

“Money Is not the Root of All Evil – no Money Is”. Do (Anti-)Proverbs Always Tell the Truth? (Using the Example of Addition)

Despite the fact that numerous proverbs about proverbs stress the truth of proverbs, and assert that proverbs cannot be contradicted or judged, proverbs have never been considered as absolute truths. While people have appreciated the didactic wisdom of these sapiential gems (see Mieder 1985), they have certainly also noticed the limited scope of proverbs when interpreted as universal laws of behavior. The folk do not consider proverbs sacrosanct, and people are well aware of the fact that proverbs are at times simply too rigid and limited in their prescribed wisdom.

For centuries, proverbs have provided a framework for endless transformation. In recent decades, the modification of proverbs has taken on such proportions that sometimes we can even encounter more proverb transformations than traditional proverbs. Wolfgang Mieder has invented a term *anti-proverb* (or, in German, *Antispruchwort*) for such deliberate proverb innovations. Although proverb transformations arise in a variety of forms several types, which are by no means mutually exclusive, stand out, for example, adding new words to the original text; replacing a single word; substituting two or more words; changing the second part of the proverb; melding two proverbs; punning; adding literal interpretations. The focus of this study is on the analysis of addition, one of the most popular mechanisms of proverb variation in 263 transformations of 13 Anglo-American proverbs about money. Furthermore, the study concentrates on the discussion of doubts concerning the truthfulness of proverbs in my corpus, according to the money proverbs and anti-proverbs. The anti-proverbs discussed in the present study were taken primarily from written sources and can be found in two collections of Anglo-American anti-proverbs compiled by Wolfgang Mieder and Anna T. Litovkina (see Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina 1999; T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006).

Keywords: anti-proverb, proverb, transformation, Anglo-American, addition, truthfulness, doubts

“Geld ist nicht die Wurzel allen Übels – kein Geld ist es”. Sind (Anti-)Sprichwörter immer wahr? (Dargestellt am Beispiel der Addition)

Es existieren zahlreiche Sprichwörter, die den Wahrheitsgehalt von Sprichwörtern bezeugen und postulieren, dass diese weisen Sprüche weder widerlegt noch kritisch beurteilt werden können. Trotzdem wurden Sprichwörter nie als unangefochtene Wahrheiten betrachtet. Zwar haben die Menschen ihre didaktische Weisheit geschätzt (vgl. Mieder 1985), sie haben aber auch erkannt, dass Sprichwörter in ihrer Funktion als universelle Lebensregeln lediglich eine begrenzte Gültigkeit haben. Das Volk betrachtet Sprichwörter nicht als heilig und unantastbar, und die Menschen sind sich dessen bewusst, dass die festgelegte Weisheit dieser Sprüche manchmal einfach zu starr und beschränkt ist. Seit Jahrhunderten lassen Sprichwörter reichlich Raum für Modifikationen. In den letzten Jahrzehnten wurden sie in solch einem Ausmaß abgewandelt, dass man häufiger auf modifizierte als auf traditionelle Sprichwörter trifft. Zur Bezeichnung dieser absichtlich abgewandelten Sprüche hat Wolfgang Mieder den Begriff Antispruchwort geprägt. Obwohl es viele verschiedene Arten von formalen Transformationen gibt, die zur Entstehung von Antispruchwörtern führen, heben sich einige davon – die sich keineswegs gegenseitig ausschließen – deutlich ab, und zwar: das Hinzufügen neuer Wörter zum ursprünglichen Text, das

Ersetzen eines Wortes bzw. das Ersetzen von zwei oder mehr Wörtern, das Abändern des zweiten Teils des originalen Sprichwortes, das Verschmelzen zweier Sprichwörter, diverse Wortspiele sowie die wörtliche Interpretation des Spruchs. Im Fokus dieses Beitrags steht das Hinzufügen neuer Elemente, eine der beliebtesten Formen der Transformation von Sprichwörtern. Es werden 263 Abwandlungen von 13 traditionellen angloamerikanischen Sprichwörtern, die sich mit dem Thema „Geld“ befassen, analysiert. Darüber hinaus werden anhand von Sprichwörtern und Antisprichwörtern über Geld, die im Untersuchungskorpus enthalten sind, einige Zweifel am Wahrheitsgehalt von Sprichwörtern dargestellt. Die im Rahmen des vorliegenden Beitrags untersuchten Beispiele entstammen hauptsächlich schriftlichen Quellen und finden sich in zwei Sammlungen angloamerikanischer Antisprichwörter, die von Wolfgang Mieder und Anna T. Litovkina herausgegeben wurden (s. Mieder und Tóthné Litovkina 1999; T. Litovkina und Mieder 2006).

Schlüsselwörter: Antisprichwort, Sprichwort, Transformation, angloamerikanisch, Addition, Wahrheitsgehalt, Zweifel

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The focus of the study

This study attempts to analyze addition, one of the most popular mechanisms of proverb variation in transformations of Anglo-American proverbs about money. It concentrates mainly on the discussion of anti-proverbs expressing doubt concerning the truth of proverbs or even negating their truth. For this analysis out of the corpus that contains over 6000 anti-proverbs based on almost 600 proverbs (see Mieder/Tóthné Litovkina 1999, Litovkina/Mieder 2006). I have selected the proverbs that contain the word “money” (13) and all their transformations (263).

The organization of the study¹

My discussion is in three parts. The first part of the study (Section 1.) explores the topics of contradictory proverbs and people’s doubts as to the truth of proverbs after which I review the background of anti-proverb research and terminology. Then (Section 2.) I will list the proverbs containing the word “money” and the numbers of their transformations (13 proverbs and 263 anti-proverbs). The third – and main part of the article – will be devoted to the analysis of addition, one of the most popular mechanisms of proverb variation.

The selection of material

The 263 Anglo-American anti-proverbs discussed and analyzed in the present study were taken primarily from American and British written sources². The texts of anti-

¹ Some parts of this study (including the examples of anti-proverbs) have appeared in Litovkina (2005) or have been published in Mieder/Litovkina (1999), Litovkina/Mieder (2006), Litovkina (2015).

² The vast majority of the examples were found when I was in the USA and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, being supported by a Fulbright research grant and by a Hungarian State Eötvös Scholarship which enabled me to conduct research at the

proverbs were drawn from hundreds of books and articles on puns, one-liners, toasts, wisecracks, quotations, aphorisms, maxims, quips, epigrams, and graffiti the vast majority of which have been published in two collections of anti-proverbs compiled by Wolfgang Mieder and Anna T. Litovkina: “Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-Proverbs” (Mieder/Tóthné Litovkina 1999) and “Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify: A Collection of Anti-Proverbs” (Litovkina/Mieder 2006)³.

1. The background of research and terminology

1.1 Dichotomy True/False

Despite the fact that numerous proverbs about proverbs stress the truthfulness⁴ of proverbs, and assert that proverbs cannot be contradicted⁵ or judged⁶, proverbs have never been considered as absolute truths. While people have appreciated the didactic wisdom⁷ of these sapiential gems (see Mieder 1985), they have certainly also noticed the limited scope of proverbs when interpreted as universal laws of behavior. The folk do not consider proverbs sacrosanct, and people are well aware of the fact that proverbs at times are simply too rigid and limited in their prescribed wisdom.

Being a generalization, a proverb in itself can't be defined as „true“ or „false“. A person chooses a proverb according to the demands of the situation – not due to its universal, abstract sense, and any situation it can be interpreted in more than one way. The relevance of proverbs and their meaning emerges only in their application and use in specific contexts. According to Mieder, “We can thus characterize the particular choice

Department of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley (1998–1999) and at Oxford University Press (2003).

³ The idea to start exploration of Anglo-American anti-proverbs about money came to my mind after editing two collections of anti-proverbs together with Wolfgang Mieder (see Mieder/Tóthné Litovkina 1999, Litovkina/Mieder 2006). I would like to express my thanks to Wolfgang Mieder for such inspiration. I am forever grateful to him for his constant encouragement, helpful suggestions, and criticism, and for supplying me with numerous books and articles on proverbs over the years. I would also like to express my gratitude to the reviewers of the article for their valuable comments and suggestions. I am grateful as ever to Fionnuala Carson Williams for “anglicizing” my study.

⁴ For example, *The proverb is true* (English, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Hebrew and Yiddish); *The common proverb seldom lies*; *Every proverb is truth*; *Old proverbs are the children of truth* (English); *A proverb never tells a lie* (Lebanese); *Mad folks and proverbs reveal many truths* (American); *Old proverbs are the children of truth* (Welsh); *The proverb doesn't lie* (Russian, Estonian, Lebanese); *The proverb is like a horse, when the truth is missing, we use a proverb to find it* (African /Yoruba/).

⁵ For example, *Proverbs cannot be contradicted* (Irish); *You can't argue against a proverb, a fool, or the truth* (Russian); *The proverb cannot be disputed* (Russian).

⁶ For example, *A proverb can't be judged* (Russian).

⁷ For example, *Proverbs are the wisdom of the streets*; *The proverb is wisdom of the street* (German); *Proverbs are the wisdom of nations* (American).

of proverbs in any given context by the popular proverb ‘If the shoe (proverb) fits, wear (use) it’” (Mieder 1989: 239). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1973: 823) states, “a person tends to select a proverb on the basis of what the situation requires rather than simply or solely because of either a given proverb’s semantic fit or its ‘truth’ in some abstract sense”.

Furthermore, anybody can quickly tell that many other proverbs contradict each other, as can be seen by the juxtaposition of such frequently cited proverb pairs as: *Haste makes waste* versus *Procrastination is the thief of time*; *Like attracts like* versus *Two of a trade seldom agree*, and so on. Vernon Rendall also comments on the problem of contradictory proverbs: “Whoever paused over the warning of a proverb? The next minute, if he had a good head, he might think of another that contradicted it” (Rendall 1929: 443). The poem “Paradoxical Proverbs” by Frank H. Woodstrike (see Mieder 1989: 187–188), juxtaposing 16 proverb pairs that possess opposite meanings and demonstrating the contradictory nature of proverbs – which can be “wise” or “absurd”, depending on how a given situation is presented – supports Rendall’s statement (for more on contradictory proverbs and the dichotomy True/False, see also Litovkina 2005: 6–13, Carson Williams 2012).

1.2 Anti-proverbs

For centuries, proverbs have provided a framework for endless transformation. In recent decades, the modification of proverbs has taken on such proportions that sometimes we can even meet more proverb transformations than traditional proverbs. Wolfgang Mieder has invented a term **anti-proverb** (or in German ‘Antispruchwort’) for such deliberate proverb innovations, also known as alterations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, mutations, or fractured proverbs. This term has been widely accepted by proverb scholars all over the world as a general label for such innovative alterations and reactions to traditional proverbs: ‘антипословица’ (Russian), ‘anti(-)proverbe’ (French) (see the general discussion of the genre of anti-proverbs in Litovkina 2005, 2015; Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 1–54, Litovkina et al. 2021, Hrisztova-Gotthardt et al. 2023).

Anti-proverbs may contain revealing social comments (*American money talks in just about every foreign country* (McKenzie 1980: 343) [Money talks]⁸), but they may also be based on mere wordplay or puns, and they may very often be generated solely for the goal of deriving play forms (*A fool and his monkey are soon parted* (Margo 1982) [A fool and his money are soon parted]).

As Mieder and Litovkina pointed out: “It should be noted that while some anti-proverbs negate the ‘truth’ of the original piece of wisdom completely, the vast majority of them put the proverbial wisdom only partially into question, primarily by relating it to

⁸ For the reader’s convenience all anti-proverbs in this study are followed by their original forms, given in {} brackets.

a particular context or thought in which the traditional wording does not fit. In fact, the ‘anti’ component in the term ‘anti-proverb’ is not directed against the concept of ‘proverb’ as such” (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 5). Although the term introduced by Wolfgang Mieder has been accepted by many proverb scholars worldwide, it is also worth noting the opinion of scholars who have stated that not all anti-proverbs are opposed to proverbs, and have suggested avoiding the prefix *anti-* (‘against’), for example, by using the prefix *para-* (‘beside’) (for more, see Litovkina et al. 2021, Hrisztova-Gotthardt et al. 2023).

Typically, an anti-proverb will elicit humor only if the traditional proverb upon which it is based is also known, thus allowing the reader or listener to perceive the incongruity (violation of expectation) between the two expressions. Otherwise, the innovative strategy of communication based on the juxtaposition of the old and “new” proverb is lost. The juxtaposition of the traditional proverb text with an innovative variation forces the reader or listener into a more critical thought process. Whereas the old proverbs acted as preconceived rules, the modern anti-proverbs are intended to activate us into overcoming the naive acceptance of traditional wisdom. Because it always refers to an original text, the innovative anti-proverb can be understood as the appearance of intertextuality: to use Neal Norrick’s terminology (1989: 117), we can call anti-proverbs “intertextual jokes”. As he points out, “[I]ntertextuality occurs any time one text suggests or requires reference to some other identifiable text or stretch of discourse, spoken or written” (Norrick 1989: 117).

There are extremely productive proverbs in our corpus that have generated over 30 anti-proverbs. The 20 Anglo-American proverbs most frequently transformed are listed in Litovkina 2005: 24, Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 12–13).

2. Anglo-American proverbs and anti-proverbs about money

All’s fair for anti-proverbs – there is hardly a topic that anti-proverbs do not address. Among the most frequent themes discussed in proverb alterations are women (see Litovkina 2005, 2018; Litovkina/Mieder 2019, etc.), sexuality (see Litovkina 2018: 149–170, Litovkina/Mieder 2019: 65–79, etc.), professions and occupations (see Litovkina 2005, 2016, etc.), and marriage and love (Litovkina 2018, Litovkina/Mieder 2019, etc.).

Without any doubt, money is a frequent theme in Anglo-American anti-proverbs. A brief glance at the 20 most popular proverbs for transformation from the list referred to above at the very end of Section 1 tells us that many of the most frequently transformed proverbs in Mieder and Litovkina’s collections of anti-proverbs are about money. While 5 of them even contain the word *money* (for example, *Money talks; Money isn’t everything*), two of them (*Two can live as cheap(ly) as one* and *Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise*) contain the words *cheap(ly)* and *wealthy* which are associated with the word *money*.

If we examine the list of 580 Anglo-American proverbs that have provided the template for variation in the corpus of anti-proverbs, we will see the following: 13 proverbs

in this corpus contain the word *money*. The 13 proverbs containing the word *money* and included in Litovkina and Mieder's collections of anti-proverbs (see Mieder/Tóthné Litovkina 1999, Litovkina/Mieder 2006) are listed below. The actual proverbs are given in italics. Each proverb is preceded by a number in parentheses indicating the number of anti-proverbs located for it:

- (66) *Money talks* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 227–230);
- (47) *A fool and his money are soon parted* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 61–63);
- (36) *Money [The love of money] is the root of all evil* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 223–224);
- (35) *Money isn't everything*. (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 224–226);
- (34) *Money can't [doesn't] buy happiness* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 220–222);
- (15) *Time is money* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 309);
- (12) *Money doesn't grow on trees* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 222–223);
- (9) *Money makes the mare go* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 227);
- (3) *Lend your money and lose your friend* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 197);
- (3) *Money makes a [the] man* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 226);
- (1) *Money burns a hole in the pocket* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 220);
- (1) *He who marries for money sells his freedom* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 164);
- (1) *Money makes money* (Litovkina/Mieder 2006: 226).

As we can clearly see from the list of the 13 money proverbs above, it contains a number of contradictory proverbs. Thus, while the proverbs *Money talks*, *Money makes the mare go* and *Money makes a [the] man* proclaim that money is the most influential and important thing in the world – if you have it, you can obtain everything – the proverbs *Money isn't everything* and *Money can't [doesn't] buy happiness* have the completely opposite meaning – wealth and financial security alone do not necessarily bring contentment and happiness.

3. An analysis of modified Anglo-American money proverbs with added constituents

Many proverb transformations keep the actual text of the original proverb intact but add new words, or a tail, to it. These complementary elements (often a comment) twist and parody the original meaning of the proverb. As it has been explored elsewhere, such an addition most frequently takes place at the end (see Litovkina 2025). The third – and the main part of the article will be devoted to the discussion of addition (or amplification, extension, expansion), one of the most popular mechanisms of proverb alteration in our 263 Anglo-American anti-proverbs about money⁹. In particular I am

⁹ Another study of mine (Litovkina 2025) treats addition in Anglo-American anti-proverbs about money, and examines the place of the addition, how many components are added to the original proverb text and some other mechanisms of proverb variation that might be simultaneously combined with addition, as well as lists and exemplifies some themes emerging in the Anglo-American proverb transformations about money in which addition takes place.

going to treat the anti-proverbs that express doubts concerning the truthfulness of the analysis of proverbs about money. Thus, in the focus of my analysis of the money proverbs with added constituents, there will be the anti-proverbs doubting or negating the truthfulness of proverbs about money. Furthermore, it has to be pointed out here that I will put the main emphasis on the formal features of the alterations and only rarely mention the themes that emerge in them.

3.1 Transforming proverbs into their opposite

There exists a long tradition of parodying individual proverbs by adding a statement which puts its wisdom into question or negates it completely. Let us examine below how it might happen.

When a person perceives that the “truth” of a proverb does not fit his or her own observations of life, he or she will simply transform the proverb into its opposite. Since proverbs tend to express wisdom in an authoritative way, the coiners of anti-proverbs undermine that authority to express current attitudes towards proverbial wisdom:

A miser is the proof that not every fool and his money are soon parted (Esar 1968: 522)
[A fool and his money are soon parted].

In some cases a positive proverb statement may be changed into a negative one, as is demonstrated below in the two transformations of the proverb *Money is the root of all evil*. Furthermore, in the first example many more mechanisms of proverb variation can be observed, along with addition. Thus, the addition of new words at the beginning and the end of a proverb is braided together for greater effect with word repetition (or even proverb repetition) in the tail, as well as word order reversal in the tail (*money* and *evil*). Negating disappears in the original text, thus, the negative form of the verb *to be* (i.e. *isn't*) is turned into the positive form (*is*); and consequently, while being repeated in the tail, the proverb *Money is the root of all evil* is turned into “evil is the root of all money”, which carries a message very different from the one contained in the original proverb text:

In the underworld, money isn't the root of all evil, but evil is the root of all money (Esar 1968: 193);
Money is not the root of all evil – no money is (Esar 1968: 528).

The proverb *Money doesn't talk* is also extremely popular for this type of alteration as the following two examples demonstrate:

Money doesn't talk – it just goes without saying (Esar 1968: 758);
Money doesn't talk, it swears! (Kilroy 1985: 59);
Money doesn't really talk; it just makes a sonic boom as it goes by (McKenzie 1980: 344).

As we can see, word addition at the end of the anti-proverbs above is combined with word addition in the original proverb text (in each example the phrase *doesn't talk* substitutes for the *talks* in the original).

And *vice versa*, a negative statement might be changed into a positive. Just observe with what ease the proverb *Money doesn't grow on trees* is changed into its opposite (*Money grows on trees*) in the syllogism below. Furthermore, the anti-proverb is used twice, at the very beginning and at the very end of it. Indeed, a frequent feature of syllogisms is magnification of the contradictory qualities of proverbs by pushing their received wisdom to illogical extremes. Moreover, the word *monkey* (one of the favorite words of punsters in the corpus of analyzed money anti-proverbs) is also employed here (not just once but twice), showing the predictability of its usage in the process of proverb transformation. Last but not least, the word *monk*, a paronym of the words *money* and *monkey* occurs twice in this text:

The Long-Sought-After Proof that Money Grows on Trees

1. *Money is what people get when they sell.*
2. *Sell sounds the same as cell.*
3. *A cell is a tiny room.*
4. *One kind of person who lives in a tiny room is a monk.*
5. *Monk is a short form of monkey.*
6. *Monkeys eat bananas.*
7. *Bananas grow on trees.*

Therefore, money grows on trees (Louis Phillips, in Rosen 1995: 51).

Coiners of anti-proverbs often introduce the traditional form of a proverb with such words or phrases as *used to*, *in the (good) old days*, *there was a time*, and then use such words as *nowadays*, *then* or *now* to describe a single situation in which the proverb may sound wrong:

There was a time when a fool and his money were soon parted, but now it happens to everybody (Adlai Stevenson, in Metcalf 1993: 119) [A fool and his money are soon parted];
Our parents used to tell us that money isn't everything. Now we tell our kids that money isn't anything (Metcalf 1993: 118) [Money isn't everything].

The opposite view may also be achieved through employing antonyms (such as *buy* and *sell*, *talks* and *listens*, *everything* and *nothing*) to one of the words of original proverb in the tails of anti-proverbs:

Money cannot buy happiness, but it certainly can sell it! (Palma 1990: 8)
 [Money cannot buy happiness];
They say money talks. But smart money listens (Mieder 1989: 274) [Money talks];
Money isn't everything – in fact, with taxes and the high cost of living, it's nothing (Safian 1967: 55) [Money isn't everything].

3.2 Conjunctions

Let us examine below the conjunctions with the help of which commentaries that put the wisdom of a proverb into question or negate it completely might be added to our proverbs.

Most often such commentaries are introduced by the conjunction *but*, thus immediately flagging the contradictory intent of the message:

Time is money, but not when you're doing it in jail (Esar 1968: 632) [Time is money];
A fool and his money are soon parted, but seldom by another fool (Esar 1968: 318) [A fool and his money are soon parted].

The most popular proverb in my corpus containing the word *money* for this kind of variation is *Money talks*:

Money talks, but big money doesn't – it hires a staff of lawyers (Esar 1968: 465);
Money talks, but dollar for dollar its voice keeps getting weaker and weaker (Prochnow/Prochnow 1987: 194);
Money talks, but it doesn't always talk sense (Esar 1968: 529);
Money talks – but you need an amplifier to hear what it's saying nowadays (Safian 1967: 55).

The proverbs *Money isn't everything*; *Money cannot buy happiness*; *Money makes the mare go* also deserve to be mentioned here:

Money isn't everything
Money isn't everything, but it does quiet the nerves a little (McKenzie 1980: 344);
Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps you in touch with the children (McLellan 1996: 180);
Money isn't everything, but it's a long way ahead of whatever comes next (Metcalf 1993: 148);
Money isn't everything – but it's a nice consolation until you have everything (Safian 1967: 55);

Money cannot buy happiness
Money cannot buy happiness – but it can corrupt it! (Palma 1990: 9);
Money doesn't buy happiness, but that's not the reason so many people are poor (Esar 1968: 621);

Money makes the mare go
Money makes the mare go, but not if it's bet on her (Esar 1968: 396);
Money makes the mare go – but not the nightmare (Mieder 1993: 185).

Doubts about the truth of a proverb may also be expressed by adding the verb *may* to a positive statement, or the words *may not* to a negative statement in the original proverb, followed by a commentary (usually also introduced by the conjunction *but*) questioning the truth of the proverb. See the examples below:

Time may be money, but it's much easier to persuade a man to give you his time than to lend you his money (McKenzie 1980: 51) [Time is money];
Money may talk, but have you ever noticed how hard of hearing it is when you call it? (Fuller 1943: 214) [Money talks];
Money may not buy happiness, but most of us are willing to make the experiment (Esar 1968: 286) [Money does not buy happiness].

Some proverb variations question the truth of a proverb by posing a naive question thus, once more, presenting a single situation in which the proverb may sound wrong, or doesn't fit. Such questions might frequently be preceded by the conjunction *but*:

Money is the root of all evil – but has anyone ever discovered a better route? (Safian 1967: 54);
Money may talk, but have you ever noticed how hard of hearing it is when you call it? (Fuller 1943: 214).

The conjunction *but* is frequently followed in the corpus of Anglo-American anti-proverbs by a *how* question:

A fool and his money are soon parted, but how did they get together in the first place? (Esar 1968: 513);
We know that a fool and his money are soon parted, but how did they ever get together? (McKenzie 1980: 187).

In the anti-proverbs below we see the following structure: *if* + a proverb in the first part of proverb transformation followed by a question introduced with the words *how* or *why*.

If + a proverb + a *how*-question
If love is blind, how can there be love at first sight? (Esar 1968: 491) [Love is blind];
If money doesn't grow on trees, how come the banks have so many branches? (Metcalf 1993: 19) [Money doesn't grow on trees].

If + a proverb + a *why*-question
If a fool and his money are soon parted, why are there so many rich fools? (Berman 1997: 141) [A fool and his money are soon parted];
If time is money, why is it that wealthy executives never seem to have a moment to spare? (Esar 1968: 105) [Time is money].

4. Conclusion

The present study, while continuing Litovkina's research (see Mieder/Tóthné Litovkina 1999, Litovkina 2005, Litovkina/Mieder 2006, Litovkina et al. 2021, etc.) on various types of proverb alteration in anti-proverbs (i.e. deliberate proverb innovations, alterations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, fractured proverbs), has focused on one of the most frequent types of proverb alteration in 263 transformations of 13 Anglo-American proverbs about money, namely, addition (amplification, extension or expansion).

The first part of the study has addressed contradictory proverbs and doubts regarding the truthfulness of proverbs, and has also treated the background of anti-proverb research and terminology. Then, the second part of the study has listed 13 Anglo-American proverbs containing the word "money" and numbers of their transformations. The third part of this study has been devoted to the analysis of addition in the analyzed Anglo-American money proverbs, especially the examples doubting or even negating completely the truthfulness of the original proverb texts.

As it has been demonstrated above, authors reworking traditional gems of wisdom may simply put the proverb in a context in which it does not sound truthful and then

offer an explanation. Furthermore, in numerous cases, the added elements are introduced by the conjunction *but* which emphasizes the contradiction to the wisdom in the proverb.

Reading these texts, it becomes clear that the authors deliberately misunderstand, distort the proverbs narrowing down their meaning to a literal interpretation and pointing to only a specific case for which the proverbs in question are incorrect. However, anyone of us could recall many situations to which these proverbs fit perfectly. As Mieder states, “proverbs are no longer sacrosanct bits of wisdom laying out a course of action that must be adhered to blindly. Instead proverbs are considered as questionable and at best apparent truths that are called on if the shoe (proverb) happens to fit. When that is not the case, they are freely changed to express opposite points of view” (Mieder 1993: 90).

Since proverbs are considered by many of us sacrosanct, their reinterpretation in innovative ways can create humor. We laugh at some anti-proverbs because they skew our expectations about traditional values, order, and rules. We are, however, sometimes struck by the absurdity of some situations portrayed in proverb parodies, especially when they rely purely upon linguistic tricks employed for the sole purpose of making punning possible. Very often, however, anti-proverbs move beyond the realm of fun and wordplay to comment on important aspects of society.

Suggestions for further research

In my analysis I have mainly emphasized the formal features of the analyzed alterations with added constituents, in particular, of the anti-proverbs contending with the message of original proverb texts, and I have only briefly mentioned the themes that appear in them. It would be interesting to do a detailed examination of the themes (other than money) that emerge in the proverb alterations in which addition takes place. Furthermore, we have clearly seen that in numerous anti-proverbs addition is combined with some other technique of proverb alteration such as word repetition, punning, word substitution, word order reversal, and so on. However, only a few anti-proverbs have been analyzed from this point of view. Therefore, another important goal for future research would be to analyze such combinations of techniques. It has to be pointed out here that, due to the fact that the vast majority of the anti-proverbs in Litovkina and Mieder’s anti-proverb collections are given without any context, my anti-proverb analysis is also contextless. Last but not least, another equally exciting task for further research could be the exploration of the functions of anti-proverbs.

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