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**THE IMAGE OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS IN ENGLISH AND LITHUANIAN  
PROVERBS**

BACHELOR THESIS

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## INTRODUCTION

There are thousands of proverbs in the multitude of cultures and languages of the world, as stated by Mieder (2004). The meaning of proverbs has universality and for centuries has been used to teach the values and skills of life in the shared human experience. Nevertheless, proverbs remain unique for each country, which can be illustrated by the saying "If you want to know a people, know their proverbs". In other words, proverbs and sayings encode the manners, customs, characteristics, and spirits of each culture and its people. However, the diversity of proverbs and the uniqueness of their meanings and usage in various life situations make it difficult for non-native speakers to understand them. As Načisčione (2020, p. 9) states, attitudes to proverbs and their use, especially creative use, vary from country to country. Direct usage of a proverb without knowledge of the country's culture can also lead to serious cultural misunderstandings. To avoid these problems, it is crucial to analyze two very different languages: English and Lithuanian, the means of proverbs, to compare and find similarities and differences between them.

It is not a secret, that Lithuanian is one of the oldest and richest languages in the world. Lithuanian is an Eastern Baltic language, which belongs to the Indo-European languages family, which means its cultural heritage is conveyed through the language year after year. The most famous Lithuanian paremiologist, professor Kazys Grigas, in the systematic file "Proverbs and adverbs", has collected proverbs and sayings from fiction, scientific and journalistic texts, as well as living speech. In total, it was counted over 200,000 proverbs and sayings exist in the Lithuanian language. On the other hand, such a work comprises tons of accumulated proverbs, grouped according to keywords arranged in alphabetical order. This way of arranging proverbs complicates the search for the reader, who is looking for proverbs that cover a specific topic, for example, the relationship between children and parents in general. The reader spends a long time searching for proverbs using keywords such as parents, children, relationships, family, and others. Therefore, it would be much more convenient if there were a work that specifically contained all the proverbs that could be used in this area. Nevertheless, a common Lithuanian proverb has many different variations, appearing in different forms, for instance, 'Mokyk Jonelį, o ne Joną' and 'Mokyk vaiką, kol mažas'. It reveals how rich and flourishing the language is. English also has a wide vocabulary because of the large influence of Latin, Germanic, and Celtic languages. However, in comparison to Lithuanian, English is a fairly simple language: words or expressions are used with higher frequency, but not diversity. For this reason, there are proverbs in the Lithuanian language that are difficult to find equivalents in English, especially when trying to match their meaning and purpose.

Even though proverbs in both languages have been used for centuries, and almost no new ones appear, cultural diversity can create difficulty for language users to understand another culture's proverbs.

Although proverbs have been the subject of research for many years, there is still a lack of comparative analysis between these two languages. This thesis is special not only in that it examines proverbs in English and Lithuanian languages but also in that it delves into the specific picture of children and parents depicted in proverbs. The theme concentrated on children and parents was chosen because the very first proverb I learned in my childhood, was 'Lenk medį, kol jaunas', which remained in my memory as one of the most important proverbs of life. It is also known as one of the most popular proverbs used in Lithuania, which teaches parents to raise their children so that they could follow the right path when they grow up. This proverb, as well as many other family-oriented proverbs, is important to learn as it seeks to teach moral values to young and old people. For this reason, I choose to analyse the representation of children and parents in two different languages. Not to mention that proverbs are widely spread in all languages, so it is crucial to know them to understand other cultures, as an American novelist and poet J. G. Holland once said, the proverbs of a nation furnish the index to its spirit and the results of its civilization. Therefore, what images are chosen to represent children and parents in proverbs?

The **subject** of the thesis is the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs. The **aim** is to conduct a comparative analysis of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs examining the similarities and differences in the two cultures.

The **objectives** of this Bachelor thesis are:

1. to examine scientific literature on proverbs cross-culturally,
2. to arrange the distribution of proverb meanings in the collected English and Lithuanian proverbs,
3. to compare the impact of socio-cultural contexts on the representation of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs.

## I. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF PROVERBS

### 1.1 Definition of a proverb

The importance of understanding the concept of proverbs in this research is necessary because it conveys its importance and functions in a language. Many scholars have tried to create a definition of a proverb, but among the hundreds of similar descriptions, none has been able to contain the essence of any proverb in the world. This is because languages are alive and constantly changing, each one with its exceptions. Not to mention the fact that people understand and use proverbs according to their perceptions. However, all attempts to define proverbs are very significant as they reflect different perceptions of the concept and the different criteria they carry.

Created from our experiences and observations, proverbs are very important tools constantly used by many people, who use them to teach, advise or observe different situations of life. According to Mieder (2004, p. 1), proverbs summarize human experiences and observations into “nuggets of wisdom” that comment on personal relationships and social affairs. It means that they are practically used to advise or give a moral on what should be done and what should not or what can happen if a person does not listen to the moral. Mieder (2004, p. 1) adds, that proverbs are significantly used in various fields of communication, from friendly chats, powerful political speeches, and religious sermons to lyrical poetry, best-seller novels, and the influential mass media.

Taking all the definitions that exist, it seems impossible to merge them in one sentence, as each composes many different elements and features. Mieder’s (1993, p. 24) attempt to merge 55 definitions of proverbs from different people resulted in a definition: "A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation". However, Honneck (1997, p. 12) draws attention that it is still a deeper explication of the components “metaphorical” and “fixed” is lack in order not to leave any important views of a proverb. Even though it is difficult to create a perfect definition, it is possible to determine aspects that should be included in any definition of a proverb: “(1) a form of a simple or compound sentence; (2) preservation of proverb meaning outside the context; (3) unknown author; (4) widespread usage of proverbs; (5) expression of universal truths of human experience; (6) conveyance of some educational sense; and (7) brevity, figurativeness and metaphorical character” (Wyżkiewicz (1998, p. 366) as cited in Valiulytė (2010, p. 11)).

Despite the mentioned requirements, many definitions of proverbs lack some aspects in them. However, they should not be considered incorrect, as each of them explains proverbs using certain information or looking at them from different perspectives. For instance, some linguists provide definitions of a proverb from a traditional point of view, underlying the reflection of wisdom and human experience as the most important criteria of a proverb:

- *A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation.* (Mieder 1993, p. 24)
- *Proverbs are brief (sentence-length) entextualized utterances which derive a sense of wisdom, wit and authority from explicit and intentional intertextual reference to a tradition of previous similar wisdom utterances.* (Winick 2003, p. 595, as cited by Mieder 2004, p. 5)

The definitions mentioned above do not include the certain proverbial rules of language, but they present them through the perspective of the values and traditions of shared human experience. Not to mention that most of these definitions are created to explain to a simple person a more complex linguistic concept. Some linguists provide more detailed definitions with a more extensive range of features of proverbs:

- *A proverb can be regarded as a discourse deviant, relatively concrete, present (nonpast) tense statement that uses characteristic linguistic markers to arouse cognitive ideals that serve to categorize topics in order to make a pragmatic point about them.* (Honeck, 1997, p. 18)
- *Proverbs are mainly word combinations of one sentence, performing a semantic and lexical function.* (Grigas, 1976, p. 8)

These definitions give a different perspective as they differentiate proverbs from other linguistic units and introduce their semantic and lexical distinctive features.

Some definitions try to accommodate many possible features of proverbs, involving different perspectives of their understanding:

- *A proverb is an expression which, owing its birth to the people, testifies to its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what is apparently a fundamental truth—that is, a truism,—in homely language, often adorned, however, with alliteration and rhyme. It is usually short, but need not be; it is usually true, but need not be. Some proverbs have both a literal and*

*figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense; but more often they have but one of the two. A proverb must be venerable; it must bear the sign of antiquity, and, since such signs may be counterfeited by a clever literary man, it should be attested in different places at different times. This last requirement we must often waive in dealing with very early literature, where the material at our disposal is incomplete.* (Whiting (1904–1995), as cited in Mieder, 2004, p. 2)

Even though there are many different definitions of proverbs, they are all important in understanding the proverb from different perspectives. Some scholars emphasize values and wisdom as the main features of a proverb, while others emphasize their semantic and lexical features. It is also important to take into consideration the differences in the concept of proverbs between languages, so consequently, this aspect is discussed in the following section.

## 1.2 The difference of proverbs in English and Lithuanian

Even though the concept of proverb and its function in English and Lithuanian is similar, it is important to compare the term in both languages “to notice the passage of proverbs from language to language, the change of their content and form in space and time, the direction of variation of proverbs, which depend on the peculiarity of the ethnology of national languages”. (Grigas, 1987, p. 6). Different dictionaries of both languages give slightly different definitions, however, generalizing all of them leads to a similar definition of the notion. The definitions are provided above:

- The Academic Dictionary of Lithuanian defines proverb as “a short saying that succinctly conveys the wisdom of life: proverbs express complex thoughts in easy-to-remember images”.
- According to the English Cambridge dictionary, a proverb is “a short sentence, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice”. The dictionary also gives synonyms such as adage (“a wise saying”), axiom (“a statement or principle that is generally accepted to be true, but need not be so”), saw (“a short sentence that states something that is generally thought to be true, or that gives useful advice”) and saying (“a well-known wise statement that often has a meaning that is different from the simple meanings of the words it contains”).

Although the term proverb can be found in both languages, other synonymous terms are used parallelly with the term proverb. In English, for instance, the term “phrase” is sometimes used by linguists as a more general concept of proverb. According to Mieder (2004, p. 13), “linguists have decided to refer to all formulaic phrases as phraseological units or phraseologisms. They have created a new subfield of study, which they have designated as phraseology (the study of phrases). That scholarly term serves as an umbrella for all phrasal collocations, including the entire area of paremiology. Linguists usually employ the Greek term based on paremia (proverb), indicating that proverbs are very special phraseological units”. In Lithuanian, the term proverb (*patarlė*) is synonymously used with several other terms, that can be found in both written and spoken language. The variations include *posakis*, *pasakymas*, *priežodis*, *patarimas*.

While comparing the definitions of proverb in both languages, they appear very similar, but not identical. They can be expressed in several terms; however, they all similarly reflect the same meaning. The compilers of the dictionaries and scholars in both languages agree that a proverb can be defined as a short statement with certain distinctive features that conveys already known facts in a different, more stylistically expressive form and is used as a tool to teach or advise.

### 1.3 The meaning of proverbs

What matters the most about the proverb is the meaning of it and the idea it sends. However, the complexity of proverbs and their meaning raises difficulties in their understanding because proverbs are known for having both metaphorical and literal meanings.

Consequently, Kispál (2007, 414-422) notes, that proverbs can be classified into the group of figurative or idiomatic (for ex., *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*) and of non-idiomatic proverbs (for ex., *Better late than never*). Idiomatic proverbs often cause comprehension problems since the meaning of the whole proverb cannot be determined from the meaning of its separate components. In other words, a person, hearing a certain proverb for the first time, especially if this proverb originated from another culture, can easily misunderstand the idea of it by developing a figurative meaning based on its component words: “Such a view might be supported by the fact that speakers asked to describe what a proverb means might either succeed or fail to achieve this task, depending on the extent to which the proverb is familiar or unfamiliar to them” (Lemghari, 2021, p. 268). Lemghari (2021, p. 270) provides examples and explanations of proverbs that have both metaphorical and literal meanings:

1. Like father, like son (father and son are higher-order forms, and apply as such to higher-order forms of human beings. Hence the reason the proverb is considered literal.)
2. A barking dog never bites (despite being a lower form, the animal form dog applies to higher-order forms of humans. The difference between the source lower-order and the target higher-order of forms is thus the main reason for qualifying it as metaphorical in nature.)

On the other side, the meaning of proverbs also highly depends on social situations, on the person who delivers the message, and on how the receiver understands the message from his or her point of view: “It seems most reasonable to take into consideration the importance of context only as a potential, or visual factor, and to abstract for heuristic purposes from all contextual elements (such as number, age, gender, social status of the involved persons, etc.), and to outline the “ethnic frame” of proverb use” (Seitel, 1969, 1972, as cited in Mieder, 1994, p. 37). In addition, Honeck (1997, p. 1) indicates that due to the complexity of proverbs, we need an interdisciplinary perspective to explain how people use and understand proverbs. Consequently, Honeck (1997, p. 1) states: “Enter cognitive science, a discipline dedicated to solving the puzzle of the mind by using concepts that originate within psychology, linguistics, neurology, artificial intelligence, and the philosophy of language and mind”. It can be said that each person when using or hearing proverbs in certain situations in life, adapts them according to their perception and experience. In addition, every proverb, both with literal or figurative meaning might require deeper thinking skills and cognitive processing: “Recognizing the specialized thinking required in the processing of figurative expressions and the particular functions certain genres serve in different societies allows us to localize the interface of cognition and language by showing us how we combine the reasoning skills we are born with (i.e., the ability to infer, compare, and generalize) and the acquired social skills that tell us when, how, and to what we should apply our intellectual wherewithal” (Barajas, É. D., p. 50).

The way how the message with the proverb in it was expressed has a huge impact on how the listener perceives it: “They hear what is spoken, experience disaster, start acting at a certain stage and call upon wisdom. They form a second source domain in dialogue with the first source domain of wisdom speaking” (Venter, 2019, p. 2). Lau, Tokofsky, Winick (2004 p. 6) adds that proverbs can express deference or confidence or worry, instil fear, or respect, or even mock the listener.

The understanding of proverbs also depends on the context: “In everyday use, proverbs function as social strategies and their meaning only become apparent in context” (Mieder 2004, p. 134, as cited in Zaikauskienė, 2021, p. 14).

To conclude, the use and comprehension of proverbs are very complex. Both the language user and the listener are responsible for how the proverb is going to serve and what represents in a language. The context in which the proverb is used also plays a huge part in its comprehension, which requires cognitive processing.

#### 1.4 The features of proverbs

There are thousands of different proverbs among languages and there is no possible way to remember all of them. This may create difficulty to distinguish them from any other phrase. Scholars from ancient times tried to define what the proverb is; however, there could be no ideal definition which would include and cover every single proverb in the world and its particularities, as they are always exceptions in languages and the diversity of nations with their exceptional proverbs. For this reason, it is better to define proverbs by certain frames and features that could be distinguished as general among cultures. Lau, Tokofsky, Winick (2004, p. 3) argues that certain attributes exist that can work as a tool for defining proverbs:

In some cultures, and situations, we are lucky that proverbs are preceded by a framing device: “You know what they say”; “As someone once said”; or, in some locales, “We have a proverb for that.” In most cases, though, we need to look for other clues. Sometimes proverbial messages are metaphorical so that, for example, being circumspect in signing a mortgage can be described as “looking before you leap.” Sometimes proverbs are poetic, featuring rhyme (“No pain, no gain”; “Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise”), near rhyme (“Honesty is the best policy”; “A stitch in time saves nine”), regular meter (“There’s many a slip twixt the cup and the lip”; “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”), or alliteration (“Where there’s a will, there’s a way”; “Love laughs at locksmiths”). Sometimes they use the unusual or archaic syntax (“He who hesitates is lost”; “Here today, gone tomorrow”; “It’s an ill wind that blows nobody good”). Norrick (1985, p. 12) adds that proverbs are often introduced with certain frames or followed by proverbial affixes:

*You should, one should, always, as the saying goes, they say, it is said.*

Norrick (1985, p. 12) also comments that taken together, these items hold out the possibility of varying and extending practically any proverb. These can also work as a tool for identifying and understanding proverbs in different contexts. Norrick (1985, p. 17) provides ten features of proverbs with their explanations:

1. Polysemy (The polysemy of the proverb *A rolling stone gathers no moss* with its two standard interpretations *a person on the move remains young* and *a person on the move remains poor* has often been noted. Historically the separate interpretations may have originated as dialect variants.)
2. Pun (Proverbs occasionally contain puns. This makes them potentially polysemic as well, in as much as either meaning may predominate in any particular discourse context. For instance, we interpret *No news is good news* to mean *either news is never positive* or *the absence of new information leaves hope that nothing bad has happened.*)
3. Hyperbole (Any proverb containing absolute modifiers and adverbs like *no*, *never*, *all* and *always* is likely to involve overstatement, as in *A watched pot never boils* and *The grass is always greener on the other side.*)
4. Irony (A few proverbs are ironic, e.g., *All geese are swans*, though the irony is much commoner in proverbial phrases such as *A fine kettle of fish* and *As clear as mud.*)
5. Tautology (Tautologous proverbs are considerably more common. The most obvious examples are proverbs where the same noun phrase appears on both sides of a copula verb, as in *Enough is enough*; *Boys will be boys*; *What will be, will be.*)
6. Paradox (Proverbs expressing preposterous claims like *The pen is mightier than the sword* are fairly common in English, and level-mixing, vicious circle proverbs like *Never say never* and *Expect the unexpected.*)
7. Connotation (They intensify the rhetorical force and the traditional significance of proverbs. Folksy, rural, pre-industrial connotations are typical of proverbs, e.g., *Make hay while the sun shines* and *Don't put the cart before the horse*. Many proverbs also exhibit Biblical and/ or religious connotations as well, e.g., *The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak* and *The blind lead the blind*. Proverbs employ humour fairly frequently and jocular connotations are evident in many proverbs, e.g., *Monkey see, monkey do* and *If you can't be good, be careful* used as a leave-taking formula.)
8. Imagery (Proverbs contain specialized images from pre-industrial life, rather than basic-level metaphors or images familiar to speakers today. Proverbs thrive on foregrounding, high visibility and cultural salience, and consequently, their images must be striking and

memorable, not quotidian. Proverb images often fail miserably as models for organizing our perceptions of recurrent situations. They are frequently specialized, archaic and/or far-fetched, e.g., *The apple doesn't fall far from the tree* is certainly confusing and ambiguous in comparison with *Like father, like son.*)

9. Syntactic features (Proverbs often contain archaic and dialect words and structures, e.g. *Them as has gits*. They may even come from other languages entirely, as in *Che sarà sarà* and *C'est la vie*. Proverbs are also often constructed around formulas which fail to conform to normal sentence grammar, e.g., *Like father, like son*; *The bigger they come, the harder they fall*; *Once bitten, twice shy.*)
10. Discourse features (The patterns of frequency, salience and recognizability all hang together. Proverbs and proverbial phrases are not frequent, but highly noticeable, because they are salient in context, frequently foregrounded, easily remembered, and so they can be varied and serve as templates but remain recognizable. By contrast, frequent phrases like *of course* and *at all* go unnoticed despite their frequency and because of their nondescript form.)

However, considering the differences between languages and cultures, applying these attributes to every proverb would not be correct, as each language has its exceptions. According to Grigas (1976, p. 8), poetic images are in many cases created by using the broadest names and images of things which details everyday life, work, customs, rituals, and beliefs that are typical of a comparatively narrow geographic environment. It demonstrates the diversity of features that different proverbs carry with them.

### 1.5 The origins of proverbs

It is a well-known fact that the origin of proverbs is related almost to the occurrence of languages, as people at all times tried to find expressions to reflect on the experiences of their life. Proverbs from ancient times represented the uniqueness of different cultures and mirrored the behaviours and features of nations. Proverbs are born when they are used and accepted by many people, stored in their memory, and shared from generation to generation. According to Yu (2019, p. 1), proverbs can familiarize people of one country with the cultural heritage of the other, thus achieving the goal of cultural exchange. It means that proverbs that reveal certain characteristics of the culture of one country usually do not correspond with the proverbs of another culture because

of the cultural gap between them. Yu (2019, p. 2) introduces four factors that reveal the reasons for the proverbial differences among cultures:

1. Proverbs originate from human experiences (People have drawn, by various means, ever so many elements from their daily practice to invent numerous proverbial expressions. <...> Most proverbs come from the colloquial speech of the common people, for through their practical work people have created a great number of proverbs, just as sailors in Britain have invented many lively sea proverbs, labourers in the fields have created expressions concerning farm work and workers from occupations of all kinds have given birth to numerous proverbs concerning their daily practice. These proverbs are terse, colloquial, vivid and charged with life; therefore, they acquire a wide application to analogous situations in everyday life, and finally come to be universally understood.)
2. Proverbs originate from Literary works (The merit for the abundance of English proverbs should, to a large extent, go to William Shakespeare's plays from which spring up a great number of proverbs involving events and characters. These proverbs and the rich connotations reflected by them have become a part of their life so that they quote them in their daily speech and writing often even without definite consciousness of their origin.)
3. Proverbs originate from religion (It is known that religion came into being at the time when society as a whole remained backwards and people could hardly explain satisfactorily many seemingly unnatural events when confronted with various natural phenomena. Gradually, mysterious religions came to their rescue. Religion once had and still has an immense influence on people's behaviour, mind and thought. Naturally, these religions found their expressions in languages, especially in proverbs, the cream of language, which mirror different events taking place at various stages of human development.)
4. Proverbs originate from social discrimination (Social discrimination as it was has taken its root in many aspects. As a result, no one can claim that everyone in his country enjoys equal opportunity, respect and treatment, for it still needs some time for the planet to become an ideal global village in which every global citizen will not be judged by colour, but by one's character; not by sex, but by one's work; not by the position one holds, but by the contribution they make to the society. So, it goes without saying that the progress of development of every society is stamped with the brand of discrimination of various kinds. As an indicator of the cultural traits, proverbs reflect these social events in a crystal way.)

When examining the origins of proverbs, it is important to mention the significant work of psycholinguist R. P. Honeck. In his book *A Proverb in Mind: The Cognitive Science of Proverbial Wit and Wisdom* (1997) he examines seven possible aspects of how proverbs are invented, used, and remembered:

1. Personal (The proverb is treated from a subjective viewpoint based purely on personal experience and understanding.)
2. Formal (This is a scientific approach that primarily uses the methods and concepts of linguistics, logic, and semiotics to define, classify and otherwise analyze proverbs.)
3. Religious (Religious teaching and wisdom are examined in texts such as the Bible.)
4. Literary (Proverbs in prose and poetry are analyzed in terms of their literary value and what they tell us about the writer, their times, and so forth.)
5. Practical (The many uses of the proverb in intelligence testing, advertising, psychotherapy, and other areas are examined.)
6. Cultural (This is a scientific approach to the proverb that treats it as a multifunction form of folk literature that arises from and is embedded in a sociocultural context.)
7. Cognitive (This is a scientific approach based on cognitive science that attempts to explain how individuals use and understand proverbs. This view is the foundation for this study.)

The multitude of experiences from our life has a huge impact on the emergence, origin, and usage of new proverbs. Even though they share certain experiences, most proverbs serve a single culture, which means that their understanding requires a deep knowledge of culture and good skills in cross-cultural communication. Proverbs may seem like simple language units that vividly express the truths of life; however, they need a deep knowledge of different fields to be correctly understood and properly used.

### 1.6 The similarity of proverbs among nations

While comparing proverbs with the same semantical meanings in different cultures, they could be found of the same semantic equivalence as they share the general meaning and cultural experience of the people creating them (Rusieshvili-Cartledge, Dolidze, 2017, p. 270). Seliverstova (2020, p. 202) gives three factors on proverbial similarities among nations:

1. one can find expressions which are not connected with the national identity but appeared on the all-European cultural and philosophical basis and have a common origin — mythology, the Bible, fiction, etc.
2. In different languages we often find proverbs which are not based on genetic commonness or language contacts, and which, however, have much in common in their meaning, structure, and vocabulary. This can be explained by the common features of human nature and intellectual activity and common observations of the environment.
3. The share of uniquely national elements in the proverbial corpus of a certain language becomes less significant, if, while comparing different languages, one takes into consideration special features of proverbs as such.

Buja (2018, p. 1) states, that by analysing proverbs, one can get an understanding of the culture that produced them. This understanding is even deeper if proverbs from one foreign culture reflect the same values as those in our own.

Considering all the factors, similarities in proverbs among cultures mean the common perception of the world for the speakers of various languages.

### 1.7 The synonymy of proverbs

Proverb synonymy is a very frequent trait that creates complications in understanding and use. It means that even apparently different proverbs can express the same idea. If two proverbs have the same idea and differ only in a few words or grammatical structures, they are proverb variants (Lauhakangas, 2001, as cited in Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Varga, 2014, p. 54). Lemghari (2021, p. 267) provides the example of two distinct in-character proverbs with similar meanings: “The girl who cannot dance says the band cannot play” and “Blind blames the ditch”. Their synonymy demonstrates that they belong to the same category when the meaning of proverbs is far from equal to either of their literal meanings. However, if the meaning of these proverbs were literal in character, they would mean different things.

It is also important to mention that many proverbs have developed various forms because of their frequent usage. According to Klégr (2011, p. 5), variants of proverbs (excluding contextual modifications) can be divided according to the type of difference between them, such as word order, structural, morphological, or lexical (using a synonym, co-hyponym). These types may

combine and/or differ in other dimensions, stylistic, pragmatic, etc. Klégr (2011, p. 5), provides examples of possible variants and corresponding proverbs:

1. Word order: “All that glitters is not gold” and “All is not gold that glitters”
2. Morphological: “More haste, worse speed” and “The more haste, the less speed”
3. Lexical (structure preserved, one or more different items involved): “Like father, like son” and “Like master, like servant”
4. Structural: “Never cross a bridge until you come to it” and “Don't cross the bridges before you come to them”
5. Quantitative: “April showers bring May flowers” and “March winds and April showers always bring May flowers”

Finally, proverb synonymy creates difficulties in the usage and comprehension of proverbs because they depend on certain factors, including their figurative and literal differences, lexical representation, propositional density, and others.

Having reviewed the scholar’s insights about proverbs from different perspectives and their analysis in various regards, it can be summarized that they are very complex and vivid tools that have accompanied languages since ancient times. They are born from our experiences, and observations and intelligently comment on personal relationships and social affairs. Scholars defined certain features, attributes and framing devices that help to distinguish proverbs from other parts of the language. Those ways of distinguishing proverbs can also work as a tool for identifying and understanding proverbs in different contexts and cultures. Ten features are provided by Norrick (1985, p. 17), who included polysemy, pun, hyperbole, irony, tautology, paradox, connotation, imagery, syntactic and discourse features. On the other side, the cultural gap between cultures is the main factor why features of proverbs usually do not correspond with the features from another culture. Yu (2019, p. 2) provided four factors of the proverbial differences among cultures. These are different human experiences, literary works, religion, and social discrimination. Even though proverbs share certain experiences, most proverbs serve a single culture, requiring a deep knowledge of culture and good skills in cross-cultural communication, to be correctly understood and properly used. Scholars also mention various proverb variants and their synonyms as an important phenomenon that often occurs in proverbs from different cultures. Despite these factors, individual experience and understanding also play an important role in the usage of proverbs.

## METHODOLOGY

All the examples for this research are taken from primary and secondary sources. Lithuanian proverbs are taken from digitized archives of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore *Lietuvių patarlės ir priežodžiai*, and two books *Lietuvių patarlės* (1976) and *Patarlių paralelės* (1987) of linguist Grigas, who collected and analysed over 611 international proverbs and their equivalents in both Lithuanian and English languages. For collecting English proverbs, the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (2008) is used. To find the equivalents of English and Lithuanian proverbs, Grigas' books contribute significantly by juxtaposing the proverbs in two languages, according to their structure, types, tendencies of representation, formation, and other regards.

For collecting the examples in English and Lithuanian, the keywords are used in searching proverbs. They are parent, children, father, mother, son, daughter, kid, and their equivalents in Lithuanian. Keeping in mind that the representation of those words may vary due to their synonymous variants, other words are also used to search proverbs. It is also important to mention, that words, such as apple, tree and others are also used in this research as they are the metaphorical expressions of children and parents.

This research comprises 54 proverbs in English and Lithuanian through the process of taking Lithuanian proverbs and finding their equivalents in terms of their purpose and meanings in English and vice versa. The number is chosen because this number of examples might be the right amount of data to cover in one research. The number of analysed Lithuanian and English proverbs is not equal, because when pairing proverbs in two languages, some variations appear in different forms. The list of proverbs is provided in the appendix.

The research uses a mixed-method analysis to analyse proverbs. To investigate all the similarities and differences of proverbs in the two languages, there is a decision made to use two types of analysis: semantic and cultural. The semantic analysis is used to understand different representations of the image of parents and children in proverbs in both languages, pairing proverbs with the same semantical meaning. The cultural analysis is done to find how socio-cultural contexts contributed to the representation of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs. Cultural analysis is also used to analyse the origins of target proverbs. Determining the origins of proverbs is important in this research because socio-cultural analysis requires an understanding of the reasons for the emergence of proverbs. However, this analysis is not extended due to the lack of knowledge and sources, as most of the proverbs in the list existed in languages

for decades with little knowledge of their actual origin. Nevertheless, proverbs that have explanations of their origin, or their implicit nature are analysed through a cultural perspective.

## EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS

### 3.1 The image of children and parents

The family, its inner life and the relationship between its members can be found described in books and stories of all times. However, it can be noted that families exist not only among people. We can find animal families being described, even plants being depicted as family members. Those proverbs depict children and parents in many imaginative ways, reflecting different behaviour, values, and other regards. A number of proverbs representing children and parents in various forms have been collected. When comparing and analysing Lithuanian and English proverbs, semantics is not always clear, as some proverbs may have several unrelated meanings. Therefore, the meaning was chosen and analysed according to the context covering children and parents.

#### PARENTS AND CHILDREN AS TREE AND FRUIT

There are many similarities between a tree and a human being. The roots correspond to the head, the branches to the hands, the trunk to the back, the core to the heart, and the leaves and fruits to the children. Even more, we can find that in the literature the tree is often personified - it can stand, look, cry, or even feel pain, as the tree has a heart and a soul. A wounded tree, like a wounded person, bleeds. This also reflects in the proverbs below, where parents are associated with a tree and children with the fruit or seeds:

- (1) *Medį pažinsi iš jo vaisių*
- (2) *Iš vaisiaus pažįstamas yra medis*
- (3) *Kiekvienas medis veda savo vaisių*
  
- (4) *So every tree hath fruit after his kinde*

Lithuanian examples (1), (2), (3) and English example (4) express the same idea using different component words. Proverbs use a tree and its fruit as the figurative image of parents and their children.

According to the proverbs, each tree grows fruit that is unique to that tree. This is a reflection of children that are very similar to their parents, who educated and instilled in them their values. To put it another way, a tree's fruit is a reflection of the tree itself, as the children are the reflections of their parents. These proverbs also underline the notion that each child has specific qualities, characteristics, behaviours, or values that are reflected in his parents. Children cannot act against their inherent characteristics, just as a tree cannot produce fruit that is inconsistent with its type.

After analysing all examples, it has been observed that in both English and Lithuanian languages, the tree and its fruits have been chosen to represent the similarity between children and parents. These instances highlight the idea that a child's family environment and upbringing have an impact on who they become. It implies that parents can have a lasting impact on their kid's development by modelling and teaching them good habits, attitudes, and behaviours.

Another way to represent children and parents using the image of different kinds of plants is found by using comparison. This indicates a certain innate human tendency to look for causality in observing and evaluating life, to try to discover inner connections in everything. Take the following instances:

- (5) *Koks medis, toks ir vaisius*
- (6) *Kokie grūdai, tokie ir javai*
- (7) *Kokie lapai, tokios ir uogos*
- (8) *Kokie šiaudai, tokie ir grūdai*
- (9) *Koks medis, tokia ir šaknis*
- (10) *Koks medis, tokia ir žievė, kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*
- (11) *Koks medis, tokie ir lapai*
- (12) *Koks medis, tokios ir skiedros*
- (13) *Kokia obelis, tokie ir obuoliai*
- (14) *Koksai beržas, toks ir kelmas, koksai tėvas, toks sūnus*
  
- (15) *Like tree, like fruit*

All above mentioned Lithuanian and English proverbs emphasize that children often look so much like their parents. For instance (10), a daughter resembles her mother in much the same way that a tree's bark resembles the actual tree. This applies to behaviours, attitudes, and personality attributes in addition to how daughters look physically like their mothers. Proverbs places a heavy emphasis on the massive influence parents have on their children. It implies that parents' teachings and actions frequently influence children's learning and development. These proverbs work as a reminder of the importance of setting a good example for children and instilling excellent beliefs and behaviours.

Proverbs (6), (7), and (8) use different plants to represent the idea of similarity between children and parents. Examples (5), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14) and (15) are very similar to each other, as all of them use a tree to represent parents, and fruit or other parts of a tree to represent children. Proverbs (10) and (14) use both figurative and literal meanings, as they are commented on in the second part of the sentence, revealing what is hidden behind their figurative meaning. It can be noticed that the Lithuanian language has more variants than the English language when the same idea is expressed in several different, synonymous variants.

It also can be observed that in the Lithuanian language, 10 different synonymous variants of proverbs were found, while in the English language, there was only one short proverb to express the same idea. Lithuanian language represents its proverbs in a more detailed manner, as proverbs (13) and (14) even distinguish certain species of trees to provide more vivid emotion to them. In addition, all these above-analysed proverbs are synonymous variants to the examples (1), (2), (3) and (4), as they carry similar meanings by using different representations.

The analysis shows that proverbs use comparison to represent the resemblance of children to their parents. In the Lithuanian language, proverbs are more likely to use many synonymous variants to represent one idea, while the English language tends to use only one variant of proverbs. These proverbs serve as a general reminder of the significant influence parents have on their children. Proverbs motivate parents to be aware of their behaviour and work to be a good example for their children.

Proverbs below use an apple tree and its fruits to depict children and their parents:

(16) *Netoli obels obuoliukai krinta*

(17) *The apple never falls far from the tree*

Two synonymous examples (16) and (17) in English and Lithuanian are very similar and deliver the same message. They refer to how a child's behaviour, traits, or abilities frequently resemble those of their father or mother. In other words, children inherit their parent's characteristics, whether they are positive or negative. It also implies that whether the quality is physical, emotional, or intellectual, children naturally take it from their parents.

These proverbs can be interpreted in two ways. Positively, it implies that parents who exhibit good behaviours and values can encourage their kids to become successful individuals. On the other hand, it also negatively implies that kids who grow up with problematic parents may be more likely to have the same issues as adults. Despite that, these proverbs are most often used to criticize or point out the flaws and faults of a child, referencing his parents at the same time.

Both instances mention the apple tree. It symbolises parents, that take care of their children until they grow up, the same way the apple tree grows its fruits until they ripe and fall on the ground. However, even when they fall, apples roll under their branches, not too far from the stem. It can be considered as a reference to children with similar behaviour to their parents.

In general, these proverbs, using the image of an apple tree, serve as a reminder that our family environment and upbringing have a significant impact on us and encourage parents to be mindful of the behaviours they model for their children.

Another way proverbs represent children is by comparing them to a young tree, which is much easier to bend, as its stem is thin and flexible than that of an old, stunted tree. These proverbs are collected below:

(18) *Lenk beržą, kol jaunas*

(19) *Lenk medį, kol jaunas*

(20) *Lenk medį, kol žalias*

(21) *Lenk karklą, kol šis dar jaunas*

(22) *Kur lenksi, ten lenkiasi, kaip mokysi, taip išmokysi*

(23) *Lenk medį, kol jaunas, lupk vaiką, kol mažas*

(24) *Lenk medį, kol dar palenki, bausk vaiką, kol dar priveiki*

(25) *Bend a tree while it is young*

(26) *The tree must be bent while it is young*

(27) *Best to bend while it is a twig*

(28) *A young tree is easier twisted than an old tree*

Proverbs (18), (19) and (20) use the image of a tree that is young, green, and not yet formed its shape. This kind of tree is at its best time to be shaped to grow strong and straight to the sky. These proverbs indicate that it is simpler to shape someone's character while they are still young, open to advice and more likely to be influenced by people and events around them. These proverbs emphasize the idea that a person's future can be significantly shaped by early actions. Parental advice, support, and positive role modelling can have a significant impact on a child's growth.

Proverb (21) accordingly uses an osier plant as the image of young children. In Lithuanian folklore, the leaning osier symbolizes condescension, which is seen as a quality of a young personality. Instances (22), (23) and (24) also represent a child as a young tree, however, these proverbs provide both figurative and literal meaning, explaining its meaning at the end of the sentence. English versions (25), (26), and (28) representing children also depict them as a young tree. They also intend to show the right time for parents to teach their kids. Proverb (27) respectively compares children to a twig.

Proverbs in both English and Lithuanian languages tend to compare children to a young tree or its twig to represent the flexible character that can be easily shaped. People in their young days should be assisted in developing positive habits, mindsets, and beliefs before their habits and attitudes become more settled, just as a young tree must be bent when it is still flexible and not stunted.

## CHILDREN AS YOUNG TO TEACH

Proverbs dealing with the topics of child and parent relations and parenting are discussed in many ways. They are full of advice on what to follow when raising children; they warn, summarise various phenomena and draw conclusions. Several proverbs that teach adults to educate their children from their youth are provided below:

(29) *Mokyk Jonelį, o ne Joną*

(30) *Ko Jonelis neišmoko, to Jonas jau neišmoks*

(31) *Mokyk vaiką, kol mažas*

(32) *Kalk geležį, kol karšta, paskui neįveiksi, mokyk vaiką, kol mažas, paskui nepriveiksi*

(33) *Teach someone while they are young*

Instances (29), (30), (31), (32) and (33) indicate that children should be taught while they are young because when they grow up, it is impossible to instil new values or behaviour that are not already in their habits. It means that the values learned in youth accompany us throughout our whole life.

To enhance the impression in proverbs, Lithuanian instances (29) and (30) use a diminutive version of the name Jonas. In this way, proverbs convey the age difference without straightly telling it, as little Jonas is compared to already grown-up Jonas. Example (32) compares children to hot iron, whereas hot iron, similarly to young personality, is favourable to shaping, but when cold and hardened, it is almost impossible to change its shape.

The cases above draw the image of children by comparing them to the old version of themselves. Proverbs imply that making an effort on educating children while they are still young will prove beneficial in the long run because it might be more challenging to change their behaviour or attitude as they get older.

#### MOTHER AND CHILDREN AS BIRDS

Most birds take care of their children for days or even weeks after they hatch, bringing food to their young ones and protecting them from predators. For this reason, the following proverbs describe motherly love for children using the image of birds:

(34) *Savas vis gražiausias, nors būt ir pelėdos vaikas*

(35) *Ir pelėdai savo vaikas gražus*

(36) *Kiekvienai motinai savo vaikas gražus*

(37) *The crow thinks her own bird(s) fairest (whitest)*

Examples (34), (35) and (37) use a bird as an example of a mother who thinks that her babies are the most attractive or pure, even though they might be not different from those of another

bird. In this way, proverbs in the form of comparisons are often used to ridicule something. They are frequently used to illustrate how people tend to exaggerate their children, believing them to be better, more beautiful, or more important than those of others. These proverbs talk about the motherly love for a child, that is immense and ignores any factor, including the look or behaviour.

In the Lithuanian language, proverb (34) uses an owl bird to represent the child, while in the example (35), the owl is used to represent the mother. On the other hand, in English, the proverb (37) represents the mother as a crow bird. Instance (36) is not using any bird to represent the image of a mother or child. However, this proverb is included in this list because it is synonymous with the rest and sends the same message using similar component words.

The analysis shows that proverbs in the Lithuanian language tend to use an owl as the image of a mother and her child, while the English language respectively uses a crow. In both languages, they mean that parents tend to have a biased view of their children.

#### CHILDREN AS A MIRROR OF THEIR PARENTS

People frequently use comparisons when they make observations. It is in our nature to compare ourselves to others to understand why we are the way we are. Comparisons are frequently used when discussing children's behaviour because it always mirrors their parents. This reflects in the following examples:

- (38) *Koks tėvas, toks ir vaikas*
- (39) *Koks tėvelis, toks sūnelis*
- (40) *Kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*
- (41) *Koks tėvas, toks ir sūnus, kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*
- (42) *Koks tėvas, toks ir vaikas, koks mėnuo, toks ir laikas*
- (43) *Koks čėsas, toks ir laikas, toks tėvas, toks ir vaikas*
  
- (44) *Like father, like son*
- (45) *Such father, such son*
- (46) *Like father, like son; like mother, like daughter*

The examples reveal that proverbs tend to present parents as a mirror, equivalent to their children. According to these proverbs, children frequently have the same attitude traits and behaviours as their parents. These proverbs imply that most characteristics are acquired from parents and that children typically pick them up through observation. These proverbs can be used to highlight the significance of setting a positive example for kids, as parents' actions and attitudes can have a huge impact on their offspring's growth.

Proverbs (38), (39), (40), (41) and (44), (45), (46) are synonymous variants that exist in two languages. They present children as a reflection of their parents. However, a tendency can be found in proverbs, as all of them compare the son with the father and the daughter with her mother. Other proverbs (42) and (43) compare father and child to a month and time. These examples express the idea that time is beyond control, it always flows according to month. It is a reference to father and son, as sons always behave as their fathers, who instilled in their children the same values as their own.

There is a sort of not written rule that parents must take care of their children until they reach adulthood, and grown-up children must take care of their parents in their retired days. However, children very often behave unthankful towards their parents, as they are unwilling to provide the right support for them when they get old. Several proverbs collected below represent the image of children in this negative way:

(47) *Vienas tēvas šešetą vaikų išmaitina, o šešetas vaikų vieno tėvo neišmaitina*

(48) *Vienam tėvui yra lengviau dešimt vaikų išmaitint nekad dešimčiai vaikų vieną tėvą*

(49) *One father is enough to govern one hundred sons, but not a hundred sons one father*

Examples (47), (48) and (49) can be considered synonymous variants, illustrating the father, who is left without any help or support from their grown-up children.

According to these proverbs, it is easier for one father to raise and educate many children, than many children take care of one father. It indicates that taking care of a family is easier for a single father in a position of authority than it is for many children to successfully take care of their father. They negatively represent children, as they are depicted as unwilling to take care of their

father in his old days. It also implies that children should endeavour to treat their fathers with the respect and love they merit in exchange for the sacrifices they make on their behalf.

(50) *Motina gal devynetą vaikų adata išpenėt, o tėvas nei šešiais žirgais vieną*

The proverb above shows the superiority of the mother's role over the father's when it comes to taking care of the children. According to the instance (50), fathers may be less actively involved in parenting on a daily basis than mothers, who are always aware of their children's needs. The proverb uses the image of threading a needle, which calls for considerable patience and a steady hand. The idea of a mother raising nine children suggests that she is prepared to invest the time and energy necessary to raise them, even when it is challenging or time-consuming. However, the image of a father struggling to feed even one child with six horses raises the insight that fathers may be less capable or willing to carry out duties that are thought of as traditionally maternal. However, such a proverb is not only intended to make fun of the poor father's role in raising children but emphasize the important role of the mother in the family. In addition, the proverb exaggeratedly conveys its idea, thickening the colours of the situation.

Many themes have been given to proverbs by typical individual traits of children and parents. Proverbs not only observe bad habits but also ridicule people's vices and weaknesses. In addition, a figure of a mother and father are impressively juxtaposed and contrasted.

#### CHILDREN AS TROUBLE

Children, as they are young and careless, are generally known to cause stress and a constant worry to their parents. Take the following examples:

(51) *Maži vaikai – maži vargai, dideli vaikai – dideli vargai*

(52) *Children when they are little make parents fools, when they are great they make them mad*

Examples (51) and (52) illustrate growing children as growing problems. According to the proverb (51), as children grow, so do the challenges that parents deal with. Parents often confront more immediate and physical difficulties when their children are young, such as meeting their basic needs and keeping them safe. However, as children get older, parents may confront more complex challenges, such as handling behavioural, social and other problems. The proverb is a reminder that parenting worries never vanish, even when children mature and develop. It highlights the continuity of parenting and the necessity to be adaptable and resilient in the face of shifting conditions.

According to the proverb (52), children care is a hard and stressful undertaking, as young people may act in ways that look silly or absurd. However, as they mature and gain their independence, children could make choices or do things that enrage or anger their parents. The proverb also highlights the problems that rises at various phases of children's development by juxtaposing the images of parents being made "fools" when their children are young and "angry" when they are grown. It implies that parenting calls for a high level of tolerance, comprehension, and adaptability.

Both proverbs suggest that parents often struggle with children when they are young because they require constant care. Even more, older children bring even more worries to their parents as they burden them with new problems.

The behaviour of the children often has negative effects on their parents. This can be found in the following instances:

(53) *Vaikai obuolius valgo, tėvai dantis atšimpa*

Case (53) compares the child's behaviour to eating an apple, and the consequences of that behaviour as the punishment to his father. The proverb indicates that when the son commits a crime, the father gets punished and is the one who gets into trouble. It indicates that parents often repay for their children's actions, make sacrifices or go through hardships to safeguard the welfare of their children. However, this is like a response to the fact that it is the fault of the parents themselves because children's behaviour reflects how they were raised. To convey the message, the baring teeth of the father are used to indicate the bad consequences caused by children's reckless and frivolous behaviour. Children eating apples suggest that they can experience life's joys without worrying about the difficulties and responsibilities of maturity. The picture of parents loosening

their teeth, on the other hand, symbolizes that they might have to labour hard or put up with suffering to provide for their children and that their sacrifices can go unrecognized or unappreciated.

Finally, the proverb emphasizes the notion that raising children is a selfless and frequently tough duty and that parents must be prepared to make sacrifices and face challenges to secure their well-being.

(54) *The Fathers have eaten a sour grape and the teeth of sons shall be asroined*

Unlike proverb (53), the case (54) indicates children as victims, who suffer the consequences of their father's life. In other words, it implies that the choices made by earlier generations may have long-lasting effects on younger generations. The image of the sour grape refers to fathers that have left their children with misery and difficulty. The notion behind the proverb is that the repercussions of these misdeeds will be felt by children, just as someone who eats a sour grape will experience a bitter aftertaste and may experience dental issues.

Finally, the proverb highlights the idea that children are related to their forefathers and instils responsibility for conducting activities that will impact future generations.

The total number of proverbs depicting children and parents in various forms and from different points of view is 54 collected. Lithuanian proverbs were found in the online source *Lietuvių patarlės ir priežodžiai*, and two books *Lietuvių patarlės* (1976) and *Patarlių paralelės* (1987) of linguist Grigas, while English proverbs were collected from the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (2008). The following table displays and divides these proverbs according to the image that is chosen to represent children and parents. The table includes proverbs in both English and Lithuanian languages.

**Table 1.** The recurrence of proverbs reflecting the image of children and parents in various forms.

Category	Rate of recurrence
Literal meaning	20
Tree and fruit	14
Tree/apple	7

Birch	2
Time/month	2
Owl	2
Crow	1
Osier	1
Twig	1
Iron	1
Trouble	1
Other	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>54</b>

According to Table 1, proverbs reflecting children and parents in their literal meaning amount to 20 proverbs, which reveals that the highest number of collected proverbs tend to avoid figurative meaning when representing children and parents. The number of proverbs that uses the image of a tree and its fruit to depict children and parents reaches 14, which belongs to the second-highest number of cases. Proverbs that use apple tree and apple amount to 7 examples. Proverbs that use birch tree, time and month, and owl when referring to children and parents, reach the number of 2. The least range of proverbs refers to crow, osier, twig, iron, and trouble, as these proverbs constitute only 1 case each. Lastly, some proverbs that refer to children and parents were not assigned to a specific title; however, the number of cases is counted to 5.

To conclude, it is clear that the majority of collected proverbs depict the image of children and parents in its literal meaning, without using any figurative expressions. On the other hand, there is a high number of examples that employ figurative meanings to convey the image of children and parents. Therefore, the explanation of such a choice of used devices will be analyzed in the subsequent section, as they mostly depend on the impact of socio-cultural contexts and the origins of proverbs of both Lithuanian and English languages.

### 3.2 The impact of socio-cultural contexts

This part of the research covers the impact of socio-cultural contexts on the representation of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs. The socio-cultural

contexts cover aspects such as place, time and others. However, the most attention was paid, and the generalization will be done according mostly to the aspects of the content of proverbs. The equivalents of proverbs between two languages also complement each other, increasing the opportunity to find clarifications when analysing the origin.

## THE IMAGE OF TREE

*Medį pažinsi iš jo vaisių*

*Iš vaisiaus pažįstamas yra medis*

*Kiekvienas medis veda savo vaisių*

*So every tree hath fruit after his kinde*

*Koks medis, tokia ir šaknis*

*Koks medis, tokia ir žievė, kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*

*Koks medis, tokie ir lapai*

*Koks medis, tokios ir skiedros*

*Koks medis, toks ir vaisius*

*Like tree, like fruit*

*Lenk medį, kol žalias*

*Kur lenksi, ten lenkiasi, kaip mokysi, taip išmokysi*

*Lenk medį, kol jaunas, lupk vaiką, kol mažas*

*Lenk medį, kol jaunas*

*Netoli obels obuoliukai krinta*

*Kokia obelis, tokie ir obuoliai*

*The apple never falls far from the tree*

Very often, in internationally spread proverbs, we can find common images, symbols, and other components familiar to different cultures. Both English and Lithuanian languages have common proverbs where they use a tree as a symbol of parents, and its fruit as their children. The reasons are provided below:

1. Trees are known for having strong roots, that go deep into the soil, giving trees great stability and support. Similarly to this, parents are frequently considered the foundation and main support for their children, giving them a strong base from which to grow and develop.

2. Trees nourish and nurture their offspring through their branches, leaves, and fruits. Similarly, parents also nourish and nurture their children, giving them love, attention, and direction.
3. Trees provide their offspring protection, keeping them safe from rough weather. Parents are frequently viewed as guardians who give their children a sense of safety, comfort, and protection from the hardships of life.
4. Known for their vast longevity, trees are sometimes regarded as symbols of knowledge and wisdom, as they experienced many storms, droughts and other hardships. Parents are also frequently seen as being wise and experienced, who pass to their children valuable life lessons.

Generally, using trees as parents in proverbs may highlight the important duties that parents play in giving their children support, sustenance, protection, guidance, and wisdom, much like trees provide for their offspring in nature.

At the same time, there are also various explanations for why fruits are referred to as children in proverbs:

1. Children are frequently called "the seeds of the future", as fruits contain seeds that can develop into new plants. Fruits are often used as the image of children to emphasize the idea that children are the future and necessary for the survival of any family or society.
2. Just as fruits need a lot of care and nurturing to ripen, children similarly need care and nurturing to grow and mature. They should be given appropriate care, love, and attention to promote their growth and development, according to proverbs that compare children to fruits.
3. Fruits are frequently linked to sweetness, and children are frequently viewed as a source of happiness and enjoyment. The idea that children bring joy to their parent's life and the world around them may be expressed through proverbs that utilize fruits as metaphors for children.
4. Children are perceived as being fragile and vulnerable, similar to how fruits might be delicate and in need of protection. Fruits in proverbs are often referred to as children to emphasize how crucial it is to protect and nurture children because they are more exposed to the difficulties and dangers of life.

5. Fruits are a symbol of promise for a harvest or a prosperous future. Children are similarly frequently viewed as being full of promise and potential, having their entire lives ahead of them to achieve great things.
6. Apple trees are deciduous plants that lose their leaves each fall, go dormant for the winter, and then sprout new leaves and bear fruit in the spring. Apple trees may be mentioned in proverbs as a sign of time passing, of life's cycles, or the inevitable nature of change. This can be a reference to children, who grow up and develop incessantly as the fruits of a tree.

Children are seen as a vital and valuable element of human life in many cultures, and the use of fruits as children in proverbs reflects this idea. Children are a symbol of hope, growth, joy, and potential.

## THE IMAGE OF AN OWL

*Savas vis gražiausias, nors būt ir pelėdos vaikas*

*Ir pelėdai savo vaikas gražus*

The image of the owl as a mother in proverbs is often based on the bird's character traits and behaviour, which is usually found described in folklore, myth, and cultural symbolism. Several explanations are provided below:

1. The owl is frequently regarded as a symbol of knowledge, insight, and intelligence in many cultures. The bird may be used as a metaphor for a wise and loving mother figure in certain proverbs, highlighting maternal care and wisdom.
2. Owls are birds of night, known for their strong developed senses to see in the dark and fly silently. In proverbs, the owl's nighttime habits may be used to emphasize the idea of maternal care, nurturing qualities, vigilance, watchfulness and protection of children that remain even in the toughest times of life.
3. The owl with its massive size, sharp beaks, and talons is sometimes depicted in proverbs as a strong, protective mother figure who brings her children guidance, safety and security.

4. Owls have been depicted in mythology and folklore in many cultures, and they are frequently associated with maternal traits. For instance, in Greek mythology, the owl was linked with the goddess Athena, who was seen as a wise and protective figure.

Proverbs frequently incorporate cultural symbolism, folklore, and mythology to express their intended meaning, and these elements may have an impact on how the owl is portrayed as a mother figure in proverbs.

Lithuania may have unique cultural and historical roots for the use of the owl as a mother figure in proverbs. Apart from the points above, here are a few other potential explanations:

1. Owls have been connected to several beliefs and superstitions in Lithuanian culture. For instance, owls were thought to bring good luck and guard households from evil spirits. Owls were also seen to be smart, attentive creatures that might offer protection and direction for people.
2. The image of the owl as a mother figure in proverbs may also be influenced by the country's literary tradition. Birds are frequently used as symbolic characters in Lithuanian literature, such as folk tales, poems, and songs, each having distinctive characteristics and significance attributed to them. Lithuanian proverbs may have used the owl to convey these symbolic meanings due to its links with knowledge, guardianship, and motherhood.

The owl's representation as a mother figure in Lithuanian proverbs is unique to the cultural and historical circumstances of Lithuania and not found in all cultures and their proverbs.

## THE IMAGE OF A CROW

*The crow thinks her own bird(s) fairest (whitest)*

Proverbs frequently use crows as symbols to convey a variety of thoughts or ideas. The reasons why English proverbs symbolically interpret crows as a figure of mother follow below:

1. Crows symbolize the loving and protective qualities of motherhood, especially in unexpected or unanticipated circumstances. It could mean that mothers will aggressively defend and protect children no matter what the situation or difficulties are, much like crows do. It might also imply that mothers have strong instincts and can

persevere in the face of difficulty like crows do when defending their young. Crows are also well renowned for fiercely guarding their nests and young and will go to considerable measures to protect them from danger.

2. Crows are sociable birds who often reside in tight-knit households. Crows are referred to as a sign of loyalty, cooperation, and familial or social ties in English proverbs. Crows are well recognized for their communal nesting behaviours, where multiple crows may help other crows to raise their young. This suggests that motherhood is not just limited to biological connections and that people who are not necessarily moms can nevertheless fulfil maternal roles by providing care and nurturing.

The crow used in English proverbs reveals the traits and qualities of a protective, caring, and nurturing mother. However, it is significant to mention that proverbs and the symbolic interpretation of crows might imply different things to different people or in different cultural contexts since they are frequently open to interpretation.

## THE USE OF NAMES

*Mokyk Jonelį, o ne Joną*

*Ko Jonelis neišmoko, to Jonas jau neišmoks*

Proverbs frequently use names to personify or illustrate certain behaviours or traits. In Lithuanian folklore, names are often used to represent certain characteristics rather than having specific symbolic meanings.

Jonas is a very common Lithuanian given male name. The name with its various diminutive, pleasant variants Jonukas, Jonelis, and Joniukas is probably most often found in Lithuanian proverbs, as it is also one of the most popular names in Lithuanian folk tales. In Lithuanian tales and folklore characters named Jonas usually carry negative meaning, depicting the personage as an oblivious, forgetful person who lacks intelligence in difficult situations.

The use of names in proverbs is effective in conveying their intended meanings or messages. However, it is important to note that certain names used in proverbs may vary across different languages and regions, and their meanings may not always be universally understood.

## PROVERBIAL VARIATIONS

*Kokie grūdai, tokie ir javai*

*Kokie lapai, tokios ir uogos*

*Kokie šiaudai, tokie ir grūdai*

*Koks medis, tokia ir šaknis*

*Koks medis, tokia ir žievė, kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*

*Koks medis, tokie ir lapai*

*Koks medis, tokios ir skiedros*

*Kokia obelis, tokie ir obuoliai*

*Koksai beržas, toks ir kelmas, koksai tėvas, toks sūnus*

It is worth mentioning that the similarities in life experience and common world observation stimulate the formation of identical images in proverbs among nations. The single subject is frequently discussed not in one but in many proverbs, with the same notion being expressed from several different angles or conveying the same idea using different images.

There are numerous national variations of some proverbs, which can commonly be observed in the Lithuanian language. Variations of proverbs are mostly a result of neighbouring countries, which play a significant role, in borrowing and sharing proverbs in their unique ways. Proverb users in different nations must more or less alter the images in proverbs to preserve or increase their effectiveness of them. For instance, Lithuanians share many common proverbs with the Russians, Belarusians, Poles and Germans. Lithuanian proverbs may have acquired numerous variations and synonymous proverbs as a result of centuries-long economic, political, and cultural links with these countries. The different images also can be incorporated into the same proverb because one or the other object mentioned in the proverbs is more common and better known for that specific culture. For example, the proverb “Koks medis, toks ir vaisius” has many variants, talking about the similarity of character and values between the parent and their child. It can be noted that across different variants of this proverb, the same component word “koks/kokia” and “toks/tokia” is repeated. In other variants, the word can be replaced by another appropriate word “motina”, “tėvas” and others. However, the general truths, which are covered in proverbs in a variety of ways, are vital to recognize since they apply constantly and everywhere. Therefore, many proverbs are common to European and other continents.

Although it is not always easy to find the origins of proverbs, they discuss mainly the common moral issues and vary these common proverbs in their way.

## HUMAN ACTIVITY

*Motina gal devynetą vaikų adata išpenėt, o tėvas nei šešiais žirgais vieną*

Considering the nature of some proverbs and their images, the origin can be associated with certain areas of human activity.

Some proverbs appeared, summarizing the experience of agriculture and farming practices developed in Lithuania as they were the main source of human livelihood. For instance, the proverb “Motina gal devynetą vaikų adata išpenėt, o tėvas nei šešiais žirgais vieną” is likely to have originated in an environment where sewing and farming were the main activities of people by which they earned their bread. The basis for the formation of the proverb probably was given by custom for women to participate in household activities, such as sewing, cleaning or preparing meals for a family, while a man was responsible for outdoor work.

Generally, human activity from past centuries inspired proverbs and reflected people’s life, customs, and activities.

## CONCLUSIONS

Proverbs greatly serve in representing the life of people. Although children and parents are depicted in the analyzed proverbs, their images are rarely conveyed directly as they are frequently expressed through figuratively chosen objects that have particular cultural connotations. Thus, the present research aimed to investigate what images of children and parents are chosen in proverbs by fulfilling the established objectives.

1. Proverbs are pieces of knowledge, wisdom, truth, and morals derived from our observations and experiences. Proverbs create poetic images from the names of objects, aspects of daily life, work, religion, customs, and other things that people from all cultures are familiar with. They are used to observe, teach moral principles, advise on which vices to avoid, and which qualities to promote. Life experiences have a significant impact on the formation and use of new proverbs. They were made out of everything that ever concerned people, influencing their imagination and feelings. Even though they share common experiences, most proverbs serve a single culture, which implies that understanding them takes an in-depth understanding of culture as well as strong cross-cultural communication skills. Metaphorical and literal images used in proverbs also create the complexity of their understanding. Also, considering the differences between languages and cultures, it would be incorrect to apply these features to all proverbs, as each language has its exceptions.
2. The total amount of the collected proverbs constitutes 54 examples. These instances, comprising both English and Lithuanian expressions, have been paired according to their equivalents in terms of their purpose and meaning. The analysis of proverbs, including their synonymous forms consisted of the semantical and lexical explanations. Comparing the equivalents of proverbs in English and Lithuanian languages, the similarities in the structure of components, as well as in semantics and images chosen to represent the idea were noticed. The categories that represented children and parents in various forms were distinguished. The largest number of proverbs depict children and parents in their literal meaning, which amounts to 20 cases. Proverbs depicting the image of a tree and fruit constitute 14 cases. Proverbs using the image of birch, time/month, and owl amount to two cases each. The least range of examples uses the image of a crow, osier, twig, iron, and trouble. They amount to one case each. Five instances were not attributed to any category.

3. Proverbs have a centuries-old tradition, their creation and usage are greatly influenced by various cultures. Proverbs frequently become widely utilized in numerous countries as they serve their objective of reflecting universal ideals and standards. On the other hand, proverbs can be differentiated and distinguished as the product of a single culture thanks to distinctive national form details and certain features of their structure. Proverbs are also frequently influenced by the major languages, which are used universally for communication in various parts of the world. However, since it is difficult to discuss the prevalence of proverbs and the unique ways in which they are used in the intercultural sphere, this research analyzes proverbs avoiding categorical conclusions.

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## SUMMARY

The **subject** of the thesis is the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs. The **aim** is to conduct a comparative analysis of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs examining the similarities and differences in the two cultures. The **objectives** of this Bachelor thesis are 1. to examine scientific literature on proverbs cross-culturally; 2. to arrange the distribution of proverb meanings in the collected English and Lithuanian proverbs; 3. to compare the impact of socio-cultural contexts on the representation of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs. Proverbs are pieces of knowledge, wisdom, truth, and morals derived from earlier generations' observations and experiences. According to scholars, proverbs are very complex and vivid tools born from our experiences, observations and intelligently comment on personal relationships and social affairs. Even though proverbs share certain experiences, most of them serve a single culture, requiring a deep knowledge of culture and good cross-cultural communication skills to be correctly understood and properly used. This research analyses 54 English and Lithuanian proverbs using two types of analysis: semantic and cultural. The **semantic analysis** examines different representations of the image of parents and children in proverbs in both languages, pairing proverbs with the same semantical meaning. Comparing the equivalents of proverbs in English and Lithuanian languages, the similarities in the structure of components, as well as in semantics and images chosen to represent the idea were noticed. The categories that represented children and parents in various forms were distinguished (proverbs depicting the image of children and parents in its literal meaning amount to 20 cases; the image of tree and fruit constitutes 14 cases; the image of birch, time/month, and owl amount to 2 cases each; the image of crow, osier, twig, iron, and trouble amount to 1 case each; 5 instances were not attributed to any category). Although children and parents are depicted in the analyzed proverbs, their images are rarely conveyed directly as they are frequently expressed through figuratively chosen objects that have particular cultural connotations. The **cultural analysis** determines how socio-cultural contexts contributed to the representation of the image of children and parents in English and Lithuanian proverbs. Proverbs are widely utilized in numerous countries because they serve their objective of reflecting universal ideals and standards of human behaviour. On the other hand, proverbs can be differentiated and distinguished as the product of different cultures thanks to particular and distinctive national form details.

Darbo **objektas** – vaikai ir tėvai anglų ir lietuvių patarlėse. **Tikslas** – atlikti lyginamąją vaikų ir tėvų įvaizdžio angliškose ir lietuviškose patarlėse analizę, nagrinėjant šių dviejų kultūrų panašumus ir skirtumus. Šio bakalauro darbo **uždaviniai**: 1. išnagrinėti mokslinę literatūrą apie patarles tarpkultūriniu aspektu; 2. sugrupuoti anglų ir lietuvių patarles pagal jų reikšmes; 3. Išsiaiškinti sociokultūrinių kontekstų įtaką vaikų ir tėvų vaizdavimui anglų ir lietuvių patarlėse. Patarlės yra žinių, išminties, tiesos, moralės fragmentai, kilę iš ankstesnių kartų stebėjimų ir patirties. Pasak mokslininkų, patarlės yra labai sudėtingos ir ryškios priemonės, gimstančios iš mūsų patirties, pastebėjimų ir protingai komentuojančios asmeninius santykius bei socialinius reikalus. Nors patarlės dalijasi tam tikra patirtimi, dauguma jų tarnauja tik vienai kultūrai, todėl norint jas teisingai suprasti ir tinkamai vartoti, reikia gerai pažinti kultūrą ir turėti gerų tarpkultūrinio bendravimo įgūdžių. Šiame tyrime analizuojamos 54 angliškos ir lietuviškos patarlės, taikant dviejų tipų, semantinę ir kultūrinę, analizę. Atliekant **semantinę analizę** nagrinėjami skirtingi tėvų ir vaikų įvaizdžiai abiejų kalbų patarlėse, suporuojant patarles pagal vienodą semantinę reikšmę. Lyginant patarlių atitikmenis anglų ir lietuvių kalbose, pastebėta patarlių komponentų struktūros, taip pat semantikos ir pasirinktų įvaizdžių panašumų, skirtų perteikti idėjai. Išskirtos vaikų ir tėvų įvaizdžiui atskleisti parinktos kategorijos (patarlės, kuriose vaikų ir tėvų įvaizdis atskleidžiamas tiesiogine prasme, sudaro 20 atvejų; medžio ir vaisiaus įvaizdis sudaro 14 atvejų; beržo, laiko / mėnesio ir pelėdos įvaizdis sudaro po 2 atvejus; varnos, uosio, šakos, geležies ir bėdos įvaizdis sudaro po 1 atvejį; 5 atvejai nepriskirti jokiai kategorijai). Nors visose analizuotose patarlėse vaizduojami vaikai ir tėvai, jų įvaizdžiai dažnai išreiškiami per vaizdingai pasirinktus objektus, turinčius tam tikrą kultūrinę konotaciją. **Kultūrinė analizė** nustato, kaip sociokultūriniai kontekstai prisidėjo prie vaikų ir tėvų įvaizdžio perteikimo angliškose ir lietuviškose patarlėse. Patarlės plačiai vartojamos daugelyje šalių, nes jų tikslas – atspindėti universalius žmonių elgesio idealus ir standartus. Kita vertus, patarles galima diferencijuoti ir išskirti kaip skirtingų kultūrų produktą dėl ypatingų ir savitų nacionalinių detalių.

## APPENDIX

- (1) *Medį pažinsi iš jo vaisių*
- (2) *Iš vaisiaus pažįstamas yra medis*
- (3) *Kiekvienas medis veda savo vaisių*
- (4) *So every tree hath fruit after his kinde*
- (5) *Koks medis, toks ir vaisius*
- (6) *Kokie grūdai, tokie ir javai*
- (7) *Kokie lapai, tokios ir uogos*
- (8) *Kokie šiaudai, tokie ir grūdai*
- (9) *Koks medis, tokia ir šaknis*
- (10) *Koks medis, tokia ir žievė, kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*
- (11) *Koks medis, tokie ir lapai*
- (12) *Koks medis, tokios ir skiedros*
- (13) *Kokia obelis, tokie ir obuoliai*
- (14) *Koksai beržas, toks ir kelmas, koksai tėvas, toks sūnus*
- (15) *Like tree, like fruit*
- (16) *Netoli obels obuoliukai krinta*
- (17) *The apple never falls far from the tree*
- (18) *Lenk beržą, kol jaunas*
- (19) *Lenk medį, kol jaunas*
- (20) *Lenk medį, kol žalias*
- (21) *Lenk karklą, kol šis dar jaunas*
- (22) *Kur lenksi, ten lenkiasi, kaip mokysi, taip išmokysi*
- (23) *Lenk medį, kol jaunas, lupk vaiką, kol mažas*
- (24) *Lenk medį, kol dar palenki, bausk vaiką, kol dar priveiki*
- (25) *Bend a tree while it is young*
- (26) *The tree must be bent while it is young*
- (27) *Best to bend while it is a twig*
- (28) *A young tree is easier twisted than an old tree*
- (29) *Mokyk Jonelį, o ne Joną*
- (30) *Ko Jonelis neišmoko, to Jonas jau neišmoks*
- (31) *Mokyk vaiką, kol mažas*

- (32) *Kalk geležį, kol karšta, paskui neįveiksi, mokyk vaiką, kol mažas, paskui nepriveiksi*
- (33) *Teach someone while they are young*
- (34) *Savas vis gražiausias, nors būt ir pelėdos vaikas*
- (35) *Ir pelėdai savo vaikas gražus*
- (36) *Kiekvienai motinai savo vaikas gražus*
- (37) *The crow thinks her own bird(s) fairest (whitest)*
- (38) *Koks tėvas, toks ir vaikas*
- (39) *Koks tėvelis, toks sūnelis*
- (40) *Kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*
- (41) *Koks tėvas, toks ir sūnus, kokia motina, tokia ir duktė*
- (42) *Koks tėvas, toks ir vaikas, koks mėnuo, toks ir laikas*
- (43) *Koks čėsas, toks ir laikas, toks tėvas, toks ir vaikas*
- (44) *Like father, like son*
- (45) *Such father, such son*
- (46) *Like father, like son; like mother, like daughter*
- (47) *Vienas tėvas šešetą vaikų išmaitina, o šešetas vaikų vieno tėvo neišmaitina*
- (48) *Vienam tėvui yra lengviau dešimt vaikų išmaitinti nekada dešimčiai vaikų vieną tėvą*
- (49) *One father is enough to govern one hundred sons, but not a hundred sons one father*
- (50) *Motina gal devynetą vaikų adata išpenėt, o tėvas nei šešiais žirgais vieną*
- (51) *Maži vaikai – maži vargai, dideli vaikai – dideli vargai*
- (52) *Children when they are little make parents fools, when they are great they make them mad*
- (53) *Vaikai obuolius valgo, tėvai dantis atšimpa*
- (54) *The Fathers have eaten a sour grape and the teeth of sons shall be asroined*