

PAREMIOLOGICAL ANTONYMY IN ROMANIAN AND RUSSIAN: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract: A proverb involves a set of operations that make it a linguistic and a cognitive, ontological, cultural and pragmatic phenomenon. In a discourse, proverbs and sayings function as verbal stereotypes: they are “ready-made” discourse units that reproduce, depending on the emitter’s intention and on the link with the message communicated. There are antonymic structures at paremiological level; thus, we identified different implicit and explicit proverbial contrasting structures that we gathered under the label “paremiological antonyms” (PrmA); we then distinguished two main types of PrmA: inter-paremiological antonyms and intra-paremiological antonyms. We exemplified on a Russian and Romanian corpus. PrmA are the most vivid example of the (co)existence of antonyms proper and occasional at phrase, contextual level.

Keywords: paremiological antonymy, inter- and intra-paremiological antonyms, contrasting paremiological meaning.

1. Introduction

Together with phraseology, *paremiology* is an important, specific component of the linguistic frame, characterised equally by national and universal, by traditional and universal, by particular and general. It is known that there are a set of general elements that bring paremiology close to phraseology and vice versa. Both paremiological and phraseological formulae speak of the national-linguistic awareness of a community, including references to its lifestyle, to its perception of existence, including different cultural milestones of the community. At the same time, they serve communication as stereotypical discourse mechanisms. It is also relevant that proverbs and phrases are efficient models that test the semantic, formative and functional potential of the words of a language. Maybe these common features made linguists speak of a single domain, *phraseology*, where they ranged any model based on fixed/stable verbal and syntagmatic stereotypy. As far as Russian linguistics is concerned (Alefirenko-Semenenko 2009, Semenenko 2011, Savenkova 2002, etc.), this vision has changed: they agree phraseology and paremiology are domains with distinct study subjects though there is a close connection between the two (numerous phraseological units have paremiological origins).

2. Theoretical Background

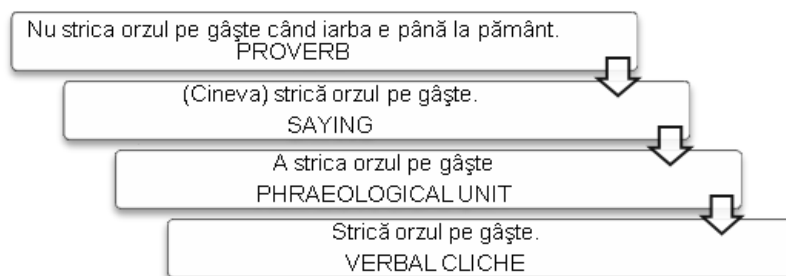
World paremiology has known two important linguists – the Russian G. Permyakov, considered the “father” of paremiology, and the Finnish M. Kuusi – who tried to analyse and classify the paremiological system for international use. Permyakov developed the *theory of clichés*, studying and classifying, for the first time, an impressive inventory of paremiological and cliché-like structures from 200 Oriental

peoples. He found out that there is an isomorphism of nomination, construction and content, which allows a general ordering of the proverbs of different languages. In his later works, Permyakov (1975: 250-251) established that there is a paremiological and a phraseological level in every language, which consolidates their status. Oppositional centralisation and systematisation has been widespread due to Kuusi, whose theory was put into practice through the development of a universal catalogue of data able to classify thousands of paremiological units from the most diverse languages, together with their equivalents in other languages (see Stanciu 1980).

Defining paremiology and classifying paremiological forms and formulae have known different views and conceptions, like phraseology (see Permyakov (1970, 1975, 1988), Tăbârcea 1982, Negreanu 1983, Stanciu 1980, Ruxăndoiu (1973, 2001, 2004), Roşianu (1979 [2005]), Slave 1967, etc. or, more recently, Alefirenko-Semenenko 2009, Semenenko 2011, Savenkova 2002, Danilov 1995, etc.). A vast critical study of the different definitions and interpretations of the proverb in Romanian and foreign literature can be found in the Romanian paremiologist P. Ruxăndoiu (2003: 6-41). As for us, we have adopted a consecrated point of view, since our attention focuses not on the strict delimitation of the types of paremiological structures but on the investigation of their antonymic relationships. Therefore, we monitor these relationships in both folklore and cultivated productions such as *proverbs*, *sayings*, *aphorisms*, *maxims*, *sentences*, *adages*, *parables*, *winged words*, *thoughts*, *reflections*, *quotations*, etc. Traditionally, proverbs and sayings have been considered folk linguistic forms. We borrow, from Tăbârcea (1982: 84), the definition of *proverb*, because it seems to be the most adequate one – it underlines the communicative function of the proverb as a discourse operative unit: thus, a proverb is “a linguistic enunciation with a fixed logic-semantic structure that interrupts the discourse containing it to refer metaphorically to a situation or to a discourse segment”.

N. Roşianu (2005) claimed it would be recommended to use the term “maxim” as a generic name for “genuinely folk” *proverbs* and *sayings*.

A paremiological pattern is the basis of verbal enunciations (in most cases of the cliché type) that act directly on the discourse. Starting from the example supplied by Stanciu (1980: 207), we present below the influence of the proverb model:



Researcher C. Negreanu (1983) accomplished a synthesis of Romanian paremiology where he tackled the conceptual, linguistic and stylistic structure of the proverbs. His inter-disciplinary approach and the use of such terms as *micro-context*, *macro-context*, *conceptual field*, *ethno-field*, *ethno-sign*, *paremiological synonymy*, *inter-micro-contextual synonymy*, *paremiological antonymy*, *intra-micro-contextual paremiological antonymy*, or *inter-conceptual antonymy* are still in valid particularly

within the context of cognitive linguistics or even of the ethno-linguistics and anthropolinguistics.

Structuralism and linguistic anthropology defined proverb as *an expression of one's conception of the world* (Negreanu, 1983: 52). From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the researcher tried to decrypt the national specificity by appealing to *concepts* without mentioning it. Negreanu considers concept synonym of ethno-field, which shows that he properly understood that there are several conceptual fields in a concept. The linguist's choice of distinguishing conceptual fields in paremiology seems the most adequate method that fits the specificity of these linguistic structures – the result of cognitive-affective generalising, conceptualising and classifying operations. The linguist classifies the 6,000 Romanian proverbs analysed into according to fundamental concepts of our people's life (*Ibid.*: 48), capturing the connections between them at synonymic and antonymic levels.

The conceptual (theme) statistics showing the predominance of the proverbs circumscribing "wisdom" made the researcher say that *wisdom is a concept defining the soul structure of our people* (*Ibid.*: 49). Together with "wisdom", other concepts like *worth, irony, intelligence, kindness, knowledge, friendship*, etc. make up the aesthetic-moral profile of our society. Structurally, as in the case of phraseology, the development of paremiological units is a matter of intervention at metaphorical, metonymical, comparison, associative, repetition, hyperbolic, symmetrical, syntactic parallelism, chiasm, and rhythm levels and, over all, of the classical and conceptual opposition system on which we focus below.

Researcher I. Danilov (1995: 64) established a paremiological *typology* and underlined the importance of *paremiological stereotypy* advancing two main classes of proverbs: *oppositive* and *non-oppositive*. This shows that Danilov took into account both Kuusi's theory based on the opposition system (where a proverb is seen as an alternative to a binary opposition) and Permakov's logico-semantic criteria (all proverbs are not organised based on semantic contrariety) (see also Roşianu, 2005: 22, Stanciu, 1980: 208).

Antonyms presented in a paremiologic context are, according to Tăbârcea (1982: 255), "paradoxical contradictory associations", while Danilov (1995: 99) calls them "opponyms". In fact, contextual-proverbial or paremiological antonyms are the concrete, viable example of both systemic and extra-systemic antonymy, where there are both non-canonical, occasional and discourse antonymy features the latter of which needs to be reconstructed.

As for the operational phrases "paremiological antonymy" and "paremiological antonymy", we have borrowed them from C. Negreanu 1983. We also re-affirm our conception on this type of antonyms (Gheltofan 2013a, 2013b, 2014), i.e. there is, within discourse antonymy, paremiological antonymy, phraseological antonymy, stylistic antonymy, scientific antonymy, etc. and, at a concrete level, that of antonymic relationships, two major types of antonyms – canonical and non-canonical (see Gheltofan 2014; the terms "canonical antonyms" and "non-canonical antonyms" are from Murphy 2003). This means that, at paremiologic level, there are the same types of antonyms but, to point out antonymic relationships at paremiological level, we used the phrases "paremiological antonymy" and "paremiological antonyms" (further PrmA).

3. Resources used

As far as the material we have used in this study, we need to mention that the Romanian paremiological repertoire has been recorded in extremely valuable works whose authors understood their expressive and spiritual-cultural richnessⁱ. In our study, we relied particularly on Anton Pann's *Povestea vorbii*, selecting 125 units, and on the work *Maxima populară rusă și corespondentele românești* by N. Roșianu, from which we have chosen 174 units and their Romanian equivalents. We have also used the dictionary *Poslovicey russkogo naroda* (2002), that gathers proverbs from the well known lexicographical work by V. I. Dal', as well as the paremiological index by C. Negreanu (1983) and I. Danilov (1995), where we identified 179 and 84 units, respectively. Finally, the corpus analysed counts 724 units, of which 304 are Romanian and 420 are Russian.

4. Objectives

The main goal of this study was to establish theoretical and practical grounds for the classification of antonymic relationships within paremiological units (intra-paremiological antonymy) – when there are contrasting words within the same proverb – and between paremiological units (inter-paremiological antonymy) – when antonymic relationships rely on contrasting paremiological meaning.

5. Methodology

Based on the classifications advanced by C. Negreanu 1983, N. Roșianu 2005, and I. Danilov 1995 regarding paremiological structures, by R. Sârbu 1977 regarding the linguistic principles involved in the delimitation of antonymic types, as well as by Gheltofan (2013a, 2013b) regarding the classification of phraseological antonymy and the discourse categories of antonymy, we attempt at establishing a hierarchy of PrmA. We have also kept an interesting conclusion by C. Tăbârcea (1982: 109-110) that ensures the theoretical grounds for delimiting PrmA: paremiological formulae are *logico-semantic and syntactic binary structures*; *semantic binarism* is, in our opinion, one of the antonymic features of proverbs closely related to a certain syntactic structure that is binary.

Therefore, in our approach, we present a few theoretical and practical aspects of *antonymy* and *paremiological antonyms*; in all this, *binarism* refers to a dual, axiological conceptualisation focused on two opposite poles that lead to semantic polarisation, to antonymisation, while, at lexicosyntactic level, we can identify:

- (1) Either canonical antonyms such as *bine-rău*, *bogat-sărac*, *întuneric-lumină*, *dulce-acru*, [good-bad]
- (2) Or non-canonical (contextual) antonyms such as *cinste-rușine*, *lopata-sapa*, *trandafir-mărăcine*, *păun-cioară*, *tărățe-făină*, *vrăbie-șoim*, etc. [peacock-crow]

6. Our study

In paremiology, the pragmatic and discourse sides are essential: paremiological formulae can define a concise point of view, give a verdict or add some more expressivity. In current discourse, they explore the communicational-playful side of the

terms particularly in advertising, in political discourse or on the Internet (3), (4), (5). The pleasure of operating lexical changes in the fixed structure of proverbs and sayings leads to occasional PrmA determined by certain situations or by the speaker's need to be original or funny:

- (3) Москва слезам не веритⁱⁱ– Нью-Йорк доверяет хохоту [Moscow doesn't believe in tears – New York trusts laughter].

Playfulness and social reality resulted in some proverbs that become *anti-proverbs* because they paraphrase negatively known proverbs:

- (4) „Fie pâinea cât de rea, tot mai bine-n țara mea” has turned into „Fie pâinea cât de rea, tot ți-o fură cineva”ⁱⁱⁱ; „Nu lăsa pe mâine ce poți face azi” into „Lasă pe mâine ce poți face azi, că poate mâine nu mai e nevoie”.
- (5) „Дома плохо, а не дома еще хуже” (Acasă e rău, dar să nu fii acasă și mai rău (lit.)) after „В гостях хорошо, а дома лучше”^{iv} (În vizită e bine, dar acasă e și mai bine (lit.)).

This type of PrmA is considered *antiphrastic PrmA* (see below) because they represent a stylistic-linguistic manifestation of current language. *Antiphrastic PrmA* is the result of intra- and inter-linguistic mechanisms capable of producing true cognitive and behavioural mutations in the conscious of a community. In Romanian, these types of PrmA are found mainly on the Internet, in printed media, in fiction or in oral discourse; however, in Russian, their attestation by dictionaries is rather recent (Walter-Mokienko 2005). Therefore, C. Tăbârcea (1982: 114) was right when he said that the “paremiological store” is an “open corpus” since new proverbs are currently developed even through paraphrasing to illustrate verbally a certain reality. In our opinion, the study of *antiphrastic PrmA* could lead to a better understanding of current socio-cultural realities and to the deciphering of the modern humans think and behave.

The most important way of developing a proverb is metaphor (a proverb is, usually, synonym of a metaphor) (see Tăbârcea, 1982: 35, Constantinovici, 2006: 85). However, together with metaphor, other figures of style can be traced in proverbs such as antithesis, hyperbola, paradox, etc. Besides *anti-phrase*, there is also *chiasm* in the structure of a proverb, an “in the mirror” construction that suggests in a simple way the contrary proverbial semanticism resulting in a PrmA:

- (6) *Un tată poate să hrănească zece fii, dar zece fii nu pot să hrănească un tată.
Vai de hoțul care-i sărac și de săracul care-i hoț, etc.*

In the light of the observations above, we suggest the following classification:

I. According to the structural-semantic criterion, there is “intra-paremiological antonymy” and “inter-paremiological antonymy”, as well as “intra-paremiological antonyms” and “inter-paremiological antonyms”. We adopt these terms conventionally to distinguish the phenomena observed and discussed by us. We need to mention that “intra-paremiological antonyms” are, in fact, what Negreanu calls “intra-microcontextual antonyms” but, since we need uniformity and clarity between the two types, we stick to the labels mentioned above. Though Negreanu (1983: 80) understood and mentioned the “opposable character of two paremiological units”, he did not extend their analysis or name them. Therefore, we distinguish between:

a. Intra-paremiological antonymy, characterised by a binary syntactic construction where there are canonical or non-canonical antonymic pairs:

- (7) *Cine învață la tinerețe se odihnește la bătrânețe.*
 (8) *De multe ori dintr-o iapă bună iese un măgar și dintr-un măracine iese un trandafir.*
 (9) *Лучше с умным потерять, чем с глупым найти.*
 (10) *У богатого всякий волос в масле, а у бедного и в кашу нем.*
 [It is better to lose with a wise man, than to win with a fool.]

Intra-paremiological antonymy relies on both *explicit contrast* (7), (8), (9), (10) and *implicit contrast* (Tăbârcea, 1982: 240) as in (11), (12):

- (11) *Corb la corb nu-și scoate ochii.*
 (12) *Алмаз и в грязи блестит.*
 [A diamond is valuable though it lie on a midden.]

b. Inter-paremiological (intercontextual) antonymy:

- (13) *Aurul și-n glod strălucește. – Nu tot ce strălucește este aur.*
Ochi care nu se văd se uită. – Ochii ce se văd rar sunt mai dragăstoși.
 (14) *Горькие проводы – жена мужа (муж жену) хоронит – Красные похороны, когда муж жену хоронит, etc.*
 [The morning hour has gold in its mouth. – All that glitters is not gold.]

Inter-paremiological antonymy (13), (14) is the result of contextual paremiological meanings in whose syntactic organisation there is, usually, a triggering keyword (13): *aur*, *ochi*. We should also mention that the paremiological meaning has a dynamic conceptual-affective component that guides the semantics of the paremiological unit. Therefore, opposing meanings relies on binary or axiological conceptualisation: */dominant positive/ vs. /dominant negative/*. This binary conceptualisation relies on the principle of ambivalence that covers the analysed PrmA (13): „gold” cumulates both positive connotations and negative connotations – it has, thus, a dual, ambivalent nature.

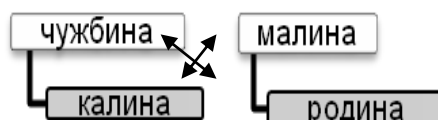
II. **According to the morpho-grammatical criterion**, there are:

Morpho-grammatical marker	Examples
Verbal antonymic differentiator ^{vi}	<i>Limba îndulcește, limba amărește.</i> Одним глазом плачет, другим смеётся. Easy come, easy go.
Nominal antonymic differentiator	<i>Unde e dragoste, e și ceartă.</i> Держи голову в холоде, а ноги в тепле.
Adjectival antonymic differentiator	<i>Decît bogat și bolnav, mai bine sărac și sănătos.</i> Корень учения горек, да и плод его сладок. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
Adverbial antonymic differentiator	<i>Mai bine șezi strîmb și vorbește drept.</i> Сиди криво, да суди прямо.

Numeral	Ce face <i>un</i> prost nu pot desface <i>zece</i> înțelepți.
antonymic	Лучше быть <i>первым</i> в деревне, чем <i>последним</i> в городе.
differentiator	Two heads are better than one.

There are also several opposable pairs in a proverb, which distinguishes between *complex* or *double PrmA* (cf. Danilov 1995: 64):

- (15) Cuvântul *aspru scârbă* aduce, iar cuvântul *dulce dragoste*.
 (16) Чужбина – калина, Родина – малина.



III. According to the logico-thematic criterion, classification can also take into account traditional theme groups (see Roșianu, 2005: 13) such as *richness-poverty*, *goodness-badness*, *stupidity-cleverness*, *much-few/little*, *strength-weakness*, etc.

From the same logico-semantic perspective (see Permyakov 1988, Roșianu 2005: 17), we can classify PrmA as follows:

a. Contrary semanticism, *contrary action-reaction*:

- (17) Cine începe *multe* puține *sfirșește*.
 (18) Ехал в Казань, а приехал в Рязань.

b. Contrary semanticism, *one's own-foreign object*:

- (19) Mai bine în *coliba* ta decât în *palatul* altuia.
 (20) Чужая жена – лебедушка, а своя – *попынь* горькая.

c. Contrary semanticism, *in the mirror*:

- (21) Dintr-un *mărăcine* iese un *trandafir* și adesea dintr-un *trandafir* iese un *mărăcine*.

IV. According to the syntactic-semantic criterion, there is largely structural identity between Russian and Romanian – this is about the syntactic isomorphism identified by Permyakov.

Syntactic-semantic criterion	Structure	Examples
PrmA with discourse- paremiologic connectors	<i>mai bine ... decât</i> (<i>decât ...</i> , <i>mai bine</i>)/ <i>лучше ...</i> , <i>чем</i> (<i>чем...</i> , <i>лучше</i>)	<i>Decît</i> toată vara <i>cioară</i> ,/ <i>Mai bine</i> -o zi șoim în vară. <i>Лучше</i> с умным потерять, <i>чем</i> с дураком найти.
	<i>unde ...</i> , (<i>acolo</i>) / <i>где ...</i> , <i>там</i> :	<i>Unde</i> lipsește răunul, <i>cioara</i> pare pasărea cea mai frumoasă. <i>Где</i> любовь, <i>там</i> и напасть.
PrmA with relative pronominal connector	<i>cine</i> (<i>cel ce</i>) ..., (<i>acela</i>)/ <i>кто ...</i> <i>тот</i>	<i>Cine</i> e mursicat de șarpe se păzește și de șorîrlă. <i>Кто</i> доброе творит, <i>того</i> зло не вредит.

PrmA with adversative connectors ^{vii}	<i>dar, iar, și (adversativ)/ a, da</i> or with <i>juxtaposed involved adversative meaning (adversative juxtaposition)</i>	Mierea-n gură e plăcere./ <i>Dar</i> la inimă durere. Сытый голодного, а богатый бедного не знает.
PrmA with opposite connectors	<i>ci</i> ^{viii}	Dracul nu face punți și biserici, <i>ci</i> întinde curse și piedici.
PrmA with contrary adverbial connectors	<i>lesne-anevoie</i>	<i>Anevoie</i> să câștigă și <i>lesne</i> să cheltuieste.
PrmA with alternative connectors ^{ix}	<i>când</i>	<i>Cînd</i> îmbrăcat, <i>cînd</i> despuat.

V. According to the stylistic-semantic criterion:

Stylistic-semantic criterion ^x	Examples
<i>Ironic PrmA</i>	Fugii de naiba și dădui peste dracul. Делавши смеялись, а сделавши плачем.
<i>Antithetic PrmA</i>	Живут доходом, а проживают расходом.
<i>Paradoxical PrmA</i>	Cei mai frumoși ghiocci prin mărăcini se gădesc.
<i>Chiasmic PrmA</i>	Trandafirul scoate ghimpi și ghimpele trandafiri. Смерть живота не любит. Живот смерти не любит.
<i>Hyperbolic PrmA</i>	Cine fură azi o seară./ Mîine fură o iară.
<i>Antiphrastic PrmA</i>	Много из леса да пацифисты. – Один в поле не воин”; „Nu lăsa pe mîine ce poți face azi. – Lasă pe mîine ce poți face azi, că poate mîine nu mai e nevoie.

7. Conclusion

Among verbalisation modalities, from words to fixed or free word combinations, proverbs are seen as special language items and key elements of the culture of a community because they contain compressed essential information about the lifestyle of a people, about the way people feel and behave, about the vision of life of a community, etc.

In my research, I have focused mostly upon underlining a number of theoretical and practical features of PrMAs with the goal of establishing a typology according to several criteria: *structural-semantic*, *morphological-grammatical*, *structural and morphosyntactic* and *stylistic-semantic*. Thus, two major classes of PrMAs can be identified: *inter-paremiological antonyms* and *intra-paremiological antonyms*. *Paremiological antonyms* are *implicit or explicit proverbial contrasting structures* at micro-contextual (within a proverb) or inter-micro-contextual (between proverbs) level, with a rhythmic and mnemotechnic character.

We believe that the conceptual-semantic space of paremiologic units as peripheral parts of linguistic concepts should be deepened because it represents a defining coordinate of a people's spirit as well as a code of culture that sets humans and their activities in the middle of everything. It is also necessary to study the triggering mechanisms of using proverbs in a discourse as well as their discourse functions.

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Endnotes

ⁱ For an historic of the early records of the paremiological units in Romanian culture, see Tăbârcea (1982: 141- 153).

ⁱⁱ Example belonging to Bočina (2007: 164).

ⁱⁱⁱ The examples belong to Smarandache 2010.

^{iv} The examples belong to Bočina (2007: 164).

^v The examples belong to Negreanu (1983: 80).

^{vi} By the typology of phraseological antonymy (Gheltofan 2013b), in which I used the operational phrase „antonymous differentiator”, belonging to Alekhina 1968. We also remember the classification proposed by Danilov (1995: 64): “proverbs with verbal opposition”; “proverbs with noun opposition”; “proverbs with adjectival opposition”; “proverbs with adverbial opposition”; “proverbs with complex antonymy”; so, plus, we distinguish paremiology units with antonymous differentiator, numerological or quantitatively.

^{vii} See Borchin (2007: 28), “indicators of adversity”.

^{viii} See Irimia (2004: 321), “oppositing coordinating conjunction”.

^{ix} See Irimia (2004: 499), “alternative coordination”.

^x It must be remind the fact that the paremiological unit carries, sine qua non, a metaphor or a metonymie or a synecdoche.