

Figurative phraseological units are fixed expressions in a language whose meaning cannot be directly inferred from the meanings of their individual components. For instance, the Polish phrase *ktoś poszedłby za kimś w ogień* (“someone would go into fire for someone”) expresses deep loyalty, while *obietcywać złote góry* (“to promise golden mountains”) is used when someone makes exaggerated and unrealistic promises. Such expressions are part of everyday language, and their deeper analysis helps us understand how different cultures express similar emotions and interpersonal relations.

The aim of the project is to compare phraseological units describing interpersonal relationships in four languages: Czech, Serbian, Polish, and Spanish. The study will focus on the so-called image component – a culturally grounded mental image embedded in the structure of a given expression, which links its literal and actual meanings. For instance, the Spanish *dar calabazas a alguien* (literally “to give someone pumpkins”) means “to reject someone,” while the Serbian *podvlačiti se nekome pod rep* (literally “to crawl under someone’s tail”) means “to flatter someone.”

The project will analyze similarities and differences between expressions with similar meanings but different constructions and cultural backgrounds. Some may appear to be equivalents – such as Polish *mieć kogoś na oku*, Spanish *tener a alguien en la mira*, or Czech *mít někoho na očích* (all roughly meaning “to keep an eye on someone”) – but their usage contexts and associated connotations may differ significantly.

The research material will come from phraseological dictionaries and language corpora, which will make it possible to analyze how these expressions function in real texts. The results will not only contribute to a better understanding of how interpersonal relationships are conceptualized in different languages and cultures but also point to the limits of translation and offer insights for future phraseological dictionaries – ones that take into account subtle semantic and functional distinctions.