

The Role of Proverbs in Providing Speech Individuality

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ABSTRACT

This article takes the novel Devona Mashrab by the famous Uzbek writer Khayriddin Begmatov as an object, and the functional-aesthetic functions of proverbs in the text that individualize speech in accordance with the logic of the hero's character are selected as the subject of research. The proverbs presented in the language of the characters are analyzed and interpreted in the article.

Keywords: Novel, artistic speech, individuality of speech, proverb, image, hero, character, personage.

INTRODUCTION

In current Uzbek novels, artistic portraits of our ancestors, such as Yassavi, Ibn Sina, Beruni, Amir Temur, Navoi, Mashrab, are being created and interpreted in a unique way. This, in turn, poses fair and relevant tasks for literary criticism.

The famous Uzbek writer Khayriddin Begmatov's historical-biographical novel *Devona Mashrab* became a unique phenomenon in Uzbek prose nearly twenty years ago. However, despite the passage of time, this novel has not been the subject of serious scientific research. The portrayal of religious scholars, the proverbs and aphorisms in the characters' speech, the layers of meaning in words and expressions, and their aesthetic functions have not been specifically studied. *Devona Mashrab* is not the only work in Uzbek literature that depicts the image of Mashrab. During the Soviet era, in 1981, Hamid Gulom's novel

Mashrab was published. This novel was studied in depth by the Mashrab scholar Erkin Musurmonov.

Boborahim Mashrab is renowned in the centuries-old history of our literature and philosophy as the author of passionate, resonant, and impactful poetic works, as well as a person who contributed to the development of the science of mysticism... He spent his entire life in search of a unique revelation of the truth – that the transience of the material world, the insignificance of worldly values before divine power, and inner love for the Creator surpass all external matters."

Mashrab's socio-philosophical views were reflected in both his lifestyle and creative work, demonstrating a sense of harmony and consistency. This can be observed in his sharp criticisms directed at religious scholars, sycophantic poets, and rulers, as well as in his bold and truthful words. For this reason, the writer skillfully used proverbs and aphorisms to individualize the character and speech of the protagonist.

METHODS ANALYSIS

In literary studies, several works have been conducted on the role and significance of proverbs within artistic works. These studies are equally relevant to both classical and contemporary literature. To systematically analyze them, it is appropriate first to review theoretical research in this field. In this article, we primarily employ analytical and comparative analysis methods.

The use of proverbs within literary works dates back to ancient times in practice. We know well that even in the earliest Turkic written sources, such as the Orkhon-Enisei inscriptions, numerous proverbs were used, enhancing their artistic expressiveness. The theoretical generalization of the use of proverbs in literary works emerged relatively later. In classical poetics, particularly in treatises on the art of poetry, we can find some of the earliest discussions on this subject. The poetic device known as "Irsoli masal" specifically refers to the use of proverbs within literary works, especially in poetry. In the Turkic language, such a generalization was first made by Shaykh Ahmad Tarazi. It is also well known that Alisher Navoi

expressed a positive attitude toward poets who incorporated folk proverbs into their poetry.

Folk proverbs can serve as unique insertions in written literature. Some researchers interpret this as an ambiguity in the author's perspective. For instance, N. T. Fedorenko and L. I. Sokolskaya state: "Inserted aphorisms do not always reveal the author's viewpoint; they often belong to the characters of the work and express their perspectives". While fully acknowledging this perspective, it is also worth noting that in some cases, it may be one-sided. The materials from *Qutadg'u Bilig* alone sufficiently support this argument. It is well known that the novel *Devona Mashrab* is primarily based on the conversations and dialogues of its characters. At first glance, this may seem to confirm the aforementioned viewpoint. However, a deeper examination of the actual context leads to somewhat different conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In the novel, proverbs and expressions are used to prove arguments, provide accurate evaluations of certain events, highlight the flaws of opponents, and convey the author's perspective on the situation. The use of proverbs in the characters' speech not only reinforces their thoughts but also demonstrates their intellectual abilities, making their speech more individualized. Proverbs are predominantly used in dialogues throughout the novel. In fact, the Quranic text itself is structured as a dialogue - God's guidance to His prophets. In the novel's language, proverbs are applied in two ways. 1. Preserving the original structure – The proverb is used exactly as it is. 2. Adaptation based on context – The proverb is slightly modified to fit the situation, as seen in: *Tuya yetaklagan birla hamma sarbon ermas* (Not everyone who leads a camel is a true caravan leader). This proverb is spoken by Mulla Bozor Oxund's father, Ubaydulla Bozor, as a reflection on his own life. Having worked for many years as a caravan leader and trader to support his family, he uses this proverb upon noticing something unusual about his son. Through this, the author hints at Mulla Bozor

Oxund's future. It is well known that proverbs, while preserving their literal meaning, are often used figuratively. In this context, the proverb serves as a reference not only to the character himself but also to his son's destiny.

The plot of the novel is built on the characters' dialogues and exchanges of questions and answers. The conflicts between the characters also take on a dramatic nature through the dynamics of these dialogues. The proverbs and expressions used in their speech are carefully chosen to match their personalities. Mansur Shoir, expressing his resentment toward Mashrab and Setoriy's performances, says:

May your faith burn bright! - Mansur Shoir began - This is indeed worthy of praise, sir! However, the danger of a fast-burning fire extinguishing just as quickly is not nonexistent! (p. 63).

The syntactic phrase *tez yonmish o'tning tez so'nmoq xavfi* in the text corresponds to the folk proverb *Tez yongan olov, tez o'char* (A fire that burns fast also dies quickly). A variation of this proverb, *Otash tez yonar bo'lsa, tafti tez ketur* (If a fire burns quickly, its heat fades just as fast), is also used on page 93 of the text. The use of proverbs in speech serves to clarify meaning or reinforce a decision about a specific situation. Additionally, it enhances sarcasm and irony, creating a more figurative and expressive speech. This proverb also has other versions in folklore, such as *Tez bitgan tez yitar* (What is quickly done is quickly consumed), *Tez kirishgan tez qaytar* (What starts quickly ends quickly), and *Tez kelgan davlatning bahosi bo'lmas* (Wealth gained quickly holds no true value). A similar proverb appears in Boborahim's words addressed to his mentor, Bozor Oxund:

Bir qinga ikki tig' sig'maydi, taqsirim!. (Two blades cannot fit in one sheath) (p. 72).

Bozor Oxund's disciples attempt to discredit the young poet in his mentor's eyes, setting them against each other. However, Boborahim's use of this proverb toward his teacher does not align with the psychological dynamics of their relationship. In this

context, *Bir qin*” (one sheath) symbolizes Namangan, the place where they live, while *Ikki tig* (two blades) represent the mentor and his student. Throughout the development of events, there is no instance where the mentor and student compete for position, status, or fame. Moreover, Boborahim was still quite young. For these reasons, the use of this proverb in Boborahim's speech appears somewhat unnatural.

In the text, proverbs are spoken by elders as advice to the younger generation. One such proverb is directed at young Boborahim by the caravan leader:

Qulog'ingizda bo'lsin! O'z yurtini qadrlay bilmagan kimsa o'zga yurtda qadr topmast. (Remember this! One who does not value their homeland will not be respected in a foreign land). (p. 77)

Here, an elder with vast life experience offers guidance to the young and inexperienced Mashrab. In this case, the proverb loses its structural form and blends into regular speech, yet its complete meaning remains evident. There are numerous proverbs in folk oral tradition that convey the same idea, such as: *O'z yurtiningni qadri o'zga yurtda bilinar* (The value of your homeland is realized in a foreign land), *O'z yurtning – o'lan to'shaging, o'zga yurt bo'lmas beshiging* (Your homeland is your soft bed; a foreign land will never be your cradle), *O'zga yurtning gulidan o'z yurtningning cho'li yaxshi* (Better a desert in your homeland than flowers in a foreign land).

Religious-Islamic proverbs related to attitudes toward women include: *Ato rozi – Xudo rozi* (If the father is pleased, God is pleased), *Teng tengi bilan, tezak qopi bilan* (Like pairs with like; the dung bag with dung). These proverbs are spoken by O'foqxo'ja, emphasizing that a woman's (daughter's) freedom is under her father's authority. Their use in the dialogue clarifies the character's mindset and reinforces the historical and cultural context of the era.

Proverbs used in dialogues between opposing characters create sarcasm. For instance, in the exchange between Poet Gumnom and Mashrab, the following proverbs are used: *Uyga kelganni it qopmas* (A guest is not bitten by the dog), *Osh*

boshdin, ish yoshdin (Feast suits the old, work suits the young). The first proverb is spoken by Mashrab and directed at Gumnom, metaphorically comparing him to a "dog". Variants of this proverb include *Uyga kelganga uyday o'pkangni aytma* (Do not complain like a house to a guest) and *Uyga mehmon kelganda mushugingni pisht dema* (Do not shush your cat when a guest arrives), both emphasizing hospitality and etiquette. The second proverb is used by Gumnom to test Boborahim's poetic skills. A similar version is *Qari kelsa oshga, yosh kelsa ishga* (The old go for food, the young for work). As the conversation unfolds, the proverbs help clarify intentions and deepen the meaning of the dialogue.

Beqaror jilg'a tog'din kelur!

Sokin oqqan suv yer qa'riga singib yo'qolur.

(Unstable streams come from the mountains! Still waters seep into the earth and disappear).

This passage (from page 99 of the book) metaphorically contrasts two types of people or circumstances. The first line suggests that energetic, restless, and forceful individuals (like a mountain stream) often originate from high, challenging places. The second line implies that those who are too passive or stagnant may fade away without leaving a trace, much like still water sinking into the ground.

Gumnom compares Boborahim to an unpredictable stream flowing down from the mountains, implying that he is restless and uncontrolled. By doing so, Gumnom expresses his desire for Boborahim to become more submissive and obedient. Boborahim's response is embedded in the second proverb: *Sokin oqqan suv yer qa'riga singib yo'qolur* (Still waters seep into the earth and disappear). With this, Mashrab sarcastically warns Gumnom that being too passive or conformist will lead to obscurity and insignificance – his name will vanish without a trace. An alternative version of the first proverb is: *Sel ariqni buzari, yomon so'z – dilni* (A flood destroys a ditch, just as harsh words break a heart). This version would have been more fitting in this context, as it reinforces the idea that strong and forceful

individuals make a greater impact than those who conform and remain silent.

The proverb *Oqmagan ko'lmakdan sado chiqmas!* (A stagnant puddle makes no sound!) is used in the text, but it does not appear in collections of Uzbek folk proverbs. Given its style and context, it may well be the author's own creation. This proverb is characteristic of Mashrab's speech and expresses his attitude toward Gumnom. It is well known that flowing water is clean – it moves with a murmuring sound. However, puddle water remains stagnant, becomes impure, and is unfit for consumption. Through this metaphor, Mashrab critically comments on Gumnom's creativity, implying that his work lacks vitality and originality.

Avliyoning bir tuki ortiq! (A single hair of a saint is worth more!)"= (p. 72).

"Itga itchivin yopishar (Fleas cling to a dog) (p. 103).

These proverbs are spoken by Mashrab's friends, Setoriy and Bukhariy, reflecting their attitude towards the poet Gumnom. The proverbs contribute to the individualization of speech.

Terakning bo'yini yiqilganda ko'r (The height of a poplar is seen when it falls) (p. 111).

Bosh yorilsa doppinging ostidadur (If the head is cracked, it is under the skullcap) (p. 122).

The first proverb is used in the author's narration, referring to the historical Isaqiyya period, specifically the decline of the Isaqiyya sect. The center of Isaqiyya was Yarkand. In oral literature, similar variants exist, such as *Terakni kesilganda ko'r* (See the poplar when it is cut), *Terak terakni yiqar* (One poplar fells another) and *Terakning soyasi tagiga tushmas* (The shadow of a poplar does not fall beneath it)". However, the specific version found in the text does not appear in collections of proverbs, suggesting that it may have been creatively adapted to fit the narrative. The second proverb is attributed to Ofoq Khoja. After being defeated in a debate and reprimanded by Mashrab, Ofoq

Khoja prefers silence over responding to the poet's taunts and recalls this saying: "If the head is cracked, it is under the skullcap. Ofoq Khoja wishes to avoid disgrace in public. By using this proverb in Ofoq Khoja's speech, the author portrays him as a composed, politically savvy figure. The writer maintains a neutral stance in constructing Ofoq Khoja's portrait and moral character.

The author uses the proverb *Qaratgan qarab qolmas* (One who sets their sights does not remain empty-handed) to describe Ofoq Khoja's attitude toward Totiniso. This expression, conveyed through the author's narration, reflects Ofoq Khoja's inner intentions. Following this, in an attempt to fulfill his evil desires, Ofoq Khoja performs a ritual, reciting prayers over an amulet and giving it to Totiniso. His belief in this act sustains his confidence. Variants of this proverb include *Qaratgan quruq qolmas* (One who sets their sights does not remain empty-handed) and *Qarab turgan yorimni qaroqimga oldirdim* (I took the beloved I had my eyes on into my arms).

Through Ofoq Khoja's words, *Sochi uzun, ammo aql-u farosatda kosir* (Her hair is long, but she lacks wisdom and intelligence), his attitude toward his wife becomes evident. Here, the author adapts the proverb *Sochi uzun aqli kalta* (Long hair, short wit)" to fit Ofoq Khoja's speech. This saying reflects the mindset of a particular historical period. In response, Ofoq Khoja's wife uses the proverb *Ot tepkisini ot ko'taradi* (A horse endures the kick of another horse) to address him. Despite being a secondary character in the novel, she is portrayed as a woman of intelligence and insight, equal to her husband in wisdom. Her presence influences the course of events, as she does not interfere with the love between the main characters.

Ikki kemaga oyoq qo'rgan g'arq bo'lur! (One who sets foot on two boats will drown!) (p. 165)

This statement is based on the proverb *Ikki kemani boshini tutgan g'arq bo'lar* (One who tries to steer two boats will drown).

This remark was made by Shah Ismail as a warning or reproach directed at Ofoq Khoja. From the tone of speech, it is

more of a warning than a taunt. This is because Ofoq Khoja, with his fame and influence, sought to control both religious and political power. The proverb *Otdan tushsa ham egardan tushmas* (Even if he dismounts the horse, he will not leave the saddle) is used by negative characters, emphasizing their relentless pursuit of power. Meanwhile, positive characters use *Bir yomanni ko'rmay, bir yaxshini qadrini bilmas* (One cannot appreciate the good without encountering the bad), which clarifies their moral stance and individualizes their speech. Tanbury, the uncle of Sitoriy, gives Mashrab friendly advice by saying, *Daraxt bir yerda kamol topur* (A tree flourishes in one place). This is based on the proverb *Daraxt bir joyda ko'karar* (A tree grows where it is rooted), signifying stability and growth. In the novel, proverbs and aphorisms used in conversations among friends contain no sarcasm or irony. However, in dialogues between opposing sides, sarcasm, humor, and satire are significantly intensified.

Eshakning mehnati halol, illo go'shti xaromdur! (The labor of a donkey is lawful, but its meat is forbidden!) (p. 214). This statement is voiced by Mashrab as a decisive verdict on life. The proverb carries the weight of life experience and is especially fitting when spoken by Mashrab, a man who has endured life's hardships. This saying reflects a bitter judgment on the fate of selfless, hardworking people in history. Mashrab often encountered such individuals – those who toiled tirelessly yet remained undervalued or oppressed. He stood up for them, criticizing tyrannical rulers and religious leaders with sharp satire and bold defiance.

Additionally, the novel includes proverbs such as *Loyqa oqqan suv tinmagay* (Muddy water never settles), *Iting tirigidin she'ring o'ligi afzal* (A dead poem is better than a living dog), *Ko'r ko'rni paypaslab topar* (The blind find their way by groping), *Har kim ekkani o'rar* (Everyone reaps what they sow), *Sichqonning ini ming tangga* (A mouse hole is worth a thousand coins), *Tilga kelganni demaslik koziblik emas* (Not saying what comes to mind is not wisdom) and *Har ibtidoning intihosi bor* (Every beginning has an end). Among these, some are traditional proverbs, while others are modified versions. For example, *Loyqa oqqan suv tinmagay* (Muddy water never settles)

and *Tilga kelganni demaslik koziblik emas* (Not saying what comes to mind is not wisdom)" are direct creations of the author. The second proverb also exists in the form *Tilga kelganni demoq nodonning ishi* (Saying whatever comes to mind is the act of a fool). However, despite their similar structure, they convey different meanings. The first proverb suggests that withholding one's words is inappropriate, whereas the second implies that uttering every thought without consideration is a trait of a fool.

CONCLUSION

During the analysis of the novel's text, special attention was given to the individualizing and concretizing functions of proverbs in speech. Additionally, the original forms of the proverbs, their textual variants, and the creatively adapted versions by the author were identified. Proverbs were mainly used to reinforce ideas and clarify speech. Moreover, they played a significant role in characterizing personalities and revealing character traits. Observations show that proverbs were often used in dialogues between contrasting characters. Besides enhancing the literary quality of speech, proverbs also intensified sarcasm and irony in the text. The proverbs used in Mashrab's speech align with his character and the author's intent, making them a fitting part of the narrative.

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