



Figurative Language and Idiom Motivation

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Abstract

Traditionally, figurative language is considered more complex and derived from literal language. It enriches communication by serving as metaphorical underpinnings that evoke vivid imagery and heighten emotional impact. Since figurative language introduces novelty and creativity, contrasting with conventional literal usage it grounds language with vibrancy and adds decorative nuances, thereby depicting language with the brightest shades.

Theoretically and practically, the meaning of an idiom does not rely solely on the literal definitions of its constituent words but depends on the overall figurative context. As a literary device, idioms are utilized to incorporate figurativeness into language and speech. They add flair and reflect the complexity and ingenuity of human expression and communication. To accurately analyse idioms, a specialized theory is needed one that describes the irregularities of conventional figurative units, including lexicalized figurative expressions.

A detailed analysis of metaphorical and metonymic transfers in 444 Albanian and English idiomatic expressions related to body parts will help us understand how these phrases are generated and to what extent their semantic and pragmatic values can be uncovered. This paper aims to describe and compare a set of related idiomatic expressions across these two languages within the framework of figurative language and linguistic tropes, emphasizing how such devices contribute to the interpretation and motivation of idiomatic expressions. This exploration underlines the importance of culturally resonant connections, guiding the transition from literal to figurative meaning.

Keywords: figurative language, idioms, semantic motivation, tropes, contrastive analysis

1. Introduction

Figurative language encompasses various linguistic expressions, such as metaphors, idioms, and proverbs, that shape our understanding of the world. It plays a central role in everyday discourse, linguistic evolution, and human thought across different domains. Traditionally, figurative language has been viewed as more complex and derived from literal language. It enriches communication by serving as metaphorical underpinnings that evoke vivid imagery and amplify emotional impact. Figurative language is inherently novel and creative often

non-conventional, engaging more intricate, multidimensional, and diverse means of linguistic expression.

As figurative language enhances novelty and creativity, it contrastively grounds vividness and adds ornamental nuances, illuminating language with brighter shades. Units within the figurative lexicon (conventional figurative units) differ from other language elements in two main ways, first, they are conventionalized, that is, they are part of the mental lexicon, as opposed to freely created figurative expressions. Second, they can operate on two conceptual levels: they are interpretable both literally and figuratively, with both meanings potentially activated simultaneously [Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2018: 14]

Gibbs emphasizes that “figurative language may, more generally, be special because of its ability to demonstrate, and not simply describe, speakers’ understanding of distal events and abstract ideas. These demonstrations are ‘figurative’ because they arise via embodied simulation processes in which listeners imagine themselves bodily enacting the actions referred to in figures of speech. What is ‘figurative’ about figurative language is the unique way in which different figures of speech concretely demonstrate what speakers mean by the words they utter” [Gibbs, 2023: 3]

Figurative language has been viewed as more sophisticated and derived from literal language, functioning as a means to add aesthetic richness and expressive nuance to speech and writing. It enables speakers and writers to communicate abstract concepts through vivid imagery, making ideas more memorable and emotionally resonant. Moreover, figurative language is inherently creative and often non-conventional, reflecting human ingenuity and cultural diversity. It engages multiple levels of interpretation, inviting listeners and readers to explore layered meanings, recognize cultural references, and appreciate the aesthetic beauty of language. As an evolving facet of language, figurative expressions contribute to linguistic innovation, cultural identity, and cognitive processes—shaping how individuals conceptualize and relate to their social and natural environments. Overall, figurative language enriches human communication by transforming simple words into multi-dimensional artistic expressions that evoke imagination and foster cultural understanding.

Moreover, different cultures interpret life experiences uniquely, delineating distinct values and assigning new significance to realia. Cultural conceptualizations of human perceptions influence metaphors that are culture-specific, leading to diverse perspectives in how individuals interpret and understand the world around them.

From a cognitive standpoint, metaphors and idioms function as mental tools that facilitate understanding by framing abstract or complex concepts in familiar, tangible imagery. This cognitive framing helps shape perceptions, influence reasoning, and encode shared cultural knowledge. Moreover, figurative expressions are constantly evolving, adapting to new contexts brought about by technological innovations, globalization, and intercultural exchanges, which further enrich their expressive potential. They also cross disciplinary boundaries, appearing in visual arts, music, advertising, and digital communication, thereby amplifying their societal influence. In educational settings, figurative language enhances learning by making difficult ideas more relatable and memorable, while in rhetoric, it plays a vital role in persuasion and emotional appeal. However, because figurative expressions often rely on cultural references and shared knowledge, they can also pose challenges, leading to misunderstandings across different cultural contexts. Overall, figurative language is a dynamic and creative aspect of human discourse that deepens communication, reflects cultural values, and influences how individuals perceive and interpret their world.

Research questions

- How do specific metaphors and metonymies, related to parts of the body manifest differently or similarly in Albanian and English idioms?
- How do metaphorical and metonymic transfers operate within these idioms, and what does their usage reveal about cultural perceptions of the body?
- What are the cross-linguistic and intercultural differences observed in idioms associated with the same body parts, such as mouth, hand, eye, leg/foot, and head?
- How does semantic motivation contribute to the understanding and interpretation of body-part idioms across Albanian and English?

Methodology

Corpus Selection and Data Collection

- The study analyzes idiomatic expressions related to specific body parts (mouth, hand, eye, leg/foot, head) from two linguistic sources: Albanian and English.
- The idioms are collected from reputable dictionaries, such as the Albanian Dictionary of Idioms, Chambers Dictionary of Idioms, and other relevant idiomatic references providing reliable and well-established sources

Criteria for selection

- The idioms selected are widely used in everyday language and are recognized as natural parts of national speech communities.
- As they appear frequently in spoken and written corpora, dictionaries, their significance in language use is ensured. Preference was given to idioms that exhibit some level of semantic motivation.
- The idioms directly relate to specific body parts (mouth, hand, eye, leg/foot, head), which are common loci for metaphorical extension in both cultures, facilitating cross-linguistic comparison.
- The units were chosen to allow comparison between Albanian and English expressions that either share similar imagery or have culturally unique connotations related to the same body parts.
- Idioms that actively incorporate metaphorical and metonymic transfers were selected, enabling detailed analysis of how these rhetorical devices operate within different cultural contexts and languages.

Qualitative analysis:

- Examine each idiom's structure, meaning, and cultural references.
- Identify and categorize the types of metaphorical and metonymic transfers involved

Quantitative analysis

- Assess usage frequencies based on corpus data to determine the idioms' prominence in everyday language.
- Measure the degree of semantic transparency through the structural analysis of the selected idioms

1.1 Metaphor

“The essence of metaphors is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” [Lakoff& Johnson, 1980: 5]

Metaphor is a conventional way of conceptualizing the world, and our everyday behaviour reflects our indirect, transferred way of understanding of experience. Metaphors bridge the intersection between language and thought, shaping our perceptions and interactions with the world. Metaphor (where one entity is described in terms of another, unrelated entity) is an inherently ambiguous trope, as it allows spaces for multiple meanings to exist: the most literal meaning in a physical sense, and the conveyed or comparative meaning.

Metaphoricality is widespread in the lexicon and is one of the chief motivating forces which underlies the development of polysemy. Metaphorical expressions were assumed to be mutually exclusive with the realm of ordinary everyday language: everyday language had no metaphor, and metaphor used mechanisms outside the realm of everyday conventional language. [Lakoff, 1991: 2]

Lakoff and Johnson clearly emphasise the point that “Primarily, on the basis of linguistic evidence, we have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. and we have found a way to begin to identify in detail what the metaphor are that structure how we perceive, how we think and what we do. [Lakoff& Johnson, 1980: 4]

According to CMT (conceptual metaphor theory), the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another, and metaphor is defined as a unidirectional mapping between two conceptual domains, a source, and a target domain. Metaphor, therefore, is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but refers to the pattern of conceptual association underlying linguistic expressions [Yo, 2020: 5]. Moon supports the point that “Exaggeration and manipulation of reality are key features of metaphorical expressions” [Moon, 1998 :193]. According to Lakoff’s perspective “The most basic concepts in our conceptual systems are also comprehended normally via metaphor-concepts” [Lakoff, 1991: 9]

Lakoff and Johnson state that “Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish-a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” [Lakoff& Johnson, 1980: 3]

1.2. Metonymy

In the classical theory, metonymy is often defined as a figure of speech which operates on names of things. Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model. In other words, as generally stated, metonymy operates on names of things, involves the substitution of the name of one thing for that of another thing and assumes that the two things are somehow associated.

The traditional view defines metonymy as a relationship involving substitution. This view is reflected in the notation generally used for stating metonymic relationships, namely X STANDS FOR Y. Metonymy does, however, not simply substitute one entity for another

entity, but interrelates them to form a new, complex meaning. Metonymic relationships should therefore more adequately be represented by using an additive notation such as X PLUS Y [Radden & Kövecses, 2007:5]

Historically, metonymy is regarded as a pervasive cognitive phenomenon with a significant impact on language use and structure. It is generally accepted as a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, resulting in a form of figurative language that relies on the use of a related term to represent a concept. Metonymies operate within a single semantic domain. In broad terms, while metaphor involves a mapping between two different domains, metonymy represents a mapping between two elements within the same domain.

From a broad perspective, metonymy has the effect of creating concrete and vivid images in place of generalities. Thus, it seems that what is said is likely cognitively or semantically closer to what is meant in a metonymy than in a metaphor. This implies that there is a systematic difference in how literal metonymies are in comparison to metaphors. [Michl, 2019: 100].

Gryn emphasises the point that “Metonymy is the linguistic result of the cognitive ability to represent the broader complex concept (the whole) by referring to a sub-concept (the part). This is argued to explain entrenched or “conventionalised” linguistic structures, referred to as ‘conceptual metonymy’, but it is also perhaps a cognitive process and linguistic structure that one employs in creative metonymy” [Gryn, 2006: 3]

1.3. Metaphor vs. Metonymy

Metaphor and metonymy are perceived as distinct linguistic devices. Broadly speaking, while metaphor involves a mapping between two different domains, drawing similarities between two concepts, metonymy involves a mapping within a single domain, typically based on a part-to-whole or whole-to-part relationship. Despite their conceptual differences, both metaphor and metonymy frequently occur in idioms, which are predominantly non-literal, fixed expressions. They both enhance figurativeness by deviating from literal statements or conventional usage. As non-literal devices falling under the umbrella of figurative language, they create associative relations: metaphor links two different concepts through similarity, whereas metonymy relies on contiguity or proximity within a single conceptual domain. The striking distinctions and similarities between these two figures of speech highlight their roles as powerful tools in language, serving different creative and rhetorical functions. They provoke specific conceptual interpretations and evoke distinguishable feelings and emotions.

Antonio Barcelona namely hypothesizes that “every metaphorical mapping presupposes a conceptually prior metonymic mapping, or to put it differently, that the seeds for any metaphorical transfer are to be found in a metonymic projection” [Barcelona, 2002:31]

Literal, metonymic, and metaphorical senses are viewed as forming a continuum. Giving insight to the degree of figurative transference embedment the line between metaphorical and metonymic transference, seems to be somehow blurred and indetermined.

As Cserep emphasises, “The metaphor-metonymy boundary is likewise fuzzy. Some metaphors seem not to be related to metonymy, since the two domains that are mapped are too distinct to suggest a metonymic origin. [Cserep, 2009 : 3]

1.2 Idioms

Idioms are traditionally described as multi-word constructions, usually semantically opaque and in most of the cases figuratively transferred. The fussy nature of idiomaticity is usually emphasized in many traditional scientific research works.

In the main literature on the topic, different scholars have given idioms different definitions. Yet, they all agree that what is essential to an idiom is that its meaning cannot be deduced from its constituent parts. Healey (1968: 71 as cited in Halawachy 2013: 4) defines an idiom as “any group of words whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words”.

Idioms are also said to be “groups of words with set meaning that cannot be calculated by adding up the separate meaning of the parts” (Bolinger, 1975: 100)

Research in language acquisition suggests that language is learned, stored, and retrieved and produced in holophrases and other multi-word items, not just as individual words, and terms. [Moon, 1998 : 30]

Each language manages to express a unique world view by the way it slices up reality into its own language. Idiomaticity is a universal linguistic phenomenon in natural languages. Phraseology is a kind of picture gallery in which are collected vivid and amusing sketches of nation’s customs, traditions, and prejudices [Antrushina, 2004 : 73].

The study of idioms has been generally considered problematic and controversial for many linguists. Langlotz argues that “idioms are peculiar linguistic constructions that have raised many eyebrows in linguistics and often confuse newcomers to a language” [Langlotz, 2006:1]

Whereas Cermak states that “In idioms, nothing is what it seems to be: words are not words, they do not have the familiar meaning one knows from dictionaries, while, perhaps, the worst anomaly of there is to be found in their specific and unpredictable function, especially a pragmatic one” [Cermak, 2017: 8] Idioms are traditionally described as multi-word constructions, usually semantically opaque and in most of the cases figuratively transferred.

Idioms are traditionally described as multi-word constructions, usually semantically opaque and in most of the cases figuratively transferred. The fussy nature of idiomaticity is usually emphasized in many traditional scientific research works. Idioms typical properties are conventionality (non-compositionality), inflexibility, figuration, proverbiality, informality, and affect. Since the acquisition, representation, and processing of idiomatic constructions are shaped by usage, a usage-based perspective underlines the idea that different features such as syntactic idiosyncrasy, variability, semantic irregularity, lexical specification, and cognitive entrenchment prevail at all levels of constructions. [Wilinski, 2022: 118]

2. The problem of inner form and idiom motivation

2.1 The concept of inner form

One of the main questions in the field of phraseology is to what way the **inner form** of an idiom unveils the underlying meaning or conceptual imagery thus contributing to its overall figurative significance and to what extend the image component of an idiom fixed in its inner form reaches into its lexicalized meaning.

The concept of inner form in linguistics is historically approached by many eminent scholars. Following Potebnja perspective, the concept of the inner form can be surveyed not solely in separate lexical items, but also in phrases characterized by semantic stability and unity as the set phrases or phraseological units represent. Potebnja speaks of the inner form of a word and defines it as the ratio of the content of thought to consciousness. The inner form shows the way in which people reflect their thoughts. He connected the inner form of the word both with its etymology and with the psychological side of its motivation [Dobrovol'skij, 2016: 22].

In terms of idioms Potebnja points out that “what is characteristic of phraseological units is the fact that in most of the occurrences the literal, core meaning of these entities (summarized meaning of the componential parts) is what may be regarded as the inner form of the phraseological units [Rojzenzon L.I, 1965: 63]

As it has been generally accepted “the inner form of the phraseological unit is being defined as the relation established between the phraseological meaning of the unit and the mere senses of the components it has been composed of”.

Whereas as Dobrovol'skij emphasises “In terms of present-day linguistics, the inner form of a lexical unit (word or idiom) can be defined as a kind of semantic paradigmatic relations between the target lexeme and the meanings associated with its constituent parts and/ or the underlying mental image” [Dobrovol'skij, 2016: 23]

2.2 The concept of idioms' semantic motivation

The investigation of the concept of motivation has a long tradition in lexicological scientific research. Though the criterion of motivation has been criticized especially because it has been regarded as a subjective, not that clearly verified criterion. Nevertheless, as Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen point out “Seen from the cognitive viewpoint, however, this criterion is a relevant parameter because the motivation of an idiom influences its cognitive processing. People are often unable to distinguish between the literal and the figurative meaning of an idiom. This means that the literal sense is often mentally present for speakers, even if they use an idiom only in its figurative meaning. [Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2005: 6]

In most cases, idioms can be semantically motivated, meaning they are associated with identifiable logical connections or transparent interlinguistic relations. These aspects can help us understand the reflection of shared conceptual grounds across languages. One of the most striking features of these conventional figurative units is that they cannot be fully interpreted without considering their deep cultural context. Extralinguistic factors, such as cultural, social, and historical influences must be taken into account to understand their semantic and pragmatic features, as well as the ways in which they function within communication.

Since idioms are linguistic abnormalities, they cannot be fully understood only by metalinguistic instruments. Wierzbicka emphasizes the idea that a specific theory to describe the abnormalities of idioms is needed as they register and store necessary information and knowledge as part of the content (such as imaginary marks and reflections) demonstrating in this way respective cultural traits [Wierzbicka, 1999 : 28]

The issue of motivation is one of the most debated topics in modern linguistics. Vinogradov's classification of the degree of motivation is based on several criteria, such as stability, inseparability, and the nature of the relationship between the overall (or complete) meaning—often equated with a single word—and the meanings of its compositional parts. As Vinogradov stated, “the meaning of idioms is a special chemical mixture of the meaning of

all components” (Vinogradov, 1977: 120). These units are typically referred to as “idioms” because, in such cases, the internal form of the structure is entirely lost, and their investigation requires a specific etymological analysis. According to the classic perspective, these units cannot be semantically disintegrated due to the absence of an internal semantic structure.

One of the most crucial issues semantically approached is the description and the explanation of the interrelation of the senses and different layers of the meanings. The stronger the relation, the more motivated the idioms. Dobrovolskij and Piirainen have singled out several types of semantic motivations, among which we could pick out the metaphorical motivation and the symbolically based motivation [Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Piirainen, E, 2005: 30]. What is more, if we could say that in the idiom “spill the beans” and not “spill the peas” no grammatical rule is applied, this idiom should absolutely be mechanically reproduced, no matter the fact that semantically this idiom can be analyzed. This means that idioms are ready-made fixed constructions, conventionally coined which should merely be memorized and reproduced. Yet, curiously enough, some structurally related restrictions can be traced. In most of the cases, these confines are determined by extralinguistic factors.

A phraseological symbol is a specific type of linguistic sign, grounded in the transparency of its inner form (the etymological sense). This inner form serves as an implementation of the denotational meaning and the figurative transference within the phraseological unit. The symbol of phraseological units is based on inner form symbols that represent the content abstracted from the figurative bases of the external meaning of the expression. A good example is the metaphorically motivated phraseological unit “the pink of health,” which means “to be in very good condition, either physically or emotionally”

The meaning of every individual linguistic sign is an interpretation of broader, more inclusive alternative signs, within which it can be further subdivided. There is no specific metalanguage used to prescribe the semantics of phraseology. Compared to other types of lexical units, majority of fixed expressions possess a vivid internal form, which, in turn, constitutes an important component of idiomatic meaning. Interpretations of the sense-relations within the internal form can be explicit or implicit. An explicit approach is based on meaning operators that, in semantic representations, demonstrate a comparison between two entities. Conversely, an implicit strategy suggests that there are no specialized operators functioning within the internal form, and that the appropriate semantic information is distributed among several components of the definition. The context plays a crucial role in determining the semantics of these expressions. The stability of a phraseological meaning is directly related to the stability of its semantic structure.

As stated by many modern schoolers, apart semantic and pragmatic characteristics, crucial cultural concepts should be also treated as indispensable means of interpreting extralinguistic instruments. Since idioms are anomalies of language, mavericks of the linguistic world they show some characteristics that are difficult to be explained in terms of language universals [Flavell L and R, 1997: 36]. In fact, the realm of scientific research should be extended beyond linguistic fields and methodology of study, because these figurative speech means of expression decode different types of knowledge and what is more, they record and store effective information in the form of traced images reflecting respective cultural and social backgrounds.

The motivation of idioms, that is to say “the exploration of the inner form can be achieved through the analysis of the way the free word groups can be transformed in set phrases (phraseological units). According to many scholars, this process appears to be

multidimensional and complicated.

Weirzbicka points out the idea that “emotional universals importance should be carefully investigated, and that the analysis of different languages would be in favor of approval that there is a universal tendency to express the emotions and feelings shaped based on a cognitive ability of the realia and the figurative images of the human being” [Weirzbicka, 1999: 23]

The most logical question arising at this point is: if the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from its superficial structure due to the incongruence between its external form and its internal meaning, then how can we effectively explore its meaning? A compelling approach involves examining examples related to the exploitation of the iconic model of fear/shock, as well as the metaphorical association of shame/shock/thrill—often accompanied by a color change. In different languages, such expressions are coined in various ways, reflecting these underlying conceptual models. For example,

Eng. “*to turn pale*”, Spa. “*empalidese*” Eng. “*to turn as white as sheet*”, Alb. “*tw zbardhesh si leter duhani*” Germ. “*blass warden*” SCB. “*probijediti*”

Eng. “*to turn white*”, Alb. “*tw zbardhesh nw fytyrw*”, Turk. “*bembeyaz almak samarmak*”

The same analysis can be extended even in the iconic model; body+ movement which elaborate metaphors related to physical movement

Eng “*to tremble with fear*”, “*my heart skipped a jump*”, Alb “*tw dridhesh nga frika*”, “*tw hidhet zemra pwrpjetw*”, Germ. “*von angst zittern*”, Span. “*temblar de miedo*”, “*me dio unvuelco el Corazon*”, SCB. “*drhati od straha*”, Turk. “*kalbim hop etti*”

In many cases, these perceptions are associated with increase of the physical temperature and in these cases the metaphorical transference indicates “body temperature increase” as in

Eng. “*my body run cold*,” Alb. “*me ngriu gjaku*” Span. “*la sangre se me helo*”, Germ. “*mir frierte das Blunt*“, Turk. *buz gibi oldum/buz kestim*.

Anger and rage are also linguistically embedded in idioms such as Eng *my blood boiled*, Alb. *me ngriu gjaku*, Span. *quemarsele la sangre*, Germ. *mir kocht das Blunt in den Adren*.

3. Figurative language and idiomaticity

The term “idiom” is mostly applied to phraseological units with completely transferred meanings, that is, to the ones in which the meaning of the whole unit does not correspond to the current meanings of the components. Above all, idioms are not only multiword units but also conventionalised and figurative lexical items. Because of their semantic specifics (their idiomaticity) idioms have much in common with other figurative units of the lexicon.

As theoretically and practically surveyed the meaning of an idiom does not rely on the literal independent definition of its words, but rather the figurative context of the whole unity. As a literary device, idioms are generally exploited a means of incorporating figurativeness in language and speech. Idioms add flair to the language. and reflect the complexity and ingenuity of human expression and communication. Therefore, it is not sufficient to describe idioms merely within the framework of phraseology. They can be better captured within a theory specially designed to describe the irregularities of conventional figurative units (including all lexicalised figurative units) [Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2018: 6]

According to the cognitive theory of metaphor, the role of phraseology as a field of study is subject to debate. A key issue highlighted in recent research is that majority of idioms can be semantically motivated; therefore, they are not entirely arbitrary. This idea is supported by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 448), who argue that most idioms are motivated by underlying cognitive structures. Bali further elaborates on this concept, emphasizing that “idioms are not frozen linguistic elements, nor are they arbitrary. Instead, they can be fully motivated by different cognitive structures and levels” (Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Baranov, A. N., 1996, p. 47).

In conventional theory of idioms’ figurative language by Dobrovolski and Pirainen it is clearly stated that there is a specific conceptual structure comprised in the meaning of figurative units. The conceptual structure, as a figure of the image, is primary based in mental images becoming therefore an important figure in content plane. Idioms motivation does not necessarily imply underestimating the etymological description as an important compositional part. There are many examples demonstrating that “etymological memory of an idiom determines its function in speech” [Dobrovolskij, D.O. & Piirainen, E, 2005: 430]

Lakoff states that “Many of the metaphorical expressions discussed in the literature on conventional metaphor are idioms. On classical views, idioms have arbitrary meanings. But within cognitive linguistics, the possibility exists that they are not arbitrary, but rather motivated. That is, they do arise automatically by productive rules, but they fit one or more patterns present in the conceptual system” [Lakoff, 1991: 8]

3.1 Metaphor and metonymy as devices for understanding idiomatic expressions

Many idioms are decomposable, with constituent words carrying independent metaphorical or metonymic meanings [Cserep, 2009: 4]. The use of figurative language devices such as metaphor and metonymy provide crucial arguments supporting the analysis of language-specific differences in idiomatic expressions across languages like Albanian and English. Since the overall meaning of idioms is not solely dependent on their literal interpretation, their close ties to mental and cultural reflections are omnipresent.

Viewing idioms as historically embedded linguistic by-products, these two tropes metaphor and metonymy serve as pervasive explanatory tools in analysing and interpreting idioms from a broad perspective of authentic figurative language incorporation.

When examining the idiomatic corpora of Albanian and English, it becomes evident that both metaphor and metonymy amplify idiomaticity and emotional resonance. They often expand lexical meaning from concrete and literal to abstract and transferred, thereby evoking vivid imagery and figurativeness.

A detailed analysis of metaphorical and metonymic transfers within idiomatic expressions can help us understand how these phrases operate and the extent to which their semantic and pragmatic features can be uncovered. This approach aligns with the necessity to explore the culturally resonant bonds that guide the transition from literal to figurative meaning.

The corpus under investigation focuses on commonly used Albanian and English idioms associated with parts of the body, specifically: mouth (goje), hand (dorë), eye (sy), leg/foot (këmbë), and head (koke). The phraseological material is drawn from idiomatic dictionaries, including the Albanian Dictionary of Idioms, Chambers Dictionary of Idioms (1996), Dictionary of Idioms and Their Origins (1992), and How to Use Idioms (1998)

3.2. Albanian metaphorical and metonymical idioms with the words “mouth, hand, eye, leg, hand”

Among the 235 examples of Albanian idiomatic expressions we can survey that 108 are based on metonymy and 127 on metaphor.

Gojë (mouth)

Metonymy (20 units)

me zihet në gojë (to me mentioned by somebody; *i erdhi goja* (start talking, reveal everything someone knows, tell the truth), *ia hap gojën* (he started talking, he said something; he told what he knew), *i thau gojën* (He didn't give him anything to eat, he didn't eat for a long time), *i shkau goja* (unintentionally say something should not have been said, saved by a word that shouldn't have been said), *e mbaj në gojë* (constantly mentioning and remembering him/her for good, speaking very well of him/her; praising him/her a lot), *iu pre goja* (stuck, stunned by fear, surprise, a powerful feeling), *e prishi gojën* (talk back and forth, use harsh or vulgar words; spoil someone's pleasure with words, speak against a wish or a request), *s'ma nxe goja* (I don't want to say something, I can't say it, I don't feel like saying it because of something bad or shameful), *e preu gojën* (being in agony, dying and unable to speak), *i merret goja* (stuttering; barely speaking and pronouncing words well), *e merr/mban nëpër gojë* (speaks too much about someone or something, gossips about it, slanders it), *iu hap goja* (dare saying or ask for something), *nuk e heq nga goja* (speaking a lot about him, mentioning him/her, showing love and respect, praising him/her a lot; never forgetting to mention him), *gojë e liga* (those who speak badly about someone or something or engage in gossip; ill-wishers), *e rrudhi gojën* (he pursed his mouth), *ka gojë* (talking nonsense, using harsh, offensive words, etc.; being foul-mouthed), *i mbeti goja* (not being able to speak), *u bë goja e botës* (embarrassed, being mocked and ridiculed by everybody), *me plot gojën* (with all your heart, convinced, being fully aware, certain, without any doubt), *e leshoi gojën* (started talking suddenly and unthoughtfully)

Metaphor (20 units)

me gojë të lan e me dhëmbë të çan (someone who pretends to be good, a hypocrite), *mbeta me gojë thatë* (I haven't been able to eat anything, I haven't eaten anything; I don't even have anything to eat), *mbes pa gojë* (I cannot speak a word out of wonder, out of joy, out of happiness, etc., I don't know what to say, amazed, stunned, frozen), *është (i zoti) i gojës* (knows how to speak well, defend oneself or convince others; fluent), *hap gojën e shikon qiellin* (lazy man, expecting everything to be ready for others, not moving himself), *ta merr kafshatën nga goja* (very agile and doing something quickly without being able to defend oneself, not being able to catch someone or escape from them), *e ka marrë këmbën në gojë* (severely injured, no chance to recover), *në gojë të ujkut* (before a great risk; in very dangerous circumstances in the middle of the fierce enemies. in a serious condition), *me gojë mbyllur* (Not speaking, not saying a word, shut-mouthed, mouthful; silent), *flet me pesë gojë* (He is a great talker, he never stops talking), *ra në gojë të dikujt* (someone speaks badly of him, slanders him), *u bë goja e botës* (being ashamed, being mocked), *është i zoti i gojës* (He is able to defend himself or to convince others. He is fluent in speech), *më vajti (më shkoi) goja* (be repetitive, talk while nobody listens to you), *hanë në gojë të njëri-tjetrit* (they are very close, they share everything with one another), *e lëshon gojën si në urov* (speaks without thinking, speaks as if it will benefit him), *e ka gojën çorap* (talkative), *laje (pastroje) gojën* (look at yourself before you speak about someone, you are not even worthy of mentioning their name, you have no moral right to speak about them), *i do dardhat në gojë* (he is lazy, he does not do any work)

dorë (hand)**Metonymy (18 units)**

e mbaj nëpër duar (I elaborate it at length, I work on it until it is perfect), **ngre (çon) dorë** (hits someone, shoots them, beats them; attacks or rapes them, starts a fight against someone), **e ka prishur dorën** (He no longer works with the same skill he used to, he no longer does work with as good quality as before), **e shtiu (e vuri) në dorë** (He became the owner of something, he became its master, it is finally his; he took it, he appropriated it; he conquered it), **s'më bën dora** (I feel sad or regret doing something, touching it, taking it, etc.; I don't feel like doing something), **ve dorë** (intervene to put something in order, help to improve a situation, etc.; act on someone or something to fix it, to prevent it from getting worse), **e mbaj nëpër dorë** (I elaborate it at length, I work on it until it is perfect), **më ra në dorë** (something found by chance, I just wanted to have it or see it), **i lidh duart** (prevent from doing something, stop someone doing something), **mu lidhën duart** (I was left without a job because someone or something was stopping me; I can't do anything, I can't act freely), **luaj duart** (perform, act, do something), **i ka lyer (i ka përlyer) duart**, **mbaj dorën** (I stop acting, I interrupt something that has begun; I restrain myself from hitting someone or doing another wrong thing), **ndërroi dorë** (It became the property of another; it was alienated, it belongs to someone else), **marr në dorë** (become the master of a task or issue and pursue it seriously until I complete or resolve it), **nuk ka gjë në dorë** (it is not up to him to decide anything, he has neither the power nor the authority to do anything), **e ka në dorë** (It's entirely up to him to solve it), **ka dorë** (He has a habit of beating others, he has a habit of hitting, hitting), **laj duart** (I don't have it anymore, I'm left without it, I lost it, I have no hope for it anymore), **i marr dorën** (I ask someone if I can get permission for something)

Metaphor (20 units)

me dorë në zemër (with justice, without partiality; with good will), **i ka duart e arta** (very capable), **dora e djathhtë** (a close person standing by someone), **dorë e hekurt** (a very powerful or influential person, who sets strict rules and demands strong discipline, who makes no concessions), **me dorë të lëshuar** (spending too much and excessively, being intemperate in spending, spoiling too much), **dora e zezë** (bad people, murderers), **mw fluturoi nga duart** (I do not have it anymore, something I needed was gone, it saved me), **mw hanw duart** (I want to work, I do not mind being unemployed, I'm used to working), **i ka duart e thata** (could not control oneself, not knowing what to do), **e jep me dorë dhe e merr me këmbë** (gives something generously and takes it back with great difficulty, said of someone who is ungrateful and does not return the loan or thing you gave them), **i rri dorë në zemër** (take great care of someone; fulfil their every wish or request without any objection, serve them well; take care not to spoil their mood), **është dorë akrepi** (he is very agile and dangerous), **rri me duar lidhur** (do not work; do not act, don't interfere when necessary), **i dorës së dytë** (lower in value, importance, quality, interest etc.), **ka dorë të lirë** (nothing and no one hinders him, he is free to act according to his own desire to do something, he can act as he pleases), **e bëri gropën me dorën e vet** (he did harm to himself, he suffered from it), **ka rënë në dorë të liga** (it is in the hands of evil people, who teach it or educate it crookedly,

depending on the desires and intentions of other evil people), *ia dha këpucët (opingat) në dorë* (drove him out (usually from the house); expelled (an undesirable person), *ta lë shpirtin në dorë* (he is very weak in body and helpless), *e ka doren e shpuar* (spend a lot, waste money)

Sy (eye)

Metonymy (29 units)

e ha me sy (he looks at it intently or with great attention because he desires it very much; he covets it), *i hap sytë* (I begin to see things as they really are, I begin to understand them correctly), *si trembet syri* (he is very brave, courageous), *sytë e ballit* (somebody/something really precious), *të del syri* (you like it very much, because it is very beautiful, you are amazed by its beauty; you like it very much), *nuk dua t'ia shoh sytë* (I'm angry with someone and I don't want them to get in my way; I hate them; I despise them), *e ve festen mbi sy* (relaxed and unbothered as nothing worries him/her), *zbardhi sytw* (suddenly appeared), *ia vuri syrin* (started noticing, became interested in something/somebody), *më therin sytë* (become angry every time I notice someone, become furious), *m'u tha syri* (I desperately miss somebody), *nuk sheh dy sy njeriu* (nobody is around, nothing to be seen), *ia ngul sytë* (stare, observe), *nuk ia ndaj (nuk ia shqit) sytë* (cannot stop looking at somebody), *mbyll syte* (relax), *m'u mbush syri* (I got tired of sleeping after a long period), *me mbiu ne sy* (it annoys me watching at him/her, I avoid coming someone across), *e mat me sy* (I guess, I estimate approximately), *ta merr prej syrit* (he is very clever, he immediately starts understanding), *lë sytë* (I am very surprised by the beauty of someone or something, I want to see it constantly, it attracts me and makes me want it, I admire it), *kullot syte* (look around with no stated intention), *m'u errën sytë* (I lost my sanity for a moment, I lost my mind and self-control from greed, from anger), *nuk ia hedh sytë* (avoids looking at someone), *ma bën me sy* (give me a sign with your eyes about something), *më ra në sy* (I noticed it, I saw it, I dictated it), *më ranë sytë* (I got tired of looking for someone or something for a long time; I have been longing for it for a long time), *s'më hyn në sy* (It seems worthless and unimportant to me; there is nothing I appreciate or like)

Metaphor (31 units)

më mbetën sytë (cannot help watching at him/her), *me sy mbyllur* (blindly, without thinking or caring), *s'më punojnë sytë* (cannot see clearly), *ma zunë sytë* (notice someone, spot him / her), *të vret sytë* (cannot bear looking at because of being ugly, misplaced or something like that), *m'u veshën sytë* (cannot see clearly or transparently), *m'u thanë (më shterën, më shteruan) sytë* (I have cried a lot out of great sadness or longing for someone; I have suffered so much for someone that I am numb), *ktëj sytë nga dielli* (he pins his hopes on an unknown direction, no longer expecting help from his own people or from concrete circumstances; he waits and hopes), *shih me sy e plas me zemër* (I really want someone or something, but I can't have it, I suffer because I don't have it), *e sheh me syrin e njerks* (is unfair or does not care about someone or something, treats them badly, is different from others, does not love them), *e sheh me sytë e bufit* (he doesn't see it at all; he ignores it, pretending to be busy with something), *c'i sheh syri ia bën dora* (he very skillful, capable of performing many duties), *i shkel (i luaj) syrin* (poking someone, teasing him or her), *e dua, (e ruaj) si sytë e ballit* (love someone immensely, deeply), *shih me sy e qaj me zemër* (I don't show others my sadness, I look happy, but in reality I suffer; I hide my pain from others), *me sy të shuar* (lifeless, as if dead; without any hope), *ta nxjerr nga syri (nga sytë, prej syrit* (he will not give up until he achieves what he wants, he will persistently seek something until he

reaches it, he will stick to it and will not let you rest until he reaches his goal), *ia bën gjelit me sy* (he is very sick), *i ka dalë sytë jashtë* (he has become arrogant, boasts a lot and behaves arrogantly; he is conceited; he does not speak with his mouth; his mind has gone to his neck (to the sky)), *me sytë e mendjes* (by imagination; by reasoning, as I think; by fantasy), *mori vdekjen në sy* (make a brave decision, not consider the consequences), *ka sy edhe në qafë* (he sees things clearly and understands them quickly, nothing escapes him; he is smart and alert; he can never give up), *nuk i vetëtin syri* (he knows no fear, he will not be afraid of any danger, he is brave and courageous), *e sheh me sy të mirë* (looks at someone with kindness and sympathy; has a good opinion of someone, supports them and trusts them based on the good opinion they have of them), *e sheh me sy të keq* (does not value him/her fairly, does not like him/her, does not trust him/her; tries to hinder him/her; does not wish him/her well), *sa për sy e faqe* (superficially, not focusing on important things), *s'më hyn në sy* (it does not matter to me, it is not important), *syri plot e dora thatë* (although there is an abundance of everything around, one is unable to obtain anything for oneself), *po ia bën korbët me sy* (he is in his final agony, dying), *m'u bë syri bakër* (to miss someone very much), *halë në sy* (to hate a person very much), *t'i futësh gishtat në sy* (it's so dark, you can't see two steps away)

Këmbë (feet/leg)

Metonymy (24 units)

ngul këmbë (I don't play from the spot, I don't walk, I don't move), *mori këmbë* (It spread by word of mouth everywhere), *i vuri këmbën* (He drove him out, kicked him, he hid him, he abandoned him), *e theu këmbën* (died), *ku e shpien këmbët* (wander without knowing where to go) *m'u shkurtuan këmbët* (I can't walk or stand anymore due to fatigue, old age, unexpected news, etc.), *nuk i ka shkelur këmba* (has never been there), *e shkel me këmbë* (I reject, I do not apply (a principle, a law, etc.)), *e kam nëpër këmbë* (I have a job to do and I need to finish it; I have something stopping me and I need to get it done as soon as possible), *i shkau këmba* (made a mistake), *m'u prenë këmbët* (I can't walk anymore; I collapsed from fatigue, from bad news), *i nderi këmbët* (died), *e coi në këmbë* (help somebody to recover, to become better), *e mbaj në këmbë* (help someone), *theu këmbën e shejtanit* (paid a visit after a long time, appeared suddenly), *tund këmbët* (He demands something with persistence and stubbornness, he doesn't give up; he argues, quarrels and threatens), *ia lidhi këmbët* (It doesn't let him go anywhere, it's holding him back and preventing him from moving or doing anything), *i lëpin këmbët* (to bow down to someone, to please them; to beg and plead with them, to flatter them, and to submit completely to them), *e drodhi këmbën* (died), *bën këmbë* (walks, sets off somewhere; sets out; goes somewhere, enters a house first, crosses the threshold first on a certain day), *i ra këmbës* (he tried in vain to achieve something; he insisted forcefully and made every effort), *fshij këmbët* (I do not appreciate it at all), *më ranë këmbët* (I got tired/exhausted), *e mori nëpër këmbë* (He does not honor or value it properly; he misuses it; he treats it badly)

Metaphor (31units)

me një këmbë në varr (seriously ill or injured, almost dying), *i zuri guri/ ferra këmbët* (cannot go anywhere, he is forced to stay and struggle), *varet nga këmbët e veta* (works and lives alone, without the help of others; is independent of others, progresses on his own), *i futet detit më këmbë* (starts a task that cannot be done or that is extremely difficult; has excessive courage, undertakes a very difficult task without thinking long), *i kam litarët nëpër këmbë* (I am busy with work and I am not finished yet, I have not yet escaped a burden I had; something is still holding me back), *nuk më bëjnë këmbët* (I don't have the strength to walk, I can't go anywhere), *e merr nëpër këmbë* (ignore, underestimate somebody, do not respect

him at all), *më merren këmbët* (cannot stand still, unable to walk steadily), *e lidhi këmbë e duar* (he left him no freedom of action, he took away every opportunity to do anything, he handcuffed him, he blocked him), *me këmbët e pulës* (very bad, not clear and not beautiful; without order and without care, as if from a person who does not understand), *këmbë e kokë* (completely), *me këmbë e duar* (with all the strength and possibilities to convince someone; with passion), *e ha arën në këmbë* (spends income prematurely; does not know how to economize; does not know how to save when and where necessary), *e kalon detin më këmbë* (starts a task that cannot be done or that is extremely difficult; has excessive courage, undertakes a very difficult task without thinking long), *është me një këmbë në varr* (seriously ill, almost dying), *është në këmbë* (is in good health, is not sick), *e hedh këmbën mbi këmbë* (I am calm and do not worry anymore, because I have everything provided for; I am very satisfied and without any worries), *ha këmbët e veta* (he suffers so much that he can't stand it anymore; he doesn't know what to do, he's consumed with himself, he tries to sacrifice himself and refuses to do anything), *sa i hanin këmbët* (at the greatest speed, as fast as he could, as fast as he could run), *nuk ia gjen dot këmbët* (you can't find someone hiding, they're hidden somewhere and you can't find them), *i futet detin në këmbë* (starts a task that cannot be done or that is extremely difficult; has excessive courage, undertakes a very difficult task without thinking long), *ecën me këmbët e veta* (works and lives alone, without the help of others; is independent of others, progresses on his own), *fle në këmbë* (he is clumsy and weak in body and mind, he is sleepy and lost), *eci me këmbët e veta* (works and lives alone, without the help of others; is independent of others, progresses on his own), *s'i këmbët e dhisë* (just as it is not clear who is bigger and who is smaller, who is in front and who is behind, etc., as if we are all the same), *i fsheh këmbët* (works and acts secretly; is cunning; does not appear as he is, conceals his intentions), *calon nga të dyja këmbët* (It has very serious flaws; it is bad on all sides, not good in every way), *më ranë këmbët* (I left no place without looking for someone or something; I stopped looking, I wandered around), *është këmbë e krye* (it's very confused, it's become a mess; it's very complicated; it's so mixed up that I don't know the beginning and the end), *ti lash këmbët e ti pish ujën* (he is a very good man, he has no friend and deserves the greatest respect, he is so good that you should like and accept everything from him)

kokë (head)

Metonymy (17 units)

më zien koka (I have many troubles, many things to be worried), *më zuri koka* (get tired, worried because of noises, someone's words or complaints), *vari kokën* (became worried, concerned), *e uli kokën* (surrendered, subdued), *e solli kokën* (suddenly appeared (for someone we do not like at all), *e nxori kokën* (revealed all the hidden intentions), *e ngriti kokën* (recovered, gain again the pride and honour), *ngre kokë* (start recovering over an illness or misfortune), *iu ndez koka* (become angry or furious), *nuk i mbushet koka* (stubborn, difficult to be convinced or change one's mind, *ia mbush kokën* (convince someone by giving arguments), *lë kokën* (desperately fall in love with someone), *jap kokën* (love someone to the point of dying for him or her), *i hipi në kokë* (unexpectedly started feeling for someone), *i hëngri kokën* (betrayed someone), *i di koka* (he is very clever or intelligent), *nuk i merr vesh koka* (stupid not capable of understanding)

Metaphor (25 units)

me mend në kokë (clever, bright), *më vjen koka vërrdallë* (do not know what to do, unable to think and decide), *ti presësh kokën* (It's so beautiful and good to the point of being

unbelievable), *me kokë të prerë* (as if killed, very sad and desperate; completely helpless, *i ve gishtin kokës* (start thinking wisely, avoid to repeat the same actions), *për të vënë duart në kokë* (complete disaster), *i trashë nga koka* (stupid), *pa kokë e pa bisht* (not of a certain shape, irregular; not knowing where it begins and ends, not knowing what it is like and where to catch it), *ia shpërlau kokën* (it cleared some wrong thoughts or views from his head), *me kokë në torbë* (in great danger, not knowing what evil awaits me, with life in danger at hand), *ia shkuli nga koka* (force someone to change its mind), *e ngul dicka në kokë* (concentrate on something, memorize it), *sipas kokës i ve festen* (as long as he is worth it or behaves the way he is, that is the assessment he is given, he has no reason to complain and it is good for him to suffer the bitter consequences of his wrong actions), *ia futi në kokë* (convinced someone of something, made them understand and fix something in their mind; reminded them, mentioned it so they wouldn't forget), *s'i dëgjon koka* (does not listen to what someone tells him to do, does not obey or accept, is stubborn), *i di koka* (is smart and resourceful, knows a lot and understands quickly; can't throw it away; knows how to provide for himself), *sa të lesh kokën* (It's so beautiful, so good, etc. somewhere, that you don't feel like leaving, you want to stay there at all cost), *kokë turku* (a person who becomes a victim for someone else without being guilty, to create the impression that the real culprit was punished), *kokë qepë* (someone who is worthless and can do whatever they want with him, who no one feels sorry for, who they don't value or spare), *me kokë në torbë* (be in danger), *me sa ka në kokë* (with a loud voice, screaming, yelling), *m'u fry koka* (I feel very tired from mental work, I think of myself as very smart, very clever, or very cultured, I puff myself up and become arrogant as if I am something), *nuk më nxe koka* (I can't imagine it, I can't understand it or accept it as reasonable), *e bluan në kokë* (he thinks carefully before deciding on something, he sifts it well, he weighs it up with himself), *ma bëri kokën dauille* (I was overwhelmed by the noise, the hassle, the many words, I was very upset), *kokë e madhe* (a prominent person, a great thinker or well-known personality, a very intelligent and knowledgeable person)

3.3. English metaphorical and metonymical idioms with the words mouth, hand, eye, leg, hand

209 English idioms have been investigated and they are linguistically materialised as following, respectively 112 metonymical expressions and 97 metaphorical.

Mouth

Metaphor (19 units)

to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth (someone born into a wealthy family, implying a life of privilege and advantage) *to laugh out of the other side of one's mouth* (have the last laugh, to prove successful despite the doubts of others, laugh out of the other), *butter will not melt in one's mouth* (one who appears innocent, modest, or reserved in certain company, when in fact one may have the opposite demeanor). *to be down at the mouth* (to look or feel sad, unhappy, or depressed) *dragon mouth* (particularly foul-smelling breath), *to put one's foot in one's mouth* (to unintentionally say something foolish, tactless, or offensive), *mealy-mouthed* (someone who speaks in a vague, evasive, or insincere manner) *a mouth breather* (stupid, nonintelligent, being uninformed, uncaring, or lacking social awareness) *potty mouth* (someone who frequently uses obscene or vulgar language, often swearing or cursing), (back up your words with actions, show your commitment to something), *to run one's mouth* (to talk profusely, especially in an insolent or antagonistic manner), *big mouth* (someone who tends to chatter excessively or dominate

conversations), **mouth waters** (to desire something greatly, often referring to food), **have a mouth like a sailor** (to use vulgar or profane language frequently), **all mouth and no trousers** (someone who talks a lot about doing something but never actually follows through), **mouthpiece** (a person who expresses someone else's thoughts or opinions, often used to refer to a spokesperson), **from the horse's mouth** (information that comes directly from the most authoritative source), **mouth of babes** (honest or innocent speech, often referring to the idea that children speak truthfully), **dumb as a mouthful of rocks** (someone who is perceived as very foolish or not intelligent), **a mouthful of marbles** (someone difficult to be understood, someone speaking unclearly or mumbling)

Metonymy (20)

put words in s.b.'s mouth (ascribe a quote or a sentiment to someone that is not truly theirs) **put money where one's mouth is** (back up your words with actions, show your commitment to something), **big mouth** (someone who talks too much or reveals secrets, often unintentionally), **bad mouth** (to speak negatively about someone or something, often criticizing or insulting them), **put your foot in your mouth** (to say something embarrassing, tactless, or inappropriate, usually without intending to cause offense), **sweeten the mouth** (to say something pleasant or kind to someone, often in order to soften a message or win their favour), **mouth to feed** (the responsibility one has to provide for someone else, highlighting the burden or obligation that comes with caring for another person), **use your mouth** (taking action—either by vocally asserting oneself or by literally using one's mouth for a specific purpose), **watch your mouth** (someone should avoid using offensive, disrespectful, or inappropriate language), **have a mouth on you** (to share or reveal compromising information about one to a figure or body of authority), **keep your mouth shut** (to remain silent or not to speak about something), **by word of mouth** (the process of spreading information or opinions through informal spoken communication rather than through written or official channels), **mouth of the wolf** (being in a dangerous situation or facing a significant threat), **mouth piece** (a person or entity that speaks on behalf of another, often conveying their views, opinions, or messages), **mouth full of lies** (a story or report that is completely false), **close your mouth and open your ears** (it is important to listen first and pay attention to what people say), **to put one's foot on one's mouth** (to unintentionally say something without tact or something that is offensive to others), **foul mouth** (someone who uses a lot of foul or obscene language), **to have one's heart in one's mouth** (to be very nervous or anxious about something), **to hold one's mouth the right way** (to do something very carefully), **to make one's mouth water** (to cause a person to eagerly long for something they want)

Legs/ foot

Metaphor (20 units)

the boot is on the other foot (a situation where someone who was previously in a position of weakness or vulnerability now has the advantage over the other party), **be /get up on one's hind legs** (angry or assertive), **stand on your own feet** (strong and independent, not need the help or guidance of the other) **run away with your tail between your leg** (to leave or flee with embarrassment or shame, especially after losing or having to admit that one was wrong), **leg puller** (someone who teases or jokes with another person, often conveying a sense of light-hearted fun rather than malice), **break someone's leg** (wish someone good luck, especially in the context of performing arts or theatre), **get off on the wrong foot** (start an activity or relationship badly), **leg up in life** (a boost from another person that enables one to reach something that one could not reach on one's own), **leggy** (women, who have an attractive, elongated appearance), **leg up** (a person who has an advantage or a boost in a situation, often in the context of support or assistance), **pulling someone's leg** (someone is joking or

trying to trick another person), **legless** (a situation or concept where someone feels incapacitated or unable to move forward, often due to a lack of resources or support), **on your last legs** (very tired or near to death), **leg it** (a situation where someone feels the need to escape quickly), **shake a leg** (to encourage someone to speed up their actions or to prompt them to get started on a task), **legs of steel** (someone who has excellent stamina or strong legs), **take a leg out from under someone** (undermining someone's support or stability, often referring to causing someone to lose their advantage or confidence), **legs are made for walking** (one should take action rather than hesitate), **leg of a stool** (something that is essential for stability), **jumping on one leg** (a lack of balance or a need to focus only on one aspect of an issue)

Metonymy (27 units)

on foot (a situation where someone has to walk or run because it has no means of transport), **drag your feet** (to delay or procrastinate), **get back on one's feet** (recover from a difficult situation), **get cold feet** (to suddenly become frightened to do what you planned to do), **have one's feet on the ground** (to be and remain in a calm, stable, sensible, and pragmatic state or condition) **put one's feet up** (to take a rest, to relax), **a leg to stand on** (**proof, defence** or support for one's argument or position, often used in the negative to mean the opposite), **leg of the journey** (a particular stage or portion of a trip), **get your legs under you** (getting back on one's feet after being knocked down) **get a leg up** (a boost or a position of advantage), **leg out** (to be knocked down by something), **have legs** (have endurance, last long), **shake a leg** (encouraging someone to hurry up or get moving), **on your legs** (being active or engaged), **put some legs under it** (to encourage someone to take the necessary steps to make something happen), **leg it into action** (to suggest that someone should hurry up and get started on a task), **table your legs** (to set aside hesitations or distractions and focus on getting started with the work at hand), **legwork** (the effort or physical work involved in gathering information, conducting research, or completing tasks), **keep your legs under the table** (to continue being fed or to be well-supported, often in financial or social status), **put your best leg forward** (encourage someone to try their hardest or to present the best version of themselves), **on someone's last leg** (someone is close to exhaustion or failure), **two left legs** (someone who is awkward or clumsy, particularly in movement or dance), **an old leg** (someone who has experience or wisdom in a particular area), **have legs in both camps** (to have an affiliation or interest in two opposing sides of an issue, suggesting a dual allegiance), **legs of steel** (someone who has excellent stamina or strong legs)

head (mind, brain)

Metaphor (16 units)

have a roof over one's head (a home in which to live or rest; basic shelter), **know one's own mind** (to clearly understand one's feelings, intentions, to be decisive and determined), **speak one's mind** (to say what one thinks, to state one's opinion), **bury one's head in the sand** (to avoid, or try to avoid, a particular situation by pretending that it does not exist), **a head of steam** (a situation in which a person or an activity starts to become active or successful), **knock s.th on the head** (to promptly prevent something, especially an idea, suggestion, or plan), **raise/rear its head** (starts to appear or be active), **turn/stand s.th on its head** (make it have the opposite effect or opinion), **give someone a head start** (allowing them to start a task or an activity earlier than usual), **banging your head against a brick wall** (to engage in a futile or frustrating effort, often when trying to achieve something that seems impossible), **stand head and shoulders above** (to be significantly better or superior to others)

in a particular area or context), **get it into your head** (to believe that something is true), **above one's head** (being too advanced or difficult for one to be able to comprehend, understand, or complete; beyond one's abilities) **bury one's head in the sand** (to refuse to face up to unpleasant or awkward situations), **can't make heads and tails** (completely puzzled or unable to make sense of something), **off the top of one's head** (without careful thought or investigation)

Metonymy (21 units)

count heads (to count the number of the people in a group), **bite/snap sb.'s head off** (to speak to someone angrily), **hold/put a gun/pistol to sb.'s head** (to force someone to do something by using threats), **bite/snap sb.'s head off** (talk to someone angrily), **heads roll** (people will be punished for something bad that has happened), **bird brain** (someone as foolish or lacking in intelligence), **brain box** (a person who is very intelligent or knowledgeable, suggesting they have a lot of mental capacity), **go to sb.'s head** (to strongly affect a person, especially to the detriment of his or her senses or mental faculties), **great minds think alike** (intelligent or visionary people often share similar thoughts or ideas) **brain dead** (someone who is mentally exhausted, unable to think clearly, or has made a particularly foolish decision), **two heads are better than one** (collaborating or working with another person can lead to better problem-solving or decision-making than an individual working alone), **sb.'s eyes are popping out of sb.'s head** (a way of describing the way you look when you are extremely surprised to see something or someone), **have eyes in the back of one's head** (to know everything that is happening around you), **laugh/scream/talk one's head off** (someone who is doing one of those actions excessively or with great enthusiasm), **in over your head** (to be involved in a difficult situation that you cannot get out of), **to lose your head** (to become so emotional or overwhelmed that you can no longer think clearly or act rationally), **head over heels** (completely in love), **head to head** (a direct confrontation or competition between two people or groups), **put your heads together** (to collaborate or brainstorm ideas with others to solve a problem or come up with a plan), **can't make heads an nails out of something** (being unable to understand or make sense of a situation or information)

Hand

Metaphor (19 units)

dirty hands (to become involved in something unfair or dishonest), **heavy hands** (someone who takes a heavy-handed approach in their actions or decision-making), **soft hands** (something or someone that has a gentle touch and is delicate with their movements), **iron fist** (a particularly severe, forceful, and uncompromising manner of ruling), **hand in glove** (collaboration of two parties or a close, intimate relationship), **hand on experience** (to practical, direct involvement in a task or activity rather than just theoretical knowledge or learning), **a load off your hands** (to relieve someone of a burden or responsibility), **two hands are better than one** (the value of teamwork and collaboration is more effective), **hand over fist** (quickly or in great quantity, esp. in earning money), **a helping hand** (providing assistance or support to someone in need), **in hand** (having control over something or being able to manage a situation effectively), **hand down** (to pass something from one person to another, often across generations), **a hand to mouth experience** (having, providing, or characterized by the bare minimum of money, food, or resources to survive), **tie one's hands** (to prevent someone from doing something), **hand-off approach** (a style of management or

leadership where a person allows others to take charge of tasks or make decisions), **a full hand** (having a lot on one's plate or being busy with many responsibilities or tasks at the same time), **have blood on one's hand** (to bear the guilt or responsibility of someone's death or injury), **to row cross-handed** (to do something in a way that is awkward, ineffective, or counterproductive), **wash your hands off** (to absolve oneself from responsibilities or blame), **get their hands dirty** (to do hard work, especially hard physical labour or to do something illegal)

Metonymy (22 units)

lend a hand (to assist or help someone voluntarily), **all hands on deck** (as much as possible in order to accomplish a task or reach a goal), **wash your hands off** (to absolve oneself from responsibilities or blame), **hands are tied** (unable to act or make decisions), **out of hand** (immediately or at once), **change hands** (to transfer the ownership or control from one person to another), **in good hands** (managed or cared for with great attention), **give someone a hand** (assist or help someone to do a task), **at hand** (readily accessible when needed), **on hand** (available, ready, in stock), **hand in hand** (two people or things are very closely connected), **take the matter into your own hand** (to deal with, manage, or do something oneself, especially after having relied on others to do it), **put your hand to the plough** (to start work or get busy working), **out of hand** (out of control), **to change hands** (to be passed on to a different owner), **to get your hands on** (to acquire something), **to hand down** (to pass something to a successor), **to hand someone something on a plate** (to make something very easy for another person to achieve or obtain), **to have something in hand** (to have something under control), **to wait on hand and foot** (to attend to someone's every need), **with one hand behind your back** (restricted, limited)

eye

Metaphor (23 units)

the eyes are the windows to the soul (understanding people's emotions and sometimes thoughts by simply looking at their eyes), **eyes wide shut** (somebody refuses to see something that is directly in their eyes), **keep an eye out** (look out for something with particular attention) **to have a bird's eye view** (a view seen from high above), **a sight for sore eyes** (someone or something that is very pleasing to see), **to open someone's eyes**, **eyes like a hawk** (miss nothing of what is going on around one), **keep an eye on the ball** (to keep oneself very focused on something), **have an eagle eye** (the ability or tendency to observe closely or pay attention to detail), **look someone in the eye** (look directly at someone without showing embarrassment, fear, or shame), **give someone the evil eye** (to look in a hateful, malicious or threatening way), **more than meets the eyes** (there is hidden information under the surface), **close one's eyes to** (to willingly ignore or overlook something), **cry one's eyes out** (to cry very hard or for a long time, often as a result of intense emotion such as sadness, frustration, or grief), **bat an eye** (to display a subtle emotional reaction, such as consternation, annoyance, sadness, joy, etc), **starry-eyed** (naively enthusiastic or idealistic), **eyes glued to** (watching it with all their attention), **to have one's eyes peeled** (stay alert and vigilant), **have eyes bigger than one's stomach** (to take more food on one's plate than one can eat), **with a naked eye** (seeing something without the aid of any optical instruments), **feast your eyes on** (look at them or it with pleasure, joy, or admiration), **see eye to eye** (to agree (with someone), to share the same position or opinion (as someone else))

Metonymy (22 units)

have one's eye on something (to watch or look at someone or something closely), **sb.'s eyes are popping out of sb.'s head** (surprise or extreme interest in what one is looking at), **have eyes in the back** (to be or seem to be able to detect what is going on all around one), **eye to eye** (to agree with someone or share the same opinion), all-seeing eye, **in the eye of the beholder** (the perception of beauty is subjective and varies from one person to another), **keep an eye on** (to take care or watch something or someone), **the eye of the storm** (at the centre of or deeply involved in an especially difficult, stressful, situation), **eyes wide open** (to do something with keen or complete knowledge), **turn a blind eye** (to ignore something that you know is wrong), **a glaring eye** (facial expression showing disapproval, fierceness and/or hostility) **have an eye for** (be able to recognize, appreciate, and make good judgements about), **eye candy** (someone or something that is attractive but not very interesting or useful), **eye of the tiger** (focus, determination and self-confidence), **be in the public eye** (to be famous and often seen or mentioned in the newspapers or on television), **eye of the needle** (a small target which requires precision), **a watching eye** (to observe or monitor someone or something very closely), **eye on the prize** (maintaining focus on a goal) **a twinkle in the eye** (friendly or happy expression), **an eye for an eye** (a person who causes another person to suffer should suffer in an equal amount), **the evil eye** (a look that is thought to be able to harm someone), **be all eyes** (to be watching someone or something carefully and with a lot of interest), **catch someone's eye** (to attract someone's attention)

4. Conclusions

Using figurative language effectively can significantly enhance the process of idiom motivation, enriching both communication and comprehension. Figurative language evokes emotions and creates vivid imagery, making idioms more relatable and memorable. Given the multifaceted nature of this concept, a deeper semantic, pragmatic, and cultural analysis is necessary. Figurative language often encapsulates the essence of an expression in a more accessible manner, allowing us to explore its meanings more deeply and foster a richer vocabulary. Employing figurative language in idioms can serve as a bridge for conceptual understanding, thereby promoting deeper interpretation and appreciation. Contextualizing idioms through figurative expressions facilitates practical application in various scenarios, helping develop a nuanced understanding of their use.

Moreover, figurative language opens avenues for insights—ranging from uncovering deeper meanings and subtexts to recognizing cultural nuances and unspoken thoughts. Each of these interpretations highlights the richness of language and communication, where much is often implied rather than explicitly stated. Ultimately, figurative language used in idioms can reveal culturally and psychologically specific meanings that may not be apparent without understanding their context. By exploring the depths of language, we can cultivate a more profound appreciation of idiomatic expressions and their significance in effective communication.

Figurative language captures the essence of these expressions in a more accessible and engaging manner, allowing learners and speakers alike to explore multiple levels of meaning. This exploration deepens our understanding of idioms and enriches our vocabulary, as it encourages us to see beyond the superficial surface toward the underlying cultural and contextual significance.

Moreover, the strategic use of figurative language acts as a bridge for conceptual understanding, helping individuals to interpret idioms in various contexts and fostering a more nuanced appreciation of language. When idioms are contextualized with vivid metaphors or analogies, they become easier to remember and apply in real-life situations, enhancing language fluency.

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