

ALGUMAS NOTAS PAREMIOLÓGICAS SOBRE PROVÉRBIOS EM TRÊS JORNALIS FINLANDESES (NEWSPAPER GROUP-2)

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Resumo

Esta apresentação será uma continuação do *Newspaper Project* apresentado no ICP-2012 (os artigos foram publicados em 2013). O *Newspaper Project-2* concentra-se em jornais da Estónia (Piret Voolaid), da Eslovénia (Saša Babič) e da Finlândia (Liisa Granbom-Herranen) do ponto de vista paremiológico. Os jornais são exactamente os mesmos que em 2012, mas desta vez, os jornais foram acompanhados durante um período de um mês, Maio de 2013. O objectivo deste artigo é descrever a parte finlandesa do projecto. Os jornais acompanhados vão desde a distribuição local (*Perniönseudun Lehti*), regional (*Salon Seudun Sanomat*) até ao jornal de maior circulação na Finlândia (*Helsingin Sanomat*). O foco é sobre provérbios finlandeses como parte da linguagem escrita coloquial contemporânea no uso quotidiano e contexto. Este artigo apresenta algumas comparações com os resultados do projecto anterior, bem como algumas observações sobre possíveis paralelos e diferenças entre os jornais locais, regionais e nacionais.

Palavras-chave: provérbio, referência a provérbio, citação da Bíblia, citações, *slogan*, jornal.



SOME PAREMIOLOGICAL NOTES OF PROVERBS IN THREE FINNISH NEWSPAPERS (NEWSPAPER GROUP-2)

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Abstract

The article is a continuation of the Newspaper project presented in ICP-2012 (the articles were published in 2013). This study has been a part of a comparative study in Estonia, Finland and Slovenia for the years 2012–2014, the Newspaper project -2 focuses on Estonian (Piret Voolaid), Slovenian (Saša Babič) and Finnish (Liisa Granbom-Herranen) newspapers from paremiologic point of view. Many of the newspapers are the same as in 2012¹ but this time the newspapers were followed up during one month period, May 2013. The aim of the whole three years' project has been to look if and how proverbs as well as proverbial expressions are represented in newspapers.

The aim of this paper is to make a glance at the Finnish part of the project and so the article handles with proverbs and proverbial expresses used in three Finnish newspapers. Newspapers represent local distribution (*Perniönseudun Lehti*), regional level (*Salon Seudun Sanomat*) and the newspaper with largest circulation in Finland (*Helsingin Sanomat*). The local newspaper issues once a week while the two others are targeted at common people for everyday reading. The focus is on Finnish proverbs as a part of contemporary colloquial

written language in everyday use and context. This paper presents one of the specialities combined with proverbs and in Finnish newspapers: proverbs in the titles of TV-programmes.

Key-words: proverb, reference to proverb, Bible quotation, newspaper, TV, vernacular

Introduction

The aim of this part of the newspaper project is to have a glance at the Finnish proverbs as a part of contemporary colloquial written language in everyday use and context. This article concentrates on one of the specialities in the use of proverbs. The readers could meet proverbs and references to them most often in the titles of TV-programs.

As the article considering the whole project is supposed to be published during the year 2015 in a folkloristic journal I mainly focus on the Finnish specific part. For one month (May, 2013) Finnish newspapers *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Salon Seudun Sanomat* and *Perniönseudun Lehti*² were under observation in how prolific is the use of proverbial material in all kinds of newspaper texts. The starting point is on folkloristic paremiology as well as on proverbs in the Finnish language. Modern proverbs³ are a part of urban life, although most of the traditional Finnish proverbs use still agrarian language, although nowadays they are often used in a new context with a new meaning. New proverbs are created by using old proverbs, and old proverbs are transformed. Sometimes they are made to be parodies of the old tradition (Granbom-Herranen 2014a: 555–556; 2014b: 108). The problem of interactions of traditional proverbs, their modifications and from accidental transitive and phrases based on or derived from traditional proverbs. This is one of the points where the cultural knowledge is needed. It means that when we look for proverbs in speech and texts like speech, we have to look at all proverbial expressions (Granbom-Herranen 2014a: 556). We ended to what we call “paradox” of contemporary proverbs, including new (modern) and old (traditional) proverbs. We assume that the new ones are the most paradox-bounded because we cannot find them as we do not know what we are looking for and if we just look for some proverbs we know we are not to find anything new. So as all proverbs work on the same way, we do not divide them by their germination.⁴ (Granbom-Herranen *et al* 2015.)

As in the previous studies (Babič 2013, Granbom-Herranen 2013, Lauhakangas 2013 and Voolaid 2013) it has already been noticed the combination of proverbs and newspapers is not a new one to be studied. The question about proverbs and proverbial expressions in newspapers has been topical quite a long time and the use and occurrence of proverbs in media texts has been previously analysed from various aspects (see e. g. Lüthi 1970; Mieder

1971, 2008; Boškovič-Stulli 1980; Pilz 1989; Chlosta *et al* 1993; Carson Williams 2009). What comes to these three countries in project, before the pre-study focusing on newspapers for one week, it is mainly Estonian media texts which have been analysed from the paremiologic point of view (Järv 1999; Krikmann 2005). Even if the material in the first pre-studies (Babič 2013, Granbom-Herranen 2013, Lauhakangas 2013, Voolaid 2013) consisted of just one week newspapers, it could be observed that in many cases the distribution between sections that were possible to find in all these studies had no revolutionary differences. However, the studies consider various newspapers from different era and cultures; so, comparisons between sections in newspapers is not relevant (Granbom-Herranen 2013: 321). (Granbom-Herranen *et al* 2015.)

Finnish newspapers

Helsingin Sanomat is the largest subscription newspaper in Finland. It was founded in 1899 when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia and the newspaper was first published in Finnish the name *Päivälehti* [Daily Paper] (1889–1904). Nowadays it is published daily except after certain holidays as 1st of May. In 2013 the circulation was about 355,000 which makes about 850,000 readers ⁵ (the population of Finland was at the end of year 2013 was about 5,5 million ⁶). In May 2013 *Helsingin Sanomat* daily had 60–132 pages. The monthly supplement in May 2013 included 88 pages. The total number of pages in was 2752.

Salon Seudun Sanomat [Newspaper of Salo District] is a regional newspaper. Except after certain holidays, as 1st May, it is published daily. The newspaper has been established in 1919 and it has always been published in Finnish. Year 2009 the daily circulation (seven days a week) of the newspaper was about 20,000 that make about 50,000 readers (Granbom-Herranen 2013). The size of the newspaper *Salon Seudun Sanomat* during May 2013 was 16–28 pages as the total number of pages was 562. The newspaper is divided to sections each of them including everyday 1 to 10 pages. Most of the readers live in Salo and its surroundings; Salo is a coastal town of about 54,500 inhabitants in the prosperous south-west of Finland.

Perniönseudun Lehti is a local newspaper focusing on southern Salo districts. The newspaper has been published beginning from 1903 up to 1944 the name was *Perniön Kuulutuksia*. At present it issues once a week, on Thursdays. The circulation in 2013 was 4428 that means about 16,000 readers. ⁷

Proverbs in the newspaper are approached from the reader's point of view. This study uses mixed methods even the weight is in the qualitative research. The central research method is content analysis which is understood as a cluster of methods connected with conclusions based on theoretical analyses. The content analysis is commonly used with existing text material as texts in newspapers and it differs from discourse analysis that also concentrates on the communication in written form but the contact between the sender and receiver of a message is in importance (Granbom-Herranen 2010; 2014a).

As proverbs very often are combined with the history of a nation, Finnish proverbs are combined with the Finnish origin, which has been considered as a value by itself. The connection between Finnish language and social capital roots back to the history. That is seen also when looked at the proverbs in the context of television.

Material

Newspaper material was collected during one month, from 1st of May to 31st of May 2013. By the term *newspaper* I mean concretely that what a person gets in one month while the paper version of the newspaper is pre-ordered. As in the case study, I have concentrated on the paper versions of newspapers. One thing is that Internet version is living all the time and it is not fully in free access. The paper version is available also in libraries and so it is possible to read it without any cost all over the Finland. The paper version is written and published for common people. In many cases what comes to the language and use of proverbs, the paper version is more edited. Also the paper versions turn out to include wider number and quality of categories. The form of the newspaper is much easier to handle with than in the case of reading the text on computer, tablet or mobile phone.

Finnish newspapers included 2752 (HS), 562 (SSS) and 64 (PsL) pages. There is variation in how often they appear and to how wide circulation is. A summation of the newspapers is presented in following paragraphs.

Table 1. In May 2013 the Finnish newspapers of this study included

	HS	SSS	PsL
Issues	31	31	5
Pages	2752	562	64
Proverbial expressions	560	375	8
Proverbial expressions / page	0,2	0,7	0,1
Pages / proverbial expression	4,9	1,5	8,0

Both the number of pages and the number of proverbs varied a lot as is seen in the Table 1. My starting point is that an utterance is expected to follow Paul Grice's (1975) 'cooperative principles'. When making a pause in the discourse the use of the proverb as a violating element brings in some new aspects. (Granbom-Herranen 2011a, 48–50.) I collected various kinds of proverbial expression, including traditional and modern proverbs and references to them, Bible quotations and references to them, slogans, aphorisms, proverbial citations, riddles and references to folklore items. Of that material I left out all but proverbs and Bible quotations and references to them.

Main and most commonly exposed characteristic of proverb is that it is a short, independent statement in a relatively stable form (person, gender, number, time do not change) of whole compound or simple sentence, which is or has been familiar within a frame and place. As we see it, proverbs are indispensable part of language, expressiveness, communication, culture, which live and change with the use. That is why it is impossible to give one final lasting formula or definition what such a lively and living language structure is (Babič 2015). This is confirmed also in both František Čermák (2005) and Risto Järv (1999) findings: it is obvious that users of proverbs cannot always identify proverbs or make difference between proverbs and other proverbial expressions (otherwise than Mieder 1993: 36; Arora 1994: 4). (Granbom-Herranen *et al* 2015.)

Paremiologic findings in Finnish newspapers

The Table 2 offers a general overview on Finnish newspapers and the frequencies of proverbial expressions (traditional and modern proverbs and references to them, Bible quotations and references to them, slogans, aphorisms, proverbial citations).

Table 2. short form genres in per cents the complete newspaper and TV-programmes

	HS	HS/TV	SSS	SSS/TV	PsL	PsL/TV
Traditional proverb	28,9	45,0	29,1	47,6	25,0	0
Reference to traditional proverb	33,6	44,1	32,8	38,7	37,5	0
Modern proverb	17,7	6,7	17,9	5,2	12,5	0
Reference to modern proverb	6,6	0,8	3,2	1,1	12,5	0
Bible quotation	4,6	0,8	11,5	5,7	12,5	0
Others	8,6	2,5	5,5	3,6	0,0	0

The definition of the concepts traditional proverb and modern proverb are challenging. The easiest is reference to traditional proverb because once the basic concepts are defined the

references are to be found. This might be one of the reasons why traditional proverbs and Bible quotations as well as references to them are quite easily observed in texts. With the ones I call modern proverbs it is not as obvious.

The number of proverbial units in Finnish newspapers was 943. Of them 412 was in the title of TV-program.

Proverbial expressions in titles of tv-programmes

Proverbs are a part of vernacular that people are familiar with. It might be assumed that as an instrument of communication both newspapers and televisions are mostly in daily use. Proverb is also an indisputable way to express ideas for readers of newspaper and TV watchers. The power of proverb lays on its briskness as well as on possibility to use it in many meanings.

Of the Finnish newspapers HS, SSS and PsL were TV programs included in the two firstly named newspapers. In HS and SSS are TV programs (the most common channels) and radio programs (in HS the most common channels and in SSS one national YLE1 and one regional YLE3) published daily. About half of all the proverbial expressions in above named three Finnish newspapers were involved with TV and radio programs (only 10 of them appeared with names of radio programs). This follows what came out in the pre-research 2012 (Granbom-Herranen 2013); in all the sections of *Salon Seudun Sanomat* a proverb could most often be found in television and radio programs. All this gives the idea that there might be something that Finnish proverbial expressions in TV programs are something more than just unique phenomenon combined with some special newspaper. So I decided that the motivation of text that is called "TV & radio" is worth of deeper insight. When looking at "TV & radio" in Finnish newspapers, I noticed that the radio programs included only a couple of proverbial expressions (only 4 proverbial expressions, totally 10 times) so I left the radio out. As mentioned above, like in Finnish part of the previous one week project also during this one month period this "motivation of text" TV & radio included most of the proverbial expressions. In both HS and SSS, the headlines and sub-headlines were the most common places for proverbs; it might be connected with the need for impressiveness (Granbom-Herranen 2013). All together there were 412 proverbs and references to proverbs (in short form genres called traditional proverbs, modern proverbs, references to both kind of proverbs and Bible quotations with references to them) connected with TV in newspapers as the total sum of proverbial expressions were 958. Most often proverbs (or proverbial expressions) in

TV programs were mentioned or referred to two to four times while both HS and SSS has besides the daily program pages the weekly published a collage of TV programs being presented during a week.

As from the viewpoint of a newspaper reader, if a person read all the newspapers of May 2013⁸ one met proverbs and proverbial expressions in TV programs more than 400 times. This means that in average in every day one was put in front of the proverbs more than 10 times only in the titles of TV-programs and anyhow once again if watching TV.

The most often occurred proverbs are taken from the ground forms of proverbial expressions. The ground form means the form of the proverb that a modification or variation is combined and to which the reference of a proverb is combined with.⁹ The TOP 4 for proverbs consists of only four proverbs which represents more than half of all the proverbs in the titles of TV-programmes:

* *Suku on pahin* [Family is the worst]; the proverb is the ground form for to *Perhe on pahin* [Family is the worst]. This occurred or was referred to 128 times (128 as total in newspapers) *Perhe on pahin* is a TV program with original title 'All in the Family' (for example HS 1. 5. 2013, p C22).

* *Vanha suola janottaa* [Old salt makes one thirsty]; is a well-known proverb. It occurred 92 times as the name of TV program (93 as total in newspapers). *Vanha suola janottaa* is a TV program with original title 'As Time Goes By' (for example SSS 21. 5. 2013, p 20).

* *Ajattelen, siis olen* [I think, so I am]. It was referred to 9 times as *Piirrän, siis olen* (10 as total in newspapers). / *Muistan, ajattelen, piirrän. Olen*. It is a translation to the Latin proverbs '*Cogito ergo sum*' (for example HS 23. 5. 2013, p C22).

* *Älä nuolaise ennen kuin tipahtaa* [Do not lick before dropping]. It was referred 7 times in shortened form *Älä nuolase* [Don't lick] as a name of a TV programme (for example HS 24. 5. 2013, p D4). (9 as total in all the newspapers where it was once used as such and once referred in text when talked about the dog ... *ja alkaa seurata niitä kuono lattiaassa. Kielikin suusta tipahtaa, vaan...*(HS 20. 5. 2013, p A16). As an equivalent to this proverb is 'Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.'

Conclusions

When summing up and implication proverbs are used as rhetoric tools and this is why the reader meets them often when reading daily newspaper. In Finnish newspapers proverbs were most often in headlines as they occurred most often as titles of TV programs. The proverbial expressions in the names of the TV-programs might be bound with the phenomenon TV. "Finnish television" is actually a much wider phenomenon than only a technical innovation. With TV there exists always a demand of the programs' ratings. The use of proverbs might be

combined with the expectation that all readers are aware of the ground meaning and this way the proverbs can be used in the texts meant to be published in all the country.

The definition of the concepts traditional proverb and modern proverb are challenging. Easiest is to point out references to traditional proverb because once the basic concepts are defined the references are quite easy to recognize. The biggest category of the proverbial utterances, four of five, consists of traditional proverbs or references to them. It seems that a good name of a program is short and at the same time telling something but not too much about the program itself. About one of ten proverbial expressions was bound with modern proverbs. It is to assume that they have not yet got the position as common knowledge. Bible quotations in this context might be seen as a Finnish phenomenon. The Bible quotations can be seen as traditional utterances are often understood as proverbs in Finnish tradition. Even if in the titles of TV-programs there were not many of them, there were about 5 per cents of proverbs in *Salon Seudun Sanomat* and only 1 percent in *Helsingin Sanomat*.

Of proverbs used in the TV-programmes all together four of five proverbial expressions in a Finnish newspaper are connected with our past. As the constellation of proverbs is quite permanent and only one third of proverbs are supposed to change in about one hundred years (Kuusi 1994: 117–118) this means that in a Finnish newspaper in 21st century the contemporary TV-programmes use expressions connected quite far in the past.

Endnotes

1. In 2012 Outi Lauhakangas (2013) focused on *Helsingin Sanomat*.
2. In future text *Helsingin Sanomat* is HS, *Salon Seudun Sanomat* SSS and *Perniönseudun Lehti* PsL.
3. Modern proverbs have many names in paremiological etic-language (Granbom-Herranen 2011b, 286).
4. Compare to Mieder 2014: 17.
5. http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helsingin_Sanomat October 10, 2014
6. <http://vrk.fi/default.aspx?site=4> October 11, 2014.
7. Emails sent by the editor of *Perniönseudun Lehti* 3. 9. 2014.
8. Most of the Finnish traditional proverb types before 1950's are included in three published collections: Nirvi & Hakulinen (1948), Kuusi (1953) and Laukkanen & Hakamies (1978). The concept of proverb in Finland has primarily been advanced to coincide with the types and structures presented in the aforementioned publications (Granbom-Herranen 2014a, 545).
9. In Finland it is not unusual to follow the national newspaper as well as the regional and local one.

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