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Annotation: *Article presents a detailed overview of the state of the study of proverbs, which over the past three decades have become the object of not only ethnography and folklore, but also linguistics.*

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One of the most pressing problems of linguistic paremiology, posed by the Moscow paremiologist-orientalist G. L. Permyakov [48; 46], is the problem of the so-called paremiological minimum. The tempting idea of finding such a minimum from Russia quickly spread to Europe. Based on the material of the Czech language, it was instrumentalized by Fr. Cermak [84], based on German material by Peter Grzibek [87, etc.], Croatian by Peter Grzibek in collaboration with Danica Shkara and Zdenka Heiken [88], in English by Wolfgang Mieder [100] and Heather Haas [89]. There were also attempts to establish a paremiological minimum even for such exotic languages for the Slavs as Somali [91]. For us, Slavists, a valuable experience in taking into account the relative frequency of proverbs in modern use was the dictionary of Slavic proverbs by M. Yu. Kotova [28], the materials of which were verified by the author through direct surveys and questionnaires of informants.

The paremiological minimum is not only “living folklore”, but also that reserved part of the figurative and expressive national language fund, which should be recommended to foreigners who want to comprehend our mysterious Slavic soul. This is also the group of proverbs that should be disseminated as “reasonable, kind, eternal” in schools and university textbooks, and especially commented on in manuals on speech culture and cultural reference books.

The enthusiasm with which the idea of the paremiological minimum and its Russian version, developed by G. L. Permyakov, was met is quite explainable not only by the tempting prospects indicated above that they promised, but also by the general state of paremiology and paremiography in the late 60s - early 70s -ies of the last century in comparison with lexicological lexicography. Indeed, by the beginning of the 70s, the vocabulary of most European languages was statistically calculated, its core and periphery were measured in frequency both synchronically and diachronically, and many languages (Russian, German, English, French) already had several frequency lexical units. dictionaries of different types and volumes.

The proverbial and phraseological material of any of the European languages has not been measured even by an approximate frequency measure. And to this day we still do not have a single frequency phraseological or paremiological dictionary, which is why their corpuses quantitatively range from 300 to 50,000 phraseological units or paremias.



It is characteristic that even dictionaries with a quantitatively small volume of phraseological and paremiological material select far from the most common proverbs and therefore no longer pretend to be frequency dictionaries. That is why the idea of G.L. Permyakov found ardent adherents in many countries.

What did the experience of our domestic and foreign colleagues and our own experience give us?

Alas, despite all the heuristics and apparent promise of the “paremiological experiment,” it not only did not confirm, but rather refuted the very foundations of the idea of the paremiological minimum put forward by G. L. Permyakov. There is apparently no general minimum, a minimum “for all” speakers of a particular language. There is only a “zone of recognition” that defines a more or less conventional core of national paremiology. But this core also fluctuates in the linguistic consciousness of specific native speakers depending on the individual perception of the Word, its figurative and expressive potentials and personal speech experience. Regardless of social status and educational qualifications, people with a developed sense of words widely use proverbs and sayings, while people of a rational, rational character and thinking almost never use them. This conclusion can be drawn not only by analyzing the use of phrases and paremios by writers, poets or journalists, but also by observing the living speech of residents of our cities and villages, large and small societies. The use of proverbs is selective; it is regulated not by their general frequency in the language system, but by the individual preferences of speakers.

Having imposed the Russian paremiological minimum, compiled by L. G. Permyakov, on the vocabulary of most published dictionaries of Russian proverbs (especially those that were selected on the basis of classical and modern texts - [18; 80; 69]), one should note their striking inconsistency.

The paremiological minimum of L. G. Permyakova was subjected to a very reasoned critical analysis by E. E. Ivanov. In his report at the XI International Congress of MAPRYAL [22], he demonstrated the discrepancy between this minimum and the real, very commonly used blocks of Russian paremiology, reflected by modern dictionaries and paremiological collections. Thus, the paremiological minimum did not include such commonly used, “well-known” (in the terminology of L.G. Permyakov) proverbs such as “You don’t go to someone else’s monastery with your own rules”; Steam doesn't break bones; A raven will not peck out a crow's eye; According to Senka and the hat or Masha is good, but not ours. Following A. Krikman, E. E. Ivanov noted the quantitative and qualitative imbalance in the personal composition of informants comrade L. G. Permyakova and the territorial limitations of the experiment. That is why the Belarusian paremiologist proposed replacing the search for the “paremiological minimum” with the identification and scrupulous description of the “main paremiological fund” of the Slavic languages. The latter, in his opinion, can be identified on the basis of accurate calculations of fixations of one or another proverb in the relevant sources. The discussion of E. E. Ivanov’s report forced many participants to admit that his criticism of the paremiological minimum was generally fair, as well as the idea of the basic paremiological fund he proposed.

As a like-minded person of E. E. Ivanov, I was recently pleased with the advertising innovation of the St. Petersburg metro: 12 instructive proverbs were posted on the



billboards of most escalators. Correlating all of them with the paremiological minimum of G.L. Permyakov, i.e., with the 500 most common Russian paremias recommended by him for active use and lexicographic processing [46: 154-166], led to an amazing result: only one (!) of the 12 proverbs posted in the subway is included in this minimum. Namely, a proverb about the famous Russian Avos: Perhaps they will somehow lead to no good [46: 157].

Does this mean that all 12 proverbs posted in the subway are infrequent and relatively rush to the periphery of the Russian paremiological fund?

Yes and no.

Yes, - because all of them really do not belong to a number of proverbs, “legalized” by the majority of Russian paremiological collections, - that is, they do not correspond either to the criterion of frequency of use on the “minimum” scale of G.L. Permyakov, or to the alternative criterion of the paremiological “stock” » frequency proposed by E. E. Ivanov. No, because on the very first morning after they were posted on escalator billboards, read by millions of passengers, they became frequent and thus became candidates for inclusion in the minimum.

Thus, without denying the fundamental usefulness of the search for a paremiological minimum, it seems that its limitations should be taken into account. A proverb is a minimal literary text and as such, unlike such a structural unit of language as a word, it is perceived individually and selectively. There are no proverbs “for everyone,” since they are used according to individual taste, depending on linguistic competence and attitude towards the Word as an aesthetic category.

Interlingual comparison and historical and etymological analysis of Slavic proverbs.

One of the dominant features of the study and lexicographic description of proverbs is their interlingual comparison and the associated search for their original source. Already the biblical paremiological tradition and commentaries on the Old and New Testaments were associated with these two problems. In the era of flourishing interest in national cultural identity, this line of research into proverbs has become especially in demand. Starting with the collection of European paremiology of Erasmus of Rotterdam, interlingual comparison has become one of the lexicographical priorities. In Slavic paremiography it reached its apogee in the mid-19th century, fueled by the idea of Slavic reciprocity and close linguistic kinship. Monumental collections of proverbs Fr. Lad. Chelakovsky, V. Fleischgans, Iv. Franko and M.I. Mikhelson draw a line of comparison extremely consistently; in many others it acts, albeit sporadically, as a very significant aid for the explication of the material. In the already mentioned dictionary of M. Yu. Kotova, this kind of inter-Slavic comparison is made taking into account the experience of predecessors, but is based on modern empirical data.

Particularly popular and in demand in Slavia are such collections of Slavic proverbs that offer broad European parallels. And many pan-European collections of proverbs and sayings include Slavic material in varying proportions. I will not abuse the attention of the listeners by listing such collections of proverbs - their bibliography is given in the already mentioned monumental reference book by V. Mieder. I will now remember only two passionaries of this matter - the Bulgarian lexicographer S. I. Vlahov, who published a whole series of comparative dictionaries of proverbs, and the Hungarian paremiographer G.



Pacholay, who created a unique in its scale code of general European paremiology, where 55 languages are represented, including all Slavic, and even with equivalents in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese [108].

Such works provide enormous material for interlingual comparisons. In contrast to phraseology, there is not enough research on these topics. Here we, Slavists, should follow the experience of our Baltic colleagues, where paremiologists such as K. Grigas [86], E. Ya. Kokare [25] and their followers did a lot for the theoretical understanding of this problem.

Interlingual comparison, as well as a detailed study and description of dialectal proverbs of modern Slavic languages, can provide a lot for one of the most neglected problems in European paremiology - the historical and etymological analysis of proverbs based on strict linguistic methods.

If in phraseology certain successes have been achieved here, then in paremiology we are still content with folklore and ethnographic comments, which are often valuable only historical anecdotes at the level of folk etymology. We became convinced of this by developing historical and etymological comments to our collective school dictionary of Russian proverbs [80] and compiling a short historical and etymological dictionary of Russian proverbs in the series "Let's speak correctly!" [12]. Many of the paremiologists and phraseologists, of course, have already bitten the apple of this issue a little, analyzing this or that Slavic paremia diachronically. In the works of V. Eisman, B. Tatar, R. Eckert, J. Matešić, A. K. Birikh, I. G. Dobrodomov, H. Walter, A. Menac, J. Fink, E. Kržišnik, D. Mršević-Radovich, A. A. Ivchenko, I. V. Kuznetsova, L. I. Stepanova, E. K. Nikolaeva, E. V. Ganapolskaya and other Slavists, one can find very valuable deciphering of one or another paremiological riddle. However, we really lack a refined methodology for the linguistic analysis of Slavic proverbs in the diachronic aspect and, apparently, it will not appear soon - like modern historical and etymological dictionaries of such linguistic units.

But since it is impossible to grasp the immensity, we have to be content with those innovative paremiological sketches that can become mosaic stones of the future overall picture.

It is clear that, precisely because of the impossibility of covering the immensity, my article does not touch upon many other problems of our discipline that deserve both scientific consideration and fruitful discussion. I tried to pay special attention only to the 8 most "provocative" questions that the rapid development of linguistic paremiology posed to us. And the more different answers there are to them, the better for our ancient and young philological discipline.

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