Bipartite and tripartite Russian proverbs are analyzed in terms of devices of repetition. Major attention is given to formulaic devices, including correlative, contrastive, and conjunctive formulas. Grammatical and phonetic devices are also discussed. An argument is advanced for the basic binary division of the Russian proverb, since even tripartite proverbs contain two main propositions. (AF)

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does not apply, and according to our claim Rule III would
have to occur below the point in the grammar where marked-
ness rules cease to apply. Note, however, there is another
universal markedness condition stating that continuant ob-
struents are not aspirated. Since the aspirates upon which
Rule III operates must become unaspirated by virtue of
their becoming continuant, this markedness principle must
apply to those cases that undergo Rule III. According to
our principle, Rule III must, on this evidence, be above
the point in the grammar where markedness rules cease to
operate. Our principle thus yields a contradiction. We
do not know how markedness principles do operate, but this
example shows one way in which they cannot operate.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE RUSSIAN PROVERB

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This article is an attempt to classify Russian proverbs, not on the basis of subject matter but according to formal considerations. A basic assumption is that all Russian proverbs are bipartite, that is, consist of two parts or propositions. There are various types of repetition that may occur, and an analysis of these devices of repetition is what provides the basis for this system of classification. There are three major classifications of the basic devices of repetition: phonetic, grammatical, and formulaic.

The first of these three major groups is the one to which most attention has been paid and for that reason only scant attention will be paid to it in this article.

The most basic type of phonetic repetition and one which is central for any analysis of the proverb is, of course, rhyme. The importance of rhyme, particularly end-rhyme, as an element of the proverbial style, is noted in an anonymous article on Russian proverbs in which it is stated: "Even where reason remains, the want of rhyme in a popular saying is often fatal. We recognize a magic force in 'A stitch in time saves nine' which 'A stitch in time saves eight' would never have exercised."[1] There are many other types of phonetic repetition found in the proverbs and these have been outlined and discussed before.[2] A description of these various types of phonetic devices would provide a catalog of exotic Greek terms like mesophonia, parechesis, paramoion, etc., as well as a list of more familiar ones. However, regardless of what terms are used, proverbs in which the major device of repetition is based on likeness of sound may be classified according to grammatical criteria, since rhyme, or any other type of phonetic likeness, can be grammatical or antigrammatical, but never agrammatical.[3] All the examples of proverbs of this type are characterized by antigrammatical rhyme, owing to the fact that proverbs containing phonetic likeness as well as grammatical parallelism necessarily fall into the next major group. Proverbs with antigrammatical rhyme as the major device of repetition may be subdivided into three groups in dependence upon whether the word-pairs contain words that are the same part of speech; words that are not the same part of speech, but are both inflected forms; or word-pairs containing both inflected and non-inflected forms. Some examples are:[4]

Скупому душа дешевле гроша.

Варила баба брагу, да и упала к оврагу.

Ешь пироги, а хлеб вперед береги.

Хлеб да живот — и без денег живет.

Я за пирог, а черт поперек.

Отдал поклон, да и ступай вон!

In the examples above, the first two typify the first subgroup, the next two, the second, and the last two, the third.

Under grammatical devices of repetition we include: an identity of syntactic structure in each proposition: a repetition of the same word in different categories; a repetition of the same root in different words; a repetition of the same affix; a

repetition of words that belong to the same declensional or con-
jugational type. Examples of the first major subgroup, that is,
identity of syntactic structure, are:

> Часом с квасом, а порою с водою.
>
> Убожество учит, богатство пучит.
>
> Богатый не золото ест, а бедный не камень гложет.
>
> Богатый не сахар зоблет, убогий не камень гложет.

As indicated, the basic device in this group of proverbs is a
more or less identical syntactic structure in each proposition.
Elements of phonetic similarity, if present, play a secondary,
often decorative, role. This fact is attested to by a large num-
ber of proverb-pairs (like the last two examples above) where
there is found an identity of structure coupled with rhyme or
other phonetic likeness in one of the proverbs, but not in the
other.

There would also be included in this group those proverbs
which are characterized by a repetition of words in the same
grammatical category, even though there is not complete identity
of syntactic structure in each proposition. The obverse of this
is found in the next subgroup, that is, a repetition of the same
word in different grammatical categories. Examples are:

> В тревогу — и мы к богу, а по тревоге — забыли о боге.
>
> И с умом, да с пустой сумой, а и без ума, да туга сума.
>
> Умел дитя годить, умей и научить.

The next two subdivisions involve a repetition of words
with the same root or of words with the same affix. Examples of
the first are:

> Ехал наживать, а пришлось проживать.
>
> Никто не может, так бог поможет.
>
> Убогий бога боится и богача боится, а богатый никого
>   не боится.

Some examples of the repetition of words with the same affix are:

> Богатому старость, а убогому радость.
>
> Держи девку в темноте, а деньги в тесноте.
>
> Богово дорого, бесово дешево.
>
> Беда вымучит, беда и выучит.

The last subgroup contains proverbs in which the basic de-
vice of repetition involves words of the same declensional or
conjugational type. Especially common here are word-pairs in-
volving nouns or verbs which belong to groups containing only a
small number of items, for example, neuter nouns in -мя (the
first example) or verbs of the пить — type (the second example).
The fewer the number of words that belong to a given type the
more effective is the linking of these words. Such is the case
in the third example below, where the end-words are forms of the
only two verbs in contemporary standard Russian which represent
the athematic class of verbs and are now generally treated as
irregular.

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Всякое семя знает свое время.

Как ни бьемся, а к вечеру напьемся.

Бог не даст, свинья не съест.

Up to now we have discussed devices of repetition which are based either on the repetition of homophonous elements or of elements which are similar grammatically (and which may incidentally also be homophonous), but not with the repetition of any particular word-pair. In examining the formulaic devices of repetition we are concerned with certain word-pairs which are found to occur with particular frequency among the proverbs. These formulae may be further subdivided into three groups: correlative, contrastive or conjunctive.

The first, the correlative formulae, contain a very large number of proverbs in which correlative pairs composed of demonstrative and interrogative pronouns or adverbs create the basic means of union of one proposition with the other. Each example of a correlative formula listed below itself serves as a model for the various subdivisions within the correlative formulae. The formulae are: кто—тот, чей—тот, что—то, каков—таков, где—там, как—так, когда—тогда, куда—туда. Examples:

Кто богу угоден, тот и людям пригоден.

Тошно тому, кто сражается, а тошнее тому, кто останется.

Что батюшка лопаточкой сгребал, то сынок тросточкою расшвырял.

Каково семя, таково и племя.

Где льется, там и живется.

Как умею, так и брею.

Когда играют, тогда и пляши.

Куда иголка, туда и нитка.

Obviously more than one type of repetition may be found in a proverb and it is in this group that an accretion of devices is observed. While there are proverbs of this type in which the only device of repetition is the formula itself, much more common is the appearance of other devices. For example, we see a repetition of words of the same root in the first one, words of the same declensional type in the fourth one, and an identity of structure in each proposition in all but the next to last one. Thus, whether the formula stands alone as the only device of repetition, or whether there are other devices present as well, the presence of the formula demands that such proverbs be grouped with those containing a formula.

The second major subdivision of the formulaic proverbs contains contrastive formulae. The formulae in this section, as the title indicates, take part in the presentation of a contrast between the major elements of each proposition. It should be noted that just as the proverbs that have been selected as examples in no way represent all the proverbs, but only enough to make a given point clear, so the number of formulae represents not an exhaustive catalog of all the possibilities but merely a few of the more common and notable ones. Here, too, the examples will serve as a model for each of the various subdivisions with-

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in the contrastive formulae. The contrastive formulae are:
не—а, лучше—чем, кому—нам. Examples:

> Не за то волка бьют, что сер, а за то, что овцу съел.

> Лучше раз в году родить, чем день-деньской бороду брить.

> Кому чудо, а нам чадо.

The proverbs of the first type (не—а) generally begin with
the negative не; the second proposition may often have ellipsis
of the conjunction а, or replacement of it by the more colloqui-
al да. Proverbs containing this formula almost always have some
other device present. The proverbs with the лучше—чем formula
generally have an identity of structure in each proposition, of-
ten involving an infinitive construction. The third formula in
this group, кому—нам, shows far more variation in the formulaic
elements than any other. The proverbs of this type are unified
by an opposition based on the contrast of first person pronoun
(usually нам) with forms that signify someone else (usually some
form of the pronoun кто, most often the dative кому). The most
common replacements for кому are forms of the noun люди or the
adjective чужой.

The third group, the conjunctive formulae, differs from the
first group where the formulaic elements were related but not
identical, and from the second where contrast was the central
factor, in that their formulaic elements are identical and, ex-
cept for occasional examples of ellipsis, are repeated usually
at the beginning of each proposition. The formulae are: не—не,
либо—либо, ни—ни, and кому—кому. Examples are:

> Не петь куре петухом, не владеть бабе мужиком.

> Либо мед пить, либо биту быть.

> Ни конному, ни пешему, ни проходу, ни проезду.

> Ни дна в тебе, ни покрышки, ни дыху, ни передышки.

> Кому лежа работать, кому стоя дремать.

In most instances there is found a high degree of symmetry based
upon homophony and/or identity of syntactic structure in each
proposition as well as other types of repetition. There is very
little variation of the formulaic elements and almost never is
there ellipsis of one of these elements. The либо—либо formula
is sometimes replaced by the related forms или—или or хоть—хоть,
while кому may be replaced by some other case form (кто, кого).
In this latter instance, whenever this occurs, the same case
form will always appear in both propositions.

It is not difficult to find many examples of proverbs with
more than one formula present. Either there is doubling of the
formula (e.g., the third and fourth examples above), or there
may be some other formula present, a mixing of formulae (Что
кому надобно, то тому и замило). In these instances it can usu-
ally be shown that one of the formulae is the basic one and
serves as the means of classification in the same way that a
proverb containing more than one device of repetition will be
classified according to which device is the basic one.

It was stated earlier in this article that a basic assump-
tion is that all Russian proverbs are bipartite. There is, how-
ever, a large group of Russian proverbs which consist of three
parts and it will be necessary to show that these tripartite

proverbs, though composed of three parts (which will be referred
to here as terms), actually do consist of two propositions. By
this it is meant that the three terms can be shown to pattern
always in such a way that the first two are opposed to the third.
In other words, the first two terms comprehend the first proposi-
tion and the third term stands as the second proposition. The
various devices of repetition which have been discussed in the
preceding part of this article are of central importance in dem-
onstrating the manner in which this patterning is achieved.
That is, where previously these devices are discussed in order
to show their function within the structure of bipartite prov-
erbs, here attention will be focused upon them in the role they
play in the patterning of tripartite proverbs.

It has been pointed out earlier that rhyme is the most com-
mon element among the proverbs. Its function in dividing the
tripartite proverbs into two propositions is so important that
it has been chosen as a criterion for classifying them as well.
That is, there are three basic types of rhyme or homophony that
are found among these proverbs: 1) rhyme involving terms one
and two (ab rhyme); 2) that involving terms two and three (bc
rhyme); and 3) likeness in all three terms (abc) or the obverse,
no rhyme at all. The first two types of phonetic repetition, it
will be shown, provide in themselves a means of binary division;
the third must have other means of uniting the first two terms
against the third. In fact, however, other devices are seen to
operate in the first two types as well, reinforcing the basic
division created by the sound. Another formal element to be
noted along with rhyme as a device of division is the longer
length of the third term. In a great many proverbs, especially
those with bc rhyme, the third term has a greater number of syl-
lables than the first or second term. This helps to provide
rhythmic support for the opposition of terms one and two to
three.

Examples of proverbs of the first subtype are:

Из короба не лезет, в коробе не едет и короба не отдает.

Лег — свернулся, встал — встряхнулся: вот моя жизнь.

И холодно, и голодно, и до дому далеко.

Держи голову в холоде, живот в голоде, а ноги в тепле.

Один кинул — не докинул; другой кинул — перекинул;
   третий кинул — не попал.

In such proverbs binary division is achieved primarily by link-
ing the first two terms to each other in opposition to the third.
This linking is based on the ab rhyme, but other devices also
play a role. For example, in the first proverb above, the end-
words are both determined forms of motion verbs; in the second,
there is a repetition of the same suffix; in the third and
fourth, a repetition of pleophonic forms. Other factors could
be cited (e.g., the defeated expectancy occasioned by не попал
in the fifth one) as contributing to the attempt to set the third
term apart from the first two, but the process is sufficiently
clear and there is no need to belabor it.

In the proverbs of the second subtype the effect of bipar-
tition is achieved in a somewhat different way from that of the
first subtype. Instead of unifying the first two terms against
the third on the basis of homophony between the first two terms,

in these proverbs the binary effect is produced mainly by like-
ness of sound between the second and the third terms. In this
way the end words of terms two and three resemble the end words
of a normal bipartite proverb. The predominance of a longer
third term among this type of tripartite proverb helps to fur-
ther this impression. For example, in the first proverb terms
one and two comprise a proverb containing the что—то formula;
this helps to set it off from the third term. In the second and
third proverbs of this type the longer length of the third term,
brought about by an added element (от беды in the second, и пе-
сенки in the third), is significant. That is, besides making
the third term as long as the first and second combined, the
added items also help to make the syntactic structure of the
third term different from that of the first two.

      Что испекли, то и съедим, а завтра поглядим.

      Ни дна, ни покрышки, ни от беды передышки.

      Сам пашет, сам орет, сам и песенки поет.

In proverbs of the third subtype we find rhyme, or the lack
of it, in all three terms and thus we cannot rely on the sound
alone for signalling the binary division. Here reference must
be made to other devices which in subtypes one and two were not-
ed as aiding or sustaining the bipartition but which did not
have to be cited to show this division. Examples are:

      И холодовал, и голодовал, и нужу знавал.

      Семь сел, один вол, да и тот гол.

      Первый сын богу, второй царю, третий себе на пропитание.

      Портной — вор, сапожник — буян, кузнец — пьяница.

      Служал семь лет, выслужил семь реп, да и тех нет.

These other devices are, for example, the almost formulaic
pairing of the roots холод- and голод- in the first proverb
above; the identity of structure in the first two terms of the
second and third examples reinforced by the longer length of the
third term in the latter; and the repetition of words with the
same root as well as an identity of structure in the first two
terms of the fifth example above.
A question which may be raised at this point, and not with-
out justification, is why, if both binary and ternary tendencies
are found, should we assume the binary pattern to be the basic
one rather than the ternary, since these proverbs do consist of
three terms. There are several reasons for assuming that even
though these proverbs contain three parts they are nonetheless
bipartite in structure. The most basic reason is that this as-
sumption is prompted by the general structure of the Russian
proverb as a whole. That is, if the overwhelming majority of
Russian proverbs are bipartite in structure, why not assume that
this may be a general characteristic of all Russian proverbs;
and if there are certain features in the structure of proverbs
consisting of three terms which indicate a binary division, then
the assumption is even more valid. This, the presence of binary
devices, is thus the second reason. Neither the first nor the
second reason alone is sufficient, but taken together they con-
stitute adequate justification for assuming the binary division
to be the basic one. Thus, for example, in the case of the

fourth proverb above, it could be argued that the opposition of terms one and two against the third is based on the fact that the end-words of the first two terms are masculine nouns with the normal ending (-∅) for masculines, while the end-word of the third term has the less common (for masculines) ending -a. Much more basic here, however, is the force of all the other proverbs with a palpably bipartite structure which is exerting a very strong influence on those few in which this force is less clearly felt.

As stated at the beginning of this article, this is an attempt to classify Russian proverbs, but very little has so far been said about this question. It is clear that the devices of repetition that have been examined can serve as the criteria for a system of classification in the following way. All proverbs that contain three terms would automatically belong to the group of tripartite proverbs, which, as has been noted, may be divided into three subgroups. Any proverb containing one of the proverbial formulae would belong to one of the appropriate subgroups of this major type. In a similar manner, those proverbs in which one of the grammatical devices of repetition is basic would belong to that particular subgroup. Finally, any proverb distinguished by antigrammatical rhyme would be grouped with proverbs of that type. Where more than one device is found, a decision will have to be made regarding which device is basic. Thus there would be a hierarchy of devices, with those that are distinguished by tripartition at the top, followed by those containing a formula, a grammatical device of repetition, and ending with those characterized solely by phonetic repetition. This would leave only those proverbs in which there is no device of repetition at all, a small number of proverbs which have not been examined at all in this paper, since the concern here has been with those containing a device of repetition.[5] This former group, it can be demonstrated, consists of proverbs in which the relationship between the two propositions can be summarized in grammatical terms, but not in terms of repetition. Thus, a proverb such as "Скупому душа дешевле гроша," though not basically different from "Пьяному — и море по колено," would belong to the group distinguished by antigrammatical rhyme, while the latter proverb would have to be assigned to the group in which no devices of repetition are found. An analysis of proverbs of this latter type could be made with a division into various subgroups. There would then be a basic division into two major groups: those proverbs in which a device of repetition is present and those in which no such device is found. The former group has been examined in this paper; the latter group still requires attention.

Notes

1. "Russian Proverbs," The Quarterly Review, CXXXIX (1875), 496.

2. To name only the most obvious sources: Ю. М. Соколов, Русский фольклор, (Москва: 1941), pp. 214-216; В. И. Даль, Пословицы русского народа, (Москва: 1957), pp. 23-26.

3. Roman Jakobson, "The Phonemic and Grammatical Aspects of Language in Their Interrelations," Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Linguists, (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1949), p. 14.

4. All of the examples are drawn from Даль.

5. No attempt has been made to determine the ratio of proverbs containing a device of repetition to those without such a device. The conclusions reached in this paper are based on an analysis of the entire corpus of Даль, Пословицы русского народа. This analysis suggested the divisions according to type of repetition and a representative sample of approximately 1400 proverbs was selected for further study. The breakdown of major types within this sample of 1400 is as follows:

phonetic devices	— 10 per cent
grammatical devices	— 28 per cent
formulaic devices	— 50 per cent
tripartite proverbs	— 12 per cent