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VARIABILITY AND MODIFICATION OF PROVERBS IN THE BULGARIAN MASS MEDIA: A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

Abstract: The present research deals with the variability and modification of Bulgarian proverbs in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics. A detailed analysis of proverb usage in the mass media shows that a proverb system undergoes both quantitative and qualitative alterations (in Aristotle's sense), quantitative alterations resulting from proverb variability, qualitative alterations from proverb transition to a phraseme and unproverbial application of a proverb to the mass media. Proverb variability is regarded in the paper as a mechanism of a proverb system to renovate itself, while proverb modification is a mechanism of proverb transition to another linguistic unit. Following the mechanism of proverb variability, new variants of proverbs and new potential proverbs are created within the discourse of the mass media. The linguistic and stylistic means of proverb variability and modification are examined in the paper. The study strives to provide a theoretical foundation for the key notions of proverb variability, modification, proverb variant, variation and invariant, as used in the present paper.

Keywords: Bulgarian National Corpus, definition, linguistics, proverb, open system, qualitative changes, quantitative changes, invariant, variability, variant, variation, modification.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that proverbs occur in forms of *variants*, *variations* and *modifications* in languages. However, the question of how to define and to distinguish these forms is still open in paremiology (Taylor 1931; Mieder 2009; Kapchits 2008; Trendafilova 2008; Sergienko 2010). The problem is complicated by the fact that one and the same proverb can be rendered in different forms in various proverb collections or dictionaries. Nowadays, a majority of linguists believe that language is a system constituted by a set of subsystems. Each subsystem is responsible for a part of the total job – “it takes the output of other

subsystems as its input and distributes its own output to other subsystems” (Fasold & Connor-Linton 2013: 2). In this paper, proverbs are considered to constitute an *open system* and a subsystem within the system of language. The main properties of an open system are the interaction with the surroundings and an ability to undergo alterations (Moore & Spenser 2001: 284, 301-309). The aim of this study is to examine different forms of proverbs in Bulgarian mass media discourse in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics. A discourse is a coherent text considered together with extra linguistic factors (Jarceva 1988: 136). The questions put forth in this study are as follows:

- 1) What is a proverb?
- 2) In what forms do proverbs occur in the mass media?
- 3) How can these forms be defined in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics?
- 4) How can these forms be constructed in the language?

2. Defining a Proverb

There is no generally accepted definition of a proverb among paremiologists (Taylor 1931; Mieder 2005; Mokienko 2010; Kotova 2004). This paper defines a proverb as a figurative, aphoristic set expression with the syntactic structure of a sentence that contains both moral and philosophical thought. A proverb has the following categorical (essential) properties:

- 1) A proverb has the syntactic structure of a sentence
- 2) A proverb has an aphoristic character
- 3) A proverb contains figurativeness
- 4) The semantics of a proverb contains both moral and philosophical thought

Paremia is considered to be a broad term for both proverbs and maxims. The main difference between a maxim and a proverb is figurativeness. A proverb is a figuratively set expression while a maxim is a literally set expression, *i.e.*, an expression without figurativeness. The form and the meaning of a proverb are realised only in discourse. This paper considers proverbs listed in dictionaries or collections of proverbs to be paremiographical forms of proverbs. One should bear in mind that not all of these proverbs are commonly used in the language. There are plenty of proverb collections that disregard the principle of fre-

quency of use, thus prioritising another principle, namely the principle of comprehensiveness and representation of paremiological material, for example *Bol'šoj slovar' russkih poslovic* (Mokienko 2010).

3. Proverb and Phraseme

A phraseme (phraseologism) is considered to be a set expression. Proponents of the broad conception in phraseology consider proverbs to be phrasemes (Mokienko 1989; Telija 1996; Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen 2005; Trendafilova 2008; Sergienko 2010). Indeed, proverbs and phrasemes have the same features: they are both set expressions. Studies of proverbs applying methods of historical linguistics show that proverbs can be a source of new phrasemes, while conversely, phrasemes can be a source of new proverbs (Mokienko 1989: 116). However, advocates of a narrow conception in phraseology regard proverbs as constituting a separate subsystem of language, exactly as a paremiological level or subsystem. Thus a phraseme signifies a concept, while a proverb signifies a proposition (Permjakov 1968:225; 1988: 85; Kotova 2004: 22).

4. Variability vs. Modification. Definitions of Invariant, Variant, Variation and Modified Proverb

Perhaps Archer Taylor was one of the first, who gave consideration to *proverb variability* in the language. In his book *The Proverb*, he showed that the existence of proverbs in oral traditions causes them to change over time and that some proverbs are formed on the basis of already existing proverbs. Here are some examples from Taylor's book (1931: 22).

A birde in hond is better than thre in the wode.

A birde in the hand is worth ten in the wood.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

According to Taylor, the proverb "One man does not make a team" was created on the basis of the proverb "One swallow does not make a summer," the proverb "Politics makes strange bedfellows" was derived from two proverbs – "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows" and the proverb "Poverty makes strange bedfellows" (Taylor 1931: 19-20). Having researched Somali proverbs, Kapchits came to the conclusion that one should distinguish between proverb variants and proverb varia-

tions. A proverb variation does not make a change to the proverb's basic meaning, while a proverb variant modifies it (Kapchits 2008: 200). Paremiologist Petranka Trendafilova (2005; 2006; 2008) suggests distinguishing between proverb-variants and proverb-synonyms. However, her conception is controversial. It is well known that a proverb signifies not a concept but a proposition and therefore cannot have relations of synonymy in a language. Speaking about the variability or modification of the proverbs, paremiologists point out the various linguistic and extra linguistic factors: time, space, context, language tendency to economy and human memory (Žigulev 1986: 16-19; Alefrenko & Semenenko 2009: 285; Trendafilova 2008: 66; Dobrovol'skij & Karaulov 1992: 12).

From my point of view, the existence of variability implies an existence of an invariant. The definition of a proverb invariant is considered in the doctoral thesis of Olesja Sergienko (2010). She regards a proverb invariant to be a proverb norm. According to Olesja Segienko, a norm (invariant) of a proverb is the most frequently used variant of a proverb, discovered as a result of a paremiological sociolinguistic experiment. It should be mentioned that the notion of the most frequently used proverb variant depends on time and space, and therefore cannot be regarded as a proverb invariant. In this paper, I offer the following definition of a proverb invariant: a proverb invariant is regarded as a relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, with the logical sense of the proverb being maintained. Thus, proverb variants have the same invariant. Let us consider examples (a) and (b) from the Bulgarian language. Example (a) is borrowed from Stojkova's proverb collection:

(a) **Два пъти мери, тогаз отрежи.** [Dva pāti meri, togaz otreži] (Stojkova 2007)

Measure twice, and then cut the cloth.

The logical sense of the proverb (a) is: 'think twice before you do something.'

Example (b) is taken from the Bulgarian mass media:

(b) Той припомни българската поговорка «**Три пъти мери, веднъж режи**» [Tri pāti meri, vednāž reži]. (Стандарт 2005, бр. 4592)

En: He recalled the Bulgarian saying “**Measure three times, once cut the cloth.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the proverb (b): ‘think twice before you do something.’

Examples (a) and (b) maintain the relative stability of the semantics and structure and have the same invariant ‘think twice before you do something.’ Therefore, they can be considered to be proverb variants.

The well-known international proverb “Appetite comes with eating” can be used both as a maxim (when it is used literally) and as a proverb (when it is used in a figurative sense). The case in which it is used as a proverb is considered below in the examples (c) and (d). Example (c) is borrowed from Kotova’s proverb collection:

(c) **Апетитът идва с яденето.** [apetităt idva s jadeneto] (Kotova 2004)

Appetite comes with the meal.

Logical sense of the proverb (c): ‘demands grow with consumption.’

Example (d) is taken from the mass media.

(d) Тук на Балканите **апетитът идва още преди яденето** [apetit idva ošte predi jadeneto]. Сръбския [(sic!) Сръбският? М. V.] премиер Джинджич още в началото на ноември заяви, че от международната финансова подкрепа за Сърбия зависи съдбата на полуострова[...].(Демокрация 2002, бр. 5).

En: Here in the Balkans “**Appetite comes even before the meal.**” In the beginning of November, the prime minister of Serbia declared that the destiny of the Balkan Peninsula depends on financial help... [Translated by M. V.].

Logical sense of the proverb (d): ‘demands grow before the consumption.’

In the example above, one can observe the logical deviation of proverb (d) from proverb (c). I consider proverb (d) to be a variation of proverb (c), because (d) is formed on the basis of the well-known international proverb “Appetite comes with the

meal.” Thus, the proverb variation is characterised by a relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, while the logical sense of the proverb is changed. I hold that it is possible to use the word *variation* in this sense because the words *variation* and *variant* are not fully synonymous. In mathematics and statistics, the notion of variation has a definite meaning of its own. I believe that the notion of variation can have its own definite meaning in paremiology, as well. Unlike proverb variants, proverb variations have their own logical sense in the language, thus they have the potential to become standalone proverbs in the language. In order to become a standalone proverb, proverb variation should come into use in the language and become a set expression. Since the notion of a set expression presupposes that this expression is approved by the usage of the language. Let us examine the next example:

(e) На всички натюрморти в долния десен ъгъл стои и подписът на главния готвач. След тази кратка и леко шизофренична разходка в културологичния гастронном, ще завърша с една лично моя поговорка: «**Апетитът идва с яденето, хепатитът - с пиенето**» [Apetit idva s jadeneto, hepatităt – s pieneto]. (Егоист 2006, бр. 11)

En: There is a signature of the principal cook in the right bottom of all still life paintings. I shall finish this short and somewhat “schizophrenic” tour with my personal saying, - “**Appetite comes with meal, hepatitis – with drinking-about.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Example (e) cannot be considered to be a proverb variation. In the sense I mean, it is a case of proverb modification, because the proverb loses its figurativeness and philosophical thought in the context. Thus, the modification of a proverb is an alteration of its essential property or properties (see § 2). As a result of the loss of its essential properties, the proverb ceases to meet the criteria for the definition of a proverb and leaves the proverb system. I hold that a modified proverb is no longer a proverb. A modified proverb has associations with the original proverb, but ceases to belong to the proverb system and becomes another linguistic unit. In the case of example (e), the modified proverb can be interpreted as a potential maxim (to become a maxim it must

be approved by the usage of the language). Thus, proverb variability and proverb modification are different mechanisms in the language.

5. Theoretical Bases of the Paper

The theoretical bases of the paper lean on the theory of the open system that is used in thermodynamics. An open system (unlike a closed system) is capable of interacting with its surroundings and of exchanging substances. Therefore, the main characteristic of open systems is the capability for interaction and change (Moore & Spencer 2001: 284, 301-309).

I regard the proverb system as an open system, which interacts with the surroundings and undergoes alterations. Surroundings consist of various factors, *e.g.*, time, space, context, human memory, etc. All alterations that occur in the proverb system are considered in this paper in accordance with the philosophical categories of quality and quantity (Audi 1999: 122-123). The concept of categories of quality and quantity goes back to Aristotle. "Quality is differentia of essence," - (Aristotle 1980: 259). Due to its quality, a thing exists as itself and not as another thing. Quantity is either discrete or continuous (Aristotle 1963: 24, 12). Hegel, in his *Science of Logic*, describes quality as determinateness and quantity as magnitude (Hegel 2010: 58, 152). He considers the difference between quality and quantity as follows: Qualitative alteration causes the modification of one thing into another, while quantitative alteration does not cause such alteration (op. cit.: 153).

This paper regards quality as essential properties. Having lost these properties, the essence ceases to be itself and becomes another essence. Quantity is not property of essence. Quantity can be represented as a discrete magnitude (op.cit: 166).

All alterations that affect the essential properties of a proverb are considered to be qualitative changes or modifications. Modification implies that a modified proverb leaves the system of the proverb. Alterations that do not affect the essential features of a proverb are considered in this paper to be quantitative alterations or variability. Proverb variants and variations are the parts of the proverb system. The schema of proverb variability and proverb modification is represented below:

Variability (quantitative alterations):

Proverb system:
 Proverb invariant (relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, logical sense of the proverb being maintained).
 Proverb variant (a proverb variant has the same invariant with the proverb).
 Proverb variation (relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, logical sense of the proverb being changed).

VS.

Modification (qualitative alterations):

↓ Proverb leaves the proverb system:
 Proverb loses at least one of its essential properties:
 1) Syntactic structure of a sentence
 2) Aphoristic character
 3) Figurativeness
 4) Moral and philosophical thought

6. Data and Methods of the Research

Paremiologists consider mass media as important materials for researching proverb usage. The data for this research were collected in the mass media corpora of the *Bulgarian National Corpus (BNC)*. The BNC was created at the Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. L. Andrejchin” by research associates from the Department of Computational Linguistics and the Department of Bulgarian Lexicology and Lexicography. It incorporated several individual electronic corpora, developed during the period from 2001 to 2009. The corpus was constantly enlarged with new texts. I collected data for this study in the summer of 2012. At that time, the mass media corpora consisted of periodical print editions from 1945 to 2009. The total number of newspapers was 3426 units and magazines numbered 1126.

Proverb variability and modification was researched against the background of paremiographical forms of these proverbs in a collection of Bulgarian proverbs (Stojkova 2007) and a collection of commonly known Bulgarian proverbs prepared by Mari-

na Kotova (2004) in her doctoral thesis. Thus, these proverb collections served as supporting data in the study. There was no need to compare the media forms of the proverbs with all other existing paremiographical forms of these proverbs in order to discover the proverb variability or modification in the mass media. It was enough with one paremiographical form for this purpose. Therefore, the choice of paremiographical form of a proverb was not essential to the aim of this study. We investigated media forms of the proverbs against the background of the paremiographical forms of Marina Kotova (if the analysed proverb was recorded there) or paremiographical forms of Stefana Stojkova (in case if the analysed proverb was registered there). Stojkova's collection was prepared on the basis of other proverb collections according to the encyclopaedic principle and represents Bulgarian paremiographical traditions. The encyclopaedic principle is an advantage in the Stojkova's collection, but it constitutes a disadvantage as well. For example, Stojkova's proverbs are often out of date and do not fit the situations of modern life. Kotova's collection was prepared as a result of a sociolinguistic paremiological experiment according to the principal of common proficiency.

The data in this study were retrieved by a method of searching 34 Bulgarian proverbs in the media corpora of the BNC. The data consisted of 99 media forms of these proverbs. The study defined a media form as any form that did not match the paremiographical forms of Stefana Stojkova (2007) or Marina Kotova (2004). The main criterion for data collection was the use of the proverb in media forms.

The aim of the study required complex research methods. These methods allowed one: 1) to consider proverbs as an open system and to introduce the concept of the proverb invariant, 2) to compare media and paremiographical forms of the proverbs, 3) to classify the data, 4) to study the proverb semantics, structure and stylistics.

A proverb invariant was introduced by means of deduction and modelled with the help of the method of semantic modelling. For example, the proverb "Най-добре се смее оня, който се смее последен" ("He laughs best who laughs last") has the following invariant 'he who wins last, wins definitively.'

In order to study the proverb semantics, I used methods of both context-free and context-bound analysis of proverb semantics (Krikmann 2009:15-17), as well as methods of component semantic analysis and the method of semantic field (Tarlanov 1995).

The proverb structure was studied by means of a traditional syntax analysis of a sentence (op.cit.).

The morphological features of the proverbs were analysed with the help of a traditional method that takes into account the concept of parts of speech and morphological notions of form, inflection, tense etc (op.cit.).

Stylistic devices were studied in the context of the paremiographical forms of the proverbs, the last being regarded as stylistically neutral, since metaphor, rhyme and some other stylistic devices are ordinary and therefore a stylistically unmarkable means of proverb creation (op. cit).

Proverb variability and modification was researched with the help of a comparative method often used in paremiology. I compared media forms with the paremiographical forms of the proverbs. If paremiographical forms of one and the same proverb differ in various collections, I preferred the traditional form from Stojkova's collection (because her collection represented Bulgarian paremiographical traditions). In order to discover proverb variability or modification, I analysed proverb semantics, structure, stylistics and morphological features.

The research data were classified in compliance with two criteria:

- 1) The essential properties of proverbs. By means of this criterion, I distinguished proverbs from cases of modified proverbs.
- 2) The notion of a proverb invariant (the relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, logical sense of the proverb being maintained). Using this criterion, all proverbs were divided into variants and variations.

The structure of this article represents a classification of the research data. Part 7 analyses proverb variants, part 8 examines proverb variations, part 9 dwells on modified proverbs. All examples are supplied with a number, a translation into English and an interpretation of the meaning.

7. Proverb Variants

Research material shows that proverb variants can be created by means of lexical, morphological, structural and structural lexical means. Here are some examples:

7.1. Lexical Means

Proverb variability in example (1) is created by means of synonyms *obadilo se/otgovorilo* (answer):

Каквото повикало – такова се обадило. [kakvoto povikalo – takova se obadilo]
(Kotova 2004; Stojkova 2007)

One gets an answer in line with the request.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘all that we do can influence our future.’

(1) Вероятно периодът ще премине изцяло под знака на поговорката «**Каквото повикало, такова отговорило**» [kakvoto povikalo takova otgovorilo]. (Пари 2004, бр. 135)

En: It looks like the whole period will go under the saying “**One gets an answer in line with the request.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Example (2) shows that proverb variability is made by means of words that have some similar semantic features. Root is a part of a tree, so the words *дървото* (tree) and *корен* (root) have some similar semantic features.

Крушата не пада по-далече от дървото. [Krušata ne pada po daleč ot dărvoto] (Kotova 2004)

The pear does not fall far from the tree.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘children are like their parents.’

(2) И вярно е, че **крушата не пада по-далеч от корена** [krušata ne pada po daleč ot korena]. (Нова Зора 2004, бр. 1)

En: That’s true that “**The pear does not fall far from the root.**” [Translated by M. V.]

7.2. *Morphological Means*

In example (3), variability is created by morphological means. Proverb variant (3) has different forms of grammatical number than does proverb (3) (*krotkoto agne/krotkite agne; suče/sučāt*):

Кроткото агне от две майки суче. [Krotkoto agne ot dve majki suče] (Stojkova 2007)

A meek lamb suckles milk from two mothers.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘a quiet person is accompanied by luck.’

(3) «**Кротките агнета от две майки сучат**»

[krotkite agneta ot dve majki sučāt], - казва

българския народ. (Литературен форум 2000, бр.

3)

En: “**Meek lambs suckle milk from two mothers,**” - say Bulgarians. [Translated by M. V.]

7.3. *Structural Means*

Example (4a) demonstrates that the proverb variant is created by structural means. Here one can observe change in word order. The predicate (P) changes places with the direct object (O). If we mark the subject as (S), then the formula of word order variability looks like this (S+O+P/S+P+O).

Една лястовица пролет не прави. [Edna ljastovica prolet ne pravi] (Stojkova 2007)

One swallow does not make a spring.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘do not make hasty conclusions.’

(4a) През 1958 съветският астроном Козирев съзря в единен лунен кратер признаци на изгриване, ала само «една лястовица не прави пролет» [edna ljastovica ne pravi prolet]. (Космос 1962, кн. 2)

En: In 1958 soviet astronomer Kozirev saw features of shining in one crater, but “**One swallow doesn’t make a spring.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Example (4b) reveals the structural lexical means in the creation of the proverb variability. Words *пролет* (*spring*) and *лято* (*summer*) have the same semantic feature of ‘season’; moreover, both words designate the warm season of the year when the swallows come back. In addition, the word order in example (4b) differs from the paremiographical form of the proverb, *i.e.*, (S+O+P/S+P+O).

(4b) Няма съмнение, че той има възможност да се бори за титлата, но все пак не забравяме, че **една лястовица не прави лято**. (Капитал 2008, бр 11)

En: There is no doubt that he has a chance to fight for the title, but let us not forget that “**One swallow doesn’t make a summer.**” [Translated by M. V.]

8. Proverb Variations

Unlike proverb variants, proverb variations have their own logical sense. Proverb variations do not have the same invariant with the original proverb on the basis of which they are created. Therefore, I hold that proverb variations can become potential standalone proverbs if they come into usage in the language. Research material in this study shows that proverb variations can be created through lexical and structural lexical means.

8.1. Structural Means

Example (5a) demonstrates the creation of proverb variation through structural changes in the original proverb, namely by the continuation of a proverb. The well-known international proverb “Appetite comes with eating” (Martinsson 1996) gets a contextual continuation in the Bulgarian mass media. The article in the newspaper tells us about the increase in financial expenses in providing economic assistance for unemployed people. Thus, the proverb gets a new logical sense in the context - ‘demands grow with consumption according to the affordability of the consumption.’

Апетитът идва с яденето. [apetităt idva s jadeneto]
(Kotova 2004)

Appetite comes with the meal.

Logical sense of the proverb (5a): ‘demands grow with consumption.’

(5a) Нормално, **апетитът идва с яденето**
толкова по-бързо, колкото «по-безплатно» - е
то [apetităt idva s jadeneto tolkova po-bărzo, kol-
 koto po-bezplatno e to]. В самата национална
 програма подпомаганите безработни в
 трудоспособна възраст се разделят на три групи.
 (Капитал 2005, бр. 2)

En: Usually “**Appetite comes with the meal according to the affordability of the meal.**” The National program divides all unemployed people into three groups. [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the proverb variation (5a): ‘demands grow with consumption according to the affordability of the consumption.’

8.2. *Structural Lexical Means*

The next example of proverb variation (5b) is constructed by means of a lexical change in the proverb. Namely, the preposition *c* (*with*) is replaced by *npedu* (*before*); moreover, the proverb variation (5b) contains a specifying adverb *още* (*even*).

(5b) Тук на Балканите **апетитът идва още преди**
яденето [apetităt idva oše predi jadeneto].
 Сръбския [(sic!) Сръбският? М. V.] премиер
 Джинджич още в началото на ноември заяви, че
 от международната финансова подкрепа за
 Сърбия зависи съдбата на полуострова [...].
 (Демокрация 2002, бр. 5)

En: Here in the Balkans “**Appetite comes even before the meal.**” In the beginning of November, the prime minister of Serbia declared that the destiny of the Balkan Peninsula depends on financial help... [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the proverb variation (5b): ‘demands grow even before the consumption.’

9. *Modified Proverbs in the Discourse of the Bulgarian Mass Media*

As I mentioned above, this paper considers a proverb modification to be a case in which a proverb loses its essential proper-

ty or properties. The essential properties of a proverb are: the syntactic structure of a sentence, the aphoristic character, and figurativeness, moral and philosophical thought. Cases of structural, lexical, structural lexical proverb modification were found in the research material, as were cases of stylistic proverb modification.

9.1. Structural Proverb Modification

There are many cases of proverb modification into noun and verb phrases in the investigated material. These phrases still retain a fragment of the original proverb figurativeness. If they are frequent in the language, they can become idioms (an idiom is a figurative set expression). I consider such to be cases of structural proverb modification because the proverb loses its essential property, namely the syntactic structure of a sentence. I believe these phrases are potential idioms in the language.

Example (6) demonstrates the case of a proverb modification into the verb phrase. The second part of the proverb (after the comma) is deleted and the first part becomes the verb phrase.

Кови желязото, докато е горещо. [Kovi željzoto na demokracija] (Stojkova 2007) → **да се кове желязото** [da se kove željzoto]

Forge the iron when it is warm. → forge the iron

Modification of the logical sense: ‘do the work in time’

→ ‘do the work.’

(6) Другата Михайлова – Екатерина – се опита да внесе ред и мир. И заяви, че трябва заедно да се кове желязото [da se kove željzoto] на демокрацията. (Нова Зора 2003, бр. 44)

En: Another Mihajlova – Ekaterina – tried to bring order and peace. She declared that we should “forge the iron” of democracy together. [Translated by M. V.]

Example (7) shows a proverb modification into a noun phrase.

Под една мишница две дини се не носят. [Pod edna mišnica dve dini se ne nosjat] (Stojkova 2007) . → **(x) дини под една мишница** [(x) dini pod edna mišnica]

Two melons are not carried under one armpit. → (x) melons under one armpit

Modification of the logical sense → ‘do not do two jobs simultaneously’ → ‘(x) jobs simultaneously’

(7) Преценете дали събирате **три дини под една мишница?** [tri dini pod edna mišnica] Парите не стигат, никой не ми взема на работа освен като сервитьорка. (Капитал 2004, бр. 23)

En: Try to evaluate if you can take “**three melons under one armpit?**” There is not enough money nobody wants to employ me. The only job I can get is as a waitress. [Translated by M. V.].

9.2. Lexical Proverb Modification

A modified proverb (8a) is created with the help of lexical means on the basis of an already existing proverb. The word *цар* (*tsar*) is replaced by a semantically different word, *газ* (*gas*). As a consequence, the modified proverb loses its philosophical meaning and fragment of the proverb figurativeness. Example (8a) can be understood only in its context.

Цар далеко, Бог високо. [Car daleko, Bog visoko] (Stojkova 2007)

The tsar is far away, God is high in the sky

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘government is far away, justice is high up - rely only on yourself’

(8a) **Бог високо, Газ – далеко [Bog visoko, Gaz daleko].** Колкото по-далеко, толкова по-опасен. През седмицата се видя ясно въпреки совалките на властта, че газ у нас няма и скоро няма да има. (Стандарт 2009, бр. 57)

En: “**God is high up on the sky, the gas is far away.**”

The more far away it is, the more it is dangerous. This week, it became clear that in spite of the efforts of the government, we do not have gas and will not have it in the near future. [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the modified proverb (8a): ‘justice is high up, gas is far away.’

9.3. Structural Lexical Proverb Modification

The next example, example (8b), reveals the structural lexical modification of the proverb. As a result of the modification of the second part of the proverb (after the comma), it loses its figurativeness and the modified proverb loses an essential property of being a proverb, namely, its philosophical and moral thought.

(8b) И най-ужасното, че няма на кого да се оплачеш. **Бог високо, а царят стана премиер.**
[Bog visoko, a carjat stana premier]. Как да се оплачеш на човек, понижен в ранг. (Демокрация 2001, бр. 193, 17.08.2001)

En: The worst is that there is nobody to receive my complaint. “**God is high up on the sky, the tsar became a prime minister.**” How one can complain to a person that has been lowered in rank. [Translated by M. V.]

Another example of a structural lexical modification demonstrates a contamination of the proverbs. For the purposes of this paper, proverb contamination refers to the combination of two parts of different proverbs in one expression. A part of the proverb is regarded as any proverb component bigger than a word. It can be a phrase, which retains a fragment of the proverb figurativeness. If a proverb is a complex or compound sentence, then the part of the proverb can be either a dependent or independent clause. The contamination of two proverbs is observed in example (9). As a consequence of proverb contamination, the figurativeness of the modified proverb is not clear; it loses its aphoristic character. The meaning of the modified proverb cannot be understood in the context without knowing the original proverbs.

(A) **Най-добре се смее оня, който се смее последен.**
[naj-dobre se smee onja, kojto se smee posleden]
(Kotova 2004)
He laughs best who laughs last.
Logical sense of the proverb (A): ‘he who wins last, wins definitively.’

(B) **Който копае гроб другиму, сам пада в него.**

[kojto kopae grob drugimu, sam pada v nego] (Stojkova 2007; Kotova 2004)

He who digs the grave for another, falls down in the grave.

Logical sense of the proverb (B): ‘he who wants to harm another, harms himself.’

The second part of the proverb (A) is attached to the second part of the proverb (B), so we get a proverb modification (9).

(9) Удари един кметски скоч от гербаджиите!

Викам му! – Бе, аз скоч винаги, ама по какъв

случай? Първи сме! – Айде бе? – викам му. Нали

БСП беше първа? После пък ДПС? Сега вие??!!?

– **Който се смее последен, сам пада в него!**

[kojto se smee posleden, sam pada v nego] –

обърква пословицата Бат Бойко и отново ме

издумква по гърба. (Дума 2007, бр. 117)

En: Are we first? – Are we really? - I shouted to him.

Was the BSP (political party) first? Was then the DPS

(political party) first? Are you first now??!!? – “**He who**

laughs last, finally falls down” – uncle Bojko mixed up

the proverb and again pat me on the back. [Translated by

M. V.]

Logical sense of the modified proverb (9): ‘he who wins,

finally loses.’

9.4. Stylistic Proverb Modification

Example (10) demonstrates proverb modification with the help of stylistic means, namely application. In this example, a proverb modification is created by means of a stylistic device: application. Proverb application means applying a proverb as a “building material” to the discourse. As a consequence of such an application, proverb modification loses its aphoristic character, as well as its moral and philosophical meaning.

Гарван гарвану око не вади. [garvan garvanu oko ne vadi] (Stojkova 2007; Kotova 2004)

A raven does not peck the eye of another raven.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘bad people do not harm one another.’

(10) По онова време началничката му Темида работела на принципа «Гарван гарвану око не вади» така че безметежно минали 10 години. Съдията обаче вече не бил сред силните на деня и **на горкия гарван му извадили окото** [na gorkija garvan mu izvadili oko]. (Банкер 2009, бр. 41)

En: During that time, his boss, the Judiciary worked according to the principle of “A raven does not peck the eye of another raven”; ten years passed peacefully that way. The judge did not direct the session of the court that day and “**they pecked out the eye of the miserable raven.**” [Translated by M. V.]

The logical sense of the modified proverb (10): ‘the miserable defendant was sentenced.’

Proverb modification (11) is created by means of a paradox between the logical sense of the original proverb and the meaning of the example (11). As a result, we have a parody on the original proverb. This study finds the parody on the proverb to be a case of a proverb modification creating a comic effect in the discourse. Proverb modification (11) loses its figurativeness and philosophical thought. If it gains common use in the language, it can become a maxim (an aphoristic set expression with a syntactic structure of a sentence).

Най-добре се смее оня, който се смее последен.
[Naj-dobre se smee onja, kojto se smee posleden]
(Kotova 2004)

He laughs best who laughs last.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘he who wins last, wins definitively.’

(11) Това беше виц, нали? **Който се смее последен – бавно загрява**, казваше В. Върбанов на радио «Тангра». (Литературен вестник 2003, бр. 39)

En: It was a joke, was it not? “**He who laughs the last – thinks slowly,**” - V. Vărbanov used to say on the radio “Tangra.” [Translated by M. V.]

Another example of the parody on the proverb can be found in that example (12). The comic effect of the proverb modification is constructed by means of a parallelism of the forms *jad-eneto/pieneto* and *apetit/hepatit* in example (12), and by means of a paradox that lies in the comparison of appetite with hepatitis. A modified proverb loses its figurativeness, philosophical thought and becomes a potential maxim.

Апетитът идва с яденето. [apetităt idva s jadeneto]
(Kotova 2004)

Appetite comes with the meal.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘demands grow with consumption.’

(12) На всички натюрморти в долния десен ъгъл стои и подписът на главния готвач. След тази кратка и леко шизофренична разходка в културологичния гастроном, ще завърша с една лично моя поговорка: «**Апетитът идва с яденето, хепатитът - с пиенето**» [apetit idva s jadeneto, hepatit – s pieneto]. Да ви е сладко. (Егоист 2006, бр. 11)

En: There is a signature at the bottom right of all the still-life paintings. I shall finish this short and somewhat “schizophrenic” tour with my personal saying, - “**Appetite comes with meal, hepatitis – with drinking-about.**” [Translated by M. V.]

The proverb modification in example (13) is made by means of the stylistic device of allusion. Allusion to the international proverb creates associations and expressiveness in the discourse. The proverb serves as subtext without which it is hard to understand the meaning of the example (13).

С питане до Цариград се стига. [S pitane do Carigrad se stiga] (Stojkova 2007; Kotova 2004)

Asking how one gets to Carigrad (Constantinople).

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘asking how one can get to wherever.’

(13) Пътят до него не се намира лесно, в тази част на страната ни указателни табели са дефицит, но

нали знаете, **с питане докъде се стига** [s pitane dokăde se stiga]. (Върхове 2007, бр. 78)

En: The road to this place cannot be found easily – There is a lack of direction signs in this part of the country, but after all you know “**Where one gets by asking, don’t you?**” [Translated by M. V.]

The next proverb modification is created by means of literalisation. In this case, a modified proverb loses its figurativeness and becomes a diet instruction for people that suffer from corpulence. The original proverb is literalised in the context with the help of a lexical change of the word *meri* (*measure*) for word *hapni* (*eat up*). The modified proverb (14) has the potential to become a maxim if it gains common use in the language.

Два пъти мери, тогаз отрежи. [Dva păti meri, togaz meri] (Stojkova 2007)

Measure twice, and then cut the cloth.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘think twice before you do something.’

(14) **Три пъти мери, веднъж хапни!** [Tri păti meri, vednăž reži] Калорийната везна при вас е задължителна, тъй като килцата ви не подлежат на контрол. (Живот и здраве 2009, бр 1)

En: “**Measure three times, eat once!**” Caloric measurement is compulsory for you because your weight is out of control. [Translated by M. V.]

10. Conclusions

Paremiology is the interdisciplinary field of study that uses methods both of linguistics and of literary study. This paper examines proverb variability and modification in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics. Proverbs are considered to constitute an open system that interacts with the surroundings and that undergoes qualitative and quantitative alterations. The terminological base is developed for the purpose of the study. Proverb variability refers to quantitative alterations in the proverb system. Resulting from proverb variability, proverb variants and proverb variations appear in the language. In order to investigate proverb variability, the paper introduces the notion of a

proverb invariant. Modified proverbs are the result of qualitative proverb changes. As a consequence of the qualitative alterations, proverbs lose their essential properties and become other linguistic units. In order to analyse such qualitative proverb alterations (proverb modification), the essential proverb properties are defined in this paper.

Summarising the results of the study, it should be stated that:

- In addition to their paremiographical forms, proverbs appear in mass media in the forms of variants, variations and modifications.
- The question of whether the discovered forms of variants, variations and modified proverbs are common or occasional (one-day wonders) in the language will be answered in time.
- Proverb variability is created by various linguistic means. Proverb variants are created with the help of lexical, morphological, structural and structural lexical means. Proverb variations are made by lexical and structural means.
- Some creation patterns of proverb variants and variations are discovered in the research. The creation patterns of proverb variants and proverb variations differ from each other.
- Some creation patterns of modified proverbs were found in the study. Proverb modification is created by means of lexical, structural, structural lexical and stylistic devices.
- The analysis performed showed that proverb modification and proverb variability have different patterns.
- Proverb modification can function as a mechanism for proverb transfer into another phraseological unit (*e.g.*, idiom and maxim).

In conclusion, I would like to point out that issues concerning proverb variability and modification are worth studying both in terms of synchronic and diachronic linguistics.

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