Towards an analysis of repetitive puns in Anglo-American anti-proverbs from the second half of the 20th century

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Abstract: The main focus of the study is on the discussion of repetitive puns, one of the most popular mechanisms of proverb variation in Anglo-American anti-proverbs (or proverb transformations). While certain types of repetitive puns occur pervasively in our anti-proverbs, others appear in only a few. At first we will consider and illuminate the most prevalent repetitive puns such as those containing paronyms, homonyms, and homophones. Afterwards we will address and exemplify some other types of repetitive puns such as puns playing upon personal names, double puns, triple puns, puns in which one word is split into two, and finally bilingual puns. It is important to point out that in a number of our anti-proverbs several types of puns are employed simultaneously. It must be also mentioned here that repetitive puns are extremely rarely used just on their own, i.e. punning is most frequently combined with other mechanisms of proverb variation in a variety of ways. The Anglo-American anti-proverbs discussed in the study were taken primarily from American and British written sources.
Keywords: Paremiology. Anti-proverb. Anglo-American. 20th century.

Título: «Hacia un análisis de los juegos de palabras repetitivos en los antiproverbios angloamericanos de la segunda mitad del siglo 20»
Resumen: El estudio se centra en el análisis de los juegos de palabras repetitivos, uno de los mecanismos de variación de proverbios más populares en los antiproverbios (o transformaciones de proverbios) angloamericanos. Mientras que ciertos tipos de juegos de palabras repetitivos son omnipresentes en nuestros antiproverbios, otros sólo aparecen en unos pocos. En primer lugar, examinaremos e iluminaremos los juegos de palabras repetitivos más frecuentes, como los parónimos, los homónimos y los homófonos. Después abordaremos y ejemplificaremos otros tipos de juegos de palabras repetitivos, como los juegos de palabras con nombres propios, los juegos de palabras dobles, los juegos de palabras triples, los juegos de palabras en los que una palabra se divide en dos y, por último, pero no por ello menos importante, los juegos de palabras bilingües. Es importante señalar que en algunos de nuestros antiproverbios se emplean simultáneamente varios tipos de juegos de palabras. También hay que mencionar aquí que los juegos de palabras repetitivos se utilizan muy raramente por sí solos, es decir, los juegos de palabras se combinan con mayor frecuencia con otros mecanismos de variación de proverbios de diversas maneras. Los antiproverbios angloamericanos analizados en el estudio proceden principalmente de fuentes escritas estadounidenses y británicas.
Palabras clave: Paremiología. Antiproverbio. Angloamericano. Siglo XX.

Titre : « Vers l'analyse des jeux de mots répétitifs dans les anti-proverbes anglo-américains de la seconde moitié du XXe siècle ».
Résumé : Cette étude se concentre principalement sur la discussion des jeux de mots répétitifs, l'un des mécanismes les plus populaires de variation des proverbes dans les anti-proverbes (ou proverbes détournés) anglo-américains. Si certains types de jeux de mots répétitifs sont omniprésents dans nos anti-proverbes, d'autres n'apparaissent que dans quelques-uns d'entre eux. Dans un premier temps, nous examinerons et éclairerons les jeux de mots répétitifs les plus courants, tels que ceux contenant des paronymes, des homonymes et des homophones. Ensuite, nous aborderons et illustrerons d'autres types de jeux de mots répétitifs, tels que les jeux de mots sur les noms de personnes, les doubles jeux de mots, les triples jeux de mots, les jeux de mots dans lesquels un mot est divisé en deux et, enfin, les jeux de mots bilingues. Il est important de souligner que dans un certain nombre de nos anti-proverbes, plusieurs types de jeux de mots sont utilisés simultanément. Il convient également de mentionner que les jeux de mots répétitifs sont très rarement utilisés seuls, c'est-à-dire que les jeux de mots sont le plus souvent combinés à d'autres mécanismes de variation des proverbes, et ce de différentes manières. Les anti-proverbes anglo-américains traités dans cette étude proviennent principalement de sources écrites américaines et britanniques.

Mots-clés : Parémiologie. Anti-proverbe. Anglo-américain. XXe siècle.

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of the present study[1], in the beginning (Section 1.1.) I will briefly demonstrate the background of anti-proverb research and terminology, afterwards I will focus on the background of pun and repetition research and terminology (Section 1.2. and Section 1.3. subsequently).

The Anglo-American anti-proverbs discussed and analyzed in the present study were taken primarily from American and British written sources. The texts of anti-proverbs were drawn from hundreds of books and articles on puns, one-liners, toasts, wisecracks, quotations, aphorisms, maxims, quips, epigrams, and graffiti the vast majority of which have been published in two dictionaries of anti-proverbs compiled by Wolfgang Mieder and Anna T. Litovkina: "Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-Proverbs" (Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina, 1999) and "Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify: A Collection of Anti-Proverbs" (T. Litovkina and Mieder, 2006).

1.1. Background of anti-proverb research and terminology

For centuries, proverbs have provided a framework for endless transformation. In recent decades, the modification of proverbs has taken such proportions that sometimes we can even meet more proverb transformations than traditional proverbs. Wolfgang Mieder has invented a term *anti-proverb* (or in German *Antisprichwort*) for such deliberate proverb innovations, also known as alterations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, mutations, or fractured proverbs. This term has been widely accepted by proverb scholars all over the world as a general label for such innovative alterations and reactions to traditional proverbs: *антипословица* (Russian), *anti-proverb* (English), *anti(-)proverbe* (French) (see the general discussion of the genre of anti-proverbs in T. Litovkina, 2005; T. Litovkina and Mieder, 2006: 1–54; T. Litovkina, 2015; T. Litovkina et al., 2021).

Anti-proverbs may contain revealing social comments (*A condom a day keeps AIDS away* (Mieder, 1991: 99) {An apple a day keeps the doctor away}[2]), but they may also be based on mere wordplay or puns, and they may very often be generated solely for the goal of deriving play forms (*Monkey is the route to all people* (Rees, 1980: 91) {Money is the root of all evil}).

Typically, an anti-proverb will elicit humor only if the traditional proverb upon which it is based is also known, thus allowing the reader or listener to perceive the incongruity (violation of expectation) between the two expressions. Otherwise, the innovative strategy of communication based on the juxtaposition of the old and "new" proverb is lost. The juxtaposition of the traditional proverb text with an innovative variation forces the reader or listener into a more critical thought process. Whereas the old proverbs acted as preconceived rules, the modern anti-proverbs are intended to activate us into overcoming the naive acceptance of traditional wisdom.

There are extremely productive proverbs in our corpus that have generated over 30 anti-proverbs (20). The 10 Anglo-American proverbs most frequently transformed are listed below (see T. Litovkina, 2005: 24; T. Litovkina and Mieder, 2006: 12–13). Each proverb is followed by a number in parentheses indicating the number of anti-proverbs that we have been able to locate for it:

Old soldiers never die (, they simply fade away). (79)
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. (65)

[1] Some parts of this study (including the texts of anti-proverbs) have appeared in T. Litovkina, 2005, or have been published in T. Litovkina, 2015; Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina, 1999; T. Litovkina and Mieder, 2006; T. Litovkina et. al., 2021).

[2] For the reader's convenience all anti-proverbs in this study are followed by their original forms, given in {} brackets.

Money talks. (65)
An apple a day keeps the doctor away. (63)
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. (49)
Never [Don't] put off till [until] tomorrow what you can do today. (48)
A fool and his money are soon parted. (47)
Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. (46)
To err is human (, to forgive divine). (45)
Opportunity knocks but once. (43)

All's fair for anti-proverbs – there is hardly a topic that anti-proverbs do not address. Among the most frequent themes discussed in proverb alterations are women, sexuality, professions and occupations, marriage and love, children, money, etc. (T. Litovkina, 2005, T. Litovkina and Mieder, 2006, etc.).

1.2. Background of pun research and terminology

A pun is defined by Hempelmann (2014: 612) as "a type of joke in which one sound sequence (e.g., a word) has two meanings, and this similarity in sound creates a relationship for the two meanings from which humor is derived. Puns are one of the most prominent types of humorous text […]."

Salvatore Attardo, along with many other humor researchers, distinguishes four subcategories of puns—paronyms, homonyms, homographs, and homophones (Attardo, 1994: 110–111)[3]:

> Two words are paronyms when their phonemic representations are similar but not identical. Two words are homonyms when their phonemic or graphemic representation is identical, and two words are homographs when their graphemic representation is identical (i.e., they are spelled the same). Two words are homophones when their phonemic representation is identical (i.e., they are pronounced the same). Homographs and homophones are subclasses of homonyms.

Charles F. Hockett (1972: 157) talks about two categories of puns – "perfect" (identical in sound) and "imperfect" (non identical). Thus, according to his definition, homonyms and homophones could be called perfect puns, and paronyms and homographs – imperfect puns.

According to Evan Esar, "the variety of puns must be infinite" (1952: 77). He lists some puns according to category (e.g., repetitive, blending, divisive, additive, linking, etc.). In addition, certain puns involve not simply single words but groups of words or even sentences.

Punning is one of the most frequently employed techniques of proverb alteration is (for general discussion of various types of puns in Anglo-American anti-proverbs, see T. Litovkina, 2005, 2009a, 2009b).

1.3. Background of word-repetition research and terminology

Word-repetition is considered to be one of the most important 'markers' of proverbiality (some internal features which make a certain statement a proverb, even if it is presented in isolation, out of its surrounding discourse, and even if it is heard for the first time). Word-repetition belongs to the most powerful markers of proverbiality, together with metaphor, traditionality, currency, paradox, ellipsis, and others (for more about proverbial markers, and in particular repetition, see Tóthné Litovkina, 1994).

Word-repetition is very common in American proverbs and has been found in about a quarter of American proverbs: 25.5% of the proverbs in "A Dictionary of American Proverbs" [Mieder et al., 1992] contain such repetition (for more on repetition figures in American proverbs, see Norrick, 1991;

[3] In this study, contrarily to Attardo's definition, I interpret homonyms more restrictively, that is, being simultaneously homographs and homophones.

Tóthné Litovkina, 1994). As we can see from the list of the 10 most frequently transformed proverbs (see Section 1.1.), two of them (i.e., 20%) contain word repetition: *If at first you don't succeed, try, try again; Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.*

Repeated words are usually verbs (e.g., *Do as I say, not as I do; He who laughs last laughs best; If at first you don't succeed, try, try again*), nouns (e.g., *A penny saved is a penny earned; Fools' names and fools' faces often appear in public places; A friend in need is a friend indeed),* or pronouns (e.g., *Don't cut off your nose to spite your face; Use your head and save your feet*).

Sometimes two or more words are repeated in a proverb, e.g., *Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you; The bigger they are, the bigger they fall; A son is a son till he gets a wife, a daughter is a daughter for the rest of her life; A place for everything and everything in its place; When the going gets tough, the tough get going.*

The proverb *Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me* deserves special attention. It has four repeated words, one of which (*me*) occurs three times. In the proverb *One boy is a whole boy; two boys are half a boy; three boys are no boys at all* the word *boy* is repeated 6 times.

2. REPETITIVE PUNS

Although proverb transformations arise in a variety of forms, several types stand out. There are a number of mechanisms of proverb variation (which are by no means mutually exclusive), e.g., replacing a single word, substituting two or more words, changing the second part of the proverb, adding a tail to the original text, adding literal interpretations, word-repetition, melding two proverbs, word-order reversal, etc. (for more, see T. Litovkina, 2005, 2015; T. Litovkina and Mieder, 2006; T. Litovkina et al., 2021, etc.)

The second – and the main part of the article – will be devoted to the discussion of repetitive puns, one of the most popular categories in puns employed in Anglo-American anti-proverbs. In the repetitive pun, punning words are repeated.

The most common subtypes of repetitive puns will be demonstrated separately in this part of the study, with some representative examples. At first, I will focus on repetitive paronymous puns (Section 2.1.), then I will consider repetitive homonymous puns (Section 2.2.), and afterwards my attention will be given to repetitive homophonous puns (Section 2.3.). Last but not least, I will consider and illustrate some other types of repetitive puns such as puns playing upon personal names, double puns, triple puns, puns in which one word is split into two, and, finally, bilingual puns (Section 2.4.).

It has to be pointed out here that in the vast majority of anti-proverbs repetitive punning is combined with some other techniques of proverb alteration such as word repetition, word addition, spoonerism, change of word class, literalization, etc. While certain types of repetitive puns occur pervasively in anti-proverbs, others appear in only a few. For this reason, our discussion might sometimes seem uneven, and the treatment of certain categories might seem to be either narrower or broader. It must be also mentioned here that in a number of our anti-proverbs several types of puns are employed simultaneously. Such examples could be discussed in various sections of the present study, under various headings. As a rule, anti-proverbs that embrace more than one type of pun will be quoted and discussed only once.

2.1. Repetitive paronymous puns

Paronomastic puns – i.e., puns involving two similar but not identical strings of sounds and graphemes – constitute by far the largest class of repetitive puns analyzed here. Puns of this nature

might be called "imperfect" puns (non-identical in sound, i.e., based on paronymy, see Hockett, 1972: 157).

In many cases, the choice of a word for punning in proverb variation is obvious or largely predictable, as in the transformations below playing on the following pair of words (paronyms): *fool* and *fuel.* Furthermore, if there is word repetition in the genuine text of a proverb, most frequently in proverb transformations it is also repeated, e.g. the word *fool* is substituted by its paronym (the word *fuel*) in the following alterations of two proverbs:

There's no fool like an old fool
Aesop, Jr.: "There's no *fuel* like an old *fuel*!"
Aesop, Sr.: "Hmmm....I gas you're right." (The Bullwinkle Show, in Mingo and Javna, 1989: 197) (this example also contains a play on the words *gas* and *guess*)
Coal miners: "There's no *fuel* like an old *fuel*." (MacHovec, 1988: 134)
In days of oil shortage, many homeowners revert to using coal, recognizing that there's no *fuel* like an old *fuel*. (Crosbie, 1977: 138)
Old playboys giving fur coats to young mistresses
There's no *fuel* like an old *fuel*. (Safian, 1967: 51)

You can fool some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time
Sign seen at a service station during the gasoline shortage: "We can *fuel* some of the people some of the time, but we can't *fuel* all the people all the time." (Prochnow, 1985: 127)

Many proverb transformations keep the actual text of the original proverb intact, but add new words, or a tail, to it. These complementary elements (often a comment) twist and parody the original meaning of the proverb. Evan Esar calls this type of twisted proverbs "the extended proverb." According to his opinion, this is the most extensive class of proverb alteration. As he points out: "The popularity of the extended proverb is due to the ease with which all proverbs can thus be transformed" (Esar 1952: 201). There exists a long tradition of parodying individual proverbs by adding a statement which puts its wisdom into question or negates it completely. Addition of new words at the end of a proverb (introduced by the conjunction *but)*, repetition of words paronymous to the ones in the original proverb texts (*truth* and *true* in the first example; *rest* and *arrest in the second example*) in the tail are exploited in the following anti-proverbs. Furthermore, the addition of the tails including the paronyms happens along with the addition of the verb "may" to a positive statement of the proverb (in the first example), or the words "may not" to a negative statement (in the second example):

Truth may be stranger than fiction, but fiction is *truer*. (Metcalf, 1993: 218) {Truth is stranger than fiction}
There may be no *rest* for the wicked, but there is often *arrest*. (Esar, 1968: 276) {There is no rest for the wicked}

Triplication or quadruplication of similar sounding elements is quite rare in our material (for some other examples, see our discussion of such puns in Section 2.4.3. on triple puns below).

2.2. Repetitive homonymous puns

Numerous proverbs in our corpus have provided good models for exploiting ambiguity through the use of a single word that is polysemous (i.e., having two meanings) or two words that are homonymous (i.e., having identical graphemic and phonemic representation), thus creating comic

surprise with unforeseen links between words or ideas. Puns of this nature are referred to in our study as homonymous[4], or "perfect" (Hockett, 1972: 157) puns.

Let us have a look at the following proverb transformation of the proverb *Where there's a will, there's a way* which contains a repetitive homonymous pun. It is possible due to different connotations of the noun "will" (e.g., Webster gives us eight different meanings of it). By seeing the words "many wills," introduced into the context of the following transformation and by seeing "no way" instead of "a way" one has to reinterpret the original meaning of "will" (which is defined by Webster as "strong purpose, intention, or determination"[5]) and switch it to other connotations, i.e., (a) "the legal statement of a person's wishes concerning the disposal of his property after death"; (b) "the document containing this"[6]), indicated by the parody below:

> Where there's a *will*, there's a way; but where there are many *wills*, there's no way. (Esar, 1968: 856) Where there's a will, there's a way}

To appreciate the ambiguity of the following homonymous pun – *A miss is as good as a mile, but some of them are better at two miles* (Esar, 1968: 234) –, we have to backtrack in our interpretation of the text of the well-known proverb: *A miss is as good as a mile*. This proverb typically means, "almost having achieved something and missing your objective by a narrow margin is the same as not having achieved it at all or missing it by a great margin" (see Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina, 1999: 19). When, however, we search for possible ambiguous elements in this proverb, it may take on many other shades of meaning. For example, when the word "miss" in the second part of the transformation above becomes "a girl or young unmarried woman" (instead of "failure," as in the original text), an anti-proverb results.

The following anti-proverb exploits two meanings of the word "lie" (to deceive and to be found, exist):

> Truth *lies* at the bottom of a well, but if it *lies*, how can it be the truth? (Esar, 1968: 829) {Truth lies at the bottom of a well}

In the anti-proverb below the introduction of the word "pair" into the context immediately suggests a reinterpretation of the second word "right" (as opposite to "left," and not as "just" dictated by the original proverb text):

> Two wrongs don't make a *right*, and two *rights* don't make a pair. (Esar, 1968: 687) {Two wrongs don't make a right}

Here is a similar example:

> Two wrongs don't make a *right*...and three *rights* will get you back on the freeway. (Berman, 1997: 463) {Two wrongs don't make a right}

Our next anti-proverb illustrates an interesting example of repetition of the word *present*. In this double homonymous pun, when the word *present* is used second time, it adopts another meaning (i.e., a thing given to someone as a gift):

> There is no time like the *present* for a *present*. (Esar, 1952: 91) {There is no time like the present}

[4] In our discussion I don't distinguish between polysemous and homonymous words.
[5] This connotation is listed in Webster under N 3 (Webster, 2092).
[6] These connotations are listed in Webster under N 8 (Webster, 2092).

Other repetitive homonymous puns include:

> Divorced couples
> United we *stand*, divided we can *stand* it better. (Safian, 1967: 48) {United we stand, divided we fall}
> A man is broke by the *company* he keeps, especially if he keeps *company*. (Esar, 1968: 161) {A man is known by the company he keeps}
> Any *port* in a storm – preferably expensive *port*. (Esar, 1968: 872) {Any port in a storm}
> A man is only as old as he *looks* – and if he only *looks*, he's old. (Adams, 1959: 170) {A man is only as old as he looks}

2.3. Repetitive homophonous puns

Puns employing homophones (words pronounced the same but spelled differently) are relatively rare in our material. Especially seldom they can be found in combination with repetition.

Anti-proverb coiners succeed in finding a word phonologically paralleling a word from the original proverb, tying together two different strings of thoughts and thus bridge domains which at first glance seem unrelated. To illuminate it, let us view two transformations of the proverb *Two wrongs don't make a right*, both of which are based on the identical phonetic construction of "right," "rite" and "Wright":

> Bigamy is the only crime on the books where two *rites* make a wrong. (McKenzie, 1980: 45)
> Two wrongs don't make a *right*, but two *Wrights* made an airplane. (Slung, 1986: 83)

Two additional puns playing on repetition of homophones (*know* and *no*, as well as *die* and *dye*):

> *Know* thyself, and *no* thy selfishness. (Esar, 1968: 713) {Know thyself}
> The good *die* young, but the old *dye* for various reasons. (Esar, 1968: 154) {The good die young}

In the two modifications of the biblical proverb *An eye for an eye* below, the word "eye" is not even mentioned. The first alteration makes a pun on "eye" from the original text of the proverb and the pronoun "I." The second pun exploits the identical phonemic representation of three words – "aye," "I," and "eye":

> When two egoists meet, it is a case of an *I* for an *I*. (Copeland, 1965: 781)
> "An '*aye*' for an *I*," muttered the candidate as he voted for himself. (Copeland, 1965: 785)

2.4. Other types of repetitive puns

After discussing and exemplifying the most frequent types of repetitive puns in Anglo-American anti-proverbs, let us consider and illustrate some other types of repetitive puns (such as puns playing upon personal names, double puns, triple puns, puns in which one word is split into two, and, last but not least, bilingual puns).

2.4.1. Repetitive puns playing upon personal names

Some repetitive puns (most frequently employing paronyms) play upon personal names: *Edward* and *Eds* in the transformation below are opposed to the *heads* from the original proverb text:

> Far more foresighted was the father who named both his sons *Edward* because, as he said, "Two '*Eds* are better than one." (Safian, 1966: 33) {Two heads are better than one}

Employing repetitive puns that play on personal names is a very frequent technique of proverb transformation in jokes in which anti-proverbs are used as joke punchlines. E.g.:

> Patrick Doyle was justly renowned for his drinking habits. He could down whole gallons of alcoholic stimulants at a sitting.
> One day he choked on a pretzel, and as he gasped for breath, the spectators hollered, "Give the man a glass of water."
> "Water," roared Doyle, regaining himself. "Everyone knows that *water and* Doyle *don't mix*." (Heller, 1974: 277) {Water and oil don't mix} (*oil* and *Doyle*) (see also the first example in Section 2.4.5.)

The humor of some anti-proverbs quoted in the study is based upon the incongruous use of the vulgar or taboo word, as well as on the contrast between an innocent text of a proverb and the sexually-loaded reinterpretation of it. Hence the humorous effect and unexpected punchline in wordplay with "Jack of all trades" (i.e. a person who can do many different types of work) and "jack off" (masturbate):

> I'm a *jack* of all trades. I *jack off* to
> signed SLIPPERY SLIM. (Read, 1977: 61) {A Jack of all trades is master of none}

2.4.2. Double repetitive puns

According to L. G. Heller, "In theory one may have any number of puns embedded in the same utterance" (Heller 1974: 280). In just a few anti-proverbs in our corpus, a double pun appears.

In the transformation below the incongruity emerges from double bisociation: "Christmas" (a holiday) is opposed to "Christmas" (male name), while "come" refers to ejaculation and not to the act of arrival, offered by the original text of the proverb *Christmas comes but once a year*:

> *Christmas comes* but once a year
> Thank God I'm not *Christmas*. (Rees, 1980: 22) {Christmas comes but once a year}

One meaning of an ambiguous word, as it has been shown in the previous example, as well as in the last example quoted in Section 2.4.1. may be risqué or indecorous. Anti-proverbs of this type, which combine a sexual meaning with a non-sexual one, present examples of double entendre in its strictest sense. To understand some puns cited and analyzed in this study it is essential to know an array of slang terms and euphemisms for masturbation ("jack off"), for ejaculation ("come"), and so on.

The following Wellerism is also a good example of double pun one of which, based on the *cases* of the original proverb text and the *hard cases* (i.e. corpses) in the transformation is repetitive:

> "Circumstance *h-alters cases*," said the Cockney, when he saw two "hard *cases*" hung. (Mieder and Kingsbury, 1994: 19) {Circumstance alters cases}

What is also common for all the two examples cited in Section 2.4.2., in each case only one double pun of the two employed is repetitive.

The following two double puns (one of which, based on the *swallow* and *swallow* is repetitive), both variants of transformations of the proverb *One swallow does not make a summer,* are derived from the wordplay on "swallow" (bird vs. the act of swallowing) and "fall" (season of the year vs. the act of dropping or tumbling, caused in our case by drinking too much alcohol). The introduction of the word "fall" into the context of the proverb is not only provoked by the ambiguity of "swallow" but by the occurrence of the word "summer" in the original proverb text:

> One *swallow* doesn't make a summer, but too many *swallows* make a *fall*. (George D. Prentice, in Adams, 1969: 99)
> "One *swallow* does not make a summer."
> "Very true, but several *swallows* of liquor frequently make a *fall*." (Copeland, 1965: 126)

2.4.3. Triple repetitive puns

Triple repetitive puns are extremely rare in our corpus, and they are only paronymous:

> All that *glitters* is not gold, nor all that *litters, literature*. (Esar 1968: 484) {All that glitters is not gold}

Here is another example with triplication of similar sounding words:

> If at first you don't succeed, keep on sucking till you do succeed. (Mieder et al. 1992: 570)

The proverb transformation above, as well as the proverb mutation cited at the end of Section 2.4.4., rework the proverb *If at first you don't succeed, try, try again*. In both transformations oral-genital sex[7] is discussed. Moreover, in both the transformations triplication of similar sounding elements takes place (*succeed, sucking* and *succeed* in the example above, as well as *succeed, suckin'* and *suck seed* in the mutation below), along with some other techniques of proverb alteration (such as change of the second part of the proverb, and word addition). Furthermore, in the second example, splitting of a punning word (*succeed*) into two words (*suck seed*) occurs (however, in the first example such a word split is definitely assumed).

2.4.4. Repetitive puns in which one word is split into two

The following proverb mutation contains a repetitive paronomastic pun in which one word (*amiss*) is split into two (*a miss*). Furthermore, this pun occurs in combination with such techniques as change, addition and omission of letters, sounds or even words, etc.:

> It's better to have kissed *amiss* than never to have kissed *a miss.* (Old postcard) (Berman, 1997: 251)
> {It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all}

Similarly to the anti-proverb above, in the mutation below – also a triple pun – one word (*succeed)* is also split into two (*suck seed*):

> If at first you don't succeed, just keep suckin' till you do *suck seed*. (Anonymous, 1961: 200) {If at first you don't succeed, try, try again}

2.4.5. Bilingual repetitive puns

Puns based on the intermixture of words from two languages may be called bilingual (or "macaronic") puns. Bilingual puns usually employ words from two languages phonetically similar but different in meaning.

The following joke exploiting the popular proverb *Two wrongs don't make a right* mocks the inability of Chinese people to pronounce "*r*" and contains two puns (*wrongs* and *Wongs; right* and *white*):

> Mrs. *Wong*, a Chinese woman, gave birth to a blond-haired, blue-eyed Caucasian baby. When the doctor asked Mr. Wong to explain the astonishing occurrence, he replied:
> "*Two* Wongs *don't make a white*." (Lederer, 1988: 132–133)

Our last example, a slogan, advertising different VW car models, is a bilingual repetitive pun reworking the proverb *Different strokes for different folks* based on phonetic and graphemic similarity of words from two languages – the English word "*folks*" and German "*Volks*":

[7] Oral-genital sex is also referred to in the anti-proverb below as well (also repetitive paronymous pun):
If you don't succeed, suck sausage, it tastes much better! (Brown, 1999: 14)

> Different *Volks* for different *folks*. (Volkswagen advertisement). (Time, November 25, 1974: 114; and December 16, 1974: 31; Mieder, 1989: 328)

Many more types of repetitive puns and examples of anti-proverbs demonstrating them could be addressed in this study, but I must come to conclusions now.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study, while continuing my research on punning in anti-proverbs, has focused on repetitive punning in Anglo-American proverbs.

In the first part of the study, I have addressed the background of anti-proverb, pun and word-repetition research and terminology. The second – and the main part of this study – has been devoted to the discussion of repetitive puns in Anglo-American anti-proverbs. I have explored that while certain types of repetitive puns occur pervasively in our anti-proverbs, others appear in only a few. Furthermore, in a number of our anti-proverbs several types of puns are employed simultaneously.

As it was expected, the vast majority of repetitive puns in the corpus of Anglo-American anti-proverbs are based on sound similarities rather than on sound equivalences; that is, paronyms prevail. Second, come homonyms. Homophones are represented in only a few instances. No homographs have been found in our material. The study has also discussed and exemplified less prevalent types of repetitive puns (such as puns playing upon personal names, double puns, triple puns, puns in which one word is split into two, and, last but not least, bilingual puns).

I have also explored that most frequently used place of adding a second pun in the context of an anti-proverb is expanding a proverb at the end (or tail in which the second pun is added). Quite rarely in our material repeated words or parts of words are put somewhere inside the proverb text.

Last but not least, it is important to point out that repetitive puns are extremely rarely used just on their own, i.e. punning is most frequently combined with other mechanisms of proverb variation in a variety of ways (such as repetition of words, word addition, literalization, word omission, etc.).

Let me finish this study with the following example which illustrates the variety of forms that proverbial variation can assume. The radio ad below functions on several levels: it manipulates two well-known proverbs (*A fool and his money are soon parted* and *Where there's a will, there's a way),* plays with puns generated from these proverbs: a double pun (play on the words *Phil* and *Will*, as well as on the words *fool* and *Phill*), play on personal names (*Phil* and *Will*). Finally, the ad replicates the typical performance context of puns by incorporating a groan into the text:

> (Radio advertisement for Fotomat store, Austin, Texas. In the ad, two hypothetical individuals, Phil and Will, go to two stores to have pictures developed. One, Will, goes to the Fotomat store; the other, Phil, goes to another store. Will is satisfied and Phil is not. At the end of the ad, a moral is drawn):
> Which just goes to show:
> *A Phill and his money are soon parted*. But, *where there's a Will, there's a way*. Groan. (Sherzer, 1978: 344)

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