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**THE IDEA OF SPEECH AS REFLECTED IN RUSSIAN PAROEMIA:
A VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF
CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND AXIOLOGY**

Scientific specialty 5.9.5. Russian language. Languages of peoples of Russia

DISSERTATION
for the degree of
candidate of Philology

Translation from Russian

Academic advisor:
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Saint Petersburg

2024

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INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a system undergoing historical changes, “not only a fossilized set of lexical units and the rules governing their use”, but also a human activity of a special kind [Kondratenko 2012]. While it can be purposefully regulated, it primarily complies with the conventions of a given society and is characterized and evaluated from different perspectives.

Man is a social animal. Speech facilitates the establishing of contacts and is, to an extent, the very form of human coexistence. This is why people are evaluated not only in terms of their appearance, behaviour, and actions, but also in terms of their speech, both with its external characteristics and its content.

“Language, which is an instrument of culture and at the same time constitutes part of culture” [Tolstoy 1997: 312], provides the core of the ethnic identity, and any national culture exists and develops within the medium of an ethnic language [Tatiyeva, Suyunova 2015: 324]. Every language is rooted in a culture and has its own specific ways of reflecting the speakers and the things that happen to them, including – through the medium of stable language units.

The semantic system of these units consolidates the knowledge and experience of the society and reflects the worldview of the speakers. The meanings of various stable units form a unified system, a collective philosophy of a kind, or norms of behaviour that speakers of this language have to follow.

Paroemia constitute a particular stratum of linguistic units capturing typical life situations, ethno-specific ideas, recommendations on behaviour, etc. They have a great potential for research in cultural linguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic axiology, and cognitive linguistics [Tatiyeva, Suyunova 2015: 323-328]. Russian paroemia are currently at the centre of attention of linguists, which is seen in the works of O.B. Abakumova [2012], E.I. Zinovieva [2012], T.G. Bochina [2002, 2023], E.E. Ivanova [2007, 2019], M.L. Kovshova [2017, 2019a], L.B. Savenkova [2002], E.I. Seliverstova [2005, 2017], O.E. Frolova [2007] and many others.

Proverbs¹ reflect folk ideas about language and speech, summarize ethno-specific views on the nature of communication and observations of various types of communicative behaviour, and provide evaluations. Proverbs verbalizing the idea of speech can be found in all languages, and their national character is manifested in the differences between standards, images, and stereotypes used in this or that culture. The study of a component of a linguistic worldview that represents the speakers attitudes towards the principal type of human activity, i.e. speech, seems to be extremely important.

Speech is considered “the most complex human system and is the component of the linguistic worldview that has not been studied sufficiently” [Gutovskaya 2007: 63]. At the same time, little attention has been given to such an object of research as a speaker, who is present in the Russian linguistic worldview thanks to his individual speech characteristics. The ideas of speech and the speaker, however, are extremely significant for both an individual and a society, and lexicographic sources provide rich material for identifying and generalizing various representations of speech accumulated in Russian culture and Russian mentality.

On the other hand, the perceptions of speech reflected in proverbs may have divergences with those cultural attitudes and perceptions that are typical of Russian speakers today. This makes it expedient and **relevant** to identify not only the main trends in the interpretation and evaluation of speech recorded in the corpus of Russian proverbs and the ideas of speech formed over time in the collective linguistic consciousness, but also to determine the criteria of evaluating speech by which Russian speakers are guided these days as well as to find the scale of the differences found.

The **scientific novelty** of the current dissertation lies in the fact that this topic has not been subjected to scientific research as regards comparing the attitudes towards speech expressed in proverbs with the perceptions of speech by today's speakers of the Russian language. The novelty of the work is also found in the analysis of the evaluation of an individual through their speech verbalized in proverbs.

¹ In this paper we follow a number of contemporary linguists and use the terms “paroemia” and “proverb” as synonyms.

The **object** of the current study is Russian language proverbs characterizing the activity of speech, stereotypical ideas of speech in Russian culture and in Russian paroemia.

The **subject matter** of the study comprises the verbalization of stereotypical perceptions of speech in Russian proverbs, the cultural attitudes and values reflected in paroemia, and the ways modern Russian speakers tend to view speech behaviour.

The **aim** of the study is to reveal the linguocultural content of the national-cultural constant of “speech” as verbalized in Russian proverbs against the backdrop of its perception by modern native speakers.

The aim of the study makes it necessary to solve the following **tasks**:

1. to present the theoretical basis of the study based on the analysis of academic literature on the main issues addressed;
2. to characterise the basic components of proverbs, which allow to develop criteria for selecting units for analysis and are involved in the formation of the idea of speech as reflected in proverbs; to select material from dictionaries of Russian proverbs and sayings;
3. to reveal the paradigm of attributes of the national-cultural constant of “speech” in the Russian paroemiological worldview and to propose a typology of stereotypical representations verbalized in Russian paroemia and reflecting the main trends in the interpretation and evaluation of speech;
4. determine the range of characteristics of the Russian individual revealed through speech and constituting the linguocultural potential of paroemia;
5. to identify the values of Russian speakers expressed in proverbs about speech;
6. to conduct a survey of native speakers of Russian in order to identify their perceptions of speech, its positive and negative features, and to comment on the results obtained;
7. to determine the overlap in the representations revealed in proverbs and in the views on speech of present-day native speakers, and to assess the degree of similarity, i.e. coincidences and divergences.

The hypothesis is as follows: The study and description of the linguocultural constant of “speech” in the Russian linguistic consciousness will allow, firstly, to reveal

the system of parameters by which speech is characterized, and a set of the most frequently verbalized cultural attitudes and stereotypical representations, in which the values of native speakers are manifested; secondly, to reveal the character of the nation-specific view of speech as an important human activity and of the individual, whose traits are manifested in speech, and also – by comparing the two sets of data – to note the changes occurring in the consciousness of the collective native speaker or, on the contrary, the stability of some perceptions of speech and its evaluation.

The following **methods and techniques** were applied: the method of linguocognitive analysis, the method of component analysis, the method of continuous sampling of material from lexicographic sources, the method of quantitative calculations, the method of questionnaire, descriptive and comparative methods.

The material under examination is extracted from dictionaries of Russian proverbs and sayings: The collection “Russian Proverbs” by V.I. Dal, the collection ‘Russian Folk Proverbs and Parables’ by I.M. Snegirev, ‘The Big Dictionary of Russian Proverbs’ by V.M. Mokienko, T.G. Nikitina, E.K. Nikolaeva, ‘The Dictionary of Russian Proverbs and Sayings’ by A.M. Zhigulev, ‘The Dictionary of Russian Proverbs and Sayings’ by V.P. Zhukov, ‘The Dictionary-Thesaurus of Russian Proverbs, Proverbs and Metaphorical Expressions’ by V.M. M. Zhigulev, ‘Dictionary of Russian Proverbs and Sayings’ by V.P. Zhukov, ‘Dictionary-Thesaurus of Russian Proverbs, Sayings and Apt Expressions’ by V.I. Zimin, collection ‘Russian Proverbs and Sayings’ by V.P. Anikin. The total number of paroemia under examination is more than 1500.

The theoretical and methodological background of the dissertation comprises:

– works on cultural linguistics: N.D. Arutyunova 1984, E.S. Yakovleva 1994, Y.D. Apresyan 1995, V.N. Telia 1996, V.V. Vorobyev 1997, V.I. Postovalova 1999, V.V. Krasnykh 2002, V.I. Karasik 2004, 2013; D.B. Gudkov, M.L. Kovshova 2007, V.A. Maslova 2007, 2023; 3.D. Popova, I.A. Sternin 2007, M.L. Kovshova 2009, 2012, 2019a; N.F. Alefirenko 2010, S.V. Ivanova, Z.Z. Chanysheva 2010; E.I. Zinovieva 2016, I.V. Zykova 2017, etc.;

– works on Russian proverbs: G.L. Permyakov 1970, 1988; V.P. Zhukov 1991, Z.K. Tarlanov 1999, E.E. Ivanov 2007, 2019; E.V. Ivanova 2002, L.B. Savenkova 2002,

2006, V.M. Mokienko 2001, 2010; T.G. Bochina 2002, 2023; O.E. Frolova 2007, O.B. Abakumova 2012, E.I. Seliverstova 2003, 2017; M.L. Kovshova 2019b, N.N. Semenenko 2020, Ani Rahmat, S.V. Banit, N.E. Yakimenko 2021; Xiaojun Ho, N.E. Yakimenko 2022, etc.;

– works on the problems of studying speech and the speaker as a communicating individual: P.A. Sorokin 1992, N.I. Beresneva, L.A. Dubrovskaya, I.G. Ovchinnikova 1994; N.S. Ryabinskaya 2002, S.Y. Gennadyevna 2007, M.S. Gutovskaya 2007, 2008, 2020; S.A. Eremina, A.P. Orlova 2009; E.V. Ivanova 2010, A.N. Ksenofontova 2012, L.B. Matevosyan 2017, E.I. Zabusova, A.Y. Lazareva, V.V. Kolodchenko 2018; V.Y. Lyubimov 2022, S.V. Moshcheva 2022, etc.;

– works on the semantics value in linguistic units: Shibutani 1961, N.D. Arutyunova 1984, V.I. Karasik 2002, R.M. Yakushin 2003, L.K. Bayramova 2008, A.I. Lyzlov 2009, N.N. Semenenko 2010, D.B. Kumakhova 2011, E.A. Bogdanova 2012, E.V. Nichiporchik 2012, 2015, 2023; Y.O. Suleymanov 2017, M.L. Kovshova 2018, O.V. Lomakina, V.M. Mokienko 2018; T.G. Bochina 2023, others.

The dissertation has the following **structure**: an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, a list of dictionaries and sources, and an appendix. The introduction explains the relevance of the topic, defines the object, subject matter, hypothesis, and aims of the study, formulates the novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the paper, presents the provisions put forward for defence, as well as the main results obtained in the course of the study. Chapter One is devoted to the theoretical foundations of the research: issues related to the anthropomorphic cultural code, the essence and basic concepts of cultural linguistics, the content of the terms “linguistic worldview”, “paroemiological worldview”, “paroemia”, “proverb”, “stereotype”, “linguocultural constants” and others. Chapter Two provides an overview of the lexical composition of PU, i.e. their components with the semantics of speaking, analyses proverbs about speech, proposes a typology of stereotypical ideas and cultural attitudes verbalised in them, and considers the personal qualities manifested in speech. The second part of Chapter Two consists of the analysis of the results of the survey we conducted, which provides information about the dominant characteristics of speech in the modern

Russian linguistic consciousness. The two main aspects of the work create a basis for comparison and identification of similarities and differences in the perception and evaluation of speech, reflected, on the one hand, in the paroemia, the latter being as a collection of folk wisdom, and, on the other hand, verbalised by modern native speakers.

The **theoretical value** of the research is seen in the fact that its results contribute to the further development of the theory of cultural linguistics and paroemiology, to the study of particular components of the Russian linguistic worldview, nation- and culture-specific semantics, pragmatics, and the axiology of Russian proverbs and sayings.

The **practical value** of the research consists in the possibility of using the results in teaching Russian as a first and as a foreign language and in developing courses on the issues of phraseology and paroemiology, cultural linguistics and lexicography.

The evaluation of results: the results of the research were presented and considered at the seminars for Ph.D. students at the Department of Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language, St. Petersburg State University, as well as in the presentations at scientific conferences:

1. A National (All-Russia) Conference in Sciences and Humanities with International Participation “Science SpbU – 2021” (December 2021, St. Petersburg);
2. The XXVII International scientific and methodological conference “The problems of teaching philological disciplines in higher education”. (April 2022, St. Petersburg);
3. The 51st International Scientific Philological Conference named after Ludmila A. Verbitskaya (March 2023, St. Petersburg);

The main theses and points of the dissertation are covered in six publications, three of which are published in the journals indexed and recommended by the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles (SCADT):

1. *Xu Yao. Stereotypical ideas of speech as reflected in Russian proverbs // Bulletin of Philological Studies. – 2023a. – №3. – Vol3. – P. 68–72.*
2. *Xu Yao., E.I. Seliverstova. The verbalization of the idea of importance of choosing words carefully: Evidence from Russian paroemia against the backdrop of*

Chinese ones // Bulletin of Kostroma State University. – 2023b. – №2. Vol29. – P. 160–166.

3. Xu Yao. Personal qualities as manifested in speech: Evidence of Russian proverbs // Bulletin of the I. Y. Yakovlev Chuvash State Pedagogical University. – 2023c. – №4. – P. 32–36.

Other publications:

4. *Xu Yao*. Stereotypical ideas of language in Russian proverbs viewed against the backdrop of the Chinese language // Proceedings of the All-Russian Conference on Natural Sciences and Humanities with International Participation “SpbSU Science – 2021”. – SPb.: Scythia-Print, – 2021. – P. 694–695.

5. *Xu Yao*. The verbalization of the concept of “speech” in Russian proverbs // The problems of teaching philological disciplines in higher education: Proceedings of the XXVII international scientific-methodological conference – St. Petersburg: FGBOUVO “SPbGUPTD”, – 2022. – P. 154–160.

6. *Xu Yao*. Verbalization components of the concept of “speech” in Russian proverbs: lexis and semantics // LI International Scientific Philological Conference named after Lyudmila A. Verbitskaya. St. Petersburg: – 2023d. – P. 486–487.

Major research results of the study are as follows:

1. The paper analyses proverbial units within a number of categories: a) expressions that characterize the manner of speech and the perception of its external characteristics; b) sayings that reflect an opinion of the content of speech; c) paroemia connected with the choice of the addressee / interlocutor (the smallest category). The analysis makes it possible to identify the most frequently verbalized stereotypical ideas, both about the negative characteristics of speech (hasty, pointless, empty, dangerously careless, etc.) and positive ones (thoughtful, careful, etc.). The paroemia contain a whole range of recommendations regarding sensible and dignified communication. (*Xu Yao*. Stereotypical ideas of speech as reflected in Russian proverbs. – 2023a. – P. 68)

2. Russian paroemia reveal a significant number of cultural attitudes important for native speakers: about actions outweighing words; the impossibility of unsaying what has been said; cautiousness in choosing words; evaluating the situation before speaking, etc.

The fact that the same idea reappears in various proverbs is evidence of the importance of this idea in the Russian culture. (Xu Yao., Seliverstova E.I. The importance of choosing one's words carefully: The verbalization of this idea in Russian paroemia as compared with Chinese ones. – 2023b. – P. 160)

3. The paper analyses Russian paroemia reflecting speech in terms of its verbal design, meaningfulness, pragmatic orientation, performance, context, etc. The results demonstrate the anthropocentricity of proverbs, because what is said in them, no matter what sphere of activity it concerns, is considered with an individual in mind: how he/she is seen by the speaker in this or that life situation. Paroemia tend to verbalize critical attitudes towards speakers; it is not often that positive attitudes or approval are found, which confirms the axiological nature of these units. (Xu Yao. Personal qualities as reflected in speech: Evidence from Russian proverbs). – 2023c. – P. 32)

4. Speech as a vital human activity is widely represented in Russian paroemia and is verbalized using a great variety of components, most of which are verbs and nouns. Proverbs reflect native speakers' stereotypical notions about various aspects of speech and characterize the speaker in terms of the content of his/her speech and its external characteristics. (Xu Yao. Verbalization of the concept of “speech” in Russian proverbs. – 2022. – P. 154)

5. Proverbs reveal a wide range of lexical items which, acting as components, serve the paroemiological verbalization of the concept of “speech” and the demonstration of various perceptions associated with speaking among Russian speakers. (Xu Yao. Verbalization components of the concept of “speech” in Russian proverbs: Lexis and semantics – 2023d. – P. 487)

The following statements are to be defended:

1. The variety of lexical units expressing the semantics of speaking and the stunning variety of proverbs verbalizing ideas about speech are evidence of the importance of speech as a human activity.

2. Proverbs as units containing a wealth of cultural information provide a lot of data to be deciphered, which in turn allows to make judgments about typical

manifestations of communication, about its characteristics in the eyes of native speakers, and whether the rules of the unwritten code of speech conduct are observed or violated.

3. The corpus of proverbs characterising speakers and their attitudes to their interlocutors, as well as attributes of speech and typical communicative situations, is made up of proverbs containing components with the semantics of speaking belonging to different word classes. At the same time, beyond this array of units there are also proverbs of similar semantics that do not contain such components.

4. Out of the two main categories of proverbs that concern, on the one hand, the external characteristics of speech and, on the other, its content, the units of the latter category prevail in number, since it is the content of speech that is crucial in determining human relationships.

5. The paradigm of speech behaviour patterns includes units that differ in the degree of implicit / explicit expression of cultural attitudes and stereotypical perceptions, including contradictory ones. Among them, there clearly stand out the most important ones as they are verbalized repeatedly in a variety of ways and differ significantly from the rest in terms of frequency.

6. The impression of a person depends in many respects on how he or she speaks, and many proverbs about speaking discuss not speech as such, but how a person's character shows in their speech, their view of themselves, their attitude to people and to work, their manner of speaking, etc.

7. Proverbs about speech reveal constants at the level of proverb-specific ideas, clichéd paroemia components, and logical-structural models typical of the Russian paroemiological domain and of the component of the paroemiological worldview under examination.

8. The linguistic consciousness of modern Russian speakers identifies a significant number of both positive and negative features of speech, which for the most part overlap with the features mentioned in Russian proverbs, which in turn testifies that the expectations of the interlocutor and the general rules of communication - first of all, with regard to the content of speech – have remained relatively stable over the course of time.

9. Compared with the paroemia, modern speakers of Russian give greater attention to the standards of speech, to the forms of communication, to the observance of etiquette, and to the impression speech produces.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE LINGUOCULTURAL STUDY OF PAROEMIA

1.1. Foundations and principles of cultural linguistics

1.1.1 The interconnection of “culture” and “language”

The way out of the impasse into which traditional linguistics, which studies “language in itself and for itself” (F. Saussure), has reached in its time, was its interest in man, his consciousness, and culture.

Cultural linguistics as an independent science formed its outlines in the 1980s-1990s. As a result, a completely new scientific field was opened for research by modern linguists, which has received wide development prospects. As V.I. Postovalova points out, the implementation of the anthropological programme of comprehension of language, to which the science of language has now turned, “begins with the creation of synthetic and complex disciplines aimed at considering language in close connection with the fundamental aspects of man, taken in their linguistic refraction” [Postovalova 1999: 29]. Y.S. Stepanov believes that the essence of language can be revealed to researchers only from philosophical positions – in the aspect of “philosophical anthropology” – the doctrine of man, his “essence” and “nature” [Stepanov 2007]. Hence the following conclusion: the scientific world is overdue for the transition of linguistics to a new stage of development, to a new paradigm in its study [Maslova 2014: 78].

In modern Russian science a lot has already been done to define the status of cultural linguistics, its essence and directions of study. The notion of “cultural linguistics” is used in the works of venerable linguologists and their works are heard in the scientific world – N.D. Arutyunova [Arutyunova 1999], N.F. Alefirenko [2003, 2006], V.V. Vorobyov [Vorobyov 1997], V.I. Karasik [Karasik 2004, 2013], M.L. Kovshova [Kovshova 2019], V.A. Maslova [Maslova 2004], Y.S. Stepanov [Stepanov 1985], T.B. Radbil [Radbil 2017], V.N. Telia [Telia 1996] and many others who addressed the problem of identifying information of cultural property contained in language units. Special linguocultural dictionaries are also published [Kovshova, Gudkov 2018; Kovshova 2019; Krasnykh 2016; Telia 2018, etc.], – including bilingual ones [Xiaojun

Ho, Yakimenko 2022; Ani Rahmat, Banit, Yakimenko 2021, etc.]. Currently, cultural linguistics is included as a theoretical course in the programmes of university training of specialists, resulting in textbooks and manuals on this discipline [Alefirenko 2010; Vorobiev 2008; Zinovieva 2016; Krasnykh 2002; Maslova 2023, etc.].

As you know, language is closely related to culture, since not a single culture in the world can fully realize its development and formation without the existence of language. “Language not only reflects the surrounding reality, but also interprets it, creating a special reality in which a person lives” [Sklyarova 2021: 5]. Cultural linguistics is not just a field of determining the national-cultural specificity of linguistic units and text. It is focused on identifying the mechanisms of introducing cultural information into a linguistic sign, as well as the mechanisms of its extraction from there by a native speaker [Maslova 2023: 14].

The connection between culture and language is also pointed out by V.N. Telia: “Cultural linguistics is that part of ethnolinguistics which is devoted to the study and description of the correspondence of language and culture in their synchronous interaction”. [Telia 1996: 217]. The researcher considers the concept of cultural connotation as a way of embodiment of culture in a linguistic sign to be basic for cultural linguistics [ibid.: 16].

Culture is perceived by a person in different ways: it depends on how it is fixed in language and how it is stored in human consciousness and collective linguistic consciousness, how it is manifested in the behaviour of a society – including speech, how it is verbalized in discourse, thus determining its national-cultural specificity. Often this “cultural content” is not verbalized and reflexed by the representative of a certain culture [Krasnykh 2001: 5], it is stored at the deep levels of human consciousness and is transmitted by culture bearers unconsciously – by various language units, including proverbs.

The anthropocentricity of the meanings of linguistic units as reflecting the general properties of human nature was noted by V.N. Telia. As V.A. Maslova writes, V.N. Telia believed that culture is “included” in language, because language, “being a means of communication, absorbs into the meaning everything that is related to the cultural

competence of its speakers” [Maslova 2020: 690].

Thus, linguocultural studies are liberalized in the direction from culture to language liberalizing national consciousness.

The definition of linguistics given by the Chinese linguist Liu Hong seems fair and all-encompassing: cultural linguistics is a complex integrative discipline that “combines the study of language and culture as its primary task, includes research into the characteristics of national cultures, the core elements of the national mentality reflected in the system of linguistic means, as well as the peculiarities of the perception of a foreign language picture of the world and the formation of ideas about a foreign language culture” the ‘course of studying a foreign language’ [Liu Hong 2020: 675].

In conclusion of this section, we will cite the opinion of E.I. Zinovieva, who insists on the independence of linguocultural studies as a scientific discipline, reasonably separating it from linguistic and regional studies, cognitive linguistics, ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics. In her opinion, we can talk about “the intersection of sciences that have a common object, but different subjects of research” [Zinovieva 2016: 17]. Cultural linguistic studies “the material culture and mentality embodied in a living national language, manifested in language processes in their effective continuity with the language and culture of an ethnos” [ibid.].

1.1.2. The linguistic worldview as an object of research

The concept of “worldview” as a nomination of semantic modelling of the world exists in various areas of human life: in science, religion, literature; linguistic worldview (sometimes – naive linguistic worldview) is understood as a scheme of perception of reality fixed in language and specific for a given group [Yakovleva 1994]. Any nation in the process of cognition of the world has developed a special system of names for the surrounding reality. Everything that people experienced, found, experienced, went through the stage of processing and linguistic comprehension. Depending on the national

experience, the linguistic system differs, as the formation and transmission of the results of the cognition process is impossible without language.

The basic concept of *linguistic worldview* (LW) appeared in the 60s. The linguistic worldview is in the centre of attention of modern linguistics as a fundamental concept of anthropocentric paradigm. The concept of linguistic worldview goes back to W. von Humboldt's ideas about the internal form of language and the relationship between language and culture. A significant stage in the development of the concept of linguistic worldview was the emergence of the hypothesis of linguistic relativity of American linguists E. Sapir and B. Whorf, which consisted in recognizing the influence that language has on human thinking [Humboldt 1984].

W. von Humboldt, introducing the important concepts of “linguistic worldview” and “internal form of a word” , believed that languages differ from each other not only in their external form (sounds, signs), but also in the views of the linguistic community on the world contained in it [Humboldt 1984: 319]. According to him, the spiritual characteristics of a nation are necessarily involved in the process of language creation. The intellectual merits of a language, according to Humboldt, rest “exclusively on the orderliness, thoroughness and purity of the spiritual organization of peoples in the era of formation or transformation of languages and are a reflection or even a direct imprint of this organization” [ibid.: 101], that is, material and spiritual culture are directly reflected in language. Briefly, the essence of his views can be summarised as follows: “all culture is national, its character is expressed in language through a special vision of the world” [ibid.]. This idea of “linguistic worldview” was developed in the works of A.A. Potebni, S. Bally, I.A. Baudouin de Courtenay, P.O. Jakobson and other researchers.

Although the linguistic worldview is not a part of naive or scientific pictures, researchers note the fact of coexistence of ordinary and scientific knowledge about the world in it [Pimenova 2019: 9]. Many concepts (time, space) that are reflected in language are common to both scientific theories and everyday consciousness. These worldviews can influence the linguistic worldview to a greater or lesser extent due to their linguistic relevance [Yakovleva 1994: 11].

Some researchers identify the LW and the naive picture of the world due to the presence in the former of certain signs of popular misconceptions and even mistakes, outdated beliefs, simply everyday ideas, which are slowly changing attitudes [Yakovleva 1994: 10; Apresyan 1995: 39]. However, naive thinking should not be understood as primitive; it has evolved over centuries and carries within itself the folk wisdom of generations of people: “naivety is associated with a reflection of everyday, everyday perception of the order of things, as opposed to their scientific understanding and explanation” [Ivanova 2002: 15].

There are complex relationships between the concepts of “worldview” and “linguistic worldview”. The fundamental difference is that “the worldview is a concrete reflection of reality in human consciousness, and the linguistic worldview is information about reality fixed in language” [Sklyarova 2021: 26]. The LW, like the conceptual picture of the world, needs reconstruction, which involves relying exclusively on the facts of language [Ivanova 2006: 38] – this is what makes it interesting to linguists. A conceptual picture of the world means “knowledge that acts as a result of a mental reflection of reality”, as well as “the result of sensory knowledge” [Zinovieva 2016: 26]. In order to reconstruct fragments of the linguistic worldview that require the analysis of linguistic data and the interpretation of socio-historical and cultural factors, linguists find it necessary to prioritise linguistic data over socio-historical context.

According to the concept of Y.D. Apresyan, each natural language reflects a certain way of perceiving and organizing the world. Language is a fact of culture, an integral part of the culture that we inherit, and at the same time its instrument. It is language that accumulates and verbalises the key concepts of culture, translating them into sign embodiment – words. The world model created by language is a subjective image of the objective world, it bears the features of the human way of worldview [Sukalenko 1992: 77], that is, the anthropocentrism that permeates all language.

Let us present another definition of LW that has become fundamental and very authoritative. According to V.A. Maslova, this “It is structured and multileveled. It is the linguistic worldview that determines such important phenomena as communicative behaviour, understanding of the external world and the inner world of a person. It is also

very important for us that it reflects the *way of speech and thinking activity* characteristic of a particular era, with its spiritual, cultural and national values” [Maslova 2007: 296].

V. A. Maslova believes that each language divides the world in its own way, that is, it has its own way of conceptualizing it. The characteristics of the national language create for speakers of this language a specific coloring of this world, determined by the national significance of objects, phenomena, processes, and a selective attitude towards them, which is generated by the specifics of the activities, lifestyle and national culture of a given people [Maslova 2004: 66].

From the point of view of modern linguocognitivists, LW is a multi-layered discourse and meaning formation. Multilayeredness arises both because of the participation of different layers of linguistic units in its verbalisation and because of the historical change of worldview paradigms that determine the content and nature of categorisation and conceptualisation of reality cognised by a person [Semenenko, Krivosheev, 2019: 34].

Cultural linguistic is a direction in linguistics, “aimed at studying culture in language and language in culture” [Karasik 2013: 4] and engaged in the search for patterns of linguistic transformation of reality, largely relies on an array of stable units of language. According to V. N. Telia, the basic concept for cultural linguistic is the concept of cultural connotation as a way of embodiment of culture in a language sign [Telia 1999: 16], and this is largely true for phraseological units. This opinion is also shared by other researchers, defining connotation as cultural information extracted from consciousness, which “connects with verbal signs of language and folklore — idioms and paroemias, is added to their semantics in the form of a special categorical component” [Kovshova 2019: 173].

Since the object of study in our work is proverbs, we cannot ignore the interpretation proposed by M.L. Kovshova, who considers the linguistic worldview to be a general cultural structured and multilevel heritage of the nation. The researcher notes that “the folklore ‘layer’ of culture <...> is ‘populated’ with fairy tales, proverbs, sayings, riddles, etc.; in the form of a ‘condensed’, fragmented discourse, it exists in the memory

of every person and forms the foundation of his or her cultural composition” [Kovshova 2016: 40].

1.2. The study of the paroemiological worldview

When writing this section of the paper, the materials of previously published articles were used: [Xu Yao 2023a].

1.2.1. The terms “*paroemia*” and “*proverb*”

Each language contains a considerable number of speech formations that have linguocultural value due to their figurative content, laconic form, verbalisation of human experience in them [Babenko 2020: 15]. Among the linguistic evidence of national linguistic cultures, phraseological units and proverbs – as one of the varieties of phraseological units – rightfully occupy an important place as sources of information about different aspects of the life and worldview of an ethnic group.

Active attention to phraseological problems in the last decades of the 20th century led to increased interest in such a small genre of folklore as paremiology. Therefore, the *linguistic status* of paremiological units is nowadays almost beyond discussion. Note that in modern research scholars often use the terms *paroemia* and *proverb* as synonymous [Dolgova 2018, Kopylskikh 2016, Seliverstova 2009, etc.]. We follow this principle, since other proverbial genres – for example, riddles, signs – are not considered by us.

A rather clear distinction between phraseological phrases and Proverbs was made in his time by V.P. Zhukov. On the basis of semantic and syntactic criteria he distinguished, firstly, *phraseological phrases (proverbs)* as “units with an open structure (unclosed)”, which are based on concepts (*tongue swallowed* – ‘silent’; *tongue without bones* – ‘chatterbox’). The second category – *proverbs* – are units with a closed structure, completed in semantic and intonational relation, with inherent categories of predicativity and modality, that is, with the features of a sentence [Zhukov 1991: 9].

The founder of the logical approach to Proverbs G.L. Permyakov derived a model of their semantic structure, according to which the basis of a paroemia is always a thematic pair of components connected by a certain type of relationship [Permyakov 1988: 107-128]. The elements of this thematic pair can be connected by relations of various properties. For example, the thematic elements of PU *If there were a cow, there would be a milking can* are connected by relations “thing – object (tool) directly related to its use” (*milking can* – ‘milking utensil, milking can, milking machine’ [DED.3: 159]; ‘a dish in which milk is poured’). The structural-logical approach allowed the scientist to identify a certain (limit) number of universal models of Proverbs, applicable to the paremics of any language and finding in it the corresponding examples of realisation of the selected models.

Proverbs, demonstrating a great variety of syntactic structures, attracted the attention of Z.K. Tarlanov, who consecutively considered separate types of syntactic constructions realised in paremics. For example, he identifies models of paroemias that demonstrate comparative-contrastive and adjunctive relations, adversative-restrictive, comparative-adversative and other relations, proverbs with non-union, etc. [Tarlanov 1999].

Proverbs as units of language are studied in different directions. So, E.I. Seliverstova, comparing phraseological units and proverbs, identifies features characteristic of PU: completeness and didacticism, a syntactic structure different from phraseological units-word combinations, special conditions for contextual inclusion and functioning in the text, a bright pragmatic orientation, certain paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships between components, etc. [Seliverstova 2017: 24-25]. In a number of works, the researcher addresses the problem of proverb variation and argues for the regularity of the appearance of variants by the presence of a special paremiological space that authorizes numerous replacements of components and entire fragments of PE, the formation of single-model sayings, etc. [Seliverstova 2003, 2005].

The most urgent problems that are being solved by modern paremiology are presented in detail by Prof. V.M. Mokienko in his review article devoted to the main eight “provocative” questions concerning the directions of studying Proverbs. V.M. Mokienko,

despite the great variety of different interpretations of proverbs and sayings and criteria for their selection, insists on preserving the traditional understanding of a Proverb as “a logically complete figurative or non-imaginative aphoristic utterance, having an edifying meaning and characterised by a special rhythmic and phonetic organisation” [Mokienko 2001: 10]. In this paper, in the linguistic interpretation of Proverb, we rely on this very definition.

We consider V.M. Mokienko’s objection to the decline in the functioning of PU in modern speech and the interpretation of proverbs as “linguistic casts of outdated folklore stereotypes”, as if not corresponding to the realities of modern life, to be very important. Linguistic practice, in his opinion, confirms the opposite, which is based on observations of the proverbial creativity of modern urban societies [ibid.: 11].

Let us dwell in more detail on the proverb as one of the most striking structures that represent a certain way of ordered knowledge about the world, the method of organization of which is also an element of this knowledge [Putilov 1994]. Paroemias reflect the relevance of fragments of the surrounding world, which receive weight due to reasons of an extralinguistic nature, from which – according to a mosaic principle – a holistic image, an idea of the world and a person’s place in it is formed in the consciousness of the collective and the individual [Korneeva 2003: 251]. The American paremiologist Alan Dundes (Dandes 1980) noted that proverbs are, along with other forms of culture, the “autobiography of the people” and the “mirror of culture” and are of interest for study in terms of reconstructing on their basis a total understanding of the world.

Paroemias exist in any language and during their long-term functioning they form a significant fund of units. According to V.M. Mokienko, proverbs and sayings are the core of national consciousness and gradually become “a measure of the spirituality of the people” [Mokienko 1986: 251]. Their attractiveness for speakers is determined by a significant national colouring at the level of figurative-expressive means of language and logical-linguistic structure of sayings, as well as by the originality of the ideas expressed, that is, cultural attitudes and their interpretations, the presence of various extra-linguistic reasons that explain the appearance of these or those units of paremics by the properties

of national culture. Through the interpretation of the meaning of paroemias and correlating them with the nature of the prototypical situation, the national-cultural features of the analysed units are revealed. According to V.M. Mokienko, paroemias are informatively two-dimensional: they state “various aspects of life” and have a high degree of “cumulativeness” [Mokienko 2001: 7].

The famous linguist Anna Vezhbitskaya shows in her work “Understanding Cultures through Key Words” how nationally marked specificity is manifested in the vocabulary of languages, making it possible to state differences in the core values of cultural communities [Vezhbitskaya 2001], and notes that one of the indicators of the importance of a word is the presence of “a whole phraseological family” with this word. The scientist writes about the possibility to “untangle” a whole tangle of “attitudes, values and expectations embodied not only in words, but also in common combinations, in stable expressions, in grammatical constructions, in Proverbs, etc.” [ibid.: 36-37]. In fact, the emphasis in the above statement is on the importance of an array of stable units of language as a source of nationally marked information. The “developed vocabulary”, the frequency of use of individual words, and the place occupied by a certain concept in a particular culture can be nationally specific. Arguing the last thesis, the researcher cites as an example Russian proverbs that verbalize the concepts of ‘truth’ and ‘truth’ [ibid.: 31–33].

Scientists specializing in various fields of science rightly call the phraseological fund of national languages a “treasury of wisdom” that gives an idea of various areas of social life. “The centuries-old experience of the cultural and historical development of the people, native speakers, is truly an encyclopedia of their life” [Antonova 2020: 150]. The fact that each nation, despite the generally universal mechanism of generalization and stereotyping of various situations recorded by proverbs, “in its own way consolidates the worldview system in these figurative units of language” [ibid.], allows scientists to speak not only about linguistic, but also about paremiological worldview.

1.2.2. *The paremiological worldview as a component of the linguistic worldview*

The paremiological worldview (PW) is understood as a fragment of the linguistic picture of the world, represented by the proverbial fund of the ethnos. The linguistic picture of the world as a whole coincides with the reflection of the world in the minds of people and represents the broadest concept; it reflects the “naive” worldview of the people [Savenkova 2006, Ivanova 2006, etc.]. The proverbial worldview differs from the linguistic worldview: “paroemia, often ready to respond with numerous variants of conveying the same idea, turns out to be quite whimsical and is characterised by selectivity in reflecting fragments of the surrounding world” . [Seliverstova, Len Si-i 2005: 49].

Being an integral part of the linguistic worldview, PW creates a special “global image” underlying the worldview of both the nation as a whole and each individual. In other words, it is a generally accepted stereotype expressing the essential properties of the world in the understanding of man as a result of his spiritual activity [Postovalova 1988: 9]. This rather general understanding of the paremiological (proverbial) worldview receives more detailed coverage in the works of other researchers, based on the analysis of specific material – see, in particular: Zhukov 2004; Komova, Lomakina 2019; Ledneva 2016; Savenkova 2006 and others.

The proverbial picture, reconstructed by linguists, is composed of many proverbial units, each of which is a carrier of a piece of information, and its meaning is a socially codified form of social experience [Seliverstova, Len Si-i 2005: 49]. PW reflects the peculiarities of peoples' worldview, conditioned, on the one hand, by extra-linguistic factors. These include specific features of historical development of each nation, peculiarities of material and folk spiritual culture, manifested and reflected in myths, beliefs, rituals, customs, stereotypes of thinking, national psychology. Compare such culturally marked PUs as the *First Wife from God, the Second from Man, the Third from the Devil; The first bow to God, the second to the owner and mistress, the third to all good people; The first puppies (greyhounds) are royal, the second are lordly, the third are dog puppies*. On the other hand, the peculiarities of the ethnomarked paremiological

worldview are determined by the nature of languages that categorise the same objective reality in different ways.

The proverb is one of the very specific types of units involved in the narrativization of human experience. She is, according to G.L. Permyakov, “a sign of a situation”: in it, the referent event is not a specific, but a typified situation, revealed to a native speaker with varying degrees of explicitness. The emergence of a similar situation in real life leads to the retrieval from the memory of speakers of the corresponding expression associated with it previously and associated with it now.

The paremiological worldview is especially marked by the richness of people’s stereotypical ideas about the world, a reflection of their sociocultural experience. It represents “a compact container of experience, a kind of packaging of this experience” [Bredis, Lomakina 2018: 119]. The paremiological worldview is a worldview of a special kind, because the linguistic reflection of the environment is overlaid with the peculiarity of verbalising means, which delineate some life situations in a special way. Proverbs speak about the actual for the speakers, laconically and expressively formulate inferences derived from observations, draw analogies between life situations and human behaviour in them.

The appeal to Russian phrase-paremiological material by researchers – native speakers of another language and culture is indicative. This interest is explained by the desire to “decode” the knowledge hidden in a phraseological phrase or Proverb, related to the categories of culture of the people and a particular country, which include historical and geographical information, information about the climate, about the mental makeup of the people, about the way of life in different times, and others. “Cultural discourse” can be addressed to science, religion, philosophy, social sphere of a particular nation [Georgieva 2002: 108].

Proverbs and sayings are one of the important factors in the adaptation of the values of different peoples. That is why it is not only advisable, but also extremely important to consider the study of phraseological and paremiological material as a way of becoming familiar with the system of values of a foreign language culture, as a means of relieving ionophones of possible difficulties in adapting the values of another people.

Thus, each nation has its own unique paremiological worldview, which makes it not only interesting, but also relevant to study the sets of Proverbs verbalising certain aspects of human perception and evaluation of man and the surrounding world.

1.2.3. The axiological foundations of the paroemiological worldview

N.D. Arutyunova noted that language reflects, preserves and transmits from generation to generation “only the most significant elements of culture for a person, only those that have a certain value for him” [Arutyunova 1984: 6]. In general, interpreting the understanding of value in the most general form, the researcher defines it as a concept denoting the cultural, social or personal significance (meaning) of phenomena and real facts. Values are the fundamental characteristics of culture, they represent “the most significant objects and phenomena of the surrounding reality for a person, playing the role of standards of what is proper and determining the direction and content of human activity” [ibid.].

In cultural linguistics, the evaluative element in the semantic content of linguistic units receives special attention as a result of verbalising the object's place in the value worldview belonging to the speakers of language and culture. According to V.I. Karasik, the value picture of the world is displayed in language with the help of evaluative judgements which are coordinated with certain codes (legal, religious, moral), generally accepted rational judgements, typical folk and popular literary subjects. The value picture of the world includes a universal one, represented by universal values, and a national-specific one, within which parts of the qualification of objects are based on different assessments, and values intersect and match in different ways. The researcher also believes that the value picture of the world contains the most important for a certain culture meanings, cultural dominants (constants or cultural concepts), the totality of which forms a specific type of culture fixed in language [Karasik 2002: 117-118].

Contained in the linguistic worldview of the world, in addition to the cognitive element, the normative-evaluative component is not by chance a separate subject of study for linguoculturology and deserves study in the aspect of the so-called value picture of

the world [Suleymanova 2017: 32]. The manifestation of special interest in the subject, writes the Japanese researcher Shibutani, is due precisely to its value component [Shibutani 1961:105].

The authors of the monograph “Paremiology without Borders”, considering value as the subject of semantic analysis of proverbs, write that the semantic structures of nominative units of language – including proverbs – are “a creation of the human mind, a product of the value-semantic interpretation of knowable reality, which constitutes the meaningful essence mentality of this or that people” [Paremiology 2020: 103].

N.F. Alefirenko also emphasises the value and semantic significance of fragments of the surrounding world. He writes about the nature of valuable meanings: “A person’s attitude to the world is, first of all, determined by meaning. If something is devoid of meaning, it ceases to exist for a person. Man endows the whole world with cultural meanings, and the world appears for him in its unique value-semantic significance” [Alefirenko 2013: 10]. The value basis of LW determines its comprehension as a worldview category, while the content of the term “worldview” is noticeably expanded and is actually identified with the concept of worldview [Semenenko, Krivosheev 2019].

Y.O. Suleymanova operates with the concept of “*worldview image*”: for a researcher, this is not only an understanding of the world, knowledge about it, but “at the same time, a system of values that determines the nature of a person’s attitude, experience of the world, a certain assessment of certain of its events and phenomena and, accordingly, a person’s active attitude to these events” [Suleymanova 2017: 33].

The concept of evaluation can be defined as “the attitude of native speakers towards an object, conditioned by the recognition or non-recognition of its value in terms of compliance or non-compliance of its qualities with certain value criteria” [Yakushina 2003: 7]. This definition seems to us to be optimal as it is concise and very meaningful.

Proverbs are the units in which people's values are most vividly reflected. This is determined by a high degree of paremiological conceptualisation of the value meaning of material and ideal objects. According to E.V. Nichiporchik, “the source of any knowledge is determined by human consciousness, and the edifying meanings of paroemias can be

explained by the intensional essence of values – comprehension of the value meaning of things as goals, motives and ways of achieving the desired” [Nichiporchik 2015: 19].

Paremiology is a branch of philology in which, when studying proverbs –proverbs, sayings, riddles, omens and other sayings, the emphasis is often placed on the value component of the semantics of units. In a brief figurative expression of traditional views and values based on the life experience of the people, researchers see the main purpose of proverbs – proverbs and sayings [Massalskaya 2016: 121].

The dominant position of certain values in the paremiological worldview is defined quite clearly – both by the number of units verbalising them and by the variety of aspects of their coverage. T.G. Bochina, considering the “axiology of age” in Russian paroemias, notes such phenomena as “life – death”, “health – illness” as components of the basic level of values and anti-values. Social-utilitarian values (labor, work), in her opinion, are associated with youth, and material – utilitarian values are associated with wealth and frugality [Bochina 2023: 180-181].

N.N. Semenenko pays considerable attention to the value component of paroemia. She notes the ambiguity of the approach to the stratification of values represented by paroemias [Semenenko 2020: 217]. The researcher emphasizes the importance of “terminological specification of the concept of the value substrate of paroemia by analogy with the concept of the cognitive substrate of paremic meaning.” In it she sees “the meaningful core of the implementation of the designated communicative intention”, for the sake of which the paroemia is used – “in accordance with the paremic concept sphere, in which the value-semantic architectonics of the ontology of culture is structured” [Semenenko 2017: 49].

Proverbs seem to be the most suitable for expressing the value component of semantics. As the authors of the monograph “Paremiology without Borders” write, paremic didactics “consists in the formation of stereotypical assessments, judgments and algorithms for awareness of reality,” which is carried out in the process of “perception of the patterns of awareness of the surrounding world inherent in the semantics of PU,” “clarification of the relationships and correlations of individual value dominants culture” by projecting them onto the actual linguistic semantics of the paroemia [Paremiology

2020: 80-81]. Proverbs, thus, not only aptly and expressively characterize a situation that gives impetus to the understanding of value, but “model the sphere of culture” – in the entire spectrum of diverse assessments and opinions. In this case, the proverb, being a carrier of value content, acts not as a nominative, but as an interpretive means of language [ibid.: 81]. For example, PU from *friendly words the tongue will not dry out* is intended not so much to represent a situation where the speaker does not show traditional (accepted) friendliness and goodwill towards the interlocutor, but rather to negatively assess such behavior. Politeness, verbalized goodwill, is one of the values associated with communication and speech activity.

At the same time, to characterize the value component of proverbial semantics, it is important to take into account its manifestation both in a separate proverb and in the national paremiological space as a whole. At the same time, it is advisable to approach the value, which is objectified by paroemia, as “a cognitive unit of a special kind, especially since the modern linguocognitive approach to resolving controversial issues of linguo-semiotic status allows for a very broad interpretation of the cognitive unit” [Kovshova 2018: 232].

The studies of many modern paremiologists are devoted to various value aspects of proverbial semantics – L.K. Bayramova [2008], E.A. Bogdanova [2012], D.B. Kumakhova [2011], O.V. Lomakina, V.M. Mokienko [2018], A.I. Lyzlova [2009], N.Y. Nelyubova et al. [2019], E.V. Nichiporchik [2012, 2023], N.N. Semenenko [2010] and others.

1.3. National cultural constants as units of mentalisation

The formation of a separate direction in linguistics – cultural linguistics, the subject of study of which is language means expressing certain culturally marked constants, has led to the identification and study of various cultural constants as an important factor in speech communication. I.V. Zykova gives such an understanding of *linguocultural constants*: in her opinion, these are the basic terminological concepts of the metalanguage

(or metaunits) of linguistic and cultural science. They have a certain set of properties “relevant for its formation and functioning as an integral system of properties” and are aimed at studying the deep ontology of “a complex linguocultural object and comprehension of linguoculturological reality in its versatility and multidimensionality” [Zykova 2017: 144].

Researchers A.V. Lenets and T.V. Ovsienko write about the *constants of linguoculture* as certain standards-standards manifested in everyday life, the main purpose of which is seen to preserve stability for native speakers of the language and culture, the ability to navigate the world around them and adapt to the conditions of the social environment [Lenets, Ovsienko 2018: 62]. Linguoculture is a complex of such linguistic units that fill the value-sense space of language in the process of cognition of reality.

R.P. Milrud, developing an algorithm for “decoding culture” with the help of various units, speaks of the reliability of revealing the worldview of culture bearers on the basis of texts and sets of metaphors called hypertexts [Milrud 2013: 55]. The researcher also notes that linguoculture has a complex of linguistic units that make up the value-semantic space of language in the process of cognition of reality. The researcher identifies “culturally filled linguistic signs” that correlate not just with objects and processes of the surrounding world, but with cultural phenomena in the social environment [ibid.: 43]. Such units are subject to decryption of the information encoded in them.

Turning to the problem of constants in the field of humanities, researchers note that, firstly, “constants are realised in everyday life in completely different forms, aspects, and acts”. Secondly, these units constitute the value-sense space of language in the process of cognition of reality [Kostina 2017: 197]. Thirdly, “being worldview elements of culture, constants are based on centuries-old, most generalised cultural traditions”, correlate with a wide range of specific historical situations and “ensure the overall stability of the cultural system regardless of changes in social life” [ibid.].

The stable units of any language can be attributed to national-cultural constants, which are part of the background knowledge of culture bearers and are gradually

comprehended by those who are immersed in this culture due to their characteristics – stability, popularity and public “sanction” (Jan Mukarzewski's term), vivid nationally-marked imagery. They represent typical life situations and collisions, quite tangibly express the attitude to the presented events and their evaluation [Shuyan Sun, Seliverstova 2018: 47]. Compare: *to sit in a puddle; I went by the hair, but returned shorn; I aimed at a crow, but hit a cow; In the rain the roof is not covered, but in the bucket and the bucket itself does not drip*, etc.

V.A. Maslova notes that the most relevant and valuable phenomena of reality for a given culture, which “have a large number of linguistic units for their fixation, are the topic of proverbs and sayings, poetic and prose texts,” become constants. They are a kind of symbols, emblems that definitely indicate the text, situation, knowledge that gave rise to them” [Maslova 2004: 28]. It is especially important for us in this definition that the carriers of the “cultural memory of the people” include stable units, including paroemias.

National differences in paremiological worldviews are most clearly manifested when comparing data from different languages, demonstrating how the peculiarity of nationally coloured perception of the surrounding world and attitudes towards it is manifested in the speakers’ proverbial worldview. It is no coincidence that in recent years researchers have paid such attention to the possibility of studying the semantics of paroemias as “complex signs of language and culture” (N.N. Semenenko’s term) against the background of other languages.

Thus, for the carriers of Russian culture, the idea of an arrogant, snooty person is traditionally associated with the image of an excessively raised and even tilted head (the nose as a part of it): *A high flight will make your head spin; Don't look high: you will cover your eye with dust*, etc. The image of a snobbish person is traditionally associated with the image of an excessively raised and even tilted head. The standard “height, high” becomes in PU a symbol of arrogance, and in vain, censured, which is indicated by the differently verbalised “danger” of unpleasant consequences: *Do not throw your head: you will stumble; Satan was proud, he fell from the sky; You spit above your nose, you will spit yourself; The high-minded one bridges high, but sits low; The high heel, but the nabochook is broken*, etc. [Shang Wenqing 2022: 110-111].

Researchers who analyze linguistic, including paremiological material, use in their works terms and concepts that allow them to show the features of the worldview manifested in language. Below we will look at some of them.

1.3.1. Cultural linguistic codes: definition and taxonomy

The concept of code is widely used in the humanities and technical sciences, and the term “*cultural linguistic codes*” has already entered the terminological apparatus of cultural linguistics. The basis for this was the realisation and recognition that culture and language in their interrelation is a structure strongly influencing individual and social life of each person. From the point of view of E.V. Koroleva, the term Cultural linguistic codes in comparison with the terms cultural code and linguistic code in the field of linguistics is the most successful, because “it emphasises the equality of the study of cultural and linguistic phenomena” [Koroleva 2015: 338]. “The linguocultural code appears as a result of the verbalization of cultural codes” that acquire a linguistic essence; such “disobjectification leads to the decoding of cultural codes” [Ivanova, Chanysheva 2010: 75], which contributes to their wider dissemination.

Y.M. Lotman believes that language and culture have a sign character, they can be regarded as ontologically homogeneous phenomena and include language in the system of cultural codes. Moreover, from the point of view of cultural semiotics, language represents the basic, nuclear sign system of ethno-culture, over which all other sign systems of this culture are built as auxiliary, secondary modelling systems [Lotman 1994].

According to V.A. Maslova, an extensive paradigm of images that perform a sign function is formed and widely functions in culture, which are called cultural codes in cultural semiotics [Maslova 2023: 61], that is, images in paremiological units are, in fact, manifestations of cultural codes. V.I. Karasik also emphasises the essence of the linguistic worldview, which has developed into “a complex system of images reflecting reality in the collective consciousness” [Karasik 2002: 105].

E.L. Berezovich believes that the code of culture is information about the world fixed in symbolic form, which has a linguistic and cultural marking. The content of this information is determined not so much by “photographing” reality as by the subjective and naive worldview of the tradition bearer, which has ethnic, social and cultural background [Berezovich 2007: 9].

An attempt to specify the content of the term “culture code” was made by researcher A.I. Kravchenko – he interprets the cultural code as “a set of signs (symbols) and a system of certain rules with the help of which information can be presented (encoded) in the form of a set of such symbols.” They are used to transmit, process, store and remember information as regulatory rules, “codes established by agreement between bearers of the same culture” [Kravchenko 2001: 241]. Let us emphasize here the importance of the specific feature noted by the researcher, namely: *the function of a regulating rule*, which is directly related to proverbs.

P. Bapт understands cultural codes as clots of the cultural experience of a collective, fragments of cultural memory, cultural trends (motives), cultural precedents that have acquired a concentrated, iconic character. They form a sign system that “serves as a model for understanding the phenomenon of culture, nature and existence in general” [Bapт1994: 284].

As R.M. Frumkina writes, “without resorting to sign means of categorisation, we cannot create a picture of the world that is absolutely necessary for our own functioning in this world as a reasonable person” [Frumkina 2003: 97]. The categories themselves are formed in our consciousness spontaneously – in accordance with the specific requirements of the environment. At the same time, “any language adequately serves its culture, providing speakers with the means to express culturally significant concepts and relations” [ibid.].

V.V. Krasnykh gives the following figurative understanding of the cultural code as a way of categorizing the world: it is “a ‘grid’ that culture ‘throws’ over the surrounding world, divides, categorizes and structures, and evaluates it” [Krasnykh 2002: 232]. Covering the linguocultural approach to phraseology and the participation of phraseology in the categorization of the concept sphere of cultures, M.V. Kovshova interprets culture

“as a space of cultural meanings, or value content developed by a person in the process of understanding the world,” and codes, for the transmission of which various material and formal means are used to signify cultural meanings [Kovshova 2012: 170].

If V.V. Krasnykh named 6 basic codes – spiritual, bodily, spatial, temporal, object, biomorphic, the authors of the “Big Phraseological Dictionary” under the leadership of V.N. Telia identified fifteen codes of culture, without pretending to the finiteness of the list. The classification in the dictionary covers the following codes: anthropic (human proper), zoomorphic, vegetative, natural, artifactual-vehicle - with a separate identification of the thing-costume, gastronomic, architectural code, spiritual and / or religious-anthropomorphic, religious-artefactual, temporal, spatial, quantitative (numerical), colour and bodily (somatic) [Kuznetsova 2022: 46-47]. “Culture codes are thematically united on the basis of the properties and actions of man himself, animal, plant, etc. worlds, the world of object (natural or man-made ‘things’), natural-landscape or spiritual-religious, etc.” [LPDRL: 13].

V.N. Telia considers it important to note that the code of a culture is considered to be the “taxonomic substrate of its texts,” which also includes numerous stable units of language. It is “a set of cultivated ideas about the picture of the world of a particular society – about the natural objects, artifacts, phenomena included in it, the actions and events identified in it, mentofacts and their spatio-temporal or qualitative-quantitative dimensions inherent in these entities” [Telia 1999: 20-21].

A cultural code is “the key to understanding a certain type of culture, unique cultural characteristics” inherited by an ethnos from its ancestors [Parshukova 2015: 105]. This, however, does not exclude individual coincidences both in the nature of the categorization of the surrounding world and in the methods of verbalization of codes of different cultures, which can also be found in the material of proverbs and phraseological units. On the “similarity-difference” scale, relations of identity, incomplete identity and difference can be identified [Reichstein 1980: 24]. This is natural, because different cultures in the course of history naturally collide and interact, exerting mutual influence on each other and leaving their “traces”. The degree of similarity and difference of codes

reflects the degree of commonality and divergence of peoples' cultures [Mamontov, Moroslin 2016: 142].

Paroemia acts as an ethno-linguistic carrier of value-sense content, that is, “not so much as a nominative, but as an interpretative means of language” [Paremiology... 2020: 104]. The code of culture is not accidentally called a code, it requires decoding, that is extracting from the paremiological unit specific content, cultural context, determined by the worldview of the people, the moral code peculiar to it in a certain period, history, and so on. [Stepanova 2012: 187].

Paroemias, verbalizing ideal artifacts – linguistic images, symbols, signs and, in general, “the results of the heuristic activity of the entire linguistic community” [Georgieva 2012: 219], represent a wealth of material for observation.

1.3.2. Stereotypes and cultural attitudes as national cultural constants

The term “stereotype”, historically associated with the name of W. Lippmann, refers not only to the field of linguistics. Nowadays, it is used in various sciences and disciplines – sociology, ethnography, cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, etc. Representatives of each of the sciences “identify in a stereotype those properties that they notice from the perspective of their field of study, and therefore social stereotypes, communication stereotypes, mental stereotypes, cultural stereotypes, ethnocultural stereotypes, etc.” [Maslova 2023: 108].

We can talk about stereotypes of behavior, which are also recorded in language – it is no coincidence that the assessment of actions and behavior is often carried out in the modality “they don't do that, it's not customary to do that.” We are interested in linguistic units and the stereotypical ideas verbalized by them, considered as manifestations of culture.

The linguoculture of each nation has a number of “universal statements” and precedent texts that constitute the cultural context and are understandable to the average speaker [Stepanova 2012: 188]. These include etiquette rules, politeness formulas,

evaluative meanings of words and values of various ranks. Thus, Y.V. Stepanova names, in addition to universal values and values peculiar to a certain type of civilisation, values characteristic of a certain ethnos [ibid.]. Cognising the world in the process of communication with representatives of a certain nation, a person thus learns stereotypical ideas and behavioural stereotypes, comprehends value dominants, ethical and utilitarian values.

Stereotypical perceptions are expressed in their content by proverbial units. Representing one of the most vivid types of text referred to precedent [Semenenko 2011: 3], Proverb, along with aphorisms, wings, idiomatics, “enters the hyperspace of culture not only at the level of quotations [in the text], but also at the level of the conceptual basis of the author's idea, and, on the other hand, form a very extensive fund serving as a source for various kinds of precedent references”[Semenenko 2011b: 19]. A paroemia is considered as a precedent text precisely because of the judgement contained in it, which is usually referred to in support of the idea expressed by the speaker when describing a fairly typical situation. Thus, the meaning of a Proverb is socially sanctioned, and the idea is shared by the speakers.

From the point of view of cognitive science, linguistic consciousness is defined as “a set of mental mechanisms for generating, understanding speech and storing language in consciousness” [Popova 2007: 45]. According to I.V. Privalova, the images formed in linguistic consciousness are formed “with the help of linguistic means reflecting perceptual and conceptual knowledge of a linguistic person about cultural objects of the real world. At the same time, this process is objectified by the real situation (ecology) in which it takes place” [Privalova 2003: 96]. That is, behind the stereotype formed in the collective consciousness there is a historical context of this or that length, which is associated with a psychological process of cognitive property – stereotyping. Stereotype in such a view appears as a conceptual unit (mental formation, cognitive structure). Since “stereotypes can be formed in any field of human knowledge, <...> a stereotype, acting as a regulator of social behaviour, is also a cognitive stereotype” [Pishchalnikova 1999: 166]. The researcher, as we see, includes in the definition of a stereotype its ability to

serve as a “regulator of social behavior,” which directly concerns paremics, which largely perform a prescriptive function.

According to V.V. Krasnykh, stereotype, *stereotypical representation* is a structure of the mental-linguistic complex formed by “a set of valence relations attributed to a given unit and representing the image-representation of the phenomenon behind this unit” [Krasnykh 2002: 231]. The researcher sees in a stereotype “a certain “representation” of a fragment of the surrounding reality, a fixed mental “picture” that is the result of reflection in the consciousness of an individual of a “typical” fragment of the real world, a certain invariant of a certain part of the picture of the world” [Krasnykh 2002: 178].

Many modern researchers rely on the definition of stereotype given by Jerzy Bartminsky in his monograph “Linguistic Image of the World”: it is “a representation formed within a certain collective experience and determining what this object is, how it looks, acts, how it is perceived by a person, this representation is embodied by a person in language, is accessible through language and belongs to the collective knowledge about the world” [Bartminsky 2005: 15]. This is a cumulative “subjectively determined idea of an object, covering both descriptive and evaluative features, and also being the result of the interpretation of reality within the framework of social cognitive models” [ibid.: 48]. It is impossible not to emphasize the importance of not only the external features included in the stereotype noted by the scientist, but also its evaluative and interpretive characteristics.

M.L. Kovshova clearly defines what gives us grounds to speak about a stereotype in relation to a phraseological unit: “We speak about a stereotype if the figurative description of a situation in a phraseological unit agrees with a stable representation of a pattern of some actions, and this representation is fixed in culture, confirmed by its facts” [Kovshova 2009: 33].

Stereotypical representations constitute the most important element of Proverbs, which are part of the paremiological fund of the national linguistic community. This is what makes Proverbs an attractive and promising object of analysis when identifying cultural attitudes and stereotypical representations typical for a certain ethnic group. This approach is realised in the works addressed to the stable units of language as verbal signs

of culture: A.S. Alyoshin [2019], E.I. Zinovieva [2013, 2014, 2018, 2022, etc.], M.L. Kovshova [2009; 2019a; 2019b, etc.], in the works by V.V. Krasnykh [2002], L.B. Matevosyan [2017], E.I. Seliverstova [2019a, 2019b, 2020, etc.], Wang Yixuan [2022], Ma Xiafei [2017] and others.

In the work of V.N. Teliya “Russian phraseology: semantic, pragmatic and linguocultural aspects” points to the value of phraseological units as having cultural and national connotations. The researcher points to the cultural-human factor as determining the formation of phraseological units and notes the manifestation in them of standards and stereotypes of national culture [Teliya 1996: 271].

When analysing the linguocultural potential of linguistic units – including stable language units – many of the ideas formulated in paroemias are considered in terms of “cultural attitudes”. This is one of the important terms of the conceptual apparatus of cultural linguistics.

E.O. Oparina notes that “this term is one of the least defined and amenable to formalization” [Oparina 2004: 53]. V.N. Teliya understands *cultural attitudes* as “mental patterns that play the role of prescriptions for life practices and are the product of interaction between two or more individuals” [Teliya 1999: 18].

According to V.A. Maslova, cultural attitudes are certain ideals that each nation has, which “are developed along the historical path traversed by the people, which is deposited in social memory and forms attitudes” [Maslova 2023: 50].

Defining the priority tasks facing cultural linguistics, L.M. Kovshova wrote about the importance of developing methodological assumptions, on the basis of which a meta-language of linguistics should be developed, “understood as key terms for solving new problems: culture, cultural attitudes, cultural text, cultural thesaurus, cultural symbology, etc.” [Kovshova 2012: 55].

As we see, *cultural attitudes* and *stereotypical ideas* are terms – “tools” used by scientists when conducting linguocultural research.

1.4. Speech as an activity and a manifestatio of the anthropomorphic cultural code

This subchapter is written using materials from previously published articles: [Xu Yao 2023b, Xu Yao 2023d].

Speech (word, language, speaking) is one of the most important activities. As V.V. Krasnykh writes, “the awareness of the multidimensionality of being of a person speaking” has made the “unfused unity ‘man – language – culture – linguistic culture – consciousness – communication – community’ central in modern research” [Krasnykh 212: 345]. According to O.V. Rtischeva, in “anthropocentric humanistics” the subject acts “as the dominant of the space of human activity”, and the phenomenon of linguistic personality is central in cultural linguistics [Rtischeva 2021: 153]. Language and its use, that is, speech activity, are a necessary condition for human cognition and reflection of the surrounding reality.

Speech is a very capacious concept, including ‘a mechanism for the generation and perception of speech’, ‘speech act’ and ‘speech work’, ‘speech interaction’ [Gutovskaya 2007: 63]. Language in the system of meanings it expresses “records the knowledge and experience of the linguistic community, the picture of the world of the people speaking it” [ibid.]. Through speech activity, a person acquires knowledge, assimilates information and transmits it [Ksenofontova 2012: 164]. “In the language before us, writes Y.S. Stepanov, – captures thousands of years of knowledge of the world” [Stepanov 2001: 921].

Language and speech are multifunctional. The function of language and speech noted by researchers as “a way of conveying the speaker’s attitudes” is considered very important [Gutovskaya 2007: 63], which directly concerns proverbs, which are exponents of non-scientific knowledge – worldview. The worldview becomes for modern man the standard of “correct ideas” [Apresyan 1995: 58], with which he often reinforces his judgments.

Speech is a means of communication that makes socialisation of a member of society possible: “in communication a person lives and reveals himself as a person”, absorbs culture and linguoculture [Krasnykh 2012: 346]. According to A.N. Leontiev, a

person is always included in joint activity, even if he is actually alone with himself [Leontiev 1961: 14].

Language, on the one hand, is a means and way of objectifying the linguistic and cultural realities of a certain nation, its cultural code [Khomyakova 2014: 5], but, on the other hand, it itself is an object of analysis to identify “ethnic standards of dialogical interaction” of native speakers, norms speech etiquette, communication traditions, etc. In this approach, language as a code of culture “is not so much a mirror of the soul of the people as a mirror of the culture, the originality of which it models” [ibid.: 4].

Like any other activity, real concrete speech, a person’s statement is “a specific activity that proceeds from certain motives and pursues a specific goal” [Rubinstein 1973]. This allows us to judge by speech about the person himself, his character, upbringing, intentions and ambitions, and his self-esteem.

Considering the value plan of a communicative personality, E.V. Kosinova notes that the set of assessed speech characteristics includes norms of behavior enshrined in the moral code of the people, reflecting “the history and worldview of people united by culture and language,” such as rules of etiquette, display of good manners, communicative strategies of politeness, paralinguistic means of communication, etc. [Kosinova 2011: 183-184].

Speech serves as a way to convey a variety of pragmatic meanings that are intentionally or not quite consciously verbalized by speakers. At the same time, one cannot fail to recognize the importance of not only the content of speech, but also the form in which the speech act is carried out, and the circumstances of communication.

Stable units with the meaning of speech are “always addressed to the subject,” they are called upon to name one or another type of his speech activity and, more importantly, “interpret it in a certain way, give it an assessment” [Zueva 2003: 82]. Therefore, speech can characterize the linguistic personality itself from different sides. The ways of presenting speech in paremics and thoughts about it can be ethnospecific and reflect the originality of the worldview of a certain linguistic community and the characteristics of its culture [Gutovskaya 2020: 212].

Numerous proverbs that verbalize the view of native speakers of a language and culture on the person speaking testify to the importance of speech and its ability to give an idea of the norms of speech behavior and etiquette, to implement various communication strategies, to express assessments, and to characterize universal human values.

The nominative density of Proverbs about “word”, “language”, “speech” (about 1200 units in total were involved in our study), also testifies to the importance of the concept “SPEECH (WORD)” verbalised by these lexemes actively acting as PU components. Speech is one of the dominant values in the Russian linguistic and paremiological worldviews. This explains the fact that researchers have not bypassed the characteristic of speech with their attention.

Thus, S.A. Eremina and A.P. Orlova characterise the stereotype “speech activity” in phraseological units reflecting folk linguistic consciousness and highlight positive characteristics of speech activity, ideas about language fixed in speech practice and different meanings of the word *language* [Eremina, Orlova 2009: 70-71]. The authors cite their understanding of cultural stereotypes: they exist in the consciousness of representatives of a particular culture in a broad and narrow sense, carry “the potential to study predictable behaviour of people regulated by some hidden systems” [ibid.: 68].

Serious attention was paid to the concept “Speech” by A.B. Tatiev and G.S. Suyunova, who assigned speech an important place in the anthropocentric paradigm and defined speech as a “historically established form of communication between people” using language constructs based on certain rules, involving the formulation of thoughts by linguistic (speech) means and their perception and understanding [Tatieva, Suyunova 2015: 325]. Analyzing the selected subject area, the researchers note that “the specificity of the concept is precisely determined by the number of culturally significant everyday ideas – everyday concepts shared by members of any ethno-linguistic society” [ibid.]. In their opinion, “concept-forming features of the semantics of speech-language” are presented in proverbs “indistinctly and syncretically,” and their isolation is quite problematic [ibid.: 326]. However, in a number of proverb units the essential semantics

of speech seems more obvious. In the terminology we use, “everyday concepts” correspond to “cultural attitudes” and “stereotypical ideas”.

In the article “The concept of ‘speak’, ‘say’ in Russian dialects of Siberia” A.N. Rostova turns to the dialectal uses of two verbs, which reveal significant originality in the semantic structure in comparison with all-Russian variants of lexemes. Important in light of the topic of our work is the range of meanings of the verb *to speak* - ‘to express some feelings in oral form of speech, to communicate something’, ‘to have a conversation, to talk’, ‘to be proficient in oral speech’, etc., differing in frequency of use. Individual meanings of the word “speak” in the dialect denote different types of speech action: the implementation of oral speech, a performative act, the expression of intention, an act of reference; designation by the word – nomination. Analysis of contexts allowed the author to come to a convincing conclusion about the differences in the conceptual content of the verbs “speak” and “say”. *To speak* – ‘to express one’s ideas about the world’. *To say* is to ‘adequately reflect the world and one’s own intentions’ [Rostova 2002: 106, 110].

In the work “Folk linguistics in Russian Proverbs and Sayings”, M.R. Shumarina, considering Proverbs as potentially polymodal units capable of realising different meanings, notes that one or another meaning comes to the fore depending on the nature of the communicative situation [Shumarina 2014: 100]. The author notes that proverbs “generalise knowledge about communicative behaviour, expressing at the same time its multidimensional evaluation”, record observations about the facts of language and “peculiar instructions about the rules of behaviour”, for example: *Don’t hurry with your tongue, hurry with your work* [ibid.: 98]. The concept of “folk ideas” includes “observations of deviations from the norm” and manifestations of typical behavior of people – in particular women – in contrast to men; manipulators, etc. One cannot but agree with the conclusion that the author comes to regarding metalinguistic proverbs: they often contain opposing opinions.

Thus, language is a defining property of culture and man as its bearer and representative. *Language, speech, word* – these concepts are inextricably linked to the essence of man, they nominate one of the indisputable values of Russian culture and mentality. A linguistic personality can be characterised from the position of linguistic

consciousness and speech behaviour [Rtishcheva 2021: 152] – both get multidimensional coverage in paroemias as units of folk consciousness. This makes proverbial material, which verbalises stereotypical ideas about speech and cultural attitudes (prescriptions), a vivid example of the manifestation of anthropomorphic cultural code. Speech in many respects testifies to the originality of the national character.

Resume

Let us draw some conclusions. Meanings expressed by linguistic units form a semantic system that serves as a storage for the knowledge and experience of the society and reflects the worldview of the language speakers. The theory of the interrelation of language and culture developed by modern researchers, has shaped its main tenets, established its terms, definitions and methods of research. The task of linguocultural research, which recognizes the undeniable connection between ethnic culture and language as a means of its manifestation, is to identify the quanta of information in which linguistic and culture-specific features reveal themselves.

Language is a defining property of culture and an individual as a representative of a particular culture. For this reason, it appears important to study the linguistic worldview, which reflects the perception and evaluation in this culture of the most important type of human activity, namely speech, its production, perception and functioning. The importance of speech is evidenced both by a significant number of lexical units with the semantics of 'speech, speaking' and a vast array of proverbs of different structure and different pragmatic orientation.

The paroemiological worldview is given increasingly close attention by researchers as the component of the linguistic worldview which has a very important advantage: it does not nominate separate objects and phenomena, but recreates typical life situations and verbalizes the prescriptions and stereotypical ideas that result from the fact that speakers evaluate those situations. Proverbs as “units of everyday consciousness” allow to have an insight into the way people think, to better understand the national system of

values and priorities. This is what makes the material of proverbs so popular in the study of ethno-specific constants existing in the axiological domain of language.

The nation-specific features of any culture are manifested, among other things, in everyday communication, in conversation, which, if not regulated by strict and obligatory rules for all members of society, are viewed and evaluated through the lens of cultural attitudes formed in the collective consciousness and verbalized in proverbs.

Proverbs have a great heuristic potential and serve as a material for the development of cultural linguistics, linguistic axiology and other areas of study. Addressing Russian proverbs verbalizing the views on things of vital importance, to which language and speech certainly belong, is a reliable way of obtaining information not only about this part of the linguistic worldview, but also about the humanity, human character, behaviour and actions.

Folk axiology is manifested in the assessment of both various aspects of speech and, in general, of the speaker - in terms of his/her intentions, attitudes to other people, compliance with the conventions of behaviour and communication.

By deciphering the codes of a culture verbalized by means of the Russian language, the researcher has the opportunity to better comprehend the culture and language of another ethnic group. This, of course, also applies to the cultural code of speech - with its variety of stable units, multiple dimensions of talking about speech and expressed evaluations.

CHAPTER 2. THE STEREOTYPICAL IDEA OF SPEECH AS REFLECTED IN PROVERBS AND IN THE PRESENT-DAY LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

2.1. Verbalization components of the concept of “speech” in Russian proverbs

This subchapter is written using materials from previously published articles [Xu Yao 2021; Xu Yao 2022].

A human – and, certainly, a human understood as a collective linguistic persona, i.e. the totality of all language speakers – tends to model the linguistic reality according to certain “templates” [Gridina, Pyatinin 2003: 6] that manifest in the nature of nominative activity, in motivation giving impetus to the formation and further interpretation of language units. The interaction between a linguistic persona and other speakers results in a particular range of linguistic units called a lexicon that enable native speakers to comprehend both the topic and the meaning of an utterance, whether generalised or situationally dependent. It stands to reason that scholars refer not only whole proverbs but also their typical vocabulary, which is words linked by “relations of topical homogeneity”, to units of paroemiological space [Seliverstova 2017: 103]. In our paper, these are exemplified by such words as *речь* (*speech*), *беседа* (*discussion*), *разговор* (*conversation*), *слова* (*words*), *басни* (*fables*), *говóря* (*subdialect*), *голдóвня* (*uproar*), etc. Some semantic “distance” between the words involved as PU components does not prevent them from participating in the expression of various meanings related to the speech characteristics. Let us compare the verbs *говорить* (*speak*), *галдеть* (*clamour*), *толковать* (*rede*), *болтать* (*chat*), *сболтнуть* (*blurt*), *ленетать* (*babble*), *беседовать* (*talk*), *сказать* (*say*), *сбрехать* (*fib*), *баять* (*narrate*), *молвить* (*utter*), *талдычить* (*harp*) etc. Some of them are typical specifically for proverbs, which makes it possible for E.I. Seliverstova to point out the “authorisation” by a paroemiological space for certain vocabulary [ibid.: 65], although particular components of this array of words are represented with varying frequencies in the paroemia. Thus, for instance, a section of V.I. Dahl’s “Proverbs of the Russian People” collection, namely the “Language – speech” one representing an impressive array of speech units, has 86 utterances with the *язык* (*1. language; 2. tongue*) component, about 50 with the *слово* (*word*), *словоцо* (*mot*), *словечко*

(*wordie*) and *слова́* (*words*) components, while only 13 with the *речь* (*speech*), *речи* (*speeches*) components.² This number does not include comparisons and sayings that are not structured as a completed utterance, such as *не доищется слова* (*he cannot find a word*); *у него слово слову костыль подает* (*his words give a crutch to each other*); *говорит, что клеит* (*he speaks as if he glues*); *говорит, что клещами на лошадь хомут тащит* (*he speaks as if he drags a collar onto a horse with tongs*) etc.

Speech situations, represented as separate life scenes or “pictures” in proverb units, are presented from various perspectives and, as we will demonstrate further, involving linguistic units of different lexical and grammatical status. Let us address first the noun components.

2.1.1. *Speech nomination with noun components*

Paroemias with the *Язык* Component

Paroemias include a large number of units containing the *язык* component. For this research, special interest lies in the PU in which *язык* means not just “a human organ involved in the formation of speech sounds and thereby in the verbal reproduction of thoughts, a vocal organ” [SAD.4:780] but is used in its second meaning given in the Small Academic Dictionary that interprets it as ‘the ability to speak, express one’s thoughts verbally’ [ibid.]. Here are some examples: *Язык языку вести подает* (*Tongues report news to each other*); *Язык на замок не запрешь* (*One cannot lock a tongue*); *Язык впереди ног бежит* (*One’s tongue runs before one’s wit*); *Два запора – губы да зубы, а языку удержу нет* (*Lips and teeth are both latches, yet unable to hold a tongue*); *Язык не стрела, а пуще стрелы* (*A tongue is not an arrow, but more than an arrow*); *Всякая сорока от своего языка погибает* (*Every magpie perishes because of its tongue*); *К старости зубы тупее, а язык острее* (*In old age, the teeth become blunter and the tongue sharper*) [Zhig.: 294-295]³ etc.

In PU *Язык голову кормит, он же и спину портит* (*и до смерти / до беды*

² If we follow other proverbial sources, in particular, the “Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs” edited by V.M. Mokienko, the quantitative indicators will be different (see the aggregate data on the number of units involved in the analysis).

³ Examples taken from the same source are provided with a single link thereto if the page numbers match.

доводум) (*The tongue feeds the head but also damages the back (and leads one to doom/trouble)*) [GDRP: 1013], two meanings of *язык* (*tongue*) are implemented: a tongue as an ‘organ involved in human food intake’ and a tongue as an ‘ability to speak’ that may get a speaker into big trouble. Compare with PU *Язык мой – враг мой (наперед ума лепечет)* (*A man’s ruin lies in his tongue (that babbles ahead of the mind)*) [D.2: 279]. However, this instance does not exclude another interpretation: a tongue is able to feed a human through its involvement in the digestion, but engagement in communication it of importance as well, since it is hard for a person to solve vital issues and satisfy needs without verbalizing a person’s intentions; compare with *Язык до Киева доведёт* (*With a tongue in one’s head one may find one’s way anywhere*) [Zhig.: 294].

PU *Самое сладкое – язык, самое горькое – язык* (*A tongue is the sweetest and the bitterest thing at once*) [Zhig.: 295] also allows for several interpretations: *literal*, since only the tongue is able to taste both sweet and bitter due to its taste buds; *figurative*, since both pleasant and unpleasant for a listener’s ear are expressed by means of the tongue – and this is certainly related to speech and to the use of the tongue as part of the human articulatory apparatus.

The Russian language has a total of over 200 utterances with the *язык* component that imply specifically the speech – such a number of PU selected on the basis of the first noun included in the utterance may be found in the “Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs”.⁴

Proverbs with the *Слово, Слово, Словечко* and *Слова* Components

The array of proverbs with the *слово, слово, словечко* and *слова* components is rather extensive; however, our primary interest lies in the meanings associated with the notion of speech as a speaking process and ability to speak and express one’s intention, which are interpreted in the Small Academic Dictionary as follows: *Слово* – 2. *только ед. ч. Речь, язык* 3. *ед. ч. в том же знач., что и мн. ч. Высказывание, словесное выражение мысли, чувства и т.п. / Word* – 2. *only sing. Speech, language.* 3. *sing. in the*

⁴ This collection of proverbs contains a total of 234 units with the *язык* component, of which more than 40 are exemplified in this paper.

same meaning as *pl.* Utterance, verbal expression of thoughts, feelings, etc. [SAD.4: 139-140]. *Слово – серебро, молчание – золото* (*A word is silver while silence is gold*).

Here are some instances: *Слово не стрела, а сердце насквозь разит* (*A word is not an arrow, whereas pierces the heart right through*); *Слово выпустишь, так и вилами не втащишь* (*Once you let a word out, you would not drag it in with a pitchfork*); *Блюда хлеб на обед, а слово на ответ* (*Keep some bread for lunch and a word for an answer*); *Кто слова не боится, тому и плеть не страшна* (*Who is not afraid of a word would not tremble at a whip*); *Худого слова и бархатным медом не запьешь* (*An evil word is impossible to be drunk with mellow mead*); *Лучше споткнуться ногою, нежели словами* (*It is better to stumble with your foot than with your words*) [Zhig.: 223-224] etc. It is impossible to overlook that the paroemias with the *слово* component have something common in the content and even structure with the PU containing the *речь* component: *Слова хороши, если они коротки* (*Words are good when short*) (compare *Хороша веревка длинная, а речь короткая* (*A good rope is a long one, while a good speech is a short one*)). In PUs *Доброе слово лучше мягкого пирога* (*A warm word is better than a puffy pie*) and *Добрая речь, что в избе печь* (*A warm-hearted speech is the same thing as a furnace in a hut*), the emphasis is laid on a positive assessment of the information given, and the *слово* and *речь* components are synonymous in this case.

According to dictionaries, the total number of paroemias with such components as *слово, словцо, словечко, слова* in various forms totals, as we have already mentioned, over 500 units, i.e. more than 30% of the total array of speech PUs.

Paroemias with the *Речь* Components

Firstly, the PU indicates the very **act of speaking, communication**, and here the *речь* component that names **a process, a specific type of activity**, turns out to be very important: we seem to see the speech actor surrounded by communicators listening to him; compare: *Речь красна слушаньем* (*A criterion of speech beauty is its listeners*) [CFW]. The *речь* component appears with various meanings in Russian proverbs. The following meanings are found oftener than others: ‘the ability to speak, to express a thought in words’ *Речь вести – не ланти плести* (*Making a speech is not that easy as*

making bast shoes), ‘a language peculiar to someone, a way of speaking’ *Красна речь поговоркою (Proverbs make one’s speech more vivid)*, ‘words, conversation, the things they say’ *Язык мой, а речи не свои говорю (With my own tongue, I make someone else’s speech)*; *Глупые речи, что пыль на ветру (Senseless speech is like dust in the wind)*, ‘public speaking’ *Хороша веревка длинная, а речь короткая (A good rope is a long one, while a good speech is a short one)* [SAD.3: 713-714]. Compare also: *Красно поле рожью, а речь ложью (красным словцом) (A field is good with rye, while a speech with a lie (witticism))*.

In paroemiology, the metonymic transfer, rather typical for PUs with the *речь* lexeme, is also important. Thus, in the proverb *Речи как снег, а дела как сажа (There is white snow in his speech but black soot in his life)*, the *речь* component does not imply the act of speaking itself but the ‘content’ of the spoken words expressed directly or indirectly. It is no coincidence that this component is accompanied in PUs by definitions emphasizing this meaning; compare: *Умные (Хорошие) речи приятно и слушать (Wise (Good) speech is pleasant to one’s ear)*; *Глупые речи, что пыль на ветру (Silly speech is like a dust in the wind)*; *Лихих речей не переслушаешь (All evil speeches are impossible to be heard)*; *Пустые речи и слушать неча (It is not worth listening to senseless speeches)*; *Похвальные речи всегда гнилы (Laudatory speech always hides rottenness)*; *Льстивые речи душу калечат (Flattering speeches cripple one’s soul)* [GDRP: 754-755] etc. A person is characterised not so much by the wording of speech as by its content: *По речам можно человека узнать (One can get to know a person by his speeches)*; *Какова речь, таков и склад (Like speech, like constitution)* [GDRP: 754]. Likewise, an indirect indication of the content of a person’s speech is given in the PU *На свашенькиных речах хоть садись да катись (хоть выпнись) (Matchmaker’s speeches are as smooth as a sleigh (as tender as a featherbed))* [GDRP: 754] which seemingly provides no direct characteristics; however, the cultural type of “matchmaker” is associated among Russian native speakers with an abundance of complimentary words for a maiden or a lad she offers as a would-be spouse.

In the composition of paroemias, the *речь* component is one of quite active and is included in more than 100 expressions making up 7% of the total PU number containing

nominal components with speech semantics.

Paroemias with *Разговор* and *Беседа* Components

Another category of units under consideration is PUs with such noun components as *разговор* and *беседа*. The *разговор* component and *беседа* component are often synonymous and indicate a verbal communication on a specific topic between two or more speakers that involves reporting data and exchanging information or opinions: *Разговор дорогу коротаем* (*A conversation makes a long road shorter*); *Разговорами щи не сварить* (*Conversations are useless to cook a cabbage soup*); *Из разговоров о меде сладко во рту не будет* (*Conversations about honey never taste sweet in one's mouth*) [GDRP: 745]; *Лошади узнают друг друга по ржанию, а люди — по разговору* (*Horses recognize each other by neighing and people by conversation.*); *Красен разговор, да не спор* (*Good people have conversations, not arguments*) [Zhig.: 196] etc. The *разговор* component is significantly inferior in comparison with the *говорить* (*converse*) verbal component and accounts for approximately 30 PUs.

There are almost the same number of paroemias with the *беседа* component. Compare: *Беседа не без красного словца* (*A discussion always has some witticism*); *Беседа найдет соседа* (*Those who want to hold a discussion will always find a company*); *И невелика беседа, да честна* (*A discussion may be short but honest*); *В чужой беседе всяк ума купит* (*Everyone may gain some wisdom from others' discussion*) [Zhig.: 17]; *Сладка беседа, да голодна* (*No matter how dulcet a discussion may be, it is unable to nourish*) [D.2: 19]; *Звон не молитва, крик не беседа* (*Chime is not a prayer, shout is not a conversation*) [D.2: 26] etc.

Other Paroemia Components Indicating the Act of Speech or Speaking

In addition to the above, the following components are included in proverbs in small quantities:

– *болтовня, болтовство* (*chatter, twaddle*) (compare *болтать* (*to chat*)) – *Болтовня может стоить жизни* (*Chatter may cost one one's life*) [Zhig.: 22]; *Болтовня и красна, и пестра, да пуста* (*Chatter is pleasant and motley but senseless*);

Болтовство – не ремесло (Twaddle is not a craft) [GDRP: 83];

– *голдовня (uproar) (compare clamour) – Вощина – не соты, голдовня (болтовня) – не толк (Raw beeswax is not honeycomb, uproar (chatter) is not rumour [GDRP: 159]; Кто голдобней, кто молчанкой (One is strong in uproar and other in silence) [GDRP: 186];*

– *ответ (answer) (meaning ‘verbal reaction, response) – Блюда хлеб на обед, а слово на ответ! (Keep some bread for lunch and a word for an answer) [GDRP: 949]; Язык языку ответ дает, а голова смекает (A tongue gives an answer to the other tongue, yet a head catches it on) [D. 1: 355];*

– *басни (fables) (‘senseless and useless talks’) – Баснями закрома не наполняются (They do not fill granaries with fables); Баснями сыт не будешь (Fables do not fill the belly); Бабы басни, а дурак то любит (Only a fool may like women’s fables) [GDRP: 36];*

– *сказка (fairy tale) – Скоро сказка сказывается, да не скоро дело делается (A fairy tale is a short-time matter while a work takes a good deal of time) [Zhig.: 218]; В сказках все есть, да в руках ничего нет (Fairy tales are bountiful while hands are empty) [GDRP: 812]; the PU *Полно тебе докучную сказку сказывать (Stop telling an irksome fairy tale) (докучная сказка (irksome fairy tale) means a narrative in which the same fragment is repeated many times) [D.2: 122] serves as an attempt to interrupt the monotonous boring speech of an interlocutor;**

– *прибаска (ditty) – Всякая прибаска хороша с прикраской (Every ditty is better when embellished) [GDRP: 717];*

– *лясы (baluster) – На ляхах далеко не уедешь (Baluster will not get you far) [GDRP: 511];*

– *мелево (ground grain) – Мелева много, да помолу нет (Much ground grain yet no flour) (that is, senseless speeches) [GDRP: 527].*

Speech Actor Denomination Components

A separate lexical and semantic group of nominative PU components consists of the **denominations of speakers** which are the speech actors functioning as an object of

observation and assessed from the outside. Proverbial generalisations refer to those nominations of a person, the meanings of which emphasize the speaker's obvious propensity for talking or special speech behaviour:

– болтун (*chatterbox*) – Болтун не ждет спроса, а сам все скажет (*A chatterbox does not wait for a question but will tell you everything himself*); С ворон болтун начал, а на сорок перевел (*A chatterbox started with crows but moved on to magpies*); С болтунами держи язык за зубами (*One should keep one's mouth shut with a chatterbox*) [Zhig.: 22, 23]; Болтуна видать по слову, а рыбака по улову (*A chatterbox is recognised by a word and a fisherman by a haul*); У осла уши длинные, а у болтуна язык (*A donkey has long ears and a chatterbox has long tongue*) [GDRP: 84, 628];

– говорун (*talker*) – Большой говорун – плохой работун (*A big talker is a bad worker*) [Zhig.: 46];

– враль (*fibber*) – Были бы враль, а что врать – сыщут (*If a fibber is in place, he will always come up with a lie*); Враль врет: семь верст до небес, и все лесом (*A fibber lies about walking seven miles to heaven, all through the woods*) [GDRP: 161] etc.

– шептун (*whisperer*) – Шептунов – на высылку (*Whisperers should be brought to outskirts*) [GDRP: 1001] etc.

The fact of speech is also allegorically pointed out by such components that are not a nomination of a process or a speech actor but indicate the organs necessary for speech reproduction:

– зубы (*teeth*) – Ешь пирог с грибами (крупнами), а язык держи за зубами (*Eat your pie with mushrooms (cereals) and keep your tongue behind your teeth*) [GDRP: 661];

– рот (*mouth*): Важно, не что в рот, а что изо рта (*Of importance is what comes out of your mouth rather than what comes in it*); Чужой рот не свои ворота: не затворишь (*You cannot shut someone else's mouth like your gate*); Чужой рот не хлев: не затворить (*Other's mouth is not as easy to shut as a shed*); Ртом болезнь входит, а беда выходит (*Through one's mouth, the disease comes in while the trouble out*); [GDRP: 765-766] – ‘about the unpleasant effect of what has been said’;

– глотка (*gullet*) – Глотку раздереешь – не зашьешь (*A torn gullet will not be*

sewn up) [GDRP: 178]); *И неправде глотку рукавицей не заткнешь* (*A lie's gullet cannot be plugged with a mitten*) [GDRP: 594];

– *горло (throat)* (*Горлом дело не спорится* (*A throat will not help work go well*); *Горлом не много навоюешь* (*One will not achieve much using a throat*); *Не все горлом, ино и руками* (*Not every issue may be managed using a throat, for some require hands*) [GDRP: 205]). As we can see, metonymic transference is quite actively used in proverbs: *горло (throat)*, *рот (mouth)*, *глотка (gullet)* stand for the ability to speak and *горло (throat)* and *глотка (gullet)* stand for shouting as opposed to an unemotional businesslike approach.

Thus, paremias show a fairly wide range of nominative components used by culture bearers to describe speech. Its constituent units take part in the formation of proverbs of varying degrees of activity.

2.1.2. Speech nomination with verb components

In our paper, the second and quite substantial group of paroemias consists of units having verbal components that verbalise the semantics of “speech, speech act”. Some differences can be noted among them.

The first group includes the verbs implying ‘to speak’ as the basic meaning in their semantics:

Говорить (speak) – *Говори меньше – умнее будет* (*The less you speak the wiser you are*); *Не все говори, что знаешь* (*Do not speak of everything you know*); *Говорит направо, а глядит налево* (*One speaks rightwards but looks leftwards*); *Кто горячо говорит, тот быстро остывает* (*Those who speak passionately calm down swiftly*); *Говори с другим поменьше, а с собою побольше* (*Speak less with the other but more with yourself*); *Говоря, не ошибешься, а молча не обмолвишься* (*You will neither mistake while speaking nor spill the beans when silent*) [GDRP: 181] etc. According to the “Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs”, the array of paroemias with this component in various forms makes up over 600 units.

Сказать (Say) – *Скажет вдоль, а сделает поперек* (*He says it expectably but*

he does it contrariwise); Скажешь – не воротишь, напишешь – не сотрешь, отрубешь – не приставишь (You cannot unsay what you have said, you cannot erase what you have written, you cannot stick what you have cut off); Скажешь тайком, а услышишь – не приставишь (What you have said in secret will not be attachable when you hear it); Было бы сказано – забыть можно (No matter what was said, for we can forget it) [GDRP: 811]; Лучшие скажи мало, но хорошо (Say it shortly but well); Сперва подумай, а потом скажи (Firstly think it over, only then say it aloud); Как сказано, так и сделано (It has been done as said); Сказал бы еще, да дома забыл (I would say something more if I did not forget something at home) [Zhig.: 217] etc.

Беседовать (Talk) – *Беседовать – не устать: было бы что сказать (You will not get tired of talking if you have something to say) [GDRP: 52]; Через порог не здороваться, не беседовать (Never greet or talk to anyone over a doorway) [D.2: 389] etc.*

Молвить (utter) – *Говори, говори да и молви (Keep speaking and then utter); В добрый час молвить, а в худой промолчать (Uttering in a good hour, silent in an evil one); Подумай, обдумай, да и молви (Think about it, then think it over, and then utter it); Недолго думал, да хорошо молвил (He did not give it much thought but uttered it well); Не все то в строку, что молвится (Not everything uttered is worth being written down); Молвишь – не воротишь, а плюнешь – не проглотишь (You cannot withdraw what was uttered or swallow what was spat out) [Zhig.: 124];*

Толковать (rede) – *Кто меньше толкует, тот меньше тоскует (Those who rede less grieve less); Глухому с немым нечего толковать (A deaf and a dumb have nothing to rede); Сколько ни толковать, а всего не перетолковать (не пережевать) (It is impossible to rede up (chew up) every single thing no matter how long it takes) [GDRP: 478].*

The second group can include verbs that, in addition to the ‘to speak’ meaning, have other differentiating semantic connotations. Thus, the **болтать (to chat)** verb may express the semantics of ‘vain, useless’, ‘senseless’, ‘long’, ‘inconsiderate’, etc. conversations: *Кто много болтает, тот много врет (Those who chat a lot lie a lot); Много болтать – тому ж быть (A lot of chatting turns into reality); Полно болтать-*

то, ино болтнешь, не воротить (Stop chatting, for you cannot turn back what was blurted out) [GDRP: 83]; Захочешь болтать – язык что-нибудь да скажет (If you want to chat, your tongue will find what to say); Языком болтай, а рукам волю не давай (Chat with your tongue and keep your hands off); Глупому лучше молчать, нежели много болтать (A silly one should rather keep silent than chat a lot) [Zhig.: 22] etc.

Some verb components are quite occasional and can be found in very few paroemias.

Сказывать (relate) – *Все скоро сказывается, да не все скоро делается (Everything can be related quickly, yet not everything can be done soon); Знает сила правду, да не любит сказывать (The power knows the truth but would not prefer to relate it); Мал бывал – сказки слушал, вырос велик – сам стал сказывать (Being small, I used to listen to fairy tales; grown up, I relate them myself) [GDRP: 812]; Говори, говори, да сказывай (Keep speaking and relate) [D.2: 357] etc.*

Глаголать (speak out (pathetic)) – *Язык мой – враг мой: прежде ума (наперед ума) глаголет (My tongue is my enemy, for it speaks out before my head thinks up) [GDRP: 172];*

Ленетать (babble) – *Ешь калачи да поменьше лепечи (Eat your kalaches and babble less); Ленеталось бы, да не дремалось (I would babble but I could not slumber) [GDRP: 478]; Язык лепечет, а голова не ведает (The tongue babbles but the head is unaware) [D.1: 358];*

Рассказывать (tell) – *Береги язык под старость – ребятам сказки рассказывать (Take care of your tongue before getting old to be able to tell fairy tales to children) [GDRP: 812];*

Шептать(ся) (whisper) – *Шептал тайно – хлопотать явно (Those who whisper in secret bustle on the public eye); В темноте хорошо шептаться, но не ловить блох (Darkness is good for whispering, not for catching fleas) [GDRP: 1000];*

Хаять (scold) – *Не хвали: половина хвои. Не захваливай: дай людям похаять! (Never praise, for there is a half of pine needles. Never overpraise, let people scold (one)!) Непочто хаять, коли лучшего (ишого) нет (No reason to scold if there is nothing better (other)) [GDRP: 946].*

The third category of verbal components consists of units in which the 'to speak' meaning is marked as figurative; compare such lexemes as *чесать* (*scratch*), *почесать* (*scrape*), *точить* (*sharpen*), *молоть* (*grind*) as part of collocations with the meaning of 'to lie, to talk nonsense': *Языком молоть – не дрова колоть: спина не заболит* (*Tongue grinding is not as easy as wood chopping and does not make your back ache*) [GDRP: 550]; *Языком мели, а руками не разводи* (*Grind with your tongue but do not spread your arms*) [Zhig.: 295]; *Пустая мельница и без ветру мелет* (*An empty mill can grind without wind*) [GDRP: 528]; *Лясы точит да людей морочит* (*One sharpens gabs and messes with others' heads*); *Полно лясы (балясы, балы) точить, пора голенища строчить* (*Enough to sharpen your gabs, for it is high time to stitch the boot tops*) [GDRP: 511, 880].

Other parts of speech can be rarely found as part of the paroemias describing conversation, speech, and communication. Compare: *Речист, да на руку нечист* (*Voluble but with sticky fingers*) (*речистый* (*voluble*) means 'grandiloquent; garrulous, talkative, chatty [SAD.3: 713]). Although not so often, the participles can also be found in PUs, compare *сказанный* (*spoken*) *Сказанное слово – серебро, не сказанное – золото* (*A word spoken is silver; yet an unspoken one is gold*)).

Having illustrated the composition of components, typical for paroemias, that obviously make a significant contribution to the formation of the semantics of utterances about speech, we can proceed to the notions verbalising in the paroemiological space and the paradigm of parameters according to which speakers and their speech behaviour are evaluated.

2.2. Stereotypical ideas of speech as represented in Russian proverbs

This subchapter is written using materials published as articles [Xu Yao 2023a, Xu Yao 2023d].

A proverb is one of the most culturally significant units of any language, and the study of paroemias verbalising the speech perception and evaluation by culture bearers enables us to identify a wide range of popular conceptions of speech and attitudes

represented in PUs. Language- and speech-related PUs carry information about the specifics of and evaluate the speech communication, and advise on proper speech behaviour. Proverbs “summarise knowledge about and express multidimensional evaluation of communicative behaviour” [Shumarina 2014: 98].

Generally, speech is by no means a simple thing, hence it should be "sophisticatedly analysed from the standpoint of human behaviour research” [Kosinskaya, Chernykh 2016: 7]. A rather complex system of ideas and notions discovered by us, the analysis of which makes up the content of this subchapter, also confirms this fact.

The analysis of paroemias, focused on identifying cultural attitudes that native speakers follow towards speech, makes it possible to distinguish four main groups of units, based on what a cultural attitude represented by a proverb is associated with.

2.2.1. Cultural attitudes towards the manner of speech and its external characteristics

The first group consists of sayings that highlight the nature of the speech flow and the communicators’ perception of the external speech parameters.

Let us address the individual categories of PUs unified by a common stereotype or cultural attitude.

2.2.1.1. Ideas of brevity and verbosity

One of this group’s most important cultural attitudes is that targeting speakers on the ***brevity*** of speech that marks the advantage of laconism. Some paroemias directly indicate that brief speech action would be preferable: *Слова хороши, если они коротки* [GDRP: 822]; *Держи язык короче! (Keep your tongue shorter) Ешь много, а говори мало (Eat more, speak less)* [GDRP: 331]; *Хороша веревка длинная, а речь короткая (A good rope is a long one, while a good speech is a short one)* [GDRP: 113]; *Недолгая речь хороша, а долгая — поволока (A brief speech is good, but a long one is procrastination)* [D.1: 357]. *Поволока* from *волочь* ‘linger, procrastinate, play for time’ (compare: *Лучше на убогой жениться, чем век с богатой волочиться (One would rather marry a poor*

woman than drag a century with a rich one) [D.1: 236]). In the PU *Короток язык, так вытянут, а длинен, так окоротают* (*окоротать* – ‘укоротить, прервать’) (*If your tongue is short, they will pull it out; if your tongue is long, they will trim it down* (to ‘trim down – to shorten, to chop’)) [D. 1: 360], we can even see a threat against an overly verbose person.

The PU *Много слов – кладь для ослов, а короткое слово – украшение мира* (*Plenty of words are baggage for donkeys, while a short speech is an embellishment to the world*) [GDRP: 821] represents 2 ways of expressing the attitude to the length of speech. Firstly, the *кладь* component is associated with heavy load that a donkey carries meekly – similarly, sometimes you have to listen to long speeches without any desire. On the other hand, interpreting the *ослы* component in a figurative sense, it is possible to identify the idea of forced verbosity if a recipient is from among of those of feeble comprehension, while brief speech is enough for a smart one. ***The idea of preference and positive evaluation of short speech*** as compared to long speech is undoubtedly one of the most important attitudes in paroemiology. Compare: *Говорить не устать, было бы что сказать* (*You will not get tired of talking if you have something to say*) [GDRP: 182]; *Бога благодари, а лишнего не говори* (*Be thankful to God and never talk too much*) [GDRP: 70]; *Говорил день до вечера, а слушать нечего* (*Though he talked day to night, nothing useful was in his talks*); *Многая говоря всегда стыда доводит* (*Too much speaking results in too much shame*) [GDRP: 183] etc. As we can see, the above PUs also allow for the interpretation that not only give importance to the brevity of a particular speech act (“reticence”) but also emphasise the fact that one should generally spend less time on talking.

However, PUs more often advise to show ***moderation*** that concerns not only the ability to briefly and substantially outline something but also to ***refrain from providing excess or important information*** that was not meant for someone else’s ears; compare: *Лишнее говорить – себе вредит* (*Talking too much may be harmful to you*) [D.1: 359]; *Щи хлебай, да поменьше бай!* (*Slurp your cabbage soup and talk less*) [D.1: 356]; *Знай больше, а говори меньше* (*More knowledge, less talking*) [D.1: 369]; *Держи язык на привязи (на веревочке)* (*Keep your tongue tied (on a leash)*); *Ешь пирог с грибами, а*

язык держи за зубами (*Eat your pie with mushrooms and keep your tongue behind your teeth*) [GDRP: 661]. It is no coincidence that the tactic of “shut (locked) mouth” is verbalised quite actively, with various images involved: *Глотку раздерешь – не зашьешь* (*A torn gullet will not be sewn up*) [GDRP: 178]; *Загороди рот запором, заставь заставкой!* (*Block your mouth with a latch, put a shutter on it!*) *Вот тебе сахарный кусок, заткни себе роток!* (*Here’s a piece of sugar for you to shut your mouth!*) [GDRP: 468]. Many phrases urge a person to deliberately make himself unable to speak: *Зажми рот и не говори [с год]!* (*Cover your mouth and do not speak (for a year)*) *Заткни рот рукавицей!* (*Shut your mouth with a mitten!*) [GDRP: 765].

The second way to emphasise the importance of the ability to speak briefly is to point out **verbosity**: *Когда он заговорит, то и собаке не даст слова сказать* (*When he speaks, even a dog cannot get a word in edgewise*) [D.1: 361]; *Губы да зубы – два запора (забора), а удержу нет* (*Lips and teeth are both latches, yet unable to hold a tongue*) [D.1: 361]; *Короткую речь слушать хорошо, под долгую речь думать хорошо* (*A short speech is good for listening, and a long one for thinking*) [D.1: 347] – this example seems to hint that a person stops listening to a speaker with his too long-lasting speech and instinctively digresses to his thoughts, etc.

Although paroemias do not categorically prohibit verbosity, the disapproval of verbose speakers seems obvious. The fallacy of the speaker’s chosen behaviour is indicated by some special PU fragments; compare: *Острый язык – дарование, длинный язык – наказание* (*A sharp tongue is a gift while a long one is a scourge*) [GDRP: 1012]; *Во многих словах нет спасения* (*No salvation in wordiness*) [GDRP: 823] (*нет спасения* (*no salvation*)) – therefore, this is a wrong tactic, verbosity is not a remedy); *Много говорить – голова заболит* (*Too much talking leads to headache*) [D.1: 357] – negative evaluation is given through the image of a head that has started aching because of long conversations. In PU *Язык блудлив, что коза (кошка)* (*A tongue is as rakish as a goat (cat)*) [D.1: 356], a negative evaluative indicator is the *блудлив* component (‘naughty, thievish’, SAD.1:99), which is negatively marked in other paroemias as well; compare: *Блудливой чушке полено на шею* (*A rakish swine deserves a log on her neck*) (*чушке* – ‘swine, pig’) [D.1: 185]. The semantics of randomness and lack of control is

implicitly shown here.

Paroemias express the message that *an idea can be conveyed in a concise form and a smart person does not need* many words to understand: *Доброму слушателю (Умному) немного слов (A good (smart) listener needs a few words)* [GDRP: 824] (*доброму*, means ‘good, decent’).

The contradiction of PUs [Seliverstova, Chen Weijia 2019: 168]⁵ manifests as their immanent quality in the expression of an idea that does not correspond to the preference for brief speech. Compare the PU *Короткие речи и слушать неча (ничего) (It is not worth listening to short speeches)* [D.1: 364], i.e., ‘no reason, no sense’ – perhaps because a speaker may not have time to convey his thought in its entirety. Most likely, this saying reproves the understatement, inaccurate or incomplete expression of a speaker’s thought.

The following meaning can also be found in PUs: the assumption of an interlocutor’s reasonableness *eliminates the need to repeat what has already been said*: *Про одни дрожди не говорят трожди (трижды) (The same yeast is not discussed thrice)* [D.2: 122]; *Заладила сорока Якова одно про всякого (Jacob’s magpie keeps saying the same thing about everyone)* [D.1: 358] etc.

In general, the “to speak – to keep silence” opposition is represented in speech-related proverbs by three semantic aspects: “to speak briefly, little”, “to speak at length (a lot)” and “to keep silence”. Let us take a closer look at the silence-related proverbs.

2.2.1.2. Stereotypical ideas of silence and listening

The viewpoint of K.A. Bogdanov, who regards silence as a “fact of speech culture”, allows us to dwell on the paroemias about silence that is seemingly opposed to speaking and speech. It “has to be respected by anyone engaged in this very culture. Silence is omnipresent and impossible to be ignored” [Bogdanov 1998: 4]. In proverbs, silence is considered not per se but in contrast to speech that may not always be appropriate and sensible. There is folk wisdom in such sayings as *Сказано – серебро, не сказано –*

⁵ N.A. Nikitin and M.G. Kharitonov note the general contradiction between ideas and values of the way of life in the modern world view [Nikitin, Kharitonov 2019: 275].

золото (A word spoken is silver, yet an unspoken one is gold) [D.1: 362]; *Молчок – золотое словечко (Hush is a goldy wordie)* [GDRP: 551]; *Говорит (поет, играет) хорошо, а замолчит — еще лучше (It's good when he speaks (sings, plays) yet much better when he keeps silent)* [D.1: 361]; *Молчанкой никого не обидишь (Silence can never be an insult)* [D.1: 362].

M.N. Epstein believes that the phenomenon of silence acquires its thematic completeness only in conversation; silence is a result, a “continuation” of the conversation that took place: “If a conversation did not take place, there would be no silence, for there would be nothing to be silent of. The conversation is not just negated or stopped by silence – it keeps on lasting in silence in a new way, creates the possibility of silence, and denotes what they are silent of” [Epstein 2006: 179]. In paroemias, most of the silence-related PUs also verbalise the concept of silence as perceived in comparison with actual or potential speaking and evaluated against its background. For instance: *Не говори, когда нужно молчать (Don't speak when you should be silent)* [GDRP: 181]; *Не все ворчать, надо и помолчать (It is not always opportune to grumble, sometimes you need to be silent)* [D.1: 334]; *Брюхо, что судья; и молчит (и молча), да просит (A belly is like a judge; it knows how to request despite being silent)* [D.2: 282].

Silence is an important aspect of human speech behaviour, which is positively evaluated in most cases of paroemias: *С молчания язык не болит (Keeping silent never makes a tongue ache)* [GDRP: 550]. For example, they appreciate the ability to keep silent at a good hour: *Кстати промолчать, что большое слово сказать (To silence pertinently is as good as to make a big speech)* [D.1: 364] (*промолчать (to silence)* means to hold back, try not to say a single word).

Remaining silent is vital when words may be undesirable or dangerous: *В добрый час молвить, в худой помолчать (Uttering in a good hour, silent in an evil one)* [D.1: 388] one is preferable to talk when the words cannot harm anything or anyone.

A conversationist may often say too much and pay for it, as admonished by such PUs as *Кто меньше толкует, тот меньше тоскует (Those who rede less grieve less)* (*тосковать (grieve)* – ‘to be sad about one thing or another’) [GDRP: 909]; *Молчанье – половина спасенья (Silence is half the salvation); Молчи больше, так проживешь*

дольше (Keep silent more, so you'll live longer) [GDRP: 550]; *Меньше говоришь – меньше греха (Less speaking, less evil)*; *И глух, и нем – греха не вем (Deaf and dumb, I escape the wickedness)* ('I do not know or deal with') [D.1: 355].

A feature of proper behaviour is the ability to understand that you have something to say and should do it in a particular situation while there is sometimes no reason or ground to do so: *Не стыдно молчать, когда нечего сказать (It's not a shame to stay silent when you have nothing to say)* [D.1: 171]; *Молчание лучше пустого болтания (Silence is better than empty talks)* [GDRP: 550] – the semantics of the vain, idle is implemented via the *пустой* component; *Умный молчит, когда дурак ворчит (A wise one keeps silent when a fool grumbles)* [D.1: 383]; *Умей вовремя сказать, вовремя смолчать (One should be able to speak and keep quiet opportunely)* [GDRP: 934]; *Говоря не ошибешься, а молча не обмолвишься (You can't make a mistake while talking and you won't let it slip when keeping silent)* [GDRP: 183] (*обмолвиться (let it slip)* – 'to say something wrong, misspeak'). According to the proverb, it is more helpful to remain silent than to say something inappropriate; compare: *Отважился слово молвить, да и то невпопад (One dared to utter a word, yet it was wide of the mark)* [DED: 736].

The information told spreads quickly among people and turns into rumor, so it is wiser to keep silent in one's personal interests: *Сказал красно — по избам пошло; а смолчится — себе пригодится (One's beautiful talks go circulating among the gossipmongers, while one's silence is useful oneself)* [D.1: 360].

The ability to keep silent demonstrates a person's experience wisdom: *Кстату промолчать, что большое слово сказать (To silence pertinently is as good as to make a big speech)* [D.1: 364]; *Кто молчит, тот двух (семерых) научит (That who keeps silent can teach two (seven))* [GDRP: 550] – this is a skill that others should learn.

Silence is perceived as a value, so it is not accidental that it is evaluated using such traditional proverbial benchmarks as *money, silver, gold*: *Сказанное слово серебряное, а несказанное – золотое (A word spoken is silver, yet an unspoken one is gold)*; *Сказанное слово – серебро, а молчание – золото (A word spoken is silver, yet silence is gold)*; *Молчок – сто рублей (Hush costs one hundred roubles)* [GDRP: 551] etc. A

different emphasis is put in such PUs as *За молчание деньги платят* (*Silence is paid with money*); *И за молчание гостинцы дают* (*One may be gifted for one's silence*) [GDRP: 550]: they probably mean one person's silence "bought" in the interests of another.

It would be impossible not to dwell individually on the paroemias that **reprove silence** in the cases where a person stays silent (1) instead of speaking, taking part in a conversation: *Молчать, так и дело не скончатъ* (*Keeping silent, one won't finish one's job*) [D.1: 363]; *Не молчи, когда нужно говорить* (*Don't be silent when you should talk*) [D.1: 364]. It is hard to get a silent person to talk: *Всю неделю говорил: ась, а в субботу сказал: что* (*He was saying "Eh?" all the week and said "What?" on Saturday*) [D.1: 318]; *Он спроста не говорит: растопырит слово да и молчит* (*He does not speak for nothing: he would spread his word out and then keeps silencing*) [D.1: 362].

Silence is not always a sign of great intelligence, for **not only a wise person but also a narrow-minded one** (2), who simply has nothing to say, **may remain silent**; compare the ironically mocking PU *Долго не говорит – ум копит; а вымолвит – слушать нечего* (*Silent for long, he accumulates his wisdom, but when he speaks his words are worthless*) [D.1: 361], in which the illusion of thoughtful silence practically turns into empty talk.

Silence can also be evaluated negatively when it **hinders communication and interaction necessary for people** (3): *Не всякое молчание – золото* (*Not every silence is gold*) [GDRP: 550]; *Говорить беда, а молчать другая* (*Talking is one trouble but being silent is another*) [D.1: 360] – this PU opposes the talker and the taciturn, providing negative perception of both. Silence is undesirable when a person is asked for his opinion: *Молчаньем (Молчбою) прав не будешь* (*Silence won't make you right*) [GDRP: 551]; *Тихое молчание – ничему не ответ* (*Noiseless silence can't serve as answer to any question*) [GDRP: 550].

Silence can also be evaluated negatively because (4) **a silent person's thoughts and intentions are unknown to others**. Compare: *Молчан-собака да тихий омут [опасны]* (*A silent dog and still waters [are dangerous]*) [GDRP: 550] – this proverb is about a dog that "bites silently, stealthily, without barking" [DED.2: 350] and can figuratively

describe a silent (taciturn) person who raise some concern by his behaviour.

Native speakers of Russian pay **attention to the tact and manners shown during a conversation**.⁶ Proverbs regulate speech behaviour at large, emphasising the importance of respect for the interlocutor, the **ability to listen without interrupting and not only to speak yourself**: *Не торопись отвечать, торопись слушать!* (*Rush to listen rather than to respond*) [D.1: 357]; *Как тут говорить, где не дадут (не велят) рта отворить* (*How can I speak if they just don't let me open my mouth?*) [D.1: 322]; *Слушай больше, а говори меньше* (*More listening, less talking*) [GDRP: 181]. Compare also how this idea is implemented in the PU *Кушать кушайте, а балы наши слушайте* (*Keep on eating while listening to our matters*) (*балы (matters) – ‘words, talks’*; derived from *балакать*); *Красна речь слушанием* (*A criterion of speech beauty is its listeners*) [CFW]. The PE also records one of the rules that remain today: do not interrupt your interlocutor: *Чужих слов не перебивай* (*Never interrupt other's words*) [DED.4: 235].

The notion of **the benefits of listening as contrasted with speech and speaking** is variedly implemented in proverbs: *Кто говорит, тот сеет; кто слушает — собирает (пожинает)* (*A speaker sows, a listener gathers (harvests)*) [D.1: 356] – the interpretation of the proverbial metaphor makes it possible to uncover the idea of the undoubtedly beneficial outcome, that is, “harvesting the fruits” of listening; *Красна речь слушаньем (а беседа смиреньем)* (*Listening is a sign of good speech, while humbleness is that of good discussion*) [D.1: 355].

As mentioned above, proverbs emphasise **the preference for restraint, infrequent participation in a discussion**: *Поменьше говори, побольше услышишь* (*Those who speak less hear more things*) [D.1: 356]; *Меньше говорить, меньше согрешит (меньше греха)* (*Less speaking, less evil*) [ibid.] (*less speaking implies not only ‘shorter’ but also ‘more rarely’*).

They are more likely to heed the words of someone who enters into discussions less often; compare: *Где слова редки, там они вески (вес имеют)* (*Words are weighty*

⁶ The research by Yuan Ling on the rules related to demonstration of good/bad manners in speech communication is of interest in this regard. Thus, based on the survey and analysis of contexts from the Russian National Corpus, a well-mannered person does not raise his voice, does not interrupt his interlocutor, does not keep up empty (idle) conversations, does not talk publicly about intimate things, does not say unpleasant things about a person behind his back, etc. [Yuan Ling: 59].

if spoken rarely) [GDRP: 821]; *He все говори, что знаешь* (*Don't tell everything you know*) [GDRP: 181].

Silence is regarded as a special behavioural strategy, it can denote a person's peculiar traits, stammering and inability to express thoughts clearly, worries or, conversely, pacification [Mukhametov 2012: 82]. Some of these characteristics of silence are reflected in the paroemias, which indicates the typicality of the attitudes and notions verbalised in PUs and the dual evaluation of such a phenomenon as silence.

2.2.1.3. Ideas of hasty and slow speech in Russian proverbs

Speech is broadly represented in the paremiological worldview, and the notion of the speech tempo and how Russian culture bearers evaluate the speech as too rapid or too slow, is also reflected therein. Both may be regarded disapprovingly as hindering successful communication.

The idea of ***disapproving hasty conversation*** is represented in several PUs based on comparing useless conversations with a job (see also 2.3.1.4) that should be done first: *Языком не торопись, торопись делом* (*Slow your tongue down, hurry your job up*) [D.2: 68]; *He спеши языком, торопись (не ленись) делом* (*Don't rush your tongue but hasten doing your job*) [D.1: 356]. As the proverbs say, one should hurry with his job. The PU *He спеши языком, торопись кочедыком!* (*Don't rush with your tongue, hurry with your kochedyk*) [D.2: 68] specifies the type of activity; *kochedyk* is a special tool to make bast shoes, using which a bast or hemp is pulled through in the process of weaving. This tool also appears in the PU *Мужик кочедыком, а чистомойка (чистоплюйка) языком* (*A man works with a kochedyk and a cleanly woman with her tongue*) [D.2: 68], implementing the concept of “differentiation of labour”: ‘one works while another talks’⁷. All these PUs still provide a motif of desirable slowness in conversation; compare: ironic *Говорить — не работать, торопиться не надо* (*Talking is not doing and doesn't need a rush*) [DED.1: 373].

⁷ Placement of this PU in Dahl's digest's “Titles – Estates” section indicates that this refers to the busyness of people of different classes – probably about a peasant as a hardworking man accustomed to manual labour and about a soft-handed man, for whom talks are a more usual thing.

It would seem that the “clumping” of speech that makes it incomprehensible should be disapproved; however, we have not found any paroemias negatively evaluating hasty and therefore inaudible speech, although such sayings can be attributed to expressions describing hasty speech as *говорить всмятку* (*speak in a crumpling manner*) [D.1: 412]; *говорит, словно кашу в ланту обувает* (*He speaks as if he puts bast shoes on porridge*); *porridge in one’s mouth* [D.1:374] – this implies a hardly comprehensible speech, etc.

The idea of the futility of talking to a person – compare *С дураком говорить – в стену горох лепить* (*Talking to a fool is the same as throwing peas at the wall*) [D.1: 388]; *С ним говорить, что решетом воду носить* (*Talking to him is the same as carrying water in a sieve*) [D.1: 189] etc. – is expressed without indicating the reason that may lie in an interlocutor’s haste. On the other hand, you should not rush with advice, with an answer (*Не торопись отвечать, торопись слушать* (*Rush to listen rather than to respond*) [Д.2: 67]), with any reply or phrase, for one should think first, otherwise one may find oneself in an unpleasant situation: *Словом поспешишь – скоро посмешишь* (*Those rushing with words may get mocked too soon*) [GDRP: 828], i.e., ‘you will become an object of ridicule’. Compare the PU *Говорить не думая – что стрелять не целясь* (*Talking unthinkingly is the same as shooting without targeting*) [GDRP: 182]. The theme of the undesirability of a hastily spoken word, which you will have to regret, is represented in many PUs (see section 2.3.2.2 below).

Slow speech that makes it **difficult to listen to a speaker** is also **negatively evaluated** in PUs, for this reduces the effectiveness of perception: *Рот откроешь, а слово не приговоришь* (*He opens his mouth without preparing a word*) [GDRP: 765]; however, this proverb may imply the ability to think quickly rather than a speech tempo.

The paroemias in which an interlocutor’s wish to hurry the speaker is verbalized are composed using images of monotonous long-time actions (*Полно плести, пора домой брести!* (*Stop talking, for it’s time to hobble home*) [GDRP: 667] *Полно мотать, пора узел вязать* (*Enough of winding, it’s time to tie a knot*) [GDRP: 924]) that one would like to finalise.

Russian proverbs express the characteristic of speech slowness in a diverse and expressive way (compare: *Слово по слову, что на лопате подает* (*A word after a word,*

as if he brings it on a shovel) [D.1: 362]; *Говорит, как сани по песку тащит* (He speaks as if he drags a sledge across the sand) [Zimin: 367]; *Говорит, как будто три дня не ел* (He speaks as if he starved for three days) [ibid.]; *Молоко скиснет, пока он слово вымолвит* (Milk will turn sour before he utters a word) [ibid.]; *У него слово слову костыль подает* (His words give a crutch to each other) [D.1: 362]; *Слово к слову приставляет, словно клетки городит* (He puts a word to a word as if he builds cages) [ibid.]), while proverbs that reprove slow speech and advise quicker speaking are rare in Russian. The very fact of speakers' description of the speech tempo indicates that it differs from some average, non-reprehensible one and therefore catches the interlocutors' attention: *Слово насилу молвит, как будто язык киселем кормит* (He barely speaks the word, as if he feeds his tongue with jelly) [Snegirev: 280]; *Говорит, что плетень плетет* (He speaks as if he weaves a wattle) [Anikin: 64]. These speech patterns indicate a negative perception of too slow speech that is tiresome to listen. It seems that in slow speech Russian speakers and culture bearers see an insufficient completion of the thought that the speaker wants to express, which hinders understanding the meaning of what has been said. It is no coincidence that the *плести* (to tat) verb is also used in PUs: *Говорит, как плохая плетей кружева плетет: что сплетет – ничего не разберет* (He speaks like a bad lacemaker tats: unable to make out what he has tatted) [Anikin: 64].

2.2.1.4. Stereotypical ideas of action being preferable to conversation

In the PUs under analysis, one of the most widely represented and rather weighty ideas is the **importance and prevalence of an action (work) over a word**, since words are of little help. This attitude can be found in many units, firstly, as a general concept: *Поменьше бы слов, да побольше дела* (A little less conversation, a little more action) [D.1: 131]; *Словом дела (дело) не заменишь* (An action is impossible to replace by a word) [GDRP: 827]; *Поменьше слов, побольше дела* (Deeds, not words); *Не много слов, да много дела* (Not many words but many actions) [GDRP: 821]; *Словами дело не делается* (Work can't be done using words) [GDRP: 823]; *От слова не сделается*

(*A word can't make it done*); *Словами всего много говорится, а на деле не все сбывается* (*Words say a lot of things, yet not every single thing turns into action*) [GDRP: 822].

This general concept is also verbalised in several specific attitudes. For instance, you should ***prefer a much more useful work or being busy to conversations***: *Меньше говори, да больше делай!* (*Less talk, more action!*) [D.1: 356], *Не спеши языком, торопись делом* (*Don't rush your tongue but hasten doing your job*); *Не спеши языком, а не ленись руками* (*Don't rush your tongue and don't let your hands be idle*) [GDRP: 1015].

Paroemias mention frequent life-related ***mismatch between talks (forward-looking promises, plans, etc.), on the one hand, and their implementation, i.e. deeds*** requiring effort and time. One can easily do well in the firstly mentioned thing, for people are not always able to realistically assess their capabilities, while the secondly mentioned one requires serious attitude and does not tolerate haste: *Все скоро сказывается, да не все скоро делается* (*Everything can be related quickly, yet not everything can be done soon*); *Скоро то говорится, а не скоро делается* (*Fast talks but slow actions*) [D.1: 356]; According to proverbs, there are a lot of those eager for talking; however, as we know, a person is evaluated by his deeds. One of the most frequently verbalized cultural attitudes is the idea of “It is hard to expect a businesslike approach from a talker”: *Кто словом скор, тот в делах редко спор* (*Those who are swift with his words rarely succeed in work*) [D.1: 145] *Где много слов, там мало дел* (*Many words yet little action*) [GDRP: 821]. *До рассказней охотник — плохой работник* (*A great fellow for story-making is a bad man for work*) [CFW]; *Кто много говорит, тот мало делает* (*Those who speak much do less*) [D.1: 356].

The PU *Рассказчики не годятся в приказчики* (*Storytellers are not fit to be stewards*) [GDRP: 749] may be interpreted as the message that a person cannot be a good administrator if he talks much. Such a talker would hardly exemplify a good labourer, although the word-deed contrast is not verbalized in this PU.

And, by contrast, ***those who speak little create and produce more tangible work results***: *Кто мало говорит, тот больше делает* (*The least talker by the greatest doer*)

[D.1: 356].

Hence, the PUs *disapprove someone who*, firstly, *fails to fulfil his promises or boasts*: (*По разговорам всюды (годится), а по делам никуды (In his talks he is all in one, but in his deeds he is worth nothing)* [D.1: 356]; *Скоро сказано, кабы да сделано (It was swiftly said, if only it will be done)* [D.1: 357]; *Звону много, да толку мало (Great boast, small roast)* [D.1: 25].

Proverbs focus on the attractive utterances, on a pleasant prospect that can evoke vain expectations of a decent result from the speaker's efforts: *На словах его хоть выспись (а на деле и головы не приклонишь) (His words are as tender as a featherbed (while his actions are worse than a firm bench)* [D.1: 365]; *Словами и туды и сюды, а делами никуды (Good words without deeds are rushes and reeds)* [D.2: 187]; *Складно баёт, да дела не знает (His talks are smooth but his work is sloppy)* [D.1: 362]; *Два слова басен – да и все дело тут (His only deed is just some fabled words)* [GDRP: 821].

Secondly, *disapproval is also expressed to someone who does not know how to work – and, perhaps, does not want to – and therefore does his job poorly*: *He все то делается (творится), что говорится (Not every word turns into a deed)* [D.1: 357]; *Слово бело, да дело черно (Unlike talks, work can make your hands dirty)* [GDRP: 826]; *Говорит много, а дела на грош, да и тот нехорош (Great talker yet bad penny doer)* [CFW]; *На думах – что на вилах; на словах – что на санях, а на деле – что в яме (His thoughts are like a hayfork, his words are like a sledge, but his deeds are like a pit)* [GDRP: 309]; *Мелева много, да помолу нет (Much ground grain yet no flour)* (i.e., senseless speeches) [D.1: 358]. The negative evaluation is supported by various PU fragments: a figurative *в яме* element, the *черно* component endowed with symbolic meaning; the *много* adverb specially emphasized by being contrasted to the absence of *помол* as an expected result. There is an expressive contrast between words and deeds, presented in the PU *Словами, что листьями сылет (листьем стелет), а делами, что иглами колет (He speaks as if he scatters leaves, but he acts as if he sticks needles)* [GDRP: 821]. This is how you can describe a hypocrite whose actions towards someone (something) contradict his speeches, or a man of eloquence whose talents are limited to

talks only.

Some PUs may accentuate the futility and uselessness of words, while the “deed”, i.e. work, efforts to do work, implementation of plans and promises do not need comments: the notion of unconditional dominance of the deed as compared to any talking prevails in the Russian nationally marked consciousness. This notion is also implemented in PUs involving other components with the speaking semantics: *Дело знай, а попусту не бай* (*Know your work and don't twaddle*) [GDRP: 826].

An outstanding one is the line linking the motif of uselessness of the word, i.e. speech, with a way (means) to feed a hungry sufferer, while satiety is one of the vital conditions of human life: *Брюхо глухо: словом не уймешь* (*A belly is deaf therefore can't be appeased with a word*); *Брюхо не насыщается словами* (*A belly is unable to be satiated with words*) [GDRP: 96, 97]; *Голодного словами не накормишь* (*You can't feed a hungry one with words*); *Словами жернова не повернешь, а глухого не научишь* (*Words can help neither turn the millstones nor teach the deaf*) [GDRP: 822, 823]; *жернова* is a flour grinding device necessary as a stage in the process of making (baking) bread as a source of food.

The PU *Из слов блинов не напечешь и полушубка не сошьешь* (*Using words, no one can make pancakes or a sheepskin coat*) [GDRP: 821] etc. implicitly hides the linguistic and cultural attitude: ***you should earn money for your food***, i.e. you have to do some active practical work. This saying is connected with the others on the basis of a single structural and semantic model “words or speech are perceived as “material” impossible to be used to make anything useful or appropriate”: *Из слов щей не сваришь – нужны капуста и мясо* (*Words are useless to cook cabbage soup, you need meet and cabbage*) [ibid.].

It is not only food products that are involved in the field of tangible results in paroemias. The paroemias such as *Спасибо в карман не положишь* (*Thanks do not fill a pocket*); *Спасибо в стакан не нальешь* (*Thanks can't be poured into a glass*) (‘verbal gratitude is not enough’) are described, in particular, by E.I. Seliverstova. She believes that Russian self-consciousness attaches importance to deeds and actions, whereas conversations, idle words, and even expressions of gratitude can be perceived as

communication attributes of little use [Seliverstova 2017: 129-130]. The word is useless in the sense that they cannot be fed and watered: *Брюхо не насыщается словами* (*A belly is unable to be satiated with words*); *Из слов щей не сварить – нужны капуста и мясо* (*Words are useless to cook cabbage soup, you need meat and cabbage*); *От слов кошелек не будет полон* (*Words can't fill a purse*). <...> The immateriality of words – in contrast to money, clothes, grain, and food – is also noted in such PUs as *Поле словами не засевают* (*One can never sow words in the field*); *Сколько ни говорить, а с разговором сыту не быть* (*However long a conversation is, it will never cram you down*) [ibid.].

Another generalised idea lies in the interpretation of a tongue as a tool. It is indeed a tool, since communication and speech are impossible without a tongue; however, neither a tongue nor speech spoken using it are usable to achieve deliverables, what makes it not good or insufficient: *Языком капусты не шинкуют* (*Cabbage can't be chopped with a tongue*); *Языком и лаптя не сплетишь* (*One can't make a bast shoe with a tongue*); *Языком целину не поднимаешь* (*New soil won't be broken with a tongue*); *Языком льна не натрепнешь* (*A tongue is useless to scutch flax*) [GDRP: 1015]. The PU *Языком молотить – не дрова колоть* (*Grinding with your tongue is not the same as chopping firewood*) [GDRP: 1015], on the one hand, indicates the ease of speaking and, on the other hand, implicitly expresses the idea that a tongue is useless to chop firewood. Anyway, this paroemia serves to describe a person who is talkative rather than laborious.

2.2.2. Stereotypical ideas of the content of speech as verbalized in Russian proverbs

Proverbs give advice on reasonable and decent speech behaviour that is one of the most important activities in human life. One of its essential features is the content and adequate sense of speech. In general terms, the attitude towards the ***need for a thorough, weighty content of the utterance*** is expressed in such PUs as *По речам узнают человека* (*Speeches show what a man is*) [GDRP: 754]; *Умей сказать много в немногих словах* (*Say many things in a few words*) [GDRP: 931] etc.

2.2.2.1. Stereotypical ideas of sensible vs inane speech

Proverbs recommend *avoiding unnecessary conversations or idle discussions*: *He с ветра говорится, что болтать зря не годится* (Not for nothing they say that there's no good in vain chatters); *Ешь капусту, да не мели попусту* (Eat your cabbage and stop prattling in vain)! [CFW] It is impossible not to mention how active the *пустой* component is in the composition of the paroemias: *На алтын — пользы, а на целковый — пустых слов* (Pennyworth benefit, pound-worth empty words); *И красно, и пестро, да все пусто* (All nice and gaudy yet empty); *Пустые слова – что орехи без ядра* (Empty words are like kernel-less nuts); *Пустыми словами и оскомину можно набить* (Empty words can make one's mouth sore) [GDRP: 822]. In Russian, it means 'superficial, lacking any great importance; of little notice, trifles, nonsense; useless' [SAD.3: 561] and is involved in expressing the idea of disapproving senseless conversations. Compare also the PU *Что толку говорить без толку* (What's the use to talk for no purpose?) where two semantic elements, 'uselessness' and 'senselessness', are combined in an unusual way, with both conveyed via the *толк* component.

The words seem empty and futile to speakers against the absence of any result emphasised by the *ничего* and *ничего* components: *Наговорили, что наварили, а глядь – ан и нет ничего* (They have discussed a bagful of things, but this didn't lead to anything) [D.1: 358]; *Говорит день до вечера, а слушать ничего* (Though he talked day to night, nothing useful was in his talks) [D.1: 358]; *Зять с тещею говорит день до вечера, а послушать ничего* (Though the son- and mother-in-law talked day to night, nothing interesting was in their talks) [D.1: 345]; *Мелет день до вечера, а послушать ничего* (Though he grinds day to night, nothing useful was in his words) [D.1: 357]. Compare also the proverb about the insignificance of the result in comparison with verbosity: *Много всего говорится, да не все в дело годится* (A lot of things can be said, but not everything fits the bill) [CFW] ('only a part of the information told is worthwhile').

The PU *Мелева много, да помолу нет* (Much ground grain yet no flour) [D.1: 358] figuratively conveys the concept of a long but useless, meaningless speech, i.e. 'speeches are senseless'; *мелево* (ground grain) <derived from *молоть* (grind), 'the activity and the product or the result thereof'. Compare the saying *Мели, Емеля, твоя неделя* (Grind,

Emelya, it's your week) that is commented in the “Russian Phraseology” historical and etymological dictionary as follows: the *языком молоть* (*grind with one's tongue*) expression was compared with lasting “hard work on a manual millstone”, while a mouth was associated with a manual mill grinding grain with the help of tongue millstones [HED 2005: 216]. Comparing empty and often long-time chatter with grinding is also expressed in other PUs, because this is facilitated by the ambiguity of the *молоть* verb; compare: *Язык – жернов: мелет, что на него ни попало* (*A tongue is millstone, it grinds whatever gets on it*) [D.1: 358]; *Язык без костей – мелет* (*A boneless tongue grinds everything*). *Язычок – балаболка* (*This little tongue chatters incessantly*) [ibid.]; *Мелет день до вечера, а послушать нечего* (*Though he grinds day to night, nothing useful was in his words*) [D.1: 357].

As we have already mentioned (see 2.3.1.4.), the evaluation of empty words as compared to deeds or fruitful activities is explicitly negative. Sayings with 2 intersecting motifs of verbosity (see 2.3.1.1.) and, on the other hand, the meaninglessness of speech occupy a borderline area between the two PU groups. As exemplified by the PU *Много говорено, да мало сказано* (*Though much has been discussed, little has been mentioned*) [D.1: 317], actions indicated by the *говорить* and *сказать* verbs are contrasted. The *говорить* verb calls an action that is not obligatory but long-lasting owing to the *много* clarification, and the desired result as the outcome of the conversation is indicated by the *сказать* verb. Understanding the meaning of PU is also facilitated by a one-model proverb *Много наговорено, да мало переварено* (*Lot of things said, few absorbed*) [D.1: 355] also emphasizing a trifle of the rational grain taken out of the conversation, understood, and learnt by an interlocutor. Compare the expression about the preference for short senseful speech, similar to the last given PUs in structure but opposite in meaning: *Коротко сказано, да много высказано* (*Though a speech was brief, many things were shared*) [CFW].

The proverbs addressed in this subsection are also relevant to the linguistic and cultural attitude associated with the disapproval of verbosity, since it is traditionally perceived as unnecessary, time-consuming and often futile: *В долгих речах и короткого толку нет* (*Long speeches never make even little use*) [GDRP: 754], i.e. even a bit of

sense. *Многословие (Verbosity)* – ‘excess of words, excessive length of speaking’ [SAD.2: 283] – is perceived mainly as talking of a narrow-minded or short-witted person, which is manifested in the content of his speech. It is no coincidence that paremia, on the one hand, recommends *Говори меньше — умнее будет (The less you speak the wiser you are)* [GDRP: 181] and, on the other hand, emphasises situations where long and beautiful speeches are meaningless there is nothing to be learned from them: *В многословии не без пустословия (Verbosity often shows verbiage)* [D.1: 355]; *Говорит много, а слушать нечего (Though he talks a lot, nothing useful is in his talks)*; *Красно говорит, а слушать нечего (Though he talks beautifully, nothing useful is in his talks)*; *И красно и пестро (говорит), да пустоцветом (Though he talks beautifully and gaudily, his talks are a barren flower)* [D.1: 359]; *пустоцвет (barren flower)* means ‘a flower that does not bear fruit’, figuratively means ‘a person whose activities do not benefit other people, society’ [SAD.3:562], and as for the paroemia, the component introduces the meaning ‘for nothing, in vain’. Compare also: *Не тот умен, кто много говорит, а тот, кто попусту слов не тратит (A smart person is not the one who talks a lot, but the one who never waste words)* [CFW].

So, speech and conversation are **required to be senseful, useful, providing clever thoughts**: *Умную речь хорошо (добро) и слушать (A wise speech is good to listen)*; *Красную речь красно и слушать (A pleasant speech is pleasant to listen)* [GDRP: 755]; *Хорошего пирожка приятно покушать, умную речь приятно послушать (It’s a pleasure to eat a good patty, it’s a pleasure to listen to a wise speech)* [GDRP: 756]; *Умные речи и дурак поймет (Wise speech is easy to understand even for a fool)* [CFW].

Wise speech is that of a clever person who does not talk too much or in vain and is responsible for his words: *Кто говорит без умолку, в том мало толку (Those who talk incessantly are of little use)* [GDRP: 933]; *Из пустой клетки – сыч или сова; из пустой головы – пустые слова (An owl flies out of an empty cage, and empty words out of an empty head)* – an empty head, i.e. ‘stupid person’, is unable to say anything reasonable or useful. *Что знает, все скажет, и чего не знает, и то скажет (He’ll tell everything he knows, even everything he doesn’t)* [D.1: 355] is about a person whose speech veracity cannot be guaranteed. **Sensible and reasonable utterances are highly appreciated:**

Слово толковое стоит целкового (A sensible word is worth a rouble). The PUs В доброй беседе всяк ума копит (A good discussion lets everyone gain some knowledge); В умной беседе ума набраться, а в глупой – свой растерять (Intelligent discussions bring you knowledge, while the dumb ones make you lose your own intellect) [GDRP: 52] recognise the benefits of smart talk, and the proverb Я тебе говорю не (на) глум, а ты бери на ум (What I've told you is for you to keep in mind, not to sneer at) [GDRP: 178] contains a recommendation to draw useful information from the communication; глум – ‘something said for a laugh, as a joke, mockery’.

The value of wise speech is highlighted using the *мед (honey, mead)* benchmark that is widespread in the paremiological space: *Хорошая речь лучше (слаще) меда (Good speech is better (sweeter) than honey) [GDRP: 756]; С умным разговориться, что меду напиться (Conversing with a smart one is the same as drinking mead) [GDRP: 524]. Compare it in the PUs of other theme: Ласковое слово слаще меда (A kind word is sweeter than honey) [GDRP: 824]; Пьешь у друга воду слаще меду (A friend's water is sweeter than honey) [GDRP: 303].*

The proverbs disapproving stupid or silly speech are opposite in meaning: *Глупо говорить – людей смешить (Stupid speeches make people laugh) [CFW]; Глупые речи, что пыль на ветру (Senseless speech is like dust in the wind) [ibid.]*, that is, they fade away quickly without nothing left after them; besides, they are probably unpleasant. Compare also PUs about reprovably speech: *За умную речь хвалят, за дурную хаят (Wise speech is praised, silly one is berated) [CFW]; За дурную речь – голову с плеч (Off with his head for silly speeches!) [ibid.]; Тот дурак, кто говорит не так (That who speaks wrong is a fool) [GDRP: 313]; Глупому лучше молчать, нежели много болтать (A stupid one would better stay silent than talk too much) [GDRP: 178]. It is better for a fool not to taking part in a discussion at all: *С глупую речью сиди за печью (Stay behind the furnace with your silly speech) [GDRP: 756].**

The PUs regarding interlocutors' perception of speech also refer to those expressing disapproval: *Говорит красно, да слушать тошно (What he tells is beautiful yet tiresome to listen) [GDRP: 182]; Вежества не купи, умелось бы говорить (No need in wisdom if one is able to speak) [GDRP: 107] ironically represents the assessment of a*

speaker who is not intelligent and knowledgeable yet willingly talks about anything; *вежество* – derived from *ведать* ‘to know’, and the PU *Говорит — сам себя веселит* (*He talks for self-amusement*) allows for various interpretations: on the one hand, the speaker may have a conversation just for fun, therefore he is a frothy speaker willing to show off. On the other hand, a person may talk nonsense that makes him amused himself. In any case, such a speaker is negatively evaluated.

They ironically refer to a long-lasting silence that can be mistaken for a thinking process – *Не говорит — ум копит; а скажет — нечего слушать* (*Silent for long, he accumulates his wisdom, but when he speaks his words are worthless*) [D.1: 377] that, however, is not followed by an expected profound thought.

The PU also warns of the implications of ill-considered, stupid speech: *Из-за пустых слов пропал как пес* (*He is lost like a dog because of his empty words*) [GDRP: 821]; *пес (dog)* – ‘About a person who causes contempt or indignation by his deeds [SAD.3: 113].

Thus, the following requirements are imposed on PUs in relation to the speech content: speech should be as brief as possible, and its content should be reasonably outlined stated and useful for listeners. Proverbs do not approve of “speaking for the sake of speaking”. Compliance with these conditions is greatly facilitated by understanding how, with whom, about what and why communication, conversation or discussion should take place.

2.2.2.2. Stereotypical ideas of the importance of choosing words carefully and of being prudent

This subchapter is written using materials from previously published articles [Xu Yao, E.I. Seliverstova 2023b].

Speech paroemias include units expressing stereotypes of the need for some preliminary “preparation” for a conversation. Thus, this PU expresses the attitude “***the content of a conversation should be approached wisely***”: *Говори подумавши, садись осмотревшись* (*Speak after thinking it over, take your seat after looking around*) [GDRP:

181].

A peculiar one is the three-part PU *Думка чадна, недоумка бедна, а всех тошней пустослов* (*A thought is smoky, a bewilderment is poor, but a windbag is the worst*), where *думка* [GDRP: 310] – ‘a thought’; *чадна* derived from *чад* – ‘smoke, vague; *недоумка* – ‘bewilderment’, compare *недоумевать* – ‘to be unable to comprehend, to misunderstand’. An obscurely expressed thought is disapproved; however, as the proverb states, the worst thing whatsoever is the absolute absence of thoughts: *empty words* that have no pragmatic purpose.

Some proverbs directly indicate how to approach the utterance composition correctly: *one should think his words over and only then pronounce them*, with compliance of some unwritten rules. The PU *Не болтай наугад, клади слово в лад* (*Don't talk at random, put your words in the right way*) [GDRP: 825] defines a general rule to enter into a conversation in line with the topic, the remark exchange order, etc.

The *opportune participation in a discussion* is indicated by the paroemia *Блюда хлеба до обеда, а слово до ответа!* (*Keep some bread for lunch and a word for an answer*) [GDRP: 954]; *Умей вовремя сказать, вовремя смолчать* (*One should know the right time to say and to silence*) [GDRP: 931]. It is not always desirable to interfere in the conversation: *Где двое говорят, там третий не приставай* (*Where two have a talk, the third one is a fifth wheel*) [GDRP: 183].

PU's may express *disapproval of the things said repeatedly*. Account on a reasonable and intelligent interlocutor makes it unnecessary: *Про одни дрожжи* (‘дрожжи’) *не говорят трожжи (трижды)* (*The same yeast is not discussed trice*) [GDRP: 299]; *Заладила (твердит) сорока Якова одно про всякого* (*Jacob's magpie keeps saying the same thing about everyone*) [GDRP: 858] etc.

Such sayings as *Сначала пожуй слово, а потом скажи* (*First chew a word and then say it*) [GDRP: 827]; *Прожуй слово, да и молви!* (*Chew your word up and then start talking*) [GDRP: 825]; *Разжевав слова, да выплюнь* (*Having chewed the words, spit them out*) [GDRP: 826] may be understood both as a wish to *take a slow, thoughtful approach to what you say* and as an advice to *pay attention to the speech quality*, clarity, and articulation.

One need to ***understand well what the discussion is about***: *Толкуй, да наперед сам разжуй!* (*Chew it up yourself before speaking*) [D.1: 399], that is, the speaker himself must primarily understand the essence of the discussion. Herewith, one should ***follow the thread of the discussion and know the limits***, since it is impossible to touch on all possible topics: *Воздух словами не наполнить* (*Air can't be filled with words*). *Всего не переговоришь* (*You'll never discuss every single thing*) [D.1: 363].

Thus, a conscious and deliberate approach to speech assumes that the speaker understands the topic of a discussion and clearly realises the content of his speech, that a person enters into a discussion opportunely and realises his purpose or reason of speaking.

The linguistic and cultural attitude “***One should be diligent in conversation***” finds the widest implementation in paroemias, for many proverbs warn of possible unpleasant consequences.

Firstly, many proverbs – especially those with the *язык* component – contain the idea of its ***uncontrollability*** and therefore implicitly indicate the ***need to restrain oneself in conversation, to mind one's language***: *Язык, что вехотка: все подтирает* (*A tongue wipes everything off, like a loafah*) [D.1: 358]; *На язык нет пошлины* (*A tongue is not levied with duties*) [ibid.]; *Говори, да не проговаривайся (да не заговаривайся)* (*Speak but don't ramble*) [D.1: 361]; *Рот нараспашку, язык на плечо* (*With a mouth wide open and a tongue on a shoulder*) [ibid.]. The consequences of uncontrolled speech may be undesirable: *До чего язык не договорится!* (*A tongue may talk into deep maze*) – *договориться* – ‘to go too far in a conversation’ [GDRP: 183].

There various ways for proverbs to point to potential harm that should be avoided: *Язык до добра не доведет* (*A tongue leads to no good*); *Язык до добра не доведет болтуна* (*A chatterbox's tongue won't lead him to any good*) [GDRP: 1013]; *Свой язычок первый супостат* (*Your tongue is your first foe*); *Языце, супостате, губителю мой!* (*My tongue is my foe and destructor*) [GDRP: 1015]; *Язык мой – враг мой: прежде ума рыщет, беды ищет* (*My tongue is my enemy, for it speaks out before my head thinks up and seeks trouble*) [GDRP: 1014]; *Лишнее говорить – себе вредит (болячку вередит)* (*Talking too much is self-harming (aggravates one's sore)*) [GDRP: 85]; *Мужик ражий, да язык-то вражий* (*A sturdy man, but a hostile tongue*) [GDRP: 567];

Большое вяканье доводит до бяканья (Great yapping leads to heavy crash) [GDRP: 170]; *Где твои слова, там моя голова (Your words are where my head is)* [GDRP: 821] etc. In the PU *Ртом болезнь входит, а беда выходит (Through one's mouth, the disease comes in while the trouble out)* [GDRP: 766] the mouth (oral cavity) involved in the speech generation is perceived as a source of trouble. A tongue may harm a person if it “anticipates” the speech comprehension: *Язык мой – враг мой: прежде ума (наперед ума) глаголет (My tongue is my enemy, for it speaks out before my head thinks up)* [GDRP: 1014].

In such paroemias, the *язык* component appears in two meanings at once: ‘an auxiliary organ of the digestive system’ and therefore “feeding a head” and ‘the ability to speak, verbally express one’s thoughts; language’ – both of these, though being useful, can cause harm: *Язык голову кормит, он же и до побоев (до смерти) доводит (A tongue feeds a head yet may lead to beating (death))* [GDRP: 1013]; *Язык хлебом кормит и дело портит (A tongue feeds one with bread and messes everything up)* [GDRP: 1014].

In addition to the general indication of the undesirable final effect of involvement in a conversation (compare *trouble, harm, heavy crash, foe, destructor*), the PUs mention some definite consequences as well: *Лишнее слово в досаду (во грех, в стыд) вводит (An odd word leads to displeasure (sin, shame))* [GDRP: 824], that is, you have to experience unpleasant feelings as a result.

Secondly, it should be remembered that a stranger may hear a conversation unintended for him to listen to: *Говори, да назад оглядывайся! (Speak but look back)* [GDRP: 181]; *Говорил бы много, да сосед у порога (I would say more, but my neighbour is at the door)* [GDRP: 181]. Using various figurative elements, proverbs warn to be careful and circumspect while talking: *Сказал бы словцо, да сучок в избе есть (глаз) (I would say a wordie but my house has a twig (eye))* [D.2: 142] (*odd twigs – ‘odd eyes, ears’*); *Сказал бы словечко, да волк недалеко (I would say a wordie but a wolf is getting closer)* [GDRP: 821]. Information heard by an individual may become public, which is undesirable: *Не говори при холопье онуче: онуча онуче скажет (Don't tell anything in the presence of a serf's onucha, for it will tell it to the other onucha)* [GDRP: 626].

Thirdly, as advised by the PUs *Не говори всего, что знаешь* (*Don't tell everything you know*); *Не всегда говори, что знаешь, но всегда знай, что говоришь* (*Don't always tell what you know but always know what you tell*) [GDRP: 181]; *Не все сказывай, что поминается (помнится, отпрыгается)* (*Don't tell everything you recall*) [GDRP: 812] etc., **not all information should be shared**. Not everything should be said at once, as recommended by the PU *С ним говори, а в запас словечко покидай* (*Talk to him but keep some words in store*) [D.2: 163], – it is important to keep some arguments to convince the interlocutor and thus have the last word in the discussion.

Fourthly, Russian proverbs are very active in expressing the idea that one should mind his language so as not to regret what was said. In the most general form, the concept of the irrevocability of the words already spoken is implemented through fairly similar forms due to verbs with the semantics of possession⁸ used in a negative way: *Сорвалось словцо – не схватишь* (*You can't catch an escaped word*); *Выпустишь словцо – не ухватишь за кольцо* (*Once you let a word out, you won't catch its ring*) [GDRP: 828]; *И дорого б дал за словечко, да не выкупишь* (*I'd pay a high price for word, yet it couldn't be bought back*); *Выпустишь словечко, не догонишь и на крылечке* (*An escaped word can't be caught up even on a porch*); *Словечко выскользнуло – не воротишь* (*You can't take back a word that has slipped out*) [GDRP: 821].

Russian native speakers verbalised this idea through diverse metaphorical images: “a word, a remark” is compared to a nimble sparrow: *Слово не воробей, а выпустишь – не схватишь (вылетит – не поймаешь)* (*A word is not a sparrow; if you let it out, you won't grab it (if it flies out, you won't catch it)*); *Слово не воробей, не поймаешь за хвост* (*A word is not a sparrow and can't be caught by the tail*) [GDRP: 826] etc. Paroemiology also provides for other figurative solutions to implement the concept of irrevocability, such as comparison with a bullet (*Выстрелив, пулю не схватишь, а слово сказав, не поймаешь*. (*Taking a shot, you won't grab a bullet, and having said a word, you won't catch it*) [D.1: 364]; *Выпалишь, пули не поймаешь* (*Having fired, you won't catch a bullet*) [CFW]) or with a horse (*Коня на вожжах удержишь, а слово не*

⁸ The structure of possession that assumes the possession subject-object relationship is heterogeneous. It includes both “fixed, static, and moving, dynamic” relationships [Milovanova 2007: 121]. In this respect, we consider such verbs as *to grasp*, *to grab*, *to turn back*, etc.

воротить (а слова с языка не воротить) (You can keep a horse with the reins, but you can't get a word back (to your tongue)) [D.1: 364].

As a rule, one has to regret when something has been said in vain, in a hurry, in anger by a person who did not think about the consequences. Herewith, speech is regarded as undesirable, capable of offending the recipient. This explains the appearance of the *плевок* (*spit*) component in PUs, which can be literally interpreted as an action that is not appropriate for a civilised person or as a disregard for someone or something, an underestimation of someone or something, which may seem offensive if it was sounded in speech. The spit-word convergence is not accidental, for their connection is mediated by the *рот* component that is not verbalized in the PUs: *Плевка не перехватишь, слово (слова) не воротить* (One is unable to intercept a spit or return a word) [D.2: 157]; *Плюнешь — не воротить* (One's spit can't be get back) [ibid.]. This also explains the use of such verbs as *лизать, слизнуть, подлизать* (*lick off, lick up*) in the PUs: *Слово выронишь, не подлижешь* (A dropped word can't be licked up) [GDRP: 826]; *Оброненное слово языком не слизнешь* (A dropped word can't be licked off with a tongue) [D.1: 364]. We could also mention the semantics of incident implemented through the *выронить* and *обронить* components.

It is impossible to return the spoken words even with considerable effort: *Слово выпустишь, так и вилом (и крюком) не вытащишь* (Once you let a word out, you won't drag it in with a pitchfork (and a hook)). As we can see, proverbs are selective in choosing figurative elements that cover outer world's objects and phenomena relevant to a particular nation, and, on the other hand, the motif of the impossibility of “cancelling” any accomplished speech action and remedying the existing situation [Seliverstova 2003: 48] is quite variedly verbalised in the PUs.

The ratio of the paroemias describing particular characteristics of speech identified by us during the analysis can be graphically represented as diagrams. Thus, the first of them (Fig. 1) shows that units that reprove verbosity and units that emphasize the importance of meaningful speech prevail among those with the *говорить* verbal component and its various forms.

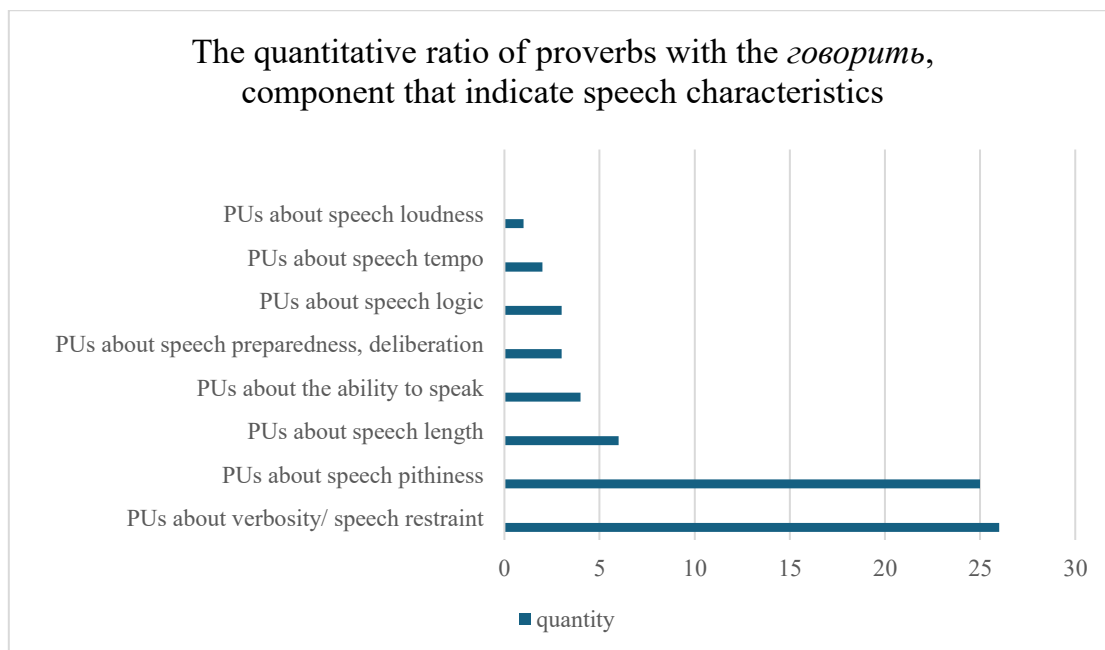


Fig. 1. The ratio of proverbs with the *говорить* component that indicate speech characteristics.

There are few PU categories related to such characteristic as “logic, coherence of speech”, “preparedness, thoughtfulness of speech”, “ability to speak”, i.e. speech as the language skill. The speakers marked speech loudness minimally.

Among the paroemias with the *слово, слова* components (Fig. 2), etc., one of the most important categories was made up of units emphasising the need to think over your speech before starting speaking so as not to regret later about what you have said. The second category is PUs giving an explicit or implicit recommendation to speak briefly and laconically.

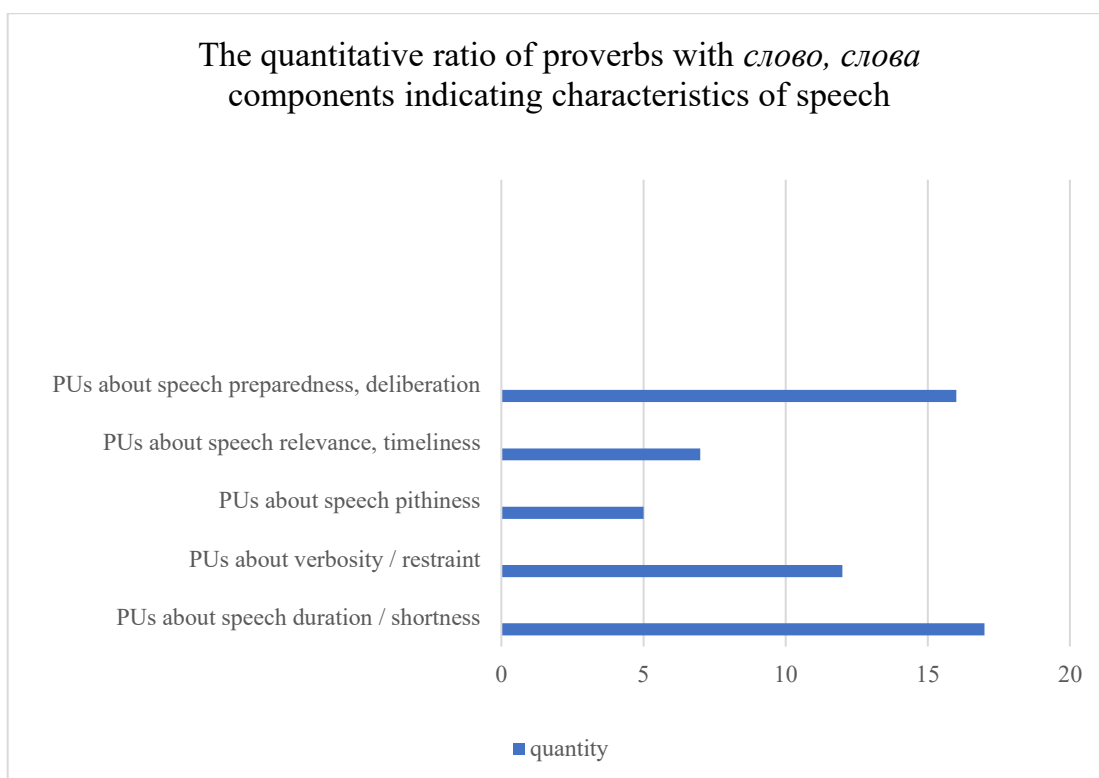


Fig. 2. The ratio of proverbs with *слово, слова* components indicating characteristics of speech.

This also made it possible to see that the importance of individual parameters of communicators' speech can be noted in PU groups united by different components with the semantics of speaking, because, firstly, the meaningfulness and content of speech as opposed to idle chatter, and secondly, the length of speech –not only a specific speech act but also speech communication in general – are significant in both groups; here, the account is taken of the time allotted by the interlocutors for conversations as an activity.

If we summarise what has been said about speech in the two above-mentioned PU groups, then the conclusion arises that verbosity and empty chatter are reproved by speakers while the most important matter can and should be said briefly. Long-lasting speech cannot be justified either due to the fact that a speaker counts on an understanding listener, to whom the essence of speech is clear without lengthy explanations and repetitions (*Про одни дрожжи (дрожжи) не говорят трожды (двожды)* / *The same yeast is not discussed trice (twice)* [GDRP: 299]; *Говоренное переговаривать, что вареное переваривать* / *Saying repeatedly what's been already said is the same as boiling food which's already boiled* [GDRP: 181]), or because long conversations

contradict the idea of a beneficial pastime ((*Не та хозяйка, которая [красно] говорит, а [та,] которая щи варит* (A good housewife does not say fine words but cooks cabbage soup)) [GDRP: 962]. The motif of speech uselessness continues to develop as compared to labour or job, this is one of the most widely verbalised by proverbs with various components considered by us: *Меньше бы говорил, больше бы делал* / *You'd better talk less and do more* [GDRP: 181]; *Языком лопочи, а руками делай* (*Jabber with your tongue and do work with your hands*) [GDRP: 1015]; *Речей много – толку мало* (*Much talking, little use*) [GDRP: 755] etc.

This basic cultural attitude determines other semantic vectors of paroemias: speech should be appreciated and approached from the standpoint of pragmatics and benefits; speech should be combined with a thought process preferably preceding the speech act itself; the conditions and possibilities of speech realisation, i.e., essentially the speech situation and communicators, should be evaluated. These ideas as verbalised by paroemias are also marked by modern native speakers and culture bearers, as we will show below.

Having presented the typology of the stereotypical ideas recorded in Russian proverbs as a fount of folk wisdom, we will further focus on how speech is perceived by contemporary Russian native speakers and culture bearers, which speech aspects are considered to be the most important, and what speech means to them. To answer this question, let us review the results of our survey

2.3. Russian native speakers' stereotypical ideas of speech: survey results

In order to obtain data on what contemporary Russian speakers think about speech, its purpose in everyday use, its assessment as an activity and the features of a speaking person, we conducted a survey in which 61 respondents – people aged 20-30 (24.6%), 30 to 50 (36.1%), over 50 (39.3%) – took part. The respondents included people having various degrees: engineering (11.5%), liberal arts (24.6%), philology (63.9%). The gender factor was not taken into account when analysing the respondents' answers. The survey

was conducted online using a Google form provided on the website. The questions were mostly open-ended and assumed that respondents would answer by themselves.

2.3.1. Respondents' understanding of the purpose of speech according to the survey results

As the first task, the respondents were asked to extend the statement, the beginning of which was "Speech is ...". The responses received were very diverse (the respondents sometimes gave more than one characteristic), which made it possible to identify groups of responses depending on what emphasizes the respondents put, what kind of information they considered substantial to reflect in their comments.

1. The largest group includes the responses (29.5% of the total responses) that reflected the ***importance of the human ability to speak and communicate*** (Table 1). They are given in the right column of the table.

Table 1. Responses on the perception of speech as a mode of communication⁹

Speech function	Responses (18)
Mode of communication or interaction	...means of communication (2) ...ability to speak ...mode of communication ...oral linguistic communication ...mode of human communication ...one of the forms of human interaction ...oral communication in any language ...use of linguistic material for communication purposes ...human ability distinguishing him from animals, means of communication ...form of human communication (speaking) (2) ...form of verbal communication Speech is a means of communication expressed verbally.

⁹ The respondents' answers are shown as received during the survey in the tables. If the answers match, they are summed up, as indicated by the number given in parentheses.

Table 1 continued. Responses on the perception of speech as a mode of communication

Speech function	Responses (18)
Internet source	<p>...communication process using language, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing</p> <p>...mode of self-expression</p> <p>...historically developed form of human communication through language patterns formulated as required by particular rules (2)</p>

It should be noted that some of the respondents used the Internet information and gave one of the “speech” definitions almost literally – we singled this answer out as a separate line.

2. The second largest group (21.3%) consisted of responses where respondents *associated speech with mental activity and intellectual functioning* (Table 2).

Table 2. Responses reflecting the speech - mental activity relation

Speech function	Responses (13)
Mental activity and verbalisation of its results	<p>...means of thought expression using language</p> <p>...membrane of thoughts</p> <p>...expression of thoughts and feelings using language</p> <p>...means of explaining thoughts</p> <p>... capability of expressing one’s thoughts</p> <p>...process and result of mental activity in the form of words</p> <p>... ability to express one’s thoughts coherently and articulately</p> <p>... ability to speak, express, convey one’s thoughts, experiences, whether orally or in writing (2)</p> <p>... ability to speak, express, convey something through the words, whether orally or in writing</p> <p>...ability to express one’s thoughts orally, in writing, using inner speech</p>

Table 2 continued. Responses reflecting the speech - mental activity relation

Speech function	Responses (13)
	<p>...demonstration of the level of human intelligence and emotional range</p> <p>...ability to express one's opinion, attitude to life, a person's individual feature showing the level of intelligence and education</p>

In addition to assertion of the mental activity and speech relation, the respondents noted some additional features characterizing the thinking process: reflection of experience, display of emotions, capability to express one's thoughts in the written and oral forms, importance of coherent and articulate presentation of thoughts achievable exactly with the help of language. The last one in this section is the completest and quite informative multifaceted response covering several essential points.

3. The third largest group (25% of the total) consists of responses where respondents commented on the *forms of speech, the connection of speech with the language system and the possibility of its implementation* (Table 3).

Table 3. Responses characterising speech by the form of language implementation as a system

Forms of speech implementation	Responses (15) ¹⁰
Written and oral speech forms. Speech as language system implementation.	<p>... oral form of language implementation</p> <p>... written and oral language forms</p> <p>...the form of language existence (oral / written) that results from human speech activity using a language code and that reflects the characteristic features of a communicative situation, the addresser and the recipient, and the context of the communicative situation (<i>S.Ya. research article citation</i>);</p> <p>... form of language existence</p> <p>... speech is a language implemented in its usage</p>

¹⁰ The reasons for including individual responses in this group and for their quantitative accounting are italicized.

Table 3 continued. Responses characterising speech by the form of language implementation as a system

Forms of speech implementation	Responses (15)
	<p>... language system implementation (2)</p> <p>... live language (language system) implementation</p> <p>... purposeful temporal language deployment.</p> <p>... any act of speaking being continuous in time and expressed in <i>phonically or in written</i></p> <p>... <i>oral</i> means of conveying information</p> <p>...ability to express one's thoughts <i>orally, in writing, using inner speech</i></p> <p>... words <i>spoken</i> by a person <i>out loud</i></p> <p>... any text created by a person <i>orally or in writing</i></p> <p>...individual language implementation</p>

As we can see, the respondents' answers, in which they noted the relation between language and speech, differentiating language as a system of symbols and as speech, i.e. the "purposeful" use of language for communication purposes, make up a fairly big group. The mention of written and oral speech forms can also be found in the responses that we have assigned to other response groups – for instance compare the characteristic of speech as an "*oral* method to convey information" where the information conveyance function makes it possible to take this response into account in another category as well (see Table 5). One of the respondents also mentioned *inner speech* that often precedes the verbalization of speech addressed to someone or to oneself.

4. The fourth largest group (8.2% of the total) consists of responses in which respondents described *speech as a type of activity* (Table 4).

Table 4. Responses reflecting the perception of speech as an activity

Speech as an activity	Responses (5)
	<p>...one of the types of activity (3)</p> <p>...particular act of speaking that takes place over time</p> <p>...human brain activity to reproduce specific sounds for communication purposes</p>

As we can see, the respondents' answers are different: here we can see both a simple statement of speech as an activity and a definition close to a dictionary one. The last of the above answers is interesting because it combines the description of the type of activity (speech) with its pragmatic purpose and an indication of the function of the speech organs producing sounds.

5. The fifth group consists of responses (8.2% of the total) concerning such an important language function as the *information conveyance* (Table 5).

Table 5. Responses on the relation between speech and information conveyance

Speech function	Responses (5)
Information conveyance	<p>... ability to convey information using language</p> <p>...information conveyance using words</p> <p>...human means to convey information.</p> <p>...oral means to convey information (2)</p>

The survey results show that respondents are aware of the importance of exchanging various information between people, which is possible through speech.

6. A minor group (5% of the total) consists of responses where respondents noted the *types of speech communication* (Table 6).

Table 6. Responses on forms of speech communication forms (communicative interaction)

Types of speech communication	Responses (3)
	...text expressed by a human orally or in writing ...public speaking or monologue ...formal speaking

In their answers, the respondents drew attention to such type of speech as a monologue delivered in the first person, including in the form of a prepared speech. We considered it possible to classify both the speech in front of the public (*official speech*) and the text *designed* (i.e. created) by a person (*author*) as monologues, although other interpretations are also acceptable here. Note that the answers do not mention such types of speech and genres as “*conversation*” or “*discussion*”, i.e. dialogue or polylogue, “*discourse*” (monologue), etc.

7. Not many of the respondents noted the *phonic aspect of speech*, although this could also be implied by those who mentioned the *oral form, oral speech*. We received 5 responses (8%), which include such words as *sound, phonic* (Table 7).

Table 7. Responses on relation between speech and its phonic aspect

Phonic aspect of speech	Responses (5)
	... senseful <i>sequence of sounds in a sound chain</i> ... <i>sound</i> the act of speaking that is continuous in time and expressed in <i>phonic or written forms</i> human brain activity focused on the production of particular <i>sounds</i> for communication purposes ... words <i>spoken by a person out loud</i>

This is an important speech characteristic, since the phonetic form, i.e. the “sound shell”, is included in the list of the main word characteristics, along with semantics, valence, lexical and grammatical relatedness, etc. [Shansky 2009: 21].

8. The last group (3.3% of the total) includes responses where respondents *related speech to the resultant aspect of speech activity* (Table 8).

Table 8. Responses on relation between speech and activity results

Speech function	Responses (2)
Speech activity as that focused on the result	<p>...the whole <i>sum of texts produced</i> using the language system in the course of speech activity</p> <p>...usage of a language system to achieve communicative goals, as well as the <i>result</i> of such usage</p>

Such a small number of responses with emphasis on the ‘efficiency’ semantics by no means imply that this speech aspect is not valuable for speakers, since respondents previously named such essential functions of “purposeful” speech as “implementation of mental activity”, “conveyance of information”, expression of “one’s opinion, attitude to life”, etc.

Respondents also noted that speech is focused on generating texts as a specific speech product through the use of the language system units.

The response “Speech is always me”, which was not included in any of the groups, seems uncommon. It shows attention to the authorship of speech and the speaker’s persona, since the speech actor is a primary factor determining the speech structure, intentional direction and achievement of a communicative effect.

The comparison of the survey results with the speech notions discovered in the paroemias, rather distant from today in terms of time, makes it possible to find certain similarities in the interpretation of the essence and purpose of speech activity.

2.3.2. *Speech characteristics identified by the respondents during the survey*

The second task proposed to the respondents was as follows: “Speech can be various. Extend the series of words that characterise speech. Write down the most important characteristics. At least 6 words. For example: *long, pertinent ...*”. In this way, we were supposed to receive a response as an aggregate list of characteristics from which, according to their repeatability, we could single out those that seem to be the most important for speakers, and it is likely that they will be heard first. Although our survey is close to associative experiments aimed at identifying native speakers’ “inner lexicon” reflecting the national linguistic consciousness of its speakers [Zalevskaya 2006], it differs from associative surveys, since the respondents were given a fairly clear task to “characterise” speech. In such surveys, the respondents cite a typical word combination, as fixed in their linguistic consciousness, that can be interpreted as evidence of relevant, important – especially with a known repeatability of the above characteristics. The answers received should be grouped under the principle of semantic proximity and generality of the feature marked.

The range of features resulted from the survey is rather wide and describes speech from different viewpoints. Let us name sequentially the categories into which we grouped the individual characteristics.

I. Thus, a number of highlighted characteristics are associated with the perception of speech in terms of the possibility and convenience of perception and comprehension. First of all, we discuss the *nature of speech flow, temporal and other speech parameters*¹¹.

Therefore, these are firstly (1) the *length* noted by 24 respondents: *short* – 9 responses, *brief* – 4, *laconic* – 1, and on the other hand, *long* – 7, *lengthy* – 1, *terribly long* – 1, *protracted* – 1. It is quite obvious that the length-shortness characteristic of speech is one of the most important for communicators. It should be noted that the Russian Associative Dictionary edited by Y.N. Karaulov also illustrates the importance of this characteristic: the *long* parameter is one of the most frequent associates describing

¹¹ The responses are given as presented in the questionnaires we received.

the external aspect of speech. It is marked (as well as *flowing*) with the highest index of 8. Compare also: *long-lasting* – 3, short, laconic – 1 each [RAD.1: 554-555].

(2) ***The speed of speaking***, pronouncing speech is described by such adjectives as *slow* – 2, and on the other hand, *fast* – 8, *fluent* – 1, which makes up 11 responses in total. By contrast, the *fast* speed of speech caused 7 *reactions* in the Russian Associative Dictionary [Ibid.].

(3) ***Audibility and articulation of speech*** that significantly facilitates its perception was noted by 13 respondents and verbalised by such characteristics as *articulate* – 3, *audible* – 6, and on the other hand, *inaudible* – 4. In RAD, this parameter of articulated speech ensuring its good understanding is nominated by respondents in different ways: *inaudible* - 7 reactions, *inarticulate* (2) and opposable characteristics: *audible*, *articulate*, *clear* – 2 reactions each [RAD.1: 554-555].

(4) Such speech criterion as ***loudness*** did not turn out to be very relevant for the respondents: only one of them mentioned the *loud* characteristic – 1 response, and two respondents described speech as *gentle* – 2, which may also be taken as an indirect contrast of loudness.

(5) Regarding the ***smoothness*** of speech as a qualitative characteristic of an utterance, 7 people responded: *flowing* – 3, *curt* – 4.

II. Description of the expressed content and the way it is presented is noted by the respondents according to several criteria – see Table 9.

One of these criteria is adherence to the ***logic of speech composition***, according to which such parameters as coherence, accuracy of composition, and comprehensiveness were highlighted. As we can see, incoherent and confused speech was notably mentioned by speakers.

The second parameter describing speech is its ***pithiness***. Herewith, the respondents marked (Table 9) this characteristic in two ways: by direct indication of informativeness or by stating its inanity. Another way is an indirect indication of a speaking person's mental abilities evaluated through this person's speech (*wise* – *dumb*, etc.).

Table 9. Speech characteristics in terms of content (39 responses) and structure of the expressed content (14 responses). Total 53 responses

Content-based description of the information reported	Positive characteristic	Negative characteristic
Logic of speech composition 3 ← → 11	coherent – 1 comprehensive – 1 clear – 1	incoherent – 4 chaotic – 2 messy – 1 confused – 1 rambling – 3
Speech pithiness 23 ← → 7	pithy – 6 informative – 5 interesting – 5 important – 2 pertinent – 2 educative – 1 relevant – 1 appropriate – 1	empty – 3 boring – 2 uninteresting – 1 senseless (pointless) – 1
Indirect indication of the speech content through the description of the speaker's mental abilities 5 ← → 4	wise – 3 reasonable – 1 meaningful – 1	senseless – 2 futile – 1 dumb – 1

Responses provide almost no characteristics of speech in terms of the trust that the speech content evokes or, conversely, does not evoke, with the exception of the *deceitful* characteristic (1 response). This may be explained by the task assigned to the respondents: to characterise not the speaker but the speech, i.e. in hypothetical isolation from the speech actor. Meanwhile, numerous speech parameters function as “human-projected” in the language: boastful speech is the ‘boaster’s speech’, cowardly speech is the ‘coward’s words’, etc.

On the other hand, the *grandiloquent* characteristic seems to describe a person (singular masculine noun) as a florid speaker, though words also characterise the style of spoken speech, the manner of expression. Compare: grandiloquent – ‘pompous, sonorous’ [SAD.1: 146].

III. In the context of **accepted standards** and **stylistic features**, respondents described speech using the definitions that made up the third group (Table 10). The respondents' attention was drawn to speech correctness and normativity as a manifestation of speech culture. On the other hand, they marked functional and stylistic registers and even genres (*royal speech* – 1). Not quite accurately, but 3 of the 5 main functional speech styles were mentioned.

Table 10. Speech from the perspective of normativity, functional styles and genres, and richness (57 responses)

Positive characteristics of speech culture (17)	Negative characteristics of speech culture (9)	Speech in terms of style and genre (31)
correct – 6 normative – 1 competent – 8 decent – 1 rich speech – 1	slang – 1 incompliant with linguistic standards – 1 illiterate – 2 obscene – 1 flat – 1 defective – 1 meagre – 2	poetic – 2 formal – 7 everyday – 2 informal – 1 colloquial – 5 grandiloquent – 1 solemn – 8 greeting – 1 introductory – 3 royal speech ¹² – 1

Such characteristics noted by us as *royal*, *solemn* also describe rather the general tone of the spoken speech, while *greeting* and *introductory* can be related both to the speaker's purpose (to greet those present, announce the agenda, program, etc.) and to the place occupied by the spoken text in the general order of a particular event that may include several presentations. The *introductory* adjective may also imply the division of the spoken text into parts in the course of defence by students of their research papers; cf. *introductory word*.

¹² When someone call a speech *royal*, they usually mean the speech of a monarch addressed to his subjects, mostly to parliament members or ministers. This meaning is illustrated by many examples of the official activities of the Queen of Great Britain. The National Corpus also provides examples of the use of the phrase in the meaning of 'important, significant speech of an official holding a key position (mayor, president, etc.)'. The emphasis on high stylistic tonality can be seen in the *throne speech* phrase.

IV. The **overall impression produced by speech** consists of several components. It is largely determined by the **emotional intensity** of the addresser's speech, the addresser's persuasion and **expression**, which was noted by the respondents (see the left column of Table 11). Many respondents find it important **what feelings the speech act evokes** in the recipient, how well it is remembered, **how it affects**, i.e. both the emotional feedback or mood of the recipient and the pragmatic effect of the text addressed to him are taken into account (see the right column of Table 11).

Table 11. Speech evaluation in terms of the speaker's emotionality and in terms of the impact on the listener (41 responses)

Speaker's emotions (10)	Speech evoking particular feelings, sensations in a listener (31)
wrathful – 1	exciting – 2
emotional – 5	encouraging – 1
rhetorical – 1 ('vivacious, emotional')	inspiring – 5
pathetic – 1	animating – 1
enthusiastic – 1	breathtaking – 2
passionate – 1	touching – 1
	persuasive – 5
	impressive – 1
	edifying – 1
	catchy – 2
	fascinating – 2
	exciting – 3
	vivid – 5

We should not leave unmentioned the relevance for the respondents of such a speech characteristic as effect on listeners. Undoubtedly, a positive one is the *persuasive* characteristic, for it is used to describe the speech of a person who has achieved a certain goal due to the ability to arrange speech and apply expressive techniques. Speech is called *inspiring*, *encouraging* and *persuasive* when a speaker has managed to influence the recipient as much as possible and encourage him to take any actions or make decisions that meet the interests or are consistent with speaker's intention.

Table 12 shows the positive and negative attributes by which speakers give a general, aesthetic, non-reasoned assessment (*beautiful, amazing*, etc.) in contrast to the above.

Table 12. Aesthetic speech assessment (no indication of a characteristic) – 12 responses

Evaluation of speech without a characteristic (positive) (9)	Evaluation of speech without a characteristic (negative) (3)
beautiful – 4	unpleasant – 1
pleasant – 2	poor – 2
amazing – 1	
brilliant – 1	
great – 1	

As we can see, it takes into account the communicator’s perception of external, i.e. unmeaningful speech parameters.

It is noteworthy that tables 11 and 12 contain relatively few negative characteristics: the respondents’ wish to highlight exactly those features that make speech worthy of attention and unforgettable is obvious. Herewith, there is no doubt that this considerable number of adjectives is not named to describe speech as a whole or as a speech activity in general; a certain performance before an audience, an individual speech act is evaluated.

V. Respondents indicated the *oral* and *written forms of speech* as characteristics (see Table 13). Both **communication channels** (the term introduced by N.V. Izotova) are essential as those making it possible to adequately communicate in order to convey thoughts and realise intentions of the speaker. Speech is also described by the nature of participants’ interaction: *dialogue* as an exchange of utterances, and *monologue* as a system of “verbally expressed thoughts” voiced “to deliberately influence upon others” [Shcherba, 1957: 115]. It is revealing that respondents also mentioned the **ways of conveying someone else’s speech**: *direct and reported speech*, the respective rules of which are included both in the school syllabus for the Russian language and, certainly, in the philological specialist’s training programmes, as well as in the educational programs on the Russian Language and Elocution in recent years.

Table 13. Speech forms, communication channels, ways to convey someone else's speech (37 responses).

Speech forms (26)	Types of speech by the nature of participants' interaction (6)	Ways to convey someone else's speech (5)
oral – 14	dialogue – 3	direct – 3
written – 12	monologue – 3	reported – 2

VI. According to particular features of speech, listeners can quite easily determine whether it is previously planned and prepared (i.e., in this case, speech is considered as a public performance, prevalently an oral one) or, conversely, spontaneous, which often affects the logic and the impression of the spoken text. For the respondents, the **speech preparedness level** was also relevant (see Table 14).

Table 14. Speech characteristics in terms of preparedness (11 responses)

About prepared speech (7)	About unprepared speech (4)
prepared – 3	spontaneous – 4
elaborate – 2	
deliberate – 1	
rehearsed – 1	

In order to compare the importance of individual speech parameters for native speakers and culture bearers, the survey results are shown below as a diagram (Fig. 3) where individual segments or sectors (contracted as *Rv.*) differ in colour and are accompanied by the number of responses received. All parameters are duplicated in the list following the diagram.

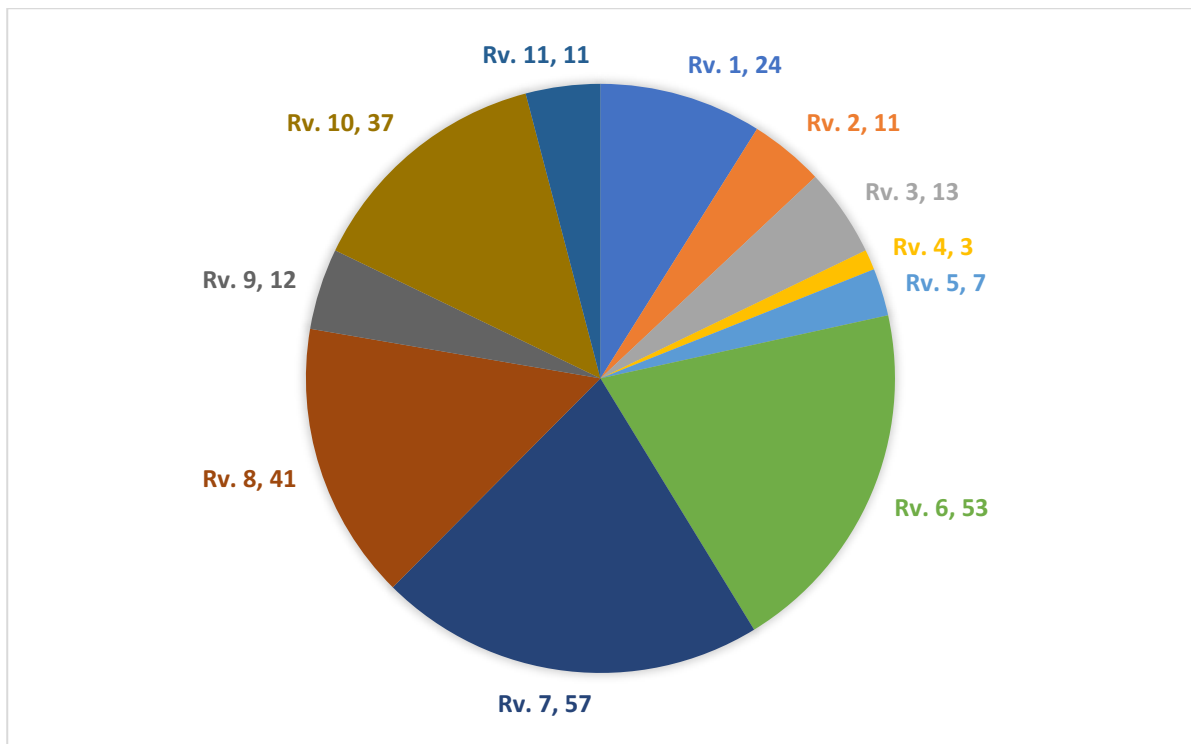


Fig. 3. Survey results concerning the speech characteristics.

1. Speech description in terms of length – 24 responses
2. Speech in terms of speech tempo – 11 responses
3. Description of speech audibility and articulation – 13 responses
4. Speech description in terms of loudness – 3 responses
5. Speech in terms of flow and continuity – 7 responses
6. Speech characteristics in terms of content and logical structure – 53 responses
7. Characteristics in terms of speech culture (normativity, functional styles and genres, richness) – 57 responses
8. Characteristics of the emotional aspect of speech (in terms of the impression the speech makes and the speaker's emotions) – 41 responses
9. Aesthetic assessment of speech – 12 responses
10. Speech forms, communication channels, ways to convey someone else's speech – 37 responses
11. Speech description in terms of preparedness – 11 responses

The diagram shows that the biggest are several groups of responses. Firstly, these are characteristics related to the speech culture of and speech description in terms of

normativity and richness, functional styles and genres (57 responses). The speech description in terms of content and logical structure ranks second with regard to the number of responses received (53 responses). Judging by the responses, the emotional aspect associated with speech activity and an individual speech act is very important for communicators. There are a total of 41 responses here. Considerable attention is paid to the speech forms (oral / written) and types of speech by the nature of participants' interaction (a total of 37 responses). Regarding the description of speech duration, 24 responses were received from respondents, which is also quite large number against such characteristics as speech tempo, audibility, loudness, flow.

2.4. Personal traits from the perspective of speech activity

This subchapter is written using materials published as an article [Xu Yao 2023c].

The model of linguistic persona introduced by Y.N. Karaulov is understood as “a combination of human skills and properties enabling a human to create speech products (texts)” [Karaulov 1987: 3]. The cognitive level as part of this model implies that the linguistic persona has ideas and knowledge describing it as an individual or as a bearer of collective linguistic consciousness [Kosinova 2011: 183].

Regarding a speaking human as a communicative persona, V.I. Karasik identifies several contingent planes in this structure. The value-based approach addresses the code of behaviour (including speech behaviour) typical at some stage for people united by a common culture and language [Karasik 2004: 56]. Herewith, the cultural context includes, among others, precedent texts as units of common socio-cultural background, to which proverbial units also belong.

Speech makes it possible for a person to manifest himself and for others to identify him through the qualification of speech behaviour. Speech is considered as a derivative of a person's individual abilities, as “a factor of his successful presentation in communication with other people” [Shkuratova 2009: 57]. This is probably why speech is given great importance as an opportunity for versatile description and evaluation of a

person¹³.

Observations of the speech peculiarities and the communicative skills and style are instrumental in seeing a person from a certain perspective and generalising typical situations of speech behaviour that form the speaker's image and reflect the speaker's personality, habits, intentions, good or ill manners, tolerance, etc. In the light of active interpersonal interaction, addressing the specifics of speech communication and traditions of human perception through the lens of speech is relevant, and the range of characteristics of a speech actor changes little over time, which indicates the importance of the characteristics verbalised by paroemias.

2.4.1. Ideas of personal traits manifested in speech as verbalised in proverbs

This subchapter is written using materials published as an article [Xu Yao 2023c].

The compilers of the “Great Explanatory Dictionary of Russian Verbs” (edited by L.G. Babenko) explain the principles of its elaboration and allocation of sections and subsections by exemplifying the category of verbal units “reflecting the situation of characterised speech activity”. Herewith, they highlight lexical variants of the “Subject – Predicate of Characterised Speech Activity” basic model that are represented by situations where such features of uttering a remark (speech) are noted as opportuneness, continuity, etc., clarity of content and expediency of utterance, the interlocutors' perception of speech, speaker's emotional stress and/or physiological condition, attitude to an interlocutor, etc. [ESD 1998]. This typology of situations is based on the material of such lexical units as *to speak, to rattle off, to pronounce, to clamour, to boom, to mutter, to drone, to grumble, to laugh off, to blurt* and many others. As the illustrations for particular situations show, the use of certain verbs describes a speaker, his way of talking, range of motivations and emotions [ibid.].

¹³ To judge a person by his words and either justify or condemn him – this biblical truth is expressed in the “Gospel” according to Matthew, “But I tell you that for every idle word that men say, will they give an answer on the day of judgment: for you will be justified by your words and you will be condemned by your words” The Bible Online; <https://bibleonline.ru/bible/rst-jbl/mat-12.37/>

As the situational symbols catching the attention of communicators or outside observers, proverbs also describe speakers in various aspects. Speech is “a matter that has nothing to do with simplicity and self-evidence”, the course of its analysis reveals the issues of importance for studying personality problems [Kosinskaya, Chernykh 2016: 7]. Via speech, a person signals his erudition, intelligence, mental state, sociability, etc. [ibid.].

According to M.S. Gutovskaya, speech describes a person in the context of the ability to speak, verbalising ideas, style and way of talking manifested in speech, public speech performance, whatsoever [Gutovskaya 2007: 164-165].

So, proverbs as a special form of behavioural description give a very detailed picture of what kind of a person one is through the lens of one’s speech.

1. Thus, the way of taking and willingness to speak reveals a speaker as a **talkative** person: *Говорить – десятерых отставить, да ее одное приставить* (She talks so much that she can replace ten people by herself) [D.1: 320]; *Говори да откусывай* (Speak and take a bite) [DED.2: 733]; *Язык что осиновый лист: во всякую погоду треплется* (A tongue is like a aspen leaf fluttering in any weather) [CFW] (fluttering implies ‘in vain’); *Тещиноного языка и аршином не измеришь* (A mother-in-law’s tongue is impossible to measure even with a yardstick) [GDRP: 1014].

There are very few proverbs about a taciturn or silent person, and this is most likely due to the fact that this trait would rather be helpful than impeding in practical life: *Говоря не ошибешься, а молча не обмолвишься* (You can’t make a mistake while talking and you won’t let it slip when keeping silent) [GDRP: 183] (let it slip – ‘to say something wrong, misspeak’). Native speakers express the course of slow speech very vividly (*Говорит, будто клеит* (He speaks as if he glues); *Говорит, как клещами на лошадь хомут тащит* (he speaks as if he drags a collar onto a horse with tongs); *Говорит, что родит, Слово к слову приставляет, словно клетки городит* (He puts a word to a word as if he builds cages) [D.1: 362] etc.) reflecting the painful search for a way to express your thoughts, yet rarely recommending you activating your speech activity; compare *Не говори «тпру!»», когда ехать надобно* (Don’t say “whoa!” when you have to go) [Anikin: 213].

2. However, the evaluation is given primarily to an overly **verbose** person, whose speech does not show the rational grain of utterance, i.e. a **chatterbox**: *Сам с вершок, а слов с горшок* (*He is an inch high, yet speaks a bunch*) [D.1: 115]; *Говорить не думая – стрелять не целясь* (*Talking unthinkingly is the same as shooting without targeting*) [GDRP: 182]; *С дураком говорить – решетом воду носить* (*Talking to a fool is the same as carrying water in a sieve*) [D.1: 383]; *Сколько ни говори, а еще на завтра будет* (*However long your speech is, you'll leave some more for tomorrow*) [D.2: 161]; Compare the saying *Его слова на воде писать* (*His words may be written on the water*) [D.1: 145]– ‘It is not possible to extract the essence of speech, nor to save the text on the water’; etc. Russian culture bearers perceive a **chatterer** as not a really active worker if not particularly as a shirker from work, i.e. disapprovingly: *Если косить языком, спина не устанет* (*Mowing with a tongue won't get your back tired*); *И клочет, и валяет, и гладит, и катает – и все языком* (*Using his tongue, he tears, felts, irons, rides, whatsoever*) [GDRP: 1014]; *В долгих речах и короткого толку нет* (*Long speeches never make even little use*) [CFW]; *Много говорят, да мало делают* (*They speak much yet do little*) [GDRP: 183]. Idle chatter is a serious disadvantage for a person under description.

Russians ironically and jokingly call **frothy speakers** those who are eager to talk and can do it beautifully, but more often those who suffer from verbosity perceived as a disadvantage; compare: *Для (Ради) красного словца не пощадит (не пожалеет) ни матери, ни отца* (*For a witticism, he would have no mercy on his mother or his father*) [D.1: 360]; *Дай волю языку; скажет то, чего и не знает* (*Unleash your tongue and it would say everything, even unknown to it*) [CFW]; *Говорит – хорошо, а замолчит – еще лучше* (*It's good when he speaks yet much better when he keeps silent*) [GDRP: 182]; *Красноплюй заговорит – всех слушателей переморит* (*Windbag's speeches would make everyone die*) [D.1: 360]; *И красно и говорит, да пусто цветом* (*Though he talks beautifully, his talks are a barren flower*) [D.1: 359]– that is, a speaker may not pursue a specific goal in a conversation, which is equivalent to empty talk.

Nevertheless, proverbs positively evaluate both the speech beauty and the speaking skill, – *Речь вести – не ланти плести* (*Making a speech is not that easy as making bast*

shoes) [GDRP: 756], since not everyone has this talent; *Хорошая речь слаще меда* (*Good speech is sweeter than honey*) [GDRP: 756]. It is no coincidence that proverbs stress the importance of a tongue and the ability to make a strong impression with speech and to solve both serious tasks and more pragmatic everyday ones; compare: *Язык царствами ворочает* (*A tongue rules kingdoms*); *Язык — стяг, дружину водит* (*Like a flag, a tongue can lead a squad*); *Кто с языком, тот с пирогом* (*Those who have a skilful tongue get a pie*) [GDRP: 1014].

3. Proverbs recommend showing **restraint** in conversation (*Языку больше давай каши, нежели воли* (*Give your tongue more porridge than freedom*); *Языку воли не давай* (*Do not unleash your tongue*) [GDRP: 1015]; *На язык пошлины нет: что хочет, то и лопочет* (*A tongue is not levied with duties, so it mutters whatever it wants*) [GDRP: 1012]) and, therefore, can describe a Russian speaker as a **watchful** and **cautious** person remembering that not all things can be shared with everyone and that there are situations in which one should restrain. The PUs mentioned generally express this idea, while other paroemias indicate that conversations and chatter as erroneous actions committed by an imprudent person and having unpleasant consequences: *Больше говорить – больше грешить* [GDRP: 182]; *Из-за пустых слов пропал, как пес* (*He is lost like a dog because of his empty words*) [D.1: 359] (*empty* – i.e. said in vain, frivolous, unreasonable) etc. This idea is also laconically conveyed by the PU *Свой язык (язычок) – первый synoctam* (*Your tongue is your first foe*) [GDRP: 1015] – i.e. ‘enemy, adversary’. The implications caused by a loose tongue, that is, unconstrained by anything, are metaphorically represented in the PU *Дай язык волю – голове тесно будет* (*An unleashed tongue makes a head cramped*) [CFW] – cramped, probably, due to unwanted thoughts or search for a way out of the existing situation etc (compare the PhU *голову ломать* (*bother one’s head*) over smth). Compare also: *Язык говорит (болтает), а голова не ведает* (*The tongue talks but the head is unaware*) [GDRP: 1013] – it is like a head is not involved in a conversation, i.e., there is no clear awareness of the purpose and conditions of speaking; *За слова голова гинет* (*A head dies for words*) [GDRP: 821]; *За худые слова слетит и голова* (*Off with your head for evil words*) [ibid.]; *Язык голубит,*

язык и губам (*A tongue can both caress and ruin one*) [GDRP: 1013], i.e. ‘a speaker may pay for his words’.

If a person is *circumspect*, he takes account of the presence of other people as unwelcome witnesses of a conversation: *Говорят с уха на ухо, а слышно с угла на угол* (*They talk ear to ear, yet it's heard corner to corner*) [GDRP: 938]; *Скажешь тайком, а услышишь явком* (*You'll say it in secret, but you'll hear it in reality*) [GDRP: 811]; *Сказал бы словечко, да у стен уши есть* (*I would say a wordie, but walls have ears*) [GDRP: 821] etc. This is especially dangerous, since, according to PUs, negative information about a person tends to spread rapidly: *Хорошее слово лежит, а худое бежит* (*A good word lies while a bad one runs*) [GDRP: 827]. This is where the motif of a needles word said in vain, widely used by PUs, comes from: *Лишнее слово досаду приносим* (*An odd word brings annoyance*); *Лишнее слово до стыда доводим* (*An odd word leads to shame*) [GDRP: 824]. All sorts of figurative notions are used in PUs to verbalise the motif of the word spoken by accident, imprudently, which is impossible to return: *Сказанное слово – пущенная стрела* (*A word spoken is an arrow shot*); *Сказанное слово и топором не вырубим* (*A word already uttered can't be cut down with an axe*); *Сказанное слово в кадык назад не ворочается* (*A word spoken can't be got back to a throat*) [GDRP: 825-826] etc.

Proverbs warn that a *careless* word may easily hurt your friend (*Пряательское слово не должно быть сурово* (*A friend's word shouldn't be stern*) [GDRP: 825]), and one may get into a ridiculous and awkward situation without deliberating on one's words: *Словом поспешишь скоро посмешишь* (*Those rushing with words may get mocked too soon*) [GDRP: 828]. Imprudence (it can sometimes be malice as well) may show in verbalisation of unflattering characteristics and evaluations; compare the PU's notion of communicators' reaction to someone's utterance unpleasant in terms of form or content: *Жесткое слово строптивит, мягкое (кроткое) смиряет* (*A harsh word makes one obstinate while a soft (gentle) one makes one humble*) [GDRP: 824]; *Жестко слово воздвигает гнев* (*A cruel word evokes wrath*) [ibid.] – and therefore breeds objections.

4. Verbosity and verbiage are associated with *lack of intelligence*. Such a person is described by the PUs *Длинный язык с умом не в родстве* (*A long tongue is not akin to*

mind) [GDRP: 1012]; *Где много плевел, там мало хлеба, где много слов, там мало мудрости* (*A lot of chaff is a little of bread, a lot of words is a little of wisdom*) [GDRP: 666]; *У дурака дурацкая и речь* (*A fool speaks foolishly*) [GDRP: 315]; *Осла знают по ушам, медведя по когтям, а дурака по речам* (*A donkey is recognisable by ears, a bear by claws, and a fool by speech*) [GDRP: 628]; *Пень не околица, глупая речь не пословица* (*A stump is not a gate, stupid speech is not a proverb*) [GDRP: 645]; *С глупой речью сиди за печью* (*Stay behind the furnace with your silly speech*) [GDRP: 756]. That is why the PUs *Востер язык, да дурной голове достался* (*A tongue is sharp, yet it belongs to a stupid head*) [CFW]; *Дурной язык без привязи как бешеный пес на воле* (*When untied, a stupid tongue is like a freed rabid dog*) [GDRP: 1012] characterise a narrow-minded person.

Conversely, “wise speeches” are perceived positively, though paroemias about stupid and clever speakers and their words are incomparable in quantitative terms: *Умные речи приятно и слушать* (*Wise speech is pleasant to one’s ear*); *Хорошие речи приятно и слушать* (*Good speech is pleasant to one’s ear*); *С умным речь к разговору, а с безумным в ссору* (*A clever person is an interlocutor, a stupid one is a squabbler*) [GDRP: 755]; *Умный одно слово вымолвит, и то скажется* (*Even a single word of a clever person has its effect*) [GDRP: 827].

5. In paroemias, verbiage and flimflam are qualified from other perspectives as well. They often distinguish, firstly, a **boaster** or **braggart** talking about the advantages that he does not always have: *Хвастливое слово гнило* (*A boastful word is rotten*) [GDRP: 827]; *На словах города строит, а на деле ничего не стоит* (*By his words he erects cities, yet in fact he is worth nothing*) [GDRP: 823]; *Похвальные речи всегда гнилы* (*Laudatory speech always hides rottenness*) [GDRP: 755]. Paroemias that are based on the pattern of opposition of two contrary actions evaluate a chatterbox, a person whose word is not a bond: *На словах – Волгу переплывет, а на деле – ни через лужу* (*By words he can cross Volga but in practice he can’t cross even a puddle*); *На словах князь, а на деле – грязь* (*Duke’s speeches but scoundrel’s deeds*); *На словах, что на санях, а на деле, что на копыле* (*He speech is like a sledge ride, but his deeds are like kopyl ride*) [GDRP: 823]; *копыл* — ‘a small sledge part’ unfit for riding. Secondly, the PUs describe

an *irresponsible* person who fails to keep his word or makes groundless promises: *На словах, что на перинке, а проснешься наголе (на голе) (His words are like a featherbed, yet his deeds are a bare place)* [GDRP: 823]; *наголе* – ‘on a bare place’.

We have found only few units describing a person as a man of his word: *Тот в слове стоит твердо, кому слово дорого (Those for whom a words is a value stand firm in the words)* [GDRP: 823]; compare the saying: *Слово сказал, так на нем хоть терем клади (His word is as firm as a basement for a tower)* [CFW].

6. Description of an *unbusinesslike and useless* person, whether a *lazy one* or *one not used to work*, or rather one “working” with his tongue, is one of the most impressive by number of units: *Щедр на слова, да скуп на дела (Generous with words, stingy with deeds)* [GDRP: 822]; *От слов до дела – целая верста (There’s a mile between a word and a deed)*; *Два слова басен, да и все дело тут (His only deed is just some fabled words)* [GDRP: 821]; *Речи слышали, а дел не видим (We’ve heard his speech but we don’t see his deeds)*; *Большой говорун – плохой работник (A big talker is a bad worker)* [CFW] etc.

Evaluation of a person deduced from such PUs can be expressed directly: *На словах кажется человек, а на деле покинуть (By words he seems to be a man, but his deeds prove his futility)* [GDRP: 823], “futility” – ‘no pity to live; worthless, useless.

7. People may often *be flattering and duplicitous* if they pursue a specific goal – this idea is verbalised in PUs warning that a speaker may be insincere and it may be dangerous to believe his words: *На ласково слово не сдавайся, а на грубое не сердись (Don’t give in to a sweet word or be angry at a harsh word)* [GDRP: 825]; *Речи сахарные, а за пазухой камень (Sugary speeches and a stone in his bosom)*; *Льстивые речи душу калечат (Flattering speeches cripple one’s soul)* [GDRP: 755]. The PU *Речи – что мед, а дела – что полынь (Speeches are mead and deeds are sagebrush)* [D.2: 153] shows an expressive contrast in metaphorical interpretation of two attributes – “sweet” and “bitter”. Therefore, the PUs negatively describe not only those who are amenable to flattery but also sly *flatterers*; compare: *Лестуны суть лукавы: на языке мед, а в сердце лед (A flatterer’s nature is craftiness, for they have a honey tongue and an icy heart)* [GDRP: 481].

Many Russian proverbs mention a person amenable to **flatters, vanity**: *Падок соловей на таракана, человек – на льстивые слова (речи) (A nightingale is penchant for a cockroach, and a man for flattering words) [GDRP: 854]; Не льстись на льстивые слова, скоро сведут с ума! (Don't get tempted by flattering words, for they will drive you crazy soon) GDRP: 822] etc.*

8. Russian proverbs actively verbalise a notion of a **hypocrite** that says pleasant things about someone while doing bad things to this very person: *Речами тих, да сердцем лих (Taciturn yet with an evil heart) [GDRP: 754]; Льстец под словами – змей под цветами (A flatterer hidden by words is a snake hidden by flowers) [GDRP: 499]; Льстивые слова говорит, а сам в карман норовит (He flatters while striving to get into my pocket) [CFW]; Слова золотые, да рот у него поганый (Words of gold but a mouth of filth) [GDRP: 822]; На словах тих, а на деле лих (Taciturn but with evil deeds) [GDRP: 823]. It is no coincidence that the proverb directly expresses the linguistic and cultural attitude: *One should not trust flatterers* [GDRP: 499].*

9. Paroemias show, on the one hand, a **vulnerable** person that is easy to insult, hurt with words: *От одного слова да навек ссора (A single word gave rise to an everlasting quarrel) [GDRP: 822]*, and on the other hand, they provide various description for a **sarcastic, mocking, criticizing** person able to hurt, offend or slander someone with his speech: *Острый язык змею из гнезда выманит (A sharp tongue can lure a snake out of its nest); Мягок язык, а жалит больно (A tongue is soft but stings painfully) [GDRP: 1012]; Лучше быть битым, чем задетым словом обидным (It's better to be beaten than to be insulted with an offensive word); Слово что уголь: не обожжет, так замарают (Like piece of coal, a word can blacken or burn) [GDRP: 827]. Proverbs disapprove those who **swear** (*Чем ругаешься, тем и подавишься (Your swearing words may get you choked); Ругать – не ласкать, не скоро заморишься (Unlike caressing, swearing may not tire one soon) [GDRP: 768]; Говорю людскую честить, отца-мать забыть (Honouring people's talks but forgetting one's mother and father) [D.2.161], curse (Бранливых никто не любит (Nobody likes cursers); Не бранись ни с кем, так хорош будешь всем (Don't curse anybody and thereby you'll be good for everyone); Брань до добра не доводит (Curse makes for misery); Бранить – себя тешит (To**

curse is to amuse oneself) [GDRP: 90]), or even **wage a fight** – compare ironical *Чем долго браниться, не лучше ль подраться* (*It's better to fight than to curse each other*) [GDRP: 90]; *Языком болтай, а рукам воли не давай* (*Chatter with your tongue but don't get handsy*) [GDRP: 1015].

Wicked, ill-tempered – such people are marked in PUs with a negative evaluation (*Гнило слово от гнила сердца/A rotten word comes from a rotten heart* [GDRP: 823]; *И доброе слово не уймёт злого/A gentle word won't pacify an evil one* [GDRP: 824]), in particular, since the implications of evil words may have an adverse effect for an object of criticism: *Дурное слово, что смола: пристанет – не отлепится* (*An evil word is as sticky as a resin*) [GDRP: 824]. Paroemias approve the approach where **an acid-tongued person** is constrained (*Тот всегда будет славен, кто обличает язык злонравен/Those who condemn an acid tongue will always be glorious* [GDRP: 1012]), and a discussion is recognised as useful and pleasant if *Язык доброглаголив умножит добру беседу* (*A kindly speaking tongue will increase a good discussion*) [GDRP: 1013], i.e. ‘speech of a person with good intentions will improve a conversation’.

However, we should also highlight the paroemias which mark that it is a challenge to terminate an unwanted spread of negative information about someone or something: *На чужой роток не накинешь платок* (*You can't cover other's mouth with a handkerchief*); *Чужой роток не свой хлевок: не затворишь* (*Other's mouth is not as easy to shut as your own shed*) [GDRP: 766]; *На чужой рот пуговицы не нашьешь* (*You can't sew buttons on the other's mouths*) [GDRP: 765] etc. Proverbs use the image of a human's mouth as a source of speech, and the owner of this “mouth” appears as an **idle gossipmonger or prattler**.

This paroemias are opposed to utterances stressing the importance of positive attitude to a person. **Kindness, praise, approval, weasel** are highly evaluated by the speakers: *Доброе слово дороже золота* (*A kind word is more precious than gold*) [GDRP: 823]; *Доброе слово пива дороже* (*A kind word is pricier than beer*); *Ласково слово что великий день* (*A gentle word is like a great day*); *Доброе слово обращает лице, а злое отвращает сердце* (*A good word turns one to you, while a bad one turns one's heart away*) [GDRP: 824]. Diversity of figurative solutions and value standards

represented in PUs to express positive evaluation of a “good word” shows how important the manifestation of such attitude to an interlocutor is: *Ласковое слово лучше мягкого пирога* (A kind word is better than a puffy pie); *Доброе слово сказать, что посошок в руку дать* (To say a good word is like to give a staff); *Доброе слово человеку – что дождь в засуху* (A good word is like a rain at the time of drought); *Доброе слово – что весенний день* (A kind word is like a springtime day) [GDRP: 824]; *Доброе слово в жемчугах ходит, а злое слово пуце стрелы разит* (A good word wears pearls while a bad one shoots worse than an arrow) [CFW].

10. The following PUs say that a straight opinion or characteristic expressed by a **straightforward** person may be rather unpleasant: *Прямикое слово что рогатина* (A straight word is like a winged spear) [GDRP: 825] – a winged spear is also used in other paroemias as a benchmark and as a symbol of ‘prickling’ and metaphorically ‘injuring’ object; compare: *Холопье слово что рогатина* (A serf’s word is like a winged spear), *Прямое слово рожном торчит* (A straight word sticks out like a picket) [GDRP: 825], *picket* – ‘a sharp pole fixed in an inclined position’ [EDU.3], i.e. ‘unpleasant, inconvenient, prickling’.

One should not show **stubbornness** (*Заколоти в него хоть осиновый кол – он все будет говорить: соломинка!* (Even with an aspen stake flogged into him, he would repeat “a straw!”) [D.1.114]), **arrogance** (*Ваши слова в Библию, а мои, знать, ни в [татарский] Пролог [не годятся]* (Your words are worth the Bible, and ours are not good even for the Tatar Prologue); *Ваши слова в Евангелие писать, а наши в азбуку не годятся* (Your words are worth the Gospel, and ours are bad even for an ABC book); *Нашему слову и места нет* (There’s no space for our words) [GDRP: 821]), or let someone lie, since **deceitful** speeches “smudge” a speaker and make him publicly known as a liar: *Не с ветра говорится, что лгать не годится* (It didn’t come from the wind that lies are no good) [GDRP: 118]; *Лгать – бога прогневить, правду говорить – людей досадить; и молчи* (Lies enrage the Lord, the truth annoys people, so please don’t speak at all) [GDRP: 71]; *Вчера солгал, а сегодня лгуном обзывают* (He lied yesterday and is called a liar today) [GDRP: 474].

Russian proverbs show that the most typical method to indicate an actor's speech content and intention is to use an adjective component able to directly or indirectly qualify a speaker himself, a speech recipient, and observable situations in general.

The PU *Жестoko слово смущает сердце* (*A cruel word discomfits a heart*) [GDRP: 824] says about demonstration of cruelty and describes a **cruel** person.

The PU *За бесчестное слово засвербела голова* (*A dishonest word make a head itchy*) [GDRP: 824] describes a disapproved deed of a **dishonest** person.

The saying *Лестное слово что вешний день* (*A flattering word is like a vernal day*) [CFW] may serve both as encouragement of a person **generous in praise** and indirect qualification of a **vain person**.

The use of the paroemia *Льстивое слово недолго живет* (*A flattering word lives for a while*) is not a direct qualification of a communicant or any third person, yet it undoubtedly relates it to the notions of a **flatterer, hypocrite, sly, astute, provident person** etc.

The proverb *Покорное слово гнев укрощает* (*A humble word tames wrath*); *Покорно слово сокрушает кости* (*A humble word breaks one's bones*) [GDRP: 825] indicate the lack of stubbornness rather than obedience of a person. Display of **agreeableness** may have a great effect on an interlocutor and helps in getting along; compare also: *Кроткое слово гнев побеждает* (*A gentle word defeats wrath*) [GDRP: 824].

Surprisingly, the proverbs are versatile, they urge to, whether directly or indirectly, to be **attentive and welcoming** *Доброе слово и кошке приятно* (*A kind word is pleasant even for a cat*) [CFW]; *От вежливых слов язык не отсохнет* (*Gentle words won't make a tongue wither off*) [GDRP: 821]; **tactful, sensitive** (*В доме повешенного не говорят о веревке* (*Don't talk about a rope at a hanged man's home*) [GDRP: 291]; **grateful** *Пожалуйста не кланяется, а спасибо спины не гнет* (*"Welcome" doesn't bow and "Thank you" doesn't bend your back*); *Своего спасибо не жалеи, а чужого не жди* (*Be generous with your own thanks and don't wait for the other's*) [D.1.114]; *Пошел на обед — носи слово на привет* (*If you go for a lunch, take a greeting word*) [CFW]; **sagacious** *Говорить правду — потерять дружбу* (*Telling the truth breaks up*

friendships) [GDRP: 713]; **reserved** – *На ласковое слово не кидайся (не сдавайся), на грубое не гневайся (не сердись) (Don't give in to a sweet word or be angry at a harsh word)* [D.1.116]; **well-mannered, polite**: *Чужих слов не перебивай* [DED.4: 235]; *Рад не рад, а говори: милости просим! (Say "You are welcome!" even if you're not glad)* [D.1.263]; *Колокольный звон не молитва (а крик не беседа) (Chime is not a prayer, shout is not a conversation)* [D.1.38].

Thus, using proverbs as examples, we have tried to demonstrate which human properties revealing themselves in speech activity are the basic ones, how Russian speakers see a person in a positive, but mainly in a negative context. This is quite concordable with the purpose of proverbs as units of “authorised wisdom” (the term introduced by Jan Mukarzewski) – to orient a person towards the best behavioural “exemplars”, although through rejection and disapproval of undesirable traits and deeds.

2.4.2. Description of an unpleasant interlocutor through the lens of his speech: survey results

We conducted a small experiment focused on clarifying what guides the dialoguers and communicators in evaluating their interlocutors, which properties of a speaker they find as the most unsatisfying and making a negative impression. Its essence consisted in a survey of 61 respondents (university graduates) required to answer the following question: “What kind of an interlocutor could you describe as follows: “*It is unpleasant to have a conversation with him, since he says ...*”.

As the survey result, we received a fairly large list of answers showing, on the one hand, the compatibility of the *to speak* verb and, on the other hand, a wide range of features for both the speech actor with his speech style and the content of a speech utterance unacceptable to others.

The responses received are so diverse that they can be obviously divided into several categories based on what exactly makes the speech recipients evaluate negatively.

Let us show individual categories of the responses with a view to demonstrate the priority for respondents of particular speaker (communicator) characteristics that repel in communication and are involved in the formation of a general impression of a person.

2.4.2.1. Attitude towards communicators and disregard of the rules of speech interaction

1. Let us consider the **first-group** responses that give the characteristics of speech behaviour that show a negative perception of a speaker evaluated in terms of **how he treats other communicators, disregards the principles of speech interaction, and makes his own speech difficult to perceive.**

Thus, antipathy is caused by behaviour that indicates *a person's sense of superiority and exclusivity*, which is conventionally considered to be a manifestation of immodesty and bad manners, a violation of the principle of “equality” of interlocutors (see Table 15). Within this group and those discussed below, this feature is accompanied by a quantitative index indicating, firstly, the number of respondents who gave this answer (for instance, arrogantly – 5), which is evidence of its relative importance for speakers as compared to, for instance, with the given single answer. On the other hand, similar answers are summarised (for instance, “Demonstration of superiority in conversation” – a total of 14 responses), which let us see, on the one hand, how many respondents do not tolerate whatever demonstration of superiority in communication (14 out of 61 people). On the other hand, this makes it possible to make comparison, based on the priority for individual groups, of the features mentioned in the survey.

Table 15. Demonstration of superiority in conversation (22 responses)

Reason to consider speech behaviour intolerable	Responses	Quantity
Sense of superiority, demonstration of arrogance, haughtiness	arrogantly – 8 haughtily – 3 preachingly – 1	17

Table 15 continued. Demonstration of superiority in conversation (22 responses)

Reason to consider speech behaviour intolerable	Responses	Quantity
	disdainfully – 1 pretentiously – 1 disrespectfully – 1 without respect for an interlocutor – 1 as a snob – 1	
Unreasonable self-confidence	edifyingly – 1 self-confidently - 1 challengingly – 2 despotically – 1	5

2. According to the principles of cooperation and politeness, in the course of verbal communication, interlocutors should not only speak themselves but also let another interlocutor speak and be listened to, without depriving him of the right to speak. If one communicant speaks, “the other should stay listening, which corresponds to silence” [Bogdanov 1990: 27]. Then they exchange their roles. According to I.V. Groshev and A.A. Shcherbak, “the person who interrupted the interlocutor is evaluated as argumentative, aloof, self-assertive, rude, domineering, prone to rivalry, subjugating the interlocutor” [Groshev, Shcherbak 2008: 280], i.e. exclusively negatively.

Respondents also negatively evaluate neglect of the interlocutor, of the subject and content of his utterance. This is a kind of disregard for a person of little importance (use) for communication, as if included in the circle of “subjectively insignificant persons” (the term introduced by I.V. Groshev, A.A. Shcherbak). The following responses should be attributed to such evaluations (Table 16).

Table 16. Neglect of the interlocutor as a communicator, underestimation of the interlocutor (16 responses)

Reason to consider speech behaviour intolerable	Responses	Quantity
Speech interruption	interrupting the interlocutors – 3	3
Lack of attention to the interlocutor's speech	not listening to the interlocutor – 2 does not hear the interlocutor at all – 1 without caring for the interlocutor – 1 inattentive – 2 would always be distracted by something – 1	7
Getting off the subject touched on	would always (speak) on other subjects – 1 fails to keep up the conversation – 1	2
Speaking exclusively himself	without letting (me) give an answer – 1 nonstop – 1 (talking) he speaks selfishly – 1 revelling in his speeches – 1	4

3. As disapproved characteristics, there are also those that describe the *tone, communication style, and way of talking incorrectly chosen by the interlocutor* (54 responses in total) that evoke antipathy and make the interlocutor unwilling to talk in a similar tone:

Rudely – 15 (25% of the total respondents), *aggressively* – 5 (8%), *harshly* – 3 (5%), *boorishly* – 1 response (2%), *impudently* – 2 responses (3%), i.e. ignoring the norms of etiquette, inconsiderately, shamelessly. As we can see, rudeness as *a tactic used in a conversation* is one of the most undesirable features of speech behaviour in communication – a total of 26 responses;

obscenely – 4, *cursing, obscene words* – 2, *uncivilised, use of slang, use of filler words* – 2; a total of 11 responses.

sarcastically, venomously, in an insulting tone – 3 answers indicating one's *intention to offend the interlocutor*, to characterise something in an unflattering, offensive way;

importunately, that is, ‘bothering, tedious, intrusive’ – 1 response.

A tactless and ill-mannered person is described with such characteristics as *with irritation* (1), *naggingly* (1), *shamelessly* (1), “*through clenched teeth*” (1), *tactlessly* (1), *defiantly* (2), *disgustingly* (1), *nastily* (1), *categorically* (1) – 10 responses.

On the other hand, the **general style and tone** are also evaluated by the speakers; compare the features: *pompously* – 2 responses, i.e. ‘in an extremely puffy, haughty way’, ‘in an excessively solemn, falsely elated, stilted way’ [SAD.2: 386]; *grandiloquently* – 1 response; a total of 3 responses.

4. The features indicating the **ambiguity of the content, the lack of a clearly expressed idea or logic, inability, unpreparedness** are given in such responses as *incomprehensibly* (4), *incoherently* (3), *tentatively* (1), *haltingly* (5), *chaotically* (1), *too confusingly or as if in delirium* (1); *he is unable to articulate his idea clearly in his speech* (1) – such speech is difficult to perceive, significantly reduces clarity, and hinders the achievement of a specific goal – a total of 16 responses.

These should probably include the features, as indicated by the respondents, that may also make it difficult to understand what has been said. The disapproval of an illiterate interlocutor – 14 responses – was expressed in such answers as: *illiterately* (7), *making errors* (4), *ignorantly* (2), *uneducatedly* (1). A total of 30 responses.

5. Of great importance were the characteristics indicating the inability to fully understand the interlocutor’s speech due to **audible pronunciation deficiencies**. This is evidenced by the fact that more than 20% of respondents mentioned indistinctness of speech (15 responses), and together with the responses *inaudible* (8), *inarticulate* (2) and *swallowing words* (2), *incomprehensible due to poor diction* (1), *tongue-tied* (2), *slurring* (1) and a figurative characteristic *as if his mouth is full of porridge* (1 response), the total indicator of the importance of articulate, easily perceived speech was 32 responses.

6. A small group consisted of responses in which respondents expressed their dislike of an **uncultured** person who *eats while talking* (2 answers – 3%), and of an **untidy** person who *splashes saliva* during a conversation (1 response – 2 %); a total of 3 responses.

The responses indicating individual violations of the speech interaction principles that create obstacles to successful communication are given by a various number of respondents, i.e. their priority is graded in a certain way. This is quite clearly shown in the following diagram (Fig. 4).

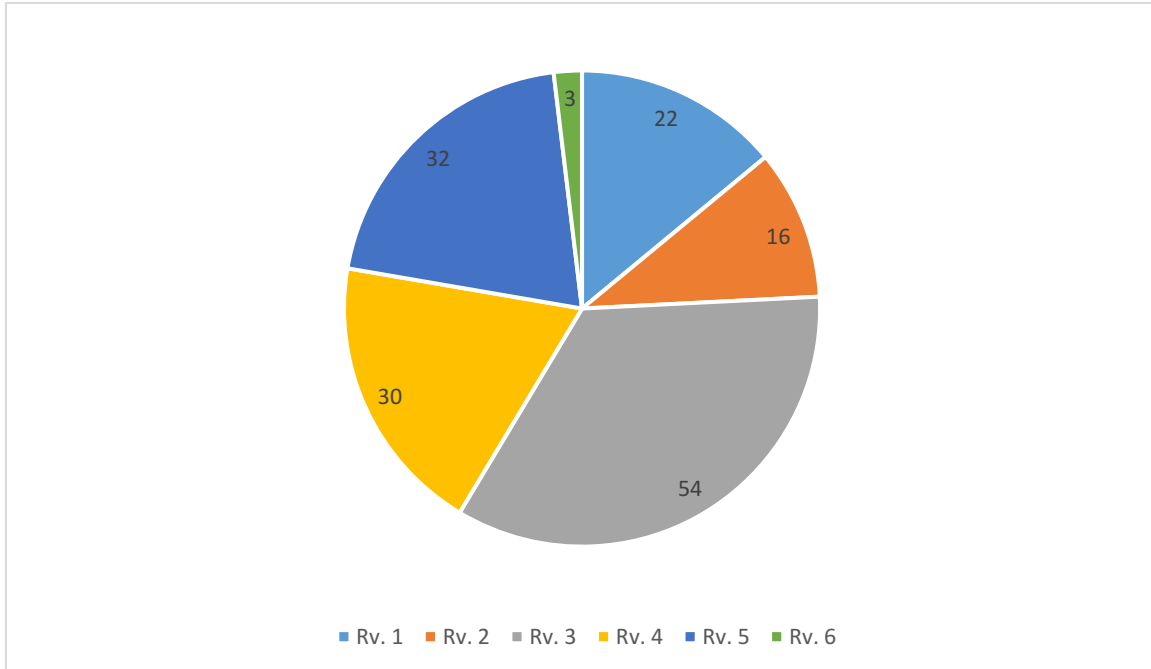


Fig. 4. Speaker's unacceptable attitude towards other communicators: violation of the speech interaction principles, creation of difficulties in speech perception.

1. Demonstrating superiority in conversation (22 responses);
2. Lack of attention to an interlocutor as a communicator (16 responses);
3. Characteristics of the wrong tone, style, and way of talking chosen by an interlocutor (54 responses);
4. Lack of clarity of idea, logic (30 responses);
5. Audible pronunciation deficiencies that interfere with perception (32 responses);
6. Attitude towards an uncultured person (3 responses).

Respondents paid considerable attention to such characteristics as the speaker's arrogance and superiority, violation of the speech interaction norms manifested in the inattention to the interlocutor and rude and harsh behaviour. Unexpectedly, a large group of responses indicated factors that impede the optimal perception of the interlocutor's speech.

2.4.2.2. Characteristics of audially perceived speech

The *speech tempo* and *loudness* are important parameters, since both too fast speech resembling a tongue twister and slow lengthy speech, as well as too loud or, conversely, quiet speech is hard for listeners to perceive. Any of these features is important if speech displays its excessive manifestation.

As negative, the respondents mentioned the external speech characteristics forming pairs that are opposite in meaning:

(1) the first pair includes such features as *fast* (9 responses – 15%) and *slow* (8 responses – 13%) that are similar in number of responses;

(2) The second pair includes *loudly* (13 responses – 21%) and *quietly* (5 responses – 8%).

There are also such *features of how speech sounds* as *discordant* (1); *making one's ears tingle* (1) and, indicatively, *unemotional* – 1 response, *boring* – 2 responses and *monotonous* (3 responses). The last three characteristics show that emotionally colored speech and its audibly perceived intonational expressiveness are welcomed in communication.

The data summarising the speech characteristics of in terms of audible perception are given in Table 17.

Table 17. Speech characteristics in terms of audible perception and length

Reason to find speech unacceptable	Mentioned features	Quantity
Speech tempo	<i>fast</i> – 9 responses <i>like a machine gun</i> – 1 response <i>slow</i> – 8 responses	18
Speech loudness	<i>loudly</i> – 13 responses <i>quietly</i> – 5 responses <i>under one's breath</i> – 2 responses	20
Speech length	<i>much and for a long time</i> – 15 responses <i>incessantly</i> – 1 response <i>day to night</i> – 1 response	18

Table 17 continued. Speech characteristics in terms of audible perception and length

Reason to find speech unacceptable	Mentioned features	Quantity
	<i>nonstop</i> – 1	
Emotional and intonational speech melody	<i>monotonously</i> – 4 responses <i>ponderously</i> – 2 responses <i>unemotionally</i> – 1 response <i>discordantly</i> – 1 response <i>making one's ears tingle</i> – 1 response	9
Voice pitch	<i>squeakily</i> – 2 responses	2

2.4.2.3. Speech features in terms of content

The analysis of the survey results allowed us summarising what exactly is evaluated as unacceptable and disapproved in the dialoguers' speech in terms of the contents of utterances. Let us mention individual subgroups as a result of grouping the responses offering the same concept or similar, overlapping concepts.

1. Thus, the first response subgroup consists of features describing ***speech as meaningless, meagre, and uninteresting:***

<i>boringly</i> – 7 responses (11%) <i>platitudes</i> – 4 (7%) <i>stale news</i> – 1	<i>senseless</i> – 1 <i>off the point</i> – 8 (13%) <i>the same things</i> – 2 (3%)	23 responses
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2. The second subgroup consists of more judgemental evaluations of respondents who define the interlocutor's ***speech as frankly stupid.***

<i>humbug</i> – 13 (21%) <i>unthinkingly</i> – 1	<i>nonsense</i> – 1 <i>rubbish</i> – 1	16 responses
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3. Listeners get a particularly unpleasant impression from ***negative information about something or someone and from negative evaluation*** of the interlocutor or any

third persons (29 responses):

Unpleasant things – 4, *hurtful things* – 2, *horrible things* – 2 responses. The “*bad things (about everyone)*” characteristic given by 8 respondents (13%) can be considered as a generalising feature. However, there are also more specific comments on the negative content of utterance: it is unacceptable to *discuss interlocutor’s shortcomings in the presence of others* (1), which is adamantly frowned upon both in business relations and in child upbringing. Interestingly, the respondents particularly marked a stranger’s displeasing eagerness to “nose” into others’ affairs, to *air someone else’s dirty laundry* (1) and to *discuss mainly other people’s sins* (1). This is a fairly typical situation: as the Russian proverb says, “We see a speck in someone else’s eye but fail to notice a beam in our own eye”, i.e., ‘flaws are always visible from the outside in a situation with another person, while they are hardly noticeable when it comes to our own affairs’.

In addition to the relatively neutral characteristics of the unacceptable content of utterances, respondents also mentioned more specific and “harsh” features indicating speech of immoral or obscene content and disgusting words:

<i>nasty things</i> – 1 <i>ribald things</i> – 2 <i>smut</i> – 1	<i>foul things</i> – 3 <i>dirty</i> – 2 <i>peppering one’s speech with some vulgar jokes</i> – 1
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4. Respondents considered it unacceptable to ***give (spread) unverified or deliberately misleading information*** (9 responses):

<i>untruth</i> – 4 <i>untruthfully</i> – 1	<i>insincerely</i> – 2 <i>gossips</i> – 1 <i>Spreading silly rumours about our mutual acquaintances</i> – 1
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5. If a ***conversation is focused on any subject matter interesting only to one of the communicants*** (6 responses) – for instance, a speaker is fixated solely on his issues, affairs, successes, etc. and ignores the option to discuss something else, then this becomes of little interest to the rest and often makes a conversation stop, or even cuts ties in the future. It is not by chance that we have such responses regarding undesirable subjects of discussion: *exclusively about oneself* (5) and *discusses solely one’s own issues* (1).

The scattered responses, which also addressed the speech content, failed to make

up individual groups. Thus, when one of the interlocutors is sure that he knows everything better than others is hardly a good option for communication: *he knows the way one should live your life and what one should do* (1) and *one should follow other people's models* (1), i.e. the speaker exemplifies someone else's life as an appropriate behavioural option for the interlocutor.

The respondents also gave 4 positive speech features as commendable characteristics of speech behaviour – 1 answer each: *interesting, extensive experience, meaningfully, broad knowledge*.

Thus, we can summarise the responses regarding the content of speech denounced by respondents as communicators. Diagram 2 shows the ratio of the response groups demonstrating the priority of the above-mentioned speech characteristics.

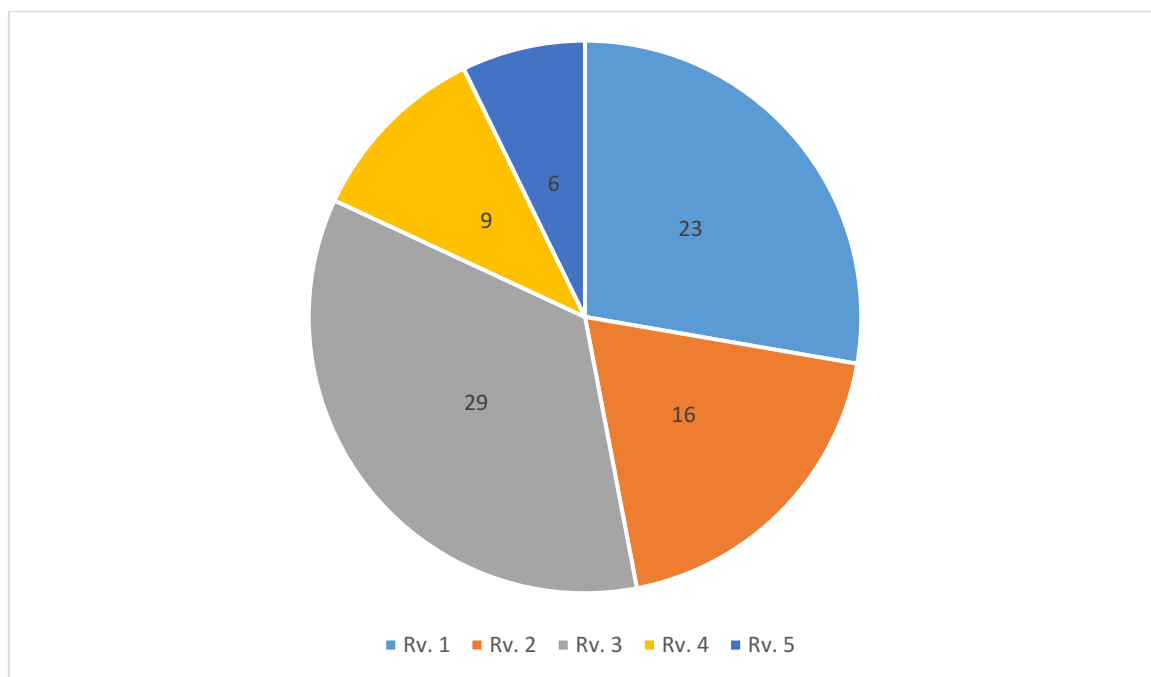


Figure 5. Criteria for evaluating the speech content as unacceptable.

1. Meaningless, meagre, uninteresting speech (23 responses);
2. Interlocutor's frankly stupid speech (16 responses);
3. Speech containing negative (discrediting) information about something or someone, negative evaluations of an interlocutor or any third persons (29 responses);
4. Speech containing unverified or deliberately misleading information (9

responses);

5. Speech reduced to any subjects and aspects interesting solely to one of the communicants (6 responses).

As we can see, speech is perceived positively if it provides useful and interesting information, does not contain information discrediting a interlocutor or any third parties, does not embarrass communicators with obscenity, disgusting details, etc. To a lesser extent, communicators are dissatisfied with misleading information, rumouring and gossiping, as well as the lack of subjects relevant to all (both) interlocutors in a conversation.

Resume

Let us summarise the results of our analysis.

1. Proverbs, in which native speakers and culture describe speech situations, speech characteristics, features of communication and communicators, make up a big array of units with components included in the “speech, speech activity” thematic field. Some of them are represented in the composition of paroemias to a larger extent – the *говорить* verb in all its forms (over 600 units), such nouns as *язык* (over 200), *речь* (over 100), *слово* – the latter also appears in other forms (*словцо, словечко, слова*) and has more than 500 PUs. These components make up an active proverbial vocabulary, sanctioned by the paremiological space, which also includes stylistically marked units, whether substandard (*брехать*) or book (*глаголати*). Other components are also used to verbalise ideas about speech in PUs. They are less frequent yet very diverse, which makes it possible to assess the scope of over 1,500 units of the material under consideration.

Owing to the proverb card file stored in the Dictionary Room of the Faculty of Philology of Saint Petersburg State University, which served as the basis for compiling the Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs, we got an idea of how many units there are, according to a variety of paremic sources, that components with speaking semantics.

2. A wide range of lexical tools is involved as components in the verbalisation of various notions related to speaking among native Russian speakers. The tradition of grouping proverbs about speech in dictionaries influenced the choice of the “speech” lexeme as a generic word for various denominations of speaking as one of the most important activities. Thus, in the Proverbs of the Russian People digest, paroemias about a speaking person and the nature of his speech are collected under the Language – Speech heading. In the Perm Region’s paremiological dictionary entitled Each Rides to the Feast Yet Utters for the Word (edited by I.A. Podyukov), these PUs are united under the About Speech, Conversations title. Thus, on the one hand, there is no uniformity in the principles of grouping units about speaking and choosing a common name for them. On the other hand, units containing various components with the speaking semantics and describing different aspects of speech activity are united within these arrays of paroemias. They are not divided depending on whether they imply the ability to speak, the manner of speaking

(pronunciation, etc.), conversation, discussion or speech as a public appearance, informative aspect of speech, etc. This is how, in particular, Dahl's digest of proverbs is arranged.

Reference to separate paremic categories united by the same component (*речь, язык, слово, говорить*) shows that many stereotypical ideas can be repeated from one category to another, i.e. the expression of one particular idea can be assisted by different components with the semantics of speaking – for instance, the *говорить* и *молоть* verbs (*Зять с тещею говорит день до вечера, а послушать нечего* (*Though the son- and mother-in-law talked day to night, nothing interesting was in their talks*); *Мелет день до вечера, а послушать нечего* (*Though he grinds day to night, nothing useful was in his words*)), or the *слова* and *язык* nouns in the PUs *Много слов – мало дела* (*Many words yet little action*) and *Не торопись языком – поспеши делом* (*Hurry with actions rather than with words*), which indicate the preference of actions to conversations.

3. Among the speech-related PUs, there are units that firstly evaluate the capability of speaking at large due to the availability of a tongue as a speech organ (*И велик и широк корове бог язык дал, да говорить заказал* / *Though God endowed a cow with a big and wide tongue, a cow is forbidden to speak*; *Язык мой, а речи не свои говорю* / *With my own tongue, I make someone else's speech*) and, secondly, units that formulate general communication rules and relate to the external audibly perceived speech characteristics such as speech tempo, length (*Хороша веревка длинная, а речь короткая* / *A good rope is a long one, while a good speech is a short one*; *Говорить — не работать, торопиться не надо* / *Talking is not doing and doesn't need a rush*), etc. Herewith it is interesting that the level of speech loudness is almost irrelevant for speakers.

Thirdly, the PUs directly or indirectly express prescriptions concerning the speech content. The typology of stereotypical ideas proposed by us demonstrates their diversity, on the one hand, and the importance of individual attitudes for native speakers, on the other. First of all, culture bearers are disgusted by verbosity and empty words that are especially negatively perceived in contrast to necessary and fruitful labour (*Поменьше слов, побольше дела* / *Deeds, not words*; *Не спеши языком, торопись кочадыком!* / *Don't rush with your tongue, hurry with your kochedyk*) that the speakers have given an

important place to in the paroemias as a whole.

It is also recommended to take a serious attitude to the choice of words: one should speak after thinking about it, critically considering the meaning of one's own speech (*Всякая сорока от своего языка погибает / Every magpie perishes because of its tongue*), weighing the potential consequences (*Лишнее говорить – себе вредит / Talking too much may be harmful to you*), evaluating an interlocutor (*Знай больше, а говори меньше / More knowledge, less talking; Щи хлебай, да поменьше бай! / Slurp your cabbage soup and talk less*), showing caution (*Сказал бы словечко, да волк недалеко / I would say a wordie but a wolf is getting closer; Держи язык на привязи / Keep your tongue tied*), etc.

Some motifs have got a chance to be repeatedly verbalised in proverbs; this regards vivid figurative units implying the impossibility of remedying what was said, the benefits of silence and restraint in talking, the importance of tact and politeness in communication, etc.

4. While describing speech, proverbs note a person's various properties that manifest in speaking, although it is hardly possible to name all the traits manifesting in speech within the framework of one research paper, since speech enables the realisation of a variety of intentions (for instance, to flatter, bring to reason, insult, praise, envy, etc.), determined by the relationship between people, a person's temper and speakers' habitual communication style.

In the range of human characteristics, a significant place is held by direct and indirect indications of negative personal properties and traits that can manifest through speech, for instance, stubbornness (*Заколоти в него хоть осиновый кол – он все будет говорить: соломинка! / Even with an aspen stake flogged into him, he would repeat "a straw!"*), caution (*Говори, да назад оглядывайся! / Speak but look back*), haste and self-confidence (*Не говори «гон», пока не перескочишь / Do not say "hop" until you jump over*), straightforwardness (*Не говори обиняком, говори прямоком / Do not talk in a roundabout way, speak straight out*), etc.

5. The attitudes we have identified are verbalised using a number of images, comparisons and standards (*Сказанное слово – серебро, не сказанное – золото / A*

word spoken is silver, yet an unspoken one is gold; Слово не стрела, а сердце насквозь разит / A word is not an arrow, whereas pierces the heart right through; Язык что осиновый лист: во всякую погоду треплется / A tongue is like a aspen leaf fluttering in any weather; С умным разговариваться, что меду напиться / Conversing with a smart one is the same as drinking mead; Доброе слово дороже золота / A kind word is more precious than gold etc.), which gives the proverbs a memorable form.

Thus, paroemias about speech characterize a peculiar set of right or wrong speech behaviour models evaluated by communicators and perceived by native speakers and culture bearers as a practical guide to action.

6. Let us focus on the results obtained during the survey. As part of the task to define speech, which allows for a fairly arbitrary choice of answers, most respondents gave their understanding and noted such features that made it possible to correlate them with the ideas verbalised in proverbs. When grouped, they show that speakers emphasise various speech aspects, of which the most important ones – as shown by the number of responses received – turned out to be: “speech is a way of communication or interaction”, the possibility of “mental activity using language”, “implementation of the language system, the form of language existence”, “conveyance of information”; that is, almost all the main aspects of the *speech* definition as given in dictionaries and indicating the speech and language functions are covered by the responses.

These answers also show similarities with PUs in the interpretation of the essence and purpose of speech activity. Proverbs also consider speech as a way to convey information (*Свинья скажи борову, а боров всему городу / The pig will tell this to the hog, and the hog to the whole city*); it is related to mental activity (*Сперва подумай, а потом скажи / Firstly think it over, only then say it aloud*); exists mainly orally (*Лучше скажи мало, но хорошо / Say it shortly but well*); provides an opportunity for communication (*Беседовать – не устать: было бы что сказать / You will not get tired of talking if you have something to say*); is characterised by sound realisation (*Горлом дело не спорится / A throat will not help work go well*), etc.

We should note that none of the respondents left this task uncompleted. According to the well-known linguist B.Y. Norman, a person whose consciousness is “thoroughly

saturated with language” [Norman 1987: 17] cannot but has an idea why one needs a tongue language and what the purpose of tongue is in real life.

7. Naming the speech features, the respondents gave a big range of characteristics, thus demonstrating knowledge of many essential speech parameters such as oral, written, inner forms of speaking, stylistic varieties represented by formal, poetic, everyday speech; communication forms (monologue, dialogue), the degree of speech preparedness, characteristics of speech culture.

It should be noted that the responses reflected speakers’ exigent attitude to the speech quality – firstly, to respect its clearness and correctness, and secondly, to lexical realisation determining the speech richness, expressiveness and emotional colouring, as well as acceptability / unacceptability for speakers, since respondents noted such features as *rude*, *obscene*, etc.; thirdly, to the impression that speech can (and often should) make on the communicators and that is evaluated both positively and a negatively. Fourth, they named the external speech features, which formed impressive groups, that characterise the features of speech course such as length, rate, audibility, loudness, flow that have a major effect on the perception of and possibility of understanding speech.

The second large block of criteria consisted of features associated with the speech content, i.e., what speech activity is for – the ability to convey some content. According to the responses received, it must comply with the requirements of logic (*coherent*), clearness (*clear*), attention-worthy content (*pithy*, *substantive*, etc.). Herewith, respondents follow the path of nominating positively evaluated parameters (*informative*) and also name undesirable, reprehensible characteristics (*meaningless*, *empty*). It is noteworthy that respondents indicate the connection between the content, meaningfulness of speech and speakers’ mental abilities (*wise*, *reasonable and stupid*, *senseless*) – this is one of the constants reflecting the specifics of the Russian mindset.

8. Since paroemias often represent situations that make it possible, whether directly or indirectly, to verbalise undesirable or reprehensible speech features manifested in communication, respondents were tasked with describing precisely the unacceptable behaviour of speakers, which can serve as an indirect attestation of prescribed speech behaviour. This allowed us to obtain a wide range of features significant for effective

communication: the presence / absence of pronunciation defects that interfere with perception as noted by 52% of respondents; the presence / absence of demonstration of superiority in conversation – by 36%; manifestation of bad manners (ignoring the interlocutor, avoiding the topic of conversation, interrupting, etc.) – by 27% of respondents; the presence / absence of rudeness – by 25% of respondents.

The analysis of the responses concerning compliance with the speech cooperation rules has shown that the speaker's attitude, as manifested in speech, to other communicators is very important, as evidenced by both the total number of marked signs and their diversity.

CONCLUSION

Viewed through the lens of language, the culture manifests itself in different ways. “Cultural content” can be found at the deepest levels of human consciousness and unconsciously conveyed by culture bearers, in particular, through paroemias. As our analysis shows, proverbs characterise numerous details and various aspects of speech. Typical speech situations, prescriptions and verbalised stereotypical ideas found in them, which deal with the priority of actions over words, disapproval of verbosity and idle talks, prudence and foresight in conversation, showing tact and good manners in speech etc., confirm the importance of judgments about and evaluations of speech as expressed by Russian culture bearers.

The observation results show that proverbs are anthropocentric, because their contents, no matter what area of activity it concerns, are viewed with a projection on a person: how speakers see him in a particular life situation. This is also an obvious fact with regard to paroemias about speech: being prescriptive units, proverbs verbalise mainly a critical attitude towards speakers who break unspoken rules of communication, while less often a positive or approving one, which generally confirms the axiological nature of these units and their edifying nature.

Involvement of modern native speakers and culture bearers in communication and observation of communication features result in the formation of a whole range of features describing speech and an interlocutor that make up two “plus” and “minus” poles on the rating scale. These feature groups include both characteristics making importance for a particular speaker and those being part of the unspoken “code of speech” in society. The survey results have shown that Russian speakers appreciate good and high-quality speech and outline in detail the range of features that can reduce the importance of a speech act and even exclude its pragmatic meaning, devalue speech and communication.

The comparison of sets of ideas about speech, which describe two different ways of identifying them and two time slices, confirmed the relevance of the approved and reprehensible speech features verbalised by proverbs for culture bearers of the first quarter of the XXI century. Both cases note external characteristics such as speech tempo, audibility, and preparedness. Excessive talkativeness and idle talks, unreasonable speech

length, rude and reckless speakers, etc. are frowned upon by both modern Russian native speakers and their predecessors.

An important aspect that reveals coincidences is the speech content (in the responses: *substantive, important, relevant,*) coupled with the speakers' mental abilities (in the responses: *wise, reasonable, meaningful*). However, the emphasis here is put in different ways: the proverbs actively highlight the explicit unacceptability of idle chatter, since labour is the main proverbial imperative.

The discrepancy lies in the absence of proverbially verbalized ideas that are not among those determining the effectiveness of communication. Such parameters mentioned by respondents as speech genres and forms, normativity and stylistics, communication channels, etc. are characteristics and notions relevant to today's discourse. To some extent, they are also determined by professional activities of the respondents, among whom philologists make up 63.9%.

The difference in the speech evaluation by contemporaries and traditional folk culture bearers is also visible in the attention they pay to certain speech parameters. Thus, a positive evaluation of the speech beauty is rare in paroemias, while beautiful, rich, expressive speech is given great attention in the respondents' evaluations. This indicates the modern Russian language consciousness that includes an evaluation of the aesthetics and expressiveness of speech, the impression it makes, while folk wisdom puts a greater emphasis on the aspect of benefit, thereby illustrating the pragmatic and utilitarian approach as typical of proverbs and folk culture bearers. As we believe, this shows a temporal change in the view of speech: it is currently considered not only through the prism of a socially sanctioned code of speech behaviour but also as an aesthetic phenomenon and a manifestation of speaking skills.

The coincidences and discrepancies in the sets of speech features noted in proverbs and in respondents' questionnaires are illustrated below in the Appendix, where the degree of relevance of individual features for modern native speakers of Russian is indicated by the number of plus signs. The lacunarity of individual features is indicated by a dash in the corresponding column.

In the light of active interpersonal interaction, the attention to the specifics of

speech communication and the perception of a person through his speech turned out to be quite significant, since the range of features of the speech actor does not change so quickly over time, which indicates the importance of the characteristics verbalised by proverbs. Many proverbial cultural attitudes and speech features are still relevant for the perception and evaluation of the interlocutor today.

As resulted from our work, the ideas of the national and cultural specifics of the evaluation of speech and speakers themselves by Russian native speakers and culture bearers can be verified on the basis of the corpus of modern contexts that directly or indirectly describe the speech activity of communicators. This provides a prospect for the development of the trend in line with which this research has been carried out.

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**APPENDIX. SPEECH ATTRIBUTES IDENTIFIED IN PROVERBS ABOUT
SPEECH AS COMPARED TO THE ATTRIBUTES IDENTIFIED IN THE
SURVEY**

Speech in terms of perception and understandability		Speech features based on survey results	Speech features verbalised in PUs
Nature of temporal flow (length, tempo)	long-lasting, verbose speech	++	<i>Too much speaking results in too much shame [GDRP: 183]; It's vain to wait for his mots to end [D. 2: 10]</i>
	short speech	+++	<i>A good rope is a long one, while a good speech is a short one [GDRP: 113]; Plenty of words are baggage for donkeys, while a short speech is an embellishment to the world [GDRP: 821]</i>
	fast, hasty speech	++	<i>Don't rush your tongue and don't be lazy doing your job [GDRP: 1015]; Talking is not doing and doesn't need a rush [DED.1: 373]</i>
	slow speech	+	<i>Enough of winding, it's time to tie a knot [GDRP: 924]; Milk will turn sour before he utters a word [GDRP: 549]</i>
Speech audibility, articulation	audible, articulate	++	—
	inaudible, inarticulate	+	—
Loudness	loud (shout)	+++	<i>A throat will not help work go well [GDRP: 205]; Chime is not a prayer, shout is not a conversation [GDRP: 368]</i>
	quiet, calm	+	—
Smoothness	flowing	+	<i>He speaks like a nightingale sings [GDRP: 826]</i>
	curt	+	—

Continued Appendix. Speech attributes identified in the survey in comparison with the attributes identified in proverbs about speech

Speech in terms of perception and understandability		Speech features based on survey results	Speech features verbalised in PUs
Speech in terms of content			
Logic, meaningfulness	coherent, logic	+	<i>A pleasant speech is pleasant to listen [GDRP: 755]; No need in wisdom if one is able to speak [GDRP: 107]; Don't talk at random, put your words in the right way [GDRP: 825]</i>
	incoherent, chaotic, rambling	+++	<i>A thought is smoky, a bewilderment is poor, but a windbag is the worst where a thought [GDRP: 310]; He speaks like a bad lacemaker tats: unable to make out what he has tatted [Anikin: 64]</i>
Pithiness	pithy, informative	+++++	<i>A good discussion lets everyone gain some knowledge; Intelligent discussions bring you knowledge, while the dumb ones make you lose your own intellect [GDRP: 52]; A sensible word is worth a rouble [GDRP: 827]</i>
	empty, useless, pointless	++	<i>Empty words are like kernel-less nuts [GDRP: 822]; Much ground grain yet no flour [GDRP: 527]; They have discussed a bagful of things, but this didn't lead to anything [D.1: 358]</i>
	unreliable untrue	++	<i>One speaks rightwards but looks leftwards [GDRP: 181]; His words are like a featherbed, yet his deeds are a bare place [D.2: 136]</i>
Indirect indication of the speech content of through the description of speaker's mental abilities	wise, meaningful	+	<i>Wise speech is easy to understand even for a fool [CFW]; A wise speech is good to listen [GDRP: 755];</i>
	stupid, senseless	+	<i>Stay behind the furnace with your silly speech [GDRP: 756]; Stupid words deserve silly ears [GDRP: 822]; A donkey is recognisable by ears, and a fool by speech [GDRP: 628]</i>

Continued Appendix. Speech attributes identified in the survey in comparison with the attributes identified in proverbs about speech

Speech in terms of perception and understandableness		Speech features based on survey results	Speech features verbalised in PUs
Speech in terms of accepted standards and stylistic features			
positive features	correct, competent	++++	—
negative features	slang	+	—
	illiterate, defective	+++	—
style and genre	formal	++	—
	colloquial	++	—
	informal	+	—
Speech evaluation in the context of impression			
speaker's emotions	emotional, rhetorical	++	<i>He speaks like a nightingale sings</i> [GDRP: 826]
listener's feelings and sensations	exciting, inspiring	+++	—
significance for recipient	persuasive, edifying	++	<i>A bird can be caught by seeds, and a man by a word</i> [GDRP: 731]; <i>A speaker sows, a listener gathers (harvests)</i> [D.1: 356]
	commanding, catchy	+	<i>A word spoken opportunely has more power than a written or printed one</i> [GDRP: 826]
positive speech evaluation	good, beautiful, pleasant	++	<i>A pleasant speech is pleasant to listen; Proverbs make one's speech more vivid</i> [GDRP: 755]; <i>He speaks like a nightingale sings</i> [GDRP: 826];
negative speech evaluation	unpleasant	+	<i>Stupid speech is not a proverb</i> [GDRP: 755]; <i>Stay behind the furnace with your silly speech</i> [GDRP: 756]

Continued Appendix. Speech attributes identified in the survey in comparison with the attributes identified in proverbs about speech

Speech in terms of perception and understandableness		Speech features based on survey results	Speech features verbalised in PUs
Neglect of an interlocutor			
display of tactlessness	interrupting the interlocutors	+	<i>Don't interrupt other's words</i> [DED.4: 235]
lack of attentiveness	not listening to the interlocutor, inattentive	++	<i>More listening, less talking</i> [GDRP: 181]
getting off the subject touched on	fails to keep up the conversation, always changing the subject	+	<i>When they tell him about a priest, he would keep discussing foolish Emelya; Unleash your tongue and it would say everything, even unknown to it</i> [CFW]
speaking exclusively himself	without letting (me) give an answer, revelling in his speeches	+	<i>If you choose a clever woman, she won't let you utter a single word</i> [D.1: 284]; <i>When he speaks, even a dog cannot get a word</i> [D.1: 361];
Unacceptable way of talking			
violation of the code of etiquette	rudely, aggressively	++++++	<i>Curses lead to no good; It's better to fight than to curse each other</i> [GDRP: 90]
	obscenely, uncivilised	+++	—
demonstration of bad manners	shamelessly, defiantly	++	—
disapproved speech style	pompously, stiltedly	+	<i>Despite his grandiloquence, he is unable to touch the sky</i> [GDRP: 774]