РОЗДІЛ III. ФОЛЬКЛОРИСТИКА

THE LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY OF PROVERBS

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Proverbs are commonly thought to be highly recognizable, fixed textual building blocks with unique rhetorical potential. Proverbs incorporate features of the lexeme, the sentence, the phrase, the collocation, the text, and the quotation.

However, research proves that proverbs are flexible; they are part of contemporary communication and are used in a modern context and with a new meaning. There are many ways in which researchers refer to the phenomenon of proverb variation, e.g., anti-proverbs, reverse proverbs, creative formations, transformed proverbs, modern proverbs, and new proverbs.

Our experiment also proves that traditional proverbs tend to have different variations as they are frequently integrated into online publications. We define proverbs as communicative units, small topical texts with no titles, autonomous, and reflect the condensation of people's observations. The topics of proverbs reflect different areas of human life: health, nature, character, relatives/neighbors, officials, chiefs, people's hopes, thoughts, laws, and everyday customs.

As this experiment aimed to investigate the linguistic creativity of traditional proverbs, we focused on detecting and classifying proverbs' structural and semantic changes. In order to test this premise, we compiled the dataset of traditional proverbs as a "source document". Then, we searched for their transformed variant in online periodical publications to form a "target document".

The obtained results verified our hypothesis that proverbs undergo linguistic creativity and frequently appear in periodical publications. Moreover, we found that certain semantic and structural transformations of proverbs predominate. The analysis of the dataset has shown that in terms of structural changes of proverbs, the most typical types were transformation by expansion of the traditional proverb by adding lexical units (75%) and expansion of the conventional proverb by insertion of lexical units (17%). In comparison, the least common were cases of conventional proverb compression by elimination (8%). According to the data obtained, the most frequent semantic change in the transformed proverbs is using a proper name (23.5%), followed by adding a semantic group or lexical units (19.8%) and then using negation/opposition (9.9%).

ЛІНГВОКРЕАТИВНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ПРИСЛІВ'ЇВ

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Ключові слова: пареміологія, контекст, креативність, традиційні прислів'я, трансформовані прислів'я.

Прислів'я зазвичай тлумачаться як добре впізнавані, фіксовані текстові блоки з унікальним риторичним потенціалом. Прислів'я поєднують у собі риси лексеми, речення, словосполучення, тексту та цитати.

Проте наукові розвідки засвідчують, що прислів'я є гнучкими, вони є частиною сучасної комунікації й використовуються у сучасному контексті та з новим значенням. Є багато способів термінологічно позначити явище варіювання прислів'їв, наприклад, антиприслів'я, зворотні прислів'я, креативні утворення, трансформовані прислів'я, сучасні прислів'я та нові прислів'я.

Проведене дослідження також верифікує тезу того, що традиційні прислів'я мають тенденцію до різних варіацій, виступаючи інтегрованими конструкціями у статтях періодичних видань. Ми визначаємо прислів'я як комунікативні одиниці, невеликі тематичні тексти без заголовків, автономні мудрі сентенції, що відображають конденсацію народних спостережень. Тематика прислів'їв відображає різні сфери людського життя: здоров'я, природу, характер, родичів/сусідів, чиновників, начальників, народні сподівання, думки, закони, побутові звичаї.

Це дослідження мало на меті дослідити лінгвістичну креативність прислів'їв, тож фокус нашої уваги був зосереджений на виявленні та класифікації їх структурних і семантичних змін. З цією метою проводилося формування корпусу ілюстративного матеріалу, який уміщує масив традиційних прислів'їв та їх трансформовані варіанти.

Отримані результати підтвердили нашу гіпотезу про те, що прислів'я піддаються лінгвокреативності та часто з'являються в періодичних виданнях. Крім того, нами було схарактеризовано найчастіше уживані семантичні та структурні трансформації прислів'їв. Аналіз масиву даних засвідчив, що з точки зору структурних змін прислів'їв найбільш типовими є трансформації шляхом розширення традиційного прислів'я внаслідок додавання лексичних одиниць (75%) та розширення традиційного прислів'я за рахунок вставки лексичних одиниць (17%). Для порівняння, найменш поширеними виявилися випадки стягнення традиційного прислів'я шляхом скорочення (8%). Згідно з отриманими даними, найчастішою семантичною зміною в трансформованих прислів'ях є використання власної назви (23,5%), далі йде додавання семантичної групи або лексичних одиниць (19,8%), а потім – заперечення/ протиставлення (9,9%).

Introduction. Proverbs represent the lexicological and cultural wisdom of every nation. Life and language are constantly changing and developing. All the changes in society, science, and daily life are reflected in the new content of proverbs and sayings. Nowadays, English proverbs, which were integrated into literary texts and periodical publications (newspapers) frequently undergo modifications that testify to their dynamic nature. The transformed variants of English proverbs facilitate communicative situations and create connotations to follow specific intentions.

The multifaceted analysis of paremiological units has always provoked the interest of many scientists (e.g., A. Dundes, H.Ye. Kreidlin, A. Krikmann, W. Mieder, O. Lauhakangas, N. Norrick, A. Taylor). The term "proverb" is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary and the Cambridge Dictionary as follows:

1. A short, traditional, and pithy saying; a concise sentence, typically metaphorical or alliterative in form, stating a general truth or piece of advice; an adage or maxim [1].

2. A short sentence, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice: *The appetite, says the proverb, grows with eating* [2].

N. Norrik [3] argues that the proverbs are traditional, pithy, often formulaic and/or figurative, fairly stable, and generally recognizable 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. This differentiates them from non-sentential items like proverbial phrases, idioms, binomials, etc. Proverbs can be collected and anthologized 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 recognizable (relatively) fixed textual building blocks with unique rhetorical potential. Proverbs are valued as folk wisdom and bearers of traditional lore.

In-depth study of semiotic and semantic aspects of proverbs is presented by P. Grzybek [4]. The scholar introduces the idea of classifying the traditional sayings according to their speech act character, to their status as complex super-signs or categorizing them based on the assumption that proverbs are signs and models of typical situations. According to P. Grzybek, it is worth taking the three semiotic dimensions – the pragmatic, the syntactic, and the semantic dimension – as a starting point for analyzing the proverb's semiotics. The author points out that studying proverbs from cultural semiotics can give deep insides into various cultural mechanisms.

The contrastive study of the proverbs has been worked out by R. Petrova [5]. According to R. Petrova, contrastive paremiology is the theoretical extension of contrastive paremiography. Her research paper contributes in greater detail four sets of specific approaches in contrastive proverb studies: the semantic, the linguocultural, the cognitive, and the culturematic approaches.

Scholars have come up with various terms for denoting the basic thought or idea that is contained in a single proverb, a group of proverb synonyms in the same language, or in proverb equivalents or analogues in different languages. Apart from the terms thought, basic idea, denotational (direct, literal) meaning, figurative meaning, the sense of a proverb, etc., various other terms have been suggested for describing the semantics of proverbs to compare and contrast them, the most frequent being explanation, and definition, while others are message, concept, logeme, cultureme. The term logeme is used for describing proverb semantics, namely to designate the meaning not only of a single proverb text but instead of the summarized or generalized, primary meaning of a group of similar, thematically close proverbs. Scholars use the logeme for analyzing and classifying monolingual proverbs. R. Petrova is convinced that this unit can be used with even greater success in conducting cross-cultural studies, where proverbs in different languages can be described contrastively in very great detail by taking their generalized basic meaning as a starting point. The linguocultural approach has been steadily gaining popularity, especially among scholars engaged in contrastive linguocultural studies. With this approach, scholars have sought to bridge the gap between linguistics, cultural studies, and cognitive science. The cognitive approach's aims, objectives, and research methods closely relate to the linguocultural approach. The culturematic approach should be viewed as an extension, and a further elaboration of the linguocultural approach. A cultureme is a unit developed explicitly for conducting linguocultural contrastive studies of proverbs. A cultureme is axiologically marked, verbalized content, explicated through a semantic transformation of the question-answer kind, and represented by a noun or noun phrase [5].

M. Kuusi elaborated an electronic international type-system of proverbs entitled "The Matti Kuusi International Type System of Proverbs". The database was intended to study proverbs' structures and identify the main themes of proverbial thinking [6].

The terms "perverse proverb" and "anti-proverb" are widely used in linguistics were elaborated by well-known scientist W. Mieder [7]. He was among the pioneers of setting a transformation character of proverbs. W. Mieder focused on proverbs creation [7]; he detailed four major sources for common European proverbs: the Greek and the Roman Antiquity, the Bible, the Medieval Latin, and the loan translations. W. Mieder also directed attention to some modern proverbs' origin and stated that the mass media create some modern sayings; lines of popular songs and films, advertising slogans, book titles, bumper stickers, T-shirt inscriptions, headlines, etc., can very quickly turn into proverbs.

M. Coinnigh [8] provided a linguistic overview of the structural aspects of proverbs. He points out that most sayings adhere to certain grammatical formations regardless of language, and certain

syntactic structures are the favored architecture for creating new proverbs.

Ch. Doyle's [9] gave a wide range of uses of the traditional sayings with numerous examples for proverbs in poetry, prose fiction, plays, and other kinds of literature, e.g., in philosophical writings, political speeches, etc.

The current study investigates the linguistic creativity of proverbs used in online periodical publications. In this paper, we focus on structural and semantic transformations of proverbs. Moreover, we intend to distinguish the most common types of proverbs transformation. In particular, we leveraged an existing dataset of traditional proverbs to form a dataset of the same proverbs but integrated into a context with changes in semantics and structure.

Materials and procedure. To construct our dataset, we manually compiled a list of 400 "traditional proverbs" from the Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs [10]. By the notion "traditional proverbs" we understand proverbs in the form they take in the dictionary. We were focused on having a dataset of traditional proverbs from various topics, such as behavior, friendship, love, discipline, self-control, money matters, good, evil, etc. We didn't intend to collect proverbs from a particular category. Then, we searched for online periodical publications for the same proverbs but with transformations. The dataset of transformed proverbs was formed from articles from online periodical publications (The Guardian, The Times, The New York Times, Daily Mail, The Sunday Times, Daily Post, InvestmentNews, etc.).

The articles were published from 2014 to 2023. Our data set consisted of 400 "traditional proverbs" and 400 "transformed proverbs".

Results. Using the transformed proverbs dataset, we identified the most common types of structural changes (Fig. 1).

The analysis of the dataset has shown that in terms of structural changes of proverbs, the most typical types were transformation by expansion of the traditional proverb by adding lexical units (75%) and expansion of the traditional proverb by insertion of lexical units (17%). In comparison, the least common were cases of conventional proverb compression by elimination (8%).

A pie chart illustrates structural transformation by expansion/contraction (Fig. 2).

The examples of proverbs' structural transformations by expansion are as follows:

An apple a day keeps a doctor away (traditional proverb) → *Apple a day keeps **pills (but not doctors) away** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [11]; *Cut your coat according to your cloth (traditional proverb)* → ***You** cut your coat according to the cloth **in this game** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [12]; *Fortune favours the brave (traditional proverb)* → *Fortune favours the brave **as Arsenal fight Barcelona fire with fire** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [13]. Here we can see the addition of a new fragment to the original structure of the proverb.

There is no smoke without fire (traditional proverb) → *There **really** is no smoke without fire (the proverb embedded into the context)* [14]. This example is
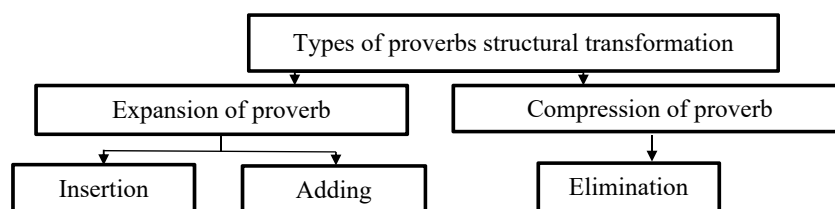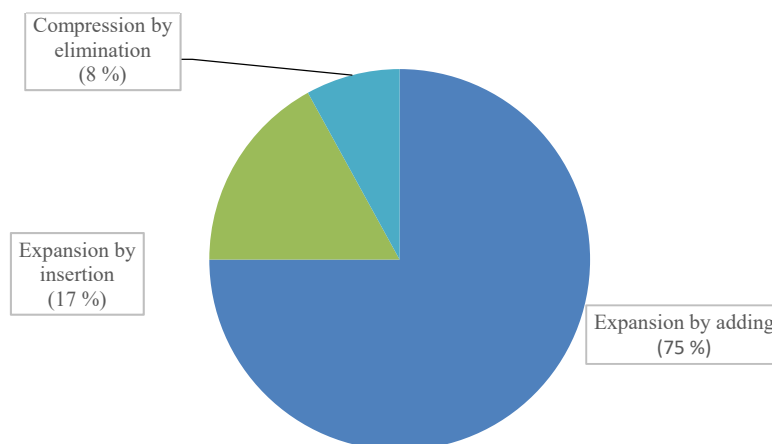

Fig. 1. Types of proverbs structural transformation

Fig. 2. Frequency of proverbs structural transformations

Table 1

Types of proverbs semantic transformations and their frequency

No.	Semantic transformations	Frequency
1.	Adding expressions of time and place	4.8
2.	The use of common nouns and proper nouns	26.9
3.	The use of negation/ opposition	11.5
4.	Replacing affirmative constructions with interrogative ones	7.2
5.	Specifying the reference objects	7.9
6.	Generalization of proverb's topic	7.2
7.	Mergence of words/word combinations	2.2
8.	Adding a semantic group or lexical units	21.5
9.	Intensification of proverb's themes	2.7
10.	The use of up-to-date terms	2.7
11.	Change of proverbs' grammatical form	5.4

characterized by the extension of the structure of the original proverb by the insertion of the lexical unit 'really'.

The examples of proverbs' structural transformations by compression are given below:

When in Rome, do as the Romans do (traditional proverb) → ***When in Rome ...*** *(the proverb embedded into the context)* [15]. This example illustrates the elimination of the second part of the original proverb.

In addition to the above-mentioned structural transformations, the semantic transformations of proverbs are also considered (Table 1).

According to the Table 1, in the transformed proverbs, the most common semantic change is the use of a common nouns (26.9%), followed by the addition of a semantic group or lexical units (21.5%), and then the usage of negation/opposition (11.5%), etc.

The following examples show some of the most common types of semantic transformation of proverbs:

Practice makes perfect (traditional proverb) → ***Great Britain*** *hope practice makes perfect **for European championships** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [16].

Money is the root of all evil (traditional proverb) → *'Money is **no longer** the root of all evil' – **Timaya** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [17].

When in Rome do as the Romans do (traditional proverb) → *When in Rome, **DON'T** do as the Romans (the proverb embedded into the context)* [18].

An apple a day keeps a doctor away (traditional proverb) → ***Does an apple a day keep the doctor away?*** *Dr Nighat busts some healthy living myths (the proverb embedded into the context)* [19].

Better the devil you know than the devil you don't → ***Better the Devil You Don't Know?*** *(the proverb embedded into the context)* [20].

Out of sight, but not out of mind (traditional proverb) → *Out of sight but **top of** mind: **SEC maintains ESG focus despite absence in exam***

priorities *(the proverb embedded into the context)* [21].

Kill two birds with one stone (traditional proverb) → *'I wanted to kill **three** birds with one stone': Costa Concordia's Captain Calamity admits he WAS showing off to ship's waiter, a friend on shore and passengers when he attempted fatal 'salute' to island (the proverb embedded into the context)* [22].

Rome was not built in a day (traditional proverb) → *Rome Wasn't Built in a Day, **and Neither Was the Metaverse** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [23].

Little knowledge is a dangerous thing (traditional proverb) → ***If a** little knowledge is a dangerous thing, **then Charlie Skelton is the deadliest olive farmer in Portugal** (the proverb embedded into the context* [24].

Nothing venture, nothing gained (traditional proverb) → *Nothing ventu**red**, nothing gained **by cautious Key** (the proverb embedded into the context)* [25].

Discussion. The main aim of this study was to analyze the linguistic creativity of traditional proverbs with a focus on structural and semantic changes. In order to test this hypothesis, we used traditional proverbs as "source document" because their large datasets are publicly available. Then, we searched for their transformed variant in online periodical publications to form a "target document". Our results indicate that transformed proverbs frequently appear in periodical publications. Specifically, they are integrated into a context. These results are not surprising as a proverb is considered a short, traditional, and pithy saying; a concise sentence, typically metaphorical or alliterative in form, stating a general truth or piece of advice; an adage or maxim. Usually, a proverb is given as a short sentence, etc., known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice. There are several arguments for using proverbs in periodical publications. First, proverbs are flexible; they can

be easily adjusted to contemporary communication or used in a modern context with a slightly modified or new meaning. Second, the process of innovation based on tradition becomes proof of the continuity of the traditional forms. Third, using proverbs in everyday life reminds us that folklore is a genuinely dynamic process.

Based on the analyses of the database, we can argue that a transformed proverb would only be recognizable to the reader if the traditional proverb on which it is based is known, allowing the reader to perceive the incongruity between the two expressions. Otherwise, the innovative communication strategy based on comparing canonical and new proverbs will make no sense. The juxtaposition of the traditional proverb with a creative variant forces the reader to think more critically. Whereas the old proverb acted as a set of preconceived rules, the modern transformed proverb is intended to activate us to overcome the naïve acceptance of traditional wisdom.

Conclusion and future work. In this study, we formed two datasets: traditional proverbs and transformed proverbs. Quantitative methods were used while collecting and analyzing numerical data. The results of this study indicate that proverbs are actively embedded in modern discourses. Furthermore, we found that certain semantic and structural transformations of proverbs occur. Our approach can easily be extended to cover more proverbs and other kinds of set expressions, such as idioms and sayings.

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