

Proverbs about children in English, Georgian and Turkish culture

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Abstract

Proverbs are combination of “universal” and “national-cultural” factors, which are interwoven. The proverbs are common to all communities and though each culture has its own set of proverbs, the same wisdom can usually be recognised in a different culture. There are a number of proverbs in each culture dealing with children and their upbringing according to their own cultures. This means that the well-being of children and their education is very important for the society. The study of the proverbs related to children in three different cultures (English, Georgian, and Turkish) has revealed the importance that these cultures give to upbringing children. In our collection of the “children” proverbs and their complete English-language equivalences, we aim to help strangers to better understand the implicit as well as the explicit meanings of those three nations’ proverbs. In order to explore the paradigm of the proverbs related to children in English, Georgian and Turkish languages and cultures we conducted the research in several stages.

Keywords: Children, proverb, Georgian, Turkish, English

Introduction

There are a number of proverbs in each culture dealing with children and their upbringing in traditional cultures. This means that the welfare of children and their education is very important for the society. In addition to this, children are valued as the bulk of the concept of the family. The study of the proverbs related to children in three cultures (English, Georgian, and Turkish) has revealed similar approaches to the issue.

If Georgia and Turkey are neighboring countries and it is only natural to compare their proverbs, England both geographically and culturally differs a lot with both. However, what permits us to compare their proverbs is the concept of archetype introduced by the Swiss psychologist Karl Jung. “Archetype” is derived from the Greek words “archos” meaning “first,” and “typos”, meaning “a mark.” Thus in a very literal sense, an archetype is the “first mark” and therefore most dictionaries define it to mean “an original pattern or model, a prototype.” Jung explained archetypes as the images, patterns or symbols that are contained in the collective unconscious. Archetypes may be thought of as blueprints, deeply imbedded within the psyche of the individual, and responsible for the foundations of human behavior, and perhaps genetically inherited over many generations of human existence (Moore & Gillette, 1990). Archetypes are the “content of the collective unconscious” (Jung, 1972, p. 4).

In order to explore the paradigm of the proverbs related to children in English, Georgian and Turkish languages and cultures we conducted the research in several stages:

1. We identified relevant proverbs in the corpuses of these languages. In this process

we revealed several points:

a) The definition of the proverb, “The proverb

is a verbal form well-known to the language community, which laconically (within the boundaries of a sentence) metaphorically expresses a deep, well-known, archetypal knowledge accumulated by the nation and mankind in the process of exploring the universe and reality” (Rusieshvili, 2005).

b) Secondly, we identified the proverbs by means of presence in their structure of relevant lexemes: son, daughter, mother, father, child and their equivalents in all above mentioned languages.

2) We analysed the proverb data revealing the pragma-semantic model of the proverb suggested by Rusieshvili (Rusieshvili, 1998; Rusieshvili, 2005).

According to this theory, the semantic model of a proverb consists of three interdependent layers - explicit, implicit and presuppositional - each of them has its own status, function and plays a definite role in the creation of a general meaning of a proverb:

The direct meaning of a proverb metaphor is realised on the explicit level, they coincide with each other both by the form and the contents, fully and clearly expressed, leaving nothing implied.

Its figurative meaning - on the implicit level, implied or expressed indirectly, they are semantically similar, but the basic word or other components are changed.

The presuppositional level, completely different, but the perfect equivalent can be found, the proverb actualises the part of the linguistic model of the world connected with the extralinguistic knowledge expressed in a proverb.

In the proverbs below, understanding the explicit and implicit markers in the interpretation is not so much important because markers help us disambiguate the intended meanings.

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Parents' input is important in the process of raising a child

1. Dört göz bir evlat içindir. [Four eyes are for one child.]
2. დედა ნახე, მამა ნახე, შვილი ისე გამოიხატე. Deda naxe, mama naxe, shvili ise gamonaxe. [Look at mother and father and decide about the child.]
3. სამოსელს ნაწიბური გაუსინჯე და შვილს დედა-მამაო. Samosels nawiburi gausinje da shvils ded-mamao. [When you buy clothes, look at the seams, when you look at the child, ask for her/his mother and father.]
4. Parents are patterns.

All these proverbs express the same idea but in a different way. The Turkish proverb stresses the function of both parents in watching closely what the child is doing, whereas the Georgian one emphasises the fact that mother and father make the child and thus, they are responsible for them. All of the proverbs comprising this model are partial equivalents- they are similar on the explicit level of their pragma-semantic structure.

5. კვიცი იყიდე, დედა იკითხე. კვიცი იყიდე, დედა იკითხე. [When you buy a foal, ask for its mother.]
6. Anasina bak kızını al, kenarına bak bezini al. [Look at the mother before marrying the daughter just as you examine the selvage before you buy the cloth.]
7. Yavru kuşun dilinden anası anlar. [Only its mother understands the young bird's song.]
8. Men are what their mothers made them.
9. Like hen, like chicken.

As it is seen, the importance of mother is given place in Georgian and Turkish proverbs. This semantic model comprises several subgroups of proverbs: The proverbs (4), (5) above stress the fact that mother is important in the life of a child as the child often resembles her in behaviour. Number (6) reveals that only mother can fully understand the child and stresses the fact that mother looks after her children well. All of these proverbs are partial equivalents.

10. კვიცი გვარზე ხტისო. Kvici gvarze xtiso. [The foal follows his father's behaviour.]
11. შვილი თუ სტყუა, მამაც სტყუა. Shvili tu styua, mamac styua. [If the child is bad, the father is as well.]
12. ხემ გამოისხა ხილიო, რაც მამა ისა შვილიო. Khem gamoisxa khilio, rac mama isa shvilio. [The fruit ripens in the tree, the child is raised up by his/her father.]
13. Wise child is a father's bliss.
14. One father is more than a hundred school masters.

This group of proverbs reveals one and the same idea: Father and children often resemble each other. All of these Georgian and English proverbs are partial equivalents.

15. მეძებრის შვილს დაგეშა არ უნდაო. Medzebris shvils degesha ar undao. [The puppy of the setter does not need additional training.]
16. (Kavun) karpuz kökeninde büyür. [The water melon grows from its stem.]
17. Armut dibine düşer. [A pear will fall to its root.]
18. An apple does not fall far from the apple tree.

In spite of the fact that the gender of the parent is not emphasised in these proverbs it is still clear that these proverbs also claim that the directors and authors of the child's life and values are their parents. Number (13)-(14) are full equivalents as they are similar on all of the levels of their semantic structure. Others can be classed to be partial equivalents.

Fathers groom the sons, while daughters are raised by their mothers

In Turkish and Georgian cultures the boys are expected to spend a lot of time with their fathers while the girls are trained by their mothers. Consequently, a boy learns to deal with the duties of men in a house from his father and a daughter - from her mother.

15. გოგოს ნაკეთი სამხარი, ბიჭის ნამკალი ყანაო. Gogos naketi samxari, bijis namkali khanao. [The girl should take care of the dinner, the boy, harvest the crop.]
16. Oğlan atadan öğrenir sofrayı, kız anadan öğrenir biçki biçmeyi. [A son learns from his father how to provide for a table and a daughter learns from her mother how to cut out clothes.]
17. Like father like son, like mother like daughter

As it can be seen, these proverbs are partial equivalents. However, all of them stress the functions and duties of men (boys, sons) and women (girls, daughters) in the family, though they choose different things to single out as major functions. Clearly, the girls have to do cooking and sewing, whereas the boy's main duty is to harvest the crop (15) or/and provide food. The English proverb states only that daughters are like mothers and sons are like fathers.

Parents' values and behaviours are crucial as the children tend to imitate their parents

18. Keçi nereye çıksa oğlağı da oraya çıkar. [Where the nanny goat climbs, so does her kid.]
19. Çocuğa, "Ne işliyorsun" demişler, "Büyüğün yaptığını işliyorum" demiş. [The child was asked: "What are you doing?" "Doing what adults do" said.]
20. კვიცი გვარზე ხტისო (kvitsi gvarze xtiso) [The foal jumps as their parents (father) do.]

Because children learn from parents, they need to be careful for their children to be good models. Children learn by repetition so they behave in the way they see from their elders.

Children are the wealth of the family and parents are lucky to have children

In the following English, Georgian and Turkish proverbs, kids are seen as the wealth of their parents and it is claimed that they bring joy into the house and lead to the continuation of the family. So the parents are seen as lucky people. In the household, where there are children, it is always noisy and cheerful whereas a house without children is full of sadness.

20. Çocuklu kadın kargalı çınar, civcivli tavuk. [A woman with children is like a plane tree with crows or a hen with chicks.]

21. Bal tatlı, çocuk baldan da tatlı. [The honey is sweet but the child is sweeter.]

22. Çocuksuz baba meyvesiz ağaca benzer. [Father without children is like a fruitless tree.]

23. Ağaç dalıyla gürlür. [The tree roars with its branches.]

24. He that has no children knows not what is love

25. The best love is that of children.

26. Children are poor men's richness.

27. Happy is he that is happy in his children

28. უშვილო კაცი ჯირკია. Ushvilo kaci jirkia. [A childless man is like a log.]

These proverbs present one and the same idea from different points of view. (22) and (28) compare childless people to a tree and a log whereas (21) and (23) stresses the importance of having the children. Number (20) compares a mother to a hen with chicks or a tree with crows thus stressing the turbulent and noisy life mothers have while (23) stresses the fact that family is disturbed but proud of their children. Number (21) stresses the importance of children by emphasising the happiness they bring to the household. The English proverbs stress that parents' happiness depends on the happiness of their children.

It is a great commitment and responsibility to raise good children and sometimes they make their parents' life hard

29. ბევრი შვილი ჭირიაო, ცეცხლიც არის, ვერცხლიც არის. Bevrî shvili jiriao, cecxlic aris, vercxlic aris. [Having many children in the family is fire as well as silver]

30. Çok çocuk anayı şaşkın, babayı düşkün eder. [Many children make the mother confused and the father tired.]

31. Çoluk çocuk sahibi oldukça gül de bulunur bülbül de bulunur. [After having a child, one finds a rose as well as the nightingale.]

These proverbs stress the fact that it is difficult to raise a child. (29) and (30) emphasise the fact that children bring both good and bad (rose/nightingale; fire/silver) whereas the proverb number (31) states the fact that the children make their parents tired.

In spite of the time and effort children require, still they are crucial to the family

32. Çocuklu ev pazar, çocuksuz ev mezar. [House with children is like a marketplace and a house without children is like a graveyard.]

33. Çocuk dolu eve şeytan pek az girer. [The evil rarely comes to the house which has children.]

34. Çocuk evin meyvesidir. [A child is the fruit of a home]

35. Evlatsız yurt, odunsuz ocağa benzer. [Çocuksuz baba meyvesiz ağaca benzer.]

36. Where children are not, heaven is not.

37. Children are the keys of paradise.

This semantic model emphasises the fact that children maybe causing problems but, however, they enliven the house (32), (34) and (35). As well as that, they keep the evil away (33). The English proverbs (36), (37) confirm that children are the keys to happiness (paradise, heaven).

It is difficult to raise a child properly

The care and concern for the education of children in the cultures selected for the analysis is sometimes seen as hard work by the parents. In this case, they should be patient as in the proverbs 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46. Raising and taking care of a child is not an easy task, but the parents gladly put up with all the difficulties for the sake of their child. The proverbs number 41, 44 mean that children need to be fed and given food.

38. Çocuk büyütme taş kemirmek. [Raising children is like gnawing at stones]

39. Çocuğun/Evladın var mı, derdin var / Çocuk isteyen belasını da istemesi gerek. [He who desires to have children must be willing to endure their difficulties.]

40. Her kimin evladı var, başından büyük derdi var. [If you have children you have trouble]

41. Eşeğe —Sıpan oldu demişler, —Sırtımdan yükümü atacak değil ya, önumden yemimi alacak demiş. [They told the donkey : "you have had a foal, He said: He is not going to relieve some of the burden of my back, he will share some of my fodder]

42. Evladın varsa bin derdin var, evladın yoksa bir derdin var. [If you have children you will have a thousand worries, if you have no children you will have one worry.]

43. At at oluncaya kadar sahibi mat olur. [Until the pony becomes the horse, the owner will be checkmated.]

44. Small birds must have meat/ Children must be fed.

45. Children are certain cares, but uncertain comforts.

46. ერთი ყმანვილის გაზრდას ერთი ბათმანი ფეტვის ახეკა სჯობიაო. Erti ymawvilis gazrdas erti batmani fetvis axeka sjobiao. [It is better to collect one

sack of barley rather than bring up one child.]

As it can be seen, these proverbs are partial equivalents to one another, as they express one and the same idea, but employ different images. However, they are similar on their implicit levels.

One should not spoil the child by pampering him. Kids do not understand the difficulties of the life

While educating their children, the parents should be careful not to spoil them, because fulfilling all of their wishes may make them lazy. Kids do not understand the difficulties of life, for them it is important that parents would provide them with everything necessary. Children must be grateful for the parents' devotion and care.

47. ბავშვს რომ გაუცინებ, მუშტს გიჩვენებსო. Bavshvs rom gaucineb, mushts gichvnebsso. [If you smile at the child, he/she will show you a fist.]

48. მაგლა ბავშვი ავნიე და თავში ჩამკრაო. Magla bavshvi avwie da tavshi chamkrao. [I held the child up and he hit me in my head.]

49. შვილს დედ-მამა ხაზინა ჰგონიაო. Shvils ded-mama xazina hgoniao. [A child thinks his/her parents are his/ her mint/bank.]

50. ყმანვილი პატარაა, გული კი დიდი აქვსო. Ymawvili pataras, guli ki didi akvso. [The child is small but has a big heart.]

51. პატარა ეშმაკმა დიდი ეშმაკი აცდინა. Patara eshmakma didi eshmaki acdina. [A small devil tempted (seduced) a big one.]

52. Çocuğu şımartma, başına çıkar. [Do not spoil the child he will sit on the neck.]

53. Çocuk ekmeği dolapta bitiyor/yetişiyor sanır. [A child thinks bread grows in the cupboard.]

54. Gönül çocuğa benzer gördüğünü durmayıp ister. [The heart is like a child, it hopes what it desires.]

55. Çocuk padişah bilmez. [Children don't know the king.]

56. Yavru kuşun ağzı büyük olur. [A young bird's mouth is big.]

57. It dalaşına, çocuk dövüşüne uyulmaz. [Never mind the dogs fighting and the children's fighting as well.]

58. Children suck the mother when they are young, and the father when they are old.

59. Wife and children are bills of charges.

60. A growing youth has a wolf in his belly.

61. Boys will be boys. (Children may behave in an unruly manner.)

As it is seen in the proverbs above, one of the most unpleasant things a parent can encounter on earth may be a demanding (49, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60) and spoiled child, because they do not understand the difficulties of life. So, they believe that they are entitled to whatever they want whenever they want it. If parents do not teach a child to be disciplined, s/he will grow up spoiled and then later it will be too difficult

or too late to educate her/him and make them understand anything as in the proverbs 47, 48, 52. The strict training given to children will help their self-control develop and be good people when they are adults. Number 61 means that children may behave in an unruly manner. But their emotions are sometimes more than adults as in the proverb number 50, 55.

A child should be groomed when he is young

Everything has its own time and children can be taught everything in their childhood, they acquire new habits and changing old ones is difficult in adulthood. You can tell about a child at early age whether s/he is going to be a well-mannered person in the future. The following English, Turkish and Georgian proverbs stress that the early period of childhood is the best time to acquire habits and the way of living.

62. Ağaç yaş iken eğilir. [A twig is bent while it is green.]

63. სანამ წკნელი პატარაა, მანამ უნდა მოიგრიბოს, გაიზრდება ვეღარ მოგრეხ. sanam wkneli pataraa, manam unda moigrixos gaizrdeba vegar mogrex. [The twig of the tree must be bent when it is green.]

64. ძაღლი ლეკვობისას გამოიზრდება. Dzagli lekvbisას გამოიზრდება. [It is easier to raise the puppy than the dog.]

65. Raw leather will stretch.

66. İyi kuzu körpe iken belli olur. [A good lamb will be known when it is tender.]

67. Twist the wand while it is green.

68. As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.

69. Soft wax will take any impression.

These proverbs are also equivalents. Obviously, (62),(63),(68),(69) are full equivalents because they coincide on the explicit level (images and niches selected to characterise the concept). In those proverbs, the metaphorical figure chosen is "twig" which is easy to bend while it is green. That is associated with early influences having a permanent effect. As in the meaning 'a man may bend a wand while it is green and make it straight though it be never so crooked,' gives the idea that 'education forms the common mind at early ages'. But (64), (65),(66),(67) are considered partial equivalents because they coincide only on the implicit level of their structure, meaning that education given at early ages takes affect.

Conclusion

The results of our research argue that Georgian and Turkish proverbs in "children" case reveal coincidence of culturally marked realia, which can be explained by the geographic situation of Georgia and Turkey, which conditioned their cultural relations. Moreover, It is argued that the cultural contacts between the peoples living in the region have permeated their folklore simmering down in proverbs.

However, we see similarity with English proverbs as well, which cannot be explained by geographic situation, but by some universal archetypes that exist in people's minds all over the world, even in cultures which have never had any direct contacts.

As it has been revealed by the data, relations between children and parents in English, Georgian and Turkish proverbs are one of the most frequent ones on the list of proverbs concerning children. The idea that the child does best when s/he is raised by her/his parents is revealed in the proverbs and it is suggested that the child should grow and evolve in a similar environment to her/him, along with their parents. English, Turkish and Georgian proverbs agree that parents play a vital role in raising their children and are important in their children's developments. Children must be controlled by parents, otherwise they will seek for love in other surroundings.

As it is seen in English, Turkish and Georgian proverbs, there are many proverbs related to the training, importance of children and all three cultures under study give a great value and importance to the education of children. Children are also seen as the vital elements of the family's happiness and are very important for the future.

The study and comparison of the relevant equivalent proverbs in English, Turkish and Georgian cultures revealed that the people of these countries pay a great attention to the concept of the family and proper grooming of their children. They assign an important role to parents in the process of raising a good generation.

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