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## A CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF METAPHORICAL AND METONYMIC EXPRESSIONS WITH THE LEXEME SALT

### Abstract

This paper presents the results of a comparative-contrastive analysis of forty-eight metaphorical and metonymic expressions containing the lexeme *salt* in the following languages: English, Italian, German and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. The analysis is guided by the principles of cognitive linguistics and each phrase is categorized into the scope of conceptual metaphor and/or metonymy. The aim is to reveal possible overlapping in the wording and meaning of expressions containing the key word *salt* as well as to determine common conceptual metaphors and metonymies employed in these expressions. The paper focuses both on similarities and variations of conceptual metaphors and metonymies in different languages. The research showed that there are several metaphorical and metonymic expressions in the languages analysed with the same lexical content carrying the same or highly similar meaning. Taking into consideration the metaphorical nature of these phrases, it can be established that there is universality of certain concepts across the examined languages. Moreover, there is a significant number of conceptual metaphors employed in more than one language analysed, which yet again proves the universal nature of conceptual metaphors. However, there is a certain level of variation in linguistic expressions of these metaphors.

*Key words:* cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, metonymy, source domain, target domain, English, German, Italian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian

## 1. Research Outline

### 1.1. Aim of the research

The aim of the research is to investigate the expressions containing the lexeme *salt* since salt is one of the most important commodities used by humankind. The research is of a comparative-contrastive kind, i.e. the non-literal linguistic expressions containing the key word *salt* in the English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (B/C/S), Italian and German language are examined through the prism of conceptual metaphor and metonymy. The research further aims at revealing possible overlapping in the use, structure and semantics of expressions containing the key word. Moreover, common conceptual metaphors underlying metaphorical expressions that contain the lexeme *salt* will be identified and described as they play a decisive role in understanding these expressions.

### 1.2. On the corpora

For the analysis, several online and printed sources were used. First of all, a number of online monolingual dictionaries of English, Italian and German were used available at the following websites: <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com>, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>, <http://www.linguee.it> and [www.rendensarten-index.de](http://www.rendensarten-index.de), respectively. In addition to this, an online dictionary of common B/C/S phrases and proverbs was used (<http://staznaci.com>). Secondly, bilingual phraseological dictionaries such as *Englesko-srpski frazeološki rječnik*, *Srpsko-engleski frazeološki rječnik* and *Bosansko-njemački frazeološki rečnik* represented a valuable source. Finally, various monolingual and bilingual printed dictionaries of all fore-mentioned languages were used (the list provided in References).

### 1.3. Methodology

The analysis was conducted in several stages. Firstly, phrases and idioms from all four languages that constitute the corpus of this analysis were extracted from the aforementioned online and printed monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. In other words, the initial step was to compile a list of (metaphorical and metonymic) expressions which were further analyzed. The analysis was conducted from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and each phrase was categorized into conceptual metaphor and/or metonymy scope. The next step included identifying their corresponding conceptual metaphors and metonymies and validating them by the previous studies and compiled lists such as Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz's *Master Metaphor List* (1991), onlineLingan

University – Rootbase and Goatley’s *Washing the Brain Metaphor and Hidden Ideology* (2007). All the meanings, both literal and figurative, were provided for all phrases analysed as well as the literal English translations of Italian, B/C/S and German phrases. Since there is overlapping in lexical and conceptual content of phrases in certain languages, such instances are referred to constantly throughout the analysis. Moreover, in instances where there is a slight difference in the lexical content, additional explanations were provided.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Traditional metaphor

In the traditional view, metaphor is a figure of speech defined as “a matter of words rather than thought or action” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3). It is a linguistic device mainly utilized by poets and authors as their artistic tool and hardly ever by common people. Therefore, expressions such as Shakespeare’s “Juliet is the sun” or Dizdar’s “Valja nama preko rijeke” are regarded as instances which prove the immense scope of creativity of these authors. Such expressions are not related merely to the capacity of ordinary people to perceive others as precious as the sun or death as a difficult end of a journey.

### 2.2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was developed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980 in their pivotal book *Metaphors We live By*. According to this theory, metaphor is not merely a figure of speech but a normal mode of thinking, used by speakers of all languages, in everyday use. The view of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 3) that “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is metaphorical in nature.” is reflected in the linguistic expressions of any language.

In the CMT, one of the key concepts is that of a conceptual domain. Evans (2007, p. 61) defines domains as “relatively complex knowledge structures which relate to coherent aspects of experience.” For this reason, conceptual domains are also called experiential domains. For instance, we have coherent knowledge about journeys, wars, buildings, etc. which makes them suitable and quite common as domains in conceptual metaphors.

According to their cognitive function, there are three basic types of metaphors: structural, orientational and ontological. In a structural metaphor, the basic model comprises two domains: a source domain and a target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain that relies on our experience of the world. To exemplify, a source domain could be our experience of journeys,

money transactions, etc. Target domains represent abstract phenomena such as life, time, etc. According to the CMT, we understand more abstract phenomena by means of concrete experiences. Thus, for example, we understand the ever-elusive concept of life by comparing it to a journey, we understand time by relating it to a money transaction and this results in conceptual metaphors *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* and *TIME IS MONEY*. Conceptual metaphors like these do not appear in such form in language. In this form, they represent our way of understanding more abstract things via concrete, experiential things following the formula conceptual domain (A) is conceptual domain (B) and motivate a great variety of forms of metaphorical expressions in language use. In orientational metaphor, however, a spatial orientation, such as up-down or in-out, is given to a concept. For instance, the concepts of happiness and sadness are perceived on a vertical axis, i.e. we conceptualize the state of being happy as being up (the *HAPPY IS UP* metaphor) and being sad as being down (the *SAD IS DOWN* metaphor). This comes from our bodily experience, i.e. body posture: when we feel sad, we have drooping posture. On the other hand, when we are happy, we have an erect posture. To sum up, in structural metaphor, we structure metaphorically one concept in terms of another whilst in orientational metaphors an entire system of concepts is organized with respect to one another. In ontological metaphors, however, we view our experiences as entities (animals or objects) or substances. For example, we perceive human mind as a machine (*I am a little rusty today*) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p. 27). The most obvious example of ontological metaphors is personification, in which human characteristics are scribed to nonhuman entities as in, for example, *Inflation has given birth to a money-minded generation* (ibid, p. 33). So, ontological metaphors involve “the projection of entity or substance status on something that does not have that status inherently” (ibid, p. 196).

target domain: LOVE		source domain: JOURNEY
lovers	----->	travellers
love relationship	----->	vehicle
being in a relationship	----->	physical closeness of being in a vehicle
lovers' common goals	----->	common destinations
difficulties	----->	impediments to travel

A significant feature of the CMT are relations that exist between elements in conceptual domains, i.e. cross-domain mappings. In fact, the conceptual

metaphor can be comprehended as a mapping from a source to a target domain with ontological correspondences between elements constituting these domains (Lakoff 1986, p. 216). The ontological correspondences are at times referred to as knowledge structure (ibid. p. 217). So, the knowledge about the source domain of journey is used to better understand the target domain of LOVE. As an illustration, here are the following ontological correspondences for the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY (ibid, p. 217):

Metaphorical mappings represent the way our mind works and this is reflected in the language in the form of metaphorical expressions. Metaphorical expressions are actually words used to express cognitive mappings. Since human mind operates in the same manner all around the world, it is not surprising that there is a plenitude of similar linguistic metaphorical expressions in different languages. For instance, metaphorical expressions for the TIME IS MOTION metaphor are quite numerous some of which are: *time passes*, *time flows* and *time goes by* in English (Radden 2003, p. 233 ) or *vrijeme leti* ('time flies') and *vrijeme prolazi* ('time passes by') in B/C/S. All of this implies that cross-domain mappings are an inevitable part of our cognition and they are reflected in metaphorical linguistic expressions.

### 2.3. Conceptual metonymy

Metonymy, like metaphor, also means understanding, or rather conceiving of one thing in terms of another. The main difference, however, is that a conceptual metaphor involves two conceptual domains, i.e. the metaphorization process involves using the structure of one domain to conceptualize another whereas metonymy involves a single conceptual domain or idealized cognitive model. Another difference is that metaphor is based on similarity whereas metonymy has a more referential function relying on association between elements of the same domain. In other words, metonymy is another conceptual process that motivates a significant number of meaning extensions and is responsible for a great number of cases of polysemy and subsequently figurative meanings of expressions analysed. Metonymic concepts are systematic and some types occur more frequently such as PART FOR WHOLE, WHOLE FOR PART, PLACE FOR INSTITUTION, PLACE FOR EVENT, PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, OBJECT USED FOR USER, etc. Human cognition makes use of this cognitive mechanism, making it possible to perceive a single aspect of something and use it for the thing as a whole or some other aspect of it (Lakoff 1987, p. 77). To exemplify, a place where an institution is situated might stand for the institution as in: *The White House isn't saying anything*. So, there is *stand for* relation between the elements (ibid, p. 78). These elements are both placed within the same conceptual domain, or idealized cognitive model.

There are various views on the importance and nature of metonymy particularly in relation to metaphor. While some regard it as a sub-type of metaphor, other consider it to be even more fundamental. There are also claims that metonymy is a fundamental process underlying metaphor and very often the two combine to create complex figurative meanings. This comes out of necessity, as some concepts are very complex. For example, emotions have such a complex conceptual structure that includes both metonymy and metaphor. The folk theory of physiological effects of anger (increased body heat, blood pressure, muscular pressure, etc.) is the basis for the metaphor ANGER IS HEAT (Lakoff 1987, p. 383). Therefore, a great number of expressions related to anger are metonymical and metaphorical in nature.

### 3. SALT across languages

Salt was of such importance and value in the past that it was a part of sacrificial meals. One of the important aspects of salt, i.e. the ability to preserve, made it a suitable symbol of endurance. In addition to that, it acquired connotations of fidelity and honour which was reflected in languages from all around the world. There are many proverbs that contain the word *salt* with these connotations. The lexeme *salt* has been used in the coinage of idiomatic expressions both in the past and in modern times. For instance, there is an old Arab avowal which translates as ‘there is salt between us’ with the meaning of friendship being made. Two people sitting at a table sharing a meal, with salt between them on the table, is a clear indication of intention to become friends. There is also a modern Persian phrase *namak ḥarām* (‘untrue to salt’), with the meaning of being disloyal, or even a traitor. (www.britannica.com)

#### 3.1. Expressions with the same or similar semantic content in all languages analysed

Out of 48 expressions analysed, there are only three expressions that share the same semantic content in all four languages examined and these are: *take something with a pinch of salt*, *Attic salt* and *rub salt into someone’s wound* and their equivalents in B/C/S, German and Italian. As it will be seen in the analysis, some of these expressions do not represent full equivalents structurally, lexically, but the overall meaning of the expressions is the same. Let us consider the first example.

- (1) take something with a pinch /a grain of salt (OX<sup>1</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

The English expression in (1) means to regard something as exaggerated and believe only part of something. The phrase comes from the Latin phrase *cum grano salis* which is literally translated as ‘with a grain of salt’. The meaning is motivated by and derived from our experience. Namely, when we are not sure how salty a meal is, we usually add just a pinch of salt just to be on the safe side. This is indirectly implied by the expression in (1). The use of the verb *take* clearly attributes physical characteristics to something abstract (e.g. a story). A piece of information we receive and need to process is compared to, or rather conceptualized as food that is being consumed via “the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphor”. Perfect equivalents can be found in B/C/S and German which is evident from examples (2) and (3) as they have the same lexemes and the same meaning as the English expression.

(2) *uzeti sa zrnom soli što* (SEFR<sup>2</sup>) (‘to take something with a grain of salt’<sup>3</sup>)

(3) *mit einem Körnchen Salz nehmen* (RED<sup>4</sup>) (‘to take with a grain of salt’)

The Italian expression, however, exhibits a slight lexical difference. Instead of the verb *take* the verb *intendere* (‘hear/understand’) is used. The meaning is the same and it refers to listening to something with caution (example 4).

(4) *intendere con un grano di sale* (GDI<sup>5</sup>) (‘hear/understand with a grain of salt’)

To sum up, in three of the languages, English, B/C/S, and German, expressions observed have the same lexical and semantic content whereas the Italian expression has one lexeme different, but the overall meaning is quite the same as all the expressions imply caution in processing information.

The second expression that exists in all four languages is given in (5)

(5) *rub salt in/into the wound* (OX)

Namely, the phrase *rub salt in/into the wound* means ‘to make a difficult situation even worse for someone’ (OX). If someone has an open wound, it is very painful and putting salt on it only aggravates the whole situation i.e. increases the pain. It can be concluded that making someone’s life more difficult is conceptualized as making someone’s physical health worse. This is the notion underlying the conceptual metaphor HARM IS A PHYSICAL INJURY motivating the lexical realization mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> Srpsko-engleski frazeološki rječnik

<sup>3</sup> Single quotation marks ‘ ’ are used for literal translations provided by the author for German, Italian and B/C(S) expressions.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.redensarten-index.de>

<sup>5</sup> Grande Dizionario Italiano



B/C/S and German, however, show a slight lexical variation. Instead of the verb *rub*, they employ verbs *sipati* and *streuen* respectively which both mean ‘to pour’ (examples 6 and 7). In Italian expression, the verb *rub* is replaced by the verb *mettere*, which means ‘to put’ but the figurative meaning is the same. From example (6) it can be seen that the expression can be modified by adding an adjective to highlight the intensity of the pain. This is another slight difference in the lexical structure of the B/C/S equivalent. The mental images evoked with the lexeme *rana* (‘wound’) and *živa rana* (‘open wound’) have different nuances in meaning as the latter evokes more vivid image with more suffering of the person wounded.

(6) *sipati (kome) so na (živu) ranu* (RBJ<sup>6</sup>) (‘to pour salt on someone’s (open) wound’)

(7) *Salz auf jmds/auf die /in jmds/in die Wunde streuen* (BNJFR<sup>7</sup>) (‘sprinkle/pour salt into someone’s wound’)

(8) *mettere il sale sulla ferita* (LI<sup>8</sup>) (‘to put salt on the wound’)

Finally, the third expressions that can be found in all four languages is *Attic salt* (also *Attic wit*) (ID<sup>9</sup>) which means ‘shrewd, cutting, or subtle humour or wit’. All four languages use the same lexemes conveying the same meaning. Only Italian version uses the plural of the noun *i sali* ‘salts’. This expression dates back to ancient Greece and ancient district Attica. Today the district is called the district of Attica and its administrative centre is still Athens. Salt was very important for trade in the ancient times. It was very significant to Greeks, but not only to them. Namely, salt was closely knit in the rituals and cults involving offerings of salt to gods in all ancient nations as a result of the transition from nomadic to agricultural lifestyle. Greeks had highly developed civilization with very sophisticated sense of humour. Therefore, salt, as the basic element in the rituals, and important merchandise was connected with literature and philosophy as well. *Attic salt* was used to symbolize ancient Greek wit (Britannica). In this expression, we can identify salt, something pervasive and precious in all the fields of human action at that time, as a symbol of wisdom and wit. Since Greek culture and empire had an immense impact on European countries at that time, it comes as no surprise that this expression can be found in all four languages analysed. The expression is metaphorically motivated as the importance and value of salt in the ancient times is used as a metaphor for delicate wit. Namely, the source domain is substance (salt) and the target domain is

<sup>6</sup> Rječnik bosanskog jezika

<sup>7</sup> Bosansko-njemački frazeološki rečnik

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.linguee.it>

<sup>9</sup> <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com>



wit constituting the WIT IS SALT metaphor. Full equivalents for this expression appear in B/C/S, German and Italian given in (9), (10) and (11) respectively.

(9) *atička so* (<http://staznaci.com>),

(10) *Attisches Salz* (DUD 2<sup>10</sup>)

(11) *i sali attici* (GDI).

### 3.1. Expressions with the same or similar semantic content in B/C/S and Italian

As already mentioned, salt was used with reference to wit and intelligence from ancient Greeks. So, to have salt means to have wit. This kind of conceptualization is what motivates expressions (12) and (13). Both expressions mean 'to be reasonable and intelligent'. Such expressions can be found only in B/C/S and Italian but not in other two languages.

(12) *imati (zrno, dva zrna) soli (u glavi)*(RBJ) ('have (a grain or two of) salt in one's head').

(13) *avere (poco) sale in zucca* (GDI) ('have a bit of salt in your head').

From the translations, we can conclude that there is, or can be, a slight difference in lexical content. Both languages allow slight modification in terms of specifying how small the amount of salt someone has.

The second expression shared by these two languages given in (14) and (15) are rather similar to the previous one as they share metaphorical conceptualization. Once again, salt refers to wisdom. The connotation is slightly negative as both expressions have the meaning of giving someone a useless piece of advice.

(14) *soliti (kome) pamet/mozak* (RBJ) ('pour salt into someone's brains')

(15) *mettere un po di sale in zucca* (GDI) ('to put a bit of salt into someone's head').

The lexical content of these expressions is slightly different. Namely, in Italian the lexeme *zucca* ('head') is utilized whereas in B/C/S the lexeme *pamet/mozak* ('brains'/'brain'). In the phrases above, in addition to the WISDOM IS SALT metaphor, the part for whole metonymy also appears. Its interpretation can be two-fold. Namely, head, as a part of the body, represents the whole person as well as brain. Both of these in fact stand for intellect.

There is another expression in Italian that is conceptually related to the ones previously discussed utilizing the same metonymy and metaphor (example 16).

<sup>10</sup> Duden, Das grosse Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache in 10 Binden

It means to become more judicious due to experience which is compared to the activity of eating, consuming salt, i.e. experience and wisdom.

(16) *mangiare un altro po' di sale* (GDI) ('to eat a bit of salt')

### 3.2. Expressions with the same or similar semantic content in English and Italian

English and Italian seem to have only one common expression with the lexeme *salt* (examples 17 and 18).

(17) *salt of the Earth* (OX)

The expression in (17) refers to a person or group of people of great kindness, reliability, or honesty. This idiom was coined during the teaching of Jesus Christ. Namely, He said that His disciples were salt of the earth (Mathew 5: 13). Salt was precious and so were Jesus's disciples. From this expression, it is evident that humans are perceived as something precious through the metaphor HUMAN IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY. Simultaneously, the metaphor high moral standards are salt is utilized. The Italian equivalent given in example (18) is semantically broader, i.e. the scope of meaning is extended. Namely, not only is it used to describe a good person of high moral standards but for good things in general. So, the metaphor is expanded into the good is a commodity (salt) metaphor.

(18) *il sale della terra* (GDI)

### 3.3. Expressions with the same or similar semantic content in German and Italian

When it comes to expressions with the lexeme *salt*, German and Italian have only one in common (examples 19 and 20).

(19) *ohne Salz sein* ('to be without salt') (NJHISR)<sup>11</sup>

(20) *scritto senza sale* (GDI) ('written without salt').

The German expression is used to refer to something that is not amusing, i.e. something boring. The meaning draws on human experience. When there is no salt in a meal, it is tasteless. This is transferred by means of metonymy and metaphor to other aspects of life. The common conceptual metaphor laughter is substance is modified into fun is spice, more specifically fun is salt. The Italian expression has slightly different semantic content as the German as it

<sup>11</sup> Njemačko hrvatski ili srpski rječnik

is restricted to the activity of writing (refers to something written only), but there is a similar conceptual metaphor. There is common conceptual metaphor knowledge is substance and it is elaborated into: WIT IS SALT. Two other phrases in the German language that have similar meaning (examples 21 and 22) can be considered as modifications or rather extended versions of example (19).

(21) *ohne Saltz und Schmaltz sein* (NJHISR) ('to be without salt and lard')

(22) *wie eine Suppe ohne Salz sein* (RED) ('to be like a soup without salt')

The expression in (21) refers to something lifeless whereas example (22) refers to something boring.

### 3.4. Expressions with the same or similar semantic content in B/C/S and English

Similarities between B/C/S and English when it comes to the figurative use of the lexemes *so* and *salt* seem to be rare as only one expression with similar semantic content can be found. B/C/S expression provided in (23) has the meaning of catching someone. Its English equivalent with the same lexical and semantic content is given in (24).

(23) *staviti nekome soli na rep* (BFR<sup>12</sup>) ('to put salt on someone's tail')

(24) *put salt on someone's tail* (VEHR<sup>13</sup>)

In its mineral form, called halite, salt is a rock. Thus, the image of a rock evokes the image of stiffness. In this sense, folk wisdom is that if you put salt on someone, it will become rock and that person will not be able to move. So, one of the traits of salt is utilized in the formation of a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy: quality for the whole material. In this case, metonymy is combined with metaphor. Namely, as human beings do not have tails, here a person that one is trying to catch is perceived as an animal via the PERSON IS AN ANIMAL metaphor.

### 3.5. Expressions with the same or similar semantic content in German and B/C/S

There are two expressions in B/C/S and German that have similar lexical content. The phrase in (25), with almost a proverbial status, which means that you should spend a lot of time with someone in order to get to know him or her, is metonymical in nature. It comes from the Latin proverb *Nerriini jidas, nisi cum quo prius medium salis abtumpt*. "Trust no man till you have eaten a

<sup>12</sup> Bosanski frazeološki rječnik

<sup>13</sup> Veliki englesko-hrvatski rječnik

bushel of salt with him” (Riley 1891, pp. 256). Eating ‘a bushel of salt’ takes a long time and if a person spends that much time (eating) with someone they will definitely get to know each other well.

- (25) *treba s nekim vreću soli pojesti da bi ga upoznao* (BRJ) (‘you should eat a sack of salt with someone in order to get to know them’)

The German equivalent in (26) has the same meaning but slightly different lexical content. Namely, where B/C/S uses the word *vreća* (‘sack’) German selects *der Scheffel* (‘bushel’). Both languages employ containers in terms of volume and shape but of a different kind in order to convey the same figurative meaning.

- (26) *mit jemandem eien Scheffel Salz gegessen haben* (RED) (‘to eat a bushel of salt with someone’)

The following expressions examined both refer to a situation of having basic things in life.

- (27) *imati hljeba i soli* (RBJ) (‘to have bread and salt’)

- (28) *Salz und Brot haben* (NJHISR) (‘to have salt and bread’)

Metonymy is used in the coinage of phrases in (27) and (28). The salt is a basic spice and a basic ingredient but it also represents basic meals we need in order to survive. Therefore, metonymy activated is of the PART FOR WHOLE type. It is interesting that in B/C/S bread seems to be of greater importance than salt, which is reflected in the syntactic structure as evidenced by the word order, whereas in German it is the opposite.

### 3.6. Expressions with the lexeme salt that exist in one of the languages only

#### 3.6.1. English

From examples that follow, it can be concluded that English is quite productive in forming expressions with the lexeme salt. Expression in (29) means ‘an experienced sailor’ and is both metaphorically and metonymically motivated. It means that over the years spent at sea, experienced sailors become part of the sea; they become one with the sea. This means that salt stands for the sea representing a part for whole type of metonymy, more specifically the salt for person metonymy. Apart from metonymy, the metaphor WISDOM/EXPERIENCE IS SALT is also utilized in this conceptualization.

- (29) *old salt*

The following two expressions will be analysed together as they employ the same conceptual metaphors and metonymies. The expressions in (30) and

(31) were coined in medieval times and describe the state of being in position of high and low standing, rank, regard, or repute, respectively. They originated in dining custom of nobility. Namely, salt was a very valuable commodity at that time and it was placed in the middle of the dining table. People of high noble rank were seated closer to the lord of the house, i.e. above the salt. Those of lower rank were seated on the other side of the dining table, i.e. below the salt. Therefore, the whole social hierarchy of nobility is presented in the seating arrangement in which salt is the central item. In both expressions, the metonymy SEATING AT THE TABLE FOR A POSITION IN SOCIETY is combined with metaphor POSITION IN SOCIETY IS POSITION AT THE TABLE in order to create this complex figurative meaning.

(30) *be above the salt* (ID)

(31) *be below the salt* (ID)

Expression in example (32) means ‘to resume one’s daily work, often unhappily’. Slaves and prisoners often worked hard in the salt mines. Namely, the actual returning to salt mine meant going back to difficult manual. Over the time, going back to the salt mine started meaning going back to work. All of this supports the idea that the expression is metonymically motivated manifesting the metonymy of a specific type, namely the place stands for the activity performed at that place metonymy.

(32) *back to the salt mine* (ID)

Very commonly used English expression in (34) has three meanings.

(33) salt and pepper

a) a black and white police car’;

b) ‘interracial, including black and white’;

c) ‘with some grey hair’ (ESFR).

All three meanings are motivated by the same metonymy i.e. part for whole. Moreover, the following metonymy is used simultaneously as well: substance stands for the colour of the substance. In the first meaning (a) colour of the car stands for the car, in (b) skin colour stands for a person and finally, in (c) colour of some hairs stands for the whole hair of a person.

(34) *eat (someone’s) salt* (ID)

Expression in (34) means ‘to be someone’s guest, stay at someone’s house’. The first metonymy activated is PART FOR WHOLE as salt, the basic ingredient of a meal, stands for the whole meal. Furthermore, since having meals is only

one activity done when being someone's guest, the initial metonymy is reinforced.

(35) *be true to someone's salt* (VEHR) ('to be loyal to your master/employer')

Every master or employer pays their servants/employees a certain amount of money for the service they provided. So, the master/employer is the source of all the goods, including salt, as a very precious commodity. In addition to this, the expression can be viewed from a slightly different point of view. Namely, employer provides income for employee and this income used to be given in salt.

### 3.6.2. German

The following phrases (examples 36-38) activate the same metonymic patterns as the phrase *Salz und Brot haben*.

(36) *nicht das Salz zum Brot/zur Suppe haben* (DUD 1) ('not to have salt on the bread, not to have salt in the soup')

(37) *jmdm nicht das Salz in der Suppe gönnen* (DUD 1) ('not able to afford salt in the soup')

(38) *sich nicht das Saltz aufs Brot/in die Suppe verdienen* (DUD 2) ('not to earn the salt in the soup/on the bread')

All three expressions above refer to the state of being poor, of not being able to earn enough money to manage to survive and to suffer due to poverty. They are also all metonymical in nature as salt is considered one of the basic commodities. So, when one does not have even salt on the bread, or cannot even afford to buy salt, they are very poor. So, (not) having salt stands for (not) having basic things which entails the state of poverty.

(39) *gesalzene Rede* (NJHISR) ('salted speech')

This expression is used to describe harsh or bitter speech. When there is too much salt in a meal, it is not tasty at all. So, the idea behind the expression is that the excess of spice is not pleasant in any sense. The metaphor behind this expression is *HARSH SPEECH IS SALTED*. An interesting comparison is to the B/C/S language, where there is an expression *paprena šala* ('a joke with too much pepper') which has the meaning of inappropriate joke with sexual allusions but it includes another spice, i.e. pepper ('*papar*'). The excess again represents something undesirable. However, just the perfect amount is a good thing as illustrated in expression in (40).

(40) *Salz in der Suppe* (RED) ('salt in the soup')

This expression depicts something that makes things better, perfect, through the metaphor GOOD IS SALT.

(41) *gesalzene Rechnung* (NJHISR) ('salty, spiced bill')

The expression in (41) refers to a huge bill. Similarly to the previous phrase, the idea behind this expression is that excess of spice is not good at all. The adjective *salato* ('salted') is used in Italian, when talking about something too expensive (cf. 47). In B/C/S there are expressions such as *papren račun* and *pa-prena cijena* ('bill/price with too much pepper'), so there is a relation between the excess of another spice and excessive payment. In this case, metaphor TOO MUCH SALT IS HIGH PRICE is used.

(42) *jemand hat es (noch bei jemandem) im Salz liegen* (RED) ('someone still has it lying in salt at someone else's place')

There are two figurative meanings of this phrase:

- a) someone has not been brought to justice
- b) someone's discussion has not been resolved yet

In the past, salt was used for preserving food, so food was placed to 'lie' in salt. There is a metaphor which evokes images of something still being as it is, i.e. status quo is lying in salt.

### 3.6.3. Italian

The expression in (43) is used to describe something foolish. Cakes are usually sweet so the idea of a cake of salt involves absurdity. This is mapped onto the silly behaviour as being silly can be understood as adding salt when it is not needed or even not advisable.

(43) *dolce di sale* (GDI) ('cake of salt')

Similar to the previous phrase, the meaning of expression in (44) is grounded in the fact that the taste of salt is unpleasant if it is added to meals where it should not be added. This is transferred to another domain and adding salt when not needed stands for something being unpleasant and difficult to endure.

(44) *sapere di sale* (GDI) ('to taste like salt')

(45) *restare/rimanere di sale* (DELI) ('stay in salt')

The expression is used to describe someone who is completely shocked, dumbfounded. Salt, as mentioned previously, is a mineral and its natural form is that of a rock salt. The use of the word to illustrate both the shock and firmness of salt was first noted in the Bible in Genesis 19:26: "But Lot's wife looked



back, and she became a pillar of salt.” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/gen-esis/19.html>) People can evoke image of Lot’s wife being so shocked by what she saw and becoming a literal pillar of salt. In this way, the shock and the characteristic of salt are connected and used in the expression in (45). There is metonymical relation here as the firmness of salt stands for the stiffness of a human body combined with the metaphor BEING SHOCKED IS BEING ROCK SALT.

(46) *non metterci né sale né olio, né sale né pepe* (GDI) (‘not to put salt nor oil, nor salt, nor pepper’)

This expression is used in speech when describing someone who is talking or should be talking realistically. Here adding additional information that is unnecessary or true is conceptualized as adding spice and other ingredients. The common conceptual metaphor used is INFORMATION IS SUBSTANCE and it elaborated into another metaphor underlying this expression and that is adding unnecessary information is adding salt.

(47) *salato* (DELI) (‘salted’)

This lexeme is used in its literal meaning when describing food but also it is used with its figurative meaning to describe a price that is too high (cf. 41). Too much salt in a meal is hardly ever tasty which transfers to other domains as well as excess of any kind is rarely desirable. This experiential basis is utilized for the metaphor TOO MUCH SALT IS HIGH PRICE.

#### 3.6.4. B/C/S

(48) *podijeliti hljeb i so (sa kim)* (SEFR) (‘to share bread and salt with somebody’)

The meaning of this phrase ‘to live with somebody’ is metonymical in nature. Namely, when we live with someone, we usually share meals and bread and salt are usually inevitable parts of a meal. Metonymically speaking, eating is only one aspect or one part of the whole experience.

### 4. Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. First, there is a substantial level of concordance, which speaks in favour of the claim of cognitive linguists that metaphorical and metonymic meanings are not arbitrary but motivated. Several expressions with the same lexical and semantic content are found in use in all four languages analysed. These expressions, such as *Attic salt*, are perfect examples of motivation existing across cultures and languages. This points to an important finding that there are conceptual metaphors that occur

in all four languages, such as psychological harm is physical injury as the speakers of these languages conceptualize psychological pain as physical pain caused by rubbing salt to the wound. Secondly, a great majority of expressions appear in two of the analysed languages, which also supports the claim of motivation and universality of certain concepts especially the ones essential for life and survival. Additional discovery is that apart from universality, some expressions allow for a certain level of modification. These variations can be ascribed to slight differences in conceptualization directly related to cultural differences.

Regarding the metaphorical nature of expressions, the analysis showed that *salt* as the source domain is mostly used to stand for wit, common sense, wisdom and fun. In addition to this, *salt* is often used to represent goodness of people and high moral standards. Metonymical relations are achieved through the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy as the metonymical nature of some of the phrases indicates that *salt* stands for basic things in life, such as a meal or a salary.

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# KONTRASTIVNA ANALIZA METAFORIČKIH I METONOMIJSKIH IZRAZA KOJI SADRŽE LEKSEMU SO

## Sažetak

Ovaj rad predstavlja rezultate komparativno-kontrastivne analize 48 metaforičkih i metonimijskih izraza koji sadrže leksemu *so* ('salt') u engleskom, talijanskom, njemačkom i bosanskom, hrvatskom i srpskom jeziku. Analiza je urađena po principima kognitivne lingvistike i svakom izrazu je pridružena konceptualna metafora i metonimija koje ih motiviraju. Cilj je da se ukaže na strukturu i značenje izraza koji sadrže leksemu *so* kao i da se odrede zajedničke metafore i metonimije s kojima su analizirani izrazi značenjski povezani. Rad se fokusira na sličnosti i razlike konceptualnih metafora i metonimija u različitim jezicima. Istraživanje je pokazalo da postoji nekoliko metaforičkih i metonimijskih izraza u posmatranim jezicima koje imaju isto ili veoma slično značenje. Uzimajući u obzir prirodu ovih izraza, može se zaključiti da postoji određena univerzalnost određenih koncepata u posmatranim jezicima. Povrh toga, određen broj metafora se javlja u više jezika što također dokazuje univerzalnu prirodu konceptualnih metafora. Međutim, postoje određene varijacije u lingvističkim izrazima posmatranih metafora.

*Ključne riječi:* kognitivna lingvistika, konceptualna metafora, metonimija, izvorišna domena, ciljna domena, engleski, njemački, talijanski, bosanski/hrvatski/srpski