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## PROVERBS AND ANTI-PROVERBS IN MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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*The article deals with the place of proverbs in modern English. The article seeks to analyze the anti-proverbs as the phenomenon of modern society. The aim of the article is to analyze the popularity of the notion of anti-proverb.*

*It has been noted that proverbs have originated since ancient times. The philosophers' and writers' statements of that time became popular proverbs. Bible also played an important role in forming English proverbs. It has been concluded that proverbs are divided into national, literary and adoption. Nowadays the process of creating new proverbs has not stopped, which caused the enriching of English vocabulary by modern proverbs. The modern English literature and cinema has become one the significant sources of their origin. It also has been noted that the anti-proverbs became a popular phenomenon of 20th century. An anti-proverb is the transformation of a standard proverb for humorous effect. This trend in the linguistics has been evoked by the originality and freshness of anti-proverb notion.*

**Key words** : proverb, anti-proverb, preverb, vocabulary, national experience, humorous effect.

Proverbs have always been a reflection of a nation. They are also an integral part of the cultural heritage. Proverbs have enriched the national vocabularies since ancient time till nowadays. A great deal of research has been made to find out the origin of the proverbs and to classify them. Proverbs are ubiquitous. One could take any topic and ask which role proverbs play - even schizophrenia research. Proverbs are increasingly being used in the study of schizophrenia, Alzheimer, and so forth, to find out what metaphors do to our brains. Journalists also like to work with proverbs because they know that we know them - and then they play around with them. Wolfgang Mieder, a native of Germany, is a professor at the University of Vermont in one of his work called this phenomenon "anti-proverb"[5].

Anti-proverb is the popular notion nowadays and it spreads all over the world. The sphere of its usage becomes wider and wider. So this caused the **topicality** of our research. **The aim** of the article is to analyze the phenomenon of anti-proverbs in English language. In order to reach the aim we should solve the following **tasks**:

- to determine the definition of the proverb and anti-proverb;
- to analyze the historical development of the proverb;
- to consider the changes in proverbs nowadays;
- to analyze the anti-proverb as the main stream of expressions in modern English;

At various times different people gave explanations of the word "proverb" in their own way. We have studied some of them:

- Proverb is an old and common saying. (*Socrates*)
- Proverb is a brief saying that presents a truth or some bit of useful wisdom. (*William Shakespeare*)
- Proverb is a short well-known statement that gives advice or expresses something that is generally true. (*Longman dictionary of contemporary English*)[3].

Proverbs and sayings, being an integral part of the national folklore, and in its turn, being an attribute of culture of the nation, comprise the reflection of the people's life; they reflect people's views and characters. Proverbs warn, sum up national experience, critically deride people's instincts, maliciously make comments on appearance, give bright and remembered advice, teach wisdom of life, provide humor in a sarcastic way, philosophize and collect thoughts.

"Proverbs are the wisdom of peoples" as an Italian saying goes. Analyzing materials on this theme we have sorted out a few sources of origin proverbs: national (ordinary people's

statements), literary (intelligent people's statements), adoption (the Bible, proverbs and sayings from other languages).

English proverbs come from a variety of sources. Some are, indeed, the result of people pondering and crafting language, such as some by Confucius, Plato, Baltasar Gracián, etc. Others are taken from such diverse sources as poetry, songs, commercials, advertisements, movies, literature, etc. A number of the well-known sayings of Jesus, Shakespeare, and others have become proverbs, though the creators of the proverb were known, and many of these sayings were not seen as proverbs when they were first coined. Many proverbs are also based on stories, often the end of a story. For example, the proverb "Who will bell the cat?" is from the end of a story about the mice planning how to be safe from the cat.

Some authors have created proverbs in their writings, such as J. R. R. Tolkien, and some of these proverbs have made their way into broader society, such as *the bumper sticker pictured here*. Similarly, C.S. Lewis' created proverb about *a lobster in a pot*, from the Chronicles of Narnia, has also gained currency. In cases like this, deliberately created proverbs for fictional societies have become proverbs in real societies. In a fictional story set in a real society, the movie Forrest Gump introduced "*Life is like a box of chocolates*" into broad society.

Though many proverbs are ancient, they were all newly created at some point by somebody. Sometimes it is easy to detect that a proverb is newly coined by a reference to something recent, such as the Haitian proverb "The fish that is being microwaved doesn't fear the lightning". Over 1,400 new English proverbs are said to have been coined in the 20th century. This process of creating proverbs is always ongoing, so that possible new proverbs are being created constantly. Those sayings that are adopted and used by an adequate number of people become proverbs in that society. E. g [1]:

*Crime doesn't pay* (If you engage in illegal activities, you will not make money in the long run.) - First used in the USA at least as early as 1927, this saying became the slogan of the USA's Federal Bureau of Investigation and the American comic-strip detective Dick Tracy created by cartoonist Chester Gould in 1931.

*Make love not war* (1. Sex between people is better than fighting between countries. 2. Peace is better than war.) - American student slogan of the 1960s, then mainly used by those opposed to the American War in Vietnam. It subsequently featured in John Lennon's song *Mind Games* (1973); and has since been used by those opposed to the American War in Iraq and war in general.

*Put the pedal to the metal* (Go as fast as possible.) - his saying originates from the idea of pressing a car's accelerator pedal down hard to the (metal) floor, thus making the car go at maximum speed.

*Would you buy a used car from this man?* (Do you trust this man? I don't.) - This saying is attributed to the American comedian Mort Sahl (born 1927). It was often applied to USA President Richard Nixon, and is today used with regard to anyone who does not seem entirely trustworthy.

*There's no such thing as a free lunch* (We cannot get something for nothing. We must pay for everything. Nothing in life is free.) - Often attributed to the American economist and Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman (1912-2006), this saying was around at least by the 1950s. Friedman popularized but did not originate it.

In modern society appeared such notion as anti-proverbs or perverses since they are a perversion of the original. An anti-proverb or a perverb is the transformation of a standard proverb for humorous effect. Paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder defines them as "parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom"[4]. They have also been defined as "an allusive distortion,

parody, misapplication, or unexpected contextualization of a recognized proverb, usually for comic or satiric effect." [1] To have full effect, an anti-proverb must be based on a known proverb. For example, "If at first you don't succeed, quit" is only funny if the hearer knows the standard proverb "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Anti-proverbs are used commonly in advertising, such as "Put your burger where your mouth is" from Red Robin. [1] Anti-proverbs are also common on T-shirts, such as "Taste makes waist" and "If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you".

Standard proverbs are essentially defined phrases, well-known to many people, as e. g. *Don't bite the hand that feeds you*. When this sequence slightly changed (*Don't bite the hand that looks dirty*) it becomes an anti-proverb.

Anti-proverbs have been used and recognized a long time, though the term "anti-proverb" was not coined until 1982 by Wolfgang Mieder [5]. The term became more established with the publication of *Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-Proverbs* by Wolfgang Mieder and Anna T. Litovkina.

They were one of the many experimental styles explored by the French literary movement Oulipo. The term perverb is attributed to Maxine Groffsky. The concept was popularised by Oulipo collaborator Harry Mathews in his *Selected Declarations of Dependence* (1977).

Anti-proverbs are used by a popular British writer J.K. Rowling in her popular series of novels "Harry Potter". She reshapes a standard English proverb into "It's no good crying over spilt potion" and Dumbledore advises Harry not to "count your owls before they are delivered".

Mieder and Litovkina suggested the following classification of anti-proverbs [2]:

Mitigation: The meaning seems kept, but is qualified by the supplement: *Everything has an end, but a pudding has two*.

Apology: The original sequence is defended against attacks: German example, translated: *Art (Kunst) comes from 'able' (können), not from 'will' (wollen), or we'd better call it wirt (Wulst, fantasy word)*.

Athesis: The message of the original sequence is destroyed but no new meaning is established: *Guns don't kill – ammunition does*.

Conservation: The meaning is similar, with and without the supplement: *There is no such thing as a free lunch, but there is always free cheese in a mousetrap*.

Contrast: The original meaning is put in relation to another sphere of life: *All we need is love – all we get is homework*.

Break of metaphor: Metaphors are interpreted literally: *Duty is calling? We call back*.

Neogenesis: The meaning of the new sentence is completely independent of the original one: *An onion a day keeps everybody away*.

Rejection: The original assertion is rejected: *When marriage is outlawed, only outlaws will have in-laws*.

Synthesis: A meaningful sentence consists of some phrases; Some of these classes are divided into sub-classes.

There is no doubt that most anti-proverbs are one-day-wonders in that they will never enter general folk speech by gaining a certain currency and traditionality. However, there are at least some anti-proverbs that do express new wisdom and which have by now been accepted as innovatively expressed wisdom based on traditional proverbial structures. All of this is taking place in the vast area of the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet), enabling such newly discovered wisdom to reach thousands of people who in turn use these texts to such a degree that they can be considered to be new proverbs. Here are some examples of these anti-proverbs:

- *No news is the mother of invention*

- *What doesn't kill you makes you stranger.*
- *Don't count your chickens in midstream*
- *The road to Hell wasn't paved in a day or the road to Hell is the spice of life.*
- *When in Rome, do it yourself.*
- *A bird in the hand is a dangerous thing.*
- *A rolling stone gets the worm.*
- *A penny saved is a penny indeed or a penny saved is a penny taxed.*
- *A fool and his money is a friend indeed.*
- *Laughter is the best medicine for when you cannot afford health insurance.*

Proverbs remain one of the most popular expression of the language. Although many proverbs have been forgotten there still some that will forever be used. They can be represented in new forms, such as the anti-proverbs - the one of the popular stream in the language society. They change the idea of the old proverbs, giving them a new humorous significance. The given information can be considered in the further perspective of the research "Proverbs and sayings in the linguistic area aspect".

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#### АНОТАЦІЯ

*У статті йдеться про місце прислів'їв на сучасному етапі розвитку англійської мови. У статті ставиться завдання проаналізувати анти-прислів'я як сучасне явище в суспільстві. Було зазначено, що прислів'я беруть свій початок ще з античних часів, зокрема відомими прислів'ями стали вислови стародавніх філософів та письменників. Біблія відіграла не менш важливу роль у формуванні англійських прислів'їв. Було зроблено висновок, що прислів'я поділяються на народні, літературні та запозичені. На сучасному етапі процес їх творення не зупинився, у зв'язку з чим за останнє століття англійська мова збагатилася сучасними прислів'ями. Значним джерелом їх походження стала новітня англійська література та кінематограф. Також нами було зазначено, що у 20 столітті набуло популярності явище «антиприслів'я». Антиприслів'я – це перетворення звичайного прислів'я задля гумористичного чи сатиричного ефекту. Це зумовлено оригінальністю та новизною цього явища.*

**Ключові слова :** прислів'я, антиприслів'я, словниковий запас, національний досвід, гумористичний ефект.

#### АННОТАЦИЯ

*Предметом исследования являются пословицы на современном этапе развития английского языка. Ставится задача - проанализировать анти-пословицы как современное явление в обществе. Целью статьи является исследование популярности анти-пословицы в современном английском языке.*

*Было отмечено, что пословицы берут свое начало еще с античных времен. Известными пословицами стали высказывания древних философов и писателей. Библия сыграла не менее важную роль в формировании английских пословиц. Был сделан вывод, что пословицы подразделяются на народные, литературные и заимствованные. На современном этапе процесс их создания не остановился, в связи с чем за последнее столетие английский язык обогатился современными пословицами. Значительным источником их происхождения стала новейшая английская литература и кинематограф. Нами было отмечено, что в 20 веке приобрело популярность явление «анти-пословиц». Антипословицы – это преобразование обычной пословицы для юмористического или сатирического эффекта. Внимание большинства современных лингвистов уделяется именно антипословице. Это обусловлено оригинальностью и новизной этого явления.*

**Ключевые слова:** пословица, антипословица, словарный запас, национальный опыт, юмористический эффект.