

Proverbs as a didactic tool in the foreign language classroom

Vidushi Sharma

Assistant Professor in Russian
Department of Foreign Languages
BPS Women University, Sonipat



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Proverbs can be a valuable didactic tool in the foreign language classroom. As they offer insight into the cultural values and beliefs of the target language community. They also, provide opportunities to expand vocabulary and enhance understanding of grammar and syntax. They can be a fun and engaging way to learn and practice language skills.

Cultural Insight: Russian proverbs provide insight into the values and beliefs of Russian culture. They can help students understand Russian traditions, customs, and ways of thinking.

When using proverbs in the classroom, it is important to discuss the contextual information about the proverb, including its origin and cultural significance. This can help students better understand the proverb's meaning and use, example:

"Лучше поздно, чем никогда" (Luchshe pozdno, chem nikogda) - "Better late than never."

Origin: The exact origin of this proverb is not known, but it has been used in Russian language for centuries. It is believed to have originated from the Latin phrase "sero venientibus ossa" which translates to "bones to those who come too late."

Cultural significance: This proverb reflects the value of completing a task even if it's not done on time. In Russian culture, punctuality is highly valued and being late is generally considered rude. However, this proverb suggests that it's better to complete a task, even if it's not on time, than to not complete it at all. It is often used to encourage people to take action and not give up, even if they start late or encounter obstacles along the way.

By providing contextual information about the origin and cultural significance of the Russian proverb, foreign language teachers can help students gain a deeper understanding of the language and culture they are studying. It can also help students better appreciate the diversity of cultures

Students can be encouraged to compare and contrast proverbs in their native language with those in the target language to deepen their understanding of the similarities and differences between cultures.

Vocabulary Expansion: Proverbs can help expand students' vocabulary by introducing them to idiomatic expressions and new vocabulary words. By studying proverbs, students can learn how to use language more naturally and effectively.

- i. Жизнь прожить – не поле перейти. (Life is not a bed of roses)
- ii. Не надо печалиться, вся жизнь впереди. (No need to worry, your whole life is ahead of you)
- iii. is ahead of you)

- iv. Что посеешь, то и пожнешь. (As you sow so shall you reap)
- v. Поспешишь людей – людей насмешишь. (Haste makes waste)
- vi. Что Бог ни делает – всё к лучшему. (Whatever God does is for the best)
- vii. Говорить одно, а думать другое. (Cry with one eye and laugh with another)
- viii. Азбуки не знает, а читать садится. (If you don't know then study)
- ix. Если книг читать не будешь, скоро грамоту забудешь. (If you don't read,
- x. then you can't learn)

Critical Thinking: Many Russian proverbs are thought-provoking and require critical thinking to fully understand their meaning. By analysing proverbs and discussing their relevance, students can develop their critical thinking and analytical skills. Russian proverbs contribute to the development of critical thinking skills. Proverbs are concise and often metaphorical statements that encapsulate wisdom and common sense. They offer insights into human behaviour, relationships, and various aspects of life. Proverbs encourages reflection, stimulates analysis, developing logical reasoning, promote cultural understanding, foster problem-solving skills, encourages critical questioning. It should be also kept in mind though Russian proverbs can be valuable tools for critical thinking, they should not be regarded as absolute truths. They are products of cultural and historical contexts, and their applicability may vary depending on the situation. It is essential to approach them with an open mind and evaluate their relevance to the specific circumstances at hand.

- i. "Доверяй, но проверяй." (Translation: "Trust, but verify.")
Meaning: Critical thinking involves being open to trusting others but also exercising scepticism and verifying information or claims through evidence and logical reasoning.
- ii. "Делу время, потехе час." (Translation: "There is a time for work and a time for play.") Meaning: Critical thinking involves recognizing the importance of balance and prioritizing tasks based on their significance and urgency.
- iii. "Не сова, а ворона считается умной." (Translation: "It's not the owl, but the crow that is considered clever.")
Meaning: Critical thinking involves challenging preconceived notions and not assuming that popular opinions or appearances necessarily reflect intelligence or wisdom.
- iv. "В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят." (Translation: "Do not bring your own rules into someone else's monastery.")
Meaning: Critical thinking involves understanding and respecting different perspectives, cultures, and contexts, and being willing to adapt one's thinking or approach to fit the situation.
- v. "Семь раз отмерь, один раз отрежь." (Translation: "Measure seven times, cut once.") Meaning: Critical thinking involves thorough analysis, planning, and consideration of potential consequences before making a decision or taking action.
- vi. "Не все то золото, что блестит." (Translation: "Not everything that glitters are gold.") Meaning: Things may not always be as they appear on the surface. Critical thinking involves going beyond appearances and examining the true value or essence of something.

Comparison and contrast of Russian, Hindi and English proverbs:

Comparison: Russian and Hindi proverbs share a common use of concise, memorable statements to convey wisdom and knowledge. Both languages use proverbs as a means of reflecting their respective cultures and traditions. Additionally, proverbs in both languages emphasize the importance of virtues such as hard work, honesty, and perseverance.

Contrast: One major difference between Russian and Hindi proverbs is their linguistic and cultural background. Russian is a Slavic language with a Cyrillic script, while Hindi is an Indo-Aryan language with a Devanagari script. This difference in language structure can affect the construction of proverbs in both languages. Furthermore, Russian proverbs often reference historical figures, events, or traditions that may not be familiar to Hindi speakers, and vice versa.

Another difference between Russian and Hindi proverbs is their emphasis on different themes. Russian proverbs often focus on virtues such as wisdom, diligence, and perseverance, while Hindi proverbs may also focus on spirituality and moral values such as kindness, compassion, and humility. Additionally, Russian proverbs may place a greater emphasis on individual achievement, while Hindi proverbs may focus more on collective responsibility and community.

In terms of length, Russian proverbs are often shorter and more direct, while Hindi proverbs can be more descriptive and poetic. This is due to differences in the grammar and sentence structure of the two languages. Russian and Hindi proverbs share some similarities in their use and emphasis on virtues, there are differences in their linguistic and cultural background, thematic emphasis, and length. reality of some values and beliefs. Teachers can also use proverbs to help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, students can analyse proverbs and discuss their relevance to real-world situations or use them as prompts for writing assignments.

Proverbs are a powerful didactic tool in foreign language classrooms. They provide insight into culture, expand vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and offer opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. By incorporating proverbs into language instruction, teachers can help students develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the target language and culture.

- i. Дареному коню в зубы не смотрят. (Don't look a gift horse in mouth)
(दान की बछिया के दांत नहीं गिनते)
- ii. Пуганая ворона куста боится. (Once bitten twice shy) (दूध का जला छाँड़ भी फूंक फूंक के पीता हैं)
- iii. В своей семье, всяк сам большой (Every dog is a lion at home) (अपनी गली में तो कुत्ता भी शेर होता है)
- iv. Мать жива и дети сыты. (No one will take care of your children the way a mother would) (एक संतान के लिए उसकी मां से अधिक ममता कोई और नहीं दिखा सकता)
- v. Повторение – мать учения (Practice makes perfect) (करत-करत अभ्यास के, जड़मति होत सुजान)
- vi. Там хорошо, где нас нет (The grass is greener on the other side of the fence) (दूर के ढोल सुहावने लगते हैं)

Practical Use: Proverbs are often used in everyday communication, so studying them can help students improve their speaking and listening skills in Russian. Proverbs can be incorporated into the Russian language classroom. Proverbs are used as a warm-up activity to get students thinking in Russian. Students can work in groups to create their own proverbs in Russian. Students can analyse the meaning of a proverb and write a short essay discussing its relevance to their own lives.

- i. Повторение - мать учения. (Translation: "Repetition is the mother of learning.")
Meaning: Practice and repetition are essential for mastering new skills or acquiring knowledge. This proverb emphasizes the importance of perseverance and continuous effort in learning and improvement.
- ii. Меньше знаешь — крепче спишь. (Translation: "The less you know, the better you sleep.")
Meaning: Ignorance can sometimes lead to peace of mind, suggesting that excessive worry or overthinking can disrupt tranquillity. It advises against unnecessary stress and encourages maintaining a balanced perspective.

- iii. Утро вечера мудренее. (Translation: "Morning is wiser than the evening.")
Meaning: It's often better to make important decisions or tackle complex tasks in the morning when you are fresh and alert. This proverb emphasizes the importance of starting the day early and taking advantage of productive mornings.
- iv. Надежда умирает последней. (Translation: "Hope dies last.")
Meaning: This proverb emphasizes the power of hope and resilience. It encourages maintaining optimism and perseverance even in challenging circumstances, as hope can be a driving force for achieving positive outcomes.
- v. Глаза боятся, а руки делают. (Translation: "The eyes are afraid, but the hands do.")
Meaning: It is natural to have apprehension or fear, but taking action and facing challenges is necessary for progress. This proverb emphasizes the importance of courage and proactive behaviour.
- vi. Не говори гоп, пока не перепрыгнешь. (Translation: "Don't say 'hop' until you've jumped.")
Meaning: Don't make promises or boast about achievements until you have actually accomplished them. This proverb highlights the value of humility and avoiding premature declarations.

These proverbs offer practical wisdom that can guide decision-making, behaviour, and attitude in various life situations. Applying their lessons can lead to better learning, improved productivity, resilience, and grounded optimism.

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