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THE USE OF PAREMIOLOGICAL UNITS AND THEIR CULTURAL FUNCTIONS

SamSIFL
Head of the Department of Korean Philology
(PhD), Acting Associate Professor
Bayankhanova Iroda Furkatovna

Abstract: This article is devoted to a comparative-typological study of paremiological units—proverbs, sayings, and idioms—in the Korean and Uzbek languages. The article analyzes the role of paremiology in reflecting the worldview, culture, and moral values of a nation. The research highlights the semantic similarities and linguocultural differences between Korean proverbs, shaped by Confucian traditions, and Uzbek proverbs, based on Islamic and humanitarian values. Furthermore, the paper discusses challenges in translating paremiological expressions, their classification, and their significance in the educational process, while offering practical recommendations for the creation of a Korean-Uzbek paremiological dictionary.

Keywords: paremiology, proverb, saying, idiom, comparative analysis, linguoculturology, Korean language.

This research provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of paremiological units—including proverbs, sayings, idioms, and phraseological expressions—within the Korean and Uzbek languages. Paremiology serves as a linguistic mirror reflecting a nation's centuries-old worldview, historical experience, and moral foundations. By examining over 100 units from both languages, this study explores how cultural traditions (such as Confucianism in Korea and Islamic/Central Asian values in Uzbekistan) shape linguistic expressions. The paper also addresses the complexities of translating these units and proposes methodological frameworks for a bilingual paremiological dictionary.

1. Introduction: The Essence of Paremiology as Cultural Heritage

Paremiology is a specialized branch of linguistics dedicated to the study of proverbs, adages, aphorisms, and other short-form oral folk traditions. These units are not merely linguistic ornaments; they are the "semantic concentration" of a people’s collective wisdom. As unique examples of oral folk art, paremiological units embody the worldview, life experiences, beliefs, and ethical principles developed over centuries.

In both Korean and Uzbek societies, these units serve as a bridge between oral traditions and written literature. They facilitate communication by providing a concise yet profound way to express complex social norms and national spirit. Whether used in casual conversation or formal literature, paremiology reflects the historical trajectory and the intellectual maturity of the nation.

2. The Role of Paremiological Units in Expressing National Identity

Every nation’s lifestyle, religious convictions, and social values are encapsulated within its proverbs. In the Uzbek context, proverbs like “Har kimning o‘z oshig‘i go‘zal” (Everyone finds their own love/path beautiful) or “Yaxshi otga bir qamchi” (A good horse needs only one whip) promote values such as wisdom, discretion, industriousness, and family loyalty.

Conversely, Korean paremiology is deeply rooted in social order and hierarchy. For instance, the proverb “윗물이 맑아야 아랫물이 맑다” (The lower stream is clear only if the upper stream is clear) illustrates the importance of leadership and the influence of elders or superiors. This reflects the pervasive influence of Confucian traditions, where respect for

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seniors and adherence to social roles are paramount. Thus, paremiological units act as a medium through which the "national soul" is transmitted across generations.

3. Comparative Semantic Analysis: Korean and Uzbek Parallels

A comparative analysis reveals that while Korean and Uzbek are linguistically distinct, they share profound similarities in how they conceptualize human struggle and virtue. Many proverbs in these languages are semantically equivalent, even if their lexical imagery differs.

In Korean, the expression "호랑이굴에 가야 호랑이 새끼를 잡는다" (To catch a tiger cub, one must enter the tiger's den) emphasizes that success requires risk and bravery.The Uzbek language expresses similar sentiments through proverbs like "Qo‘rqqan go‘sht yeyolmas" (The fearful person cannot eat meat) or "Er yigit o‘lim topar, lekin g‘am topmas" (A brave man may find death, but he shall not live in grief/dishonor). Despite the different metaphors (the tiger’s den vs. the consumption of meat), the underlying message remains the same: courage and resilience are essential for achieving one's goals.

The Korean proverb 고생 끝에 낙이 온다 (Pleasure comes after hardship) finds its echo in various Uzbek proverbs regarding patience (Sabr tagi - sariq oltin). This cross-cultural emphasis on enduring difficulty as a prerequisite for success highlights a shared human experience that transcends geographical boundaries.

Challenges in the Translation of Paremiological Units

Translating proverbs and idioms is widely considered one of the most difficult tasks in linguistics. Because these units are heavily metaphorical and culturally specific, a literal "word-for-word" translation often fails to convey the intended meaning and emotional impact.

The Metaphorical Gap. Paremiological units use specific cultural symbols. For example, a symbol of luck or danger in Korean culture might not hold the same weight in Uzbek culture.

The Problem: Literal translation results in "semantic loss."

The Solution: The translator must prioritize functional equivalence over formal equivalence. The goal is to find an expression in the target language that performs the same communicative and pedagogical function as the original.

Contextual Nuance. A translator must understand the socio-historical context of an idiom. In Korean, many idioms are derived from ancient stories or Hanja (Chinese characters), while Uzbek idioms often draw from agricultural life, Islamic teachings, or nomadic history. Bridging this gap requires deep ethnolinguistic knowledge.

Ethnolinguistic Foundations: Confucianism vs. Islamic Values

The linguistic differences between the two nations are most evident when examining their core philosophical foundations.

Korean Influence (Confucianism): Korean proverbs often emphasize "Insa" (etiquette), "Hyo" (filial piety), and "Ye" (propriety). The emphasis is on maintaining social harmony through the recognition of hierarchy.

Uzbek Influence (Islam and Central Asian Tradition): Uzbek proverbs frequently center on "Insoflilik" (fairness), "Halollik" (honesty), and "Mehmondo‘stlik" (hospitality). There is a strong focus on the moral character of the individual and their relationship with the community and the Creator.

A clear example of this is seen in the comparison of:

Korean: "가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다" (To hear kind words, one must speak kind words).

Uzbek: "Qush uyasida ko‘rganini qiladi" (A bird does what it sees in its nest) or "Yomon o‘rtoqdan yiroq yur" (Stay away from bad company).

Both focus on moral behavior, but the Korean version emphasizes the reciprocal nature of polite social interaction, while the Uzbek version focuses on the foundational role of the family and environment in shaping character.

To systematize the study, paremiological units in Korean and Uzbek can be classified into three distinct categories:

Total Equivalents: Units where both the meaning and the imagery are identical or nearly identical. Semantic Equivalents with Different Imagery: Units where the core message is the same, but the metaphors used are culture-specific (e.g., the "tiger's den" vs. "meat").

Unique Cultural Units: Expressions that exist only in one language and have no equivalent in the other due to specific historical or religious reasons. This classification is crucial for developing effective translation strategies and educational materials for language learners.

Pedagogical Significance in Modern Education. Studying paremiology is highly beneficial for students in Uzbekistan learning Korean, and vice versa. It facilitates: Intercultural Competence: Understanding how another culture thinks and values the world. Natural Language Acquisition: Moving beyond textbook grammar to sound more like a native speaker.

Critical Thinking: Analyzing the logic and metaphors of a foreign language.

Incorporating proverbs into the curriculum helps students master "contextual translation," allowing them to understand not just what is said, but what is meant.

Research Findings and Practical Proposals. As a result of this study, which analyzed over 100 units, several key innovations have been identified:

Methodological Foundations: We have established the basis for a "Korean-Uzbek Paremiological Dictionary."

Adaptation Strategies: We have developed strategies for translating universal Uzbek proverbs into Korean by aligning them with Korean cultural norms.

Practical Recommendations: Bilingual Dictionary: Create a comprehensive Korean-Uzbek paremiological dictionary to serve as a resource for translators and educators.

Interactive Teaching: Develop classroom methods where students compare proverbs to learn cultural nuances.

Thematic Research: Conduct further studies focusing on specific themes like "Religious Values," "Family," or "Labor" to show the cultural proximity of the two nations.

The comparative study of Korean and Uzbek paremiological units is a vital field at the intersection of philology, culturology, and translation studies. While the two languages belong to different families and historical spheres, their proverbs reveal a shared commitment to wisdom, justice, and the preservation of national identity. By studying these "pearls of wisdom," we not only enrich our linguistic knowledge but also strengthen the cultural ties between the Korean and Uzbek people.

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