

## Comparative phenomena about phraseology in the animal theme field

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### Abstract

Every language has its own history and structure of development and it is in a gradual and continuous process of change moving in an unconscious way from one kind to another, so in different languages we distinguish analogical development. Sapir (1912) was one of the first linguistics and anthropologists who developed the linguistic discipline and in an interlingual comparison he identified that languages differ from one another, but some differ more than others.

Phraseological units deriving from a certain language do not remain isolated within the same language. They travel from one language to another due to relationships between people and languages. This happens because during these centennial relationships, people have exchanged not only goods, but even cultural values. As a result in our first steps of research there is a need to know and decide on phraseological types in each language, as well as comparison with other languages, to find out what is common and what is special among them. One of the main reasons of analogies in phraseology stays on similar or approximate concepts of objects and features of everyday life. Having into consideration the fact that the main source of phraseological units is the material world with a great variety and a wide range of clothes, tools, domestic animals, parts of human body, food and cooking, weapons and hunting objects, tribal relationships, job processes etc. we are going to analyse in this manuscript this phraseological phenomena.

**Keywords:** phraseology, phenomena, animal field, vocabulary.

### Introduction

In this study we refer to phraseological units formed about the world of domestic animals, thus referring to phraseological dictionaries in Italian, English and French, as well the Albanian Phraseological Dictionary.

Through the comparison of phraseology in these languages, we could see cultural, social changes that belong to the lexical field of animal world according to the perception of each nation.

Animals have been used by people since the dawn of humanity, for protection, for friendships or even for food. That is why there is no surprise that the image of an animal is being used to express human characteristics.

They are already known since Ancient Greece, through Aesop's tales, where animals' features are compared to human characteristics through metaphorical meaning.

There are a great number of examples that connect animal and human features through metaphorical usage such as the portrait of a man with masculine features compared to a dog, a pig, a horse, a lion, a wolf, a snake etc and feminine features in a chicken, a cat, a cow or a fox.

According to Jaritz (Otium, 1997, 5) human behavior can be explained compared to

animal behavior. The explanation of signs is in correlation with the situation in which a sign appears and then in this case the animal must be seen as a human being. Characteristics that are attributed to animals do not have only one meaning, and these signs could have a positive or negative connotation depending on the cultural effect but referring to previous studies about the languages of the Indo-European Family, Franz Bop, known as the founder of Indo-European linguistic, was the first one that scientifically supported connection between languages coming to a standard term "Indo-European". According to Bop's classification of languages, similarities between English and French are more justified because they belong to the same linguistic group, Roman languages that derive from vulgar Latin, continuation of Latin, a language documented in the IV century Before Christ (Memushaj, 2004, 299) whereas English belongs to the German branches. Although less in number, similarities between Albanian and English are present in phraseology both in social and linguistic aspect. Through this study we try to present that cultural similarities and resemblance are real even in phraseological sphere.

### **Conceptual analyses of the animal world in phraseological dictionaries of Albanian-, Italian-, English- and French language**

In connection with this topic we have taken to investigate some of the animals which have had a more spiritual relationship, with the man considering different connotations according to contextual circumstances.

The dog is the closest and most lovable animal for man, because it is considered as his loyal best friend. Anyway there is an opposing fact because most of the phraseology belonging to this animal is attributed with the most negative features.

There has always been a double meaning. Although the dog is a loyal and lovable animal, it is at the same time an extraordinary phenomenon and has a dignity to be disgusted.

In all four dictionaries we referred to you can rarely or not at all find phraseological units which treat the dog with honour and love.

In all life processes during a dog's life, from birth to death he has been treated with disgust. This does not come as the result of his loyalty, but this behaviour is seen as a feature of lavishness and fear. So, we say about a man. (Alb) *është qen* – (It) *essere un cane* – he is a very bad person (It) *fa il cane* – He does as a dog.

(Alb) *jetë qeni* – (Eng) *it's a dog's life* or *have a dog chance* (French) *une vie de chien* or *chienne de vie*. In Italian we use the expression: *fatiche da cani*.

The lamb has been considered the symbol of death and rising since ancient times. In the Bible, the lamb is seen as a symbol of innocence, simplicity and quietness that often comes out in the role of a sacrificed victim. In all four phraseological dictionaries this being is attributed the feeling of softness, pity and quietness and is almost thought in the same way. (It) *mansueto come un angelo* – A cool, well-behaved, sweet and lovable person.

The sheep. Simplicity and quietness are synthesized with love and pity in the characteristic features of the sheep. It is appeared in the Bible as a symbol of humanity; *la pecora smarrita* – the lost sheep usually present people who have gone a wrong

moral way in their life.

The sheep is a shy animal which likes living in herds and symbolizes a sweet and simple/common person as well as ninny, easy to be tricked or deceived and if the contrary happens we say that this is "a crazy sheep".

In Italian phraseology we come across the expression: *essere una pecora*, which can be defined as a weak person (cowardly, timid, humiliated).

He is frightened and shy to react against the strong ones; he is humiliated to the strength and power of the others. In the Albanian dictionary of phraseology there is a definition for the expression: *dele qorre pas këmboreve*, which means someone who goes the way the others tell him, and does thoughtless actions as if he was blind. In French we have the phraseological unit *Obeissance aveugle d'un mouton*. The blind obedience of a sheep as well as *Mouton qui se laisse mener*- The guided sheep.

The sheep of God that follow the right way are usually white which symbolizes the purity and moral values of a man. The characteristic of the black color takes a strong negative connotation which is distinguished in the Italian, English and Albanian phraseological dictionary, and symbolizes a person who is distinguished from others by his negative features, usually a person who remains out the family because of bad behavior.

The pig, in its conceptual way, is one of the most mal-treated animals which is defined as a symbol of dirtiness, greediness, mean moral values as well as human viciousness. It is very interesting that in all phraseological dictionaries referred to, its image has been used to describe a very fat and greedy person as well as dirty, who behaves in a shameless way, dedicated only to material and sexual desire. In a broader sense it is used for a greedy, dishonest, traitorous and mean person. It symbolizes a person with a bad and disorderly character or otherwise unpleasant. In Italian it is explained: *porco* – 1.Pig, piglet 2.a dirty person. *Essere un porco* – he is a pig – it is an animal with a human's face disgusting, dishonest, corrupted, vicious and shameless. In the Albanian phraseological dictionary is used the phraseological unit "derr me zile" ( a pig with bells). A very stupid and disgusting person. In French: *être grass comme un cochon* – as fat as a pig; or *avoir un caractère de cochon*- in the meaning of a difficult character. Whereas in the English phraseological dictionary, we find the expression: *eat like pig*; (Fr) *Manger comme un cochon*; (Alb) *ha si nje derr*. For this reason there is a source of disgust and swearing in all four dictionaries. (Eng) *make a pig's ear of* – your ears are like a pig's (disgusting). *Sweat like a pig* – *djersin si derr*. (Fr) *avoir une tette de cochon* – a pig's head (stupid and stubborn).

The bull is the symbol of strength, of a strong character and even masculine fertility. In French there is the expression: *forte comme un taureau* (as strong as an ox). In different phraseological dictionaries it has been seen from different points of view. Thus, in the Italian dictionary – *essere toro* – which in the language of exchange field shows that the value of the stock market is increasing. The horns of a bull symbolize the strength, the impulse and briskness of economy. The opposite of this is: *essere orso* – the stock market is going down. In our phraseology the bull is a very loveable animal, spiritually connected with the life and prosperity of the farmer: *sikur i kane vrare demin* (as if his bull has been killed) and it means increasing the number of live stock farming. In English, the toreador's fights have been attributed to the bull: to be

like a red rug to a bull – të jetë si një leckë e kuqe për një dem.

### **Phraseological units which are expressed in the same way are identical from the structural point of view and express the same notion**

Sometimes the expressions match perfectly. The world of phrases and sayings has clear and correct rules, the structural construction and semantic transmission are realised in a perfect way (Alb) trajtoj dikë si një qen; (Eng) to treat somebody like a dog; (Fr) traïter quelqu'un comme un chien. It is also used: suivre quelqu'un comme un chien – follow like a dog; (It) trattare come un cane = trattare da cani. This expression has been firstly used as: tattare come un cane in chiesa and in all four dictionaries has the same meaning: to treat someone with disregard and disrespect.

2. (Alb) vdes si një qen; (Eng) die a dog's death; (Fr) mourir comme un chien; (It) morire come un cane. There is a very interesting version of this phraseological unit close to a proverb in Albanian language "do të rrojë si princ e do të vdes si qen" – I will live as a prince and die as a dog.

3. (Alb) qeni që leh nuk të ha; (It) cane che abbaia non morde; (Fr) chien qui aboie ne mord pas; (Eng) a barking dog, never bites.

4. (Alb) shkojnë si macja me miun; (It) andare d'accordo come cane egatto; (Fr) etre comme chien et chat; (Eng) fight like cat and dog – They can not stand each other, they always quarrel. This phraseological unit which is used in all phraseological dictionaries is based on a wrong belief, according to which the cat and the dog are natural enemies. In all phraseological dictionaries the same meaning has been expressed in the same way using the same animals.

5. (Alb) zihen si qentë; (Fr) se battre comme des chiens; (Eng) fight like dogs.

6. The Italian expression: agnello tra i lupi (lamb among the wolves), has its roots in the Bible and presents a person who voluntary agrees to sacrifice himself for the other welfare. (Alb) është një qengj në mes të ujqërve; (It) essere un agnello tra i lupi – a good person among dangerous ones. In French it appears in plural: comme des agneaux au milieu des loups. This expression originates in the Bible when Jesus says to his men: "I am sending you like lambs among wolves", but latter in the Italian phraseology the lamb has been substituted with "the goat": essere il capro espiatorio which in Albanian means a Turkish head, sacrifice.

7. (Alb) Vë ujkun të ruajë delet; (Eng) enclose the wolf in sheep; (Fr) Enfermer le loup dans la bergerie- put the wolf among the sheep. In Italian it is used in versions: fare il lupo pecoraio or dar la pecore in guardia al lupo as well as mettere il lupo nell'ovile which means to rely on a negative person to guard something good, to depend on a cruel person. In Albanian we have other versions as well: vuri ujkun bari – to make the wolf a shepherd or ia var ujkut mëlçitë në qafë – to hang the liver on a wolf's neck.

8. The idea of counting the sheep has been used in phraseological dictionaries: (It) contare le pecore; (Fr) compter les moutons; (En) count the sheep. It has its origin in mythology and later has gone down in the folk of some nations. It's an action that has been performed repeatedly and continuously as a means to calm your thoughts. The idea of counting the stars in people's physiology has served as a means of calmness and to fall asleep.

9. In the Italian phraseological dictionary, the phraseological expression has been used: *Dare la pecore in guardia al lupo* – to give the sheep to be guarded by the wolf. This expression has its own uses even in Albanian language and has already appeared in many different versions meaning: to believe the unreliable, careless and frivolous man. Here also derives the expression: “sheep among the wolves”. (It) *andare come agnelo in mezzo ai lupi* – in danger.

### **Phraseological units that express the same notion, but which are realized through different animal**

1. In Italian is used the expression: *cane non mangia cane* = *fra cani grossi non si mordono cane grosso* – a big dog/ a strong hand or person in authority as well as the dog doesn't eat the dog. The expression reminds us especially of dishonest people that try not to harm each other and it derives from Latin “*corvus corvi oculus non eruit*”, (Fr) *les loups ne se mangent pas entre eux* – the wolf doesn't eat the wolf. In French phraseology the dog has been substituted with the wolf and the same message is revealed. The cruel/the strong protects his friends. In English both versions are used but with opposite meanings (phraseological antonymy). *dog eat dog* revealing the meaning of war within the kind as well as the opposite version “*dog does not eat dog*”. In Albanian we say “*The crow doesn't blind the crow*”. So, to transmit the same message “the individuals of the same kind try not to harm each-other, whereas the animals used to realize this message, are different. Italian and English use “the dog”, French uses “the wolf” and Albanian uses “the crow”. This phraseological unit is in the limits of a proverb, as it can be used as a separate sentence, but we can not omit the cases when it is used within the limits of a phraseological unit.

2. (It) *non svegliare il cane che dorme* – do not disturb a sleeping dog (Fr) *ne reveille pas le chat qui dort* (En) *let sleeping dogs lie* In Albanian we have the proverb *the devil sleeps, you wake him up*. Thus in the Italian, French and English phraseological dictionaries it appears through the dog, whereas in Albanian this process is revealed through the devil.

3. (Alb) *work like a dog* (*punon si qen*) (It) *lavorare come un cane* (Eng) *work like a dog*; In French there is the expression: *c'est un cheval a l'ouvrage* which in Albanian corresponds to “*work like a horse*. At a superficial look the expressions: *work like a horse*, *work like a donkey*, *work like a dog* seem to have the same emotional colouring, a tiring and difficult job, but in reality, when we say *work like a dog* the shades of feeling sorry are added to despise and disgust.

4. *Wolf in sheep's clothing* or *he has put on the sheep's skin*. (*ujk me veshje qengji*); (It) *lupo in vesto d'agnello*; (En) *wolf in sheep's clothing*.

In phraseological dictionaries of Albanian, English and Italian they have been expressed in an identical way concerning structure, and they express the same notion; a man who pretends to be quiet so as to hide his real bad aims. Whereas in French phraseology to express this notion they say: “*un serpent cache sous les fleurs* – a snake covered with flowers. Thus, in the psychology of French phraseology the wolf has been substituted with the snake. For the same notion, different animals have been used.

5. In English they use the expression: Like lambs to the slaughter to describe people who are doing something dangerous without conscience or without understanding it. In Albanian we say “si çjapi, te kasapi”. (It) andare come un agnello al macello whereas in English like pigs to the slaughter where the lamb and the pig substitute each other.

6. In the dictionaries being referred to we find the phrasological unit:

(Alb) blej derr ne thes (En) Buy a pig in a poke.

In Italian-Albanian dictionary we find the version: comprare gatta nel sacco. (Fr) Acheter chat en poche – to buy or get something without checking it first or without knowing about it before. In Albanian and English is used the pig, while in Italian and French, the cat.

7. The phraseological unit: Buttare perle ai porci – throw pearls to the pigs which means to offer something valuable, beautiful and important to someone who can not value it. It is an expression that derives from the Bible and which is presented in the French phraseological dictionary: Jeter des perles aux porcs; Jeter des perles aux cochons – in English: cast pearls before swine. Whereas in the Albanian phraseological dictionary we find another version: ku di derri kembore. Ignore or make fun of, does not have the proper knowledge about something or can not value something good. We also have the other version where the pig is substituted with the goat: Ku di dhia ç’është tagjia.

8. The phraseological unit (Alb) fluturon gomari (the donkey flies) comes out with its equivalent: kur te fluturoje gomari (when the donkey could be able to fly) or kur te shohesh majen e veshit pa pasqyre (when you could be able to see your ears without a mirror) which means “never”. In Italian: far credere che un asino voli – it makes me believe that the donkey can fly. In the English dictionary we find the version: pigs may/might fly! Similarly, this phraseological unit is interpreted through different animals. In Albanian and Italian phraseology the monkey is used, in English the pig can fly whereas French comes with the version: quand les poules auront des dents – when the chicken could have teeth. Although, all versions have been presented with different animals and in different ways they express the absurdity in performing an action.

9. In all phraseological dictionaries the bull fight and the victory upon it symbolizes a successful battle or going over a difficult situation. Thus in Italian phraseology they use the expression: tagliare la testa al toro – to cut off a bull’s head, or else tenere il lupo per gli orecchi – to take a wolf by its ears (to find solution to a problem). In French: prendre la taureau par les cornes – to take the bull by its horns. This is used to describe a person who is ready to face a difficult and dangerous situation. In Albanian – e zë gjarprin nga koka (to take a snake by its head). In English – take the bull by the horns – to do something difficult in a certain and safe way. Hit the bull’s eye –to achieve the best results ever. Other various expressions derive from this notion attributed to a successful man compared to the strength and power of the bull. This phraseological unit which gives the idea of facing a difficult and dangerous situation is being realized with the bull in French and English, the bull and the wolf in Italian and the snake in Albanian language.

**Phraseological units in which the same notion is expressed in different metaphorical ways in various languages, equivalents beyond the animals notion, but with another notion or concept completely different from the animals' world.**

It appears that not in all four phraseological dictionaries that we have been refer to, animals are used to transmit a phenomena or message. Thus, the same message, in some languages is given through the animals, in others beyond the animal's world.

2. Thus, to express an impossible action in the Italian phraseological dictionary we find the expression: raddirizzare le gambe ai cani – to straighten the dog's legs - You try to do the utmost, but you do something useless, absurd, meaningless which in Albanian is expressed with the phraseological units: Bjeri vangallit or kërkon qiçra në hell. In French: vouloir changer le monde. In English: Flog a dead horse which in Albanian is translated: rrah ujë në hava or build a castle in the air or fish in the air. Thus, the notion of performing an impossible action in Italian is presented with the straight legs of a dog, in English with the whip of a dead horse, whereas in the other phraseological dictionaries it is realized metaphorically with the objects beyond the world of animals.

3. In the French phraseological dictionary to show that it rains heavily they use the expression: pleuvoir comme vache qui pisse whereas in English they say "It's raining cats and dogs". In Albanian language we have: bie shi me gjyma/me shtama/litare/ In Italian: piovere a bocca di barile or a piovere a catinelle. As we can see in the above examples the phenomena of a heavy rain is expressed not only through animals' behavior (in French with the cows; in English cats and dogs) but also using different metaphorical equivalents beyond the animals' notion, with a notion or concept completely different from animals' field.

## Conclusions

The world of domestic animals is a source to phraseology. Their metaphorical meaning is connected with certain human behaviors. Through phraseological comparison in these languages, we can see cultural, social changes that belong to the lexical field of animal world in the perception of each nation.

Intentionally, the analyses of the conceptual world of animals is being considered the first topic in the phraseological dictionaries of Albanian, English, French and Italian to find out which is the semantic connection and metaphorical usage of a man through animals.

In the above examples we figured out that in most cases there is the same semantic concept of animals in different languages.

Thus, we have the same attitude towards the dog, the lamb, the sheep and the pig. For other animals like the cow and the bull, there are not only similar attitudes, but also partial changes depending on the view point of a system of values and traditions as a result of religion, human culture and geographical area of a nation, as well as a number of non-linguistic factors.

Although it is difficult to import phraseological units from one language to another, surprisingly we see that in the conceptual field of phraseology related to the world of animals, there is a considerable number of expressions where the semantic context

matches the linguistic tools perfectly.

During the analyses of phraseological units compiled concerning the animal world we found out that most of them expresses the same notion, but in different languages this is realized through different animals.

(It) cane non mangia cane (En) dog does not eat dog (Fr) les loups ne se mangent pas entre eux (Alb) korbi (sorra), korbit (sorrës), s'ia nxjerr sytë

Phraseological units which express the same notion, in different languages through different metaphorical equivalents beyond the animals' notion, referring to another field or concept completely different from the animals' field. Thus it can happen that the same message is transmitted through animals in some language and beyond them in another. So in Italian *raddirizzare le gambe ai cani*, in French *vouloir changer le monde* in English *Flog a dead horse; Built castle in the air - Fish in the air*.

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