

# VEGETABLES IN IDIOMATIC REALMS: A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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## Abstract

This study explores the use of vegetables in idiomatic expressions across four languages—English, French, Italian, and Romanian—employing a contrastive approach to highlight both similarities and divergences. Idiomatic expressions involving vegetables provide a rich field for examining how cultural contexts shape language and meaning. By analyzing idioms from each of these languages, the research reveals how vegetables symbolize various cultural values, social norms, and emotional states.

In English, idioms such as "cool as a cucumber" illustrate how vegetables can convey composure and status. Similarly, French idioms like "*tomber dans les pommes*" (to fall into the apples, meaning to faint) and "*être dans le pétrin*" (to be in the kneading trough, meaning to be in trouble) reflect a blend of humor and traditional imagery. Italian expressions, such as "*essere un cetriolo*" (to be a cucumber, meaning to be calm), further demonstrate the role of vegetables in conveying personal traits and social actions. Romanian idioms, including "*a fi în pom*" (meaning to be in a difficult situation) and "*a se face roșu ca un ardei iute*" (to turn red as a hot pepper, meaning to blush), offer insights into how vegetables are used metaphorically to express emotional states and social interactions.

This contrastive analysis highlights how idiomatic expressions involving vegetables are deeply rooted in cultural practices and perceptions. The study underscores the importance of understanding these idiomatic nuances for more effective cross-cultural communication and translation. By examining the metaphorical use of vegetables across languages, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how language reflects and shapes cultural attitudes and practices.

**Key words:** idiomatic expressions, contrastive linguistics, vegetables, cross-cultural analysis, English, French, Italian, Romanian