

PROVERBS AS JUSTIFYING ARGUMENTS IN THE SUBSTANTIATION OF MORAL VALUES

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Abstract: Although Uzbek folk proverbs have been extensively studied from linguistic and cultural-historical perspectives, they have not yet been sufficiently explored as a source that reveals the logical foundations of national mentality and folk reasoning. This article proposes a logical-deductive analysis of proverbs. Additionally, it examines the role of proverbs in substantiating moral values and justifying ethical decisions. In this context, the study seeks to answer the question: *Can proverbs serve as arguments in justifying moral values?*

Keywords: moral values, classical logic, proverb, classification of proverbs, common sense logic.

Uzbek folk proverbs have been extensively studied as a primary object of research by folklorists. In these studies, proverbs have mainly been analyzed from linguistic and cultural-historical perspectives, containing valuable information about the distinctive features of the proverb genre, its origins, and the ways in which it has developed and expanded. However, proverbs are not merely a literary genre that expresses the spiritual heritage of the people and is passed down from generation to generation; they also serve as a fundamental source that reflects the identity and unique mentality of the people, particularly their rational and logical modes of thinking. One of the works that inspired the emergence of this research is *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Kenneth Burke, 1941). In the section "Literature as Equipment for Living," Burke views proverbs not simply as a form of folklore but as tools that help people overcome life's difficulties and obstacles.

This article proposes approaching proverbs from a philosophical and logical perspective and analyzing them through logical-deductive methods. In this context, proverbs appear both as argumentative information embodying moral values and as arguments that justify moral decisions. The main goal of the article is to answer the question: Can folk proverbs serve as arguments in substantiating moral values?

Moral values are universal norms that ensure the harmonious existence of society. These norms must be preserved and developed through the succession of generations. This process takes place through the effective transmission of moral education to the younger generation. When moral values are conveyed from the older generation (the addresser) to the younger generation (the addressee) in the form of information, it is crucial that they are well-grounded and logically supported.

In this regard, it has been emphasized that fairy tales are among the most effective models of moral education, as they represent highly reasoned and well-structured forms of information, both in form and content [9]. In our view, proverbs, like fairy tales, can also serve as strong arguments in both structural and semantic terms for substantiating moral values.

In the book “*Uzbek Folk Proverbs*” (published by “Sharq,” 2005), compiled by Doctors of Philological Sciences and Professors T. Mirzayev, A. Musoqulov, and B. Sarimsoqov, nearly 10,000 Uzbek folk proverbs are presented. Since these proverbs are classified thematically based on their explicit meanings, we found it necessary to reclassify them in order to identify and analyze the algorithm of moral value argumentation within them. Through a logical-semiotic classification of proverbs, we aimed to define the scope of the research and minimize the possibility of repeatedly analyzing proverbs with similar structures.

In classifying Uzbek folk proverbs, we referred to the research findings and conclusions of several folklorists. Each paremiologist has approached the study of proverbs using distinct methods and perspectives. What they share in common is that almost all of them begin their analyses with classification.

The American philosopher and writer Kenneth Burke, for instance, classified proverbs according to their psychological purpose [1]. He grouped them as follows:

1. Consolatory proverbs, e.g., *Even if the moon is dark for fifteen nights, it shines for fifteen others; Every evening has its dawn.*
2. Proverbs about justice being served, e.g., *A calf can only run as far as the barn; Deeds will be repaid.*
3. Prognostic or predictive proverbs, e.g., *A good horse runs last.*

Burke compares proverbs to strategies for resolving life situations encountered by humankind.

When classifying proverbs, folklorist Matti Kuusi sought to distinguish between their surface form and deeper meaning. Through this approach, Kuusi aimed to trace the archetypal origins and points of intersection among similar proverbs found in different cultures [4].

Russian paremiologist G. L. Permyakov, on the other hand, proposed viewing each proverb as an “answer to a question” [4]. This suggests that, according to him, every proverb contains a response that expresses a specific situation or attitude. The aspect of Permyakov’s research on proverbs that is particularly significant for us lies in the fact that he employed logic as the main analytical tool in classifying proverbs and was among the first to consider them as logical units expressing specific judgments. However, according to Permyakov, “some of these logical propositions do not conform to the classical (formal) laws of logic—namely, the Law of Non-Contradiction and the Law of the Excluded Middle” [7].

According to the Law of Non-Contradiction, “two mutually exclusive (contradictory or opposing) statements about the same subject cannot both be true at the same time and in the same respect; at least one of them must be false” [5]. In logical terms, if $p \rightarrow q$ is true, then $p \rightarrow \neg q$ must be false. Meanwhile, according to the Law of the Excluded Middle, “two contradictory statements about the same subject cannot both be false at the same time, within the same scope and in the same respect: one must necessarily be true, and the other necessarily false; a third option is excluded” [5]. However, in the logic of proverbs, both propositions can simultaneously hold true: $(p \rightarrow q)$ and $(p \rightarrow \neg q)$, even together as $(p \rightarrow q) \wedge (p \rightarrow \neg q)$. For example, although the proverbs “Measure seven times, cut once” and “While the thinker is still thinking, the risk-taker gets the job done,” or “He who has a daughter

has grace” and “If your match is equal, give it for free” seem to contradict each other in meaning, both are nonetheless accepted as equally valid truths.

At this point, a counterargument may arise regarding our position — namely, that since proverbs appear to contradict the two laws of formal logic, they might seem to represent a violation of correct reasoning or even illogical thinking. In reality, however, proverbs do not operate under the rules of formal logic, but rather follow what has long been accepted among all peoples as the logic of common sense [8]. This is because proverbs reflect specific real-life or hypothetical situations, illustrating how one should act within them. In some cases, proverbs call for quick action and decisiveness, while in others they emphasize the need for caution and patience. Kenneth Burke holds a similar view to that of Permyakov on this matter. According to him, “*Proverbs that appear contradictory are, in fact, related to different types of human relationships, and each implies the need to adopt a distinct strategy appropriate to the situation*” [1]. Therefore, it is not enough merely to know proverbs; one must also apply them wisely, thoughtfully, and in accordance with the specific context. In this regard, the studies of E. Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes in the field of ethnography of speaking in folklore are particularly noteworthy.

Permyakov’s classification of proverbs is also directly connected with logic, as he divides them into four logical-thematic groups based on their content, and into logical-semiotic models based on their form. Table 1 presents the logical-thematic groups of Uzbek folk proverbs, their corresponding logical formulas, and examples of Uzbek proverbs that fit each category.

Table 1

№	Logical-thematic groups	Formula	Example (Proverb)
1.	Cause–Effect	$p(x) \rightarrow q(x)$ <i>(If something possesses a certain property, it will also possess another related property.)</i>	If you work in summer, you’ll eat raisins in winter.
2.	Love–Beauty	$\exists x p(x) \rightarrow \exists y q(y)$ <i>(If one thing exists, then another also exists.)</i>	If you have money, you can have soup even in the desert.

3.	Creator–Created	$\forall x \forall y (r(x,y) \wedge p(x) \rightarrow p(y))$ <i>(If one thing is connected to another and possesses a certain property, then the second thing also possesses that property.)</i>	Choose a daughter by looking at her mother.
4.	Action–Result	$\forall x \forall y (p(x) \wedge \neg p(y) \rightarrow x > y)$ <i>(Agar (If one thing has a certain (positive) quality and another does not, the first is superior to the second.</i>	One brave man is better than a hundred cowards.

When Uzbek folk proverbs were classified, it was confirmed that all of Permyakov’s thematic and semiotic models correspond to them. This demonstrates that Uzbek proverbs are capable of expressing different judgments about various types of objects and situations, reflecting their logical versatility.

Overall, Uzbek folk proverbs are not only a poetic expression of national thought and values, but also serve as an independent argumentative system that reveals the logical structure of popular reasoning. Through proverbs, people logically justify their moral views, life experiences, and value-based reflections.

The study revealed that moral values in proverbs are substantiated in two ways — demonstratively (deductively) and non-demonstratively (analogically). In the first case, a moral conclusion is derived from general axiomatic principles, whereas in the second, it is based on positive or negative analogies that justify a moral situation.

Moreover, the contradictions found in proverbs do not contradict formal logic; rather, they represent a distinct form of common-sense reasoning, arising from the need to choose an appropriate strategy in different life situations.

Thus, Uzbek folk proverbs serve as powerful arguments in substantiating moral values. They embody the logical models formed within national consciousness and not only preserve moral norms, but also effectively transmit them to future generations

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