

Phraseological units and metaphors

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.10.c21>

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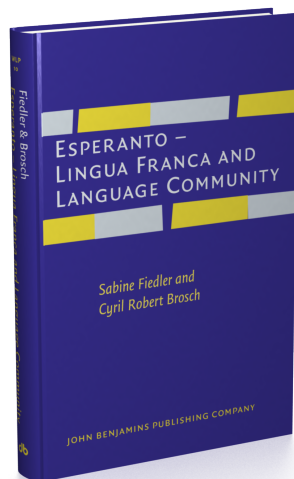
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Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community

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[Studies in World Language Problems, 10]

2022. xx, 429 pp.



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Phraseological units and metaphors

21.1 Introduction

The subject that we are exploring in this chapter – phraseology, the inventory of fixed expressions, idioms, proverbs, catchphrases and other ready-made constructions – is of special interest for Esperanto as it is the part of the language that is most closely related to its history and to the culture of the people who use it. Phraseology, like no other topic, provides an insight into the life of the Esperanto speech community and can therefore be considered proof of Esperanto as a living language.

Considering the function of a planned language as a means of worldwide communication among people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, one might ask whether the employment of idiomatic expressions is actually advisable. Mutual understanding has to be the top priority in communication and this can obviously be hampered by linguistic items that are semantically opaque or only partly transparent. The transfer of culturally dependent expressions from ethnic languages to Esperanto by authors and translators is therefore frequently the subject of heated debate among speakers, for example in book reviews (see Fiedler, 1999, pp. 295–297, 2001b). While some Esperanto speakers welcome the opportunities presented by the language to adopt figurative expressions from other cultures and regard them as a means of enriching and increasing expressiveness, others fear a loss of homogeneity or a danger of misunderstanding.¹¹⁷ Zamenhof adopted a balanced position towards idioms:

117. For an extreme position see Kadoya (2013, p. 17), who rejects the use of any phraseology in Esperanto: “Ĉar frazeologiaĵoj grandigas malfacilecon lerni esperanton, tio signifas, ke la lernokosto multiĝas proporcie al la malfacileco. [...] Profunde lerni aŭ posedi esperanton devas esti plej malfermitaj al ĉiuj. [...] Malfermiteco de esperanto estas unu el la necesaj kondiĉoj por lingva egaleco kaj justeco, kvankam ĝi ne estas sufiĉa kondiĉo. Frazeologiaĵoj almenaŭ parte helpas detrui malfermitecon.” [As phraseological units enhance the difficulty to learn Esperanto, this means that the learning costs increase proportionally with difficulty. (...) Learning and possessing Esperanto profoundly has to be most open for everyone. (...) Openness of Esperanto is one of the necessary conditions for linguistic equality and justice, although it is not a sufficient condition. Phraseological units help destroy openness at least partly.]

[...] *La vera stilo Esperanta estas nek slava, nek germana, nek romana, ĝi estas – aŭ almenaŭ devas esti – nur stilo simpla kaj logika.*

Tamen ĉio devas esti en ĝusta mezuro. Ankaŭ en Esperanto troviĝas diversaj (ne multaj) idiotismoj, kaj tute malprave kelkaj Esperantistoj ilin kontraŭbatalas, ĉar lingvo absolute logika kaj tute sen idiotismoj estus lingvo senviva kaj tro peza; sed kvankam kelkaj el la Esperantaj idiotismoj estas prenita ankaŭ el la lingvoj slavaj (dum aliaj estas prenita el aliaj lingvoj), ili tamen estas ne slavismoj, sed esperantismoj, ĉar ili fariĝis parto de la lingvo.

(Zamenhof 1962 [1911]: 119, original emphasis)

[The true style of Esperanto is neither Slavic nor Germanic nor Romance, it is – or at least should be – just a plain and logical style.

However, everything has to be in the right measure. In Esperanto there are some (not many) idioms, as well, and some Esperanto speakers fight against them without good reason, because an absolutely logical language without idioms is a dead and heavy language; but although some of the Esperanto idioms were taken from Slavic languages too (while others were taken from other languages), they nevertheless are not Slavisms, but Esperantisms, because they have become a part of the language.]

If we consider the wide application that Esperanto has since achieved in written and spoken communication – as a literary medium (for both original and translated works), as a language of everyday conversation, as a family language and as a language for special purposes – the development and use of phraseology seems to be a natural process. A planned language that claims to be a fully fledged language must include equivalents for political terminology such as *Cold War* or *Iron Curtain*, and it has to be able to cope with the challenges posed by translations. By way of an example: in the funny scene in *Astérix le Gaulois* (Goscinny & Uderzo, 1961), when the Romans try to produce a magic potion with the result that everyone including the little dog Dogmatix suffers from excessive hair growth, the French original evokes humour by an excessive accumulation of idioms referring to hair. Of course, if it is to convey the same humour, a stylistically equivalent translation has to resort to phraseological units in Esperanto in the same way as translations into other languages do. As Richmond (1993, p. 97) shows, the planned language can keep up well with, for example, the English version (see Table 12).

Command of a language includes proficiency in the use of phraseology – a fact acknowledged by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which aims to provide a common basis for the development of curricula, teaching materials and levels of proficiency for foreign language learning in Europe. Knowledge and appropriate use of phraseological units is considered to

Table 12. Phraseological units referring to 'hair' in *Astérix le Gaulois* (Goscinny & Uderzo, 1961) in the French original and the translations into English and Esperanto (taken from Richmond, 1993, p. 97, with translations of the Esperanto versions and the German equivalents added from Goscinny & Uderzo, 1968, pp. 41–42)

French	English	German	Esperanto
<i>Parlons sans couper les cheveux en quatre !</i> (Asterix)	<i>Talk away then! Let's not split any hairs</i>	<i>Verhandeln, aber ohne lange Haarspaltereien!</i>	<i>Bone, sed ni ne disfendu harojn.</i> ('Good, but we should not split hairs.')
<i>Je ne veux plus qu'on parle de cheveux !!!</i> (Centurion)	<i>Will you shut up about hair!!!</i>	<i>Ich kann das Wort Haare nicht mehr hören!!!</i>	<i>Mi ne plu volas aŭdi ion pri haroj!!!</i> ('I don't want to hear anything about hairs any more!!!')
<i>Puisque c'est comme ça ... la barbe !</i> (Asterix)	<i>Well, if you will beard us in our own tent...</i>	<i>Haargenau verstanden!</i>	<i>Mi ne ŝatas tiun tonon; vi bruligis al vi la lipharojn.</i> ('I don't like this tone; you got your moustache burnt.' Cf. English to <i>get one's fingers burnt</i>)
<i>D'accord, mais ne me prends plus à rebrousse-poil !</i> (Asterix)	<i>All right, keep your hair on.</i>	<i>Gut! Du hast also ein Haar in der Suppe gefunden!</i>	<i>Barbo potenca, sed kapo senseenca!</i> ('A huge beard, but a senseless head!')
<i>Tout ceci est échevelé. Parle, nous t'écoutons !</i> (Asterix)	<i>Or this talk will bristle with difficulties. Go on!</i>	<i>Das ist eine haarige Angelegenheit, aber kommen wir zur Sache!</i>	<i>Nu, parolu: Kion vi vilas .. eee ... volas?</i> ('Well, speak: What do you want .. eee ... want?'; <i>vilo</i> = an untidy tuft of hair)
<i>Il a un poil dans la main !</i> [Referring to Getafix] (Asterix)	[Getafix:] Try a hair of the dog?	[no matching pun]	<i>Lupo ŝanĝas la harojn, sed ne la farojn.</i> ('A wolf changes its hair, but not its deeds') [Referring probably to the centurion, but this is not clear.]
<i>...Parfois il a un cheveu sur la langue aussi !</i> [Referring to Getafix] (Asterix)	<i>He's a bit hare-brained sometimes!</i> [Referring to Getafix.]	<i>...daß die Römer am Ende stets Haare lassen!</i>	<i>...Li preskaŭ ŝiras la harojn.</i> ('He is almost tearing his hair [out]') [Referring to the furious centurion.]

be a relevant part of a learner's lexical competence (Section 5.2.1.1 of the CEFR) as well as a key factor in speakers' development of sociocultural competence:¹¹⁸

These fixed formulae, which both incorporate and reinforce common attitudes, make a significant contribution to popular culture. They are frequently used, or perhaps more often referred to or played upon, for instance in newspaper headlines. A knowledge of this accumulated folk wisdom, expressed in language assumed to be known to all, is a significant component of the linguistic aspect of sociocultural competence.

The following subgroups and examples of the so-called expression of folk wisdom are mentioned:

Proverbs, e.g. *A stitch in time saves nine.*

Idioms, e.g. *A sprat to catch a mackerel.*

Familiar quotations, e.g. *A man's a man for a' that.*

Expressions of:

belief, such as – weather lore, e.g. *Fine before seven, rain by eleven.*

attitudes, such as – clichés, e.g. *It takes all sorts to make a world.*

values, e.g. *It's not cricket.* (CEFR p. 120)

The phraseology of Esperanto is what shows convincingly that regularity and an absence of exceptions in a language are not necessarily accompanied by a lack of expressiveness. When the CEFR describes irregular forms and morphologically conditioned variation in Section 5.2.1.2 on grammatical competence, the Esperanto version has to resort to examples from English and German (e.g. *sing/sang, catch/caught, mean/meant, gut/besser*) (p. 122), as these peculiarities do not exist in Esperanto. As regards phraseology, however, it seems to be the equal of other languages in every way (KER 2007, pp. 126/127):

Proverbs, e.g. *Ne ŝovu la nazon en fremdan vazon.*

Idioms, e.g. *krokodili; kabei.*

Familiar quotations, e.g. *Ho, mia kor'!*

Expressions of

belief, e.g. *Restu tajloro ĉe via laboro.*

attitudes, e.g. *Post vetero malbela lumas suno plej hela.*

values, e.g. *Belaj rakontoj el trans la montoj.*

118. Unfortunately, the CEFR is inconsistent as regards terminology. It uses a variety of expressions (e.g. “fixed formulae”, “idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms”, “patterns and expressions”, and “fixed phrases”) for the items that we call phraseological units in this chapter.

In our description of phraseological units in Esperanto in this chapter, prescriptive aspects, i.e. considerations of whether phraseology should be used or not, are not relevant. Our point of departure is again actual language use. We will show how phraseology is employed and serves its speakers, taking as a basis the speech events that constitute our dataset. Before this, however, some general introductory remarks concerning the phenomenon of phraseology may be useful.¹¹⁹

21.2 Definition

There are five main defining characteristics of phraseological units (PUs) (Burger et al., 2007; Fiedler, 2007b): (A) they have a polylexemic structure, i.e. we are concerned with word-groups and sentences here; (B) they are characterised, in principle, by syntactic and semantic stability; (C) they are lexicalised, i.e. as ready-made units of the lexicon they are not created productively by the speaker or writer as free combinations of words are, but reproduced; (D) they are marked by various degrees of idiomaticity (as a potential characteristic); and (E) very often, they have stylistic and expressive connotations. These features are characteristic of phraseology in general and can be verified for the phraseology of Esperanto. In the following, they will be explained in more detail and with special reference to the planned language.

A. The polylexemic character of phraseological units

The first characteristic, the polylexemic structure, was mentioned by Charles Bally as early as 1909. Referring to its form, he wrote that a phraseological unit (“*unité phraséologique*”) can be recognised by the fact that it is composed of several separately written words (“*qu’ un groupe est composé de plusieurs mots séparés par l’écriture*”, p. 75, original emphasis). It is useful to keep in mind that lexemes have different structures, as shown in Figure 7.

Phraseology research deals with multi-word items, such as the expressions in the right-hand column of the diagram, i.e. with phrases (e.g. *rompi al si la kapon*) and sentences (e.g. *Mankas klapo en lia kapo*), while the expressions presented in the middle column (*enkapigi* and *ventkapulo*) are the subject of morphology (word formation). As a defining criterion of a phraseological unit, polylexemic structure is not uncontroversial, however. It seems to be questionable whether it is correct to choose size, i.e. the orthographic structure, as a basis for separating PUs from

119. The following sections on the definition and classification of Esperanto phraseology are, in part, based on previous explorations of the topic (see Fiedler, 1999, 2002b, 2007a, 2015d).

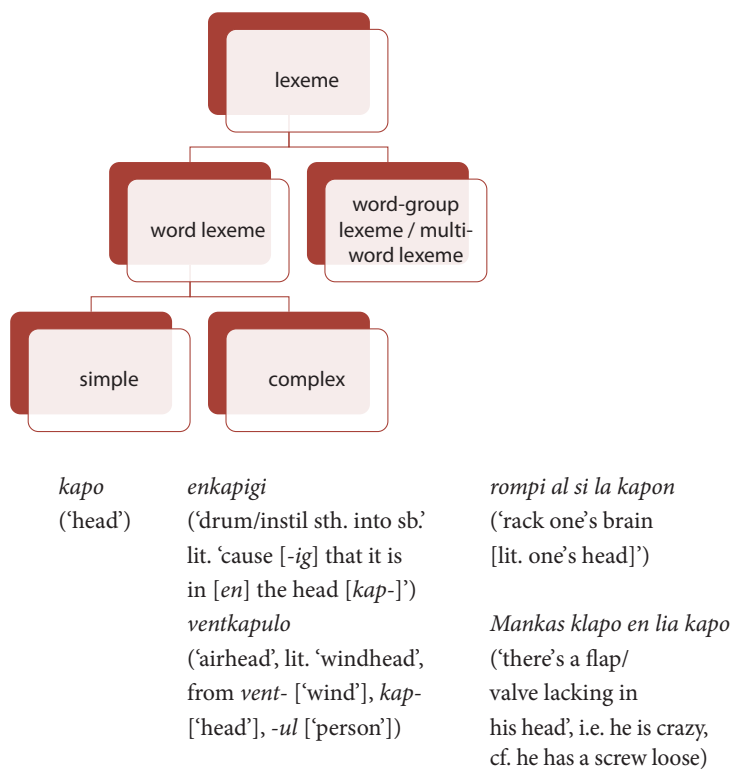


Figure 7. Word lexemes and phraseological units

non-phraseological items. Language use sometimes contradicts this principle. This is especially true for Esperanto with its flexible system of word formation, according to which a phraseological word group can be easily transformed into individual words. As regards our dataset, this criterion means that among the following examples, only Example (226) can be considered a phraseological unit:

- (226) *Kaj mi praktike devis fariĝi verkanto, mi devis fariĝi unu el la verkantoj, ĉar estis la sola maniero por (kritiki) malantaŭ la kuliso.*
[And in practice I had to become an author, I had to become one of the authors, because it was the only way to be critical behind the scenes.]
[71 (eng; disc; Lille) 25:23]
- (227) *Poste vi trovos ĉerpaĵojn el internaj leteroj de Akademianoj, kiuj iel montros la postkulisajn manovrojn.*
[Later you’ll find excerpts from internal letters by Academy members, which, one way or another, will show the manoeuvres behind the scenes]
[114 (ita; disc; Lille) 20:15]

Whereas *post/malantaŭ la kuliso(j)* ('behind the scenes') is without doubt a phraseological unit according to the defining criteria mentioned above, the derivative *postkulisaj*, created on its basis, is not part of the Esperanto phrasicon. Analogously, *harfendado* ('hair splitting', cf. *fendi harojn* 'split hairs') or the name of the protagonist in Reto Rossetti's *El la Maniko* (1955), *profesoro Klapelkap*, which alludes to the saying *Mankas klapo en lia kapo* mentioned in Figure 7, have to be excluded.

Although because of the existence of writing variants – in our spoken dataset, for example, we are not able to distinguish *vole nevole* from *vole-nevole* or *volenevole* and *esperanto edzperanto* from *esperanto-edzperanto* – makes a decision on the phraseological character of a unit not always easy to arrive at, we agree with the majority of phraseology researchers, who maintain the criterion of the polylexemic character of a phraseological unit (Burger et al., 2007; Fiedler, 2007b, pp. 17–19) and recognise the word group as its lower limit. A compound such as *ventkapulo* (see Figure 7) shares the features of idiomaticity and connotative content, but as a compound it is not accepted as a part of the phrasicon.

B. The semantic and syntactic stability of phraseological units

This feature makes phraseological units distinctive from a random combination of words as a syntagma. In contrast to ad hoc constructions, such units are conventionalised in content and structure. Only over considerably long periods of time, if ever, will phraseological units change their meanings. As for the structure of a phraseological unit, substitution tests can be applied to prove the syntactic stability of a unit. Compare the following example from English:

- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- *A sparrow in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- *A bird in the hand is worth three in the bush.
- *A bird in the cage is worth two in the bush.
- *A bird in the hand is worth two in the tree.

In a similar vein, in the case of such a well-known Zamenhofian expression as *per flugiloj de facila vento*¹²⁰ Esperanto speakers reading or hearing

- **per flugiloj de agrabla vento* (*agrabla* 'pleasant') or
 - **per flugiloj de facila sento* (*sento* 'spirit')
- would feel that something is wrong or out of place.¹²¹

120. '[O]n the wings of an easy wind'; *Per flugiloj de facila vento* is a line from Zamenhof's poem *La Espero* ('The Hope') (see footnote 104; see also Example (280)).

121. For situational modifications of phraseological units, see Chapter 21.4.3.

The stability of a phraseological unit has to be considered a relative criterion, however, as variation is possible within definite constraints. There are structural variants, in which the use of function words (prepositions, determiners, etc.) may vary, or constituents within the phrase can be used in the singular or plural, as for example in

English *by / in leaps and bounds* and *down the tube / tubes*,
 Esperanto *froti la manojn / froti siajn manojn/froti al si la manojn* ('to rub one's hands') and *aliaj tempoj, aliaj moroj / alia tempo, aliaj moroj* ('other times, other customs / another time another custom')

In addition, lexical constituents (autosemantic elements such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) can vary, as for example in

English *to sweep sth. under the carpet / rug* and *to throw / cast pearls before swine*;
 Esperanto *demeti / levi la ĉapelon* ('to take one's hat off / to raise one's hat') and
kaptita ĉe freŝa faro / kulpo. ('caught red-handed, lit. at fresh deed / fault')

As the examples show, phraseological variants also abound in ethnic languages. The range of variation seems to be larger in Esperanto, however, because of the multitude of speakers' native languages. This is also the reason for a third type of variation – phraseological synonyms, in which identical or similar contents are expressed by different expressions based on different images. Compare, for example, the following Esperanto proverbs whose basic meaning is that 'a trifling cause may have a serious effect':

unu fajrero estas sufiĉa por eksplodigi pulvon ('one spark is enough to make powder explode'),
pro najleto bagatela pereis ĉevalo plej bela ('because of a little nail the most beautiful horse perished'),
ofte de kaŭzo senenhava venas efiko plej grava ('a trifling cause often has a very serious effect'),
unukopeka kandelo forbruligis Moskvon ('a one-kopek candle burnt Moscow down'),
de malgranda kandelo forbrulis granda kastelo ('because of a small candle a great castle burnt down'),
unu fava ŝafo tutan ŝafaron infektas ('one shabby sheep will mar the whole flock'),
unu ovo malbona tutan manĝon difektas ('one bad egg spoils the whole meal').

The extensive variation in Esperanto phraseology can also be explained by the relative lack of Esperanto native speakers – who would normally decide on the basis of their intuition whether an utterance is correct or not. Structural and lexical differences are not at once recognised as odd or wrong, while in ethnic languages

minute deviations can result in the dissolution of a phraseological unit (e.g. German **einen Löffel abgeben*, French **avoir un bras long*, English **to lose the head*), which, together with their stylistic-pragmatic restrictions, makes using phraseological units so difficult in ethnic foreign languages.

The variability described above does not mean, however, that the criterion of semantic and syntactic stability is inapplicable to Esperanto. Playful manipulation of phraseological units, as in Raymond Schwartz's coinage *Kaj tiel staras la demando. Kiam ĝi estos laca, ĝi sidiĝos* (Schwartz *Kun siaspeca spico* 1971, p. 156) ('And this is how the question stands. When it gets tired, it sits down') make us aware of the fixed nature of their structure. The effect of phraseological manipulations, i.e. text-related modifications such as the addition or substitution of lexical elements (see examples in 21.4.3), is based on their stability.

C. Lexicalisation

This feature of a phraseological unit is closely related to its stability. The term 'lexicalisation' is used to describe the fact that a phraseological unit is retained in the collective memory of a language community. As a fixed and ready-made unit, it is recognised and accepted as a part of the language. Phraseological word groups and sentences are memorised holistically by the language users. They are not produced anew like random sequences of words, but merely reproduced. This is also the reason why it is often sufficient to mention only a particular element of a phraseological unit as a cue. In the following newspaper headlines, the word *lanco* and the phrase *la monto granita* suffice to actualise the complete units *rompi lancon por iu* ('to break a lance for sth./so., i.e. to give support') and the line of Zamenhof's poem "La Vojo" ('The way') *Eĉ guto malgranda, konstante frapante, traboras la monton granitan* ('Even a little drop, constantly falling, pierces the granite mountain'), which has become a catchphrase:

- (228) *Lanco por la Zamenhofa lingvo* [A lance for Zamenhof's language]
[*Esperanto* 2/1990, p. 33; headline]
- (229) *La monto granita konkerita en Greziljono* [The granite mountain conquered in Grésillon] [*Esperanto* 12/2015, p. 245; the text is about an activists' meeting at the Esperanto centre of Grésillon that consisted of a series of sequential phases]

The process of lexicalisation of a phraseological unit as a multi-word designation is not very different from the lexicalisation of a simple word lexeme (see Bauer, 1983, pp. 45–50). It may start with a nonce-formation: a new expression is coined by a speaker or writer to fill some immediate need in finding an appropriate word, as

was the case with *baki esperantistojn* ('to bake Esperantists')¹²² and *fek al X* ('screw X', expression of frustration, *feki* 'defecate')¹²³ in recent years, for example. The new coinage catches on, is gradually used by other speakers and becomes accepted as a lexeme – a process that is often called 'institutionalisation'. When it is lexicalised, it is permanently incorporated into speakers' mental lexicons, often adopting a specialist function as well as idiosyncratic meanings. Occasionally, variants of the same expression compete with one another for a certain time, as was the case in the 1990s with *Malferma tago* ('open day', cf. English *open house*) and *Tago de la malfermita pordo* ('day of the open door') as terms to describe events at which Esperanto institutions open their doors to the general public.

(230) *Tago de la malfermita pordo*

[...] Ankaŭ la Internacia Esperanto-Muzeo, kvankam ĉiam ĝi estas senkosta, bonvenigis per speciala programo [...]

[Day of the open door

(...) The International Esperanto Museum, although (admission) is always free, also welcomes (people) with a special programme]

[Heroldo de Esperanto 15 Dec 1994]

(231) *Centra Oficejo: Malferma Tago*

La Centra Oficejo invitis la membrojn de la nova tutlanda asocio Esperanto Nederland [...] al "Malferma Tago" la 26-an de novembro, sabate.

[Central Office: Open Day

The Central Office invited the members of the new country-wide association Esperanto Nederland (...) to an "Open Day" on 26 November, Saturday]

[*Esperanto* 1/1995, p. 18]

122. Although the figurative use of *baki* ('bake') is well known in Esperanto – Zamenhof used, for example, *diversaj rapide bakitaj kaj rapide mortantaj projektoj* ('various quickly baked and quickly dying projects'), and *novbakita esperantisto* ('a newly baked esperantist', i.e. one who finished an Esperanto language course only recently) is even an entry in the *NPIV* (Duc Goninaz et al., 2002, p. 133) –, the verbal construction *baki esperantiston* is relatively new. We found a first example in a speech at an Esperanto teachers' conference in 2001 (http://www.ilei.info/ipr/universitata_instruado.htm). The author used it in Esperanto due to her familiarity with the expression in several languages (personal correspondence). Since then it has become widely used, e.g. in official documents of the *Universal Esperanto Association* (see <https://www.yumpu.com/it/document/view/52413659/januario-februaro-marto-2012-kiraly-lajos/33>), by speakers from Cuba, China and Africa (cf., e.g., http://www.espero.com.cn/se/txt/2010-08/03/content_288596.htm).

123. *Fek!* is an interjection that is often used for cursing (cf. *NPIV*, Duc Goninaz et al., 2002, p. 323). Its use as a formula, *Fek al X*, was probably popularised by the group *La Pafkliko*'s self-ironic rap song *Fek al Esperanto* (see <https://esperanto.stackexchange.com/questions/1633/what-is-the-full-sentence-of-fek-al-tio>).

Meanwhile the expression *Malferma Tago*, which seems to correspond with the linguistic system of Esperanto better than *Tago de la Malfermita Pordo* (probably a loan translation from German, *Tag der offenen Tür*) and is, in addition, shorter, has gained general acceptance, as can be seen in the following diagram based on frequencies. *Tago* is a “significant right neighbour” (i.e. collocator) of *malferma* (see Figure 8), and the expression is now mainly associated with the open day at the Central Office of the Universal Esperanto Association (*Centra Oficejo*) where this event occurred for the fiftieth time in April 2019.

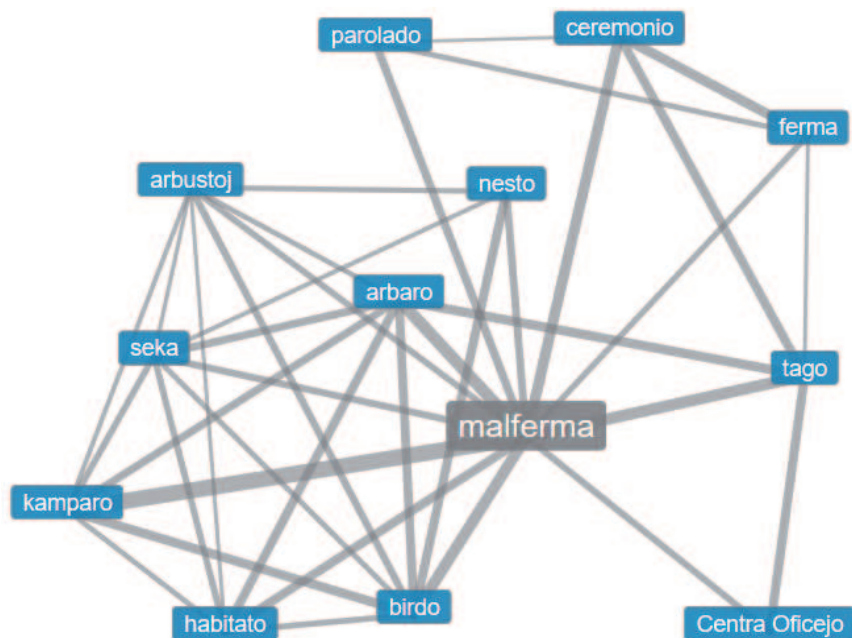


Figure 8. Co-occurrences of *malferma* (<http://wortschatz.uni-leipzig.de>) (last access: 1 Feb 2020)

Lexicalisation does not necessarily mean codification in a dictionary. As an inventory of phrases, phraseology is unpredictable. New expressions are constantly making their way into language. In fact, phraseological units can originate in all fields of social life. As for Esperanto, apart from the domain of education or language learning (where *baki esperantistojn* had its origin), original literature and entertainment seem to be productive (e.g. *Ĉu vi sufiĉe ...?*, *Fine mi komprenas la radion!*;¹²⁴

124. These two items mentioned are examples of book titles that have become Esperanto catch-phrases: Johán Valano wrote a series of detective novels between 1976 and 1982 whose titles started with *Ĉu* (e.g. *Ĉu vi kuiras ĉine?* ‘Do you cook Chinese?’, *Ĉu vi bremsis sufiĉe?* ‘Did you

Ĝis la nokto-nokto-fin' ‘until the very end of the night’ from the song *Ska-virino* by Esperanto Desperado). Expressions like these have a tendency towards lexicalisation. Some of them sink their roots into the language permanently, while others fall into disuse or disappear altogether. It would not be appropriate to restrict the Esperanto phrasicon to expressions in dictionaries because, on the one hand, there are numerous innovative units that have not yet found their way into a dictionary due to their novelty and, on the other, reference books often contain obsolete material or even entries that were never really in use. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 21.3.

D. Idiomaticity

This feature describes the common phenomenon that the meaning of an expression is difficult or even impossible to derive from the meanings of its parts. Idiomaticity is treated here as an intralinguistic feature. Thus, expressions such as *reinventi la radon* or *perdi la kapon* are idiomatic in Esperanto because their meanings – ‘work on an idea or project that is no better than sth. that already exists’ and ‘become confused / lose control of oneself’ – cannot be decoded on the basis of their elements, and it is of marginal importance that there are similar expressions in other languages which might help us to understand them (cf. English *to reinvent the wheel*; French *perdre la tête*). Given the various linguistic backgrounds of Esperanto speakers, those helpful parallels in languages would never concern all possible mother tongues. In addition, in other cases, semantic and structural similarity may even be misleading and prove to be false friends (see, for example, the two different meanings of *to be over the hill* in English [‘to be no longer young or too old to do a particular thing’; see *Collins COBUILD*, 2004, p. 195]) and German [*über den Berg sein* ‘to have passed the worst point in an unpleasant or difficult situation’; see Röhrich, 1991/92, p. 173]).

Phraseological units are idiomatic to varying degrees. At one end of the scale there are real idioms, i.e. fully opaque expressions. At the opposite end of the scale, we find fully transparent PUs, which are, however, legitimately included in the phrasicon because they are polylexemic, stable, and lexicalised. Coulmas (1981) describes idiomaticity as a universal property which a language needs to expand its expressive possibilities. It guarantees the functioning and flexibility of a language,

break enough?’). They are occasionally referred to as the *ĉu-romanoj* (‘whether-novels’). *Fine mi komprenas la radion!* (‘Finally I understand the radio’) refers to Eugène Aisberg’s introduction to radio technology (*Mi komprenas fine la radion! Amuza kaj populara enkonduko en la radioteĥnikon*, 1934). See also the examples using *Kredu min ...* in Chapter 18.2.2.

which has to meet different communicative requirements in a changing world. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that Esperanto has idiomatic expressions.

Our studies suggest, however, that Esperanto speakers mainly resort to phraseological units that have low degrees of idiomaticity and that are known by the majority of speakers through common cultural sources or shared on the basis of experiences in the planned language community.

Anomalies, such as grammatical ill-formedness or the use of unique (fossilised) elements, as we know them from ethnic languages,¹²⁵ do not occur often in Esperanto. Among the rare examples is the frequently used formula *Jam temp' está* ('it's about time'), written in Zamenhof's first version of the language, *lingwe uniwersala*, the so-called Pra-Esperanto created in 1878 (Cash, 1992, p. 16) (see Chapter 8).

E. Connotations

In Esperanto as in ethnic languages, phraseological units (PUs) are often used to place emphasis on the speaker's or writer's intention and to make a text more expressive. As we shall see in Chapter 21.4, PUs are applied with a large variety of functions: they serve to evaluate events and people, they are used to attract attention, to illustrate facts or to organise texts. They can promote solidarity on the part of the reader or listener, evoke humour and put people at ease. Their expressive character becomes obvious when we compare phraseological with non-phraseological uses:

- (232) *Mi celas la krepovon de herooj el sango kaj karno.*
 [I aim for the creativity of heroes by flesh and blood.] [*La Gazeto*, 3/96, p. 13]
el sango kaj karno – *vivaj/vivoplenaj* ('lively / full of life')
- (233) *La Ruĝa Kruco havigis medikamentojn kaj nutraĵojn al la bezonantoj. Sed ĉio ĉi estis nur guto en la oceano.*
 [The Red Cross provided medicine and food for those in need. But all this was just a drop in the ocean.] [Teodoro S. Švarc (Tivadar Soros) 1965,
Maskerado ĉirkaŭ la morto, p. 149]
guto en la oceano – *ne estis sufiĉa* ('was not sufficient')
- (234) "Certe estis almenaŭ unu-du mortoj, alikaze la polico *ne donus furzon*."
 [Certainly, there were at least two, three murders, otherwise the police wouldn't give a damn (lit. a fart).] [Trevor Steele 1992, *Memori kaj forgesi*, p. 26]
ne doni furzon – *ne serioze okupiĝi/ne zorgi*
 ('not to deal with sth. seriously' / 'not care')

125. For example, English *dog eat dog* and *to be at loggerheads*.

The substitution of the phraseological units in the left column with the non-phraseological lexemes on the right in these examples leads to semantically comparable or even equivalent propositions. With regard to their connotative meanings, to the associations they trigger, however, there are losses. The sentences without the PUs are less pithy and less impressive.

Example (234), by the Australian writer Trevor Steele, illustrates that phraseological units are often used for stylistic effect. In literature, this practice can be connected with the purpose of characterising protagonists. This is often done by a character's own speech, the so-called linguistic portrait. In *Heroo de nia epoko* ('A hero of our time'), Steele (1992) makes effective use of phraseology as a rhetorical device with this function. See, for example, the protagonist's vulgar expressions in (235) and (236) and the contrastive phrase in the narrator's language in (237):

- (235) *Kiel aŭtentika proleto li celis, ke liaj gefiloj ne devu "ŝovadi merdon", lia ŝerca aludo al la peza laboro de segejisto.* [As an authentic proletarian, he wanted his children to not have to "shovel shit", (which was) his humorous allusion to a sawyer's hard work.] (p. 66)
- (236) *"[...] Povra olda pisulo, li kakis la lastan fojon."* [(...) The poor old pisser, he was shitting for the last time.] (p. 85)
- (237) *Miaj gepatroj jam delonge vendis la butikon [...] kaj transiris al sia Kreinto.* [My parents sold the shop a long time ago (...) and met their Maker.] (p. 78)

In addition, phonostylistic properties such as rhyme, rhythm and rhetorical devices contribute to the expressiveness of phraseological units. Many figures of speech manifest themselves in them. Compare the following examples:¹²⁶

metaphor	<i>fari el muŝo / muso elefanton</i> ('to make out of a fly / mouse an elephant'; cf. <i>to make a mountain out of a molehill</i>)
metonymy	<i>savi sian haŭton</i> ('to save one's skin')
hyperbole	<i>morti pro enuo</i> ('to die of boredom')
comparison	<i>silenti kiel tombo</i> ('to remain silent as a grave')
alliteration	<i>Tut-Tera Teksaĵo</i> (<i>World-Wide Web</i>)
parallelism	<i>Kiom da homoj, tiom da gustoj</i> ('As many people, as many tastes')
ellipsis	<i>Laboro finita – ripozo merita</i> ('Work done – rest deserved')

The rhythm of Esperanto proverbs often reminds us of equivalents in other languages:

126. For rhetorical figures see also Chapter 21.7.

Aliaj tempoj, aliaj moroj (Other times, other customs);

Kiu groŝon ne respektas, riĉecon ne kolektas ('The one who doesn't take care of the penny won't get rich'; cf. English *Take care of the pennies/pence and the pounds will take care of themselves* and German *Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt, ist des Talers nicht wert*).

Whereas the fixed word stress on the penultimate syllable can impose a restriction on the creation of euphonic proverbs in Esperanto, the flexible and productive word formation system (with word category suffixes) can be employed to make them stylistically impressive:

Inter lupoj krii lupe ('Among wolves cry like a wolf'; lit. 'wolf-ishly', *-e* marks adverbs);

Langa vundo plej profunda ('A wound caused by the tongue [i.e. by words] is the deepest'; lit. 'tongu[e]-ish', *-a* marks adjectives).

Rhyme is the most conspicuous stylistic feature of Esperanto proverbs. The majority of rhyming proverbs are characterised by the traditional pure rhyme on the stressed penultimate syllable:

Jen la tubero en la afero ('Here's the knot in the affair' = There is a snag to it),

Ne ŝovu la nazon en fremdan vazon ('Don't push your nose into so. else's affairs', lit. 'vase').

Peko kaj eraro estas ecoj de l'homaro ('Sin and mistakes are characteristics of mankind', i.e. the Esperanto way of saying *Errare humanum est*; cf. English *To err is human*).

The characteristics described in this section make phraseological units, especially proverbs, pithy and catchy and assure their recognisability and memorability. It is because of these features that merely alluding to a proverb is often sufficient to evoke the whole thing.

21.3 Classifications

There are different ways to classify phraseological units. For most of the conventional types of phraseological units that are distinguished in other languages, Esperanto examples can be readily found (see Table 13).

Table 13. Conventional subtypes of PUs

Type of PU	Examples
Nomination	<i>fera kurteno</i> (the Iron Curtain), <i>diabla cirklo</i> (a vicious circle)
Saying	<i>transiri la Rubikonon</i> (to cross the Rubicon); <i>balai ion sub la tapiŝon</i> (to sweep sth. under the carpet / rug)
Binomial	<i>Dirite, farite</i> ('Said, done', cf. <i>No sooner said than done</i>), <i>finita kaj glatigita</i> ('finished and smoothed'; cf. English <i>done and dusted</i>)
Proverb	<i>Du militas, tria profitas</i> ('Two wage war, the third benefits', cf. <i>When two people quarrel, a third rejoices</i>), <i>Unu hirundo printempon ne alportas</i> (<i>One swallow doesn't make a summer</i> , lit. 'spring')
Catchphrase ("winged words")	<i>La reĝo mortis, vivu la reĝo</i> (<i>The king is dead, long live the king</i>), <i>la nepoj nin benos</i> ('the grandchildren will bless us', line from a Zamenhof verse)
Routine formula	<i>Kion fari?</i> ('What can be done about it?'), <i>Laste, sed ne balaste</i> ('Last, but not as a ballast', cf. <i>Last but not least</i>)
Stereotyped comparison	<i>mola kiel vakso</i> ('soft as wax'), <i>ruza kiel vulpo</i> ('sly as a fox')
Stereotyped constructions with functional verbs (paraphrasal verbs) ^a	<i>preni en konsideron</i> (to take into consideration), <i>doni atenton</i> (to pay attention)

a. Also called *support verb constructions* (Evert & Krenn, 2005, p. 114) or *light verb constructions* (Gledhill, 2014, p. 335).

The peculiarities of Esperanto as a planned language suggest a need for a classification of PUs on the basis of their origin. Three groups can be distinguished:

- a. The quantitatively largest group is made up of those units that have entered the language through various other languages. These are loan translations, from Greek mythology and from the Bible, which today are some of the most widely disseminated proverbs (e.g. *Mano manon lavas* – cf. Latin *Manus manum lavat*). A surprisingly large number of PUs are known in both European and Asian languages. Examples include *verŝi oleon en la fajron* ('pour oil into the fire') (Engl. *to add fuel to the flames*, Chin. *huǒ shàng jiāo yóu*) (Schue, 1985, p. 93; Jiang et al., 2009, p. 185), *Temp' estas mono* (Engl. *Time is money*; Jap. *Toki wa kanenari*) (Azuma, 2012, p. 214) and *Kie estas volo, tie estas vojo*, (Engl. *Where there's a will there's a way*, Bahasa Indonesia *Ada kemauan, ada jalan*) (Fiedler & Rak, 2004, pp. 134f.). In fact, as collections of proverbs show (e.g. Iscla, 1995; Paczolay, 1997; Strauss, 1994), because of common sources, language contact, universal features and regularities in human cognition and collective experience, but also independent parallel developments, PUs often have equivalents in a large number of languages (Fiedler, 1999, pp. 339–343, 2007b, pp. 62f.; Piirainen, 2012, pp. 514–522). Piirainen's (2012) collection of *Widespread Idioms* includes 190 items, 103 of them with an Esperanto equivalent.

Furthermore, individual speakers more or less spontaneously introduce expressions from their native languages which may enjoy international currency (ad hoc loans). These may have the character of occasional formations showing striking similarities to their ethnolinguistic bases, as in the following examples:

- (238) *Estas malfacile kompari pomojn kun citronoj. Eĉ jam komparo kun la antaŭulo (por mi la Langenscheidt-eldono de 1993) ne estas tiel facila. Unuavide, oni pensus, ke oni komparas giganton kun nano [...]*
 [It is difficult to compare apples and oranges (lit. compare apples with lemons). Even the comparison with the predecessor (to me, the *Langenscheidt* edition of 1993) is not that easy. At first glance, we might think that we compare a giant with a dwarf (cf. Dutch *appelen met citroenen vergelijken*)
 [*Monato* 10/2007, p. 23; Flemish author]
- (239) *en 1867 Usono aĉetis de Rusio Alaskon por 7,2 milionoj da dolaroj. Multaj opiniis, ke tio estis mono ĵetita al la vento.*
 [in 1867 the USA bought Alaska from Russia for 7.2 million dollars. Many people thought that this was money down the drain (lit. money thrown to the wind); cf. Russian *бросать деньги на ветер*]
 [*Monato* 4/1996, p. 22; Russian author]
- (240) (...) *tiu batalo malfermis sian kurtenon per akuzoj pri falsaj insektidoj, semoj, cigaredoj kaj vinoj.*
 [(...) this battle began (lit. opened its curtain) with accusations of false insecticides, seeds, cigarettes and wine; cf. Chinese *kai mu*]
 [*El Popola Ĉinio* 12/1990, p. 23]

This group of phraseological units developed, first, because of Esperanto's position as a means of communication in a second-language community which is in turn in permanent contact with a diversity of ethnic languages, and, second, because of properties of its linguistic structure favouring the adoption of foreign lexical material. There are obvious parallels to language-contact phenomena in bilingual speakers, as they have been described for the phraseology of various languages.¹²⁷ The influences on Esperanto, however, are much more international than the influences on other languages.

- b. The second group represents a peculiarity of planned language phraseology: the conscious creation of units. The majority of such 'planned' proverbs go back to Zamenhof, who in 1910 published the *Proverbaro Esperanta* ('Esperanto

127. For the influence of German, for instance, on the Sorbian language see Wölke (1992, 1995), and of Hungarian on the German language spoken by a minority in Hungary, Földes (1996). For the impact of English on various European languages in the field of phraseology, see Section II in Furiassi et al. (2012).

Proverb Collection’) based on a collection compiled in Russian, Polish, German and French by his father, Marcus Zamenhof. It contains units such as *Ĉio transmara estas ĉarma kaj kara* (‘Everything on the other side of the ocean is charming and precious’) or *Neniu estas profeto en sia urbeto* (‘No one is a prophet in their own little town’; = is recognised in their own country), which are very popular with Esperanto speakers today.

As Zamenhof’s collection is based on traditional European proverbs, the social values conveyed by some of them are outdated from today’s perspective. This is especially evident in proverbs on the position of women. Women are described as talkative and malicious. Their place is in the home and they should not interfere:

La lango de virino estas ŝia glavo (‘A woman’s tongue is her sword’)

Virino scias, tuta mondo scias (‘A woman knows, the whole world knows’)

Kie diablo ne povas, tien virinon li ŝovas (‘Where the devil cannot go, he pushes a woman’)

Kie regas virino, malbona la fino (‘Where a woman rules, the end is bad’)

Virino bonorda estas muta kaj surda (‘A good woman is mute and deaf’).

Similar proverbs can be found in many European languages (cf., e.g., *A woman’s place is in the home*; *Lange Haare, kurzer Verstand*; *A mulher e a mula, o pau as cura*). Mieder (1987) speaks of “the obvious anti-feminism prevalent in proverbs”. Our analyses, however, reveal that these proverbs are among those from Zamenhof’s collection that cannot be considered common knowledge of the speech community.

As regards their euphonic character, the grammar of Esperanto provides good opportunities to create catchy PUs, especially proverbs. Zamenhof, for example, made extensive use of the set of Esperanto correlatives, the so-called *tabelvortoj*, described in Chapter 11. Their use in proverbs results in parallel structures, including patterns such as *kiu(n) ... tiu(n)*, *kio(n) ... tio(n)*, *kie(n) ... tie(n)*, *kiam ... tiam*, *kies ... ties* etc.:

Kiu kaĉon aranĝas, tiu ĝin manĝas (‘The one who makes the mess [lit. prepares the gruel] has to tidy it up [lit. eat it]’),

Kion mi ne scias, tion mi ne envias (‘What I don’t know doesn’t make me envious’),

Kie regas la forto, tie rajto silentas (‘Where force rules, rights are silent’).

As described in Chapter 11, syntactically Esperanto belongs to the so-called SVO-type of languages and the existence of a marked accusative (-n) and various inflectional devices allows for great flexibility in word order. A deviation from the ordinary, or expected, word order is, however, stylistically marked. The most frequent type of inversion in Esperanto proverbs is the use of the direct object in front of the verb:

Urson evitu, bopatrino ne incitu ('A bear avoid, a mother-in-law don't provoke'),
Arbon oni juĝas laŭ la fruktoj ('A tree one judges by its fruits').

As epithets are normally placed before the noun, a change of this order is felt as emphatic:

Kapo majesta, sed cerbo modesta ('A majestic head, but a modest brain'),
Amiko fidela estas trezoro plej bela ('A true friend is the most beautiful treasure').

In addition, we find verbs and adverbials in front position (e.g. *Ŝirigiĝis fadeno sur la bobeno* 'The thread on the bobbin broke off'; = something went wrong; *Ĉe tavolo malplena babilo ne fluas* 'At an empty table conversation doesn't flow'). Even the expected order of auxiliary and main verbs can be switched:

Pri gustoj oni disputi ne devas ('About tastes one cannot dispute'; unmarked word order: *oni ne devas disputi*),
Kiu mordi ne povas, kisi ekprovas ('The one who cannot bite tries to kiss'; unmarked word order: *Kiu ne povas mordi, ekprovas kisi*).

Finally, we can find a combination of different types of stylistic inversion:

Azenon komunan oni batas plej multe ('The common donkey is beaten most'; fronting of the direct object + inversion of epithet and noun),
Murmuregas la urso, sed danci ĝi devas ('The bear grumbles, but it has to dance'; fronting of the verb + inversion of auxiliary and main verb – *sed ĝi devas danci*).

- c. A third group is made up of PUs which have their origin in the language and cultural life of the Esperanto community. These reflect such things as communicative history, sociological characteristics, the speakers' collectively held ideals, and aims, traditions, and Esperanto literature, as the following examples show:

Esperanto – edzperanto ('Esperanto – husband/wife-provider / matchmaker', a catchphrase referring to the phenomenon that a considerable number of Esperanto speakers find their partners in Esperanto circles)
Ne krokodilu! (lit. 'Don't be a crocodile!' = Speak Esperanto when amongst Esperanto speakers: friendly admonition at Esperanto meetings as an expression of linguistic loyalty)¹²⁸

128. The verb *krokodili* (lit. 'to crocodile / behave like a crocodile') is one of the rare fully idiomatic expressions that exist in Esperanto. Its origin is not entirely clear. There are several suggestions in the literature as to why someone's behaviour in using his/her mother tongue instead of Esperanto in an Esperanto context is called *krokodili*. Vilborg (1993, p. 67) mentions a café in Paris in the 1930s where Esperanto speakers met frequently. An Italian waiter working there (Ferrari) is said to have called a group of elderly esperantists who talked to each other mainly in French the crocodiles (*krokodiloj*) derogatorily. From this, a verbal form was created by local

La nepoj nin benos ('The grandchildren/descendants will bless us', a quotation from Zamenhof's well-known poem *La Vojo*)

Manifesto de Raŭmo ('Manifesto of Rauma'; an Esperanto document which was proposed for ratification at an international Esperanto youth congress in Rauma, Finland, in 1980. It criticises the traditional aims of the Esperanto speech community and defines it as a "mem elektita diaspora lingva minoritato" ['self-elected diasporic language minority']) (see Chapter 8)

eterna komencanto ('eternal beginner', with regard to language proficiency)

pasporta servo ('passport service' = international network of hosts providing free lodging for Esperantists)

interkona vespero ('acquaintance/welcoming evening', traditional element of an Esperanto event)

verda stelo ('green star', symbol of Esperanto)

finu venko ('final victory'; the expression refers originally to the time when every person on earth speaks Esperanto or when Esperanto will have been generally recognised as an international means of communication; presently often used in the sense of 'in a very distant future' or 'never' – see Mel'nikov, 2015, p. 135)

interna ideo ('internal idea', main element of the ideology of Esperanto [Esperantism], which has its origin in Zamenhof's humanist-pacifist aim to create and disseminate a common language in order to banish war from human societies (*forigi la militon el la homa socio*) as well as to nurture fraternity and justice among all peoples (*frateco kaj justeco inter ĉiuj popoloj*) (Kökény & Bleier, 1986/1933, p. 250)

rondo familia ('family circle' = synonym for the Esperanto speech community, coined by Zamenhof)

unua bulteno ('first bulletin', the first of two leaflets or brochures describing plans for the annual Esperanto World Congresses)

kongresa libro / kongreslibro ('congress book', book or brochure that all participants of an Esperanto World Congress receive; it contains information about the place of the congress, the programme including lectures, excursions and other events, as well as the list of participants).

young speakers: *Almenaŭ ni ne krokodilu!* ('At least we should not crocodile!'), which then rapidly gained currency. According to Wood (1979, p. 445), the meaning of *krokodili* goes back to the renowned Esperanto teacher Andreo Cseh: "The historical circumstances were, in fact, the direct-method Esperanto language, first in the prisoner-of-war camps of Eastern Europe during World War I, and later in various countries during the between-war period. As realia he used model animals, associated with various defects or abilities in the use of the language; the crocodile, of course, failed to speak Esperanto when he was supposed to." By way of analogy, some Esperanto speakers use *aligatori* ('to alligator') to mean 'to speak one's native language with sb. speaking it as a second language' and *kajmani* ('to cayman') to mean 'to converse in a language that is native to neither speaker' (e.g. English as a lingua franca) (Pilger, 1998, pp. 2, 18).

This type of phraseological unit is especially interesting as these expressions disprove the thesis that a planned language, by its very nature, ‘lacks culture’ (see Fiedler, 2010b, 2015b). Within its communicative history, the Esperanto speech community has not only produced a large number of artefacts in the field of literature, music, cabaret, etc., it has also given rise to shared values, traditions, patterns of behaviour and ideas in highly conventional forms of speech. As a consequence, most of the above expressions can only be understood by Esperanto speakers on the basis of their sociocultural background knowledge. There are, of course, *eternal beginners* in many languages and in many fields, but to fully understand this expression in Esperanto we have to know something about how relatively easy it is to learn the basics of the language, which makes it possible to achieve a substantial degree of communication with only rudimentary knowledge. And the title of a short story by Sten Johansson (1996), *Interkona mateno* (‘get-to-know morning’) is funny only because the average Esperanto speaker is familiar with *Interkona vespero* (‘get-to-know evening’), the denotation of a traditional meeting on the first evening of an Esperanto event, as a set phrase.

The classification into these three types of phraseological units according to their origin is of course an abstraction. Since it is sometimes difficult to find out whether there is a model structure in one of the ethnic languages, the dividing lines between the three groups (a), (b) and (c) may often appear indistinct.

A previous investigation, based on 500 PUs found in a comprehensive corpus of written and spoken texts and on a questionnaire study on the knowledge of phraseology among Esperanto speakers (Fiedler, 1999), suggests that the majority of PUs are loan translations (49.0%). Original Esperanto items constitute the phrasicon of the planned language at 14.4%, whereas 36.6% of Esperanto PUs go back to Zamenhof’s collection *Proverbaro Esperanta*. Although the latter figure indicates a relatively high proportion of items, we have to consider that this amounts to only 7% of the 2,630 units in this collection. Only a very small part of the *Proverbaro Esperanta* can be considered common knowledge among the speech community – which shows the limitations of planned processes in a functioning planned language (Schubert, 1989).

More often than not, speakers prefer the ad hoc translation of a proverb or phrase from another language to an entry in Zamenhof’s collection. An example might be useful to illustrate this. Zamenhof, in analogy to the expressions in the other languages of his father’s collection, created the catchy phrase *granda frakaso en malgranda glaso* (lit. ‘a big smash in a small glass’) (ProvE no. 659).¹²⁹

129. In this proverb, *frakaso* is to be understood as ‘the loud noise that a disruption produces’. The *NPIV* (Duc Goninaz et al., 2002, p. 362) describes the meaning of the proverb as “granda bruo por nenio” (‘loud noise about nothing’).

In Esperanto communication, however, we observe that speakers often resort to their own versions based on mother-tongue uses, as the following excerpts from an Internet discussion forum show:

- (241) Finfine la afero ne estas tre grava – kaj fakte nur **ŝtormo en la akvoglaso**, kiel diras germanlingvanoj. Mi nur volis atentigi pri tio, ke oni ne disvastigu tekstojn kolbasigitajn en la gugla tradukmaŝino sen esti poluritaj.
[Finally, the matter is not very important – and in fact only a storm in a teacup (lit. a storm in the water glass), as German speakers say. I just wanted to make us aware of the fact that one should not disseminate texts that were put into the Google translation machine like sausages without having been polished.]
[<http://www.liberafolio.org/arkivo/www.liberafolio.org/2012/forpasis-josi-semer/>, 2012–04–05]
- (242) *En mardo (sic!) ekis diskuto pri la publikeco de la estraraj protokoloj en la retlisto de la komitato. Tie <name> amplekse komentis la temon, kiun li nomis “**ŝtormo en tetaso**”.*
[In March a discussion started about the public character of the board’s minutes on the Internet list of the committee. There <name> extensively commented on the topic, which he called “a storm in a teacup”.] [<http://www.liberafolio.org/arkivo/www.liberafolio.org/2007/sekretajprotokoloj/>, 2007–04–21]
- (243) – *Krom tio, konante <name>, mi sincere ne kredas, ke li faris tion nur por instigi partoprenadon de membroj de <name of an organisation> [...] Kaj lia naiveco pri havi multajn membrojn por ricevi subvenciojn [...]*
– *Ĉu nur al mi ĉi-ĉio aspektas kiel **ŝtormo en akvoglaso**?*
[– In addition, knowing <name>, I sincerely do not believe that he did this only in order to instigate participation of the members of <name of organisation> (...) And his naivety about having many members for receiving subsidies (...)
– Is it only to me that all this looks like a storm in a teacup (lit. ‘storm in a water glass’)]?]
[Facebook, 2016–12–26]

Those Zamenhofian phrases and proverbs that are in use, however, are very well known by the majority of speakers and frequently found, for example, in the Esperanto press, where they serve as headlines and captions (see Fiedler, 1999, pp. 216–260).

21.4 The use of phraseological units

Phraseology is widely used in Esperanto. Previous studies have shown that phraseological units can be found in both written and spoken communication and in a variety of genres, in which they produce profound communicative effects

(see Fiedler, 1999, 2015d). In this chapter, we will shed some light on the general text-constituting function of PUs, their text-structuring function and their text-related modification.

21.4.1 PUs as text constituents

Phraseological units produce their full communicative effect only in specific situational contexts. They constitute textual meaning and develop textual coherence, making them much more than mere embellishment. More than anything else, this text-constituting function of PUs is based on their complex structure. Since they are polylexemic (constituting word groups and sentences), as described above, isolated phraseological constituents can be reiterated to play a specific role in the text. Sometimes a PU becomes the main element of the text structure. Examples can be found in literary texts as well as in journalism, as the following examples illustrate. In (244), from Jean Forge's (1923) novel *Abismoj* ('Abysses'), the element *fadeno* ('thread') in the phraseological unit *pendi ĉe fadeno* ('hang by a thread') forms the starting point for a vivid and imaginative description of the protagonist's mood. In (245), an acceptance speech, the parallel repetition of the phrase *turni la dorson al io/iu* ('turn one's back on sth./sb.') at the end of decisive paragraphs makes the text solemn and impressive.

- (244) *Jes, nur ĉe fadeno pendis mia vivo kaj mia espero, pendis mia bieno, mia brutaro, mia domaro. Kaj mi konsideris ĉi tiun fadenon jam forta. Ĉu mi povis scii, ke tiu fadeno apartenis al la fadenaro de aranea reto, al kiu mi pendigis min, esperante, ke mi sukcesos suprentiri min per tiu fadeno, kiun mi kaptis. Ĉu mi povis supozi, ke tiun fadenon faris kruela araneo – malica virino? La fadeno estas disŝirita, kaj mi falas en teruran abismon [...]*

[Yes, my life and my hope hung only by a thread, and so hung my estate, my livestock, my farm. And I did consider this thread to be strong. Could I have known that this thread belonged to a network of threads in a spider's web in which I had suspended myself, hoping that I would draw myself upwards by means of this thread which I caught. Could I have supposed that this thread was made by a cruel spider – a malicious woman? The thread was torn apart and I am falling into a terrible abyss (...)] [Jean Forge, 1923, *Abismoj*, p. 118]

- (245) *Ricevante tiun ĉi premion, mi spertas samtempe fieron kaj humilon. De tempo al tempo homoj starigas al mi demandon: Kial vi dediĉas tiom da tempo kaj energio al la afero Esperanto? Ĉiam denove mi pripensas, kaj ĉiam denove mi trovas abundajn kialojn [...]*
Tial estis neeble al mi dum mia vivo perfidi tiun mirindan homon [Zamehof], kies klarvido, obstino, celtravo kaj esenca homeco, kaj la modesto kiu animis ilin,

estas tiom profunde admirindaj. Al tiu homo kaj al Esperanto mi neniam povus turni la dorson. [...]

Ligas min al Esperanto ankaŭ la fakto, ke la esperantistoj estas pravaj. Tio, kion ni pretendas rilate nian lingvon, estas vera, konstatebla kaj pruvebla. Kaj tial senĉese min agacis kaj obstinigis tiuj, kiuj diras pri Esperanto malveraĵojn. [...]

Fronte al tia traktado mi neniam povis turni la dorson. [...]

Trie, ligas min al Esperanto ties granda esprimivo, kiu ankoraŭ ne estas plene malkovrita. [...] Al tio mi neniam volus **turni la dorson**.

[Receiving this prize, I am experiencing at the same time pride and humility. From time to time, people ask me: why do you dedicate so much time and energy to the affair of Esperanto? Again and again, I think about it and all over again I find abundant reasons (...)]

Therefore, it is impossible for me during my life to betray this wonderful man (Zamenhof), whose clear vision, persistence, purposefulness and essential humanity, and whose modesty, which emanated from these, are so profoundly admirable. On such a human being and on Esperanto I could never **turn my back**. (...)

What links me with Esperanto is also the fact that Esperantists are right. What we claim concerning our language is true, ascertainable and provable. And therefore the people who tell untruths about Esperanto always set my teeth on edge and make me dig my heels in (...) On such treatment I could never **turn my back**. (...)

Thirdly, what ties me to Esperanto is its enormous expressiveness, which has not yet been fully revealed. (...) On this I could never **turn my back**.]

[*Esperanto* 10/1995, p. 161]

Examples like these illustrate how the text-constituting potential of phraseology can be employed by authors. Further examples will be given in Chapter 21.4.3 on modifications. The next section will focus on the fact that phraseological units can be frequently found in recurrent positions of a text.

21.4.2 PUs as text-structuring elements

Phraseological units can perform important structuring functions: proverbs and catchphrases are often found in recurrent positions, especially at the beginning and at the end of paragraphs. In an initial position a PU can provide a core reference for textual expansion. Authors like to take general truths expressed in proverbs as a starting point for their reports and arguments, as in the following examples: an article about youth riots in British cities, and an article about language instruction.

(246) *Malstulta sezono*

Paul GUBBINS

Kiam vi legos ĉi tiujn vortojn, estos finiĝinta la tiel nomata stulta sezono. “Stulta sezono” nomas ĵurnalistoj – almenaŭ en Britio – la periodon, ĝenerale en aŭgusto, kiam mankas novaĵoj. [...] Tiam plenas ĵurnaloj, radio-programoj, per “stulta”, do malpli seriozaj raportoj. Tertremo: Arbo falinta. [...] Tamen la ĉi-jara stulta sezono [...] montriĝis oble pli malstulta ol en la pasinteco. Terglobe dominis novaĵ-bultenojn la ekonomia krizo.

[Non-silly season]

Paul Gubbins

When you read these words, the so-called silly season will be over. “Silly season” is what journalists – at least in Britain – call the period, generally in August, when newsworthy events are lacking. (...) Then journals and radio programmes are full of “silly”, that is, less serious, reports. Earthquake: a tree has fallen down. (...)

However, this year’s silly season (...) turned out to be a whole lot more non-silly than in the past. All over the world, the economic crisis dominated the news.]

[Monato 10/2011, p. 7]

(247) *La unua leciono*

Ĉiu scias la proverbon: “Unua paŝo iron direktas.” Sendube la unua E-leciono havas eksterordinaran signifon por la futuro de la loka lingvoinstruado. [...]

[The first lesson]

Everybody knows the proverb: “The first step decides the direction.” Without any doubt, the first Esperanto lesson is of enormous significance for the future of local language instruction. (...) [Internacia Pedagogia Revuo 3/1995, p. 14]

When phraseological units mark the end of a text or paragraph, they can serve the function of a comment, as with the passage from Zamenhof’s poem *La Vojo* in example (248), or they are used as an evaluative concluding signal, as in the book review in (249).

(248) *Eĉ se oni devus labori vane dum kelkaj jaroj, ŝajnas al mi ke la rezultoj estos ĉiamaniere tre bonaj: “Eĉ guto malgranda, konstante frapante, Traboras la monton granitan.”*

[Even though we had to work in vain for some years, it seems to me that the results will be very good: “Even a little drop, constantly beating, bores through the granite mountain.”]

[La Gazeto 6/1997, p. 8]

- (249) *Ju pli oni legas aŭ aŭskultas tiun eposan verkon, oni pli kaj pli konvinkigas, ke ĝi estas gravega kontribuo al la monda literaturo. La temo estas universala, nome la situacio de la homaro en la tempo kaj en la kosmo. Ĝi estis parte inspirita de la verko Cantos de la usona poeto Ezra Pound, kaj ĝi memorigas min pri Canto General de la ĉiliano Pablo Neruda. Ofte grandaj mensoj simile pensas.*

[The more one reads or listens to this narrative poem, the more one becomes convinced that it is a significant contribution to world literature. The theme is universal, it is the situation of humankind in time and space. It was partly inspired by the work *The Cantos* by the US poet Ezra Pound, and it reminds me of *Canto General* by the Chilean Pablo Neruda. **Often great minds think alike.**]
[Esperanto 3/2011, p. 64]

The text-structuring function of PUs can even be observed in such complex communicative events as a congress spanning several days. During the opening ceremony of the 100th World Esperanto Congress in Lille, the speaker introduced the audience to a local proverb, which he returned to at the very end of the congress in his closing speech:

- (250) *Mi venis al Lillo antaŭ kelkaj tagoj kaj havis okazon pasigi tempon kun mia kolego ĉi tie, la prezidanto de LKK, kiun mi prezentos al vi post momento, kaj eh per li iom klariĝis pri la kulturo de la regiono. Estas diraĵo en Lillo ke eh se mankas suno en la ĉielo kiel ofte okazas, tamen neniam mankas suno en la koroj de la Lillanoj. [applause] Sed kiel vi povis konstati jam venante al la kongresejo, ke kiam okazas Esperanto-kongreso en Lillo tiam mankas nek suno en la koroj nek suno en la ĉielo. Do dankon, ke vi alportis la bonan humoron kaj la bonan veteron al Lillo.*

[I came to Lille some days ago and had the opportunity to spend some time with my colleague here, the president of the local committee, whom I will introduce to you in a moment, and uh through him the culture of the region became clear to me a bit. There is a saying in Lille that uh if the sun is absent from the sky, which is often the case, nevertheless the sun is never absent from the hearts of the citizens of Lille. (applause) But as you already realise when coming to the congress building, when there is an Esperanto congress in Lille, then neither the sun in people's hearts nor the sun in the sky is missing. So, thanks for bringing along a good mood and good weather to Lille.]

[69 (eng; cerem; Lille) 6:15–7:11]

- (251) *La vetero ne estis ĉiam (1) la plej hela, sed la suno certe brilis en niaj koroj. Ĝuste laŭ la popola diro de la ĉi-tieaj homoj.*

[The weather was not always (1) the brightest, but the sun certainly shone in our hearts. Just as the popular expression of the local people goes.]

[171 (eng; cerem; Lille) 6:55–7:10]

21.4.3 Modifications

A large number of phraseological units are not used in the form that we expect or as they are listed in dictionaries. We are not talking about variations here, as they were described above, but about ad hoc exploitations, i.e. innovative uses that are closely related to a specific situation or text. Authors alter catchphrases, slogans, proverbs and other types of PUs deliberately with specific purposes in mind, as illustrated in Chapter 20 on the production of humour.

Occasionally, the creative expansion of a phraseological unit extends throughout an entire text. In Example (252), the phrase *inventi la radon* takes centre stage in an article on language reform. The elements *inventi* ('invent') and *rado* ('wheel') are repeated several times and modified by additional elements (e.g. *inventi gramatike*, *leksike* 'invent grammatically, lexically ...'; *genrolingva rado* 'a wheel of gender-related language use').

- (252) [...] Tamen per la cetere bona tendenco esti originala oni ne devas troigi. Tiel ekzemple la troigado esti je ĉiu prezo kaj kontraŭ ĉia racio "originala" trovisian bildon ankaŭ en niaj lingvoj per la sintagmo "**ne inventi denove la radon**". Bedaŭrinde ankaŭ en la historio de Esperanto – se iu socia fenomeno kontinue daŭras pli ol 100 jarojn, oni jam prave povas paroli pri historio – fantomas provoj, **inventi radon ĉu gramatike, ĉu leksike, ĉu ortografie, ĉu stiluze**. Fariĝis preskaŭ parto de esperantpopola folkloro, tuj post la duonsukcese farita ekzameno A proponi certajn lingvajn reformojn en la verko de d-ro Zamenhof. Tian **nove inventitan "radon"** mi trovas ankaŭ en via prezento de "riismo" [...] Kaj nun pri la "**invento de rado**" en tiu ĉi ideo [...] La genre neŭtrala formo [...] Ne estu partieca inter morta objekto, planto, besto kaj homo, ja sub la principo de absoluta neŭtraleco ili ĉiu/ĉio por si estas la samo, kaj inter si ili ĉiuj estas la samo. Do ankaŭ en la tabelo de korelativoj oni devus **inventi genrolingvan "radon"** por ne esti partieca ĉu objekte, ĉu animale, ĉu home. [...]

[(...)] However, the otherwise worthy tendency to be original should not lead to exaggeration. Thus, for example, such exaggeration for the sake of "originality" at all cost and against all reason has also found its expression in our languages through the syntagm "**not to reinvent the wheel**". Unfortunately, also the history of Esperanto (if any social phenomenon steadily endures for more than 100 years, one can legitimately speak of history) is haunted by attempts at **inventing the wheel**, grammatically, lexically, orthographically, stylistically. It has almost become part of popular Esperanto lore to propose this or that linguistic reform in Dr Zamenhof's invention as soon as you have passed exam level A halfway successfully. I also find such a **newly invented "wheel"** in your presentation of "ri-ism" (...) And now about the "**reinvention of the wheel**" in this idea (...) The gender-neutral form (...). Don't take sides among a dead object, plant, animal and human being; after all, on the principle of absolute

neutrality each of them is the same and among themselves they are the same. Thus, in the table of correlatives one would have to **reinvent a gender-linguistic “wheel”** in order not to be partial as regards an object, animal, human being. (...)] [Esperanto aktuell 1/2015, p. 27]

In Example (253), an editorial in the journal *Esperanto* (6/2010, p.123), the phrase *esti en la sama boato* (cf. English *be in the same boat*) is of central importance to the message. It is used in the headline and in the final sentences of two of the paragraphs of the text. Furthermore, it is playfully contrasted with another phrase, *Ni fosu nian sulkon!* (lit. ‘We should dig our furrow’, a traditional Esperanto motto), and, finally, by using the constituent *boato* (‘boat’) and other lexical elements from the same word field (e.g. *flosi* [‘float’], *veli* [‘sail’]) in isolation the author starts a complex interplay around the literal and the figurative meanings of the two expressions.

(253) *Ni estas ĉiuj en la sama boato kaj devas noveme kunveli*

Kiu laŭ vi estis la ĉefa problemo de UEA en la pasintaj 50 jaroj? Ĉu la puĉo en Hamburgo? Homaj bedaŭrindaĵoj. [...] Ĉu la malfrue alvenantaj Jarlibro aŭ revuo? Ni delonge lernis trateni tion. Ĉu la falanta membronombro? Jes, sed falas la membronombro ankaŭ en la landaj asocioj kaj en la lokaj societoj, kaj ne ekzistas specife universal-asocia solvo de ĉiunivela problemo. Se ni problemas kune, ni solvu kune.

Por alproksimiĝi al la problemo, ni unue tuŝu la temon de Usono. [...] Usono estas hodiaŭ tio, kio estis hieraŭ Francio. Esperanto rajdis sur franca ĉevalo ekde Bulonjo, kaj estis atentata; se hodiaŭ reaktuala alvoko al Esperanto estus veninta el la usona kontraŭkulturo, ni estus nun en bona pozicio, kiel... la rokmuzika industrio. [...]

Nun ekzistas potenco pli aktuala ol Usono: la reta mondo [...]. Malaperis la tradicia rilato inter la mono, la loka sindediĉo de maljunuloj kaj la energio de la junularo. Kaj ni ne sukcesis, en la reta mondo, instali funkciantan maltradician kunligon inter tiuj faktoroj.

En tiu malsukceso, ni trovas nin en la sama boato, kiel la monda muzika industrio; kaj ni devos lerni kunflosi. Tio signifas iom ekskutimigi la retorikon de senlikva fosado (L estas likva konsonanto) kaj sulkoj, ĉar tiu retoriko respegulas tion, kio dividas nin kaj malhelpas solvon. En solida mondo de sulkoj, ĉiu emas rigardi sin mem la centro de la movado, ĝia plej grava parto.

Ĉiu fosas sian sulkon kaj ne emas helpi fosi alilokajn sulkojn.

[...] oni devas iamaniere teni la Esperanto-movadon funkcianta kaj laŭeble kreskanta en Germanio, Usono, Japanio kaj samtempe loka kaj internacie. La demando estas, kiamaniere malplej dolore forlasi la sulko-fosan racion kaj kol-ektive fronti al la fakto, ke nun ni ĉiuj estas en la sama, nova boato.

[...]

Sed ankaŭ en la nuna mondo, nur malrapide oni lernas lingvojn, aŭ konvinkas najbaron pri la lernado de Esperanto, aŭ vartas instituciojn kaj festivalojn tra la jaroj.

*Por plufari tion efike, por pluirigi la **boaton** de Esperanto, por konvinki la mondon pri la bezono pri lingva justeco, ni bezonas ĉiujn **boatistojn** kaj ili devas kunlabori inter si, estimi unu la alian, helpi unu la alian. Internaciuloj, landuloj, lokuloj kaj retuloj, ni ĉiuj faras ion utilan. Neniu havas en sia poŝo la sekreton por triumfigi Esperanton, sed se tio eblas, tio okazos nur se ni kunlaboros.*

*Fiere kaj kunlabore konstruu kun ni movadon de homoj kapablaj **kunveli**. Ni **velu** antaŭen kun kredo, fervoro, kiel kantas Grabowski.*

[We are all in the same boat and have to sail innovatively together.

What in your opinion was the UEA's (= Universala Esperanto-Asocio 'Universal Esperanto Association') main problem over the past fifty years? The putsch in Hamburg? Human weaknesses. The late arrival of the yearbook or the journal? We have long since learned to cope with this. The declining membership? Yes, but the number of members is falling in the national and local associations as well, and there is no specifically Universal-Association solution to an all-level problem. Common problems call for common solutions.

In order to approach the problem, we should first address the topic of the US. (...)

The USA today is what France was yesterday. Esperanto has been riding the French horse since Boulogne [= since the first international Esperanto congress in Boulogne-sur-Mer in 1905] and has gained attention; if today a renewed call to Esperanto had come from the American counter-culture, we would now be in a good place, like (...) the rock music industry (...)

But now there is a power that is more up-to-the-minute than the USA: the world of the Internet. [...]

The traditional relationship among money, the local commitment of older people and the energy of the young has disappeared. And we have not managed, in the world of the Internet, to establish a new non-traditional connection among these factors. In this failure we find ourselves **in the same boat** as the international music industry; and we will have to learn to **float together**.

This means to a certain extent to break out of the rhetoric of dry ('non-liquid') **digging** (L is a liquid consonant) and **furrows** [= in the original a play on words: flosi / fosi 'float/ dig'], because this rhetoric reflects what divides us and hinders a solution. In a solid world of **furrows**, everybody tends to regard themselves as the centre of the movement, as its most important part. Everybody **digs** their own **furrow** and nobody likes to help **dig furrows** in other places.

(...) [S]omehow we have to keep the Esperanto movement functioning and, if possible, growing in Germany, the US, Japan and also at the same time locally and internationally.

The question is how to give up the **furrow-digging** approach while causing as little pain as possible and collectively face the fact that we **are all in the same, new boat**.

(...)

(...) But in today's world, too, it is only slowly that we learn languages, convince a neighbour that it is worthwhile learning Esperanto, or foster institutions and festivals over many years.

To continue our work effectively, to drive **the boat** of Esperanto forward, to convince the world of the necessity of linguistic justice, we need all **sailors** and they have to cooperate with one another, respect each other, help each other. Those working on the international, national, local levels, on the Internet, we all do something useful. None of us has the secret in their pocket for the triumph of Esperanto; if it is possible, it will only happen if we work together.

Build up a movement with us, with pride and cooperation, of people who are able to **sail** with us. Let's **sail** forward with faith and fervour, as Grabowski¹³⁰ sang.]

Creative reshaping of PUs or allusions to them are widespread in Esperanto. Casual conversations at dinner, but also the press, are where we expect to find intertextual allusions of this kind. The world of pretexts that can be alluded to is rich for Esperanto communication. It includes the various cultures of the world derived from individual speakers' native cultural backgrounds and, in addition, the culture of the planned language community. We offer two illustrations: modifications of Hamlet's *To be or not to be: that is the question* (in Esperanto: *Ĉu esti aŭ ne esti: tiel staras la demando*) and the first line of the refrain of Zamenhof's poem "La vojo" *Nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj ne flankiĝante ni iru la vojon celitan* ('Only directly, courageously and without turning aside, we must follow the path to the goal').

- (254) *Ĉu esti aŭ ne esti: tiel staras la demando*
Ĉu meti aŭ ne meti? Tiel staras la demando – almenaŭ kiam pri komoj temas.
 [To put or not to put: that is the question – at least when we are talking about commas] [Esperanto 2/1995, p. 28]
- (255) *Ĉu genri aŭ ne genri?* [To gender or not to gender?] [La Gazeto 1/1994, p. 5]
- (256) *Ĉu fundamenti aŭ teoriumi?* [To stick to the *Fundamento* or to theorise?]
[La Gazeto 3/1994, p. 6]
- (257) *Ĉu rimi aŭ ne rimi – tiel staras la demando en la cerbujo de multaj poetoj.* [To rhyme or not to rhyme – that is the question in the mindset of many poets.]
[La Gazeto 6/1994, p. 14]
- (258) *Ĉu feki aŭ ne feki?* [To defecate or not to defecate?] [Monato 1/1999, p. 23]
- (259) *Futbali aŭ ne futbali ... Jen staras la demando, ja por milionoj.* [To play football or not to play football ... That is ultimately the question for millions.]
[Kontakto 6/1998, p. 5]

130. Antoni Grabowski (1857–1921), a Polish chemical engineer, was an outstanding Esperanto activist whose translations had an enormous impact on the development of Esperanto as a literary language.

- (260) *Ĉu knedi aŭ ne knedi?* [To knead or not to knead?]
 [La Ondo de Esperanto 4/2007, p. 150; review of the collection of Esperanto slang expressions, *Knedu min, sinjorino*, whose title is a modification itself – see Chapter 18.2.2, footnote 77]

See also the following examples by Raymond Schwartz, which put an emphasis on the similarity between words (*esti* ‘to be’ – *vesti* ‘to dress’ – *estri* ‘to boss’):

- (261) “*Ĉu vesti aŭ nevesti?*” kiel sopiras Hamleto [...]. [‘To dress or not to dress?’ as Hamlet yearns] [Schwartz ... *kun siaspeca spico!* 1971, p. 173]
- (262) *El “Hamleto” li parkere citis al la tuta lando: “Estri aŭ ne estri?” vere, tiel staras la demando.* [From “Hamlet”, he quoted by heart to the whole country: ‘To boss or not to boss?’ indeed, that is the question] [Schwartz *Verdkata testamento* 1926, p. 101]
- (263) Nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj ne flankiĝante ni iru la vojon celitan
Rekte, kuraĝe, eĉ se flankiĝante: IFEF progresas [...] [Directly, bravely, even if turning aside: IFEF progresses] [*Esperanto* 1/1995, p. 12]
- (264) [...] nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj ne Frank-iĝante [...]. [(...) just directly, bravely and not turning into Frank (...)] [IF 2/1993, p. 61; with a reference to Helmar Frank, an Esperanto researcher]
- (265) Modifita “proverbo”: nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj tre difinite ni diru la vorton benitan.
 [A modified “proverb”: just directly, bravely and very defined we should say the blessed word] [*Monato* 2/1996, p. 22]
- (266) – Kie ili renkontiĝas?
 – Nur iru rekte antaŭen kaj ne flankiĝante [...]
 [– Where are they meeting?
 – Just go directly forward and without turning aside (...)]
 [31 Mar. 1997, Duderstadt]
- (267) [...] ni iru la vojon ĉe-litan [(...) we should go the way to bed]
 [Alòs i Font & Velkov, 1991, p. 22]
- (268) *Recenzi talentan satiron en kiu rolas aktuale agantaj esperantistoj [...] malfacilas ĝuste pro la risko enfali kaptilon de partiiĝo [...] dum vi ŝatus resti neŭtrala kaj iri la propran vojon, eĉ se tiu lasta ne estas ‘klara kaj rekta kaj tre difinita’.*
 [It is difficult to review a talented satire in which active Esperantists play roles (...) it is difficult especially because of the risk of falling into the trap of partisanship (...) when you would like to be neutral and go your own way, even if the latter is not “clear and direct and very definite”.] [*La Gazeto*, 1/1996, p. 19]

Uses like these can also be found in everyday conversations, in speeches and debates, as we will see in the examination of PUs occurring in our dataset.

21.5 Analysis of the Esperanto phraseology in the dataset

The phraseological occurrences in our dataset (see Chapter 5) corroborate the majority of properties mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter concerning the various types, functions and uses of PUs. Speakers make extensive use of phraseology to render their speech more expressive: for example, to illustrate a fact, to attract attention, to express an ironic undertone, to evoke humour, to put the listener or reader at ease, or to be euphemistic.

As for the types of phraseological units, loan translations predominate, accounting for 77% of all PUs, i.e. speakers transfer expressions from their native languages, as they consider them to be well known in various languages (see Examples (269) and (270)) or to be based on sufficiently transparent images (see Examples (271) to (273)):

- (269) *Ni devas pri tio konscii, ke tio estas nur pinto de la glacia monto, kion ni per la vortoj diras / Se iu venas de ekstere, ne konante nin, ne estante el la sama kulturo, ofte tiun grandan, tutan parton de la glacia monto – tion ne konceptas.*

[We have to be conscious about the fact that this is just the tip of the iceberg, what we say with our words / If someone comes from outside, not knowing us, not being from our culture, they often have no conception of this whole huge part of the iceberg.] [18 (hun; edu; Poznań) 42:52 / 43:17–32]

- (270) *Do ni devas trovi en niaj socioj nigran ŝafon kaj pro tio ni mem daŭre sekurigas nin / Do la nigra ŝafo estas iu eksterstaranto.*

[So, we have to find in our societies a black sheep and because of this we constantly protect ourselves / So the black sheep is someone from outside] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 26:20 / 63:28]

- (271) *[...] pro tio, ke jam ni laboras je la rando de niaj kapabloj se temas pri tempo, ĉefe, ĉu ne [...]*

[(...) given the fact that we are already working at the limit of our abilities, above all, in terms of time you know (...)] [99 (eng; disc; Lille) 80:05–17]

- (272) *Tio al ni ne eblas kaj tute kontraŭas la etikon de esperantista kunlaboro [...] nu tio estas bedaŭrinda kaj ni faras kion ni povas por glatigi la vojon por ke la sesa Afrika kongreso de Esperanto okazu en bonaj kondiĉoj kun granda subteno kun granda partopreno de esperantistoj el aliaj mondopartoj.*

[This is not possible and completely contradicts the ethics of Esperanto cooperation (...) well this is regrettable and we do what we can to pave the way so that the sixth African Esperanto congress can take place in good conditions and with strong support with strong participation by Esperanto speakers from other parts of the world] [157 (eng; disc; Lille) 49:42–50:13]

- (273) *Ni povas referenci al tiuj rezolucioj kaj tio estas vere **atuto en niaj karto**j, tio donas al ni vere firman bazon.*
[We can refer to these resolutions and this is really a trump card, it gives us a truly firm basis.] [163 (fra; disc; Lille) 26:21–32]

If speakers decide to mention a culture-specific phrase or proverb from their native language, perhaps to lend their expression a specific tone or if they are not sure about the acceptability of a phrase in Esperanto, they often add metacommunicative markers to signal these uses and aid understanding:

- (274) *Do mi ne kantos. Sunas hodiaŭ. En Francio oni diras: Se oni malbone kantas, poste pluvos* [So I won't sing. The sun is shining today. In France we say: if you sing poorly, later it will rain.] [118 (fra; tour; Lille) 24:08]
- (275) *Kiu volas frakasi la glacieron kiel oni diras en aliaj lingvoj* [Who wants to break the ice, as they say in other languages] [143 (spa; pres/disc; Lille) 78:47]

Instead of *frakasi la glacieron* ('shatter the ice'), used in Example (275), the dataset also contains *rompi la glacieron* (*frakasi* 'shatter', *rompi* 'break') (113, 40:50). In general, within this group of loan translations, variants are frequent, as the occurrences of *kapti la okazon* ('seize/grab the opportunity') illustrate:

- (276) *Mi havis unu monaton ĉion aranĝi. [...] Mi **kaptis la okazon**, mi ne havis tempon ĉion kontroliĝi ĉar mi volis [...]*
[I had one month to arrange everything. I seized the opportunity, I didn't have time to have everything checked because I wanted (...)]
[71 (hun; disc; Lille) 30:12–25]
- (277) *Mi nur volis **profiti la okazon** prezenti la plej junan partoprenanton de la kongreso.*
[I just wanted to take the opportunity to present the youngest participant of the congress] [69 (?; cerem; Lille) 126:55 – a participant of a congress interrupts the procedure of welcoming speeches to hold up the secretary's baby]
- (278) *Fakte pri tiu pasedukado estas tri aksoj [...] Unua akso konsistas el [...], la dua akso estas **uzi la okazon** reagante al iu situacio, kaj la tria akso estas kurso [...]*
[In fact, as regards this peace education there are three axes (...) The first axis consists of (...) the second axis is to use the opportunity to react to a certain situation, and the third axis is a course (...)] [103 (fra; pres; Lille) 61:53–62:28]

About 20% of the phraseological occurrences in the dataset include what we called original PUs in Chapter 21.3. These are expressions closely related to the history of the speech community, for example phrases from Zamenhof's works or literary works by other authors that have become catchphrases (see also Examples (63), (64) and (263) to (268)):

- (279) *Ideologo: vidante belan knabinon li pensas pri venko (.) fina*
 [Ideologist: watching a beautiful girl, he thinks about victory, the final one]
 [29 (pol; tour; Poznań) 68:10]
- (280) *Do, la granda ŝanĝo venis sur armiloj de milita vento, dum la Dua Mondmilito.*
 [So, the huge change (in the evolution of the computer) came on the wings of
 a wind of war, during the Second World War.] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 7:30,
 allusion to the phase *per flugiloj de facila vento*
 from Zamenhof's *La Espero*; see footnote 120]
- (281) *Ĝis la ludduona paŭzo la okcidentsaharanoj sukcesis fari kvar golojn kontraŭ nulo. Tamen la pacaj batalantoj plubatalis kaj ni estis optimismaj pri nia sorto en la dua duono.*
 [By half-time the West-Saharan team had succeeded in scoring four goals to nil.
 But the peaceful fighters fought on, and we were optimistic about our destiny
 in the second half.] [169 (eng; cerem; Lille) 8:16–42, *pacaj batalantoj*
 'peaceful fighters' is used in Zamenhof's *La Espero* to refer to Esperantists]

Only three phrases stem from Zamenhof's proverb collection:

- pli bone hodiaŭ ovo ol poste bovo* [better an egg today than later an ox] [37 (ita; infl; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 17:00, see ProvE no. 2008: *Pli valoras tuj ovo, ol poste bovo*],
Neniu povas esti profeto en sia propra hejmo [Nobody can be a prophet in their own home] [2 (hun; infl; Poznań) 11:03, see ProvE no. 1716: *Neniu estas profeto en sia urbeto*]; and
Jen la tubero en la afero [Here's the knot in the affair, = There is a snag to it] [198 (eng; pres; Lisbon) 9:40, see ProvE no. 536: *Estas tubero en la afero*].

This low percentage can be explained by the spoken character of our dataset. In spontaneous oral communication, speakers are not able to check the wording of the constructions they want to use as they would in written text production, and thus avoid using a phrase that they have not entirely grasped. The slight deviation from Zamenhof's original construction in the first example lends support to this explanation.

The structuring function of PUs mentioned above can also be observed in our dataset. Above all, rhetorical formulae can be found in this function. For example, we found *Jam temp' está* (see Chapter 21.2 D) in the dataset used by teachers and conference convenors to admonish speakers during a break to get back to work or to tell presenters that they are running out of time, e.g. in [2 (pol; infl; Poznań) 5:30]. In (282), in his evaluation of a congress, a speaker mentions a number of conclusions that should be drawn for future events and introduces his last point with the phrase *laste (sed) ne balaste* (lit. 'last, [but] not as ballast'; cf. *last but not least*).

- (282) *Tiu ĉi kongreso estas bona, ĝi estas en (ordo). Mi nur parolas pri iuj dek procentoj kiuj povus esti pli bonaj [...] tamen ni fajlu ĉe tiuj malglataĵoj. [...] Ni povas [...] Kaj laste ne balaste, ni devas zorgi, ke tiujn spertojn kiujn ni prenas ni konservos je la- por la venontaj kongresoj.*

[This congress is a good one, it is OK. I only speak about some ten per cent that might be better (...) but we should smooth those rough patches. We could (...) And last but not least we have to take care that we'll keep in mind these experiences that we have gained in the- for the following congresses.]

[144 (deu; disc; Lille) 86:12–87:13]

Modifications of phraseological units, as described in Chapter 21.4.3, can also be found in our dataset of spoken communicative events. For example, in (283), the phrase *la tria aĝo* ('the third age'), which is often used to denote the phase after people's active professional lives (when they have time to deal with the language [again]), is turned into *la kvara aĝo* ('the fourth age'), as the speaker alludes to his return to gainful employment after having been a pensioner for some time. The addition of *Budapeŝta*, referring to a literary school of Esperanto poets (*la Budapeŝta skolo* 'the Budapest school') to the expression *tra la lupeo* ('through the magnifying glass') in (284) leads to an appealing combination of a metaphoric with a metonymic expression.

- (283) *Sed mi ne plu estas emerito, mi (?-is) al la kvara aĝo, mi estas eksa emerita profesoro [@@@], kaj nuntempe mi estas gastprofesoro, mi estas multe pli aĝa ol emerita profesoro [@]*

[But I am no longer a pensioner, I (?-ed) to the fourth age, I am an ex-retired professor (@@@), I'm a visiting professor now, I'm much older than a retired professor (@)]

[114 (swe; disc; Lille) 13:43–57]

- (284) *Kalocsay ne vojaĝis tiel multe, li estis profesoro ĉe la universitato, departementestro ĉe la kliniko, kie li operaciis. Do li vidis la popolon en Budapeŝta, tra Budapeŝta lupeo.*

[Kalocsay did not travel that much, he was a university professor, head of department in a clinic, where he did operations. So, he saw the people in a Budapestian, through a Budapestian magnifying glass.]

[40 (ita; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 6:36–59]

A considerable part of our dataset are debates at forums, committee sessions and working group meetings. These communicative settings are characterised by a large number of recurrent phrases used to coordinate the order of speakers' contributions, such as *doni la parolon* ('to give the floor'), *preni la parolon* ('to take the floor'), *ricevi la parolon* ('to be given/have the floor') or *malfermi/ĉesigi la diskuton* ('to open/close the discussion'). As regards votes, the following phrases have the status of fixed expressions (collocations):

esti por la akcepto (de la raporto) ('to be for accepting [the report]')

esti kontraŭ ... ('to be against –')

Ĉu estas sindetenoj? ('Are there abstentions?')

Bonvolu levi la manon ('Please raise your hands')

fari (proceduran) proponon ('to make a procedural proposal')

The following excerpt will illustrate such recurrent phrases and expressions:

- (285) [...] *Jen nia raporto. Mi proponas ĝin al via akcepto. [...] Do mi ne vidas emon por diskuto, ĉu estas pliaj komentoj de la reviziantoj? Kiu estas por la akcepto de tiuj raportoj? Kiu estas kontraŭ? Sindetenoj? Tri sindetenoj. Dankon. Neniu kontraŭ kaj tri sindetenoj. [...] Ĉu estas pliaj intervenoj pri tiu agadkampo entute? Se ne, mi petas vian voĉon pri akcepto de raporto de la rekomendoj el la el la komitata forumo pri konsciigo. Se vi estas por akcepto de tiuj du rekomendoj (.) proponoj, bonvolu levi la manon. Koran dankon. Klare la plimulto. Kiu estas kontraŭ la akcepto? Kiu sin detenas? Neniu. Koran dankon. [...] Mi nun malfermas tiun raporton al la diskuto [...]*

[This is our report. I propose it for your adoption (...) Well, I don't see any inclination for discussion, are there further comments by the auditors? Who is for the adoption of these reports? Who is against it? Any abstentions? Three abstentions. Thank you. No votes against and three abstentions (...) Are there any further interventions about this field of activity as a whole? If not, I ask for your vote on the adoption of these two recommendations from the from the committee's forum on awareness campaigns. If you are for adopting these two recommendations (.) proposals, please raise your hand. Many thanks. A clear majority. Who is against adopting them? Who abstains? Nobody. Many thanks. (...) I am now opening this report for discussion (...)]

[157 (eng; disc; Lille) 27:50–34:28]

21.6 Historical phraseology: A pilot study

The phrasicon of any living language is subject to change. As a consequence of societal changes, new expressions gain currency. Schreiber et al. (2012, p. 3) consider a phraseological unit a neologism "(1) if it is a new form with a meaning not known previously or (2) if a known form has a new phraseological meaning from a certain point in time". They also state that the neologism "has to be known by a reasonable number of speakers in a reasonably large region" (p. 3). The authors describe the difficulties of detecting phraseological neologisms: the task is hampered by the low frequency of occurrences in corpora and the fact that most corpora contain mainly written language, while phraseological units are expected to first occur in spoken communication (for a discussion on spoken vs written Esperanto see Chapter 23).

A small-scale diachronic study using Esperanto journals from 1892 to 1947¹³¹ shows that texts from the early periods of Esperanto history contained a large stock of PUs that are used in present-day Esperanto journals. These include:

Binomials

tiam kaj tiam ('every now and then')

(*La Marto* 5/1924, p. 19; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct 1933, p. 6)

vole nevole ('willy-nilly')

(*Espero Katolika* n-ro 82, 1930, p. 387; *Esperanto Triumfonta* 7 Aug 1936, p. 3)

jen kaj jen ('here and there' / 'from time to time')

(*Poŝta Esperantisto* 1–2/1913, p. 1; *Juna Esperantisto* 2/1914, p. 14)

de tempo al tempo ('from time to time')

(*Verda Mondo* 11/1927, p. 22; *Espero Katolika* 3/1935, p. 4)

man' en mano ('hand in hand')

(*Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct 1933, p. 5; *La Revuo Esperanta* 2/1935, p. 40)

Nominations

Salomona juĝo ('Solomonic judgement')

(*Lingvo Internacia* 1/1909, p. 179; *Esperanto* 3/1933, p. 52)

la nuda vero ('the naked truth')

(*Poŝta Esperantisto* 8–9/1913, p. 42; *Espero Katolika* 3/1922, p. 165)

(partly with historical character)

la Tria regno ('the Third Reich')

(*Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct 1933, p. 5; *Aŭstria Esperantisto* 3/1938, p. 4)

la flava danĝero ('the yellow peril')

(*Esperanto* 3/1928, p. 56; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 13 Nov 1931, p. 1)

Proverbs

Kie estas volo, tie estas vojo ('Where there's a will, there's a way')

(*Espero Katolika* n-r 83, 1930, p. 403; *La Nova Epoko* 11 Aug 1932)

Vivi estas batali ('To live means to fight')

(*Esperanto* 1/1916, p. 118; *Esperanto* 3/1933, p. 59)

Routine formulae

kiel dirite ('as [already] said')

(*La Lernanto* 25 June 1927; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 30 May 1937, p. 2)

Mil diabloj! ('A thousand devils!')

(*Lingvo Internacia* 1913, p. 398; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct. 1933, p. 6)

131. Provided by ANNO (<http://anno.onb.ac.at/>), a catalogue of digitalised journals by the Austrian National Library in Vienna.

Some PUs have changed their structure and found more stabilised forms (e.g. *doni mortan baton* → *doni mortobaton* [‘to deal a death blow to sb.’]; *Ne estas novaĵo sub la suno* → *Nenio nova sub la suno* [‘Nothing new under the sun’]). A few expressions found in the journals do not seem to be used any more. An example is *kavaliro de la verda stelo* (‘knight of the green star’),¹³² used to denote an Esperanto speaker.

In Chapter 21.2 (B) we characterised PUs as relatively stable in form and content. Nevertheless, phrases can sometimes change their meaning. An example is the unit *fosi sian sulkon* (‘to dig one’s furrow’). The use of the phrase in Esperanto is closely related to the history of the planned language. It entered the language at the beginning of the twentieth century, when reformers left Esperanto to follow the project of a modified (or improved) Esperanto, Ido, created by Louis Couturat and Louis de Beaufront, which led to vigorous debates (see Chapter 8). Théophile Cart (1855–1931), a French university professor who edited the journal *Lingvo Internacia* from 1907 to 1914, introduced *Ni fosu nian sulkon!* It was coined on the basis of a French expression used in a fairy tale, where it expressed the meaning that it is better to make use of an instrument than to discuss its flaws (Mel’nikov, 2015, p. 215). He used the phrase to refer to what is known as the Ido schism, i.e. it meant speakers should not discuss in vain what can be improved in Esperanto but instead should go on working for their common aims. In this sense, it became widespread fast, as the following examples from Esperanto journals show:¹³³

- (286) [...] *Kaj nun ni eble tro forgesis en niaj polemikoj, ke, se Esperanto estas nur lingvo, la demando pri lingvo internacia estas socia demando. La perfekteco de la ilo estas certe elemento de l’sukceso, sed nek la sola, nek la ĉefa. [...]*
Esperantistoj, karaj kunbatalantoj, trankvile kaj konfide ni fosu nian sulkon.
Th. Cart

[(...)] And now in our polemics we have perhaps too easily forgotten that, if Esperanto is only a language, the international language question is a social question. The perfection of the instrument is certainly an element of success, but neither the only one nor the principal one (...) Esperantists, dear fellow fighters, let us dig our furrow calmly and confidently. Th. Cart]

[*Lingvo Internacia* 4/1908, p. 149)

132. An expression alluding to the coinage “Don Quixote the knight of the white moon” which was used in an invitation to the 5th International Esperanto Congress in Barcelona in 1909 published in several journals (e.g. *Amerika Esperantisto* July 1909, p. 141 and *Lingvo Internacia* 1909, p. 102). Several years later, in *Espero Katolika* 3/1935, p. 15, we find: *Ankaŭ el Praha (Ĉeĥoslovakio) ni ricevis bonegan verkajeton de unu el la „Junaj kavaliroj de la verda stelo” [...]* [‘Even from Prague (Czechoslovakia) we received a very good little piece of work from one of the young knights of the green star’].

133. The catchphrase was also printed as a motto on the cover of the journal *Lingvo Internacia*.

- (287) *Kroata Esperantisto (Marto) – Pri Reformoj*
 [...] *Esperanto disvastiĝas senĉese, kaj ĝiaj sinceraj anoj kondukas ĝin al fina celo, ne deklinigite de la diversaj gustdiferencoj. Mi konkludas per la devizo de nia estiminda kunfrato Lingvo Internacia: „Ni fosu nian sulkon!”* Stanislav Tomić
 [Kroata Esperantisto [March] – About Reforms
 (...) Esperanto spreads constantly, and its sincere adherents lead it to the final aim without being swayed by the various differences in taste. I conclude with the motto of our esteemed brother Lingvo Internacia: “Let’s dig our furrow!”
 Stanislav Tomić] [Lingvo Internacia 1910, p. 186]
- (288) *Simile alvokas al ni P-ro Cart per la trafikaj signaldiroj: “Ni fosu nian sulkon! Ni restu fidelaj!” Jen bona kaj mallonga laborprogramo.*
 [Similarly, Professor Cart calls upon us with the striking signal words: “Let’s dig our furrow! Let’s stay loyal” This is a good and short working programme.]
 [Esperanto 1911, p. 82]

We should note that a number of occurrences in those early days include playful modifications of the catchphrase, from which we can deduce that linguistic creativity in Esperanto is not just a characteristic of today’s language use:

- (289) *Ni simple daŭrigos fosi nian modestan sulkon, en kiun la praktikaj, aplikaj societoj, “UEA” kaj fakaj grupoj ĵetas la semon, kiu kreskos por riĉa, de l’homaro benota rikolto!*
 [We should simply go on digging our modest furrow, into which the practical, applied societies, “UEA” and specialist groups throw the seed, which will grow to produce a rich harvest blessed by mankind.]
 [Lingvo Internacia 1910, p. 242]
- (290) *Paris – Esperanto [Junio] – La Rabistoj ...*
Sinjoroj de Beaufront kaj Couturat, la nuntempe oficialaj aŭtoroj de la “Internaciona Linguo”, ne prezentas sian Idion [sic] al la mondo, ne! Ili ĝin nur prezentas al ... la Esperantistoj. Ili ne konkurence, senmaske, kuraĝe fosas sian sulkon, ne! Ili postvenas en nian sulkon, sekvas nian armeon, kiel la korvoj pretaj por ataki ĉiun malfruiĝinton. [...]
 [Paris-Esperanto (June) – The Robbers
 Mr de Beaufront and Mr Couturat, now the official authors of the “Internaciona Linguo” (= Ido), do not present their language to the world, no! They only present it to ... the Esperantists. They do not dig their furrow in competition, without a mask, bravely, no! They come behind us in our furrow, follow our army like the crows ready to attack everyone who is a latecomer.]
 [Lingvo Internacia 1908, p. 328, original emphasis]

- (291) *En esperantista deputataro ekzistas ankaŭ kvar partioj malsimilaj kaj tamen ne Idistaj: I-a Konservemulo: Deklaracio de Boulogne estas unu fojon por ĉiam akceptita, nek Zamenhof nek la aŭtoritato povas decidi la plej malgrandan reformeton. Ni fosu kaj refosu nian unu sulkon ĝis la fino de la mondo. Estu malbenata la plugisto kiu lasas sian foston ŝtonan por provi sulkon malpli ŝtonozan! Por konservemulo, ŝtonoza ne ekzistas. II-a Progresistoj [...]*

[In the Esperanto chamber of deputies there are four parties which are different from one another, but not [belonging to] Ido. The first: the Conservative: the Declaration of Boulogne is once and forever accepted; neither Zamenhof nor authority can decide the tiniest reform. We should dig and dig again our one furrow till the end of the world. Damned be the digger who leaves their stony furrow to try a furrow that is less clogged with stone!¹³⁴ For a conservative, stone-ridden does not exist. The second: the Progressive (...)]

[*La Langue Auxiliaire* May 1909, p. 105]

In the 1920s and 1930s, the noun *sulko* alone was often used figuratively, in the sense of ‘a task, (new) branch or activity’ in the work for Esperanto, as in Examples (292), a report on the foundation of an Esperanto radio association, and (293), in which readers of an Esperanto journal are encouraged to donate money to support its financial survival.

- (292) [...] *Simpatia saluto kaj sincera helpopromeso de ĉiu Esperantista ligo, societo kaj grupo, kaj de ĉiu unuopa samideano, iru al tiu nova Asocio kaj ĉefe al niaj spertaj kaj lertaj pioniroj D-ro Pierre Corret, el Parizo, kaj H.A. Epton, el Londono, kiuj akceptis la premegan funkcion konduki ĝin tra la nova **sulko**, kiu sin prezentas al nia agado.*

[(...) A nice greeting and sincere pledge by each association, society and group of Esperantists, and by each single fellow thinker / Esperanto supporter, should go to this new association and above all to our experienced and skilful pioneers, Dr Pierre Carret of Paris and H. A. Epton of London, who have accepted the weighty function of leading it through the new furrow that presents itself to our activity.]

[*Belga Esperantisto* 3–4/1924, p. 30]

- (293) [...] *Ĉiu gazeto kia ajn bezonas subtenon fincan, ideo ideala ĝin bezonas des pli multe, ĉar ĝi silente kalkulas kun bonaj koroj de geamikoj. Tiuj scias, ke la pozicio de Esperanto ne estas tiel firma, kiel ĝi devus esti. Kaj perdita **sulko** donas argumenton al malamikoj de la lingvo. Ili diros, ke la ideo ne kapblas vivi.*

134. The author plays with the two adjectives *ŝtona* and *ŝtonoza*. In Esperanto, only the first one is official: *ŝtona* (‘stony’) is used to express any relationship to ‘stone’ (consisting of, appearing like, containing, etc.), and the context shows what exactly is meant. Ido introduced an additional suffix, *-oz*, with the specific meaning of ‘containing’.

[...] Any kind of newspaper needs financial support, an idealistic idea needs it even more, as it tacitly reckons with friends' good hearts. These know that the position of Esperanto is not as firm as it should be. And a lost furrow provides enemies of the language with an argument. They will say that the idea is not capable of surviving.] [Marto 11/1928, p. 1]

When Théophile Cart died in 1931, the catchphrase created by him dominated his obituaries, both in its original wording, *Ni fosu nian sulkon!*, referring to the Ido crisis, and in a wider sense as 'to continue one's efforts for Esperanto' (see Example (294)). This more general meaning is also expressed in Example (295), a report on the twentieth congress of the German Esperanto Association:

- (294) *Malĝoja sciigo venis el Parizo. Mortis Prof. Th. Cart [...] Firma, kiel ŝtalo, li bataladis la duonon de sia vivo fervore por Esperanto, kuraĝe kontraŭ ĉiuj malamikoj de nia ideo. "Ni fosu nian sulkon!" tondris lia voĉo en la mezo de la kirlanta tumulto okaze de la Idista Intrigo. [...] Fajraj vortoj liaj ekrememorigis nian tutan anaron pri nia sulko, kiun ni havas la devon fosi. Por la homaro estonta, por nia neparo ni devis ne deflankiĝi. [...]*

"Ni fosu nian sulkon!" estos por ĉiam la devizo de la fidelaj esperantistoj. Liaj vortoj estos de ni en la estonteco pli bone observataj, kaj ni promesas per lia glora nomo, ke neniam deflankiĝante ni fosadas nian sulkon por la bono de la homaro.

[Sad news came from Paris. Prof. Th. Cart has died (...) As strong as steel, he fought half of his life eagerly for Esperanto, courageously against all enemies of our idea. "We have to dig our furrow!" his voice thundered in the middle of the whirling tumult surrounding the Idists' intrigue (...) His fiery words reminded all our members of the furrow that it is our obligation to dig. For the future of mankind, for our grandchildren we were not allowed to deviate. (...)

"We have to dig our furrow!" will be the faithful Esperantists' motto forever. His words will be better observed in the future and we promise by his glorious name that, never deviating, we will dig our furrow for the benefit of mankind.]

[La Revuo Orienta July 1931, p. 193]

- (295) *[...] Sincere ni eldiras ankaŭ en ĉi tiu loko dankon al la ne-germanaj amikoj, kiuj plibeligis nian kongreson per ĉesto, al la organizinta Trio, al la kongresintoj mem! Ni daŭrigu, fosi nian sulkon: ni laboru kaj esperu!*

[...] In this place as well, we pronounce our sincere thanks to our non-German friends who brightened up our congress with their attendance, to the trio of organisers, to the participants themselves! We should continue, dig our furrow: we should work and hope!] [Germana Esperantisto 6/1931, p. 91]

The PU *fosi la sulkon* is a frequently used expression in Esperanto today,¹³⁵ and it is in the wider sense expressed in (295) that the majority of speakers understand it now. It is no longer used with reference to the historical context that brought it into being, i.e. meaning ‘to give up discussions about possible improvements of Esperanto and work for its dissemination sticking to the linguistic norms’, although alterations to Esperanto (e.g. the introduction of new affixes, the use of neologisms) are among commonly discussed topics within the speech community. *Fosi la sulkon* has adopted a wider meaning as ‘to continue one’s work for Esperanto and its targets in spite of all setbacks and adverse circumstances’, as can be seen in (296) to (298):

- (296) *Mi estas feliĉa, ke mi restis dum tuta 50-jara epoko fidela leganto de EPĈ. Tiu luksa gazeto rekompencis min per pliperfektigo. Mi estas dankema al ĉiuj, kiuj preparas ĝin. Mi deziras al la redakcio kaj al ĉiuj legantoj, ke en pluaj jaroj ili sukcese fosu sian sulkon.*

[I am happy that I remained a faithful reader of EPĈ during the whole fifty-year epoch. This richly produced journal repaid me by perfecting my Esperanto. I am grateful to all those who produce it. It is my wish that the editors and all readers will dig their furrow successfully for many years to come.]

[*El Popola Ĉinio* 8/2000, from a letter to the editor]

- (297) *Dankon. Do mi volas danki nome de <name> por tiuj tre diversspecaj honorigoj kaj se li ĉeestus li certe dirus: jam sufiĉas la honorvortoj. La plej bona honorigo estas la daŭrigo de la laboro. Ĉiu inter ni fosu sian sulkon por la komuna afero.*

[Thank you. So, I would like to say thanks on behalf of <name> for these very diverse forms of honour, and if he were here, he would certainly say: enough with the words of honour. The best form of honour is to continue the work. Each of us should dig their furrow for our common cause.]

[191 (deu; pres; Lisbon) 39:00–39:43]

- (298) *Niaj tradiciaj paradigmoj de Landaj kaj Fakaj Asocioj kaj lokaj grupoj ne kapablus ne nur atingi tiom da homoj, sed igi ilin eklerni la lingvon. La projekto Duolingo kaj similaĵoj ne naskiĝis el nenio. [...] ĉio ĉi fontis en la generacioj de lojalaj esperantistoj, kiuj kontraŭ ĉiaj obstakloj diligente kaj eĉ obstine ‘fosis siajn sulkojn’.*

[Our traditional paradigms of national and specialist associations and local groups would not only not be able to reach so many people, but could not make them learn the language. The Duolingo project and projects like it did not come

135. As in ethnic languages, this assertion does not mean that every speaker is familiar with its meaning. See, for example, the following entry on a learners’ platform: <https://www.en.lernu.net/hr/forumo/temo/9763> – *Aliajn nekutimajn diraĵojn mi ne komprenas, interalie „Ni fosu nian sulkon“*. Kion tio signifas? [I don’t understand other unusual sayings, among them “Ni fosu nian sulkon”. What does that mean?]

into being out of nothing (...) all this has its source in the generations of loyal Esperantists who diligently and even obstinately ‘dug their furrows’ against all obstacles.] *[Esperanto 1/2017, p. 13]*

In addition, we observe that *fosi sian sulkon* is used to stress that a certain activity or effort is individual in character, different from the activities or effort of other people (see Examples (299) and (300)):

- (299) *Do mi ekz. tre ĝojas ke <name of an organisation> plenumas efikan rolon laŭ sia memelektita vojo. Se ne eblas organizita kunlaborado, ĉiu do fosu sian sulkon, kun tiuj homoj apud kiuj eblas efika kunlaborado. Sed tamen prefere oni evitu neutilan konkurencadon kaj ĉefe, oni evitu misfamigi Esperanton mem per fuŝa informado, ridindaj argumentaĉoj au aĉaj absurdaĵoj.*

[Thus, for example, I am very pleased that <name of organisation> fulfils an efficient role along its self-chosen way. If it is not possible to organise cooperation, everybody should **dig their own furrow**, next to those people with whom efficient cooperation is possible. However, it is nevertheless preferable to avoid useless competition and above all one should avoid denigrating Esperanto itself by means of botched information, ridiculous argumentation or wretched absurdities.] *[Libera Folio 2011–04–29]*

- (300) *Ĉu oni bedaŭru, ke JES (kredeble) ne estos 200-homa, sed verŝajne 400-homa renkontiĝo? Eble, sed pri tio decidu evidente tiuj, kiuj aranĝos JES-on. Se tiuj homoj deziras aranĝi ion, kio celas fariĝi ĉirkaŭ 400-homa, tiam ili faru tion [...] Klopodu pri organizado de malpli grandaj renkontiĝoj tiuj, kiuj deziras tiajn. Ĉiu fosu sian preferatan sulkon.*

[Should one regret that JES will (likely) not be a meeting of 200 participants, but probably of 400? Perhaps, but this should be decided obviously by those who organise JES. If those people wish to arrange something that aims to have 400 people, they should do it. (...) Those who wish to organise less big events should take steps to organise those. Everybody should **dig their preferred furrow**.] *[Libera Folio 2009–01–06]*

As the examples show, the phrase in this general meaning is associated with the past and with traditional ways of dealing with Esperanto. This general meaning was also observed above (see Example (253) in Chapter 21.4.3), where the author combined both meanings when using *fosi sian sulkon* with regard to previous or old-fashioned strategies and contrasted it with *esti en la sama boato*.

Our observation of the use of the PU *fosi sian sulkon* in two different historical moments, at the beginning of the twentieth and of the twenty-first centuries, reveals changes with respect to several properties of the unit. There is semantic change, including both an expansion in meaning and a specialisation, and there are two

structural changes. First, the phrase has moved from a fixed catchphrase, *Ni fosu nian sulkon!*, to a verbal phrase, *fosi sian sulkon*, that can be freely adapted to fit the required syntax. Second, *sulko* has become more than a phraseological constituent and has taken on individual metaphorical meaning. Further research into historical phraseology should deal with the change of meaning that particular PUs have undergone, and it could address topics, such as the effects that the employment of phraseological units has on literary works in particular periods in the history of Esperanto, the rise and development of particular types of PUs (e.g. binomials such as *lerte kaj sperte* ‘with skill and experience’), and the change in form and function that can be observed for routine formulae (e.g. *Kiel vi fartas?* ‘How are you?’, which is presently mainly used in its shortened form, *Kiel vi?*).

21.7 Metaphors and similes

As we have seen in the previous sections of this chapter, a considerable proportion of phraseological units have non-literal meanings. Metaphors are key elements in proverbs, for example – such as *Inter lupoj krii lupe* (‘Among wolves, cry like a wolf’) and *Lupo ŝanĝas la harojn, sed ne la farojn* (‘A wolf changes its hair, but not its deeds’). Based on a relationship of similarity, which might be objective or subjective, the properties of one concept (in the case of our proverbs, of an animal) are transported to another concept without explicitly mentioning the basis of the relationship, the *tertium comparationis*.

We owe to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) the insight that metaphors are conceptual in nature. They are not merely a literary device but a fundamental and ubiquitous procedure of everyday language. The two authors treat metaphors as primarily a matter of mind, as a set of abstract-and-concrete mappings between two domains. We understand an abstract concept (target domain) in terms of a concrete (or source) domain that we have experienced. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 49) mention expressions such as *He is known for his many rapid conquests; She fought for him, but his mistress won out; He fled from her advances*, and others, as evidence for the conceptual mapping LOVE IS WAR. Although relying on linguistic examples, the cognitive explanation of metaphor shifts the attention away from language (‘the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another’, Lakoff 1993, p. 203) and puts its focus on conventionalised metaphors (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Here, we recognise ideas from cognitive metaphor theory, but, taking authentic language data from spoken interaction as a starting point, we focus on novel metaphors, or ‘dynamic metaphors’ as Hanks (2006) calls them. We aim to analyse metaphors

in use, including their linguistic, semantic and pragmatic qualities, and we also consider affective factors, i.e. speakers' attitudes, values and emotions, as these play a role in the emergence of metaphors.

The difference between a metaphorical proverb (or in general a figurative PU) on the one hand, and a metaphor as a figure of speech on the other, is that the non-literal meaning of the former is already known by the speaker of the language. Idioms are fixed and conventionalised. Their meanings can be retrieved from the mental lexicon. This is different in novel metaphors, which can be understood even if we have never heard them before. It is what makes metaphors so interesting: they create imagery by means of unexpected descriptions of a subject, making us aware of connections that we may not have thought of before. Metaphors are therefore more creative, semantically richer and more flexible than idioms. Many idioms were originally metaphors that caught on and became a frozen pattern with a fixed meaning. Their metaphorical motivations, i.e. the interaction between the two domains, can however be reactivated by modifications, as we have seen in previous sections (see, e.g., Examples (244), (252), (253), and (290)).

The decision as to whether a particular figurative expression constitutes a metaphor or a phraseological unit is not always easy to make and might be subjective. It depends on whether an individual speaker is familiar enough with the unit to recognise it as something known, fixed and associated with a certain meaning, or whether he or she encounters the expression as something novel – painting a picture that nudges him or her into thinking. In (301) and (302), speakers describe the situation where people are in an uncertain state or condition or are confronted with an insecure future:

(301) A: *Mi povus imagi ke oni trovus eble inter junaj homoj kiuj ofte ne havas perspektivon [...] multaj junaj intelektuloj **pendas en la aero**.*

B: *Jes*

C: *Nu preskaŭ ĉiuj. Tio ĉefe estas la ĝenerala situacio en Eŭropo.*

D: *Ekzakte.*

E: *nur dependas ĉu ili pendas aŭ pendumas @*

[A: I could imagine that one might find [someone] maybe among young people, who often do not have a perspective (...) many young intellectuals **are in limbo**.

B: Yes.

C: Well almost all. That's mainly a general situation in Europe.

D: Exactly.

E: It only depends on whether they hang [in the air] or hang.]

[158 (deu-?-ita-eng; disc; Lille) 30:33–31:10]

- (302) *Do mi petas vin voĉdoni favore ankaŭ (por) la dua propono ĉar tie estas plano por konkretigi la aferon por ke ĝi ne plu ŝvebu en la aero kiel ĝi foje estis en la pasintaj du jaroj por nia grupo, sed ni havu klaran limdaton por la sekvontaj semajnoj, estu homoj, kiuj laboras [...]*

[Thus I ask you to vote in favour of the second proposal as well because there is a plan to make the thing concrete, so that it does not **float in the air** any more, as occurred once in the past two years for our group, but we need to have a clear deadline for the next weeks, there must be people who work (...)]

[157 (ita; disc; Lille) 146:30–146:56]

On the basis of participant observation, we can judge that the expressions *pendi en la aero* and *ŝvebi en la aero* were understood by the interlocutors in the figurative sense described above. The phrases are not known to us, however, as conventional phrases in Esperanto, neither can their phraseological character be verified by dictionaries or corpora. Both of them could therefore be considered dynamic metaphors. Knowing that speaker A in (301) is German and being German native speakers ourselves, we are sure, however, that *pendi en la aero* is a loan translation of *in der Luft hängen* ('hang in the air', cf. *up in the air* ['still to be settled'] in English). The same might be true for the expression *ŝvebi en la aero* coined by the Italian Esperanto speaker in (302), so that as a result one might call *pendi en la aero* and *ŝvebi en la aero* variants of a (potential) PU in Esperanto, but, as we are not familiar with Italian, this expression appears to us to be a metaphor opening our minds to imagine a person floating in the air, so that from our perspective *pendi en la aero* is labelled a PU and *ŝvebi en la aero* a metaphor.

Our dataset includes a large number of metaphorical expressions that we do not consider phraseological units, but ad hoc coinages, i.e. novel metaphors, which is why we address metaphor in this separate section. In our first example of a metaphor, in (303), an author presents language learning as a walk through a forest, and in (304), we are invited to think of nature and seasons.

- (303) [...] *neniu povas finfine fanfaroni, ke "nun mi regas la lingvon". Lingvo estas senfina arbaro, bunta kaj densa, tra kiu oni promenadas kolektante fruktojn, foliojn, radikojn; ĉiam la lingvo subite montras ion nekonatan, ion surprizan.*

[(...) nobody can finally boast "now I have a command of the language". Language is an endless forest, colourful and dense, through which one walks collecting fruits, leaves, roots; the language always shows something unknown suddenly, something surprising.] [Esperanto 11/2014, p. 223]

- (304) *Sed tiuj komputiloj estis tre komplikaj kaj estis tre malrapidaj kompare kun aliaj. Kaj do, kio estis tute kontraŭpraktika. Kaj oni nomas tion "periodo de artefaritinteligenteca vintro". Do post la entuziasmo estis vere periodo kie la neĝis- neĝo falis kaj nenio pli movis-moviĝis.*

[But those computers were very complicated and were very slow in comparison with other ones. And so, this was completely impractical. And they call this the “period of the winter of artificial intelligence”. So, after the enthusiasm there really was a period where it was- the snow was falling and nothing mov- was moving any more]

[98 (ita; pres; Lille) 23:36–24:12]

Another difference between idiomatic PUs and metaphors involves their form. As explained in Chapter 21.2.1, phraseological units are polylexemic in nature: they have the structure of word groups and sentences. Metaphors, by contrast, can also be figurative one-word units. An example is *talpo* (‘mole’) with its figurative meaning of a “person who works in an organisation and secretly passes important information to another organisation or country” (*Oxford Advanced ...*, 2000, p. 986), which is known in a number of languages. Interestingly enough, in addition to this, a second figurative meaning of *talpo* occurs in Esperanto. In the 1960s, the use of *talpo* was popular in the sense of ‘someone who works for Esperanto diligently but without much knowledge of aims being therefore more detrimental than beneficial for a dissemination of the language’. This use had its origin in German Esperanto circles,¹³⁶ but gained currency internationally, so that Corsetti et al. (1987, p. 23) included the expression in their collection of Esperanto slang words, defining it as “tro fervora Esperanto-aganto, kiu fuŝas pro miopeco” (‘an overly enthusiastic Esperanto activist who bungles because of shortsightedness’). A questionnaire study (Fiedler, 1999) revealed that only a small proportion of Esperanto speakers are familiar with this interpretation of the word today. This specific use does not occur in our dataset, unlike the first of the two figurative senses of *talpo* (as someone secretly disclosing information), which is found several times. An example is given in (305):

- (305) A: *Nur aldonon: <name> estas fakulino por terminologiaj aferoj [...] kaj nun ŝi doktoriĝas en Genevo. La interesa afero estas, ke ŝi sukcesis dum mallonga tempo eniri ĉiujn gravajn estrarojn de neesperantista terminologia mondo, ŝi eĉ estas membro de [...]*
- B: *Nu jes.*
- A: *Kaj tiujn homojn ni bezonas, kiuj estas ĉe la neesperantista fako sed povas preni la (?) -on al Esperanto.*
- C: *Do baze oni bezonas esperantologiajn talpojn, jes [...]*
- All: @@@

136. Cf. the explanation in the German Esperanto journal *Germana Esperanto-Revuo* (5/1965, p. 55): “[...] ‘samideanoj’, kiuj blinde laboras resp. mallaboras por Esperanto, kiuj vivas kaj agas en obskura mallumo kaj mallerte antaŭenŝovas sin damaĝante la movadon” (‘Esperanto followers / esperantists [‘sam-ide-an-o = same + idea + member] ‘who blindly work or rather do the opposite of it, who act in obscure darkness and clumsily push forward themselves damaging the movement’). The journal also contained a column “talpaĵo” (‘mole acts’) with respective examples from the Esperanto press.

- [A: Only an addition: <name> is a specialist in the field of terminology (...) and now she is working on her PhD in Geneva. The interesting thing is that within a short time she managed to join all the important boards of the non-Esperantist terminological world, she is even a member of (...)]
- B: Well, yes.
- A: And these are the people we need, those who are (Esperantists) and specialists in other fields and can take the (???) to Esperanto.
- C: So, basically we need Esperantological **moles**, yes ...
- All: @@@ [151 (deu-swe-eng; disc; Lille) 12:50–13:25]

Further one-word metaphors include the following:

- (306) *Ĉar, se vi konsideras [...] kiel **flagŝipo**, unu el la prestiĝaj programoj de la kongreso*
[Because, if you consider (...) the flagship, one of the prestigious programmes of the congress] [157 (heb; disc; Lille) 55:30]
- (307) *Sed neniŭ ĝis nun sukcesis **bridi** tiujn homojn*
[But nobody has been successful in bridling these people until now] [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 47:53]
- (308) *Estis sinjoro <name>, kiu **fîŝkaptis** min*
[It was Mr <name> who hooked me. (lit.: caught me in the fishing net)] [79 (pol; disc; Lille) 9:18]
- (309) *JoMo, la **reĝo** de la Esperanta etna-revolucia rokenrolo*
[JoMo, the king of Esperanto ethno-revolutionary rock'n'roll] [Esperanto 6/2016, p. 138]

The metaphors in our dataset are often extended over longer phases of speech, as Example (310) illustrates. This discussion on sexes starts with an introduction of the letters GLAT (which stand for *Gejoj, Lesbaninoj, Ambaŭseksemuloj, Transseksemuloj* ‘Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transsexuals’) in Esperanto, which leads to A’s critical question whether such an abbreviation does not reinforce the allocation of people into categories and giving them labels. Speaker B, agreeing with A, then introduces the image of putting human beings into “boxes” (*skatoloj*), which from this point onwards pervades the entire discussion:

- (310) A: *Mi volas [...] restarigi fakte demandon al vi tamen, ĉar per tiuj literoj vi tamen iasence kreas novajn kategoriojn, plurajn, konsentite, eĉ multajn eble, sed tamen kategoriojn [...] Ĉu vi vere pensas, ke tio solvas la problemon, ke ni kreas novajn etikedojn kvazaŭ, ĉu ne tamen la vera problemo estas [...] ke ne eblas ke ni etikedas homojn kaj ĉu ne ĉiu estas simple individuo kaj povas esti ĉiu ajn miksaĵo de preferoj, aspektoj kaj simple estas kontin*
LUO

B: *mi pensas, ke vi diras tre gravan aferon, nu jes ni simple havas tiujn skatolojn de ina kaj iĉa, kaj de eh samseksema ambaŭseksema, fakte ekzistas tiom da skatoloj ke se vi volas vere havi skatolon en kiu vi taŭgus, vi bezonas tiom da skatoloj kiom da homoj ekzistas @*

A: *jes*

B: *kaj vi pravas en tio, ĉar fakte ĉi tiuj literoj ktp. estas por ke ni povu paroli pri la afero [...] sed vi absolute pravas laŭ mia vidpunkto tiu ideo pri ĉi tiuj skatoloj jam malnoviĝas ni ja ne ni JAM pensas pri spektroj anstataŭ punktoj kaj skatoloj [...]*

[...]

C: *Mi celas al tio kion vi diris pri la malfermo de novaj, kelkaj skatoloj, aŭ multe pli [...]*

D: *Foje en la aliĝiloj estas simple praktikaj kialoj. Oni volas scii kun kiu vi emas dormi en la sama ĉambro, ĉar se estas komuna ĉambro, eble vi emas loĝi nur kun virinoj aŭ nur kun viroj [...] se ni restas kun tiuj skatoloj [...]*

[A: In fact I wanted to ask you the question once more, however, as by means of these letters nevertheless in a certain sense you create new categories, several (categories), true, even many maybe, but nevertheless categories (...) Do you really think that this solves the problem that we create new labels, as it were, isn't the real problem however that it isn't possible that we label people and isn't everybody simply an individual person and may be any mixture of preferences, aspects and simply a continuu lum

B: I think that you are saying a very important thing, well, we simply have these boxes of female and male, and eh of homosexual bisexual, in fact there are so many boxes that if you want to have a box that really fits for you, you need as many boxes as there are people @

A: *yes*

B: *and you are right about it, as in fact there are these letters, etc. so that we should be able to talk about the thing (...) but you are absolutely right from my point of view this idea about these boxes is already getting old and we don't we ALREADY think about continua instead of points and boxes (...)*

[...]

C: *I wanted to address what you said about opening these boxes, some, or even many (...)*

D: *Sometimes in the application forms there are mere practical reasons. One wants to know with whom you want to sleep in one room, because if there is a common room, perhaps you would like to live with women or only with men (...) if we stay with these boxes. (...)]*

[12 (deu-slk-deu-?; disc; Poznań) 53:53–62:10]

The subjects that Esperanto speakers choose as target domains reflect that they are aware of communicating in an international speech community. The metaphors in our dataset are based on three subjects that are common in many cultures: nature, the human body and technology. The nature-inspired metaphors include images of typical natural settings such as sunrise (Example (311)), representing ‘beginning’ and clouds (Example (312)) standing for fuzziness or lack of clarity (see also Example (303), which presented Esperanto as a forest).

- (311) *Saluton al ĉiuj, <name>, kongresa numero 977 [...] Se vi celas uzi Esperanton kaj (se vi) celas ke Esperanto estu daŭre uzata por ĉiutagaj bezonoj, al la komunumo mankas la parto de komerco. Komercaj iniciatoj en Esperantujo estas, sed estas ankoraŭ ĉe la sunleviĝo ni diru, ni estas ĉe la sunleviĝo de tiu epoko kaj se ni volas ke Esperanto prosperu evidente ni devas ankaŭ subteni komercajn iniciatojn, ĉu ne [...]*

[Hello everyone, <name>, congress number 977 (...) If you intend to use Esperanto and if your aim is that Esperanto be used continuously for everyday needs, the community lacks the aspect of commerce. Commercial initiatives in Esperantoland exist, but they are still at the sunrise so to say, we are at the sunrise of this epoch and if we want Esperanto to prosper, of course we should also support commercial initiatives, shouldn't we.]

[144 (ita; disc; Lille) 43:37–45:25]

- (312) A: *La demando estas nur ĉu la Akademio aprobas tion ĉar en la diskutoj en la reto kiuj estis, eble ses personoj eniris tiun debaton. Ĉi tio estas oficiala, do decidorajto de la Akademio, kiu decidu, ĉu plu studi la ideon de jura rekonio de la Akademio aŭ lasi ĉion kiel nun ŝvebanta inter la nuboj*

B: *Ne ne.*

A: *Ni devos ion decidi.*

B: *Jes, la decido estos voĉdonado.*

[A: The question is only whether the Academy approves this because in the discussions on the Internet that took place, there were perhaps six people who entered the debate. This is official, and therefore the prerogative of the Academy, which should decide whether to further study the idea of legal recognition of the Academy or leave everything as it is now, floating in the clouds.

B: No no

A: We have to decide something

B: Yes, the decision will be a vote.] [71 (ita-swe; disc; Lille) 58:35–59:13]

Similarly, the human body serves as a source of metaphorical expressions shared by speakers from different cultures, as human conceptualisation is largely body-based. In Example (313), a controversial discussion on the separation of the international

youth organisation TEJO from its “mother” organisation UEA, two metaphors take centre stage in a speaker’s argumentation. First, he describes the process of becoming independent using the image of birds learning to fly (*disigi la flugilojn* ‘spread the wings’), and then he paints a picture of the umbilical cord connecting mother and child (*ligita en umbiliko* ‘connected at the navel’) to stress the unity of the two organisations.

- (313) *Tio fakte estas io, kion mi memoras el miaj fruaj TEJO-tagoj; ĉiam TEJO strebis tiel aŭ alie sendependiĝi de UEA kaj ĉiam UEA daŭre diris vi estas tro junaj aŭ vi estas tro senspertaj aŭ vi estas tro senrespondecaj. Sed ĉi tie, ŝajnas al mi, mi vidis sufiĉe respondecan sintenon kaj funde preparitan ŝajne ankaŭ kaj ne nur TEJO-anoj estas en tiu afero sed ankaŭ pli spertaj personoj kiel <name> kaj ĉiuokaze ili ne petas nian tujan konsenton, do estu ankoraŭ tempo por studi la aferon kaj kontroli pli profesie do ĉu ĝis iu dato en oktobro, ĉu ĝis iomete pli malfrue. Do ili nur petas la konsenton de la komitato **disigi siajn flugilojn**, ĉu ne, doni la benon por io kio, mi ankaŭ (vidas ke), estas motivigita ĉu finance [...] Do ili ne forlasas TEJO (sic!) kaj poste TEJO malaperos ĉar certe UEA kaj TEJO restas **ligitaj** ĉiuokaze **en umbiliko**, estas unu movado [...] La nunaj TEJO-anoj estas la estontaj gvidantoj de UEA, do mi ankaŭ donas la benon al tiu (projekto).*

[This in fact is something that reminds me of my early days in TEJO; TEJO would always strive to become independent of UEA in this or another way and UEA would continuously say you are too young or you are too inexperienced or you are too irresponsible. But here it seems to me I’ve seen a sufficiently responsible and seemingly thoroughly prepared attitude, and not only members of TEJO are (involved) in the affair but also more experienced people like <name> and at any rate they don’t ask for our immediate consent. So we still have time to study the affair and to check more professionally – perhaps up to some date in October or a little bit later. So they’re simply asking for the committee’s agreement to spread their wings, right? For the approval of something that is, I see, also financially motivated (...). So, they do not leave TEJO and afterwards TEJO will disappear because certainly UEA and TEJO remain connected at the navel, are one movement (...) The present members of TEJO are the future leaders of UEA, so I also give my approval to this (project)]

[157 (heb; disc; Lille) 149:57–151:37]

In two further examples within this group, the *Fundamento*, the linguistic norm of Esperanto, is associated with the skeleton of the human body (see Examples (314) and (315)). In (315), the metaphorical use encourages another speaker to add, as a further image, the role that the foundation (*fundamento*) plays for the construction of a building, which is appreciated by the audience:

- (314) *Sed tio estas ia skeleto, aŭ homo, kaj ni devas nutri. Kaj tiu nutrado, tio estas la kerno de la afero.*

[But this is some kind of skeleton, or person, and we have to nourish (lit.). And that nourishment, that is the core of the whole thing]

[76 (fra; pres; Lille) 19:16–27]

- (315) A: *Kaj alia demando pri tiu “arkaika” Fundamento. Tiu ja estas laŭ mia imago kiel skeleto kaj se oni ne havas skeleton, oni nur povas rampi sur la tero eh aliflanke, se oni estas nur skeleto, oni ne povas vivi, oni bezonas ankaŭ koron, cerbon kaj muskolojn do mi pensas ke oni bezonas kaj skeleton kaj muskolojn kaj koron kaj cerbon.*

B: *Mi ŝatus tie aldoni alian metaforon pri la Fundamento. La fundamento de domo estas ĝuste tio, sen fundamento la domo ne povas ekzisti, sed la domo konsistas el multe pli ol la fundamento.*

(Applause)

[A: And another question about this “archaic” *Fundamento*. In my imagination this one is like a skeleton, and if one does not have a skeleton, one can only crawl on the ground eh, on the other hand, if one only has a skeleton, one cannot live, one also needs a heart, brain and muscles, so I think we need a skeleton as well as muscles as well as a heart and a brain.

B: I would like to add another metaphor about the *Fundamento*. The foundation of a house is exactly this, without a foundation the house cannot exist, but the house comprises much more than its foundation. (applause)]

[114 (swe-eng; disc; Lille) 48:50–49:57]

In a third group, the development of Esperanto is described using images from technology. In Example (316), reacting to criticism of the efficiency of an institution that he represents, a speaker, obviously elaborating his argumentation on the spur of the moment, first employs a body-related metaphor (*piedoj por iri* ‘feet for walking’, *oni ne povas iri sen la kapo* ‘you can’t go around without a head’) to then establish a relationship between the Universal Esperanto Association UEA and its central office and the engine (*motoro*) of a car as the source of energy (*UEA eh centra oficejo estas la motoro* ‘UEA uh the Central Office is the engine’), expanding the image finally to equate the importance of local agencies for Esperanto with the wheels of a car (*la motoro ne povas turniĝi se ĝi ne estas ligita al la [...] radoj* ‘the engine cannot rotate if it is not connected to the [...] wheels’). In Example (317), wordplay is the starting point for the development of a technology metaphor. The abbreviation *TIR* (*Tutmonda Informa Reta* ‘International Information Network’) creates a meaningful acronym (*tir-i* meaning ‘to draw’).

- (316) *Ekzistas kondiĉoj en la landaj asocioj vivantaj kiuj povas ebligi ke oni iru ankaŭ al la superaj instancoj. Ĉar sen la piedo, sen la piedo oni ne povas iri nur per la kapo al iu instanco. Se ne estas la bazo, tiam ne eblas fari tion, [...] Imagu aŭtomobilon sen motoro aŭ aŭtomobilon kun motoro sen radoj, UEA eh Centra Oficejo estas la motoro, ne estas radoj ne estas la landaj asocioj [...] kiuj agadas surloke, la motoro ne povas turniĝi se ĝi ne estas ligita al la neekzistantaj radoj [...]*

[There are conditions in the living national associations that make it possible for people to go to the superior authorities. Because without the foot, without the foot one cannot go only with the head to an authority. If there is no basis, then it is not possible to do anything. Imagine a car without an engine or a car with an engine without wheels, UEA uh the central office is the engine, there are no wheels there are no national authorities that work locally, the engine cannot rotate if it is not connected with the non-existing wheels (...)]

[72 (hun; disc; Lille) 73:02–47]

- (317) *Do informado pri Esperanto, ĉu ne, al la ekstera mondo ene de la movadaj formoj. Tio signifas, ke ni devas havi reton de kompetentaj bonvoluloj, kiuj akceptas tiun rolon [...] projekto, kiu nomiĝas T-I-R tir, kiu tiras la tutan agadon, fakte oni povas diri tiel, tutmonda informreto, tutmonda informa reto, tio signifas homoj estas en diversaj landoj, kiuj kreas, konsistigas tiun reton kiuj en sia loko proprainiciate engaĝiĝas, akceptas tiun taskon, ke ili ofte kaj se necese en kampanjoj informas la lokan gazetaron, informas la eksteran publikon kaj organizas tiun laboron kun la lokaj aktivuloj aŭ Esperanto-grupoj [...] Tio estas unu ekzemplo de informado, informreto kaj tradukebloj, uzo de de nia reto TIR [...] ni bezonas homojn, kiuj aliĝas, sin anoncas por paroli, kunlabori en tio, por tiri la ĉaron de la Esperanto-movado kaj sorton de Esperanto; tutmonda informreto, do serĉu, anoncu, varbu vi ĉirkaŭ vi, aŭ anoncu vin mem por estu unu el tiuj tirantoj de la ĉareto. Dankon*

[So, information about Esperanto, right? For the external world, inside the structures of the movement. That means we need to have a network of competent people of good will who accept this role (...) a project named T-I-R tir, which draws the entire activity, in fact we can say so, a global information network, this means people in various countries who create, constitute this network, who in their place on their own initiative are engaged, accept this task that they often and if necessary in campaigns inform the local press, inform the external public and organise this work with the local activists or Esperanto groups (...) This is an example of informing, information networks and possibilities to translate, a use of our our network TIR (...) we need people who join (the network), who announce their intention to speak, to work together in order to draw the cart of the Esperanto movement and the destiny of Esperanto; a global information network, so search, announce, advertise around you, announce yourself to be one of those who draw the little cart. Thank you.]

[99 (hun; disc; Lille) 3:34–4:51, 11:07–12:21]

Metaphors are sometimes hard to differentiate from similes. As Aristotle (1954) put it, “the simile also is a metaphor ... the difference is but slight” (Rhetoric III, 4). In fact, Example (318) also produces a relationship between a source entity (*arbo* ‘tree’) and a target entity (*la ligo/ILEI* ‘the league/the International League of Esperanto-Speaking Teachers’), as we found in some of the nature-induced metaphors above. What makes this example different from metaphors is the explicit construction that connects the two (*similas al* ‘is similar to’):

- (318) *La ligo similas al granda arbo jam pli ol sesdekjara, ne emerita, espereble merit-plena. La ligo produktis- produktas lernolibrojn kaj retkursojn (Esperanto etape) por modernaj telefonoj, sed apud ILEI ĉirkaŭ ĝi kreskas plej diversaj lerniloj, lernprogramoj kaj lernigaj retpaĝoj. Tio ĝojigas nin ĉiujn. Tiu granda arbo ne volas fari ombbron al alies agadoj kaj aktivadoj, tute male [...]*

[The League resembles a big tree that is already more than 60 years old, not retired, hopefully commendable. The league produced- produces textbooks and online courses (*Esperanto etape* ‘Esperanto step by step’) for modern telephones, but besides ILEI, around it all manner of learning tools, learning programmes and teaching Internet pages grow. This pleases us all. This big tree does not want to cast a shadow over others’ work and activities, not at all (...)]

[69 (fra; cerem; Lille) 92:35–93:15]

As a form of comparison, a simile involves overt reference to the two entities and does not therefore require as much interpretation as a metaphor, which expresses the relationship between source and target domain less immediately (Carter, 2016, pp. 125–127; Israel et al., 2004). The simile in Example (318) co-occurs with an instance of wordplay that is based on the similarity of the two words *emerita* (‘honourably retired’) and *meritplena* (‘commendable’).

One genre in which similes (but also extended metaphors) can be expected to play an important role is that of welcome or thank-you speeches at official conferences and receptions. See Example (319). In this speech, at the reception given by the mayor of the French town of Lille, the representative of the Universal Esperanto Association describes what unites Esperanto and Lille. He first describes the similarity between Esperanto and its symbol, the green star, and the town’s citadel, which was transformed from an object of military resistance to a peaceful garden. Secondly, in a tongue-in-cheek manner – as his talk as well as the audience’s reactions show – he draws parallels between Esperanto speakers and microbes spreading all over the world.

- (319) *Sed ĝi [= Lille] estas ankaŭ urbo rimarkinda pro du aliaj aferoj [...] Ĝi estas urbo de citadelo, eble kelkaj el vi jam havis okazon viziti ĝin dum la semajno [...] kial ĝi estis tiel eksteror- eksterordinara, tiu citadelo [...] nun kaj tiu citadelo, kian formon ĝi havas por esti tiel rezista al la atakoj de la tempo, la atakoj de la militoj? Ĝi havas la formon de stelo.*

All: @@@

Kaj do la citadelo estas iusence bela simbolo por ni, des pli ĉar nun ĝi ne plu estas afero de la milito, ĉar ĝi transformiĝis en parkon, en parkon kun bestoĝardeno, en parkon kun grandaj avenuoj kaj floroj kaj botanika ĝardeno kaj tiel plu. Tio estas ĝuste la transformo kiun la esperantistoj celas porti al la mondo, al la mondo eterne militanta, ni portas ĝardenan citadelon.

All: @@

Kaj lasta rimarkindaĵo en la historio de Lillo estas ke ĝuste en ĉi tiu urbo la granda franca sciencisto Louis Pasteur faris la unuajn eksperimentojn, kiuj montris la fonton, la kaŭzon de malsanoj. Do li malkovris la mikrobojn esence, li tiam ne havis la teknikon por videbli ilin kiel ni nun povas fari, sed li pruvis ke ili devas ekzisti. Kaj kio estas tiuj mikroboj, aferoj tre malgrandaj nevideblaj kiuj disiras tra la mondo tra la aero portante kun si ian misteran povon kiun homoj poste sentas en siaj korpoj, en siaj koroj? Nun, ni estas, ĉu ne? Ni esperantistoj, ni estas virtaj mikroboj @

All: @@@

Kiuj, kiel antaŭdiris Zamenhof en sia unua parolado en Bulonjo-ĉe-Mar, disiras tra la mondo nevideble flugante por porti la verdan spiriton kaj la senton kaj komprenon de paco kaj la kapablon interkompreniĝi al ĉiuj homoj de la mondo [a single attempt at applause]

Do @ do ni povas esti ankaŭ fieraj kongresi ĉi tie, ĉar Lillo prezentas al ni tiajn belajn modelojn kaj metaforojn de nia afero. Koran dankon al vi.

[But it (=Lille) is also a remarkable town because of two other things (...) It is a town with a citadel, maybe some of you have already had the opportunity to visit it during the week (...) why was it so extraor- extraordinary, this citadel (...) well, this citadel, what form does it have to resist all the attacks of the times, the attacks of the wars? It has the form of a star.

A: @@@

And so the citadel is in a certain sense a beautiful symbol for us, even more because it is no longer a thing of the war now, as it was transformed into a park, a park with a zoo, into a park with large avenues and flowers and a botanical garden and so on. That's exactly the transformation that Esperantists aim to carry into the world, into a world constantly at war, we are carrying a garden citadel.

All: @@

And one last remarkable thing in the history of Lille is that it was in this town that the great French scientist Louis Pasteur conducted his first experiments which showed the source, the reason for diseases. In this way, he essentially discovered microbes, back then he did not have the technology to show them that we now have, but he proved that they must exist. And what are these microbes, very little invisible things that spread into the world through the air carrying with them a kind of mysterious power that people feel later in their

bodies, in their hearts? Well, we are, aren't we? We Esperantists are virtuous microbes @

All: @@@

Who, as Zamenhof foretold in his first speech in Boulogne-sur-Mer, spread through the world, invisibly flying to carry the green spirit and the sense and understanding of peace and the capability to make oneself understood to all people in the world [a single attempt at applause]

So @ so we can also be proud to have our congress here because Lille presents to us those beautiful models and metaphors of our cause. Warm thanks to you.]

[153 (eng; cerem; Lille) 22:27–25:57]

If what researchers on stylistics tell us about the effect of a simile is correct – that the less plausible the relationship between the two items, the more impressive its effect – then (319) is especially successful. In addition, this last example illustrates the role that Esperanto culture plays for both the choice and the reception of rhetorical devices such as metaphors and similes in Esperanto communication. They mainly relate to the speakers' realm of experience, and, as this speech shows, to enjoy them to the full people have to be familiar with the history of the community (see the reference to Zamenhof's speech), its key texts ("la mondo eterne militanta" is a quote from Zamenhof's poem *La Espero*), with cultural elements and symbols such as the figurative meaning of the colour green and the green star as the manifestation of the community.

21.8 Some concluding remarks on phraseology and metaphors in Esperanto

This investigation has revealed that Esperanto possesses a rich phraseology. It shares with other phraseologies the attribute of uniting both universal and culturally specific components. In communication, phraseological units are applied with a large variety of pragmatic functions. Phraseology is not ornamental but fundamentally purposeful. It contributes to textual composition: PUs constitute textual meaning and develop coherence. In addition, our dataset confirms findings from previous examinations about the text-organising function of PUs and their situational modification. In a similar vein, metaphors and similes are often found at specific points in communicative events where they are used to express emotions and attitudes along with ideational content.

Phraseology should not be explored wholly in isolation. It often co-occurs with figures of speech such as metaphors and similes and with other stylistic devices such as wordplay. Their employment in discourse corroborates what we have already seen in Chapter 20 on humour: linguistic creativity is at the heart of the Esperanto speech community. It is not exclusive to poems and novels, but pervasive in all

genres that constitute our dataset. It can contain elements of preformulation but is often emergent in spoken language exchanges and co-constructed. Its use is often appreciated or explicitly commented on (see for example (315)), which indicates speakers' metalingual awareness.

Recently, research in English as a lingua franca has focused on L2 speakers' phraseological variation and creativity (Bell, 2012; Pitzl, 2012, 2015). A problem that emerges in this context is the extent to which the deviation from a standard (or canonical) form produced by a non-native speaker is accepted as creative alteration or dismissed as a linguistic mistake. Carter (2016, pp. xxvii) asks, "where are lines drawn between errors and creative uses of language by learners?" Prodromou (2007) found in an investigation that the same instance of a creative use of a PU (*I'm always glad when for example I bump into a new expression*) was accepted by a vast majority of respondents who were informed that it had been produced by an L1 speaker, whereas it was considered unacceptable by about half of the respondents within the group who were told it was a non-native speaker's utterance. As the many examples in this chapter show, Esperanto speakers seem to be better off in this respect. Creative language use is pervasive and highly appreciated in Esperanto communication, in word formation as well as in phraseology. Dasgupta (2021) points out:

[...] Esperanto, thanks to its far greater transparency and symmetry, takes a speaker to the point of unique and exact target-hitting that is the mark of the best athletes. Beyond the physical thrill of such performance, these resources make the speaker feel that she has all the power of a co-creator, equal to language itself. Learning Esperanto gives every speaker this unique access to a feeling that is not otherwise available in one's experiences in any other language – access to the heart of linguistic creativity itself.

This might be one of the reasons why Esperanto speakers do not like their language to be called a foreign language.¹³⁷

Our pilot study on the rise and use of the phrase *fosi la sulkon* has shown that the investigation of the phraseological past of Esperanto is a rewarding topic and that much work in this field remains to be done. The existence and further development of the Esperanto phrasicon, which has to be seen in close relation to its speech community, proves to be an important criterion in establishing the transition from language project to actual language.

137. A piece of anecdotal evidence: in the questionnaire study mentioned in this chapter as a basis for the original investigation on phraseology (Fiedler, 1999), many speakers reacted to the question of whether they knew a phraseological unit "from Esperanto or another foreign language" (*Mi konas la esprimon el Esperanto/el alia fremdlingvo*) with the indignant statement: *Esperanto ne estas fremdlingvo (por mi)!* ('Esperanto is not a foreign language [to me]!').

