CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF RITUAL PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS (ALBANIAN-ROMANIAN-BULGARIAN)

ANALIZA CONTRASTIVĂ A UNITĂȚILOR FRAZEOLOGICE REFERITOARE LA RITUALURI

(Rezumat)

Frazeologia este unul dintre cele mai importante elemente care determină caracteristicile unei limbi, protejează timp mai îndelungat urmele sale de originalitate și tradiție. Forma interioară a unităților frazeologice este strâns legată de modul de viață al oamenilor, de tradițiile lor, de obiceiurile și viața lor socială. Prin urmare, aceste expresii pot fi studiate, atât în trecut, cât și în prezent. Frazeologia este ca un muzeu de cuvinte, de forme gramaticale care pot fi interrne sau externe, arhaice, regionale,, toate fuzionate într-un singur sens. Acest lucru face posibil ca în corpusul total de unități frazeologice să putem distinge materialul lexico-semantic și stilistic, ca urmare a culturii limbii, spirituală și materială, ca un produs al diferitelor generații, care sunt în strânsă legătură cu tradițiile lingvistice și culturale. Din acest punct de vedere, formarea unităților frazeologie este legată chiar și de tradiția ritualurilor religioase și păgâne, care au de-a face cu mentalitatea, spirituală și cultural materială, precum și de credințe, ale căror elemente se materializează și în frazeologia referitore la fenotipuri și stereotipuri umane. Scopul acestei lucrări este de a determina asemănările și deosebirile dintre unitățile frazeologice deacest tip în limbile balcanice (albaneză, bulgară, și română).

Cuvinte-cheie: frazeologie, ritualuri religioase, caracteristici lingvistice, limbi balcanice.

According to the fact that each part of the southeastern European civilization, in any epoch of the history has been part of a cultural, religious, political construction and it has to be analyzed in its complexity. In this

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

civilization where Albania takes part, is an area of fights, where the empires and other states always aspired and overrun; where orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam meet each other and interlinked together except excision and areas of different ethno cultural and ethno linguistics coexistence (Doja 1999: 159).

Language and culture are seen as two interdependent systems (Nida 1999: 2–7), which means that they influence each other. The culture represents an important element in the process of communication and the phraseology interpret and reflect the cultural view of a society in the language. It is also the field of study that tries to give an explanation about the stable expression of a language which contains words referred to a cultural meaning.

According to Glaser's definition (1998:125) praseological units are the units which indicate a phenomenon, an object, a process or a situation, belonging or relation beyond the object. She emphasized that this relations are a group of two or more lexicalized words in everyday usage of language which have a relative semantic and syntactic stability, which may be idiomatic, to contain stylistic issues and to show emphatic function in a text. In this manner, each language constructs them according to their nature, sometimes based on their own existed patterns. This is a way to develop them not only in the written language but even in spoken language (Thomaj, Lloshi 1972: 231).

Common points of the European phraseology sometimes are considered as a part of what is called "cultural European heritage". Menac (1987) presents an inventor of dozens common (supposed) European idioms, in six languages with different genetic relation, two Slavic languages (Croatian and Russian), two Germanic languages (German and English) and two Roman languages (French and Italian). Her analyze brought a considered number idiomatic coincidences in these languages (Pirrenei 2005: 49). Another contrastive study of idioms by Jermo Korhonen (1991) covered nine European languages, German, Finnish, French, Italian, English, Swedish, Russian, Hungarian and Estonian, focused on the parallels and differences (full and partial) inter linguistic in a synchronic view. He refers to the term "cultural European heritage" based on the common origin and the ways of transfer from a language to another.

From this point of view, based on the definition of Balkan Sprachbund, different scholars have found linguistic similarities in folklore, proverbs and widely even in phraseology in Balkan Languages. These similarities have been object of study of many scholars who they are focused in the phraseology of Albanian language. We can mention the study about the phraseological units and parallels of linguistic idioms in Rumanian, Albanian, Greek and Bulgarian of P. Papahagi (1908), the short paper of A. Xhuvanit about the Rumanian-Albanian similarities (1958), or the study of J. Thomaj and Xh. Lloshi about the phraseological parallels of Albanian with other Balkan languages (1972).

The interest for these partial and fully types of studies for the Balkan languages may explain with the fact that in a small area and with a small population in number compared with other parts of Europe, are used many

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

languages which don't have genetic relation. A linguistic parallel, especially the phraseological ones, seems to be linked with the similar element of spiritual world of Balkan nations, which Sanfeld emphasized as one of the factors of "Balkan commune" (Thomaj, Lloshi 1972: 225). Based on this similar Balkan element, lexical similarities between the languages of Balkan are present and distinctive because "…it is in the nature of the phenomenon of convergence of languages, which in the field of lexical to create more analogies with the first contacts" (Thomaj, Lloshi 1972: 223).. Due to Glasser's concept, the phraseology doesn't present only as a nomenclature similarities, but as a linguistic perspective of a similar mentality, in this case of Balkan mentality.

Based on its own nature, the linguistic phraseology cannot be treated without relations with the lexical and grammatical categories, without the phenomenon of semantic development of the linguistic elements and mainly without the spoken speech (Thomaj et al. 1999: 9). In this phraseological material, used in the linguistic community, with certain features which are addicted by the territory and social conditions, we can find not only evidences of early form of language, of dialect and local dialects of a territory, but even evidences of mentality, culture, and way of life of its inhabitants.

From the experience of translating the Bible in many languages and based on the relation between language and culture, following Eugen Nida (linguist and famous in the field of the translation theory) and applying the concept of culture to the task of translation, Newmark (1988: 21) has determined that the intercultural communication is based on five types of subcultures: 1. ecologic culture; 2. linguistic culture; 3. religious culture; 4. material culture and 5. social culture. Each of these cultures cannot be presented separated; they cooperate with each other in the linguistic community marking their features during the time. In particular the phraseological units are the most interesting expression of cooperation and differentiation of these subcultures. From this point of view we can see some PhU in three Balkan languages, which doesn't have the same origin: Albanian, Bulgarian, Rumanian that we collected mainly from "Fjalori ballkanik frazeologjik" (Thomaj et al. 1999)

Among many phraseological units, in these three languages, we can mention similarities which come not only from the similarities of languages, but come from the way of imaging, meaning and the practice of rituals.

1. Fully similarities are justified by the general influence of the ritual and religious dogma in their own countries. More than Balkan similarities, they are usage from Bible which are present in most of the countries where is widespread the Christian religion and not only. One can obviously detect striking similarities, between the BPs in different languages, with the reason for this similarity being quite obvious. The explanation is probably the common source of the units, i.e. the Bible, hence – common imagery and subjects. Moreover, cultures of Christian nations share common religions, moral and

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

ethical values. As a result, we can speak of the so-called biblical universals in these languages (Dubrovina 2012). Religion is seemingly universal in all human societies and despite of cultural differences and variation from one society to another, the meaning and the practice of some rituals demonstrate certain feature in common as to warrant their being labeled religions (Ugwueye,Ezenwa-Ohaeto 2011: 174). In this way our imagination of such figures as God or Devil and the place when its stay is an image that comes a lot even from the literature or films, this makes possible an easily usage of expressions without based on the folk mentality.

In the three languages which are taken under discuss, are found a consideration number of expressions which are linked with the figure of Devil and their semantic-structure construction is the same, such as: *Alb. Si djalli nga temjani / Bul. като дявол от тамян kato divoll ot temian / Rum. (A se teme) ca tămîie / 'as devil by incense'; or Alb. Vajti në djall / Bul. отивам по дяволите / Rum. A se duce la dracul; a da dracul; a-l lua dracul / 'has gone to the devil'*. Here we can distinguish PhU Alb. *E dërgoi në djall /* Bul. *пращам по дяволите*; in relation with Albanian and Bulgarian, Rum. *A trimite (pe cineva) unde şi-a înţărcat dracul copii* has a deeper semantic nuance considering devil's breast as the feed, the origin of all the worst things. So, the expression in Rumanian has a pejorative nuance compared with the expression in Albanian and Bulgarian.

Culture-specific words are conceptual tools which reflect a society's past experience of thinking about things in certain ways; and they help to perpetuate these ways. As a society changes, these tools, too, may be gradually modified and discarded (Goddard,Wierzbicka 1995: 58). In that sense it is necessary to analyze the use of term Alb. *djall/dreq* and Rum. *Dracul/Diavol*. Dana Luminiţa Teleoacă states that the pagan significance *draco* is to be found dialectally in Romanian – detail that highlights a "continuum" of the Roman; *dracul din vale* 'the devil in the valley', *dracul în Balta* 'the devil in the puddle', *muşcatul dracului* 'bitten by the devil' etc., these are phrases where the meaning of *drac* should be connected more to the pagan semantics *draco*. The same author states that it is only in Romanian *draco* that is the essential word for *devil* and this Christian meaning is common to all Romanian dialects (Teleoacă 2014: 193–194).

But and in Albanian are found the variants *djall/dreq*. Çabej states that the variant *dreq* is accepted by old Greek, not with the authentic pagan meaning, but it is fit in with the religious meaning influenced by the Christianity (Çabej argues this with the presence in Albanian of derived word alb. *dragua/dragoi* 'snake' from old Greek (1987: 316–317). As a result in Albanian many various PhU with word *dreq* have the same structure and meaning with PhU with *djall*, such as: *dreqi me të birin*, *i hipën dreqërit*, *dreqi me të birin*, but some of them are different, such as: *ka sa të hajë dreqi*, *e hëngri dreqi*, *ta hëngërt dreqi në bark* etc. where *dreq* is something that eats (probably a snake).

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

Teleoacă points out that the Romanian language also has the Christian *devil*, although it is not an inherited term. Even in Albanian, according to Çabejt, *djall* has possibility to be word from old Greek which has penetrated in Albanian through Latin, became a word of the authentic lexical corpora of Albanian. For historical reasons, Çabej prefers to consider it having Latin origin bringing as an argument its usage in both Albanian dialects and in the field of Church's old rituals (Çabej 1987: 258–259).

The important ritual of Christian religious, such as Christmas and Easter (raise) have their importance in celebrating them as official feasts (this is especially for Albanian where coexist three religions). It is important to be emphasized that the similarity of fasting (for Christianity, Alb. "Kreshmë") as a ritual and ramazan (for Muslim Alb. "Ramazan") makes easy the usage of such phraseological units such as: Alb. *Mban kreshmë / Mban ramazan*; Bul. *на пост и молитва съм* / Rum. *A ţine post* (Bantaş, Leviţchi, Gheorghiţoiu 1998: 334*)* 'refuse to eat, to keep fast'.

The right hand, probably in part due to the fact that most people are right-handed, is traditionally the hand of blessing and greeting in many cultural settings, a convention found in Scripture and Tradition. For example, Jesus places the sheep on his right hand but the goats on his left; he himself is "seated at the right hand of the Father"; at God's "right hand are blessings forevermore", and so on. In sacred images, Jesus is depicted raising his right hand in blessing. Even today, we use our right hand for handshakes or salutes; we are familiar with the phrase "the right hand of fellowship" and so forth. So the action to make the Crosse with the left hand is something wrong, unbelievable or unthinkable. As a result, Phu Alb. *Të bësh kryq* (me dorën e majtë) / Bul. *да се прекрьстиш с лявата рька* / Rum. *A-si face cruce cu stînga* 'to make the cross with the left hand' has the same semantic structure in the three languages.

2. Based on the concept of H. Burger (2003: 66) that "motivation means that the meaning of a phraseologism can be understood by way of the free meaning of the unit or the meanings of its component parts", partial similarities may be determined the phraseological units, whose meanings are represented or are based in the same rituals but due to the linguistic and non-linguistics conditions, they have determined an element or another one from the ritual process as more important. Furthermore, some types of phrasemes are strongly tied to a particular cultural background and transmit cultural elements through their image components (Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen 2005). If in Albanian and Bulgarian the expression Alb. *I puthi kryqin* 'to kiss some body's Cross' Bul. *преварвам в гроба* 'to kiss somebody's tomb', is linked with the tomb's stone or tomb as a final element for the death, in Rum. *A da ortul popii, a da pielea popii* the expression referred to the pagan ritual of the mythology, Kreont's

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

payment (coin) to pass in Paradise, based on the ritual point of view as a payment for the priest.

In the case of the PhU Alb. *Puth kryqin* 'kiss the Crosse', in Bul. *влизам на попа в джоба* 'to enter in the priest pocket', different from Albanian, it is the priest who becomes the representative of passing in Paradise or in the other world (in the pocket of) while in Rumanian has the same meaning as it is mentioned above, but with a demonstrative to express the time (before) Rum. *A da ortul popii înaintea altcuiva* 'to pay the coin to the priest in advance'.

The figure of cleric in the Albanian mentality has been saint and holistic and a difficult situation could be expressed in a higher emotional level when in the center of these kind of situations is a priest. This is very clear in the expression Alb. *Kërcen prifti nga belaja* the priest dance in Rum. this expression unlike Albanian is linked with a character (person) who has to do the religious ritual Rum. *Bea Grigore aghiazma*! / in bulg. PhU Bul. *от зор хоро играе* is based on the lexeme of dancing, but the subject will be anyone.

In the case of the PhU Alb. *Nuk i kam thyer poganikun* breaking of the scone (Alb. *poganik* – a type of scone that is brought in the family where a newborn baby was born) means even the process when the parents named their baby, in Bulgarian is linked with the process of baptizing: Bul. да не съм го кръщавал. This PhU in Rum. *A nu cunoaşte pe cineva de aproape* (FBF) is not a proper phraseology.

Some of PhU which are taken under consideration have equivalents in the semantic of phraseology, but semantic of their elements doesn't have relation between each other. In Albanian PhU Alb. *Siç tregojnë bathët* is based on the calculation of the time of Easter based on an old story as anecdote from the folklore of Southern Albania. A priest that did not have a calendar, he calculates the beans. One day, he forgot to number the beans and the inhabitants asked when the Easter was, he answered: "*Siç tregojnë bathët e mia do bjerë vonë sivjet"* (As my beans tells, it will be later this year). *Batha* (a kind of bean- lat. *fava vicius*) in pagan and religious belief represent a mysterious plant (started with the Pitagora's legend and after with the interpretation of the disease of favizm). In Bulgarian, the main element is the smell Bul. *Ако се съди по миризмата*, while in Rum. from visual signs: Rum. *Pe semne, după cum se vede*.

PhU Alb. *Lyp për derë e ndan për shpirt* is an expression where the second part is linked with the ritual of memorial of the death people, to share coffee, corn or food for the spirit of the death to the people who are related with the family of the death person. In this way, on the one hand, the family and friends will not forget the death person and on the other hand even "the death person" himself will not feel alone. The ritual of sharing for spirit often include the sharing of food even for the poor people, hoping that the death will be quite in the other world if his relatives make charity in the real world. So, the expression has connotation of helping the others, such in PhU Bul. *давам*

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

си и ризата от гърба ‘ to give you the shirt off your back’ / Rum. *Îşi dă şi cămaşa de pe el* (‘he gives even his shirt’) are similar.

PhU Alb. *Me frymën e shenjtë* ‘with Holy Spirit’ is Bible calk which has ironic connotation in Albanian, but in Bul. *на магия* ‘as a magic’ and in Rum. *Ca prin minune* ‘as a miracle’ the unit is supported by the noun with direct meaning *магия* ‘magic’ and by the name with direct meaning *minune* ‘miracle’.

In Albanian are interesting even the expressions that express or are structured based on the ritual diversity.

The confrontations between elements that faced the rituals and clerics of the two different religions create conflicts and these situations became source for phraseological units such as: *Ngrihu prift të ulet hoxha* ‘stand up priest seat to seat Muslim preacher’, in Bul. *стани куме кумицата да седне* ‘stand up the godfather to seat the godmother’ is linked with the gender level of the people who baptize the baby. In Rumanian PhU seems to be newer because its elements referred to the socialist period Rum. *A face schimbări de cadre* ‘change the personnel’ (but, it is to take in consideration and the translation).

The remark of the scholar Hristova-Bejleri (1996) that “in Bulgarian different from Albanian has more NF in which the comparison is made with objects linked with ritual images and religious beliefs even with ethnonyms, names of kin and professional names” must take into consideration with reserves while phraseological units are developed more in dialects and often their parallels are found in small dialectic communities or sub dialects.

As a conclusion, it can be mention that such similarities and equivalents can be found in many other expressions, but the dictionary in which we based our small corpora of expressions and some of the phraseological units in other languages expect Albanian cannot be considered such as mentioned above. But, on the other hand, it has to be emphasized that such contrastive observations can be the first steps for a general project for Balkan languages, including structure and semantic parallels in the level of dialects and sub dialects. In this way, it can be verified what T. Papahagi emphasized before more than 100 years that “…what is worth for Rumanian, it is worth more or less even for the all Balkan nations, because even their history has been more or less similar” (1908: 114). Many people have interpreted their universality and similarity as indicating the presence of a religious belief and practice in all human beings. In the same vein, every human society possesses a language. The language as “an implicit schemata of thinking”, through contrastive descriptions and inter linguistics similarities makes possible to point out inner linguistic relation within a common Balkan mentality.

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

SOURCES

Bantaş, A., L. Levi̯tchi, A. Gheorghi̯toiu, 1998, *Dicţionar frazeologic român-englez*, Bucureşti, Teora.

Thomaj, J., 2010, *Fjalori frazeologjik i gjuhës shqipe*, Tiranë, EDFA.

Thomaj, J., Xh. Lloshi, R. Hristova-Bejleri, K. Qiriazati, A. Melonashi, 1999, *Fjalori ballkanik frazeologjik,* Tiranë, Dituria.

Българска Академуя На Науките, Институт За Българпски Език, 1974, Фразеологичен речник на български език, София.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burger, H., 2003, *Phraseologie. Eine Einführung am Beispiel des Deutschen*, Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Çabej, E., 1987, "Studime etimologjike në fushë të shqipes" III, Tiranë, AHSH.

Doja, A., 1999, "Ethnicité, construction nationale et nationalisme dans l'aire albanaise: Approche anthropologique du conflit et des relations interethniques", *Ethnologia Balkanica* (Ethnologia Balkanica), issue 03, p. 155–179 [www.ceeol.com].

Dubrovina, K. N., 2012, "Study of Biblical Phraseology: general tasks and results", Series *Modern Linguistic and Methodical-And-Didactic Researches*, Issue no 1 (1).

Gläser, R., 1998, "The Stylistic Potential of Phraseological Units", in Cowie, A. P. (ed), 1998, *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, and Applications*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 125–143.

Goddard, C., A. Wierzbicka, 1995, "Key words, culture and cognition", *Philosophica*, 55, 1, p. 37–67 (logica.ugent.be/philosophica/).

Hristova-Bejleri, R., 1996, "Njësi frazeologjike që përmbajnë krahasim në shqipe e bullgarishte". Seminari i XVIII i gjuhës, letërsisë dhe kulturës shqiptare, Tiranë, [http://www.albanian.dir.bg/studii/ezik/st-ez-5-sravnenie.htm].

Korhonen, J. 1991, "Konvergenz und Divergenz deutscher und finnischer Phraseologie. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Erlauterung der Verbreitung und Entlehnung von 73 Idiomen", in Palm, Christine (ed) *„EUROPHRAS 90". Akten der internationalen Ta gung zur germanistischen Phraseologieforschung Aske/Schëeden 12–15 Juni 1990*, Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, p. 123–133.

Menac, A., 1987, "Gemeinsame semantische Gruppen in der Phraseologie der Europaischen Sprachen", in Burger, Harald, Robert Zett (eds), *Aktuelle Probleme der Phraseologie*. Symposium 27–29. 9. 1984 in Zurich, Bern [etc], Peter Lang, p. 269–289.

Newmark, P., 1988, *A Textbook of Translation*, London/New York, Prentice Hall Print.

Papahagi, P., 1908, *Parallele Ausdrücke und Redensarten im Rumänischen, albanesischen, Neugriechischen und Bulgarischen* [http://www.albanianorthodox.com/tekste/albanologji/papahagi.pdf].

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)

Piirainen, E., 2005, "Europeanism, internationalism or something else? Proposal for a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research project on widespread idioms in Europe and beyond", *Hermes*, *Journal of Linguistics*, no 35, p. 45–75.
Teleoacă, D. L., 2014, "Termes religeux herites du latin a diffusion restreinte dans la Romania", *Revue roumaine de linguistique*, LIX, 2, p. 189–202.
Thomaj, J., Xh. Lloshi, 1972, "Paralele frazeologjike të gjuhës shqipe me gjuhë të tjera të Ballkanit", në *Studime mbi leksikun dhe formimin e fjalëve në gjuhën shqipe*, II, botim i ASHSH, p. 223–234.
Ugwueye, E., N. Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 2011, "Religious Language: Problems and Meanings", in *Unizik, Journal of arts and Humanities*, vol. 12, no 1, p. 173–187.
Xhuvani, A., 1958, *Bashkëpërkime rumuno-shqiptare*, *Vepra II* (1990), ASHSH, p. 408–411.

Arsinela XHARA
Anyla SARACI (MAXHE)
University "Fan S. Noli", Korce, Albania

BDD-V4265 © 2017 Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 22:09:54 UTC)