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ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS
CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS OF HEALTH AND
ILLNESS IN ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH
PAREMIOLOGY

PhD Supervisor:

Professor TEODORA POPESCU, PhEd. Habil. Phil.

PhD Candidate:

GABRIELA CORINA SANTA (CÂMPEAN)

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Keywords: concept of HEALTH, concept of ILLNESS, paremiology, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, mental lexicon, translation studies, corpus linguistics, anti-proverbs, semantic analysis, syntactic analysis

Abstract

The research aim is to compare and contrast proverbs addressing the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS in the Romanian and English languages from the Conceptual Metaphor Theory perspective so as to detect similarities and differences between the two peoples' conceptual representations regarding the concepts under scrutiny. This research encompasses a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating cognitive linguistics, specifically Conceptual Metaphor Theory, paremiology, corpus linguistics, and translation methods. The main objectives proposed to be achieved are to comprise a self-made corpus and analyse it from the Conceptual Metaphor Theory viewpoint in order to link the research findings for revealing similarities and differences regarding the Romanian and English peoples' approaches to the concept of HEALTH and ILLNESS. Additionally, an investigation from the corpus linguistics perspective so as to supplement the analysis of the research findings is performed, and the translation of the proverbs which do not have an equivalent or a supplied translation following the conceptualisation stage underscores the significance of concepts in conveying messages through proverbs. The methods employed for analysing the corpus are to perform semantic and structural investigations to identify conceptual metaphors and statistical interpretations using concordancers, with the role of completing and validating the research findings as they are unveiled by the conceptual metaphors and the translation process that follows the conceptualisation. Lastly, the change in the individual mindsets regarding the proverbs that deal with the two concepts is investigated as a corpus of anti-proverbs is built and analysed with a focus on the evolution of the message over time. The findings reveal both similarities and differences regarding the perception of the two antagonistic concepts by the Romanian and English rooted in their attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, and values. The innovative aspects of the

thesis pertain to the approach to corpus collection based on terminological mapping in which a code of colours is used and maintained throughout the entire paper. The semantic and structural method analysis combines two existent methods into one; the translation is based on the conceptualisation, and the quantitative data corroborate the qualitative. Furthermore, novel conceptual metaphors are identified and, together with the self-made corpus, represent a valuable resource for further research.

Research hypothesis

The research hypothesis pertains to the comparative analysis of Romanian and English proverbs, particularly investigating how the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS are embodied in these two languages and clustered into conceptual metaphors. This study aims to yield valuable insights into the specific conceptual perspectives by scrutinising the conceptual metaphors within the proverbs as the research endeavours to identify the similarities and differences in the representation of these concepts across the two languages. Consequently, the hypothesis is oriented towards detecting and interpreting the conceptual metaphors of the proverbs through the lens of the mental lexicon, as the observed similarities and differences are intricately linked to the interplay between cognition and conceptual representations. A primary research hypothesis is formulated based on the premise that proverbs constitute a vital component of cultural heritage and catch scholars' attention across various disciplines, including folklore, literature, education, history, linguistics, and anthropology. Additionally, the proliferation of proverbs in media and online platforms has resulted in their adaptation and diversification, leading to the emergence of novel forms and functions. Thus, if proverbs in two different languages, specifically Romanian and English, regarding the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS, are analysed and clustered into conceptual metaphors, then they will display particular standpoints concerning the concepts under scrutiny, which are representative of their creators and consequently, the proverbs can be used to reveal similarities and differences of the Romanian and English conceptual representations. Hence, the hypothesis targets the framework for explaining the particular conceptual metaphors of the proverbs through the mental lexicon perspective because the conceptual similarities and differences pertain to the relationship between cognition and culture. Three secondary hypotheses are formulated as they enhance the research study's depth and contextualise the primary hypothesis, allowing a broader investigation into corpus collection, the analysis of the proverbs, and their translation. Thus, the first hypothesis targets health and illness-related words that are arranged in a map so that the map can help identify proverbs followed by their analysis and conceptualisation. The

second relates to considering both the meaning and structure of proverbs together in analysing the proverbs, and thus, the conceptualisation is useful in interpreting the similarities and differences in how health and illness are conceptually represented in Romanian and English proverbs. The last targets the translation of the terminology related to HEALTH and ILLNESS while considering the conceptual metaphor of the proverb, resulting in a translation that differs from a one-to-one translation and improves the understanding of the intended message.

Context and motivation

The achievement of my thesis aim proved to be motivating as Romanian and English proverbs were analysed and conceptualised to expose similarities and differences regarding the perception of the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS because proverbs are expressions of their creators' knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, and wisdom, making them valuable tools for this comparative analysis. Furthermore, the concepts under scrutiny have received attention in linguistic circles since 2019 in the context of the pandemic that humankind experienced, and thus, their investigation occurred relevant to detect the paremiological perspective on the concept of HEALTH and ILLNESS as exposed by their investigation using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The two antagonistic concepts have already been subjected to investigation by scholars from different fields of research, and conceptual metaphors have been detected and investigated. Nevertheless, applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory to a large self-made corpus consisting of proverbs dealing with the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS in the Romanian and English languages revealed novel conceptual metaphors and similar and different standpoints towards the concepts under scrutiny were identified due to their interpretation.

Regarding the translations of the proverbs that did not have an equivalent in the corpus, the process appeared engaging, as it was performed considering their conceptualisation. The proverbs without an equivalent or a supplied translation in the consulted sources were translated based on their conceptualisation and respecting the prosodic and structural features detected in analysing the equivalent proverbs. The subchapters that deal with the translation of the proverbs contain explanations regarding the selected choices. The task was challenging due to the fact that although proverbs are not complex statements from the semantic and structural point of view, as stated by Mieder (2004), they display the “most concise but not necessarily the simplest form” (p.1). Additionally, their metaphorical nature (Mieder, 2004) targets particular concepts in a complex manner, conveying profound messages through few words. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the anti-proverb, i.e. a result of the transformations in society,

highlights the eternal nature of the proverbs, renders the individuals' new mindset and, thus, the process of collecting and comparing them to the source proverb is rewarding regarding the manner in which the change is revealed.

The number of tokens and lemmas, besides the number of occurrences of words, were investigated separately in the section dedicated to the corpus linguistics analysis, which unveiled further results and motivated me to implement quantitative interpretations. The quantitative and qualitative interconnection was performed to correlate the results and offer an overview of the results. These aspects were considered independently, but their interconnectedness should not be excluded in order to prove the assumed hypothesis.

The structure of the thesis, limitation and innovations

The thesis consists of four chapters, apart from the abstract, introduction, conclusions and recommendations, references, and annexes. The first chapter presents the theoretical framework which supports the research and offers insights into the existing specialist literature on the directions given by the aim and objectives of the research. Accordingly, the following chapter contains the research methodology applied in the paper, specifically the hypothesis, the research questions, the aims and objectives, the procedure for corpus collection, and the approach used in detecting the conceptual metaphors and obtaining the additional results required by the current research. The most extensive chapter consists of the analysis and interpretation of the findings, in which each proverb is analysed considering its message and semantic and syntactic features. Their translation and conceptualisation are also performed and discussed alongside the quantitative analysis. The last chapter is dedicated to the phenomenon of antiproverbs, a comparative study of seven proverbs and their anti-proverbs and their conceptualisation.

A systematic literature review of the studies in the fields of research involved in the thesis is the key to a successful outcome, specifically to reveal novel similarities and differences regarding the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS in Romanian and English paremiology and to provide a proper understanding of conceptual similarities and differences. The multidisciplinary approach required a unique combination of sources for the theoretical framework to present existing specialist literature relevant to the research and to build the scaffolding, as the references had to support all the fields to promote achieving the aim and objectives. Thus, the bibliographical sources were categorised according to the domain they target in the following sections: conceptual metaphors, paremiology, structural and semantic issues, translation, corpus linguistics, cultural linguistics, and the mental lexicon. The first

direction in approaching the theoretical aspect was related to the Conceptual Metaphors Theory, and the foundation of the thesis was represented by Lakoff & Johnson's approach as devised in *Metaphors We Live By* (2003, first published 1980). Supplementary, the analysis of the proverbs in the metaphor identification stage was guided by the methods supplied by the Praggeljaz Group's (2007) and Charteris-Black's approach (2004), and their combination resulted in the method of semantic and structural analysis in the thesis. Regarding the semantic, structural and pragmatic aspects of proverbs, Wierzbicka's *Semantic Primes and Universals* (1996), Negreanu's *Structura proverbelor românești* (1983), Mac Coinnigh's *Structural Aspects of Proverbs* (2014) and Jesensek's *Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects of Proverbs* (2014) were relevant among the consulted studies. The last two works were published in *An Introduction to Paremiology: A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*, edited by Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga (2014), a valuable tool for examining proverbs. Regarding the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS, two studies have to be mentioned, i.e. Sontag's book, *Illness as a Metaphor* (1978) and Semino and Potts's article entitled *Cancer as a Metaphor* (2019). Biblical proverbs and culturally specific proverbs and their conceptualisation were supported theoretically by Lakoff & Turner's work, *More than Cool Reason. A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (1989) and Charteris-Black's *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* (2004). Relevant studies in cognitive and cultural linguistics and their implications in paremiology were necessary to be approached, and Ogden & Richards's *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (1923), Pinker's works: *How the Mind Works* (1997), *Rules of Language* (1991), *Words and Rules* (1999), *The Stuff of Thought. Language as Window into Human Nature* (2007), alongside Sharifian's *Cultural Linguistics: Cultural Conceptualisations and Language* (2017), are among the sources that have to be mentioned. The relevance of proverb translation and the dynamic principle of translation were relevant in the study, and therefore, Nord's *Translating as a Purposeful Activity. Functionalist Approaches Explained* (2018), Newmark's *A Textbook of Translation* (1988), and Nida & Taber's *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (1982) were consulted, amongst other sources. The collections of proverbs and building a self-made corpus linked to corpus linguistics and scholars' works such as Tony McEnery, Costas Gabrielatos, Andrew Hardie, Andrew Wilson, and Elena Tognini-Bonelli were used. Regarding the issues of how to build a corpus, representativeness and the principle of representativeness, two works have to be mentioned as representative, i.e. McEnery and Wilson's *Corpus Linguistics. An Introduction*. (2001) and McEnery and Hardie's *Corpus Linguistics. Method, Theory and Practice* (2012). Lastly, the anti-proverbs theoretical aspect was investigated in sources on the

mental lexicon and anti-proverbs and thus, scholars' contributions, such as Litovkina's *Anti-proverbs* (2014), and Aitchison's *Words in the mind – An Introduction to the mental lexicon* (1990) were illustrative to create the theoretical background alongside other valuable sources.

With regard to the research methodology chapter, the angle of approach changed to a practical aspect, and interest increased as the investigation was conducted. Although the data collection stage might be perceived as time-consuming and meticulous, it proved to be fascinating and rewarding, considering the content and size of the corpus. The main goals of the chapter were to describe the techniques used to compile the corpus and establish the research methodology for conducting the subsequent research stages. The relevance of notions such as *hyponymy*, *meronymy*, and *troponymy* was explained, and the consulted specialist literature regarding corpus compilation was presented to support the following stages of the research. Subsequently, the focus in the data collection stage was on the presentation of the available and consulted sources of proverbs and the approach used to construct the self-made corpus. The approach used in the analysis of the proverbs, namely methods for identifying the metaphors, the format of the structural analysis, the conceptualisation and the translation approach, were also presented in the chapter, and the construction of each group of proverbs and the collection of the anti-proverb and their analysis were introduced. Designing the research methodology for any research paper represents a significant stage in the entire process of the research as it provides a solid basis for accurate and reliable results and, subsequently, for the achievement of the research aims, offering guidance for the next steps. Additionally, the corpus had to be built in such a way as to be representative of the qualitative and quantitative viewpoints in accordance with the topic addressed in the paper. Thus, the research aims, hypotheses, objectives, and research questions had to be supported by an appropriate approach in order to obtain accurate and reliable findings. Specifically, designing the approach to the self-made corpus in the current doctoral thesis was crucial for achieving the aim of the paper so that the findings could be relevant and accurate. My personal contribution to the insights into the topic from the conceptual metaphor perspective was performed by identifying novel conceptual metaphors concerning the two concepts, specific semantic expressions and structures and conceptual relationships in the analysed proverbs, together with their evolution into anti-proverbs over time, thus reflecting the transformation in the perception of the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS in Romanian and English societies. Additionally, the corpus is a valuable contribution as it offers opportunities for future research. The corpus consists of proverbs addressing the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS, categorised into three groups, i.e.,

equivalent proverbs, English proverbs, and Romanian proverbs, completed by an additional corpus of anti-proverbs comprising quotations and memes on seven of the analysed proverbs.

In order to manipulate the proverbs easily, the proverbs were further grouped according to sub-concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS, explicitly HEALING, INSANITY, HARM, HEALTHY HABITS, and IMPAIRMENT. Biblical proverbs were analysed in a distinct category in the equivalent group, which added a supplementary section to the analysis. However, all proverbs were similarly investigated to detect their message, semantic and structural features and their implications in conceptualisation and an overview of the findings regarding each aspect involved in the analysis of the proverbs is provided in the third chapter of the thesis. Thus, regarding the semantic aspects of the proverbs and the cultural implications in the conceptualisation, the semantic features generated the conceptual metaphor. In the context of the cultural analysis of the proverbs, few variations were detected in the corpus, as most similarities and differences were given by the semantic features of the proverbs. When the proverbs were analysed, particular words denoting objects, food, animals, colours, plants, weather, the natural environment, and units of measure served as vehicles for conveying specific messages. Considering the structural aspect of the analysis, the prosodic aspect was considered, along with the narrative devices relevant to the conveyed message and punctuation. Punctuation assumes a significant role in both prosody and narrative devices in proverbs, as it governs the intonation and rhythm of the proverb, especially when it is used as a substitute in ellipses, and it contributes to the creation of clarity, rhythm, and overall structural coherence within the proverb. The integration of the semantic and structural features in the analysis that preceded the conceptualisation proved to be beneficial as it contributed to obtaining a multifaceted image that led to the conceptualisation of the proverbs.

Concerning the translation process, the overview underlines the key aspects of the translation process and its connection to the conceptualisation of the proverb, which is considered to supply an accurate equivalent in the target language. The supplied translations in the group of the equivalent proverbs were used as a reference to compare and contrast the limitations and advantages of a one-to-one translation and the advantages of translation proverbs using the concepts they address. Furthermore, the subchapter briefly presents the structural features that were detected in the structure of the proverbs as being specific to the English or Romanian proverbs and used in order to bring the translation as close as possible to a proverb regarding its rhythm.

Furthermore, the findings obtained in the quantitative analysis of the corpus are presented in the subchapter dedicated to the corpus linguistics approach, and they not only

support the results revealed by the conceptual relationships but also provide novel contributions. Specifically, the number of occurrences of particular words, tokens and lemmas support and enrich the findings by showing a particular preference for a term in the approach to the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS in Romanian and English paremiology. The corpus was prepared for the investigation, and the data was manipulated using the software *Lancsbox*, completed by manual refining as the Romanian corpus could not be investigated using the software solely. The designed charts displayed the number of occurrences for the terms in the terminological map, the highest frequencies were interpreted, and their collocations were investigated.

Mainly, existing and novel conceptual metaphors and distinctive patterns concerning particular types of target and source domains were detected. These were subsequently presented in the concluding subchapter to substantiate the quantitative and qualitative data. Graphical representations were employed to illustrate the findings consistent with the precedent subchapter. Using maps, the interconnection of concepts was depicted to facilitate the comprehension of similarities and variances between the conceptual representations of HEALTH and ILLNESS in the Romanian and English proverbs, thereby providing a clear image of their interconnectedness, similarities, and differences. Although proverbs display a concise structure, much wisdom is encapsulated in few words. Thus, alternative conceptualisation, double, triple or quadruple conceptualisation, and further conceptualisation were possible. The first and the last types were related to the semantic aspect, whereas the others were the consequences of the structural features of the proverbs. Additionally, the equivalent proverbs had been expected to generate similar conceptualisation, but the conceptual metaphor varied due to their semantic and structural features, even in the case of the biblical proverbs. Regarding the source and the target domains, terms such as *past/present*, *partial/ total*, *preferable to*, and *a lack of* were detected in their construction.

The last chapter, dedicated to the conceptual metaphors of anti-proverbs and memes, considered the evolution of seven proverbs in their variants, i.e. anti-proverbs. The memes were particularly appealing as the message of the proverb was conveyed not only through words but also through images or characters in specific contexts. The difference between the primary message of the proverb and its corresponding conceptual metaphor, and those which resulted after the analysis of the anti-proverbs respectively, the memes, was discussed and analysed in order to detect change in the individuals' mindsets and how the visual aids contributed to a different message and conceptualisation. The anti-proverbs corpus is unbalanced, as there was an issue regarding the Romanian anti-proverbs. There are no collections of Romanian anti-

proverbs, and the use of proverbs addressing the concept of HEALTH and ILLNESS is practically non-existent on the internet. However, the anti-proverbs did not represent the main focus of the thesis, and for this reason, they were analysed in a separate chapter, whereas the unbalanced corpus did not affect the achievement of the aim of the thesis.

Innovative aspects

Subsequently, the thesis introduced innovative elements regarding the method of compiling the corpus, the approach pertaining to the semantic and structural analysis and conceptualisation of the proverbs, and the corroboration of the qualitative and quantitative data. Firstly, the approach to corpus collection was unique in that it was based on a terminological mapping system that uses a code of colours, consistently maintained throughout the entire paper. This method provided a visually intuitive way to track and analyse data in the corpus. Additionally, the semantic and structural analysis method was a novel combination of two existing methods. This approach allowed a comprehensive understanding of the data, as it integrated both semantic and structural perspectives that facilitated the process of conceptual metaphor identification. The translation process was specifically grounded in the conceptualisation, enhancing the analysis's accuracy and depth. Furthermore, the thesis employed quantitative data to support and enhance the qualitative findings. The frequencies and lemmas of terms retrieved from the terminological map were identified and analysed to support the corpus construction and the findings in the thesis. The thesis identified and explored novel conceptual metaphors, adding a valuable contribution to the field, especially as they were interconnected using charts to exemplify the similarities and differences of the conceptual representations of HEALTH and ILLNESS in Romanian and English proverbs. The detected conceptual metaphors were also interpreted and contracted, and a list is supplied in the annexes section. These conceptual metaphors, along with the self-made corpus, not only enrich the present study but also serve as a valuable resource for future research endeavours.

However, several limitations and pitfalls occurred during the research development, and their identification led to appropriate solutions to address them. Firstly, time limitation was considered to be a limitation in my research because numerous proverbs were available and compiled in various works with different purposes. The corpus compilation, the analysis, comparison and contrast of the proverbs from the semantic and structural perspective, their conceptualisation and the analysis of the occurrences, tokens, lemmas and collocations proved that time was insufficient. Proverbs have been collected in numerous works throughout history, and the reliability of the sources was of the utmost importance as an academic approach requires accuracy and trustworthiness, amongst other features. Specifically, the collections of

proverbs demanded particular academic requirements in terms of the author(s) who compiled them and their target readers, and not all the available works met these requirements. The availability of the sources decelerated and, accordingly, delayed the entire process of completing the task of corpus compilation. Besides, the available specialist literature regarding the topic was extensive and problematic to cover in its entirety because the research fields involved the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, paremiology, syntax, semantics, cultural differences, translation studies, corpus linguistics, and the mental lexicon. The time constraint was also considered a limitation in the analysis stage as the designed approach was laborious, and the corpus was large and comprehensive in size. On the other hand, a limitation throughout my endeavour was the issue of the number of equivalent proverbs, as one entry consists of more than two proverbs in many cases, which resulted in large groups of proverbs. Thus, the conceptual interconnections are numerous, but their comparative interpretation and the identification of the similarities and differences in the conceptualisations of HEALTH and ILLNESS could be performed.

The supplied translations and equivalents were proved to be different in the paremiologists' approaches, and additionally, the proverbs which had not been translated or supplied with an equivalent required a careful method pertaining to the struggle to supply an accurate version in the target language so as to reflect the concepts and maintain the structural features as close as possible. Furthermore, the anti-proverbs encountered similar limitations, adding to the difficulty of their detection and ascertainment of their authenticity as they were mainly found in media, except for those retrieved from Mieder's (2004) *Proverbs: A Handbook*. The accuracy of the interpretation of the qualitative data was also troublesome due to subjectivist bias and the fact that proverbs were open to multiple interpretations. Generally, subjectivity is related to the qualitative interpretation of data as it is caused by the researcher's biases, experiences, and assumptions. It was difficult to stay objective and measure the significance of the research findings, reducing the level of subjectivity and ambiguity in interpreting the qualitative data. The issue of the authenticity of proverbs was also considered a limitation due to their dynamic nature. Proverbs have evolved over time, and their appearance has undergone changes, making it difficult to ascertain their authenticity or categorise them as translations. It is essential to acknowledge that there is flexibility within the field and in their interpretation, making it challenging to distinguish between a genuine proverb and a translation. Furthermore, the widespread use of the internet has blurred the lines, as widely disseminated translated proverbs can be considered a genuine version, losing their original cultural context within the vast network of online data. Thus, the question arises as to what

defines a proverb as genuine or what prevents it from being considered a proverb belonging to a specific cultural background. It was essential to be aware of these limitations and take action to moderate their impact on the research findings. These constraints highlighted the importance of considering qualitative research's limitations and potential biases when interpreting data.

Overall, the current research disclosed novel conceptual metaphors regarding the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS, whilst the metaphorical aspect of the analysed proverbs revealed fresh perspectives considering the Romanian and English conceptual representations pertaining to the similarities and differences encapsulated in proverbs. Therefore, the objectives were strictly followed in order to adopt the best techniques for achieving the research goals. Examining the self-compiled corpus encompassing Romanian and English proverbs exposed numerous similarities and differences in the perception of HEALTH and ILLNESS. Assessing the semantic and structural features of the proverbs, distinct linguistic differentiations and convergences were ascertained. Moreover, the equivalentents provided valuable insights into their conceptualisation, facilitating an accurate translational approach. This inquiry also unveils shared and distinctive conceptual metaphors associated with HEALTH and ILLNESS across both languages. Additionally, exploring word occurrences, lemmas, tokens, and collocations within the semantic fields of health and illness unveiled further connections in interpreting the Romanian and English proverbs. Finally, an analysis of the identified anti-proverbs indicated the shifts in societal attitudes and mentalities over time, which permits further research opportunities, alongside the self-made corpus that may be used in future studies.

Concerning the structural analysis, common specific traits were detected, such as the use of modality in the English proverbs, and dissimilarities concerning the sentence aspect and punctuation marks. Additionally, the use of the ellipsis and archaisms was detected in both languages, alongside with a pattern in dissimilarities. Specifically, the English phrase *he that* is detected to have the Romanian equivalent the relative pronoun *who*. Apart from archaic forms detected in both languages, the English proverbs contain the archaic ending *eth*. Conversely, the phonetic features of the Romanian proverbs prove a particular symmetry that was not detected in the English corpus.

The conceptual metaphors displayed common target and source domains, such as HEALTH, ILLNESS, HEALING, INSANITY, IMPAIRMENT, INTAKE, MARRIAGE, WOMANHOOD, and SPEECH. The metaphors that contained the connection PREFERABLE TO and frequently detected due to the use of comparative forms. Similarly, IMPERATIVE also often occurs in the conceptual metaphors as a result of the structural aspect. The code of colours devised in the previous stage proved to be a valuable tool as it helped group the proverbs and validate the approach and the

conceptualisation as the terms were marked to be evident in each proverb. The conceptual metaphors are to be connected using a similar mapping as some proverbs display a double or triple conceptualisation, especially the biblical proverbs in the corpus. Specifically, double, triple and even quadruple relations have been detected due to their semantic and structural features, and although the proverbs are equivalent, the semantic features led to different conceptualisation in some cases. Consequently, the conceptual metaphors were organised in a list in which a process of reduction, guided by the approach presented in *Master Metaphor List* (1991), was performed.

The conceptualisation supported the translation stage in the case of those proverbs without an equivalent, alongside the translations supplied by scholars and detected in the consulted sources. The trends detected in the semantic and structural characteristics of the equivalent proverbs and their translations were maintained, and frequently, one-to-one translation led to similar conceptual metaphors. Nevertheless, the conceptual metaphors of the proverbs guided my struggle to supply an accurate translation. Thus, the final stage involved the connection of the research findings regarding the detected conceptual metaphors to reveal similarities and differences between the Romanian and English cultures regarding the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS and to summarise the similarities and differences between Romanian and English proverbs concerning their semantics, syntax, translation, anti-proverbs, the concepts and the interpretation in accordance with the theoretical framework.

Corpus linguistic approach revealed that *insanity* was prevalent in both languages, but the Romanians linked it to motion, similar to the term *illness*. The type of impairment that occurred mostly was blindness, and the parts of the body that occur in relation to health and illness are *head* and *eyes* in both languages. *Pain* is frequently detected in the English corpus, whereas *illness* registers the highest frequency in all corpora.

The examination of anti-proverbs demonstrated that the progression of society was indeed reflected in proverbs, with the latter evolving in accordance with the needs of individuals to articulate their thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and values. Humour and irony were tools for conveying a novel message or a change in attitude within the conceptual metaphors presented in proverbs and their variants. The alterations to the structure of a proverb conveyed a new message or underscored a specific attitude that diverged from the proverb's original expression. Consequently, the anti-proverbs in the corpus functioned as a tool that signifies adaptation and progress. Moreover, the identified conceptual metaphors not only validated the visible alterations in the structure of anti-proverbs, but also elucidated the underlying justification for the preservation and adaptation of ancestral heritage. Overall, proverbs and

their associated anti-proverbs were employed by ordinary individuals to exemplify the similarities and differences between each generation and its predecessors, supporting the idea of change, progress, and innovation. The examination of anti-proverbs illuminated natural responses to societal changes, providing valuable insights into prevailing attitudes. The use of proverbs in memes varied significantly. At times, only a segment of a proverb was employed to convey a message in a meme, or an anti-proverb was utilised instead. Moreover, dissimilar frequencies of memes were detected using a particular proverb. The juxtaposition of the message and the image, the use of anti-proverbs, and the additional linguistic elements presented in the memes' structure engendered specific conceptual metaphors that diverged from the original proverb. Consequently, the conceptual metaphors of the memes corresponded, contradicted, or diverged from the original proverb, contingent on the concepts being juxtaposed.

However, a comprehensive study of anti-proverbs, compared and contrasted with their original counterparts, would significantly contribute to a deeper understanding of societal attitudes towards specific concepts. Similarly, the analysis of a substantial corpus of memes featuring specific proverbs and anti-proverbs would be essential to augment and fortify the existing research as a comparative study involving memes in different languages that pertain to analogous proverbs and related themes is imperative for conducting a conceptual examination, elucidating both similarities and disparities among individuals from distinct cultural milieus.

Conclusions

Overall, this thesis facilitates further investigations as well as interpretation of the research proverbs, anti-proverbs and conceptual metaphors. Additionally, the research may be supplemented by highlighting relevant academic actions that contribute to the development of my thesis. The inexhaustible nature of proverbs as resources for analysis lies in the fact that they are “a quintessence of folk wisdom, encompassing an essential part of our daily existence and experience” (Popescu, 2022, p. 213). Thus, applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory to the study of proverbs using a contrastive and comparative method revealed similarities and differences between the Romanian and the English approaches to the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS and may further unveil attitudes, beliefs and values addressing other concepts. Therefore, exploring and comparing Romanian and English proverbs in order to identify conceptual similarities and differences using the method employed in the thesis may be useful

as it has already reflected the connection of folk wisdom to the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS. New insights and novel conceptual metaphors can be detected and compiled using a similar terminological map by analysing a corpus of proverbs dealing with other concepts. The translation procedure adopted in the thesis, which considered conceptualisation together with the semantic and structural analyses of the proverbs, may be chosen as a translation method for proverbs and the corpus may be subjected to further investigation, whereas the lists of metaphors can be accessed when further research is performed.

Additionally, the comparative approach involved the quantitative and qualitative analyses of Romanian and English proverbs based on the principle that proverbs are metaphorical expressions, as asserted by Mieder (2004). The quantitative data supported and validated the semantic and structural analysis as the quantitative results were presented in diagrams and tables, and this approach can be considered in further research to obtain validation of further information on the topic. Thus, designing visual representations of the findings enhanced understanding, a method employed in the final stage that targeted combining the findings regarding the detected conceptual metaphors to reveal similarities and differences between the Romanian and the English attitudes, values, beliefs and thoughts regarding the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS and to summarise the similarities and differences between Romanian and English proverbs concerning their semantics, syntax, translation, anti-proverbs and frequent use of terminologies.

In conclusion, a contrastive and comparative analysis of proverbs, including conceptual metaphors that deal with similar concepts but stem from different cultural backgrounds, would provide a genuine reflection of the similarities and differences between two types of peoples' conceptual representations and how they approach specific concepts. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory applied in paremiology represented an appealing approach when Romanian and English proverbs dealing with the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS were studied comparatively. Thus, they were decoded from a distinct perspective via interpretations and the connections amongst concepts.

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