MULTIDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON OF PHRASEOLOGICAL VARIATION IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

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Abstract

Focusing on the Spanish language, this paper aims to introduce the phenomenon of phraseological variation, presenting, on the basis of the studies carried out in the context of Hispanic linguistics, the theoretical aspects, the quantitative frequency of the variations and the phenomenon of geolinguistic or diatopic variation. The difficulty that phraseological translation represents is pointed out emphasizing the fact that this type of translation is not impossible and that the user should be able to count on phraseological tools and databases that will allow to find phraseological equivalents in other languages before thinking about using recurrent translation techniques.

Keywords: Phraseology, fixing, phraseological variation, diatopy, translation.

Resumen

El presente trabajo, centrándose en la lengua española, pretende introducir el fenómeno de la variación fraseológica, presentando, a partir de las investigaciones llevadas a cabo en el marco de la lingüística hispánica, los aspectos teóricos, la frecuencia cuantitativa de las variaciones y el fenómeno de la variación geolingüística o diatópica. Se señala la dificultad de la traducción fraseológica incidiendo en que esta traducción no es imposible y que el usuario debería poder contar con herramientas y bases de datos fraseológicas que le permitan encontrar las equivalencias fraseológicas en otros idiomas antes de pensar en usar las recurrentes técnicas de traducción.

Palabras clave: Fraseología, fijación, variación fraseológica, diatopía, traducción.

1. Introduction

Given that this subject has little relevance, phraseology has become a recurrent research topic in a large number of languages and even in translation, because of the many issues regarding understanding and equivalents that this topic presents. *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (Paul 1880), *Essai de sémantique* (Breal 1897), *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (Saussure 1916) and *Précis de Stylistique* (Bally 1905) are considered the precursors of phraseology. However, in the end, the Russian structuralists were the ones who laid the foundations of modern phraseology.

Nowadays, we see that there is constant scientific activity in the area of phraseology around the world. In Spanish phraseology, on which we will focus, after the pioneering contributions of Casares (1950) and Zuluaga (1980), the advancement of phraseology undergoes a decisive expansion with the publication of Corpas (1996), a reference paper that generated an exponential growth of phraseological studies. This advancement was consolidated by García-Page (2008), giving Spanish phraseology a high level of maturity.

In the last forty years, the large number of studies in the area of phraseology has shown that this is not about linguistic anomalies, analyzing elements as diverse and, at the same time, as different as:

(1) Theoretical classifications: Casares (1959), Zuluaga (1980), Corpas (1996), Ruiz Gurillo (1997), García-Page (2008), etc.
(2) The properties of phraseological units (PU): idiomaticity, compositionality, opacity, iconicity, language registers, motivation, metaphorization, deautomatization, etc.
(3) The phraseodidactic: it is born within applied linguistics and it is focused on the teaching/learning of the PU of both mother and foreign languages (González Rey 2012).

2. Phraseological variation

Interest in linguistic variation arises in the middle of the 20th century with the rise of sociolinguistics[1]. Originally, in the phraseological field, most of

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1. This analyzes the possible modification that can be made in the daily use of the language of a community of speakers, conditioned by elements of a temporal, sociocultural or

the studies indicated that the different types of phraseological units (PU) differed from free linguistic combinations, mainly because of their fixation and idiomaticity and because their components and their structure(s) did not allow changes or modifications[2]. Researchers, in order to demonstrate such a possibility, used PU with a high degree of fixation in which no element could be replaced by another one (Montoro del Arco 2004). For example:

(1) *salir del armario* (DUE[3]), [*[4]emerger, *aparecer] del [*mueble, *ropero]; *estirar la pata* (RAE/DUE), [*extender*, *alargar*, *desplegar*] alguien la pata, *estirar* alguien *la *pierna;*

(2) *ladrar a la luna* (DUE), ladrar [al *sol, a las *estrellas];

(3) *apretarse el cinturón* (DUE), *[apretarse la *cintura, la *correa]; etc.*

Phraseological variation (PV) has been stirring interest, as evidenced by the many existing studies in the area of Hispanic phraseology (Carneado Moré 1985; Corpas 1996, 2008, 2018; Corpas & Mena Martínez 2003; Cuadrado-Rey 2016, 2018; García- Page 2001, 2008; Koike 2001; Mogorrón 2010, 2014, 2015, 2020a, 2020b; Navarro-Brotons 2011, 2018; Penadés 2014, 2020; Zuluaga 1980)[5]. The distinctions established and the different denominations formulated show some confusion (Montoro del Arco 2004, 2008; Alvarado Ortega 2008; Sinner & Tabares Plasencia 2016). In these studies, it has been considered, as a general rule, that PV is not a fundamental property of PU, contrary to idiomaticity and fixation. However, at the end of the 20th century,

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geolinguistic nature. All languages, as Gadet (2003:13) points out, are subjected to many changes: "Il n'est pas de langue que ses locuteurs ne manient sous des formes diversifiées… les sociolinguistes, la saisissent en parlant de variétés pour désigner different façons de parler, de variation pour les phénomènes diversifiés en synchronie, et de changement pour la dynamique en diachronie; et ce, à la fois pour les productions d'an individual, d'un group ou d'une communauté".

2. In other words, the components could not be replaced by other ones of the same syntactic class without changing the meaning of the PU. These PU do admit other possible modifications or transformations such as the variation of person, tense, inclusion of adverbs, pronominalization, etc.

3. All the acronyms relate to dictionaries that appear in the bibliography.

4. The * will indicate that a multi-verbal sequence is not admitted as PV, losing the original meaning of the PU.

5. The issues of the ELUA (2020) and L.I (2020) journals related to phraseological variation and diatopic variation are currently being solved.

some other studies began to highlight the possible importance of PV: "son muy numerosos los fraseologismos que admiten variaciones" (Carneado Moré 1985: 269); "La lingüística hispánica apenas ha prestado atención a la variación fraseológica, debido fundamentalmente a la falta de datos fraseológicos que cubran toda el área hispana y con los que se puedan hacer investigaciones sobre el tema. Los escasos trabajos sobre los fraseologismos […] no han sido suficientes para obtener una visión global de la variación fraseológica del mundo hispánico" (Koike 2001: 77); "[…] no es menos cierto que la inmensa mayoría de ellas experimenta algunos cambios o puede tener formulaciones diversas al ser actualizadas en el discurso" (Montoro del Arco 2004: 593). Thus, in the case of the verbal phrases *estar en la luna* and *coger el toro por los cuernos* we find the following variants:

(1) *estar en la luna*, *estar en* [*Babia* (DUE), *Belén* (DUE), en el *limbo* (DUE), en *la higuera* (DUE), *la parra* (CREA), *las Batuecas* (DUE), *las nubes* (DUE)].

(2) [*agarrar, coger*] *el toro por los cuernos* (DUE), *coger al toro por* [*las astas*, *los cuernos*] (RAE).

The main problem is that variation appears in unpredictable processes regarding potential candidates for variant(s). Indeed, there is no rule that allows neither to determine nor to guess the reason why some words can be used as switching elements in some PU and other words cannot. This is the case of the possible variants of: *estar hasta las narices*, for which we have found: *estar hasta [el coco* (DUE), *el (mismísimo) coño* (DFDEA), *el copete* (LARBI), *el culo* (DUE), *el gollete* (RAE), *el gorro* (DUE), *el moño* (DUE), *el nabo* (oral), *el pirri* (VV[6]), *el pito* (VV), *el punto com* (VV), *la coronilla* (VV), *la polla* (DUE), *la punta de los pelos* (DUE), *las cejas* (DUE), *las narices* (DUE), *las pelotas* (DUE), *los cojones* (DUE), *los huevos* (DUE), *los ovarios* (VV), *los pelos* (DUE), etc.] *de alguien / algo*. Why can we say *estar hasta las narices*, *hasta el moño*, *hasta las cejas* and not **estar hasta las orejas* o *hasta la frente?

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6. VV means Viva Voz and its use is attested on the Internet browsers. *Estar hasta el punto com* presents 1450 occurrences on Google.

This process of variation and its unpredictability (Mellado Blanco 2004: 159; Mogorrón 2010: 96) can be found in most types of PU[7] (namely: verbal, adjectival, nominal, adverbial phrases, collocations, sayings[8], pragmatemes[9], etc.). However, taking into account the material impossibility of presenting the changes in each of them, in the context of this paper, we will analyze the variation in the PU that we call fixed verbal constructions (FVC) in which we include: *poner una pica en Flandes* (DUE); 2) verbal collocations: *guiñar un ojo* (DUE); 3) support verbs: *dar un paseo* (DUE); *dar ayotes a alguien* (DUE); 4) comparative verbal constructions: *dormir como un lirón* (DUE), (see Mogorrón 2010).

The possible variations are unpredictable and, in addition to that, the number of words that can be accepted as variants can fluctuate and lead to low-productive or highly productive variants, numerically speaking. As part of the low-productive variants, we find, for example:

(1) [*acabar, terminar*] *como el rosario de la aurora* (DUE);
(2) [*arrojar, echar, tirar*] *la casa por la ventana* (DUE);
(3) *echar*(le) *margaritas a los* [*cerdos, puercos*] (RAE);
(4) [*despedirse, marcharse*] *a la francesa* (DUE); etc.

On the other hand, other PU allow a much larger number of words accepted in the process of variation and modification of the canonical form. Thus, for example:

(1) *irse* algo *a* [*freír espárragos* (DEA), *freír monas* (DEA), *hacer puñetas* (DEA), *hacer gárgaras* (DEA), *pique* (DUE), *tomar por culo* (DEA), *tomar por el culo* (DEA), *tomar viento* (DUE)], *irse* algo *al* [*carajo (DUE)*, *cuerno* (DUE), *diablo* (DUE), *demonio* (DUE), *garete* (DFDEA), *infierno* (VV), *traste (DUE*], *irse* algo *a la* [*mierda* (DUE), *porra* (DUE), etc.].

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7. See Corpas (1996), García-Page (2008).
8. See Sevilla Muñoz (2020), Navarro-Brotons (2011, 2018, 2020). E.g.: (1) *A Dios rogando y con el mazo dando* / a Dios rogando y al macho dando. (2) *[A/ para cada cerdo / puerco] [le llega / hay / le viene] su San Martín.* (3) *[Quien / el que / al que] a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra [le cobija / tiene].*
9. See Alvarado Ortega (2008). E.g.: *¡me cachis en la mar!, ¡me cago en la mar!, ¡me cagüen la mar!, ¡me cago en la puta [la hostia, la leche]!*

(2) [*descalzarse, descojonarse, descoyuntarse, despedazarse, despelotarse, desternillarse, desperezarse, mearse, mondarse, morirse, partirse, retorcerse, reventar, troncharse*] *de risa* (RAE).

Finally, cases of simultaneous variations regarding several components of a PU, such as verbs and nouns, verbs and prepositions, nouns and prepositions, etc. may occur. E.g.:

(1) [*dejarse, quitarse*] *de* [*cuentos, historias*] (DUE)
(2) [*descubrir, inventar*] [*América (VV), el agua caliente (VV), el mediterráneo (DFDEA)*, la pólvora (DFDEA)];

At this point and in order to deal with the concept of phraseological variation, a broad conception of phraseology will be used here (Gläser 1986: 42; Corpas Pastor 2003) and we will talk about PV when there is, in a given PU, a substitution of one or more of its lexical or grammatical components with another one which has the same characteristics (synonymous or not), the resulting PU having the same meaning and an identical or a very similar syntactic structure.

2.1. *Geolinguistic or diatopic variants*

In the case of languages such as Spanish, French, English, Arabic, etc., used as official languages in many countries, there are also numerous diatopic or geolinguistic variants. In the case of Spanish, most of the cited studies - with the exception of Zuluaga (1980); Carneado Moré (1985); Square-King (2016, 2018, 2020); Koike (2001); Mogorrón (2014, 2015, 2020); Navarro-Brotons (2011, 2018, 2020); Pamies (2017)– show the typology of phraseological variations adhering to Peninsular and/or Common Spanish (EspPC), leaving aside numerous creations used in *los españoles de América* (LaS), as recognized by García-Page (2008: 253): "La lista de variantes de una lengua ha de tener en cuenta las diferencias institucionalizadas que se producen en cualquier ámbito de su empleo, en especial las de índole sociolectal o distráctica y geolectal o diatópica. Por esa razón, resulta arriesgado afirmar que los inventarios de variantes constituyen conjuntos cerrados, sobre todo cuando se trata de lenguas como el español de un radio de acción tan amplio".

Going back to some of the examples belonging to the EspPC in point 2., we see that Latin-American dictionaries show that there are recognized variants in Latin-American countries. E.g.:

(1) with examples of apparently fixed PU in EspPC[10]:

a) *apretarse el cinturón* (DUE*) / ajustarse el cinturón*, *los cinturones* (Ddmexicanismos, Mx), *amarrarse el cinturón* (DdAm, Pe).

b) *salir del armario* (DUE) */ salir del closet* (DdAm, ES, Ni, PR, Co, Ve, E, Pe, Ch, Py).

(2) with new variants in Latin-America of FVC that already present variants in EspPC. For example:

a) *irse* algo *a* [*freír espárragos* (DEA), *freír monas* (DEA), *hacer puñetas* (DEA), *hacer gárgaras* (DEA), **a justa** (DdAm, PR), **a juste** DdAm, PR), **a la chucha** (DdAm, Ch), *pique* (DUE), *tomar por culo* (DEA), *tomar por el culo* (DEA), *tomar viento* (DUE)]; *irse* algo *al* [*carajo* (DUE), **cachimbo** ((DdAm, RD), *cuerno* (DUE), *diablo* (DUE), *demonio* (DUE), *garete* (DFDEA), **hoyo** (DdAm, Bo, Ch, Ar), *infierno* (VV), **tacho** (DdAm, Bo, Ch, Py, Ar, Uy), **sipote** (DdAm, RD), *traste (DUE*], *irse* algo *a la* [*mierda* (DUE), *porra* (DUE)].

b) *coger al toro por los cuernos*, [*agarrar, coger*] *el toro por los cuernos* (DUE), *coger al toro por* [*las astas*, *los cuernos*] (RAE) */ agarrar al toro por los* **cachos** (DdAm, Py, RD, Ve, Pe), *tomar el toro por las guampas* (DdAm, Ur).

c) [*lanzarse*, *tirarse*] *alguien a la piscina* (RAE) */ tirarse* **a la pileta** (DdAm, Ar, Ur).

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10. LaS variants are indicated by separating them with a slash **/**. Usually, Spanish dictionaries include a large majority of words and expressions from EspPC and Latin American dictionaries include content from LaS. As an example of this, the two most representative dictionaries of the EspPC, the DRAE and the DUE, have only about 770 PU of the LaS.

2.2. Numerical variations in PU

The first contributions in which the variations of the FVC were analyzed and quantified have been carried out by the University of Alicante FRASYTRAM[11] research group (see Mogorrón 2010, 2015), thanks to a Database (DB) of 41,000 FVC collected thanks to more than 30 Spanish and Latin-American dictionaries, 26,000 of which belong to EspPC and 15,000 to LaS.

In the case of the EspPC, the analysis of the 26,000 entries highlights that 15,001 FVCs, that is a 58%, present some type of variation (see figure 1).
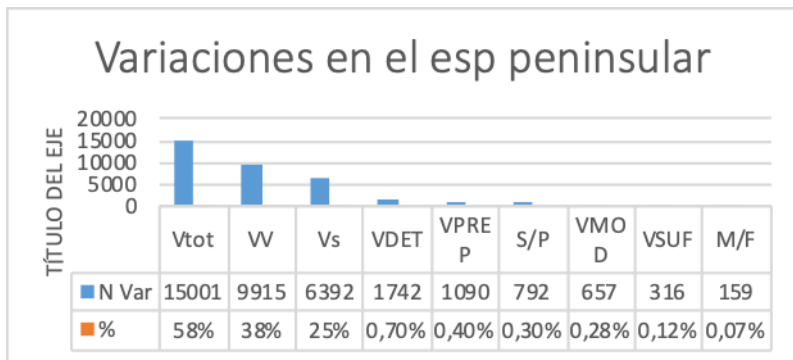

Figure 1. Variations in Peninsular Spanish

In the case of LaS, the analysis shows that 3359 CVF of LaS present some type of variation[12] (see figure 2).

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11. Fraseología y Traducción multilingüe (Phraseology and Multilingual Translation)
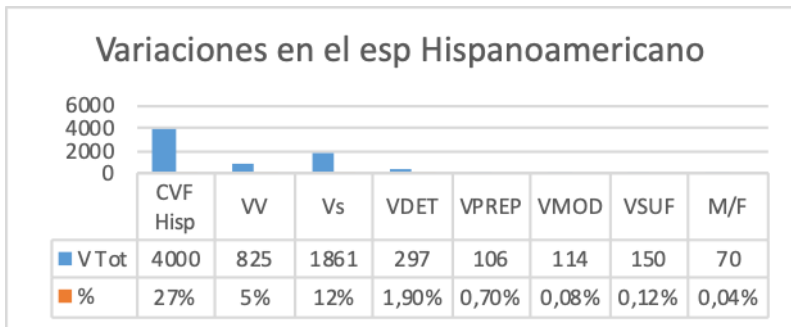12. This is an ongoing analysis.

Figure 2. Variations in Latin-American Spanish

In both cases, the most frequent variations take place with lexical variants, either verbal or nominal. Now, while in the EspPC there are more verbal variations, in the LaS there are more nominal variations.

2.3. *Actual use of phraseological variants*

Finding the possible phraseological variants (PV) generally implies an extensive lexicographic compilation work, consulting different dictionaries, since the phraseological content of each one presents considerable differences (see table 1).

DUE	[agarrar / coger] el toro por los cuernos
RAE	coger al toro por [las astas / los cuernos]
Espasa Calpe	[agarrar / coger / tomar] el toro por los cuernos

Table 1: PV in dictionaries

However, is this collection of documentary sources complete? Currently, the possibility of searching for some lexical chains in textual corpora[13], through

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13. Since the 1960s, textual corpora have significantly changed linguistic studies, allowing researchers to have great volumes of data and to study the language through real examples using automatic processes (Corpas, 2008, 2013, 2018, etc.), which extract the requested results thanks to natural language processing.

automatic text processing, allows finding numerous VF that are not included in the analyzed peninsular dictionaries and that are still used by the speakers daily. In the case of the variants of *coger el toro por lo cuernos*, according to the uses listed in the dictionaries, the forms *tomar al toro por los cuernos*, *agarrar al toro por las astas*, *tomar el toro por las astas* would not be acceptable despite being on Google.es on the Internet.

In order to find out the possible variants of *coger el toro por los cuernos* y de *echar margaritas a los cerdos* (see tables 3 and 4), a search was conducted in three textual corpora: CREA[14], CORDE[15] and Sketch-Engine (S-E)[16], which bring together a large collection of representative texts. The search for the VF, alphabetically ordered starting with the verb, offers the following results:

		CREA	CORDE	S-E	EspPC	LaS
1	*agarrar al toro por los cachos*			4	3	1
2	***agarrar al toro por los cuernos***	2		194	**153**	41
3	*agarrar al toro por las astas*			14	**10**	4
4	*agarrar el toro por las astas*		2	35	14	**21**
5	*agarrar el toro por las guampas*			2		**2**
6	*agarrar el toro por los cachos*	1	1	8		**8**
7	***agarrar el toro por los cuernos***	1	1	184	82	**102**
8	*amarrar al toro por los cuernos*			1	**1**	
9	*asir al toro por las astas*			2		**2**
10	*asir al toro por los cuernos*			1		**1**

14. REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Database (CREA) [online]. Corpus de referencia del español actual. http://www.rae.es.
15. REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Database (CORDE) [online]. Corpus diacrónico del español. http://www.rae.es.
16. https://www.sketchengine.eu/ el corpus esTenTen18 de S-E, consists of the *European Spanish Web* and *American Spanish Web* subcorpus and has 17.553.075.259 tokens, so it is a large corpus, with 49.32% of European Spanish domains and 46.46% of Latin-American Spanish.

11	*asumir al toro por los cuernos*			1		**1**
12	*atacar al toro por los cuernos*		1	1	**1**	
13	*atrapar al toro por las astas*			1		**1**
14	*atrapar al toro por los cuernos*			1	**1**	
15	***coger al toro por las astas***		1	6	3	3
16	*coger al toro por los cachos*			4		4
17	***coger al toro por los cuernos***	3	1	353	**333**	20
18	*coger el toro por los cachos*			2		**2**
19	***coger el toro por los cuernos***	39	1	2050	**1980**	70
20	*enfrentar al toro por los cuernos*			11	2	**9**
21	*entrar al toro por los cuernos*	2		59	**38**	21
22	*ir al toro por los cuernos*			4	1	**3**
23	*pillar al toro por los cuernos*			3	**3**	
24	*tener al toro por las astas*			4		**4**
25	*tener al toro por los cuernos*			11	**6**	5
26	*tomar al buey por los cuernos*			2	1	**1**
27	*tomar al toro por las astas*	2		191	31	**160**
28	*tomar al toro por los cachos*			8	3	**5**
29	*tomar al toro por los cuernos*	3	1	338	100	**238**
30	*tomar el toro por las astas*	8	2	793	20	**773**
31	*tomar el toro por las guampas*	1		16		16
32	*tomar el toro por los cachos*			57	10	47
33	***tomar el toro por los cuernos***	10		620	160	**460**

Table 2. VF *coger el toro por los cuernos*

		CREA	CORDE	S-E	EspPC	EspHisp
1	*arrojar margaritas a los cerdos*		1	8	4	4
2	*arrojar margaritas a los chanchos*			1		1
3	*arrojar margaritas a los puercos*	1	1	3	1	2
4	*dar de comer margaritas a los cerdos*			11	4	7
5	*dar margaritas a los cerdos*			33	**29**	4
6	*dar margaritas a los chanchos*			11		**11**
7	*dar margaritas a los cochinos*			1	1	
8	*dar margaritas a los gorrinos*			1	1	
9	*dar margaritas a los puercos*			4	1	3
10	*echar margaritas a los cerdos*	4	1	84	76	6
11	*echar margaritas a los puercos*		3	11	6	5
12	*lanzar margaritas a los cerdos*			4	2	2
13	*ofrecer margaritas a los cerdos*			3	3	
14	*tirar margaritas a los cerdos*			15	7	8
15	*tirar margaritas a los chanchos*			30		**30**

Table 3. VF *echar margaritas a los cerdos*

In both cases, we have highlighted in bold the VF collected in the dictionaries used for the elaboration of the DB. Although it is true that all the VF that are collected in the dictionaries appear in the textual copora, it can be observed that they do not always include the most usual forms and that some added VF present very few occurrences in the three analyzed textual corpora. What is most outstanding is that they can be detected with contextualized examples:

(1) uses of the same forms on the two sides of the Atlantic, corroborating the existence of a common Spanish language. The variants with the most occurrences in S-E, and surely the most common today, appear on both sides of the Atlantic. E.g.: *coger el toro por los cuernos* (DUE) *echar margaritas a los cerdos* (RAE); y otras muchas como *estar en la*

luna (RAE); *estirar la pata (DUE)*; *comerse las uñas (DUE)*; *hacer el agosto* (DFDEA); etc.

(2) new variations that did not appear in dictionaries.

However, the use of these magnificent tools does not imply that variants will be found in each and every PU, since many are still unalterable concerning its formulation. This would be the case of *hacer de tripas corazón* (RAE), *ladrar a la luna* (RAE), *ponerse el mundo por montera* (RAE), *estar entre Pinto y Valdemoro* (RAE); *dar el ala para comerse la pechuga* (DdAm, PR); that appear in many occurrences in EspPC and/or LaS in S-E.

In view of the data obtained, we think that it is convenient to reconsider not only the importance in the world of phraseology of variations, given that the two concepts of fixation and variation are surely the two opposite faces of the same phenomenon, but also its treatment and consideration as an essential property, and most likely with the same importance as fixation and idiomaticity. As anticipated by Corpas & Mena Rodríguez (2003: 183):

> hay que admitir que el concepto de fijación tal y como fue planteado en las primeras investigaciones queda en entredicho. Si en un principio las UFs se definieron como unidades estables y fijas que mostraban rechazo a cualquier alteración léxica, semántica y morfosintáctica, en vista de la existencia de cambios reales y potenciales, no cabe hablar de la fijación como una propiedad absoluta (Burger 1998) sino como una cualidad relativa (Fleischer 1982; Gläser 1986; Wotjak 1992; Corpas 1996; Burger 1998) y variable.

2.4. *Variation of meaning*

Another type of variation that should be highlighted, in relation to the understanding and translation process of the PU, which has not been analyzed either, is related to their meaning(s) and geolinguistic polysemy. However, it is also a problem of great magnitude. The exhaustive analysis of the 41,000 FVC of the BD has made it possible to collect 14,238 cases of polysemic FVC so far and to identify polysemic FVC that present situations ranging from two meanings to ten (Mogorrón 2020) with the following results (see table 4).

polysemic FVC	
1 meaning	26652
2 meanings	4335
3 meanings	1006
4 meanings	328
5 meanings	120
6 meanings	31
7 meanings	19
8 meanings	6
9 meanings	1
10 meanings	4

Table 4. FVC, cases of polysemy

Furthermore, the analysis of the 14,238 cases of polysemy to determine the area of use, offers the following results:

(1) 8.423 FVC belong to EspPC only, being the most frequent situation. E.g.:

a) *pegar un metido* (1. Regañar, reñir con rigor DUE; 2. Sonsacar dinero a alguien, DUE; 3. Pegar, dar una paliza a alguien, DUE);

b) *pedir la luna* (1. Pedir, pretender algo muy difícil o imposible de obtener, RAE; 2. Pedir un precio o sueldo exagerado, DFDEA), etc.

(2) 1.358 FVC have meanings that belong to EspPC or LaS. E.g.:

a) *bañarse en agua de rosas* (1. Alegrarse de algún mal ajeno, DUE; 2. Sentirse alguien muy orgulloso por el éxito de un ser querido, DdAm, Ve, Ec; 3. Disfrutar de bonanza económica, DdAm, Gu);

b) *no tener abuela* (1. Se dice irónicamente de la persona que se alaba a sí misma, DUE; 2. Ser malo, DdAm; 3. Mantener una conducta incorregible, DdAm, Mx, ES, Ni, Ar); etc.

(3) 4.454 FVC have meanings that belong only to LaS. E.g.:

a) *enredar la pita* (1. Complicar las cosas, DdAm, Ho, Ni, Co, RD, PR; 2. Hacer difícil de comprender algo, DdAm, Cu, RD; 3. Confundirse, DdAm, RD; 4. Irse por las ramas, DdAm, Ni);

b) *acabarse el veinte* (1. Agotarse el tiempo, DDMex, Mx; 2. Agotarse la oportunidad de hacer algo, DDMex, Mx; 3. Acabarse la suerte, DdAm, Mx); etc.

2.5. *Phraseological parasynonymy*

The last type of variation that we would like to talk about in this paper, also due to its great impact on translation, is the one about phraseological parasynonymy. In addition to the idiosyncratic culturemes associated with a well-determined culture (Pamies 2008), there are many concepts in many languages that we could qualify as polycultural, or even as phraseological universals (Dobrovol'skij 1988; Corpas 1995, 1998 ; Luque & Majón 2002; Mogorron 2002), which are so usual that speakers of different languages have created many expressions with the same meaning to refer to these concepts. In this case we can find parasynonymic groups ranging from a couple of expressions to groups formed by several dozens of PU. These usual polycultural concepts can refer to any activity of daily life, for example: sex, food, drink, death, work, pregnancy, skipping class, being fat, skinny, being handsome, ugly, short, small, brave, fearful, eating a lot, homosexuality, wealth, poverty, distraction, etc.

The 41,000 entries in the FRASYTRAM database have been semantically classified according to their definition(s). As an example, the following parasynonymic FVC for *being distracted* have been collected on the basis of the UF *estar en la luna*:

(1) **in Spain:** *andar en las nubes* (RAE); *andar por las nubes* (DUE); *cazar tilingos* (RAE); [*contar*, *estar contando*, *ponerse a contar*] *las vigas* (RAE); [*estar*, *quedar*] *a uvas* (EPM); *estar en Babia* (DUE); *[estar, estar bailando] en Belén* (RAE); *estar con la torta* (DTDFH); *estar con los angelitos* (RAE); *estar en el limbo* (RAE); *estar en la higuera* (RAE); *estar en la luna* (DUE); *estar en la parra; estar en las Batuecas* (DUE); *estar en las nubes* (DUE); *estar pensando en la mona de Pascua* (DTDFH); *ir a por uvas* (Akal); *[mirar a, pensar en] las musarañas* (RAE); *mirar las telarañas* (LARBI); *quedarse encantado* (DUE); *tener la cabeza a las once* (RAE); *tener la cabeza a pájaros* (RAE); *tener la cabeza en el aire (VV) tener la cabeza en la luna (VV); tener la cabeza*

en las nubes (RAE); *tocar el violón* (RAE); *tocar el violón a dos manos* (DTDFH)*; vivir en las nubes* (DUE); *etc.*

(2) **in Latin-America:** [*andar*, *vivir*, *pasársela*] *en la luna* (DEUEM, Mx, Ch); [*andar*, *estar*] *fuera de onda* (DTDFH, Mx); *cortar varas* (DdAm, Gu, Ho, Nicaragua); *estar* (alguien) *en el aire* (RAE; Cu); *estar en la estratosfera* (DFHA, Ar); *estar en otra* (DFHA, Ar); *estar papando moscas* (GDLA, Ar); *estar en la luna de Paita* (Bo, Ec, Pe); *estar en la luna de Paita y el sol de Colán* (DdAm, Pe)*; estar en las nebulosas (RAE, Ve); estar fuera de onda* (DTDFH, Mx)*; estar pensando en los pajaritos de colores (DdAm, Ar); pensar en la inmortalidad del cangrejo* (DdAm, Mx, Gu, Ho, ES, Ni, Py, Cu, RD, Ve, Ec, Bo, Ur); *pensar en la inmortalidad del mosquito* (DdAm, Pe); *pensar en las muelas del gallo* (DdAm, Gu); *pensar en los anteojos del gallo* (DdAm, Gu); *pensar en los huevos del gallo* (DdAm, CR); *quedarse en China* (DdAm, Cu); [*ser*, *tener*] *cabeza de novia* (GDLA, Ar); *tener la cabeza en los pies* (DEUEM, Mx); *vivir en el limbo* (GDLA, Ar).

3. Translation of the PU

3.1. Translation and phraseology

Translation is a complicated multifunctional process which is much more complex than the simple fact of searching for equivalences between words or sentences. In this process, the purpose and the context that will give rise to different translation methods (Hurtado Albir 2001: 252) should not be ignored. However, PU represent the desire of the speaker to use in the act of communication, written or spoken, a specific wording endorsed by a large part of society, adding a cultural, socializing, generational nuance and performing stylistic, discursive, argumentative and even pragmatic functions instead of using a neutral word or a verbal paraphrase. Furthermore, its use presupposes that the interlocutors have a common cultural and linguistic background, otherwise they will find groups of words that they will not understand and will have to rely on other users' help or dictionaries to try to decode this possible PU.

What would the spoken language be without PU or even the literary works of some authors as expressive in their discourse as:

(1) Pérez Reverte (*El capitán Alatriste*, 1996: 123 y 133): "pueden más dos tetas que dos carretas", "dormir a pierna suelta"; "puso pies en polvorosa", "dar tres cuartos al pregonero", "la pasó en vela", "estar al tanto");

(2) Torres (¡Oh es Él!, 1998: 33 y 44): "echar las campanas al vuelo", "caer en manos de", "estás como un cencerro"; "tenía el corazón en un puño", "estaba hecha un manojo de nervios";

(3) Ruiz Zafón (*El juego del ángel*, 2008: 23-24): "ver ni en pintura", "subsistir por los pelos", "otro gallo nos cantaría", "de medio pelo", etc.);

(4) Gala (*El dueño de la herida*, 2003: 24-25): "le echó en cara", "la gata flora, que si se la meten chilla, y si se la sacan llora", "quitarme de en medio", "soy de ordeno y mando").

What would their translation become if these forms that the author has consciously used on the basis of their inherent phraseological function were omitted or eliminated? It is true that the phraseological competence of every user, already limited in their mother tongue, decreases considerably in other languages (Corpas 2003, Tabares & Batista (2019). It is also true that the phraseological content of dictionaries is far from being complete and it is also true that the translation of the PU represents a real challenge for translators, but no matter how difficult it is, it is an acceptable challenge (Corpas 2003; Richart Marset 2008) as indicated by Mona Baker (1992: 65): "the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language", and Ballard (1998: 247): "le jugement de fidélité et de qualité que l'on porte sur la traduction ne peut s'exercer qu'au travers des formes, porteuses de sens et d'effets stylistiques", having then to forge a work of translatological goldsmithing.

3.2. *Steps of the phraseological translation process*

Several authors have analyzed phraseological translation, highlighting that the different steps of the process correspond, according to Corpas (2003), with the identification, interpretation and search for equivalence (at the

lexical and later textual level) (Sevilla & Sevilla 2005, 2009; Mogorrón 2008; Timofeeva 2008, etc.).

The identification and interpretation-understanding steps of the PU are closely related to idiomaticity/opacity, as well as to the phraseological competence of the translator, who will be facing several prototypical situations.

(1) If the PU belongs to the translator's phraseological competence, he or she should try to find another equivalent of meaning in the target language.

(2) If it is not within the translator's phraseological competence, he or she may identify it or not.

(3) If he or she does not identify it as a PU, it will be detrimental to the translation, no matter how much the overall meaning of the text is preserved.

(4) If he or she does identify it as a PU, again, he or she will have to search for it in monolingual or bilingual dictionaries to see if the dictionary hopefully includes that form, and then he or she will have to be able to identify, interpret and translate the PU.

It has become evident that the process of understanding/interpreting the PU is much more complex than it might seem, as evidenced by the examples shown below, due to the limited phraseological competence of each user, the deficient phraseological treatment of dictionaries[17] (Corpas 2003: 155-169; Mogorrón 2011, 2015) and the numerous phraseological and paremiological publications in the publishing market. E.g.:

(1) *cerrar los ojos* 1. Dormir, RAE; 2. Morir, RAE; 3. Sujetar el entendimiento al dictamen de otro, RAE; 4. Obedecer sin examen ni réplica, RAE; 5. Arrojarse temerariamente a hacer algo sin reparar en inconvenientes, RAE; 6. No apartarse de un enfermo hasta que expire, RAE; 7. Permitir cierta cosa haciendo como que no se advierte, DUE; 8. No querer enterarse de ello para no disgustarse o por terquedad, DUE; 9. Hacerlo como gesto de miedo, DUE; 10. Alucinarle, para que no oiga, vea lo que le conviene, RAE;

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17. The expression *salir del armario* does not appear in the DRAE in October 2020.

(2) *meter el diente* 1. Morder o comer algo difícil de mascar, DFDEA; 2. Emprender con interés una cosa que implica dificultad, DUE; 3. Apropiarse de algo que pertenece a otra persona, RAE; 4. Criticar hablar mal de alguien, RAE; 5. Cobrar más de lo establecido, DdAm, ES, CR, Pa;

3.3. *Existence of phraseological correspondences*

After the identification and understanding/interpretation process, the translator has to search for correspondences. The semantic analysis of the 41,000 entries in the DB and the search for translatological and phraseological equivalents has allowed us to see that there are many cases of parasynonymy and that in the translation process the translator is going to find three well-differentiated situations.

(1) The one in which in the source and target language there is a single PU to express a situation (see table 5):

Spanish UF	French UF	English UF
[marcharse, despedirse] a la francesa (DUE)	filer à l'anglaise (GR)	To take french leave ((DCU) **to make an Irish exit**[18].
cantar victoria (RAE)	chanter victoire (GR)	to claim/cry victory (DCU)
poner una pica en Flandes (RAE)	mettre 1 grain de sel sur la queue d'un oiseau (GR)	to bring off a real coup (DCU)

Table 5. Only PU in source and target language

(2) The one in which for the same situation we find several PU in different languages (see table 6):

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18. In the same way that we are collecting the Latin-American Spanish PU, it would be very important to be able to differentiate the British ones from those of the United States or from other English-speaking countries in order to be able to distinguish between translation and understanding.

Empezar la casa por el tejado (RAE) Poner el carro antes de los bueyes (VV)	mettre la charrue avant les boeufs (GR) mettre la farine avant le beurre (VV)	To put the cart before the horse (DCU)
estar en la luna (RAE) estar en las nubes (DUE) estar en el limbo (RAE) estar en las Batuecas (DUE) tener la cabeza a las once (RAE)	être dans la lune (GR) avoir la tête dans les nuages (GR) être dans les nuages (GR) Bayer aux corneilles (GR)	to have one's head in the clouds (CDU) to be lost in reverie (CDU)

Table 6. Several PU in many languages

(3) The one in which there is a PU to express a situation in one language but not in (an)other(s) (see table 7).

dar gato por liebre (RAE)	rouler, tromper qq'un (LBI)	*[buy/accept] a pig in a poke* *to pull the wool over someone's eyes* *to take someone for a ride*
armarse la de San Quintín (DUE)	il va y avoir du grabuge	There will be an almighty row All hell will break loose
salir por la puerta grande (DFDEA)	sortir par la grande porte	to make a triumphant exit to do something in grand style

Table 7. The PU does not exist in all languages

3.4. *Phraseological equivalence degrees*

Although the concept of equivalence is recurrent in translation (Nida 1964, Newmark 1982, Rabadán 1991, Elena García 1994, Hatim & Mason 1995; Jakobson 1959[19]), phraseological equivalence has been fundamentally researched in contrastive linguistics, analyzing the lexical structures and components, looking for parameters that, based on formal and semantic

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19. Jakobson (1959 [1975]: 70): "La equivalencia en la diferencia es el problema cardinal del lenguaje y la cuestión central de la Lingüística".

similarities and differences, would allow to set types of equivalences, such as isomorphisms[20] (syntactic, lexical-semantic, etc.). These studies did not take into account the level of the language, the frequency and the area of use, or the possible connotations; which is, in the opinion of many translatologists, essential information in order to obtain a good translation.

On the other hand, the study of phraseological correspondences establishes that there are three degrees of translation equivalence (Corpas 2003; Mogorrón 2008, 2014; J. Sevilla 1997; M. Sevilla 2015; Mellado Blanco 2015). That is:

(1) total or full equivalence (both units have the same denotative and connotative meaning. E.g: *quemar las naves* (RAE) / *to burn one's boats* (CDU) / *brûler ses vaisseaux (GR)*.

(2) partial equivalence (when a locution of the source language is translated by a locution in the target language that presents differences of denotative or connotative meaning); or it is translated by a lexical unit without the expressive values of the locution in question: *quemar las naves* (RAE) = *couper les ponts*[21] (GR); *dar gato por liebre (RAE)* = *to pull the wool over someone's eyes*/rouler, tromper qq'un;

(3) null equivalence (these are cases of sociolinguistic realities in the source language that are not lexicalized in the target language. The translator has to choose some other transfer technique to express the meaning of the unit, often losing the corresponding connotations); *armarse la de San Quintín* (RAE) = There will be an almighty row / *il va y avoir du grabuge*; *salir por la puerta grande* = to make a tiumphant exit / *sortir triomphalement*.

The most frequent type of equivalence between phraseological systems is generally the partial one. We agree with Corpas (2003: 254):

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20. Giving way to a large number of false friends like *salir por la puerta grande / sortir par la grande porte* (reach a good situation, TLFI).

21. In French, *brûler ses vaisseaux* and *couper les ponts* could be used with the same meaning, but with different connotations. When searching for the form "cortar los puentes" in Spanish, we see that: (1) it does not appear in any of the major reference dictionaries (DRAE, DUE); (2) one occurrence appears in CREA, two in CORDE, more than 500 in Sketch-Engine and more than 2,000 in the Google search engine.

> Las correspondencias fraseológicas que se establecen entre dos lenguas distintas suelen ser relaciones de equivalencia parcial por cuanto las UF implicadas presentan ciertas diferencias y solapamientos con respecto a uno o varios de los siguientes aspectos: contenido semántico, base figurativa, características morfosintácticas, restricciones diasistemátcas y rasgos pragmáticos.

Searching for phraseological equivalences in a thematic database of 2,482 Spanish PU and 2,031 French PU classified semantically (Mogorrón 2002) makes it possible to demonstrate this statement and proves that there are very few cases of null phraseological equivalence, at least between phraseological systems of nearby languages and cultures, with less than 5% of the cases[22].

We will not deal here with the techniques and strategies of translation, nor with the difficulties of phraseological translation that may arise at the lexical or textual level, which were already discussed in many studies and that should be used when an suitable phraseological equivalent is not found (Capra 2012; Corpas 2000, 2003; J. Sevilla 1997; Sevilla & Sevilla 2000; M. Sevilla 2009, 2015).

The translator should know or be able to quickly know the different possible meanings of the PU (see 2.4). PU like *pedir la luna*, *pegar un metido* have several meanings that should be distinguished in each case. PU such as *no tener abuela, bañarse en agua de rosas, enredar la pita*, can have many different meanings depending on the geographical origin of the text in which we find them. We are in an endless circle where we go back to the starting point again and again, because if the translator detects the PU, but does not have all the necessary tools to interpret them correctly, he or she will be powerless and will have to interpret them blindly.

It is extremely important that these tools also include all possible variants in order to facilitate their location and correct interpretation. Thus, in the case of the PU *no pegar ojo* we find in the DRAE *no pegar* [*ojo*, *el ojo*, *los ojos*] with the meaning of not being able to sleep and in the DFDEM: *no pegar* [*ojo*, *los ojos*]. If with these data we see the subtitled version of the French film *Les femmes du sixième étage*[23] in which we see on screen: *no pude pegar*

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22. Obviously, in the future it would be useful to find bilingual and bicultural experts who would carry out this type of analysis among PU belonging, for example, to Chinese, Arabic or Japanese, to mention linguistically and culturally distant languages.

23. By Philippe le Guay (2010). Spanish titel: *Las chicas de la sexta planta*.

un ojo, we can then think that it is an error or a wrong literal translation (see screenshot 1).

| Subt: No pude pegar un ojo |
| D: No he podido pegar ojo |
| O: J'ai pas pu fermer l'oeil
00:03:56 – 00:04:05 |

Screenshot 1

However, the DUE says: no pegar [ojo, el ojo, los ojos, **un ojo**], no cerrar los ojos and the DFDEA: [*cerrar*, *pegar*] [*ojo*, *el ojo*, *los ojos*, **un ojo**], showing that it is a correct variant accepted by the Hispanic lexicography. The translation of PU is therefore not impossible, but very complex, but it is due to: the large number of PU in each language; fixation and, on its opposite side, variation; the limited phraseological competence of any user and any translator; the limited phraseological content of reference or specialized dictionaries; the phraseological universals (2.5); the several cases of parasynonymous PU.

Though they themselves could be the subject of all kinds of very interesting research papers, we will not address the topic of translation techniques. Indeed, before using translation techniques to translate a PU, the first step should be a DB that helps to confirm the existence of a PU, its variant(s) and possible meaning(s), as well as parasynonymous expressions and their phraseological equivalents. This DB would allow us to visualize the meanings of numerous PU which are not part of the phraseological competence of the

user / translator, or which are not included in the thesaurus of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Thus, when there are clear phraseological equivalents, the need to use translation techniques or strategies would be avoided.

Such a tool, whether it is a phraseological DB or not, that claims to be exhaustive and useful for translation, should include a semantic classification that allows us to know the PU with a given meaning, their possible variants, as well as indications about their frequency of use, the level of language, the register to which they belong; this is the type of information that, in our opinion, is essential to achieve a good translation and that was missing in contrastive linguistics contributions.

If we go back to the case of the parasynonymous FVC of *estar en la luna*, (2.5), the use of all the information that has been exposed can currently be applied to computer applications. An example could be the following phraseology app (screenshot 2[24]):
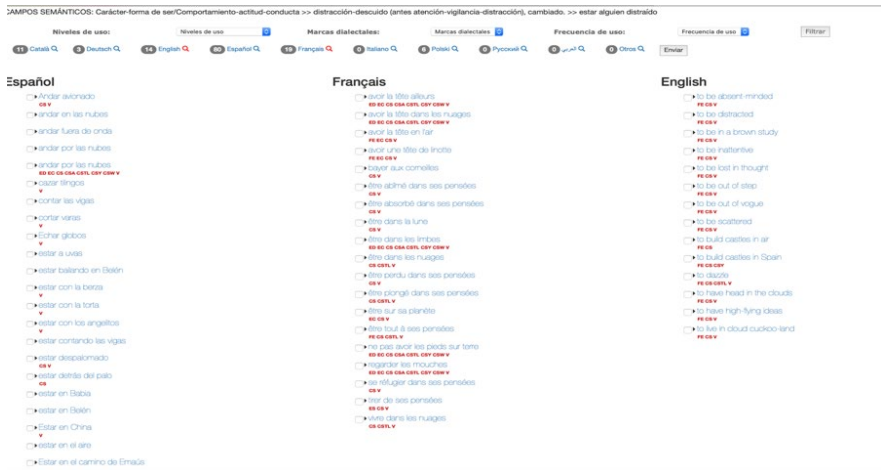
Screenshot 2

It allows us to know the phraseological correspondences in many languages[25], and also to select them thanks to filters according to diatopic values, language levels, frequency of use, and it quickly provides the PU with the required lexical and textual values.

With regard to translation, this type of application, which incorporates the possible variations, the PU and their possible phraseological equivalent(s) has multiple uses:

(1) It will allow machine translation programs not to make verbatim versions of variants that have not been included in their terminology bases.

(2) It will allow in some translation modalities to select the equivalents according to the textual parameters, for example, in literary translation.

(3) It will allow to select the closest phraseological equivalent according to the source language depending on technical aspects that must be taken into account, such as the correct oral synchronization in audiovisual translation.

Conclusions

Phraseological variation is a complex phenomenon whose numerical importance shows that it must be given the relevance it deserves. The development of corpus linguistics will undoubtedly make it possible to further highlight its importance in terms of users and geolinguistics. Regarding phraseological translation, it is convenient to repeat what has already been indicated: it is not impossible, since (very) often the same concepts are used as PU in different languages. It is complex, but it is due to: the large number of PU in each language; fixation and variation; the limited phraseological competence of any user; the limited phraseological content of reference or specialized dictionaries; the phraseological universals (2.5); the several cases of parasynonymous PU, etc.

Before using recurrent translation techniques, it is essential for human and machine translation to develop and have huge databases that will allow

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25. https://dti.ua.es/es/frasytram/grupo-de-investigacion-frasytram.html

to decide whether to use an available phraseological equivalent or to opt for another solution.

Although we should always bear in mind that translation involves a more complex process than simply searching for correspondences, it should not be forgotten that the step of going from a lexical level to a contextualized discourse leads to consider the possible associated pragmatic values.

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BIONOTE / BIONOTA

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