

# Comparative analysis of PUs with food constituent in English and Italian

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**Antonija Milardović**

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Comparative analysis of PUs with food constituent in English and Italian

Diplomski rad

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Zadar, 2023.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this paper is to conduct research inside the field of phraseology in order to examine the special type of idioms: phraseological units with food constituents, through the process of comparative analysis of two languages: English (the source language) and Italian (the target language). When it comes to confronting two or more languages, one of the most important features that stand out, for sure is the cultural markers, that can lead to two possible outcomes: they can either provoke certain discrepancies or matching (overlapping). This will be particularly shown in the part designated for the corpus presentation and analysis. It will argue the specific branch of linguistics, phraseology. Although it is a discipline that relatively recently emerged, phraseology can be considered as a substantive one, since it deals with various parts of speech. Apart from providing a short insight into the very discipline (its origin, development and other important features), the most attention will be drawn to phraseological units, marked later on as PUs. Used frequently in everyday life, PUs contribute to the expressiveness of one language by transmitting the simple, basic meanings across their various types, whether those are phraseological nominations, proverbs or other types that will be presented afterwards. These types of PUs make the basis on which this thesis will be formed. When it comes to the relation between the languages, they can differ but also have some similarities. This will be shown throughout the comparative (descriptive) analysis of PUs in English and Italian. The central feature of the phrases in both of these languages that will be confronted is their food constituent, which is interesting to analyse given the fact that each language implies its cultural markers that can either bring to certain discrepancies or matching (overlapping).

The research will be divided into four main parts: theoretical background (where some of the key concepts will be incorporated), the research methodology, the corpus presentation and analysis, and concluding remarks. Alongside the key concept of phraseology, an overview of some other concepts will be provided as well i.e., phraseological unit, idiomaticity, equivalence. What is more, a special section will be reserved for the very process of translation of idioms. The latter will be explained thoroughly, through multiple steps. Furthermore, the focus will then shift to the central part based on the comparative analysis of fifty (50) English idioms with food constituents by choice and their Italian counterparts. As for the very process of translation of the idioms, the technique model that will be taken into consideration is the one

by Sabine Fiedler, which can be found in her book *English Phraseology: A Coursebook*. The results of the analysis, alongside with a discussion, are intended to contribute to the forming of concluding remarks, as well as their graphic representation in the form of various diagrams. The main task in this part will be to detect the frequency of each type of equivalence among the idioms. In other words, what will be provided is an exact number of idioms that showed non-equivalence, partial or full equivalence after the comparative analysis.

The general assumption related to this particular research is that a greater number of English idioms will be translated into Italian either as partial or non-equivalents. This may occur due to the cultural diversity between these two languages, but perhaps it can be also justified with some contrast when it comes to other features as well, such as syntax, grammar, and others (e.g., absence of grammatical gender in the English language).

## 2. RELEVANT TERMINOLOGY

### 2.1. Phraseology

By consulting Sabina Fiedler's coursebook, *English Phraseology*, one can easily find out the definition of the term phraseology. What is primarily highlighted is that the term itself has two main uses. Firstly, the term refers to the field of study known as phraseology research. Secondly, it denotes the set of linguistic units that are investigated within this field. These linguistic units are called phraseological units (PUs), which make up the phrasicon or the inventory of idioms and phrases. Both of these meanings are relevant in the context of the coursebook (Fiedler 2007: 15).

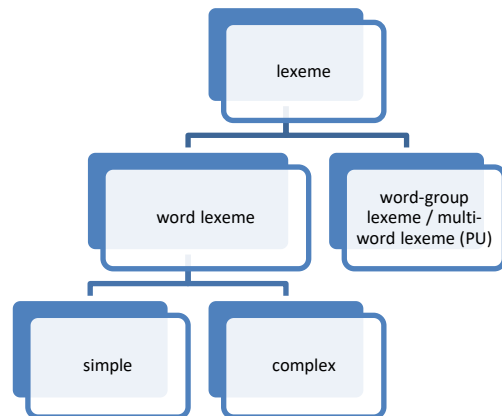
### 2.2. Phraseological unit

The concept of a phraseological unit (PU) refers to a lexicalized linguistic unit that consists of at least two lexemes (words) that are relatively syntactically stable and idiomatic in nature. Despite their interchangeable use in the past, the terms *phraseological unit* (PU) and *idiom* are not considered to be synonymous (Fiedler 2007: 15).

#### 2.2.1. Phraseological unit: the main characteristics

Phraseological units (also known as *cliches*, *fixed expressions*, *multi-word lexemes*, *phrasemes* and *set phrases*) are considered to be polylexemic items. They are composed of at

least two constituents, e.g., independent words. In order to depict this particular feature, a schematic representation will be attached here below:



*flame*      *flameproof*      *an old flame*

*Dutch*      *Dutchman*      *Dutch courage*

*end*      *endless*      *a sticky end*

Figure 1: Word lexemes and PUs, adapted from the book *English Phraseology: A Coursebook* by Sabine Fiedler

Moreover, the relative stability of both the semantic and syntactic structure is another key characteristic of PUs, that sets them apart from random combinations of words such as a syntagma. To put it simply, the meaning and the structure of PUs show resistance to the changes under the different circumstances. Phraseological units (PUs) can exhibit various structural variants, including variations in the use of function words, spelling, singular/plural forms, and lexical constituents. These variants add flexibility and nuance to the expression while maintaining its core meaning (e.g., *down the tube/tubes* or *to throw/cast pearls before swine*). It is also worth mentioning lexicalization, the phenomenon in which a phraseological unit (PU) becomes firmly established and preserved as part of the collective memory of a language community. This feature of lexicalization is closely tied to the stability of PUs. Once a PU is lexicalized, it becomes easily identified and accepted as a fixed and ready-made unit within the language. One characteristic of lexicalized PUs is that they are memorized holistically as a



whole by language users. Instead of being constructed or generated from individual words or random sequences, PUs are reproduced as fixed units. This implies that language users do not typically create them anew but rather recall and reproduce them from memory. Finally, idiomaticity is the last to be mentioned as an important distinctive feature of PUs (Fiedler 2007: 17 - 22). The notion of idiomaticity will be separately discussed hereafter (more precisely, after the presentation of types of PUs) since this paper focuses particularly on that aspect when it comes to the analysis and translation of PUs.

### 2.2.2. Conventional types of PUs in the majority of systemic descriptions

One of the possible ways in which we can observe phraseological units is that the latter can be considered as productive language creations since there are various classifications according to which we can determine the type of PU, that is, many different aspects of PUs can be taken into consideration during the process of classification. This paper will focus primarily on the conventional types of PUs. Alongside these, an overview of special types of PUs will be provided as well.

Phraseological nominations are word combinations or expressions that serve as equivalents for specific concepts or refer to particular objects, individuals, states, processes, or relationships. They can be categorized based on their word classes. In other words, it is possible to make a distinction between phraseological nominations with nouns (*hot dog*), adjectives (*mad as a hatter*), verbs (*to spill the beans*) and adverbs (*at the end of the day*) (Fiedler 2007: 39-40). According to Malkiel, binomials are pairs of words that belong to the same word class, are placed at the same syntactic level, and are typically connected by specific lexical links. The most common lexical links are the conjunctions *and* and *or* (e.g., *law and order*, *in and out*), although less frequently, conjunctions like *but* or prepositions can also be used (e.g., *back to front*, *from top to bottom*). It is also possible to have identical words conjoined (e.g., *by and by*, *side by side*). This type of binomials is also known as irreversible binomials, and their main and most recognizable characteristic is their fixed order (Malkiel 1959: 113). Stereotyped comparisons, also known as *frozen similes*, are another type of phraseological expression that exhibit fixed and conditioned structures. There are two common types of stereotyped comparisons:

(as) + adjective + as + noun phrase (for instance, *as clear as crystal*, *as old as the hills*)

(verb) + like + noun phrase (e.g., *eat like a horse*, *breed like rabbits*)

A feature that is commonly related to stereotyped comparisons (adverbial ones) is

alliteration (e.g., *as busy as a bee, as thick as thieves*) (Fiedler 2007: 43 - 44). Moving on with other types of PUs, it is almost inevitable to bring upon proverbs, which, above all, are sentences recognizable by their conciseness, catchiness, and by being handed down from generation to generation. What also distinguishes them is their expressiveness, which is especially achieved through the use of metaphor. When it comes to the very structure of proverbs, they can be either in the form of simple sentences (e.g., *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*) or complex ones (e.g., *When the cat's away, the mice will play*). There is also another possible form of proverbs, that appears inside the structure of irreversible binomials as well, and that is an elliptic construction, where a finite verb is being omitted (e.g., *Waste not, want not*). The use of alliteration, rhyme and assonance can be spotted as well, as the contributors to the phonostylistic effects (e.g., *An apple a day keeps the doctor away*) (Fiedler 2007: 44 - 45). Winged words are another type of PUs to be discussed. It is about the specific type of linguistic expression that can be traced back to a specific author or historical source (e.g., Bible, Greek mythology, etc.). These expressions can take various forms, including catchphrases, slogans, sententious remarks, and quotations. They are widely known and used within a language community and can be employed in diverse contexts of speech (e.g., *Something is rotten in the state of Denmark*, a line from Shakespeare's Hamlet) (Fiedler 2007: 47 - 48). The next type of PUs is probably the one that is the most frequently used in our everyday communication, and those are routine formulae. They are conventionalized utterances that the language provides as ready-made units for common situations. These expressions serve discoursal functions and can be considered as a form of phatic communication. Two criteria determine the classification of routine formulae, and those are functional and situational ones. Thus, Ross distinguishes three groups of routine formulae: social formulae (e.g., *Touch wood!*), gambits (e.g., *to the best of my knowledge*) and expressive formulae (e.g., *What do you know!*) (Fiedler, 2007).

### 2.2.3. Special types of PUs

Alongside the conventional types of PUs, there are also special types of PUs, and those are the following: *paraphrasal verbs, (restricted) collocations, rhyming slang, wellerisms, PUs containing colour terms, designations of parts of the body and proper names.*

To start with the first special type, paraphrasal verbs are constructed by combining a transitive verb with a noun phrase that carries the main semantic content. The transitive verb, such as *have* or *pay*, has a broad range of meanings, while the noun phrase, such as *a look* or *attention*, provides the main (narrow) meaning (e.g., *to have a fight*) (Fiedler, 2007). Furthermore, restricted collocations are specific combinations of words where one of the

constituents, either the verb or the noun, is employed in a specialized or figurative sense, deviating from its typical or literal meaning (Fiedler 2007: 52). Moving on to the rhyming slang, a linguistic phenomenon particularly associated with Cockney English, the local and social dialect spoken in London's East End that involves creating new words or phrases by replacing a common word with a phrase that rhymes with it (e.g., *dog and bone* (=phone)) (Fiedler 2007: 54). In addition, as Mieder argues, wellerism is a sentence-like phraseological unit (PU) that is characterized by its triadic structure. It consists of three essential elements: a statement, an identification of the speaker and a phrase that is seen as quite unexpected. To provide an example, here is the following sentence: "*All's well that ends well,*" said the peacock when he looked at his tail (Mieder 1989: 24). As for the other types of PUs, next to be presented are PUs with special elements, starting with PUs containing colour terms. What is particular about this type of PUs is that colour terms offer a rich source of creativity for the formation of novel phrase units (PUs). Colour perception and categorization vary across cultures, and languages may have different ways of dividing and naming colours. This cultural variation in colour terms reflects how language shapes and is shaped by the cultural contexts in which it is used. For instance, *black market* which denotes an illegal or clandestine system of trade in which goods, services, or currencies are bought and sold outside of official channels (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). As previously mentioned, the next type of special PUs are the ones that designate body parts. These figurative meanings draw on the physical attributes and functions of body parts to convey abstract concepts, emotions, or behaviours. They are widely used in everyday language and contribute to the richness and expressiveness of communication (Fiedler, 2007). To provide the example, the word *ear* is very productive when it comes to possible idiomatic syntagma, as is the case with the following one, *music to my ears*. This phrase is used figuratively to express extreme pleasure, satisfaction, or delight upon hearing something (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). Lastly, what follows is a brief overview of PUs containing proper names. What is important to emphasize when it comes to this special type of PUs is that they form a captivating subgroup within language. They are intricately connected to the cultural tradition of a language community, reflecting its history, values, and shared experiences (Fiedler, 2007). To illustrate this, here is the following phrase, *Jack is as good as his master*, which highlights the notion that the hierarchical relationship between an employee and an employer does not inherently imply the inferiority of the employee (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.).

### 3. IDIOMATICITY

Idiomaticity denotes the characteristic of an expression or phrase where its meaning cannot be easily deduced from the meanings of its individual words or constituents. It is a common phenomenon in language where the combination of words takes on a figurative or non-literal meaning that is different from the literal interpretation of its components. The idiomatic nature of expressions poses challenges for language learners because they might be familiar with the meanings of the individual words in a phrase, but struggle to understand the overall figurative or idiomatic meaning of the expression as a whole. For example, a learner might know the meanings of the words *to pull* and *leg*, but may not be able to deduce the figurative meaning of *to pull someone's leg*, which means to tease or play a prank on someone (Fiedler, 2007).

Furthermore, in his book *Toward a Science of Translating*, Eugene Nida dedicates a special chapter to this particular feature of phraseological units, entitled *Figurative Extensions of Meaning*, where he argues how the figurative extensions of meaning can present challenges when dealing with referential meanings. To depict this statement, he uses the example of the word *dog*, and states how many words have central domains of meaning that are relatively straightforward, such as the different species of dogs in the case of *dog*. However, when we encounter figurative extensions of meaning, such as *a dirty dog* to refer to a despicable person, or *putting on the dog* to mean pretension, it can be more difficult to make sense of these associations.

Figurative extensions of meaning occur when we select certain aspects or components of the meaning of a word, such as physical appearance, psychological disposition, spatial relationships, or functional similarity, and apply them to objects or concepts that are not typically associated with that word. For example, when we use *dog* to refer to constellations in the sky or mechanical devices for gripping, we are extending the meaning of *dog* to cover these additional domains (e.g., *the Great Dog* and *the Little Dog*, located near the constellation Orion). These figurative extensions of meaning are part of the semantic structure of the word *dog*. However, it is important to note that if an object or concept becomes permanently associated with a particular word and widely accepted within its domain, the extension is no longer considered figurative. In other words, once an object or concept is commonly understood as falling within the meaning of a word, the extension becomes a conventional part of its meaning rather than a figurative one (Nida, 1964).

#### 4. TRANSLATION OF IDIOMS

When it comes to translating idioms, there is an established order: after determining the meaning, the translator should find a matching idiom in the target language, i.e., determine an established de-semanticized connection that adequately replaces the idiom of the source language with the highest degree of congruence on multiple levels. Adequate replacement primarily refers to the translation equivalent, which does not necessarily imply the linguistic equivalent, because conveying, i.e., conjuring up the original context by means of translation, is a kind of imperative in the translation process<sup>1</sup>.

In her book, Fiedler (2007: 120) describes the very process of translation of PUs, which implies four main stages. The first phase aims to the identification of the source language. Once the source language has been detected, the second phase occurs, where the meaning of the identified unit has to be provided, taking into consideration the context in which the phrase is used. In the third phase, the previously provided meaning of the phraseological unit needs to be transferred into the target language. Finally, the fourth phase is supposed to result in the corresponding target-language unit.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from Croatian, from the article “Frazemi – prevoditeljski kamen spoticanja” by the author Ivana Vidović Bolt, p. 345

## 5. EQUIVALENCE OF IDIOMS

According to Dobrovol'ski (2011), there are four main types of the equivalence among idioms: full or absolute equivalence, partial equivalence, phraseological parallels and non-equivalence. Full equivalents or absolute equivalents refers to idiomatic expressions in two different languages, that is, that are identical not only in terms of meaning but also in terms of syntactic structure, lexical composition, and imagery basis. In other words, these expressions are direct parallels that retain all elements of the original expression when translated into another language (e.g., German: seine Hand ins Feuer legen für etw., English: to put one's hand into the fire for sth. In this example, the German idiom and its English counterpart have the same meaning, to vouch for something without reservation, and share a similar syntactic and lexical structure. The imagery basis of the phrase *risking one's hand in the fire* is the same in both languages, first and second language (the terms will be later used in their abbreviated forms: L1 and L2) (Dobrovol'ski, 10).

To further explain the aforementioned abbreviations, L1 and L2, the first language (L1), also known as *mother tongue*, implies the language that an individual has learned first, as a child. The second language (L2) denotes every language that has been acquired after the first one. The expression *second language* is often used in contrast with *foreign language*: the second language would be the one learned in the country where it is usually spoken (e.g., the Italian learned in Italy by immigrants). In contrast, the foreign language would be a language learned, typically in school contexts, in a country where it is not usually spoken (e.g., English learned at school by the Italian students) that are identical not only in terms of meaning but also in terms of syntactic structure, lexical composition, and imagery basis<sup>2</sup>.

Moving on to the partial equivalents that refer to idiomatic expressions in two different languages (L1 and L2) that share similar or nearly identical meanings but may not fully correspond in terms of syntactic structure, lexical composition, or imagery basis. These expressions convey the same or a very similar concept, but there might be some differences in how they are constructed or the imagery they evoke (e.g., English: *to get out of bed on the wrong side*, Russian: встать не с той ноги (vstat' ne s toj nogi) - *to get out [of bed] with the wrong foot*).

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<sup>2</sup> Translated from the Italian book *La Seconda Lingua* by the author Gabriele Pallotti, p. 13

Phraseological parallels are idiomatic expressions from two different languages (L1 and L2) that share a core or central meaning but differ in terms of their imagery or the literal components used in the expression. These idioms are semantically related, but their linguistic forms and visual components do not necessarily align (English: *hot potato*, German: *heiβes Eisen* (hot iron)).

Non-equivalents are idiomatic expressions in one language (L1) that lack direct or idiomatic correspondences in another language (L2). These are expressions that cannot be translated into the target language using a single, equivalent idiomatic expression due to linguistic and cultural differences. Instead, they might require longer or different phrases to convey the same idea (e.g., Russian: "объяснить на пальцах что-либо" (objasnit' na pal'cax čto-l.) - "to explain something on fingers". This Russian idiom means "to explain something as simply as possible," often using simple and clear language) (Dobrovol'skij 10-11).

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since every language is enriched by the existence of phraseological units that are principally based on idiomaticity as a particular feature of one language, the focus of this paper was the comparative analysis that put into confrontation two languages: English and Italian, to show how one common feature reflects on the linguistic environment of different languages.

The primary step was to compile the required dictionaries (whether in printed version or online). Both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries were of great importance: monolingual (both English and Italian) dictionaries served as a tool in providing examples of phraseological units alongside their meaning, while the use of bilingual dictionaries contributed to detecting the possible counterparts of the indicated phraseological units. To specify, for the purpose of finding the English PUs and their meanings the dictionaries used were the following ones: *Longman American Idioms Dictionary (LAID)*, *Cambridge Dictionary (CD)*, *Collins Dictionary (COD)*, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary (MW)* and *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms* written by A.P. Cowie, R. Mackin and I.R. McCaig. After extracting 50 food items out of the English dictionaries and listing them alphabetically, the next step was trying to find as many phraseological units containing that particular food item as possible. In order to find the counterpart of the English PU, the focus shifted to the Italian dictionaries. The selected dictionaries were the following ones: *Corriere Della Sera (CDS)*, *Treccani (TRE)*, *Zingarelli (ZING)*, and *Dizionario Internazionale (DIT)*. As for the bilingual dictionaries, it is worth pointing out *Grande dizionario inglese (GDI)*, and *Dizionario La Repubblica (DLR)* that contributed a lot to the contrastive analysis.

The research consisted firstly of compiling the theoretical framework, which included a definition of some basic concepts to facilitate and make the analysis and elaboration more comprehensive. Finally, in order to detect the type of each PU, Sabine Fiedler's work *English Phraseology: A Coursebook* was being used, that is, apart from the comparative analysis, the descriptive analysis made a central part of this paper. The primary aim of this MA thesis was to conduct research inside the field of phraseology to demonstrate how one constituent (in this particular case: the food constituent) inside the PU is represented in one language (English) and how in other (Italian). In the end, the degree of equivalence between PUs was determined. Criteria that were taken into consideration when determining the degree of equivalence were of lexical and typological nature. To further explain, lexical analysis focused on the word class that were detected in the English PUs (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) and their Italian counterparts. After confronting both English and Italian PUs, the goal was to establish whether



there was overlapping or some discrepancies when it comes to word type that was used in each of these two PUs. The typological analysis, however, dealt with the classification of PUs, that is, their typology (proverbs, irreversible binomials, phraseological nominations, etc.).

The thesis was arranged in this way: the first part provided some necessary theoretical background i.e., definition of phraseology as a discipline and other related concepts, as well as Fiedler's classification of PUs. The second, and the most important part of the thesis, was reserved for the analysis of 50 PUs by choice, while the third part dealt with the results of the analysis and discussion. To determine the degree of equivalence among PUs (full equivalence, partial equivalence, phraseological parallels and non-equivalence), the classification by Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij was selected as a model to follow throughout the whole analysis.

To elaborate this particular step in the analysis, it is important to point out the criteria that were taken into consideration when forming the final decision about the equivalence type. The meaning of a PU, definitely as the most important one, refers to the figurative meaning that certain idiom conveys. If two idioms express the same meaning in figurative sense, they can be considered as equivalents. What makes a distinction between the idioms (e.g., what determines their degree of equivalence) are their syntactic structure, lexical composition, and imagery basis. The determination of types of equivalence proceeded as it follows: after consulting the English dictionary of idioms and finding the one with particular food constituent, the key step in this process was to provide the metaphorical meaning of the idiom in source language and then, if possible, to translate that very meaning into the target language (Italian), and try to find the Italian counterpart, an equivalent of the initial English idiom. If the confronting of the idioms resulted in overlapping when it comes to their meaning, syntactic structure, lexical composition, and imagery basis, that is, if each of these features resulted to be transferred successfully on the idiom in target language, the case of full or absolute equivalence was detected. Partial equivalence, however, was the case when idioms had similar or nearly identical meanings but did not show a full correspondence in terms of syntactic structure, lexical composition, or imagery basis. To put it simply, partial equivalence was determined by the differences in how the idioms were constructed or the imagery they evoked. The third type, phraseological parallels, was assigned to idioms that were semantically related, but with slightly different linguistic forms and visual components. Finally, the non-equivalents were the idioms that showed no idiomatic correspondence in another language (L2). This means that neither syntactic nor semantic features resulted with overlapping. The translation of these expressions

with a single, equivalent idiomatic expression was not possible, so a more descriptive translation was used in order to convey the same idea.

## 7. THE CORPUS

The corpus for this particular research was compiled out of 50 phraseological units with food constituent in English and their (if detected) Italian counterparts. The food constituents were grouped according to their type in categories i.e., fish, meat, fruit, vegetables, cereals, desserts, dairy products, spices etc. The main sources for this corpus were the dictionaries *Zingarelli* (for the examples in Italian), and *Longman American Idioms Dictionary* (for the examples in English). Apart from providing the basic meaning of the lexeme, *Zingarelli* offers a very detailed insight, that is to say, the economy of each lexeme is pointed out, i.e. presentation of its synonyms, antonyms, phrases, etc., so, although containing idiomatic expressions that were required for this paper, it can be considered more as the dictionary of wide use, since it offers both lexical and grammatical aspects of the lexeme, while *Longman American Idioms Dictionary* focuses primarily on the meaning of the words i.e., idiomatic expressions related to the particular word.

Taking into consideration all 50 food items that were included in the analysis, the utterly mentioned can undergo subdivision based on the food group they belong to. Thus, there can be a distinction between 11 food groups: fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy products, grains, legumes, eggs, nuts, sugar and sugar products, and spices. In the Italian counterparts, however, there is a slightly different division, between the following: abstract nouns, animals, body parts, colours, dairy products, eggs, fish, fruits, grains, numbers, spices, and utensils.

## 8. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PUS

What follows is the comparative analysis of English PUs with food constituent and their Italian counterparts. The analysis is done by the following: firstly, the food constituent is to be specified (all food constituents are listed alphabetically). Below the food constituent there is its corresponding phraseological unit. Afterwards, there are five key steps that determine this type of analysis: in the first step there is an immediate insight in the use of the particular food constituent, a sentence that serves as a representative example, where the food constituent is being highlighted. Then, in the second step, the meaning of that idiomatic sentence is provided. The third step deals with searching and providing the same idiomatic meaning in the target language (Italian). The fourth phase is supposed to provide the corresponding phraseological unit in the target language. Finally, the degree of equivalence between two idioms is determined (full, partial, phraseological parallels, non-equivalence). In addition, the typology (phraseological nominations, stereotyped comparisons, proverbs, etc.) of both English and Italian PUs is being shown.

### APPLE

#### (1) the apple of somebody's eye

1. "*I became a father later in life, and Geraldine was **the apple of my eye.***" (LAID, 6)
2. "to be loved very much by someone, especially an older member" (LAID, 6)
3. "essere qualcosa di preziosissimo, di molto caro per qualcuno, come il dono della vista" (CDS, n.d.) (to be something very precious, very dear to someone, like the gift of sight)
4. **la luce degli occhi di qualcuno** (CDS, n.d.) (the light of somebody's eyes)
5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The partial equivalence between these two expressions may be due to linguistic and cultural differences. Semantically speaking, the meaning is basically the same, as well as the type of the used phraseological unit (sayings in both of the examples). However, what is noticeable as

different is the lack of food constituent in the Italian counterpart, where the word *apple* is being replaced with the word *luce* (light).

### **(2) a rotten/bad apple**

1. "*All it takes is one **bad apple**, and the whole industry is affected.*" (LAID, 6)
2. "used about someone who is dishonest or immoral and who has a bad effect on others in a group" (LAID, 6)
3. "l'elemento negativo in un gruppo" (ZING, 1380) (someone negative from the group)
4. **mela marcita** (ZING, 1380) ('rotten apple')
5. full equivalence

The equivalence of these two phraseological units has been detected as full equivalence due to the overlapping in all key aspects (lexical, syntactic, semantic, etc.)

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

### **(3) An apple a day keeps the doctor away**

1. "*Grandma always fed us with lots of apples when we visited her. She believed that **an apple a day keeps the doctor away.***" (Spears 2006: 17)
2. "this means that eating an apple each day can help to keep you healthy" (CD, n.d.)
3. "consumare una mela al giorno contribuisce a tenerci in salute, allontanando la possibilità di aver bisogno del nostro dottore" (CDS, n.d.) (consuming an apple a day helps keep us healthy, avoiding the possibility of needing our doctor)
4. **Una mela al giorno toglie il medico di turno** (GDI, 54) (An apple a day keeps the doctor away)

5. full equivalence

Since both of phraseological units have the same food constituent, provide the same meaning, share the same typology (proverbs) and they overlap syntactically as well, this is the case of full equivalence between the idioms.

Type of English PU: proverb

Type of Italian PU: proverb

**(4) The apple doesn't fall far from the tree**

1. "*Her daughter soon showed her own musical talent, proving that **the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.***" (CD, n.d.)

2. "a child usually has a similar character or similar qualities to his or her parents" (CD, n.d)

3. "una persona non si discosterà mai dalle caratteristiche tipiche delle sue origini" (CD, n.d.)  
(a person will never deviate from the typical characteristics of his origins)

4. **La mela non cade mai lontano dall'albero** (CD, n.d.) (The apple never falls far from the tree)

5. full equivalence

These two idioms are being detected as fully equivalent considering the fact that all the key elements (food constituent, semantics, syntax) coincide. Although the Italian counterpart has an extra word *mai*, which means *never*, and it has a role of intensifier, it does not affect on the overall degree of equivalence.

Type of English PU: proverb

Type of Italian PU: proverb

**(5) an/the apple of discord**

1. "*The girls had got on well together until **the apple of discord** in the person of a handsome young apprentice arrived in their midst.*" (Cowie et al., 15)

2. "(sb or sth that is) a cause of dispute, argument or rivalry; (from the Greek myth of a golden apple which was to be given to the most beautiful of three goddesses) " (Cowie et al., 15)
3. "motivo di lite o di contrasto in generale" (CDS, n.d.) (reason for dispute or conflict in general)
4. **il pomo della discordia** (CDS, n.d.) ( the apple of discord )
5. full equivalence

This is an example of the full equivalence since the Italian counterpart preserved all linguistic features that are present in the English idiom as well (same word choice, same syntax, meaning etc.)

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

#### **(6) the Big Apple**

1. "*She's planning a trip to **the Big Apple.***" (CD, n.d.)
2. "New York City" (CD, n.d.)
3. "la città di New York" (ZING, 1362) (the city of New York)
4. **la Grande Mela** (ZING, 1362) ( the Big Apple)

5. full equivalence

Idioms are considered to be fully equivalent due to the same form and meaning.

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

#### **BACON**

#### **(7) bring home the bacon**

1. "*When I started as a drummer in the band, it was difficult – my mates were either in university or bringing home the bacon.*" (LAID, 13)
2. "to provide enough money to support your family" (LAID,13)
3. "lavorare per vivere" (ZING, 1586) (work for living)
4. **guadagnarsi il pane** (ZING, 1586) ('earn your bread')
5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The equivalence of these two expressions can be considered as partial, since they do not fully correspond in terms of syntactic structure and lexical composition. Semantically speaking, the basic meaning that has been transmitted remained the same in both cases. While the English phrase contains the word *bacon* that stands for the means that are required for the existence, in the Italian phrase the word *pane* (bread) is being used. Furthermore, there is a difference in the verb selection: English *bring* is being substituted with the verb *guadagnarsi*, which stands for *to earn*.

#### **(8) save somebody's bacon**

1. "*We had a very dry winter, but the month of March, when it rained heavily, just saved our bacon.*" (LAID, 14)
2. "to stop someone from failing or having trouble, when they are in a difficult situation" (LAID, 14)
3. "salvarsi da un pericolo mortale | salvare la vita a qualcuno" (DIT, n.d.) (save yourself from mortal danger | save someone's life)
4. **salvare la pelle** (DIT, n.d.) (to save one's skin)
5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

In this case, the detection of the of the phraseological parallels lies in the lexical difference: the word *bacon* in the English phrase is being substituted with the word *pelle* that in Italian denotes *skin*, so there has not been detected no food constituent whatsoever). Both of the phrases share a core meaning but differ in terms of the literal components used in the expression. These idioms are semantically related, but their linguistic forms and visual components do not align (English: *save the bacon*, Italian: *salvare la pelle* (save the skin).

## BANANA

### (9) slip on a banana skin

1. "*Most of the nation would enjoy seeing this mighty team slip on a banana skin in front of millions.*" (COD, n.d.)
2. "to say or do something that makes you look stupid and causes you problems" (COD, n.d.)
3. "incorrere in un errore o in un incidente imprevisto" (ZING, 236) (run into an error or an unforeseen accident)
4. **scivolare su una buccia di banana** (ZING, 236) (slip on a banana skin)
5. full equivalence

Both of these PUs transmit a common image, and that is an event or action that causes troubles, and they correspond lexically and syntactically as well.

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

### (10) a banana republic

1. "*Until recently there was a tendency to dismiss whatever happened, good or bad, in South America as just the sort of thing one would expect of **banana republics**; but now such simple and derogatory attitudes no longer hold good.*" (Cowie et al., 44)
2. "a state that is (considered to be) dependent on primary, agricultural products and that is, therefore, backward economically and politically, and subject to internal disorder" (Cowie et al., 44)



3. "denominazione generica degli Stati dell'America centro-meridionale la cui economia è basata sulla esportazione di frutta o di materie prime in genere e che sono in una condizione di endemica arretratezza politico-istituzionale; stato caratterizzato da corruzione, illegalità, inefficienza" (ZING, 236) (generic denomination of the Central-South American states whose economy is based on the export of fruit or raw materials in general and which are in a condition of endemic political-institutional backwardness; characterized by corruption, illegality, inefficiency)

4. **repubblica delle banane** (ZING, 236) (a banana republic)

5. partial equivalence

These idioms are considered to be partially equivalent due to the syntactic difference that has been spotted on, and that is the number of the noun *banana*. While this noun is used in the English PU in singular, in the Italian counterpart appears in the plural form (*banane*).

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

## **BEAN(S)**

### **(11) to spill the beans**

1. "*He promised that he wouldn't **spill the beans** about what happens at the end of the play.*" (LAID, 20)

2. "to tell someone something that is supposed to be a secret" (LAID, 20)

3. "dire tutto ciò che si pensa, senza riserve o pudori; confessare" (ZING, 1999) (say everything you think, without reservations or modesty; to confess)

4. **vuotare il sacco** (ZING, 1999) (empty the bag)

5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The lexical difference can be considered as a motif of the partial equivalence of these two expressions: the verb *to spill* is being replaced with the verb *vuotare*, which means "to empty", and instead of *the beans*, in the Italian counterpart there is a word *sacco*, which stands for *the bag*. No food constituent was detected in the Italian counterpart.

### (12) be full of beans

1. "*I was exhausted last night, but I feel **full of beans** again this morning.*" (LAID, 20)
2. "to feel eager to do things and have a lot of energy" (LAID, 20)
3. "essere molto attivo" (GDI, 98) (to be very active)
4. **essere tutto / (pieno di) pepe** (GDI, 98) (to be all / (full of) pepper)
5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

These two expressions can be seen as phraseological parallels due to their different lexical composition. The word *beans* from the English phrase in the Italian counterpart is being replaced with the word *pepe* (pepper).

### (13) (not) worth a row of beans

1. "*Your assurances **aren't worth a row of beans**, never have been. What I want to see is results.*" (Cowie et al., 600)
2. "(not even) of slight value, importance, or significance" (Cowie et al., 600)
3. "non valere niente" (CDS, n.d.) (to worth nothing)
4. **non valere un fico secco** (GDI, 98) (not worth a damn)

## 5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The two expressions are phraseological parallels since they share the same meaning, but differ in their lexical units. Firstly, the matter of quantity is noticeable: in the Italian counterpart instead of *a row* there is *un* (one). In addition to this, the word *beans* is being replaced with *fico* (fig), and there is an extra word *secco* (dry) with the qualitative role, that is, a dry fig is usually tastier than normal fig, so if it is said that someone/ something is not worth even a dry fig, it implies that it is really worthless.

**BREAD****(14) bread and butter**

1. "*Small jobs like oil changes are the garage's owner's **bread and butter**.*" (LAID, 41)
2. "the way that someone earns most of their money" (LAID, 41)
3. "fonte o mezzi di sussistenza o di sostentamento, fonte di guadagno" (DLR, n.d.) (source or means of subsistence or livelihood, source of income)
4. **pane e burro** (DLR, n.d.) (bread and butter)
5. full equivalence

These idioms resulted to be fully equivalent due to the same syntactic structure, lexical aspect (word choice), and their meaning.

Type of English PU: irreversible binomials

Type of Italian PU: irreversible binomials

**(15) earn your bread**

1. "*We started our library just hoping we could **earn our bread** from it – we had no idea it would become one of the largest collections in the world.*" (LAID, 41)

2. "to earn the money that you need in order to live" (LAID, 41)
3. "lavorare per procurarsi il necessario per vivere" (CDS, n.d.) (to work to obtain the necessities of life)
4. **guadagnarsi il pane** (ZING, 1586) (earn your bread)
5. full equivalence

Full equivalence is being detected due to overlapping in both syntactic and semantic aspects. Both verbs (*to earn* and *guadagnarsi*) are transitive verbs, with a direct object, that is, *bread* or *pane*).

Type of English PU: sayings

Type of Italian PU: sayings

**(16) to know which side one's bread is buttered (on)**

1. "*They're all the same, these old soldiers. On the scrounge. They **know** very well **which side their bread's buttered.***" (Cowie et al., 338)
2. "know where one's interests lie; know who to please, what work to choose or continue, in order to ensure one's livelihood, comfort or success" (Cowie et al., 338)
3. "sapersi destreggiare, saper fare i propri interessi" (GDI, 139) (knowing how to juggle, knowing how to do one's own interests)
4. **saper da che parte conviene stare** (GDI, 139) (knowing which side is best to be on)
5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: sayings

Type of Italian PU: sayings

As for the comparison of an English idiom *to know which side one's bread is buttered (on)* with the possible Italian equivalent, the research resulted with partial equivalence due to differences in lexical structure: the only contrast is in the final part of the PU, between the words *is buttered (on)* and *stare*. The meaning and syntactic features remained the same.

## CAKE

### (17) a piece of cake

1. "*After getting our daughter through high school and on to college, raising an 8-year-old seems like a piece of cake.*" (LAID, 262)
2. "used in order to say that something is very easy" (LAID, 262)
3. "di cosa facile (o difficile) a farsi" (TRE, n.d.) (easy (or difficult) thing to do)
4. **un gioco da ragazzi** (TRE, n.d.) (a child's play)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The cause of the non-equivalence is of lexical nature. Although both idioms have the same typology, by being phraseological nominations, and having the same meaning, there wasn't any food item that was being found in the Italian counterpart. What is more, there is a lack of idiomatic correspondence in the Italian language.

### (18) the icing on the cake

1. "*The book is selling well, and the extra sales we made at Christmas were icing on the cake.*" (LAID, 179)
2. "something that makes a good situation or activity even better" (LAID, 179)
3. "il tocco finale che conclude una serie di avvenimenti piacevoli" (ZING, 443) (the final touch that concludes a series of pleasant events)

4. **la ciliegina sulla torta** (ZING, 443) (cherry on the cake)

5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

These two phraseological units share the same meaning (something that comes at the end as the best part) but they differ by their lexical components: the English noun *icing* is being replaced with the Italian noun *ciliegina* (cherry).

**(19) have your cake and eat it (too)**

1. "*You can't **have your cake and eat it** – if you want more local services, you can't expect to pay less tax.*" (CD, n.d.)

2. "to have or do two good things at the same time that are impossible to have or do at the same time" (CD, n.d.)

3. "non si può avere tutto" (CDS, n.d.) (you can't have everything)

4. **non si può avere la botte piena e la moglie ubriaca** (CDS, n.d.) (you cannot have the full barrel and drunk wife)

5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: saying

Type of Italian PU: saying

Non-equivalence of these two expressions is an outcome of two situations: in the Italian idiom no food item was being found, and the word choice is completely different when comparing to the English idiom. There is also difference when considering the expressed quantity in the meaning of these two PUs (two good things (few) vs. all (*tutto*)), and in the main lexicon as well (noun the cake vs. noun *botte* (barrel)).

## CARROT

### (20) (the) carrot and (the) stick

1. "We favour a *carrot-and-stick* approach to get unemployed people back to work." (LAID, 53)
2. "a way of making people do what you want by giving them something good if they do it, and making something bad happen to them if they do not do it." (LAID, 53)
3. "alternare la maniera dura a quella dolce" (ZING, 248) (alternate between the hard way and the soft way)
4. **il bastone e la carota** (ZING, 248) (the stick and the carrot)
5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: irreversible binomials

Type of Italian PU: irreversible binomials

In this case, the partial equivalence is being detected due to the difference in one syntactic aspect, and that is the word order: while in the English idiom the word *carrot* is being followed by the word *stick*, what is noticeable in the Italian idiom is the inversion (*bastone e la carota*).

## CHEESE

### (21) to be cheesed off

1. "I have to get back to work soon, because my clients might get **cheesed off** and take their business elsewhere." (LAID, 59)
2. "to feel annoyed about something" (LAID, 59)
3. "seccato, annoiato, stufo, scazzato (*vulg*), sfottuto (*vulg*)" (GDI, 198) (annoyed, bored, fed up, pissed off (*vulg*), mocked)
4. **averne (fin) sopra i capelli** (TRE, n.d.) (to have it until above your hairs)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

Since these two idioms differ completely when it comes to the lexical aspect, and there was no food constituent in the Italian idiom, what follows is the detection of the non-equivalence between these two expressions. Italian counterpart, however, contains the body part (*capelli*, which stands for *hair*).

**(22) Hard/tough cheese!**

1. "*This is the only food we have left, and if you don't like it, **hard cheese.***" (CD, n.d.)
2. "something that you say to indicate that you have no sympathy for someone or cannot do anything to help them" (CD, n.d.)
3. "fortuna contraria, avversa; cattiva sorte" (DRE, n.d.) (contrary, adverse fortune; bad luck)
4. **Che sfortuna!** (GDI, 198) (Tough luck!)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

In the Italian language, there is no correspondent idiomatic phrase for this English one, although it expresses the same imagery. There was no food constituent found in the Italian counterpart.

**(23) Say cheese!**

1. "*Well, smile! **Say cheese!** You can look quite pretty when you smile.*" (Cowie et al., 489)
2. "something that someone who is taking a photograph of you tells you to say so that your mouth makes the shape of a smile" (CD, n.d.)
3. "sorridi!" (COD, n.d.) (smile!)
4. **Fai un bel sorriso!** (GDI, 198) (Put a smile on your face!)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination



Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

In the Italian language, this particular expression comes in the simplified version, without any food constituent, so there is no proper equivalent when it comes to that specific criterion. Therefore, non-equivalence is being established between these two expressions.

## COOKIE

### (24) tough cookie

1. "And let me tell you something, he's one **tough cookie** - so be prepared." (CD, n.d.)
2. "a person who is able to deal with difficult situations and not be easily defeated, frightened, or upset" (CD, n.d.)
3. "(nel linguaggio giovanile) valido, risoluto" (CDS, n.d.) (in juvenile language-valid, resolute)
4. (*coll*) **un tipo tosto** (GDI, 264) (a tough guy)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

There wasn't any food constituent in the Italian counterpart, that is, the proper idiomatic substitution. In the Italian counterpart, the meaning is being expressed throughout more generic noun, *tipo*.

### (25) That's the way the cookie crumbles

1. "I'm disappointed that I didn't get the job but **that's the way the cookie crumbles.**" (MW, n.d.)
2. "used when something bad has happened to say that someone must accept things the way they are" (MW, n.d.)
3. "È il corrispondente del francese "c'est la vie". Si usa per indicare una situazione negativa in cui occorre rassegnarsi, tanto non c'è nulla da fare ed è inutile prendersela." (TRE, n.d.) (it

is the equivalent of the French "c'est la vie". It is used to indicate a negative situation in which it is necessary to resign, as there is nothing to be done and it is useless to take it)

4. **Che vuoi farci, così va il mondo! / Questa è la vita!** (GDI, 264) (What can you do, that's how the world works! / This is the life!)

5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: saying

Type of Italian PU: saying

In the Italian slang, there is no such equivalent in the sense of the presence of food constituent inside the very expression. What is rather present are the exclamative generic sentences.

## CUCUMBER

### (26) (as) cool as a cucumber

1. "*I thought there would have been protestations and tears when I told her I wanted to move out of the flat, but no, she stayed **as cool as a cucumber**.*" (Cowie et al., 19)

2. "controlled; not disconcerted or upset (especially in circumstances where the opposite might be expected)" (Cowie et al., 19)

3. "impassibile, impenetrabile" (GDI, 292) (impassive, impenetrable)

4. **freddo come il ghiaccio** (GDI, 292) (as cool as ice)

5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparisons

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparisons

These are phraseological parallels. Both English and Italian idioms share the core meaning, but they differ in their lexical choice. The English *cucumber* is being replaced with the Italian *ghiaccio* (ice).

## EGG(S)

### (27) to put / to have all the eggs in one basket

1. "*I'm applying for several jobs because I don't really want **to put all my eggs in one basket.***" (CD, n.d.)
2. "to depend for your success on a single person or plan of action" (CD, n.d.)
3. "rischiare tutto in un solo colpo" (GDI, 399) (risk it all in one fell swoop)
4. **mettere/avere tutte le uova in un unico paniere** (Picchi, 399) (put/have all your eggs in one basket)
5. full equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

Both English and Italian idioms are the same in the form and meaning. Therefore, a full equivalence between these two idioms is being established.

### (28) to walk/to tread on eggs

1. "*I find in business these days I'm **walking on eggs**; I have to be careful with everything I say.*" (CD, n.d.)
2. "to be very careful not to offend or upset someone" (CD, n.d.)
3. "agire con cautela estrema o anche eccessiva" (DIT, n.d.) (act with extreme or even excessive caution)
4. **camminare sulle uova** (DIT, n.d.) (to walk on eggshells)
5. full equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

These expressions are fully equivalent since they share meaning and form.

**(29) as sure as eggs is eggs**

1. "*One day he'll realize that I was right, as sure as eggs is eggs.*" (CD, n.d.)
2. "for certain" (CD, n.d.)
3. "Molto chiaro, evidentissimo, indiscutibile" (CDS, n.d.) (very clear, very evident, indisputable)
4. **sicuro come due più due fanno quattro** (GDI, 399) (as sure as two plus two equals four)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

Although these idioms are typologically equivalent (both being stereotyped comparisons), the main difference that appears is in their lexical aspect, e.g., word choice: while in the English language something very evident and clear is being represented through the image of the food item (egg), the same concept in the Italian language is being shown through the basic mathematical operation.

**(30) to have/to get egg on one's face**

1. "*The President has egg all over his face from an incident at the press conference yesterday.*" (LAID, 102)
2. "to look stupid because of something that you have done" (CD, n.d.)
3. "rivelare povertà, limitatezza di idee e di principi morali" (DRE, n.d.) (to reveal poverty, limited ideas and moral principles)
4. **fare una figura meschina** (GDI, 399) (to make a poor impression)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The main difference is in the lexicon that is being used in both idioms. The Italian counterpart does not involve any food item, thus lacking the metaphorical aspect.

## FIG

### (31) not give a fig about/for

1. "*In a class of 33 children, there are always several who **don't give a fig about** school or the teacher.*" (LAID, 119)
2. "to not be concerned about or interested in something at all" (LAID, 119)
3. "Non importare nulla; considerare irrilevante, non attribuire a qualcosa nemmeno lo scarso valore di un fico secco" (CDS, n.d.) (to consider irrelevant, not to attribute even the low value of a dried fig to something)
4. **non importare un fico secco** (CDS, n.d.) (do not import a dried fig)
5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nominations

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nominations

Partial equivalence of these two idioms lies in the fact that they share the same meaning and even the same food constituent (fig), but they differ in the selection of the verb, i.e., stylistically (*do not give* vs. *non importare* (*do not matter*)) and in the addition of some extra words for the purpose of intensifying (*fico secco* - dry fig).

## FRUITCAKE

### (32) nutty as a fruitcake

1. "*I'm not going to spend the night alone with Carrie – she's **nutty as a fruitcake**.*" (LAID, 130)
2. "used in order to say that someone is behaving in a way that is slightly crazy" (LAID, 130)

3. "imprevedibile, balzano, usato in senso benevolo e scherzoso per persone stravaganti o irrequiete" (CDS, n.d.) (unpredictable, springy, used in a benevolent and joking sense for extravagant or restless people)

4. **matto come un cavallo** (CDS, n.d.) (crazy as a horse)

5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

The detection of the case of phraseological parallels lies in the second part of the idioms, where the word *fruitcake* is being replaced by the word *cavallo* (horse), hence lacking the food constituent, while the remaining part of the phrase is the same (adjective *nutty* and *matto* (crazy)).

## GRAPES

### (33) sour grapes

1. "*The Board insists they're against the programme on moral grounds, but it feels more like sour grapes.*" (LAID, 142)

2. "a bad attitude that makes someone criticize something because they want it but cannot have it" (LAID, 142)

3. "ostentare disprezzo o disinteresse per quello che non si riesce a ottenere pur desiderandolo molto" (CDS, n.d.) (showing contempt or disinterest for what you cannot obtain even though you want it very much)

4. **fare come la volpe con l'uva** (CDS, n.d.) (do like the fox with the grapes)

5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

The idioms differ stylistically: in the English version, the image is presented only through the sour grapes, while in the Italian version, apart from the grapes, there is the figure of the fox (*volpe*) as well. In addition, there is a difference in the typology as well: while the English PU is phraseological nomination, its Italian counterpart is stereotyped comparison.

## MEAT

### (34) **be easy meat**

1. "*The crowds of tourists who came for the pageant were easy meat for thieves working the streets.*" (LAID, 227)
2. "used in order to say that someone or something can easily be attacked, defeated, or deceived" (LAID, 227)
3. "essere vinto, preso senza fatica" (DIT, n.d.) (to be won, taken without effort)
4. **essere una facile preda** (DIT, n.d.) (be an easy prey)
5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

These resulted to be phraseological parallels. Namely, both *meat* and *preda* denote the concept of the *prey*. However, in the Italian version the meaning that is being expressed is the denotative one (the word *prey* as itself) while in the English version the word *meat* is being used to make the meaning as the connotative one.

## MUSTARD

### (35) **(as) keen as mustard**

1. "*This clansman James Donaldson is keen as mustard. He understands absolutely why I object to the notion that the Monster has left Loch Ness.*" (Cowie et al., 23)
2. "very enthusiastic and active" (Cowie et al., 23)

3. "entusiasta, appassionato, interessato" (DRE, n.d.) (enthusiastic, passionate, very interested in something)

4. **molto entusiasta** (DRE, n.d.) (very excited)

5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

Even though there is a match in the meanings of both English and Italian phrase, the non-equivalence is primarily due to the lack of the food constituent in the Italian expression, and consequently, the lack of metaphoric component. Additionally, there is a typological difference as well: the English phrase is a stereotyped comparison whereas the Italian one is a phraseological nomination.

## NUT(S)

### (36) **hard/tough nut to crack**

1. "*But the difficult terrain of the Pennines, and the congested urban development along the remainder of the route will both be **hard nuts to crack.***" (Cowie et al., 252)

2. "a problem difficult to find an answer to, a situation difficult to deal with effectively; somebody likely to resist efforts to conciliate, influence or intimidate him" (Cowie et al., 252)

3. "problema, scocciatura, impiccio" (DIT, n.d.) (problem, annoyance)

4. **gatta da pelare** (DIT, n.d.) (cat to be peeled)

5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

English idiomatic expression *hard/tough nut to crack* is translated in Italian as *gatta da pelare*. Despite the fact that both idioms provide the same meaning (a problem that is difficult to solve), they differ in their constituents. Thus, the *nut* is being replaced with *gatta* (*cat*), and the action



involved is different as well: verb *to crack* is being replaced with the verb *pelare* (*plucking*). This mainly contributed to the detection of the partial equivalence between the idioms.

### (37) (from) soup to nuts

1. "*This is how you do a film campaign **from soup to nuts**.*" (CD, n.d.)
2. "from the beginning to the end; including everything" (CD, n.d.)
3. "interamente, completamente" (DIT, n.d.) (‘entirely, completely’)
4. **da cima a fondo** (DIT, n.d.) (‘from top to bottom’)
5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: irreversible binomials

Type of Italian PU: irreversible binomials

The common feature of these two idioms is the concept that is being transmitted, and that is thoroughness, wholesomeness. However, due to the evident stylistic and lexical differences (*soup-cima* (*top*), *nuts-fondo* (*bottom*)), and the lack of the food constituent in the Italian idiom, these two expressions can be considered as phraseological parallels.

## OATS

### (38) to sow one's wild oats

1. "*His grandfather advised him **to sow his wild oats** before getting married.*" (LAID, 248)
2. "to behave in an irresponsible way and have fun while you are young, especially by having many sexual relationships that are not serious" (LAID, 248)
3. "fare una vita spensierata, piena di piaceri" (DIT, n.d.) (‘to live a carefree life, full of pleasures’)
4. **correre la cavallina** (DIT, n.d.) (‘run the leapfrog’)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The first, and most evident difference between these two idioms is the word choice, or the lexical aspect of the very idiom. The meaning remained the same, even though it was transmitted through the different set of words: in the Italian version of the idiom, the verb *correre* (*to run*) takes place instead of the original verb *to sow*, and the noun phrase *wild oats* is replaced with the noun *la cavallina* (*leapfrog*).

## OMELETTE

### (39) you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs

1. "*I believe that **you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs**, and so you can't hold any public office without making some people angry with you.*" (LAID, 250)

2. "used in order to say that you cannot achieve anything without causing some problems" (LAID, 250)

3. "Pretendere un vantaggio o un beneficio senza pagarne il prezzo. Usato principalmente per persone avido che cercano di avere tutto gratis." (CDS, n.d.) (claiming an advantage or benefit without paying the price. Mainly used for greedy people looking to get everything for free)

4. **voler la frittata senza rompere le uova** (CDS, n.d.) (wanting the omelette without breaking the eggs)

5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: saying

Type of Italian PU: saying

The partial equivalence of these two idioms is being established primarily due to the stylistic and lexical difference: the beginning of the phrase differs in the form (the English idiom beginning as a negative, and Italian idiom beginning as an affirmative sentence).

## PANCAKE

### (40) (as) flat as a pancake

1. "*It was supposed to have been a gathering of celebrities, but as most of them sent notes of regret for their absence, the whole affair fell **flat as a pancake**.*" (Cowie et al., 20)
2. "very flat; completely flattened; (*fig*) without interest, being a disappointment or anti-climax" (Cowie et al., 20)
3. "privo del necessario rilievo, o di originalità, banale, incapace di suscitare interesse" (TRE, n.d.) (lacking the necessary prominence, or originality, banal, unable to arouse interest)
4. **piatto come una tavola** (GDI, 481) (flat as a table)
5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

In the Italian counterpart no food constituent has been detected. Although both English and Italian idioms are typologically the same (stereotyped comparisons), different word choice and the lack of the beforementioned constituent is what makes them as phraseological parallels.

## PEA(S)

### (41) (as) like as two peas in a pod

1. "*An expert could probably tell which was the original and which the copy, but to the layman's eye the three vases were **as like as two peas in a pod**.*" (Cowie et al., 24)
2. "very similar in appearance, but not necessarily indistinguishable" (Cowie et al., 24)
3. "essere perfettamente simili" (ZING, 1002) (to be perfectly similar)

4. **somigliarsi come due gocce d'acqua** (ZING, 1002) (‘ as alike as two drops of water)

5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

These two idiomatic expressions have in common the typology: both of them are stereotyped comparisons, and they share the same meaning. What is noticeable, is the difference in the word choice (*two peas* vs. *due gocce d'acqua (two drops of water)*).

## PICKLE

**(42) be in a pickle**

1. "*John's money affairs are in such a pickle, and he keeps putting off trying to sort them out.*" (LAID, 261)

2. "to have problems that are difficult to solve" (LAID, 261)

3. "guaio, situazione intricata e difficile da risolvere" (CDS, n.d.) (‘ trouble, intricate situation and difficult to solve)

4. **mettersi in un bel pasticcio** (CDS, n.d.) (‘ to get in a lot of trouble)

5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The two respective idioms have in common the typology (both being phraseological nominations) and the main concept that has been expressed, and that is a problem or a trouble. However, because of the impossibility of the translation with equivalent idiomatic expression, they overall result to be non-equivalent.

**PIE****(43) (as) easy as pie**

1. "The test should be *as easy as pie* if you've managed to get enough driving practice." (LAID, 262)
2. "used in order to say that something is very easy" (LAID, 262)
3. "di cosa semplicissima a farsi" (CDS, n.d.) (very simple thing to do)
4. **facile come bere un bicchiere d'acqua** (CDS, n.d.) (as easy as drinking a glass of water)
5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

As for the common features, these two idioms share the same typology (both being stereotyped comparisons). What is different though, is the lexical aspect (different words that form the comparison: *pie-bicchiere d'acqua* (*the glass of water*)), and the lack of the food constituent in the Italian counterpart. Taking this into consideration, makes the overall partial equivalence between the idioms.

**(44) pie in the sky**

1. "Agnos insists the proposal for a new sports stadium is not *pie in the sky*." (LAID, 262)
2. "used about an idea, plan etc that you think will never happen" (LAID, 262)
3. "sognare, fare progetti fantasiosi" (CDS, n.d.) (to dream, to make imaginative plans)
4. **fare castelli in aria** (CDS, n.d.) (to build castles in the air)
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

The motif of determining the case of non-equivalence of these two idioms lies in the Italian counterpart of the idiom *pie in the sky*: *fare castelli in aria*. Despite these two idioms share the

same typology (phraseological nominations), and their meaning, there is no overlapping when it comes to the criterion of presence of the food constituent (English food constituent *pie* is being replaced with the word *castelli*, which stands for the *castles*).

## POTATO

### (45) a hot potato

1. "*Closing the shipyard was a political **hot potato** and a very sensitive issue for the government.*" (LAID, 271)
2. "used about a subject that a lot of people are talking or arguing about, but that nobody wants to deal with or take responsibility for because it upsets or offends people" (LAID, 271)
3. "argomento, situazione e sim. scottante, scabroso, di cui è opportuno liberarsi" (ZING, 1621) (topic, situation, etc. burning, rough, which it is advisable to get rid of)
4. **patata bollente** (ZING, 1621) (hot potato)
5. full equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

Both English and Italian idiom are simple noun phrases, that is, phraseological nominations, that convey the same meaning. Therefore, the two can be considered as full equivalents.

## PUDDING

### (46) the proof of the pudding (is in the eating)

1. "*You'd have thought this message was not one to appeal to today's world but **the proof of the pudding is in the eating**, and upwards of 2 million have bought his books and crowds flock to hear him speak.*" (Cowie et al., 466)
2. "the true value of sb/sth (can be judged only from practical experience and not from appearance, theory etc)" (Cowie et al., 466)

3. "parlare senza darsi da fare non serve a guadagnarsi da vivere" (TRE, n.d.) ( talking without getting busy does not help to earn for a living)

4. **Le chiacchiere non fanno la farina** (TRE, n.d.) ( Chatter doesn't make flour)

5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: saying

Type of Italian PU: saying

These idiomatic expressions are considered to be non-equivalent due to the different syntax (the English phrase being an affirmative one and Italian the negative one), as well as the different word choice. Typologically, these expressions can be classified as sayings.

## SALAD

### (47) somebody's salad days

1. "*His later music is very different from the precise classically-based works of his salad days.*" (LAID, 294)

2. "the time when someone was young and did not have much experience of life" (LAID, 294)

3. "i giorni/ gli anni della giovinezza" (GDI, 1179) ( the days/years of youth)

4. **gli anni/ i giorni verdi** (GDI, 1179) ( the green years/days)

5. partial equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

Partial equivalence of these two idiomatic expressions is due to the fact that the same idea is being expressed (someone's youth days), and the second part of the PU is the same in both cases (the noun *days*), but in the Italian counterpart there is no food constituent, even though some lexical features indirectly indicate to it (e.g., the noun phrase *i giorni verdi* denotes someone's *green days* when translated literally, and just this very colour that is present in the expression makes the allusion to some food constituent).

## SALT

### (48) the salt of the earth

1. "*They're decent people, trying to earn a living, and this play shows they're **the salt of the earth.***" (LAID, 294)
2. "used about a person or group of people you admire, because they are good, honest, ordinary people" (LAID, 294)
3. "una persona che viene ritenuta particolarmente saggia o colta, oppure, ironicamente, di chi è convinto di essere depositario dell'unica verità illuminata che pretende d'imporre a tutti gli altri" (CDS, n.d.) ('a person who is considered particularly wise or cultured, or, ironically, who is convinced that he is the custodian of the only enlightened truth that he claims to impose on the others')
4. **essere il sale della terra** (CDS, n.d.) ('to be the salt of the earth')
5. full equivalence

Type of English PU: phraseological nomination

Type of Italian PU: phraseological nomination

These phraseological units overlap in their syntax and typology. What is interesting to note is that the meaning of these PUs is all vast.

### (49) rub salt in/ into sb's wounds

1. "*Not only has he treated her like dirt, now he's **rubbing salt in her wounds** by bringing Joanne to her party.*" (LAID, 294)
2. "to do something that makes someone feel even more embarrassed or upset about their situation than they already do" (LAID, 294)
3. "parlare di un argomento doloroso" (DIT, n.d.) ('to talk about a painful topic')
4. **affondare il coltello nella piaga** (DIT, n.d.) ('to stick the knife in')
5. non-equivalence

Type of English PU: saying

Type of Italian PU: saying



This is another example of non-equivalence due to the fact that the Italian counterpart differs completely in terms of lexicon. The translation of this phrase would be: *to plunge the knife into the wound*, which approximately conveys the same message, but there is no food constituent whatsoever. Typologically, these are sayings.

## **SARDINE(S)**

### **(50) pack sb like sardines**

1. "Even *packing them like sardines* into wards planned for half the number of beds, many cases requiring hospital treatment could not be admitted." (Cowie et al., 446)
2. "accommodate, seat etc a number of people in the minimum of space, as with sardines in a tin" (Cowie et al., 446)
3. "essere, stare accalcati o pigiati in poco spazio" (DIT, n.d.) (‘to be huddled or pressed into a small space’)
4. **essere/stare come sardine** (DIT, n.d.) (‘to be / to stay like sardines’)
5. phraseological parallels

Type of English PU: stereotyped comparison

Type of Italian PU: stereotyped comparison

These 2 idiomatic expressions can be considered as phraseological parallels since their meaning is completely the same, but they slightly differ in their stylistic features. To provide the example, instead of the verb *to pack*, Italian counterpart contains the variation between the verbs *essere* (*to be*) and *stare* (*to stand*). Typologically, these are stereotyped comparisons.

## 9. RESEARCH RESULTS

For this particular purpose, fifty (50) English idiomatic expressions with food constituents were taken into consideration. Idioms were analysed and translated with the scope of finding a possible equivalent in the target language: Italian. Twelve (12) of those idioms

resulted to be the examples of full equivalence, while eleven (11) idioms showed partial equivalence. There were eleven (11) cases of phraseological parallels as well, and non-equivalence has been detected in the translation of sixteen (16) idiomatic expressions.

As for the typology of idiomatic expressions (phraseological units) involved, the most frequent ones were the phraseological nominations (29). Other types that were also detected were proverbs and sayings (9), stereotyped comparisons (9), and finally, irreversible binomials (3).

What follows below is the graphic representation of frequency of each of the four equivalence types, determined by Dobrovol'skij:

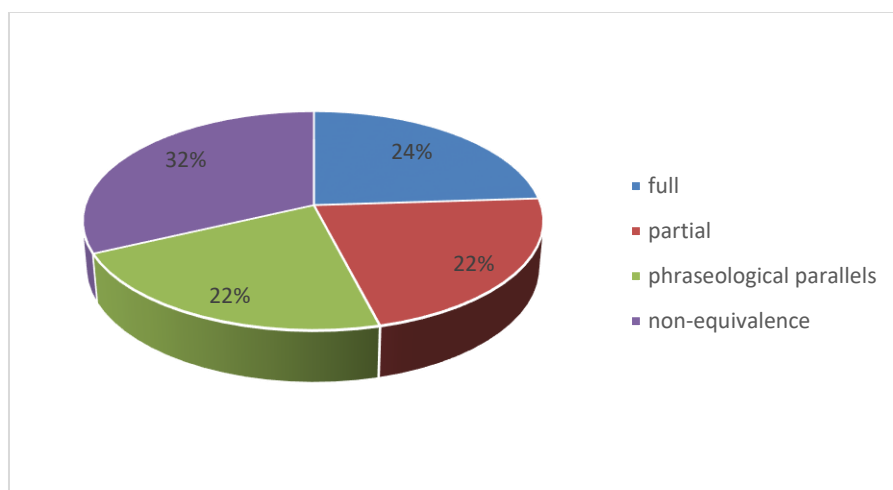


Figure 2: The representation of the equivalence type in the translation of idioms with food constituents from English to Italian

As mentioned previously, the most frequent type of equivalence is non-equivalence, with a convincing 32%. What is also interesting is the fact that partial equivalence and phraseological parallels resulted to be equally frequent. Lastly, the 24% of full equivalence is a percentage that certainly cannot be disregarded considering the fact from the beginning, that English and Italian are 2 languages that are (by their syntax, grammar, etc.) quite opposite.

In below there is a graphic representation of the types of PUs that were detected when translating idioms from the source language (Italian) to target language (English).

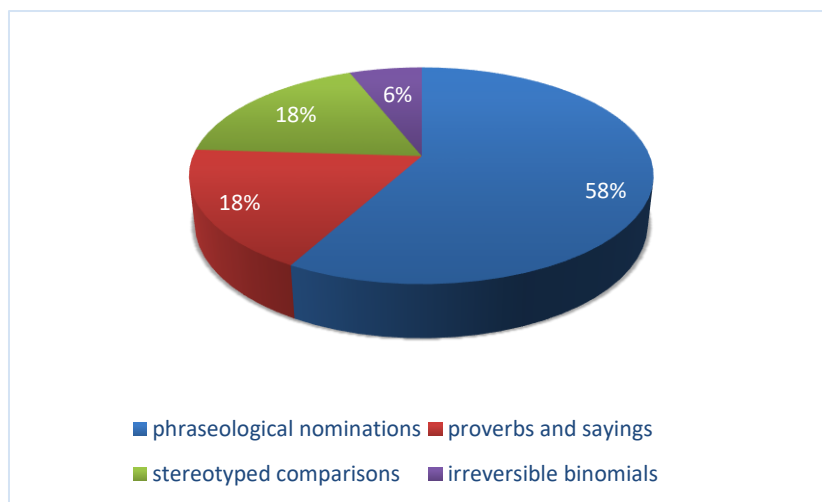


Figure 3: The representation of the types of PUs in the translation of idioms with food constituents from English to Italian

What is immediately noticeable when observing this diagram, is that the most frequent types of PUs were phraseological nominations, with a convincing 58%. It is also interesting to note that stereotyped comparisons and proverbs and sayings shared the same percentage. Finally, irreversible binomials turned out to be the type with the lowest frequency (only 6%).

What was also taken as one of the criteria for systematizing PUs is the food group in which every food constituent detected inside the PU could be placed in. Thus, the eleven food groups were listed in the left column of the table, and in the right column a belonging food constituent.

FOOD GROUP	FOOD CONSTITUENT
Fruit	apple, banana, fig, grapes
Vegetables	carrot, cucumber, pickle, potato, salad
Meat	bacon, meat
Fish	sardines
Grains	bread, oats
Legumes	beans, pea
Eggs	eggs, omelette
dairy products	butter, cheese
sugar and sugar products	cake, cookie, fruitcake, pancake, pie, pudding
Spices	mustard, salt
Nuts	nuts

Table 1: The diversity of food constituents found in English PUs

Table 2 presents three columns: firstly, the elements found in Italian PUs are listed, in the column right next to that one is the translation to English and the third column represents the corresponding group or a category in which the element in Italian PU can be placed in.

ELEMENTS IN THE ITALIAN PUs	TRANSLATION	CORRESPONDING GROUP
luce	light	abstract nouns
mela, pomo	apple	fruit
pane	bread	grains
pelle	skin	body parts
banana	banana	fruit
cavallo	horse	animals
burro	butter	dairy products
fico	fig	fruit
ciliegina	cherry	fruit
carota	carrot	vegetables
uva	grapes	fruit
capelli	hair	body parts
gioco	play	abstract nouns
ghiaccio	ice	drinks
uova	eggs	eggs
sorriso	smile	abstract nouns
gatta	cat	animals
cavallina	leapfrog	abstract nouns
tavola	table	utensils
gocce	drops	abstract nouns
pasticcio	trouble	abstract nouns
bicchiere	glass	utensils
castelli	castles	buildings
patata	potato	vegetables
farina	flour	grains
sale	salt	spices
coltello	knife	utensils
sardine	sardines	fish
sacco	bag	utensils
pepe	pepper	spices
preda	prey	abstract noun

Table 2: The diversity of elements found in Italian PUs

## 10. CONCLUSION

After confronting English and Italian phraseological units through the process of comparative and descriptive analysis, it can be said that the English and Italian languages, although not having much in common at first glance, linguistically speaking, resulted in a percentage of idiom equivalence (either full or partial) that certainly cannot be disregarded. The general assumption, mentioned at the beginning of this research, was justified by the fact that these two languages belong to quite opposite language groups, having different grammatical, syntactic and other features. What was noticeable in the Italian idioms was the variety of categories of nouns that were being used to express certain images. Likewise, when the search for an Italian counterpart resulted unsuccessfully, that is, when the existence of a direct equivalent in the target language was not established, there were phrases that were more of the descriptive type, rather than idiomatic (e.g., the PU *tough cookie* translated as *un tipo tosto*).

Taking all this in regard, the final thought for this particular research can be that both English and Italian languages are languages with an enriched phrasicon, at least when it comes to this specific type of idioms, those with food constituent. To widen the knowledge of a certain language and thus have a possibility to express ourselves and to understand as many idiomatic expressions of these languages as possible, it would be of great use to proceed with this type of research but to shift it on some other conceptual fields, in terms of detecting new idiomatic expressions with some other constituents, e.g., body parts, colours, names, etc.

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## 12. SUMMARY

### Comparative analysis of PUs with food constituent in English and Italian

This thesis argues special branch of linguistics, relatively recently emerged, phraseology. The focus is on phraseological units and their descriptive and comparative analysis. The thesis aims to conduct the research in order to demonstrate how one constituent (in this particular case: the food constituent) of PU is represented in one language (English) and how in the other (Italian). The research consists firstly of compiling the theoretical framework, which includes a definition of some basic concepts (i.e., PU) in order to facilitate and make the analysis and elaboration more comprehensive. For this particular purpose, the book written by Sabine Fiedler is being used, and that is *English Phraseology: A Coursebook*. The second part, being the most important one, as it is based on confrontation and comparison of two different languages, is reserved for the analysis of the 50 PUs by choice that contain food constituents. The third part deals with the results of the analysis and their discussion. In the end, the degree of equivalence between PUs (full, partial or non-equivalence) is determined.

Key words: phraseology, phraseological units, English, Italian, food constituent, comparative analysis



## 13. SAŽETAK

## Komparativna analiza frazema s prehrambenom sastavnicom na engleskom i talijanskom jeziku

Ovaj se rad bavi frazeologijom, relativno novijom specijalnom granom lingvistike. Drugim riječima, fokus je na frazeološkim jedinicama i njihovoj deskriptivnoj i komparativnoj analizi. Cilj ovog rada je provesti istraživanje kako bi se prikazalo na koji je način jedna sastavnica (u ovom konkretnom slučaju prehrambena) frazema zastupljena u jednom jeziku (engleskom), a kako u drugom (talijanskom). Istraživanje se prvenstveno sastoji od sastavljanja teorijskog okvira, koji uključuje definiranje nekih osnovnih pojmova (npr. frazeološke jedinice) kako bi se analiza i elaboracija olakšale, te učinile sveobuhvatnijima. U tu svrhu koristi se knjiga Sabine Fiedler, a to je *English phraseology: A coursebook*. Drugi dio, koji je najvažniji jer se temelji na usporedbi dva različita jezika, predviđen je za analizu pedeset (50) frazema sa prehrambenim sastavnicima po izboru. Treći dio rada bavi se rezultatima analize i njihovom raspravom. Na kraju se utvrđuje stupanj jednakosti među frazemima (potpuna, djelomična ili neekvivalentnost).

Ključne riječi: frazeologija, frazemi, engleski, talijanski, prehrambena sastavnica, komparativna analiza