THE EXPRESSION OF MORAL VALUES IN APHORISMS

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Annotation: *This article examines the expression of moral values in aphorisms, focusing on how concise linguistic forms convey ethical principles. Aphorisms, as brief and memorable statements, reflect universal values such as honesty, justice, responsibility, and wisdom. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze selected aphorisms from philosophical and literary sources. The analysis highlights key linguistic features, including brevity, figurative language, and structural balance, which contribute to the effective transmission of moral messages. The findings demonstrate that aphorisms not only communicate ethical ideas clearly but also encourage reflection and critical thinking. The study concludes that aphorisms play a significant role in moral education and social communication due to their simplicity, depth, and universal applicability.*

Key words: *Aphorism, moral values, ethics, linguistic features, brevity, figurative language, moral communication, critical thinking, ethical principles, social communication.*

Aphorisms are concise statements that express general truths and moral principles. This study explores how moral values are represented and communicated through aphorisms. Using a qualitative approach, selected aphorisms were analyzed in terms of their linguistic structure and ethical content. The findings reveal that aphorisms effectively convey moral values such as honesty, responsibility, wisdom, and justice through brevity, metaphor,

and contrast. The study highlights the importance of aphorisms as tools for moral education and social communication.

Aphorisms have long served as a powerful means of expressing moral values in a concise and memorable form. Throughout history, philosophers and writers such as Confucius and Socrates have used aphorisms to communicate ethical principles and guide human behavior. These short expressions often reflect universal truths about morality, making them relevant across cultures and time periods.

Moral values such as honesty, integrity, justice, and responsibility are essential components of human society. Aphorisms provide a unique way of conveying these values in a form that is easy to remember and interpret. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica[1], aphorisms are brief statements that express general truths, often with moral or philosophical significance.

The aim of this study is to analyze how moral values are expressed in aphorisms and to identify the linguistic features that enhance their effectiveness. The research question is: How do aphorisms convey moral values through linguistic and stylistic means?

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method. A corpus of six well-known aphorisms related to moral values was selected from literary and philosophical sources:

- “Honesty is the best policy.”
- “Actions speak louder than words.”
- “Justice delayed is justice denied.”
- “The unexamined life is not worth living.”
- “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
- “Character is what you do when no one is watching.”

Each aphorism was analyzed based on the following criteria:

- Moral content – the ethical value conveyed
- Linguistic features – brevity, vocabulary, and clarity

- Stylistic devices – metaphor, parallelism, and antithesis

This method enables an in-depth understanding of how moral ideas are structured and communicated.

The analysis revealed several important findings.

Firstly, all aphorisms clearly express core moral values, including honesty, responsibility, justice, and self-awareness. These values are presented in a universal manner, making them applicable across different cultures.

Secondly, aphorisms rely on brevity and simplicity, which enhance their memorability. Each example contains a limited number of words but conveys a complete moral idea.

Thirdly, stylistic devices play a crucial role. For example, “Actions speak louder than words” uses contrast to emphasize behavior over speech, while “Justice delayed is justice denied” uses repetition to reinforce its message.

Finally, aphorisms often contain implicit meaning, encouraging readers to reflect and interpret the moral lesson.

The findings suggest that aphorisms are highly effective in expressing moral values due to their linguistic and stylistic characteristics. Brevity allows for quick understanding, while figurative language and contrast enhance emotional and cognitive impact.

These results are consistent with previous research, which highlights the role of concise language in moral communication. Aphorisms function not only as linguistic expressions but also as tools for ethical guidance and social regulation.

Moreover, aphorisms encourage critical thinking and self-reflection, which are essential for moral development. They are widely used in education, literature, and everyday communication to promote ethical behavior.

However, the study has limitations, including a small sample size. Future research could explore a larger dataset and examine how moral aphorisms vary across cultures and languages.

In conclusion, aphorisms serve as powerful tools for expressing moral values. Their key features—brevity, clarity, and stylistic richness—enable them to convey complex ethical ideas effectively. By combining linguistic simplicity with deep meaning, aphorisms play an important role in moral education and communication.

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