

Names of Zero Suffixation in Russian Proverbs and Sayings

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Abstract: The problem statement is to study zero exponents' text-forming function in texts of different genres and styles. The object of the study is the usual names of zero suffixation in the Russian language and the features of their functioning in the works of small folklore genres – proverbs and sayings. The purpose of the paper is to identify the main word-formation types of names of zero suffixation presented in proverbs and sayings, to evaluate their role in organizing the literary space of utterances. Leading research methods are theoretical analysis of scientific and educational literature on the topic, method of continuous sampling, language, speech and text analysis, structural and semantic analysis of language material, comparative and statistical methods, and lesson observation. The article reveals the frequency of the use of certain word-formation types of names of zero suffixation (deverbal, denominal, adjective-based) in individual proverbs and sayings, points out the frequency of unprefixated names of zero suffixation, shows the features of compatibility of deverbatives, their place in the meaningful and rhythmic construction of proverbs and sayings. The figural and expressive properties of these formations are considered. The applied significance of the study and the possibility of using the results for linguodidactic purposes of teaching Russian as a native and as a foreign language are emphasized.

Keywords: Word Formation, Zero Suffixation, Text-Forming Function, Russian proverbs, Russian sayings.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the text-forming function of linguistic units suggests defining their role in creating a multidimensional holistic space of literature. As far as is known, the text's integrity is provided by its substantial and structural connectedness (coherence and cohesion, respectively). The works dealing with text analysis distinguish the main textual categories: informativeness, dividedness, intertextual links, continuum, autosemantic subtext text fragments, retrospection, prospection, modality, integration, and finishedness of the text. Coherence is considered as a property of the text, and cohesion – as a property of text elements (Alvermann, 2000; Efanova, 2013), the mechanisms of cohesion are as follows: reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalization, lexical isotopy, the use of connectors to establish a logical and temporal binding between utterances (Jobo, 2016; Galiullin *et al.*, 2014). “The formal cohesion of the text is achieved via various linguistic means: conjunctions, repetitions, substitute words, coordination of temporary and other forms, etc. The semantic unity of the text (coherence) is ensured by logical sequence and consistency of presentation, logical connections <...>, the use of stereotypical formulas denoting the beginning and the endings of the narrative, anaphoric

and cataphoric references to other parts” (Babenko, 2004; Husnutdinov *et al.*, 2016). When considering the features of functioning of linguistic units of different levels in the text, attention is drawn to the need to take into account “the entire totality of explicit and implicit components of the meaning of the text”, “diversity and “over-summariness” of semantic content”, constituents, features of intra-textual links, logical, associative, figurative, compositional structural, stylistic and rhythmic-forming means (Bignell, 2002; Galiullin *et al.*, 2014).

Studying the features of the functioning of the names of zero suffixation in works of different genres reveals their essential role in organizing the “continuum” of literary text at the formal and semantic levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a wide range of research and scientific resources to study the subject of this article. In this article, an attempt has been made to provide accurate analyses considering the views of different authors.

Koneva (2014) says: S.G. Ter-Minasova has underlined the importance of the language comparison: “We can clearly see a barrier between languages, but a barrier between cultures can only be seen when a native culture collides... with another, different, culture”. In the thirties and forties of the last century, there emerged an idea to look at the comparative

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method from a linguistic perspective. The following scientists contributed to its development: E.D. Polivanov, L.V. Sherba, S.I. Bernstein. Иванов¹ (2019) believes: In modern linguistics, more and more attention is paid to the study of recurrence as properties and as categories in relation to various units of language and speech. In this connection is especially relevant is the analysis of recurrence in its opposition to reproducibility on the material of superword units. The material for the research was about 1000 recurrent aphoristic unit's modern Russian language, recorded in phraseological and paremiological dictionaries, as well as those identified by the author as a result of observations of the speech of modern native speakers of the Russian language. As a result of the study, the recurrence concept was defined as a regular repeatability of the procedure for free generation of a phrase in stereotyped contexts, not as the repeatability of a word in its finished form in speech. It has been established that recurrent aphoristic phrases are not characterized by stability, do not have a figurative meaning (both general and individual components), cannot have nominative semantics. Recurrent phrases do not belong to "standards" and "stereotypes" of speech, which function in speech as "ready-made formulas" that manifest a stable nature of the relationship between their components. Recurrent phrases are a special kind of free phrases.

Tsirkunova, (2016): It is difficult to overvalue the role of mass media discourse in creating and changing individual worldviews. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". It is difficult to overvalue the role of metaphors in political mass media discourse, "[...] where the choice of metaphoric construals is determined by various factors, from purely decorative rhetoric to ideological stance". Murashova (2020) devoted to establishing the image of a country, in this case Russia, through the media, in which either a positive image of the country is created or negative characteristics are affirmed, she believes that Since today the media are one of the main resources by which the public learns about political events, images of the state and government are being formed. Through various channels of information transmission, representations, stereotypes, and myths about the state are broadcast; the combination of these factors makes up the country's image, which is represented in the media. Zheltukhina & others (2018), colleagues worked on images of Russia based on the media. The

main method used was the content analysis of a corpus of American, British, German, French and Spanish printed media texts during the period from 2000 to 2018, and Their result was that "The image of Russia in Western media is negative and is based on the perceptions, which were developed over the last century – the image of the enemy. Russia is characterized as a resurgent/revived Empire, regain its lost role of great power by all means. Russia is often described as a country that «aspires to be a great power», as an Empire (negative connotation), rather than as a great power/global power (positive connotations). The strengthening of Russia's role in the international arena is not denied. However, its foreign policy is characterized as aggressive, threatening for the international security and stability. It is also possible to conclude that there is a clear possibility for the growth of Western media criticism for Russia in the coming years. In addition, the problem here is not only in nominations and evaluations but also in real actions and real events that can be evaluated from different points of view. The consequence of all this is a rejection of Russia as an integral part of the «civilized world», as a state which is ready to share «universal values» as the Western society sees them".

METHODS

Social and political practice proves that Russia's attitude is dictated more by ideological than by pragmatic guidelines. Analysis of the material shows that a sharply negative attitude is formed to Russia and Russians in some newspapers. In the linguistic aspect, these newspapers use invective vocabulary. In general, they are characterized by creating an image of the occupier and the enemy in Russia. This attitude is in sync with the actions of Russia's enemies on a European and global scale. However, sociological research and mass media practice in modern Bulgaria indicate that in public space, the image of Russia remains close to Bulgarians(Avramova, 2020).

The main research methods include theoretical analysis of scientific and educational literature on the topic, continuous sampling method, language, speech and text analysis, structural and semantic analysis of language material, comparative and statistical methods, and lesson observation. Based on a theoretical analysis of the scientific literature on the topic, the main works related to the complex analysis of the literary text have been identified. The terminological and conceptual features of the study's metalanguage as an instrument of linguistic analysis have been

clarified. The continuous sampling method provided us with an opportunity to form an empirical research base and compile a voluminous file of language material on the topic (over 200 examples). Based on the method of language, speech, and text analysis, a description of the main word-formation types of names of zero suffixation found in proverbs and sayings is given, and the features of their functioning in speech are revealed. The text analysis allowed to prove the text-forming role of the formations of zero suffixation in works with a minimized proposition. The structural-semantic approach to the facts of language and speech deepens the idea of the unity of form and content at all levels of their representation (Gilazetdinova *et al.*, 2014; Husnutdinov *et al.*, 2016). the use of a comparative method made it possible to compare the functions of names of zero suffixation in different genres and styles (works of small folklore genres, poetic works of the beginning of the 20th-century works of modern prose). The statistical method's application has revealed the frequency of using formations of zero suffixation in russian proverbs and sayings, making it possible to identify repeated lexemes. The method of lesson observation (Dunbar, 2003; Efanova, 2013). contributed to the implementation of the applied aspect of the study, particularly the development of linguodidactic material on the topic for the formation of language, linguistic and linguocultural competences of students in the process of teaching russian as a native and foreign language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Russian language is also one of two official languages aboard the International Space Station – NASA astronauts who serve alongside Russian cosmonauts usually take Russian language courses. This practice goes back to the Apollo-Soyuz mission, which first flew in 1975. In March 2013, it was announced that Russian is now the second-most used language on the Internet after English. People use the Russian language on 5.9% of all websites, slightly ahead of German and far behind English (54.7%). Russian is used not only on 89.8% of .ru sites, but also on 88.7% of sites with the former Soviet Union domain .su. The websites of former Soviet Union nations also use high levels of Russian: 79.0% in Ukraine, 86.9% in Belarus, 84.0% in Kazakhstan, 79.6% in Uzbekistan, 75.9% in Kyrgyzstan and 81.8% in Tajikistan.

However, Russian is the sixth-most used language on the top 1,000 sites, behind English, Chinese, French, German, and Japanese (Gelbmann, 2013).

Proverbs are considered to be cultural heritage, circulating for centuries around the world. As such, they are bequeathed to us by the past generations. This paper aims at analyzing the peculiar features of some of the most prominent Russian and English proverbs available in the relevant linguistic literature. One of the main objectives of this work is to inspect whether the scrutinized proverbs in both languages have similar or different qualities. The study of zero exponents in the language involves a structural-semantic approach to the material under consideration and a functional one, particularly thinking of the features of the use of words in speech (Gilazetdinova *et al.*, 2014; Husnutdinov *et al.*, 2016).

As a rule, forms of zero suffixation attract the attention of scholars in their rare variant as an element of poetic idiosyncrasy. The role of familiar names in creating literary tropes or in the stylistic organization of a literary work remains out of the scientific view. Meanwhile, studying the features of functioning of the names of zero suffixation in the lyrics of the early 20th century, in the works of modern authors, allows us to expand and deepen our understanding of the word as “living multi-code hypertext” (Keaton, & Giles, 2016) and the text-forming potential of derivative words with zero word-forming elements.

“The problem of defining a proverb appears to be as old as man’s interest in them. Not only did such great minds as Aristotle and Plato occupy themselves with the question of what constitutes a proverb, but early Greek paleographers, in particular, wrestled with this seemingly insurmountable task as well”. (Mieder, 1993:4). The appeal to the functions of the names of zero suffixation in Russian proverbs and sayings is not accidental. Being a small folklore genre, proverbs and sayings are judgments that have an “everyday” plane of expression and a “philosophical” plane of content. They are the embodiment of a minimized situation, concise, concentrated in the structural plane, and ambiguous in the semantic one. The minimization of the situation is also characteristic of the semantics of zero suffixation names, particularly for deverbatives.

The names of zero suffixation are derivative formations with an implicit character of expression of a word-forming morpheme, the meaning of which includes a minimized situation. Deverbatives are used most often in literary texts, firstly, as the most productive group of similar formations (including historically formed action nouns derived from unprefixated verbs), secondly, along with other types of

names of zero suffixation, realizing word-formation potentials of the language (for example, occasional formations of zero suffixation in poetic texts of the beginning of the 20th century, described in detail in the scientific literature). The text-forming role of formations of zero suffixation can be traced to the example of the analysis of a number of works of different forms and genres. First of all, the names of zero suffixation serve as a means of organizing the literary space of small folklore genres.

Having highlighted the core grammatical markers in proverbs in English and Russian, the semantic features in both languages will be studied. As explained by Liddell and Scott (Liddell, 1940), "linguistic semantics is the study of meaning that is used for understanding human expression through language". The term originates from the Ancient Greek word *semantikos* - "related to meaning, significant". A key goal in linguistic semantics is discovering how meaning attaches to texts. In this case, it seeks to determine what proverbs mean. From the examples shown above, one can notice that proverbs are polysemous- they can have multiple meanings. Thus, the semantic markers that I wish to analyse will further highlight polysemy in proverbs, as they are frequently found in proverbs and are used to make them more vivid and memorable. The semantic markers of proverbs are comprised of stylistic devices such as metaphor, metonymy and personification, which contribute to their rhetorical efficiency. Bearing this in mind, one of the most frequent semantic features of proverbs is the usage of metaphorical techniques. To clarify, Deignan (2005) defines metaphor as a "word or expression that is used to talk about an entity or quality other than that referred to by its core, or most basic meaning". Its purpose is shifting the meaning of the sentence or proverb from literal to figurative. There are an abundance of both English and Russian proverbs that bear a figurative meaning. Some of them include "He говори́ гоп, пока́ не перепры́ гнешь" (lit. "Don't exclaim 'Up' has not yet made a jump") and the English variant of the proverb with the same connotation: "Don't count your chickens before they hatch". Obviously, it does not refer to actually counting the chicken before the hatched, but to not making any plans before one is certain that they will occur. Or if someone claims that "Хлеб всему́ голова́" in Russian, they do not mean that bread is actually the staff of life, but that it is inevitable for one's survival. The message that these proverbs convey should be interpreted in a figurative way.. In order to provide an answer to the rhetorical question "why so many

proverbs are metaphorical", Sackett (Sackett, 1964) highlights that metaphor makes proverbs more succinct, more concrete and more indirect. The importance of these proverbial features is explained by Bascom (1965): "Concreteness provides imagery and succinctness, both of which make proverbs easy to remember, while indirection pro- pounds a riddle which gives pleasure to the individual who solves it.". The grammatical markers of proverbs in English and Russian will be elaborated in the following paragraph. The linguistic frame in which a proverb operates is a sentence. The structure of the sentence is fixed and the smallest proverb consists of two elements, as in "Time flies" and the Russian variant "Время летит". One of the most noticeable grammatical marker in proverbs is that they demonstrate a temporal category which relates to an action which can occur anytime. This denotes that in proverbs the "past is always future and always ready to be present". The present is the most frequent grammatical tense. This is illustrated in the following English proverb examples: "A book holds a house of gold", "Honey catches more flies than vinegar" and "Opportunity seldom knocks twice". It can be also noticed in Russian proverbs: "Вода́ ка́мень то́чит", (lit. "Water cuts through stone") and a similar meaning with "Little strokes fell great oaks". "На во́реша́пка горит", (lit. "A thief's hat is burning"), conveying the message that "A guilty mind betrays itself" and "Плоха́я молва́ на кры́льях летит" (lit. "A bad rumor flies on wings"), denoting that bad news spread quickly. Another feature of proverbs is its traditional roots. Namely, in some proverbs, there is an occurrence of archaisms or archaic structures. This can be observed in proverbs of the following type: "Manners maketh man"; maketh being an old form of the verb make. In Russian, there is a similar change in the noun of the proverb: "Тяжё́лый молот дро́бит стекло, куёт булат", which can be translated into "The same hammer that shatters glass forges steel". The archaic form in this proverb is молот which means hammer. By doing this, the speakers distance themselves from being responsible of the claim and transcend it to the wisdom of the past. An immense number of proverbs in both English and Russian are of impersonal and neutral nature, usually in the present tense and in the third person singular, as in "Обже́гшись на молоко́, ду́ют на́ воду" (lit. "He who got burned by hot milk, blows on water"). For a high percentage of proverbs, an abstract subject is frequently used and this can be observed in, for instance "Truth never perishes" and the Russian version of the proverb "Правда в огне́ не горит и в

воде не тонет” (lit. The truth does not burn, nor does it sink”). Proverbs in their most usual form are comprised of a statement in two parts, or four smaller elements such as the following one in English: “Nothing venture/ nothing gain”, “Out of sight/ out of mind”, “Talk is cheap/ silence is golden”, “Same meat/ different gravy”. Likewise, this is demonstrated in Russian proverbs too: “То густо/ то пусто”, “Век живи́ / век учи́ съ”, “Говори меньше/ умнее будет”, “Какó в поп/ такó в и приход́ д”. The prevalence of this structure in English and Russian is evident, as well as among proverbs in various languages explained by Odlin (1986), who argues that “there is probably something akin to a law of natural selection which tends to promote the remembering of proverbs that have certain characteristics”.

SUMMARY

There is a general belief that proverbs are the smallest folklore genre, which is mediated verbally. However, they can be analysed as linguistic units as well. The usage of proverbs is multidimensional- they are utilised in everyday speech, slogans, literature, journalism and other forms of communication. By utilising proverbs in communication, we aim at strengthening our arguments, expressing general ideas, postulating generalisations about a certain idea and conveying a message. Thus Burke’s (1957) definition that “proverbs are strategies for dealing with situations” implies that some situations may eventuate to be alike or identical and consequently we assume that they can have alike or identical linguistic structures. Nonetheless, the task of analysing proverbs of different languages, which emerged in different times, across different regions and cultures, may sometimes seem challenging. For this reason, we have based this essay on the assumption that languages can have proverbs with a similar structure. To accomplish our objective and justify the proposed hypothesis, we intend to trace patterns of similarities and differences in English and Russian proverbs based on grammar, semantics, and the prevalence of phonic devices.

Observation of the features of the functioning of formations of zero suffixation in Russian proverbs and sayings fixed in the *Dictionary* by V. P. Zhukov (Kuznetsov, 2004; Quasthoff, 1978) allows us to note the following basic laws.

1) Proverbs and sayings present the majority of word-formation types of the indicated names, but

their frequency varies. Considering a conditional character of the classification, we note the predominance of nouns with the meaning of abstract action (*торг, гром, потеха, дума, звон, зов, суд, забота, работа, визг, спрос, беседа, крик, оборона, ответ, перевоз, полёт, похвала, проводы, расчёт, спрос, ссора, счёт, укор (укора), шум*) and abstract notion (*дело, слава, вкус, межа, грех, вина, воля, совет, разум, риск, добро, худо, жар, зависть, игра, мера, молва, ноша, нужда, обида, охота, посул, риск, слух, смех, сон*). To a lesser extent, there are the noarauns with the meaning of the result of action (*недосол, пересол, запас, недород, совет, уговор*), of single action (*удар, чох, поклон*), of state (*стыд, голод, тепло, покой, худо*), place (*село, брод, мель, поворот*), collective nouns (*голь, приход*), of object (*пряжа, помол, капля, навоз*), tool (*воз, хомут*), face (*вор, слуга, кума, раба, сват*), as well as the names of adjectives (*золотой, злой*) and adverbs, formed on the basis of the names of zero suffixation (*по выбору, за упокой*).

To determine the word-forming meaning with accuracy is sometimes impossible because the context allows for an ambiguous interpretation. For example, the syncretism of the semantics of a word is manifested in the proposition *Рыболова одна тоня кормит* (*A fisher is fed by fishery*). In the word *тоня*, the meanings of place are realized (compare: a tract of a reservoir specially equipped for fishing with the throw seine, as well as a part of the bank adjacent to this tract), of abstract action (fishing in such a tract), and of tool and result of the action (seine net with capture) after one throw) (see: (Isina, 2008).

- 2) A significant part of the names are formations from prefixless verbs. This is often observed in poetic texts (for example, in poems by A. Akhmatova). Structurally less complicated derivative words contribute more to the intrinsic motivation of the poetic text, in contrast to the objective motivation of structurally complicated words.
- 3) The greatest number of proverbs occurs with the words *дело* (*occupation*) (24), *добро* (*good*) (6), *труд* (*labor*) (4). The proverbs with other names of zero suffixation are much less. Etymologically, the word *дело* dates back to the Indo-European * dhē- (Maitra, 2017; Quasthoff, 1978) and is a

suffix derivative; however, a change in motivation led to the establishment of a verb correlation in formations of this type. In *Materials for the Dictionary of the Old Russian Language* by I. Sreznevsky, the meanings of the word *дело* are fixed, such as activity (opposite to inaction); action, deed; way, way; work, labor; feat; battle; dispute, competition; contest, power, energy; value, dignity; merit; pattern, likeness (Mugtasimova *et al.*, 2014; Apresyan, 2009; Fedyayeva, 2009). In proverbs, the meaning of the word *дело* is synonymous with the word *работа* (*work*), less often with the word *деяние* (*action*). Unlike the word *труд* (*labor*), the word *дело* (*occupation*) does not carry in itself the semantics of something heavy, requiring effort and patience. It is no accident that in the *Dictionary of Russian Idiomatics* by G. I. Kustova there is a difference in the compatibility of these words: *труд — адский, неустанный, нечеловеческий, а дело - необыкновенное, нешуточное* (Saifullina, 2009; Fedyayeva, 2009).

- 4) The names of zero suffixation are rarely derived from rhythmic inertia and rhyme (*Эта ворона нам не оборона, Каков поп, таков и приход, Без соли, без хлеба худая беседа, Пропап мех, а на батьку грех*).

In general, the study of the features of functioning of the names of zero suffixation in proverbs and sayings can be continued in comparing them with other small genres of verbal folklore – riddles, proverbial signs, nursery rhymes, and humorous sayings, counting-out rhymes, tongue twisters, games, and catchphrases.

One of the central paradoxes of proverbs is that they are usually recognized to epitomize common sense and simplicity. However, it seems that they are both complex and challenging to define. Although most people can provide many examples of proverbs, few of them can accurately describe what makes them proverbial in essence. Proverbs have challenged scholars for hundreds of years, and hundreds of different definitions have been improved. Thus, many linguists have devoted their profession to providing concise, informative, and evaluative insights into the nature of proverbs, their poetic, cognitive, and pragmatic aspects. (Grambo, 1972), (Kemper, 1981), (Lieber, 1984), (Rothstein, 1969). A proverb, according to Paczolay (1970), “is a short statement, having an evident or implied general meaning, related to a certain

type field of general human conditions, attitudes or actions” (p.742). They include “witty traditional expressions” (Abrahams, 1972, p.119), have “at least two words” (Dundes, 1975, p.970) and a “relatively fixed form which is or has been, in oral circulation” (Brunvand, 1986, p.74). Their importance lies in their continuity, as it is suggested below: “The vitality of proverbs—the constant emergence of new proverbs, together with their continual expression in new contexts—captures how folklore draws together our gravest concerns and our strongest commitments, our most precious values, and our wisest perspectives, at times even our coarsest humor and our basest beliefs, thereby structuring the world around us.” (Lau *et al.*, 2004, p.1)

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the nouns' text-forming function with empty suffixing in Russian proverbs and sayings has linguistic and applied lingua didactic meaning. Proverbs and sayings, including the formation of zero suffixation, reflect the characteristics of the people's ideas of morality and can serve as the basis for analytical and synthetic exercises of various types related to the reflection in the language and text of the specifics of the Russian national mentality.

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