COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS ABOUT MONEY IN ENGLISH, ROMANIAN AND FRENCH

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Articolul prezintă o analiză contrastivă a cincizeci de proverbe ce se referă la bani în limbile engleză, franceză şi română. Proverbele sunt analizate din perspectiva stilistică: prezența figurilor de stil lexicale, fonetice şi sintactice.

Proverbs and sayings form an important part of any culture and are a proof of popular wisdom aquired during centuries, kept in the collective memory and up untill the last two centuries- transmitted orally from parents to their children. They are interesting to study since they keep the essence of the collective consciousness and show it's change over time, being a proof of a people's moral values, way of life, geographical conditions, development over time, interaction with other peoples. Their educative value cannot be denied, statement which is supported by the attitude of even the most ancient cultures.

The accurate usage of idioms in general and of proverbs in particular can be considered as a distinguishing mark of native command of a language and a sign of profficiency among foreign learners. A structural and semantic comparisson of proverbs belonging to different languages, in this case English, Romanian and French can become useful to achieve this goal for a non-native speaker. We have chosen the narrow field of proverbs about money because this is a topic that dominates modern society and it was interesting to observe how the ideas of wealth and poverty are reflected in proverbs. English language is abundant in proverbs about money and wealth, showing that for the In our paper we make a comparisson between English proverbs about money and their equivalents in Romanian and French and analyze them from the point of view of structure, degree of equivalence of form and meaning, predominance and role of different stylistic devices and how these stylistic devices are preserved across languages.Fifty different English proverbs about money and their Romanian and French equivalents have been analyzed in order to achieve these goals, resulting in a total of more than one hundred and fifty proverbs. As a main source for this selection were the dictionaries of Romanian authors Virgiliu Lefter and Teodor Flonta. We had the hypothesis that lexical expressive means and stylistic devices should be the most abundant in proverbs about money and that the preservation of some of them in equivalents in all three languages is indicative of a high degree of equivalence.

Significant contributions to the research of proverbs have been done by such prominent scholars as, W.Mieder, A.V. Koonin, I.R. Galiperin, D.Melenciuc, G.B. Antrushina, V.A. Kuharenko, A.Taylor, W.G. Smith and others. The focus of their work ranges from defining the proverb, placing it in the context of phraseological units to compelling dictionaries of equivalents. The purpose of the analysis of scientific material was to find features that are common for all proverbs in general and for English proverbs in particular. This is why the first concern of this paper was finding several definitions that scholars give and to see if there is a disagreement in this sense. There is no common definition, however we found that the definition given by the American prominent paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder is the most precise one: "*A short generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation*" [4, p.3].

Two opposing viewpoints exist regarding the question of placing the proverb in the context of phraseological units. Moldovan scholar D.Melenciuc argues that proverb is a type of phraseological unit, specifically phraseological unitybecause it is partially non-motivated- it can be interpreted literally, but usually we interpret it through the metaphorical meaning of the

whole and not through the meaning of each component separately [3, p.192]. By contrast, such scholars as G.B. Antrushina, consider proverbs as separate from the group of phraseological units, finding structural and semantic dissimilarities. They do not function as word equivalents and they possess a social function: to give advice, to moralize [1, p.93]. In order to understand what principles are employed when giving equivalents of proverbs, we used the classification of the Russian scholar expert in translation, V.N. Komissarov, who identifies five components:the purport of communication, the identification of the situation, the method of describing the situation, similar syntactic structure and maximum equivalence of meaning of words [2, p.11-16]. Depending on the presence of these components, he describes five types of equivalents, the first one retaining just the global message and the fifth one containing all elements.

The second part of the paper deals with a comparison of proverbs in English, Romanian and French which is made on several levels. We analyze what are the dominant lexical, syntactic and phonetic means and stylistic devices to achieve brevity, metaphorical meaning and moralizing effects and weather they were kept in their Romanian and French equivalents. We identified such expressive means and stylistic devices as metaphor, personification, antonomasia, allegory, simile – lexical; ellipsis, repetition, enumeration, parallel constructions – syntactic; alliteration, assonance, rhyme, rhythm, meter – phonetic. Metaphors (33 proverbs) personifications (32) and parallel constructions (32) are frequent, while similes (5), metonymies (2) and enumerations (2) proved to be rare. Lexical expressive means and stylistic devices are the most numerous, with 99 proverbs out of 150 containing one or more devices and we concluded that this is in accordance with the quality of proverbs to possess figurative meaning. Then we have the syntactic and phonetic stylistic devices with 46 proverbs each.

We had the hypothesis that the preservation of some types of stylistic devices in equivalents in all three languages indicates a high degree of equivalence. This seems to be true for the parallel construction, the antithesis and the metaphor, while phonetic expressive means such as assonance, alliteration and rhyme are hard to preserve deliberately when giving equivalents. Preserving rhyme, for example, is sometimes done at the expense of meaning: *"As long as I am rich reputed, with solemn voice I am saluted;Omul cel bogat e mai lăudat; Qui argent a, on lui fait fête, qui n'en a point, n'estqu'une bête".* However, rhyme is used extensively because it makes the proverb memorable.

The presence of syntactic expressive means and stylistic devices in equivalent proverbs seems to be the best indicator of a high coincidence in meaning, syntactic arrangement and choice of words*: "As the pay, so the*

*work; Selonl'argent, la besogne; Cum e plata, şi lucrul" (ellipsis).*What we did not expect to find, is such a big number of antithesis. We explain this phenomenon by the fact that people have a quite contrary attitude toward money which makes them see both the negative and the positive at the same time. E.g.:*"Where gold speaks every tongue is silent; Când bogatul vorbeşte lumea amuţeşte;Où l'or parle, toute langue se tait".* Since some of the stylistic devices, such as repetition, might add in length, we made the hypothesis that they should be infrequent in proverbs because this is in contradiction with the quality of proverbs of being brief.

The English proverbs have the biggest number or syntactic and lexical devices. They contribute to the fact that English proverbs are very witty. Humor results out of the well-shaped, unexpected combination, if "unexpected" could be used with regards to proverbs. Romanian proverbs, by contrast, have much rhyme which allows us to speculate that our people and our language has a tendency to lyricism and musicality, proverbs included.

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