

Review article

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T. Litovkina, Anna. *Practice makes perfect. Workbook of English and American proverbs for students*. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó, 2023. 169 p. ISBN 978-963-409-385-5

Proverbs are “traditional sayings that offer advice or present a moral in a short and pithy manner” (The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs, 2004: ix). Meider has defined the proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (1985: 119). According to what Mieder (2004) has mentioned, the significance of proverbs has not been decreased in modern society. While the frequency of their usage may vary among individuals and contexts, proverbs exert a considerable influence across diverse communication in life. So, proverbs are the most effective devices to communicate wisdom and knowledge about human nature and the world and are used to attract people’s attention by using them in books’ titles, newspaper headings, and advertisements (Mieder 2004).

Workbooks play a crucial role in the learning process, especially in educational settings. Workbooks often present information in a structured and organized manner which helps learners to learn the lesson easily. Proverbs may be easy to memorize but difficult to understand and learn in every language, especially in English and the American language due not only to the metaphorical meanings of some proverbs but also to their meaning in different contexts. The primary goal of this workbook is to make learning proverbs an enjoyable process through various activities and exercises. This workbook is helpful for memory reten-

tion and provides learners with structured activities to practice their acquired knowledge.

Anna T. Litovkina is an experienced teacher in Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland and her latest workbook is a condensed version and concise adaptation of the book *A Proverb a Day Keeps Boredom Away* (2000). The topic that the author has selected for this book is *Practice makes perfect. Workbook of English and American proverbs for students*. It was published in Budapest in 2023. The Hungarian title is *Angol és Amerikai Közmondások Gyakorlókönyve*. The workbook presents 450 common proverbs in both American and British English, offering learners enjoyable and humorous activities and exercises to understand how to use these proverbs in various situations. This review summarizes not only the workbook's content and structure but also provides perspectives on its educational benefit for language learners. Therefore, proverbs continue to play a major role as a pedagogical tool in modern societies, especially among family members and in schools.

The workbook consists of 18 units, divided into three main parts, each including six units that cover proverbs alphabetically related to specific topics such as 'money and love', 'knowledge and wisdom', 'children and parents', 'speech and silence', 'words and deeds', and 'necessity and adversity'. Anna T. Litovkina starts the workbook with an insightful introduction and each of the three main parts is followed by a test for the 18 units. The inclusion of tests at the end of each part is highlighted as a particularly beneficial feature, emphasizing comprehension and application.

The author concludes that the workbook serves as a valuable resource for intermediate learners, providing examples, activities, and exercises that contribute to a better understanding of English and American proverbs in context. At the end of this workbook, there are key answers to each test, a carefully chosen bibliography of collections on British and Anglo-American proverbs, and an index to help locate specific proverbs.

The topics of each of the six units in Part One are money, love, sexual relationships, weddings and marriage, knowledge, wisdom, folly and ignorance, appearance and taste, as well as children and parents. The topics of each of the six units in Part

Two are home, family, relatives and surroundings, associates and friends, medical and weather proverbs, action and consequence, reciprocity, optimism, success, hope as well as pessimism and misfortune. Finally, the topics of each of the six units in Part Three are discretion, risk, caution, thrift and prudence, necessity and adversity, speech and silence, words and deeds, work, opportunity, procrastination, patience and haste.

The main focus of the first three activities in each unit is guessing the meaning of underlined italicized proverbs, matching the proverbs, and filling in the blanks. For instance, the first unit in the first part presents 13 proverbs which include the word ‘money’ such as *Money can buy happiness, Money doesn’t grow on trees, Money is power, Money talks*, etc. Then the author introduces proverbs related to money such as *A penny saved is a penny earned, Easy come, easy go*, etc. The following exercises depend on the proverbs and the activities that are best suited for each unit such as matching the beginnings of proverbs in column A with their endings in column B. Then the authors provide different sentences or jokes related to the proverbs in each unit and the learner should guess the proverb that best matches the definition, or try to identify the proverbs from the initial letters given by the author.

Proverbs often vary across cultures, and learning them through diverse exercises promotes cross-cultural understanding. This review emphasizes the significance of understanding cultural and metaphorical elements in proverbs as a means to achieve communicative competence. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a proverb is “a brief popular epigram or maxim” and “a saying often in a metaphorical form that typically embodies a common observation”. Norrick (1985:78) also defines the proverb as “a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with a general meaning, a potential free conversational turn, preferably with a figurative meaning.”

As proverbs are “linguistic signs of cultural values and thoughts” (Mieder 2004), their role in foreign language teaching and corpus linguistic aspects of paremiology cannot be ignored. They have been studied as teaching tools in schools, and for imparting general human experiences for centuries (Mieder 2000). Workbooks and exercises on proverbs help learners un-

derstand the cultures and histories behind these proverbs, motivating them to learn how different societies share important lessons and truths. This enhances their cultural comprehension. Proverbs often contain rich vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language, which contribute to linguistic proficiency. Engaging in activities with proverbs also improves learners' language use. Overall, the cultural and metaphorical aspects of proverbs significantly impact learners' achievement of communicative competence.

In conclusion, proverbs are valuable in both spoken and written language. Learning proverbs enhances communication skills by introducing effective ways of expressing ideas succinctly. It helps learners explain complicated ideas briefly and powerfully, which is useful for both speaking and writing. The workbook is recognized as a useful tool for enhancing memorization skills through engaging exercises. Activities involving proverbs help stimulate cognitive development by encouraging memory retention, pattern recognition, and idea connectivity, fostering overall mental growth. In particular, the tests at the end of each part make it more valuable and emphasize a deeper understanding of proverbs in context.

Overall, the workbook is considered a valuable collection of proverbs, providing a significant benefit for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and students aiming to improve their language proficiency. I strongly recommend this workbook because it helps students memorize proverbs more effectively while solving the exercises. In my opinion, learning proverbs through workbooks, exercises, and activities holds significant importance as it offers a structured and engaging approach to understanding these traditional expressions. Analyzing and interpreting proverbs in workbooks and exercises encourages critical thinking, requiring learners to deduce meanings, consider context, and draw connections between the proverbial wisdom and real-life situations. Thus, using workbooks, exercises, and activities when learning proverbs helps learners create a complete and interactive learning experience. This approach promotes cultural understanding, improves language skills, encourages critical thinking, and develops other important abilities for a comprehensive education.

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