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TRANSFORMATIONAL FEATURES OF «CORONAVIRUS» ANTI-PROVERBS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Summary. Research *purpose* — to analyze the ways in which anti-proverbs in Russian were transformed during the COVID-19 pandemic; to reveal the mentality of people in Russia during the pandemic as reflected in these anti-proverbs. Research *object* — Russian anti-proverbs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research *methodology* — Word frequency statistics; comparative analysis; corpus analysis; literature analysis. Research *result* — 89 Russian anti-proverbs of pandemic were analyzed in terms of their ways of transformation, and it was found that 81 of them used substitution, 5 used associative extension, 2 used both ways, and 1 used homonymic mean. Word frequency statistics of thematic vocabulary were done for these anti-proverbs to obtain high frequency thematic vocabulary, and the results are as follows: *вирус (23), карантин (8), маска (7), чихать (7), ковид (5), лечиться (5), вакцина / прививочный (5), заразить (4), Ухань / китаец (4), пандемия (3), инфицированный (3), антисептик (3)*. **Conclusion.** By collating and analyzing the anti-proverbs that appeared in Russian during the pandemic, it was found that the transformation of anti-proverbs during the period included substitution, extension, and a combination of various methods. Meanwhile, high-frequency words such as *карантин, маска, чихать* etc. in the anti-proverbs reflected to a certain extent the living conditions of Russian people during the pandemic. The anti-proverbs themselves contained a wealth of content, including people's fear and disgust of the virus, their ambivalence toward home quarantine, their negative attitude toward the vaccine at the beginning of the epidemic, as well as their misunderstanding of Wuhan, China. At the same time, they took an active role in protection, washing their hands regularly, wearing masks, and keeping social distance, and gained inspiration for healthy living from the epidemic. **Value of research.** Theoretically, the study of Russian anti-proverbs during the pandemic period can effectively contribute to the development of linguistics as a new change in the language; practically, we can see from these anti-proverbs some characteristics of people's mentality during that period. In addition, the humorous feature of anti-proverbs can be used in the education of Russian language to enhance students' interest in learning Russian proverbs and thus help them memorize traditional proverbs.

Key words: COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian language, Russian anti-proverbs, ways of transforming anti-proverbs.

Problem statement. Language is the mirror of society. The changes and development of society will certainly be reflected in language. There are no fixed things in the world, and language is the same. Language is created and evolves with the development of society, only that it changes more slowly and is not noticed by all. One of the four great works of China «Dream of the Red Chamber» portrayed more than four hundred different characters, but in this work we cannot find words that are common nowadays due to the forward development of our language.

Social development is closely related to language. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, people have been experiencing a life that has never been seen before. We have had to deal with home quarantine, online education, loss of income and many other problems. The virus has affected all aspects of people's lives and reflected in the language. A number of new words and meanings have emerged in the Russian language in connection with the new pandemic, and the meaning of existing words is expanding. While struggling with the disease, people transformed traditional proverbs and

created many anti-proverbs to express their feelings. It is no coincidence that these anti-proverbs were generally humorous in character, and it can be seen that the Russian people were in need of such a sense of humor to help them through difficult times. The great changes in society have led to changes in the Russian language and, fundamentally, in the picture of the Russian language world. The study of this change in the Russian language world picture is also an important task for us Chinese researchers of the Russian language.

In 2021, the Institute of Linguistic Research, Russian Academy of Sciences published the dictionary «Словарь русского языка коронавирусной эпохи» (The Russian Dictionary of the Coronavirus Era), which compiles new words and meanings in the Russian language during the epidemic period, and at the end of the dictionary attached the work «Словарь русских ковидных антипословиц-карантинок» (The Dictionary of Russian Coronavirus Anti-proverbs-Quarantine), written by the famous proverbialists Walter H. (Вальтер Х.) and Mokienko V. M. (Мокиенко В. М.) [8, p. 483–487]. Most of the corpus for this study was obtained from the above-mentioned dictionaries, and some of the corpus was obtained by the author through YANDEX web resource. A total of 89 anti-proverbs from the epidemic period were collected. By analyzing these anti-proverbs, the ways of their transformation were classified.

Literature review. Anti-proverb is a relatively new linguistic concept. According to researchers, the term was used frequently in proverbological studies only in 2005. «Антипословица» was derived from the German word (Antispruchwort), created by the famous modern proverbialist W. Mieder, who considered the anti-proverb as twisted wisdom. (DE. verdrehte Weisheiten) [2, p. 8].

Recently, Russian anti-proverb research has drawn more interest in the field of linguistics. In 2005, Russian proverbialists Walter H. (Вальтер Х.) and Mokienko V. M. (Мокиенко В. М.) wrote the first Russian dictionary of anti-proverbs «Антипословицы русского народа» [2], which covered almost all anti-proverbs in the Russian language of the period. Ivanov E. E. (Иванов Е. Е.) and Borovaya I. I. (Боровая И. И.) (2009) summarized the previous studies on the types of Russian anti-proverbs and proposed his own classification standards [4]; Butko Yu. V. (Бутко Ю. В.) (2009) researched Russian anti-proverbs from a perspective of linguistic culturology and considered them as a manifestation of the dynamics of the language world picture; Abakumova O. (Абакумова О.) (2012) viewed anti-proverb as a linguistic game and summarized four ways of its transformation by analyzing some anti-proverbs [1]; Khanmurzaeva D. M. (Ханмурзаева Д. М.) (2015) concluded the social reasons for the emergence of anti-proverb and its role in modern linguistic and cultural life [11]; Walter H. (Вальтер Х.) and Mokienko V. M. (Мокиенко В. М.) (2021) researched Russian anti-proverbs that appeared during the COVID-19 pandemic [8, p. 483–487] from the perspective of axiological space, suggesting that we need to investigate the linguistic results of this worldwide challenge, so that perhaps this pandemic will sooner leave humanity and remain only in the linguistic history of the world. In China, the research on Russian anti-proverbs is currently available only in two works by Professor Liu Guangzhun (2001, 2003) [12]. Instead of directly using the linguistic term *Антипословица*, the researcher compared this phenomenon with the imitation of Chinese proverbs, generalized its ways of transformation, and at the same time explored the dynamism and openness of Russian language in discourse practice. It is worth pointing out that there is no existing domestic research on Russian anti-proverbs that emerged during the epidemic period. It can be said that there is still a lot of space for the exploration of Russian anti-proverbs by domestic researchers.

Task statement. The main tasks of this study are as follows: 1) To analyze the ways of transformation of Russian anti-proverbs that appeared during the pandemic period; 2) To explore the features of the people's living conditions and mentality in that period as reflected by these anti-proverbs.

Thesis statement. In the Russian encyclopedic dictionary of linguistics, an anti-proverb (*антипословица*) is defined as a short sentence (usually with humor) that is a variant of a common and well-known proverb (by substituting one or more components of the original proverb or by combining components of different proverbs, etc.) [5, p. 26]. H. Walter and V. M. Mokienko defined anti-proverb as follow: *изречение, представляющее собой результат языковой игры с фразеологической единицей, пословицей, поговоркой или афоризмом; переделку известного изречения или выражения, «подчёркнуто иронического их «выворачивания наизнанку»* [2, p. 4].

In the following, we will analyze the collected 89 anti-proverbs and group them into their modes of transformation.

1. **Substitution.** Substitution is a very popular approach to antiproverbs in Russian, usually by replacing single or multiple linguistic elements without changing the syntactic structure of the original proverb. Following an analysis of the collected antiproverbs, it was found that the vast majority of proverb variants during the pandemic were formed by substitution, with the following examples:

(1) **Substitution of a single linguistic unit:**

① AP: *Вот тебе, бабушка, и коронавирусный день. (Damn it! Here comes the coronavirus day).*

OP: *Вот тебе, бабушка, и Юрьев день! (Damn it! It's Uri's Day again).* Here it means that bad luck is coming. *Юрьев день* is a term used in Russian for an unlucky day, a day of sadness or despair when something does not come true. Here, the term *коронавирусный день* is used instead of *Юрьев день*, in fact, both want to express the unfortunate life.

② AP: *Самоизоляцию пережить — не поле перейти* (Spending a home quarantine is not walking across a field).

OP: *Жизнь пережить — не поле перейти* (Spending a lifetime is not walking through a field). Actually, it means that there is no straight path in life, and here it means that quarantine at home is not an easy task.

(2) **Substitution of multiple linguistic units:**

③ AP: *Плох тот вирус, который не хочет выбиться в люди* (A virus that doesn't want to get ahead is not a good virus).

OP: *Плох тот солдат, который не хочет стать генералом* (A soldier who does not want to be a general is not a good soldier). The original proverb was intended to encourage people who stop moving forward after making progress. In this group of proverbs, it is clear that more than one linguistic unit has been replaced.

④ AP: *Одна голова — хорошо, а две — не менее полутора метров друг от друга* (One head is good, while two heads would have to be separated from each other by 1.5 meters).

OP: *Одна голова хорошо, а две лучше.* (This is what we call «two heads are better than one»). The first half of the original and the variant are the same, but the second half is completely different.

2. **Associative extension.** Associative extension refers to the addition of new linguistic units to the structure of the original proverbs, thus making the semantics of the variant more concrete. The following are some of the proverbs that have been transformed in this way.

⑤ AP: *Кто рано встаёт, тому Бог пропуск даёт.* (God gives a pass to the early risers).

OP: *Кто рано встаёт, тому Бог даёт* (That's what we call «The early bird catches the worm»). The word «*пропуск*» is similar to the health code of the pass. The variant extends the original by adding the word «*пропуск*» to the verb «*дать*», thus making the semantic meaning of the variant more concrete.

⑥ AP: *Семь пятниц на неделе, когда работаешь из дома* (When you work at home, things can be changeable).

OP: *Семь пятниц на неделе* (There are five Fridays in a week). It is worth pointing out that the meaning of «five Fridays a week» actually means capriciousness, constant change of mind. Obviously, this meaning is also reflected in the variants. The variant adds a restriction to the original, referring specifically to the fact that there are many changes when working at home, which may refer to some policies or measures, etc.

⑦ AP: *Обещанной вакцины три года ждут* (All the vaccines that are promised now still have to wait for three years).

OP: *Обещанного три года ждут.* (All the things that were promised have to wait for three more years). This is also what we call «pay lip service». The variant expands the word «*вакцина*» on the basis of the original, so that «*обещанный*» has a specific central word, thus achieving semantic concreteness.

The above substitution and extension are the two most common ways of forming anti-proverbs, however, there are cases that cannot be clearly classified into the above two ways in the process of actual analysis. For example: *В магазин поспешишь — людей заразишь* (Going to the supermarket in a hurry will be infected). (OP: *Поспешишь — людей насмешишь*. Rushing around makes people laugh. That is, «More haste, less speed»). By analysis, we can see that there is a substitution between the original and the variant «*насмешишь*» and «*заразишь*», as well as an expansion of the component «*В магазин*». So the way of its formation should be «substitution + extension»; similarly, there is also *Вирус вирусу глаз не выключет, но генами обменяется. Не выключет.* (OP: *Ворон ворону глаз не выключет*). Besides that, *Уже коронавирус на пороге, а ВОЗ и ныне там.* (The new coronavirus is at the doorstep and still the WHO does nothing). (OP: *Воз и ныне там*. The car is still in place. It refers to the fact that things are not progressing.) Here the extension is used in an obvious way, but we cannot see *ВОЗ* (*Всемирная организация здравоохранения*) and *Воз* as a simple substitution, here this language game of using homonyms (*омонимия*) should also be classified as a new way of anti-proverbial formation.

What is worth mentioning is that, on the one hand, some anti-proverbs have more than one original proverb, and we cannot even be sure which one is the original proverb, e.g.: *Лучше уж зум-зоны, чем цифровые концлагеря.* ← *Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе; Лучшее ложь сказать, нежели правду открыть.*

Не имей сто рублей, а имей антисептик. ← *Не имей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей; Не держи сто рублей, держи сто друзей; Не ищи сто рублей, а ищи сто друзей.*

On the other hand, some proverbs have transformed into more than one anti-proverb, e.g.: *У семи нянек дитя без глазу (без глаза) → У семи чиновников вирус без присмотра; У семи докторов пациент без маски.*

Мал золотник, да дорог. → *Мал вирус, да вреден; Мал санитаризер, да дорог.*

Proverbs are collectively created by folk, widely circulated, concise and more qualitative artistic statements, and a regular summary of the rich wisdom and universal experience of the people. When large changes occur in society, people express their feelings in language, and anti-proverbs are a reflection of this. As a result, it is appropriate for us to think of the anti-proverbs that emerged in Russian

folklore during the epidemic to grasp the attitude of the Russian people. Naturally, it should be mentioned that the views expressed here are merely those of the majority of individuals, not all of them.

A word frequency count of the 89 collected proverb variants yielded the following results (the numbers in brackets are the number of occurrences): *вирус* (23), *карантин* (8), *маска* (7), *чихать* (7), *ковид* (5), *лечиться* (5), *вакцина / прививочный* (5), *заразить* (4), *Ухань / китаец* (4), *пандемия* (3), *инфицированный* (3), *антисептик* (3). The above results reflect to some extent the living conditions of the Russian people during the pandemic, where «home quarantine», «keeping a distance», «wearing a mask», «showing *пропуск*» and «online classes» should be a regular sight.

If we look not at the word frequency but the specific content of these proverb variants themselves, we can generally divide the features of the people's mentality shown in these variants into the following parts:

● Attitude toward the virus

In addition to our above example ①, there is also: *Мал вирус, да вреден* (= The virus is small but harmful); *После коронавируса в четверг* (Far away and not within the foreseeable future, here it should refer to the new coronavirus). *Вирус — не воробей, вылетит — не поймаешь* (The virus is not a sparrow, it flies out and can't be caught), etc. From these variants it is possible to see that the Russian people loathe and fear the new crown virus, see it as an unfortunate and unlucky phenomenon, and express their helplessness at its rapid and uncontrollable spread.

● Attitude toward some anti-epidemic initiatives

The attitude of the Russian people towards different initiatives is very different and can be somewhat contradictory. Here the initiatives include wearing masks, keeping personal social distance, home quarantine. From the proverbial variant *По маске встречают, по температуре провожают* (Welcome guests by masks, send guests by body temperature); *Своя маска ближе к телу* (Own masks are more fitting); *Лучше синица в руках, чем за курицей без маски в магазин* (It is better to go to the supermarket without a mask to buy chicken than to grasp the poultry in your hands); *Дружба дружбой, а полтора метра врозь* (Friendship is friendship, but still have to maintain a distance of 1.5 meters). As well as the above example ④, it is clear that the variants about mask and *полтора метра* (1.5m) reflect a more positive attitude. But *Не все дома — это не оскорбление, это статья УК РФ в условиях карантина* (The regulations on quarantine in Russian criminal law are a bit silly, it's not an insult); *Больной лечится, а самоизолированный бесится* (The patient is being treated, while the quarantined person is going crazy); *С инфицированными жить — в карантине вить* (And the infected person lives, wailing in quarantine). As well as examples ② and ⑥ above, these variants again show a more negative attitude, indicating the existence of a certain number of Russian people who are not satisfied with the initiative of home isolation, which makes them irritable and believe that there is no end to home quarantine. These variants of negative attitudes towards quarantine make up the majority of the collected anti-proverbs, but there is also a small number of people who accept or praise the initiative, such as *Конец на карантине не меняют; Где родился — там и сиди на карантине*.

● Attitude toward the vaccine for the virus

The Russian people are looking forward to the vaccine, but they think it is a long way off. There are three anti-proverbs about *Вакцина* (vaccine) and they reflect the same attitude. *Не хвались вакциной в пустой избе* (Don't brag about the vaccine in an empty hut); *Вакцина — дура, карантин — молодец* (Vaccines are fools, quarantine is the right way). They do not believe that a vaccine will be created in a short period of time and consider the so-called «vaccine deadline» to be empty talk, as well as in the above example ⑦. Certainly, this should be the mentality at the beginning of the outbreak, but now that the vaccine is available, the mentality of the people will change.

● The inspiration of healthy living

The sudden arrival of the epidemic made all people appreciate the preciousness and pricelessness of health, such as: *Кто не курит и не пьёт, от короны не помрёт* (People who do not smoke and do not drink do not die from the new crown epidemic); *Кто рано встаёт, тому Бог пропуск даёт* (God will give a pass to the early risers), etc. It can be said that it was the pandemic that made people begin to look at their former lives and appreciate the present one more.

● Misconception about Wuhan city

What is important to mention is that, in addition to the above, the attitude of the people of Russia towards Wuhan and the Chinese people at the beginning of the pandemic is also reflected in these anti-proverbs. For example: *Заражённый — лечись, а вернувшийся из Уханя — берегись* (Cure the infection, cherish it if you can come back from Wuhan!); *Все дороги ведут в Ухань* (A great road leads to Wuhan); *Не было заботы — купила баба летучую мышь (на уханьском рынке)*. (Grandma bought a bat in the Wuhan market, what an unexpected trouble) *Бойся китайцев, дары приносящих*. (Fear of Chinese people who come with gifts.) Apparently, these proverbs appeared at the beginning of the pandemic. The truth about the disease was unknown, and people could only learn about it through some news reports, fearing the uncertainty of Wuhan, where the outbreak had occurred. Nowadays, although the truth about the origin of the pandemic is unknown, the world knows that Wuhan is only a victim city.

The anti-proverbs quoted above reflect to a certain extent the mentality of the Russian people at the time of the epidemic, and these anti-proverbs may come from different people and different groups, so naturally their mentality is also different. Therefore, the above analysis can only be described as the mentality characteristics of some people, not all.

Conclusion. This research collated and analyzed the anti-proverbs that appeared in Russian during the COVID-19 pandemic, and found that the transformation of anti-proverbs during that period included substitution, extension, and a combination of these methods. By conducting word frequency statistics on these proverb variants, high-frequency words were obtained among them. The high-frequency words such as people at that time. These anti-proverbs are also rich in reflecting the *карантин, маска, чихать* etc. in the anti-proverbs reflect to a certain extent the living conditions of the Russian people's attitudes towards the virus, anti-epidemic initiatives and the vaccine for the new virus, as well as their misconceptions about Wuhan, China at the beginning of the outbreak. But at the same time, they are actively taking protective measures by washing their hands regularly, wearing masks and keeping social distance, and have gained inspiration for healthy living from the epidemic.

Some might argue that native Russian speakers will be able to know what the original proverbs are as soon as they read them, and that these anti-proverbs seem to be less firm in their political positions and more ethnic. It is not possible for us to make these analyses to solve the fundamental viral problem. But it is an important perspective to see the changes in society and people through the language variations. The epidemic will eventually pass, but it will definitely leave a trace among the world language history of human beings, and that's where we should focus as linguistic researchers.

Prospects for further research. The global pandemic is not yet over, and no one knows what the future holds. As the world situation and people's mentality change, the anti-proverbial corpus on the subject of the pandemic will be constantly updated, and the related dictionaries will be revised. From a linguistic point of view, the more detailed we can make this work, the more we will be able to preserve the traces of this worldwide disaster on human language.

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЙНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ «КОРОНАВІРУСНИХ» АНТИПАРЕМІЙ У РОСІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

Анотація. *Мета* дослідження — проаналізувати шляхи трансформації антиприслів'їв і антиприказок у російській мові під час пандемії COVID-19, розкрити особливості ментальності жителів Росії під час пандемії, віддзеркалені в цих антипареміях. *Об'єкт* вивчення — російські антиприслів'я і антиприказки, що були утворені під час пандемії COVID-19. *Методологія* дослідження: кількісний метод для обчислення частоти вживання фразеотрансформів; зіставний аналіз; структурний, семантичний, аксіологічний аналіз відібраного корпусу одиниць; аналіз наукової літератури щодо розглянутої проблеми. *Результат* дослідження: 89 російських антипаремій пандемії проаналізовано за способами трансформації. З'ясувалося, що 81 з них утворилася способом лексичної заміни, 5 — способом асоціативного розширення, у 2 використана двостороння заміна, у 1 — перенесення значення й утворення омонімічної фрази. Щоб отримати високочастотну тематичну лексику, було зроблено кількісний аналіз частоти слів тематичної групи «КОВІД-19» для цих антиприслів'їв. Результати такі: *вирус* (23), *карантин* (8), *маска* (7), *чихать* (7), *ковид* (5), *лечиться* (5), *вакцина / прививочный* (5), *заразить* (4), *Ухань / китаец* (4), *пандемия* (3), *инфицированный* (3), *антисептик* (3). **Висновки.** Шляхом зіставлення й аналізу антипаремій, які утворилися в російській мові під час пандемії, було встановлено, що трансформація традиційних прислів'їв і приказок у цей період включала заміну, розширення та поєднання різних способів. Найвищою в цих антипареміях є частота таких слів: *карантин*, *маска*, *чихать*. Вони певною мірою відображають умови життя росіян під час пандемії. Самі антипаремії містять багато змісту, включаючи страх людей перед вірусом, їхнє двоїсте ставлення до домашнього карантину, негативне ставлення до вакцинації на початку епідемії, а також нерозуміння того, що сталося в Ухані і, в цілому, в Китаї. Водночас вони брали активну участь у захисті від поширення інфекції: регулярно мили руки, носили маски, дотримувались соціальної дистанції та черпали натхнення для здорового способу життя, щоб побороти епідемію. **Цінність** дослідження полягає в тому, що теоретичне осмислення російських антипаремій періоду пандемії може бути ефективним у вивченні найсучасніших тенденцій еволюційного розвитку мови, у спостереженні ментальних особливостей громадян Росії в той період. Жартівливість антипаремій можна використовувати в навчанні російської мови для підвищення інтересу учнів до використання прислів'їв і приказок, для розвитку пам'яті та мовленнєвих навичок.

Ключові слова: фразеологізм, паремія, антиприслів'я, пандемія COVID-19, російська мова, прислів'я, приказка, способи трансформації паремій.

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