CROSS-CULTURAL COGNITIVE MOTIVATION OF ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN NOSE IDIOMS. A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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Abstract: *The study of idiomaticity is considered to be one of the most controversial aspects of modern linguistics. The paper analyses from a cognitive perspective a series of English and Romanian idioms pertaining to the conceptual domain of nose. The cognitive frame provides an adequate explanation for most of nose idioms. In most of the cases, more than one cognitive mechanism contributes to the motivation of the idiomatic meaning. The paper is based on the cognitive hypothesis according to which idioms are motivated by conceptual structures: conventional knowledge, conceptual metonymies and metaphors. We also try to demonstrate that in some cases the meaning of an idiom can be inferred from its components.*

There is a considerable degree of correspondence between English and Romanian in that there are nose idioms in both languages which share the same figurative meaning, as well as the same underlying conceptual strategies.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonymies, idiom.*

1. The traditional approach to idioms

The study of idiomaticity is one of the most difficult and neglected aspects of modern linguistics. The characteristic feature of phraseology and idiomaticity as a discipline is that traditional procedures, criteria and methodological approaches mostly cannot be applied here, and that is for the simple reason that these procedures, criteria and methodological approaches have been created for regular language and its phenomena. However, what is in principle valid for phraseology is that it is always somehow anomalous, irregular. Describing idioms and idiomaticity is a very complex problem which should be analysed from the formal, functional as well as from the semantic point of view.

In *Longman Idioms Dictionary* (2001: VII) an idiom is defined as a "sequence of words which has a different meaning as a group from the meaning it would have if you understand each word separately".

An idiom is a conventionalized multiword expression whose units are mostly semantically ambiguous.

A *conventionalized* expression is an expression which has been used over time so frequently that it has lost its special metaphorical features and with which many speakers of a particular language are familiar.

A brief presentation of some general aspects on the definition of the term and on the main criteria of idiom classification from the traditional perspective may be appropriate.

In his book *Idiom Structure in English*, Adam Makkai (1972:122) considers the following criteria decisive for characterization of idioms: 1. the term *idiom* is a unit realized by at least two words; 2. the meaning of an idiom is not predictable from its component parts, which are empty of their usual senses; 3. idioms display a high degree of disinformation potential, i.e. their parts are polysemous and therefore can be

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misinterpreted by the listener; 4. idioms are institutionalized, i.e. they are conventionalized expressions whose conventionalization is the result of initially ad hoc expressions.

Weinreich's article "Problems in the Analysis of Idioms" is an attempt to establish the criteria upon which to base the characteristic features of idiomatic phrases. He accepts as idioms only multiword expressions which have literal counterparts. Weinreich (1969:226) gives his definition of an idiom as "a phraseological unit that involves at least two polysemous constituents, and in which there is a reciprocal contextual selection of subsenses[...]"

In the two volumes of *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, Cowie *et alii* (1975: VIII-XI) consider the following two features as the most important to characterize idioms: 1. compositeness, i.e. "an idiom is a combination of two or more words which function as a unit of meaning" and 2. semantic unity, i.e. "idiomaticity is largely a semantic matter, and is manifested in much the same way in expressions of different structural types".

2. Idioms viewed from the cognitive perspective

While Makkai, Weinreich and other linguists study mainly the formal aspects connected to idioms and Fernando classifies idioms according to the function they have in discourse, cognitive linguists have a completely different view. The major representatives of experiential realism, Lakoff, Johnson and Gibbs have discussed aspects concerning the nature of meaning, the role of metaphor and metonymy, the process of categorization and the relationship between form and meaning. It is natural within the new theoretical frame founded by them, based on the way people perceive, conceptualize and categorize the world around them, that the complexity of idioms should occupy an important place.

Without totally denying the traditional view according to which the meaning of an idiom cannot be completely inferred from the meaning of its components, these linguists consider that there exists a systematic conceptual motivation for a large number of idioms. Most idioms are products of our conceptual system and not simply a matter of language. An idiom is not just an expression that has a meaning somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituent parts, but its meaning arises from our more general knowledge of the world embodied in our conceptual system. In other words, the majority of idioms are conceptual, and not linguistic, in nature (Kövecses, Szabó, 1996:330).

Idioms are conceptually motivated in the sense that there are cognitive mechanisms such as metaphors, metonymy and conventional knowledge which link literal meaning with figurative idiomatic meaning. This view is also shared by Gibbs (1997:142) who claims that "idioms do not exist as separate semantic units within the lexicon, but actually reflect coherent systems of metaphorical concepts".

The term *conventional knowledge*, as a cognitive mechanism, designates what is shared about a conceptual domain by the people belonging to the same culture. This knowledge includes, for example, the body part corresponding to a conceptual domain. Lakoff (1987:446) suggests that people have in their minds large sets of conventional images of world around them, depending upon their specific culture. Conventional images are context independent and they remain in our subconscious sometimes for the rest of our life.

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Lakoff (*op.cit*:448) also shows that there is a great number of idioms (*imageable idioms*) whose meaning is not arbitrary as traditional theory considers. For an adequate motivation of the idiomatic meaning, all three above-mentioned cognitive sources should be taken into account.

Gibbs and O'Brien (1990:37) try to infirm the traditional theory which regards idioms as non-compositional expressions from the semantic point of view. They have also shown that people have tacit knowledge about the metaphorical basis of idioms.

Cognitive linguists consider that many idioms are based on conceptual metonymies and metaphors which connect the concrete and abstract areas of knowledge. They view metaphor and metonymy as cognitive mechanisms that relate a domain (or domains) of knowledge to an idiomatic meaning in an indirect way, without excluding the possibility that a given domain of knowledge can often account for a particular idiomatic meaning in a direct way; that is without metaphor or metonymy.

Metonymy is distinguished from metaphor in such a way that metonymy is characterized as typically involving one conceptual domain, rather than two distinct ones as in the case of metaphor. Furthermore, metonymy involves a 'stand for' conceptual relationship between two entities (within a single domain), while metaphor involves an 'is' or 'is understood as' relationship between two conceptual domains such as anger and fire (Kövecses, Szabó, *op. cit*.:338).

The target-domain of conventional metaphor determines the general meaning of the idiom.

According to Kövecses and Szabó (*ibidem:* 352) the meaning of many idioms depends on the following factors:

source-target relationship, which determines the general meaning of idioms;

systematic mappings between the source and target domains, which provide more specific meaning of idioms;

particular knowledge structures, or inferences, associated with the source domain, i.e. the general knowledge of the world;

cognitive mechanisms: metaphor and metonymy.

The impossibility of applying the cognitive mechanisms to all idioms represents a weak point of the cognitive theory.

However, the cognitive frame provides an adequate explanation for body parts idioms. In most of the cases, more than one cognitive mechanism contributes to the motivation of the idiomatic meaning; this motivation results from the combination of three factors: conventional knowledge, metonymy and metaphor. Idioms which make use of parts of the human body are more predictable than others, simply because as human beings we are more familiar with our perception of the shape, size and functions of individual parts of our own bodies, since we experience them every day. The idiomatic language is mostly anthropocentric, i.e. it is focused on people, on their behaviour, perceptions of their environment, on their physical and emotional states (Bílková, 2000:6).

Idioms can be more easily analysed within a certain conceptual domain and not in isolation. In this respect Gibbs (*op. cit*.:104) claims that if we examine groups of idioms, especially those referring to similar concepts, it is easier to uncover the active presence of conceptual metaphors which structure the way we think about different domains of human experience.

If we consider that some idioms are partly semantically transparent, and also that their meaning can be determined by means of conceptual mappings between source and target domains, we may analyse in detail the idiomatic structures in any language.

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Are there idiomatic structures common to several languages? Are there conceptual metaphors, metonymies and conventional knowledge present in all languages? Are there common concepts resulted from the way people conceptualize the surrounding reality all over the world?

Starting from these aspects the purpose of this paper is to analyse a series of English and Romanian idioms pertaining to the conceptual domain of *nose* from a cognitive perspective. The analysis is based on the cognitive hypothesis according to which idioms are motivated by the above mentioned conceptual structures. Since in the process of deducing the meaning, the speakers activate first of all the idiom Keywords, the total figurative meaning can be anticipated from the meanings of its components. It is equally interesting to notice whether the speakers of English and Romanian have many common elements in the way they conceptualize this very important part of the human body - *nose* - and in the way this conceptual structure is reflected in the idiomatic expressions.

We will first examine the general conventional knowledge which conceptually motivates the meaning of many idioms containing the word *nose* (*nas*) as the first cognitive mechanism which connects the physical (or source) domain of our knowledge about the nose with the abstract (or target) domain of knowledge which arises when the word *nose* is used in idiomatic expressions. Next, conceptual metaphors and metonymies which underlie various idiomatic phrases will be presented. To demonstrate that the same conventional knowledge and conceptual metaphors and metonymies can be found both in English and Romanian, examples will be given from both these languages, thus enabling us to draw a parallel between them.

The analysed idioms have been collected from standard dictionaries of idioms: *Longman Idioms Dictionary- LID* (2001), *Oxford Idioms. Dictionary for Learners of English* (2001)- *OID* and *Dicţionar de expresii şi locuţiuni ale limbii române* (1985), but other dictionaries of both English and Romanian have been consulted.

3. Conventional knowledge

Conventional knowledge is relevant for the following English and Romanian nose idioms:

- *give somebody /be given a bloody nose* means 'to defeat or damage someone/to be defeated or made to fail in a way that you did not expect and that makes you seem weak or stupid'. A possible Romanian equivalent might be: *a ieşi* or *a-i da cuiva ceva pe nas:*

English*: The company* ***got a bloody nose*** *when it launched a software package in direct competition with its smaller rival* (*LID*, 246).
Romanian: *Lasă dacă* ***nu i-o da odihna pe nas****, zise boierul în gândul său* (Creangă, *apud. DLRLC*, 161).

- *turn your nose up at something* (informal) ' refuse or reject something because you do not think it is good enough for you' has the Romanian correspondent *a strâmba din nas*:

English*: The cat* ***turned up his nose at the food*** *(OID, 240).*
Romanian: ***Strâmba din nas*** *la toate ofertele.*

Here reference is made to the specific movement of the nose, or rather the facial muscles which help to move it, so that it looks like it has been turned up. Such a person expresses his contempt. So the literal meaning of this expression is linked to its idiomatic meaning 'to despise something' via the speakers'general conventional

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knowledge (Bilkova, *op.cit.*:65). Nose is conceptualized in both languages as an instrument to express contempt.

- *thumb your nose at* meaning 'to show that you do not respect rules, laws or authority, to despise something or somebody' has a Romanian equivalent *a da cu tifla:*

English: *The drawing shows clearly that Picasso was determined* ***to thumb his nose at his teachers****. (LID,* 247*).*
Romanian: *Nu e frumos* ***să dai cu tifla*** *unui bărbat care-și apără iubirea (Ion Vinea, apud* Duda et ali., *713).*

- *a tăia or a scurta nasul cuiva* 'to punish, to humiliate somebody'(the reference is made to a medieval kind of punishment):

Dumnezău, ca ***sa-i taie nasu'****, îi răspunsă: Ba mai bine să mori tu! (Șezătoare, III, apud DLR, VII, part 1,* 28*).*

- *a da cuiva peste nas*' to tell somebody harsh words in order to put them in their place' may have as an English equivalent the expression *to snub somebody* (Hulban, 2012: 203).

I-am dat peste nas*, amintind- i cum se comportase ea insăși cu mine în trecut.*

- *a-i trânti cuiva ușa în* nas 'to refuse to receive a person'. In this case, the metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON is also a cognitive strategy. In English there is a similar idiom, but containing the word *face to shut/to slam the door in somebody's face* (*ibidem:* 380).

Nu mai voia să- l vadă, așa că ***i-a trântit ușa in nas.***

- *a-i da cuiva cu cădelnița pe la nas* 'to flatter somebody'*:*

Nu mai știe cum ***să-i dea cu cădelnița pe la nas****, doar i-o intra în voie. (*Duda *et alii,417).*

Another possible cognitive mechanism is the metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON.

- *a lăsa (a pune) nasul în* jos'to be ashamed'*:*

George ***puse nasul în pământ*** (Rebreanu, *Ion, apud DLRLC,* 161*).*

In both languages, *nose* is conceptualized in connection to the idea of pride, impertinence, bad behaviour and punishment. All these conceptualizations have their origins in conventional knowledge.

4. Conceptual metonymies

Conceptual metonymies motivate certain English and Romanian *nose* idioms, thus providing the link between their literal and idiomatic meanings.

THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON

- *somebody can't see beyond (the end) of his/her nose* 'someone is too interested in themselves and their own lives to understand or deal with other situations or other people's problems' has the Romanian equivalent *a nu vedea mai departe decât lungul nasului.*

English: *The article says this city is full of people who* ***can´t see beyond the end of their noses****. I strongly disagree.*
Sometimes the administrators do not seem ***to see beyond their noses.*** *They forget they are dealing with real human things* (*LID,* 245-246).
Romanian : *Toți știau că el* ***nu vedea mai departe decât lungul nasului****.*

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- *have a nose round* 'to look around a place or to look for something, especially when it is someone else's place and you are not supposed to be there':

English: *I **had a nose round**, but I couldn´t find where he keeps the whisky.*

*There was a big new shopping centre, and after **having a nose round** she went into the shiny new coffee shop* (*LID*, 246).

Conventional knowledge also motivates this idiom.

- *have/keep your nose to the grindstone* 'to work very hard for a long time without thinking about anything else' has no Romanian equivalent containing the lexeme *nas*. Yet, there is an idiomatic *equivalent a lucra/ munci pe brânci / pe rupte:*

English*: Cole had a bad reputation when he was younger, but nowadays he **keeps his nose to the grindstone**.*

*Let´s try **to keep our noses to the grindstone**, and then I think we´ll see the results (LID*, 246).

*Romanian: **Muncea pe brânci** ca să termine la timp.*

Conventional knowledge could be another possible cognitive source.

The informal expression *be right (there) under somebody´s nose* is used in order to say that something that someone cannot find or understand is really very easy to find or understand. It has an identical equivalent in Romanian: *sub (*or, rarely *în) nasul cuiva.* In this case, conventional knowledge also functions as a cognitive strategy.

English: *You wouldn't notice something if it **was right under your nose**, because you are so angry all the time.*

"Where are my keys?"

*"**Right** there, **under your nose**" (LID*, 246).

Romanian: *De ți-ar fi tot trupul ochi și ai pândi fiecare bătaie de inimă, tot are s-o înșele **sub nasul tău** (*Negruzzi, *apud DLR, VII, partea I*, 27*).*

- *rub somebody´s nose in it/something means* 'to keep reminding someone about something they do not want to think about, especially something that makes them feel ashamed or embarrassed'. There are similar Romanian idioms: *a-i freca ridichea la nas* and *a-i trage un ibrișin pe/la nas:*

English*: The failure of the satellite was a major embarrassment, but no one has tried **to rub our noses in what we did**.*

*You are supposed to try to keep the old man from thinking about his illness, **not rub his nose in it** (LID*, 246).

Romanian*: **Îi tot freca ridichea** la nas cu trecutul lui și nu-l lăsa să uite.*

***Ne și trage câte un ibrișin pe la nas** despre fata popii de la Folticenii Vechi* (Ion Creangă, *apud DLRC, I*, 481).

- *have (got) you nose in a book, magazine, etc*.(informal*)* 'be reading something and giving it all your attention' has a Romanian similar phrase *a sta cu nasul în cărți.*

English*: She´s always **got her nose in a book*** (*OID*, 257).

Romanian: *Toată viața **stătuse cu nasul în cărți*.**

- *keep your nose clean* (informal) 'do nothing that will get you into trouble with the police and the authorities' has no Romanian correspondent.

*After he came out of jail, he was determined **to keep his nose clean**.* **(***OID*, 257).

- *it´s no skin off somebody´s nose* (informal) is used to say that somebody is not upset or annoyed about something because it does not affect them:

***It´s no skin off my nose** if the price of cigarettes goes up. I don´t smoke (OID*, 357).

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- *never to poke one's nose out (of doors)*meaning 'to go out' has a Romanian idiomatic equivalent*: a-şi arăta* or *a scoate, a-şi scoate nasul la ivealã:*

English*: He felt that* ***he will never poke his nose out of doors*** *again.*
Romanian*: Predescu nu voia* ***să-şi arate nasul pe peron***. (V.I. Popa, *apud DLR, VII, part I,* 27).

- *to slip past under someone's (very) nose* has a Romanian idiomatic equivalent *a trece cuiva pe la nas* or *pe lânga nas:*

English*: The chance* ***has always slipped past under his nose.***
Romanian*: Şansa unei burse in străinătate* ***îi trecuse pe la nas.***

- *to wave something about in front of someone's nose* has a Romanian correspondent: *a- i flutura cuiva ceva pe la nas* / *a da cuiva cu ceva pe la nas* or *a trece cuiva pe la nas sau pe lângă nas*, meaning 'to tempt' somebody:
  Îi tot flutura pe la nas *un post mai bun.*
- *to shove something under someone's nose* has its Romanian idiomatic equivalent in the expression *a azvârli* or *a arunca cuiva ceva în nas:*

English: Margaret ***shoved the letter under his nose*** *so he was forced to admit the truth.*
Romanian*: Ce te ţii, mă, după mine?- răcni o*şteanul tare, *înturnându-se şi* ***zvârlindu-i vorbele în nas*** (Sadoveanu , *apud DLRLC,* 161).

- *get/ put somebody´s nose out of joint* 'to annoy someone by not giving them as much respect as they think they deserve; to offend somebody'. There is a similar Romanian idiomatic expression *a-i da cuiva peste nas:*

English*:* ***Has Derek got your nose out of joint****? I´ m sure he was just teasing you.*
Now that was a quick, simple solution, and it ***hasn't put anybody's nose out of joint*** *(LID,* 246).
Romanian*:* ***Îi dădea mereu peste nas*** *şi asta îl enerva pes*te măsură.

- *count noses* 'to count people'. There is no Romanian correspondent.
  The teacher stopped ***to count noses*** *before they entered the museum.*
- *nose (someone) out* or *nose out (someone)* 'to push someone away, to exclude someone'. There is no Romanian equivalent.
  She ***was nosed out of t****he competition.*

The conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON also motivates the following Romanian idiomatic expressions:

- *a da cu nasul de ceva 'to face a difficulty':*

Nu era obişnuit cu munca şi acum, când ***a dat cu nasul de greu****, nu -i venea să creadă* (Duda *et alii*., 417).

- *a da cu nasul pe undeva sau prin ceva 'to pass quickly'*

Noi cei cari ***am dat cu nasu' prin şcoale****...* (Gligore M. Jipescu, *apud* Duda *et alii*, 417).

- *a da nasul cu cineva, a da nas in nas cu cineva 'to meet unexpectedly'*
  Tocmai când mă aşteptam mai puţin, ***am dat nasul cu el***. (Duda *et alii*, 417).
- *a-i da cuiva şi pe gură şi pe nas* 'to give somebody more than he needs and deserves'

I-a dat şi pe gură şi pe nas*, neîndreptăţind pe ceilalţi.*

In the above examples conventional knowledge is also a conceptual strategy in inferring the idiomatic meaning.

- *a nu fi de nasul cuiva*'not to be good enough for somebody':

Mai încet, mai încet, te- ai cam grăbit, ***nu e de nasul tău*** *o asemenea bucăţică!* (P. Ispirescu, *apud DLR, VII, part 1,* 20).

- *a- i râde cuiva în nas* 'to mock somebody':

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Cum i-o mai râde în nas *Dalia după toate acestea! Nu, el n-are voie să se depărteze de locul luptei!* (Ion Vinea, *apud* Duda *et alii*, 419).

In English, the same idiomatic meaning is rendered by the idiom *to laugh in somebody's face.*

THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT

In the English idiom *to have a nose for something* 'to be naturally good at noticing or finding a particular type of thing', the nose is taken to mean instinct. This seems to be based on the fact that people used to smell the air around them in order to find out various very specific things (e.g. whether it is going to rain, whether there is a danger etc.). Based on such experience, people were able to predict these things very precisely. The combination of this conventional knowledge and the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT seems to be the main motivating factor which links the literal with the idiomatic meaning of this expression (Bilkova, *op.cit.*, 2000: 67). Indirect Romanian equivalents might be*: a avea fler pentru ceva* and *a simți/a prinde ceva* (Nicolescu, Preda et alii: 95).

English*: Philcox always* ***had a nose for opportunities****, even before they happened*. (*LID*, 246).

The Romanian idiom *a avea nas means 'to dare'*. *Nose* is negatively conceptualized in connection with the idea of insolence, impertinence, rudeness as in *a-i da nasul să:*

N-are nas *să mai ceară de când nu a dat banii înapoi.*

De ***i-ar mai da lui nasul să mai miroase*** *pe-aici, apoi lasă! (*Creangă, *apud DLRLC*, 160*).*

To follow one's nose is another example in which the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT motivates the idiomatic meaning. Conventional knowledge has also an important role. The phrase has actually two idiomatic meanings:

1. 'to behave in a way that you think is best or right, often in a situation in which there are no rules':

I just ***follow my nose***

A good physician will still need ***to follow his nose*** *in deciding what the cause of the problem is.*

2. 'to keep going straight ahead':

Just ***follow your nose*** *to the end of the path and turn left. (LID*, 246*).*

There is no Romanian equivalent.

The nose is negatively conceptualized in connection with the idea of insolence and rudeness in the Romanian expression*: a-și lua nasul la purtare* 'to be insolent, rude', *a-i da cuiva nas* 'to indulge somebody, especially somebody who takes advantage of it'. There are no English equivalents:

Ar trebui sa vorbească cineva cu el; prea ***și-a luat nasul la purtare*****.**

I-a dat nas *și acum un se mai poate nimeni înțelege cu ea***.**

In the English idiom *get up your nose* 'to annoy you very much by saying or doing something', nose is conceptualized in association with the idea of annoyance and anger. The same conceptualization is valid for the Romanian idiom*: a-i veni mustarul la nas, a-i tremura nasul, a fi cu nasul de ceară. A fi cu nasul de ceară* also means 'to be shy'. Conventional knowledge also motivates these idioms.

English: *He's on the phone half the day -* ***it gets up my nose,*** *and when customers ring us they can't get through (LID*, 246*).*

Romanian*: Când l-a auzit vorbind astfel,* ***i-a venit mustarul la nas.***

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Nose is also conceptualized in connection with the idea of an inappropriate behaviour in the Romanian idiom *a nu-şi cunoaşte lungul nasului* 'to be insolent, to pretend more than you deserve':

*Viindu- i cu greaţă de atâta cutezare, vru să-i arate că nu-**şi cunoaşte lungul nasului***. (Ispirescu, *apud DLRLC*, 160).

5. Conceptual metaphors

Next we shall analyse some English idioms and their possible Romanian correspondents motivated by conventional metaphors.

SMELLING IS SUSPECTING

The sense of smell is seen as a weaker source domain for metaphorical mappings in comparison with the other senses, vision, for example. Sweetser (1990: 43) considers that this sense has fewer metaphorical connections with the mental faculties than other senses.

There are two metaphorical extensions from the concrete domain to the abstract one (Neagu, 2005:86):

- bad smell to indicate bad character
- detection of such characteristics

The conceptual metaphor SMELLING IS SUSPECTING motivates the English idiom *to smell something fishy*. Two possible Romanian equivalents might be *a nu-i mirosi ceva bine* and *a avea nas de prepelicar*. In these cases, the idiomatic meaning is also motivated by the metonymy SMELL *STANDS FOR INTUITION:*

English*: I **smell something fishy.***

Romanian*: Lauda de sine **nu miroase a bine.***

*Lui **nu i-a mirosit bine** de la început toată **această afacere.***

***Avea nas de prepelicar** şi simţise că ceva un este în regulă.*

TO BE PROUD IS TO HOLD THE NOSE UP

- *do something/ go/ walk with your nose in the ai*r 'to behave as if you are better than someone else' has two Romanian idiomatic correspondents: *a umbla* or *a fi, a merge, a se ţine cu nasul pe sus* and *a nu- i ajunge cu prăjina la nas.*

English: *Cramer sat on the beach **with his nose in the air** and pretended not to notice the rest of us* (LID, 246).

Romanian: Pe dumneata vreu numaidecât să te văd om ca toţi oamenii, în rând cu lumea.

Nu vezi că cei mai mulţi de teapa dumitale se ţin cu nasul pe sus, numai din pricina asta? Ca şi cum dumneata n-ai fi vrednic sa ţii o femeie! (Creangă, *apud* Duda *et alii*, 684)

*Nu-**i mai ajungea** nimeni **cu prăjina la nas.***

In Romanian, there is also the opposite expression *a-i cădea nasul* 'to lose one's pride, to be humiliated':

O, de te-aş vedea măritată după gândul meu, cum ţi-ar cădea nasul! (V. Alecsandri, *apud DLR, VII, part 1*, 29)

TO BE INTRUSIVE IS TO STICK THE NOSE INTO SOMETHING

The speakers of both languages seem to rely on conventional knowledge and on this metaphor while inferring the meaning of these idioms: *stick/ poke your nose into something* and *a- şi băga nasul unde nu- i fierbe oala* 'to interfere in one's private life':

English: *Maybe **I was sticking my nose in someone else's business**, but I had to stop the fight (LID,* 246*).*

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Romanian: *Dar tu ce-**ți mai bagi nasul**? N-ai de lucru acasă*? (Rebreanu, *apud DLR, VII, part 1*, 28).

In English there is also the derivative *nosy*, meaning 'curious' and the expression *a nosy parker* 'a person who is too interested in other's people's private lives':

*Our next door neighbour is **a** real **nosy parker**. He always has to know everything about everybody on our street (OID, 257).*

TO LEAD SOMEBODY BY THE NOSE IS TO CONTROL HIM/HER

This conceptual metaphor may be the cognitive source for the idiom *lead somebody around by the nose* meaning 'to control somebody completely so that they do everything you want them to do, especially in a way that makes the person seems stupid'. It has the Romanian correspondent *a duce de nas pe cineva*:

English: *Doug actually seemed to enjoy the fact that, at home, Katie* **led him around by the nose** (LID, 246).

Romanian***:*** *Nu e om să se lase **dus de nas*** (G. M. Zamfirescu, *apud DLRC, VII, part 1*, 28).

In Romanian the expression has also the meaning 'to deceive somebody'**:**

*S-a lăsat **dus de nas** și tras pe sfoară de toți șarlatanii* (Vlahuță, *apud. DLR, VII, part 1*, 29).

6. Conclusions

As can be seen from the previous analysis, the conceptualization of the human *nose* depends on the conventional knowledge which we have about the placement, shape, and function of this part of our body and gestures connected with it. The other two cognitive mechanisms, conventional metaphor and metonymy play an important role in the way we store information about the human *nose* in our memory. Although there are many more idiomatic expressions both in English and Romanian which contain the word *nose*, and which would require further analysis to confirm or reject the claim that the meaning of the constitutive parts of some idioms partially motivates their meaning, the previous examples prove that in many cases, this is true.

This analysis shows that there is a considerable degree of correspondence between English and Romanian regarding *nose* idioms. Thus, there are idiomatic expressions in both languages which share their figurative meaning, as well as the same underlying conceptual strategies. In both languages, *the nose* stands for person, instinct, intuition and is also negatively conceptualized as an instrument with which a person intrudes in someone's affairs, or in close connection with the idea of pride, disdain and bad behaviour.

Examining idioms across languages enables us to understand the way people think and gives us an invaluable insight into human psychology. Although it is impossible to generalize with confidence about language in general, from a restricted study such as this one, the fact that cognitive mechanisms are at work in English and Romanian would suggest that metaphorical thinking may also function in other languages. The present analysis can also be a partial answer to a question whether or not we may speak about cross-cultural concepts within a common conceptual framework. As Taylor (1995:41) points out "since certain experiences are presumably common to all normal human beings, it comes as no surprise that we find both considerable cross-language similarity in metaphorical expression, as well as cross-language diversity".

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Cross-cultural and cross language similarity concerning *nose* idioms were, at least partially, demonstrated in our study.

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