

PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF PROVERBS AS TRADITIONAL RULES OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Proverbs contain precious experience gathered and selected by many generations in short and vivid linguistic form, thus preserving cultural values and mentality of different nations. Health is the key value of any world culture.

The purpose of the article is to analyze pedagogical potential of proverbs about health in teaching healthy lifestyle in foreign language classes. Research methods are analysis, system approach, generalization, inter-disciplinary approach.

The authors divided proverbs about health into the following groups: 1. proverbs about environmental factors influence on human health; 2. physical activity, sport; 3. daily routine and hygiene; 4. healthy eating; 5. importance of work; 6. optimism, positive attitude to life.

Discussing proverbs about health with students in English classes develops their lingua-cultural competence, and makes a valuable contribution into the health of future generations.

Keywords: proverbs, health, healthy lifestyle, foreign language teaching, cultural values

“Our bodies are our gardens – our wills are our gardeners”.

William Shakespeare

Introduction

Human health depends on several factors: genetics, environment, both natural and social, cultural traditions, and what depends on a person himself is his everyday habits, or his lifestyle. And if healthy habits prevail, we are likely to have an individual enjoying a good health, which is better than wealth, as an English proverb says. The proverb gives a verbal model of a certain life situation, not just expressing a certain meaning, information, but also embodying it in a visual image [1, p. 171], it makes our speech bright and visual.

Proverbs reflect the experience of the older generations as well as instructions, wishes, recommendations to the younger generation on how to behave in this or that case. The main idea of popular pedagogy, the origins of which date back to ancient times, continue to evolve throughout history – the desire for knowledge, for learning [2, p. 93].

As for difference between proverbs and sayings, we are going take the broadest approach here and analyze all proverbs, sayings and even aphorisms, as we consider idiomatic phrases from pedagogical, not linguistic view point. It is interesting to note that “saying” often comes as synonym of “proverb”, for example, several most renowned English dictionaries define “saying” as follows:

a) a well-known and wise statement, which often has a meaning that is different from the simple meanings of the words it contains (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary);

b) a well-known phrase, expression, or proverb (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary);

c) a well-known short statement that expresses an idea most people believe is true and wise [= proverb] (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English);

d) a well-known expression, or a remark often made, also known as a proverb (The American Everyday Dictionary).

Aphorisms can become proverbs if they are often used, common people use them not knowing its author, like in famous Early to bed and early to rise makes people healthy and wealthy and wise by Benjamin Franklin [3, p.126].

Idiomatic phrases like the ones above contain precious experience gathered and selected by many generations. They preserve wisdom of traditional culture saved in short and polished linguistic form. Proverbs reflect mentality of the people speaking the language and show its fundamental cultural values. In proverbs “mentality of a lengthy continuum, not a short span of time is reconstructed. But such reconstruction is quite justified as it helps reconstruct a certain basis, the essence of mentality” [4, p. 49].

By teaching proverbs in English language classes, we kill two birds with one stone: first, introduce a new linguistic unit, thus enriching idiomatic vocabulary, which is important for the upper language levels; second, increase awareness of a foreign language culture that may be similar or different from the native one.

More than that, there may be the third bird (in Russian language it would be a hare from the proverb ubit' dvukh zaitsev translated as “to kill two hares”) – the enduring value of proverbs themselves, their meaning, the wisdom of our ancestors that reached us through the centuries.

The purpose of this article is to analyze pedagogical potential of proverbs about health in teaching healthy lifestyle during foreign language classes.

Research methods are analysis, system approach, generalization, inter-disciplinary approach.

Results and Discussion

When speaking about health, different peoples all agree that health is better than wealth and value health as number one priority in life. Such thought

is found in different languages – English, Russian, Spanish, Romanian, French (in its variation He who has not health has nothing), Arabian (more sophisticated He who has health, has hope. And he who has hope, has everything), or Gypsy (May your clothes rip and wear out, but may you live on in good health and fulfillment) [5].

Universal value of health is understood by all people in all countries. It has been declared by international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the WHO Constitution, «health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity» [6]. To have access to conditions for healthy life is one of fundamental human rights: “The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition» [6]. A Sicilian proverb connects freedom and health, thus underlying that they are fundamental rights of people, natural as breathing the air: Freedom and health, who has them is rich and doesn't know it [5].

To avoid the sad consequences of forgetting about healthy lifestyle traditional wisdom warns us against wrong attitude to health: Folks spend their health to acquire wealth and later spend their wealth in an effort to regain their health (American proverb); Health is not valued till sickness comes (British proverb); The first step to health is to know that we are sick (English proverb); No time for your health today, will result in no health for your time tomorrow (Irish). But nothing is valued more than health, especially after a disease: Disease and disasters come and go like rain, but health is like the sun that illuminates the entire village (Luo proverb) [5].

We have studied proverbs about health and decided to divide them into following groups:

- proverbs about environmental factors influence on human health
- physical activity, sport
- daily routine and hygiene
- healthy eating
- importance of work
- optimism, positive attitude to life

Let us consider the most important components of a healthy lifestyle in greater detail.

1. Environmental factors influence on human health

Sunlight, air, water are essential for the prevention and treatment of many diseases. So the ancient Latin proverb says *Quem medicamenta non sanant, natura sanat* translated as "If medicines do not heal a person, nature cures him" [7]. There are many proverbs and aphorisms on this topic: If you want to be healthy – make oneself fit; There is nothing more useful than the morning sun; Know and remember one thing – fresh air is good before going to sleep!; Chinese wisdom "饱经风霜", which is translated as "to be in the wind and frost long enough" [8]. Water, air and cleanliness are the chief articles in my pharmacopoeia, Napoleon I used to say [9].

The ancient peoples attributed great importance to the sun and sunlight. Speaking in terms of modern research, we can say that under the influence of ultraviolet sun rays on the skin vitamin D is produced, which not only strengthens bones, but also is a good remedy for depression. Sufficient level of this vitamin protects against osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis and rickets. Its deficit contributes to the development of periodontal disease, cancer, muscle pain, joint diseases and even diabetes. Unfortunately, with age, the absorption of this key vitamin drops, and as not everyone can afford regularly buy good sea fish or pharmaceutical substitutes, therefore, it is extremely important to get vitamin D absolutely for free during walks. The destruction of pathogenic microorganisms is one of the positive aspects of sunlight. In the old days, before the advent of antibiotics, sunlight was also actively used for treatment of various pustular diseases of the skin. In addition, sunlight has a beneficial effect on human psyche, bringing positive emotions that also contribute to overall health. Keeping a healthy lifestyle means not to neglect walks on sunny days, regularly let the sun rays in through open windows into the room, and get a moderate tan. On the other hand, in order to avoid the negative impact of sunlight on summer days it is necessary to use sunglasses and prevent sunburn by wearing appropriate clothing and using sunscreen.

The importance of water cannot be overemphasized. For normal functioning of our body it is enough to drink 1.5-2 liters of fluid a day, 2/3 of which must be ordinary water. The following symptoms may indicate the shortage of water: headache (usually it is enough to drink 1-2 glasses of water to make it disappear); fatigue, weakness, irritability; constipation; swelling and puffiness of the face; sleep disturbance. Heart, nervous system, kidneys and other organs function well, if a person of 70 kg drinks at least 1.5 liters of fluid a day. When overweight, one should add 1 glass of water for every 10 kilos of excess weight.

2. Physical activity, sport

In the culture of any nation a great attention has been paid to physical exercises. A Dutch Proverb warns us against lack of physical activity: *Sickness comes on horseback but departs on foot* [9]. Some more examples of popular proverbs: *After dinner sit a while, after supper walk a mile.* (coined by T. Cogan in 1584) [7]; *To enjoy the glow of good health, you must exercise* (Gene Tunney) [7]. Physical exercises not only improve metabolism and blood circulation in the body, but also enhance immunity, reduce cholesterol and normalize metabolism. It is necessary for an adult to make at least 10,000 steps a day. Gymnastics, jogging, swimming or other sports are also useful for at least 30-40 minutes 5 times a week. A number of proverbs can be found on this topic, the Latin *Motus vita est* (Movement is life) being the most popular and essential [12].

3. Daily routine and hygiene

The most popular proverb about daily routine in English was coined by Benjamin Franklin: *Early to bed and early to rise makes people healthy and*

wealthy and wise. Another variation: The early bird catches the worm. In Russian language a healthy habit to get up early is connected with God's benevolence: Kto rano vstaet, tomu Bog podaet translated as "The one who gets up early is given by the God".

Good sleep is also important: Without sleep, no health (English proverb), The beginning of health is sleep (Irish proverb).

Hygiene, clean body and home are emphasized in different cultures, sometimes in different proportions of importance: Cleanliness is next to godliness (English); Cleanliness is half-health (Hungarian); Cleanliness is half your health (Czech); Hygiene is two thirds of health (Lebanese).

A Latin proverb points out that all healthy habits must be well-balanced: Eat well, drink in moderation, and sleep sound, in these three good health abounds.

4. Healthy eating

In the 5th century B.C. Socrates uttered: Eat to live, not live to eat. Food has a great impact on our health, of course. We are what we eat. Many diseases occur due to improper nutrition, the folk wisdom also tells us about it: Gluttony kills more than sword; To lengthen thy life, lessen thy meals. Hippocrates, the father of medicine said: Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.

The basic principle of a balanced diet moderation and variety, because the body needs to obtain all the necessary nutrients and minerals. The basic diet should be composed of cereals, bread and pasta from whole meal flour, potatoes and lots of vegetables. Many of the problems arise from the fact that modern people consume less of fruit and vegetables that are rich in fiber, phytochemicals, vitamins and minerals. According to WHO recommendations [6], a person should eat at least 200 g of fruits and 300 vegetables a day. A healthy diet must also include milk and dairy products, eggs and legumes. Many pyramids of balanced diets also recommend to include in the daily menu fish and lean meat, nuts and seeds. From fats, preference should be given to vegetable oils,

as for candies, cakes and other sweets, they should be consumed in very limited quantity, for example, on weekends or holidays. A healthy and balanced diet is the foundation of prevention of colon cancer, constipation, hemorrhoids, gastritis, atherosclerosis, hypertension, osteoporosis and many other diseases [11].

5. Importance of work

Finally, to keep fit and healthy it is necessary not only to keep to the right diet and do physical exercises, but it is necessary to work. There are many proverbs and sayings about it in different traditions. Here are examples of some:

You won't get sick if you have plenty of work (Japanese proverb); Work is half of health (Swedish proverb). Work has a significant impact on forming a healthy human body and creating material and spiritual values.

6. Optimism, positive attitude to life

We find in the Bible: A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones (Proverbs 17:22). Positive attitude to life and people can work miracles and in combination with healthy lifestyle leads to health: Joyfulness is half your health (Czech proverb); When the heart is at ease, the body is healthy (Chinese proverb); Calm mind brings inner strength and self-confidence, so that's very important for good health (Dalai Lama).

In conclusion, we should add that studying and comparing proverbs of the world is an engaging and inspiring activity.

1. The wisdom of our ancestors saved in proverbs helps us develop both spiritually and physically.

2. A healthy lifestyle is the optimum mode of work and rest, proper nutrition, sufficient physical activity, personal hygiene, healthy habits, eradication of bad habits, love for friends, positive perception of life that brings longevity and ability to maintain moral, mental and physical health.

3. Discussing it with students during English, or other, classes develops their linguistic and cultural competence, and makes a valuable contribution into the health of future generations.

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ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЙ ПОТЕНЦИАЛ ПОСЛОВИЦ КАК ТРАДИЦИОННЫХ ПРАВИЛ ЗДОРОВОГО ОБРАЗА ЖИЗНИ В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ

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Пословицы содержат драгоценный опыт, накопленный и отобранный многими поколениями и заключенный в короткую и яркую словесную форму, сохраняя таким образом культурные ценности и менталитет разных народов. Здоровье – это ключевая ценность любой культуры мира.

Цель. Анализ педагогического потенциала пословиц о здоровье в преподавании здорового образа жизни на уроках иностранного языка.

Методы исследования – анализ, системный подход, обобщение, междисциплинарный подход.

Авторы разделили пословицы о здоровье на следующие группы: 1) пословицы о воздействии факторов окружающей среды на здоровье человека; 2) физическая активность, спорт; 3) распорядок дня и гигиена; 4) здоровое питание; 5) важность работы; 6) оптимизм, позитивное отношение к жизни.

Обсуждение пословиц о здоровье со студентами и учащимися на занятиях по английскому языку развивает их лингвокультурологическую компетентность и вносит ценный вклад в здоровье будущих поколений.

Ключевые слова: пословицы, здоровье, здоровый образ жизни, обучение иностранным языкам, культурные ценности.

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