



# **Culture-Oriented Idioms in English and Albanian Language-Analyses of the Semantic and Syntactic Structure of Life and Death Idioms: A Comparative Study**

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## **Abstract**

Idiomatic expressions are a crucial part of language reflecting the mindset of a nation's culture and shaping the characteristics of language usage. This paper elaborates on the rich content of the variety of idiomatic expressions in English and Albanian of idioms related to life and death. Each language possesses its characteristics making the languages similar and different from one another, thus leading to different expressions of the same things. Writing and speaking a language cannot be understood without using idioms, especially when describing one's emotional or mental conditions. This article aims at analyzing the semantic and syntactic structure of idioms denoting life and death connotations in both languages. Language is an independent system and as a result, different ethnic groups show their psychological characteristics through different concepts. Such differences and similarities are reflected in figurative expressions of each nation which incorporates the focus of this study. An analysis of the constituent parts of idioms, features of non-compositionality, syntactic functions in sentences, and other characteristics of set expressions are the focus of this research paper through componential and comparative analyses. The research is based on the database of 480 English idioms 291 phraseological units with the element "life", 189 phraseological units with the element "death", and more than 320 idioms in Albanian. Data were drawn from two phraseological dictionaries Albanian Phraseological Dictionary and English-Albanian Phraseological Dictionary. A detailed and in-depth insight was made into the corpus of the dictionary entries to find out idioms that express life and death in both languages. The methods used are based on comparative and componential analyses. The study displayed characteristics in idiomatic expressions reflected in two cultures showing different semantic and syntactic features in both languages.

**Keywords:** characteristics, figurative expression, mindset, reflection, system

## **1. Theoretical background**

We often read and hear the phrase ‘language is a living thing’, but most of us do not stop to think about how and why this is true. (Seidl and McMordie 1978:1). Since the general characteristics of present-day English are towards more idiomatic usage, it seems to be worth paying attention to the role phraseological units or idiomatic expressions play in a language. It is difficult to speak or write English without using idioms. An English native speaker is very often not aware that he is using an idiom. A non-native learner makes the correct use of idiomatic English in comparison to native speakers who might use the incorrect use of idiomatic phrases. (Siedl and McMordie 1978:4).

Linguists have shown a constant interest in the field of phraseology. Undoubtedly, not only are idioms an important part of the language and culture of the society, but they also carry more impact than non-idiomatic expressions because of their close identification with a particular language and culture (Nida 2001:28).

Culture is a complex whole, including knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, and custom. And people, as members of the society, get the ability and habits” (Tylor, 2010). Language is a system of vocabulary and grammar combined with sound and meaning, it is the most important means of communication. Idiomatic phrases are closely related to the culture of the language expressing rich cultural connections. Every word handed down in every language is a symbol of arbitrary and statutory convention (Whitney, 1979). The relationship between language and culture is inherent. Each language possesses its characteristics; it is an indirect reflection of the objective world through the human brain. Weinreich (1969:42) defined idioms as “phraseological units that involve at least two polysemous constituents, and in which there is a reciprocal contextual selection of subsenses.” Idioms usually carry more impact than non-idiomatic expressions because of their close identification with a particular language and culture. According to Fernando, an idiom may be defined as a conventionalized, often but not always non-literal, multiword expression. Idioms reflect the environment, life, history, and culture of the native speakers, and are closely associated with their innermost spirit and feeling. According to Nida (2001:28), idioms are not only an important part of the language and culture of the society but they carry more impact than non-idiomatic expressions because of their close identification with a particular language and culture.

English is a language full of idiomatic expressions, hence learning these idioms constitutes the spirit of language (Elkilic, 2008). According to Boers et al. (2004: 376), if figurative language such as idioms, metaphors, and metonymies is pervasive in real life as a part of the culture, then it is not surprising that language learners will be certainly encountered and exposed to idiomatic expressions as a part of language learning and they should attempt to build up their knowledge of idioms if they want to survive in real communication settings.

## **2. Cultural connotations between idioms and culture in English and Albanian under the domain of “life” and “death”**

Idiomatic expressions are very important parts of the language. They have structural solidification and a sense of integrity, contain rich connotations of national culture, and show prominent personality characteristics of the language. Knowing the difference between languages and comparing the syntactic and semantic features of idiomatic expressions reveals the mentality of a nation. Figurative expressions are important parts and building materials of language. According to Tylor 2010, “Culture is a complex whole, including knowledge,

belief, art, morals, law and custom. And people as members of the society, get the ability and habits". The formation of language is arbitrary and at the same time will be affected by social convention (Saussure, 1959). Idioms offer cultural understandings of societal standards, principles, and beliefs. They allow us insights into the thoughts, emotions, and views of the speaker's background. Language and culture are inextricably connected. Culture is not understood without language and language is not understood without culture. Language is an inseparable means of communication, and the use of idioms and metaphoric language is an undisputable natural decoder of customs, cultural beliefs, social conventions, and norms. The study of idioms is a crucial element in understanding a specific nation's language and culture. It increases language awareness and improves communication. As Byram and Risager assume culture has a crucial role in encoding and decoding messages being at the heart of everyday communication. Culture as a body of knowledge of common beliefs, behaviors, and values appears to be the factor to establish and interpret meaning in both verbal and nonverbal language. Alptekin (2002) explains this process as the enculturation of the foreign language learner stating that "Learners are not only expected to acquire accurate forms of the target language but also to learn how to use these forms in given social situations in the target language setting to convey appropriate, coherent and strategically-effective meanings for the native speaker".

We use the term culture to refer to all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things and people that we learn when we become members of social groups defined as "socially acquired knowledge". The awareness of our knowledge, and hence of our culture is developed only after having developed language. The particular language we learn through the process of cultural transmission provides us with a ready-made system of categorizing the world around us and our experience of it (George Yule, 2014). Min (2007) categorizes culture in English under two phenomena; high culture, and anthropological culture. The first highlights the intellectual and artistic achievements; the second refers to any of the customs, worldviews, languages, and conventions that make some people distinct from other social groups.

According to Boers et al., (2008), language as a continuum of thought ranging from simple to complex units, including idioms plays a significant role in the linguistic system but not merely for ornamental purposes. English is a rich language of idioms, metaphors, and metonymies. Since it is pervasive in real life as a part of the culture, then it is not surprising that language learners will be certainly encountered and exposed to idiomatic expressions as part of language learning and they should attempt to build up their knowledge of idioms if they want to survive in real communication settings. (Boers et al., 2004, p. 376).

Social customs vary in different countries and get involved in every field of social life, religion, geographical background, religious belief, historical development, different conquests, food and thought, dances, literature, mythology, and fables, (*kill the Goose that Lays the golden eggs*), economy, sport, and entertainment (*out of the count, below the belt, pull one's punches, to play cricket*), etc. Language as a special part of a nation's culture reflects the social customs of a nation. As part of language expressions, idioms are closely related to national customs and they reflect the mindset of people's beliefs and traditions as well. English people are very well known for eating and drinking traditions connected with the environment and customs. Since tea is a British traditional drink many idioms arise from this source. They drink tea at any time of the day especially they like drinking afternoon tea at four or five o'clock every day. Bread, butter, and jam are also a staple food for English people and many idioms come from them e.g. *piece of cake, bring home the bacon, hard nut to crack, to go bananas, as different as chalk from cheese, have jam on it, eat like a horse,*

*walk on eggshells, have bigger fish to fry*, etc. Shakespeare is one of the greatest writers and a master of English with a large vocabulary of 16000 words. Many words, phrases, or names of characters in his works became popular idioms, which are used widely in everyday life until now. For example, *love is Blind, green-eyed monster, salad days, wear my heart on my sleeve, to paint the Lily, to gild beyond refined gold*, from Ch. Dickens is *right as a trivet, never say die*, J. Chaucer *through thick and thin, murder will out*, etc.

As culture is reflected in language, respectfully in idioms the Albanian language is rich in phraseological units. Different nations have different perceptions of social life. The most common sources of Albanian idioms as an agricultural nation come from it. Literary work is a rich source of idioms like *Mos hap dhëmbët,- bërtiti ai*; '*na thotë si na vjen mbarë*' (talk whatever one desire); '*I kanë arrestuar të vëllanë, në ta ka zënë veshi*' (something wrong has happened, his brother has been arrested); '*mos t'i thotë mendja se fshati ha bar*' (do not pretend that the others could believe or get betrayed easily); '*e shkonte jetën hiq e mos këput*' (had a low expectation of life, with no joy or interest); '*e donte me mish e me shpirt*' (loved to the moon and back); '*të shpëtosh në betejë e të shkosh për dhjamë qeni...*' (to be alive from a battle but to die suddenly and unexpectedly; **from folklore**, Halil Garrit t'i thuash më ka dërguar jot motër të të pyes: ku e ke besën që i ke dhënë? (where is the word you have given); '*I thotë që fjet për fjet unë të vras*' (I kill you as soon as possible); '*Muji s'guxon të më dalë ballë për ballë*' (Muji- a legendary figure does not dare to come face to face); '*Kaçaku e pyet fije për pe për punët e pazarit*' (the Kaçak asks everything for the trade issues); '*krah për krah që të dy burrat dolën në rrugë*' (both men went outside on the road); **from people and everyday life** '*u grindën për mustaqet e Çelos*' (to quarrel for nothing); '*si e ëma e Zeqos në majë të thanës*' (to talk without thinking about what you are saying), '*është njeri me lugë në brez*'; '*I ra si plumb ajo fjalë*' (to hear something you don't expect to); '*I ishte bërë mendja veri për të ikur*' (want to leave as soon as possible); '*flet qesh e ngjesh*' (does many things at a time); '*ai e lëshoi brezin i pari*' (leaves the work the first); '*A të është ngritur në këmbë fëmija?*' (Has your child begun to walk?); '*I ranë pendët më në fund*' (does not have credibility anymore), **from household items**: '*I hodha rrezen derës, i ra shtëpisë fshesë me themel*' (to do housework thoroughly), '*janë prerë si me gërshërë*' (have been cut without a model); **from animals**: '*ku s'shkel këmba e kalit*' (where the horse do not step), '*s'i përgjigjet shala gomarit*' (does not fit), '*s'fshihet derri në thes*' (cannot hide something visible), '*ra në gojë të ujkut*' (fell in the wolf's mouth). Like the English language Albanian has idioms with food too: '*buka të zë sytë*' (have to be careful with the things you possess), '*fjalë me kripë*' (the right word to say), '*na e bëri mendjen dhallë*' (to get confused by somebody), etc. An enormous number of idioms come from parts of the body. Both languages are rich in this source. For example, *to have one's back to/against the wall, to beat/rack one's brain(s) (about something), keep your chin up, strain one's ears*, in Albanian: '*s'më hyn në sy*' (it does not have any effect on me, not interested), '*më ka fjetur shpirti*' (to feel calm and not disturbed), '*derdh trutë*' (invest from oneself, get tired), '*s'ma do barku*' (do not appreciate), '*më ziejnë veshët*' (have noise in the ears), '*i dridhet buza*' (feel afraid), '*me dy faqe*' (not stable in character), '*më shpëtoi goja*' (say something not expected), '*i derdhi zorrët*' (kill somebody), '*e drodhi qafën*' (to die), etc. All the above Albanian idioms reflect the cultural characteristics of idioms which cannot be translated into another language (thus in English) due to the high level of motivation they possess. Since they have flourished from the Albanian customs and traditions they are typical of that culture, and it is barely hard to find an English correspondent of each one of them since taken out of the Albanian context they do not make sense. Hardly ever is it found a *Çelo* in English culture or a *Jack of all trades* in the Albanian

one. These characteristics make each nation's culture differ from the other shaping their unique semantic features of them.

### 3. Different aspects of the idiom

Many definitions come to focus when the idiom is taken into consideration. Langlotz (2006:1) argues that “idioms are peculiar linguistic constructions that have raised many eyebrows in linguistic and often confuse newcomers to a language”. Glucksberg (2001: 68) defines them as a “subset of the fixed expressions in a language community” and on account of their complex nature, idioms give rise to a broad range of definitions. However, linguists have not reached a unified approach related to idioms but common features of all definitions render to “collocation of two or three words whose combined meaning is not deducible from knowledge of the meanings of its component words and their grammatical syntagmatic relations to each other”. (Meetham and Hudson 1969: 667). Seidl and McMordie (1978:4) define an idiom as “several words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone. How words are put together is often odd, illogical or even grammatically incorrect”. Thus, idioms are fixed phraseological units by their long usage to be learned as a whole. Weinreich (1969:26) defines them as “a complex expression whose meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of its elements”. For Lipka (2002: 89) idioms are identified with phraseological units “a phraseological unit is a semantic unit consisting of a group of word-forms not beyond the sentence level”, comparable to word-forms as concrete realizations of lexemes. Adkins (1968: 149) names idioms as modes of expression or phrases that are peculiar to a given language, and which are the bases for understanding the language, since they constitute a large part of it. Čermák (1979) emphasizes that one of the core characteristics of idioms since “the more anomalies a phraseme displays, the more idiomatic it is and vice versa”. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic deviations are mainly emphasized as the chief features of idioms. Nunberg et al. (1994: 492) underline that “idioms are conventionalized: their meaning or use can’t be predicted, or at least entirely predicted, based on a knowledge of the independent conventions that determine the use of their constituents when they appear in isolation from one another”. Idioms such as *spill the beans* “reveal a secret” and *kick the bucket* “die” do not tell anything if the constituent words are taken into consideration rather than learn them by heart.

Idioms may be short or long. They can take many different forms or structures. According to their structural classification, they are nominal phrases e.g. *bucket list*, *at death’s door*, *the root of the trouble*; verbal phrases; *come to a sticky end*, *bought the farm*, *breathe one’s last*, *die in a hole*, *pushing up daisies*, *meet your maker*, *cheat death*, *rest in peace*; adjectival phrases: *brown bread*, *the big Adios*, *as good as gold*, *red as a cherry*; adverbial phrases; *from head to foot*, prepositional phrases; *in the course of*; conjunctive phrases: *as long as*, *on the other hand*; interjectional phrases: *Well*, *I never!* *Never say die!* *Never give up hope!* *Take your time!* *Do not hurry!* An idiom can have a regular structure, an irregular or even a grammatically incorrect structure (Seidl and McMordie, 1978:5). The idiom *I am good friends with him* is irregular or illogical in its grammatical structure. Native speakers according to Seidl and McMordie are unaware of this inconsistency. The second type they denote is idioms with a regular form but an unclear meaning to have a bee in one’s bonnet, the third form both the form and meaning are irregular e.g., to be at large, to go through thick and thin, to be at daggers drawn, to be in the swim (Seidl and McMordie, 1978:7).

Idioms or phraseological units are characterized by semantic unity and structural stability. They do not allow changes or they might allow some slight changes in their structure. Thus they are divided into highly motivated idioms where no change is possible like in the idiom

*kick the bucket*, motivated or partly motivated idioms (a dog in the manger), when they are used in actual context, they experience grammatical changes, such as different forms of the verbs, agreement of personal pronouns and number and so on. We may also find changes in constituents of idioms: addition or deletion: *(for) all night, from (the bottom) of one's heart*, replacement: *catch (get, seize, take) hold of* position-shifting: *wheel of fortune- fortune's wheel*, shortening: *Jack of all trades- Jack of all trades and master of none*, dismembering: where the idiom is breaking-up into pieces *"The leopard! But he did change them, Dinny."* etc., (Stefanllari, 2011:155).

Idiomaticity, stability, and word equivalency are the three main criteria offered by linguists. We distinguish lexico-semantic stability and morphological and syntactic stability. A criterion of function is another criterion of idioms. According to A. Smirnitsky phraseological units are considered to be word-equivalents because they are introduced in speech as ready-made and function as single words. Like idioms words have identical syntactic functions and they are interchangeable in certain contexts. Like words, they have synonyms for bad (foul) language, and are characterized by polysemy and homonymy e.g. getting under sb's skin has the meaning 1) to annoy 2) to produce a great impression on sb. (Stefanllari, 2011:146).

## 4. The study

### 4.1 Research questions

1. How is culture reflected in idioms expressing *death* and *life* in English and Albanian?
2. How is the semantic structure of idioms different?
3. What syntactic changes can idioms of Albanian and English allow?

### 4.2 Methodology

The study relates to the syntax-semantics interface within which phraseological units are to be better comprehended. The semantic dimensions of idiomaticity are to be discussed. The research is based on the database of 480 English idioms 291 phraseological units with the element "life", 189 phraseological units with the element "death", and more than 320 idioms in Albanian. Data were drawn from two phraseological dictionaries Albanian Phraseological Dictionary and English-Albanian Phraseological Dictionary. A detailed and in-depth insight was made into the corpus of the dictionary entries to find out idioms that express life and death in both languages. The methods used are based on comparative and componential analyses.

### 4.3. Data analysis

The study seeks to analyze a corpus of 536 phraseological units which express life and death in both languages. After a careful and detailed study of two phraseological dictionaries, idioms were divided into units that express life and units that express death in the English and Albanian languages. The research paper is based on the semantic and syntactic differences in idioms of both languages. The analysis aims to shed light on the differences between figurative units seen from their meaning and the function they have in a sentence, the way they reflect culture and traditions based on the semantic and structural constituents of the phrases. Both languages show peculiarities in phrase constituents that reflect directly the culture and mindset of the nation. These phrases cannot be translated into another language; they are culture-specific and could be explained only with the historic conditions or people's

everyday life in the specific social conditions where it has been created. They are highly motivated idioms and no equivalent can be found in another language. For example, *Jack of all trades, but master of none, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, Jonny-on-the-spot, Tom, dick, and/or Harry*. In Albanian; *si Kofini pas te vjeli (too late), i duket ferra Brahim (seem unimportant or useless), u grindën për mustaqet e Çelos (quarrel for nothing); si e ëma e Zeqos në majë të thanes (talk inappropriately), etc.*

#### 4.3.1 Semantic and syntactic analysis of idioms in English and Albanian

We would consider the syntactic analyses of idioms starting from some examples where idioms might change the indefinite article “a” into the definite article *the* and also change the tense of the verb as well, or change the number of the noun of the phrase and the definite article to the indefinite determiner *some*. The gender-neutral, indefinite pronoun is *one* into the possessive pronoun *his/her*.

e.g. *come to a sticky end* - “The prolonged sick patient *came to the sticky end* recently”.

*get the foot on the grave* - “He’s got *some foot on the grave*.”

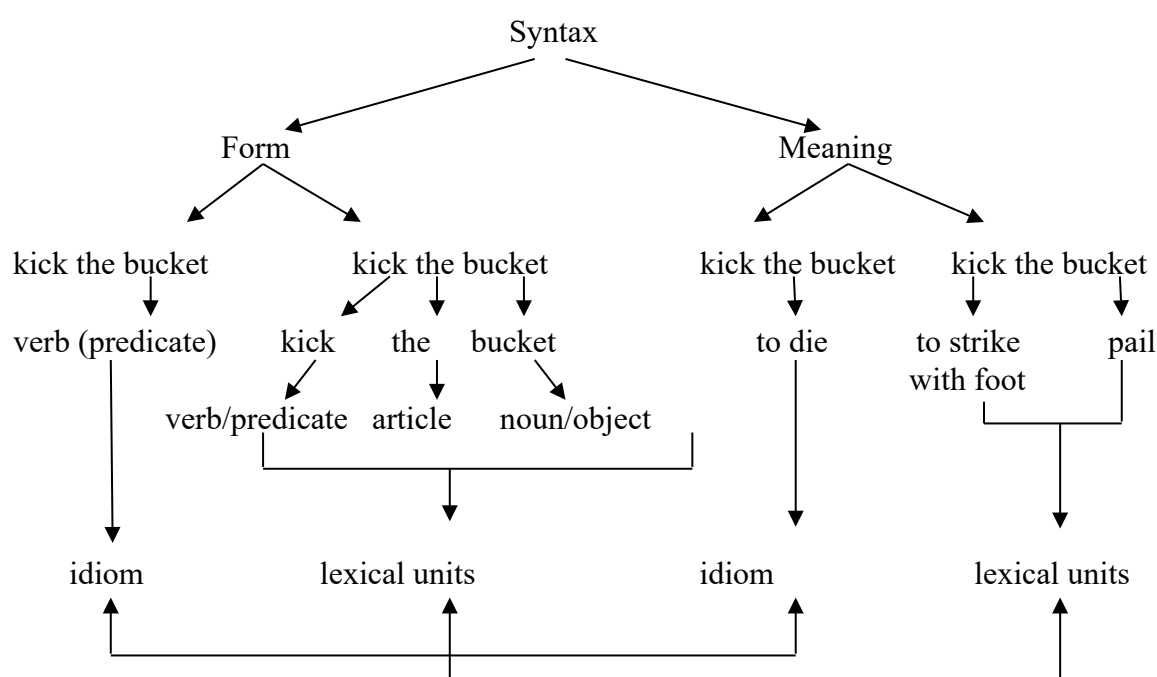
*to breathe one’s last*- The grandma *breathed her last*.”

In Albanian, we notice expressions related to the flexibility of the noun variability in the expressions related to death:

*Është në të fundit (në momentin e fundit) – in the last moments of life, ta thëntë prifti (hoxha) në vesh, për një bark (copë) bukë* or an omission of the adjective which is understood but not part of the phrase: *sa për të mbajtur shpirtin (gjallë)- keep the spirit (alive)* (non-idiomatic phrase). Verb phrases could also change in semi-motivated idioms like *të rëntë pas veshit – të ardhhtë pas veshit* (to die), in English *to die/meet a violent death* (to die from violence).

Syntax establishes the coordinated system of form and meaning. The relationship that idioms create in a sentence between the form and the meaning shows a different analysis based on the context. The idiom *He kicked the bucket* (to die) can be analyzed syntactically as follows.

**Figure 1.** Adapted from Yusifova, Gunel Izzaddin, *Syntactic features of English Idioms*, *International Journal of English Linguistics*; Vol. 3, No. 3; 2013, ISSN 1923-869X, Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education



From the figure above, the constituents parts in the sentence (He kicked the bucket) possess different syntactic functions. Any thought in the language can be expressed in different forms. Two semantic descriptions appear in a sentence: real or concrete, idiomatic or figurative. The form, syntactic features, and meaning are what make lexical units and idioms identical. Idioms are perceived as a whole construction which makes the difference between lexical units. So whenever we make the analyses of the sentence the whole phraseological unit must be analyzed as a single word. Depending on the motivational degree idioms can undergo some or no grammatical changes at all. The more flexible idioms can easily be subjected to syntactic changes. Partly-motivated idioms might allow different grammar tenses, the usage of active or passive moods of the verbs, change of places of the constituent parts, the inclusion of additional parts or reduction of words, changes of singular and plural forms, whereas non-motivated idioms do not allow any change at all in their construction. The idioms *kick the bucket* or *si Xhaferri simiten* in Albanian does not allow any difference in the grammatical structure, they are highly motivated idioms. In some idioms, the words can be used both in singular and plural, countable nouns can become uncountable ones and vice-versa. Such kinds of changes are considered to be minimal changes in idioms. According to different linguists idioms being partly analyzable offer the understanding of the meaning from its constituents parts, thus having syntactic flexibility, *to die/to meet a violent death*. Based on the conceptual metaphors of Lakoff (1980), metonymies and the encyclopedic knowledge of the human being the meanings of the idioms can be interpreted. The idiom *kicks the bucket* does not awaken the “death” domain. The noun phrase of the idiom “the bucket” does not agree with the “death” concept. There is not any subsidiary sign to determine NP. Thus the whole construction will not change into the passive voice. If we consider other idioms such as *he’s far gone*, *he’s not long for this world*, *to breathe one’s last*, *to pass away*, *come to a sticky end*, *on your last legs*, *to go the way of all flesh*, *he’s on his death-bed*, *be with the Lord*, *dropping like flies*, *big sleep (euphemism)*, *drop dead*, *he’s got one foot in the grave*, *to die a natural death*, mostly idioms sound with their paraphrases = “to die”. Such idioms can be subjected to syntactic variations as well. From the Albanian language we have idioms: *e drodhi bishtin*, *ktheu sytë nga qielli*, *i doli shpirti*, *iu shuan sytë*, *është në të fundit*, *po jep shpirt*, *mbylli sytë*, *po jep shpirt*, *e drodhi qafën*, *e preu gojën*, *në buzë të varrit*, *në fije të perit*, *e ktheu me këmbë përprjetë*, *i ra këmbës*, etc. These idioms mean “to die”, “nearly to die” or “has died”.

Other idioms like *the bucket list*, *get smoked*, *be taken from*, *pushing up daises*, *pop your clogs*, *reset character*, *it’s clipped*, *on the wrong side of the grass* (euphemistic slang), hardly can anyone understand the “death” domain unless he does not know the meaning of the whole idiom. Even though some idioms might allow some slightly different changes in tense, number, mood, inclusion of additional words, or reduction, idioms are characterized by the compositionality and stability of the constituent parts. Based on the level of idiomaticity idioms are divided into motivated, highly motivated idioms, and non-motivated idioms. Dealing with the syntactic structure of phraseological units, they could allow some changes or no changes at all in their structure based on the criteria of motivation.

Idioms undergo determiner variability. The change in determiner sometimes carries along with it a change in the number of the noun involved. For example:

- 1) *on your last leg*: “He was on **his** last legs yesterday”.
- 2) *to die by one’s hand*: “The old man died by **his** hand”.



- 3) *die in a hole*: “The situation was really bad in the family. The granddad died in **the hole**”

The second sentence has a tense variability besides the determiner change as well. Such slight changes of intervening determiner are seen by Jackendoff as simple syntax.

Based on the conceptual structuring of the idioms we can mention the following subsets:

- A. The notion of death “die-go”: go to the forefathers, to join the majority- e drodhi bishtin, mbylli sytë, ndrroi jetë, u fik kandili. The metaphor involves verbs of movement go, join, fik, mbyll, and ndrroi.
- B. “Die-sleep”. The metaphor of death as sleep implies the process of rest or relaxation. For example. To fall asleep – “ktheu sytë nga qielli, i vdekuri fle në shtëpinë e tjetrit”,
- C. “Die-surrender” involves the concept of spirit/soul. The metaphor used identifies life with a token borrowed by God and must be given back: give up the ghost, soul, yield up the ghost – e mori Perëndia.
- D. “Die – breathe away”. Breathing is taken with the meaning of life manifestation. Breathe one’s last- dha shpirt, është ne gramën e fundit.
- E. “Die- kill” cheat the gallows, die with your boots on, go for your tea- i derdhi zorrët, e hoqi qafe, e ktheu me këmbë përpjetë, ja kripi kokën, e fshiu nga faqja e dheut, etc. the number of phraseological units under the domain of die because of being killed is numerous in English. A considerable number of idioms are present in the Albanian language too.
- F. “Die – Commit a suicide” Do the Dutch - ia hoqi vetes.
- G. “Die -lose connection with the source of life” - to cut one’s cable, slip one’s cable, drop off the books, pop off the books, slip off the books - të shuhet kandili, të fiket kandili.

The meaning and form are closely related to the syntactic analysis. The unity of semantics and syntax has widely been found in Fillmore’s works. He considers semantics as a constituent part of syntax. Taking into consideration partly-motivated idioms, the constituent parts of the idiom possess to some extent individual meanings which are not the literary meanings of the components. Even though the notion expressed by the words of the construction is figurative, they establish adequacy with the paraphrase and can undergo several transformations.

## 5. Conclusions and further recommendations

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) emphasize that to achieve desired communication, culturally appropriate language use appears to be a must. Knowledge of linguistic features is not adequate for successful intercultural communication (Scarino, 2010). Referring to Baker (2012), this knowledge must be supported by an awareness of the sociocultural context, tendencies, conventions, and norms in communication. Culture has a crucial role in encoding and decoding messages corroborating the above-mentioned idea that culture is at the heart of communication. Language as a special product of human society and an instrument of human thinking and communication is a kind of institutional culture.

Learning idiomatic expressions will enhance the student’s communicative ability and will result in understanding cultural norms (Samani and Hashemian, 2012: 249). The meaning of idiomatic expressions is not formed within conventional rules and is often seen as non-compositional in nature, lack of reliable clues to understand and interpret has led to the assumption that the only way to learn idiomatic expressions is rote-learning (Boers et al.,

2007). Many idioms are not arbitrary but motivated by conceptual metaphoric and metonymic understanding.

Ter-Minasova (2000) states that language is a coating material for culture, in vocabulary, grammar rules, idioms, proverbs and interpretation, folklore, literature, and science, in written and oral discourse, cultural values are maintained. Thus, in any foreign language course, such a clash of cultures and practical experience is cross-cultural communication because every foreign word reflects, the outside world and foreign cultures.

Language and culture are closely connected. Language embodies and transfers culture. Varieties in language use within culture create different views. Teaching a second language should be accompanied by teaching a second culture. Teachers should equip themselves with the knowledge of second culture, make students familiar with cultural differences, and have high esteem for student's native culture; thus facilitating the process of language learning. Awareness of figurative language particularly idioms will improve teaching and assist learners to have better communication strategies. Therefore, a systematic knowledge of language and culture integration inside and beyond the classroom setting can be built up. Idioms, as a major component of native-like communication, enable a language learner to understand the thoughts, emotions, and views of the speakers of the target language. Thus, learning idioms provides learners with a significant chance to acquire information about the underlying parameters of a language.

Based on the fact that idioms can have no features of being subjected to changes like in idioms *kick the bucket* and *si e ema e Zeqos majë thanës*, analyzing some idioms are subjected to both lexical and grammatical changes. This is the proof of complexity of the language. The cognitive-oriented views and paraphrasing could determine the type of syntactic changes. The mutual connection between syntax and semantics acts as a major factor in carrying out analyses and investigations more efficiently. Idioms undergo determiner variability. The change in determiner sometimes carries along with it a change in the number of the noun involved. The meaning and form are closely related to the syntactic analysis. The unity of semantics and syntax has widely been found in Fillmore's works. He considers semantics as a constituent part of syntax. Taking into consideration partly-motivated idioms, the constituent parts of the idiom possess to some extent individual meanings which are not the literary meanings of the components. The syntactic analyses of idioms should not be carried out only in the grammatical aspect but also a researcher should pay attention to the images, domains that the idioms evoke psychologically evolved idioms, etc. The ability to understand such kinds of transformations, substitutions, and permutations in idioms is possible by the creative approach to the idioms. Both languages show peculiarities in phrase constituents that reflect directly the culture and mindset of the nation. These phrases cannot be translated into another language; they are culture-specific and could be explained only with the historic conditions or people's everyday life in the specific social conditions where it has been created. They are highly motivated idioms and no equivalent can be found in another language. For example, *Jack of all trades, but master of none, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, Jonny-on-the-spot, Tom, dick and/or Harry*, in Albanian; *si Kofini pas te vjeli, I duket ferra Brahim, u grindën për mustaqet e Çelos*, etc. The syntactic and semantic analysis of idioms in two languages reveals the distinct features each one of the languages possesses, shaped by the cultural identity and general characteristics of both English and Albanian.

## Acknowledgments

This paper is funded under the specific grant intended per year for academic research for each professor from Fan S. Noli University.

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