



Semantics of Idioms Containing Names of Body Parts in English, Slovak, and Hungarian (A Comparative Study)

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Abstract. The main objective of the paper is to study idioms containing names of body parts in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages. The traits of the selected idioms are investigated in terms of semantics. The research sample, which includes fifty idioms with the body part keyword, is inspected with the help of both quantitative and qualitative methods. To give the research a theoretical basis, it is firstly explored how idioms are understood within these typologically diverse languages in the matter of their typical features, and classifications from the viewpoint of semantics. As a result, the investigated idioms were divided into eight groups in accordance with the discovered semantic similarities and differences across the studied languages. Furthermore, the research outputs demonstrate that there appear six groups of idioms considering the correspondence of keywords of the studied idioms in English, Slovak, and Hungarian. The principal benefit of the study is the examination of the given lexical units in a trilingual environment of typologically different languages.

Keywords: idiom, semantics, comparative analysis, typologically diverse languages

1. Introduction

To really master a language, it is not enough to be acquainted with a wide range of single words and the rules on how to put them together to create clauses, sentences, and longer speeches. There are also plenty of metaphorical expressions,

collocations, and idioms that reflect the surrounding world, the culture and history of a nation, community, or even a single family and form a fundamental part of their everyday language, making it more colourful, vivid, and expressive. That is one of the reasons why we decided to focus on the issue of idiomatology. Additionally, we grew up and live in the ethnically mixed territory of south-eastern Slovakia. Finally, we are not aware of a study dealing with the issue of comparison of idioms containing names of body parts in three languages simultaneously. The study can practically be used as a study material, as well as a teaching aid for teaching English in the ethnically mixed territories of Slovakia and Hungary.

The main objective of the paper is to investigate idioms having a body part as the keyword in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages. Through the analysis of their semantics, speakers of the languages can better understand different lexicosemantic possibilities of their usage, since they directly manifest language vitality and represent an intriguing subject of linguistic research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. The delimitation of idioms in English, Slovak, and Hungarian

Idiomatic expressions such as metaphors, collocations, proverbs, sayings, and idioms proper are utilized by all human beings as “prefabricated elements”, as Forgács (2012) calls them, in their everyday life, often without realizing it. Their usage is not limited exclusively to educated people. New idioms appear, already existing ones change, and some of them wane, mirroring the development of their users. It also happens that the beliefs or practices leading to their application disappear while the idiom itself continues to be used.

For the needs of our research analysis, we will debate how idioms are perceived in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages when it comes to their semantic characteristics and classification.

When discussing idioms in English, it needs to be mentioned that they have been studied by plenty of linguists from numerous points of view. It is rather demanding to define strict borders and classes of these expressions; even scholars do not always agree while doing that. As a matter of fact, when it comes to different academicians and different attitudes, there are discrepancies in the whole terminology of the field of study of idiomatic expressions. Within our study, we will follow Kvetko (2009), who distinguishes the following groups of idioms according to the degree of opacity (transparency) and differences in degree of motivation: 1. pure idioms (opaque, demotivated idioms, phraseological fusions) – the meaning of the whole cannot be understood from the meaning of individual constituents there, e.g.: *spill the beans* (tell somebody something that should be kept secret

or private), *shoot the breeze* (have a casual conversation), or *pink elephants* (hallucinations symptomatic of chronic alcoholism); 2. semi-opaque idioms (semi-transparent, “figurative idioms”, transparent metaphors, phraseological unities) – the expressions in which the literal meaning of the single words indicates the idiomatic meaning of the whole expression, e.g.: *behind closed doors* (hidden from public or in secret), *child’s play* (a task which is easily accomplished), or *do / make a U-turn* (completely change one’s policy); 3. semi-idioms (restricted or bound collocations, phraseological combinations) – expressions in which one word has a literal meaning and the other or others have figurative meaning, e.g. *promise the moon* (promise something that is unlikely to be fulfilled), *foot the bill* (pay the bill), or *dirty money* (money obtained unlawfully or immorally).

The classification of Slovak idioms is basically discussed by linguists such as Mlacek (2001), Ďurčo (1995), and Magalová (2016). In their work, they present classifications from different aspects: semantic, structural, stylistic, and functional classifications; further, categorization according to the parts of speech, according to the relation to the literary language, to the basis on which they arise, and, eventually, grouping taking into account the relation between constancy and variability.

In fact, each of them emphasizes that not all criteria are equally important while researching idioms. Mlacek (2001), Ďurčo (1995), and Magalová (2016) distinguish three types of phrasemes: 1. phraseological fusions – type of phrasemes in which the individual word components lost their original meaning; 2. phraseological unities – their meaning is only indirectly related to the meaning of individual components. It means that some components of the phraseological unity have preserved their original or related meaning, but the others are bearers of the transferred meaning. Therefore, a phraseological unity does not lose any of its figurativeness; 3. phraseological combinations – here, one component has a figurative meaning, while the other members have their original lexical meaning.

Hungarian linguists who have inquired into idiomatic expressions are, for example, Ujváry, Nagy, and Forgács. Likewise, in the Slovak language, it is phraseology that deals with idiomatic expressions here. By way of contrast, proverbs and sayings have a much more prominent place in the study of phraseology here than in the Slovak or English languages.

For the needs of our research, we give a short overview of how Hungarian idioms are classified as reported by Forgács (2012). To do it, he applies the following five standpoints: classification according to: their communication function, their syntactic behaviour, the value of their parts of speech, their semantic behaviour, and structural-semantic classification.

Reconsidering the theories of the German linguists like Burger, Buhofer, and Sialm, Forgács (2012) elaborated the following semantic categorization of idioms: 1. non-idiomatic, 2. partly idiomatic, 3. fully idiomatic.

2.2. Contrastive analysis of idioms

Numerous scholars have concentrated on the investigation of idiomatic traits within two or more, even typologically diverse, languages. Pastor (2021) placed the focus on constructional idioms expressing insanity in English and Spanish from grammatical, semantic, and informative perspectives to coin a multi-linguistic prototype of the investigated structures. Recently, the grammar and semantics of idioms has been studied by corpus linguists, too. Blanco (2019) contributes to the contrastive studies within constructional idioms in the framework of the German and Spanish languages; he employed five parameters of comparison to develop a multi-level depiction procedure based on corpus for the determination and analysis of corresponding idioms across languages. Gizatova (2018) addressed the propositions of developing the first English–Russian dictionary of idioms utilizing data from textual corpora.

Surprisingly, the corpus evidence shows that idioms are not as frozen as it is often estimated; exchanges of lexemes are acceptable without the loss of the original meaning of the idiom in question. In the given context, Firenze (2007) provides a description of the disagglutination mechanisms of the determiners in idioms used by contemporary German speakers. In addition to this, Dobrovolskij (2020) discusses the implementation of parallel corpora for the needs of the study of idioms: his findings support the presupposition that the spreading of corpus-based data improves their description on the cross-linguistic level and helps identify the discrete linguistic traits of idioms that were regarded equivalent.

Marginally, idioms containing a name of an animal have been of interest for linguists. Zemtsova (2019) discusses such idioms for translation needs taking into account the point of view of cognitive linguistics. Her findings demonstrate that mapping systems existing behind the conceptual metaphor reveal human traits from animals' somatic, behavioural, and emotional features. Ngoc and Huyèn (2018) carried out a systematic inquiry into the semantics of English animal idioms; the scholars claim that they are the results of interaction between a man and nature, and therefore they represent an intriguing sphere for an investigator.

Colin (2006) examined animal idioms, focusing primarily on English idioms in comparison with Swedish ones, even if the Swedish counterparts do not contain an animal name. Two different standpoints were presented. One of them illustrates that half of the English animal idioms have a Swedish equivalent containing an animal name. The other one illustrates that the Swedish animal idioms are analogous with the English ones, and they mostly have identical structures and similar variations in degree of transformation, fixity, literalness, and manipulation. Furthermore, the use of metaphor, personification, and simile appears to be common both in English and Swedish animal idioms.

Eventually, Zhang (2021) provides an insight into the translation of animal idioms from the functional equivalence viewpoint with the goal to discuss factors that influence the translation of these idioms. One of such factors might be an animal transition, which is possible to overcome, namely with functional equivalence, and a pragmatic version of the idiom can be achieved.

3. Research methodology

The main objective of the study is to investigate idioms containing names of body parts in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages. To achieve this, two partial aims were stated: to find similarities and differences between them in terms of semantics and the keyword of the idiom. To direct the research properly, we specified the following questions that are required to be answered and hypotheses that need to be proved or disproved.

Q1: Are the studied idioms identical in terms of semantics in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages?

Q2: Are the keywords of the observed idioms the same in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages?

H1: The majority of the studied idioms are identical in terms of semantics in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages.

H2: The keywords within the observed idioms containing names of body parts are different in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages.

In view of that fact, we identified and investigated fifty idioms which contain expressions labelling the following parts of the human body and organism: *arm, back, blood, brain, chest, chin, ear, elbow, eye, eyelid, eyelash, face, finger, fingertip, hair, hand, head, heel, heart, jaw, knee, leg, limb, lip, mind, mouth, muscle, nail, neck, nerve, nose, palm, shoulder, skeleton, skin, stomach, tongue, tooth*. We took into consideration several criteria for the selection of these idioms. First, we decided to investigate relevant frequent idioms that are more likely to have a significant impact on communication and understanding. As this is a comparative cross-linguistic study, we chose idioms with strong cultural connotations within individual languages in question. The final point of our motivation was our own desire to explore new linguistic phenomena in the given context. We worked with the following dictionaries to single the idioms out: *Prekladový anglicko-slovenský frazeologický slovník* (Kvetko 2014) and *Angol-magyar szólásszótár – English-Hungarian Idioms* (Magay 2009).

To analyse the selected idioms, we applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. Of the quantitative methods, we implemented processing, statistical processing, evaluation, and subsequent interpretation of acquired knowledge together with their generalization. We categorized the idioms on the basis of their

semantics by processing. Then, statistical processing was used to express the number of idioms in each group. Besides the quantitative methods, qualitative ones were applied as well, namely observation and work with texts, work with dictionaries of phraseological expressions, linguistic analysis, and comparison. Observation and work with texts were crucial components while studying and reviewing literature. Thanks to these procedures, we were able to uncover new connections within the relevant sources. We took advantage of dictionaries of phraseological expressions for the purpose of revealing idiomatic expressions containing the selected names of body parts. The dictionaries provided us with a deeper understanding of how metaphorical language is utilized in literature. Together with this, we were able to gain a better comprehension of the symbolic meanings associated with different body parts. To answer the research questions and prove or disprove the hypotheses, we applied evaluation and subsequent interpretation of acquired knowledge, and generalizations as well.

4. Research results

This part considers resemblance of the idioms containing names of body parts in the English, Slovak, and Hungarian languages from the semantic standpoint. What is more, we check out whether their keywords in the Slovak and Hungarian languages correspond to those in the English language.

For the intention of comparing the idioms from this point of view, we will adopt Kvetko's classification according to the degree of opacity and differences in degree of motivation for English idioms, Mlacek, Ďurčo, and Magalová's classification for Slovak ones, and Forgács's categorization in terms of the transferred meaning for Hungarian ones. We will do so for the simple reason that in spite of the fact that categories in the mentioned classifications differ in name, their characteristics are very much alike, if not even identical in most cases.

From the overview of the idioms systematization, we can state that English pure idioms equal Slovak phraseological fusions and Hungarian fully idiomatic phraseological units (phrasemes). English semi-opaque idioms are identical to Slovak phraseological units and Hungarian partly idiomatic phrasemes. English semi-idioms have their counterpart in the Slovak language – phraseological combinations. However, this subgroup does not exist in the Hungarian language. Instead, there is a group of non-idiomatic phrasemes. Further, non-idiomatic phrasemes are non-variable expressions with a high level of conventionality and literalness.

After checking out the semanticity of the chosen idioms in all three languages, we divided them into the following groups in accordance with the similarities and differences across the studied languages:

- a) pure idioms in English, phraseological fusions in Slovak, and fully idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- b) pure idioms in English, phraseological fusions in Slovak, and partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- c) pure idioms in English, phraseological fusions in Slovak, and non-idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- d) pure idioms in English, phraseological unities in Slovak, and partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- e) semi-opaque idioms in English, phraseological unities in Slovak, and partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- f) semi-opaque idioms in English, phraseological unities in Slovak, and non-idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- g) semi-idioms in English, phraseological combinations in Slovak, and non-idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian;
- h) pure idioms in English, phraseological combinations in Slovak, and partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian.

a) Pure idioms in English – Phraseological fusions in Slovak – Fully idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

The following five idioms belong to the same group of expressions in terms of semantics in all three languages: *(be) on sb's **back** – by' niekomu na krku – a nyakán van/ül valakinek; **Blood** is thicker than water – krv nie je voda – Vér nem válik vízzé; give sb the **elbow** – dať niekomu kopačky – kiadja az útját valakinek; twist sb (a)round one's (little) **finger** – omotať si niekoho okolo prsta – az uja köré csavar valakit; (have sth) at one's **fingertips / finger tips / finger ends** – (mať niečo) v malíčku – a kisujjában van valami.*

These idioms are classified as non-compositional, opaque, and demotivated units: the users of the languages utilize them to express various aspects of interpersonal relations. Moreover, the idiom *(have sth) at one's fingertips / finger tips / finger ends* bears two meanings. The meaning which corresponds with those in the Slovak and Hungarian languages is to have the knowledge or the ability to carry out a task easily.

b) Pure idioms in English – Phraseological fusions in Slovak – Partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

These two idioms: *kick up one's **heels** – vyhodit' si z kopytka – úszik a boldogságban; a/the **skeleton** in the cupboard – maslo na hlave – rejtegetett/titkolt családi szégyenfolt* belong to the same group of opaque expressions in the English and Slovak languages. In the Hungarian language, there are words

which are used in their literal meaning: *boldogság* ‘happiness’ in the first one and everything except for *folt* ‘spot’ in the second one: *rejtegetett/titkolt családi szégyen* ‘hidden shame of a family’.

c) Pure idioms in English – Phraseological fusions in Slovak – Non-idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

There is one idiom: *(be) out on a limb* – *(byť) v štichu – hátrányos/veszélyes/veszélyeztetett helyzetben* that belongs to the same group of opaque expressions in the English and Slovak languages. Its semantics covers the concept of being without support. In the Hungarian language, its meaning is completely literal.

d) Pure idioms in English – Phraseological unities in Slovak – Partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

These expressions: *in cold blood* – *chladnokrvne – hidegvérrel*; *(know/learn) by heart* – *(vedieť/(na)učiť sa) naspamäť, z hlavy – fejből (tudja/megtanulja)*; *get sth off one’s chest* – *ulahčiť si na duši – könnyít a szívéen/lelkén*; *pull sb’s leg* – *uťahovať si z niekoho – ugrat valakit, húz valakit*; *by the skin of one’s teeth* – *len tak-tak, o vlások/o chlp – hajszál híján* fall under the same class in the Slovak and Hungarian languages, where some of the components help us guess the meaning of the whole. In the English language, they are fully demotivated. They express the semantics of *various emotional states such as relief, ruthlessness, or deception*.

e) Semi-opaque idioms in English – Phraseological unities in the Slovak language – Partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

This is the largest group of the investigated idioms from the semantics standpoint, where the meaning of the whole can be guessed from the meaning of the components in all three languages: *cost (sb) an arm and a leg* – *stát celý majetok – egy vagytonba kerül*; *beat one’s brain’s out (about sth)* – *lámať si hlavu (nad niečím) – töri a fejét (valamin)*; *Chin up!* – *Hlavu hore! Drž sa! – Fel a fejjel!*; *go in (at) one ear and out (at) the other* – *jedným uchom dnu, (a) druhým von – egyik fülén be, a másikon ki*; *(be) (like) music to sb’s ears* – *(byť) rajskou/nebeskou hudbou (pre niekoho) – zene füleinek*. These idioms mostly contribute to the description of mental states of the language users.

f) Semi-opaque idioms in English – Phraseological unities in Slovak – Non-idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

Here, the expressions are classified among the same category of semi-transparent idioms in the English and Slovak languages: *flex one's muscles/muscle* – *napínať svaly* – *megmutatja, mit tud*; *have a loose tongue* – *nevedieť udržať jazyk na uzde* – *sokat fecseg*, while their Hungarian counterpart is non-idiomatic. The metaphors hidden behind them communicate the connection between the part of the body and a secondary meaning that is tied to them.

g) Semi-idioms in English – Phraseological combinations in Slovak – Non-idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

The only expression here (*pay*) *cash on the nail* – (*vyplatiť*) *na ruku* – *azonnal/készpénzzel fizet, az egészet kifizeti* has one or more components applied in their literal meaning (*pay cash* and *vyplatiť*) and the other in its figurative meaning (*nail* and *na ruku*).

h) Pure idioms in English – Phraseological combinations in Slovak – Partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian

The expression *give sb the cold shoulder* is a pure idiom in the English language, and it means to intentionally ignore someone or treat someone in an unfriendly way. In the Slovak and Hungarian languages, the words *priať niekoho* and *kezel valakit* are used in their literal meaning and the words *chladne* and *hűvösen* in their figurative meaning.

In the upcoming part of the study, we will present the results of the investigation whether the keywords of the idioms in the Slovak and Hungarian languages correspond to those in the English one. Therefore, we divided the picked 50 idioms to different classes in this way:

- idioms with the identical keyword in all three languages,
- idioms with the identical keyword in English and Slovak,
- idioms with the identical keyword in English and Hungarian,
- idioms with the identical keyword in Slovak and Hungarian,
- idioms with the identical keyword without a body part in Slovak and Hungarian,
- idioms with different lexical units in all three languages.

Idioms with the identical keyword in all three languages

To begin with the largest group of the idiomatic expressions, it can be declared that there are 22 cases out of 50 when they use the same body part to reveal a piece of reality in all three languages. We feel it necessary to notice that even though we sometimes find two alternatives in the Slovak or Hungarian languages, one of them is that with the same body part as in the English language.

To speak of some peculiar examples, let us scrutinize the following ones: *Blood is thicker than water*. – here, the common body part is more likely a type of body fluid. Another kind of liquid, namely *water*, is found in the proverb in all three languages. *An eye for an eye (and a tooth for a tooth)* – there are two body parts – *eye* and *tooth* – in the saying in all three languages to refer to the belief that retaliation in kind is the appropriate way to deal with an offence or crime. *Without batting an eyelid / eyelash* – in this expression employed to express showing no emotional or other reaction, the Slovak and Hungarian counterparts apply the whole body part – *eye* –, while the English one only a part of it – the *eyelid* or *eyelash*. *Have one's heart in one's mouth* – expressions in all three languages work with *heart* as the body part to convey being greatly alarmed or apprehensive. Nevertheless, instead of *mouth* in the English language, the Slovak and Hungarian equivalents use 'throat' – *hrdlo* – *torok* to place sb's heart while feeling this way.

There are also instances when the Slovak and Hungarian equivalents are the exact translations of the English phraseme: *go in (at) one ear and out (at) the other*, *twist sb (a)round one's (little) finger*, *give sb a free hand*, *bury/hide one's head in the sand*, etc.

Idioms with the identical keyword in English and Slovak

In this class with 6 phrasemes, there are cases when the Hungarian counterpart engages a different body part from those in the English and Slovak ones – e.g. in *make sb's skin crawl*, in contrast to the English and Slovak *skin*, the Hungarian phraseme uses the person's 'back' *hát*. Yet, in *flex one's muscles/muscle*, the Hungarian equivalent does not include a body part at all.

Idioms with the identical keyword in English and Hungarian

Moreover, we found also examples of the similarity in the English and Hungarian languages, when the Slovak counterparts not only do not contain the same body part, but they do not contain any at all: *(be) (like) music to sb's ears* – *(byť) rajskou/nebeskou hudbou (pre niekoho) – zene füleinek*.

Idioms with the identical keyword in Slovak and Hungarian

Furthermore, there are cases, precisely 8, when the Slovak and Hungarian translations employ the same body part, but the English one differs: *beat one's brain's out (about sth) – lámat' si hlavu (nad niečím) – töri a fejét (valamin)*. At this point, we would like to highlight one of them. Firstly, we consider it interesting to apply *heart* in the phraseme (*know/learn*) by **heart** as the organ used to express learning or mastering something from memory, while the Slovak and Hungarian translations comprise *head* completely self-explanatorily.

Idioms with identical keyword without a body part in Slovak and Hungarian

Additionally, we identified some examples when the Slovak and Hungarian expressions are mirror images of one another but none of them contain a body part: *pull sb's leg – u'ahovať si z niekoho – ugrat valakit, húz valakit, heccel valakit*. In all three languages, it is a very common expression used to describe joking with somebody in a light-hearted manner.

Idiomatic expressions with different lexical units in all three languages

Finally, there are expressions where there are no identical idiom key terms in any of the languages. However, we may find some common semantic features in the following examples: **face to face** (*with*) – the Hungarian equivalent *szemtől szemben* applies a face part: *szem* 'eye'. In like manner, both words in the Slovak *zoči-voči* involve the same face part: *oči*. (*Pay*) *cash on the nail* – although the Hungarian expression does not use a body part, the Slovak one contains 'hand' *ruka* as the place where nail is located. (*Have*) *a sweet tooth* – the Hungarian counterpart works with the whole 'mouth' *száj*, whereas the English and Slovak ones with a part of it. In the first one, it is tooth and the second one *jazyček* 'little tongue'. *Kick up one's heels* – the Slovak *vyhodit' si z kopýtka* encompasses *kopýtka* 'hoof' as the hard part on the bottom of the feet of some animals, the similar part where the human heel is located. The Hungarian phraseme does not contain a body part, though.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In this section, we will discuss the research findings regarding the research questions and research hypotheses. When considering Q1, in agreement with our analysis and the presented findings, we claim that not all the studied idioms are identical in terms of semantics in English, Slovak, and Hungarian, although most

of them are. In conclusion, the following can be said: 38 idioms out of 50 belong to the same category in all three languages from the semantic point of view. That equals 76%. Five expressions of this group belong to the category of pure idioms in English, phraseological fusions in Slovak, and fully idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian. Nonetheless, the most – 33 out of 38 – belong to the class of semi-opaque idioms in English, phraseological units in Slovak, and partly idiomatic phrasemes in Hungarian. On the other hand, in 11 cases out of the 50 (22%), the studied idioms belong to the same class only in two languages: in 6 cases, the class is the same in English and Slovak, in 5 cases in Slovak and Hungarian. In one case, idioms belong to different groups in all three languages from the viewpoint of semantics. The following chart clearly illustrates the described ones.

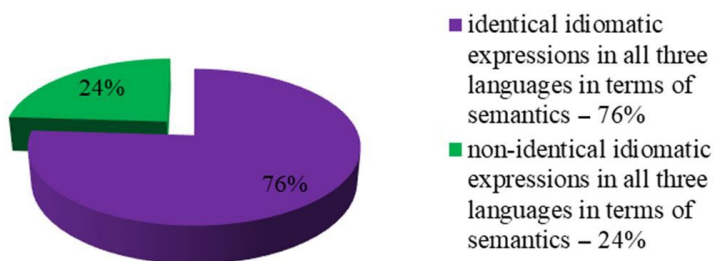


Figure 1. *Similarity of idiomatic expressions in terms of semantics*

In relation to Q2, as a result of our study, we demonstrate the following: the biggest class of idioms in terms of similarities and differences in observed lexical units containing names of body parts is the one with the same lexical unit in all three languages. This group consists of 22 phrasemes, which equals 44% of the whole research sample. Also, in 16 cases (32%), the lexical unit containing names of body parts is the same in two out of the three observed languages. Within that, in 8 cases, they are Slovak and Hungarian, in 6 cases English and Slovak, and the smallest class with two cases is that with the English and Hungarian ones. Alternatively, there is a small group of 4 phrasemes (8%) with the same lexical unit without a name of a body part in Slovak and Hungarian. For the sake of completeness, it is pointed out that in 8 instances (16%) the idioms contain different lexical units comprising names of body parts in all three languages. The described outcome is illustrated by the following chart.

The answer to the first research question says that 76% of the examined idiomatic expressions fall under the same category in all three languages from the semantic point of view. For that reason, we can confirm the hypothesis that most of the studied idioms are identical in terms of semantics in English, Slovak, and Hungarian.

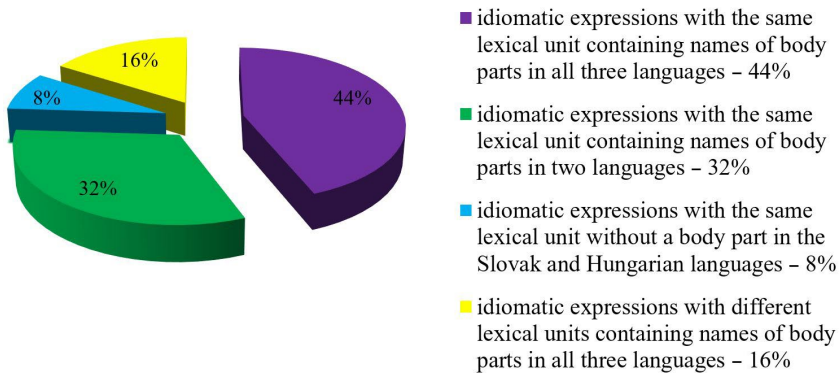


Figure 2. *Similarity of lexical units denoting names of body parts*

While the English and Slovak languages belong to different branches of the same language family, the Hungarian language comes from a completely dissimilar language family, hence our hypothesis 2. Surprisingly, among the examined idioms, the lexical units differ by 16% in all three languages. On the other hand, 44% of the whole research sample uses the same lexical unit containing names of body parts in all three languages and 32% in two out of the three. Therefore, we disprove the hypothesis that the keywords of the observed idioms containing names of body parts are different in English, Slovak, and Hungarian in most of the examined idioms.

The investigation outcomes highlight that the cultural aspects of the studied idioms vary greatly across English-, Slovak-, and Hungarian-speaking communities since they are an integral part of everyday communication. Moreover, the investigated idioms have historical origins and background that are not immediately apparent to non-native speakers of the above-mentioned languages. From the sociolinguistic point of view, the idioms containing body part names are applied to share common experience and understanding within a particular social group.

The research results of the study can be practically utilized as a study material for future translators and as a teaching aid for teaching English in the ethnically mixed territories of Slovakia and Hungary.

Our research has several limitations in terms of the research sample. These are factors that do not allow us to comprehensively examine the entire issue of the studied idioms. The first such factor is the size of the research sample. We worked with a selected sample of 50 expressions while there are incomparably more of them in all languages. The dictionaries of idioms which we worked with to select the research sample contain a very large number of them, not to mention that certain expressions are limited to residents of a smaller settlement or even

one family. They are not listed in the dictionaries we used. A great number of them are not even recorded in any dictionaries or collections at all.

Secondly, due to the dynamic nature of languages, we may not have noticed all shades of meaning of given expressions. Both limiting factors could be partially eliminated, for example, by studying language corpora or by personal discourses with members of various societies.

Regarding possible further research, it would be very interesting to develop the given topic in the direction of etymology. We mean to investigate the origin and reasons of similarities and differences of idiomatic expressions from the mentioned viewpoints. We assumed that the majority of idiomatic expressions would contain different lexical units comprising names of body parts in the three investigated languages for a very simple reason. These languages are completely different both typologically and genetically. Nevertheless, we concluded that lexical units containing names of body parts differ in all three languages in just 16% of the research sample.

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