

Idioms of emotion in English and Croatian

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Idioms of emotion in Croatian and English
Završni rad

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Abstract

The topic of this paper is idioms of emotion in English and Croatian. The English language is very rich in the use of idioms. Rosamund Moon (according to Strakšiene 2009:13) defines idiom as “an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways, in lay or general use, idiom has two main meanings [...] First, idiom is a particular means of expressing something in language [...] which characterizes a person or group. Secondly (and much less commonly in English) an idiom is a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme, peculiar to a language”. The word idiom is based on the meaning of the Greek word *idioma* (peculiar feature) (Fiedler 2007:16). According to Cherry (2015), human emotion can be defined as “a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components a subjective experience, a psychological response and behavioural or expensive response”. There is a large number of different emotional reactions followed by almost just as many corresponding different expressions which are often idioms. The main goal was to find idioms of emotion in English language and then to translate them, by using a correct method, to target language – Croatian. Most of idioms concerning emotions were found in *Hrvatsko – engleski frazeološki rječnik* (Bendow 2009) which was a primary source for analysis. I have found the Croatian equivalents (almost 50% of all the examples) in *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik* (Menac, Fink-Arsovski, Venturin 2003). Just as it usually is when it comes to idioms we have to be very careful about their translation to a different language.

Finally, I have selected 45 idioms using a typical classification which is usually used when idioms are translated – these are: full equivalence, partial equivalence and zero equivalence (Gläser 1984:124).

Key words: idiom; emotions; translation strategies; full – partial – zero equivalence.

List of abbreviations

Dictionary	Abbreviation
<i>Hrvatsko – engleski frazeološki rječnik</i>	HEFR
<i>Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik</i>	HFR
<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i>	OALD

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1. Introduction

The topic of this paper is idioms of emotion in English and Croatian. Idioms are considered to be one of the hardest and the most interesting parts of English vocabulary. The English language is very rich in the use of idioms. They are used in formal style and in slang. Idioms may appear in poetry, literature, and even, in Bible. Idioms are fascinating because of the tone and colour they give the vocabulary and the insight they provide into the history of a language community and its culture (Fiedler 2007: Preface).

Considering the topic of this paper, it is necessary to say something about emotions as well. According to Cherry (2015), human emotion can be defined as “a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components a subjective experience, as a psychological response and behavioural or expensive response”.

According to – Changing Works (2002-2015), a wide range of research on identification of basic emotions has been collated. (Table 1)

Table 1. Basic emotions in English language

Theorist	Basic Emotions
Plutchik	Acceptance, anger, anticipation, disgust, joy, fear, sadness, surprise
Arnold	Anger, aversion, courage, dejection, desire, despair, fear, hate, hope, love, sadness
Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth	Anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise
Frijda	Desire, happiness, interest, surprise, wonder, sorrow
Gray	Rage and terror, anxiety, joy
Izard	Anger, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, guilt, interest, joy, shame, surprise
James	Fear, grief, love, rage
McDougall	Anger, disgust, elation, fear, subjection, tender-emotion, wonder
Mowrer	Pain, pleasure

Oatley and Johnson-Laird	Anger, disgust, anxiety, happiness, sadness
Panksepp	Expectancy, fear, rage, panic
Tomkins	Anger, interest, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, joy, shame, surprise
Watson	Fear, love, rage
Weiner and Graham	Happiness, sadness

According to the same internet source there is a deeper list of emotions and they are categorised into a tree structure (Table 2).

Table 2. Tree structure of different emotions in English language

Primary emotion	Secondary emotion	Tertiary emotions
Love	Affection	Adoration, affection, love, fondness, liking, attraction, caring, tenderness, compassion, sentimentality
	Lust	Arousal, desire, lust, passion, infatuation
	Longing	Longing
Joy	Cheerfulness	Amusement, bliss, cheerfulness, gaiety, glee, jolliness, joviality, joy, delight, enjoyment, gladness, happiness, jubilation, elation, satisfaction, ecstasy, euphoria
	Zest	Enthusiasm, zeal, zest, excitement, thrill, exhilaration
	Contentment	Contentment, pleasure
	Pride	Pride, triumph
	Optimism	Eagerness, hope, optimism
	Enthrallment	Enthrallment, rapture
	Relief	Relief
Surprise	Surprise	Amazement, surprise, astonishment

Anger	Irritation	Aggravation, irritation, agitation, annoyance, grouchiness, grumpiness
	Exasperation	Exasperation, frustration
	Rage	Anger, rage, outrage, fury, wrath, hostility, ferocity, bitterness, hate, loathing, scorn, spite, vengefulness, dislike, resentment
	Disgust	Disgust, revulsion, contempt
	Envy	Envy, jealousy
	Torment	Torment
Sadness	Suffering	Agony, suffering, hurt, anguish
	Sadness	Depression, despair, hopelessness, gloom, glumness, sadness, unhappiness, grief, sorrow, woe, misery, melancholy
	Disappointment	Dismay, disappointment, displeasure
	Shame	Guilt, shame, regret, remorse
	Neglect	Alienation, isolation, neglect, loneliness, rejection, homesickness, defeat, dejection, insecurity, embarrassment, humiliation, insult
	Sympathy	Pity, sympathy
Fear	Horror	Alarm, shock, fear, fright, horror, terror, panic, hysteria, mortification
	Nervousness	Anxiety, nervousness, tenseness, uneasiness, apprehension, worry, distress, dread

It is clear there is a large number of different emotional reactions followed by almost just as many corresponding different expressions which are often idioms.

2. Theoretical overview

Mc Mordiew (according to Strakšiene 2009:13) provides a definition for the idiom: “We can say that an idiom is a number of words which taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone”.

Rosamund Moon (according to Strakšiene 2009:13) defines idiom as “an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways. In lay or general use, idiom has two main meanings [...] First; idiom is a particular means of expressing something in language, music, art, and so on which characterizes a person or group. Secondly (and much less commonly in English) an idiom is a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme, peculiar to a language”. The word idiom is based on the meaning of the Greek word *idioma* (peculiar feature) (Fiedler 2007:16).

The term idiom can be used in different ways. Some of these are:

1. The form of speech peculiar or proper to a people or country; own language or tongue,
2. In narrower sense: the variety of a language which is peculiar to a limited district or class of people, dialect. The specific character, property or genius of any language; the manner of expressions which is natural or peculiar to it. (Fiedler 2007:15)

Mona Baker (1992) (according to Strakšiene 2009:13) excluded five things that normally cannot be done to an idiom as it will lose its sense: the translator cannot change the order of the words in an idiom; cannot delete a word from it; cannot add a word to it; replace one word by another one and change its grammatical structure.

Just as it usually is when it comes to idioms we have to be very careful about their translation into a different language.

Translation is to be understood as the complex process of transferring a text from a source language into a communicatively adequate and equivalent text in a target language. The word “equivalent” plays a key role in this definition. Translators aim at a high degree of equivalence but they are not able to comprehend the totality of a text producers associations. In translating idioms, the translator meets various difficulties that are not so easy to overcome. The main problem is the lack of equivalence on the idiom level. It would be perfect if a translator could find an idiom in the target language which was the same in its form and meaning as that of the source language. However, even though each language has

its idioms, it is still hard to find the exact equivalent. Idioms may be culture bound and this may cause even greater problems for translator. Therefore, in order to transfer a source idiom into the target language the translator must choose the most appropriate strategy.

3. Research design

I have selected a number of idioms in Croatian and English from *Hrvatsko – engleski frazeološki rječnik* (Bendow 2009) as a primary source for analysis. I have found the Croatian equivalents (almost 50% of all the examples) in *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik* (Menac, Fink-Arsovski, Venturin 2003). Just as it usually is when it comes to idioms we have to be very careful about their translation to a different language.

“Translation is defined as the cognitive and linguistic process the translator performs in decoding a text which is the result of a communication act in the source language and in encoding it as speech product in the target language by preserving the content and achieving the stylistic quality of the source language text” (Gläser 1984:123).

Soviet linguist L. Barchoudarow (1979), (according to Gläser 1984:125) distinguished three types of lexical equivalence when we compare English and German phraseological units. We can speak about complete, partial and zero equivalence. Complete equivalence shows a close correspondence in both structure and the complex meaning of phraseological units in both languages. Such idioms which are completely the same in both English and Croatian language are not difficult to find.

When idioms strikingly differ in their referential base of a metaphor or metonymy their connotational and stylistic meanings, they are to be considered as cases of partial equivalence. Partial equivalence includes other units with different lexical or structural constituent. In the above mentioned dictionary partial equivalence is the most frequent way of translating the idiom. Zero equivalence can generally be compensated by a circumscription of the denominal meaning of the word or the word group from the source language so that there is no deficit of information in the target language. Zero equivalence may be caused by the fact that idioms are deeply rooted in the history of a language community and that it has a literature source. For instance, zero equivalence between English and German idioms is rare

due to dominant influence of English (Fiedler 2007:118). In translation of English idioms into Croatian, zero equivalence is very common.

The process of translating idioms consists of the following steps (Labno – Falecka 1994) (according to Fiedler 2007:120)

1. Identification of the idiom in the source language. This step should not be underestimated. Many translation errors come about because of translator – generally translating from a foreign language into his/her mother language – does not realise that a string of words is meant in figurative sense or that the identical expression in the target language differs in meaning (Fiedler 2007:121).

2. Analysis of the phraseological meaning.

3. Translation of the phraseological meaning.

4. Substitution by an idiom in the target language.

In this paper I have displayed the idioms in the following way:

1. I have found an English idiom about emotion in the dictionary, for example: be beside yourself (HEFR, 26).

2. I have provided a definition of the idiom: an extreme state of emotion.

After that I have provided the source which in this case is an Internet page (Farlex, Inc. 2003–2015).

3. An example sentence containing the idiom: “Sarah could not speak. She was beside herself with anger” Again I have used the same source: (Farlex, Inc. 2003–2015).

4. Equivalent in Croatian: full equivalence: *biti izvan sebe*. For some of idiom definitions or translation I used *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik*). For the rest of them I used my own ideas for translation.

5. An example sentence in Croatian: “Ivo je bio izvan sebe od ljutnje”.

4. Corpus analysis

4.1. English idioms about emotions with full equivalence in Croatian language

English and Croatian languages are not much related (like for example: English and German). Quite surprisingly it wasn't a problem to find idioms of emotion which are basically the same in both languages. From 15 idioms total with full equivalence I have found 8 of them in *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik*. All English definitions and examples, unless stated otherwise, were taken from Farlex (2003–2015).

(1) Have your head in the clouds (HEFR, 68).

To be unaware of what is going on from fantasies or daydream

“Bob, do you have your head in the clouds?” asked the teacher

Biti glavom u oblacima (HFR, 199).

Zbog zaljubljenosti imao je glavu u oblacima.

(2) Keep a cold head (HEFR, 70).

The ability to stay calm and think clearly in a difficult situation

These are high pressure situation and you have to keep a cool head

Sačuvati hladnu glavu (HFR, 78).

Iako su svi bili vrlo uzbuđeni, on je sačuvao hladnu glavu.

(3) Jump out of your skin (HEFR, 109).

To react strongly to shock or surprise

Oh! You really scared me. I nearly jumped out of my skin.

Iskočiti iz vlastite kože (HFR, 127).

Od nemoći je htio iskočiti iz vlastite kože.

(4) Get under someone's skin (OALD, 1462).

Obsess someone or affect someone's deep feelings

Jean is really gotten under his skin; he misses her terribly.

Uvući se nekome pod kožu (HFR, 127).

Djeca uvijek nađu načina kako da se djedovima i bakama uvuku pod kožu.

(5) Turn your back on someone (HEFR, 121).

To refuse to help someone.

These people are appealing to our government to help them. We cannot just turn our backs on them

Okrenuti leđa nekome (HFR, 147).

Okrenuo je leđa svima onima koji su u njega imali povjerenja.

(6) Have butterflies in your stomach (HEFR, 122).

To feel very nervous.

Her mouth was dry, there were butterflies in her stomach, and her knees were shaking so much it was hard to walk on stage.

Imati leptiriće u trbuhu.

Prije svakog ispita imao je leptiriće u trbuhu.

(7) Laugh in someone's face (HEFR, 124).

To laugh in derision directly into someone's face.

After I heard what she had to say, I just laughed in her face.

Smijati se nekome u lice.

Nakon svega lošeg što im je učinio, još im se i smijao u lice.

(8) Be worried to death (HEFR, 147).

To be or cause someone to be anxious or uneasy, especially about something uncertain or potentially dangerous.

I was worried to death as I waited to the result of the lung scan.

Biti smrtno zabrinut.

Nakon što je napustio liječničku ordinaciju, bio je smrtno zabrinut.

(9) Come down from the clouds (HEFR, 158).

Become real

I soon realized that my standards were unreasonably high and that I should come down from the cloud

Sići sa oblaka.

Nakon što je dugo živio iznad svojih mogućnosti, napokon je sišao sa oblaka.

(10) Leave a bitter taste in your mouth (HEFR, 164).

To leave a bad feeling or memory with someone.

The whole business about the missing money left a bad taste in his mouth

Ostaviti gorak okus u ustima (HFR, 206).

Nakon razvoda, i jednom i drugom ostao je gorak okus u ustima.

(11) Shrug your shoulders (OALD, 1423).

To not care or feel unable to do anything.

The reason most people are not excited about the election is that both candidates leave them shrugging their shoulders.

Slegnuti ramenima.

Nakon što je rekla da će ga napustiti, on je samo slegnuo ramenima.

(12) Throw someone off balance (HEFR, 249).

To confuse or disorient someone.

Your last question sort of threw me off balance.

Izbaciti nekoga iz ravnoteže.

Bio je nerazuman i to je sve oko njega izbacivalo iz ravnoteže.

(13) Feel like fish out of water (HEFR, 212).

To feel awkward because you are not familiar with situation or because you are very different from the people around you.

All the other children in the school had rich, middle-class parents, and she was beginning to feel like a fish out of water.

Osjećati se kao riba izvan vode (HFR, 254).

Zbog toga što se nije uklopio u društvo u razredu, osjećao se kao riba izvan vode.

(14) Welcome someone or something with open arms (HEFR, 220).

To greet someone with arms spread wide to hug someone/ to greet someone eagerly

His mother greeted him with open arms at the door.

Dočekati nekoga otvorenih ruku (HFR, 263).

Kad smo bili prognanici, ljudi su nas primali u svoje domove otvorenih ruku.

(15) Be fed up with something or someone (HEFR, 225).

To be unable or unwilling to put up with someone or something.

This place is really dull. I am fed up with it. I am out of here.

Biti sit nekoga ili nečega.

Ne mogu više raditi, sit sam svega!

4.2. English idioms about emotions with partial equivalence in Croatian language

The most frequent type of equivalence from HFR was partial equivalence. From 15 idioms total with partial equivalence I have found 10 of corresponding translations in HFR. Very often idioms in English share at least one word or action with their Croatian equivalent.

(16) Wear your heart on your sleeve (HEFR, 233).

To display ones feelings openly and habitually, rather than keep them private.

John always has his heart on his sleeve so that everyone knows how he feels.

Nositi svoje srce na dlanu.

On nikada nije skrivao svoje emocije, njegovo je srce uvijek bilo na dlanu.

(17) From the bottom of your heart (HEFR, 233).

Sincerely.

When I returned the lost kitten to Mrs. Brown, she thanked me from the bottom of her heart.

Od svega srca (HFR, 282).

Nakon svega što si učinio za mene, zahvalan sam ti od svega srca.

(18) My heart is in my mouth (HEFR, 233).

If someone's heart is in their mouth, they feel extremely nervous or frightened.

Ma heart was in my mouth as I walked onto the stage.

Srce mi je u petama (HFR, 284).

Nakon što je bomba pukla nedaleko od nas, srce mi je bilo u petama.

(19) Quake in your boots (HEFR, 237).

To be afraid; to shake from fear.

I was shaking in my boots because I had to go see the manager for being late.

Tresti se od straha.

Nisam se mogao kontrolirati, tresao sam se od straha.

(20) Look on the bright side (HEFR, 244).

Consider the positive aspects of a negative situation.

Look on the bright side! Things could have been much worse than they are.

Vedro gledati na stvari.

Iako mu liječnici nisu ništa mogli obećati, on je na svoju bolest uvijek gledao sa vedre strane.

(21) Put your foot down (HEFR, 250).

To assert something strongly.

The boss put her foot down and refused to accept any more changes to plan.

Lupiti šakom po stolu (HFR, 301.)

Nitko ga nije slušao i odlučio je lupiti šakom po stolu.

(22) It makes my skin crawl (HEFR, 254).

To cause someone's skin to feel funny or get goose pimples through fright.

Just to hear the story of the killings made my flesh crawl.

Prolaze me trnci (HFR, 317).

Kada se sjetim kako je to moglo završiti, prođu me trnci.

(23) Be head over heels in love (HEFR, 270).

To be very much in love with someone.

John is head over heels in love with Mary.

Biti zaljubljen do ušiju (HFR, 323).

I nakon toliko godina, u svoju je ženu bio zaljubljen do ušiju.

(24) To lose your temper (OALD, 1593).

To become angry at someone or something.

Lisa lost her temper and began shouting at Bob.

Izgubiti živce (HFR, 364).

Nakon svih laži koje je čuo, potpuno je izgubio živce.

(25) Be down in the dumps (HEFR, 25).

Discouraged, depressed, or sad.

She has been down in the dumps ever since she lost the match.

Biti loše volje (HFR, 338).

Svi su mogli vidjeti da je loše volje.

(26) Get something out of your system (HEFR, 85).

To be rid of the desire to do something; to do something that you have wanted to do so that you are not bothered by wanting to do it anymore.

I bought a new car. I have been wanting to for a long time. I am glad I am finally got that out of my system.

Izbaciti što iz sebe.

Nakon što sam trpio nepravdu godinama, napokon sam to izbacio iz sebe.

(27) Go to pieces (HEFR, 102).

To become non-functional or to have a mental collapse.

All her hopes and ideas went to pieces in that one meeting.

Raspasti se na sto komada.

Nakon što je ostao bez posla i bez zdravlja, život mu se raspao na sto komada.

(28) Pull your hair out (HEFR, 107).

To be very anxious about something – often in continuous tenses.

I have been tearing my hair out trying to get the job finished on time.

Čupati si kosu (HFR, 122).

Od nemoći da što promijeni, čupao si je kosu sa glave.

(29) Make a face (HEFR, 123).

To attempt to communicate to someone through facial gestures, usually an attempt to say “no” or “stop”.

I started to tell John where I was last night, but Bill made a face so I did not.

Napraviti kiselo lice (HFR, 149).

Kad je otac vidio njegove ocjene, napravio je kiselo lice.

(30) Be on cloud nine (HEFR, 148).

To be very happy.

For a few days after I heard I had got the job, I was on cloud nine.

Biti na sedmom nebu (HFR, 185).

Nakon što je dobio na lotu, bio je na sedmom nebu.

4.3. English idioms about emotions with zero equivalence in Croatian language

Because zero equivalence may be caused by the fact that idioms are deeply rooted in the history of a language community it is logical that there are many idioms of emotion in English language which have no equivalents or a link to Croatian language. That may be

explained due to historical facts, tradition etc of Croatia. From 15 idioms total I have found only 4 with a satisfying translation both in HFR and other sources as well.

(31) Be out to lunch (HEFR, 54).

Be out of it; not alert; giddy; uninformed.

Bill is really out of it. Why can't he pay attention?

Biti odsutan duhom (HFR, 60).

Ne troši riječi uzalud, on je odsutan duhom.

(32) Lose heart (HEFR, 54).

To lose ones courage or confidence.

What a disappointment! It is enough to make one lose heart.

Klonuti duhom.

Mogu ti samo reći iz vlastitog iskustva – nikada na kloni duhom!

(33) Eat humble pie (HEFR, 98).

To act very humble when one is shown to be wrong.

I think, I am right, but if I am wrong, I will eat humble pie.

Gutati knedle (HFR, 113).

Mi smo gutali knedle ali smo i dalje nastavljali raditi.

(34) Bloodied but unbowed (HEFR, 11).

Harmed but not defeated by an unpleasant situation or competition.

I emerged bloodied but unbowed from my oral exam.

Slomljenih krila ali čvrsta duha.

Bio sam čvrsta duha i nastavio sam dalje iako su mi krila bila slomljena.

(35) I drew a blank (HEFR, 141).

To get no response; to find nothing.

I tried to remember her telephone number, but I could only draw a blank.

Mozak mi se zabetonirao.

Iako sam se dobro pripremio, na ispitu mi se mozak zabetonirao.

(36) Have bats in your belfry (HEFR, 143).

To be crazy.

Don't tell anyone else I said that or they I will think I have got bats in the belfry.

Imati mušice u glavi (HFR, 181).

Nismo mogli računati na njega jer je imao mušice u glavi.

(37) Carry a torch for someone (HEFR, 173).

Continue to feel the pain of unreciprocated love for. The torch in this term alludes to the heat of love or passion.

Although they never saw each other again, she carried a torch for him all her days.

Imati tihi patnju.

Nikad nije prestala biti njegova tiha patnja.

(38) Get hot under the collar (HEFR, 179).

Very angry.

The boss was really hot under the collar when you told him you lost the contract.

Jako se naljutiti.

Kad sam to sve prvi put čuo, jako sam se naljutio.

(39) Go ballistic (HEFR, 188).

To become irrationally enraged. Ballistic refers to a missile launching.

The boss went ballistic when he saw my expense report.

Izbezumiti se od gnjeva.

Nitko nije očekivao da će se tako izbezumiti od gnjeva.

(40) Look as though butter would not melt in your mouth (HEFR, 191).

To appear to be cold and unfeeling (despite any information to the contrary).

Sally looks as if butter would not melt in her mouth.

Praviti se nedužnim.

Iako su svi sumnjali u njega, on se pravio da je savršeno nedužan.

(41) Would not say boo to a goose (HEFR, 227).

If someone would not say boo to a goose, they are shy and nervous.

She would not say boo to a goose, so I don't think he has cut out for carrier in the police.

Bojati se vlastite sjene (HFR, 275).

Nikada nije bio opušten, kao da se bojavao vlastite sjene.

(42) Be rolling in the aisles (HEFR, 245).

Wild with laughter.

I will them rolling in the aisles. What a great performance!

Pucati od smijeha.

U njegovom društvu često smo pucali od smijeha.

(43) Be tickled pink (HEFR, 233).

Very much pleased or entertained.

I was tickled pink to have you visit us.

Biti vrlo sretan.

Kad sam dao sve ispite, bio sam vrlo sretan.

(44) Get hot and bothered (HEFR, 275).

Excited; anxious.

John is hot and bothered about the tax increase.

Uzrujavati se bez veze.

Uzrujavao se bez veze, kao da ima viška živaca.

(45) Eat your heart out (HEFR, 291).

Something that you say which means that you or someone you know can do something better than a person who is famous for doing that thing

I am taking singing lessons. Celine Dion, eat your heart out!

Puknuti od zavisti.

Tako sam dobro to otpjevao da bi James Maynard puknuo od zavisti!

5. Conclusion

The English language is very rich in the use of idioms. The spectre of human emotions is also wide and they are often expressed through usage of idioms.

I have selected a number of idioms in Croatian and English from *Hrvatsko – engleski frazeološki rječnik* (Bendow 2009) as a primary source for analysis.

I have found Croatian equivalents of English idioms (regardless of their type of equivalence) in *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik* (Menac et al. 2003).

A very important part is finding a satisfying translation of English idioms into the target language – Croatian. Gläser (1984:125) distinguished three types of lexical equivalence when we compare English and German phraseological units. We can speak about complete, partial and zero equivalence. I have used those three types of equivalence.

Although English and Croatian languages are not much related it was not a problem to find idioms of emotion which are basically the same in both languages. From 15 idioms total with full equivalence I have found 8 of them in HFR.

The most frequent type of equivalence from the mentioned source was partial equivalence. From 15 idioms total with partial equivalence I have found 10 of the corresponding translations in HFR.

There are many idioms of emotion in the English language, which have no equivalents, in the Croatian language. That may be explained due to historical facts, tradition etc of Croatia. From 15 idioms total I have found only 4 with a satisfying translation both in HFR and other sources as well.

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