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Metaphorical uses of *horse* in Hungarian and English

What can the dictionary and the corpus tell us?

Abstract

The paper addresses the issue of the extent to which cultural similarity is reflected in English and Hungarian conventional metaphors related to the source domain HORSE. Bilingual dictionary data seem to show a rather lower degree of equivalence in imagery than expected between English and Hungarian figurative expressions. Hungarian corpus data support the lexicographic evidence. Idiomatic expressions originate in everyday human experience, especially past rather than current, but knowledge of previous discourse, intertextuality and other aspects of culture are also relevant.

Keywords: phraseology, idioms, metaphor, culture

1 Introduction

Some time ago, when computers were not as widespread as today, I was looking for phrasebooks and idiom dictionaries in the library of the University of Debrecen. Since there was no electronic catalogue available, the manual catalogue had to be searched by topic. Many of the relevant books were placed under the label “Nyelvsajátosságok” [“Language peculiarities”], which implies a view of idiomatic expressions as linguistic idiosyncrasies, endemic to a particular country and nation and not found elsewhere. This impression of figurative phrases as distinctly Hungarian, English, etc. is partly corroborated if we have a quick look at a bilingual dictionary. For example, the Hungarian idiom *lóhalálában jön/csinál valamit* [come/do sth in horse’s death] has various equivalents listed in Nagy’s (2005: 496) Hungarian–English idiom dictionary, such as *to run/tear along/hell for leather*, *to come/ride/dash full tilt* or *to race at a breakneck speed*, none of which conveys the image of death and/or horse, as the Hungarian idiom does. Furthermore, in the English–Hungarian counterpart of this dictionary, it is only the English equivalent given last in the above list that has a Hungarian equivalent corresponding to it in its imagery: *nyaktörő sebességgel vezet/száguld* [drive/speed with neck-breaking speed] translates as *drive at a breakneck speed* (Nagy 2003: 73).

The purpose of this paper is to study Hungarian figurative uses of nouns related to the source domain HORSE to see to what extent Deignan’s (2003) claims can be supported. Deignan (2003: 267) posits that it may be “difficult to predict which metaphorical meanings become conventionalized in a language” and languages with similar cultural background may have great differences in their idiomatic expressions. She also claims that most metaphorical expressions reflect native speakers’ past experience rather than current experience, i.e. it is

the salient aspects of a source domain in the past that matter (Deignan 2003: 268-269). The data come primarily from idiom dictionaries and two corpora. This study is an initial pilot study focusing on Hungarian, also involving comparative research.

2 Theoretical background and previous research

2.1 Phraseology and metaphor from a cross-linguistic perspective: general remarks

The assumption that the phraseology of a language affords insight into the national character, the mentality and culture of a nation can be traced back to ideas of linguistic relativism (Piirainen 2008: 219). Piirainen (2008: 220) notes that early Soviet phraseological research emphasized the cultural component of idiomatic expressions, treating them as cultural signs unique to the language and therefore often untranslatable. If this is true, the study of idioms offers an appropriate method through which the specific cultural worldview can be discovered. Piirainen (2008: 220) argues, however, that while culture undoubtedly manifests itself in language, and thus in idiomatic expressions, and language also contributes to culture, the view of idioms as representations of unique cultural features is disputed. She cites Dobrovól'skij (1997, 2000) who attributes this erroneous view to the confusion of two different linguistic phenomena: the lack of idiomatic equivalents does not have to follow from cultural and national specifics, rather the particular figurative meanings of originally literal expressions may be the result of different pathways of semantic development (Piirainen 2008: 220).

Overlapping with phraseological research, one subfield in metaphor research is concerned with cross-linguistic and cross-cultural aspects (see, for example, Boers 2003, Boers & Demecheleer 1997, Deignan 2003, Kövecses 2005, 2010). Until recently, conceptual metaphor theory has laid the emphasis on universality in accordance with its basic tenet of embodiment. The embodied nature of metaphor means that metaphorical mappings are grounded in common human experience, especially sensory-motor experience of the world around us (Lakoff 1993: 240).

How can metaphors vary from culture to culture if metaphors are based on universal human embodied experience? First, as Lakoff (1993: 241) points out, the experiential basis cannot predict metaphors, although it motivates them. The correspondence that humans experience between MORE and UP is universal, but not every language has a MORE IS UP metaphor. Second, metaphor is not a homogeneous category with all metaphors being of the same type. Grady (1999) warns us that a number of metaphors may be motivated by resemblance, rather than experience. Furthermore, the experientially motivated primary metaphors may combine to build complex metaphors, which seem not to be experientially grounded (Boers 2003: 233). Thus, one would have difficulty trying to find everyday scenes that might have given rise to the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS complex metaphor, since it combines the more elementary metaphors ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT (Boers 2003: 233, Grady 1997). Third, Kövecses (2006: 171) suggests that “universal physiology provides only a *potential* basis for metaphorical conceptualization” [emphasis in the original]. In other words, universal embodied experience is utilized in different ways across the nations.

Classification of the ways in which metaphor can vary from culture to culture depends partly on the researcher's focus. Boers (2003: 232) establishes three types of variation from an applied linguistic perspective: a) differences in the source-target mappings; b) differences

in the value judgements associated with the source-target mappings; and c) differences in the pervasiveness of metaphor, as compared with other types of figurative language. Kövecses (2006: 157) is primarily concerned with variation that is subsumed under a) above and elaborates upon it. Some metaphors may be unique to a language and absent from another language. Another case of variation is where a different set of source domains is used to conceptualize a target domain, or vice versa. Boers (2003: 233) hypothesizes that an isolated community in the Andes would probably lack sailing metaphors. Yet another type of variation involves similarities existing at a fairly general level, with differences found in the details. The ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER metaphor is used in such different languages as Chinese, Japanese or Zulu, but in Japanese anger is often found in the *hara* (literally, ‘belly’), in Chinese the anger-substance is not liquid but gas, a type of excess *qi*, while in Zulu the container that holds anger may be the heart (Kövecses 2006: 158). Finally, languages and cultures may exploit the same metaphorical mappings, but the given metaphor may have different degrees of productivity. One language may show clear preferences for a given metaphor, which is rare in the other language. Baseball metaphors are popular in the US, but they are less common in Europe (Boers 2003: 234).

2.2 Cross-linguistic studies of metaphor

In this section, some relevant cross-linguistic metaphor studies are summarized to show examples of what differences exist in metaphors across languages. The list below is, of course, not exhaustive, but it gives the reader a taste of the general direction of research.

Idström (2010) demonstrates that, as opposed to English, TIME IS MONEY is extremely rare in Inari Saami, where the predominant metaphor is TIME IS NATURE. Boers & Demecheleer (1997) compare English, French and Dutch metaphors in western economic discourse and find that the frequencies of PATH, HEALTH and WAR metaphors differ in the three languages. In addition, the PATH metaphor more commonly uses nautical images in English than in French (Boers & Demecheleer 2003: 127). Not surprisingly, gardening expressions are more common in English than in French, while expressions related to food (or oral consumption) are more frequent in French (Boers & Demecheleer 2003: 128). To what extent such national stereotypes are reflected in language is also addressed by others. Kövecses (2003) has examined expressions instantiating the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in English and Hungarian and found that

American English sentences foreground active agents and deliberate action on the part of these agents, as opposed to the foregrounding of a passive relationship and relative passivity on the part of the people participating in the love relationship in Hungarian. (317)

The example *We’re just spinning our wheels* and its Hungarian equivalent *Ez (már) csak felesleges erőlködés* [This is (already) only superfluous effort]¹ evoke images of agents making a continued and concerted effort, i.e. optimism, determination and perseverance in English but “resignation and a tendency to give in to forces that are beyond one’s control” in Hungarian (Kövecses 2003: 318). Simó (2009) has explored metaphors used to describe chess games and chess events in English and Hungarian. She tentatively suggests that the frequency of the supernatural/gambling domain in Hungarian may be explained with the not so practical

¹ To facilitate comparison of the underlying metaphor, the literal translations are not morpheme-by-morpheme glosses but nevertheless close literal renderings of the given phrase or sentence.

and slightly dreamy character of this nation” (Simó 2009: 56). The above-mentioned evaluative statements about Hungarians should perhaps be best interpreted with some caution, as they are based on a small amount of data (Kövecses 2003) or a single target domain (Simó 2009). Nevertheless, the data seem to show evidence of differences in metaphor use. Deignan (2003: 260) reports her and her co-authors’ findings in relation to Spanish and English. Several English horse-racing metaphors have no counterparts in Spanish, while Spanish uses bull-fighting metaphors that are absent from English.

Deignan (2003) conducted searches of the lexical item *horse* to find nonliteral uses, explore their forms and see how British they are. Her research is explained in more detail here, as the present study was inspired by it. Concordance lines for *horse/horses/horsing* were studied (there were no hits for *horsed*) together with concordances of some related lexis, such as *cart/carts*, *workhorse/workhorses*, *bridle*, *reins*, etc. (Deignan 2003: 262) A 56 million word sample of the Bank of English was used to study a maximum of 500 citations, where the number of hits was higher, 500 random examples were selected. Figurative uses of *horse* showed a strong tendency of patterning with a large number of semi-fixed or fixed expressions (see Table 1) (Deignan 2003: 264).

| | Meaning or Expression |
|---|---|
| Similes | eats like a horse |
| | work like a horse |
| | strong as a horse |
| Other non-literal expressions: horse (singular) | high horse |
| | one-horse town |
| | from the horse’s mouth |
| | shut the stable door after the horse has bolted |
| Other non-literal expressions: horses(plural) | put the cart before the horse |
| | dark horses |
| | wild horses wouldn’t drag... |
| | horses for courses |
| Other non-literal expression: horsing | drive a coach and horses through sth |
| | horsing around |

Table 1: Non-literal meanings of “horse” from a 56 million word sample of the Bank of English (based on Deignan 2003)

To collect equivalents in other languages, 14 teachers of English as a second language were asked to provide equivalents and figurative expressions with similar meaning and structure (Deignan 2003: 265-266). It was found that it is the similes in Table 1 that have the closest equivalents in other languages, though differences may also exist. In Korean you eat like a dog and in Japanese you work like an ant. Most of the other expressions were found to have no equivalents, except *dark horse*, which may be a borrowing from English in some cases.

It seems that many figurative expressions in Table 1 have no equivalents in Castilian Spanish, though Spanish culture is not very different in terms of people’s everyday experience of horses (Deignan 2003: 267). Among the phrases that are absent from Spanish we find *drive a coach and horses through sth*, *shut the stable door after the horse has bolted*, *put the cart before the horse*, *one horse town* and *wild horses wouldn’t drag...* (Deignan 2003: 267). Furthermore, the expressions evoke images of horses as working animals, as a

means of transport or in battle, situations that are not directly experienced by the majority of British English speakers currently. They were common experience in the past (Deignan 2003: 268). Current experience tends to be predominantly in relation to leisure: horse-riding, horse-racing and keeping horses as pets, which generate only a few metaphors. Deignan (2003: 269) offers two explanations. Either the development of metaphorical uses requires time and there is a time lapse between entities becoming salient and the words for these entities developing metaphorical senses, and they remain metaphors long after the literal referents have fallen out of use. Or speakers are attracted to the picturesque in seeking metaphor vehicles.

3 Dictionary data and what it reveals

To find cross-linguistic equivalents, Deignan (2003: 265) asked native speakers whether translation equivalents of some previously explained figurative expressions exist and whether there are other figurative phrases “with a similar structure and meaning”. The dictionary offers another suitable way of studying equivalents. All the expressions under *horse* in Nagy’s (2003) English–Hungarian idiom dictionary and under *ló* ‘horse’ in the Hungarian–English idiom dictionary by the same author (Nagy 2005) were collected, with additional phrases found in the entries *rein* and *gyeplő* ‘rein’, *bridle* and *zabla* ‘bridle’, *saddle* and *nyereg* ‘saddle’, *trace* and *hám* ‘trace’, *cart/wagon* and *szekér* ‘cart, wagon’, *yoke* and *iga* ‘yoke’. The expressions are shown in Appendix 1. Many of the items are entries on their own, others occur only as translation equivalents. Although Deignan (2003) made her claims about British English, the dictionaries are based on American English. However, the role of the horse is culturally similar in American English and British English.

What is remarkable is that despite the cultural similarity of English and Hungarian, so many expressions have no “equivalents”. It is assumed that past and current experience of native speakers in the US (or in Britain) and Hungary are similar in terms of horses, yet Appendix 1 shows only a few image equivalents. The proverbs *All lay loads on a willing horse* and *Azt a lovat ütök, amelyik húz* [That horse is beaten which pulls] are exceptional in that they have no matching images, but they have been paired because of the use of *horse* and its Hungarian equivalent as one of the lexical constituents.

There may be a number of reasons why metaphorical equivalence is rare. Some items may have no idiomatic equivalents at all. For example, *a charley horse* is simply expressed nonmetaphorically in Hungarian: *izomgörcs* ‘muscle cramp’. Other items may have metaphorical equivalents derived from other domains than the HORSE. The Hungarian proverb *Ha ló nincs, jó a szamár is* [If there is no horse, the donkey will do] corresponds in its meaning to *Any port in a storm* or *Half a loaf is better than none*. Another reason could be the limitations that every dictionary comes with. In this case, Nagy (2003, 2005) includes a wide range of phraseological expressions, but there was probably no systematic attempt to enter dated or dialectal idioms. A language may have had conventional expressions in the past that are no longer in current use. One of the expressions that seems to have no metaphorical equivalent in Hungarian is *lock the barn door after the horse had been stolen*, but O. Nagy (1966: 305) lists essentially the same metaphor in his monolingual Hungarian idiom dictionary: *Akkor zárja istállóját, mikor ellopták a lovát* [He locks his stable when his horse has been stolen]. However, this idiom is marked as dated in his dictionary. As has been mentioned, the dictionaries consulted include American English idioms, expressions restricted to other varieties may therefore be absent. Both the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* and

the *Longman Idioms Dictionary* list *ride two horses at the same time*, a metaphor that seems to correspond to *egyszerre két lovat ül meg* [ride two horses simultaneously], listed by Forgács (2003: 192). The keywords that were checked may be central in the HORSE domain, but idioms including other HORSE-related lexis may show a higher degree of overlap between English and Hungarian. Finally, arbitrariness cannot be excluded in phraseology.

The two languages undoubtedly bear some resemblance, and metaphorical equivalents can also be found. It is interesting to note that even where equivalent metaphors exist, sometimes only one of them can be found as an entry (headword) in the dictionary. *A dark horse* is one of the entries in the English–Hungarian dictionary, but its Hungarian counterpart cannot be found as a separate entry in the Hungarian–English dictionary under the same headword *ló* ‘horse’, nor under *sötét* ‘dark’. While the absence of an item as an entry does not necessarily mean that the given item cannot be found elsewhere in the dictionary as one of the synonymous expressions supplied within another entry, this is actually what we can observe with *sötét ló*. Similar examples are *felül a magas lóra* [get on the high horse] and *kézben tartja a gyeplőt* [hold the reins in hand].

There are some expressions that are separate entries in the Hungarian–English dictionary only, without their English counterpart also occurring as a separate entry in the English–Hungarian dictionary: *leszállít valakit a magas lóról* [make sb get off the high horse] and its English translation *get someone off his high horse*; *A lónak négy lába van mégis megbotlik* [The horse has four legs, yet it stumbles] and its counterpart *It’s a good horse that never stumbles*; *elengedi/eleresztí a gyeplőt* [let the reins go] and English *loosen the reins*; *igába hajt valakit* [drive sb into a yoke] and *put someone under the yoke*. While all this may be explained (away) as minor lexicographic slips, the non-occurrence of an idiom as an entry may also suggest that the given expression is not very common in the given language or there may be other lexicographic reasons. We can only speculate at this point, but for example, *get someone off his high horse* is probably felt to be a less common variant of *get off one’s high horse* and it evokes the same image. Similarly, *felül a magas lóra* [get on the high horse] is closely related to *leszáll a magas lóról* [get off the high horse] but may not be as common. The idiom *put someone under the yoke* cannot be entered as there is no headword “yoke” in the English–Hungarian dictionary. Frequency can be checked in a large corpus. *Sötét ló* [dark horse] is far from marginal. This is supported by data from the Hungarian National Corpus, where the idiom occurs 44 times, 0.27 per million words. *Felül a magas lóra* [get on the high horse] occurs 8 times with the verb *felül* [sit up onto] or other verbs, it is therefore not very infrequent, the variant *magas lovon ül/van* [sit/be on a high horse] has the same frequency, with *leszáll a magas lóról* [get off the high horse] being the most common, occurring 19 times, more than twice as frequently. As far as the English expressions are concerned, in COCA (The Corpus of Contemporary American English) I found no example of *It’s a good horse that never stumbles*, and no tokens of *put someone under the yoke*, but 29 occurrences of *loosen the reins*. Queries consisted of searching for the noun and the verb within a span of 5 words to the right or left of one another.

It has to be borne in mind that even a comprehensive bilingual dictionary may not include all the figurative expressions. For example, *Trojan horse* cannot be found in Appendix 1, though it is clearly figurative. The same example also highlights the point that idioms have various origins not confined to everyday human experience. Some expressions originate in spoken or written discourse and may be widespread in many different cultures. Piirainen (2008: 210) labels this feature “textual dependence”.

Notwithstanding all the differences, the dictionary data also show equivalents. However, metaphorical correspondence may be deceptive. Take *kick over the traces* and its “equivalent” *kirúg a hámból* [kick out of the traces]. Nagy (2003: 751) in his English–Hungarian dictionary does not provide the Hungarian expression among the equivalents of English *kick over the traces*, and he lists the English phrase as the last equivalent of the Hungarian expression in his Hungarian–English dictionary (Nagy 2005: 293). Though the images are similar, the meanings are different. The Hungarian expression denotes having fun, spending time in an enjoyable way doing something unusual, while the English expressions have more to do with disobeying rules and norms. Corpus searches confirm this point. COCA produced only six examples, one of them is shown below in (1), with a typical Hungarian example from the Hungarian corpus in (2).

- (1) At one end are instinctive conservatives, here conceived as people who tend to respect traditional values and established authority; at the other end are rebellious types generally inclined to kick over the traces.
- (2) Életem legszebb napja volt, győztünk, és még nekem köszönte meg a csapat a győzelmet – mondta, és ki is rúgott a hámból, mert rendelt a Bölényben egy kisméretű pizzát. [It was one of the best days of my life, we won, and it was me that the team thanked for the win, he said, and he kicked out of the traces, because he ordered a small pizza in The Bison.]

4 The Hungarian corpus and what it reveals

The Hungarian National Corpus was used to search for citations of *ló* ‘horse’ to study a sample of figurative uses. Checking each idiom and its variant in the corpus would have required a large-scale study, instead the word *ló* ‘horse’ was examined in a manner similar to Deignan (2003) for English *horse* (see 2.2. above). Data retrieval was confined to the Hungarian spoken in Hungary, thus the corpus contained 165 million words. The corpus is relatively balanced and includes fiction, journalism, academic Hungarian, formal and informal language, the latter coming from web chats. There is no spoken component.

Queries can extract a maximum of 500 random concordance lines. Since Hungarian has a rich morphology and the target lexical item may have many different suffixes, four times 500 random concordance lines were studied, as four separate searches were conducted. A set of 500 examples were extracted for the singular *horse* with any of the case endings but without possessive suffixes and the search was repeated for the target word supplied with any of the possessive (and case) suffixes. The same procedure was used for the plural noun with and without possessive suffixes. Metalinguistic references and duplicate concordance lines were ignored. Since web chats contain a substantial amount of repetition whereby participants often quote previous discourse word by word, utterances quoted repeatedly in web forums were discarded. The corpus comes with its search engine and a limited context can also be seen. Where it was insufficient to judge the figurativity of the expression further searches were made on words found at the right or left boundary of the span to see expanded context to the right or left and in some cases this was repeated several times, allowing access to a large span of neighbouring discourse. Appendix 2 lists most of the figurative uses in order of frequency.

The table in Appendix 2 includes mostly conventional expressions. In addition to these phrases, the concordance lines also contained various one-off uses with *ló* ‘horse’ having abstract meanings, often not specifiable exactly. In fiction or poetry, the horse is sometimes

metaphorically mapped onto various emotions which people experience and which drive them on, such as pleasure, persistent will, or haughtiness. Since the focus of this research is on conventional expressions, these creative, one-off uses were ignored, unless they were variants of conventional idioms.

The phrase *a halál lovai* [death's horses] may be a variant of *az Apokalipszis lovai* [horses of the Apocalypse], in which case the idiom would be the third most common. I have listed them as separate items because the fiction/poetry context makes it difficult to determine the meaning with any precision. Idioms related to the metaphor of a high horse are also separate items, because their idiomatic meanings are different, though *magas lóról beszél* [talk off a high horse] 'speak in a conceited manner' can be considered a variant of *felül a magas lóra* [get on the high horse] 'behave in a conceited manner' in contexts where behaviour is predominantly verbal.

The figurative uses generally refer to horses as animals of transport (*váltott lovakkal* [changing horses] 'quickly', *átesik a ló túlsó oldalára* [fall over onto the other side of the horse] 'go to the other extreme', *a lovak közé dobja a gyeplőt* [throw the reins between/among the horses] 'loosen the reins') or animals kept around the house (*a saját lovát dicséri* [praise one's own horse] 'praise one's own work', *Dögöljön meg a szomszéd lóva* [Let the neighbour's horse die] '(If I suffer damage or harm,) others should also experience something similar'). Though several expressions could refer to horse-riding as a current leisure-time activity, they are compatible with past experience of using the horse for transport and more likely to be derived from that practice. Thus, the corpus confirms Deignan's (2003) observation mentioned in Section 1. Horse racing gives rise to *rossz lóra tesz* [bet on a wrong horse] 'back the wrong horse' and *sötét ló* [dark horse] 'a dark horse'.

The origin of some phrases cannot be easily explained with reference to common uses of the horse. *Szent Mihály lóva* [St. Michael's horse] 'bier' has mythological/Biblical origin, just as *az Apokalipszis lovai* [the horses of the Apocalypse] 'the horses of the Apocalypse', the latter acquiring a symbolic meaning. An old superstitious belief in the capability of witches to transform people lies behind *lóvá tesz vkit* [turn sb into a horse] 'make fool of sb' (O. Nagy 1999: 264-265). Similarly, people's old belief that the devil can appear in the shape of a horse explains how *kilóg a lóláb* [the horse's leg is showing] 'the cloven hoof is showing' could have arisen (O. Nagy 1999: 266). Additionally, some expressions have intertextual origin, deriving from (knowledge of) previous discourse, well-known texts, etc. *Halott ló* [dead horse] is a reference to a proverb that is currently taking on properties of a catchphrase. Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, in some of his speeches has "cited" a proverb of allegedly Dakota origin *If you are sitting on a dead horse, get off it*. In fact, the proverb was invented by a leading figure behind the political campaign supporting Orbán's party (Rab 2012). It is also noteworthy that in Hungarian slang *dakota* means 'gypsy' (Rab 2012). The idiom *a saját lovát dicséri* [praise one's own horse] 'praise one's own work' is a shortened form of the proverb *Minden cigány a maga lovát dicséri* [Every gypsy praises his own horse] 'Every cook praises his own broth' used as a phrase-level idiom. The short phrasal form appears to be more common than the original proverb.

A full comparison between English and Hungarian is outside the scope of this article, but it is worth briefly comparing the expressions in Table 1 and those in Appendix 2, even though the two lists are based on corpora of different sizes. Deignan's (2003) study is only a pilot study, that is why she does not give any frequency figures. One simile has been retrieved from the Hungarian corpus (*izzad, mint egy ló* [sweat, like a horse] 'sweat heavily'), but it does not correspond to the imagery of any of the English similes. It is the horse racing

metaphor *sötét ló* [dark horse] ‘a dark horse’ and the metaphor of the high horse where equivalence can be observed, covering only four of the twenty-seven items (15%) in Appendix 2. This preliminary investigation does not allow us to draw robust conclusions, but Deignan’s (2003) claims seem to have been supported. It is remarkable that the top four Hungarian expressions in Appendix 2 have no metaphorical equivalents.

5 Conclusion

This initial attempt at uncovering the figurative uses of *ló* ‘horse’ and contrasting it with Deignan’s (2003) findings seems to support the role of the unpredictable in the phraseology of a language. Metaphorical equivalence seems to be less common than perhaps expected on the basis of cultural similarity between the HORSE-related idioms of English and Hungarian. Many conventional metaphors go back to speakers’ past experience of the horse as a transport or work animal, and in addition to everyday human practices other aspects of human culture also give rise to common expressions, such as intertextuality, previous discourse or belief systems. Similarity in past and present experience with the horse does occasionally give rise to metaphorical equivalents, such as the metaphorical use of *high horse*.

Appendix 1: Corresponding (metaphorically equivalent) HORSE-related idioms in English and Hungarian based on Nagy (2003, 2005)

The English and Hungarian expressions are paired if both languages use corresponding HORSE-related metaphor to express the same meaning. Bold items are found only in one of the dictionaries despite evoking similar HORSE-related images in both languages.

| | English idioms | Hungarian idioms |
|-----|--|---|
| | HORSE | LÓ |
| 1. | a dark horse | sötét ló [dark horse] |
| 2. | a charley horse | |
| 3. | A nod’s as good as a wink to a blind horse | |
| 4. | a willing horse | |
| 5. | All lay loads on a willing horse | Azt a lovat ütik, amelyik húz [That horse is beaten which pulls] |
| 6. | (as) strong as a horse | |
| 7. | back the wrong horse | rossz lóra tesz [bet on a wrong horse] |
| 8. | beat/flog a dead horse | |
| 9. | change horses in midstream | |
| 10. | Don’t look a gift-horse in the mouth! | Ajándék lónak ne nézd a fogát! [Do not look at the teeth of a gift horse] |
| 11. | Don’t put the cart before the horse! | A lovak elé fogja a kocsit [harness the cart before the horses] |
| 12. | eat like a horse | |
| 13. | get off one’s high horse | leszáll a magas lóról [get off the high horse] |
| 14. | get someone off his high horse | leszállít valakit a magas lóról [make sb get off the high horse] |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 15. | get on one's high horse; ride the high horse | magas lóról beszél valakivel [talk to sb off a high horse], felül a magas lóra [get on the high horse] |
| 16. | hold your horses! | |
| 17. | horse around | |
| 18. | If wishes were horses, beggars might ride | |
| 19. | in the horse and buggy days | |
| 20. | Lock the barn door after the horse had been stolen | |
| 21. | put one's money/bet on the wrong horse | rossz lóra tesz [bet on a wrong horse] |
| 22. | put the cart before the horse | a lovak elé fogja a kocsit [harness the cart before the horses] |
| 23. | straight from the horse's mouth | |
| 24. | that's a horse of a different/another color | |
| 25. | wild horses wouldn't drag it out of me | |
| 26. | work like a horse | dolgozik, mint egy ló [work like a horse] |
| 27. | You may lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink | |
| 28. | It's a good horse that never stumbles. | A lónak négy lába van mégis megbotlik [The horse has four legs, yet it stumbles] |
| 29. | | átesik a ló túlsó oldalára [fall over onto the other side of the horse] |
| 30. | | az apostolok lován megy [go on apostles' horse] |
| 31. | | elver valakit, mint szódás a lovát [beat sb, like the soda-water carrier his horse] |
| 32. | | Ha ló nincs, jó a szamár is [If there is no horse, the donkey will do] |
| 33. | | Közös lónak túros a háta [A shared horse has a sore back] |
| 34. | | lová tesz valakit [turn sb into a horse] |
| 35. | | lovat ad valaki alá [give a horse under sb] |
| 36. | | Minden cigány a maga lovát dicséri [Every gypsy praises his own horse] |
| 37. | | Nagy a feje, búsuljon a ló! [His head is big, let the horse grieve!] |
| 38. | | üti a lovat [hit the horse] |
| | REIN | GYEPLŐ |
| 39. | give free rein to someone, give someone free rein | |
| 40. | keep tight rein on someone/something | szorosan fogja a gyeplőt [hold the reins tight] |
| 41. | take over the reins (of something, from someone) | |
| 42. | loosen the reins | elengedi/elereszt a gyeplőt [let the reins go] |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | BRIDLE | ZABLA |
| | – | – |
| | SADDLE | NYEREG |
| 43. | be in the saddle, hold the reins | nyeregben van [be in the saddle], kézben tartja a gyeplőt [hold the reins in hand], nyeregben érzi magát [feel in the saddle] |
| 44. | be saddled (with something) | |
| 45. | TRACE | HÁM |
| 46. | kick over the traces | kirúg a hámból [kick out of the traces] |
| 47. | CART/WAGON | SZEKÉR |
| 48. | Don't put the cart before the horse! | |
| 49. | put the cart before the horse | |
| 50. | circle the wagons | |
| 51. | fix someone's wagon | |
| 52. | | Ne fuss olyan szekér után, amelyik nem akar felvenni [Do not run after a cart that does not want to pick you up] |
| 53. | | valakinek a szekerét tolja [push sb's cart] |
| | YOKE | IGA |
| 54. | | húzza az igát [pull the yoke] |
| 55. | | iga alá hajtja a fejét [bend one's head under a yoke] |
| 56. | put someone under the yoke | igába hajt valakit [drive sb into a yoke] |

Appendix 2: Frequency of figurative uses of *ló* 'horse' in the Hungarian National Corpus based on a sample of 2000 concordance lines

Uses and meanings occurring only once have been excluded. Creative variants of conventional metaphors have been included.

| | Expression | Raw frequency |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | átesik a ló túlsó oldalára [fall over onto the other side of the horse] | 9 |
| 2. | Szent Mihály lova [St. Michael's horse] | 9 |
| 3. | lovat ad vki alá [give a horse under sb] | 7 |
| 4. | állatorvosi ló [vet's horse] | 6 |
| 5. | a saját lovát dicséri [praise one's own horse] | 6 |
| 6. | magas lóról beszél [talk off a high horse] | 5 |
| 7. | rossz lóra tesz [bet on a wrong horse] | 5 |
| 8. | a halál lovai [death's horses] | 4 |
| 9. | halott ló [dead horse] | 4 |
| 10. | az Apokalipszis lovai [the horses of the Apocalypse] | 4 |
| 11. | anyám, én nem ilyen lovat akartam [mum, I did not want a horse like this] | 4 |
| 12. | sötét ló [dark horse] | 4 |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 13. | elszalad vkivel a ló [the horse runs away with sb] | 4 |
| 14. | leszáll a magas lóról [get off the high horse] | 3 |
| 15. | egyszerre két lovat ül meg [ride two horses simultaneously] | 3 |
| 16. | lová tesz vkit [turn sb into a horse] | 3 |
| 17. | váltott lovakkal [changing horses] | 3 |
| 18. | Hogy az Isten lovába [How in God's horse] | 3 |
| 19. | az apostolok lován [on apostles' horse] | 3 |
| 20. | egy vak lova sincs [not have even a blind horse] | 2 |
| 21. | Döggöljön meg a szomszéd lova [Let the neighbour's horse die] | 2 |
| 22. | felül a magas lóra [get on the high horse] | 2 |
| 23. | kilóg a lóláb [the horse's leg is showing] | 2 |
| 24. | izzad, mint egy ló [sweat, like a horse] | 2 |
| 25. | a lovak közé csap [strike among the horses] | 2 |
| 26. | a lovak közé dobja a gyeplőt [throw the reins between/among the horses] | 2 |
| 27. | elver valakit, mint szódás a lovát [beat sb, like the soda-water carrier his horse] | 2 |

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