

Emotions of love in Slovak and Romanian idioms

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The empirical core of this study is represented by an analysis of distinctive features of the language view of the world that is typical in Slovak language and partially modified mainly by cultural-historical encounter of Slovaks and their language in the Great Hungarian Plain, specifically in Romanian environment. The analysis leading to the comparison of language and idiomatic material is specific by accepting bilingualism of Slovaks living in Romania. In other words – the analyses are aimed at uncovering the common and the specific in expressing emotions, namely the emotions of love and hatred in Slovak and Romanian idioms. Idioms have maintained socio-historical circumstances, through which people denoted and assessed those aspects that were, based on their preferences, considered crucial or relevant under the given circumstances. The idiomatic richness of a national language is captured through the view mediated via language, in which perception of the outer world by the given ethnicity are reflected. It is a specific, but undoubted witness of traditional life; it is a reflection of historical facts and culture.

Keywords: idioms, emotions, Slovaks in Romania, Romanian language.



Interpretation and Comparison of Slovak and Romanian Proverbs, Idioms and Phraseologised Similes Expressing the Emotion of Love

“Feelings and their expressions are related to emotions or are considered as emotional if they meet two conditions: they are related to an expression of evaluation and in many cases, although not in all, are related to a way how we express certain social acts” (Dolník, 2010, p. 36). We can understand love due to a feeling of liking, we feel affection towards somebody. Body, as stated by Lakoff (2006, p. 370), is a vessel for emotions. How can we, however, identify and interpret these emotions in a form of phraseological units? The answer to this question can be found in cognitive theory of emotions and feelings, which starting thesis is that only upon cognitive interpretation of a certain experience an emotion or a feeling is created. The cognition ability includes cognitive assessment, which is crucial for the quality and differentiation of emotional or affective experiencing. We can identify

identity and interpretational emotion base in phraseology when we perceive the emotion in the foreground. We interpret a particular emotion through construct. The constructs are fixed through language expressions. Language, in this case, actively intervene in emotional experiencing. Specific perception/experiencing of particular emotions and an appropriate action is in the case of bilinguals realised through two languages (in our case it is Slovak and Romanian language). The examples of proverbs and phraseologised similes demonstrate figurative, i.e. metaphoric, rendition of emotions in two natural languages of a different type. We base this on associated metaphoric or phraseological phrases formulating the strongest human feeling – love.

Love between a Man and a Woman Seen as Romantic Love

Love between a man and a woman is considered to be biologically and ontologically oldest, and therefore as such

the most dominant. The love stands in the background of the preservation of human race, at the beginning of the birth of new life, hence also linguistic national community has devoted to the topic considerable space. Love leading to marriage has a gender context. It means that to the basic concept of love the subconcepts speaking of traditional role of a man and a woman are associated. Based on the anticipation of beauty, particularly in female, strenuousness of both partners, traditional work duties of a male and a female, expectation of offspring – sons and daughters, and their characteristics that are further associated or anticipated in their offspring. In the entire set of idioms and proverbs or similes tradition, history and social being of society is encoded.

Comparison of proverbs **expressing the intensity of love emotion:**

(a) In Slovak language, the intensity of love can be expressed through an impossible action:

Láska horyprenáša (*Love can move mountains.*) / in Romanian language we can use an equivalent proverb *Inbirea trece prin apă, nu-i frică că se-neacă* / literally: *Láska prejde cez vodu, nebojí sa, že sa utopí* (*Love can cross the water, it is not scared to drown*). Romanian proverb similarly expresses the intensity through impossible action, that being walking on the water surface.

Interpretative analysis reflecting the linguistic picture of the world:

Love is so strong that it can conquer all obstacles, even when they are really unconquerable; it is not scared of anything, withstands anything, endures anything, hence if the love is real, it cannot die. In the both languages, the intensity of love is expressed figuratively, the key realia for creation of the pictures and their intensity being *hora* (*mountain*) in Slovak language and *voda* (*water*) in Romanian language. Both key terms derive from the character of the nation, where the language society lives. Romania spreads along the coast; thereby love is associated with water, with vastness and stubbornness of sea. Slovakia is a country surrounded by high mountains, the valleys interlace with deep forests. Geomorphological relief of the land is folded, mostly mountainous. Mountains, for their vastness and impenetrability, as well as thanks to their height and impassability, epitomise a serious obstacle for a man, especially when overcoming distances. Love is hence associated with a mountain as some natural phenomenon and a man often feel helpless towards it. Above mentioned Romanian and Slovak proverbs reflect the environment and nature in linguistic pic-

ture of the intensity of love. The linguistic pictures have been constituted and subsequently preserved based on the association of the relationship between a man and an environment and de facto as perception of limited opportunities and strengths of a man compared to the force of nature.

Comparison of phraseologised similes expressing **man's admiration towards a woman and her beauty:**

(b) *Pozerá sa na ňu ako na obrázok.* (*He is looking at her like at a picture.*) / In Romanian language we could use an alternative simile: *A se uita la cineva ca la soare* / literally: *Pozerat' na niekoho ako na slnko.* (*Looking at someone like at a sun.*)

Interpretative analysis reflecting the linguistic picture of the world:

In the mentioned Slovak phraseologised simile we can clearly decode remarkable positive emotion, emotion of love, because *pozerat' sa na niekoho ako na obrázok* (*looking at someone like at a picture*) means looking at someone with admiration, love, respect; to be captivated by her beauty. The essence of this experience is identified with the third signifier stated in *Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka* [Short Dictionary of Slovak] (2003), where the meaning of the word *obraz* (*picture*) is described as: 1. Flat graphic portrayal of reality; 2. Reflection of reality in a mirror or possibly in water; 3. *Obrázok* (*small picture/ image*) – diminutive, pretty, holy image.

Both similes have identical tactile nature. Both are expressing an image of visual touching of some unusual beauty. The common feature here is the act of visual perception. The object a man is looking up to and is captivated by as a result of the acquired image as a visual perception is different in individual similes. While *obrázok* (*a picture*) is a thing, which can be touched and grasped, we can only look at the sun, we are not able to really touch it. The beauty of the seen is, however, in its effect and intensity the same, and so intensive that the glow emitting from it is blinding. *Obrázok* (*a picture*) in the Slovak phraseologised simile expresses the connection with faith and religion. The beauty of a holy image, as one of possible connotations mentioned in *Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka* [Short Dictionary of Slovak], and beauty of a woman are comparable. The emotions experienced when looking at a holy image and a beautiful loved woman are comparable. Romanian phraseologised simile about a sun also means astonishment connected with the feeling of being blinded by the intensity of emitted light. The similes in both languages express the fact that love/admiration towards a loved one is understood as very valuable

and the imagery is based on the perception of light, brightness, glow as something valuable and essential for life. The sun as an epicentre of our solar system and as a star, which is a necessary source of heat and light determining life on Earth; the phraseologised simile associates that we could not live without the person we love.

In relation with associated meanings of phraseologised similes, in Slovak language there are other associated proverbs, which participate in the formation of so-called association-semantic network (which was described and identified by Alefirenko in the so-called theory of living word):

(c) *mrie za ním / za ňou* (he/she is **dying** for him/her); *láska ho zaslepila* (love **has blinded** him); *on / ona je svetlo mojich očí* (he/she is **the light** of my eyes).

From the source of light and heat *rozhorí* (me-dzi nimi) **plameň** lásky (**the flame** of love will flare up (between them)); *spaľuje ju/ho láska* (love is **scorching** her/him); *zahorel k nej láskou* (He **blazed up** in love with her).

When we get back to the examples of proverbs (a) and (b), we can identify as a key logoepestemy the verb *pozerat'* (to look), which is common for proverbs in both compared languages. *Pozerat'* (to look) at something anticipates the ability *vidieť'* (to see), which in turn implies light as a condition of physiology of human vision. This implies that, based on the principle of synergeticity characterising cognitive exploration, it is relevant to reconstruct the etymology of the word *light*. Rejzek (2002, p. 617) next to the word *light* states that it is a pan-Slavic word, which comes from the **psl. světlb*. The word *svet* (world) has the same root – described as *to, čo je vidieť' / čo prišlo na svet* (the thing that is visible/the thing that came to the world). Similar semantic shift can be found in Romanian *lume – svet* (world) coming from Latin *lumen – svetlo* (light). Formally closely related is also the origin of the word *svätý* (holy), which originated from **psl. sventb*. Proto-Slavic *sventb* evolved from Indo-European **kaen-to*, from which originated the Latvian *svinē t*, with the meaning of *slávīt'* (to celebrate), old Italian *śuná-*, which means *úspech, št'astie* (success, luck); in Christianity modified to Latin equivalent *sanctus*. Králik in his *Stručný etymologický slovník slovenčiny* [Brief Etymological Dictionary of the Slovak Language] (2015, p. 568) mentions that the original meaning of Proto-Slavic **psl. sventb* was probably *oslavovaný, slávny* (celebrated, famous), which gave rise to the meaning *silný, mocný* (strong, powerful).

Etymological interpretation confirms that the bree-

ding ground for the formation of figurative nomination in the form of proverbs in Slovak and Romanian language is visual perception based on light. The source of light as true participant of similes is influenced by the environment, in which the language society lives immemorial, and cultural-religious background.

Comparison of proverbs expressing **the love of home and the love of country**

The Slovaks, especially when coming home from abroad, use to say:

(d) *Všade dobre, (ale) doma najlepšie*. (There is no place like **home**.) / In Romanian we can find semantically equivalent proverb *O fi pâinea cât de rea, tot mai bine e în țara mea* / literally: *Môže byť chlieb akokoľvek zlý, ale preda najlepšie je v mojej vlasti*. (**Bread** can be bad in any way, but there is no place like my **homeland**.)

Interpretative analysis reflecting the linguistic picture of the world:

The above-mentioned proverb evokes love of home, love of homeland, reawaken the memories from childhood, when a man is carefree, because as a child he is under the protection of his parents. *Malý synonymický slovník* [Concise Dictionary of Synonyms] (1988) the word *dom* (house) identifies as follow: *a building, result of construction activities assigned to living, storage etc.; a building, site, home (rarely), building activity: a building, construction is nearing completion; household domestic environment, private life and everything related to it: a house, family, privacy*. *Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka* [Short Dictionary of Slovak] (2003) states: *1. A building assigned to living: family, tenant, cooperative; 2. An institution organising cultural events or providing various services: community centre (literally in Slovak: cultural house); 3. Home; 4. Family, household: to have peace in the house, to be a man of the house etc.*

The proverb through its formal rendition brings gradation from neutral *dobre* (good) to its utmost degree of goodness expressed by superlative *najlepšie* (the best). Home is associated as a symbol of family, source of love and affection, feeling of fellowship. Gradation is, from the point of the meaning of the proverb, essential, because home is in ontology of the subject the primary space or a concept that a child gets to know. It means that it is not only familiar with it, but also trusts it wholeheartedly. Associated home territory is in the hierarchy of values at the highest place. The Romanian proverb consists of the key lexemes *chlieb* (bread) and *vlast'* (homeland). Bread, as the most basic human food, is related to the environment, in which a man lives and works. These

connotations are very old, their history can be traced to the historical period when mankind left a nomadic way of life and started to subsist through agriculture, especially crop growing. From the cultural point of view, bread is understood as a sacrifice and a symbol of God, which is related to the emergence and spread of Christianity. Bitterness and undesirable taste paradoxically assigned to the source of livelihood is here the tool of hyperbole, preference of home to foreign world. Associated are the phrases: *sladkosť domova* (*sweet taste of home*); proverb *lepšia suchákôrka doma než plná misa v cudzine* (*dry crust at home is better than full bowl abroad*).

(e) Another possible equivalent proverb to Slovak one *Všade dobre, doma najlepšie* (*There is no place like home*), is the Romanian: *Pretutindeni e bine, dar acasă e mai bine / Nicăieri nu-i ca acasă* / literally: *Všade dobre, doma ešte lepšie / Nikde nie je ako doma*. (*There is no place like home / There is nowhere like at home*.)

The example can be viewed as variant forms of the same meaning.

Positive emotions connected with home are related to the concept of a nest and its primary function in human life.

Interpretative analysis reflecting the linguistic picture of the world:

In Romanian language love is generally verbalised through soul: *mat' niekoho rád* (*to like someone*) in Romanian is analogically expressed using the concept of a soul, literally: *niekoho máme na duši / pri duši* (*Having someone in our soul/close to our soul*). Although in both languages for the construction of syntactic structure with relevant meaning the verb expressing ownership and possession is used, the key word is different. The key lexeme in Slovak language is *love* (*láska*), in Romanian language it is metonymic use of the lexemes *soul* (*duša*) and *heart* (*srdce*). On the contrary, if we looked at Slovak proverbs, which connect possessive verb and key lexemes *duša* (*soul*) and *srdce* (*heart*) we would find considerable semantic difference. The proverbs *mat' niečo na duši / na srdci* (*to have something on one's soul/on one's heart*), or in other words *niečo mi leží na srdci* (*I have something on my heart*) means that there is something that is bothering me and I have to confide in someone, because I need help/ support/ solidarity.

Conclusions

Interpretation of the stereotypes in communication patterns of the members of different national and lingu-

istic societies points to the fact that the question of bilingualism or the question of mastering a foreign language is not only the question of mastering the language code and lexical richness, but is also the question of deeper understanding of the culture, religious traditions, historical context and other socio-political fates of the whole national community.

Interpretative analysis of peremiological units, which are semantically indicated to express emotions of love to identification of the lexemes, which prove the specificity of figure of speech construction. The preferences of a man based on physical being and experience, or the things he considers essential, project into the linguistic picture of the world reconstructed from the mentioned proverbs. In the linguistic paremiological expression of the intensity as the endlessness of love, in Slovak language it is *hora* (*a mountain*) while in Romanian language it is *more* (*sea*). Analysed proverbs semantically orientated to express admiration or astonishment have in both cases the same concept of brightness, light, however they differ in the source of light. While in Slovak language in the proverbs talking about love between a man and a woman we identify a holy image, or holiness, as an episteme, i.e. religious or cultural concept, in Romanian proverbs the source of light is the sun as a natural source. Modification of love as a value of home is verbalised based on the perception of security and taste, thus being in both languages.

In the case of phraseologised simile expressing admiration along the line of love between a man and a woman, we identified the verb *pozerat'* (*to look*) as the episteme uncovering the simile archetype. The act of seeing depends on light and the etymological analysis of the words *svetlo* (*light*), *slnko* (*sun*) and *svätý* (*holy*) points to the etymological relatedness of the mentioned lexemes, what leads to a conclusion that perception of light is a base for the creation of other proverbs and indirect designations that are created based on the associations: *byť zaslepený / oslepený láskou* (*to be blinded/ blinded by love*), *žiarit' od lásky / šťastia, vyžarovať lásku/ nebu* (*to glow with love / happiness, to radiate love / affection*) etc.

We have proven both our hypotheses in the study. The discursive-narrative analysis and the interpretative analysis have proven that the figures of speech, such as proverbs and phraseologised similes, imply the lexemes, which are semantically related to the environment and geomorphological nature of the country, in which the language community lives. This is visible from the preference of the word *hora* (*a mountain*) by Slovak people

