

Idiomatics: The Ethos, Pathos, and Logos of Idiomatics Proper

*By John I. Liontas**

Idiomatics, the scientific study of idiomatic and figurative language, is examined in this article to define the boundaries as a distinct academic discipline. The investigation highlights the significant implications of idiomatics for understanding human behavior, language development, and technological advancements. A six-part approach to language study is outlined, providing a comprehensive exploration of language dynamics and application. The importance of interdisciplinary approaches, methodological frameworks, and global collaboration is emphasized as crucial for solidifying idiomatics as an autonomous academic field. Focused research enables the development of novel methodologies and tools, ultimately improving language instruction, research, and policy-making. The advancement of idiomatics as a distinct field necessitates a concerted effort from scholars, educators, policymakers, and linguists to collaborate on advancing our understanding of language and its role in shaping human culture and society. This endeavor has the potential to unlock the full potential of idiomatics and yield its dividends for future generations.

Keywords: Idiomatics, idiomaticity, idiomatic and figurative language, human communication, persuasion

Prolegomena

In any piece of writing, a title functions as a multifaceted tool. It reveals the essence and subject matter of the text, providing readers with a tantalizing preview. It sets the tone and context for what follows, signaling the genre, style, or perspective of the writing. It captivates the reader's attention, sparking curiosity and compelling deeper exploration. It distills the core idea or focus of the text concisely, ensuring clarity. And it serves as a compass, guiding the reader's understanding and expectations. Essentially, a title transcends mere labeling; it serves as a vital gateway in communication, bridging understanding while enticing and preparing the reader for the journey ahead.

Thus contextualized, the title "Idiomatics: The Ethos, Pathos, and Logos of Idiomatics Proper" sets the stage for a nuanced examination of idiomatics, teasing out its rhetorical subtleties through the lenses of ethos, pathos, and logos. This title promises a meticulous analysis of idiomatics within specialized frameworks, highlighting its importance in the domain of "Idiomatics Proper." It is reasonable to assume that this article will delve into the intricacies of how idiomatics navigates the realms of ethos, pathos, and logos, shedding light on their crucial roles in

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communication and underscoring their profound influence on the fabric of linguistic and rhetorical studies.

Beyond initial impressions, perceptive readers may recognize that this article is geared toward an academic or scholarly audience with a keen interest in linguistics, rhetoric, or communication studies. The deliberate use of technical terms like “ethos,” “pathos,” and “logos” indicates a rigorous scholarly approach to exploring idiomatics within a specialized domain. By referencing *ethos*—the ethical appeal that fosters credibility and character—*pathos*—the emotional appeal that evokes profound feelings—and *logos*—the logical appeal that constructs reasoned arguments—the title hints at a multifaceted investigation. This suggests an inquiry into how idiomatics operates not only as a linguistic tool but also as a powerful persuader, one that engages credibility, emotions, and logic to enrich communication. In doing so, the article promises to shed light on the intricate role of idiomatics in compelling rhetoric, underscoring its significance in shaping effective communication.

Beyond the surface level, discerning readers will notice that the article adopts an analytical lens to examine idiomatics, scrutinizing its rhetorical complexities rather than providing a cursory overview. This understanding becomes apparent from the title itself: “Idiomatics: The Ethos, Pathos, and Logos of Idiomatics Proper.” The title’s nine words are carefully crafted to convey a sense of depth and nuance. Four powerful nouns—Idiomatics, Ethos, Pathos, and Logos—interact with each other in a deliberate dance, while the inclusion of the preposition “of” and the enriching phrase “Idiomatics Proper” add layers of meaning. This title signals that the article is not merely introducing a topic but rather delving into the intricacies of idiomatics as a rich and complex phenomenon.

The title, comprising primarily of nouns and a preposition, skillfully outlines the article’s subject matter and focus. Each component is deliberately chosen to emphasize the thorough exploration of idiomatics and its rhetorical dimensions, examined through the scholarly lenses of ethos, pathos, and logos within the specialized realm of “Idiomatics Proper.” This term signifies a systematic and rigorous study within the broader field of idiomatics. The article promises a meticulous analysis of how idiomatics functions persuasively, shedding light on its significant contributions to linguistic and rhetorical inquiry. By examining idiomatics through the triad of ethos, pathos, and logos, the article will provide a nuanced understanding of its role in shaping communication and its implications for scholars of linguistics and rhetoric.

Introduction

For nearly a century, the scientific study of idiomatics—the scientific study of idiomatic and figurative language (Liontas, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c)—has been a significant area of research in linguistics. Notable scholars such as Smith (1925), Firth (1957), Hockett (1958), Chafe (1968), Pawley and Syder (1983), Gibbs (1994), Barkema (1996), Fernando (1996), Jackendoff (1997), Moon (1998), Erman and Warren (2000), McCarthy and O’Dell (2002), and Weinert (2010) have made important contributions to our understanding of this nuanced phenomenon.

Over time, various approaches have been developed, including sociocultural (Roberts, 1944), transformational-generative (Katz & Postal, 1964; Weinreich, 1969; Fraser, 1970), naturalist (Chafe, 1968), syntactic (Newmeyer, 1972, 1974), semantic (Nunberg, 1978; Fernando & Flavell, 1981), and pragmatic (Strässler, 1982) perspectives. These theoretical frameworks have led to the formulation of competing hypotheses, such as the *idiom list (literal first) hypothesis* (Bobrow & Bell, 1973), the *lexical representation (simultaneous processing) hypothesis* (Swinney & Cutler, 1979), the *figurative first hypothesis (or direct access model)* (Gibbs (1994), and the *holistic hypothesis* (Jiang & Nekrasova, 2007; Wray, 2002).

In addition, several models have been proposed to explain how idiomatic-figurative language is processed, stored, and interpreted in both comprehension and production, primarily in first languages. These models include the *idiom decomposition model* (Gibbs, 1980, 1995; Gibbs & Nayak, 1989; Gibbs et al., 1989), the *configuration model* (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988), the *hybrid model* (Caillies & Butcher, 2007; Cutting & Bock, 1997; Sprenger et al., 2006), the *constraint-based model* (Libben & Titone, 2008; Titone & Connine, 1999; Titone et al., 2015), and the *dual route model* (Van Lancker Sidtis, 2004, 2012; Van Lancker Sidtis et al., 2015).

Since the mid-1990s, research has shifted its focus to how second and foreign language learners process, retrieve, and comprehend idioms. This shift has led to the development of several research-based hypotheses and models, including the *graded salience hypothesis* (Giora, 1997), the *idiom diffusion model* (Liontas, 2002a, 2015a), the *dual idiom representation model* (Abel, 2003), and the *literal salience model* (Cieślicka, 2006). These models, which share a common goal of understanding idiomatic competence, all support the idea that learners can develop the ability to understand and use idioms effectively in various sociocultural contexts, much like native speakers.

Liontas (2002a) defines *idiomatic competence* as “the ability to understand and use idioms appropriately and accurately in a variety of sociocultural contexts, in a manner similar to that of native speakers, and with the least amount of mental effort” (p. 72). This definition underscores the importance of idiomatic competence in language learning and highlights the need for learners to develop this skill in order to communicate effectively.

The terminology surrounding idioms has resulted in a complex and confusing landscape, with many terms used interchangeably without clear definitions. As early as 1998, Moon noted that the nomenclature was “an unruly collection of names for them, with confusing results... there is no generally agreed set of terms, definitions and categories in use” (p. 43). Hinkel (2017) concurred, stating that many forms of multi-word items, including idioms, proverbs, and conventionalized expressions, are “notoriously—famously—difficult to define and hence to identify” (p. 46). The analysis of language corpora has only added to the confusion, as different researchers and scholars have employed various terms and categories without a clear consensus. Hinkel notes that “analyses of language corpora have further added to the typological and terminological stew...” (Hinkel, 2017, p. 46).

Liontas (2019) has aptly described this terminological chaos surrounding idiomaticity as the “Idiomaticity Labyrinth.” He compiled a comprehensive list of 73 terms representing “lexemes of repeated structures exhibiting language

peculiarities that defy expected rules of grammar and/or logic” (Liontas 2019, p. 58; Table 1, pp. 59-62). Liontas emphasized the need for authoritative, definitive, and comprehensive descriptions and terminology to mitigate confusion and misuse of these terms and associated concepts (p. 63).

The examination of idioms and idiomatic language has led to a reevaluation of the concept of *idiomaticity*, an area of study that Liontas has been investigating since 1997. His 2021 revision and expansion of the definition of idiomaticity introduced the concept of *idiomatics*, which refers to the scientific study of idiomatic and figurative language that is characteristic and peculiar to a particular group, individual, or style (Liontas, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). The term *idiomatics* originates from Ancient Greek and Late Latin words *ιδίωμα* (*idíōma*), meaning “language,” “peculiarity,” and “unique phraseology.” This linguistic heritage is reflected in the term’s combination of the root “idioma” (language) with the suffix “-istics” (denoting a field of knowledge), thereby yielding a study that focuses on language that is personal, distinct, and unique to an individual or group. This phenomenon offers valuable insights into the cultural and social dynamics of the speakers or writers who employ them.

Idiomatic language is the natural expression and structure of a language, characterized by distinctive or characteristic expressions, words, or phrases that native speakers use and perceive as natural and correct. This type of language is essential in linguistics, as it allows us to understand the unique characteristics of a particular dialect or regional variation. *Figurative language*, on the other hand, involves the creative use of language that deviates from conventional syntax and literal meaning to imply rather than explicitly convey meaning. This can take many forms, including metaphors, similes, and other imaginative devices that enrich meaning beyond the literal. According to Liontas (2021a), figurative language serves specific descriptive purposes, using imaginative language to add depth and nuance to communication (p. 32).

Idiomatics is the symbolic expression of human thought, creating meaning through a complex system of communication that transcends individual differences. This dynamic system manifests in various forms, including speech, writing, and gesture, within a shared speech community. Idiomatics is deeply ingrained in social dynamics, cultural interactions, and pragmatic knowledge, making it a unique blend of personal and collective experiences. As a set of cultural codes, symbols, and signs, idiomatics conveys information in conventional and institutional ways, allowing speakers to convey complex ideas and emotions with precision and nuance. Idiomatic expressions are woven into the fabric of language, forming a rich tapestry of meaning that is both context-dependent and context-specific. In this sense, idiomatics is not just a product of individual creativity but also a reflection of shared cultural values, historical events, and social norms. It is a powerful tool for constructing identity, negotiating relationships, and navigating the complexities of human interaction. By understanding idiomatics as a dynamic system of communication, we can better appreciate the intricate web of meaning that underlies human language.

Idiomatics proper encompasses both idiomatic language, which is accepted in formal and informal settings, and figurative language, found in oral and written texts. This multifaceted concept is essential for effective communication, as it creatively

conveys cultural notions, sentiments, and meanings across generations and geographic boundaries. The study of idiomatics proper aims to understand how our minds organize and utilize idiomatic and figurative language knowledge, as well as its purposeful use in various discursive and communicative contexts. *Idiomatics* is a broad term that encompasses every aspect of human communication, from the creation of symbolic meaning in the mind to its expression through language and interpretation within social contexts that adhere to established sociocultural norms and practices within a speech community (Liontas, 2021a, p. 3).

Throughout this discussion, the significance of idiomatics in understanding human behavior and language development will be a recurring theme, emphasizing its interdisciplinary relevance across cognitive science, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education (Chomsky, 1965; Fernando, 1996; Hockett, 1958; Katz & Postal, 1964; Lantolf, 2000; Myles & Cordier, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978; Wilkins, 1972). This emphasis highlights the far-reaching implications of idiomatics for understanding human behavior and language development. Mastering the interpretation of idiomatic and figurative expressions can significantly improve natural language processing capabilities, leading to more intuitive human-computer interactions and driving technological advancements (Alemi et al., 2012; Amer, 2014; Jewitt, 2006; Mayer, 1997). Our exploration begins with an examination of idiomatic and figurative expressions and their connection to the fundamental principles of rhetoric which are essential for effective communication.

Idiomatics and the Pillars of Persuasion

This section claims that idiomatics embodies the art of persuasion “times three,” intricately weaving together *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, the fundamental principles of rhetoric (Aristotle; Lundberg, 2018). Through its rich and varied expressions, idiomatics not only illuminates these principles but also establishes them as essential foundations for effective persuasion in the realm of rhetoric.

Ethos (ἦθος) refers to the speaker’s character or credibility, which is established by demonstrating one’s expertise, authority, or good reputation. It is the embodiment of ethics, speaker disposition, trust, expertise, authority, reputation, and reliability. In idiomatic and figurative expressions, *ethos* transcends linguistic boundaries to establish cultural credibility and authenticity by resonating with shared values, beliefs, and norms within a community or language group. This foundation not only strengthens the speaker’s or writer’s authority but also enhances their persuasiveness by forging a profound connection with the audience’s cultural identity.

Pathos (πάθος) refers to the emotional appeal or emotional connection made with the audience, which is achieved by evoking emotions such as sympathy, empathy, or enthusiasm. It is the embodiment of passion, feelings, values, and experience. As a fundamental aspect of idiomatics, *pathos* skillfully taps into the power of emotions to create a deep and lasting impression. Idiomatic and figurative expressions evoke strong feelings and resonate deeply with shared human experiences, imbuing communication with impact and memorability. Whether through humor,

nostalgia, or empathy, pathos enriches the emotional resonance of communication, fostering a strong bond between the communicator and the audience.

Logos (λόγος) refers to the logical or rational appeal, based on reason, evidence, and logic. It encompasses rationality, reasoning, proof, argumentation, message, and consistency, highlighting its rational dimension. Idiomatics enables effective reasoning and argumentation by succinctly conveying intricate concepts in a way that makes complex ideas accessible and persuasive through vibrant language expressions that resonate with the audience. These expressions adeptly convey complex ideas, bolstering clarity and coherence in communication with well-structured arguments and evidence.

Idiomatics, as the art of persuasion “times three,” leverages *ethos* (the ethical appeal) to establish credibility, *pathos* (the emotional appeal) to evoke emotions, and *logos* (the logical appeal) to present reasoned arguments. These three elements—the pillars of persuasion—jointly constitute the bedrock of idiomatics in rhetoric, showcasing its multifaceted role that transcends conventional interpretations of ethos, pathos, and logos. Idiomatics orchestrates a harmonious symphony by balancing ethos, pathos, and logos, thereby achieving a dynamic equilibrium within the discourse that unfolds into a persuasive narrative that captivates and persuades audiences.

Idiomatics infuses language with cultural authenticity, emotional resonance, and logical precision, transforming it into a potent tool for persuasion and communication that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries. It enables nuanced expression by bridging cultural divides and serving as a symbolic gateway to preserving heritage and identity through language. Empowering communicators to navigate complex societal dynamics with authenticity and clarity, idiomatics underscores its vital importance in both everyday conversation and scholarly investigation. Through evocative language in specific rhetorical contexts, idiomatics captures shared experiences and values, fostering empathy and mutual understanding.

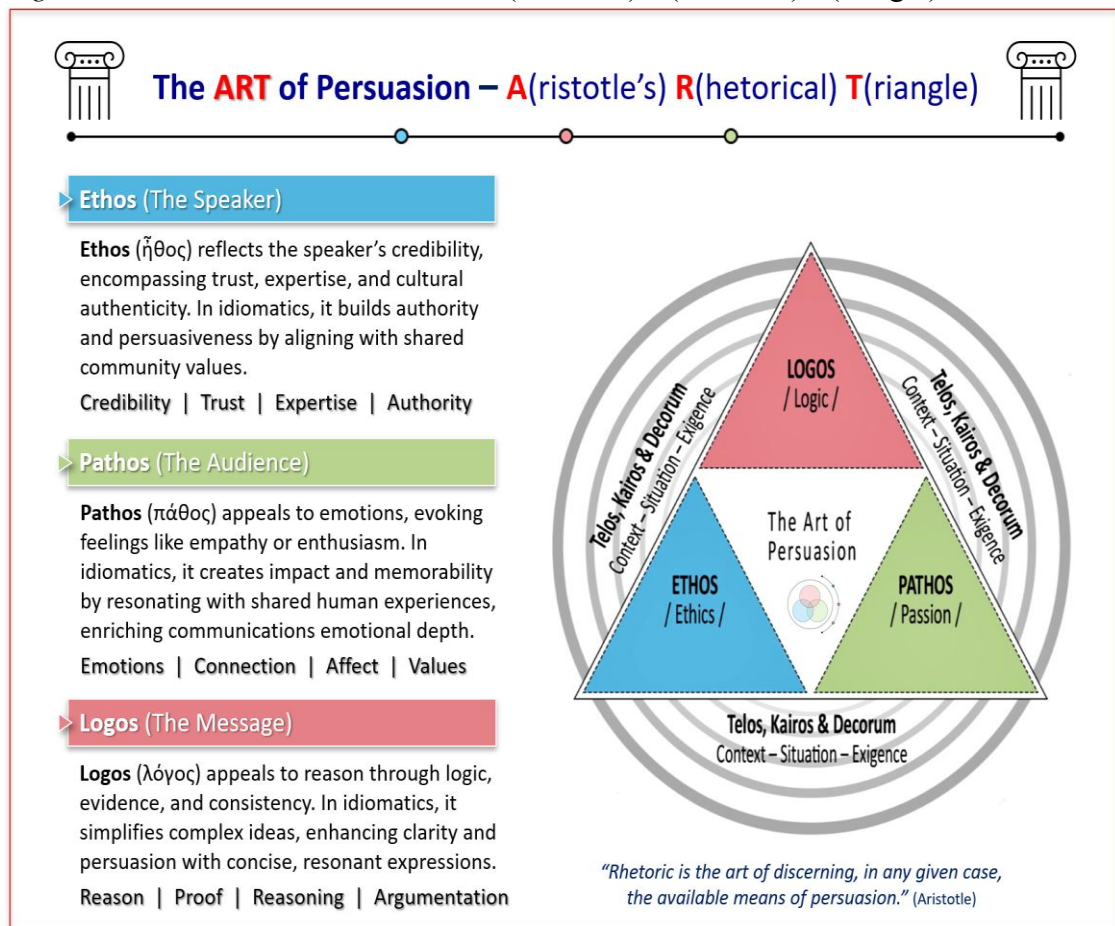
Purpose, tone, and style converge with diction, syntax, and imagery to confront the *exigence*—the driving force or urgency behind a rhetorical act—compelling speakers or writers to engage an audience and provoke action or change. Together, these elements amplify the potency of persuasion, appealing to reasoned analysis and emotional resonance, thereby rendering intricate concepts comprehensible and enduring in memory.

In the intricate tapestry of effective communication and rhetoric, *Idiomatics* and *Καιρός* (Kairos) stand as essential threads. Idiomatics meticulously studies figurative language and idiomatic expressions within cultural and linguistic frameworks, imbuing communication with layers of cultural norms, values, and historical contexts. These expressions evoke profound emotional and intellectual resonance among speakers and listeners alike, transcending mere literal interpretation. In stark contrast, while idiomatics provides a rich foundation for effective communication, *Kairos* sharpens its focus on the opportune moment and timing in communication, keenly attuned to the specific context and needs of the audience. It navigates the complex web of social, political, and cultural landscapes that shape the environment where communication unfolds, ensuring messages resonate effectively and meaningfully.

Identifying *Exigence* serves as the compass guiding communicators to understand the purpose behind their message and tailor their strategies accordingly.

Idiomatics equips them with linguistic tools, while Kairos directs the strategic deployment of these tools, ensuring messages resonate deeply within their cultural and contextual milieu, thereby amplifying their persuasive impact. Significantly, varying communicative contexts necessitate nuanced combinations of ethos, pathos, and logos to secure audience acceptance. These elements form the holy trinity of argumentation, anchoring persuasive rhetoric by shaping communication with credibility, emotional resonance, and logical coherence. Effectively harnessing them through idiomatic or figurative expressions can evoke engagement in meaningful symbolic actions. Mastering the art of language to communicate effectively and persuasively is crucial. Persuasion matters in most matters, playing a pivotal role and highlighting its pervasive influence and enduring relevance (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The ART of Persuasion — A(ristotle's) R(hetorical) T(riangle)



for steering its trajectory and fostering scholarly and intellectual advancements in the future.

Foundational Principles of Idiomatics Proper

The foundational principles of idiomatics proper delineate its scope as an independent academic discipline distinct from related fields in several ways. Each principle adds depth to the study of idiomatic and figurative language from different perspectives, contributing to its interdisciplinary nature. While the macro-principles listed cover significant aspects of idiomatics proper, additional micro-principles or micro-perspectives could be considered depending on the specific focus and scope of idiomatics research (Figure 2). We will start by outlining the fundamental macro-principles of idiomatics proper:

1. **Focus on Natural Language Phenomena:** Idiomatics proper prioritizes the study of natural language phenomena. While linguistics examines language structures broadly, idiomatics specifically investigates how idiomatic-figurative expressions operate within native speaker discourse and cultural contexts, emphasizing their natural and intuitive use.
2. **Psycholinguistic and Neurolinguistic Viewpoints:** Idiomatics proper embraces a deep inquiry into the cognitive and neural underpinnings of idiomatic and figurative language. By delving into cognitive psychology and neurolinguistics, idiomatics unravels how these expressions are processed, represented, and comprehended in the human mind, offering invaluable insights into language cognition.
3. **Integration of Interdisciplinary Insights:** Idiomatics proper integrates insights from cognitive science, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education to understand how idiomatic-figurative knowledge is acquired, processed, and used. This interdisciplinary approach enriches the study of idiomatics by considering cognitive processes involved in understanding and producing them, psychological dimensions of language processing, and educational implications for language learners.
4. **Cultural and Societal Embeddings:** Unlike pure linguistic studies focused on syntax or phonetics, idiomatics proper explores how idiomatic-figurative expressions are deeply embedded within cultural and societal norms. It examines how these expressions mirror cultural attitudes, beliefs, and social interactions, thereby offering insights into broader societal dynamics beyond mere language structure. Importantly, it acknowledges that culture and human interaction do not exist in a vacuum; both are profoundly influenced by and, in turn, impact the societal structures and practices within which they operate.
5. **Cross-cultural and Cross-linguistic Comparisons:** Idiomatics proper employs cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparisons to discern both universal cognitive patterns and culturally specific nuances in idiomatic and figurative expressions. These comparisons illuminate shared human

cognitive processes while highlighting the diverse ways these expressions manifest across different linguistic and cultural landscapes.

6. **Functionality and Communication Roles:** Idiomatics proper examines the functional role of idiomatic and figurative expressions in discourse and communication. This includes assessing their effectiveness in conveying nuanced meanings, emotions, and pragmatic intentions that surpass literal interpretations. The focus is on understanding the broader communicative impact and efficacy of idiomatic and figurative language use across various contexts. This exploration encompasses both theoretical inquiry and practical applications aimed at enhancing communication skills and strategies.
7. **Pragmatic and Contextual Factors:** Central to idiomatics proper is the nuanced examination of how idiomatic and figurative expressions operate within specific communicative contexts to achieve precise and culturally nuanced communicative goals, taking into account factors such as implicature, speech acts, and context-dependent inferences. Idiomatics delves into the pragmatic implications of these expressions in discourse, highlighting their role in shaping interpersonal interactions and conveying subtle layers of meaning. The emphasis is on understanding the situational and contextual factors that influence the use and interpretation of idiomatic and figurative language, thereby enriching our understanding of its pragmatic functions in real-world communication settings.
8. **Historical and Evolutionary Perspectives:** Idiomatics proper delves into the historical trajectories and evolutionary paths of idiomatic and figurative expressions across languages and cultures. This exploration provides profound insights into how these expressions have morphed and adapted over time in response to historical and cultural changes, reflecting the dynamic evolution of human language.
9. **Methodological Rigor:** Idiomatics proper contributes to the development of rigorous methodologies for analyzing and categorizing idiomatic and figurative expressions. By establishing clear definitions, classifications, and frameworks, idiomatics proper enhances its status as a distinct academic discipline with unique methodological approaches and research paradigms.
10. **Idiomatics Learning and Teaching:** Idiomatics proper addresses the specific challenges and strategies involved in learning and teaching idiomatic and figurative expressions, particularly in contexts of second language acquisition. It develops methodologies for teaching idiomatic and figurative competence and investigates how learners acquire proficiency in understanding and using idiomatic and figurative language effectively.
11. **Technological and Computational Advances:** Idiomatics proper acknowledges the growing importance of idiomatic and figurative language in artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing. It explores how computational linguistics can leverage insights into idiomatic-figurative expressions to enhance machine learning algorithms, improve automated language understanding, and develop more intuitive and user-friendly human-computer interfaces. Technological and

computational advances are likely to benefit significantly from a deeper understanding of idiomatic and figurative language.

In essence, the foundational macro-principles of idiomatics proper define its scope as a distinct academic discipline. They center on natural language phenomena within diverse cultural and social contexts, weave together interdisciplinary insights, underscore the functional intricacies of communication, address the complexities of language acquisition, explore technological frontiers, and uphold rigorous methodological standards. Together, these principles collectively encompass various facets of idiomatics proper, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature and broad scope in the study of idiomatic and figurative language (Liontas, 2001; 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003). In turn, each principle contributes uniquely to understanding how idiomatic and figurative expressions operate, evolve, and are utilized across different contexts and disciplines.

As previously mentioned, the approach and focus of idiomatics research determine the use of additional micro-principles or nuanced perspectives for detailed analyses. These analyses are categorized into six thematic areas of language study. Each thematic area is clearly defined and followed by relevant subcategories that delve into specific aspects of language dynamics and application. This structured approach, collectively titled *Dynamics of Idiomatics*, ensures a comprehensive exploration of language facets without unnecessary overlap. The organization allows for a logical progression from foundational linguistic and mental dynamics to broader examinations of social and cultural contexts, multimedia influences, societal implications, textual nuances, and practical applications. Balancing theoretical frameworks with real-world implementations, this framework caters to both theoretical inquiry and practical application in language studies. Aligned with their primary focus areas and methodologies, these analyses provide a structured overview of how idiomatic and figurative expressions can be studied across various dimensions of language, cognition, culture, and application (Liontas, 2006; 2007, 2013). It is crucial to note that categorizations can always be refined based on specific research goals, theoretical frameworks, or practical applications—indeed, as the saying goes, *the devil is in the details*. Here, then, is the list of analyses organized into thematic areas.

Dynamics of Idiomatics

1. Linguistic Dynamics

- *Phonological Analysis*: Analyzes the sound patterns and prosodic features of idiomatic and figurative expressions, assessing their impact on communication.
- *Syntactic Analysis*: Examines the grammatical structures of idiomatic and figurative expressions, focusing on their syntactic behavior within sentences.
- *Semantic Analysis*: Explores the semantic structures and meanings associated with idiomatic-figurative expressions.
- *Lexical Analysis*: Investigates the vocabulary and word choice within idiomatic and figurative expressions, emphasizing lexical semantics and variation.

- *Functional Analysis*: Surveys the roles and functions that idiomatic and figurative expressions in language, such as emphasis, humor, or politeness.
- *Pragmatic Analysis*: Studies how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used to achieve specific communicative goals in context, focusing on implicature and speech acts.
- *Metaphorical Analysis*: Probes the presence and implications of metaphors embedded within idiomatic and figurative language.

2. Mental Dynamics

- *Cognitive Analysis*: Studies the cognitive processes involved in understanding and producing idiomatic and figurative expressions.
- *Psychosocial Analysis*: Examines the psychological and social motivations behind the creation, adoption, and adaptation of idiomatic and figurative expressions.
- *Psycholinguistic Analysis*: Investigates the mental processes involved in comprehending and producing idiomatic and figurative expressions, including memory and retrieval mechanisms.
- *Developmental Analysis*: Traces how the understanding and use of idiomatic and figurative expressions evolve over time, especially in children and language learners.
- *Behavioral Analysis*: Analyzes the impact of idiomatic and figurative expressions on behavior and decision-making in communication.

3. Multimedia Dynamics

- *Digital Media Analysis*: Analyzes the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions in digital media contexts.
- *Intertextual Analysis*: Explores how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used across different texts and media, considering references and allusions between them.
- *Multimodal Analysis*: Investigates how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used alongside other modes of communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and visual media.

4. Social, Societal and Cultural Dynamics

- *Critical Discourse Analysis*: Analyzes how power dynamics, ideologies, and social structures influence the use and interpretation of idiomatic and figurative expressions.
- *Political Analysis*: Investigates the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions in political discourse, examining their role in persuasion and ideology.
- *Interactional Analysis*: Examines how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used in interactive settings, such as conversations, and their role in turn-taking and dialogue management.
- *Sociolinguistic Perspectives*: Investigates the complex social dynamics that shape the use and evolution of idiomatic and figurative expressions, highlighting how cultural norms, social structures, linguistic communities,

and communicative contexts contribute to their ongoing development and adaptation over time.

- *Variation and Change*: Studies how idiomatic and figurative expressions vary across different dialects and evolve over time, exploring the influence of regional, generational, and socio-economic factors on idiomatics usage while observing changes in meaning and usage patterns within linguistic communities.
- *Comparative Analysis*: Contrasts idiomatic and figurative expressions across languages and cultures, revealing universal patterns and cultural influences on societal conceptualization and communication of shared experiences, emotions, and ideas shaped by historical, geographical, and social factors, illustrating the intricate interplay between language and culture.
- *Ethnographic Analysis*: Conducts ethnographic studies focusing on understanding the cultural contexts and dynamics associated with the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions, emphasizing changes and continuities in cultural practices, beliefs, values, and symbols over time, including the production, consumption, and transformation of culture within society, evident in the evolution of traditions, customs, and cultural identities.
- *Netnographic Analysis*: Considers the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions within online communities and digital cultures, examining their shifting roles in virtual interactions, and dissecting usage patterns, semantic shifts, and transformations within the digital realm.
- *Social Network Analysis*: Analyzes the spread and evolution of idiomatic and figurative expressions in social networks and communities, both online and offline, investigating their adoption and adaptation within social contexts influenced by social norms, roles, institutions, and networks, thereby shaping patterns of change and stability in social relationships and behavior.

5. Textual Dynamics

- *Genre Analysis*: Investigates how idiomatic and figurative language varies across different genres of discourse.
- *Literary Analysis*: Studies the use and function of idiomatic and figurative expressions in literature, focusing on their aesthetic and narrative roles.
- *Aesthetic Analysis*: Explores the aesthetic qualities and creative uses of idiomatic and figurative language in relation to artistic expression, beauty, and emotional impact.
- *Stylistic Analysis*: Analyzes the stylistic effects and rhetorical devices employed through idiomatic and figurative language.
- *Rhetorical Analysis*: Investigates how language, including idiomatic and figurative expressions, is used to persuade or influence audiences effectively.

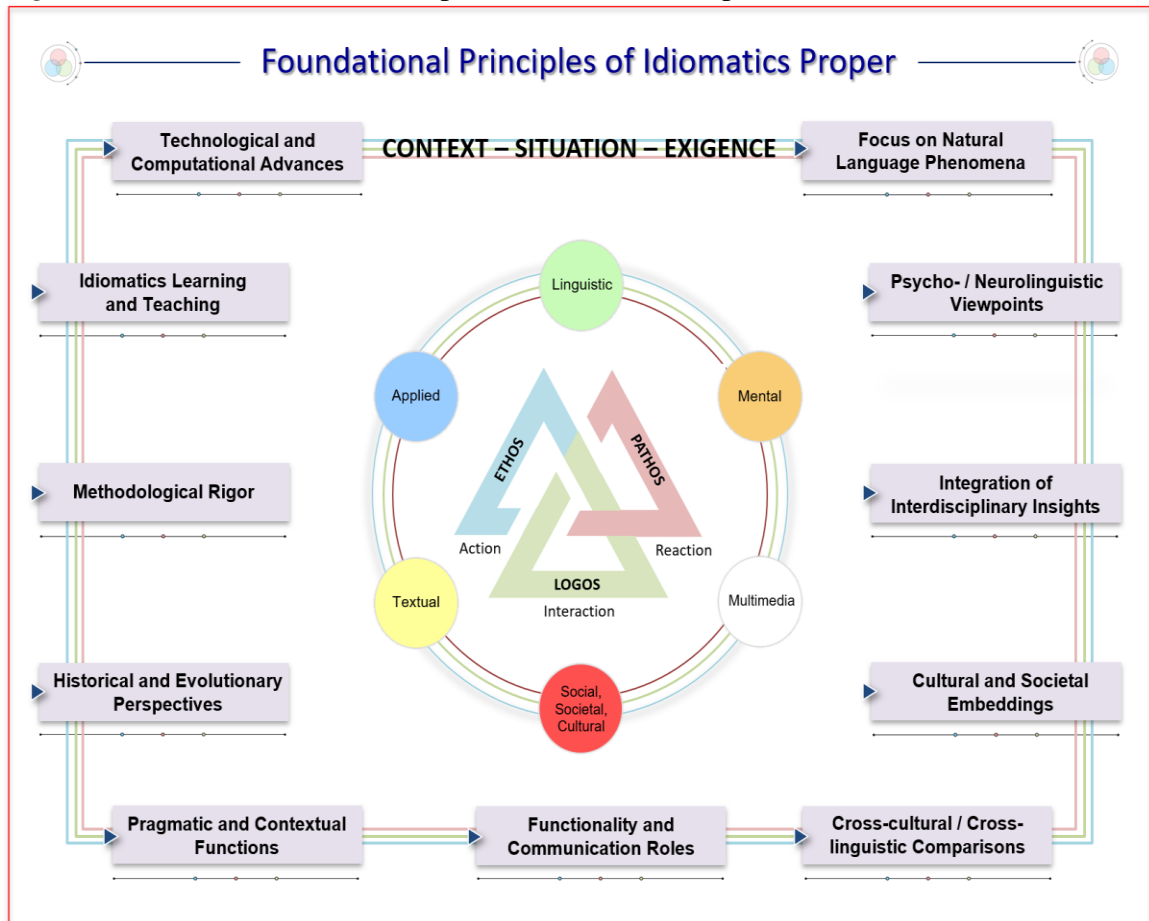
6. Applied Dynamics

- *Educational Applications*: Explores how idiomatic and figurative expressions are taught and learned in educational settings, including curriculum development and language instruction methods.
- *Clinical Applications*: Investigates the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions in clinical settings, such as language therapy, psychotherapy, or cognitive-behavioral interventions.
- *Professional Applications*: Applies idiomatic and figurative expressions in professional contexts such as business communication, legal discourse, or diplomatic negotiations.
- *Literary Applications*: Examines how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used in literature, including literary criticism, stylistic analysis, and creative writing.
- *Cultural Studies Applications*: Explores how idiomatic and figurative expressions reflect and shape cultural identities, beliefs, and practices within societies.
- *Legal Applications*: Examines how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used in legal documents, court proceedings, and legal argumentation.
- *Translation and Localization Applications*: Studies how idiomatic and figurative expressions are translated and adapted across different languages and cultures.
- *Media and Advertising Applications*: Analyzes the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions in media campaigns, advertising strategies, and digital content creation.
- *Technology and User Interface Design Applications*: Analyzes the use of idiomatic and figurative expressions in user interfaces, UX design, and human-computer interaction.
- *Cross-Cultural Communication Applications*: Explores how idiomatic and figurative expressions facilitate or hinder communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.
- *Political and Diplomatic Communication Applications*: Investigates how idiomatic and figurative expressions are used in political speeches, diplomatic negotiations, and international relations.
- *Psychological Applications*: Investigates the role of idiomatic and figurative expressions in psychological assessments, counseling sessions, and psychotherapeutic interventions.
- *Historical Applications*: Studies how idiomatic and figurative expressions evolve over time and their historical significance in literature, discourse, and societal changes.

The list forms a robust foundation for exploring language analysis across diverse contexts and applications, providing insights into its complexities. It organizes language studies comprehensively, emphasizing how idiomatic and figurative language intersect with societal dynamics, power structures, and cultural expressions. These analyses span varied cultures and historical eras, deepening our grasp of idiomatics. Recognizing their interconnections is vital for rigorous methodologies and holistic insights into language evolution. Tailored categorization aligns with specific research goals,

frameworks, and applications, enriching our understanding of language nuances and its role in human communication.

Figure 2. The Foundational Principles of Idiomatics Proper



The fusion of theory with practical application drives profound intellectual strides, firmly cementing idiomatics within the domain of first and second language studies (Liontas, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2007, 2015a, 2015b). Yet, to assert its autonomy and interdisciplinary relevance decisively, a compelling narrative must intertwine credibility, emotional resonance, and rigorous discourse. This exploration unfolds next.

The Road to Independence: Navigating the Field of Idiomatics

Hindsight is deemed 20/20, but what about foresight, which remains shrouded in uncertainty? Can we really say hindsight is always 20/20? What compelling arguments can be marshaled to champion independence, and what foundational principles can we establish to fortify our aspirations for autonomy and self-determination?

Given the significance and universality of idiomatics proper across world languages, it is logical to assert the pursuit of constructing a comprehensive theory

of idiomatics as sound. Methodology and theory development provide compelling insights into the characteristics and cultural implications of idiomatic-figurative language, thereby emphasizing the interdisciplinary importance of idiomatics as an autonomous field for further exploration (Liontas, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). Advocating for the expansion of its independence is therefore crucial. This endeavor promises to catalyze a paradigm shift, emphasizing the imperative to recognize idiomatics as a distinct academic discipline separate from related fields. Establishing clear disciplinary boundaries and methodological frameworks within academia will be pivotal in achieving this independence (Liontas, 2024c).

Beyond Hindsight—The Principle of Uncertainty

The study of idiomatics has traditionally been relegated to the periphery of linguistic research, with many scholars relying on hindsight to understand the nature and cultural implications of idiomatic and figurative language (Cieślicka, 2006; Fernando, 1996; Hinkel, 2017; Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2017; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2002; Moon, 1998; Pawley & Syder, 1983). However, this approach has limitations, as it fails to account for the Principle of Uncertainty (PU), a fundamental concept in the study of language, particularly in the field of linguistics and semiotics.

The Principle of Uncertainty (PU) asserts that language is not a fixed or absolute system, but rather a dynamic and constantly evolving process. This means that meaning is not fixed or determinate, but rather is constantly negotiated and re-negotiated between speakers and hearers. Language is inherently ambiguous, with words and phrases having multiple meanings depending on the context in which they are used. Furthermore, idiomatic and figurative language use can have different meanings or connotations depending on the cultural context in addition to the literal meaning of the words. This has significant implications for understanding how language works, particularly in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic contexts where idiomatic and figurative language use can be particularly complex. In fact, there is no single, definitive interpretation of idiomatic and figurative language, as meaning is constructed through a dynamic process of negotiation between speakers and hearers involving both explicit and implicit cues. Instead, meaning is constructed through a process of negotiation between the speaker and the hearer, involving both explicit and implicit cues. Idiomatics can also be used creatively to convey complex emotions, ideas, or values that may be difficult to capture with literal language (Savignon, 1972; van Lier, 2000). The PU disrupts the notion that language is a fixed or determinate system. Instead, meaning is inherently uncertain, subject to multiple interpretations and negotiations between speakers and hearers. This indeterminacy is a hallmark of language, and the PU highlights its inherent uncertainty (Liontas, 2015b, 2015c).

Idiomatic-figurative language is notoriously context-dependent, with a single phrase having multiple meanings depending on tone, volume, and social setting. Take, for example, the phrase “Shut up!”, a seemingly simple phrase that is a prime example of how context shapes meaning. What might seem like a straightforward instruction to be quiet can, in fact, be a playful joke or a sarcastic comment, depending on the tone, volume, and social setting. When a friend says it in a playful

tone while watching a game, it is likely to be interpreted as a lighthearted jab or joke. On the other hand, when someone utters the same phrase in a harsh or sarcastic tone during an argument, it can be perceived as a hostile command to silence the other person. The speaker is not simply giving a literal instruction; they are drawing on a complex web of cultural and social cues to convey a specific tone, attitude, and emotion. The phrase is an expression of frustration, annoyance, or even affection—depending on the context.

This nuance is lost when we reduce language to its literal meaning alone. By ignoring the complexities of tone, volume, and social setting, we risk misinterpreting the intended message and causing misunderstandings. The importance of considering context in determining the meaning of language cannot be overstated. Consequently, the power of language lies not only in its ability to convey meaning, but also in its capacity to convey meaning in a specific context. The same words can have vastly different meanings depending on the context in which they are used.

This is a classic example of how idiomatic language can greatly influence the meaning of language. Idiomatic language, in particular, relies heavily on shared cultural knowledge and communal understanding to convey meaning. When we use idioms like “Shut up!”, we are drawing on a shared cultural database of associations and meanings that are not explicitly stated. The phrase illustrates the crucial role of context in shaping meaning. It also highlights the importance of idiomatic language, which relies heavily on shared cultural knowledge and experiences. The way we interpret idioms is often subconscious, relying on our knowledge of cultural norms and social relationships.

For instance, “Break a leg!” is a common expression used to wish someone good luck, but its origins are rooted in ancient superstitions about theater and performance. When we hear someone say “Break a leg!” before a performance, we understand it as an encouragement to do well, rather than an actual request to break their leg. Similarly, “Bite the bullet” means to endure a difficult or unpleasant situation, but its origins are tied to 19th-century military practices.

In these examples and thousands others like them, idiomatic language demonstrates how our understanding of language is deeply rooted in our cultural heritage and social experiences. They all are culturally specific and context-dependent. They rely on shared knowledge and experiences that are not always explicitly stated. These examples show how language can be shaped by historical events, cultural practices, and communal experiences. When we use idioms, we are drawing on these shared references to convey meaning. This highlights that meaning is not fixed, but emerges from the interaction between speakers, hearers, and the context (Liontas & Siegel, 2018, 2019).

In addition to cultural specificity, idioms can also rely on figurative language and metaphorical associations. For example, when we say “The road ahead is long,” we are using a metaphor to describe a challenging or uncertain situation. The meaning of this phrase is not fixed, but rather depends on the listener’s understanding of metaphors and their associations with roads and travel.

The importance of context, culture, and idiomatic-figurative language in shaping meaning highlights the complexity and nuance of human communication. By acknowledging these factors, we can better appreciate the richness of language and

learn to be more empathetic listeners. We can recognize that words can have multiple meanings and that understanding depends on shared cultural knowledge and social context. This perspective encourages us to approach language with curiosity and openness, recognizing that meaning is always in flux and subject to negotiation. By doing so, we can foster deeper connections with others and navigate the complexities of communication with greater ease (Liontas, 2018a, 2018b).

The PU highlights the dynamic interplay between speakers and hearers in shaping meaning. When we use idiomatic language, we are not just conveying information; we are negotiating meaning with others. The same words can have different meanings depending on who is speaking, who is listening, and what is happening in the moment. This flexibility is both liberating and challenging, as it demands that we are attuned to the subtleties of language and the people we are communicating with. In this way, idiomatic and figurative language is not just about conveying information; it is about building relationships, negotiating power dynamics, and expressing ourselves in ways unique to our culture and community. The PU reminds us that language is always in motion, subject to interpretation and reinterpretation—and it is this uncertainty that makes language rich and meaningful (Liontas, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e).

Shared knowledge and cultural background also play a crucial role in shaping the meaning of idiomatic and figurative language, as they often rely on shared cultural references. Idioms often have specific historical, cultural, or communal origins that may not be universally known. For example, the idiom “to take someone under your wing” is rooted in the idea of a mother bird caring for her young, but its meaning extends beyond this literal reference to include mentorship and guidance. Similarly, the phrase “to cost an arm and a leg” is an idiom that means something is very expensive, but its origin is rooted in medieval times when execution was a punishment for debt. Lack of shared cultural knowledge or unclear references can lead to misunderstandings.

Cultural references are not static entities, but rather dynamic constructs that evolve through cultural exchange and exposure to different languages, media, and social contexts. This fluidity enables people from diverse backgrounds to learn and comprehend idioms. In the context of language learning and communication, it is essential to be aware of these potential cultural references and nuances to avoid misunderstandings. When encountering idioms with unfamiliar cultural references, learners can try to find equivalent expressions in their native language or ask for clarification. The PU underscores the importance of understanding these shared contexts to effectively communicate (Liontas, 2018f, 2018g).

As meaning is not fixed by words alone, but is shaped by the social, cultural, and historical context in which they are used, the PU highlights the significance of understanding these factors in effective communication. Meaning emerges from the dynamic interaction between speakers and hearers in real-time as they negotiate meaning together. This interaction is crucial for determining how idiomatic or figurative language is interpreted and understood.

These ideas have far-reaching implications for our understanding of language, communication, and meaning-making. They challenge traditional notions of language as a fixed system with clear rules (Chomsky, 1965), instead emphasizing

its dynamic, creative, and collaborative nature of language use. By acknowledging these aspects of the PU, we can move beyond hindsight and adopt a more nuanced understanding of idiomatics. As a dynamic, context-dependent, and culturally relative system of communication, idiomatics encourages us to consider not only the ambiguity and complexity of human communication but also its creative potential (Liontas, 2018g, 2020). Consequently, a more nuanced understanding of language is predicated on acknowledging the inherent ambiguity and uncertainty that pervades language use.

To grasp the intricacies of idiomatics, we need to integrate perspectives from linguistics, cognitive science, psychology, anthropology, and AI (Chomsky, 1965; Hockett, 1958; Katz & Postal, 1964; Lantolf, 2000; Liontas, 2006; Myles & Cordier, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978; Wilkins, 1972). A robust theoretical framework for understanding idiomatics can be developed by recognizing its dynamic nature and its role in shaping our understanding of human communication. This framework should acknowledge the complex interplay between context, culture, and individual cognition that shapes meaning-making. Recognizing the PU enables researchers to develop more nuanced approaches to analyzing idiomatic expressions and figurative language in discourse. These approaches should take into account the intricate relationships between language, culture, and cognition that underlie human communication. Embracing the dynamic nature of language use and acknowledging the uncertainty that accompanies it can initiate a paradigm shift in the study of language and communication (Liontas, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). This shift can lead to a deeper understanding of the complexities of human expression and communication.

Breaking Ground: The Emergence of Idiomatics as a Focused Field

To establish idiomatics as a distinct academic field, a paradigmatic shift is needed within academia. This requires a clear definition of the field's boundaries and the development of rigorous methodological frameworks. By doing so, idiomatics can demonstrate its unique contributions and methodologies, setting it apart from related fields like general linguistics or cultural studies. This endeavor encompasses both theoretical advancements and practical applications. Idiomatics has the potential to significantly impact fields such as language pedagogy, translation theory, AI in language processing, and intercultural communication (Karagoz & Liontas, 2024).

In particular, solidifying idiomatics as an autonomous academic field would enable the development of specialized methodologies and tools specifically designed to address the complexities of idiomatic and figurative language (Li & Liontas, 2023; Liontas, 2017, 2021d; Liontas et al., 2023). The advantages of solidifying idiomatics as an autonomous academic field are numerous. Some of the key benefits include:

1. **Focused Research Agenda:** As an independent discipline, idiomatics could dedicate specific research efforts solely to understanding the nuances of idiomatic and figurative language. This focused agenda would allow researchers to delve deeply into the cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and social aspects of idioms,

metaphors, and other figurative expressions. Such focused research is crucial for developing comprehensive theories and models that accurately capture the complexities of these linguistic phenomena.

2. **Tailored Methodologies:** Idiomatics could innovate new approaches, such as corpus-based analyses, experimental studies on comprehension and production, and ethnographic investigations into cultural contexts. Current methodologies in linguistics and cognitive science often need adaptation to effectively capture and analyze these expressions' unique characteristics. Idiomatics could develop and refine methodologies that are specifically tailored to studying idiomatic and figurative language.
3. **Educational Initiatives:** With autonomous status, idiomatics could influence language teaching and learning practices significantly. It could develop specialized curricula and educational resources aimed at enhancing learners' understanding and proficiency in idiomatic expressions. This includes designing teaching materials that reflect real-world usage contexts, incorporating idiomatics into language proficiency tests, and training educators to effectively teach idiomatic and figurative expressions across different proficiency levels and learner demographics.
4. **Technological Applications:** In the realm of AI and natural language processing, idiomatics could contribute to developing more sophisticated algorithms and tools capable of understanding and generating idiomatic-figurative language. This includes improving machine translation systems to handle idiomatic-figurative expressions accurately, enhancing sentiment analysis tools to interpret idiomatics in social media and online content, and developing chatbots and virtual assistants capable of using idiomatics proper appropriately in human-computer interactions.
5. **Cross-disciplinary Collaboration:** Autonomous status would foster collaboration across disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, anthropology, computer science, and language education, which is essential for tackling the multifaceted nature of idiomatic and figurative language comprehensively. It would allow idiomatics researchers to draw on diverse expertise, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks to enrich their understanding and application of idiomatic and figurative expressions in various contexts.

Solidifying idiomatics as an autonomous academic field would provide a foundation for advancing research, developing specialized methodologies, and creating practical applications that address the complexities of idiomatic and figurative language. This autonomy would enable researchers to explore new avenues of inquiry, contribute innovative solutions to real-world problems, and ultimately deepen our understanding of how language operates in both everyday communication and specialized domains. Global collaboration and collective action are crucial in this endeavor, requiring international networks and institutions to support interdisciplinary research initiatives, foster knowledge sharing, and develop practical applications that address real-world problems (Liontas, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

Global Collaboration and Collective Action

Advancing idiomatics requires a collaborative effort, as idiomatic and figurative expressions thrive on a global scale, necessitating a worldwide perspective. By fostering international alliances and promoting joint research endeavors, idiomatists—those who study *idiomatics*—can leverage diverse linguistic and cultural expertise to tackle challenges and methodically explore idiomatic and figurative language in all its forms. Strategic approaches to achieve this include:

1. **International Research Networks:** Establishing and maintaining international research networks where scholars, researchers, and practitioners from different countries collaborate on shared projects on a global scale. These networks can facilitate joint research initiatives, workshops, and conferences that bring together scholars and experts from diverse backgrounds to share knowledge and expertise. Such an interdisciplinary approach fosters innovative research methods and theoretical frameworks that address complex linguistic and cultural phenomena.
2. **Cross-Cultural Studies:** Encouraging comparative studies that investigate how idiomatic expressions vary across cultures and languages. This approach involves collaborative efforts to collect data, analyze patterns, and derive insights into cultural differences in the use and interpretation of idiomatic and figurative language. Such endeavors facilitate the exchange of data, methodologies, and insights across different linguistic and cultural contexts.
3. **Multilingual Corpora Development:** Collaborating with linguists, computational linguists, and corpus linguistics experts to develop multilingual corpora that specifically focus on idiomatic and figurative expressions from diverse languages and societies. These efforts would involve compiling, annotating, and analyzing idiomatics data from various linguistic backgrounds to uncover patterns and shed light on how idiomatic-figurative language usage varies across cultures and languages. By integrating diverse perspectives and methodologies, this endeavor can foster a deeper understanding of the complexities of language in use.
4. **Joint Educational Programs:** Establishing innovative educational programs and exchange opportunities that facilitate cross-cultural learning and collaboration among scholars and students. This could involve student exchanges, joint course offerings, collaborative research projects, or workshops between universities in diverse countries. By fostering cultural immersion and intercultural dialogue, these initiatives can enhance our understanding of idiomatic and figurative expressions and their role in shaping linguistic and cultural identities.
5. **Digital Research Infrastructure:** Leveraging digital platforms and tools to facilitate global collaboration, knowledge sharing, and real-time interaction among researchers. This may involve developing virtual research environments, online databases, and collaborative writing platforms that enable seamless communication and co-creation among scholars from diverse backgrounds. By fostering a digital ecosystem for idiomatics research, we can accelerate the dissemination of knowledge and insights, and promote cross-cultural understanding.
6. **Policy and Practice Recommendations:** Offering policy recommendations and best practices to integrate studies of idiomatic and figurative language into

educational curricula, language teaching methodologies, and professional training programs globally ensures practical application of findings. This may involve collaborative efforts to standardize terminology, develop teaching materials, and establish guidelines for effective cross-cultural communication and professional training programs across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Given these aspirations, decisive action is crucial. Without a well-defined course of action, collaborative efforts may falter due to fragmentation and inefficiency. A cohesive and unified approach is essential for mobilizing resources and human capital, facilitating knowledge exchange, and driving innovation within the discipline. Moreover, ongoing critical reflection and adaptation to new scholarly insights are vital (Liontas, 2024c). By rigorously evaluating past research and integrating emerging discoveries, the field of idiomatics can evolve dynamically and stay responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities. This approach not only strengthens the academic foundation of idiomatics but also enriches its practical applications across diverse societal contexts. Most importantly, it underscores the urgency of seizing the present moment (Liontas, 2024c).

The Imperative of the Present Moment

As the digital landscape continues to reshape global communication, the current juncture presents an unprecedented opportunity for idiomatics to solidify its place as a distinct field of study. The rapid pace of technological progress, the growing importance of cross-cultural communication, and the increasing recognition of cognitive and linguistic diversity all converge to create a perfect storm of potential. It is imperative that we seize this moment to establish idiomatics as a distinct and autonomous field. Failing to do so could mean missing opportunities for significant breakthroughs in our understanding of human language and communication dynamics. By seizing this moment, we can position idiomatics at the forefront of interdisciplinary studies, ensuring its vital role in shaping future academic and practical insights.

Advocating for idiomatics' autonomy involves highlighting its unique contributions to the broader landscape of language and communication studies. By emphasizing its interdisciplinary nature, developing clear methodological frameworks, and fostering global collaboration, we can position idiomatics as a distinct and vital academic discipline. Furthermore, this endeavor not only sheds new light on the intricacies of idiomatic and figurative language but also highlights the far-reaching implications of idiomatics on human communication, culture, and cognition.

The pursuit of independence is not just a goal, but a necessity for idiomatics to fulfill its true potential. A nuanced appreciation of autonomy's transformative power prompts not only a theoretical framework overhaul but also the development of innovative methodological frameworks. Global collaboration is indispensable for seizing the opportunities presented by the current moment, as is collective action. Embracing these strategies allows the field to propel scholarly pursuits forward and effectively tackle the intricacies of idiomatic and figurative language across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. These measures not only solidify idiomatics'

theoretical foundations, but also improve language instruction, research, and policy-making in real-world contexts. By taking proactive measures, idiomatics can secure its place as a cornerstone of language studies. This will enable it to inform and shape the development of first and second language instruction, research, and policy-making (Liontas, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

Conclusion

This article has presented a compelling case for establishing idiomatics as a distinct field of study. We began by highlighting the pervasive presence of idioms in global literature, where clear definitions of idiomatic language have long been lacking. Over the past 70 years, scholars from various disciplines—linguistics, etymology, lexicology, idiomatology, and language research—have made significant contributions to the study of human language across both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. Despite these efforts, however, the field of idiomatics remains fragmented and lacks a unified theoretical framework. Research on second languages has yielded various competing hypotheses and models attempting to explain how literal and non-literal language is processed, retrieved, and produced in diverse contexts. Despite its crucial role in understanding human behavior and language development, the interdisciplinary relevance of idiomatics has been insufficiently emphasized.

The interdisciplinary nature of idiomatics underscores its relevance across cognitive science, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education. Moreover, idiomatics has significant implications for AI and machine learning by advancing natural language processing and human-computer interactions through a deeper understanding of idiomatic and figurative expressions. By grounding research in meticulous observations of natural language usage, idiomatics facilitates the formulation and testing of hypotheses that generate theories aimed at explaining and predicting real-world patterns. These theories must be logically testable even when faced with consistent contradictory evidence. A thorough understanding of how individuals employ idiomatic and figurative language in their native and other languages is essential for developing innovative theories that reveal form-meaning relationships and cognitive developmental processes. This exploration contributes to the development of practical solutions for significant issues, making idiomatics a crucial area of research.

The foundational principles of idiomatics have established it as a distinct academic discipline, focused on the study of idiomatic and figurative language. By integrating macro-principles and nuanced perspectives across various thematic areas, idiomatics provides a comprehensive understanding of language dynamics. This framework promotes rigorous methodologies, explores language complexities and cultural expressions, and aligns with specific research goals, thereby advancing idiomatics within the broader field of language studies. The argument underscores the need for a paradigm shift to recognize idiomatics as a separate discipline, with clear disciplinary boundaries and methodological frameworks that facilitate global collaboration. A call to unite under idiomatics proper aims to propel the field

forward by setting strategic priorities, fostering reflection on scholarly insights, and envisioning progress across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes.

The next decade will undoubtedly see significant advancements in our understanding and application of idiomatic and figurative language across diverse disciplines and cultural contexts. The dynamic evolution of idiomatics will be fueled by collaborative research efforts, the development of specialized methodologies, the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives, strategic prioritization, and the establishment of well-defined disciplinary boundaries. Global collaboration will be a crucial driver of progress in this field. Ongoing reflection on scholarly insights and the incorporation of new discoveries will ensure that idiomatics remains agile and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities, propelling the field forward.

As we bid farewell to our exploration of idiomatics, it is clear that this ancient art remains a potent force in shaping our understanding of language dynamics across diverse contexts. The ethos, pathos, and logos of idiomatics continue to captivate us, driving continued exploration and understanding. Just as the great explorers of old charted new territories, so too do we venture into the uncharted territories of idiomatic and figurative expression, unlocking a virtually limitless treasure trove of linguistic possibilities that can revolutionize our communication and connection. And as we embark on this journey, we would do well to remember that perseverance, creative experimentation, and a willingness to venture into the unknown are the keys to unlocking the secrets of effective expression.

The future is calling. The hour is now. Time's a-wastin'!

Happy trails to you, until we meet again!

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