BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg
BG PULSE JOURNAL

GRAMMAR FROZEN IN FOLK WISDOM: THE PAREMIOLOGICAL UNIT AS A REPOSITORY OF MORPHOSYNTACTIC ARCHAISMS IN THE OGHUZ DIALECTS OF KHOREZM

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23193002

Abstract. The paper explores the morphological and syntactic properties of the paremiological unit. Its central hypothesis runs as follows: owing to its fixed character, the proverb shields the grammatical forms it contains from the changes taking place in living speech and thus turns into a natural archive of the history of the language. This hypothesis is put to the test on data from the Oghuz dialects of Khorezm, with particular focus on the *-ur/-ür* form of the categorical future tense, the *-mak* form of the verbal noun, derivatives in *-quv/-guv* and the *-din* variant of the ablative case. At the syntactic level, the prevalence of the conditional pattern is accounted for by the logical nature of the proverb.

Keywords: paremiological unit, morphological archaism, categorical future tense, conditional mood, syntactic pattern, Oghuz dialect group, transcription.

Introduction. The grammatical analysis of a paremia differs fundamentally from the analysis of units of free speech in one particular respect. In a free sentence the speaker chooses the form: tense, mood and case are determined according to his or her communicative intention. In a paremia, by contrast, there is no choice – the form comes ready-made together with the unit and is not subject to alteration.

This gives rise to the central hypothesis of the present article: since the paremia is a fixed unit, it protects the morphological forms within it from the changes occurring in living speech, and as a result forms that have dropped out of the language survive as components of paremias. Defining the proverb as a condensed fable, A.A. Potebnya showed that it retains the compressed

trace of an expanded text that once existed[1]; at the grammatical level this principle operates with even greater precision.

In Uzbek linguistics, the grammatical features of proverbs were investigated by X. Abdurahmonov[2]. The scholar worked with material from the literary language; in the present article, however, the analysis is transferred to dialect material, and this makes an essential difference, since the dialectal stock, not having undergone codification, preserves archaic forms more fully.

Verb forms and the archaic layer. The verb is the most active part of speech in the corpus, and the reason for this lies in the fact that a paremia expresses a complete judgement: a judgement requires a predicate, and the function of the predicate is in most cases performed by a verb.

The *-ur/-ür* form of the categorical future tense constitutes the most valuable material for the study. It is used consistently in such units as *Iči kemäni tutgan γarq ičidä qálur* ('He who clings to two boats is left to drown')[3], *Táj át bolgunča ägäsi it bolur* ('By the time the foal grows into a horse, its owner is worn out like a dog')[4] and *Báj maqtansa, tápi̇lur, joq maqtansa, čápi̇lur* ('When the rich man boasts, he is taken at his word; when the poor man boasts, he is cut down')[5]. In present-day literary Uzbek this form is not productive, its place having been taken by *-adi*; in the languages of the Oghuz group, however, it has remained the principal form, and F.A. Abdullayev identified it as a feature characteristic of the Oghuz dialect group of the Uzbek language[6].

The distribution of this form across the corpus deserves special attention. It occurs mainly in units taken from the collection «Xorazm folklori» (Khorezm Folklore), whereas in the modern dictionary it is recorded in only a handful of cases. This distribution admits of two interpretations: either the form is genuinely falling out of living speech, or modern compilers have brought the texts closer to the literary norm. The second possibility must likewise be taken into account.

The *-mak* form of the verbal noun has been preserved in only a few instances in the corpus: *Ičdä bolgan oγri̇qni̇ tilmäk bolmas* ('A pain that lies within cannot be cut open')[7]. In modern Uzbek its place has been taken by *-moq*, whereas in the languages of the Oghuz group *-mak* has remained the principal form. To this series one may add derivatives in *-quv/-guv*: *Äšäkniŋ jűki jűŋil bolsa, játquvsi̇ gelür* ('When the donkey's load is light, it feels like lying down')[8] and *Därd jámáni̇ sančuv,*

[1] Potebnya A.A. Iz lektsiy po teorii slovesnosti: Basnya. Poslovitsa. Pogovorka [From lectures on the theory of literature: The fable. The proverb. The saying]. – Kharkov, 1894.

[2] Abdurahmonov X. O'zbek xalq maqollarining sintaktik xususiyatlari [Syntactic features of Uzbek folk proverbs]: Abstract of the Dissertation for the Degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences. – Tashkent, 1964.

[3] Xorazm folklori [Khorezm folklore]. Vol. XI / Compiled by S. Ro'zimboyev. – Urgench, 2021. – P. 35.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Abdullayev F. O'zbek tilining Xorazm shevalari [The Khorezm dialects of the Uzbek language]. – Tashkent: Fan, 1961.

[7] Xorazm folklori. Vol. XI. – P. 36.

[8] Ibid. – P. 35.

gäp jámänï qanquv ('The worst of ailments is a stabbing pain; the worst of words is a retort')[9]. These forms are scarcely used in present-day spoken language and live on only within paremias – and it is this that provides the most direct evidence for the central hypothesis of the article.

Negative forms are highly frequent in the corpus. The suffix *-mas/-mäs* conveys general negation, i.e. that the action never takes place: *Čumčïqdïn qorqqan tarïq elmäs* ('He who fears sparrows will not sow millet')[10], *Käfännïŋ čöntägi bolmas* ('A shroud has no pocket')[11]. This form is fully in keeping with the function of the paremia as an expression of categorical judgement, since it leaves no room for exceptions; compared with the literary form *-maydi*, *-mas* carries a considerably sharper and more conclusive tone.

The form *-mish* performs a function of its own: *Er-xátïnnïŋ urïšïya bosaya kűlärmiš* ('At a quarrel between husband and wife, the threshold laughs, they say')[12], *Jer qattïq bolsa, höčiz höčizdän görärmiš* ('When the ground is hard, one ox blames the other, they say')[13]. It softens the judgement, as it presents the idea being expressed not as the speaker's personal conclusion but as the experience of the people. Participial forms, for their part, create a generalised person: the participle in *-gan* denotes not a specific individual but anyone who performs the given action[14].

Noun forms and case variation. Nouns and their grammatical forms display less variability in paremias than verbs do; yet it is precisely this stability that makes them convenient material for identifying dialectal features.

Among the case forms, the most noteworthy is the *-din* variant of the ablative case: *Bojnï bár däräqdin, aqlï joq köräkdin* ('Tall as a tree, yet as witless as a köräk')[15], *Čumčïqdïn qorqqan tarïq elmäs*[16], *Tutun ömčädin čïqar* ('Smoke comes out through the chimney')[17]. The lexeme *o'mcha* in the third example means 'chimney, flue'.

What is remarkable is that the form of these units in literary spelling does not coincide with their form in transcription. While the written form of the first example shows the suffix *-day*, its transcription gives the form *däräqdin*. The same situation is observed in the unit *Ignädin jerdän tujadin šamál ötär* ('Through a needle-sized hole blows a camel-sized wind')[18]. This demonstrates

[9] Ibid. – P. 30.

[10] Ibid. – P. 35.

[11] Komil Avaz. Mo'jaz maqollar va naqllar [Concise proverbs and sayings]. – Urgench, 2005. – P. 33.

[12] Ibid. – P. 42.

[13] Norboyeva Sh., Sa'dullayeva N., Ataboyeva M. Xorazm shevalaridagi maqol va iboralarning qisqacha izohli lug'ati [A concise explanatory dictionary of proverbs and idioms in the Khorezm dialects]. – Urgench, 2022. – P. 99.

[14] Ibid. – P. 98.

[15] Xorazm folklori. Vol. XI. – P. 29.

[16] Ibid. – P. 35.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid. – P. 31.

that morphological analysis must rely on transcription rather than on spelling: when compilers write a text in a way that approximates the literary norm, dialectal features vanish from the written form, whereas transcription retains them.

The syntactic pattern and its logical basis. A paremiological unit is built on a sentence pattern and, in formal terms, does not differ from an ordinary sentence. The difference lies in the way it comes into being: a free sentence is generated in the course of speech, whereas a paremia is retrieved in ready-made form. For this reason, the syntactic pattern of a paremia is regarded as the outward manifestation of its logical model[19].

The conditional mood is the most frequently occurring form in the corpus: *Araq qazìmasaŋ, átìza suv bármas* ('If you do not dig the irrigation ditch, water will not reach the field')[20]. It is not enough merely to register the predominance of this pattern; its cause must be sought in the logical nature of the paremia. Since a paremia is a sign of a class of situations, it is most inclined to express the relation between a condition and its consequence, and the conditional pattern renders this relation in the most economical way grammatically.

Two varieties of the conditional form are to be distinguished. The second-person form, i.e. *-saŋ* in transcription, is addressed directly to the listener and lends the utterance the tone of a warning or a piece of advice. The third-person form, by contrast, approaches the statement of a general regularity. B.M. Jo'rayeva showed that the choice of the form of address determines the speech function of a paremia[21]; the dialect material confirms this view.

The imperative mood ranks second and, as a rule, occurs in the negative form: affirmative imperatives of the type *Körpäŋä qarab ájáq uzat* ('Stretch your legs according to the length of your quilt')[22] are in the minority. The predominance of the negative imperative stems from the cautionary function of the paremia: folk experience tends to record not what one ought to do but what one ought to guard against.

The scarcity of interrogative sentences calls for a separate explanation. A paremia expresses a judgement, whereas a question does not count as a judgement – it requests information and demands an answer, and a fixed unit has no answer. The interrogative forms that do occur in the corpus are, in fact, rhetorical in character: in the unit *Ánadìn mehribán qajda, átadìn yamgusár qajda* ('Who could be kinder than a mother, who could be more caring than a father?')[23] the question requires no answer; on the contrary, it emphasises that no answer exists. Describing the

[19] Permyakov G.L. Osnovy strukturnoy paremiologii [Foundations of structural paremiology]. – Moscow: Nauka, 1988. – 236 p.

[20] Xorazm folklori. Vol. XI. – P. 29.

[21] Jo'rayeva B.M. O'zbek xalq maqollari shakllanishining lingvistik asoslari [Linguistic foundations of the formation of Uzbek folk proverbs]: Abstract of the Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philological Sciences (DSc). – Tashkent, 2019.

[22] Norboyeva Sh., Sa'dullayeva N., Ataboyeva M. Op. cit. – P. 84.

[23] Xorazm folklori. Vol. XI. – P. 32.

rhetorical structure of the paremia, W. Mieder stressed the persuasive force of precisely this device[24].

Economy in the use of function words is one of the formal features of the paremia. Conjunctions are in many cases omitted, and the parts are placed directly side by side. The absence of a conjunction not only shortens the expression but also requires the listener to reconstruct the relation between the parts on his or her own, which in turn heightens the expressive impact of the paremia[25].

Conclusion. The analysis has confirmed the central hypothesis of the article. As a fixed unit, the paremia protects the grammatical forms it contains; consequently, a number of forms that have disappeared from living speech – the *-ur/-ür* variety of the categorical future tense, the *-mak* form of the verbal noun and derivatives in *-quv/-guv* – have survived only as components of paremias.

The analysis of the *-din* variant of the ablative case has yielded a conclusion of methodological significance: the form of one and the same unit in literary spelling and its form in transcription systematically fail to coincide. Hence, the grammatical analysis of dialectal paremiological material can be conducted only on the basis of transcription; reliance on spelling leads to the loss of dialectal features.

At the syntactic level, the predominance of the conditional pattern stems from the logical nature of the paremia, while the fact that the imperative mood occurs mostly in the negative form is explained by its cautionary function. The scarcity of interrogative sentences, together with the rhetorical character of those that do occur, shows that in a paremia the question is subordinated to the judgement.

On the whole, the paremiological stock of the Khorezm Oghuz dialects serves as a natural source for the historical grammar of the Uzbek language. The forms preserved in it are typologically close to the layer attested in written monuments, and this closeness calls for a reassessment of the place of dialect material in the history of the language.

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