A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF PHRASEOLOGISMS WITH THE ZOONYM *CAT* IN BULGARIAN, GREEK, RUSSIAN AND SERBIAN[1]

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Abstract

The eternal contact of the human species with characteristic representatives of the animal kingdom undeniably indicates their constructive contribution to every psycho-intellectual parameter and cultural manifestation. In parallel the essential statement that human characteristics are reflected in animals and that quite reasonably, on the one hand, a fierce instructive character and also a catalytic productive symbolism are attributed to them, explains the dominant presence of many stereotypical phrases and inspired idioms in each language code.

Excerpting material from reliable lexicographic sources (general, phraseological, monolingual, bilingual dictionaries) with a view to the contrastive aspect of the paper, at first we attempt to clarify the semantic dimensions of the selected idioms in daily Greek and three modern Slavic languages, namely in Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian. Furthermore we tend to a conceptual analysis, but also to a highlighting of their principal similarities and main differences.

Key words: *cat, semantics, phrasemes, idiomatic phrases, contrastive analysis*

Résumé

L'éternel contact de l'espèce humaine avec les représentants caractéristiques du règne animal indique incontestablement leur contribution constructive à chaque paramètre psycho-intellectuel et à chaque manifestation culturelle. Parallèlement, l'affirmation essentielle selon laquelle les caractéristiques humaines sont réfléchies dans les animaux et que, de manière raisonnable, d'une part, un caractère féroce et aussi un symbolisme productif catalytique leur sontattribués, fait qui explique la présence dominante de plusieurs expressions stéréotypes et des idiomes inspirés dans chaque code linguistique.

Ce matériau, extrait de sources lexicographiques fiables (dictionnaires généraux, phraséologiques, monolingues, bilingues), afin de réaliser l'aspect contrastif du travail, représente un essai de clarification des dimensions sémantiques des idiomes sélectés du grec courant et trois langues slaves modernes, à savoir le bulgare, le russe et le serbe. De plus, on a l'intention de réaliser une analyse conceptuelle, mais aussi de souligner leurs principales ressemblances et différences.

Mots-clés: *chat, phrasèmes, sémantique, expressions idiomatiques, analyse contrastive*

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1. Identification basis of phraseologisms

In modern researches Phraseology carries a two-dimensional concept: it indicates a wide linguistic spectrum which refers to the language idiomatic phrases and their set as well[2].

However, the generally accepted identification of idiomatic phrases[3] or stereotypical expressions used in any language code reflects the essential difficulties related to:

(i) ambiguity: the multi-word expressions represent a double meaning based on the literal result that is derived from traditional syntactic-semantic analysis, but also on a metaphoric[4] approach to them;

(ii) idiomaticity: the whole term doesn't comply with specific syntactic data, semantic features or pragmatological aspects of structural components;

(iii) contextual framework: it is possible that the phrasemes function as autonomous word combinations;

(iv) multilexicality: although the set phrases are not intra-sentential parts, they consist of two or more words whose mutual connection is narrow or relaxed. So they are characterized as "idiosyncratic interpretations that cross word boundaries (or spaces)"[5];

(v) syntactic-semantic fixedeness: their connection is accessible to the intellectual range of speakers[6].

It is worth mentioning that the character of the idiomatic phrases is obvious, not only on the basis of their kind, but also through the relationship between form and meaning. Still as indicators of proper recognition of idioms act:

(a) the grammatical restrictions of which the most significant occur in:

(a_1) number, as a phraseologism may be formed either in the singular or plural:

- Greek: "τρώω πόρτα" {tróo pórta} ~ "to eat a door" = not to be permitted to enter

* not "τρώω πόρτες" {tróo pórtes} ~ "to eat doors"}

- Serbian: "добити корпу" ~ "to get a basket" = to be rejected by a girl

* not "добити корпе" ~ "to get baskets"

(a_2) gender[7]:

[2] Шуба (1998, p. 322) claims that Phraseology is a "раздел языкознания, изучающий устойчивые сочетания в языке. Фразеологией называется также совокупность устойчивых сочетаний в языке отдельного художественного произведения и т.д."

[3] "The term 'phraseologism' is used in two ways: (1) as a synonym for a phraseological unit, that is, as a general name for a unit of the phraseological system regardless of its structural-semantic and functional peculiarities and (2) as a name suitable only for the expressive phraseological units and mainly in the works of those linguists who in the phraseological units include besides the expressive and the non-expressive fixed syntagmas with nomination function in language" (Мршевић-Радовић, 1987, p. 11). Similar conceptual approaches are presented by Савко (2005, p. 87): "Фразеологизм – это устойчивые сочетания слов, постоянные по своему составу, значению и воспроизводимые в речи в качестве готовых и целостных единиц, напр., посыпать голову пеплом" and Шанский (1996, p. 22): "Фразеологический оборот – это воспроизводимая в готовом виде единица языка из двух или более ударных компонентов словного характера, фиксированная (т. е. постоянная) по своему значению, составу и структуре."

[4] Lakoff, Johnson (1980, p. 153) underline: "Methaphor is primarily a thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language."

[5] Sag, Baldwin, Bond et al., 2001, p. 2.

[6] Fillmore, Kay, O'Connor, 1988, p. 504.

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- Serbian: “дужан као Грк” ~ “to owe like a Greek man” = I have big debts

* not “дужан као Гркиња” ~ “to owe like a Greek woman”

(a_3) tense:

- Serbian: “неће (пасти / ударити) гром у коприве” [only in the future tense!]

~ “a thunder will not fall / hit in nettles”
= a worthless person doesn’t experience anything bad
* not “ne (пада / удара) гром у коприве” ~ “a thunder does not fall / hit in nettles”

(a_4) modality:

- Serbian: “држ не дај” ~ “hold, do not give” = back and forth

* not “држ дај” ~ “hold, give”.

(b) an one-word periphrasis (either on the paradigmatic or on the syntagmatic axes only one word can paraphrase the phraseologism):

- Serbian: “ухватити се на лепак” ~ “to catch up on glue” = to be deceived

* not “ухватити се на млеко” ~ “to catch up on milk”.

(c) the conventionality[8] (the functional use and the proper concept of phraseological units are not predictable in case of separation of their constituent entities):

- Serbian: “као светог Петра кајгана”

~ “as scrambled eggs of Saint Peter” = very expensive; at a high price
* not “као ~~светог Петра~~ кајгана” ~ “as scrambled eggs ~~of Saint Peter~~”.

(d) the lexical peculiarities (obsolete words or idiomatic phrases as autonomous lexemes present an exceptional frequency and a unique distribution):

- Serbian: “ни бригеша” [“бригеша” instead of “брига”]

~ “not worry” = a quite indifferent person

- Serbian: “обрни-окрени” ~ “reverse-turn” = take it as you wish.

(e) the lexico-grammatical fixedeness (non-violation of criteria provides for it):

(e_1) substitutability:

- Serbian: “мачка има девет живота”

~ “a cat has nine lives” = a cat is able to survive despite a near encounter with death
* not “мачка има шест живота” ~ “a cat has six lives”

(e_2) deletion:

- Serbian: “уморан ко пас” ~ “as tired as a dog” = to be exhausted, to be worn out

[7] Soler, 2004, p. 555.

[8] According to Nayak, Gibbs (1990, p. 317) the choice of an idiomatic phrase is not in relation to arbitrary usage conventions.

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* not "уморан ко ~~пас~~" ~ "tired as ~~a dog~~"

(e_3) change of the lexical category:

- Serbian: "изводи бесне глисте"

~ "he takes out the angry worms"
= he does something stupid or crazy; he plays silly buggers; he plays the giddy goat
* not "изводи беснило глисте" ~ "he takes out the anger of the worms"

(e_4) permutation:

- Serbian: "Је л' игра бела мечка?" ~ "Does the white bear dance?" = a bad event

* not "Је л' игра мечка бела?" ~ "Does the bear the white dance?".

(f) translatability (the idiomatic phrases are considered original structures of any language. So their word by word translation is not realizable):

- Greek: "τρέχα γύρευε" {tréxa jíreve} ~ "run look for"

= to declare indifference to something that is difficult to find or to accomplish

- Russian: "по уши влюбиться" ~ "on ears to fall in love" = to fall in love deeply

(g) semantic non-compositionality (the basic meaning of the multi-word expressions does not depend on the sense of their parts)[9]:

- Greek: "δένω το γάιδαρό μου" {ðéno tó ɣáiðaró mu}

~ "I tie my donkey" = to be secured mainly in a professional (financial, social) sense.

(h) semantic opacity: the historical and mythological background, the ecclesiastical and literary tradition[10] explain the unclear word order of the set phrases:

- Serbian: "лупа ко Максим по дивизији"

~ "he bangs as Maxim over the division"
= he says something absurd (this idiomatic phrase is associated with a famous machine gun invented by Hiram Stevens Maxim in 1884).

(i) syntactic irregularity (the grammar and syntax rules are not fully applied):

- Serbian: "није ни принети" ~ "not either to bring" = to be incomparable.

(j) structure: in idiomatic phrases there are at least two lexical units one of which is called *autosemantic* and has an independent meaning outside of a particular context (noun, adjective, verb, adverb, number), while the *syssemantic elements* are of secondary importance (pronoun, preposition, conjunction, particle):

- Russian: "для вида" ~ "for the look" = as a blind (person)

- Russian: "по блату" ~ "on mud" = through good connections.

[9] Gross, 1996, p. 10-11.
[10] Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη, Ευθυμίου, 2006, p. 46

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2. Origin and distinction of idiomatic phrases

In all national languages the phraseological units with a zoonym component play an interestingly impressive role. This general conclusion is verified by two unquestionable facts:

(a) since ancient times the dominant presence of animals has been observed in everyday manifestations and various activities;

(b) representatives of the animal kingdom are presented with symbolic, mostly negative concepts of human characteristics.

In the opinion of renowned anthropologists established stereotypes reflect derogatory connotations, while the majority of wrong anthropocentric prejudices are hierarchically formed under the catalytic influence of traditions, space, even fabulists (Aesop). In addition, human actions during long-term coexistence, as well as the prevailing tendency to portray human society better than the animal world, serve as the starting point for misinterpreting the authentic behavior of animals. About that Bertoša emphasizes: "the animal stereotypes arise from abuse of language and animal categories that are judged according to their direct utility or uselessness to man."[11]

Paralleling the double metaphorization of human features in animals with the movement of the boomerang Vidović-Bolt divides the zoonym idioms into[12]:

(i) ***the concrete idiomatic phrases*** that come from the common life between people and animals, while they are real and recognizable:

- Serbian: "прести као мачка"

~ "to purr like a cat" = a person who tends to a comfortable life

(ii) ***the associative multi-word expressions*** whose formation is related to the specific circumstances that the idiomatic phrase itself describes:

- Russian: "биться как рыба об лёд" ~ "to beat against the ice like a fish"

= to work very hard to survive, to struggle desperately

(iii) ***the abstract phrasemes*** that are not explained in a logical way, because they are imposed by human interpretation:

- Russian: "покупать кота в мешке" ~ "to buy a cat in a sack"

= to get hold of something without having the opportunity to evaluate its qualities

(iv) ***the Biblical set phrases***[13] that have been excerpted from the Bible:

- Serbian: "бити здрав као бик" ~ "to be as healthy as a bull" = to be extremely healthy

(v) ***the national phraseologisms*** concerning only a certain nation:

- Serbian: "бити тврдоглав као босански магарац"

~ " to be as stubborn as a Bosnian donkey" = to be very stubborn

[11] Bertoša, 1999, p. 68.
[12] Vidović-Bolt, 2007, p. 417-418.
[13] Опашић, 2013.

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3. Topic – Corpus – Method

In every time period and social structure the cat (along with the dog) appears as the most favorite and adorable pet. Therefore, in the phraseological fund of the co-examined languages (Bulgarian, Greek, Russian, Serbian) we may find out a remarkable frequency and a particular diversity of the indicated set phrases which actually present the main subject of this contrastive research.

Using descriptive and phraseological, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, we have primarily made a selection of characteristic phrases in order to show their most interesting similarities and major differences on the semantic level. According to the aforementioned data, such a linguistic paper cannot be perceived as a complete quadrilingual review of multi-word expressions.

The method of the contrastive analysis is primarily aimed at a detailed access to the rich corpus material which contains a total of two hundred fifty eight (258) lexical units: forty one (41) Bulgarian idioms, sixty eight (68) Greek set phrases, a hundred (100) Russian phraseologisms and forty nine (49) Serbian idiomatic phrases.

4. Main explanatory elements of the conducted contrastive analysis

For a more synoptic consideration we have distinguished all the phrasemes on the basis of their positive connotation or negative conceptual nuance, while accompanying them with necessary clarifying symbols: B = Bulgarian; G = Greek; R = Russian; S = Serbian; M = Meaning; ~ = literal translation; {} = Greek words accentuated and transcribed in line with the International Phonetic Alphabet:

4.1. Idiomatic phrases with positive connotations

4.1.1.

B: гъвкав като **котка** ~ as flexible as a cat
G_1: ευλύγιστος σαν **γάτα**{evlíjistos sán ɣáta} ~ as flexible as a cat
G_2: σκαρφαλώνω σαν **γάτα** {skarfalóno sán ɣáta} ~ to climb like a cat
R_1: гибкая как **кошка** ~ as flexible as a cat
R_2: запихаться как **кот** на дерево ~ to climb on a tree like a cat
R_3: карабкаться (красться, лазать) как **кошка** ~ to climb (creep, climb) like a cat
S: гибак ко **мачак** ~ as flexible as a cat
M: the cat's capability of being flexed

4.1.2.

B: галя се като **котка** ~ to be stroked like a cat
G_1: χουχουλιάζω σαν **γάτα** {xuxuʎ̱ázo sán ɣáta} ~ to purr like a cat
G_2: είναι χαδιάρα σαν **γάτα** {íne xaðjára sán ɣáta} ~ she is as cuddly as a cat
R_1: лежать (валяться) как **кот** на печи ~ to lie (wallow) like a cat on a heater
R_2: мурлыкать (урчать) как **кошка** ~ to purr like a cat
S_1: прести (мазити се) као **мачка** ~ to purr (cuddle) like a cat
S_2: жми ко мачка уз огњиште ~ he squints like a cat next to the fireplace
M: a person who strives for a comfortable life

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4.1.3.

B: стъпвам (ходя, вървя) като **котка** ~ to step (go, walk) like a cat
G: **γατίσιο** βάδισμα (περπάτημα)
{γatísx̃io váð̲izma (perpátima)} ~ the feline gait (walk)
P_1: ходить (ступать, расхаживать) как **кошка** ~ to go (walk, pace) like a cat
P_2: подкрадывающийся как **кошка** ~ sneaking up like a cat
P_3: тихо как **кошка** ~ quietly like a cat
S_1: **мачји** ход ~ the cat walk; the feline gait
S_2: ходати као **мачка** ~ to walk like a cat
M: a quiet movement; a stealthy and noiseless action

4.1.4.

B: вардя (пазя) като **котка** мишка ~ to protect a mouse like a **cat**
G_1: η **γάτα** που μουλώνει, ποντικούς μαζώνει
{í γ̲áta pú mulóni, pondikús mazóni} ~ a cat that lurks carefully collects mice
G_2: η **γάτα** που κάνει την αδιάφορη, όλο ποντικούς μαζώνει
{í γ̲áta pú káni tín að̲iáfori, ólo pondikús mazóni}
~ a cat that pretends to be indifferent constantly catches mice
R: **кошка** спит, а мышей видит ~ the cat is asleep, but sees the mice
S: неће **мачка** кобасице ~ the cat does not want sausages
M: someone who pretends and acts indifferently may achieve his goal more easily

4.1.5.

B: катеря се като **котка** ~ to climb like a cat
G: **γάτα** με πέταλα {γ̲áta mé pétala} ~ a cat with petals
R_1: вороватый как **кот** ~ as thievish as a cat
R_2: игривый (резвый, шаловливый) как **котёнок**
~ as playful (frisky, naughty) as a kitten
R_3: ловкий как **кошка** ~ as nimble as a cat
S: жустар (спретан) као **мачка** ~ as brisk (deft) as a cat
M: a very active and resourceful man

4.1.6.

B: **котките** имат девет живота ~ the cats have nine lives
G: η **γάτα** είναι εφτάψυχη {í γ̲áta íne eftápsixi} ~ the cat has seven souls
R_1: живуч как **кошка** ~ as tenacious as a cat
R_2: **кошку** девятая смерть донимает ~ the ninth death pesters the cat
S: **мачка** има девет живота ~ the cat has nine lives
M: a strong person who is characterized by exceptional endurance

4.1.7.

B: мъкна като **котка** малките ~ to drag something as a cat pulls her kittens

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G: η **γάτα** τα γατάκια της κι η μάνα τα παιδάκια της
{í ɣáta tá ɣatác̃ia tis c̃í í mána tá peð̲ác̃ia tis}
~ the cat her kittens and the mother her kids
R: носится, как **кошка** с котятами ~ to move like a cat with her kitten
S: носити (преносити, премештати) као **мачка** младе
~ to carry (transfer, relocate) as a cat her kittens
M: it is known how gently and tenderly a cat treats her kitten

4.1.8.

B: грациозна като **котка** ~ as graceful as a cat
G: **γατίσια** χάρη {ɣatísx̃ia xári} ~ the feline grace
R: **кошачья** грация ~ the cat grace
S: **мачја** грациозност ~ the catlike grace
M: when someone moves with grace and cunning

4.1.9.

B_1: одирам (раздирам) **котката** [на прага]
~ to skin (tear apart) the cat [on the threshold]
B_2: улавям **котката** за ноктите ~ to catch the cat on my nails
G_1: σκίζω τη **γάτα** {sc̃ízo tí ɣáta} ~ to rip the cat
G_2: πιάνω τη **γάτα** από τα νύχια {px̃áno tí ɣáta apó tá níx̃ia} ~ to grab a cat for nails
S: одрати (некога) као **мачку** ~ to skin (somebody) like a cat
M: to impose myself; to be a master

4.1.10.

G_1: με γέρο **γάτο** κάθεσαι, ποντίκια μη φοβάσαι
{mé j̲éro ɣáto káθese, pondíc̃ia mí fováse}
~ when you sit with an old cat, don't be afraid of mice
G_2: ο **γάτος** κι αν εγέρασε, τα νύχια που 'χε έχει
{ó ɣátos c̃í án ejérase, tá níx̃ia pú 'xe éxi}
~ although the cat grew old, he has the nails he had
R_1: **кошка** мышей ловить не устанет, а вор воровать не перестанет
~ a cat will not get tired of catching mice and a thief will not stop stealing
R_2: постригся **кот**, посхимился **кот**, а все тот же **кот**
~ the cat got a haircut, became a monk, but he still remains a cat
S: стари **мачак** ~ an old cat
M: the nature of a crafty man remains the same regardless of external influences

4.1.11.

G_1: θα βάλω τη **γάτα** μου να κλαίει
{θá válo tí ɣáta mu ná kléi} ~ I shall put my cat to cry
G_2: ούτε **γάτα** ούτε ζημιά {úte ɣáta úte zimñá} ~ neither cat nor damage

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R_1: **кот** наплакал[14] ~ the cat cried
R_2: оставить как **кошке** на ложку ~ to leave like a cat on a spoon
S: то је **мачји** кашаљ ~ it's a cat's cough
M: 1. no harm, no foul; 2. an unimportant affair

4.1.12.

G_1: έχω **γατίσια** όραση {éxo γatísx̃ia órasi} ~ to have feline vision
G_2: τα μάτια του γυαλίζουν σαν της **γάτας**
{tá mátia tu jalízun sán tís χ̲átas} ~ his eyes shine like a cat's eyes
R_1: глаза светятся как у **кошки** ~ eyes shine like a cat's eyes
R_2: глаза у кого как у **кота** ~ to have eyes like a cat
R_3: видящий ночью как **кошка** ~ seeing at night like a cat
R_4: видеть в темноте как **кошка** ~ to see at night like a cat
R_5: жмурить глаза как **кот** ~ to squint eyes like a cat
R_6: вылупить глаза как **кошка** ~ to hatch eyes like a cat
R_7: зоркий как **кошка** ~ as bright as a cat
S: у ноћи очи ко у **мачке** сјаје ~ at night the eyes shine like a cat's eyes
M: 1. to have eyes like a cat; 2. able to see in the dark

4.1.13.

G: σαν ερωτευμένος **γάτος**{sán erotevménos χ̲átos} ~ like a cat in love
R: влюблён / влюблёна как **кошка** ~ in love like a cat
S: заљубити се као **мачак** ~ to fall in love like a cat
M: to be head over heels in love

4.1.14.

G: αυτό το κάνει κι η **γάτα** μου{aftó tó káni k̃í í χ̲áta mu} ~ even my cat can do it
M: to be able to perform something asked easily

4.1.15.

G: αυτό το ξέρει κι η **γάτα** μου{aftó tó kséri k̃í í χ̲áta mu} ~ even my cat knows it
M: it is widely known

4.1.16.

G: βγάζω τη **γάτα** απ' το σακί
{vγázo tí χ̲áta ap' tó sak̃í} ~ to take the cat out of the sack
M: to oblige an illegal person to come out of his hiding place

[14] Розенталь, Голуб, Теленкова, 2010, p. 110-111.

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4.1.17.

G: όσο πατάει η **γάτα** {óso patái í ɣáta} ~ as much as the cat steps
M: to come in on little cat's paws; a little

4.1.18.

R: кошка в дом – радость в нём ~ cat in the house – joy in it
M: a purring cat offers people comfort and pleasure

4.2. Set phrases with negative connotations

4.2.1.

B_1: кога направят **котката** калугерка ~ when they make a cat nun
B_2: на **котка** хлопка ~ on a cat bell
G_1: εκουρέψαμε τη **γάτα** για να φτιάξουμε μια κάπα
{ekurépsame tí ɣáta já ná ftχáksume mñá kápa}~ we cut the cat off to make a cloak
G_2: ποιος θα κρεμάσει το κουδούνι στη **γάτα**;
{pχiós θá kremási tó kuðúni stí ɣáta;} ~ who will hang a bell on a cat?
R_1: **кошке** тура не родить ~ a cat cannot give birth to a bull
R_2: искать чёрную **кошку** в тёмной комнате
~ to look for a black cat in a dark room
R_3: **коту** под хвост ~ to a cat under the tail
S: вежи (обеси) то **мачку** за (о) реп ~ to tie (hang) it for (on) the tail of a cat
M: to waste something to no purpose[15]; down the drain

4.2.2.

B_1: мина ми [черна] **котка** път ~ a [black] cat crosses my way
B_2: пресече ми **котка** път ~ a cat cuts off my way
G_1: μαύρη **γάτα** τού έκοψε το δρόμο
{mávri ɣáta tú ékopse tó ðrómo} ~ a black cat blocked his way
G_2: μαύρη **γάτα** πέρασε από το δρόμο μου
{mávri ɣáta pérase apó tó ðrómo mu} ~ a black cat crossed my way
R_1: чёрная **кошка** перешла (перебежала) дорогу
~ a black cat crossed (ran across) the path
R_2: между нас чёрная **кошка** пробежала ~ a black cat ran between us
S_1: црна **мачка** пресекла му пут ~ a black cat cut his way
S_2: прешла му **мачка** пут ~ a cat crossed his path
M: 1. a quarrel will break out due to irrelevant reasons; 2. a calamity will befall somebody

[15] Ничева (1993, p. 164) believes that this phrase comes from "a story about mice that wanted to hang a bell on a cat, so when they heard it they could escape, hide and save their lives."

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4.2.3.

B_1: като **котка** по гърб не падам ~ not to fall on the back like a cat
B_2: падам като **котка** на краката си ~ to fall on one's feet like a cat
G: η **γάτα** πέφτει (προσγειώνεται) πάντοτε στα πόδια της
{í ɣ̱áta péfti (prozjiónete) pándote stá póð̲ia tis}
~ the cat always falls (lands) on her feet
R: **кошка** всегда падает (приземляется) на лапы
~ the cat always falls (lands) on her paws
S: **мачка** се увек дочека на ноге ~ the cat always falls upon her feet
M: 1. a person who does not recognize his mistakes; 2. an inventive man

4.2.4.

B: **кот** из дому – мыши в пляс ~ the cat is away from home, the mice are dancing
G_1: όταν λείπει **η γάτα** χορεύουν τα ποντίκια
{ótan lípi í ɣ̱áta xorévun tá pondík̃ia} ~ when the cat is away the mice will dance
G_2: έλειψαν οι **γάτοι** κι οι ποντικοί βγήκαν στον ιππόδρομο
{élipsan í ɣ̱áti k̃í í pondik̃í vɣ̱íkan stón ipóð̲romo}
~ the cats were absent and the mice went out on the hippodrome
G_3: γέρασαν οι **γάτοι** και τους περιπαίζουν οι ποντικοί
{jérasan í ɣ̱áti k̃e tús peripézun í pondikí}
~ the cats grew old and the mice ridicule them
R_1: **кошки** нет дома – мышам воля ~ the cats are not home, that is the mice's will
R_2: **кошки** – со двора, а мыши – по столам
~ the cats are out of the yard, the mice are on the tables
S_1: кад **мачке** нема, мишеви коло играју ~ when the cat's away the mice will play
S_2: пусто млеко и **мачке** лочу ~ the abandoned milk even the cats lap up
M: when there is no control or the person whom the people are afraid of is powerless, everyone does whatever they want

4.2.5.

B: като **котки** на сирене ~ like cats on cheese
G_1: **η γάτα** για το ψάρι πούλησε το αμπέλι της
{í ɣ̱áta já tó psári púlise tó ambéli tis} ~ for the fish the cat sold her vineyard
G_2: ο **κάτης** που τρώει τον άθο μούδε τ' αλεύρι δεν αφήνει
{ó kátis pú trói tón áθo mú̲ð̲e t' alévri ð̲én afíni}
~ the cat that eats ash does not leave the flour either
P_1: вылакать как **кот** языком ~ to glug with the tongue like a cat
P_2: глотать как **кот** селёдок ~ to swallow a herring like a cat
P_3: пить как **кошки** молоко ~ to drink milk like a cat
S: попашан као **мачак** на рибу ~ desirous of fish like a cat
M: a greedy man cannot get enough of something

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4.2.6.

B: гледам като **котка** на джигер ~ to look at the liver like a cat
G_1: εμείς ψωμί δεν έχουμε κι η **γάτα** πίτα έσερνε
{emís psomí ðén éxume k̃í í ɣ̱áta píta éserne}
~ we do not have bread, but the cat pulled a pie
G_2: η **γάτα** είχε πεινάσει κι έτρωγε τ' αυτιά της
{í ɣ̱áta íxe pinási k̃í étroje t' aftx̃á tis} ~ the cat was hungry and she ate her ears
R: макар да **кошка** – комар да мошка ~ mosquito and cat – mosquito and midge
M: great poverty; terrible misery

4.2.7.

B: гледаме се (живеем, погаждаме се, разбираме се, обичаме се) като куче **котка** ~ to look at each other (live with, agree with, understand, love each other) like a dog and a cat
G: τρώγονται σαν το σκύλο με τη **γάτα**
{tróɣ̱onde sán tó sk̃ílo mé tí ɣ̱áta} ~ they argue like a dog with a cat
R_1: жить как **кошка** с собакой ~ to live like a cat with a dog
R_2: **кошка** с собакой дружно не живут ~ the cat doesn't live amicably with the dog
R_3: любить как **кот** сало ~ to like fat like a cat
S: гледати се (живети, слагати се, волети се, пазити се) као пас и мачка
~ to look at each other (live with, agree with, love each other, look out) like a dog and a cat
M: to be in constant quarrel; to have bad relations

4.2.8.

B: играя си някого, като **котка** и мишка ~ to play with somebody like a cat and a dog
G: παίζω όπως η **γάτα** με το ποντίκι
{pézo ópos í ɣ̱áta mé tó pondík̃i} ~ to play like a cat and a mouse
R_1: играть в **кошки**-мышки ~ to play cat and mouse
R_2: на мышку и **кошка** зверь ~ on the little mouse even the cat is a beast
S: играти се **мачке** и миша ~ a game of cat and mouse
M: a play between unequal opponents; to engage in a suspenseful relationship in which one is being pursued and one is the pursuer

4.2.9.

B: нямам ни куче, ни **котка** ~ to have neither a dog nor a cat
G: σκυλιά, **γατιά** δεν έχω {sk̃iʎ̃á, ɣ̱atx̃á ðén éxo} ~ I have neither dogs nor cats
R: у меня нет собаки и **кошки** ~ to have neither a dog nor a cat
S_1: бити без кучета и **мачета** ~ to be without puppy and kitten
S_2: немати ни кучета ни **мачета** ~ to have neither a puppy nor a kitten
M: a lonely and marginalized person who has no one, not even a pet

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4.2.10.

B: любопитството уби **котката** ~ curiosity killed the cat
G: η περιέργεια σκότωσε τη **γάτα**
{í periérjia skótose tí χáta} ~ curiosity killed the cat
R: любопытство сгубило **кошку** ~ curiosity killed the cat
S: радозналост је убила **мачку** ~ curiosity killed the cat
M: excessive curiosity leads to bad results

4.2.11.

B: **котката** на Шрьодингер ~ Schrödinger's cat
G: **η γάτα** του Σρέντιγκερ{í χáta tú Sréndiŋger} ~ Schrödinger's cat
R: **кошка** Шрёдингера ~ Schrödinger's cat
S: Шредингерова **мачка** ~ Schrödinger's cat
M: Schrödinger's cat is a thought experiment, sometimes described as a paradox, devised by the Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger in 1935

4.2.12.

B: **котка** с девет опаски[16] ~ a cat with nine tails
G: η **γάτα** με τις εννιά ουρές {í χáta mé tís enéa urés} ~ a cat with nine tails
R: **кошка**-девятихвостка ~ nine-tailed cat
S: ударити на **мачке** ~ to hit on the cats
M: the cat o' nine tails is a multi-tailed whip used for severe physical punishment

4.2.13.

B: **котаракът** в чизми ~ puss in boots
G: ο παπουτσωμένος **γάτος** {ó paputsoménos χátos} ~ a shod cat
R: **кот** в сапогах ~ a cat in boots
S: **мачак** у чизмама ~ a cat in boots
M: 1. puss in boots; 2. when someone wears thick and non-elegant shoes

4.2.14.

B: гледам като **котка** в календар ~ to look at the calendar like a cat
P_1: допасться как **кот** до сала ~ to catch up with lard like a cat
P_2: дуться как **кот** на сало ~ to be angry with the fat like a cat
P_3: смотреть (глядеть, скосовуриться) как **кот** на сало (масло, воробья)
~ to look at (gaze, squint) the fat (butter, sparrow) like a cat
P_4: облизываться как **кот** сметану ~ to lick the sour cream like a cat
P_5: жмуриться как **кот** на сливки ~ to blink on the cream like a cat
S_1: гледати (буљити, зурити, пиљити) као **мачак** у сланину
~ to watch (look, gaze, stare at) the bacon like a cat

[16] Кузнецов, 2003, p. 464-465.

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S_2: гледати (пиљити) као **мачак** у жижак ~ to watch (gaze) the weevil like a cat
M: to keep my beady eye on something; to be particularly attentive to someone

4.2.15.

B: **котка** и мишка ще спят заедно ~ the cat and the mouse will sleep together
R_1: **кошка** в печурку – стужа на двор ~ the cat in the stove – cold in the yard
R_2: **кошка** клубком ~ cat as a clew
S: ноћас ће миш (пас) и **мачка** спавати заједно
~ tonight the mouse (dog) and the cat will sleep together
M: extremely cold; freezing

4.2.16.

B: дразня **котките** ~ to irritate cats
R: **кошачий** концерт ~ a cat concert
S_1: **мачја** дерача ~ a caterwaul; a cat's shriek
S_2: гњавити **мачиће** ~ to bother kittens
M: dissonant singing; inconsistent playing

4.2.17.

B: влизам с **котка** в чувал ~ to go in with a cat in a sack
R: купить **кота** в мешке ~ to buy a cat in a sack
S: купити (узети) **мачку** у врећи (џаку) ~ to buy (take) a cat in a sack (poke)
M: to buy a pig in a poke; a meaningless shopping

4.2.18.

B: навъсвам се (намусвам се) като **котка** на зло време
~ to frown (scrowl) like a cat in bad weather
R: **кошки** на душе (сердце) скребут ~ the cats scratch on the soul (heart)
M: someone experiences strong feelings of unrest, anxiety, worry

4.2.19.

B: сякаш че са го **котки** близали ~ as if the cats have licked him
R: гладкий как **кот** ~ as sleek as a cat
M: someone has smooth hair

4.2.20.

B: и **котката** има мустаки ~ and the cat has a moustache
R: **кошке** тура не родить ~ a cat cannot give birth to a bull
M: a person who verbally aims at grandiose projects, but he isn't able to achieve them

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4.2.21.

B: пребия (убия, удавя) като мръсно **коте** ~ to beat (kill, drown) like a dirty kitten
S: претући (истући, пребити, убити) као **мачку**
~ to beat up (thrash, batter, kill) like a cat
M: to severly punish; to beat mercilessly; to make mincemeat of somebody

4.2.22.

B: дали го е булка мазала или го е **котка** драскала
~ whether the bride has smeared him or a cat has scratched him
S: ићи као ћорава **мачка** ~ to go like a blind cat
M: to move aimlessly

4.2.23.

B_1: казали (рекли) на **котката**, а тя на опашката си
~ they told (said) to the cat, but you are in the queue
B_2: накарали **котката** на работа, а тя опашката си
~ they convinced the cat to work, but you are in the queue
M: when we assign a work to a person, but he transfers it to another

4.2.24.

B: настъпвам **котката** по опашката ~ to step on the cat's tail
M: to make a serious mistake or to annoy someone

4.2.25.

B: настъпвам опашката на **котката** ~ to get the cat's tail
M: to feel unpleasant because of someone's question

4.2.26.

B: комшийската **котка** изяла месото, а нашата се наяла
~ the neighbour's cat ate the meat, but our cat got fed
M: when a person has done something wrong and he blames others

4.2.27.

B: не яде **котка** риба (сметана) ~ the cat does not fish (sour cream)
M: when someone hypocritically declares that he dislikes something he really wants, on the ground that he cannot achieve or have it

4.2.28.

G_1: η **γάτα** καλό δεν ξέρει, τρώει και σφίγγει τα μάτια της

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{í ɣáta kaló ðén kséri, trói k̃é sfiŋgi tá mátx̃a tis}
~ the cat does not know any good, she just eats and tightens her eyes
G2: η **γάτα** είναι του σπιτιού κι όχι του νοικοκύρη
{í ɣáta íne tú spitx̃ú k̃í óx̃i tú nikok̃íri}
~ the cat is of the house and not of the housekeeper
G3: μην παραχαϊδεύεις τη **γάτα**, θα σου βγάλει τα νύχια της
{mín paraxaiðévis tí ɣáta, θá sú vɣáli tá níx̃ia tis}
~ do not stroke your cat so much, she will show you her nails
R1: гордому **кошка** на грудь не вскочит
~ the cat does not jump on the chest of an arrogant person
R2: **кошачья** лапка мягка, а коготок востер
~ the cat's paw is soft, but her claw is sharp
R3: напала на **кошку** спесь, не хочет с печи слезть
~ arrogance attacked the cat, she does not want to come off the stove
R4: **кошка** которая гуляет сама по себе ~ a cat that walks by herself
R5: никогда не доверяйте улыбающемуся **коту** ~ never trust a smiling cat
R6: он честен как **кот**, который не может дотянуться до миски с мясом
~ he is as honest as a cat who cannot reach the bowl with the meat
R7: у **кошечки** когти в перчатках ~ a kitty has claws in the gloves
R8: эти **кошки** облизали ножки ~ these cats have licked the small legs
M: a perfidious, ungrateful and arrogant behaviour

4.2.29.

G1: κάνει σαν την λυσσασμένη **γάτα**
{káni sán tí lisazméni ɣáta} ~ she acts like a rabid cat
G2: κάνει σαν **γάτα** στο σακί {káni sán ɣáta stó sakí} ~ he does like a cat in the sack
R1: фыркать как **кошка** ~ to snort like a cat
R2: как угорелая **кошка** метаться (бегать, носиться)
~ to move (run, be, walk around) like a poisoned cat
S: фрктати као **мачка** ~ to snort like a cat
M: when a person reacts angrily

4.2.30.

G: σαν δαρμένη **γάτα** {sán ðarméni ɣáta} ~ like a beaten cat
R1: как паршивая (шелудивая, дохлая) **кошка** ~ like a lousy (scabby, gaunt) cat
R2: худая (тощая, ободранная) как драная (облезлая) **кошка**
~ as thin (scrawny, skinned) as a tattered (shabby) cat
S: изгледати (осећати се, вући се) као пребијена (крепана) **мачка**
~ to look (feel, drag along) like a beaten (wreckled) cat
M: a man who is exhausted and for this reason he moves very slowly

4.2.31.

G1: η **γάτα** άμα δε μπορεί να φτάσει το ψάρι, λέει: «μυρίζει»
{í ɣáta áma ðé borí ná ftási tó psári, léi: „mirízi"}

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~ when the cat cannot reach the fish, she says: “it smells bad“]
G$_2$: η **γάτα** δεν έφτανε το βούτυρο κι έλεγε: «Είναι Παρασκευή!»
{í ɣ̲áta ð̲én éftane tó vútiro k̃í éleje: „íne Paraskeví!“}
~ the cat did not get the butter and said: “it’s Friday!“
R: **кошка** не могла достать мяса и говорит: „сегодня пятница (пост)“
~ the cat could not reach the meat and said: “today is Friday (fast)“
M: when a person with excuses justifies his inability to achieve a set goal

4.2.32.

G$_1$: κάθεται σα βρεγμένη (ζημιάρα) **γάτα**
{káθete sá vreɣ̲méni (zimñára) ɣ̲áta} ~ she is sitting like a wet (troublemaking) cat
G$_2$: τα κουκουλώνει (σκεπάζει) σαν τη **γάτα**
{tá kukulóni (skepázi) sán tí ɣ̲áta}
~ he sweeps his mess under the rug (he covers things up) like a cat
R: знает **кошка** чьё мясо съела ~ a cat knows whose meat she has eaten
M: a person whose behaviour suggests that he is aware of his wrongdoing

4.2.33.

G: παραμονεύω σαν τη **γάτα** {paramonévo sán tí ɣ̲áta} ~ to lurk like a cat
R: караулить как **кошка** добычу ~ to keep watch over the prey like a cat
S: гледати као **мачак** иза угла ~ to watch like a cat behind the corner
M: to lie in wait for

4.2.34.

G$_1$: όλο το χρόνο πετεινός και **γάτος** το Γενάρη
{ólo tó xróno petinós k̃é ɣ̲átos tó Jenári}
~ to be the whole year a rooster and a cat in January
G$_2$: γεναριάτικος **γάτος** {jenarjátikos ɣ̲átos} ~ a January cat
R$_1$: мартовский **кот** ~ a March cat
R$_2$: блудлив (похотлив) как **кот** ~ lustful (lewd) like a March cat
R$_3$: **кот** Евстафий покаялся, постригся, посхимился, а все мышей во сне видит
~ the cat Eustathius repented, cut his hair, became a hermit and dreams all the mice
R$_4$: звал **кот** кошурку в печурку ~ the cat called the kitty to the small stove
M: uncontrolled sexual activity

4.2.35.

G: **γάτα** που κοιμάται (νιαουρίζει) ποντικούς δεν πιάνει
{ɣ̲áta pú k̃imáte (ñaurízi) pondik̃ús ð̲én pχ̃áni}
~ a cat who sleeps (meows) does not catch mice
R$_1$: лакома **кошка** до рыбки, да в воду лезть не хочется
~ the cat fancies small fish, but she doesn’t feel like stepping in the water
R$_2$: **кот** охотник до рыбы, да воды боится
~ a cat is lover of fish, but she is afraid of water

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R_3: **кот** видит молоко, да у него рыло коротко
~ a cat sees the milk, but she has a short snout
M: a lazy person

4.2.36.

G: σκούζω σαν τη **γάτα** {skúzo sán tí ɣ̱áta} ~ to shriek like a cat
P_1: визжать как **кошка** ~ to squeal like a cat
P_2: как **кот** на крыше ~ like a cat on the roof
M: to yell at; to caterwaul; to make a harsh cry

4.2.37.

G_1: δεν αφήνει ούτε θηλυκιά **γάτα**
{ðén afíni úte θilikx̃á ɣ̱áta} ~ he does not leave even a female cat
G_2: δεν του ξεφεύγει ούτε θηλυκιά **γάτα**
{ðén tú ksefévγi úte θilikx̃á ɣ̱áta} ~ neither does a female cat get away from him
R: ласти́ться как **кошка** ~ to talk as sweetly as a cat
M: a great seducer who requires sexual intercourse indiscriminately from all women

4.2.38.

G_1: ο ζεματισμένος **γάτος** φοβάται και το κρύο νερό
{ó zematizménos ɣ̱átos fováte k̃é tó krío neró}
~ the scalded cat is scared even of cold water
G_2: πατάει σαν τη **γάτα** {patái sán tí ɣ̱áta} ~ he steps like a cat
S: вртети се (мотати, обилазити) као **мачка** око вруће (вреле) каше (кобасице, сланине)
~ to turn around (wander, go around) like a cat around a hot (boiling) porridge sausage, bacon)
M: 1. to beat around the bush; 2. to approach something cautiously or indirectly

4.2.39.

G: σού έφαγε η **γάτα** τη γλώσσα;
{sú éfaɣ̱e í ɣ̱áta tí ɣ̱lósa;} ~ did the cat eat your tongue?
S: **мацa** ти појела језик? ~ did the cat eat your tongue?
M: someone is suspiciously unobtrusive and inexplicably silent when he is expected to speak

4.2.40.

G: πατώ τη **γάτα** {pató tí ɣ̱áta} ~ to step on a cat
S: повући **мачка** за реп ~ to pull a cat by the tail
M: to have become associated with something powerful and potentially dangerous

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4.2.41.

G: είναι ζηλιάρα σαν **γάτα** {ine zi͡Ĭára sán ɣ̱áta} ~ she is as jealous as a cat
M: a woman who experiences erotic jealousy

4.2.42.

G: η θεωρία της **γάτας** {í θeoría tís ɣ̱átas} ~ the cat theory
M: the various illegalities that are in particular done by an authority should be hidden

4.2.43.

G: όπως πλένεται η **γάτα** {ópos plénete í ɣ̱áta} ~ as the cat washes herself
M: an unclean person who never cleans all his body

4.2.44.

G: ούτε θηλυκιά **γάτα**{úte θilikx̆á ɣ̱áta} ~ nor a female cat
M: total lack of female presence

4.2.45.

R_1: **кошке** игрушки, а мышке – слёзки
~ for the cat there are toys, for the little mouse there are little tears
R_2: **кошке** смех, а мышке – слёзы
~ for the cat there is laughter, for the little mouse there are tears
M: the pleasures of the mighty are the tears of the poor

4.2.46.

R: не всё **коту** масленица ~ a cat won't always have Maslenitsa (Cheese-fare week)
M: life is not made up of pleasures alone, troubles and difficulties also occur; every day is not Sunday; life is not all beer and skittles

4.2.47.

R: ёшкин **кот** ~ a cat from Yoshkar-Ola (the capital city of the Mari El Republic)
M: negative emotions like frustration or anger

4.2.48.

R: отольются **кошке** мышкины слезки
~ the tears of the little mouse are echoing in the cat
M: he that mischief hatches, mischief catches; people who behave wickedly receive their just deserts

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4.2.49.

R: потом суп с **котом** ~ then soup with a cat
M: an joking or ironic response that puts something off into the indefinite future; later never arrives

4.2.50.

R: вот такие пирожки с **котятами** ~ here such are the pies with kittens
M: that's the way the cookie crumbles (often said of things that go badly)

4.2.51.

R: ночью все **кошки** серы ~ all cats are grey at night
M: all cats are grey in the dark; in obscure circumstances the real difference between people or things is indistinguishable

4.2.52.

R: сильнее **кошки** зверя нет ~ there is no stronger beast than a cat
M: a person who is considered powerful, although he is not

4.2.53.

R: тянуть **кота** за хвост (яйца) ~ to drag the cat by the tail (eggs)
M: to talk too slowly and not to the point; to beat around the bush

4.2.54.

R: когда **коту** делать нечего, он яйца лижет
~ when the cat has nothing to do, she licks her eggs
M: a meaningless action; a useless activity

4.2.55.

R: шкодлив, как **кошка**, а труслив, как заяц
~ naughty like a cat and coward like a hare
M: meanness always goes together with cowardice

4.2.56.

S: што је преслано није ни **мачкама** драго
~ whatever is too salty neither is dear for the cats
M: any exaggeration in telling stories or presenting events should be avoided

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4.2.57.

S: добити **мачиће** ~ to get kittens
M: to lose patience by waiting

4.2.58.

S: први се **мачићи** у воду бацају ~ the first kittens are thrown in the water
M: every beginning is difficult; first attempts usually fail

4.2.59.

S: не видим белу **мачку** ~ I do not see a white cat
M: a temporary blindness caused by external influences (alcohol, marijuana, cold)

4.2.60.

S: ко покисла **мачка** ~ like a drenched cat
M: when a person does not object to someone's endangering behaviour or threats

5. Conclusions

The conducted contrastive analysis of two hundred fifty eight (258) multi-word lexical units with the component "cat" in Bulgarian (41), Greek (68), Russian (100), and Serbian (49) leads to the clear conclusion that most frequently unfavourable features and negative connotations {181 (-) vs. 77 (+)} are attributed to this beloved domestic animal. Additionally, we must emphasize that remarkable cultural sterotypes reflecting the complicated conceptual framework and the unique ethnological parameters are clearly manifested in significant similarities and interesting differences related to the examined phrasemes.

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