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The role of proverbs in the improvement of students' foreign language communicative skills

The article focuses on the role of proverbs as the source of folk wisdom, means of expressing national character and culture specificity; and also peculiarities of their use at foreign language classes. In the research paper proverbs are presented as the language awareness product, which reflects people's historical life experience, traditions and culture; the analysis of essence, content and structure of proverbs has been done, characterizing their expressiveness and brevity, which enable to reveal specifics of people mentality, their mind and identity. Special attention is paid to the use of proverbs at foreign language classes for improvement of learners' intercultural and socio cultural knowledge; familiarizing them with the culture of the studied language; development of students' foreign language communicative skills and habits, that are important for their intercultural communication with native speakers of the studied foreign language. Examples of language and speech activities on the use of proverbs, directed to the enhancement of learners' communicative skills in different aspects of the language, the role of proverbs in the development of students' oral and written foreign language communication are given in the article.

Keywords: proverbs, national character, foreign language communicative competence, peculiarities, national wisdom, mentality, human experience, socio-cultural competence, linguistic awareness.

In the process of learning a foreign language in the context of the development of foreign language communicative competence students become acquainted with customs, traditions, peculiarities of the national character of the target language, which undoubtedly enrich them spiritually and provide to deeply understand the uniqueness of their culture. The great Czech educator Yan Amos Komensky believed that learning a foreign language should follow the path from the gradual gaining the essence of foreign language utterances to the appreciation of the beauty of words, expressions, the spiritual heritage of all language features; and further to the ability to penetrate into the aesthetic essence of the language, mastery a language treasure. Thus, the comprehension of the language should be not only pragmatic, but also spiritual [1]. K.D. Ushinsky, developing the ideas of Komensky, wrote that we need to learn not only speaking in a foreign language, but also explore the richness of the national culture of the target language [2].

The function of a language is not only transferring messages, but first and foremost is the transmission of what we report. There is a «space of meanings» fixed in the language knowledge about the world, about the national characteristics of a particular community speaking this language. Language picture of the world is formed as the set of knowledge about the world, reflected in vocabulary, grammar, phraseology [3].

National character is the elusive phenomenon of ethnicity. Culture, history, living conditions and activities of any nation form a certain psychological features, peculiar to this nation (ethnic group), perceived as one of its characteristics. These psychological traits relate to certain phenomena. For example, the degree of conscious regulation of emotions and feelings of each nation is different: some people are more reserved, others more emotional and direct in expressing their feelings and moods [4].

What is national character? Does it exist? Is it possible to generalize typical features in the scale of the whole, when people are different? It takes all sorts to make a world, says the English proverb. Should we believe that nation are those people from different varieties with their own individual features? The definition of the concept «national character» is very complex and contradictory. We consider the views of various authors regarding the concept of «national character».

N.A. Erofeev emphasizes sketch or image of another nation, calling it ethnic representation [5]. S.M. Harutyunyan defines the national character as a kind of national flavor of feelings and emotions, ways of thinking and actions under the influence of conditions of material life, the peculiarities of historical development of this nation and that is manifested in the specificity of their national culture [6]. N. Dzhangildin defines the national character as a combination of specific psychological features, that is the characteristic of the particular socio-ethnic community in the specific economic cultural and environmental conditions of its development [7].

For the revealing peculiarities of the national character of people of the country of the target language, particular interest and relevance represent proverbs, as they are the product of linguistic awareness of people, transmitted from generation to generation [8]. Proverbs reflect the rich historical experience of people, ideas associated with work, lifestyle and culture of people. Correct and appropriate use of proverbs gives speech a unique originality and special expressiveness. As noted by M. Sholokhov: «...in none of the forms of language folk creativity people's mind is described with such a power, its national history, social structure, everyday life, worldview are reflected so clearly as in proverbs» [9].

In the explanatory dictionary of S. I. Ozhegov a proverb is defined as a short folk saying with edifying contents, a popular saying. Longman Contemporary English Dictionary gives the following definition of the proverb: proverb is a short well-known statement that contains advice about life in general [10].

M.I. Dubrovin traces the conceptual content of the term «proverb» in the following structure [11] (Fig. 1).

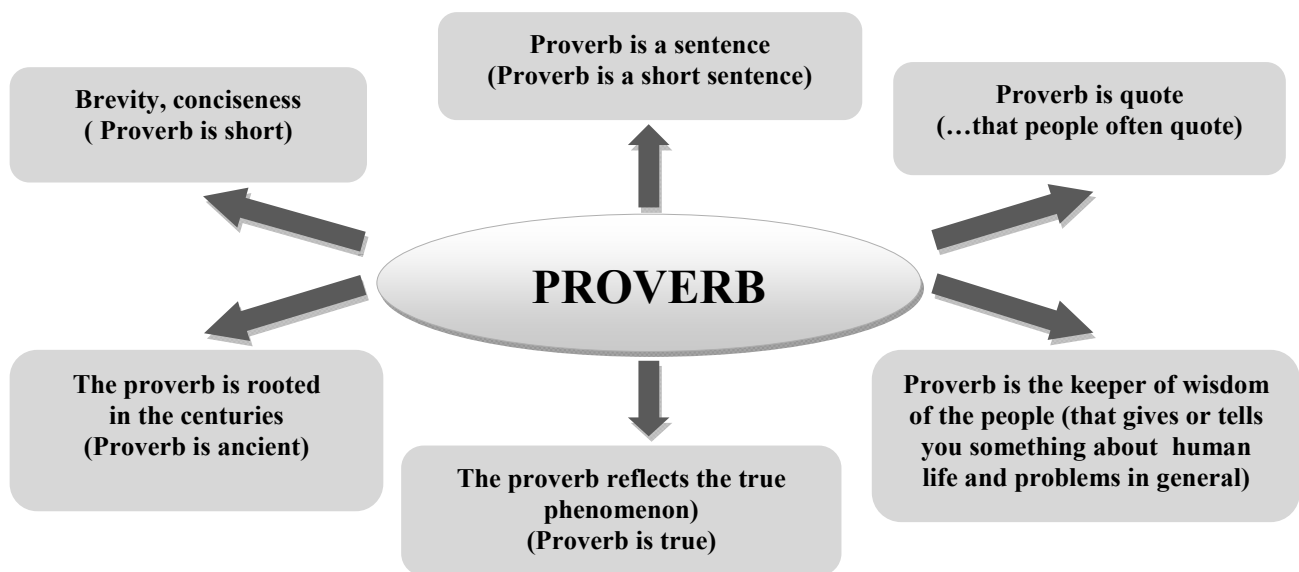


Figure 1. The conceptual content of the term «proverb» by M. I. Dubrovin

According to this scheme, proverbs are characterized by their conciseness and brevity, have their roots back centuries, reflect a true phenomenon and are the source of folk wisdom.

Such expressive means as an exact rhyme, ordinary form and brevity are peculiar to proverbs that made them memorable and necessary in speech. In such sayings people expressed a special characteristic of their people mindset, identity, spirit and character, a way of judgment, moral beliefs. The main purpose of proverbs is to give a national assessment of the phenomena of reality, expressing their worldview. Having studied proverbs and sayings of people it's much easier to understand the mindset and character of the nation, that is an important component of intercultural communication.

Proverbs as a whole cover a large part of the human experience. Due to the generalized nature of the structure of proverbs, they can be used at different stages of learning a foreign language, which in its turn will contribute to the development of foreign language communicative competence of students through the expansion of socio-cultural knowledge, enriching students' vocabulary.

Proverbs can be used in the process of learning different aspects of a foreign language. Let's consider using proverbs as a means of improving phonetic skills of the students. Students are offered proverbs and sayings for practicing difficult English sounds that are absent in the native language of pupils, that can be used as a phonetic training to improve auditory-phonetic and rhythmical-intonational skills. For instance, proverbs *Where is a will there is a way*, *When the cat is away, the mice will play*, *We do not know what is good until we have lost it are used for practicing mouth-labial sound [w]*; *Wealth is nothing without health*, *Birds of feather flock together*, *He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth* for testing the interdental sounds [ə], [ð]. Difficult sounds are pronounced first in isolation, then in words where this sound occurs in phrases and sentences. Both choral and individual work are conducted. Regular use of the proverbs in English language, selected according to phonetic principle gives a positive result in training and improvement of phonetic skills of students [12].

Teaching grammar, according to the communicative approach in foreign language teaching methodology is conducted on the functional and interactive basis, so proverbs can be widely used to practise and enhance a variety of grammatical forms and structures. So imperative mood takes a special place in foreign language communication, with its help one can express a wish, request, advice, permission, prohibition, warning. When fixing the grammatical material one can use the following proverbs: ***Make the best of a bad job, Hope for the best and prepare for the worst, Don't play with fire, Strike while the iron is good*** [13].

In the process of study and consolidation of imperative mood one can also use the following assignment.

- ❖ **Complete the proverbs with the verbs from the box. Then in pairs think about situations when we can use these proverbs.**

Put, say, make, go, fling, eat, don't burn, don't look, roll, give, don't teach, don't tell, spend, drink

1. _____ my log and I will roll yours.
2. _____ your trust in God, but keep your powder dry.
3. Never _____ die.
4. Never _____ your money before you have it.
5. _____ hay while the sun shines.
6. _____ to bed with the lamb and rise with the lark.
7. _____ credit where credit is due.
8. _____ dirt enough and some will stick.
9. _____ with pleasure, _____ with measure.
10. _____ teach fishes to swim.
11. _____ your bridges behind you.
12. _____ tales out of school.
13. _____ a gift horse in the mouth.

Proverbs can also be used effectively in the study of irregular verbs in English, as far as a brief, concise form of proverb and its content contributes to a better memorization of irregular verbs. So, in the given exercise students have to match not only proverbs, but also insert the missing verbs in the correct form:

- ❖ **Match two parts of the proverbs. Put the underlined verbs in the correct form. Give Russian equivalents to these proverbs.**

1. Old birds are not
2. Love is not
3. Soon learn
4. A word speak in the past
5. A tree is know
6. Well begin
7. If one claw is catch
8. The fox is not take
9. Nothing is lose
10. A break friendship may be soldered

- a) but will never be sound
- b) is half do
- c) twice in the same snare
- d) for asking
- e) by its fruit
- f) recalling
- g) soon forget
- h) to be catch with chaff
- i) find in the market
- j) the bird is lose

Thus, proverbs can be useful for illustrations of grammatical material at the stage of presentation, consolidation and automation.

Proverbs are also a means of improving communication skills of students, support various discussions and debates, the topic for writing essays and compositions. In the process of learning a foreign language on the basis of studied proverbs, social and cultural knowledge of students is improved. In the context of the problem one can use different game techniques and tasks of creative nature in order to develop the analytical and critical thinking skills of students.

The next task is focused on semantic understanding of proverbs, it also helps improve lexical knowledge and skills of students and can be used at intermediate and senior stages at school. Students choose the synonymical proverbs to given ones that are similar in meaning, then provide an explanation and give examples from own life.

Find the proverbs with similar ideas, explain them and give examples from your own life.

1. *Words cut more than swords.*
2. *When pigs fly.*
3. *A thing that is said is said, and forth it goes.*
4. *Do not look upon the vessels but upon that which it contains.*
5. *A good name is sooner lost than words.*
6. *Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.*

- a) The tongue is not steel, yet it cuts b) Never fry a fish till it's caught.
 c) Better the foot slip than the tongue trip. d) Appearances are deceptive.
 e) On the second Sunday of next week. f) It is easier to fall than to rise.

Proverbs have a great potential in improving all kinds of speech activity: they can be used at foreign language classes as a means of developing skills in oral speech and writing, in listening and reading.

In teaching oral language, it is recommended to use creative tasks that improve the cognitive activity of students, promote the abilities to express and defend their own point of view. Let's consider exercise that is used to develop skills of students in dialogical speech on the theme «Food, healthy food» at the secondary level of education.

Fill in the blanks with the suitable proverbs. Then in pairs make your own dialogue and tell the class, try to use proverbs in your speech.

- 1) *Tastes differ*
- 2) *Eat at pleasure, drink with measure*
- 3) *A hungry belly has no ears*
- 4) *Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise*
- 5) *Health is better than wealth*
- 6) *Live not to eat, but eat to live*

In the Restaurant

- What shall we have?
- The three-course meal, I suppose. I'm hungry as a wolf.
- I think I'll have green peas, fruit and a cup of tea without sugar.
- Are you on a diet?
- I have to be on a diet. I'm afraid of getting fat. I'm an actress starring at a local theatre. Our producer

likes to say:

'a) _____.'

- 'b) _____', of course. But I'm sure that a spicy roastbeef is much tastier than vegetables.

- Is it your keep-fit programme?
- Yes, it is. My motto is 'c) _____' and enjoy life as it is! You aren't a fitness fanatic, are you?
- I wouldn't say so. I only try to follow the doctor's advice.
- Which is?
- To walk as much as possible and take the stairs, not to eat bread and sweets.
- The recommendations are rather useful. But isn't it boring?
- If you are in perfectly good health, you can live well and have more pleasures of life. As they say:

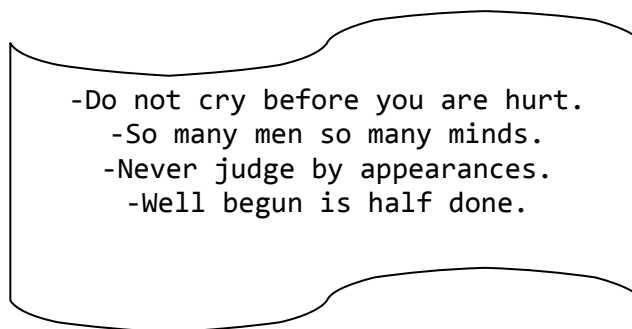
'd) _____'.

- You are right. But 'e) _____'. I'll start with fish in jelly, a bowl of cabbage soup then a beefsteak with mushrooms and fried potatoes and a cup of strong tea with a chocolate cake.

- How careless of you! 'f) _____'.

At the senior stage students' level of English increases, their speech becomes more fluent and accurate, and allows them not just to perform reproductive activities, but also express their attitude to the given utterance, to express agreement or disagreement. So one can use the following tasks:

❖ Give a piece of advice to your partner paraphrasing the proverb.



Proverbs can be used for developing situational dialogues and monologues at senior stage of learning.

❖ Illustrate the use of proverbs in any life situation. Tell the case of your life, confirming the correctness of proverb.

Students come up with the story, it can be home assignment or class activity, then they present their story, choose a suitable proverb. Other students agree or disagree, justifying their answers. Thus, students develop their skills to draw their own conclusions, generalize information.

At the senior level of foreign language teaching and learning process proverbs can become a meaningful support for further discussion. The teacher needs to engage students, motivate them for further discussion of the problem. So, for example, the topic *Relations –Friendship* is preceded by the following proverbs: *They are rich, who have true friends. When a friend asks there is no tomorrow.* Do you agree with these proverbs or not? Express your opinion. Then students can be divided into groups, the topic of discussion is the issue of friendship – who is he a real friend? At the end, speakers of each group express, defend their viewpoints, reasoning their opinion. In the course of such discussions a portrait of a true friend is demonstrated. As a home assignment for the aim of development of writing skills, students could be asked to write an essay about true friendship, using one of the proverbs as the theme of the work.

To improve the skills of pupils in listening, developing their analytical skills trainees are offered different situations for listening, which they analyse and give a critical assessment; then, for each situation, students choose the appropriate proverb in the sense of justifying their choice.

Listen to the following situations. Match the proverbs in the box with the appropriate situation.

Never too late to learn. Don't judge a book by its cover. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Situation 1

Mary had a big problem and she didn't know what to do about it. After she told the problem to her best friend, she felt much better.

Situation 2






A new girl came to our class. She was very weird. She often wore very dark and strange clothes. We all thought that she was very bossy and serious and she didn't want to talk to us. Later we found out that she actually was very polite and intelligent.

Situation 3

My uncle, who is 50 years old, decided to start learning again. He said that he had always wanted to study Spanish and he hadn't had any time to do that when he was younger.

In the process of using Proverbs and sayings at foreign language lessons vocabulary of students is enriched, their socio-cultural knowledge is improved; also favorable conditions are created for the development of their creative activity and increase the motivation to learn a foreign language.

The following exercise stimulates memory, develops the language of brilliance and creative, associative thinking of the students, since the visual support facilitates understanding of the illustrations in the picture. Students are dealt to the tableau with pictures. In accordance with their content, they need to find a suitable proverb, saying one's answer. This task can be used at the senior level of learning a foreign language. **Guess the proverb using the pictures.**

<i>Pictures</i>	<i>Proverbs</i>
	Time is money
	Like father, like son
	Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.
	Don't look a gift horse in the mouth
	East or West, home is best

In summary, we conclude that proverbs are essential and multi-functional methodological tool in teaching a foreign language. They are valuable training materials for improvement students' knowledge on such aspects of the language as grammar, vocabulary, phonetics. They play an important role in the intensification of the educational process as well. The use of proverbs in the process of learning a foreign language helps improve all types of speech activity, develops the imagination and creativity of students. Using proverbs in the classroom is beneficial, due to them favorable environment is created, the learning process becomes more enjoyable and interesting.

Moreover, proverbs contribute to the development of communicative skills of students, that are necessary for intercultural communication with native speakers of the studied foreign language and learning their culture. Thanks to proverbs, students become familiar with spiritual heritage, national character of representatives of the foreign culture, their way of thinking and expressing thoughts. Proverbs are a source of development of human values in a broad sense, as students become acquainted with the national values and characteristics of another culture, feel themselves as a part of the intercultural space, at the same time they preserve their own national identity. Systematic and purposeful use of proverbs in foreign language classroom greatly enhances the quality of teaching and learning process and promotes the formation of foreign language communicative competence of students.

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Шетел тілі сабақтарында мақалдарды қолдану

Мақалада мақалдардың рөлі халық даналығының көзі, ұлттық сипатты айқындау құралы және мәдениеттің өзгешелігі, сонымен қатар шетел тілі сабақтарында оларды қолдану ерекшеліктері ретінде қарастырылған. Мақалдар — ұлттың тарихи тәжірибесі, адамдардың тіршілігі және мәдениетін білдіретін тілдік сананың өнімі ретінде көрсетілген, сонымен қатар ерекше ұлтқа тән ақыл жаратылысы мен өзіндік ерекшелігін беруге мүмкіндік беретін мақалдардың мәнерлілігін және ықшамдылығын сипаттайтын олардың мазмұны мен құрылымына талдау жасалған. Шетел тілі сабақтарында білім алушылардың әлеуметтік-мәдени білімін тереңдету үшін, оқытылып жатқан шетел тіл иелерімен мәдениетаралық қатынасты жүзеге асыруға қажетті олардың шеттілдік коммуникативтік біліктері мен дағдыларын дамыту үшін мақалдардың қолданылуына ерекше көңіл бөлінген, олардың мәдениетіне жете ену, тілдің әр түрлі аспектілері бойынша оқушылардың біліктерін жүзеге асыруға бағытталған мақалдардың қолданылуымен тілдік және сөз жаттығуларының мысалдары келтірілген, сондай-ақ мақалдар ауызша және жазбаша тілдесімде оқушылардың біліктерін дамыту амалы ретінде қолданылған.

Кілт сөздер: мақалдар, ұлттық мінез, шеттілдік коммуникативтік құзырет, ерекшеліктер, халық даналығы, менталитет, адами тәжірибе, әлеуметтік-мәдени құзырет, тілдік сана.

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Использование пословиц на занятиях по иностранному языку

В статье рассмотрены роль пословиц как источников народной мудрости, средства выражения национального характера и своеобразия культуры, а также особенности их использования на занятиях по иностранному языку. Пословицы представлены как продукт языкового сознания, в котором отражен исторический опыт народа, быт и культура людей. Авторами проделан анализ содержания и структуры пословиц, характеризующий их выразительность и краткость, позволяющих передать особый, свойственный народу склад ума и самобытность. Особый акцент сделан на использовании пословиц на занятиях по английскому языку для расширения социокультурных знаний обучающихся, развития их иноязычных коммуникативных умений и навыков, необходимых для осуществления межкультурной коммуникации с носителями изучаемого иностранного языка, приобщения к их культуре. Приведены примеры языковых и речевых упражнений с использованием пословиц, ориентированных на совершенствование умений учащихся по различным аспектам языка, а также как средства развития умений учащихся в устной и письменной речи.

Ключевые слова: пословицы, национальный характер, иноязычная коммуникативная компетенция, особенности, народная мудрость, менталитет, человеческий опыт, социокультурная компетенция, лингвистическое сознание.

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