

# DISCURSIVE-PRAGMATIC CRITERIA FOR DEFINING PAREMIC GENRES: A LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK

Tolibova Nodira Nosirovna

Teacher of Interfaculty Department of Foreign Languages

Bukhara State University

## Abstract

In the contemporary linguistic paradigm, paremias (proverbs, sayings, and aphorisms) are analyzed as functional units of discourse rather than static lexical items. This article outlines the essential discursive-pragmatic criteria used to categorize and interpret these units, focusing on how they operate as strategic tools in communication.

**Keywords.** Paremiology, Discursive-Pragmatic Criteria, Illocutionary Force, Contextual Dependency, Speech Act Theory, Intertextuality, Face-Saving Strategies, Linguistic Worldview, Didacticism, Pragmatic Presupposition, Paremic Genres, Communicative Strategy, Discourse Analysis, Cultural Schemas, Functional Linguistics.

## 1. Introduction

The transition from structural to pragmatic paremiology requires a shift in focus from "what a proverb means" to "what a proverb *does*." Within a discourse, a paremia functions as a micro-text that carries the weight of collective wisdom while serving the specific goals of the speaker. Defining its nature requires a multi-layered set of criteria.

## 2. Core Discursive-Pragmatic Criteria

### A. Illocutionary Force (Speech Act Criterion)

The primary pragmatic criterion is the illocutionary intent. According to Speech Act Theory (Austin & Searle), paremias are rarely assertive (stating facts); they are usually:

- Directive: Aimed at influencing behavior (e.g., "*Look before you leap*").
- Expressive: Conveying emotional evaluation or criticism.

- Commissive: Setting a moral or social standard the speaker intends to uphold.

### 3. Directive Illocutionary Force: The Call to Action

Directives are the most common function of paremias. Their pragmatic goal is to change the listener's future behavior. However, proverbs are **indirect directives**; they don't use the imperative "Do X," but rather "Wisdom says X is better."

- **Prescriptive (Encouragement):** "*Strike while the iron is hot*" (English) or "*Harakatda — baraka*" (Uzbek). The intent is to catalyze immediate action.
- **Prohibitive (Warning):** "*Don't put all your eggs in one basket.*" This functions as a preventive strike against risky behavior.
- **Cognitive Strategy:** By using a proverb, the speaker avoids sounding bossy. The "authority" shifts from the speaker to "the ancestors" or "common sense," making the directive easier for the listener to accept without losing "face."

### 2. Expressive Illocutionary Force: Evaluation and Criticism

Expressives focus on the speaker's psychological state or their evaluation of a situation. In paremiology, this is often used to deliver **social judgment** without being overly aggressive.

- **Ironic Criticism:** When someone fails after ignoring advice, a speaker might say, "*I told you so*" via a proverb like "*Experience is a dear school.*"
- **Ethical Evaluation:** "*Appearance is deceptive*" or "*Sirti yaltiroq, ichi qaltiroq.*" The illocutionary intent here is to express skepticism and warn against superficiality.
- **Social Comfort (Consolation):** "*Every cloud has a silver lining.*" The intent is to express empathy and shift the listener's emotional state from despair to hope.

### 3. Commissive Illocutionary Force: Moral and Social Oaths

Commissives commit the speaker (and by extension, the community) to a certain course of action or a belief system. When a speaker invokes a commissive paremia, they are "signing" a social contract.

- **Establishing Standards:** "*A man is as good as his word*" or "*Va'da — qarz*" (A promise is a debt). By uttering this, the speaker is not just stating a fact; they are affirming their intent to be a person of integrity.
- **Collective Commitment:** These proverbs reinforce the "social glue." They act as a vow that the community will uphold justice or hospitality (e.g., "*Guest is king*").

### B. Contextual Dependency and Situational Adaptability

Unlike simple sentences, paremias possess discursive elasticity. The same proverb can change its pragmatic value based on:

- The Participant Relationship: A proverb used by an elder to a junior functions as didactic guidance, whereas the same proverb between peers might function as irony.

- The Chronotope: The specific time and place of the utterance. A proverb in a political speech functions differently than one used in a domestic argument.

### C. Presupposition and Shared Cultural Background

For a paremia to "work" pragmatically, there must be a pragmatic presupposition—a shared mental space between the speaker and the listener. If the listener does not possess the "cultural key" or the cognitive schema associated with the proverb, the discursive act fails. This criterion measures the degree of intertextuality—the way the proverb refers to a pre-existing "text" of national wisdom.

### D. Politeness and Face-Saving Strategy

In both English and Uzbek linguistics, paremias serve as Face-Threatening Act (FTA) mitigators. Instead of direct criticism, which may damage the listener's "face," the speaker uses a proverb to shift the source of the critique from themselves to an impersonal, "universal" truth.

- Uzbek Context: The concept of *Andisha* (discretion/modesty) is a major pragmatic criterion for using proverbs to mask direct advice.

### E. Authority and Intertextual Polyphony

This criterion defines the "voice" of the paremia. When a speaker uses a proverb, they are engaging in polyphony (Bakhtin's theory), bringing a third, authoritative "voice" into the conversation. The pragmatic power of the paremia is derived from this perceived collective authority, making the speaker's argument more difficult to challenge.

## 3. Genre-Specific Pragmatic Distinctions

To define the nature of different genres, we apply the criteria as follows:

| Criterion          | Proverb (Maqol)             | Saying (Matal)                  | Aphorism (Hikmatli so'z)   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Syntactic Autonomy | High (Independent sentence) | Low (Fragment of a sentence)    | High (Often authored)      |
| Didactic Load      | Strong moral instruction    | Descriptive/Imagery focus       | Intellectual/Philosophical |
| Pragmatic Goal     | To conclude an argument     | To color/illustrate a situation | To provoke deep thought    |
| Source Authority   | Anonymous/Collective        | Folk/Traditional                | Individual/Specific Author |

#### 4. Conclusion

The discursive-pragmatic nature of paremias is defined by their ability to mediate between the universal (cultural knowledge) and the particular (the specific speech situation). By applying criteria such as illocutionary force, face-saving strategies, and contextual adaptability, linguists can decode the sophisticated social engineering that takes place every time a proverb is uttered.

#### References

1. Tolibova N. N., Pulatova S. K. The Concept of Translation and Pragmatics //Uzbekistan: Scientific reports, Bukhara State University. – 2021.
2. Haydarovna P. S., Nosirovna T. N. On the Issue of Teaching Foreign Languages in Secondary School //Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal. – 2022. – T. 10. – №. 11. – C. 621-624.
3. Haydarovna P. S., Nosirovna T. N. INNOVATIVE METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH //Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal. – 2023. – T. 11. – №. 4. – C. 776-779.
4. Khaydarovna P. S., Nosirovna T. N. The Role of Choosing Authentic Materials in Teaching English Language. – 2023.