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INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – PRESS AS A CREATOR OF NEW IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Language and culture are two elements that predominate in our existence. According to Grzegorzycykowa, language is like air. It is needed in order to create and depict culture. It is a form of behaviour, a way of thinking and understanding the world around us. The language versatility and resourcefulness means that it can convey everything we contemplate. Therefore, its role in the linguistic system is of unparalleled importance. It performs a generative and cognitive function, and as a social phenomenon it plays a socialising role. Moreover, if the elements of culture are reflected in the language then press using written word as a tool in presenting news can be credited with coining new terms related to these cultural elements. The aim of the article is to present the influence of press in forming new idiomatic expressions.

Keywords: culture, language, idioms, press.

1. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language and culture are two elements that dominate our existence. According to professor Grzegorzycykowa, language is like air; it is necessary to create and present elements of culture. It is a way of social behaviour, a form of thinking and understanding the world around us. The universality of language means that we can convey everything we have thought of. Therefore, in the linguistic system, it performs a generative and cognitive function, and as a social phenomenon it plays a cultural and socialising role. The question has always been whether the language shapes the way we think (Sapir) or is it the other way round, and the culture influences the language (Malinowski).

It began with Humboldt's bold declaration that different languages mean different ways of seeing the world. This statement, later known as the Linguistic Worldview, was soon considered and somewhat elaborated by other scholars, out of which the most recognised were Boas, Sapir and Whorf. However, even though the scholars fully acknowledged the relationship between language and culture, the direction of this relationship, i.e. language → culture or culture → language, differed among them. Boas rejected the view that the language dominated culture,

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It does not seem likely [...] that there is any direct relationship between the culture of the tribe and the language they speak, except in so far as the form of the language will be moulded by the state of culture, but not in so far as a certain state of culture is conditioned by morphological traits of the language (Boas, in Underhill, 2009).

In Sapir's view,

The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. [...] The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Sapir, in Underhill, 2009).

Whorf, in agreement with Sapir's view, stated, "[...] the structure of a human being's language influences the manner in which he understands reality and behaves with respect to it" (Whorf, 1956).

Over the years, other linguists recognised or denied the influence a language has on culture. Wittgenstein affirmed, "The limits of my language are the limits of my cognition" (Riegler, Peschl, Stein, 2007). Likewise, Krapiec declared, "The limits of language are the limits of culture" (Krapiec, 1983). Alternatively, Polish anthropologist Malinowski opposed language dominance, stating that culture influences the language as culture is simply a way for people to address their needs which consecutively is reflected in the language (see: Malinowski, 1944).

Culture can be regarded as a set of behaviours, values, norms, evaluations and social attitudes. It is an open, evolutionary and self-organising system in which the language is used to verify and code cultural content, allows access to the world, and is created by our needs. Since the language system changes more slowly than culture (Algeo and Butcher, 2013) and the elements of the past view of the world, old beliefs, remnants of ancient knowledge are captured and preserved in it.

As rational creatures, humans learn from mistakes, can draw conclusions, notice certain regularities, and change the surrounding reality. Depending on how important it is in a given community, it is / or is not reflected in the language. For example, is there a need in the Polish language for two shades of blue² (Winawer, Witthoft, Frank, Wu, Wade, Boroditsky, 2007); a hundred terms for snow or thirteen words for rice? (Harley, 2001). On the contrary, perhaps in northern countries with a different climate, such an extensive range in the snow distinction and a variety of blue may find its applications.

Moreover, man is a creature relatively consistent in his intentions, rapidly learns routine. From my prospective routine is an inseparable part of our life. Since early childhood, it is engraved in us the meal times, responsibilities connected with the school, responsibilities attached to being a part of a family. Performing varied tasks routinely tends to increase the pace of life, which is mirrored in the culture. Our behaviour, e.g. our reactions are faster; values – the things that make our lives easier are valued higher. The change of the components of culture leads to linguistic changes. The language becomes faster, more illustrative and more concise.

² E.g. Russian makes an obligatory distinction between lighter blues ("goluboy") and darker blues ("siniy").

Wittgenstein maintained that communication problems arise because each of us has a different mental image when presented with an utterance (e.g. "a ball" while one person may think of a football, someone else may imagine a tennis ball as that is his or her favourite pastime). In a way introducing linguistic abbreviations such as OMG and LOL or emoticons and emoji to the language allows for a faster and more accurate communication transfer.

As presented by Anusiewicz, Dąbrowska and Fleischer, the creators of the cultural worldview expression, the Linguistic Worldview, the notion introduced by Wilhelm von Humboldt, constitutes just one of the elements of the cultural worldview. The other elements named by the authors were as follows: language and gestures, behaviour, beliefs and ideologies (Głaz, Danaher, Łozowski, 2013).

2. IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Phraseology is regarded as one of the determinants of the Linguistic Worldview. Idiomatic expressions are considered fixed word combinations that show some irregularity, which requires that they be remembered in their entirety. Idiomatic relationships are the rarest examples in phraseology. Their meaning does not stem from the meanings of their component elements. Bussmann (2006) defines language as

a vehicle for the expression or exchanging of thoughts, concepts, knowledge, and information as well as the fixing and transmission of experience and knowledge. It is based on cognitive processes, subject to societal factors and subject to historical change and development.

Thus, language possesses evolving characteristics. Also, since idioms constitute a part of a language, they express the same features. They draw on cultural knowledge of a society in that they focus on a particular cultural characteristic and convey simple and everyday facts in a fixed meaning representation.

They are evidence of belonging to a particular culture, e.g. cockney rhyming slang. They play a complementary role to the language dictionary system and multiply synonymous resources. They should not be regarded as an addition to the language. With their help, the speaker can express emotions and his attitude to the subject of the conversation. They are an art of allusion, metaphor, and the ability to use language indirectly.

Definition of an idiom fluctuates amongst the scholars, as do their classifications. For some of them, the expression covers all fixed phrases, formulaic speeches, slang expressions, proverbs, clichés and even single polysemic words (Cooper, 1998; Hockett, 1958; Katz and Postal, 1963). While others, for example, Moon (1998), consider idioms in a more limited context, stating that the term only refers to "fixed and semantically opaque or metaphorical" expressions (Moon, 1998). Grant and Bauer's positions are even more restrained, excluding the metaphorical idiomatic expressions altogether from the definition of the term idiom (Grant & Bauer, 2004). However, as Tabossi and Zardon (1993) maintain, idioms can be regarded as "multifaceted objects (...) not only complex but also in many ways elusive". Wood assumes that (an) "idiom is a complex expression which is wholly in non-compositional meaning and wholly non-productive in form" (Wood, 1986). According to the scholar, these two conditions must be met for an expression to be deemed an idiom.

Although Wood's description of an idiom seems to be the most accurate one, it is not free of problematic aspects. Owing to the categorial indeterminacy of language, the linguistic categories often overlap as they are not clear-cut. Consequently, it may be

challenging to decide whether a phrase belongs to the idiom category or retains the status of a collocation.

Even though the definition of an idiomatic phrase differs among linguists, there are some elements that they agree on. Generally, idioms display certain unique features regardless of sharing many characteristics with other forms of non-literal language. These traits incorporate alternation of grammatical rules, word order, the conventionalism of phrases and figurativeness. Although English holds a very structured form, its idiomatic expressions have become widely accepted and frequently used by all native and foreign speakers alike.

3. MECHANISMS OF IDIOM FORMATION

Numerous sources influence idiom formation. Devices such as metaphor, analogy, metonymy, synecdoche, alliteration, aphorism, allusion and cliché are the prominent contributors to figurative language.

Many linguists believe that a significant number of idioms are motivated by deeply entrenched conventional metaphors. Scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson point out the omnipresence of metaphor in everyday life, in our thoughts and actions. “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (1980), but it is something we are unaware of. Quite the reverse,

In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by looking at language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Conceptual metaphor theory³ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), presents a metaphor not simply as a poetic device in language but as an abstract instrument needed for structuring, restructuring and creating reality. Our languages, thoughts and actions are constructed based on conceptual metaphors. Hence, it is an essential cognitive mechanism, which contributes to creating the meaning extension of idioms (Zhang & Bai, 2015).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) uphold that “our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (1980). Furthermore, the scholars add that “the English expressions are of two sorts: simple literal expressions and idioms that fit the metaphor and are part of the normal everyday way of talking about the subject” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

When a metaphor is applied for the first time, it feels “novel and fresh” (Glucksberg, 2001), and people have to think past that image to understand what it communicates. However, persistent use can link the expression to its content faster and more automatically, without thinking why a given phrase conveys what it does. The process is lengthy and slow, and people are not aware of the change that is happening. In the words of Zhang and Bai, “Metaphor mechanism provides the conceptual motivation and cognitive operation mechanism for the formation of the extended meaning of this idiom. In this process of metaphorical mapping, the literal meaning functions as the source domain, while the extended meaning is the target domain” (2015).

Likewise, another researcher Mäntylä (2004), also discerns that metaphoricity is one of the most frequently recognised features of idioms. The roots of metaphoricity often stem from real situations or images that connect the idiomatic phrase and its meaning. She adds

³ It understands one domain of experience in terms of another.

that the reason why idioms are sometimes recognised as “dead”, is that the connection between the origins and the meaning of a phrase has been forgotten or the literal context tricky to discern (Mäntylä, 2004).

As pointed out by Gibbs (1993):

Idioms are partially compositional, and their rich figurative meanings are motivated by the metaphorical knowledge people possess of the domains to which idioms refer. These metaphorical mappings between source and target domain knowledge often are conventionalised in the sense that they are so much a part of our everyday cognition as to be unconscious and automatic.

In general, the idiom is a colloquial metaphor that entails specific knowledge, experience, or information that can be effectively used within a culture of origin. “It can be said that idioms that are derived from physical human experiences are, in general, culturally equal” (Thyab, 2016).

Alternative sources that influence idiom formation such as analogy, metonymy, synecdoche, alliteration, aphorism, allusion and cliché all draw on a concept of metaphor.

Plato theorised about analogy, calling it a “shared abstraction”⁴ (Cameron, 2003). The comparing entities reveal a shared idea, a concept, theory, or effect, and the analogy abetted in explaining this mutual trait. The analogy does not just “draw our attention to observable features of things in the world, but at least one part of analogy depends on an additional metaphor” (Klein, 1997). In the Old English, a different yet prevalent form of analogy was kenning – a metaphorical recreation of a familiar concept. Kennings are compound word structures, a poetic circumlocution for a word that already exists.

Metonymy not only has a referential function as it allows language users to apply one entity in place of another⁵. However, it also serves the function of providing understanding, “Metonymic concepts allow us to conceptualise one thing by means of its relation to something else” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metonymic concepts structure not only human language but actions, thoughts and attitudes. All of these mechanisms are grounded in our experience, just like metaphorical ones. In reality, the grounding is more discernible than metaphoric concepts since it generally involves direct physical or causative associations.

When it comes to the conceptual system of culture, it is metaphorical. For example, symbolic metonymies are crucial links between everyday experience and the logical metaphorical systems that characterise religions or cultures⁶. Symbolic metonymies grounded in our physical experience present a vital means of comprehending many concepts (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

Oxford English Dictionary Online describes the process of alliteration as:

The commencement of adjacent or closely connected words with the same sound or letter; an instance of this; spec. (in Old and Middle English and other Germanic

⁴ Plato’s shared-abstraction theory states that: “An analogy may be drawn between an individual and a city because they both share in a third thing, namely an idea of justice. This idea is an abstract property that applies to both the individual and the soul” (Cameron, 2003).

⁵ As much as conceptual metaphor maps across different domains, conceptual metonymy maps within the same domain. A particular case of metonymy is synecdoche, where the part stands for the whole.

⁶ In Christianity, there is the metonymy ‘dove for Holy Spirit’. It is grounded in the conception of the dove in Western culture and the conception of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology.

poetry) the commencement of certain accented syllables of a verse with the same consonant or consonantal group or vowel sounds.

Alliteration has existed in the English language for hundreds of years, (e.g. works of Shakespeare). Frequently, their origins can be traced to the same material, i.e. the poems. Alliteration was a figure of speech that functioned similarly as rhymes do today. Dupriez (1991) defines ‘alliteration’ as “multiple repetitions of an identical sound”. Therefore, it is often used as a form of rhetoric in addition to a literary trope. These qualities determine frequent use of alliteration in the formation of idioms since it gives an idiom a natural rhythm and makes it easy to remember, for instance, *part and parcel*, *kit and caboodle* and *leave it the lurch*.

Just as with the alliteration, aphorisms have been extensively exploited over the years in literature. There were very common in the works of Shakespeare. However, while the popularity of alliteration can be accredited to the rhyming trait, the popularity of aphorisms lies in their ability to communicate some fundamental truths.

Baldic (1996) states that aphorism is “A statement of some general principle, expressed memorably by condensing much wisdom into few words”, for example: “*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*”. It can often take a form of a definition. Aphorisms are found in the literature of many different cultures. Many authors have incorporated them into their works to present universal facts, e.g. *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (*The Merchant’s Tale*) “*For love is blind*”.

Another typical device used while forming idiomatic expressions is an allusion. Dupriez (1991) defines ‘allusion’ as “a reference by means of an evocative utterance, to something implied but not stated”. Respectively, allusion can be: an implied, indirect, or passing reference to a person or thing; any reference to someone or something (also symbolic); the action or process of making such a reference; a play on words, a pun, or an illusion⁷. Therefore, it can refer to a real or fictional person, event, expression, situation or quote. Due to the reader’s previous knowledge of the object, allusions can add emotional significance. Most allusions employ the source material as a reference for new purposes. Additionally, they are used intentionally; however, the meaning is lost if the reader cannot make a connection to the reference. Therefore, it can be said that allusions are a test of cultural literacy, e.g. “*15 minutes of fame*”⁸ or “*back to square one*”⁹ as they draw on general knowledge, cultural aspects and facts. Absence of familiarity with needed comprehension results in a person not being able to fathom the allusion.

When considering the term ‘cliché’ in linguistics, Bussmann describes it as a phrase or expression regarded as unoriginal due to overuse, adding that it is a “pejorative term taken from printers’ language, generally used to refer to a commonly occurring utterance that is used schematically” (2006). Therefore, clichés demonstrate a lack of originality from the speaker or writer.

As stated by Cacciari and Tabbosi (2014), “The study of idioms is significant not only in terms of understanding how people learn and comprehend figurative language, but also

⁷ *Allusion*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/5520?redirectedFrom=allusion#eid>

⁸ In “1968”, artist Andy Warhol remarked that everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes.

⁹ A numbered grid system published by the BBC in the 1930s allowed commentators to indicate where the ball was on the pitch, i.e. square one was the goalkeeper’s area. Back to square one means back to the beginning (Jack, 2005).

because idiomaticity reveals some dramatic insights into the relationship of language and thought". English as a language is exceptionally rich in idiomatic phrases. Literary works of Carroll¹⁰, Shakespeare¹¹ or Dickens¹² produced idioms based on metaphor (Jack, 2005). Metonymy and synecdoche are mainly responsible for idioms originated from everyday life. As much as alliteration may be considered a thing from the past (i.e. Old English poetry), the play on words exploiting rhyme is still present, e.g. cockney rhyming slang. Idioms fashioned on analogy use devices such as a metaphor, a simile or an allegory in order to create a comparison between two objects, while clichés are overused expressions¹³. An anaphor also uses metaphor to create concise and pithy sentences containing some kind of truth, a maxim¹⁴. Finally, since allusion-based idioms refer to someone or something or somewhere, they frequently contain elements of culture. Consequently, possessing some cultural knowledge assists the comprehension process.

4. IDIOMS WITH HIGH CULTURAL REFERENCE – EXAMPLES FROM THE PRESS

In the doctoral thesis *Idioms – a Look into Culture. The Formation of English Idioms in the Framework of British Culture (1945–2020)*¹⁵ a research was conducted into idiom application by British press. The two research subjects chosen represented quality press (*The Guardian*) and popular press (*The Mirror*). The aim of the research was, first of all, to determine the ratio of frequency of idioms appearing in tabloid newspapers to the frequency of idioms used in quality press in the years 1945–2020, secondly, to try and determine whether the coinage of idiomatic phrases reflected changes in the economic and political situation. Since this article is intended to present how British press can be credited with coining new idiomatic phrases with cultural background, only the results of the qualitative research are stated and specific examples provided.

On April 5, 1945, an article was published in *The Times* (London) where the expression *V-Day* (Victory Day) was applied for the first time in the UK's newspapers "To-day the battle still rages with loss and peril in Europe. On V Day it will still go on over great stretches of land and water in the Far East"¹⁶. Previously to that event in July 1941, *Newsweek* (New York) published in one of its articles, "Encouraged by the success [of the V propaganda campaign], Britain proclaimed July 20 as 'V Day'". The expression was subsequently exploited in 1942 by *Time* (New York) "We at Hercules are eager to learn of any new material, process, or equipment... which can enable us to create more employment after V-Day". In September 1944, *Washington Post* established new terms for the two victory days, i.e. V-E Day (Victory in Europe) and V-J Day (Victory in Japan).

¹⁰ E.g. the Mad Hatter, a character from *Alice in Wonderland*, describes an insane person (*as mad as a hatter*).

¹¹ E.g. *at one fell swoop*, meaning in a single movement. First time used by Shakespeare in *Macbeth* (1966).

¹² E.g. Artful Dodger, a character from *Oliver Twist* novel, was quickly adopted by the Victorian public to describe any crafty rascal, or doubtful, risky situation or a thing, (*a little bit dodgy*).

¹³ E.g. *I lost track of time*; or *play your cards right*.

¹⁴ E.g. *a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*; or *a rolling stone gathers no moss*.

¹⁵ Coombs-Hoar (2021). *Idioms – a Look into Culture. The Formation of English Idioms in the Framework of British Culture (1945–2020)*. Uniwersytet Rzeszowski.

¹⁶ *V-Day*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/220871?redirectedFrom=V+day#eid16064605>.

V-Day, referencing WW2 victory, is frequently applied figuratively to one's success or triumph. Moreover, throughout the years British press devised similar expressions based on the term *V-Day* and its implication. *The Guardian*, in the article "All systems go for the euro", January 4, 1999, employed the term *E-Day* to describe the beginning of the Euro as a common currency in Britain.

An example of a different idiom with high cultural reference is *Watergate's* 1972–1974 US scandal during President Nixon's administration. Certain officials were caught trying to bug the national headquarters of the Democratic Party stationed in the Watergate building in Washington, DC. The press quickly chose the name for the scandal that originated from where the event had happened. As stated in *Oxford English Dictionary* online, "The suffix -gate has since been used, preceded by the name of a person, place, etc., to denote a scandal comparable with or likened to Watergate"¹⁷. On September 1, 1997, *The Mirror* presented an article titled "Haunted by the image of fame", where the expression *Camillagate tape* was applied to describe precedence where tapes with private phone calls between Camilla Parker-Bowles and Prince Charles came to light. Still, it is not the only time the suffix-*gate* has been used to denote a scandal or an incident. For example, *Murdochgate* (2011) denotes to *News of the World* phone-hacking scandal¹⁸; *Elbowgate* (2016) refers to Justin Trudeau accidentally hitting with an elbow an MP in the parliament¹⁹; or *Pizzagate* (2004) describes an incident during which the Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson was struck with a slice of pizza by an opposition player following a league game against Arsenal²⁰.

Throughout the years, the suffix *-gate* has been extensively used on many occasions in order to signify a scandal or an incident (the most recent – *partygate* – from *Daily Mail* online, 18.03.2022²¹). Nevertheless, not knowing the origins of the phrase *Watergate* and what it denotes leads to confusion and misperception of the newly devised phrases such as *partygate* or *pizzagate*²².

A different example of an idiom worth pointing out is *Brexit*. The expression refers to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union and the political process connected with it. *The Oxford English Dictionary* online maintains that P. Wilding created the term in 2012 blog "Stumbling towards the Brexit: Britain, a referendum and an ever-

¹⁷ *Watergate*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/226192?rskey=0QvUnu&result=3&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

¹⁸ *The Guardian*, 03.08.2011, "Academics at the fore of hacking debate", <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2011/aug/03/media-studies-academics-phone-hacking>

¹⁹ *The Guardian*, 19.05.2016, "Justin Trudeau apologises again as 'elbowgate' darkens 'sunny ways' image", <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/19/justin-trudeau-apology-elbowgate-canada-parliament-critics>

²⁰ *The Guardian*, 15.09.2006 "Pizzagate: a slice of strife", <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2006/sep/15/newsstory.sport1>

²¹ *Daily Mail* online, 18.03.2022, "Has Boris survived the plot to oust him over Partygate? PM's allies increasingly confident after leading rebel backs down as coup would be an 'indulgence' during the Ukraine crisis", <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10625357/Plot-oust-Boris-Johnson-Leading-rebel-backs-time-crisis-Ukraine.html>

²² The expressions mentioned above, i.e. *Camillagate tape*, *Murdochgate*, *elbowgate*, or *pizzagate*, can be regarded as pressdioms [Coombs-Hoar *Idioms – a Look into Culture. The Formation of English Idioms in the Framework of British Culture (1945-2020)*] since they were devised by the press using pre-existing idioms as templates.

closer reckoning”²³. Later on, the term was applied again in *Christian Science Monitor* “Why would the EU consider special economic and trading privileges for Britain after its ‘Brexit’?”. Subsequently, the *Financial Times* in 2014 used the term again “In many cases, the US banks are as worried about the eurozone’s impending banking union as they are about Brexit”. After that, in 2016, *Daily Mirror* exploited the expression in one of the articles, “A soft Brexit would see us maintain access to the single market and the customs union and accept some EU rules. A hard Brexit would see us quit the single market and the customs union in return for control of our borders”²⁴.

The noteworthy fact is that the suffix – *exit* has become productive. The expression *Brexit* has led to devising such terms as *Grexit* – Greece’s possible withdrawal from the Eurozone; *Frexit* – hypothetical French withdrawal from the European Union; or *Megexit* (*Megxit*) relates to Meghan Markle and Prince Harry stepping down as ‘senior’ members of the Royal Family and relocation to the United States.

V-day, *Watergate* or *Brexit* are not deemed typical types of idiomatic expressions as most definitions maintain that the idiom should comprise of minimum two items. Nevertheless, these are pretty recent entities, and as language continuously evolves soon, there may be more such expressions consisting of a single item. Since pure idioms are considerably older, their origins are often unknown. Consequently, we cannot be sure how they evolved in time to become what they are now. For example, the idiom *meets one’s Waterloo*, referring to The Battle of Waterloo in 1815 in Belgium, which meant the final defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. Initially, only the word ‘Waterloo’ was used regarding the event:

- In 1816 Ld. Byron *Let. December 5* in T. Moore *Life Ld. Byron* (1851) 329/1 It [*sc.* the Armenian alphabet] is..a Waterloo of an Alphabet.
- In 1842 J. Aiton *Clerical Econ.* ii. 48 If there must be a Waterloo, let it be a conflict for all the minister's rights so that he may never require to go to law in his lifetime again²⁵.

The phrase *meet one’s Waterloo* has been applied from 1961:

- In 1859 W. Phillips *Lesson of Hour* 11 Every man meets his Waterloo at last.
- In 1902 *Washington Post* May 3 8/6 Five favourites and a heavily played second choice won, and ‘getaway day’ proved a Waterloo for the books.
- In 1961 C. McCullers *Clock without Hands* iii. 67 I felt right then and there I had met my Waterloo.
- In 2002 *US News & World Rep.* October 28 53/2 HRT has not met its Waterloo. Despite the headlines, the estrogen-progestin regimen did not flunk ‘massively’²⁶.

As presented above the terms *Watergate*, *V-day* or *Brexit*, are productively applied as templates for creating new idiomatic phrases.

²³ *Brexit*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/54763375?redirectedFrom=brexit#eid>

²⁴ *Brexit*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/54763375?redirectedFrom=brexit#eid>.

²⁵ *Meet one’s Waterloo*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/226234?redirectedFrom=meet+your+waterloo#eid15062851>.

²⁶ *Meet your Waterloo*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/226234?redirectedFrom=meet+your+waterloo#eid15062851>.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Idiomatic expressions reflect our ever-changing society at the utmost. They exhibit new values, ideals, and views while capturing the major historical events, incidents and affairs. A small body of an idiom is a sea of information that offers facts, details, and elements connected to the culture. Therefore, their significance for the language is undeniable and irrefutable.

Nowadays, the well-established and widely recognisable idiomatic phrases but partially altered are frequently exploited by the press²⁷. Moreover, such idioms are used as a template for creating new terms. Substituting a part of such an idiom to contain the new idea or a fact has led on numerous occasions to the creation of new idiomatic phrases. Our shared knowledge of the prototype aids us to recognise it for what it is, i.e. a well-known idiom revealing some new cultural elements.

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²⁷ E.g. *Willy-come-lately*, or *Oval the moon*.

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