

OCCASIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF PROVERBIAL PHRASEOLOGISMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract

This paper examines the occasional transformations of proverbial phraseologisms in English and Uzbek literary texts from a comparative linguistic perspective. In contemporary linguistics, proverbial phraseologisms are no longer regarded as fixed or “frozen” units of language; instead, they are viewed as dynamic and flexible expressions that may undergo semantic and structural modification in a specific literary context. The study situates proverbial phraseologisms at the intersection of phraseology and paremiology, highlighting their cultural, cognitive, and stylistic value. The research identifies the principal mechanisms of occasional transformation, including extension, ellipsis, substitution, contamination, and convergence, and analyzes their functions in selected works of English literature (Amy Tan, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser) and Uzbek literature (Abdulla Qahhor, Shuhrat). The findings demonstrate that, despite differences in cultural imagery and national mentality, both languages employ similar transformation strategies, with extension emerging as the most productive method. Occasional transformations do not distort traditional proverbs; rather, they revitalize collective folk wisdom and adapt it to modern social realities and individual artistic expression.

Keywords

proverbial phraseologism; occasional transformation; anti-proverb; paremiology; phraseology; comparative linguistics; literary discourse

INTRODUCTION

The study of phraseological units occupies a central place in modern linguistics, particularly within cognitive, cultural, and stylistic approaches. Among these units, proverbial phraseologisms represent a unique linguistic phenomenon, as they combine figurative meaning with traditional wisdom accumulated through generations. Proverbs have long been regarded as stable expressions reflecting the worldview, moral values, and historical experience of a nation (Mieder, 2004). However, literary discourse demonstrates that such units are frequently modified by authors for expressive and pragmatic purposes.

In recent decades, scholars have increasingly focused on the phenomenon of occasionalism, which refers to the context-dependent, author-specific transformation of established language units (Moon, 1998). Within literary texts, these transformations give rise to anti-proverbs, ironic reinterpretations, or structurally altered forms that preserve recognizability while acquiring new meanings. This study aims to analyze how English and Uzbek writers employ occasional transformations of proverbial phraseologisms and to identify both universal and culture-specific features of this process.

Theoretical Background

Proverbial phraseologisms occupy an intermediate position between phraseology and paremiology. While phraseology focuses on the structural and semantic properties of fixed expressions, paremiology examines proverbs as minimal units of collective folk wisdom (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2005). Proverbial phraseologisms differ from purely idiomatic expressions in that they retain didactic and evaluative functions while allowing limited grammatical and lexical variation.

From a cognitive perspective, proverbs are conceptual metaphors that structure human experience (Gibbs, 1994). Their occasional transformation in literary texts reflects the author's intention to reinterpret traditional knowledge in light of contemporary social, psychological, or cultural realities.

Types of Occasional Transformation

The analysis identifies several major types of occasional transformation:

Extension – the addition of new lexical components to a traditional proverb in order to intensify emotional or stylistic effect.

Ellipsis – the omission of certain elements, relying on the reader's cultural competence to reconstruct the original meaning.

Substitution – the replacement of one or more components to adapt the proverb to a specific character or situation.

Contamination – the blending of two different proverbs into a single hybrid unit.

Convergence – the simultaneous use of several transformation techniques within one expression.

Among these, extension proves to be the most productive in both English and Uzbek literary texts.

Comparative Literary Analysis

In English literature, occasional transformations of proverbial phraseologisms are widely used to convey themes of individualism, social mobility, and cultural conflict. For instance, in *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan modifies traditional proverbial expressions to illustrate the tension between inherited cultural values and modern

American identity (Tan, 1989). Jack London's *Martin Eden* employs ellipsis and individualization to emphasize intellectual isolation and personal struggle (London, 1909). Similarly, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* demonstrates how substitution and extension reflect materialistic aspirations and social inequality (Dreiser, 1900).

In Uzbek literature, authors such as Abdulla Qahhor and Shuhrat actively transform traditional proverbs to enhance satire and social criticism. Qahhor's works reveal how expanded proverbial expressions intensify irony and expose moral contradictions within society (Qahhor, 1987). Shuhrat's substitutions often increase emotional impact and emphasize the vulnerability of specific characters, particularly women.

Despite cultural differences, both literary traditions reveal a shared tendency to reinterpret traditional wisdom through occasional transformation.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis demonstrates that occasional transformations of proverbial phraseologisms in English and Uzbek literary texts are governed by similar linguistic mechanisms, though their functional orientation is shaped by national and cultural factors. These transformations should not be regarded as violations of proverbial norms; rather, they represent a sophisticated stylistic device that enables authors to reconcile collective folk wisdom with individual artistic vision. As a result, proverbial phraseologisms remain a productive and relevant component of modern literary discourse.

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