

Vietnamese and South Korean Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations in Comparisons

Phuong Nguyen Hoang^{1*}, Jung In Woong¹, An Mi Ji¹, Park Yoon Seo¹, Jun Ji Hyeon¹, Kim Ju Hyun¹

¹Faculty of Vietnamese Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University – Hochiminh City, Vietnam

***Corresponding Author:** Phuong Nguyen Hoang

Faculty of Vietnamese Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University – Hochiminh City, Vietnam

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Abstract: Proverbs and idioms are folk voices, are creative products of the masses through many ages, reflecting people's feelings and emotions in daily activities. Although they are from folk language, proverbs and idioms are not ordinary voices but rhymes, brief, widely popular among the masses. Proverbs and idioms are oral literature, expressing many aspects of the masses' activities, especially emotionally. In addition, proverbs and idioms also express people's judgments on the good and bad behaviors of people in society when communicating with each other. Therefore, the research topic "Vietnamese and South Korean proverbs and idioms of social relations in comparisons" has been done in order to find out the similarities and differences in culture, thinking and languages between two countries, two cultures. Since then, this study is not out of the goal to help international students have more opportunities to exchange and integrate with Vietnamese culture as well as to facilitate foreigners in studying Vietnamese language and Vietnamese studies. In this research, proverbs and idioms about social relations in Vietnamese and Korean will be compared in terms of syntax structure, semantic structure and pragmatic characteristics to find similarities and differences in culture, thinking and language.

Keywords: Vietnamese, Korean, proverbs, idioms, structure, meanings, pragmatic characteristics.

1. INTRODUCTION

A proverb in Vietnamese corresponds to the Korean term *성어*. However, there are many different viewpoints on the definition of proverbs, such as the following definitions. A proverb itself has to have the full meaning, either to admonish, or to indicate something (Ham, 1968). A proverb is an idiom that is familiar in secularity. Many sentences have profound meaning, far-reaching thoughts. A sentence from ancient times is called as adage, and is sometimes also called a proverb. The meanings of proverbs or adages are similar (Dien, 1975). In Vietnamese, proverbs, axioms and adages are related to idioms and expressions. They are not objects of lexicology but objects of folklore. But because they are built-in units in language that are used over and over again to exchange ideas, they have to do with the problem of fixed phrases. In fact, they are complete sentences with a complete content, and they don't need any syntax components (Tu, 1978). Proverbs are also used repeatedly in speech as a built-in unit. But they are different from the idioms in that the meaning of the proverb is always a judgment. In terms of content, the meaning of the proverb is close to the free phrase, because it does not represent a concept as an idiom but denotes a combination of concepts (Giap, 1985). A proverb is a sentence that fully expresses itself, an idea, an evaluation, an experience, a morality, a justice, sometimes a criticism (Phan, 1998). Proverb is the product of thinking, a tool to express precious knowledge and experiences, and human philosophies that are both profound and artistic, passed from generation to generation another generation (No, 2008). Proverbs are complete sentences, fully meaningful; express either a psychological comment, or a compliment or a criticism, or an admonition, or an experience of spontaneous perception of the nature or the society (Lan, 2010).

Idioms are fixed sets of words often used to refer to concepts and generalizations. The meaning of an idiom is often not simply explained by the meaning of the words that make up it. Idioms are widely used in speech as well as in

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writing and creating poetry and literature. The idioms are brief, concise, iconic, and highly expressive. According to (Chang, 1990), an idiom is a phrase or group of words that is composed of two or more words or has a special meaning that is different from the conventional method of expression of a language. Idioms are a form of language that combines two or more words, and are commonly used between non-syntactic words. Structurally, an idiom is a compound word compounded by two or more words. And in terms of meaning, it is a specific language that has a third meaning without carrying the basic meaning (Soon, 1985), (Sook, 2003) stated that "An idiom is two or more words joined together, losing the main meaning of each word and gaining another meaning, having more than one solid configuration structure".

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Descriptive Method

Based on the collected linguistics of proverbs and idioms in Vietnamese and Korean, they are described in terms of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics.

Contrastive Comparison Method

After obtaining the description of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of Vietnamese and Korean idioms and proverbs, they are compared to find out the similarities and differences between the two languages as well as to detect cultural and linguistic characteristics of the two languages and two nationalities.

3. SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF PROVERBS AND IDIOMS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN VIETNAMESE AND KOREAN

3.1 Simple Sentence

Proverbs and idioms are mostly short sentences. Among them, the most basic structure is the subject + descriptive word. The structure of this kind of sentence is a narrative that affirms or concludes a certain thing, situation or experience.

Example 1:

가까운 이웃 먼 친척보다 낫다. = Bà con xa không bằng láng giềng gần. = A close neighbor is better than a distant relative.

달걀로 바위 치기. = Trúng chọi đá. = Beat rocks with eggs.

3.2 Complex Sentence

Complex sentences in Korean are often connected propositions by linking words "~ 고, ~ 며, ~ 나, ~ 오"... "~ 수록" represent the relationship between two propositions as a continuous relationship, cause and effect, etc. In Vietnamese, a complex sentence is a sentence that combines an independent proposition with a dependent proposition. Compound sentence is a sentence formed by many different clauses put together. It is imperative that a sentence has 2 subjects, 2 or more predicates in a sentence. The clauses can be separated by commas, or comparison words.

Example 2:

소 잃고 외양간 고친다. = Mất bò mới lo làm chuồng. = Lost cows to worry about building stables.

가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다. = Lời nói chẳng mất tiền mua, lựa lời mà nói cho vừa lòng nhau. = Words do not cost money to buy, choose words that satisfy each other.

3.3. Parallel Structure

The proverb or idiom is concise and there is harmony in structure. They are mainly the sentences which are composed of double concepts or consisting of two or more parallel propositions, basically of the same kind.

Example 3:

사람은 죽으면 이름을 남기고 범은 죽으면 가죽을 남긴다. = Khi chết người để lại danh, hổ chết cũng để lại da. = When a person dies, he leaves his name, and when a tiger dies, he leaves behind his skin.

병 주고 약 준다. = Vừa đánh vừa xoa. = Hit and rub.

3.4. Comparative Structure

There are structured proverbs and idioms that compare two things in one sentence. It conveys meaning by comparing two things with different attributes. There are many proverbs and idioms that a and b appear in a sentence, and state that a is better than b.

Example 4:

가까운 이웃 먼 친척보다 낫다. = Láng giềng gần tốt hơn bà con xa. = A close neighbor is better than a distant relative.

그 아버지에 그 자식. = Cha nào con nấy = Like father like son

3.5. Similarities between the Syntactic Structure of Vietnamese Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations and the Syntactic Structure of Korean Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations

Korean and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms show similar sentence structures. One of the features is that there are relatively short paragraphs because proverbs and idioms require simplicity. There are many proverbs and idioms with similar meanings because both Korean and Vietnamese are related to Chinese characters. The proverbs and four-word idioms are also common in Korean and Vietnamese.

Example 5:

백번 듣는 것보다 한 번 보는 것이 낫다. = Trăm nghe không bằng một thấy. = It is better to see once than to hear a hundred times.

3.6. Differences between the Syntactic Structure of Vietnamese Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations and the Syntactic Structure of Korean Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations

The biggest difference between Korean proverbs and idioms and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms is the sentence structure. Comparing simple sentences of Korean and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms, there are many topic acronyms of Korean proverbs and idioms, but there must be subject + predicate in Vietnamese. This is due to the grammatical difference between Korean and Vietnamese. However, despite these differences, there is no problem conveying the meaning of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms and Korean proverbs and idioms.

Example 6:

갈수록 태산이다. = Càng đi càng thấy thái sơn, qua núi rồi lại đến núi. = The more you go, the more you see the mountain, across the mountain and then back to the mountain.

4. SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF PROVERBS AND IDIOMS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN VIETNAMESE AND KOREAN

4.1. Symbolization of Plants

Proverbs and idioms are sayings that are passed down orally from folks after birth through the daily experience of ordinary people over a long period of time. In the old days, when people lived in the agricultural period, farming was an essential relationship with the ordinary people. Therefore, people have devised many proverbs and idioms in connections with trees while farming. The proverbs and idioms contain the experience and wisdom that ordinary people gain from farming, and express it in accordance with their own feelings. So, in Korean and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms, there are many proverbs and idioms with symbolization of plants.

Example 7:

나무만 보고 숲을 보지 못한다. = Chi thấy cây mà không thấy rừng. = You can only see the trees and not the forest.

4.2. Symbolization of Animals

Chúng ta nhìn vào những câu tục ngữ tương tự ở Hàn Quốc và Việt Nam, như sau. From the old time, humans and animals have maintained close relationships for many years. Especially, with humans, animals often have certain images. In everyday languages, in the case of common proverbs and idioms, images of animals are well reflected through their unique and interesting expressions. For example, various proverbs and idioms reflect human life by comparing with animal behavior and habits. Since they are animals that are close to our everyday life and reflect human thinking, they have appeared a lot as a subject. Therefore, animals appear most as the subject of Korean and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms. Proverbs and idioms with symbolization of animals also avoid direct manifestation of human behavior and can teach the next generation in a gentler way.

Example 8:

우물 안 개구리. = Éch ngồi đáy giếng. = Frog in the well.

토끼 두마리를 잡으려다가 한마리도 못 잡는다. = He tried to catch two rabbits, but couldn't catch one. = Bắt cá hai tay.

4.3. Symbolization of Natural Phenomena and Things

In the past, there was no weather forecast, people produced and lived based entirely on experience in observing natural phenomena. Over the time, those precious experiences are gradually summarized into valuable idioms and proverbs. In particular, weather is a natural phenomenon that is most concerned by people because it directly affects daily life and activities. Idioms and proverbs symbolizing natural things, phenomena can be divided into three categories. First, predicting natural phenomena through long experience. For example, " Tháng bảy kiến bò chỉ lo lại lụt." (In July, ants will only worry about flooding) shows that ant's actions can predict whether it will rain or not. This can be called ancestral wisdom through agricultural life experience. Because in an agrarian society, the weather has a direct effect on agriculture. Second, show the current situation by comparing natural phenomena. For example, "가뭄 에 콩 나듯" means that the bean grown in drought could not germinate properly and sparsely. When some event or something happens, people use this idiom to refer to it. And the last is to teach lessons through natural phenomena. For example, the proverb "윗물 이 맑아야 아랫물 도 맑다" (Upper water must be clear, then lower water is clear.) comes from a natural phenomenon when water flows from top to bottom, and teaches us the lesson that the upper must do well, the people below will do it well.

Example 9:

달도 차면 기운다. = When the moon is full, it leans = Lên voi xuống chó. = It's up and down.

구르는 돌에는 이끼가 끼지 않는다. = (Hòn đá lăn thì không bị đóng rêu) Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim. = (The rolling stone is not covered with moss) There is a day when the iron is grinding.

4.4. Symbolization of Human Social Phenomenon and Things

Proverbs and idioms are products of the society. A certain proverb or idiom must be recognized by human at that time to be inherited. Or it can be destroyed. According to the development of the society, the development of people's lifestyles, thinking, emotions, and social productive capacity which are constantly changing, proverbs and idioms also continuously change. Hence, the formation of proverbs and idioms appears depending on the certain era.

Example 10:

옷이 날개이다. = Người đẹp vì lụa. = Beauty because of silk.

검은 머리 파뿌리 되도록. = Đầu bạc răng long = last till the end of life

4.5. Similarities between the Semantic Structure of Vietnamese Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations and the Semantic Structure of Korean Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations

There are many similarities between Vietnamese proverbs and idioms and Korean proverbs and idioms. First, the proverbs and idioms based on animals have almost the same meaning. This is due to the common characteristics of Vietnamese and South Korean culture. In particular, the agricultural culture in the past is a big reason. Next, proverbs and idioms based on natural phenomena also have many similarities. There are many proverbs and idioms with symbolization of climate and sky. Proverbs and idioms based on human social phenomena also have many things in common. This means that Vietnamese and South Korean culture have a lot in common.

Example 11:

금강산도 식후경. = Có thực mới vực được đạo. = A hungry belly has no ears.

4.6. Differences between the Semantic Structure of Vietnamese Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations and the Semantic Structure of Korean Proverbs and Idioms of Social Relations

The themes of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms and Korean proverbs and idioms are almost the same. However, there is a slight difference in the expression or the conveyed meaning. Additionally, there are instances where proverbs and idioms have the same meaning but have different ways of expressing.

Example 12:

밥 먹을 때는 개도 안 때린다. (I don't even hit the dog while eating.) = Trời đánh tránh bữa ăn. (Even the lord never pours his wrath upon thee at mealtimes.)

5. PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PROVERBS AND IDIOMS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN VIETNAMESE AND KOREAN

5.1. Proverbs and Idioms with Meaning of Teaching and Training

Proverbs – idioms, such as “콩 심은 데 콩 나고 팥 심은 데 팥 난다” (Growing red beans will have red beans, growing black beans will have black beans) implies that “Whatever you sow, you will reap”. Or the proverb “낮말은 새가 듣고 밤말은 쥐가 듣는다” (Words during the day are heard by birds, words at night are heard by mice) implies that wherever you are, you must be careful with your words (Walls have ears) are typical examples of proverbs and idioms that have teaching and training nature. Both Korean and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms that contain the meaning of teaching and training are rooted in ancestral experiences, intended to advise children and grandchildren what to do and should not do.

Example 13:

좋은 약은 입에 쓰다 = Thuốc đắng giá tật = Bitter pills may have blessed effects.

열 번 짚어 안 넘어가는 나무 없다. (There is no tree that cannot be climbed ten times.) = Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim. (Practice makes perfect.)

5.2. Proverbs and Idioms with Meaning of Describing the Implications

Đây là đặc điểm ngữ nghĩa thể hiện đúng bản chất của câu tục ngữ. The proverbs and idioms of this kind are mainly of metaphorical, ironic nature, tend to allusion rather than containing a doctrinal meaning. For example, “수박 겉 핥기 / 중의 빗 / 꿀 먹은 병어리 / 개팔자” (Licking watermelon rind / Comb of the monk / Mute eat honey / Dog position), all have metaphors. In the proverbs and idioms that contain ingenious metaphor, there is a conflict of meaning that collides with each other. This is a semantic feature that expresses the true nature of proverbs and idioms.

Example 14:

그림의 떡 (Tteok in pictures) = bánh vẽ = Metaphor that is useless.

모래 위에 선 누각 = ngôi nhà xây trên cát = the house built on sand

5.3. Proverbs and Idioms with Meaning of Taboos

Proverbs and idioms with taboo content are heavy in folk beliefs, are prophecies about good - bad, good luck - bad luck and mainly proverbs and idioms related to admonitions, taboo, distinguish good from bad, dream analysis. These proverbs and idioms are formed on the basis of the knowledge and experiences of ancestors who lived and summarized at that time, so, there will certainly be things that are not really consistent with knowledge of modern science. There are even superstitious things that are anti-scientific in nature.

Example 15:

쌀 먹으면 에미 죽는다. = Nếu ăn gạo thì mẹ sẽ chết. = If you eat rice, your mom will die.

결혼 날짜를 잡은 후 다른 결혼식에 가지 않는다. = Sau khi chọn ngày kết hôn thì không đi dự đám cưới khác. = Don't go to another wedding after you set a wedding date.

6. CONCLUSION

Language is a major means of communication. However, language not only conveys pure information objectively, but is also helpful in expressing one's own feelings and judgments because language is also an expression of the country's culture. Specifically, the study of idioms and proverbs that incorporate human thoughts, feelings and needs into universal language as a form of cultural expression as a language has been found to be very useful in learning the language and culture of a country. The expression "human intellectual treasure" can be verified as correct. It is impossible to know who created these proverbs and idioms and when they were made. However, Korean and Vietnamese proverbs and idioms, including wit and humor, dominate people's linguistic lives and contain their own emotions. Knowing idioms and proverbs help to enrich conversations and use humorous words is one of the essential virtues of modern people. Not only that, idioms and proverbs reflect the characteristics, physicality and spirit of the people, making it a good study materials for studying people's history, religion, customs and institutions. Like everything in the world, idioms and proverbs reinforce the imagination, emotions, experience, and philosophy with the sympathy and resonance of many things around them. Idioms, proverbs refer to the unique emotions, psychology and feelings of the country and its people. That is also a life trend that includes public characteristics, language purification, an invisible teacher and life philosophy of experience. Thus, idioms, proverbs express the experiences or wisdom that ordinary people have in their daily lives to fit into their own emotional world. In this respect, it is necessary to know idioms and proverbs to understand people and it can be said that people cannot speak without knowing idioms and proverbs. Contrast and analyze the idioms and proverbs of the two countries with the idea that it is possible to understand the cultural differences

of the two countries and to learn languages more easily based on them. Understanding, arranging and describing the meaning of idioms and proverbs increases the understanding of the national feelings of the two countries. In addition, it is possible to consider how the historical and socio-cultural context or natural environment are reflected in each linguistic expression and behavior. Specifically, idioms and proverbs contain a lot of history, culture and ideas because of the brief structure of language that having been passed through long times. It also has the implications of including lessons and satire such as rhetorical measures as metonymy and metaphor. Moreover, because indigenous words such as names of places and historical figures often appear in idioms and proverbs, it is difficult to understand idioms and proverbs as a foreigner. However, this is a great opportunity to understand Vietnamese culture. Therefore, this work has compared and studied bilateral idioms and proverbs so that South Koreans can understand Vietnamese idioms and proverbs and this can help them learn Vietnamese. Not only is it an opportunity to correctly understand the meaning of idioms and proverbs, but also found that similar idioms and proverbs were passed down through friendship, history and geography of two countries.

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