CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of English Language and Literature

BACHELOR THESIS

Comparative Analysis of Czech, English and German Proverbs in Jirotka's Saturnin

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Prague   **2013**

Declaration

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the result of my own work and that no other sources were used in this thesis than those listed on the Works Cited page.

Prague, April 2013   Kamila Sehnalová

Acknowledgements

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor PhDr. Klára Matuchová, PhD. for her patience and useful advice. I also wish to thank my family for their continuous support.

Abstrakt

Tato práce analyzuje a srovnává typické rysy a tendence českých, anglických a německých přísloví na základě knihy *Saturnin* (Zdeněk Jirotka). Teoretická část shrnuje problematiku definice přísloví, dále se teoreticky zabývá různými způsoby překladu přísloví a v neposlední řadě představuje konkrétní specifika přísloví v jednotlivých jazycích. V praktické části jsou poté z různých hledisek analyzována přísloví, která jsou obsažena v originálu knihy *Saturnin* a jejím anglickém a německém překladu (např. z hlediska existence a neexistence jednotlivých přísloví, motivace, rozdílů ve významu, básnických a gramatických rysů apod.). Cílem této práce je posoudit, do jaké míry se od sebe přísloví jednotlivých jazyků liší a naopak, jaké společné tendence dané jazyky ve svých příslovích vykazují.

Klíčová slova: přísloví, čeština, angličtina, němčina, překlad, *Saturnin*

Abstract

This thesis analyses and compares the typical features and tendencies of Czech, English and German proverbs with specific reference to the book *Saturnin* by Zdeněk Jirotka. The theoretical part summarizes the complexity of proverb-definition. It also deals with the different ways of translating proverbs and, last but not least, the concrete specifics of proverbs in the particular languages are introduced. Within the practical part, the proverbs contained in the original version of the book *Saturnin* - and its English and German translations are analysed from different viewpoints (e.g. existence and non-existence of proverbs, motivation, semantic differences, poetic and grammatical features etc.). The aim of this thesis is to assess to what degree the proverbs of the individual languages studied differ and, conversely, what common tendencies their proverbs display.

Key words: proverbs, Czech, English, German, translation, *Saturnin*

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1 Introduction

It is the specific phraseological category of proverbs which enables the noteworthy phenomenon of whole nations being able to express an idea in exactly the same formulation and using the same words by providing numerous utterances in the form of a sentence which comment on various situations, incidents and problems of everyday life. These utterances occur in a fixed form, they very frequently incorporate metaphorical imagery, archaistic expressions or atypical, irregular syntax and yet they are used in all kinds of situations (ranging from very formal speeches to informal conversations) by all sorts of people (irrespective of their age, education or background).

This thesis aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Czech, English and German proverbs based on the corpus of the Czech original of the book *Saturnin* and its individual translations into English and German. The emphasis will be placed both on how accurate the English and German versions are in terms of the proverb-translation, i.e. how well the idea of proverbs (which is quite crucial in the book) was conveyed into the target languages as well as on the general tendencies of proverbs of the individual languages toward their structure, themes and meanings.

The theoretical part will deal with the problems of proverb-definition, namely with its history and with attempts at definition. Within this chapter (3.1), the typical (although not always essential) properties of proverbs will also be pointed out. Since most of the resources used in this chapter refer to the attributes of English proverbs, there are two subchapters within the theoretical part devoted to the nature of Czech and German proverbs.

Furthermore, the techniques of proverb-translation and its related drawbacks will be covered, explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the particular methods. One section of this chapter (3.2.2) will investigate the special category of proverbs originating from the four major cultural sources. These would be expected not to pose any significant challenge for the translators as they have been translated literally into most of the European languages.

As stated above, in the last subchapter of the theoretical part (3.3), the peculiarities, special qualities and tendencies of German and Czech proverbs will be explored. This section will also review the history and volume of the paremiological studies in these nations, including the significant eras for proverb-use.

The second part of the thesis is concerned with the practical analysis itself. Nevertheless, at the beginning it is clarified why the corpus of *Saturnin* in particular was chosen. It is also delineated according to which criteria the proverbs will be analysed, providing the reader with an overview of the topics covered later.

The first phenomenon analysed is the occurrence of non-existing (non-codified) proverbs in the translations and the possible reasons for it. It is evaluated whether it really was the only option for the translator or whether it was possible to find an existing equivalent through more careful research. Naturally, the different tendencies of English and German versions are compared and analysed.

Subsequently, the case of identical proverbs is examined, at first in all three languages studied and then in the following pairings: Czech-English and Czech-German, with the aim of assessing their relative proximity.

The following subchapter (4.2.3) concentrates on the degree of literalness and figurativeness of proverbs in the three languages, the figurative ones being somewhat more typical than the literal proverbs.

When speaking about the motivation of the figurative proverbs, carefully-chosen examples of the differences between each of the particular languages will be analysed in order to show how different cultures may influence proverbs and, also, what imagery is used in the respective languages.

A closely connected topic deals with the differences in the meanings of the proverbs used. It is examined whether the semantic deviations alter the overall meaning or impression. In this subchapter (4.2.5), the context is also taken into consideration, helping to evaluate how the proverbs with a difference in their meaning match the particular situation in which they were used.

The last two subchapters (4.2.6, 4.2.7) focus on the formal properties of the proverbs, namely on the external poetic and grammatical features. As will be explained, these attributes are quite typical for the genre, contributing to the recognisability of proverbs.

2 Hypothesis

The Czech- and German-speaking nations have been influencing each other in all spheres of life for hundreds of years, starting with the migration of the German communities into the Czech borderlands in the 13th century, and continuing through to the Enlightenment era (Trost 21). The analysis is expected to confirm that this long-lasting coexistence of the two nations has also affected the phraseology of the both languages, here with specific attention given to proverbs. Thus, it is anticipated that the Czech and German proverbs will show similar tendencies in all (or almost all) of the linguistic aspects studied. Conversely, since no such particular connection between the Czech and English-speaking environment can be traced, it is assumed that the English proverbs will differ notably from their Czech counterparts. This thesis will strive to examine how these tendencies are reflected in the separate translations of the given corpus.

3 Theoretical Part

3.1 Nature of Proverbs and Attempts at Definition

In the course of history, many scholars, folklorists and paremiologists (e.g. A. Taylor, W. Mieder, A. Dundes or N. R. Norrick) have attempted to create a satisfactory definition of a proverb which would be as accurate as possible. This definition should, of course, apply to all the existing proverbs and, at the same time, should exclude all the proverb-like statements that cannot be counted as proverbs. However, it has been found to be extremely difficult to word such an abstract and complicated mental concept. The problem consists in the fact that every native speaker can distinguish a proverb from a statement resembling a proverb but it is very complicated to capture the characteristic features responsible for this distinction.

Nevertheless, let us have a look at some of the ways the paremiologists strived to define the proverb. Honeck asserts that: "From a linguistic standpoint, a proverb is a phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and, some would add, a semiotic (complex sign) entity" (Honeck 11). As he himself remarks, this does not distinguish proverbs from other forms which seems to be the most troublesome difficulty for all scholars in defining this specific phraseologism (Honeck 12).

An interesting way of coming to terms with the proverb-definition was presented by Taylor, who declared such accomplishment impossible by stating that: "The definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking ... An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and this one is not. Hence no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial" (Taylor 3). Even though this approach may seem somewhat negligent, it might represent a significant facilitation of the problem and create greater scope for further and more detailed research.

 Mieder mentions instances of a wide range of definitions stretching from brief and quite general definitions (e.g. Gallacher: "A proverb is a concise statement of an apparent truth which has [had, or will have] currency among the people" [Mieder, *Proverbs* 4]) to more precise and extensive attempts. Mieder makes reference for instance to a lengthy, yet rather imprecise definition by Whiting:

"A proverb is an expression which, owing its birth to the people, testifies to its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what is apparently a fundamental truth – that is, a truism, - in homely language, often adorned, however, with alliteration and rhyme. It is usually short, but need not be; it is usually true, but need not be. Some proverbs have both a literal and figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense; but more often they have but one of the two. A proverb must be venerable; it must bear the sign of antiquity, and, since such signs may be counterfeited by a clever literary man, it should be attested in different places at different times. This last requirement we must often waive in dealing with very early literature, where the material at our disposal is incomplete." (Mieder, *Proverbs* 2)

Mieder himself formulated the definition in a following way:

"Proverbs [are] concise traditional statements of apparent truths with currency among the folk. More elaborately stated, proverbs are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorizable form and that are handed down from generation to generation." (Mieder, *Proverbs* 4)

Norrick, another renowned paremiologist, summarizes a great number of different proverb definitions and suggests that we could draw a line between traditional and structural attempts at proverb definitions and in addition, he also mentions the supercultural and ethnographic definition and the definition via feature matrix. (Norrick 31)

3.1.1 Traditional definition

The traditional definition encompasses various features of proverbs that are recognizable by most speakers as they mainly deal with the most striking characteristics. Norrick presents these features as shown below. Among the dominant features of proverbs we can count the attribute of **self-containedness** which means that "none of their essential grammatical units may be replaced" (Norrick 32). This feature mainly serves to differentiate between proverbs and proverbial phrases (e.g. *As cool as a cucumber*) which do not incorporate the grammatical element indispensable for proverbs. Within this feature one should also understand that "proverbs must be complete (if elliptical) sentences" (Norrick 33).

Another characteristic feature of a proverb is its relative **pithiness.** Owing to this property the majority of proverbs are noticeably short, they "lack semantically neutral and purely functional words" and "have a high degree of lexical meaning per word" (Norrick 36), e.g. *Forewarned, forearmed.* However, a great number of long proverbs are to be found which do not conform to this requirement, e.g. *Whoever digs a pit for another falls into it himself.*

Proverbs are known to be a vital part of folklore and thus their **traditional** character proves to be quite essential for them. Therefore they differ from aphorisms in that the author is not known and they often contain rustic imagery or archaisms, depending on the place and conditions of origin (Norrick 40). Nevertheless, new, modern proverbs keep developing and these of course present a different kind of tradition.

From the nature of proverbs it is self-evident that one of their essential features is the **didactic element** (Norrick 41). Proverbs instruct people, most often in an indirect way, using metaphors and figurative language. However, it is not unusual for a proverb to tell us directly, literally what to do; what is right and what is wrong, or what consequences our behavior could have.

For many paremiologists one of the essential characteristics of a proverb is its **fixed form.** Only thanks to the invariable form can proverbs be recognized by the wider scale of the population and also survive the oral transmission through generations. However, Norrick claims that "the condition of recognisability does not require total immutability of proverb form" (Norrick 44). There are different types of proverb variation which do not prevent us from identifying the proverb, e.g. the expansion of elliptical proverbs *(Young sinner, old saint → A young sinner will become an old saint)* proverb frames *(One should, You should, Always)* or special adjectives *(proverbial, good ol', everlovin')*. Very well-known proverbs can be reduced to only one phrase, the so called *kernel,* which calls forth the whole proverb *(the early bird, a bird in the hand etc.)*. This means that the fixedness of form is only a relative term, it is important that the proverb is recognized as the proverb, no matter how close it is to the original form (Norrick 45). To support this claim, we can mention a popular game based on a similar principle where only the beginning of a proverb is said and the task is to complete correctly the rest of the proverb. Interestingly enough, this game is often referred to as the "Cup of Aunt Catherine" which is, of course, an allusion to the book in question (*Saturnin*), more precisely to the character of the book well-known for her extensive usage of proverbs.

The distinctive characteristics that all speakers can recognize are the **poetic features.** Norrick distinguishes the external features (prosody) and internal features (figuration). Within prosody we can trace examples of rhythm, rhyme, parallelism, alliteration and repetition which help the proverb to become more memorable. However, it is important to say that, while the prosody is by no means indispensable, it is only a common device used in proverbs. Among the figurative features we count the use of metaphors, synecdoche, metonymy, personification or hyperbole which contributes to the typical form of proverbs (Norrick 46 - 48). Nonetheless, there exist proverbs of a figurative nature – e.g. *One shouldn't count one's chickens before they're hatched,* as well as proverbs used in the literal way – e.g. *Honesty is the best policy* which proves yet again that the figurative quality is prototypical but not vital.

As Norrick claims, most of these features cannot really be used as essential definitive rules as there are a lot of exceptions from these. The above-mentioned characteristics can thus be used as a means of recognizing a proverb because they are very common but they would not serve the purpose of a precise definition of a proverb (Norrick 51).

3.1.2 Structural definition

Elsewhere, Norrick explains that the lack of precision of the traditional definition compelled other paremiologists to formulate a definition based on the structure of proverbs (Norrick 51). From this endeavour, two structural definitions have emerged, namely the one based on quadripartite structures and another using the topic-comment structure.

Being a great innovator, Milner is mentioned as the first to have suggested a proverb definition on the basis of **quadripartite structures**. "Milner proposes that the popularity of such a saying depends upon how well its symmetry of meaning matches its symmetry of form" (Norrick 51). Thus, he claims that almost every proverb consists of four parts which are either positive or negative and which constitute two halves of a proverb, again evaluated positively or negatively. In this manner, proverbs can be further categorized according to their polarity.

The **topic-comment structure** was devised by Alan Dundes who asserts that "there is a close relationship between proverb structure and riddle structure" (Dundes 50). According to him, a proverb consists of at least one topic and one comment which form the descriptive element. This type of definition was criticized for being too broad by Norrick who also said that it

"remains an empirical fact about a certain number of proverbs rather than a definitional criterion proper" (Norrick 57).

3.1.3 Other definition attempts

We should also note that folklorists have tried to distinguish proverb from other genres (aphorism, epigram, proverbial phrase, riddle, curse etc.) by supercultural and ethnographic definitions which would result in "simply listing indiscriminately whatever properties differentiate the proverb from any other linguistic or folkloristic item" (Norrick 59).

The foregoing strategy is somewhat connected with the definition via feature matrix devised by Barley. Norrick presents his strategy in the following manner: "Barley suggests that the proverb be defined and related to other items of folklore by means of a set of features arranged into a matrix" (Norrick 60). This definition was reworked and partly-used in Norrick's linguistically founded proverb definition.

3.1.4 A Linguistically Founded Proverb Definition

Based on the criticism of the above-mentioned proverb definitions Norrick himself attempted to create a definition using some fragments that he found valid for his purpose. He created a feature matrix (shown in the picture below) by carefully choosing the properties that would help to distinguish unequivocally the proverb from all other genres. Among these he counts for instance: potential free conversational turn, conversational character, fixedness of form, traditionality, didactic element, prosodic character, general meaning etc. and he determines their presence, absence or optional presence by the signs +, – and 0 respectively (Norrick 72 - 73).

3.5 A linguistically founded proverb definition   73

	potential free conversational turn	conversational	traditional	spoken	fixed form	didactic	general	figurative	prosodic	entertaining	humorous
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
proverb	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	−	0
cliché	+	+	+	+	+	−	0	0	0	−	0
Wellerism	+	+	+	+	+	−	−	0	0	+	+
curse	0	+	+	+	+	−	−	0	0	−	0
proverbial phrase	−	+	+	+	+	−	−	+	0	−	0
riddle	−	−	+	+	0	0	−	0	0	+	0
joke	−	−	+	+	−	−	−	0	−	+	+
tale	−	−	+	+	−	0	−	0	−	+	0
song	−	−	+	−	+	0	−	0	+	+	0
slogan	+	−	−	0	+	0	−	0	0	−	0
aphorism	0	−	−	−	+	0	+	0	0	+	0

Thus he proposes the ethnographic definition: "The proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with general meaning, a potential free conversational turn, preferably with figurative meaning" (Norrick 78) and the supercultural definition: "The proverb is a typically spoken, conversational form with didactic function and not associated with any particular source" (Norrick 79).

In this chapter we have explored the difficulties the paremiologists face in forming a valid definition of a proverb. It has been proved that, even though a proverb seems to be a fairly

common lexical device used both by people in their everyday conversations and also in the media, in the speeches of politicians or in literature, it is extremely demanding to delimit the properties that are essential and defining for the proverb.

3.2 Translation of Proverbs

Translating proverbs poses a great challenge to translators, especially owing to the proverbs' traditional and folklorist nature which may (and very often does) differ across the cultures of the source and target language. According to Wilson, the translator must take account of not only the message but also the different meanings, context, connotations or linguistic structure. She claims that "the goal of translation is to maintain as many of [these] components as possible. ... The ultimate goal of translation is equivalence, an event that occurs when as many of the components of the message as possible do match between the two languages" (Wilson). That means that the translator must allow for many more factors than is necessary when translating an ordinary statement. It is important to note that the differences in the source and target culture play a crucial role in the process of proverb translation. Therefore, the translator must be familiar not only with the two languages and their linguistic structures, but also with all the particularities typical for the target language and culture.

3.2.1 Three Strategies for Translating Proverbs

In a lucid way, Fedorov presents three possible ways of translating proverbs as they were summarized and assessed by Hečko:

The first possibility the translator has is to translate the proverb into the target language literally, i.e. with no changes whatsoever in the structural, lexical respect. By choosing this option the translator risks that he or she will not succeed in transferring the whole meaning of the proverb with all the connotations or faithful metaphors (Hečko 143). This may result in the translation sounding contrived or unnatural to the native speaker of the target language. Initially it can seem that the information has been transmitted but, as Hečko concludes, with this strategy, once the figurative and generalizing aspect typical for a proverb is lost, the whole translation becomes pointless (Hečko 143).

If the translator decides not to use the first option, he or she can create a new equivalent of the proverb. This inevitably involves making changes to both the lexical and syntactic structures of the original phrasing (Hečko 143). The risk lies in the fact that the author/translator can

never be sure how well the new proverb will be accepted among the readers and native speakers. According to Wilson, it is also necessary to correctly determine whether a new proverb would be acceptable or whether there exists a suitable equivalent that could be used. However, provided that the newly created proverb is successful, it may later become integrated into the set of traditional proverbs used by the population.

The last and arguably the best option is to use a ready-made equivalent already accepted among the speakers of the target language. These can be found in various dictionaries and collections, either mono-, bi- or even multilingual. Nevertheless it needs to be said that it may be rather demanding to succeed in finding the right equivalent suitable for the situation in question. As Hečko claims: "it means that one [the translator] has to employ the conceptual standpoint with all the linguistic meticulousness" (Hečko 144, as translated by Kamila Sehnalová).

3.2.2 Identical Equivalents of Certain Proverbs

However, it frequently occurs that a proverb is common to all (or most) European languages which represents a great aid to the translator. This phenomenon affects general proverbs and is predominantly caused by the origin of the proverb. Based on Wolfgang Mieder's book, four sources of European proverbs can be distinguished:

1. Greek and Roman antiquity. Proverbs coming from this age disseminated very broadly, especially thanks to the widely spread Latin language.
2. The Bible. A great number of commonly used proverbs come from the Bible which has, of course, been translated many times and always as accurately as possible. Obviously, the quality and number of proverbs depended on the translators who sometimes naturally avoided creating a new proverb but in some cases (Martin Luther), even more proverbs were created compared to the original.
3. Medieval Latin.
4. Reverse of the historical move of proverbs from Europe to the USA. This tendency became significant in the middle of the 20th century, mainly thanks to the mass media (Mieder, *Proverbs* 10 – 13).

However, it is important to mention that it is usually highly challenging to trace the origin of a proverb that has been used for hundreds or thousands of years as they were most often transmitted orally, and also due to the lack of written evidence of the proverb's existence.

3.3   Specifics of German and Czech Proverbs

Proverbs across most European languages share a very similar structure, sometimes themes and occasionally even metaphors. As stated above (3.2.2), the similarities are caused by the common origin of proverbs that spread - in a similar form - to a great number of languages. Thus, it is not easy to trace some regular, prototypical particularities that would definitely distinguish the proverbs of one language from the proverbs of another. Nevertheless, this chapter will strive to identify some of the similar tendencies that Czech and German languages share concerning the form, meaning or etymology of their proverbs.

3.3.1 German Proverbs

With regard to the development of German proverbs one could say that there were certain fruitful periods in producing new German proverbs. Mieder mentions especially the 16th century which he calls the "golden age of the proverbial language" thanks to the contribution of such great personalities as Martin Luther, Sebastian Brant or Hans Sachs. In the 17th century, besides the didactic use of proverbs in the work of Abraham A Santa Clara, we can trace also the satiric way in which Ch. von Grimmelshausen used proverbs. The almost purely proverbial plays by Andreas Gryphius also date back into this period. During the Enlightenment period and the 18th century, the names of Lessing, Goethe and Schiller were important for the development of German proverbs (Mieder, *Sprichwörter* 7). Mieder also claims that the use of proverbs has always been common, citing the continuing tradition in contemporary literature as evidence of this. According to him, proverbs have been chiefly used to evoke the feeling of a natural and believable language (Mieder, *Sprichwörter* 8). This could serve as proof that this specific lexical item plays quite a crucial role in the use of an authentic language.

As far as the form of German proverbs is concerned, Röhrich claims that, "the quick-witted shortness and the refined conciseness [of German proverbs] are not seldom reached by the omission of articles, verbs or relative pronouns" (Mieder and Röhrich 56, as translated by Kamila Sehnalová). According to his summary, it is also not hard to infer that it is fairly common for German proverbs to be rhymed. He distinguishes a number of different types of rhyme among which the following tend to be predominant: the usual 2-line end rhyme (*Was ich nicht weiß, macht mich nicht heiß*), 1-line internal rhyme (*Eile mit Weile*), close rhyme (*Trau – schau – wem*), or the head rhyme [alliteration] (Mieder and Röhrich 57). German

proverbs are also no exception in the usage of parallelisms (*Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat*) (Mieder, *Sprichwörter* 5) and again, all these features help the users to remember the proverbs, even though they are not requisite. Another point examined by Röhrich is that, if the proverb includes a relative clause, it is formed according to grammatical patterns and the same applies to the unreal conditional clauses (Mieder and Röhrich, 58). Finally, it is no surprise that proverbs, thanks to their didactic and instructive nature, tend to involve imperative forms (Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen).

By careful study Röhrich also detected the most common patterns that are likely to occur in the German proverbs. Only a few of them will be mentioned: *A ist A, A bleibt A, A ist B, Nicht alles ist A, was B, Ohne A kein B,* or *Lieber A als B* (Mieder and Röhrich 61). These patterns can also help the recipient to recognize them as proverbs.

When speaking about the themes of proverbs, it is self-evident that the cultural and historical aspect is of great significance. With regard to German traditional folklore or different types of occupation, it should not be surprising that a lot of German proverbs are concerned with themes like: trade, agriculture, craft or the life of sailors (Mieder and Röhrich 65). It is obvious that in this aspect there will be notable differences between the central-European environment, as opposed to countries with significantly different cultural grounds. However, in this particular aspect, no major differences are likely to be found between the themes of Czech and German proverbs due to the similar historical and cultural context of these neighbouring countries.

3.3.2 Czech Proverbs

Like in other languages, Czech proverbs and sayings have been the subject of study of many scholars throughout the course of history. Nevertheless, should we compare the amount of theoretical works concerning the Czech paremiology with similar specialized publications in other languages, we would find that Czech scholars have been concerned with the ethnographic and folkloristic, rather than the linguistic aspect of proverbs, which is a presumption confirmed by Čermák (Čermák, *SČFI* 7). Generally, the number of theoretical sources proves to be very limited, since most of the paremiological study has been devoted to collecting phraseologisms instead of covering the theoretical, linguistic aspects of Czech proverbs. However, the tradition of collecting proverbs is indeed very old. According to Stěpanova, the oldest preserved collection of Czech proverbs by Smil Flaška dates back to the

15th century (Stěpanova 3). In her subsequent overview we can find the collection by Jakub Srnec z Varvažova, Jan Blahoslav or Jan Amos Komenský mentioned. Further, in the period of Enlightenment, Josef Dobrovský could be pointed out. The most famous collection was written by F. L. Čelakovský (*Mudrosloví národa českého v příslovích*). Among the modern paremiologists, F. Čermák and his *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* [Dictionary of Czech Phraseology and Idiomatics] has to be mentioned as a great contributor to Czech phraseology and linguistics in general (Stěpanova 3).

Examining the formal aspects of Czech proverbs, it can be observed that they tend to be quite short. According to Čermák's study, the average length of a Czech proverb is 4.6 words where the shortest proverbs consist of 2 words (e.g. *Sliby, chyby*) and the longest go up to 10 words (e.g. *Tak dlouho se chodí se džbánem pro vodu, až se ucho utrhne*) (Čermák, *Frazeologie* 599 - 600).

As for the common proverb-feature of verbal ellipsis we can remark that the most frequently omitted verb is the verb *být* [to be] (e.g. Sliby, chyby). However, in his study, Čermák found only 19 % of cases in which this feature occured (Čermák, *Frazeologie* 602), which implies that the verb is usually present in Czech proverbs.

It might be also considered remarkable that in Czech proverbs which include the imperative form, the formal method of addressing people [vykání] is not used (Čermák, *SČFI* 1244). This feature is true for German as well but, in English, due to the non-existence of this phenomenon, we cannot assess it.

Another piece of research by Čermák shows that Czech proverbs are also very likely to vary and change over time and according to context (Čermák, *Frazeologie* 587). This only supports the above-mentioned thesis of Norrick's about the fixed, yet not frozen nature of proverb-form. The proverbs may be affected by both paradigmatic (substitutions of one or more components) and a little less-frequent syntagmatic changes (reductions or additions) (Čermák, *Frazeologie* 587). This feature of Czech proverbs will, however, most likely not be supported by subsequent research, owing to the special use of proverbs in the chosen corpus. Proverbs actually play a major role in this book and, therefore, they are not applied in the completely natural flow of speech. On the contrary, special attention is drawn to them which suggests that they are likely to occur rather in the prototypical form than in a non-codified, altered form.

4 Practical Part – Introduction

This part of the thesis will strive to compare and analyse the linguistic features of proverbs used in Jirotka's *Saturnin* and the respective English and German translations, as based on the theoretical grounds of proverb-study. Thus, the proverbs will be analysed cross-linguistically according to different criteria: the actual existence and non-existence of English and German equivalents; the possible identity of proverbs in the languages studied; the degree of figurativeness and literalness of particular equivalents; different motivation in the figurative proverbs; possible semantic differences of the proverbs used; their poetic features or syntactic structure (with the emphasis on verbal ellipsis). In this manner we will attempt to assess how accurate the translations were as far as the proverbs are concerned and also to detect the typical differences between the proverbs of different languages.

4.1 Choosing the Corpus

As the source of proverbs studied in this thesis, the book *Saturnin* by Zdeněk Jirotka was chosen. Being one of the most popular books in the Czech cultural context, it is well-known that proverbs play a major role within this piece of work, contributing to the humour of the book. They are predominantly used by the character of Aunt Catherine, mostly in order to annoy the people around her. Nevertheless, there is also one whole chapter devoted to the analysis and criticism of proverbs in the form of Dr. Witherspoon's (Doktor Vlach's) monologue. As will be highlighted later, this part of the book in particular posed a great challenge to the translators, mainly because the proverbs are set in a certain context which is based on the motivation of Czech proverbs. Therefore, it sometimes proved impossible to make use of existing proverbs of the individual languages which feature different motivation since they would be contextually inappropriate (to be analysed in the subchapter 2.1).

In total, 47 different proverbs were found in the Czech original, providing the foundations upon which to build the research. Thanks to the nature of the book (where, as has been said before, proverbs are of great significance) both the translators (Mark Corner and Joachim Bruss) were compelled to do their best in conveying the general atmosphere which, quite inevitably, includes the proverbs. As a result, it proved impossible to avoid the translation of proverbs and thus we are able to analyse the equivalents or attempts at translation (in short, the way of dealing with the translation) of all the original proverbs. The list of the proverbs

used in the original book and the translations is to be found in the Appendix, as well as the tables documenting some of the subchapters.

Moreover, *Saturnin* was chosen because it very much resembles the typical British 'dry' sense of humour (Chiaro 223). Consequently, the English translation has been very popular in the English-speaking environment, being frequently compared with the works of P. G. Wodehouse's, primarily with the Jeeves (Čáp 2009). From this we can infer that, not only the book itself, but also the translation was very successful, thus providing the research with high-quality material.

4.2 Analysis

4.2.1 Non-existence of the equivalents used

The way of dealing with the translation of proverbs differed from case to case: at times a proverb was used which, thanks to the ancient origin, exists in the same form in all three languages (*All that glitters is not gold*). This case does not pose any challenge for the translator since the search for the equivalent is infallible. Nevertheless, the occurrence of cases where the original proverb is either not known in the target language (e.g. *Host do domu, Bůh do domu*), or where the typical equivalents would not be contextually suitable was not rare. In such situations, there are two options for the translators: one possibility is to use an existing proverb which does not semantically express the specific meaning (but maintains the impression of proverb-usage, as e.g. in the proverb *Just as well to be an addled egg as an idle bird* as an equivalent for *Kdo chce kam, pomozme mu tam*). The other method is to translate the original Czech proverb literally and thus create an utterance resembling a proverb in structure which, however, does not sound familiar to the ears of a native speaker (e.g. *Whoever sits on the stove at home must be looking for someone else*). By using this option, the translator risks the passage giving a clumsy impression but, on the other hand, there is still a chance that it might later become proverbial even in the respective language.
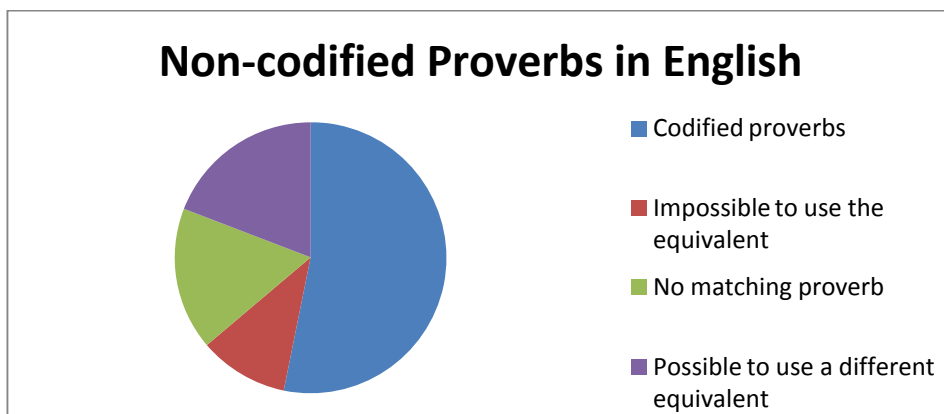
4.2.1.1 English

The potential non-existence of the English proverbs was determined according to the Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs (1970, hereafter ODEP).

The research showed that, out of 47 proverbs, in 22 cases (46.81 %) a non-codified English equivalent was used. This outcome seems quite striking and provokes a question about the reason for this noticeable result. One of the explanations might be that the Czech and English proverbs differ so much that it is impossible to think of suitable equivalents in the given context. However, during the research it was found out that this can by no means apply to all the examples since there actually are proverbs which could have been used even in the given context. For example, instead of the clumsy phrase *Youth spent in idleness means old age holding the begging bowl* (as an equivalent of *Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci*) a far more suitable proverb was found: *A young man idle, an old man needy,* which fulfils both the contextual needs and the form of an existing proverb. A similar instance appears twice in the book, namely the equivalent of the Czech proverb *Mladý může, starý musí* which was translated as *What the young may do, the old must die*. This phrase was also not found in the ODEP; nevertheless, in both cases it could be replaced by a proverb *Young men may die, but old must die.* From this example we can observe that even a slight change might mean a big difference in the overall impression.

Nevertheless, it was ascertained that in 5 out of 22 cases (22.73 %), due to contextual reasons, it is impossible to use the existing equivalent found in the ODEP. In these examples, Jirotka usually comments on the proverb later using the literal meaning of the proverb which prevents the use of an equivalent, same in the meaning, but different in the motivation. To illustrate this, it seems that the proverb *Curses, like chickens come home to roost* might be an appropriate equivalent for the Czech proverb *Jak se do lesa volá, tak se z lesa ozývá.* However, it is impossible to use it in the book because the following paragraph is devoted to the explanation of the invalidity of this proverb using the background of the forest. As a consequence, the translator was forced to use the non-proverbial English phrase *What you say to forest, the forest echoes back to you.*

Nevertheless, in total, there are only eight cases where no matching proverb whatsoever was discovered (when the context is disregarded), which corresponds to 17.02 %.

Non-codified Proverbs in English
- Codified proverbs
- Impossible to use the equivalent
- No matching proverb
- Possible to use a different equivalent

From the presented findings we can deduce that, in some cases (21.28 %), a little more attention could have been paid to the translation in order to provide the readers with a more plausible interpretation. For the full overview see Appendix 2.

4.2.1.2 German

The analysis of the German proverbs revealed notable differences between both translations. It was found that 40 out of 47 proverbs (i.e. 85.11 %) exist in exactly the same form, as compared to the German dictionary of proverbs by Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander (2012). This result indicates the measurable closeness of Czech and German proverbs, as well as the cultural similarities in general. The non-existing proverbs were mere translations of the Czech source with the exception of the proverb *Grüß Gott tritt ein, bring Glück herein,* as an inventive equivalent of the Czech proverb *Host do domu, Bůh do domu.*

With some of the proverbs, only a minor change would have sufficed in order to use a codified form – e.g. the phrase *Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben* could have been replaced by the proverb *Wer zu spät kommt, schadet sich selbst* which is actually identical in form to the Czech original *Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.*

Non-codified Proverbs in German
- Codified proverbs
- Possible to use the equivalent
- No matching proverb
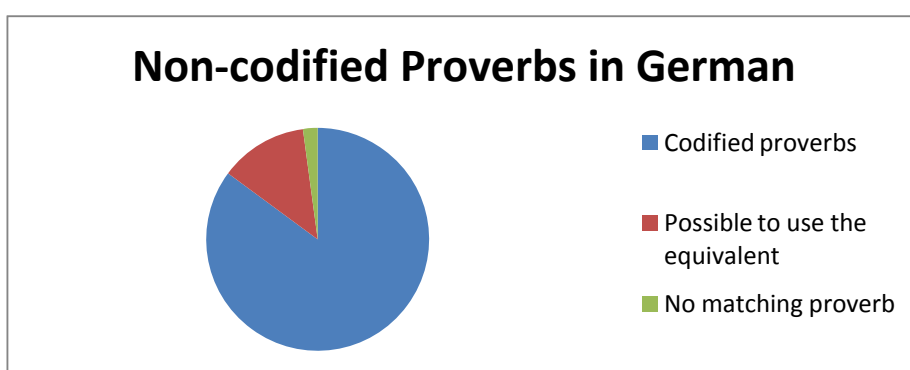
This survey clearly shows that the share of existing German equivalents was much higher than in the case of English proverbs. One of the possible reasons is that almost all the Czech proverbs used in *Saturnin* have their deep-rooted counterparts in the German language. However, seeking English equivalents proved to be much more difficult because of both the linguistic as well as cultural differences.

4.2.2 Identical Proverbs

It has already been stated in the chapter about the translation of proverbs (3.2.2) that the existence of proverbs using identical vocabulary and imagery to express identical meanings is caused by their common origin. Owing to the very closely-connected historical and cultural backgrounds within Europe, it is no wonder that all three languages in question have been influenced by Antiquity, the Bible or Medieval Latin, for instance. We might also safely assume that the long-lasting interconnection between the Czech and German cultural and linguistic environments, which lasted for about six centuries (Trost 21), is responsible for a bigger proportion of identical proverbs than in the case of Czech and English.

It should also be noted that only the existing (codified) proverbs will be considered, i.e. not the mere translations.

Altogether, nine instances (19.15 %) of the identical proverbs in all languages were found, e.g. *Whoever digs a pit for another falls into it himself, Who laughs last laughs longest, All that glitters is not gold*, etc. (the complete list to be found in the Appendix 4).
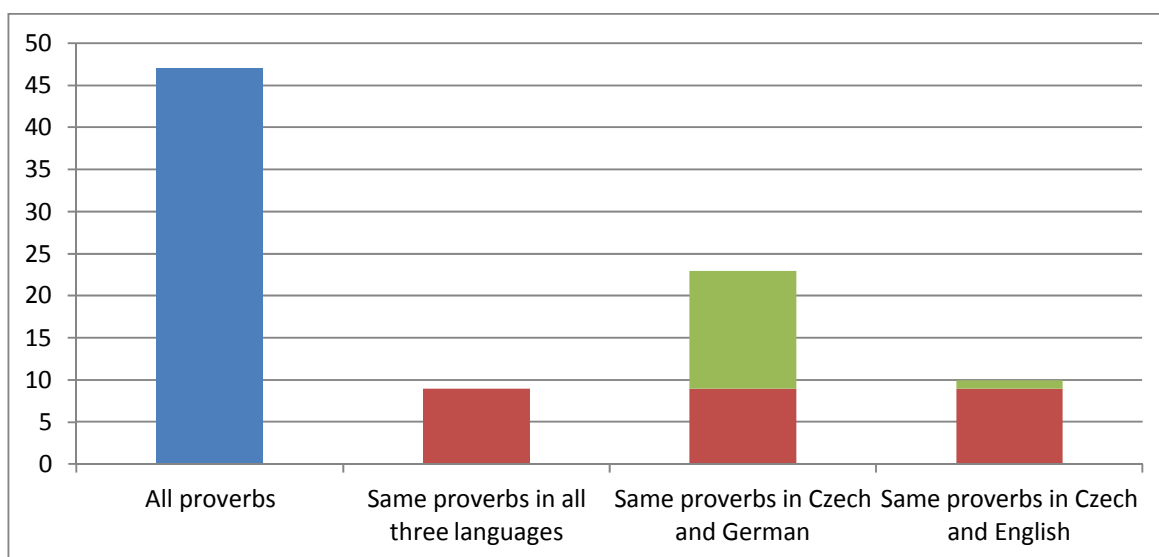
When examining the relationship between Czech and German proverbs only, we arrive at the conclusion that 23 out of 47 proverbs (48.94 %) are identical. Conversely, when we study the shared proverbs in Czech and English, we find that in total only 10 proverbs (21.28 %) are the same. Thus, there is only one extra proverb shared by Czech and English languages *(A cow cannot catch up with a hare)*, in addition to the nine proverbs common for all three languages.

This disproportion of the results only supports the assumption that the coexistence of the Czech and German nations largely influenced the phraseology which seems to be shared to a certain degree.

4.2.3 Figurative and Literal Proverbs

Even though, typically, the proverbs occur in the figurative form (using a metaphor, personification, metonymy, hyperbole etc.), there are a lot of proverbs, as well, which express general wisdom without any metaphorical disguise. The merit of figurative proverbs exists in their greater indirectness and subtlety, as well as in the wide scope of applicability. Nevertheless, as Taylor claims, even the literal proverbs, thanks to their frequent use and universality, serve as a fairly indirect way of instructing, and commenting on, various issues (Taylor 5).

In the original version there are 23 figurative (48.94 %, e.g. *Ranní ptáče dál doskáče*) and 24 literal proverbs (51.06 %, e.g. *Komu není rady, tomu není pomoci*) to be found, so the proportions seem to be quite balanced. In the English translation, out of the 25 codified proverbs 18 are figurative (72.00 %, e.g. *A dog who barks won't bite*) and 7 literal (28.00 %, e.g. *Accidents will happen*), which shows a higher degree of metaphorical, and thus, as has been stated in the theoretical part (3.1.1), also more prototypical sayings. However, the result might be somewhat distorted due to the general low number of codified proverbs found in the English translation. The German translation incorporates 25 figurative proverbs (62.50 % of the 40 codified proverbs, e.g. *Viele Hunde sind des Hasen Tod*) and 15 literal proverbs (37.50 %, e.g. *Alles Böse ist zu etwas gut*). The complete list is included in the Appendix 5.

| Czech Proverbs | English Proverbs | German Proverbs |

Figurative
Literal

According to these findings it can be stated that, in this respect, the translations succeeded in transferring the meanings of the proverbs, considering the importance of figurativeness for the recognisability and memorability of proverbs.

Whereas the Czech and German versions usually agree in the figurative proverbs, the English translation shows quite inventive proverb-equivalents. For instance, the common Czech proverb *Všechno zlé je pro něco dobré* is translated in a metaphorical way: *Every cloud has a silver lining*. A similar example is the English proverb *One shouldn't count one's chickens before they're hatched* as an equivalent for *Nechval dne před večerem, Fine words butter no parsnips (Sliby - chyby), There is no smoke without fire (Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu), Time and tide wait for no man (Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí)*. As a result, we might say that, even though the German version is an exact transfer of the original, as far as the figurativeness is concerned, the English translation managed, in some cases, to surpass the original owing to the inventive and highly metaphorical English proverbs.

4.2.4 Different Motivation in Proverbs of Different Languages

As stated above, the figurative proverbs employ various figures of speech and create rich and inventive imagery, often corresponding with the cultural or even climatic background in which the proverb was created, as for example in the typically British proverb *It never rains but it pours*. The motivation might also be connected with the prototype theory which is practically the fact that people "judge some members of a category to be better examples of the category than other members" (Cruse 383). Therefore, the words used in the proverbs might be chosen according to national and cultural prototypes. Obviously, these typical prototypes are likely to differ across different cultures and environments. The question is whether the prototypes can be reflected in the proverbs of an individual nation.

An interesting example could be the proverb *A cow cannot catch up with a hare,* which incorporates the same imagery as the Czech version *Kráva zajíce nedohoní,* whereas, in German, we find the proverb *Eine Schnecke holt keinen Hasen ein.* Thus we can see that in Czech and English the idea of a slow-moving animal is represented by a cow, while in German the snail is used as a typical slow animal unable to catch a hare.

The notion of danger or possible trouble is also depicted in different ways – in Czech and German we find a similar proverb Nehas, co tě nepálí (Was dich nicht brennt, das lösche nicht) in which the fire is used to deter people from doing something possibly dangerous or troublesome. In English, however, the proverb *Let sleeping dogs lie* makes use of the idea of vicious dogs for the same purpose.

Another difference between Czech, German and English equivalents might be found in the very well-known proverb *Lepší vrabec v hrsti, nežli holub na střeše.* The proximity of Czech and German is made obvious by the fact that the imagery is completely the same in both versions (*Ein Spatz in der Hand ist besser als eine Taube auf dem Dach*), using identical bird-species. On the other hand, English approaches the same problem in a different way, concentrating on quantity instead of quality: *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.*

Attention ought also to be drawn to two examples which help to prove the multicultural nature of the English language, which is closely connected to its remarkable colonial history. It is quite clear that the proverb *It's the last straw that breaks the camel's back,* as well as *Softly, softly catchee monkey* is by no means based on the typical British imagery. These proverbs have been obviously adopted from other languages, as can be deduced from the geographical occurrence of the animals used in the sayings. No such elements may be found in the lists of Czech and German proverbs, arguably because of the generally lesser (Germany) or no (Czech lands) contact with exotic cultures.

A noteworthy example is also the proverb *Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu* which quite overtly uses a word *šproch,* coming from the German (Bavarian) word *sprechen* (Knoll 2013). Nevertheless, the German version is completely different: *Etwas bleibt immer hängen* which demonstrates the fact that the Czech language is largely influenced by German, integrating German words into Czech folklore (even without a previously existing German model). The English translation makes use of a much more general proverb with a broader meaning: *There is no smoke without fire.*

In this chapter we could observe that there are certain differences in the motivation of proverbs among the three languages but it would be very problematic to assert unequivocally that these differences are somehow reflective of the particular cultures, which is a conclusion supported by Mieder: "Care must be taken when looking at proverbs as expressing aspects of a certain worldview or mentality of a people that no stereotypical conclusions about so-called 'national character' are drawn. ... It would be foolish to think of them as reflecting some imagined national character" (Mieder, *Proverbs Speak Louder Than Words* 22-23).

4.2.5 Differences in Meaning

Even though it seems the best option for the translators to attempt to find existing proverb-equivalents of the Czech original in the target languages, it might eventually turn out to be fairly deceptive. Provided that the equivalents have the same origin and thus exist in the same form in the particular languages, the task is fairly straightforward and the English or German version can be used without hesitation. However, this case having been analysed earlier on, we know that such facilitation for the translators did not occur very often. Thus, the translators had to choose between seeking an - at least relatively - suitable equivalent, or simply translating the Czech proverb into the target language. The potential risk comes when the translator chooses to search for an applicable equivalent since, quite obviously, it is practically impossible to find a synonym with completely the same meaning. Nevertheless, owing to the different corpora of proverbs in the individual languages, it might happen that the chosen equivalent matches the context in an even more adequate manner than the original choice of Jirotka's. In this section only a few concrete examples will be analysed in order to show the tendencies in this respect:

Czech	English	German
Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu.	There is no smoke without fire.	Etwas bleibt immer hängen.
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.	Time and tide wait for no man.	Wer nicht kommt zur rechten Zeit, der muss essen was übrigbleibt.
Dočkej času, jako husa klasu.	Softly, softly catchee monkey.	
Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci		Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr.

Considering the proverb *Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu*, its German counterpart *Etwas bleibt immer hängen* and the English version *There is no smoke without fire*, we can clearly observe the more specific meaning of the Czech and German proverbs, which are both focused specifically on slander. On the contrary, the meaning of the English saying is much broader and can be applied to various situations in which the Czech and German version cannot. However, taking the context into consideration, we find that the English translation loses one of the humorous moments owing to the use of the proverb mentioned above. In the context, a piece of gossip is being discussed about someone who was reputedly imprisoned in the past - which appears either completely untrue or an unconfirmed fact. Both the Czech and German versions of the translation make use of the word **trochu** and **etwas** in their proverbs, commenting on this hardly believable fact with the proverb *Na každém šprochu pravdy* **trochu** (**Etwas** *bleibt immer hängen*, respectively), from which they deduce that at least "a bit" (**trochu, etwas**) of the person in question was indeed imprisoned. However, the English version uses the phrase that the person was "at least partially locked up" (Jirotka – Eng, 120), which does not correspond with the proverb used (*There is no smoke without fire*) at all.

The English proverb *Time and tide wait for no man* also somewhat differs from the Czech and German equivalents (*Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí* and *Wer nicht kommt zur rechten Zeit, der muss essen was übrigbleibt*) which can be instantly inferred from the distinct motivation, inspired by the seafaring tradition of Great Britain. Moreover, in addition to the basic meaning that things will not wait for you when you are late (and thus can cause you damage), the English version also denotes the fact that people are unable to stop the passing of time which, in this way, elevates the proverb onto a more noble and general level. Conversely, the German version is even more specific than the Czech original, focusing on the theme of food and eating which, coincidentally, fits perfectly into the context (where the company decides not to wait with lunch for the grandfather).

One particularly specific English proverb which should not be neglected is *Softly, softly catchee monkey* (as an equivalent for *Dočkej času, jako husa klasu*). It is said to have originated in the 20th century in one of the British colonies as a pidgin English phrase instructing how to catch a monkey. Both the Czech and English proverb denotes the idea of patience, however, the English saying also encompasses the notion of gentleness and caution. Moreover, the Czech proverb might also have a rather insulting effect since the person

addressed is indirectly compared to a goose. In the context of *Saturnin*, this effect is greatly utilized: the proverb is used by the annoyed grandfather when talking to Aunt Catherine.

Another particularity that can be identified in the meaning of proverbs are their divergent aims. To illustrate this, we may observe that the German proverb *Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmer mehr* is focused largely on the matters of education whereas the Czech version *(Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci)* concentrates on the dangers of idleness. Even though the general meaning of both proverbs is quite similar, we might consider the Czech proverb somewhat more appropriate, since in *Saturnin* it is used in order to wake the main character up. Thus, the expression *ležáci* implies that the proverb corresponds with the context, evoking the idea of lying or sleeping.

This subchapter has attempted to illustrate the differences that may be found in the meanings of proverbs. Owing to the generally low number of proverbs in the corpus studied, it is impossible to identify any strong tendencies between the proverbs of the individual languages in this respect. However, within the chosen corpus the results seem to suggest yet again that the differences between English and Czech proverbs are far more striking than they are between the Czech and German equivalents.

4.2.6 Poetic Features

It has already been claimed in the theoretical section that the various poetic features of proverbs "increase their chances of becoming inventorized as a unit in a language" (Norrick 47). As Norrick claims, so far there has never been any study which has strived to determine the degree to which the external poetic features (such as rhyme, rhythm, parallelism, alliteration etc.) influence the ease of remembrance or the speed at which new proverbs are adopted by a given target language. Nonetheless, it seems obvious that the impact of prosody is of great significance in the process of a phrase becoming proverbial (Norrick 47).

Czech proverbs

- Rhyme
- Parallelism
- Prosodically neutral

My research has determined that, among the proverbs from Saturnin, rhyme and parallelism seem to be the most prevalent of all poetic features. In the Czech set of proverbs, ten rhyming sayings were found (21.28 %), e.g. *Ranní ptáče dál doskáče, Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci, Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí, Kdo za pecí sedá, jiného tam hledá*. As far as parallelisms are concerned, only three instances were traced (6.38 %), e.g. *Víc očí víc vidí or Host do domu, Bůh do domu*.

English Proverbs

- Rhyme
- Parallelism
- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Prosodically neutral
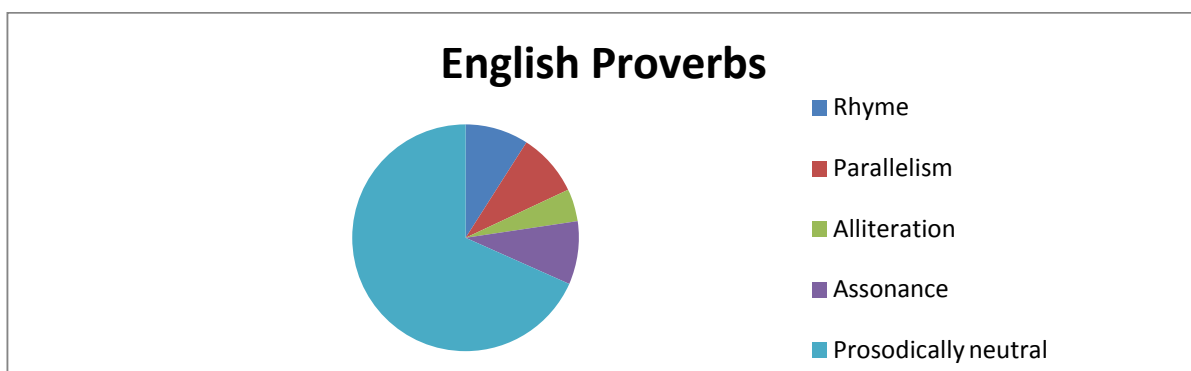
The English codified proverbs do not incorporate as many instances of poetic features as do their Czech counterparts; however, they seem more varied. By way of example, two proverbs contain rhyme (8.00 %): *East or west, home is best* and *A friend in need is a friend indeed* and there are also two instances of parallelism (8.00 %): *A friend in need is a friend* indeed and *Who laughs last laughs longest.* In addition, we find an example of alliteration (and possibly also assonance): *Time and tide wait for no man,* as well as a highly noticeable use of assonance in the exotic proverb *Softly, softly catchee monkey.*

German proverbs

- Rhyme
- Parallelism
- Wer...der
- Prosodically neutral
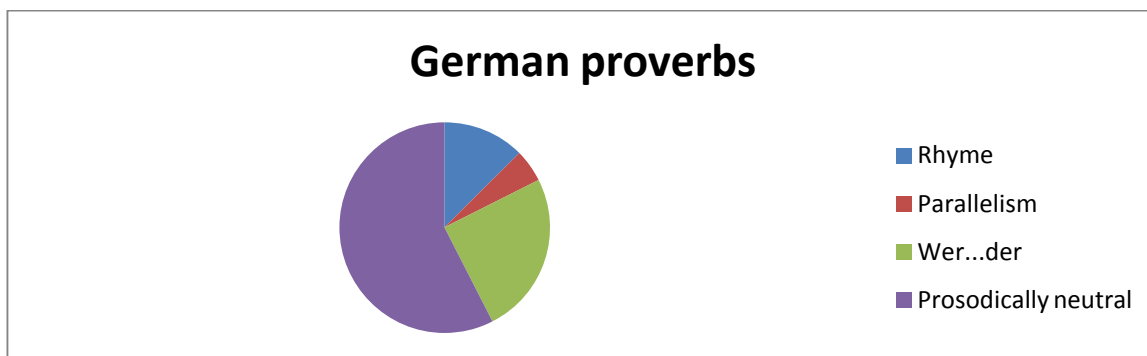
Among the 40 codified German proverbs there are five examples of rhymed proverbs (12.50 %), e.g. *Was du heute kannst besorgen das verschiebe nicht auf morgen, Wenn's der Teufel nicht kann vollenden, tut er ein altes Weib* hinsenden or *Wer dem Teufel Gutes tut, dem dankt er mit der Höle Glut* and two instances of parallelisms (5.00 %): *Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen, Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat.* It might be also noted that the proverbial frame *Wer ... der* is quite frequently used, namely in ten different proverbs (of course the inflectional variants of both the pronoun *wer* and the definite article *der* are included) which corresponds to 25 %.

From these findings we can infer that, although it is quite common to use various prosodic features in the proverbs, it is by no means imperative. More than half of the German proverbs - and almost three quarters of the Czech and English proverbs - do not incorporate any prosodic element and yet they are codified as proverbs.

4.2.7 Grammatical Features

It follows from the characteristic 'pithiness' of proverbs that there should be a strong inclination towards brevity, which also complies with language economy. Thanks to the specific nature of proverbs - and the general awareness of them - it is affordable to omit certain elements from the traditional structure without impeding understanding. As Čermák claims, the most frequently omitted element is the verb (usually the one which does not carry much meaning – e.g. the verb *to be*) (Čermák, *Frazeologie* 602). Even though it might seem odd at first sight to use such an atypical phrase in the flow of speech, it can help to distinguish clearly the proverbial part from the rest of the utterance.

Based on my research it is noticeable that the Czech proverbs in particular employ the syntactic deviation of verbal ellipsis. In 6 cases (12.77 %) the verb *být* [to be] was omitted – e.g. *Mnoho psů - zajícova smrt, Všude dobře, doma nejlépe, Na každém šprochu pravdy*

trochu, Host do domu, Bůh do domu etc. Another peculiar example is the ellipsis of the content verb in the proverb *Mladý může, starý musí* where we have to infer that the omitted verb is *umřít* [to die]. Nevertheless, no native speaker would have any doubt about the intended meaning. In the proverb *Dočkej času, jako husa klasu*, namely in its second part, we are confronted with the ellipsis of the verb - which is the same for both clauses - and which is not repeated for stylistic reasons.

Among the codified English proverbs there are indeed very short - but mostly grammatically regular - sentences. The exception might be in the phrase *East or west, home is best* where the frame *"Whether it is..."* is missing, arguably because of its rhythmical and rhyming nature. However, we can observe a tendency in the proverbs to use a relative nominal clause in the role of a subject, as e.g. in ***Whoever digs a pit for another*** *falls into it himself*, ***Who laughs last*** *laughs longest*, ***Whoever tells lies*** *must also be a thief,* etc.

The German proverbs do not seem to deviate extensively from the grammatical rules although we can again find certain examples of verbal ellipsis: *Draußen ist's gut, daheim aber am besten* or *Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen*. The ellipsis of the subject seems not to be so prevalent so the proverb *Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat* without the anticipatory *es* might also be considered quite remarkable. It should not be missed out, either, that the syntax of a proverb might also be altered on the account of rhyme, e.g. *Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen* where the finite verb of the subordinate clause (*kannst*) should be positioned at the end, more specifically after the infinitive (*besorgen*). The same example can be found in the proverb *Wenn's der Teufel nicht kann vollenden, tut er ein altes Weib hinsenden*.
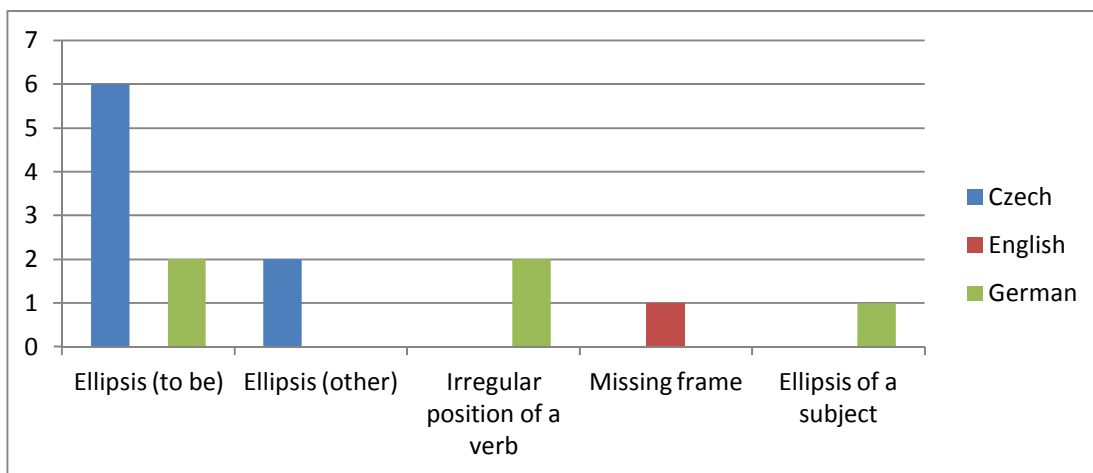
The findings show that it is not exceptional for proverbs to diverge from grammatical rules. The most significant tendency (although not too significant) towards the syntactic (or grammatical, generally) irregularity has been traced in the Czech proverbs in the form of verb-omission. Otherwise it might be concluded that most of the proverbs studied comply with the regular grammatical structures valid for the particular languages.

5 Discussion

The results of the analysis seem to validate quite convincingly the given hypothesis. The Czech and German proverbs share very similar features as far as their motivation is concerned; they agree in terms of the poetic features employed and we also find less significant semantic differences between the Czech and German proverbs than in comparison with English. Most noticeably, however, the hypothesis is confirmed by the general correspondence between the Czech and German equivalents, where in 85.11 % of cases an existing German equivalent was found, as compared with the 46.81% success rate of the English translation. Similarly, whereas in the Czech and English versions only ten identical proverbs were detected, the German translation agrees with the Czech original in 23 cases. These pieces of evidence suggest that the Czech and German proverbial corpora have developed in a very similar direction, influencing each other to a considerable extent. Conversely, based on the different motivation and differences in the meaning of the English proverbs, we might assume that the English corpus of proverbs has been affected by different influences: for example, by adopting proverbs from other cultures (which is a tendency not found in the Czech and German corpora). This tendency was also reflected in the accuracy of the individual translations, whereby the German version had to diverge from the original to a lesser degree than the English version, in which suitable equivalents were often not found at all.

6 Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to compare and analyse Czech, English and German proverbs and to determine what tendencies the individual languages show towards the form and structure of their proverbs. In the theoretical section, the complexity of proverbs was introduced in connection with the definition of a proverb, incorporating also the typical features of proverbs of the languages studied. Since the practical section is comprised mainly of a comparison between the individual translations, the different strategies of proverb-translation were also described in the theoretical section.

The practical part endeavoured to confirm the hypothesis that the tendencies of the Czech and German proverbs approximate somewhat more than in the case of Czech and English by analysing the proverbs from different viewpoints. It was demonstrated that the German corpus of proverbs provides more favourable grounds for translation from Czech than does its

English counterpart, since the proverbs are very often based on similar foundations. Thanks to the cultural and historical proximity of the Czech- and German-speaking nations, it is also not surprising that the proportion of identical proverbs is greater between these two languages than between Czech and English. However, according to the research, it seems that the English proverbs employ figurative features more often than the proverbs in Czech or German, showing a bigger variety of motivations. It was also proved that both the external poetic features - as well as grammatical deviations - are fairly common, yet not vital for proverbs in all three languages.

The thesis has attempted to prove that, thanks to the historical, cultural and linguistic closeness of the Czech and German nations, the German translation showed to be more accurate and faithful as far as the proverbs are concerned. However, the English translation also managed to convey the general character of the book (typical because of the frequent use of proverbs), despite it being rather demanding, owing to the differing nature of the two languages.

The possible drawback of this thesis might be the extent of the corpus, which was restricted by the choice of a book and its translations. Nevertheless, I find it quite crucial that the proverbs and their equivalents were set into a certain context as they would appear for example in a conversation, as it resembles much better their real use than merely searching for isolated equivalents would.

Counted amongst the areas which, due to the limited length of the thesis, have not been covered but could be included in my future M.A. thesis, is the etymology of proverbs, since it would be very interesting to examine the most prevalent sources of proverbs of the individual languages, or the direction of the influences between the languages. Apart from that, the motivation of proverbs could be analysed more extensively, in an attempt to determine which spheres of life are most often reflected in the proverbs of the particular languages.

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Appendix 1 - List of proverbs as they appear in the book

ČJ	AJ	NJ
Neštěstí nechodí po horách, ale po lidech.	Accidents will happen.	Das Unglück kommt nicht über die Berge, sondern über die Menschen.
Neštěstí nechodí nikdy samo.	It never rains but it pours.	Ein Unglück kommt selten allein.
Host do domu, Bůh do domu.	A guest in the home represents a visit from God.	Grüß Gott tritt ein, bring Glück herein.
Víc očí víc vidí.	A lot of eyes do a lot of seeing.	Vier Augen sehen mehr als zwei.
Mnoho psů – zajícova smrt.	Many dogs mean the death of a hare.	Viele Hunde sind des Hasen Tod.
Všude dobře, doma nejlépe.	East or west, home is best.	Draußen ist's gut, daheim aber am besten.
Ranní ptáče dál doskáče.	The early bird catches the worm.	Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund.
Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci.	Youth spent in idleness means old age holding the begging bowl.	Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr.
Nechval dne před večerem.	One shouldn't count one's chickens before they're hatched.	Man soll den Tag nicht vor dem Abend loben.
Kam čert nemůže, nastrčí bábu.	The old hag rushes in where the Devil fears to tread.	Wenn's der Teufel nicht kann vollenden, tut er ein altes Weib hinsenden.
Kdo jinému jámu kopá, sám do ní padá.	Whoever digs a pit for another falls into it himself.	Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein.
Čiň čertu dobře, peklem se ti odmění.	Hell is the reward for those who treat the devil kindly.	Wer dem Teufel Gutes tut, dem dankt er mit der Höle Glut.
Kůň je jednou hříbětem a člověk dvakrát dítětem.	A horse is only a foal once while a human is twice a child.	Das Pferd wird wohl alt, aber es wird nicht wieder ein Füllen.
Tak dlouho se chodí se džbánem pro vodu, až se ucho utrhne.	One day comes the straw that breaks the camel's back.	Der Krug geht solange zum Wasser, bis er bricht.
Komu není rady, tomu není pomoci.	Those who didn't take advice received no help.	Wem nicht zu raten ist, dem ist auch nicht zu helfen.
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.	Time and tide wait for no man.	Wer nicht kommt zur rechten Zeit, der muss essen, was übrigbleibt.
Častá krůpěj i kámen proráží.	The constant drip wears away the stone.	Steter Tropfen höhlt den Stein.
Dočkej času, jako husa klasu.	Softly, softly catchee monkey.	Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat.
Kdo se směje naposled, ten se směje nejlépe.	Who laughs last laughs longest.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten.
Máš-li škodu, o posměch se nestarej.	The injured one are immune to mockery.	Wer den Schaden hat, braucht für den Spott nicht zu sorgen.
V nouzi poznáš přítele.	A friend in need is a friend indeed.	In der Not erkennst du den Freund.
Co tě nepálí, nehas.	Let sleeping dogs lie.	Was dich nicht brennt, das lösche nicht.
Každý je svého štěstí strůjcem.	Everyone is the architect of	Jeder ist seines Glückes

	their own misfortune.	Schmied.
Koho Bůh miluje, toho křížem navštěvuje.	God visits suffering upon those whom he loves.	Des Kreuzes schickt Gott denen viel, die er in den Himmel will.
Trpělivost přináší růže.	Patience is a virtue.	Geduld trägt Früchte.
Mladý může, starý musí.	What may cut short a young life always ends an old one.	Jung kann man, alt muss man.
Kdo chce kam, pomozme mu tam.	Just as well to be an addled egg as an idle bird.	Reisende soll man nicht aufhalten.
S poctivostí nejdál dojdeš.	Honesty is the best policy.	Ehrlich währt am längsten.
Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu.	There is no smoke without fire.	Etwas bleibt immer hängen.
Kdo lže, ten i krade.	Whoever tells lies must also be a thief.	Wer lügt, der stiehlt auch.
Kdo do tebe kamenem, ty do něho chlebem.	If someone casts a stone at you, you should respond by offering him bread.	Wer die Steine bietet, den vergelt's mit Brot.
Není všechno zlato, co se třpytí.	All that glitters is not gold.	Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glänzt.
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.	Whoever's late harms no one but himself.	Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben.
Jak se do lesa volá, tak se z lesa ozývá.	What you say to the forest, the forest echoes back to you.	Wie man in den Wald ruft, so schallt es heraus.
Kdo za pecí sedá, jiného tam hledá.	Whoever sits on the stove at home must be looking for someone else.	Der sucht den andern im Ofen, der selbst im Ofen wohnt.
Pes, který štěká, nekouše.	A dog who barks won't bite.	Hunde die bellen, beißen nicht.
Kráva zajíce nedohoní.	A cow cannot catch up with a hare.	Eine Schnecke holt keinen Hasen ein.
Čistota je půl zdraví.	Personal hygiene is halfway to health.	Reinlichket ist die halbe Gesundheit.
Lepší vrabec v hrsti, nežli holub na střeše.	A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.	Ein Spatz in der Hand ist besser als eine Taube auf dem Dach.
Sytý hladovému nevěří.	The well-fed don't understand the hungry.	Der Satte glaubt dem Hungrigen nicht.
Pozdě bycha honiti.	It's too late to go chasing "if's".	Wennich holt den Verzehrmann nicht ein.
Kdo jsi bez viny, udeř.	Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone.	Wer ohne Schuld ist, der werfe den ersten Stein.
Všechno zlé je pro něco dobré.	Every cloud has a silver lining.	Alles Böse ist zu etwas gut.
Mladý může, starý musí.	What the young may do, the old must die.	Der Junge kann, der Alte muss.
Co můžeš učiniti dnes, neodkládej na zítřek.	You should not put off till tomorrow what you can perfectly well do today.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen.
Sliby jsou chyby.	Fine words butter no parsnips.	Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen.
Každá liška chválí svůj ocas.	Every fox boasts about its tail.	Jeder Fuchs lobt seinen Schwanz.

Appendix 2 - Non-codified equivalents in English

Non-codified English Proverbs	Possible equivalents found	
	Contextually appropriate	Contextually inappropriate
A guest in the home represents a visit from God.		
A lot of eyes do a lot of seeing.	Two eyes see more than one.	
Many dogs mean the death of a hare.		
Youth spent in idleness means old age holding the begging bowl.	A young man idle, an old man needy.	
The old hag rushes in where the Devil fears to tread.	Where old Harry can't go, an old harridan can.	
Hell is the reward for those who treat the devil kindly.		
A horse is only a foal once while a human is twice a child.		
Those who didn't take advice received no help.	We may give advice but we cannot give conduct.	
The injured one are immune to mockery.		
Everyone is the architect of their own misfortune.	Everyone is the architect of their own fortune.	
God visits suffering upon those whom he loves.		Whom the Gods love die young.
What may cut short a young life always ends an old one.	Young men may die, but old must die.	
If someone casts a stone at you, you should respond by offering him bread.		
Whoever's late harms no one but himself.	Late comers are shent.	
What you say to the forest, the forest echoes back to you.		Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.
Whoever sits on the stove at home must be looking for someone else.		
Personal hygiene is halfway to health.		Cleanliness is next to godliness.
The well-fed don't understand the hungry.	Full believes not who is fasting.	
It's too late to go chasing "if's".		It's too late to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted.
Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone.		

What the young may do, the old must die.	Young men may die, but old must die.	
Every fox boasts about its tail.		Fox is known by his brush.

Appendix 3 - Non-codified Equivalents in German

Non-codified German proverbs	Contextually appropriate equivalents
Grüß Gott tritt ein, bring Glück herein.	Den Gast senden die Götter.
Jung kann man, alt muss man.	Der Junge kann, der Alte muss.
Wer die Steine bietet, den vergelt's mit Brot.	Wer nach dir mit Steinen wirft, dem antworte mit Brot.
Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben.	Wer zu spät kommt, bestraft sich selbst.
Der sucht den andern in Ofen, der selbst im Ofen wohnt.	Wer einen hinterm Ofen sucht, muss selber dahinter gesteckt haben
Alles Böse ist zu etwas gut.	Alles Schlechte hat auch seine gute Seite
Jeder Fuchs lobt seinen Schwanz.	

Appendix 4 – Identical Proverbs

ČJ	AJ	NJ
Kdo jinému jámu kopá, sám do ní padá.	Whoever digs a pit for another falls into it himself.	Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein.
Častá krůpěj i kámen proráží.	The constant drip wears away the stone.	Steter Tropfen höhlt den Stein.
Kdo se směje naposled, ten se směje nejlépe.	Who laughs last laughs longest.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten.
V nouzi poznáš přítele.	A friend in need is a friend indeed.	In der Not erkennst du den Freund.
Každý je svého štěstí strůjcem.	Everyone is the architect of their own misfortune.	Jeder ist seines Glückes Schmied.
Kdo lže, ten i krade.	Whoever tells lies must also be a thief.	Wer lügt, der stiehlt auch.
Není všechno zlato, co se třpytí.	All that glitters is not gold.	Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glänzt.
Pes, který štěká, nekouše.	A dog who barks won't bite.	Hunde die bellen, beißen nicht.
Co můžeš učiniti dnes, neodkládej na zítřek.	You should not put off till tomorrow what you can perfectly well do today.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen.

Appendix 5 – Figurative and Literal Proverbs

FIGURATIVE	LITERAL	NON-CODIFIED

ČJ	AJ	NJ
Neštěstí nechodí po horách, ale po lidech.	Accidents will happen.	Das Unglück kommt nicht über die Berge, sondern über die Menschen.
Neštěstí nechodí nikdy samo.	It never rains but it pours.	Ein Unglück kommt selten allein.
Host do domu, Bůh do domu.	A guest in the home represents a visit from God.	Grüß Gott tritt ein, bring Glück herein.
Víc očí víc vidí.	A lot of eyes do a lot of seeing.	Vier Augen sehen mehr als zwei.
Mnoho psů – zajícova smrt.	Many dogs mean the death of a hare.	Viele Hunde sind des Hasen Tod.
Všude dobře, doma nejlépe.	East or west, home is best.	Draußen ist's gut, daheim aber am besten.
Ranní ptáče dál doskáče.	The early bird catches the worm.	Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund.
Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci.	Youth spent in idleness means old age holding the begging bowl.	Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr.
Nechval dne před večerem.	One shouldn't count one's chickens before they're hatched.	Man soll den Tag nicht vor dem Abend loben.
Kam čert nemůže, nastrčí bábu.	The old hag rushes in where the Devil fears to tread.	Wenn's der Teufel nicht kann vollenden, tut er ein altes Weib hinsenden.
Kdo jinému jámu kopá, sám do ní padá.	Whoever digs a pit for another falls into it himself.	Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein.
Čiň čertu dobře, peklem se ti odmění.	Hell is the reward for those who treat the devil kindly.	Wer dem Teufel Gutes tut, dem dankt er mit der Höle Glut.
Kůň je jednou hříbětem a člověk dvakrát dítětem.	A horse is only a foal once while a human is twice a child.	Das Pferd wird wohl alt, aber es wird nicht wieder ein Füllen.
Tak dlouho se chodí se džbánem pro vodu, až se ucho utrhne.	One day comes the straw that breaks the camel's back.	Der Krug geht solange zum Wasser, bis er bricht.
Komu není rady, tomu není pomoci.	Those who didn't take advice received no help.	Wem nicht zu raten ist, dem ist auch nicht zu helfen.
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.	Time and tide wait for no man.	Wer nicht kommt zur rechten Zeit, der muss essen, was übrigbleibt.
Častá krůpěj i kámen proráží.	The constant drip wears away the stone.	Steter Tropfen höhlt den Stein.
Dočkej času, jako husa klasu.	Softly, softly catchee monkey.	Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat.
Kdo se směje naposled, ten se směje nejlépe.	Who laughs last laughs longest.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten.
Máš-li škodu, o posměch se nestarej.	The injured one are immune to mockery.	Wer den Schaden hat, braucht für den Spott nicht zu sorgen.
V nouzi poznáš přítele.	A friend in need is a friend indeed.	In der Not erkennst du den Freund.
Co tě nepálí, nehas.	Let sleeping dogs lie.	Was dich nicht brennt, das

		lösche nicht.
Každý je svého štěstí strůjcem.	Everyone is the architect of their own misfortune.	Jeder ist seines Glückes Schmied.
Koho Bůh miluje, toho křížem navštěvuje.	God visits suffering upon those whom he loves.	Des Kreuzes schickt Gott denen viel, die er in den Himmel will.
Trpělivost přináší růže.	Patience is a virtue.	Geduld trägt Früchte.
Mladý může, starý musí.	What may cut short a young life always ends an old one.	Jung kann man, alt muss man.
Kdo chce kam, pomozme mu tam.	Just as well to be an addled egg as an idle bird.	Reisende soll man nicht aufhalten.
S poctivostí nejdál dojdeš.	Honesty is the best policy.	Ehrlich währt am längsten.
Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu.	There is no smoke without fire.	Etwas bleibt immer hängen.
Kdo lže, ten i krade.	Whoever tells lies must also be a thief.	Wer lügt, der stiehlt auch.
Kdo do tebe kamenem, ty do něho chlebem.	If someone casts a stone at you, you should respond by offering him bread.	Wer die Steine bietet, den vergelt's mit Brot.
Není všechno zlato, co se třpytí.	All that glitters is not gold.	Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glänzt.
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.	Whoever's late harms no one but himself.	Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben.
Jak se do lesa volá, tak se z lesa ozývá.	What you say to the forest, the forest echoes back to you.	Wie man in den Wald ruft, so schallt es heraus.
Kdo za pecí sedá, jiného tam hledá.	Whoever sits on the stove at home must be looking for someone else.	Der sucht den andern im Ofen, der selbst im Ofen wohnt.
Pes, který štěká, nekouše.	A dog who barks won't bite.	Hunde die bellen, beißen nicht.
Kráva zajíce nedohoní.	A cow cannot catch up with a hare.	Eine Schnecke holt keinen Hasen ein.
Čistota je půl zdraví.	Personal hygiene is halfway to health.	Reinlichket ist die halbe Gesundheit.
Lepší vrabec v hrsti, nežli holub na střeše.	A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.	Ein Spatz in der Hand ist besser als eine Taube auf dem Dach.
Sytý hladovému nevěří.	The well-fed don't understand the hungry.	Der Satte glaubt dem Hungrigen nicht.
Pozdě bycha honiti.	It's too late to go chasing "if's".	Wennich holt den Verzehrmann nicht ein.
Kdo jsi bez viny, udeř.	Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone.	Wer ohne Schuld ist, der werfe den ersten Stein.
Všechno zlé je pro něco dobré.	Every cloud has a silver lining.	Alles Böse ist zu etwas gut.
Mladý může, starý musí.	What the young may do, the old must die.	Der Junge kann, der Alte muss.
Co můžeš učiniti dnes, neodkládej na zítřek.	You should not put off till tomorrow what you can perfectly well do today.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen.
Sliby jsou chyby.	Fine words butter no parsnips.	Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen.
Každá liška chválí svůj ocas.	Every fox boasts about its tail.	Jeder Fuchs lobt seinen Schwanz.

Appendix 6 – Rhyme and Parallelism in Proverbs

RHYME		
ČJ	**AJ**	**NJ**
Host do domu, Bůh do domu.	East or west, home is best.	Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund.
Ranní ptáče dál doskáče.	A friend in need is a friend indeed.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen.
Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci.		Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen.
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.		Wenn's der Teufel nicht kann vollenden, tut er ein altes Weib hinsenden.
Dočkej času, jako husa klasu.		Wer dem Teufel Gutes tut, dem dankt er mit der Höle Glut.
Kdo chce kam, pomozme mu tam.		
Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu.		
Kdo za pecí sedá, jiného tam hledá.		
Sliby jsou chyby.		
Kdo pozdě chodí, sám sobě škodí.		

PARALLELISM		
ČJ	**AJ**	**NJ**
Host do domu, Bůh do domu.	A friend in need is a friend indeed.	Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat.
Víc očí víc vidí.	Who laughs last laughs longest.	Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen.
Kdo se směje naposled, ten se směje nejlépe.		

Appendix 7 – Ellipsis of the Verb TO BE

ČJ	NJ
Host do domu, Bůh do domu.	Draußen ist's gut, daheim aber am besten.
Mnoho psů, zajícova smrt.	Leicht versprochen, leicht gebrochen.
Všude dobře, doma nejlépe.	
Mladí ležáci, staří žebráci.	
Na každém šprochu pravdy trochu.	
Pozdě bycha honiti.	