

THE GUATEMALAN PROVERB

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1. Introduction

The main objective of this work is to situate the Guatemalan proverb as one more folkloric fact that comes to integrate our own culture, product of the crossbreeding of pre-Hispanic and Spanish cultural elements that occurred during the conquest and colonization.

Guatemala, like other American countries, can't forget Spanish colonialism. In it we have the current predominant language and other cultural elements, which undoubtedly we cannot see as something past, without utility; on the contrary, their contribution must be taken dialectically: to see in it the formation of our own culture, of our identity.

The study presented on the proverb includes, from the beginning, a conceptualization and etymology about it; then a form of classification is established, in which the differences between the proverb itself, adages, proverbs and proverbial phrases are placed.

In the section on how to compile the proverbs, a form of record keeping is determined, based on the outline presented by Mr. Richard Jente¹, making some reforms that we consider convenient for the particular case of Guatemala.

¹ Cf. Richard Jente, "El Refrán", in *Folklore Américas* (Volume VII. Numbers. 1-2. June-December 1947).

One part of the study is aimed at presenting in summary form a history of the proverb and its study, from its general origins. In this part, a section is dedicated to the Spanish proverb, considering that this is the determining antecedent in the formation of the Ibero-American proverbs, and, therefore, of Guatemala. This chapter also mentions the origin and study of the proverb in America, and concludes with a section on the study of the proverb in our country and its origins.

To conclude, a collection of Guatemalan proverbs is presented, arranged alphabetically, along with conclusions on the topic and documentary and informative sources.

The purpose of this work is to rescue and promote the appreciation of popular guatemalan proverb as a product of the philosophy and wisdom of our people, and to highlight their contribution to the formation of our cultural identity.

Nowadays, proverbs are no longer a little studied genre,² but instead, on the contrary, the bibliographic contribution for their study is valuable and abundant.³

But in Guatemala, this topic has been little explored. Contributions began with the book published by Licenciado Antonio de Batres Jáuregui around 1892,⁴ and after him, only four other researchers have been interested in the subject.

Thus, the antecedents at the national level are very scarce, and none of the works carried out present a previous study of the gathered collections. On the contrary, the collections of proverbs have been included within groups of provincialisms and Chapin idioms, so that the present work constitutes the first contribution on this topic, with a part destined to situate the proverb as a folkloric fact.

² Paulo de Carvalho-Neto, *Historia del folklore Iberoamericano*, (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, S.A. 1969.) p. 32.

³Cf. "Bibliografías del folklore a nivel general, latinoamericano." in *Southern folklore quarterly*, compiled by Ralph S. Boggs, of the University of North Carolina, in the United States. For older works, Cfr. W. Bonser y T. A. Stephens, *Proverb, literatura; a bibliography of Works relating to proverbs*, London Folklore Society. 1930. It can also be seen José Mará Sardi. *Monografía sobre los refranes, adagios y proverbios castellanos*. Madrid, 1891.

⁴ Antonio Batres Jáuregui, *Vicios del lenguaje y provincialismos de Guatemala*. (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1892).

For this reason, I consider that the study carried out now does not intend at any time to exhaust the topic. On the contrary, it tries to motivate further research as well as to stimulate the enrichment of the compilation of proverbs now presented, in order to integrate a more or less complete collection of what makes up the Guatemalan proverb collection. I estimate that our country's collection includes some 4,000 to 5,000 texts, among which are proverbs and proverbial phrases. However, it should be noted that day by day new popular sayings emerge among the people, which after their adaptation process will be added to the existing collection.

It should also be noted that further research will have to establish relations and differences between our proverbs and those existing in Latin America and Spain, since the immediate antecedents of our proverbs are located in this European country.

Undoubtedly, this comparison must also take into account the contribution made by indigenous languages to the formation of our proverbs.

2. Literary folklore or oral literature.

In general, since its beginnings, folklore has been taken as linguistic folklore or oral literature; the significance of both is similar for Ibero-Americans. However, for our sub-continent, oral literature comes to be something richer; it comprises a part of the vast areas that make up folklore in general.

Following Paulo Carvalho-Neto's⁵ classification, we have that the folkloric species are classified in six groups: 1) poetic folklore; 2) narrative folklore; 3) linguistic folklore; 4) magic folklore; 5) social folklore and 6) ergological folklore. The "oral literature" includes only the first three groups mentioned above, that is, folklore in its old concept and can be divided as follows:

⁵ Op. Cit., P. 14.

ORAL LITERATURE		
Poetic folklore	Narrative folklore	Linguistic folklore
Songbook	Myths	Vocabulary
Ballads	Tales	Announcements
Proverbs	Legends	Mime
Riddles	Cases	

Like all the divisions of oral literature, the proverb, contemplated within the poetic folklore, contains a series of subdivisions and classifications that will be detailed in this work, in the point referring to its classification.

In particular, in order to offer a panorama of Guatemalan popular culture, Celso Lara classifies the folklore facts grouped in three categories: ergological or material folklore, social folklore and spiritual-mental folklore, being in this last one where he places the proverbs.⁶

Spiritual-mental folklore, according to Celso Lara's classification, "includes all those manifestations of Guatemalan popular man in which he expresses his feelings through creation, aspirations, art and science (literature, folk music, popular art and traditional knowledge)".⁷

According to this classification, intended for Guatemalan folklore in particular, the proverb can be placed within the division of traditional knowledge.

3. Concept and etymology

Trying to conceptualize the *proverb* has been a problem faced by researchers and scholars of this branch of linguistic folklore. One of the conceptualizations that fall within

⁶ Celso Lara. "Origen y dispersión del folklore guatemalteco", in Tradición Popular, Boletín del Centro de Estudios Folkloricos. University of San Carlos, numbers 29-30 1980.

⁷ Celso Lara. Op. Cit., p. 4

the language of folk science is offered by Richard Jente, who points out that "The proverb is a common and commonplace saying among the people. Like speech itself, it is the property of all, and synthesizes in a concise and attractive form the wit, salt, wit and wisdom of a nation. For the most part, proverbs are survivals of the thought, experience and philosophy of our ancestors. Repeated at every turn, they are accepted without question as true and irrefutable."⁸

However, to the above definition, it should be added that, according to the dictionary of the Castilian language, the name of proverb, sentence, adage or proverb and saying is applied to the phrases or short sentences, commonly of popular treatment, with moral character. According to its etymology, it comes from the Latin adagium (from ad agere). Agere means "to do".

What we must be clear about in the definition of the proverb, is that we will always find in it phrases with "rhyme or without it that are expressed in figurative language and contain much of the Creole psychology and idioms of a place".⁹

The proverb carries, moreover, implicitly, almost always superstition, which is common among the people.¹⁰

The proverbs contain a knowledge proper to the people; they represent something of their wisdom that is common to them. But the proverb, like folkloric facts, is not the product of a personal invention, but the result of a whole interaction. In the particular case of Ibero-America, it represents part of the result of the Spanish cultural penetration in Indian America, which took place during the colonial period.

4. Classification of the proverb.

"Not everything that glitters is gold", we would say trying to apply the sense of the wisdom of the proverb when explaining the classification of this one, since everything that we point out among us as a proverb does not always turn out to be it in all the sense of the word. This term is often used to refer to adages, sayings, proverbs, etc.

⁸ Op. Cit., p. 1.

⁹ Isabel Aretz. Manual de Folklore Venezolano: 3rd. Edition (Caracas, Montr Avila Editores, 1972). p. 136

¹⁰ Ibid., P. 137

In this regard, Jente points out that "it must be clearly recognized that in Spanish, as in most languages, all kinds of proverbial speech have been called "*refrán*". The speech of the people includes sayings, sentences, sentences, maxims, adages, idioms, expressions of various kinds that must be examined as to their form and content, and classified according to their category".¹¹

"Nowadays, moreover, the proverb properly speaking is no longer confused with the phrase and comparisons, among other forms paremiological forms."¹²

In general, Richard Jente establishes three groups in the classification of the proverb, with their consequent subdivisions. The first group is made up of complete sentences that have their origin in the people themselves, which are called "proverbs". Such proverbs of the people could be defined as short, succinct and crystallized sentences, of popular origin, generally metaphorical in their form, or at least rustic or vulgar in their language, which express a fundamental truth, apparent or manifest, applied with an affirmative and confirmatory effect. They express a general truth and a philosophical observation generally in terms of one of their specific applications, as a traditionally accepted form. Sbardì's definition of "saying" is "that succinct expression of more or less common use, almost always doctrinal or sententious, celebrated and usually acute, with novelty in its application, antiquity in its origin, and approval in its use".¹³

Examples of proverbs or sayings are: "*La ocasión hace al ladrón*" (Opportunity makes the thief); "*Genio y figura hasta la sepultura*" (Genius and figure until the grave); "*Perro que ladra no muerde*" (A barking dog never bites).

The second set of proverbial materials groups the so-called "Proverbs", materials product of erudite and not popular minds, which nevertheless the people have adopted them as their own. "They are numerous sententious sayings of the learned, expressing truths in complete, simple and concise sentences, not metaphorical, expressed in general, abstract or categorical terms.

¹¹ Op. Cit, P. 2.

¹² Paulo de Carvalho, Op Cit, P. 32

¹³ Richard Jente, Op. Cit, p. 2

Many of these proverbs have been inherited from the Bible and from ancient Greek and Roman cultures, making them the most international group of proverbs in the world".¹⁴

Some of the examples of this type of proverbs are: "*El hombre propone y Dios dispone*" (Man proposes and God disposes); "*A la vista del amo engorda el ganado*" (In the sight of the master the cattle grows fat); "*Más vale caer en gracia que ser gracioso*" (It is better to fall in grace than to be funny).

To conclude with the classification, we have the large group of proverbial phrases, which differ from the previous ones in that they do not have the fixed form of a complete sentence, and can vary grammatically to fit the situation to which they apply, depending on the case.¹⁵

Proverbial phrases can be classified according to their grammatical structure, and they integrate four subgroups that we will detail below, being this group the only one that presents subdivisions.

The first subgroup gathers the proverbial phrases containing a verb, generally quoted in their infinitive form in printed collections. They constitute, perhaps, the most voluminous part of proverbial speech.¹⁶ Some examples of this classification are: "*Pagar con la misma moneda*" (To pay with the same coin); "*Estar con el pie en el estribo*" (To be with one's foot in the stirrup).

Proverbial phrases that do not contain a verb and are simply metaphorical idioms make up the second subgroup. These, unlike the previous ones, are scarce. Among the examples of this order we have: "*Pobrete pero alegrete*" (Poor but cheerful); "*Su alma en su palma*" (His soul in his palm); and "*Aguja en pajar*" (A needle in a haystack).

The third order includes proverbial phrases, which "are proverbial comparisons and similes. There are many of them in all languages, handed down through the centuries since antiquity. And still the wit and wit of the people continues to create them, as well as poets and literary writers".¹⁷ This classification still contains localized divisions according to the words "as or so". Example: "*Medida como una novia en el tálamo*" (Measured like

¹⁴ Idern

¹⁵ Idern

¹⁶ Idern

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

a bride in the bridal chamber); *"Tan conocida como Judas en la pasión"* (As well-known as Judas in the passion).; or they are classified according to whether an adjective or adverb is used in the comparative form: *"Más blanca que la nieve"* (Whiter than snow).

Finally, proverbial forms include proverbs dealing with the weather, proverbs in the form of a quotation, and dialogues. The latter are quite rare in Spanish-speaking countries.¹⁸ Examples are: *"La mitad del año con arte y engaño, con engaño y arte la otra media parte"* (Half of the year with art and deception, with deception and art the other half); *"Más vale llegar a tiempo, que rodar un año"* (It's better to arrive on time than to roll a year.). Entre los proverbios citados se encuentran: *"¿Querés saber de aquel? -vive con él-"* ("¿Want to know about someone? -Live with him-"); *"¿Quién es tu enemigo? -El que es de tu oficio-"* ("¿Who is your enemy? -He who is of your trade-"). As an example of dialogued proverbs we have: *"Tírate allá cual negro, dijo la sartén a la caldera"* ("Throw yourself over there like a black pot, said the frying pan to the kettle"); *"En hora buena vengáis, dijo el agua al vino"* ("Welcome in good time, said the water to the wine"); *"El comal le dijo a la olla, qué tiznada estás"* ("The griddle said to the pot, how sooty you are").

5. How to collect the proverb.

Currently, there are few authors who have compiled proverbs, and most of them do not present the model or scheme used for data collection; they only present the proverbs, without clearly indicating how they were compiled.

One of the models of compilation is provided by Richard Jente, although it should be noted that the points he contemplates should undergo some variations, in order to make the annotation cards more flexible, especially for Latin America, and in particular for Guatemala, where for the first time a compilation of this type is attempted through specific cards.

Taking Mr. Jente's model¹⁹ as a basis for the compilation of the proverbs, the following rules are established. Some modifications are indicated in parentheses, based on the compilation carried out in our country:

1. It is advisable to use 8 cm by 12 cm index cards (although these may vary according to the researcher's taste).
2. It is convenient to write each proverb on a separate card, in ink or typewriter, exactly as it was heard and dictated, with all its known variants.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.p, 10-11

3. Notes on the person who used the proverb and the context or circumstances in which it was used should be added to clarify its meaning and application.
4. At the top left, write the key word on the card, which will generally be the noun or the most important verb. If there are two or more keywords, file the proverb under the first one, and under the others, in other tabs, just say: See.... (You can also file the material by placing the first word of the proverb as the key word and file them in alphabetical order).
5. The place where the proverb was found should be noted at the top right of the card. If the proverb was found in a published work, all the bibliographic data should be cited: name of the author, title, place and year of publication, name of the printing house, volume and page. (If the proverb was collected orally, the informants' data should be noted: name, age, occupation, place of origin and current residence, the latter due to the immigration from the countryside to the city, particularly in Latin American countries. This will also help to detect some variants of proverbs that are preserved in the countryside and in the city, but whose explanatory meaning is the same).
6. If the informant does not understand the proverb because he belongs to a different cultural environment, the meaning of the proverb must be explained so that it is perfectly clear.
7. When all the data have been entered on the cards, they should be put in alphabetical order, according to the key words.
8. As it will be found that most of the proverbs collected come from the culture of Spain, it is convenient to note the volume, page and keyword under which the Spanish variant is found in Sbardí's collection, if it is found there, or in those of Correas or Rodríguez Marín. Only in this way, by pointing out all the parallels that exist in Spain, will it be possible to give special emphasis to those Latin American proverbs that have developed in the New World, and those that have been

borrowed from the indigenous populations. However, special care must be taken because undoubtedly other European cultures have also contributed with their own proverbs to the so-called national or native element. (It is also convenient to take into account the provincialisms applied to each proverb and to check beforehand in the collections on languages or native languages, some sayings that are counted). In the particular case of Guatemala, it is necessary to review dictionaries of translations of native languages into Spanish, as well as the collection made by Antonio Batres Jáuregui and Lisandro Sandoval.²⁰

Data Sheet No. 1

Proverb.	"In an open ark the righteous sin".
Variant	"The occasion makes the thief."

Back Side No. 1

<p>It is used to indicate that a person, no matter how honorable he may be, when faced with too much opportunity, easily falls.</p> <p>Informant: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
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²⁰ Cf. Antonio Batres Jáuregui., Op. Cit. Lisandro Sandoval. *Semántica guatemalense o Diccionario de guatemaltequismos*. (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1959).

Data Sheet No. 2

keyword	bibliographic or informant data
Proverb	_____ _____

Back Side No. 2

Meaning of the proverb: _____ _____
Spanish variant in collection: _____ _____
Native variant in collection: _____ _____
Indicate use of provincialisms: _____ _____

6. History of the proverb and its study

6.1. Origin of the proverb

Folklore does not have a particular origin; all folklore facts are anonymous, they arise by impulse of the society. An individual is the one who materializes them, to later present them to the community, which rejects them or adopts them as its own, to become part of the conglomerate.

In the case of proverbs, any explanation or theory as to their full origin must be based on conjecture. Those are, for the most part, the product of the people, and each was created by some individual. “But really their origin and permanence are given in the fact that they please and appeal to the people as accepted and approved truths, and that they are kept alive by usage, proof of the approval of the people and of the popular origin of the proverbs.”²¹

To be more precise, we could place it among the Chinese and Indian philosophers; from them the Greek and Roman classics took its rich moral and didactic value, to transfer it to the Western world, where, once accepted, it is interpreted and reworked, as happens with all cultural facts, to survive in the new societies to which it adapts. We can't forget the contribution made in this respect by the Israelites. The largest collection of these sayings is found in the book of proverbs in the Bible, and their use is still latent among our people, which is another proof of the interaction of cultures throughout our history.

It is precisely within this interaction that we must understand that “the proverb, being concise and simple, has traveled from one language to another, from one region to another, and from one country to another, without regard to limits, but the proverb chosen, accepted and kept by any group, together with the proverbs that they themselves invent, finally characterize that group personally and morally”.²²

“However, most of these older proverbs, would rather be called trite truths, maxims or moral apothegms, which have become and are the common property of all peoples. The introduction of a metaphor or grammatical figure, so common and commonplace in

²¹ Richard Jente, Op. Cit., p. 5.

²² Ibid., p. 5.

the proverbs of the people, is an aspect whose origin cannot be explained. These metaphorical figures are simply adduced from the home and family environment and ordinary human activities and observations, metaphorically applied. The authors of most of the proverbs are unknown. It could be assumed that in each case the proverb is the spontaneous expression of an individual, who originally applied it to a certain situation. Other individuals have repeated it, and so it spread.”²³

As for the moral and didactic value of the proverb, it has interested the erudite, the literary and the philosopher since antiquity. The Fathers of the Catholic Church have also preserved, in their works, many good old proverbs of the people, in order to attract the interest of their listeners, because the proverb immediately establishes a common bond of understanding between the scholar and the people.²⁴

It was precisely the immense didactic and moral value of the proverb that prompted certain people to take an interest in its collection and preservation, making numerous compilations, among which there are some that reach more than four thousand sayings.

The origin and tracking of the proverb is lost in conjecture. Among the first to engage in these studies were the scholars of China, India, Greece and Rome. Aristotle is said to have compiled them.²⁵ “Aristotle, according to Bishop Synesius, composed a popular refrain, taking sayings, proverbs and phrases from the rich traditional stock. His paremiological inclination is discovered in his great works, where the quotation of proverbs is frequent. But Aristotle is not satisfied with just gathering pieces; he studies them with the depth of a sage, and among the lessons of the immortal philosopher a definition of the proverb has been saved, thanks to the memory that Monsignor Sinesius made of it”.²⁶

However, to date, no ancient compilation of proverbs has been located. It is possible that in the future one of these compilations may be discovered and prove to be one of those pleasant surprises that are usually kept in the archives of libraries around

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁶ Ismael Moya, *Didáctica del Folklore*. Buenos Aires: Editorial El Ateneo, 1948.

the world, which will undoubtedly be a magnificent contribution to a better understanding of the historical development of the proverb.

During the Middle Ages, the compilations of European proverbs were probably first made by monks. However, there is no large published collection of proverbs of the people. Among the forerunners of the study of proverbs in this period was Erasmus (1467-1563), author of *La Adagia*, a book composed with a genuinely scientific sense and method. Erasmios gathered proverbs, adages and proverbial phrases in use among the Greek and Roman peoples, which had then been scattered like shining pearls from an immense necklace, in the work of famous writers. He made a highly documented comparative study of all of them to clarify their origins, to point out the successive recompositions made in antiquity and in the Middle Ages, and to mention the authors who, taking them from tradition, transferred them to their creations to give them seasoning, beauty and novelty. The preambles in which Erasmios deals with the proverb, in their structure and development, constitute lessons of profound erudition.²⁷

But it was not until the 15th century when the first great collection of published proverbs appeared, made by the Marquis of Santillana, that is, Íñigo López de Mendoza.²⁸ It should be noted that the little importance that was previously given to the study of the proverb, was motivated by considering it as archaism and uncultured form of popular language, which did not reflect any importance within the composition of the language.

6.2 Spanish proverb

In this study, we are particularly concerned with Spanish proverbs, since Spain is the European country that brought the Castilian language to America and, within this language, proverbs.

The bibliography on this subject is scarce in our country. We could say that it is almost null, and no major references can be found. With regard to the historical development of the study of the proverb in Spain, it is worth mentioning the study by Richard Jente,²⁹ as it summarizes these points in a brief and general way.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Richard Jente. Loc. Cit., p. 6.

²⁹ Ibid.

As for the origin of the Spanish proverb, as well as its location at world level, the subject is contemplated as a conjecture. Naturally a product of the Greek-Roman contribution, the Spanish proverb is also the result of the influence given to Spanish culture by the Arabs, after their occupation of the peninsula for almost seven centuries.

The Spanish proverb has, therefore, as historical roots, those common to all Western countries, that is to say, the oriental contribution of China, India and the Hebrews, to which is added the contribution of the Arab culture, so significant in the formation of the Spanish culture.

Spain brings to America its own language, Castilian, with the original sayings and provincialisms of each of its regions, which will be mixed with those existing in our country. But the Spanish linguistic contribution in America will be substantial; it constitutes one of the most significant contributions of the conquest and the colony.

Following Richard Jente's study of the Spanish proverb, the following chronological table is established:

16th Century

1549	Pedro Vallés	Libro de Refranes (4,000)	Zaragoza ³⁰
1555	Fernán Nuñez de Guzmán	Colección de Refranes (6,000) españoles, portugueses, italianos	España
1568	Juan de Mal Lara	La Filosofía Vulga	Sevilla

³⁰ This edition was reproduced, in facsimile of the original, by Garcia Moreno. In 1917.

17th Century

1675	Gerónimo Martin Caro y Cejudo	Refranes y Modos de Hablar Castellanos con los Latinos que les corresponden	Madrid ³¹
	Gonzalo de Correas	Colección inédita, no publicada hasta 1906-1924	Madrid

18th Century

1774	Juan de Iriarte	Obras sueltas con selección de "Refranes Castellanos traducidos en verso latino".	Madrid
	Juan de Iriarte	Colección Inédita	Se conserva en Inglaterra

19th Century

(1847 - 1878)	José Maria Sbardi	Refraberi General Español	Madrid
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20th Century³²

6.3 The study of proverb in Latin America

In America, the proverb is a product of Spanish colonization. On the contrary, the interaction and miscegenation that occurred during Spanish colonization should be used dialectically. America should see in the colony the emergence of a cultural identity of its own, the product of the interaction of pre-Hispanic and Spanish elements.

³¹ Reprinted in 1792.

³² Cfr. Spanish bibliographies of this century.

Therefore, “it is not surprising that in Guatemala, the same thing that happens in all Iberian America, there are still remnants of the ancient language, which still live as scattered offshoots of the secular trunk that nourished them”.³³

Batres Jáuregui points that “The conquistadors themselves were the first ones who, in their long and dangerous expeditions, were spreading certain voices, which, if it were licit, we would say that they migrated with them from one place to another distant one. The words came down from the northern part of Mexico, through Yucatan, and Central America to Panama, in such a way that if we compare the Mexicanisms with our Chapinismos, and with the provincialisms of Colombia, there is a marked analogy, preserving unaltered many indigenous names throughout the great isthmus that stretches from Rio Grande to Cartagena”.³⁴

Therefore, it should be noted, as Batres Jáuregui also points out, that our language and also the proverbs are composed of “those words that go around without guardianship, like poor orphans, which do not lack personal gifts”, that “it is curious and useful to study this picturesque language and the times it is mixed with Spanish, crossed to national usage, in each of these republics of Hispanic America”.³⁵

The study of the proverb in America is a relatively recent task; it began towards the end of the last century, and its best contribution has been made in the present century. The little dedication to this study in the continent is due to the fact that it has been an underappreciated subject, generally known as “antiquities” attributed to “extraliterature.”³⁶

“One of the oldest scholarly books in America on the subject is the famous and very rare *Proverbios Históricos e Locucoes Populares*, published in Alo de Janeiro, in 1879, signed by Theobaldo, pseudonym of Francisco Méndez de Paiva, an illustrious writer who preferred anonymity to ridicule for dealing with matters then considered of low literature”.³⁷

³³ Antonio de Batres Jáuregui. *Op. Cit.*, p. 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32

³⁶ Paulo de Carvalho-Neto. *Op. Cit.*, p. 30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

After him, we have editions in different Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of America; details of these editions can be found in bibliographies published in recent years.

6.4. The proverb in Guatemala

In Guatemala, the origin of the proverb is implicit in what has been affirmed for America. Its study has been brief; few contributions have been made in this regard. The first attempt was made by Antonio Batres Jáuregui in his book *Vicios del Lenguaje y Provincialismos de Guatemala*, written at the end of the 19th century and published in 1892,³⁸ who already mentions some proverbs:

"*Soltar el Prieto*" (To release the dark one)

"This vulgar expression means that a young man declares his love to a girl."³⁹

"*Echar pan en su matate*" (To put bread in one's basket)

"A vulgar phrase, very often used, to imply that one takes experience of something."⁴⁰

Forty-eight years later, in 1941, Lisandro Sandoval published a work entitled *Semántica Guatemalense o Diccionario de Guatemaltequismos*⁴¹ (Guatemalan Semantics or Dictionary of Guatemaltequisms), in which an attempt to classify some proverbs with their corresponding explanation appears, but without presenting a previous study and analysis.

³⁸ Cfr. Antonio Batres Jáuregui. Op. Cit.

³⁹ Antonio Batres Jáuregui. Op. Cit. p. 509.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pag. 264.

⁴¹ Cfr. Lisandro Sandoval. Op. Cit.

To this publication is added the contribution of Father Narciso Teletor, with the book *Diccionario Castellano-Quiché y Voces Castellano-Pocomán*, published in 1959.⁴² In the warning of this book it is said: “it is neither complete nor invented, but compiled and taken from our living dictionaries, the indigenous people who speak this dialect”.⁴³

El refranero guatemalteco, by Mateo René Curthis, is the first specific study on this subject; it was published in the decade between 1940-1950.⁴⁴

Another attempt was made by the scholar Daniel Armas, in his *Diccionario de la expresión popular guatemalteca*. Published around 1971.⁴⁵

We can have, among the contributions of compilations of proverbs, those published by Mr. Ramiro Araujo, daily, in *Prensa Libre*.⁴⁶ Some proverbs are also mentioned, although they are classified as proverbs, by Soler y Pérez in his column “*Solerismos*” and Cipriano Castañeda Toca in his “*Greguerías*”.⁴⁷

Some bibliographies and libraries were reviewed, but it was not possible to locate more studies. Until today, then, a new attempt is presented, the first one that tries to collect the proverbs and place them as a fact that is integrated in our folklore.

⁴² Prebístico Celso Narciso Teletor, *Diccionario Castellano-Quiché y Voces Castellano-Pocomán*. Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional. 1959.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 9

⁴⁴ Informant: Journalist Humberto Madariaga, in an interview conducted in 1981. It was not possible to locate the original of this proverb in any library and the bibliographies of Guatemala published up to 1963 did not compile it.

⁴⁵ Daniel Armas. *Diccionario de la Expresión Popular guatemalteca*. Guatemala. C.A.: Tipografía Nacional, 1971.

⁴⁶ Cfr. Editions *Prensa Libre*, 1980-81

⁴⁷ Cfr. Editions *Prensa Libre*.

7. The Guatemalan proverb

At the end of this research a collection of some of the Guatemalan proverbs is presented. However, it should be clarified that we have taken into account the proverbs found in Batres Jáuregui's book, those that we have been able to locate through the collection of Mr. Ramiro Araujo and some others that are scattered among the population, whose knowledge we have from our own experience, as well as from the informants, whose list is included at the end of the work.

No research has yet been done on the books of José Milla y Vidaurre, who although “never pretended to do a scientific work on folkloric facts, described the customs, the things, everything he observed in the society in which he lived”⁴⁸ have not yet been investigated, and thus he managed to obtain one of the most important testimonies for the study of our customs.

It is also necessary to compare the writings of José Batres Montúfar and other outstanding Guatemalan writers in whose works they present the use of numerous proverbs and popular Guatemalan sayings. This could be the subject of another research, as well as to locate the proverbs presented by Soler y Pérez and Cipriano Castañeda Toca. Likewise, the proverbs compiled by Daniel Armas should be added to the studies to be carried out.

Another study should be carried out with the aforementioned work of Father Narciso Teletor, as well as with similar works that may arise, in order to locate proverbs, sayings, adages and proverbs formulated by the natives.

Finally, all the compilations should be compared, classified and subjected to scientific treatment, in order to collect and preserve one of the elements that make up our folklore and that represent the best example of the culture and wisdom of the people.

A.

A buen entendedor pocas palabras (A word to the wise)

(With intelligent people, not much explanation is necessary).

⁴⁸ Anatonía Reyes. “El Folklore en *Cuadros de Costumbres de José Milla y Vidaurre*”, in *Tradiciones de Guatemala*, número 7 Centro de Estudios Folklóricos, Universidad de San Carlos, (1979), p. 141.

It is applied when the same explanation has to be repeated several times to the same person, because it is difficult for him/her to understand.

A Dios rogando y con el mazo dando (God begging and with the gavel giving)

(When a person asks for benefits and graces from God, but keeps doing harm to his neighbor).

It applies when a person prays a lot in churches but does wrong.

A la fuerza ni la comida es buena (Even the food is not good by forcé)

(Everything must be voluntary for it to work out well).

It is applied when you want to force someone to perform a certain task even though he/she does not want to do it.

A la vista del amo engorda el ganado (In the sight of the master fattens the cattle)

(Any person who wants his business to prosper should take care of it directly).

It is applied when a person is careless and leaves his personal affairs to the care of others.

A la hora de rajar ocote hasta las astillas vuelan (When it's time to cut ocote, even the splinters fly away)

(When everyone is needed to perform some task, they flee).

It is applied to point out that people disappear when they are most needed.

A palabras necias oídos sordos (To foolish words deaf ears)

(When a person is annoyed with foolishness, he should not pay attention).

It is applied when a person who wishes to annoy another person begins to harm him with gossip or words that are directly annoying.

***A quien Dios le da San Pedro se la bendice* (To whom God gives St. Peter blesses her)**

(Every person who falls in love, then marries with God's blessing).

It applies to every man who finds a bride then gets married blessed by the church.

***A quien le venga el guante que se lo plante* (To whom the glove comes, let him lay it down)**

(In the presence of several people some general criticism is made, feeling alluded to those who have those faults).

It is applied in a meeting in which one wants to criticize one of those present without alluding to him personally.

***A rey muerto rey puesto* (A dead king is a new King)**

(When one love dies, another one always arises).

It is applied when a lover has lost his partner but finds another one.

***A todo coche le llega su sábado* (Every car has its Saturday)**

(To everyone who does wrong, one day his punishment will come).

It is applied to any person who acts in bad faith against others or to a crook who finally receives his punishment.

***Agua fría y pan caliente no hacen buen vientre* (Cold water and hot bread do not make a good belly)**

(Food eaten in bad form always causes harm to health).

It applies to people who eat food combining elements that cause indigestion.

***Agua pasada no mueve molino* (Water under the bridge does not move the mill)**

(Glories, power, past riches are of no use).

Applies to all people who for one reason or another boast and boast of powers they have had.

***Al amigo y al caballo no hay que cansarlo* (The friend and the horse should not be tired)**

(One should not abuse friendships because it can lead to a cooling of relations).

It applies to people who for one reason or another abuse the friendship given to them by another.

***Al apretar: saltará el mosto* (Squeeze: the must will jump)**

(When bosses or authorities demand compliance, there appear nonconformists and enemies).

It is applied when the authorities put pressure on the subordinates in the fulfillment of their duties.

***Al bagazo poco caso y a la basura un escobazo* (To bagasse little attention and to garbage a broom)**

(One should not give importance to unimportant things).

It is applied when one wants to say not to give importance to a thing that does not deserve it.

***Al buen pagador no le duelen prendas* (A good payer does not mind the pains)**

(The honest person does not make any objections or objections to fulfill his commitments).

It applies to all people who fulfill their commitments.

***Al bien decide: venid, y al mal, decide: pasad* (To the good, say: come, and to the evil, say: pass)**

(Good things, receive them with pleasure; bad things, do not give importance to them).

It is applied when there is a pain or evil that afflicts someone.

***Al entendido por señas y al rústico a palos* (To the understanding person by signs and to the rustic with sticks)**

(The intelligent person grasps or understands quickly; the fool by no means.

inodo.)

It is applied when a person, no matter how many explanations are given, does not understand a matter.

Al corazón no se le manda (The heart is not commanded)

(What the heart commands in matters of love is inevitable).

It is applied when someone wants to force another to love a certain person.

Al enemigo que huye, puente de plata (To the fleeing enemy, silver bridge)

(When an enemy harms us, it is better to try to make him go away).

It is applied when a person causes us harm and we try by all means to keep him away from us.

Al más vivo, candilazo (To the liveliest, candlestick)

(It is said of a clever and intelligent person who is surprised and falls into deception).

It is applied when a person is deceived, being suspicious and clever.

Al que le duela la muela que la eche fuera (Whoever has a toothache should throw it away)

(When a person annoys us: try to drive him away).

It is applied when a person, in order to avoid problems, must push aside another person who bothers him/her.

Amor de lejos es de pendejos (Love from far away is for assholes)

(Love between a couple that is far apart has no reality).

It is applied when two people who love each other live far away from each other.

Amores nuevos olvidan viejos (New loves forget old ones)

(A lover who has broken up with his partner always finds another person in whom to place his affection).

It applies to people who move away from someone they have loved and unite with another.

Amor: ni cata linaje, ni fe, ni pleito homenaje (Love: neither lineage, nor faith, nor homage lawsuit)

(The lover does not see, does not hear, and does not reflect).

It is applied to all those in love who, because of the feeling, do not reason.

Amigo reconciliado enemigo doblado (Friend reconciled enemy doubled)

(Anyone who is a friend of someone will not take action against him.)

Applies to people who seek to nullify enmities through winning friends.

Amor, sólo con amor se paga (Love, only with love is love repaid)

(To every good deed a person receives, one can only respond in kind).

It applies when a person responds in good faith and action, after having received equal treatment from another.

Amor y aborrecimiento no quita conocimiento (Love and loathing does not take away knowledge)

(Loving a person well or badly does not preclude recognizing his qualities or defects).

It is applied when someone who loves or hates another, speaks about the qualities or defects that this one possesses.

Antes la obligación que la devoción (Obligation before devotion)

(We must first fulfill all our obligations).

It is applied to make people see that obligations come before entertainment.

***Antes que te cases mira bien lo que haces* (Before you get married, watch what you are doing)**

(Marriage is a transcendental step in which all attention should be paid before doing it).

It is applied when a person does not reason about marriage, but only wants to do it without foreseeing the future of his life.

***Así como es el sapo será la pedrada* (As is the toad, so shall be the Stone)**

(As is the person, so shall be the attack).

It is applied when action is taken on something or someone.

***Así como es la vida así es la muerte* (As is life so is death)**

(Generally, death surprises us according to how we have lived).

This proverb is mentioned when one wants to point out or explain why the death of a person occurred in a certain way.

***Aunque la mona se vista de seda, mona se queda* (Aunque la mona se vestiga de seda, mona se queda)**

(Although people change their position, they always keep their origin).

It is applied to people who being of a humble origin pretend to pretend another position.

B.

***Barriga llena corazón contento* (Belly full heart content)**

(Every person who has satisfied his vital needs is happy and eager to work).

It is applied when people have covered their needs and therefore are happy.

***Bien vengas mal, cuando vengas solo* (Well come ill, when you come alone)**

(When one evil comes, others follow).

It is applied when a person suffers from some illness or a family has some sorrow and then more come and increase their distress.

C.

***Cada oveja busca su pareja* (Every sheep seeks its mate)**

(Every pair of friends or sweethearts seek to coincide in their interests).

It is applied to explain that couples always come together because of common interests.

***Cada uno habla de la feria según en ella le fue* (Each one talks about the fair according to what happened at it)**

(People relate the events according to the results and according to their participation in them).

It is applied to explain that a person speaks badly or well of an event according to the way he saw the results of it.

***Caras vemos y corazones no sabemos* (Faces we see and hearts we do not know)**

(A person's outward appearance often does not match his or her inner values).

It is applied when a person is found whose appearance does not reflect neither his inner values nor the sorrows that afflict him.

***Casa y potro que lo haga otro* (House and foal to be done by someone else)**

(Building a house is as much trouble as raising a foal; therefore, it should be someone else's job).

It is applied to indicate that people should occupy themselves with their profession or trade and not try to occupy themselves with tasks that will only bring more problems and they will not be able to develop to the fullest.

***Casamiento y mortaja del cielo baja* (Marriage and shroud from heaven comes down)**

(The marriage as the death nobody foresees it nor asks for it in fixed date).

It is applied to determine that marriage and death are events that come unexpectedly.

***Casamiento muy sonado es muy llorado* (Marriage too much celebrated is very much mourned)**

(Excessively celebrated marriages turn out to be a failure).

It is applied when a wedding turns out to be a much celebrated and applauded event.

***Como te veo te trato* (As I see you I treat you)**

(According to the education that a person manifests, so should be the treatment towards him).

It is applied to determine the behavior to be observed with the people we know or surround us.

***Con agua, el molino sigue su camino* (With water, the mill goes on its way)**

(With constant pay all work continues to develop).

All work needs constant remuneration.

***Con besos y abrazos no se hacen muchachitos* (Kisses and hugs don't make little boys)**

(Not only affection is necessary to be able to form a child).

It applies when someone does not pay all the necessary attention to the formation of a child.

***Con can viejo no hay tus, tus* (With old can there are no your, your)**

(People with a lot of experience cannot be easily deceived).

Explain that people with a lot of experience, even if you try very carefully to deceive them, this is not achieved.

Con gota perenne se horada la piedra (With perennial drop the stone is pierced)

(With insistence everything is achieved.)

It is applied when we need something and to get it we must insist on it.

Con la vara que midiereis seréis medidos (With the yardstick you measure, you will be measured)

(The way we act, good or bad, we will receive the same answers).

It is applied when someone receives a good or bad action as a product of the conduct he has observed towards others.

Cuando Dios quiere hace sol y llueve (When God wills it is sunny and it rains)

(The divine will can do the most incredible things).

It is applied to explain that with God's will we can achieve things that sometimes are considered unattainable.

Cuando el río suena es porque piedras trae (When the river sounds it is because it brings stones)

(When the rumor of something starts in the public opinion, there are reasons for it).
there are).

It is applied when rumors are spread among the population.

Cuando la barba de tu vecino veas rapar echa la tuya en remojo (When you see your neighbor's beard shaved, soak yours in wáter)

(When, all things being equal, we see bad results, let us try to avoid them in ourselves).

It is applied when bad results are seen because of the actions that someone took, being these the same that someone else does.

Cual el tiempo así el tiento (As the time so the tiento)

(According to the circumstances, so should be our way of proceeding).

Defines the way in which we should proceed according to the circumstances that are presented to us.

Cuanto mas pesa la herencia mas liviano es el dolor (The heavier the inheritance, the lighter the pain)

(The greater the amount of assets that a person leaves to his or her relatives, the less pain the loss of the loved one represents for them).

This applies to the bereaved who do not care about the loss of a loved one, but only about the assets they inherit upon the death of the loved one.

Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos (Raise crows and they will pluck out your eyes)

(He who helps people with bad intentions will one day return evil for good).

It is applied when someone has received a good deed from a person and returns evil.

D.

De cien en cien años se hacen de reyes, villanos y de seis en seis, de villanos, reyes (From one hundred in one hundred years, kings become villains, and from six in six, villains become kings)

(It is more difficult for the good to go down in condition, than for the bad to go up).

It is applied to explain that it is difficult for the majority of people who act badly to reform.

De los arrepentidos se sirve Dios (God makes use of the repentant)

(Providence, in order to carry out its plans, makes use of the one who repents of the evil caused).

It is applied when people who have acted badly against their neighbor repent of the actions committed.

De los escarmentados se hacen los arteros (Of those who have repented, those who have been reproached are made the ruthless ones.)

(Because of the experiences suffered, many people become distrustful).

It is applied to explain that the cunning and distrust that a person manifests is a product of the experiences he has had.

De lejanas tierras grandes mentiras (From distant lands great lies)

(When someone travels to distant lands he always tells of successes and never of failures).

It applies to people who regularly talk about fantastic things that happened in faraway places.

De mucho frote nace la chispa (From much rubbing a spark is born)

(When you insist on something you achieve the desired end).

based on the example that offers the birth of a spark and therefore the fire, it is concluded that who insists on something achieves what it is proposed.

De nada sirve la posición al que no aprovecha la ocasión (The position is of no use to the one who does not take advantage of the occasion)

(When a person has opportunities to excel, he must do it).

It is applied to those who, being placed in special situations that allow them to stand out, do not do it.

De nuevas no os curedes que hacerse viejas edes (From new don't worry about what you have to become old)

(We should not worry about what is said, because everything is forgotten with time).

It is applied to explain that everything good or bad that is said about something, will pass with time.

De tal palo tal astilla (Like father, like son)

(As are the parents, so will be the children).

Children are a true reflection of their parents.

De tus hijos sólo esperes lo que con tus padres hicieras (From your children only expect what you do with your parents)

(The conduct that people observe towards their parents will be the conduct that their children will observe towards them).

It is applied to explain that the conduct of children towards their parents entails much of the actions that they will receive when they play the role of parents.

De poeta, médico y loco todos tenemos un poco (Of poet, doctor and madman we all have some)

(All people develop actions that show something of poets or doctors, as well as strange performances that lead those around them to think that they have something of crazy).

It is applied to point out that people always develop varied actions.

Del agua mansa líbrame Dios, que de la brava me salvo yo (From the gentle water God, from the gentle water God deliver me, I am saved from the rough wáter)

(The actions of a calm person are difficult to foresee, however, of an impetuous and angry person we always know how he acts).

It is used to define that we should beware of people who act in a calm way, whose actions are difficult to foresee and that in certain circumstances can cause us harm.

De sólo prometer ninguno se queda pobre (From only promising, no one remains poor)

(Not everything that is promised is fulfilled).

It is applied to point out that all people can promise actions for the benefit of another and yet not fulfill them.

Del dicho al hecho hay un gran trecho (From saying to doing is a long way)

(It is very different to say a thing than to do it).

It is applied to all people who only talk but do not act.

Del mismo cuero salen las correas (From the same leather come the leashes)

(It is said when a person gives to another person something of the same that he has earned for himself).

It is applied to merchants who offer gift offers whose price they include in the sale of the articles that people acquire.

Del toro a los cuernos (From the bull to the horns)

(Of the difficult things, let's face the most serious ones).

Explains that in life we have to face problems no matter how difficult they are.

Dios los cría y el diablo los junta (God brings them up and the devil brings them together)

(People unite because of their interests and bad deeds.)

It is applied to explain that bad people grow up and, when they are older, they join groups related to their interests.

Dime con quién andas y te diré quien eres (Tell me who you hang around with and I will tell you who you are)

(According to the behavior manifested by the groups or people with whom we meet, so will be ours).

It is used to clarify that every person is accompanied by another person who has similar interests, tastes and actions.

Donde fuego hubo, rescoldo queda (Where there was fire, embers remain)

(When there has been a true affection, there will always remain, even if it is a small part, some appreciation).

It is particularly applied to lovers who break up a relationship.

Donde manda capitán no manda marinero (Where the captain is in charge, the sailor is not)

(The only thing left for subordinates to do is to obey).

It is applied to indicate that the bosses are to direct and the subordinates to obey the orders.

Dos cabezas piensan más que una (Two heads are better than one)

(The more people think to solve a problem, the faster a solution will be found).

It is used to express that in the solution of problems there must be collaboration of several individuals.

E.

***El amor verdadero es el duradero* (True love is lasting love)**

(All love that lasts is sincere and faithful).

It is applied to point out that lasting courtships are future marriages that will be full of love and understanding.

***El amigo de todos no lo es de nadie* (Everyone's friend is no one's friend)**

(Whoever shows himself to be everyone's friend is not sincere).

It applies to people who are friendly with groups that differ in ideologies and interests.

***El bien y el mal a la cara salen* (Good and evil come out in the face)**

(Every person reflects outwardly when he has committed a good or bad deed).

It is applied when you want to check that a person shows certain behavior because he has acted badly or well.

***El buey solo bien se lame* (The ox only licks himself well)**

(People who solve their problems on their own will not face later problems).

It is applied to point out that we should solve our problems without fuss.

***En cama y en cárceles conoce a los amigos* (In bed and in prisons he knows his Friends)**

(It is in the fateful hours of life that true friends are known).

It is used to clarify that true friends accompany us especially in difficult times.

El corazón no es traidor para con su dueño (The heart is not a traitor to its owner)

(Almost always the sympathies or antipathies for a person are checked later by the actions of this one).

It is applied to indicate that the heart warns about the way in which we should act with a certain person.

El hombre y el ave por la pluma se conocen (Man and bird know each other by their feathers)

(Just as birds are known by their plumage, man is known by what I write).

It is used to define that the human and professional quality of a person is known by what he writes.

El hombre propone y Dios dispone (Man proposes and God disposes)

(Man can make programs or purposes, but the will of God will always be predominant over these).

It is used to clarify how man, in spite of the planning he makes of his purposes, will not always achieve them if the will of God does not permit it.

El león cree a todos de su condición (The lion believes all of his own kind)

(Each one judges others in the belief that they possess the virtues or vices that he has).

It is used to define that people believe that others proceed in the same way as they do.

El mal pagador es buen cobrador (The bad payer is a good collector)

(Any person who does not fulfill his commitments always demands fulfillment from others).

This applies to people who do not fulfill their duties, but demand fulfillment from others.

El mal de muchos consuelo de tontos (The evil of many is the consolation of fools)

(Not because many suffer should we be content with our situation).

Applies to people who prefer to be content with their situation when contemplating the evils and misfortunes that afflict others.

***El mayor mal de los males es tratar con animales* (The greatest evil of evils is to deal with animals)**

(Many times some people have under their command other foolish people, or vice versa).

It is applied to indicate that a person acts foolishly.

***El mentir y el compadrazgo andan a la par* (Lying and compadrazgo go hand in hand)**

(Many compadrazgos are made by calculation, feigning affection and esteem).

It is used to point out that some people act premeditatedly to perform some actions.

***El miedo y el frío sólo Dios los quita* (Fear and cold only God can take them away)**

(There are situations where only the divine will can help us).

It is used to explain that humans face problems in which, in order to solve them, we must count on God's support.

***El muerto y el arrimado a los tres días hieden* (The dead person and the one who has been buried after three days stink).**

(Every person who dies or who is sheltered in someone else's home must, the first, bury himself soon and the second, face his problems alone).

It applies to people who are sheltered in someone else's home but forget that they must face the problem that afflicts them by themselves and come out ahead with their own resources.

***El muerto y el arrimado a los tres días hieden* (The dead to the hole and the living to the bun)**

(When people die, they are buried and the living continue their struggle for life).

It is applied to determine that the bereaved, in spite of the death of the loved one, must maintain themselves in the constant struggle for life.

***El que da lo que ha menester el diablo se ríe de él* (He who gives what he needs, the devil laughs at him)**

(Every person who gives what he uses for the development of his labors acts in a foolish way).

Sa begins to point out that we should not lend the objects that we use to develop our activities.

***El que desprecia favores es porque no los merece* (He who despises favors is because he does not deserve them)**

(Anyone who does not receive with pleasure a favor that is done or despises it is because he does not deserve it).

It is applied to indicate the people who do not receive with pleasure a favor that some similar person gives them.

***El que de esta vida quiera gozar: ver, oír y callar* (He who wants to enjoy this life: see, hear and be silent)**

(For speaking about matters that do not concern us, we will have to face later problems).

It is applied to those who by their gossip create problems for themselves.

***El que escucha, su mal oye* (He who listens, his evil hears)**

(He who tries to listen to others, always ends up hearing unpleasant things said about him).

Applies to those who always try to listen to the conversation of others, and end up hearing their own defects.

***El que es buen vaquero en cualquier caballo laza* (He who is a good cowherd on any horse laza)**

(Any person who is good at his trade or profession, will be good in any situation that comes his way).

It is applied when in different circumstances some person does not perform a certain activity proper to his trade or profession.

***El que entre la miel anda algo se le pega* (He who walks among honey, something sticks to him)**

(From frequent contact with other people you acquire their manners and words).

It is applied to indicate that by frequenting someone you acquire their habits and behavior.

***El que está torcido, por persignarse se araña* (He who is crooked, by crossing himself is scratched)**

(When a person is in a bad situation, every action he performs goes wrong).

It serves to point out that many times some people are in a very bad situation, or with “bad luck”, and for that reason every work or action they do will turn out badly.

***El que habla mal de la pera comérsela quiere* (He who speaks ill of the pear wants to eat it)**

(People who talk bad about something want to eat it).

It is applied when someone speaks ill of something, but one senses the desire to have it in his power.

***El que hace una, hace ciento* (He who makes one, makes a hundred)**

(He who is capable of doing one thing, good or bad, will do similar things again).

It is applied especially to criminals to point out that, when they do a bad deed, they can repeat it.

***El que la debe, la teme* (He who owes it, fears it)**

(Every person who has done wrong should expect justice to be done to him).

It is applied to indicate that those who fear that justice will be applied to them is because they have acted badly.

***El que las usa las imagina* (The one who uses them imagines them)**

(Evil-minded people are capable of doing what others think).

It is used to point out that any person who acts badly is capable of imagining the bad thoughts of another.

***El que limpio se encuentra ni de jabón necesita* (He who is clean doesn't even need soap)**

(When someone is not guilty of a certain action, he does not need to justify himself).

It is applied to the one who, in spite of the accusations that are thrown at him, does not justify himself by them.

***El que madruga no lleva sol* (The early bird has no sun)**

(He who anticipates and does everything as soon as possible saves himself a lot of trouble).

It is applied to incite negligent and lazy people to do the pending things as soon as possible.

***El que nunca ha tenido y llega a tener, loco se puede volver* (He who has never had and comes to have, may become mad)**

(People who were born poor but come to have some goods, often act inconsistently in their administration).

It is applied to some person who has never possessed greater goods, and that by chance of fortune comes to form a capital, but then does not know how to act and how to manage it.

***El que más cerca está de la cabra ese la mama* The one closest to the goat is the mother**

(He who is closest to the owners of a business or factory obtains the best benefits from it).

It is applied to point out that the people who benefit the most in any company are those who are closest to the owners.

***El que malas mañas ha, tarde o nunca las perderá* (He who has bad habits will sooner or later lose them)**

(A person hardly ever gives up bad habits).

It is applied to all those who possess bad arts or “mañas” in their actions and who will never do without them during their life.

***El que mucho abarca, poco aprieta* (He who grasps too much grasps too Little)**

(He who wishes to perform many tasks at the same time will perform none of them).

Applicable to those who wish to cover many tasks of their trade or profession, but in the end, due to the accumulation of pressures and duties they must fulfill, they do not perform anything with complete success.

***El que mucho se agacha enseña lo que no debe* (He who bends down too much teaches what he should not teach)**

(We must not be too soft and indulgent, because later we will have to repent).

It clarifies that people must sometimes act with strict sense and without giving in for any reason.

***El que muerde quedito arranca pedazo* (He who bites softly gets a piece of the action)**

(People of few words are the ones who act more firmly).

It refers to dogs that bark a lot and do not bite, and applies to people who talk a lot but do not act, while others are of few words but of much action.

***El que no aprende con los años sufre amargos desengaños* (He who does not learn with the years suffers bitter disappointments)**

(The person who does not learn over the years will one day have to repent).

It applies to people of negligent behavior and those who, in spite of the facts that are explained to them so that they do not suffer experiences, do not heed advice.

***El que no atiende consejo no llega a viejo* (He who does not heed advice does not grow old)**

(He who does not listen to reason or advice, has to repent later).

Variant of the previous one.

El que paga manda (He who pays commands)

(The person who pays for some task to be carried out, commands its execution).

It is applied to explain that the people who pay the workers, have the power to command them.

El que por su gusto muere aunque lo entierren parado (He who for his own pleasure dies even if he is buried standing upright)

(He who, in spite of knowing that the activity he performs will cause him harm, will remain with his taste, even if he dies).

It is applied to foolish people, who always want to do their own will.

El que siembra en tierra ajena, ni la semilla pepena (He who sows in other people's land, does not even reap the seed)

(Everything he does who works in a field that is not his property, will be for the benefit of another).

It is applied to indicate people who work for the benefit of others.

El que siembra en invierno cosecha en verano (He who sows in winter reaps in summer)

(When we can, let us do well, so that when we need someone, the required help will be given).

It is applied when someone does a favor. It is also applied to people who do not do any favor, in order to incite them to do it.

El que siembra vientos cosecha tempestades (He who sows winds reaps storms)

(He who goes around spreading gossip and gossip about someone else will end up in serious trouble).

It is applied to point out that when someone speaks ill of an acquaintance or friend with other people, in the end he will be involved in very embarrassing problems.

El que te quiere te aporrea (He who loves you beats you)

(True affection wants to see the beloved on the right path and sometimes has to be drastic).

Applies when a parent corrects a child.

El que ve la mesa puesta no sabe lo que cuesta (He who sees the table set does not know what it costs)

(The irresponsible or freeloader does not bother to think about the cost of all that is consumed).

It applies to those who only like to enjoy the benefits but at no time contribute to the formation of these.

El que venga atrás que arree (He who comes behind, let him go)

(It is said when someone who is voracious thinks only of himself).

It is applied to envious and selfish people who only think of themselves and not of their neighbor.

En arca abierta el justo peca (In the open ark the righteous sin)

(A person easily does something wrong in the face of excessive opportunity, however honorable it may be).

It applies to someone who is very careless of his things and leaves them at the mercy of others.

En asuntos de amor, el amigo es el traidor (In matters of love, the friend is the betrayer)

(Marital infidelities are easier with friends, because of the frequency in dealing).

It is applied to point out that in matters of love one should distrust friends.

En boca cerrada no entra mosca (No fly enters in a closed mouth)

(People who keep their mouths shut save themselves a lot of trouble).

It is applied to boisterous and talkative people, who by their continuous chattering cause serious problems for themselves.

***En cojera de perro y en lágrimas de mujer no hay que creer* (In dog's lameness and in woman's tears one should not believe)**

(Generally, women's tears are tricks to get what they want).

It is applied to point out that many times some tricks are used to try to get something.

***En casa de herrero, cuchillo de palo* (In a blacksmith's house, a wooden knife)**

(When a person has the means, he does nothing for himself or his people).

It is applied to people who, knowing a trade, do not benefit from it or do it with their own.

***En esta vida no hay dicha cumplida* (In this life there is no happiness fulfilled)**

(We all know that everyone has different sufferings, but not total happiness).

It is applied to point out that every person cannot have complete happiness because there will always be some matter that causes him difficulties.

***En la tardanza está el peligro* (In delay lies the danger)**

(We should not be careless, for the unforeseen may happen).

It applies to people who are negligent and do not act quickly.

***El mucho comer empacha y el no comer debilita* (Eating too much makes you sick and not eating weakens you)**

(All extremes are bad.)

It is applied to point out that extreme positions should not be adopted in any situation that comes our way, since they are harmful.

***El olor a mujer muerta sólo llega hasta la puerta* (The smell of a dead woman only reaches as far as the door)**

(Occasional afflictions are not lasting.)

It is applied to explain that the misfortunes that afflict someone will not last all the way through

***El papel con todo aguanta* (The paper withstands everything)**

(In writing one can tell the greatest falsehoods or lies).

It is used to point out that people can write whatever they want on paper, be it lies or truths.

***El pecado acusa* (Sin accuses)**

(He who has committed a fault, gives himself away by his actions alone).

It is used to point out that by his behavior a person can give away some bad action he has committed.

***El peor coche se come la mejor mazorca* (The worst car eats the best cob)**

(A person without merit gets what is not his due).

It is applied to determine that some people with no further preparation or merits occupy the best positions.

***El que a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija* (He who takes shelter under a good tree has a good shadow.)**

(It is necessary to look for good protectors.)

It is applied to people who seek as protectors people who stand out in a certain activity.

***El que cuando puede no quiere, ya cuando quiere no puede* (He who does not want to when he can, cannot when he wants to)**

(We should take advantage of every opportunity so as not to regret it later).

It is applied when you want to suggest to someone to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented to him.

***En los frascos pequeños se guardan los más activos venenos* (The most active poisons are kept in the smallest jars)**

(Sometimes people who are considered small and insignificant are capable of causing serious problems).

It applies when a person, however small, is capable of causing many incidents or difficulties.

***En mal de muerte no hay médico que acierte* (No doctor is right when it is time to die)**

(When it is time to die, all remedy is useless).

It is applied to point out that all effort is useless when a person is ready to die.

***En pueblo de ciegos el tuerto es rey* (In a town of blind people, the one-eyed man is King)**

(Among people of little reach, the most astute rules).

It is applied to point out that among people with little knowledge, the one who has some knowledge will be the one who rules the group.

***Entre broma y broma la verdad se asoma* (Between jokes, the truth comes out)**

(Many truths are often told while joking).

With this it can be pointed out that through jokes and games, some true facts can be indicated.

***Entre parientes, casados, enamorados y hermanos, ninguno meta sus manos* (Among relatives, married couples, lovers and siblings, no one should stick their hands in their hands)**

(One should not interfere in other people's family affairs).

It is applied to indicate that no one should act in problems that do not concern him/her directly.

***Entre santa y santo, pared de calicanto* (Between saint and saint, calicanto wall)**

(Between people of different sexes, intimacy is not good).

It can be applied to people of different sexes who wish to maintain some intimacies.

Es más rudo que la nuez (It's tougher than the walnut)

(There are people who offer much and deliver little).

This refers to those who verbally offer many benefits, but in reality they give little.

Evitar no es cobardía (Avoidance is not cowardice)

(The person who avoids problems does not do so out of cowardice, but to avoid further difficulties).

It can be applied to people who for one reason or another avoid confrontations and fights, thus trying to avoid later difficulties.

F.

Fortuna te dé Dios y el saber poco te importe (God give you fortune and knowledge is of little importance to you)

(The luck factor makes many fools stand out).

It can be applied to people who, without much preparation, reach high positions.

Freno sin barda es igual que nada (Brake without a fence is the same as nothing)

(The one who in command position does not impose his authority will be null).

It is applied to a person who, being a boss or director, does not impose his authority.

G.

Gallina que come huevo, aunque le quemen el pico (A hen that eats eggs, even if they burn her beak)

(He who gets used to doing improper things, even if he is corrected, will continue to do them).

It is applied to a person who, even if corrected for bad performances, will always continue to perform them.

***Genio y figura: hasta la sepultura* (Genius and figure: to the grave)**

(Certain characteristics of a person do not change while he is alive).

It is applied to indicate that any person with good qualities will maintain them until death.

H.

***Hasta el pelo hace sombra en el suelo* (Even the hair casts a shadow on the ground)**

(Even the simplest and humblest people have a place and role to play in life).

It is applied to point out that every person has his value.

***Hay de todo, como en botica* (There is everything, as in an apothecary's shop)**

(Every person or thing has different positions).

It is applied to point out that every person or thing has something good and bad.

***Hay más tiempo que vida* (There is more time than life)**

(Time should not be of too much concern to people.)

It is applied to point out that time is long and during it we can do many things; therefore it should not worry us.

***Hasta la comida entra por los ojos* (Even food enters through the eyes)**

(Everything should be well presented, for that which is pleasing to the eye has the most to gain).

It is applied to point out that everything that pleases the eye will be more acceptable than what is visually unpleasant.

Haz bien y no mires a quien (Do good and look not to whom)

(Good should be done to everyone we can, without distinction of any kind).

It is applied to explain that good should be done to all people.

Haz mal y ¡Guárdate! (¡Do evil and beware!)

(Whenever a person acts badly, sooner or later his punishment will come).

It is applied to point a finger at a person who acts wrongly against another.

Hacer el bien a villanos es echar agua al mar (To do good to villains is to pour water into the sea)

(All the good that some person does in favor of some villain will be a lost task).

Applies when someone intends by his good deeds to try to reform or help a villain.

Hechor y consentidor pecan por igual (Doer and consenter sin equally)

(Both the person who commits a wrongdoing and the one who covers it up are equally to blame).

It is applied to point to a person who tries to cover up wrongdoing by another.

Hombre prevenido no es sorprendido (A man forewarned is not surprised)

(People should remain alert and prepared for any eventuality).

Applied to point out that people should always be forewarned against any misfortune or tragedy.

Hombre prevenido vale por dos (A forewarned man is worth two)

(It is preferable to anticipate what may happen to us).

Variant of the previous one.

I.

Ira de hermanos es ira del diablo (Wrath of siblings is wrath of the devil)

(Difficulties between brothers are very bad).

serves to point out that arguments and fights between siblings are actions that should not happen, since they are compared to the worst of evils.

J.

Juntas ni las canillas porque se escaldan (Neither the shins together because they get scalded)

(whenever we perform any task, we must do it alone).

It is applied to explain that all tasks should be done alone, because when two people act together they always end up in difficulties.

Juntos pero no revueltos (Together but not mixed up)

(When working or acting together with another person, we should not get into many confidences nor should we copy his bad manners).

It is applied to point out that we should beware of copying other people's bad manners when we are on a par with them.

L.

La cabra siempre tira al monte (The goat always goes to the mountain)

(People who have bad habits or act badly will always go back to the same thing).

It points out that every person will always act according to his habits and idiosyncrasies.

La constancia mata la caza (Steadfastness kills the hunt)

(With tenacity we achieve everything we set out to do).

It is applied to recommend that everything should be done in a calm and prudent manner to obtain the desired end.

La experiencia entra por el pellejo (Experience comes in through the skin)

(Something must happen to us personally to make us afraid of it).

It applies to any person who needs to learn from experience.

La fruta madura es la más sabrosa (The ripe fruit is the tastiest)

(In life everything has its best time, that is to say, its ripeness, and it is then when situations become more pleasant).

It is applied to indicate that everything, in its time, turns out well.

La lengua guarda el pescuezo (The tongue keeps the neck)

(For many, to speak what they should not, causes their death).

It is applied to people who like to gossip and gossip.

La mitad del año con arte y engaño, con engaño y arte la otra media parte (Half of the year with art and deception, the other half with deception and art)

(It is said of deceitful people).

It is applied to people who during their life only live cheating others.

La mujer y la tela a la vela (The woman and the sailcloth)

(When choosing a wife or determining about textiles one should be very careful not to be deceived).

It is applied to point out that a man should be careful in choosing the woman who will accompany him for the rest of his life.

La necesidad tiene cara de hereje (Necessity has the face of a heretic)

(A person in need is capable of doing what he never imagined).

It is applied to people, who when they are in trouble for some need, know anyone to solve their problem.

La ocasión hace al ladrón (The occasion makes the thief)

(Many people succumb to opportunity).

It is applied to point out that every person who finds the opportunities to commit a bad action, will do it.

La pita se rompe por lo más delgado (The straw breaks at the thinnest point)

(there is always some situation that annoys a person, no matter how small, because of which some friendship is broken).

It is applied to point out that small incidents can cause very annoying situations.

La planta forma la trampa (The plant forms the trap)

(Most people are guided by the appearances or “plant” that some person presents).

It is applied to say that a person's appearance causes many to be deceived.

La práctica hace al maestro (Practice makes perfect)

(Practice makes a person excel in his profession or trade).

It is applied to say that every person who practices his profession and trade can develop great skill.

La ropa sucia que se lave en casa (Dirty linen to be washed at home)

(Intimate problems should remain a family secret).

It is applied when someone discloses bad situations of his own family.

La sangre sin fuego hierve (Blood without fire boils)

(When relatives meet who do not recognize each other as such, they spontaneously have a certain mutual sympathy).

It is applied when saying that relatives often recognize each other spontaneously, as blood makes them have a certain mutual sympathy.

La suerte de la fea la bonita la desea (The luck of the ugly woman is desired by the pretty one)

(Women who are physically unattractive have moral qualities that many pretty women lack, which is why they get better positions).

Applicable when someone wants to point out that, in many cases, pretty women do not get the best husbands, and, on the contrary, the unattractive ones do.

La verdad no mata pero incomoda (The truth doesn't kill but it makes you uncomfortable)

(Generally the truth displeases.)

It is applied when it is desired to emphasize that some people are annoyed because something is pointed out to them that is true, but that they do not want it to come to light.

La voz del pueblo es la voz de Dios (The voice of the people is the voice of God)

(When the majority believes one thing, it is the truth).

It is applied to make it clear that what the majority rules is what must be obeyed.

Las noticias malas tienen alas (Bad news has wings)

(Mankind seems to enjoy passing on misfortunes very quickly).

It is applied when we see that bad news spreads quickly.

Las balas las disparan los hombres y las reparte Dios (Bullets are fired by men and delivered by God)

(He who dies by a bullet, it is because God wills it, not by the will of man).

It is applied to point out that God has the power to determine the lives of men.

***Las cosas claras y el chocolate espeso* Clear things and thick chocolate**

(People should be clear in every aspect.)

Applicable to point out that in everything people should act thoroughly.

***Las dádivas quebrantan rocas* (Gifts break rocks)**

(People should be generous and helpful, but in moderation).

It is applied to people who, because they have a certain fortune or position, are sometimes very generous, but do not foresee the future.

***Las mujeres y las pistolas, para funcionar, necesitan hombre* (Women and guns, in order to function, need men)**

(Women, like guns, act or respond to the impulses of men).

It is applied to emphasize that women, in order to have children, need to have a husband or partner, while the gun, in order to fire, needs the action of the man.

***Las penas contadas son alivios* (Counted sorrows are reliefs)**

(Many times people, by counting their sorrows, feel that these dissipate).

It is applied when a person who has some sorrow becomes more distressed by not having some escape by telling it to someone.

***Las penas con pan son buenas* (Sorrows with bread are good)**

(The problems, when there are economic resources are not as serious as when there are none).

It is applied when pointing out that someone's grief is lessened when he has resources with which to face it.

Lo poco agrada y lo mucho enfada (Too little pleases and too much Angers)

(All opposites are bad.)

It is applied to point out that people should not constantly be with each other, but neither should they be completely estranged.

Lo que el corazón siente por la boca sale (What the heart feels through the mouth comes out)

(Everything that is felt about a person is expressed verbally.)

It is applied to the moment when a person expresses good or bad concepts about another person.

Lo barato sale caro (What is cheap comes out expensive)

(What seems cheap to us is expensive because of its poor quality and short duration).

It is regularly applied to point out that, most of the time, some offers of certain items are bad because they are of low quality.

Lo que es del agua el agua se lo lleva (What belongs to the water, the water takes it away)

(When we have something bad we lose it without realizing it).

It is useful to apply it when a person acquires ill-gotten things and, therefore, loses them easily.

Lo que no mata, engorda (What does not kill, fattens)

(That which does not harm us, does us good).

It is applied to point out that everything we eat can sometimes do us harm, but sometimes good.

Lo que ya se sabe ni se pregunta (What is already known is not even asked)

(Everything that someone knows, there is no need to ask about it).

It applies to all those people who, aware and knowledgeable about something, are inquiring about that particular.

***Los niños, los bolos y los locos siempre dicen la verdad* (Kids, skittles and crazy people always tell the truth)**

(Lacking the full use of reason, they always make judgments that are true, even if they are prejudicial to them).

It is applied to make it clear that some judgment made about some people by some young child, some drunkard or a madman will always be true.

M.

***Mal paga el diablo a quien bien le sirve* (The devil repays badly those who serve him well)**

(When we do good to some villain or ungrateful person he will always respond badly).

It applies when a person does good to someone who responds badly.

***Mandalo y hacelo vos y quedaréis bien servido* (Send him and do it yourself and you will be well served)**

(Any person who wishes to be satisfied with something should do it himself).

It is applied when a person is dissatisfied with a task that he ordered someone to do.

***Manos besamos que quisiéramos ver quemadas* (Hands we kissed that we would like to see burnt)**

(The attentions that people often show are not sincere).

It is applied to show that the attentions that many people have are not completely sincere.

***Más vale andar solo que mal acompañado* (It is better to be alone than in bad Company)**

(A bad company harms people; so, if it is not good, better nothing).

It is applied when pointing out that a person is accompanied by another person of bad habits and principles.

Más vale caer en gracia que ser gracioso (It is better to be liked than to be funny)

(To be funny is to be liked or to please other people; however, to be funny is to be an impertinent person who tries to make jokes and jokes at the expense of others).

It applies to people who at a gathering make jokes about others, trying to provoke laughter from the group.

Más tiene el rico cuando empobrece que el pobre cuando enriquece (The rich man has more when he gets poorer than the poor man has when he gets richer)

(The rich man, when he becomes poorer, maintains his principles but acquires humility, while the poor man, when he becomes richer, often becomes haughty, arrogant, and performs actions against his fellow men).

It is applied when a person who has not possessed fortune during his life, acquires it but abandons many principles and becomes exploitative of others.

Más vale llegar a tiempo, que rondar un año (It is better to be on time than to be a year late)

(One should try to be more opportune than stubborn).

It applies to people who are never timely in requesting something from others, and therefore must continue to insist on the same thing.

Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando (A bird in the hand is better than a hundred in the air)

(It is better little but sure.)

It is applied to point out that it is better for a person to possess few goods than to live desiring many.

Más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo (The devil knows more for an old man than for a devil)

(Life teaches us more than the sciences.)

It is used to point out that experience and age give great knowledge.

***Más sabe el loco en su casa que el cuerdo en la calle* (The fool knows more at home than the sane in the Street)**

(However foolish he may be who is watching what is happening, he knows more than the intelligent one who does not see it).

It applies to those who, in spite of their intelligence and preparation, do not stop to observe what is happening.

***Matrimonio a la edad madura: antlers or sepultura* (Marriage in middle age: antlers or burial)**

(To the person of advanced age who marries young, betrayal or death awaits).

It is used to refer to persons of advanced age who marry someone young.

***Mientras el alma está en el cuerpo tiene lugar la esperanza* (While the soul is in the body, there is hope)**

(As long as there is life, there is hope; it only ends with death).

It is applied to explain that every person can have hopes and dreams of fulfillment as long as he or she lives.

***Muchos cocineros descomponen la sopa* (Many cooks spoil the soup)**

(When many are in charge, nothing turns out well).

It is used when many people are involved in the same matter.

***Muerto el perro se acaba la rabia* (The dog is dead and the rabies is over)**

(It is said when the person who caused the discord disappears).

It is used to indicate that when a person who causes discord moves away from a group, the discord also ends.

***Músico adelantado toca mal son* (Advanced musician plays bad son)**

(Before a business deal or deal should not be paid).

It is applied when a person who is going to do a job is paid in advance, and does not fulfill his task.

***Músico pagado no toca bien* (Paid musician does not play well)**

(Variant of the previous one.)

N.

***Nada nuevo bajo el sol* (Nothing new under the sun)**

(Things, however strange they may seem to us, are not the first time they have happened).

It is applied when a person is surprised by some event.

***Nadie habla mal de su casa aunque se esté cayendo* (No one speaks ill of his house even if it is falling down)**

(Natural vanity makes us keep quiet about our evils).

It is applied when a person exalts his position in front of others.

***Nadie se muere la víspera* (No one dies the day before)**

(We all die on the day that God has already determined).

It is used to indicate that no one dies before the day that corresponds to him.

***Nadie sabe para quien trabaja* (Nobody knows who he works for)**

(The one who is least believed to be the one who enjoys the fruit of a person's labor.)

It is applied to point out that it is not known who will ultimately benefit from the fruit of one's labor.

***Ni amor forzado, ni zapato apretado* (Neither forced love nor tight shoe).**

(It compares the annoyance of a shoe that squeezes with a union without sincere affection).

It applies to people who try to force feelings or pretend to have the same feelings.

***Ni el que se va hace falta, ni el que llega estorba* (Neither the one who leaves is needed, nor the one who arrives is a hindrance)**

(No one is indispensable.)

It is used to point out that every person, no matter how necessary in a company, meeting or group, is not indispensable.

***No apedrear al vecino teniendo el techo de cristal* (Do not stone your neighbor by having a glass ceiling)**

(People should not criticize others if they also have faults).

It is applied when someone, having fault or fault on something, attacks his neighbor.

***No está el calor en las sábanas sino en el cuerpo* (The heat is not in the sheets but in the body)**

(People who complain about others are generally to blame for what happens).

It is applied to explain that whoever complains a lot about others, it is because he is to blame for the situation he is complaining about.

***No es madre la que engendra sino la que cría* (It is not the mother who begets, but the one who brings up)**

(Mother is every woman who takes care of the child, takes care of it and educates it).

It is applied to point out that the role of mother is developed by the women who take care of the child, not only those who have given birth to it.

***No es lo mismo verla venir que platicar con ella* (It is not the same to see her coming as it is to talk to her)**

(It is different to discuss things than to face them).

It is applied to point out that it is not the same to comment on an issue as to confront it.

***No hay enemigo pequeño* (There is no small enemy)**

(We should not belittle the enemy, no matter how small it may seem, because it can be disastrous).

It is applied when someone belittles an enemy, only because he does not see him as too powerful to cause him any harm.

***No hay que buscarle tres pies al gato, que tiene cuatro* (We must not look for three feet to the cat, which has four)**

(In life, one should not play down the importance of things and should face them as they are).

It is applied to point out that problems should be faced as they are and not to provoke them.

***No hay que decir: de esta agua no he de beber* (One should not say: I shall not drink of this water)**

(We should never despise neither people nor things, because we do not know what changes the future may bring).

It is said when a person mentions that he/she will never perform a certain action.

***Ni son todos los que están, ni están todos los que son* (Neither are all those who are, nor are there all those who are)**

(In any meeting there are never all the guests who should be there and, on the other hand, there are many who should not be there).

It is applied to point out that in every meeting there are never all those who were invited, and on the contrary, there are many people who attend and who are not to the liking of the owners of the party.

***Ni tan cerca que queme al santo, ni tan lejos que no le alumbre* (Neither so close that it burns the saint, nor so far that it does not enlighten him)**

(Things should be moderate, extremes are never good).

It is said and applied when a person adopts extreme positions in any matter.

***Ni tatáculas ni tataculás* (Neither tatáculas nor tataculás).**

(Everything should be moderate, don't take extremes.)

Variant of the previous one.

***Ni todo se puede decir, ni todo se puede callar* (Not everything can be said, and not everything can be silenced.)**

(Sometimes it is necessary to speak and sometimes to remain silent).

It is applied when someone says something they should not say.

Ninguno da palos de balde (No one gives sticks for nothing)

(In this life everything that is done is with an interest).

It is said when people have many attentions or services for another.

Ningún tonto se vuelve loco (No fool goes crazy)

(The fool does not create problems for himself and lives quietly).

It is applied to people who do not look for problems of any kind and prefer to live carefree.

Ninguno es profeta en su tierra (No one is a prophet in his own land)

(Those who have some merit succeed more when they are far from their fellow countrymen).

It is applied to the characters that stand out in one way or another, but they do it far from their land.

No hay que ir por lana y salir trasquilado (Do not go for wool and come out shorn)

(One should not have illusions of much, for we may be disappointed).

It is applied when someone sets out to do something that will harm or cause harm to another person, but in the end it turns out to be the opposite.

No hay mal que dure cien años, ni enfermo que los aguante (There is no evil that lasts a hundred years, nor a sick person that can stand it)

(Everything in life happens one way or another.)

applies to you when someone suffers grief or misfortune.

No hay piedra berroqueña, que dando un año no alise el pasamano (There is no stone that does not smooth the handrail after a year)

(Constancy achieves everything.)

It can be applied when a person must insist on something to achieve it.

Palabras conocidas no necesitan testigos (Known words do not need witnesses)

(Any person whose conduct is known, does not need the recommendation of a third party).

It is applied when saying that people who conduct themselves by good principles, are recommended by themselves.

Para mentir y comer pescado hay que tener cuidado (To lie and eat fish you have to be careful)

(Lies are something as delicate and careful as trying to eat fish and taking care not to ingest any bones).

It applies when a person, for some situation, needs to use a lie.

Para muestra basta un botón (For a sample, a button is enough)

(A person can be categorized by a simple fact).

It is used when saying that a person can be qualified as good or bad by some small fact.

Para tal señor, tal honor (For such a man, such an honor)

(According to the dignity of the person, so are the honors he receives).

It is applied to say that people receive tributes according to their human and formative quality.

Perro que ladra no muerde (Dog that barks does not bite)

(Whoever makes a lot of noise and boasts is good for nothing).

It is applied to people who are boisterous, but in the end do not act in anything.

Perro viejo late sentado (Old dog beats sitting down)

(Experience teaches those who have lived long not to be fiery, but calm).

It applies to people with age and experience, who always act calmly in various situations.

Piedra movediza no cría moho (Shifting stone does not breed mold)

(Someone who does not perform steadily in any activity will never excel in it. Likewise, someone who does not cultivate friendships will never have any sincere friends).

It is applied to point out that people must maintain good and constant relationships, as well as a permanent preparation in order to excel.

Por dinero: baila el perro (For money: the dog dances)

(The power of money is so great, that it achieves even what we do not imagine).

It is applied to point out that through money people can achieve things that seem impossible.

Por el fruto se reconoce el árbol (By the fruit you can recognize the tree)

(You can get to know a person by his deeds and actions).

It is applied to point out that people can get to know each other through their achievements.

Por el hilo se saca el ovillo (By the thread you get the ball of yarn)

(By paying attention to the small things we discover the big things).

It is applied to say that we must pay attention to small things in order to be able to solve big problems.

Por la pluma se conoce el pájaro (By the feather you know the bird)

(People can recognize each other through their writings).

Although it is a variant of the proverb “By the fruit you can recognize the tree”, the one we now comment on applies exclusively to writers, trying to point out that people, according to the quality of their writings, so is their quality of preparation.

Q.

***Que cada palo aguante su vela* (Let every man bear his own candle)**

(Each one must bear his own obligations.)

This means that every person should be responsible for his obligations, trying to solve them on his own.

***Querés saber de aquél, viví con él* (You want to know him, live with him)**

(To know someone completely, we must know his intimate situations).

It is applied to say that people get to know each other completely only by knowing their intimate ways of acting.

***Quien a tu hijo besa tu boca endulza* (He who kisses your son sweetens your mouth)**

(People who please the children of another, please this one also).

It is applied to say that we should please other people's children.

***Quien acecha por agujero ve su duelo* (He who lurks by hole sees his mourning)**

(Friends of spying, end up seeing their own evil).

It is applied to people who spy or always try to find out about situations that are alien to them, and end up hearing or seeing their own evil.

***Quien da de comer a perro ajeno, se queda sin el pan y sin el perro* (He who feeds another man's dog, is left without bread and without the dog)**

(He who gives interested help to people with commitments, hardly achieves his purposes).

It is applied to say that if someone gives any interested help to another person, he will never achieve what he proposes.

***Quien da la acción pierde el derecho* (He who gives the action loses the right)**

(He who having authority leaves it to subordinates, loses it.)

It is applied when someone who has direction over something, deposits his responsibilities on another person.

***Quien de los suyos se aleja Dios le deja* (He who withdraws from his own, God leaves him)**

(People who withdraw from others are left alone).

It applies when people withdraw from groups, isolating themselves from everyone, which is certainly not good.

***Quien en una misma piedra tropieza dos veces merece que se rompa la cabeza* (He who stumbles twice on the same stone deserves to have his head broken)**

(When the same person is deceived or swindled a second time by the same person, he deserves it).

It applies when the same person is deceived by another for the second time.

***Quien espera desespera* (He who waits despairs)**

(It is very unpleasant to wait, one should try to be punctual).

It is applied to say that everyone who comes to an appointment must be punctual, because the person who waits will despair if he waits too long.

***¿Quién es tu enemigo? El de tu mismo oficio* (Who is your enemy? The one of your own trade)**

(Rivalries and competitions make colleagues rivals, even if they don't show it).

It is applied when between people who dedicate themselves to the same task, trade or profession, one always tries to stand out more than the others.

***Quien mucho abarca, poco aprieta* (He who grasps too much grasps too Little)**

(He who has many matters in his hands, will pay little attention to them).

It is applied when a person tries to develop several activities at the same time.

Quien porfía mata venado (He who persists kills deer)

(He who is constant in something, at last achieves his purpose).

It is applied to teach that, being constant in something, we will achieve the good purpose that we set out.

Quien por su mano se lastima que la gima (He who hurts himself by his own hand, let him groan for it)

(No one should complain about the evil he voluntarily seeks).

It applies to people who seek their own evil and then complain about it.

Quien sirve no es libre (He who serves is not free)

(He who is paid must obey what he is commanded.)

It applies to people who work.

¿Quién te hace rico? El que te mantiene el pico (Who makes you rich? He who supports your beak)

(Whoever supports us will allow us to save and get rich).

It applies to people who are financially supported by another and therefore can keep their savings.

S.

Sabe más de lo que le han enseñado (He knows more than he has been taught)

(Said of a shrewd person).

It is applied to people who manifest a lot of intelligence.

Según quien toca la guitarra, así suena (Depending on who plays the guitar, this is how it sounds)

(Any activity or enterprise that is directed by a capable person will always develop well).

It is said and applied to indicate that the success or failure of an enterprise will depend on the person who directs it.

***Si quieres algo bien hecho, hazlo tu solo* (If you want something well done, do it on your own)**

(If we do something alone we will have no setbacks).

Suggests that, when a person wants something done, to be pleased he must do it himself.

***Siéntate a la puerta de tu casa y verás pasar el cadáver de tu enemigo* (Sit at the door of your house and you will see the corpse of your enemy pass by)**

(One should not act against one's enemies, even if they have caused us some harm).

It is applied to point out that when an enemy causes harm to a person, the latter should not respond to him with some bad action, but let his punishment come to him in time.

***Sólo a la moneda de oro todo el mundo la quiere* (Only the gold coin is loved by everyone)**

(Coins, because of their utilitarian value, everyone wants to have them; however, not everyone wants to deal with other things or people).

It is applied to point out that some things people do not want to have, just as with some individuals no one wants to have dealings.

So el sayal hay al

(It is said when something bad is suspected under the good appearance).

It is applied to point out that many people only appear, and hide their evil.

***Sólo la cuchara sabe del mal que padece la olla* (Only the spoon knows about the evil that the pot is suffering)**

(Only the family we live with knows the problems that afflict us).

It is applied to point out that only the people who form a family can know in depth the problems that afflict someone.

***Su alma en su palma* (His soul in his palm)**

(A sincere and frank person seems to show his or her way of being).

It is applied to say that people reflect in their outward appearance their inner feelings and values.

T.

***Tales cosas te harán, tal corazón te pondrán* (Such things they will do to you, such a heart they will put in you)**

(According to the facts, this is how feelings change).

It is applied when the pains and sorrows of life make a person's feelings change.

***Todo lo que nace, mueren* (Everything that is born, dies)**

(Everything that has a beginning has an end.)

It is applied to indicate that all events, and matter in general, end.

***Trabajo repartido es más ligero* (Work spread out is lighter)**

(When each one does a single thing he takes practice and does it faster).

It is applied to say that teamwork is more effective.

U.

***Un diablo se parece a otro diablo* (A devil resembles another devil)**

(It is said when we talk about two or more people who seem bad to us).

It is applied to indicate that bad people always look alike.

***Unos en la pena y otros en la pepena* (Some in sorrow and others in pain)**

(While some suffer, others take advantage of their suffering).

It is applied to point out that in misfortunes, some suffer and others take advantage of this suffering.

V.

***Vale más gota perenne que chorro de repente* (It is better to have a perennial drop than a sudden trickle)**

(It is better to have a continuous economic income, even if it is little, and not too much from time to time).

It is applied to explain that it is better for people to maintain a continuous salary and not to receive sums of money from time to time.

***Vale más maña que fuerza* (More skill is better than strength)**

(It is better to be lively than strong.)

It is applied to suggest that it is better to have intelligence than strength, to act in certain situations.

***Vale más malo conocido que bueno por conocer* (The devil you know is better than the good you don't know)**

(It is preferable what is already known, even if it is not very good, to the unknown, even if it is praised).

It applies to say that everything we know is better than what we could know.

***Vale más prevenir que lamentar* (Better safe than sorry)**

(We should avoid everything that, if it happens, can harm us).

It is applied to teach that we should always prevent any event so that we do not have to regret any misfortune that could happen to us with it.

***Vale más ser cabeza de ratón que cola de león* (It is better to be the head of a mouse than the tail of a lion)**

(It is better to be a boss in small things than a pawn in big things).

This may indicate that it is better for people to act as bosses in small companies than as subordinates in large companies.

Vale más tarde que nunca (Better late than never)

(Good deeds, even if late, will always be well received).

It is applied to indicate to people that, if they are going to do something good, they should do it even if it is late.

Vale más un rato colorado que cien descoloridos (One red moment is better than a hundred faded ones)

(One should specify attributions or point out something to a person in a timely manner and avoid doing it out of time).

It is applied when recommending to make a signal to someone in time, even if it produces anger or embarrassment, and not to do it later and provoke misunderstandings.

Z.

Zapatero a tus zapatos (Shoemaker to your shoes)

(It is said of a person who meddles in other people's affairs).

It is applied to indicate to a person not to interfere or not to try to carry out tasks that do not correspond to him/her in his/her profession or trade.

8. Conclusions

1. The proverb is a common saying among the people; it carries all the literary and philosophical flavor of the people.
2. The origin of the proverb has not been proved with certainty. Like all folkloric facts, it has arisen and has been modified, through time, by the people.
3. The proverb has been given authentic value since the present century.
4. It is necessary to carry out scientific studies on the Guatemalan proverb.
5. The proverb brings together a series of elements that make up our language. It presents the use of archaisms, idioms and a series of other elements that give it its own flavor in each place and region.
6. The proverb is another of the cultural elements that are integrated into our culture as a product of the process of miscegenation.
7. The proverbs are modified as people apply them, or according to the place where they are used.

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