

*Patryk Zajac*

## **Metaphorical mapping of LIFE in the Hausa proverbs with regard to their cross-linguistic equivalents**

### **Abstract**

Proverbs are folklore texts particularly valuable for studying a culture, as they are based on the mechanisms of conceptualization which reflect the so-called Linguistic View of the World (Underhill 2011; Bartmiński 2006). The aim of this article is to analyse Hausa proverbs from the perspective of languages representing other cultures (English and Polish). The methodological approach is based on an extended version of Lakoff-Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory in which the *metaphorical concept* is identified with the *proverb concept* of figurative sayings (Lewandowska et al. 2014). Thus, the cross-linguistic comparison of proverbial statements is based on the idea of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 2003) and its constituent elements of the source and target domain (Szpila 2003). The objective of the article is to present equivalent set phrases (in Hausa covered by the term *karin magana*) which indirectly refer to the universal conceptual target domain of LIFE.

The article also discusses the question of culturally relevant key words as the constituents of source domains of proverbs in Hausa and indicates their counterparts in Polish and English while encoding the same target domain. The data are taken from the published collections of Hausa proverbs (Kirk-Greene 1966; Yunusa 1977) and a dictionary (Abraham 1962). The comparison of *karin magana* with the English and Polish equivalents enables the identification of the lexical exponents of cultural distance between languages and cultures.

Keywords: Hausa proverbs, comparative paremiology, conceptual metaphor, culture key words, equivalence

### **1. Introduction**

Proverbs are a genre which originates from traditional oral literature. In Hausa they are called *karin magana* 'folded speech'. This term, however, is broader than its counterpart in European languages. It covers different types of short set phrases that have non-literal meanings. From the perspective of the Polish language, *karin magana* are not only proverbs but also apothegms, aphorisms and

maxims<sup>1</sup>. According to the Hausa people themselves, the most distinctive feature of *karin magana* is the fact that they must be interpreted by their recipient (Gidley 1974 as cited in Furniss 1996: 70). Significantly, this process is conditioned by one's prior knowledge of the proverb concept which is often rooted in a cultural background (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 167). According to Piłaszewicz (1983: 29), other typical features of *karin magana* are brevity, vagueness and conciseness combined with expressivity of their message which is understandable in particular for the Hausa people. As the formal properties are considered, Hausa proverbs use simple but artistic language, often enriched by the interplay of rhythm and rhyme.

“For centuries, proverbs have remained an integral part of African culture, passed on from generation to generation” (Okwelum 2017: preface). Thus, the definition of the proverb in the African context is mostly based on its communicative functions: “Proverbs in most African languages are crisp, pithy and condensed means of saying much with few words” (Obasanjo 2017). From a folkloristic perspective, proverbs shape social behaviours and encode common lore known among given society in the form of generalising statements (Bartmiński 2006: 160). And finally, it must be claimed that “[f]rom the cognitive point of view proverbs are linguistically and culturally coined frames” (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 162). The “proverbs essentials” presented up to this point establish the foundations for the following cross-linguistic cognitive analysis.

### 1.1. Previous works on *karin magana*

*Karin magana* got scholars' attention in the past. Hausa paremiography dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was initiated by an European linguist (Schön 1885), but, in fact, it was developed later (Robinson 1905 [1887]; Prietze 1904; Merrick 1905; Mischlich 1911 [1902]; Fletcher 1912; Rattray 1913; Whitting 1940). The activity of indigenous researchers did not begin until the half of 20<sup>th</sup> century and was commenced with an anonymous work of *Karin magana...* (1950).

Numerous works discuss particular aspects of Hausa proverbs which are relevant in the Hausa cultural context (Bagaye 1992; Baldi 2012; Gidley 1974; Jang 1994; Skinner 1988). Among them, those devoted to the Hausa cultural code (Aminu 2003), the ones covering the use of proverbs in a women's community (Koko 1989) and children's education (Baldi 2015).

This article is focused on the comparative aspect of Hausa proverbs. Therefore, it is taken into consideration that they have been already studied in terms of their

---

<sup>1</sup> One may compare that in the Polish language the differentiation of apothegms, aphorisms and proverbs occurred relatively recently. Historically the term *przysłowie* ‘proverb’ was applied to all of them (Kłosińska 2011: 10). However, in the Hausa literary tradition there are oral literature genres which almost certainly do not have their direct counterparts in any European language, i.a. *kirari*, *take*, *habaici*, *zambo* (Furniss 1996: 70).

English equivalents (Saleh 2014; Usman 2014). Also some issues of translating Hausa proverbs into English have been indicated (Ibrahim 2011). However, heretofore only a few works on Hausa proverbs have been published in Poland. The popular science collection of *karin magana* translations (in a somewhat poetic style) was published by Pilszczikowa (1958). Over two decades later Piłaszewicz (1983) wrote on the topic in his book on Hausa literature and preceded it by the preliminary translations of Hausa proverbs into Polish (1970, 1971).

So far, the issue of the meaning of Hausa proverbs and the possible differences between languages in encoding the target conceptual domains have not been investigated in a satisfactory manner. As proverbs can be considered a set of “how-to-live” recommendations formulated from an impartial, universal perspective, the notion of LIFE seems to have its largest linguistic representation which can be given a comparative perspective.

### 1.2. The aim of the article

The article presents a combined approach towards the comparison of equivalent proverbs as well as other set phrases in culturally and geographically distant languages which are Hausa on the one hand, and Polish and English on the other hand. The methodology that was applied is based on the *Culture Key Words Theory* (Wierzbicka 1997) and the cognitive linguistics perspective on conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 2003 [1980]). The objective of the article is to present equivalent set phrases (in Hausa covered by the term of *karin magana*) which share the same proverb (metaphorical) concept and indirectly refer to the universal conceptual domain of LIFE. It also raises the question of lexical exponents of cultural distance (key words) as the constituents of the source domains of proverbs in Hausa and indicates their counterparts in Polish and English while encoding the same target domain.

### 1.3. Sources of data

Being aware of previous advances in collecting and describing Hausa proverbs that were mentioned, the basic sources of the current research are the lexicon of Hausa proverbs by Yunusa (1977), the Hausa-English lexicon by Kirk-Greene (1966) and the Hausa-English dictionary by Abraham (1962). The last two sources are particularly valuable as they include English translations and/or equivalents of *karin magana*, therefore their non-contextual message can be established on the basis of their comparative analysis. The Polish equivalents sources cover the dictionary of Polish language (Żmigrodzki 2007) and lexicons of proverbs arranged according to key words (Krzyżanowski 1969-78; Kłosińska 2011). The English sayings are excerpted from the *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus* (online version) and the English-Polish lexicon of sayings (Radziejewski 1998).

## 2. Methodological background

The current comparative analysis of proverbs has its foundations in the ethnolinguistics and cognitive linguistics. The first part is covered by the Linguistic View (Picture) of the Word Theory (Bartmiński 2006: 12):

[The linguistic view of the world is] the interpretation of reality encapsulated in a language and verbalised in various ways which is possible to be encompassed in a set of statements about the world<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, the basic assumption of the *Linguistic View of the World Theory* is that the way of the conceptualization of the world by human beings is encoded in their language. Proverbs as set textual units deeply rooted in a traditional philosophy (folklore) of a given people provide exceptionally valuable examples to analyse in this context as they directly or indirectly utter the “statements about the world” considered to be true by these people. Moreover, the vocabulary of the proverbs and set phrases is filled with culture-specific concepts known as culturems (Burkhardt 2008). This term in broad meaning includes also culture key words (Wierzbicka 1997: 15–16):

“Key words” are words which are particularly important and revealing in a given culture. [...] There is no finite set of such words in a language, and there is no “objective discovery procedure” for identifying them. To show that a particular word is of special importance in a given culture, one has to make a case for it. [...] [T]he word in question (whatever its overall frequency) is very frequently used in one particular semantic domain, [...] this word is at the center of a whole phraseological cluster [...] the proposed “key word” occurs frequently in **proverbs**<sup>3</sup>, in **sayings**, in popular songs, in book titles, and so on.

The cognitive part of the analysis provided in the article is based on the extended Lakoff-Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory which illuminates similarities between metaphors and proverbs in three-elements spectre covering imaginary, projection and form. Thus, the common and justified assertion is that proverbs and other linguistic set phrases predominantly are metaphorical (figurative). The comprehension of proverbs stands on particular cognitive concepts (named proverb concepts) which on the operational-mental level can be compared to metaphorical

---

<sup>2</sup> Translation from Polish by the author.

<sup>3</sup> In quotations emphasis in bold-face is indicated by the author.

concepts (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 167). Therefore, numerous proverbs include (conceptual) metaphors:

From the cognitivist point of view, proverbs can be perceived as stereotyped speech-forms that, like metaphors, are based on socially efficient cognitive concepts! The underlying hypothesis is that **many proverbs and metaphors share a similar or even identical cognitive structure**. Evidence for this link between metaphors and proverbs can be found in their equivalent imagery.

(Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 166)

**Metaphorical proverbs involve two important domains: the source domain and the target domain [...].** Of interest to a proverb researcher are both domains. The latter domain gives an insight into the conceptual domains for which the language community forms proverbs [...]. **The target domain is then structured by different proverbs**, which establish an internal hierarchy within a conceptual category.

(Szpila 2003: 3)

Metaphorical (figurative) proverbs are based on pictures and that makes them “true metaphorical concepts”. It means that they can be efficiently analysed just as metaphors, and so their proverb concepts are functionally equivalent to metaphorical concepts (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 179, 182 — note 92). For example, the Lakoff-Johnson’s *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* finds its application as a cognitive linguistics tool when a particular *karin magana* can be translated (almost) literally into other languages, e.g. (1) Hau. *In za ka haka ramin mugunta, haka shi gajere* ‘If you dig an evil pit, dig it shallow’ = Pol. *Kto pod kim dolki kopie, ten sam w nie wpada* ‘The one who is digging pits under other people, he is the one who falls into them’. Both sayings are synonymous in terms of the metaphorical understanding of the conceptual target domain of (UNAVOIDABLE) JUSTICE as a manifestation of relation between human’s deeds and LIFE. In the two languages, the metaphor of JUSTICE has the same language representation, i.e. source domain: DIGGING A PIT AND FALLING IN ONE’S OWN PIT. It is also possible to identify the English counterpart: *Whosoever digs a pit shall fall therein* (*Jubilee Bible 2000*, Proverbs, 26: 27). These three proverbs from different languages can be assigned to the same proverb concept: THE ONE WHO IS TRYING TO HARM THE OTHERS MAY BECOME THE VICTIM OF THEIR OWN ACTIONS.

As it was shown above, similarly to metaphors, proverbs function as mappings. This feature enables one to group proverbs from different languages and cultures according to a proverb concept which is common for all of them and consists of “a joint cognitive basis for the intercultural comprehension of proverbs in

different languages”. Significantly, the easier a proverb concept fits its structure, the more commonly a particular proverb occurs throughout the languages what will be shown in the following examples (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 174, 176).

The proverbs are culture-specific items and when interpreted in terms of a conceptual metaphor, the exponents of their source domain include culture key words (Wierzbicka 1997), whereas their meanings indicate their target domain (Szpila 2003). As it was indicated in my previous works (Zając 2018a), some proverbs carry universal messages which are transmitted through culture texts, therefore the culture key words must be properly interpreted in terms of their vehicles (Zając 2017, 2018b, 2018c). Thus, in two or more languages the sayings usually have different exponents of the source domain while representing the same target domain, e.g. (2) Hau. *Karamin goro ya fi babban dutse* ‘A small cola nut is better than a big stone’, Pol. *Lepszy rydz niż nic* ‘The saffron milk cap<sup>4</sup> is better than nothing’ and the non-metaphorical English saying: *Something is better than nothing* can be considered equivalents at the level of proverb concept which refers to the philosophy of managing with the materialistic aspects of human’s life as POSSESSING A THING IS BETTER THAN THE LACK OF IT. Although their source domains are different, as they refer to a *cola nut*, a *saffron milk cap* and *something* respectively. Hence, to understand the proverb concept one must be familiar with the cultural frame of a proverb (which is constructed on the lexical level, i.a. by the culturemes, key words (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 173–174).

Studies on the semantic content of words that are used in proverbs to conceptualize notions other than their lexical meaning seem to be particularly interesting, as these words are deeply rooted in culture. Hausa key words modelling source domains of the sayings such as *goro* ‘cola nut’ and many others, i.a. *tuwo* ‘staple food’, *riga* ‘traditional robe’ are essential for understanding the Hausa culture, but are not present in other languages and cultures.

However, metaphoricity is very common, it is only an optional feature of proverbs. Yet, there are many non-metaphorical (non-figurative) proverbs, which are understood word by word (literally) (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 166–167, 182 — note 92). Non-metaphorical proverbs have their proverb concepts shaped by the means of language itself and/or based on circumstances without the aid of the pre-linguistic imaginary. This makes them functionally different from the concepts of metaphorical proverbs (Lewandowska *et al.* 2014: 177–178). Thus, from the perspective of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, in such sayings there is an overlap between their source and target domain (Szpila 2003: 3).

Quite interestingly, in reference to the proverb concept of BETTER TO AVOID NEGATIVE EVENTS THAN TO FACE THEM, the three languages in question have literal proverbs which are direct equivalents, e.g. (3) Hau. *Rigakafi ya fi magani* ‘Prevention is better than cure’ = Pol. *Lepiej zapobiegać niż leczyć* ‘It is better

---

<sup>4</sup> It is a type of an edible mushroom traditionally appreciated in Polish culture for its flavour and shape.

to prevent than to cure' = Eng. *Prevention is better than cure*. The meaning of the proverb often emerges from a comparison based on human experience. The conceptualisation of PREVENTION draws from the experience of disease and medical treatment. In the comparative analysis the three proverbs above are synonymous as they share a common proverb concept (composed from the overlapping source and target domains) while expressed by equivalent lexical items.

In the following analysis, the provided proverbs of the three languages in question, namely Hausa, Polish and English, are mapping the notion of LIFE, in which some particular aspects related to the understanding of the essence of human life will be distinguished. They may refer to comprehension of the sense of life, the list the most problematic issues for human existence, the choice of the best solutions in difficult situations, etc. Particular aspects of LIFE constitute the conceptual basis for proverbial expressions. In the current comparative analysis, they are representations of particular notions within the target conceptual domain of LIFE but these notions function also as upper-level target domains in which the literal meaning encoded in the lexis of the proverb can be considered as a source domain which corresponds to them.

### 3. A cross-linguistic analysis of the selected sayings

Proverbs (and it is believed that also other set phrases) are “[d]erived from careful observation of the natural world, societal events, and community life (Okwelum 2017: Preface) and are “relevant to the custom, tradition, experience and way of life of the people” (Obasanjo 2017). It is stated that this motivation can be most sufficiently grasped by analysing the key words. The following analysis elaborates on key words occurring in the provided examples as they are exponents of their source domains and they play a significant role in constructing the meanings. As far as the semantics is concerned, proverbs are short folkloristic texts which express the view on particular notions in a given society. The notion of LIFE is probably one of the most frequently occurring target domains of sayings. In their fundamental work, Lakoff & Johnson (2003: 51–52) wrote on the conceptual metaphors of LIFE in English language literal expressions and idioms and presented some basic metaphors, such as LIFE IS A CONTAINER, LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME. In Hausa proverbs these two do not seem to be dominant nor rooted as they have not been noticed in the source data.

The metaphorical structure of proverbs is oriented towards indicating the particular properties which determine human existence. Therefore, the current analysis of the Hausa proverbs distinguishes the following notions which are metaphorically mapping LIFE: CHANGEABILITY, DESTINY, CHOICE, SUCCESS.

The current analysis is focused on the comparison of Hausa *karin magana* with Polish and English equivalent proverbs that share the same cognitive concept.

They are mostly conceptual metaphors providing a common cross-cultural understanding of the notion of LIFE. Particular notions are target domains which find their culture-based interpretation in the words which build up a proverb (source domains).

### 3.1. The LIFE IS CHANGEABILITY metaphor

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS CHANGEABILITY is a basis for particular metaphors in equivalent sayings of the three languages in question. To begin with an example of a Hausa proverb: (4) *Ba kullum ake kwana a gado ba, wata rana ko a kasa sai a kwanta* ‘One not always sleeps in bed, sometimes one sleeps even on the ground’ in which the CHANGEABILITY has its cultural comprehension as sleeping either in bed or on the ground. It includes the spatial orientation (UP and DOWN) with the interpretation of BEING IN A GOOD OR IN A BAD CONDITION through culture key words *gado* ‘bed, throne’ and *kasa* ‘ground, dirt’ which carry a positive and negative axiomatic charge, respectively. *Gado* while having the meaning ‘throne’ is associated with the person of *sarki* ‘traditional ruler, emir’ who sits upon it. Therefore, ‘sleeping on a *gado*’ is considered to be a positive situation while ‘sleeping on the ground’ is just the opposite, as *kasa* ‘ground, dirt’ is related to a certain submission as can be found in the phrase *ya ci kasa* ‘he made obeisance by throwing dust over his shoulder’ (Abraham 1962: 136). This is the traditional way of making obeisance to the *sarki*.

In Polish there is an equivalent proverb: *Raz na wozie, raz pod wozem* ‘One time [you are] on the wagon, the other time [you are] under the wagon’, in which CHANGEABILITY is metaphorically mapped by being on top or bottom. This interpretation refers to key word *wóz* ‘wagon’ (inflected forms *wozie* and *wozem*). *Wóz* is a vehicle that in historical times was pulled by horses. As a wagon is moving forward, it is better to be on it and ride than under it and be crushed. Both Polish and Hausa proverbs provided above are based on universal orientation metaphors GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 16).

Finally, the understanding of life in terms of changeability is confirmed by the non-metaphorical English statement *Change of fortune is the lot of life*, in which the proverb concept LIFE IS CHANGEABILITY is also included and the source domain is encoded by the idea of fortune.

### 3.2. The LIFE IS DESTINY metaphor

The metaphor LIFE IS DESTINY is manifested in some Hausa, English and Polish set phrases. Its common understanding is based on the inevitability of death, despite precautions. In (5) Hau. *Kibiyar ajali sulke ba ya tsare ta sai ta wuce* ‘The arrow of the allotted span of life cannot be warded off by chain armour, [so the arrow] will pierce it’, the idea of protection against death is expressed by



*sulke* ‘chain armour’ which protects one against a *kibiya* ‘arrow’. Their status of culture-based key words can be explained by the long military tradition cultivated in the Hausa society. These words are source domains of the two metaphors in this proverb: DEATH IS AN ARROW and PROTECTION IS A CHAIN ARMOUR. On the basis of experimental knowledge, *kibiya* (mapping DEATH) normally cannot pierce the *sulke* (mapping PROTECTION). Therefore, to interpret these metaphors one has to understand that if it happens and a man dies, for Hausaman it is clearly an act of DESTINY (which by the way occupies a prominent place in the Islamic doctrine).

For comparison’s sake, in the equivalent Polish proverb which is attached to the target domain of DESTINY, PROTECTION is conceptualized as being rich, hence *Choćbyś miał złota skrzynię, śmierci się nie wywiniesz* ‘Even if you had a box [full] of gold, you will not escape death’. *Skrzynia złota* ‘box [full] of gold’ has a positive cultural evaluation but in this case, it conceptualizes its uselessness as protection against death and puts stress on the destiny (fate) which implies the inevitability of death.

The notion of DESTINY (FATE) is included in the English equivalent *No flying from fate* in which a general statement about LIFE is expressed literally without a metaphorical code for the source domain.

### 3.3. The LIFE IS CHOICE metaphor

LIFE IS CHOICE can be considered a universal conceptual metaphor which is based on everyday experience. In each of the three languages analysed this metaphor is realised as a choice between two unpleasant or distasteful options. However, these options, which function as a source domain of a difficult (problematic) situation, are conceptualized differently. In (6) Hau. *Gaba kura, baya siyaki!* ‘A hyena ahead, a striped hyena behind’, the metaphor of CHOICE is referred to the proverb concept MAKING DECISIONS IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION which is demonstrated as being between hyena and a striped hyena. The culture key words *kura* ‘hyena’ and *siyaki* ‘striped hyena’ are used to build up the source domain of this metaphorical proverb. *Kura* is one of the most frequently occurring words in *karin magana* (Zajac 2018b: 161, 164–166) which carries a symbolic meaning of danger, as it is a predator that attacks domestic animals and people. So do *siyaki* which is a certain species of hyena.

In Poland and England hyenas do not live in the wild and for that reason they are not found in proverbs to conceptualize the idea of danger or any other difficult situation. Thus, the Polish and English equivalents of the *karin magana* provided above, i.e. Pol. *Między młotem a kowadłem* ‘Between the hammer and the anvil’, Eng. *Between the hammer and the anvil* contain the same metaphor CHOICE IS MAKING DECISIONS IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION, but the culture-based key words which are the exponents of the source domain are different. In the two languages, the situation is pictured as being between hammer and anvil and the key

words *młot* = *hammer* and *kowadło* = *anvil* are direct equivalents. Therefore, these proverbs are based on the common tradition of blacksmithing and the observation of the blacksmith's work. References to this profession can be found also in Hausa proverbs.

### 3.4. The LIFE IS SUCCESS metaphor

The metaphor LIFE IS SUCCESS can be extended to SUCCESS IS TAKING OPPORTUNITIES. In Hausa, Polish and English this metaphor can be expressed by the same key words which constitute their common source domain. Taking opportunities is conceptualized as striking the iron, e.g. (7) Hau. *Tun da zaƙi akan bugi karfe* 'One strikes the iron while it is hot', Pol. *Kuj żelazo, póki gorące* 'Strike the iron while [it is] hot', Eng. *Strike while the iron is hot*. These three sayings use the same key word *karfe* = *żelazo* = *iron* and despite structural differences between the languages the proverbs are synonymous. This phenomena may be explained by the fact that blacksmithing is a common experience of all people around the world and the fact that shaping metal is possible only while it is hot. Hence, it is the figurative mapping of opportunities which one can take only in a certain moment that does not last long (similarly to metal being hot).

Moreover, the metaphor LIFE IS SUCCESS may also have other extensions. When success is interpreted as a result of action performed earlier, the metaphorical concept SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ACTION is an implication of many proverbs. In the three languages, namely Hausa, Polish and English, the source domain of this metaphor can be constituted by the same type of action which is related to cultural tradition of farming. Therefore, (9) Hau. *Abin da mutum ya shuka, shi zai girba* 'The thing a man sows is what he will reap', Pol. *Co człowiek posieje, to i żąć będzie* 'What a man will sow, this he will reap', Eng. *As ye sow, so shall ye reap*. The use of key words *shuka* = *siać* = *sow* and *girba* = *żąć* = *reap* makes the three proverbs synonymous on the lexical level as well.

As all of the above examples including metaphor LIFE IS SUCCESS where synonymous, one should provide a group of some other proverbs which are not equivalent on the level of source domain (lexis). Let us deal with the proverbs covering the concept SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ACTION, e.g. (10) Hau. *Zomo ba ya kamuwa daga zaune* 'The hare is not being caught from the sitting position', i.e. it is not possible to achieve success without any effort. In this example the source domain is CATCHING A HARE WHILE SITTING. In Polish a different image is present while the same message is expressed, e.g. *Bez pracy nie ma kolaczy* 'Without working there is no good bread<sup>5</sup>'. Thus, the source domain is WORKING PROVIDES

---

<sup>5</sup> In original *kolacz* '(historically) circle-shaped traditional ritual bread eaten on the occasion of wedding or other festival'. This term can be considered a Polish culture key word. In the proverb it evokes the positive situations when it was customarily eaten.

BREAD. THE English equivalent, on the other hand, shows yet another way of conceptualisation, e.g. *No gains without pains*. The source domain is shaped as ONE MUST TAKE ACTION DESPITE THE PAIN TO GAIN SOMETHING.

#### 4. Conclusions

Comparing proverbs in languages which are related to different cultures exposes differences and similarities in the ways of conceptualizing common proverb concepts, and in consequence, particular notions. As proverbs in all languages are a set of “how-to-live” recommendations and are formulated from general perspectives, some of them are direct equivalents, both in terms of meaning and the way they are rendered (as for example in case of *Prevention is better than cure*). It was stated earlier that the less complex the structure of a proverb concept is, the more equivalents of certain proverb occur throughout the languages. Therefore, the provided synonymous groups of proverbs can be attached to relatively simple metaphorical concepts. A good example is the concept SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ACTION for which numerous proverbs from Hausa, Polish and English have been provided.

Regarding the notion of LIFE, proverbs in different languages provide an opportunity to distinguish strategies of metaphorical mapping in which particular aspects are given prominence. The comparison of Hausa proverbs with their semantic equivalents from Polish and English confirmed that while they equally represent universal target domains, their source domains are not always the same.

Among the distinguished notions which are a set of mappings for LIFE, such as CHANGEABILITY, DESTINY, CHOICE, SUCCESS, there is a number of examples which show the use of culture-based key words to conceptualize the source domain (e.g. *gado* ‘bed’ and *kasa* ‘ground’ in Hausa, *wóz* ‘horse-drawn vehicle’ in Polish to encode BEING IN GOOD OR IN BAD CONDITION as a source domain of CHANGEABILITY).

The proverbs reveal either close relations or distance between languages and cultures. The more particular key words are equally rooted in given cultures, the more synonymous proverbs function in the respective languages. The analysed examples have shown that Hausa, Polish and English share the tradition of a farming and blacksmithing which provide key words for encoding source domains of various metaphors referring to LIFE.

#### References

- Abraham, Roy Clive. 1962. *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*. London: University of London Press.
- Aminu, Muhammad Lawal. 2003. *The Hausa Code of World — Life: A Paremiological Exposition* [paper presented at a conference — “African Studies Association of Australia and Pacific — African on a Global Stage”].

- Bagaye, Yakubu L. Ibrahim. 1992. *Nazarin karin magana mai labari [The analysis of proverbs with explanations]*. B.A. thesis. University of Sokoto.
- Baldi, Sergio. 2015. "Proverbs as an educational factor in Hausa society". in: G. C. Batic & S. Baldi (eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the Symposium on West African Languages, Naples: Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo*, Napoli, 249–265.
- Baldi, Sergio. 2012. "Body parts in Hausa proverbs", *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures* 46, 7–21.
- Bartmiński, Jerzy (ed.). 2006. *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata [Linguistic Foundations of the World Picture]*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.
- Burkhardt, Hanna. 2008. "Kulturomy i ich miejsce w teorii przekładu" [*Culturemes and their Place in the Theory of Translation*]. *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis* no 3060. *Język a Kultura* 20, 197–209.
- Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Internet publication: [www.dictionary.cambridge.org](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org).
- Fletcher, Roland Sackville. 1912. *Hausa Sayings & Folk-lore: With a Vocabulary of New Words*. London, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Furniss, Graham. 1996. *Poetry, prose and popular culture in Hausa*. London: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gidley, C. G. B. 1974. "Karin Magana and Amanci as Features of Hausa Sayings". *African Language Studies* 15, 81–96.
- Ibrahim, Auwal Amba. 2011. *An Assessment of the Problems and Prospects of Translating Hausa Proverbs into English*, M.A. thesis. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University.
- Jang, Tae-Sang. 1994. *Balance and Bipartite Structure in Hausa Proverbs*, Ph.D. thesis. London. *Jubilee Bible 2000*. Internet publication: <https://biblehub.com/jub>.
- Karin Magana. "Iya magana ma da ranarsa!". 1950. [*Proverbs. "Knowing the art of words brings luck"*]. Zaria: Northern Nigerian Publishing Company.
- Kirk-Greene, Anthony Hamilton Millard. 1966. *Hausa ba dabo ba ne [Hausa is not Black Magic]*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Kłosińska, Katarzyna. 2011. *Słownik przysłów. Przysłownik [Dictionary of Proverbs. "Proverb-nary"]*. Poznań: Publicat S.A.
- Koko, Tukur Umar. 1989. *Karin magana a hannun mata a garin Sakkwato [Proverbs among Women in the City of Sokoto]*, M.A. thesis. University of Sokoto.
- Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson. 2003 [1980]. *Metaphors We Live By*, London (Chicago): The University of Chicago Press.
- Lewandowska, Anna & Gerd Antos in cooperation with Dana Gläßer. 2014. "Cognitive Apects of Proverbs". in: Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina & Melita Aleksa Varga (eds.), *Introduction to Paremiology: A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*. Warsaw–Berlin: De Gruyter Open Ltd., 162–182 [e-pub version].
- Merrick, George. 1905. *Hausa Proverbs*. London: Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.
- Mischlich, Adam. 1911 [1902]. *Lehrbuch der hausanischer Sprache*. Berlin: Verlag Georg Reimer.
- Okwelume, Obii. 2017. *Drumbeats. The Proverbs of Africa*. Lagos: Narrative Landscape Press.
- Obasanjo, Olusegun. 2017. "Foreword". in: O. Okwelume. *Drumbeats. The Proverbs of Africa*. Lagos: Narrative Landscape Press.
- Pilszczikowa, Nina. 1958. „Przysłowia, zagadki, bajki hausa” [*Hausa Proverbs, Riddles and Fables*]. in: E. Tryjarski (ed.). *Z Czarnego Lądu*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 70–124.
- Piłaszewicz, Stanisław. 1983. "Karin magana". in: *Id.*, *Historia literatur afrykańskich w językach rodzimych. Literatura hausa [The History of African Literatures in Indigenous Languages. Hausa Literature]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 28–36.
- Piłaszewicz, Stanisław (transl.). 1970, 1971. "Przysłowia ludu Hausa" [*Proverbs of the Hausa People*]. *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 1970, fasc. 3, p. 212; 1971, fasc. 1, p. 44.

- Prietze, Rudolf. 1904. *Haussa-Sprichwörter und Haussa-Lieder*. Kirchhain: Max Schmiersow.
- Rattray, Robert Sutherland; Marett, R. R. (preface). 1913. *Hausa Folk-Lore, Customs, Proverbs, Etc. Collected and Transliterated with English Translations and Notes (2 Volumes)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, The Clarendon Press.
- Robinson, Charles H. 1905 [1897]. *Hausa Grammar*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.
- Saleh, Yusuf Sadau. 2014. A Contrastive Analysis of English and Hausa Proverbs in Selected Texts, M.A. thesis. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University.
- Schön, James Frederick. 1885. *Magana Hausa. Native literature, Proverbs, Tales, Fables and Historical Fragments in the Hausa Language*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Skinner, Neil. 1988. "Lexical Incompatibility as a Mark of Karin Magana". in: G. Furniss & Phillip J. Jaggard (eds.). *Studies in Hausa Language and Linguistics: in Honour of F. W. Parsons*. London–New York: Kegan Paul International with association with the International African Institute, 236–245.
- Szpila, Grzegorz. 2003. "Teaching Universal and Culture-Specific Concepts. A Case Study of English and Polish Proverbs". *Prace Językoznawcze. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* 121, 317–323.
- Underhill, James W. 2011. *Creating Worldviews. Metaphor, Ideology and Language*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Usman, Asabe Kabir. 2014. "An Annotation of Selected Hausa Parallel Proverbs". *Journal of Modern Education Review* 4(11), 892–899.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1997. *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words*. New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Whitting, Charles E. J. 1940. *Hausa and Fulani Proverbs*. Lagos: Government Printer.
- Yunusa, Yusufu. 1977. *Hausa a dunkule na daya [Hausa in a nutshell. Volume One]*. Kano: Government Printer.
- Zajac, Patryk. 2019. "Zastosowanie teorii metafory Lakoffa i Johnsona w paremiologicznych badaniach porównawczych na przykładzie przysłów w języku hausa i polskim" [*Implementing Lakoff-Johnson's Metaphor Theory in Paremiological Comparative Studies. Example of Hausa and Polish Proverbs*]. in: N. Greniewska, A. Lesiczka (ed.), *Między Wschodem a Zachodem, między Północą a Południem* 3. Warszawa: Campidoglio, 7–17.
- Zajac, Patryk. 2018a. "O przekazie uniwersalnym tekstów kultury na podstawie przysłów w języku hausa i polskim" [*Universal Message of Cultural Texts on the Basis of Proverbs in Hausa and Polish*]. *Afryka* 47, 11–27.
- Zajac, Patryk. 2018b. "Słowa-klucze kultury w przysłowiaach hausa" [*Culture Key Words in Hausa Proverbs*]. *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 1–2, 155–181.
- Zajac, Patryk. 2018c. "Wizerunek Boga oraz relacje między Bogiem a człowiekiem w przysłowiaach nigeryjskiego ludu Hausa" [*The Image of God and Relations between the God and a Man in Proverbs of Nigerian Hausa People*]. in: A. Lesiczka (ed.), *Między Wschodem a Zachodem, między Północą a Południem. Wybrane referaty z VI Ogólnopolskiej Interdyscyplinarnej Studencko-Doktoranckiej Konferencji Naukowej 22–24 maja 2017*. Warszawa: Campidoglio. 57–71.
- Zajac, Patryk. 2017. Słowa klucze kultury w przysłowiaach hausa [*Culture Key Words in Hausa Proverbs*], M.A. thesis. University of Warsaw.
- Żmigrodzki, Piotr (ed.). 2007. *Wielki słownik języka polskiego PAN [Polish Academy of Sciences Great Dictionary of Polish]*. Kraków, on the Internet: [www.wsjp.pl](http://www.wsjp.pl).