Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 5, May, 2026
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ENGLISH PROVERBS AND APHORISMS AS PAREMIOLOGICAL UNITS: COGNITIVE, PRAGMATIC, AND DISCURSIVE BOUNDARIES

Gulhayo Abdug‘affarova
PhD Student, Uzbekistan State World Languages University
Email: agulxae@mail.ru

Abstract

The relationship between proverbs and aphorisms remains a contested issue in paremiological and phraseological research, particularly where conventionalized expressions retain identifiable literary or philosophical origins. Although both categories are characterized by conciseness, generalized reference, and communicative reusability, their classification frequently depends on criteria that do not operate consistently across discourse contexts. This article investigates the linguistic relationship between English proverbs and aphorisms through an integrated cognitive-pragmatic approach. Drawing on established research in paremiology, cognitive semantics, speech act theory, and discourse conventionalization, the study develops a multidimensional framework for describing the intersection of proverbial and aphoristic properties. The research adopts a qualitative, theory-building design and applies close semantic and pragmatic analysis to ten purposively selected English expressions. The findings identify three analytically significant distinctions: the difference between authorship and conventionalization, the relationship between generalized meaning and contextual communicative force, and the contrast between inherited cultural authority and attributed intellectual authority. On this basis, the article proposes a five-dimensional model of paremiological positioning encompassing provenance, conceptual organization, pragmatic orientation, discourse circulation, and authority construction. The model challenges strictly binary classifications and treats proverbiality as a gradient property. The study argues that an expression's historical origin and its current discourse function must be analyzed independently. This approach offers a theoretical foundation for future

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corpus-based investigations of proverbialization, aphoristic circulation, and the interaction between formulaic language and cultural knowledge.

Keywords: English proverbs, aphorisms, paremiology, cognitive semantics, pragmatic meaning, discourse conventionalization, proverbiality, linguistic categorization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Proverbs and aphorisms occupy a distinctive position at the intersection of language, cognition, and culture. Their significance derives not merely from their brevity or memorability but from their capacity to represent complex social experience through condensed linguistic structures. A relatively short expression may encode an evaluative judgment, establish a causal relationship, communicate a behavioral recommendation, or provide an interpretative framework for an unfamiliar situation.

In everyday communication, speakers frequently employ conventionalized sayings to interpret events without explicitly presenting the reasoning underlying their conclusions. When someone states that actions speak louder than words, the expression does more than compare speech and behavior. It invokes a recognizable evaluative principle according to which observable conduct provides evidence of sincerity or commitment. The utterance thus connects a particular communicative situation with a broader cultural generalization.

The linguistic complexity of such expressions has long attracted scholarly attention. Mieder (2004) situates proverbs within the wider traditions of folklore, cultural transmission, and social communication, demonstrating that proverbial expressions cannot be understood independently of their historical and cultural contexts. Norrick (1985) approaches proverbial language from a semantic perspective and examines the interaction between literal meaning, figurative interpretation, and contextual usage. These contributions establish that proverbs are not simply fixed sentences containing practical advice; they are linguistically complex expressions whose interpretation depends on conventional knowledge and discourse conditions.

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Aphorisms share several of these characteristics. They frequently exhibit semantic density, structural autonomy, and generalized applicability. However, they are commonly associated with identifiable authors, literary traditions, philosophical reflection, and deliberate rhetorical formulation. Such associations appear to distinguish aphorisms from proverbs, which are generally understood as products of collective transmission.

Nevertheless, the opposition between anonymous tradition and individual authorship becomes problematic when historically attributed statements enter widespread linguistic circulation. An expression may preserve its association with a particular writer while simultaneously functioning as a conventional saying. Conversely, a traditional proverb may be transformed into an innovative literary statement through contextual reinterpretation.

The historical and cognitive dimensions of this problem are particularly relevant to usage-based accounts of language. Lückert (2019) examines the representation of proverbs in relation to discourse traditions and argues that historical conventions of use are relevant to their mental representation. Her approach suggests that proverbial knowledge is shaped not only by the linguistic structure of an expression but also by its circulation within recognizable communicative practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Proverbs as Linguistic and Cultural Units

The definition of the proverb remains one of the central questions in paremiological scholarship.

Mieder (2004) demonstrates that proverbs belong to a broad cultural tradition involving historical transmission, social evaluation, and the communication of conventional wisdom. His treatment of proverbial language encompasses not only traditional collections but also literary, political, and popular-cultural contexts.

This perspective is important because it challenges approaches that regard proverbs as isolated lexical or syntactic constructions.

A proverb is recognizable partly because language users associate it with a conventional pattern of interpretation.

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For example, a stitch in time saves nine presents a concrete scenario involving the timely repair of a damaged object. Its generalized interpretation, however, concerns the practical value of preventive intervention.

The relationship between literal content and generalized meaning is not arbitrary. The concrete scenario provides a conceptual structure that can be transferred to other domains of experience.

Norrick (1985) offers a detailed account of such relationships by investigating the semantic organization of English proverbs. His work distinguishes different aspects of proverbial meaning and demonstrates the importance of figurative interpretation.

The significance of this approach lies in recognizing that proverbial meaning cannot always be derived through the ordinary compositional interpretation of individual words.

At the same time, not every proverb is metaphorical.

Expressions such as honesty is the best policy communicate generalized evaluations without requiring the same degree of cross-domain mapping as expressions involving baskets, eggs, or cooking.

Consequently, metaphorical structure should be treated as a frequent characteristic rather than an obligatory condition of proverbiality.

2.2. Aphorisms and the Problem of Authorship

Aphorisms are commonly associated with intellectual individuality and the concise expression of reflective judgments.

Their rhetorical effectiveness frequently depends on the compression of an argument into a memorable statement.

An important example occurs in Oscar Wilde's Lady Windermere's Fan, where the character Dumby states:

Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes.

(Wilde, 1892, Act III)

The statement constructs an unexpected relationship between experience and error.

Its rhetorical force depends on the reinterpretation of a positively valued concept through a less flattering account of human behavior.

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Unlike a conventional proverb whose authority may derive from communal familiarity, this aphorism is initially situated within a particular literary text and dramatic interaction.

Nevertheless, the expression can be reproduced independently of its original context.

When circulated as a standalone quotation, its meaning becomes less dependent on the dramatic exchange in which it originally appeared.

This process illustrates a central problem in paremiological classification: the distinction between textual origin and conventional usage.

The existence of an identifiable author does not necessarily prevent an expression from acquiring proverbial functions.

Likewise, an expression's circulation as a quotation does not automatically establish that it has become a proverb.

The crucial issue is whether the expression has acquired sufficient conventional recognition and communicative independence to function as a reusable cultural formula.

2.3. Cognitive Approaches to Generalized Meaning

Cognitive semantics provides a theoretical explanation for the ability of proverbs and aphorisms to connect specific linguistic representations with broader patterns of human experience.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) establish that metaphor plays a fundamental role in the conceptual organization of abstract experience.

Their account is particularly relevant to proverbs involving concrete scenarios.

Consider:

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

The expression describes a physical arrangement in which several fragile objects are concentrated in a single location.

Its generalized interpretation concerns the risks of concentrating resources or opportunities in one strategy.

The conceptual relationship can be represented as follows:

Source domain: Concentration of fragile objects.

Target domain: Concentration of valuable resources or opportunities.

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Underlying inference: Dependence on one vulnerable arrangement increases the consequences of failure.

The expression therefore communicates an abstract strategic principle through a concrete and culturally accessible scenario.

Gibbs (1994) argues more broadly that figurative language is closely connected with ordinary conceptual processes. This perspective helps explain why proverbial expressions can be interpreted beyond their literal contexts.

However, cognitive metaphor theory alone does not explain all paremiological phenomena.

Some aphorisms rely primarily on logical contrast, evaluative reclassification, or paradox rather than concrete metaphorical mapping.

For this reason, a comprehensive model must accommodate multiple mechanisms of conceptual generalization.

2.4. Pragmatic Meaning and Communicative Action

The interpretation of proverbs and aphorisms is also shaped by pragmatic conditions.

Grice (1975) explains how communication involves meanings that extend beyond the literal semantic content of an utterance.

A proverb may communicate an indirect judgment because the participants recognize its relevance to the immediate situation.

Suppose that several managers are simultaneously attempting to control a project.

One participant comments:

Too many cooks spoil the broth.

The utterance does not concern food preparation.

Its intended interpretation is that excessive intervention may undermine effective coordination.

The proverb thus operates through a contextually relevant inference.

Speech act theory provides a complementary explanation.

Austin (1962) demonstrates that utterances may perform communicative actions, while Searle (1969) develops a systematic account of speech acts and their conditions.

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From this perspective, the same proverb may perform different actions in different situations.

Look before you leap may constitute advice before a decision, criticism after an unsuccessful decision, or a general warning in an educational context.

Its linguistic form remains relatively stable, but its illocutionary force changes.

This distinction is fundamental to the present study because it shows that pragmatic function cannot serve as an exclusively fixed property of a paremiological category.

2.5. Discourse Conventionalization and Historical Circulation

The conventional status of proverbs develops through repeated circulation within linguistic communities.

Lückert (2019) investigates the proverbial discourse tradition in the history of English from a usage-based perspective and introduces a model of proverb representation that incorporates historical patterns of linguistic use.

Her contribution is particularly relevant because it connects discourse traditions with the cognitive representation of proverbial expressions.

From this perspective, conventionalization is not simply a matter of repetition.

It also involves the establishment of recognizable relationships between linguistic form, generalized meaning, and communicative expectations.

Mieder (2005) demonstrates the relevance of proverbs to political communication, where familiar expressions may be employed to justify positions, establish solidarity, or frame public arguments.

These studies indicate that proverbial expressions are not restricted to informal everyday conversation.

They participate in institutional, literary, educational, and political discourse.

A theoretical account of proverbs and aphorisms must therefore explain how expressions move between different communicative environments while retaining or transforming their recognizable meanings.

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3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research Design

The present investigation employs a qualitative, theory-building design.

Its methodological foundation combines semantic interpretation, cognitive analysis, pragmatic contextualization, and comparative classification.

The study does not seek to estimate the frequency of proverbs and aphorisms in English or to establish statistically representative differences between the two categories.

Instead, it develops and illustrates an analytical framework intended for subsequent empirical investigation.

3.2. Selection of Linguistic Material

Ten English expressions were selected for close analysis.

The material includes traditional proverbs, literary aphorisms, and expressions that present potential overlap between the categories.

The selection was guided by three considerations.

First, the expressions needed to illustrate different forms of generalized meaning.

Second, the material needed to include both conventional sayings and historically attributed statements.

Third, the expressions needed to permit comparison across cognitive and pragmatic dimensions.

The following expressions constitute the illustrative dataset.

Table 1. Selected English paremiological expressions

No.	Expression	Analytical category
1	Actions speak louder than words.	Conventional proverb
2	A stitch in time saves nine.	Metaphorical proverb
3	Don't put all your eggs in one basket.	Scenario-based proverb
4	Too many cooks spoil the broth.	Evaluative proverb
5	Look before you leap.	Advisory proverb
6	Where there is smoke, there is fire.	Inferential proverb
7	Knowledge is power.	Attributed maxim with proverbial potential
8	Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes.	Literary aphorism
9	The unexamined life is not worth living.	Philosophical maxim
10	To err is human; to forgive, divine.	Literary maxim with proverbial potential

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The categories are preliminary analytical designations rather than empirically validated classifications.

3.3. Analytical Criteria

Each expression was examined through five dimensions:

D1 — Provenance and conventionalization: The relationship between historical attribution and conventional linguistic recognition.

D2 — Conceptual organization: The cognitive mechanism through which generalized meaning is constructed.

D3 — Pragmatic orientation: The communicative actions that the expression may perform.

D4 — Discourse circulation: The potential for reproduction and reinterpretation across communicative contexts.

D5 — Authority construction: The source of the expression's persuasive or evaluative legitimacy.

These dimensions were selected through theoretical synthesis rather than statistical factor analysis.

Accordingly, they should be regarded as interpretative categories whose empirical validity remains to be established.

3.4. Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded through four stages.

First, the literal and generalized meanings of each expression were distinguished.

Second, the conceptual mechanisms supporting generalized interpretation were identified.

Third, possible communicative functions were examined through constructed contextual examples.

Fourth, the relationship between the expression's historical or conventional status and its potential discourse functions was evaluated.

Constructed contexts were used to demonstrate possible pragmatic interpretations. They were not treated as naturally occurring discourse evidence.

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4. RESULTS

4.1. Generalized Meaning as a Shared Characteristic

The comparative analysis indicates that generalized reference constitutes a central point of convergence between proverbs and aphorisms.

Both forms allow speakers to move beyond the description of individual circumstances and formulate propositions with broader interpretative relevance.

However, the mechanism through which generalized meaning is constructed differs across expressions.

In a stitch in time saves nine, generalization emerges from a practical scenario.

The literal relationship between immediate repair and the prevention of greater damage becomes applicable to nonmaterial situations.

In the unexamined life is not worth living, generalization is expressed through an explicit philosophical evaluation.

The statement does not require the interpretation of a concrete scenario before its normative meaning becomes accessible.

These differences suggest two broad mechanisms:

Scenario-mediated generalization, in which a concrete situation provides a model for interpreting other circumstances.

Proposition-centered generalization, in which an abstract judgment is directly formulated.

Neither mechanism belongs exclusively to one category.

Nevertheless, the distinction provides a useful analytical basis for comparing proverbial and aphoristic meaning.

4.2. Cognitive Compression and Conceptual Transfer

The analysis identifies cognitive compression as a significant property of both categories.

Cognitive compression refers here to the linguistic representation of a complex conceptual relationship through a comparatively economical expression.

This proposed analytical use of the term should not be confused with a separately validated psycholinguistic measurement.

The proverb where there is smoke, there is fire illustrates the compression of an inferential relationship.

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The literal expression connects observable smoke with an underlying fire.
Its generalized interpretation suggests that perceptible indications may point toward an underlying cause.
The proverb can therefore be used in contexts involving suspicion, indirect evidence, or causal inference.
However, its pragmatic use may also be problematic because the inferred relationship is not universally reliable.
A speaker may invoke the proverb to legitimize suspicion without sufficient evidence.
This observation reveals that proverbial expressions do not merely transmit neutral information.
They may also shape judgments by presenting contingent inferences as familiar cultural principles.
The cognitive economy of a proverb can consequently contribute to its persuasive force.

4.3. Pragmatic Polyfunctionality

The analysis demonstrates that a single paremiological expression may support multiple communicative functions.
Consider:
Actions speak louder than words.
In a personal relationship, the expression may communicate criticism of unfulfilled promises.
In an educational setting, it may function as moral instruction.
In professional communication, it may justify the evaluation of performance through observable outcomes.
The semantic relationship between speech and behavior remains recognizable across these contexts.
Nevertheless, the speaker's communicative intention changes.
The same principle applies to aphoristic expressions.
Knowledge is power may function as an educational slogan, a justification for professional training, or a critical observation about the unequal distribution of information.

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These examples support the argument that pragmatic function is not a sufficient basis for separating proverbs and aphorisms into mutually exclusive categories.

4.4. The Distinction Between Provenance and Function

A central finding of the conceptual analysis is the need to distinguish historical provenance from present communicative function.

An expression's provenance concerns its documented origin, authorship, or earliest identifiable textual setting.

Its communicative function concerns the role it performs within a particular discourse context.

These properties may overlap, but they are not identical.

Wilde's aphorism concerning experience and mistakes provides an illustrative case.

Within Lady Windermere's Fan, the statement contributes to a dramatic exchange characterized by irony and social observation (Wilde, 1892).

When reproduced independently, the statement may instead function as a general reflection on learning through failure.

Its original dramatic role and its subsequent potential as a standalone maxim are therefore analytically distinct.

This distinction also applies to literary maxims that become widely recognizable.

The movement from authored statement to conventional expression should not be assumed solely because a quotation is familiar.

Rather, it should be investigated through evidence of repeated circulation, formal stability, contextual independence, and recognition among language users.

4.5. A Five-Dimensional Model of Paremiological Positioning

The principal theoretical outcome is the proposed **Five-Dimensional Paremiological Positioning Model (FDPPM)**.

The model treats proverbiality and aphoristicity as overlapping configurations of linguistic and cultural properties.

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Table 2. The proposed analytical model

Dimension	Central question	Relevant evidence
Provenance and conventionalization	Is the expression attributed, anonymous, or conventionally detached from its source?	Historical documentation, attribution patterns
Conceptual organization	How is generalized meaning constructed?	Metaphor, analogy, contrast, evaluative proposition
Pragmatic orientation	What communicative actions can the expression perform?	Advice, criticism, warning, justification, reflection
Discourse circulation	How does the expression function across genres and contexts?	Repetition, variation, contextual independence
Authority construction	Why is the expression treated as persuasive or legitimate?	Tradition, cultural familiarity, authorial reputation

The model differs from a conventional binary classification in two respects. First, it allows an expression to exhibit both proverbial and aphoristic properties. Second, it distinguishes relatively stable historical information from context-sensitive communicative characteristics.

The model can be expressed conceptually as:

Paremiological position = f(P, C, Pr, D, A)

where:

P = provenance and conventionalization;
C = conceptual organization;
Pr = pragmatic orientation;
D = discourse circulation;
A = authority construction.

The function is conceptual rather than mathematical.

No numerical weighting is proposed because the present study does not provide empirical evidence for assigning relative importance to the dimensions.

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4.6. Aphoristic Proverbialization

The proposed model permits the identification of a potential process termed **aphoristic proverbialization**.

In this article, the term refers to the process through which an originally authored aphoristic expression may acquire conventional proverbial functions.

The process can be represented as:

Authored formulation → Repeated quotation → Contextual independence → Conventional recognition → Proverbial functioning

This sequence should not be interpreted as an inevitable developmental pattern.

Some aphorisms remain strongly dependent on their original textual environments.

Others circulate widely while retaining explicit attribution.

Still others may become detached from their sources and function as anonymous cultural sayings.

The concept of aphoristic proverbialization therefore describes a possible trajectory rather than a universal historical law.

Its empirical investigation would require diachronic textual evidence and systematic analysis of attribution patterns.

4.7. Summary of Analytical Findings

Table 3. Comparative characteristics of proverbs and aphorisms

Feature	Proverbs	Aphorisms
Generalized meaning	Characteristic	Characteristic
Semantic compression	Common	Common
Identifiable authorship	Not required	Frequently relevant
Conventional cultural recognition	Central	Variable
Scenario-based meaning	Frequent	Possible
Reflective conceptual reformulation	Possible	Frequent
Pragmatic multifunctionality	Present	Present
Contextual independence	Often developed	Variable
Cultural authority	Frequently tradition-based	Frequently attribution-based
Potential for category overlap	Yes	Yes

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The table summarizes analytical tendencies rather than categorical necessities. The findings therefore support a multidimensional understanding of paremiological classification.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Beyond Binary Classification

The traditional opposition between proverbs and aphorisms provides a useful starting point but does not adequately capture the diversity of conventionalized expressions.

The distinction between anonymous collective wisdom and individual intellectual formulation becomes especially unstable when authored statements circulate beyond their original textual settings.

Mieder (2004) demonstrates the cultural breadth of proverbial language, while Norrick (1985) establishes the complexity of proverbial semantics.

The present study builds on these contributions by arguing that the relationship between proverbs and aphorisms should be investigated through multiple interacting properties.

A binary classification may obscure the fact that expressions differ not only in origin but also in conceptual organization, contextual function, and perceived authority.

The proposed model does not eliminate the distinction between proverbs and aphorisms.

Instead, it provides a means of describing that distinction more precisely.

5.2. Cultural Authority and Persuasion

Proverbs and aphorisms may both function as persuasive resources.

However, their authority is often constructed through different interpretative expectations.

A traditional proverb may appear persuasive because it is perceived as a familiar expression of accumulated experience.

An aphorism may appear persuasive because it is associated with a respected author or because its formulation produces an impression of intellectual insight.

These sources of authority may reinforce one another.

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A literary statement that becomes widely conventionalized may retain its authorial prestige while acquiring the additional legitimacy of communal familiarity.

This observation is relevant to Mieder's (2005) discussion of proverbial language in political discourse.

The persuasive effect of a familiar saying may depend less on the independent verification of its proposition than on its recognizability and rhetorical appropriateness.

Consequently, paremiological expressions can contribute to both legitimate reasoning and uncritical generalization.

Their analysis should therefore distinguish rhetorical effectiveness from factual validity.

5.3. Cognitive Generalization and Pragmatic Interpretation

The relationship between cognitive meaning and pragmatic interpretation is particularly important.

Cognitive analysis explains how an expression represents generalized knowledge.

Pragmatic analysis explains why a speaker selects that expression in a particular situation and what communicative effect the speaker intends to achieve.

These analytical levels are complementary.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of conceptual metaphor helps explain the transfer of meaning from concrete scenarios to abstract domains.

Gibbs (1994) further establishes the relevance of figurative thinking to ordinary language understanding.

However, neither conceptual mapping nor figurative interpretation alone determines whether an utterance functions as advice, criticism, or justification.

Such functions require contextual analysis informed by pragmatic theory (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969).

The integration of these approaches is therefore necessary for a comprehensive account of paremiological meaning.

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5.4. Conventionalization and Linguistic Change

The proposed continuum is compatible with usage-based perspectives on language.

Lückert (2019) emphasizes the importance of discourse traditions for understanding the mental representation of proverbs.

Her analysis supports the broader theoretical relevance of repeated usage and historically established conventions.

The present study extends this concern to the relationship between aphoristic origins and proverbial functioning.

However, the proposed process of aphoristic proverbialization remains a hypothesis.

To validate it, researchers would need to examine how expressions are reproduced across time, whether authorial attribution is retained, and whether their pragmatic uses become increasingly independent of their original contexts.

A diachronic corpus could provide evidence of changes in quotation practices, lexical variation, and genre distribution.

Such evidence would help distinguish widespread quotation from genuine proverbial conventionalization.

5.5. Implications for Translation and Intercultural Communication

The findings also have implications for translation studies.

Proverbs and aphorisms may contain culturally specific assumptions that are not fully recoverable through literal translation.

A proverb based on a concrete scenario may have a conventional equivalent in another language, while an aphorism may depend on rhetorical features that are difficult to reproduce.

The proposed framework encourages translators to distinguish several aspects of equivalence.

Semantic equivalence concerns the preservation of generalized meaning.

Pragmatic equivalence concerns the reproduction of communicative function.

Cultural equivalence concerns the recognizability and social associations of the expression.

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Rhetorical equivalence concerns the preservation of such features as contrast, parallelism, irony, or conceptual surprise.

These dimensions may conflict.

A literal translation may preserve imagery while weakening cultural recognition. A culturally familiar equivalent may reproduce communicative force while altering the original conceptual structure.

The distinction between provenance and function is also important when translating attributed aphorisms, where authorial identity may form part of the intended meaning.

5.6. Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations.

First, its dataset is illustrative rather than representative.

Second, the proposed framework has not been tested through independent annotation.

Third, the analysis does not establish the historical development of individual expressions through systematic corpus evidence.

Fourth, the model's dimensions have not been operationalized as validated quantitative scales.

These limitations do not invalidate the conceptual distinctions developed in the article, but they restrict the conclusions that can be drawn.

Future research should examine a substantially larger dataset drawn from documented proverb collections, literary texts, and contemporary English corpora.

A systematic annotation protocol could be developed for the five proposed dimensions.

Independent annotators could then assess the expressions, allowing researchers to investigate agreement and identify ambiguous cases.

Diachronic corpus analysis could further establish whether changes in attribution, frequency, and genre distribution correspond to changes in proverbial status.

Such work would permit the proposed model to move from theoretical formulation toward empirical validation.

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6. CONCLUSION

This study has investigated English proverbs and aphorisms as interconnected linguistic forms whose meanings and communicative functions emerge through the interaction of conceptual organization, cultural conventionalization, and discourse context.

The analysis demonstrates that brevity, generalized reference, and semantic density are shared characteristics rather than sufficient criteria for distinguishing the two categories.

Proverbs frequently rely on culturally familiar scenarios and established patterns of practical inference, whereas aphorisms often foreground reflective evaluation and deliberate conceptual reformulation.

Nevertheless, these differences represent tendencies rather than absolute boundaries.

The central theoretical contribution of the article is the Five-Dimensional Paremiological Positioning Model, which integrates provenance and conventionalization, conceptual organization, pragmatic orientation, discourse circulation, and authority construction.

The model provides a framework for analyzing expressions that combine traditionally proverbial and aphoristic characteristics.

It also establishes an important distinction between historical authorship and contemporary communicative status.

An expression may remain identifiable as an authored statement while acquiring conventional functions associated with proverbial language.

The proposed concept of aphoristic proverbialization describes one possible developmental relationship between these categories.

The study therefore argues that proverbiality is more appropriately investigated as a gradient and context-sensitive property than as a strictly binary classification.

The proposed approach contributes to theoretical paremiology by integrating semantic, cognitive, pragmatic, and discourse-oriented perspectives within a single analytical framework.

Its further development requires corpus-based validation, historical investigation, and systematic assessment of the proposed classification dimensions.

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