

VERBS OF SPEAKING IN SERBIAN AND ENGLISH PROVERBS*

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Abstract. *The aim of this paper is to perform a corpus analysis of verbs of speaking in 63 English and 60 Serbian proverbs in order to reveal the effect of their linguistic properties in signalling different metaphorical meanings of proverbs in the cognitive theoretical framework. The results reveal that prototypical verbs of speaking appear in approximately half of the sample of proverbs while the semantic markedness of verbs is achieved mostly lexically, although expectedly more so in the English language. The two languages also differ in the synonymy of these expressions and their metaphorical mapping. We propose three types of proverbs depending on the degree of abstraction of the speech act, in accordance with the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC scheme, which we consider vital for the interpretation of proverbs.*

Key words: *verbs of speaking, proverbs, prototypes, markedness*

1. INTRODUCTION

Spoken communication is often grammaticalized in terms of verbs of speaking, i.e. verbs which carry a semantic component of message transfer which usually includes a semantic frame consisting of the speaker, the addressee, the topic, the benefactor, the information, and sometimes the instrument (Mihaljević 2011, 63). In their performative role in speech acts, their illocutionary force can either be expressed explicitly, by stating the performative communication verb (e.g. *declare, promise*, etc.), or implicitly, by omitting it, while in speech reporting and quotation, communication verbs are used in order to transfer the message by a third party. These two areas of application of verbs of speech form the basis of linguistic research.

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If contrastive research were to be concerned not only with said uses of verbs of speaking but also with examples of their metaphorical use, a sample of proverbial expressions would be suitable for such a task. It would allow for a variety of lexical, syntactic and morphological choices made by the speaker/reporter in the communicative act to be assessed as well. As proverbs are a particular conceptual phenomenon defined within the Cognitive Theory (e.g. Lakoff and Turner 1989), performing the function of instructing, warning, advising, or otherwise imparting a culture-specific set of values, we have chosen a sample of communication verbs in Serbian and English for this study.

The purpose of this study is to explore additional properties of verbs of speaking, namely their metaphorical usage, the differences between semantically marked and unmarked verbs and synonymy, in order to determine that the *GENERIC IS SPECIFIC* metaphor, along with other cognitive mechanisms, allows the interpreter to connect the source-domain elements with their abstract counterparts in the target domain when the verbs of speaking are concerned. Bearing this in mind, the present study is based on a sample consisting of 63 English and 60 Serbian proverbs which contain verbs of speaking, whose semantic and grammatical properties will be analyzed within the cognitive theoretical framework. In order to obtain the results relevant to our present goal, we relied on two separate analyses in order to confirm two separate hypotheses:

1. An analysis of morphological and lexical markedness to confirm that there are specific-level instances which fill in the generic-level schema despite the difference in language.
2. An analysis of synonyms to confirm that the *GENERIC IS SPECIFIC* metaphor enables the same interpretation of formally or lexically different proverbs in cases where they have the same performative role.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Proverbs are folk expressions which are, as Mieder (2004) explains, quite adaptable to the passage of time and very popular today. They “summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs” (Mieder 2004, 1) and reveal culturally determined “well-known truths, social norms, or moral concerns” (Gibbs and Beitel 1995, as cited in Brown and Wright-Harp 2011, 26). However, as Honeck (1997) adds, proverbs should not be viewed as strictly culturally determined expressions, but with a universal human cognitive process behind the ability to produce and comprehend them. As a rich source of cultural information and an excellent example of underlying cognitive mechanisms, they are also discussed in Lakoff and Turner (1989), who address this notion in terms of the *GENERIC IS SPECIFIC* metaphor, where image-schemas employ either generic-level or specific-level metaphors.

According to Bradbury (2002, 267), for a metaphorical proverb to be correctly interpreted by the recipient, the source domain schema contained in the proverb must be mapped onto a target domain of an abstract nature, which may be specified by the context or not. Depending on the amount of detail they provide, the image-schemas in question can be generic-level or specific-level metaphors. Kövecses (2002, 38) adds that the first type contains “structures with very little detail filled in”, and supplies the example of the motion schema, which could have only the initial location, movement along a path, and final location. However, it can be filled in with more details in many ways, by the

addition of a traveller, a point of departure, a means of travel, etc., creating “specific-level instances of the generic motion schema” (Kövecses 2002, 38). Lakoff (1993, 234) offers a number of ways of filling in the generic-level schema, by listing the following significant elements they can possess:

- a) Causal structure
- b) Temporal structure
- c) Event shape; that is, instantaneous or repeated, completed or open-ended, single or repeating, having fixed stages or not, preserving the existence of entities or not, and so on
- d) Purpose structure
- e) Modal structure
- f) Linear Scales

This type of relationship between the two levels forms the **GENERIC IS SPECIFIC** metaphor, which enables us to interpret the meaning of an entire category of situations despite the variety of ways in which they can be made more specific, by imagining one specific situation (Klikovac 2004, 24–25). This is achieved by three additional cognitive tools. Firstly, there is the Great Chain metaphor which, as Lakoff and Turner (1989, 166) explain, puts entities on a hierarchical scale, with higher beings and properties, and lower beings and properties, where the higher entity “possesses all the salient characteristics of those below it, plus some higher order properties that justify its superior spot on the chain” (Bradbury 2002, 268). At the top of the scale are humans, who possess the properties of the highest order, and following down the scale are animals, plants, complex objects and natural physical objects (Klikovac 2004, 26).

The second tool is the practical knowledge about ‘the nature of things’, which Lakoff and Turner (1989, 170) define as the “relationship between what things are like and how they behave”, while the third and final cognitive tool is the adapted version of Grice’s (1989) “Maxim of Quantity” (“Be as informative as is required and not more so”), which states that when an entity on the scale is referred to, we logically assume that what is referred to is its highest-order properties that characterize it and determine its hierarchical position on the Chain (Bradbury 2002, 268). These four conceptual tools, the **GENERIC IS SPECIFIC** metaphor, the Great Chain of Being, the practical knowledge of the world and verbal economy, allow the interpreter to connect the source-domain elements (specified by the proverb and familiar to the interpreter) with their counterparts in the more abstract target domain, enabling him to understand the meaning of the proverb regardless of the particularities of a communicative situation (Lakoff and Turner 1989, 170).

While these cognitive mechanisms help understand the meaning of proverbs as a whole, in this paper we are also interested in the conceptual nature of verbs of speaking, and their effect in the cognitive mapping of experiential and abstract domains. As an example of the metaphorical nature of verbs, Klikovac (2004, 20) mentions Johnson’s (1987) account of the image-schematic structure of **BALANCE**, which is based on the elements of force vectors and a point, line or plane in space in relation to which the vectors are symmetrically arranged.

Verbs of speaking are said to denote either the ability to form words and utter them or the transfer of words between persons (Pranjković 2007, 133). For Štrbac (2007), their communicative component can either be part of their primary meaning (e.g. verbs such as *tell*, *speak*, *talk*), or part of their secondary meaning (e.g. *add*, *point out*, *consider*), whereas lexically they can be classified as either (1) single lexical units, (2) expressively marked phrasemes or (3) idiomatized paraphrases and decomposed predicates (Štrbac 2010, 77–78).

Because of their potential for conveying semantic information through different linguistic levels, verbs of speaking have been explored with regard to their semantic, syntactic and morphological features. These include the phraseological type of verbs of speaking (Štrbac 2009), speaking verbs occurring in journalistic articles (Štrbac 2007), verbs of speaking in the form of decomposed predicates and their semantic and combinatory properties (Štrbac 2010) and constraints in the prefixation of verbs of speaking in Serbian (Ivić 2006). More recently, Biljetina (2016) performed a contrastive analysis of Serbian and English verbs of speaking based on classification of such verbs into semantic fields in Štrbac (2011).

Regarding English verbs of speaking, Levin (1993, 1) speaks of the connection between verb behavior and “linguistically relevant pertinent aspects of verb meaning”. According to Levin (1993, 202–212), they can be systematized into the following:

- a) verbs of transfer of a message
- b) verb *tell*
- c) verbs of manner of speaking
- d) verbs of instrument of communication
- e) talk verbs
- f) chitchat verbs
- g) say verbs
- h) complain verbs
- i) advise verbs

However, as none of the papers we have discussed above used the cognitive model in order to approach the semantics of verbs of speaking, and primarily since some of them focused mainly on their syntactic and morphological properties, we should mention Klikovac’s (2004) note that behind the use of verbs of speaking there is a series of conceptual metaphors such as THOUGHT IS AN OBJECT, MENTAL SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE, ONE PERSON’S MENTAL SPACE IS HIDDEN FROM THE VIEW OF OTHER PEOPLE, AND SPEAKING IS EXTRACTING THOUGHTS, IDEAS ETC. FROM A PERSON’S MENTAL SPACE (Klikovac 2004, 143). This assessment clearly relates the verbs of speaking to the CONTAINER schema and other cognitive notions, including the notion of mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1994; Fauconnier and Turner, 2002) and the centrality and markedness of concepts (Lakoff 1987, 60–61), leading us to use one verb of speech as more basic or central than the others in a given context.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample of Serbian proverbs was manually extracted from *Srpske narodne poslovice i druge različne kao one u običaj uzete riječi* (Stefanović–Karadžić 1969) (VK), *Srpsko-engleski rečnik idioma, izraza i izreka* (Kovačević 1992) (K1) and *Srpsko-engleski rečnik idioma* (Milosavljević and Williams-Milosavljević 1995) (MWM), while the resources of our English proverbs were the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (1982)(ODP), *The Penguin Dictionary of Proverbs* (1983) (PDP), *Englesko-srpski frazeološki rečnik* (Kovačević 1997a/b) (K2) and *Englesko-srpski frazeološki rečnik* (Williams-Milosavljević and Milosavljević 1996) (WMM). The reason for this choice of sources was to find a set of proverbs which appear in all of the dictionaries so as to establish a sample with consistency in translation. However, as a large number of

proverbs denoting acts of speech exist in both languages and encompass a variety of lexical and syntactic categories, including those in which we are not primarily interested. For this study, the selection was narrowed by excluding the following categories:

a) Expressions containing archaic and out-of-use verbs of speaking (e.g. *Money answereth all things; Ljudi kad buče, žene nek muče*)

b) Decomposed predicates not containing verbs of speech, but verbs such as *give, take, make*, followed by a noun denoting the act of speaking (e.g. *We may give advice, but we may not give conduct*)

We also included additional semantic equivalents in the form of proverbs in the sample, while the proverbs' equivalent in meaning containing different verbs of speaking were still counted as separate entries. This selection provided us with a sample of 63 English and 60 Serbian proverbs which occur in all of the dictionaries mentioned above, with varying degrees of equivalence.

Once again, the following analyses will be used to attempt to prove our hypothesis that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, along with the Great Chain of Being, can be employed to interpret the meaning of proverbs containing verbs of speaking:

1. Analysis of morphological and lexical markedness
2. Analysis of synonyms

The first analysis will help to categorize the verbs in our sample according to their semantic composition, making the first distinction between prototypical verbs of speaking and those bearing additional components of meaning. The second analysis will involve the verbs in the already established semantically marked group on the basis of the linguistic level at which the marking is displayed. This is done in the hope that the specific-level instances in cognitive mapping are provided by these verbs as well, giving the speech act an event shape, temporal structure or other elements mentioned in Lakoff (1993), which should confirm our first hypothesis.

In the second analysis, the only distinction we made is that of the level of formal similarity between proverbs of different form but the same meaning. The purpose of this was to determine whether different verbs of speaking can fill the same slot in proverbs and enable the same interpretation of proverbs in cases where they have the same performative role, which would confirm our second hypothesis. We also noted pertinent similarities and differences between the two languages and exemplified our analyses while offering translation equivalents based on our sample of proverbs.

4. MORPHOLOGICAL AND LEXICAL MARKEDNESS

4.1. Serbian proverbs

All of the 60 examples of Serbian proverbs containing verbs of speaking appear to be what Štrbac (2007) describes as verbs with a communicative component as part of their primary meaning. These, however, vary in their semantic composition. A number of prototypical verbs of speaking, such as *reći–say, kazati–tell, govoriti–speak*, and *pričati–tell* appeared in 19 proverbs, the ones containing only the ones with additional on-diagnostic components (Nida 1975, as cited in Prčić 1997, 42) were found in 34 examples, whereas seven proverbs contained both types. This type of semantic markedness was achieved on different linguistic levels, with the most numerous group being the one where a different lexeme is used to denote an additional component of meaning. This

group, into which we have also included the verb *ćutati*, which denotes absence of speech, includes verbs such as:

- (1) *zapovedati* (VK) (*Lasno je zapovjedati, al' je mučno izvršivati* / *Easier said than done*)
pretiti (VK) (*Ko mnogo prijeti onoga se ne boj* / *Barking dogs seldom bite*)
lagati (VK) (*Ko rad laže, rad i krade* / *He that will lie, will steal*)
hvaliti (VK) (*Sramoti čoeaka đete čuje, a hvali đe ne čuje*¹)

The second group consists of verbs with a morphologically signalled component in meaning, and it contains the following verbs:

- (2) *poricati* (VK) (*Carska se ne poriče* / *The king's word is worth more than another man's oath*)
slagati (VK) (*Ko jedan put slaže, drugi put mu se ne vjeruje ako i istinu kaže* / *He that once deceives is ever suspected*)
odreći (VK) (*Lasno je reći, nego je muka odreći* / *Once said cannot be unsaid*)

The third group, containing both lexically and morphologically marked verbs of speaking, is small, and includes the verb *povikati*, which not only signals the increased loudness of speech by using a specific lexeme, but has the additionally signalled change in aspect in the prefix *po-*, which denotes the beginning of a verbal act:

- (3) *povikati* (MWM) (*Koje pseto hoće da ubiju, poviču: bijesno je* / *Give a dog a bad name and hang him*)

In the entire group of verbs which contain prefixes (*poricati*, *odreći*, *izbrbljati se*, *povikati*, *slagati*), this type of verb formation appears in only nine proverbs out of 34. Moreover, lexical choices seemed to mark differences in aspect more often. An example of these verbs would be *odreći*, whose replacement by *odgovoriti* in contemporary Serbian has been explained by Ivić (2006, 10) as the diachronic change in the focus of the “mental eyes” of Serbian speakers, who began to view the returning act of speech as a whole event rather than just the response. This resulted in the substitution of the verb *reći* with *govoriti* “because only the lexical meaning of this verb makes it possible to lay stress on the product of the action of speech rather than on the action itself” (Ivić 2006, 10).

On the other hand, verbs such as *zapovediti* and *besediti*, or *reći/kazati* and *govoriti*, which inform us about the duration of the action, without affixes, classifiable as either activities or achievements (Novakov 2005, 52-55), make up the majority of verbs of speaking in our sample of Serbian proverbs. We note, however, that a few examples exist where synonymous proverbs which contain different verbs of speaking also contain a difference in the verb situation, such as, for example:

- (4) *Lasno je govoriti, al' je teško tvoriti* (VK) / *Easier said than done*
Lakše je reći no učiniti (K1) / *Easier said than done*
Lasno je zapovjedati, al' je mučno izvršavati (VK) / *Easier said than done*

There are, however, more examples of synonyms with no change in the aspect of the verb of speaking, which suggests that proverbs in Serbian do not apply prefixation to a large extent to signal differences in the meaning of verbs.

¹ No equivalents for this proverb were found in our corpus of dictionaries.

4.2. English proverbs

In the analysis of the English sample of 63 proverbs containing verbs of speaking, we will rely on the same methods and analyses as with the Serbian sample. In that respect, the first analysis concerns the semantic components of verbs, where the more prototypical speaking verbs, including *say*, *talk*, *tell* and *speak*, were found in 36 proverbs or 57% of this part of the sample, which is a higher percentage than in the Serbian proverbs (32%)². The semantically marked group consists of 27 proverbs, including 29 verbs of speaking. The most frequently represented of this group of words is *ask* with ten examples followed by *lie* and *praise* with three examples each. However, whereas in Serbian we observe different linguistic levels on which additional verb meaning is conveyed, in English there are no examples of either morphologically or syntactically marked verbs, only different lexemes, as exemplified in the following descending order of frequency:

- (1) *to ask* (ODP) (*Ask a silly question and you get a silly answer / Kakvo pitanje, takav odgovor*)
to lie (PDP) (*He that will lie, will steal / Ko laže taj i krade*)
to praise (PDP) (*He praises who wishes to sell*³)
- (2) *to preach* (ODP) (*Practice what you preach / Čini ono što tražiš od drugih da čine*)

An example to note here is the verb *ask*, which appeared in 10 English proverbs, and since it denotes a request for permission or information rather than a statement, its frequency is somewhat surprising. This may be attributed to the cultural background of the English language and its politeness strategies, in which asking is the essential component of obtaining information.

Looking at both parts of our sample we find that in the Serbian language the specific-level instances occur much more frequently on the morphological level. In English, these differences occur on the lexical level and have produced a rather limited set of different verbs.

5. SYNONYMS AND MEANING

5.1. Serbian proverbs

Our sample includes several verbs which have synonymous expressions, as well as synonymous proverbs. This choice was made in order to draw some conclusions about the increased presence of specific experiences in the source domain of cognitive conceptualization and test our second hypothesis that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor enables the same interpretation of formally or lexically different proverbs in cases where they have the same communicative role. The Serbian sample proverbs included examples such as:

- (6) *Rugala se + ruga, pa joj bila druga* (VK)
sova sjenici: idi kučko glavata (VK)
ruga rugi (K1)
(rugao se) lonac tendžeri (VK) / *kotao loncu*(VK) / *bakrač loncu*(K1)

² 43% when combined with the entries containing both types.

³ No equivalents for this proverb were found in our sample of proverbs.

Smejala se + koza ovci(MWM)
 kuka krivom drvetu(MWM)
Svaki + ciga svoga konja hvali (K1) /
 svoju robu hvali(VK)
Razmisli pa reci (VK) / *Ispeci pa reci* (K1) / *Priđe nego li rečeš, gledaj kako će ti*
izaći(VK)
Ko pita, ne skita / Ko pita, (s puta) ne zalazi (MWM)

In (6), we note that the proverbs with the verbs *pitati*, *rugati se*, *smejati se* (*nekome*) and *hvaliti* possess more than one possible form, all of them with the same verb, whereas the remainder of the expression was altered. This number is by no means exhaustive, as these are only the recorded dictionary entries. However, we can also notice that in three of the four examples which contain the four verbs mentioned above, the verb in question is an expression of approval (*hvaliti*) or disapproval and derision (*smejati se*, *rugati se*), which seem to transform easily into synonymous proverbs. The transfer may be due to their semantic content, which permits fewer alternatives and complements, and which could be expected to appear more frequently with verbs such as *govoriti*, *reći*, *kazati* and alike. The verb *pitati*, on the other hand, serves a particular function of asking for information. As it is the most commonly used Serbian interrogative verb, it is not surprising that a synonymous proverb is likely to contain the same lexeme.

We can also establish a group of five synonymous proverbs which would include the ones containing different verbs of speaking. While in the previous section we discussed how the expression of disapproval and derision could transform easily into synonymous proverbs containing the same verb of speaking, example (7) shows that the intransitive verbs *smejati se*, and *rugati se* are also interchangeable, as they represent the same underlying message about mocking others for the fault one also possesses:

Kad svi poviču: pjan si, povedi se (VK) / *Kad svi kažu da si pijan, lezi pa se valjaj* (K1)
Reći i učiniti nije isto (K1) / *Lasno je zapovjedati, al' je mučno izvršivati* (VK) / *Lakše je*
reći no učiniti (K1) / *Lasno je govoriti, al' je teško tvoriti* (VK)
Što reče ne poreče (MWM) / *Lasno je reći, nego je muka odreći* (VK) / *Što rekoh, ne*
odrekoh (VK)
*Rugala se ruga, pa joj bila druga*⁴(VK) / *Smejala se koza ovci* (MWM) / *Ruga sjedi ukraj*
puta, te se ruga svakome, a njoj svatko (VK)
Usta sprdaju, a kesa odgovara (VK) / *Usta sprdaju, a novci govore* (VK)

Other proverbs exemplify the interchangeability of the verbs *kazati* and *povikati*, where the variable component is the loudness of speech, *reći*, *zapovedati* and *govoriti*, with the difference in aspect and degree of directiveness of the verbal act, *poreći* and *odreći*, with the same meaning and difference in prefixation only and *odgovarati* and *govoriti*, where the first verb introduces the act of speech as part of a verbal interaction.

5.2. English proverbs

Synonymy was observed in the English sample as well. The synonymous expressions which contain the same verb of speaking found in the English sample include:

⁴ Only one example is taken from each set of same-verb synonyms described earlier in the text.

- (8) *Do as the friar says, not as he does*(K2) / *Do as I say, not as I do* (ODP)
A fool may ask more questions in an hour than a wise man can answer in seven years
 (K2) / *Fools ask questions that wise men cannot answer* (ODP)
Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil (K2) / *See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil*
 (ODP)
Talk of the Devil and he is bound to appear (ODP) / *Talk of the devil and he appears*
 (K2)
Well, speak of the devil! (K2) / *Speak of the Devil and he is sure to appear* (WMM)
Ask much to have a little (PDP) / *Ask but enough, and you may lower the price as you*
list (PDP)
He that cannot obey cannot command (PDP) / *Through obedience learn to command*
 (WMM)
He that speaks the thing he should not, hears the thing he would not (PDP) / *He that*
speaks lavishly shall hear as knavishly (PDP)

In this group of proverbs, the verbs of speaking include *say, ask, speak, talk, tell, excuse, accuse, and command*. A subgroup of this type of proverbs exemplifies the potential for ellipsis, in which the set of proverbs differs only in the omitted constituent. Prčić (1997, 129) attributes this occurrence to the rootedness of proverbs in the culture and tradition of a particular community, which leads to the predictability of their second part. However, ellipsis in our sample of English proverbs can be found either in the initial (9), middle (9), or final position in the proverb in question (9), as in the following:

- (9) *Only time will tell*(WMM) / *Time will tell* (ODP)
He who excuses himself, accuses himself (K2) / *He who excuses, accuses himself*
 (PDP)
Talk of the Devil and he is bound to appear(ODP) / *Talk of the devil!*(K2)
Speak of the Devil and he is sure to appear (WMM) / *Speak of the devil!*(K2)

However, we can also identify a group of synonymous proverbs containing different verbs of speaking which may provide answers about the prominence of certain values and messages verbs of speaking convey via proverbs. This group includes the following proverbs:

- (10) *Children and fools tell the truth* (ODP) / *Children and fools speak the truth*(K2) /
Children and fools cannot lie (K2)
Never mention rope in the house of a man who has been hanged (ODP) / *Name*
not a rope, in his house that hanged himself (K2)
*See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil*⁵ (ODP) / *Hear and see and say nothing* (K2)
Talk of the Devil and he is bound to appear (ODP) / *Speak of the devil!*(K2)
Tell the truth and shame the devil (ODP) / *Speak the truth and shame the devil* (ODP)
A liar is not believed when he speaks the truth (PDP) / *Liar is not believed when*
he tells the truth (WMM)
He that speaks the thing he should not, hears the thing he would not (PDP) / *He*
who says what he likes shall hear what he does not like (PDP)
When money speaks the world is silent (PDP) / *Money talks* (ODP)

⁵ Only one example is taken from each set of same-verb synonyms described earlier in the text

Regarding the interchangeability of the verbs, we can note the following: *speak* and *tell* show no observable difference in meaning since speaking/telling the truth and being unable to (tell a) lie are used synonymously. The verbs *mention* and *name* differ in the existence of a speech act of naming in the second case, while *speak* and *say/talk/tell* are interchangeable to the extent of showing the prominence of the verb *speak*, which seems to be the most prototypical and adaptable of all English verbs of speaking. Among the messages these proverbs convey is advice about truth-telling, the impropriety of speaking hastily, staying away from bad influences and the power of money.

The results obtained confirm that there are proverbs in both languages which can have the same meaning despite the lexical differences, which confirms our second hypothesis that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor does enable the same interpretation of formally or lexically different proverbs in cases where they have the same performative role.

6. VERBS OF SPEAKING AND METAPHOR

6.1. Serbian proverbs

The final issue we examined is the connection between the use of verbs of speaking in proverbs and the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, posited by Lakoff and Turner (1989). While this metaphor accounts for the general use of proverbs and their interpretation, by mapping “a single specific-level schema onto an indefinitely large number of parallel specific-level schemas” (Lakoff and Turner 1989, 162) which contain the same generic-level structure, we can find a number of examples where the generic-level structure enables the mapping of more specific-level information onto the target domain than in other cases. By this, of course, we mean the change in the type of action portrayed by verbs of speaking, which is mapped as a specific-level act of speaking onto another specific-level schema containing the same or different verb of speaking in examples such as:

- (11) *Ko ne zna služiti, ne zna ni zapovijedati* (VK) / *He that cannot obey cannot command*
Ko pita, ne skita (K1) / *Better to ask the way than go astray*
*Što se češće razgovarato se bolje dogovara*⁶ (VK)

Because the second schema implies the committed act of speaking onto which the proverbial specific-level schema of words leaving our mental space is mapped, we can say that little additional information is supplied and that the event structure of the action is kept relatively intact. Using the Serbian proverb in (11), the translation of which is *Better to ask the way than go astray*, in Figure 1 we can see how schematic mapping is achieved and what specific-level information can be supplied in a variety of different situations in which this particular proverb is applied. Even though specific-level schemas may include any number of different actions performed by the subject, the action of speaking could not be substituted by an action of a different nature. In addition, it is further constrained by the type of speech event in which information is requested, therefore limiting the potential actions in a specific-level schema to verbs used to make queries. By applying Molnar and Vidaković–Erdeljić’ (2016) illustration of Lakoff and Turner’s (1989) view of this mapping, we present one such example in Figure 1.

⁶No equivalents for this proverb were found in the dictionaries.

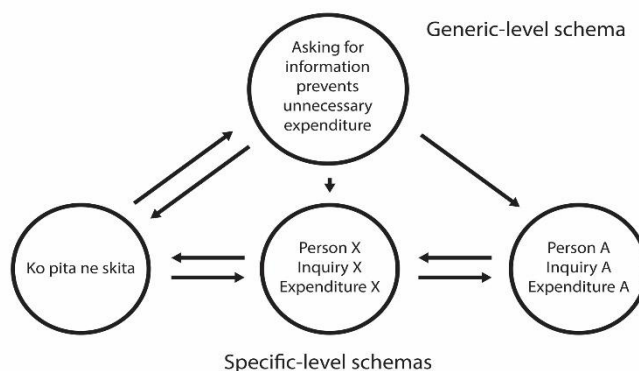


Fig. 1 Schematization of the Serbian proverb *Ko pita ne skita*

However, our sample of Serbian proverbs includes several examples where the target specific-level schema need not correspond to the source schema concerning the type of action realized by verbs of speaking, as the act of speaking is only one of the possibilities in which the following proverbs can be used:

- (12) *Ko se prije obuje, onaj i zapovijeda* (VK) / *The early bird catches the worm*
Reci bobu: bob, a popu: pop (VK) / *To call a spade a spade*

Here, the verb *zapovijedati* is tied to the more general concept of *taking charge* as a result of a person's prompt response, or merely a habit of being an early riser. *Reći* is related to the action of naming, or calling something by its proper name, which is related to the act of speaking, but not necessarily including a recipient or information. We have also noted some examples of metonymy, where the act of speaking is related to the organ which shapes the sound (mouth), and not the person:

- (13) *Usta sprdaju, a novci govore* (VK) / *Money talks*
Usta sprdaju, a kesa odgovara (VK) / *Money talks*
Koja usta rekla ona i odrekla (VK) / *Promises are like pie-crust, meant to be broken*

Much like in the above expression *Novci govore*, another group of proverbs can be seen to possess verbs of speaking attributed to non-human entities, where we can see the effect of *THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING*, a cognitive tool used for the decoding of proverbs, discussed above. However, apart from the entities lower than humans, some higher entities are also included in this scheme. This is in line with Krzeszowski's (1997) extension of the GREAT CHAIN metaphor, which would include "a level intermediate between humans and God" (Krzeszowski 1997, 68–69), to which Szwedek (2014, 349) proposed to include other supernatural beings as well. A difference in verb content can be noticed between these two groups, since *rugati se*, *lagati* and *smejati se (nekome)*, which carry a negative message about the speaker, are attributed to lower entities, while *govoriti* and *odgovoriti*, are attributed to higher ones without a positive or negative semantic component.

- (14) *Rugao se lonac tendžeri (VK) / The pot calls the kettle black*
Smejala se koza ovci (MWM) / The pot calls the kettle black
Ruga sjedi ukraj puta, te se ruga svakome, a njoj svatko (VK) / The pot calls the kettle black
Ako koza laže, rog ne laže (VK) / The truth will out
Bog govori: pomozí se sam, pomoći ću ti i ja (VK) / For a web begun God sends the thread
Ko se sam sjetuje, đavo mu odgovara (VK) / He that is his own lawyer has a fool for a client

6.2. English proverbs

Finally, as with Serbian proverbs, where we find examples with a difference in the type of action represented by verbs of speaking, the English sample also contains proverbs in which the verb of speaking refers to a range of different actions. These verbs were more or less related to the actual speech act, to which the prescriptive meaning of a specific proverb could be applied. These examples are the following:

- (15) *Man proposes, God disposes (ODP) / Čovek kaže a Bog raspolaže*
See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil (ODP) / Što vidiš, ne video: što čuješ, ne čuo
Never say die (PDP) / Nikad ne reci nikad
He who excuses himself, accuses himself (K2) / Ko se pravda, taj se optužuje
Better say 'here it is' than 'here it was' (K2) / Bolje je jedno drž' nego sto uzmi

The verb *proposes* need not denote an actual act of speaking, as the meaning of the proverb is related to the risk of making plans which might fail to materialise. However, while the verbal act of proposing may still occur, the probability of one accusing oneself or using the verb *die* is much lower, and these proverbs relate to the raising of suspicion and the loss of hope respectively. The proverb *Better say 'here it is' than 'here it was'* does not suggest that a person should actually say the line, but rather acknowledge the virtue of holding on to what one has, instead of pursuing other, less secure possibilities. In the case of the proverb *See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil*, there exist several interpretations depending on the culture where it is used; in general, the expression refers to keeping silent when faced with a hazardous situation, rather than actually speaking evil.

Only one example of metonymy is found in our sample (*What the heart thinks, the tongue speaks*). The group of proverbs attributing verbs of speaking to non-human entities contained several entries, consisting of examples of entities either lower or higher than humans, as well as of actions and abstract concepts. These examples are shown in (16):

- (16) *Actions speak louder than words (ODP) / Jače je delo nego beseda*
The Devil can quote Scripture for his own ends (ODP) / Opravdanja se nalaze i za najgora zlodela
Money talks (ODP) / Novac govori
Time will tell (ODP) / Vreme će pokazati
Blood will tell (PDP) / Krv će progovoriti
The frying-pan said to the kettle, 'Avaunt, black brows!' (PDP) / Rugao se bakrač loncu
Misfortunes tell us what fortune is (PDP)⁷

⁷ No equivalents for this proverb were found in the dictionaries.

When the fox preaches, then beware your geese (PDP) / Kad lisica pridikuje, pazi dobro na guske

*When money speaks the world is silent (PDP) / Para vrti gde burgija neće
Old saws speak truth (PDP)⁸*

What is noticeable here is that in the Serbian sample, the differences between higher and lower entities in *The Great Chain of Being* and man's attitude towards them are reflected in the use of different lexemes. On the other hand, English proverbs did not indicate this attitude in the choice of the verbs of speaking.

7. DISCUSSION

What we intended in this paper was to show the variety of effects verbs of speaking in Serbian and English proverbs have on their meaning and interpretation and to observe several kinds of metaphors and schemas that permeate the idiomatic language of proverbs, most importantly the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC scheme and the GREAT CHAIN metaphor. The results of the sample analysis showed that prototypical verbs of speaking appeared in approximately half of the sample, although *reći, kazati, govoriti* and *pričati* appeared much less in Serbian than *say, talk, tell* and *speak* did in English proverbs. Only 32% of Serbian proverbs contained only prototypical verbs, whereas their percentage in the English sample is 57%. In both languages, semantic markedness of the remaining verbs was achieved mostly lexically, with inflexion in five Serbian verbs, while a similar situation with English proverbs can be attributed to the language's reliance on syntax in dealing with aspectual issues. This also testifies to the compactness of proverbs which relate to a multitude of real-life situations with often just a single form, thus relying on the aforementioned prototypical verbs or verbs which denote additional components in their meaning, e.g. *ask, command, praise*.

However, from a cognitive perspective, the appearance of synonymous proverbs helped us discover that the experiences which appear most often in the metaphorical mappings of Serbian are connected to the expression of misplaced disapproval and derision, the difference between word and deed, sincerity, promises and commands (Table 1).

Table 1 Messages in Serbian proverbs

Message	Separate entries	Entries total (with synonyms)
Speaking hastily	5	5
Sincerity	5	5
Disapproval and derision	3	10
Making promises	5	5
Words and deeds	6	6
Giving commands	5	5

In English, the most frequent messages are about sincerity, the impropriety of speaking hastily, and asking, with more examples of synonymy than in Serbian (Table 2).

⁸ No equivalents for this proverb were found in the dictionaries.

Table 2 Messages in English proverbs

Message	Separate entries	Entries total (with synonyms)
Words and deeds	3	3
Sincerity	8	8
Speaking hastily	7	9
Asking	8	10

The tables show that both languages and their folk traditions put emphasis on the merits of sincerity and on measuring one's words, as well as on supporting statements and claims with adequate deeds. Some cultural differences may also be noticed in the presence of commands in Serbian and requests in English.

The two analyses we performed supported our two hypotheses. However, we have also noted a need to perform additional research on English prototypical verbs of speaking.

Finally, even though this was not the initial aim of the paper, the results of the analysis of verbs of speaking and metaphor suggested a classification of proverbs into three types depending on the degree of abstraction of the speech act, in accordance with the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC schema considered vital for the interpretation of proverbs:

1. Proverbs in which the verbs of speaking are mapped as specific-level acts of speech;
2. Proverbs in which the verbs of speaking refer to a range of different actions not necessarily denoted by the verb in question;
3. Proverbs in which the verbs of speaking do not denote the physical act of speech.

8. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that verbs of speaking in particular can be observed from several standpoints, since their morphological and lexical features are tied to their meaning and the interpretation of the higher structures which contain them, including proverbial expressions. The idiomatic nature of proverbs gave us the opportunity to analyse verbs of speaking from a cognitive perspective. In addition, we were able to view the phenomenon of speech as a uniquely human experience inseparable from our conceptual system and ability to apply generalised statements in an infinite number of situations, relying on their correct interpretation. This study has revealed information about the way speech events are realised and conceptualised by examining the role speech has taken in the experiences of two specific cultures and their folk traditions.

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GLAGOLI GOVORENJA U SRPSKIM I ENGLISKIM POSLOVICAMA

*Cilj ovog rada je da opišemo uzorak glagola govorenja u 60 srpskih i 63 engleske poslovice da bismo ispitali ulogu koju njihove jezičke odlike imaju u signaliziranju različitih metaforičkih značenja poslovice u kognitivnom teorijskom okviru. Rezultati analize pokazuju da se prototipski glagoli govorenja pojavljuju u približno polovini uzorka poslovice, dok se semantička markiranost glagola uglavnom postiže izborom leksema, što je češće slučaj u engleskom jeziku. Ova dva jezika se razlikuju i u upotrebi sinonimnih poslovice, kao i u metaforičkom mapiranju. Na kraju nalazimo tri vrste poslovice u zavisnosti od nivoa apstrakcije govornog čina, a u skladu sa shemom **GENERIČKO JE SPECIFIČNO**, koju smatramo suštinski važnom za interpretaciju poslovice.*

Ključne reči: glagoli govorenja, poslovice, prototipovi, markiranost