



PROVERBS AND SAYINGS AS A SPECIAL SUBSYSTEM OF
PHRASEOLOGY

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Annotation: *This article explores proverbs and sayings as a significant and autonomous subsystem within phraseology. It analyzes their linguistic features, cultural functions, and structural peculiarities. The study also highlights the importance of proverbs and sayings in language education, intercultural communication, and cognitive linguistics. Special attention is paid to their stability, figurative meaning, and role in expressing collective wisdom.*

Keywords: *phraseology, proverb, saying, idiom, figurative language, cultural linguistics, folk wisdom.*

Introduction: Phraseology is a branch of linguistics that studies fixed expressions, including idioms, collocations, and phrasal units. Among these, proverbs and sayings represent a distinct and culturally rich subsystem. They reflect the worldview, norms, and values of a speech community

Defining Proverbs and Sayings

Proverbs and sayings are integral components of phraseology, functioning as stable, commonly recognized expressions that convey meanings beyond the literal interpretation of their individual words. Though closely related, proverbs and sayings differ slightly in function and form.



A proverb is a concise, traditional statement that expresses a general truth, moral lesson, or piece of practical advice. It often employs metaphor, symbolism, or allegory to convey its message. Proverbs are typically complete sentences and are widely accepted within a culture. They are often used to summarize collective experiences or values in a memorable way. For example:

"Honesty is the best policy."

"You can't judge a book by its cover."

A saying, while similar to a proverb, is usually more colloquial and may lack the moral or advisory undertone that characterizes proverbs. Sayings often capture habitual expressions or common observations but are not necessarily meant to teach a lesson. For example:

"Easy come, easy go."

"Better late than never."

Both proverbs and sayings are characterized by:

Stability – their structure remains largely unchanged over time

Traditional usage – they are passed down through generations

Conciseness – they are brief and to the point

Figurative language – meanings often extend beyond the literal words

Despite their differences, proverbs and sayings are often grouped together because of their stylistic and functional similarities within language. Their significance lies not only in their linguistic properties but also in their cultural and philosophical content.

Structural Features:

These refer to how a text is organized and constructed — the form, arrangement, and grammatical elements. Key structural features include:

Syntax (sentence structure)

Paragraphing and text layout

Use of headings, bullet points, or lists

Text structure (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion)

Repetition, parallelism, or contrast



Tense, voice (active/passive), or aspect

Rhetorical structure (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution)

Example:

In a persuasive essay, the structural features might include an introduction with a thesis statement, body paragraphs with evidence, and a concluding paragraph.

Cultural and Communicative Roles

These expressions transmit cultural values and national mentalities. They serve as tools for persuasion, teaching, criticism, and social commentary. In many cultures, they are used to resolve conflicts or teach moral lessons.

Examples of Proverbs and Sayings

A stitch in time saves nine – emphasizes the importance of timely action.

Actions speak louder than words – stresses deeds over promises.

Don't count your chickens before they hatch – warns against premature optimism.

Where there's smoke, there's fire – suggests that rumors often have a basis in truth.

Proverbs in Language Teaching and Translation

Due to their idiomatic and metaphorical nature, proverbs are challenging for learners and translators. Yet they are valuable for deepening language skills and understanding cultural nuances.

Conclusion: Proverbs and sayings form an essential part of phraseology, offering insight into the culture and values of a linguistic community. Their unique structure and deep meaning make them indispensable for linguists, educators, and translators alike. Understanding this subsystem enriches both language competence and intercultural communication.

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