

**Individual Paper Session 26**  
**Lexicon/Vocabulary**  
**Thursday, July 6**  
**3:45-4:15pm**

**English and Spanish Idioms in Contrast: A Functional and Cognitive View**

**Silvia Molina**  
**Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha**  
[Silvia.molina@uclm.es](mailto:Silvia.molina@uclm.es)

**María Jesús Pinar Sanz**  
**Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha**  
[Maríajesus.pinar@uclm.es](mailto:Maríajesus.pinar@uclm.es)

We claim that in general bilingual dictionaries of English-Spanish/ Spanish-English dictionaries the question of functional equivalence has not been answered properly as it is hard to find parallel expressions which can be used equally in both cases.

This paper tries to elaborate some principles of contrastive idiom analysis from a functional and cognitive perspective through both the use of empirical data concerning the real usage of idioms (examples from the BNC) and a sound theoretical background. Relevant parameters of cross-linguistic comparison (Semantics, Syntax Pragmatics and Cognitive Linguistics) will be discussed with several examples trying to offer a typology of non-parallel features between L1 and L2 idioms and collocations.

From a **semantic perspective**, the content plane of idioms consists of two components: (i) the figurative meaning and (ii) the mental image, being both the conceptual foundation for semantic re-interpretation. In order to describe idioms from a **syntactic point of view**, we are going to focus on types of non-equivalence, giving some examples. From a **pragmatic perspective**, the difference between idioms can be explained in terms of:

- (i) differences in their stylistic properties;
- (ii) differences in the cultural component of their plane of content ( *Between the devil and the deep blue sea* > *estar entre la espada y la pared* );
- (iii) differences with regard to their degree of familiarity and/or textual frequency;
- (iv) differences in their illocutionary function.

Finally, we shall study the links between words in source and target domains from a **cognitive perspective**. Examples will try to determine to what extent collocational relations are preserved in the mapping from source to target domain in English and if they are maintained or not in Spanish. The paper concludes stating the important role that collocations and idioms play in the mastery for L2 learners, in our case, English.