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**HISTORICALLY AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC IDIOMS IN
AMERICAN ENGLISH**

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ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis examines the structural and semantic features of culturally and historically specific American idioms, with the aim of determining their role in conveying elements of American cultural identity in discourse. The research emphasises the value of idioms as important linguistic units that reflect collective morals, traditions, national identity, and beliefs. It also explores the intricate interplay between language, geography, history, and culture, offering a perspective on the American worldview through the metaphorical nature of idiomatic expressions. The material for the study includes 155 idioms which were selected from dictionaries and subsequently categorised into thematic groups and subgroups, such as Religion, Entertainment, Body parts and personality traits, and Foods idioms, based on their structural characteristics and connotative meanings. The research methodology includes component and semantic analysis, method of observation, and the use of descriptive, comparative, and quantitative methods. Based on the analysis of academic literature, films, political speeches, interviews, TED Talks, and online articles, the investigation reveals that American idioms are highly flexible in usage, cover a wide range of topics, and can mark stereotypical ideas. Moreover, approximately 40–50% of the idioms exhibit verbal structures, reflecting the action-oriented nature of American English. Additionally, 14% of the idioms were identified as ethnically marked, often containing cultural or national stereotypes. The findings confirm that idioms are used in both formal and informal speech, and their meanings may shift depending on the context. The conclusions reaffirm the deep interconnection between language and culture, contributing to the fields of semantics, phraseology, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

Keywords: idiom, American English, culture, semantics, classification.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Ця бакалаврська робота досліджує структурні та семантичні особливості американських ідіом, що мають культурну та історичну специфіку, з метою визначення їхньої ролі у передачі елементів американської культурної ідентичності в дискурсі. У дослідженні підкреслюється цінність ідіом як важливих мовних одиниць, які відображають колективні моральні цінності, традиції, національну ідентичність та переконання. Ця робота також розглядає складну взаємодію між мовою, географією, історією та культурою, пропонуючи погляд на американський світогляд через метафоричну природу ідіоматичних виразів. Матеріалом для дослідження стали 155 ідіом, які були відібрані зі словників та згодом згруповані за тематичними групами та підгрупами — такими як Релігія, Розваги, Частини тіла та особистісні якості, а також Їжа — на основі їхніх структурних характеристик та конотативного значення. Методологія дослідження включає компонентний і семантичний аналіз, метод спостереження, а також описовий, порівняльний і кількісний методи. На основі аналізу наукової літератури, фільмів, політичних промов, інтерв'ю, виступів TED і онлайн-статей, було встановлено, що американські ідіоми вирізняються високою гнучкістю у вживанні, охоплюють широкий спектр тем і можуть позначати стереотипні уявлення. Крім того, приблизно 40–50% ідіом мають дієслівну структуру, що відображає орієнтованість американської англійської на дію. Також було визначено, що 14% ідіом мають етнічне маркування й нерідко містять культурні або національні стереотипи. Результати підтверджують, що ідіоми вживаються як у формальному, так і в неформальному мовленні, а їхнє значення може змінюватися залежно від контексту. Зроблені висновки підтверджують тісний взаємозв'язок між мовою та культурою, роблячи внесок у розвиток семантики, фразеології, перекладознавства та міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: ідіома, американська англійська, культура, семантика, класифікація.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the key features of the English language is its rich collection of idiomatic expressions, which reflect its dynamic nature and cultural diversity. Idioms, as fixed expressions with figurative meanings, are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the language, often offering insights into the values, beliefs, and humour of its speakers. As a result, idioms frequently display national traits and capture the distinct heritage, economy, traditions and religious views of a country. The modern evolution of language has not only preserved traditional idioms but has also led to the creation of new ones, influenced by societal trends, technology, and globalisation. The USA has produced a great deal of idioms that can be used to reflect the country's unique culture, as well as to give a brief overview of its cultural evolution and evoke a distinctive and rich American atmosphere. Hence, idioms play a significant role in both spoken and written discourse, appearing in literary, conversational, and even professional contexts. Their use enhances communication by adding colour, emotion, and nuance to otherwise plain statements. This study proposes a semantic analysis of the peculiarities and classifications of idiomatic expressions and aims to make a valuable contribution to understanding their functions and correlations within the broader framework of language. By examining idioms' structure, meaning, and usage, this research sheds light on their interactions with other linguistic elements, enhancing our comprehension of their role in communication and their impact on both language learning and cultural exchange.

Linguists have shown a great deal of interest in researching idiomatic expressions and their cultural effects. Issues of idiomaticity were investigated by such Ukrainian researchers as I. Bekhta and O. Matviienkiv [1], O. Moseichuk [3], Y. Kovalyuk [25] and others. The issue of using idioms in the American English language context is presented in the studies of foreign scientists such as W. Chafe [8], J. Čolakovac [9], B. Fraser [14], E. C. Katsarou [21], G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [27], P. McPherron and P. T. Randolph [33], G. Nunberg, I. A. Sag, and T. Wasow [34], G. I. Yusifova [47] and others.

The **topicality** of this study lies in its thorough examination of culturally specific idioms, their historical and geographic roots, and their application in contemporary discourse.

The **object** of the given study is the use of historically and culturally specific idioms in American English.

The **subject** of the research is the semantic and functional characteristics of idiomatic expressions in American English and their structural patterns.

The study **aims** to examine historically and culturally specific idioms in the American language as well as their function in language, communication, and culture. The achievement of the set aim requires a solution to the following **objectives**:

1. To define, classify, and describe the general characteristics of idioms as a linguistic phenomenon.
2. To explore the geographical, historical, and cultural background of idioms in the context of American English, highlighting their cultural origins and evolution.
3. To identify and analyse the structural patterns of American idioms, emphasising their syntactic and morphological features.
4. To perform a semantic classification of American idioms, investigating their thematic groups such as religion idioms, entertainment and sports idioms, body parts and personality idioms, and foods idioms.
5. To examine how American cultural values are reflected and transmitted through idioms.

The study is based on a thorough **methodological** framework that includes a *critical analysis of scientific works* by different linguists to provide a strong conceptual framework. *Component method*, that focuses on examining the composition and structural features of idiomatic expressions; *observation method* to detect culturally unique American idioms in native speakers' speech. In addition, it uses a *descriptive method* to define the characteristics of idiomatic expressions, a *comparative method* to find similarities and differences between contexts, and a *generalising approach* to draw broader conclusions about their usage and significance. Lastly, a *quantitative method* is used to determine the prevalence and frequency of specific idioms.

The material of the paper comprises 155 idiomatic expressions in American English collected from a diverse range of reputable sources. These include well-established dictionaries and scholarly publications dedicated to the study of idioms. The research also examines idioms in films, interviews, TED Talks, and YouTube videos. The selection process focused on ensuring the comprehensiveness of the data, with particular attention to culturally and historically specific idioms. This diverse dataset supports a thorough examination of the structural, semantic, and cultural characteristics of American idioms, providing a solid foundation for meaningful interpretations.

The structure of this study consists of an introduction, two main parts (the first part is theoretical, the second part is practical), conclusions to each chapter, general conclusion, references to the sources that were used in this work, a summary and appendices.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY OF IDIOMS

1.1. Definition, general characteristics and classification of idioms

As a communication system, language can have both literal and figurative meanings. Although the literal sense is straightforward, the figurative sense includes concepts like metaphors, similes, proverbs, and idioms as well as imaginative descriptions or special effects. Understanding and acquiring formulaic patterns, such as idioms, collocations, and compounds, which are vital for fluent and natural communication, is required for full mastery of language learning. It improves language by explaining thoughts, feelings, or cultural differences in a quick and vivid manner.

The field of linguistics known as phraseology studies fixed word combinations that have a stable structure and some degree of meaning transference. Phraseology constitutes a significant portion of the overall lexicon and plays a vital role in human communication. It enriches language with imagery and metaphor, adding depth and creativity to speech. Idiom research yields useful insights on linguistic originality, cultural contexts, and language evolution. Hence, idioms are one of the most difficult parts of language to teach and learn since many of them are not immediately clear to learners and their meanings are usually not apparent from a close examination of their constituent parts. Despite the numerous definitions available, distinguishing between collocations, phrasal verbs, and idioms can sometimes be challenging. The concept of idiom is shared by all scholars, but everyone has a different perspective on how to define idioms; some of these definitions are as follows:

According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, an idiom is a term used in a language utilisation that is unique to it, either in its grammatically unusual use of words (e.g. «*give way*») or in its meaning that cannot be inferred from the combined meanings of its constituents (e.g. «*up in the air*» for «*uncertain*») [53].

Idioms are defined by W. L. Chafe as vital in any language. Given their widespread occurrence, they cannot be considered a peripheral phenomenon, and linguistic theories should undoubtedly provide a logical explanation for them [8, p. 109–127].

For B. Fraser an idiom is characterised as a component or arrangement of constituents whereby the formatives of which it comprises do not determine its semantic interpretation compositionally [14, pp. 22–42].

Another definition is given by O. Moseichuk, the scientist states, that an idiom is a specific type of phraseological unit, distinguished by its vivid stylistic qualities, emotional expressiveness, deviation from neutral language, stability, and potential for ambiguity. Its defining characteristic is idiomaticity, which relies on imagery and involves a partial or complete reinterpretation of its original meaning, often lacking a direct logical connection to its literal components. According to the scholar, understanding the figurative nature of idioms requires recognising their complex semantic relationships with freely structured language expressions [3, p. 270].

The term «**culturally specific idioms**» is used by J. J. Čolakovac to refer to idiomatic expressions that are specific to a given culture or subculture. They encapsulate the common experiences, convictions, standards, and traditions of their speakers. They are widely utilised for conveying complex ideas and challenging emotions [9].

On the other hand, researchers such as G. Nunberg et al. disagree with the non-compositional interpretation of idioms and contend that idioms possess a semantic structure by nature. They argue that idiomatic meaning is not totally independent of its constituent pieces since the meanings of idiomatic expressions are closely related to the meanings of their constituent parts [34].

American researchers J. Seidl and W. McMordie highlight the difference between the meaning of an idiom as a whole and the meanings of its individual components. They define an idiom as a group of words that, when combined, convey a meaning distinct from the separate meanings of each word [43, p. 13]. This perspective underscores the richness and complexity of language indeed, as idioms reflect cultural nuances and creative linguistic expression, making them both a challenge and a vital area of study for language learners.

The definitions of an idiom provided by the dictionary and variety of scholars share several core characteristics. Primarily, all emphasise the non-compositional

nature of idiomatic meaning, where the overall meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of individual components. Additionally, the cultural and stylistic aspects are frequently noted, with J. J. Čolakovac highlighting cultural specificity and O. Moseichuk emphasising vivid stylistic qualities and emotional expressiveness. Stability and the reliance on imagery or reinterpretation also emerge as common features, reflecting the complexity and richness of idiomatic expressions [3; 9].

J. Seidl and W. McMordie's definition of an idiom is particularly compelling because it clearly captures the core characteristic of idiomatic expressions: the divergence between the idiom's holistic meaning and the literal meanings of its individual components. This perspective highlights the essence of idiomaticity, emphasising the unique semantic shift that occurs when words are combined into an idiom itself. Such a definition is not only precise but also highly practical for linguistic analysis, as it focuses on the functional aspect of idioms that differentiates them from other forms of expression [43].

In general, every language unit has the capacity to exist exclusively because it fulfils a specific function, which sets it apart from other language units. Because of this, idioms as linguistic units cannot be broken down into smaller units with distinct nominative functions because doing so could distort or lose their entire meaning.

When examining idioms, two significant challenges often arise. The first is the issue of origin, as even linguistic experts frequently struggle to definitively explain the roots and essence of many idiomatic expressions. The second is the relationship between an idiom's origin and its current use. While the meaning of an idiom may be widely understood, the link between its etymological roots and its present-day interpretation often remains unclear or ambiguous.

Scholars have different opinions about what exactly defines idioms, just as they have differing definitions, labels, and perspectives on what characterises an idiom. An idiom's intrinsic peculiarities must be taken into account when explaining it. Idiomatic elements cannot be considered lexical units. An idiom's role within a sentence is equivalent to that of a single word within the sentence. Idioms and common words cannot be altered or divided into other parts of a sentence. Despite this, new

combinations cannot be constructed based on idioms, but it is practical to create a new lexical unit from the terms. Words have individual meanings, but as the words that make up an idiom lose their meanings, the meaning of the idiom is expressed as if it were one word rather than in the terms taken independently. An idiom is the figurative expression of a word, which is a common embodiment of meaning. Although words may combine to produce a compound, this does not imply that the compounding is an idiom. Lexical units and idioms are the same in form, syntactic characteristics, and meaning. The only way idioms vary from lexical units is that they lack morphological structure when seen as a whole. As stated by G. I Yusifova [47, p. 134], we emphasise that when analysing a sentence that contains an idiom in general, the entire idiomatic structure must be examined as a single word, and any questions addressed at the entire construction must be phrased exactly like those made at a single word. The author concludes that thus, the idiom can be referred to as a syntactic unit because it has lexical wholeness. These syntactic units are researched in phraseology and are considered to be part of phraseology.

Idioms are also known for their expressiveness. Expressiveness is a defining characteristic of idioms. Cognitive linguist M. Johnson views this as a fundamental aspect, noting that idiomatic expressions possess a strong emotional resonance despite being figurative in nature. Some idioms stand out for their vivid imagery or emotional depth, often reflecting specific aspects of human experience such as personality traits, actions, or emotions. Rather than merely naming concepts or objects as they are, idioms reinterpret and reevaluate them. M. Johnson highlights the unique qualities each idiom brings to a language, emphasising their ability to convey humour, sarcasm, irony, and other indirect forms of communication. He underscores their power to communicate complex ideas in a memorable way, far surpassing the literal meaning of their words. Additionally, idioms play a role in fostering a sense of unity or belonging within groups or communities that share the same language and cultural references. In this way, they serve as markers of cultural understanding. [27, pp.47-56].

Further, G. Nunberg et al. [34, pp. 492–493] identify six defining properties of idioms, which help to elucidate their nature and usage:

- **Conventionality** refers to the idea that idioms are conventionalised expressions, understood within a community as fixed phrases with established meanings;
- **Inflexibility** highlights the rigid structure of idioms, as they generally resist modification in form or word order;
- **Figuration** emphasises that idioms often convey figurative meanings through figures of speech such as metaphors, metonymy, or hyperbole;
- **Proverbiality** reflects their function in describing or explaining recurrent situations of social relevance, lending them a proverbial quality;
- **Informality** underlines their frequent association with colloquial or informal language, rooted in popular speech and oral culture;
- **Affect** refers to their capacity to convey an evaluative or affective stance, expressing the speaker's attitude or emotional response toward the subject matter. These properties collectively illustrate the complexity and distinctiveness of idiomatic expressions within language.

Idioms can also alter in terms of singular and plural forms, albeit not all of them do. For example, for some idioms (e. g. «*kick the bucket*», «*smell a rat*», «*chew the fat*») it does not matter whether they are used in singular or in plural. However, both singular and plural idioms are open to tense shifts. Sufficiently, the singular form may also be impossible in some idioms (e. g. «*rain cats and dogs*», «*spill the beans*»), while the plural form is impossible in others. Certain idioms exhibit the adaptability and context-driven character of English idiomatic expressions by allowing the usage of the words in both singular and plural variants. For instance, when referring to numerous acts, «*take a step*» may become «*take steps*», and «*pay lip service*» may alternatively appear as «*pay lips service*». Furthermore, depending on the structure and intended meaning of the phrase, countable nouns can change to uncountable ones and vice-versa.

Based on these characteristics, at least three distinct dimensions of the term «idiom» can be identified:

- **semantic opacity dimension** that refers to the feature of meaning, where the idiom's overall meaning cannot be easily deduced from the meanings of its individual components;

- **structural dimension** that highlights the grammatical feature, which encompasses the specific syntactic and structural patterns that idioms often follow;
- **conventionalised pragmatic dimension**, reflecting the feature of institutionalised usage, where idioms are embedded in the cultural and linguistic conventions of a speech community [21].

It is essential to define the criteria that separate idioms from other formulaic patterns from a typological perspective, and it is equally critical to have criteria that separate and distinguish the many types of idioms. Idioms are categorised by some researchers based on their form, while others do so based on their meaning. Numerous models have been proposed, and various methods have been taken with regard to the form, structure, and function of idiom. In an effort to provide a thorough definition of idioms, a variety of forms have been introduced along with a number of content-based idiom categories, including semantic, syntactic, lexical, functional, and lexicographical. According to P. McPherron and P. T. Randolph, most linguists, authors, poets, language instructors, and language learners acknowledge that idioms can be useful in providing vivid descriptions and that they are more potent and successful than literal, non-idiomatic language. Nonetheless, they also concur that idioms are difficult to categorise and present a problem for language instructors [33]. Z. Kövecses also highlights the difficulties in classifying idioms, comparing them to a «mixed bag» that contains phrasal verbs (e.g. *come up*), grammatical idioms (e.g. *let alone*), metaphors (e.g. *spill the beans*), metonymies (e.g. *throw up one's hands*), pairs of words (e.g. *cats and dogs*), idioms with «it» (e.g. *I'm on it*), similes (e.g. *as cool as a cucumber*), sayings (e.g. *a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*) and others [26].

In general, N. Fatmawati differentiates between three subclasses of idioms: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms:

- **Pure Idioms** are fixed, non-literal expressions whose original meanings have been entirely forgotten. As a result, their meanings cannot be deduced through logical analysis. Examples include «*kick the bucket*» and «*under the weather*».

Unlike figures of speech such as metaphors and similes, pure idioms lack any implied comparison or discernible meaning within their components;

- **Semi-idioms** consist of two parts, one with a literal meaning and the other with a figurative or non-literal meaning. For instance, «*break the ice*» combines the literal idea of «*breaking*» with the figurative «*ice*», referring to easing social awkwardness. Another example is «*put down roots*», where the literal «*roots*» represents establishing stability or settling in a place. The figurative meaning in semi-idioms often relies on the interplay between these components. These expressions are generally fixed in form or allow only minimal variations;
- **Literal idioms** are simpler and more transparent compared to pure and semi-idioms. They include phrases like «*See you later*» or «*All the best*» which are largely self-explanatory. Literal idioms are characterised by their invariance or restricted variation in structure, making their meanings easier to infer from their individual parts.

N. Fatmawati also highlights the challenge of maintaining a clear distinction between different types of idioms, such as pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal. This observation underscores the complexity of idiomatic language, where categories often overlap, making it difficult to apply strict classifications. The same concerns restricted and unrestricted collocations. According to N. Fatmawati's typology, idioms can function either as habitual combinations of words in a sentence or as phrases where lexical equivalents are often implied. These combinations can be categorised as either restricted or unrestricted. Restricted idioms include examples like «*burn the midnight oil*» or «*in the not-too-distant future/past*», where specific combinations are more rigidly defined. Unrestricted idioms, on the other hand, allow for greater variability, such as «*to take a stand/position/stance on an issue*» or «*to catch a bus/car/tram/train*» [12, pp. 10-11].

According to S. Glucksberg, idioms can be classified into four distinct types based on the relationship between their constituents and their meanings:

- **Non-compositional idioms** are those in which the meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of their individual components because there is no clear

relationship between them. For example, «*raining cats and dogs*», which means raining heavily, shows no direct connection between the words «*cats*», «*dogs*» and the concept of heavy rain [52];

- **Compositional opaque idioms** are expressions where some relationship between the constituents and the overall meaning can be recognised, but the connection remains obscure or limited. For instance, «*bite the dust*», meaning to die or fail, is partially understandable because the imagery of «biting dust» can metaphorically imply defeat or death. However, the phrase as a whole still has an idiomatic opacity [54];
- **Compositional transparent idioms** are easier to interpret because their meanings can be inferred from the meanings of their individual words. For example, «*break the ice*», which means to ease tension or start a conversation, is transparent because «*breaking the ice*» metaphorically represents initiating interaction [54];
- **Quasi-metaphorical idioms** are those that use a communicative strategy similar to metaphors. Their components evoke a figurative meaning, like in «*reach for the stars*» conveys the idea of striving for high or ambitious goals, utilising metaphorical imagery to express aspiration [17; 51].

Some linguists, such as I. Korunets, suggest categorising idioms based on their lexical-grammatical characteristics. This approach focuses on the part of speech to which the main, semantically dominant word in the idiom belongs. Using this framework, idioms can be classified into the following types:

- **substantive idioms**, where the key component is a noun, such as *a piece of cake* (something very easy) or *a cold shoulder* (a display of deliberate unfriendliness) [52; 54];
- **verb idioms** with a verb as the central element, such as *to spill the beans* (to reveal a secret) or *to hit the sack* (to go to bed) [51; 53];
- **adverbial idioms**, where the main word is an adverb, for example, *in a jiffy* (very quickly) or *once in a blue moon* (very rarely) [50; 53];

- **adjectival idioms**, where an adjective serves as the leading element, for instance, *as cool as a cucumber* (calm under pressure) or *red as a beet* (extremely red) [24, p. 203; 53; 54].

According to Ukrainian scientists I. A. Bekhta and O. C. Matvienkiv, idioms can be characterised from one more lexical-grammatical perspective. They took as a basis the structural-semantic (morphological) classification of idioms and analysed examples of their use in English-language artistic prose texts. According to this principle, they distinguish four types of phraseological units:

- **nominal idioms** function as nouns, often used to describe people, objects, concepts, or ideas. They provide a way to encapsulate complex notions into concise expressions;
- **verb idioms** are built around verbs and describe actions or behaviours;
- **adverbial idioms** modify actions, often describing time, frequency, or manner;
- **adjectival idioms** act as adjectives, conveying descriptive or figurative qualities [1, pp. 22-28].

A fascinating approach to the classification of idioms was explored in the project *Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond* by E. Piirainen [37], where idioms were grouped into five categories based on their cultural foundations. For example, idioms with textual dependence are those whose interpretation and origin are tied to specific textual sources, such as the Bible, fairy tales, or classical literature. Other categories in this framework include idioms that stem from pre-scientific conceptual domains, cultural symbols, and aspects of material or social culture. The project aimed to identify the fundamental collection of idioms found in numerous languages throughout Europe as well as beyond, which shaped the classification criteria. This allowed researchers to make meaningful comparisons across languages and analyse the data effectively. For instance, an idiom like *«the writing on the wall»*, originating from the Bible, would fall under textual dependence, while *«spill the beans»*, symbolising revealing a secret, might connect to cultural symbols. The influence of material culture is also highlighted by expressions like *«to strike while the iron is hot»* which have their roots in pre-scientific comprehension of smithing [54].

According to etymological classification, idiomatic expressions can be categorised into distinct groups based on their linguistic and historical characteristics:

- Splicings containing necrotic words refer to idioms that incorporate archaic or historical lexemes which are no longer used outside the idiomatic context. For example «*to buy a pig in a poke*» (unwise investment) preserves the archaism «*poke*» which has largely fallen out of modern use in this sense [54];
- Phraseological combinations are idioms that are both lexically and semantically inseparable, forming a cohesive and indivisible unit of meaning. Examples include «*to bite the bullet*» meaning to endure a difficult situation, or «*to jump on the bandwagon*» meaning to join others in doing something popular. These expressions cannot be understood by analysing their individual components independently, as their meaning arises only from the unity of the phrase [54];
- Phraseological fusions consist of idioms that include grammatical structures now considered obsolete or incorrect by contemporary standards. For example, the expression «*woe betide him*» (misfortune will happen to him) features an archaic grammatical construction. According to J. Seidl and U. McMordy, the way words are placed together is frequently unusual, nonsensical, or even incorrect in grammar [43, p.6; 51];
- *Phraseological conjunctions* are idioms in which the overall semantic meaning overshadows the significance of individual words. In these cases, the literal meaning of the constituent parts is irrelevant. For instance, «*to let one's hair down*» meaning to relax, or «*to hit the nail on the head*» meaning to describe something accurately, convey meanings entirely detached from the literal definitions of their components. [40, p. 4-15; 54; 55].

Another noteworthy framework for categorising idioms is the etymological classification proposed by J. Seidl and W. McMordie. This approach organises idioms based on their origins and themes, identifying the following groups:

- Biblical and literary idioms, such as «*to cast the first stone*» (to criticise others while being guilty oneself) or «*a Herculean task*» (a task requiring great strength or effort) [52; 54];

- Household idioms, such as «*to sweep under the rug*» (to hide something embarrassing) or «*to throw in the towel*» (to give up) [50; 55];
- Agricultural idioms, such as «*to reap what you sow*» (to face the consequences of one's actions) and «*to plow through*» (to persevere despite challenges) [51];
- Culinary idioms, such as «*to butter someone up*» (to flatter someone) and «*to stew in one's own juice*» (to suffer the consequences of one's actions) [50; 55];
- Military idioms, such as «*to drop the ball*» (to make a mistake, originating from sports but with a tactical undertone) or «*to hold the fort*» (to maintain a position) [54; 55];
- Nautical idioms, such as «*to weather the storm*» (to endure a difficult period) and «*to sail close to the wind*» (to take risks) [51; 55];
- Animal-related idioms, such as «*to be the black sheep*» (to be an outcast) and «*to let the cat out of the bag*» (to reveal a secret) [54];
- Idioms with a colour component, such as «*to see red*» (to become angry) and «*to feel blue*» (to feel sad) [55];
- Idioms featuring body parts, such as «*to turn a blind eye*» (to ignore something) and «*to lend a hand*» (to help) [43, p. 6; 47].

Another classification of idioms, proposed by M. Halliday in «*An Introduction to Functional Grammar*» [20], divides idioms into three categories: ideational, interpersonal, and relational. This framework aligns with Halliday's broader approach to analysing language use and understanding how it serves various communicative purposes:

- **Ideational idioms** characterise the content or nature of a message, encompassing the phenomena of experience, including sensory, affective, and evaluative aspects. They often describe actions, events, situations, people, objects, attributes, and emotions [25, pp. 57-59];
- **Interpersonal idioms** are used to convey emotions or attitudes towards others, often reflecting feelings or sentiments in social interactions. Examples include greetings, farewells, directives, agreements, opinion-seeking phrases («feelers»), and rejections;

- **Relational idioms** contribute to the cohesion and coherence of discourse, focusing on the relationships between two or more entities [28].

Idioms can also be classified based on their structural composition, dividing them into verbal, verbless, sentence, and minimal idioms:

- **Verbal Idioms** feature a verb as their core element, often paired with an object or complement. Examples include «*take the plunge*», «*bend the rules*» and «*draw a blank*»;
- **Verbless idioms** lack a verb and can be nominal, adjectival, or adverbial in nature. For instance, «*a thorn in one's side*» (nominal), «*over the moon*» (adjectival), or «*at the drop of a hat*» (adverbial);
- **Sentence idioms** have a more complex structure, resembling complete sentences. Examples include «*every cloud has a silver lining*», «*practice what you preach*», and «*actions speak louder than words*»;
- **Minimal idioms** are simple idiomatic expressions made up of only one or two words, such as «*head over heels*», «*on point*», and «*by chance*» [32].

Overall, the classification of idioms is a complex and nuanced process, influenced by their contextual, cultural, and figurative nature, as well as their inherent potential for multiple interpretations. Given the diversity of idiomatic expressions, linguists have not established a universally accepted method of categorisation, with different criteria yielding various classification schemes.

1.2. Geographical, historical and cultural background of American idioms

Language serves as a powerful medium for expressing and preserving cultural values, beliefs, and aspirations, highlighting the deep connection between language and culture. It is not merely a tool for communication but also a vessel carrying the implicit cultural context and meaning that shape our understanding of the world. Through the language used in intercultural interactions, we gain insights into the unique perspectives and lifestyles of different societies. The vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions of a language reveal the cultural norms, social hierarchies, and

historical milestones that have shaped a community. For instance, specific idioms or phrases might reflect a society's agricultural roots, religious traditions, or relationship with nature.

Language is far more than a tool for transmitting ideas; it is a symbolic framework that shapes our perception of reality and influences how we construct and interpret the world around us. In the article *Language in a Cultural Sociological Perspective*, G. Fele explores the interplay between language, culture, and society, presenting three main approaches to studying language from a socio-cultural perspective:

- Language as a symbolic instrument is viewed as the ultimate symbolic tool, encoding reality and assigning value to human experiences. It shapes how we perceive and interpret the world, giving meaning to our surroundings and emotions;
- Language as social participation is framed as a cultural practice through which individuals create social bonds and foster human connections. Through dialogue, storytelling, and shared expression, language becomes a medium for participation in the collective life of a community;
- Language as an instrument of power is also recognised as a tool for exerting power and establishing authority. It influences social structures, reinforces hierarchies, and can serve as a means of control or persuasion within various contexts [13].

The emergence of American English as a distinct variant was recognised as early as half a century before the American Revolution. This variation extended beyond differences in tone, accent, or the introduction of new words, encompassing unique methods of incorporating new linguistic elements [36, p. 90]. Numerous factors contributed to this process of koineization, including demographic, social, cultural, occupational, and political influences. However, identifying the exact causes of specific differences between English variants remains a challenge. Although some idiomatic expressions defy explanation regarding their origins and development, such cases are relatively uncommon in American English. For instance, according to Quirk

in his *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* the gap is not that great even between different parts of America. He emphasises the enormous influence of mass media (movies, shows, music) and notes that this nullifies differences even in pronunciation [39, p. 20].

The English language in the United States, much like its British counterpart, reflects the everyday lives, struggles, and aspirations of its people. From the vast prairies to bustling cities, American idioms have been shaped by the country's diverse history and cultural influences. Farmers, ranchers, cowboys, factory workers, soldiers, and homemakers all contributed to the rich tapestry of expressions that embody the spirit of America.

Many scholars highlight that idioms, more than other language elements, have the ability to accumulate and preserve historical facts, cultural meanings, traditions, customs, and folklore. This is due to the «cumulative» function of language. According to Natalia Bogdanets-Biloskalenko, this national-cultural element is present at all levels of the language (grammar, phonetics, stylistics). Nevertheless, non-equivalent units, in particular phraseological vocabulary, are most often associated with linguistic realities. The aspect that conveys this information is referred to as the «**national-cultural component**» [2].

Idioms are deeply tied to the culture, geography and history of a specific country, offering valuable insights into its history, traditions, and worldview. This connection arises from the fact that most idioms develop over time, reflecting the practices, beliefs, and other cultural aspects of the societies in which they originated. As cultures evolve, so do the words and expressions associated with them. Some idioms become obsolete and fade from use, while new ones emerge to take their place. This process is often influenced by the disappearance of the original factors or objects that inspired the idiom, even as the expression itself remains in use [35]. Therefore, when analysing figurative language, it is crucial to recognise that language is a dynamic, ever-changing phenomenon.

In his 2009 paper *An Analysis of the Cultural Phenomena*, X. Geng highlights that idioms are deeply rooted in the environment, lifestyle, history, and culture of their

native speakers, reflecting their innermost emotions and spirit. Closely tied to a nation's historical background, economy, geography, and customs, idioms embody the cultural essence of a language more distinctly than individual words. This connection underscores how idioms infuse language with cultural richness. For learners of a new language, understanding idioms provides insight into the culture and context behind the words, bringing them closer to achieving fluency. Grasping the context in which idioms are used allows for more natural and effective communication [16].

Geographically, the expansive landscapes of the United States have played a key role in shaping idiomatic expressions. Stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, the country's landscapes include mountain ranges, deserts, plains, and extensive coastlines. These features are deeply reflected in American idiomatic expressions, many of which carry vivid imagery tied to the nation's physical and cultural environment. Therefore, it is important to understand that each region will have its own idiomatic expressions, as geographical boundaries will not always reflect linguistic ones [5]. For instance, the phrase «*I'm from Missouri*» or «*Show me*» originates from Missouri's unofficial nickname, the «*Show-Me State*». This idiom is often used to express skepticism or a demand for proof before believing a claim [54].

One more striking example of the geographical impact is an idiom «*Silicon Valley*» that has become synonymous with technological innovation, rooted in the geography of California's Bay Area [55]. It was originally used as a word on the cover of *Electronic News Magazine's* January 11th issue in 1971. This idiom reflects the transformative impact of geography on language, where a specific location becomes emblematic of global trends in technology and culture [42; 50].

American history is another rich source of idiomatic expressions. The foundation of the United States began with the establishment of colonies by European settlers (1607–1776). The blending of Native American, British, Dutch, and other cultures in the New World gave rise to idioms that reflect the pioneering spirit and challenges of early settlers. For instance, the phrase «*bury the hatchet*» has Native American origins. It comes from the custom of burying weapons as a gesture of peace between warring tribes. Today, it signifies resolving a conflict or making peace. From this early period

we also learn that English was already perceived as a lingua franca. This idea of monolingualism was helped to take root by the cultural identity of US speakers. In particular, scholars such as A. Mackey and Z. Dornyei discuss that motivation is a key factor in the spread of a language, and suggest that Americans do not have enough cultural motivation to learn another language. This gives us a glimpse into the peculiarity of the formation of American idioms [11; 31].

Furthermore, it is practical to differentiate between various groupings of idioms based on the era of American history they represent. For instance, the idiom «*witch-hunt*» is rooted in a significant historical event, referring to the search and persecution of individuals whose views are considered harmful or dangerous. Originally tied to the 17th-century witch trials in America, the term first emerged in the United States, particularly in the context of the Salem witch trials. As historians note, this event must be understood within the broader context of political turmoil, religious upheaval, and economic change, which led to a sense of societal collapse among the Puritan settlers [6].

Further, the industrial revolution in the U.S. and its rise as a global manufacturing powerhouse gave birth to idioms related to machinery and work. For example, R. Williams argues that industrialisation and technological change played a significant role in the development of language, as they offered new terms that led to the formation of idioms [46]. Expressions such as «*hitting the nail on the head*» or «*gearing up for something*» reflect the practicality and precision associated with the trades and industries [51]. Correspondingly, the country's railroads inspired sayings like «*being on the right track*», which conveys progress or alignment with goals [55].

In summary, the linguistic worldview represents reality through the concepts and categories embedded in a language. Linguistic processes, such as naming and categorisation, are inherently linked to how people identify and comprehend objects in the external environment. This perspective suggests that interconnectedness of culture, history and geography, and linguistic consciousness capture the interplay between culturally driven practices and their linguistic expressions. These connections are reflected in communication through the structures of the languages, including its

vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Consequently, the linguistic worldview transcends objective reality, embedding cultural identity, historical experiences, ways of thinking, and lifestyle into the structural elements of language, offering insight into the unique spirit and mentality of a nation.

We mentioned the historical and geographical background of the formation of idioms, however, it is worth taking into account another strong language-forming factor as the connection between language and culture, as well as the influence of the latter. To start with, in the 19th century the Prussian linguist and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt was among the first to analyse how language affects how people see and think. According to Humboldt, each language singles out a certain worldview (*Weltanschauung*) that reflects the cultural and intellectual perception of its speaker. The scientist also emphasised that linguistic differences correspond to variations in cognitive perspective, that is, language is not only a means of communication, but also a tool of expressing the character of a nation. And also we should take into account his concept of the «*inner form*» of language, which refers to the basic structure that shapes meaning and thus distinguishes one language from another [4].

Furthermore, the relationship between language and culture can be viewed through the lens of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, also known as the linguistic theory of relativity. This hypothesis, formulated by Edward Sapir and developed by his student Benjamin Lee Whorf, suggests that the structure of language influences the cognition and perception of reality by speakers [22]. From this perspective, idioms are a particularly vivid example of how language strengthens cultural values and social norms.

As we have already identified, idioms in particular play a prominent role in such formation. According to W. Ping, idiomatic units are integral linguistic units that have broad cultural connotations, reflected in aspects of national heritage [38, p. 295]. K. Risager also highlights the connection between language and culture, emphasising that it is culture that shapes linguistic meanings [40, p. 87]. Scientists report, in particular, that culture influences the categorisation of linguistic elements.

Nevertheless, although language is the main vehicle for the transmission of culture, there is no clear correspondence between the two. I. Kecskes studies the connection between language, culture, and the context of their use. He also argues that the way we think in a cultural sense influences our speech patterns and thus makes it difficult to easily learn other languages [23, p. 113]. That is, the national components of idioms, as scientists note, symbolise the ethnic realities of the nation and encode collective experience.

Importantly, Anna Maria Castañeda notes that a full understanding of idioms only emerges when real-world knowledge and context are taken into account. It is also discussed that extralinguistic and ethnolinguistic factors influence the evolution of idioms. Indeed, while native speakers use these units to reflect their mentality, non-native speakers translate the same idioms through the perspective of their cultural background [7, p. 226]. Similarly, N.Tsetskhladze argues that idioms carry deep metaphorical and ethnic associations, especially those that involve a body part. This makes the study of idioms important from an interlinguistic and linguocultural perspective [44, p. 12].

In general, American English is multicultural in nature, which in turn allows for the study of unique ethnic idioms. The United States has developed a specific linguistic environment and, as a linguistic melting pot, reflects the ever-changing dynamics of the linguistic domain. E. Zyzik's studies focus on linguistic diversity and the role of cultural exchange in the formation of American idioms. In particular, it examines subcultural variations, informing how idioms differ in individual geographical regions and what cultural nuances they carry. Moreover, it highlights the influence of immigration and cultural mixing on the enrichment of American idioms [48]. We believe that analysing American idioms from the perspective of various factors is very important. It contributes to a broader understanding of the influence of culture on language, and the spread of such linguistic dynamics among the national identity of the United States.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

Throughout the study, we focused on the theoretical research on idioms conducted by a number of researchers who worked in various branches of linguistics and sought to understand these phraseological units on a variety of levels. Idioms, as integral components of phraseology, enrich language with creativity, cultural insight, and emotional resonance. Despite their complexity and the challenges they pose for learners and researchers, idioms serve as unique linguistic units that encapsulate the figurative essence of language, transcending literal meanings.

It should be emphasised that idioms demonstrate remarkable adaptability in terms of grammatical forms, such as singular and plural variations, tense shifts, and changes in countability, that are the characteristics that will be relevant to the research. This flexibility underscores their context-driven character and capacity for nuanced expression. Various typological frameworks classify idioms based on semantic opacity, structural patterns, pragmatic functions, and etymological origins. These diverse categorisations reflect the inherent complexity of idioms and their multifaceted nature, encompassing cultural, historical, and linguistic dimensions.

The geographical and historical background of American idioms further demonstrates their cultural significance. Idioms best capture the cultural and national variations of people's lives, thus illuminating the link between language and culture. They were also impacted by real life, routine, history, and the customs and standards of the nation from whence the idioms are derived. American English, shaped by its distinct evolution and diverse influences, offers a rich tapestry of idiomatic expressions reflecting the everyday lives, struggles, and aspirations of its people. These culturally diverse idioms highlight the fundamental American values and their close connection to the nation's past and culture. By examining idioms holistically, scholars gain valuable perspectives on linguistic diversity, the evolution of language, and the shared human experience.

Additionally, we have discussed that as language evolves alongside cultural and societal changes, idioms remain dynamic markers of historical milestones, social norms, and collective memory. Scholars such as G. Fele and X. Geng highlights the

interplay between language, culture, and society, emphasising that idioms embody the cultural essence of a language more distinctly than individual words.

We also highlighted the influence of culture on language. Different languages have divergent effects on how idioms are interpreted by people, making these units a very important element in understanding ethnic values. As a multicultural language, American English shows this unique space and opportunities for studying idiomatic variation.

Thus, it is essential to comprehend American idioms because of their uniqueness, practicality, and significant influence not only in fostering fluency but also in deepening our understanding of the cultural, cognitive, and historical dimensions of language.

2. PECULIAR FEATURES OF HISTORICALLY AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC IDIOMS IN AMERICAN ENGLISH

2.1. Structural patterns of American idioms

Focusing on the structural patterns of idioms provides a valuable framework for understanding their formation and use. Analysing the structure of idioms allows researchers to identify recurring syntactic structures, which will then be the basis for classifications. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of how idioms function within a language, highlighting their unique grammatical and semantic properties. The study of idiom's patterns also makes cross-lingual and cross-cultural comparisons easier, as it provides insights into common linguistic phenomena and idiomatic constructions. Ultimately, studying structural patterns improves our capacity for idiom analysis and interpretation.

These structures, from single words to complex sentences, enable idioms to express nuanced meanings by appearing as various parts of speech and syntactical elements. The main structural patterns we have identified in the compiled list of idioms include:

- idioms can appear as single words or composites. Examples of simple words include «*bookworm*» (a person who enjoys reading in general) and «*brainstorm*» (a clever notion or one that strikes one immediately) [55]. Composite expressions like «*meat-and-potatoes*» (centred on the necessities) combine multiple elements to convey culturally embedded meanings [51];
- many idioms are expressed as multi-word phrases that rely on metaphor or imagery: «*to bury the hatchet*» (to resolve a conflict or make peace) [54], «*not know beans*» (to have very little or no knowledge of something) [50];
- idioms also occur as complete sentences, integrating complete syntactic forms and varying in tone and structure: «*leave a bad taste in one's mouth*» (to bring up bad memories), «*the bigger they come, the harder they fall*» (the more well-known a person is, the more serious their failure will be) [55].

In American English, culturally specific idioms display diverse lexical-grammatical structures. If we take I. A. Bekhta and O. C. Matvienkiv's classification as a basis, these patterns can be categorised into nominal, verbal, adverbial, and adjectival idioms, each serving unique grammatical and communicative functions [1, pp. 22-28]. After analysing the collected list of idioms in terms of structure, we have come to the following results, considering some deviations:

- nominal idioms: *act of God, Bible belt, Sunday best, also-ran, a box score, after hours, great white hope, hail Mary, curtain call, trump card, blind date, bull session* etc.;

- verbal idioms: *to bury the hatchet, to jazz up, to ace out, to ante up, to hold all the aces, to pass the buck, to force someone's hand, to take a bath (on something), to move the goalposts, to step up to the plate, to go back to the drawing board* etc.;

- adverbial idioms: *at the drop of a hat, by the sweat of one's brow, come hell or high water, after hours, according to Hoyle, in apple pie order, from soup to nuts, in high spirits, down in the dumps, in a pickle, long in the tooth, all down but nine* etc.;

- adjectival idioms: *cold feet, hot under the collar, head over heels, butterflies in one's stomach, hot dog, cool as a cucumber, as nutty as fruitcake, bark up the wrong tree, bite the bullet, cold hands, warm heart, face the music* etc.

Next, after grouping these idioms in relation to their lexical-grammatical characteristics, we can observe several notable peculiarities:

- the omission of determiners in the nominal group of idioms like in «*Sunday best*» and «*Bible belt*», which adds to a more informal or conversational quality of an idiom;

- the verbal group of idioms is characterised by idiomatic prepositions, for example «*to step up to the plate*» relies on specific preposition *up* that cannot be substituted with others without changing its meaning; grammatical flexibility is also worth noting, as in «*to hold all the aces*», that can shift in tense or aspect while maintaining its idiomatic interpretation;

- the adverbial category is distinguished by elliptical expressions as seen in «*down in the dumps*» and «*in a pickle*». These idioms serve as examples of how leaving

off specific grammatical components (determiners, pronouns, or auxiliary verbs) improves idiomatic quality rather than hindering its clarity;

- adjectival group of idiomatic expressions frequently denotes comparative structures, such as «*cool as a cucumber*» and «*as nutty as fruitcake*» employing comparisons to describe abstract qualities. This group shows fixed patterns with minimal flexibility within idioms such as «*head over heels*», that exhibit syntactical rigidity, where the structure cannot be easily modified without changing the intended meaning.

One more feature worth pointing out is that in grammatical variations of the nominal group, a prepositional noun attribute can be used in place of an attribute conveyed by a noun in the Genitive Case, for instance: *the almighty dollar* → *a dollar of almightiness* or *the toast of Broadway* → *the Broadway's toast*. Also, the adjectival group is defined by the components' dynamic and consistent dependency: *cold feet* → *cold hands*, *warm heart* - while not exactly a simple replacement, the adjectives «*cold*» in both examples show interchangeable emotional characteristics; *hot under the collar* → *hot dog* - «*hot*» can be swapped between these idioms, though the meanings differ slightly.

Moreover, analysing idioms according to the I. Korunets' approach suggests dividing them into four groups based on the dominant part of speech [24, p. 203]. The structural analysis we provide reveals that among substantive and verb groups of idioms the common English combination in terms of idiomatic construction is **Noun (Pronoun)/Verb + own + Noun**: *the apple of someone's eye*; *toss one's cookies*; *ball is in someone's court*; *by the sweat of one's brow*; *force someone's hand*; *eat one's heart out* etc.

In the units being studied, it should also be mentioned that the English language is distinguished by the usage of prepositions like *of*, *in*, and *at*, such as: *grasping at straws*; *piece of cake*; *two peas in a pod*; *down in the dumps*; *act of God* etc.

Further peculiarity is an item or phenomena that possesses attributive or attributive-objective links to the preposition is employed as a head word when the

preposition «*of*» is utilised. That is the characteristic feature of another pattern within the substantive group: **Noun + Preposition + Noun**. In our research, we identify the following subtypes of the substantive phraseological units under analysis:

- having a head word with a reference to the individual who possesses the attribute indicated by a preposition: *the apple of someone's eye*;
- having a head word that indicates a quality or trait of an individual or thing that a preposition expresses: *fickle finger of fate*;
- using a head word to convey the entire idea and a preposition to indicate a portion of it: *a piece of the pie*;
- with a preposition indicating the content of the head word and the head word defining an item: *a breath of fresh air*.

These patterns demonstrate the idioms' innate ingenuity as well as their structural consistency in English. Such patterns enable idioms to express complex meanings that frequently go beyond their literal interpretation through the use of metaphorical and symbolic language, and, particularly here, with the use of only one preposition «*of*».

The given examination of idioms and their structures allows us to make the following conclusions: verbal patterns, which typically make up 40–50% of idioms discussed, are the most common structures. Because verbs frequently encompass the carrying out of ideas, its prevalence highlights the dynamic aspect of idiomatic expressions used in the given cultural settings. On the other hand, nominal, adverbial and adjectival idioms constitute a smaller but equally important category. These idioms (e. g. *hail Mary*, *like trying to nail jelly to a wall* or *as nutty as fruitcake*) have a deeper cultural or contextual understanding, as they rely on certain images. Regarding cultural implications, structural patterns mirror the subject matter of their respective fields: either putting emphasis on strategy, being strongly action-focused or illustrating how human experiences are communicated through analogies. As a result, we have discovered some peculiarities in the way these culturally specific idioms are structured. The study found that some recurrent structural patterns, such as Noun/Verb + own + Noun and Noun + Preposition + Noun, are essential for the idioms' formation to convey

metaphorical and culturally rooted meanings. In terms of linguistic structure, we have defined co-occurrence with verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns, showcasing idioms' flexibility in sentence construction. Additionally, they demonstrate a predisposition for pairing with modifiers and prepositions. These findings reveal that examining structural elements helps to categorise and comprehend idioms more easily.

2.2. Semantic classification of American idioms

From a semantic perspective, an idiom resembles a single word in that it conveys a unified meaning, yet it does not function as one. According to V.Fromkin and R. Rodman [15, p. 23], this distinction arises from the necessity for grammatical variability, which enables language users to adapt and utilise these expressions flexibly within different linguistic contexts. This adaptability ensures that idioms remain functional and meaningful despite their fixed semantic interpretation. Over time, the metaphorical roots of idioms may lose significance due to their frequent usage. The non-literal nature of idioms arises from figurative extensions, where a phrase describing one situation is applied to another with similar characteristics. Though despite their figurative nature, idioms reflect logical associations between different contexts.

To facilitate the semantic analysis of these idiomatic features, our study categorises 155 culturally specific American idioms into four primary semantic groups: religion idioms, entertainment and sports, body parts and personality, and foods idioms. By grouping them thematically, this categorisation simplifies the process of examining their meaning. Furthermore, we can better understand the cultural values, traditions, and everyday experiences embedded in these idioms.

2.2.1 Religion idioms

The theoretical background has shown that idioms are largely institutionalised to occur with a definite reference, making it essential to understand how they are employed in real-life contexts. Religion is a profound aspect of human culture,

developing alongside the formation of early societies. As representations of diverse cultures, religions embody unique ethnic traits. Most importantly, faith profoundly shapes individuals' thoughts and behaviours, as well as influences various aspects of society (i. e. economy, politics, literature, art etc.)

First of all, familiarity is central to the seamless understanding of idioms, particularly those with deeply entrenched cultural or contextual associations. Idioms such as «*Sunday best*» and «*preach to the choir*» illustrate this well. Their widespread usage in both legal and colloquial settings ensures that they are recognised and comprehended by diverse audiences, often without requiring detailed explanation. Such idioms can be commonly used in legal contexts to describe natural events beyond human control, such as earthquakes or floods [52]. For instance, «*all hell breaks loose*» has found a niche in legal and political discourses, albeit less formally, to describe situations where chaos or disorder occurs unexpectedly, requiring legal intervention [52]. As an example of this peculiarity, we have chosen two real-world instances to compare the idiom «*all hell breaks loose*»: the aftermath of the *Deepwater Horizon oil spill* and a courtroom altercation. These cases provide an opportunity to examine the linguistics and functions of this idiom, particularly its semantic dimensions. The use of this expression is as follows:

- “*If these things are going to be expected to work under conditions where **all hell is breaking loose**, they have to be tested in conditions...*” - a fundamental remark made by McCarthy of the National Academy of Engineering [64];
- «*...and not fly off the handle like some street thug with a bigger stick than ours. When this breaks down, **all hell breaks loose**.*» - courtroom statement [61].

Following the results we have come to the conclusion that:

- the literal meaning of «*all hell breaks loose*» suggests a release of chaos, in the Deepwater Horizon case, it symbolises the uncontrollable consequences of safety failures, such as environmental damage and regulatory fallout. In the courtroom setting, it represents the breakdown of professional order and escalation into chaos;

- the idiomatic expression carries strong negative connotations: it conveys a lack of control, aligning with the emotional components. In both examples, the idiom is

used to highlight the unpredictability of coming events, prompting a reaction of concern from the audience;

- its religious origins, though rooted in Western Christian traditions, have been secularised, making it accessible to a broad audience and suitable for varied contexts, including both technical reports and courtroom descriptions.

Thus, we can trace how religion idioms' flexibility, as a linguistic tool, allows them to transition seamlessly between various formal and semi-formal contexts. In our opinion, it demonstrates the enduring relevance of idiomatic expressions in modern discourse.

Subsequently, the use, meaning, and resonance of religious idioms in language are influenced by their diverse range of evaluative connotations. Based on their contextual use, we have distinguished several groups in terms of their emotional undertones:

- idioms, that carry profound emotive weight, often depicting critical situations: «*come hell or high water*» suggests determination and resilience despite obstacles, combining urgency with resolve [54];

- there are also idioms, reflecting desperation and hope; they emphasise vulnerability or optimism during challenging times: «*on a wing and a prayer*» highlights fragile hope or a slight chance of success [51], likewise «*by the sweat of one's brow*» shows hard work and perseverance [54];

- idioms associated with religious rituals or cultural standards are shown to evoke nostalgia: «*Sunday best*» refers to wearing one's finest attire, usually linked to religious special occasions, on a connotative level it carries a tone of respect [55]. «*Cross my heart and hope to die*» as a solemn vow or promise, reflecting sincerity [51];

- this subgroup frequently reflects society views, assess position or effort: «*at the bottom of the totem pole*» refers to a status that has an evaluation tone that is neutral to negative, while «*a feather in one's cap*» denotes a significant accomplishment with a quite favourable assessment connotation [51];

- the following idioms usually convey judgment and responsibility: «*preach to the choir*» implies repetition in persuasion and futility. «*Turn a blind eye*» indicates deliberate ignorance, frequently with unfavourable moral implications [55].

As evident from the preceding analysis, idioms related to religion function on two interrelated levels: *emotional connotation*, where a lot of idioms arouse feelings of hope; and *evaluative implication*, when they subtly evaluate or judge events, deeds, or people. Thus, idioms range from praise (diligence) to criticism (neglect).

Table 2.1

The number of Religion idioms based on their connotations.

	Positive Connotations	Negative Connotations	Neutral Connotations
Number of idioms	5	3	3
Examples	<i>By the sweat of one's brow; come hell or high water etc.</i>	<i>All hell breaks loose; at the bottom of the totem pole etc.</i>	<i>Act of God; Bible Belt etc.</i>

The diverse function of religion idioms in communication is made clear by grouping them into various subject categories. They are language instruments that have a profound resonance in a variety of circumstances, in addition to improving emotional expressiveness. Further research could explore how these idioms vary in interpretation and use across cultures, highlighting their dynamic evolution in language.

2.2.2 Entertainment and sports idioms

Idioms often capture national perceptions of entertainment and sports, highlighting their role as a means of relaxation, social interaction, and even self-expression of a given country. These activities are deeply embedded in national culture and have been closely tied to the advancement of human civilization throughout history. Many modern international sports competitions have their origins in early

ethnic sports, which were preserved and developed across different cultural groups. Therefore, many idioms are derived from popular sports like baseball, basketball, and football, which are symbolic representations of American cultural and historical background. Our study presents that this semantic group corresponds to the first mentioned group in size and percentage, as it obtains 67 items, which is roughly 50% of total analysed.

To emphasise the idioms' societal significance we have chosen to categorise this group according to thematic and contextual relevance. The four following subgroups were identified within the general category of «Entertainment and sports»:

- *sport-related idioms* originate from various competitive contexts, and usually reflect ideas of performance, teamwork, and overcoming challenges. Examples include «*bat one thousand*», which signifies flawless execution, and «*move the goalposts*», which refers to altering expectations to gain an advantage [55];

- *pastime category* captures idioms derived from performing arts and general interactions. Expressions like «*showstopper*» evoke the imagery of impressive theatrical performances [51], while «*rock the boat*» metaphorically represents disrupting established norms [54];

- reflecting the culture of risk-taking and chance, the *gambling category* includes idioms such as «*ace in the hole*» (a hidden benefit) and «*all in*» (risking everything). These idioms underscore themes of uncertainty and strategy, often applied metaphorically to various real-world situations [50; 51];

- furthermore, the group encompasses phrases rooted in specific *historical periods*, such as the Roaring Twenties and the Wild West. Examples include «*gold digger*», associated with materialistic pursuits during the 1920s, and «*hair in the butter*», which goes back to the challenges of frontier life [55].

To start with, baseball, often referred to as «America's pastime», has contributed numerous phraseological units to the language. Idioms like «*step up to the plate*» (to take responsibility or action) and «*out of left field*» (something unexpected or surprising) are deeply rooted in the game's terminology and procedure [51]. As well as the expression «*touch base with*» comes from the practice of runners touching bases

during play, the act of reconnecting or catching up with someone [55]. We have chosen the following idioms to investigate the linguistic purpose and their interpretation, namely in the interviews. The first case is an interview with Sharon L. Hicks, an American author and speaker known for her candid reflections on her life experiences:

- «...*but you know, we **stepped up to the plate** and said, 'Dad, you be happy; you've been through a lot...» [63];*

In this given sentence, Sharon L. Hicks uses the idiom «*step up to the plate*» to describe the moment when she and her brother took responsibility for their mother's care. Our observation shows that, in American culture, baseball idioms are rich in metaphorical meaning, representing not only the physical act of being at bat but also the courage required in tough situations.

The second example is an interview *Distrust But Verify* with Jeremy Ben-Ami, an American lawyer and activist:

- «*So historically, you know, the analogy of Iran, uh, and Nazi ideology is just simply, you know, **out of left field***» [59].

In this case it is quite easy to guess the meaning of an idiom just by looking at its components. The phrase «*out of left field*» typically refers to ideas that are unexpected or lacking in relevance. Ben-Ami employs this idiom to emphasise that equating Iran's current regime with Nazi ideology is historically unfounded and contextually inappropriate. Here we can trace how American sports idioms contribute to the ability of individuals to articulate social and political experiences.

American football, another highly celebrated sport, has also inspired widely used idioms. For example, «*move the goalposts*» refers to changing the rules to gain an advantage [55], while «*Monday-morning quarterback*» signifies someone who passes judgment based on hindsight [51]. Both idioms stem from the game's rules and mechanics but have taken on broader applications in everyday life. Another phrase, «*Hail Mary*», which originates from a desperate, long-range pass in football, has become synonymous with any last-ditch effort in difficult circumstances [55]. One great example to demonstrate how idioms of this realm are used is to analyse the

expression «*drop the ball*» as used by Senator Marco Rubio in the context of the 2016 Republican primary debate:

- «*On Saturday night at the debate, I **dropped the ball**. I want you to know that will never happen again*» [58].

The idiom originates from sports, metaphorically representing failure or a lapse in performance [54]. This idiom reinforces the Senator's image as a candidate willing to learn from mistakes. It should be mentioned that such idioms simplify complex issues, making them accessible to a wide audience, but might have a tricky risk of trivialising significant events as well. In Rubio's case, the idiom effectively reframes his debate misstep, but critics could interpret it as insufficiently serious for a presidential campaign.

Beyond sports, American entertainment, in particular Hollywood cinema, has also influenced idiomatic expressions. Phrases like «*showstopper*» (something exceptionally impressive or attention-grabbing) and «*curtain call*» (a final acknowledgment or act) are derived from theatre and film culture [51]. These idioms highlight the expressive facets of the entertainment industry, which is a cornerstone of American tradition and a global cultural export.

Furthermore, the idiomatic language of the 1920s and 1930s reflects the dynamic interplay between cultural trends and linguistic expression. During this period, gambling was a prominent part of American life, serving as both entertainment and a metaphor for the economic unpredictability of the era. The widespread influence of gambling on American idiomatic language reveals broader societal values of risk-taking. For example, an «*ace in the hole*» refers to a hidden advantage that can be revealed at a crucial moment. This idiom emerged from stud poker, where an ace dealt face down could secure a player's victory [50]. In the cultural context of the 1920s, the phrase symbolised the strategic thinking that was highly valued. The idiom's enduring popularity highlights its applicability to a wide range of situations requiring foresight. We have analysed the use of such interpretation in the US film of the same name «*Ace in the Hole*» produced by Billy Wilder [56]. In the context of the movie, the «*ace in the hole*» represents both the literal situation of Leo Minosa, the trapped miner, and the

figurative opportunity seized by the protagonist, Chuck Tatum, a disgraced journalist desperate for a career revival. Once, Chuck states «*Bad news sells best. Good news is no news*», exemplifying his strategic use of the «*ace in the hole*» for selfish ends.

Some other interesting phrases of that period are the idiom «*all in*», that figuratively represents complete commitment to a goal [51]; «*force someone's hand*» in the meaning of forcing someone to do something against their will [54]; «*pass the buck*» evolved to describe the act of evading responsibility [52]; «*take a bath*» describes a significant financial loss, particularly in high-stakes activities like gambling [55]; «*wheel and deal*» denotes the use of clever strategies to gain financial advantage [51]; a «*winning streak*», rooted in the optimism of the Jazz Age, refers to a series of consecutive victories in games or bets [55].

In conclusion, American idioms offer a vivid reflection of the nation's cultural identity, being deeply embedded in their origins. These idioms symbolise broader societal values, such as accountability (*to ante up*) [51], adaptability (*even money*) [55], and perseverance (*all down but nine*) [51]. Our analysis helped to clarify how their metaphorical richness allows them to transcend the literal meanings and resonate across various discourses, from personal narratives to political rhetoric.

2.2.3 Body parts and personality idioms

Humans have long relied on their body parts for sensory perception and interaction with the world, yet rarely consider why these very body parts serve as foundational elements in language. Studies of idioms involving body parts often focus on metaphorical and psychological dimensions. Unlike other objects referenced in language, body parts have a unique relationship with neural networks, making their linguistic representation deeply rooted in human cognition. Therefore, analysing body-part idioms requires more than a metaphorical perspective; it also necessitates a cognitive and embodied approach to fully grasp their formation and usage.

For our analysis, we have classified the idioms thematically based on their lexical components. The study suggests that idioms in this dataset predominantly

involve human body parts, with notable frequencies in certain terms. For instance, *head* (4), *heart* (4), *eye* (2), *foot* (1), and *hand* (1) are quite common, as seen in examples such as *head over heels*, *eat one's heart out*, *turn a blind eye*, and *get your foot in the door*. Idioms with animal-related elements, such as *feather and bark*, also contribute unique thematic interpretations (*a feather in one's cap* and *bark up the wrong tree*). Additionally, some units depict emotions and experiences through physical sensations, such as *butterflies in one's stomach* and *cold feet*. Words associated with emotions and mental conditions, such as *pickles* and *spirits*, are frequently used to convey abstract notions. Such thematic spread underscores the prevalence of body parts and emotional states as vehicles for utilising figurative language.

Further, the idioms were classified into five semantic subgroups based on their meanings:

- *characteristics* group includes idioms describing personal traits or features of individuals: «*long in the tooth*» characterises age [52], while «*cold hands, warm heart*» conveys warmth of character despite an external impression [55];

- idioms of *actions* focus on physical or mental activities; it highlights responses to situations: «*bite the bullet*» (to endure hardship) [54] and «*shoot from the hip*» (to act without forethought) [55];

- emotional, physical, and mental *states* are well-represented by «*down in the dumps*» that depicts sadness [51], while «*hot under the collar*» reflects anger [52]. In the same way, «*in high spirits*» denotes delight [55];

- idioms of *consequences* show outcomes, either positive or negative: «*get your foot in the door*» signifies initial progress toward an opportunity [51], while «*leave a bad taste in one's mouth*» conveys displeasure [55];

- idioms nominating *ability* or *inability* are less common in this set. For example, «*keep your eyes peeled*» refers to attentiveness [52].

Moreover, the cultural context on which an idiom is dependent can significantly influence its connotative meaning. In their key work *A Glossary of Literary Terms* M. H. Abrams and G. G. Harpham distinguish between *denotation*, which refers to the fundamental or literal meaning of a linguistic unit, and *connotation*, which is the

secondary or interrelated meaning [49]. Connotation is the emotional or inferred value that a word conveys and can result from a number of things, such as the historical development of language. We think it is also vital to classify the phraseological components according to their connotative significance.

According to the research, the majority of body-part idioms are connected to negative characteristics, in particular when used to describe a person's character. This prevalence results from the fact that people frequently use these units when they experience emotions intensely, especially when they are feeling down. To many psychologists, passion is a psychologically uncomfortable state characterised by heightened sensitivity, which frequently leads to intense emotional reactions. Under these circumstances, we present the following results:

- a significant portion of idioms related to character traits incorporate references to human body parts, particularly those associated with expression: «*have a chip on one's shoulder*» or «*hot under the collar*» emphasising psychological states of dissatisfaction [51];

- idioms can also band together according to particular behavioural or emotional traits. Idioms like «*butterflies in one's stomach*» or «*cold feet*», for example, highlight the bodily symptoms of these emotions [50; 54]. Moreover, idioms that stress perseverance, such as «*bite the bullet*» or «*take it on the chin*» also highlight the capacity to confront difficulties head-on [51; 54]. On the contrary, expressions of impulsivity, such as «*shoot from the hip*» indicate characteristics that are frequently seen negatively.

Curiously, there are considerably fewer idioms with positive connotations, like «*a feather in one's cap*» or «*in high spirits*», than those with negative ones. Usually these phrases indicate accomplishment or delight [50; 51]. We came to the conclusion that the disparity is a reflection of a larger linguistic tendency to point out emotional conflicts over triumphs or virtues. Although this pattern is present in many languages, American English idioms stand out in particular. Many American idioms, such as «*face the music*» or «*get your foot in the door*» which express ideals of ambition, are reflections of a culture that values independence [55]. American English's use of body-

part idioms is consistent with the culture's larger focus on overcoming hardship and succeeding personally.

In order to investigate how these idioms are used in American discourse, we have analyzed the idiom «*bite the bullet*» in the context of U.S. politics, namely *Washington, D.C. Undecided CUNY Forum* speech given by M. Benjamin:

- «*I mean, sometimes, in my view, you have to **bite the bullet** and do the right thing*» [60].

First of all, we observe that the phrase adds intensity to the part of «*do the right thing*»; that is idioms are not only carriers of metaphorical meaning, but also serve as a means of expressiveness in language. In addition, the idiom carries a somewhat negative connotation, pointing to the achievement of the desired through leaving the comfort zone, but for a greater good. Regarding culture, this idiom with its origins in battlefield medicine [50], reflects key American values: pragmatism, resilience, and practicality. Therefore, such commonly known and used idioms help shape public rhetoric while still remaining a cultural marker.

2.2.4 Foods idioms

As far as we can tell due to the previous research, idiomatic speech is very culturally specific. Food is the other factor incorporated into language to give it significance, historical context, humour, and depth. In a culture, food-related idioms serve as a kind of language slang that enhances communication and can even assist create significant interpersonal connections.

Many of the chosen and analysed idioms have origins tracing back to the early modern American English period, with some potentially dating even earlier. For example, «*the apple of someone's eye*», which has biblical roots, reflects a deep cultural heritage [51]. Similarly, expressions such as «*don't cry over spilled milk*» likely originated in agrarian societies where milk was a vital resource [54]. The enduring presence of these phrases, some surviving for over 500 years, underscores their adaptability to changing cultural trends. Then, the migration of English speakers

to America played a significant role in the evolution and preservation of these idioms. Phrases such as «*bring home the bacon*» and «*sell like hotcakes*» exemplify the blending of English roots with American culture, where staple food items like bacon and pancakes became emblematic [52; 54]. This process mirrors the way culinary practices follow cultural communities and act as markers of identity.

Our analysis is grounded in how food idioms often derive their power from universal experiences, such as everyday dishes or national meals, peculiar to a particular region. Still, such idioms do not always relate to edible topics, making them both relatable and memorable. Idioms such as «*apples and oranges*», «*piece of cake*», and «*from soup to nuts*» draw directly from everyday life, ensuring their accessibility [51]. Their vivid imagery, such as in «*cool as a cucumber*» or «*toss one's cookies*» enhances the communicative effectiveness [55]. Furthermore, idioms like «*in the soup*» demonstrate semantic evolution, shifting from literal meanings to metaphorical applications, which allows them to remain relevant in contemporary usage. One more example is, «*meat-and-potatoes*» emphasising fundamental practicality, while «*as easy as pie*» highlights simplicity [51].

Additionally, «senses» become much more vivid when we connect them to the phrases we are decoding. It is possible that these factors work together to give food idioms the cultural resilience they appear to have. Analysing the outlined semantic group, here are some general characteristics we would like to point out:

- in general, *fruit idioms* convey both positive and comparative qualities. For instance, «*the apple of someone's eye*» symbolises something cherished [51], while «*apples and oranges*» highlights the impossibility of comparison [55]. Fruit here associated with value, individuality;

- idioms involving *bread and meat* are indicative of their cultural importance as representations of prosperity. Phrases like «*bring home the bacon*» imply financial stability [52], while «*meat-and-potatoes*» or «*the meat and potatoes*» emphasise essential elements of a situation [51]. We suggest that such associations likely stem from the historical inaccessibility of certain foods (like beef) to all socioeconomic classes;

- *milk* is typically linked to nourishment, as suggested in the «*don't cry over spilled milk*». This highlights how certain food promote comfort and positivity [54];

- idioms like «*as nutty as fruitcake*» connect nuts with silliness. While the origins of this association are unclear, it effectively conveys the idea of someone being unpredictable, perhaps drawing on the chaotic mix of ingredients in a fruitcake itself [54]. However, the connotative meaning can vary, as it can carry positive meaning, humorously associating product with eccentricity;

- *alcohol-related idioms* like «*to hit the booze/sauce*» and «*hard liquor*» reflect its dual role as a means of escape and a source of indulgence [55].

- meanwhile, *soup idioms* («*duck soup*» and «*in the soup*») convey simplicity or difficulty, respectively. We suggest it illustrates the versatility of food metaphors in depicting contrasting states [51].

Analyzing these idioms, we have identified that they are very dependent on the historical context, often reflecting shared experiences. For instance:

- *toast-related expressions* (*be toast*, *the toast of Broadway*) originate from the 17th-century custom of placing spiced toast in wine [55];

- the idiom «*through the grapevine*», tied to the Civil War, evolves from technology practices, such as telegraph lines resembling grapevines [51].

In order to demonstrate how idiomatic terms are modified to fit different communicative contexts, we chose to examine the use of «*apples and oranges*» in the 2002 movie *John Q*. In the film, this idiom is used in the following dialogue:

- «- *Just pretend you're getting paid.* - *No, this is **apples and oranges**. I can't*» [62].

Firstly, the film is American-made, which allows us to explore the nature of employing this idiom even better. Secondly, the phrase itself helped to boost the character's argument, which emphasises the impossibility of treating both situations as equal and frames the idea as fundamentally incorrect. Thirdly, by illustrating how idiomatic language supports rhetorical positions, the term captures the larger idea of justice and rational refusal. It is also worth considering the practicality of such an

expression: the difference between these two fruits is pretty obvious, hence the clarity in use.

Another example for study shows the use of the «*be toast*» idiom in a more conversational style, namely in Caroline McHugh's TED Talk *The Art of Being Yourself*, which gained 16 million views in 11 years. The phrase appears in a TED Talk in the following statement:

- «*If you didn't have an ego, you'd **be toast***» [65].

The metaphor of «toast» brings up the idea of something burnt and damaged, it shows how serious the outcomes might be. McHugh skilfully communicates the importance of preserving one's sense of self in both personal and professional life by using this colloquial expression. It is actually a quite great way to captivate listeners, as she engages her audience with language they are familiar with.

Another interesting example for analysis can be found in the film *Bullets Over Broadway*, the idiom «*the toast of Broadway*» is employed to capture the quintessential theme of the fleeting nature of success within the competitive theatre-world. Generally, heat is used in toasting to represent the intensity connected to achievement. The term *toast* in the idiom exemplifies polysemy as well: it suggests celebration, like a toast in one's honour; and it implies an elevated status (e. g. to be the toast of a particular community). Therefore, the concept of toast helps to associate celebrity with something pleasant, evokes feelings of joy [57].

To summarise, the analysed instances show how idioms, that are ingrained in culture, improve the coherence of written and spoken language. We believe the lasting appeal of these units resides in their capacity to convey intricate concepts in a comprehensible way. We find idiomatic language to be dual in purpose: serving as a means of practical expression and cultural continuity. Particularly, food idioms are associated with a crucial aspect of human life within the material world - eating food for survival and fulfilment. Thus, we can conclude that cultural relationships in the American language are frequently formed by such phrases, which is evident within formal and informal discourses (e. g. the media, film production).

2.3. American cultural values reflected in idioms

Learning about the cultural connotations and associations of idioms can help us better appreciate their importance for interpersonal interaction. We have already mentioned how idioms' widespread use may be explained by how easily their figurative meanings are comprehended. People who are familiar with an idiom's culture can understand its meaning almost automatically, without having to think about interpreting it literally. For sure, idioms are extremely useful as communication tools because of their ease of understanding, which allows them to concisely explain complicated concepts or feelings. Furthermore, familiarity often comes from repeated use within the given cultural background. Our study points into how this establishes a connection between the form and meaning of the idiom.

To start with, idioms, which have their roots in daily life, reflect a shared comprehension of the environment and human experiences. Idioms reflect how Americans view the natural and social world, which is frequently influenced by their flexible approach to communication (e. g. «*flat tire*», «*to jazz up*»). Furthermore, we have also noted that idioms frequently give insight into the mental characteristics of their users. As idioms are transmitted through the discourses, they persist as a dynamic representation of American values and attitudes. Based on the list of culturally specific American idioms we have compiled, the following are some key characteristics found:

- Americans prefer action-oriented strategies and realistic answers, hence their idioms reflect similar attitude: «*cut the mustard*» in terms of meeting expectations, «*ballpark estimate*» is used to emphasise the importance of practical tasks [55];

- widespread stress on self-reliance: «*by the sweat of one's brow*» - success through hard work [54], or «*step up to the plate*» in the meaning of taking responsibility [51];

- a common aspect of the American mindset is the excitement of progress and the belief in the potential for achievement: «*on a wing and a prayer*» when there is hope in the face of limited resources [51], «*Hail Mary*» as a last-ditch effort with a chance of success [55];

- idioms that promote determination frequently reflect resilience, a fundamental quality valued in American culture: «*take it on the chin*» - facing hardships with grace [51], and «*bite the bullet*» in a sense of tackling difficulties head-on [54];

- further, there are idioms, reflecting the American emphasis on equality: «*at the bottom of the totem pole*» - acknowledging social struggles [51], or «*move the goalposts*» for critiquing unfair practices [55].

Apart from this, national beliefs and prejudices are also frequently conveyed by idioms, which are a verbal representation of cultural attitudes and show how Americans view both themselves and others. A national stereotype is a significant social factor that helps to define the boundaries of a social group and contributes to its consolidation. Prejudices can appear on an individual and a group level, influencing social norms and larger group dynamics in addition to interpersonal encounters [45, p.15]. Therefore, stereotypes frequently target the behavioural characteristics of socio-cultural groups, mainly language and social habits. Additionally, this list can be broadened to include demographic characteristics like gender, age, and place of living; physiological characteristics like skin tone and height, vestimentary features, and ethnic factors like race and nationality. Social indicators such as political beliefs, wealth, and level of education can also be added.

Ethnic-based idioms frequently reflect past attitudes and beliefs about certain cultural groups within the territory of America. For example, we investigated those that use the term «*Indian*» to refer to Native Americans. These idioms exhibit a range of neutral, negative, and positive meanings influenced by cultural representations and historical exchanges. For instance, the idiom «*Indian summer*» paints a favourable picture, linking Native Americans to the calm and pleasant climate of the areas they called home [55]. This expression, which reflects an idealised perception of maturity, has developed over time to symbolically denote a moment of peace and harmony. Another example is «*talk the leg off a wooden Indian*», showing someone as being incredibly communicative, even having the ability to interact with inanimate items [51]. It links Native Americans' representation (wooden carvings of the tribe) with

enduring presence, even if it isn't specifically favourable about them. We find this funny recognition of tenacity and endurance to be the source of the positive.

However, a number of idioms have negative implications that reinforce historical inaccuracies. For example, «*Indian giver*» misrepresents Native Americans as being arrogant or dishonest. Such attention is a result of colonial misreading based on their customs of community sharing. Further, the expression «*too many chiefs and not enough Indians*» implies an imbalance between workforce and leadership, thereby portraying Native Americans as weak in organisational structure [55]. Both phrases draw attention to the false beliefs present in historical accounts, however, still depicting American cultural values. Furthermore, «*Indian sign*» represents the wrong idea that Native Americans possessed magical abilities that could cast spells or curses. The term reinforces unfavourable biases of Native Americans as enigmatic, possibly evil people connected to the paranormal [55]. However, there are neutral meanings, such as in the idiom «*Indian file*» which describes a single-file line structure that was first employed by Native Americans in military settings. This phrase, which avoids obvious value judgment, emphasises a useful method that has been accepted across cultural boundaries [55].

Furthermore, ethnic-based idioms frequently represent events from society contributions. Regarding «*Mexican*» idioms, these terms show a complex interaction between objective observations and preconceptions. The way this ethnic component is ingrained in idiomatic language has been impacted by Mexico's close proximity to the United States as well as their shared but complicated history. Language connections between Mexico and the United States are characterised by cooperation and conflict. Particularly in areas with significant Mexican-American populations, the shared border encourages language borrowing as Spanish phrases and idioms find their way into English. For example, this cultural fusion is demonstrated by the fact that words like «*fiesta*» and «*siesta*» are now commonplace in American speech. However, the way Mexican identity is portrayed in idioms has also been impacted by economic imbalances, which frequently result in the maintenance of unfavourable stereotypes.

Therefore we consider it appropriate to look at how these factors influenced the development of idioms in the American space. Our study examines certain idioms that contain the word «*Mexican*». In fact, they are neutral, while making references to culture or description without passing judgment. For instance, «*Mexican wave*» describes the synchronised, sequential crowd movement often seen during sports games. It symbolises collective enjoyment without attaching any value judgment and has a cultural contribution to global sports entertainment [51]. In the same way «*Mexican overdrive*», which has its roots in ingenuity, describes coasting a car with the engine off, usually to conserve gasoline. It is impartial, neither endorsing nor criticising the inventiveness it suggests [55]. The term of «*Mexican jumping bean*» alludes directly to a Mexican natural phenomenon: a little object that moves because of the activity of a moth larva inside [51]. Although culturally unique, it is a neutral adjective because it lacks any evaluative overtones.

Yet, there are some idioms that reinforce assumptions about Mexican culture or reflect historical prejudices. The term «*Mexican standoff*» refers to a scenario in which mutual mistrust prevents any party from gaining the upper hand. A negative stereotype of timidity that was applied to Mexicans during the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) is its origin [55]. «*Mexican cleanup*» suggests lack of thoroughness when used to describe an insufficient cleaning effort. It promotes a stereotype of recklessness by unfairly connecting Mexican identity with poor performance [51]. One more idiom is «*Mexican breakfast*», which is slang for drinking coffee and cigarettes for breakfast and implies an unhealthy way of life. It disparagingly evokes prejudices about socioeconomic situations [55].

Positively interpreted idioms, however less prevalent, emphasise cultural pride, especially in the fields of entertainment and food. Although they aren't mentioned specifically with the term «*Mexican*», phrases like «*taco night*» and allusions to salsa dance honour the diversity of Mexican cuisine and culture. These phrases demonstrate Mexican traditions' positive impact on world heritage.

Based on the analysis made, we can conclude that «*Mexican*» idioms show a complicated interplay between celebration, bias, and neutrality. In general, positive and

neutral expressions draw attention to the cultural interactions between Mexico and the United States in such areas as entertainment, foods, and sports. Negative expressions, though being numerous, still provide insight into language preservation and capture the collective self-image of a nation.

The next ethnically explored group is that use the race-related term «*American*». This component emphasises elements of American culture that are cherished at home and acknowledged abroad. While analysing we have concluded that the most common idioms that use the word «*American*» are those that represent positive aspects of the country's identity. The phrase «*as American as apple pie*», which embodies traditional American customs, is one example. This statement highlights ingrained principles of American civilisation by depicting images of purity. It represents ideals that are cherished by all ages: a feeling of belonging within a common cultural context [51]. Another idiom that showcases a positive evaluation is «*the American dream*». This phrase encapsulates the ethos of American society aimed at success, the ideals of individual liberty through hard work. It reflects a national self-concept that elevates the potential for prosperity and ambition [55]. Initially, it symbolises equality, justice, and democracy during the Progressive Era, when wealth inequality was seen as un-American. This concept gained prominence in 1931 through James Truslow Adams' *The Epic of America*, where he criticised materialism during the Great Depression and urged a return to higher democratic values. By the 1950s, the «*American Dream*» had shifted to a consumerist ideal tied to free-market democracy, aligning with Cold War narratives and soft power strategies [10].

While many idioms that contain this component have a positive connotation, some take on a tone that is more neutral or rather dependent on the circumstances. The term «*American standard*» is used, for example, to describe generally accepted practices, frequently in a descriptive way. In this usage, the term refers to a practical norm that has received widespread acceptance, especially in fields like technology, design, and service. Without necessarily suggesting judgment or value, this neutrality is interpreted as an impact of American behaviours [55]. In a similar manner the process of embracing American customs is also referred to as «*Americanizing*».

Depending on the viewpoint of people impacted by cultural change, the term may highlight more complex emotions, even while in some situations it may convey a neutral tone that denotes basic cultural adaptability. Still our analysis shows that idiom may have a more critical connotation, particularly if the «*Americanization*» process is seen as a kind of cultural imperialism over regional identities [51].

Therefore, we found it necessary to discover a difference in terms of the connotation of the «*Americanization*» phrase. In particular, two different contexts were chosen: the JSTOR Daily article *Reading Between the Lines of a 'Americanization' Campaign* examines the early 20th-century Americanization movement that sought to integrate immigrants [31]; while The PLOS ONE article *Mapping the Americanization of English in Space and Time* looks at how books helped American English expand throughout different geographic areas [18]. The latter studies how American English has grown linguistically in a globalised world, while the former concentrates on attempts of cultural integration in the early 20th century. We suggest examining how these instances show notable variations in the term's meaning and application.

According to the *JSTOR Daily article*, «*Americanization*» is a cultural movement that aims to integrate immigrants into American culture. It explains how this method frequently promoted American norms as better in an effort to eliminate native identities. The negative meaning of this emphasises the movement's connections to racial discrimination:

- «...*what proponents of **Americanization** saw before their eyes was an incredible pool of potential labor*» - states historian Magdalena L. Barrera [30].

The *PLOS ONE* study, on the other hand, looks at Americanization as a linguistic phenomena and details how American English spelling and vocabulary have spread all over the world. This modern usage highlights the predominance of American culture in digital communication, and it is neutral or even favourable. It is said by G. Leech et al. that the development of American English is a natural process influenced by global connectedness and technological breakthroughs:

- «...*in fact, the «**Americanization**» of English is one of the main processes of language change in contemporary English*» [29].

The JSTOR example gives Americanization quite a negative meaning, with terms like «proponents» implying a planned goal. The linguistic frame identifies Americanization with imperialism, in which language is imposed as a form of dominance. On the contrary, the PLOS ONE example uses neutral to positive meanings with terms like «*contemporary*», «*change*» and «*main processes*» to present Americanization as a normal development. The implications of these two scenarios are quite different as well. Assimilation and cultural repression are linked to the idiom, according to the sociopolitical perspective of the first article. The repressive undertones of the movement are evident. Collectively, these viewpoints show how, depending on the paradigm used for analysis, cultural views can be reflected in a single idiom, and can represent both past injustices and current cultural trends.

Some other widely recognised American idioms that serve as linguistic markers include: «*the melting pot*», «*the land of opportunity*» and «*baptism by fire*». Certain idioms mostly convey positive meanings, supporting concepts related to growth. As an example, the expression «*the melting pot*» highlights the merging of various ethnic groups into a single society and presents an optimistic picture of cultural variety and assimilation. By presenting the US as a place where people from different backgrounds can live together, this phrase reflects quite a belief in national identity [51]. In the same manner, «*the land of opportunity*» represents both personal development and economic mobility and has its roots in the American Dream. It reinforces the idea that the United States is a country where people may change their background [55]. Many expressions rooted in this era reflect the intense experiences of war, shedding light on the hardships of the time, therefore carrying negative connotations. The phrase «*baptism by fire*», for instance, gained its popularity during the Civil War to describe soldiers facing combat for the first time. Initially a reference to the trial-by-fire experience of warfare, it has since broadened to signify any challenging initiation or first exposure to a difficult situation. This idiom reflects the intense psychological and physical demands placed on soldiers and their growth through adversity [19].

Although most idioms have a neutral meaning, depending on the situation, they can have either a good or depriving connotation. The idiom «*New York minute*» refers

to the perceived quickness of life in New York City and positively connotes flexibility and high energy. But it can also reflect the difficulties of living in a fast-paced environment by suggesting the relentless speed of metropolitan life [52]. It is thought to have first appeared in the 1960s or 1970s and captures the essence of the city's frenetic energy, where decisions are made and actions are taken with remarkable speed. According to W. Safire, New York's geography and status as a global economic and cultural hub contribute to this perception [41].

Further, the idiom «*Silicon Valley*» has become so widely used that it has been adapted to describe emerging tech hubs in different regions, leading to terms such as «*Silicon Prairie*» and «*Silicon Alley*». According to some accounts, it first appeared in the 1960s or 1970s. The region, encompassing cities such as Palo Alto, San Jose, and Mountain View, earned its name due to the concentration of companies involved in semiconductor manufacturing during the mid-20th century. Over time, it evolved into a global centre for technology and innovation, home to industry leaders like Apple, Google, and Facebook. Despite the fact that all three idioms represent technological advancement, their meanings vary depending on the geographic setting. We have discovered that although «*Silicon Valley*» is often linked to worldwide tech leadership, it also raises wealth disparity. With a more neutral tone that emphasises regional economic diversification and lacks Silicon Valley's reputation, «*Silicon Prairie*» (for tech hubs in the Midwest) alludes to the expanding tech sector in the Midwest. «*Silicon Alley*» (for New York City's tech scene), in its turn, embodies the tech industry in New York [42; 50].

Following the above mentioned examples we have come to the conclusion that idiomatic language is dynamic and shapes changing societal realities. Additionally, varying connotations of idioms demonstrate how language may influence the way society views cultural trends.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

In this chapter the study underscores the idioms' role as both linguistic tools and cultural markers, while they reflect shared human experiences. Firstly, we analysed culturally specific American idioms structurally to reveal their linguistic ingenuity. Given that most idioms are action-oriented, as they come from the dynamic roots of American sports, pastimes, or cooking, verbal patterns predominate in the majority of semantic groups (40–50%). Idioms that are nominal, adverbial and adjectival are also quite common; frequently they capture some peculiar concepts or connections.

We have also identified four semantic groups of idioms that most accurately reflect America's cultural values and conducted a further investigation. This classification demonstrates beliefs and customs that are characteristic for the society, highlighted by such groups as religious, entertainment and sports, bodily parts and personality, and foods idioms. Hence, those units reveal linguistic connections between physiological and psychological states, we dwelled on the usage of them in different discourses, like TED Talks, political speeches, cinematography examples, interviews and online articles. The conducted research shows that most often idioms provide insights into important national characteristics like individualism and resilience.

Last but not least, we have also explored the connotations of the selected idioms. For the most part, this allows us to understand that idioms heavily depend on the context, because the same example has different interpretations in non-identical discourses. This investigation demonstrates how idioms change their meanings and connotations according to the situation in which they are used, reflecting the communication objectives.

Lastly, we have looked at how these phraseological units are influenced by linguistic and social factors. Specifically, we have chosen to study ethnic groups such as Americans with the concept of «*Americanization*», Indians and Mexicans, and the idioms that consist of those words, respectively. The investigation shows that historical biases and relationships between various ethnic groups have a significant impact on idioms in addition to how people interpret them. Both internal (such as changes in social norms) and external (such as cultural exchanges) elements promote language

development in this environment. From this perspective, idioms offer important insights into the continuous processes of language change.

CONCLUSIONS

We have reached a number of results during the study, proving that our research aims were met. The overarching objective of this bachelor's paper is to explore the function of idioms in American English that are culturally and historically specific, with an emphasis on their implications for language and communication. The findings reveal that American idioms are notably more idiomatic, often covering a wide range of topics and demonstrating significant flexibility in usage. In particular, the theoretical classification of idioms is based on their semantic differences, structural patterns, pragmatic usage, relationship between their constituents, their lexical-grammatical characteristics, and also the approach that organises idioms based on their origins.

Based on our research in Chapter 1, these idioms are strongly impacted by geographical, historical, and cultural norms, influencing idiomatic usage. Namely, we traced their development over time and the factors that contributed to their adoption in American English. By examining these roots of idiomatic expressions, we have identified that such phenomena as the establishment of colonies by European settlers, the industrial revolution, witch trials, the American Civil War, the Great Depression, and later on technological advances such as Silicon Valley had the greatest influence on the formation and development of idiomatic expressions. This highlights how culturally specific idioms allow speakers to discuss difficult subjects in a way that connects with a broad audience.

In our structural research of culturally specific American idioms, we have discovered that between 40 and 50% of them are verbal, indicating that American English is action-oriented. While they each present distinct visual components and intellectual links, nominal, adverbial, and adjectival patterns account for a smaller portion. We have also grouped the morphological features of these idioms in a table, emphasising the prevalence or, conversely, the uniqueness of the use of certain parts of speech.

Additionally, we have divided the selected idioms (155 pieces) into four major semantic group categories: religion idioms (7%), entertainment and sports idioms

(43%), body parts and personality idioms (15%), and idioms relating to foods (20%). Given that sports and entertainment group accounts for 43% of the total, the classification emphasises how important these phraseological units are to American culture. In these terms, we have also examined the connotations and pragmatic use of idioms in different discourses. Thus, we have determined that speakers use them regardless of the style of speech, whether formal (political speeches, interviews) or informal (films, TED talks). Our contextual analysis reveals that sports and entertainment idioms are frequently used to emphasise accountability and resilience, in addition to their wide nature of origin (gambling, Roaring Twenties and the Wild West), while religious counterparts are majorly used to underline the unpredictability of the situation. An analysis of body part idioms shows that the most commonly used words are head, heart, eyes, and hands; in addition, referring to states or emotions is a fairly common practice, as people find it easier to connect language with their daily feelings. What's more, most of these idioms carry a negative connotation. We believe that appealing use of food idioms is also exclusive, as it is an undeniably integral part of human existence. Moreover, we have come to the conclusion that the same idiom, no matter what semantic group, can take on different shades of meaning, depending on the mood of the context and the speaker.

Furthermore, we have outlined a group of 22 (14%) ethnically based idioms that reflect American historical and social connections, in particular those bound to American Indians, Mexican, or Native Americans. This helped us to conclude that language, in particular such units as idioms, can often be a distributor of prejudices and stereotypes towards other nations or minorities.

In conclusion, our findings illustrate the dynamic interaction between language and culture, revealing how they mutually shape and impact one another. Possible scientific research topics may involve examining the effects of English's globalisation on idiomatic usage in non-native English-speaking nations. It would look at how globalisation causes idioms to change and adapt in various cultural contexts.

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APPENDIX 1

The most prevalent culturally specific idioms in America, arranged according to their meaning and structural patterns:

Religion idioms		
Idiom	Meaning	Structure
<i>Act of God</i>	an uncontrollable natural occurrence (such as an earthquake or flood) that is frequently employed in legal contexts	Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>All hell breaks loose</i>	a situation devolves into chaos or becomes unmanageable	Noun + Verb + Adjective
<i>At the bottom of the totem pole</i>	in a hierarchy, the lowest place or least significant	Preposition + Article + Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Bible belt</i>	is used to identify the region of the USA, primarily the Southern region, where the Church has a major influence on everyday life	Noun + Noun
<i>Bound up in</i>	completely focused on or engaged in a mental or emotional endeavour	Verb + Adverb + Preposition
<i>By the sweat of one's brow</i>	through diligence and hard work	Preposition + Article + Noun + Preposition + Pronoun + Noun
<i>Come hell or high water</i>	regardless of any challenges or barriers	Verb + Noun + Conjunction + Adjective + Noun
<i>Cross my heart and hope to die</i>	used to highlight honesty or sincerity	Verb + Pronoun + Noun + Conjunction + Verb + Infinitive
<i>Preach to the choir</i>	to attempt to convince those who already concur with you	Verb + Preposition + Article + Noun

<i>On a wing and a prayer</i>	with little prospect of success	Preposition + Article + Noun + Conjunction + Article + Noun
<i>Sunday best</i>	the finest or most formal clothes, frequently worn to church or other special events	Noun + Adjective
Entertainment and sports idioms		
Sport-related idioms		
<i>Also-ran</i>	something or someone that fails or doesn't stand out	Noun + Noun
<i>A box score</i>	a thorough summary or dissection of the main activities in a game or event	Noun + Noun
<i>Across the board</i>	encompassing a broad range and applicable to every member of a group	Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Ball is in someone's court</i>	someone needs to solve an issue or make a choice right now.	Noun + Verb + Preposition + Pronoun + Noun
<i>Ballpark estimate</i>	an extremely rough estimate	Adjective + Noun
<i>Bat one thousand</i>	to attain a perfect record or execute flawlessly	Verb + Number
<i>Behind the eight ball</i>	in a difficult or adverse circumstance	Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Body English</i>	motions that express feelings or try to affect a result (e.g., leaning during sports)	Noun + Noun
<i>Daily dozen</i>	a regular regimen of physical activities to maintain fitness	Adjective + Noun
<i>Keep your eye on the ball</i>	an unofficial method of alerting someone to a situation	Verb + Pronoun + Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun

<i>Knock it out of the park</i>	to perform really well	Verb + Pronoun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Monday-morning quarterback</i>	someone who passes judgment or offers criticism based on hindsight	Compound Adjective + Noun
<i>Move the goalposts</i>	changing the rules or expectations to gain an advantage	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>On the ball</i>	highly conscious of what is going on and on guard	Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Only game in town</i>	the only choice accessible, frequently suggesting that there aren't any other options	Adjective + Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>Play hardball</i>	to be tough, unyielding, or competitive, frequently with ruthlessness	Verb + Noun
<i>Step up to the plate</i>	to take responsibility or action	Verb + Adverb + Preposition + Article + Noun
Pastime idioms		
<i>After hours</i>	activities that take place outside of regular business or working hours	Preposition + Noun
<i>All over but the shouting</i>	the decision has already been made; only formalities need to be completed	Adverb + Preposition + Conjunction + Noun
<i>At the drop of a hat</i>	immediately or without reluctance	Preposition + Article + Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>Bury the hatchet</i>	to end a disagreement and restore friendship	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Curtain call</i>	a final acknowledgment or act	Noun + Noun

<i>Get the boot</i>	to be forced to leave by eviction, vote, or other means	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Go back to the drawing board</i>	to replan a task when the initial attempt at planning failed	Verb + Adverb + Preposition + Article + Noun + Noun
<i>Great white hope</i>	something or someone that is greatly relied upon to succeed	Adjective + Adjective + Noun
<i>Hail Mary</i>	any last-ditch effort in difficult circumstances	Noun + Noun
<i>In there pitching</i>	actively making a lot of effort and trying hard	Preposition + Adverb + Participle
<i>It takes two to tango</i>	a circumstance or activity in which two parties must actively participate	Pronoun + Verb + Number + Preposition + Verb
<i>Out of left field</i>	something unexpected or surprising	Preposition + Preposition + Adjective + Noun
<i>Rock the boat</i>	say or do something that could frustrate others or lead to issues	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Separate but equal</i>	relating to or affected by a policy whereby two groups may be segregated if they are given equal facilities and opportunities; the phrase used to support the principle of segregation in the southern US	Adjective + Conjunction + Adjective
<i>Show the ropes</i>	to instruct or clarify to someone the accepted practices in a given area	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Showstopper</i>	something exceptionally impressive or attention-grabbing	Compound noun

<i>The almighty dollar</i>	employed to parody a fixation on material prosperity or capitalism as a whole	Article + Adjective + Noun
<i>The bigger they come, the harder they fall</i>	the more well-known a person is, the more serious their failure will be	Article + Adjective + Pronoun + Verb, Article + Adjective + Pronoun + Verb
<i>The jig is up</i>	there has been a trick or fraud discovered or made public.	Article + Noun + Verb + Adverb
<i>The whole nine yards</i>	all that you could possibly desire, possess, or accomplish in a given circumstance	Article + Adjective + Numeral + Noun
<i>Throw a curveball</i>	to unexpectedly present someone with a challenging or unpleasant task	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>To jazz up</i>	to add more life or interest to something	Verb + Particle
<i>Touch base with</i>	to establish a connection or speak with someone, usually for a short time	Verb + Noun + Preposition
<i>Trump card</i>	an essential tool for seizing an advantage when it's most appropriate	Noun + Noun
Idioms of gambling (1920-1930)		
<i>According to Hoyle</i>	following the rules as set forth; according to the greatest authority (Hoyle's rules of card games)	Preposition + Proper Noun
<i>Ace in the hole</i>	concealed information or a skill that will provide you with an advantage	Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun

<i>All in</i>	in a manner that puts all of your money at danger in a game like poker	Adjective + Preposition
<i>Even money</i>	a fair chance or equal probabilities that something will occur	Adjective + Noun
<i>Force someone's hand</i>	to force someone to do something against their will or act earlier than they had planned	Verb + Pronoun + Noun
<i>Pass the buck</i>	to assign responsibility or lay blame for an issue that needs to be resolved	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Take a bath (on something)</i>	to incur a large financial loss on an investment	Verb + Article + Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>To ace out</i>	to exceed or defeat someone, usually without warning	Verb + Adverb
<i>To ante up</i>	to put in one's fair share, particularly in cash or labor (originating from poker)	Verb + Adverb
<i>To hold all the aces</i>	to be in a strong position or to have all the benefits	Verb + Verb + Adjective + Article + Noun
<i>Wheel and deal</i>	to use clever or complex strategies in an attempt to obtain financial gain or an advantage, frequently by tricking others or disobeying the law	Noun + Conjunction + Verb
<i>Winning streak</i>	a run of times where you win every match or tournament	Adjective + Noun
Idioms of «The Roaring Twenties»		

<i>Blind date</i>	a romantic social gathering between two individuals who had never previously met	Adjective + Noun
<i>Bull session</i>	extended talk or a casual discussion	Noun + Noun
<i>Carry a torch</i>	to fall in love with someone who does not reciprocate	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Flat tire</i>	a monotonous, socially incompetent individual	Adjective + Noun
<i>Gold digger</i>	someone, typically a lady, who makes an effort to become close to a wealthy person in order to receive gifts or cash	Noun + Noun
<i>Sob sister</i>	a journalist with an eye for emotional, tragic human interest pieces	Adjective + Noun
<i>Struggle buggy</i>	an automobile, especially one that boys use to try to woo girls	Verb + Noun
Idioms of Wild West period		
<i>A lick and a promise</i>	an act of quickly cleaning or washing something	Article + Noun + Conjunction + Article + Noun
<i>All down but nine</i>	not being able to comprehend something	Adjective + Adverb + Conjunction + Noun
<i>Bag of nails</i>	a confusion, a misunderstanding, anything unpleasant	Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>Hair in the butter</i>	a demanding or tough issue or circumstance	Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>In apple pie order</i>	cleanly or precisely organised; in ideal sequence	Preposition + Adjective + Noun + Noun

<i>Of the first water</i>	the greatest standard, level, or attribute	Preposition + Article + Adjective + Noun
<i>Yarn the hours away</i>	a narrative, typically one that is lengthy and full with intrigue or excitement	Verb + Article + Noun + Adverb
Body parts and personality idioms		
<i>A feather in one' cap</i>	a noteworthy accomplishment	Article + Noun + Preposition + Possessive Pronoun + Noun
<i>Arm and a leg</i>	to be exceedingly costly; a substantial sum of money	Noun + Conjunction + Article + Noun
<i>Bark up the wrong tree</i>	to be incorrect concerning the cause of something or the best means to accomplish it	Verb + Preposition + Article + Adjective + Noun
<i>Bite the bullet</i>	to make oneself accomplish something uncomfortable or challenging	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Butterflies in one's stomach</i>	to experience extreme anxiety before doing anything	Noun (Plural) + Preposition + Possessive Pronoun + Noun
<i>Cold feet</i>	a decline in bravery or confidence; the beginning of uncertainty or anxiety	Adjective + Noun
<i>Cold hands, warm heart</i>	someone with a tender and caring heart on the inside but no visible signs of emotion	Adjective + Noun + Adjective + Noun
<i>Down in the dumps</i>	to feel dissatisfied	Preposition + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Eat one's heart out</i>	to experience intense sadness, resentment, or longing; to mourn	Verb + Possessive Pronoun + Noun + Particle

<i>Face the music</i>	take responsibility for whatever you have done	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Get your foot in the door</i>	to begin an endeavor toward a goal by entering a company, pursuing a job, etc.	Verb + Possessive Pronoun + Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Go bananas</i>	to lose control of one's anger or excitement	Verb + Noun
<i>Have a chip on one's shoulder</i>	the behaviour of retaining a grievance or dissatisfaction	Verb + Article + Noun + Preposition + Possessive Pronoun + Noun
<i>Head over heels</i>	to be totally enamored or utterly captivated with someone	Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>Hot under the collar</i>	to become extremely upset, furious, or thrilled about	Adjective + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>In a pickle</i>	to be facing challenges and in a tough circumstance	Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>In high spirits</i>	incredibly joyful and enthusiastic	Preposition + Adjective + Noun
<i>Keep your eyes peeled</i>	to keep a close eye out for something or somebody	Verb + Possessive Pronoun + Noun + Adjective
<i>Leave a bad taste in one's mouth</i>	to bring up bad memories	Verb + Article + Adjective + Noun + Preposition + Possessive Pronoun + Noun
<i>Long in the tooth</i>	being elderly and frequently unable to perform (brutally or amusingly)	Adjective + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Shoot from the hip</i>	respond without giving one's words or deeds considerable thought	Verb + Preposition + Article + Noun

<i>Take it on the chin</i>	to endure something challenging or disagreeable without grumbling	Verb + Pronoun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>To raise (lift) hair</i>	really frightful but also thrilling	Verb + Noun
<i>Turn a blind eye</i>	disregarding something you are aware is incorrect	Verb + Article + Adjective + Noun
Foods idioms		
<i>A piece of the pie</i>	a portion of the availability of something, or a portion of its profit or benefit	Article + Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>All talk and no cider</i>	someone who talks a lot but never achieves anything or accomplishes anything	Adjective + Noun + Conjunction + Adjective + Noun
<i>Apples and oranges</i>	two items that cannot be compared since they are so dissimilar	Noun + Conjunction + Noun
<i>As easy as pie</i>	very straightforward or simple to complete	Adverb + Adjective + Conjunction + Noun
<i>As nutty as fruitcake</i>	very strange or insane	Adverb + Adjective + Conjunction + Noun
<i>Be toast</i>	be totally destroyed, crushed	Verb + Noun
<i>Bring home the bacon</i>	a portion of the availability of something, or a portion of its profit or benefit	Verb + Noun + Article + Noun
<i>Cool as a cucumber</i>	to be completely at ease and worry-free	Adjective + Conjunction + Article + Noun
<i>Cut the mustard</i>	meet requirements; live up to expectations	Verb + Article + Noun

<i>Don't cry over spilled milk</i>	there's no point in being outraged over a thing that already took place and cannot be reversed	Verb + Verb + Preposition + Adjective + Noun
<i>Duck soup</i>	something extremely simple or effortless	Noun + Noun
<i>From soup to nuts</i>	from start to finish; encompassing everything	Preposition + Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>Grasping at straws</i>	searching for a means of success when none of the options you select will probably work	Verb + Preposition + Noun
<i>Hard liquor</i>	strong alcoholic drinks like rum, vodka, or whiskey	Adjective + Noun
<i>Hem and haw</i>	to be undecided or hesitant	Verb + Conjunction + Verb
<i>Hot dog</i>	someone who does lavish, frequently risky stunts, particularly in sports	Adjective + Noun
<i>In the soup</i>	in difficulties or a challenging circumstance	Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Lay an egg</i>	to totally fail, particularly during a presentation or performance	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Like trying to nail jelly to a wall</i>	incredibly challenging or unachievable	Conjunction + Verb + Preposition + Verb + Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>Meat-and-potatoes</i>	fundamental, straightforward, and basic; centred on the necessities	Noun + Conjunction + Noun
<i>Not know beans</i>	to have very little or no knowledge of something	Adverb + Verb + Noun

<i>Piece of cake</i>	something that is simple to accomplish	Noun + Preposition + Noun
<i>Sell like hotcakes</i>	to sell in big volumes and very quickly	Verb + Conjunction + Noun
<i>Spill the beans</i>	reveal something too soon or reveal a secret	Verb + Article + Noun
<i>The apple of someone's eye</i>	the one that someone adores and is most proud of	Article + Noun + Preposition + Pronoun + Noun
<i>The meat and potatoes</i>	the most crucial or significant components of something	Article + Noun + Conjunction + Noun
<i>The toast of Broadway</i>	to achieve great popularity and widespread recognition for your contributions in a certain line of work	Article + Noun + Preposition + Proper Noun
<i>Through the grapevine</i>	receive news from a source who was informed by another source	Preposition + Article + Noun
<i>To hit the booze/sauce</i>	to consume large amounts of alcohol regularly	Preposition + Verb + Article + Noun
<i>Toss one's cookies</i>	to vomit	Verb + Pronoun + Noun
<i>Two peas in a pod</i>	used to describe how similar two objects or individuals are to one another	Number + Noun + Preposition + Article + Noun

APPENDIX 2

Ethnic stereotypes in American, American Indian and Mexican idioms:

Idiom	Meaning
<i>American standard</i>	generally recognized standards or customs
<i>Americanizing</i>	make one American in nationality or personality
<i>As American as apple pie</i>	incredibly common and typical in America
<i>Indian file</i>	one after the next, a line of people or objects
<i>Indian giver</i>	someone who offers something and then asks for it back
<i>Indian sign</i>	a curse or an enchantment spell
<i>Indian summer</i>	a season in the early fall when the weather is quiet and warm
<i>Mexican breakfast</i>	coffee and smokes; a comical or harmful way of life
<i>Mexican cleanup</i>	fast, improper cleaning; reckless stereotype
<i>Mexican jumping bean</i>	a moth larva is causing a seed pod to move; normal and amusing
<i>Mexican overdrive</i>	cutting corners or being resourceful when coasting downhill with the engine off
<i>Mexican standoff</i>	reciprocal hesitancy-induced stalemate; tense or unsettled
<i>Mexican wave</i>	stadium wave: cheerful and group-oriented
<i>The melting pot</i>	a society that is both integrated and culturally diverse
<i>The land of opportunity</i>	a place where hard work can lead to success
<i>Silicon Valley</i>	a hub for technological innovation worldwide
<i>Silicon Prairie</i>	a developing tech center in the Midwest

<i>Silicon Alley</i>	the media and technology district of New York
<i>New York minute</i>	a fleeting moment in a fast-paced world
<i>Taco night</i>	taco-themed fun event that is upbeat and joyous
<i>Talk the leg off a wooden Indian</i>	to speak continuously for an extended period of time
<i>Too many chiefs and not enough Indians</i>	a circumstance in which there are lots of people issuing commands and not enough people to execute them

APPENDIX 3

Chart 1.

The distribution of idioms across the four semantically identified subgroups of the *Entertainment and sports* category:

Entertainment and sports

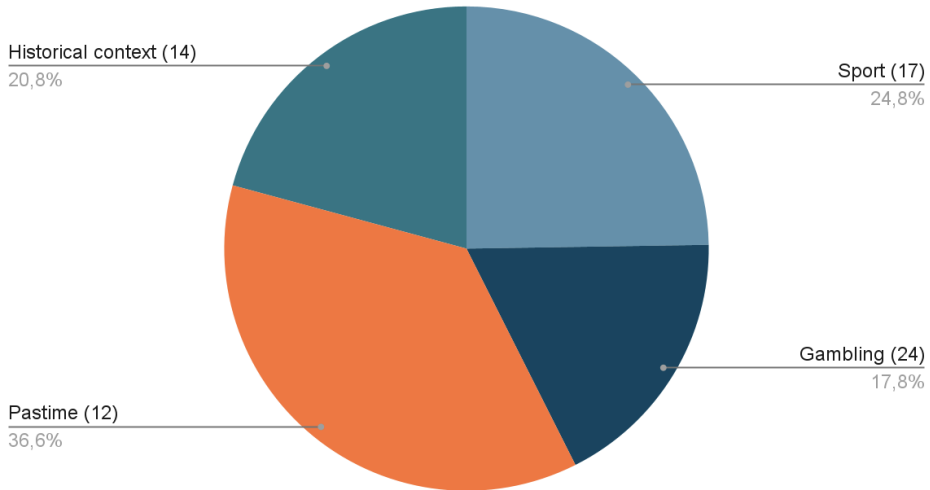


Chart 2.

Distribution of structural patterns in the group of *Religion* idioms:

Religion idioms structural patterns

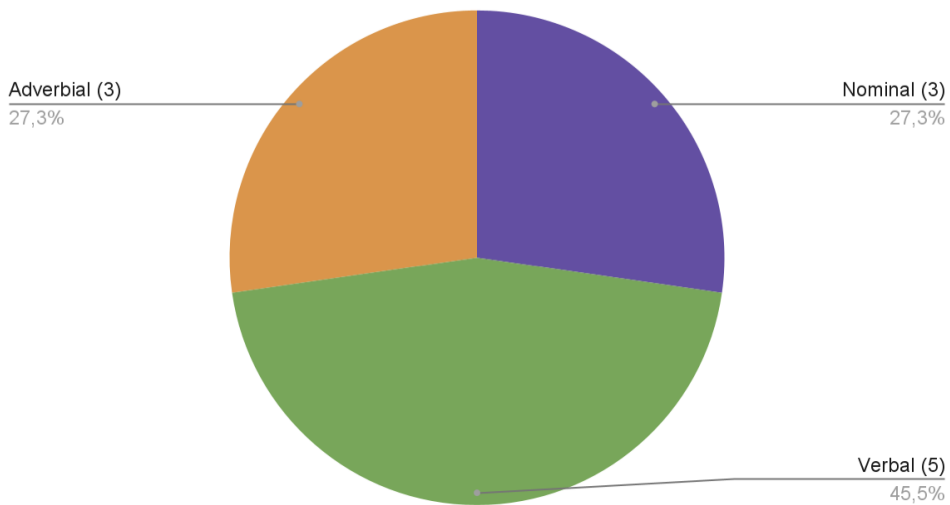


Chart 3.

Distribution of structural patterns in the group of *Entertainment and sports* idioms:

Entertainment and sports idioms structural patterns

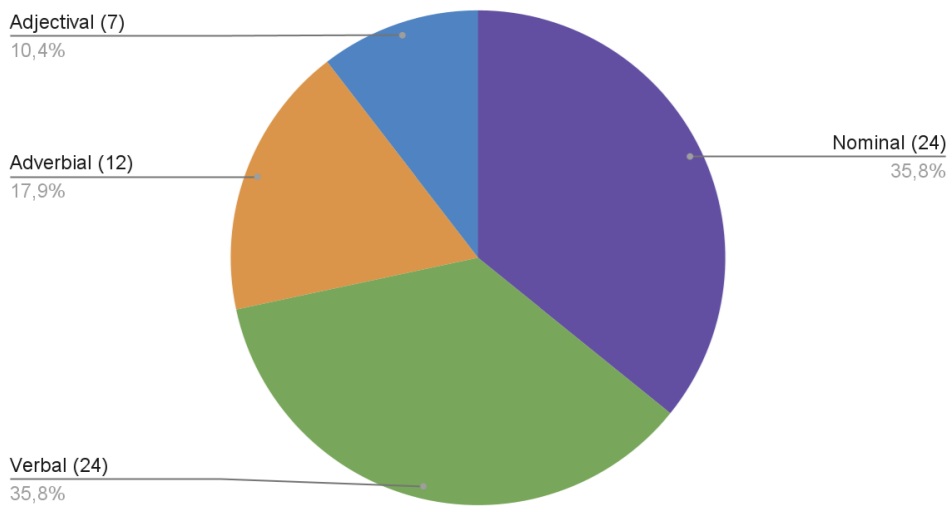


Chart 4.

Distribution of structural patterns in the group of *Body parts and personality* idioms:

Body parts and personality idioms structural patterns

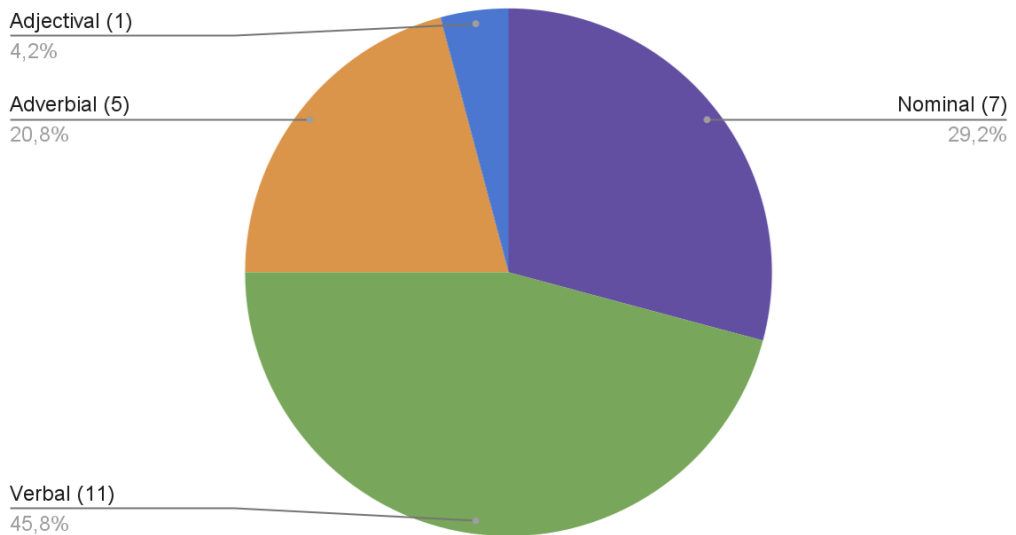


Chart 5.

Distribution of structural patterns in the group of *Foods* idioms:

Foods idioms structural patterns

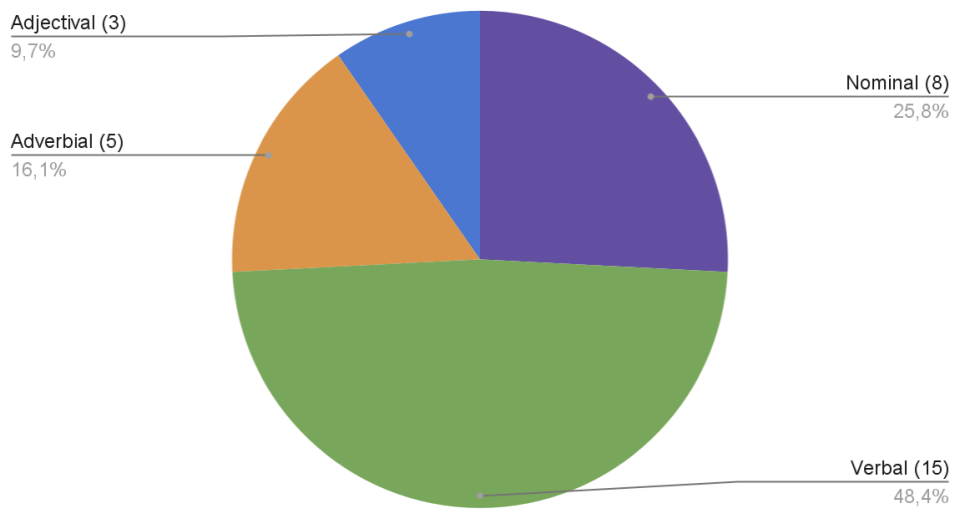


Chart 6.

Number of *Religion* idioms based on their connotations (11 pieces):

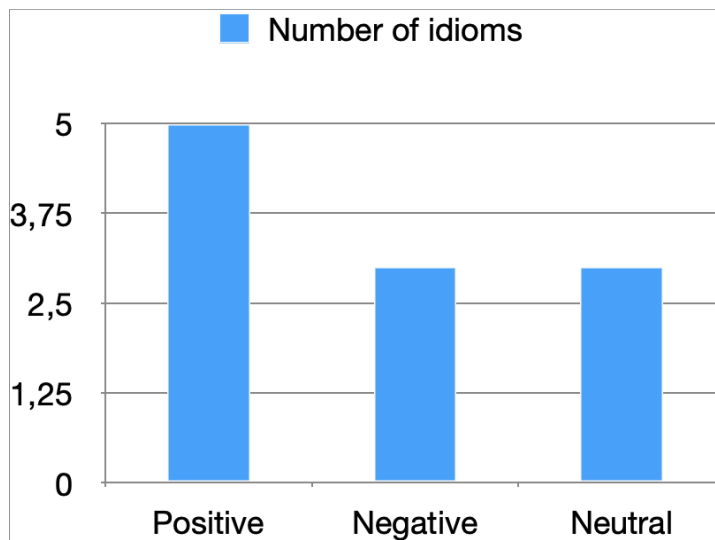


Chart 7.

Number of *Entertainment and sports* idioms based on their connotations (67 pieces):

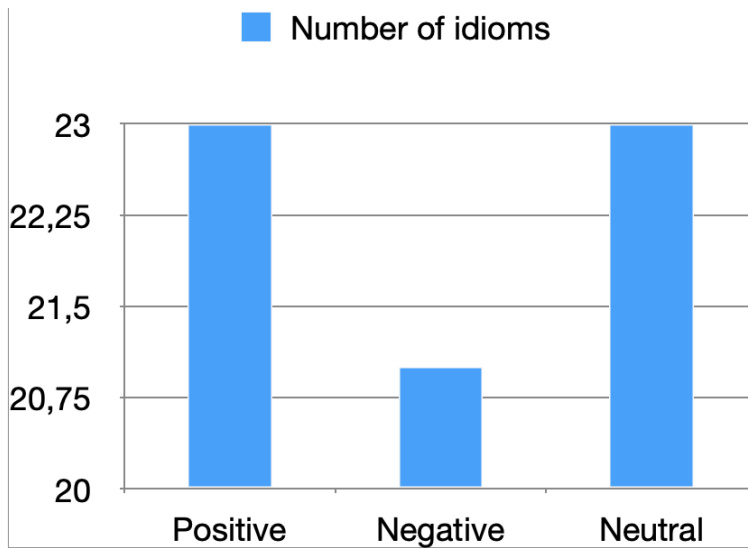


Chart 8.

Number of *Body parts and personality* idioms based on their connotations (24 pieces):

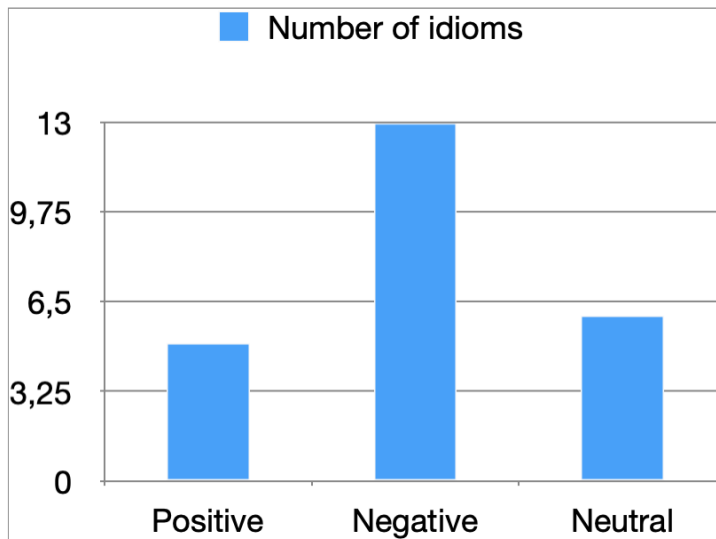


Chart 9.

Number of *Foods* idioms based on their connotations (31 pieces):

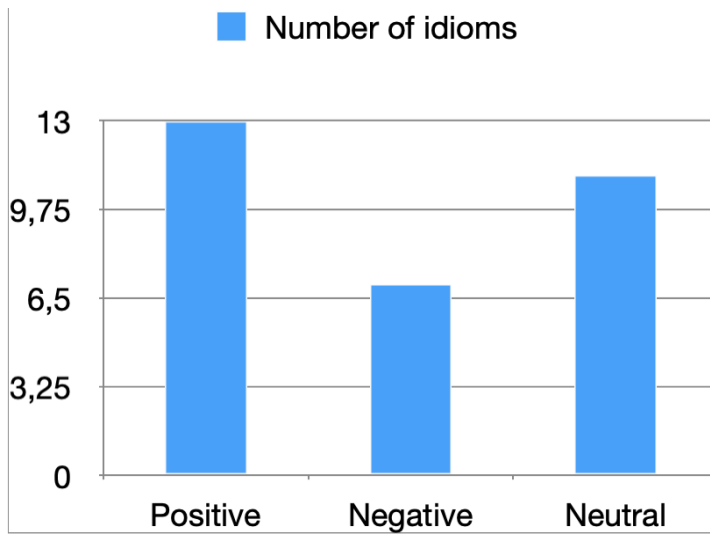
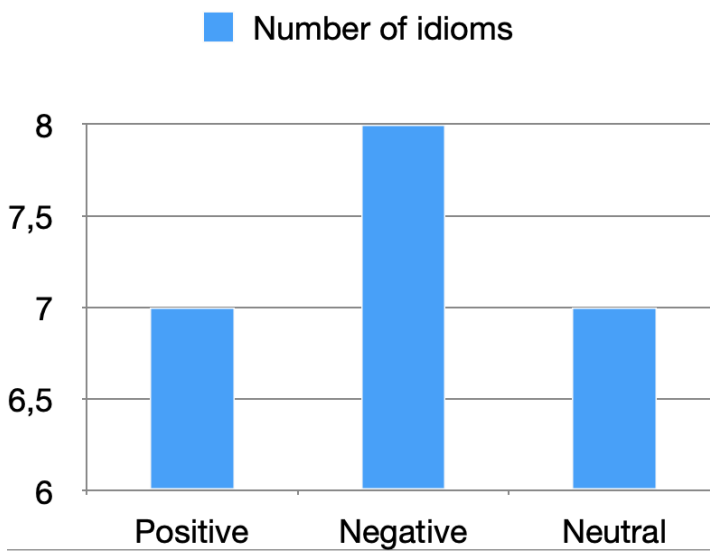


Chart 10.

Ethnic idioms connotation overview (22 pieces):



SUMMARY

Кваліфікаційна робота бакалавра присвячена вивченню та аналізу історично- та культурно-специфічних ідіом в американському варіанті англійської мови, з акцентом на їхні структурні та семантичні особливості. Основною метою дослідження є виявлення здатності цих мовних одиниць передавати елементи американської культурної ідентичності у дискурсі від політичних промов до кінематографії. У цій роботі було також поставлено за мету дослідити походження, семантику, особливості відтінків конотації та структурні характеристики різних етнічних ідіом.

Перший розділ присвячений огляду лінгвістичних досліджень, що аналізують ідіоми як важливий елемент фразеології, який надає мові образності, емоційного забарвлення та культурної глибини. Особлива увага приділяється гнучкості ідіом щодо граматичних змін і різноманітним підходам до їхньої класифікації за семантикою, структурою, прагматикою та етимологією. Зокрема, це лінгвістичні роботи, що досліджують англійські ідіоми з точки зору зв'язку між їхніми складниками та значенням (С. Глюксберг); за лексико-граматичними ознаками (І. Корунець); на основі культурних джерел як от біблійних або фольклору (Е. Пірайнен); або ж наскільки їх значення можна вивести з окремих компонентів (Н. Фатмаваті). Детально розглянуто географічні, історичні та культурні чинники формування американських ідіом, які відображають реалії життя та основні цінності американської нації; зокрема ідіоми, що виникли під впливом релігії, історичних епох, політичних подій, побутових традицій, а також специфіки професійної та військової діяльності.

У другому розділі бакалаврської роботи ми, перш за все, провели структурний аналіз 155 ідіом, який показав, що переважна більшість із них (40–50%) мають дієслівну основу, що свідчить про динамічний характер американської культури. Окрім цього, значну частку також становлять іменникові, прислівникові та прикметникові ідіоми. Окрім того, на основі семантичних характеристик ідіоми було розподілено на чотири основні групи:

релігійні (7%), ідіоми, пов'язані з розвагами та спортом (43%), ідіоми, пов'язані з частинами тіла та особистісними характеристиками (15%), а також ідіоми, що стосуються їжі (20%). Така класифікація допомогла нам щонайкраще відобразити специфічні культурні доміанти американського суспільства. Окрему увагу приділено аналізу 22 етнічно маркованих ідіом, пов'язаних із такими етнічними групами, як американські індіанці («*Indian giver*», «*too many chiefs...*») та мексиканці («*Mexican standoff*», «*Mexican cleanup*»). Зокрема ці ідіоми є носіями національних уявлень, відображають стереотипи й упередження щодо етнічних груп. Водночас є і нейтральні чи позитивні вирази, пов'язані з національною ідентичністю («*as American as apple pie*», «*the American dream*»). Так, американські ідіоми часто передають такі риси, як прагматизм, самостійність, рішучість і віра в успіх. Також, у роботі ми здійснили історико-культурний аналіз процесу формування американських ідіом, в якому висвітлено вплив ключових історичних подій — колонізації, промислової революції, війни за незалежність, Великої депресії та технологічних зрушень.

Робота включає вступ, два розділи з висновками, загальні висновки, список використаної літератури (48 джерел), перелік лексикографічних джерел (7 джерел), а також ілюстративний матеріал (10 джерел), додатки 1-3 та анотацію. Загальний обсяг роботи становить 84 сторінки, із них 57 — основна частина.

Результати дослідження підтверджують доцільність вивчення культурно-та історично-специфічних американських ідіом як важливих елементів мовної картини світу. Разом із тим, здобуті результати відкривають перспективи для дослідження впливу глобалізаційних процесів на трансформацію ідіоматичних виразів у міжкультурному просторі. Зокрема, доречно присвятити увагу адаптації американських ідіом у мовленні носіїв англійської як іноземної, що стане вагомим внеском у розвиток когнітивної лінгвістики та соціолінгвістики.