



Are folk sayings a good instrument to forecast weather? Analysis of a set of traditional Polish sayings from the point of view of climate research.

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In the past sayings and folk phrases were equivalents of today's mid and long term prognosis. These brought our ancestors hints about terms of beginning or finishing field work like sowing or harvesting. Commonness of their appearance, which produced the fact that almost every saint patron was forecasting something, and that the sayings are still alive in common language, provides an evidence, that at least in some cases their verifiability has to be satisfactory.

Even though today verifiability of these folk phrases appears to be low, and they do not determine in such scale the terms of work on farms like in the past, in mass media, just like in social consciousness and colloquial speech the sayings are still very popular.

The analysis of verifiability of such sayings is difficult. In many cases they are rather general and concern whole seasons forecasting i.e. "sweltering summer". It is not easy to define clearly criteria to provide an analysis of such prediction. During ages European climate has been changing. Some of sayings may be created in the medieval climate optimum, other could have appeared during the small ice age. For centuries Polish borders also have been changing what may cause that a part of these sayings might refer to terrains that today are outside of Poland. Mixing of cultures, especially during nineteenth century occupation can be the reason why some of folk phrases have no local character, that they are transferred from neighbouring countries.

Despite the described difficulties, authors are undertaking to analyse today's verifiability of ten, most popular, Polish sayings and folk phrases. The research material will be 15, at least 50-years time series of meteorological data from Poland, as well as some from the territory of Ukraine, Germany, Czech Republic and Lithuania.

English translation of traditional Polish sayings and their climatic sense is presented below:

1. White and frosty January heralds sweltering summer – snow and frost in January predicts heat during summer.
2. When there is crackling frost in January, it foretells warm days in the spring – heavy frost in January are forecasting warm spring.
3. When Zbigniew and Patrick are freezing peoples ears, two Sundays winter snows – frost on 17th of March suggests that the winter will take at least two more weeks.
4. Saint Barbara on ice, Christmas on water (in both directions) – weather on 4th of December forecasts weather from 24th to 26th December; when the temperature is below zero degrees Celsius, on Christmas it will be above.
5. In April more rain than sun, in June it will be warm and dry – rainy April predicts dry and warm June.
6. On St. Matthew ice foretells long coolness, but when there is a stream, winter will be short – frost on 24th of February prognosis that the winter will be longer.
7. Good weather at the end of October adds frost in February – warm and sunny last week of October suggests frosty February.
8. When St. Andrew comes with snow, hundred days the snow will lay on fields – frost and snow on the 30th of November is the beginning of 90th day period of frost.
9. Be afraid of spring in January, because March is jealous – warm January predicts cool March.
10. Pankracy, Serwacy and Bonifacy are great eccentrics, and are deigning with cool – so called "cool gardeners", 12th to 14th of May, are bringing very often nights with frost producing losses in gardens.