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# Phraseological loan translations in Bulgarian and in French: a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural study

Ramón Martí Solano & Maria Kolarova

## Abstract

Phraseological loan translations can be described as a special type of Anglicisms (Picone 1996: 3), less evident to the naked eye than loanwords or other direct or semi-direct borrowings. Nevertheless they are pervasive and extremely widespread in all European language families and constitute a major sign of globalization, in general, and of linguistic Anglicization, in particular. French (Fr) and Bulgarian (Bu), and their sister languages for that matter, are no exception to this global trend. An important number of these loan translations have been detected in corpora, the media and on the Internet such as Fr. *franchir la ligne rouge* and Bu. *пресичам червената линия* (to cross the red line), Fr. *être sur le même bateau* and Bu. *в една и съща лодка сме* (be in the same boat) or Fr. *au milieu de nulle part* and Bu. *в средата на нищото* (in the middle of nowhere). Lexicographical, typographical, contextual and multilingual methodological criteria have been used in selecting potential loan translations. Even though most of the strings are calques in both languages, a few of them can be said to be specific to one language or the other, even though specificity should be regarded rather as frequency of use and consequently degree of integration in the recipient language. Some instances of language-specific calques are Bu. *имааш неперуди в стомаха* (have butterflies in the stomach) and *слон в стаята* (an elephant in the room) or Fr. *ce n'est pas ma tasse de thé* (it's not my cup of tea) and *été indien* (Indian summer).

## Abstract (Bulgarian)

Фразеологичните калки могат да се опишат като специален тип англицизми (Picone 1996: 3), които на пръв поглед са по-малко разпознаваеми от директните или полудиректните заемки. Въпреки това, те са широко разпространени във всички европейски езикови семейства и представляват основен признак както за глобализация, така и за лингвистична англицизация. Френският и българският, и сродните на тях езици, не са изключение от тази глобална тенденция. Фразеологични калки се откриват често в корпуси, в медиите и интернет. Такива примери са Фр. *franchir la ligne rouge* и Бълг.

*пресичам червената линия* (to cross the red line), Фр. *être sur le même bateau* и Бълг. *в една и съща лодка сме* (be in the same boat) или Фр. *au milieu de nulle part* и Бълг. *в средата на нищото* (in the middle of nowhere). Чрез лексикографични, типологични, контекстуални и мултиезикови методологични критерии са подбрани потенциални фразеологични калки. Въпреки, че повечето съчетания са калки и в двата езика, някои от тях са специфични само за единия или за другия език, но тази специфичност трябва да се разглежда по-скоро като честота на употреба и съответно степен на интеграция в езика приемник. Така например, фразите *имам неперуди в стомаха* (have butterflies in the stomach) и *слон в стаята* (an elephant in the room) са характерни за българския език, докато изразите *ce n'est pas ma tasse de thé* (it's not my cup of tea) и *été indien* (Indian summer) са специфични за френския.

## **Abstract (Russian)**

### **1. General frame**

#### **1.1. Definition of phraseological units (multi-word units) and types**

##### **1.1.1. Profusion of categories and terms**

Providing a generalized definition of phraseological units appears to be a rather challenging task. Within the huge variety of word-like combinations, linguists talk about amalgams, chunks, clichés, co-ordinate constructions, collocations, complex lexemes, composites, conventionalized forms, fixed expressions, formulas/formulae, fossilized forms, frozen metaphors, frozen phrases, gambits, holophrases, idioms, lexical(ized) phrases, lexicalized sentence stems, listemes, multiword items/units, multiword lexical phenomena, phrasemes, ready-made expressions/utterances, routine formulae, set phrases, stereotyped phrases, stock utterances or unanalyzed multiword chunks, all listed by Wray (Wray 2002: 9). This great profusion of categories and terms is indicative of the fuzziness of phraseology and the difficulty of giving a straightforward answer to the question ‘what is a phraseological unit?’ Yet, the latter can be generally described as a stable combination of two or more words, i.e. a single word cannot convey phraseological meaning (Кювлиева-Мишайкова 1986: 11). Gläser gives a more detailed definition of phraseological units. She describes them as lexicalized, reproducible billexemic or polylexemic word groups with relative syntactic and semantic stability, which may be idiomatized, may have connotations and may perform an

intensifying function in a text (Gläser 1998: 125). Hence, following Gläser's definition and Vinogradov's approach to word-like combinations, we could say that all the examples cited above could be subsumed under the general term *phraseological unit*.

### 1.1.2. Characteristics of multi-word units

Within the general class of phraseological units, Vinogradov distinguished between *phraseological fusions*, also known as *idioms*, *phraseological unities* and *phraseological combinations*. The subcategory of the *fusions* was made up of structurally fixed but semantically opaque combinations. An example that can easily fit this category is *let the cat out of the bag*. By contrast, the *phraseological unities* were seen as partially motivated, i.e. Vinogradov described their meaning as "a metaphorical extension of some original neutral sense" (Cowie 1998: 5). A good example here is the expression *break the ice*. Vinogradov's third subcategory, the *phraseological combinations*, is considered to be the most interesting and the most difficult to delimit (Cowie 1998: 5). These combinations consist of two components that are open-class words. One of them is used in a literal sense, whereas the other is used figuratively. Cowie's example of phraseological combination is *meet the demand*, where it is the verb *meet* that is used figuratively (Cowie 1998: 5).

On the whole, the most important characteristic features of phraseological units can be summarized as follows (Кювлиева-Мишайкова 1986: 10-13; Fiedler 2012: 241):

- a) Each phraseological unit is made up of at least two lexical words, i.e. it has a polylexemic structure. A single word cannot have a phraseological meaning.
- b) Phraseological units are, in principle, stable word groups both in terms of lexical meaning and syntactic structure. Yet, their stability should be conceived of as something relative because they may often undergo certain changes. Hence, one and the same phraseological unit can have different variations.
- c) Their relative stability allows for their natural reproducibility in the process of communication as ready-made units.
- d) Phraseological units have a single specific meaning which is not a sum total of the literal meanings of their components. In other words, they are characterized by idiomaticity, which is their prototypical, yet potential feature.
- e) Last but not least, phraseological units may perform various pragmatic functions in discourse due to their optional connotative features such as expressiveness and emotional colouring.

Phraseological units can be classified in different ways. According to Fiedler's classification, which is based on structural-semantic criteria, there are six relevant types of phraseological units. These are: a) phraseological nominations, e.g. *hot potato* or *the elephant in the room*; b) binominals, e.g. *ifs and buts* or *back and forth*; c) stereotyped comparisons, e.g. *as good as gold* or *sleep like a log*; d) proverbs, e.g. *blood is thicker than water* or *cut your coat according to your cloth*; e) winged words/catch phrases, e.g. *Speak softly and carry a big stick* or *Big Brother is watching you* and f) routine formulae, e.g. *don't mention it* or *so long* (Fiedler 2012: 242).

### **1.1.3. Idiomatic vs. non-idiomatic multi-word units**

The idiomatic multi-word units are highly lexicalized in the sense that their meaning is not deducible from the meanings of their components. That is why idioms are seen as semantically opaque or 'unmotivated'. By contrast, the non-idiomatic multi-word units have a low degree of lexicalization and a high degree of compositionality, i.e. the meaning of the whole unit can be deduced from the meanings of its components. Hence, the phraseological meaning is quite predictable. Yet, although it is motivated by the meanings of the constituent elements, it is not confined to them.

### **1.1.4. Choice of items under investigation**

The items selected for the purposes of the present research are English-induced phraseological calques taken out from French and Bulgarian electronic sources such as corpora, newspapers, magazines, forums, websites, blogs, TV and radio programmes. They are idiomatic multi-word units that differ in terms of their stylistic features and degree of idiomaticity.

Taking into account Fiedler's classification suggested above, we can say that almost half of the selected idioms are phraseological nominations like *hot potato*, *white elephant* or *the tip of the iceberg*, and the only routine formulaic sequence *have a nice day*. Some of the items are common for both French and Bulgarian, others occur in French only and a third group are specific to Bulgarian. The selected items and their degrees of integration are discussed in detail in sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

## **1.2. Contrastive phraseology**

Research in phraseology has traditionally been either theoretical on matters such as idiomaticity (Wulff 2008) or centred around specific languages. The interface between

phraseology and other linguistic areas or sub-areas has also been developed in the last decades especially in cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics and cultural studies (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen 2005, 2006). However, the study of phraseological units from a cross-linguistic perspective has yet to be developed although some very important research has already been done (Dobrovol'skij 2000; Colson 2008). It is our intention to push even further the analysis of phraseological units across languages by focusing on the influence of Anglo-American phraseology in French and Bulgarian as “the influence of English idioms on other languages has almost never been the topic of systematic and multilingual research” (Piirainen 2012: 516). This influence has, nevertheless, been observed and analysed across the board (Görlach 2001, 2002, 2003) but also in the framework of individual languages such as Spanish (Oncins-Martínez 2007, 2012, 2014), German (Fiedler 2012) or Latvian (Veisbergs 2010), among others. Our aim is to look at this influence from a contrastive perspective by observing and analysing common influence as well as specific cases found in one language and not in the other and therefore our theoretical approach can be described as cross-linguistic corpus linguistics. Although it is sometimes hard to trace the origin of a phraseological unit and to demonstrate the influence exerted by its English counterpart, we have used the following methodological criteria for our purposes:

- a) The first attested examples are found in the media, especially in an Anglo-American context.
- b) Their ‘foreignness’ is signalled by the use of inverted commas, italics or metalinguistical comments such as “As the English say”.
- c) The expression is not found in general dictionaries or in dictionaries of idioms in French or Bulgarian or has been incorporated only in their last editions.
- d) Other Romance languages, as regards French, or other Slavic languages, as regards Bulgarian, have adopted the same expression.

All the above criteria cannot be applied to every item of our findings. For instance *ce n'est pas ma tasse de thé* (a loan translation from the English phrase *it's not my cup of tea*) does not conform to the fourth criterion: neither Spanish nor Italian nor Portuguese have calqued this

phrase<sup>1</sup>, which in any case does not invalidate the English origin of the French phrase (Martí Solano 2012: 200).

We have opted for idiomatic expressions rather than transparent or non-idiomatic ones: grammatical phrases such as *as long as* or *by virtue of* or other phrases of the like have a grammatical function rather than a semantic function. We have avoided transparent noun phrases and have selected idiomatic ones such as *hot potato* or *red line*. An important part of our selection is made up of predicate idioms, such as *give the green light* or *throw the baby out with the bath-water*, which are colourful and very expressive idioms and which lend themselves to calquing in the target languages.

Contrastive or comparative linguistics has traditionally focused on grammar rather than on lexis and it can be stated that the development of studies on languages in contact in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, begun by Weinreich's seminal work (1953), has contributed to the growing interest among scholars in this field. Both the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) and The European Society of Phraseology (EUROPHRAS) play a pivotal role in contrastive lexicology and phraseology among European languages. The ESSE 2010 conference, University of Turin, Italy, included a seminar on the "Anglicization of European Lexis" and at the EUROPHRAS 2012 Conference, University of Maribor, Slovenia, a workshop was organised entitled "The influence of English on the phraseology of European languages". Finally, the ESSE 2014 conference, University of Košice, Slovakia, had also a seminar entitled "Comparative studies of English Idioms."

## **2. Calquing vs. borrowing (phraseological)**

### **2.1. Definition of a borrowing**

Despite the rich abundance of theoretical research produced since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, modern theory of language contact still fails to provide a consensus categorization of the types of lexical borrowing (Furiassi *et al.*, 2012: 5). In very broad terms, borrowing proper, which is justifiably considered to be the most frequent form of lexical influence of one language on another, is defined as "taking over of the form and (part of) the content of foreign words" (Alexieva 2002: 256). In studies focused specifically on the influence of English on other languages, and today English is undoubtedly "a major source of language influence

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase is unknown in these three Romance languages that use instead *no es algo que me vuelva loco* (Sp.), *não é a minha praia* (Po) and *non è il mio pane* (It) that translate literally and respectively as *it's not something that makes me crazy*, *it's not my beach* and *it's not my bread*.

worldwide” (Fiedler 2012: 239), it is crucial to provide a precise and yet exhaustive definition of English borrowings or Anglicisms. In doing so, scholars should take into account the relevant fact that while Anglicisms usually preserve their English-looking form in the vocabulary of the receptor language, they also often occur in less-readily identifiable forms, disguised as adapted loans, false Anglicisms, calques or semantic loans. In addition, the influence of English has gone beyond the level of the individual lexical item so that the English-induced forms of borrowing today encompass a wider range of phenomena at levels higher than that of the individual lexeme, namely the levels of syntax and phraseology, including also the semantic, pragmatic, stylistic and cultural level (Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 5). Hence, Görlach’s definition of an Anglicism as “a word or idiom that is recognizably English in its form (spelling, pronunciation, morphology, or at least one of the three), but is accepted as an item in the vocabulary of the receptor language” seems to be convenient mainly for lexicographic purposes but fails to account for other existing or emerging phenomena of Anglicization. For this reason, some scholars propose that the term Anglicism should be taken in a much wider sense so that it could cover any instance of interference ascribable to the influence of English (Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 5). Gottlieb provides a very flexible and comprehensive definition of Anglicisms, one that could readily suit the purposes of any scientific research concerned with the phenomenon of Anglicization. In his definition, Gottlieb identifies an Anglicism as “any individual or systemic language feature adapted or adopted from English, or inspired or boosted by English models, used in intralingual communication in a language other than English” (Gottlieb 2012: 175).

Based on different scholarly views of language contact, the typology of lexical borrowing, as it is presented today in the linguistic literature, is quite detailed but still tentative. Borrowings are generally discussed as direct and indirect. Direct borrowings into a receptor language are easily detectable, bearing some prominent formal features of the source language. They include adapted or non-adapted loanwords, false loans and hybrids. Indirect borrowings, by contrast, are not immediately recognizable because the source language concept is rendered into the receptor language by native means. Indirect borrowings include calques and semantic loans (Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 6). This type of lexical borrowing is given due attention in the following subsection.

## **2.2. Definition of a calque or a loan-translation.**

Calquing, also referred to as replacement (Alexieva 2002: 256), is “a language contact phenomenon that is either conscious or spontaneous in nature and is realized through native



elements on a foreign model”<sup>2</sup> (Благоева 2005: 12). Calques are generally subdivided into four types: loan translations, loan renditions, loan creations and semantic loans (Alexieva, 2002: 256; Görlach 2003: 96). Some scholars, however, treat semantic loans as a separate type of indirect lexical borrowing, which is outside the category of calques proper (Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 6).

Loan translations are single words or multi-word units that render as closely as possible the source language concept into the receptor language. Such examples from English into Bulgarian are *върхът на айсберга*, *горещ картоф* or *слонът в стаята*, which are one-to-one translation equivalents of the etymons *the tip of the iceberg*, *hot potato* and *the elephant in the room*, respectively. A French example is *le début de la fin* from the English *the beginning of the end*. In many cases the calquing process is not complete and only one part is translated, which results in the formation of semi-calques. Bulgarian examples are *екшънгерой* from *action hero* and *кавърверсия* from *cover-version*.

Loan renditions are units which translate part of the foreign item and provide a looser equivalent for the other part. Thus, with loan renditions the equivalence involves partial difference in terms of form or meaning. This can be illustrated by the following examples: in Bulgarian *изтичане на мозъци* is the equivalent of *brain drain* and in French *boîte de nuit* stands for *night club*.

Loan creations are coinages prompted by foreign items but formally independent, i.e. they freely render the source item model in the receptor language. Examples of English-induced loan creations in Bulgarian are *зърнени ядки* (*cornflakes*) and *връзки с обществеността* (*public relations*). A French example is *planche à voile* prompted by the English *windsurfing*.

Semantic loans are already existing items in the receptor language, whether native or previously borrowed, which take over one of the meanings of the foreign word. Good examples in Bulgarian are *мишка* (*mouse*) and *намет* (*memory*). In French a semantic loan is *papillon* in the sense of the swimming style ‘butterfly’ (Alexieva 2002: 256-257; Görlach 2003: 96; Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 7-8). Semantic loans will not be further discussed because they fall outside the scope and purposes of the present research.

As Görlach points out, calques “provide an excellent alternative to loanwords”, especially in language-conscious communities, whose members and/or authorities are against the excessive influx of foreign words, trying to keep their native language as intact as possible. Thus, purism appears to be a strong determining factor behind calquing (Görlach 2003: 96-

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<sup>2</sup> The translation is made by the Bulgarian co-author of this paper.

97). In the case of French and Bulgarian under the influence of English, it appears that Bulgarian is now as open to Anglicisms as it has never been before and what is more, it is the direct borrowing of English words that wins the upper hand. To some extent, this could be explained by the fact that Bulgarian society went through a long period of relative isolation and is now trying to keep up and identify with the western world. French, by contrast, is noteworthy for its tendency to purism so that calquing in French seems to be stronger than direct borrowing. This is also true for Icelandic, Russian and Greek but even these languages have recently quite conspicuously shifted to “the easy takeover of an English word rather than the more cumbersome search for a replacement”, to quote Görlach (Görlach 2003: 98).

### **3. Phraseological loan translations versus internationalisms or widespread idioms**

A phraseological loan translation is the translation, word for word, of a foreign expression or, to a lesser extent, its lexico-grammatical adaptation so that the new expression may conform to the genius of the language and to its own linguistic system. The resulting expression may, in some cases, develop a new sense unknown in the donor language, acquire new connotations, by amelioration or pejoration, or even change its grammatical category.

The most detailed account of the common phraseological stock in most European languages, and several other languages worldwide, is to be found in Piirainen 2012 (see references). *Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond: Toward a Lexicon of Common Figurative Units* is an impressive piece of research and an extraordinary academic achievement as far as cross-linguistic phraseology is concerned. In the preface Piirainen argues against the use of the term internationalisms and introduces and defines the newly-coined term Widespread idioms (WIs) as idioms that “have the same or a similar lexical structure and the same figurative core meaning in various different languages” (Piirainen 2012: xx).

Going through all the phraseological units that constitute the bulk of the book, we have detected four idioms that can be classified as phraseological calques from English: *the light at the end of the tunnel*, *the tip of the iceberg*, *throw the baby out with the bath-water* and *have a skeleton in the closet/cupboard*.

The first occurrence in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) of *the tip of the iceberg* is from 1916. Concerning *the light at the end of the tunnel* the first attested occurrence in the OED, although not in this exact lexical frame, is from 1879. The first three occurrences in the OED of *throw the baby out with the bath-water* are from the period between 1840 and 1853

and all of them make reference to its German origin. As regards *have a skeleton in the closet/cupboard* the first attested occurrence is from Thackeray and dates back to 1855. What one can learn about all this is that these idioms have all been used in the English language for more than 100 years and that their counterparts in all the European languages are relatively recent: for instance, the first occurrence in the French general corpus *Frantext* of *un cadavre dans le placard* (a skeleton in the closet/cupboard) is from 1974. There is only one occurrence of *refiler le bébé avec l'eau du bain* (a variant form of *throw the baby out with the bath-water*) and it is from 2006.

The fact that an idiom may be widespread and that both its lexico-grammatical structure and meaning are shared by many different languages does not necessarily imply that the idiom in question cannot be a phraseological loan translation from English. Let us take the example of *to be in the same boat*, found not only in French and in Bulgarian (see section 4) but also in Spanish as *estar en el mismo barco* (Lorenzo 1996: 633) or in German as *im selben Boot sitzen* (Görlach 2003: 62). Both scholars claim that there is strong evidence that the respective phrases are loan translations from English. Even though the metaphor was used by Cicero and was later included in Erasmus's *Adagia* (Piirainen 2012: 137), we believe that a distinction should be made between the metaphor and the idiom itself as "The metaphorical source conjures up the original image rendered in whatever lexico-grammatical form whereas the phraseological source constitutes the exact or quasi-exact rendering of the phrase as found in the donor language." (Martí Solano 2012: 204)

#### **4. Bulgarian and French common calques**

Even though one might think that contrasting a Romance language with a Slavic one would not yield as many cases of common multi-word loan translations as if Romance languages or Slavic languages were compared between them, this proves to be wrong. The influence of English in general, and of English phraseology in particular, is extremely widespread in all European languages (Görlach 2003, Furiassi *et al.* 2012) regardless of language family, language contact or even number of speakers or international linguistic weight. However, it should be remembered that different historic and social events, mainly in the second half of the 20th century, have encouraged or hampered the flood of borrowings, calques, renderings and other hybrid types of lexical material of English origin in either language. The number of common calques exceeds all expectations and cannot obviously be analysed in the context and limits of a paper like this. These include, among many others, the French and Bulgarian

loan translations of *a safety net, a skeleton in the cupboard, an elephant in the room, below the belt, brain drain, brain washing, cross the red line, cross your fingers, give sb/sth the green light, glass ceiling, grey area, grey market, grey economy, Have a nice day!, have butterflies in your stomach, hot potato, in the middle of nowhere, Indian summer, keep a low profile, lame duck, love handles, not be sb's cup of tea, on the world scene, open-door day, open-door policy, paper tiger, pink elephants, point of no return, the ball is in sb's court, the best of both worlds, the eleventh hour, the tip of the iceberg, throw the baby out with the bath-water and white elephant*.

Linguists and sociolinguists are unanimous that language reflects the political, economic, social and cultural developments in a given society, together with the beliefs, attitudes and modes of thinking of the people who belong to that society and share the same language (Boyadzhieva 2006). Bulgarian society was long isolated from the Western world and now it is still regarded as being in a process of transition from a rather confined ex-soviet-like type of society to a more open multicultural one (Boyadzhieva 2010). During this transition period Bulgarian has been heavily influenced by English. This influence is part of the tendency to internationalization, which has become a characteristic feature of the development of the Slavic languages for the past decades (Благоева 2005: 56). The tendency to internationalization is triggered mainly by extralinguistic factors such as the intensity of intercultural communication, the increase in the economic, scientific and cultural relations, the vast exchange of information, the integration and globalization processes in the socio-political sphere (Благоева 2005: 57). Hence, the nature of internationalisms is again of particular interest to many scholars today. The issue has been thoroughly discussed in section 3 above.

Another active tendency in the development of the Slavic languages today is the tendency to nationalization, which is in opposition to the process of internationalization. Reproducing foreign items and patterns through native means, calquing represents the interface between the two opposing tendencies and can be regarded as a compensatory mechanism for achieving some balance between national and international elements in a given language (Благоева, 2005: 58). Some authors also speak of the so called serial calquing (серийно калкиране), which occurs when a linguistic unit from one language is reproduced in a number of foreign languages (Благоева 2005: 58; Obara 1989). Thus, taking into account the fact that for the past decades, English has been the main source for the internationalization of Slavic lexis through calquing, it should come as no surprise that most of the English phrases discussed in

this paper occur as calques not only in Bulgarian but also in other Slavic languages as well as in French and other Romance languages as illustrated below.

**give the green light** – (Bg) давам зелена светлина, (Polish) dać zielone światło, (Czech) dát zelenou, (Russian) давать зелёный свет; (Fr) donner le feu vert, (Sp and Po) dar luz verde, (It) dare luce verde.

**cross the red line** – (Bg) пресичам червената линия, (Polish) przekroczyć czerwoną linię, (Czech) překročit červenou čáru, (Russian) пересечь красную линию; (Fr) franchir la ligne rouge, (Po) cruzar a linha vermelha, (It) varcare la linea rossa.

**in the middle of nowhere** – (Bg) в средата на нищото, (Polish) pośrodku niczego, (Czech) uprostřed ničeho; (Fr) au milieu de nulle part, (Sp) en medio de ninguna parte.

**the tip of the iceberg** – (Bg) върхът на айсберг, (Polish) wierzchołek góry lodowej, (Czech) jen špička ledovce, (Russian) вершина айсберга; Fr. la partie visible de l'iceberg, (Sp) la punta del iceberg, (Po) a ponta do iceberg.

**be in the same boat** – (Bg) в една и съща лодка сме, (Polish) siedzimy w tej samej łódce, (Czech) být na jedné lodi, (Russian) быть /сидеть/ в одной лодке; (Fr) être sur le même bateau, (Sp) estar en el mismo barco, (It) essere sulla stessa barca, (Po) estar no mesmo barco.

**throw the baby out with the bath-water** – (Bg) изхвърлям бебето (заедно) с мръсната вода, (Czech) vylít s vaničkou i dítě / vyhodit dítě ven s vaničkou, (Russian) вместе с водой выплеснуть и ребенка; (Fr) jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain, (Sp) tirar el bebé/niño con el agua del baño/de la bañera.

**hot potato** – (Bg) горещ картоф, (Polish) gorący kartofel, (Czech) horký brambor; (Fr) patate chaude, (Sp) papa/patata caliente, (It) patata bollente.

The first occurrence of *hot potato* in its figurative sense of “[S]omething difficult or painful to deal with; a controversial or awkward matter or situation.”, as defined in OED, is from the novel *The Groves of Academe* by the American writer Mary McCarthy: “It was a very hot potato...I chose to ignore the question.” (1952).

The OED clearly specifies that the phrase *throw the baby out with the bath-water* is “After German *das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten* (early 16th cent.).” The first three examples make direct reference to its German origin: “*Schüttet das Kind mit dem Bade aus*; literally ‘empties out the baby with the bath’” (1840), “The Germans say, ‘You must empty out the bathing-tub, but not the baby along with it.’” (1853) and “The defect of the above article

seems to us to be that, in the language of a homely German proverb, it throws out the baby with the bath.” (1860).

These are two very different idioms in the sense that the former is American and relatively recent whereas the latter is British—although a loan translation from a German phrase—and with a longer history. In any case, all of the common idioms listed above seem to have grabbed the attention of journalists and other media professionals and therefore they have been integrated in the phraseology of each language, although their degree of integration may differ from idiom to idiom and from language to language.

## 5. Calques specific to Bulgarian

For the past few decades, calquing from English has been a very productive means of expanding the lexical stock of Bulgarian, although, as mentioned above, the items that have come into Bulgarian through direct borrowing vastly outnumber the items that have resulted from calquing (Благоева 2005: 63). What is particularly interesting is that some of the English-induced phraseological calques in Bulgarian display a high degree of variability in the sense that they often occur in various forms as regards word order, the omission of an item or the addition of a new one.

English-induced calquing is also a widely used means of filling certain slots in specific thematic fields in the Bulgarian language such as computer technologies and the Internet, finances and banking, politics and diplomacy, military science, ecology and others. The phraseological calques in particular are prevalent in the sphere of computer technologies, as well as in the socio-political, economic, military, medical, ecological, sports and everyday life lexis (Благоева 2005: 64).

The following paragraphs discuss the meaning, use and formal structure of a number of phraseological calques that are specific to Bulgarian. They belong to the everyday life lexis and display a high degree of lexicalization.

The first phrase to begin with is (*умам*) *nenepyду в cтoмaxa*, which is a one-to-one translation of the English idiom (*have*) *butterflies in one's stomach*, used to express a feeling of nervous anticipation about something you are going to do. The calque is very popular with young people but to many adults its meaning is still unclear. An important point to make here is that in Bulgarian the calque is frequently used to express a fluttering sensation caused by a love feeling. In other words, there is a certain degree of narrowing of the meaning of the calque, whereas its English etymon has a considerably wider sense, not being restricted so

much to romantic feelings. Furthermore, the expression *ненеруди в стомаха* is registered in an online dictionary of Bulgarian phrases (frazite.com) precisely with the definition “a love feeling”.

The calque occurs not only with the verb *имам*, which is the Bulgarian equivalent of the English *have*, but also with other verbs such as *усещам* (*feel*) and *хвърча* (*fly*). This can be seen in the following examples: *Мисля, че е вълнуващо да **имаш ненеруди в стомаха**, защото това означава, че все още ти пука много – каза Серина* (*I think it is exciting to **have butterflies in your stomach** because this means that you still care a lot, said Serena*); *Усещам **ненерудите в стомаха*** (*I feel the butterflies in my stomach*) and *Ненерудите, които **хвърчат в стомаха ти*** (*The butterflies that **are flying** in your stomach*). The last two example sentences display the degree of variability of this phraseological calque in Bulgarian. On the one hand, the Bulgarian equivalent of *butterflies* may take the full article inflection (*ненеруди-те*) and on the other hand, it may be followed by a relative clause as in *Ненерудите, които хвърчат в стомаха ти*. In addition, this calque is often used simply as a noun phrase without a verb, i.e. *ненеруди в стомаха* (*butterflies in one’s stomach*). It should be noted here that the English phrase itself is also characterized by such a degree of variability in the source language.

The second phrase to consider is *слон в стаята*. It is again a literal translation of its English etymon *an elephant in the room* and is frequently used by Bulgarian politicians, journalists and public figures to indicate that there is an obvious problem that people do not want to talk about. In writing, however, the expression *слон в стаята* often occurs enclosed within quotation marks, printed in italics or is accompanied by an explanation. This can be illustrated by the following citation: *Ромите и „слонът в стаята”* (*The Roma people and “the elephant in the room”*) *Какво означава „слон в стаята”? Това е англо-саксонски израз, който означава, че има някакъв огромен проблем, голям колкото „слон в стаята”, но ние не искаме да го видим.* (*What does the expression **an elephant in the room** mean? This is an Anglo-Saxon expression which means that there is a big problem, as big as **an elephant in the room** but we don’t want to see it.*)

The explanation and the metalinguistic elements that are often an invariable part of the use of this expression are indicative of its opacity and low degree of integration in Bulgarian. Yet, the calque is gaining more and more ground and can be heard on various TV and radio programmes, in addition to its use in the printed media.

Another English-induced calque specific to Bulgarian is *бял слон*, which literally translates its English etymon *white elephant*. The term derives from the white elephants kept by

Southeast Asian monarchs in ancient times but its first occurrence in English as an idiomatic expression was in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The white elephants were considered sacred and laws protected them from labour. Thus, receiving a white elephant as a gift from a monarch was both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because the animal was seen as a sign of the monarch's favour, and a curse because the recipient now had an animal that was very expensive to maintain but he could neither give it away, nor use it for practical purposes. Today the expression *white elephant* is generally used to refer to a burdensome possession that creates more trouble than it is worth.

The calque *бял слон* is still new and rarely used in Bulgarian. It is occasionally found in newspaper articles, surrounded by quotation marks and followed by an adequate definition as in *"Бял слон" е етикет за скъп и безсмислен проект... Съвременна България е огромен развъдник за "бели слонове". Явно страната ни е много богата, щом въпреки това още не е фалирала ("White elephant" is a label for an expensive but meaningless project... Modern Bulgaria is an enormous breeding place for "white elephants". Obviously our country is very rich because otherwise, it would have gone bankrupt by now).*

The low frequency of occurrence of the calque *бял слон* in Bulgarian, the quotation marks and the provided definition prove better than anything else the foreign origin of this phrase and its extremely low level of integration in the receptor language. Nevertheless, its use is quite justifiable and effective because it contributes to the colourfulness and sensational tone of the journalistic texts in which the phrase occurs.

The last item to consider in this section is the routine formulaic sequence *имайте хубав ден*. It is a direct, word-for-word translation of the English imperative structure *have a nice day* and may be frequently heard at the end of TV and radio broadcasts. The typically Bulgarian formulaic expression is *приятен ден* (*nice day*) – a noun phrase in which the head noun *ден* (*day*) is pre-modified by the adjective *хубав* (*nice*). The use of the verb *имам* (*have*) in its imperative form *имайте* followed by the noun phrase *хубав ден* (*nice day*) is a direct transfer from English. Thus, the whole expression *имайте хубав ден* is considered by many Bulgarians as rather awkward, unnatural and superfluous because it does not fill an empty slot in Bulgarian lexis but simply reproduces a foreign model alongside an already existing native one. This particular calque could also be discussed as an instance of syntactic interference, which is due to word-for-word translation. Interference, for its part, is discussed by some authors as negative transfer (Danchev 1982: 41, 45), which could be seen as a reasonable explanation why the expression *имайте хубав ден* is not wholeheartedly accepted by many Bulgarians. This negative attitude could be illustrated by the following example: ***Имайте***



*хубав ден!* Скоро прочетох някъде това пожелание и се стъписах. Стандартните английски фрази в моя речник са ограничени на брой, но все пак направих асоциация с песента ***Have a Nice Day*** на Bon Jovi и с традиционното ***Have a nice evening***, което казвам на преподавателката си след края на часовете по английски. (***Have a nice day!*** *Recently I read this greeting somewhere and I was shocked. The standard English phrases in my vocabulary are limited in number, but still I associated the expression with Bon Jovi's song **Have a nice day** and with the traditional **Have a nice evening**, which I say to my teacher at the end of our English class).*

Another point to make concerning the phrase *имайте хубав ден* is that interference in this case does not affect the source language but the receptor language. Furthermore, although the calque arouses some negative feelings and is not fully integrated into Bulgarian, it is quite transparent and is often heard in everyday conversations, probably because it is more emphatic and produces a much stronger effect on the listener.

The analysis of the calques in this section shows again that Bulgarian is quite open to the influx of English items and patterns and it readily borrows them through calquing. In addition, it proves that English-induced calquing is not only a powerful and efficient means of enriching the Bulgarian lexical stock but it is also a very convenient way of achieving unexpectedness, sensationalism and a strong, dramatic impact.

## 6. Calques specific to French

Even though *éléphant blanc* (white elephant) has been classified as specific to Bulgarian, it is always possible to find examples of the French version in the press, and obviously on the Internet. We consider that cases like these, thinly-represented and usually found in italics and/or inverted commas, represent “the lowest degree of the continuum or cline of adaptation and institutionalisation of phraseological calques” (Martí Solano 2012: 211) and therefore have been excluded as common calques.

Most of the loan translations found in French are also found in the other three main Romance languages, i.e. Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. However, there is one that really constitutes ‘the French exception’, namely *ce n’est pas ma tasse de thé* (*it’s not my cup of tea*). Together with *été indien* (*Indian summer*), *poignées d’amour* (*love handles*) et *adopter un profil bas* (*keep a low profile*), these are the four idioms that have been selected as specific to French and which are loan translations from English. It should be noted here that the English *Indian summer* has two Bulgarian equivalents which are not, however, literal, word-

for-word translations of the English phrase. These are *сиромашко лято* (*paupers' summer*) and *циганско лято* (*gypsy summer*). Another point to make is that *love handles* has been calqued into Bulgarian as well, but the calque *любовни дръжки*, which is a literal translation of the English phrase, is popular mainly with young people who have some knowledge of English or are interested in fitness, weight loss, dieting, etc. Furthermore, the calque is usually enclosed within quotation marks or is accompanied by a definition, which is yet another sign of its very low degree of integration in Bulgarian, e.g. *Може би сте пробвали различни стратегии да се отървете от „любовните дръжки“, но не сте успели.* (Probably you have tried various strategies to get rid of your **love handles** but all your efforts have been in vain).

*Ce n'est pas ma tasse de thé* is a well-known phrase in French with a high degree of institutionalisation but which tends to be used more in speech than in written form (Martí Solano 2012: 200). The following example illustrates its use: *Le Génie du christianisme n'a jamais été la tasse de thé de l'athée inflexible qui refusa d'entrer dans l'église le jour des obsèques de son maître et ami Mitterrand.* (Libération 12/03/2010) (*The Génie du christianisme has never been the cup of tea of the inflexible atheist who refused to walk inside the church on the day of the funeral of Mitterrand, his master and friend*). *Not be sb's cup of tea* is a typical case of a negative polarity idiom in English. Obviously the polarity of its French loan translation is equally negative as the phrase would not function pragmatically and discursively otherwise.

*Keep a low profile* and *Indian summer* are two phrases of American origin. The former is relatively recent whereas the latter dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The OED provides a first example of *low profile* from 1967: "We made a series of right moves: ... adopting a policy of 'masterly inactivity' when the struggle was reaching its crucial stages, and maintaining a 'low profile' in Jakarta ever since." The first example recorded in the OED of *Indian summer* is from 1790: "Fine weather—Indian summer."

The paradigm of a multi-word loan translation seems to be epitomised by *adopter un profil bas* as it has been mentioned by scholars working in the field of languages in contact or Anglicisms (Picone 1996: 4 & 101; Görlach 2003: 62). In the *Dictionnaire des Expressions et Locutions* (DEL) there is an entry for *[Adopter] un profil bas*. After a brief definition, the authors add that this phrase is widely used in the political press and that it could be a loan translation from English. Even the French general dictionary *Le Petit Robert* signals the phrase with the label *ANGLIC.* and dates its use back to 1970.

There are 11 tokens of *profil bas* in the French general corpus *Frantext*. The first occurrence is from 1986: “Là, **adoptant un profil bas**, il attendait qu'on lui demande à quel étage il désirait se rendre...” (Keeping a low profile, he was there waiting to be asked what floor he wanted to go to...). A much more recent example shows the hesitation of the journalist in using the idiom by surrounding the noun phrase with inverted commas: *Les ambassades recommandent donc la prudence à leurs ressortissants, certaines les incitent à ne pas sortir de chez eux, tandis que d'autres conseillent d'adopter "un profil bas" en cas de déplacement indispensable* (Le Nouvel Observateur (30/05/2006) (Embassies therefore recommend their nationals to be careful, some of them even encourage them not to leave their homes whereas others advise them to **keep a low profile** if they absolutely need to go outside.). Even though *adopter* (keep) is the verb most widely used in the French phrase other variants are also common, such as *faire* (do) or *jouer* (play). The former is as commonly used as *adopter* whether the latter is less frequent. Here are two examples: *Patrick Drahi est un homme discret. Il aurait voulu faire profil bas* (Le Monde, 09/01/2015) (Patrick Drahi is a discreet man. He would have liked to **keep a low profile**) and *Tout en acceptant, cette fois-ci, de jouer profil bas* (Le Monde 13/05/2002) (While accepting, this time, to **keep a low profile**). In the case of English the variant forms *maintain a low profile* and *adopt a low profile* are also found in corpora although their frequency is extremely low.

Interestingly enough the first occurrence in *Frantext* of *été indien* is to be found in the following example from 1865 by the great French writer Baudelaire: *Un brouillard fumeux, ressemblant à celui de l'été indien, enveloppait toutes choses* (A smoky mist, like that of an **Indian summer**, shrouded everything). Another more recent example taken from *Frantext* is the following: *Toute la journée, la douceur de l'été indien a fait chanter les arbres fauves dans le ciel vert* (All day long the softness of the **Indian summer** has made the fawn trees sing in the green sky). The phrase has got two distinct senses in English: on the one hand, “A period of calm warm weather which sometimes happens in the early autumn” (CALD3) and on the other hand, “A pleasant or successful time nearly at the end of someone’s life, job or other period.” (CALD3). It is only the first sense that is calqued in French as can be observed in the examples above.

Likewise, the phrase *Love handles* is from American origin and the first example in the OED is from 1970: “*Love handles*, the fat on one's sides.” This first occurrence is actually a definition of the phrase, which shows the high level of opacity when the phrase started to be used in English. Because of its specialised meaning and denominational status, the phrase, both in English and French, is only found in specialised contexts as illustrated by the

following example: *Ils sont intéressés par les opérations des paupières et des **poignées d'amour*** (Le Monde, 11/12/2007) (They are specially interested in eye-lids and **love handles** operations).

## 7. Degrees and strategies of integration

### 7.1. Frequency of use (French)

We have used mainly *Frantext* and *Le Monde* to check on the degree of integration and the strategies used by writers and journalists to signal the presence of a phraseological loan translation in French. Most of the items selected are well represented in the French newspaper archives from 1944 to date. Phraseological loan translations are more likely to be present in the newspaper archives than in the general corpus for obvious reasons related to size, genre and contemporariness.

No occurrences of *un éléphant blanc* have been found in *Frantext*, which is not surprising as this phrase has been classified as specific to Bulgarian. By the same token, there are only 2 occurrences of *papillons dans le ventre*, which is really extremely low. The loan translation of *an elephant in the room*, although classified as specific to Bulgarian, seems to be gaining ground lately in French, but not sufficiently enough to be taken into consideration, as 7 occurrences of *un elephant dans la pièce* have been found in the newspaper archives only from 2010 to the date of the actual search<sup>3</sup>.

We have found 15 occurrences of *au milieu de nulle part* in *Frantext*, the first one being from 1985: *J'appelle Lorraine d'une cabine plantée **au milieu de nulle part*** (I ring up Lorraine from a phone box right **in the middle of nowhere**). However, only 3 occurrences of *jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain* have been found in the same corpus, which again highlights the fact that even some common calques can be thinly-represented in one language or the other as their degree of integration and institutionalisation, as well as their frequency for that matter, is rather low.

### 7.2. Inverted commas and metalinguistic elements

The most straightforward, and the most widespread, way of signalling the presence of an unusual word or expression is the use of inverted commas as shown in the following examples: *Dans le domaine scientifique, la coopération doit être intensifiée, affirme l'une des*

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<sup>3</sup> This research was carried out on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2013.

*résolutions, afin de prévenir la « fuite des cerveaux » hors d'Europe, [...] (Le Monde, 14/10/1966) (As stated in one of the resolutions, cooperation in science must be intensified, sate in order to prevent **brain drain** outside Europe) and M. Allon est resté très vague en ce qui concerne la « ligne rouge » que les Syriens sont censés ne pas franchir. (Le Monde, 03/06/1976) (Mr Allon remained vague concerning the red line that Syrians are supposed not to cross).*

A second method of signalling the presence of a phraseological loan translation consists in the inclusion of a metalinguistical comment such as *comme disent les Anglais* (as the English say) as in the next four examples: *Si vous aviez besoin de plaire, je comprendrais, bien que **ce ne soit pas**, comme disent les Anglais, **ma tasse de thé**, la fonction de vos ruses* (If you needed to be liked, I would understand it, even though the purpose of your trickeries **are not**, as the English say, **my cup of tea**). This is the first non-literal occurrence of *ce n'est pas ma tasse de thé* in Frantext, which corroborates its English origin. The second example is *Gardons-nous donc, comme disent les Anglais, de **jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain*** (Let's avoid, then, **throwing the baby with the bath-water**, as the English say). The third one is: *Bref, adhérer à un groupe de lecture n'est pas forcément un "**lit de roses**", comme disent les Anglais,* (Anyway, to join a reading group is not **a bed of roses**, as the English say.) And finally, *Attention ! Sans frontière dressée par nous, rédacteurs en chef, **le ciel est la limite**<sup>4</sup>, comme disent les Anglais.* (Look out! Without walls being built by ourselves, chief editors, **the sky is the limit**, as the English say.)

In the example *mais les observateurs sont unanimes pour constater que jamais un président « **lame duck** » (**canard boiteux**), c'est-à-dire condamné à la retraite, n'a manifesté autant de vigueur*, (but the observers unanimously certify that never has a **lame duck**—that is a president condemned to retirement—shown so much vigour), a very special and rather infrequent case of metalinguistical comment is put into place. In fact the phrase *lame duck* could be seen as a culturally-bound compound word specific to American politics. The journalist not only uses italics and inverted commas but also the literal translation into French (*canard boiteux*) and a contextual explanation of its meaning (underlined in the example).

### 7.3. Information from an Anglo-American setting.

Phraseological loan translations are sometimes found in news and information concerning the United Kingdom, the United States or any other English-speaking country. Their presence is

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<sup>4</sup> For an in-depth study of this loan translation in German, see Fiedler 2011 (references)

rather conspicuous because they tend to be the literal translation of a foreign phrase unknown in the recipient language. These ‘weird’ phrases are usually marked by the use of italics or inverted commas, or even both as in the following example: « C’est un message au président Obama qu’il ne peut pas **jeter** impunément **Israël sous le bus**. », [...] Les républicains reprochent à l’administration Obama d’avoir « *attendu la 11<sup>e</sup> heure* » pour réagir. (Le Monde 20/09/2011) (This is a message for president Obama that he cannot **throw Israel under the bus** with impunity [...] The Republicans blame the Obama administration for having waited until **the 11<sup>th</sup> hour** to react.).

*Un éléphant dans la chambre* has yielded only two article results in the French newspaper Libération and both articles are about the USA as illustrated in the following examples: L’administration Bush est tel «*un éléphant dans la chambre*» dans laquelle il est incapable «*de se déplacer*», assure Gore. (Libération, 14/12/2007) (The Bush administration is like an elephant in the room where it is incapable to move about). *Son appel [Obama’s] à l’unité n’aura pas empêché l’«éléphant dans la chambre» de barrir* (Libération, 17/10/2008) (His call [Obama’s] for unity wouldn’t have hampered the elephant in the room to trumpet).

## 8. Conclusions

Common research on phraseological calques in two languages from different families such as French and Bulgarian has proved to be very revealing of the global linguistic phenomenon of Anglicization. The impact that English idioms, phrases, formulas and other types of fixed word combinations has on other languages has not still been measured to its full extent. This influence is considerable and widespread but is just the tip of the iceberg of a much larger linguistic phenomenon that covers morphology, semantics and other linguistic subfields.

All in all we can say that recent phraseological calques from English are widespread both in Bulgarian and in French although some of them tend to occur in certain contexts or genres in one language or another. However, some calques appear to be language-specific although shared with other languages. Our results show that transnational intertextuality among various types of media is at the core of some of the novel or even well-established calques from English into French and Bulgarian. A search for occurrences of these multi-word units in the archives of newspapers, general corpora and the Internet casts light on their degree of institutionalisation and lexicalisation. Moreover, it shows actual instantiations in different contexts allowing a lexico-grammatical and pragmatic reanalysis of these loan phrases or loan translations. Phraseological calques tend to appear in the media, especially in the written press due to the massive influence on journalists of the English-speaking media.

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