

EXPRESSION OF SYNONYMIC RELATIONSHIPS IN TONGUE TWISTERS WITH THE CONCEPT PLANT

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Abstract

This article explores the expression of synonymic relationships in tongue twisters containing the conceptual domain plant. Tongue twisters, as a special type of paremiological unit, combine phonetic complexity with semantic density. The study focuses on how plant-related lexemes enter into synonymic relations, contributing to expressiveness, memorability, and linguistic play. Examples from English (with comparative references to other languages where relevant) illustrate how synonymy operates at lexical, contextual, and stylistic levels.

Keywords: Tongue twister, synonymy, plant concept, paremiology, lexical semantics, stylistics.

Introduction

A nation's language holds the same value as its motherland and country. Language is what unites people as a nation, binding individuals into a cohesive cultural identity. Every language carries the pearls of folk wisdom—proverbs and sayings that serve as sources of moral guidance, passed down through generations. These expressions are known in linguistics as paremiological units (paremias). They have long been a subject of academic interest because these wise sayings inspire individuals to cultivate qualities such as kindness, morality, diligence, honesty, justice, truthfulness, unity, patriotism, and love for one's country. The scientific study of paremias helps answer numerous important questions related to human life and society.

The study of paremias traces its roots back to the works of our ancestor Mahmud al-Kashgari.¹ Additionally, many great poets and scholars, including Yusuf Khass Hajib, Rabguzi, Yasawi, Atayi, Lutfi, Sakkaki, Alisher Navoi, Babur, Abulgazi Bahadur Khan, Turdi, Gulkhani, Munis, Sufi Allahyar, Nodira, and Muqimi, skillfully incorporated proverbs into their literary works.

In England, research on paremiological units dates back to the Middle English period (14th–16th centuries), during which book printing became widespread in English society².

Linguistics recognizes nearly 30 different types of paremiological units, including riddles, proverbs, aphorisms, phraseological expressions, parables, legends, superstitions, dream interpretations, anecdotes, and tongue twisters. The field of paremiology is dedicated to studying these units. Scholars consider paremiology an interdisciplinary branch of both literary studies and linguistics, making it a subject of philological research. Paremiology is a subfield of philology that examines paremias and their classification. Additionally, a specialized field called paremiography³ focuses on collecting, preserving, and processing paremiological materials.

¹ Кошғарий М. Девону луғотит турк. 3 томлик. 3-том. - Тошкент: Фан, 1960. – Б.168-169.

² Mieder V. Twisted Wisdom, Modern Anti Proverbs. – Vermont, 1998. – 396 p.

³ Уралова О.П. Инглиз ва ўзбек тилларида “оила” бош лексемали мақоллар семантикаси ва структураси. Филол. фанлари фалсафа д-ри... дисс. Самарқанд, 2021. – 144 б.



A **tongue twister** is a phrase that is designed to be difficult to articulate properly, and can be used as a type of spoken (or sung) word game. Additionally, they can be used as exercises to improve pronunciation and fluency. Some tongue twisters produce results that are humorous (or humorously vulgar) when they are mispronounced, while others simply rely on the confusion and mistakes of the speaker for their amusement value.

Tongue twisters are commonly defined as short texts designed to challenge articulation through complex phonetic patterns. While their phonetic function is evident, their **stability, traditionality, and cultural transmission** justify their consideration as paremiological units. This article aims to substantiate the classification of tongue twisters within paremiology and to analyze their linguistic and functional features from a scientific perspective.

Some tongue twisters rely on rapid alternation between similar but distinct phonemes (e.g., s [s] and sh [ʃ]), combining two different alternation patterns,[1] familiar constructs in loanwords, or other features[which?] of a spoken language in order to be difficult to articulate.[1] For example, the following sentence was said to be "the most difficult of common English-language tongue twisters" by William Poundstone.[2]

The seething sea ceaseth and thus the seething sea sufficeth us.

In our research, we analyzed tongue twisters by categorizing them into different classifications such as profession-related tongue twisters, tongue twisters associated with flora and fauna names, tongue twisters formed based on anthroponyms, toponyms, and hydronyms, as well as those based on colors and numeration. Additionally, in this part of the study, we focused on the paradigmatic relationships of tongue twisters.

In both Uzbek and English, tongue twisters often serve as a tool for practicing pronunciation by repeating words with similar sounds. Below, we present synonymous examples of tongue twisters in Uzbek and English:

In Uzbek: *Tulki tuqqanini toqqa tortdi. – Tulki o‘zining toqqa chiqqanini tortdi.*

In English: *She sells seashells by the seashore. – She sells sea products by the shore.*

Although antonyms were known to ancient scholars, this phenomenon remains among the least studied topics both theoretically and practically.

In Uzbek: *Tez-tez, tinch-tinch, to‘qmoq tortar. – Sekin-sekin, qattiq-qattiq, yumshoq tortar.*

In English: *A black bug bleeds black blood. – A white bug bleeds white blood.*

Tongue twisters also actively engage in homonymic relationships.

In Uzbek: *Qora qush qanot qirradi bilan qochdi.*

The word *qirradi* means “border” or “side”, but in this phrase, it refers to the edge of the wing, indicating the wing itself.

In English: *The bat bit the ball.*

The word *bat* generally denotes a yellowish creature or a nocturnal animal; however, in this context, we can observe that it is used to refer to a sports implement, specifically the equipment used in baseball.

Our analysis revealed the presence of paronymic relationships within tongue twisters. This, in turn, helps to enhance linguistic precision and to develop pronunciation skills.

In Uzbek: *O‘rikka borib, o‘rik ol, o‘rik olib, o‘rik sot.*

The word *o‘rik* holds different meanings depending on the context (referring to a fruit apricot and a location for action).



In English: *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.*

The words *pickled* and *peck* have similar pronunciation and rhythm but carry different meanings. It is essential to note that Eastern scholars, statesmen, predecessors, sages and religious leaders have historically distinguished themselves with wisdom and creativity compared to scholars of other nations. As a result, the so-called Eastern pearls — paremiological units — surpass those of other languages' lexical repertoires in terms of quantity, thematic diversity, semantic richness and variety. Today, one of the most significant tasks facing scholars and researchers is preserving and passing down these paremiological units while continuing to create new ones for future generations.

The analysis demonstrates that synonymic relationships in tongue twisters with the concept *plant* are not accidental but linguistically motivated. Synonymy enhances phonetic structure, semantic coherence, and stylistic expressiveness. Tongue twisters thus function not only as speech exercises but also as valuable material for studying lexical semantics and conceptual representation.

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