

UNIVERSITATEA „OVIDIUS” DIN CONSTANȚA
ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ DE ȘTIINȚE UMANISTE
DOMENIUL DE DOCTORAT: FILOLOGIE

TEZA DE DOCTORAT
REZUMAT ÎN LIMBA ENGLEZĂ

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CONSTANȚA, 2021

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DOCTORAL THESIS
THE VERBAL IDIOMS IN ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH IN
TRANSLATOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

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SUMMARY

At the level of linguistic disciplines, phraseology distinguishes itself as one of the current concerns of the linguistic researchers, whose main scientific interest may be determined by the following scientific reasons:

- the importance of identifying the main phraseological categories of the language;
- the necessity of enhancing the theoretical background of the category of verbal idioms;
- the delimitation of verbal idioms at the level of phraseological units;
- the conceptual distinction of the verbal idioms, by identifying their specific features, but also their grammatical, lexical and syntactic behavior. Unlike other linguistic disciplines, that can easily prove their autonomy at language level, phraseology has always shown an obvious interdependence with the other major branches of linguistics: etymology (from the perspective of identifying the origin of certain idioms), morphology (in terms of identifying the morphological functions of the components of the phraseological units), semantics (in order to justify the use of phraseological units only in the stylistic register of the language), syntax (to confirming the distinct syntactic behavior of phraseological units, in general, and that of verbal idioms, in particular) or translation studies (by means of which the translator's choices are to be justified, both at the level of translation techniques and at the level of justifying the losses that derive from the translation process or the semantic equivalence of the two languages).

At the level of every language, the phraseological structures are the representative elements of the stylistic register, characterized by a high level of expressiveness and the figurative meaning of expressions/utterance.

Considering these fundamental assumptions, we have launched the study of verbal idioms, from a contrastive translation perspective, for two mentioned languages, Romanian and English. In this respect, our doctoral thesis aims at analyzing the verbal idioms, while complying with the four main levels of study, according to the three major chapters of the thesis and enlarged corpora of verbal idioms, the latter one being comprised of reference papers in phraseology, as well as of phraseological dictionaries and general dictionaries.

For highlighting the most important features of verbal idioms, we have made significant tables and explanatory diagrams, including the percentage results of different theoretical analysis aspects.

The first chapter represents the general study of phraseology, at theoretical level, both in Romanian and English, that has been accomplished by means of analyzing the following fundamental theoretical aspects: defining the domain of phraseology, by delivering detailed information about its status, introducing the theoretical concept of phraseological unit, while highlighting the key terms used by the well-known linguistic researchers (Colțun 2003- *phraseologism*, Dimitrescu 1958, Nica 1963, Iordan 1975 or Avram 1986- *idiom*, Philippide 1984 - *phraseological unit*, *idiom* or *idiotism*). Further, the concept of phraseological unit is defined, by means of its scientific analysis entailed in the specialty papers (Corlățeanu 1992, Pastor 1996, Groza 2005 etc.). Therefore, it is analyzed at linguistic level as a word group of at least two lexemes, with a new general unitary meaning, that comprises syntactic, semantic and morphological restrictions. Its general meaning is mostly achieved by means of partial or total loss of the meanings of its constituents. In addition, the behavior of the phraseological unit at language level and its significance in spoken language, in informal register, are presented and analyzed.

Regarding the theoretical study of Romanian phraseology, considerable attention is paid to the process of identifying the main classes of phraseological units. In the perspective of Romanian phraseology, the following two types are to be underlined: *free word constructions* (*expressions*, *newspaper clichés*, *international phrases and clichés*, *expressive paraphrases or metaphorical word groups*) and *fixed word constructions*, which are entirely represented by idioms.

At the level of English phraseology, we have also identified two major classes of phraseological units: *composites* and *multiword units*. The first one consists of *idioms* and *figurative idioms*, while the latter one encompasses *fixed restricted collocations* and *restricted collocations with limited variation*. In English linguistics, there are also other terminological concepts that occur in the process of defining the phraseological unit: *set expression*, *idiom*, *set phrase*, *fixed word-group*, *phraseological combination*, *phraseological fusion* or *phraseological unit* (Guliyeva 2016).

The assessment of the main phraseological classes constitutes the basis of displaying the common features regarding the entire assembly of phraseological units, both in Romanian and English, namely:

- distinct syntactic function at the phrase level;
- semantic and syntactic cohesion due to putting together the component elements semantically and syntactically;
- the etymological analysis of the relationship between individual and society;
- the alteration of the sense of the structure caused by reordering the component elements within the structure;
- the alteration of the expressiveness by substituting the component elements with lexical synonyms or by including new constituents;
- the alteration of the sense by reordering the component elements at the phrase level;
- the capability of having morphological synonym, that can be a part of speech corresponding to the grammatical key element of the idiom;
- the presence of only one morphological correspondent for more idioms (phraseological synonymy);
- the capability of forming new idioms;
- the capability of exclusively encompassing the archaic forms of the language;
- the use of the comparative term *as* in the structure of idioms, forming comparative collocations that can express, with different grades of intensity, emotional states, mental or physical features or mental and physical actions;

The latter part of chapter I comprises the large classification of the phraseological units, on the basis of the three major functional criteria: grammatical, structural and lexical-semantic. In this way, according to the grammatical criterion, the main classes of phraseological units have been identified, depending on the morphological value of the key element (verb-verbal idiom, noun-noun idiom, adjective-adjectival idiom etc.); in addition, there are references about the grammatical classes which they can take over.

While presenting the structural criterion, we have highlighted the following most important patterns: the number of constituents (two words idioms, three words idioms, multi words idioms), the grammatical structure of the idiom (rethinking the class of idioms in accordance with the grammatical composition). The lexical-semantic criterion aims at the idiom classification, on the basis of the most dominant semantic fields (emotional states, positive and negative human characteristics/features, mental

and physical activities, actions). Another lexical-semantic subcriterion used to classify the idioms refers to the following lexical-semantic fields: nature elements (air, water, sky, fire, ice, lake, moon, shore, rain, sun, wind etc.), human body parts and animal body parts (wing, lip, head, tail, body, brain, tooth, neck, tongue, nose etc.), flora and fauna (ox, donkey, dog, flower, sheep, cuckoo, pig, snake, fox etc.), colours (white, blue, yellow, red etc.), food (onion, doughnut, yeast, milk, polenta, cucumber, apple, honey, pepper, turkish delight, sugar etc.), house and household items (sponge, brick, book, yard, window, fence, table, candle, bed, curtain, chair, door, wall etc.), clothing items (floss, pocket, baggage, belt, chain, glove, sleeve, slippers etc.) and domestic tools (needle, stick, waggon, hammer, nail, knife, rope, pitchfork, plane, hoe etc.).

The second chapter is concerned with the approach of verbal idioms in Romanian and English, as a whole, by means of various tables containing significant examples and followed by their appropriate diagrams. Therefore, the following aspects are subject to the linguistic analysis:

- theoretical delimitation of verbal idioms in Romanian and English, in the large class of phraseological units, beginning with the argument that free word constructions are deemed as lexical acts, which can be analyzed, and the idioms, as grammar acts, having an unitary grammatical status (Tomescu 2003). The distinction between the two types of phraseological structures is rendered by the linguistic differences included in this chapter. Regarding the free word constructions, the lack of the cohesion and of their capability to be semantically stranded or to form spontaneously various free word combinations are obvious, if trying to take into account their ability to preserve the initial meaning or to reorder the component elements, with no alteration in meaning.

Concerning the class of fixed word constructions, represented entirely by idioms, there is unquestionable evidence of their semantic-functional, structural and grammatical status, fact that makes clear the specific survey of these language units. At the level of the English language, the distinction is made between the two main phraseological classes: *highly idiomatic constructions*, identified by the whole class of *pure idioms (core idioms)* and *literal and freely recombinable constructions*, that incorporate the other types of phraseological units.

- term equivalence regarding the verbal idiomatic constructions in Romanian and English, with the objective of displaying the unitary study of verbal idioms in the two languages; the description and the analysis of the specific features of

both Romanian and English verbal idioms (studied as word groups with a high degree of cohesion, the loss of the lexical and grammatical autonomy specific to their component elements, the loss of their initial meaning and their capability of rendering a new general meaning, different from the sum of the meanings of their component elements, an unique syntactic function and the capability to entail a single notion) emphasize a similar behavior of two corresponding phraseological constructions: *the Romanian fixed structure (idiom)* and *the English idiomatic construction (idiom)*. Therefore, in our survey regarding the two languages, we have chosen to make use of the following terms: *fixed structure* and *idiom*.

- the examination of the specific features regarding the verbal idioms in the two languages; the whole assembly of these characteristics reveals two main classes, namely the lexical features and the grammatical features. To the first one belong the following main specific properties: the capability of forming new idioms, the capability of forming derived verbs, semantic antonymy (rendered by the presence of the negative particle, also called negative adverb), lexical synonymy (expressed by the semantic correspondence with a single part of speech), phraseological synonymy (by means of semantic correspondence with other verbal idioms), the substitution of component elements with lexical synonyms, the capability of exclusively encompassing the archaic forms of the language, their capability of including new constituents or other idioms.

The grammatical characteristics bring to the foreground the exclusive affirmative/negative form, grammatical antonymy, the noun number of the component elements, the behavior regarding the presence and the use of verbal cases, prepositions and conjunctions, the incorporation of the pronominal forms, that may be contextually justified or not, reflexivity, the predicative/copulative verbs from the structure, the occurrence of the preposition in the structure of the verbal idiom or the identification of the logical subject in the case of impersonal verbal idioms.

- the reveal of the methods used to enrich the inventory of idioms in Romanian, by means of phraseological variations (the lexical phraseological variation, the phraseological variation by reordering the component elements, the phraseological variation by ellipse/expansion, the grammatical phraseological variation, the phonetic phraseological variation and the phraseological variation by means of parasynonymy);

- the classification of the Romanian verbal idioms, according to the three fundamental criteria (grammatical, structural and lexical-semantic); from the grammatical point of view, we have analyzed the syntactic and lexical-grammatical

behavior of verbal idioms, including here also the grammatical classes of the verb, that can be taken over by the verbal idioms.

In respect of the structural criterion, we have identified the following morphological combinations: 5 morphological types of verbal idioms with 2 component elements, 18 morphological types of verbal idioms with 3 component elements, 37 morphological types of verbal idioms with 4 component elements, 36 morphological types of verbal idioms with 5 component elements, 21 morphological types of verbal idioms with 6 component elements and 8 morphological types of verbal idioms with 7 component elements.

Taking into consideration the lexical-semantic criterion, we have classified the verbal idioms by means of fitting them to the main lexical-semantic fields, in the same way of classifying the phraseological units in the first chapter.

- the comparative semantic approach of verbal idioms in Romanian and English, achieved by identifying two major categories of verbal idiomatic constructions, namely **category 1** (*the class of full equivalents*) and **category 2** (*the class of widespread idiomatic patterns*); the semantic perspective brings to foreground:

- the evidence of gestural verbal idioms;
- the settlement of the frequency grade for verbs that function as key elements at the level of the verbal idiom and form the active part of the vocabulary;
- the identification of typology of the verbs comprised in the structure of the verbal idiom (*verbs of indifference, verbs of intolerance, modal verbs, verbs of minimal degree*);
- the frequency determination of the nouns included in the structure of the verbal idioms, that also represent the active part of the vocabulary;

The third chapter is concerned with the comprehensive overview of traductology in the analysis of the verbal idioms. In order to its theoretical background, we have presented and analyzed the following translation concepts:

- the concept of translation;
- the display of the translation phenomena (*version/retroversion*);
- the concept of semantic transfer;
- general translation and specialized translation;
- the examination of the general considerations regarding the translation process (*intralingual and interlingual translation*);
- the concept of translation unit and the identification of balance/

imbalance restrictions at its level (the translation phenomena of concentration/reduction or expansion/dilution of the extension of the translation unit);

- the identification of the restrictions that need to comply with for getting an adequate translation (*morphological accuracy, syntactic accuracy and semantic transfer*);

- the characteristics of the translation unit (*cohesive/non-cohesive, fragmental/non-fragmental, compositional/non-compositional*);

- the view of the adequate translation techniques used to semantically transfer the verbal idioms from the source-language into the target-language (direct translation techniques - calque and indirect translation techniques - simple punctual transposition, simple transposition by expansion/reduction, lexical modulation, statement modulation, equivalence); while presenting the already mentioned translation techniques, we have also provided the applicative section, that includes examples from various social domains : the hospitality industry, medicine, universal literature and children's literature. Also, the examples rendered in the applicative section are analyzed from the point of view of semantic transfer from the source- language into the target-language.

- the semantic study of translating the verbal idioms in Romanian and English (the results of applying the transposition by expansion/reduction, the comparison modulation-transposition, the lack of the English counterpart for some Romanian verbal idioms recorded as such in the enlarged corpora, the results of applying the linguistic calque in translating the verbal idioms, the semantic transfer of the gestural verbal idioms).

The enlarged corpora of verbal idioms in Romanian and English has been analyzed with the statistical means of quantitatively stocktaking each type of verbal idiom. The first stage in shaping the enlarged corpora of this paper is represented by the inventory of Romanian verbal idioms, according to two major lexicographic sources: first, the selection of the verbal idioms is performed by using the well-established linguistic studies regarding the analysis of verbal structures and the domain of phraseology, but also by means of Romanian general dictionaries and the phraseological ones (DȘL 1997, DEX 1998, DELR 1969, DELLR 1985, DERC 2015 etc.).

Secondly, the acknowledgement of the semantic correspondence of the two languages, namely Romanian and English, is done by means of using and recording in the enlarged corpora the following two types of dictionaries: the general ones (DRE

2000, DER 2004 etc.) and the bilingual phraseological ones (DFRE 1981, DERF 2005 etc.).

Once identified and registered in the enlarged corpora, the verbal idioms have been analyzed from the perspective of the phraseological synonymy and they have also been semantically regrouped, by means of phraseological variations that constitute the basis of enriching the inventory of verbal idioms. Thus, the 2050 Romanian verbal idioms are regrouped in 670 locutional groups or just left as individual occurrences, for those that have been recorded without any phraseological synonym.

After the systematization of the Romanian locutional groups, the applicative phraseological study highlights two major guiding lines: on one hand, the distinct survey of the Romanian verbal idioms and, on the other hand, the contrastive study of verbal idioms in Romanian and English.

By directing our survey towards the verbal idioms in Romanian and English and by planning the study stages, as seen in the table of contents, we hope that our doctoral thesis will open new guiding lines in the contrastive approach of the two languages, within the translation study dedicated to the verbal idioms. Our efforts will be carried on, in the vast domain of phraseology, with significant contribution regarding the idiomatic constructions.

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