A comparative analysis of equivalence in Croatian, English and Italian biblical proverbs

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij Engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

Doris Ercegović

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Komparativna analiza biblijskih poslovica na hrvatskom, engleskom i talijanskom jeziku

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Zadar,2016.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Doris Ercegović,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **završni** rad pod naslovom **„A comparative analysis of equivalence in Croatian, English and Italian biblical proverbs"** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

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Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 7. srpanj 2016.

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1. Introduction

Proverbs have been used for many centuries and still remain a great part of everyday life. Whether they express an experience, an idea or even a warning, proverbs are always short and memorable, catchy and educative. Due to their complex structure, proverbs are very difficult to translate. The aim of this paper is to analyse biblical proverbs and their equivalents in Croatian, English and Italian language. To achieve this goal, this paper is organized in two main parts: a theoretical one, where basic terms and classifications will be explained, and a practical one, consisting of my own research and analysis of 50 biblical proverbs and their equivalents taken from Mikić and Škara's *Kontrastivni rječnik poslovica* (1994).

The first chapter deals with the basic terminology of phraseology, the definition of the phraseological units and their features, according to Sabine Fiedler's *English Phraseology* (2007). The second chapter will show the classification of the phraseological units and the distinctions between them. The third chapter presents the definition of the proverb, according to Wolfgang Mieder's book *Proverbs* (2004). Furthermore, it explains the characteristics of proverbs, the distinction between paremiography and paremiology, and some subgenres of proverbs. The forth chapter explains steps of translation of PUs, problems and aims of the translators. In this chapter different points of view are presented, according to Fiedler, Miller-Naudé and Naudé, and Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber.

The second part of this paper is divided into methodology, were it will be explained how the research was done, which examples were taken and from where and the aim of the analysis. The next chapter is the research itself, 50 proverbs listed and their equivalence in Croatian, English and Italian. The third chapter is the analysis of the equivalence, the results

and the universal characteristics found in all proverbs. Since all languages are assumed to have the same ancestor, therefore every language that uses proverbs has to have some similar features and markers. This paper will try to show the similarities and explain them by doing the research.

2. Terminology of phraseology

Firstly, we have to explain some basic terms in order to understand better this research. **Phraseology** is the study of the set of linguistic units, which consist of **phraseological units (PUs)**. These constitute the **phrasicon** or the block of inventory of idioms and phrases. The traditional term for **PUs** (phraseological units) was **idiom**, but it has been rarely applied to idiomatic units only, and also serves as a hyperonym to cover different conventional multi-word units (Fiedler 2007: 15). In *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), an idiom is described as "a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language, and often having significance other than its grammatical or logical one" (Fiedler 2007: 16).

The main characteristic of a phraseological unit is firstly its **polylexemic structure**, meaning that these units consist of at least two independent words. On the other hand, it seems to be questionable whether it is correct to choose size as a basis for recognizing **PUs**, since a phraseological word group can be transformed into a **compound**. Also, some **PUs** in English language can result in compounds when translated to other languages. But it is important to know the difference between a **PU** and a **compound**, and the basic distinction is that a compound obeys the word formation rules. Majority of phraseology researches agreed

that the lower limit for **PUs** can be the word group, and the upper limit can be formed of a sentence or even several sentences (Fiedler 2007: 17-18).

The second characteristic which distinguishes **PU** from a random combination of words is its **relative stability**. It is constant in content and structure, i.e. it rarely ever changes its meaning. To prove the stability of a structure, we can always apply the substitution test. By changing one word of a **PU**, it loses its **syntactic stability**. Yet, there are examples when a **PU** can vary in spelling, number or function of a word. Therefore, it is called **relative stability** (Fielder 2007: 19-20).

Another feature, closely related to stability, is the **lexicalization**, meaning that the PU is retained in the collective memory of a language community. Word groups and sentences are remembered as a whole by the language users. The process of **lexicalization** starts when a new expression is coined by a speaker or a writer to fill the need of finding a new word. This new coinage catches on and it starts to be used by other speakers. It becomes accepted as a lexeme by a process called **institutionalisation**. But this process does not mean that PUs are frequent, or their codification in a dictionary. As the inventory of phrases, phraseology is also unpredictable (Fiedler 2007: 21).

Among the characteristics of **PUs**, there is also **idiomaticity**. This causes many problems to those who want to learn a new language, but they cannot see the meaning of an expression since it does not derive from the meaning of its constituents. Furthermore, **PUs** can have different **degrees of idiomaticity**, from real idioms to fully transparent idioms. This

feature is typical, but only optional regards the idiom as the prototype of a **PU**. Idioms are therefore a **subset of PUs** (Fiedler 2007: 22-23).

Other functions of **PU** are **connotations**, meaning that they can express emphasis on speaker's/writer's intention; evoke solidarity, humour and put people at ease. The sentences without **PUs** are less pithy and less impressive. **Stylistic connotations** refer to the communicative situations in which PUs are normally used and to the relationship between speakers and hearers in them. They can differ from formal to informal. **Expressive connotations** reveal additional information about a speaker's subjective attitude towards the person or state of affairs denoted (Fiedler 2007: 23-25).

The last few features of **PUs** are the **transformational deficiencies**, the fact that idioms often resist syntactic transformations such as **passivization** or **topicalization**, **grammatical ill-formedness** and the **occurrence of unique constituents**, both of which only hold for a marginal set of **PUs** (Fiedler 2007: 26-27). Following all these characteristics, we come to the final definition of the **PU**, as written in Fiedler's book:

"**A phraseological unit (PU)** is a lexicalized polyleximic linguistic unit which is characterized, in principle, by semantic and syntactic stability, and to a great extent by idiomaticity. Because of its optional connotative features, a PU may fulfil various pragmatic functions in discourse. PUs cover both word-like and sentence-like fixed expressions." (Fiedler 2007: 28)

3. Classification of phraseological units

According to Fiedler's coursebook, there are six types of conventional **PUs** in the majority of systemic descriptions. Firstly, there are **phraseological nominations**, which are word equivalents that have one common feature – their **normative function**. They can denote people, objects, states, relations and they can be classified according to word classes (nouns, pronouns, verbs and adverbs). Some of the examples are: *supply and demand, mad as a hatter, to cut a long story short, at the end of the day* (Fiedler 2007: 39-40).

Secondly, **(irreversible) binominals** are the type of **PU** intensively studied in the literature. The definition Fiedler used is the following: "**Binominals** are the sequence of two words pertaining to the same form-class, placed on an identical level of syntactic hierarchy, and ordinarily connected by some kind of lexical link." (Fiedler 2007: 40). They are usually connected by conjunctions *and* and *or*, *but* and other prepositions. They can also be identical words (e.g. *side by side*). The main characteristic of binominals is their **fixed order**, which is why they are often called **irreversible binominals**. Examples: *here and there, now and then, now or never, once or twice* (Fiedler 2007:41).

The third type is similar to the binomials, since they are also **structurally fixed** and **conditioned**. They are called **stereotyped comparisons** and they have two types: **(as) + adjective + as + noun phrase** (*as clear as crystal, as strong as a horse*), **(verb) + like + noun phrase** (*sleep as a dog, eat like a horse*). **Alliteration** is a common feature of these comparisons (Fiedler 2007: 43-44).

Forth type is **winged words**, which can be **catchphrases**, **slogans**, **sententious remarks** and **quotations** which are current in the language community. In contrast to other

types of **PUs**, they can be traced back to the author or a historical source. Some have origins in the Bible, Greek mythology or Shakespeare (*To be or not to be*) (Fiedler 2007: 47-48).

Fifth types of **PUs** are **routine formulae** (also called **pragmatic idioms**) which can be described as ready-made units that language puts at our disposal to use for recurrent situations. Examples are *What do you know!* as an exclamation or *Last, but not least* as a well-known structure used when introducing the last person or thing in the list (Fiedler 2007: 50). The last type of **PUs** are **proverbs**, but they will be discussed in the next paragraph, since they are very important to the research in this paper and need to be explained thoroughly. Other special types of **PU** are mentioned in Fiedler's coursebook such as: **paraphrasal verbs** (*to make use of, to give a smile*), **(restricted) collocations** (*blow a fuss, under attack*), **rhyming slang** (*trouble and strife*) and **wellerisms** (Fiedler 2007: 51-54).

4. Proverbs

According to Wolfgang Mieder's book *Proverbs* (2004), "they contain everyday experience and common observation in succinct and formulaic language, making them easy to remember and ready to be used instantly as effective rhetoric in oral or written communication." (Mieder 2004: 12) Although many people argue that **proverbs** have less significance in the modern world and that they have lost its status, but this is far from truth. It is correct that some **proverbs** are not in use anymore because their vocabulary is old-fashioned or they express some ideas or things that no longer exist but as one language develops there are created new phrases and proverbs which substitute the old ones. Thus, once known proverb from the 16th century *Let the cobbler stick to his last* no longer means

anything today because the profession of the cobbler is disappearing and few people remember that a last is a wooden or metal model of the human foot on which a shoe is placed during repair. But more general proverb such as *Every man to his trade* can be applied instead.

The number of proverbs is hard to define since every culture has thousands of them. They have been collected and studied for centuries. The earliest proverb collections date back to the third millennium B.C. when Sumerians inscribed them as an everyday observation of human nature. Usually the **proverb collections** list only texts of proverbs and not their social contexts or actual use. Nevertheless, nowadays we can find impressive works of proverb collections with their origin and history in almost every language. This type of proverb study is called **paremiography**. On the other hand, we have **paremiology** or the study of proverbs and their classification, definition, structure, style, content, function, meaning and value. They also differentiate among the proverbial subgenres that include proverbs as such, as well as **proverbial expressions** (*to bite the dust*), **proverbial comparison** (*as busy as a bee*), **proverbial interrogatives** (*Does a chicken have lips?*), **twin formulas** (*give and take*) and **wellerisms**. (Mieder 2004: 12-14)

On the various verbal folklore genres, proverbs are the most concise but not necessarily the simplest form. They fulfil the human need to summarize experiences and observations into words of wisdom and ready-made comments on personal relationship or social affairs. As much as there are proverbs about every situation possible, there are also the contradictory ones, which prove that proverbs do not represent a logical philosophical system. Examples of these proverb pairs are *Absence makes the heart grow fonder* and *Out of sight,*

out of mind or *Look before you leap* and *He who hesitates is lost*. But once the proper proverb is chosen, it fits perfectly.

Ever since the age of Aristotle, phraseologists have tried to come up with a definition to sum up all the features of proverbs, but even today they cannot decide which one fits perfectly (Mieder 2004: 14-20). Mieder in his book puts this definition as the closest to summarize all:

"A **proverb** is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation." (Mieder 2004: 20)

This definition is used also in Sabine Fiedler's coursebook and it is a good starting point in explaining what proverbs are and what their functions are. To be easily remembered, majority of them are metaphorical or involve some kind of **metaphor**. Examples used in the coursebook are following: *Let sleeping dogs lie.* (Don't look for trouble on purpose, don't interfere with a situation if it is likely to cause disorder), *Birds of a feather flock together.* (People who have the same ideas and interests are attracted to each other.)

Proverbs come in different sizes, meaning that they can be structured of **simple or complex sentences**, but they can also have an **elliptic construction** without the final verb. This type of proverb is frequent and similar to irreversible binomials. Proverbs are easily found in everyday life since they express different values of social life, culture or behaviour. Using the **imperative**, they can create a command, a warning, a recommendation or a prescription. If a speaker wants to interfere in something indirectly, they can express it by

using a proverb. (*A watched pot never boils.* Don't be impatient.) Usually, general truth is emphasized by **determiners** (all, every, no) or adverbs with more general meaning (always, never). Another feature of a proverb is the **construction *He who***. Furthermore, there are many stylistic features which help to memorize a proverb such as **alliteration, rhyme or assonance** (Fiedler 2007: 44-45). Many paremiologists have found that some patterns reoccur constantly. Examples are "Like X, like Y", "Better X than Y" and many others that make proverbs catchy and pithy (Fiedler 2007: 46).

5. Translation of PUs

Translation is a complex process of transferring a text from **source language (SL)** to equivalent text in **target language (TL)**. PUs are extremely difficult to translate, especially because one cannot just literally translate it because in that way it does not mean anything to the reader of another language. A translator must investigate deeply all the features of a PU and find an appropriate solution in target language. In order to do this, one has to know the culture and social background of both source language and target language.

In Sabine Fiedler's coursebook, five different **types of equivalence** are described: **denotative**, which is oriented towards the real world, **connotative**, which refers to the stylistic and expressive dimensions of a text, **pragmatic**, which includes the communicative effects a text producer wants to gain and the receiver's presuppositions, **formal-aesthetic**, important to literary translations, and **text-normative** equivalence, which is centred on the properties which characterise text types (Fiedler 2007:117-118). A translator may use various procedures such as commenting paraphrase, omission, permutation and compensation, trying

to achieve a high degree of equivalence. There can be also **zero-equivalents**, caused by the fact that a PU is deeply rooted in the history of a language and has no equivalent in other languages. The process of translating includes the following steps:

1. Identification of the PU in source language

2. Analysis of the phraseological meaning (SL paraphrase)

3. Translation of the phraseological meaning (TL paraphrase)

4. Substitution by a PU in the target language

(Fiedler 2007: 120)

Proverbs are one of the most difficult PUs to translate, since they can be structured of one or even more sentences, or they can consist of two words. They are shaped to be memorable and persuasive in an indirect way, which makes more difficult to find an equivalent in other languages. Any choice that a translator makes marks him as an agent of change and transformation. A **foreignisation** strategy recreates the cultural and social world of the original proverb and is particularly useful for someone interested in the metaphors and idioms of the original language (Miller-Naudé, Naudé 2010: 14). But this process also prevents the original proverb to enter into the language of translation as a proverb.

On the other hand, an **indigenisation** strategy produces proverbs that sound like proverbs after their translation. It is up to the translator to decide whether they want to include traditional proverbial sayings into their translation or try to produce similar proverb that sounds like a traditional one. (Miller-Naudé, Naudé 2010: 15)

In the research done by Miller-Naudé and Naudé in *The translator as an agent of change and transformation: The case of translating biblical Proverbs* (2010), where they examined the translation of biblical proverbs, the conclusion is that many English modern versions used foreignisation rather than indigenisation in the translation of proverbs.

Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber wrote in their book *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (1982) that:

"Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. But this relatively simple statement requires careful evaluation of several seemingly contradictory elements." (Nida, Taber 1982: 12)

Firstly, a translator must "reproduce the message", and by doing that one must make many grammatical and lexical adjustments. Rather than conservation of the form, the translator must strive for **equivalence** before the identity. The best translations do not sound like translations at all. One cannot translate Bible and make it sound like it happened in the next town ten years ago. Cultural and historical context are an important part of this process. **Style** is one factor that must be considered and in trying to reproduce the style of the original one must beware of producing something which is not functionally equivalent (Nida, Taber 1982: 12-14).

Nida and Taber explain that there are two different types of equivalence, namely **formal equivalence** and **dynamic equivalence**. Formal equivalence (or correspondence) focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content, unlike dynamic equivalence

which is based upon the principle of equivalent effect (Nida, Taber 1982: 22-23). Formal correspondence consists of a TL item which represents the closest equivalent of a SL word or phrase. Nida and Taber argue that there are not always formal equivalents between language pairs. In that case, they propose using formal equivalents wherever possible if the translation aims at achieving formal rather than dynamic equivalence.

Nida and Taber explain that formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and because of that distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand. Dynamic equivalence is defined as a translation principle according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the TL wording will trigger the same impact on the audience as the original wording did upon the ST audience. They state that the form of the original text is sometimes changed, but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful (Nida and Taber, 1982:25-26).

In their book, they argue that the dynamic equivalence is a more effective translation process, since they deal mostly with translation of the Bible. When talking about the Bible, it is not important to just translate the text, but one must take in account the entire cultural and historical context and the translation must have the same impact on all readers it addresses. But, of course, the message of the text must remain clear in the target text.

6. Methodology

This research is composed of 150 proverbs (50 Croatian + 50 English + 50 Italian) taken from Škara and Mikić's *Kontrastivni rječnik poslovica* (1992) and compared to Suzanić and Mikić's *Biblijske poslovice u Hrvata* (1994) to be sure that they are taken from the Bible. The proverbs are divided in groups based on the key word or theme. The proverbs are listed in three languages, first in Croatian, then English and Italian. English and Italian versions will be compared to Croatian in order to analyse which one is more equivalent and why.

The degree of equivalence is divided into **equivalent** and **non-equivalent** (specific). Equivalent translation means that the translator has succeeded in transferring the message to other languages. This type of translation does not have to be literal but similar of closely related. Specific translation is when the translator cannot find suitable words or ideas that can explain the proverb so they use other translations that are more related to their language.

Later on, it will be shown that these proverbs all have the same linguistic characteristics which can be called universal for all languages that use proverbs as a way of expressing. Universal characteristics can be divided in 3 groups: grammatical markers, semantic features and phonic devices. This type of analysis has been taken from Danica Škara's research called *Comparative analysis of proverbs: Universals and specifics* (1995). In her scientific paper, she used proverbs from Croatian, English and Italian language to prove that these languages all have similar features and forms.

The aim of this research is to compare different translations of biblical proverbs in Croatian, English and Italian language and to show whether English or Italian has more

similarities to Croatian and why is that so, which will be shown by looking at the historical and cultural background of these languages.

7. Research

The research consists of 50 proverbs (Croatian, English and Italian versions of each of the proverb) taken from the Bible. These proverbs are divided in groups according to the key word or idea. The groups are following: believe (1), care (3), death (4), evil (2), eye (1), fall (1), fools (2), friendship (6), God (11), knowledge (1), man (7), naked (1), praise (1), richness (2), today (2), tree (1), truth (1) and work (3)[1]. These groups are listed alphabetically and the name of the group is written in caps lock. Croatian proverbs are listed first and followed by English and Italian translation. Under each proverb there is a short analysis of the meaning of proverbs in Croatian, English and Italian and their message.

BELIEVE

Croatian: Što čuješ, ne vjeruj; što vidiš to vjeruj.

English: Seeing is believing.

Italian: Quel che l'occhio vede, il cuor crede.

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[1]**Number of proverbs in each group is written in brackets.**

Although the English version is not literal, because it does not include the part about hearing "What you hear, do not believe", we can see that the key message is transmitted, "What you see, believe". The Italian version includes the part about the heart, "What the eye sees, the heart believes", but we can conclude that both English and Italian have equivalence with the Croatian version. The meaning of this proverb is that a man believes only what he sees, and it is hard to believe (in this case, in God) without seeing him.

CARE

Croatian: Svatko neka nosi svoje breme.

English: Let every pedlar carry his own burden.

Italian: Ognun va al mulino col suo sacco.

The Croatian version that says "everyone should carry its own burden" is transmitted to English "every pedlar" and Italian "everyone goes to the mill with his own sack". Although the same words are not used, in all three versions the same idea is expresses. The message of the proverb is that every man must do his own thing and carry the consequences.

Croatian: Briga sijedi.

English: Care brings grey hair.

Italian: I pensieri fanno mettere i peli canuti.

These three versions are equivalent and they carry the message that the more you worry, the more grey hair you will have. As you grow older, life brings more care.

Croatian: Svaki dan svoju brigu nosi.

English: Every day brings its bread with it.

Italian: Ad ogni giorno basta il suo male.

The Croatian version "Every day brings its own care" is replaced with the word "bread" in the English version as to say that each day has its own problems and solutions. The Italian version "Every day has enough of its evil" says that each day brings something unique, whether bad or good, and it is up to us to deal with it. Although these three versions use different concepts and ideas, they are equivalent because the main message is that every day has its own situations which can sometimes worry us, but it will all pass and another day will come with something else. So we have to live our lives day by day and take every challenge with positivism.

DEATH

Croatian: Čega se čovjek najviše boji, ono će mu prvo na glavu doći.

English: He that fears death lives not.

Italian: Ciò che credi di fuggire, spesso è solito venirti incontro.

Here, the Croatian version "What man fears the most, will fall on his head first" means that is a man fears of failure, it is most likely that he will fail. The English version "He that fears death lives not" is not quite the same because there are many fears in life, not just death. In Croatian translation, if a man fears something, that something is likely to happen to him, similar to Italian translation "the things you try to escape, catch you". But these things can be anything, and English translation refers only to death. That is why we can conclude that the English version has specific equivalence.

Croatian: Bolje je umrijeti, nego umirati.

English: Better death than long sickness.

Italian: Meglio morire che soffrire.

These three versions of the proverb "Better death than long sickness" are equivalent although they use three different concepts: Croatian "dying", English "sickness" and Italian "suffering". But they all mean that death is better than any kind of suffering.

Croatian: Mrtvi se ne vraćaju.

English: It is only the dead who do not return.

Italian: I morti non tornano.

These three versions of the proverb "The dead do not return" are equivalent and mean that when someone dies, he is gone forever and cannot come back.

Croatian: Smrt roka ne stavi, ali ne čeka.

English: No man knows when he shall die.

Italian: Non vi è termine più certo e meno inteso della morte.

These three versions of the proverb "Death does not have a certain date but it is inevitable" are equivalent and mean that one cannot know when he will die but it is sure that he will.

EVIL

Croatian: Ko zlo čini, i dočekaće ga.

English: Evil to him that evil thinks.

Italian: La saetta gira, gira, torna addosso a chi la tira.

The Croatian version "He who does evil, evil will come to him" is equivalent to the English version "Evil to him that evil thinks" and means that if you wish evil to another, at some point in life something bad will happen to you. The Italian version can be translated as "The arrow turns to the one who fires it" meaning that what you do to another person will happen to you also. This Italian version is different than others because of the concept of "evil" in them and

it has a specific meaning (or more general). The message of this proverb is that everyone should behave well to others if they want that the others behave well to them.

Croatian: Tko zlo misli, zlo i čini.

English: Shame take him, that shame thinketh.

Italian: Chi mal pensa, mal abbia.

The Croatian and Italian versions of the proverb "He who thinks evil, evil does" are equivalent and their message is that if someone is just thinking about doing something wrong, it is the same as doing it. The English version explains that if someone is thinking shamefully, he should be ashamed. The message of all versions is that we should think and act in a good way.

EYE

Croatian: Oko za oko, zub za zub.

English: Tooth for tooth, eye for eye.

Italian: Occhio per occhio, dente per dente.

These three versions are equivalent in words and in their meaning. The message of this proverb means that if someone does something wrong, that person should be punished by having the same thing done to them.

FALL

Croatian: Tko visoko leti, nisko pada.

English: The higher standing, the lower fall.

Italian: Chi monta più alto che non deve, cade più basso che non crede.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that is someone wants more that they deserve or can get, it is likely that they will lose everything. People should not be greedy.

FOOLS

Croatian: Budala kad šuti, drže da je pametan.

English: Fools are wise as long as silent.

Italian: Quando non dice niente, non è dal savio pazzo differente.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that the fool and the wise are the same when they do not speak. Only when they start talking, you can see who they are. So it is better to not say anything, if you do not know everything.

Croatian: Budale se mnogo smiju.

English: The more fools, the more laughter.

Italian: I matti si conoscono dal molto ridere.

These three versions are equivalent and mean that the fools laugh a lot. The message is that fools do not know much so they laugh more than they talk about something.

FRIENDSHIP

Croatian: Bolje je valjan prijatelj, nego rođeni brat.

English: A good friend is my nearest relation.

Italian: Val più un amico che cento parenti.

These three versions of the proverb "Better a good friend than family" are equivalent. Although they use different concepts: Croatian "brother", English "nearest relation" and Italian "cousins/family", their message is the same and means that you can have a big family and many relatives but a close friend will understand you better than all of them.

Croatian: Bolje i sam, nego s rdjavim drugom.

English: Better be alone than in bad company.

Italian: Meglio soli che male accompagnati.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that it is better to be alone than in bad company with bad friend.

Croatian: Prijatelj se u nevolji poznaje kao zlato u vatri.

English: A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Italian: L'oro s'affina al fuoco e l'amico nelle sventure.

The Croatian and Italian versions are equivalent in concepts of "gold" and "fire" but they mean the same thing as the English version, that "A friend in need is a friend indeed". The message of this proverb is that in good, but also in bad times, true friend will be there for you.

Croatian: Prijateljstvo veliko je blago, koje vrijedi više nego srebro i zlato.

English: A good friend is a treasure.

Italian: Trova un amico e troverai un tesoro.

The Croatian version with the concept "silver and gold" is equivalent to English and Italian versions "A good friend is a treasure", meaning that a good friend is hard to find and should be cared about like a treasure.

Croatian: Dok imaš svačiji si, kad nemaš ničiji si.

English: In time of prosperity, friends will be plenty; in time of adversity, not one among twenty.

Italian: Chi ha quattrini, ha amici.

These three versions of the proverb "When you have money, everyone is your friend, and when you don't, there's no one" are equivalent and their message is that friends will always be there in good times, but when you have nothing, they will be gone.

Croatian: Tko nije sebi dobra učinio, ne će ni drugome.

English: He helps little that helps not himself.

Italian: È male amico chi a se è nemico.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that we have to help each other in order to help ourselves.

GOD

Croatian: Bog dao, Bog i uzeo.

English: The Earth produces all things and receives all again.

Italian: Dio da e Dio toglie.

The Croatian and Italian versions of the proverb "God gives and God takes" are equivalent and mean that God is almighty and he is responsible for all things that happen to us. The

English version is specific because it uses the concept of "Earth" which gives and takes. This is maybe because the Christianity had less influence in England than in other countries.

Croatian: Bog sreću dijeli.

English: God sends good luck and God sends bad.

Italian: Se Dio vuole, tutti ridono.

The Croatian and English versions of the proverb "God sends good luck" are equivalent and the Italian version says that "If God wants it, everyone laughs". The message of this proverb is similar to the previous one, meaning that God's will is what starts everything.

Croatian: Čuvaj se, čovječe, i Bog će te čuvati.

English: God help them that helps themselves.

Italian: Chi s'aiuta, Iddio l'aiuta.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that God will always help the one who helps himself.

Croatian: Kad je nužda najveća, Bog najprije pomaže.

English: When the need is highest, the help is nightest.

Italian: Quando è maggiore il bisogno, l'aiuto di Dio è piu' vicino.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that God always helps us and that we have to keep our faith even in the worst moments.

Croatian: Liječnik liječi, a Bog ozdravlja.

English: God heals, and the physician has the thanks.

Italian: Dio guarisce, e il medico è ringraziato.

The Croatian version says that "The doctor heals but God cures" meaning that the doctor can heal our physical state but only God can cure our soul. The English and Italian versions are specific and say that "God heals, and the physician has the thanks" meaning that God heals through physicians which is not the same as the Croatian version.

Croatian: Koga Bog čuva, onoga puška ne bije.

English: Whom God will help, nothing does harm.

Italian: A chi Dio aiutar vuole, niente noucer gli puole.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that nothing bad will happen to those who believe in God because he cares about them.

Croatian: Idje kiša, kako Bog hoće.

English: When God wills, all winds bring rain.

Italian: Non si muove foglia, che Dio non voglia.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that what God wishes, happens.

Croatian: Tko daje siromahu, zajimlje Bogu.

English: He that has pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord.

Italian: All'uomo elimosiniero Iddio è tesoriero

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that he who gives the poor lends from God, which means if someone helps others who have little, he will be rewarded by God.

Croatian: Komu je Bog u pomoći, ne treba da se za nj ljudi misle.

English: He is no loser who keeps God for his friend.

Italian: Non è un perdente che mantiene Dio come il suo amico.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that the one who has God as his friend, does not need the help of others.

Croatian: Radišu Bog pomaže.

English: Use the means and God will give his blessing.

Italian: Comincia, che Dio provvede al resto.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that is someone is working hard and trying, God will help him finish.

Croatian: S božjom pomoći sve se može.

English: All things are possible with God.

Italian: Dio può tutto.

The Croatian and English versions are equivalent and they say that with God's help all is possible. The Italian version is specific because it says that "God can do anything" which is different than the other versions.

KNOWLEDGE

Croatian: Tko mnogo zna, mnogo i pati.

English: Much science, much sorrow.

Italian: Chi acquista sapere, acquista dolere.

These three versions are equivalent and they say that the one that knows much suffers much. The message of the proverb is that the more we know about the world, the more we know about the bad things and in the end we only suffer.

MAN

Croatian: Čovjek je čovjeku vuk.

English: Man is a wolf to a man.

Italian: L'uomo è lupo all'uomo.

These three versions are equivalent and mean that the man is a stranger to a man. The wolf as a creature has qualities of being predatory and cruel, and sometimes a man behaves like that to others.

Croatian: Čovjek nalaže, a Bog raspolaže.

English: Man proposes, God disposes.

Italian: L'uomo propone e Dio dispone.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that a man can only propose something and God can make it happen.

Croatian: Čovjek se u piću poznaje.

English: Drink discovers the man.

Italian: L'uomo si conosce al bicchiere.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that when a man drinks he can became violent and show his true nature.

Croatian: Što Bog združi, čovjek ne razdružuje.

English: What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

Italian: Quel che Iddio congiunse, uom non divida.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that what God joins, the man cannot divide.

Croatian: Dobra je žena slava od muža.

English: A good wife and health is a man's best wealth.

Italian: Donna buona vale una corona.

The Croatian and English versions are equivalent and they say that "A good wife is a man's best wealth". The Italian version says that "A good wife is worth a crown" which is different and specific because it does not mention the man/husband.

Croatian: Kakav gospodar, takav sluga.

English: Like master, like man.

Italian: Tal padrone, tal servitore.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that when the master is good and treats well his servants, they will be good to him.

Croatian: Gdje nema ograde, tamo svatko ide.

English: Where the hedge is lowest men may soonest go over.

Italian: Dove la siepe è bassa, ognun vuol passare.

These three versions are equivalent and mean that everyone goes where the hedge is lowest, meaning that people will always choose the easy way to do something.

NAKED

Croatian: Nagi smo na ovaj svijet došli, nagi ćemo s njega i otići.

English: Naked as he was born.

Italian: Nudi siamo arrivati, nudi lascieremo.

The Croatian and Italian versions are equivalent and they say that we came to this world naked and we will leave it that way. This means that it does not matter how much we have in life, we all die in the end, and we cannot carry our treasure with us. The English version is specific because it refers to Christ and says "Naked as he was born".

PRAISE

Croatian: Tko se hvali, sam se kvari.

English: He that praises himself, spatters himself.

Italian: La lode propria puzza.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that one must not praise himself because in that manner he only spatters himself.

RICHNESS

Croatian: Bogat je, tko je zadovoljan.

English: The greatest wealth is contentment with little.

Italian: Chi si contenta gode.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that a happy man is the one who is contented with little things and does not want more than he can have.

Croatian: Bolje je dobro ime nego mnogo bogaatstvo.

English: Good name is better than riches.

Italian: È meglio aver buon nome, che molte vicchezze.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that a man is worth if he has a good name, meaning that he can keep his promises and be true to his words. It does not matter how much money he has if he cannot keep his word.

TODAY

Croatian: Danas jesmo, sutra nismo.

English: Here today and gone tomorrow.

Italian: Oggi in figura, domani in sepoltura.

These three versions are equivalent and they mean that anything can happen to us in any moment. The message is to live your life every day like it is the last day because it can be.

Croatian: Što se danas može učiniti ne ostavljaj za sutra.

English: Never put off till tomorrow what may be done today.

Italian: Quel che puoi far oggi, non rimandare a domain

These three versions are equivalent and mean that you should never put off something you can do today. If it can be done, it is better to do it because you never know what could happen tomorrow.

TREE

Croatian: Drvo se savija dok je mlado.

English: The tree must be bent, whilst is young.

Italian: Finche' la pianta è tenera bisogna drizzarla.

These three versions are equivalent and they say that the tree must be bent while it is young. This means that a man must be taught the difference between good and evil while he is young because later in life it is difficult to teach a man something if he does not believe it.

TRUTH

Croatian: Pravda će isplivati.

Englsih: Truth and oil are never above.

Italian: La verità può languire, ma non perire.

The Croatian and Italian versions are equivalent and they say that truth can hide but it eventually comes out. The English version says that truth and oil are never above, meaning that they are always hidden, which is contradictory because oil is always above water. This version is specific.

WORK

Croatian: Tko ne radi, neka i ne jede.

English: He that will not work, shall not eat.

Italian: Chi non lavora, non mangia.

These three versions are equivalent and they say that who does not work shall not eat either. The message of this proverb is that everyone should help and work, so that they deserve the food and goods.

Croatian: Tko okolo oltara radi, oltar ga i hrani.

English: He that serves at the altar ought to live by the altar.

Italian: Chi serve all'altare, vive d'altare.

These three versions are equivalent and they refer to the people who help in the church and the priests etc. They serve at the altar for the people and people give them money to live

Croatian: Bez muke nema nauke.

English: No pain, no gains.

Italian: Ogni agio porta seco il suo disagio.

These three versions are equivalent and their message is that without pain, there is no gain. We must try and work hard to achieve our goals.

8. Analysis

The contrastive analysis shows that a small number of proverbs have no semantic equivalent in other languages and that most of these proverbs are equivalent to Croatian. The results are following:

Croatian/English: 90% equivalent, 10% specific

Croatian/Italian: 92% equivalent, 8% specific

We can conclude that all three languages have high degree of equivalence in translations of the biblical proverbs. Italian translations have fewer specifics than English, which is probably due to geographical closeness and historical background. Tore Janson in his book *Speak: A Short History of Languages* (2002) argues that languages depend on history, but historical events also often depend on which language people speak. Thus, history is affected by languages, and languages are a part of history. The capacity to create new words

or to borrow words from other languages exists in all languages of the world, so in theory each language can have words for everything. But in practice the vocabularies of languages often differ greatly. The words and expressions in use in a language are those needed and adequate in the culture within which the language is spoken. Therefore, languages used in very diverse cultures have very diverse vocabularies (Janson 2002: 1-15).

Janson explains that languages keep changing all the time, but they are also influenced by each other. It all depends on the contacts between different groups of speakers and their respective shares of power and influence. The pace of language change is usually rather slow compared to the lifespan of an individual. English language belongs to the group of Germanic languages which includes also German, Swedish, Dutch and others, which all have a common origin in one language usually called Proto-Germanic. East and south of the Germanic languages, there are the Slavic languages, where the Croatian language belongs, among the Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and many others. Those languages are more alike than the Germanic ones, and it is believed that all Slavic languages stem from one Proto-Slavic language (Janson 2002: 30-33). The third large group consists of the Romance languages, mainly in southern and Western Europe, and the most important ones are Italian, French and Spanish. All of them have developed from Latin, which was spoken and written around two thousand years ago in the part of the Europe where the Romance languages are found today.

Around 700 or 600 BC, Latin was spoken only in Rome but it gradually expanded when Romans conquered and ruled over all Western Europe and the entire Mediterranean region, including Croatia. After a few centuries their empire vanished, but their language had become the native tongue of the inhabitants in most of the western part (Janson 2002: 34-35).

One more reason why the Latin had great influence on European languages was religion. In Rome, Christianity arrived early and after the conversion of Constantine, it became associated with the Roman state. The Church required participation and devotion on a scale quite different from any authority of the state. In addition, Latin became well established in the south-western Europe (Janson 2002: 94-95). But, in the 16th century King Henry VIII separated the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church and since that event, Latin has become a secondary language in the Great Britain. Nevertheless, as Latin was used so much and for so long all over Europe, it has affected all main European languages. The languages of Western Europe have much of their vocabulary in common. This vocabulary consists mainly of Latin words, and of Greek words that were first taken up in Latin and then transmitted to the modern European languages (Janson 2002: 105-106).

We can conclude that although Croatian, English and Italian belong to three different language groups, they all have origin in one common ancestor, Proto-Indo European. Because of that, their translation of proverbs share same ideas and values. In comparative analysis of Croatian and Italian translations there are fewer specifics, meaning that they are more related than Croatian and English. This could be due to geographical closeness and religious views, but also because Italy is closer in culture. Nevertheless, this research has shown that all three languages that use proverbs as a way of expressing have some similar and universal features that they share.

Now we will show some of the universal characteristics shared by all proverbs. They will be divided into 3 groups: grammatical markers, semantic features and phonic devices.

8.1. Grammatical markers

Firstly, all proverbs use the sentence as a linguistic frame. That sentence is usually declarative *The Earth produces all things and receives all again.*, but it can be also interrogative.

Secondly, all proverbs usually use the present tense. They express the general truths that can be applied to any time and any generation.

English: Every day brings its bread with it.

Croatian: Svaki dan svoju brigu nosi.

English: God sends good luck and God sends bad.

Croatian: Bog sreću dijeli.

Italian: Se Dio vuole, tutti ridono.

To illustrate the past traditions and create the environment in which the Bible was written, the translator can use archaic constructions. One cannot translate the Bible as if it happened two days ago, but it must create a feeling of eternal knowledge within the cultural frame.

English: He that has pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord.

English: Shame take him, that shame thinketh.

Furthermore, proverbs in most cases have the structure *He who* or generally they are in the 3.person singular. This way, it seems that they express something impersonal, but it can be applied to anyone. It is best to use a proverb when giving advice or wanting to warn a person for doing something wrong but not too directly.

English: He helps little that helps not himself.

Italian: Chi ha quattrini, ha amici.

Croatian: Tko ne radi, neka i ne jede.

English: He that will not work, shall not eat.

Italian: Chi non lavora, non mangia.

Croatian: Tko se hvali, sam se kvari.

English: He that praises himself, spatters himself.

Croatian: Tko okolo oltara radi, oltar ga i hrani.

English: He that serves at the altar ought to live by the altar.

Italian: Chi serve all'altare, vive d'altare.

In biblical proverbs, God is almighty and aware of everything. Most proverbs talk about his powers and how He rewards the one's that behave well and live by His rules. It is also a good way to teach Christians how to live their life in peace and to love one another like brothers.

Croatian: Čuvaj se, čovječe, i Bog će te čuvati.

English: God help them that helps themselves.

Italian: Chi s'aiuta, Iddio l'aiuta.

Croatian: Kad je nužda najveća, Bog najprije pomaže.

Italian: Quando è maggiore il bisogno, l'aiuto di Dio è più vicino.

Croatian: S božjom pomoći sve se može.

English: All things are possible with God.

Italian: Dio può tutto.

The most common form of proverbs is composed of two parts, sometimes opposite to each other, sometimes compared. The two parts are usually divided by a comma or some conjunction.

Croatian: Danas jesmo, sutra nismo.

English: Here today and gone tomorrow.

Italian: Oggi in figura, domani in sepoltura.

Croatian: Bog dao, Bog i uzeo.

Italian: Dio da e Dio toglie.

Croatian: Čovjek nalaže, a Bog raspolaže.

English: Man proposes, God disposes.

Italian: L'uomo propone e Dio dispone.

Croatian: Kakav gospodar, takav sluga.

English: Like master, like man.

Italian: Tal padrone, tal servitore.

Croatian: Bez muke nema nauke.

English: No pain, no gains.

Croatian: Oko za oko, zub za zub.

English: Tooth for tooth, eye for eye.

Italian: Occhio per occhio, dente per dente.

8.2. Semantic features

Semantic markers found in proverbs are usually metaphor, metonymy, personification, paradox etc. Another feature common for all proverbs is polysemy, since proverbs are abstract statements expressing general truths. Metaphor can be explained on the following examples:

Croatian: Čovjek je čovjeku vuk.

English: Man is a wolf to a man.

Italian: L'uomo è lupo all'uomo.

This is probably the most famous proverb, but it does not mean that the man is an actual wolf. It is a metaphor for the idea that a man is a stranger to another man.

Croatian: Oko za oko, zub za zub.

English: Tooth for tooth, eye for eye.

Italian: Occhio per occhio, dente per dente.

Also, this does not mean that you can take someone's eye or tooth, but something that you take from someone or do to somebody, later in life will be taken from you.

Many proverbs use personification to attribute human nature or character to animal or abstract notions. These are some of the examples:

Croatian: Tko okolo oltara radi, oltar ga i hrani.

English: He that serves at the altar ought to live by the altar.

Italian: Chi serve all'altare, vive d'altare.

Croatian: Svaki dan svoju brigu nosi.

English: Every day brings its bread with it.

Italian: Ad ogni giorno basta il suo male.

8.3. Phonic devices

Since proverbs must be memorable, they are usually short sentences and have these features: rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition and equal number of stresses.

The examples of rhyme are following:

Italian: Oggi in figura, domani in sepoltura.

English: When the need is highest, the help is nightest.

Italian: Quel che l'occhio vede, il cuor crede.

Croatian: Tko se hvali, sam se kvari.

Croatian: Bez muke nema nauke.

The examples of repetition are following:

English: Evil to him that evil thinks.

Croatian: Što čuješ, ne vjeruj; što vidiš to vjeruj.

English: He helps little that helps not himself.

9. Conclusion

Proverbs are complex units used from the beginnings of written and spoken languages to present day. For ages they have been used as a way of expressing thoughts, experiences, shared values, cultural beliefs and common ideas of a community, nation or people in general. Their form is usually the sentence, memorable and short, full of metaphors and other semantic features since most proverbs have figurative meaning. Rhyme, alliteration and phonic devices help to memorize and recognize them. Since all these features are common in proverbs in all languages that use them, we can conclude that these languages have similar cultural and historical background.

When it comes to translation, proverbs are probably the most difficult type to translate. Especially biblical proverbs, because a bad translation can transmit a wrong message and the whole point of translation can be ruined. This analysis has shown that Croatian, English and Italian translators of the biblical proverbs have done a good job and succeeded to find the true spirit of the Bible. By using some archaic forms they created the past environment but also they made proverbs as a fixed form which expresses general truth in all times, past, present and future. This is the aim of every translator. Every language has different cultural values and views on different situations but in the end they all developed from the same ancestor so they have to share same ideas and same basic features. The most credible evidence is not that

they all use proverbs, but that they share the same proverbs, messages and ideas in each

language.

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11. Summary

This paper deals with the comparative analysis of biblical proverbs and their translations on Croatian, English and Italian language. It is divided into two parts: the theoretical one, explaining the basic terms of phraseology, and practical one, which consists of methodology of the research and the analysis. In the first part the terms phraseology and phraseological units are explained as well as their classification. Proverbs are further analysed in a separate chapter, along with their most common characteristics and forms. This paper also points out the steps of translation of phraseological units and the problems that come along with it. The second part describes the method of this research. 50 proverbs taken from the Bible are listed and their equivalents in Croatian, English and Italian are analysed. The aim of this research is to show which language shares the most similar features and why. It also states the universal features found in all proverbs which prove that all languages that use them share the same ideas and culture.

Key words: proverbs, equivalent, the Bible, the Croatian language, the English language, the Italian language, comparative analysis

Sažetak

Ovaj rad se bavi komparativnom analizom biblijskih poslovica i njihovih ekvivalenata u hrvatskom, engleskom i talijanskom jeziku. Rad je podijeljen na dva dijela: teorijski, koji objašnjava osnovne pojmove frazeologije, i prakrični, koji se sastoji od metodologije istraživanja i analize. U prvom dijelu su objašnjeni pojmovi frazeologija i frazeološka jedinica

kao i njihova podjela. Poslovice su detaljnije obrađene u zasebnom poglavlju, kao i njihove karakteristike i oblici. Ovaj rad također ukazuje na korake u prevođenju frazeoloških jedinica i problem koji dolazu s tim. Drugi dio opisuje metodu ovog istraživanja. 50 poslovica je uzeto iz Biblije s njihovim ekvivalentima u hrvatskom, engleskom i talijanskom jeziku. Cilj ovog istraživanja je pokazati koji jezik ima najsličnije prijevode i zašto. Također, iznosi univerzalne karakteristike pronađene u svim poslovicama koje dokazuju da svi koji ih koriste dijele iste ideje i imaju sličnu kulturu.

Ključne riječi: poslovice, ekvivalent, Biblija, hrvatski, engleski, talijanski, komparativna analiza