

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Sumy State University (Ukraine)
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Proceedings

STRATEGIC INNOVATIONS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND FOREIGN PHILOLOGY IN CRISIS TIMES

I International Scientific and Practical Conference

1 June 2024

Sumy State University, Ukraine



Sumy 2024

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The collection includes scientific materials devoted to current problems in the field of distance teaching and learning in the era of digital technologies, in particular in language pedagogy, media innovations, modern translation, ethnolinguistics, stylistics, methods and methodologies of modern linguistic and literary disciplines. The composition of the collection is scientific research on the preservation of national identity and cultural heritage, intercultural communications, psychological theory and practice, sociological research.

For teachers of higher education institutions, graduate students, students, teachers of secondary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums and colleges, all those interested in socio-humanitarian issues.

The materials are printed in the author's editorial

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CONTEMPORARY USE OF PROVERBS: CASE OF MASS MEDIA DISCOURSE

Proverbs are known to be an integral cultural heritage. They are traditionally used and passed down from generation to generation and are part of a people's memory, language, and culture. Cambridge Dictionary (2024) defines a proverb as a short sentence, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice: *The appetite, says the proverb, grows with eating. There is an old Arab proverb that everything you write or speak should pass through three gates: Is this kind? Is this necessary? Is this true?* According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2024), the word proverb has the following synonyms: adage, axiom (formal), saw (SAYING), old-fashioned, saying. Oxford English Dictionary (2023) defines a proverb as a mysterious or ambiguous saying that requires interpretation; an allegory, a parable, or *obsolete*.

According to the dictionaries, the notion 'idiom' is identified as a group of words in a fixed order that has a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own: *To "have bitten off more than you can chew" is an idiom that means you have tried to do something which is too difficult for you* (Cambridge

Dictionary, 2024). An idiom is a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., used distinctively in a particular language, dialect, or language variety; spec. a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from the meanings of the individual words (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). In sum, the difference between proverbs and other short texts as idioms is as follows: an idiom is defined as a phrase that consists of its meaning but is not easily understood. A proverb is a short saying or phrase used to advise another person; therefore, its message should be decoded almost easily.

Neal R. Norrick argued (2015) that proverbs are traditional, pithy, often formulaic and/or figurative, fairly stable, and generally recognisable units. Proverbs are characteristically used to form a complete utterance, make a complete conversational contribution and/or perform a speech act in a speech event, differentiating them from non-sentential items like proverbial phrases, idioms, binomials, etc. Proverbs make apodictic (expressed as undeniable truth) statements like *Money talks*, or evoke a scenario applicable to a range of analogous situations, as in *Little strokes fell great oaks*. Proverbs suggest particular evaluations or courses of action in supplying ready-made responses to recurrent situations.

In a study, Varga & Hrisztova-Gotthardt (2015) observed that proverbs can be collected as little texts complete in themselves; they can be described in their relations to other proverbs, in their discourse contexts, and within their cultural matrix. For folklorists, proverbs exist as folklore items alongside riddles, proverbial phrases, and jokes. They provide highly recognisable (relatively) fixed textual building blocks with unique rhetorical potential. Their cultural salience also renders proverbs interesting in cross-cultural comparison, including questions of intercultural transmission and translation. Proverbs unite features of the lexeme, sentence, set phrase, collocation, text, and quote. They illustrate interesting patterns of prosody, parallelism, syntax, and imagery. Because of their imagery, proverbs provide evidence of stereotypes and standard cultural metaphors.

Proverbs are often used in fiction literature and mass media texts, which raises interesting issues for research as well. Proverbs in up-to-date news articles fulfil the

content with figurative meaning; however, in most cases, readers can detect proverbs due to their cultural distinctiveness. Previous research (Varga & Hrisztova-Gotthardt, 2015) has established that the contribution of proverbs to the textual organisation often depends on their position in the text. Even though proverbs can appear in basically any textual position, the use of proverbs is functionally pragmatically heterogeneous and stylistically conspicuous (also because of their pronounced modifiability) when they appear in prominent places in a text, such as at the beginning or end of a text, at the beginning or end of a text segment, in the title, in the subtitle or even in the text (segment) frame. This observation is especially accurate for opinion-based journalistic texts.

In the present study, we addressed the issue of the linguistic creativity of proverbs and conducted a self-directed online experiment involving the incorporation of proverbs into mass media discourse. First, we selected English proverbs from the English Proverbs and Sayings Dictionary by Danil B. Smith (2020). This part of the experiment is called Dataset 1, which encompasses 50 traditional proverbs. Then, we searched within the mass media discourse to extract the proverbs incorporated into sentence/context or presented as a headline/subheadline to the article followed by a resolution phrase (a concise statement summarising the article's main idea). This part of the experiment allowed us to form Dataset 2, which consisted of 50 sayings. In data collection, we mainly followed the cases of structural and semantic transformations of the proverbs.

As expected and also shown below, proverbs in isolation (without being preceded or followed by a biasing context) are frequently used as headlines:

- (1) a. **Honesty is the best policy** (Hotpress, 2024).
- b. **Is honesty the best policy?** (The Guardian, 2013).
- c. **There is no place like home** (The Guardian, 2012).

A resolution phrase followed the proverb embedded in sentences. The example with consistent resolution phrases is given in (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), where the biasing context is in italics, the proverb is in bold font, and the resolution phrase is underlined.

- (2) **Where there's a *Will Smith* there's a way** to a sequel (the proverb embedded

into a sentence) (The Guardian, 2012).

(3) *Letter to the editor: **Where there's a will, there's a way to save historic buildings*** (the proverb embedded into a sentence) (Little Village, 2024).

(4) *A leopard like PepsiCo **cannot change its spots*** (the proverb embedded into a sentence) (The Guardian, 2012).

(5) *Rome wasn't built in a day and neither are books; the secret is starting* (the proverb embedded into a sentence) (SaportaReport, 2024).

(6) ***Practice makes perfect** for Moray Rugby Club kicking hero Rory Millar who has amassed over 500 points in Scottish rugby over past two seasons* (the proverb embedded into a sentence) (Nothern Scot., 2024).

(7) ***Practice makes perfect, right? Not so fast.** I think the more accurate version of that truism is that perfect practice makes perfect, and the Tampa Bay Rays offer living proof of this maxim every time they warm up before a game* (the proverb embedded into a sentence) (Forbes, 2024).

Incorporating traditional proverbs or transformed ones in mass media texts is motivated by several factors: 1) the author's desire to establish contact with the reader; 2) attract the reader's attention and encourage to read; 3) presenting the main topic or issue of the article in a concise, well-known, comprehensive manner. Proverbs featured in the titles or subtitles of mass media texts provide a short, concise, and expressive introduction to the topic. Thus, they have a pragmatic stylistic function in drawing attention to the correspondent idea or topic.

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CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR AS THE WAY OF CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

One of the most contentious topics in modern language studies is the term «concept» which refers to the fundamental element of our perception of the universe (Tatsenko, 2008). A. Martyniuk (2012) in the «Dictionary of Basic Terms of Cognitive and Discourse Linguistics» defines a concept as «the basic unit of structured knowledge in the human mind», which possesses a certain cultural load.

N. J. Enfield (2022) states that the main function of the concept is to establish a connection between ideas and the world.