

**Letter**

# Differences in Cultural Transmission While Interpreting Hidden Mental Mechanism in English Proverbs

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**Abstract:** This paper consists on recognizing essentially proverbs and developing communication in different and specific situation, but what is hidden in the human mind still remains a dilemma. Nobody can fully read the human mind as long as human intelligence differs in opinion at fraction of a second. Proverbs are used to understand human nature and to distinguish people culturally through their daily interpretation and their wisdom transmission from one place to another. At a time when effective communication is essential, the comprehension of the right message in connection with different cultures is useful knowledge, permitting not only mobility and flexibility but also competitiveness to face different life situations. In different nations we find proverbs that are equivalent between them. It is in fact a cognitive mechanism used by speakers in order to produce, understand and transmit ideas and life messages. In cases where we have no expressive equivalence between proverbs, the same proverbs are interpreted according to life circumstances, because there operates the hidden mental mechanism.

**Keywords:** Cultural Transmission, Mechanism, Perspective, Interfere, Elaborate Use

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of progress in modern times is connected to traveling in a metaphorical sense. The journey takes us from somewhere, and leads us to another place. The use of proverbs is clearly, directly and indirectly. In the first case, proverbs are used to confirm the preliminary statement, whereas in the case used with artistic meaning their purpose was to attract interlocutor's attention in order to improve its operations. In this way, they fulfill their function of aesthetic view

Language is a vivid thing and in general a great role is played by proverbs. The artistic creation is another important element because the literary diversity and the existence of different situations in life are expressed by proverbs as concise (or frozen) structures which reflect difference in language and people in different time and space. It is important to note that interest for proverbs is very ancient, because those has been served as sources for transmission of ideas to bring information to all who want to have support (access) in recognition of the world perception proverbs, the tradition and integrity in native country used, in our case Albania, Greece

and then England, America and other English speaking countries. For this reason and many other proverbs are very valuable for different purposes in sociolinguistic studies.

Traveling and life experience make us more comprehensive to get the right message in different culture and situations. The following presentation has to do with differences in cultural transmission while interpreting hidden mental mechanism in English proverbs.

## 2. Interpretation of Hidden Mental Mechanism

Cognitive mechanism is the universal acknowledgment of proverbs that speakers use, which is made in order to produce, understand and transmit ideas and messages. However, they still claim that, before doing any social work, proverbs have first their basic psychological function to fulfill: "they categorize events and motivate thoughts and behavior"

(Honeck & Welge, 1997: 608) Thus, we can understand people in different ways and forms. Proverbs continue to maintain the most elaborative usage, used to understand human nature. This is important for the interpretation of proverbs in following examples:

Let us present some proposals that take place in the scheme for animals. On the basis of the following proverbs we have found several ways of interpreting human nature:

*-You can't teach an old dog the new tricks.*

While in the hidden mental mechanism we would have:

*- Dogs are loyal, dependable and dependent:*

*- Lions are courageous and noble:*

*- Wolves are cruel and murderous:*

*- Pigs are dirty, messy and rude:*

*- Foxes are clever:*

*- Gorillas are aggressive and violent:*

These are metaphorical choices within the schemes of proverbs in our folk understanding of these animals. It's so natural for us to understand the human qualities, while often we have difficulties in understanding the metaphor for the characteristics of the animals. According to the definitions of Lakoff & Turner (1989: 83-85), they really seem to accept the assumption that what is hidden in the knowledge of the proverb is so natural as much as universal. This recognition is widespread and deep-rooted in different cultures, which means that it is natural. Meanwhile, the universal uses of metaphor are common to many societies and cultures. This is the coincidence of proverbs, if not in form, at least, in the messages they transmit through different cultures in the world.

For convenience we could refer to this universal aspect of proverb interpretation as the contextual meaning of proverbs. However, this will figure far less prominently in our analysis, because we are far more interested in the specific imagery behind the proverbs' linguistic form, i.e. in the conceptual architecture of the proverb itself. In sum, while the universality of the categorizing aspect of proverb interpretation will be assumed in all proverbs studied here, in our analysis we will specifically focus on locating further imagistic similarities (e.g. shared metaphors such as KNOWING IS SEEING: Love is blind, or shared metonymies such as BODY PART FOR PERSON: Absence makes the heart grow fonder, 'Far from eyes, far from heart'), but also culturally salient contrasts in the wordings of English language. Since the imagery will be accounted for by cognitive mechanisms and models already well-established in Cognitive Linguistics, we believe that we have introduced no undue complexity into our account. (Buljan, Gabrijela & Gradečak-Erdelji, Tanja 2013:69-83).

The three first reigns Roman and Byzantine, then the Ottoman age are not older than the fifteenth century, but the earliest than the establishment of this rule, the time when in the life of Albanian people began to enter features of Ottoman rule. Religious topics, Christian and Islam are part of proverbs.

From a careful comparison done between Albanian proverbs and Arber's of Italy (Arbëresh-the earliest Albanian living in Calabria), Arvanites of Greece (the earliest Albanian living in Arta and Preveza) we can illustrate:

In Italian "Mani fredde, cuore caldo"

In Greek "Κρύα χέρια, ζεστή καρδιά"

In Greek referring to hands "After shaking hands with a Greek, count your fingers"

Birth roots of proverbs, in some cases coincide with the birth of fables, legends and anecdotes of other types of oral literature that are difficult to define the origin of their creation (Berisha, Ibrahim 1997: 261).

### 3. National and International Character

National and international character of proverbs, as well as the comparative method has produced tales. Proverbs are considered and explained in a very concise way, i.e. they are believed to be transferred from one population to another population. (Ecclesiastes 2009 12: 09) This is because proverbs are observed more consistently by international topics in compositional structure, in eloquent style, and in function of their semantic meaning.

Comparative method and history explain the migration of so called *archetypes*. According to the teachings of these primal forms (preform / archetypes) were born at a certain point on earth and from there they migrated throughout history in different countries of the world. So, historically and geographically is transferred from one nation to another, so it concerns too many meeting points.

Proverb is a figurative precision, notes, abstracts and typifies different life phenomenon. Since, these phenomena are life constants and typical one, undergoing a process of abstraction and thus avoid local details create reason to think of realization, operation and their international features. These lines are numerous, even more numerous than comparative methods. This method, e.g. no earlier than the examples has historical meetings with our events, circumstances or our sociological and geographical ones, often their semantic approaches are parallel with other people's proverbs (Josip Kekez 1986: 46).

Comparative method has analyzed that the material, which was explored more graphically through history and which was closest to foreign cultures, unlike other material has still remained conservative. Indeed, comparative method has been left out of communication in all those examples that has not been poured in common source, as utilitarian interpretation has affirmed not only comparative educational way but it has remained the most successful poetic opus (Josip Kekez 1986: 47).

Moreover proverbial segmentation of the same vital phenomena is presented equally to all peoples and in all has marked poetic achievements, but the totality of the ancient proverbial material could be more rich to population than perhaps to the other people of each nation and each environment, because each nation has its own specific options and their specific experience, e.g. historical conditions and circumstances for all peoples of the world have not always been the same and do not always provide rich material and that's why not always has been the same or similar. So, proverbs have existed in every nation, which semantically are

incomparable and are regularly successful examples, which the method of comparative hasn't taken into account.

It is moreover definite the opinion of romantic folklore in the nineteenth century, according to which, as an international phenomenon, proverbs are transferred from one population to another population. Even in this genre of folklore a mutual presence is felt in literary processes, because people during their historic life, have given and received many of their experiences in life and further more. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the origin of the original proverb from native or borrowed proverb ones, especially when it has undergone such changes.

Regarding this respect among the people are being made estimations, according to a new study of *intercultural theory*, then the *theory of Inter-text* of historical ancient *geographical theory*, known in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as far as the theory of monogenesis is explained in different ways.

(Ecclesiastes 2009 08: 09) Among them are three most important factors:

- (a) the influx of population
- (b) living in the neighborhood
- (c) translation

### 3.1. Existence and Function of Proverbs Matched to Tradition in the World Traveling.

Hatch & Brown (1995: 121-123) have argued persuasively that the proverbs are matched to culture and time travel, the existence and function just as many depend on the extent of the country and the extent of their culture. We find proverbs in many populations that are equivalent between them, but many are proverbs that are not equivalent to the means of expression in parabolic way. In cases where we have no expressivity equivalence between proverbs the same proverbs we interpret as such, because it operates universal hidden mental mechanism.

In this respect we can say that we have two types of Proverbs (Orbaneja y Majada 1998: 362-363).

- a) Those with ordinary moral, guider for practices of similar virtues in all cultures, if not in form, at least in the message; and
- b) Those which are specific, ascending from historical factors, customs of the countries or specific events. They have their own identity signs which characterize the place or time of origin.

I always thought that proverbs are the result of social values, cultural, political, and the only difference between one and the other is their prevalence in time by countries and societies. This kind of division, in order to arrive at conclusions is helpful for the sake of work, as we aim to spoil some similarities and differences in the body of English proverbs. For whatever reason, probably in early cognitive development, humanity inevitably formulated base model "the great chain of life". It looks like "the great chain of life" is widespread and has a very strong appeal and very natural. This is somehow intimidating. It includes what the worst policy, social, and ecological influenced by the "the great chain of life" will not go away quickly or easily or without their permission.

The proverbs are understood in terms of background assumptions and values, so that they are primarily a social

phenomenon. The context is essential for the correct interpretation, because they provide their message indirectly. They are learned through social interaction and social goals by promoting social values of different countries while traveling in different time and ages. By no doubt the axiom that proverbs reflect or transmit social values is true, but in any case what so ever, we can learn more about a specific culture. In this paper we have selected proverbs related to dogs that in the human hierarchy are not positively described, but are useful.

The body of the study is based on several authors as Flavel (1997: 72), Junce da Silva (1998: 103) e Canalleda (2001: 91-92). Beyond that, I have decided to limit the scope of research bringing in this part more accurately, the explanations and the descriptive power.

Some of the proverbs that describe the man, his behavior and findings, compositional construction are often inconsistent with each other, because they pronounce controversial semantic meanings. eg:

a. *Look before you leap. vs He who hesitates is lost:*

*Hapi sytë para se të biesh. kundër Ai që heziton është i humbur;*

a. *Ὅποιος βιάζεται σκοντάφτει. vs Αυτός που δισταζει χανει;*  
b. *A man gets no more than he pays for. vs The best thing in life are free:*

*Njeriu merr atë që paguan kundër Gjerat më të mira në jetë janë falas;*

b. *Ὅτι δίνεις παίρνεις. vs Τα καλύτερα στη ζωή είναι δωρεαν*

c. *Leave well enough alone. vs. Progress never stand still:*

*Jeton mjaft mirë vetëm. kundër Progresi nuk qëndron në vend;*

c. *Ζει καλά αυτός που ζει μόνος. vs. Η προοδος δεν μένει σταθερή.*

Generally this kind of proverbs can be found in English, Albanian, Greek and other languages.

The function of proverbs in social life is versatile, but proverb having a general form of concrete, so it has the right to be used in different directions. It is this feature of generalization in proverbs, which enables use of the same proverb in different meanings. In this way, the figurative thought of the proverb widens the scope of its use in several respects.

They transmit the way how the world should ideally be organized. The basis of the "the great chain of life" consists in man's relationship with the lowest forms of living beings.

### 3.2. Idiomatic Expressions - the Proverbial Expression and Translation

All the idiomatic expressions (idiom, phraseology and proverbs) essentially they refer to certain tendencies of words that appear together, near to each - other or too close to one - another, e.g., *bread& butter*; *galloping inflation*; *Money makes you talk*, *bullshit walks*:

This aspect of the spectrum of idiomatic and proverbial expression which is attributed to the work of Halliday (1985) helps us in providing a textual cohesion. It also is associated

with repetition of parts attached encountered throughout the texts discussed by "Webster New World Dictionary (Third College Edition, 1988). Hatim & Mason (1990: 47) paradigmatic groups argue that the idiomatic and proverbial expressions are faced along a long extension of the text portion, usually to create genres and dictionaries. Any other author (Bahns, 1993: 14) makes a division of idiomatic and proverbial expressions from grammatical and lexical part, distinguishing autonomous units as names, verbs adjectives and prepositions as expression within the grammatical structures. Let's bring an illustration:

(1) *In and out of work; Demand for; Supply of.*

The idiomatic and proverbial expressions are a combination of names, adjectives, verbs and adverbs such as e.g.

(2) *Crying shame; Big brother; heavily involved.*

Sinclair argues that words make sense upon the environment in which they are used (Sinclair 1991:112). In this context Baker forcefully answers the question when a word, in itself, can have any meaning (Baker 1992: 53). Sinclair examples e.g. the word Back that can be clearly illustrated by the following examples:

(3) *I've got a bad back;*

(4) *I go back to work tomorrow;*

(5) *Don't forget to back up your work;*

Obviously, the meaning of back is different in each case and depends on the other words that appear with it. A literal translation of back would be like the one in the first case.

Newmark (1988: 213) claims that the key issue in a translation is to find adequate expression. In common business language exist their linguistic rules for which their translation may be literal and some other times not as such, which means that demand for its equivalent in native language is evident, e.g.:

(6) *Business before pleasure; Bad money drives out good.*

Hatim & Mason (1990: 204) also watches the spectrum of idiomatic and proverbial expressions as one of the greatest problems of translation, until interference of SL can lead towards the expressions of commonly spoken language that does not sound natural in TL.

### 3.3. Parabolic Meaning Transfer from the First Language into Second Language

Proverbs are part of a story and may be the end of it, an anecdote, a legend, a fable or any other type of narrative or oral literature. We should not forget that they always have shown their effective character - the ethical and utilitarian – cognitive one. Here are some examples of proverbs language, expressing care and vigilance, as in the examples.

(1) Believe nothing of what you hear and only half of what you see. (Evis Çelo 2011: 6)

(2) *Circumstances alter the cases;*

(3) *Fact is stranger than fiction;*

The use of proverbs can donate diverse functions of social pragmatic communication and also other functions, which are true for interactive situations, as well as several genres of written and oral text. Furthermore it is important to note that not only it serves as proverbs intensification of tradition, of wisdom, of knowledge and obvious truth that is transmitted

from one generation to the other, but, regardless to the aspects just mentioned, they also undertake serious dimensions. This is especially true when they are badly used in order to express or make propaganda and certain religious beliefs, e.g. *Man proposes, God disposes*:

So, proverbs can contribute to spread and regain prejudices, or stereotypes of any kind; like some proverbs are often applied in political speeches and different propaganda.

For the aspects mentioned above is also vital to note that proverbs do not exist in a cultural vacuum, but they continue to be used depending on the language and its use. Culturally it may be very limited, as far as they contain components that may be prohibited in any culture, or religion of specific regions.

## 4. Conclusions

Proverbs are deliberately used to describe, to classify or judge a given situation to certain norms and principles, but also to emphasize the moral and the ethical recommendations.

Studies among linguistic trends and time travel and have shown that people use proverbs in everyday conversations to give messages, advices or express their real situation. Nevertheless, they are often found in written texts, in speeches, in horoscopes, also in the headlines of newspapers and magazines. Anyway it seem interesting to notice that, in recent years using traditional and compound words are disappearing greatly in favor of modern innovative forms of post-modernism.

Globally is proved by researchers like Hatch & Brown (1995: 120-121) that between people are supported symmetric proverbs which matches the semantic context by means of linguistic expression. There was a great host of semantic context in proverbs which have the same language extension, but they use different means of achieving linguistic tends and then the interpretative ones. Researchers of foreign language, especially in such cases should be very careful and make efforts in transferring the semantic meaning of the proverb, their contextual meaning in order to harmonize with the expressivity of each respective foreign language. In other words the well - known proverbs are cited partially, modified or simply implemented until they are clearly identified. They can pretty much be matched or combined with various phraseological elements or idiomatic ones. Nowadays when people are paying the price of life, I hope to draw attention to the messages of proverbs, as underlined Robert Alden's "The purpose of proverbs is to make us less stupid in order to open the eyes of the mind, or to improve the general development of life".

By proverbs usage are transmitted values of different people, countries and their own tradition by which all the unknown is revealed respectively.

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