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**AN ENGLISH-SPANISH CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF
CULTURALLY LOADED PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS
CONTAINING KINSHIP TERMS**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on phraseological units that contain kinship terms. The aim of this dissertation is verifying which cultural connotations of the selected terms are reflected in the phraseological units contained in the corpus and identifying any possible cross-cultural and linguistic difference or similitude. Data have been selected from dictionaries and colloquial language and analyzed conducting a qualitative contrastive analysis between English and Spanish. Results seem to demonstrate that the cultural connotations of each kinship term and phraseological units vary according to the language. Furthermore, they call for a deeper a more systematized “linguo-cultural” analysis within the field of phraseology and kinship.

Key words: phraseology, kinship, culture, terminology.

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1 INTRODUCTION

«La lengua es un continuo, un espacio sin límites ni fronteras, donde los lingüistas y estudiosos intentan la quimera de apresar con diversas etiquetas realidades heterogéneas y en permanente cambio», says J. Sanmartín (1998).

Phraseology could be portrayed as gallery, where representations of the nation's cultural customs are collected. Under this perspective, this field of language is not only the most colorful, but also probably the most egalitarian area of vocabulary and it drowns its resources mostly from the very depths of popular speech. Moreover, together with the study of synonyms and antonyms, phraseology represents one of the most expressive disciplines within linguistics. It is precisely due to its richness of expressions and to its heterogeneity that it seems difficult to identify which are the borders of phraseology. Delimiting the object of study of phraseology and finding a uniformed classification system seems to be a difficult task (Gläser 1988, Mel'cuk 1988, Howarth 1998, Ruiz Gurillo 1997, Cowie 1998, Moon 1998, Corpas Pastor 2000). In fact, the same terminological diversity that linguists (Fernando and Flavell, 1981, Gläser 1988, Corpas Pastor 2000) have used to refer both to the generic discipline and to the elements it studies highlights its instability. Despite the increasing amount of research within phraseology in the past fifty years, and the consequent improvement regarding the delimitation of the units that constitute its object of study, there seems to be still a great diversity of criteria. This hinders the consolidation of a systematic and scientific study of this topic.

Due to this lack of consensus, the term “phraseological unit” - hereinafter PhU or PhUs – will be used in this paper. This decision has been taken for several reasons: firstly, because this term has the status of “a unit of language ” and it acts as such at different linguistic levels; secondly, because PhU is a term that we consider wide enough to embrace different types of language units, without confusing them with a subcategories and, thirdly, because it is one of the most widely accepted terms and, most of all, supported by the scholars of the ex-Soviet Union and Eastern Countries, where many investigations regarding this topic have been carried out.

Beyond languages and linguistics, and the central role they play in the process of communication, nowadays it seems to be widely known among linguists and researchers that communication seems impossible if the speaker and the hearer do not share some basic knowledge and have at least a common referential framework (Austin 1955). Language and culture are thus seen as two similar interdependent systems (Nida 1999: 2-7), this means they influence each other. Culture represents a very important element in the communication process. At this respect, according to Luque & Manjón (1998), phraseology seems to be the discipline which best interprets and reflects the cultural framework of a whole society in the language, therefore it is also the field of study which can attempt to provide an explanation about stable expressions containing words loaded with a cultural meaning. V. Teliya and her colleagues (1993) argue that phraseology is a particular fruitful perspective for “linguo-cultural analysis”. Focusing on this type of study and having considered different authors (Murdock 1949, Radcliffe Brown 1952 and 1958, Kearsley 1996-2010, Schwimmer 1997, Parkin 1997) there appears to be nothing more specifically cultural than kinship and family relationships. In fact most societies still think in terms of lineages and are organized in “families” of some sort using “kin” terms to classify relatives. Kinship and family seem to be two universals in most societies, though they find concrete different manifestations.

Family and kinship seem to be among the most important aspects of human society, they play a central part in the social organization of peoples throughout the world. Nevertheless, the organization of the family unit and the structure of kinship relations vary from society to society and through time. The study of kinship and family falls particularly within the scope of three academic disciplines: sociology, anthropology, and social history¹.

¹ Sociological studies tend to concentrate on the form and organization of the modern family and on the social problems that surround family life. Anthropological studies also frequently concern the family, but their emphasis is on the variety of family organizations and on cross-cultural comparisons. Anthropologists are also interested in kinship ties and obligations beyond the immediate family, since these are often extremely important in small-scale non industrialized societies, on which anthropological studies tend to concentrate. Social and economic historians use the perspectives of a variety of disciplines, including psychology and economics, as well as sociology and anthropology.

Recent developments regarding kinship studies are relevant because they help to understand the different connotations that the same kinship term may have in different cultures. In fact, kin terms constitute a culture's kinship vocabulary, a catalogue of the names assigned to relatives, (*father, mother, uncle*). They provide not only convenient labels, but also assist in the identification of important social categories and principles. The fact that kinship terms have a central role within the cultural-linguistic investigation is demonstrated also by the fact that they raise a very important translation issue, due to the connotations they have in different communities, as we will see in the following paragraphs. Despite the fact that kin terms are fundamentally subjective categories, which might vary across cultures, , anthropologists have curiously observed that almost every culture has constructed a system of terms that conforms to one of six widely occurring basic patterns.

Therefore, having argued that culture finds its one of its best representation in language through phraseology, and that family and kinship seem to be two universal categories present in all the cultures of the world, why does there seem to be a lack of investigation in this direction? In fact, on the one hand, a conspicuous amount of studies, articles and papers concerning the role of certain categories in phraseology has cropped up, dealing, for instance, with parts of the body, animals, the weather or colors (Sevilla Muñoz 1987, Molina Plaza 2008, Rodriguez Redondo 2007, Rasinki 2008). Whereas, on the other hand, there is little mention to studies within the field of phraseology dedicated to investigate the use of kin terms (familiar terms) This seems to be rather unusual, especially because there is apparently nothing more culturally bound than family and kinship and, as a result, kinship terms. In this sense there appears to be an apparently unmotivated lack of research.

This is the reason why this paper focuses on one precise aspect of language, which is phraseology, and more specifically on those PhUs that contain kinship terms. A contrastive analysis will be conducted so that, these expressions will be analyzed both in English (*father, mother, uncle*) and Spanish (*padre, madre, tío*) in order to verify which cultural connotations of the term have been transposed in the PhU (idiom) people use in their daily language. Moreover, the objective is also identifying any possible cross-linguistic difference or similitude in terms of connotations and formal features.

Are kinship terms so culturally bound that in different languages they acquire different connotations? How is terminology related to membership in descent groups? Can generalizations be made about the correlation between terminology and social structures? According to what has been mentioned above, the cultural connotations involved in a specific term should depend on the culture they originate from, so we expect to find different cultural connotations underlying these terms.

The approach adopted in this paper belongs to a broader anthropocentric frame whose central assumption is that every culture is concerned with the transposition and extension, at a linguistic level, of the world-view shared by the linguistic community. Vice versa, the linguistic level most of the times has some cultural explanation for a certain way of expressing a concept or event. The expressions through which a culture is implemented are transmitted from one generation to another through linguistic and cultural norms of usage. Language and especially phraseology, is the central mechanism that contributes to the formation and reinforcement of a cultural identity.

This paper is structured as follows:

After the introduction, the second chapter will focus the attention on the historical background of phraseology: the most important phraseological studies and taxonomies both in the English and in the Spanish context will be reviewed. A special attention will be paid to the fact that this discipline can be regarded as a subfield of lexicology or as an autonomous discipline. Moreover, the concept of phraseological unit will be defined and will be pointed out as the main issue of investigation within phraseology. The third chapter of this paper will deal with the relationship between language, phraseology and culture, with a special focus on culturally loaded words. This chapter will introduce as well concern the concept of kinship and family, presenting the different classification systems which are used around the world. Moreover, the importance of kinship terms and its different usages across the cultures will be also explained.

The fourth chapter of this paper consists of our corpus and methodology, in this section, the process of data collection and choice will be presented accompanied by the method chosen for its analysis.

Finally, after having conducted the analysis and having discussed the results obtained (chapter five), the last section of this paper (chapter 6) will focus on conclusions and some suggestions for future investigations.

2 PHRASEOLOGY: GENERAL OVERVIEW.

Phraseology is an intermediary field of linguistics, it can be considered as being close both to vocabulary studies, (because it studies fixed word combinations characterized by a unitary meaning), and to syntax. Moreover, given the expressive nature of phraseological phenomena, these have also been associated to stylistics (Bally, 1951: 66-87). But beyond its closeness to different linguistic disciplines, today phraseology tends to be regarded as an autonomous discipline, with its own object and methods of investigation.

As an independent discipline, the object of research of phraseology consists in *phraseologic units* from a given language (or a group of languages). The notion of phraseologic unit has been first used by C.Bally (1909) wherefrom it was taken by V. V. Vinogradov (1946, 1947); and other Soviet linguists took it. The difference between PhUs and free word combinations is derived precisely from the syntactic stability of the former which, having been established through usage, are felt as distinct units due to the very fusion (to a larger or smaller extent) of the constitutive elements. Anyway, the borders between free word combinations and PhUs, as well as those between a PhU and a compound word are volatile: due to frequent use, a free word combination may turn into a PhU and, in its turn, this may become, in time and also through frequent and long use, a compound word. The term *phraseology* might designate the discipline as well as its object, the set or totality of PhUs in a given language.

Another essential fact to be taken into account is the connection between phraseologisms and metaphor. Stelian Dumistrăcel claimed that “the connection between metaphors and idiomatic phrases” asserts itself on its own by the fact that they have the same stylistic function, expressivity and, logically speaking, by the fact that both carry a certain (figurative) meaning” (Dumistrăcel, 1980:124). Preconditions to situate phraseology as an independent linguistic discipline and to define PhUs as its object of study had already been created at the beginning of the 20th century. In this process researches by renowned linguists such as F.de Saussure, C. Bally, O. Jespersen, J. Seidl & W. Mc Mordie (1978), R.Moon (1998), R. Gläser (1988) and P. Cowie (1998), have played an important role. Within phraseology it is possible to recognize

three major currents: 1. the Western-European structuralism, 2. Linguistics of the ex – Soviet Union and 3. North-American linguistics. Generally speaking, the independence of phraseology is rather recent, after C. Bally (1909) and V. Vinogradov (1947), the real interest in this subject started to increase in the 60's when Coseriu (1967), established the difference between repeated discourse and free discourse. At the same time, there was a growing interest also in the USA among linguists of the generative transformational paradigm.

Later on, over the past fifteen years, phraseology has undergone a rapid development. Despite the fact that in the early 80's this topic was still marginal and the core of its theoretical and descriptive researches was represented by Eastern Europe, (with the exception of Britain where the main activity related to phraseology was dictionary-making), nowadays, phraseology is no longer a marginalized discipline. This is partly due to the end of the political and intellectual isolation of Eastern Europe and Russia, partly due to the increasing credit that has been given to phraseology in the USA, and partly due to the development of corpus linguistics. Theories derived from corpus linguistics have changed the view of language – including grammar and phraseology - and corpus methodologies underpin much current work in applied linguistics, discourse studies, text analysis. In fact, the advent of linguistic corpora has allowed scholars to test their theoretical considerations. Scholars from cognitive grammar (Taylor 2002), discourse analysis and corpus linguistics (J. Sinclair 1991, R. Moon) have recognized the importance of phraseological elements for the development of the communicative competence among the speakers of a certain language. Corpus linguistic has changed the perspective from which communication was seen before, investigators have in fact realized that whenever the communication process takes place, speakers of a language combine different words in order to express their ideas, anyway, sometimes they create free word combinations determined by rules. However, in other cases they use prefabricated structures, and these are the structures which have attracted the interest of many linguists and where phraseology focuses its interest. Furthermore, phraseology is making reckonable progress at two levels: on the one hand, major research has been devoted to show the crucial role played by phraseology in first-language and second-language acquisition (Peters 1983; Alonso Ramos 1993). On the other hand, generative linguistics received a new endorsement from Fillmore's

investigations (Fillmore et al 1988) arguing that, instead of a generative grammar, we need a whole continuum of mini-grammars to account for the variable speech formulae. As has been briefly summarized, a growth in research has preceded the recent acquisition of a considered status for phraseology. This is also proved by the rising number of international conferences that are being held on this topic². Moreover, thanks to major projects of investigation (Heid & Freibott 1991, Heid 1992) phraseology has now become one of the major fields of research in pure and applied linguistics. In addition to this, the importance of phraseology as an academic independent discipline is proved not only from the investigation activity, but also from the publication of specialized dictionaries (Cowie et al. 1983; Sinclair & Moon 1995). Furthermore, the independency of phraseology is demonstrated also by the existence of research projects devoted to the phraseology of specific languages (H. Burger et al. 2007:615-779; Corpas Pastor 1996; Savin 2010), and by the creation of a “Europäische Gesellschaft für Phraseologie”, on the 29 of January of 1999 in Bielefeld (Germany). Current concerns about phraseology are not only descriptive, the interest placed in the analysis of what are usually called PhUs (Vinogradov 1947) or “word-combinations” (Cowie 1994), is accompanied by an increasing awareness of the importance of ready-made memorized combinations, both in written and spoken language, and a wider assumption of the main role they play in first and second language acquisition (Pawley and Syder 1983).

² Recent major conferences are: the EURALEX International Symposia on Phraseology, held in Leeds (1994), Moscow (1996), Stuttgart (1998) and Rome (2001). Furthermore the International EUROPHRAS Congresses held in Graz (1995), Bratislava (1997), Uppsala (2000) Loccum (2002), Basel (2004), Helsinki (2008), Granada (2010).

2.1 THE PHRASEOLOGICAL UNIT

Before conducting an analysis of the different PhUs³ involving kinship terms in English and Spanish, some basic aspects regarding terminology and definition must be addressed, namely what a PhU is and how it can be best defined. The variety of phenomena comprised by phraseology makes classification attempts difficult. External marks for recognizing a certain category of PhUs are related to the form of the group, the fixed order of elements, the reduced possibilities of separating them, the impossibility to replace one element or another. Whereas internal marks are related to the fact that the entire ensemble embodies an act of unitary thinking, equivalent to a single word, the existence of certain lexical, semantic or syntactic archaisms, ellipsis or redundancy. The terms used in order to designate a PhU, which have received most attention in linguistic literature, have been *phrases* and *idioms*. Sometimes, there is not even a clear distinction between these two terms and their parallel use with the same meaning being the common practice. In the literature dealing with phraseology, different terms, such as *idiom* (Cowie et al, 1983), *phraseme* (Mel'cuk et al. 1995) or *word-group* (Gläser, 1998) have often been used to refer to the same category. Each of them is defined according to different criteria and, for this reason, each term leads to broader (Makkai, 1972; Moon, 1998) or narrower (Fernando and Flavell, 1981) definitions and views. Gläser's approach seems to be especially appropriate for this study, given its similarity to that of Corpas Pastor (2000: 484), a Spanish phraseologist,

In the Spanish context dealing with the same discipline, things are not different, as different terms such as *locuciones* (Casares, 1992), *unidades del discurso repetido* (Coseriu 1967), *unidades fraseológicas* (Corpas Pastor 1996) are also used to refer to the same object of study.

For this reason, although each PhU in the corpus of this paper has been carefully considered and selected, the pertinence of the inclusion of some of them has been, and still is, open to discussion. The difficulty of providing a “close and definite corpus” of PhUs, arises from its heterogeneity and variety and also the from fact that the same investigators are still struggling to find a precise definition for this category. Below we

³ PhU= Phraseological Unit.

provide some examples, for the sake of discussion. In 1979 PhUs were defined by R. Ginzburg and her colleagues as follows:

“phraseological units are non-motivated word groups that cannot be freely made up in speech but are reproduced as ready-made units”(Ginzburg et al. 1979:74).

Gläser, in turn, defines the PhU as:

“a more or less lexicalized, reproducible billexemic or polylexemic word-group in common use, which has syntactic and semantic stability, may be idiomatized, may carry connotations, and may have an emphatic or intensifying function in a text”

Gläser (1998: 125)

As mentioned above, Gläser's approach is especially appropriate for this study given its similarity to that of Corpas Pastor (2000: 484), who describes *unidades fraseológicas* as:

“Combinaciones estables formadas por al menos dos palabras y cuyo límite superior se sitúa en la oración compuesta. Se caracterizan por la alta frecuencia de aparición en la lengua y de coaparición de sus elementos integrantes, así como la institucionalización, la estabilidad, la idiomatización y la variación potencial que dichas unidades presentan en diverso grado”.

Nevertheless, despite the heterogeneity of terminology, there seems to be a general agreement in that a PhU is a fixed word-combination whose main features are summarized in Corpas Pastor's *Manual de fraseología española*. Here, she lists the main features of a PhU, summarizing them from previous different authors (Fernando and Flavell 1981, Gläser 1996). According to Corpas Pastor a PhU :

- is an expression made of various words
- is institutionalized (institutionalization)
- presents some kind of semantic or syntactic specificity (idiomaticity)
- has different degrees of stability (graduality and stability)
- is possible a certain variation of its components (variation)
- is usually characterized by an high frequency of use

2.1.1 FEATURES OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNIT

The two main features which may be taken as criteria for distinguishing PhUs are generally said to be *stability* (manifested in the high frequency of occurrence in the language) and *semantic unity* (reflected in the lack of the correspondence between the general signification of the structure and the accumulation of significations of the constituent elements). These two characteristics are closely interconnected: the global signification associated with the group leads to its repetition, its frequent use leading to stability. However, this is a brief review of the features mentioned in the previous paragraph:

I. FREQUENCY

Corpas Pastor considers frequency as one of the most important aspects of a PhU. The frequency of use is the general frequency of appearance of a certain PhU in the language. From the moment in which a certain expression is used, it is then available for being used by other speakers. «The higher the frequency of use of this combination , the higher its opportunities to consolidate itself as fixed combination” [my translation from Corpas Pastor 1996:22].

II. INSTITUTIONALIZATION

It can be considered as the moment of implementation of the neologist expressions into the language. This process occurs thanks to the repetition, the usage and the frequency of appearance. In fact the repetition of a PhU can lead to its institutionalization. Zuluaga defined the process of repetition as “reproduction” or “repetition with no shape alteration”⁴.

III. FIXITY

Zuluaga points out that certain expressions have the specificity of being reproduced in the language as already made expressions (1975:225). These expressions have a precise shape because of the repetition of high frequency of use made by a

⁴ See Corpas Pastor. *Manual de fraseología española*, Madrid: Gredos, 1996: 22.

certain linguistic community⁵, and in his opinion, their degree of fixity is arbitrary and it is not equal for all speakers. M. Seco explains these already made expressions as prefabricated expressions, used as a chunk and having, in the language, a value established by the frequency of use (Seco 2005). It seems possible to conclude that fixity depends on the level of institutionalization a certain expression has achieved and vice versa.

IV. VARIATION

If, as previously mentioned, fixity is arbitrary; this means that many PhUs allow for a certain degree of variation. There are two main types of variations:

- a. variants: which are the synonyms and the structural variants⁶.
- b. modifications: are those components of the PhUs which acquire a new meaning as a consequence of the global meaning of the PhU.

V. IDIOMATICITY

The term idiomaticity, or rather the adjective idiomatic, is usually included in dictionaries with at least the following two meanings:

- a. "use of language that sounds natural to native speakers of that language" (Sinclair, 1995: 833 and hereafter idiomatic / idiomaticity).
- b. "given to or marked by the use of idioms" (Onions, 1964: 952) and hereafter phraseologically idiomatic / phraseological idiomaticity).

It is interesting to consider this initial distinction between the two meanings of the adjective *idiomatic*. Indeed, given that PhUs are characteristically lexicalized (Gläser, 1998) and institutionalized (Moon, 1998) – i.e. recognized and accepted as

⁵ For further subdivisions, see Thun 1978: internal and external fixity. The previous one divides into material fixity and content fixity. The latter divides into: situational fixity, analytical fixity and positional fixity.

⁶ See Corpas Pastor 1996:28 «éstas deben darse dentro de una misma lengua funcional, no presentar diferencias de significado, ser libres e independientes de los contextos en que aparecen, ser parcialmente idénticas en su estructura y en sus componentes, y ser fijas».

lexical items of a particular language (Bauer, 1983: 48) – they may also be regarded as idiomatic in the first sense mentioned above: natural and peculiar to a given language. Despite being different concepts, phraseological idiomaticity and idiomaticity seem to be very much related, even if whether this is a cause-effect relationship still needs to be assessed. As will be dealt later on, idioms are regarded as a prototype within PhUs (Gläser 1998), but the main issue one comes up with, when trying to define an «idiom», is identifying the property (or properties) which will satisfactorily include all the idioms in a language while excluding all the non-idioms. At this respect, it seems relevant to mention the publication, in 1978 of the dictionary of English idioms «Idioms of the English language and their use», by J. Seidl and W. Mc Mordie. The authors of this dictionary considered that an idiom was «some quantity of words which, under condition of their joint consideration, mean something absolutely another in comparison with the individual word meanings, forming an idiom» (J.Seidl and W. McMordie 1978). In this way, one of properties of PhUs, later named idiomaticity, had been formulated. Idiomatic specificity, also called idiomaticity, means that the global meaning of the PhU it is not deductable from the sum of the isolated meanings of each of its constituent's elements and, as previously mentioned, it is extensively considered (together with fixity) as one of the main features of PhUs (Fernando & Flavell, 1981). Corpas Pastor confirms that the term idiomaticity is reserved for defining that particular highest level of lexicalization or specialization. Idiomaticity is also strictly related to the concept of “non-motivation” or “non-composition, and it essentially means the lack of semantic content of the component words. This implies that an idiomatical PhU cannot be understood by analyzing it word by word and by trying to evince its meaning from those of its components. Idiomatical expressions are characterized by the fact that its meaning is not the product of the sum of its components. Words do not combine according to the normal rules of language. Anyway, not all the PhUs are idiomatic, for this reason it is regarded as a potential feature.

VI. TRANSLATABILITY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

Another distinctive characteristic of PhUs is also the fact that their translation is often problematic. Since they are closely linked to a specific situation, culture, or society, for a foreigner is very difficult to understand their meaning and consequently, to translate them.

It is very important to point out that, in Gläser's and Corpora's view, the characteristic features of a PhU may be present to different degrees, along a continuum. They both agree in that all the previous features may be present in a higher or lower degree, along a scale, the more of these feature a PhU has, the closer to the prototype of PhU it will be. The extent to which these features are present in a certain PhU concur to shape its phraseological idiomaticity. Under this view, although idioms are "the prototype of a set expression or phrase" (Gläser, 1998: 272), they represent only one group within the whole phraseological system, which also contains non-idiomatized units, idiomaticity indeed may or may not be present, at different degrees. According to Gläser's analysis, the criteria that contribute to the formation of idiomaticity of a PhU, are similar to the ones listed by C. Pastor above:

+/- lexicalization

+/- common usage

+/- reproducibility

+/-syntactic and semantic stability

+/- connotations⁷

+/-expressive, emphatic or intensifying functions in a text

Depending on the way and the level in which they are present, or not, in a given PhU, the degree of idiomaticity of the selected expression will vary. In other words, PhUs can vary their stability because they are based on constituents that allow

⁷The term connotation will be explained in the chapter "culture and language" because, being a key to the stylistic properties of a set expression, calls for further comments.

variations within the constraints of the phraseological system and they can also be interpreted as systemic variations of idioms and phrases. Investigations on idioms show that they have important roles in the spoken and written language, in particular for conveying evaluations. Moreover, in line with Gläser's opinion, they represent a model, a stereotype and the dominant subtype within the umbrella category of PhU. They have been (and still are) defined in different ways, according to the criterion used for describing them. Let us take different definitions, provided from several linguists:

“An idiom is interpreted as a non-free combination of 2 or more words that acts as a semantic whole. In the most cases, the meaning of an idiom cannot be predicted from the meaning of the components. An idiom is reproduced in speech as a ready-made unit, and, in this function, is a part of speech or interdependent sentence”

(S. Lubensky, Russian-English dictionary, 1995: 13).

“an idiom is a lexicalized, reproducible word-group in common use, which has syntactic and semantic stability, and may carry connotations, but whose meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of its constituents”

(R. Gläser 1998:125)

The word “idiom” is used to describe the “special phrases” that are an essential part of a language, they usually are special because they are fixed units of language that clearly do not follow the normal rules of grammar.

(H. Warren , Oxford learner's dictionary of English idioms 1994)

An idiom is a phrase whose meaning is different from the meaning of each words considered separately. These phrases have a fixed form-they usually cannot be changed-and they are often informal, but they can also be slang, rude slang or even slightly formal. Not all fixed phrases are idioms. For example, close your eyes is a common fixed phrase, but it is not an idioms because each word in it is used in its standard meaning. The phrase keep your shirt on, is an idiom, however, because the phrase does not mean “do not take off your shirt” it means “stay calm”

(P. Heacock, Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms, 2006)

Modismo: "expresión propia de una lengua con un significado unitario que no puede deducirse del significado de las palabras que la forman y que no tiene traducción literal en otra lengua". Se le llama también expresión o giro idiomático o frase hecha.

(Diccionario de Uso del Español Actual, 2005)

G. Philip (2007) maintains that idioms are “a class of multi-word units which pose a challenge to our understanding of grammar and lexis that has not yet fully met”. According to this author, an idiom is composed of two or more constituent parts, which generally are words. However, contrary to the expectations, each of these words does not contribute to give shape to the overall meaning of the phrase (idiomaticity), which works as if it were a lexical item on its own right, and expresses a semantically-complete idea which may be quite independent of the meanings of its components. One of the main reasons for this anomaly derives from the fact that an idiom is not built up word by word, according to the grammar rules of the language in use, but it is non-compositional, this means it is learned, stored and reused as a single chunk. The terms “non-compositional”, related to the concept of “unmotivation” explained above, indicates that the meaning of that phrase cannot be deduced as the sum of its component parts. For this reason, idioms are typically said to be non-compositional, as their meaning derives from a metaphor or other types of semantic extension. They can be listed in the lexicon already formed, as any other lexical item. Again, following the line of Corpas Pastor and Gläser’s criteria previously seen, Philip (2007) summarizes a series of features an idiom should have in order to receive this denomination and which concur to shape its degree of idiomaticity. Once more, the same idea is repeated: all these features can be present to a more or less degree of formation, along a scale of continuum:

- +non-compositional/lexicalization.....compositional/no lexicalized
- + non-motivated/opaque.....motivated/transparent
- + stable/conventionalized.....flexible/transformable

For what has been described so far, it may be stated that idioms are commonly believed to be qualitatively different from “normal” language, even though, the precise nature of this difference has not been precisely defined yet. In fact, as it has been reviewed, even among researchers who have conducted investigations on this topic, it is hard to find a consensus as to what precisely they are, or are not, and how to name them. However, despite the differences regarding classification and terminology, there seems to be at least a widespread agreement on one general idea, which consists of interpreting an idiom as an institutionalized expression whose overall meaning does not correspond to the combined meanings of its component parts. Nevertheless, this is a very broad concept, and may include a vast variety of PhUs units, such as proverbs, sayings, collocations, formulaic greetings, clichés etc..., and other conventionalized expressions. Idioms resist a specific definition and classification because they constitute a heterogeneous class of anomalous lexical items. In order to understand them, it seems necessary to understand first the mechanisms at work in “normal, free” language, and in this field corpus and cognitive analysis have been challenging the traditional descriptions.

More recently, also current psycholinguistics studies (Gibbs 1994, 2002) seem to support the notion of idiom as a kind of “long word” whose meaning is accessed directly, without the process of decomposition or analysis of its parts. Nevertheless, it should be admitted that whenever a person faces an unknown idiom for the very first time, one has no other possibility but to decipher its sense from the meaning of their constituents, (usually basing the decodification on the most salient meaning first, that is, most of times, influenced by one’s own cultural background and connotations). Giora (2001 and 2002) explains that this is one of the reasons for the failing of this common decodification tactic. The easiness of interpretation of an idiom is based on its level of semantic transparency or motivation; a transparent (motivated) idiom conveys its meaning more easily because there is a direct connection between the phrase and the metaphor (to put the card on the table). On the contrary, an expression in which there is no such a straightforward connection and that is more arbitrary, is described as unmotivated or opaque. Transparency (motivation) and opacity (unmotivation) cannot be measured in absolute terms because, as mentioned before, they are affected

by the individual's knowledge, in fact, it seems true that, an idiom which reflects a real-world situation is more comprehensible or that an idiom which refers to a cultural-familiar situation is easier to understand. Moreover, according to Philip (2007), it is also true that an idiom, which is familiar to a person, is perceived as more transparent than one, which is not familiar, even if it reflects a real or a cultural familiar situation. At this respect, another important matter is the one related to the idiom's adherence or violation of truth conditions: when an idiom refers to events or situations that cannot possibly occur in the real world, a literal interpretation is not possible (*it's raining cats and dogs*). Consequently, when the metaphor has lost its clarity, only an idiomatic interpretation is possible. Psycholinguistics have dealt as well with *homophone idioms* (idioms having both literal and idiomatic meaning). While Giora & Fein (1999) claim that contextual clues are very important in order to guide the reader towards an idiomatic or literal interpretation, latest corpus-based researches (Hoey 2005) suggest that context is less crucial than previously believed, and that in the case of homophones, one reading is always preferred over the other. In these cases, language users would opt for paraphrasing or using and alternative expressions.

More recent descriptive studies, in the field of corpus linguistics (Moon 1998), have also challenged the previously mentioned notions of fixity, in the light of the observation that most idioms do allow variation to occur. This means that, as has been previously mentioned, fixity can be variable and relative. The demonstration of idioms' (syntactic and semantic) stability has been an issue of prime importance for scholars of generative tradition. Idioms were, for this reason, considered transformationally deficient and in order to prove it, they could be submitted to different tests (Gläser 1988:268-269):

- 1) Lexical tests augmentation test (+ lexical components)
 deletion test (-lexical components)
 substitution (replacing by a synonym)
 permutation (changing the order of constituents)

- 2) Grammatical tests blocking of predication
 blocking of the formation of comparatives and
 superlatives
 blocking of nominalization and passivization

The concern with transformation tests is that they work within a theoretical vacuum, in fact they do not resist the empirical scrutiny. Even before the large use of computers, corpora criticisms were risen against this method of classifying idioms. Later on, thanks to the advent of corpus studies, it has been possible to illustrate that the lexical variation in idioms is a wide spread phenomenon (Moon 1998). This is a very relevant aspect, which has been experienced during the conduction of this analysis; in fact, while the institutionalized, canonical forms used in the dictionary appear as fixed, the reality of everyday language is that most idioms can suffer a controlled amount of variation to their standardized form. On this point it has been noticed the presence of some divergence of opinions between theoretical and descriptive studies. These differences are partly due to the fact that much of the standard literature on idioms deals only with what is theoretically possible, pre-corpus authors define idioms as “frozen”, referring to fact that they resist morpho-syntactic change, on the contrary, nowadays it is more common to define them as stable or of limited flexibility (Barkema 1996:128). Therefore, the current defy for linguists is to originate a definition, which should be flexible enough to include all known idioms, yet exclude non-idioms. Today, idioms are less fixed than used to be believed and “normal” language less free.

2.2 THE ENGLISH CONTEXT: ATTEMPTS OF CLASSIFICATION

From the mid 70's and increasingly over the 80's one of the strong influences on British phraseological theory was provided by the work of Russian scholars, in fact the material obtained from their studies has been widely used for describing phraseological systems of the English language. The main legacy of the Russian theory is a framework of descriptive categories which is "comprehensive, systematic and soundly based" (Cowie 1998:4). As shown in Table 1, despite the great variety of terms used to refer to the same category (a fact that is not unusual in phraseology and in other domains of linguistics), most of the early categorizations and further modifications agree in recognizing a basic distinction between "word-like units", which function syntactically at or below the level of the simple sentence, and "sentence-like units" which function pragmatically as sayings, catchphrases and conversational formulae.

Table 1: terms used to define "sentence like" and "word like" combinations.

Author	General Category	Sentence-like (pragmatic) unit	Word-like (semantic) unit
Chernuisheva(1964)	Phraseological Unit	Phraseological expressions	-----
Mel'cuk (1988)	Phraseme (set phrase)	Pragmatic phraseme (pragmateme)	Semantic Phraseme
Gläser (1988)	Phraseological Unit	Preposition	Nomination
Cowie (1988)	Word-combination	Functional expression	Composite
Howarth (1996)	Word-combination	Functional expression	Composite unit

As Table 1 shows, the difference can still be recognized by British authors such as Cowie and Howarth who are influenced by the Russian model. Sentence-like units would include sayings, proverbs, etc...(for a detailed schema see Gläser 1986, 1988), that do not belong to the investigation conducted in this paper. Word-like units which are the subject of this paper, have been the focus of the early Russian work and within

this field, most theorists in the 21st century recognize that a major contribution to phraseology, as an independent linguistic science, was provided by V.V. Vinogradov (1947), who provided a further sub-classification of “word-like” or “semantic” units. He is considered to be the father of the Russian Phraseology⁸ because he defined the object, the structure, and the reach of this linguistic science. Among many already existing terms for designating the general class of “word-like units” or “semantic unities, more complicated, than a word” (see Table 1) he chooses to name this category as “phraseological unit” and defines them as the basic object of phraseology. Since then, PhU is considered as the most inclusive category and the most widely used term in Russian phraseology. According to Vinogradov’s classification, PhUs are divided into three big groups: phraseological fusions, phraseological unities and phraseological combinations

Phraseological fusions (also called idioms) are word-groups or combinations that are unmotivated (or semantically opaque) and normally structurally fixed. The concept of “unmotivation” or “opaqueness” refers to the fact that, their meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of their constituent parts because there is no relation whatsoever between the meaning of the whole combination and those of its components. In other words, they have a completely changed meaning because the metaphor, on which the shift of meaning is based, has lost its clarity. (*spill the beans*). As previously explained, this designation, with its stress on the impossibility of interpreting the whole as the sum of the meanings of its parts, represents the standard approach to idiomaticity (Cowie 1998). In any case, Vinogradov did not stop here, because he claimed that the degree of semantic fusion was also related to the rigidity (or non-rigidity) of the semantic expression, or in other words, as Arnold said (1986:170)

⁸ The first to be aware of this distinction was the Swiss linguist Charles Bally (1909) who traditionally considered the founder of the theory of phraseology and whose scheme formed the starting point of Vinogradov’s categorization. He tried to give a classification to various combinations of words in the French language. However he did not consider it necessary to allocate phraseology as a separate discipline and he included it in the structure of lexicology and studied PhU mainly in the stylistic aspect.

“with the possibility of changing the form or the order of the components and substituting the whole by a single word”. Apart from the phraseological fusions, the author recognized a partially non-motivated type, called:

Phraseological unities, they are a partially motivated type of word-groups or combinations. Unlike the previous category, they are partially motivated because they have suffered a figurative extension from a (still active) technical meaning. Their meaning can be interpreted as a metaphorical extension of some original sense and so it can be deduced from the meaning of their parts, this means they are partially transparent. (*to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen, to wash one's dirty linen in public*). The borderline separating *unities* from *fusions* is vague and even subjective, because it varies according to the linguistic and cultural experience of the individual. In fact, for some people, a given expression has a figurative sense, which is not yet completely fossilized; while for others the same expression is completely opaque. I. Mel'cuk, for instance is not willing to recognize this category precisely because of vagueness: the assignment of an expression to this category would depend on the different linguistic and cultural experience of the speaker.

Vinogradov's third category is the most difficult to delimit and introduces the concept of “contextual determination of meaning”:

Phraseological combinations are said to be clearly motivated or transparent (the meaning of the unit can be easily understood from its constituents), moreover, according to Arnold (1986:170), “they are not only motivated but contain a component which is used in its direct meaning, while the other is used figuratively”. They are composed by words having a specific lexical valence, which accounts for a certain degree of stability in such word-groups. (*meet the demand/the requirements*, where *meet* would be the element used in a figurative sense, while the nouns form a variable determining context). Habitual collocations, such as the previous one, tend to become kind of clichés, where the meaning of a member-word is dominated by the meaning of the whole group, consequently they possess a certain degree of semantic inseparability. It is important to point out that the specific sense of the figuratively used component is determined by its context, (it is “phraseologically bound”, according to Vinogradov).

The difference between Vinogradov and Amosova (1963) lies in the fact that, while for the former the figurative element could be bound or determined by a word or a limited set of words, the latter claimed that for a combination to be phraseological, the “bound sense” must have a single determining item. N. N. Amosova (1963) deserves a special mention because of the formulation of the “phraseologically bound meaning”. In fact, the notion of “contextual determination of meaning” is a core concept for modern English phraseology, indeed PhUs are also investigated from the contextual perspective, under this approach, the distinction is that free-word groups build a variable context, whereas the essential feature of PhUs is a non-variable or "fixed" context. Unlike free-word groups, which have variable components, PhUs allow only partial or no substitution, for instance, in the PhU "small hours" (the early hours of the morning), there is no variable member as “small” denotes "early" only in the collocation with word "hours". In the PhU "small bear" the word "small" has the connotation "weak" only in this fixed non-variable context. Hence, a non-variable context is indicative of a specialized meaning of the component words, this implies the connotation is observed in the word only in the given phrases. Therefore, the stability of lexical components (or non-variability of context) and specialized meaning are regarded as interdependent features of PhUs, whose semantic structure is unique, no other word-groups can be created on exactly the same pattern.

The controversy here seems to be the extent to which a collocation can vary and still remains “restricted”. As Table 2 summarizes, despite differences in terminology, the terms used by Vinogradov and Amosova, to define world like units, are still imitated in the late 1990s.

Table 2 terms used to define the subcategories of word-like units (semantic units)

Based on Cowie (1998:5,217)

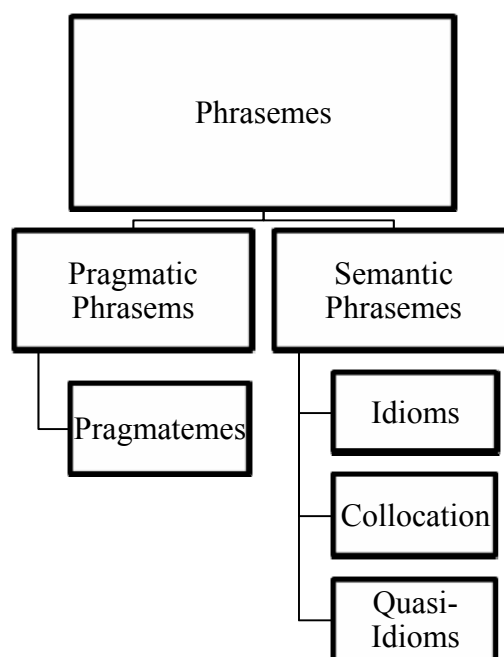
Author	General Category	Opaque Invariable unit	Partially motivated unit	Phraseologically bound unit
Vinogradov (1947)	Phraseological Unit	Phraseological fusion	Phraseological Unity	Phraseological combination
Amosova (1963)	Phraseological Unit	Idiom	Idiom (no difference)	a. Phraseme b. Phraseoid
Cowie (1981)	Composite	Pure Idiom	Figurative Idiom	Restricted Collocation
Mel'cuk (1988)	Semantic Phraseme	Idiom	Idiom (no difference)	Collocation
Gläser (1988)	Nomination	Idiom	Idiom (no difference)	Restricted Collocation
Howarth (1996)	Composite Unit	Pure Idiom	Figurative Idiom	Resticted Collocation

The typology provided, worked out on the material of the Russian language, has been widely used by linguists for describing phraseological systems of other languages, including English. Nevertheless, as it can be evinced from Table 2, together with the term “phraseological unit”, generally accepted in the western countries, there are many others terms, such as: set phrases, composite, idioms, etc..Not even the English dictionaries (containing different expressions of all kinds) are able to demonstrate a reliable criterion to distinguish between free word-groups and PhUs. The complexity of the topic this paper concerned with is yet demonstrated by the fact that the borderline between free word-groups and PhUs is not clearly defined. From a semantic point of view, all word-groups may be classified into motivated and non-motivated. Non-motivated word-groups are generally described as PhUs (with different level of “non-motivation), and they differ from motivated word-groups because they cannot be freely made up in the speech, but they are reproduced as ready-made units. Therefore, it seems possible to defend what was previously stated, that one of the essential features of PhUs is the stability of their lexical components and their structures. For instance, in the free word-group “red flower” the first word may be substituted for any other color (blue, white, etc.) without changing the meaning of the word-group (“a flower of a certain color”). But in the phraseological unit “*red tape*”, meaning the burocratic methods, such

substitution is not possible, a change of adjective would completely change the meaning of the whole group: “Blue/black tape” would mean a tape of a certain color. Thus, it may be said that the basic criterion to distinguish a free word-group from a PhU is comparative lack of motivation of the latter, and its semantic inseparability, which enable us to regard them as semantically equivalents to single words, and for this reason a single unit with an own meaning.

As Table 2 also shows, categories with a nominative function range along a scale or a continuum from unmotivated and formally invariable to partially motivated and partially variable collocations. Beyond the latter are “free” or “open” combinations whose make-up can be explained in terms of general restriction of co-occurrence but Even if collocations are not taken into consideration in this paper, it is important to mention two authors that have conducted important analysis on this topic. I.Mel’cuk and Howarth play a special role in the study of collocations .The first maintains that collocations constitute, after all, the great majority of “phrasemes” (the term he uses for PhUs) in the lexicon. The echo of “contextual binding” is very strong in this author, as he recognizes that the meaning of a two-word collocation involves “intact” the meaning of one of its constituents, but that the other component of its meaning is expressed by an element contingent to the first, for this reason he can be placed within the classical Russian tradition. Furthermore he also proposes a more detailed sub-classification of collocations, according to the category of the bound element, contributing to a rigorous categorization of collocation in terms of the “lexical functions” they have. The general representation of Mel’cuk can be represented as follows:

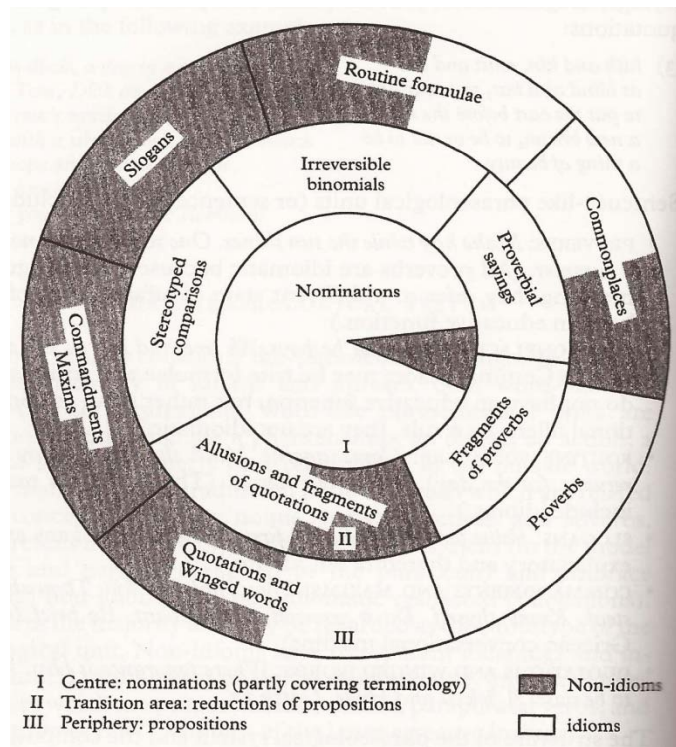
Table 3. terms used to define world like units by Mel’cuk



From the previous table it is possible to corroborate that Mel’cuk also recognizes a so-called *quasi idiom* in which the meaning of the whole is derived compositionally from those of the parts, but where there is also an “unpredictable meaning” (*skating on ice*). Howarth (1998) also provides, in a more large-scale recent analysis of collocations, a accurate cataloging of along a scale from the most restricted towards the area of free collocability (see Cowie’s 1998:164 for further clarifications).

A more recent taxonomy, is the one provided by Gläser (1996), who defines word-like PhUs as “nominations” because they designate a phenomenon, an object, an action, a process or state, a property or a relationship in the outside world. They represent the core of the phraseological system and they embrace both idioms and non-idioms. Idioms are the majority of them and they might be considered the model of PhUs, non-idioms have transparent meanings and can include technical terms, phrases with proper names, clichés, etc...Sentence-like PhUs are definide by Gläser as “prepositions” and they design a whole state of affairs in the external world, they are located at the periphery of the phraseological system and can be subdivided into: proverbs, commonplaces, routine formulae, slogans. The transitional area of this system is occupied by PhUs.

Table 4. the phraseological system according to R. Gläser



2.3 THE SPANISH CONTEXT: ATTEMPTS OF CLASSIFICATION

As regards Spanish phraseology, it must be said that few are the attempts of classifying PhUs, nevertheless there some important contributions (Casares, Zuluaga and Corpas Pastor), based on different criteria (semantic, functional or stylistics criterion) The first taxonomy was provided by Casares in the 50's and, ten years later, E. Coseriu (1967) introduced the difference between "repeated discourse" and "free discourse". In 1975, A. Zuluaga presents his PhD expanding Casares's taxonomy, basing his hypothesis on German and Russian researches.

Let us briefly summarize the categories presented by Casares, Coseriu and Zuluaga. Casares's classification still has a special relevance in the Spanish context, not only for being the first but also because it has worked as a model for future investigations. He makes a distinction between two different types of PhUs:

- *Locuciones*
- *Formulas Proverbiales (refranes and frases proverbiales)*

Since in this paper it has been decided not to consider proverbs, as the author considered that they belong to the field of Paremiology, this section of the study will only be focused on the first category. Anyhow, it is important to mention that this Casares defines the *frases proverbiales* similar to the way in which Gläser defined the general category of proverbs, claiming that they belong to a different field of study of phraseology, because they express universal truths and they do not describe a single event. J.Casares (1992:170) defines *locuciones* as follows:

“combinación estable de dos o más términos, que funciona como elemento oracional y cuyo sentido unitario consabido no se justifica, sin más como una suma del significado normal de los componentes”.

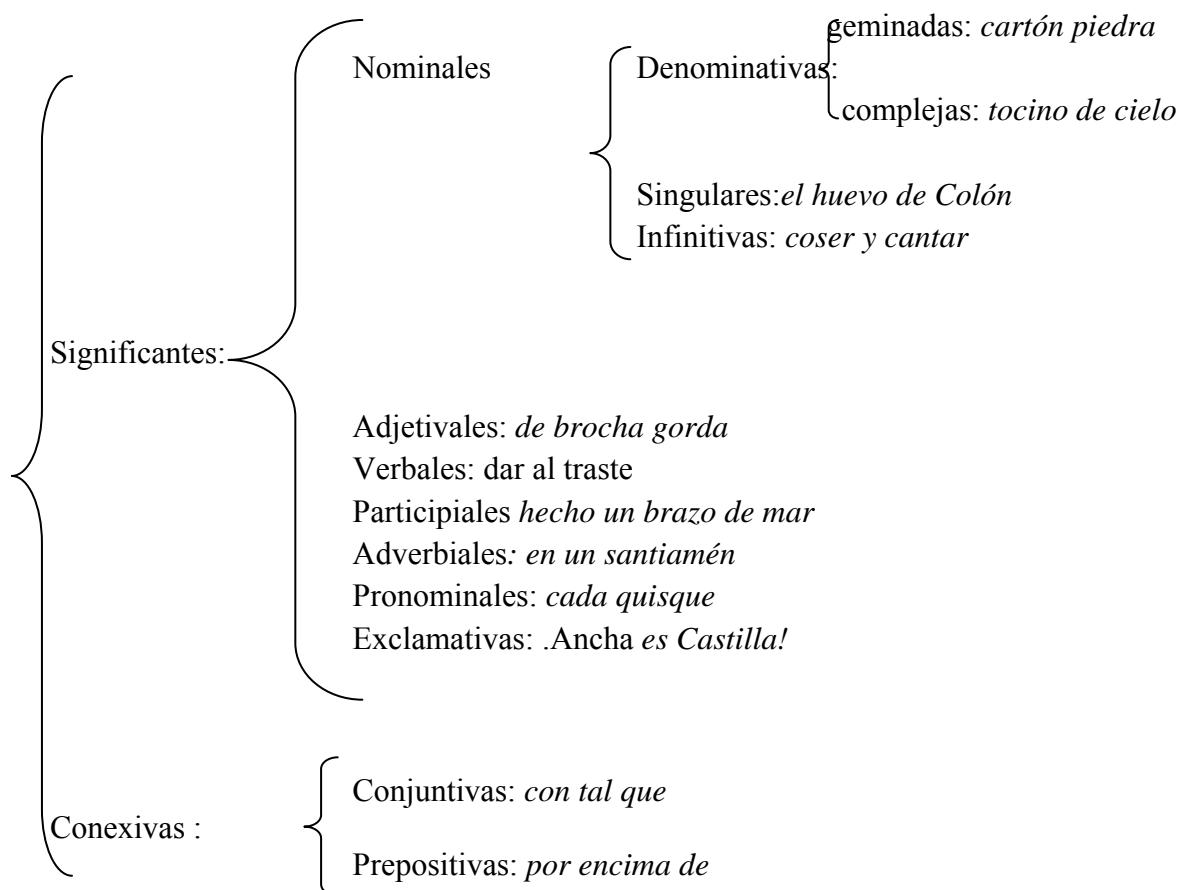
Within the general category of *locuciones*, he makes a further distinction between:

a. *Locuciones conexas*: those composed of grammatical words to join a sentence.

b. *Locuciones conceptuales o significantes*⁹: whose components represent a conceptual unit.

His classification can be summarized with the following diagram representing the different types of *locuciones*:

Table 5: Casare's classification of *locuciones*



⁹ Casares subdivides this category into different groups according to the syntactic function they have in the discourse.

Furthermore, he also pays attention to the *modismo*. Even though at the beginning he was not intentioned to include it, because he considered it to be at the periphery of its field of study, he deals with it due to the importance this lexical phenomenon has acquired.(Casares 1992: 205). After having concluded an analysis of its features, the author defends that linguistics cannot include in its categorization the term “*modismo*” because its boundaries are so flexible that it could be easily included both in the “*locuciones*” and in the “*frases proverbiales*”.

Eugenio Coseriu (1967) provided another important contribution to Spanish phraseology by establishing the difference between

- repeated discourse
- free discourse.

As he explains, free discourse refers to all those lexical and grammatical units that join and modify themselves according to the rules of language; while repeated discourse involves those units that are fixed and repeated (or reproduced) in the discourse and whose constituents are not always combined according to the rules of the language. Approaching phraseology from this perspective, this paper’s focus of attention lies in the first category, which, following the previous description seems to be the one where PhUs and idioms belong. Within repeated discourse, E. Coseriu distinguishes three different types of PhUs, his differentiation is based on a functional point of view, given that he takes as reference the grammatical level of the units to which they would correspond:

a. *Locuciones*, (he also calls them “*textemas*” or “*frasemas*”): units which are equivalent to clauses. Here he includes proverbs, sayings, quotations, prayers, literary fragments etc...

b. *Sintagmas estereotipados*: units which can be combined in a clause and are equivalent to syntagms (he only provides examples in French).

c. *Perífrasis léxica*: units which are equivalent to words, they can be combined in the clause and they can be replaced by single words (“*dar abasto*” can be replaced by “*producir lo necesario*”, “ *echar en cara*” can be replaced by “*reprocahar*”)

His categorization of the “repeated discourse” could be represented as follows:

Table 6: Coseriu’s classification of Repeated Discourse Unities



At this point, it is already possible to verify the terminological heterogeneity of the Spanish phraseological system, as it has also been seen in the English one. In this case, what Casares defines as “locuciones” for Coseriu are “unidades del discurso repetido”, and moreover, within these two general categories, different terms are used by the two authors, to refer to the same category. Again, this serves as demonstration of the difficulty of establishing the limits of phraseology and of creating a precise corpus composed of homogenous PhUs.

There still remains to review other three authors which provided a major contribution in Spanish phraseology and who will confirm the lack of homogeneity for the nomenclature of the different categories or for the definition of criteria which allow to place a certain PhU in a certain category. Later investigations of Zuluaga (1980:79) and Corpas Pastor (1996:27) considered that Coseriu’s taxonomy was rudimentary and not meticulous, because he did not use a clear criterion in order to differentiate among the different kinds of units. Moreover, he included in the first group (textemas) some units which do not belong to the field of study of phraseology (literary fragments and prayers). Nevertheless, it is of great value his distinction between “free discourse” and “repeated discourse”. In his PhD thesis, Zuluaga (1980) expands the classification provided by Casares using (with no distinction) the following denominations:

- fixed expressions (since its main feature is fixity) and *PhUs* (since they work as units of the language).

With both of these terms he covers the spectrum from two-word combinations to those formed by simple or compound clauses, which are characterized by fixity and for presenting, in many cases, different degrees of idiomaticity. Zuluaga proposes two different criteria in order to catalogue fixed expressions (or PhUs):

- according to their degree of formal fixity and semantic fixity (idiomaticity) he distinguishes:

- a. fixed non-idiomatic expressions as “dicho y hecho”
- b. semi-idiomatic expressions as “la oveja negra de la familia”
- c. idiomatic expressions as “cabeza de turco”

- according to its semantic-functional value, that is, the different syntactic functions they play in the discourse, he distinguishes between two large groups:

- a. *locuciones*¹⁰: which need other element in order to combine themselves in a text.
- b. *enunciados fraseológicos*: which have syntactic autonomy (*clichés, formulas, dichos, refranes, proverbios*).

The focus of attention of this paper lies in the first category, which seems to be the most similar to the category of *nominations* identified by Gläser (juxtaposed to the category of *proposition*). The *locuciones* are firstly differentiated (so as Casares) between those who have a grammatical value and those who have a semantic value. Within this grouping he provides further distinction (similar to Casares’ ones) according to the type of semantic role they have.

More recently, during the decade of the 90’s, two different authors have proposed new classifications from a different perspective. Corpas Pastor (1996: 50-52), provides a wide vision of phraseology which involves all those combinations made of at least two words, and whose upper limit is the composed clause, characterized by an high

¹⁰ They correspond to the category of *locuciones* provided by Casares, excepted for the category of *locuciones gramaticales* where Zuluaga add the “*locuciones elativas*” whose aim is to emphasize the meaning of the clause.

frequency of appearance in the language and of co-appearance of its constituents elements, as well as its institutionalization, stability, idiomaticity and variability [my translation from Corpas Pastor 1996]. In order to classify the PhUs, she combines the criterion of *enunciado*¹¹ with the one of fixity, in this way she distinguishes a first-level classification into three general categories:

- *colocaciones*: they are not considered to be fixed according to the general norms (institutionalized) but they are not complete statements and are seen as free syntagms.

- *locuciones*: they are also fixed according to the general norms of the system but they are not statements. Corpas, as well, uses the functionality of these PhUs and its equivalence as a reference; actually, there is no substantial difference with Casares and Zuluaga.

- *enunciados fraseológicos*: they are PhUs which are autonomous statements, are fixed in the oral language and belong to the socio-cultural background of the speakers¹².

L.Ruiz Gurillo (1997) showed a different taxonomy based on the concept of centre and periphery, similar to Gläser's position, aimed at demonstrating the gradual nature of the phraseological phenomena. On the one hand, she explains that they represent a gradual category between lexeme and syntagm: on the other hand, its own features are also present in a gradual way. All this demonstrate the non-discrete nature of the fixed combination of words and makes impossible to list precise categories and arrive to a general agreement over the different groups that compose the phraseology system. In its investigations, both Gurrillo and Gläser opt for sharing the Prague School's view of centre and periphery. Gurrillo starts from a strict view of phraseology which basically involves: the PhUs which have a highest degree of idiomaticity and fixity. Depending on the degree of idiomatic and fixity they have, the result would be its

¹¹ Following Zuluaga (1980) she considers the *enunciado* “una unidad de comunicación mínima producto de un acto del habla que corresponde a una oración simple o compuesta pero que también puede constar de un sintagma o de una palabra” (Corpas Pastor, 1996:51).

¹² In these category she includes *formulas, refranes, proverbios* etc.... They have been excluded from this classification, in order to be coherent with previous author's classifications, because these subcategories do not belong to the analysis of this paper but they seem to be more related to the field of study of Paremiology.

degree of *fraseologización*; according to it, PhUs can be located at the centre, in the transition area, or in the periphery. Nuclear PhUs are the ones located at the centre of this system because they have the maximum degree of fixity and idiomaticity, transitional PhUs and peripheral PhUs, which have the highest degree of freedom. In order to place a PhUs in one of this category, she differentiates different features of the PhUs at different levels, which contribute to locate a PhUs at one point of this gradual scale. The levels she takes into consideration are: phonetic/phonology, morphology, syntax, lexical-semantic, pragmatic. Her vision allows her to define a gradual structure and to fight against the old habit of considering the irregularity of a PhU as a parameter in order to classify it as wrong, and she suggests to change the point of view and to think that right those so-called “irregularities” of the PhUs represent the authentic peculiarity of a PhU.

2.4 A GENERAL CONCLUSION

From this general review of the English and Spanish phraseological models, it can be argued that, the distinction between PhUs and non-phraseological elements is by no means clear. Apparently, it can be concluded that there are multiple and different classifications of PhUs which are based on different criteria. Generally speaking, the majority of the attempts of classification arise from a wide perspective of phraseology and divide the PhUs into two big groups, word units and sentence units. On the one side, those units which are autonomous in terms of syntax and semantics, and which can be replaced by just one word, on the other side, those which need other elements in the clause and which need an entire sentence to be replaced. Another important feature to be underlined is that, especially more recent classifications deal more and more with all those kinds of expressions that play an important role in the communication, both for its pragmatic and organizing functions in the discourse. Having found a large variety of definitions and denominations, most of the times different labels for the same category, it seems reasonable to admit that there has been, and there is still a big argument over the phraseological specificity, in order to distinguish different PhUs. Nor in English, neither in Spanish there exists, so far, any standardized common definition of PhU, which clearly list its features. However, almost all scholars point out the stability of the expressions (that is fixity, even if there is the possibility of lexical and grammatical

variation of many units), its high frequency of use and its non-motivation (non-compositional) as the most relevant features of PhUs and those which concur to give its degree of idiomaticity. Consequently, these will be our main criteria.

3 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Acquiring cultural knowledge of another language is often considered the fifth skill in language learning, in fact being aware of the cultural differences help people to prevent misinterpretation caused by confusing cultural referents (Austin 1955). At the same time, according to Michael Byram (1994) the aim of language teaching is to develop both linguistic and cultural competence, which he defines as intercultural communicative competence. On the other side, Kramsch (1993:8) defends the idea that cultural knowledge is not only ‘an educational objective’ in itself, which is separate from language, on the contrary, she supports the notion of language as a social practice, in this way culture would become the core of language teaching. According to her perspective, culture awareness must be understood both as “enabling language proficiency and being the product of reflection on language proficiency”.

Cultural knowledge acquires a special importance in the fast changing world we live in today. Yet words are generally used by people to communicate, but at the same time the acceptance of their meaning and their usage often goes far beyond traditional meaning description in dictionaries. This was already described by Nida (1999), who explained that it happens because the use of language not only includes the verbal but also the cultural factors. He maintains that language and culture are two similar systems of interdependent symbols. Cultural factors are deeply interwoven with the language, and thus are morphologically and structurally reflected in the forms of the language. Henle (1958) had already raised this discussion considering the relationship between vocabulary and perception. Sapir (1958:19) had even argued that the vocabulary of a language clearly reflects the physical and social environment of a people. Under this perspective, it seems possible to interpret the language as part of our culture. The latter, may be defined as:

“the totality of beliefs and practices of a society [my translation]”

(Nida in M.A. Vega and R. Martín-Gaitero 1999:1)

or also as:

“the ability of members of a speech community to orientate themselves with respect to social, moral, political and so on values in their empirical and mental experience”

(V.Telika and al. 1998:55)

Cultural categories are conceptualized in the subconscious knowledge of standards, stereotypes, mythologies, rituals, general habits, and other cultural patterns (Teliya 1998) and they are based on people’s background knowledge, values and way of experiencing the world. Language is fundamental for every culture in order for these categories to be transmitted, thus, language and culture cannot exist separately. People use language to represent any class of elements and models of a culture, all the meanings of a word are usually based on cultural elements¹³.

Pointing out the interaction between language and culture and the relation it has with phraseology is essential in this study. In fact, due to this interaction, the boundaries of symbolic meaning of an object or an event (be it a verbal or a cultural), are not clear cut; just in the same way a cultural symbol may have different interpretations, it can also be said that in language the same “linguistics symbol”, does not have a definite meaning. For this reason, phraseology, which lacks of precise categorizations and interpretations, seems to be the discipline which best exemplifies the difficulty of establishing the limit between certain linguistic symbols. As a matter of fact, as it has been previously summarized, so far there have been no definite terminologies able to define the criteria to identify an idiom from a non-idiom. In the same way, it would be very difficult to imagine language in terms of logic, with words having only one specific meaning; it would be almost impossible in a natural language, where polysemy seems inevitable.

¹³ For example, the word “love” in classical Greek which can be expressed with four different words according to the kind of love involved.

As early as 1955 J.L. Austin claimed that communication is not possible if speaker and hearer do not share some basic knowledge and presuppositions, which means communication is not possible if there is no common reference. Many authors have oriented their investigation towards the study of real manifestations of cultural differences and their impact in language (Henle P. 1958, Sapir E. 1958, G.G Morain 1986, Kramsch C.1993). In line with this perspective, it can be established that language is the means of representing and reproducing culture. In other words, culture is assumed to be manifested, in one way or another, in the content level of many linguistic expressions, reproduced and transmitted from one generation to next through linguistic and cultural norms of usage.

In relation with this linguo-cultural perspective, Luque and Manjón (1998: 141) defend the idea that one of the best examples of culturally loaded lexical units is the PhUs or idioms: “phraseological symbols are more directly related to culture, ideas, and the way of living of a society [my translation]”. Thus, if language contributes to the formation of a collective cultural identity, also phraseology, due its wide spectrum of different forms of usage and due to the fact that it often includes elements which have a strong relationship with the culture of a specific country (part of the body, animals, and colors), can be considered as a domain of linguistics which seems to adequately illustrate the correlation between culture and language. This suggests a new direction of research for phraseological studies, called “linguo-cultural investigation”, or the analysis of PhUs for cultural data as represented in linguistic meanings” (V. Telyka 1998:54). These kinds of investigations are aimed at clarifying the figurative meaning of everyday language and the implications and extension of our world-view. If the same world view is shared by all members of a linguistic-cultural community, the generation and comprehension of metaphorical linguistic meaning is possible. Under this perspective, one of the most challenging aspects of investigating the phraseology of a language is the fact that, being considered as one of the best examples of cultural-linguistic interaction, its categories and identified units are continuously changing, so as culture and language are. According to Nida, this is due to the fact that, contrary to folk

or intuitive conceptions, language does not lie in dictionaries nor in grammars, but it only exists in the people's minds. (Nida 1999: 4).

After having described the interaction between language, culture and phraseology, it seems also important to mention the ways in which culture is implemented through language. Each culture has a set of patterns that could be defined as basic, when they enter the lexicon and the language, it is possible they act as "direct cultural signs" (i.e. "as cunning as a fox"). On the other hand, when linguistic symbols interpret these cultural patterns, then these symbols transform themselves into bodies of those cultural patterns; in this case, language units acquire the status of standard or quasi-stereotypes. For instance, "to carry one's cross" interprets the Biblical Crucifixion but has lost its original holy meaning, and its everyday usage becomes the quasi-stereotype of torment and sacrifice. According to V. Telyka and al. (1998) there exist five ways through which language is penetrated by culture:

- Cultural semes: these include words and word combinations denoting idioethnic realia. In this case the cultural component shapes the cultural seme and the cultural seme reflects general knowledge of the realia.

- Cultural concepts: these are abstract notions that map and construct our world view in a certain way (Cowie 1998:58) and their specificity is implemented at the cognitive level.

- Cultural connotations: they represent the interpretative relation between linguistic signs and symbols of any other cultural non-verbal code (stereotypes, myths etc.. and other entities also called cultural patterns). Cultural connotations are especially vivid in idioms, because the activation of a cultural connotation is connected with the type of cultural information contained in the keyword (in this paper: *mother, father, and uncle*). Generally speaking, cultural connotations can accompany any culturally loaded word when it belongs to a phraseologism and when the term is manifested in word-combinations that activate culturally relevant parameters of the base (the keyword). Cultural connotations arise from associative relation between the images contained in the inner form of the language sign.

- Cultural background: refers to a kind of information that is the most difficult to define as it is connected with semantics in a very indirect and still unexplored way. It seems likely that a word has “cultural background” when it possesses a clearly ideological aura related to an historical situation, political movement, a fashionable trend, etc. These kind of entities would have the strength of a visual symbol.

- Discourse stereotypes: a culture develops through the repetition, reinterpretation and multiplication of many texts as well as through the creation of new ones. These texts, which pertain to different discourse types (literary, religious, political, medical etc...) have a strong influence over culture, vice versa, also the cultural change may origin a reinterpretation of discourse stereotypes.

As has been briefly summarized, the cultural component might penetrate the language through different ways and to what extent and in what ways cultural information manifests itself in the language still remains a matter of investigation. Furthermore, it seems that phraseology remains - despite the difficulty which entails the lack of precise taxonomies - one of the most challenging topics of study within linguistics for two main reasons: i) its relevance as one of the best examples of cultural-linguistic interaction, ii) its taxonomies and identified units are continuously changing, so as culture and language are.

3.1 DEFINITION OF KINSHIP

Despite the acceptance of kinship as a universal concept, it has been clearly defined neither by anthropologists nor by sociologists. According to A.R Radcliffe Brown (1952:280) kinship is “a system of dyadic relations between person and person in a community, the behavior of any two persons in any of these relations is regulated in some way and to a greater or less extent by social usage”. Consistent with this definition, kinship, constitutes part of that total network of social relations called social structures and it is indeed part of them. It includes definite social groups of which the most important is the family. On the other side, in the Encyclopedia Britannica (ed. 2004) kinship is defined as “the socially recognized relationship between people in a culture who are held to be biologically related or who are given the status of relatives by marriage, adoption, or other ritual.”

In line with Parkin (1997:3) and Murdock studies, kinship seems to be the most basic principle of organizing individuals into social groups, roles, and categories. It represents some form of organization based on parentage and marriage, which, through different manifestations, seems to be present in every human society. Even though nowadays the family structure of modern industrialized society has been weakened by the dominance of the market economy and - in some cases- replaced by the provision of state organized social services, in non-industrial contexts, kinship units are the sole structuring factor and, normally, they have many more functions. In fact, they often work as basic units of production, political representation and even as religious bodies for the worship of spiritual beings, who are themselves considered members of the kin-group. Although kinship systems seem to be universal throughout human society, they differ among cultures in terms of importance within the broader social structure, the form in which they are implemented, the number of relatives they include, and the demands they place upon the members. In this sense, family may be said to be a form of kin-group. Parkin's view is that many societies still think in terms of marriage system, descent system and residence rules and almost all of them are organized in a family of some sort and use kin terms to identify their relatives (Parkin 1997). Within this frame, the nuclear family (parents and children) still represents a fundamental institution responsible for rearing children and organizing consumption.

3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AS A VARIETY OF KINSHIP ORGANIZATION

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the kinship system is part of the social group and it includes definite social clusters of which the most important is the domestic family. The domestic family may be of different forms and size and may observe different manners of life. Moreover, in words of Radcliffe Brown (1952:279) "The unit of structure from which a kinship system is built up is the group which I call elementary family, consisting of a man and his wife and their child or children, whether they are living together or not."

In the same line, back in 1949, the American anthropologist George Peter Murdock had published the results of a major survey of kinship and social organization

in a worldwide sample of 250 societies. His starting point was the family and, on the basis of his survey, he concluded that the nuclear family (made of a man, his wife and child or children) is, at least as an idealized norm, universal. All of the societies which belonged to his sample had some form of family organization and, although many societies were organized into polygamous families and extended families, even these had as their basis at least two nuclear families per polygamous or extended family household. The author's key point was that, even where complex forms of family organization occur, nuclear families are still found as the basis of the more complex forms. He also defended that the nuclear family is not only universal but also universally important. Murdock underlined that the key functions of the nuclear family, as well as its universal status, are most apparent if one considers them in reference to the relationships that make them up. The key functions include the sexual, economic, reproductive, and educational aspects of the family, while the relationships include the bonds between: husband and wife, father and son, father and daughter, mother and son, mother and daughter, brother and brother, sister and sister, and brother and sister. These eight relationships have come to be known as those of primary kinship, and they are normally the relationships through which all more distant ties of kinship are traced. Murdock's approach to the definition of the family - although it does involve universals - is a very relevant perspective for this paper because it represents an example of an approach based on a limited but important comparative analysis.

3.2.1 THE FAMILY FUNCTIONS

The family performs various valuable functions for its members; perhaps the most important of all is that it provides for emotional and psychological security. The family also serves a valuable social and political function by institutionalizing procreation and by providing guidelines for the regulation of sexual conduct, in addition, it provides other socially beneficial functions such as the rearing and socialization of children, along with such humanitarian activities as caring for its members when they are sick or disabled. On the economic side, the family provides food, shelter, clothing, and physical security for its members, many of whom may be too young or too old to provide for the necessities of life themselves. Finally, on the social side, the family may serve to promote order and stability within society as a whole. Furthermore, from a sociological

perspective, the family represents one of the society's main social institutions because it represents our first encounter with socialization processes, thus is the main agent of socialization and helps individuals to be productive members of society and also. Furthermore, the family is not only seen as an institution, but also as a social system and a social group (J. Eshleman, 2000), in fact most of us look to our family for guidance, support, and a sense of belonging.

As all institutions, the family has a set of norms, values, statuses, and roles that are organized to meet specific goals for the overall society. The norms, values, statuses, and roles within the family are mainly designed to guide sexual activity and social relations within a sexual union of individuals. As a social system, the family is viewed as an entity, which consists of various interrelated parts (statuses) that perform particular functions (roles). Further, the family as a system is part of a larger system (society) and contributes to the functioning of society. Within the family system, the statuses and roles interact with one another to form a system of relations amongst the members who hold a specific status and perform a specified role. The operation of the family system is dependent upon the effectiveness of these status-role interactions. As a social group, the focus is on the individual members (people) of the family in question. What each person brings to the family and how each person contributes to the relationships with other individuals in the family determines the reality within each family.

Whether we examine the family as an institution, a system, or as a group, the interest of sociologists who have studied the family lies in the fascination of the family entity and the relationships within its boundaries. In fact, one of the big challenges for people who study the family lies in its definition. Contemporary society is changing rapidly and we have seen many family forms increase in number and some relatively new forms emerge; in fact, there are growing numbers of so-called "variant family forms" throughout the world, indeed, from a purely sociological perspective it seems that it should be accepted that the family has many different manifestations. It can be finally said that family forms, similarly to biological organisms, evolve with time and circumstance.

The complexity of the sociology of family is exemplified by the fact there is a very vast amount of definitions for the word “*family*”. The Webster's Dictionary alone offers twenty-two definitions. While the USA Census Bureau defines a family as "two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption who reside in the same household", so, what is family?

Basing our supposition on different definitions¹⁴, it can be maintained that the debate about the criteria that define a family is still totally open. Nevertheless, as the main objective of this paper is not to conclude a detailed investigation on the sociological and anthropological connotation of the definition of family, the main feature important to point out is that, sociologically, being identified as a "family member" implies differences in the social rights and obligations toward others who are identified (both by the broader society and by the members, themselves) as "family" as opposed to being a stranger, colleague, neighbor, roommate, friend or one so distantly

¹⁴ "A relationship of indeterminate duration existing between parent(s) and children" (Nimkoff and Ogburn, 1934).

"A social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction, including adults of both sexes, at least one of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults." (Murdock, 1949).

"The family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption; constituting a household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, and creating and maintaining a common culture" (Burgess et al. 1971).

"A family is any group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship in which (1) the people are committed to one another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship, (2) the members see their identity as importantly attached to the group, and (3) the group has an identity of its own" (Rice 1990).

"Family refers to a collection of people, related to each other by marriage, ancestry, adoption, or affinity, who have a commitment to each other and a unique identity with each other. This collection forms an economic unit. The adults in the collection have varying degrees of responsibility for young members that might be a part of the collection" (Bidwell and Vander Mey, 2000).

“A group of kin (related through blood, marriage, and/or adoption) who share a household and pool together economic and other resources for the purposes of socialization”.

related as to not really "count" as family. Of course, we always have to consider what has been previously said regarding the lack of clear-cut boundaries, when dealing with linguistic and cultural symbols. Yet, there seems to be nothing more "cultural" than the family, and of course, where a culture draws this line between family and not-family is highly variable.

3.3 KINSHIP STUDIES

Having affirmed that kinship as a universal concept, that it is present through different manifestations, in all cultures, and being this paper aimed at investigating PhUs containing different kinship terms, it is important to summarize the recent developments regarding kinship studies. They are relevant because they help to understand the different connotations that the same kinship term may have in different cultures. Furthermore, the modern anthropological approach to kinship is an example to follow for developing more contrastive analysis based on kinship terminology in different cultures.

The study of kinship saw its origin in the 19th century with Engels' attempts to speculate on the origin and development of kinship systems¹⁵, over the early 20th cent. Freud expanded his psychoanalytic studies and tried to provide an explanation for the historical roots of the family, and later on, the sociobiologists used genetics and evolutionary theory to the same end. Engels, Freud, and the sociobiologists are considered to be the best-known investigators among those who have studied the question of kinship in human society, because the three of them have tried to explain the origins and evolution of kinship and to account for aspects of kinship found universally in human societies. However, none of their theories belongs to the mainstream of social or cultural anthropology as it is meant today.

¹⁵ Conjectural histories.

Sociobiology originated in the '70s and can be defined as an interdisciplinary approach combining biology and the social sciences¹⁶. The main promoter of the socio-biological approach, applied to the study of the family, has been the American sociologist Pierre L. Van den Berghe, who claimed that human family systems develop as part of a complex interaction between genetic and environmental factors. The first ones not only are those that differ between individuals or human groups but also those common to the general mankind. He argued that human culture is not merely what is left after everything determined by biology, but rather that culture itself is an outgrowth of natural selection. The widespread occurrence of the nuclear family, the cultural rules of incest avoidance and marriage, and other aspects of kinship are, in Van den Berghe's view, products of biologic evolution distinguishing mankind from the apes. In this perspective, elements of fictive kinship, such as the honorary kin statuses of god parenthood¹⁷ and blood brotherhood, can be seen as attempts by human groups to extend kinship through culture. According to this theory, biologic kinship lies at the root of social behavior in all human societies. Other investigators have taken this biologic determinist perspective to greater extremes.¹⁸

Finally, modern anthropology is mostly concerned with new specific theoretical aspects of kinship such as explaining particular systems or particular aspects of kinship, rather than the origins, evolutionary schemes, and universal aspects. The inquiries of

¹⁶Sociobiology scholars defend that animal and human behavior should be studied in conjunction with Darwinian evolutionary theory. They see anthropology as a merely sub discipline of zoology and they believe human kinship should be studied in the same way that zoologists study animal behavior.

¹⁷ Fictive kinship will be explained in paragraph number 3.5.

¹⁸For instance, the American zoologist Robert L. Trivers (1971) defended the “nepotism hypothesis.” In this theory animals and humans alike are biologically conditioned to sacrifice themselves for the good of other close relatives, so that their own genes may be passed on by these close relatives when they mate. This view can provide an explanation to the fact that in some societies, it is considered appropriate and desirable to marry close kin. According to the socio-biological theory, such customs represent a way to reinforce unconscious desires of self-perpetuation. However, the explanations provided by people belonging to these kinds of societies—maintaining close ties with relatives or keeping property in the family—do not generally coincide with the unconscious desires postulated by the socio-biologists. This is one of the reasons why most anthropologists do not subscribe to socio-biological theory.

modern anthropologists are both specific, in order to explain particular systems, and comparative, in order to explain the range of variation among systems. Anthropologists have been recently interested in the comparative study of kinship with the aim of discovering universal patterns and the variable forms that they assume in specific societies. They are widely divided as refers to which features can be viewed as invariant and why regularities and variations occur (Schwimmer: 1997). This paper dealing with a contrastive terminological analysis of different kinship terms in phraseology, finds its best justification and relevance, within this frame of comparative studies and inquires. In fact further contrastive investigations (between different languages), within the field of phraseology with kinship terminology might contribute to explain the different cultural connotations (cultural variations) associated to universal words such as *father*, *mother* and *uncle*, and many other kinship terms, which have not been included in this paper. Adopting a biological and an anthropological approach to kinship prove different, because the first one deals with kinship in the physical sense, while the second one tries to provide a cultural and social interpretation for the physical universals. While the socio-biologists' position defines all kinship institutions as conforming to a basic plan which reflects human biological and evolutionary necessities, anthropologists, maintain that kinship has no intrinsic relationship to biology and is unlimited in its possible forms. The socio-cultural approach to kinship assumes a middle ground position and defends it as "constructed from a set of categories, groups, relationships, and behaviors based upon culturally determined beliefs and values concerning human biology and reproduction". Consequently, an underlying common framework is present, but considerably modified by culture and ideology; this is one of the most important points of relevance for this paper. Therefore it is the object of a large spectrum of variation that challenges the validity of any generalizations because, as previously stated, cultures have different views about the "facts" of life and the meaning of them ¹⁹.

¹⁹ At this respect note that in some cultures for instance; sex has nothing to do with a child's birth. Therefore, kinship is determined only according to links through females in a matrilineal system. In these cultures, fathers and people linked through males are technically not relatives at all, although they may assume important social roles and relationship. Other cultures group people into localized patrilineages, whose members regularly marry into the same group

An interesting example of how different manifestations of common universal features of kinship can take place, is the perspective adopted by the Catholic moral on consanguinity and affinity, (which seems to most relevant in our Western society where this analysis is being conducted). Marriage, in the Catholic world, is considered as a literal union of the husband and wife, who become "one flesh" as a consequence of the wedding sacrament. For this reason, in our culture, the resulting network of people linked by marriage become more than mere affines. They are transformed into kin in both spirit and substance, consequently, regulations impose incest prohibitions are applied to a range of a person's spouse's relatives, which has varied over time. In addition to this regulation, the Church applies standards of kinship to an individual's baptismal godparents, who are unrelated to the child by birth or marriage but who have entered into kinship through a shared sacrament. Anthropologists name this relationship *fictive kinship*²⁰.

Current kinship studies consist of three main areas of interest: kinship terminology, descent theory, and alliance theory. Whereas some scholars treat these as distinct and competing approaches, many regard them as complementary. In fact, the study of kinship involves, among other things, the study of any particular individual in the society, whether male or female. Although the aim of this paper is not to conduct an exhaustive analysis of anthropological theories used in kinship studies, it seems necessary to dedicate a few lines in order to define and illustrate the different classification systems which are used in many anthropological studies on different cultures.

generation after generation. Therefore a man's wife and mother usually belong to the same lineage, creating a situation where mothers are considered as in-laws (affinal relatives) rather than biological (consanguineous) kin.

²⁰ For a more detailed explanation of fictive kinship please refer to paragraph number 3.5.

3.3.1 ALLIANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

The first distinction that shall be made is between lineal kin and collateral kin (Parkin: 1997; Schwimmer: 1997):

- Lineal kin is linked to ego²¹ in a direct line of ancestors or descendants.
- Collateral kin is composed of ego's siblings and their descendants and the siblings his/her lineal kin of ascending generations and their descendants as well. They can be represented as side branches of the main trunk that links a person to his ancestry and progeny.

Moreover, one ego has a consanguineal kin with an alter to whom s/he is related by birth. S/he will also have important relationships with affines or affinal relatives linked by his/her own marriage or that of one of his consanguines. This introduces the second distinction:

- Consanguineous: relation due to the bond of blood is called consanguineous kinship (parents and their children or between children of same parents). Thus, son, daughter, brother, sister and paternal uncle etc are consanguineous kin because each of these is related through blood. This paper will involve only some kind of consanguineous relationships in the English and Spanish language. These are the mother, father and uncle ones.

- Affinal: kinship due to marriage is called affinal kinship. New relations are created when a marriage takes place. Not only the two people who get married establish relationship with each other, but also family members of both sides get bound among themselves. This paper will not deal with terms related to affinal kinship.

A third, very important, distinction is often made between:

- matrilineal kin, all family members related through ego's mother.
- patrilineal kin, all family members related through ego's father.

²¹ When dealing with kinship classifications, the individual is usually designated as "ego" and the other person is designated as "alter" or "referent".

According to Murdock, patrilineal societies are much more common than matrilineal ones, occurring at roughly twice the incidence and accounting for 60% of all unilineal systems and 40% descent systems (unilineal and cognatic) throughout the world. (Murdock 1949:59).

3.3.2 DESCENDENT SYSTEMS

Kinship analysis also involves the study of descent systems, these are concerned with the rules that people in different cultures use to determine parenthood and identify ancestry and how they assign people to social categories, groups, and roles on the basis of inherited status.

A first, basic distinction can be made between:

1. unilineal systems, in which descent is traced through parents and ancestors of only one sex. (they are subdivided into patrilineal and matrilineal forms).
2. cognatic systems, in which descent can be traced through either or both parents (they are subdivided into bilateral and ambilineal), and which are used in most Western societies included the English and Spanish ones.

bilateral systems involve the inclusion of all of an ego's relatives within a given range. They are usually ego focused and are formed by tracing relationships from both parents throughout an ever widening network of kinship. This happens, for instance, in the English and Spanish societies which are the object of this study.

ambilineal systems involve an exclusive selection of membership in a father's or mother's group, usually upon adulthood. They are ancestor focused and become organized by tracing descent from either father or mother, but not both, and back through a similarly restricted string of forbearers

The previous classifications have been presented because they seem relevant for this study. In fact, from them it is possible to deduce that while unilineal kinship creates a direct and simple assignment of social statuses, rights, and duties by confining transmission to a single descent line, cognatic, systems allow building social groups and categories through any or all of an individual's acknowledged relatives, beginning with

both his/her father and mother. The open nature of cognatic organizations leads to greater complexities and wider variations that normally do not appear in unilineal forms. In cognatic societies there are no unilineal groups (groups descended strictly in the father's or mother's line) and for this reason a person is reckoned to be equally related to kinfolk on either side of the family. As claimed by Murdock, while people of Western industrialized societies and of European ancestry, such as the English and the Spanish societies, are more familiar with cognatic kinship institutions, only 30% of the world's cultures reckon descent and group membership on this basis. The remaining majority of societies, including India and China, follow unilineal principles (Murdock 1949:59)²². This is still much more present in the Spanish society where a person's surname is inherited both from the father's and the mother's side. But also in other societies, where ones inherits only the father's surname (such as the English or Italian), a person feels no closer to an uncle on the father's side than an uncle on the mother's side. More specifically, the bilateral systems of cognatic kinship establish an open network for building groups and relationships based on equality of status and conditions through both parents and extended kin of either gender. In contrast, ambilineal systems of cognatic societies, involve group membership, property and status through only one parent, although the choice between a paternal or maternal connection is open²³.

²² Many societies construct kinship groupings, roles, and relationships by tracing descent exclusively through the male - patrilineal - or female - matrilineal - line. Unilineal kinship institutions, either patrilineages or matrilineages, according to the prevailing descent rule, occur at over twice the incidence of cognatic ones among the world's cultures. In many societies, unilineal descent groups assume important corporate functions such as land ownership, political representation and mutual aid and support.

²³ Ambilineal structures are, therefore, similar to unilineal forms and result in the construction of ancestor focused groups with discrete and exclusive memberships often occupying distinct territories. In these societies, a person may join the group that offers the most prestige, either the father's or the mother's, but in so doing the person gives up any rights held in relation to the other group.

3.3.3 KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

The last area of investigation within kinship studies is defined as kinship terminology, which deals with the way people in a society classify their relatives. It is exactly for this reason that it probably represents the field of kinship studies which is most directly related to phraseology and consequently, the most important for the kind of investigation that it is being conducted in this paper. There seems to be a strong interest in the social aspects of these classifications as well as in the formal properties of the terminology itself. Does a given language “merge” parents with parents' same-sex siblings—in other words, call the father and father's brother by the same term? Does it “skew” generations, perhaps by calling every male member of the father's group by the term *father*?

As has been previously mentioned, there seems to be a general agreement over the fact that kinship is a universal concept and that in most societies it plays a significant role in the socialization of individuals and the maintenance of group solidarity, thus all human languages possess a kinship term system. Kinship terminology refers to the various systems used in languages to refer to the persons to whom an individual is related through kinship. All kinship term systems make use of factors such as sex, age, generation, blood and marriage in the society. Kinship terms, according to E. R. Leach, are “category words by means of which an individual is taught to recognize the significant groupings in the social structure into which he is born” (1958:143). It has long been known that people classify their world through language (see Chapter 3 of this work), therefore a word in one language does not necessarily have an exact equivalent in another. The way people classify the world reflects the way they think, or, equally, they think according to the way they classify the world. Different societies classify kinship relations differently and therefore use different systems of kinship terminology - for example some languages distinguish between affinal and consanguine uncles, whereas others have only one word to refer to both a father and his brothers- . Often the particular system of categorization gives clues to a culture's principles of social organization and construction of social roles. The fact that Latin referred to the father's brother with one term, (*patruus*), and to the mother's brother with a different one, (*avunculus*), reflected the way the ancient Roman family life was organized. In the

same way, it reasonable to argue that, the fact that both English and Spanish people use only one term (*uncle* and *tío* respectively), for both “father’s brother” and “mother’s brother”, may indicate that the distinction between these two is unimportant. In this case, an uncle on the father's side of the family is treated in much the same way as an uncle on the mother's side. The Romans, however, treated them differently, the *patruus* being a stern figure much like the father, the *avunculus* being literally an “avuncular” figure, likened somewhat to a grandfather, who unlike the father was not a figure of authority.

The first person who studied the issue of kinship terminology under a scientific method was L. H. Morgan (1871). After a massive work of questionnaires collection, he concluded that different kinship terminologies reflect pre-existing social structures and that one can therefore study the prehistory of society by analyzing known kinship terminologies. Even though anthropologists now study kinship terminologies (relationship terminologies), in relation to existing social institutions, rather than as clues to the past, they recognize the great importance of Morgan’s discovery of the diversity of kinship terminology structures. This innovation is important for this study and similar ones, because it indicates that if people classify relatives in a particular way, the implication is they do so for a reason that may be found in their existing social structure. Even where terminologies are conservative and reflect the customs of the past, the categories remain to the perceptions of the people who use them.

Therefore, kin terms constitute a culture’s kinship vocabulary, a catalogue of the names assigned to relatives, (*father, mother, uncle*). They provide not only convenient labels but also assist in the identification of important social categories and principles. Proceeding on a superficial level, it can be noted that different societies use different labels to designate their kin; *uncle* is *oncle* in French, *tio* in Spanish, and *zio* in Italian. However, more significant differences in classification occur, as cultures frequently go beyond mere labeling differences to group relatives in completely different ways. This refers back to what has been pointed out in the previous chapter about the fact the meaning of a word usually goes far beyond its strict meaning described in a dictionary. Often the particular system of categorization gives clues to a culture’s principles of social organization and social role definition.

At this respect, the distinction between kin types and kin terms must be introduced:

- Kin types refer to the basic uncategorized relationships that anthropologists use to describe the actual components of kinship categories, (which specific biological relationships are involved). They are supposedly culture free, or of ethnic components.

- Kin terms are the labels for categories of kin that include one or more kin types. They are emic structures and vary from culture to culture.

Kin types

A kin type is a designation assigned to each individual relationship (such as a mother, father, mother’s brother, etc...). Each relationship is described by a sequence of primary components, which are strung together to indicate genealogical connections. They culturally neutral and anthropologists use them to begin a description and analysis of any kinship system prior to a consideration of the main principles of classification:

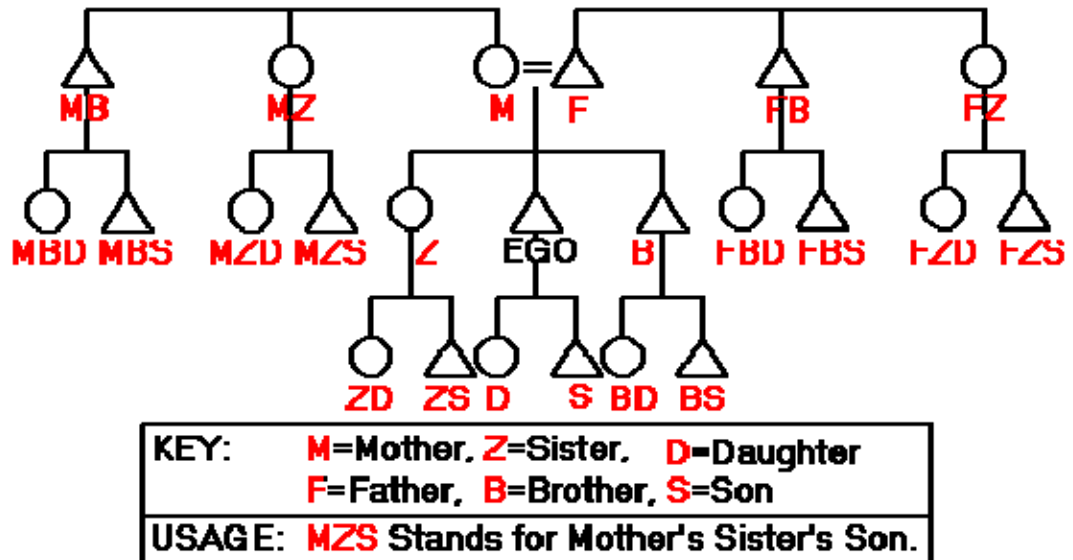
Table 7: Relationships described by primary components
 Adapted from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>

Primary Components²⁴	Letter Symbol	Compound Strings	Letter Symbol
Mother	[M]	Mother’s Brother	[MB]
Father	[F]	Father’s Brother	[FB]
Brother	[B]		
Sister	[S]		
Son	[S]		
Daughter	[D]		

²⁴ Single letter abbreviations are used to indicate the primary terms.

The diagram which follows shows how some basic relationships are designated by kin types:

Table 8 <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>



Kin terms

On the other hand, kin terms are the set of names that people actually use to designate and address their relatives, are specific to each culture. The terms *uncle*, *mother*, *father*, belonging to English and Spanish terminology, are not kin types but categories which include more than one relationship and therefore more than one kin type as:

Table 9: English and Spanish Kin Terms defined by Kin Type

Adapted from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>

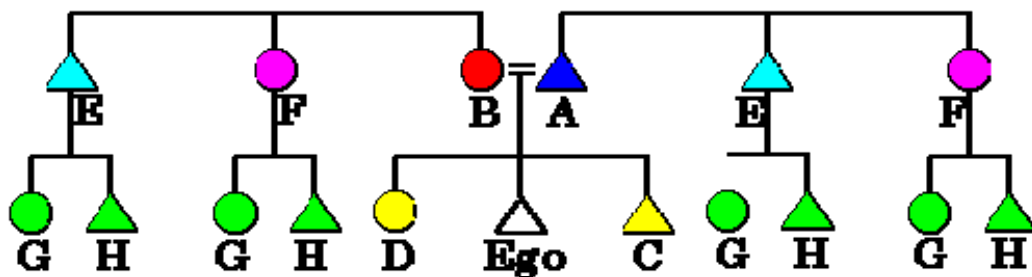
Kin term	Kin type
Father /Padre	F
Uncle/Tío	FB, MB
Brother/Hermano	B
Cousin/Primo	FBS, FBD, FZS, FZD MBS, MBD, MZS, MZD, FFBSS, Etc.
Son/ Hijo	S
Nephew/Sobrino	BS, ZS

According to what has been previously stated, since kin terms are essentially arbitrary categories, different cultures can potentially group their relatives into a widely varying, indefinite number of classifications. The fact that kinship terms have a central role within the cultural-linguistic investigation is demonstrated also by the fact that they raise a very important translation issue, due to the connotations they have in different cultures, as we will see in the following paragraphs. Despite the fact that kin terms are fundamentally subjective categories, which might vary across cultures, curiously, anthropologists have observed that almost every culture has constructed a system of terms that conforms to one of six widely occurring basic patterns. The classification of terminologies by terms for relatives in a person's own generation (brothers, sisters, and cousins) is complex and the most prevalent classification is that of George Peter Murdock, who distinguished six types. (Sudanese, Eskimo, Hawaiian, Iroquois, Omaha, Crow)

We will focus only on the “Eskimo” type, because is the one found also in English and Spanish languages. The formal definition of an Eskimo terminology is simply that it distinguishes sisters and brothers from cousins. Most European societies have terminologies of this type, as do small-scale hunting and gathering societies such as the Eskimo groups in Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. It tends to be found in societies that have cognatic descent systems, that is, those that lack either strong patrilineal or matrilineal principles. The Eskimo system involves the creation of categories of kin, it is marked by a bilateral emphasis (no distinction is made between patrilineal and matrilineal relatives) and by a recognition of differences in collateral distance (close relatives are distinguished from more distant ones).

Table 10: Eskimo Category Kin Terms

Taken from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>

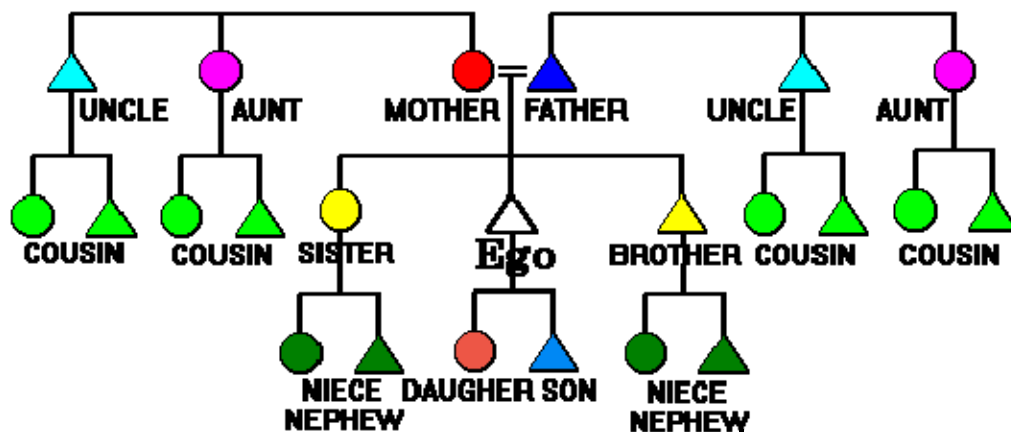


Because of predominant marking of immediate family members, Eskimo terms usually occur in societies which place a strong emphasis on the nuclear family rather than extended kin or larger kinship groups. In this sense, modern English and Spanish kin terms exemplify the principles of Eskimo terminology:

1. The system is bilateral (no distinctions between father's and mother's relatives).
2. Distinctions mark differences in gender, generation, and collateral kinship distance.
3. Each nuclear family relationship receives a distinct term; more distant relatives are grouped into general categories.

Table 11: English and Spanish Kin Terms

Taken from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>



Another feature of this terminology is that nuclear family members are assigned unique labels that are not extended to any other relatives, whereas more distant relatives are grouped together on the basis of collateral distance. This means, nuclear family terms - *mother, father, brother, sister, son, and daughter*- apply to only one kin type, but terms applied to extended kin - *uncle, aunt and cousin* - are used to form more comprehensive categories (this process is called *collateral merging*).

Table 12 Adapted from:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>

English Kin Terms Designated by Kin Type (Male terms only)		Spanish Kin Terms Designated by Kin Type (Male terms only)	
Kin term	Kin type	Kin term	Kin type
Father	F	Padre	F
Uncle	FB	Tío	FB
	MB		MB
Brother	B	Hermano	B
Cousin	FBS	Primo	FBS
	FZS		FZS
	MBS		MBS

The word *parent* is described in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2004 ed.) as one who has begotten offspring, or one who occupies the role of mother or father. From this explanation it seems possible to argue that, in Western societies, parenthood, with its obligations, rests strongly on biological relatedness²⁵. In the parents' generation, four forms of classification are found (generational terminology²⁶, bifurcate merging²⁷,

²⁵ This is not the case in all societies: in some, a distinction is made between a biological parent and social parent, with the former producing the child and latter raising the child and acting as a mother or father in as affective or legal a sense as biological parents are expected to do in Western society. This distinction is particularly common in the case of fathers, and to accommodate it anthropologists have developed separate kinship terms: a “genitor” is a biological father, and a “pater” is a social one.

²⁶ It classifies all female relatives or male relatives in the parental generation by the same term. There is no equivalent to the English term “uncle” or the Spanish “tío”.

²⁷ This structure differentiates between parallel relatives (including lineal relatives and those related through a same-sex sibling link) and cross-relatives (those related through an opposite-sex sibling link). In this system a person's mother and mother's sisters are called by one term and the father's sisters by another.

bifurcate collateral²⁸ and lineal terminology). In this paper, only the system used in the English and Spanish societies which is the lineal terminology will be detailed. It distinguishes *mother* from *aunts* and *fathers* from *uncles* but does not make any further distinction by employing different terms for the father's and mother's sides of the family. English and Spanish societies have this term system because of its distinction between lineal relatives (those from whom a person descends from) and collateral relatives (those related through a sister or brother), but not between patrilineal or matrilineal relatives.

Examples of other classifications can be taken from the Hindi culture, which has a very elaborate system of kinship terms, and where each relation has a different term, there are several different terms for *uncle* depending on paternal side or maternal side, and younger or older to your father or mother, One needs to use a correct word for the person you are referring to. As well as from the Arabic culture, which is always more precise than European languages for family relationships. They have no word for *uncle*, but two separate words for "*father's brother*" and "*mother's brother*", and no word for *aunt*, but two separate words for "*father's sister*" and "*mother's sister*". While, in English or Spanish one's uncle's wife would always be *aunt*, in Arabic there are many ways to refer to her.

A further illustration of the cultural specificity of kinship terms is the fact that in some languages we use the same word to identify two family members. While English

²⁸ This is the case of Roman Latin terminology. Even if it could be considered bifurcate merging -because relatives on the same side of the family are called by linguistically related (or identical), terms- strictly speaking it "bifurcates" by employing different terms for the father's and mother's sides of the family, but it is "collateral" in that it distinguished lineal relatives from collateral ones by calling the mother's sister, for example, by a different term from the mother. The ancient Romans used slightly different but related terms for mother (*mater*) and mother's sister (*matertera*), but they sharply distinguished the father's sister (*amita*), who, in their patrilineal society, was closely associated with the kin group of the father. The equivalent terms for male relatives of this generation, were *pater*, *patruus* (father's brother), and *avunculus* (mother's brother), the last being derived from *avus*, meaning "grandfather." Scandinavian languages, as well as Old English and other Germanic languages, have had kinship terminologies of this type, with no equivalent of the modern English terms *aunt* and *uncle*. Instead, relatives are literally called "mother's sister," "father's sister," and so on.

and Spanish have different words for *nephew or sobrino*, and *niece or sobrina*, Italian uses the same word “*nipote*”, (*nephew/niece-sobrino/sobrina*) for both genders (a distinction between male and female can however be made by adding different articles before the noun). Furthermore, in Italian *nipote* can also mean *grandchild*. Even though English and Spanish languages have their own unique kinship term system, where terms define the role they serve in society, few basic kinship terms share the same semantic constants. For instance, both in English and Spanish kinship systems, consanguineous relation is defined as biological and symbolized by blood, they both agree that “blood is thicker than water”, which emphasizes the kinship relations created by blood rather than marriage. In both languages, kinship terms distinguish between sexes (the difference between a brother and a sister), and between generations (the difference between a child and a parent). Moreover, both the two kinship systems distinguish between relatives by blood and marriage.

3.4 THE METAPHORICAL USE OF KINSHIP TERMS

In all languages kinship terms form a recognized vocabulary used to designate relatives, however these terms are not always used only in their literal, kinship context. They may be employed in fictive kinship contexts, as godparenthood, or yet more metaphorically in other contexts. In politics reference is sometimes made to “Big Brother,” to “brothers and sisters” in the black power movement, or to “sisters” in the feminist movement. In a religious context there are “fathers” in the priesthood and “mother superiors,” “sisters,” and “brothers” within religious orders. Children may address their parents' friends as, for example, “Aunt Mary” or “Uncle Bill”. Crime networks and youth gangs employ kinship bonds and ideas of “blood brotherhood” as organizing principles

3.5 FICTIVE KINSHIP

One of the best-known forms of fictive kinship in the English and Spanish societies is godparenthood. This institution is found in many Christian societies, where the ritual sponsors of a child at baptism, the godparents, act as quasi-parents, promising to look after the spiritual interests of the child. The relationship between godparent and godchild is not, strictly speaking, one of kinship. Although godparents are regarded as being like parents in certain ways, they are not seen as part of the actual kinship system. Nevertheless, certain elements of the godparent relationship come very close to kinship. For example, marriage to a godchild or to a godparent's child has been forbidden in the past. In addition to the relationship between godparent and godchild, relationships are also established between the godparents and parents. This is particularly true in certain Roman Catholic societies, notably in western Mediterranean (Spain) and Latin American countries. Here, the notion of *compadrazgo* (as it is called in Spanish) includes fully this cluster of relationships; parents and godparents are said to be *compadres*, and they were required by custom to help each other in times of hardship, to lend each other money, and to offer support, for example, at festival times. Anyway, seems to be considered an inaccurate designation for Catholic practice, which once prohibited marriage not only between godparents and godchildren, but also between a godparent and a sponsored child's parent and between unrelated godchildren of the same godparents on the basis of shared substance²⁹.

The distinction between real and fictive kinship is not precise but depends on many cultural factors. The only element all fictive kinds of kinship have in common is that some aspect of the relationship is regarded as fictive, while another aspect is regarded as true kinship. Fictive kinship involves the extension of kinship obligations and relationships to individuals specifically not otherwise included in the kinship universe. In many societies, people have "aunts" or "uncles" who are merely their

²⁹ Fostering, may also be regarded as a form of fictive kinship in which foster parents provide for children, offering moral and material support. Fostering differs from adoption in that the latter fully incorporates the child into the family providing for true (social) kinship rather than merely fictive kinship. The distinction is not absolute, however, because specific ideas about what is and what is not kinship differ among cultures.

parents' closest friends. Actually, in these cases, they can be seen as fictive kinship because they serve to broaden the support network and its role is voluntary. Nonetheless, all fictive kin relationships have one element in common: they are defined by criteria distinct from those establishing blood or marriage relationships. Fictive relationships may mimic the ties they copy, but they are defined in their own terms. These terms may have a religious or economic component, be predicated on existing social networks, or manipulate reality to fill gaps in real kinship networks. Fictive relationships serve to broaden mutual support networks, create a sense of community, and enhance social control. In essence, fictive kin ties elaborate social networks and regularize interactions with people otherwise outside the boundaries of family. Unlike true kinship bonds, fictive kin ties are usually voluntary and require the consent of both parties in establishing the bond (Gubrium, and Buckholdt, 1982).

4 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Considering the heterogeneity of a field of study such as phraseology, its variety and the difficulty it entails for setting concrete limits, in this part of the paper the criterion followed to set up the corpus will be presented.

First of all, it has to be said that, being a short paper, after having collected a wide corpus, composed of many different kin terms both in English (*mother, father, brother, sister, son, uncle, grandmother*) and Spanish (*madre, padre, hermano/a, hijo/a, tío/a, abuelo/a, padrino*) it was decided to limit this research to a smaller number of kin terms. The choice has been taken on the basis of the concept of “nuclear family” which according to Parkin (1997) and to Parkin and Stone (2004) is made of just parents and their children. The latter have been excluded from the study, but the previous ones, have been chosen due to their degree of representativeness in different cultures: *mother, father; madre, padre*. Moreover, even if not included in the concept of “nuclear family”, also the kin term of *uncle* or *tío* has been included in this study, due to the fact that it seems to be especially representative and culturally loaded. Nevertheless, the author of this paper is working in order to use the rest of the kin terms collected for this study, and excluded from the present corpus, for future investigations in this field. It is also important to point out that the corpus has been limited to the “*castellano*” in Spanish (therefore expressions used in Central and South America have been excluded). Regarding English, the expressions collected are used in UK, USA and Australia.

The data have been collected using the different English and Spanish monolingual dictionaries as well as specific monolingual dictionaries of idioms of each language, bilingual dictionaries and selected monolingual web pages specialized in idioms³⁰. Moreover, in order to compensate for a possible loss of everyday language data, that might be derived from the fact of limiting the search only to dictionaries which collect the formal and standardized forms of the language, the corpus has been

³⁰ For the specific reference of the dictionaries used, the reader is referred to the bibliography

enriched also with the contribution of the English and Spanish native people the author knows, in order to add any pertinent expression or idiom they might know.

Even though at the beginning of this research, the selection of the units which were to be included in our corpus as object of study seemed clear, the heterogeneity and the lack of a precise consensus among the “elements” which are listed as the object of study of phraseology, has by some means hindered the process of data selection. Finally, it was decided to exclude proverbs (*proverbios y refranes*) and sayings (*dichos*) as belonging to a different field of study, that is Paremiology, as well as compound words and quotations or formulae. The selection has been limited to those PhUs which respect, with different degrees and levels, the criteria listed in the first chapter as the features of a PhU and whose meaning cannot be understood by the meanings of its individual components.

The corpus has been analyzed according to two different criteria:

Firstly it has been analyzed according to the constituent criteria of a PhU which have been listed in the first chapter.

Secondly, it has been analyzed according to the degree in which, the different meanings or connotations of its constituent term (*mother, father, uncle; madre, padre tío*) have been transferred to the PhU. This means, analyzing the cultural connotations these terms reflect in the Spanish and English cultures respectively.

The Spanish corpus includes the following expressions:

MADRE	PADRE	TÍO
	Ni su padre	el tío Sam
¡Ser la Madre del Cordero!	Estar para hacerlo padre y darle las gracias	Tener un tío en Alcalá
¡Madre mía!, ¡Madre de Dios!	De padre y muy señor mío	Tener un tío en las Indias/ América
De puta madre	niñito de papa	Tío, pásame (usted) el río
La madre que te trajo/parió	más feo que pegar a un padre	Ya vendrá el tío Paco con las rebajas
¡tu madre!	cuando seas padre comerás chorizo	Tío: apelativo para un desconocido
Como la madre lo trajo al	acordarse de su	Tío: apelativo para designar

mundo	padre/padres	a un amigo/conocido
Ciento y la madre	¡tu padre!	El tío del saco
Viva la madre que te parió!	Darse la vida padre	Ser un tío grande
Ni tu/su madre	Un ... padre	Ser un tío con toda la barba
Sacar de madre	Tener el padre alcalde	¡Tío bueno!
Salirse de madre		
Las madre de todos/as los/as ...		
No tener madre		
Te crees la madre de tarzán		
Estar mal de madre		
Estar pegado a las faldas de la madre		
Ser cada uno de su madre y de su padre		
Irse con su madre la gallega		

The English corpus includes the following expressions:

MOTHER	FATHER	UNCLE
Face that only a mother could love	Old enough to be someone's father/mother	Bob's your uncle
Every mother's son of them	A bit of how's your father	Everybody and his uncle
A mummy's boy	When smb was a twinkle in their/your father's eye	Say/Cry uncle
Mother's milk	a sugar daddy	Talk to smb like a Dutch uncle
Mother's hen		It'll be a monkey uncle
Learn/be taught sth at your mother's knees		Uncle Sam
Tied to one's mother apron strings		
The mother of sth (cause or origin)		
The mother of all...		
The mother lode of ...		
Shall I be mother?		
Mother wit		

5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In order to have a general idea of the features that have been analyzed, it is useful to begin with the presentation of two tables which contain:

- In the first column, the Spanish PhUs and the English PhUs which have been analyzed.
- In the second column, the respective translations.
- In the third column, there are their equivalent expression, with terms belonging to the same semantic field of kinship (whenever they exist).

MADRE

SPANISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH SAME SEMANTIC FIELD
¡Ser la Madre del Cordero!	To be the root of the problem, to be the crux of the matter	
¡Madre mía!, ¡Madre de Dios!	my goodness, good heavens	
De puta madre	Bloody fantastic!	
La madre que te trajo/parió	You jerk, you bastard, Fuck off!	
¡tu madre!	Get stuffed! up yours! fuck off!	
Como la madre lo trajo al mundo	Buck naked, in his birthday suit	
Ciento y la madre	hundreds of people	Everybody and his uncle
Viva la madre que te parió!	Say as a compliment to a very attractive man/boy	
Ni tu/su madre	None/Nobody	

Sacar de madre	To upset someone /exaggerate?	
Salirse de madre	To go too far, to lose all self-control (person); to turn wild, to go (event)	
Las madre de todos/as los/as...	The most relevant / representative example.	The mother of all
No tener madre	To be a real swine (person); this is the limit (event)	
Te crees la madre de Tarzán	You think you are the best/ you can do everything	
Estar mal de madre	Something that is bad done from the very beginning	
Estar pegado a las faldas de la madre		To be tied to one's mother apron strings
Ser cada uno de su madre y de su padre	To be different	
Irse con su madre la gallega	Go and seek one's fortune	

PADRE

Ni su padre	no one	
Estar para hacerlo padre y darle las gracias	handsome, sexually attractive	
De padre y muy señor mío	Terrific, incredible, terrible	
niñito de papa		Daddy's boy
más feo que pegar a un padre	Be as ugly as a dog, as ugly as a sin	Face that only a mother could love
cuando seas padre comerás chorizo/huevo	When you are a grown up, you can do as you please	

	-You'll have to earn your wings if you want to fly' -Age/experience has its privileges	
acordarse de su padre/padres	¡Up yours!	
¡tu padre!	Up yours!	
Darse la vida padre	To live the life of Riley, like a king	
Un xxx padre	A huge xxx, a hell of a xxx, a fuss, a row.	
Tener el padre alcalde	To have a friend at court	

TÍO

In this table, a distinction between literal uses of *tío* (uncle) and extended uses of *tío*, as an affective appellative for a friend or an unknown person, has been made.

el tío Sam		Uncle Sam
Tener un tío en Alcalá	It is of no use at all	
Tener un tío en las Indias/ América	It is very beneficial	
Tío, pásame (usted) el río	There is a solution	
Ya vendrá el tío Paco con las rebajas	They will soon come down to earth with a bump	
Tío: apelativo para un desconocido	guy, mister, bustler, mate,	
Tío: apelativo para designar a un amigo/conocido	brother, man	
El tío del saco	Boogeyman	
Ser un tío grande	He is a great guy	

Ser un tío con toda la barba	He is a bloke	
¡Tío bueno!	He is a hunky	

MOTHER

ENGLISH	SPANISH	SPANISH SAME SEMANTIC FIELD
Face that only a mother could love		Feo como pegar un padre
Every mother's son of them		Cada hijo de vecino
A mummy's boy		Niñito de papa
Mother's milk	Darsele algo a alguien de vicio, salirle algo a alguien natural	
Mother's hen	Gallina	
Learn/be taught sth at your mother's knees		Aprender algo desde el vientre materno, Mamar algo en casa,
Tied to one's mother apron strings		Estar pegado a las faldas de tu madre
The mother of smth (cause or origin)		La madre de algo (causa u origen)
The mother of all...		La madre de todos/as
The mother lode of ...	Un pedazo de..., el mejor ejemplo de	
Shall I be mother?	Os/Les sirvo?	

Mother wit	Sentido común	
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FATHER

Old enough to be someone's father/mother	Ser lo bastante mayor como para ser su padre/madre	
A bit of how's your father	trans or explanation	
When somebody was a twinkle in their/your father's eye	Cuando todavía no te habían ni concebido	
a sugar daddy	Persona mayor rica que, a cambio de atenciones sexuales, mantiene a una mujer con toda clase de lujos	

UNCLE

Bob's your uncle	¡Eso está hecho!	
Everybody and his uncle		Ciento y la madre
Say/Cry uncle		Tío, pásame (usted) el río
Talk to smb like a Dutch uncle	Decirle cuatro verdades a alguien	
Il'be a monkey uncle	Alucinar, flipar	
Uncle Sam		Tío Sam

The first connotation of the word *madre* which calls our attention is its basic natural meaning of “a woman who has given birth”. Due to this fundamental natural meaning, the connotations of the word *madre* can be expanded and it can be metaphorically and culturally interpreted as an origin (because she naturally is the origin of all the men) and consequently as the ultimate cause of something. Therefore, its culturally derived connotations have roots in its essential natural meaning of “origin” of somebody or something.

Cultural metaphorical connotations:

ORIGIN: Taking the natural connotation of *mother* as “the origin” or as a starting point, it is possible to see that this one is reproduced in many Spanish expressions. For instance, the idea of *mother* as the origin is at the very centre of the Spanish expression “estar mal de madre”, meaning something that is incorrect from the very beginning, that is, from its ultimate origin.³¹ Another Spanish expression which points to the importance of the *mother* as the origin of something is “la madre del cordero” used in order to express the root of the problem or the ultimate reason of something. It is very important to notice that, in this expression, the religious extension is clear. In fact, the “cordero”, this expression refers to, is the mystic Cordero, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and his origin is the Virgin Mary, His mother. The connotation of origin is reinforced by the fact of being a religious origin. It is also important to notice that, in English, the same concept is expressed by the expression “the crux of the matter”. This might be a clue, which indicates that, according to the Spanish mentality, the most important thing is the one which lies at the beginning, (like at the beginning of a straight line) while in the English mentality the most important thing is the one which lies in the middle, like

³¹ Another meaning of the Spanish expression “mal de madre”, or “estar mal de madre”, is the one presented in many Spanish dictionaries, that is, “hysteria”. The expression “mal de madre” is probably related to the Spanish literature of the 15th century and especially to “*La Celestina*”, where one of the main themes is this “mal madre”, which women usually suffered and the way to solve it, that is by having sexual relationships. Therefore, what today is defined as “hysteria” was previously defined as “mal de madre”. This denomination allows us to think that, on the one side masculine cases of hysteria have been usually not considered, and on the other, that the origin of hysteria has been commonly attributed to a physical organ that is the uterus. At the same time it also included a physiological component related to that.

Because, during the Medieval period, the Spanish language referred to the “uterus” (*matriz*) as “madre”, several expressions such as “mal de madre” developed. This expression was used to convey a sense of “ager” or “histeria”. Consequently, for the expressions that have been previously mentioned, such as “sacar de madre” (to upset), “salirse de madre” or “desmadrarse” (“to be out of control”), it would not be completely weird to assume that this image might have been crossed with to the one of “mother” as “uterus”. Infact, to upser somebody or to be out of control, seem to be elements that contribute to shape hysterical behaviors

the middle point in a crux³². Meaning that, the essence of something stands at its central or pivotal point.

ORDER and control: The notion of origin seems relevant because it can be used as a first step to guide the reader to other cultural connotations, which might be interpreted as a derivation of the first one. In fact, having taken the origin as a starting point, it seems possible to argue that, figuratively, the origin of something, contributes to keep that something under control, by giving it a limit, that is “an origin” which cannot be surpassed. The concept of “order” and “control” is the second cultural feature of the term *mother*, which seems to be manifested in the Spanish, PhUs. In fact, the Spanish expression, “No tener madre”, used when a person or a situation is going too far, finds its equivalent in English, with the expression “to be a swine person” or “having no limit”. Therefore, it can be argued that, in Spanish, if something has “no madre” it means it has no origin and therefore no limit and no control. Similarly, the Spanish expressions “sacar de madre” or “salirse de madre”, are also related to the connotation of order and, therefore, control. Even though, in the second case, the Spanish meaning of *mother* as “main irrigation channel”, into which the other little channels flow, might have influenced this interpretation. The English language, uses a clear linguistics expressions, such as “upset”, “exceeding the limits” or “to lose control”, to convey the same meaning. On the contrary, in the English corpus that has been analyzed the term *mother* does not show the above-mentioned connotation.

AGENT: Analyzing the corpus, the maternal figure, in the Spanish culture seems to have a great level of intervention and a major role as the agent or protagonist of an action, compared to the English one. There are several examples that show this feature. For instance, the PhU “como la madre lo trajo al mundo” which finds its English

³² Crux: 1814, "cross," from L. crux "cross" (see cross). Figurative use for "a central difficulty," is older, from 1718; perhaps from L. crux interpretum "a point in a text that is impossible to interpret," in which the literal sense is something like "crossroads of interpreters." Extended sense of "central point" is from 1888.

equivalent with the PhU “in its birthday suit”. Both of them, according to Gläser would be nominations (because they can be replaced by one word) and mean “naked”. The role of the mother seems to be much more active in the Spanish expression than in the English one. In fact, the English language uses a term which belongs to a different semantic field (the term *birthday*), and there is no presence at all of the mother as a participant or agent of the action. On the contrary, the reference is made to the day of birth (birthday) but not to the agent, to the person who made the action of giving birth. Another illustration of the role of agent or active participant is the Spanish PhU “viva la madre que te parió”, in order to refer to someone beautiful or successful, again, the focus is placed on the agent, on the person who made the action of giving birth and, not on the subject. A further example is the PhU “la madre que te trajo/parió”, which, in this case, is used as a negative intensifier, always referring to the agent of the action, the ultimate cause for which that person is on the earth. While, in English, the offense is aimed directly at the person one is talking to (“you jerk”, “you bastard” or “fuck off”). In Spanish the focus, is always on the mother as the agent and therefore the person responsible for the act. A similar one is the expression “!tu madre!” translated which in English would be “get stuffed”. This seems to reinforce our starting idea of the *mother* as origin and cause, therefore as the ultimate agent in the life a person. The Spanish culture seems to give relevance to the mother, as an essential individual feature of each individual.

INTENSIFIER: The importance of the mother in the Spanish society is also shown by the fact that she appears in some expressions which are not related to the idea of the family, despite this, she is used as a form of intensifier (either positive or negative). This usage might be interpreted as metaphorical, cultural extension, derived from her being root, origin. For instance, the expressions “¡Madre mía!”, or “¡Madre de Dios!” meaning surprise or exclamation point out, once more, the importance of the mother in the Spanish society, while English, again, to convey the same meaning of surprise refers to religious terms such as “my goodness” or “heavens”. Moreover, the expression, “De puta madre” represents again the importance of the term *mother* as a positive intensifier. Although in English there is no equivalent in the same semantic context, it is interesting to notice that *mother* is used in English as intensifier but in the

negative sense (*motherfucker*). Within this category, also the above mentioned PhU “la madre del cordero” might be included. In fact, as has previously explained, the fact of referring to a divine origin might be regarded as an intensification of the same concept of origin and therefore cause. If the *mother* of something is its origin, much more intense is “la madre del cordero” as the main reason of something. Discovering the divine mother means discovering the basic central matter of a question, the one that is the most ultimate. While in English, to express the same concept, the usage refers to a religious element. Another point which is worth mentioning in this paragraph, is that the Spanish expression “la madre de todos los/todas”, that works as an intensifier of something is probably a borrowing of the English expression “the mother of all xxx”. In both languages (Spanish and English), it has become a widespread stock phrase, however, at this respect, it must be commented that the origin of this English expression comes from the Arabic language. In fact it was coined by the ex-Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, who talked about “The mother of all the battles” (in Arabic) to refer to the Gulf War³³.

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY and FUSION; In Spanish, the term *mother* is also used in phraseology to reaffirm the essential identity of someone. This connotation may also be derived from the notion of origin (as the notions of cause, order and agent) moreover the term *mother* shows the high level of closeness between mother and the individual person. A closeness that might be interpreted almost as fusion, to be one with the people that are our dearest ones, a sort of ontological identification with the person that is closer to us. Sometimes, this concept finds a correspondence in English, within the same semantic field (kinship), even if not exactly with the same term. For instance, the expression “Ciento y la madre” finds its English equivalent with a similar expression “Everybody and his uncle”. Even though both of them seem to express a deep level of identification between a person and his/her family, in Spanish, this blending of identity, is evidentially related to the term *mother*, while in English to the uncle (probably

³³ Um M'aārak. "[BBC ON THIS DAY | 17 | 1991: 'Mother of all Battles' begins](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/17/newsid_2530000/2530375.stm)". BBC News. 17January1991. http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/17/newsid_2530000/2530375.stm. Retrieved 2010-03-18. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_mother_of_all

because of a sense of protection). Other Spanish expressions, such as “ni tu/su madre”, demonstrate to what extent the mother is identified and merged with the individual person, in fact the PhU “ni su madre” means “nobody”. If in Spanish a person says “no lo conoce ni su madre” or “no lo sabe ni su madre” means that “nobody knows him/it”. This may be interpreted as an indication of the extent to which the individual identity of a person is reproduced by the mother (and vice versa), underlining, at the same time, her importance. In effect, the idea that the expression “ni tu/su madre” wants to convey is that, if a mother does not know something or somebody, then nobody else knows it. The Spanish corpus provides another example, of the fact that in the Spanish society, the mother is essential for building the identity of a person, for constructing one’s individuality and that she plays a central role in each one’s existence. In fact we refer to the PhU “ser cada uno de su padre y de su madre”, which in English has no correspondence within the same semantic field of kinship, and therefore can only be translated as “be different”. In the English language the connotation of individual self-identity, conveyed in the Spanish “ser cada uno de su padre y de su madre” is lost. In Spanish, more importance is given to the fact that we all inherit something from our parents (be it good or bad) and therefore we are all different, because our parents are all different. However, in English, this correspondence of identity between parents and sons seems to be expressed in a different way (like mother like daughter and like father like son).

PROTECTION: the expression: “estar pegado a las faldas de su madre”, which finds its English equivalent, with the expression “to be tied to one’s mother apron strings”. In this category it is possible to include also the expression “irse con su madre la gallega”. In fact, the equivalent English expression might be “go and seek for one’s fortune”. While in Spanish the mother is needed in order to find better life conditions, probably because she can help, guide and protect that person; in English the individual who wants to seek one’s fortune is much more independent, and s/he does not need a mother.

In conducting the inverse analysis, starting with English PhUs including the term *mother*, it is possible to evince that in English the most salient connotations are those related to:

PROTECTION: An example is the above mentioned English expression “tied to one’s mother apron strings” which corresponds to the Spanish “estar pegado a las faldas de la madre”. In this case, there is a semantic correspondence between English and Spanish; in fact, they both belong to the semantic field of kinship. A second example is provided by the expression “Mother hen”, which has no correspondence in Spanish. In fact, in the Spanish language, the term “gallina” exists to define a woman who is very protective with her children but the term *mother* is not included in the expression. Another example of the protective role of the mother, in English, is the expression: “mummy’s boy” that in Spanish finds its equivalent within the same semantic field but with another term “niñito de papá”. All these examples, contrary to what one may think, indicate that in the English culture the mother is seen as a much/ very protective figure.

LOVE: “Face that only a mother could love” finds a Spanish similar equivalent with “feo como pegar un padre”. Despite the fact of having an equivalent within the same semantic field, this English PhU is relevant because it highlights a positive feeling (love). On the contrary, in Spanish the same concept is expressed through an emphasis of a negative direct, practical action, that of hitting one of your naturally dearest/ closest (pegar).

SERVICE and PUBLIC ROLE In the expression, “Shall I be mother”, the relevance is placed in the public function of the person who distributes the food in a meal. This expression could be interpreted as an indication that the *mother*, in English, belongs more to the public sphere of life, as opposed to the private one. In fact, she is identified with a stereotypical social role common to many mothers. Another PhU that may strengthen this notion is “Learn/be taught smth at your mother’s knees”. This expression seems to point out the cultural role of the mother, as the one who has the responsibility of raising children. Again, this interpretation strengthens the vision of the mother belonging to the public, common sphere. For “public” and “common”, we mean something that is not a distinctive sign of the individuality of each person but something that is, instead, common to everybody in a society. In other words, she is a figure which is present in everybody’s life (every one has a mother) and in this sense we can say that she belongs to the common public field and performs “stereotypical” roles. Furthermore, the English corpus provides other examples of the universal connotations

of the term which is not present in the Spanish corpus. The fact that everybody has a mother, reinforcing the universal over the personal, can also be perceived in the English expression “every mother’s son of them” (meaning every one of them). Through this phrase, English reveals that the *mother* is not a distinctive sign of originality. Whereas in Spanish the equivalent expression would be “cada hijo de vecino”, taking the same idea outside the sphere of influence of the family.

NATURALLY GIVEN: The previous connotation of *mother* involves the fact of being interpreted as something natural, something that is naturally given and, thus, common to all human beings. The English expressions that support this connotation of the term *mother* are: “mother wit” and “mother’s milk”. The fact that “mother wit” is a synonym of “common sense” proves quite significant because in the Spanish culture there is no mention to the mother as a promoter of that kind of “native intelligence” we all should have. The second one (mother’s milk), is very noteworthy as well, because it indicates an activity or thing that a person naturally enjoys, like a baby his/her mother’s milk. An activity implying no effort, because it is natural.

As a conclusion of the contrastive analysis which has been conducted for the term *mother*, it can be noticed that there are some common connotations and meaning extensions which are shared in both languages. Specifically, the protective meaning conferred to the *mother* and the extension of the word to meanings of intensification. Yet, there seem to be other ideas, metonymically or metaphorically derived from the extended meaning of origin, (order, agent, main contributor to a personal self-identity), which are only present in the Spanish culture. Whereas the connotations of mother performing a public role or reflecting common, universal traits, things that are naturally given, seems to be a peculiar feature on the English culture, while the Spanish society prefers to maintain the mother under a more intimate and private sphere .

The second term to be analyzed is *padre*. Considering the Spanish corpus first, it seems relevant to notice that this term is used in phraseological expressions to indicate a condition of privilege, or the ideas of help and protection. Like mother, father has shifted its meaning into that of an intensifier of an action or an event. In English it seems to be more related to the sexual conceptual field and to a sense of identification.

PRIVILEGE: this cultural connotation is present in the following Spanish expressions, “Darse la vida padre” and “cuando seas padre comerás chorizo/huevos”. They both refer to a situation where a person lives a life full of comforts or can afford certain luxuries. These privileges seem derived from the condition of being “father”, therefore this position allows one having benefits that otherwise would not exist. The same concept, is expressed in English in a much more transparent expression, that is “to live like a king”, which seems to be much clearer even for a non-English speaker, yet the image we all have of king is that of a person who has privileges and luxuries. Regarding the second one “cuando seas padre comerás chorizo” there is no equivalent in English, therefore it must be directly explained through a periphrasis (age and parenthood has its privileges).

HELP and PROTECTION: These cultural connotations seem to be evident in the following PhUs: “niñito de papá” and “tener el padre alcalde”. The first expression involves also a sense of “spoiled person”. This Spanish phrase is almost the same as the English “mommy's boy” (mentioned above). In fact, they both usually carry negative connotations. When referring to a man as “niñito de papa” or as a “mommy’s boy”, he is seen as overprotected, smothered, and incapable of doing things for himself. Interestingly enough, however, in English daddy’s girls are not viewed as negatively. As such, one may conclude that a close and protective relationship between a father and daughter is widely accepted as healthy, yet a man’s close relationship with his mother is considered wrong and unnatural.

The second expression “tener el padre alcalde” indicates a person having a strong public protection, an idea expressed in English with the sentence “to have a friend at court”. At this respect, it is interesting to point out that, the same protective role played by the father in Spanish is played by a friend, external to the consanguineous sphere of kinship in English. This might indicate that the public protective role in English is played by people that are not directly related to consanguineous family, possibly because familiar relationships are not so tight as in Spain.

INTENSIFIER: the word *padre* is also used in Spanish to intensify and strengthen the relevance of a sentence (in this case, “ni su padre” has the same function of “ni su madre” mentioned above). Other examples, which point out the use *padre* as enhancer, are: “estar para hacerlo padre y darle las gracias”, which is used to define an extremely handsome man, so handsome that a woman would thank him for making her pregnant. “De padre y muy señor mío”, which means an event that, has a huge magnitude. “... padre” (for instance, “un susto padre”) which means something very big, important, in English it would be translated as “a hell of something” and finally “más feo que pegar a un padre”, which has already been discussed above. Considering the English corpus, no trace of the usage of *father* to enhance the meaning of something is found. Furthermore, it seems quite the opposite, because the English culture uses the word *mother* to convey the same result “the mother of all something”, “the mother lode of something”, and all the Spanish expressions containing the word *fathe*” that have been previously mentioned must be translated with an adverb or a paraphrasis of the concept. An expanded connotation, originating from its role of intensifier, is the fact that in Spanish the term *father* is also used to insult somebody (the same happens with the term *madre*, as we have previously seen). A possible explanation may be the fact that there is a strong identification of the person with his/her parents) and such a close relationship of ontological proximity between a human being and his/her progenitors is translated in the daily language, with the idea that insulting the father (or mother) of somebody is like insulting him or her directly. For instance “acordarse del padre de alguien” and “!tu padre!” are used when one is very angry at a person and one wants to insult him/her, something close to *fuck off* or *up yours* in English.

In conducting the inverse analysis, the English expressions including “father” show a double connotation of the word :

ONTOLOGICAL PROXIMITY: indicating a personal and natural identification with one’s parents, pointed out by expressions such as: “Old enough to be someone’s father”. “When somebody was a twinkle in their/your father’s eye” (something similar to “cuando aún no era ni espermatozoide”). This meaning is similar to one expressed in the previous paragraph, regarding the word *padre* in Spanish.

SEXUAL: “A bit of how’s your father”³⁴, which is used in English to refer to a sexual relationship or activity, and “a sugar daddy”, which is used to describe a rich man who is generous to younger women in return for sexual favors.

As a conclusion of the contrastive analysis conducted for the term *father*, in phraseological expressions, it can be stated that English and Spanish share some common cultural connotations referring to a sense of identification and ontological proximity with one’s father. In this sense, the meaning can be expanded to the connotation of *father* as origin of something in both languages (“el padre de” or “the father of ...”). All other nuances of: help, protection, intensification, insult and privileges- are not present in the English phraseology. Likewise, the sexual semantic component has not been found in the Spanish corpus.

The last kinship term analyzed is *tío*, in English *uncle*. The first important distinction that should be made is that in Spanish the word *tío* is used to indicate the familiar relationship (father of the father, father of the mother, or husband of the aunt), but it is also used as a form of address to refer to an unknown person, or a close friend.

³⁴According to Michael Kelly (<http://michaelkelly.artofeurope.com/qfather.htm>), "the origin of the expression 'how's your father' can be traced back to Victorian times. In those days any man with a daughter was so protective of her virtue that he would take extraordinary measures to safeguard it. Unmarried girls would be kept within the bosom of their family as much as possible, chaperoned on excursions, and on those occasions when they were let out of bounds for social events, their fathers would often accompany them discreetly by hiding underneath their voluminous skirts ready to pounce on any man who transgressed the bounds of propriety. However, a father with more than one daughter couldn't be everywhere at once. Thus, a suitor having a discreet vis-a-vis with his beloved would cautiously ascertain her father's whereabouts by asking, 'And how is your father?' If her father was currently under her skirts, she would glance downwards and reply, 'My father is very well, thank you, and as alert and vigorous as ever, and maintains his interest in rusty castrating implements.' Her beau would then say, 'I have always had the greatest respect for your father, and of course for you. Let us hold hands and think about the Queen for a while.' If, on the other hand, her father was elsewhere, she would reply, 'The mad old bastard is currently stationed between my sister Constance's thighs. Let us go into the garden and rut like stoats.' Hence, 'How's your father' became a euphemism for you-know-what."

“How's your father?” is later associated with the British music-hall comedian Harry Tate (1872-1940). Apparently, he would exclaim it as a way of changing the subject and in order to get out of a difficult situation. The phrase either subsequently or simultaneously took on a life of its own meaning the same as a 'thingummy' or anything the speaker did not wish to name. From that, in phrases like 'indulging in a spot of how's-your-father', it became a euphemism for sexual activity. (Dictionary of Catchphrases, 1995, Nigel Rees).

In English terms such as *mate*, *man*, *fellow* or *brother* cover this function of “term of address”. In fact, one of the important issues this analysis wants to raise is that the role of the word *tío* as a term of address is represented in English by the words *brother*, *mate* or *guy* and *man*, depending on whether s/he is a known or unknown person. In any case, both languages use a kinship term in order to indicate a close friend or an unknown person, and in doing so, both of them create a fictive kinship relationship with a member of the family. If Spanish people use the word *tío* and in doing so they include an unknown person or a friend in the circle of the extended family, the English speaker use the word *brother* including a friend in the closer circle of the nuclear family. Perhaps this is the biggest difference, more distance (extended family) in Spanish and closer vicinity (nuclear family) in English. In both cases, the familiar relationship is being reinterpreted in a figurative sense in order to define any person, or also to use it as a form of address. This use of *tío* is quite widespread in today’s Spanish society, especially among young people, nevertheless its usage dates back to 1896, in the R. Salillas’s play “*El delincuente español. El lenguaje*”, and it appears in one of the first dictionaries of Spanish argot in 1905 the “*Diccionario de argot común español*” of L. Besses. Regarding the usage of *brother* as a familiar term of address from one man to another, it has been attested since 1912 in U.S. slang, while its specific use among blacks is recorded from 1973. Therefore, the role of *tío* as a term of address seems to be covered, in English, by the word *brother*.

In the analyzed corpus, there are several examples of the usages described above:

Tío: apelativo para un desconocido	guy, mister, bustler, mate,
Tío: apelativo para designar a un amigo o conocido	brother, man
El tío del saco	Boogeyman
Ser un tío grande	He is a great guy

Ser un tío con toda la barba	He is a bloke
¡Tío bueno!	Hunk, stunner

Ser un “tío grande”, which in English literally means “to be a great a guy”, suggests in both languages the typical paradigm and stereotype of the man. All the other English expressions seem to be informal substitutes for *man* or *brother*, so there appears to be a tendency to widen the set of terms which can play the same role, starting from an initial different meaning, that is, starting from a more intimate a private kind of relationship³⁵.

Regarding the use of *tío* to indicate a familiar – it is interesting to point out that this word, due to its extended uses, has come to indicate a common, recurrent, close – relationship. The word *tío* seems to be linked to the concept of protection and success. The phraseology of both languages, English and Spanish, provides us with different evidences of these connotations (either lack or existence of protection).

For instance, the PhU “Como tener un tío en Alcalá” means a total lack of protection or usefulness. Comparing something to having an uncle in this Spanish city, (Alcalá) does not mean to literally have an uncle there, but that a specific, action, event

³⁵ From the Online Etymology Dictionary, <http://www.etymonline.com/>: 1) mate: "companion, associate, fellow, comrade," late 14c., from M.L.G. mate, gemate "one eating at the same table, messmate," from P.Gmc. *ga-maton "having food together" which is etymologically identical with companion (q.v.). Meaning "one of a wedded pair" is attested from 1540s. Used as a form of address by sailors, laborers, etc., since at least mid-15c. Meaning "officer on a merchant vessel is from late 15c. The verb, of animals, "to pair for the purpose of breeding" is first recorded c.1600. 2) bloke: "fellow," 1851, London slang, of unknown origin, perhaps from Celt. ploc "large, stubborn person;" another suggestion is Gypsy and Hind. loke "a man.". 3) guy: "fellow," 1847, originally Amer.Eng.; earlier (1836) "grotesquely or poorly dressed person," originally (1806) "effigy of Guy Fawkes," leader of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up British king and Parliament (Nov. 5, 1605), paraded through the streets by children on the anniversary of the conspiracy. The male proper name is from French, related to It. Guido, lit. "leader," of Germanic origin .

or reality is worth nothing, has no use at all. This concept is probably derived from the contrast with the PhUs “como tener un tío en las Indias /in America” which was (and in some cases still is) considered something very prestigious, important, and which could provide protection, money and success. In Spanish, if someone compares something to “having an uncle in the Indies” s/he means that a particular thing has many advantages and grants for protection and success. Another Spanish expression which has a similar meaning is the expression “tío paseme Ud el río”³⁶ indicating a situation for which there is some or no possibility of help or solution (depending on whether the preceding words “hay” or “no hay”).

A separate explanation is required for the expression “ya vendrá el tío Paco con las rebajas”, meaning that hard times will come. In his book “Personajes, personas y personillas, L. Montoto contends that the “tío Paco” does not correspond to any person, specifically; it is rather the representation of disillusion, in fact whenever our imagination tries to increase the good and the evil, time (in the aspect of “tío Paco”) comes to put things in their place and bringing them down. Regarding the expression “tío Sam”, it is clearly a loan translation from the English “uncle Sam”, which denotes the United States³⁷.

Similar connotations (protection and success) of the term *uncle* in English are found in the following PhUs: “to cry uncle”, “Dutch uncle” and “Bob’s your uncle”. The first one means to admit defeat and it points out the fact that when a person admits having been defeated s/he may call their uncle for help and protection. This is probably a relic of the cultural connotations the paternal uncle had in the Roman Empire³⁸, in

³⁶ Although some authors such as J. Panizo Rodríguez considers it as a proverb meaning to ask for help when somebody finds himself in danger.

³⁷ During the War of 1812 between the United States and England, a man named Samuel Wilson provided supplies to the American troops. Wilson was known as 'Uncle Sam', and he stamped his supplies with 'US', which stood for both 'United States' and 'Uncle Sam'. Since then, 'Uncle Sam' has been a symbol for the country, especially in times of war.

³⁸ The exact origin of "say uncle" or "cry uncle," an American invention first appearing in written English around 1918, is unclear, but there are some interesting theories. One theory defends that "uncle" is actually a mangled form of the Irish word "anacol," meaning

fact, as mentioned in the second chapter he was in charge of the education and protection of the child. The second expression dates back to the 17th century, during the period of the Anglo-Dutch war, when many expressions with the word Dutch were coined. In this case, this expression indicates a man who gives frank and direct advice to someone, and was initially considered as an insult. Today, addressing somebody like a "Dutch uncle" means to criticize that person in a frank and stern manner (not in a protective way, like an avuncular uncle would do), though always with the aim of helping, so the connotation of aid is still present. At the same time, this expression meaning to address someone in a forthright way also involves a feeling of discontent and disappointment, because one comes to know or experience the true and crude reality of things. The last one, "Bob is your uncle" is also related to a concept of success and achievement, it is a British expression used to indicate that a given task is very simple. Possibly inspired by Victorian Prime Minister, Robert Cecil, who appointed his nephew to a ministerial post, to have "Bob as your uncle" was a guarantee of success. This is probably the most similar expression to the Spanish one "tener un tío en las Indias" which indicates a guarantee of success as well.

The English expression "I'll be a monkey's uncle" means "I'm amazed", but the truth on the origin of this phrase has more to do with scientific inquiry than with a monkey being part of the family. In 1871, Darwin published the *Decent of Man*

"protection" or "safety," making a demand from an aggressor to "cry uncle" equivalent to the thug demanding that his victim "cry for help" as a signal of surrender. There's no real evidence to support this theory, but there certainly was no lack of Irish immigrants in the U.S. around the turn of the century, so it's not entirely implausible. The other popular theory about "cry uncle" suggests that the phrase may actually be thousands of years old, and that its origins go all the way back to the Roman Empire. According to this theory, Roman children, when beset by a bully, would be forced to say "Patrue, mi Patruissimo," or "Uncle, my best Uncle," in order to surrender and be freed. As to precisely why Ancient Roman bullies forced their victims to "cry uncle," opinions vary. It may be that the ritual was simply a way of making the victim call out for help from a grownup, thus proving his or her helplessness. Alternatively, it may have started as a way of forcing the victim to grant the bully a title of respect -- in Roman times, your father's brother was accorded nearly the same power and status as your father. The form of "uncle" used in the Latin phrase ("patrue") tends to support this theory, inasmuch as it specifically denoted your paternal uncle, as opposed to the brother of your mother ("avunculus"), who occupied a somewhat lower rung in patrilineal Roman society.

outlining his theory of evolution, and, apparently, “I’ll be a monkey’s uncle” was originally a sarcastic remark made by non-believers of Darwinism. So this PhU seems to have nothing to do with a kinship relationship, or an extended use of the term *uncle*; it seems more linked to a sarcastic view of something impossible, comparable to the Spanish expression “te crees la madre de tarzán”. Both of them contribute to provide an idea of a superlative increase of something very difficult or impossible.

Formal features:

Given the impossibility of registering the frequency of usage for every single PhU of the corpus, this has not been considered as a criterion. The analysis of the formal features of phraseological expressions collected in the corpus is, thus, based on those features on which the majority of scholars seem to agree (refer to the Phraseology Section).

Table 12: indicating formal features for Spanish PHU

PHU	Fixity	Transparent/ motivated
¡Ser la Madre del Cordero!	YES	NO
¡Madre mía!, ¡Madre de Dios!	YES	NO
De puta madre	YES	NO
La madre que te trajo/parió	YES	NO
¡Tu madre!/ ¡Tu padre!	YES	NO
Como la madre lo trajo al mundo	YES	PARTIALLY
Ciento y la madre	YES	PARTIALLY
Viva la madre que te parió!	YES	PARTIALLY
Ni tu/su madre/padre	YES	NO
Sacar de madre	YES	PARTIALLY
Salirse de madre	YES	PARTIALLY
Las madre de todos/as los/as ...	YES	NO
No tener madre	YES	NO
Te crees la madre de tarzán	YES	NO

Estar mal de madre	YES	NO
Estar pegado a las faldas de la madre	YES	PARTIALLY
Ser cada uno de su padre y de su madre	YES	NO
Irse con su madre la gallega	YES	PARTIALLY
Estar para hacerlo padre y darle las gracias	YES	PARTIALLY
De padre y muy señor mío	YES	NO
Niñito de papa	YES	NO
Más feo que pegar a un padre	YES	PARTIALLY
Cuando seas padre comerás chorizo/huevos	YES	PARTIALLY
Acordarse de su padre/ padres	YES	NO
Darse la vida padre	YES	NO
Una ... padre	YES	NO
Tener el padre alcalde	YES	PARTIALLY
El tío Sam	YES	NO
Tener un tío en Alcalá	YES	NO
Tener un tío en las Indias/ América	YES	PARTIALLY
Tío, pásame (usted) el río	YES	NO
Ya vendrá el tío Paco con las rebajas	YES	NO
Tío: apelativo para un desconocido	YES	NO
Tío: apelativo para designar a un amigo/conocido	YES	NO
El tío del saco	YES	NO
Ser un tío con toda la barba	YES	NO
¡Tío bueno!	YES	NO
Ser un tío grande	YES	PARTIALLY

Table 13: indicating formal features for English PHU

PHU	Fixity	Transparent/ motivated
Face that only a mother could love	YES	PARTIALLY
Every mother's son of them	YES	NO
A mummy's boy	YES	NO
Mother's milk	YES	NO
Mother's hen	YES	NO
Learn/be taught something at your mother's knees	NO	NO
Tied to one's mother apron strings	YES	PARTIALLY
The mother of something	YES	PARTIALLY
The mother of all...	YES	NO
The mother lode of ...	YES	NO
Shall I be mother?	YES	PARTIALLY
Mother wit	YES	NO
Old enough to be someone's father/mother	PARTIALLY	YES
A bit of how's your father	YES	NO
When somebody was a twinkle in their/your father's eye	YES	NO
A sugar daddy	YES	NO
Bob's your uncle	YES	NO
Everybody and his uncle	YES	NO
Say/Cry uncle	YES	NO
Talk to somebody like a Dutch uncle	YES	NO
Il'be a monkey uncle	YES	NO
Uncle Sam	YES	NO

As for the formal analysis, almost all the PhU analyzed are very fixed, which might be due to the precise criteria used to set up the corpus of this paper. There do not seem to be substantial differences between Spanish and English. The only relevant aspect to point out is that while the English corpus shows a 18% of partially motivated PhUS, the Spanish corpus shows a 31%.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This paper, focused on the contrastive analysis of English and Spanish phraseology involving kinship terms, started summarizing the main theoretical aspects related to phraseology, culture and kinship. The analysis of a carefully selected corpus of expressions followed, a process that led to several general conclusions:

1) despite the existence of a heterogeneous taxonomy, the common object of study of phraseology seems to be the PhUs –words combinations with a high degree of fixity-which are characterized by a complex structure, stability and by the presence of lexical or grammatical anomalies. Furthermore they are usually institutionalized and idiomatical. Hence, it seems possible to claim that PhUs constitute an incredibly general group of expressions and involve a whole inventory of phrases, both word-like and sentence-like. Despite the differences between pre-corpus Linguistics, which defended the strict regularity of PhUs, and corpus Linguistics, claiming their flexibility, scholars of both currents agree that fixity and idiomatic specificity are the main characteristics of PhUs.

2) Culture and kinship have also been at the centre of this study. After having analyzed some phraseological expressions involving different kinship terms (*mother, father* and *uncle*), it seems possible to confirm that they embody a high degree of cultural load. In fact, they show different connotations in different cultures. Therefore, the fact that language is a vital part in the culture seems to be demonstrated, too. This paper has been an intent to reveal that PhUs reflect the socio-cultural dimension of the language, through the analysis of the cultural connotations and referents of a precise group of PhUs: the ones involving kinship terms. These cultural connotations and referents (images, stereotypes we have, etc.) emerge from the elements ingrained in a specific culture, this is the way a community interprets the words for *mother, father* and *uncle*.

3) phraseological expressions with kinship terms, belonging to the set of culturally determined PhUs, represent an undeniable source of non-equivalence in contrastive studies, causing difficulties in the translation process and forcing the translator to use a cultural substitution, an adaptation or a paraphrasis. For this reason, “translators need to be well versed in the customs, habits and traditions of the cultures they are mediating between”(Katan 1999:53).

As for PhUs reflecting the kind of kinship system adopted in our societies, three conclusions may be drawn:

- As claimed by Murdock, despite the fact that only 30% of the world's cultures reckon descent and group membership based on cognatic systems, people of Western industrialized societies and of European ancestry, such as the English and the Spanish societies, are more familiar with cognatic kinship institutions.

- The previous statement seems to be demonstrated by the fact that, the selected PhUs both in English and Spanish revolve around nuclear consanguineous kin-terms, reflecting a cognatic system of kinship relationships, of the Eskimo type, as defined in section 3.3.2. That means that in both cultures a strong emphasis is placed on the nuclear family.

- Both in English and in Spanish the term *mother* or *father* are used as an intensifier, which reflects the relevant position recognized to these two essential figures of the nuclear family.

- two English expressions were found to highlight a kinship term system distinguishing between generations “old enough to be someone’s father”; “When somebody was a twinkle in their/your father’s eye”

As for the cultural or semantic analysis, several conclusions may be drawn:

- both English and Spanish expressions reflect the kind of kinship system adopted, as well as the various valuable functions performed in each culture by the *mother*, the *father* and the *uncle*. Despite the fact that the English and the Spanish societies share many features, common to a wider western culture, some of the functions performed by the *father*, the *mother* and the *uncle* in either culture, their social roles and obligations, as represented in the PhUs analyzed, differ. Namely, PhUs seem to reflect the variable

forms of kinship assumed in either society, based upon culturally determined beliefs and values.

- in both languages, the mother seems to be the most important figure in kin relationships. In fact, she is the one who has a highest frequency of appearance, in both English and Spanish PhUs and, thus, the one depicted in deeper detail. This mother figure is also the one that most notably shows the differences between the English and the Spanish cultures. Concerning the cultural specific connotations of the mother figure, both English and Spanish recognize its role in providing love and protection. However, as mentioned in section 5, this figure presents differences between English and Spanish. As a matter of fact, in Spanish the mother's role in the construction of an individual's identity seems to be highly reinforced, whereas in English it is conferred a more public function.

- With regard to the figures of *father* and *uncle*, they outstand as important kinship terms in Spanish, less so in English. They are conferred a clearer role in the Spanish society, if only for the higher number of expressions institutionalized around the terms *padre* and *tío*.

- Both *father* and *padre* are conferred a special status (privileges, sexual conduct) in English and Spanish PhUs, probably derived from the basic connotation of authority within the notion of family. However, in Spanish, the PhUs seems to codify certain guidelines regulating people's conduct: *más feo que pegarle a un padre*.

- As for the *uncle*, it is to be noted this figure's role in Spanish to provide physical and economic security to children. The uncle in Spanish could be an example of fictive kinship. Both when used with a true family meaning and with an extended or metaphorical one, the uncle in Spanish serves to enlarge aid networks. The use of *tío* in fictive kinship PhUs seem to have initially involved the extension of kinship close relationships to individuals and have later generalized to refer to anyone unknown through complex processes of social cognition.

- As for the formal analysis, almost all the PhU analyzed are very fixed, this is due also to the precise criteria used to set up the corpus of this paper. There do not seem to be substantial differences between the Spanish and English corpus, regarding the degree of fixity and opaqueness of expressions.

To sum up, this paper has proved the importance of the interaction between language and culture. Language allows the reproduction of certain cultural connotations that otherwise would be only present in the mind of the speaker. At the same time, culture enriches language with more and more new different connotations. Due to this interaction, the boundaries of symbolic meaning of an object or an event (be it a verbal or a cultural), are not clear-cut; in the same way a cultural symbol can have different interpretations, the same “linguistic symbol” does not have a definite meaning. In this study, it has also been demonstrated that phraseology, lacking precise categorizations and interpretations, seems to be the discipline which best exemplifies the difficulty of establishing the limit between certain linguistic symbols. Furthermore, this paper has also proved the importance of the cultural connotations that each kinship term has in the language. In fact, generally speaking, even though terminologies are conservative and reflect the customs of the past, both in English and in Spanish the categories analyzed seem to remain as perceptions of the people who use them.

In order to conclude, it may be added that current challenges for researchers working within phraseology include the struggle to formulate a clear definition of the discipline, flexible enough to include all known idioms, yet exclude those expressions that are not. This seems difficult because, as has been demonstrated, PhUs are less fixed than used to be believed and “normal” language less free. Systematic research into phraseology following a linguo-cultural perspective would help to overcome what has been called “cross-cultural deafness”, a barrier that today is still present in our postmodern, multicultural world community. Kramsch supports this vision (1993:8) defending the idea that cultural knowledge is not only ‘an educational objective’ in itself, separate from language. On the contrary, the notion of language as a social practice should be supported, so that culture would become the core of language teaching. Under this perspective, it seems that much cross-linguistic research is still to be done within this field of phraseology and kinship terms, which has proved so fruitful.

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