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# **A Comparative Study of English, Russian and Czech Proverbs**

## **Srovnávací studie anglických, ruských a českých přísloví**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis deals with the usage of proverbs in contemporary language and compares English, Russian and Czech proverbs. The theoretical part explains the differences in terminology between idiomatics and phraseology, defines phraseology and incorporates proverbs into the field of paremiology together with an explanation of its subject of study and paremiographic activities. Further on, the proverbs themselves are described and their individual types and subtypes are set apart. Attention is also paid to their origin and meaning in the past and today.

The practical part examines concrete proverbs of three languages. For the purpose of comparative study, four types of equivalence are established and on this basis, selected proverbs are compared and contrasted. The analysed proverbs are further examined from grammatical and semantic perspectives. The geographical viewpoint is also taken into account because it is evident that proverbs of the individual languages can differ due to the different locations of the given countries.

## **Anotace**

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na užití přísloví v současném jazyce a porovnává anglická, česká a ruská přísloví. Teoretická část vymezuje rozdíl v terminologii mezi idiomatikou a frazeologií. Práce dále definuje frazeologii a začleňuje přísloví do oboru paremiologie, společně s vysvětlením předmětu jejího studia a objasněním paremiografické činnosti. Dále jsou popsána samotná přísloví a vyčleněny jejich jednotlivé typy a podtypy. Pozornost je též věnována jejich původu a významu v minulosti a dnes.

Praktická část zkoumá konkrétní přísloví ve třech jazycích. Pro účely porovnávací studie jsou stanoveny čtyři různé druhy ekvivalence, na základě kterých jsou srovnávána vybraná přísloví. Tyto příklady jsou následně analyzovány jak z gramatického, tak i ze sémantického hlediska. Zkoumáno je též geografické hledisko, jelikož je zřejmé, že přísloví v jednotlivých jazycích se mohou lišit z důvodu odlišných geografických poloh daných zemí.

## **Poděkování**

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# **I Introduction**

The main objective of this thesis is to compare proverbs with animal images in three languages – English, Russian and Czech. The topic was chosen on the basis of my experiences with these languages and interest in phraseology, without which a good knowledge of any language is impossible.

Without competence in using proverbs, one will be limited in conversation and will have difficulty comprehending a wide variety of printed texts, radio, television, songs, etc., and will not understand proverb parodies which presuppose a familiarity with the proverb stock. Traditional proverbs as well as new proverbs and anti-proverbs are abundantly used in literary works, mass media, advertisements, graffiti and nowadays also frequently on the internet. Furthermore, proverbs are ideally suited to pedagogical purposes. Another reason for proverb study is their unique combination of properties that makes them interesting for research.

This thesis is divided into a theoretical and practical part.

The opening chapter deals with the linguistic disciplines that study proverbs and positions proverbs in the field of paremiology. The definition of the term proverb is provided.

The following chapters discuss the role of proverbs in modern communication and explain the most important sources and origin of proverbs.

Further chapters describe a typology of proverbs, highlighting the differences among proverbs and sayings and other types of proverbial expressions.

The following chapters deal with the classification systems of proverbs based on different criteria and explains problems connected with the categorisation of proverbs.

The next sections of the text are dedicated to a description of internal and external formal features of proverbs. They discuss structural peculiarities of proverbs, which include formulas typically used in these expressions and different kinds of parallelism with different forms of logical relationships between individual elements.

The closing chapters of the theoretical part are dedicated to syntactic features of proverbs and deal with elliptical constructions and sentential types of proverbial expressions. Stylistic devices commonly used in proverbs are described, such as alliteration, consonance, assonance, rhyme, rhythm and different figures of speech.



The practical part of the thesis is devoted to an analysis of a corpus comprised of 30 English proverbs with animal names and their equivalents in the Russian and Czech languages. These expressions are characterised from semantic, syntactic, lexical and phonological perspectives. A list of sources of excerpted material is included in the introduction to the practical part, which is followed by a description of degrees of equivalence determined for the purpose of the interlanguage research.

The proverbs selected for analysis are grouped according to the animal they refer to and arranged alphabetically. The resulting triplets of proverbs, i.e., each English proverb and its Russian and Czech equivalents, are organised in tables for ease of overview. The research itself is focused on a quantitative analysis of animal names, degrees of equivalence in proverbs, as well as on identifying stylistic devices and syntactic features of the selected proverbs.

All the excerpted proverbs are divided into groups according to the degree of equivalence and organised into tables, which are part of the appendix. A list of all the English proverbs used in the study is included as well.

## **II Theoretical Part**

### **1 Linguistic Classification of Proverbs**

#### **1.1 Phraseology and Idiomatics**

The lexicon of each language comprises individual lexical items (i.e., single words) as well as more or less fixed phrases (i.e., multiword expressions). The latter vary in terms of their fixedness and transparency. Some expressions may have literal meanings in one situation but figurative meanings in another, others are only used in their figurative meanings. Spontaneously produced speech combines words relatively freely (as long as the grammatical rules of the given language are observed), while fixed expressions are ready-made institutionalised units whose elements cannot be combined or changed at will. Fixed expressions consist of semantically dependent elements whose meanings in isolation are different than the meaning of the expression as a whole. The meaning of these expressions is semi-opaque (or semi-transparent).

There exist different perspectives in linguistics from which to approach these fixed expressions. The term phraseology is used to denote both the field of study and the subject of the study, i.e., a set of phraseological units (Fiedler, 2007, 15; Kvetko, 2009, 16). This inventory of phraseological units is termed the phrasicon, i.e., a collection of idioms and phrasal expressions (Fiedler, 2007, 15). Phraseology has not been considered as an independent discipline in English linguistics until recently. The study of phrasal expressions was regarded as part of lexicology. Before phraseology as a discipline of its own was established, the term idiomatology was used to refer to this field. The term idiom is now used as a hyperonym, i.e., an umbrella term for a variety of conventionalised phrasal expressions (Fiedler, 2007, 15).

The basic unit of phraseology is the phraseological unit, defined as “a lexicalized polylexemic linguistic unit which is characterised, in principle, by semantic and syntactic stability, and to a great extent by idiomaticity” (Fiedler, 2007, 28). Other terms are sometimes used interchangeably with the term phraseological unit, such as fixed expression, multiword lexeme, phraseme, etc. Some other terms, including proverb, saying, slogan, etc., are used to refer to specific types of phraseological units (Fiedler, 2007, 16, 37).

Slavic linguistics traditionally regards phraseology as an independent discipline (Kvetko, 2009, 14–15). The Czech linguist František Čermák uses the terms phraseology and idiomatics to denote the discipline concerned with phrasemes and idioms, the basic units of this field of study (Čermák, 2007, 83). Čermák describes both phrasemes and idioms as “a unique combination of minimally two elements, one (or more) of which does not function in the same way in another combination (combinations), or it occurs in just one expression” (Čermák, 2007, 83). As to the subtle difference between the phraseme and the idiom, Čermák argues that phraseme is the term used for an analysis of formal features, while idiom is used when analysing semantic features (Čermák, 2007, 85).

Fiedler applies the term idiom or idiomaticity to “the common phenomenon that the meaning of the expression is difficult or even impossible to derive from the meanings of the constituents it is composed of” (Fiedler, 2007, 22). There are different degrees to idioms in that some of them are fully opaque, i.e., real idioms, while others are fully transparent but are classified as idioms because they are used as fixed phrases (Fiedler, 2007, 22). Idiomaticity, therefore, is a scale and the phrasicon comprises units of varying degrees of idiomaticity (Fiedler, 2007, 23).

## **1.2 Phraseology and Paremiology**

Phraseology and paremiology are largely overlapping disciplines. As Mieder explains, “Phraseology, which is a study of phrases, is an umbrella term for the study of all phrasal collocations including the field of paremiology that is the study of proverbs” (Mieder, 2004, XIII). In this sense, paremiology is regarded as a subdiscipline of phraseology.

Phraseology, however, does not cover the subject of paremiology in its entirety because phraseology is not interested in the study of all folklore items, so riddles, curses, jokes, and others are excluded. On the other hand, paremiology is not concerned with items that are not of paremiological nature, which excludes phrasal verbs, social formulas, similes, etc. (Kvetko, 2009, 19).

The difference between phraseology and paremiology can also be described in terms of their approach to the subject of study. Phraseology is predominantly concerned with linguistic properties, whereas paremiology is an interdisciplinary field which encompasses aspects of anthropology, sociology, psychology, but also history, literature, culture in general and

others (Mieder, 2004, 119). As Mieder points out, paremiology not only analyses its subject in terms of language but also offers insights concerning the origin of proverbs, their spread and development, their use in literature and spoken language, etc. (Mieder, 2004, 119).

### **1.3 Paremiology and Paremiography**

Paremiology is generally understood as a study of proverbs and other folklore language items. The purpose of paremiology is to define, describe and classify proverbs, analysing both their form and content, but also their function, meaning and value (Mieder, 2004, XII). Paremiography is a narrower discipline, whose purpose is to collect, organise and record proverbs for future generations (Mieder, 2004, XII). Paremiography requires its practitioners to encompass an extended period of time, from the most ancient proverbs to the most recent ones, and to see the old and the new proverbs in a broad cultural context. Newly appearing proverb collections are added to an annual list of the *International Bibliography of New and Reprinted Proverb Collections*, included in Mieder's *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*.

## **2 Definition of Proverbs**

Although researchers as well as laypeople can easily recognise a proverb when they see one, establishing a single universally accepted definition of the proverb has proved to be a difficult task. The difficulty is to devise a concise yet comprehensive definition that would capture the characteristics of proverbs while at the same time clearly setting them apart from other similar items, such as aphorisms, maxims, quotations, etc. Wolfgang Mieder, a leading paremiologist, recognised that because proverbs are rooted in folklore, it might be helpful to approach the very creators and perpetuators of folklore in order to formulate a working definition. After addressing fifty-five laymen with the request to explain in their own words what a proverb is, he compiled the following canonical definition: “Proverbs [are] concise traditional statements of apparent truths with currency among the folk. More elaborately stated, proverbs are short, generally known, sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and that are handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder, 2004, 4). This definition successfully covers all the major aspects of proverbs, including their fixed form, their moralising intent and their traditional folklore character.

### 3 Role of Proverbs

Proverbs always were and are still used nowadays as an effective tool of expressing various meanings and intentions in a condensed form in spoken and written language. Since proverbs possess diverse stylistic and pragmatic potential, this enables them to fulfil many different functions and perform different roles in oral and written communication.

Proverbs are frequently used in everyday social interaction to communicate general human concerns in a traditional, familiar language. Proverbs are “regarded as socially accepted formulations of convictions, values, and norms to a specific culture and era” and as such they fulfil social function (Burger, Dobrovol’skij, Kühn, & Norrick, 2007, 107). In specific communicative situations, they play different roles as speech acts depending on the type of proverb and the type of communicative setting where they are used, for example, “warning, persuasion, argument, confirmation, comfort, appeasement, conviction, admonition, reprimand, assessment, characterization, explanation, description, justification, or summarization” (Jesenšek, 2015, 135).

It is only social context that gives the proverb its meaning. As Mieder points out, “a proverb in a collection that merely enumerates uncontextualized proverb texts is for all general purposes meaningless” (Mieder, 1993, 11). “By employing proverbs in our speech we wish to strengthen our arguments, express certain generalizations, influence or manipulate other people, rationalize our own shortcomings, question certain behavioural patterns, satirize social ills, poke fun on ridiculous situations, and so on” (Mieder, 1993, 11). These examples of the various uses of proverbs to achieve various goals illustrate the pragmatic (contextual) function of proverbs.

The relationship between the speaker of the proverb and its recipient is to be understood as a reciprocal relationship because “for example a proverb can support an argument (= contextual function) only if the speaker and the recipient understand it as a formulation of a general rule (= social function)” (Hrisztova-Gotthard & Varga, 2015, 135). The following examples show proverbs that serve different kinds of intentions and purposes in concrete speech acts:

Implicit criticism: *The world is full of fools.* (Fergusson, 2000, 100)

Advice: *If you want a thing well done, do it yourself.* (Fergusson, 2000, 236)

Warning: *Better go away longing than loathing.* (Fergusson, 2000, 126)

Because proverbs are typically metaphorical in meaning, they enable to communicate the message in an indirect or figurative way rather than stating it explicitly. Speech acts may be realized in two ways: either directly or indirectly. The proverb as a metaphorical expression counts among indirect speech acts. Due to their indirect and metaphorical character, proverbs enable their speakers to respond to a wide range of situations but at the same time to conceal their own thoughts and opinions (Norrick, 1985, 27).

When the speakers use a proverb, they simply repeat a generally known phrase and do not use their own words to express themselves. In this way, proverbs can play the role of indirect criticism. The speaker of the proverb does not present the criticism as his or her personal opinion but rather as the opinion of the society or the majority of people. The speaker therefore avoids responsibility for this criticism. Furthermore, as Barajas (2010, 104) states, “if the receivers of the proverb are to understand the intended meaning of the same, then they must go through the process of decoding its analogical structure as it relates to their context; this participation in the criticism reinforces the message that the criticism is founded on shared social expectations”.

Another characteristic function of proverbs is described by Burger et al. (2007, 118): “Since proverbs are regarded as universal statements or generalizing propositions, they are suitable for supporting particular statements as inference rules in argumentative contexts.” For example, the proverb *All roads lead to Rome* can be understood as referring not only specifically to Rome but to the different ways that can lead to the goal (Jesenšek, 2015, 145). On the surface, proverbs speak about specific situations from everyday life, but under the surface, they are general truths that apply to many similar situations.

Proverbs play an important role in many genres of texts. They are most often associated with journalistic and literary texts. Journalists often use proverbs in a creative manner and sometimes even change them to achieve a specific effect. Proverbs are suitable for the journalistic style because they allow the writer to express a complex thought or opinion in a simple way. Additionally, proverbs used in headlines attract the attention of the reader and raise curiosity to read the whole article and find out what the proverb refers to in this specific situation (Jesenšek, 2015, 153–154). For example, Fiedler (2007, 74) mentions the headline *Don't wait until the cows come home* that appeared in *The Economist* (12 December 1992).

Particularly in journalistic texts, proverbs can be used to organise the text and give it structure. A proverb used in the headline or at the beginning of the text can serve to introduce

the topic, which is then developed further in the rest of the text. When a proverb is placed at the end of the text, it can function as a summary of the idea or the opinion of the text. Furthermore, proverbs can be used to open arguments and discussions within the text (Fiedler, 2007, 73).

In literary texts, proverbs can be used for aesthetic purposes. Proverbs as metaphorical expressions make the text more expressive and vivid, so they also serve as stylistic devices. They are however not used for their aesthetic value only, but also for their meaning. Because proverbs are associated with traditions and conventions, some modern writers play with the wording of proverbs and change it to achieve a surprising effect. Proverbs changed in this way can be used to express that the old and traditional truths may no longer be true. Proverbs can therefore be rewritten, manipulated and parodied (Fiedler, 2007, 85). As Fiedler (2007, 47) concludes: “Such parodies and modifications are therefore proof that proverbs are very much alive today and that there is no doubt about their future longevity.”



## 4 Origin of Proverbs

It is difficult to attempt to identify the origin of each proverb in terms of the person who said the proverb first and introduced it into general use. This is because proverbs are by definition ancient pieces of folk wisdom and many of them date to the medieval times or even classical antiquity. Another reason for the difficulty of finding out the original authors of proverbs is the fact that proverbs started to circulate orally in the first place, hence we have no evidence of their use in spoken language. However, based on the content of the proverbs, their reference to specific objects and their language, we can at least estimate in which period they originated (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 32).

Several sources of origin of proverbs in European languages, including English, have been identified. Among the classical ancient writers, Aristotle was the first to study proverbs. Further proverbs are to be found in Plato, Homer, Aristophanes and others. The proverb *Big fish eat little fish*, for example, is attributed to the ancient Greek author Hesiod (Mieder, 1993, 12). Latin proverbs were used in school translation exercises, which contributed to their spread to other languages (Mieder, 2014, 13). In the Renaissance period, Erasmus of Rotterdam contributed to the spread and study of proverbs with his work *Adagia*, a collection of proverbs, their explanations and comments on them. In Germany, Martin Luther contributed with his translations of classical proverbs and with many original German proverbs.

The earliest source of proverbs is classical Greece and Rome, from where proverbs spread in Latin into other parts of Europe. Classical proverbs exist in similar wordings in many European languages, which evidences their origin from the same source. Among these proverbs are, for example, *Where there is smoke, there is fire* (in 54 European languages); *Barking dogs do not bite* (51 languages); *One swallow does not make a summer* (49); *Walls have ears* (46); *One hand washes the other* (46); *Make haste slowly* (43); *Children and fools tell the truth* (41); *Still waters run deep* (38); and *Love is blind* (37) (Mieder, 2014, 15–16).

Another source of proverbs is the Bible and other religious texts. The Bible was widely translated, which is how biblical proverbs made it into everyday language of the people. Biblical proverbs have the same or similar wordings in many European languages because they all come from the same source. Examples of biblical proverbs include *As you sow, so you reap* (in 52 European languages; Galatians 6:7); *He who digs a pit for others falls in himself* (48 languages; Proverbs 26:27); *He that will not work, shall not eat* (43; 2

Thessalonians 3:10); *A prophet is not without honour save in his own country* (39; Matthew 13:57); *An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth* (38; 2 Moses 21:24); and *There is nothing new under the sun* (29; Ecclesiastes 1:9) (Mieder, 2014, 16).

Yet another, later source of proverbs is medieval Latin, which was the lingua franca in medieval times. Although the older, classical ancient proverbs also circulated first in Latin, new proverbs originally in Latin were created as well. These new Latin proverbs were further translated into other languages. Among these proverbs are, for example, *Crows will not pick out crows' eyes* (in 48 European languages); *Strike while the iron is hot* (48 languages); *New brooms sweep clean* (47); *All that glitters is not gold* (47); *When the cat is away, the mice will play* (46); *The pitcher goes so long to the well until it breaks at last* (40); *No rose without thorns* (39); *At night all cats are grey* (38); and *Clothes do not make the man* (37) (Mieder, 2014, 16–17). Interesting is the proverb *All roads lead to Rome* (33 languages), where Rome is sometimes replaced by another city (Mieder, 2014, 16–17).

The last source of European proverbs is the most recent: it is the spread of proverbs from the United States to Europe, which is the reverse of the original process. American proverbs come from popular culture and mass media and have been coming to Europe since the mid-twentieth century. From the current lingua franca, English, these proverbs are then translated into other languages. Among these proverbs are *A picture is worth a thousand words*; *It takes two to tango*; and *Garbage in, garbage out* (Mieder, 2014, 17). This process illustrates that proverbs continue to be created even now. Many traditional proverbs are recreated and rephrased or otherwise modernised, such as the American proverb *Money won't buy happiness* and its modern parody *Money won't buy happiness, but it will go a long way in helping you*. (Mieder, 2008, 87).

## **5 Typology of Proverbs**

### **5.1 Proverbs and Sayings**

Proverbs and proverbial sayings have much in common, which is why some researchers group them without distinction together under the generic label “proverbs” or under the title “proverbs and proverbial sayings”. Other researchers seek to distinguish the two. Ultimately, the boundaries between proverbs and proverbial sayings often blur, especially in spoken language when the proverbs or sayings are modified.

The chief distinction between proverbs and sayings is the didactic intent and wisdom of proverbs, which is missing in proverbial sayings. Norrick argues that “didactic content is a definitional criterion of the proverb” (Norrick, 1985, 43). Proverbs are intended to moralise, judge and instruct. In contrast, sayings serve rather to express an emotional attitude or assessment of a situation. Examples of such sayings that convey an expressive evaluation without providing a moralising generalisation are *It is easy to speak*, *A little bird told me* or *It’s like snow on my head* (Norrick, 1985, 43).

Starchević points out another difference between proverbs and sayings, which is the structural and semantic completeness of proverbs that is lacking in proverbial sayings (Starchević, 1996, 23). Proverbs are complete sentences that can stand on their own and can be applied to various different situations. On the other hand, sayings are often incomplete sentences and typically refer to one specific situation only (Starchević, 1996, 23).

Given the broader frame of reference of proverbs, they are more figurative than sayings. Sayings have a narrower frame of reference and are therefore understood literally rather than figuratively. Arora considers metaphorical or figurative features typical for proverbs as one of the main characteristics that distinguishes proverbs from traditional sayings (Arora, 1984, 7).

### **5.2 Weather Proverbs**

Proverbs and proverbial sayings regarding weather, seasons and husbandry are possibly the largest subcategory in terms of themes of proverbs. Czech phraseology categorises weather proverbs and sayings as a subcategory of proverbs. In English, weather proverbs are commonly also grouped with other types of proverbs under the general proverb label.

However, Alan Dundes (1989), for example, argues that weather sayings cannot be regarded as proverbs, rather, they should be seen as superstitions that happen to take on a fixed form resembling proverbs (Mieder, 2008, 5).

The difficulty with classifying weather sayings as true proverbs is the fact that these formulations serve to predict weather, hence they are to be understood literally rather than metaphorically (Arora, 1991; Dundes, 1989). Furthermore, they do not serve a didactic purpose, which is an essential feature of proverbs. Mieder adds that weather proverbs are also more precisely termed “predictive sayings, weather rules, and weather signs” (Mieder, 2004, 26). Their purpose is to observe a causal relationship between two natural events and formulate a weather forecast based on this relationship.

The typical structure is “If/when A, then B”, such as in *If it rains before seven, it will clear by eleven*; *When the cat in February lies in the sun, she will again creep behind the stove in March*; and *If the spring is cold and wet, then the autumn will be hot and dry*. This type of sayings is based on observations of the changing weather and the natural cycle of seasons for many generations. Although their purpose is prognostic and their meaning is literal rather than metaphorical, some of them may be interpreted on a figurative level as well, such as *Make hay while the sun shines*; *Every cloud has a silver lining*; *Lightning never strikes twice in the same place*.

These sayings may come across as unfounded superstitions, however, as contemporary meteorologists confirm, some of them are actually relevant and surprisingly accurate, including the saying *Red sky at night, sailor’s delight; red sky in the morning, sailor take warning* (Mieder, 2004, 27). Weather sayings are also of great interest to scholars and proverb collectors. Matti Kuusi, for example, produced an extensive book called *Regen bei Sonnenschein* (1957), which is concerned with the many variants of the saying *When it rains and the sun shines...* This saying is completed in different languages as follows:

*When it rains and the sun shines,*  
... *foxes are on a marriage parade.* (Japanese)  
... *the devil is getting married.* (Bulgarian)  
... *mushrooms are growing.* (Russian)  
... *good weather is coming.* (German)

Collectors usually regard weather sayings as proverbs, such as W. Mieder, A. Stewart and M. E. Kingsbury, who published an annotated collection of more than four thousand weather

sayings collected in North America in the latter half of the twentieth century, under the title *Weather Wisdom: Proverbs, Superstitions, and Signs* (1996).

### 5.3 Proverbs and Anti-proverbs

Proverbs are defined as fixed expressions, however, even they can undergo changes. Traditional proverbs are often updated, modified and parodied; in fact, so often that their newer variations are sometimes used more frequently than their original forms. Wolfgang Mieder describes these innovated proverbs as “Anti-Sprichwörter”, which translates into English as “anti-proverbs”. This label has been accepted by scholars worldwide to describe “parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom” (Mieder, 2004, 28).

Mieder explains that anti-proverbs are formed by taking the original proverb structure and changing some of the words (Mieder, 2004, 28). The original proverb must still be recognisable if the anti-proverb is to be recognised by recipients as such. Even such a slight change as replacing one word for another can bring about striking effects, changing the meaning of the original proverb, sometimes so that the anti-proverb means the opposite from the original proverb (Mieder, 2004, 28).

Out of the numerous techniques that can be utilised to create anti-proverbs, the use of clever puns is perhaps the most popular one. Puns rely on word play, often a humorous use of words which are polysemous, homonymous or otherwise open to ambiguity. This type of anti-proverbs is represented by examples such as *Where there’s a will (referring to future) there’s a wait* or *Where there’s a bill, we’re away*.

Other common techniques to produce anti-proverbs are as follows:

- (1) Replacing a single word. The original word can be substituted by a word that sounds and/or is spelled in a similar way. Examples: *Strike while **the irony** is hot – Strike while **the iron** is hot; Use **clay** while the sun shines – Make **hay** while the sun shines* (Fiedler, 2007, 91).
- (2) Replacing two or more words. Examples: *One man’s drive is another man’s funeral – One man’s meat is another man’s poison; A brain is no stronger than its weakest think – A chain is no stronger as its weakest link*.

- (3) Altering one part of a binary proverb. Example: *If at first you don't succeed, give up – If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.*
- (4) Elaborating a proverb by adding more words. Example: *An apple a day keeps the doctor away and an onion a day keeps everyone away.*
- (5) Adding more words to achieve a literal interpretation. Example: *When one door shuts, another opens, which means that you live in a draughty house.*
- (6) Reversing word order or changing sounds/letters to form a different word. Example: *Let sleeping gods lie – Let sleeping dogs lie.* Here, the humorous effect is achieved both by the change of *dogs* to *gods* and the homonymy of the verb *lie*.
- (7) Word-repetition. Example: *The man who lives by bread alone, lives alone – Man doesn't live by bread alone.*
- (8) Mixing two proverbs into one. Example: *A penny saved gathers no moss – A penny saved is a penny earned; A rolling stone gathers no moss.*
- (9) Combing the above techniques, so that the original proverb becomes almost unrecognisable. Example: *When the boss tells a joke, he who laughs, lasts* (Litovkina, 2019, 29–35).

Anti-proverbs are used similarly as traditional proverbs, in personal communication as well as in public texts and speeches. However, anti-proverbs particularly abound in humorous literature, such as comics and cartoons, and also in advertising, journalism, magazines and newspapers. The lively existence of anti-proverbs illustrates that proverbs continue to be a significant part of our language.

## 5.4 Wellerism Proverbs

Wellerisms are a subtype of proverbs that follow a distinctive syntactic pattern and are used to express humour, irony or satire. Wellerisms typically consist of three parts: 1) a statement in the form of a proverb, 2) the speaker of the statement, 3) a comment on the statement that places it in an unexpected context, which results in a humorous or ironic situation (Mieder, 2004, 15).

Wellerisms are named after Samuel Weller, a character in Charles Dickens's novel *The Pickwick Papers*, who is known for making a great use of exactly this type of proverbs. Although the term for Wellerisms was established only in the nineteenth century with the publication of Dickens's novel, Wellerisms existed and were freely used a long time before that.

A typical example of a Wellerism in English is:

*“I see,” said the blind carpenter as he picked up his hammer and saw.*

[statement] + [speaker] + [context]

Another example:

*“Every evil is followed by some good,” as the man said when his wife died the day after he*

[statement/proverb] + [speaker] + [context]

*became bankrupt.* (Mieder, 2004, 15)

An alternative structure of Wellerisms is starting with the speaker and only then continuing with the comment or the context and the actual proverb. This type is not that common:

*For as the old maid remarked about kissing the cow, “It’s all a matter of taste.”*

[speaker] + [context] + [statement/proverb] (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 120)

## 6 Classification of Proverbs

Classifying proverbs is a complex question given the large size and considerable variety of the body of proverbs. So far, paremiologists have not agreed on a single unified classification, which is not surprising, given that each classification is an artificial construct and none can entirely account for all the existing examples of proverbs. There exist different classifications of proverbs according to different criteria. Each type of classification is suitable for a specific purpose but usually less suitable for other purposes. Owing to the multifaceted nature of proverbs, it is a challenging task to devise a concise and meaningful classification system.

The most common classification systems order proverbs by alphabet, by theme and by keywords, respectively. Proverb collections often use the alphabetical system, which is the most straightforward one. Although the alphabetical system is the easiest and the most obvious choice for publication purposes, it is the least convenient system for researching proverbs from a linguistic, thematic or comparative perspective. The alphabetical arrangement makes it difficult to locate proverb variants starting with a different word or proverb equivalents in different languages.

Some proverb compilations also comprise an index of themes or keywords, which makes it easier to find a particular proverb. Thematic indexes may include proverb subjects such as money, love, knowledge and wisdom, children and parents and many others. A thematic classification groups individual proverbs according to the themes they cover and/or the ideas they express.

Keywords, or base words contained in the proverb, partly overlap with themes and may include terms such as man and woman, god and devil, food and drink, animals, human qualities, etc. A classification by keywords is useful for the purpose of comparative studies of proverbs within and across cultures. This type of classification is particularly suitable for a semantic research of proverbs in terms of their meaning, however, it is not helpful for research interested, for instance, in the formal structure of proverbs in terms of syntax.

One of the examples of a thematic classification is Matti Kuusi's seminal work on the international type-system of proverbs. Kuusi created this classification system for the purpose of folkloristic and linguistic research. His systematisation of proverbs aims to facilitate the study of structures as well as main themes recurrent in proverbs. Kuusi's work was continued by his daughter, Outi Lauhakangas, and resulted in a system based on the



meaning of proverbs. In this manner, thirteen major categories of proverbs were created, most of them representing various aspects of human life (Lauhakangas, 2001):

- A. Practical knowledge of nature
- B. Faith and basic attitudes
- C. Basic observations and socio-logic
- D. The world and human life
- E. Sense of proportion
- F. Concepts of morality
- G. Social life
- H. Social interaction
- J. Communication
- K. Social position
- L. Agreements and norms
- M. Coping and learning
- T. Time and sense of time

The thirteen key themes are furthermore divided into 52 classes, from A1 to T4, and these are even further divided into 325 subgroups. The distribution of proverbs in these classes and subgroups is not even, some subgroups have only a few proverbs listed under them, while others count dozens of proverbs. To illustrate the concept, here are the eight classes which comprise the main theme of Social Life:

- G. Social life
  - G1 kinship
  - G2 development—a person's background
  - G3 child: parents / upbringing
  - G4 man: woman / ranking and position of both sexes
  - G5 marriage
  - G6 youth: old age
  - G7 health: illness
  - G8 death / the dead

Kuusi was interested not only in the semantic aspect of proverbs but also in their structural properties, which makes his system highly elaborate and quite comprehensive. As to the proverb structures, Kuusi focused on repeated formulas which are used to create new

proverbs. He gathered similar proverb structures from different languages to illustrate that a shared idea exists across nations, languages and cultures. This type of proverbs are presented as a global type. Furthermore, Kuusi introduced a series of symbols which indicate for each group of proverbs what the logical relationship expressed in the proverb is: comparison, cause and effect, description, warning, expression of a positive or negative value, etc. (Mieder, 2004, 17).

The advantage of Kuusi's system is its openness, which means that new themes and therefore new groups can be added when the need arises (Lauhakangas, 2001, 76). Kuusi attempted to comprise universal human archetypes of thought across the world. His system is international, based on a large database of proverbs in different world languages. The resulting cross-cultural system is helpful for comparative and contrastive proverb studies.

While Kuusi's type-system of proverbs is international and takes into account both semantic and structural aspects, Arvo Krikmann (2007) focused on the Estonian language and compiled a system of syntactic prototypes of proverbs in this language. According to Krikmann (2007), fixed syntactic structures are the major feature of traditional proverbs. His list of proverbs according to their syntactic types includes the following:

- A. Non-equative simple sentences
- B. Non-equative sentences with recurrent parts
- C. Equalities and comparisons
- D. Inequalities (including preferences)
- E. Symmetric implicational patterns
- F. Units with parallel list supra-level
- G. Units with an imperative verb form
- H. Rhetorical questions
- I. Exceptional forms

The above classes are furthermore split into three levels of subclasses, creating a total of 144 syntactic types. The main classes as well as the subclasses are given a T or V value and a number, such as 60–170, which refers to 60 unique proverbs found in 170 authentic texts. To give an example, let us take a type from subclass F4b1, parallelism: the formula is *If..., then... or When..., then...* (80–460) and examples include the proverb *If swans fly low, there'll be a shallow winter, if swans fly high, there'll be a deep winter* (Krikmann, 2007).

Another classification of proverbs was proposed by Neal Norrick, who based his classification on proverbs found in the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (Honeck, 1997, 130–135). His list is based on the type of figure used in the proverb, which results in the following five categories: synecdoche, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and paradox (these types are described in more detail in chapter Semantic Features of Proverbs). Unlike the previously mentioned classifications, this system assumes that proverbs always have a figurative meaning, which is, however, not the case. Some proverbs can function both figuratively and literally, depending on the context.

To conclude, proverbs are so rich in meanings and forms that they resist an easy classification. Although multiple classification systems exist, none of them is universal and suitable for all purposes. Mieder argues that because of “the polyfunctionality, polysemanticity, and polysituativity of proverbs no classification system, no matter how elaborate, could possibly include all of these variables” (Mieder, 2001).

## **7 Structural Features of Proverbs**

Proverbs as fixed phraseological units often demonstrate specific syntactic structures in a much more consistent manner than other types of utterance. During their evolution, proverbs have acquired rigid structural patterns that cannot be freely modified. International collections of proverbs show that proverbs occur in certain specific structures in a wide number of languages. While some of them appear in equivalent forms in many languages throughout the world, some unique proverbs are limited to a few related languages only. The proverb is one type of formulaic expressions and it shares many characteristics with other formulaic expressions, such as idioms, social speech formulas, etc.

### **7.1 Proverbial formulae**

One of the structural properties that very often occurs in proverbs is their fixedness. Alan Dundes (1975, 962) concludes that even if the structure of individual proverbs may vary “there appears to be finite number of proverb compositional and architectural formulas”. Archer Taylor (1962, 16) observes that “New proverbs have often been made on old models. Certain frames lend themselves readily to the insertion of entirely new ideas”.

Diana Van Lancker Sidtis (2011, 248) identifies three salient features of formulaic expressions. Firstly, formulaic expressions are static in terms of structure: they typically use the same syntactic structure and the same lexical items, though there may be some minor variety, e.g. in the use of synonyms. Secondly, formulaic expressions have a fixed meaning, which often conveys conventional wisdom and is often interpreted figuratively. Finally, formulaic expressions depend for their function on pragmatics.

Alison Wray (2000, 465) explains that formulae are “prefabricated: that is stored and retrieved whole from the memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar”. This also means that formulae may retain linguistic features that have meanwhile become obsolete, such as archaic words or grammar. Formulaic expressions are inherited from generation to generation: “They are holistically acquired and used in a language community based on shared knowledge of the stereotyped, canonical form, the conventionalized meaning, and conditions of use” (Van Lancker Sidtis, 2011, 248).

Proverbs are included in the broader category of formulaic expressions because like other formulae, proverbs are static in terms of both form and content. Unlike some other formulae,

proverbs are sentential, they always form a complete (if elliptical) propositional statement. In their standard usage, proverbs are stereotyped, routinised and conventionalised. Proverbs as formulaic expressions are “memorised holistically (i.e., as a whole) by the language users” and “are not produced anew as random sequences of words are, but only reproduced” (Fiedler, 2007, 21).

Proverbial formulaic expressions are therefore ready-made units and as such, they typically share a similar structure. This fixed or partly fixed syntactic construction is used as a template for many proverb variations in a given language within a given culture. Additionally, proverbial formulae across languages seem to work on similar principles. Some syntactic structures typical for proverbs occur frequently and recur even across many different languages. Thousands of proverbs in many languages can be reduced to the following typical structures (Fiedler, 2007, 46; Norrick, 1985, 95):

*Better X than Y* (e.g. Better poor with honour than rich with shame.)

*Like X, like Y* (e.g. Like master, like man.)

*No X without Y* (e.g. No work, no pay.)

*One X doesn't make a Y* (e.g. One swallow does not make a summer.)

*If X, then Y* (e.g. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.)

*Where there's X, there's Y* (e.g. Where there's a will, there's a way.)

*The X-er, the Y-er* (e.g. The nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat.)

*So X, so Y* (e.g. So far, so good.)

The simple but effective structure *Better X than Y*, for instance, is one of the most widely spread and can be seen in the following examples of three languages:

*Lejší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše.*

*Better later than never.*

*Лучше жить в тесноте, чем в обиде.*

## 7.2 Updated proverbs

Proverbs are traditionally used as stock phrases with stock meanings, however, creative users of language may rephrase an old proverb for a new purpose. When a traditional proverb is modified in this manner, it is typically updated to reflect modern conditions. These new proverbs or anti-proverbs use the most well-known old proverbs as templates. The syntactic structure of such updated proverbs usually does not change, what changes are some lexical

items only. For the new proverb to achieve the desired effect, it must still be recognisable as a derivative.

The knowledge of the most popular proverbs is almost universal among native speakers of the language. Fiedler (2007, 46) confirms the speakers' awareness of proverbs as a widespread phenomenon when he points out that "a mere allusion to a proverb is often sufficient to evoke the entire proverb". Owing to this fact, typical syntactic structures of traditional proverbs can be reused to compose a new proverb that better corresponds to the opinions of the present day. The structural properties remain the same but the meaning changes, reflecting the change of the times.

### **7.3 Parallel Structures**

Parallel structures, also known as parallelism, are one of the characteristic features of proverbs. Roman Jakobson defines parallelism as a device "which depends on the principle of equivalence ... or on the repetition of the same structural pattern: commonly between phrases or clauses" (Jakobson, 1987, in Wales, 2011, 301–302). More generally, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 945) describe parallelism in proverbs as "a juxtaposition of two expressions of like form" and give the example of the proverb "*The sooner, the better*" as an elliptical correlative structure which can be rephrased as "The sooner you do something, the better it will be".

Parallelism is commonly used in proverbs because it makes them more memorable. The language of proverbs is often similar to the language of poetry in that it uses rhetorical figures of speech and metaphorical language. The use of parallel structures makes proverbs more rhetorically powerful because parallelism gives proverbs a distinct pattern and rhythm. In addition to it, proverbs often make use of rhyme, which is another feature they have in common with poetry. A case of parallelism combined with rhyme is for example the proverb "*A friend in need is a friend indeed*".

#### **7.3.1 Syntactic Parallelism**

In practice, parallelism in proverbs consists of a repetition of equivalent syntactic structures, whether clauses or phrases, or individual words that are similar in length, grammatical form and meaning (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 122). This achieves the effect of either

emphasising similarity or pointing out contrast. Parallelism relies either on juxtaposing contrasting images or ideas to show the difference between them or on joining similar concepts to show how they are connected. An example of a proverb based on a parallel structure with an ellipsis of the verb is “*No work, no pay*”.

Given their parallel structure, proverbs can be typically broken up into two parts. Murphy (1990, 6) refers to these two parts or clauses as stitches. The two structurally and semantically distinct parts of the proverb are also referred to as couplets. An example of structural parallelism is the proverb “*Out of sight, out of mind*”, where the prepositional phrase is repeated to emphasise the equivalent meaning of the two parts of the proverb. On the other hand, the proverb “*Nothing ventured, nothing gained*” uses parallelism to emphasise the contrast between the two clauses.

Alan Dundes (1981, 53) argues that with respect to functional sentence perspective, the binary structure of proverbs can be divided into a topic and a comment. The first part of the structure comprises the topic or the subject of the conversation and the second part of the structure provides a comment on the topic. These two parts together are called the descriptive element. In its simplest form, the topic-comment structure is represented by two words, for instance in the proverb “*Money talks*”, where “*money*” is the topic and “*talks*” is the comment. Also more elaborate proverbs, like “*Barking dogs seldom bite*” (“barking dogs” is the topic, “seldom bite” is the comment) manifest the topic-comment structure.

### **7.3.2 Oppositional and Non-oppositional Parallelism**

Dundes (1981, 53) further distinguishes between non-oppositional and oppositional proverbs according to the relationship of the descriptive elements contained in the proverb. Proverbs including a single descriptive element are always non-oppositional but proverbs with two or more descriptive elements can be either non-oppositional or oppositional.

Non-oppositional or equational proverbs can be noted down in the form of an equation, such as in *First come, first served*, which can be noted as *first come = first served*. The same rule applies to more complex proverbs with multiple descriptive elements, such as *Where there's life, there's hope*, implying *life = hope* (Dundes, 1981, 53).

In contrast, oppositional multi-element proverbs contain an antithetical contradiction, which means that the individual descriptive elements cannot be linked with an equal sign. “*The*

*mob has many heads but no brains*” is an example of this type of proverb, where the mob ≠ many brains (Dundes, 1981, 54).

Finally, Dundes (1981, 59) points out that equational and oppositional features may be combined within a single proverb, such as “*The longest way round is the shortest way found*”. There is seemingly an equation of “the longest way” = “the shortest way”, but in fact, the lexical items “longest” and “shortest” are opposites, hence the overall resonance is oppositional rather than equational.

Oppositional proverbs may use a variety of forms to express the opposition, whether a simple overt negation or an opposition of semantic antonyms, which mostly derive from the word categories of adjectives and adverbs, such as:

<i>one</i>	<i>versus</i>	<i>two</i>
<i>few</i>		<i>many</i>
<i>young</i>		<i>old</i>
<i>little</i>		<i>great</i>
<i>weak</i>		<i>strong</i>
<i>worst</i>		<i>best</i>
<i>always</i>		<i>never</i>
<i>black</i>		<i>white</i>
<i>before</i>		<i>after</i>
<i>today</i>		<i>tomorrow</i>

Among the examples of oppositional proverbs where the opposition is achieved through lexical negation, Dundes (1981, 60) mentions “*Man works from sun to sun but woman’s work is never done*”, which explicitly or implicitly contrasts man and woman, finite and infinite, complete and incomplete. In this example, the contrast is expressed exclusively or almost exclusively through lexical means.

George Milner uses different terms to describe the typical two-part structure of proverbs. According to Milner, many proverbs can be divided into two parts, and these two parts can be further subdivided into two parts, making a total of four segments per proverb. Each of the four minor segments is called a “quarter”, each of the two major segments is called a “half”, and these “match and balance each other” (Dundes, 1981, 47). Milner attaches to each quarter either positive (+) or negative (–) sociolinguistic value. To illustrate Milner’s theory on the example of the proverb “*Soon ripe, soon rotten*” (Dundes, 1981, 47):



<i>soon</i> +	<i>ripe</i> +	(which means that the head is +)
<i>soon</i> +	<i>rotten</i> –	(which means that the tail is –)

### 7.3.3 Tautologous, Antithetic and Synthetic Parallelism

Woodcock (2001, 11–12) concludes that parallelism in proverbs occurs in three major forms: tautological (synonymous), antithetic and synthetic.

Tautologous parallelism is manifested in proverbs where both parts of the binary structure make the same point. Tautology itself refers to repeating the same idea in different words. Tautologous proverbs are a common type and the most obvious example are proverbs where an identical phrase appears in both parts of the structure, such as *It isn't over till it's over* (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 18).

In contrast, antithetic parallelism occurs when two opposing ideas are juxtaposed. The two parts of the proverb structure have a contrasting meaning, either explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirectly. An example of an antithetic proverb is *To err is human, to forgive divine*, where the overall meaning of the proverb is that of contrast. There is a contextual opposition in the words *human* and *divine* because in this proverb, humans are associated with imperfection and contrasted with divine creatures, who are in turn associated with perfection.

In the last type, that of synthetic parallelism, the two parts of the binary structure of the proverb are neither in tautological nor in antithetic relationship. Most commonly, the second part of the proverb elaborates on the first part, providing additional comments, explanations or specifications. The first clause introduces an idea, while the second clause continues to develop the idea in more detail or to illuminate its meaning, such as in *Happy are those who find wisdom* (line A) / *and those who get understanding*. (line B).

## 7.4 Parataxis

Like parallelism, parataxis is a rhetorical device that finds its use in literary texts and other texts focusing on the content as much as the form, which includes proverbs. Parataxis refers to a linking of two or more elements. While parallel structures may use coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to specify the relationship between the elements, parataxis

dispenses with linking devices. In parataxis, the elements are either simply juxtaposed or their relationship is indicated by a punctuation mark.

Wales (2011, 204) defines parataxis as “the linking of constructions of the same grammatical and semantic level”, that is, the elements have an equal standing in all respects. In contrast, “hypotaxis refers to a kind of dependent element which is explicitly linked to the main clause by a conjunction” (Wales, 2011, 204). Parataxis as an asyndetic juxtaposition uses other than grammatical means to indicate the nature of the relation between the connected elements.

Parataxis in proverbs conveys various effects: it serves rhetorical and aesthetic purposes, but it also challenges the addressee to pay a close attention to the paratactic statement in order to infer the exact meaning of the statement as a whole. Wales (2011, 303) explains that the overall meaning of the statement is interpreted “through logical, temporal, or causal connections”, through reading and connecting both grammatical and semantic relationships among the individual elements to create a coherent whole.

A classic example of parataxis in practice is Caesar’s famous statement *Veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered). This is the simplest example of a paratactic construction which places side by side three verbal phrases without the use of any conjunction, relying only on punctuation to separate the elements from one another. All the three elements in this statement are equal in terms of grammatical structure and significance of meaning (Mac Coinnigh, 2015, 112).

In paratactic proverbs, the most commonly juxtaposed elements are individual words or phrases which typically comprise nouns, adjectives or adverbs. Paratactic proverbs are often elliptical, especially the verb *to be* is frequently ellipted. The following paratactic constructions demonstrate the use of punctuation, the use of ellipsis as well as the common word categories occurring in this type of proverbs:

*Extreme disease, extreme treatment.* NP

*Easy come. Easy go.* VP

*Out of sight, out of mind.* PP

*Once bitten, twice shy.* AdjP

Besides straightforward binary structures, parataxis in proverbs may take the form of juxtaposed clauses or sentences, such as in the following example: *For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; for want of a horse the man was lost* (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 128). This proverb consists of three sentences in a

paratactic relationship, that is, all the three sentences are of equal status and importance to the overall meaning of the proverb.

Looking in more detail at the various logical relationships into which the individual elements of a paratactic structure enter, the most common relationships are that of equality ( $X = Y$ ), cause and effect ( $X \Rightarrow Y$ ) and antonymy ( $X \neq Y$ ) respectively (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 128).

### **Equality or Identification ( $X = Y$ )**

In paratactic constructions based on the relationship of equality, two parts of the proverb are equal or equivalent to each other. This relationship can be noted down with the use of the equal sign:  $X = Y$ , such as in *The greater the sinner, the greater the saint* (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 128).

### **Cause and Effect ( $X \Rightarrow Y$ )**

Paratactic proverbs based on the principle of cause and effect comprise two constituents, where the first constituent states the cause of a situation and the second constituent adds the effect or the consequence. This type of proverbs can be rephrased as *When there is X, there is Y*, such as in the proverb *Full cup, steady hand* (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 128).

### **Contrast and Antonymy ( $X \neq Y$ )**

In this type of paratactic proverbs, two elements are placed in a stark contrast with each other. The contrast is emphasised by their asyndetic connection, by the simple juxtaposition of the contrasts. The elements are in an antonymous relationship, where one element is the opposite of the other, as in *Last hired, first fired* (Dundes, 1981, 59).

## 8 Syntactic Features of Proverbs

### 8.1 Ellipsis in Proverbs

A common structural feature occurring in proverbial formulae is ellipsis. An elliptical construction is one where some parts are omitted because it is assumed that the listener or reader will be able to supply them easily based on the context. In McShane's (2005, 3) definition, "syntactic ellipsis is the non-expression of a word or phrase that is, nevertheless, expected to occupy a place in the syntactic structure of a sentence". Ellipsis therefore refers to an omission in the structure of the sentence which does not disrupt the meaning of the sentence.

The most obvious purpose of elliptical constructions is to condense meaning into fewer words. Ellipsis is often used to avoid unnecessary repetition of words that can be deduced from the context of the utterance. Another purpose of ellipsis is adding "poetic emphasis" to what would otherwise be a simple, ordinary statement (Mieder, 2004, 281). In this case, ellipsis is used as a rhetorical device to achieve a particular effect. Ellipsis in proverbs fulfils both these functions, that is, condensing meaning and adding rhetorical emphasis.

For example, the proverb "Out of sight, out of mind" is not a grammatically complete sentence because it lacks a verbal element. However, the meaning of the proverb is immediately obvious because it is easy to fill in the missing words based on contextual clues. This sentence fragment can be readily expanded into a grammatically complete sentence: "What is out of sight is out of mind". Omission of the verb is a common feature of many proverbs, such as "Like father, like son" or "No rose without a thorn". On the other hand, numerous proverbs use verbal elements but omit the subject, such as "Easy come, easy go".

Apart from the omission of verbs and nouns, some proverbs leave out "semantically neutral and purely functional words" (Norrick, 1985, 36). Norrick gives the example of the proverb "Nothing ventured, nothing gained", which does contain the subject and the predicate but lacks functional words which do not carry any significant meaning on their own. As a syntactically complete sentence, this proverb could be rephrased as "If nothing is ventured, then nothing is gained". Again, these omissions do not affect the meaning of the proverb. Quite the contrary, the ellipsis in the proverb highlights its succinctness.

According to Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985, 451), "words are ellipped only if they are uniquely recoverable, i.e., there is no doubt about what words are to be supplied,

and it is possible to add the recovered words to the sentence”. This definition of ellipsis holds true for most proverbs, but it does not always apply to the specific case of a proverbial structure that lacks both major sentence constituents, the main verb and the subject noun. An example is the proverb “*Fair without, foul within*”, which could be rephrased by adding various words, such as *He who...* or *That which...*, therefore it does not meet the criterion of unique recoverability (Norrick, 1985, 86).

Norrick (1985, 85) points out that ellipsis is one of the causes of structural ambiguity. As an example of such ambiguity created by ellipsis can serve the proverb “*First come, first served*”. In this sentence, it is not clear what or who is served: (a) the first person to come is the first one to get a meal, or (b) the first person to come is the first one made into a meal and served.

Quirk et al. (1985, 888) formulate five criteria which a sentence must meet if it is to be considered as elliptical:

- 1) The ellipped word(s) must be “precisely recoverable”.
- 2) The elliptical structure must be “defective”.
- 3) Inserting the recovered word(s) in the elliptical structure produces a complete grammatical sentence with the same meaning.
- 4) The ellipped elements must be recoverable “from the neighbouring text”, i.e., not from situational or other context.
- 5) The ellipped element must be “an exact copy of the antecedent”.

Furthermore, Quirk et al. (1985, 888–889) propose to distinguish several types of ellipsis according to the degree of its strictness. The term strict ellipsis applies to those elliptical constructions which fulfil all the five above-stated criteria. At the other end of the scale of strictness, there is weak ellipsis, whose missing elements cannot be uniquely recovered but there is still a very limited number of alternatives from which the words to insert can be chosen (Quirk et al., 1985, 890). In between these two extremes on the scale, there are several other types of more or less strict ellipsis.

## 8.2 Proverbs According to Sentence Types

Quirk et al. (1985) divide sentences according to their structure into three broad categories: simple, compound and complex. Structures that cannot be labelled as belonging to any of these three major categories are grouped together under the label minor sentences.

Sentences are classified according to the number of main and subordinate clauses which they consist of. Based on the traditional classification, sentences fall into one of the following categories: simple, compound, complex and complex-compound.

In terms of syntactical structure, proverbs qualify as sentences and may take on a number of different sentence types. However, the most frequent sentence type in proverbs is the simple sentence.

### 8.2.1 Simple Sentence

The basic sentence type is the simple sentence, which comprises only one main clause (also termed an independent clause). There are no dependent clauses (also termed subordinate clauses) in the simple sentence. Proverbs may take the form of either affirmative or negative clauses.

*A bad workman always blames the tools.*                      Affirmative (+)

*One swallow does not make a summer.*                      Negative (–)

### 8.2.2 Complex Sentence

Complex sentences comprise one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. The dependent clause is connected to the main clause typically with a subordinating conjunction (because, since, although, etc.), but it can also be connected with a relative pronoun or wh-word. The subordinate clause is dependent on the main clause, hence the term dependent clause. The dependent clause cannot stand independently of the main clause. Proverbs which have the form of complex sentences usually only have one dependent clause.

*Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.*                      [Clause] + [Subclause]

*God helps those who help themselves.*                      [Clause] + [Subclause]

*Who digs a pit for other falls into it himself.*                      [Subclause] + [Clause]

### 8.2.3 Compound Sentence

Compound sentences consist of at least two main clauses and contain no dependent clauses. The two main clauses form grammatically independent units and can stand alone. These clauses “display a type of semantic equality or contrast, which is created through the replication of the syntactic pattern” (Mac Coinnigh, 2015, 114). Proverbs which take the form of compound sentences usually do not have more than two main clauses.

*Love comes in at the window but goes out at the door.* [Clause] + [Conjunction] + [Clause]

*Knowledge is treasure but practice is the key to it.* [Clause] + [Conjunction] + [Clause]

In a compound sentence, the clauses are linked with a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, etc.). In proverbs formed by a compound sentence, the coordinating conjunction is often missing. The clauses are joined asyndetically, i.e., they are juxtaposed without the use of any conjunction. Punctuation serves to separate the two clauses in writing. (For a detailed discussion of this type of connection, see chapters Parallel Structures and Parataxis.)

*United we stand, divided we fall.* [Clause] + [Clause]

*Men make houses, women make homes.* [Clause] + [Clause]

### 8.2.4 Compound-Complex Sentence

Compound-complex sentences are, as their name suggests, formed by two or more main clauses and one or more dependent clauses. This type of structure is rare to find in proverbs because proverbs are by definition pithy and easy to memorise (Mac Coinnigh, 2015, 115).

## 8.3 Proverbs According to Sentence Constituents

### 8.3.1 Simple Sentence Type Proverbs

Quirk et al. (1985) describe the following major constituents in clausal structures: Subject (S), Verb (V), Object (O), Complement (C) and Adverbial (A). Various combinations of these constituents give rise to the following types of sentence structures: SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOO, SVOC and SVOA. Quirk et al. (1985) categorise structures with copula verbs as complements, such as in the proverb *Time is money*. The majority of English proverbs

follow the basic sentence structure of the subject, verb and direct object (SVO<sub>d</sub>). All the other sentence structures are however represented among proverbs as well:

SV	<i>Money talks. A barking dog never bites.</i>
SVO	<i>A rolling stone gathers no moss.</i>
SVC	<i>A hungry man is an angry man.</i>
SVA	<i>A woman's place is in the home.</i>
SVOO	<i>You can't teach an old dog new tricks.</i>
SVOC	<i>Ambition makes people diligent.</i>
SVOA	<i>You can't put a round peg in a square hole.</i>

### 8.3.2 Complex Sentence Type Proverbs

Complex sentences have a main clause and one or several dependent clauses, which function as a sentence constituent in the whole structure. The hierarchy of the main and the dependent clauses is asymmetrical in that the subordinate clause serves as a sentence constituent to the main clause. According to the type of the clausal constituent, the following main types of the dependent clause can be distinguished: nominal, adjectival, adverbial or comparative.

#### Nominal Clauses

Nominal clauses are typically joined by the conjunction *that* or by a *wh*-word (who, where, when, why, what, etc.). This type of clause has the function of nominal elements. It expresses the full content of what was indicated in the main clause.

*It is not the beard **that** makes the philosopher.* [Clause] + [Subclause]

***When** the tree is fallen, everyone runs to it with his axe.* [Subclause] + [Clause]

The last example illustrates the structural type when the dependent clause precedes the main clause. This is comparatively common in proverbs because it provides additional emphasis.

An example of dependent interrogatives are structures such as *Tell me **who** your friends are and I will tell you who you are*, which contains a subordinate clause introduced by the *wh*-pronoun.

Nominal relative clauses are introduced by *wh*-words, such as the proverb ***Whoever** loves discipline loves knowledge*, where the *wh*-word functions as a syntactic noun.

#### Adjectival Clauses



Adjectival relative clauses typically serve the same function as adjectival elements. This type of relative clauses modifies a nominal phrase, such as the subject or the object of a sentence. Adjectival clauses are connected to the head of the nominal phrase with relative pronouns (which, that, who) or relative adverbs. These connectors also serve as sentence constituents and function as the subject or the object of the relative clause.

*He **who begins many things** finishes but few.* (*who* is the subject of the relative clause) (Bertram, 1993, 105)

***Whom the Gods love** die young.* (*whom* is the object of the relative clause) (Bhuvanewar, 2010, 34)

### **Adverbial Clauses**

Adverbial clauses have the same function as adverbial elements. They are introduced by *wh*-words or conjunctions. They may express a range of semantic relationships, depending on the type of connector used, such as a clause of time, place, condition, concession, contrast, reason, purpose, result, similarity and comparison.

***When** one door shuts, another opens.* (clause of time) (Bachmannová & Suksov, 2007, 296)

*Fools rush in **where** angels fear to tread.* (clause of place)

***While** the cat's away, the mice will play.* (clause of concession)

*Eat, drink, and be merry, **for** tomorrow we may die.* (clause of reason)

*Work **as though** you were to live forever.* (clause of comparison)

### **Comparative Sentences**

Clauses expressing a relationship of comparison serve as a means of comparison and contrast, expressing similarities and differences between items. While Quirk et al. (1985) consider comparative clauses as a separate category, Dušková (2012) classifies them under adverbial clauses, specifically as adverbial clauses of comparison.

Traditionally, comparative sentences contain comparative elements in both clauses. These comparative elements are for example the following pairs: *as...as*, *not as...as*, *not so...as*, *the...the*, *comparative...than*. The endorsing item is found in the main clause. Furthermore, the comparative form of adjectives and adverbs may be used for comparison and contrast.

***Better** an egg in peace **than** an ox in war.* (Bachmannová & Suksov, 2007, 171)

***The more, the merrier.*** (Quirk et al., 1985, 843)

*As a man sows, so shall he reap.* (Bertram, 1993, 24)

*The longest way round is the nearest way home.* (Bertram, 1993, 204)

### Conditional Sentences

The conditional clause formulates the condition on which the main clause is dependent. This condition may be either real (can be fulfilled) or unreal/hypothetical (cannot be fulfilled). The content of the main clause is only realised when the condition expressed in the dependent conditional clause is fulfilled. Conditional clauses are connected to the main clause with the conjunctions *if* or *when*.

*If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.* (Bachmannová & Suksov, 2007, 288)

*When the cat is away, the mice will play.* (Bertram, 1993, 230)

In rare cases the conditional subordinate clause comes after the main one: *It is easy to swim if another holds up your chin* (Strauss, 1998, 1133).

### Cleft Sentences

Cleft sentences are special syntactical structures which are used to add more emphasis to the statement. Cleft sentences do not follow the canonical sentence word order. The word order can be rearranged by clefting so that constituents that need to be emphasised are moved to the front of the sentence. The basic structure for clefting is *It is/It was*, which serves as an introductory phrase after which the emphasised element follows. In this way, it is possible to perform the fronting of nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

In proverbs, the cleft structure occurs for additional emphasis and is realised by dividing the proverbial structure into two parts. The part of the proverb that is fronted in the cleft structure is emphasised, while the other part is backgrounded.

*It is a poor heart that never rejoices.* (Bertram, 1993, 121) [clefted sentence]

*A poor heart never rejoices.* [canonical sentence]

### Comment Clauses

Comment clauses are another specific type of structure; their purpose is to introduce a statement. Examples of comment clauses or phrases are *As you probably know...* or *To be*

*honest...* Comment clauses, also called hedging in pragmatics, are extremely rare in proverbs. When they do occur in proverbs, they introduce direct speech, such as Wellerisms.

*“Neat but not gaudy”, said the monkey when he painted his tail blue.*  
(Bhuvanewar, 2010, 32)

## **8.4 Proverbs According to Sentence Function**

Sentences can be further categorised according to their communicative function. Based on this criterion, the following types can be distinguished: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory.

### **8.4.1 Declarative Sentences**

All the above types occur in proverbs; however, the most common type are declarative sentences, which express simple statements.

*You can't teach an old dog new tricks.* (Bachmannová & Suksov, 2007, 297)

### **8.4.2 Interrogative Sentences**

On the other hand, interrogative sentences serve to ask a question. There are two subtypes, one of them being the yes/no question (can be answered by either yes or no), the other *wh*-questions (open questions, can only be answered with a word, phrase or sentence). Interrogative sentences are used in proverbs as rhetorical questions, which means that the answer is not expected.

*Does a chicken have lips?* (yes/no interrogative) (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 116)

*What are little boys made of?* (*wh*-interrogative) (Bhuvanewar, 2010, 25)

### **8.4.3 Imperative Sentences**

Imperative sentences serve to give a command, an order or a recommendation. This type of sentences is common in proverbs because the role of proverbs is to provide advice. Proverbs contain words of wisdom based on experience and observation, so their intention is didactic. They teach us what we should and should not do, what is right and what is wrong. Proverbs

in the form of imperative sentences address us either directly (*you*) or implicitly and express an instruction or a prescriptive rule.

A positive imperative instructs us what we should do in the form of a command, request or advice.

*When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.*

A negative imperative, in contrast, tells us what we should not do. A great number of proverbs take this form when they forbid or advise against something.

*Don't cry over spilled milk.* (Bertram, 1993, 71)

Proverbs that take the form of imperative sentences can be introduced by the verb *let* followed by the subject. This type of imperatives is used to give suggestions and offers which include us. The following proverb is an example of the third person imperative:

*Let the cobbler stick to his last.* (Bachmannová & Suksov, 2007, 289)

#### **8.4.4 Exclamatory Sentences**

Exclamatory sentences serve to express the speaker's spontaneous emotions, such as surprise, joy, anger, frustration, admiration, etc. In natural speech, any sentence type can become exclamatory when it is uttered as such, which is reflected in writing by an exclamation mark (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 116).

*What goes around comes around!* (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 116)

## 9 Phonological Stylistic Devices

Proverbs differ in many respects from natural, spontaneous speech. Apart from the obvious differences on the syntactic level, proverbs also manifest distinctive features on the phonological level. In this respect, proverbs are closer to the language of literature, especially poetry, than to standard prose. Like poetry, proverbs exploit various phonological stylistic devices, including alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme and rhythm. Arora (1994) includes these phonological devices among proverbial markers that distinguish proverbs from ordinary speech or other stock phrases. Proverbs in different languages across the world share many formal characteristics, which holds true also for their specific phonological features.

### 9.1 Alliteration

Alliteration is one of the most common phonological stylistic devices which may be used to achieve a particular effect in poetry or literary fiction as well as proverbs. Alliteration consists of the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of the word in two or more directly adjacent words or words occurring close together (Wales, 2011, 14; Norgaard, Busse, & Montoro, 2010, 49). Alliteration uses the repetition of either consonants or vowels, which is an efficient device in drawing attention both to the form and to the message of the statement. In proverbs, alliteration contributes to their easy memorability (Sachkova, 2012, 16). In proverbs but also elsewhere, alliteration as a play with sounds contributes to the pleasant musical effect of the text.

### 9.2 Assonance

Assonance can be regarded as a specific variant of alliteration. Like alliteration, it uses the repetition of sounds, but unlike alliteration, assonance refers to the repetition of vowel sounds in words coming close together, typically in stressed syllables (Norgaard & et al., 2010, 50). As other phonological stylistic devices, assonance contributes to the melody of the statement and makes the statement easier to remember. In proverbs, an example of assonance can be seen for instance in the /i:/ sound in the proverb *Seeing is believing* or in the /əʊ/ sound in the proverb *A rolling stone gathers no moss*.

### 9.3 Consonance

Consonance follows the same principles as assonance, but the repeated sound are consonant sounds, as the name suggests. Consonance refers to the repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of several successive words or words occurring close together (Sachkova, 2012, 16). Like assonance and alliteration, consonance helps the memorability of the proverb and enhances its melody and rhythm. An example of consonance in proverbs is the repetition of the voiced bilabial nasal in *Many man, many minds* or the repetition of the voiceless alveolar plosive /k/ in *Cut your coat according to your cloth*.

### 9.4 Rhyme

Rhyme belongs among the most frequently used phonological devices in poetry and elsewhere. Rhyme consists of the repetition of the same or similar sounds, typically syllables, usually at the end of words. Rhyme as a phonemic matching occurs usually consistently in words that are at a certain distance from each other; in poetry, this is often the end of each verse line (Sachkova, 2012, 17). Similarly, in proverbs, the rhyme is typically placed at the end of each of the two parts of the proverb in the case of structurally binary proverbs.

There are various types of rhyme, specifically, the end rhyme, internal rhyme and eye rhyme. The end rhyme is the most obvious type. Here, the rhyme occurs at the end of each phrase or segment and the sound repetition involves the last syllable of the word. The initial syllable of the word, when it is polysyllabic, can have different, non-repeated sounds.

Rhyme facilitates memorisation of proverbs because it adds a musical rhythm to them. Rhyme, along with other phonological stylistic devices, adds an aesthetic dimension to proverbs. The repetition of sounds creates euphony. Furthermore, rhyme creates in proverbs the “effect of giving authority of being someone else’s statement” (Arora, 1994, 12). Examples of the end rhyme in proverbs include *Men may meet but mountains never greet; Man proposes, God disposes*; and *What can’t be cured must be endured*. These proverbs use rhyme always in two words, each at the end of one segment: *meet–greet, proposes–disposes* and *cured–endured*.

Another type of rhyme is the internal rhyme. In this case, rhymed words occur not at the end of segments but anywhere in the middle, between the first and the last word. An example of the internal rhyme includes *Haste makes waste*.

The last type of rhyme is the eye rhyme, also called a visual rhyme. Words in the eye rhyme are spelled in a similar way, they look like they would rhyme, but when spoken, they do not rhyme because they are pronounced differently (Norgaard et al., 2010, 145; Wales, 2011, 371; Sachkova, 2012, 18). This type of rhyme is very frequent in English, in words such as *move, love; come, home; laughter, daughter; flood, brood* (Britannica, 2019). An example of the eye rhyme is *An April **flood** carries away the frog and her **brood***.

## 9.5 Rhythm

Rhythm is perhaps the most general phonological stylistic device. It is used not only in poetry and proverbs but also in a variety of other written and spoken texts. Rhythm is sometimes referred to as metre and consists of a regular repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables, which creates a particular pattern (Wales, 2011, 269). According to the number and position of stressed and unstressed syllables, there are several poetic feet distinguished (Sachkova, 2012, 20).

In English, the most common metre is iambic. A number of proverbs have iambic or trochaic metre; furthermore, in binary proverbs divided into two parts, not only the stress pattern is repeated but there is often also the same number of syllables in each of the two parts of the proverb (Unseth, 2006). An example of an iambic pattern with two syllables per foot, one unstressed, the other one stressed, is the proverb *The **bigger** | they **are**, |the **harder** | they **fall***. An example of a proverb with a trochaic pattern with four feet, a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one, is *|**Sharply bargained**,|**honestly paid*** (Barajas, 2010, 53).

## **10 Semantic Features of Proverbs (Literal Proverbs, Figurative Proverbs)**

Apart from structural features characteristic for proverbs (described in the previous chapters), there are also semantic characteristics peculiar to proverbs. While structural features are external markers that set proverbs apart from ordinary speech, semantic features are not evident in the external structure of proverbs but are rather internal features that pertain to the meaning of proverbs.

This chapter focuses on the semantic features that add to the rhetorical effectiveness of proverbs and include various types of figurative language. As opposed to literal language, figurative language does not use words at their face value but uses instead various rhetorical figures of speech. Proverbial figures of speech illustrate recurrent patterns of thought, which are the subject of cognitive linguistics.

### **10.1 Literal Proverbs**

The term “literal” refers to the simplest, primary meaning of a word, statement or text. It is defined as referring to the “meanings of words that are common to a speaking community, fixed by the norms of usage in the community and inscribed in a lexical code” (McKenzie, 1996, 7). The literal meaning of a sentence is the meaning of the sum of its components that takes into account the meaning of the individual morphemes, lexemes and sentence elements and how they work together to create a meaningful whole. The meaning of a literal statement is objective and context-independent.

John Searle (1976) argues that what makes the meaning literal or figurative is pragmatics, that is, how language is used rather than what the words or sentences mean. Literal or figurative meaning is not a property of the language itself but rather pertains to the communicative intentions of the speaker. When the speaker uses denotative meanings of words to express directly what they intend to communicate, then the meaning is literal (Searle, 1976; Honeck, 1997, 53). However, when there is a discrepancy between the denotative meaning of words and the intended meaning, then the meaning is figurative.

The above principles apply equally to the meanings of proverbs. The proverb as a stock unit in a particular language has its own standard proverbial interpretation (SPI) attached. The SPI determines how the proverb is meant to be understood. When the SPI coincides with the



literal reading of the proverb, then the proverb can be said to have a literal meaning. For example, the proverb *Like father, like son* counts as literal because its SPI coincides with its literal reading, which is “father and son are alike”. On the other hand, the proverb *No rose without a thorn* counts as figurative because its SPI is “there is no pleasant thing without some unpleasant aspect”, which is different from the literal reading “there is no rose without a thorn” (Norrick, 1985, 2).

Literal proverbs can be read in their face value, such as *Knowledge is power*, *Honesty is the best policy*, *Virtue is its own reward* (Mieder, 2004, 8). Some proverbs, however, are difficult to categorise as either literal or figurative because they have features of both. Rather than as two entirely self-contained categories, literal and figurative proverbs can be understood as a scale with different degrees of the literal or figurative property. An example is the proverb *Pride feels no pain*, which is partly literal and partly figurative. The subject noun phrase is figurative here, while the predicate is literal. The opposite is the case in the proverb *Friends are thieves of time*, where the subject is literal, while the predicate is figurative. In contrast, an example of a fully figurative proverb is *Soft fire makes sweet malt*.

Furthermore, there is a group of proverbs that can be understood simultaneously on the literal and on the figurative level, depending on the context. For instance, the proverb *It never rains but it pours* may be used to refer to an actual rainstorm, in which case the meaning is literal, or it may be used to describe a struggling person, in which case the meaning is figurative. Similarly, *Praise a fair day at night* may be used literally to caution a person praising the day before evening, or it may be used figuratively to refer to another situation when someone praises a situation before knowing its outcome.

In conclusion, it must be kept in mind that language can be used in various ways in different contexts and that the line between literal and figurative meanings is often blurred.

## **10.2 Figurative Proverbs**

In rhetoric, words with a figurative meaning differ from words with a literal meaning in that the former are not used as expected, their usage deviates from the standard norm. This nonstandard, unconventional usage of words and phrases involves figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile, paradox, hyperbole and others. Although all these figurative expressions may occur in proverbs, the most common figure of speech manifested in proverbs is the metaphor.

An important research in the meaning of proverbs was done by the cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who developed the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). This theory describes how proverbs come to mean what they do. The theory is based on three propositions. First, the metaphor is understood as a cognitive phenomenon. Second, the metaphor should be analysed as a mapping between two domains, the concrete and the abstract. Third, linguistic semantics relies on experience (Murphy & Koskela, 2010, 40). In other words, metaphor is used to express abstract ideas in concrete terms.

### **10.2.1 Metaphor**

Metaphor is a figure of speech which involves describing something in terms of something else. The thing that is being described is termed the source, while the thing that is used to describe it is called the target. Proverbs are particularly suited for the use of metaphor because both use images to describe something new in terms of something already known and familiar (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, 167–168).

To illustrate the operation of metaphor on a proverb, let us take the example of the proverb *Fair play is a jewel*. Here, *fair play* is the source, that which is being described. *Jewel* is then the target, that which is used to describe *fair play*. Fair play is described in terms of a jewel not because it is literally a jewel but because jewels are valuable, and so is fair play. High value is a common feature characteristic for both jewels and fair play, and this shared aspect is what the metaphor is based on.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) show that a significant part of language involves metaphors, that is, mapping one conceptual domain in terms of another. Interpreting the meaning of metaphorical expressions is the result of complex cognitive processes. This is true also of proverbs. In many cases, the moral of the proverb is not stated directly but must be inferred by the recipient. For example, the proverb *A watched pot never boils* is understood by the recipient based on the context and the recipient's extralinguistic knowledge as an advice to wait patiently (Fiedler, 2007, 45).

### **10.2.2 Metonymy**

Apart from metaphors, proverbs may use a figure of speech called metonymy, which is based on association of two elements, so that, for example, a person can be replaced by a place relating to them, a work of art can be replaced by the name of its author, an abstract concept can be replaced with a concrete manifestation of the concept, etc. Norgaard et al. (2010, 109)

emphasise the principle of contiguity which applies in metonymy, that is, there must be a logical functional connection between the referent and the referring word. Cruse (2011, 256) points out that while “metaphor involves the use of one domain as an analogical model to structure our conception of another domain,” metonymy in contrast “relies on actual, literal associations between two components within a single domain.”

The relationship between the two elements may be based on cause and effect, instrument, source and others (Wales, 2014, 267–268). To give examples, the proverb *Fear gives wings* illustrates the metonymic relation of instrument and function. The instrument here is wings, which are used to refer to the function of flying (Norrick, 1985, 128). A similar example of an instrument-function metonymic relation is the proverb *Far from eyes, far from heart*, where organs in the human body are used to refer to their functions, the eyes for the sight and the heart as the proverbial seat of emotions (Norrick, 1985, 129). Finally, the famous proverb *The pen is mightier than the sword* also illustrates metonymy, where the pen is used to replace (written) word and the sword is used to replace physical force (Bertram, 1993, 206).

### 10.2.3 Synecdoche

Synecdoche is sometimes interchangeably with metonymy and sometimes it is regarded as a special type of metonymy. Synecdoche refers to the specific case of contiguity where a part is used to refer to the whole or vice versa (Norgaard et al., 2010, 109). Proverbs using a part of the body to refer to a whole person are very common, such as *Faint heart never won fair lady*, where *faint heart* is used to replace a *faint-hearted person*. Similar examples include *A fair face cannot have a crabbed heart* or *A false tongue will hardly speak the truth*, where specific body parts are used to refer to a person of qualities associated with that body part, e.g., *a false tongue for a liar*.

A more complex example is the proverb *The early bird catches the worm*, which is analysed by Norrick (1985, 110) as an instance of a species-genus synecdoche. The literal reading of the proverb involves a bird that gets its food, represented by the worm. The figurative meaning can be put as “the early agent gets the wanted object”, which is also the SPI of this proverb. In this broader meaning, the proverb can be used in a wide range of situations which may have nothing to do with either birds or food.

#### 10.2.4 Personification

Personification is a very common and relatively straightforward figure of speech which involves attributing human qualities to non-humans, such as animals or inanimate objects (Wales, 2011, 314). This trope has had a long and rich tradition in folklore. Specifically in proverbs, objects or abstractions are ascribed human characteristics or are shown acting as if they were human. Examples include *Money answers all things* (Norrick, 1985, 37), *Hunger is the best cook*, *Facts are stubborn things* (Norrick, 1985, 140) or *Failure is the mother of success*.

#### 10.2.5 Paradox

Paradox is a common rhetorical figure not only in proverbs. Paradox relies on presenting apparently contradictory ideas which, on closer inspection, turn out to have something in common, so the contradiction is eventually reconciled (Wales, 2011, 300). Paradoxical proverbs are demanding for the recipient to interpret because the seemingly incompatible ideas must be understood on a deeper, figurative level. A typical example of such at first sight absurd proverb is *The farthest way about is the nearest way home* and its alternative version *The longest way about is the nearest way home*. The first variant juxtaposes the words *farthest*, which represents geographical distance, and *nearest*, which refers to temporal duration. These opposites are reconciled in the SPI of the proverb, which is “the farthest way in distance is the nearest way in time”.

#### 10.2.6 Hyperbole

Hyperbole is another trope that is used commonly not only in proverbs but also in ordinary speech. This rhetorical device consists in exaggeration or overstatement. This effect can be achieved by various means, such as by the use of numerals, comparatives and superlatives, single words with absolute meanings, repetition and others (Athanasidou, 2017, 52–53). An example of a hyperbolic comparison expression is *I avoid mornings like the plague if I can*, an example of repetition is *for ages and ages and ages* and an example of a numeral used for hyperbole is *hundreds of times*.

Hyperbolic proverbs include for example *Far shooting never killed bird*, which uses a single word with absolute meaning to gain the desired effect. The SPI here is “indirect action seldom achieves the goal”. Similarly, *All is fair in love and war* uses the hyperbolic word

*all*. Finally, the effect of hyperbole achieved by the use of numerals is illustrated in the proverb *One father is more than one hundred schoolmasters* (Norrick, 1985, 131–133).

### 10.2.7 Simile

Simile consists in an explicit comparison of two different things or concepts, which is signalled by the use of words *like* or *as*. Examples include *Nothing kills like doing nothing* (Cordry, 2005, 133) or *As wise as Solomon* (Bertram, 1997, 40). Simile differs from metaphor in that the latter, the comparison is indirect and no connectives (*as, like, such*) are present.

Figurative proverbs are considered by some scholars as the quintessential proverbs because the figurative meaning is sometimes regarded as the chief defining characteristic of proverbs. Other scholars however consider the figurative meaning as only one of the many characteristics of proverbs, that is, it is common but does not necessarily need to be present in all proverbs. The latter view is perhaps more justified because often it is difficult to draw a strict line between the figurative and the literal meaning, furthermore, the same proverb can have both, depending on the context.

### 10.2.8 Irony

Irony is a common rhetorical device which consists in saying one thing and meaning the opposite. For instance, the exclamation *What a lovely weather* uttered when it is raining is ironic. When irony is directed at another person, it can serve as a form of polite criticism, such as the observation *Aren't you clever!* (Wales, 2011, 240). It follows that irony is typically context dependent, though there are also sentences that are inherently ironic and do not need any further context to get the ironic intention across. Among proverbs, an example of an ironic, duplicitous claim is *Friends are of thieves of time*. Other proverbs, such as *Life is a bowl of cherries*, may or may not be used ironically, depending on the context (Manser, 2002, 167).

### III Practical Part

#### 11 Introduction

The practical part of the thesis is devoted to a comparative analysis of English, Czech and Russian proverbs which contain components denoting animal referents. This specific category of proverbs was chosen because the semantic field of animals is one of the most productive fields and because animal imagery has played a major role in folklore imagination across the world. Animals are commonly used to describe particular traits, characteristics and behaviours of people. In the same way in proverbs, images of animals are utilised to refer figuratively to typical human characteristics, relationships and life situations.

For the purpose of this thesis, a list of thirty English proverbs regularly included in dictionaries was compiled, drawing on material selected from the dictionaries and collections listed below, as well as from online dictionaries:

- 1) Speake, J. (2015). *Oxford dictionary of proverbs* (6th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2) Swierczynski, A., & Swierczynska, D. (2008). *Slovník přísloví v devíti jazycích*. Praha: Universum.
- 3) Firth, D., & Veselý, V. (1991). *Nejznámější anglická přísloví a jejich české protějšky*. Praha: Erika.
- 4) Bachmannová, J., & Suksov, V. (2007). *Jak se to řekne jinde: Česká přísloví a jejich jinojazyčné protějšky*. Praha: Universum.
- 5) Ridout, R., & Witting, C. (1982). *English proverbs explained*. London: Pan Books.
- 6) Litovkina, A. (2000). *A proverb a day keeps boredom away*. Szekszárd: IPF-Könyvek.
- 7) Bittnerová, D., & Schinder, F. (2003). *Česká přísloví: Soudobý stav konce 20. století*. Praha: Karolinum.
- 8) Čermák, F. (2013). *Základní slovník českých přísloví: Výklad a užití*. Praha: Lidové noviny.
- 9) Lubensky, S. (2013). *Russian-English dictionary of idioms* (Rev. ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press.

- 10) Margulis, A., & Kholodnaja, A. (2015). *Russian-English dictionary of proverbs and sayings*. Jefferson: McFarland.

The next step was to find the corresponding variants of the selected English proverbs in the Czech and Russian languages. In total then, ninety proverbs in three languages were chosen for examination by means of a comparative analysis. The equivalent proverbs will be analysed from syntactic, semantic and lexical points of view. The main objective of this thesis is to assess to what degree the equivalent proverbs in the three languages manifest similarities and to what degree they are different.

For the purpose of a comparative analysis of the proverbs, various degrees of interlinguistic equivalence are established. The proverbs selected for analysis are grouped according to the animal they refer to (e.g., dog, cat, horse, fox, etc.) and arranged alphabetically. The resulting triplets of proverbs, i.e., each English proverb and its Russian and Czech equivalents, are organised in tables for ease of overview. For each phraseological unit, the degree of equivalence is determined. Based on this classification, the given phraseme is either a fully equivalent phraseological unit, a partially equivalent phraseological expression, a semantically equivalent expression or an expression without equivalence.

The linguistic analysis of the proverbs focuses on identifying syntactic features (sentence type, sentence constituents, ellipsis), stylistic phonological devices (such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, etc.) and rhetorical devices such as metaphor (based on the assumption that most of the proverbs under analysis will make use of animals to refer to human beings, hence their meanings will be metaphorical rather than literal).

Furthermore, an interpretation of each proverb and its canonical meaning will be provided. Attention will be paid also to the geographical aspect of the proverbs, since proverbs in general and animal imagery in particular reflect a specific environment, its natural features as well as the characteristics of the given society.

The research tasks are set as follows:

- 1) to categorise the selected English proverbs based on the animal that they refer to;
- 2) to identify corresponding proverbs in Czech and Russian;
- 3) to determine the degree of equivalence of the Czech and Russian variants;
- 4) to define and explain the meanings of the proverbs;
- 5) to carry out a linguistic analysis of the proverbs in terms of syntactic, phonological and semantic features;

- 6) to discuss similarities and differences in terms of structural features as well as extralinguistic references to animals among the three languages and cultures.

## **12 Equivalence**

When looking for the Czech and Russian equivalents of English proverbs and sayings, I was guided by the criterion of correspondence of the main meaning that they convey. Proverbs often put across the same message but utilise different images to convey it. These differences in imagery reflect the differences in ways of life and types of society, including different social standards, in the selected three nations. Many proverbs are common to all or almost all European languages but there are also language- and culture-specific proverbs that do not have a corresponding equivalent in other languages.

For the purpose of comparative analysis, some kind of a comparative system must be established. I have chosen to analyse the selected proverbs according to Mokijenko and Stěpanova's phraseme translation model (2008, 37). This model of translation of phraseological units was adjusted for application specifically on proverbs. Mokijenko and Stěpanova (2008) base their comprehensive model on a set of criteria of equivalence, including semantic equivalence, syntactic structure and lexical makeup of phraseological units in different languages.

It must be noted that the comparative analysis will work with typologically dissimilar languages – English is analytical, while Czech and Russian are synthetic languages. This means that we can expect many differences given by the different language type rather than by any salient differences in the corresponding proverb. Because of this fact, the criteria for full equivalence must not be too strict when applied on proverbs. The following four types of interlingual equivalents will be distinguished.

### **12.1 Full Equivalence (FE)**

The category of full equivalence will include proverbs and sayings that have the same semantic, structural and lexical content, as well as the same figurative and pragmatic meaning. Proverbs will be considered fully equivalent even when they manifest some minor grammatical discrepancies explained by the different grammar structure of the target language. Small inconsistencies in prepositions, for example, and slight morphological and syntactic differences will be disregarded.



Example: *Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.* – *Co můžeš udělat dnes, neodkládej na zítřek.* – *Не откладывай на завтра то, что можно сделать сегодня.* (Sergienko, 2016, 77)

## 12.2 Relative Equivalence (RE)

Relative equivalents are those proverbs and sayings that are identical in terms of meaning but manifest some minor differences with respect to form. These expressions may have slight lexical, grammatical or lexico-grammatical differences, but at the same time, they still satisfy all levels of equivalence. Commonly, there are differences in open word classes, i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs.

Example: *Every man is the architect of his own fortune.* – *Každý (je) svého štěstí/osudu strůjcem.* – *Всяк своего счастья кузнец.* In these partially equivalent proverbs, there is one major difference, which is the choice of the word *strůjce (constructor)* – *кузнец (blacksmith)* – *architect*. Despite this lexical difference, the semantics remains the same for all the three proverbs, i.e., Your own decisions and your own actions determine what your life will be like (Sergienko, 2016, 77).

## 12.3 Semantic Equivalence (SE)

Semantically equivalent proverbs share the same meaning but otherwise do not correspond in terms of syntactical structure and lexical items used. They utilise different grammatical structures as well as different images to convey the same message.

Example: *When in Rome do as the Romans do.* – *Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výti.* (Firth & Veselý, 1991, 41) – *В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят.* (Akademik, 2019)

## 12.4 Zero-Equivalence (ZE)

Zero-equivalence, termed also lacunarity, refers to a situation when there is no equivalent to be found for a given proverb in another language. In other words, the other language lacks a proverb or a saying that would convey the same meaning, even in different words.

## 13 Analysis of English, Russian and Czech Proverbs

### 13.1 Bird

English	Russian	Czech
A bird in (the) hand is worth two in the bush.	Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе. [ <i>better a tit in hands than a stork in the sky</i> ] (SE)	Lepší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše [ <i>better a sparrow in the hand than a pigeon on the roof</i> ] (SE)
S + V + S	[V] + S + S	[V] + S + S

**Explanation:** It is wiser to accept something of smaller value now than to hope to get something of greater value later (Ridout & Witting, 1982, 32).

**Semantics:** These proverbs metaphorically express that having something sure is better than to risk losing it by trying to attain something more. The proverbs use different images to convey the same message: the Russian proverb uses the contrasting images of *tit* and *stork*, while the Czech proverbs uses the images of *sparrow* and *pigeon* for contrast.

**Grammatical form:** The Russian and Czech proverbs have the form of a comparative sentence, which is indicated by the comparative adjective and conjunction pairs *лучше... чем* and *lepší... než*, and contains an adverbial clause of comparison that functions as an adverbial. Structurally they are the same. English proverb is a simple statement that uses numerical components *one (a bird)* and *two* to contrast ideas.

**Ellipsis:** The copular verb *to be* is not present in the Russian and Czech variants.

**Equivalents:** The Russian and Czech proverbs correspond semantically to their English counterpart, but they are different lexically and syntactically, they also use different imagery to convey the message. Therefore, they are semantic equivalents.

### 13.2 Cat

English	Russian	Czech
All cats are grey at night.	Ночью все кони вороные. [ <i>at night all horses black</i> ] (RE)	Potmě každá kráva černá. [ <i>in the dark all cows black</i> ] (RE)
S + V + C + A	A + S + C	A + S + C

**Explanation:** It is difficult to distinguish things in the dark; in the dark, appearances do not make any difference (very often refers to women: in the dark, all women are equally suitable as romantic partners) (Bertram, 1997, 18).

In obscure circumstances, the difference between people or things is indistinguishable (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 162).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs have the same metaphorical meaning, but they use different animal images to express this meaning. The English proverb use the image of *a cat* (*cats*), the Russian variant that uses the image of *a horse* (*horses*), the Czech proverb that uses the image of *a cow* (*cows*). Despite this lexical difference, the semantics remains the same.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs take the form of a simple sentence statement. The English proverb includes the copular verb *to be*, which is omitted in the Czech variant. There are minor differences in word order, namely, in the position of the adverbial of time, which is in the sentence-initial position in the Czech and Russian variants.

**Equivalence:** The Czech and Russian proverbs both have the same meaning and similar grammar, but differ in lexical items used, therefore, they are relative equivalents to their English counterpart.

English	Russian	Czech
Curiosity killed the cat.	Любопытной Варваре на базаре нос оторвали. [ <i>curious Barbora's nose at the marketplace has been ripped off</i> ] (SE)	Nebud' zvědavý, budeš brzo starý. [ <i>do not be curious or you'll be soon old</i> ] (SE)
S + V + O	O + A + O + V	[S] + V + C/[S] + V + A + C

**Explanation:** A warning against being inquisitive about matters that do not concern you (Speake, 2015, 65). It will not do any good to be too curious or inquisitive (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 121).

**Semantics:** The English proverbial phrase is metaphorical, it compares curious people to cats, which are popularly known as curious creatures. Like curious cats, people who are curious tend to get into unpleasant situations. For instance, someone exploring a dangerous situation and getting into difficulty may be considered silly for attempting to satisfy

their curiosity and may be thought as deserving whatever ill fate befalls them. Another rhetorical figure used in these proverbs is paradox, as they involve two contradictory and seemingly incompatible ideas.

**Grammatical form:** The syntactic structures of these proverbs are different. The English and Russian versions are declarative sentences, whereas the Czech variant is a paratactic imperative sentence that indicates a relationship of cause and effect.

**Alliteration:** In the English variant, the consonant sound “k” is repeated in the phrase.

**Rhyme:** In the Russian version, a word-final combination of sounds is repeated in the words *Варваре* and *на базаре*, which creates a rhyme (end-rhyme); furthermore, there is an internal rhyme in *Варваре* and *оторвали*, which makes these proverbs melodious.

**Equivalence:** The presented proverbs are semantic equivalents as they carry the same message, though they do not correspond in their lexical or syntactic structures.

English	Russian	Czech
A cat in gloves catches no mice.	Без труда не вытянешь и рыбки из пруда. [ <i>without labour you cannot pull a fish out of a pond</i> ] (SE)	Kočka v rukavičkách myš nechytí. [ <i>a cat in gloves a mouse does not catch</i> ] (FE)
S + C + V + O	A + S + V + O + A	S + C + O + V

**Explanation:** You will not achieve anything without working for it (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2008, 20).

**Semantics:** All these proverbs utilise metaphor to ironically comment on the cause-and-effect relationship of work and achievements. The animal images employed are not identical: the English and the Czech proverbs use the image of *a cat* and *mice* to convey this meaning, whereas the Russian proverb uses *рыбку (fish)*. The *cat* is here used symbolically to designate a lazy person, *mice* and *рыбка (fish)* stand for achievements.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs are simple statements; the Russian proverb differs from its English and Czech counterparts in its paratactic structure.

**Rhyme:** In the Russian version, the words *без труда* and *из пруда* rhyme (end rhyme).

**Equivalence:** The English and Czech proverbs are identical in both the choice of animal images and in meaning. Even though they differ in word order, they can be considered as

full equivalents. The Russian expression is a semantic equivalent of the English proverb since it has a different lexical and grammatical form.

### 13.3 Chicken

English	Russian	Czech
Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.	Не считай утят, пока не вылупились. [ <i>don't count ducklings until hatched</i> ] (RE)	Nechval dne před večerem. [ <i>don't praise the day before the evening</i> ] (SE)
V + O + A	V + O + A	V + O + A

**Explanation:** Do not be rash in making optimistic conclusions or assumptions until they are proven justified (Speake, 2015, 60).

**Semantics:** The presented proverbs are intended as a metaphor. The English and Russian versions obviously do not refer to literal animals or farming, neither does the Czech variant refer to praising the day, but all refer to making plans. In spite of the lexical differences, the semantics remains the same for all the three proverbs.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs take the form of a negative imperative sentence which contains the same constituents.

**Equivalence:** The English and Russian proverbs are relative equivalents because they have the same form and only slight lexical differences, whereas the Czech variant uses completely different images to convey the same meaning, therefore it is a semantic equivalent.

### 13.4 Cock

English	Russian	Czech
Every cock will crow upon his own dunghill.	Всякий кулик в своём болоте велик. [ <i>every sandpiper in its swamp is great</i> ] (SE)	Každý pes na svém dvoře nejsilněji štěká. [ <i>every dog at its yard barks the most</i> ] (SE)
S + V + A	S + A + V + C	S + A + V

**Explanation:** Everyone is confident or at ease when on home ground (Speake, 2015, 56).

**Semantics:** These proverbs do not correspond on the lexical level. They are conceived as metaphors using different animal images (cock, bird and dog) and different places (dunghill,

swamp, yard) to represent the homes of the animals. The main idea remains the same in all the three versions.

**Grammatical form:** Syntactically, all these expressions have the form of a simple declarative statement.

**Rhyme:** In the Russian variant, the words *кулик* (*sandpiper*) and *велик* (*great*) are rhymed.

**Equivalence:** The Russian and Czech variants differ from the English proverb in their lexical items and grammatical structure, therefore, they are semantic equivalents.

### 13.5 Cow

English	Russian	Czech
To wait till the cows come home.	Когда рак на горе свистнет. [ <i>when a crawfish will whistle on the top of a mountain</i> ] (SE)	Čekat do soudného dne. [ <i>to wait till the judgement day</i> ] (SE)
V + A	S + A + V	V + A

**Explanation:** What you are waiting for will never happen (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 97).

**Classification:** These fixed expressions can be considered as sayings rather than proverbs since there is no explicit didactic intent present in them. Furthermore, structural and semantic incompleteness is also evident in them.

**Semantics:** All the three expressions are metaphorical but each of them uses different images to convey the idea that something will never happen. The semantic connection between these three sayings is evident, furthermore, all the three use the pragmatic device of irony to make their point.

**Equivalence:** Lexically and structurally, the English and the Russian sayings do not correspond, they are therefore semantic equivalents. The English and the Czech variants have identical structure and share the lexeme *to wait* but their other lexical items are different, they can be therefore considered as semantic equivalents as well.

English	Russian	Czech
It becomes him as well as a cow does a cart-saddle.	Это ему пристало, как корове седло. [it becomes him as a saddle to a cow] (RE)	Sluší mu to jako psovi uši. [it becomes him as ears to a dog] (SE)
S + V + O + A	S + O + V + A	V + O + S + A

**Explanation:** Something does not fit someone well and/or looks ridiculous on the person (Lubensky, 2013, 265)

**Semantics:** All the three variants of this proverbial expression use simile, which is an explicit comparison of items linked in this case by the transition words *as well as*, *как* and *jako*, respectively. The English and the Russian proverbs employ the image of *a cow* and *a saddle*, while the Czech one uses the image of *a dog* and *ears* to convey the same meaning.

**Grammatical form:** The English proverbial expression assumes the form of a complex sentence containing an adverbial clause of comparison. The Czech and Russian proverbs utilise ellipsis and take the form of a simple sentence with an adverbial of manner. Grammatical structures of the analysed proverbs are similar, minor differences occur in word order, which is caused by the grammar of the target languages.

**Rhyme:** The Czech equivalent makes use of rhyme in the words *sluší* and *uši*.

**Equivalence:** Due to the stated similarities and differences, the English and Russian versions are relative equivalents; the English and Czech versions are semantic equivalents.

English	Russian	Czech
A curst cow has short horns.	Бодливой корове Бог рог не даёт. [a cow that butts God horns doesn't give] (RE)	Trkavé krávé nedal Bůh rohu. [a butting cow didn't give God a horn] (RE)
S + V + C	O + C + S + O + V	O + V + S + O

**Explanation:** Wicked people are not allowed the opportunity to get in the position of power to abuse it (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 24).

**Semantics:** Beyond their literal meaning, these proverbs are used as a metaphor in which *a cow with short horns* or *without horns*, as included in the Russian and Czech variants, stands

for an unkind person who attempts to hurt other people around but, fortunately, fails to do so.

**Grammatical form:** These proverbs take the form of a simple declarative statement. In the Russian and Czech variants, there are two phrases in opposition to express contradictory ideas (*a cow that likes to butt and being with short or without horns*).

Alliteration: In the English variant, the consonant sound “k” is repeated in the phrase (*curst, cow*).

**Equivalence:** The proverbs have the same meaning, use the same animal images, but differ from their English variant syntactically and lexically, therefore, they are considered to be relative equivalents.

### 13.6 Dog

English	Russian	Czech
Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on.	Собаки лают, караван идёт. [ <i>dogs bark, the caravan goes on</i> ] (FE)	Psi štěkají, ale karavana jde dál. [ <i>dogs bark but the caravan goes on</i> ] (FE)
S + V / S + V	S + V / S + V	S + V / S + V + A

**Explanation:** When someone is determined, nothing can prevent them from following their goal (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 206).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs are conceived as a metaphor which uses the image of *dogs* to express the concept of futility, vainness of opposing. All the proverbs use the same lexical items.

**Grammatical form:** The three proverbs have the form of a compound sentence. In the English and Czech variants, the clauses are linked with the coordinating conjunction *but*; in the Russian variant, the binary construction takes the form of asyndetic juxtaposed clauses.

**Equivalence:** The proverbs share the same lexical items. In grammatical structure, there are minor deviations in the Russian proverb, but all the proverbs can be considered full equivalents.



English	Russian	Czech
Two dogs strive for a bone and a third runs away with it.	Двое дерутся – третий ползуется. [ <i>two fight – the third benefits</i> ] (SE)	Když se dva hádají, třetí se směje. [ <i>when two fight, a third laughs</i> ] (SE)
S + V + O / S + V + O	S + V / S + V	S + V / S + V

**Explanation:** Two competitors may concentrate on their fight so much that a third person can take away the object of their fight unnoticed (Speake, 2015, 330).

**Semantics:** The English proverb is conceived as a metaphor. The image of *a dog* is used to comment on the common outcome of arguments and disputes. The Russian and Czech counterparts are literal in their meaning.

**Grammatical form:** The English variant is a compound proverbial sentence whose two clauses are connected syndetically with the coordinating conjunction *and*. The Russian variant is an elliptical binary construction whose two parts are linked asyndetically. The Czech expression has the structure of a complex sentence with a dependent adverbial clause.

**Equivalence:** These proverbs share the same meaning, but they use different lexical means and utilize different grammatical structures, they are therefore semantic equivalents.

English	Russian	Czech
Barking dogs seldom bite.	Не всякая собака кусает, которая лает. [ <i>not every dog bites which barks</i> ] (RE)	Pes, který štěká, nekouše. [ <i>a dog which barks does not bite</i> ] (RE)
S + A + V	S + V + [O + V]	S + [O + V] + V

**Explanation:** People who are noisy and boisterous usually do not present a real threat (Ridout & Witting, 1982, 28).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs are intended as a metaphor. To express their meaning, they use the image of *a dog* in reference to people's propensity to complain or to threaten.

**Grammatical form:** The structural patterns of these proverbs are not identical. The English phrase is a simple sentence; the Russian and the Czech variants include a restrictive adjectival clause introduced by the relative pronouns *которая* and *který* (*which*), modifying the subject of the sentence.

**Rhyme:** The Russian proverb utilises rhyme in the words *кусаем* and *лаем*, which stand at the end of each of the two parts of the phrase.

**Equivalence:** In spite of some minor grammatical discrepancies owing to the grammar of the target languages, the presented proverbs are partly identical in terms of lexical items, therefore, they can be considered relative equivalents.

English	Russian	Czech
Let sleeping dogs lie.	Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо. [ <i>do not wake up the trouble while it is quiet</i> ] (SE)	Nedráždi hada bosou nohou. [ <i>don't tease a snake with a bare foot</i> ] (SE)
[S] + V + O + C	[S] + V + O + A	[S] + V + O

**Explanation:** Avoid stirring up trouble when it is not necessary (Ridout & Witting, 1982, 107).

**Semantics:** The English and Czech expressions are conceived as metaphors, but they use different images to refer to trouble: English – *dog*, Czech – *had* (*snake*). In the Russian proverb, *лихо* (*trouble*) is personified.

**Grammatical form:** All the three expressions have the form of an imperative sentence. The English proverb is the type of imperative that expresses suggestions by means of the verb *let*, whereas the Russian and Czech variants are negative imperatives where explicit subjects are missing. The Russian proverb, in contrast to the English and Czech variants, takes the form of a complex sentence containing an adverbial clause of time introduced by the conjunction *пока* (*while*).

**Rhyme:** In the Russian equivalent, the words *лихо* and *тихо* are phonemically matched.

**Equivalence:** The proverbs express the same point, but they do not correspond either on the lexical or the grammatical level, they are therefore semantic equivalents.

English	Russian	Czech
Beware of a silent dog and still water.	В тихом омуте черти водятся. [ <i>in a quiet pool imps live</i> ] (SE)	Tichá voda břehy mele. [ <i>still water grinds banks</i> ] (SE)
[S] + V + O + O	A + S + V	S + O + V

**Explanation:** Quiet people who plot secretly should be feared (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 140).

**Semantics:** The proverbs express the same meaning through different images. Fear of *a silent dog, quiet pool* and *still water* stands for fear of silent people with evil intentions, which means that these images are used metaphorically to express human actions that can take one by an unpleasant surprise. The three proverbs differ in their lexical forms.

**Grammatical form:** The English version manifests the structure of an imperative sentence; the Russian and Czech variants are simple statements.

**Equivalence:** Considering their different syntactic structures and different lexical forms, these proverbs have been placed into the category of semantic equivalence.

### 13.7 Dog/Lion

English	Russian	Czech
Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.	Лучше быть головой кошки чем хвостом льва. [better to be the head of cat than the tail of lion] (RE)	Lepší být prvním na vesnici než druhým ve městě. [better to be the first in a village than the second in a town] (SE)
A + V + C	A + V + C	A + V + C

**Explanation:** It is better to be the leader in a less influential group than a regular member in a more prestigious group (Bertram, 1997, 47).

**Semantics:** The English and Russian proverbs share the same metaphor and metonymy, what is different is the choice of the animal (*dog, кошка [cat]*) to represent someone not too important. The Czech proverb expresses its metaphorical meaning in a different lexical form. An expressive contrast is achieved through the oppositions of *head of a dog vs. tail of a lion, голова кошки vs. хвост льва* and *první na vesnici vs. druhý ve městě*.

**Grammatical form:** All the three variants take the form of a comparative sentence including the comparative adjectives *better... than, лучше... чем* and *lepší... než*.

**Equivalence:** The proverbs of the three languages describe the same semantic situation and have the same grammatical structures but manifest differences in their lexical structure. The only difference between the Russian and English expressions is in the lexemes *dog/кошка*

(cat), therefore, they qualify as relative equivalents. The Czech proverb is a semantic equivalent to its English counterpart.

### 13.8 Fox/Hare

English	Russian	Czech
An old fox need learn no craft.	Не учи учёного. [ <i>don't teach a scholar</i> ] (SE)	Starého zajíce netřeba učit do zelí chodit. [ <i>an old hare does not need to be taught in cabbage to go</i> ] (SE)
S + V + O	[S] + V + O	S + V + O

**Explanation:** You should not teach someone what they already know very well (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 159).

**Semantics:** All these three proverbs have the same meaning but the English and Czech variants, unlike the Russian proverb with a literal meaning, employ animal images (*fox, zajíc [hare]*) to express this meaning in a metaphorical manner.

**Grammatical form:** In contrast to the English and the Czech proverbs, which take the form of simple negative statements, the Russian version has the form of a negative imperative, in which the subject *you* is not expressed explicitly.

**Rhyme:** The Czech proverb contains the rhyming words *učit* and *chodit*.

**Equivalence:** The Czech and the English proverbs have an identical grammatical structure but differ in their lexical form, therefore, they are semantic equivalents. The Russian and the English proverbs describe different semantic situations but have the same message, hence they qualify as semantic equivalents.

### 13.9 Goose/Swan

English	Russian	Czech
Every man thinks his own geese swans.	Всякий считает своих гусей лебедями. [ <i>everyone considers his geese swans</i> ] (FE)	Oslu je pěknější osel než arabský kůň. [ <i>to an ass is prettier an ass than an Arab horse</i> ] (SE)
S + V + O + C	S + V + O + C	O + V + C + S

**Explanation:** People tend to think higher of their children, possessions or achievements than others would do (Manser, 2002, 79).

**Semantics:** The English and Russian proverbs employ the image of *geese* and *swans* respectively to convey the common shortcoming of people to think of their own as better than others. The Czech equivalent expresses the same metaphorical meaning through the images of *ass* (*osel*) and *horse* (*kůň*).

**Grammatical form:** The English proverb takes the form of a complex sentence containing a nominal relative clause that is linked to the main clause asyndetically. The Russian and Czech proverbs are simple sentences; the Czech variant uses a comparative.

**Ellipsis:** The copula verb *to be* is omitted in the English expression.

**Equivalence:** The English and Russian proverbs correspond semantically, syntactically and lexically, therefore, they are full equivalents. The Czech expression uses different wording and grammatical structure than the English proverb, it is therefore a semantic equivalent.

English	Russian	Czech
Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.	Не режь курицу, несущую золотые яйца. [ <i>don't butcher the hen that lays the golden eggs</i> ] (RE)	Nezabíjej slepici, která ti snáší zlatá vejce. [ <i>don't kill a hen which for you lays golden eggs</i> ] (FE)
[S] + V + O + C	[S] + V + O + C	[S] + V + O + C

**Explanation:** This proverb warns against destroying something that brings value (Cambridge, 2019).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs are conceived as a metaphor which uses the images of *goose* and *hen* (*курица*, *slepice*) to stand for something that is valuable and profitable.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs have the form of a negative imperative sentence that contains a relative clause modifying its antecedent (*goose*, *курицу*, *slepici*) and functioning as its attribute.

**Equivalence:** The English and Czech proverbs correspond on all levels, therefore, they are full equivalents. The Russian expression in comparison with the English phraseme uses a different animal image and there is also a difference in the verb components *режь* (butcher) – *kill*, therefore, they are to be considered relative equivalents.

### 13.10 Hare

English	Russian	Czech
If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.	За двумя зайцами погонишься – ни одного не поймаешь. [ <i>you run after two hares – you will catch neither</i> ] (FE)	Kdo dva zajíce honí, žádného nechytí. [ <i>who runs after two hares neither catches</i> ] (FE)
S + V + O / S + V + O	S + V + O / S + V + O	S + O + V / O + V

**Explanation:** When you work on two things at the same time, you will manage neither (Bertram, 1997, 118). When you do many things at once, nothing will be done (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 76).

**Semantics:** These proverbial expressions share the same meaning. They are conceived as a metaphor, where *hares* refers to any kind of activity and *running after* refers to performing the activity.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs take the structure of a complex sentence. The English version is represented by a conditional sentence, in which the subordinate clause is connected to the main clause with the conjunction *if*. The Russian proverb expresses a cause-and-effect relationship by means of a paratactic structure. The Czech variant similarly expresses a cause-and-effect relationship.

**Equivalence:** These proverbs can be considered full equivalents, even though they manifest minor grammatical and lexical differences. The semantic correspondence among these three proverbs is however evident.

### 13.11 Horse

English	Russian	Czech
You can lead the horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.	Можно пригнать коня на водопой, но пить его не заставишь. [ <i>possible to drive a horse to water, but you can't make him drink</i> ] (FE)	Koně k vodě dovést můžeš ale napít ho nepřinutíš. [ <i>a horse to the water lead you can but drink him not make</i> ] (FE)
S + V + O + A / S + V + O + C	[S] + V + O + A / [S] + V + O + C	[S] + O + A V / [S] + V + O + C

**Explanation:** One can be shown a solution or an opportunity but cannot be forced to make use of it (Bertram, 1997, 234).

**Semantics:** *Horse* is used here metaphorically to refer to people, who cannot be made do something that they do not want to. The literal meaning of the proverb is that a horse will only drink water when it is thirsty; the metaphorical meaning is that a person can be given advice but cannot be forced to act on it. The proverb uses antithetic parallelism, i.e., parallel structures that contrast the ideas expressed in each of the two clauses.

**Grammatical form:** The proverbs have the form of a compound sentence which consists of two main clauses. The clauses are explicitly linked with the coordinating conjunctions *but*, *но* (but) and *ale*.

**Equivalence:** The Russian and Czech proverbs share with their English counterpart the same denotative meaning and use the same image to convey the message. Even though there are some minor grammatical differences, they are considered to be full equivalents.

English	Russian	Czech
Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.	Дарёному коню в зубы не смотрят. [ <i>a gifted horse at teeth don't look</i> ] (FE)	Darovanému koni na zuby nehled'. [ <i>a gifted horse at teeth don't look</i> ] (FE)
[S] + V + O + A	O + V + A	[S] + O + A + V

**Explanation:** One should not look for defects in what was gifted to them (Bertram, 1997, 71).

**Semantics:** The literal meaning of the phrase is to examine the teeth of a horse to determine its age and condition. The metaphorical meaning conveys the advice that a person should not criticise a gift and should be thankful for it. The image of *horse* is used to represent a *gift*.

**Grammatical form:** The English and Czech proverbs take the form of a simple negative imperative sentence which consists of the same constituents. The Russian proverb is a simple declarative statement. The English proverb differs in word order.

**Equivalents:** Since all the three proverbs express the same idea through using the same imagery and similar wording, they are considered to be full equivalents, despite minor differences in syntactic structure.

English	Russian	Czech
Don't shut the stable door after the horse is stolen.	После поры не точат топоры. [ <i>after it's time do not grind axes</i> ] (SE)	Pozdě bycha honiti. [ <i>late would to chase</i> ] (SE)
[S] + V + O + A	A + [S] + V + O	A + O + V

**Explanation:** There is no point in taking precautions after something that could have been prevented has already happened (Litovkina, 2000, 141).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs use a metaphor to express the point when it is too late to take action, but they convey the message through different images – *horse*, *топоры* (axes) and *bych* (would).

**Grammatical form:** The English proverb has the form of a complex negative imperative sentence and contains an adverbial clause of time introduced by *after*. The Russian and Czech variants are simple declarative statements. The Russian version is composed of two parallel structures of a similar grammatical form that stand in contrast to each other.

**Rhyme:** There is a rhyme in the Russian proverb, where the words *поры* and *топоры* that stand at the end of each phrase phonemically match.

**Equivalence:** The proverbs describe the same idea but they differ significantly in terms of lexical items as well as grammatical form, therefore, they fall into the category of semantic equivalents.



English	Russian	Czech
If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.	Кабы сивому коню чёрную гриву, был бы буланый. [ <i>if to a grey horse a black mane, he would be dun</i> ] (SE)	Kdyby jsou chyby. [ <i>if are mistakes</i> ] (SE)
S + V + C / S + V	O + O / S + V + C	S + V + C

**Explanation:** It does not help to make futile wishes (Bertram, 1997, 116). Warns against wishful thinking (Speake, 2015, 349).

**Semantics:** All the proverbs are formulated as a metaphor which suggests that if making a wish could make things happen, then even the most destitute people would have everything they wanted. The English and Russian expressions use the image of *horse* to convey the meaning, while the Czech proverb uses the word *kdyby* (*if only*).

**Grammatical form:** The English and Russian proverbs have the form of a conditional sentence (type II, unreal conditional) where the dependent subordinate clause is connected to the main clause with the conjunctions *if* and *kaby* (if). The Czech proverb is a simple statement with the copular verb *to be*. The English and Russian proverbs consist of a juxtaposition of two expressions of similar form, thus forming a parallel structure.

**Rhyme:** The English version uses nursery rhyme, i.e., a traditional rhyme of songs and poems for children.

**Equivalents:** The proverbs have the same meaning, but they do not correspond syntactically and lexically, they are therefore semantic equivalents.

### 13.12 Leopard

English	Russian	Czech
A leopard doesn't change its spots.	Волк каждый год линяет, а всё сер бывает. [ <i>a wolf every year changes, but still grey is</i> ] (SE)	Leopard nemění své skvrny. [ <i>a leopard doesn't change his spots</i> ] (FE)
S + V + O	S + A + V / A + C + V	S + V + O

**Explanation:** People cannot change their defining characteristics (Litovkina, 2000, 146).

**Semantics:** These proverbs are conceived as a metaphor where the images of *a leopard* and *a wolf* are used to express that people cannot change the basic aspects of their character, especially negative ones.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs have the form of simple declarative statements. The Russian proverb exhibits a parallel structure where the two phrases are in a contradictory relationship to each other, which is manifested by the use of the conjunction *a* (but). The opposition is also realised through the semantically contrastive pairs *каждый год* (every year) and *всё* (always).

**Rhyme:** The Russian expression includes rhyming words at the end of each segment: *линяет* and *бывает*.

**Equivalence:** The English and Czech proverbs correspond lexically, syntactically and semantically, therefore, they are full equivalents. The Russian expression lexically and grammatically differs from its English counterpart, it is therefore a semantic equivalent.

### 13.13 Ох

English	Russian	Czech
An old ox makes a straight furrow.	Старий конь борозды не портит. [ <i>an old horse furrow does not spoil</i> ] (RE)	Starý vůl dělá rovné brázdy. [ <i>an old ox makes straight furrows</i> ] (FE)
S + V + O	S + O + V	S + V + O

**Explanation:** An older person is more experienced and less likely to make a mistake in what they do (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 212).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs use a metaphor where *an old experienced person* is compared to *an old ox* or *an old horse*.

**Grammatical form:** The analysed proverbs have the form of a simple declarative statement with the same sentence constituents. The difference is in word order: in the Russian expression, the noun *борозда* (furrow) is placed in the middle of the sentence, whereas in the English and Czech counterparts, it is in sentence-final position.

**Alliteration:** In the English proverb, there is an alliteration of the /v/ sound in the adjective *old* and the noun *ox*.

**Equivalence:** The English and Czech proverbs correspond lexically and grammatically, therefore, they are full equivalents. The Russian proverb, compared to the English one, uses different images (ox – horse), there are also lexical differences (make – портит [spoil]), as well as grammatical differences in word order and formation of words (as Russian has flexible word order and inflected words). The English and Russian phrasemes are therefore relative equivalents.

### 13.14 Pig

English	Russian	Czech
To buy a pig in a poke.	Кота в мешке покупать. [ <i>a cat in a poke to buy</i> ] (RE)	Купovat zajíce v pytli. [ <i>to buy a hare in a poke</i> ] (RE)
V + O + Att	O + Att + V	V + O + Att

**Explanation:** Refers to buying something without making sure that the item is worth buying (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 100).

**Classification:** Sayings.

**Semantics:** The three proverbs metaphorically warn against accepting an offer or a deal without examining the goods first, but the English buy *a pig in a poke*, the Russian *a cat in a poke* and the Czech *a hare in a poke*.

**Grammatical form:** These proverbs do not have the form of a complete sentence and the didactic intention is also missing; therefore, they are sayings rather than proverbs. All the three proverbs use the infinitive form of verb in their structure (*to buy, покупать, kupovat*). In the Russian proverb, the order of lexical components is reversed when compared with the English and Czech variants.

**Equivalence:** The phraseological units express the same idea, but they do not use identical animal images to express it. They belong in the category of relative equivalents.

### 13.15 Sheep

English	Russian	Czech
One scabbed sheep will mar a whole flock.	Одна паршивая овца всё стадо испортит. [ <i>one black sheep a whole flock will spoil</i> ] (FE)	Jedna ovce prašivá celé stádo nakazí. [ <i>one sheep scabbed a whole flock will infect</i> ] (FE)
S + V + O	S + O + V	S + O + V

**Explanation:** One disgraced person is enough to ruin the reputation of the whole family. A bad person can influence others to wrongdoing (Bertram, 1997, 207).

**Semantics:** These proverbs employ a metaphor that uses the image of *sheep* to represent the negative human characteristics of disgracefulness and foolishness.

**Grammatical form:** All the three proverbs take the form of a simple statement and use the same constituents in their sentence structure. The only difference is in word order: in the English proverb, the noun phrase *a whole flock* follows after the verb in sentence-final position, while in the Russian and Czech proverbs, the equivalent phrase comes before the verb. These proverbs have a binary structure (topic and comment structure) where two phrases stand in opposition to each other. The opposition is produced through semantic contrastive word pairs – *one* and *whole*, *одна* (one) and *всё* (whole), *jedna* (one) and *celé* (whole).

**Equivalence:** The presented proverbs manifest slight lexical and grammatical differences, but they still satisfy all levels of equivalence, therefore, they are full equivalents.

### 13.16 Wolf

English	Russian	Czech
You can give the wolf the best food, but he would hanker for the wood.	Как волка не корми, а он всё в лес глядит. [ <i>as a wolf do not feed, he still at the forest looks</i> ] (RE)	Krm vlka, jak chceš, on vždy k lesu hledí. [ <i>feed a wolf how you want, he always at the forest looks</i> ] (RE)
S + V + O + O / S + V + O	[S] + V / S + A + V	[S] + V + O + A / S + A + V

**Explanation:** One's natural instincts are stronger than any training and cannot be changed (Bertram, 1997, 9).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs are conceived as a human-animal metaphor in which *wolf* represents a person or any living creature whose natural essence, habits and inclinations cannot be changed, however hard one may try.

**Grammatical form:** The presented proverbs have the form of a compound sentence where the two clauses are linked with the coordinating conjunctions *but* and *a (but)* in the English and Russian proverb, respectively. In the Czech proverb, the clauses are joined asyndetically: they are composed of two parallel phrases that juxtapose two contrasting ideas and are similar in length and grammatical structure.

**Rhyme:** In the English proverb, the words *food* and *wood* that are placed one at the end of each phrase are rhymed.

**Alliteration:** The English proverbial expression demonstrates the assonance of the /u:/ sound, which occurs in stressed syllables in the words *food*, *would* and *wood*.

**Equivalence:** The proverbs are identical in their choice of the animal image and meaning, but they manifest some differences in open-class words and syntactic form. They are therefore relative equivalents.

English	Russian	Czech
Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl.	С волками жить – по волчьей выть. [ <i>with wolves to live – like a wolf to howl</i> ] (RE)	Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výt. [ <i>who wants with wolves be, must with them howl</i> ] (RE)
S + V + O + C / V + O	S + C	S + V + O + V / V + O + C

**Explanation:** One has to adapt to the social environment and do as others do, whether one likes it or not (Margulis & Kholodnaja, 2015, 197).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs are composed as a metaphor that uses the image of *wolf* to describe human conformist behaviour, i.e., when a person finds themselves in a certain society, they must accept the rules of this society.

**Grammatical form:** The English and Czech proverbs have the form of a complex sentence with an adjectival relative clause connected to the main clause with the relative pronoun *who* and *kdo* (who) that function as the subject of the relative clause. The Russian and Czech expressions manifest parallel structures, where the two phrases are linked asyndetically.

They use the infinitive forms of verbs (*жить, выть, býti, výtí*) to express the relationship of cause and effect.

**Rhyme:** The Russian and Czech proverbs contain the rhyming words *жить* and *выть* and *býti* and *výtí*, which stand at the end of each phrase.

**Equivalence:** The presented proverbs use an identical animal image and have the same meaning but they differ in grammatical structure and lexical items used, so that they are considered relative equivalents.

### 13.17 Wolf/Sheep

English	Russian	Czech
To set the wolf to keep the sheep.	Волка в пастухи поставить. [ <i>a wolf in a shepherd to put</i> ] (RE)	Běda ovčím, kde vlk soudcem. [ <i>woe sheep where a wolf judge</i> ] (RE)
V + O / V + O	O + C + V	S + [V] + O / [V] + S + C

**Explanation:** It is not advisable to put someone in a place where they might be tempted to wrongdoing (Manser, 2002, 62).

**Semantics:** All the three proverbs are conceived as a metaphor where *wolf* stands in place of an unreliable person. Another stylistic device used here is irony, as the intended meaning is the opposite to what is said in the English and Russian proverbial expressions (i.e., the intended meaning is *Do not set a wolf to guard the sheep*).

**Grammatical form:** The English and Russian phraseological units manifest features of a saying rather than a proverb because the didactic intent is missing and structural and semantic incompleteness is also evident. The Czech equivalent is a complex sentence with a dependent adverbial clause of place. The English and Czech proverbs have the form of parallel structures because phrases of similar length and grammatical form are repeated – *to set the wolf* and *to keep the sheep*, *běda ovčím* and *vlk soudcem*. This juxtaposition emphasises the incompatibility between two entities (wolf x sheep).

**Ellipsis:** Ellipsis is used in the Czech proverb, where the predicate (copular verb *to be*) is omitted.

**Equivalence:** The proverbs use identical animal images and express the same metaphorical meaning, but they differ in grammatical structure and some lexical components of each proverb vary, therefore, they are considered to be relative equivalents.

## 14 Frequency of Occurrence of Individual Animal Names in the Corpus

	<b>Animal name</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Russian</b>	<b>Czech</b>	<b>In total</b>
<b>Domestic animals</b>	<i>Cat</i>	3	2	1	6
	<i>Chicken</i>	1			1
	<i>Cock</i>	1		1	1
	<i>Cow</i>	3	2	2	7
	<i>Dog</i>	6	2	4	12
	<i>Duckling</i>		1		1
	<i>Goose</i>	2	1		3
	<i>Hen</i>	1	1	2	4
	<i>Horse</i>	4	5	3	12
	<i>Mouse</i>	1		1	2
	<i>Ox</i>	1		1	2
	<i>Pig</i>	1			1
	<i>Sheep</i>	2	1	2	4
					<b>56</b>
	<b>Wild animals</b>	<i>Ass</i>			1
<i>Bird</i>		1			1
<i>Crawfish</i>			1		1
<i>Fish</i>			1		1
<i>Fox</i>		1			1
<i>Hare</i>		1	1	3	4
<i>Leopard</i>		1		1	2
<i>Lion</i>		1	1		2
<i>Pigeon</i>				1	1
<i>Sandpiper</i>			1		1
<i>Snake</i>				1	1
<i>Sparrow</i>				1	1
<i>Stork</i>			1		1
<i>Swan</i>		1	1		2
<i>Tit</i>			1		1
<i>Wolf</i>		3	4	3	10
				<b>31</b>	

**Table 1** Animal referents and frequency of their occurrence in proverbs



The first stage of research deals with a quantitative analysis of animal names that occur in the examined corpus. All the animal names found in the proverbs included in the corpus were counted and divided into categories: domestic and wild animals. An overview of all the animal names and the frequency of their occurrence is presented in table 1.

The results of the analysis show that the top-three most prominent domestic animals referred to in the proverb corpus are: 1. **the dog with 12 occurrences**, 2. **the horse with 12 occurrences** and 3. **cattle (either the cow or the ox, with 7 occurrences in total)**, whereas the most frequent references made to wild animals involve **the wolf with a total of 10 occurrences**. It can be assumed that in the case of domestic animals, this paremiological ranking is due to the fact that dogs, horses and cattle were among the earliest domesticated animals and consequently, they make up for the highest share in the proverbial animal imagery.

The highest ranking of the *wolf* highlights the typical wildlife representative of the region inhabited by the speakers of the three languages under examination. As table 1 shows, the *wolf* is the most popular wild animal in proverbs of all the three languages. This can be explained by the fact that the wolf is a common species whose natural habitat expands across all the examined regions.

As for the individual languages, the most frequently encountered animal components **in English proverbs** are the *dog*, *horse* and *wolf*; **in Russian expressions**, the *horse* and *wolf* are prevalent; and **in the Czech language**, the *dog*, *horse* and *wolf* are the most frequent. This indicates that the speakers of all the three languages had a detailed knowledge of these animals because their lifestyle was closely connected with these creatures: whether it was domesticated animals used for farming and company (*horse*, *dog*) or animal predators (*wolf*).

Table 1 also contains animals that are not typical of the regions inhabited by the people of the three nations under examination, such as the *leopard* and *lion*. This suggests that many proverbs spread into European languages from other parts of the world, hence a number of equivalent proverbs in different languages can be all tracked to the same source.

Another finding that the research brings is **the predominance of domestic animal references over references to wild animals**. This likely has to do with man's traditional occupations, such as farming and animal husbandry. People tended these animals every day and knew their characteristics, habits and needs most likely as well as their own. This knowledge found its natural reflection in paremiological expressions.

To draw a general conclusion from the above findings, it is apparent that cultural representations of animals in folklore are rooted in images that were most familiarly known and most commonly seen around in the people's everyday lives. The animals that became the subjects of proverbs and other pieces of folk wisdom are therefore determined by the historical and geographical realities of the particular language users.

## 15 Analysis of Proverbs According to the Degree of Equivalence

This chapter focuses on interlanguage, determining for each Russian and Czech proverb the extent of correspondence to their English counterparts. The criterion of the degree of interlinguistic equivalence was used to arrange the proverbs in three tables, which are included in the appendix. These tables contain, respectively, proverbs manifesting full, relative and semantic equivalence. All the English proverbs analysed in this thesis have their Russian and Czech counterparts, therefore, the category of zero equivalence was not used.

Results of the analysis of collected data are presented in table 2, which gives the figures and percentages for each of the three categories. Percentage numbers are rounded.

Language	Proverbs Total	Full equivalents	Relative equivalents	Semantic equivalents
Russian	30	6 (20%)	12 (40%)	12 (40%)
Czech	30	9 (30%)	7 (23%)	14 (46%)
	<b>60</b>	<b>15 (25%)</b>	<b>19 (32%)</b>	<b>26 (43%)</b>

*Table 2 Degrees of translation equivalence*

The results show that the most numerous category is that of **semantic equivalence**, counting 12 instances (40%) of Russian and 14 instances (46%) of Czech equivalents (see appendix D). This category of equivalence includes proverbs that consist of completely different words, even though they maintain the same meaning, as in the following example: *A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.* / *Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе.* / *Lepší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše.*

In the above example, the Russian and Czech proverbs convey the same figurative meaning as the English proverb but use more vivid and rich imagery. While the English proverb only operates with the image of the *bird*, the Russian proverb contrasts the images of a *stork* and a *tit* and the Czech one uses the contrast of a *sparrow* and a *pigeon*. The choice of the lexical item is consequently reflected in the degree of equivalence.

The second most numerous category includes proverbs manifesting **relative equivalence** and counts a total of 19 instances, out of which there are 12 instances (40%) in Russian and 7 instances (23%) in Czech (see appendix C). The reason for the comparatively high number of relative equivalents is the fact that the languages used for this study are typologically different, which significantly affects the degree of proverb equivalence. As a result, there is

a great number of proverbs which have the same meaning but use diverse lexical or grammatical means to convey it.

The least numerous category is that of **fully equivalent** proverbs, which were determined in a total of 15 instances, comprising 6 (20%) instances in Russian and 9 (30%) instances in Czech (see appendix B).

Overall, the second stage of research shows that there is a large number of English-language zoomorphic phraseological units that find full and relative equivalence in the Russian and Czech languages. This can be explained by the fact that proverbs tend to capture the most common paradigms of experience which seem to be shared by all these three European nations. Despite their apparent superficial differences, the speakers of English, Russian and Czech share many deeply rooted cultural elements – in other words, cultural universals – which found their way into proverbs. Furthermore, some of the proverbs were first formulated in ancient Greek or Latin and only then directly translated into modern languages such as English, Czech and Russian, which is another reason for their similarity. Finally, much proverbial wisdom derives from the Bible, which is a shared source among all the three historically Christian societies.

## 16 Figurative and Literal Proverbs in the Study

Most proverbs analysed within this study take the form of metaphorical expressions. Metaphor is a figure of speech utilised in **86 out of 90 proverbs** in the corpus compiled for this thesis. Four English proverbs find their equivalents in **Russian (2 instances)** and **Czech (also 2 instances)** in expressions that are literal rather than figurative. They are the following:

Russian: Двое дерутся – третий ползается. [*two fight – the third benefits*]

Не учи учёного. [*don't teach a scholar*]

Czech: Když se dva hádají, třetí se směje. [*when two fight, a third laughs*]

Nebud' zvědavý, budeš brzo starý. [*do not be curious or you'll be soon old*]

The individual words in the above sentences are used in their denotative meanings, i.e., the literal meaning of these proverbs coincides with their SPI (standard proverbial interpretation).

The results of this part of the analysis confirm the assumption that in most cases, the basic strategy of proverbs is to employ an indirect form of expression to convey pieces of wisdom in a disguised manner.

### 16.1 Stylistic Devices Used in Analysed Proverbs

In the corpus of proverbs analysed in this thesis, all the English and most Russian and Czech proverbs employ animal imagery to describe human beings. The most commonly utilised rhetorical device is metaphor, where human characteristics, behaviours and manners are ascribed to animals. Animals therefore often figure in proverbs as acting like humans. For example:

An old ox makes a straight furrow. / Старый конь борозды не портит. [*an old horse furrow does not spoil*] / Starý vůl dělá rovné brázdy. [*an old ox makes straight furrows*]

#### 16.1.1 English Proverbs

In the sample of English proverbs, there are 30 instances of metaphor, 1 instance of metonymy, 1 instance of paradox, 1 instance of simile, 4 instances of either structural or semantic parallelism, 2 instances of rhyme, 2 instances of alliteration and 2 instances of assonance.

**Metaphor:** 30 proverbs

**Metonymy:** 1 proverb (*Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.*)

**Paradox:** 1 proverb (*Curiosity killed the cat.*)

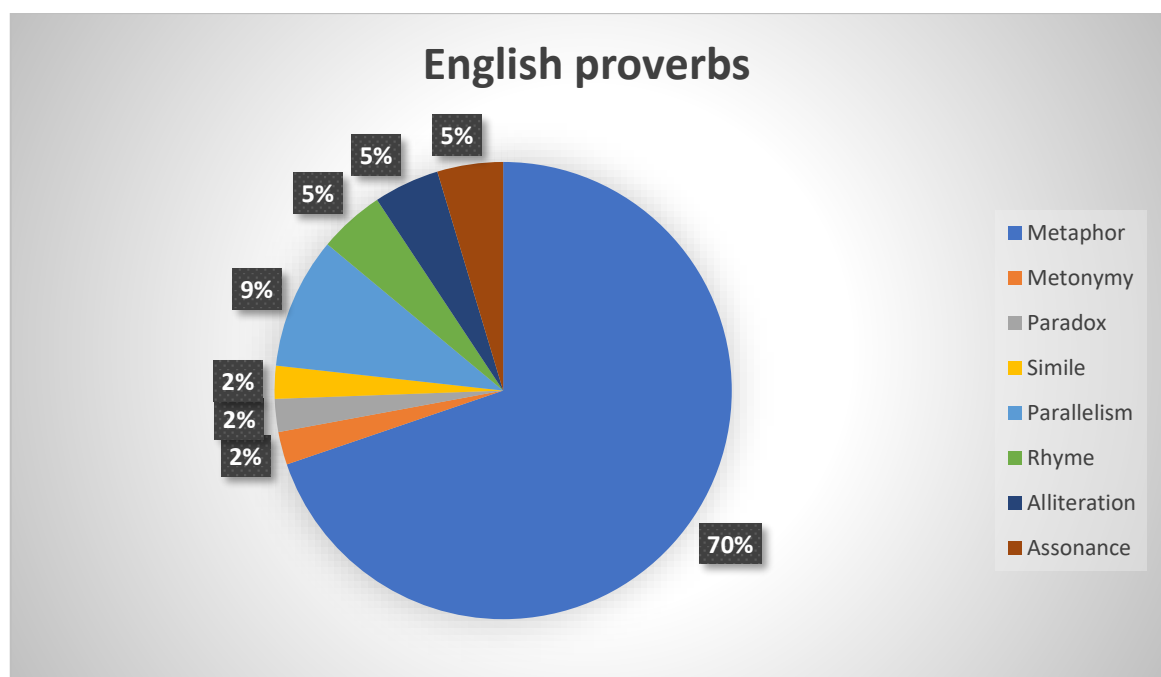
**Simile:** 1 proverb (*It becomes him as well as a cow does a cart-saddle.*)

**Parallelism:** 4 proverbs (*A **bird** in hand is worth **two** in the bush. Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on. You can give the wolf the best food, but he would hanker for the wood. To set the wolf to keep the sheep.*)

**Rhyme:** 2 proverbs (*You can give the wolf the best **food**, but he would hanker for the **wood*** (end rhyme), *If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.* (nursery rhyme))

**Alliteration:** 2 proverbs (*Curiosity **killed** the **cat**. A **curst** cow has short horns.*)

**Assonance:** 2 proverbs (*You can give the wolf the best **food**, but he **would** hanker for the **wood**. An old **ox** makes a straight furrow.*)



**Figure 1** Stylistic devices in English proverbs

### 16.1.2 Russian Equivalents

In the sample of Russian equivalents, there are 28 instances of metaphor, 1 instance of metonymy, 1 instance of simile, 1 instance of personification, 1 instance of irony, 4 instances of parallelism and 8 instances of rhyme.

**Literal:** 2 proverbs

**Metaphor:** 28 proverbs

**Metonymy:** 1 proverb (*Лучше быть головой кошки чем хвостом льва.*)

**Simile:** 1 proverb (*Это ему пристало, как корове седло.*)

**Personification:** 1 proverb (*Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо.*)

**Irony:** 1 proverb (*Волка в пастухи поставить.*)

**Parallelism:** 4 proverbs (*Собаки лают, караван идёт. Двое дерутся – третий ползуется; За двумя зайцами погонишься – ни одного не поймаешь. С волками жить – по волчьи выть.*)

**Rhyme:** 8 proverbs (*Не всякая собака кусает, которая лает. С волками жить – по волчьи выть; Любопытной Варваре на базаре нос оторвали. Без труда не вытянешь и рыбки из пруда. Всякий кулик в своём болоте велик. Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо. Росле поры не точат топоры. Волк каждый год линяет, а всё сер бывает.*)

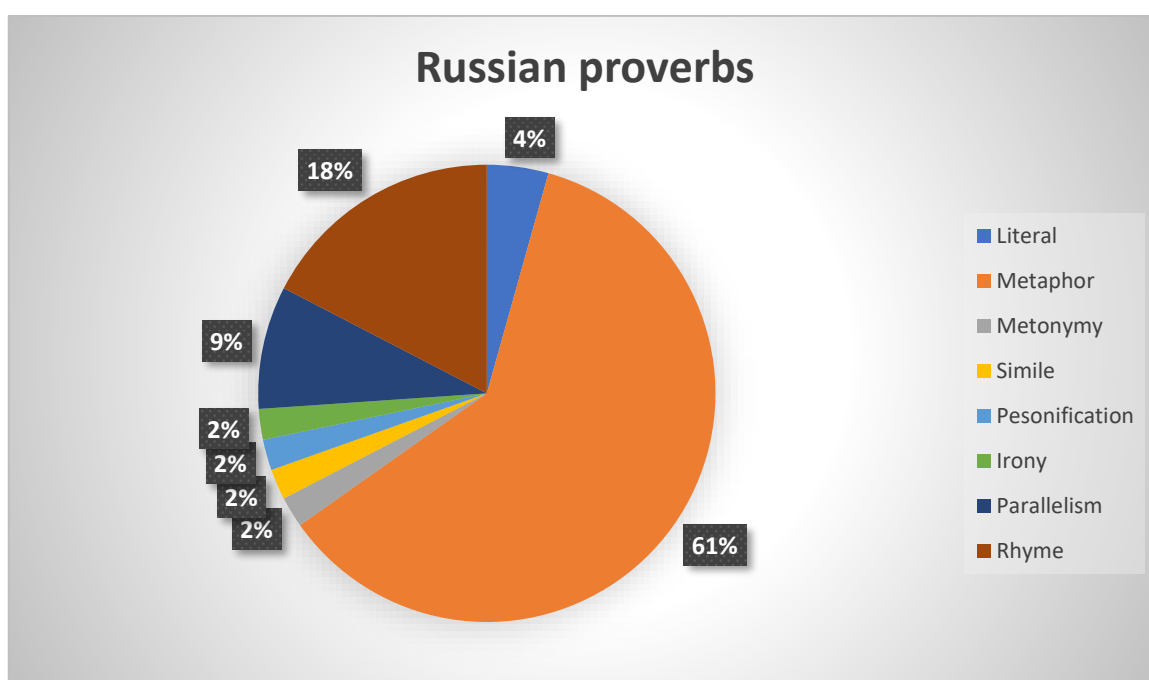


Figure 2 Stylistic devices in Russian proverbs

### 16.1.3 Czech Equivalents

In the sample of Czech equivalents, there are 28 instances of metaphor, 1 instance of simile, 4 instances of structural or semantic parallelism and 3 instances of rhyme.

**Literal:** 2 proverbs

**Metaphor:** 28 proverbs

**Simile:** 1 proverb (*Sluší mu to jako psovi uši.*)

**Parallelism:** 4 proverbs (*Běda ovčím, kde vlk soudcem. Když se dva hádají, třetí se směje. Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výti. Tichá voda břehy mele.*)

**Rhyme:** 3 proverbs (*Sluší mu to jako psovi uši. Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výti. Starého zajíce netřeba učit do zelí chodit.*)



**Figure 3** Stylistic devices in Czech proverbs

## 16.2 Conclusion

This stage of research shows that by far the most frequent proverbial marker encountered in the analysed proverbs is metaphor, which is the case in all the three languages. Another commonly used device is structural or semantic parallelism, which is often combined with



rhyme. The Russian proverbs manifest the most instances of both parallelism and rhyme. Other stylistic devices, such as metonymy, simile, assonance or alliteration, are represented relatively infrequently, with most instances occurring in the English proverbs.

## 17 Syntactic Analysis of Proverbs

The next phase of research will focus on the level of sentence structure, i.e., the syntactic analysis of the selected proverbs. The main aim of this research stage is to determine which syntactic constructions are most typical of proverbs. Furthermore, the goal is to find out whether the analysed proverbs in the three languages share similar or equivalent syntactic structures. A comparative method will be used to identify any shared structural features among the three languages.

### 17.1 Sentence Types (Simple, Complex, Compound)

As to the sentence type, most of the examined proverbs in English, Russian and Czech consist of simple declarative sentences. The second most numerous type is that of complex sentences, while the least frequently occurring type are compound sentences. These results are shared by all the three languages without any significant variations among them.

Sentence type	English proverbs	Russian proverbs	Czech proverbs	Total
Simple	15	17	16	48
Complex	11	9	10	30
Compound	4	4	4	12

*Table 3 Distribution of sentence types*

### 17.2 Sentence Types According to Communicative Function

As to the communicative function, the vast majority of analysed proverbs in all the three languages are declarations, i.e., simple statements. The second most frequently used sentence type are imperatives. This finding can be explained by the main function of proverbs, which is to advise, caution and/or teach a lesson. In keeping with the didactic feature of proverbs, imperatives are commonly used to express a prescriptive rule for the addressee to observe.

#### 17.2.1 Imperatives (Negative or Affirmative)

##### English

Beware of a silent dog and still water.

Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.

Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Don't shut the stable door after the horse is stolen.

Let sleeping dogs lie.

### **Russian**

Не считай утят, пока не вылупились.

Не режь курицу, несущую золотые яйца.

Не учи учёного.

За двумя зайцами погонишься – ни одного не поймаешь.

Можно пригнать коня на водопой, но пить его не заставишь.

Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо.

### **Czech**

Darovanému koni na zuby nehleď.

Nedráždi hada bosou nohou.

Nechval dne před večerem.

Nebud' zvědavý, budeš brzo starý.

Nezabíjej slepici, která ti snáší zlatá vejce.

Krm vlka, jak chceš, on vždy k lesu hledí.

Some of the examples above are not clear-cut imperatives, which is the case of the proverb Krm vlka, jak chceš, on vždy k lesu hledí. This sentence comprises three clauses, out of which one is an imperative clause: krm vlka. Though the structure of this clause takes the form of an imperative, the communicative function conveyed is that of a condition: even if you feed the wolf well, it will always want to be wild.

## **17.3 Frequently Occurring Sentence Patterns**

As to the frequently occurring sentence patterns, apart from declaratives, conditional and comparative sentences are common types across all the three languages.

### 17.3.1 Conditional Sentences

#### English

If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.

If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.

Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl.

You can give the wolf the best food, but he would hanker for the wood.

#### Russian

Кабы сивому коню чёрную гриву, был бы буланный.

За двумя зайцами погонишься – ни одного не поймаешь.

#### Czech

Když se dva hádají, třetí se směje.

Kdo dva zajíce honí, žádného nechytí.

### 17.3.2 Comparative Sentences

#### English

Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.

It becomes him as well as a cow does a cart-saddle.

#### Russian

Лучше быть головой кошки чем хвостом льва.

Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе.

Это ему пристало, как корове седло.

#### Czech

Lepší být prvním na vesnici než druhým ve městě.

Lepší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše.

Sluší mu to jako psovi uši.

### 17.3.3 Formulaic Patterns

All the three languages share several formulaic patterns which recur as a template on which the proverbs are modelled. The most frequently utilised patterns are listed below.

#### a) *Better... than...*

##### **English**

Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.

##### **Russian**

Лучше быть головой кошки чем хвостом льва.

Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе.

##### **Czech**

Lepší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše.

Lepší být prvním na vesnici než druhým ve městě.

#### b) *If/When..., (then)...*

##### **English**

If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.

##### **Czech**

Když se dva hádají, třetí se směje.

#### c) *(He) who..., ...*

##### **English**

Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl.

##### **Czech**

Kdo dva zajíce honí, žádného nechytí.

Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výti.

#### d) **Elliptical Proverbs**

##### **English**

Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion. (*It is* is omitted)

Every man thinks his own geese swans. (copular verb *to be* is omitted)

Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl. (*He* is omitted)

### **Russian**

Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе.

За двумя зайцами погонишься – ни одного не поймаешь.

С волками жить – по волчьи выть.

Двое дерутся – третий ползается.

### **Czech**

Lepší být prvním na vesnici než druhým ve městě.

Lepší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše.

Kdo dva zajíce honí, žádného nechytí.

Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výti.

Běda ovcím, kde vlk soudcem.

Potmě každá kráva černá.

## **17.4 Conclusion**

The results of the syntactic analysis show that by large the most common sentence type of proverbs is the simple sentence, which is the case in all the three languages. Even when the proverbs have the form of a complex or compound sentence, they remain short, which is in keeping with the principle of easy memorability of proverbs.

One of the characteristics of proverbs is their condensed nature, which is manifested also in the frequent utilisation of elliptical constructions in all the three languages. Ellipsis is especially common when coupled with parallel structures and comparative sentences.

As to the sentence types according to communicative function, simple statements are clearly the most common. However, also imperatives are represented by numerous examples, which is in accordance with the didactic intention of proverbs.

Among the most common sentence patterns are conditional and comparative sentences. Furthermore, all the three languages share several formulaic structures, mostly the pattern *Better... than...* but also others, such as *If/When..., (then)...* and *(He) who..., ...*.

## 18 Summary

The applied part of this thesis examined in detail a sample of 30 proverbs excerpted from dictionaries and collections of proverbs which are listed in the introduction to the practical part. The corresponding equivalents of selected English proverbs in the Russian and Czech languages were found. Proverbs in all the three languages were then arranged in groups according to the animal names occurring in them and subsequently sorted in alphabetical order. A total of 90 animal proverbs were examined. For the purpose of comparative analysis, the degree of equivalence for each Russian and Czech proverb counterpart was determined and an interpretation of each triplet of proverbs was provided. Furthermore, each proverb triplet was described from a semantic, grammatical and phonological point of view.

The research involved a quantitative analysis of animal names that were present in the analysed proverb corpus, an analysis of proverbs according to the degree of equivalence and a linguistic analysis which focused on identifying stylistic devices and grammatical features occurring in the selected proverbs.

The results of the first stage of research have showed that the highest number of occurrences in the corpus have domestic animal names: the dog with 12 occurrences, the horse with 12 occurrences and cattle (either the cow or the ox) with 7 occurrences. The most frequently represented image of wild animals was the wolf with a total of 10 occurrences. The reason for these results is pragmatical – the above-listed animals were the most familiarly known and most commonly seen around in people's everyday lives. The animals that became the subjects of proverbs are determined by the historical and geographical realities of the particular language users.

An analysis of the degree of interlanguage equivalence has showed that the most numerous category is semantic equivalence, counting altogether 26 instances (12 instances of Russian and 14 instances of Czech equivalents). The second most numerous is the category of relative equivalence, with a total of 19 instances (12 in Russian and 7 in Czech). These results are affected by the difference in language type and hence major differences in grammar among the chosen languages, as well as by the fact that a lot of proverbs spread into these languages from the same sources, which are ancient Latin and Greek as well as the Bible.

The next stage of research focused on identifying stylistic devices utilised in the selected proverbs and brought the following results: 86 out of 90 proverbs in the corpus are conceived as a metaphor. Other commonly employed devices are parallelism and rhyme.

A syntactic analysis of the proverbs has showed that apart from simple declarative statements, the most frequently occurring sentence types are conditionals, comparatives and imperatives. The results have also confirmed that numerous proverbs in the three different languages share equivalent structures. A common formulaic pattern which occurs in proverbs of all the three languages is *Better... than...* . Another frequently occurring characteristic was the use of ellipsis in the proverb structure, which is in keeping with the tendency of proverbial wisdom to be expressed in a concise form.



## IV Conclusion

This thesis focused on a comparative analysis of proverbs featuring animals in English and their equivalents in Russian and Czech. Animal proverbs were chosen for the research as they represent one of the most productive areas, furthermore, animal imagery is usually used in the proverbs figuratively to describe human beings, which facilitates knowledge about specific environmental and social characteristics of people of different nations.

The text was divided into two parts, a theoretical and a practical one. The research corpus consisted of 30 English proverbs and their Russian and Czech variants found in dictionaries and proverb collections listed in the introduction to the practical part of the thesis. A total of 90 proverbs were analysed.

The theoretical part dealt with the usage of proverbs in present-day English. Linguistic disciplines concerned with the study of proverbs were described and differences in terminology among them were delineated. The following chapter focused on the origin and function of proverbs in human discourse. Further on, a typology of proverbs and their classification according to different criteria were introduced. Finally, formal features of proverbs, including structural, syntactic, semantic and stylistic properties, were described.

This theoretical background was referred to in the practical part, which analysed and compared selected English, Russian and Czech proverbs with animal images from lexical, semantic, syntactic and phonological points of view. The main objective was to discover to what extent the examined animal proverbs in the three languages were equivalent and, on the other hand, what distinctive individual features they manifested.

The results of a quantitative analysis showed that the most prominent images of animals referred to in the proverb corpus were *dog*, *horse*, *wolf* and *cattle* (either *cow* or *ox*), which is related to man's traditional occupations, such as hunting, farming and husbandry. In the past more than now, people were in close contact with these animals, which therefore became natural subjects of proverbs. The Russian and Czech proverbs employ more vivid and rich imagery in comparison to English proverbial expressions (*crawfish*, *sandpiper*, *stork* and *tit* are animals that appeared only in the Russian proverbs; *pigeon*, *sparrow*, *snake* and *ass* appeared in Czech).

An analysis of the extent of interlanguage correspondence of the Russian and Czech proverbs and their English counterparts showed that the most numerous category was that of semantic

equivalence, i.e., proverbs that convey the same meaning with use of different language means. In the category of semantic equivalence, there was a total of 26 instances (43%; 12 instances in Russian and 14 in Czech).

The second most numerous category was that of relative equivalence, i.e., proverb variants that communicate the same meaning but differ in some aspects of the language used. This category counted a total of 19 instances, out of which there were 12 instances (40%) in Russian and 7 instances (23%) in Czech.

The least numerous category was that of fully equivalent proverbs, i.e., proverbs with the same meaning conveyed with the same language means. In this category, a total of 15 instances were identified, out of which 6 instances (20%) in Russian and 9 instances (30%) in Czech.

These results were affected by the difference in the types of languages chosen for the research, with English belonging to the Germanic language group, whereas Russian and Czech counting among the Slavic languages. The fact that a considerably large number of English-language zoomorphic phraseological units found full and relative equivalents in the Russian and Czech languages could be explained by the origin of some proverbs used in the study from the same sources – ancient Latin and Greek writings as well as the Bible, which is a shared cultural source among all the three historically Christian societies.

An analysis of stylistic devices characteristic of proverbs showed that the most frequently occurring proverbial marker encountered in the studied proverb sample was metaphor. Out of 90 proverbs in the corpus, 86 were conceived as a metaphor. Another commonly used device was structural or semantic parallelism, which was often combined with rhyme. The Russian proverbs manifested the greatest number of instances of both parallelism and rhyme.

When examining the syntactic structure of the proverbs, it was determined that the most common sentence type in the studied sample were simple declarative statements, followed by conditionals, comparatives and imperatives. Elliptical constructions appeared in all the three languages, particularly when coupled with parallel structures and comparative sentences. Regarding any shared structural features, the results showed that all the three languages had several formulaic structures in common, namely, the pattern *Better... than...* but also others, such as *If/When..., (then)...* and *(He) who..., ...* .

Overall, the study suggested that there was a high degree of similarity in the ideas expressed by the proverbs as well as in the linguistic features employed in the proverbial expressions

of all the three studied languages. These results indicate that the different geographical positions and cultural environments of the three nations did not play any significant role in the formation of proverbs in their respective languages.

## Závěr

Předložená diplomová práce se soustřeďuje na komparativní analýzu anglických přísloví obsahujících názvy zvířat a jejich ruských a českých ekvivalentů. Prísloví s názvy zvířat byla zvolena jako předmět výzkumu z toho důvodu, že představují jednu z nejproduktivnějších oblastí, a navíc postavy zvířat se obvykle používají v příslovích k obraznému popisu lidí, což umožňuje poznání specifických charakteristik prostředí a společností různých národů.

Text práce je rozdělený do dvou částí: teoretické a praktické. Výzkumný korpus sestával z 30 anglických přísloví a jejich ruských a českých variant nalezených ve slovnících a sbírkách přísloví, jejichž soupis je zahrnutý v úvodu do praktické části této práce. Celkem bylo podrobena rozboru 90 přísloví.

Teoretická část se věnovala užití přísloví v současné angličtině. Byly popsány jazykové obory zabývající se studiem přísloví a nastíněny terminologické rozdíly mezi nimi. Následující kapitola se zaměřila na původ a funkci přísloví v lidské promluvě. Dále byla představena typologie přísloví a jejich rozdělení podle různých kritérií. Nakonec byly popsány formální vlastnosti přísloví, včetně jejich syntaktických, sémantických a stylistických rysů.

Na východiska teoretické části odkazuje část praktická, která rozebírá a srovnává vybraná anglická, ruská a česká přísloví s názvy zvířat z hlediska lexikálního, sémantického, syntaktického a fonologického. Hlavním cílem bylo zjistit, do jaké míry si zkoumaná přísloví se zvířaty v uvedených třech jazycích odpovídají a nakolik naopak vykazují individuální rysy.

Výsledky kvantitativní analýzy ukázaly, že zvířaty nejčastěji odkazovanými v korpusu přísloví byli *pes*, *kůň*, *vlk* a *dobytek* (buď *kráva* nebo *vůl*), což souvisí s tradičními povoláními našich předků, kteří se zabývali lovem, zemědělstvím a chovem zvířat. V minulosti více než nyní žili lidé v blízkém kontaktu se zvířaty, která se potom přirozeně stala předměty mnohých přísloví. Ruská a česká přísloví vykazují v porovnání s anglickými živější a rozmanitější obrazy zvířat (*rak*, *vodouš*, *čáp* a *sýkora* jsou zvířata vyskytující se pouze v ruských příslovích; *holub*, *vlašťovka*, *had* a *osel* se objevují v češtině).

Rozbor míry mezijazykové shody mezi ruskými a českými příslovími a jejich anglickými protějšky prokázal, že nejpočetnější skupinou je sémantická ekvivalence, tj. přísloví

sdělující stejný obsah rozdílnými jazykovými prostředky. Ve skupině sémantické ekvivalence bylo zjištěno celkem 26 případů přísloví (43 %; 12 případů v ruštině a 14 v češtině).

Druhou nejpočetnější skupinou byla relativní ekvivalence, tj. varianty přísloví se stejným významem, ale odlišnostmi v některých aspektech použitého jazyka. Tato kategorie obsahovala celkem 19 případů, z toho 12 příkladů (40 %) v ruštině a 7 (23 %) v češtině.

Nejméně zastoupenou skupinou byla přísloví plně ekvivalentní, tj. přísloví stejného významu sdělovaného stejnými jazykovými prostředky. V této skupině bylo zjištěno 15 případů, z toho 6 (20 %) v ruštině a 9 (30 %) v češtině.

Na výsledky měla vliv odlišná typologie jazyků zvolených pro výzkum, kdy angličtina patří ke skupině germánských jazyků, zatímco ruština a čeština se počítají mezi jazyky slovanské. Skutečnost, že značně vysoký počet anglických zoologických frazeologických jednotek našel odpovídající plné a relativní ekvivalenty v ruštině a češtině, lze vysvětlit shodným původem některých zkoumaných přísloví – některá přísloví pocházejí z klasických latinských a řeckých spisů a dále z Bible, která je společným kulturním zdrojem pro všechny tyto tři historicky křesťanské společnosti.

Rozbor stylistických prvků typických pro přísloví ukázal, že nejčastěji se vyskytujícím rysem přísloví zahrnutých v korpusu byla metafora. Z celkem 90 přísloví v korpusu bylo 86 pojato metaforicky. Dalším běžně používaným prvkem byl strukturální nebo sémantický paralelismus, který se často objevoval společně s rýmem. Ruská přísloví vykazovala největší počet případů paralelismu i rýmu.

Při zkoumání syntaktické struktury přísloví bylo zjištěno, že nejběžnější větný typ ve studovaném vzorku byly prosté sdělovací věty, za kterými následovaly věty podmiňovací, srovnávací a rozkazovací. Eliptické struktury se objevovaly ve všech třech jazycích, zejména ve spojení s paralelními a srovnávacími konstrukcemi. Co se týče struktur společných pro všechny tři jazyky, výsledky prokázaly několik sdílených formulí, zejména vzorec *Lepší/lépe... než...*, ale i další, například *Kdyby/když...*, *(tak)...* a *(Ten) kdo...* .

Celkově ze studie vyplynulo zjištění, že panuje vysoký stupeň shody mezi myšlenkami vyjádřenými příslovími a také jazykovými rysy uplatněnými v příslovích ve všech třech jazycích. Výsledky tedy naznačují, že rozdílné zeměpisné polohy a kulturní prostředí zkoumaných národů nehrály významnou roli při tvorbě přísloví v daných jazycích.

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## VII Appendices

### A – A List of English Animal Proverbs Used in the Study

1.	A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.
2.	A cat in gloves catches no mice.
3.	A curst cow has short horns.
4.	A leopard doesn't change its spots.
5.	All cats are grey at night.
6.	An old fox needs learn no craft.
7.	An old ox makes a straight furrow.
8.	Barking dogs seldom bite.
9.	Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.
10.	Beware of a silent dog and still water.
11.	Curiosity killed the cat.
12.	Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on.
13.	Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.
14.	Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.
15.	Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
16.	Don't shut the stable door after the horse is stolen.
17.	Every cock will crow upon his own dunghill.
18.	Every man thinks his own geese swans.
19.	If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.
20.	If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.
21.	It becomes him as well as a cow does a cart-saddle.
22.	Let sleeping dogs lie.
23.	One scabbed sheep will mar a whole flock.
24.	To buy a pig in a poke.
25.	To set the wolf to keep the sheep.
26.	To wait till the cows come home.
27.	Two dogs strive for a bone and a third runs away with it.
28.	Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl.
29.	You can give the wolf the best food, but he would hanker for the wood.
30.	You can lead the horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.

## B – A List of Full-Equivalence Animal Proverbs

Full Equivalence			
No.	English	Russian	Czech
1.	A cat in gloves catches no mice.		Kočka v rukavičkách myš nechytí.
2.	Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on.	Собаки лают, караван идёт.	Psi štěkají, ale karavana jde dál.
3.	If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.	За двумя зайцами погонишься – ни одного не поймаешь.	Kdo dva zajíce honí, žádného nechytí.
4.	You can lead the horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.	Можно пригнать коня на водопой, но пить его не заставишь.	Koně k vodě dovést můžeš ale napít ho nepřinutíš.
5.	Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.	Дарёному коню в зубы не смотрят.	Darovanému koni na zuby nehleď.
6.	An old ox makes a straight furrow.		Starý vůl dělá rovné brázdy.
7.	One scabbed sheep will mar a whole flock.	Одна паршивая овца всё стадо испортит.	Jedna ovce prašivá celé stádo nakazí.
8.	A leopard doesn't change its spots.		Leopard nemění své skvrny.
9.	Every man thinks his own geese swans.	Всякий считает своих гусей лебедями.	
10.	Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.		Nezabíjej slepici, která ti snáší zlatá vejce.

## C – A List of Relative-Equivalence Animal Proverbs

Relative Equivalence			
No.	English	Russian	Czech
1.	All cats are grey at night.	Ночью все кони вороные.	Potmě každá kráva černá.
2.	Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.	Не считай утят, пока не вылупились.	
3.	It becomes him as well as a cow does a cart-saddle.	Это ему пристало, как корове седло.	
4.	Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.	Лучше быть головой кошки чем хвостом льва.	
5.	Barking dogs seldom bite.	Не всякая собака кусает, которая лает.	Pes, který štěká, nekouše.
6.	To set the wolf to keep the sheep.	Волка в пастухи поставить.	Běda ovčím, kde vlk soudcem.
7.	You can give the wolf the best food, but he would hanker for the wood.	Как волка не корми, а он всё в лес глядит.	Krm vlka, jak chceš, on vždy k lesu hledí.
8.	Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl.	С волками жить – по волчьи выть.	Kdo chce s vlky býti, musí s nimi výti.
9.	An old ox makes a straight furrow.	Старий конь борозды не портит.	
10.	To buy a pig in a poke.	Кота в мешке покупать.	Kupovat zajíce v pytli.
11.	Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.	Не режь курицу, несущую золотые яйца.	
12.	A curst cow has short horns.	Бодливой корове Бог рог не даёт.	Trkavé krávě nedal Bůh rohu.

## D – A List of Semantic-Equivalence Animal Proverbs

Semantic Equivalence			
No.	English	Russian	Czech
1.	Curiosity killed the cat.	Любопытной Варваре на базаре нос оторвали.	Nebud' zvědavý, budeš brzo starý.
2.	A cat in gloves catches no mice.	Без труда не витянешь и рыбки из пруда.	
3.	Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.		Nechval dne před večerem.
4.	Every cock will crow upon his own dunghill.	Всякий кулик в своём болоте велик.	Každý pes na svém dvoře nejsilněji štěká.
5.	To wait till the cows come home.	Когда рак на горе свистнет.	Čekat do soudného dne.
6.	It becomes him as well as a cow does a cart-saddle.		Sluší mu to jako psovi uši.
7.	Two dogs strive for a bone and a third runs away with it.	Двое дерутся – третий ползается.	Když se dva hádají, třetí se směje.
8.	Let sleeping dogs lie.	Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо.	Nedráždi hada bosou nohou.
8.	Beware of a silent dog and still water.	В тихом омуте черти водятся.	Tichá voda břehy mele.
10.	Better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.		Lepší být prvním na vesnici než druhým ve městě.
11.	An old fox need learn no craft.	Не учи учёного.	Starého zajíce netřeba učit do zelí chodit.
12.	Don't shut the stable door after the horse is stolen.	Росле поры не точат топоры.	Pozdě bycha honiti.
13.	If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.	Кабы сивому коню чёрную гриву, был бы буланый.	Kdyby jsou chyby.
14.	A leopard doesn't change its spots.	Волк каждый год линяет, а всё сер бывает.	
15.	Every man thinks his own geese swans.		Oslu je pěknější osel než arabský kůň.
16.	A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.	Лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе.	Lepší vrabec v hrsti než holub na střeše.