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RETHINKING BASIC TERMINOLOGY IN PROVERB RESEARCH: A COGNITIVE STUDY

Abstract: A closer look at terminology reveals the need to rethink some of the fundamental terms in the study of proverbs. My aim is to explore the basic terminology in paremiological research and raise awareness of the terms used. My approach is cognitive semantic.

An essential aspect in proverb research is the choice of terminology that forms the conceptual framework for research: the terminology employed discloses part of the author's conception of the phenomenon. In paremiology, attitudes to proverbs have differed greatly. Along with stable positive terminology used in paremiological research since the beginning of the 1930s (Taylor 1931; Whiting 1931; Mieder 1974, 1989, 1993), a number of negative terms have been introduced, displaying an overtly or covertly negative attitude. Most of the negative terms are metaphorical.

Cognitively, the meaning of a metaphorical term is an integral part of the respective research concept (Gibbs [1994] 1999; Naciscione 2006, 2010). Negative terminology raises doubt about the correctness of choice of term. Proverbs have been branded as stereotypes (Moon 1998; Norrick 2007) and clichés (Kirkpatrick 1996b; Rees 1996; Moon 1998; Cresswell 2000; Hayden 2013). Proverbs are often referred to as quotations (Cram 1983; Norrick 2007). They are even called a hodge-podge, a fuzzy category whose "images often fail miserably as models for organizing our perceptions of current situations" (Norrick 2007). I view the use of negative terminology in proverb research as groundless and inappropriate.

Proverbs form part of cultural folk heritage; they are retained in the collective long-term memory of a people. Linguistically, choice of research terms is closely linked with the basic linguistic and cognitive understanding of proverbs in both the system of language and proverbs in use. More clarity and consistency in terminology would make it easier to communicate a message and follow developments.

Keywords: proverb, terminology, metaphor, cognitive semantics, cultural folk heritage, collective long-term memory

Language is charged with meaning.
Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading*

In scholarly research, choice of terminology is of great importance. It is revealing as it forms part of the author's conception of proverbs, their semantic structure and functioning in discourse. My aim is to explore some of the basic terminology in paremiological research and draw attention to the terms used.

Achievements in all areas of paremiology have been truly outstanding, as manifested by annual bibliographies in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. Mieder's international proverb archive at the University of Vermont contains close to 10 000 scholarly studies on proverbs as well as about 4 000 proverb collections from many languages (Mieder 2004: xiii, 2009, 2011).

This research has produced a wealth of empirical material in both verbal and non-verbal representation in different languages. Importantly, it has yielded fruitful theoretical findings and has opened up new vistas for further research. Proverbs have been thoroughly researched from many points of view: folklore, anthropology, etymology, ethics, philosophy, culture, mass media, social sciences, and many others. Many of the past and present accomplishments have been presented by Wolfgang Mieder in his chapter *Scholarship and Approaches* in *Proverbs: A Handbook* (op. cit.: 117-153).

Linguistic aspects of proverbs have been less researched by far. An essential aspect in proverb research is the choice of terminology that forms the conceptual framework for research. The development of paremiology has witnessed a number of terms that have been used to describe the proverbs as a category. Along with stable terminology used in paremiological research since the beginning of the 1930s (Taylor 1931; Whiting 1931), negative terms have emerged in research texts over the last half of the 20th century, and they still linger. Most of these terms are metaphorical. Some of the negative terminology shows disapproval and reveals that proverbs have been, and still are, seen as undesirable or labeled and branded as wrong. The language user may even be advised to avoid using them. Proverb studies contain a

number of basic terms that convey an explicitly or implicitly negative attitude.

Terminology is inextricably linked with specialist knowledge. In the cognitive semantic view, a term reflects the underlying theoretical conception or some part of it. A cognitive approach affords an understanding of the function of metaphorical terms and their significance in abstract reasoning and the formation of figurative terminology. Findings of cognitive linguistics provide evidence that metaphorical terms are theory constitutive metaphors (Gibbs [1994]1999: 169-172). Metaphorical conceptualization plays a constitutive role in framing ideas in any area of research, paremiology included. Proverbs are handed down from generation to generation as part of cultural heritage, and they are kept in the collective long-term memory of a people. Therefore I would argue against use of negative terminology in proverb research. I believe that the meaning of a metaphorical term forms part and parcel of the respective research concept. Negative terminology raises doubt as to the correctness of choice of term and poses a number of questions.

1. Are Proverbs Stereotypes?

In the traditional view, proverbs are often called stereotypes and treated as such (see, for instance, Moon, 1998: 275). Unfortunately, this view also appears in recent publications in this century, e.g., in Neal Norrick's chapter *Proverbs as Set Phrases* (2007: 381-393), published in an impressive two-volume edition *Phraseology: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*. Norrick believes that proverbs are stereotypes: "proverbs provide evidence of stereotypes and standard culture metaphors," supplying ready-made responses to recurrent types of situations (op. cit.: 381).

Negative terminology is catching; it spreads, and is often used without due re-evaluation of its worth. Even the distinguished folklorist and paremiologist, Arvo Krikmann, who has made an important contribution to proverb studies, believes in the stereotypical nature of proverbs. He writes that, "as to the lexical composition of proverbial tropes, they are quite stereotypical and humdrum already" (Krikmann 2009: 28). He contrasts poetry, which tends to use fresh metaphors that are not redundant, and folklore and phraseology (proverbs included)

which are stereotypical, traditional and present no problem in interpretation. "The tropes of folklore and phraseology (incl. the proverbial ones), on the contrary, are traditional, stereotypical, already met and known previously, as a rule, and automatically interpretable" (ibid.).

Several reasons may explain the appearance of negative terms in paremiology. In practice, researchers tend to form judgments about proverbs proceeding from dictionary head phrases and recorded core use in the entry, and computer data bases that, as a rule, do not reflect cases of stylistic use, especially extended metaphor, allusion, initial replacement, replacement of the key constituent/s and others which are not recorded by most dictionaries and which computers are as yet unable to capture. It is the discerning eye of the researcher that is capable of perceiving, recognizing and identifying stylistic use in discourse.

Another reason is cognitive semantic. Words have meaning. Choice of the right term is an essential part of research. Let me turn to the semantic structure of the word "stereotype" that contains two meanings:

1) (*literal*) a plate cast from a printing surface conforming to a fixed pattern; a fixed, unvarying form;

2) (*metaphorical*) sth conforming to a fixed or general pattern; esp. a standardized mental picture that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment; a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image (*Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary* 2003).

Understanding proverbs as stereotypes runs counter to the findings on proverbs in many areas of research in folklore studies, literature, anthropology, linguistics, and others. Studies by psychologists and neuropsychologists have proved that proverbs reflect and conceptualize personal and social experiences, human behavior and abstract thought, and their interpretation reveals both how people think and their ability to think and reason abstractly (Gibbs and Beitel 2003: 109-115).

In the cognitive perspective, a metaphorical term is an integral part of research theory; it reveals the importance of metaphorical conceptualization and the role of metaphor as a technique of abstract reasoning. The cognitive view maintains that the very "concepts are cognitive; that is, they are part of human

cognition" (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 111). A metaphorical pa-remiological term should serve as a tool for understanding prov-erbs and their actual use in all modes of their functioning: oral, written and non-verbal, e.g., in visual representation (e.g., pic-tures, advertisements, films, gestures).

Linguistically, choice of research terms is closely linked with the basic linguistic understanding of proverbs in both the system of language and proverbs in use. This is a matter of the theoretical stance and the linguistic definition of proverbs. I would argue that the proverb is a stable, cohesive combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning and the struc-ture of a sentence (Naciscione 2010: 19, 2013b: 16-19). Thus, this definition includes two categorical features of proverbs: sta-bility and figurative meaning. In cognitive semantic terms, the proverb is one of the modes of conceptualization of the world and human experiences.

If a proverb is stable, it cannot be new: once recognized and used by people, it must have functioned for a longer or shorter period of time. In a dictionary entry the proverb is recorded as the head phrase, that is, it is given in its base form[1] that has been established as a standard out-of-context unit in the system of language due to customary use (Naciscione 2010: 31-35). In practice it is the dictionary form and meaning, e.g., *A chain is no stronger than its weakest link*. The proverb is metaphorical in its base form. Dictionaries also record its variant *No chain is stronger than its weakest link*. In their base form, proverbs never exceed the boundaries of one sentence.

It is worthwhile examining the functioning of proverbs in discourse. In core use[2], proverbs frequently appear in their stand-ard form and meaning; however, they do not acquire additional semantic and stylistic features. Core use is confined to a single sentence. Contextual changes are insignificant: these are gram-matical changes to comply with the requirements of the sentence, but no semantic or stylistic changes occur as compared to the base form, e.g.:

> We must also remember that these five *As*[3] of access form **a chain that is no stronger than its weakest link**.

> For example, improving affordability by providing health insurance will not significantly improve access.
>
> Leon Wyszewianski, Access to Care: Remembering Old Lessons, *Health Services Research*, 2002, No 37

The use of this common proverb was recorded in English dictionaries more than 200 years ago. Interestingly, the earliest available occurrence is a case of instantial stylistic use[4]. It is a single instance of a unique stylistic realization of the proverb in actual use that has created significant changes in form and meaning, motivated by the thought and the context. In cognitive linguistic terms, instantial stylistic use is a mode of conceptualization. At the same time the new discoursal form remains semantically and stylistically related to the base form:

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link[5]
No chain is stronger than its weakest link
    "In every **chain** of reasoning, the evidence
    of the last conclusion can be no greater
    than that of **the weakest link of the chain**,
    whatever may be the strength of the rest."

> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind*, 1786

Some sources indicate the year 1786 as the origin of the proverb. E.g., the Internet thesaurus *The Phrase Finder* (2014) asserts that Thomas Reid converted this notion into a figurative phrase, and in this way established the proverb in the language of the 18th century. I would argue against that assertion as this example is a case of creative stylistic use that is based on allusion[6] to and extension of the metaphorical image of the proverb. Moreover, the key constituent *chain* is used in two meanings: a) *a chain of reasoning*, which means a series of things associated together, and b) *a chain* as a constituent of the proverb, which signifies an unreliable part of a system, in this way forming a pun based on two figurative meanings of a word. Establishing the origin of the proverb calls for diachronic exploration and etymological proof.

 Allusion is a stylistic pattern that frequently emerges in stylistic use of proverbs, acquiring a discourse dimension as we see it in a dialog between Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, e.g.:

"May I be there to see!" I exclaimed devoutly. "But you were speaking of this man Porlock. "

"Ah, yes -- the so-called <u>Porlock is **a link** in the chain</u> some little way from its great attachment. Porlock is not quite <u>a sound</u> **link** -- between ourselves. He is the only <u>flaw in that chain</u> so far as I have been able to test it."

"But <u>**no chain is stronger than its weakest link**</u>."

"Exactly, my dear Watson! Hence the extreme importance of Porlock."

Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Valley of Fear*, 1915

This unique instantiation forms a figurative network: a metaphorical extension of a common image and the creation of a novel image of a proverb that is so very well known to us. Interpreting a piece of text requires creative processing, as the meaning of the proverb has been developed: it is no longer the same as the figurative meaning of the base form. The explicit figurative constituents serve as associative links and help to retrieve the base form from long-term memory. As the proverbial image is well known, the full form of the proverb can easily be retrieved. The interlocutor (Watson) responds using the standard form of the proverb, presenting the piece of folk wisdom in a nutshell.

The metaphorical thought of this proverb lends itself very well to use in titles of scientific articles, performing a sustainable cohesive text-embracing function which I call umbrella use (Naciscione 2010: 163-170). For instance, the proverb forms the title of a serious piece of research in DNA studies performed by a group of systematic biologists in the year 2000:

<u>**A Chain is No Stronger than Its Weakest Link**</u>:
Double Decay Analysis of Phylogenetic Hypotheses

Mark Wilkinson et al., *Systematic Biology*, 2000, 49(4): 754

This group of scientists has chosen this metaphorical proverb as the title for their scientific study, as it best conveys the essence of their theory. This is an important theoretical issue for paremiology too: "metaphor resides in thought, not just in words" (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 2).

In the traditional view, proverbs have often been seen as phrases of old-time wisdom that are no longer in use. This approach occasionally appears in modern research, too. For instance, Norrick maintains that proverb images are often "archaic and/or far-fetched," e.g., *The apple does not fall far from the tree*. He argues that this proverb is certainly confusing and ambiguous (ibid.). He believes that "proverbs and proverbial phrases contain specialized images from pre-industrial lives, *not*[7] basic-level metaphors or images familiar to speakers today" (2007: 387). My empirical proverb database shows that this is not the case. By way of example, I would like to offer a case of stylistic use of this proverb taken from the lyrics of a song *Being Pretty Ain't Pretty,* written and performed in 2013 by *Pistol Annies*, an American country music group. The girl sings that she is different from her Mama who was sweet as the day is long but who used to wear no makeup at all while she spends all her money on makeup and things:

> But I'd spend the house
> Claiming on new cowboy boots
> **How** *the hell* **did the apple**
> **Fall** *so damn* **far from the tree**

> Pistol Annies, *Being Pretty*
> *Ain't Pretty*, 2013

Stylistic use of the well-known proverb *The apple does not fall far from the tree* in a modern song proves that the proverb is not archaic, confusing or far-fetched. It is alive; it is used in modern texts and is also easily identifiable in a case of stylistic use where the syntactical form of the proverb has been changed by insertion, which shows that the proverb is part of the active paremiological stock of the people. My conclusion is that the proverb is not obsolete because the thought is not obsolete (see also the study of this proverb by Mieder 2000: 109-144).

The proverb *The apple does not fall far from the tree* is a metaphorical generalization, reflecting people's social and individual experience. I agree with Elisabeth Piirainen that similar figurative units have come into being independently in various languages based on common human experiences and general perceptions. They are of polygenetic origin (2012: 518-519, Mieder 2000: 109-111), which explains the existence of this proverb in many languages and cultures, e.g.:

EN *The apple does not fall far from the tree*
RU *Яблоко (яблочко) от яблони (от яблоньки) недалеко падает*
HR *Jabuka ne pada daleko od stabla*
LV *Ābols no ābeles tālu nekrīt*
LT *Obuolys nuo obels netoli rieda*
DE *Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm*
PL *Jabłko nie spada daleko od jabłoni*

Thus, the argument that the proverb *The apple does not fall far from the tree* is archaic does not hold water. I would argue that we bear responsibility for the research terms we choose to use. Even archaic forms that are enshrined in some proverbs do not make them archaic as the proverb survives due to the stability of its structure and figurative meaning, e.g., *Com__eth__ the hour, com__eth__ the man*. On 10 April, 2013, David Cameron made a speech, paying tribute to Margaret Thatcher, saying, "Well in 1979 **came the hour** and **came the** L a d y . "[8]

To put the use of proverbs in a nutshell, I would offer a table that reveals the three basic types of proverb existence and functioning[9] (see **Table 1**).

2. Are Proverbs Clichés?

It is quite a commonplace to say that proverbs are clichés (Permjakov 1968; Alexander 1978, 1979; Moon 1998).

Grigoriy L. Permjakov is an original and inspiring scholar, a paremiologist who has done both theoretical and empirical research. In his day, he was one of the leading paremiologists in the Soviet Union. At the same time, he writes that many proverbs appear as clichés in speech (that is, in actual use). Some of them have not become full clichés while the rest of them appear in speech in constant and unchangeable form; in other words,

they are clichés from beginning to end (Permjakov 1968: 277). Proverbs are sentences that have turned into clichés because they consist of constant components that cannot be changed or replaced; hence they are condemned as empty rhetoric (ibid.).

The choice of the term "cliché" conveys a prejudiced attitude. The word has a meaning of its own; it is not a semantic void. Its semantic structure is polysemic. In a similar way to "stereotype," the first meaning is direct and technical, while the second is metaphorical:

1) (*literal*) an impression made by die in any soft metal; an electrotype or stereotype plate;
2) (*metaphorical*) a trite, hackneyed idea, theme, plot, form (*Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*. [1983] 1987).
*Oxford Dictionary Online (*2014) claims that it is overused and "betrays a lack of original thought."

A number of dictionaries that contain phraseological units, proverbs included, are entitled "Dictionary of Clichés" (Kirkpatrick 1996a; Rees 1996, Cresswell 2000). Kirkpatrick, for instance, points out that the cliché is "a pejorative term for an expression that has lost its first bloom and thus its potency" (Kirkpatrick 1996b: vi). She brands all familiar phraseological units, proverbs included, as clichés which are stale, overused, and over-abused stereotypes, old stock which cannot boast of actions or processes, lacking freshness (ibid.).

An extreme case is Laura B. Hayden's publication on the Internet *Clichés: Avoid Them Like the Plague* (2013), which means avoiding proverbs along with other types of phraseological units. This is a case of indiscriminate use of the term without giving it due linguistic and cognitive consideration. Importantly, Hayden is a teacher on the Professional and Creative Writing Program at Western Connecticut State University; she has worked out a special program for creative writing: "Left-Brain-Right Brain/Creativity Program."

A warning to avoid proverbs is frequently given on the Internet among methodological hints and aids to improve student creative writing skills. The aim of *ProWritingAid: Improve Your Writing. List of Clichés* (2013) is to eliminate clichés and redundancies. The huge list of clichés contains very many proverbs.

Their elimination is supposed to improve student language, especially their writing skills.

In contrast to the above programs, a different approach to proverb use and teaching is shown by Mieder's special course "The Nature and Politics of Proverbs" delivered at the University of Vermont, US. The syllabus presents a positive experience in teaching proverb use in different types of texts, e.g., literary texts, political speeches, mass media, advertisements, poems, popular songs, and others (Mieder 2010).

The use of negative terminology directly influences the whole theoretical approach. The premise that proverbs are clichés is linked to the theoretical belief that they are fixed and frozen, even petrified, that is, turned to stone. (Strässler 1982; Cram 1983; Moon 1992, 1998).

This stands in contrast with the theory of stability in phraseological units (proverbs included) as elaborated by Kunin in the 1960s. Kunin singles out stability of use, structural-semantic stability, lexical stability, morphological stability and syntactical stability (Kunin 1964, 1970: 89-110). I would argue for two other important aspects of the concept of stability: 1) stylistic stability, which is manifest in preservation of the same image and type of figurativeness and 2) diachronic stability, which displays stability of proverbs across time. Stability of the base form does not contradict the dynamic stylistic changes that proverbs may undergo in discourse (Naciscione 2013b: 18).

Mieder has done extensive research on stylistic use of proverbs, and he emphasizes that proverbs are nothing static. Many proverb studies offer ample proof that authors have not stuck to standard proverb forms, but they have varied and modified them to fit their communicative intentions. They prove that "the so-called fixity of proverbs is a myth, once proverbs are integrated into a text" (Mieder 2007: 19).

Cognitively, proverbs provide special interest. Gibbs writes that "proverbs give significant insights into the poetics of mind because they reflect how our metaphorical conceptualization of experience bears on particular social situations" (Gibbs [1994] 1999: 309). He sees proverbs as special cases of the more general process of metaphorical understanding (ibid.). He exposes the myth that proverbs are simply dead metaphors (op. cit.: 265-268). He continues to argue that "linguistic items of this general

class are not simply frozen, formulaic phrases but are excellent indicators of how people think metaphorically in their everyday lives" (op. cit.: 270).

In the cognitive semantic view, proverbs present original images used in a creative way, reflecting unique emotional and social experiences of the people, their observations and generalizations of people's behavior and the world around them. Stylistic use of proverbs displays creativity on the part of the author. The originality of a stylistic instantiation depends on the author's creativity of mind.

3. Are Proverbs Quotations?

It may be strange to find a language unit called a quotation without any author to support the claim. However, proverbs have been referred to as quotations in proverb research.

Cram (1983) maintains that the proverb should be viewed as a lexical element with a quotational status; "its quotation status derives from the fact that proverbs are typically invoked or cited rather than straightforwardly asserted" Norrick treats proverbs as quotes (2007: 381, 386). In contrast, I believe that people do not quote proverbs: they use them. It is not only the nouns "quotation" and "quote" that are used in reference to proverbs but also the verb "to quote," e.g., "the proverb is quoted" instead of "the proverb is used."

Proverbs are stable language units that are retained in the collective long-term memory of a people, forming an intrinsic part of their language stock and hence their intangible cultural property. The same as words and other structural types of phraseological units, proverbs are not quoted; they are freely used by people. Thus, proverbs form part of a common heritage, part of their language and culture, while quotations are individual.

The folk character of proverbs has been indicated by the founding father of paremiology, Archer Taylor, who observes that "a proverb is a saying current among the folk" (1931). The same thought is expressed by Whiting, who emphasizes the popular origin of proverbs; he believes that proverbs are felt to be common property as they convey a generalization (Whiting 1931).

Thus, proverbs differ from quotations in several ways:

1) In their base forms proverbs are stored in the collective long-term memory of the people, forming part of their language stock; quotations are not.

2) Importantly, there is a structural difference: in its base form the proverb has the structure of a sentence. Syntactically, proverbs never exceed sentence boundaries in their base form (Naciscione 2013b: 18). If we go to *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* ([1941]1987) we discover that quotations have no definite syntactical structure: they vary in length from just one word to any length including a paragraph, a stanza or even a whole monologue.

3) Another point of essential difference between proverbs and quotations is that a quotation has a source or, to be more precise, an author. It is a question of authorship. Quotations are as good as copyrighted material. I would argue that calling proverbs quotations or to say that they are quoted in a text is unsubstantiated and misleading.

4. Are Proverbs a Disorderly Mass?

The admirable proverb diversity in structure, imagery and lexical composition has given rise to the idea that proverbs constitute a disorderly mass. For instance, Norrick emphasizes that "the linguistic units called proverbs constitute a diverse, organically merging and emerging hodge-podge" that is not different from an ad hoc grouping of recurrent sayings from the discourses of a language community (2007: 381). Surprisingly, this is written by a linguist who has done research on proverbs before. He perceives proverbs as a hodge-podge: a disorderly mass, a mixture, and underlines the "fuzziness of the category" (op. cit.: 382).

Norrick's research in paremiology has been adversely affected by the theory of "mixed metaphor,"[10] which is clearly seen in his view of proverbs as a "hodge-podge." He argues that proverb images "fail miserably as models for organizing our perceptions of recurrent situations" (op. cit.: 387). According to Norrick, proverbs "frequently mix metaphors, combining images from separate source domains into complex, sometimes incompatible collages" (ibid.). He illustrates separate source domains by the proverb *Every cloud has a silver lining* that presents "a jumble of

incongruous metaphors from unrelated domains" (ibid.). He argues against cognitive linguists who believe that metaphors organize our perceptions, and obviously also against one of the tenets in cognitive linguistics, namely that the human mind is capable of figurative thinking.

Norrick does not view metaphoricity as "an internal semantic property of proverbs," (382) which stands in stark contrast with Aristotle's basic tenet that "proverbs too are metaphors from species to species," expressed in his seminal book "Rhetoric" ([350 BC] 1833). Figurativeness in proverbs was early established in proverb research. Taylor devotes a whole section of *Metaphorical Proverbs* to metaphoricity and extension of meaning in proverbs (1931: 10-15). Whiting underscores the figurative nature of proverbs (1931) and speaks of "a second level of meaning in proverbs" (1968: xiv).
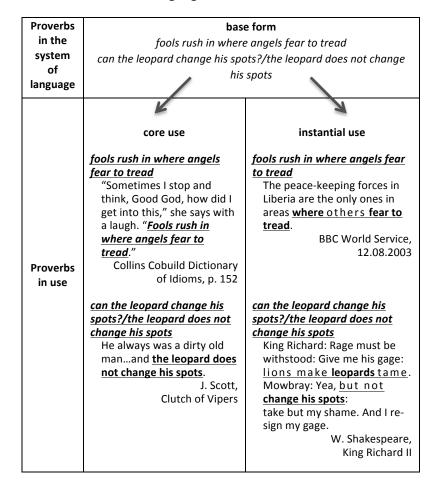
In the cognitive linguistic view, figurative meaning is seen as an integral part of all proverbs and their extension; or in other words, stylistic use is treated as a natural discourse phenomenon.

Conclusion

My plea is for a linguistic and cognitive consideration of choice of terminology in proverb research. Empirical study of proverbs provides evidence against the use of negative terminology for a positive language phenomenon. Metaphorical terms have a metaphorical meaning in their semantic structure. Moreover, they reflect the theoretical concept and serve as a way of framing ideas and performing reasoning.

The paremiological stock of a language is a treasure that reflects people's social and individual experience, feelings and emotions, as well as the external world. In cognitive semantic terms, instantial stylistic use of proverbs constitutes a mode of conceptualization that forms part of human cognitive processes, providing a new way of expression and extension of figurative thought. Stylistic use of proverbs discloses the creativity of the human mind.

Table 1: Proverbs as language units

Proverbs in the system of language	base form *fools rush in where angels fear to tread* *can the leopard change his spots?/the leopard does not change his spots*	
Proverbs in use	**core use** *fools rush in where angels fear to tread* "Sometimes I stop and think, Good God, how did I get into this," she says with a laugh. "***Fools rush in where angels fear to tread***." Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms, p. 152 *can the leopard change his spots?/the leopard does not change his spots* He always was a dirty old man…and **the leopard does not change his spots**. J. Scott, Clutch of Vipers	**instantial use** *fools rush in where angels fear to tread* The peace-keeping forces in Liberia are the only ones in areas **where** others **fear to tread**. BBC World Service, 12.08.2003 *can the leopard change his spots?/the leopard does not change his spots* King Richard: Rage must be withstood: Give me his gage: lions make **leopards** tame. Mowbray: Yea, but not **change his spots**: take but my shame. And I re-sign my gage. W. Shakespeare, King Richard II

Notes:

[1] By the base form I understand the form to which other forms of the proverb can be related and with which they can be compared. In practice, this is the dictionary form and meaning: the form of the proverb outside discourse, or in other words, out of context. In this form the proverb is stored in the collective long-term memory of the language user.

[2] Core use is use of a proverb in its most common form and meaning that never exceeds the boundaries of one sentence (Naciscione 2010: 35–39).

[3] *As* stands for five characteristics of access to care: *Affordability*, *Availability*, *Accessibility*, *Accommodation*, and *Acceptability*.

[4] Instantial stylistic use is a particular instance of a unique stylistic application of a word or phraseological unit in discourse resulting in significant changes in its form and meaning determined by the thought and the context.

[5] Stylistic instantiation has been highlighted for emphasis: **base forms** are marked bold and underlined; i n s t a n t i a l   e l e m e n t s are spaced and underlined; r e p l a c e d   e l e m e n t s are double underlined and spaced.

[6] Allusion is one of the patterns of stylistic use of proverbs in discourse. It is an implicit mental reference, verbal or visual, to the image of a proverb represented in discourse by one or more explicit image-bearing constituents. For a detailed discussion of allusion in proverb use, see Naciscione 2015a (in print).

[7] Underlined by Norrick.

[8] See analysis of stylistic use of the proverb *Cometh the hour, cometh the man* in Naciscione (2013a: 41-42).

[9] For my theoretical conception of the functioning of phraseological units in discourse (proverbs included), see Naciscione (2010: 79-120).

[10] Norrick follows the "mixed" metaphor theory, which holds that if two metaphors are used in close proximity (in one sentence) and they belong to different conceptual domains, they are "mixed" metaphors and hence impermissible. For my arguments against the "mixed" metaphor theory, see Naciscione (2015b).

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