



The Linguocultural Peculiarities of the English Proverbs

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Abstract: *A proverb is a short sentence that people often quote, which gives advice or tells you something about life. This article describes about some linguocultural peculiarities of the English proverbs.*

Keywords: *a proverb, peculiarities of proverbs, counter proverbs, linguo-cultural peculiarities of proverbs.*

A proverb is a simple and insightful, traditional saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience. Proverbs are often metaphorical and use formulaic language. A proverbial phrase or a proverbial expression is a type of a conventional saying similar to proverbs and transmitted by oral tradition. The difference is that a proverb is a fixed expression, while a proverbial phrase permits alterations to fit the grammar of the context. Collectively, they form a genre of folklore. Some proverbs exist in more than one language because people borrow them from languages and cultures with which they are in contact. Proverbs are culture-loaded. They are regarded as one of the most ancient and valuable manifestations of human culture. They use succinct and pithy language to express commonly held ideas and beliefs and provide the readers with interesting glimpses at a people's geography, religion, history, social views and attitudes. Proverbs play an important role in delivering cultures of certain nation. Proverbs and sayings reflect cultural values widely accepted in the society and contain widely used and accepted evaluations of human behavior and actions or deeds in various situations and in different circumstances. Surrounding phenomena often become part of proverbs.

There is a longstanding debate among proverb scholars as to whether the cultural values of specific language communities are reflected (to varying degree) in their proverbs. Many claim that the proverbs of a particular culture reflect the values of that specific culture, at least to some degree. Many writers have asserted that the proverbs of their cultures reflect their culture and values. However, a number of scholars argue that such claims are not valid. They have used a variety of arguments. Grauberg argues that since many proverbs are so widely circulated they are reflections of broad human experience, not any one culture's unique viewpoint. Related to this line of argument, from a collection of 199 American proverbs, Jente showed that only 10 were coined in the USA, so that most of these proverbs would not reflect uniquely American values. Giving another line of reasoning that proverbs should not be trusted as a simplistic guide to cultural values, Mieder once observed proverbs come and go, that is, antiquated proverbs with messages and images we no longer relate to are dropped from our proverb repertoire, while new proverbs are created to reflect the mores and values of our time", so old proverbs still in circulation might reflect past values of a culture more than its current values. Also, within any language's proverb repertoire, there may be "counter

proverbs", proverbs that contradict each other on the surface. When examining such counter proverbs, it is difficult to discern an underlying cultural value. With so many barriers to a simple calculation of values directly from proverbs, some feel "one cannot draw conclusions about values of speakers simply from the texts of proverbs". Many outsiders have studied proverbs to discern and understand cultural values and world view of cultural communities. These outsider scholars are confident that they have gained insights into the local cultures by studying proverbs, but this is not universally accepted. A study of English proverbs created since 1900 showed in the 1960s a sudden and significant increase in proverbs that reflected more casual attitudes. Some scholars have adopted a cautious approach, acknowledging at least a genuine, though limited, link between cultural values and proverbs: "The cultural portrait painted by proverbs may be fragmented, contradictory, or otherwise at variance with reality... but must be regarded not as accurate renderings but rather as tantalizing shadows of the culture which spawned them." There is not yet agreement on the issue of whether, and how much, cultural values are reflected in a culture's proverbs.

Even though there are differences between cultures or backgrounds, some proverbs have similarities because different cultures may have similar ways of thinking. Especially when there is a relationship of ethnicity, more similarities are found in proverbs. Sometimes proverbs have completely opposite meanings depending on countries or the area. For example, there is an English proverb 'The Squeaky wheel gets the oil'. The idea of this proverb is that people who keep drawing attention to themselves are more likely to get attention. But on the other hand, there is a proverb 'The nail that sticks out gets hammered down' because in Japanese society, people who stand out are often hated, or disturbed.

Because humility or modesty is a virtue in Japan, their very similar proverb has a completely different meaning in comparison to the English version.

As there are countless languages in the world, proverbs are everywhere in the world. Most of them are straightforward and often show characteristics of nationality, so they can be utilized as a source of good educational material to learn about different cultures.

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