

## THE PHRASEOLOGY OF THE LANGUAGE OF WINE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH<sup>1</sup>

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**Resumen:** Según afirma Sinclair (2000: 197), alrededor del 80% de las palabras utilizadas en el discurso, las elegimos siguiendo criterios co-textuales o de uso en vez de sintácticos o gramaticales. Así, el análisis de las colocaciones o combinaciones de palabras constituye un campo de estudio de interés muy amplio y atrayente. En otras palabras, el estudio de la fraseología es una parte esencial del estudio de la lengua. Esto es especialmente interesante en el caso de los lenguajes de especialidad donde no es suficiente conocer la terminología de un campo, sino que también hay que conocer su uso para poder producir textos estilísticamente aceptables tanto en lengua origen como en lengua meta. En el presente artículo, tras definir lo que entendemos por unidades fraseológicas, examinaremos la fraseología del lenguaje vitivinícola en inglés y en español usando un corpus comparable de fichas de cata. Analizaremos las unidades fraseológicas desde el punto de vista de la forma y del significado y las compararemos en las dos lenguas objeto de estudio.

**Palabras clave:** terminología; unidades fraseológicas; corpus comparable; análisis estructural; análisis semántico

**Abstract:** According to Sinclair (2000: 197), about 80% of the words in discourse are chosen according to the co-selection principle rather than for purely syntactic or grammatical reasons. Thus, the analysis of how words co-select or combine with other words is a necessary focus of study for any linguist. In other words, the study of phraseology is an essential part of the study of language. This is especially true of specialized languages, where it is not enough to know the terminology of a discipline, but where one also needs to know their contextualised use in order to produce technically stylistic texts either in the original language or in translation. In this paper, after defining what we mean by phraseological units, we will examine the phraseology of the language of wine in English and Spanish, using a comparable corpus of wine tasting notes. We will analyze phraseological units for key wine tasting terms from the point of view of form and meaning, comparing and contrasting our findings for the two languages under study.

**Key words:** term; phraseological units; comparable corpus; structural analysis; semantic analysis

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### 1. Introduction

The study of phraseology has become an essential part of the study of language, especially since corpus linguistics revealed the key role of phraseological units in language. Indeed, according to Sinclair, described as “a first-generation modern corpus linguist”, about 80% of the words in discourse are chosen according to the co-selection principle rather than for purely syntactic or grammatical reasons (Sinclair, 2000: 197). Thus, the analysis of how words combine with other words to form phraseological units is a necessary focus of study for any linguist. In other words, the study of phraseology is an essential part of the study of language. The interest in phraseology is not restricted to linguists studying general language. Phraseology has also attracted the attention of terminologists, who deal with specialized languages. Notes on phraseology were originally inserted in the context section of terminological records, which shows the term in its immediate environment and gives information on the typical usage of the term. This initial effort to include phraseology in the study of terminology has since expanded to the point where phraseological units are now often awarded their own term records. Indeed, there is definitely a growing awareness of the fact that it is not enough to know the terminology of a discipline to write specialized texts in that discipline, but that one also needs to

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know the contextualised use of the terms in order to produce technically appropriate texts either in the original language or in translation.

In this paper, we will examine the phraseology of a specialized language, the language of wine, Oenology, in English and Spanish, using a comparable corpus of wine tasting notes. We will begin by defining phraseological units and presenting our approach to the study of these units. We will then analyze phraseological units for key wine tasting terms from the point of view of form and meaning, comparing and contrasting our findings for the two languages under study.

## 2. Phraseological units and approaches to their study

Phraseology followed a steady growth of scholarly interest and activity in the last century; therefore, and according to Cowie (1998: 1-2), it became a major field of pure and applied research (Diez Arroyo, 2009). However, even nowadays it is difficult to find a suitable definition of phraseology since it covers different realities for different linguists. Its definition varies depending on whether language for general purposes or language for specific purposes (LSP) are being considered (Roberts, 1998, 62). Moreover “what is covered by the term “phraseology” is to some extent language dependent” (1998: 63) since some units are considered part of phraseology in one language (phrasal verbs in English, for example) and not in others (phrasal verbs do not exist in Spanish and or in French).

However, in 1998 Gläser provided a relatively clear definition of the unit, which is the focus of phraseology, which she termed ‘phraseological unit’ (PU). PU is defined 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).

Along with her definition of PU, Gläser also puts forward her own phraseological model (1998). Gläser (1994/1995: 46-58) has studied phraseology in English basing her classification on the notions of “centre” and “periphery” from the Prague school. The **centre** comprises phraseological units that function as single words such as nouns (*blind alley*), verbs (*make assumptions, make choices*), etc.; function words that denote relations between phenomena or objects (prepositions: *by dint of, in terms of/* conjunctions: *in order to, as if*) and Gläser also includes some billexemic units (*blanket cover*) but eliminates others (*man-made, milkman*). The **transition area** includes ‘irreversible binomials’ (word pairs which have a fixed order such as *bread and butter*), stereotyped combinations or similes (*as cold as a cucumber*), sentence-like, fragments of sentence-like phrases (*a rolling stone*), quotations and literary allusions (*Scylla and Charibdis* situation) and finally, collocations. Last but not least, the **periphery** includes proverbs, truisms (*boys will be boys*), maxims, quotations, slogans and routine formulae (*what’s up?*) (Molina Plaza, 2009: 120).

Let us exemplify the concept of PU provided in the paragraph above as follows: a multi-word item consisting of a meaningful sequence of words. Thus, in the sentence “he was in dire straits”, “dire straits” and “to be in dire straits” can be considered phraseological units, but not “he was in”, since, unlike the first two units, the latter is not a meaningful sequence of words.<sup>2</sup>

As a conclusion, we could state that “Phraseological unit” is a generic term covering a range of subtypes which have been classified according to their degree of semantic fixedness, syntactic fixedness, lexical restrictions and institutionalization. These subtypes include, on the one hand, idioms and compounds that present a high degree of semantic and syntactic fixedness and are institutionalized, and, on the other hand, collocations and still other units identified as lexical chunks, colligations, etc., which present some degree of lexical restriction but little fixedness and are not usually institutionalized.

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<sup>2</sup> Timmis calls them a sequence of words found together without a clear semantic or pragmatic meaning a “lexical bundle” (2015: 26).

While examination of the various subtypes of phraseological units represents the traditional approach to the study of phraseology (the Prague or the Russian Schools for example), a more modern approach, originated with Sinclair, adopts a bottom-up corpus-driven method to identify lexical co-occurrences and generate a wide range of word combinations, many of which do not fall neatly into the phraseological subtypes identified by the traditional approach. In fact, the lexical co-occurrences identified by corpus extraction methods extend the domain of phraseology into what was originally considered purely free combinations.

### 3. Methodology used in this study

In this paper, we have adopted Sinclair's bottom-up approach to phraseology. The starting point of our study is an ad-hoc domain-specific (Corpas y Seghiri, 2009: 78) comparable corpus of wine tasting notes in English and Spanish, which we developed in the context of a larger research project, termed the ACTRES project<sup>3</sup>. Wine tasting notes are a specific genre in the field of Oenology, being a genre a class of communicative event which possesses features of stability, name and recognition (Swales, 1990: 9). Swales states that the main criteria that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes. In other words, those texts used in a particular situation for a particular purpose may be referred to as genres.

In the present paper, we will follow Swales methodology to distinguish genres according to socio-rhetorical criteria and, in this sense, the communicative purpose of a particular discourse community is the decisive criterion by which they are properly defined. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style (Swales, 1990: 58).

Exemplars of a genre exhibit patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. Therefore, the micro and macrolinguistic levels (phraseology and rhetoric) are comprised in the notion of genre and therefore crucial concepts in our study.

Our corpus was compiled using pragmatic text selection criteria: the wine tasting notes were chosen to ensure a representative sample of the language of expert members of the discourse community, in this case of expert wine writers. We also considered availability, which refers to the ease with which the texts constituting the corpus could be obtained. The wine tasting notes corpus includes 750 wine tasting notes in Spanish and 716 wine tasting notes in English, which amount to 54,545 and 55,339 words respectively.

An important feature of our corpus is that its rhetorical structure is tagged. We annotated the texts using rhetorical labels that help us set up the semantic units (*moves and steps*, according to Swales, 1990, 2002) that constitute wine tasting notes in every language. We were able to identify five different moves in the wine tasting notes with various steps. See Table 1 for the rhetorical structure. To limit the scope of our study of phraseology, in the present paper we have restricted ourselves here to one important move found in all wine tasting notes: *taste*.

1. Introductory remarks (IR)
2. Appearance (AP)
a. Colour hue and depth
b. Clarity
c. Viscosity
d. Effervescence

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<sup>3</sup>ACTRES is a research group with researchers from different Spanish, European and American Universities. ACTRES stands for Análisis Contrastivo y Traducción Especializada.

3. Aroma (AR)
a. Fragrance
b. Intensity
c. Development
4. Taste (TA)
a. Flavors
b. Finish
c. Astringency
d. Mouthfeel
e. Body
f. Balance
5. Concluding remarks (CR)

Table 1. Rhetorical Structure of Wine Tasting Notes

The rhetorical labelling of the texts allowed us to identify wine words that are typical of the different moves and steps. So we first identified seven key nouns found in the taste move. They include *flavors*, *finish*, *mouthfeel*, *body*, *balance*, *tannins* and *acidity*<sup>4</sup>. We proceeded in the same way in Spanish as we did in English. The Spanish key words identified are *acidez*, *taninos*, *cuero*, *boca*, *final* and *retrosgusto/postgusto*. It should be noted that there are only six keywords in Spanish as opposed to seven in English. This is because the concept of *balance* is not presented as an independent entity but is attached to other concepts such as that represented by *acidity* or *tannins*.

The next step consisted of examining our corpus with the aim of identifying the words that collocate with these nouns. We did this using, on the one hand, a browser specially prepared for the analysis of ACTRES corpora, which presents concordance lines and statistics for a bilingual comparable corpus (See image 1), and, on the other, AntConc, a monolingual corpus analysis tool for concordancing and text analysis. The former provided a good starting point, but the latter allowed greater manipulation of the concordance lines and therefore more in-depth analysis.

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<sup>4</sup>Definitions for these key words are found in Appendix 1.

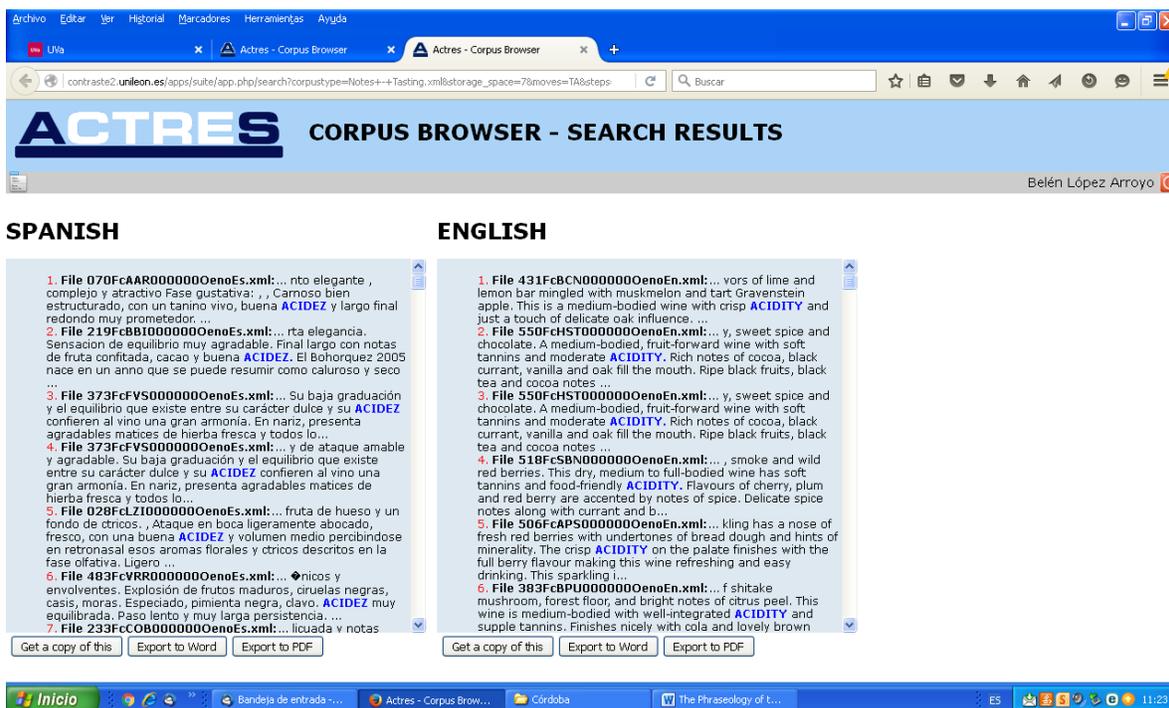


Image 1. Actres Browser

In principle, the key word had to co-occur with another word at least five times in our corpus for the lexical co-occurrence to be considered a phraseological unit. However, we made two exceptions to this rule. First, when a given word collocated with the key word at least three times and with a synonym of the key word at least twice (e.g. *notes* and *aromas* are often used interchangeably with *flavors*), we considered that a phraseological unit did exist: for example, “(the wine) offers flavors” appears four times in our corpus, and “offers” co-occurs with “aromas” twice. However, we did not make a conscious effort to search for key word synonyms. It was only when a synonym appeared in a concordance line for the key word that we took it into consideration. Second, when a key word was understood in the context, the understood item was considered to co-occur with a given word: in the sentence “this wine offers generous fruit”, the word “flavors” is understood after “fruit” (since fruit per se is not found in wine) and therefore “wine offers flavors” is considered a phraseological unit.

The units identified in the manner described above were then further analyzed from the point of view of form and meaning.

#### 4. Raw results

Tables 2 and 3 presented below show the raw results of our examination of concordance lines. Each of the key words is dealt with separately, with the total number of phraseological units identified for each indicated in parentheses after the key word. The shorter units for each key word are displayed before the longer units, and after each unit the number of occurrences is indicated in parentheses.

<b>Acidity (15)</b>	<u>Balanced/well-balanced</u> acidity (14)
<u>Bright</u> acidity (24)	<u>Crisp</u> acidity (10)
<u>Elevated</u> acidity (11)	<u>Fine</u> acidity (12)
<u>Fresh</u> acidity (5)	<u>Good</u> acidity (5)
<u>Juicy</u> acidity (10)	<u>Lively</u> acidity (16)
<u>Natural</u> acidity (10)	<u>Mineral</u> acidity (3) but also <u>minerality and acidity</u> (2)
<u>Moderate</u> acidity (8)	<u>Refreshing</u> acidity (12)
<u>Soft</u> acidity (11)	(wine/mouthfeel/aromas) <u>is balanced with/by</u> acidity (5)
<b>Balance (6)</b>	<u>Acid</u> balance (9)
<u>Excellent</u> balance (9)	<u>Good</u> balance (8)
<u>Great</u> balance (12)	<u>Lovely</u> balance (8)
(this wine) <u>shows</u> balance (12)	
<b>Body (2)</b>	
<u>Medium</u> body (7)	<u>Full</u> body (8)
<b>Finish (20)</b>	<u>Clean</u> finish (5)
<u>Complex</u> finish (5)	<u>Crisp</u> finish (5)
<u>Dry</u> finish (20)	<u>Juicy</u> finish (6)
<u>Lengthy</u> finish (5)	<u>Lingering</u> finish (40+)
<u>Long</u> finish (40+)	<u>Mineral</u> finish (6)
<u>Persistent</u> finish (8)	<u>Rich</u> finish (5)
<u>Savoury</u> finish (7)	<u>Seamless</u> finish (9)
<u>Silky</u> finish (10)	<u>Spicy/spice</u> finish (10)
<u>Smooth</u> finish (20)	<u>On</u> the finish (44)
(Acidity/flavors) <u>linger(s) on</u> the finish (19)	<u>provides (for) a X</u> finish (7)
The finish <u>shows</u> X notes ... (5)	
<b>Flavors (7)</b>	<u>Concentrated</u> flavors (5)
<u>Fruit</u> flavors (25)	<u>Juicy</u> flavors (20+)
<u>Luscious</u> flavors (3)	<u>Ripe fruit</u> flavors (5)
(the wine) <u>displays</u> flavors (7)	(the wine) <u>offers</u> flavors (3+2)
<b>Mouthfeel/Mouth-feel/Mouth feel (4)</b>	<u>Rich</u> mouthfeel (5)
<u>Round</u> mouthfeel (6)	<u>Smooth</u> mouthfeel (7)
<u>Soft</u> mouthfeel (5)	
<b>Tannins (23)</b>	
<u>Chalky</u> tannins (9)	<u>Chewy</u> tannins (5)
<u>Drying/dry</u> tannins (9)	<u>Elegant</u> tannins (7)
<u>Fine</u> tannins (40+)	<u>Firm</u> tannins (29)
<u>Flowery</u> tannins (8)	<u>Fruit</u> tannins (8)
<u>Grainy</u> tannins (7)	<u>Gravelly</u> tannins (6)
<u>Gritty</u> tannins (8)	<u>Integrated/well-integrated</u> tannins (11)
<u>Juicy</u> tannins (5)	<u>Mineral</u> tannins (7)
<u>Powdery/powder like</u> tannins (17)	<u>Ripe</u> tannins (9)
<u>Round/rounded</u> tannins (6)	<u>Silky</u> tannins (12)
<u>Smooth</u> tannins (15)	<u>Soft</u> tannins (28)
<u>Supple</u> tannins (15)	<u>Velvety</u> tannins (12)
Tannins <u>provide structure/a X</u> finish (15)	

Table 2. English Key Words

<b>Acidez (6)</b>	Acidez <u>equilibrada</u> (12)
Acidez <u>marcada</u> (4)	Acidez <u>notable</u> (14)
<u>Buena</u> acidez (33)	<u>Con (una) buena</u> acidez (6 + 4)
(el vino) <u>presenta</u> buena acidez (8)	
<b>Boca (6)</b>	
Boca <u>afrutado</u> (7)	Boca <u>potente</u> (7)
<u>En boca (es) muy/intenso y agradable</u> (6)	<u>En boca</u> es un vino <u>agradable</u> (27)
(La) <u>entrada en boca (es) aterciopelada</u> (4 + 11)	
<b>Cuerpo (3)</b>	
<u>Buen/gran</u> cuerpo (2 + 4)	<u>Con</u> cuerpo (9)
<u>De/con/su</u> cuerpo medio (3 + 2 + 1)	
<b>Final (7)</b>	
<u>Amargor</u> final (8)	Final <u>elegante/elegante</u> final (7)
Final <u>largo/ largo</u> final (38+16)	Final <u>persistente/ persistente</u> final (8+5)
Final <u>de boca</u> (22)	Final <u>de boca prolongado /prolongado final de boca</u> (4 + 11)
<u>El final de boca resulta (cálido)</u> (6)	
<b>Retrogusto/Posgusto (6)</b>	
Retrogusto <u>largo/ largo</u> retrogusto (3 + 3)	Retrogusto <u>persistente</u> (6)
<u>Con</u> retrogusto (7)	Posgusto <u>franco</u> (5)
(Su) <u>posgusto (es) largo</u> (20+ 5)	Posgusto <u>persistente/muy persistente</u> (3 + 5)
<b>Tanino (5)</b>	Taninos <u>maduros</u> (30)
<u>Con un tanino amable</u> (5)	<u>Con taninos maduros</u> (11)
<u>Con/de taninos bien/muy maduros</u> (10+6)	Tanino <u>en boca</u> (10)

Table 3. Spanish Key words

In the following section, a contrastive analysis of the phraseological units in the field of Oenology in English and Spanish will be carried out according to the results obtained from our corpus.

## 5. Analysis and discussion of results

The phraseological units identified above give rise to a number of observations, from the point of view of both form and meaning. We will indicate aspects that are common to both English and Spanish and highlight, when required, the differences.

1) Two-word units are far more common than larger units (cf. *smooth tannins* vs. *tannins provide structure/a X finish*, *Acidez marcada* vs. (el vino) *presenta buena acidez*). This fact makes sense in terms of the frequency criterion, since it is relatively rare to find the same three or more words regularly in combination.

2) Generally, the two-word units consist of the key word with a descriptor. The descriptor is normally an adjective (e.g. *luscious flavors*, *boca potente*), but it can sometimes be a noun used adjectivally (e.g. *fruit flavors*) or in an adjectival phrase (e.g. *final de boca*).

The fact that the two-word units are ADJ + N or N + (Prep) + N units is not surprising, given both the nature and the style of our corpus (wine tasting notes). The purpose of a wine tasting note is to describe a wine, and the obvious way to do that is to collocate descriptors (adjectives or nouns used adjectivally) with a wine or one of its key aspects. Moreover, one of the styles used extensively in wine tasting notes in both English and Spanish is that of verbless sentences as it is shown in example *Appearance* or *Bouquet* in example 1 or *Nariz* in example 2.

1. Appearance:

*Light pale straw in colour*

Bouquet:

*A rich nose filled with peach blossom, lime and hints of tropical fruits.*

Palate:

*The palate shows rich fruit weight and texture, supported by bright acidity and a long finish.*

2. Color

*Presenta un color rojo muy vivo, intenso y muy cubierto.*

Nariz

*Entrada muy intensa, con notas acarameladas ,tofes, tostados, cueros y un gran recuerdo a chocolate negro. Tonos balsámicos muy fuertes, pero con una base de vino muy importante, con frutas sobremaduras, pasas.*

Boca

*Potente, con personalidad, estructurado, equilibrado sin aristas. Con un postgusto largo, dejando recuerdos de tonos torrefactos persistentes.*

In the first two sections of the tasting note, those dealing with the appearance and aroma of the wine, the sentences are verbless (i.e. they have no conjugated verb). While, in examples one and two, the third section, that devoted to taste, in both cases, do have a sentence with a verb, there are a number of other tasting notes where verbless sentences are used throughout the text. This, in itself, would explain the lack of phraseological units that include verbs and correspondingly the large number of ADJ + N or N + (Prep) + N units.

3) Adjective + Noun units (e.g. *crisp acidity; retrogusto largo*) can also be expressed as Noun + Linking verb + Adj units (*acidity is crisp; su retrogusto es largo*). However, we consider the latter a syntactic variation of the former, and have therefore not listed it as a separate unit above.

4) As indicated above, the number of phraseological units that include verbs is very limited, in part because of the nature and style of our corpus of wine tasting notes. When verbs are used, they are generally of the linking variety (*to be, ser*) or are very general (*to have; tener*). For instance, sentences such as the following are very common:

**MOUTHFEEL** *is* *luxurious and silky with firm tannins.*

*La entrada en boca es aterciaopelada.*

**THE FINISH HAS** *a lovely texture and exceptional balance.*

*En boca tenemos un TANINO amable*

Given that *to be/ser* and *to have/tener* can be used with most nouns, if not all, they are not really considered specific collocates of our key words. However, we were able to identify a few examples of V + N or N + V phraseological units, such as the following:

(Acidity/flavors) linger(s) on the finish (15)

(Tannins) provide (for) a X finish (7)

The finish shows (X notes)

(El vino) presenta buena acidez

El final de boca resulta (calido)

5) Phraseological units involving verbs are generally longer units since they often involve not only the verb and the key word (noun) in the V + N or N + V pattern, but also include other element(s) required to complete the structure. Thus, the basic V + N phrase *linger on the finish* is completed by either *acidity* or *flavors* as the agent. And the same is true of *presenta buena acidez*, which requires an agent such as *el vino* or *los taninos*. In fact, the basic N + V unit *The finish shows* would make no sense without the following noun phrase (X

notes), and the same applies to *El final de boca resulta* without *de calidad*. It should be noted that even when there are noun and verb combinations that co-occur with some frequency, the verbs generally remain fairly general, which makes the addition of other elements essential to make the unit meaningful.

6) In addition to adjective and noun combinations and verb and noun units, we identified some preposition + noun units. In English, we found a single phraseological unit: *on the finish*, which is found both on its own and in the larger phraseological unit *linger on the finish*, as the examples below show:

*Flavours of black cherry, blackberry begin the palate, with pepper and spices* **ON THE FINISH**.  
*Refreshing notes of lemon, lime and pink grapefruit* **LINGER ON THE FINISH**.

In Spanish, on the other hand, a number of such units were found: *Con retrogusto, tanino en boca, final de boca*:

*Su gusto es redondo y carameloso* **CON RETROGUSTO** *sutil*.

7) The smaller phraseological units are often combined to make larger units as in the following examples:

*Broad on the palate, this mouth-filling wine has a lush and velvety texture with toasty* **FLAVORS** *and a touch of oak that concludes with a long, silky finish*.  
*Importantes sensaciones frutales entre toques de madera limpia* **CON FINAL LARGO Y PERSISTENTE**.

Thus, one can find *a long finish* and *a silky finish* by themselves. But the two collocates (*long* and *silky*) can be and are occasionally used together with the key word (*finish*), although *a long, silky finish* may not occur frequently enough in the corpus for it to be considered a separate phraseological unit. The same can be said about *final largo y persistente*, which combines the phraseological units *final largo* and *final persistente*.

8) Whatever the size or the form of the phraseological units identified in our corpus, very few of them are extremely restricted semantically. In other words, the meaning of most of the phraseological units is simply made up of the sum of the meanings of their parts. Our phraseological units in both English and Spanish are semantically transparent, rather than opaque, for the most part. Let us analyze a single example, that of *long finish*.

Both the key word *finish* and its collocate *long* have a specialized sense in the language of wine. **finish** — the impression of textures and flavors lingering in the mouth after swallowing wine (<http://www.vinology.com/wine-terms/>)

**Long:** A very desirable trait in any fine wine is that it be long in the mouth. Long (or length) relates to a wine's finish, meaning that after you swallow the wine, you sense its presence for a long time. (Thirty seconds to several minutes is great length.) In a young wine, the difference between something good and something great is the length of the wine (<https://www.erobertparker.com/info/glossary.asp>).

The phraseological unit *long finish* basically combines these two specialized senses to make up the following sense: the impression of textures and flavors lingering in the mouth for a long time after swallowing wine. The one phraseological unit that constitutes an exception to semantic transparency is the Spanish *final de boca*, where the combination has become semantically and syntactically fixed to designate the concept covered by *finish* in English. In other words, *final de boca* would be considered a compound if we were to analyze our phraseological units using the traditional approach.

9) A typical feature of our two-word phraseological units in English is that the collocate for a given key word is also used as a collocate for another key word. In other words, the same collocate enters into two or more phraseological units. This tendency, although present in the Spanish corpus, is less dominant since just one example was found in our corpus. Presented below is a list of collocates that combine with more than one key word and the key words they collocate with.

*Crisp* – *finish/acidity*  
*Dry* – *finish/tannins*  
*Fine* – *tannins/acidity*  
*Juicy* – *flavors/tannins/acidity*  
*Mineral* – *tannins/acidity*  
*Rich* – *finish/acidity*  
*Round* – *mouthfeel/tannins*  
*Silky* – *finish/tannins*  
*Smooth* – *finish/mouthfeel/tannins*  
*Soft* – *tannins/acidity*  
*Largo* – *final/retrogusto/postgusto*

The first question that arises is whether these collocates have two or more different specialized senses that allow them to combine with different key words covering different concepts. The following analysis of a limited number of English collocates and phraseological units explore this question; the collocates analyzed are the following: *crisp*, *mineral* and *fine*.<sup>5</sup>

Let us begin with *crisp*, which collocates with *finish* and *acidity*. *Crisp* has a specialized sense in wine language: “Describes a wine with moderately high acidity; refreshing and bright with a clean finish.” (<http://www.winespectator.com/glossary>) While it can be used to describe a wine as a whole, it can also be applied to acidity (*crisp acidity* = moderately high acidity), and to finish (*crisp finish* = a refreshing taste in the mouth at the end due to the *crisp acidity*). The specialized sense of *crisp* does not change depending on the word it collocates with. At best, we can claim that the specialized sense of *crisp* manifested in *crisp acidity* is extended to some extent in *crisp finish*.

Next, let’s analyze the collocate *mineral* as it appears in *mineral tannins* and *mineral acidity*. The descriptor *mineral* has become a buzzword in wine language, which is overused and poorly understood, as Teague (2013) claims. Her conclusion is that *mineral* applies to wines that are “fresh and lively with lots of acidity”. Others, who believe minerality is a direct outcome of winemaking, and point to high levels of acidity, go deeper into this question and suggest that wines that have been through malolactic partially (not completely) – where the ‘appley’ malic acid is converted to the ‘milky’ lactic acid – have much much more mineral textural potential, because of the complexity of the acid profile (Evans 2014). From the above, we can conclude that *mineral acidity* implies lots of acidity and complex acidity. But what about *mineral tannins*? Here the term *mineral* seems to be related to *earthy*, (earth covers dirt and minerals) which is a wine tasting term, which means just what it sounds like, a slight taste of soil, and to the notion of terroir, fundamental to the wine industries of old world countries such as France, Italy and Germany, whereby a wine from a particular patch of ground expresses characteristics related to the physical environment in which the grapes are grown. Tannins are the phenolic compounds in wines, which are extracted from the grape skins and stems during the wine-making process. The grapes are affected by the type of soil in which they are grown. Hence, *mineral tannins* seem to mean tannins in grapes that come from soil characterized by minerality. Here, the collocate *mineral* seems to have taken on the additional meaning of “earthy”. But, given the loose use of the word *mineral* in the world of wine, it is difficult to be sure of this.

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<sup>5</sup> Definitions or comments on the meaning of collocates are found in Appendix 1.

Finally, let us consider the phraseological units *fine tannins* and *fine acidity*. Although *fine* is often used as a wine descriptor, it is a vague term that is never clearly defined in wine dictionaries. *Finesse* seems to be a term expressing admiration, as in general language. When used in the context of wine, one wine writer suspects that *finesse* “is most used to express admiration for the balance of a very fine wine, when the amount of fruit, acidity and tannins are harmonious enough to keep any one from standing out.” (<http://www.wineeducation.com/glosf.html>). Thus, *fine tannins* merely seems to mean the right amount of tannins, and *fine acidity* the right amount of acidity.

Our analysis of three sets of phraseological units, with the same collocate used in each set, leads us to the following observations:

- The same collocate can be used with different wine key words with either no change in meaning (e.g. *fine*) or a slight extension of meaning (e.g. *crisp*) or with a different meaning (e.g. *mineral*).
- The meaning of the collocate is influenced in many cases by the key word. In more concrete terms, the key words *acidity* or *finish* with which *crisp* is used determine the precise meaning of *crisp*.
- However, the integration of many general language descriptors into wine language have led to loose and vague use of some of these words (e.g. *fine*, *juicy*) both within and outside of phraseological units.

## 6. Conclusion

Our study of phraseological units in a bilingual corpus of wine tasting notes in English and Spanish has shown that the language of wine contains a fairly large number of such units: 77 phraseological units involving seven key words in English, and 33 phraseological units involving six key words in Spanish. There seem to be more recurring combinations (i.e. phraseological units) in English than in Spanish, with an average of 11 units per key word in English, as opposed to an average of 5.5 units per key word in Spanish. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that there is a greater use of synonyms in Spanish style than in English, which would result in fewer occurrences in Spanish of the same collocate with a given key word.

The majority of these units, both in English and in Spanish, consist of the key word and a descriptor in the form of an adjective or noun used adjectivally. As previously indicated, this finding can be readily explained by the fact that wine tasting notes, which comprise our corpus, are intended to describe wines and the obvious way to do so is by adding descriptors to the key words for different aspects of wine. The relative lack of phraseological units involving verbs in our corpus can be explained by a writing style that is commonly used for tasting notes: the use of irregular sentences, and especially verbless sentences.

Almost none of the phraseological units identified both in English and in Spanish are fixed syntactically or semantically. The only exception is *final de boca* in Spanish, which is syntactically fixed and has lost its semantic transparency. All the other units are semantically transparent, with both the collocate and the key word retaining an individual meaning and the meaning of the units being the sum of the meanings of their parts. However, while in some cases the meaning of the collocate may seem totally uninfluenced by the key word, in many cases the use of the collocate with a given key word may extend its meaning or even give it a new meaning. Given that these collocates are often descriptors taken from general language and used in a specialized language, they may take on a specialized meaning when used in combination with a key term of the specialized language. Much has been said about the vagueness of some of these descriptors and the fact that they are often not included in wine dictionaries, or, when they are, are poorly defined. To better identify the sense of wine descriptors, lexicographers and terminologists working in the wine domain need to examine phraseological units in which they are found.

Our findings are based on a given genre in the field of oenology: wine tasting notes. It would be interesting to see if they hold true if another genre, that of wine tasting technical sheets for example, were analyzed. That is a study we intend to undertake in the future.

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