

# Idiomatic expressions associated with the domain FOOD in English and their counterparts in Croatian

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Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni diplomski studij mađarskog jezika i književnosti i  
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## Abstract

Idiomatic expressions and their translation in to a foreign language have always sparked interest among many speakers of English language. Metaphorical connotations and impossibility to assign them specific features make the translator's task undoubtedly challenging. The first part of this paper gives a brief theoretical overview of key features of idiomatic expressions, while the second part provides a detailed analysis of the selected English idiomatic expressions associated with the domain *food* and their counterparts in Croatian. This paper aims at comparing and contrasting the equivalence between the English and Croatian idiomatic expressions associated with the domain *food*.

Key words: idiomatic expressions, Croatian idiomatic expressions, food, lexical equivalence

## Sažetak

Idiomatski izrazi i njihov prijevod na strani jezik je oduvijek izazivalo veliko zanimanje među govornicima engleskog jezika. Metaforične konotacije i nemogućnost definiranja jasnih karakteristika idiomatskih izraza čine posao prevoditelja još izazovnijim. Prvi dio ovog rada daje kratki teorijski pregled glavnih karakteristika idiomatskih izraza, dok drugi dio rada pruža detaljniju analizu odabranih engleskih idiomatskih izraza vezanih uz domenu *hrana* i njihovih ekvivalenata u hrvatskom jeziku. Glavni cilj ovog rada je usporediti razinu ekvivalentnosti između engleskih i hrvatskih idiomatskih izraza vezanih uz domenu *hrana*.

Ključne riječi: idiomatski izrazi, hrvatski idiomatski izrazi, hrana, leksička ekvivalentnost

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## Introduction

Idiomatic expressions have always been an intriguing part of English language. Their ambiguity and impossibility to be specifically and clearly defined and categorized have always been of great interest not only among many scholars, but also among non-native speakers of English. As they make up a large part of English language, idiomatic expressions also spark interest in the field of contrastive analysis and translation into foreign languages. Since most idiomatic expressions include metaphorical, i.e. figurative connotations, the process of their correct translation into another language can be indeed challenging operation to perform. The translator has a difficult task in identifying the meaning that stands behind the mostly ambiguous constituents of idiomatic expression. A large number of expressions are culture-specific, which makes the task of translation even more demanding. The translator has to be thoroughly acquainted with the language and culture he is translating into.

The topic of this paper reflects difficulties in defining and translating idiomatic expressions, and provides the analysis of the selected English idiomatic expressions, that is idioms, related to the domain *food*, and their counterparts in Croatian.

The first part of the paper gives a brief theoretical background necessary to better understand idioms and what makes them idiomatic. The second part deals with the main problems the translator may encounter while translating idiomatic expressions, and provides some of the strategies on how to properly handle them. The third part of this paper explains how the analysis will be conducted and what methodology will be used. The last part of this paper comprises the corpus analysis which provides detailed explanation of the origins of idioms, their meaning, usage, and is contrasted to their counterpart in Croatian on the base of equivalence proposed by Gläser in 1984 (complete, partial and zero equivalence).

The main aim of this paper is to try to compare and contrast the equivalence between the English and Croatian idiomatic expressions associated with the domain *food* based on the theoretical background introduced in this paper.

# 1. Theoretical Background

## 1.1. Definitions of Idiom

Defining an idiomatic expression is an uneasy task for many scholars because it is a broad category which encompasses various fixed phrases, proverbs, formulaic speeches, and even single polysemic words (Dilin, 2003: 1). According to Kövecses and Szabó, the category of idiom involves metaphors, metonymies, pairs of words, idioms with *it*, similes, sayings, phrasal verbs, grammatical idioms and others (1996: 1).

Although it is difficult to draw the line between idioms and other idiomatic expressions which may or may not fall into the same category, majority of scholars agree that idioms are a group of two or more words whose overall meaning cannot be deduced from the separate meaning of each word. Baker states that idioms are “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components” (1992: 63). Larson, (according to Ajaaj, Mohammad, 2014: 1) claims that an idiom is "a string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words".

Moon in her book *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English: A Corpus-Based Approach* states that idiom is:

... 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. (1998: 3)

Furthermore, idiomatic expressions enrich the language and provide more nuances to the meaning of particular ideas, attitudes, opinions and thoughts. Idioms bear “certain emotive connotations which are not revealed in other lexical items” (Ajaaj, Mohammad, 2014: 1). Generally, they preserve “the local and cultural colour of that language through observing the figurative sense of the society” (Ajaaj, Mohammad, 2014: 1).

Whatever definition and criteria is used in identifying and defining idioms, it is important to be “clear, specific, and systematic” (Dilin, 2003: 3).

## 1.2. Defining Characteristics

It is difficult to clearly define what an idiom is, but it is even more difficult to provide specific characteristics which an idiomatic expression should fulfill if it is to be considered an idiom. Over the years, various theoretical and applied studies have investigated the peculiar nature of idioms. Many of them regarded idioms as dead metaphors that are unable to undergo any syntactical, lexical, semantic or stylistic changes without losing their original meaning. In the recent years, this theory has been disputed as more and more studies have been conducted in order to try to define and categorize idiomatic expressions.

There are certain features that mainly appear only in idioms such as analyzability or non-compositionality, level of formality, metaphoricity and fixedness of a form or stability (Mäntylä, 2004: 29-36). Analyzability or non-compositionality refers to the idioms that can be “broken down in such a way that each word can be claimed to correspond to/ stand for a part of the metaphorical meaning of the whole” (Mäntylä, 2004: 32). This implies that the meaning of figurative idioms may be detected from a single constituent, while the meaning of more opaque or non-transparent idioms is less likely to be guessed from a single constituent, even though they once referred to something concrete.

Another characteristic of idioms Mäntylä mentions is their level of formality. It is believed that idioms are only part of informal language. She explains that idioms rarely appear in formal texts, especially in highly formal texts because idioms are “fairly seldom neutral”, and are often used when talking about a third person or an object (2004: 35-36).

### 1.2.1. *Metaphoricity*

Perhaps the key feature of every idiomatic expression is its level of figurativeness or metaphoricity. According to Mäntylä, “metaphoricity is one of the most frequently mentioned features of idioms. Nearly all studies treat this characteristic as a fundamental attribute of an idiom (e.g. Cronk et al 1993, Gibbs 1980, 1985, McGlone et al 1994, Nippold et al 1989, Strässler 1982)” (2004: 29). As it is defined in online Oxford Dictionaries, metaphoricity is “the fact or quality of being metaphorical”, or to have a “metaphorical nature”.

It can be challenging to estimate the level of metaphoricity or figurativeness in idioms since this quality of idioms depends much on the judgment of the individual language user (Mäntylä, 2004: 30). However, there are three sub-classes of idioms proposed by Fernando in her book *Idioms and Idiomaticity* (1996). Fernando distinguishes idioms into pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. Pure idioms or opaque idioms are “a type of conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression” (1996: 36), e. g. *to spill the beans*. Their meaning is impossible to detect without knowing the etymology (Mäntylä, 2004: 28-29). Semi-idioms have one or more literal constituents and are considered to be partially opaque (Fernando, 1996: 60), e.g. *foot the bill*, *foot= platiti*. Literal idioms are such expressions where the image that literal meaning creates is clearly connected to the figurative meaning (Mäntylä, 2004: 28-29), e.g. *give the green light*.

This characteristic of idioms is often connected with metaphors and their role in idiom comprehension. The roots of metaphoricity “often lie in some real situation or act (e.g. *hang up one’s boots*), or an image created by the similarity between the idiom and its meaning (e.g. *the fat is in the fire*)” (Mäntylä, 2004: 29), but Kövecses and Szabó, (according to Pinnavaia, 2010: 23) state that “idiomatic expressions are governed and determined by the conceptual metaphors and the encyclopedic knowledge of the world that underlie human thought”. Lakoff, (according to Tang, 2007: 1) believes that, “the mind is inherently embodied and the pre-conceptual structures based upon bodily experiences give rise to conceptual structures (or ‘kinesthetic image schemas’), which in turn form literal, metonymical or metaphorical expressions and idioms”.

### 1.2.2. *Stability*

Another frequently mentioned feature of idioms is their stability or fixedness of a form. Over the years, idioms have been considered to show semantic and syntactic stability which was subject to no changes. It has been believed that idioms are “fixed in form with a very limited tolerance of transformations and variations” (Mäntylä, 2004: 29). Baker observes that a speaker normally cannot do any of the following with an idiom: 1. change the order of the words in it, 2. delete a word from it, 3. add a word to it, 4. replace a word with another, and 5. change its grammatical structure (1992: 63).

Many descriptive studies in the last twenty years have challenged this theory and confirmed that in real English use idiomatic expressions can be subject to syntactic variations (Pinnavaia, 2010: 22).

Barkema, (according to Pinnavaia, 2010: 22) illustrated some of the morpho-syntactic transformations idioms can undergo, such as the deletion, the substitution, the addition, and/or the permutation of elements composing them. The variation of idioms, thus, has become the focus of the following theoretical and applied researches. For example, Nuccorini (2001) “collects articles that show different instances of idiom flexibility in different English contexts (spoken and written), while Moon (1998a) closely examines a series of idioms in the Oxford Hector Pilot Corpus in order to describe and comment in detail the variety of morpho-syntactic layouts” (Pinnavaia, 2010: 23). More recent studies have shown that one genre takes good advantage of the communicative potential of idioms. According to Howarth (2002), Minugh (1999) and Pinnavaia (2007), journalistic prose manipulates the idiom by using structural variations such as addition, substitution, deletion, and permutation to create a multitude of styling effects (Pinnavaia, 2010: 23).

Although idioms exhibit the possibility of variation in their form, Stock, Slack and Ortony, (according to Mäntylä, 2004: 34) raised objections that the lexical variance is still rare and that language users cannot freely replace the words within an idiom structure with another word. However, Mäntylä claims that it is possible to play with the relationship between the literal and figurative meaning, and that lexical and syntactical variability increase the flexibility of idioms (2004: 33-34). This play between the literal and figurative allows “alteration in the form and/or vocabulary of an expression to suit the context and situation while yet retaining the characteristics of an idiom” (Mäntylä, 2004: 34).

### 1.3. Translation of Idiomatic Expressions

Translation, in general, is a challenging task which often requires vast knowledge about various cultural phenomena related to the particular country, specific language uses and parts of language, which may or may not have its equivalent in the target language. Translation of idiomatic expressions is an even more challenging task since idiomatic expressions are often culture bound and have no equivalent in the target language, or the equivalent is expressed through different wording or even through different grammatical category. Baker, (according to Strakšienė, 2009: 3) states that, “different languages express meanings using different linguistic means such as fixed expressions, idioms, words, etc. and it is very hard to find an equivalent of the same meaning and form in the target language”. Culler, (according to Baker, 1992: 22) writes that languages are not nomenclatures for a set of universal concepts, as it would be extremely easy to translate from one language to

another, but each language articulates and organizes world differently, that is, languages articulate their own categories.

The active usage of idiomatic expressions is evidently far more frequent if the person is a native speaker. Native speakers will always be more capable of judging when and how an idiomatic expression can be manipulated, than translators who can only strive to achieve such sensitivity when it comes to idiom manipulation (Baker, 1992: 76). To avoid wrong interpretations and translations, there has been established The Code of Professional Ethics of the Translators' Guild of Great Britain which states:

A translator shall work only into the language (in exceptional cases this may include a second language) of which he has native knowledge. 'Native knowledge' is defined as the ability to speak and write a language so fluently that the expression of thought is structurally, grammatically and idiomatically correct. (as cited in *In Other Words: A Course Book on Translation*, Baker, 1992: 77)

Translator may encounter several difficulties while translating idiomatic expressions into target language. According to Baker, there are three main difficulties that translator meets: a) an idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the target language, b) an idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different, and c) an idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time (1992: 80-81). The first difficulty Baker writes about, deals with the fact that every language has its own means of expressing things (1992: 80). One language may express a given meaning by using a single word, while another language may express it by using, for example, an idiom or a transparent fixed expression. This difficulty is often culture-specific. Baker further writes that this does not necessary mean that a certain idiomatic expression is untranslatable, but that the translator has to capture the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific contexts.

Another difficulty Baker writes about, concerns those idiomatic expressions which may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but the connotations or the context of use is quite different (1992: 69). For example, Fernando and Flavell (1981), (according to Baker, 1992: 69) compare an idiomatic expression *to skate on thin ice* with a similar Serbian expression *navući nekoga na tanak led* and state that Serbian idiom implies that somebody is forced into a dangerous position, while

English expression implies that a person acts unwisely or courts danger voluntarily. The difference in the usage of these two expressions can be attributed to the different verbs contained in them. Translated to English, Serbian expression would be *to pull somebody on thin ice*, which has different connotation than *to skate on thin ice*, and it is also used in a completely different context.

The last difficulty Baker writes about, refers to those instances where an idiomatic expression is played with, and in a given context is used both in its literal and idiomatic sense. Depending on the language, such cases of difficulty may be easily solved if there is a counterpart in the target language which is the same both in its meaning and form. Otherwise, translation in the target language is often unsuccessful since the play on words does not function properly as it does in the source language (1992: 81-82).

Beside the aforementioned difficulties, the translator must be aware of other factors which may pose a barrier in successful translation of idiomatic expressions such as “questions of style, register, and rhetorical effect” (Baker 1992: 84).

In order to easily overcome such difficulties, Baker defines the following strategies on how to translate idiomatic expressions: a) using an idiom of similar meaning and form, b) using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, c) translation by paraphrase, and d) translation by omission (1992: 84-89). In comparison to Baker, Gottlieb (according to Strakšienė, 2009: 3) has a different approach to translation. As Strakšienė writes, Gottlieb points out that there are two possibilities in translation: either the translator has to bring the reader to the text, or the translator has to bring the text to the reader (2009: 3). She elaborates on it by stating that depending on the situation, the translator has to either consider the original structure and element of the source text and try to transfer all the culture and language specific items and elements from the source text, or if the latter is case, the translator does not have to preserve the originality of the source text (2009: 3).

According to Gläser, there are three types of lexical equivalence important for the translation of idiomatic expressions: complete, partial and zero equivalence. Complete equivalence refers to those idiomatic expressions which are congruent with their identity, denotational meaning, and also with the expressive and stylistic meanings (e.g. *Adam's apple*= *Adamova jabučica*). Partial equivalence marks the difference in the “referential base of a metaphor or metonymy [and] their connotational and stylistic meanings” (e.g. *bring home the bacon*= *donositi kruh u kuću*). Zero equivalence occurs

when there is no approximate expression in the target language, but “a paraphrase of the denotational meaning of the idiom of the source language is possible, although (. . .) connotations (. . .) may not be represented adequately in the target language (. . .), [but this] does not mean a gap in the notional or conceptual system of a language, but a different ordering of reality in linguistic terms” (e.g. *like as two peas in a pod*= *sličiti kao jaje jajetu*) (1984: 124-127).

## 2. Research Design and Methodology

As it is stated in the introductory part, the main aim of this paper is to compare and contrast English idiomatic expressions associated with the domain *food* to their counterparts in Croatian.

Corpus consists of the selected English idiomatic expressions with key lexemes: *bread*, *egg*, *apple*, *milk* and *cake*. Dictionaries used to compile the list are the following monolingual dictionaries: The American Heritage® Dictionary of Idioms (TAHDI), Dictionary of Idioms and their Origins (DIO), McGraw-Hill’s Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs (DAI), Oxford Dictionary of Idioms (2nd ed.) (ODI), Cambridge Idioms Dictionary (2nd ed.) (CID), McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs (2002) (DAI 2002), and Farlex Dictionary of Idioms (FDI).

Definitions of the compiled English idiomatic expressions were taken from the above listed dictionaries.

The translation of English idiomatic expressions was taken, unless otherwise stated, from the following dictionaries: Hrvatsko-engleski frazeološki rječnik + kazalo engleskih i hrvatskih frazema. Croatian-English Dictionary of Idioms + index of English and Croatian Idioms (CEDI), Englesko-hrvatski frazeološki rječnik (EHFR), and Hrvatsko-engleski frazeološki rječnik (HEFR). Also, Hrvatski Jezični Portal helped with the translation of some idiomatic expressions, as well as [hr.glosbe.com](http://hr.glosbe.com).

The example sentences for English idiomatic expressions were taken from the above listed monolingual dictionaries. Example sentences for the Croatian counterparts were mostly original, but some of them were found in the online resources, such as [hr.glosbe.com](http://hr.glosbe.com).

After the English idiomatic expressions were selected, the analysis of the compiled corpus was conducted in the following manner:



- a) example sentence in English,
- b) definition of the English idiomatic expression,
- c) Croatian counterpart,
- d) example sentence in Croatian,
- e) the type of equivalence.

Both English and Croatian counterpart were compared and contrasted on the basis of their lexical equivalence proposed by Gläser in 1984 (complete, partial, zero). Beside the determination and analysis of the lexical equivalence, the origins of each English idiomatic expression were provided in order to better understand the connotation each expression carries.

### 3. Corpus Analysis

#### 3.1. Idiomatic expressions with *bread*

##### 1. *take the bread out of someone's mouth*

- a) Lowering wages is taking the bread out of the workers' mouths. (TAHDI)
- b) deprive someone of his or her livelihood (TAHDI)
- c) uzeti kome kruh iz usta (my translation)
- d) Donošenjem novog zakona o porezu na plaću, vladajući otimaju ljudima kruh iz usta.
- e) complete equivalence

The origin of this expression is a bit difficult to trace, but the first records of this expression were made in the 1700s (TAHDI, 1043).

English expression is completely equivalent to the Croatian counterpart. Constituents are completely the same in their meaning: *take the bread out of someone's mouth*= *uzeti kome kruh iz usta*.

##### 2. *a bread-and-butter letter*

- a) Mother always had to remind the children to send Grandma a bread-and-butter note. (TAHDI)
- b) a thank-you letter from guest to host (TAHDI)

- c) pismo zahvalnosti (my translation)
- d) Pošalji im pismo zahvalnosti za sve poklone koje su poslali.
- e) zero equivalence

The English expression *a bread-and-butter letter*, whose origins are unable to trace, has zero equivalence to the Croatian expression *pismo zahvalnosti*. Translated into English, *pismo zahvalnosti* would be *a thank you note*, which is also a commonly used collocation in English language. However, there is no idiomatic expression in Croatian that would stand as a replacement for the expression *pismo zahvalnosti*.

### 3. *bread and butter*

- a) The quality of the schools is the bread and butter of town property values. (TAHDI)
- b) the essential, sustaining element (TAHDI)
- c) podrška (hr.glosbe.com); temelj, osnovica (my translation)
- d) Generaliziranje na temelju malih uzoraka temelj je znanstvenog rada.
- e) zero equivalence

According to TAHDI, this expression appeared around the 1700s. Bread and butter, a basic food at the time, refer to something that is essential and vital (125).

In Croatian, there is no idiomatic expression that would serve as a counterpart to the English expression *bread and butter*. Translated into Croatian, the expression *bread and butter*= *kruh i maslac*, does not have the same connotational meaning as it has in English. To express the same connotation, Croatian uses nouns such as *podrška, temelj, osnovica*.

### 4. *bread and circuses*

- a) Tax cuts are just bread and circuses designed to distract attention from the underlying economic crisis. (CID)
- b) activities that are intended to keep people happy so that they do not complain about problems (CID)
- c) kruha i igara (my translation)
- d) Narod ne želi besplatno obrazovanje i zdravstvo, već kruha i igara.

- e) partial equivalence

The expression *bread and circuses* is a translation of the Latin expression *panem et circenses*, which appeared in Juvenal's Satires, and alludes to the "Roman emperors' organization of grain handouts and gladiatorial games for the populace" (ODI, 37).

Croatian counterpart *kruha i igara* is also a translation of the Latin expression, but instead of the direct translation of the Latin word *circuses* into *cirkus*, Croatian uses the word *igara* (=games). Therefore, Croatian expression is only partially equivalent to the English expression, even though they share the same connotation.

#### 5. *break bread*

- a) It's hard to remain enemies when you've broken bread together. (TAHDI)
- b) have a meal, eat (TAHDI)
- c) jesti; večerati/objedovati skupa (hr.glosbe.com)
- d) Pa, vidjevši da naše obitelji nisu imale puno prilika da se upoznaju, zaključili smo, što je bolje, nego večerati skupa.
- e) zero equivalence

According to TAHDI, this expression appears in numerous places in the New Testament, where it has a double meaning: to share the bread and to distribute food to others. It refers to the sacramental bread of Communion in Christian services, and is still present in the spiritual hymn, "Let Us Break Bread Together" (126).

Directly translated into Croatian, the expression *break bread*= *lomiti kruh*, only appears in the religious context. There is no similar idiomatic expression that would be also used outside the religious context as it is used in English.

#### 6. *someone's bread and butter*

- a) I can't miss another day of work. That's my bread and butter. (DAI 2002)
- b) someone's basic income; someone's livelihood—the source of one's food (DAI 2002)
- c) (nečiji) prihod/ izvor novaca (my translation)
- d) Ovaj posao mi je jedini izvor novaca koji imam.

- e) zero equivalence

Similar to the expression *bread and butter*, which denotes something essential and vital, the expression *someone's bread and butter* refers to someone's means of livelihood. This expression appeared in the first half of the 1700s (TAHDI, 125).

There are a lot of idiomatic expressions in Croatian containing the word *bread* (= *kruh*) that describe the importance of bread in one's life (*izgubiti kruh*= *to lose one's job*; (*potreban*) *kao komad kruha*= *extremely necessary*; (*živjeti*) *o (samom, suhu) kruhu*= *to live in poverty*; *kruh sa sedam kora*= *a difficult job* (Hrvatski jezični portal)), but there is no idiomatic expression that would be completely equivalent to the English expression *someone's bread and butter*.

#### 7. *the best thing since sliced bread*

- a) I work as a technician in a secondary school where we have 21 Macs. The staff thinks the machines are the best thing since sliced bread and use them all the time for their work. (DIO)
- b) the best innovation for some time (DIO)
- c) najbolja stvar ikada (my translation); bog bogova (HEFR)
- d) Pametni telefon je najbolja stvar ikada, ne znam kako smo živjeli prije bez njega.
- e) partial equivalence

According to DIO, the exact date of origin is unknown, but it is believed that the expression *the best thing since sliced bread* rapidly became popular either during the early years of the product, or when sales started to boom in the 1950s (47).

Croatian counterpart *najbolja stvar ikada* is only partially equivalent to the English expression. In English expression is known what was the last best thing- *sliced bread*= *narezani kruh*, while Croatian counterpart refers to something as that is the best thing that has ever existed.

#### 8. *bread always falls on the buttered side*

- a) Not only did my phone break, but it broke today—today of all days, when I'm expecting a really important call. The bread always falls on the buttered side. (DAI 2002)
- b) when things go wrong, they go completely wrong (DAI 2002)
- c) kruh uvijek pada na namazanu stranu (my translation)

- d) Znanstvenici kažu da kruh uvijek pada na namazanu stranu jer nema vremena napraviti pun okret do poda.
- e) partial equivalence

This English expression stems from the superstition that bread falling buttered side down always causes bad luck and it is often associated with the Murphy's Law that states: "if anything can go wrong, it will" (The Phrase Finder).

There is no idiomatic counterpart in Croatian that would be used for the same connotation as is the case in English. One could say that *bread always falls on the buttered side*= *kruh uvijek pada na namazanu stranu*, but it is not a common expression used for describing one's bad luck. In Croatian, this expression is only used as a conclusion of the debate whether bread lands butter or jam side down.

#### 9. *bread and water*

- a) Bread and water sounds better than that terrible food in the cafeteria! (FDI)
- b) the bare essentials for sustenance (FDI)
- c) na kruhu i vodi (my translation)
- d) Toliko štedi da će uskoro početi živjeti na kruhu i vodi.
- e) partial equivalence

The expression *bread and water*, originally thought of as prison food, is partially equivalent to the Croatian counterpart *na kruhu i vodi*. Both English and Croatian expression share the same connotation of scarcity and having only bare essentials necessary for one's livelihood, but Croatian counterpart also has an addition of the preposition *on* (= *na*).

#### 10. *on the breadline*

- a) Mr. David Fryer of the University of Stirling interviewed people who had recently lost their jobs and found that even those far from the breadline felt cut off from their peer groups. (DIO)
- b) very poor, having almost nothing to eat (DIO)
- c) (živjeti) o (samom, suhu) kruhu (Hrvatski Jezični Portal)

- d) Jako mi ih je žao, otac je izgubio posao, majka je bolesna, žive o samom kruhu.
- e) zero equivalence

According to DIO, this expression originated in America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that it is tied to the bakery in New York, which would give away all the bread that was left on the shelves after the closing time to the poor who were standing in line. The queue of hungry people who waited for bread soon became known as *the breadline* (47).

There is zero equivalence between the English expression and its Croatian counterpart. Although both expressions have the same key lexeme *bread*= *kruh*, they in fact do not have the same constituents. Translated into English, *(živjeti) o (samom, suhu) kruhu* would be *(living) on the dry bread/ on the bread alone*, which has no meaning.

#### 11. *cast your bread upon the waters*

- a) Joseph is casting his bread upon the waters, supporting Bob while he works on his novel. (DAI 2002)
- b) act generous because you feel it is right and not because you expect a reward (DAI 2002)
- c) biti velikodušan (my translation)
- d) On ti je baš velikodušna osoba, uvijek daje sve, a ne očekuje ništa zauzvrat.
- e) zero equivalence

It is stated in ODI that the expression *cast your bread upon the waters* comes from Ecclesiastes 11:1: “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (37).

There is no idiomatic Croatian expression that would be equivalent to the English expression *cast your bread upon the waters*. Translated into Croatian, the expression *cast your bread upon the waters* would be *baciti svoj kruh u vodu*, which carry no figurative meaning.

#### 12. *man cannot live by bread alone*

- a) Our cultural heritage is important. Man cannot live by bread alone. (CID)
- b) something that you say which means people need things such as art, music and poetry as well as food, in order to live a happy life (CID)
- c) ne živi se samo od kruha (my translation)

- d) Ljudi se danas brinu samo za materijalno, iako se ne živi samo od kruha.
- e) partial equivalence

The expression *man cannot live by bread alone*, originating from the Bible, is partially equivalent to its Croatian counterpart *ne živi se samo od kruha*. These two expressions would be completely the same if the English expression replaced the constituents *man cannot* with the constituents *one does not*. Despite the partial equivalence, these two expressions have the same connotation: you have to take care of your spiritual needs as well.

### 13. *half a loaf is better than no bread*

- a) I know they're offering you less money than you'd hoped for, but at least it's a good job—half a loaf is better than no bread. (FDI)
- b) getting less than what one wants is better than getting nothing at all (FDI)
- c) bolje išta nego ništa (EHFR)
- d) Nisam baš zadovoljna s ovim poslom, plaća je premala, ali opet bolje išta nego ništa.
- e) zero equivalence

This shortened expression came from a proverb: “for better is half a loaf than no bread” (TAHDI, 447).

English expression *half a loaf is better than no bread* has zero equivalence to the Croatian expression because the constituents are different in their meaning. Croatian expression translated to English would be *better something than nothing*.

### 3.2. Idiomatic expressions with *egg*

#### 1. *put all of one's eggs in one basket*

- a) He had warned Peter about investing heavily in a single stock; it was putting all his eggs in one basket. (TAHDI)
- b) risk all of one's resources in a single venture (TAHDI)
- c) stavljati sva jaja u istu košaru (my translation); ne stavljaj sve na istu kartu (HEFR)
- d) Poznati ulagački postulat glasi: Ne stavljajte sva jaja u istu košaru. Kupnjom različitih dionica, obveznica ili udjela u investicijskim fondovima, Vaša ukupna imovina neće propasti jednom krivom odlukom o ulaganju. (www.pbzinvest.hr)
- e) complete equivalence

The expression *put all of one's eggs in one basket* is first recorded in 1710 and it replaced the older expression *trust all one's goods to one ship*. Also, Mark Twain used it in his novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1984) where he played with the expression and wrote: "The fool saith, 'Put not all thy eggs in one basket' . . . but the wise man saith, 'Put all your eggs in one basket, and watch that basket!'" (TAHDI, 844).

Both English and its Croatian counterpart contain the same constituents; which means that we have complete equivalence between the two. Analyzed, each constituent means the same in both languages: *put*= *staviti*, *all of one's egg* = *sva jaja*, *one basket*= *jedna/ista košara*. In both languages, this expression conveys the same meaning: depending for your success on a single person or action.

#### 2. *walk on eggs*

- a) I knew I was walking on eggs when I asked about the department's involvement in the lawsuit. (TAHDI)
- b) proceed very cautiously (TAHDI)
- c) hodati kao po jajima (CEDI)
- d) Selma kaže: "I prije nego što sam upoznala istinu, u braku s Billom morala sam hodati kao po jajima jer bi on lako planuo. (hr.glosbe.com)
- e) partial equivalence



According to TAHDI, this expression first appeared in the first half of 1700s and it is based upon the metaphorical concept of walking on fragile eggshells to discuss or investigate a dangerous subject (1139).

The English expression is partially equivalent to the Croatian counterpart because Croatian expression has an addition of the word *kao= like*, which is not present in the English counterpart, but otherwise, all the other constituents are the same: *walk on= hodati po*, *eggs= jaja*.

### 3. *to over-egg the pudding*

- a) On TV news yesterday lunchtime, BBC Political Editor John Cole claimed that the chances of a November election had always been ‘greatly over-egged. (DIO)
- b) to exaggerate, to spoil something by going too far (DIO)
- c) pretjerivati (my translation)
- d) Toliko se šminkala da je na kraju pretjerala i sad je još ružnija nego što je bila.
- e) zero equivalence

To add too many eggs to a pudding or to the instant cake mix is to go “too far and to be excessive, hence the current meaning of to exaggerate” (DIO, 147).

The English expression has zero equivalence to the Croatian counterpart since there is no such fixed or idiomatic expression in Croatian language. The constituents *to over-egg the pudding* translated into Croatian- *dodati previše jaja u pudding* bear no meaning at all.

### 4. *to have egg on one's face*

- a) We aimed to grow up with our readers and in so doing hoped to be around to define the new decade. Now we have egg on our face and the Face and iD, who stuck with a tried and tested style formula, must be crowing. (DIO)
- b) to look foolish having made a wrong choice (DIO)
- c) osramotiti se (my translation); ispasti budala (EHFR)
- d) Ne samo da si se osramotila, već si nam uništila i reputaciju. (hr.glosbe.com)
- e) zero equivalence

This expression was given an American origin by Brandreth in the 1960s and a British use in 1972. It was popular mainly in journalism. The idea for this expression came from the act of throwing eggs at an opponent's face, especially on the political hustings. Egg on the face makes a person look foolish, and metaphorically leaves the responsible for the backfired decision with an egg on their faces (DIO, 87).

Once again, English expression has zero equivalence to the Croatian expression since the English counterpart consists of completely different constituents that bear no figurative meaning when translated to Croatian: *to have egg on one's face*= *imati jaje na licu*.

#### 5. *to be a bad/good egg*

- a) Morse and Sgt Lewis gradually uncover the truth about a murder victim - an artist, a drinker and therefore a reasonably all round good egg in the inspector's book. But things are not what they seem. (DIO)
- b) to be an untrustworthy/dependable person (DIO)
- c) biti nepouzdana/ pouzdana osoba (my translation)
- d) Nemoj bolje njoj ostavljati svoju mačku na čuvanje, nije ti ona baš pouzdana osoba.
- e) zero equivalence

The idea behind this expression is that an egg may be either fresh or not, but it is uncertain until it is broken and its contents revealed. If the egg is good, it will be good from its shell right through to its very center. Same goes with people: the outward appearance of a person will not reveal the contents of the character (DIO, 87).

The first written reference of the expression to be a bad egg appeared in Samuel A. Hammett's *Captain Priest* in 1855. This expression is older than its positive version, which appeared not before the beginning of the 20th century (DIO, 87).

In idiomatic sense, there is no similar expression in Croatian and therefore English and Croatian expressions have zero equivalence. While English uses the idiomatic expression to describe a bad or a good person, Croatian does so by means of adjectives.

## 6. *a nest egg*

- a) Regular investment of small amounts of money is an excellent way of building a nest egg. (CID)
- b) an amount of money that you have saved (CID)
- c) bijeli novci za crne dane; ušteđevina (hr.glosbe.com)
- d) Imam i ja malu ušteđevinu za crne dane.
- e) zero equivalence

In the old days, a common country trick to encourage hens to lay more eggs was to put a porcelain egg in the nest. The connection between this trick and the expression *a nest egg* is the idea that a person sets aside a small amount of money for future use, adds to it, and watches it grow (DIO, 141).

The English expression has zero equivalence to its Croatian counterpart. The constituents of the Croatian expression are completely different than those of the English expression: *bijeli novci za crne dane*= *white money for black days*; *ušteđevina*= *savings*. However, the connotational meaning is the same.

## 7. *take eggs for money*

- a) No matter how tantalizing their offers sound, don't take eggs for money. (FDI)
- b) to let oneself be mistreated or cheated in some way (FDI)
- c) zavarati, obmanuti (my translation)
- d) Bez obzira koliko to dobro izgleda, nedaj se zavarati.
- e) zero equivalence

The idea for the expression *take eggs for money* comes from the fact that eggs were once so plentiful that they did not worth much money (FDI).

The constituents of the English expression are completely different than those of the Croatian counterpart: *take eggs for money*= *uzeti jaja za novac*; *zavarati, obmanuti*= *deceive, mislead*, and therefore these two expressions are in zero equivalence relationship to each other.

### 8. *egg in your beer*

- a) What do you want, egg in your beer? (TAHDI)
- b) a bonus, something for nothing (TAHDI)
- c) Što još hoćeš, i glazbenu želju? (my translation)
- d) Nije ti dovoljno što sam ti napravila večeru, što još hoćeš, i glazbenu želju?
- e) zero equivalence

According to TAHDI, this expression dates back from the 1940s and it became widespread during World War II (303). It is often used in the phrase, “What do you want, egg in your beer?” as a response to someone who is complaining for something he or she should already be content (FDI).

The Croatian counterpart has the same connotational meaning as the English expression. Both are used as a response to someone who is complaining for something he or she should be happy with. However, these two expressions are not lexically equivalent. Translated into Croatian, the constituents of the English expression mean *jaje u tvom pivu*, which bear no figurative meaning in Croatian.

### 9. *egg on*

- a) Jack is always egging me on to drive faster. (TAHDI)
- b) incite, urge ahead, provoke (TAHDI)
- c) provocirati, poticati (my translation)
- d) Iako na prvu djeluje mirno i povučeno, Marina je uvijek ta koja potiče Ivana da se svađa sa svojim roditeljima.
- e) zero equivalence

As a matter of fact, the expression *egg on* comes from the Old Norse word *eggja* meaning *to edge*, and has nothing to do with hen’s eggs. Both *edge on* and *egg on* were used interchangeably, but the expression *egg on* remained in use to this day (TAHDI, 303).

Again, the English expression has zero equivalence to its Croatian counterpart. The constituents of the English expression are idiomatic, while Croatian uses verbs to express the same connotation.

### 3.3. Idiomatic expressions with *apple*

#### 1. *apple of one's eye*

- a) The youngest was the apple of his father's eye. (TAHDI)
- b) special favorite, beloved person or thing (TAHDI)
- c) čuvati koga kao oko u glavi (CEDI); kao zjenica oka (EHFR)
- d) Ne brini se, sa mnom si sigurna, čuvam te kao oko u glavi.
- e) complete equivalence

The expression *apple of one's eye* appeared first in the Bible in the Old Testament. It alluded to the idea that the person's eye is apple-shaped and that eyes are particularly precious. Its usage became common in the early 1600s (TAHDI, 36).

The English expression is completely equivalent to its Croatian counterpart. Constituents *apple of his eye* are translated into Croatian as *zjenica oka*.

#### 2. *apple of discord*

- a) It [the letter] was her long-contemplated apple of discord, and much her hand trembled as she handed the document up to him. (DIO)
- b) something which causes strife, argument, rivalry (DIO)
- c) jabuka razdora (EHFR)
- d) Nakon što je baka umrla, njena kuća je postala jabuka razdora jer se njena djeca nisu mogla dogovoriti tko će ju naslijediti.
- e) complete equivalence

The origin of this expression goes back to the Greek mythology. Eris, the goddess of Discord, angry because she was not invited to the marriage of Thetis and Peleus, threw among the goddesses a golden apple with the inscription 'for the most beautiful'. A bitter quarrel ensued among the Pallas, Hera and Aphrodite. Paris, who was chosen to judge between them, chose Aphrodite. Pallas and Hera decided to take revenge, and this played a big role in the fall of Troy (DIO, 11).

As one can see, the English and the Croatian expressions are completely equivalent. Directly translated into Croatian, apple of discord means the same as it does in English: *jabuka razdora*.

### 3. *apples and oranges*

- a) Assessing the problems of the neighborhood grocery by examining a giant supermarket is comparing apples and oranges. (TAHDI)
- b) unlike objects or persons (TAHDI)
- c) kruške i jabuke (EHFR)
- d) Crtica i spojnica nisu jednu te isto, nemoj miješati kruške i jabuke.
- e) partial equivalence

This expression stems from the older expression *apples and oysters*, which appeared in John Ray's proverb collection of 1670. It is used to describe dissimilarity, often accompanied by a warning that the two cannot be compared (TAHDI, 37).

The English expression is partially equivalent to the Croatian expression. English uses the words *apples and oranges*= *jabuke i naranče* to express dissimilarity, while instead of *oranges*, Croatian uses the word *pears*= *kruške*. Also, the word order in the Croatian expression is reversed- *jabuke* comes as the second constituent.

### 4. *in apple pie order*

- a) In the hall, drawing-room and dining room everything was always gleaming and solidly in apple-pie order in its right place. (DIO)
- b) with everything neatly arranged, in its proper place (DIO)
- c) sve po špagi, po P.S.-u (my translation)
- d) Kod njih u kući ti je uvijek sve jako uredno složeno i čisto, ona voli da je sve po špagi.
- e) zero equivalence

According to DIO, there are several theories on how this term was coined. The main theories are French, Greek and American origins. One French theory claims that the expression derived from the French term *cap à pié*, meaning clothed immaculately in armour from head to foot. However, this expression was current in Britain long before it was in America and therefore belongs to the British. The British claim that the expression *in apple pie order* originates from New England where housewives neatly and with much care made apple pies (15).

Analyzing the constituents of both English and Croatian expression, it is noticeable that they have zero equivalence. Both expressions carry the same connotational meaning, but the lexical meaning of their constituents is not identical in order to be completely equivalent.

#### 5. *an apple a day*

- a) He exercises regularly? An apple a day is his motto. (TAHDI)
- b) a small preventive treatment wards off serious problems (TAHDI)
- c) Jabuka na dan tjera doktora van.
- d) Jabuke su voće koje smatramo vrlo običnim, možda čak i dosadnim, a polako zaboravljamo onu staru "Jabuka na dan tjera doktora van".
- e) partial equivalence

This English expression is shortened from the proverb *an apple a day keeps the doctor away*, and it was first cited about 1630 (TAHDI, 36).

The shortened English expression *an apple a day* does not have a similar counterpart in Croatian. In Croatian, *an apple a day* does not have a figurative meaning, but instead one has to utter the whole proverb to have the same connotation.

#### 6. *polish the apple*

- a) It may help your standing with the boss if you polish the apple. (TAHDI)
- b) try to win favor through flattery (TAHDI)
- c) ulagivati se, laskati
- d) Laskaš mi, ali znaš da ti ja ne mogu pomoći oko posla, morat ćeš se ipak sam malo potruditi.
- e) zero equivalence

The expression *polish the apple* alludes to the old practice of children bringing their teacher a bright shiny apple, and it is in use since the 1920s (TAHDI, 826).

The English expression and its Croatian counterpart have zero equivalence. Translated into Croatian, *polish the apple* means *polirati jabuku*, which has no figurative meaning. Croatian uses verbs to express flattery, while English, in this case, does so by means of idiomatic expression.

### 7. *a rotten apple*

- a) Before you accuse the entire department of wrongdoing, you should try to find the rotten apple that initially caused the problem. (TAHDI)
- b) a person who negatively impacts an entire group of people through his or her words or actions (TAHDI)
- c) kukolj; osoba koja loše utječe na druge
- d) Uvijek se u društvu nađe ta jedna osoba koja kvari ostale- u svakom žitu ima kukolja.
- e) zero equivalence

It is stated in TAHDI that, the first recorded use of this expression was in Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack (1736). Originating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century Latin proverb translated as *the rotten apple injures its neighbors*, this expression alludes to the spread of mold from one apple to the rest (888).

There is no Croatian expression that would serve as a complete equivalent to the English expression *a rotten apple*. Translated into Croatian, *a rotten apple*= *trula jabuka*, has no figurative meaning, and cannot be used to describe a person that has a bad influence on other people. Instead, Croatian does it so by means of a descriptive sentence, or a proverb *u svakom žitu ima kukolja*.

### 8. *a second bite of the apple*

- a) Since a large percentage of her students failed the calculus exam, the teacher decided to give them a second bite of the apple by allowing them to take the test again. (FDI)
- b) a second chance or opportunity (FDI)
- c) druga prilika (EHFR); imati pravo na popravni (EHFR)
- d) Ajde nemoj plakati, bit će druge prilike za osvojiti medalju.
- e) zero equivalence

This idiomatic expression is often used by attorneys, judges and other representatives of the law. It refers to a second chance at an argument or negotiation previously lost. The law typically frowns upon second bites of the apple and does not allow them (Evans, William Evans).



English expression *a second bite of the apple* has zero equivalence to the Croatian expression *imati drugu priliku* or *imati pravo na popravni* because the constituents are not the same: *a second bite of the apple*= *drugi griz jabuke*; *druga prilika*= *a second chance*.

#### 9. *she's apples*

- a) used to indicate that everything is in good order and there is nothing to worry about (ODI)
- b) "And how's my old truck working out for you, Daniel?" Daniel: "She's apples, Grandpa, thank you again for letting me have it!" (FDI)
- c) sve je dobro; sve je OK (my translation)
- d) Moram javiti mami da je sve dobro i da se ne mora brinuti.
- e) zero equivalence

The expression *she's apples* was originally rhyming slang- *apples and spice* or *apples and rice* with *nice*, and it means that everything is fine. It is primarily heard in Australia in informal context (ODI, 8).

The English and Croatian expressions are in zero equivalence relationship to each other. The constituents of the English expression combined together have idiomatic meaning, while in Croatian this expression will have no figurative meaning: *she's apples*= *ona je jabuke*. Instead, in Croatian one will say that everything is just fine or good.

#### 10. *wise apple*

- a) Does that kid ever shut up? He's a real wise apple. (FDI)
- b) A smug, sarcastic person who constantly tries to upstage others (usually to their annoyance) (FDI)
- c) pametnjaković (HEFR); praviti se pametan (my translation)
- d) Kako me živcira njezin brat, uvijek se pravi pametan, a ustvari nema pojma o ničemu.
- e) zero equivalence

The expression *wise apple* is another version of the expression *smart Alec*. It has zero equivalence to the Croatian counterpart *pametnjaković* because it consists of two constituents, which translated into Croatian means *pametna jabuka* and it has no figurative meaning.

### 3.4. Idiomatic expressions with *milk*

#### 1. *no use crying over spilled milk*

- a) The papers you wanted went out in last week's trash, so don't cry over spilled milk. (TAHDI)
- b) don't regret what cannot be undone or rectified (TAHDI)
- c) ne vrijedi plakati za prolivenim mlijekom (EHFR)
- d) Život ide dalje, neću plakati za prolivenim mlijekom.
- e) complete equivalence

According to TAHDI, this expression refers to the fact that you cannot recover milk once it has been spilled, and therefore describes something that cannot be changed. It was first mentioned as a proverb in James Howell's *Paroi miografia* in 1659 (238).

The English expression is completely equivalent to the Croatian expression since all of the constituents in both phrases are the same: *no use crying*= *ne vrijedi plakati*, *over spilled milk*= *za prolivenim mlijekom*.

#### 2. *the milk of human kindness*

- a) There's no milk of human kindness in that girl, she's totally selfish. (TAHDI)
- b) compassion, sympathy (TAHDI)
- c) trun dobrote (my translation)
- d) Nemoj očekivati od nje neko sažaljenje, ili ne daj Bože pomoć, nema ti u njoj ni trun dobrote.
- e) zero equivalence

TAHDI states that, “this expression was invented by Shakespeare in *Macbeth* (1:5), where Lady Macbeth complains that her husband "is too full of the milk of human kindness" to kill his rivals” (683).

The expression *the milk of human kindness* has zero equivalence to the Croatian counterpart because, when translated to Croatian, it carries no meaning: *the milk of human kindness*= *mlijeko ljudske ljubaznosti*.

### 3. *milk the ram*

- a) Studying for this class is like milking the ram—I'm just not going to get it. (FDI)
- b) to do or attempt something futile (as milking a male sheep would be) (FDI)
- c) uzaludno, Sizifov posao (my translation)
- d) Cijeli dan pokušavam riješiti ove matematičke jednadžbe, ali je uzaludno, neću ih nikada shvatiti.
- e) zero equivalence

Although the exact origin of this expression is unknown, it alludes to the fact that you can milk a male sheep, but it will fail because it is not biologically possible for male sheep to produce milk, therefore it will be futile.

The English expression has zero equivalence to its Croatian counterpart. Except for the expression that something is a *Sisyphus' job*, there is no idiomatic expression in Croatian that would be lexically equivalent to the English expression.

### 3. *milk someone for something*

- a) The reporter milked the mayor's aide for information. (DAI 2002)
- b) to pressure someone into giving information or money (DAI 2002)
- c) izmusti (nešto od nekoga) (my translation)
- d) Baš je lukava, uvijek uspije izmusti novce od mene, a ne od tate.
- e) partial equivalence

The English expression *milk someone for something* is partially equivalent to its Croatian counterpart. Both expressions have the same form and meaning, only the word order is different. Directly translated into Croatian, *milk someone for something* would be *izmusti nekoga za nešto*, which has a slightly different meaning, if it has meaning at all, than *izmusti nešto od nekoga*.

### 5. *milk and honey*

- a) People in poorer parts of the world still look on the States as the land of milk and honey. (CID)
- b) prosperity and abundance (ODI)

- c) med i mlijeko (my translation)
- d) Svi odlaze u Njemačku misleći da tamo teče med i mlijeko, a zaboravljaju da se mora puno i raditi da bi uspio.
- e) partial equivalence

According to ODI, this expression alludes to the “prosperity of the Promised Land of Israel in the Bible (Exodus 3:8)” (188).

The English expression and its Croatian counterpart would be completely equivalent if the word order is reversed in either English or Croatian expression. In the English expression, *milk* is the first constituent, while in Croatian expression, *honey* is the first and *milk* is the second constituent.

#### 6. *why buy cow when you can get milk for free*

- a) I don't have a car because someone always gives me a ride to work. Why buy a cow when you can get milk for free? (DAI 2002)
- b) Why pay for something that you can get for free otherwise (DAI 2002)
- c) zašto kupiti kravu kad možeš dobiti mlijeko za besplatno (my translation)
- d) Ne kupujem knjige zato što ih u knjižnici mogu besplatno pročitati- zašto kupiti kravu kad možeš dobiti mlijeko za besplatno?
- e) complete equivalence

This expression originates from the 17th century English literature, but it has been in general use since the 19th century. It is often used to describe the behaviour of a man who does not want to marry. There is also Australian version which states *why buy a book when you can join a library* (Partridge).

The English expression is completely equivalent to its Croatian counterpart. Translated into Croatian, constituents are the same in both their form and meaning: *why buy cow when you can get milk for free*= *zašto kupiti kravu kad možeš dobiti mlijeko za besplatno*.

### 3.5. Idiomatic expressions with *cake*

#### 1. *sell like hotcakes*

- a) I'm sure this new line of coats will go like hot cakes (DAI)
- b) be a great commercial success; sell quickly (DAI)
- c) prodaje se kao halva (HEFR); prodaje se kao ludo (my translation)
- d) Fidget spinneri su zaludili svijet, prodaju se kao halva.
- e) partial equivalence

It is believed that the phrase did not appear until the 1840s. Since that, there is no written evidence that the demand for hotcakes were great at the time; it is left to assume that hotcakes were very popular at county fairs and similar social gatherings (Soniak, 2010).

The English expression is partially equivalent to its Croatian counterpart. The only difference is the use of a different noun (*halva= paste*), while other constituents are the same in their meaning and form (*to sell= prodavati se, like= kao*).

#### 2. *have one's cake and eat it, too*

- a) Doug was engaged to Ann and still dating Jane; he was trying to eat his cake and have it, too. (TAHDI)
- b) have a dual benefit, consume something and still possess (TAHDI)
- c) imati i ovce i novce (EHFR)
- d) "Čelnici RS željeli bi imati i „ ovce i novce "-- oni žele zadržati nadležnosti entiteta u najvećoj mogućoj mjeri, ali žele i izbjeći da budu viđeni kao netko tko je izravno umiješan u prisiljavanje optuženika na odlazak u Haag tako što će ih uhititi ", kazao je Partos. (hr.glosbe.com)
- e) zero equivalence

This expression, according to TAHDI, is often put negatively, as it was in John Heywood's proverb collection of 1546: "You cannot eat your cake and have your cake." (300).

Analyzing lexical equivalence, it is evident that these two expressions share zero equivalence. Although both English and its Croatian counterpart share the same connotational meaning, their

constituents are not the same in their form and meaning: *imati i ovce i novce*= *have both sheep and money*.

### 3. *as nutty as a fruitcake*

- a) Mary's nutty as a fruitcake if she thinks she can get away with that. (TAHDI)
- b) crazy, idiotic (TAHDI)
- c) lud sto gradi (HEFR)
- d) Njemu nije problem sad se spakirati i otputovati na kraj svijeta, on ti je lud sto gradi.
- e) zero equivalence

According to TAHDI, in the 1821 was the first record of the adjective *nutty* meaning *insane*. The similarity to fruitcake, which contains fruits, as well as nuts, was first recorded in 1935 (728).

English expression *nutty as a fruitcake* has zero equivalence to its Croatian counterpart. Directly translated into Croatian, *nutty as a fruitcake*, means *lud kao voćna torta*, which does not have a figurative meaning in Croatian.

### 4. *a piece of cake*

- a) I had no trouble finding your house, a piece of cake. (TAHDI)
- b) something easily accomplished (TAHDI)
- c) mačji kašalj (HEFR)
- d) Test je bio mačji kašalj, sigurno ću dobiti 5.
- e) zero equivalence

According to TAHDI, this expression originated in the Royal Air Force in the late 1930s for an easy mission, but the exact reference is unknown (810).

The English expression has zero equivalence to the Croatian counterpart. The constituents of the English expression are completely different than those of the Croatian counterpart: *a piece of cake*= *komad kolača*; *mačji kašalj*= *a cat's cough*.

### 5. *icing on the cake*

- a) All these letters of congratulation are icing on the cake. (TAHDI)

- b) an additional benefit to something already good (TAHDI)
- c) šećer na kraju (HEFR)
- d) Cijeli dan smo proveli na plaži, sunčali se, plivali, i onda me je kao šećer na kraju, odveo na najbolji sladoled u gradu.
- e) zero equivalence

The expression *icing on the cake*, or *frosting on the cake* appeared mid-1900s and it alluded to the sweet final coating used to enhance a cake (TAHDI, 512).

The English and Croatian expressions are in zero equivalence relationship to each other. Although both expressions have the same connotation, their constituents are not the same: *icing on the cake*= *glazura na torti*; *šećer na kraju*= *sugar on the end*.

#### 6. *as flat as a pancake*

- a) There are no hills; this terrain is flat as a pancake. (TAHDI)
- b) extremely level, especially too much so (TAHDI)
- c) ravno kao daska; ravno kao stativa (my translation)
- d) Kod izvođenja vježbe izdržaja, tijelo mora biti ravno kao daska.
- e) partial equivalence

The expression *flat as a pancake* dates from the 1500s and it has survived another similar expression *flat as a flounder*. It is sometimes used disparagingly to describe a part of a woman's body (TAHDI, 347).

The English and Croatian expressions differ in one constituent and therefore are only partially equivalent. English compares a flat surface to the pancake (= *palačinka*), while Croatian compares it to the board or goalpost (= *daska, stativa*).

#### 7. *slice of the cake*

- a) The employees applauded when the boss announced that everyone was getting a slice of the cake in the form of a holiday bonus. (FDI)
- b) a portion of the money or profits that are being shared by everyone involved in generating them (FDI)

- c) dio kolača (EHFR)
- d) Da nije bilo marljivih zaposlenika, naša tvrtka ne bi nikad ostvarila ovoliki profit, tako da je najpoštenije da i oni dobiju svoj dio kolača.
- e) complete equivalence

This expression, also known as *slice of the pie*, dates from the late 1800s and it alludes to the “division of the spoils” (TAHDI, 961).

The English expression is completely equivalent to its Croatian counterpart. The constituents of both expressions are the same and carry the same connotation: *slice of the cake*= *dio kolača*.

#### 8. *let them eat cake*

- a) Fred: The budget will allow each one of our managers to get a substantial holiday bonus.  
Jane: And what about the rest of the employees? Fred: Let them eat cake! (DAI 2002)
- b) a joking disclaimer of responsibility for some group of people (DAI 2002)
- c) neka jedu kolače (my translation)
- d) Izjava premijerove supruge da narod crni kruh reže na tanje šnite ako im je skup, jako podsjeća na izjavu Marije Antoanete neka ljudi jedu kolače, ako nemaju kruha.
- e) complete equivalence

It is believed by many that this expression has been uttered by Marie Antoinette, French Queen, when she heard that the common people had no bread. This theory has not been confirmed, but the expression remained to this day.

*Let them eat cake* is completely equivalent to the Croatian counterpart *neka jedu kolače* because the constituents are lexically the same: *let them eat cake*= *neka jedu kolače*, and both expression carry the same connotation: disclaiming responsibility for people one should be accountable for.



## Conclusion

Idiomatic expressions have proven to be quite demanding part of the language to define and set an array of clear and systematic characteristics. However, nearly all studies and theoretical approaches have come to the agreement that the idiomatic expressions are multiword expressions whose meaning is not the sum of each constituent's meaning. In most cases, their lexical meaning once referred to something concrete and literal, but over the years it transferred into something more metaphorical and figurative. Despite their versatility, there have been established a set of common characteristics that are detectable in almost every idiomatic expression. Every idiomatic expression portrays, perhaps the most important characteristic, a certain level of figurativeness, that is, metaphoricity. According to Ferdinando (1996), there are three sub-classes of idioms: pure idioms or opaque idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. The meaning of opaque idioms cannot be detected without knowing their etymology, while literal idioms are fairly transparent in their meaning. Another important characteristic is fixedness of a form or stability. Even though, stability of idiomatic expressions have been challenged and disputed, they still portray a very limited tolerance of transformations and variations in their properties. Beside these two, idiomatic expressions portray a characteristic of analyzability or non-compositionality, and a certain level of formality. Analyzability or non-compositionality refers to those idiomatic expressions whose meaning can be inferred from a single constituent. This means that the meaning of more figurative idioms may be easily detected while the meaning of more opaque idioms is less likely to be guessed from the sum of the meanings of its constituents. When it comes to the level of formality, idiomatic expressions are considered to be part of informal language since there are not many proofs of evidence of their presence in formal, especially in highly formal texts.

Furthermore, translation of idiomatic expressions can be quite challenging and demanding task. As Baker writes, the translator may encounter several difficulties while translating, such as no equivalence in the target language, the context of use is different in foreign language and the idiomatic expression is used in the source text both literally and idiomatically. She proposes various strategies on how to deal with such difficulties, but what is most important is that the translator tries to capture and preserve the original meaning as much as it is possible closer to the original meaning. Important for the translation of idiomatic expressions is the level of lexical equivalence. Gläser (1984) states that there are three types of lexical equivalence: complete, partial and zero equivalence.

Complete equivalence means that the lexical meaning of the idiomatic expression is completely identical to the lexical meaning of its counterpart in foreign language, while zero equivalence means that the constituents of both expressions carry different lexical meaning.

This paper tried to compare and contrast selected English idiomatic expressions associated with the domain *food* with key lexemes *bread*, *egg*, *apple*, *milk*, and *cake* to their counterparts in Croatian on the basis of lexical equivalence. Corpus analyses showed that majority of selected idiomatic expressions have zero equivalence to their Croatian counterparts. More precisely, out of 46 idiomatic expressions, more than half, 26 expressions have zero equivalence to their counterparts. Only 8 idiomatic expressions are completely equivalent to their counterpart, meaning that they are lexically identical. The rest of the expressions, that is, 12, are partially equivalent to their counterparts, meaning that they are almost lexically identical except for one constituent which is different. In percentage, this means that 18% of selected idiomatic expressions are completely equivalent to their counterparts, 26% are partially equivalent, while 56% of selected idiomatic expressions have zero equivalence to their Croatian counterparts. This analysis showed that idiomatic expressions are mostly culture-specific, that is, they are often bound to the specific culture they belong to. Every language has its own unique culture with unique phenomena that are in fact untranslatable. The connotational meaning of every idiomatic expression depends largely on the conceptual images born in the minds of language users.

Conclusively, as much as idiomatic expressions seem to semantically and grammatically break what are seem to be rules of normal language use, they in fact exhibit a set of characteristics common and detectable in many idiomatic expressions. Their translation in to a foreign language has shown to be demanding since they are in most cases related to the specific culture phenomena, but it is not impossible. The only thing that is important is to try to capture and preserve the original thought in the source text.

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