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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE PROBLEM OF INNER FORM IN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract

The concept of the inner form can be surveyed also in phrases characterized by semantic stability and unity as the set phrases or phraseological units. What is characteristic of phraseological units is the fact that in most of the occurrences the literal, core meaning of these entities is what may be regarded as the inner form of the phraseological units. As generally accepted in most of the cases idioms can be semantically motivated and they can be associated to a to an identifiable logical connection as well as to transparent stated interlinguistic relations which could help us to understand the reflection of common conceptual grounds. One of the most striking traits these figurative conventional units have is that they cannot be interpreted without being addressed to a deep cultural exploitation. Extralinguistic factors should be considered so that we understand these units' semantic and pragmatic features as well as the way they operate. The principal scope of this paper is to demonstrate that the study of idioms' inner form, as part of exploiting idiomatic motivation, is an important linguistic issue because motivation can influence the way an idiom can be interpreted and consequently used. The exploration of the inner form is understood as a possibility to interpret the underlying mental image. Examples taken from three different Indo-European languages as mere representatives of idiomatic corpus demonstrated that the underlying lexical structure of these phraseological units on one hand and their inner form including the image component on the other are not identical. Moreover, differences in the inner form of these idioms can lead to differences in their lexicalized meanings.

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Introduction:

The term inner form was coined by the well-known Russian philosopher of language of the 19th century Potebnya. The term initially goes back to Humboldt who introduced the term inner form of language (innere Sprachform) and understood it in a completely different sense; something like national spirit reflected in a language i.e the specific ways of conceptualizing reality characteristics of every language community [Humboldt, 1963, 368]. Potebnya speaks of the inner form of the word and defines it as the ratio of the content of form to consciousness. The inner form shows the way in which people reflect their thought. He connected the inner form of the word both with its etymology and motivation [Dobrovolskij, D.O, 2016, 22].

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Following Potebnya's perspective, the concept of the inner form can be surveyed not solely in separate lexical items, but also in phrases characterized by semantic stability and unity as the set phrases or phraseological units represent. According to him, what is characteristic of phraseological units is the fact that in most of the occurrences the literal, core meaning of these entities (summarized meaning of the componential parts) is what may be regarded as the inner form of the phraseological units [Rojzenzon L.I, 1965 63-70].

As it has been generally accepted "the inner form of the phraseological unit is being defined as the relation established between the phraseological meaning of the unit and the mere senses of the components it has been composed of". Dobrovolskij claims that "one of the most unsolved problems of idioms is the question as to what extent the traces of the mental imagery underlying a figurative idiom reach its lexicalized meaning and pragmatics" [Dobrovolskij, D.O, 2016, 22]

Dobrovolskij and Baranov's investigation suggests that "idioms can differ from other lexical phenomenon exclusively regarding the possibility given by the inner form to reconstructed form the semantic point of view the cognitive process which is comprised in fundamental paradigmatic otologic knowledge. This process makes them distinguishable from one another. Idioms allow us to penetrate in the insight of the conceptual world" [Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Baranov A. N., 1996, 428].

Reinforcing the point that the ideas beliefs or moral and social convictions can be established based on human nature it can be claimed that the analysis and explanation of these units can be clearly determined by the cultural background they are endowed. Many aspects of our everyday life cannot be outlined on natural dimensions of our experience basis, especially while trying to through light to human emotions, abstract notions, mental activities, social relations. All these perceptions cannot be personally and individually perceived rather than by means of collective entity and experience.

As generally accepted in most of the cases idioms can be semantically motivated and they can be associated to an identifiable logical connection as well as to transparent stated interlinguistic relations which could help us to understand the reflection of common conceptual grounds. One of the most striking traits these figurative conventional units have is that they cannot be interpreted without being addressed to a deep cultural exploitation. Extralinguistic factors should be considered so that we understand these units' semantic and pragmatic features as well as the way they operate.

Since idioms are linguistic abnormalities, they cannot be fully understood only by metalinguistic instruments. As Wierzibska emphasizes the idea that a specific theory to describe the abnormalities of idioms is needed as they register and store necessary information and knowledge as part of the content (such as imaginary marks and reflections) demonstrating in this way respective cultural traits [Wierzbicka.1999, 28].

The problem of motivation is one of the most controversial debates in modern linguistics. Vinogradov classification on degree of motivation is based on some criteria of application such as stability inseparability and the nature of relation between the thorough (complete) meaning usually equivalented to a single word and the meaning of the compositional parts. As Vinogradov stated "the meaning of an idioms is the special chemical mixture of the meaning of all components" [Vinogradov 1977 120]. These units are usually termed as "idioms" because in these cases the inner form of the structures is completely lost and what is more the investigation of these units should undergo specific etymological analysis. The classic perspective of these units is that they cannot be semantically disintegrated because of the lack of the internal semantic structure.

One of the most crucial issues semantically approached is the description and the explanation of the interrelation of the senses and different layers of the meanings. The strongest the relation, the more motivated the idioms. Dobrovolskij and Piirainen have singled out several types of semantic motivations, among which we could pick out the metaphorical motivation and the symbolically based motivation [Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Piirainen, E, 2005. 30]. What is more, if we could say that in the idiom "*spill the beans*" and not "*spill the peas*" no grammatical rule is applied, this idiom should absolutely be mechanically reproduced, no matter the fact that semantically this idiom can be analyzed. This means that idioms are ready-made fixed constructions, conventionally coined which should merely memorized and reproduced. Yet, curiously enough, some structurally related restrictions can be traced. In most of the cases, these confines are determined by extralinguistic factors. The phraseological symbol is a specific type of the linguistic sign, whose foundation is the inner form transparency (the etymological sense), which serves

as an implementation of the denotational meaning and the figurative transference of the phraseological unit. The symbol of the phrasemes is based on the inner form symbols which represent the content abstracted from the figurative bases of the external meaning of a phrase. A good example is the metaphorically based semantic in the phraseological unit “*the pink of health*” which means “in very good condition, either physically or emotionally”

The meaning of every single linguistic sign is the interpretation of some more ample and inclusive alternative signs in which they can be furtherly subdivided, there does not exist any specific metalanguage used to prescribe the semantic of phraseology. Compared to other types of lexical units, the overwhelming part of fixed expressions have a vivid internal form, which on its side constitutes an important constituent part of idiomatic meaning. The sense-relation interpretation of the inner form could be explicit or implicit. The explicit strategy is based on meaning operators which do demonstrate in semantic representation an idea of comparison of two entities. On the other hand, the implicit strategy implies that there are not special operators functioning in operation of the inner form and the adequate semantic information is equally distributed among several components of the definition. The context plays an important role in the semantic of these expressions. The stability of the phraseological meaning is directly related to the stability of the semantic structure of that unit.

As stated by many modern scholars, apart semantic and pragmatic characteristics, crucial cultural concepts should be also treated as indispensable means of interpreting extralinguistic instruments. Since idioms are anomalies of language, mavericks of the linguistic world they show some characteristics that are difficult to be explained in terms of language universals [Flavell L and R, 1997, 36]. In fact, the realm of scientific research should be extended beyond linguistic fields and methodology of study, because these figurative speech means of expression decode different types of knowledge and what is more, they record and store effective information in the form of traced images reflecting respective cultural and social backgrounds.

According to the cognitive theory of metaphor, phraseology, as a field of study has a disputable role. The most crucial debatable issue emphasized in recent studies is that the greatest part of the idioms can be semantically motivated, thus they are not arbitrary. [Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 448]. In fact, the assumption that most idioms can be motivated is elaborated by Bali and his interpretation has emphasized the idea that “idioms are not frozen linguistic elements, nor are they arbitrary. Instead, they can be fully motivated from different structures and cognitive levels [Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Baranov A. N., 1996,47]. The motivation of idioms, that is to say “the exploration of the inner form can be achieved through the analysis of the way the free word groups can be transformed in set phrases (phraseological units). According to many scholars, this process appears to be multidimensional and complicated. Veirzbicka points out the idea that “emotional universals importance should be carefully investigated, and that the analysis of different languages would be in favor of approval that there is a universal tendency to express the emotions and feelings shaped based on a cognitive ability of the realia and the figurative images of the human being” [Wierzbicka.1999, 23].

The most logical question raised at this point is that if the meaning of the idiom cannot be deduced on superficial level because of the incongruence of the external structure, then in what way can we explore the meaning.

A convincing interpretation could be the examples related to the exploitation of the iconic model fear/ shock and the metaphor shame/ shock/ thrill (usually accompanied by a color change) which in different languages is coined in several ways. For example,

Eng. **to turn pale**, Spa. **empalidese**

Eng. **to turn as white as sheet**, Alb. **tëzbardheshsileterduhani** Germ. **blass warden** SCB. **probijediti**

Eng. **to turn white**, Alb. **tëzbardheshnëfytyrë**, Turk. **bembeyazalmaksamarmak**

The same analysis can be extended even in the iconic model; **body+ movement** which elaborate metaphors related to physical movement

Eng. **to tremble with fear, my heart skipped a jump**, Alb. **tëdridheshngafrika, tëhidhet zemrapërpjetë**, Germ. **von angstzittern**, Span. **temblar de miedo, me diounvuelcoel Corazon**”, SCB. **drhati od straha**”, Turk. **kalbim hop etti**

In many cases, these perceptions are associated with an increase of the physical temperature and in these cases the

metaphorical transference indicates “body temperature increase” as in

Eng. **my body run cold**, Alb. **mëngriugjaku** Span. **la sangrese me helo**, Germ. **mir frierte das Blunt** Turk. **buzgibioldum/buzkestim**

Anger and rage are also linguistically embedded in idioms such as

Eng. **mybloodboiled**, Alb. **mëngriugjaku**, Span. **quemarsele la sangre**, Germ. **mir kocht das Blunt in den Adren**.

Semantic idiomaticity and the conceptual metaphor are usually manifested in associations between specific colours (*yellow, green, black, red, and white*) and emotions such as *envy, anger, rage irritation*. If principally surveying these postulates are based on arbitrary conceptual relations it is obvious that further interpretations related to cultural mental or collective experiences and evocations are indispensable. From linguistic point of views, what is important is revealing the way every image component contributes into the mere overall sense of the phrase and how the “contextual behaviour” of a given idiom is determined. Defining the source of the metaphorical image is crucial for the evoked experience which implies the perception of the objective reality through abstracting abilities and physical sphere of human experience.

As usually being stated, the meaning of idioms is often vague. For example, what does it mean “*to kill two birds with one stone*”? What is the exact sense of the action performed (killing)? Phrasemes are empty formulas that can be packed with meaning, only in given contexts. There are several different characteristics under the labelling “idioms’ expressive skills”. They are “overloaded” with added connotative values compared to common words and syntagms. As noticed, in two meaning phrasemes, the first literal meaning can be actualized, a process exclusively important in metaphorical-metonymical expressions. In these examples, the expressive ability can be equated with figurativeness.

In conventional theory of idioms’ figurative language by Dobrovolski and Pirainenit is clearly stated that there is a specific conceptual structure comprised in the meaning of figurative units. The conceptual structure, as a figure of the image, is primary based in mental images becoming therefore an important figure in content plane. Idioms motivation does not necessarily imply underestimating the etymological description as an important compositional part. There are many examples demonstrating that “etymological memory of an idiom determines its function in speech” [Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Piirainen, E. 2005, 430].

A classification of idioms according to conceptual fields, in the function of the inner form, can be interpreted as below. The phraseological corpus has been respectively listed in “FjaloriFrazeologjikigjuhëshshqipe” “English idioms and how to use them”, “Dictionary of idioms and their origins”, “Italian-Albanian dictionary of idioms”, “Dictionary of idioms” and “Fjaloriigjuhëssësotmeshqipe”

Anger/ Rage

English

Go through the roof/ blow a fuse. blow your top/ fly your lid/ lose your cool/ loose your rag. see red/ blow a stream. make your blood boil/ burst a blood vessel. somebody’s blood is up/ bite somebody’s head off/ cut down to size/ give somebody a piece of your mind/ give somebody a rocket/ give somebody the rough side of your mouth. jump down somebody’s throat/ ruffle somebody’s feathers/ get up steam/ have steam coming out of your ears/ be hot under the collar/ mad as a hornet/ be up in arms/ bite one’s tongue off/ beat somebody black and blue/ get into a rage/ bite one/s lip

Albanian

Tëtëluajëmendjae kokës, tëtëpëlcasëkoka, mëlëshonkokatym, tëtëzjejëgjaku, mëhipëngjakunëkokë, mëvjennëmajëtëhundës, iundezgjaku, iluan/lajthitmendja, ma heqtrurin, ihedhthonjtënëfytyrykë, e bëjpushk, iabëjkurrizinmëtëbutë se barkun, mëkanëhipurkacabujtë, tëtëvijënëmajëtëhundës, tëkafshoshgjuhën, ha vetenngainati, e zhdëpnëdru, ibiemurit me kokë, tëtëmarrëkokazjarr, lajthit, tëtëlëshojnësytëxixa, humbtoruan, pëlcasgainati, ikërcendelli

Italian

Perdere la testa, vedere le stele al mezzogiorno, scoppiare di rabbia, spruzzar fiamme dagli occhi, dare con la testa nel

muro, mettersi in capo, essere nero come il carbone, perdere il ben del' intelletto, avere la bava alla bocca, gli ha dato di balta il cervello

Similarity, Affinity, Common Features

English

As like as two peas, cut from the same cloth, chip of the old block, birds of a feather flock together, great minds think alike, in tune with, be of one mind, get on the same page, be on the same wavelength, speak the same language, speak with one voice, be a carbon copy, like two peas in a pod, like father like son, in the same breath

Albanian

Sidypika uji, janëtënjëprerjeje, miellinjëthesi, ashkël e nxjerrëngainjëjtikërcu, sikur e ka nxjerrëngahundët, tibieshtënjëjtavaz, tëjeshnënjëmendje, e gjejjuhën, siijatidhe e biri, sikur e ka nxjerrëngahundët, i ka këputur/prerëkokën, sitëlidhurnënjëkërthizë, dardhabienëndardhë, sitënxherjakapakun, janëtënjëkallëpi

Italian

Essere carne cunzia, sono pane e cacao, tale padre tale figlio, e suo padre anto e sputato, i figlioli dei gatti pigliano i topi, chi si somiglia si piglia, sono tutti della medesima tacca, essere una coppia e un paio.

Problems, Troubles, Difficult economic situation

English

S.th is hard/difficult to swallow, something is like pulling teeth life is not a bed of roses, life is not picnic, have your back to/ against the wall, not to have a bean, to be/feel like a fish without water, between the devil and the deep sea, tighten your belt, it's a dog's life, put your head in the lion's mouth, fish in troubled waters, to go through fire and water, get into deep waters, get into a mess, keep the pot boiling

Albanian

Tëjeshivënëme shpatulla pas murit, ngelemsipeshku pa ujë/ngelemsipeshkunëzall, jam mesdyzjarresh, tëjeshnëgojën e ujkut, tëheqështëzitë e ullirit, tështërngoshrripin, sapërtëmbajturshpirtingjallë, ikamxhepat e shpuar, s'kamasnjëdyshkë/asnjëgrosh, e kamdorën me vrimë, ikamxhepat e shpuar, jamdorëshpuar, jamtrokë, ështëëpykë, ështëërasënëdiell, ështëëkëputur, notonëujëratëceka

Italian

Aver le tasche asciutte, non avere il becco di un quattrino, avere le mani bucate, ridursi ala candela/ essere alla candela, essere povero in cana, soffrire come un danato, suonare a messa con gli embrici, essere a terra, navigare in basse acque

Easy/ Effortlessy

English

As easy as falling off a log, as easy as pie, be a breeze, be a piece of cake, be home and dry, sb. can do sth. in his/her sleep, sb. can do sth. with one hand, sb. takes to sth. like a duck to water

Albanian

E bën me njëdorë, e bën me symbyllur, e ka sibukë me djathë, tëjeshsinështëpinëtënde, si rosa nëujë,

Italian

E come un bicchier d'acqua, e come bere in bicchier d'acqua,

Differences in Behaviour and Character

English

Another kettle of fish, a new ball game, be like chalk and cheese, a different animal, oil and water, be poles apart, be worlds apart, go/swim against the current, math to a different drum, a rare bird, stand out like a sore thumb, like an apple to an oyster

Albanian

Ështëbotëmëvete, tëjeshsi dita me natën, hane Shan hane Bagdat, tëjeshbotëmëvete, tëcëshkundërrymës, fshat e zanat, mëndjemendje, sakokëaqedhemendje

Italian

Essere come l'acqua e il fuoco, tanti paesi tante usate, quante teste, tanti cervelli

Ignorance, Carelessness, Immaturity, Hurry**English**

Put the cart before the horse, beat the air/the wind, build castles in Spain, to cast pearls before swine, cut off one's nose to spite one's face, to drop a brick, fight with one's shadow, if the sky falls we will catch larks, first catch your hare, then cook him, cost the earth, cost a pretty penny, ride two horses at the same time, count one's chickens before they are hatched, drop in the bucket/ocean, end in smoke, flog a dead horse, can't say boo to a goose, catch the wind in a net

Albanian

Tëveshkarrocënpara kalit, rrahujënëhavan, ndërtojkeshtjellanërërë, didhiac'ështëtagjia, në vend qetëveshvetulla, nxjerrsytë, lufton me hijen e vet, lufton me mullinjë e erës, kurtëbëhetdeti kos, kurtëbëjëgjelive, ibëjhesapetpahanxhinë, peshkunë det, tiganinëzjarr, tëtëkushtojësabishtikoka, tëkushtonnjëdjall e gjysmë, mbajdykungujnënjësqetull, një pike ujënëoqean, rrahujënëhavan, nuk e nxjerrqimënngaqulli, mbajujënëshoshë, bëjnjëvërënëujë, bërtasnëveshtëshurdhët, sikofini pas tëvjelit, i hip gomaritsëprapi, sikërrici para gomarit, kërkongjilpërënnëkashhtë, gomarhipur, gomarkërkon, shpiedrunëpyll, nuk e nxjerrqimënngaqulli, përnjëgozhdëhumbetpatkoi, shohëndrranëdiell, shohëndrra me syhapur,

Italian

Abbiarealla luna/ al vento, fare un buco nell'acqua, portare acqua quando la casa e bruciata, arrivare quanto si spengono le candele, arrivare a spogliare il prete, fuggir l'acqua sotto le grondaie, non avere ne arte, ne parte, essere come un assino al suona della lira, mettere il carro davanti ai buoi, fare il conto senza l'oste, cercare un ago nel pagliaio, fare come quello che cercava l'asino e c'era sopra, aspetare che cali dall cielo, portare acqua nel mare, non cavare un ragno da un buco, per un punto martin perse la cappa, afre dei castelli in Spagna, buttare il denaro a due mani, non dire quattro se non l'hai nel sacco,

Death**English**

Emit the last breath, end one's days, to pay the debt of nature, join the majority, to answer the last call, a blissful reward, in the world of unending glory, enjoyment of the fruits of life, go west, be asleep forever, to be brought to one's long home, return to dust, return to earth, to go to one's own place, bit the dust, have one foot in the grave, dig your own grave, kick the bucket, go to a another country, go to a better place, to join the choir invisible, be asleep in the arms of God, go home and free, to be out of the game, jump the last hurdle, shuffled out of the deck, to buy the farm, to cross the border, turn one's toes up

Albanian

Jap frymën e fundit, iumbaruanditët, shkoj me tëshumtët, shkojnëbanesën e fundit, bëhemdhe/pluhur, kthejpatkonjtëngadielli, tëjesh me njëkëmbënëdhe, lajborxhet, irakëmbës, iktheukëmbëtpërperjetë, ilaugjynahet, shkoipër thana, e bëribishtinpallë, iumbaruavajjiikandilit, puthikryqin, ifolihoxha/prifti, shkoinëjetëtëvërtetë, iktheusytëngadielli, e mori ora e ligë, u ftohkëmbësh, e mori gjumi, shkoipërtëmos e parëmbëdiellin, tundikëmbët, u martua me gurë e dhe, shkoisiqeninërrush, imblodhilekat

Italian

Andar a dare calci al vento, dare calci all' aria, battere l'ultima capata, essere in fin di vita, ha finito i propri giorni

Unfaithfulness, Lies, Ingratitude**English**

Cry with one eye and cry with another, elbow one's way, pull the wool over somebody's eyes, run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, pour oil out on the flames, see how the cat jumps into, see how the wind blows, set fire to something, stick to somebody like a bug, burr, limpet

Albanian

Jam mësalë me dyfaqe, e gjuaj me bërryla, iveshkopinjnërrota, ihedh hi syve, ha me dylugë, lëpijnëdysahanë, kthejflëtën, kthejgunëngafryn era, ivëzjarrin, ihedhbenzinëzjarrit, ifrynzjarrit, bëhemrrodhe, ngjitemsibalta pas

këpucës, nxjerrgështenjatngazjarri me duart e tëtjerëve, hedhgurindhefshehdorën, ha bukëndhepërmbyskupën, kurkemashënpsetëdjegëshduart, e bëjmizënbuall, e bëjqimentra, iështëbërërlëkurashollë, vetë zot, vetëshkop, e ka gjuhënzeher/farmak

Italian

Gettare acqua sul fuoco, levare castagne dal fuoco con la zampa del gatto, fare di una mosca un elefante, avere una faccia di bronzo, fare il buono e il cattivo tempo, avere il fiele nella lingua, sedere su due poltrone, sputare nel piatto dove si mangia, tenere il piede su due staffe, avere la faccia tosta, fare di ogni fuscello una trave

Conclusions:

The study of idioms' inner form, as part of exploiting idiomatic motivation, is an important linguistic issue because motivation can influence the way an idiom can be interpreted and consequently used. The exploration of the inner form is understood as a possibility to interpret the underlying mental image. Examples taken from three different Indo-European languages as mere representatives of idiomatic corpus demonstrated that the underlying lexical structure of these phraseological units (their literal meaning) on one hand and their inner form including the image component on the other are not identical.

Moreover, differences in the inner form of these idioms can lead to differences in their lexicalized meanings. Interpreting the inner form of phraseological units, is crucial in attempt to discover their formal and semantic source, explain several steps in the semantic shifts and semantic change and understand the linguistic background of their formation. The designation of structural relations should go alongside with the detection of the idiomatic source and the cognition of the situation, historical and cultural background, social circumstances the idioms is brought into being and used. Discovering the inner form could be fundamentally crucial for non-motivated idioms, which do not have a "free homo form structure" evidently characterized by a certain degree of "idiomaticity". These idioms as emphasized above, demonstrate to a large extent national and cultural traits as well as they cannot be literally translated because of a highly transferred figurative meaning

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