

PHONOSTYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ARMENIAN DIALECTAL PROVERBS

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1. Introduction and Linguistic Premises

In the historical course of language development, colloquial varieties—dialects and vernacular speech—infuse the literary language with vital material through their immediate and natural linguistic cognition. In this regard, folk proverbs and sayings possess exceptional value, as they perpetually delineate the boundaries of national thought, worldview, and cultural values (Hasan-Rokem, 2000). The syntactic and stylistic elements of oral speech have been shaped over centuries, continuously evolving and spreading. As a result of centuries-long refinement, the folk utterance condenses within itself not only ethnographic and pragmatic-ethical tenets but also demonstrates the full diversity of the language's structural possibilities. In this context, reduplicative formations and phonological correspondences merit particular attention, as they perform critically important stylistic, semantic, and cognitive functions in dialectal phraseology (Mieder, 2004; Taylor, 1931).

Reduplication constitutes one of the primary means of word formation and semantic intensification in numerous languages worldwide, including those of the Indo-European language family. Since the earliest periods of Armenian language development, a substantial corpus of words has been created through lexical and morphemic repetition. According to historical-comparative studies, approximately five hundred reduplicative formations were actively employed in Classical Armenian, particularly in fifth-century literary works and Biblical translations (Acharyan, 1957, p. 10). This clearly attests that root or word reduplication is not a linguistic coincidence or merely a manifestation of early phonological development in child speech (Fee & Ingram, 1982), but rather a fundamental regularity stemming from the grammatical and morphological templates of the language (Inkelas & Zoll, 2005; Inkelas, 2014).

From the perspective of the semantics and word formation of Modern Armenian, reduplicative formations are regarded as an active means of lexical enrichment and semantic nuancing (Jahukyan, 1989). In contemporary linguistics, reduplicative formations are also examined from the standpoint of grammatical templates. This approach affords the opportunity to understand how a language, through specific models, reproduces the root morphemes of its basic word stock, thereby generating new semantic nuances and phonological modifications. For instance, in studying the Western Armenian and closely related dialect groups, linguists have observed that the intensification or depreciation of adjectives and nouns is frequently accomplished through the reduplication of a preceding or following syllable, in which the consonant of the reduplicated element is replaced by a different phoneme (Vaux, 1998, p. 32). This grammatical mechanism is highly relevant to the scientific analysis of rhyming patterns and word-formational play found in dialectal proverbs.

The issues of phonological correspondences, or phonostylistics, have likewise become the subject of serious scholarly investigation. The principal components of phonological stylistics are intonation, speech pause, and rhyme. These are not merely aesthetic or poetic embellishments; the findings of experimental phonetics and cognitive linguistics confirm the existence of sound symbolism—phonosemantics—(Sapir, 1929; Hinton et al., 1994), according to which each sound or phoneme carries a specific psychological, subconscious signification. Even in antiquity, it was noted that the sounds of words are not chosen arbitrarily (Plato, 1997). From this perspective, the meticulous examination of the syntax and phonology of folk oral speech and proverbs reveals an immense body of linguistic and ethnographic information, which is clearly reflected in the rich collection of folk *paremia* presented herein.

The research was conducted using a qualitative analytical method (Norrick, 1985), specifically employing structural-semantic analysis, a phonostylistic approach (Jakobson & Waugh, 1979; Sapir, 1929), and conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 1994). The transliterations of the proverbs were rendered using the Hübschmann–Meillet scholarly transliteration system. English translations of the proverbs have been provided as semantic translations intended for the international reader.

2. Materials and Methods

The analytical material for the present study comprises Armenian dialectal sayings and proverbs. A portion of the material can be found in the classical printed collections of Armenian folklore (Sakayan, 1994; 1995; 2024), particularly in A. Ghanalanian's *Aratsani* [Collection of Proverbs], while the core and more contemporary stratum was recorded through direct fieldwork and dialectological expeditions beginning in 2008. Special emphasis was placed on paremiological units collected from living discourse. In total, the research team examined and

systematized approximately 6,621 dialectal utterances, from which the most representative and pragmatically valuable specimens were selected and analyzed in the present article.

The study was conducted through a synthesis of the methods of contemporary cognitive linguistics, phonostylistics, and paremiology. Specifically, the following analytical approaches were employed:

1. The symmetrical structures of proverbs, as well as models of ellipsis and syntactic parallelism, were examined.

2. The roles of alliteration (consonance), assonance (vowel harmony), and reduplicative formations in ensuring the rhythmic structure and emotional impact of the utterance were analyzed.

3. Drawing upon conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Turner, 1989) and speech act theory, the gender stereotypes, social hierarchies, and interpersonal relationships reflected in the paremia were decoded.

This multilayered methodology made it possible to examine the folk proverb not as a fossilized folkloristic artifact but as a living and active linguistic instrument that regulates social relations.

The theoretical foundation of the study was established within the framework of contemporary cognitive linguistics. In particular, the analytical approaches employed in the article are consonant with the fundamental tenets of cognitive linguistics, which regard language as an inseparable component of human cognition and linguistic units as the products of conceptualization processes (Wen & Taylor, 2021). This approach affords the opportunity not only to identify the structural particularities of dialectal proverbs but also to elucidate the cognitive mechanisms of worldview and social experience reflected therein (Wen & Taylor, 2021).

3.1. Phonetic Correspondences and Consonant-Vowel Play

The structural backbone of the overwhelming majority of folk sayings is anchored in rhyme and phonetic harmony. In dialectal discourse, the use of semantically vacuous or partially modified phonetic reduplicates is particularly active. According to linguistic theory, this phenomenon manifests in Armenian dialects primarily through the addition or substitution of sonorants or plosive consonants (e.g., *gavat'-mavat'*, *arev-marev*), a process known in cross-linguistic typology as **phonetically modified reduplication**. Possessing sarcastic, pejorative, or intensifying connotations, these linguistic forms serve as an indispensable instrument for ridiculing and exposing social or individual vices. Scholars investigating problems of stylistics have demonstrated that such phonetic and syntactic interrelations contribute to the formation of a coherent system of figurative and expressive devices in the language (Poghosyan, 1990).

Let us examine this phenomenon through immediate examples from the present corpus:

«Ինչ իլ իկն է, ինչ քիլ իկն է, ինչ սպիտակն է, ինչ իր կնիկն է» [Inč' ilikn ē, inč' pilikn ē, inč' naxraraṅn ē, inč' ir knign ē] (Like the spindle, like the pilik, like the herdsman, like his wife):

«Հաւուր իկը, հաւուր իկը, հաւսպորճիկ, հաիր կնիկը» [Ha urikə, ha turikə, ha naxərčin, ha ir knikə] (Here is the urik, here is the turik, here is the herdsman, here is his wife):

«Ինչ իլ իկն է, Էս քիլ իկն է, Շամշադիլն ու իր կնիկն է» [Inč' ilikn ē, ēn bilikn ē, Šamšadiln u ir knikn ē] (Like the spindle is, that bilik is, Shamshadil and his wife are):

«Ինչ Ուլիկ, ինչ Պուլիկ, ինչ սատանն, ինչ ուր կնիկ» [Inč' Olulik, inč' Pululik, inč' satanēn, inč' ur knik] (Like Olulik, like Pululik, like the devil, like his wife):

«Ինչ իլ իկ, ինչ իքիլ իկ, ինչ քաչալ Հոնոն, ինչ իր կնիկ» [Inč' ilik, inč' xipilik, inč' k'ačal Hunon, inč' ir knik] (Like the spindle, like the xipilik, like bald Huno, like his wife):

«Ինչ իլ իկ, ինչ իվ իկ, ինչ խոնդատ ինչ ուր ծաղիկ, ինչ սատանն ինչ ուր կնիկ» [Inč' xlik, inč' xlvlik, inč' xondat, inč' ur caṭik, inč' satanēn inč' ur knik] (Like the xlik, like the xlvlik, like the xondat plant, like its flower, like the devil, like his wife):

The series of proverbs mentioned above is a classic sample of phonetic consonance and rhyming artificial reduplicatives. The noun *ilik* (an everyday artisan tool for spinning thread, 'spindle') is associated with the purely phonetic replica word forms *pilik*, *bilik*, and *xipilik*. These partial repetitions, beginning with the plosive sounds *p* or *b*, create not only simple auditory metricity but also semantically devalue the main object. In oral speech, such unnatural and artificial structures immediately create an image of frivolity, emptiness, and superficiality for the listener.

On the syntactic level, the role of parallelism becomes evident: the meaninglessness and frivolity of the first part of the sentence "Like the spindle, like the pilik" are directly transferred to the actors in the second part of the sentence, "like the herdsman, like his wife" or "like the devil, like his wife." Here, a deliberate depreciation of meaning and value takes place: through phonetic play and repetition (Tannen, 2007), human behavior and social role are identified with worthless and meaningless lexemes. On the cognitive level, this serves as a powerful linguistic mechanism of social control aimed at preventing or mocking the unwarranted and artificial elevation of an individual's self or status.

Besides the substitution of vowels and consonants, phonetic accumulation plays a major role in dialectal texts, ensuring the sensory perception of the utterance. For example:

«Հայ ըդ՝ տիւ մայ ըդ՝ սխոր, ուսկե՞ Էլ տր կանաչ գխոր» [Hayrd' sox, mayrd' sxtor, uskē' ēlar kanač' gxtor] (Your father is an onion, your mother is garlic, from where did you become a green gall?):

This utterance is rich with phonosemantic manifestations. The lexical chain "onion-garlic-gall" (*sox-sxtor-gxtor*) is based on the harsh accumulation and repetition of the voiceless consonants *x*, *t*, and the sonorant *r*, which subconsciously evokes in the listener unambiguous associations with an unpleasant, sharp smell or taste, and consequently, a low and plebeian origin. The dialect speaker does not trust someone who tries to stand above their roots and true origin, and expresses their attitude with an interrogative-sarcastic intonation, deliberately repeating the sharp consonants. The linguistic theory according to which sounds have a natural correspondence with the features of an object or phenomenon works flawlessly here and proves that the sounds *x* and *gh* in Armenian dialects frequently label harshness, rusticity, or poor quality.

3.2. Homonymy and Antanacsis as Stylistic Devices

In dialectal proverbs, full phonetic and lexical repetition of the same word occurs very frequently, with the aim of maximizing sarcasm and logical emphasis:

«Ես տղա դու տղա բամեր տղու եր ո՞վ տղա» [Es ała, du ała, ba mer ałunə o' v ała] (I am a master, you are a master, so who will grind our grain?):

This syntactic template occurs in numerous lexical variants:

«Ես տղա դու տղա մեր բնատու ես ո՞վ տղա» [Es ała, du ała, mer bnatunn o' v ała] (I am a master, you are a master, who will grind our grain?)

«Ես տղա դու տղա մեր շաղսցքը ո՞վ տղա» [Es ała, du ała, mer əlačk'ə o' v ała] (I am a master, you are a master, who will work our mill?)

«Ես տղա դու ես տղա մեր ալ ուրը ո՞վ տղա» [Es ała, dun ała, mer alurə o' v ała] (I am a master, you are a master, who will grind our flour?)

«Ես տղա դու ես տղա մեր կորկոտը ո՞վ տղա» [Es ała, dun ała, mer korkotə o' v ała] (I am a master, you are a master, who will grind our groats?)

Moreover, a variant of the same structure with a completely changed lexical composition is also found:

«Ես ուստա դու ես ուստա բամեր սխալ ո՞վ դուս տա» [Es usta, dun usta, ba mer axpə o' v dus ta] (I am a master, you are a master, so who will take out our refuse?):

This structure is one of the most vivid examples of folk speech stylistics, where there is a cunning phonetic-lexical play or homonymy (known in classical stylistics as **antanacsis**—the use of words with the same phonetic composition in completely different meanings) (Santoyan, 2009, p. 8). In the sentence, the first two words *agha* are nouns (meaning master, lord, ruling or noble social class), while the last *agha* is a verb (to grind, to crush, to work).

Here, absolute phonetic identity unites strictly opposing and polarized semantic fields: the highest social status is sharply contrasted with the compulsion of menial, physical labor. This is not simple linguistic juggling or a manifestation of rhyming for its own sake; this is a sharp and uncompromising social criticism addressed to laziness, the groundless inflation of one's self and status, and the complete disregard of vital responsibilities. Similarly, in the *usta-dus ta* example, the rhyming of the noun (*usta*—craftsman, master) and the verbal juxtaposition (*dus ta*—take out, clean the garbage) is anchored on the same rhythmic parallelism and the juxtaposition of social expectations.

Table 1. Types of homonymy and root repetition and their stylistic value

Form of lexical repetition	Original example	Linguistic and stylistic analysis	Pragmatic purpose
Homonym repetition	«Ես աղա դու աղա բամեր աղու ևը ո՞վ աղա» [Es ała, du ała, ba mer ałunə o՞v ała] (I am a master, you are a master, so who will grind our grain?)	Phonetic identification of a noun (person) and a verb (action).	Mocks class arrogance, reminding of the inevitability of work.
Semantic repetition	«Ով հարս, դու հարսնաքուր» [Ov hars, du harsnak'ur] (Whoever is the bride, you are the bride's sister) «Ով քեսա դու և քեսադբեր» [Ov p'esa, dun p'esalber] (Whoever is the groom, you are the groom's brother)	Syntactic repetition of the same root ("hars", "p'esa") in compounds.	Emphasizes the tendency to artificially adapt and create self-interested connections.
Juxtapositional repetition	«Մանե՛ - մանե՛ , ման խաթու և, մանը կանե քեզ խաթու և» [Mane՛ , mane՛ - man xat'un, manə kane k'ez xat'un] (Spin-spin, spinning lady, spinning will make you a lady)	Triple stressed repetition of the verb root with imperative and indicative.	Affirms the importance of work, imitating the rhythm of the spinning spindle.

3.3. Antonym Repetition as Semantic Axis and Syntactic Parallelism

The repetition of antonyms (words with strictly opposite meanings) is one of the pillars of the syntactic style of folk oral speech. Proverbs have a clear didactic (instructive) nature. To permanently fix the moral, everyday, and practical lesson in the listener's consciousness, dialectal linguistic thinking skillfully utilizes bipolar oppositions, which are invariably combined with syntactic symmetry and rhyme.

Let us examine the following structure:

«Հալ ալ զադեն (ազնիվ որդի) կը շինի, հարաւ զադեն (փուչ զաւակ) կը քանդի» [Halal zaden (azniv ordi) kə šini, haram zaden (p'uč' zavak) kə k'andi] (The legitimate child builds, the illegitimate child destroys):

Here, the use of a pair of antonyms is manifested: the word *halal* (legitimate, pure, earned) is contrasted with the word *haram* (illegitimate, impure, unworthy), and the verb *šini* (builds, creates) is contrasted with the verb *k'andi* (destroys, ruins). The repetition of the word *zaden* (child) is the fixed and stable axis around which the entire opposition revolves. This creates a perfect mirror-like syntactic structure, which is highly characteristic of Armenian dialectal thinking.

Another highly expressive example:

«Ներսան ինսաի, սրսան թշնամի» [Nersan xnamı, drsan t'šnami] (In-law from the inside, enemy from the outside):

In this concise yet highly informative sentence, the spatial antonymous pair "inside-outside" (*ners-durs*) is combined with the rhyming pair "in-law-enemy" (*xnami-t'šnami*) indicating social relations. The extreme syntactic compression (the complete omission of the verb-predicate) imparts incredible speed, dynamics, and emotional tension to the speech. Such omitted syntactic models immediately form the perception of the undeniable truth of

hypocrisy and two-facedness for the audience, as the symmetry of the form imparts the force of an irrevocable law to the message. Generally, in the process of connecting texts and sentences, repetition and substitution act as factors ensuring text cohesion and creating a strong syntactic bond (Sargsyan, 2024).

We also see the principle of opposition in the following structures:

«Անշ մորթուս, ետև որդուս» [A^əa^ə mort'us, etew ordus] (First my skin, then my son):

«Լացն ածիծաղը սխաբր են» [Acn au cicaṭə axper en] (Weeping and laughing are brothers):

«Ղարկն ու ինդունը իրար սխաբր են» [Dardn u xndumə irar axper en] (Sorrow and joy are brothers to each other):

In the proverb "First my skin...", the spatial antonyms "first-then" (*a^əa^ə-etew*) are connected with the rhyme *mort'us / ordus* (my skin / my son). Here, the moralizing premise of human egoism and personal priorities is revealed. The phonetic and syntactic similarity forces the listener to contrast human skin (the protection of one's self) with the closest biological entity (one's own son). This device makes the vital imperative of self-preservation easily memorable and psychologically impressive. And in the other two examples containing an opposition of emotions (weeping-laughing, sorrow-joy), the polarization is transferred to the family plane (with the repetition of the expression "are brothers"), which confirms the unpredictability of life and the constant and regular neighborhood of opposing emotions in human life experience.

3.4. Verbal Ellipsis and the Principle of Speech Economy

One of the most important means of artisticizing dialectal speech, ensuring its dynamics, and increasing its impact is speech economy, specifically the omission of the verb-predicate or auxiliary verb (ellipsis). The deliberate omission of the predicate transforms the sentence into a concise and striking formula, imparting the value of an indisputable fact or axiomatic truth to the message.

One of the classic manifestations of this phenomenon is the following proverb:

«Հացը ծնկանը, աչքը կնկանը» [Hac'ə cnkanə, ač'k'ə knkanə] (The bread is on his knee, his eye is on the woman):

Here, the predicate ("is" or "is placed") is entirely absent. In the surface syntactic structure, we see only two nominal pairs: bread/eye and knee/woman. The rhyming (*-nkanə*) and the exact equal number of syllables (five syllables in each segment) completely replace the grammatical connection. This structure demonstrates the ungrateful, greedy, or self-interested nature of the subject. If this sentence were formulated in a complete literary structure ("His bread is placed on his knee, but his eye looks at another's wife"), it would lose its striking force, as it would cease to function as an irrefutable formula.

Another vivid and frequently encountered example:

«Հացը հորիցը, որդին փորիցը» [Hac'ə horic'ə, ordin p'oric'ə] (The bread from the father, the son from the belly) or its dialectal synonymous variants:

«Ցորենը հորեն, որդին փորեն» [C'orenə horēn, ordin p'orēn] (The wheat from the father, the son from the belly)

«Ցորենը ֆորիցը, որդին հորիցը» [C'orenə foric'ə, ordin horic'ə] (The wheat from the belly, the son from the father):

Here, linguistic omission is combined with a rapid logical jump. The repetitive lexical rhyming of *horic'ə* and *p'oric'ə* (or *horēn-p'orēn*) encapsulates a complete complex biological and economic process, clearly pointing out the material origins of nature and sustenance. The absence of the verb deliberately accelerates the tempo of speech, which in turn imparts the value of an indisputable natural fact to the utterance.

Table 2. Syntactic ellipsis models and their impact on speech tempo

Type of ellipsis	Dialectal original example	Analysis	Semantic result
Omission of auxiliary verb in rhyming pairs	«Արդի նամուսը գառնիս ա կընկանը՝ լ աչ սկը» [Mardi namusə gtakn a, kənkanə' lačakə] (The man's honor is the hat, the woman's is the headscarf)	In the second sentence, the auxiliary verb "a" (is) and the noun "namus" are omitted.	An immediate comparison is created between the symbols of male and female honor, accelerating perception.

Full omission of predicate with spatial antonyms	«Էրիկմարդը դու րս, վաստակը ներս» [Ērikmardə durs, vastakə ners] (The husband goes out, the earnings come in)	The verb indicating action (works, brings) is missing. The structure is based on the "out/in" opposition.	Consolidates the strict, inviolable law of the distribution of economic duties in the traditional family.
Multiple omission and nominal chain	«Շահն ի մամոնց, դեքն (տղք) ի պապոնց» [Šahn i mamonc', dek'n (aṭb) i paponc'] (The profit is from the mother's side, the trash is from the father's side)	Any verb is missing. Only material oppositions and kinship sources remain.	Demonstrates the unfair or unequal distribution of inheritance and benefit among relatives.

3.5. Reflection of Gender Roles and Family Hierarchy in Linguistic Structures

The cultural and ethnic characteristics of a society are inevitably and deeply reflected in the language, and proverbs provide rich and indispensable material for the study of gender differentiation and family roles in this regard. Armenian dialectal paremiology vividly highlights the strict separation and polarization of male and female genders, as well as the family social hierarchy (mother, father, boy, girl, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, mother-in-law). Syntactic repetitions here act as a powerful linguistic tool for discrimination or role justification.

3.5.1. Axiological Opposition of Masculine and Feminine

The patriarchal model of society is firmly recorded in lexical and phonetic repetitions:

«Աղջիկն ու թիշի տան ճրագն է» [Aṭəikn uriši tan čragn ē] (A girl is a lamp for another's house):

«Աղջիկը էլ ու (օտար) պատա» [Aṭəikə ēlu (otar) pat a] (A girl is a foreign wall):

«Աղջիկը ու թիշի վուրթի է, տղեն բիւսապար (կայ ու ն) է» [Aṭəikə uriši vurt'i ē, tḡen binadar (kayun) ē] (A girl is another's child, a boy is permanent):

«Անչ քերող աղջկան դրսեցի չ են տալ» [Manč' beroṭ aṭəkan drsec'ii č'en tal] (They do not give a boy-bearing girl to an outsider):

«Անչ՝ օսկի փարչ, աղջիկ՝ հողե փարչիկ» [Manč'' oski p'arč', aṭəik' holē p'arč'ik] (A boy is a golden pitcher, a girl is an earthen little pitcher):

The proverb "A boy is a golden pitcher, a girl is an earthen little pitcher" is a brilliant phonostylistic and semantic sample. Here we see two metaphors of material ("golden pitcher" / "earthen little pitcher"), which are directly matched with male and female children. On the morphological level, the presence of the diminutive suffix *-ik* stands out (*p'arč' – p'arč'ik*), which, combined with the obvious contrast of earthen and golden materials, emphasizes the different economic and social values of the genders in the patriarchal rural environment. Moreover, the phonetic rhythmic repetition (*manč' – p'arč'*) completes the image on the auditory level and creates a harmonious rhyme.

Another manifestation of syntactic polarization is the repetition of verbs and participles with the presence of strictly opposing subjects:

«Աղջիկը պակվել ու գել իս՝ տան կնու ճներն է ջարդու մ, տղան ու գել իս՝ օտարու թյ ու ն է գնու մ» [Aṭəikə psakvel uzelis' tan kčučnērñ ē ʔardum, tḡan uzelis' otarut'yun ē gnum] (When a girl wants to marry, she breaks the house's pots; when a boy wants to, he goes to foreign lands):

In this linguistic structure, the verb form "when wanting" (*uzelis*) is repeated, but the same biological and social action (the desire to marry) produces completely different behavioral results in the case of a boy and a girl. The initiative or activity of the female sex is described as a destructive, internally demolishing process (breaking the house's pots), whereas the marital urge of the male sex is immediately transferred to a constructive, socio-economic field (going to foreign lands or migrant work). This points to the profound gender stereotype according to which a woman's emancipation threatens the microclimate of the household, while a man's expands and strengthens it.

3.5.2. *The Oppositional Unity of Mother and Father*

In this paradigm, the correlation between father and mother, as well as the attitude of children and society towards them, also holds a special place:

«Ելորդ մորս հալ և տաքցնու մ, հորս հալ ը հարցնող չ կա» [Ekoṛə mors haln a harc'num, hors halə harc'noṭ č'ka] (The comer asks how my mother is doing, there is no one asking how my father is doing), և դրաստրութրսկը՝ «Մորս խաթրը (կամքը) հարցնող շատ հորս խաթրը հարցնող չ ի կա» [Mors xat'rə (kamk'ə) harc'noṭ šat, hors xat'rə harc'noṭ č'i ka] (Many ask for my mother's sake, no one asks for my father's sake):

«Հորը բերածը կերել է, մորը մանածը հագեր է» [Horə beracə kerel ē, morə manacə hager ē] (He has eaten what the father brought, he has worn what the mother spun):

«Մորը մանածը ծախող է» [Morə manacə caxoṭ ē] (He is a seller of what the mother spun), «Մորը մանածը ներկած է» [Morə manacə nerkac ē] (What the mother spun is dyed):

«Պապն բերե, մամն էկե, տատն ու տե» [Papan berē, maman ēp'ē, tatan utē] (The father brings, the mother cooks, the child eats):

In these proverbs, a clear linguistic classification of parental functions is observed. The repetition of the verbal juxtaposition "asking how someone is doing" (*halə/xat'rə harc'nel*) shows society's emotional attachment to the mother and the father's alienation from the emotional sphere. As for the proverb "The father brings, the mother cooks, the child eats," it has a perfect phonetic rhythm (three components consisting of three syllables each): *Pa-pan be-re / ma-man e-p'e / ta-tan u-te*. This chain repetition outlines the entire consumption chain of the rural economy, where the man is the resource provider, the woman is the processor, and the older generation or child is the final consumer.

3.5.3. *Family Complexes: The Discourse of the Bride, Mother-in-Law, Groom, and Mother-in-Law's Mother*

In Armenian dialectal speech, utterances analyzing internal household-family conflicts and relations constitute a large number. The complex interrelations of the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law (*kesur, skesur*), the mother-in-law's mother (*zonk'ač'*), and the groom (*p'esa*) are often described with ingenious phonetic effects that either mitigate or exacerbate the conflict.

«Աղջիկ քեզ ասեմ, հարս դու իմացի» [Aṭəik k'ez asem, hars du imac'i] (Daughter, I tell you, daughter-in-law, you understand):

«Խարսնիկ քե կասեմ, կեսրիկ դու լ սի» [Xarsnik k'e kasem, kesrik du lsi] (Dear daughter-in-law, I tell you, dear mother-in-law, you listen):

«Հարս քեզի կըսեմ, տալ դու իմացի» [Hars k'ezi kəsem, tal du imac'i] (Daughter-in-law, I tell you, sister-in-law, you understand):

«Հարսի՛ կ քեզ ասիմ, ճիրուկ դու հասկցիր» [Harsi' k k'ez asim, čiruk du hask'ir] (Dear daughter-in-law, I tell you, dear sister-in-law, you understand):

«Տա՛լ քեզ եմ ասում, հա՛րս դու ն իմացի» [Ta' l k'ez em asum, ha' rs dun imac'i] (Sister-in-law, I am telling you, daughter-in-law, you understand):

«Փեթկիկ քեզի կըսեմ, հարսնուկ դու լ տե» [P'et'kik k'ezi kəsem, harsnuk du lsē] (Dear beehive, I tell you, dear daughter-in-law, you listen):

This series testifies to the pragmatic mechanisms of indirect communication in the dialectal community. Since in the traditional family the daughter-in-law was often deprived of the right to speak or answer (the well-known tradition of remaining "mute"), commands and messages were communicated in an indirect, mediated form. Here again, we see the abundant use of the affectionate suffixes *-ik* or *-uk* (*harsik, xarsnik, kesrik, čiruk, p'et'kik, harsnuk*). These suffixes do not have the purpose of expressing sincere love and affection; rather, they perform the task of ensuring phonetic-rhythmic repetition to outwardly disguise or soften the harshness of the indirect command and reprimand. This structure has a strictly templated formulaic appearance: [Person A + I tell you] + [Person B + you listen/understand].

Another vivid phonostylistic example directed at the daughter-in-law vs. mother-in-law conflict:

«Մինչ և հարսին քեֆը (տրամադրություն) ըլ լ ա կեսերոջը հոգին կել լ ե» [Minč'ew harsin k'efə (tramadrut'yun) əlla, keseroṗə hogin kēllē] (Until the daughter-in-law gets in the mood, the mother-in-law's soul comes out):

Hidden within the "gets in the mood" – "soul comes out" (*k'efā alla – hogin kēllē*) opposition is the transformation of vowels and consonants. The repetitions of the verbal endings *alla / ēllē* (vowel alternation) turn the speech into a pun, which highlights the complete incompatibility of generations and social roles in terms of expectations and the perception of time.

In the relationship between the man (groom) and the mother-in-law (*zok'anč'*), mockery is syntactically woven with a harsh, everyday rhythm:

«Չոկանչն ու պետեն, վա՛յ չ՛տ՛տ՛ի կ'ասեն» [Zonk'anč'n u p'esēn, va' y č't't'vi k'asēn] (The mother-in-law and the groom, oh, lest the bowl sours):

«Ատր ու պետեն, վա՛յ չ՛տ՛տ՛ի կ'ասեն» [Aner u p'esēn, va' y č't't'vi k'asēn] (The father-in-law and the groom, oh, lest the bowl sours):

Here, the rhyme (*p'esēn – k'asēn*) is not merely for auditory pleasure or poetic ornamentation: the *k'asen* (a large clay vessel or bowl) in rural daily life symbolizes family wealth, reserves, and food, and its "souring" implies an irreversible deterioration of relations and material damage. The phonetic repetition is accompanied by the negative and alarming interjection *vay*, predicting the inevitable clash between these two parties. As is rightly noted in cognitive linguistics, phonetic motivation and rhyming in oral discourse are not merely ornamentation, but serve as a powerful cognitive tool for memory consolidation (Benczes, 2019).

Table 3. Reflection of patriarchal hierarchy in repetitions

Theme of family structure	Dialectal original example	Mechanism and meaning of linguistic repetition
Devaluation of the girl's role	«Իւ աղջիկը՝ իւ հարս կըլ նի, իւ հարսը՝ իւ տանտիկին» [Xew ałəikə' xew hars kəlni, xew harsə' xew tantikin] (A crazy girl becomes a crazy bride, a crazy bride a crazy housewife)	The triple repetition of the adjective "xev" (crazy, foolish) emphasizes the immutability of the trait, describing the entire cycle of a woman's life as consistently negative behavior.
Identification of mother and daughter	«Արը տես՝ աղջիկն առ, եզրը տես՝ կտավն առ» [Merə tes' ałəikn aə, ezrə tes' ktavn aə] (See the mother, take the girl; see the edge, take the canvas)	Structural symmetry of the two sentences ("See X, take Y"). The mother is compared to the edge of the canvas, and the girl to the fabric itself.
Syntax of indirect communication	«Խարսնիկ քե կասեմ, կեսրիկ դու լ սի» [Xarsnik k'e kasem, kesrik du lsi] (Dear daughter-in-law, I tell you, dear mother-in-law, you listen)	Repetition of pronouns ("k'e-du") and suffixes ("-ik"). Directed at preserving the internal family hierarchy without direct command.

3.6. Linguistics of Socio-Economic Classifications and Interpersonal Relations

Beyond the narrow family circle, dialectal proverbs broadly address the complex relations of social classes, wealth and poverty, as well as neighborhood and enmity. In this field, reduplicative formations and syntactic parallelisms unmask social hypocrisy and inequality.

Let us consider the following striking example:

«Աղքատին տղան օձ կերավ, ըսին՝ անոթի էր. հարստին տղան կերավ, ըսին՝ դեղ էր» [Ałk'ətin tlan əj kerav, əsin' anot'i ēr. harəstin tlan kerav, əsin' deł ēr] (The poor man's son ate a snake, they said he was hungry; the rich man's son ate one, they said it was medicine):

This is a brilliant application of lexical repetition and homonymy (antanaclasis) to highlight the double standards of social inequality. Modern paremiological studies document that precisely such formal markers (syntactic parallelism, repetition) and cognitive mechanisms ensure the viability and wide dissemination of the proverb in society (Villers, 2022). The action "ate a snake" is in one case perceived and interpreted as a sign of

extreme poverty, starvation, and desperation (in the case of the poor person), and in the other case as a means of luxury, ingenuity, and exotic treatment (in the case of the rich person). The absolute syntactic parallelism of the structure (the segment "the son ate, they said" is repeated twice) cruelly unmasks the subjectivity of social interpretations and societal prejudices. From the perspective of the construction of oral and written speech and verbal behavior, such structures ensure the absolute impactfulness of speech (Avetisyan et al., 2016). Specialists in stylistics also note that frequent lexical repetition is a vivid manifestation of the emotionality and stylistic originality of linguistic units (Ezekyan, 2006). At the linguistic level, the fact is the same, but the explanation placed at the end of the sentence ("was hungry" / "was medicine") diametrically changes the perception of the phenomenon.

The theme of wealth and economic relations is closely connected to the friend-enemy opposition:

«Բարեկամիդ հետքե՛ք արա՛, առու տու ր մի՛ անիլ, թշնամիդ հետառու տու ր արա՛, քե՛ք մի անիլ» [Barekamid het k'ef ara' , aotutur mi' anil, t'snamiid het aotutur ara' , k'ef mi anil] (Feast with your friend, do not trade; trade with your enemy, do not feast):

«Բարեկամացանք՝ բարեբարացանք (հավասարեցինք)» [Barekamac'ank' barebarac'ank' (havasarvec'ink')] (We became friends, we became equals):

In the proverb "Feast with your friend..." we see a cross-arranged (chiastic) placement and repetition of the terms "friend / enemy" and "feast / trade", spiced with a negative imperative. This syntactic twist performs a deep pragmatic role. Similar syntactic oppositions are characteristic of proverbs in various languages, where binary structures help emphasize social and moral poles and facilitate their cognitive processing (Mac Coinnigh, 2015). It teaches to separate the emotional-kinship field from the financial field, saving both from potential collapse. As for the example "We became friends, we became equals," the morphological repetition is based on the root *bare-*, which, through phonetic identity, closely binds the concepts of friendship and social equality.

It is interesting to observe how financial and commodity relations invade even the field of the most sacred kinship ties—brotherhood:

«Աբարն սխարն ասեց՝ առաջ մի հեսաբըս (հաջիվ) տես, ետ աչքիս լ իսն ես» [Axpern axporn asec' a@a mi hesabəs (hašiv) tes, eto ač'k'is l isn es] (The brother told the brother: first settle my account, then you are the light of my eye):

«Աբարու թյ ան արեն սխարր սխս, առու տու թի արեն՝ օտարի սխս» [Axperut'yan aten axpor pes, aoturi aten' otari pes] (At the time of brotherhood, like a brother; at the time of trade, like a stranger):

«Աբարը սխարր միս կու սի, ոսկրները դեն չի քցի» [Axperə axpor mis kuti, oskrnerə den č'i k'c'i] (A brother will eat a brother's meat, but he will not throw away the bones):

While in the proverb "A brother will eat a brother's meat..." the juxtaposition of the genitive and nominative cases of the same root (*axper / axpor*) emphasizes the inseparability of the biological and family bond (even during bloody disputes, eating the meat, they do not throw away the bone), in the previous two examples the classical perception of brotherly selfless love is dismantled. The repeating "brother-stranger" opposition (with the rhythmic repetition of the adposition *pes* [like]—"at the time... like / at the time... like") contains deep irony: kinship subsidizes and retreats before finances and calculation.

3.7. Quantitative Oppositions and Numerical Symbolism in Discourse

One of the most important means of artisticizing dialectal speech and increasing its impact is the opposition of numerals or quantitative expressions. The numbers "seven" (*yot', oxtə*), "thousand", "one", "nine" appear in proverbs not with their purely mathematical value, but with symbolic, exaggerative (hyperbolic), and cognitive value.

Let us examine these manifestations with examples:

«Լավ տղիկը օխը տիս ամե» [Lav ałəikə oxtə t̪in aze] (A good girl is worth seven boys):

«Աղել տղիկը յ որը մանչ ու համ կու տա» [Ałek ałəikə yot'a manču ham kuta] (A good girl gives the taste of seven boys):

«Մի՛ ու նեցիր հարյ ու ր դստեկան, ու նեցիր երկու բարեկամ» [Mi' unec'ir haryur dahekan, unec'ir erku barekam] (Do not have a hundred dahekans [coins], have two friends):

«Մեկ թշնամին՝ հազար բարեկամեն շատէ» [Mek t'shamin' hazar barekamēn šat ē] (One enemy is more than a thousand friends):

In the first two examples containing a comparison between a girl and a boy, the numeral "seven" (*yot'* or *oxtə*) in Armenian (and generally Indo-European) folklore possesses the significance of magic, fullness, perfection, or maximum. Here, the qualitative opposition ("good") is intertwined with quantitative multiplication ("one girl = seven boys"). This linguistic model uniquely breaks the previously analyzed patriarchal paradigm, where the boy was always preferred over the girl. Language allows for aligning high moral quality with the maximum numerical value.

The most emphasized opposition of entities and multitude is seen in friend-enemy relations. The "one - thousand" opposition stresses the destructive potential of evil or danger, which practically outweighs the positive forces. As for the *dahekan* - *barekam* (coin - friend) rhyme, it is a classic phonostylistic example, where material and spiritual values are placed on the same paradigmatic plane and metricity so that they can be directly compared.

3.8. Paradoxical Formulations and Dialogical Proverbs

The complexity and subtextual richness of folk speech testify that it strives not only to simplify reality but also to reveal and demonstrate its paradoxes (formulations that seem illogical but contain profound truth). The highest level of irony is often manifested by demonstrating impossibility through syntactically identical verbal structures.

Let us pay attention to the following dialogical proverbs:

«Վարդապետին ասին՝ որդիդ մեռնի. ասաց՝ ես որդի չունեմ, համարա՞նք բառ չէ» [Vardapetin asin' ordid meṛni. asac" es ordi č'unem, hama baṛd baṛ č'ē] (They said to the vardapet: may your son die; he said: I have no son, but your word is not a word):

«Աբեղին ասեցին՝ բալ եդ մեռնի, ասեց՝ ես բալ աչունիմ, համալ աղսքդ (խոսք) լավ չի» [Abelin asec'in' baled meṛni, asec" es bala č'unim, hama laṭabd (xosk') lav č'i] (They said to the monk: may your child die; he said: I have no child, but your speech is not good):

«Վարդապետին ասին՝ տղեդ մեռնի, ասեց՝ վարդ վարի, վարոց գցի» [Vardapetin asin' tled meṛni, asec" varə vari, varoc' gc'i] (They said to the vardapet: may your boy die; he said: plow the plowing, throw to the plow-line):

«Վարդապետին ըսին՝ կնիկդ մեռնի. ասաց՝ որդի, ես կնիկ չունիմ, հըմը բառը բառ չէ» [Vardapetin əsin' knikd meṛni. Əsac" ordi, es knik č'unim, həmə baṛəd baṛ č'ē] (They said to the vardapet: may your wife die. He said: son, I have no wife, but your word is not a word):

This series presents dialogical paremiae (conversational proverbs) constructed with the template [They said to Person X – he answered Y]. Syntactically, they are based on the logic of question and answer, wherein the repeating premise is a false or absurd assumption. Since the *vardapet* (celibate priest) or the monk are celibate clergymen, they cannot have a wife or child due to their spiritual calling. Consequently, the curse "may your boy die" or "may your wife die" directed at them is practically devoid of any physical target.

However, the clergyman's response ("your word is not a word" or the emphasis on the repeating root "word") shows that although there is no physical harm, the linguistic act itself is condemnable. These proverbs reveal the people's incredibly deep consciousness of the performative nature of language: speech, the word, and especially the curse are viewed as a physical act, a weapon, which possesses power and negative energy, regardless of logical truth or objective reality. The repetitive juxtaposition "your word is not a word" points to the speaker's evil intent (pragmatics), which is condemned no less than a real blow.

Another phonostylistic structure that seems illogical is manifested in the following proverb:

«Կուկուն քերավ, ճուճուն կերավ» [Kukun berav, čučun kerav] (The cuckoo brought it, the chick ate it):

This is an imitation of child speech (the artificial, childlike reduplicatives *kuku* and *čuču* are used), which explains an unfair distribution. The phonetic closeness (the abundance of the vowel *u*—assonance, and the alliteration of hard consonants) emphasizes the idea that one's toil or earnings can be very easily and effortlessly appropriated by someone else.

3.9. Zoonymic Allegories and Recurring Metaphors

Phenomena of nature and the animal world occupy a key place in the vocabulary of folk speech, which are metaphorically (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) transferred to the field of complex human interrelations. The names of

animals (zoonyms) are often used in repetitive syntactic frames to describe the decline of authority, the balance of power, and the clash of generations:

«Գել ը որ պաժնա՛ն շների մախարա(ծանախ) կը դաժնա» [Gelə or paʒvna' šneri masxara (canak) kə daʒna] (When the wolf ages, he becomes the mockery of dogs):

«Գել ը վուր կու պաժի, շներու ճանգը կու ննգի» [Gelə vur ku paʒvi, šneru čangə ku nngni] (When the wolf ages, he falls into the claws of dogs):

«Արջը որ դախանա(ծերանա), քոթթներ ձվերու հետկը խաղան» [Arʒə or ʔaxana (cerana), k'ot'ot'ner jveru het kə xaʔan] (When the bear gets old, the cubs play with his testicles):

In these models, we see syntactic repetitions and the construction of systematically organized semantic paradigms. In folk consciousness, the wolf and the bear embody absolute physical power, freedom, danger, and unquestionable authority. However, their aging (the parallel use of the verbs *paʒvna*, *ʔaxana* in adjacent proverbs) leads to a tragic decline in status, and a transfer of power occurs to subordinates or adversaries (dogs or little cubs). The phonetic harmony and rhyme (*paʒvna* – *daʒna*) here also have a memory-enhancing significance: the cruel law of nature inevitably becomes applicable to human old age and the loss of social standing. Generally, the perception of animal metaphorical meanings in proverbs requires special neurocognitive complexity, wherein the solidified formal structure helps the brain quickly perform semantic integration, moving from the literal to the metaphorical (Villers, 2024).

The linguistic manifestations of these and other everyday metaphors are summarized below:

Table 4. The metaphorical system and repetitive verbal structures

Metaphorical basis	Original example	Linguistic analysis and stylistic impact
Artisan-everyday action	«Աղջիկն որ հարս կերթան գուրսի (գուրսի պիս) ախ Է. Զանդեն, նորեն կը գործեն» [Aʔəikn or hars kert'a' gurpi (gulpa) pes ē. K'anden, norēn kə gorcen] (When a girl goes as a bride, she is like a sock. They unravel her, and knit her anew)	The opposition of the verbal pair "knit-unravel" metaphorically describes the destruction and recreation of an individual's identity in a new family. The person is identified with inanimate thread.
Role decline of wild animals	«Գել ը որ պաժնա՛ն շների մախարա կը դաժնա» [Gelə or paʒvna' šneri masxara kə daʒna] (When the wolf ages, he becomes the mockery of dogs)	Subordinate conditional sentence with emphasized rhyme. Demonstrates the inevitable victory of time and the transience of authority.
Combination of everyday objects and emotions	«Անց հերսը (բարկու թյուն) կճուճի եռն ա» [Knoʒ hersə (barkut'yun) kčuči eʒn a] (A woman's anger is the boiling of a clay pot)	Nominal attribution. The metaphor emphasizes the brief but intense and superficial nature of the emotion (like the rapid boiling of water in a clay pot).

4. General Conclusions

This extensive and profound linguistic and stylistic analysis, conducted on the basis of a rich corpus of folk dialectal proverbs, allows us to register a number of crucial regularities and semantic shifts in oral discourse:

Reduplicative formations in dialectal speech are much more than mere phonetic ornamentation or poetic effect. They act as a primary means of syntactic templating of speech, extreme intensification of meaning, and logical emphasis. As in Classical Armenian, so too in modern dialects, rhymed partial reduplicatives have a clear

pragmatic purpose: they devalue the object or phenomenon, turning it into a target of social play and mockery. This is language's natural defensive and adaptive mechanism to confront social injustice or human folly.

The repetition of antonyms is the cornerstone of folk didactics and the educational paradigm. The oppositional unity creates mirror-like syntactic structures, where the frequent ellipsis (omission) of the predicate or auxiliary verb imparts the tone of an immutable law or religious dogma to the text. Such regular parallelism attests to the linguistic thesis that repetition is a special templating process that helps to quickly reproduce and consolidate complex social and economic messages in the collective memory.

The presence of sound symbolism or phonosemantics in Armenian dialectal utterances practically confirms both ancient and modern theories concerning the natural connection of the linguistic sign. From the perspective of cognitive stylistics, these phonetic and syntactic repetitions cease to be mere stylistic expressive means; they transform into deep models that reflect the cognitive system and worldview of the language speaker (Naciscione, 2010). Clusters of harsh, sibilant, or voiceless consonants (consonant clusters) regularly and predictably accompany texts with negative, low-quality, or alarming content (such as onion and garlic, the aging wolf, the crazy daughter-in-law), while the use of diminutive *-ik* suffixes often has the purpose of role limitation and conveying an indirect command.

The analysis of gender, age, and family paradigms reveals a powerful patriarchal and socio-hierarchical discourse. A woman, daughter-in-law, or daughter is frequently restricted at the linguistic level through materializing phonetic metaphors. At the same time, proverbs born in the interrelations of mother-in-law and groom, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law demonstrate the highest level of linguistic irony, serving as a unique psychological and phonetic buffer for discharging family conflicts, while utterances analyzing fraternal and friendly ties ruthlessly unmask the primacy of economic interests.

Further study of the linguistic typology of these utterances opens broad possibilities for the development of cognitive linguistics, ethnopragmatics, and phonostylistics alike.

Within the context of the present research, it would be expedient to conduct cross-linguistic comparative studies, comparing the typology of Armenian dialectal proverbs with the paremiological materials of other languages (Dundes, 1975; Mieder, 2004). Furthermore, the results can also be applied in sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic research.

Among the limitations of the present study, we note that the work is primarily based on Armenian dialectal material, and the results cannot be directly generalized to other linguistic communities. Future research may also include the application of quantitative methods (e.g., statistical surveys).

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