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Representation of the Top Level "Nuclear Family" in the American Paroemiological Fund

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Abstract: Proverbs and sayings reflect different peoples' values and help to reconstruct the linguistic view of the world of a particular language. The study analyses how top level "nuclear family" and its terminal/slot 'parents and children' with sub-slots 'father and mother', 'children, son, daughter', 'brothers and sisters', 'grandchildren and grandparents', 'stepmother' are represented in the American paroemilogical fund. With the help of continuous sampling method 334 paroemiae were selected. The verification of the research was carried out on the basis of 15,000 proverbs and sayings. Sub-slots 'child/children' (65 units), 'parents: father, mother' (43 units), 'sister' (13 units), 'brother' (11 units) are domineering. 1-2 units belong to the sub-slots 'grandchildren and grandparents', 'stepmother'.

Key words: American paroemiological fund, top level, nuclear family, slots, sub-slots

INTRODUCTION

Under present conditions in the USA the institution of the family has been experiencing radical transformations connected, in our opinion with the loss of some moral and religious values. As far as we know there is an idea of introducing changes into family code and some other codes by substituting traditional names of husband and wife into spouse 1 and 2. Since, basic concepts of people's consciousness are reflected in the paroemiological fund of any language it makes it possible to get acquainted with its ideals and values through the analysis of its proverbs and sayings. Due to this consideration the study of the concept family in the American paroemiological view of the world may be of some interest for those who would like to find the sources of the abovementioned changes in American consciousness.

The present study continues the researcher's research on the concept of family done on the basis of the Finnish and Mari paroemiological consciousness and their comparative analysis (Yakovleva, 2013; Yakovleva and Kazyro, 2014; Yakovleva, *et al*., 2015a, b).

Objective of the study: The study aims at analysing the frame structure of the concept family reflected in the top level nuclear family.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As a research source A Dictionary of American Proverbs was used the most extensive collection of American paroemiae ever published in the USA (Mieder, 1996). The dictionary is based on actual field research which took American Dialect Society 40 years of collecting proverbs based on oral rather than written sources and being in common use in North America.

The research was carried out by many scholars under the direction of Margaret M. Bryant who in 1991 reached the age of ninety. Wolfgang Mieder, editor in chief, Stewart A. Kingsbury and Kelsie B. Harder, editors point out that many proverbs and sayings go back to classical, biblical, British, European and American literature. Some of them may be attributed to Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain and some other famous Americans.

A descriptive method, conceptual analysis and cognitive analysis were used in the research according to its objective. With the help of continuous sampling method 334 paroemiae were selected. The verification of the research was carried out on the basis of 15,000 proverbs and sayings given with their geographical distribution and variants presented in the above mentioned Dictionary.

The results of the research show that in the American paroemiological fund the frame structure of the concept 'family' is represented by the following top levels, slots and sub-slots: Top level nuclear family. Slot 1: parents and children; sub-slot 1: mother, father, sub-slot 2: children, son, daughter; sub-slot 3: brothers, sisters, sub-slot 4: grandchildren and grandparents. Top level patriarchal family. Slot 1: house, family, slot 2: separate relationships. Top level relatives by marriage. Slot 1: husband/wife, sub-slot 1: wife's destiny; sub-slot 2: bride; sub-slot 3: bachelor, slot 2: mother-in-law.

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The most important components, represented in the slots and sub-slots of top levels were found out with the help of statistical method.

In the study, the numbers of pages on which the proverbs may be found in the dictionary are given in the brackets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Peculiar features of the top level (Top level 'nuclear family')

Slot 1: parents and cildren (Sub-slot 1: mother, father): For the American consciousness, the most specific feature reflected in the top level 'nuclear family' is a crucial role of the mother in children's upbringing and development: The future of the child is the work of the mother (96). Children are what their mothers are (97). Men are what their mothers made them (402). Mothers make men (96). In American paroemiae it is emphasized that daughters and mothers have a lot in common: as is the mother, so is the daughter (96); like mother, like daughter (96). A young man choosing a future wife is advised to observe her mother: observe the mother and take the daughter (96). The image of the mother is undoubtedly meliorative: mother knows best (96). No mother has a homely child (96). Mother's love is best of all (96). If a child cuts his finger, it has cut his mother's heart (96). One should respect his/her mother as only silly people think little of their mothers: a foolish man despises his mother (405).

The most evident feature in the representation of the image of the father in this slot is its ambivalence. On the one hand, father is also a role-model for his children: like father, like son. As father as son. Such is the father such is the son (200). As mother and father, so is daughter and son (200). As the baker, so the buns; as the father, so the sons (201). Father knows best (201). No advice like a father's (201). What's good enough for father is good enough for me (201).

On the other hand, a friend may substitute both father and brother: A father's a treasure; a brother's a comfort; a friend is both (2000). If father is mean his son may be of the opposite character: A miserly father makes a prodigal son (200). It is emphasized in the proverbs that one should not lavish praises to his sons: when a father praises his son he flatters himself (201). It's a wise father who knows his own son/for his own children. It is not always the case when good fathers can raise good sons: many a good father has a bad son (201). Children are not responsible for their fathers' deeds: no man is responsible for his father (201). One cannot choose a father: you cannot choose your father but you choose your father's son (201). Being a father is quite a difficult role. To become a father is easy but to be a father is difficult (201). The authority of the father diminishes in the course of time: any fool knows more than his father (201). A thrifty father rarely has thrifty sons (201).

Mother's image is quite vividly opposed to the father's one in the American idiomatic view of the world. The father is the embodiment of being rational while the mother is the embodiment of being emotional: the father is the head but the mother is the heart (402). Men build houses; women build homes (402). It should be noted that home plays quite a different role in the life of the household: the home is the father's kingdom, the children's paradise, the mother's world (200). One can trace different views on each of the parents' role and functions based on gender differences in paroemiae: father works from sun to sun but mother's work is never done (402). Men must work and women must weep (402). The father to his desk, the mother to her dishes (200). The mother should be an economical housewife: mother knows best; father pays less (200). Woman's subordinate position to her husband is stated only in one paroemia, registered in Illinois and Wisconsin, dating back to the sixteenth century: it is a sad house where the hen crows louder than a cock (316).

On the whole, paroemiae representing parents' image are not numerous: 5 units from 334. Good parents determine their children's future: if the parents are good, the children will follow in their footsteps (449). Parents are patterns (449). Children's parents are their best protection: parents are God's most gifted ministers (449). Performing parents' duties is hard. The art of being a parent consists of sleeping when the baby isn't looking (449). As it is emphasized in the proverbs one cannot choose their parents: fate gives you parents; choice gives us friends (449). Children must respect parents: honor your father and your mother (201). Despise not your father when he is old (201).

Sub-slot 2 (children, son, daughter): As it is stated in the American paroemiae the son should follow his father's advice: a wise son hears his father's instruction (201). Sons may be different and so is parents' attitude to them: A wise son makes a glad father but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother (201). The son is advised to be careful while getting married: do not marry an heiress unless her father has been hanged (201). What concerns the daughter's image representation, the father is always of great opinion of her: any girl is beautiful in her father's eyes (201). Daughters should be obedient to their mothers: if you don't obey your mother, you will obey your stepmother (419). Housekeeping seems easy only at

first glance: everyone can keep house better than her mother until she tries (315). Excessive mother's activity can make her daughter harm: the daughter of a spry old woman makes a poor housekeeper (317).

The second group representing the concept "family" is introduced by the sub-slot children: 65 paroemias from 334. First of all children are the meaning and happiness of the family: children are love made visible (97). Children are the keys of paradise(970). Children: one is one, two is fun, three is a houseful (97). It takes children to make a happy home (97). The house without children is a cemetery (97). A babe in the house is a wellspring of pleasure (97). The proof of the home is in the nursery (304).

Opposite in content paroemiae make a characteristic feature of any proverbial view of the world which is confirmed by the American one. It is natural that children are the source of happiness and joy as well as they cause problems: when a child is little, it pulls at your apron strings. When it gets older, it pulls at your heart strings (96). How sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child (96). Little children, little troubles; big children, big troubles (97). Little children step on your toes; big children step on your heart (97). When your children are small they tread on your toes and that you don't mind but when they grow up they tread on your heart and then it hurts (97). Undutiful children make wretched parents (97). Children are to be seen and not heard (97).

There is quite a great number of paroemiae concerning child's upbringing and development. Consistency is one of the main principles: a child must learn to crawl before it can walk (95).

Child who has suffered from something starts being too precautious: A bitten child dreads a dog (95). A burned child dreads/avoids/is afraid of the fire(95). A burned child dreads the flames (95). A burned child won't go near the stove (95).

A child should be raised with love whatever happens: A child needs love the most when he deserves it the least (95). Childhood should be happy and carefree (96). There are four things every child needs. He needs an abundance of love, plenty of good nourishing food, lots of soap and water and after that some good healthy neglect (95). A child spirit is easily broken and difficult to heal (95).

The necessity of physical punishment is not denied in the American paroemiae: a child that won't hear will feel (95). A lot of a child's welfare can be done with a razor strap (95). For the most part the welfare of a child is achieved through belting. Spare the rod and spoil the child (96). Do not slap your children in the face, for the Lord prepared a better place (97). To spoil a child is to kill him/her (95).

Parents' pattern is an effective means of bringing up: The hardest job a child faces is that learning manners without seeing any (95). What a child does at home, it will do abroad (96). Being outside the home a child will imitate his actions at home. Teach children to behave at home and they will know how to behave everywhere else (96). A wise man has wise children (97). Train up a child in the right way; when he is old he will not depart from it (96). Train a child in the way he should go and walk there yourself once in a while (96). A man among children will be long a child; a child among men will soon be a man (95). Children can teach old folks (97).

The following principle being reflected in American paremiological consciousness is the link of education with life and work, the fullness of a child's life with his/her employment: even a child makes himself known by his doings (95). When children stand quiet, they have done some harm (97). A quiet child is plotting mischief or has done it (97). When children are doing nothing, they're doing mischief (97). Since, the evil spirits can not manage with everything, children were created. The devil could not be everywhere so he made children (97).

American paroemiae ironically note that people who do not have children better know the ways of bringing them up: he that has no children brings them up well (97). Old maids fancy nobody knows how to bring up children but them (97).

Rich families are rich in wealth and the poor-in kids: The rich get richer and the poor have children (97). Children are poor man's riches (97).

Children should be born at the proper time: Late children are early orphans (97). A child without parents is like a ship without a rudder (95).

Children can not keep family secrets, they hear too much: Little children have big ears (97). What children hear at home soon flies abroad (97). Being chatty is a serious drawback: a child learns to talk in about 2 years but it takes about 60 years for him to learn to keep his mouth shut (95). Teach a child to hold his tongue: he will learn fast enough to speak (95). Men are grown-up children: men are children of a larger growth (97).

Several paroemiae evidence a lack of fundamental differences between a child and a fool: never argue with a child or a fool (95). Children and fools have merry lives (96). Children and fools speak the truth (96).

Children require constant concern, attention, care, their needs can not be fully satisfied: children, chickens and women never have enough (97).

Sub-slot 3 (brothers and sisters): In American paroemias verbalization of the sub-slot sisters is often characterized by a lack of any friendly or cordial relations between

sisters. They are always rivals: a mother wants her daughter marry well but her sister does not want her married better than she is (419). Every mother wants to give her daughter in marriage successfully but her sister does not want her match to be better than her own one. If you want to keep your mister, do not introduce the baby sister (543).

In contrast to the image of sisters' the brothers's one has a pronounced ambivalent charactarisation. On the one hand, brothers are inseparable whole: brothers are hands and feet (72). Brothers should be lenient to each other: to a brother's virtues be kind; to his faults be a little blind (72). Brothers and sisters are linked by their blood ties: When you fight with a brother or sister, you are only hurting yourself because they are a part of you (72). Help your brother's boat across (72).

On the other hand, in American proverbs a brother is often opposed with a friend or a neighbor: a brother may not be a friend but a friend will always be a brother (72). We can live without a brother but not without a friend (72). It is difficult to reconcile the enmitting brothers: a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city (72). Between two brothers have two witnesses and a voting (72). Financial relations are superior to brotherhood: brotherly love for brotherly love but cheese for money (72).

Sub-slot 5 (grandchildren, grandparents): This sub-slot is not considered to be representative in the framing organization as it is verbalized only by two paroemiae. Grandchildren are viewed as good investment: grandchildren are the interest paid on the original investment (264). The opinion of the older generation can serve as a guide: what's good enough for grandfather is good enough for me (264).

Sub-slot 6 (stepmother): The image of a stepmother has an unambiguously negative connotation: there are as many good stepmothers as white ravens (563).

CONCLUSION

Thus in the top level of Nuclear Family in the American paremiological fund most clearly are represented the sub-slots child, children (65 units), parents: father, mother (43 units), sister (13 units), Brother (11 units). In small amounts the sub-slots; grandchildren, grandparents and stepmother (1-2 units) are represented.

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