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*Пословицы в фразеологическом поле: когнитивный, дискурсивный, сопоставительный аспекты/Proverbs in the Phraseological Field: Cognitive, Discursive, Comparative Aspects.* Ed. by T.N. Fedulenkova. Vladimir, Russia: Vladimir State University, 2017. Pp. 230.

The festschrift, dedicated to Professor Alina Mikhailovna Melerovich, consists of 11 chapters written by her colleagues from various Russian universities, as well as universities from the former soviet republic – and now an independent country – of Georgia. The only US contribution was written by Professor Wolfgang Mieder, the University of Vermont.

Each chapter discusses a different aspect of proverbs, so it is difficult to pinpoint a common topic of the book. Thus, even though they are called chapters, it would be more appropriate to classify them as separate papers, and the book as a collection of research papers.

Here is the list of chapters with their Russian titles translated into English and their respective authors:

Chapter 1. “Cognitive-Pragmatic Nature of Proverb.” N.F. Alefirenko, N.N. Semenenko.

Chapter 2. “Explaining the Meaning of Proverbs and Sayings: An Attempt of Slow Reading.” V.I. Zimin.

Chapter 3. “Old Proverb Will Never Break: On Some Aspects of Analyzing Proverbs.” E.V. Ivanova.

Chapter 4. “On the Problem of Cultural Reference of Proverbs (based on the Russian Proverbs Using Clothes References).” M.L. Kovshova.

Chapter 5. “Proverbs in Poetry.” V.M. Mokienko.

Chapter 6. “Cognitive-Discursive Characteristics of English Language Proverbs in Various Types of Discourse.” O.I. Natho, T.A. Shiraeva.

Chapter 7. “Antithesis in Proverbs (on the Material of German, Georgian, and Russian Languages).” L.M. Ratriani, Z.K. Adamia.

Chapter 8. “Language, Culture, and National Character in English Proverbs.” T.N. Homutova, E.A. Damman.

Chapter 9. “Tendencies in the Development of Proverbs (on the Material of the English Language).” T.N. Fedulenkova.

Chapter 10. “Proverbs and Sentential Phrasemes of Other Types.” D. Dobrovolskij.

Chapter 11. “Futuristic Paremiography and Paremiology: A Plea for the Collection and Study of Modern Proverbs.” W. Mieder.

For obvious reasons, it will be impossible to review all 11 contributions to the festschrift; so I will have to concentrate on those chapters that – in my opinion – present most interesting research. Thus, I will devote more space to the analysis of chapter 2 (“Explaining the Meaning of Proverbs and Sayings”), chapter 5 (“Proverbs in Poetry”), and chapter 9 (“Tendencies in the Development of Proverbs”). However, before doing that, I believe it is my duty to describe, even if briefly, the main content of other chapters.

Chapter 1, “Cognitive-Pragmatic Nature of Paroemia,” based on a lengthy analysis of cognitive-pragmatic nature of proverbs, comes to the conclusion that the following are the unique cognitive-pragmatic features of proverbs:

1. Stereotypical and evaluative nature of the content (pragmatic factor)
2. Secondary nature of the verbal and cognitive objectivity (cognitive factor), and
3. Implicit nature of the realization of meaning (discursive factor).

Chapter 3, “Old Proverb Will Never Break: On Some Aspects of Analyzing Proverbs,” analyzes traditional and modern proverbs as complex language signs, each of which is a multifaceted reflection of a fragment of the real world; therefore, there is no doubt that proverbs that have existed in language for a longtime will continue to exist in the future.

Chapter 4, “On the Problem of Cultural Reference of Proverbs,” discusses Russian proverbs which use references to vari-

ous items of clothing as the most natural way to establish cultural norms and prescriptions. Based on the extensive analysis of a wide range of traditional Russian proverbs using clothes references, the author comes to the conclusion that various items of clothes used in these proverbs lose their direct meaning and become symbols of certain cultural content associated with them.

Chapter 6, "Cognitive-Discursive Characteristic of English Language Proverbs in Various Types of Discourse," analyzes the following cognitive-discursive functions of English proverbs: the function of structural and explicatory organization of discourse; the function of emotional and semantic emphasis; the function of generalization; the stylistic function; the function of euphemisms; the regulatory function; the phatic function; the function of variation of meaning.

Chapter 7, "Antithesis in Proverbs," analyses proverbs based on contraposition in German, Georgian, and Russian languages. The authors identified substantial differences among the proverbs of genetically unrelated languages and examine the circumstances that are the cause of such differences.

Chapter 8, "Language, Culture, and National Character in English Proverbs," classifies English proverbs by the following cultural areas: attitude towards work; attitude towards personal freedom and competition; attitude towards authority; attitude towards time; attitude towards communication; attitude towards nature; attitude towards people; attitude towards space. As a result of the analysis, the authors managed to identify certain qualities of the national character that are considered important in an English-speaking society.

Chapter 10, "Proverbs and Sentential Phrasemes of Other Types," is devoted to differentiating proverbs and sayings and comes to the conclusion that there is no clear-cut borderline between proverbs and sayings. "There are forms which function as proverbs in certain contexts and as sayings in others" (202).

Chapter 11, "Futuristic Paremiography and Paremiology," is a passionate plea, addressed to all paremiologists, to identify and collect modern proverbs. The author correctly states that "Paremiography cannot remain a science that looks primarily backwards and works only with texts of times gone by" (212). Professor Meider not just encourages his colleagues to study modern

proverbs, but he provides the algorithm, the pattern how they should proceed:

What needs to be done after having established a textual candidate to be considered as a new proverb is to establish its earliest possible reference and citing it within a context and with precise bibliographical information. Variants should also be included and, where appropriate, short explanatory comments (213).

The author then lists a number of characteristics that differentiate modern proverbs from traditional ones, and ends his paper with the following appeal: “The polyfunctionality, polysemanticity, and polysituativity of these modern proverbs deserve the attention of paremiographers and paremiologists everywhere who, proverbially speaking, need to think outside the box as they study the fascinating world of proverbial modernity in the languages of their countries” (221).

Now, let us have a look at the three chapters that were chosen for a more detailed analysis.

Chapter 2, “Explaining the Meaning of Proverbs and Sayings: An Attempt of Slow Reading,” is written by Professor Valentin Zimin (Moscow State Pedagogical University). The basic assumption of the analysis is the following provision: “In order to correctly understand and use a proverb, one has, first of all, have a clear understanding of its inner form, the circumstances of its appearance, the meaning of the components of the proverb, the semantic context, and many other factors” (55). The author then argues that modern people do not always understand the meaning of many words used in proverbs, especially those that appeared in the life of peasants, even if they use the proverbs, for the most part, correctly.

In his paper, Professor Zimin analyses several traditional Russian proverbs the origin of which is often misinterpreted. This is a truly fascinating reading, as the author describes and explains the origins of proverbs that are still used today, but the origins of which are impossible to explain for a contemporary Russian speaker. For example, the proverb “Both the wolves are full and the sheep are whole.” The meaning of the proverb is quite obvious: both parties are satisfied, but the question is: how is that possible? How it can be that the wolves are full (that is,

they have eaten sheep) but at the same time, the sheep are whole? There is an obvious contradiction in terms. However, once we learn the origin of this proverb, it becomes clear: in Russia, during the serfdom law times, the shepherds would intentionally underreport the number of sheep born in the herds belonging to their landowners: thus, even though wolves did eat several sheep during summer, the overall number of sheep did not change.

Another traditional proverb analyzed in the paper is, literally, something like that in English: "Here is the Yuriev Day for you, granny!" (Yuriev Day is November 26<sup>th</sup>; the importance of that holiday was that during a week before and a week after the serfs could leave their landlord and go to another one). The proverb is used to express disappointment that something that was expected for a long time did not happen, as tsar Ivan the Fourth banned this custom in 1581, thus the peasants were deprived of even that little freedom that they used to have and became property of their landowners.

However, Professor Zimin argues, that the real origin of this proverb is a different one. Indeed, it is connected with that day, Yuriev day, but for another reason: on that day, the landowners would pay their serfs for their work during summer; often times, they (landowners) cheated and gave them much less money than the workers expected. Thus, the author argues that the fact of getting much less than expected (or nothing at all) was the real reason for the appearance of the proverb, not the fact that the peasant could no longer change their owners: such transfers were rare anyway.

I do not have the space to show the readers all examples of the truly fascinating analysis suggested by Professor Zimin, but I would like to quote at least one more proverb. It says, literally, "To come [to some place] by the time when people are taking their hats," which obviously means to come to some place too late, when everything is over, to miss some event. The usual explanation of the origin is something like that: it was said about guests who come to a home too late, when everyone else is leaving. However, there is a problem with such an explanation: the Russian word used in the proverb, "razbor" presupposes that there were a lot of hats, so this makes the explanation about late guests sound weak. The author suggests another explanation:

according to the old Greek tradition, when men came to the church, they took off their hats and left them at the entrance. Thus, the proverb not just says that someone comes late, but that someone comes late to the church service, which is bad, because it is a sin.

In conclusion, I would encourage everyone to read Professor Zimin's paper: not only his analysis is flawless and can serve as a model for any linguist, but his style is an example of clarity: it shows how research papers should be written, which is a very important fact today: there is an unfortunate trend in modern linguistics, especially among young colleagues, to overload their papers with a lot of terminology, which not only makes it difficult to read but – more important – often times hides the paucity of the content.

Now allow me to say a few words about Chapter 5, "Proverbs in Poetry," written by Professor Valery Mokienko (Saint-Petersburg State University). The paper analyzes some examples of proverbs used in poetry, taken from the dictionary *Phraseology in Russian Poetry* (2016), compiled by the author and two of his colleagues: Professors Yakimov and Melerovich. The examples chosen for the chapter are well-known traditional Russian proverbs:

1. Somebody else's problem I will solve by my hands (i.e. other people's problems seem to us easy, unlike our own)
2. Somebody else's soul is dark (i.e. one cannot know the thoughts, feelings, intentions of another person)
3. To live a life is not like crossing a field (i.e. life is not easy, there are a lot of hardships in life)

Then the paper quotes examples of using these proverbs in Russian poetry, from poems by such well-known poets (both living and those who passed away) as Yulia Drunina, Anna Akhmatova, Igor Guberman, Alexander Gitovich, Konstantin Vanshenkin, Boris Pasternak, Bulat Okudzhava, Yuna Morits, and others. I am not going to try to translate poetic texts into English (one has to be a poet himself to even attempt to do that), so the readers have to take my word: the examples quoted by Professor Mokienko and his colleagues show how well-chosen proverbs and other phraseological units emphasize and enrich

poetic texts: they produce both semantic and stylistic effects, creating an individual connection to a poetic text and by that the initial symbolism found in proverbs is being enriched and emphasized.

In conclusion, the paper mentions the invaluable contribution made by A.M. Melerovich to the dictionary, as she had to read an enormous volume of poetic texts, from the poems by Alexander Pushkin to the ones written by modern Russian poets. Thus, the dictionary *Phraseology in Russian Poetry* has become not just the result of her work but the overall goal of the research activity of Professor Melerovich, to whom this festschrift is dedicated.

After reading the paper, one is tempted to read the dictionary itself: there is no doubt that it will be both an enlightening and fascinating reading.

The last chapter I would like to analyze is Chapter 9, "Tendencies in the Development of Proverbs (on the Material of the English Language)," written by Professor Tatyana Fedulenkova (Vladimir State University). The paper discusses in detail the tendency to clip the content of traditional proverbs when they are used today. After analyzing a large sample of modern usage of traditional proverbs, Professor Fedulenkova identifies three variants of the reduction of the content:

1. Initial clipping: Fouling my old nest (It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest); Second nature (Habit is a second nature).
2. Terminal clipping: Early to bed (Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise); Talk of the devil (Talk of the devil and he'll appear).
3. Bilateral clipping: Counting your chickens (Do not count your chickens before they are hatched); The last straw (It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back).

The author comes to the conclusion that the identified three types of reduced proverbs acquire the status of independent phraseological units, since they have their own form, their own meaning, and their own function in the sentence or utterance. Even though not all of the analyzed proverbs have been recorded in phraseological dictionaries, most of them have been, which makes it

possible to establish the fact of such a language phenomenon as phraseological compression (194).

Overall, the collection under review is an essential contribution to the field of paremiology, and thus is an encouraging sign that the plea for the collection and study of modern proverbs, voiced by Professor Mieder, will not remain the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

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