ABSTRACT
of the dissertation by An Lan «Linguo-cognitive and ethnocultural analysis of the concepts "marriage" and "family" in paremiology»
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Relevance of the research. Paremiology studies proverbs as a special form of linguistic and cultural expression. Within this field, proverbs about marriage and family deserve particular attention, because marriage and family are among the most fundamental institutions of human society and play an important role in shaping both individual behavior and collective cultural consciousness. As concise and stable units of folk discourse, proverbs preserve social experience, ethical principles, cultural concepts, and value judgments. English and Chinese proverbs related to marriage and family reflect not only common human concerns, but also different cultural views of marital relations, kinship structure, gender roles, and family ethics.

These proverbs were formed over a long historical period and are closely connected with specific philosophical traditions, social systems, and cultural patterns. They record culturally shaped ideas about spouse selection, marital duties, filial piety, intergenerational relations, and moral responsibility. In this sense, they can be understood as a condensed reflection of national ways of thinking. At the same time, proverbs are not fixed or isolated linguistic relics. Their meanings, functions, and patterns of use continue to change under the influence of social transformation, globalization, and digital communication.

In the contemporary world, intercultural communication has become increasingly frequent, while differences in the understanding of marriage and family often lead to difficulties in translation, value interpretation, and cross-cultural interaction. Against this background, a comparative study of English and Chinese marriage and family proverbs makes it possible to examine more closely how language reflects cognitive patterns and cultural meanings. Such a study helps reveal both the common features shared by different cultures and the distinctive conceptualizations shaped by particular historical and cultural traditions.

The relevance of the present research lies in its focus on marriage and family proverbs as culturally embedded linguistic units that reflect deep cognitive and ethnocultural structures. A systematic cognitive and ethnocultural analysis of English and Chinese marriage and family proverbs contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between language, cognition, and culture. At the same time, the research addresses both theoretical demands within linguistics and practical needs in translation studies, intercultural communication, and cultural interpretation, which makes it particularly relevant in the context of contemporary scientific and social development.

The object of the research is the paremiological system of proverbs about marriage and family in the English and Chinese languages.

The subject of the research is the cultural value orientation and the evolution of proverbs about marriage and family in the English and Chinese languages.

The purpose of the research is to construct an integrated analytical model based

on an analysis of the similarities and differences in the cognitive models and ethnocultural foundations of English and Chinese proverbs about marriage and family, and to identify their dynamic development within the framework of cognitive linguistics and ethnocultural studies.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

– to construct an integrated theoretical and methodological framework for the study of English and Chinese proverbs related to marriage and family by synthesizing approaches from cognitive linguistics and ethnocultural studies, and to determine their applicability to paremiological research;

– to examine the internal cognitive, cultural, and semantic organization of English and Chinese proverbs about marriage and family as an interconnected thematic system, and to determine the interaction between conceptual structures, cultural models, and semantic relations throughout the entire life cycle;

– to conduct a systematic comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between English and Chinese marriage and family proverbs in order to reveal the underlying cognitive models and culturally conditioned value orientations reflected in their metaphorical and semantic patterns;

– to investigate the dynamic evolution and contemporary transformation of marriage and family proverbs under conditions of globalization, digital communication, and generational change, including the emergence of digital proverbs and anti-proverb forms;

– to clarify the social-cognitive functions of marriage and family proverbs as linguistic mechanisms for transmitting cultural norms, shaping collective memory, regulating social expectations, and mediating between traditional and contemporary social values.

Methods of the research. The research adopts a qualitative comparative approach combined with corpus-based verification. The analytical procedure follows the sequence of proverb selection, classification, comparative analysis, and interpretation. Comparative analysis is employed to identify similarities and differences between English and Chinese marriage and family proverbs, while corpus-based methods are used to verify contextual usage and contemporary relevance.

Sources of the research. The empirical basis of this research consists of proverb data collected from authoritative dictionaries, established language corpora, and contemporary digital platforms. English marriage and family proverbs were primarily drawn from *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs, The Penguin Dictionary of Proverbs, Cassell's Dictionary of Proverbs,* and *The Facts on File Dictionary of Proverbs,* supplemented by corpus-based retrieval from *the British National Corpus (BNC)* and *the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).* Chinese proverb data were collected from *中国谚语大辞典 (Zhongguo Yanyu Da Cidian), 中华谚语大词典 (Zhonghua Yanyu Da Cidian), 汉语谚语词典 (Hanyu Yanyu Cidian), and 谚海 (Yanhai),* with additional verification conducted through the *Peking University Chinese Corpus (CCL)* and the *Beijing Language and Culture University Corpus Center (BCC).*

To reflect both traditional usage and contemporary developments, the research corpus comprises over 600 English and Chinese proverbs related to marriage and

family. Among them, approximately 500 proverb instances were obtained from dictionaries and reference corpora, while more than 100 items represent contemporary and digitally mediated proverbs collected from online platforms such as Weibo, Zhihu, Twitter, and Instagram. These digital items include both newly emerging expressions and modified proverb forms, often referred to as anti-proverbs, which reflect ongoing processes of linguistic innovation under conditions of digital communication.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the research is grounded in foundational and contemporary works by international and Kazakhstani scholars in the fields of cognitive linguistics, ethnocultural studies, and paremiology. The cognitive linguistic approach is based on the works of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, E. Rosch, A. Wierzbicka, C. J. Fillmore, L. W. Barsalou, and G. L. Murphy, as well as studies on cognition across cultures represented in the works of E. T. Hall, R. E. Nisbett, K. Peng, I. Choi, A. Norenzayan, L. Boroditsky, and G. Hofstede. The ethnocultural perspective of this study is based on the ideas of W. von Humboldt, E. Sapir, V. I. Karasik, V. A. Maslova, A. Qaydar, N. Ualy, Z. Q. Akhmetzhanova, R. Syzdyq, N. M. Zhanpeisova, A. Imanqul, and B. Smaqambet, who regard language as a reflection of the national worldview and as a carrier of cultural experience. This position is further supported by contemporary Kazakhstani paremiological studies, including the works of K. B. Duisenova, K. M. Zhampeiis, A. E. Sarbassova, E. V. Aleshinskaya, G. Omarbekova, F. Orazbayeva, E. Orazaliyeva, Z. Abdigapparova, G. Bekkozhanova, and R. Shakhanova. The paremiological framework draws on the works of A. Taylor, W. Mieder, R. P. Honeck, H. Hrisztova-Gotthardt, M. Varga, A. T. Litovkina, E. Davis, C. M. Danforth, and P. S. Dodds, in which proverbs are conceptualized as culturally marked units with important social functions and dynamic patterns of use in both traditional and contemporary contexts.

The theoretical and practical significance of the research. The research possesses both theoretical and practical significance. From a theoretical perspective, by combining cognitive linguistics and ethnocultural studies, the work systematically reveals the cognitive models and cultural logics underlying English and Chinese proverbs about marriage and family, thereby expanding the theories and methodologies of intercultural proverb studies and deepening the understanding of the interaction between language, thought, and culture. In addition, the research provides an empirical and methodological foundation for the interdisciplinary integration of related fields, as well as for the formation of a specialized corpus of proverbs about marriage and family.

From a practical perspective, the results of the research may be applied in language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication, contributing to the development of cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, and intercultural competence. At the sociocultural level, the work helps reduce the risk of misunderstanding and conflicts in intercultural interaction, supports the international dissemination of culture, and contributes to the analysis of differences between traditional and modern values. At the academic and technological levels, the obtained results and the developed corpora possess significant potential for application in artificial intelligence systems and large language models in intercultural semantic analysis.

The scientific novelty of the research.

– the traditional approach, in which the concepts of “marriage” and “family” are

examined separately, has been overcome, while the corresponding proverbs are presented as a unified and interconnected system of cultural and semantic relations covering the full life cycle of family relations;

– the traditional and modern forms of proverbs, as well as the specific features of their functioning in digital communication, including social media, have been analyzed from the perspective of a dynamic approach, which makes it possible to reveal their evolutionary character;

– a two-dimensional analytical model integrating cognitive linguistics and ethnocultural studies has been developed and presented; on this basis, the metaphorical mechanisms, value orientations, and cultural norms reflected in English and Chinese proverbs about marriage and family have been identified;

– possible directions for the practical application of the research results in the development of artificial intelligence systems and large language models have been outlined, especially in the interpretation of metaphors, culturally conditioned expressions, and intercultural semantic processing.

The following key propositions are submitted for defense:

– the integrated linguo-cognitive and ethnocultural approach constitutes an effective theoretical and methodological foundation for the systematic study of English and Chinese proverbs related to the themes of marriage and family. By synthesizing cognitive linguistics and ethnocultural studies, the present research demonstrates that proverbs should be regarded not merely as fixed linguistic units, but as cognitive constructions deeply rooted in culture that encode collective experience, value systems, and socially shared models of conceptualization.

– English and Chinese proverbs about marriage and family form an interconnected system of cognitive, cultural, and semantic relations, rather than two isolated thematic areas. Considering marriage and family proverbs as a continuous and interactive whole makes it possible to reveal how conceptual structures, cultural models, and semantic relations jointly shape meaning throughout the entire life cycle, including partner selection, marital relations, family formation, child-rearing, and the ethical norms of kinship relations.

– the similarities and differences between English and Chinese marriage and family proverbs represent systematic projections of underlying cognitive models and culturally conditioned value orientations rather than random linguistic variation. While certain metaphorical patterns reflect universal human cognitive experience, English proverbs tend to foreground individual choice, contractual relations, and personal responsibility, whereas Chinese proverbs emphasize collectivism, familial hierarchy, moral obligation, and intergenerational continuity, thereby reflecting broader contrasts in cognitive-cultural orientations.

– marriage and family proverbs are dynamically evolving linguistic and cultural units whose meanings, structures, and communicative functions continuously adapt to social transformation. Under the conditions of globalization, digital communication, and generational change, contemporary digital proverbs and modified forms (anti-proverbs) demonstrate that paremiological expressions remain active sites of cultural cognition, reinterpretation, and value negotiation, thus bridging the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of proverb research.

– marriage and family proverbs function as social-cognitive mechanisms that transmit cultural norms, shape collective memory, regulate social expectations, and mediate between traditional value systems and contemporary social concepts. Their continued use in both conventional and digital discourse confirms their role as dynamic linguistic instruments through which societies preserve, negotiate, and reconstruct cultural identities and social values.

Research approbation. The materials and main provisions of the dissertation have been tested through publications: 3 articles were published in scientific journals indexed in the Scopus database, and 2 articles were published in editions recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Volume and structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of a list of definitions, a list of abbreviations, an introduction, three main chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references. The total length of the dissertation is 155 pages.