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Titles of TV Programmes in Finnish Newspapers: a Context for Proverbs in Contemporary Use

Abstract. The article focuses on the everyday use of proverbs, concentrating on proverbs in two Finnish newspapers and using some of the results of the previous cooperative paremiologic project.¹ The study highlighted some special cases in the use of proverbs in Finnish daily newspapers as the fairly rich use of proverbs in the titles and sub-headings of TV programmes. This article focuses on proverb use in titles, studying it as a culture-bound phenomenon. The article combines two phenomena originating from different eras and living conditions. On the one hand, Finnish proverbs originate from an oral agrarian context and often use old-fashioned, agrarian language and concepts, but in contemporary use they exist in a new context. The television, however, is a relatively new phenomenon; it has been more than just a pure technological innovation. The article's perspective is based in folkloristic paremiology.

Key words: *contemporary proverb, newspaper, paremiology, television*

1. Introduction

As understood in this article, the Finnish proverb displays the most commonly named characteristics of the proverb. It is a relatively short and fairly independent statement in a more or less stable form. In addition, the expression is or has been familiar to the general public within a certain frame in a particular time and place and, in this case, most often in Finnish.²

¹ The aim of the "The Newspaper Project" was to find out how proverbs as well as other kinds of proverbial expressions appear in newspapers in three countries and languages: Estonian, Finnish and Slovenian. http://www.folklore.ee/ri/fo/koostoo/prov_news.htm [3.9.2016]

² Finnish proverbs are not and have not earlier been used only in the Finnish language. Finnish proverbs exist also in Swedish (nowadays Finland Swedish), Sámi (nowadays Northern

It can be understood as a generalizing expression. The traditional proverb has been and may still be used in vernacular language, and this also applies to its modern counterpart. When a proverb is used, the authority of the earlier proverb speaker may be present as well.³ However, this is an unclear statement in the urban tradition, which is not pedagogically oriented. In any case, the earlier speaker does not have to come from the distant past. The earlier speaker is somebody who has used the proverb, but this does not necessarily have anything to do with the inventor of the proverb (Granbom-Herranen 2016b).

The expression *traditional proverb* in this article means an utterance that in Finland is commonly accepted to be an old proverb.⁴ The concept of *contemporary proverb* includes proverbs used nowadays, in other words traditional proverbs, modern proverbs and Bible quotations as well as references to them (that are not proverbs proper). Nowadays, the term *proverb* most often refers to “proverb and proverbial expression”, both in emic and etic language. This definition follows the contemporary international tendency in paremiology. However, in relation to this definition, we should keep in mind what Lauri Honko (Honko 1989: 14) has said: “It is not always necessary, or even possible, in the dynamic research tradition to define the key concepts exhaustively, for there must always be room for new connections”.

Nevertheless, today the proverb is used in spoken Finnish in much the same way as it is used in the colloquial written language of the media, everyday political rhetoric, mass media and the internet. These days, the native Finnish-speaking population of Finland can read and write Finnish. This has changed the position of proverbs in Finnish and may be an expla-

Sámi, Skólt Sámi and Inar Sámi) as well as Romany. In contemporary use, English and mixed-English proverbs exist that are original Finnish proverbs (e.g. *Elämä on laiffii* [Life is life]; for more on these proverbs, see Granbom-Herranen 2013 and 2016b). In the future, there will surely be more and more mixed-language Finnish proverbs partly originating from the various languages spoken by the second or third generation members of Finnish population with an international background. (In 2015 in Finland, more than 135 languages were spoken.)

³ The presence of the earlier authority has been verified within pedagogical discourse (Briggs 1988; Granbom-Herranen 2008).

⁴ Otherwise, the concept of *traditional* is to be understood in the meaning of “typical” and “usual” in both the past and present. Most of the ground forms of Finnish traditional proverbs before the 1950s are included in three published collections and in an online database: Nirvi & Hakulinen 1953 [1948], Kuusi 1993 [1953] and Laukkanen & Hakamies 1997 [1978] as well as in an online corpus including proverbs collected in the 1930s and owned by the Institute for the Languages of Finland (KOTUS). The concept of the proverb in Finland has primarily been advanced to coincide with the types and structures presented in the aforementioned publications.

nation for the similarities between the use of proverbs in spoken language and written colloquial form. In its entirety, oral and written communication in Finnish has become increasingly similar in many ways (Granbom-Herranen 2011a: 289; 2016b). When defining what a proverb is, it is worth noting that many significant changes between the 19th and 21st centuries have occurred in the daily lives of Finnish people, as well as in the environment in which Finnish proverbs are used. One of the reasons to look at contemporary living conditions from the paremiologic point of view is that, at the beginning of the 21st century, proverbs in Finnish (as in many other languages) are not primarily transmitted either orally or from one generation to another, but rather in some written form. Repetition is an effective way to imprint ideas in written forms of information as well. However, many proverbs in Finnish still use agrarian language and concepts. The starting point for this article is the assumption that proverbs are alive as long as they are used or referred to in everyday communication.

2. Basic information about Finnish newspapers

In comparison with the opportunity to read, write and publish newspapers in one's native language elsewhere in Europe, Finnish newspapers in Finnish are a relatively new phenomenon. Prior to the 20th century, the main spoken language of Finland was Finnish, but it was rarely the written language.⁵ The written standard Finnish language was developed for a particular use: in the beginning, it was the language of the Bible (17th century) and in the Lutheran church it was also needed in order to teach the common people to read the Bible by themselves. In the 19th century, written Finnish was needed for official use in statutes, and later, chiefly in the 20th century, written Finnish was also used in newspapers (Häkkinen 1994: 11–17;

⁵ Finland was incorporated into Sweden during the Crusades of the 12th century, and it remained a part of the Kingdom of Sweden until the beginning of the 19th century. In Finnish areas, Finnish was the language used in sermons and all quotations and proverbs from the Bible were heard in Finnish. After the era of Swedish rule, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia from 1809 to 1917 (some parts of the country even before), enjoying a special position as to the rules and regulations of state, the Lutheran church, popular education, the question of language, currency and so on. Swedish was still the official language of Finland at this time. The languages of the power elite were Swedish and Russian, in some cases German and French. The Finnish language and proverbs were mostly used orally and they were a part of the language of the underprivileged majority and most of the farmers (Granbom-Herranen 2014b: 546–547; 2016a: 504).

Laine 2002: 17; also Stark 2006: 22, 34). At the same time, the proverbs in Finnish were mostly used in speech, as part of the language of the underprivileged majority. Proverbs had an important role as informal knowledge compared to written information⁶ (Granbom-Herranen 2008, 2016b).

The first newspaper published in Finland (when it was a part of Sweden) was *Åbo Tidningar* [Newspaper in Turku]⁷ in 1771, and it was published in Swedish. Today, the oldest newspaper in Finland, having been published since 1824, is *Åbo Underrättelser* [Notices in Turku], a newspaper in Swedish.⁸ The most widely circulated national newspaper in Finland, however, is *Helsingin Sanomat* [Newspaper of Helsinki].⁹ It was founded in 1899 when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia and the newspaper was first published in Finnish under the name *Päivälehti* [Daily Paper], from 1889 to 1904. Today it is published daily, seven days a week except after certain holidays.¹⁰ In 2013 the circulation was about 355,000, which makes about 850,000 readers.¹¹ (At the end of 2013, the population of Finland was about 5.5 million.¹²) In May 2013, *Helsingin Sanomat* contained between 60 and 132 pages every day. The monthly supplement in May 2013 included 88 pages. The other newspaper this article focuses on is a regional newspaper, *Salon Seudun Sanomat*¹³ [Newspaper of Salo district]. Except after certain holidays, as 1 May, it is published daily. The newspaper was established in 1919, and it has always been published in Finnish. In 2009, the daily circulation (seven days a week) of the newspaper was about 20,000, which means about 50,000 readers. The size of the newspaper *Salon Seudun Sanomat* during May 2013 was 16–28 pages on a daily basis (Granbom-Herranen 2013, 2015).

⁶ For example, in the 19th century the Finnish-speaking majority comprised about 85% of the population in Finland, even though there were also ordinary people who spoke Swedish (about 5–10%). In Finland (and also in Sweden, Norway and Russia), there has also always been a Sámi-speaking minority (Niemi 1969: 55; Talve 1990: 323) (Granbom-Herranen 2016a).

⁷ The capital of the Finnish area under Swedish and Russian administration was Turku (in Swedish Åbo) until 1812.

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turku#Media> [28.8.2016].

⁹ Helsinki is the capital of Finland. Later abbreviated as HS.

¹⁰ In the study, there was a holiday that fell on 1 May, so the newspaper was not published on 2 May.

¹¹ http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helsingin_Sanomat [28.8.2016]

¹² http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto.html [28.8.2016]

¹³ Salo is a coastal town of about 54,500 inhabitants in the prosperous south-west of Finland and most of the readers live in Salo and its surroundings. Later abbreviated as SSS.

3. Theoretical background

Regarding the use of proverbs, the study is based on folklorist Charles Briggs's (1988) concept of *proverb performance* combined with Alain Badiou's concept of *event* (Badiou 2009). The concept of performance includes both the verbal expressions and behaviour by which a message comes across (Bauman 1992: 125). To use a proverb is a small performance which has a target bound to the situation and words used (Briggs 1988). A performance is always interaction between the sender of some message (the speaker or writer using proverbs) and the audience (a real or assumed one). A proverb as a performance or in one might be handled as what Badiou (2009) calls an event (or the proverb paves the way for an event); it has the power to change the significance of the entire occasion. The successful proverb performance sums up the kernel of the performance, and this is what the title or sub-heading¹⁴ of a TV programme is trying to achieve. Proverbs are shared tradition, meaning the performer and the audience have to share some common knowledge about the past in order to be able to connect the message to the activity.¹⁵ Additionally, in a newspaper every proverb performance is somehow an interactive and communicative occasion produced by the performer (writer) and the audience (reader) together even if the feedback does not happen immediately.

The significance of an utterance has several starting points: First, language is not understood only as an instrument of communication but as linked to a thought (Vygotski 1967); second, a proverb gets its significance by way of context (Frege 2000, principle of context); and third, the use of the proverb is a violating element, marking a kind of pause in the discourse and bringing in new aspects (the cooperative principle, see Grice 1975).¹⁶ This study uses the concepts of emic and etic by Kenneth Pike and Marvin Harris (see Headland 1990). The dichotomy of the emic and etic in language use can be handled in various ways. Briefly, the etic-based definitions are used by the paremiologists and other researchers and the emic-based definitions can be understood more as concepts that are not actually defined (Granbom-Herranen 2010b: 217; 2016b). The biggest difference between these concepts becomes evident in Harris and Pike's focus on etic interpretations and their

¹⁴ Later, *title* refers to both titles and sub-headings.

¹⁵ However, there are always listeners and readers who are incapable of understanding and/or interpreting proverbs and even less the references to proverbs (Granbom-Herranen 2008: 184; Ferretti et al. 2007).

¹⁶ For more about proverbs and the cooperative principle, see Granbom-Herranen 2014a.

justification. They are very much of the same opinion regarding the emic (Headland 1990). By using a loose definition of the proverb, this article leans primarily on the emic concept, but the etic concept also comes into play because the other kinds of utterances of various short-form genres which might, in the reader's eyes, also represent proverbs (in folkloristics) are not considered here (see Granbom-Herranen 2016b).

4. Proverb material and used method

Two Finnish newspapers, one from the regional level (*Salon Seudun Sanomat*) and one from the national (*Helsingin Sanomat*), were followed for one month, May 2013. Both of these daily papers are targeted at the general public for daily reading. By *newspaper*, I refer to the paper version a person receives via subscription, which in Finland is the most common way to receive the daily papers. I have used the paper versions of these newspapers because the online versions are not free to access whereas the paper version is available in public libraries,¹⁷ and so it is possible to read it without any cost all over the country. Both of these newspapers publish the schedule for TV programmes on a daily basis, and about half of all the proverbial expressions in these two Finnish newspapers were involved with TV programmes. This finding emerged already in the one-week case study that was a part of the Newspaper Project in 2012 (Granbom-Herranen 2013; Granbom-Herranen et al. 2015).

I have used mixed methods to even the weight in the qualitative research. Quantitative results provide information on the quality of conclusions and can also verify them. The central research method is content analysis, which is understood to be a cluster of methods connected with conclusions based on theoretical analyses (Granbom-Herranen 2010a). Content analysis is commonly used with existing text material, such as texts in newspapers (Grönfors 1982), and it differs from discourse analysis that also concentrates on communication in written form (Jussila et al. 1992). The most frequently occurring proverbs are taken from the ground forms of proverbial expressions. The *ground form* is the form of the proverb that is the proverb proper behind an utterance or to which the expression refers.¹⁸

I have read both *Helsingin Sanomat* and *Salon Seudun Sanomat* daily for a number of decades, so these newspapers were familiar to me. I have divided

¹⁷ In 2013, there were almost 700 public libraries around Finland.

¹⁸ See aforementioned published collections and the online database.

Table 1. The two Finnish newspapers in May 2013 (Granbom-Herranen 2015)

	HS	SSS
issues	31 ¹⁹	31 ²⁰
pages	2752	562
proverbial expressions	560	375
proverbial expressions/page	0.2	0.7
pages/proverbial expression	4.9	1.5

Source: own research.

the content analysis into phases. During the first phase, I acquainted myself with the newspaper as a whole in May 2013. Proverbs in the newspapers were approached from the reader's point of view, which in practice means I read them daily the way all newspaper readers do. Because proverbs published in the newspaper are already public, the material did not demand any special treatment regarding ethical issues. In the second phase, I defined a working concept of a proverb for contemporary Finnish use. I focused on units consisting of a sentence or a part of a sentence (see Granbom-Herranen 2014b). The third phase concerned identifying the proverbial utterances in the newspapers. In this phase I identified and recorded all kinds of proverbial expressions, including phrases, idioms, aphorisms and so on. Table 1 contains quantitative information as a summary of proverb use in the newspapers. It is a short overview of what the two Finnish newspapers included in May 2013. The categorization gives an idea of the frequency, indicating if something is common or rare. In this phase, I excluded expressions that were not to be considered proverbs even in the frame of the loose definition of proverb that counts even references to proverbs as well as possible proverbs. The expressions were searched for via the ground form of the proverb, which might be called the proverb proper behind an utterance. Phase four involved classification of the proverb material. Table 2 presents the categories I proposed for proverbial expressions: traditional proverbs, references to traditional proverbs, modern proverbs, references to modern proverbs, and Bible quotations. Bible quotations can be seen as traditional utterances and in Finnish tradition they are often understood as proverbs. Bible quotations are often easy to recognize because most of the Finnish

¹⁹ The sum consists of newspapers for 30 days (not published 2 May 2013) and a monthly supplement in May 2013.

²⁰ The sum consists of newspapers for 30 days (not published 2 May 2013) and a special supplement for summer 2013 (Suvilehti).

Table 2. Short-form genres (by percentage) in the complete newspapers (HS, SSS) and TV programmes

	HS	HS/TV	SSS	SSS/TV
total	560	238	375	191
traditional proverbs	29%	45%	29%	48%
references to traditional proverbs	34%	44%	33%	39%
modern proverb	18%	7%	18%	5%
references to modern proverbs	7%	1%	3%	1%
Bible quotations and references to them	5%	1%	12%	4%
others	9%	3%	6%	4%
	100%	99.9%	100%	100%

Source: own research.

Lutheran population still learns their Bible and Catechism in confirmation classes organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

More than nine hundred proverbial expressions (in short-form genres called traditional proverbs, modern proverbs, references to both kind of proverbs, and Bible quotations with references to them) were connected with TV programmes. The most commonly used proverbs (or proverbial expressions) in TV programmes were mentioned or referred to two to four times. Along with the daily programme listings, both HS and SSS included a weekly round-up of TV programmes being shown during the week.

5. Findings in newspapers

This section concentrates especially on proverbs included in the titles of TV programmes. As seen in Table 2, other kinds of utterances of various short form genres (in folkloristics) were also used. I identified over nine hundred proverbial units in these two Finnish newspapers, of which more than four hundred were used in the titles of TV programmes.

From a reader's perspective, if a person read both newspapers (HS and SSS) in May 2013,²¹ he or she encountered proverbs and proverbial expressions in TV programmes more than four hundred times. This means that, on average, one encountered proverbs more than ten times a day in the titles

²¹ In Finland it is not unusual to follow the national newspaper as well as the regional and local ones.

of TV programmes alone and once again if watching television. In addition to the aforementioned, both newspapers have, in addition to the daily listings, a weekly preview round-up of TV programmes for the upcoming week (Granbom-Herranen 2015: 411; Granbom-Herranen et al. 2015: 23–24). This kind of repetition keeps proverbs alive and makes the utterance more influential even though the meaning might change over the course of time.²²

The material included about 90 different ground forms of proverbs in the titles of TV programmes.

About one third of the proverbs referred to one and same proverb, *Suku on pahin*²³, and one fifth of the proverbs referred to *Vanha suola janottaa*.²⁴ However, nearly half of the proverbs were expressed nine times at the most. These numerous occurrences are due to the nearly daily presence of these programmes on the schedule.

The list below introduces the four proverbs representing more than half of all the proverbs in the titles of TV programmes (Granbom-Herranen 2015; Granbom-Herranen et al. 2015):

- *Suku se pahin on* [Family is the worst], nowadays in the form *Suku on pahin*, is the ground form of the proverb. This was referred to 128 times (128 as total in newspapers) in the form *Perhe on pahin* [Family is the worst]. *Perhe on pahin* is a TV serial with the original title *All in the Family* and was shown on Finnish television for the first time in the 1970s.²⁵ (e.g. HS 1.5.2013, p. C22).
- *Vanha suola janottaa* [Old salt makes one thirsty] is a well-known proverb. It occurred 92 times as the title of TV programmes (93 times total in newspapers). *Vanha suola janottaa* is a TV programme with the original title *As Time Goes By* (e.g. SSS 21.5.2013, p. 20).
- *Ajattelen, siis olen* [I think, therefore I am]. In the titles of TV programmes it was referred to nine times in the form *Piirrän, siis olen* [I draw, therefore I am]. It is a translation of the Latin proverb *Cogito ergo sum* (e.g. HS 23.5.2013, p. C22).

²² For more about the transfer of meaning, see Granbom-Herranen 2011b.

²³ *Suku se pahin on* (Laukkanen & Hakamies 1997) can be seen as the ground form of this is the proverb even though there are other proverbs that express this idea in other, more lyrical ways. The Finnish terms *suku* and *perhe* are both translated as 'family'. *Suku* is one's extended family, a group of relatives as *perhe* is one's immediate family, people living together.

²⁴ The proverb *Vanha suola janottaa* is most often used when pointing at someone's past, something that has been near one's heart, a person, thing or object. As the title of a TV programme, it suggests problems in one's love affairs.

²⁵ In the 1980s, a TV serial with the title *Perhe on paras* (*Family Ties*) ran on Finnish television. This name also refers to the proverb *Suku on pahin*.

- *Älä nuolaise ennen kuin tipahtaa* [Don't not lick it before it drops]. It was referred to seven times in shortened form *Älä nuolase* [Don't lick] as the title of a TV programme (e.g. HS 24.5.2013, p. D4). The English equivalent would be 'Don't count your chickens before they've hatched'.

The TV listings section is the part of the newspaper that is basically the same all over Finland. What was surprising, however, was that most of the TV programmes rely on traditional proverbs either as the proverb proper or as references to them, with Bible quotations included in this group. In both of the newspapers, this was the case for approximately 90 percent of the proverbs. On the one hand, the fact that the percentages were equal for both newspapers is not a coincidence, because the TV programmes they refer to are the same. On the other hand, the sum of proverbs in each newspaper was nearly equal, but as seen in Table 2 the percentage of modern proverbs was smaller in TV programmes than in the newspapers' average. As mentioned above, Finnish traditional proverbs use old-fashion language and many agrarian concepts. This sort of usage is something that one would not expect to come across in modern society.

This finding suggested that Finnish proverbial expressions in TV programmes might be more than just a unique phenomenon combined with a special newspaper. In 2010, a Finnish TV serial drama began called *Uusi päivä* [A new day]. It was meant to be broadcast for two seasons, but it continues to this day, and is now in its seventh season.²⁶ For the first two seasons, all the titles of the episodes were proverbs. In the third season, Finnish songs were used and, in subsequent seasons, some phrases.²⁷ This TV serial was partly rerun in May 2013 during the research period. The next chapter provides some general background information on the television and its history in Finland.

6. Television in Finland

Television broadcasts began in Finland in the mid-1950s whereas in many European countries, such as Great Britain and Germany, as well as in the United States and the Soviet Union, they had begun in the 1920s

²⁶ http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uusi_p%C3%A4iv%C3%A4_%28televisiosarja%29 [4.9.2016]

²⁷ After the first two seasons, one TV watcher asked why the titles of the episodes changed form, to which the producers answered, "We started to run out of proverbs." https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luettelo_televisiosarjan_Uusi_p%C3%A4iv%C3%A4_jaksoista [4.9.2016]

and 1930s. When it comes to the television in Europe, Great Britain might be seen as one of the pioneers. The organization of the television institution in Great Britain has functioned as an example for Finnish television (Kortti 2007: 60). Television broadcasts in Finland began on 24 May 1955 (Helsti 1988: 27), but it was not until 1958 that they became regular, five evenings a week (Helsti 1988, 27; 1989: 256). The importance of this occasion can be seen in how regular broadcasting began with the New Year's speech of Finland's president at the time, Urho Kekkonen, on 1 January 1958 (Kortti 2007: 118).

In the 1950s, the state-owned Finnish broadcasting company still considered television to be most suitable for wealthy nations and densely populated areas. From the beginning, TV has had a position as a recognized media and as a status symbol (Helsti 1988: 52; 1989: 258; Kortti 2007: 237). The biggest obstacles to buying a television were religious conviction and the price of a television set. In the 1950s and 1960s, Finland was still a fairly agrarian society and a television set cost about the same as a good cow.²⁸ However, it was not more than ten years before one million television licence fees were paid (Helsti 1988: 43, 51, 102; 1989: 257–258; Kortti 2007: 111).²⁹ It may be that door-to-door salesmen helped this process by giving families the opportunity to try out a television set for a few weeks (Helsti 1988: 29). Despite the high price of a television, people in the lower social class were more inclined to look favourably on television than the upper class did. The upper class and educated people, however, have always looked down on many technological consumer goods (Helsti 1988: 102–103; Kortti 2007: 241). One of the reasons to look down on television was that it represented popular culture and entertainment. The other was the wish to separate oneself from the common people, the folk. A third reason was the anti-literary character of television. The idiom of television recalled the oral tradition, which had a low status in society (Helsti 1988: 103).

Television came to Finland at the same time as many big changes were occurring in Finnish society. These included, for example, migration from the countryside to urban areas and the automation of agriculture and forestry. Through these and many more changes, people started to have more leisure time (Heiskanen 1981: 157; Helsti 1988: 53–62; Kortti 2007: 33, 79).

²⁸ At the end of 1980s, it was possible to buy two or three colour television sets for the price of a good cow.

²⁹ From 1958 to 2013, all owners of TV sets had to pay a television license fee to the state (similar to the one for radios from 1927 to 1976). It is now included as part of annual household taxes.

The structural change in Finnish society differed from most other Western European societies. It happened late, at the end of 20th century, and the transition went from extractive production direct to the service industry. In 1970, the urban population was half of the population whereas as in the 1960s it was a little more than about one third of the population and in 1950s even less (Kortti 2007: 81–82).³⁰

In all market economy countries, the number of television watchers is important: the more people that watch television, the more powerful the commercials become (Heiskanen 1981: 148). However, contrary to many European countries, Finnish commercial television has been seen as one way to finance television so that certain mandates could be fulfilled (Hellman 2012: 40; Miettinen & Wiio 1994: 117). One of the mandates given to television has always been to educate people. This was already included in the first articles of the Finnish radio company in 1925. This mandate remains an important part of Finnish television production, and it is mentioned in the latest set of regulations concerning television programmes (Kortti 2007: 357; Wiio 2007: 405–407, 420).

At the beginning of 1970s, the television became an established part of Finnish society, and by 2006 nearly every Finnish household had at least one television set (Wiio 2007: 415).³¹ Within that 30-year span, however, television grew to become the most popular Finnish pastime. As soon as the 1980s, more than 80 percent of the population watched television daily for an average of almost two and a half hours (Helsti 1992: 7). In 2013, the number of television sets in Finland was 4.4 million and the total population of Finland was approximately 5.5 million.³² In the 21st century, 94 percent of people still use a TV rather than a computer or smart phone to follow the media. For a time in the 1980s, television and TV watchers were also an interesting subject for Finnish research. Further research has been done since, but it has not been so Finland-centred. Television in Finland has always had social importance (Helsti 1988: 67–91), and the need for domestic relevance has remained significant (Kortti 2007: 173).

³⁰ At the beginning of 20th century Finland was a “peripheral agriculture”, but still Finland was one of the first countries where telephone was in everyday use in many households (Kortti 2007: 245).

³¹ <http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Televisio> [9.10.2014].

³² <http://vrk.fi/default.aspx?site=4> [11.10.2014].

7. Conclusion

As expected, the occurrence of proverbial expressions in the titles of TV programmes seems to be related to the history of television in Finland. Finnish proverbs have always been understood as a part of the Finnish heritage that belongs to everyone. Proverbs are a part of the vernacular that people are familiar with. It might be assumed that as instruments of communication, both newspapers and televisions are in daily use. Proverbs are also an indisputable way to express ideas for newspaper readers and TV watchers. The power of a proverb lays in its brevity as well as in the possibility to use it in many meanings. There are good reasons to say that the phenomenon of proverbs is bound up with the phenomenon of television in Finland for various reasons. The cultural impact of television in Finland has, in comparison with other European countries, several unique features. One, the culture industry was not important before television. Two, in the 1960s the Finnish worldview and living conditions were at a turning point and the television had a role in this process (Kortti 2007: 356). Times of structural change in society are critical periods. From the paremiologic point of view, critical periods have the tendency to highlight domestic and nationalistic phenomena in proverbs (Granbom-Herranen 2011a, 2016a).

In addition to these aspects, there are also differences in attitudes between social classes. Many traditional conventions live on even when the status and practices have changed. From the perspective of the upper social classes, television was not linked to high culture but rather to entertainment for the masses. The anti-literary status connected the idiom of television with oral tradition. These views are very similar to the attitude shown towards oral culture in relation to literature. As mentioned above, in the 19th century proverbs in Finnish appeared mostly in speech as a part of the language of the underprivileged majority (i.e. the folk). In many ways, the language of television is and wants to be the language of the common people, but Finnish television has always had an educational mandate as well.

The traditional proverbs or references to them in the titles of TV programmes reflect an idea that a good title of a programme is short and at the same time says something – but not too much – about the programme itself. This usage might be connected with the expectation that all proverbs can be understood by some universal assumed *standard proverbial interpretation* by Neal Norrick (Norrick 1985: 109–117). This expectation is something that newspaper readers and TV watchers are aware of, and proverbs can be used in this manner in the media published in Finnish throughout Finland. The TV listings are the part of the newspaper that can be supposed

to serve the Finnish language common for the whole country, including all dialects and levels of society. Mass media is an institutionalized process, and it reflects the expectations of society.

For many people, proverbs represent something familiar, domestic and old-fashioned while also reflecting a modern Finnish way of thinking. Yet, nostalgia is said to be important in popular culture and it becomes emphasized in television (Kortti 2007: 20). From the commercial point of view, advertisers benefit from television programmes: the more interesting a programme is, the more watchers there are and the more possibilities there are to be seen. Nowadays, the average time people spend daily watching TV is about three hours. During this time, people see approximately 32 commercials and even though most programmes are viewed at the time they are broadcast, it is clear that even the title of a programme is important.³³ Using proverbs, therefore, is an acceptable way to generate interest. Usage of them does not, however, run counter to the educational and cultural functions that have been assigned to television. In Finland there is no inconsistency between agrarian proverbs and the urbanized lifestyle shown in the media. Use of proverbs and the media share a common history and maybe also a common future. As a phenomenon, Finnish proverbs seem to have a status that promotes their continued use in the context of modern urban society, new technology and mass media.

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³³ Finnpanel <http://www.finnpanel.fi/tulokset/tv/kk/ohjryh/2013/10/kotimfiktio.html> [4.9.2016].

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Tytuły programów telewizyjnych w fińskich gazetach: kontekst dla przysłów we współczesnym użyciu

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest używaniu przysłów w komunikacji codziennej, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem przysłów w dwóch fińskich dziennikach: jednym na poziomie regionalnym (*Salon Seudun Sanomat*) i drugim na poziomie krajowym (*Helsingin Sanomat*). Wcześniejsze badania zasygnalizowały specjalne przypadki użycia przysłów w fińskich dziennikach oraz dość liczne występowanie przysłów w tytułach i podpisach w programach telewizyjnych. Zarówno fińskie gazety jak i programy telewizyjne są względnie nowym zjawiskiem, ponadto telewizja jest czymś więcej niż tylko technologiczną innowacją. Autorka łączy te dwa zjawiska z fińskimi przysłowiami pochodzącymi z ustej rolniczej tradycji, co zaświadcza używanie staroświeckiego, wiejskiego języka i pojęć. Jednak we współczesnym użyciu istnieje nowy kontekst.

Przyjęta w artykule perspektywa badawcza opiera się na założeniach folklorystycznej paremiologii. Główna metoda badawcza to analiza treści, rozumiana jako zespół metod powiązanych z ustaleniami opartymi na analizie teoretycznej. W aspekcie wykorzystania przysłów badanie opiera się na koncepcji *proverb performance* folklorysty Charlesa Briggsa (1988) połączonej z koncepcją eventu Alain Badiou (Badiou 2009). Fortunne użycie przysłowia jest głównym ośrodkiem działania i to właśnie tytuł lub podpis w programie telewizyjnym ma za zadanie osiągnąć.

Większość programów telewizyjnych wykorzystuje tradycyjne przysłowia lub odwołania do nich, cytaty biblijne włączone są również do tej grupy. Przysłowia są częścią języka codziennego znanego ludziom. Stanowią one także środek służący do wyrażania niepodważalnych stwierdzeń komunikowanych czytelnikom gazet i telewizjom. Swoistym fenomenem jest status fińskich gazet, które nadal są w obiegu w środowisku współczesnego społeczeństwa miejskiego, nowych technologii i mass mediów.