

English proverbs and sayings

Literature



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INTRODUCTION

This research is devoted to such an interesting phenomenon of our life as proverbs and sayings, and English proverbs and sayings in particular.

Proverbs and sayings are records of the development of civilization throughout its history.

We strongly believe that to know people's culture and values, one should study their proverbs. People express their beliefs, customs, habits, knowledge, morals and any other capabilities in their proverbs. Nowadays pupils don't read much and they don't show much interest in learning either Russian or English proverbs or sayings. We began to write this work because we know that some children don't think that English proverbs and sayings are worth learning. We want to prove that English proverbs and sayings can be very useful for learning the language.

We read books on linguistics and also searched the Internet in order to find some useful information there. The object of our research is the phenomenon of the English proverbs and sayings. The subject of the research is the linguistic value of English proverbs and sayings while learning the language. The goal of the research is to make up a summary of English proverbs and saying which will be useful for teachers and pupils while teaching or learning different aspects of the language. The objectives are: * to study the problem of the definition of proverbs and sayings * to study the origin of English proverbs and sayings to group English proverbs and sayings according to their meaning (thematically) * to analyze the possibility of the usage of English proverbs and sayings in teaching * to make lists of the most useful ones * to find Russian equivalents to English proverbs and sayings Our hypothesis is that English proverbs and sayings can be widely used in teaching different aspects of the language. In this work we used different

research methods, such as scientific cognition methods (analysis and synthesis), empirical methods (comparison).

We think that the information acquired during the research is useful for learning and understanding the essence of proverbs and sayings and their role in communication; it develops language competence and encourages people to study the cultural aspect of the English language. 1. The problem of the definition of proverbs and sayings According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary a proverb is a well-known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true, for example 'Waste not, want not'.

A saying is a well-known phrase or statement that expresses something about life that most people believe is wise and true: 'Accidents will happen', as the saying goes. A saying is something that is said, notable in one respect or another, "a pithy expression of wisdom or truth. There are a number of specific types of saying, and one of them is a proverb - an expression of practical truth or wisdom. A proverb, (from the Latin *proverbium*), is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity.

They are often metaphorical. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a maxim. If a proverb is distinguished by particularly good phrasing, it may be known as an aphorism. The study of proverbs is called: paremiology (from Greek *παροιμία* - *paroimia*, "proverb") and can be dated back as far as Aristotle. Paremiography, on the other hand, is the

collection of proverbs. Subgenres include proverbial comparisons (“ as busy as a bee”), proverbial interrogatives (“ Does a chicken have lips? ”) and twin formulas (“ give and take”). Typical stylistic features of proverbs are: alliteration (Forgive and forget) parallelism (Nothing ventured, nothing gained) rhyme (When the cat is away, the mice will play) ellipsis (Once bitten, twice shy) Internal features that can be found quite frequently include: hyperbole (All is fair in love and war) paradox (For there to be peace there must first be war) personification (Hunger is the best cook) To make the respective statement more general most proverbs are based on a metaphor. Further typical features of the proverb are its shortness (average: seven words), and the fact that its author is generally unknown (otherwise it would be a quotation).

We should also understand the difference between a proverb and a saying. A proverb distinguishes from a saying by its instructive nature and maturity. Whereas a saying is usually not quite complete and has no conclusion. 2. The origin of English proverbs and sayings The sources of the proverbs and saying are various. Proverbs exist as folk knowledge in many cultures and diffuse across cultural and language boundaries with surprising ease as cultures adopt sayings from other communities and other languages.

At their origin, most proverbs operate in an oral environment, and as such they display many of the same mnemonic traits necessary for purely oral retention and transmission such as alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm. They also display many of the content patterns common in other oral traditions including personification, and hyperbole. In fact most orally transmitted epic poems are constructed from “ cliché” proverb building blocks, that is short, <https://assignbuster.com/english-proverbs-and-sayings/>

well-known and concrete sayings. Proverbs and sayings become part of common knowledge and nation's heritage and when we use it we don't think about its origin.

We can suppose that any proverb was created by some definite person in some definite situation, but it's impossible to find the author of many of them. We think it will be right to say that generally proverbs are of folk origin and their source is the collective intellect of the nation. On the other hand it is quite clear that lots of proverbs and sayings were added by clever people of their times. They say that Shakespeare added more phrases and sayings to the English language than anyone else. It is most likely that lots of them had existed before but not in such an easy to remember form.

However, both sources – folk and literary – are intertwined closely together and very often cannot be separated from each other. The world of sail has given us more phrases and sayings than any other occupation. If it isn't Shakespearian and it isn't nautical there's a good chance it's Biblical. Both the Bible (Book of Proverbs) and Medieval Latin have played a considerable role in distributing proverbs across Europe, although almost every culture has examples of its own. Proverbs are also often borrowed from similar languages and cultures, and sometimes come down to the present through more than one language.

Every country and language has its own stock of proverbs, and proverbs in our language today reflect every age and time. Art is long and life is short is found originally as a saying of the Greek physician Hippocrates; The apple never falls far from the tree, which means that family characteristics will

always assert themselves, is apparently of eastern origin. Sometimes the proverb as we have it today looks back to an earlier period; the idea that Bad money drives out good, recorded from the early 20th century, looks back to the anxieties of the 16th-century financier Sir Thomas Gresham about the debasement of the coinage.

The Bible has always been a major source (The leopard does not change his spots!), but changes in the world around us create new proverbs to reflect current experience. The computing world has given us two of the most durable: Garbage in, garbage out and What you see is what you get. So as we can see the main sources of proverbs and sayings are folk, literary and Biblical. 3. The thematic classification of English proverbs and sayings English proverbs and sayings are numerous and various. It seems quite impossible to divide them all into thematic groups.

But we have analyzed the meanings of a great number of English proverbs and sayings and singled out the following topics which are most frequently discussed by pupils in the lesson: [pic] Examples are given in appendix 1. We think that teachers can widely use these proverbs and sayings in their lessons to encourage their pupils to share the ideas and express their opinions while working on this or that topic. 4. 1 The use of English proverbs and sayings in teaching English phonetics English proverbs and sayings can be used by teachers while teaching different aspects of English at school.

We think that they can also make the process of learning more interesting and exciting. Some English proverbs can be used to improve pupils' phonetic skills and pronunciation. Teaching the beginners English proverbs and

sayings can be used for practising different sounds, especially those which do not exist in the Russian language. Instead of separate words or phrases with sounds any teacher can use specially selected proverbs and sayings with the sound needed. This type of work can be included on different stages of the lesson and be a kind of relaxation for pupils. We propose the following proverbs and sayings for phonetic drills.

Examples are given in appendix 2. We think that proverbs and sayings can be used not only while teaching beginners, but also working with intermediate students, when they can improve both the pronunciation and stimulate the speaking activity. Even advanced pupils learn proverbs and sayings with pleasure while trying to make their pronunciation perfect.

Usually pupils have no problems with learning proverbs and sayings and find them interesting and useful. 4. 2 The usage of English proverbs and sayings in teaching English grammar English proverbs and sayings can be widely used in teaching English grammar.

We analyzed lots of them and found out that the following grammar aspects can be taught with the help of proverbs and sayings: [pic] Examples are given in appendix 3. It is hardly possible to teach English grammar using only proverbs and sayings, but their use seems highly advisable for making the process of learning more fascinating and interesting. 4. 3 The usage of English proverbs and sayings in teaching English vocabulary English proverbs and sayings can also be widely used for teaching English vocabulary, because children learn a lot of new words from them.

Sometimes pupils memorize new words easier better because proverbs and sayings are logical and expressive statements. When pupils learn proverbs and sayings they train their memory, learn how to select necessary words and also develop the emotional expressiveness of their speech. The necessity to find the appropriate Russian equivalents for English proverbs and sayings helps pupils to develop their ability to choose lexical items adequately, stimulates pupils' desire to use dictionaries and improves their translating skills.

For example we can use proverbs and sayings in teaching numbers, because they are easier to learn when the context is vivid. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Two is company, three is none. If two man ride on a horse, one must ride behind. . Rain before seven, fine before eleven. Custom is a second nature. Two heads are better than one. To kill two birds with one stone. A cat has nine lives. The following proverbs and sayings can be used in teaching the names of different animals: Every dog is a lion at home. If you cut the woods, you'll catch the wolf. There is life in the old dog yet. If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.

Curses like chickens come home to roost. Can the leopard change his spots? Like cow, like calf. The early bird catches the worm. If you sell the cow you will sell her milk too. A fly in the ointment. Love me, love my dog. Curiosity killed the cat. A living dog is better than a dead lion.

Pigs grunt about everything and nothing. Catch the bear before you sell his skin. Learning English proverbs and sayings helps pupils to enrich their lexicon, train their memory and improve translating skills which are very

important for anyone who wants to know English well. 4. 4 The usage of English proverbs and sayings in teaching speaking skills Proverbs and sayings can be used in different kinds of exercises for developing pupils' speaking skills where they can serve as a stimulus. Here are some examples: make up a mini-dialogue using some proverb (work in pairs) " Two heads are better than one" P1: Tom, I can't do my English today. Can you help me? P2: OK, it's very not difficult. I'll help you R1: Thank you very much. Two heads are better than one. " Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today" P1: Mum, I want to play football with Pete. P2: Have you cleaned up your room? P1: Not yet. I'll do it tomorrow. P2: Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today. * make up a collective story about this or that proverb (group work) " A friend in need is a friend indeed" P1: Yesterday I went to school.

P2: We had a test in Russian. P3: But I left my pencil-box at home. P4: I didn't know what to do. P5: My friend Nick had two pens. P6: He gave me one pen. P7: A friend in need is a friend indeed. * make up a fairy tale with a proverb as a title or a moral (individual work) " An apple a day keeps a doctor away" Once upon a time there was a little girl. Her name was Mary. She was very ill and her mother called a doctor. The doctor looked at the girl and said: " You must eat an apple every day. " Every day Mary ate one apple and soon she was fine. Her mother didn't call the doctor any more.

An apple a day keeps a doctor away. " The right thing in the right place". Mother bought tickets to the cinema. She gave them to me. I put the tickets on my table. When the time came to go to the cinema I didn't remember where they were. I looked for the tickets. I looked and looked and looked and found them under the table. " The right thing in the right place". Debates are <https://assignbuster.com/english-proverbs-and-sayings/>

also very popular with teachers when they want to improve their pupils' speaking skills. For debates we usually need two different opinions which must be contradictory in their meaning for pupils to try and to prove one of the opinions.

English conflicting proverbs can be used to give a general idea for discussion. Examples are given in appendix 4. Proverbs and sayings can be used in different discussions when they can serve as a starting point of expressing pupils' opinions. We think that conflicting proverbs are very useful for developing speaking skills because they will make any debate more interesting and dynamic. CONCLUSION This research is devoted to such a phenomenon as English proverbs and sayings. Proverbs and sayings are records of the development of civilization throughout its history.

A proverb is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. A saying is a well-known phrase or statement that expresses something about life that most people believe is wise and true. The main difference between a proverb and a saying is that a proverb distinguishes from a saying by its instructive nature and maturity. Whereas a saying is usually not quite complete and has no conclusion. The sources of proverbs and sayings are many various. The main are folk, literary and Biblical.

All proverbs and sayings can be divided into various groups according to their meanings: proverbs and sayings about friendship, work, time, money and wealth, health, home and family, love and happiness, weather, learning

and others. English proverbs and sayings can be used for teaching different aspects of the language: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, speaking skills on all the levels. Our research is aimed to help teachers in making their lessons more interesting and informative. Having analyzed a great number of English proverbs and sayings we created a sort of collection where they are presented according to their themes.

We also grouped them together by grammar aspects. We are sure that English proverbs and sayings can be widely used in teaching different aspects of the language. We hope this collection will serve as a help list for teachers who want to make the process of English studying more interesting and effective for their pupils. REFERENCES 8. <http://www.ky-net-eye.com/rus/dictionary/english/for-russian-speaking/proverbs> 9. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proverb> 10. <http://www.classes.ru/proverbs-and-sayings.htm> 11. http://eng.1september.ru/view_article.php?ID=200801319

Appendix 1 Thematic classification of English proverbs and saying 1). English proverbs and saying about friendship: A friend in need is a friend indeed. A friend is never known till needed. A friend in court is better than a penny in purse. A friend who shares is a friend who cares. A broken friendship may be soldered, but will never be sound. Friend's frown is better than a foe's smile. A hedge between keeps friendship green. A joke never gains an enemy but often loses a friend. Better an open enemy than a false friend. A friend to all is a friend to none.

13. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. APPENDIX 4 Conflicting proverbs and sayings for debates Absence makes the heart grow fonder. – Out of sight, out of mind. Actions speak louder than words. – The pen is <https://assignbuster.com/english-proverbs-and-sayings/>

mightier than the sword. A silent man is a wise one. – A man without words is a man without thoughts. Look before you leap. – He who hesitates is lost. Many hands make light work. Too many cooks spoil the broth. Beware of Greeks bearing gifts. – Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Clothes make the man. – Don't judge a book by its cover. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. – Better safe than sorry. The bigger, the better. – The best things come in small packages. What will be, will be. – Life is what you make it. Cross your bridges when you come to them. – Forewarned is forearmed. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. – One man's meat is another man's poison. With age comes wisdom. – Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings come all wise sayings. The more, the merrier. Two's company; three's a crowd. It's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. – The nail that sticks out gets hammered. The best things in life are free. – You get what you pay for. It never rains, than it pours. – Lightning never strikes twice in the same place. Everything comes to him who waits. – He who hesitates is lost. Opposites attract. – Birds of a feather flock together. Never too old to learn. – You can't teach an old dog new tricks. There is nothing permanent except change. – There is nothing new under the sun. Variety is the spice of life. – Don't change horses in the middle of a stream.

Never do evil that good may come of it. – The end justifies the means.