

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF TERMINOLOGICAL PHRASEMES WITH COLOUR COMPONENTS IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN AND SLOVAK. FIELD OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE¹

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Kontrastívna analýza terminologických frazém s názvom farby v angličtine, francúzštine, taliančine a slovenčine. Odbor ekonomika a financie

Abstract: *In the following paper, we present a contrastive analysis in which the terminological phrasemes (TPs) with the colour components (black, white, grey) in economic texts are compared in order to examine their degree of equivalence. More precisely, these TPs are contrasted in four languages (English is the source language; French, Italian and Slovak are the target languages) where we rely on the typology of equivalence of phrasemes and the symbolism of colours. The occurrences of these TPs are checked in the texts of the fields of economy and finance in all four languages by using several textual corpora. By this contrastive analysis, we demonstrate the similarities and specificities of these TPs in the compared languages and their cultures.*

Keywords: *terminological phrasemes, colour components, economy and finance*

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1 Introduction

One of the factors to ensure the efficiency of communication between participants in the international business environment is good skills in a professional language, such as terminological phraseology in the fields of economy and finance. Several linguists have observed this topic from a contrastive point of view. More exactly, they have analysed terminological phrasemes (TPs) of two languages where frequently the languages compared are English and another language or French and another language, for example Fabijanić and Štrmeljz [9], Rosenbaum Franková [25], Kožarićková [13], Dinžíková [5], Biloré [2]. However, we have not found many phraseological studies (Mešková – Kubeková, [17]; Martí Solano, [16]) that have compared TPs in several languages to look for equivalences between them. So we aim to contrast four different languages (English, French, Italian and Slovak) to find out the equivalents of the selected TPs with colour components in the fields of economy and finance.

Firstly, we have selected TPs from several dictionaries as well as from several studies of different linguistic disciplines according to colour components of the field of economy and finance. Then, we have checked the occurrences of these TPs in the texts of the fields of economy and finance in the five corpora, each of which has about 21 million to 18 billion words.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the similarities and differences of the selected TPs in the compared languages and their cultures based on the typology of equivalence of phrasemes and the symbolism of colours. Let us start with the hypothesis that the symbolism of colours is often similar in the semantics of these compared languages and in the cultural implications that semantics actualizes. Therefore, the given phrasemes are often equivalent in all four languages in the fields of economy and finance.

2 Contrastive Phraseology

In the context of contrastive phraseology, we look at the similarities and differences of the examined phrasemes between those languages. There are several classifications of phrasemes that have been proposed, for example by Ďurčo [7], Krzyzanowska [14]. We rely on the typology of equivalence of phrasemes according to Mešková and Kubeková [17], Morer Murcia [22], Țaran Andreici [29], where we distinguish three degrees of equivalence of phrasemes, such as total, partial and zero equivalency.

Besides, according to Dobrovol'skij [6, p. 169], in order to find functionally adequate equivalents, “we must not stop at the lexical structure (looking for idioms with similar key components) but focus on the shared conceptual metaphors and/or culturally relevant symbols”. The metaphor plays an important role not only in general phrasemes, but also in the TPs. For Rosenbaum Franková [25, p. 59], the metaphor or the figurativeness is an essential part of the definition of TPs where “phraseological unit regularly occurring in professional texts with the typical characteristics of phrasemes such as figurativeness or expressiveness, but at the same time taking the denominative function of the term”. However, in this paper, we will not focus on conceptual metaphors in the TPs' analysis but shared symbols like colours (for example black for “bad”).

2.1 Typology of equivalence of phrasemes

As we have already mentioned, we distinguish three degrees of equivalence of phrasemes. The first type is definable as total equivalency that is characterized by Țaran Andreici [29, p.154] as “a phraseological unit from a language that conveys the same semantic content that another phraseological unit from a different language has” with a comparable meaning, functionality, internal form and similar stylistic effects. When we talk about total equivalency of phrasemes, we must also present the terms *europeanism* or *internationalism* used by several phraseologists such as Piirainen [23], Čermák [4]. Since the field of phraseology is always relative to every natural and independent culture, there is phraseology on the one hand, native phrasemes for all cultures. But on the other hand, according to Vittoz and Rigat [31, p. 109] there is “a very old common and pan-European phraseological pool that has migrated in a contrasting way in both culture-languages”, so there are parallel phrasemes in many European languages that have their common origin, that is to say shared sources, motivations, conceptual metaphors and/or culturally relevant symbols.

The second type is partial equivalency of phrasemes where “idioms of L1 and L2 which have identical or near-identical meanings, but do not fully correspond in syntactic and lexical structure, or imagery basis” (Dobrovol'skij [6, p. 372]); therefore these are cases in which it is not possible to find an identical phraseological equivalent in the target language.

The last type is zero equivalency of phrasemes. These are phrasemes that do not have their equivalent in the target language. According to Mlacek, Ďurčo et al. [19, p. 15], they are “phrasemes that have no equivalent in the target language with the same motivation base or if the phrasemes contain certain autochthonous elements”. Moreover, Ďurčo [7, p. 92] adds that “the

equivalent relations of phrasemes are always conditioned by a concrete pair of compared languages and the zero equivalence generally concerns only the concrete pair of compared languages”. We can thus see that there are also a number of phrasemes without equivalents for these four compared languages.

2.2 Symbolism of colours

The symbolism of colours differs according to the languages, the cultural contexts, the countries and the time periods. Sometimes the colours represent shared culturally relevant symbols, other times their meanings differ from those of neighbouring cultures. As the case of the white colour that is related to purity in Western countries while it is connected to the mourning in most Asian countries. We can therefore find identical, similar or quite different connotations across different cultures. There are several studies on the symbolism of colours (Mešková – Kubeková [17]; Molina Plaza [21]; Spišiaková [26]; Kvapil [15]; Mocková [20]) on which we rely in the analysis below.

3 Methodology

We select phrasemes that include the component colour in phraseological, terminological, monolingual, bilingual or trilingual dictionaries (Rey et al. [24]; Gründlerová et al. [10]; Gründlerová – Škultéty – Taraba [11, 12]; Black [3]; Šlosár – Šlosárová – Majtán [28]; Bernard – Colli [1]; Michník et al. [18]; Šibl et al. [27]; Žák et al. [32]; Valent [30]) and in studies referred to in section 2.2. We thus find 13 TPs in English and their equivalents in target languages (French, Italian and Slovak). Then we will analyse these TPs according to the colour symbolism. Finally, we have verified each of these phrasemes in several corpora, but even if we submit the examples of the most interesting cases. For our search, we use the query language CQP/CQL (Evert – Hardie [8]) and we search for them in the four languages in the five following corpora: *Corpus prim-8.0-public-sane*⁴, *Timestamped JSI web corpus 2014-2016 English*⁵, *Corpus iTenTen16*⁶, *Corpus journalistique anglais v27*, *Corpus du presse du Monde, Figaro, Libération 2010-2015*⁸.

⁴ Available at: <https://bonito.korpus.sk/run.cgi/first_form?corpname=prim-8.0-public-sane>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

⁵ Available at: <<https://the.sketchengine.co.uk/auth/corpora/>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

⁶ Available at: <<https://the.sketchengine.co.uk/auth/corpora/>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

⁷ Available at: <<http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/lexicoscope.php>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

⁸ Available at: <<http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/lexicoscope.php>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

4 Analysis of TPs

We have analysed 13 TPs which have the colour components (black, white, grey) in source language of the fields of economy and finance. The TPs are noted in the following order: English, French, Italian, and Slovak. If there is not a total equivalency of the TP among English and the target languages, we state the verbatim translation in English, in square brackets, in order to demonstrate similarities and differences between the source language as well as the target languages.

4.1 Black as symbol

In Western culture, black colour is traditionally indicated as bad. In this context, we present the phraseme *black swan/cygne noir/cigno nero/čierna labuť* (example 1). This occurrence is financial, especially indicating the unexpected and rare event which sparks turbulence in the financial markets.

(1) V roku 2012 sa mi tak podarilo vytvoriť slušný zisk, a to aj keď som sa takmer v sto percentách svojich veľmi konzervatívnych predpovedí trhu mýlil. Zvyšných 30 percent som použil ako poistku proti tzv. čiernym labuťam alebo na príležitostné investície.

Corpus prim-8.0-public-sane. Posted in *Hospodárske noviny* on March 19, 2013.

The black symbol also includes the *black knight/chevalier noir/cavaliere nero/čierny jazdec* (example 2), which denotes an investor trying to get the company against its will. The opposite of this TP is the *white knight* (example 9).

(2) Good times need cash to rally on. Mallya's long drawn crusade to take over the operations of key rival Shaw Wallace, first in black knight attire and then as a white knight, was gruelling to the extreme - the Chhabrias wanted debt infusion while not totally ceding control.

Timestamped JSI web corpus 2014-2016 English. Available at: <<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/382940/balancing-grand-booze-deal.html>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

Another example of black with negative connotation is *Black Friday/Venerdì nero/Venerdì nero/čierny piatok* (example 3a). It refers to October 25, 1929, when the most devastating stock market crash began, more precisely at Wall Street, New York, in history and it also represents the beginning of the Great

Depression. In this sense, we can also talk about the phraseme of *Black Monday/Lundi noir/Lunedì nero/čierny pondelok* (example 4). It is the day on which world stock markets collapsed in New York.

(3a) Od „čierneho piatku“ uplynulo 73 rokov. Presne 25. októbra 1929, zhodou okolností to bol tiež piatok, vypukla na Newyorskej burze cenných papierov kríza, ktorá časom zachvátila celý svet.

Corpus *prim-8.0-public-sane*. Posted in *Hospodárske noviny* on March 19, 2013.

(3b) Nákupná horúčka sa čiernym piatkom iba začala, dnes pokračuje tzv. kybernetickým pondelkom, keď v agresívnej marketingovej stratégii najlepšie zľavy ponúkajú internetové obchody.

Corpus *prim-8.0-public-sane*. Posted in *SME* on November 28, 2006.

(4) Black Monday, 19 October 1987, saw the largest ever one-day percentage fall. Reasons cited for that meltdown included overvaluations, market psychology and automatic electronic trading strategies that exacerbated the collapse, with institutions blindly selling into a falling market.

Corpus *journalistique anglais v2*. Posted in *The Observer* on March 23, 2008. Available at: <<http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/context.php?&idsent=s609259&idxml=emobase/Guard08a-xrx-prs-tei.v2.xml&user=user&token=ae0302e5680a5c9e1120c2970ac31252>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

However, there is also the positive connotation (example 3b) of this phraseme which is more used in English, *Black Friday*, in all three target languages, in the direction of the shopping day (the day following Thanksgiving Day), when most of the business chains begin the sale period at significantly reduced prices. The examples (1-4) of TPs are total equivalents in all four languages.

Another case of a positive connotation is *to be in the black/être dans le vert* [to be in the green]/*essere in nero/byť v čiernych číslach* [to be in black numbers] (example 5). It represents positive values (the company's profit), as in the past, black ink was used in the accounting to indicate the positive numbers, i.e. profit. There is the same colour in English, Italian and Slovak, but in French this positive financial result of a company is indicated by the colour green. This phraseme in French has been also analysed by Mešková and Kubeková [17]. It is also interesting to add that the opposite of this phraseme is *to be in the red/être dans le rouge/essere in rosso/byť v červených číslach* [to be in

red numbers]. In the accounting, the red ink has a negative connotation, as it denotes losses in business.

(5) Betdaq appears to have reached a significant milestone. Accounts show that its British business is in the black. Global Betting Exchange UK made a tidy profit of Pounds 500,000 (E670,000) on turnover of Pounds 1.1m (E1.5m) in 2006.

Corpus journalistique anglais v2. Posted in Sunday Times on January 06, 2008. Available at: <<http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/context.php?&idsent=s255375&idxml=emobase/Times08a-xrx-prs-tei.v2.xml&user=user&token=759bc786df493a9a2ab6927af2b3b34d>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

We also find a significant representation of black in economy and finance, where black is related to illegality. There are for example: *black economy/économie noire/economia nera/čierna ekonomika* (example 6), *black market/marché noir/mercato nero/čierny trh* (example 7), *black money/argent sale/denaro sporco* [dirty money]/*špinavé peniaze* [dirty money] (example 8).

It is worth noting that cleansing money from its illegality is expressed in French through *blanchir/blanchiment* and in the other three languages using *to launder/laundering*, i.e. *to launder dirty money/blanchir l'argent sale* [to whitewash dirty money]/*riciclare denaro sporco* [to recycle dirty money]/*prat' špinavé peniaze* [to launder dirty money] or *money laundering/blanchiment d'argent sale* [dirty money whitewashing]/*riciclaggio di denaro sporco* [dirty money recycling]/*pranie špinavých peňazí* [dirty money laundering].

(6) Una parte di questa industria sommersa o semi sommersa dell'accoglienza deve essere considerata come economia nera vera e propria (ovvero attività fraudolente avviate con lo scopo di non pagare le tasse e non versare i contributi ai collaboratori) mentre per un'altra parte si può più correttamente parlare di "sharing economy" ovvero di economia della condivisione con una impostazione di tipo collaborativo e spontaneo, che si sviluppa soprattutto grazie alle potenzialità aperte dal web di mettere in connessione domanda e offerta di beni e servizi.

Corpus it TenTen16. Available at: <<http://www.adusbef.veneto.it/piu-evasione-piu-nero-reazione-italiana-alla-crisi>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

(7) Správa o plánovanom rušení 500-euroviek sa objavila zhruba pred tromi týždňami. BenoitCoeuré, ktorý je členom predstavenstva Európskej centrálnej banky, povedal, že veľká časť týchto bankoviek sa používa v

čiernej ekonomike, rôznych kriminálnych a nelegálnych aktivitách.

Corpus *prim-8.0-public-sane*. Posted in SME on March 02, 2016.

(8) Customs seized 101million smuggled cigarettes destined for Britain yesterday in a raid which highlights the huge black market in contraband tobacco driven by the highest price of smoking in Europe.

Corpus journalistique anglais v2. Posted in The Times on April 26, 2008. Available at: <<http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/context.php?&idsent=s1034739&idxml=emobase/Times08a-xrx-prs-tei.v2.xml&user=user&token=c1d7ca2c39a7339522553de2812d62eb>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

We can observe that concerning the typology of the equivalence of TPs, examples 6 and 7 are total equivalents, but example 8 is only partial equivalency for all target languages.

4.2 White as symbol

White is considered to be the colour of goodness. This is strongly motivated by its contrast with black. This symbolism is also applied in the phraseme *white knight/chevalier blanc/cavaliere bianco/biely jazdec* (example 9 as a contrast of the example 2) which is described by Black [3, p. 53] as “a purchaser for a company, willing to rescue it from an unwanted takeover bid by another buyer. A company threatened with takeover may welcome a competitive bid by a white knight as a mean of improving the terms offered by the first bidder, whether or not the alternative bid is ultimately accepted”, so in this case *white knight* is used to describe someone as a saviour. We must be careful not to confuse this phraseme in Slovak with another similar phraseme *biely kôň* [white horse]. In three other languages, we have TP as *straw man/prête-nom* or *homme de paille/prestanome* or *uomo di paglia* to indicate in the context of economy and finance (or sometimes of politics) a person who, under their own name, acts for another person and protects them against a certain risk.

(9) Le groupe pétrolier BP devrait se contenter de chercher de nouveaux dirigeants au lieu de partir à la recherche d’un chevalier blanc pour le protéger d’une éventuelle offre publique d’achat (OPA) hostile.

Corpus du presse du Monde, Figaro, Libération 2010-2015. Posted in Le Monde on January 22, 2015. Available at: <http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/context.php?&idsent=s1203786&idxml=lm2010_2015.xml&user=user&token=e14e61df30837f2a842dc46bb060b239>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

Another example of white is represented by the phraseme *white goods/produits blancs* [white products]/*elettrodomestici bianchi/biela technika* [white technique] example 10, which generally refers to appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, stoves, etc.

(10) Pred kúpou bielej techniky buďte obozretní. Nezriedka sa stáva, že dvojdverová chladnička či práčka neprejdú cez úzke dvere miestnosti a elektrický varný panel zostane nezapojený, pretože elektroinštalácia vyžaduje zložité úpravy. Poradíte sa vopred a myslíte na detaily.

Corpus *prim-8.0-public-sane*. Posted in SME on December 05, 2007.

In the past, other colours were not used in the manufacture of this type of appliance. In translating this phraseme, we find only a small nuance in all three target languages. In addition to white goods, there are also televisions, radios, home cinemas (normally called home theatres), i.e. *brown goods/produits bruns* [brown products]/*elettrodomestici bruni*. Historically, they also refer to the colour material from which it has been made, namely wood. However, we translate *brown* into Slovak as *čierna technika* [black technique].

In two presented examples, we can confirm that white is in connection with positive or neuter connotation, the latter being so because it refers to the material from which these objects are made.

4.3 Grey as symbol

Grey colour is between white and black and symbolizes something between good (white) and bad (black). However, in the area of economy and finance, it is often mistaken to use *grey* and *black* in the sense of illegality. According to Žák et al. [32], we distinguish the concepts of the *grey economy* and *black economy*, where the grey economy refers to activities that are not taxed (for example, employment of aliens without a work permit). The black economy is characterized by activities whose content is illegal (for example, prostitution, criminal contracts, drug trafficking). In this sense, for the grey colour, we find several examples *grey economy/économie grise/economia grigia/šedá ekonomika* (example 11), *grey area/zone grise/zona grigia/šedá zóna* (example 12) *grey market/marché gris/mercato grigio/šedý trh* (example 13). The examples of TPs (11-13) are total equivalents in all four languages.

(11) Néanmoins, la dette publique espagnole reste limitée, le pays a déjà connu des périodes de chômage élevé grâce à une économie grise plus importante qu'on ne le pense, des régions comme la Catalogne et Euskadi sont parmi les

plus dynamiques d'Europe, et enfin les banques espagnoles, malgré les désastres immobiliers, ont admirablement passé ces deux dernières années de crise.

Corpus du presse du Monde, Figaro, Libération 2010-2015. Posted in Le Monde on May 11, 2010. Available at: <http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/context.php?&idsent=s658104&idxml=lm2010_2015.xml&user=user&token=3f9ddc93428548325c37d69d13c46cdd>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

(12) The companies fail to make returns and just disappear. But recent legal guidance has removed some grey areas.

Corpus journalistique anglais v2. Posted in The Guardian on April 05, 2008. Available at: <<http://phraseotext.u-grenoble3.fr/lexicoscope/context.php?&idsent=s255375&idxml=emobase/Times08a-xrx-prs-tei.v2.xml&user=user&token=759bc786df493a9a2ab6927af2b3b34d>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

(13) Sotto questo punto di vista, per l'investitore medio il mercato grigio può quindi dare una sorta di valutazione aggiuntiva magari permettendo di cogliere alcuni elementi che non sarebbero visibili nel normale processo di collocamento.

Corpus itTenTen16. Available at: <<http://www.valoreazioni.com/4110/approfondimenti-finanziari/mercato-grigio-grey-market.html>>. [accessed 24. 03.2018].

5 Conclusions

This research showcases terminological phrasemes (TPs) of the fields of economy and finance in English and their translation in the three target languages (French, Italian and Slovak). According to the analysis of the TPs, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, our hypotheses for the similarity of the symbolism of colours in the semantics of languages compared and in the cultural implications that semantics actualizes, have been confirmed. Secondly, most of the examples of the TPs are total equivalents and also we have found some TPs with partial equivalency that confirms the cultural differences in the fields of economy and finance between a particular pair of languages compared. However, the TPs with zero equivalency do not appear in our examples at all. As it is only about total or partial phraseological equivalents, we can prove according to Martí Solano [16] that only three different types of sources (namely loan translations, common

metaphorical source domains and common cultural tradition) have been taken into consideration to analyse these presented TPs. Lastly, by extracting examples from multiple corpora in all four languages, we can also confirm that all these TPs are well used in the fields of economy and finance.

In addition, it can be concluded that among the three colours examined, the most represented is black, which is mostly under negative connotation (except the TP with “shopping” Black Friday and with black numbers), while white is perceived positively and grey colour is between these two colours as something between good and bad. Although cultural differences can be found in individual examples, the conducted analyses have proven the presence of the same symbolism of colour in four languages compared in the fields of economy and finance.

Author’s Contributions

Both authors equally contributed to this work.

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