A COMPARISON ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH IDIOMS

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ABSTRACT


In this paper, the writer uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis by comparing and analyzing from the dictionary and short story. The dictionary that would be analyzed by the writer is English and American Idioms by Richard A. Spears and the short story is you were perfectly fine by John Millington Ward. Through this method, the writer tries to find the differences meaning between American idioms and British idioms. The collected data are analyzed by qualitative using the approach of deconstruction theory.

English is a language particularly rich in idioms – those modes of expression peculiar to a language (or dialect) which frequently defy logical and grammatical rules. Without idioms English would lose much of its variety and humor both in speech and writing. The results of this thesis explain the difference meaning of American and British Idioms that is found in the dictionary and short story.
APPROVEMENT

A COMPARISON ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH IDIOMS

A Thesis

Submitted to Letter and Humanities Faculty
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Strata One Degree (S1)

Nanik Fatmawati
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Approved by:
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2011
LEGALIZATION

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The thesis has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’ Examination Committee on July 26, 2011. It has been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, 26th July, 2011

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my original work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, 26th July 2011

The writer
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the most gracious and the most merciful

All praises to be Allah SWT. The real writer’s guide, who amazingly guides her in the process of making this paper and salutation, be upon the most honorable prophet a messenger Muhammad SAW. His family, companion and adherents.

The writer had been supported by a number of people whose contribution in assorted ways to the research and the making of the thesis deserved special mention. It is a pleasure to convey the writer’s gratitude to them all in her humble acknowledgment. The writer would like to express her sincerest thanks to her lovely advisor, Dr. Frans Sayogie, M. Pd, SH, who always guides and supports the writer until this paper finished. Without him guidance, this paper is never completed, may Allah SWT always bless him and his family.

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1. Dr. H. Abd. Wahid Hasyim, the Dean of faculty of Adab and Humanities, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta.
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3. Mrs. Elve Oktafiyan, M.Hum as the secretary of English Letters Department.
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5. I would like to express my gratitude to my beloved parents. For my mom, Anah, who have prayed for me day and night, and for my dad, Panut, his
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9. All librarians of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah main library, University of Atmajaya library, and Baitussalam Boarding school library, for having help me to obtain some useful books in relation to my thesis.

May Allah blesses us and gives His kindness in every breath we take.

The writer realizes this thesis is not the perfect one and the writer will very open and receive any comments, suggestion or criticism.

Jakarta, 26th July 2011

The writer
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You were perfectly fine
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is a highly variable language. American English has differences that correlate with geographical location the level and register of use, and other differences that relate to characteristics of the speaker. To include examples that would represent all kinds of American English used in the dictionary is generally what one would expect to hear used by educated, polite individuals’ representative of the traditional American home, family and community. It is widely used in the United States and understood by English speakers throughout the country.¹

An idiom is a sequence of words which has a different meaning as a group from the meaning it would have if you understood each word separately. Idioms add color to the language, helping us to emphasize meaning and to make our observations, judgments and explanations lively and interesting. They are also very useful tools for communicating a great deal of meaning in just a few words.² Idioms are used in a wide variety of register and situations. They are often used in spoken language, in situations that range from friendly conversations to business meetings. Idioms are used in written English as well, especially in journalism where writers frequently use them to bring their stories to life.

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“In studying idioms one is confronted, apart from any question of the current meaning of an expression, by two main problems. The first is its origin. As Pearsall Smith has pointed out, there are a number of idiomatic phrases for which even specialists have not been able to find a completely certain explanation. Secondly there may be a problem of the connection between the origin and the current use. It has often been necessary, in dealing with an idiom of which the current meaning is clear and that is generally used correctly, to state that the connection between the origin and the meaning is unknown. Sometimes a dominating factor in the formation or the popularity of an idiom must have been a desire for euphony, alliteration, rhyme, repetition, etc.: as for example, to take a few of those dealt with in this book, in *bag and baggage, at sixes and sevens, rack and ruin, high and dry, by hook or by crook*. Even when the origin of a phrase is unknown, or when the connection between the origin and the current meaning is obscure, the formation of idiom could seldom have been mere bedevilment, any more than, in usage in general, are the grossest verbal and syntactical misuses”.\(^3\)

“In standard spoken and written English today Idiom is an established, universal and essential element that, used with care, ornaments and enriches the language”.

Idiom or idiomatic expressions are often defined as “set phrases” or “fixed phrases”. The number of idiomatic expressions that are totally invariant is really quite small, however, even when the English proverbs are included in this category. Most of phrases can vary the choice of noun or pronoun and most select from a wide variety of verb tense and aspect patterns. Adjectives and some

adverbs can be added at will to be idiomatic phrases. “Furthermore, the new-to-English user is faced with the difficulty of isolating on idiomatic expression from the rest of the sentence and determining where to find it in a dictionary of idioms”. If the user fails to extract the essential idiomatic expression, the likelihood of finding it in any dictionary is reduced considerably.4

The NTC’s American idiom dictionary uses the phrases-finder index to get a round the problems users face with trying to isolate the complete idiom and trying to predict its location in the dictionary. Simply look up any major word-noun, verb, adjective or adverb in the phrase-finder index, and you will find the form of the entry head that contains the definition you seek. Another important feature for the learner is the use of object placeholder indicating human and nonhuman. Typical dictionary entries for idiomatic phrases—especially for phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal prepositional verbs—omit direct objects, as in put on hold, bail out, or see through. This dictionary uses the stand-in forms such as some one, something, some amount or somewhere for variable objects and other variable forms. These stand-in forms are in condensed type.

All of that information is vital to learners of English, although it seems to come perfectly naturally to lifelong English speakers, for example, There is a big difference between put some one on hold and put something on hold, or between bail someone out and bail something out. There is also a great difference between see something through and see through something. 5 These differences may never be revealed if the entry reads are just put on hold, bail out and see through, with no object indicated.

5 Ibid.
Many idioms have optional parts. In fact, a phrase may seem opaque simply because it is really just an ellipsis of a longer, less opaque phrase. In the NTC’s American idiom dictionary shows as full a form of an idiom as possible with the frequently omitted parts in parentheses. For example: back down (for someone or something), be all eyes (and ears, and every) once in a while.

A. Focus of the study

The research is focused on the differences meaning between American and British Idioms in the; you were perfectly fine short story and dictionary. From that story and dictionary are compared to fine the differences meaning between American and British Idioms. Then, the writer will compare the meaning contained in that short story and dictionary through analyzing the differences between them.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the writer tries to identify the problem by the following question: How are the differences meaning between American and British idioms?

C. Significance of the research

The significance of the research is classified into two, the academic and practical significance of research. The academic significance of research is to fulfill one of the requirements for “S1” degree to the Letters and Humanities faculty State Islamic University “Syarif Hidayatullah” Jakarta. The practical one

\[6 \text{Ibid.}\]
is also broad up the research’s knowledge regarding to the comparison analysis of American and British Idioms.

D. Research Methodology

1. Method of the Research

To solve the problems of research that are presented in the statement of the problems, the writer uses qualitative method with a descriptive analysis. It means that the writer analyzes the differences meaning of American and British idioms from the dictionary and short story; you were perfectly fine. In the descriptive analysis, the writer described some facts and also the result of analysis. The writer will describe some quotations in the short story to support the differences meaning that have been found.

2. Objective of the Research

The objective of research is to know about the differences meaning of American and British Idioms from the dictionary and short story; you were perfectly fine.

3. Data analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is the short story; you were perfectly fine by, J. Millington Ward which was published on the 1961 in London, English and American Idioms dictionary by, Richard A. Spears.
4. **Instrument of the Research**

In This research, the instrument of the research is the writer herself. The writer used relevant materials that related with the study. The data that related to the study collected from libraries.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Idiom

1. The Definition of Idiom

Idiom is an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways. In lay or general use, an idiom has two main meanings. First, Idiom is a particular manner of expressing something in language, music, art, and so on.\(^1\) Secondly (and much less commonly in English), an idiom is a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme. Charles F. Hockett is the only modern theoretician to have dealt in writing extensively and seriously with the idiom. He uses the term IDIOM as a cover term for certain lexicographic and syntactic phenomena which share the fact that the meaning is not predictable from the composition.\(^2\)

Idiomaticity is a universal linguistic phenomenon in natural languages, although the distinction between morphemes, words, and groups may be qualitatively different in non-Indo-European languages.\(^3\)

Idioms and idiomaticity, while closely related, are not identical. The basis of both is the habitual and, therefore, predictable co-occurrence of specific words, but with idioms signifying a narrower range of word combinations than idiomaticity. Idioms are indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits. No other


words can be substituted for those comprising, for example, *smell a rat or seize/grasp the nettle*, which take either of these two verbs but no others: thus *grab* is unacceptable. Nor are the words of an idiom usually recombinable.\(^4\)

All idioms, of course, show idiomaticity. However, all word combinations showing idiomaticity, for instance, *habitual collocations* such as *rosy cheeks, sallow complexion, black coffee, or catch a bus*, etc., are not idioms for they are relatively unrestricted in their adjectival and nominal variants: *rosy/plump cheeks, rosy dawn, and a sallow skin* are all possible. Similarly, we can have *strong coffee* and *catch a tram*. All these variations yield idiomatic expressions exemplifying idiomaticity, but they are not idioms.\(^5\) Idiomaticity is exemplified not only in idioms and conventional *ad hoc* collocations, but also in conventional lexicogrammatical sequencing most apparent on longer text fragments: *those smooth, plump, rosy cheeks will one day be shrunken, shriveled, and withered*. This *ad hoc* sequence of adjectival modifiers preceding and following *cheeks* exemplifies idiomaticity in both selection and sequencing, but there are no combinations within the sequence qualifying as idioms. Such an *ad hoc* sequence can be compared with *tall dark and handsome*, an idiom both lexically and sequentially fixed.\(^6\)

All idioms are not grammatically regular. Non-canonical conventionalized word orders and semantics are possible as in *nothing loath, footloose and fancy free, beside oneself, curry favour*, etc. In sum, while habitual co-occurrence produces idiomatic expressions, both canonical and

\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
non-canonical, only those expressions which become conventionally fixed in a specific order and lexical form, or have only a restricted set of variants, acquire the status of idioms and are recorded in idiom dictionaries as bread and butter and footloose and fancy free. Combinations, showing a relatively high degree of variability, especially in the matter of lexical replacement such as catch a bus, catch a train, etc., are not regarded as idioms, though they exemplify idiomaticity by virtue of habitual co-occurrence: catch meaning ‘be in time for’ co-occurs usually with a mode of transport, though catch the post is also possible.  

Of the various definitions of “idiom”, three criteria, both semantic and syntactic, emerge as predominant. The first is semantic opacity, or what has come to be known as “noncompositionality”, the fact that the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from a sum of the meanings of its parts: in this sense, the meaning of an idiom is not “motivated”.  

Thus the meaning of ‘die’ cannot be produced from the sum of ‘kick’ + ‘the’ + bucket’, or ‘be patient, slow down’ from ‘hold’ + ‘your’ + ‘horses’. No constituent of an idiom carries independent meaning.

The second criterion relates to the apparent morphological and transformational deficiencies of idioms, in not permitting the syntactic variability displayed in other, freer sequences of words; operation such passive (*The bucket was kicked by Sam), internal modification (*Hold your restless

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horses), and topicalization (*The bucket Sam kicked) cannot occur with the idiomatic meaning being retained.  

The third criterion is the lack of substitutability in idioms; their “lexical integrity” synonymous lexical items cannot be substituted in an idiom, as in have a crush on, but not *have a smash on, nor can elements be reversed or deleted. Idioms are, therefore, syntagmatically and paradigmatically fixed. In addition to these criteria, It has been observed that idioms belong to an informal register, are figurative or metaphorical in meaning, have homonymous literal counterparts, are often “institutionalized” or proverbial in nature (describing situations of common social interest), and have an affective quality (implying a certain affective stance). They are frequently nontraslatable.

After knowing many definition of idiom, it can be seen that idiom is peculiar pattern of a language that the meaning of on idiom is based on characterization of a person or a group itself. Every cultural community has their own idioms and sometimes it’s hard to be interpreting by other community. And the most important thing about idioms is their meaning that is why sometimes idioms are difficult to be interpreted by non-native speaker because historical culture also plays in the form of idiom itself. Every country has their own idiom that bonding them in one language culture that can be understood by their own community.

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9 Ibid.
2. Types of Idiom

Idioms yield three sub-classes: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. A working definition of a pure idiom which is adequate for the present is ‘a type of conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression’. Spill the beans, foe example, has nothing to do with beans. In contrast to its literal counterpart meaning ‘letting fall leguminous seeds’, a non-literal meaning is imposed on idiom as a whole: ‘commit an indiscretion’.

A semi-Idiom (Weinreich 1969; Cowie 1981) has one or more literal constituents and at least one with a non-literal subsense, usually special to that co-occurrence relation and no other: drop has the meaning ‘overuse’ only when it co-occurs with names. Other examples are catch one’s breath ‘check’, foot the bill ‘pay’, etc. Some of these semi-idioms, like their kin, restricted collocation with specialized subsenses, permit lexical variation, for example, blue ‘obscene’ film/joke/gag/story/comedian.

Literal Idioms (on foot; tall, dark and handsome; waste not, want not; on the contrary; a (very) happy birthday; a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, etc.) meet the salient criterion for idioms: invariance or restricted variation. They are, however, less semantically complex then pure and semi-idioms.

Some collocations, like idioms, show a habitual co-occurrence of words but these are multiword expressions which permit lexical alternatives as a matter of course, either restricted or unrestricted: addled eggs/brains, in-the-not-too-distant past/future (restricted); by dint of hard work/

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12 Ibid, p.36.
perseverance/repetition/application/patience/persistence, etc. catch a bus/train/tram, etc. (unrestricted). The last example is the most unrestricted collocation of the cited examples, but this only in relation to the others. Catch in the context of items signifying public transport has the specialized subsense ‘be in time for’, as it does with the post (catch the post). New forms of public transport can be added to the set of possible alternatives (e.g. hydrofoil/hovercraft), but some restrictions exist as with ship, though not with boat. Catch does not generally co-occur with forms of private transport (bicycle/car/yacht/dinghy/helicopter, etc.) though taxi (catch a taxi) is an exception. Although catch is unrestricted relatively restricted itself where compared with some other habitual co-occurrences such as Adj +coffee: strong/weak/black/white/Irish/Turkish/Brazilian/hot/iced/sweet/bitter, etc. coffee. However, numerous as are the adjectives that can co-occur with coffee, there are limits: coffee can be strong but not powerful or vital, weak but not limp, Irish ‘coffee laced with whisky’. But not British, and so on.

Despite such limits, the generous openness of this collocations apparent in the wide range of possible adjective options it has, places it at the lower end of a scale of idiomaticity (habitual collocations, IV, Table 2.1) in contrast to smell a rat, white lie, catch fire, etc., which are lexically invariant and non-literal, completely or partially.

It is difficult to maintain a strict division between pure idioms, semi-idioms, literal idioms, restricted and unrestricted collocations (as Table 2.1

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shows). The range of alternatives that can co-occur with blue ‘obscene’ (film/joke, etc.) may lead to this expression being seen as both a semi-idiom like white lie and a restricted collocation like explode ‘debunk’ a myth/theory/notion/idea/belief, especially as both have specialized subsenses; ‘obscene’ and ‘debunk’, which are non-literal. Consequently, semi-idioms and restricted collocations can be regarded as overlapping as in Cowie (1981). However, explode a myth because of its several options has less unity as a multiword expression that the invariant catch one’s breath ‘check’ or catch fire ‘ignite’, ‘be enthused’. A pure idiom such as get cold feet can take two other options (have/give), a flexibility which establishes links between it and restricted collocations.

The existence of conventionalized multiword expressions, or idioms, showing invariance or only restricted variation and habitual collocations, restricted or unrestricted in their variability, calls for a scale of idiomaticity. Several other scholars have all used scales to demonstrate the shading off of subclasses of idioms into one another as well as the overlap between idioms and the their lexical kin, collocations. The scale presented in the Table 2.1 has most in common with that of Cowie et al. (1983) but is probably less delicate than theirs.

The rationale underlying the combination of scalar and columnar format in Table 2.1 is that is makes possible:

1. A clear presentation of idioms and habitual collocations related, but two different lexical types.

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15 Ibid, p.31.
2. A clear presentation of the basis of this difference: the degree of variability, a lexicogrammatical feature, distinguishing these two lexical types. The semantics of idioms and collocations, though important, is not crucial as the examples cited in Table 2.1 show. There are both literal and non-literal expressions in the two columns, whereas only variable items occur in the collocations column.\(^{16}\)

The items at the top of the idioms column (Ia), are both invariant and non-literal, while Ib shows restricted variance and non-literalness. Ia and b are classed as pure idioms. IIa and b repeat the features invariant/variant evident in Ia and b, but are semi-literal and so are classed as semi-literal idioms. This set, as the arrow shows, overlaps

### Table 2.1: Multiword expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idioms</th>
<th>Habitual collocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
<td><strong>II</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pure idioms</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semi-literal idioms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invariant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Invariant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. devil- may-care, backlash, chin wag, red herring, make off with, spick and span. Smell a rat, the coast is clear, etc.</td>
<td>a. drop names, catch fire, kith and kin, foot the bill, fat chance you’ve got, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted variance, non-literal</strong></td>
<td><strong>Restricted variance, semi-literal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. pitter-patter/pit-a-pat, take/have forty winks, seize/grasp the nettle, get/have/cold feet, etc.</td>
<td>b. chequered career/history, blue idea/belief, catch the post/mail, film/story/joke/gag/comedian, thin/flimsy excuse, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted variance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Explode a myth/theory/notion/chequered career/history,blue idea/belief, catch the post/mail, film/story/joke/gag/comedian,thin/flimsy excuse, etc.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{16}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{17}\) *Ibid.* p.32.
With a sub-class of collocations (I). IIIa and b (the idioms column), both variant and invariant, are literal idioms of which IIIb overlaps with the literal collocations marked II. The idioms in IV are also literal with prepositions, which though optional, usually co-occur with their verbs (see section (1.2.4)).

The various classes of idioms listed above are not as neatly differentiated as they appear to be in Table 2.1. The fuzziness characterizing their interfaces are looked at in section 2.1.3.

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18 Ibid, p.33.
The salient characteristic of habitual collocations is that all the items there show variance, restricted as in I: *explode a myth*, etc., or relatively unrestricted as in IV: *beautiful/lovely*, etc. *woman*. Some of these collocations have one item have a non-literal sub sense as *explode* ‘debunk’ *a myth* or *catch* ‘be in time for’ *a train/plane*, etc. do. Others are literal, for example, *addled eggs/brains*. The bracketed items in V tend to be omitted and in this respect are more strongly optional than those optional items in the Idioms column IV.

A word regarding terminology: *An idiom is* used as a cover term for the various sub-classes of idioms. *An idiom is* also used in similarly general way when contrasted with non-idioms. Specific classificatory terms, for example, *pure idioms*, are used where necessary. The same practice is followed for *collocations*: the term is used generally, with the type of collocation specified where necessary.

B. The Comparison between American Idioms and British Idioms

American English has some spelling differences from English as used elsewhere. Unlike many 20th century language reforms the American spelling changes were not driven by government, but by textbook writers and dictionary makers. Spelling tendencies in Britain from the 17th century until the present day (e.g. -ise for -ize, programme for program, kerb for curb (noun), skilful for skillful, chequered for checkered, etc.), in some cases favored by the Francophile tastes of 19th century Victorian England, had little effect on American English.  

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20[http://www.google.co.id/search?q=differences+between+american+and+british+idioms&hl=id&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:id:official&channel=s&prmd=ivns&ei=UAe2TeK1BMnp9g&start=30&sa=N](http://www.google.co.id/search?q=differences+between+american+and+british+idioms&hl=id&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:id:official&channel=s&prmd=ivns&ei=UAe2TeK1BMnp9g&start=30&sa=N). Accessed on September 15, 2010
The first American dictionary was written by Noah Webster in 1828. At the time the United States was a relatively new country and Webster's particular contribution was to show that the region spoke a different dialect from Britain, and so he wrote a dictionary with many spellings differing from the standard. Webster also argued for many "simplifications" to the idiomatic spelling of the period. Many, although not all, of his simplifications fell into common usage alongside the original versions with simple spelling modifications. Some words with simplified spellings in American English include center, color, and maneuver, which are spelled centre, colour, and manoeuvre in other forms of English.

In Southern Britain the word whilst is used almost interchangeably with while. To Americans the word whilst, in any context, seems very archaic or pretentious or both. 21 The words amidst (as opposed to amid), and amongst (as opposed to among), are also rarer in American English.

1. In the UK, generally the term fall meaning "autumn" is obsolete.

2. In the UK, the term period for a full stop is now obsolete. For example, Tony Blair said "Terrorism is wrong, full stop." rather than "Terrorism is wrong, period."

Normally, Britons “tell the time” and Americans “tell time”. Fifteen minutes after the hour is called quarter past in British usage and a quarter after or, less commonly, a quarter past in American usage. Fifteen minutes before the hour is usually called quarter to in British usage and a quarter of, a quarter

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21 Ibid.
to or a quarter till in American usage. In informal British speech the preposition is sometimes omitted, so that 5:30 may be referred to as half five. A number of English idioms that have essentially the same meaning show lexical differences between the British and the American version; for instance:²²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British English</th>
<th>American English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweep under the carpet</td>
<td>sweep under the rug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch wood</td>
<td>knock on wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the wood for the trees</td>
<td>see the forest for the trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw a spanner (in the works)</td>
<td>throw a (monkey) wrench (in-the works)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuppence worth</td>
<td>two cents’ worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeleton in the cupboard</td>
<td>skeleton in the closet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A home from home</td>
<td>a home away from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven’t a clue</td>
<td>have no clue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flogging a dead horse</td>
<td>beating a dead horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A drop in the ocean</td>
<td>a drop in the bucket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Idiom is an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent element as kick the bucket, hang one’s head etc., or from the general grammatical rules of language, as the table round for the round table, and which is not a constituent of a larger expression of like characteristics. This definition seems a bit dry and doesn’t really tell anything about the function of idioms in English language.²³

²² Ibid.
English is a language particularly rich in idioms – those modes of expression peculiar to a language (or dialect) which frequently defy logical and grammatical rules. Without idioms English would lose much of its variety and humor both in speech and writing.

The background and etymological origins of most idioms is at best obscure. This is the reason why a study of differences between the idioms of American and British English is somewhat difficult. But it also makes the cases, where background, etymology and history are known, even more interesting. Some idioms of the “worldwide English” have first been seen in the works of writers like Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, and Lewis Carroll or even in the paperbacks of contemporary novelists. An example of Shakespearian quotation can be found in the following sentence:”As a social worker, you certainly see the seamy side of life.” Biblical references are also the source of many idioms. Sports terms, technical terms, legal terms, military slang and even nautical expressions have found their way to the everyday use of English language. Following are some examples of these, some used in either American or British English and some used in both:

1. “Having won the first two Tests, Australia is now almost certain to retain the Ashes.” (Ashes is a British English idiom that is nowadays a well-established cricket term.)

\footnote{Ibid.}
2. “In his case the exception proves the rule.” (A legal maxim — in full: “the exception proves the rule in cases not excepted”. Widely used in both American English and British English.)

3. “To have the edge on/over someone.” (This is originally American English idiom, now established in almost every other form of English, including British English.)

4. “A happy hunting ground.” (Place where one often goes to obtain something or to make money. Originally American English idiom from the Red Indians’ Paradise.)

In the old days English idioms rarely originated from any other form of English than British English.\(^{25}\) (French was also a popular source of idioms.) Nowadays American English is in this position. It is hard to find an American English idiom that has not established itself in “worldwide English” (usually British English). This is not the case with British English idioms which are not as widespread. It has to be remembered that it is hard to say which idioms are actively used in English and which are dying out or have already died. Idioms are constantly dying and new-ones are born. Some idioms may have gone through radical changes in meaning. The phrase – There is no love lost between them – nowadays means that some people dislike one another. Originally, when there was only the British English form, it meant exactly the opposite. The shift in meaning is yet unexplained. All dialects of English have different sets of idioms and situations where a given idiom can be used. American English and British English may not, in this respect, be the best.

possible pair to compare because they both have been developing into the same direction, at least where written language is concerned, since the Second World War. The reason that there is so much American influence in British English is the result of the following:

a. Magnitude of publishing industry in the U.S.
b. Magnitude of mass media influence on a worldwide scale
c. Appeal of American popular culture on language and habits worldwide
d. International political and economic position of the U.S.

All these facts lead to the conclusion that new idioms usually originate in the U.S. and then become popular in so-called “worldwide English”. This new situation is completely different from the birth of American English as a “variant” of British English. When America was still under the rule of the Crown, most idioms originated from British English sources. Of course there were American English expressions and idioms too, before American English could be defined as dialect of English. Some examples of these early American English idioms follow:

1. “To bark up the wrong tree.” (Originally from raccoon-hunting in which dogs were used to locate raccoons up in trees.)
2. “Paddle one’s own canoe.” (This is an American English idiom of the late 18th Century and early 19th Century.)

Some of these early American idioms and expressions were derived from the speech of the American natives like the phrase that “someone speaks with a forked tongue” and the “happy hunting ground” above. These idioms

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26 Ibid.
have filtered to British English through centuries through books, newspapers and most recently through powerful mediums like radio, TV and movies.\textsuperscript{27}

During the War English-speaking nations were united against a common enemy and the U.S. took the leading role. In these few years and a decade after the War American popular culture first established itself in British English. Again new idioms were created and old ones faded away. The Second World War was the turning point in many areas in life. This may also be the case in the development of the English language.

In the old days the written language (novels, poems, plays and the Bible) was the source from which idioms were extracted. This was the case up until WWII. After the war new mediums had established themselves in English-speaking society, there was a channel for the American way of life and the popular culture of the U.S. TV, movies and nowadays the interactive medium have changed the English language more to the American English direction. Some people in the Europe speak the Mid-Atlantic English, halfway from the British English to American English. The influence of American English can even be seen in other European languages. In Finland, we are adopting and translating American English proverbs, idioms and expressions. It can be said that the spoken language has taken the leading role over the written and the only reason for this is TV and radio. Most proverbs and idioms that have been adopted to British English from American English are of spoken origin. This is a definite shift from the days before WWII.

How then does differences words contained in the dictionary of American and British in the use of idioms? There are no radical differences in

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
actual use. American English is the form of English used in the United States. It includes all English dialects used within the United States of America. On the contrary, British English is the form of English used in the United Kingdom. It includes all English dialects used within the United Kingdom. The main differences are in the situations where idiomatic expressions are used. There have been many studies recently on this subject. American English adopts and creates new idioms at a much faster rate compared to British English. Also the idioms of American English origin tend to spread faster and further. The future of idiomatic expressions in the English language seems certain. They are more and more based on American English. This development will continue through new mediums like the Internet and interactive mediums. It is hard to say what this will do to idioms and what kind of new idioms are created. This will be an interesting development to follow, and by no means does it lessen the humor, variety and color of English language.

Idioms are multiword expressions but there are limits of their size. Ad hoc constructions, on the other hand, do not have such limits on size apart from those imposed by contextual appropriateness and memory limitations. Non-Idioms can range from short phrases like very true, rosy cheeks, one morning, etc. to multiple modifying recursive structures for example, In heman America, or In heman, two-fisted, bronco busting, poker-playing, stock juggling America (John Dos Passos, USA), or recursive multiple-clause structures such as well this is what I’m saying let’s get back to the morals

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29 Chitra Fernando, op. cit. p.40.
(BCET), both of which are potentially extendable. The same is true of common locutions like *come here* or *Please/do come right here or come right up and straight in here*, etc. Idioms do not permit such extensions; they are conventionalized expressions and, if variable, are variable only within definite constrains.

The lower limit for idioms is established by the compound. Though not generally included in dictionaries of idioms, compounds show many of the characterizing features of idioms. They are multi word expressions and represent habitual co-occurrences between two or more words (e.g. foxglove, overtake, pitter-patter/pit-a-pat, happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care).

Compounds are classifiable into the parts of speech which categorize the content words of the vocabulary: nouns (*baby-sitter*), adjectives (*devil-may-care*), verbs (*over-take*), and adverbs (*pitter-patter/pit-a-pat*).\(^{30}\) Relational forms like *however, moreover, therefore, none the less, nevertheless*, etc. though consisting of two or more independent forms are, like complex prepositions(e.g. *inside, outside*), accepted as single words and listed as such in dictionaries.

In speech, compounds are identified by distinctive stress patterns which differentiate them from homonymous free constructions, if these exist. Primary stress in compounds always falls on the first part of the compound: *si’lver screen* film industry’ vs. *silver scre’en* ‘a silver-coloured screen’.\(^{31}\) By this criterion, not only *si’lver screen* but other expressions like it that are


orthographically spaced (*bi’rth control, inco’me tax*, etc.) are also compounds despite the difference in writing conventions. The presence of the space as opposed to hyphenation or closed juxtaposition reflects different degrees of institutionalization in the recognition of the expression as a compound as opposed to a phrasal sequence.  

Like larger idioms, compounds can be both literal (e.g. *mother-in-law*), semi-literal (e.g. *baby-sitter, sickroom*), or non-literal (e.g. *foxglove, eavesdrop, pick-me-up*).

Some semi-clausal idioms can be transformed into compounds, e.g. *lick sb’s boots* → *boot-licker*; *break the ice* → *ice-breaker*, etc. If the compound is the recognized lower limit for idioms as far as size goes, the complex clause is the recognized upper one in dictionaries of idioms, and citations by scholars: *when the cat is away, the mice will play* ‘uninhibited behavior’; *don’t count your chickens before they are hatched* ‘ill-advised optimism’; etc. There are no idioms, whatever their sub-classes that consist of more than two subordinating clauses. In fact longer expressions such as those quoted are often shortened: *don’t count your chickens, red herring (originally trail a red herring across the path)*, etc. Short expressions that are easily remembered that are the commonest; what matters is not the number of clauses but the length as is evident in *I came, I saw, I conquered*, a saying that has acquired the status of an idiom.

The most favoured type of construction evident in English idioms, in term of both size and form, going on collections in dictionaries and other works, appear to be verb + particle(s) construction (e.g. *put up, put up with*) and the semi clause (e.g. *spill the beans, smell a rat*, etc).
The distinctive feature of idioms is that though they are multiword expressions, they are also lexicalized: they have the semantic unity of single words but the grammatical flexibility, though in varying degrees, of phrases, semi-clauses, and clauses, which indeed the majority are. Hence, they need to be described by means of the descriptive procedures common to both the grammar and the vocabulary. Semantic unity and the corollary of such unity, non-literalness, and opacity also serve the communicative needs of the language-user by adding to the synonymic resources of the language forms which are connotatively different and whose composite nature makes them specially suited to different forms of word play.

33 Ibid, p.74.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Data Description

To support this analysis in this research the writer uses the following data description to be analyzed then. The table contained difference meaning of American and British Idioms that is found in the dictionary and short story.

Table 3.1
Short story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>‘The hair of the mastiff that bit me?’ he said.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Oh, no, thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2
Dictionary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Idiom Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kick the bucket</td>
<td>To die. Derived from the slaughter of pigs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Analysis

From the tabulated corpus data on the table above the writer tries to analyze the data by comparing the difference meaning of American and British Idioms from the dictionary and short story.

From the short story you were perfectly fine Line 16, the hair of the mastiff (dog) that bit me. This Idiom, common to both countries, may need some
explanation. An ‘old wives’ tale’ says that if one is bitten by a mad dog one must seize some of that dog’s hairs and put them at once on the wound; in this way one may avoid the terrible disease of rabies. The old wives’ tale has been twisted, in modern use, to mean that, if one drank too heavily last night and has a terrible headache this morning, one may get rid of the headache if one at once drinks something alcoholic. (The majority of doctors disapprove of this modern application of the tale!).

From the dictionary “kick the bucket” idiom, this example of this common, famous American - English Idiom Kick the bucket plays a major part in the non-standard common speech, slang or dialect that is natural to the people of the United States and Great Britain. The meaning and origin of the American - English Kick the bucket idiom has been explained above and forms part of the free, online idioms dictionary. An Idiom is a common, everyday phrase or expression or saying whose meaning cannot be understood by the individual words or elements. A phrase, proverb, or slang that is peculiar to a people or to a district, community or class. This is demonstrated by the American - English meaning of the Idiom Kick the bucket. Although the word 'idiom' is not commonly used in our everyday language the actual idioms we quote, such as the American - English Idiom Kick the bucket is nevertheless frequently quoted! An idiom can relate to a variety of subjects including topics like a Funny Idiom, Sports idiom, rare, food idiom and even idioms found in books such as "Catch 22".
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

Between American Idioms and British Idioms there are no radical differences in actual use. American English is the form of English used in the United States. It includes all English dialects used within the United States of America. On the contrary, British English is the form of English used in the United Kingdom. It includes all English dialects used within the United Kingdom. The main differences are in the situations where idiomatic expressions are used. There have been many studies recently on this subject. American English adopts and creates new idioms at a much faster rate compared to British English. Also the idioms of American English origin tend to spread faster and further.

In the other hand, in British English and American English there are numerous differences in the areas of vocabulary, spelling, and phonology. Actual speech by educated British and American speakers is more varied, and that of uneducated speakers still more. Grammatical and lexical differences between British and American English are, for the most part, common to all dialects, but there are many regional differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, usage and slang, some subtle, some glaring, some rendering a sentence incomprehensible to a speaker of another variant.

After knowing many definition and types of idiom, it can be seen that idiom is peculiar pattern of a language that the meaning of on idiom is based on
characterization of a person or a group itself. Every cultural community has their own idioms and sometimes it’s hard to be interpreting by other community. And the most important thing about idioms is their meaning that is why sometimes idioms are difficult to be interpretated by non-native speaker because historical culture also plays in the form of idiom itself. Every country has their own idiom that bonding them in one language culture that can be understood by their own community.

B. Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, the writer has some suggestions as follows:

1. In the course, there should be introduction of American and British idioms that exist in relation to culture, because the idiom is a representation of the cultural values of language.

2. English language learners are advised to neither read more American language phrasebooks nor phrase in English and idioms that are no longer foreign to the learner's idioms in differentiating both expressions and can provide good contribution to the learners.

3. Expected for all the learners, especially students of English Department add new idiom Dictionary collection, to facilitate in exploring and studying the differences in idiom. In addition, in the process of learning the English language learners are advised to use idioms in daily conversations in the classroom and outside the classroom, so it is more motivated to explore further.
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Books


Websites:
YOU WERE PERFECTLY FINE

DOROTHY PARKER

(American)

THE PALE YOUNG MAN eased himself carefully into the low chair, and rolled his head to the side, so that the cool chintz comforted his cheek and temple.

‘Oh, dear,’ he said. ‘Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear. Oh.’

The clear-eyed girl, sitting light and erect on the couch, smiled bitterly at him.

‘Not feeling so well to-day?’ she said.

‘Oh, I'm great,’ he said. ‘Corking, I am. Know what time I got up? Four o'clock this afternoon, sharp. I kept trying to make it, and every time I took my head off the pillow it would roll under the bed. This isn't my head I've got on now. I think this is something that used to belong to Walt Whitman. Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear.’

‘Do you think maybe a drink would make you feel better?’ she said.

‘The hair of the mastiff that bit me?’ he said. ‘Oh, no, thank you. Please never speak of anything like that again. I'm through. I'm all, all through. Look at that hand; steady as a humming-bird. Tell me, was I very terrible last night?’

‘Oh, goodness,’ she said, ‘everybody was feeling pretty high. You were all right.’

1 *i.e.* feeling very well (slang).

2 *i.e.* (here) trying to get out of bed (slang).

3 19th-Century American poet, who had an unusually large head.

4 *i.e.* very unsteady.
**You Were Perfectly Fine**

'Yeah,' he said. 'I must have been dandy. Is everybody sore at me?'

'Good heavens, no,' she said. 'Everyone thought you were terribly funny. Of course, Jim Pierson was a little stuffy there for a minute at dinner. But people sort of held him back in his chair, and got him calmed down. I don't think anybody at the other tables noticed it at all. Hardly anybody.'

'He was going to sock me?' he said. 'Oh, Lord! What did I do to him?'

'Why, you didn't do a thing,' she said. 'You were perfectly fine. But you know how silly Jim gets when he thinks anybody is making too much fuss over Elinor.'

'Was I making a pass at Elinor?' he said. 'Did I do that?'

'Of course you didn't,' she said. 'You were only fooling, that's all. She thought you were awfully amusing. She was having a marvellous time. She only got a tiny bit annoyed just once, when you poured the clam-juice down her back.'

'My God,' he said. 'Clam-juice down her back. And every vertebra a little Cabot. Dear God. What'll I ever do?'

'Oh, she'll be all right,' she said. 'Just send her some flowers, or something. Don't worry about it. It isn't anything.'

'No, I won't worry,' he said. 'I haven't got a care in the world. I'm sitting pretty. Oh, dear, oh, dear. Did I do any other fascinating tricks at dinner?'

'You were fine,' she said. 'Don't be so foolish about it. Everybody was crazy about you. The maitre d'hôtel was a little worried because you wouldn't stop singing, but he really didn't mind. All he said was, he was afraid they'd close the place again if there was so much noise. But he didn't care a bit him-self. I think he loved seeing you have such a good time. Oh, you were just singing away there for about an hour. It wasn't so terribly loud at all.'

1 hit (slang).

2 i.e. 'Was I trying to flirt with Elinor?' (slang).

3 joking (slang).

4 large shell-fish.
The Cabots are a prominent .American family.
\[\text{i.e. I have nothing to worry about (slang).}\]

\[\text{You Were Perfectly Fine}\]

'So I sang," he said. 'That must have been a treat.\(^1\) I sang.'

'Don't you remember?' she said. 'You just sang one song after another. Everybody in the place was listening. They loved it. Only you kept insisting that you wanted to sing some song about some kind of fusiliers\(^2\) or other, and everybody kept shushing\(^3\) you, and you'd keep trying to start it again. You were wonderful. We were all trying to make you stop singing for a minute, and eat something, but you wouldn't hear of it. My, you were funny.'

'Didn't I eat any dinner?' he said.

'Oh, not a thing,' she said. 'Every time the waiter would offer you something, you'd give it right back to him, because you said that he was your long-lost brother, changed in the cradle\(^4\) by a gipsy band,\(^5\) and that anything you had was his. You had him simply roaring\(^6\) at you.'

'I bet I did,' he said. 'I bet I was comical. Society's Pet, I must have been. And what happened then, after my overwhelming success with the waiter?'

'Why, nothing much,' she said. 'You took a sort of dislike to some old man with white hair, sitting across the room, because you didn't like his necktie\(^6\) and you wanted to tell him about it. But we got you out before he got really mad.'

'Oh, we got out,' he said. 'Did I walk?'

'Walk! Of course you did,' she said. 'You were absolutely all right. There was that nasty stretch of ice on the sidewalk,\(^6\) and you did sit down awfully hard, you poor dear. But good heavens, that might have happened to anybody.'

'Oh, sure,' he said.'Louisa Alcott\(^7\) or anybody. So I fell down on the sidewalk. That would explain what's the matter with my— Yes. I see. And then what, if you don't mind?'

'Ah, now, Peter!' she said. 'You can't sit there and say you

\(^1\) very enjoyable for everybody (slang).

\(^2\) type of soldier.
don't remember what happened after that! I did think that maybe you were just a
little tight\(^1\) at dinner—oh, you were perfectly all right, and all that, but I did know
you were feeling pretty gay. But you were so serious, from the time you fell
down—I never knew you to be that way.\(^6\) Don't you know, how you told me I had
never seen your real self before? Oh, Peter, I just couldn't bear it, if you didn't
remember that lovely long ride we took together in the taxi! Please, you do
remember that, don't you? I think it would simply kill me, if you didn't.'

'Oh, yes,' he said. 'Riding in the taxi. Oh, yes, sure.\(^c\) Pretty long ride, hmm?'

'Round and round and round the park,' she said. 'Oh, and the trees were
shining so in the moonlight. And you said you never knew before that you really
had a soul.'

'Yes,' he said. 'I said that. That was me\(^c\).'

'You said such lovely, lovely things,' she said. 'And I'd never known, all
this time, how you had been feeling about me, and I'd never dared to let you see
how I felt about you. And then last night—oh, Peter dear, I think that taxi ride was
the most important thing that ever happened to us in our lives.'

'Yes,' he said. 'I guess\(^c\) it must have been.'

'And we're going to be so happy,' she said. 'Oh, I just want to tell
everybody! But I don't know—I think maybe it would be sweeter to keep it all to
ourselves.

'I think it would be,' he said.

'Isn't it lovely?' she said.

'Yes,' he said. 'Great\(^c\).'
'Lovely,' she said.

'Look here,' he said, 'do you mind if I have a drink? I mean, just medicinally, you know. I'm off the stuff for life, so help me.² But I think I feel a collapse coming on.'

'Oh, I think it will do you good,' she said. 'You poor boy, it's a shame you feel so awful. I'll go make² you a whiskey and soda.'

¹ drunk (slang).
² i.e. so help me God.

You Were Perfectly Fine

'Honestly,' he said, 'I don't see how you could ever want to speak to me again, after I made such a fool of myself, last night. I think I'd better go join⁰ a monastery in Tibet.'

'You crazy idiot!' she said. 'As if I could ever let you go away now! Stop talking like that. You were perfectly fine.'

She jumped up from the couch, kissed him quickly on the forehead, and ran out of the room.

The pale young man looked after her and shook his head long and slowly, then dropped it in his damp and trembling hands,

'Oh, dear,' he said. 'Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear.'

English and American Idioms dictionary

“Kick the bucket”

Idiom Meaning - To die. Derived from the slaughter of pigs.
Nama: Nanik Fatmawati

Nim: 206026004290

A Comparison Analysis of American and British Idioms Summary

English is a funny language and when it comes to idioms, it sounds even more hilarious. This is because idioms are defined as expressions of two or more words, which mean something other than the literal meanings of its individual words. Many people think as English in itself is a difficult language to understand, the idioms in it make it even more difficult. But I think, idioms definitely save the effort put into explaining an entire situation in a matter of a few words. There are many idiom examples used not very often today, but can be put to use when you're out of words. Listed below are such witty examples of idioms which you can use in sentences as and when required.

An idiom is a combination of words that has a meaning that is different from the meanings of the individual words themselves. It can have a literal meaning in one situation and a different idiomatic meaning in another situation. It is a phrase which does not always follow the normal rules of meaning and grammar. *To sit on the fence* can literally mean that one is sitting on a fence. *I sat on the fence and watched the game.* However, the idiomatic meaning of *to sit on the fence* is that one is not making a clear choice regarding some issue. *The politician sat on the fence and would not give his opinion about the tax issue.* All idioms, of course, show
idiomaticity. However, all word combinations showing idiomaticity, for instance, *habitual collocations* such as *rosy cheeks, sallow complexion, black coffee*, or *catch a bus*, etc., are not idioms for they are relatively unrestricted in their adjectival and nominal variants: *rosy/plump cheeks, rosy dawn, and a sallow skin* are all possible. Similarly, we can have *strong coffee* and *catch a tram*. All these variations yield idiomatic expressions exemplifying idiomaticity, but they are not idioms. Idiomaticity is exemplified not only in idioms and conventional *ad hoc* collocations, but also in conventional lexicogrammatical sequencing most apparent on longer text fragments: *those smooth, plump, rosy cheeks will one day be shrunken, shriveled, and withered*. This *ad hoc* sequence of adjectival modifiers proceeding and following *cheeks* exemplifies idiomaticity in both selection and sequencing, but there are no combinations within the sequence qualifying as idioms. Such an *ad hoc* sequence can be compared with *tall dark and handsome*, an idiom both lexically and sequentially fixed.

Idiomaticity is a universal linguistic phenomenon in natural languages, although the distinction between morphemes, words, and groups may be qualitatively different in non-Indo-European languages.

Idioms and idiomaticity, while closely related, are not identical. The basis of both is the habitual and, therefore, predictable co-occurrence of specific words, but with idioms signifying a narrower range of word combinations than *idiomaticity*. Idioms are indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within
definable limits. No other words can be substituted for those comprising, for example, *smell a rat or seize/grasp the nettle*, which take either of these two verbs but no others: thus *grab* is unacceptable. Nor are the words of an idiom usually recombinable.

All idioms, of course, show idiomaticity. However, all word combinations showing idiomaticity, for instance, *habitual collocations* such as *rosy cheeks, sallow complexion, black coffee, or catch a bus*, etc., are not idioms for they are relatively unrestricted in their adjectival and nominal variants: *rosy/plump cheeks, rosy dawn, and a sallow skin* are all possible. Similarly, we can have *strong coffee and catch a tram*. All these variations yield idiomatic expressions exemplifying idiomaticity, but they are not idioms. Idiomaticity is exemplified not only in idioms and conventional *ad hoc* collocations, but also in conventional lexicogrammatical sequencing most apparent on longer text fragments: *those smooth, plump, rosy cheeks will one day be shrunken, shriveled, and withered*. This *ad hoc* sequence of adjectival modifiers preceding and following *cheeks* exemplifies idiomaticity in both selection and sequencing, but there are no combinations within the sequence qualifying as idioms. Such an *ad hoc* sequence can be compared with *tall dark and handsome*, an idiom both lexically and sequentially fixed.

All idioms are not grammatically regular. Non-canonical conventionalized word orders and semantics are possible as in *nothing loath,*
footloose and fancy free, beside oneself, curry favour, etc. In sum, while habitual co-occurrence produces idiomatic expressions, both canonical and non-canonical, only those expressions which become conventionally fixed in a specific order and lexical form, or have only a restricted set of variants, acquire the status of idioms and are recorded in idiom dictionaries as bread and butter and footloose and fancy free. Combinations, showing a relatively high degree of variability, especially in the matter of lexical replacement such as catch a bus, catch a train, etc., are not regarded as idioms, though they exemplify idiomaticity by virtue of habitual co-occurrence: catch meaning ‘be in time for’ co-occurs usually with a mode of transport, though catch the post is also possible.

Of the various definitions of “idiom”, three criteria, both semantic and syntactic, emerge as predominant. The first is semantic opacity, or what has come to be known as “noncompositionality”, the fact that the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from a sum of the meanings of its parts: in this sense, the meaning of an idiom is not “motivated”. Thus the meaning of ‘die’ cannot be produced from the sum of ‘kick’ + ‘the’ + bucket’, or ‘be patient, slow down’ from ‘hold’ + ‘your’ + ‘horses’. No constituent of an idiom carries independent meaning.

The second criterion relates to the apparent morphological and transformational deficiencies of idioms, in not permitting the syntactic variability displayed in other, freer sequences of words; operation such passive (*The bucket was
kicked by Sam), internal modification (*Hold your restless horses), and topicalization (*The bucket Sam kicked) cannot occur with the idiomatic meaning being retained.

The third criterion is the lack of substitutability in idioms; their “lexical integrity” synonymous lexical items cannot be substituted in an idiom, as in have a crush on, but not *have a smash on, nor can elements be reversed or deleted. Idioms are, therefore, syntagmatically and paradigmatically fixed. In addition to these criteria, It has been observed that idioms belong to an informal register, are figurative or metaphorical in meaning, have homonymous literal counterparts, are often “institutionalized” or proverbial in nature (describing situations of common social interest), and have an affective quality (implying a certain affective stance). They are frequently nontraslatable.

Idioms yield three sub-classes: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. The existence of conventionalized multiword expressions, or idioms, showing invariance or only restricted variation and habitual collocations, restricted or unrestricted in their variability, calls for a scale of idiomaticity. Several other scholars have all used scales to demonstrate the shading off of sub-classes of idioms into one another as well as the overlap between idioms and the their lexical kin, collocations. The scale presented in the Table 2.1 has most in common with that of Cowie et al. (1983) but is probably less delicate than theirs. The rationale underlying the combination of scalar and columnar format in Table 2.1 is that is makes possible:
1 A clear presentation of idioms and habitual collocations related, but two different lexical types.

2 A clear presentation of the basis of this difference: the degree of variability, a lexicogrammatical feature, distinguishing these two lexical types. The semantics of idioms and collocations, though important, is not crucial as the examples cited in Table 2.1 show. There are both literal and non-literal expressions in the two columns, whereas only variable items occur in the collocations column.

The items at the top of the idioms column (Ia), are both invariant and non-literal, while Ib shows restricted variance and non-literalness. Ia and b are classed as pure idioms. Ila and b repeat the features invariant/variant evident in Ia and b, but are semi-literal and so are classed as semi-literal idioms. This set, as the arrow shows, overlaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1: Multiword expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idioms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  Pure idioms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invariant, non-literal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. devil- may-care, backlash, chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Restricted variance, non-literal**

b. pitter-patter/pit-a-pat, take/have forty winks, seize/grasp the nettle, get/have/cold feet, etc.

**II Semi-literal idioms**

**Invariant**

a. drop names, catch fire, kith and kin, foot the bill, fat chance you’ve got, etc.

**Restricted variance, semi-literal**

**Restricted variance**

Explode a myth/theory/notion/

b. chequered career/history, blue idea/belief, catch the post/mail,

film/story/joke/gag/comedian, thin/flimsy excuse, etc.

good morning/day, etc.

**III Literal idioms**

**Invariant**

a. on foot, one day; in sum; in the meantime; on the contrary; arm in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arm; very important person (VIP); potato crisps; tall, dark and handsome; waste not, want not; happy New Year, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted variance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. opt in favour of/for, for example/instance, inorder that/to, happy/merry Christmas, etc. wood, etc. chips, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II Restricted variance, literal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. addled brains/eggs, in-the-not too distant past/future, for certain/sure, potato/corn/wood, etc. chips, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III Unrestricted variance, Semi-literal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch a bus/plane/ferry, etc. Train, run a business/company Pany, etc. theatre, by dint of Hard work/patience/repetition, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV Unrestricted variance, Literal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful/lovely, etc. sweet Woman/smooth/plump, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With a sub-class of collocations (I). IIIa and b (the idioms column), both variant and invariant, are literal idioms of which IIIb overlaps with the literal collocations marked II. The idioms in IV are also literal with prepositions, which though optional, usually co-occur with their verbs (see section (1.2.4).

The various classes of idioms listed above are not as neatly differentiated as they appear to be in Table 2.1. The fuzziness characterizing their interfaces are looked at in section 2.1.3.

The salient characteristic of habitual collocations is that all the items there show variance, restricted as in I: *explode a myth*, etc., or relatively unrestricted as in IV: *beautiful/lovely*, etc. *woman*. Some of these collocations have one item have a non-literal sub sense as *explode* ‘debunk’ *a myth* or *catch* ‘be in time for’ *a train/plane*, etc. do. Others are literal, for example, *addled eggs/brains*. The bracketed items in V
tend to be omitted and in this respect are more strongly optional than those optional items in the Idioms column IV.

A word regarding terminology: An idiom is used as a cover term for the various sub-classes of idioms. An idiom is also used in similarly general way when contrasted with non-idioms. Specific classificatory terms, for example, pure idioms, are used where necessary. The same practice is followed for collocations: the term is used generally, with the type of collocation specified where necessary.

The background and etymological origins of most idioms is at best obscure. This is the reason why a study of differences between the idioms of American and British English is somewhat difficult. But it also makes the cases, where background, etymology and history are known, even more interesting. Some idioms of the “worldwide English” have first been seen in the works of writers like Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, Lewis Carroll or even in the paperbacks of contemporary novelists. An example of Shakespearian quotation can be found in the following sentence:”As a social worker, you certainly see the seamy side of life.” Biblical references are also the source of many idioms. Sports terms, technical terms, legal terms, military slang and even nautical expressions have found their way to the everyday use of English language. Following are some examples of these, some used in either American or British English and some used in both:
1. “Having won the first two Tests, Australia is now almost certain to retain the Ashes.” (Ashes is a British English idiom that is nowadays a well-established cricket term.)

2. “In his case the exception proves the rule.” (A legal maxim — in full:”the exception proves the rule in cases not excepted”. Widely used in both AmE and BrE.)

3. “To have the edge on/over someone.” (This is originally American English idiom, now established in almost every other form of English, including BrE.)

4. “A happy hunting ground.” (Place where one often goes to obtain something or to make money. Originally American English idiom from the Red Indians’ Paradise.)

In the old days English idioms rarely originated from any other form of English than British English. (French was also a popular source of idioms.) Nowadays American English is in this position. It is hard to find an AmE idiom that has not established itself in “worldwide English” (usually BrE). This is not the case with British English idioms which are not as widespread. It has to be remembered that it is hard to say which idioms are actively used in English and which are dying out or have already died. Idioms are constantly dying and new-ones are born.
Some idioms may have gone through radical changes in meaning. The phrase – There is no love lost between them – nowadays means that some people dislike one another. Originally, when there was only the British English form, it meant exactly the opposite. The shift in meaning is yet unexplained. All dialects of English have different sets of idioms and situations where a given idiom can be used. American English and British English may not, in this respect, be the best possible pair to compare because they both have been developing into the same direction, at least where written language is concerned, since the Second World War. The reason that there is so much American influence in British English is the result of the following:

1. Magnitude of publishing industry in the U.S.
2. Magnitude of mass media influence on a worldwide scale
3. Appeal of American popular culture on language and habits worldwide
4. International political and economic position of the U.S.

All these facts lead to the conclusion that new idioms usually originate in the U.S. and then become popular in so-called “worldwide English”. This new situation is completely different from the birth of American English as a “variant” of British English. When America was still under the rule of the Crown, most idioms originated from British English sources. Of course there were American English expressions and
idioms too, before American English could be defined as dialect of English. Some examples of these early American English idioms follow:

A. “To bark up the wrong tree.” (Originally from raccoon-hunting in which dogs were used to locate raccoons up in trees.)

B. “Paddle one’s own canoe.” (This is an American English idiom of the late 18th Century and early 19th Century.)

Some of these early American idioms and expressions were derived from the speech of the American natives like the phrase that “someone speaks with a forked tongue” and the “happy hunting ground” above. These idioms have filtered to British English through centuries through books, newspapers and most recently through powerful mediums like radio, TV and movies.

Between American English and British English in the use of idioms, there are no radical differences in actual use. The main differences are in the situations where idiomatic expressions are used. There have been many studies recently on this subject. American English adopts and creates new idioms at a much faster rate compared to British English. Also the idioms of AmE origin tend to spread faster and further. After it has first been established in the U.S., an American idiom may soon be found in other “variants” and dialects of English. Nowadays new British idioms tend to stay on the British Isles and are rarely encountered in the U.S. British idioms are actually more familiar to other Europeans or to the people of the British
Commonwealth than to Americans, even though the language is same. The reason for all these facts is that Britain is not the world power it used to be and it must be said that the U.S. has taken the role of the leading nation in the development of language, media and popular culture. Britain just doesn’t have the magnitude of media influence that the United States controls.

The future of idiomatic expressions in the English language seems certain. They are more and more based on American English. This development will continue through new mediums like the Internet and interactive mediums. It is hard to say what this will do to idioms and what kind of new idioms are created. This will be an interesting development to follow, and by no means does it lessen the humor, variety and color of English language.

The lower limit for idioms is established by the compound. Though not generally included in dictionaries of idioms, compounds show many of the characterizing features of idioms. They are multi word expressions and represent habitual co-occurrences between two or more words (e.g. foxglove, overtake, pitter-patter/pit-a-pat, happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care).

Compounds are classifiable into the parts of speech which categorize the content words of the vocabulary: nouns (baby-sitter), adjectives (devil-may-care), verbs (over-take), and adverbs (pitter-patter/pit-a-pat). Relational forms like however, moreover, therefore, none the less, nevertheless, etc. though consisting of
two or more independent forms are, like complex prepositions (e.g. inside, outside), accepted as single words and listed as such in dictionaries.

In speech, compounds are identified by distinctive stress patterns which differentiate them from homonymous free constructions, if these exist. Primary stress in compounds always falls on the first part of the compound: si’lver screen film industry’ vs. silver scre’en ‘a silver-coloured screen’. By this criterion, not only si’lver screen but other expressions like it that are orthographically spaced (bi’rth control, inco’me tax, etc.) are also compounds despite the difference in writing conventions. The presence of the space as opposed to hyphenation or closed juxtaposition reflects different degrees of institutionalization in the recognition of the expression as a compound as opposed to a phrasal sequence. Like larger idioms, compounds can be both literal (e.g. mother-in-law), semi-literal (e.g. baby-sitter, sickroom), or non-literal (e.g. foxglove, eavesdrop, pick-me-up).

Some semi-clausal idioms can be transformed into compounds, e.g. lick sb’s boots → boot-licker; break the ice → ice-breaker, etc. If the compound is the recognized lower limit for idioms as far as size goes, the complex clause is the recognized upper one in dictionaries of idioms, and citations by scholars: when the cat is away, the mice will play ‘uninhibited behavior’; don’t count your chickens before they are hatched ‘ill-advised optimism’; etc. There are no idioms, whatever their sub-classes that consist of more than two subordinating clauses. In fact longer expressions such as those quoted are often shortened: don’t count your chickens, red herring (originally trail a red herring across the path), etc. Short expressions that are
easily remembered that are the commonest; what matters is not the number of clauses but the length as is evident in *I came, I saw, I conquered*, a saying that has acquired the status of an idiom.

The most favoured type of construction evident in English idioms, in term of both size and form, going on collections in dictionaries and other works, appear to be verb + particle(s) construction (e.g. *put up, put up with*) and the semi clause (e.g. *spill the beans, smell a rat*, etc).

The distinctive feature of idioms is that though they are multiword expressions, they are also lexicalized: they have the semantic unity of single words but the grammatical flexibility, though in varying degrees, of phrases, semi-clauses, and clauses, which indeed the majority are. Hence, they need to be described by means of the descriptive procedures common to both the grammar and the vocabulary. Semantic unity and the corollary of such unity, non-literalness, and opacity also serve the communicative needs of the language-user by adding to the synonymic resources of the language forms which are connotatively different and whose composite nature makes them specially suited to different forms of word play.

An idiom is an expression whose meaning is not compositional — that is, whose meaning does not follow from the meaning of the individual words of which it is composed. For example, the English phrase "to kick the bucket" means "to die". A listener knowing the meaning of kick and bucket will not necessarily be able to predict that the expression can mean to die. Idioms are often, though perhaps not universally, classified as figures of speech.
In the English expression *to kick the bucket*, a listener knowing only the meanings of *kick* and *bucket* would be unable to deduce the expression's true meaning: *to die*. Although this idiomatic phrase can, in fact, actually refer to kicking a bucket, native speakers of English rarely use it so. Cases like this are "opaque idioms". Literal translation (word-by-word) of opaque idioms will not convey the same meaning in other languages – an analogous expression in Polish is *kopnąć w kalendarz* ("to kick the calendar"), with "calendar" detached from its usual meaning, just like "bucket" in the English phrase. In Bulgarian the closest analogous phrase is *da ritnes kambanata* ("да ритнеш камбаната", "to kick the bell"); in Dutch, *het loodje leggen* ("to lay the piece of lead"); in Finnish, *potkaista tyhjää* ("to kick nothing", or more literally "to kick the absence of something"); in French, *manger des pissenlits par la racine* ("to eat dandelions by the root"); in Spanish, *estirar la pata* (to stretch the foot); in German, *den Löffel abgeben* ("to give the spoon away") or *ins Gras beißen* ("to bite into the grass"); in Latvian, *nolikt karoti* ("to put the spoon down"); in Portuguese, *bater as botas* ("to beat the boots"); in Danish, *at stille træskoene* ("to take off the clogs"); in Swedish, *trilla av pinnen* ("to fall off the stick"); and in Greek, *τινάξω τα πέταλα* ("to shake the horse-shoes"). In Brazil, the expression "to kick the bucket" (chutar o balde) has a completely different meaning (to give up on something complicated, as a bucket kicked makes too much noise, demonstrating impatience). Some idioms, in contrast, are "transparent idioms": much of their meaning does get through if they are taken (or translated) literally. For example, "lay one's cards on the table" meaning to reveal previously unknown
intentions, or to reveal a secret. Transparency is a matter of degree; "spill the beans" and "leave no stone unturned" are not entirely literally interpretable, but only involve a slight metaphorical broadening.

Another category of idioms is a word having several meanings, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes discerned from the context of its usage. This is seen in the (mostly un-inflected) English language in polysemes, the common use of the same word for an activity, for those engaged in it, for the product used, for the place or time of an activity, and sometimes for a verb.

Idioms tend to confuse those unfamiliar with them; students of a new language must learn its idiomatic expressions as vocabulary. Many natural language words have idiomatic origins, but are assimilated, so losing their figurative senses, for example, in Portuguese, the expression "saber de coração" (meaning "to know by heart", with the same meaning as in English), was shortened to "saber de cor", and, later, to the verb "decorar", meaning "memorize".

Review of what has been the writer, the writer concludes there is no special difference in the use of idioms, what distinguishes culture is, because every culture has its own distinct idioms. Another difference is just a term and a thesis on each sentence and the meaning of each idiom itself. And the writer have tried to find a difference in a short story titled you were perfectly fine by John Millington Ward. Below is the result of my analysis:
The table contained difference meaning of American and British Idioms that is found in the short story.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>‘Do you think maybe a drink would make you better?’ she said.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>‘The hair of the mastiff that bit me?’ he said.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Oh, no, thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I’m through. I’m all, all through.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Of course, Jim Pierson was a little stuffy there for a minute at dinner.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>But you were so serious, from the time you fell down--I never knew you to be that way.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>‘Yes,’ he said.’ I said that. That was me.</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>‘Yes, ‘he said. Great.’</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I’ll go make you a whiskey and soda.’</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the difference meaning of American and British Idioms from the short story:

Line 14, maybe; as an adverb (i.e. not as a tense form: ‘He may be there.’), this word is rather more American than British. Perhaps is the more British word. (The
etymologist may find this amusing: *maybe* is of slightly earlier *British* origin than *perhaps*. Line 16, the hair of the mastiff (dog) that bit me. This Idiom, common to both countries, may need some explanation. An ‘old wives’ tale’ says that if one is bitten by a mad dog one must seize some of that dog’s hairs and put them at once on the wound; in this way one may avoid the terrible disease of rabies. The old wives’ tale has been twisted, in modern use, to mean that, if one drank too heavily last night and has a terrible headache this morning, one may get rid of the headache if one at once drinks something alcoholic. (The majority of doctors disapprove of this modern application of the tale!). Line 18, I’m through; i.e. I shall not drink alcohol again; predominantly American and slang. The British version would be something like *I’ve finished (with alcohol)*. Line 25, Stuffy; in colloquial American, this means annoyed; rather angry. In British (non-colloquial), it means without air (e.g. ‘let’s person open a window. The room is rather stuffy.’). Line 89, to be that way; in British, this would to be like that. Line 99, that was me; this seemingly incorrect expression is common in the *educated* speech of both countries (American and British). Grammar would insist on *that was I*-but grammar must not be a dogma; it must be an analysis of the way of majority of educated people speak and use a language, and that majority in both Britain and America would not say *that was I*. (Another example: imagine to yourself a man arriving home late at night and finding that he has lost his keys; he knocks on his front door; his wife wakes up and comes downstairs; because it is very late she asks, from her side of the door: ‘who is it?’ Her husband replies: ‘It’s me, Peter.’ Only a very pompous person would reply: ‘It’s I, Peter’—irrespective of what
grammar demands.). Line 111, great; this, in this meaning, is predominantly American; the British version would be yes, lovely; very good; or wonderful; etc. (In American, the answer to ‘How are you?’ is very often ‘Great thank you’. This answer is very rare in British; it is usually ‘Very well, thank you’, ‘Fine, thank you’, etc.). Line 117, I’ll go make and I’d better go join; the omission of and is fairly standard colloquial American; British would insist on either and or to; e.g. I’ll go and make/I’ll go to make; I’d better go and join, etc.
CURRICULUM VITAE

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FORMAL EDUCATION

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