EXAMPLES OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS WITH THE LEXEME *INIMĂ* IN THE ROMANIAN AND SERBIAN LANGUAGES

Laura SPĂRIOSU
University of Novi Sad

Abstract

The aim of this work is to make a comparison between idiomatic expressions with lexeme *inimă* in the Romanian and Serbian languages. These expressions could be classified according to different criteria and the main source in identifying them were bilingual dictionaries. Most of these are related to human feelings expressing joy or pleasure, suffering, love, goodness or badness, courage. Moreover, the similarities between expressions, in both languages, clearly show that the cultural development of the Romanian and Serbian peoples followed the same direction.

Key words: *the Romanian language*, *the Serbian language*, *idiomatic expression*, *comparison*, *lexeme* inimă

Résumé

Le but de cet article est de comparer les expressions idiomatiques qui contiennent le lexème *inimă* en roumain et en serbe. Ces expressions peuvent se classifier selon plusieurs critères, la principale source dans leur identification en étant les dictionnaires bilingues. Leur grande majorité se réfère aux sentiments humains, en exprimant la joie ou le plaisir, la souffrance, l'amour. En outre, les similitudes entre les expressions de deux langues montrent que le développement culturel de deux peuples, roumain et serbe, a poursuivi la même direction.

Mots-clés: *langue roumaine*, *langue serbe*, *expressions idiomatiques*, *comparaison*, *lexème* inimă

Preliminary deliberations

Lexicography is the applicative domain of linguistics which naturally entails the analysis and explanation of expressions (Dumistrăcel, 1980: 131). A series of contemporary research conducted on the lexicon contributed immensely to the comprehension of the structure and developmental rate of this language domain, by defining the criteria derived

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)

from modern concepts of structural determinism resulting in the affirmation of certain domain specifics such as phraseology (Dumistrăcel, 1980: 132).

Phraseology is the language domain which studies the phraseologic entities or idiomatic expressions of a language or a group of languages: their occurrence and origin, their usage in dialects, their role in the modernization of the literary language. The aim of the research is to prove that this discipline should be independent. Idioms are groups of words having a single meaning or different meanings and a specific internal topic; due to these characteristics phraseology is closely related to lexico-semantics, morphology and syntax. Phraseology should be separated from syntax and lexicology; still, it is similar to the latter regarding the aims and methods of research (http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/filologie/dominte/index.htm).

Idioms represent combinations of two or more words which have one meaning and one reference. Their components have a set, predetermined position as well as a figurative, expressive character. For example, *a tăia frunze la câini* "to waste time", *a vinde gogoşi* "to lie", *a-i sta ca un ghimpe în ochi* "to create a constant fear" etc. Idioms make the written and spoken language more expressive.

Having in mind the large number of idioms used in various domains, one can say that the study of phraseology can bring us much closer to the history and civilization of our people or other peoples than the study of phonetics or grammatical structures (Hristea, 1984: 134). Considering many different language domains, only the lexicon and phraseology truly express culture and civilization, because only they directly reflect changes in society. This indisputable truth provides an additional reason to give phraseology much more attention in scientific research as well as in teaching and cultivating the Romanian language (Hristea, 1984: 135).

When analyzing the mentioned phenomenon, it should be pointed out that it exists in all languages. The language specific differences are exclusively quantitative and they cannot be explained by ethnical psychology, as it has been done so far (Iordan, 1975: 267). The sole criterion for differentiating is the social one; when the speaker is of a lower social status, the language he uses is more expressive. The inexistence of external constrains makes it spontaneous and natural in all its domains,

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)

especially when it is used by impulse or driven by emotions (Iordan, 1975: 267).

Idiomatic expressions with the lexeme *inimă* in the Romanian and Serbian languages: examples.

The lexeme *inimă* "heart" plural *inimi* "hearts" can found in DEX with several explanations: 1. internal muscular organ functioning as the center of the circulatory apparatus, situated in the left part of the thorax, which, while contracting, ensures blood circulation in the human and higher animal organism; pump; 2. stomach, belly, abdomen; 3. (in card games) hearts 4. a piece or an organ which has a shape similar to a heart.

In a figurative sense, *heart* appears in idioms. In following pages, we give a list of such expressions in Romanian and their translated equivalents in Serbian. The relevant sources used in this research are bilingual dictionaries, while the classification depends on the meaning of the key word:

Heart as a centre of human feelings, with the meanings:

a) Joy, liking:

a-i sălta (cuiva) *inima* (de bucurie)*/treperiti* (nekome) *srce od sreće/one's heart trembles with joy*, (lit. "a-i sălta inima de noroc") = a tresări ***de bucurie***, a se bucura mult/to jump with joy, to be very happy;

cât îi cere (cuiva) *inima*/*koliko mu srce želi*/*as much as one's heart desires* (lit. "cât îi doreşte inima") = atât cât vrea, cât ***poftește***, cât are plăcere/as much as one wants or desires.

b) Suffering, ache, misery:

a arde, *a frige*, *a seca* (pe cineva) *la inimă/parati* (nekome) *srce/to rip one's heart out* (lit. "a rupe (cuiva) inima") = a provoca (cuiva) o durere morală, o supărare mare/to cause somebody mental or emotional pain/to be very angry with somebody;

a i se rupe, *a rupe* (cuiva) *inima/slomiti* (nekome) *srce/to break one's heart* (lit. "a rupe (cuiva) inima") = a-i fi milă de cineva/to take pity on someone;

a avea (ceva) *pe inimă*/*ležati* (nešto) *na srcu/to burden someone's heart* (lit. "a-i sta (ceva) pe inimă") = a fi chinuit de un gând neîmpărtăşit, a

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)

avea o taină în suflet/to be tormented by a unrequited thought, to have a dark secret;

a pune (ceva) *la inimă/primiti k srcu/to take something to heart* (lit. "a primi la inimă") = a se supăra (pentru ceva) mai mult decât merită/to get angry because of something more than you should.

c) Affection or love:

a avea (pe cineva) *în* (*la*) *inimă/imati* (nekoga) *u srcu/to carry someone in your heart* (lit. "a avea (pe cineva) în inimă") = a iubi (pe cineva)/to love somebody;

a avea tragere de inimă (pentru), *a-l trage* (pe cineva) *inima să.../ imati volju* (za što)/*to want to do something* (lit.: "a avea voință pentru") = a se simți atras să facă ceva/to be driven to do something.

d) To be good or evil:

a avea inimă deschisă/imati otvoreno srce/to be openhearted (lit. "a avea inimă deschisă") = a fi sincer, cinstit/to be sincere, honest;

a fi bun la inimă/biti dobra srca/to be goodhearted (lit. "a fi bun la inimă) = a fi bun, milos, înțelegător, darnic/to be good, merciful, full of understanding, generous;

a fi fără inimă/biti bez srca/to be heartless (lit. "a fi fără inimă") = a fi rău, înrăit/to be evil, wicked;

a avea inimă haină/biti zla srca/to be evilhearted (lit. "a fi cu inimă haină") = a fi crud, neînțelegător, dușmănos, rău/to be cruel, unfriendly, like an enemy, evil;

a avea inimă de piatră/biti tvrda srca/to have a heart of stone (lit. "a fi cu inimă tare") = a fi nesimțitor, rău, fără suflet, rece/to have no feelings, evil, without a soul, cold;

a se muia la inimă, *a* (*i*) *se înmuia* (cuiva) *inima/biti meka srca/to become goodhearted* (lit. "a fi cu inimă moale") = a deveni bun, milos; a se îndupleca/to become better, merciful, to give in.

e) Courage, daring, internal force, volition:

a-şi lua inima în dinți/stisnuti petlju/to pluck up courage, to take heart (lit. "a strânge lațul") = a-şi face curaj, a se hotărî să întreprindă ceva/to pluck up courage, to decide to take actions;

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)

a-i veni (cuiva) *inima la loc/biti srce na mestu/to be relieved* (lit. “a-i fi inima la loc”) = se spune când cineva îşi recapătă calmul, echilibrul şi curajul după un moment de emoție sau de spaimă/to calm down, to regain balance and courage after being frightened or disturbed;

a-i sări (cuiva) *inima din loc/srce skoči u grlo/one’s heart jumped in one’s mouth* (lit. “a-i sări inima în gât”) = a se speria foarte tare, a se emoționa puternic/to be very scared or troubled.

Heart as the centre of spiritual life:

(a fi) *cu inima împăcată/olakšati srce/to unburden one’s heart* (lit. “a-şi uşura inima”) = (a fi) cu conştiința împăcată, liniştită, curată/to have a clear consciousness, to be at ease, calm, untainted;

a i se lua, a i se ridica (cuiva) *o piatră de pe inimă/pasti kamen sa srca/to lift a weight of one’s chest, shoulders* (lit. “a-i cădea o piatră de pe inimă”) = a scăpa de o stare sufletească apăsătoare, plină de griji şi de zbucium/not to be worried and agitated;

a deschide inima (sau sufletul)/*otvoriti srce* (ili dušu)/*to open one’s heart or soul* (lit. „a deschide inima (sau sufletul) ”) = a face destăinuiri, a spune tot ce are pe suflet; a se confesa/to reveal, to say everything that is in your heart, to confess;

din inimă, din toată inima/od srca, od sveg srca/from the bottom of one’s heart (lit. “din inimă, din toată inima”) = din tot sufletul, cu toată puterea sufletească/with all being.

As far as the form and content are concerned, there are:

a) Identical expressions in both languages: *a i se rupe, a rupe* (cuiva) *inima/slomiti* (nekome) *srce/to break one’s heart*; *a avea* (pe cineva) *în* (sau la) *inimă*/*imati* (nekoga) *u srcu/to have someone in your heart*; *a fi bun la inimă/biti dobra srca/to be goodhearted*; *a avea inimă deschisă/imati otvoreno srce/to be openhearted*; *a fi fără inimă/biti bez srca to be heartless*; *a deschide inima* (sau sufletul)/*otvoriti srce* (ili dušu)/*to open one’s heart or soul*; *din inimă, din toată inima/od srca, od sveg srca/from the bottom of one’s heart*.

b) Partial equivalents: *a-i sălta* (*cuiva*) *inima* (*de bucurie*)/ *treperiti* (*nekome*) *srce od sreće/one’s heart trembles with joy*; *cât îi cere* (*cuiva*) *inima/koliko mu srce želi/as much as one’s heart desires*; *a arde, a*

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)

frige, *a seca* (*pe cineva*) *la inimă/parati* (*nekome*) *srce/to rip one's heart out*; *a avea* (*ceva*) *pe inimă/ležati* (*nešto*) *na srcu/to burden someone's heart*; *a pune* (*ceva*) *la inimă/primiti k srcu/to take something to heart*; *a avea tragere de inimă* (pentru), *a-l* trage (pe cineva) *inima să.../imati volju* (za što)/*to want to do something*; *a avea inimă haină/biti zla srca/to be evilhearted*; *a avea inimă de piatră/biti tvrda srca/to have a heart of stone*; *a se muia la inimă*, *a* (*i*) *se înmuia* (*cuiva*) *inima/biti meka srca/to become goodhearted*; *a-i veni* (cuiva) *inima la loc/biti srce na mestu/to be relieved*; *a-i sări* (cuiva) *inima din loc/srce skoči u grlo/one's heart jumped in one's mouth*; (a fi) *cu inima împăcată/olakšati srce/to unburden one's heart*; *a i se lua, a i se ridica* (cuiva) *o piatră de pe inimă/pasti kamen sa srca/to lift a weight of one's chest, shoulders*.

c) Different expressions: *a-şi lua inima în dinți/stisnuti petlju/to pluck up courage, to take heart*.

Identical expressions whose elements cling to the autonomy of their meaning were translated literally; even though these idioms can be easily translated into other languages, some of them cannot be translated literally, and were replaced by equivalents with the same meaning, but different components. On the other hand, different expressions are difficult to translate. Hence, some elements were fused. Such idioms coincide semantically, but differ in the idea which is at the base of their meanings. The examples studied are mostly verbal phrases and a few adverbial phrases.

Conclusions

Idioms can be studied and classified using many different perspectives, while arising a series of problems such as the origin, structure, stylistic value, etc. We were interested in how these idioms are translated into Serbian because the Romanian language spoken in Vojvodina is intermediately connected to and influenced by Serbian.

Among the mentioned idioms, we can detect both similarities and differences. Similarities in internal form and metaphorical value can be explained by the same life conditions as well as similarities in the cultural developments of the two peoples (Romanian and Serbian). Bearing all this in mind, we can add the fact that idioms of a language represent a synthesis

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)

of thoughts which can clearly and concisely express the essence of an idea. These idioms translated from one language into another, no matter how old they are, are still genuine. In a way, their function in a language is to ease communication, and on the other hand to evoke human experience they sprang from.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dumistrăcel, Stelian, *Lexic românesc*. *Cuvinte, metafore, expresii*. Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1980.

Hristea, Theodor, In *Sinteze de limba română*. Bucureşti, Editura Albatros, 1989.

Iordan, Iorgu, *Stilistica limbii române*. Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1975.

Kašić, Jovan, Petrović, Vladislava, Rajkić, Lukrecija, *Frazeološki rečnik srpskohrvatskog jezika, srpskohrvatko-rumunski*, Novi Sad, 1985.

Raichici, Lucreţia, *Dicţionar frazeologic al limbii române* (*român-sârbocroat*), Novi Sad, Facultatea de Filosofie, Institutul de Limbi Slave, Institutul de Pedagogie, 1989.

SOURCES

dexonline.ro

cis01.central.ucv.ro/.../an.../frazeologie_pitiriciu_optlbrom_an3.doc

http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/filologie/dominte/index.htm

BDD-A3849 © 2011 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 06:04:19 UTC)