Research Article

Ana-Maria Trantescu* and Georgiana Reiss

Considerations on the meaning and translation of English *heart* idioms. Integrating the cognitive linguistic approach

Abstract: Idioms have long been an intricate part of language both from a semantic and a translational point of view. According to Cognitive Linguistics, many idioms do not always have an arbitrary meaning, as postulated by their traditional definition. The purpose of this article is to bring into focus the contribution that the Cognitive Linguistic approach can make to the process of selecting appropriate target language counterparts of source language idioms while applying translation strategies. To this end, we attempt at identifying appropriate Romanian counterparts of several English *heart* idioms on the basis of the same cognitive mechanisms (conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies) which motivate, to a certain extent, their meanings. Moreover, considering its specificity, this study is structured by drawing on the first three strategies suggested by "Baker, Mona. 1992. *In other words. A coursebook on translation.* London & New York: Routledge," which translators can make use of when being faced with the challenging task of rendering idioms from the source text into the target text. In addition, our analysis is exclusively concerned with systemic equivalent idioms in terms of language as a system (Kvetko, Pavol. 2009. *An outline of English phraseology*. 3rd revised edition. Trnava: Univerzita Sv. Cyrila a Metoda).

Keywords: heart idioms, cognitive mechanisms, translation strategies, systemic equivalents

1 Introduction

Idiomatic expressions have always been an appealing research topic which can be approached from both a cognitive and a translational perspective, and this is proved by numerous studies. For example, Dong and Bai (2015) investigate the cognitive mechanisms, namely conceptual metaphors and metonymies, of the idioms identified in *The Book of Songs*, and Abdelaal and Alazzawie (2019) discuss the strategies used for translating the idioms in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* from English into Arabic. Furthermore, as regards *heart* idioms, we identified several recent research studies, such as Cheng's (2021) paper which provides a semantic analysis of metaphorical expressions containing the term "heart" in Chinese and English and proves that there are some similarities, due to common bodily experiences, and differences that are triggered by cultural discrepancy. Likewise, Baş (2017) analyses the Turkish words for "heart" in idiomatic expressions and proposes a cognitive-cultural model for emotions in Turkish. We also note Akhorsheda's (2021) study which investigates the translation of several Arabic idioms containing the words "head," "heart" and "hand" into English and shows that none of them have equivalent English idioms, thus being paraphrased.

---

* **Corresponding author: Ana-Maria Trantescu,** Department of British, American and German Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, e-mail: ana.trantescu@edu.ucv.ro
Georgiana Reiss: Department of British, American and German Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania

Drawing on Trantescu's (2016) PhD thesis, which comprises a contrastive cognitive analysis of English and Romanian idiomatic expressions belonging to the conceptual domains of the "head," "heart," "eye" and "hand," the authors of the present article take the research a step further and attempt at approaching *heart* idioms by combining the two perspectives: translational and cognitive. More precisely, we aim at highlighting the importance of considering cognitive linguistic mechanisms when searching for suitable equivalent idioms. In order to prove this, we intend to identify appropriate Romanian renderings of several English *heart* idioms, on the basis of the same cognitive mechanisms which account for their similar meanings, for three strategies of translating idioms suggested by Baker (1992). The identification of common conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies lying behind the same meaning of a source language (SL) idiom and a target language (TL) idiom reveals a conceptual correspondence between the two idioms which enhances their semantic correspondence.

The corpus consists of a total of 66 idioms, namely 27 English idioms and 39 Romanian idioms, respectively. While compiling the corpus, we focused on the following selection criteria: the presence of the lexeme *heart* in the structure of the English idioms, the presence of the lexeme *inimă* [heart] and, alternatively, the lexeme *suflet* [soul] in the structure of the Romanian idioms and the existence of common cognitive mechanisms underlying the same or similar meanings of the idioms in both languages, on the basis of their definitions.

All the idioms making up our corpus, together with their definitions, were extracted from various dictionaries as follows: three English monolingual dictionaries of idioms, two Romanian monolingual dictionaries of idiomatic expressions and phrases (of which one comprising three volumes) and one monolingual Romanian explanatory dictionary. They are also cited in the text.

In addition, we consulted other dictionaries that include two monolingual English dictionaries and two bilingual ones. Moreover, whenever further clarifications and contexts were needed, online resources were used (three English monolingual dictionaries, two Romanian monolingual dictionaries and three bilingual dictionaries). It is important to note that the equivalence between the English idioms and the Romanian ones was checked by means of bilingual dictionaries.

For reasons of conciseness, the dictionaries from which we extracted definitions are cited in the text using their abbreviated forms. These acronyms are mentioned after the full titles of the respective dictionaries, at the end of the Bibliography section, where the list of all the dictionaries that we referred to can be found.

In order to meet the purposes of our research, we used the qualitative method by which data were collected from dictionaries, then analysed and interpreted. Each idiom under discussion is accompanied by a reliable definition, the source being given in brackets. Likewise, the Romanian idioms are followed by their English literal translations in square brackets, as well as by their definitions in Romanian which are also translated and placed between square brackets. Moreover, by means of the comparative method, we managed to identify common cognitive mechanisms which account for the meanings of the English and Romanian idioms being discussed.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 The cognitive linguistic approach to idioms

According to the traditional view, the meaning of an idiom cannot be revealed on the basis of the meanings of its component parts. In this regard, the representatives of Cognitive Linguistics have a different approach by attempting to prove that there are numerous idiomatic expressions whose meanings can be conceptually motivated to a certain extent. As Kövecses and Szabó (1996, 330) point out, "an idiom is not just an expression that has meaning that is somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituent parts,

but it arises from our more general knowledge of the world (embodied in our conceptual system). In other words, idioms (or, at least, the majority of them) are conceptual, and not linguistic, in nature."

The conceptual motivation of idioms can be achieved by means of cognitive mechanisms, such as conventional knowledge, metaphor and metonymy, which can account for the links between the proper and figurative meanings of idioms. People that belong to the same culture possess common information about various conceptual fields which is mainly known in cognitive terminology as *conventional knowledge*. Likewise, abstract entities can be conceptualized on the basis of concrete ones by means of conceptual metaphors and metonymies which play an important part in motivating the meanings of numerous idioms.

According to Kövecses and Szabó (ibid., 331), *metaphor* and *metonymy* are "cognitive mechanisms that relate a domain (or domains) of knowledge to an idiomatic meaning in an indirect way." Metonymy operates within only one conceptual field involving a "stand for" relationship between two entities, whereas metaphor establishes a relationship based on "is" or "is understood as" between two conceptual fields (ibid., 338). Radden and Kövecses (1999, 3) provide the following definition: "metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model." It belongs to people's everyday way of thinking, revealing itself in the structure of categories, it enables mental access between the reference-point entity and the intended entity, and it operates within an idealized cognitive model (Lakoff 1987) that is a structure by means of which people organize knowledge.

Cognitive Semantics is based on the assumption that metaphor is essential to the process of thinking. Metaphor as a linguistic expression is possible because our conceptual system is metaphorically structured. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) classify conceptual metaphors according to their cognitive role. *Orientational* or *spatial metaphors* give spatial orientation (up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow and central-peripheral) to abstract concepts and "have a basis in our physical and cultural experience" (ibid., 14), for example HAPPY IS UP/SAD IS DOWN. By means of *ontological metaphors*, events, actions, states, activities, emotions and ideas are seen as entities, objects, substances and containers, such as THE MIND IS A MACHINE or THE MIND IS A BRITTLE OBJECT. *Structural metaphors* involve cases in which "one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another" (ibid.), for example ARGUMENT IS WAR.

As regards metonymy, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 35–40) explain that it has a referential function, since one entity is used to refer to another one that is associated with it. However, it also provides understanding, like metaphor does, and enables "us to focus more specifically on certain aspects of what is being referred to." Moreover, metonymic concepts can be traced in the way people think, act or talk and, just like metaphoric concepts, they are systematic and grounded in our experience (e.g. THE PART FOR THE WHOLE, PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, OBJECT USED FOR USER, etc.). There are also special cases of metonymies such as symbolic ones (e.g. DOVE FOR HOLY SPIRIT), which play an important role in understanding religious and cultural concepts.

There are cases in which both metaphor and metonymy contribute to the motivation of the idiomatic meaning. Thus, we deal with *metaphorical metonymies* whenever conceptual metonymies underlie conceptual metaphors (Kövecses and Szabó 1996, 338). Furthermore, Goossens (2003, 361–5) uses the term *metaphtonymy* when referring to the interaction between the two cognitive processes. In this respect, he discusses four cases: "metaphor from metonymy," "metonymy within metaphor," "demetonymization inside a metaphor" and "metaphor within metonymy." Additionally, de Mendoza Ibáñez and Masegosa (2011, 10–3) offer a different interpretation of the way the two interact by providing the following patterns: "metonymic expansion/reduction of a metaphoric source" and "metonymic expansion/reduction of a metaphoric target."

Considering the fact that culturemes are "extra-linguistic cultural symbols, which behave like metaphorical models, motivating figurative expressions in language (lexical and phraseological)" (Pamies 2017, 100), the meanings of some idioms stem from culture-specific aspects. A revealing example is the Spanish idiom *cortarse la coleta* [to cut one's ponytail], which means to 'retire from a profession' and whose underlying cultureme is represented by the *corrida* [bullfighting], since bullfighters cut the small ponytail of their outfit when they retire (ibid., 102). As regards the idioms in our corpus, only one might reveal the existence of a cultureme, namely *wear one's heart on one's sleeve*, which seems to be motivated by the medieval knights' habit of wearing an item offered by a lady during jousting competitions.

2.2 Translating Idioms

Baker (1992) tackles various aspects of translating idioms when discussing equivalence above word level. As she points out, unlike collocations, idioms and fixed expressions lack flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning since "they allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components" (ibid., 63). Yet, at times, certain idioms can allow for a certain degree of flexibility in form ("to pass the buck" could be repatterned as "buck passing"). This, of course, can be done only by native speakers as translators do not possess the same sensitivity necessary in order to decide "when and how an idiom can be manipulated" (ibid., 64).

The translation of idioms and fixed expressions involves two main aspects: recognizing and correctly interpreting an idiom and dealing with the difficulties associated with rendering its meaning into the TL. As Baker (1992) explains, idioms which can be easily recognized comprise, in general, expressions which do not make much sense in a given context. They can be expressions which contravene truth conditions, those that do not conform to the rules of the language, expressions that start with *like* and expressions that have individual collocational patterns. Furthermore, translators can easily misinterpret idioms since some of them can be misleading having both a literal and an idiomatic meaning, whereas others may have a close counterpart in the TL which looks the same but has a different meaning. After recognizing and correctly interpreting an idiom, the translator is faced with several other difficulties such as the lack of an equivalent in the TL, the difference in the contexts of use as regards the SL idiom and its TL counterpart (connotation and pragmatic transferability-related issues), the simultaneous use of both the literal and the idiomatic meanings of an idiom in the same source text (ST), differences in the conventions and frequency of use, as well as the contexts in which they occur in written discourse.

There are many factors that influence how an idiom can be rendered into another language such as the existence of an idiom having a similar meaning in the TL, whether the lexical items forming the idiom are manipulated in other parts of the ST, the (in)appropriateness of using idiomatic expressions in a certain TL register, as well as the style and rhetorical effect. Therefore, Baker (ibid., 72–8) suggests six strategies that can be implemented when translating idioms:

1. *using an idiom of similar meaning and form* (the TL idiom needs to express approximately the same meaning as that of the SL idiom and also be made up of equivalent lexical items). In terms of *heart* idioms and with reference to our analysis, one example that can illustrate this strategy is the English idiom ***have a heart of gold*** which has the Romanian counterpart ***a avea inimă de aur*** [literal translation: *have (a) heart of gold*];

2. *using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form* (the TL idiom has a meaning resembling that of the SL idiom, but it is made up of different lexical items). For example, the English idiom ***break someone's heart*** can be rendered by the Romanian idiom ***a sfâşia cuiva inima*** [literal translation: *tear someone's heart*];

3. *using a paraphrase* (this strategy can be used when there is no TL counterpart or whenever idiomatic language cannot be used in the target text [TT] by reason of different stylistic preferences). We can consider the example of the English idiom ***one's heart is in the right place*** which does not have a Romanian equivalent idiom and, thus, might be paraphrased as ***a avea o inimă bună, contrar aparențelor*** [literal translation: *have a good heart, contrary to appearances*];

4. *translation by omission* (in this case the idiom is not rendered at all in the TT as a result of not having any TL "close match," because it is hard to be paraphrased or just for reasons of stylistics). In order to illustrate this strategy, Baker (ibid., 77–8) gives an example in which the English expression *for good measure* is omitted in the Arabic translation;

5. *translation by compensation* (this strategy involves omitting or playing down on idiomaticity exactly where it appears in the ST and introducing it in some other part of the TT). As Baker (ibid., 78) points out, an example that could appropriately illustrate this strategy would need a lot of space; therefore, we refer to one particular case explained by Mason (1982, 29) and quoted by Baker (ibid.) in which the strategy of compensation was useful to handle idiomaticity: the translators of *Astérix* had to insert English puns in

different parts of the cartoon in order to make up for the French puns that could not be rendered in the TT exactly where they appeared in the ST.

Newmark (1988, 104) considers that "whilst the central problem of translation is the overall choice of a translation method for a text, the most important particular problem is the translation of metaphor." He uses the term *metaphor* to refer to any figurative expression. Also, he tackles six types of metaphors (*dead*, *cliché*, *stock*, *adapted*, *recent* and *original*) on the basis of contextual factors and translation procedures.

Kvetko (2009, 51) distinguishes between *systemic* and *translation* equivalents. He considers that, when comparing idioms in two languages, there are two possible approaches: the contrastive one (based on the systemic linguistic point of view) and the translation one (centred on the translation of idioms in literary texts). On the one hand, *the systemic equivalent* "reflects the equivalence of a particular idiom in a language as a system," depending on "the existence or non-existence of idioms with the same (very close) content – containing the same/different lexical components" (ibid., 52). In this regard, Kvetko (ibid., 53–5) attempts to classify systemic equivalents into three categories: absolute equivalents, relative equivalents and deceptive equivalents. The first category includes *absolute equivalents proper* (the idioms in the two languages are considered to be identical taking into account the lexical and grammatical structures, symbolism and imagery, e.g. *blue blood – sânge albastru* [*blue blood*]) and *similar equivalents* (the idioms differ only in form due to the lexical or syntactic rules of each language). The second category comprises *relative equivalents proper* (the lexical items, symbols and imagery of the idioms in the two languages are different, e.g. *a piece of cake – floare la ureche* [*flower at the ear*]) and *partially different equivalents* (the idioms in the two languages contain at least one common lexical item and are based on different symbolism and imagery, e.g. *the last straw – ultima picătură* [*the last drop*]). Being the smallest one, the third category contains idioms which are made up of "formally literally equal lexical components" but whose meanings on the whole are different (e.g. false friends, interlingual homonyms and paronyms). For this last category, Kvetko (ibid., 55) provides the example of the English idiom *lead somebody by the nose*, meaning 'to control somebody completely', which has a deceptive Slovak equivalent that means 'to deceive somebody'. In Romanian, the same idiom *a duce pe cineva de nas* [*lead somebody by the nose*] conveys both meanings, namely 'to control and to deceive somebody'.

On the other hand, the *translation* (*functional*) *equivalent* does not have to be identical with the *systemic equivalent* that is usually given in dictionaries. Since the translator needs to render the stylistic effect of the ST idiom into the TT, the *translation* (*functional*) *equivalent* can take the form of "an idiom (absolute or relative equivalent), a synonymous word/word group, metaphoric expression or, rarely, description" (ibid., 59). Also, it depends on the type of the text, the translator's competence and interpretation of the text, the principles of translation and readership. Likewise, translation equivalents are triggered by functional shifts that can be divided into *systemic shifts* and *individual shifts*. Systemic shifts are further analysed as *constitutive* (*linguistic*) *shifts* which are influenced by the differences between the two language systems, and *thematic shifts* which are determined by the differences between the extralinguistic realities or traditions of the two languages. Additionally, Kvetko (ibid., 60–1) presents individual shifts which are governed by subjective factors. They may be *positive shifts* that involve compensation and *negative shifts* that are brought about by deceptive idiomatic equivalents, misinterpretations, literal translation or by the loss of the original connotations.

3 Results and discussion

Our discussion will be centred on *heart* idioms and will take into account the first three strategies of translating idioms suggested by Baker (1992), namely using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form and translation by paraphrase.

Moreover, with reference to Kvetko's classification (2009), our endeavour falls into the category of tracking down *systemic equivalents* that are part of language as a system, being investigated outside a definite context of use.

3.1 Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

The Romanian idioms under discussion are *similar equivalents* (Kvetko 2009) of the English ones since the lexical and syntactic rules of the two languages influence their form. Actually, it is generally hard to find *absolute equivalents proper* whose lexical and grammatical structures are identical.

The English idiom **with one's hand on one's heart** which is used when referring to someone "speaking very honestly and telling the truth" (OID 2003, 154) has the Romanian equivalent idiom **cu mâna pe inimă** [*with the/one's hand on the/one's heart*] meaning "cu conștiința curată, cu convingerea că e adevărat" (DEX 1998, 612) ["with a clear conscience, having the conviction that something is true"]. From a cognitive point of view, we notice that both idioms are conceptually motivated by conventional knowledge as people sometimes make this gesture in order to reinforce the truthfulness of their words. Additionally, another cognitive mechanism which plays an important part in accounting for the meaning of the two idioms is the metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR SINCERITY (Trantescu 2016, 221).

The idiom **with all one's heart** can be rendered into Romanian by the idiom **cu toată inima** [*with all the/one's heart*]. They basically convey the same idea: the former means "with the utmost sincerity, with all best wishes" (DEI 2002, 115) and the latter expresses that something is done "cu tot sufletul, bucuros, cu mare plăcere" (DERC (D-N) 2016, 212) ["with all one's soul, gladly, with great pleasure"]. Another Romanian idiom that can be used as an equivalent to the English one is **cu dragă inimă** [*with (a) dear heart*], which corresponds to the strategy of *using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form*. We can notice the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES and the metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR SINCERITY, which underlie the meaning of these idiomatic expressions.

The Romanian idiom **cu inima ușoară** [*with (the) light heart*], that is "fără griji, bine dispus; cu conștiința împăcată" (DERC (D-N) 2016, 212) [carefree, in good mood, with a clear conscience], is used as the counterpart of the English idiom **with a light heart** that means "with a feeling of happiness or relief" (OID 2003, 213). In both cases, we can notice the conceptual metaphors THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS and THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER. Also, the orientational metaphor HAPPINESS IS UP comes into play and links the literal meaning with the figurative one.

The next two pairs of idioms are based on the conceptual metaphors THE HEART IS A VALUABLE OBJECT and THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE. Thus, the idiom **win somebody's heart** ("make somebody love you," OID 2003, 446) has the Romanian equivalent idiom of similar meaning and form **a câștiga inima cuiva** [*win somebody's heart/win the heart of somebody*], which is used when gaining someone's love or winning someone over (DEX 1998, 156; 245) and the idiom **steal somebody's heart** ("make somebody fall in love with you," OID 2003, 374) can be translated by the Romanian idiom **a fura inima cuiva** [*steal somebody's heart/steal the heart of somebody*], which means "a fermeca, a încânta pe cineva" (DEX 1998, 405) [to charm, attract someone].

The two opposite idioms **have a heart of gold** ("used about someone who is very kind, especially when they do not seem to be kind," LID 1998, 164) and **have a heart of stone** ("to be very unkind and unsympathetic," ibid.) have similar Romanian counterparts, namely **a avea inimă de aur** [*have (a) heart of gold*] ("a fi bun, milos, înțelegător, darnic," DEX 1998, 492) [to be kind, compassionate, understanding, generous] and **a avea inimă de piatră** [*have (a) heart of stone*] ("a fi nesimțitor, rău, fără suflet, rece," DEX 1998, 492) [to be insensitive, evil, soulless, cold], respectively. We can notice the metonymies THE HEART STANDS FOR KINDNESS and THE HEART STANDS FOR WICKEDNESS, which can account for the meanings of these idioms.

Moreover, the previously two English idioms can also be translated by means of Romanian *idioms of similar meaning but dissimilar form* such as **a avea inimă bună** [*have (a) good heart*]/**a fi bun la inimă**

[*be good at heart*] and **a avea inimă împietrită** [*have (a) petrified heart*]. Heavy, hard materials are metaphorically linked to a rigid or harsh attitude, to a bad character. Thus, the heart, which actually stands for the person, is not easy to reach or impress. However, *gold* as in *have a heart of gold* has a positive connotation despite the hard material as its value is the dominant feature in this case (Trantescu 2016, 232).

The conceptual metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR COURAGE underlies the English idiom **lose heart** ("to lose courage, to despair," DEI 2002, 115) and its Romanian counterpart **a-(și) pierde inima** [*lose one's heart*] ("a-și pierde curajul, speranța, a se descuraja," DEX 1998, 492) [to lose courage, hope, to feel discouraged]. Furthermore, the idiom **take heart** which has an opposite meaning ("to be encouraged," DEI 2002, 115) can be translated into Romanian by the two following idioms having *a similar meaning but dissimilar form*: **a prinde inimă** [*catch heart*] ("a căpăta din nou putere, curaj, a nu-i mai fi teamă," DEX 1998, 492) [to regain strength, courage, not to be afraid anymore] or **a-și lua inima în dinți** [*take one's heart in one's teeth*] ("a se îmbărbăta, a-și face curaj," DERC (D-N) 2016, 45) [pluck up courage], depending on the context.

Table 1 presents the English *heart* idioms and their Romanian equivalents of similar meaning and form that we discussed in this section of the article, together with the common cognitive mechanisms that we identified.

3.2 Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

In order to meet the purpose of our study and identify common English and Romanian conceptualization of the *heart*, we will consider Romanian equivalent idioms containing the lexeme *inimă* [heart] or *suflet* [soul], since sometimes they can both be used alternatively to refer the seat of feelings or emotions. Trantescu (2016, 223) explains that this is probably due to the fact that the Romanian *inimă* [heart] comes from the Latin noun *anima* [soul].

Table 1: English *heart* idioms and their Romanian equivalents of similar meaning and form

English	Romanian	Cognitive mechanisms
With one's hand on one's heart	*cu mâna pe inimă*	Conventional knowledge Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR SINCERITY
With all one's heart	*cu toată inima*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR SINCERITY
With a light heart	*cu inima ușoară*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS Metaphor THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER Orientational metaphor HAPPINESS IS UP
Win somebody's heart *Steal somebody's heart*	*a câștiga inima cuiva* *a fura inima cuiva*	Metaphor THE HEART IS A VALUABLE OBJECT Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE
Have a heart of gold	*avea inimă de aur*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR KINDNESS
Have a heart of stone	*a avea inimă de piatră*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR WICKEDNESS
Lose heart	*a-(și) pierde inima*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR COURAGE
Open one's heart	*a-și deschide inima*	Metaphor THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER
One's heart leaps	*a-i sălta inima*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES Metaphor THE HEART IS A LIVING ORGANISM

The meaning of the English idiom ***one's heart skipped/missed a beat*** ("used in order to say that you were very excited, surprised or frightened," LID 1998, 165) springs from conventional knowledge, since whenever one is emotional or anxious, he or she has the feeling that his/her heart suddenly stops beating or that it does not work properly anymore (Trantescu 2016, 221). Although it is not listed in Romanian dictionaries, the idiom ***a-i sta inima*** (***în loc***) [*one's heart stands still*], which is quite commonly used by natives, is a suitable equivalent as it conveys the same meaning and it is motivated by the same cognitive mechanism. Additionally, another Romanian idiomatic expression which is formed when the verbs *a tresări* or *a sări* collocate with the lexeme *inimă*, ***a-i tresări inima*** [*one's heart flinches*] or ***a-i sări inima din loc*** [*one's heart jumps off*], basically expresses the same meaning by focusing on the opposite reaction ("a tresări – (despre inimă) a-și accelera și intensifica bătăile din pricina unei emoții," DEX 1998, 1111) [to flinch – (about the heart) beating faster because of emotions], ("a simți brusc o mare frică sau o emoție intensă," DERC (S-Z) 2021, 21) [to suddenly feel great fear or intense emotion].

The meaning of the English idiom ***from the bottom of one's heart*** ("with the utmost sincerity, most deeply," DEI 2002, 115) can be rendered into Romanian by means of the idioms ***din adâncul inimii*** [*from the depth of the/one's heart*]/***din toată inima*** [*from all the/one's heart*]/***cu dragă inimă*** [*with dear heart*] ("cu toată puterea, din tot sufletul," "cu foarte mare și sinceră plăcere," DELR 1985, 292) [with all your heart, with great and sincere pleasure] and ***din adâncul sufletului*** [*from the depth of the/one's soul*]/***din tot sufletul*** [*from all the/one's soul*] ("cu pasiune, cu convingere, foarte mult," DELR 1985, 677). From a cognitive perspective, we can identify the conceptual metaphor THE HEART (SOUL) IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER where people preserve their feelings and emotional experiences.

As Trantescu (2016, 223) points out, the recipient or container is often seen as open or closed. Whenever one opens it, the others get access to that person's feelings. Thus, the previously mentioned conceptual metaphor also motivates the following English idioms and their Romanian corresponding idioms: ***open one's heart*** ("tell somebody about your feelings, problems or worries," OID 2003, 267) can be translated either by the idiom ***a-și deschide sufletul*** [*open one's soul*] or by the idiom of *similar meaning and form* ***a-și deschide inima*** [*open one's heart*] ("a face destăinuiri, a se confesa," DEX 1998, 284) [to open up to someone, to confess]; ***pour out one's heart*** ("tell someone everything that you are thinking or feeling," LID 1998, 164) can be rendered by the Romanian idioms ***a-și descărca conștiința*** [*unload one's consciousness*], ***a-și descărca inima*** [*unload one's heart*] ("a-și ușura conștiința, făcând confidențe cuiva," DEX 1998, 283) [ease one's conscience by confiding in someone]; ***take*** (***something***) ***to heart*** ("to take something badly, to be very much hurt by," DEI 2002, 115) has the Romanian counterpart ***a pune ceva la inimă*** [*put something to heart*] ("a se supăra pentru ceva mai mult decât merită," DELR 1985, 293) [to get too upset over something that it is not worth it].

The conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A BRITTLE OBJECT is the underlying mechanism, which motivates the English idiom ***break someone's heart*** that can be generally used in relation to an event or situation that makes someone "very sad or upset" or when one makes "someone very unhappy by ending a marriage or romantic relationship" (LID 1998, 163). The same cognitive mechanism can be identified in the case of the Romanian idioms ***a sfâșia cuiva inima*** [*tear someone's heart*], which means "a produce o mare durere" (DEX 1998, 981) [cause great suffering] and ***a frânge cuiva inima*** [*snap one's heart*] ("a întrista peste măsură, a înduioșa până la lacrimi," DERC (D-N) 2016, 130) [to cause someone extreme distress, to move someone to tears]. The latter is more frequently used as an equivalent of the English idiom when referring to disappointment in love.

The metaphors THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES and THE HEART IS A LIVING ORGANISM are reflected in the idiom ***one's heart leaps***, which refers to "a sudden feeling of happiness or excitement" (OID 2003, 163). There are several Romanian idiomatic expressions motivated by the same metaphor, which can be used as translations of the English idiom, depending on the context: ***a-i sălta inima*** (***de bucurie***) [*one's heart leaps* (*for joy*)] which is an idiom of *similar meaning and form* meaning "a tresări de bucurie, a se bucura mult" (DEX 1998, 950) [to jump for joy, to rejoice]; ***a-i zburda inima*** [*one's heart skips*] ("a fi foarte vesel," DERC (S-Z) 2021, 415) [to be very cheerful]; ***a i se bucura inima*** [*one's heart rejoices*] ("în legătură cu bucurii, plăceri," DEX 1998, 492) [referring to joys, pleasures]; ***a-i râde cuiva inima*** [*one's heart laughs*] ("a se simți foarte bine, a se bucura," DERC (D-N) 2016, 210) [to feel very good, happy].

The Romanian idioms ***după/pe voia inimii*** [*after/on* (*the*) *heart's willingness*] or ***după/pe pofta inimii*** [*after/on* (*the*) *heart's desire*] which mean "după plac, nestingherit, cum îi e dorința" (DEX 1998, 492) [as one pleases/wishes, not hindered] are the equivalents of the English idiom ***to one's heart's content*** ("to one's complete satisfaction," DEI 2002, 116). They are all motivated by the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES and the metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON.

The metonymy THE HEART (SOUL) STANDS FOR KINDNESS is well illustrated by the idiom ***have a heart!***, which is commonly used in spoken English "to ask someone not to be strict or unkind" (LID 1998, 164). The following Romanian idiomatic expressions are motivated by the same cognitive mechanism: ***a fi om de inimă*** [*be a man of heart*] ("a fi om bun, săritor," DELR 1985, 292) [to be kind, warmhearted], **(*a fi om*) *cu inimă/suflet*** [(*be a man*) *with* (*a*) *heart/soul*] ("bun, milos, înțelegător, uman"/"trăsătură de caracter bună," DEX 1998, 492; 1038) [kind, compassionate, understanding, humane/a trait of good character].

The idiom ***be close/dear/near to one's heart*** which is used to talk about "a person or thing that somebody is very fond of, concerned about, interested in" (OID 2003, 163) has the Romanian counterpart ***a avea*** (***pe cineva***) ***în/la inimă*** [*have* (*someone*) *in/at* (*one's*) *heart*] ("a îndrăgi sau a simpatiza pe cineva," DERC (D-N) 2016, 208) [to like someone, to hold someone dear]. We can notice that the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE AND AFFECTION lies behind the meaning of both idioms.

Although the Romanian idiomatic expression ***a ajunge la inima cuiva*** [*get to/arrive at someone's heart*] is not mentioned in dictionaries, it is often encountered in spoken and written Romanian and it can be used as an equivalent of the English idiom ***the way to somebody's heart*** ("the way to make somebody like or love you," OID 2003, 437), both being motivated by the metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE AND AFFECTION and the structural metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Likewise, the literal translation of the English idiom (*calea către/spre inima cuiva* [*the way to/towards somebody's heart*]) has increasingly been used lately.

Another conceptual metaphor which can shed some light upon the meaning of the idiom ***sick at heart*** ("very sad or upset about something," LID 1998, 164) is THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF SUFFERING, PAIN, TROUBLE. The same cognitive mechanisms can be identified in the case of its Romanian counterparts ***a durea*** (***pe cineva***) ***la inimă*** [*someone's heart aches*] and ***a-și face*** (***a-i face cuiva***) ***inimă rea*** [*make oneself* (*a*) *bad heart/make one's heart bad*] ("a se mâhni sau a mâhni pe cineva," DELR 1985, 590) [to grieve about something or to sadden someone].

The English idiom ***one's heart sinks*** ("used to say that you suddenly feel sad or depressed about something," OID 2003, 163) has the Romanian equivalent idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form ***a i se îneca cuiva corăbiile*** [*one's ships sink*] ("a fi trist, fără chef," DERC (A-C) 2015, 268) [to be sad, not feel like doing anything] which does not contain the lexeme *inimă* (*heart*), but which is motivated by the same orientational metaphor SADNESS IS DOWN.

The English *heart* idioms and their Romanian equivalents of similar meaning but dissimilar form, along with the common cognitive mechanisms motivating their meaning, are summarized in Table 2.

3.3 Translation by paraphrase

Considering that this strategy involves the lack of a TL counterpart, we will point out the cognitive mechanisms that come into play in the case of English idioms and we will also try to find suitable Romanian paraphrases, which can reflect such mechanisms to a certain extent. We believe that, in some cases, the identification of cognitive mechanisms might contribute to better capturing the meanings of the SL idioms in the TL paraphrases.

The English idiom ***wear one's heart on one's sleeve*** which means "to show your true feelings openly" comes from an old custom whereby a man used to wear something on his sleeve which he received from his lady (LID 1998, 165). It is thus motivated by conventional knowledge and also by a cultureme which reminds us of a medieval tradition during jousting competitions. It could be translated into Romanian by means of the paraphrase ***a-ți arăta adevăratele sentimente/dragostea față de cineva*** [*show one's true feelings/love to someone*].

Table 2: English *heart* idioms and their Romanian equivalents of similar meaning but dissimilar form

English	Romanian	Cognitive mechanism
One's heart skipped/missed a beat	*a-i sta inima* (*în loc*) *a-i tresări inima* *a-i sări inima din loc*	Conventional knowledge
Form the bottom of one's heart	*din adâncul inimii/ sufletului* *din toată inima/din tot sufletul* *cu dragă inimă*	Metaphor THE HEART (SOUL) IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER
With all one's heart	*cu dragă inima*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR SINCERITY
Open one's heart	*a-și deschide sufletul*	Metaphor THE HEART (SOUL) IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER
Pour out one's heart	*a-și descărca inima* (*conştiinţa*)	Metaphor THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER
Have a heart of gold	*avea inimă bună* *a fi bun la inimă*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR KINDNESS
Have a heart of stone	*a avea inimă împietrită*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR WICKEDNESS
Take something to heart	*a pune ceva la inimă*	Metaphor THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER
Take heart	*a prinde inimă* *a-și lua inima în dinți*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR COURAGE
Break someone's heart	*a sfâșia cuiva inima* *a frânge cuiva inima*	Metaphor THE HEART IS A BRITTLE OBJECT
One's heart leaps	*a-i zburda inima* *a i se bucura inima* *a-i râde inima*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES Metaphor THE HEART IS A LIVING ORGANISM
To one's heart's content	*după/pe voia inimii* *după/pe pofta inimii*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF JOYS, WISHES, PLEASURES Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON
Have a heart!	*a fi om de inimă* *a fi om cu inimă/cu suflet*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR KINDNESS
Be close/dear/near to one's heart	*a avea pe cineva în/la inimă*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE AND AFFECTION
The way to somebody's heart	*a ajunge la inima cuiva*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE AND AFFECTION Metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY
Sick at heart	*a durea pe cineva la inimă* *a-și face* (*a-i face cuiva*) *inimă rea*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF SUFFERING, PAIN; TROUBLE
One's heart sinks	*a i se îneca cuiva corăbiile**	Orientational metaphor SADNESS IS DOWN (*the Romanian idiom does not contain the lexeme *inimă*)

The conceptual metaphors THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF SUFFERING, PAIN, TROUBLE and THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER account for the meaning of the idiom **sob one's heart out** ("cry noisily for a long time because you are very sad," OID 2003, 363). A suitable Romanian paraphrase is **a plânge în hohote vârsându-şi tot amarul (din inimă/suflet)** [*cry out loud pouring out (of one's heart/soul) all the bitterness*], which can mirror the same metaphors.

The saying **absence makes the heart grow fonder** is based on the metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE AND AFFECTION and the metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON, being "used in order to say that being away from someone you love makes you love them more" (LID 1998, 1). It can be rendered into Romanian by the paraphrase **absenţa persoanei iubite face ca inima să iubească mai tare** [*the absence of the loved one makes the heart love harder*] in which we can identify the same conceptual metonymy since the heart is personified.

The conceptual metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR KINDNESS motivates the English idiom **one's heart is in the right place** which refers to someone who is "kind and well-meaning" is "almost always used when appearances are to the contrary" (DEI 2002, 116). In Romanian, we can preserve the lexeme *inimă* in the paraphrase **a avea o inimă bună, contrar aparenţelor** [*have a good heart, contrary to appearances*] or **a avea suflet, contrar aparenţelor** [*have soul, contrary to appearances*] in which case the metonymy THE SOUL STANDS FOR KINDNESS comes into play.

The English idiom **set one's heart on (doing) something** ("want something very much; want to do or achieve something very much," OID 2003, 342) is based on the conceptual metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR WILLINGNESS and can be translated as **a-şi dori (să obţină) ceva din toată inima** [*wish for something/ to get something from all one's heart*] or **a-şi pune ceva în gând/a-şi pune în gând să facă ceva** [*put one's mind on something/have it in mind to do something*]. The first paraphrase focuses on the heart as the set of one's willingness to do something, whereas the other two place one's *heart* [*inimă*] and *thought* [*gând*] in an interlinguistic equivalence relation.

Table 3 comprises a summary of the English *heart* idioms, along with the cognitive mechanisms that we identified, and their possible Romanian translations by paraphrase.

Table 3: English *heart* idioms and their Romanian translations by paraphrase

English	Romanian (paraphrase)	Cognitive mechanism
Wear one's heart on one's sleeve	*a-ţi arăta adevăratele sentimente/dragostea faţă de cineva*	Conventional knowledge/cultureme
Sob one's heart out	*a plânge în hohote vârsându-şi tot amarul (din inimă/suflet)*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF SUFFERING, PAIN, TROUBLE Metaphor THE HEART IS A RECIPIENT/CONTAINER
absence makes the heart grow fonder (*saying)	*absenţa persoanei iubite face ca inima să iubească mai tare*	Metaphor THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE AND AFFECTION Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON
one's heart is in the right place	*a avea o inimă bună, contrar aparenţelor* *a avea suflet, contrar aparenţelor*	Metonymy THE HEART/SOUL STANDS FOR KINDNESS
set one's heart on (doing) something	*a-şi dori (să obţină) ceva din toată inima a-şi pune ceva în gând/a-şi pune în gând să facă ceva*	Metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR WILLINGNESS

4 Conclusion

The Cognitive Linguistic perspective might be considered a useful tool when attempting to identify common features between SL and TL idioms in order to select appropriate equivalents.

Drawing on Baker (1992), we considered three strategies of translating English *heart* idioms into Romanian and we managed to identify, in each case, common cognitive mechanisms that lie behind the equivalence in meaning between the English idioms and their Romanian counterparts.

With reference to Kvetko's classification (2009), the Romanian idioms that we put forth are *similar equivalents* of the English ones, differing more or less in the grammatical or lexical structures proper to each language. In fact, there is little chance of finding *absolute equivalents proper* that are identical in every way.

The examples provided for the strategy of using a TL idiom of similar meaning and form are obviously outnumbered by the ones given for the translation strategy of using a TL idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. As regards the third strategy, we believe that identifying the cognitive mechanisms that motivate a TL idiom might enable the translator to better capture its meaning in the paraphrase.

Whatever strategy translators may adopt, it is important that the meaning of the ST idiom should be clearly rendered into the target text. We believe that, in most cases, maximizing the similarities between the two languages would be of help. However, we should not overlook the fact that there are various factors that influence the way an idiom is rendered from one language into another, such as the register or the translator's knowledge, preferences and sense of language.

In our effort to identify common English and Romanian conceptualization of the *heart*, we focused our attention only on idioms containing the lexeme *heart* and *inimă*, respectively. However, as shown by our analysis, the lexemes *heart* (*inimă*) and *soul* (*suflet*) in Romanian are often alternatively used as source domains for the same target concepts. There are numerous examples of English and Romanian *heart* idioms which share the same cognitive mechanisms. Thus, the most frequent common cases are those in which the *heart* is metaphorically conceptualized as a recipient or container, as the seat of joys, wishes, pleasures, feelings of love, affection, suffering, pain or trouble, as a precious and often fragile object, as well as a living organism. Likewise, it is metonymically conceptualized as a person and it can stand for sincerity, kindness, wickedness and courage.

Although not exhaustive, our endeavour has met its purpose in highlighting the usefulness of integrating the Cognitive Linguistic approach into the process of searching and selecting appropriate equivalent idioms in translation.

References

Abdelaal, Noureldin and Abdulkhaliq Alazzawie. 2019. "Translation strategies in the translation of idioms in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet." *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana* 24, 275–90.

Akhorsheda, Ibtehja. 2021. "Using the words head, heart and hand in Arabic idioms and how to render their meanings into English." *Journal of Social Sciences* 10(1), 139–49.

Baker, Mona. 1992. *In other words. A coursebook on translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

Baş, Melike. 2017. "The metaphoric conceptualization of emotion through heart idioms in Turkish." *Cognitive Semiotics* 10(2), 121–39.

Cheng, Gong. 2021. "Comparison of metaphorical expressions of the heart between Chinese and English." *English Language Teaching* 14(3), 25–31.

Dong, Zhang and Jiehong Bai. 2015. "A cognitive semantic study of idioms from the book of songs." In *Chinese Lexical Semantics. CLSW 2015. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, edited by Quin Lu and Helena Hong Gao, p. 120–29. Cham: Springer.

Goossens, Louis. 2003. "Metaphtonymy: the interaction of metaphor and metonymy in expressions for linguistic action." In *Metaphor and metonymy in comparison and contrast*, edited by René Dirven and Ralf Pörings, p. 349–77. Berlin/New York: Mouton De Gruyter.

Kövecses, Zoltan and Peter Szabó. 1996. "Idioms: A view from cognitive semantics." *Applied Linguistics* 17, 326–55.

Kvetko, Pavol. 2009. *An outline of English phraseology*. 3rd revised edition. Trnava: Univerzita Sv. Cyrila a Metoda.

Lakoff, George. 1987. *Women, fire and dangerous things*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Mason, Ian. 1982. "The role of translation theory in the translation class." *Quinquereme* 5(1), 18–33.

de Mendoza Ibáñez F. J., and A. G. Masegosa. 2011. "Going beyond metaphtonymy: Metaphoric and metonymic complexes in phrasal verb interpretation." *Language Value* 3(1), 1–29.

Newmark, Peter. 1988. *A textbook of translation*. New York: Prentice-Hall International.

Pamies, Antonio. 2017. The concept of cultureme from a lexicographical point of view. *Open Linguistics* 3, 100–14.

Radden G. and Z. Kövecses. 1999. "Towards a theory of metonymy." In *Metonymy in language and thought*, edited by Günter Radden and Klaus-Uwe Panther, p. 17–59. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Trantescu, Ana-Maria. 2016. *Conceptualizări metaforice şi metonimice în construcţiile idiomatice din limbile engleză şi română* [Metaphorical and metonymic conceptualizations in English and Romanian idiomatic expressions]. Craiova: Editura Universitaria.

Dictionaries

Concise Oxford-Lingua English-Romanian Dictionary. 2009. Oxford University Press and Educational Centre.

Dicţionarul explicativ al limbii române (*DEX*), Ediţia a II-a [The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language. Second edition]. 1998. Bucureşti: Editura Univers Enciclopedic.

Duda, Gabriela, Aglaia Gugui, and Marie Jeanne Wojcicki. 1985. *Dicţionar de expresii şi locuţiuni ale limbii române* (*DELR*) [Dictionary of Romanian Expressions and Phrases]. Bucureşti: Editura Albatros.

Gulland, Daphne M. and David Hinds-Howell. 2002. *Dictionary of English Idioms* (*DEI*). London: Penguin Books.

Ilincan, Vasile. 2015. *Dicţionar de expresii româneşti în context* (*DERC*). (*A-C*) [Dictionary of Romanian Expressions in Context]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană.

Ilincan, Vasile. 2016. *Dicţionar de expresii româneşti în context* (*DERC*). *Volumul al II-lea* (*D-N*) [Dictionary of Romanian Expressions in Context. Volume II]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană.

Ilincan, Vasile. 2021. *Dicţionar de expresii româneşti în context* (*DERC*). *Volumul al IV-lea* (*S-Z*) [Dictionary of Romanian Expressions in Context. Volume IV]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (*LDCE*). 2004. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Longman Idioms Dictionary (*LID*). 1998. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Nedelcu, Carmen, Ioana Murar, Andreea Bratu, and Andrei Bantaş. 2006. *Dicţionar Român-Englez* [Romanian-English Dictionary]. Bucureşti: Teora.

Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus (*ODT*). 2007. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English (*OID*). 2003. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Online sources

Cambridge Dictionary
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/
English-Romanian/Romanian-English Dictionary
https://hallo.ro/dictionar-englez-roman/
https://www.wordreference.com/roen/
https://dictionare.linghea.ro/englez-roman
Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
https://www.ldoceonline.com/
Oxford Learner's Dictionaries
https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/
Romanian Language Dictionary
https://dexonline.ro/
https://dexonline.net/