

The Role of Proverbs and Sayings in the Development of Sanogenic Thinking of the Individual

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The article presents a theoretical overview in the field of psychosemantics and psycholinguistics. It is shown that proverbs and sayings, as a short and accurate version of “folk wisdom”, allow not only to overestimate and realize personal meanings, but also are able to change the programs of his behavior. In the article, the authors emphasize that the key mechanism that triggers an individual’s awareness of these meanings and further changes in the program of his behavior is not just reflection, as a “process of thinking about thinking”, but a special sanogenic reflection (aimed at analyzing non-constructive mental automatisms and rethinking them). The article also considers a variant of working with an individual’s awareness of the meanings and further changes in the programs of his behavior through the author’s transformational game of cognitive-emotive technology “Sanogenic poker” (TRGCET).

Keywords: sanogenic reflection, proverbs, sayings, thinking, mental automatism, psychosemantics, psycholinguistics

Proverbs and sayings are works of oral creativity of the people. It is interesting and fascinating to read them. They reflect the way life of a person, love for parents, homeland, people’s character traits are noticed and natural phenomena are described. Among the proverbs and sayings there are those that were composed by Russian writers and poets, those that were created in Soviet times, and there are proverbs and sayings of our days (Anikin, 2007, p. 25).

The proverb is curious, it is interested in everything related to a person, his activities, the nature surrounding him. She is omnipresent, knows everything and has her own, people’s final judgment about everything. The popular position in proverbs and sayings is always clear, sometimes even categorical, often with irony: “Think in two ways, and do it alone”; “I thought, I thought—it’s impossible to live, I’ve thought it over—it’s possible”; “Interfere with idleness, you’ll live a century with fun”. (Trufanova, 2021, p. 372)

What is a proverb? A proverb is a short folk saying with edifying content (Dal, 2003). A proverb is a short

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stable expression, mainly figurative, which, unlike a proverb, does not constitute a complete utterance (Dal, 2003).

What is the difference between a proverb and a saying? In general, the proverb teaches people; it has a deep meaning. A saying is an apt remark about an event, phenomenon, object. Compare: “Business is time, fun is an hour”—a proverb and “Hour by hour is not easier”—a saying.

Especially significant in this regard are the proverbs, which in a brief aphoristic form convey the point of view of the people on the main issues of existence. Basically, proverbs are supranational in nature, reflect the general laws of nature, including human, and prescribe certain rules of behavior: “Hope in God, but do not flatter yourself”, “Hope in Allah, and tie the camel”. The content of these proverbs speaks about the personal responsibility of everyone for their actions.

In literature, proverbs and sayings are a form of folklore wisdom. These are special sayings with a capacious meaning. They make it possible to effectively solve the problems of psychological impact not only on the individual, but also on the group. This form is the subject of socio-psychological research and refers to the method of psychological influence. The works of V. Wundt, K. Gillebrandt, G. Lebon, G. Steinthal touched upon the issues of ethnopsychology: the analysis of the products of folk art. The fundamental theoretical foundations of psychological impact research were laid in the works of V. M. Bekhterev, L. C. Vygotsky, McGuire, A. G. Kovalev, V. N. Kulikov, A. A. Leontiev, D. Myers, V. N. Myasishchev, B. D. Parygin, A. U. Kharash, Yu. A. Sherkovin. In theoretical and empirical studies of folklore, proverbs are considered as a means of psychological influence (Sh. Bally, M. M. Bakhtin, N. Lossky, L. S. Vygotsky, E. P. Krupnik, M. M. Mukanov, N. D. Ovsyaniko-Kulikovskiy, N. Peseshkiyan, G. L. Permyakov, V. F. Petrenko, D. Sokolov, K. Teigen, M. Erikson). The authors in their works laid the foundations for further research of the mechanisms and determinants of the psychological impact of folklore on a person (Anikin, 2007; Borovykh, 2006; Brenifier, 2019; Mokienko, 2005; Propp, 2022).

Folk art, which has been established for centuries, contains both the direct meaning of the words included in it, and veiled, hidden. Our consciousness is a huge matrix of words containing the evolutionary memory of a person. And the words, signs, phraseological units, proverbs that exist in the language of the people carry this evolutionary experience. In order for proverbs and sayings to become “folk wisdom”, it was necessary initially that a person unconditionally followed the rhythms of nature: perceived himself as a natural body, thought and spoke like nature itself. Later, these observations were recorded by signs on sand, birch bark, stones, and now we display them on paper. According to C. G. Jung, the archetype of the letter, alphabet, and written language are the original signs, which still remain a colossal semantic capacity for a person. Words, sayings, proverbs, phraseological units, letters themselves are the evolutionary experience of mankind.

Our brain, busy with daily routine chores, even before the end, without delving into the hidden meaning of the proverb, sayings, unconsciously still catches the subtext, which contains the truth, some secret, a guide to action. And, as a rule, this experience accumulated gradually, based on the observation and self-observation of a person for himself, his life, other people, their relationships, natural phenomena. Therefore, this experience would not be historically and evolutionarily alive if the meanings accumulated as a result of observation and self-observation did not carry the potential of humanizing a person.

Sensory content as a result of the work of the organs of sensitivity, the whole process of cognition is only the “picture” itself, the original image of the reflected world, which is subjective and often unconscious. However, the objective component of human consciousness is represented in the meanings that have developed in the

practice of people of knowledge, interpretations that are in the layer of the cults of humanity. Proverbs and sayings are the works of oral creativity of the people, the experience passed down from generation to generation. Meanings as objective components in the structure of consciousness, fixed in proverbs and sayings, would never become facts of individual consciousness, personal meanings without reflection. Questions: “Why? What does it matter to me?” They allow you to turn the value for everyone into a value for yourself (into meaning). It is through the mechanisms of reflection that the seeds of humanity, evolutionarily fixed in culture, germinate in the individual. The appropriation of the experience accumulated by mankind, reflected in oral folk art through the acquisition of personal meaning, makes this experience alive, really acting.

The peculiarity of reflection is that it is the most important component of self-knowledge and self-regulation, linking the operational-objective side of thinking with the personal meanings of the subject included in the thought process. Despite the mostly positive content of many folk proverbs and sayings, their edifying moral meaning, depending on the philosophy of everyday life that serves human behavior and activity, the context of the proverb chosen by the person may change. In one case, the pathogenic philosophy of life is supported by the content of the proverb: “My hut is on the edge, I don’t know anything”. The personality, not wanting to solve the problem, hides behind the content of the proverb, and leaves the situation, which, as it seems to her, violates her peace and well-being. In another context, the same proverb in an allegorical form contains a reproach, demonstrates rejection of such a position, and fixes a negative attitude towards oneself and a person with an egoistic orientation. In the proverb: “Your shirt is closer to the body”, the same tendency is caught—a focus on yourself, your purely selfish needs: “For me, only what meets my interests is valuable. I don’t care about the problems of others”. A person withdraws from solving problems that go beyond his narrowly focused motives. Service as a moral motive of behavior is alien to him; there is no willingness to act in the name of moral, spiritual ideals. Conversely, the moral context inherent in the content of this proverb is realized through personal constructive reflection. Proverbs and sayings with their inherent allegorical, metaphorical content are reference points on the scale of morality: “Don’t do that, it’s bad”, “Don’t be like that”. They already have a potentially embedded mechanism of reflection as the turning of consciousness on itself: “What am I like?”, “What do I do to respect myself?”. The reflected value of the social lifestyle, the value of “being a person”, serves as a guide in behavior and promotes the integration of the individual in the community. Through proverbs and sayings, semantic formations of personality, moral ideals, and values are transmitted from generation to generation. Even at the early stages of personality development, during periods of adaptation to society through proverbs and sayings, oral folk art, thanks to their reflexive potential, the personality masters sociotypic supra-conscious patterns of behavior of the social space into which it grows. Folk wisdom, embedded in proverbs and sayings, translates samples of sanogenic thinking.

Translated from Greek, “sanos” means healing, and “genos”, occurring, bearing. That is, “sanogenic”, which means that it brings health improvement. Many proverbs and sayings contain accumulated sanogenic experience, which is passed down from generation to generation and is appropriated as a philosophy of everyday life, serving human life. For example: “You can’t wear out your face without shame, like dresses without a stain”—at least once in your life, every person is ashamed of their words, actions, or thoughts. The content of this proverb reduces the destructive power of shame and helps to maintain self-respect. “There is no luck for a shy wolf”—excessive shame interferes with business and generates fear of failure. Reflection, on the other hand, turns a person’s consciousness to pathogenic thinking as the cause of excessive shame and helps to

curb its restraining force. “Do not renounce your guilt, but do not renounce your duty”—admit your guilt, the proverb says, it is not called for experiencing and self-eating, but for awareness of your behavior, for the desire to change it. “There was guilt, yes it is forgiven”—the psychological stress from experiencing guilt is reduced if it is realized and the person is forgiven. Or: “I have rung—and out of the bell tower”—I have completed my task and do not interfere with others to perform their tasks. And in this case, it is said about the need to respect the activities of others, their right to independence. “In close quarters, but not in offense”, “People live in close quarters, but die in offense”—the content of these proverbs testifies to the danger to the life of resentment and calls for responsibility for other people, the desire to share their living space, their benefits, to be sensitive to someone else’s pain and need. “An evil offense is more bitter than wormwood”, “You can’t calm an offense with anger, you can’t extinguish a fire with oil”—it is unreasonable to try to survive an offense with the help of aggressive thoughts and behavior. The content of the proverbs calls for the development of the ability to manage your feelings.

“The child does not cry—the mother does not understand”—it is stupid to count on help, to be offended if you do not ask for it; someone who does not ask for help is unlikely to be helped. “Ask and they will give you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). The truths embedded both in folk literature and in the Bible are woven into a person’s consciousness from the beginning and become his worldview, serving his behavior, activity, life as a whole.

Briefly, the dynamics of the appropriation of folk wisdom by a person, enshrined in proverbs and sayings, can be represented as follows: Subjective experience gained as a result of observation, introspection, behavior, and activity with the help of reflection turns into the property of individual consciousness. Fixed in proverbs and sayings, it becomes a value for all the property of the people, ethnos, humanity. The fact of the appropriation of the experience of humanity by a person is the personal meaning revealed by reflection as meaning for oneself.

Subjective meaning, unlike meanings, is more changeable and only thanks to proverbs and sayings, the experience of individual consciousness becomes more stable. At the same time, it is impossible to teach subjective meaning, since it is formed in a separate individual through the accumulation of experience of interaction with the world, its comprehension, restructuring of the need-motivational sphere of personality.

The realities of the modern digital world indicate that folk wisdom has ceased to be a priority of values. Clip thinking and fragmentary perception of the world dehumanize a person, turning him into a digital entity that does not deserve respect, although “... a person’s unconditional respect for another person is an important evolutionary acquisition that ensures the successful existence of human communities” (Trufanova, 2021, p. 371).

Despite the fact that proverbs and sayings, thanks to their metaphorical, allegorical, and symbolism, contain a huge potential of humanity, in the modern realities of digital society they will not be able to become a means of transmitting the experience of moral existence from generation to generation without special training. The reflexive potential inherent in oral folk art can unfold thanks to a special constructive reflection, sanogenic in its orientation. If we assume that reflection is a process, then it can be mastered. Sanogenic reflection can be learned. A person who has mastered the process of reflection becomes able to look at himself as an object of cognition, describe the experience of perceiving himself, and change himself according to this description. In the opinion of Teilhard de Chardin,

... reflection is the ability acquired by consciousness to focus on oneself and master oneself as an object with its own

specific stability and its own specific meaning—the ability to no longer just know, but to know oneself; not just to know, but to know what you know. (1987, p. 136)

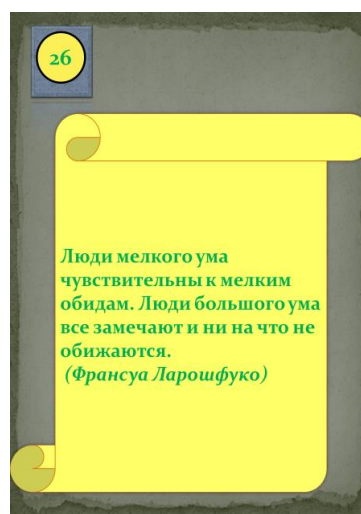
Reflecting adequately on the social context, a person is capable of self-development, self-education. The ability to recognize mental automatisms with the help of reflection that contribute to the formation of pathogenic attitudes helps to overcome the destructive power of pathogenic thinking, and then proverbs and sayings can really become not only a means of transmitting folk wisdom from generation to generation, but also the basis for the formation of a philosophy of everyday life of a person filled with moral meanings, providing the joy of being.

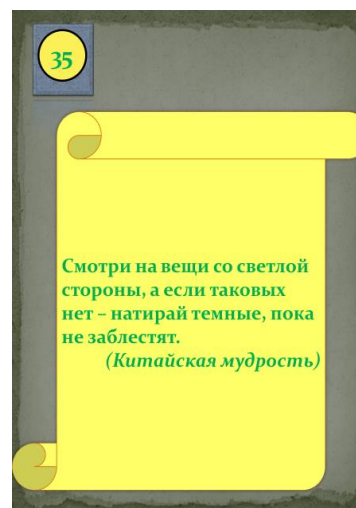
Yu. M. Orlov not only created the concept of sanogenic thinking, but also developed the technology of its development through sanogenic reflection (S. N. Morozyuk). Numerous studies carried out in the traditions of this scientific school have proved the validity of the ideas put forward by the authors about the positive impact of sanogenic thinking and sanogenic reflection on the success of a person in activity, effectiveness in the system of interpersonal interaction, emotional well-being (L. A. Kananchuk, Yu. N. Krainova, E. S. Kuznetsova, S. F. Marchukova, S. N. Morozyuk, Yu. V. Morozyuk, N. Yu. Pavlyuchenkova, A. L. Rudakov, T. O. Smoleva, et al.). The technology of development of sanogenic reflection and sanogenic thinking has been tested not only in scientific research, but also in practice.

This article presents one of the methods of this technology. The authors of this article have developed a transformational game of cognitive-emotive technology “Sanogenic Poker”. In August 2022, a certificate of deposit was issued to the authors of the game as an object of intellectual property.

The game is based on the idea of using folk wisdom for the development of sanogenic thinking, enshrined in proverbs, winged expressions, sayings of philosophers, scientists, writers. Carefully selected quotes, examples of pathogenic and sanogenic thoughts set out on the game cards allow the participants of the game to enter the reflexive field to observe their pathogenic attitudes, make them the subject of observation, and see the possibilities of going beyond their everyday philosophy, which brings suffering. A card with pathogenic content should be beaten with a card with the opposite content from the arsenal of proverbs, apt expressions.

For example,





At the end of the game, each participant writes a small reflective essay in which he fixes the most significant thoughts for himself, allowing him to change his attitude to the problem. The experience of using this game both in group work and in individual counseling has shown its effectiveness in the work of a psychologist aimed at overcoming personal problems of clients, developing their ability to be conscious.

Thanks to the playful form of interaction in the dyad “client-psychologist”, it was possible to use all the moral potential of folk wisdom embedded in proverbs and sayings, apt expressions, turn it into personal meanings, and direct it to the development of sanogenic thinking and the philosophy of everyday life that makes a person happy.

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