



## THE ORIGIN OF PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

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### Abstract

The article is about proverbs, their origin and problems of defining proverbs and sayings. Proverbs and sayings, phraseology, neologisms, winged expressions and other means make speech more vivid, figurative, saturated and in this way stimulate communicative, cognitive and aesthetic motivation to master the language. Proverbs and proverbs are an element of folk art, which allows to concisely and figuratively express the folk wisdom, reflect the history and worldview of the people, their customs, traditions, habits and values.

**Keywords:** proverbs, their origin and problems of defining proverbs and sayings, phraseology, neologisms, winged expressions, an element of folk art.

### Introduction

Language is a world with its own structure, system of values, problems and experiences. Proverbs and sayings, phraseology, neologisms, winged expressions and other means make speech more vivid, figurative, saturated and in this way stimulate communicative, cognitive and aesthetic motivation to master the language. Proverbs and sayings are an element of folk art, which allows to concisely and figuratively express the folk wisdom, reflect the history and worldview of the people, their customs, traditions, habits and values. They contain common sense and humour, emotional expressiveness and the ability to express feelings and moods, national originality and the depth of culture of the people - the speakers of the language.

Proverbs and sayings give an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with the life and culture of people for whom the language is native, they convince us that different peoples can have similar views and moral values. The study of proverbs and sayings contributes to understanding the mentality and national character of the speakers of that language. Proverbs and sayings, as a whole, cover a large part of human experience.

There are hundreds of proverbs and sayings in the English language. They have been created by many generations of people, developed and improved over the centuries. The origin of proverbs and sayings was studied by both Russian and English linguistic scientists. The greatest contribution to the study of the theory of origin and classification of proverbs and sayings was made by Zhukov V.P., Kunin A.V., Sokolov Y.M., Sviridov L.F., Rybnikov M.A. Works of English and American linguists, among them Reidout R., Whitting K. Meader W., Taylor A. and others are devoted to the problems of studying English proverbs.



## **Problems in defining proverbs and sayings**

Proverbs and sayings are a widespread genre of folklore. Unknown time of origin of proverbs and sayings, but one thing is undeniable: both proverbs and sayings arose in antiquity, since then accompany the people throughout its history. The expressive means by which proverbs and proverbs become durable or memorable deserve attention. One such means is the exact or assonance rhyme:

**Little strokes fell great oaks** «от малых ударов валятся большие дубы»

A simple balanced form of proverbs and sayings is the most frequently used technique, e.g:

**More haste, less speed** «тише едешь – дальше будешь»

**Easy come, easy go** «пришло махом – ушло прахом»

**Like father, like son** «каков отец, таков и сын»

Shortness is an essential aspect of memorable sayings. Very few proverbs and sayings are verbose; most contain no more than five words.

**Better late than never** «лучше поздно, чем никогда»

**No pains, no gains** «без труда не вытащишь и рыбку из пруда»

There is as yet no universally accepted view of proverbs and sayings in language science. Most commonly, proverbs and sayings have been understood as "an apt figurative utterance (usually of a nominal nature) typifying a wide variety of phenomena in life and in the form of a complete sentence". A proverb expresses a complete judgement. A proverb is a short figurative expression, which differs from an adage in the incompleteness of the conclusion.

A similar definition can be found in all explanatory dictionaries, as well as in many special articles and studies. Proverbs are usually understood as "short sayings applied to various aspects of life, entered into the circulation of colloquial speech".

A proverb is always a sentence. It has a didactic purpose (to teach, warn, etc.).

Proverbs are often compound sentences. In context, the proverb acts as a stand-alone sentence or as part of a compound sentence.

In context, proverbs are semantically realised by being attached to variable sentences. Proverbs are often realised in a super-phrasal context.

The concept of proverbs in modern folklore is vague, including different structural and semantic types of stable figurative word combinations. Essentially, the only thing these different word combinations have in common is that they are not proverbs, although the proximity of both in some cases cannot be denied.

The English and American linguistic literature also does not make a clear distinction between proverb and proverb. This explains why the English dictionaries of proverbs also include expressions that are not proverbial in nature.

A caveat should be made that we do not include proverbs with literal meanings of all their components: all is well that ends well «все хорошо, что хорошо кончается»; appearances are deceptive «наружность обманчива»; better late than never «лучше поздно, чем никогда» and others. These proverbs are stable formations of a non-phraseological nature.



In some works on phraseology, the main difference between a proverb and a proverb is seen in the fact that a proverb expresses a general statement, while a proverb is a partial statement. According to these linguists, not only proverbs but also proverbs may be in the form of a complete sentence.

A proverb is a sustained sentence of the same structure as a proverb, but devoid of didactic content.

Proverbs are usually expressions such as:

**When pigs can fly.**

**The Dutch have taken Holland!**

**When two Sundays come together.**

**When hell freezes over.**

Proverbs and sayings should be considered those sayings which enjoy public popularity. It follows that these are usually old sayings, as they could not have become part of the public consciousness in a short period of time. Of course, there are exceptions, and some proverbs and sayings break into the popular consciousness with unusual rapidity, but we should exclude such one-day phrases as "I couldn't care less" or "What's the odds?".

Sometimes it is very difficult to distinguish a proverb from a saying, or to draw a clear line between these genres. A proverb borders on a proverb and if it has one word added to it or the word order is changed it becomes a proverb. In oral speech proverbs often become proverbs and proverbs become proverbs. As for content, English proverbs are very varied and cover all aspects of English life.

Proverbs are unflattering to the rich: one law for the rich, and another for the poor «для бедных один закон, а для богатых другой»; a thief passes for a gentleman when stealing has made him rich «вора называют джентльменом, когда он становится богатым» and others.

War is condemned: war is sweet to them that know it not «война приятна тем, кто ее не знает»; war is the sport of kings «война — забава для королей»; «война нужна королям, а не народу».

Fools are mocked: a fool's bolt is soon shot «у дурака деньги долго не держатся»; «дурак быстро упускает свои возможности»; fools grow without watering «дураки растут без поливки»; fools rush in where angels fear to tread; give a fool rope enough, and he will hang himself «дай дураку возможность, он и сам себя загубит»; he who is born a fool is never cured «дураком родился, дураком и помрет»; one fool makes many and etc.

Criticising lazy, slackers: idleness is the root of all evil «праздность — мать всех пороков»; if the devil find a man idle, he'll set him to work «если чёрту попадетя лодырь, он заставит его работать на себя».

Proverbs teach saving: a penny saved is a penny gained; take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.

It is said that without labour there is no fruit: he that will eat the kernel must crack the nut (или he who would eat the nut must first crack the shell); he that would eat the fruit must climb the tree; he who would catch fish must not mind getting wet; he who would search for pearls must dive below and so on. Among English proverbs there are some that are conservative in content and sometimes anti-popular. An example of a conservative proverb is the biblical proverb: **spare the rod and spoil the child**



«пожалеешь розгу, испортишь ребенка». Bourgeois morality is reflected in the proverb: **he that will steal an egg will steal an ox** «кто украл яйцо, может украсть и вола».

Proverbs and sayings are an integral part of any language. In contrast to a native speaker who easily uses many proverbs and sayings from childhood, the process of memorising them and using them correctly requires some effort from those who learn the language in question. Those who have a superficial knowledge of the proverbs and sayings used in the language find it difficult to listen to English, to translate English texts and to inadequately interpret them in discussions and conversations. The topic of this article is determined by the desire to help learners of English to avoid mistakes associated with incorrect or inaccurate translation and use of proverbs and sayings in speech.

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