

REPORT ON THE 2006 LAURENCE URDANG AWARD
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English-Ukrainian Phraseological Dictionary

The 2006 Laurence Urdang Award was received for the project of compiling an *English-Ukrainian Phraseological Dictionary*.

The author chose to devote particular attention to the lexicographic description of English proverbs. The project aims at presenting, among other units, all English proverbs in current use. In at least one aspect proverbs constitute the most difficult kind of phraseologisms for the lexicographer. The problem lies in the difficulty of finding multiple, contemporary, and often fairly extensive citations to illustrate the use of proverbs in texts. Research shows that even present-day corpora, such as the BNC, in many cases contain an insufficient number of occurrences which renders reliable lexicographic description of proverbs impossible.

The solution is to use extremely large corpora. The author has been able to use the LexisNexis Academic database, which provides an abundance of linguistic data. Over 5,000 proverbs were selected from a variety of printed and online sources of which the main and most reliable ones are:

Speake, J. (ed.) (2004) *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Whiting, B. J. (1989) *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings*. Cambridge, MA, London, Harvard University Press.

Mieder, W., Kingsbury, S. A., Harder, K. B. (eds.) (1992) *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Mieder, W. (1988) *English Proverbs*. Stuttgart, Reclam.

All of the selected proverbs were then searched for in the LexisNexis database. The first task was to filter out the expressions which are no longer used in contemporary English-language texts. It was found that over 3,500 of the originally selected expressions fall into this category. The investigation yielded a number of interesting findings when, for example, a seemingly established proverb (at least in lexicographic tradition) does not occur in the database or when a particular expression is much more frequently used as a quotation rather than as a proverb (i.e., with the source and/or author indicated in the text).

As far as the remaining (nearly 1,500) proverbs are concerned, the author was able to arrange them into three frequency bands (frequent, less frequent, and rare) and identify the variety of English to which a particular proverb belongs. The frequency and regional labels were included in the entries. For the overwhelming majority of proverbs at least two to three illustrative examples were provided. In some cases (for example, when the proverb is used in a variety of different contexts) more examples were given. The corpus-based approach made it possible to discover and present some of the most frequent variations of proverbs. In a large number of cases the selection of examples provides a good outline of how English proverbs are (and should be) used in context. This kind of description of English proverbs is not present in any other dictionary available in Ukraine.

Definitions, translation equivalents, and comments on the origin were provided for a number of English proverbs. More work, including corpus-based research of Ukrainian equivalents, needs to be done to complete these entries.

In addition to proverbs, extensive linguistic data were collected to describe over 5,000 English idioms, including their stylistic labels, regional distribution, variations, examples of use, and Ukrainian equivalents. These entries require some further elaboration.

The current results and the overall approach to the compilation of the *English-Ukrainian Phraseological Dictionary* were presented by the author at the International conference "Lexicography in Ukraine: Past, Present, and the Future" (November 8-9, 2007, Kyiv, Ukraine). The presentation was positively evaluated by the scholars in the field. A research article devoted to the lexicographic description of English proverbs will appear in print in 2008. A similar paper on the *English-Ukrainian Dictionary of Phraseologisms* is being prepared for publication.

As a recipient of the 2006 Laurence Urdang Award, the author is deeply grateful to Laurence Urdang and the EURALEX Award Selection Panel for supporting the project.