

# The Phraseology of the Croatian Political Substyle

Tamara Gazdić-Alerić (Zagreb)

## 1. Introduction

Every language contains expressions of a relatively fixed structure, which are not created in speech processes but are reproduced in their final form. Their meaning is usually not derived from the meaning of their elements since they, or at least some of them, have undergone semantic shifts, and they fit into a sentence or higher structure as a single constituent.<sup>1</sup>

Although phraseology as a *separate* linguistic discipline has existed for only about fifty years, phrasemes as the subject of phraseology have been known for a long time – since the time when scholars started showing interest in rhetoric and stylistics. Charles Bally is considered to be the founder of phraseology in modern linguistics, and its sudden development was encouraged by Russian linguistics in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Russian linguists (Molotkov, Potebnja, Fortunatov, Šaxmatov, Teliija and others) developed hypotheses for the theory of phraseology. Around the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more precisely, after the publication of *Basic Types of Phraseological Units in the Russian Language* by Viktor Vladimirovič Vinogradov in 1947, phraseology started to isolate itself from lexicology as one of the youngest linguistic disciplines. As a result, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, phraseology developed into a relatively autonomous linguistic discipline which has its own object of research, its own name and its own methods of analysis and description.

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the name of a linguistic discipline, the word *phraseology* is used as a name for the accumulation of such expressions in a language, that is, the phraseological fund of one language community.

In Croatian linguistics, phraseology started to develop during the 1970s due to the merits of Antica Menac, who applied the knowledge and theories of Russian phraseologists to contemporary Croatian phraseology. Recently, there has been an increased interest in this area of research, especially among younger Croatian linguists. Despite numerous investigations in this area, an examination of phraseology as a functional-stylistic phenomenon is still lacking. This is why in existing phraseological dictionaries of the Croatian language phrasemes<sup>2</sup> are not marked with respect to their affiliation to a functional style, and there are no phraseological dictionaries of particular functional styles. In order to advance in this area, it is necessary to systematically investigate phrasemes of particular functional styles and to determine by comparative analysis which phrasemes belong to the general phraseological fund and which are marked by a particular functional style.

The incentive behind this study was the desire to systematically describe functional styles, since research in this area contributes to a more accurate description of the standard language and at the same time to more appropriate multifunctional communication. The Croatian system of education, despite numerous warnings from the profession, still does not place enough stress on the development of multifunctional communicative competence.

The point of departure for this research is the fact that functional styles differ in many linguistic characteristics. It is assumed that the political substyle of the administrative style has its own phraseology, which differs from the general phraseological fund. Because of that, the article examines an impressive corpus of political discourse and gives examples which answer the question whether a phraseology of political discourse exists, that is, whether there are phrasemes which can exclusively be linked to the political substyle of the administrative style. It also provides examples of phrasemes which, to date, have not been noted in Croatian professional literature, as well as examples of combinations of words in which the components are not entirely desemantized. In the political substyle they are often found as noun phrases (*biračko tijelo* ‘electorate’; *pranje novca* ‘money laundering’; *pravni*

---

<sup>2</sup> In Croatian linguistic articles of the last decade, the basic phraseological unit has been given various names. *Phraseologism* and *phraseme* were used most often. The name *phraseologism* was taken over from Russian linguistics and fits well into the formation chain *phraseology*, *phraseologist*, *phraseological*, while the name *phraseme* with the suffix *-eme* is in accord with other linguistic names of basic units: *phoneme*, *morpheme*, *lexeme*, *sememe*. In addition to these terms other terms were used: *idiomatic phrase*, *phrase-lexeme*, *fixed expression*, *phraseological unit*, *phraseological turn*, *fixed lexical complex*, etc.

*lijek* ‘remedy’)<sup>3</sup> and phrasal verbs (*staviti/stavljati otklon* ‘make remedy’; *podastrijeti/podastirati materijal* ‘set forth/set before material’). Here the question arises from when on we can say that such word combinations have completed the process of idiomatization, or from when on they can be considered phrasemes in the narrower sense. Using a statistical method, the dictionary of phrasemes is developed from a corpus of political discourse, thus refuting the statement often found in literature on functional styles that the administrative style is non-expressive. After that, the use and characteristics of the phrasemes are linked to the planning and production of speech; the phrasemes are analyzed with respect to origin and source, which is connected to the social and cultural environment in which they are used. In the end, the most interesting examples of phraseological play are mentioned.

The article does not attempt to provide all answers to questions relating to the phenomenon and methodology of the research on Croatian phraseology. It poses a number of questions and opens various possibilities relating to functional and stylistic issues in Croatian phraseology.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Corpus and method

The corpus consists exclusively of speeches from the Croatian parliament that were not read from a script.<sup>5</sup> It covers the first multiparty parliament meeting in 1990 (3½ hours), a regular meeting from 1995 (18 hours), the constitutive meeting of 2000 (3½ hours) and a regular meeting from 2002 (15 hours), totaling 40 hours. Thus an interesting time frame was captured, during which a change of leading parties took place.

As the research was based on spoken discourse in the political substyle, obtaining material for the corpus posed a problem from the very beginning.

---

<sup>3</sup> All phrasemes mentioned in the article, including partially desemanticized expressions, will be given in the form in which they appear in the Croatian language and in the corresponding English form. The majority of the corresponding English phrasemes were found in the *Croatian-English Dictionary of Idioms* (Vrgoč and Fink Arsovski 2008), where the abbreviation *sth* refers to the government of inanimate, while *sb* stands for the government for animate nouns. Phrasemes which could not be found in the dictionary were translated.

<sup>4</sup> Some of these issues were mentioned in my presentation at the International scientific conference *Slavic Phraseology and Pragmatics*, which took place in Rab (Croatia) on September 17-19, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> This covers four subcategories: spontaneous, unprepared speech; improvised speech; speech which is based on key points; and prepared, thoroughly developed speech (cf. Duden and Hatje 2002: 33).

Since the Croatian parliament refused my request for obtaining transcripts (phonograms) of public parliament meetings, the corpus was made from reviewing and listening to taped materials of parliament meetings, which are in the possession of *Hrvatska Radiotelevizija (HRT)*.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to compiling a dictionary of phrasemes, criteria for including phrasemes into the list had to be established. Firstly, it was necessary to establish required characteristics which a word combination has to have in order to be a phraseme, in the narrower and wider sense. Secondly, possible structures of phraseological units had to be defined, especially considering the classification of the phrasemes.

### 3. Characteristics of phrasemes

At the beginning of the analysis, the criteria for including a phraseme into the dictionary were defined, so that out of relatively different definitions of phrasemes four of their mandatory characteristics were singled out:

1. They are not created in the speech process but reproduced in final form.
2. They have a constant composition and arrangement of elements, a relatively firm structure, in which lexical substitutions are rather limited and in which grammatical changes do not imply semantic changes.
3. Their meaning is not usually derived from the meanings of their elements since they, or at least some of them, undergo semantic conversions.
4. They fit into a sentence or higher-level structure as their constituent part; fitting into a sentence means that they can be realized in all syntactic functions (e.g. as predicates, subjects, adverbs, objects).

Other characteristics which some professionals consider crucial for determining phrasemes can be found in the literature on phraseology. Some such factors are that they must have characteristics of metaphors, emotion, national character, unpredictability, etc.; nevertheless, they cannot be considered as obligatory.

---

<sup>6</sup> In the following year, 2003, the *Law on Information Access* came into effect, based on which the person authorized “has the right to access information by submitting an oral or written request to the competent public authority”, by which one can obtain phonograms of public parliament meetings (*Zakon o pravu na pristup informacijama* 2003: article 11).

#### 4. Classification of phrasemes

Phrasemes can be divided according to various aspects. Fink (1992/1993: 91) states that phrasemes can be analyzed from three aspects: structural, syntactic and semantic. Structural analysis examines the form of the phrasemes, i.e. the range of the units, lexical composition, the determination of the main element, etc. Syntactic analysis deals with determining the function of the phrasemes in a sentence and with incorporating the phraseme into the sentence and higher-level structure. Semantic analysis deals with the meaning of the phraseme and can also examine the origin, manner of their composition, motivation, etc.

##### 4.1. Structural classification

###### 4.1.1. Range of the phraseme

In observing the structure of phrasemes, it can be seen that they differ in their range. With respect to range they can be divided into: phonetic words, combinations of words and sentences. All three sets of phrasemes are found in the political discourse, but considering that the list of phrasemes taken from the studied discourse consists of 687 phrasemes they cannot be presented in the article entirely. Therefore, only examples from the dictionary which are supported by the content of this study are mentioned here. Where needed, the phrasemes cited are accompanied by the meaning of the phrasemes or parts of the text of the political speech in which the phrasemes were used.

**Phraseological phonetic words** are the smallest type of phrasemes.<sup>7</sup> Those are phrasemes which are usually made up of one independent and one (or more) dependent words, proclitics and enclitics (e.g. *bez daljnijega* ‘without much objection’; *ni govora* ‘no questions asked’; *nadovezati se na* ‘to continue on’).

The corpus has many phrasemes of that type, which are included into a phraseological dictionary since they have the above-mentioned obligatory characteristics of phrasemes, which are also the criteria for inserting words into the phraseological dictionary. They are also included into the *Croatian Dictionary of Idioms* (Menac, Fink-Arskovski and Venturin 2003).

The second structural type is the **combination of words**. This is the most frequent type of phrasemes, and it is also the most frequent one in the polit-

---

<sup>7</sup> On the problem of *phraseological phonetic words* see Menac (1978: 221) and Fink (2000).

ical discourse corpus. These phrasemes consist of two or more independent words, which can, but do not have to, be accompanied by function words. These combinations of words can have different syntactic connections, which can be divided according to the type of connection, the main word, use of auxiliary words, etc. A syntactic connection can be dependent or independent. In a dependent syntactic connection the most frequent types of grammatical connections among word elements are agreement and government. Agreement is based on the correspondence of gender, number and case, where the dependent part determines the main part by inheriting such characteristics (e.g. *začarani krug* ‘vicious circle’; *u svakom slučaju* ‘by all accounts’), whereas with government there is no direct correspondence but the main part selects a complement with predetermined grammatical characteristics. Government is usually verbal (*voditi miroljubivu politiku* ‘conduct peaceful politics’; *imati petlju* ‘have guts’), since the verb has the most “governing” characteristics, but it can also be nominal (*oštrica napada* ‘attack blade’; *kamen smutnje* ‘stumbling block’), adjectival (*pun sebe* ‘full of oneself’; *dobar u duši* ‘a good, kindly soul’) and adverbial (*više (nekoliko) navrata* ‘several attempts’; *vitalno ugrožen* ‘life-threatened’). The independent type of syntactical connection is less frequent, and the elements of such a type are combinations that are not in a grammatically dependent relationship (*jasno i glasno* ‘loud and clear’; *milom ili silom* ‘by hook or <by> crook’; *živ ili mrtav* ‘dead or alive’; *sad ili nikad* ‘now or never’; *prije ili kasnije* ‘sooner or later’). Such combinations give speeches a special rhythm.

The third and largest type are **phrasemes with a sentence structure**. When determining such units, one must keep in mind that we are not dealing with combinations of words with verbal government, which due to the personal form of the verb become sentences (*pao je u zaborav* ‘fall into oblivion (obscurity)’; *plivati protiv struje* ‘swim (go) against the tide (stream, current)’) but with phrasemes for which the sentence is the basic structural form. If their composition is observed, those sentences can be simple (*ne da mu vrag mira* ‘is asking (looking) for trouble (it)’; *duša me boli* ‘feel sick at heart’; *zabijaš glavu u pijesak* ‘bury (hide) your head in the sand’) or complex: independent complex (*na jedno uho uđe, a na drugo izade* ‘go in one ear and out the other’) or dependent complex (*tko jači, taj kvači* ‘the strongest one catches (meaning that the strongest person wins)’), or they can be elliptic (*čudna mi čuda* ‘miracles strange to me’).

#### 4.1.2. Lexical composition

When analyzing the lexical composition of phrasemes, types of words which take part in creating a phraseme are observed. Some phrasemes are made up of adjectives and nouns (*morski vuk* ‘<old> sea dog: meaning an experienced person /at sea/’); some of verbs and nouns (*nabijati/nabiti rogove komu* ‘make a cuckold’), some of verbs, conjunctions and particles (*vjerovali li ne* ‘believe it or not’), etc. There is also a smaller set of Croatian phrasemes which are referred to as phraseological splices since at least one of the elements does not have any lexical meaning (*pošto-poto* ‘by all means’; *šuć-muč* ‘namby-pamby’; *trt-mrt* ‘no more Mr Nice Guy’).

In the lexical composition of a phraseme, parts can be omitted. In dictionaries those parts are usually put into angle brackets (e.g. *ispiti <gorku> čašu <do dna>* ‘drain the cup of sorrow’; *dati/davati <svoj> glas komu, čemu*, ‘give voice <to>’; *dati/davati <svoj> glas za koga, za što* ‘give one’s vote to’; *biti <i> gluh <i slijep> <i nijem>* ‘to be blind <and> deaf <and dumb>’). Parts can also be interchangeable, which is often based on synonymity; they are put into parentheses in dictionaries (e.g. *poštena (časna) riječ* ‘word of honor’). Sometimes exchangeable parts do not have to be synonymous, and the meaning of the phraseme does not change due to the substitution (*Bog (vrag) bi ga znao* ‘God (goodness, heaven, devil) <only> knows’).

#### 4.1.3. Main element

The third area of structural analysis is determining the main element of the phraseme. The main constituent can be a noun, verb, adjective or adverb, and accordingly there are nominal (*kamen smutnje* ‘stumbling block’; *oštrica napada* ‘attack blade’), verbal (*vedriti i oblačiti* ‘rule the roost’), adjectival (*mrtav umoran* ‘dead beat’; *gol i bos* ‘naked and bare-footed’) and adverbial phrasemes (*tu i tamo* ‘<every> now and then (again)’; *danas-sutra* ‘one of these days’).

### 4.2. Syntactical classification

The syntactical analysis of a phraseme determines the functions of the phraseme in a sentence and examines the inclusion of a phraseme into a sentence or higher-level structure.

In a sentence, a phraseme can have a syntactic function or functions which elements have as parts of speech with which the phraseme is interchangeable in meaning. In that respect a nominal phraseme can have all the functions

that nouns have: subject, apposition, object, adverbial, part of a nominal predicate; a verbal phraseme can have the function of a predicate; an adjectival phraseme the function of an attribute or part of a nominal predicate; and an adverbial phraseme the function of an adverbial. Modal and exclamation phrasemes are not part of the sentence structure, but can be inserted into a sentence as a parenthesis.

The manner in which a phraseme is inserted into discourse can help in determining the categorial meaning of the phraseme.

Phrasemes at a higher level of construction, such as *it is good to remember* (where the infinitive is in a way a phrase), in political discourse play the role of a connector (textual link). Other examples of such phrase constructions are *it is worthy noting, it is worth mentioning, it should be reminded, we are obliged to say, it is interesting to mention, etc.*

### 4.3. Semantic classification

#### 4.3.1. Source language

With respect to the language, from which a phraseme takes its origin, phrasemes can be divided into originally Croatian phrasemes and those which exist in other languages (general European or phrasemes borrowed from another foreign language), and according to that we differentiate between national and international phraseology.

##### 4.3.1.1. Language-specific phrasemes

Phraseology is a linguistic area which is linked to tradition, culture and history. Consequently, in the Croatian language, under the influence of political, cultural and linguistic history, phrasemes with clear national characteristics emerged. Their features are that they usually refer to a national historical event, literary work, personal name, toponym, etc. Sometimes some of the constituents of such phrasemes do not exist in the lexical fund of a language in which the phraseme emerged (e.g. *doći u ćorsokak* ‘come to a deadlock’; *bacati drvlje i kamenje* ‘raise a hue and cry against sb’; *šuć-muć pa prolij* ‘wishy-washy’, etc.).

##### 4.3.1.2. International phrasemes

Considering that Croats in their history often came into contact with other nations and their cultures, today there are many phrasemes from various sources in Croatian phraseology. The borrowed phrasemes originated in another language and they adapted to the recipient language in various

degrees and in different ways. Consequently, in the recipient language they can be found in their translated or original form.

Menac (1972: 10-12) states that phrasemes are borrowed from one language to another in two main ways: direct transfer without translation and total or partial translation (loan translation, calque).

In the first case, elements of one language are transferred into another one in their original form, and as foreign elements do not take on grammatical characteristics of the recipient language. Pronunciation can more or less be adapted to the phonological system of the recipient language. Their use is mostly limited to certain functional and stylistic areas. In the dictionary of political discourse such phrasemes mostly originate from Latin (*status quo*, *apage satanas*, *ad hoc*, *nota bene*), English (*fair play*, *fifty-fifty*, *take it easy*), Italian (*salto mortale*, *eppur si muove*) and French (*par excellence*).

In the second case, with total translation all elements are literally translated into the recipient language, or with partial translation only one part of the phraseme is translated, whereas the other one is borrowed in a more or less unchanged form. In the dictionaries, such phrasemes are *blic-analiza* 'quick analysis' (< German *Blitzanalyse*); *biti kadar* 'be able' (< Turkish *karşı kader olmak*); *bez pardona* 'without excuses' (< French *sans pardon*); *bjanko vjerovati* 'believe blindly' (< Italian *credere bianco*), etc.

Phrasemes originated in the mentioned ways have a wide use in many languages and are not regarded as foreign elements. Menac (1972: 13) states that this can be explained by the fact "that international phraseology developed mostly out of those phraseologisms which do not have a narrow national character and that their meaning is accessible to representatives of various nations; from the linguistic point of view, the basis for international phraseology is made up by those phraseologisms where the meaning of the whole arises from the meaning of its constituent parts".

Research has shown that in order to make communication easy and appropriate (public, cultivated speech) Croatian political speakers do not use outdated or vulgar phrasemes and that they use phrasemes of various origins. Both national and international phrasemes were found in the corpus. Numerous international phrasemes which are used as total or partial translation were found, but there are also many that were used in their original, untranslated form (see 4.3.1.2).

From the analysis it can be concluded that in some cases there is a correlation between the level of education and the use of a particular type of phraseme depending on their origin. Namely, highly educated speakers will use phrasemes of foreign origin (Latin, English, etc.) and speakers with a

lower education will mostly use national phrasemes from folk speech. Both types of speakers will often use phrasemes originating from various sports.

#### 4.3.2. Phraseme origin

The sources from which phrasemes originate can be very different. Some phrasemes emerged from citations from literary and other works which were written in the language that uses them (e.g. *o lijepa, o draga, o slatka sloboda* ‘beautiful, sweet freedom: meaning the ability to function independently, self-determination’; *gospoda Glembajevi* ‘the Glembaj gentry: a way of life as described in M. Krleža’ drama *The Glembaj Gentry*’),<sup>8</sup> some arose through direct translation of phrasemes from literary works in other languages (*biti ili ne biti* ‘to be or not to be’; *boriti se s vjetrenjačama* ‘tilting at windmills’), some originate from folk literature, primarily folk songs and stories (*Ero s onoga svijeta* ‘Ero from another world: a comical, ingenious man’), while others stem from other forms of folklore, such as proverbs (*tko jači, taj kvači* ‘the strongest one catches’; *u laži su kratke noge* ‘lies have short legs; i.e., the truth will out’).

A part of national phraseology is regionally restricted. Some of those phrasemes, while keeping dialectal elements, have broadened their use over dialectal boundaries (e.g. *obrati bostan* ‘come a cropper’, etc.).

Phrasemes can originate from various slangs. Although slangs are coded languages understandable to only a particular circle of people, phrasemes originated from them can sometimes leave the closed circle and become understandable to the majority of people and therefore enter the phraseological fund. Such phrasemes are taken e.g. from the card-game slang, fortune games slang (*igrati na kartu* ‘play on sth’; *igrati otvorenih karata* ‘play with the cards on the table’; *kockati se čime ili za što* ‘to gamble with something or for something’), youth slang (*biti u <teškom> bedu* ‘be down in the mouth’) etc.

A large number of phrasemes are derived from proper names from various scientific disciplines, professions and areas of human activities (science, music, sports, theater, maritime, etc.).

The corpus also contains interesting examples originating from IT terms (e.g. *sajber-spejs* ‘cyberspace’, *biti u virtuelnoj realnosti* ‘be in virtual reality’, *reducirati input* ‘reduce input’).

---

<sup>8</sup> Phrasemes based on literary and other folk literature were not found in the political speech corpus.

There is a larger group of general European phrasemes which are common to the majority of European languages. In this respect there are phrasemes in Croatian which can be subdivided into smaller groups, depending on the source of phraseme origin. As such we encounter phrasemes of biblical origin, phrasemes motivated by antique myths (e.g. *danajski darovi* ‘an unsolicited gift’, from Latin *Timeo Danaos et dona ferrentes* ‘I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts’, an expression based on the legend of the Trojan Horse, which the Danaans (Grk *Danaoi*) cunningly offered as a present to Troy in order to take over), phrasemes originated from quotations by famous people and phrasemes related to the common general experience. A special group is formed by phrasemes stemming from politics and economy, which spread rapidly through the media. Their language of origin is known, and usually also the person who coined them.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned, one of the sources that served as a basis for creating phrasemes was sports. Phrases were taken from sports expressions which then underwent semantic changes and with the new, phraseological meaning entered the phraseological fund. It is interesting that many constructions relating to sports are parallelly used as expressions in a particular sport and as phrasemes that have acquired a different meaning.

In the corpus of political discourse, there are three types of sports backgrounds.

The first type of phraseme relates to sports in general, that is, it has obviously evolved from sports but does not refer to any particular sport. The phraseme *skupljati (zbirati/sabirati) poene* ‘collect (gather)/points’ belongs to this type and the political speech type as well. Its phraseological meaning is ‘brownnose to superiors’. It is interesting that in all cases in which the phraseme is found an additional determinant of the situation in which the phraseme is used (political speech) – the adjective *political* – is inserted (e.g. *ja shvaćam da se želi skupiti neki politički poenčić, ali to je skupljanje jeftinih političkih poena..., da bi prikupljao političke poene* ‘I understand that a political point should be collected, this is collecting cheap political points..., in order to collect political points’).

---

<sup>9</sup> Recently, the most famous phraseme that emerged in Croatian politics, more precisely in a parliamentary discussion, and whose author is well-known in the public is *tko je jamio, jamio* ‘take advantage of a situation’. The phraseme spread quickly through the media and is often used in various situations when referring to scavenging and illegal activities in privatization.

The second type of phraseme relates to several types of sports which are connected by a common characteristic. We find the phraseme *startati (ići, skočiti) na prvu loptu* ‘start (go, jump) without thinking’, which is etymologically related to sports with a ball and has the meaning ‘react recklessly, rashly and abruptly’. Its literal meaning is ‘not to pass the ball to the team-mate but continue playing towards the opponent goal or basket’. The expression (*greška*) *u koracima* ‘traveling (mistake)’ is used in some sports (e.g. basketball) and literally means ‘an offense due to inappropriate moving on the court’. Its phraseological meaning is ‘wrong timing for doing some kind of work, mismatching, or disorganization in some kind of activity’.

The third type of phraseme is taken from a recognizable sport. The corpus includes phrasemes with origins in the following specific sports: soccer, wrestling, athletics, chess and gymnastics. Phrasemes coming from soccer are e.g. *dati žuti karton* ‘give a yellow card’; *dati gol* ‘score a goal’; from wrestling: *otrvati se čemu* ‘wrestle something off’; *hrvati se s kime (s demonima prošlosti)* ‘wrestle with someone (demons from the past)’; from athletics: *trčati prema čemu (Washingtonu, Europskoj uniji i sl.)* ‘run towards something (Washington, European Union, etc.)’; and from chess: *dovesti/dovoditi do pat-pozicije* ‘bring to a dead draw’; *dovesti/dovoditi u nepovoljnu poziciju* ‘lead to an unfavorable position’.

A gymnastic exercise which requires a spring board served well for developing the phraseme *odskočna daska* ‘spring board’. Its literal meaning influenced the framing of a phraseological meaning ‘position which serves only as a transition towards some higher, better or more profitable position’.

Phrasemes are often qualified by adjectives, e.g. the phraseme *napraviti potez/korak* ‘make a move’ does not say much about the quality of the move, only expresses what has been done. The procedure itself can be qualified using various adjectives as in the case of phrasemes which we marked in the dictionary: *lijep potez na igralištu* ‘nice move on the playground’;  *bilo je krajnje vrijeme da se povuče jedan snažan potez* ‘it was high time for a strong move’. The process can also be qualified by an ordinal number. In the dictionary we have a phraseme *napraviti prvi korak* ‘to make the first move’.

The Croatian language also uses an antonym pair, *napraviti (učiniti, povući) dobar potez* ‘make a good move’ and *napraviti (učiniti, povući) loš (krivi) potez* ‘make a bad (wrong) move’, where the antonymous meaning is achieved by substituting adjectives of opposite meaning. However, we did not find such an antonym pair in the corpus.

### 5. Phraseological play<sup>10</sup>

One can find various categories of phraseological play in literature, however the majority can be reduced to (a) semantic change, which is based on the transformation of the meaning without changing the lexical composition and structure of the phraseme itself, (b) structural-semantic transformation, which implies a change in the form of the phraseme (substitution of constituents, ellipsis of some of them, insertion of new words into the phraseme), and (c) formal-grammatical transformation, which refers to changes in the form of particular constituents, the structure of the phrasemes and the order of the constituents, etc. (Cf. Fink 1997: 325 f.).

In a narrower sense, a large number of phrasemes developed from free combinations of words, whose elements are desemanticized, that is, from words that have lost their original lexical meaning. The phraseological meaning remains in an underlying relationship with the free combination of words from which the phraseme originates, since the image of the free combination of words is built into the phraseological meaning and has a direct influence on it. In most of the cases, when uttering a phraseme we are not aware of that underlying structure of the phraseme. Phraseological plays which are based on this type of semantic shift draw on the mix of those two levels: the original meaning of the base and the phraseological meaning emerged from desemantization. In the observed parliamentary speech an interesting phraseological play was used where two types of shifts occurred: a structural-semantic shift and a purely semantic shift. An example of this type occurred in one politician's speech:

Hrvati su doživjeli odluku kao da im je *pao kamen sa srca* – neizvjesno je hoće li im *kamen pasti na nogu*. Hoće li Hrvatska samo s *jednom nogom na zemlji* uspjeti održati... 'Croats received the decision as if *a load was lifted off their minds* (literal trans. a rock was lifted from their hearts) – it is uncertain though *whether it will fall back* (lit. whether the rock will fall on their feet.). Will Croatia sustain with only *one foot on the ground*<sup>11</sup>...'

The first phraseme mentioned is *pao je kamen sa srca* komu 'be a load (weight) off *your* mind (literal meaning a rock fell off one's heart)' in its phraseological meaning 'someone was eased, relieved, felt relief'. The

<sup>10</sup> Fink (1997: 325-330) uses the term *phraseological play* in contrast to the term *word play* and explains phraseological play in addition to giving examples from Croatian and Russian advertising.

<sup>11</sup> This is an allusion to the phraseme *stajati s obje noge na zemlji* 'to have (keep) your feet <set> on the ground'.

phraseological play took place, that is, a structural – semantic transformation – an exchange of the element *heart* with *foot* – a particular semantic irony of the phraseme *a rock fell off one's heart*, in order to emphasize that a relief that the Croatians felt was only temporary and that it would return twofold – a kind of semantic antonymy.

The phraseological play of element substitution (substitution of *heart* and *foot*) at the same time reminds of the lexical meaning of elements in a free combination of words, since the desemanticized meanings are semantically realized again.

The following sentence is a conclusion even in the field of discourse semantics, and since they are semantically linked, in the field of semantic phraseological play. A new announcement is introduced – *international reaction* –, which clarifies the meaning since it explicitly mentions the cause of a possible consequence. The phraseme *with one foot on the ground* is introduced into the phraseological play in its full form, but its meaning is not ‘to be unrealistic, live in an illusion’ but the lexical meaning of its elements, i.e. not desemanticized. Consequently, only a semantic modification occurred in this example.

In the examined political speech we found another play, as it were, even though there is no semantic, structural-semantic or formal grammatical transformation, but there is antonymy of the phraseme which has the same elements except the ones which are in contradiction and is therefore interesting to mention. The sentence with phraseological antonymy is:

*Otvoraju se vrata još jeftinije i nekvalitetnije hrane, a našim proizvođačima ta se vrata polako zatvaraju.* ‘Doors are being opened for cheaper and worse food, and doors are slowly closing for our producers.’

This sentence consists of two phrasemes with a similar element structure, which have the opposite meaning. The phraseme *vrata su otvorena* komu ‘doors are opened for *sb*’ has the meaning ‘*sb* is welcomed, *sb* will be happily accepted, someone will have free access’, while the phraseme *vrata su zatvorena* komu ‘the doors are closed for *sb*’ has the meaning of ‘being unwelcome, *sb* is prevented from doing *sth*, *sb* comes across obstacles, *sb* has no access to *sth*’.

## 6. Analysis

In the political speech corpus, 687 phrasemes were found, which disproves the frequent statement on the nonexpressiveness of the administrative style, since expressiveness is, in addition to its imagery and basic meaning an important charac-

teristic of phrasemes. Nonexpressiveness, in a broader sense, is not even a characteristic to which administrative style should aspire, especially in spoken communication. However, in phraseme use, as well as in the use of other expressive language elements, the rule is that such use should not undermine the basic communicative function of language, that it should be in accordance with the objectivity and factualness of the administrative style, as well as in harmony with extralinguistic reality.

An action is expressed by using verb + noun expressions (e.g. *izvršiti uplatu* ‘make a payment’ instead of *uplatiti* ‘pay’; *vršiti pouku* ‘conduct teaching’ instead of *poučavati* ‘teach’), while cliché expressions contribute to economy and professionalism (e.g. *astronomske cijene* ‘astronomical prices’; *krucijalno pitanje* ‘crucial question’, etc.). Accuracy provokes the need for emphasizing message content, therefore influencing the development of numerous unconscious pleonasm such as *u oblasti politike* ‘in the domain of politics’ (politics is a domain), *kako i na koji način* ‘how and in what way’, *ja, osobno, mislim* ‘personally I think’, *to je proces koji traje* ‘that is a lasting process’, *nikad i ni u kome slučaju* ‘never and not in any case’, etc. The wish to leave an increased good impression leads to ostentatious words and expressions (e.g. *staviti naglasak na što* ‘place emphasis on something’; *podcrtati što* ‘underline something’; *u svjetlu postignutih rezultata* ‘in the light of the results achieved’, etc.)

Considering that phrasemes are steady connections of words that are employed in their final form and not created in the speech process, their use enables economic speech planning. Consequently, more time remains for planning the rest of the spoken statement, which should be more fluent, without unfinished sentences, elliptic expressions, hesitation forms or anything else that disturbs its fluency. It would be useful to check the mentioned hypothesis and measure fluency of speech in statements of particular speakers in segments which abound in phrasemes and in segments which do not contain phrasemes, and compare the results obtained.

Furthermore, using quantitative analysis it was established that the headword *question* had the highest number of phrasemes in the dictionary and that the phraseme *voditi (povesti i sl.) računa* ‘to take (take along, etc.) care of’ has the most examples (20), which means that it is used most frequently in the Croatian parliament. According to frequency of use the following phrasemes are also worth mentioning: *dovesti/dovoditi u pitanje* ‘bring forth an issue/question’ (12), *postaviti/postavljati pitanje* ‘ask a question’ (11), *reći (kazati, obratiti se s, osvrnuti se s) nekoliko (par) riječi (riječ-dvije)* ‘to say (speak, tell, address) several (a couple of) words (a word or two)’ (11).

In the analysis of phraseme use in speeches of particular politicians it was observed that politicians do have an idiolect, that is, that they do not use the same phrasemes. Although one of the main characteristics of phrasemes is that they are transferred in their final form, that is, they are not developed in the speech process and can therefore not be considered a part of an idiolect, frequent use of some particular final forms can be considered a personal feature of an individual's speech. It is interesting that phrasemes are repeated within a speech and that the following speaker, in replying to the speech of the predecessor, often uses phrasemes which the predecessor mentioned.

Research on the corpus showed that there are no phrasemes that can be linked to the political substyle of the administrative style exclusively, at least not when referring to spoken discourse. It turned out that the phraseology of politics belongs to a general phraseological fund. In particular cases it is linked to the political discourse, in which it originated. Thus, politicians using usual, every-day phrasemes often insert possessive adjectives, which are related to political discourse and the subject at issue, into the phraseme formula (e.g. *krojač međunarodne sudbine* 'shaper of *international* destiny'; *ubacujući Europsku uniju kao trećeg igrača u hrvatsku igru* 'mentioning the European Union as the third player in the *Croatian* game', etc.), creating an interesting phraseological construction.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the phraseology of 40 hours of speeches from the Croatian parliament between 1990 and 2002, it can be concluded that in the political substyle of the administrative style the majority of phrasemes belong to the general phraseological fund. It is interesting that the general phraseological fund is in some cases linked to the political discourse in which it originated.

The number of phrasemes encountered in the corpus, 687, disproves the statement on the nonexpressiveness of the administrative style, since expressiveness, in addition to imagery and connotation, is an important characteristic of phrasemes.

Frequent use of phrasemes can be linked with planning and speech development. Phrasemes are steady connections of words, which are used in their final form and not created in the speech process, which leaves more time for speech planning. It can therefore be assumed that a speech should be more fluent, that is, that it reduces the number of hesitation forms, repetitions, false beginnings, stuttering, pauses and other elements which make a speech less fluent. Correct use of expressive elements gives speeches imagery, which

makes message transfer easier, more interesting and more economical in expression. It should be emphasized that when using phrasemes, as well as when using other expressive elements in a language, the rule of application is that their use should not disturb the basic communicative language function and that it should be in harmony with objectivity and factualness of the administrative style and extralinguistic reality.

The use of expressive elements within the limits of norm, objectiveness and factualness is supported by the fact that Croatian politicians do not use outdated and vulgar phrasemes (public, cultivated speech) and that my corpus of phrasemes does not include idiolect. It is interesting that politicians often repeat phrasemes within a speech and that these phrasemes are used by the following speaker in his/her speech.

Based on the conducted sociolinguistic analysis, it can be concluded that in some cases there is an evident correlation between the degree of education and the use of a particular type of phraseme depending on its origin. In that respect, well-educated speakers use phrasemes of foreign origin (Latin, English), while less educated speakers use mostly national phrasemes from folk speech. Both kinds of speakers often use phrasemes originating from various sports.

This research contributes to the systematic description of functional styles of the Croatian language, including the standard language. Such descriptions are needed in order to emphasize the multifunctionality of language and the normative use of phrasemes. The phraseology of other functional styles should also be analyzed in order to isolate phrasemes which belong to particular styles and in that way add stylistic marks to phraseological dictionaries.

## References

- Duden editorial staff, Siegfried A. Huth and Frank Hatje (2002): *Govori za sve prilike (i ukratko o govorništvu) Priručnik za učinkovite i moderne govore*. Poliglot d.o.o. (trans.). Poslovni zbornik. Zagreb.
- Fink, Željka (1992/1993): Tipovi adjektivnih frazeologizama (na materijalu ruskog i hrvatskog jezika). *Filologija* 20-21, 91-101.
- Fink, Željka (1997): Frazeološke igre u reklamama ili misli li četkica za zube svojom glavom. In: M. Andrijašević and L. Zergollern-Miletić (ed.). *Tekst i diskurs*. Zagreb, 325-330.
- Fink, Željka (2000): Tipovi frazema – fonetskih riječi. In: D. Stolac (main ed.). *Riječki filološki dani III. Zbornik radova s Međunarodnoga znanstvenog skupa Riječki filološki dani održanoga u Rijeci od 3. do 5. prosinca 1998*. Rijeka, 93-98.
- Zakon o pravu na pristup informacijama* (2003). *Narodne novine* 21.10.2003, <<http://www.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeno/2003/2491.htm>> (accessed 1 July 2008).

Menac, Antica (1972): Svoje i posuđeno u frazeologiji. *Strani jezici*. 1, 9-18.

Menac, Antica (1978): Neka pitanja u vezi s klasifikacijom frazeologije. *Filologija* 8, 219-226.

Menac, Antica, Željka Fink-Arsovski and Radomir Venturin (2003): *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik*. Zagreb.

Vrgoč, Dalibor and Željka Fink Arsovski (2008): *Hrvatsko-engleski frazeološki rječnik*. Zagreb.