The Structure and Context of Idiomatic Expressions in the Saudi Press

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my home country, to the heart of my mother, to the soul of my father, to my wife, and to the members of my family.

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All thanks be to Allah, The Almighty, for giving me the strength and patience to undertake and complete this work. Glory and praise to him!

This thesis would not have been completed without the assistance and support I have received from many people on both an academic and a personal level.

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Abstract

Idiomatic expressions are linguistic expressions, grammatical forms, phrases or words that are used conventionally and possess a figurative meaning which cannot be predicted from the individual components or literal meanings of the constituent parts. These expressions play an important role in human communication, since their emotive and cultural connotations facilitate the expression of meaning at both linguistic and cultural levels.

This linguistic phenomenon has attracted the attention of many researchers in Arabic and English. However, unlike previous studies which concentrated on Classical Arabic idioms in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, this thesis focuses on a sample of Modern Standard Arabic idiomatic expressions taken from the Saudi-based newspaper *Al-Riyadh* in order to investigate their structure and grammatical relations, and to analyse a range of factors relating to context, namely co-text, situational context, and cultural context. The study also explores how these idioms are cohesive to their context.

This study has two main objectives. The first is to explore idioms in the Saudi press from a structural perspective by examining structural patterns in the data sample and analysing both the internal and external grammatical relations which occur when idiomatic expressions are used within the text of *Al-Riyadh*. In addition, the possible variations within idiomatic expressions which were found in the newspaper discourse will also be examined in order to determine what they reveal about the limits of the textual flexibility of this linguistic phenomenon.

The second objective is to textualise and contextualise idiomatic expressions in a sample of randomly selected texts to examine how idioms are cohesive with their co-text and assess the role of co-text in the interpretation of the meaning of idioms. On the level of context, the study examines the situational and cultural context for some selected idioms within the sample to determine the degree of correlation between idioms, context and culture.

Adopting a text linguistics approach, a sample consisting of some 440 idioms that appeared in *Al-Riyadh* was analysed in the structural study, focusing on Arabic syntax and grammatical structures. The study also utilised fixedness and compositional/non-compositional approaches when investigating structural variations. Halliday and Hasan's model of cohesiveness was applied to the analysis of this feature in the idiomatic expressions. Halliday and Hasan's concepts of context of situation and context of culture proved useful when analysing the co-text, situational and cultural context of idiomatic expressions in the newspaper sample.

The study found that nearly half of the overall structures analysed were verbal patterns. Moreover, idioms were found to display the same structural and grammatical relations as other linguistic units. Despite the shortage of structural variations in idiomatic expressions, some noticeable changes were observed within idiom structures which enable them to fit into their context. The study also found that idiomatic expressions are cohesive and are connected to their co-text by means of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. Finally, the analysis demonstrated that internal context (co-text) and border context (situation and culture) played an important role in determining the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

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Arabic Transliteration System

The following system of transliteration, used by the Library of Congress, is adopted in this thesis.

Consonants

خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	ب	أ	ء
kh	ḥ	j	th	t	b	a	’
ض	ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د
ḍ	ṣ	sh	s	z	r	dh	d
ل	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
l	k	q	f	gh	ʿ	ẓ	ṭ
			ي	و	ه	ن	م
			y	w	h	n	m

Vowels

Arabic (short vowels)	transliteration	Arabic (long vowels)	transliteration
◌َ*fatḥah*	a	ا	ā
◌ُ*ḍammah*	u	و	ū
◌ِ*kasrah*	i	ي	ī

Grammatical Terminology Employed

Doer of the action	=	الفاعل
Subject	=	الفاعل
Object	=	المفعول
Deputy of the doer/of the subject	=	نائب الفاعل
Subject	=	المبتدأ
Predicate	=	خبر
Adjective	=	صفة
Adverb	=	ظرف
Circumstance	=	حال
Adverb of Time	=	ظرف زمان
Adverb of Place	=	ظرف مكان
Genitive	=	إضافة
Preposition	=	حرف جر
Prepositional phrase	=	حرف جر+اسم مجرور
First part of genitive construction/ annexed to	=	مضاف إليه
Second part of genitive construction/ annexed	=	مضاف
Pronoun	=	ضمير
Implicit/hidden pronoun	=	ضمير مستتر
Explicit pronoun	=	ضمير بارز
Connected/attached pronoun	=	ضمير متصل
Particle	=	أداة

List of Abbreviations

A	=	Adjective
MSA	=	Modern Standard Arabic
N	=	Noun
O	=	Object
Prn	=	Pronoun
Prp	=	Preposition
S	=	Subject
V	=	Verb

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This research focuses on idiomatic expressions in a sample of Modern Standard Arabic (hereafter MSA) texts selected from a Saudi-based newspaper, *Al-Riyadh*. This chapter will provide an introduction to the research and an overview of the contents of this thesis. It starts by explaining the significance of this research which is the first extended study of idiomatic expressions focusing on the Saudi Press. This is followed by an overview of the areas covered by this study, a statement of the research questions and the scope of the study. The methodology that is employed in the study is then explained, and the chapter ends with an outline of the structure of the study.

1.2 Research Significance and Rationale

Idiomatic expressions can be defined as conventionally used phrases or sentences which have a figurative significance. They play a very important role in language usage, not only facilitating the communication of meaning but also conveying both emotive and cultural connotations. The fact that the meaning of idiomatic expressions often has no obvious connection with the literal lexical significance of the words they contain, together with their heavy reliance on cultural references, means that they can present a particularly difficult challenge for those learning a foreign language or for translators mediating between cultures. This linguistic and cultural variation is one of the reasons why this field has attracted the interest of scholars of Modern Languages.

However, the study of idiomatic expressions is also valuable because it enables researchers to discover underlying patterns which relate to the semantic, structural, and lexicographical aspects of language itself. Thus, the added value of this thesis is to be found in its examination of the structural and semantic patterns of MSA idioms in Saudi press, and its analysis of the factors or contexts which influence how the meaning of idiomatic expressions is interpreted.

As the review of the literature in this field will show, a number of studies have investigated various aspects of English idiomatic expressions, including their typology, semantics, and syntactic behaviour, beginning with Hockett (1958) followed by Weinreich (1969), Fraser (1970) and Makkai (1972). Other experimental studies, such as that by Gibbs (1985), have focused on the way in which idiomatic expressions are understood. Various researchers, e.g. Strässler (1982), Fernando (1996), and Moon (1998), have analysed English idioms using pragmatic, functional and corpus-linguistic approaches.

However, idiomatic expressions did not attract the attention of scholars of Arabic linguistics at either a theoretical or practical level until Al-Qassimi's (1979) study, which was followed by further works by Bin Faraj (1983); Husam Al-Din (1985); Al-Hannash (1991); Al-Anbar (2001); Gurab (2005) and Abu-Zulal (2005).

As might be expected, there is a substantial body of work on idioms in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith [the Prophet Muhammad's sayings]. In addition, there are three dictionaries of idiomatic expressions, namely *A Dictionary of Structures and Phrases of Arabic Terminologies, from the Oldest to the Newest* (Abu-Saad, 1987); *A Contextual Dictionary of Idiomatic Expressions* (Sini *et al.*, 1996); and *The Dictionary of Idiomatic Expressions* (Dawood, 2003). Careful examination of these works shows that they omit many well-known idiomatic expressions and include other proverbs and sayings which Al-Anbar (2001) does not classify as idiomatic expressions in MSA.

This brief survey of the existing literature on idioms in MSA reveals that to date most of the previous research on this linguistic phenomenon has either focused on the lexicographic aspects of idioms, or has studied them from the perspective of semantic fields and structures. Furthermore, not a single study has been devoted to examining idiomatic expressions in contemporary media texts, specifically Saudi media discourse, highlighting the need for research in this area.

This lack of applied studies of idiomatic expressions in MSA media texts, in particular, those dealing with Saudi media discourse, is thus one of the reasons why the researcher has chosen to focus this study on data collected from *Al-Riyadh*, a

newspaper which appeals to a broad readership in Saudi Arabia. The second reason relates to the fact that the contemporary Saudi Press provides a particularly rich source of MSA idiomatic expressions, representing a specific period in our contemporary world. The specific significance of this thesis, therefore, can be summarised as follows:

1. This study analyses the structural, semantic, and lexical aspects of the sample of MSA idiomatic expressions and identifies the role which they play in Saudi Press discourse.

2. This study also explores the use of idiomatic expressions in different genres of discourse in the Saudi Press including political, literary and current affairs reports.

3. The element of originality in this study lies in examining the context in which these idiomatic expressions have been used. It deals with the pragmatics of idioms, analysing their linguistic function within a specific chronological and geographical context.

1.3 Research Area

This thesis focuses on analysing MSA idiomatic expressions occurring in *Al-Riyadh* newspaper. This choice was made on the basis of various criteria, including the popularity and wide circulation of the newspaper, and the broad range of topics and features which it publishes, representing different views from various walks of life in contemporary Saudi society. Finally, this thesis examines various aspects of structure and meaning found in idiomatic expressions.

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

This thesis has four aims. The first one is to analyse the use of idiomatic expressions in *Al-Riyadh* newspaper. It further aims to study the structure of idiomatic expressions in relation to their context of use (in terms of their figurative meaning), and it will also identify the possible changes/variations in the structure of the idiomatic expressions under examination. The third aim is to examine how idiomatic expressions cohere within their linguistic context. Finally, it aims to investigate the

role played by context (co-text, situation and culture) and the extent to which it impacts on the interpretation of idiomatic expressions.

This thesis addresses six questions:

1. What types of structural patterns of idiomatic expressions are found in *Al-Riyadh* and what are their degrees of frequency?

2. What types of structural relations exist between lexical items in the idiomatic expressions (internal grammatical) and their external grammatical relations with linguistic context (co-text)?

3. To what extent, if any, do changes made to the structure of idiomatic expressions affect their meaning? Which types of changes do affect meaning and which do not?

4. How do idiomatic expressions cohere within their linguistic context?

5. In which ways and to what extent does linguistic context affect the interpretation of the meaning of idiomatic expressions?

6. How do the situational context and cultural contexts contribute to interpretation of the idiomatic expressions?

1.5 The Scope of the Research

This thesis focuses on studying the context and syntactic modes of a sample of idiomatic expressions collected from the Saudi newspaper *Al-Riyadh*. This newspaper is used as a representative example of the Saudi Press and of the linguistic norms of written MSA. This research is not concerned with contemporary colloquial language or with idioms in other newspapers or in other mass media, nor does it deal with the problems posed by translating these MSA idiomatic expressions into English.

1.6 Methodology

For the reasons previously outlined, the Saudi newspaper *Al-Riyadh* was chosen as the source for the sample of idiomatic expressions analysed in this study. The researcher examined a six-month period (from June, 2012 till December, 2012) of editions of the online version of *Al-Riyadh* (available at http://www.alriyadh.com/), surfing its browser to find the data required. This process produced a sample consisting of 440 idiomatic expressions, collected over this period of time. These were selected on the basis of their structural and semantic properties (see 2.5.1, and 2.5.2). New idiomatic expressions used in contemporary communication were also searched for using the newspaper browser.

Once collected, the data were firstly classified according to their structural patterns (verbal, nominal, adjectival, phrasal, incomplete structure) following the traditional MSA perspective (Husam Al-Din, 1985). This classification was used to examine internal grammatical relations and was also used within the texts in order to study the external relations. The last part of the structural investigation was focused on identifying the changes/variations that these idiomatic expression can undergo whilst still retaining a recognizable meaning as an idiom. This analysis followed the transformational and fixedness approach (see 4.7). Using this analytical paradigm is a valuable means of examining the syntactic aspects of idiomatic expressions and testing the role of syntax in changing the meaning of idiomatic expressions by applying factors such as ellipsis, addition, and substitution.

With regard to co-text and cohesion, a number of idioms was analysed after being extracted from the original newspaper source. A small sample of idiomatic expressions was carefully selected to reflect the role of situational context in order to study the ability to comprehend these examples. A different classification was used to analyse the idiomatic expressions in terms of culture. For this purpose, based on Newmark (1988) and Katan (1999; 2004) five cultural categories have been established to cover all the idiomatic expressions. Eight culturally bounded examples representing different levels of culture which had appeared most frequently in the newspapers were analysed.

The general approach adopted in this study to examine the context and co-text of the selected idiomatic expressions is the framework of cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, 1989; de Beaugrand and Dressler, 1981 see 3.5.1 and 3.5.2), context of situation and context of culture (see 3.6).

Various frameworks have been applied to the study of context including the pragmatic approach, discourse analysis, and text linguistics. Since the Hallidayan approach is used in this study, text linguistics theory has been adopted (see 3.2) since Halliday's model examines both the linguistic context (sometimes termed as co-text) and the context of culture (also including the 'context of situation'). The researcher believes that Halliday's insights should be categorised under the area of text linguistics because in its entirety, Halliday's model focuses on examining the text, and its relationship to the context. Also, it is mainly concerned with the process of textual linguistic cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1989).

Both the pragmatic approach and discourse analysis examine the role of context in the process of semantic analysis. However, the pragmatic approach adopts the theory of speech acts, which will not be used here in the contextual study of the meaning of idiomatic expressions. With respect to discourse analysis, it is clear that this focuses more on psychological and personal aspects of discourse, a dimension which is not necessary in our contextual view of meaning. Thus, the school of text linguistics and the Hallidayan model will be the tools of analysis in the search to textualize and contextualize the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

1.7 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, offering an overview of its significance, the particular research field, the research questions, methodology and research structure.

Chapter Two includes the concept, characteristics and sources of idiomatic expressions, and also provides a succinct historical background of the development of idiomatic expressions. It also deals with the literal and figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions and differentiates idioms from both proverbs and collocations. Also the relation between both idioms and context, and idioms and culture is highlighted.

Chapter Three deals with the text-linguistics approach in terms of definitions, importance, and its applicability in the light of work by Halliday and Hasan (1976; 1985) and Halliday (1985). The analysis also tackles standards of textuality as proposed by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). Moreover, under the general umbrella of text linguistics it provides an overview of contextual theory and its importance in understanding the intended meaning. It also tracks the theory of context in Arab/Middle Eastern and Western studies. For this purpose, three types of contexts have been handled, namely linguistic context (or co-text), context of situation, and context of culture.

Chapter Four analyses the structure of idiomatic expressions, and the degree of frequency of each of these structures. The researcher gives analytical examples of the grammatical relations existing among the elements informing each expression, such as the relationship between the subject and predicate of nominal sentences, and the relationship between the verb and its subject, object or the subject of the passive as well as the relationship between the preposition and the genitive. After that, the relationship between the idiomatic expression and the linguistic context is examined, including attributives, allocations, dependency, etc. For this purpose, the researcher examines the expected changes that a structure may undergo for the purpose of testing the relative fixedness of idiomatic expressions.

Chapter Five analyses the cohesive devices used in idiomatic expressions, and the role of co-text in determining their intended meaning.

Chapter Six analyses the cultural references which occur within the idiomatic expressions in an attempt to demonstrate that culture plays a major role in interpreting some idioms.

Chapter Seven presents the conclusions of the study, together with some recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two: A Review of the Literature Related to Idiomatic Expressions

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review and discussion of the concept of idiomatic expression, tracing the historical background of the term 'idiom' in both western and Arabic studies. It further aims to examine syntactic and semantic features as well as the sources of idiomatic expressions. Attention is also paid to establishing the similarities and differences between idioms and other linguistic structures, including metaphor and metonymy. Also, consideration is given to the literal and figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions. Finally, the relation between idioms, context and culture is highlighted.

2.2 Idiomatic Expressions and Language

All languages have structures. When we use a language, we structure it in a way that complies with the structural system peculiar to that language. MSA, for instance, operates according to patterns including nominal and verbal sentences, annexation and similar structures.

Sinclair (1991) argues that there are two models which can be used to explain the meaning of a language text, namely, the Open Choice Principle and the Idiom Principle. The former, which describes language in terms of 'slot-and-filler' modes, views language text as the result of a large number of complex open choices made at each point where a unit is completed. The text is viewed, therefore, as a series of slot nodes which can be filled from a lexicon governed by the particular constraints of the language in question. In practice, it has been noticed that the number of possible slots is effectively minimised because the sentences produced by native speakers of a language are not as widely various as might be expected by the Open Choice Principle. The Idiom Principle, on the other hand, states that the choice in slots/the tree structure is not open. Rather, native speakers have a number of pre-constructed phrases (units) formed by single choices. This principle is sustainable because words do not occur at random in a text (Ji and Zhang, 2012:149-150; Liu, 2008:25).

Al-Anbar (2001:1) identifies two types of language structures. The first does not possess any special structural characteristics which serve as identifying features. Normal sentences or phrases whose meaning is understood directly from their components belong to this category which is the most common e.g. يلعب علي كرة قدم (*Ali plays football*). The second type can be identified by their structural and semantic characteristics, and this category includes proverbs, e.g. رجع بخفي حنين (literally *He came back with Hunayn's shoes* i.e. *His efforts came to naught*) and idiomatic expressions, e.g. نضب ماء وجهه (literal meaning '*his face water ran out'*, to mean he *is no longer ashamed of himself).*

Nicolas (1995:234-235) distinguishes between three semantic patterns constituted from word combinations, namely: (1) free combinations (also known as compositional sentences), (2) collocations, and (3) idioms. Compositional sentences convey a literal meaning, which is simply the sum of all their constituent elements, i.e. all the words in the sentence or phrase contribute to the meaning of the structure. According to Nicolas (1995), the second pattern, known as collocations, consists of two words, and underlies the free combinations, e.g. 'fast food'. Collocations have a special feature, namely that their meaning is fixed whenever it is linked with a particular structure. Consequently, they can be viewed as 'semi-compositional'. The third type of semantic patterns, idioms, bear no compositional relation to their free-composition sense, as can be demonstrated in an English example such as "to kick the bucket" meaning "to die".

2.3 Defining the Concept of Idiomatic Expression

Many attempts have been made to define the term 'idiomatic expression' (e.g. Katz and Postal, 1963: 275; Fraser, 1970: 22; Makkia 1972: 23; Kövecses and Szabó, 1996: 326) and all of them stress, like Kövecses and Szabó (1996: 326), that the meaning of an idiomatic expression is indirect and cannot be deduced purely by reference to the meaning of its lexical components since idioms are "linguistic expressions whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of their constituent parts". Domyati (2009) provides two MSA examples:

- كل يجر النار إلى قرصه (literally *Everybody drags fire to their own loaf of bread* i.e. *Everyone looks after their own interests).*
- ركب رأسه (*to be headstrong*).

However, in the previous two examples it is clear that the intended meaning is completely different from the literal meaning.

This characteristic of idiomatic expressions means that they often pose difficulties when attempts are made to render them into other languages (Al-Qassimi, 1979: 18-19; Davies, 1982: 68; Husam Al-Din, 1985: 125; Al-Hamzawi, 2000: 28).

Other definitions have also emphasised that the structure of an idiomatic expression follows the structure of the language in which it was originally coined. Consequently, idioms may be as long as a sentence or as short as a clause or phrase (Hockett, 1958: 172; Katz and Postal, 1963: 360; Abu-Saad, 1987: 10). With reference to Arabic, Al-Anbar (2001: 2) specifies the length as consisting of two words or more. In the case of English, Katz and Postal (1963: 275-276) argue that even polymorphic words, such as telephone or greenhouse, constitute a type of idiom which they refer to as “lexical idioms” (see also Hockett, 1958: 172; Liu, 2008: 4-5).

Jaeger’s (1999: 246) definition identifies several different aspects of idiomatic expressions, referring to them as “collectively coined imaginative utterances of two or more words but usually under sentence-length”. He maintains that these utterances are “based on a range of figurative patterns aimed at achieving specific sound and sense effects” and that they are “linguistic signs in their own right”.

Idiomatic expressions are also characterized by means of relative degrees of fixedness (for further examples, see 2.5.1). According to Fraser (1970: 22) the most important features of idiomatic expressions are conventional common usages in a limited formula in each particular linguistic usage (see 2.5.2).

Moreover, idiomatic expressions can be characterized by metonymy and metaphorical meaning (see 2.9) but may also have specific characteristics in their structures which help differentiate them from metaphors or figurative meaning. Their conventional meaning also arises from language speakers who approve the

meaning of an idiomatic expression (Davies, 1982:69; Nunberg *et al.*, 1994: 496-498).

According to Husam Al-Din (1985: 19) an idiom is:

> *a fixed mode of expression in a particular language. It consists of a word or more whose meaning has been transformed from a literal one to another one agreed upon by linguists.*

For Al-Hamzawi (2000, 28) it is:

> *a particular, fixed mode of speech, marked by its metaphorical and untranslatable nature, studied as one linguistic unit according to specific linguistic rules that may agree with or differ from general linguistic rules.*

Amongst all the many definitions of the term 'idiomatic expression', Crystal (2008: 237) provides one of the most detailed and specific, describing it as:

> *A term used in grammar and lexicology to refer to a sequence of words which are semantically or syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit. From a semantic viewpoint, the meaning of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the idiomatic expression as a whole. From a syntactic viewpoint, the words often do not permit the usual variability they display in other contexts.*

2.4 A Historical Overview of Idiomatic Expressions in Western and Arabic Studies

Although idiomatic expressions are a widespread linguistic phenomenon which has been studied by many scholars (Al-Qassimi, 1979), they did not attract the interest of European linguistic and literary scholars until the second half of the nineteenth century, a trend which was led by Russian linguists (Hussam Al-Din, 1985: 18). This resulted in the production of dictionaries of idiomatic expressions in several European languages (Husam Al-Din, 1985: 16-17).

In Arabic Studies, interest in studying these linguistic structures dates back many centuries. Idiomatic expressions appeared in the Holy Qura'n and Al Hadith Al Sharif, whilst early Arabic poetry and prose texts were rich in idioms, attracting the attention of linguistic scholars at the time. Arabic has preserved a particularly large number of these idioms with varying structures and meanings, reflecting different aspects of Arab heritage and everyday life (Al-Anbar, 2001: 1).

Idiomatic expressions have also been referred to variously as lexical clusters, semantically exocentric expressions, collocations, formulas, phrases, compound lexical units, and specialized hypermorphemes (Makkai, 1972: 26). Makkai (1972: 26) identifies five definition for idioms, and he tends towards to the fourth of these which is the ideational form in the Oxford English Dictionary: "A form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc, peculiar to a language, a peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage of language and often having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one" (1972: 23). The same author states that an idiomatic expression can be a phrase or a clause. Moreover, it is a complex unit which has a special function in the sentence, and it is possible to replace this unit by other units; in addition, its meaning is not derived or cannot be predicted from its components.

Fraser (1970: 22) has the same common definition of idioms, which is a constituent or series of constituents whose semantic interpretation does not have a compositional function of the formative elements of which they are composed. In Fraser's view, there are seven levels of frozenness in idioms: level six (L6) – unrestricted– presents the most extreme level of allowing change operations, whereas level zero (L0) is the extreme level of frozenness. Therefore, he claims that there is no idiomatic expression related to L6. In Davies' (1983: 68) definition, the idiomatic expression is a phrase or sentence which is used conventionally in a different meaning from its literal meaning. Moreover, he considers that some idioms do not have a literal meaning, and if the phrase has a literal meaning, that will cause ambiguity.

Some western studies look at idioms as dead metaphors, simply because these idioms were once metaphorical but have lost their metaphorical meaning over a long period of use, and have now become equivalent to a simple literal phrase (Gibbs, 1992: 485). Keysar and Bly (1999) state that the idiom “kick the bucket” is the most common example given in linguistic and psychological textbooks, which reflects the traditional concept of idioms as “frozen forms whose meanings are represented in the mental lexicon as one word”. However, their view of idioms is that “an idiom is an expression whose meaning is not a compositional function of its elements or word” (Keysar and Bly, 1999: 1560). According to Gibbs (1992: 485), idioms are not dead metaphors but have more complex meanings that are motivated by conceptual metaphors linking idiomatic phrases with their figurative interpretations.

Moreover, Cacciari and Tabossi (1988: 668) believe that an idiom is characterized as “a string of words whose semantic interpretation cannot be derived compositionally from the interpretation of its parts”. Another definition by Huber-Okrainec *et al.* (2005: 349) is that idioms are “phrases with figurative meaning that are not directly derived from literal meanings of the words in the phrase”. Similarly, there is another definition given by Cain *et al.* (2009: 280), who state that idioms have both literal and figurative meaning, depending on the context.

Hockett (1958: 172) gives a general definition of idiomatic expression. He claims that any linguistic element whose meaning cannot be predicted from its structures will be an idiom; this includes small units of morphemes, such as /tele/ /phone/ and /class/ /room/, and also includes multi-word units like: “What’s up?”. Moreover, Liu (2008: 4-5) argues that Hockett is the only one who treats individual morphemes as idiomatic expressions. In a different way, Katz and Postal (1963) and Makkai (1972) consider that individual words consisting of polymorphisms, such as greenhouse and telephone should be classified as idioms.

Katz and Postal (1963: 275) maintain that the linguistic structure of an idiomatic expression includes polymorphemic words whose meaning is not derived or composed from its component parts. They distinguish two kinds of idioms: ‘lexical idioms’, which are constituted by polymorphemic words and ‘phrase idioms’ which

are constituted from multiple words. Similarly, Liu (2008:5) gives the example of 'telephone' for the first type (lexical idioms). In his view, the meaning of this idiom is that of a device for long distance talk, and the meaning of the idiom does not come from the structural meaning of the idiom elements (tele = far), (phone = sound). For the other type –phrase idioms–, he gives the example "kick the bucket".

Nunberg *et al.* (1994: 497) clarify two kinds of idiomatic expressions, both of which have a conventional meaning. The first is "idiomatically combining expressions" and an example of this type is the idiom "spill the beans" the meaning of which is composed of its literal meaning. The second one is "idiomatic phrases", and an example of this type is "kick the bucket", in which the components do not contribute to its idiomatic meaning.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that all definitions revolve around the idea that the actual sense of an idiomatic expression cannot be predicted simply by interpreting the sum of its literal meanings. The other additional ideas are represented by referring to its semantic and structural aspects; an idiom may consist of one word or a group of words, and the meaning of an idiomatic expression is close to the meaning of one word.

Moving to the terminology of idiomatic expressions, its concept and resources in Arabic Studies, it appears to have received little attention prior to the arrival of Al-Qassimi (1979) and Husam Al-Din (1985). However, Husam Al-Din looks at the term for idioms in Arabic Studies, trying to find any term which is semantically close to idiomatic expressions, and identifies several terms used by Arab scholars of rhetoric and linguistics. To begin with, we will identify the term in ancient studies to establish what was written about idiomatic expression or terminology which is semantically close. Following this, the term's use in modern studies will be clarified by examining how these tackle the terminology of idiomatic expressions.

The term 'proverb' has been used to express the concept of idioms by Al-Jāḥiẓ (1988: 12), Al-Anbar (2001: 23), Al-Anbari (1992: 501), Al-Mobarid (1989: v 1, p

8), Al-Zamakshari (1996: 153), Ibn Manzur (n.d: v 11, p 138), Al-Qaurawani (1934, v 1, p 281), Al-Jurjani (n.d: 85) and Ibn Al-Atheer (n.d: v 3, p 66). Moreover, some of the aforementioned scholars use different terms, e.g. Al-Mobarid, Ibn Manzur and Al-Qaurawani use ’metonymy’. In addition to the term ‘proverb’, Ibn Al-Atheer uses ‘metonymy’ whilst he uses ‘metaphor’ to denote what is commonly referred to as idiomatic expressions (n.d: 62;78). However, Al-Shareef Al-Radi (1967), Al-Tha’alibi (1996) and Al-Zamakhshari (1996) use more than one term for idioms including ‘metaphor’, ‘allegory’, ‘metonymy’, and ‘proverb’. Ibn Fares (1993: 210) and Al-Ascari (1984: 407) use the terms ‘metonymy’ and ‘metaphor’. The term التمثيل, meaning *representation* or *likeness*, is used by Al-Tha’alibi (1983: 22-23) and Al-Ascari (1984: 391).

An example of using a range of different terms to refer to idiomatic expressions can be found in Al-Jāḥiẓ (1988:12) in his discussion of the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad: ألان حمي الوطيس (*Now the war has become harder*). He comments that, because of frequent usage, this expression or saying is similar to a proverb. Al-Shareef Al-Radi (1967) also claims that this expression is recognised as a proverb. Commenting on the expression لبس له جلد النمر (literally *Someone wears the tiger skin*), Al-Tha’alibi (1994: 511) says that this expression is an Arab proverb used in relation to representing disclosure and highlighting enmity. However, an example of using metaphor in relation to idiomatic expressions is Al-Tha’alibi’s (1994) investigation of some idioms in his chapter concerning metaphor. Examples include رأس المال (*capital*) and انشقت عصاهم (literally *their stick has split* i.e. they are divided/became separated). Similarly, Ibn Al-Atheer (n.d: v 3, p 62) uses the term ‘metaphor’ in describing the Prophet Mohammad’s phrase هادم اللذات: أي الموت (*killer of joy* i.e. death).

Abdu Al-Gaher Al-Jurjani (n.d.) refers to idiomatic expressions using three related terms: proverb, representation and similarity. Unlike previous scholars of rhetorics and linguistics, Al-Jurjani was clear that idiomatic expressions were a linguistic phenomenon. He comments on the idiom رفع عقيرته، أي: رفع صوته (*the voice became loud/raised*) maintaining that it has come to be used conventionally and its meaning

cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts since there is no relation between صوت (*voice*) and عقيرة (*foot*) (n.d: 85).

In the modern era, scholars of Arabic Studies also refer to idiomatic expressions using a range of different terms. Aniees (1992) uses the term الكنايات الادبية (*literary metonymies*) arguing that the change in domain of usage in language is one aspect of semantic development. His example indicating the metonymy of bowing or obsequiousness is the idiomatic expression إراقة ماء الوجه *(spilling the face's water*) (Aniees, 1992: 161). Shawqi Dayf classifies idiomatic expressions as a type of proverb (1995: 21). Idiomatic expressions are also referred to as special expressions, structural or compound expressions, fixed expressions, or traditional phrases (Husam Al-Din, 1985). Abu Saad (1987: 5) follows the use of the term 'idiomatic phrase' by Al-Qassimi (1979) and Husam Al-Din (1985) defining this as:

> *A phrase which exceeds its denotational meaning and appears in language of surface structure to other rhetorical conventional meanings, identified by figurative or metonymic expressions.*

Despite the variation of terms used by researchers, most terminology relating to the concept of idiom views this as being similar to the general meaning of a word or series of words which are composed of a semantic unit whose meaning cannot be extracted or deducted from its component words. However, the definition which is used in this research to explain the meaning of 'idiomatic expression' is that proposed by Husam Al-Din, namely:

> *A pattern of expression specific to a particular language, featuring fixedness and consisting of one word or more which is converted from literal meaning to another different meaning conventionalised by language speakers* (1985: 34).

One reason for choosing this rather than other definitions is Husam Al-Din's use of the phrase 'a pattern of expression' which reflects what other linguists have suggested: that the idiomatic expression can be a phrase or a part of sentence. His definition also includes the most important features or characteristics of idiomatic expressions, highlighting that idioms are language specific, and that their features

are fixed and conventional. These characteristics are discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.5 Characteristics of Idiomatic Expressions

This section describes the properties and features of idioms, focusing on their structural and semantic aspects.

2.5.1 Structural Features

Idiomatic expressions are fixed or constant in terms of their features and order, which makes them different from normal expressions (Abdou, 2011: 20). Therefore, they cannot be changed or modified by grammatical means (Katz and Postal, 1963; Husam Al-Din, 1985: 125). However, this fixedness does not mean total immobility as in the case of proverbs, but that this element is restricted in expression.

Normally, there is inseparability between at least two elements in these expressions, meaning that they cannot be changed or substituted by other components or elements (Al-Hannash, 1991: 31-32). Thus, in the following example احمرّ وجههُ (*His face went red* i.e. *He blushed due to self-consciousness or embarrassment*) the juxtaposition is between the verb احمرّ and the subject وجهه. Other types of collocations include those between verb and object, between subject and predicate, and between prepositions and their object. Juxtapositions may occur between more than two elements, such as the collocation between verb, subject and object found in this example:وضعت الحرب أوزارها (literally, *The war takes off its skirts* i.e. *War is over*). These collocated lexical items are examples of what are referred to as fixed expressions in which the restricted elements cannot be changed or replaced. Thus, in the above mentioned idiomatic expression, the word (noun) أوزار (*skirts* i.e. clothes) cannot be replaced by أثقال (*weights*). Similarly, in the following idiom, the verb تبرق cannot be replaced by تلمع or another verb: تبرق أسارير وجهه (literally, *His face is lit up*, i.e. *He is cheerful*). The preposition في in the expression أُسقط في يده (*He cannot help himself because he is in a mess*) cannot be substituted by any other preposition. Moreover, if there are any changes, they will only appear in a limited number of syntactic frames or constructions (Nunberg *et al.*, 1994: 492).

As noted above, this rule or principle does not imply total immobility; rather, that a degree of flexibility is permitted in certain circumstances, allowing for the

substitution of particular elements within idiomatic expressions (Al-Anbar, 2001: 2). Fraser (1970: 39-41) notes that idioms present different levels of frozenness, i.e. some are completely frozen requiring a fixed structure while others are amenable to transformational operations. Some of the more limited changes may involve eliminating an element from an idiom or replacing one element with another. Thus, one noun or verb may be substituted by another noun or verb. For example, in the idiomatic expression أضل من بعيره (literally, *He is more misled than his camel* i.e. *He lost his thread)* بعيره (*his camel*) can be substituted by certain other lexical items e.g. جمله (*he-camel*) or ناقته (*she-camel*). Likewise, in the idiomatic expression ارتدوا على أعقابهم (*They did not achieve their goal*) the verb ارتد can be replaced by other synonymous verbs e.g. رجع (*to come back*) or انقلب (*to turn over*) (Al-Anbar, 2001: 4-5).

Prepositions, however, are unlike verbs because they are functional words which may have more than one meaning. However, when used in a specific context, a preposition can have only one meaning. Thus, when a preposition is used within the structure of an idiomatic expression, it has a specific contextual meaning and consequently, does not have the same flexibility for substitution as nouns or verbs (Al-Anbar, 2001: 6).

To summarise, in terms of frozenness, there are two types of idiomatic expressions. The first, be it a phrase, sentence or clause, is completely fixed, and usually self-contained, e.g. أصابع الاتهام (*fingers of suspicion*). The second type of idioms can be subjected to changes and will allow transformation of certain of their elements as in يمسك/ أمسك العصا من المنتصف/ الوسط (*to grasp the stick by the middle* i.e. *to take a moderate stance*).

In terms of the word order within idiomatic expressions, this corresponds to the relation imposed by a particular language structure system, for example that between verb and subject. Consider the following idiomatic expressions. In the first, the order is Verb then Subject: رق عظمه (literally, *His bone becomes thin* i.e. *He is growing old*) and in the second, Verb then Auxiliary Subject: رفع عنه القلم (literally, *The pen has been lifted off him* i.e. *He was excused on the grounds of diminished responsibility*). This order remains constant in idiomatic expressions, whereas the order of some elements may change in nominal structures. Thus, the idiom محمد قلبه

متعلق بطلب العلم (literally, *Mohammed's heart hangs next to knowledge seeking*, i.e. *Mohammed is keen on learning*) can also be expressed as محمد متعلق قلبه بطلب العلم. Other elements which may change in the structure of idioms include the relation between predicate and statement, or that between subject and object (Al-Anbar, 2001; Husam Al-Din; 1985; Nunberg *et al.*, 1994).

Verbs used in idiomatic expressions should correspond in terms of person, number and gender (Al-Anbar, 2001:7; Al-Hannash, 1991). For example, the singular expressions موقف لا يحسد عليه (literally, *He is in a situation which nobody would envy*, i.e. *He is in dilemma*) and ارتد على عقبيه (*He did not achieve his goal*) can also be expressed in the plural موقف لا يحسدون عليه *(They are in a situation which nobody would envy*) or ارتدوا على أعقابهم (*They did not achieve their goal*).

Idiomatic expressions can also be involved in some syntactic processes. In other words, idioms can be subject to transformation processes (Fraser, 1970: 23; Nunberg *et al.*, 1994: 509-510), for example some elements of idioms can be deleted whilst maintaining their meaning. This process can include the deletion of nouns, adjectives, or prepositions. Al-Hannash (1991:7) claims that while the deletion of non-essential adjectives occurs frequently, it is impossible to delete any component of a nominal compound in an idiom due to the compulsory distribution between the verb and the noun. The same applies to verbal compounds. He attributes the reason for this to the metaphorical level of idioms which controls their idiomatic features. In addition, this feature has to remain at the same level of order and morphology to signify or indicate this metaphorical level (Al-Hannash, 1991: 7-9).

Moreover, since idiomatic expressions are liable to certain transformation processes, inverted construction and grammatical compliance, Al-Hannash argues that no idiom is entirely fixed because they all contain at least one free element which can be substituted by other linguistic elements in the same category. He attributes the retention of this normal distribution element to the maintenance of the relation between this expression and the normal system of language; without such links, an idiom would lose any connection with the general linguistic system (Al-Hannash, 1991: 36).

However, unlike Al-Hannash, Al-Anbar (2001: 11) argues that some fixed idioms do exist, since they contain an element which cannot be subtituted. As an example of an idiom which does not contain any free elements, she cites وضعت الحرب أوزارها (*War is over*). Al-Anbar (2001: 11) also questions Al-Hannash's insistence on the need to retain the free (i.e. replaceable) element on the grounds this maintains the relation between an idiom and the general linguistic system. Al-Anbar states that some proverbs and adages are examples of fixed structures that are still able to retain their relation with the general linguistic system.

2.5.2 Semantic Features

The idiomatic expression is a semantic unit or phrase which cannot be understood, derived, composed or predicted from the meaning of individual words or idiomatic expression components (Al-Hannash, 1991: 32-39; Cacciari and Tabossi, 1988: 668; Cain *et al.*, 2009: 208; Huber-Okrainec *et al.*, 2005: 349 ; Keysar and Bly, 1999: 1560; Makkai, 1972:23; Nunberg *et al.*,1994: 496). Consequently, idiomatic expressions are not linked to their lexical aspect. Furthermore, there is no denotational meaning in idioms. Rather, they are recognized merely through their pragmatic significance or use (Al-Hannash, 1991: 36).

The significance of an idiomatic expression lies exclusively in its distant figurative or metaphorical meaning, which cannot be close to the real meaning. Linguistic and situational context is helpful in identifying literal or figurative meaning (Al-Anbar, 2001: 13; Nunberg *et al.*, 1994: 496). Both Gibbs *et al.* (1997: 141-142) and Ortony *et al*. (1978: 465) refer to the importance of the concept of metaphor in idiomatic expression and the relationship between the interpretation of meaning and metaphorical meaning. Kövecses and Szabó (1996: 326-331) state that the figurative meaning of idiomatic expression includes the use of metonymy and metaphor.

As an idiomatic expression is a single semantic unit or phrase, it is subject to semantic relationships, including synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy which deal with the idiomatic expression as a lexical item (Al-Anbar, 2001: 12).

Idiomatic expressions are divided into those with an explicit meaning, e.g. "to kick the bucket" and those with an implicit meaning, e.g. "carrying coals to Newcastle" (Cacciari and Glucksberg, 1995: 43). Al-Anbar (2001: 12-13) argues that the level

of ambiguity in idiomatic expressions varies, the most ambiguous ones being those which are closely connected to a specific environment and culture. Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995: 43) cite the example of “carrying coals to Newcastle” as one of the many idioms that cannot be understood without having a good knowledge of the culture and environment that lies behind its use. However, Ortony *et al.* (1978: 465-460), and Titone and Connine (1999: 1656-1661) claim that there are two classes of idioms, the first comprising those whose meaning has a relationship with the component lexical items (known as compositional), and the second being those whose meaning has no relation with their components (non-compositional).

Bin Faraj (1983: 7) states that the meaning of idiomatic expressions in MSA is affected by the diversity of local and regional dialects within the language.

Idiomatic expressions cannot be translated from one language into another literally, using word-for-word translation, the reason being that they do not have an equivalent in literal or formal terms. Thus, when translating idiomatic expressions, attention must be paid to their metaphorical nature and the cultural environment in which the expression is used (Al-Hamzawi, 2000; Al-Qassimi, 1979; Husam Al-Din, 1985; Davies, 1982: 68).

Idiomatic expressions are also marked by concision in meaning, and may consist of just one or two words. MSA examples, cited by Al-Hamzawi (2000) include:

سحابة صيف	(literally, *summer cloud* i.e. *a temporary occurrence*
ابن السبيل	*a passer-by in need of assistance)*
نعجة	(literally, *a goat or ewe* i.e. someone who is weak and does not understand)

Literal translation of certain idiomatic expressions may convey their metaphorical meaning, particularly when the meaning in the target language is close to that of an interpreted idiom. For example, if the idiom بين فكي الأسد is translated word-for-word as between the two jaws of the lion i.e. *He has become a prey*, the listener or reader may understand that someone is surrounded by danger, without any metaphorical or figurative interpretation.

2.6 Sources of Idiomatic Expressions

New idioms in MSA may be coined daily and they may have their origins in various sources. Unsurprisingly, many MSA idiomatic expressions have their origins in the Holy Qur'an, for instance, the phrase "*lay down the hearing*", which means *to listen to something*. Both Domyati (2009) and Dawood (2003: 12) note that this idiom has its origin in the Quranic verse:

{إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ}.

Indeed in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart or who listens while he is present [in mind]. (Qaf 37)

A second key source of idioms is Al-Ḥadīṯh Al-sharīf, as narrated by the Prophet Mohammad. Examples which have their origins in the Hadith include جناح بعوضة (*mosquito's wing*) used to refer to any trivial matter and رجل ذو الوجهين (*the man with two faces*) implying someone is a hypocrite.

Some idiomatic expressions are derived from poetry or classical Arabic sources (Domyati, 2009; Abdou, 2011: 18). Domyati (2009) notes, for example, that the idiomatic expression بنات العين (*daughters of the eye* i.e. tears, was used for the first time by a poet, and then after a considerable period of use became an idiom.

Other idioms can be traced to an utterance originally pronounced by a specific individual on a particular occasion as is the case with سبق السيف العذل (*too late to back off from something*). This phrase was first used by Al Harith ibn Dalim when he was told to pardon a man he had already executed (Domyati, 2009). This example also illustrates the potential overlap with the domain of proverbs, an issue that will be discussed shortly.

Idiomatic expressions can also be borrowed from other languages with numerous idioms having been transferred to MSA via translation or cross-cultural/intercultural transfer between languages. Two examples include, the first example: وضع النقط على الحروف (literally, *put dots on letters*) which is similar to the English expression *to dot the i's and cross the t's*, used when close attention must be paid to a task (Domyati, 2009), the second one: أذاب الثلج بينهما (*to break the ice)*, which used widely in English

and nowadays used in Arabic. Further examples are provided in Abdou (2011: 18) and Faied (2003: 904).

Expressions which originally arise in different Arabic dialects or from slang can also be transferred into MSA to be used as idiomatic expressions (Abdou, 2011: 18; Faied, 2003: 904), for example: حبة خشم (*a nose-to-nose greeting*).

Finally, some idiomatic expressions are borrowed from specialised linguistic fields and then enter into ordinary discourse. Examples include sport (الكارت الأحمر *red card*); science and medicine (غسل المخ *brainwashing*) and the military domain (ساعة الصفر *zero hour*) (Faied, 2003: 904).

2.7 Functions of Idiomatic Expressions

Fernando (1996, citing Halliday, 1985) classifies idioms in three groups according to their functions: (1) ideational, (2) interpersonal and (3) relational.

Ideational idioms, also known as 'the state and way of the world' idioms, communicate the content of the message, and provide a description of the nature of the message that they convey. This type of idiom is frequently used in informal speech or journalism, but rarely used in formal speech. Fernando (1996, citing Halliday, 1985) divides ideational idioms into those which describe: actions (*to spill the beans*); events (*a turning point*); situations (*to be in a pickle*); people and things (*a red herring*); attributes (*cut-and-dried*); evaluations (*A watched pot never boils*); and emotions (*green with envy*).

Interpersonal idioms can fulfil an interactive function by means of expressing greetings and farewells (*good morning*); directives (*let's face it*); eliciting opinions (*what do you think?);* agreements (*say no more*); and rejections (*come off it!*). Moreover, they may also have the function of characterizing the message. Interpersonal idioms can be used covertly, e.g. *believe (you) me* or overtly, e.g. *it's raining cats and dogs*.

Third, relational idiomatic expressions essentially perform a connective function, i.e. they bring both cohesion and coherence to the text. Examples of relational idioms include *in sum*, *on the other hand*, *for example*, *in addition*, and *at the same time*.

According to Domyati (2009), idiomatic expressions are used in MSA in preference to more literal language to perform a number of functions. First, idioms are often used to replace a literal word or expression for stylistic or rhetorical purposes, being used because they make the text richer, adding depth to the intended meaning and creating more of an impact in the mind of the intended audience. Second, people are sometimes afraid to use certain terms which are seen as being cultural taboos, especially those related to death and killing, and thus replace them with idiomatic expressions that convey the same idea. For example, direct mention of the word الموت (*death*) is usually avoided, replacing it instead by some idiomatic expression that conveys the same message such as قضى نحبه (*he spent his time*) or قضى قضاءه (*he spent his destiny*), both meaning he died. Third, in some cases, idiomatic expressions are used to show respect for and awareness of other people's feelings. Thus, a liar may be referred to as منغمس في عيبه (*dipped in his shame*), whilst the descriptions عريض الوساد (*his pillow is wide*) or عريض القفا (*the back of his head is wide*) are used to suggest that someone is stupid. Finally, idiomatic expressions are used when people experience embarrassment when talking about sex, body parts, and bodily functions e.g. the idiomatic expressions كشف قناعها (*he revealed her mask*) and فلان ذهب إلى الخلاء (*he went to the open*) are used as euphemisms for *he had sex with her* and *he went to the toilet* respectively.

2.8 Idiomatic Expressions and Other Linguistic Structures (Multiword Units)

The goal in this section is to clarify the difference between idiomatic expressions and other linguistic structures such as collocational or contextual expressions, proverbs, and metonymical structures. In order to achieve this objective, previous research by scholars concerning differences between these linguistic phenomena will be presented and discussed. This section will be divided into three sub-sections examining collocation, proverbs, and metonymy.

2.8.1 Idiomatic Expression vs. Collocation

As indicated in the previous discussion, MSA has an abundance of idiomatic expressions, the meaning of which cannot be determined simply by analyzing their components individually because they are based on either metaphor or metonymy

(Kövecses and Szabó, 1996: 326). In my opinion, this is why it has proved so difficult to distinguish idiomatic expressions from other linguistic phenomena such as proverbs, contextual expressions and commonly used linguistic structures which are mainly built on synecdoche. Thus, researchers such as Al-Anbar (2001) found close similarities between some proverbs and idiomatic expressions whilst Kövecses and Szabó (1996:327) claim that idiomatic expressions include the use of metaphors (*spill the beans*), metonymy (*throw up one's hands*), pairs of words (*cats and dogs*), sayings (*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*), and phrasal verbs (*come up*). It will be suggested later that those idiomatic expressions based on the use of metaphor or metonymy are different from those based on the use of collocations, proverbs, and the kind of common metonymy and metaphor which is used in everyday speech.

Jaeger (1999: 125-126) differentiates between idioms and figures of speech on a number of bases. First, the meaning of an idiom is immediately clear, whereas the meaning of a figure of speech can be hidden or obscure. Second, the meaning of an idiom is known to speakers beforehand but the meaning of a figure of speech needs an introduction and, thus, cannot serve as a means of instant communication. Third, as a means of communication idioms are available to all participants – speakers and hearers alike - and, consequently, they are accepted for use in everyday speech. However, figures of speech tend to be exclusive to the speaker. Fourth, synonyms are widespread among idioms, but there are no proper synonyms among figures of speech, although other figures may be used to express related ideas.

It is also worth noting that many idiomatic expressions are included in those books designed primarily to discuss proverbs. For instance, Al-Anbar (2001) discusses some commonly used expressions as though they were idiomatic expressions. Although these expressions are mainly based on synecdoche or metonymy, they should not be described as idiomatic expressions. Thus, the MSA idiomatic expression فوقع الإسلام في قلبي كل موقع (literally, *so my heart appealed to Islām*) is a commonly used expression that can be translated using the same lexical equivalents, it can be said that it has a metaphorical sense. Similarly, the expression فلم يرجع إلينا بشيء (*so he came back to us with nothing*) is a commonly used expression which only needs to be contextualised in order to clarify its meaning.

Oumar (2007) claims that idiomatic expressions are a type of collocational expression, because they are composed of juxtaposed and recurrent lexical items. He also believes that idiomatic expressions include proverbs; Prophetic wise-sayings, everyday expressions used on particular occasions, e.g. الحمد لله (*Thank God*), أدام الله عزك (*May God keep you in luxury*); greetings and compliments, e.g. السلام عليكم (*Peace be upon you*), دمتم بخير (*May God preserve you*); commonly-used expressions which make reference to sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, and social tribes, e.g. ابن ارض (literally, *the son of earth*, i.e. *a stranger*) and اخو الشر أي الخير (*brother of an evil that means welfare*). He also considers dictionary expressions to be collocational ones, e.g. (ذهبوا شذر مذر) (*spread far and wide*).

It should be noted that a number of scholars who have distinguished idiomatic expressions from other structures have expressed different views to Oumar's (2007) claim that idiomatic expressions should be viewed as a type of collocation. Husam Al-Din (1985:34) and Nicolas (1995:234-235) draw a distinction between idiomatic expressions and collocations or contextual expressions. Nunberg *et al.* (1994: 492) distinguish between idiomatic expressions and other structures such as fixed phrases, collocations, clichés, saying, proverbs and allusions. To discuss Oumar's claim, let us consider his definition of collocations (2007: 29):

> *These are linguistic elements that communicate their meaning by using two or more successive as well as juxtaposed linguistic components. These components are mixed and recurrent in a grammatical form used and known in language.*

It is argued here that idiomatic expressions are sometimes confused with collocations because the components of certain idiomatic expressions are collocated in all contexts and usages. However, this is not the case for all idiomatic expressions. As later analysis will show, sometimes the linguistic elements in particular idiomatic expressions can be changed, meaning there is no collocation. Furthermore, some idiomatic expressions do not have any two-word collocations or consist of a single word. In addition, many collocations do not have any idiomatic

meaning and communicate only one explicit meaning, e.g. مكة المكرمة (a reference to the city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia), and صديق حميم (*a close friend*).

Faied (2003) considers collocations to be contextual expressions, defining them as a group of words with a determinate meaning, which tend to be related to each other because of recurrence. Collocations also conform to particular linguistic rules. She views idiomatic expressions as a sub-group of collocations/contextual expressions, defining them as a fixed group of words which communicate a specific meaning that cannot be determined by considering the meaning of each lexical unit separately. Based on Faied's claim (2003), it can be seen that this grouping of words which are structurally juxtaposed as well as semantically related is a semantically homogenous structure that can be referred to as collocations. The lexical components of these collocations maintain their meanings, so the meaning of the collocation is related to the sum of the meanings of its component words (see also Abdul-Raof, 2001:28-29).

Abdul-Raof (2001: 29) notes that certain verbs collocate with nouns and certain adjectives collocate with nouns, for instance in MSA the verb نبح (*to bark*) can only collocate with كلب (*dog*), whilst فتَّاك (*lethal*) collocates with either سلاح (*weapon*) or مرض (*disease*). Two further adjective/noun examples cited by Faied (2003) are التراب الوطني (*national territory*) and القمر الصناعي (*satellite*). This is likely to be the essential difference between collocations and idiomatic expressions.

Al-Qassimi (1979: 28) and Al-Hamzawi (2000: 31) refer to collocations as 'contextual expressions'. These contextual expressions are identified by common usage of two words or more in an inseparable use; this collocation is not always obligatory and does not constitute a complete linguistic unit. Furthermore, it can be interpreted through a contextual view of meaning. However, sometimes contextual expressions may consist of only one word e.g.القدس (*Jerusalem*) can be used without الشريف. Moreover, a contextual expression cannot be substituted by one word and is liable to experience structural change (Al-Qassimi, 1979; Al-Hamzawi, 2000); this is what distinguishes collocations/contextual expressions from idioms.

Faied (2003: 897) defines an idiomatic expression as a fixed group of words communicating a specific meaning that cannot be deduced from the sum of its component words e.g. هبت ريحهُ (*he was fortunate* i.e. *he succeeded*) and نضب ماء وجهه (literally, *the water of his face has run out*, i.e. *he was not ashamed of himself*). An idiomatic expression can sometimes undergo changes and can have more than one meaning, e.g. اخبط/ اضرب دماغك/ رأسك في الحائط (literally, *Hit your head/brain against the wall*, i.e. *Do whatever you like and I will not care*). Finally, an idiomatic expression can take different grammatical forms.

However, a collocation or contextual expression can be understood by considering its linguistic context, and cannot be substituted by a single word, although one of its elements may be used singly in a different context (Al-Hamzawi, 2000: 32).

Jaeger (1999: 44) believes that idioms are collocations which are shorter than a sentence but at least two words long, noting, however, that examples consisting of compound or other kinds of single words, e.g. *anchor-man, bombshell*, and *dog-eared*, may challenge this definition.

Other studies on English language suggest that collocations or frozen collocations are a type of idiom (Makkai, 1972; Kövecses and Szabó, 1996: 327). Fraser (1970: 22), however, considers that familiar collocations of the type *here and there*, *bacon and eggs* cannot be analysed as idioms due to the fact that the interpretation of the collocation's meaning is determined from the exact meaning of its components. Nicolas (1995: 234-235) agrees that it is possible to distinguish between idioms and collocations on the grounds that the former have no compositional relation to their meaning and a free composition sense, whereas the latter consist of two words and they underlie the free combinations but have a special feature which is non-free meaning as it combines with structure (see also Nunberg *et al*., 1994: 492).

2.8.2 Idiomatic Expressions and Proverbs

A review of the literature reveals that scholars have always experienced considerable difficulty in differentiating between proverbs and idiomatic expressions

due to the fact that they share a number of common features. In this section, then, an effort is made to determine the difference between these two linguistic phenomena by establishing their respective distinguishing features.

According to Jaeger (1999), proverbs are a form of "wisdom" literature. He also considers that proverbial expressions usually relate to customs, legal and ethical maxims, superstitions, weather, medical lore, and other categories of conventional wisdom. Jaeger believes that proverbs are moralising in tone in that they lay down rules of behaviour, set standards of good and evil, and are intended to teach moral lessons. In his view, this is the key element which distinguishes proverbs from idioms (Jaeger 1999: 37).

Yakub (1995: 21) defines the proverb as:

> *A concise expression loved by people both as a form and as a meaning; it is widely used, having been passed down through the generations without any change, and used frequently on similar occasions although its origin is unknown.*

Al-Hamzawi (2000: 4) describes proverbs as "fixed, concise and common expressions, used metaphorically, which are true in meaning, and mainly based on the use of similes". He identifies the following distinctive aspects of the proverb:

- It is one type of fixed expression, being fixed in form.
- It can be used in different contexts and in its relationship to these contexts, it adheres to specific semantic rules.
- It is both rhetorical and expressive.

Oumar (2007: 23-27) notes the following differences between idiomatic expressions and proverbs:

- The idiomatic expression is an aspect as well as a component of discourse and context, whereas the proverb is used as a situational expression or carries a particular implication when used in a certain context.

- In terms of the form and collocation of their components, the idiomatic expression has a relative inflection in comparison with the proverb in which there is no inflection, whether of gender, number or grammatical structure.
- In terms of meaning, that of the idiomatic expression is determined by examining the context, whereas with proverbs there is a story that explains this meaning.

Al-Hamzawi's (2000: 6-10) list of distinguishing features of the proverb, is as follows:

- Conciseness is an essential aspect of proverbs, resulting from the fact that the proverb merely refers to an implied meaning, expressing both a simple and a complex meaning.
- Since proverbs are a product of everyday experience they are an accurate reflection of reality and are intended to convey a truth.
- Al-Hamzawi (2000: 3 citing Al-Zamakhshari) clarified that: المثل في أصل كلامهم بمعنى المثل والنظير (*The proverb is originally an indication of both similarity and identity*). The MSA root (م ث ل) [*mathal*] is an indication of similarity. However, Al-Hamzawi (2000: 6) argues that whilst similarity is an aspect of numerous proverbs, in many cases the meanings which are expressed are difficult to grasp. Thus, concrete examples or real events are communicated in an alternative fashion. Al-Hamzawi cites as an example the MSA proverb قبل الرماء تملأ الكنائن (literally, *Before shooting, the bags are filled* i.e. *Forewarned is forearmed*). This is an example of a concrete image derived from the Arab environment which in recurrent usage is both clear and expressive (2000: 7).
- Proverbial style is usually highly metonymical and implicational. The referent is often covert, being expressed by means of other lexical items used in the proverb itself. Thus proverbs say one thing, when in reality they mean something else (Ateeq, 1980). In this context, implication means using puns to hide one meaning and reveal another (Al-Hamzawi, 2000: 7-8). Al-Hamzawi (2000: 8) illustrates this point by quoting a proverb in which lexical items are not used explicitly and the meaning is

thus implied: بلغ السيل الزبى (literally, *The torrent reaches the surf* i.e. *The problem is aggravated*).[1] Meaning is thus communicated metaphorically, meaning that proverbs acquire expressively aesthetic implications.

- Since proverbs are clear, concise, rhetorical and convey a truth, they tend to be widely used (Al-Hamzawi, 2000: 8).
- Proverbs remain fixed in both form and meaning, and sometimes break grammatical rules because they have been transmitted orally and are written as originally spoken. Al-Hamzawi (2000:9) cites as an example الصيف ضيعتِ اللبن (literally, *lost summer yogurt* i.e. *loss of a golden opportunity* or *failure to appreciate the value of something until it is gone*). This proverb is used with the masculine, the feminine, and the plural although the proverb uses the feminine form because it was originally addressed to a woman (Al-Hamzawi, 2000:9; Al-Anbar, 2001:14).

2.8.3 Similarities/Differences between Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions

Since both idiomatic expressions and proverbs originate from specific linguistic and cultural situations, their meaning is inextricably linked with aspects of that language and culture. Consequently, as linguistic structures, they cannot be easily understood by those outside of the environment and culture to which the idioms and proverbs relate. Sometimes knowing the context of their use is essential to understanding their true meaning.

The fact that idiomatic expressions and proverbs are often studied as one semantic unit makes it difficult to distinguish clearly between them. Unlike ordinary phrases and structures, both idiomatic expressions and proverbs are fixed, but to differing degrees. Proverbs are more fixed, having a non-changing form which contradicts the structural system of language (Al-Hamzawi, 2000; Al-Anbar, 2001). In the case of idiomatic expressions, however, their frozenness is variable, and they are subject to

[1] For further discussion of metonymy, see Qatamish (1988: 269).

transformational grammar, meaning that their structure changes when the syntactic situation requires this (Fraser, 1970).

Al-Qassimi (1979: 31) observes that both proverbs and idiomatic expressions are composed of few words. Proverbs typically communicate a wisdom that expresses a general or eternal truth; idiomatic expressions do not share this characteristic. Al-Hamzawi (2000), however, argues that there are different kinds of proverbs and that not all of them are intended to convey wisdom. He also mentions that some types of idiomatic expression reflect the surrounding environment and are recurrently used on specific occasions and at particular events.

According to Al-Hannash (1991: 36), another feature that distinguishes proverbs from idiomatic expressions is the specificity of reference found in the latter in contrast with the generality of the former. Consider the MSA proverb كل الطرق تؤدي إلى روما (*All roads lead to Rome*). Despite the reference to the city of Rome, the proverb is not linked to a specific place but is used to express the general idea that there are many different ways to achieve a goal or to deal with a problem. By way of contrast, idiomatic expressions require a clear linguistic reference and a specific discourse context in order to perform their communicative function.

Furthermore, Al-Hannash (1991: 36) argues that proverbs are always linked to a historical occasion reflecting a specific event, i.e. each proverb has its own story, which is not the case for idiomatic expressions. Reflecting on this point, Al-Anbar (2001: 15) cites a problematic example رجع بخفي حنين (*His efforts came to naught*) and considers whether this should be categorized as a proverb or an idiomatic expression. For this expression requires a specific linguistic reference, like an idiomatic expression, but at the same time it is related to a specific event, like a proverb. Thus, Al-Anbar argues that idiomatic expressions require a doer or agent that can be interpreted from the context. This suggests the need for a demarcation line between what is currently considered to be proverbial, what was proverbial and was once commonly used as an idiomatic expression, and those expressions which are mainly based on the use of synecdoche or metonymy and whose meaning has become conventional, namely the idiomatic expression.

Al-Qassimi (1979: 31), Al-Hannash (1991: 36-37), and Al-Anbar (2001: 15) all distinguish between proverbs and idiomatic expressions by claiming that whilst the former always consist of a complete sentence, this is rare in the case of idiomatic expressions, which often form part of a sentence complemented by the text, involving additional explanatory expressions and semi-sentences. Thus, consider the MSA proverb إن غدا لناظره قريب (literally, *tomorrow is near to whoever waits* i.e. *wait and see*) which can be uttered alone to comment on a piece of news or particular event. However, in the case of the idiomatic expression طار عقله من هول المنظر (literally, *his brain flies from the extreme sight*, i.e. *he was extremely surprised*), it is clear that the phrase طار عقله is related to a tacit doer, forming part of a whole sentence.

Al-Qassimi (1979: 31) and Husam Al-Din (1985) claim that proverbs can be translated by understanding their lexical items. They discuss the MSA proverb عصفور في اليد خير من عشرة على الشجرة (*A bird in the hand is better than ten on the tree*) and compare this with the equivalent proverb in English: *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*. This type of translation is not possible with idiomatic expressions due to their metonymical nature, as previously indicated.

In addition, Al-Qassimi (1979: 18) believes that although it is sometimes necessary to trace a proverb's origin in order to interpret it correctly, its meaning can generally be determined from recognizing its lexical components. He cites the proverb ما يوم حليمة بسر (literally, *The day of Ḥalīmah is not a secret*) as an example in which the meaning of the constituent elements does not matter. Idiomatic expressions, in contrast, cannot be understood by recognizing their component elements, even if they are semantically clear, e.g. يكمل نصف دينه (*to complete half of one's religion*) meaning *to get married*.

2.8.4 Idiomatic Expressions and Metonymy

The metaphorical nature of idiomatic expressions was mentioned previously. It is important to note here that idiomatic expression is often based on the use of metonymy (figurative meaning) and that these two linguistic phenomena share two key features. Firstly, they both communicate a meaning which is different to that of the meaning of their component elements. Secondly, they both adhere to the rule of substitution, i.e. neither a metonym nor an idiomatic expression can be substituted by the use of a single word (Al-Anbar, 2001: 16).

However, as Al-Qassimi (1979: 18) notes there are also differences between idiomatic expressions and metonymy. Firstly, a metonym may refer to both a close and a remote meaning, e.g. the phrase زيد كثير الرماد (*Zayd has a lot of ash*) may be understood literally or figuratively i.e. that the person in question produces a lot of ash because he is a generous man who prepares large quantities of cooked food for his guests. However, in the case of an idiomatic expression, it is not possible to refer to the literal meaning, even if that possibility is available, e.g. أصابه في مقتل (*to find someone's weak point*).

The second difference is that metonymy is closely related to the creativity of the writer, and it is not conventional by nature, thus a writer can create a new metonym but cannot invent a new idiomatic expression. Even if the origin of an idiomatic expression was a metonym, it takes a long time for an idiomatic expression to become widely used and easily recognized. Therefore, the number of metonyms in language is infinite, whereas the quantity of idiomatic expressions can be counted.

2.9 Metaphor, Metonymy and their Relationship to Idiomatic Expression

The previous section outlined the similarities and differences between metonymy and idiomatic expressions. This section will shed light on the notion that metonymy and metaphor are two types of idiomatic expressions upon which the semantic property of the expression is based.

Kövecses and Szabó (1996: 326) argue that most idiomatic expressions are based on the notions of metaphor and metonymy. In other words, as is the case with metonymy and metaphor, idiomatic expression involves the use of some words or a phrase to produce a meaning which is different from the literal meaning of that word or phrase. This means idiomatic expression is a type of metaphorical usage of language.

2.9.1 Idiomatic Expressions and Metaphor (Allegory)

According to Al-Jurjani (1994), metaphor is one of the types of allegory المجاز [al-Majaz] which refers to any word that is used implicitly. Elsewhere, in Al-Jurjani's (n.d.: 304) work 'أسرار البلاغة' (*Secrets of Rhetoric*) he defines allegory as "any word used differently from the way it is normally used". Abdul-Raof (2006: 209-211) defines allegory as a word being transferred from its denotative meaning to an allegorical meaning, having some evidence that prevents interpreting the real meaning of the word.

Allegory is divided into two types. The first is mental or cognitive allegory, which is used as an attribution, i.e. attributing the verb or what is in its position to some other lexical item which is not normally used in that position e.g. أنبت المطر العشب (literally, *the rain planted the grass*) because it is God who gives us the grass, not the rain (Ateeq, 1980: 337; Al-Jurjani, n.d: 304, Abdul-Raof, 2006: 212-213). The second type of allegory is linguistic allegory, in which words are used with different, though related, meanings from those for which they would normally be used, e.g. employing *lion* to mean *man*, or *hand* to mean *favour*. Allegory can, in turn, be sub-divided into:

1. Metaphor: This is a linguistic allegory in which the relationship between the real meaning and the metaphorical one is a relation of similarity.
2. Synecdoche المجاز المرسل (*hypallage*): This is the type of metaphor in which the relationship between the real meaning and the metaphorical

one is a relation of difference (cf. Ateeq, n.d. and Abdul-Raof, 2006: 219).

Thus, it can be claimed that metaphor is a linguistic synecdoche (allegory) which is based on similarity between two things in the presence of evidence which prevents interpreting the real meaning, whether this evidence is verbal or contextual.

One of the types of idiomatic expression is semantically based on using metaphor which, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 104), is not only an aspect of language but a part of cognition and human knowledge as well. This section examines the relationship between the primary meaning (also known as literal meaning) and the interpretation of the whole expression i.e. the idiomatic expression as seen when interpreting the expression using the criterion of similarity, an example being أفل نجم الشيء (*The glory or fame of somebody/something came to an end*).[2] In this idiomatic expression, meaning is based on the criterion of similarity, i.e. the similarity between the end of the glory or fame of somebody or something and the disappearance of a star. Another example is: شمَّرت الحرب عن ساقها (literally, W*ar uncovers its leg*, i.e. *The war escalated*). In this example, too, the meaning is based on the similarity between the escalation of conflict and the uncovering of the leg which implicitly refers to the stepping up of tension and conflict inside the human being. Other examples include: فلان يلعب بالنار *(somebody is playing with fire*), أصابع الاتهام (*fingers of suspicion*) and امسك العصا من المنتصف (*to grasp the stick by the middle*).

Kövecses and Szabó (1996: 327) point out that idiomatic expression includes the use of metaphor, citing as an example the English expression *to spill the beans.* Davies (1982: 80) and Gibbs *et al.* (1997: 141) also refer to the crucial role played by metaphor in using idiomatic expressions. Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995: 45) claim that consensus among people regarding the mental image of idiomatic expressions is a result of a metaphorical notion. Ortony *et al.* (1978: 466) argue that analysis of the

[2] Cf A Latin phrase is usually employed in English in this case: *Sic transit gloria mundi* (Thus passes the glory of the world).

notion of metaphor is a three–stage process involving: (1) the literal meaning of the utterance, (2) the meaning which appears as contradictory to the context and (3) if there is a disagreement between this literal meaning and the context, a re-interpretation takes place allowing the metaphorical meaning to appear. This is valid for the idiomatic expression used metaphorically.

Overall, metaphorical usage is meant to be allegory because an idiomatic expression does not convey any other meaning rather than the metaphorical (figurative) one.

2.9.2 Idiomatic Expressions and Metonymy

Metonymy is an antonym of the explicit meaning and can be defined as saying one thing but meaning something else. For rhetoricians, it is a word that is used to convey another meaning which is collocated with the license of using the real meaning too (Ateeq, n.d.). Abdul-Raof (2006: 233) defines metonymy as the word that "signifies the allusion to someone or something without specially referring to his or her or its identity". According to Abdou (2011: 79), the literal as well as non-literal reading of metonymy stands in a relationship of contiguity rather than similarity. Bredin (1984: 45) defines metonymy as "the transfer of the name of a thing to something else that is closely associated with it, such as cause and effect, container and contained, possessor and possessed". Abdul-Raof (2006: 233) explains that the idiomatic expression زيد كثير الرماد (*Zayd has a lot of ash*) includes an example of metonymy referring to the idea that Zayd is generous since the accumulation of ash is the result of burning large quantities of wood on the fires used to cook the food with which he feeds his frequent guests.

Idiomatic expressions based on the use of metonymy take many forms. Idiomatic expression is mainly metonymy with a certain meaning. It has previously been established that idiomatic expressions have a meaning which is different from their literal meaning. That intended meaning is based on using metaphor or metonymy. In my opinion, these two usages are in reality just one, i.e. allegory (figurative) because this meaning has gone beyond the limits of the meaning of the constituent parts to

the meaning which is communicated and interpreted, whether the structure relies on the use of metaphor or metonymy. Consider the following examples of idiomatic expressions that depend on metonymy:

1. تجمد الدم في عروقه (literally, *The blood freezes in his veins*, i.e. *He was very scared*) as a metonym of being very scared (Abdou, 2009).
2. زلَّت قدمه (literally, *His foot slipped*, i.e. *He made a mistake*)
3. أم الدنيا (literally, *The mother of the world*, i.e. *Egypt*)

2.10 Literal and Metaphorical (Figurative) Meaning of Idiomatic Expressions

Language may be used directly or figuratively to convey a certain meaning or achieve communication between people. The motivation or situation affects the kind of communicative language, whether explicitly or implicitly. Figurative language plays a central role in discourse and knowledge structure. Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995: 43) claim that the figurative functions of language facilitate the process of communication and the transfer from abstract to concrete meaning. However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) discuss the importance of using figurative language to convey a concrete meaning rather than an abstract one.

Idiomatic expression is one of the linguistic units which is able to convey both metaphorical (figurative) and literal meaning. Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995) argue that the semantic structure of most idiomatic expressions is formed through concrete literal verbs leading to a mental (symbolic) conclusion. In other words, the literal structure of the expression leads to inferring its metaphorical or figurative meaning. They provide two examples by way of illustration.

In the first expression, "*carrying coals to Newcastle*", the literal meaning does not refer to the supposed one. Since this city used to produce large quantities of coal for export, why would coal from elsewhere be taken to a place that produces it? Hence, this is an example of an action which is unnecessary, that is, these two levels of the

literal meaning and the one understood refer to each other. They are explained by interpreting the cultural environment and the conventional symbols used by speakers. This example also demonstrates that cultural allusion plays an important role in interpreting language in general and idiomatic expressions in particular.

In the second example, "*to spill the beans*", the relationship between the literal meaning and the implicit one appears conventional. That is to say, there is a similarity in English between the verbs '*spill*' and '*reveal*', and the nouns '*beans*' and 'secret' which allow the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression to be understood.

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995: 43) claim that idiomatic expressions appear to have linguistic structures although linguists and psychologists argue that idiomatic expressions do not have a syntactic structure, implying that the literal meaning of words or phrases is not available.

Context plays a central role in determining the intended meaning of idiomatic expressions and discouraging use of their other literal meaning (Cain *et al.*, 2009: 280; Ortony *et al.*, 1978: 4-5), and this is the separation between the literal and metaphorical meaning of the idiomatic expression. However, if the idiomatic expression is taken out of context and viewed simply as a phrase or sentence, some idiomatic expressions can be interpreted literally in addition to their metaphorical interpretation. Ortony *et al.* (1978: 4-5), Gibbs (1989), Titone and Connine (1999), Cain *et al.* (2009: 280), and Espinal and Mateu (2010) all claim that there are two ways in which the meaning of idiomatic expressions can be structured. The first is the 'non-compositional approach' in which the idiomatic expression is treated as a long word and there is no relationship between the figurative/metaphorical meaning and the literal interpretation. In other words, there is no relation between the constituent parts of the idiomatic expression and its meaning. For instance, in the idiomatic expression "*to kick the bucket*" meaning '*to die*', the constituent parts do not play any role in forming the symbolic meaning of the expression. The second way is the 'compositional approach' in which the constituent parts semantically

participate in interpreting and understanding the metaphorical meaning as in the idiomatic expression *spill the beans* discussed above.

Idioms were characterised as non-compositional by Weinreich, 1969, and Katz and Postal, 1964; this indicates that individual words in a phrase do not contribute to the figurative meaning when those words are put together in an idiomatic phrase (cited in Grant and Bauer, 2004). However, Nunberg *et al.* (1994) conducted a linguistic analysis demonstrating that idioms are compositional. In support of this claim and based on how analyzable or decomposable idioms are, Gibbs and Nayak (1989) proposed a model consisting of three different types of idioms, namely (1) normally decomposable, (2) abnormally decomposable, and (3) non-decomposable. A normally decomposable idiom (or semi-idiom) indicates that there is a relationship between the surface structure of the idiom and its figurative meanings (e.g. *lose your temper*). The literal meaning of the words is sufficient to understand their idiomatic meaning.

Abnormally decomposable idioms (also known as figurative, non-compositional, or logically interpretable idioms) require more analysis in order to make sense of them as the link between the literal and figurative meanings of the idiom is more complicated (e.g. *flip your lid*). The term non-decomposable (also referred to as pure, non-compositional, or semantically opaque idiom) refers to the idioms whose literal meaning is not related to their figurative meaning (e.g. *to kick the bucket*), and their occurrence is attributed to a historical or cultural usage (Grant and Bauer, 2004).

Other attempts have been made to categorize idiomatic expressions. First, Fernando (1996) classifies idioms into three groups: pure idioms, e.g. *kick the bucket*; semi-literal idioms, e.g. *to use something as a stepping stone*, and literal idioms. Makkai (1972) classifies idioms into decoding and encoding idioms, further dividing the former category into lexemic and sememic idioms. Grant (2007) categorizes idioms into core and figurative idioms (see Tran, 2012).

In the view of Gibbs (1989: 576), understanding the meaning of an idiomatic expression in the 'non-compositional' way is quicker than in the case of the 'compositional' approach. Thus, it is easy to perceive the meaning of the idiomatic expression "*to kick the bucket*" mentally because the semantic property of the term can only be interpreted in one way as the constituent parts may not give a logical literal meaning. Gibbs (1989) claims that phrasal idioms seem to be non-compositional because their figurative meaning cannot be determined from the meaning of their constituent parts. These two views seem to be based on the assumption that the semantic relationship between the meaning of the idiomatic expression and its constituent parts is arbitrary (Gibbs, 1989; Titone and Connine, 1999); or they are based on the idea that the constituent parts of the idiomatic expressions are semantically 'empty' (Cacciari and Glucksberg, 1995: 44); or that the meaning of the idiomatic expression is taught. When an idiomatic expression is heard for the first time, the hearer/reader identifies its meaning then he/she starts observing whether there is a relationship between its metaphorical or figurative meaning and the meaning of its constituents. Following this, the hearer/reader begins to imagine the relationship between the constituent parts and its intended meaning (Keysar and Bly, 1999: 1559). The literal meaning of the idiomatic expression may be activated when the expression is non-compositional if the meaning of the expression is not figuratively clear (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1995: 44).

In the view of Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995: 44-45), the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression is activated and becomes available and immediate; whereas the metaphorical meaning takes a little time to be identified. Therefore, it cannot be determined before completing the sentence. They also claim that understanding language is not an optional task because users generate the meanings automatically by means of the immediate words. People cannot neglect the meaning of the constituent parts of the idiomatic expression as long as they can identify the metaphorical interpretation of the expression. Furthermore, to identify the symbolic meaning, the hearer must handle necessary information to perceive the structure and interpret it as an idiomatic expression.

There are two schools of thought regarding how idiomatic expressions are interpreted. The first claims that the idiomatic expression is stored in a mental lexicon as one unit and is retrieved in the same way as any other word. This process of retrieval starts as soon as the first word of the idiomatic expression is heard, taking into account the literal meaning of the expression. The second claims that the idiomatic expression is not compositional and that the expression is not identified by interpreting the literal meaning but goes beyond this stage. Literal meaning occurs when the interpretation of an idiomatic expression does not cope with the context (Cacciari and Tabossi, 1988: 668-669; Gibbs, 1989: 576).

Nunberg *et al.* (1994: 69) draw a distinction between two types of idiomatic expressions. The first type, 'idiomatically combining expressions', include idiomatic expressions such as *to spill the beans* or *to pull strings*. These are types of 'compositional idioms' discussed above (see 2.1). In these expressions, the literal meaning parallels the idiomatic one. The second type, 'idiomatic phrases,' include expressions such as *to kick the bucket*. In these expressions, the meaning is <u>not</u> attributed to the meaning of their constituent parts. These expressions were referred to as 'non-compositional idioms' (see also Espinal and Mateu, 2010: 1398).

According to Nunberg *et al.* (1994, 69), there are three semantic dimensions involved in drawing a distinction between idiomatic expressions. These dimensions are dubbed: 'compositionality', 'conventionality' and 'transparency'. This model is used here to draw a distinction between the literal and idiomatic/metaphorical meanings of the idiomatic expression. The first dimension, compositionality, confirms the previously mentioned view that the meaning of some idiomatic expressions can be identified through their constituent parts. The second dimension, 'conventionality', confirms the other view, that the meaning of the idiomatic expression cannot be identified through its constituent parts; it depends on consensus and conventional usage in a specific linguistic environment. The third dimension, 'transparency', refers to the immediate original motivation of the expression (see also Espinal and Mateu, 2010: 1398; Titone and Connine, 1999: 1663-1664).

To conclude, it will be argued in this thesis that there are some types of idiomatic expressions which have only one meaning: a metaphorical meaning which can be identified directly. This type of idiomatic expression does not have a literal meaning or this cannot be perceived. Other types of idiomatic expressions convey both a metaphorical and a literal meaning simultaneously. These are of two sub-types: (1) those in which both the literal and the metaphorical/idiomatic meaning can be perceived easily, and (2) those in which the literal meaning can be perceived but the metaphorical meaning remains somewhat inaccessible. In the latter case, the context, environment and culture, play a major role in clarifying the ambiguous meaning of the idiomatic expression.

Moreover, some expressions are immediately comprehensible when they are read or heard while others need the context to be clarified in order for them to be understood. I do not agree with those who claim that idiomatic expressions are arbitrary, in particular those whose meaning is not the sum of their constituent parts, because they are not like other expressions that refer to something; rather they are used for clarification, or to refer to a certain meaning. They are secondary rather than primary sources of language. Whether directly or indirectly, there needs to be a relationship between the semantic meaning of the expression and its constituents. This argument supports Kövecses and Szabó (1996: 330) who claim that idioms are not expressions that convey their meaning in relation to the meanings of their constituent parts; meaning arises instead from the interlocutor's general knowledge of the world which is found in our cognitive (conceptual) system. This means that idioms are not arbitrary.

2.11 Idiomatic Expressions and Context

Context has a substantial impact on idiom comprehension; the use of idioms is extremely important when determining the respective roles played by the expression because it provides the ideal material for readers/listeners who have to differentiate between what is said and what is meant according to the context. That is why idioms pose a theoretical challenge to researchers interested in the social uses of language (Laval, 2003).

Arriving at a detailed and precise definition of context is not an easy task because this is one of the most widely used terms in both linguistics and literary criticism; it is also considered to be one of the most wide-ranging in terms of its meanings (Wales, 2001: 81). In basic terms, it is possible to talk of linguistic and non-linguistic context; the former refers to the surrounding features of language inside a text, while the latter refers to text-external features influencing the language and style of a text (Verdonk, 2003: 117; Halliday 1989).

2.12 Language and Culture

Following Kramsch (1998: 3), it can be argued that language is a central aspect of culture for three key reasons. Firstly, “language expresses culture”, meaning that language is the vehicle that reveals cultural practices, knowledge and attitudes, together with beliefs and emotions which are basic forms of culture. Secondly, “language represents culture” in the sense that a nation’s cultural behaviour and practices are carried out through the medium of language, whether this is verbal or non-verbal. Finally, “language symbolizes culture” because language serves as an expression of identity. If, for a certain reason, the linguistic signs, e.g. language symbols, are rejected, users of the language look upon this as a rejection of their own identity.

2.13 Idiomatic Expressions and Culture

Idioms are an integral part of culture; they are culture-specific items that exert a major influence on the comprehensibility of language. The key to mastering and interpreting idiomatic expressions lies in having a sufficient knowledge of the cultural environment and context of situation where an idiomatic expression is likely to be used. The topic of idiomatic expressions and their sensitivity to the conventional knowledge of their culture is discussed in Chapter Six together with the notion of context of situation since these are significant factors in interpreting the denotational meaning of idiomatic expressions.

2.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, a range of definitions of idiomatic expression were analysed, and some key studies of this concept in Arabic and Western studies were discussed. This review revealed that most of the studies propose similar definitions of idiom, encapsulating the following ideas: Idiomatic expressions are linguistic expressions, grammatical forms, phrases or words that have figurative meaning; this meaning cannot be predicted from the individual components or literal meanings of the parts but is used conventionally.

Regarding their structural features, idioms are characterised by fixedness, but do allow structural changes. Semantically, an idiomatic expression is a single unit that cannot be understood from its vocabulary, but depends on figurativeness in its meaning. These expressions convey the semantic meaning of a single word although they appear in the form of a structure (semantic unit). Finally, some expressions are untranslatable because of their cultural or semantic specificity.

The sources of idioms and their functions were also examined in this literature review. The relation between the idiom and other structures was discussed (see 2.8) and an attempt was made to draw a distinction between idioms and collocations since previous Arabic studies have tended to focus on the overlap between the two concepts. It was concluded that although idioms and collocations do share certain qualities, they can be categorised as distinct concepts.

A distinction was also made between idioms and proverbs, the latter being more fixed. In other words, a proverb can be used in different contexts, whilst retaining the same structure whereas an idiomatic expression may be changed and transformed, depending on its context. Furthermore, idioms take the form of a phrase whereas the proverb is a complete sentence.

The differences between idiomatic expression and metonymy were also highlighted. The literal meaning of an idiom can never be acceptable since its intended meaning

is always figurative. A metonym, however, can be viewed literally or figuratively as both of these may indicate its intended meaning. It can be concluded that idiomatic expression depends largely on using both metaphor and metonymy to deliver its intended meaning.

The literal and figurative meaning of idioms were discussed (see 2.10) and it was argued that figurative meaning is important in the process of communication. In addition, it was noted that a considerable number of idiomatic expressions possess both a literal and a figurative meaning, and that idioms can be categorised as follows: (1) compositional idioms, in which the separate units help to convey figurative meaning, and (2) non-compositional idioms, in which there is no relation between the units and the meaning of the expression.

Idioms can also be divided into transparent and non-transparent types, depending on the way the expression is viewed. It was argued that non-compositional idioms can be understood as a single word/unit as they are stored this way in the mental lexicon. In the case of compositional idioms, however, the component units help the meaning of the expression to be comprehended. This chapter also highlighted the importance of context in understanding the meaning of idioms as well as the relation between the idiomatic expressions, language and culture.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework: Text and Context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to establish the framework for the current research. A text linguistics approach has been selected and particular emphasis will be paid to approaches towards cohesion in linguistics and theories of context in anthropology and linguistics as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday and Hasan (1989) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). The ultimate goal is to propose a contextual view of meaning in which the language and culture of the text are closely examined.

In order to achieve this goal, the text linguistics approach to language will first be introduced. This serves as a general framework within which both notions of cohesion in language and theories of context in anthropology and linguistics will be examined. To investigate the former, i.e. cohesion in language, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) and Halliday and Hasan (1989) will be adopted, with particular emphasis on examining the linguistic relationships between the lexical units of the text. To examine the latter, i.e. theories of context, the notions of both 'context of situation' and (ii) 'context of culture' will be closely examined.

3.2 Text Linguistics: Moving beyond the Sentence to the Text

The focus of linguistic studies in the twentieth century was confined to the sentence itself. That is to say, the sentence was analyzed as an independent unit, irrespective of its context (Gary 1976:1). Thus, the sentence was viewed as the largest structural unit in the analysis. This also explains why in his analysis Chomsky chose to exclude “what goes beyond the sentence or the person who uses it, in what social circumstances, and for what purposes it was used” (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 21). However, this view has completely changed in modern linguistics, particularly with the emergence of numerous approaches to text analysis, one of which is text linguistics.

Interest in textual analysis dates back to Greco-Roman orators, and continued throughout the Middle Ages until the present time (de Beaugrand and Dressler 1981:15).

Text linguistics can be defined as a new branch of modern linguistics which is concerned with studying the property of texts, either written or spoken, and their usage in communication, e.g. text cohesion, coherence and textuality (Zaidan 2006; Al-Shurafa, 1994). Moreover, the written text is the principle subject of text linguistics.

For example, Van Dijk (1985: 130) points out that text linguistics cannot actually be considered to be a broad title for an independent theory or a specific methodology. Rather, it refers to any research in which the study of the text is the core issue.

Text analysis is classified under text linguistics, and concentrates on the structure of written language in textbooks, newspapers, etc. This branch of text linguistics has been used and developed by many different disciplines, e.g. in linguistics, it has been used to examine the features of language and the connections between sentences; in psychology, it has been used to examine the role of social interactions in producing sentences. It has also been applied to the study of metaphoric imagery and stylistics, etc. In other words, text linguistics highlights the interactions between producers and receivers through conveyed meanings by exchanging complicated language rather than simple sentences (see Al-Amri, 2004).

Zaidan (2006: 11) considers text linguistics to be a branch of discourse analysis which usually describes written language. However, the emergence of text linguistics took place in the last quarter of the twentieth century when some linguists viewed texts as a group of elements linked with each other by means of linguistic relations (McArthur, 1992: 316).

In text linguistics, linguists consider the sentence to be a unit of language and; therefore, part of the text. Also, the text is viewed neither as a grammatical structure, such as sentences and phrases, nor is it described by its shape or size. Rather, it is viewed as a semantic unit (Al-Shurafa, 1994: 17, see also Haliday and Hasan, 1976).

However, according to Harris (1952) who is one of the linguists who argues for going beyond the sentence structure to consider the meaning of the whole text, text linguistics involves the analysis of the function of the sentence and how it works in sequences to form a cohesive structure of language, i.e. a text. Harrris also pays attention to the linguistic elements in texts and the relationship between text and context. Harris was followed by many other linguists who were interested in text linguistics. Amongst these are Halliday and Hasan (1976) who explicitly refer to the

crucial role of the situational and cultural context in understanding the meaning of the text. They in turn were followed by de Beaugrand and Dressler (1981) who paid a lot of attention to the issue of textuality.

In the first half of the twentieth century, modern linguistics was based on describing and analysing the minimum unit of language. This tendency achieved success in examining certain aspects of language, e.g. sounds and/or words. However, this does not help in the comprehension of the whole text. This view is justified by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 21) who argue that text linguistics can analyse texts as minimum units, but it is unable to provide an overall view of the nature of texts.

There have always been calls to analyse the linguistic structure beyond the sentence level. For example, Firth (1957) argues for the importance of viewing speech within its context and defines speech as a complicated group of contextual relations. Linguistic study thus needs to relate words with the context in which they are used, in a similar way to the meaning analysis process which occurs within a coherent context of action. Moreover, Hasani (1994: 154) argues that it must be borne in mind that context interacts with other contexts that collectively belong to a more general context, i.e. the cultural one.

Firth (1957), who strongly emphasizes the social function of language, was a key figure in this new trend of linguistic studies (Omar 2009: 68). He argues that textual analysis should rely on examining the virtual lingual context, i.e. language as one form of human life. He based his ideas on determining the elements of language activity and disclosing their mutual relations. Firth divides those relations into two types: (i) the internal relations among the language activity itself and (ii) the external relations in the context in which the language activity occurs (Abdul-Aziz, 1984: 313-314).

Likewise, Harris (1952) argues that the study of the lingual structure of context and discourse is based on analysing the written text. In his work, Harris analyses lingual structures beyond the sentence level, arguing that language does not occur in the form of single words or separate sentences, but rather in coherent text, moving from the single word to the whole text. Accordingly, sentence analysis occurs only within the framework of texts, which collectively constitute the components of a more general discourse (Heinemann, 1999: 21).

Carstens (1999) claims that in the twentieth century linguistic theory witnessed a remarkable shift from a sentential perspective as expressed by Chomsky and his many followers to a more textual or discoursal approach by some scholars such as Van Dijk (1997/2000), de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Halliday and Hasan (1989). A main reason for this shift was the limitations that the study of sentences held for linguistic studies.

Earlier approaches to linguistic studies in the twentieth century tended to isolate the sentence both from its contexts and from the writers/speakers' intentions. Thus, in order, to avoid the problems caused by the previous approach to linguistic studies, Harris (1952) suggests some solutions. First, linguistic studies should not isolate themselves from studying sentences and considering the relationships between parts of sentences. Secondly, linguistic studies should create a link between the language of the text and the social situation in which it was produced. Therefore, Harris's approach to discourse analysis emphasizes two crucial points: the relationship between sentences and the connection between language and social situation (ibid).

At this stage of linguistic studies, there was a shift from investigating elements of the sentence to investigating text in its relation to the situations of text production and process. Another shift led to considering the text as one linguistic unit. These shifts have resulted in the appearance of text grammar (Van Dijk, 1972) and text linguistics (Halliday and Hasan, 1976 and De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981) (see Carstens, 1999).

In addition, text linguistics pays attention to the function of language, the text producer and receiver, the cultural environment, the participants' intentions and the aims of the text (de Beaugrand and Dressler, 1981). It also analyses both spoken and written texts. Text linguistics transcends the study of sentence structure with attempts to investigate what is beyond the sentence level. For example, van Dijk (1989) argues that analyzing the text at a lexical-grammatical level helps in clarifying the relationship between the meanings of units in discourse. These relations are described by Halliday and Hasan (1989) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) as 'cohesion/ cohesive ties'. In order to explore these insights raised by both Arab and Western semanticists, an overview of different approaches to text linguistics in both Arabic and Western literature will be provided.

3.2.1 Text Linguistics in Arabic Linguistics

Although the technical term ‘text linguistics’ was not clearly used in the early writings of Arab linguists, their contribution in this area was both tangible and efficient, their ideas being very similar to those of Western linguists. Clear examples can be found in Al-Jurjani’s work on collocation and نظرية النظم (*nazm*), i.e coherence whilst Al-Jāḥiẓ demonstrates an understanding of the importance of ‘speech situations’.

We begin by considering Al-Jurjani’s view of ‘collocations’. This vision involves a systematic association with linguistic entities. Al-Jurjani defines ‘collocation’ as ‘the association of words and their inter-operability in cause and effect process’ (cited by Abu-Gazala et al, 1992:17). Not only was Al-Jurjani concerned with studying lexical semantics, but also he was keen on investigating the cognitive aspects of studying words. He examined both shorter utterances and larger units in addition to exploring the denotation and connotation of words.

It is also useful to consider some of the key concepts discussed by other linguists, including the informational and situational aspects of language which have been repeatedly stressed in expressions such as لكل مقام مقال (*For every situation there is a speech to cope with*) and مراعاة مقتضى الحال (*Bearing in mind the current circumstances and conditions*) (ibid: 19).

Focusing on a similar topic, Al-Jāḥiẓ wrote an influential work on two important aspects of textuality, namely intentionality and acceptability. One of the prominent features of this work is its ability to capture the readers’ interest (Abu-Gazala et al., 1992).

With the emergence of text linguistics as an autonomous branch of linguistics in the early 1960s, efforts were made to go beyond the study of the sentence to text linguistics, which was developed to fill this gap (cf. Al-Shawish, 2001: 79; Beheyri, 1995, 217-218).

Beheyri (1997) argues that text linguistics aims to move beyond the rules for producing a sentence to the rules for producing a text. The main concern is no longer confined to investigating the structural dimensions of language. Rather, linguists are increasingly interested in exploring the correlation between structural, semantic and pragmatic dimensions. Fadl (1992: 321-322), for instance, argues that there is no

value in superficially analyzing vocabularies and/or structures without describing their deep semantic meanings which originate from their diverse linguistic contexts. Therefore, a new orientation towards text linguistics has come to the fore. Based on this idea, it can be argued that Arab linguists have also emphasized the transition from the sentential to the textual level**.** In other words, Arabic text linguistics is now paying great attention to the interpretation and analysis of discourse at the syntactic, lexical and semantic levels (Al-Wa'r, 2001; Al-Shawish, 2001: 79; Beheyri, 1995). In brief, though early Arab linguists did not show any interest in what is now called "text linguistics", it is clear that modern Arab linguists, e.g. Mahmoud Al-Saaran, Tammam Hassan and Kamal Bishr have largely been influenced by their Western counterparts in their treatment of the whole text instead of merely the sentence.

3.2.2 The Function of Text Linguistics

Various Western linguists have closely addressed the issue of textual analysis, with particular emphasis on the function of the text. For example, de Beaugrande (1980) points out that a central function of text linguistics is the study of the concept of textuality as a product of communication events for the usage of the text. This means that the process of textual analysis implies examining the linguistic aspects of the text in its wider framework, i.e. in its relationship with the surrounding culture. This requires exploring the social communicative events which are related to the text, making text analysis a complex issue involving many different tasks. It is interesting to note that textual analysis has been raised in Arabic linguistics. For example, Fadl (1992) indicates that the function of text linguistics is fourfold. Its first function is to describe a text, its components and linking elements that lead to coherence and cohesion within the same text. The second function lies in analysing the text in such a way that it transcends the internal, i.e. cohesive ties to external ones, and links relating to coherence. Consequently, linguists began to look into the role of context in forming the meaning of the text. Third, it explores the function of the text in communication by knowing the circumstances around the producer and recipient of text. The fourth function is to go beyond description and analysis of the text to a more comprehensive approach that considers different genres of texts, e.g. medical, political, legal, literary, etc.

Taylor (2006) also raises a number of points which are relevant to the functions of text linguistics. In his opinion, the first major difference between text linguistics and other fields is that meaning in language occurs in units of text beyond the word and sentence level. These units are the discourse and the text. Also, unlike traditional grammar which focuses on small units, such as phrases, clauses and sentences, text linguistics focuses on the text as a whole. This assumption does not underestimate the small units that collectively form bigger units. Rather, text linguistics investigates big units that communicate ideas utilising macro-structures that govern micro-structures, and consequently the full text (Taylor, 2006: 38). Therefore, to do a thorough textual analysis, i.e. the analysis which involves both linguistic and cultural dimensions, discourse should be analysed from the macro-structure, i.e. the cultural to the micro-structure, i.e. the linguistic rather than the other way round (ibid).

Text linguistics is also concerned with the concepts of coherence and cohesion, both of which represent an attempt to understand the formal cohesive ties within the text, whereas grammatical, semantic and contextual elements hold a text together so that it makes sense. These cohesive and coherent links provide rules to connect sentences in longer syntactic units (see 3.5).

This helps readers/listeners to understand the text as a cohesive piece of communication rather than as a group of unconnected words and/or sentences. In fact, a number of factors work together to create cohesion, including grammatical and lexical cohesion. In other words, cohesion and coherence emphasize the perception of recognizing language as a dynamic interaction between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader (Taylor, 2006).

The third aspect in text linguistics is relevant to the situational text and the text-pragmatic features that form the discourse or text as a whole (Taylor, 2006). According to Taylor, these features include the writer, the occasion, the circumstances of the readers and the social context. These are necessary to discern the different factors of situation that affect the text and determine the importance of diverse text units in discourse (2006: 39).

Based on the above insights, it can be argued that Western linguists have emphasized the idea that text linguistic analysis involves an examination of the cultural aspects of the text, including the "context of situation" and the "context of culture" in addition to investigating the linguistic dimensions, such as the use of cohesive and coherent

devices. These are the parameters upon which the process of textual analysis is based. Central to the process of textual analysis is the examination of the text as the main unit. Therefore, the next section, will shed more light on the concept of text.

3.3 The Text

One of the central concepts in modern linguistic studies is that of 'text'. Studies which are dedicated to the analysis of texts are commonly referred to as 'text linguistics', 'discourse analysis' and/or 'syntax'. The above-mentioned studies support the idea that linguistic studies should go beyond the sentence level, i.e. a thorough linguistic analysis of the text implies analyzing all aspects of the text, including the linguistic (which of course includes the analysis of rhetoric aspects, artistic work, i.e. the text itself) in addition to the cultural aspects (Al-Ibrahimy, 2006: 196). This remarkable shift resulted in two important consequences: (1) it directed attention towards the importance of examining the cultural aspects of the text and (2) it also freed linguistic studies from the dilemma of structural studies which failed to examine the relations among syntactic, semantic and semiotic aspects of the linguistic issue under discussion.

For a long time, emphasis was placed on the sentence as the unit of text analysis. This orientation completely ignored the fact that the meaning of a sentence may be closely connected to those sentences which preceded or followed it. Therefore, language is not just a sentence we use; rather, it is a series of utterances and sentences. Many studies in text linguistics have highlighted this claim and viewed the text as the central means of communication (Al-Amri, 2004). Modern critical text linguistics has gone far beyond the smallest structural unit, i.e. the sentence, to a larger analytical one called 'the text', which undoubtedly represents a complete and consistent form of communication among mono-lingual groups. Harris (1952) exemplifies this perspective, claiming that the sentence can no longer meet all the needs of linguistic modifications (description). Consequently, he analysed the sentence in a scientific study widely quoted by the American transformationlists and their most distinguished figure Bloomfield, and reflected in Chomsky's 'competence linguistics' which describes sentence constituents using the surface and deep structure technicalities (Omran, 2010).

Investigating the notion of 'text' has resulted in an extension of the system of linguistic levels suggested by modern linguistic theorists. This extension paved the way to the process of examining, explicating and understanding a number of textual issues, such as cohesion and coherence and their relevance to such problems as text typology (Al-Amri, 2004: 14). It has also facilitated comprehension of a number of issues which were difficult to examine using sentence-level analysis.

A text, whether verbal or written, is the means by which feelings, attitudes and ideas are expressed. Also, it is through texts that culture can be analysed. Therefore, texts play an essential role in achieving communication. That is to say, communication takes place through words, phrases and texts. We speak a text, read a text, listen to a text, write a text, and translate a text. Types of texts vary, and can include medical, legal, political, religious, scientific, etc. Each of these types has its own unique language, terminology and style. As such, the text is a multi-dimensional process and it is difficult to arrive at one specific, unified definition which does justice to this term (Al-Amri, 2004).

Not surprisingly, then, definitions vary from one linguist to another. For instance, Halliday and Hasan (1976: 1) argue that the term 'text' is used in linguistics to refer to any written or spoken passage of any length which forms a whole unit. They elaborate this point by claiming that the text is a unit of language in use; it is not a grammatical unit, but a semantic one (1976:2).

Another linguist who introduces a definition for the term 'text' is Werlich (1976: 23) who defines the text as an expanded entity of syntactic units, e.g. words or phrases or textual components which are coherent and cohesive. A third definition is introduced by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 3) who refer to text as 'a communicative utterance', involving the existence of seven textual criteria which lead to a process of communication between the producer and the recipient. They further consider the text to be 'a natural manifestation of language, i.e. a communicative language event in context' (ibid: 63). De Beaugrande (1992) later defined text as a meaningful structure which has the ultimate objective of achieving communication. He also argued that text includes words, groups of words and sentences.

Adopting a more culture-based approach, Fairclough (2001:24) establishes a connection between text and its socio-cultural context. He posits that text is part of

the social interactions in both the processes of producing and interpreting the text. In his opinion, the text is a process of production, meaning that text analysis is part of the process of discourse analysis, an area which is concerned with processes of both production and interpretation.

In light of the above definitions, it can be concluded that the term 'text' refers to both spoken and written texts. However, some linguists argue that this should be used solely to describe written texts, which have unique features and distinctive stylistic characteristics (Zaydan, 2006: 10). Another supporter of this tendency is Coulthard (1994) who defines the text as 'a string of words which a writer has to code the ideational meaning into and a reader to decode that meaning from words' (Coulthard, 1994:9). The justification he provides is that the meaning of words in a text may change for creative or stylistic reasons and that identifying the meaning of words is basically a contextual task. Similarly, Hoey (2001: 11) views the text as visible evidence of communication between a writer and his/her readers.

In brief, it is clear that there is no agreement amongst linguists on a specific definition for the notion of 'text' since it carries many different shades of meaning.

The focus of the current study will be on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1989) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). This is justified by the fact that their work is commonly held to have provided a clear framework in the area of text analysis since 1976. These theories have proved to be viable when treating text as 'long stretches'. The tools of analysis adopted in this approach are viewed as a solid base for the future. However, before proceeding to examine both approaches as central to text linguistics, justifications for adopting a text linguistics model need to be provided.

3.4 Text Linguistics: Text and Discourse Analysis

Adopting text linguistics as a methodology for the present study was not an easy decision. The key challenge lies in the difficulty of delineating the area of text linguistics due to its connections with other disciplines, such as, in particular, discourse analysis and pragmatics. This study will aim to study the connections between text and discourse on one hand, and between text linguistics and discourse analysis on the other. This will help to clarify the reasons for choosing text linguistics as a theoretical approach for this study.

The main reason for this apparent overlap between text linguistics and discourse analysis is due to the fact that linguists use the terms ‘text’ and ‘discourse’ in different ways. In addition, a number of theoretical approaches to text linguistics and discourse analysis refer to different traditional approaches although they share some common ground (Alba-Juez, 2009).

The term ‘text’, which is widely used in everyday language, relates to written language and tends to be exclusive to it (Fairclough, 1995: 4). However, according to Alba-Juez (2009) the term discourse is related to both spoken and written language (Harris, 1952: 3). Some linguists argue that discourse is more comprehensive than text, and that discourse is related to the context surrounding its production (Alba-Juez, 2009). In contrast, some other linguists argue that the difference between text and discourse lies in the issue of context. That is to say, discourse can also mean both the text and the circumstances in which the text is produced, whereas the text means discourse without context, i.e. the linguistic text (Alba-Juez, 2009).

Based on the above definitions, it is argued here that the term ‘text’ refers to written language, whereas the term ‘discourse' includes both written and spoken text, whether in everyday speech, media interviews, academic lectures or formal speeches. Therefore, it can be seen that under the terms of this definition, every written discourse is a text, but not vice versa.

The study of text linguistics has taken two different approaches, namely text linguistics (De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981) and discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Schiffrin, 1994). Consequently, this orientation has created a perception that it is not easy to analyse a text using only one approach, making it essential to draw a distinction between the two approaches.

On the one hand, discourse analysis is traditionally considered to be a theoretical approach to analysing spoken utterances, and in particular the “analysis of utterances as social interaction” (Schiffrin, 1994: 419). Moreover, Hatim and Mason define discourse as ‘modes of speaking and writing which involve social groups in adopting a particular attitude towards areas of socio-cultural activity’ (1997: 216). Also, Brown and Yule (1983: 1) give a simpler and more general definition of discourse analysis, arguing that it is concerned with language in use. Similarly, Fairclough (1992:28) believes that discourse is language in use seen as social interaction.

On the other hand, both de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) and Carstens (1997) claim that text linguistics is primarily concerned with describing the way texts are structured and interpreted. Thus, it pays more attention to the study of the text's properties, i.e. the components of the text (Crystal, 1992: 387).

Modern linguistics, however, argues that the concept of the 'text' expands to include all kinds of utterances including the articles in magazines, TV interviews and talks (Alba-Juez, 2009). According to Alba-Juez, the definition of the 'text' exactly matches the definition of 'discourse'. This view is supported by Halliday and Hasan's definition of which they argue that "the term 'text' is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole" (1976: 1). Although there is some interference between the definition of both terms (text and discourse), 'text linguistics' does not differ from 'discourse analysis' in its approach to the study of the text. In other words, text linguistics studies the text itself and the circumstances around it, as will be discussed later. Looking closely into the concepts of text linguistics and discourse analysis, interference in their fields of study can also be observed. For example, both of them share the concept of 'cohesion'.

Crystal (1997) defines text linguistics as the formal account of the linguistic principles governing the structure of the text. For their part, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) present a wider view of the text as a communicative event and identify seven criteria relating to textuality. These are: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality.

Both cohesion and coherence are known as text internals, whereas the other five criteria are known as text externals. A number of linguists have argued that text linguistics is concerned with text internal criteria (cohesion and coherence), whereas discourse analysis is concerned with text external criteria, i.e. the context of the production of the discourse (Alba-Juez, 2009).

Titscher *et al*. (2000:29) point out that the internal criteria elements form the text, whereas external factors form the context. According to Schiffrin (1994: 363), discourse analysis encompasses the study of both text and context; whereas text linguistics encompasses the text only.

Halliday defines text in broad terms as "everything that is meaningful in a particular situation" (1976:137). Similarly, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) define text in a

way that includes both elements of text and context. That is to say, de Beaugrande (2002) defines text linguistics as the study of real language in use. This definition is not much different from that of discourse analysis as “a study of any part of language use” (Fasold, 2003:65).

In short, it can be concluded that the terms of 'text' and 'discourse' can be used interchangeably and that the scope of text linguistics may overlap with that of discourse analysis. In addition, the general tendency for understanding text linguistics revolves around the text only. On the other hand, discourse analysis revolves around the text itself along with the context governing its production. Finally, discourse analysis may include both written and spoken language, whereas text linguistics is commonly viewed as related to written texts analysis. Therefore, text linguistics has been selected as the most appropriate methodology for the present study.

In light of the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), it can be argued that their approach is concerned with the text and its internal and external relations (for a detailed discussion of cohesive and coherent links, see (3.5.1 and 3.5.2).

Their approach provides more tools for studying texts than traditional methods of text analysis, which is not sufficiently clearly explained in earlier works. This approach highlights the relationship between texts and context, co-text, producer and receiver (Zaidan, 2006). However, de Beaugrande and Dressler and Halliday’s work was not adequately criticised by linguists (*ibid.*). In my view, this approach will be helpful in examining the structure and context of idiomatic expressions. In the following section, Halliday and Hasan and De Beaugrande and Dressler’s approaches to text linguistics will be examined in detail.

3.5 Cohesion in English

3.5.1 Halliday and Hasan’s Approach

Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday in Halliday and Hasan (1989) and Halliday (2002) have thoroughly analysed ways of analysing English texts, describing their linguistic properties and examining devices of textual analysis. They have highlighted cohesion as a fundamental component of the text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976:2) argue that the primary unit of analysis should be extended to be the text itself rather than the word. What Halliday and Hasan mean by the text is not only a clause or a sentence, but a type of super sentence, i.e. a grammatical point which extends beyond the limits of the sentence. Thus, the text is a semantic unit, i.e. a unit of meaning not of a structure.

In their view, the text has a functional property, a feature which invokes looking at the text in its wider framework, i.e. the text in its cultural context. Thus, at the linguistic level, elements of the text are linked together constituting cohesive ties, whilst at the cultural dimension, the text is viewed as part of its surrounding culture (1989: 10).

Cohesion is the main device by which the text is linked semantically, and therefore it is an indispensable part of any text (1976). More importantly, cohesion forms part of language itself (1976:4-5). Interpreting any element of the text depends on a sound understanding of all the other parts of the text. Thus, examining the linguistic relationships within the text is of paramount importance (ibid).

For Halliday and Hasan (1976: 2), the concept of 'texture' or the organization of text is largely made up of the relationships amongst units of the text, which are referred to as 'cohesive ties'. Some of these links are of a grammatical nature, while others are semantic. In their view, two types of ties can be recognised: grammatical and lexical. The former falls into four types: reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction.

Firstly, reference is used when the writer refers to some other part of the sentence in order for the reader to better understand its meaning. A reference can include a pronoun, demonstrative or comparative. For example (Halliday, 2002: 38):

- ***She's*** *shy. (pronoun referring to a previously named individual);*
- ***This*** *is what I meant (demonstrative indicating a previous idea/statement); and*
- *You should have come* ***earlier*** *(comparative).*

With regards to references, these can indicate something that has come before within the same text (anaphoric reference) or something that is about to follow in the same text (cataphoric reference). Indeed, reference may also point to something that is not

included in the text, in which case this is known as an exophoric reference (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

As for substitution, this is the grammatical way of replacing a word or a statement in a sentence with something else that has the same grammatical purpose. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that this is a cohesive device and its purpose is “a sort of counter which is used in place of the repetition of a particular item” (Halliday and Hasan, 1989). In some languages, such as English, a substitution may be made to replace an entire clause using a word such as ‘so’, ‘do’ or ‘one’.

It should be noted that it is also possible to substitute part of, or a whole, sentence with nothing or simply with ‘zero’. This is known as an ellipsis or the omission of parts of a sentence when they can be presumed from what has been mentioned previously in the text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Ellipsis refers to the deletion of some elements of the texts either because they have been already mentioned in the text or because they are automatically understood (Rolnick, 2005). The cohesive value of ellipsis lies in the fact that it creates some anaphoric and cataphoric referential ties that help connect the different parts of the text together (Quirk et al., 1972). Johnstone (2002) states that the omission of one element necessitates readers go somewhere in the text to fill in the gap.

Conjunction is the final type of cohesion and can be exemplified by the use of words such as ‘but’, ‘however’, ‘so’ or ‘that is’. A conjunction is used to link two propositions in a single sentence or in more than one sentence and there are four main groups: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Halliday and Hasan (1976) suggest that conjunction is different from other cohesive examples because the cohesiveness does not result from continuity but is expressed through “certain meanings, which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse” (ibid:226). “Conjunctive relations” are “based on the assumption that in the linguistic system there are forms of systematic relationships between sentences” (ibid: 320)

A lexical cohesion may entail repetition of lexical items, synonymy or near-synonymy, and collocations, which are collections of items that share the propensity for co-concurrence (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Viewing the text as a semantic unit, Halliday argues that the text is a living entity for the purpose of achieving communication among people in their 'context of situation'.

Thus, the text should not be viewed in isolation from its cultural dimension or 'context of culture'.

Texts are not composed of words or sentences, but of meanings. It is not ”something that can be defined as being just another kind of sentence, only bigger” (Halliday, 1989:10). The text should be analysed from a semantic perspective and all other dimensions, whether phonological, lexical or grammatical, work together to reveal that semantic dimension. The text is both a process and a product. It is a product in that it is an output, a clear appearance of a mental image that can be studied and recorded, having a definite construction that can be represented in systematic terms. On the other hand, it is a process in the sense that it is a continuous movement through the network of meaning potential which involves a lot of choices and decision-making (Al-Amri, 2004).

Halliday argues that text is a mixture of both language and culture. Thus, he combines semiotics with both sociology and linguistics, and the "context of situation" is the semio-socio-cultural environment in which the text is located. Text and context cannot be separated from each other. Halliday and Hasan (1989: 5) argue that:

> *There is a text and there is another text that accompanies it: text that is ‘with’, namely the co-text. This notion of what is ‘with the text’, however, goes beyond what is said and written: it includes other non-verbal signs-on-the total environment in which a text unfolds.*

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (on line), the term ‘context’, in its simple form, refers to what comes before and after a word, phrase, statement, etc., helping someone to understand the meaning or the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea. It is sometimes possible to make inferences about the 'context of situation' from certain words in texts. These texts, short or long, spoken or written, will carry with them indications of their contexts. We need to hear or read only a section of them to know where they come from. Given the text, it should be possible to place it into an appropriate context (Al-Amri, 2004: 18). In other words, the situation must be constructed. Hence, when discussing text, one should initially bear in mind both 'context of situation' and 'context of culture' which are examined in detail in the following sections.

3.5.2 De Beaugrande and Dressler's Approach

In their procedural approach to linguistics, de Beaugrande and Dressler assert that "all the levels of the language are to be described in terms of their utilization" (De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981: 30). Their approach acknowledges that there are internal and external properties of text. The internal ones are provided in the text, whereas the external ones are provided by the producer and the receiver of the text in any textual communication. The authors emphasize the function or utilization of texts in human interaction. In this respect, De Beaugrande (1980: 11) defines the text as:

> *The multi-level entity of language must be the text, composed of fragments which may or may not be formatted as sentence.*

De Beaugrande (1980) makes some essential distinctions between text and sentence, noting that the text is an actual system, while sentences are elements of a virtual system. He adds that "the sentence is a purely grammatical entity to be defined only on the level of syntax. The text must be defined according to the complete standards of textuality" (ibid: 12). In his view, the text must be related to the situation of occurrence in which some groups of strategies, expectations and knowledge are active. This broad environment can be described as the 'context of situation'. Moreover, he states that:

> *A text cannot be fully treated as a configuration of morphemes and symbols. It is a manifestation of a human action in which a person intends to create a text and instruct the text receivers to build relationships of various kinds* (ibid: 12).

Texts are sequences between states. The knowledge state, emotional state and social state of text users are subject to change by tools of text. In addition, social conventions relate more to texts than to sentences i.e. psychological factors are related to the text more than to sentences (ibid: 14).

De Beaugrande (1980) makes a further distinction between the text and the sentence. On the one hand, the sentence can be subject to grammatical forms and patterns, which make it either grammatical or ungrammatical. On the other hand, Ithe text is a

complex unit that is not governed by a set of grammatical rules. In addition, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 3) define text in the following terms:

> *A communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality, if any of these standards is not considered to have been satisfied, the text will not be communicative.*

De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) are interested in the notion of text. However, their work is focused on discovering what makes the text unified and meaningful rather than just a string of disconnected words or sentences. Therefore, they introduce the idea of the seven standards of textuality (cohesion, coherence, informativity, situationality, intertextuality, intentionality and acceptability) which function as the constitutive principles which define and create communication.

The examination of the notion of 'cohesion' is central to the current research and is explained by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) in the following terms. Cohesion is concerned with the connections between the elements of the surface of text, which include the procedures of making text unified. Therefore, parts of the text must be formed or structured into meaningful sequences of sentences under the grammatical rules of text language.

Al-Amri (2004) describes cohesion as the network of lexical, grammatical and other relationships that provide connections between the various parts of a text. These relations result in a unified text and help the reader to interpret words or meanings successfully using both reference and cohesive ties.

According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), cohesiveness can be divided into grammatical and lexical cohesion. However, cohesiveness of text is successfully achieved by combining different syntactical elements, phrases, clauses and sentences. It may also be attained through various devices, such as lexical repetition, ellipsis, junctions, reference (for example, anaphora and exophora), and substitution.

3.6 Theories of Context

3.6.1 Introduction

In the previous sections (3.4; 3.5), the text linguistics approach to language was introduced. The main argument postulated was that a central dimension in the

process of textual analysis lies in closely examining the text itself, with particular emphasis on the linguistic relationships between the lexical units of the text. Central to this approach is the argument that a proper textual analysis requires not only the examination of the linguistic relationships between the lexical units of the text, but also the investigation of the context in which this (linguistic) text is used. Thus, it is also necessary here to examine theories of context, which are themselves a branch of text linguistic theory, in terms of both language and culture. That is to say, there are various contextual factors, which help to determine the intended meaning of idiomatic expressions. These factors vary in type. Some of them are linguistic in nature, whilst others are cultural. Therefore, different types of context such as linguistic context (co-text/verbal context), non-linguistic context (situational context) and the context of culture (cultural and social context) will be introduced and discussed here also.

This analysis will be comprised of three sections, based on context categories. The first section focuses on co-text/linguistic context and will tackle the role played by co-text in interpreting idiomatic expressions i.e. analysing the various co-texts of idioms. Also, cohesion tools will be applied to some idiomatic expressions within their co-text in order to identify how idiomatic expressions are cohesive with the text. The second section of the analysis will consider situational context. Finally, the section on cultural analysis will start by providing examples of cultural categories, and will be followed by an analysis of some idioms in order to determine their dimensions of culture.

3.6.2 The Meaning of Context

Context, as a concept, has been studied in great depth by a variety of linguists working in the areas of both pragmatics and systemic-functional linguistics. The objective of their studies has been to define the various meanings of the term context as it is understood in different fields of study. Context is defined as:

> *A set of entities (things or events) which are related in a certain way; these entities have individual characters such that other sets of entities occur having the same characters and related by the same relations; and these occur "nearly uniformly"* (Ullmann, 1957: 63).

With regard to contextual theory, Lyons (1977: 572) argues that:

> *Context is a theoretical construct, in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language-event, systematically determine the form, the appropriateness or the meaning of utterances.*

Similarly, Trask (1993) describes the theory of context as being linguistic or extra-linguistic in nature. Emphasizing linguistic context as one important dimension of the notion of context, Crystal (1997: 87) describes it as "a general term used in linguistics to refer to specific parts of an utterance (or text) near or adjacent to a unit which is the focus of attention". Leech (1974: 78), however, describes the context as something that comes before the expression uttered and he defines the context as something that needs to be connected with what "we happen to know about the state of the universe at the time that the linguistic expression under consideration was uttered". Leech believes that the context can be established by various means related to the setting and background of the intended understanding of the uttered words as well as reader interpretation.

Sperber and Wilson (1995) define context as a psychological construct. In relation to their theory of relevance, they describe the context as a range of premises utilised to decipher what an utterance is about. The psychological aspect of the theory stems from the realisation that listeners make assumptions about what they hear. Such assumptions are based on their background knowledge and not simply the physical environment of the words that are spoken or written (Sperber and Wilson, 1995; Widdowson, 2004).

In simple terms, context is a widely known linguistic term that "refers to that which comes before or after something" (Finch, 2000: 212). Finch (2005: 208-209) also argues that "context is a very widely used term in linguistics and, as a consequence, any account of its meaning will involve us in specifying exactly how it is being used". He determines two types of context, namely linguistic and situational. In

many descriptions of context, its pragmatic and semantic notions can be understood due to the fact that the utterance of linguistic meaning is surrounded by the notion of context. That is to say, a text can have many different meanings that may be disparate from a literal meaning (Katz, 1977).

Contextual studies need to take note both of the text and the context in which it was written. Brown and Yule (1983: 35) cited in (Song, 2010: 876) state that:

> *The task is to determine what we can know about the meaning and context of an utterance given only the knowledge that the utterance has occurred […] I find that whenever I notice some sentence in context, I immediately find myself asking what the effect would have been if the context had been slightly different.*

The 'context' is not a stative variable, but a dynamic and evolving one as Mey (1993), and Fetzer and Akman (2002) point out. The context of any written communication allows for people to interact and express their understandings of linguistics. The dynamic nature of the context means that utterances are shaped by the context in which they are used. The context is also shaped by the communication paths that are evident in the relationship between the writer and the reader (Hewings and Hewings, 2005: 22).

Discourse can take many forms and these can be formal or informal in nature. Some examples of discourse include news reports, formal written reports or official records, academic papers, statements of spoken words, conversational dialogues, interviews and many others. These types of discourse may be found in a variety of sources including media sources, such as newspapers, television and magazines as well as novels and academic literature. These are all texts and they 'store' complexities of social circumstance and background (Bondarouk and Ruël, 2004).

Titscher et al. (2000) and Grant et al. (2001) describe context as being either broad or local whilst Alvesson and Karreman (2000) use a more detailed classification to describe the context as a specific study of language which focuses on micro-discourse (more specific perspective), meso-discourse (a broader perspective), grand

discourse (an arrangement of discourses that are related by a specific theme), or mega discourse (which refers to a specific phenomenon such as globalization).

Allan (1986) argues that context can be divided into three components: the physical setting of the uttered words (the spatio-temporal location), the world spoken of in an utterance (how people understand the real world) or the textual environment, which describes what a textual source provides towards cohesive semantic units of several utterances.

Yule (1996) subdivides context into linguistic context, and what is sometimes described as co-text and physical context. The linguistic context, which can have a strong effect on the meaning of a word, describes the surrounding words of a certain phrase or sentence, whereas the physical context describes the actual environment in which a word is utilised.

Cook's study of discourse and literature (1999) has taken the notion of 'context' into consideration, as a way to understand the world in broadly and narrowly defined terms. The narrow term describes the factors outside the text under consideration, whereas the broad term refers to the context surrounding the text under consideration. This area is often referred to as the 'co-text' (cited in Song, 2010).

Hewings and Hewings (2005) demonstrate another definition of the context which is sometimes described as local linguistic context. This definition refers to the language that comes before and after the text under discussion. The idea of the co-text is often used to describe what is also referred to as the local linguistic context. However, some researchers view the co-text as a more general description of the linguistic context. It is also relevant to consider the idea of the wider linguistic context, as a means of understanding how a particular snapshot of text is related to other texts. This idea suggests that the interpretation of a text is based on its relationship with other texts.

The local situational context refers to the time, location, age and gender of text participants and their relative status, and finally the wider socio-cultural context which describes the wider background against which communication is interpreted.

This contextual term involves both social and political aspects of language (see Figure 3.1):

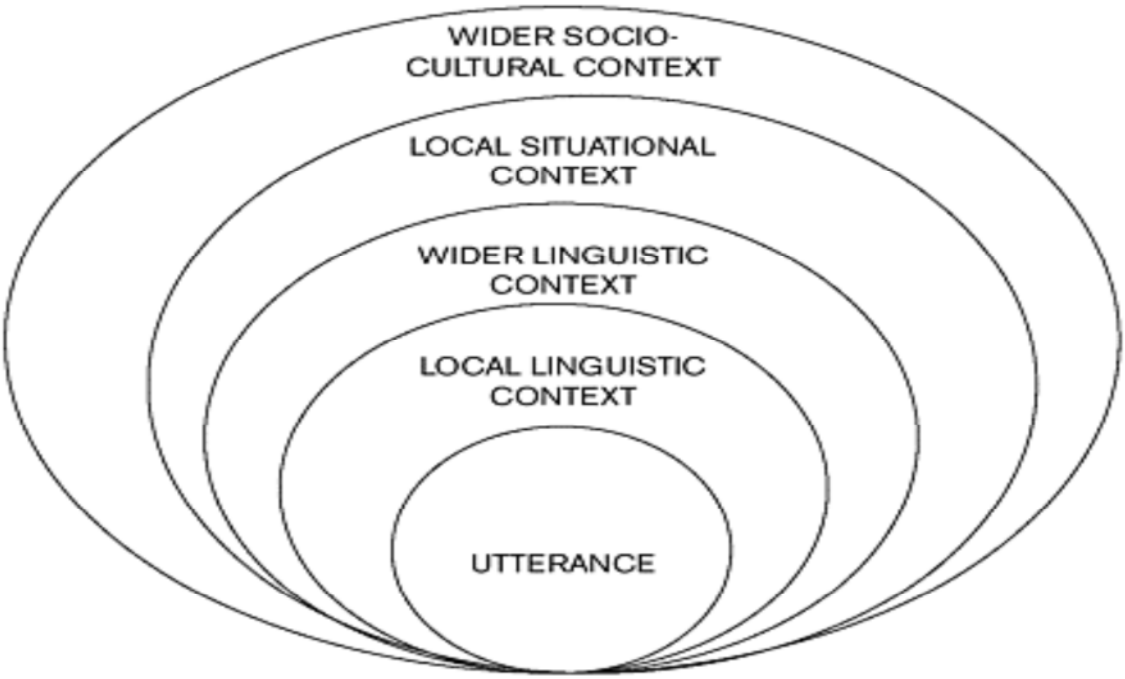

Figure 3-1 The context of utterances (Hewings and Hewings, 2005:21)

Van Dijk (2001) defines context in terms of its global and local values by which he means the 'global' values of social, political, cultural, and historical features of communication, and the 'local' values of the more immediate situational circumstances of communication events (Van Dijk, 2009).

To summarise, then, it can be argued that there is no one universally accepted definition of context amongst linguists. However, there is a common agreement on the factors which constitute the components of the context. These are linguistic context, situational background, and environmental/cultural aspects. These factors collectively shape both the text itself and its settings.

3.6.3 The Importance of Context

The notion of context plays a significant role in the semantic meaning of a word or sentence. Classical Arab linguists repeatedly emphasize the importance of context

and the need for compatible discourse. Consequently, they have coined and frequently used the brief statement "لكل مقام مقال" (*Every context of situation has a discourse/utterance*), i.e. the context is implied within the utterance in a certain way. In addition, a word becomes meaningless when de-contextualised. Also, the meaning of a statement will vary depending on the context in which it is used, the circumstances of the speakers and the time and place of the utterance (Abd Al-Latif, 1983).

In regard to his study of meaning, Firth (1957) discusses precise methods of disclosing the meaning and the core of the text. He argues that meaning is a characteristic of a word which cannot be taken independently as a semantic unit. It does not have a separate or an independent meaning. Rather, its existence and meaning are relative. Each of them can exist only in the context of other words and meanings. In other words, the semantic meaning of a word is exclusive to its function which exists via the functions of other words.

Firth is one of the distinguished modern linguists who played a major role emphasising the importance of the socio-linguistic role in studying language. Influenced by Firth's concept of the systemic context, Halliday formulated the rule that "meaning is the function of the context" and argued that language should be studied in a semiotic-social context as it is a basic means of disclosing meaning in context.

Context is essential when attempting to distinguish between meanings of the same utterances and, in fact, to determine the precise semantic meanings of these utterances governed by the context (Yahya, 2008). Context is also important in disambiguating the lexical meaning, i.e. many words have a number of meanings although we commonly use one prominent meaning in a certain context. A few words or sentences sometimes appear ambiguous and indeterminate, but the uttered structure discloses the meaning intended. Polysemous words are words with a multiplicity of meanings. In this case, the context plays a decisive role in placing such a word within an appropriate linguistic structure and making its precise meaning clear. Any ambiguity will then be overcome (Yahya, 2008).

In this respect, as cited in Yahya (2008), Vendryes argues that context is what determines the value of a word. Each time a word is used temporarily in a certain environment, the context imposes a particular value on that word even if it has

several meanings. Furthermore, the 'context of situation' or co-text is important in many areas. Examples of these are determining meaning or the semantic significance of words, specialization and clarifying ambiguous words (Yahya, 2008). In other words, when a word is polysemous, only one meaning is actually meant via the context. Other meanings will spontaneously disappear. Consider the verb يقص in the following sentences: الخياط يقص الثوب (*the tailor sews the dress*), الخبر الذي قصه فلان صحيح (*the piece of news narrated is true*), and البدوي خير من يقص الأثر (*the Bedouins are best at following tracks*). We see that the one utterance قص expresses three different meanings that alter with a change in the context. The meaning of a word is determined by the words with which they collocate. Based on Vendrys, it can be argued that the functions of context are: (1) to determine a single meaning for a word, (2) to derive a word from other possible meanings acquired through historical knowledge and (iii) to impose a current meaning and eliminate all others (Tomy, 2010).

Vendrys (cited in Tomy, 2010) discusses the issue of ambiguity and explains the role of context in clarifying any ambiguity resulting from homonymy (one word may have different meanings). He also explains the role of the context in making clear specific meanings resulting from polysemy via connecting a word to its usages. Vendrys, however, does not generalise the role of the context as it is not the sole means behind revealing ambiguity.

On the level of structures, Abd Al-Latif (1983) points to the importance of context in revealing semantic and syntactic meanings, and emphasizes the value of combining both these elements. The syntactic element provides the semantic meaning with the primary meaning of the sentence, and mutually the semantic element provides the syntactic element with some aspects that help to determine and distinguish it. In other words, the two sides affect each other reciprocally. The impact of the linguistic context and the 'context of situation' manifests itself on the syntactic element with regard to mentioning, deletion, foregrounding, and backgrounding. Likewise, context affects the meaning of the same structural unit, depending on the context in which it occurs, however simple the sentence is (ibid, 1983).

Ullmann (1957) argues that the theory of context, if applied wisely, represents a cornerstone in semantics. In fact, it has resulted in a number of conclusions. Context theory has also provided us with new tools to determine the meaning of words. Nearly all words need some clarification, which can be taken from the real context, whether verbal or non-verbal. Ullmann also argues that context should not include only words together with the sentences which precede and follow them, but also the whole text and book, known as 'the textual context'.

Responding to those who reject context, Palmer (1981) argues that it is easy to refute contextual theories as they are impractical, but it is still difficult to do so without denying the fact that the meaning of words and sentences is combined in a practical way (pragmatism). Husam Al-Din (2000) raises the issue that no two words have the same meaning as every speech act is unique, involving participants who change continuously and have unfixed meanings.

Guriud concludes that words do not have meanings. Rather, they have uses which transcend their static meaning transforming into a dynamic one (cited in Husam Al-Din, 2000). In other words, the meaning of a word lies in its use. The German philosopher Wittgenstein asserts that we should not look at the word, but at its usage (Lyons, 1968)

Linguists indicate that precise meaning in translation is not to be found in dictionaries. Rather it stems from the historical knowledge that a translator acquires of the various meanings of words through the different uses and contexts that he himself experiences (Ullmann, 1957). Consequently, linguists pay attention to the context to determine the meaning(s) of a word, as a word per se is meaningless but takes its meaning from the context around it. The various meanings of the word 'operation' for example can be determined based on its combination with physicians, officers, or merchants. Similarly, context itself can indicate the meanings of 'play' depending its collocation with children, actors, or athletes (Husam Al-Din, 2000).

Sociolinguists such as Firth assert the role of context in determining meaning. They focus on the verbal (pragmatic) usage of a word within the framework of a specific society, and believe that the combination is governed by two factors:

1. Linguistic context itself as it does not see words as isolated units. Rather, their meanings are determined via their collocation with other words in the speech series.

2. The context or the situation in which the speech is uttered (Ullmann, 1957).

For linguists, the issue of context is a cornerstone in sociolinguistics studies. Firth (1957) expanded and developed the context to comprehend and take account of all linguistic and non-linguistic factors in determining meaning. In Firth's view, the function of meaning is performed by context. He asserts that the social function of language has a very important role. Thus, the meaning cannot be divorced from the social context or the 'context of situation'.

Similarly, Halliday (1976) adopts a culture-oriented approach to language. He argues for a social perspective in explaining the text as a whole and not only focuses on a given segment of text. In his view, the context allows for understanding the whole text. It is significant in terms of determining the meaning of the linguistic structure in both written and spoken formats. Its major role lies in allowing greater understanding of the force of the text in question. Related to this, Searle (1969: 30) states that:

> *Often in actual speech situations, the context will make it clear what the illocutionary force of the utterance is, without its being necessary to invoke the appropriate explicit illocutionary force indicate.*

Corder (1973) suggests that the structure of the linguistic form must be considered in relation to the context because the same sentence can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on the intention and the background information around the sentence or the phrase. Lyons (1981) explains that there are three different levels by which the context can be understood. The first level describes how the context permits understanding the sentence which has been uttered. The second level

informs us of what proposition has been expressed. The third level shows what single illocutionary force has been used to express the proposition in question.

Similarly, Hymes (1964) grasps the same intention to reveal the role of the context in interpretation and the limitations of not doing so. In Hymes words:

> *The use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context, it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those the form can signal: the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support* (Hymes, 1968:105).

Connolly (2001) also suggests the importance of the linguistic context in interpreting texts. He mentions as examples the significance of pronouns, such as 'he' or 'she' and their relevance in referencing something that has come up earlier in the text.

Several linguists have also emphasized the importance of the context in terms of determining the meaning of a sentence (Widdowson, 2004) and (Song, 2010) identify the role of the context in eliminating ambiguity and indicating referents. Firstly, with regard to eliminating ambiguity, the context allows for the ambiguity of sentence and phrases to be made clearer by looking at the lexical ambiguity and the structural ambiguity of these texts. With regard to indicating referents, this refers to the act of replacing noun phrases with 'I', 'you', 'he', 'this', etc and by replacing verb phrases with words such as 'can', 'should' etc.

The importance of the context is undeniable as it allows the reader and listener to gain a greater understanding of the meaning of any utterance from the vast range of verbs and sentence structures used (Song, 2010). Texts can be hard to decipher if there is no contextual meaning behind them; discourse does not take place inside a vacuum. An understanding of discourse requires an understanding of the context (Van Dijk, 1997 and Titscher et al., 2000). McCarthy (1991:64) also highlights the importance of the context:

> *Most are already in agreement that vocabulary should, wherever possible, be taught in context, but context is a rather catch-all term and what we need to do at this point is to look at some of the specific relationships between vocabulary choice, context (in the sense of the situation in which the discourse is produced) and co-text (the actual text surrounding any given lexical item).*

Leech (1974), likewise, believes that the context is the cornerstone in the process of explaining the precise meaning. He specifies a number of ways through which we can determine the meaning. These are:

1. The context reveals vagueness and ambiguity in the intended message and how multiple meanings can be narrowed down to one meaning through contextual reference. An example is the word ‘ground’, which could mean to grind down or as in the floor or earth;

2. The context makes clear anaphora in speech patterns such as ‘this’, ‘which’, ‘here’, ‘there’, ‘you’, etc;

3. The context provides us with the word(s) ignored by the speaker/writer. Consider the deletion in (Janette, the donkeys!) to mean (Janette, drive these donkeys away) instead of (Janette, fetch the donkeys here) (see Tomy, 2010).

In looking at the literature on the meaning of the context, it is easy to see that the context has a fundamental role (both linguistic and non-linguistic) to play in assisting in understanding texts. Schiffrin (1987) shows how language structure and use require the study of the context in order to see how it is embedded in all kinds of cultural, social and cognitive contexts.

3.6.4 Context in English Linguistics

Western linguists, such as Firth or Palmer often describe the context within two forms, which are linguistic and non-linguistic in nature. The linguistic form is often referred to as co-text and the non-linguistic incorporates 'context of situation' and 'context of culture'.

3.6.4.1 Linguistic Context (Co-Text)

Brown and Yule concentrate particularly on the physical context in which single utterances are embedded and pay less attention to the previous discourse co-ordinate. Lewis, however, includes the co-ordinate concept to consider sentences that have a specific reference to what is said before (Brown and Yule, 1983: 46). It is, however, the case that any sentence other than the first in a fragment of discourse will have the whole of its interpretation forcibly constrained by the preceding text, not just those phrases which obviously and specifically refer to the preceding text, such as the aforementioned (Brown and Yule, 1983: 46). A good example of that is the interpretation of token as in the child's representation of "without disturbing the lion". This is what Halliday calls the co-text (Brown and Yule, 1983: 46).

Song (2010) defines the linguistic context as a reference to the context within the discourse through its relationship with the words, phrases and sentences of any discourse. Song, for instance, argues that a word on its own (taken out of context) is difficult to understand. If you use the word "bachelor" on its own, it has no significance. However, if you say "he is a bachelor" then the meaning becomes clear. Furthermore, Song (2010) highlights how the linguistic context is described using three important points: deictic, co-text and collocation. With regards to the deictic component of language, this refers to the situation of the text in space and time, which is expressed by expressions such as 'now', 'then', 'I' and 'you'. Yule (1996) refers to linguistic context, or co-text as a range of words in the same sentence.

3.6.4.2 'Context of Situation'

Situational context, also referred to as 'context of situation', is related to the environment in terms of space and time of any discourse. Situational context has an impact on the relationship between the participants (Song, 2010). Both 'context of situation' and 'context of culture' are phrases coined by Bronislaw Malinowski. Malinowski highlights that language requires an understanding of both aspects of context in order to be understood. He first determined this relationship when he was studying the language of Trobriand islanders in the Western Pacific (Widdowson, 2004).

Malinowski and Firth are the founders of the school of ethnographic linguistics. Malinowski a well-known anthropologist, examines the issue of meaning in language extensively. His research stems from studies of the Trobriand Islands in the South Pacific. Malinowski was very much concerned with the problems he had in translating the language he has recorded (Palmer, 1981: 51-52). He argued that languages are alive and evolving. He also claims that language is a ‘mode of action’ and not a ‘mirror of reflected thought’. These descriptions mean that language is not just information put down into words because there is a social background to the words spoken (Palmer, 1981). Malinowski also completed research in Easter New Guinea, where he highlighted the difficulty of translating words and ideas from the native languages. Malinowski established that Trobriand utterances are lacking in meaning when they are separated from the cultural context in which they have been written or said (ibid).

In communities where there is a high level of non-literacy, it is evident that language functions as a ‘mode of action’. In this regard, the language of the Trobriand islanders become meaningful when there is a specific 'context of situation', which is familiar to the people concerned. Malinowski makes an association between context-dependent functional uses of languages. In the case of that of the Trobriand islanders, there is a high dependence on the context of words and phrases (Widdowson, 2004). According to Malinowski (1923), this shows that meaning depends on the context and is also determined by it (cited in Widdowson, 2004). This has established the significance of the context in communication. However, words from a native language are not easy to be translated as they are specific to a culture -specific language. Words cannot be replaced by translated words. Rather, they can only be described using a selection of words that explain the meaning (Malinowski, 1923/1949).

Malinowski, however, gives a greater attention to the need for understanding the context. He asserts the need for both examining the 'context of situation' and seeing language as a human action rather than as an abstract symbolic structure (Scollon, 1998: 119). Malinowski also mentions that European languages tend to translate word by word. This can cause misrepresentation of the true meaning of text. The

meaning becomes fully clear only when the context of the whole is made clear, particularly with regard to the cultural and the physical attributes (Sampson, 1980). Malinowski's 'context of situation' can be described as a "social process, which can be considered a part of an ordered series of events in rebus". Firth sees the same as a "part of the linguistic apparatus in the same way as are the grammatical categories he uses" (Palmer, 1981: 51-53). Firth's definition will be discussed in more detail later.

Malinowski and Firth have noted that 'context of situation' is important for understanding any language (Palmer, 1981). However, "'language in action' and 'meaning as use' might be taken as twin slogans for this school of thought [i.e. Malinowski and Firth's school] (Leech, 1974: 71).

However, one aspect that Malinowski did not attempt to highlight was how the context was utilised in communication on language choice and the nature of context itself. Malinowski and other researchers including J. R. Firth, Dell Hymes and Michael Halliday, have all had a significant impact on the current approaches to contextual study (Hewings and Hewings, 2005).

Firth used the study of context to expand on current knowledge of linguistic theory. He has given the term 'context of situation' greater significance and has shown how it can be used as a schematic construct in language application. Firth establishes a set of categories that help determine the nature of 'context of situation'. This allows for the organisation and classification of language functions (Firth, 1957). He suggests the following dimensions of situations as being of potential influence (Firth, 1957:182):

A. Relevant features of participants: persons, personalities;

(i) The verbal action of the participants;

(ii) The non-verbal action of the participants;

B. Relevant objects;

C. Effect of the verbal action;

The theories established by Malinowski were further developed by Firth and Halliday. Most importantly, Firth determined the idea of sociological linguistics in the mid 1930s, which aimed to categorise “typical contexts of situation within the 'context of culture' ... [and]... types of linguistic function in such contexts of situation” (Halliday, 1973: 27). Firth was interested in establishing a theory with association made to the participants in the situation and their actions.

It is important to note that Malinowski and Firth influenced each other in part. Whereas Firth was interested in phonology and semantics, Malinowski had a differing approach to language. Perhaps, Firth’s most important contribution to the field was the assertion that meaning is interlinked with social context and situation (Firth, 1957).

Sampson (1980) highlights that Malinowski adopts the theory of 'context of situation', whereas Firth is more concerned with the ‘meaning’ or ‘function of the context’. Firth is often looked upon as the founder of modern linguistics in English. He argues that the text is appropriate and/or meaningful only when it is used in an actual context. He also demonstrates the significance of implicit meanings in modern languages with respect to 'context of situation' (Firth, 1957).

Robins (1980: 33) argues that:

> *Firth’s 'context of situation' is an abstract set of related categories at the level of semantic analysis, which may be as varied in its composition as the semantic explanation of the material requires.*

Lyons (1977) explains how the context is pragmatic as opposed to semantic in nature. Also, Lyons (1981) demonstrates Firth’s assumption that “any text can be regarded as a constituent of the 'context of situation'”. Firth is more aware of the social and expressive aspects (Lyons, 1977). Therefore, meaning can be defined as:

> *The complex of contextual relations; phonetics, grammar, lexicology, and semantics individually handles its own components of the complex in its appropriate context* (Firth, 1957: 19).

In the view of Firth, language is only meaningful when it is put into the 'context of situation'. He asserts that the process starts with “the collection of a set of contextually defined homogeneous texts and the aim of description is to explain how the sentences or utterances are meaningful in their context” (Coulthard, 1977: 1).

It is the philosophy of Firth and his followers that language cannot fully be understood without relating it to the culture in which it has been expressed, i.e. the 'context of situation'. However:

> *Having decided that something is being conveyed over and above what has been said, the addressee has to infer what this is on the basis of contextual information shared by him and his interlocutor* (Lyons, 1981: 217).

Many of the theoretical insights of Firth, and in particular how appropriate and meaningful utterances are to the understanding of language, have been reiterated by Dell Hymes. Hymes (1974) declares that there is a checklist of contextual factors known simplistically as ‘SPEAKING’. With regard to ‘SPEAKING’, ‘S’ stands for setting and scene, which includes the time and place; ‘P’ refers to the participants involved in any form of communication; ‘E’ stands for ends, by which we mean the goal of any form of communication, i.e. what it hopes to achieve; ‘A’ refers to act sequence, which is concerned with the details about the ‘event’. The ‘event’ may refer to something like a lecture and the act sequence; ‘K’ refers to key, which is about the way in which something is said; ‘I’ stands for the instrumentalities, referring to the mode of communication, such as speech, writing etc; ‘N’ stands for the norm of interaction and interpretation, which takes into account the norms of conducting certain methods of communication; and finally, ‘G’ refers to genre, which refers to the genre of the utterance, i.e. whether it is a poem, a talk, a sermon or a joke (Hewings and Hewings, 2005).

Hymes (1974) emphasised the ethnographic significance of communication and suggested that the context limits interpretation of different utterances and directs people towards the intended interpretation. Hymes shows the importance of ‘communicative competence’ in different social situations and determines that this

kind of linguistic code is important for understanding the true meanings of language (Scherer and Giles, 1979).

Hymes (1964; 1974) suggests that several key components are important in thinking about the context. These components include speech situation, which refers to both verbal and non-verbal events, speech events, which refer to the activities that are ruled by ‘norms’ of language, message form, which identifies how things are said, message content, which refers to what is being talked about, setting (place and time), scene (psychological setting), participants, which may involve examples such as the addressor, the addressee and the audience. Also included are the important components of purpose, which refers to what is hoped to be achieved and includes outcomes and goals, channels, which describe the way information is uttered and the form of speech, which identifies whether it is a piece of writing or a speech etc. Norms of interaction and norms of interpretation are also significant and these specifically refer to the behaviour and the rules that are specific to a location. Finally, genre is cited as the final component and this specifically determines whether an utterance is a poem, speech, a joke, a tale, etc (Kachru and Smith, 2008).

In particular, Hymes determines ‘persons’, ‘topic’ and ‘setting’ as the major features of the context and identifies ‘channel’, ‘code’, ‘message form’, ‘events’, ‘key’ and ‘purpose’ as the minor features (Brown and Yule, 1983). As identified earlier, Hymes uses the word SPEAKING as an acronym for the various factors that are involved in context (Wardhaugh, 1990). Hymes also coined another term known as 'the communicative competence' referring to the knowledge of semantic systems, which is an important aspect of language knowledge and linguistic competence (Lyons 1977; Jones, 2012).

Brown and Yule (1983: 37) assert that “the importance of an ethnographic view of communicative events within communities has been developed by Hymes in a series of articles”. However, in Hymes’ view, the role of the context is to show how the linguistic form is utilised to communicate meaning. The linguistic form is useful in removing the meanings that are not being associated with the form presented. This ensures that the appropriate and expected meaning is communicated (ibid, 1983).

In terms of speech events, Hymes has shown that all genres of language have contextual and situational meanings. In some cases of genre, such as conversation, there are numerous situations, whereas in others, such as prayer, the situation is more highly restricted (Coulthard, 1977).

Halliday's views on the behavioural aspects of language are similar to those of Malinowski as an undefined range of possibilities where "the 'context of culture' is the environment for the total set of these options, while the 'context of situation' is the environment of any particular selection that is made from within them" (Halliday, 1973: 49). Halliday emphasized the importance of Firth's work and further observed different aspects of the context, which have had an influence on language use. Halliday (1978) believes that the social context relies on the general aspects of the situation, which help to determine the utterance by the semantic aspects of the utterance (Hewings and Hewings, 2005).

Halliday and Hasan (1985, 1989) argue that central to the process of textual analysis from a cultural perspective is the examination of 'context of situation'. This involves investigating three aspects: field, tenor and mode of discourse. In the first aspect, i.e. the field of discourse, the description is about what is actually happening and to the type of action that is taking place. This dimension is important in order to set the context of the text. However, the fields of discourse can be non-technical. For example, in the case of general topics, or it can be technical as exemplified by the use of specialist language specific to a certain area. Examples of specialist language include law, linguistics, engineering, physics, and computer science, amongst many others (Al-Amri, 2004; Hatim and Mason, 1990).

Secondly, tenor of discourse is a reference to "who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles: what kinds of role relationship obtain among the participants, including permanent and temporary relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech role that they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved?" (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 12). The tenor of discourse exemplifies the relationship between the writer and the reader and this relationship can vary depending on who

the writers and readers are (Hatim and Mason, 1990). For example, language may be formal or informal, i.e. the language used between say two friends would be quite different from the language used by a teacher and a student, or an employer and an employee (Al-Amri, 2004).

Finally, with regard to mode of discourse, the reference here is associated with "what part the language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organisation of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel (is it spoken or written or some combination of the two?), and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, and the like" (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 12). Mode of discourse is formal and it refers to what role of language in a given situation. Mode may refer to both the spoken and the written forms, which can be further divided depending on the nature of the language. For example, the spoken form may be non-spontaneous, such as for acting out a play, or spontaneous, as in having a conversation. As with the spoken form, the written form also has various subdivisions, such as those for a script to be acted out or those written in a newspaper or report (ibid: 14).

3.6.4.3 'Context of Culture'

In the previous section, the language of communicative events was studied with respect to local situational circumstances. However, in order to get a clearer picture of this aspect of context, it is important to look at the wider socio-cultural context, which has an impact on language (Halliday and Hasan, 1989).Therefore, central to this section is the examination of what the term 'culture' means at both levels of linguistics and anthropology. At the linguistic level, the Arabic term ثقافة *(thaqāfah)*, derived from the root ثقف *(thaqafa)*, is used in Arabic to express the meaning of getting knowledge of what is needed.

According to Ibn Manzūr (1956, 3: 492), 'رجلٌ ثقف تعني رجلٌ حاذقٌ فهم', (*a man of culture means a wise person and it also means a man of knowledge*). In this sense, from a linguistic perspective, the term ثقافة is used to communicate the meaning of the knowledge needed to examine and/or analyze a given issue. At the anthropological level, the notion of culture is wide and indefinite, and it is used to

cover many cultural forms and practices performed in a given society. In the words of Goodenough:

> *As I see it, a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end-product of learning: 'knowledge', in a more general, if relative, sense of the term* (Goodenough, 1964: 36).

Thus, anthropologically speaking, the term 'culture' expands to include all cultural practices, customs, traditions, norms and values followed in a certain society. These cultural patterns reflect one general meaning: 'knowledge' in its most general sense. Therefore, based on Goodenough's statement above, it can be argued that the anthropological sense of the term culture includes both its linguistic and cultural implications.

Moreover, Halliday and Hasan (1989), state that in order to get a clearer picture of this aspect of context, it is important to look at the wider socio-cultural context, which has an impact on language.

Culture is not an easily defined topic and the 'context of culture' is just as complex. There are several definitions of culture in different ways and disciplines, including that of Geertz (1973: 89), who defines culture as:

> *A historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life* (Kachru and Smith, 2008: 31).

Similarly, Quinn and Holland (1987: 4) assert that culture is about what people "must know in order to act as they do, make the things they make, and interpret their experience in the distinctive way they do" (cited in Kachru and Smith, 2008: 31).

Thornton (1988) believes in a more dynamic conceptual definition of culture, determining its importance as what it does as opposed to what it is (cited in Kachru and Smith, 2008). Similarly, Bloch (1991) identifies culture as an anthropological idea, referring to what people should know in order to function in a given society, including the behaviour and social norms that form the basis of that social environment (cited in Kachru and Smith, 2008).

'Context of culture' refers to culture, customs and background of time in language communities in which speakers play a part. Culture and language are intrinsically mixed and one cannot exist without the other. Indeed, language is a construct of the society in which it has developed and evolved (Song, 2010). Newmark (1988: 94) suggests that culture is ‘‘the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression’’. Similarly, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: 357) define culture as consisting of:

> *Patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional, i.e. historically derived and selected ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action* (ibid: 357).

Hudson (1996), on the other hand, states that culture is a type of knowledge that is passed on from one person to another. He suggests that culture is a significant aspect of communication and language. In Kramsch’s view (1998: 4), culture is defined as:

> *A membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting.*

Lyons emphasizes that language is culturally determined because:

> *The meaning of the utterance is the totality of its contribution to the maintenance of the patterns of life in the society in which the speaker lives,*

and to the affirmation on the speaker's role and personality in the society (Lyons, 1977: 607).

Language is an important means both for defining oneself and for expressing cultural distinction. In general, people are defined by the context of their culture. However, Wardhaugh (1990) believes that the culture of a society is defined by what people believe and how people function in that society.

Sapir emphasizes the correlation between language and culture in the sense that a person cannot appreciate one without appreciating the other (Wardhaugh, 1990). Indeed, the meaning of an utterance is determined by the cultural knowledge (contextual factors) that is shared by the speaker and the listener (Corder, 1973).

3.7 Conclusion

To conclude, in light of the text linguistics approach to language: Halliday and Hasan (1976), de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) and Halliday and Hasan (1989), the present chapter has attempted to argue for a textual as well as contextual view of meaning in which the process of semantic analysis expands to encompass language and culture of the text. At the level of language, the notion of linguistic cohesion as examined by both Halliday and Hasan (1976) and (1989) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) has been adopted. At the level of culture, both the 'context of situation' and the 'context of culture' as examined by theorists of context in language and anthropology, e.g. Malinowski, Firth, Halliday and Hasan and others, have been suggested. The main argument postulated is that a better understanding of the text requires widening the scope of semantic analysis to include language and culture of the text.

Chapter Four: Structural Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions in MSA

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the structural dimension in the study of idiomatic expressions in MSA. To achieve this goal, four central issues will be addressed. In this chapter a review of related literature in the area of idiomatic expressions from a syntactic dimension will be presented, which will serve to trace the historical development of major studies in this field. This section will be followed by discussion of the general theoretical framework in which the structure of the sentence in MSA is examined. Under this general heading, the results of the study of the syntactic structures of idiomatic expressions are presented here as well as the results for the frequency of all the structures which were examined. This is followed by an exploration of the types of syntactic relations to be found in idiomatic expressions in MSA. Two further sub-sections will analyse the internal and external syntactic relations that take place between an idiomatic expression and its linguistic context. Since the latter relations are closely linked to the grammatical functions of idiomatic expressions in MSA, these functions form the focus of the penultimate section. Finally, the structural variations of idiomatic expressions in MSA are analysed to consider the degree of fixedness displayed by idiomatic expressions.

4.2 Review of Literature Related to Idiomatic Expression Structure

When examining the issue of idiomatic expressions from a syntactic perspective it is important initially to present the findings from previous studies done in the area of idiomatic expressions from the same perspective. This is intended to provide the theoretical framework for the issue under examination. The objective at this stage is to review previous work carried out on the structural analysis of idiomatic expressions in MSA and, consequently, to propose additional categories that are

missing from these studies. To achieve this goal, previous studies in both MSA and English will be reviewed.

A number of works have examined the structural dimension in idiomatic expressions in MSA, including Husam Al-Din, 1985; Abu-Saad, 1987; El-Mancabadi, 1999; and Quwaydar, 2000. Husam Al-Din (1985) draws a distinction between idiomatic expressions on the basis of contextual relations (العلاقات السياقية) and idiomatic relations, classifying the expressions as رغب في (*alike*) and رغب عن (*unalike*). Al-Qassimi (1979), however, regards these as idiomatic. Dawood (2003) makes no distinction between normal and contextual relations between verbs and prepositions, referring instead to specialised and non-specialised relations. A specialised verb is one that collocates with, and is exclusive to, a specific preposition (Nawraj, 2007).

Al-Qassimi (1979: 22) identifies three types of relationship between verbs and prepositions, describing these as:

1. Normal i.e. when the meaning of the verb is not affected by the preposition;
2. Contextual i.e. when a verb always collocates with a particular preposition as evidence of a strong relationship between them e.g. صبر على الظلم (*he was patient in the face of oppression*). In this case, if the preposition على is replaced by a different one, the sentence becomes ungrammatical and ambiguous.
3. Conventional (idiomatic) i.e. when the connection and correlation between a verb and a particular preposition is strong enough to produce a specific meaning. The new meaning depends on the preposition, e.g. رغب في (*he liked*) and رغب عن (*he disliked*).

It can be argued that verbs of this type which occur as part of a phrase are insufficient to express the idiomatic and metaphorical meanings on which idiomatic expressions are built. Consequently, phrasal verbs cannot be classified as a kind of idiomatic expression because the idiomatic meaning does not lie in their correlation with the preposition. The hearer/reader automatically understands the direct meaning of the verb in phrases such as رغب في (*he liked*), and will not perceive any other meaning. In other words, the meaning of the expression in such cases is not related to either the verb or preposition alone, but rather to the meaning of the complete

expression that consists of both verb and preposition together (Katz and Postal, 1963).

Husam Al-Din (1985) divides idiomatic expressions into two types: the complex and the simple form. The former consists of more than two words and the latter of two words or less. He sub-divides the complex form into these types: (1) verbal, (2) nominal, (3) fixed, including fixed forms such as the comparative e.g. أجود من حاتم (*more generous than Hatim*), (4) doubled (a rhyming phrase e.g. حياك الله و بياك), and (5) follow-up (in which the second word qualifies the first e.g. ملح أجاج (*salt water*).

He also divides the simple form into six types:

1. Collocation e.g. نباح الكلب (*dog's barking*);
2. Additive e.g. حاطب ليل (*night logger* i.e. someone who collects logs at night);
3. Titled expressions which combine أب *father* or أم mother with a noun e.g. أم عوف (literally, *mother of 'Awf* meaning the locust)
4. Titled expressions which combine بنت *daughter* or ابن *son* with a noun e.g. ابن أرض (literally, *son of earth)* meaning a stranger).
5. Dual expressions e.g. الثقلان (*peoples and Jinn*, referring to mortals and devils).
6. Expressions based on metonymy المكنى عنه e.g. فلان اية (*outstanding*, referring to someone who is renowned in his field of specialization).

However it can be argued that Husam Al-Din's last example depends on semantics rather than structure (Husam Al-Din, 1985: 223).

In his categorisation, Abu-Saad (1987: 10) divides idiomatic expressions in MSA into just three types:

1. Single-word expressions e.g. هو أذن (literally, *he is an ear*, implying that he repeats what others say, unthinkingly).
2. Genitive construction expressions, consisting of two words, each of which has a common meaning. However, when the two are combined, a new meaning is created e.g. عصا موسى (*Moses' staff* i.e. someone who can provide solutions to seemingly impossible problems).

3. Sentential expressions consisting of more than two words e.g. يدس السم في العسل (literally, *to hide poison in honey*, meaning that although someone acts as if he were doing good deeds, in reality he/she actually cheats and misleads others).

It is noticeable that Abu-Saad's (1987) division is based on the number of words forming the idiomatic expression and this form is not confined to الإضافي (the genitive construction) but also includes sentences, phrases, prepositional transitive verbs, and adjective structures.

El-Mancabadi (1999: 17) observes that some English idiomatic expressions may be verbal e.g. 'to turn in' (to go to bed), but most are nominal e.g. 'a white elephant' (an expensive possession which is of limited use to its owner). Others may be adjectival e.g. 'wet behind the ears' (inexperienced), adverbial e.g. 'She was going at him hammer and tongs' (violently), or prepositional e.g. 'in the pink' (in good health). El-Mancabadi (1999: 17) also notes that some idiomatic expressions, known as phraseological idioms, may consist of more than one part of speech, taking the form of a full sentence e.g. 'He flew off the handle'. She also gives an MSA example: ضرب كفا على كف (literally, *to strike a palm against a palm*, meaning he clapped his hands in amazement).

Quwaydar (2000) divides the structural unit of idiomatic expressions in MSA as follows:

1. Attributive structures, consisting of:
   a. Sentential structures, which can either be nominal e.g. القاصية من الغنم (*the straggler of the flock*, referring to someone who loses contact with his group), or verbal e.g. أطلق ساقيه للريح (literally, *he released his legs to the wind*, meaning that he ran very quickly).
   b. Phrasal structures that starts with a preposition or an adverb e.g. لكل شيخ طريقة (*every man has his own way*, i.e. ways of dealing with issues differ from one person to another).
2. Additive (genitive) structures, in which one word is annexed to another e.g. شهر العسل (*honeymoon*).

3. Adjectival structures e.g. ضربة قاضية (*knockout*).
4. Co-ordination structures (e.g. على قدم وساق (literally, *on a foot and a leg*, or working around the clock until the job is done).

Looking closely at the above structural patterns of idiomatic expressions, we can see that they can be classified into the following types: sentential or phrasal, complex or simple, and correlative or non-correlative. Correlative expressions include nominal and verbal sentences, where there is a correlation between the subject and predicate, or between the verb and the subject/object.

Similarly, various scholars of English language have examined the issue of idiomatic expressions from a syntactic/structural perspective including Katz and Postal (1963), Fraser (1970), Makkai (1972) and Moon (1998). The model suggested by Katz and Postal (1963) is one of the first to address the structure of English idiomatic expression. Their model envisages two types of idiomatic expressions: lexical idioms e.g. ‘frogman’ or ‘hot dog’, and phrasal idioms e.g. ‘kicked the bucket’. Fraser (1970) distinguishes between lexical idioms which include compound lexical elements, e.g. knuckle-head, and phrasal idioms i.e. idioms possessing more elements which need to be addressed as full linguistic unit, e.g. ‘he broke the ice’. Fraser (1970: 37-39) argues that idioms could be organized into a “frozenness hierarchy” ranging from expressions which can undergo nearly all grammatical transformations/variations without losing their idiomatic meanings (e.g. “throw in the sponge”) to those expressions which will not undergo even the most simple transformations and still retain their idiomatic interpretations (e.g. “face the music”). Halliday and Hasan (1976) added a third type, collocations, studying idiomatic expressions as linguistic collocations.

Makkai’s work (1972) on idiomatic expression is the most comprehensive in English. He identified the structural patterns in idiomatic expressions, arguing that all languages have idiomatic expressions of two types: the first relates to the units of the structure and the second relates to the semantic units of the expression. He

classified idioms into lexemic[3] and sememic. The former category include phrasal verbs (e.g. *to come up with*), phrasal compounds e.g. *blackboard*; those incorporating verbs (e.g. *man-handle*, pseudo-idioms (e.g. *spick and span*); *Irreversible binomials*: e.g., *salt and pepper;* tournures or turns of phrase (e.g. *kick the bucket).* Sememic idioms, on the other hand, usually, convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture and include proverbs e.g. *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush* and familiar literary quotations e.g. 'not even a mouse was stirring'.

Moon (1998) classified her data of fixed expressions and idioms in English in terms of structure into predicate, nominal, adjectival, adjuncts, sentence adverbials, conventions, exclamations, and subordinate clauses.

McCarthy and O'Dell (2003:06) classify English idioms differently, focusing on the possible combinations of idioms which exist in this language, identifying some seven patterns:

1. Verb + object/complement (and/or adverbial) e.g. 'Kill two birds with one stone' (solve two problems at once with a single action)
2. Prepositional phrase, e.g., 'in the blink of an eye' (in an extremely short space of time).
3. Compound e.g., 'a bone of contention' (something that people disagree about)
4. Simile: as + adjective + as or like + a noun e.g., 'as dry as a bone' (very dry)
5. Binominal: word + and + word e.g., 'rough and ready' (crude and lacking sophistication).
6. Trinomial: word + word + and + word e.g. 'cool, calm and collected' (not nervous).
7. Whole clause or sentence, e.g., 'to cut a long story short' (to give the gist of something)

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[3] Lattey (1986: 219-220) believes that lexemic idioms must include a minimum of two words and correlate with an individual part of speech.

However, it is worth noting that the modifications and changes to which an idiomatic expression may be subjected are governed by the grammatical structure of that particular language.

Thus the following section offers an overview of the grammatical structure of the sentence in MSA in order to clarify the extent to which MSA idiomatic expressions can be transformed.

4.3 Sentence Structure in MSA

In MSA, the structure of a sentence is a sequence of words made up of a word or phrase syntactically subordinated to another word or phrase that it modifies, مسند (*the predicate or rheme*) and مسند إليه (*the subject, topic, or theme*) (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012). This division is also reflected in the two MSA sentence types, namely: nominal and verbal. In the nominal sentence, مسند is referred to الخبر (*the predicate*) which may be a noun, verb or phrase depending on whether it is a nominal or verbal sentence. مسند إليه (*the subject, topic, or theme*) which is called مبتدأ (*topic*) in a nominal sentence and فاعل (*subject*) in a verbal sentence (Holes, 2004). Consider the following examples that show the structure of the nominal and verbal sentences:

- Nominal sentence: البيت واسع (*The house is big.*)
  البيت (*the house*: subject)
  واسع (*big*: predicate)
- Verbal sentence: سافر الطالب (*The student travelled.*)
  سافر (*travelled*: verb)
  الطالب (*the student*: subject)

The flexibility in syntax of MSA is one of the main grammatical characteristics that help to distinguish it from other world languages (Attia, 2006). This is clearly seen in the many different variations of word order which are possible in MSA structures. Thus, for instance, any of the following patterns can be employed without changing the meaning of a statement: verb + subject + object, or subject + verb + object, or verb + object + subject (Holes, 2004).

Holes (2004) shows that a verbal sentence in MSA has a standard order that is based on classifying the information as being either known (normally definite) or new (normally indefinite) to the sentence or context. Thus, the definite clause, whether this is the subject or object, comes before the indefinite clause. When either the object or subject is known, or both are new, the subject usually precedes the object. It should be noted that this is the general rule of thumb, but the word order may be changed for the purposes of emphasis.

According to Badawi *et al.* (2004), MSA is a language based on the template of verb + subject + object. This word order is the most common in terms of verbal sentences (Holes, 2004). However, the subject + verb + object template may be more common when highlighting the subject of the sentence (Ryding, 2005).

In MSA, sentence structure may not require a verb. This type of sentence will be formed by a subject and a predicate i.e. nominal sentence, but the order may change depending on where the emphasis lies. For example, in a nominal sentence, the predicate (خبر) may come before the subject (مبتدأ), but sometimes one of these may be omitted (Al-Hashimi, 2002).

MSA is formed of both simple and complex sentences. In simple cases, the sentence will be made up of a subject and a predicate or verb with a subject. However, in complex sentences there will be more than one subject, predicate and verb. Conjunctions, such as و (*and*) or أو (*or*) are used to combine these parts of the sentence into a single sentence structure e.g. ذهب الولد والبنت إلى المدرسة (*The boy and girl went to school)* (Badawi *et al.* 2004).

In MSA, there are six major types of sentence structure (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012):

1. Noun Phrase + Noun Phrase (NP + NP)

2. Noun Phrase + Verbal Phrase (NP + VP)

3. Noun Phrase + Preposition Phrase (NP + PP)

4. Noun Phrase + Adjective Phrase (NP + AP)

5. Verbal Phrase + Verbal Phrase (VP +VP)

6. Verbal Phrase + Noun Phrase (VP +NP)

The above examples illustrate the three main phrases used in MSA sentence structure. The Noun Phrase (NP) begins with a pronoun or noun (common, proper, collective, verbal or compound) (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012; Al-Hashimi, 2002). The Verbal Phrase (VP) can be produced from a past, present or imperative verb, and is composed of a verb (الفعل) and a subject (الفاعل). The combination of these two components gives the sentence its meaning e.g. نجح الطالب (*The student succeeded*) as an intransitive verb is sufficient to give meaning to the statement with no need for an object.

A verbal sentence is made up of a verb (الفعل), a subject (الفاعل) and an object (المفعول به) and the verb may be expressed as a transitive verb (الفعل المتعدي). As an example consider the statement: فهم الولد الدرس (*The boy understood the lesson*). As with many other language structures, the verb can be conjugated to produce different tenses, of which there are four in MSA. The first is the present tense (الفعل المضارع), which describes actions that are taking place at the present time or which are ongoing e.g. يكتب الطالب الدرس (*The student writes up/is writing up the lesson*) describes an action that is happening now. The past tense (الفعل الماضي) is used to describe an action which has already taken place. Taking the previous example, in the past tense this becomes كتب الطالب الدرس (*The student wrote the lesson*), implying that the student has completed the action of writing and this event is in the past. The third type of tense is the imperative tense (فعل الأمر), which involves ordering or requesting someone to do something e.g. أكتب الدرس (*Write the lesson!*) (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012; Al-Hashimi, 2002).

The preposition phrase (PP) (الجار و المجرور) exists in both English and MSA and it is used before a word or phrase. In MSA there are twenty common prepositions including **مع** (*with*), **من** (*from*) **إلى** (*to*) and **ل** (*for*) and these cannot be used in conjunction with other prepositions (Al-Hashimi, 2002).

Among other uses, the subject in MSA (الفاعل) serves to describe a verb and to give an indication of an action. In MSA, the subject usually follows the verb,[4] whereas in English the opposite is true. The subject can take many forms in MSA, such as a proper noun, pronoun or both singular or plural form. Pronouns as subjects can be determined as being either separated/detached (ضمير منفصل) or connected/attached (ضمير متصل). There is also another form, which is known as the hidden pronoun (ضمير مستتر).

The object (المفعول به) is the entity that is acted upon by the subject. The action described upon the object is what constitutes the verb. In order for the verb to have an entity for describing, there is usually an object or a pronoun present. In MSA, there are two differing object types (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012; Al-Hashimi, 2002).

The subject is one of the two main constituents of a clause which is subject and predicate, the other being the predicate (الخبر) which explains something about the subject. With regard to the predicate, four subdivisions are available (the predicate is underlined in each case).

single word	محمد بطل	*Mohammad [is a] hero.*
nominal phrase	محمد بيته جميل	*Mohammad's house [is] beautiful.*
verbal phrase	محمد سافر إلى الرياض	*Mohammad travelled to Riyadh.*
preposition phrase	محمد في الجامعة	*Mohammad [is] at university.*

4 In MSA, when the subject is placed before the verb, this is known as **المبتدأ** and this is inchoative verb (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012; Holes, 2004).

4.4 Structural Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions in the MSA Sample

4.4.1 Frequency of Structural Patterns

This section presents the analysis of the sample of 440 idiomatic expressions from *Al-Riyadh* which have been categorised in terms of their syntactic structure. Before categorising the syntactic structure data, the results of the analysis of the frequency of structural patterns in the data sample are presented graphically. The theoretical framework for examining the data sample of MSA idiomatic expressions from a syntactic perspective is based on two previous studies which conducted structural analysis of idiomatic expressions, one of MSA (Husam Al-Din, 1985), the other of English (Moon, 1998). The aim is to identify any categories that may be missing in these previous studies and to produce a refined model of Idioms structures in MSA.

A sample of 440 idioms was identified from *Al-Riyadh* newspaper and their structures analysed, the initial aim being to establish the frequency of each type. Figure 4.1 presents these findings in the form of a pie chart. Analysis revealed that the verbal structure with some 47.6% (210 instances) is the most frequently occurring type in the sample. Next in the frequency ranking came the genitive construction and the semi-sentence, with 17.2% (76 instances) and 11.3% (50 instances made up of 13 adverbial and 37 prepositional phrases) respectively. Roughly equal amounts of incomplete sentences (7.93% 35 instances) and adjectival structures (7.7 % 34 instances). The remaining categories accounted for less than 10% of the sample data and were as follows: nominal (4.1% 18 instances); single-word idiomatic expressions (1.6% seven instances); co-ordinated idioms (1.4% six instances) and finally, comparative idiomatic expressions (1.13% five instances).

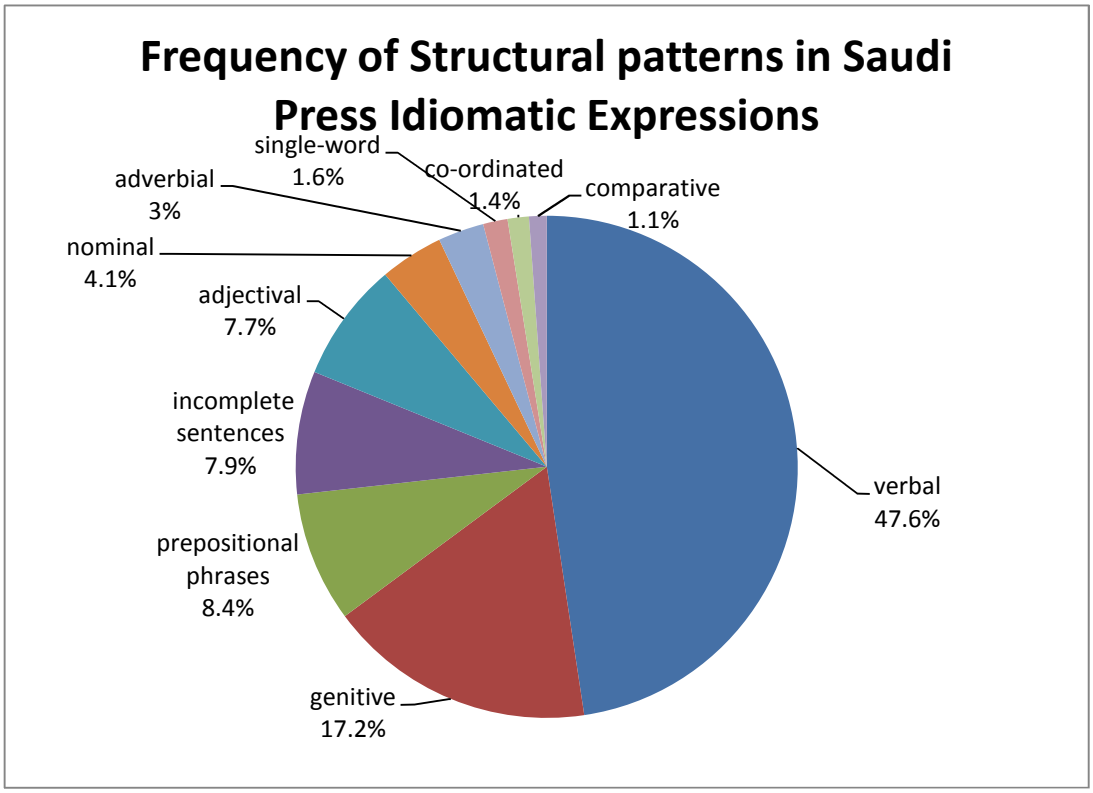

Figure 4-1 Frequency of structural patterns in Saudi Press idiomatic expressions

The next step is to compare the results of this categorisation by syntactic structures of the data sample with the findings from previous studies by Husam Al-Din (1985), Abu-Saad (1987), El-Mancabadi (1999) and Quwaydar (2000). For this purpose, 59 idiomatic expressions have been investigated to cover all syntactic categories. This discussion of these examples is in the sections which follow.

4.4.2 Verbal Idiomatic Expressions

Unlike Husam Al-Din (1985) who places both the verbal and nominal idiomatic patterns in one category, in this study these structures have been divided into two separate classes: verbal idiomatic expressions consisting of (1) a verb (theme) and (2) a subject (rheme). The verbal pattern is further subdivided into: (1a) the single verb and (1b) the phrasal verb (verb + preposition). The structural patterns that rely

on the single verb or the phrasal verb can be divided into a number of structures as seen below:

Table 4-1 Idiomatic expressions with structural patterns relying on a single verb.

No	STRUCTURE[5]	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
1	V + S	حمي الوطيس	*The fighting has become fierce*
2	V + S (annexed) + annexed to	انقبض صدره	*His chest becomes restricted (tight).* [He feels upset.]
3	V + attached Prn + S	جاءه اليقين	*Death came to him.* [He passed away]
4	V + S + N (O)	وضعت الحرب أوزارها	*The war put down its burdens.* [The war ended.]
5	V + Prn (O) + S (annexed) + annexed to (attached Prn)	وافته منيته	*Death arrived to him.* [He passed away].
6	V + S + O (annexed) + annexed to (attached Prn)	أكمل نصف دينه	*He completed half of his religion* [He got married.]
7	V + hidden S + O (annexed) + annexed to (attached Prn)	غض طرفه	*He turned a blind eye* [He ignored.]
8	V + O (annexed) + annexed to (attached Prn) + N (O)	أثقل كاهله الأمر	*The issues burdened his shoulder.*
9	V + S (annexed) + annexed to (attached Prn) + O	تنفس رجاله الصعداء	*His men breathed a sigh.* [They felt relieved.]

5 Throughout the Tables, the following abbreviations are used: V = Verb, S = Subject, O = Object, N = Noun, Prn = Pronoun, Prep = Preposition, A = Adjective.

Table 4-2 Idiomatic expressions with a structural pattern relying on phrasal verbs (verb + preposition).

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
10	V + prep phrase + S (annexed) + annexed to (Prn)	ضاق به صدره	*His chest narrowed within him.* [He became upset.]
11	V (hidden Ss) + Prep + N (annexed) + annexed	أشار بإصبع الاتهام	*He accused somebody.*
12	V + S + Prep phrase	اسودت الدنيا في عينيه	*Life turned black in his sight.*
13	V + (hidden Ss) + Prep phrase	لعب بالنار	*He played with fire.* [He behaved recklessly.]
14	V (hidden Ss) + Prep + N + A	يصطاد في الماء العكر	*He is hunting in dirty water.* [He is on the make.]
15	V + hidden S + O + Prep phrase	أمسك العصا من المنتصف	*He grasped the stick by the middle.* [He took a moderate stance.]
16	V + O + Prep + N	ضرب اخماساً في أسداس	*Confused, uncertain and thinking hard about issues.* [In a quandary]
17	V + S + O (annexed) + annexed to + Prep phrase	كفوا يده عن العمل	*They prevented him from working.*

At this stage, it important to say that the intended meaning behind idiomatic expressions of the prepositional phrase type is prior to the internal components of the structure. This finding seems to disagree with Husam Al-Din (1985) who refers to them as contextual relations, and also with Al-Qassimi (1978) who regards them

as idiomatic ones. It is argued here that this makes no difference in terms of normal and contextual relations between verbs and prepositions since these relations are the same between all verbs and prepositions. This viewpoint supports Dawood's (2003) claim that the relation between the verb and the preposition can be thought of as specialised or non-specialised, a specialised verb being one that collocates with, and is exclusive to, a certain preposition (Nawraj, 2007). In a nutshell, meaning is the key element in understanding an idiomatic expression, not the internal structure or relation between the verb and the preposition.

Table 4-3 The verbal pattern accompanied by a particle.

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
18	Particle + V + S + prep + N (annexed) + annexed to	حتى يلج الجمل في سم الخياط	*Until a camel passes through the eye of a needle.* [Never]
19	Particle + V + Prn + subjects	كأنما ابتلعته الأرض	*As if the earth swallowed him.*

Table 4-4 The verbal pattern relying on the negative verb.

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
20	particle + V + O	لا يحرك ساكنا	*He does not move any silence.* [He has no reaction.]
21	particle + V + S (hidden) + O (annexed) + annexed to	لا يصدِّق عينيه	*He does not believe his eyes.*
22	particle + verb + subject (hidden) + preposition + noun	لم ينبس بكلمة	*He did not say a word.*

The passive voice verbal pattern is also divided into forms:

Table 4-5 The passive voice verbal pattern.

no	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
23	V + deputy of the doer	رُفعت الأقلام	*Hands lifted.*
24	V + deputy of the doer + annexed to	جُن جنونه	*He went mad.*
25	V + Prep + N + annexed to	أُسقط في يده	*To get involved in a very difficult situation which cannot be resolved.*
26	V + Prep + Prn + deputy of the doer	رُفع عنه القلم	*The pen was lifted off him.* [He was excused on the grounds of diminished responsibility.]
27	V + Prep + Prn + Prep + N (deputy of the doer)	يُشار إليه بالبنان	*He is pointed out.* [He is famous.]

It is clear that numerous combinations of idiomatic expressions using the verbal structure are possible; these may consist of a verb + subject, a verb + subject + object. We accounted for a number of structures for the verb and subject positions within the expression; it is pointed out that the subject may be visible (examples 1, 2). The subject may be a hidden pronoun followed by an object (example 6, 7). The subject may occur as a verb-attached pronoun with the object as a separate noun (example 17). The subject may be a noun and the object an attached pronoun that precedes the subject (examples 3, 5).

These examples demonstrate the flexibility and complexity of the verbal structures of the idiomatic expressions. The idiomatic expressions above are clear as they are based on both the structural and semantic side. However, they are more structural than semantic, as noted by Makkai (1972) and Quwaydar (2000).

4.4.3 Nominal Idiomatic Expressions

Nominal idiomatic expressions follow the attributive structural pattern. Nominal patterns refer to expressions that have a subject (مبتدأ) and a predicate (خبر) where the subject is always attributive (مسند اليه) and the predicate is attributed to (مسند). They can occur in both affirmative and negative forms (see as shown in the five forms below) :

Table 4-6 Nominal idiomatic expressions

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
28	Subject مبتدأ + (predicate, verbal sentence) V + hidden Prn (S) + O	الباب يفّوت جمل	*The door can fit a camel.* [Used to tell someone to leave in a curt manner.]
29	S (annexed) + annexed to + N (predicate)	يدهم واحدة	*Their hands are one.* [They are united.]
30	S (annexed) + annexed to (Prn) + N (predicate) + Prep + N	قلبه معلق بالمساجد	*His heart is attached to mosques* [He is a devout Muslim.]
31	Particle + Prep + N + attributive + particle + negative particle + N	ما له أول ولا آخر	*He has neither a beginning nor an end.*
32	Prep + N + S	فيه لين	*An easy-going person.*

Studying the first two types of idiomatic structure, it could be noticed that this study divides the expressions on the basis of the attribution or linkage between the two parts of the sentence, i.e. the verb and the subject in the verbal sentence and the subject and predicate in the nominal sentence. This seems to challenge Husam al-Din's categorisation since his classification of structural patterns is based on only two forms: the simple and the compound. The former refers to the type of expressions that consists only of words or incomplete phrases, rather than a full sentence.

4.4.4 Genitive Expressions

This study also considers the basis of non-attribution as in the case of phrasal expressions, genitive constructions, and adjectives, where there are no links between the constituent parts, and thus, only a clause is formed rather than a full sentence. In the case of genitive constructions, which can be classed as non-attributive expressions, these are constructed by adding one word to another to create a new meaning. It is worth noting that the intended meaning is not the result of annexing or structuring, but rather acquired from the cultural environment of the speakers, as shown in the examples below:

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
33	أشباه الرجال	*semi-men*
34	صفر اليدين	*empty-handed*
35	جناح بعوضة	*a mosquito's wing* [a thing of insignificance]

This type of idiomatic structure is similar to that proposed by Husam Al-Din (1985: 263) insofar as the semantics of genitive structures are triggered from the acquaintance of the lingual group using fixed structures of this type within specific situations.

The annexed expression may also occur in the two forms shown below:

Table 4-7 Genitive idiomatic expressions.

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
36	annexed + annexed to (annexed) + annexed to	مزامير آل داوود	*David's family psalms*
37	annexed + annexed to + Prep + N	صبُّ الزيتِ على النار	*To add fuel to the fire*

Other forms of genitive structure also fall within the annexed expressions found as two-word structures, in which the nouns أب (*father*), ابن (son), أم (mother), بنت

(*daughter*), أخ (*brother*) and ذو (*the person having a dominant attribute)* always serve as the first word (annexed). A number of examples from the sample data are shown below:

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
38	ابن عز	*playboy*
39	ابن حلال	*kind-hearted*
40	أم الكتاب	*the most important verse*
41	ذو الوجهين	*hypocrite/ double-faced*

The given names based on the mother or father's name as well as the categories that are based on the names of sons and daughters fall under the genitive type in this research as these expressions are made by adding one word to another in building the MSA grammatical sentence. However, this categorisation was not included in Husam Al-Din's. With the exception of the dual form which is a single word, all the subcategories of the simple forms mentioned by Husam Al-Din's, namely, collocation, additive, titled constructions beginning with either 'بنت' (*daughter*) or 'ابن' (*son*), the dual/pseudo-dual and المكنى عنه (metonymy-based) fall under the genitive construction in the present study. This study classifies metonymy-based expressions as semantic rather than structural, unlike Husam Al-Din's categorisation of these.

There are two types of collocations: the first has a clear meaning depending on its structure whilst the second cannot be predicted from its components and is thus considered to be an idiomatic expression. As stated earlier, in this study these idiomatic collocational expressions have been categorised with genitive structures whilst Husam Al-Din argues that collocations should not be considered as idiomatic expressions (see 2.8.1).

It is not an easy task to understand the intended meaning of idiomatic expressions simply because they are not based on a structural dimension only. However, they can be considered more semantic than structural because judging the idiomatic dimension depends on both semantics and cultural background rather than structure.

4.4.5 Phrasal (Prepositional and Adverbial) Idiomatic Expressions

These expressions are based on prepositions or adverbs which may stand independently within an idiomatic expression rather than forming part of it. This makes them unlike verbal and nominal expressions, in which the preposition forms the main part of the structure. There are two forms of phrasal expressions: prepositional and adverbial.

Prepositional structures take four forms:

Table 4-8 Prepositional structures.

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
42	prep + N + annexed	من تحت الطاولة	*under the table* [secretly]
43	prep + N + co-ordinating particle + N	على قدم وساق	*Continuously*
44	prep + N (annexed) + annexed	على أم رأسه	*on his forehead*
45	prep + N + compliment	في خبر كان	*he became part of the past* [he was forgotten]

Second, the adverbial pattern is shown in the following examples:

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
46	تحت يده	*under his hand*
47	بين السطور	*between the lines*

As can be seen from the examples, the prepositional pattern is discussed in this work as included in the phrasal form, not within the compound type, as in Husam Al-Din's view. This has been discussed separately because the phrase starts with a preposition, but it does not make a full sentence. In my opinion, this form includes the expressions that start with either a preposition or an adverb, based on the syntactic structure of the MSA sentence.

4.4.6 Adjectival Idiomatic Expressions

These expressions contain a nouns and an adjective, as shown in the following examples from the data set:

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
48	خط أحمر	*red line*
49	نائحة مستأجرة	*A woman hired to provide professional mourning services*
50	التيس المستعار	*borrowed kid*

4.4.7 Comparative Idiomatic Expressions

These expressions take the comparative form as in the examples below:

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
51	أبيض من اللبن	*whiter than milk* [as white as snow]
52	أحلى من العسل	*sweeter than honey*

4.4.8 Coordination Idiomatic Expressions

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
53	يوم لك ويوم عليك	*One day is yours and the next is not* [Nothing lasts forever]
54	أذن من طين و أذن من عجين	*One ear made of mud and the other of dough* [used to refer a stubborn person who refuses to listen to other people's advice]
55	قلباً و قالباً	*totally agree with*

4.4.9 Single-Word Idiomatic Expressions

These expressions consist of a single noun as in:

No	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
56	أذن	*Ear* [Spy]

4.4.10 Incomplete Grammatical Structures

This structural type has not been included in previous studies and consists of a clause or incomplete sentence built or correlated with missing grammatical elements. Analysis of examples shows that various elements may be missing. The missing element can be the subject (مبتدأ) as in حبر على ورق [...] , *'the* [...] *was ink on paper'* where the missing word (subject) can be any word such as الاتفاقية (the agreement). It can also be a verb or verb + subject, e.g. in the expression الجمل بما حمل[...], ([...] *the camel and its load*), the missing verb is clearly سرق (*he stole*) i.e. *(he stole the camel and its load*). Consider these examples of idiomatic expressions which have elements missing from their structure:

Table 4-9 Incomplete structures.

No	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
57	N + Prep. + N (annexed) + annexed to	مغلوبٌ على أمره	*He is helpless*
58	N + Prep + N	نارٌ على علم	*Fire on a mountain* [Famous]
59	N + Prep + N	حبر على ورق	*Ink on paper* [Nonsense]

4.4.11 Discussion and Analysis

The sample for this study consisted of 440 idiomatic expressions which were collected from *Al-Riyadh* newspaper. These structures were analysed and categorised into nine structural patterns as mentioned above. 59 examples were

used in the categorization of the structure. These were classified into nine grammatical types: verbal, nominal, genitive, phrase, co-ordination, adjective, comparative, single-word and incomplete grammatical structures. When these types were identified, examples were sought from the collected data with the aim of clarifying the main patterns and sub-patterns of idiomatic forms. It can be argued that the reason for this range of sub-patterns is the diversity of text types in *Al-Riyadh*.

The analysis also revealed that verbal idiomatic structures are more frequent than nominal and genitive structures. Therefore, the more frequent forms have been tracked and approved as a basic structure of the expression. For instance, there may be a genitive as well as verbal pattern at the same time. In this and similar cases, the more recurrent form is examined in different contexts and certain syntactic patterns are selected. Thus, for instance, in the case of the expression مسح الجوخ (*to compliment*), this genitive construction may occur in a verbal phrase e.g. يمسح الجوخ (*he compliments somebody*) which is more frequently used than the genitive one, so this expression is categorised in the verbal pattern.

One key finding from this analysis is the identification of a new structure which has not previously been mentioned in the literature on idiomatic expressions in MSA. This new addition has been labelled the incomplete structure (see 4.4.10) and is similar to the *subordinate clauses* mentioned by Moon (1998) in her structural classification of fixed expressions and idioms in English.

Unlike the categorisation used in some previous studies which divides idiomatic patterns into three forms (verbal, nominal and literal/phrasal), here this division is based on analysing simple grammatical structures, then identifying the form or pattern of the idiomatic expression, a process which is simpler and clearer. This classification also differs somewhat from the structural categories devised by Husam al-Din (1985) which were clearly influenced by classical grammatical structure as reflected in his distinction between collocations, genitive, and the use of familial terms (المكنى والذي يبدأ بكنية ، والمبنى والذي يبدأ باسم ابن او ابنة). In this study, all these patterns are categorised under a single genitive construction form whilst his dual

form pattern is considered as a single form. All the patterns he identified are also covered here.

The examples cited here show that the most frequently occurring structure is the verbal, with the most recurrent structure containing a verb, subject and object. In the case of nominal, adjectival and genitive idioms, the most frequent structures consist mainly of a head noun plus a modifying element, used either as an adjective or a noun. This noun can be used as a predicate with a nominal structure, modifying the noun in the genitive structure.

It has also been found that the idiomatic expressions referring to the past while using verbs in their present tense after the past tense marker لا or ما can be said to communicate “the idea of continued or habitual action in the past” (Ryding, 2005: 448), e.g. لا يحرك ساكناً (*He does not care*). This negative form can only be used with the present tense to connect the negation as well as to convey the meaning of the past tense (Ryding, 2005; Badawi *et al.*, 2004).

It was also found that the verb in the structure of idioms can be used in the intransitive form, in structures consisting of verb + subject (examples 1, 2) or followed by a hidden subject and a prepositional phrase (examples 13 and 14). Moreover, the intransitive verb can be used in correlation with the preposition before the subject (examples 10). The verb in verbal structures can also be used transitively (see examples 3,4,6).

The ‘formal passive’ (Badawi *et al.*, 2004) in MSA is expressed in an inflectional way, with a shift in the vowel pattern in the active voice form taking place in order to produce the passive voice. Ryding (2005: 658) notes that the passive is "used in MSA only if the agent or doer of the action is not designated, unknown, or not to be mentioned for some reason" and this form shifts the focus from the agent (subject) to the action. There were a number of obvious examples in the sample of MSA idioms (examples 23, 24, 25, 26, 27).

The linguistic context (co-text) plays an important role in determining the grammatical form of an idiomatic expression, and analysis of the idiom sample suggested that the idiomatic expression is used both in a verbal form in some texts and in a genitive structure in others e.g. the verbal structure يجرح الكبرياء (*He lost his dignity due to a verbal insult*) was also used as a genitive construction, جرح الكبرياء (*losing one's dignity*).

In this study, some new subtypes not mentioned in Husam al-Din's classification were added to each main structure to cover most of the idiomatic expressions. These include the verbal structure accompanied by a particle, adverbial and adjectival structures and the incomplete idiomatic structures.

Finally, it is worth noting that the grammatical behaviour of idiomatic expressions reflects the grammatical structures of MSA in terms of the various modifications and changes which are seen to occur within the sample of idiomatic expressions

4.5 Syntactic Relations amongst the Constituent Elements in Idiomatic Expressions

Having examined the structural patterns of idiomatic expressions, the focus of this chapter now shifts to the analysis of their syntactic relations. Saussure (1983) argued that language is based on two types of relations: syntagmatic and paradigmatic. The former are related to positioning and the latter to substitution (Saussure 1983: 121).

Close analysis of the data sample collected from *Al-Riyadh* newspaper reveals that the elements which made up idiomatic expressions are connected by means of a particular structure which is governed by a set of syntactic rules that help to create the meaning of each expression. This, then, justifies the need for a study that examines these syntactic relations amongst the elements of MSA idiomatic expressions. Syntactic relations should be studied together with the specific meaning of the context which is exclusive to the language and structure of a specific context.

A clear rationale for adopting this approach would be that every idiomatic expression, to a greater or lesser extent, is connected syntactically and semantically with the information that precedes and follows the expression in the text in which it features.

Linguistic relations are expressed by the grammatical relations that govern the linguistic elements within a clause. These grammatical relations determine the grammatical behaviour of elements within a sentence, including the positioning of a word within a clause, subject-verb agreement and passivisation, if relevant (Hammadi and Aziz, 2012:891).

Idiomatic expressions form an essential part of a language system, meaning, therefore, that there must be at least some degree of congruence between the structure of an idiomatic expression and the syntax of the language to which it belongs. Al-Hannash (1991:32) indicates that in the MSA language system idiomatic expressions do conform to the same syntactic structures. However, he further notes that idiomatic expressions do not include all of the possible structures/forms in the language, adding that the structures found in idiomatic expressions may represent simpler or more complicated versions of the usual forms. The idiomatic expressions in this study, all of which are taken from *Al-Riyadh* newspaper, represent a small group of idioms reflecting the usage of MSA.

Analysis of this sample, consisting of 440 idioms, revealed the existence of the following six types of syntactic relations:

1. The relation between the subject and the predicate
2. The relation between the verb and the subject
3. The relation between the passive verb and deputy of the doer (subject-agent).
4. The relation between the verb and the object
5. The relation between the verb and the prepositional phrase
6. The relation between the first and the second particle of the construction.

Each of these relations is discussed in detail in the following sections.

4.5.1 The Relation between Subject and Predicate

The analysis of the structural patterns found in the 440 idiomatic expressions shows that nominal structures are noticeably less frequent than verbal structures. As the results presented in graphic form in Figure 4.1 reveal, whilst some 210 of the 440 idiomatic expressions analysed can be classified as verbal (47.6%), only 19 of these idioms were categorised as nominal (4.1 %).

These findings can be usefully compared to those achieved in the study by Al-Khouly (1982), which concluded that verbal sentences are more frequent than their nominal counterparts. Al-Khouly's sample consisted of 651 sentences, and 418 of them were found to be verbal (64.21%) whereas a considerably smaller quantity, some 233, were judged to be nominal (35.79%). This suggests that nominal idiomatic expressions are less frequently used than verbal idiomatic expressions in MSA.

According to Holes (2004: 251), the structure of nominal sentences consists of two parts, namely, the subject and the predicate. It is also worth noting that these two parts of the attribution (i.e. subject and predicate) in an idiomatic expression may both be related syntactically to other elements that can affect the meaning and structure of the expression, such as the particle of simile. They can also be related to other linguistic elements that serve to complement and expand nominal sentences including genitive constructions, prepositional phrases and the agreement between subject and predicate, and nouns and adjectives (Naḥlah, 1988: 114). All of these elements of MSA grammar are explained in further detail in the sections which follow in order to gain a clearer understanding of the role they play as constituent components of idiomatic expressions.

4.5.2 Complementary Elements

4.5.2.1 The Particle

Particles are additional elements occurring in MSA discourse that show the relationship between elements in the content of the sentence and help to convey aspects of its meaning including simile, negation, assertion, or interrogative. For the purposes of this chapter, only the first two of these purposes of the particle are outlined here.

The particle of simile: The particle كأن (*as*) correlates with the nominal sentence in order to create a simile (Al-Hashimi, 2002:159). In the following example, the idiomatic expression is expressed in the nominal form, starting with this particle: كأن على رؤوسهم الطير (literally, 'as *they had bird on their heads'* meaning *They are very quiet*). It is clear that the idiomatic meaning in this example results from the correlation between the particle كأن and the two parts of the preposition phrase (على رؤوسهم الطير). In other words, in this instance, the particle is an integral part of the idiomatic expression, and, therefore, cannot be omitted or changed. However, some other particles including ك (*like*) may be used without the same restrictions or even omitted entirely, depending on the context, e.g. the simile particle ك is unrestricted when it occurs in the idiomatic expression كالقاصية من الغنم (*like the straggler of the flock*) which is used to refer to an isolated person or thing.

The particle of negation: As Benmamoun (2000: 7) notes, in MSA, some particles correlate with the nominal structure for the purposes of producing negation. These particles include ليس, لا, and ما (Al-Hashimi, 2002:146-156). Any of these particles can be used in certain circumstances with the nominal expression to create negation. Two examples found in the data are ما له أول و لا آخر (*It has neither a beginning nor an end*) and ما له رأس و لا ذنب (*It has neither head nor tail*), used to refer to an issue which is very complex.

4.5.2.2 Genitive Constructions

Crystal (1985: 136) defines the genitive case as: "one of the forms taken by a word, usually a noun or pronoun, in languages which express grammatical relationships by means of inflections". He further notes that this grammatical case "typically expresses a possessive relationship (e.g. the boy's book), or some other similarly 'close' connection (e.g. a summer's day)" (Crystal, 1985: 136), using English examples to illustrate his point. Finally, he comments on the fact that "there is a great deal of variation between languages in the way this case is used'' (Crystal, 1985: 136).

Trask (1993: 149) offers a more technical definition of the genitive, explaining that it is:

> *a term used in the grammars of certain languages to denote a construction in which a noun is possessed or modified by another noun or noun phrase, particularly when an overt marking of the relation occurs on the noun which is possessed or modified.*

In the case of MSA grammar, the genitive is known as إضافة, and entails adding a noun or pronoun to another noun or pronoun to form a genitive construction (Wright 1967: 198).

Analysis of the idiomatic expressions in the sample shows the existence of two types of genitive. The first of these correlates with a main part of the sentence-attribution (subject or predicate) and complements the nominal structure as in the two following examples: كلمتهم واحدة (*their word is one*) and يد العرب واحدة (*the hand of Arabs is one*). Both idiomatic expressions convey the meaning that all those involved are united. The subject in both these expressions is annexed to a pronoun and a noun respectively, showing that the genitive structure forms an essential element in the attribution.

In the second type of genitive construction, the correlation is with a minor or sub-element within the sentence, and, as a result, the genitive itself functions as only a minor element in the nominal sentence (Naḥlah, 1988). An example of this type can

be seen in the idiomatic expression قلوبها في حناجرها (*their hearts are in their throats*) used to describe someone in a state of extreme horror. In this example, the noun حناجر (*throats*) is added to the following pronoun ها forming a single structural unit that functions as the second part of the genitive structure, thus, in this instance, the genitive structure takes the place of a prepositional noun.

4.5.2.3 The Prepositional Phrase

The prepositional phrase in MSA is a construction involving a preposition (حرف جر) followed by a noun or a suffixed pronoun, e.g. **به** is a prepositional phrase in which **ب** is the preposition and **ه** functions as a suffixed pronoun. In the prepositional phrase, both noun and pronoun depend on the use of a preposition. The preposition in MSA can occur either as a free-standing item or as a prefix.[6]

The prepositional phrase in MSA acts as a complementary element to the two parts of attribution (predicate and subject) and MSA syntax has a number of rules that govern the special relationship between these two components. In the prepositional phrase, preposition and noun form one structural unit, creating new meanings and a particular relationship between these elements and the structure of verb and subject (Najjar and Khalil, 2000).

The analysis of the collected data shows that all the prepositional phrases which occur in idiomatic expressions are governed by the usual rules of syntax. In some nominal idiomatic expressions, these structural units (prepositional phrases) form a fixed element as in فيه لين (*he is lenient*) and من تحت الطاولة (*from under the table*). Both these idiomatic expressions display strong connections between the preposition and the noun that follows. In addition, both these connections together express a specific figurative meaning that is semantically different from the apparent literal one.

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[6] According to Classical Arabic grammar, the suffixed noun or pronoun is considered to be a genitive case (مجرور). For further discussion, see Al-Hashimi (2002).

The prepositional phrase sometimes correlates with the nominal form to create a specific meaning known as التخصيص which restricts the relation between the prepositional phrase and the full nominal form. An example can be seen in the idiomatic expression قلبه معلق بالمساجد (*his heart is attached to mosques*) in which the prepositional phrase (حرف الجر و الاسم المجرور) creates a more specific meaning of the sentence implying that this connection is an emotional one, thus producing a phrase which by implication means someone is a devout Muslim.

4.5.2.4 The Adjective

In MSA, adjectives belong to a wider grouping known as التوابع (literally, *followers*) which is also comprised of coordinations, adverbs, and emphatics. The MSA adjective correlates with the noun, and also agrees with the noun in terms of case, gender, and number (Al-Hashimi, 2002). In MSA sentence word order, the adjective follows after the noun, as shown in the following examples:

Indefinite noun + adjective:	قابلت رجلا كريما
	I met a man generous
	I met a generous man
Definite noun + adjective:	قابلت الرجل الكريم
	I met the man [the] generous
	I met the generous man

Adjectives in MSA can be used for the purpose of 'specialization' (following indefinite nouns) or clarification (follows definite nouns) (Al-Hashimi, 2002). In this analysis, the focus is on understanding the role which the adjective plays as an additional element in nominal idiomatic expressions.

Two examples have been chosen for closer analysis. The first idiomatic expression بينهم فجوة عميقة (*there is a wide gap between them*) consists of the predicate (the

prepositional phrase بينهم) + the subject (فجوة) + the adjective (عميقة) Similarly, the second idiomatic expression اللعب في الوقت الضائع (*playing in extra time*), which has its origins in sporting terminology and has come to mean doing things at the last minute, consists of the subject (اللعب) + predicate (prepositional phrase ‘في الوقت’) + adjective (الضائع). In both these examples, the adjective acts as the additional complementary element.

In the first example, بينهم فجوة عميقة, the adjective is used to qualify the preceding indefinite noun whilst in the second example, اللعب في الوقت الضائع, it is used to restrict the structure and becomes an indivisible part of it. In other words, specifying the subject by adding this adjective can be said to impose a kind of restriction on the attribution relation, and the correlation between the adjective and the noun comes to form a part of the structure of the expression.

Other nominal idiomatic expressions may contain adjectives which make up one part of their structure, but in these cases the adjective is not used as a restrictive element, but rather as a variable one that can be changed (Al-Anbar, 2001:73).

4.5.2.5 Coordination

Like adjectives, coordination is also classified as part of the wider grouping known as التوابع (*followers*). In MSA coordination is used to link a pair of words, phrases or clauses together by use of some coordinating conjunction particle such as الواو (*and*). The first part of this pair is referred to as المعطوف عليه (*the first conjunct*) and is followed by المعطوف (*the second conjunct*). Both these parts agree grammatically in terms of number, gender and case and are congruent in syntax. Thus, for example, if two nouns are related through a conjunction then they will both share the same case ending, the second conjunct being the same as the first (Aoun *et al*., 1994; Al-Hashimi, 2002). Conjunction is a complementary element in the structure of nominal expressions.

Analysis of some nominal sentences shows that the structure of coordination is restrictive and forms an essential fixed component of certain idiomatic expressions.

In the following example, ليس له في العير و لا في النفير (*he has nothing to do with this or that*), collocation occurs between the first conjunct 'ليس له في العير', the second conjunct 'في النفير' and the coordinating conjunction particle الواو to form one meaningful structural unit as an idiomatic expression. In this case, deleting any part of the structural unit is not possible, as it will affect the idiomatic meaning.

4.5.3 The Relation between Verb and Subject

Although Badawi *et al.* (2004:344) state that MSA is a Verb + Subject + Object (VSO) language, both Aoun *et al*. (2010: 47) and Holes (2004:251) note that the two main parts of the verbal sentence in MSA are the verb, followed by the subject (or doer of the action). Analysing the data indicates that verbal idiomatic expressions consist of a verb plus a subject, the correlation occurring between the verb and the doer of the action, examples being انقبض صدره (*his chest shrank*) referring to someone who became intolerant of/towards something and قام حظه (*his luck rose*) or he had good luck.

Al-Hannash (1991: 33) indicates that the structure of the verbal idiomatic expression is not based on any single element, but rather consists of the collocation between the verb and one of the objects, and it is rarely based on the collocation between the verb and the doer of the action

Figure 4.2 below represents the results of the statistical analysis of the verbal categories of idiomatic expressions in the MSA sample used for this study.

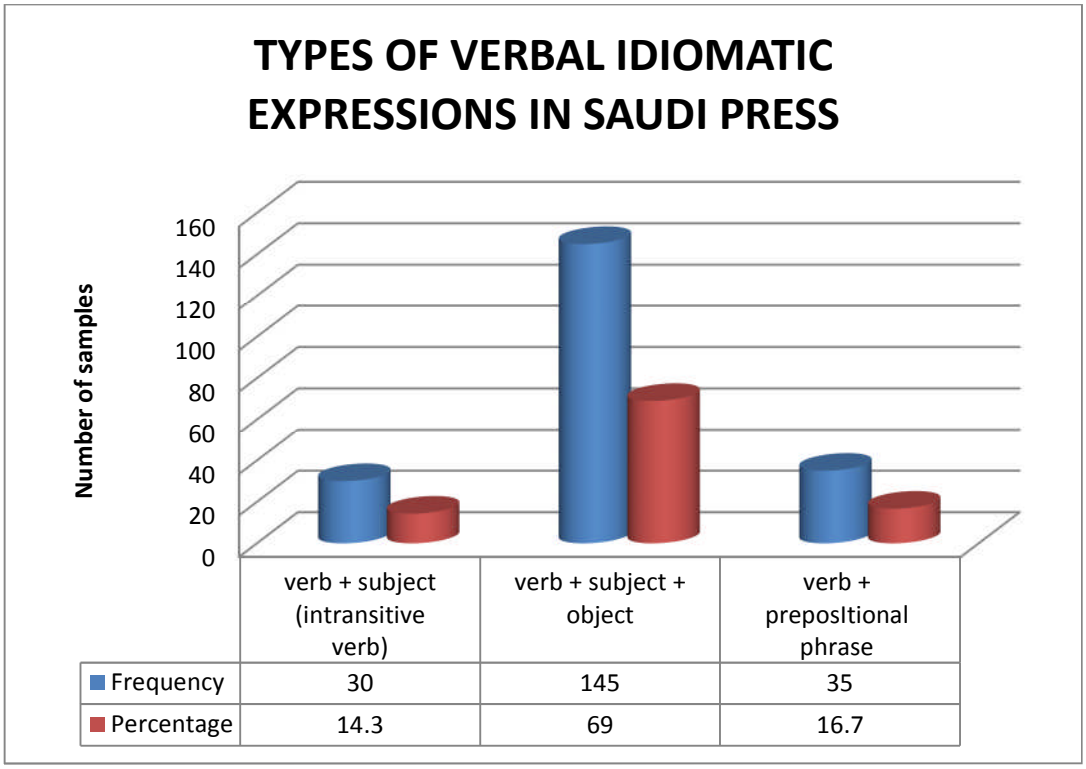

Figure 4-2Verbal categories of idiomatic expressions in Saudi Press.

As the results of the analysis of the data show, it has been found that the relation between the verb and the object does play a role in structuring well over half of the verbal idiomatic expressions in the sample (69%). However, the collocation between the verb and the subject (doer of the action) is perhaps not as rare as Al-Hannash's claim might suggest. The analysis of the data indicates that 30 (14.3 %) of the 210 idiomatic expressions that can be considered to be verbal phrases are used in the form: verb +subject structure. In fact, in addition to the two examples cited above, other examples of this structure include: شاب شعره (*his head turned grey*) which means 'he became old'; يراه الأعمى (*it can be seen by the blind*) 'it is quite clear'; تجمد الدم في عروقه (*[the] blood froze in his veins*) 'he was extremely frightened', and طفح الكيل (*the weight overflowed*) 'things became too much'.

Other verbal expressions include transitive verbs. In these expressions, the doer of the action (subject) is a major component (although restricted), whereas the object is free and can be replaced by another appropriate object. In the following expressions, collocation occurs between the verb and the doer of the action, whereas the object can be replaced by another element. Consider the examples أكل لسانه القط (*the cat ate*

his tongue) or ‘he remained silent’; وافته المنية (*death came to him*) or ‘he passed away’, and قام حظه (*luck helped him*), meaning ‘he was fortunate’. This rule also applies to those verbal expressions in which the verb is intransitive.

In the case of other verbal expressions, analysis reveals that the structural relation between the verb and the subject requires that the object functions as a collocation. This means that the structure of the expression is then based on the relation between the verb and both the subject and the object, at the same time. This can be seen in examples such as وضعت الحرب أوزارها (*the war came to an end*) and بلغ السيل الزبى (literally, *the stream reached foam*) meaning ‘things got too much’.

This discussion suggests that the structural relation between the verb and the doer of the action (subject) is quite common. In addition, this relation must usually follow the same rules as those which apply to the ordinary verbal sentence, namely that the doer of the action (subject) comes after the verb and that the subject precedes the object respectively. In a few cases, the object may precede the doer of the action (subject), and come between the verb and the doer of the action (VOS) e.g. أصابته عين (*an eye touched on him*) meaning ‘he was envied’. The relation between the verb and the subject in verbal idiomatic structures is an essential relationship and the subject can take a number of forms. It can be an explicit noun, e.g. يراه الأعمى (*it can be seen by the blind*); an implicit noun e.g. أصاب كبد الحقيقة (literally, *he hit the liver of the truth*) meaning ‘he got to the heart of the matter’, or an attached pronoun e.g. كفوا يده عن العمل (*they prevented him from working.*).

4.5.4 The Relation between the Passive Verb and the Deputy of the Doer (Subject-Agent)

The relationship between the verb and the so-called نائب الفاعل (deputy of the doer or subject-agent) in idiomatic expressions is attributive, with the attribution itself forming the linkage between the passive verb and the subject-agent (Al-Hashimi, 2002; Ryding, 2005: 658). In the sample, there are some seven idiomatic expressions based on passive verb constructions, including رفعت الأقلام (*pens were*

lifted) used in the sense of ‘it is over’, and أسقط في يده (*it was dropped into his hand*) implying that someone has become involved in something and is unable to find a way out. It is noticeable that in these expressions, the deputy of the doer is originally an object, as seen in the first example, or a prepositional phrase, as in the second.

Analysis of all the passive verbal idiomatic expressions shows that the relationship between the verb and the subject-agent cannot be transformed into an active one. In other words, the subject cannot be retrieved with the aim of forming part of the sentence. Thus, three different types of verbal idiomatic expressions can be distinguished involving the active and the passive voice.

In some idiomatic expressions, the subject is an essential part of the active voice form making the verb in the active voice obligatory. This is clear in examples with intransitive verbs e.g. حمي الوطيس (*war grew stronger*). In other examples, the subject is a restricted or core element in the structure of the idiomatic expression. In such cases, the subject cannot be omitted or replaced by a subject-agent e.g. as in بلغت القلوب الحناجر (*hearts reached throats*) meaning ‘they were totally horrified’. In such expressions, the relationship between the verb and the subject cannot be transformed into a relationship between the verb and the subject-agent, which is why such a relation is referred to as ‘obligatory’ (Al-Anbar, 2001:78-79).

In other expressions, this relationship between the idiomatic expression and the subject-agent is ‘not obligatory’ because the verb can be successfully turned from the active voice into the passive form and vice versa, without affecting the meaning or structure of the expression. This is shown in the following pair of examples, with the first in the active form طبع الله على قلبه (*God imprinted on his heart*) and the passive form طبع على قلبه (*it was imprinted on his heart*), both meaning ‘he can no longer make amends’.

In the last type of relation between the verb and active/passive voice structure, the verb is restricted to the passive form, implying that the relationship between the verb and the subject-agent in the expression is also ‘obligatory’. Thus, in both of the

following idiomatic expressions transforming passive verbs into active ones would result in distortion and loss of figurative meaning: يشار إليه بالبنان (*he is pointed out*) meaning 'he is famous' and رفع عنه القلم (*the pen was lifted off him*) to mean 'he was excused on the grounds of diminished responsibility'.

4.5.5 The Relationship between Verb and Object

In verbal sentences, some verbs are transitive and therefore must have an object. In MSA, the verb can be transitive either by itself, or with a preposition. In the former case, the verb takes a direct object, whilst in the latter it needs to take an indirect object or a prepositional object (Hasan, 1975).

The analysis of the data shows that 145 idioms contained transitive verbs and 69% of these verbal forms take the form of: verb + subject + object (VSO relations). In two of the idiomatic expressions, the verbs transited by themselves to their respective objects e.g. أزاح الستار عن الشيء (*he removed the screen from something*), implying 'He disclosed something' (object = الستار), and نسب الظلام (*to curse the darkness*) to mean 'to complain about the state of affairs'[7] (object = الظلام).

Other examples include transitive verbs with prepositions e.g. أدلى بدلوه (*he threw down his bucket*) meaning 'He made his viewpoint known', and سقط من عيني (*he fell from my eye*) used in the sense of 'I no longer respect him'. In these examples, the verb transited with the preposition ب in the former and من in the latter.

In some idiomatic expressions, the verb may require a specific noun as an object, and in such cases, this object is referred to as a restricted element. In other verbal idiomatic expressions, there is no specific restriction and, in these instances, the object can be replaced with an unlimited number of nouns which share similar

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[7] This may possibly be another incomplete idiomatic expression. Cf. the saying 'It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness', which has been attributed to many difference sources.

characteristics, without this causing any change in the semantics or structure of the idiomatic expression. This can be illustrated by the idiomatic expression الدمعة خنقته (the tear suffocated him) meaning 'he was on the verge of tears'. In this particular case, the object is unrestricted and can be replaced by any other appropriate object. On the other hand, the two other elements, i.e. the verb and the agent, are restricted and remain unchangeable.

+ المريض	+ المسافر	+ الأب	+ الأم	الدمعة خنقت
+ the patient	+ the traveller	+ the father	+ the mother	The tear suffocated
	UNRESTRICTED OBJECTS			RESTRICTED

4.5.6 The Relationship between the Verb and the Prepositional Phrase

Before proceeding to analyse the relationship between the verb and the prepositional phrase in verbal idiomatic expressions, it is necessary to point out that in general there are three types of relationships between intransitive verbs and prepositions in MSA verbal sentences (Al-Qassimi, 1979; Najjar and Khalil, 2000:109).

In the normal (free) relationship, the preposition can be changed and the prepositional phrase can be completely deleted, without affecting the meaning of the verb (Al-Qassimi, 1979; Najjar and Khalil, 2000). The verb مشى (*walked*), for instance, can be used with various prepositions without changing its meaning e.g. مشيت من البيت (*I walked out of the house*), مشيت في البيت (*I walked into the house*), and مشيت إلى البيت (*I walked to the house*). Similarly, the meaning of the verb does not change if the prepositional noun is altered, e.g. مشيت إلى البيت (*I walked to the house*), مشيت إلى الجامعة, (*I walked to the university*), and مشيت إلى السيارة (*I walked to the car*). In this type of relationship between the verb and the prepositional phrase, there is no specifically restricted structural relation.

When it comes to the contextual relationship, however, the structure of the sentence may differ or deviate from the common use if the preposition that makes the verb transitive is changed (Al-Qassimi, 1979; Husam Al-Din, 1985:222; Najjar and Khalil, 2000). In such cases, the prepositional noun can be changed, but not the preposition itself. An example of this case is the verb صبر (*he suffered*) which can be used in the following instances: صبر على الأذى (*He suffered harm*), صبر على الظلم (*He suffered oppression),* and صبر على العذاب (*He suffered torture*). In these examples, the relationship between the verb and the preposition is organically contextual. In other words, the meaning of the verb does not change even if the prepositional phrase is deleted.

In idiomatic expressions, however, the verb and the preposition together create a new idiomatic meaning (Al-Qassimi, 1979: Husam Al-Din, 1985; Najjar and Khalil, 2000). Thus, changing the preposition or deleting the prepositional phrase will completely change the meaning of the idiomatic expression. In the verbal expressions that are based on the relationship between the verb and the prepositional phrase, the relationship is an ‘idiomatic’ one.

As Figure 4.2 demonstrates, some 35 idiomatic expressions (16.7 % of the verbal idioms in the sample) are shown to have the structure verb + subject (explicit) + preposition phrase. In analysing this relationship, it was noticed that the idiomatic structure in some of these expressions emerged from the relationship between the verb and the preposition. Both the verb and the preposition are free in such expressions and can be replaced with other verbs or prepositions. Consider the following examples:

يمسك العصا من المنتصف	*to grasp the stick by the middle*
	[to maintain a moderate stance]
يصب الزيت على النار	*to pour oil on fire*
	[to make a bad situation worse]

أسدل الستار على القضية *he brought the curtain down on the issue*

[he put an end to discussion of the issue]

In the examples above, the relationship between the verb and the preposition is essential to form the idiomatic meaning. Consequently, the expressions يمسك من , على يصب, and أسدل على are idiomatic. On the other hand, when one noun can be exchanged for another without altering the meaning of the expression, the relationship between the preposition and the prepositional noun is a normal one. This means, for example, that one word for '*middle*' المنتصف can be replaced with another, الوسط, and the word القضية with الموضوع, whilst still retaining the meanings of these two expressions.

In addition to this organic relationship between the verb and the preposition, there is a wider relation that includes the verb and the prepositional phrase. In this relation, each element is restricted due to the structure of the idiomatic expression. Consider the following examples:

يدس السم في العسل *to hide poison in honey*

[to tempt somebody into a trap]

يعيش في برج عاجي *he lives in an ivory tower*

[he enjoys an affluent lifestyle]

يبكي على اللبن المسكوب *to cry over spilt yoghurt*

[to worry about something that cannot be changed]

In these examples, there must be congruence between all three elements (the verb, preposition, and prepositional noun) in order to ensure that the expression maintains its intended idiomatic meaning, and is structurally and semantically acceptable. Replacing any of these elements with a different word will create a phrase which is unacceptable within the scope of the idiomatic expressions. The first of the expressions, يدس السم في العسل , for instance, conveys the implication of intending to trick someone by offering them something which appears to be good but is actually

bad. If the noun عسل (*honey*) were to be switched for another noun خبز (*bread*), for instance, the phrase loses any sense as an idiomatic expression.

4.5.7 The Relation between the First and the Second Particle of the Construction

The genitive construction was previously discussed as a complement of nominal sentences. In this section, it is examined as an independent structure or within a verbal sentence.

Structures containing genitive constructions were the second most common form of idiomatic expressions after verbal structures in the data (see 4.4.1) with some 76 expressions featuring this type of structure. Expressions consisting solely of genitive constructions can occur to produce an idiomatic meaning and this type was introduced in the earlier discussion of the structural patterns of the idiomatic expression. In this type of genitive construction, both the المضاف and the المضاف إليه are necessarily restricted (fixed) elements since these together form the twin pillars of the idiomatic expression.

There are also a number of other idiomatic expressions which make use of genitive constructions and these are composed of a first, second and third particle of the genitive structure (2 مضاف إليه + 1 مضاف إليه + اسم مضاف). In these types, the first and the second particle of the construction are made up of fixed or restricted elements. The third particle of the construction may take several different forms, however. It can be an explicit restricted noun e.g. خفيف ذات اليد (*he is light-handed*) i.e. ‘He is a thief‘. It can also be a pronoun that refers to its precedent e.g. ابن أبيه (*his father’s son*) meaning ‘like father, like son’, or it may change its meaning with the change in the referent as in بنت أبيها (*her father’s daughter*) implying ‘she is brave’.

Other types of idiomatic expressions featuring genitive construction cannot produce an idiomatic meaning or form an idiomatic expression by themselves. However, the unity between the first and the second particle of the construction within a bigger

structural unit or a longer sentence can form an idiomatic expression. This can be seen when the first particle of the construction is annexed to one of the components of a nominal or verbal sentence. Previous examples have demonstrated that the agent or object in the verbal sentence may be attributed or connected to the noun/pronoun following it. An example of this type of genitive agent can be found in the following example: تلوح في الأفق بوادر الفوز (*signs of victory appear on the horizon*), the subject here being بوادر which is the first particle of the genitive structure. A genitive construction as an object is seen in the idiomatic expression أصاب كبد الحقيقة (*he hit the liver of truth*), used to mean 'he got to the heart of the matter', in which the object كبد is the first particle of the genitive structure. Similarly, in the example أدار ظهره (*he turned his back*) meaning 'he ignored something', the object ظهر is the first particle of the genitive structure.

In short, the genitive construction in idiomatic expressions can occur in different forms. In structures where the genitive construction is an object, it occurs in two forms: in the first type, the second particle of the construction can be transformed from a pronoun to noun and vice versa, but in the second type, the pronoun can only be replaced by another pronoun. In the example أثقلت كاهله (*it lay heavy upon his shoulder*), the word كاهل is the first particle of the construction with the pronoun ه being annexed (being the second part of the genitive structure). Nevertheless, the second particle of the construction can be replaced in this expression by using an explicit noun e.g. أثقلت كاهل الملك شؤون الدولة (*the affairs of State lay heavy upon the King*).

The second type of genitive construction is exemplified by two idiomatic expressions: يتكلم من طرف خشمه (literally, *speaking from the tip of his nose*) meaning 'he is arrogant' and أدلى بدلوه (*to take part*). In these examples the pronouns in the second particle of the construction cannot be replaced by explicit nouns as both the agent and the second particle of the construction refer to the same thing.

4.6 Grammatical Functions of Idiomatic Expressions

The previous section explored various syntactic relations between the elements of an idiomatic expression which constitute an independent structural unit forming part of a wider context and structure. Consequently, this section focuses on new syntactic units that correlate the idiomatic expression with its surrounding context. The relationship (external relations) between idiomatic expression units and larger text unit is an important factor in the communication of meaning. Thus, these syntactic and grammatical relations join the units of structure to build the whole text (Cawsey 1990: 77; Hovy 1990: 19).

Like phrases or sentences, idiomatic expressions are situated within a larger text and perform a grammatical function. However, the relationship between an idiomatic expression and its linguistic context can be viewed as a mutual one, since the expression can affect the context and vice versa. Thus, an idiomatic expression can play the role of subject or object, depending on its precedent. Idioms are correlated to what precedes or follows in terms of structural and contextual relations.

The importance of the linguistic context (co-text) is not exclusive to idiomatic expressions. Saussure (1983:221) argues that linguistic context plays a major role in the general system of language. All language units depend on other surrounding units or on the series of these units together. The idiomatic expression gains its significance in the surrounding linguistic context via its correlation with what precedes or follows (Saussure, 1983: 213).

The following sections attempt to trace the contextual relations between idiomatic expressions and their text. In Hassan’s view (1994: 191), these contexts help to analyse the syntactic meaning.

4.6.1 Idiomatic Expression in Attributive الاسناد Relation

Section 4.5 examined the attributive relation which exists within an idiomatic expression. Here, the focus in on the attributive relation as a contextual relation between the idiomatic expression and its context. The idiomatic expression can function as either a subject or a predicate. In both cases, as a basic constituent, it correlates with the second constituent in the linguistic context or structure of text.

4.6.1.1 The Idiomatic Expression as Subject

An idiomatic expression can function as a subject or a deputy of the subject in the context of a verbal sentence and as a subject/مبتدأ in a nominal sentence as seen in the following examples:

The idiomatic expression as subject/فاعل:

4.1	يلوح في الأفق بصيص أمل	*A ray of hope appears on the horizon*
4.2	ليمتنع ذو الوجهين عن إفساد المجتمع	*Let the double-faced* [hypocrites] *stop corrupting society*
4.3	نجح ابن أبيه	*Like father like son*

The idiomatic expression as deputy of the subject:

4.4	عندما يُقطع رأس الفتنة	*when the head of gossip is cut off* [wagging tongues are silenced]

The idiomatic expression as subject/مبتدأ in a nominal sentence:

4.5	هناك بصيص أمل	*There is a ray of hope.*
4.6	البصيص من الأمل لم يتحقق	*The ray of hope has not been achieved* [was extinguished]
4.7	إنّ لديهم بصيص أمل	*They have a ray of hope*
4.8	كأنَّ وجهه مغسول بمرق	*as if his face was washed off with soup* [he is rude]
4.9	كان لدول المجلس نصيب الأسد	*the Council states had the lion's share,*

It is noticeable that those idiomatic expressions functioning as subject (فاعل) or (مبتدأ) are more frequent than those functioning as the deputy of the doer. Moreover, most of these expressions functioning as subjects are of the genitive structural type. The noun is attributed to the genitive structure of idiomatic expression in examples 4.5-4.9, whereas the verb is attributed to the genitive structure of idiomatic expression in examples 4.1-4.4. It is also noticeable that in some nominal idiomatic expressions, the subject (مبتدأ) precedes the predicate which is the correct position for the subject in MSA sentences i.e. مبتدأ + خبر (example 4.6). In other nominal expressions, however, the subject (مبتدأ) follows the predicate (خبر) (example 4.5).

The idiomatic expression may be an explicit subject (مبتدأ) (examples 4.5 and 4.6) or may replace the subject (مبتدأ) with agent of the subject as in اسم إنَّ (the noun of 'إنَ' in example 4.7) and اسم كان (the noun of ' كان' in example 4.9). This is because the nouns of 'إنَ' and 'كان' are originally مبتدأ (Al-Hashimi, 2001).

As a subject (مبتدأ), the idiomatic expression should be viewed as a single structural unit (Fernando, 1996). In example 4.6, the subject is not the noun البصيص (*a ray*), but the whole expression البصيص من الأمل (*a ray of hope*).

However, in the previous examples, idiomatic expressions perform different grammatical functions in terms of co-text or grammatical relations between idioms and their linguistic context. Thus the idiom بصيص أمل (*a ray of hope*) is seen to perform different grammatical functions when used in a different linguistic text i.e. subject (فاعل), deputy of subject (نائب فاعل) and subject (مبتدأ).

4.6.1.2 The Idiomatic Expression as Predicate خبر

As a predicate, the idiomatic expression can consist of a single word, phrase, or full sentence.

The predicate as a single word:

4.10	هم أذن للنظام الفاسد	*They are an ear* [they spy] *for the corrupt regime*
4.11	هو ثور	*He is a bull* [implying strength or stupidity].

The predicate as a phrase (adverbial phrase and prepositional phrase):

4.12	هم بين نارين	*They are between two hell fires*[caught between the devil and the deep blue sea]
4.13	آمالهم وراء الأفق	*Their aspirations lie beyond the horizon*
4.14	السعادة في الرجوع إلى الله	*Happiness lies in referring to Allah*
4.15	الاجتماع في البلد الحرام	*The meeting is in Al Balad Al Haram* [Makkah]

The predicate as a sentence:

4.16	وصفوه بأنه رأس الفتنة	*They described him as the mastermind behind the gossip.*
4.17	ليكوِّن المسوؤل نظرة بعيدة	*for the manager to have a far-sighted look* [vision]
4.18	الكلام يدخل من الأذن اليمنى و يخرج من اليسرى	*Speech goes in the right ear and out the left* [I'm not interested]
4.19	نحن نقف على مفترق طرق	*We stand at a crossroads*

The predicate as a genitive construction:

4.20	الجهل أبو المصائب	*Ignorance is the biggest difficulty* [the main obstacle]
4.21	هم رأس الفتنة	*They are the head* [source] *of the gossip*
4.22	هذا حلم الضبعة	*This is the female hyena's dream* [It will be achieved by two ways]
4.23	يكون حمامة السلام البيضاء	*to be the white dove of peace*

Based on the examples above, it can be seen that the idiomatic expression encompasses various forms of predicate. It can take the form of a verbal sentence

(examples 4.18 and 4.19), a predicate of ‘كان’ (example 4.17), or a predicate of ‘إنَ’ (example 4.16). The predicate may take the form of an adverbial phrase (examples 4.12 and 4.13), or a prepositional phrase (examples 4.14 and 4.15). The predicate may also be a genitive structure (examples 4.20-4.23) where the idiomatic expression, functioning as a predicate, takes the form of the annexed predicate. Finally, functioning as a predicate, the idiomatic expression can take the form of a singular noun (examples 4.10 and 4.11).

4.6.2 Idiomatic Expressions Performing Various Functions

The relation between the idiomatic expression and its context may be a specific one i.e. when idioms appear as object or adverb; they give the meaning of specification/definition for the sentence. This is one of the contextual relations between the elements of the sentence (Hassan 1994: 194). In this section an attempt is made to introduce contextual relation and explain its role in connecting idiomatic expressions and syntactic context.

Idiomatic expressions functioning as an object:

4.24	تركت لها مسمار جحا	*I left her Joha’s nail* [a pretext to interfere again]
4.25	قطعت عليه حبل أفكاره	*I cut off his rope of thought* [interrupted his train of thought]
4.26	إسرائيل ذبحت حمامة السلام	*Israel killed the dove of peace*
4.27	نال النادي نصيب الأسد	*The club got the lion’s share*

Idiomatic expressions functioning as a adverbial phrase indicating a place:

4.28	يقف بين نارين .	*He stands between two hell fires* [He is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea]
4.29	يقف عند مفترق طرق	*He stands at a crossroads*

4.30	يقرأ ما بين السطور	*He reads between the lines*

Idiomatic expressions functioning as an adverb حال/circumstance:

4.31	لا يجد وقتا يحك فيه رأسه	*He does not have time to scratch his head* [he is very busy]
4.32	راح يعض أصابع الندم	*He gnaws fingers of regret* [is extremely sorry].

4.6.3 Idiomatic Expressions Implying Attribution (النسبة)

The concept of 'attribution' involves both preposition particles and genitive construction as they imply attribution/correlation between preposition and noun in a prepositional phrase and between the two parts of a genitive structure. Consider the examples below:

4.33	تفادي مقص الرقيب	*Evading/avioding the scissors of scrutiny*
4.34	رغبة في إيجاد بصيص أمل	*in a bid to gain a ray of hope*
4.35	الاحتفال بالتغييرات الجديدة جاء من باب التطبيل	*celebrating the new changes comes from the door of drumming* [it is just propaganda]

In examples 4.33-4.35, the idiomatic expressions function as an annexed to (second particle of the construction/مضاف اليه) in the genitive construction, and this genitive construction is the idiomatic expression in full in مقص الرقيب (*the scissors of scrutiny*), بصيص أمل (*a ray of hope*), and التطبيل (*the drumming*). The meaning in these examples implies annexation between the first and the second particle of construction which is the idiomatic expression meaning that in this instance idiomatic expressions play the role of modifiers.

Prepositions, likewise, imply the meaning of annexation/attribution, depending on their position. The preposition من (*from*) in the example ما يمتلكه من نظرة بعيدة (*the far-*

sightedness he has) implies a reason or a justification. In نحن نقف على مفترق طرق (*we stand at a crossroad*), the preposition على in this case means *at* (Haywood and Nahmad, 1962: 415). In the example حملت كثيرا من التطبيل (*carried much of drumming*), the preposition من shows gender or species (Al-Hashimi, 2002). In the example رمضان يستثمر بالرجوع إلى الله (*The Holy Month of Ramadan is best used for the purposes of invoking Allah*), the preposition ب means collocation, i.e. between 'best used' and 'for invoking Allah', or to mean 'with' according to Haywood and Nahmad (1962: 415) i.e. to invest the period of Ramadan in repenting to God.

Finally, the attributive (النسبة) relation plays a major role in connecting the idiomatic expression with the preceding structure. The prepositions and genitive structures perform this function in many idiomatic expressions.

4.6.4 The Idiomatic Expression as a Follower (تابع)

This structural relation between idiomatic expressions and their context encompasses those elements known in MSA as بدل (*replacement/ substitution*), عطف (*coordination*), نعت (*adjective*), and توكيد (*emphasis*). Consider the following:

The idiomatic expression as a replacement/substitution:

4.36	يعتبر ذلك بصيص أمل في ظلمة المجهول	*This is a ray of hope in the darkness of the unknown*
4.37	الفساد يصب في النهاية في جيب الجشع الكبير, أبو المصائب كلها	*Corruption finally pouring into the pocket of the very greedy is the father* [source] *of all problems.*

In example 4.36, the expression *a ray of hope* substitution of the demonstrative noun (this), and in example 4.37 the expression أبو المصائب (*father of all problems*) in the latter is a substitution of the phrase الجشع الكبير (*the very greedy*).

The idiomatic expression as a coordination:

4.38	معالجة الوضع الداخلي للوطن ليس من خلال قوات الأمن و لا أبواق النفاق و لا التضليل الإعلامي	*Reforming the internal situation of the homeland is not done by means of the police force, hypocrisy, or the media misleading*
4.39	من محظورات التعليم استخدام الصراخ العالي داخل الصف أو رفع العقال	*Among the banned teaching methods is shouting or rising the headband to threaten students in the classroom*
4.40	فقدنا صاحب الرؤية الثاقبة والنظرة البعيدة	*We lost the man with clear vision and far sightedness*

The idiomatic expression as an adjective:

4.41	هو رجل قلبه معلق بالمساجد	*a man whose heart is attached to mosques*[a devout Muslim]
4.42	شاب رحيم رقيق القلب	*a merciful, kind-hearted young man*
4.43	كان عاملا نظيف اليد	*he was a clean-handed worker* [honest and faithful]

The above examples 4.36-4.43 represent a group of idiomatic expressions that follow their precedent. These expressions may function as a replacement, coordinative, or adjective. There were no expressions functioning as emphatics in the study data sample.

4.6.5 Discussion

From an analytical perspective, the idiomatic expression can be viewed differently as one language unit. This unit can perform a certain grammatical function acting as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, regardless of its structure or type. An example of an idiomatic expression functioning as a noun is كان والدنا ضحية لضيق ذات اليد (*our father was a victim of lack of money*), since the expression لضيق ذات اليد can be replaced by فقر (*poverty*). An example of an idiomatic expression functioning as a verb is فأخذ يقلب عينيه في الحاضرين (*he was moving his sight around the attendants*), where the expression يقلب عينيه can be replaced with the verb ينظر (*to look at*). Examples of expressions functioning as an adjective or adverb were given above.

The different types of grammatical functions performed by the idiomatic expressions in the data sample were as follows:

Circumstance	Predicate	Verb
Adjective of Place	Coordination	Subject
Adjective	Object	Genitive

Moreover, linguistic context plays a very important role in determining the grammatical function of idiomatic expressions. However this function varies in terms of the co-text. In order to demonstrate this, the idiomatic expression الجمل بما حمل, (*the camel and its load*) is examined here. This idiom appears in 34 different texts in *Al-Riyadh* newspaper, and in three cases it functions as a subject (فاعل) with the verb سقط (*to fall down*). The same idiom also appears as an object (مفعول به) in 19 instances in combination with the verbs (يترك، يأخذ، يسرق), (*leave, take*, and *steal*). Finally, this idiom appears as annexed to (مضاف إليه) in 12 texts with the nouns ترْك، أخذْ، سرقة, (*leaving, taking,* and *theft*). This analysis demonstrates that the grammatical function of the idiomatic expression varies from one text to another in terms of the grammatical syntactical variations it undergoes (variations in the linguistic context) and this topic forms the main subject of the following section.

4.7 Variations in the Structure of Idiomatic Expressions

Idioms, which can consist of a single word, an expression or a longer phrase, are intrinsic to a culture, forming the basis of everyday language use. As a figurative language tool, idioms represent the expressive form of language and are common in both spoken and written forms. One important aspect of idiomatic expressions and phrases which differentiates them from other linguistic constructions is that they develop a particular specialised meaning, which means that the figurative meaning of an idiom is not directly related to the literal meaning of its constituent parts (Ifill, 2002). Like many other types of figurative language, idioms are flexible in terms of their structure, composition, syntax, sound and sense. This flexibility allows for greater creativity in their use, giving them scope to be altered and modified to suit the environment or context.

4.7.1 Previous Studies on Idiom Variation

Linguistic theorists are divided with regard to their view of idioms and two distinct perspectives have emerged in relation to the nature of idioms, and these can be labelled non-compositional and compositional respectively. The non-compositional view of idiom holds that the form of an idiomatic expression is fixed and that it should not be broken down into its constituent parts but must be treated as a whole expression, its meaning cannot be inferred from its constituent components. Theorists in this grouping include, most notably, Katz and Postal (1963), Fraser (1970), Nunberg (1978), Gibbs (1980), Chomsky (1980), Nunberg, Sag and Wasow (1982), and Gibbs and Gonzales (1985). All of these argue that idioms produce a single semantic expression, which is distinct from the meanings of the individual parts that make up that expression. As illustrative example of this would be the idiom *to kick the bucket*.

However, there is opposition to this particular view. More recently a compositional view of idiom has been advanced, which suggests that the individual meanings of the constituents of an idiomatic expression do, in fact, contribute to its overall

meaning (Gibbs and Nayak, 1989; Gibbs *et al.*, 1989; Taylor, 2002). These theorists argue that the true meaning of a particular idiom can be guessed by looking at the component parts of that expression, which give a certain level of predictability. Experiments by compositional theorists have focussed on how people interpret the meaning of idioms and seem to suggest that examining the constituent components of an idiom can potentially lead to heightened comprehension of their meaning. When similar experiments were conducted with non-native speakers of a language attempting to make sense of idiomatic expressions, they were more inclined to understand these by assimilation of their prior knowledge.

The flaw in this type of understanding and interpretation is that idioms are not always completely clear grammatically which may result in the misinterpretation of their intended meaning. Constituent analysis of idioms can be difficult due to this lack of clarity in their structures. Nunberg (1978), however, has shown that although idioms have lexical and syntactic flexibility, it is possible to predict their syntactic behaviour by considering their semantic decomposition. When their composition is deconstructed, this allows for them to be understood in relation to their component parts.

According to the theory of systemic functional linguistics, languages have in-built "meaning potential" (Halliday, 1994) which determines what can be done with them, for example how a speaker is able to utilise a language based on the context in which it being spoken. Meaning potential is important because it allows speakers or writers to make decisions and choices based on their intentions. The need for certain linguistic structures is determined by the communication needs of the individual. Therefore, individuals may alter the elements of the original idiom in order to suit the particular context in which they are using it. This type of alteration may be based on personal, environmental or other factors and the purpose is the expression of ideas.

Several studies have been conducted into the variations of idioms that exist in language. Fraser (1970) for example, interpreted the syntactic behaviours of idioms, being interested in how their structural forms create the basis of meaning. In order

to show the importance of syntactic transformation of idioms, Fraser constructed a hierarchical model consisting of seven possible levels of transformation of idiomatic characteristics. These levels range from completely frozen (Level Zero), which does not allow for any transformation at all, to Level Six, the most unrestricted level which permits any transformation and many examples have undergone this transition. Fraser's (1970: 39) full model is as follows:

- L6 • Unrestricted: *read the riot act.*
- L5 • Reconstitution: *pop the question.*
- L4 • Extraction: *draw a blank*
- L3 • Permutation: *keep up one's end*
- L2 • Insertion: *drop a line*
- L1 • Adjunction: kick the bucket
- L0 • Completely frozen: *face the music*

Fraser (1970) also makes it clear, nevertheless, that idioms have in-built structures which means they behave differently from other forms of language. Indeed, the components of an idiom do not retain their literal meaning and the semantic interpretation of an expression is not developed following construction of the idiom itself.

Other scholars following Fraser (1970) have conducted research on the structure and fixedness of idioms from a syntactic point of view. Makkai (1972) identified two types of idiomatic expressions according to their structure and semantics which he referred to as decoding and encoding idioms. In addition, like Fraser, he produced a classification model of the levels of idiom frozenness but argued that even those idioms which were classified as "completely frozen" might undergo some changes. Newmeyer (1974) examined the behaviour of idioms under syntactic

transformation, maintaining that meaning alone could be used to predict the syntactic behaviour of idiomatic expressions.

Later, both Nunberg (1978) and Fernando (1996) claimed that the syntactic behaviour of idioms is not something that can be calculated purely from figurative meaning and that attention needed to be paid to the significance of the relationships between the form and the meaning. Similarly, in her survey of English idioms and fixed expressions, Moon (1998: 120) found that 40% of the sample she studied included lexical variations, substitution, or conversion. She also found that 14% of the items in the corpus included two or more changes made to the usual structure of the idiomatic expressions. She indicates that these variations (both lexical and systematic) are not exclusive to English and can be found in other languages.

Initially, psychological studies regarding the scope of how individuals perceive idioms that are syntactically frozen, produced mixed results (Swinney and Cutler, 1979); however, more recent studies have shown that individuals demonstrate faster times when processing syntactically frozen idioms as compared to syntactically flexible ones (Gibbs and Gonzales, 1985). Indeed frozen idioms are viewed as being more lexicalised, making it easier for the individual to interpret their meaning more quickly. Gibbs and Gonzales (1985) paved the way for further studies of idiomatic expressions, which would be more sensitive to syntactic features, and interested in the degree to which these may be clearly understood.

To date, only limited attention has been paid to structural variation of idioms in MSA and there have been no studies of this aspect of idiomatic expression in the Saudi media. This chapter aims to fill this gap in the literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the extent to which MSA idiomatic expressions are fixed. In order to investigate this, transformational methods of MSA grammar and testing of syntactic variation of idioms will be analysed. Based on analysis of 440 idioms collected from the Saudi newspaper *Al-Riyadh*, it has been shown that there are observable differences in idiomatic syntactic behaviour.

In this section, Moon's (1998) framework, which was originally applied to English idiomatic expressions, is used, with regard to relative fixedness. As previously stated, in Moon's survey on idioms and fixed expressions, there is clear indication that variations are not exclusive to English, and may be found in other languages. This study, then, starts from this premise, applying her approach to MSA idiomatic expressions.

4.7.2 Data Analysis of Idiomatic Expression Variations

In this study, the focus is on the lexical and grammatical variations in constituents of idioms with respect to the change or substitution of the units of the structure as they form part of the process of structural change. In section 4.7.3 we will discuss a number of examples of individual lexical variation in verbs, nouns, adjectives, and prepositions which act as components of the idiomatic expressions. Grammatical changes will be examined in section 4.7.4.

4.7.3 Lexical Variation

4.7.3.1 Verb Variation

Analysis of a number of examples shows that verb variation creates the most striking change in the structure of the idiomatic expression. The most frequent type of verb variation occurs via substitution of the verb by a synonym. Nevertheless, this does not entail any real change to the meaning of the idiom. Consider the examples below:

4.44	أشرق/ تهلل وجهه	*his face shone*
		[he beamed]
4.45	نكص/ رجع على عقبيه	*he turned on his heels*
		[he retreated]
4.46	يضرب/يطرق الحديد و هو ساخن	*to strike while the iron is hot*

4.47	يأخذ/يمسك بزمام المبادرة	*to catch the rope of initiative* [to start]
4.48	يدس/يحشر أنفه فيما لا يعنيه	*to stick one's nose in other people's business*
4.49	يدس/يضع السم في العسل	*to hide poison in honey* [appearances can be deceptive]
4.50	يبدأ/ يفتح صفحة جديدة	*to start/turn over a new leaf*
4.51	يجتاز/يخرج من عنق الزجاجة	*to pass through the bottle neck* [to proceed with great difficulty]
4.52	يرى/يخرج إلى النور	*to see the light* [to start over again]

Some verbs can be replaced with other verbs that share their literal or idiomatic meaning, e.g. ذاق/عانى مرارة الحرمان (*he tasted the bitterness of deprivation*). A verb can also be replaced by a noun. Consider the examples يمسح/مسح الجوخ (*to wipe/wiping one's clothes*) meaning 'to mislead or to be hypocritical' and يضع/ وضع النقاط على الحروف (*to put/putting dots on letters*) meaning 'make everything clear'.

4.7.3.2 Noun Variation

Analysis showed that a number of idiomatic changes do occur in nouns although fewer than was the case with verbs. The most common type of noun change is achieved via the use of synonymy. Consider the three examples below:

4.45	يمسك العصا من الوسط/المنتصف	*to grasp the stick by the middle* [to be moderate]
4.46	مسمار/ وتد جحا	*Joha's nail/pole* [a weak pretext]
4.47	يركب التيار/الموجة	*to ride the wave/current* [to go in search of adventure]

Some nouns may be replaced with the plural form of the same stem:

4.48	الطريق مفروش بالورد/الورود	*the way is a bed of roses*
4.49	قضية/قضايا شائكة	*a controversial issue/issues*
4.50	خفاش/خفافيش الظلام	*night bats/bats* [a night owl]
4.51	أشبه بالنائحة المستأجرة	*Like a professional mourning woman*
4.52	صراخ النائحين المستأجرين	*The wailing of the professional mourning women*
4.53	خط أحمر/خطوط حمراء	*a red line/red lines*

The change may also involve a shift from masculine to feminine noun:

4.54	ابن/بنت حلال	*a kind-hearted man/woman*

A change in the noun may reflect a relation of generality and specificity between the original noun and its substitution. In other words, the replacement noun is either a hyponym (a part-whole relationship) or a synonym of the original. The examples below illustrate this relation:

4.55	يحشر أنفه/رأسه فيما لا يعنيه	*involve his nose/head in someone else's business*[interfere]
4.56	اسودت الدنيا في وجهه/عينيه	*life turned black before his face/eyes*
4.57	لمعت الفكرة في عقله/رأسه	*the idea glittered in* [flashed through] *his mind/head*
4.58	في قلب/عين العاصفة	*in the heart/eye of the storm*
4.59	مثل الخاتم في اصبعه/يده	*like a ring on his finger/hand* [wrapped around someone's little finger]
4.60	شخص/رجل صعب المراس	*a tough person/man*

Variation may also occur by changing a noun from one semantic field for another from a different semantic field. Thus, حية/مية من تحت تبن (*a snake/water in the grass*) used to refer to someone who plans evil in secret whilst feigning goodness.

4.7.3.3 Adjective Variation

This type, in which an adjective is replaced by a synonym, proved to be the least frequent among the idiomatic expressions. Here are two examples:

4.61	الجنس الناعم/اللطيف	*the smooth/kind gender*
		[the fairer sex/gentle sex]
4.62	دماغه ناشفة/يابسة	*he is stubborn-minded*
		[narrow-minded]

4.7.3.4 Particle Variation

The examples below show prepositional and adverbial change. Some of these particle variations do not create any change in the idiomatic meaning. Examples include:

4.63	في/على/أمام مفترق طرق	*in/on/before a crossroad*
4.63	في/على فراش الموت	*in/on the deathbed* [on one's deathbed]
4.65	وراء/خلف الافق	*behind/beyond the horizon*
4.66	يحلق مع النسور/كالنسور	*soar with/like eagles*
		[to soar like an eagle]

4.7.3.5 Truncation or Dropping

Moon (1998: 131) indicates that some idioms and proverbs may be downgraded to smaller grammatical units. For instance, a compound sentence may be downgraded to a single clause, or a clause to a group of words. Similarly, in Arabic some structures may undergo truncation. The prepositional phrase في العسل (*in honey*) may be omitted from the idiom يدس السم في العسل (*to hide poison in honey*) but the full

idiomatic meaning can still be understood clearly. Another example is وجهه مغسول بمرق (*his face is washed off with soup*) said in reference to a rude individual. Here, if the prepositional phrase بمرق (*in soup*) is dropped, the full idiomatic meaning can still be clearly understood.

In compound sentences as well, one of the two main clauses can be dropped, and the full idiomatic meaning can still be understood from the remaining phrase. . In the The phrase التي قصمت ظهر البعير (*that broke the camel's back*) is dropped from the idiom وكانت هي القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير (*it was the straw that broke the camel's back*); the full idiomatic meaning still remains quite clear to the reader/hearer of Arabic.

An added to (المضاف اليه *annexed to*) may be dropped from a nominal idiomatic expression. Even though the structure will slightly change, the idiomatic meaning will remain the same. Consider القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير (*the straw that broke [the camel's back]),* and القشة التي قصمت الظهر (*the straw that broke the back*). In the second example, the added-to is dropped and the added is identified using the definite article ال (*the*). In other words, 'the camel's back' becomes 'the back' In the former example, the word الظهر (*the back*) is defined through its addition to another word, البعير (*the camel*), but in the latter, it is defined by adding the article ال to it.

There is another type of dropping that does not have any effect on the structural or semantic level of the idiom. Consider the two expressions كل من هب و دب (*all those who came, fast and slow*) and من هب و دب (*those who came, fast and slow*). The idiomatic meaning is not changed after the deletion of the particle (noun) كل (all). In the examples من تحت الطاولة (*from beneath the table*) and تحت الطاولة (*beneath the table*), the idiomatic meaning does not change after dropping the preposition من (*from*).

4.7.4 Grammatical Variation

4.7.4.1 Verb Inflection

In the data collected, one type of change was observed that transcended the limits of the single unit. This encompasses the variation in inflectability, regarded by Moon (1998) as a characteristic of the form of idiomatic expression. Moon discusses a number of these changes under the title of ‘systematic variation’ whilst Abdou (2011) refers to this as ‘the grammatical behaviour of idioms’. Thus, it is viewed here as a type of verb variation that can change an idiom’s structure without affecting its idiomatic meaning. This type of change occurs most commonly with the inflection of verbs from present to past or to imperative, or vice versa.

Below are a number of examples to illustrate this variation:

4.67	ارتعدت/ترتعد فرائصه	*he is/was trembling*
4.68	زاد/يزيد الطين بلة	*he adds/added water to mud* [he makes/made things worse]
4.69	سلط/يسلط الضوء على القضية	*he sheds/shed light on the issue*
4.70	ضرب/يضرب عصفورين بحجر	*he hit/hits* [killed/kills] *two birds with one stone*
4.71	أسدل/يسدل الستار على القضية	*he lowered/lowers the curtain on the issue* [he drew/draws a veil over something]
4.72	أسلم/يسلم الروح إلى بارئها	*he surrendered/surrenders his soul to his Creator* [he gave/gives up the ghost]
4.73	يطلق/أطلق العنان لخياله	*he casts off/cast off the rope to his imagination* [he gives/gave free rein to his imagination]
4.74	يعطي/أعطى الضوء الأخضر	*he gives/gave the green light*

In other idioms, the verb is inflected to a source noun, as in the examples below:

4.75	يضع/وضع النقاط على الحروف	*to put/putting dots on letters* [To dot the i's…]
4.76	يضرب/ضربة من تحت الحزام	*to hit/a hit below the belt*
4.77	يدس/دس السم في العسل	*to hide/hiding poison in honey*
4.78	يحشد/حشد الجماهير	*to gather/gathering crowds*

4.7.4.2 Syntactic Variations

In some cases, an idiomatic expression may be subject to more than one variation, such as transitivity and intransitivity, causativity and reflexivity (Stathi, 2007: 107). Langlotz (2006) cites the English idiom 'the curtain comes down on something/to bring the curtain down on something' as an example of intransitivity in the former and causativity in the latter. Langlotz (2006: 182) notes that a number of idiomatic expressions "vary their lexical or syntactic structure systematically to focus on a scene or action described by the literal meaning from an alternative perspective".

However, although variation in idioms occurs in the Arabic corpus for this study, when a verbal structure is transformed into a nominal one or into a new structure, the phrase still retains the figurative meaning. Consider the examples below:

4.79	يدس رأسه في الرمال	*to hide his head in sands* [to bury one's head in the sand]
4.80	رأسه مدسوس في الرمال	*his head is hidden in sands*
4.81	يحفظ ماء وجهه	*to keep his face's water* [to save face]
4.82	حفظ ماء الوجه	*keeping face's water*

In addition, variation may occur by moving units in the structure forwards or backwards:

4.83	بدأ لعابه يسيل	*his saliva started to drip*

		[drooling in anticipation]
4.84	يسيل لعاب التجار	*the saliva of merchants drips*
4.85	القاصية من الغنم	*the distant among the sheep*
		[the straggler of the flock]
4.86	من الغنم القاصية	*among the sheep, the distant*

Variation can also take place by changing voice, from passive into active:

4.87	طبع على قلبه	*it was imprinted on his heart*
4.88	طبع الله على قلبه	*God imprinted on his heart*

One of the most common variations in idiomatic expression entails making changes to pronouns. One example involves changing the agent from a hidden pronoun to a connected pronoun as shown below:

4.89	يتعلق بقشة	*hang on to a straw* [clutch at straws]
4.90	يتعلقون بقشة	*they hang onto a straw*
4.91	عاد/عادوا بخفي حنين	*Came back/they came back with Honain's shoes* [they achieved nothing]
4.92	يعيش/يعيشون في برج عاجي	*live/they live in an ivory tower* [they live a life of luxury]
4.93	أسدل/أسدلوا الستار على القضية	*brought/they brought down the curtain on the issue* [they drew a veil over the issue]

The pronoun may be changed from singular to plural when it is added-to or connected to a preposition, as shown in the examples below:

4.94	اسقط في يده/أيديهم	*it fell into his hand/their hands*
4.95	خاتم في أصبعه/أصابعهم	*a ring on his finger/their fingers*

4.96	رفع عنه/عنهم القلم	*the pen is lifted off him/them* [he is/they are unable to be held responsible for his/their actions on the grounds of diminished responsibility]
4.97	نفسه في خشمه	*his soul is in his nose* [He is very angry]
4.98	نفسي في خشمي	*my soul is in my nose*

Variation can also take place syntactically, by dropping the explicit agent/noun and substituting it with a 'hidden' or explicit pronoun (pro-nominalisation).

4.99	تنفس رجاله الصعداء	*his men breathed a sigh* [of relief]
4.100	تنفس الصعداء	*breathed a sigh*
4.101	ارتعدت فرائصه/ ارتعدت فرائصي / ارتعدت فرائص صدام حسين	*Shake like a leaf* [frightened]

In example 4.99, the agent is explicitly stated رجال (*men*) whilst in 4.100, it is a hidden pronoun that refers to a hidden subject. In example 4.101, there are several variations. The noun in the first of these (Saddam Hussein) can be replaced by a first-person pronoun (ي), or a third-person pronoun (ه) relying on the co-text i.e. referring to anaphoric reference in the text.

4.7.4.3 Embedding

Idiomatic expressions can also undergo other transformations (see Fraser 1970; Nunberg *et al.*, 1994). Moon (1998) discussed embedding a linguistic unit within the structure of an idiom as a type of transformation process that can happen to the form of the idiom. In MSA, embedding a new linguistic element in any structure will lead to a syntactic change. For the purposes of this discussion, 'embedding' has been categorised under syntactic variation. A noun may be embedded to substitute an agent and then added to the following noun. See the examples below:

4.102	تشعل الفتنة	*ignites gossip*
		[gossip spreads like wildfire]
4.103	تشعل نار الفتنة	*the fire of gossip ignites*
4.104	أصاب الحقيقة	*he hit upon the truth*
		[he found out the truth/got to the heart of the matter]
4.105	أصاب كبد الحقيقة	*he hit the liver of the truth*
4.106	نفسه في أنفه	*his soul is in his nose*
		[He is very angry]
4.107	نفسه في طرف أنفه	*his soul is on the tip of his nose*

A preposition like من (*of*) may be embedded in some idiomatic expressions. Consider the two examples below:

4.108	بصيص أمل/بصيص من أمل	*a ray of hope*
4.109	وخز الضمير/وخز من ضمير	*the prick of conscience*

4.7.5 Discussion

Analysis of the structural patterns of the corpus of idiomatic expressions reveals that variation is common, some 60.77% of the items undergo lexical variation, substitution or transformation. A break-down by level of variation (see categories in Figure 1) suggests that certain types of idioms are more fixed than others, and that some expressions appear to be fixed, e.g., اختلط الحابل بالنابل (*matters were not in order*), showing no variation at all.

The results of this study support Fellbaum's findings (2007) insofar as some of the morphosyntactic rules are not 'hard' to use in idiomatic expressions, i. e. they do not apply only one possible route and rule out all others. Rather, these rules appear to be flexible and 'soft' enough for an expression to be performed quantitatively. This

shows that it is essential to formulate these rules in order to reveal the properties of the situational context in which the idiom is being used, the medium of interaction, and/or the text type.

An important general conclusion that may be drawn from these findings is that the syntactic flexibility exhibited by this sample of MSA idioms is higher than that suggested by previous research in contemporary Arabic linguistics (Abdou, 2011: 221). Indeed, the fact that idioms allow predicatisation, reordering of their constituents, or embedding casts doubt on Attia's (2006) assertion that:

> *As passivisation in Arabic is not made by configurational restructuring of the sentence, but rather by morphological inflection of verbs, we can say that Arabic shows only one instance of syntactic flexibility in MWEs [multiword expressions], that is allowing intervening elements* (p. 95).

Data from the study suggests that many idiomatic expressions will allow changes to be made. The study findings clearly demonstrate that the verbal structure can be transformed to a genitive structure and vice versa. Moreover, verbal structures can be changed into the nominal form or prepositional phrases, as the following examples illustrate:

STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
verbal	يلعب على المكشوف	*Play openly, to deceive others*
nominal	اللعب على المكشوف	*openly deceiving others*
verbal	يسلط الضوء على الموضوع	*to shed light on/highlight an issue*
genitive	تسليط الضوء على الموضوع	*Shedding light on a certain topic*
verbal	يواكب العصر	*to cope with age*
genitive	مواكبة العصر	*coping with age*

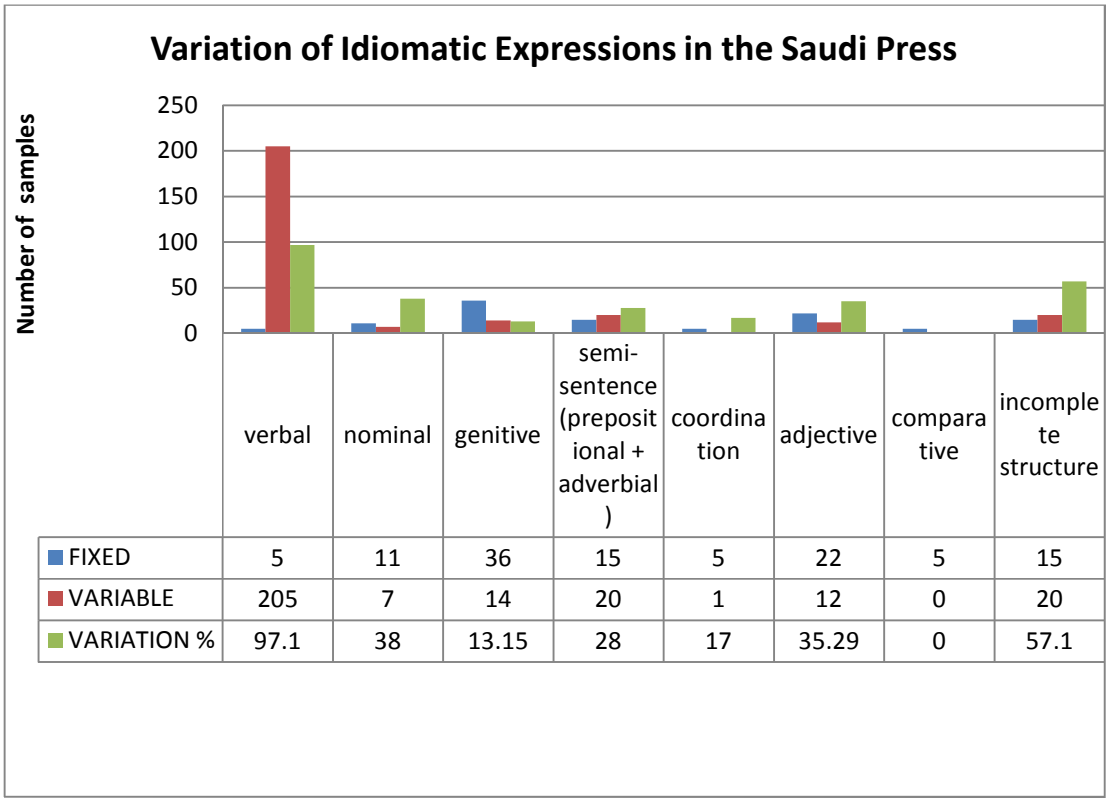
Moreover, some structures are more frequent e.g. prepositional phrases or incomplete structures also appear to be correlated with the verb in many other texts, as shown in the following examples:

STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
prepositional phrase	بدم بارد	*in cold blood*
verbal	يقتل /قُتل/ اغتيل بدم بارد	*murder/murdered/be assassinated in cold blood*
incomplete	إبرة في كومة قش	*A needle in a haystack*
verbal	يبحث عن إبرة في كومة قش	*search for a needle in a haystack*

In addition, variation in verb tenses occurs frequently in the study data. Also, one word or more may be substituted, or placed before or after the usual position in the idiomatic expression. Other processes of transformation include shifting of definite or indefinite from the singular to the plural, or from explicit to implicit nouns or explicit pronouns. A further type of syntactic change involves the deletion of some complementary element from the idiom structure.

Figure 4.4 demonstrates that fixedness and immobility in the verbal and incomplete forms appear to be less frequent than in the other forms. The variation percentage in verbal structures is 97.1%. Of the 210 examples identified, only five were completely fixed with the remaining 205 allowing one type of variation or more. This high percentage can be attributed to the variations found in verb tense, gender and substitution. The second highest variation was found in the incomplete sentence category, representing some 57.1%. The high percentage of variation seen in verbal and incomplete forms is due to the structure of these forms, both of which are constituted from more than two elements, thus more easily facilitating variation. As Figure 4.3 indicates, the variation percentage for other forms is 38% in nominal, 35.29% in adjective, 28% in prepositional and adverbial phrases and 13.15% in genitive structure. Finally, no variation was found in either coordination or comparative forms. In conclusion, it becomes apparent that the fewer the structural elements in the idiomatic expression, the lower the rate of variation.

Figure 4.4 shows the structural variations of idiomatic expressions revealed by analysis of the data:



	verbal	nominal	genitive	semi-sentence (prepositional + adverbial)	coordination	adjective	comparative	incomplete structure
FIXED	5	11	36	15	5	22	5	15
VARIABLE	205	7	14	20	1	12	0	20
VARIATION %	97.1	38	13.15	28	17	35.29	0	57.1

Figure 4-3 Variation by category in idiomatic expressions in the Saudi press

All these variations take place without affecting the meaning of the idioms themselves. This analysis shows that the structure of each idiomatic expression often contains a head and tail word which conveys the idiomatic meaning. These two key words effectively limit the tolerance levels of substitution, transformation or ellipsis within the idiom. Making changes to the head word of an idiomatic expression may affect its meaning.

In the following example, we will examine a series of variations of an idiom غصة في الحلق, (literally, *a pain in the throat*, idiomatically 'to be fed up with something') in order to identify the head word. Tracking the changing structure of an idiom as it appears in different texts shows that it is both variable and flexible. The variations which the idiom undergoes are reproduced below:

	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	GLOSS
A	verbal	يترك غصة في الحلق	*to cause pain in the throat*
B	verbal	يترك في الحلق غصة	*to cause pain in the throat*
C	prepositional phrase	في حلقه غصة من المعاناة	*a pain in his throat*
D	prepositional phrase	في حلقي غصة	*a pain in my throat*
E	incomplete	غصة في حلق الأمة	*a pain in the throat of the nation*
F	prepositional phrase	كالغصة في الحلق	*like a pain in the throat*
G	prepositional phrase	في الحلق غصة	*a pain in the throat*
H	nominal	الغصة في حلقي	*the pain is in my throat*
I	nominal	غصة وقفت في حلق يوسف	*a pain in Youssef's throat*

In the above analysis, it is clear that the idiomatic expression recurs in different forms, namely, verbal, prepositional phrase, nominal and incomplete structures in the nine examples. Idioms also undergo structural and transformational processes. At the same time as the idiom retains its figurative meaning, the literal meaning of this idiom is possible except in the case of Example E above. While all the other examples have a literal meaning parallel to their figurative meaning, they are considered to be idiomatic expressions because of the linguistic context which limits them to a figurative meaning. The conclusion which can be drawn from this idiomatic example, is that changes in structural elements are possible (transformation process, adding, embedding and variation) from verbal structures (examples A and B), prepositional phrases (examples C, D, F and G), nominal forms (examples H and I) and clause or incomplete sentence structure (example E). Moreover, this analysis clearly illustrates the idea that idioms contain key head words covering the idiom structure and meaning. In the idiom examined above, these words are غصة (*pain*) and حلق (*throat*).

Exploring the phenomenon of fixedness of idiomatic expressions, this study found that the level of this fixedness is uneven, a result which is compatible with some of the previous studies which have based their findings on an English corpus (e.g. Fraser 1970; Gibbs and Nayak 1989). Moreover, this study demonstrates that MSA idiomatic expressions are more flexible than previous western studies suggested. This flexibility can be attributed to the variety of sentence structures which are permitted in MSA such as constituent order, the use of pronouns, and verbal inflection.

Speakers may alter their language use with the aim of conveying extra meanings. In this way, many idiom variations are formed. Generally speaking, variants of an idiom are formed by replacing one or more of its original constituents or by changing its original meaning or structure. Some idiom variations are widely recognized and have become conventionalized (liu, 2012: 108). This kind of idiom tends to be fixed and relatively simple, e.g., القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير (*the final straw that broke the camel's back*) can be simplified by truncation to give rise to a new idiom: القشة (*the straw*), a commonly used idiom variation. Analysis of this particular idiom from the corpus showed in one instance the word البعير (*camel*) was substituted by النظام (*regime*) in the original context because a journalist wanted to express his feelings about the final days of the Egyptian regime. This shows that changes were made to this idiom purely to suit a specific context.

Changes/variations can be made to both the internal and external structure of idiomatic expressions but this is restricted by a constituent element known as the key word. Every idiomatic expression always has a head and a tale word which together convey the semantic meaning of the idiom. This conclusion is compatible with Cacciari and Tabossi (1988:680) who propose that the key word is the most crucial component in understanding and detecting the intended meaning of an idiomatic expression and that this can be identified by deleting non-essential words.

It is worth noting that the grammatical behaviour of MSA idiomatic expressions conforms with the grammatical structures of the language, and this ultimately determines the modifications and changes which may take place within an idiomatic

expression, according to the permitted grammatical positions. This view is supported by Croft and Cruse (2004: 225), who state that:

> *It is not an exaggeration to say that construction grammar grew out of a concern to find a place for idiomatic expressions in the speaker's knowledge of a grammar of their language.*

4.8 Conclusion

The conclusion which can be drawn from this chapter is that although idiomatic expressions have their own distinctive structures and meaning, it is clear that from the analysis that they must also conform to the rules of grammar and that they also maintain internal grammatical relations amongst their constituent elements. Whilst it is clear that idiomatic expressions function as grammatical units, it is also apparent that not all idioms are flexible in terms of grammatical transformation.

After analysing the internal relations between the various components making up idiomatic expressions, it has emerged that the specific characteristics of idiomatic expressions lie in their conventional meaning rather than in their structure. That is a result of the fact that their internal and external structures are subject to the usual grammatical rules of MSA. Consequently, when a connection exists between components in an idiomatic expression, these are of a semantic rather than a structural nature.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this analysis of the grammatical function of idiomatic expression is that this determines the relation between idiomatic expressions and their linguistic context. Since idiomatic expressions consist of structures or a single word, they are like normal expressions and words. They can become involved in all the different types of structural relations or perform a range of grammatical functions within the text. This grammatical function varies in terms of the different linguistic contexts in which the idiomatic expression is used. Similarly, it is clear that idiomatic expressions become involved in various contextual structural relations including those of predication, attribution,

customisation, and follow-up, all of which play a major role in correlating expression within the text.

It can be argued that some idioms are transformation deficient. In general, idiomatic expressions are subject to MSA language grammar but they have their own characteristics with regard to the correlation between their structural and semantic components. These characteristics may limit the extent to which grammatical changes are possible in an idiomatic expression, as compared to the range of changes which are permissible in non-fixed expressions or sentences, e.g. not all verbal structures can be transformed into the passive form. In a nutshell, the longer an idiomatic expression is, the less probability there is of fixedness. In addition, it can be argued that this study supports Halliday's (1994) functional linguistics approach in the sense that changes of syntactic or semantic elements in idioms are principally motivated by a desire on the part of the communicator to express an intended meaning relating to experiences and emotions and interpersonal interaction.

Chapter Five: Contextual Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three, a theoretical framework which combined the notions of cohesion and context was introduced. The central argument established there was that context plays a central role in determining the meaning involved in the use of idiomatic expressions. The notion of context expands beyond the purely linguistic meaning of idiomatic expressions to examine the cultural background in which they are used. Therefore, when adopting a contextual view of meaning, both language and culture must be considered.

This chapter opens by examining the notion of cohesion which is of central importance with regard to the linguistic context (co-text) in which an idiomatic expression is used. This linguistic tool plays a crucial role when exploring the linguistic relationships which exist between the lexical units in an utterance and understanding how idiomatic expressions perform a function of textuality with their surrounding linguistic context through cohesion. The focus then moves on to the semantic analysis of idiomatic expressions at the linguistic level, investigating the role played by linguistic context when drawing a distinction between their literal and metaphorical meaning. Finally, the importance of linguistic context in explaining the meaning of an idiomatic expression will be discussed.

5.2 Cohesion

According to many linguists, the linguistic term ‘text’ is used to refer to any passage, spoken or written, that forms a unified whole. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:3) maintain that in order to function as a text, spoken or written, a series of utterances has to meet the seven standards of textuality. These standards include: cohesion, coherence, acceptability, informativity, intentionality, situationality, and intertextuality. If any of these standards are not satisfied, the text is considered to have not fulfilled its function and cannot be classified as communicative. This suggests that cohesion is an obligatory property which enables any passage, written or spoken, to function as a text.

The concept of cohesion has been defined as “the relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 4). De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:3) maintain that cohesion concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text are mutually connected within a sequence. Richards *et al.* (1985:48) define cohesion as “the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text” which may also be “the relationship between different sentences or different parts of a sentence”. Hoey (1991:31) maintains that cohesion refers to the ways by which certain words or grammatical features in a text unite a sentence to its predecessors and successors. Cohesion can also be defined as “the enabling system of ties or links within a text that makes it possible to interpret its elements as meaningful and relevant” (Moon 1998: 278). Similarly, Martin (2001: 35) defines cohesion as “the set of resources for constructing relations in discourse which transcend grammatical structure”. It is noted that all these definitions revolve around the same central idea that cohesive devices provide a key means of deciding whether a passage of language forms a unified whole as a text or is just a group of random sentences.

The seminal text on cohesion in English is Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) *Cohesion in English* and they conclude that “cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another” (1976:299). The authors divide cohesion into two broad categories: grammatical cohesion referring to the structural content of the text, and lexical cohesion referring to its language content. Under the first heading, they study the concepts of reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Lexical cohesion, on the other hand, includes collocation, repetition, and sense relations such as synonymy and antonymy. Despite this grammatical and lexical division, Halliday and Hasan treat cohesion as a semantic rather than a grammatical or lexical relation.

The various types of cohesive devices identified by Halliday and Hasan will be closely examined in the following sections and their relevance to the study of idiomatic expressions will be demonstrated throughout by reference to appropriate illustrative examples taken from *Al-Riyadh*.

5.2.1 Cohesion through Reference

The term ‘reference’ is used to indicate those words which are not semantically elucidated in their own right but are interpreted in terms of their relationship with other lexical units within an utterance. In this regard, it is useful to draw a distinction between semantic references and references. The former refer to the relationship between a word and its referents in the real world, whereas the latter refers to the linguistic relationships which hold between one expression and other linguistic units in an utterance. Since the focus here is on the linguistic context, the discussion below will be confined to the latter type of reference.

Renkema (1993:16) demonstrates that a referential tie is created when the interpretation of a dummy word is determined by what is mentioned before or after it. Johnstone (2002:101-103) states that:

> *Referential ties are created when an item in one sentence refers to an item in another sentence, so that in order to interpret part of one sentence, readers or hearers have to refer to part of some other sentence.*

She further notes that pronouns can be considered to be the main source of referring. Halliday and Hasan (1976) differentiate between two types of reference, namely: exophoric and endophoric. The former refers to the background information that can be understood from the immediate context of situation, whereas the latter refers to the information which can be understood from a linguistic analysis of the text under discussion. In the case of MSA, this includes some pronouns such as أنا (*I*), نحن (*we*), or أنت (*you*), where the referent exists outside the text, i.e. in the immediate context of situation (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Thus, it can be argued that there are two key differences between exophoric and endophoric reference. First, the identity of an endophoric reference is retrieved from the text itself, whereas the identity of an exophoric reference must be retrieved by reference to the context of situation. Secondly, endophoric reference creates referential ties that function cohesively, whereas exophoric reference does not create such ties and thus does not contribute to the cohesiveness of the text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 37). Consider the following example which illustrates how exophoric reference functions.

Example 5.1

أنا لحمي مر، وأنا غصة في الحلق	Literally: *my flesh is bitter, and I am a choke in ti throat.* [I cannot be easily used and deceived].

In Example 5.1, the identity of the underlined pronoun أنا (*I*) is not retrievable from within this utterance, but only from the text of which it is a part. Thus, because its referent is not retrievable from the same utterance itself, it does not create any referential tie, and therefore does not contribute to the cohesiveness of the idiomatic expression.

By contrast, endophoric referencing points to information which can be interpreted from inside the utterance itself, i.e. the identity of the referent can be found without searching further. In this section focusing on cohesion, anaphoric referencing is the most relevant as it "provides a link with a preceding portion of the text" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 51). This type of referencing creates cohesive ties which provide unity to a text. Endophoric referencing can be divided into two subtypes: anaphoric and cataphoric. Anaphoric reference occurs when a pronoun points backwards to an earlier sentence, including a noun that it refers to (Johnstone, 2002:101). Similarly, Richards et al. (1985:12) note that anaphora occurs when the reference points to something mentioned previously in the text, thus contributing to the interpretation of an idiomatic expression. By way of illustration, consider Example 5.2:

Example 5.2

وذكر الصبي السوري وائل أنه رأى بعينيه طفلاً آخر عمره ستة أعوام وهو يلفظ أنفاسه الاخيرة بعدما تعرض للتعذيب والحرمان من الطعام	*The Syrian boy, Wa'il, said he saw another boy with his own eyes when he breathed out his last breath after torture and food deprivation.*

In this example, both the third person pronoun هو (*he*) and the attached pronoun الهاء (*his*) in the word أنفاسه (*his breath*) point backwards to the noun phrase طفلاً (*the boy*). Since the interpretation of both these pronouns depends on their linkage to a previous element inside the text, a referential tie is created, integrating the idiomatic expression in the text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976:51) explain that cataphoric referencing points to the information which will be introduced forward, and which contribute to the interpretation of the meaning are involved in the next portion of the text. Richards *et al.* (1985:15:36) define cataphora as "the use of a word or phrase which refers forwards to another word or phrase which will be used later in the text or conversation." By creating these referential ties, cataphoric reference thus typically lends connectivity to the text. However, no instances of cataphoric reference being used to connect the idiomatic expression with its co-text were found in the sample. Figure 5.1 summarizes the main types of reference according to Halliday and Hasan (1976).

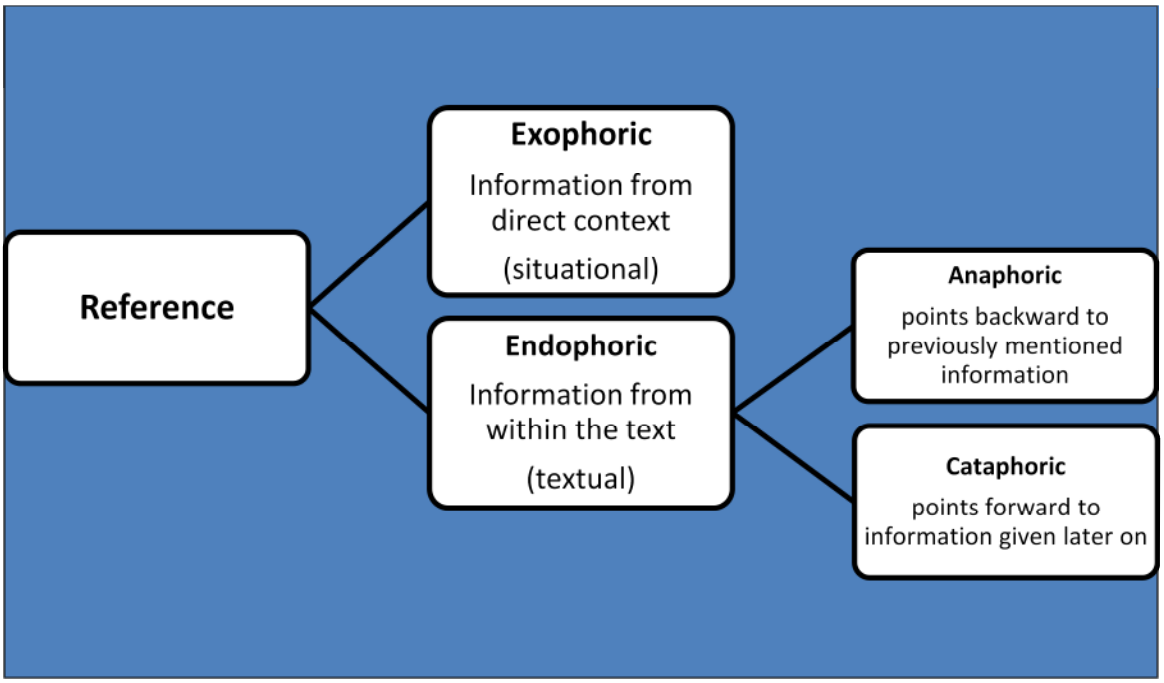


Figure 5-1 Types of reference (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

In addition, these cohesive references can be categorised as personal, demonstrative or comparative, and in the following sections each of these types of references is defined and then discussed in the specific context of MSA.

5.2.1.1 Personal Reference

Halliday and Hasan (1976:37) define personal reference as “reference by means of function in the speech situation, through the category of person”. It points to the important role played in the text by personal pronouns, e.g. *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, and possessive determiners, e.g. *mine*, *his*, *yours*. Al-Amri (2004) states that personal reference pronouns refer to their referents by specifying their function in the speech situation, recognizing the speaker as the *first person*, the addressee as the *second person* and any other participant as the *third person* (Al-Amri, 2004). Richards *et al.* (1985:213) observe that as a grammatical category, the selection of pronouns depends on a number of principles, including:

1. if the pronoun stands for a person or persons actually speaking, i.e. first person (*I*, *we*);
2. if the pronoun stands for a person or persons being addressed, i.e. second person (*you*);
3. if the pronoun stands for something or someone other than the first and second person, i.e. the third person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*).

Before considering the cohesive value of personal pronouns in MSA idiomatic expressions, it is important to outline the system of pronouns and their usage in this language. First, it is not common in Arabic to use the free-standing first person singular pronoun أنا (*I*) and second person singular أنت (*you*). Rather, these pronouns are used as suffixes, or as prefixes and suffixes with various tenses in MSA (Al-Shurafa, 1994). Second, Arabic pronouns can be categorized into two basic types: attached and unattached. Attached pronouns referred to as الضمائر المتصلة can be suffixed to particles (prepositions), nouns and verbs (Holes, 2004: 177). Unattached pronouns الضمائر المنفصلة are used as separate words to refer to the speaker, the addressee and the third person. Figure 5.2 presents a graphic overview of MSA personal pronouns.

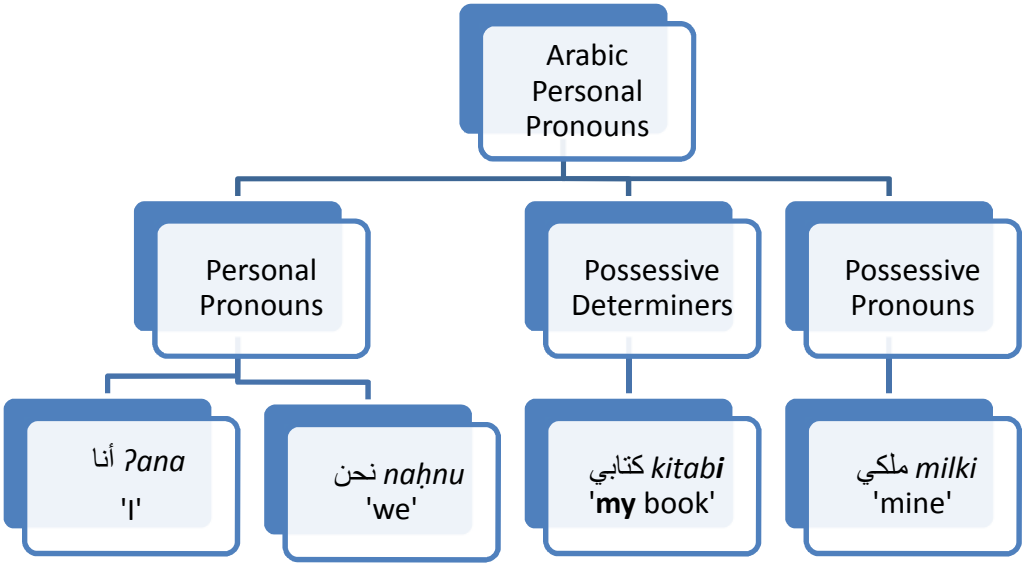


Figure 5-2 Personal pronouns in MSA.

The cohesive value of personal reference lies in linking sentences or clauses together throughout the text by using pronouns such as هو (*he*), هي (*she*), هم (*they*), etc. The following examples illustrate the role of personal reference in making connections between the idiomatic expression and its co-text.

Example 5.3

وذكر الصبي السوري وائل أنه رأى بعينيه طفلاً آخر عمره ستة أعوام وهو يلفظ أنفاسه الاخيرة بعدما تعرض للتعذيب والحرمان من الطعام	*The Syrian boy, Wa'il, stated that he had seen another six-year-old boy when he was breathing out his last breath after being tortured and deprived of food.*

Example 5.4

وما منع الصحب الكرام - وهم من هم - أن يكون فيهم من يريد الدنيا، وفيهم الفاسق، وفيهم من خاف، بل جملتهم خافوا حتى بلغت القلوب منهم الحناجر في غزوة الخندق	*Although the respectful companions were pioneers some of them followed their desires, some of them were not good, some of them were afraid, until their hearts reached their throats* [their hearts were in their mouths] *at the Battle of Alkhandaq*

In Example 5.3, the underlined explicit third person masculine pronoun هو refers back to the noun طفلا اخر (*another boy*), creating a cohesive tie that links the idiomatic expression with its co-text. Similarly, in Example 5.4, the underlined detached third person plural pronoun هم (*them*) which attached to preposition 'من' (*from*) in the second instance points back to the word الصحب الكرام (*the respectful companions*). Because the interpretation of the pronoun هم depends totally on its referent, a cohesive tie is created which contributes to the unity of the idiomatic expression with its co-text.

5.2.1.2 Possessive Pronouns

Possessive reference includes those pronouns which are suffixed to nouns and verbs to denote ownership. Similar to personal pronouns, possessive pronouns function cohesively to connect the idiomatic expression and its co-text as seen in example 5.5:

Example 5.5

هناك نوعاً من الناس يقلّب رأسه في وسط هذا الحراك الاقتصادي والاجتماعي ليس في ذلك الأمر كله، وليس له علاقة بشيء من ذلك كله، وليس له ناقة ولا جمل.	*Some people poke their noses into* [interfere in] *this economic and social movement, even though they have neither a she-camel nor a he-camel* [the whole matter is of no relevance to them].

The underlined possessive pronoun له in the above example refers back to نوعا من الناس (*some people*). To understand the meaning of the possessive pronoun له (*his*), one has to make reference to its referent نوعا من الناس, (*some people*). This helps the continuity of the text as it links the idiomatic expression ليس له ناقة ولا جمل, (*he has neither a she-camel nor a he-camel)* with the remaining text. The text would lack unity without such referential ties.

5.2.1.3 Possessive Determiners

In MSA possessive determiners can be recognized by a morpheme linked to the end of the word which indicates the number and gender of the possessor. Table 5.1 presents the possessive pronouns in MSA.

Table 5-1 Possessive pronouns in MSA.

	Possessive Pronoun	English Gloss
Singular	ـي[-i]	My
	ـكَ[-ka]	your (masc.)
	ـكِ[-ki]	your (fem.)
	ـهُ[hu]	His
	ـها[-ha]	Her
Dual	ـنا[-na]	Our
	ـكما[-kuma]	Your
	ـهما [-huma]	Their
Plural	ـنا[-na]	Our
	ـكم[-kum]	your (masc.)
	ـكن[-kunna]	your (fem.)
	ـهم[-hum]	their (masc.)
	ـهن[-hunna]	their (fem.)

The use of possessive determiners inside the idiomatic expression creates referential ties that helps to keep the idiomatic expression and the surrounding text bound together. This point is illustrated in example 5.6:

Example 5.6

سلوى عبدالرحيم العمري ... تقول لأول مرة في تاريخ المملكة 30 سيدة يدخلن مجلس الشورى السعودي -وقالت ايضاً- هذا الخبر أثلج صدري وسرني كثيرا

Salwa Abdul Rahim Al-Omari' […] commented: "For the first time in the history of the Kingdom 30 women are to appointed as Shura Council members. She also said, this news 'warmed my chest (make me happy)', and I was extremely pleased".

In this case, the possessive pronoun morpheme ي appears suffixed to the word صدري (*my chest*) and refers back to the speaker سلوى (*Salwa*). This means that part of the

interpretation and understanding of the idiomatic expression depends on its linkage with another element inside the text, namely the female speaker, Salwa. This creates a referential cohesive tie between the idiomatic expression and the remaining text, which in returns keeps them unified.

5.2.1.4 Demonstratives

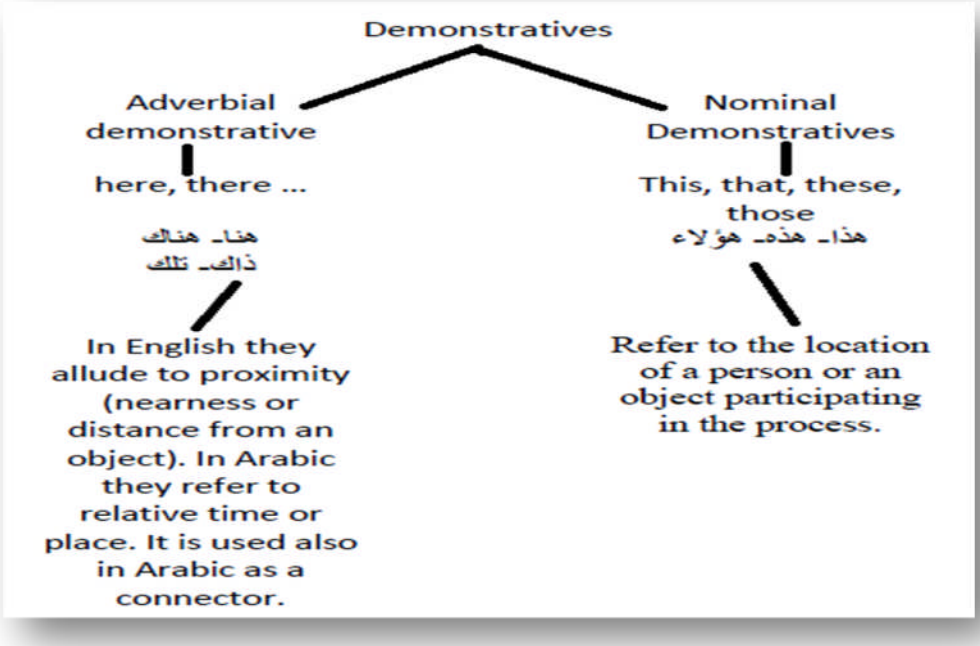


Figure 5-3 Types of demonstrative pronouns in MSA.

Demonstratives أسماء الإشارة act as a set of determiners which are used to point to people or objects and to help clarify their relative distance or proximity to the speaker (Ryding, 2005). Halliday and Hasan (1976) differentiate between two types of demonstratives: adverbial demonstratives and the nominal demonstratives. According to these authors, the former indicates the place where the action takes place either physically e.g. هنا (*here*) and هناك (*there*), or in temporal terms e.g. الان (*now*) and عندئذ (*then*). It is worth noting that demonstratives perform a cohesive function between the idiomatic expression and the co-text in two ways: when referring forward (cataphorically) or backwards (anaphorically) to connect idioms with the co-text. They can be used as adjective modifiers e.g. that garden seems longer, *that* is a modifier to the head noun *garden*, and used as a head modifier, e.g.

that seems longer, *that* functioning as head of the nominal group (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Al-Amri (2004). The following examples 5.7-5.10 illustrate several different aspects of the cohesive role of demonstratives.

Example 5.7

الطبيب يجيب على استفسار المريضة: الأخت أم هتان لقد حذرنا كثيراً من عدم الذهاب الى مثل هؤلاء المعالجين لأنه لا توجد لديهم اي خلفية عن ما تسببه بعض الأدوية العشبية من مآسٍ وخاصة ان بعض الأدوية العشبية لها اضرار جانبية على الكلى والكبد والبنكرياس والعقم والمعالجون الشعبيون بشكل عام لا يعرفون هذه الأضرار ويعتقدون ان الأعشاب اذا ما افادت لم تضر وهذا اعتقاد خاطيء، والآن وقع الفأس في الرأس فما عليك الا مراجعة اي مستشفى حكومي وعمل فحوصات شاملة على الكلى والمسالك البولية وبإذن الله سيجدون الحل المناسب وخذي حذرك من هؤلاء المعالجين.	*The doctor answered as follows:* *Um Hatan, we warned you repeatedly about going to such therapists since they do not have any background knowledge about the problems that certain herbal prescriptions can cause. Some herbal prescriptions have side effects on the kidneys and the liver. They may even cause infertility. Herbalists, generally, do not know about these harmful effects. Rather, they believe that even if herbs do not prove useful, they cannot inflict harm. This conviction is utterly wrong. The axe is already in the head.* [The die is cast.] *Therefore, you've got to check with a public hospital where a comprehensive examination of your kidneys and urinary system will be conducted.*

Example 5.8

أن ذلك أعطى الضوء الاخضر لمعالجة التباين بشكل كلي في الدرجات الوظيفية للمعلمين	*That gave the green light to treat the imbalance in the staff ranks.*

It is clear that in examples 5.7 and 5.8 respectively the underlined demonstrative pronouns الان (*now*) and ذلك (*that*) function as head modifiers for the idiomatic expressions. Thus, in the example 5.7, for instance, the demonstrative pronoun الآن

(*now*) refers to the time at which the incident took place, i.e. the time when the patient took the herbs. The demonstrative pronouns refer backward (anaphorically) to something in the text. Since the interpretation of this demonstrative pronoun requires readers to make reference to the remaining text, a referential cohesive tie is created which cements the unity between the idiomatic expression and its co-text.

As shown above, sometimes demonstratives are used as an adjective modifier in which case they do function cohesively, as shown in examples 5.9 and 5.10.

Example 5.9

هذه نقطة في بحر انجازاته.	*This is just a drop in the ocean of his achievements* [This is just one of his many achievements.]

Example 5.10

ثم ما الفائدة من إيغار الصدور وتلك العنتريات التي يطلقها البعض بين آونة وأخرى في منابرهم.	*What is the use of raging people and of these threats launched by some people from time to time?*

The demonstrative pronouns هذه (*this*) and تلك (*that*) in examples 5.9 and 5.10 respectively function as an adjective modifiers which refer forward (cataphorically) to the nouns نقطة (*drop*) and عنتريات (*threats*) and therefore these demonstrative pronouns contribute to the cohesiveness of the idiomatic expression.

5.2.1.5 Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns 'الأسماء الموصولة' connect an element in a subordinate relative clause to a noun or noun phrase in the main clause of a sentence. Relative clauses in Arabic are either definite or indefinite, while definite clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun; indefinite relative clauses do not include a relative pronoun (Ryding 2005:322).

This type of connection does not exist in Halliday and Hasan's framework since they focus on English structures, but it is very common in Arabic. The major contribution of such pronouns is to create referential ties that lend continuity to the

text. The following examples 5.11 and 5.12 illustrate the cohesive role of such pronouns:

Example 5.11

إن من يسعى إلى الرزق في منطقة واحدة كالذي يبحث عن إبرة بين كومة قش.	*Anyone who seeks a livelihood in only one place place is like someone who looks for a needle in a haystack.*

Example 5.12

فأصبح الباحث عن المادة الجيدة كمن يبحث عن إبرة في كوم من القش	*Anyone who seeks good material is like the one who looks for a needle in a haystack.*

The underlined relative pronouns الذي (*that*) and من (*who*) refer back respectively to the person who is seeking to make a living and the person who searches for good material. Since the interpretation of the relative pronouns الذي and من is dependent on another part of the text, a cohesive tie is created in each case, which leads to unifying the idiomatic expression and the remaining text. However, the text would lack unity if these relative pronoun were extracted.

5.2.1.6 Comparative Reference

Halliday and Hasan (1976:67) state that "comparative reference is indirect reference by means of identity or similarity". Comparison is that form of reference which involves drawing out similarities and differences between two things. Its cohesive value lies in the fact that it establishes a relation of likeness or contrast between two items. This relation is usually expressed in MSA by means of adjectives such as مثل (*like*), and حرف الكاف (*like*). Consider the following examples which illustrate the cohesive value of such adjectives in linking the idiomatic expression with its co-text.

Example 5.13

ويصف القارئ "علي" عبارة "السّسْتِم عطلان" بأنها اصبحت مثل مسمار جحا في البنوك والمطار والجوازات وأي شيء يتعلق بالكمبيوتر.	*Ali describes the phrase "The system is down" as Joha's nail* [a pretext] *in banks, airports, passport departments, and other computer-based services.*

Example 5.14

لقد كانت الممارسة عكس الشعارات المرفوعة، ناهيك عن استغلال قضية فلسطين أسوأ استغلال حتى ملت الجماهير من تلك الشعارات وممن يرفعها، ولذلك ظلت الشعوب مثل الغريق الذي يتعلق ولو بقشة.	*Practice was contradictory to the slogans adopted* [The reality was unlike the slogans that were touted], *and the Palestinian cause was badly exploited. The masses grew bored with the slogans and became like drowning men clutching at straws.*

Example 5.15

وقال "سعيد الخالدي": إن من يسعى إلى الرزق في منطقة واحدة **كا**لذي يبحث عن أبرة بين "كومة قش"،	*Saed al-Khaldi says: Anyone who seeks a livelihood in only one place is like someone who looks for a needle in a haystack.*

In the above examples, the comparative particles مثل and كـ ك (*like*) create a relation of similarity between the idiomatic expression and the preceding text. This means that the interpretation of the idiomatic expression depends on readers making the connection with the first part of simile which links it with its co-text and creates textual continuity.

5.2.2 Substitution and Ellipsis

The fourth and fifth types of cohesive ties consist of substitution and ellipsis. Substitution refers to the process whereby an item in one sentence substitutes for material somewhere in the text in the same grammatical slot (Johnstone, 2002: 102). It should not be considered as a grammatical conjunction but rather, as a type of lexical cohesion which is mainly used to avoid repetition of a particular item (Al-Shurafa, 1994). Halliday and Hasan (1976) differentiate substitution from reference, maintaining that substitution should be viewed as a relation at the semantic level whereas reference relates to the lexicogrammatical level. Halliday and Hasan (1976:93) introduce the concept of repudiation in an attempt to further clarify the

distinction between reference and substitution. They explain this concept in the following terms:

> *In any anaphoric context, something is carried over from a previous instance. What is carried over may be the whole of what was there, or it may be only part of it; and if it is only part of it, then the remainder, that which is not carried over, has to be repudiated* (1976:93).

This means that while there is a total referential identity between a reference and the item it presupposes, in substitution, this is better understood as a kind of redefinition.

A careful examination of the data sample collected shows that substitution is rarely used as a cohesive device to connect the idiomatic expression with the remaining text. One of the few examples demonstrating the cohesive role of substitution can be seen in example 5.16.

Example 5.16

رب كلمة أو خطبة أو رأي تتناقلها الوسائل الاتصالية قد تشعل الشارع فهل الوضع اليوم يسمح بأكثر اشتعالا؟ ثم ما الفائدة من إيغار الصدور وتلك العنتريات التي يطلقها البعض بين آونة وأخرى في منابرهم ؟ هل يمكن بناء الأوطان بالشعارات الرنانة والخطب النارية ؟؟	*A word or speech in the media could ignite the situation on the street. What is the use of provoking people and threatening them from time to time? Can building up countries be achieved by fiery slogans and fiery speeches?*

As shown in example 5.16, the underlined word العنتريات (*the cries of Antarah*) serves as a substitute for the nominal word خطبة (*speech*). A successful interpretation of the word عنتريات involves referring back to the word الخطبة. This creates a cohesive tie that helps to bind the idiomatic expression and its co-text together.

According to Halliday and Hasan, ellipsis can be thought of as ‘substitution by zero’. However, ellipsis or omission of words or clauses take place because they have been mentioned previously or because they are understood. Johnstone (2002) defines ellipsis as the process whereby a cohesive tie is established by omitting an item which necessitates that readers search elsewhere in the text to fill in the blank.

The cohesive role of ellipsis lies in the fact that the deletion of an item creates some anaphoric and cataphoric referential ties which lend continuity to the text.

Idiomatic expressions are usually represented in fixed forms, which make it very difficult to delete any word or phrase from the idiom because omission of such items would cause the expression to lose its figurative meaning. This justifies why no instance of ellipsis has been attested in the collected data.

The same argument can also be used to explain the infrequency of the use of substitution as a cohesive device in the data sample of idiomatic expressions. It was used only for the purposes of substituting the figurative meaning of an item in the idiomatic expression. For the most part, in the examples reviewed a lexical item in an idiomatic expression was substituted by a synonym or near synonym, and this is considered to be a kind of lexical cohesion. On the rare occasions when substitution is used, this takes place within the idiomatic expression structure to produce compatibility with the co-text in terms of gender and number. This is considered as a transformational operation and leads to changes in idiom structure.

5.2.3 Cohesion through Conjunction

According to Schiffrin (1987:9) conjunctions are linguistic markers which link together the parts of a clause, sentence, and/or paragraph. They also signal the linguistic relationships which exist between the constituents of a text, especially in terms of what has already been said. Johnstone (2002: 102) refers to conjunction as a grammatical relation in which one of a number of strategies is employed to show how sentences are related to each other in terms of meaning. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 226) argue that conjunctions communicate certain meanings through presupposition, i.e. the presence of other parts of the text. They further argue that conjunctive elements are not cohesive by themselves, but that the occurrence of such elements lends continuity to the text by extending the meaning of one sentence to another. A brief introduction to conjunctions in MSA follows, in order to help clarify the later discussion of the examples from the data sample.

Sentences and clauses within a MSA text are frequently connected by means of words or phrases that coordinate, subordinate and link them semantically and

syntactically. This style results in a high degree of textual cohesion in Arabic writing (Ryding 2005: 407). Connective words that link sentences within a text are referred to as “discourse markers.”

Conjunctions in Arabic often occur through connective particles, referred to as أدوات الربط، حروف العطف. Not only do these connective particles act as a genitive case, but they also perform certain functions, e.g. the function of addition and/or co-ordination, adverbials of time, adverbials of place, adversatives and causal adverbials. Beeston (1968: 56) explains that in MSA connectives link words, phrases or sentences in such a way that each of the connected members performs precisely equal syntactic and functional work. Three main connectives can be distinguished in Arabic: و (*and*), ف (*and then* or *subsequently*), together with ثم (*and then*). The first two of these, و and ف, are more widely-used than the English *and* (ibid). Moreover, و is often found in contexts in MSA where English would employ a non-emphatic *but* or *or*. In addition, و links two linguistic units without implying that one is prior to the other. In contrast, ف (*and then*) has a sequential meaning; it implies that what was mentioned previously is prior to what comes next. Furthermore, when the priority intended is one of time, ف marks the various separate stages in a sequence of events.

Holes (2004: 267) usefully classifies the general types of relationships communicated by conjunctions as: conjunction (e.g. *and*), result conjunctions (e.g. *so*), sequence conjunctions (e.g. *then*), disjunction (e.g. *or*), and adversative emphatic conjunctions (e.g. *not X, rather Y)*. She also notes that some particles (such as و and ف) may connect several linguistic relationships but argues that others such as the adversative *lākin* (but) should not be included in this group as they require one of the properly conjunctive particles e.g. و to precede them.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that conjunctions do not show a specific type of sequence in utterances and conclude, therefore, that amongst all of the tools of cohesion, they seem to have the least identifiable linguistic relation. They divide conjunctions into five types, namely: additive, adversative, causal, conditional and ‘temporal’ conjunctions (1976: 250). Figure 5.2 provides a summary of Halliday and Hasan’s conjunction typology.

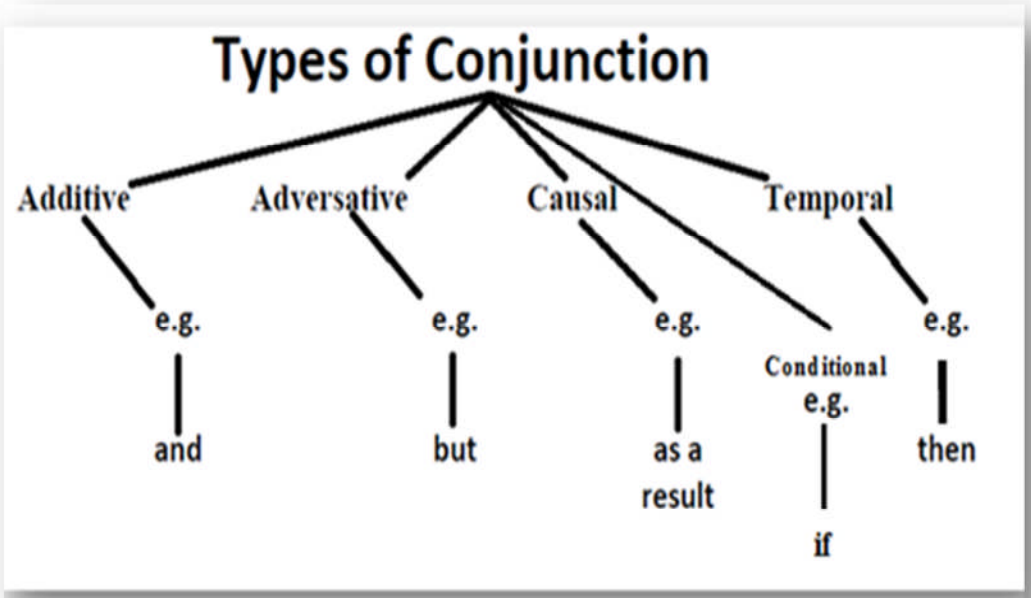


Figure 5-4 Types of conjunctions (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

5.2.3.1 Additive

Additive conjunctions refer to those connectors which are used to add more information by way of:

1. Addition using some connectors e.g. حرف العطف الواو (*and*), و كذلك (*also*), أيضا (*too*), بالاضافة الى ذلك (*furthermore*, *additionally*);
2. Alternation using some connectors e.g. بدلا من (*instead of*), أو (*or*);
3. Exemplification using connectors e.g. على سبيل المثال (*for example*);
4. Resemblance using connectors e.g. مثل (*like*); and
5. Explanation using connectors e.g. معنى ذلك (*namely*, *that is*).

The coordinating conjunction الواو (*and*) is one of the most commonly used connectors in MSA, acting as an additive within sentences to link words, phrases and clauses. In particular, Arabic uses الواو (*and*) in lists, whereas in English a comma would normally be used to separate each item. The following subsections present an overview of the most common additive conjunctions used in MSA, with a discussion of the cohesive role that such words play in connecting the idiomatic expression with its co-text.

– حرف العطف الواو (*and*)

Holes (2004: 267) notes that:

> *wa is the primitive conjunctive particle: it is the most commonly encountered sentence connective and has the widest variety of uses, analogous in these aspects to English 'and'. Unlike English 'and', however, wa regularly functions as a textual, as well as a sentence-connective.*

This conjunction performs various functions, creating a range of relations which have been identified as additive, temporal, circumstantial and adversative as well as implying simultaneous action (Al-Amri, 2004; Holes, 2004).

In the following examples the coordinating conjunction الواو functions cohesively to link the idiomatic expression with its co-text.

Example 5.17

هناك نوع من الناس يقلّب رأسه في وسط هذا الحراك الاقتصادي والاجتماعي ليس في ذلك الأمر كله، وليس له علاقة بشيء من ذلك كله، وليس له ناقة ولا جمل،	*Some people poke their noses into* [interfere in] *this economic and social movement, even though they have neither a she-camel nor a he-camel* [the whole matter is of no relevance to them].

Example 5.18

ثم ارتعش و ضرب كفا بكف	*He trembled and hit one hand with the other* [felt confused].

Example 5.19

لا مجال للمجاملات والنفاق و مسح الجوخ	*There is no time for compliments, hypocrisy, and wiping baize*

Example 5.20

فمن الذي يستطيع الهيمنة على لبنان وسرقة القرار الفلسطيني وضرب عصفورين بحجر	*Who is capable of taking control of Lebanon, dominating the Palestinian*

decision, and hitting two birds with only one stone? (achieving two goals with a single action).

In each of the above examples, the conjunctive الواو creates an additive relation between the idiomatic expression on the one hand and the rest of the text on the other hand. The conjunctive الواو serves as an indication of the meaning of the idiomatic expression by creating an additive relation with one or even two sentences that are synonymous with the idiom. For example, in example 5.19, the coordinating conjunction الواو links the idiomatic expression مسح الجوخ with two synonymous sentences لا مجال للمجاملات and النفاق. Because the interpretation of the idiomatic expression depends on these sentences, a referential tie is made which lends continuity to the text.

- ف (*so, and then*)

This connector implies a number of relationships with the previous text elements. It may have a sequential meaning و من ثم (*and then*) (Holes: 2004), a resultative meaning نتيجة لذلك (*and so*), a contrastive meaning (فاء السببية) (*yet; but)* and also a conclusive meaning (Al-Batal, 1990). It is also described as the 'particle of classification' and is usually attached to the notion of development in narration. Holes (2004) explains that *fa* usually communicates the meaning of a consequence of what happened previously. The following example illustrates the cohesive function of الفاء.

Example 5.21

غاب الأبوان فانقلب المنزل رأسا على عقب *The parents were away, so the house got turned upside down.*

In the above example, the conjunctive particle ف conveys a causative meaning. In other words, it indicates a causative relationship between the idiomatic expression and the co-text. This means that the idiomatic expression انقلب المنزل رأسا على عقب (*the house got turned upside down*) is a result of the first part, that the parents were away. Without such a particle, the two parts are longer connected and this might create a change in meaning.

- ثم (*Then*)

The connective particle ثم (*then*) is an adverb that expresses a sequential action; it comes later in time than the action in the preceding sentence or clause (Ryding 2005). Consider the following example:

Example 5.22

وكان المتوفى عن عمر 32عاما منتصف فبراير الماضي قد انهار عندما كان في إحدى عربات مترو مدينة هامبورغ ثم لفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة.	*The 32-year-old man collapsed in a train car in Hamburg in the middle of last February; then he breathed out his last breath.*

The use of the conjunctive particle ثم (*then*) connects the idiomatic expression with the preceding text by signalling a sequential meaning, i.e. that the 32-year-old man first collapsed and then he died. The existence of such a particle connects the idiomatic expression with its co-text.

- أو (*or*)

This disjunctive indicates an option between two or more elements, but that option is inclusive, that is, it may include one, both, or all the elements (Khalil 1996). For illustration, consider the following examples:

Example 5.23

الحزم والشدة ..... تجعله يحسب ألف حساب لما سينزل به من عقاب لو مد يده إلى مواطير البيوت الخاصة بالحدائق أو البيوت .. أو سولت له نفسه أخذ أي شيء ليس له	*Seriousness makes him think twice about what he may face if he turns his hand to garden house motors or if he allows himself to steal anything that is not his.*

Example 5.24

أما الذي يثبت ادانته فيتم تطبيق التعليمات عليه بنقله أو كف يده عن العمل وفق التعليمات المنظمة لذلك.	*Anyone found guilty would be moved away or his hand* [he] *would be stopped from working in accordance with instructions.*

In the above examples, the use of أو (*or*) creates a cohesive relationship between the idiomatic expression and the co-text. The existence of such a particle indicates an option between the idiomatic expression and the preceding sentence. This connects the two parts together and lends connectivity.

- كما (*also*)

This expression expresses similarity with something that has already occurred, either in a previous statement or earlier in the same sentence. It is usually followed by a verb phrase (Ryding 2005). Consider the following example:

Example 5.25

كما أعطي الضوء الأخضر لاستثمار رؤوس أموال روسية قيمتها مليارا دولار في مشروع إكمال بناء محطتين للكهرباء، وتحديث مصنع قديم للألمنيوم، وإنشاء مصنع آخر في طاجيكستان.	*He was also given the green light to invest Russian capital of $2 billion in completing building up two power stations, renovating an aluminium factory and establishing a new one in Tajikistan.*

In the above example, the particle كما [kama] creates a relation of similarity between the idiomatic expression and the preceding text. This connects the idiomatic expression with its co-text and brings unity to the text.

5.2.3.2 Adversative

This category of expressions can also be referred to as *exceptive expressions* and they include connectives and adverbs with meanings that contrast with previous propositional content. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 50) describe this conjunctive relationship as ‘contrary to expectation’. This expectation stems from what is being said (internal cohesion), the process of the communication itself or the context of the situation in which the language is used (external cohesion). In English, the internal relation is typically marked by the use of *yet, however,* or *but.* In MSA this adversative relationship is expressed by the use of single words such as لكن (*however*), أما (*while*), or by expressions including خلاف ذلك or على العكس (*on the*

contrary) and في المقابل (*on the contrary*). For illustration, consider the following examples:

Example 5.26

لم يستطع الشباب السيطرة على السيارة، مما أدى إلى انقلابها عدة مرات لتقذف الشاب على بعد أمتار عن الطريق العام. وقد حاول المارة إسعافه لكنه لفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة قبل وصوله الى المستشفى.	*The young men lost control over the car, and thus it rolled upside down, throwing the man a few metres from the main street. Passers-by tried to help him but he died before reaching the hospital.*

Example 5.27

والضغط النفسي للتقاعد ليس السبب الوحيد للجلطة ولكنه بمثابة القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير فهي نتيجة مباشرة لتراكمات سنين ماضية من الضغط والسكر والتدخين وعدم التحكم بالكلسترول.	*The psychological pressure of retirement is not the sole reason for a stroke, but it is like the straw that broke the camel's back* [the final straw]. *It is the result of the accumulation of high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, and failing to control cholesterol in previous years.*

Example 5.28

وأفادت صحيفة "الصن" البريطانية أن بيكهام يتذمّر دائماً من مضيفات الطيران التابعات للخطوط الجوية البريطانية، لكن القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير كانت عندما أقدمت إحداهن على التقاط صورته نائماً لتوقظه بوميض آلة التصوير.	*The British newspaper The Sun reported that Beckham always complains about the British Airways stewardesses, but the straw that broke the camel's back* [the final straw] *was when one of them woke him up with the camera flash when she was taking a photo of him.*

Example 5.29

عقود تطوير إثر عقود لكنها حبر على ورق.	*Contracts for development follow other contracts, but they remain ink on paper* [inapplicable].

In the above examples, the underlined conjunctive لكن signals an adversative relationship between the idiomatic expression and the preceding text. The existence of such conjunctives brings connectivity to the text, as they make the understanding and interpretation of the idiomatic expression dependent on the preceding text.

5.2.3.3 Causal

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), the simplest form of causal relation is expressed by words of the kind *so, thus, hence, therefore,* or *consequently,* together with a number of expressions including *as a result (of that), because of that,* or *as a consequence (of that).* All these words and expressions regularly combine with an initial *and*. In MSA, causal relations can be represented using words and expressions including ‘لكي (*therefore, so*) , لذلك (*therefore*) , من أجل (*in order to*), and لأن (*because*). The cohesive role of such connectors lies in the fact that they point out a causative relationship between the idiomatic expression and text which precedes it. This is reflected in the following examples:

Example 5.30

ويوضح الشاب سطام أنه لا يعرف متى يقرر الزواج ولم يكن المال عائقا كبيرا له <u>لكي</u> يكمل نصف دينه لكنه يعتبر نفسه صغيرا على تكوين أسرة .	*The young man Sattam explains that he does not know when to get married. Money has never been an obstacle <u>for him to</u> complete half of his religion* (to get married), *but he thinks that he is still too young* to take the responsibility of a family.

<u>Example 5.31</u>

من أمثلة الإساءة للغة الفصحى عند البحث "مثلاً عن بيت من أبيات المتنبي التي صارت مضرب المثل، وقلما يخطئ فيها أحد؛ فلو ذهبنا لمحرك القوقل على سبيل المثال، وكتبنا بيتاً للمتنبي؛ فإنك ستعجب مما ستجد، فكلٌ يكتب البيت على هواه، دون أن يتثبت من صحة البيت، <u>وهكذا</u> اختلط	*An example of misusing MSA is revealed when we try to search for a line of poetry by al-Mutanabbi, which was later turned into a proverb. Using the Google search engine, you will be shocked to see that everybody writes*

الحابل بالنابل، والمصيبة أن من يقرأ البيت يظنه بيتاً صحيحاً.	*this line differently without checking it. Thus, the rope man got mixed up with the dart man,* [the issue became confused], *and the problem is that whoever reads the line thinks it is correct.*

As shown in the above examples, the underlined connectors لكي (*therefore*) and هكذا (*thus*) create a causal relationship between the idiomatic expression and other lexical units within the utterance. In each example above, understanding the pragmatic meaning of these idiomatic expressions depends on the causal conjunctive and the subsequent text. In the first example the idiomatic expression يكمل نصف دينه (*to get married*) is connected to the previous co-text by means of the connectors لكي (*therefore/to/for*) in causal relation. Thus the idiomatic expression is result of the fact that his reasons for not getting married are not financial. In example 5.31, the first part of the text explains that Internet searching reveals that sometimes even well-known phrases are incorrectly written in MSA by Arabic speakers. This idea is causal and connected to the second part (containing the idiomatic expression) by using the connector هكذا (*thus*). Moreover, this causal relation between idiom and text has contributed to the text's cohesion.

5.2.3.4 Conditional

Causal patterns also include a sub-category known as the conditionals. There are two clauses: اسم الشرط (the conditional clause) which specifies the condition, and جواب الشرط (the result clause) which specifies the consequences or the result of those conditions. Some conditions are reasonably realizable, but others are simply expressions of impossible conditions (Alhawary, 2011: 297). In Arabic there are many different words meaning *if* which are known as devices of condition i.e. 'إن', 'إذا' and 'من'.

A very common feature of MSA conditional sentences is that when a perfect verb is used at the beginning of a conditional clause or result clause, it requires the imperfect tense rather than the perfect one. The English equivalent of this is rendered by a present tense in the conditional clause unless the context requires the past tense (Beeston, 1968). The most common MSA particles marking conditional sentences are إن (*if*) and إذا (*if*) (Beeston, 1968: 83).

Conditional particles play a major role in connecting the idiom with the co-text by signalling this relation of conditionality between them, as seen in the following examples:

Example 5.32

إذهب إلى العقار وأهل العقار، سوف يعقرونك عقر الناقة سوف يسحبون كل ما في جيبك، وكل ما أمامك وخلفك من أجل قطعة أرض في منطقة نائية تحلم أن تبنيها لك ولأولادك مع أنك لن تبنيها إلا إذا قامت ناقة صالح.

If you go to the property and the landlords, they may bite you like a camel; they may take all your money for an isolated piece of land that you dream of building. Though you will not build it unless Saleh's camel reappears [until Hell freezes over].

Example 5.33

العمل على بلوغ "العالمية" لن يتحقق بالنوم على وسادة التاريخ والخبرة وتعدد النجوم ولكنه يتحقق باستثمار الأدوات المتوفرة واحترام الخصم قبل كل شيء والتهيئة النفسية الفائقة والبدنية العالية وإشعار اللاعبين بأنهم في مهمة وطنية وإذا تعرضوا للإخفاق لاسمح الله فلا أحد يعذرهم خصوصا بعد غياب الأندية السعودية خلال السنوات الثلاث الماضية عن منصة الذهب القارية والمشاركة العالمية وهذا لن يتحقق إلا مع محاسبة كل عنصر هلالي لنفسه قبل أن تحاسبه الصحافة والجماهير المتعطشة منذ سنوات للظهور العالمي والتي لا ترحم إذا وقع الفأس بالرأس وأسقط خريف الهزائم جميع الأوراق!

World success cannot be achieved by laziness, but by utilizing the available tools, respecting the other team, and by psychological and physiological preparation. All players must feel they are on a national mission. Failure will not be tolerated especially because Saudi clubs have not succeeded in achieving any titles for the last three years. Press and supporters will not sympathize with the team if the axe falls in the head [failure becomes a reality]) *and defeats occur frequently.*

Example 5.34

وأكد مشعل في كلمته أن الأمة الاسلامية "لن تتخلى عن قدسها ومقدساتها ومن يلعب بالنار سيكتوي بهذه النار ويتحمل تبعات ذلك.

In his speech, Masha'l emphasised that the Islamic nation will not abandon Jerusalem or the Holy

Places; just as fire burns anyone who plays with it so he must bear the consequences.

In the above examples, the existence of the conditional particles plays an essential role in linking the idiomatic expression with its context. In example 5.32, the idiomatic expression قامت ناقة صالح (*Saleh's camel reappears*) functions as the main clause for the second part of the condition لن تبنيها (*you will only be able to develop it*) which are both connected by the condition particle لن. This makes the interpretation of the idiomatic expression fully dependent on the second part of condition. In examples 5.33 and 5.34 the conditional particles من and إذا seem to function as cohesive vehicles by which the idiomatic expression ties together the whole text.

5.2.3.5 Temporal

Ghazalah (2008:78) divides temporal connectors include five different categories as shown below. In each case, some common representative examples of each type are listed for illustrative purposes.

1. Sequence: أولا (*firstly*), ثانيا (*secondly*), بعد ذلك (*next*)
2. Simultaneity: في الوقت نفسه (*at the same time*), في هذه الأثناء (*in the meantime*)
3. Precedence: سابقا (*previously*), في السابق (*formerly*), قبل ذلك (*before that*)
4. Conclusion: أخيرا (*finally*), في النهاية (*at the end*) في الختام (*in conclusion*)
5. Immediacy: فورا (*at once*), حالا (*soon*), في المرة القادمة (*next time*)

The following examples provide an insight into the type of temporal connectors found in the data sample:

Example 5.35

في البداية قالت معينة: بعد زواجي بنحو عامين من شاب لم توفق أسرتي في اكتشاف سوء سيرته، إلاّ بعد أن "وقع الفأس في الرأس"	*Mu'ena said: two years following my marriage,my family discovered my husband's bad deeds only after the axe fell in the head* [They did not find out he was a very bad husband until it was too late].

Example 5.36

في الثمانينيات لعب الحرس الثوري دورا رئيسا خلال الحرب العراقية/الإيرانية، ولكن ما أن وضعت الحرب أوزارها حتى تنبهت النخبة الحاكمة إلى ضرورة استيعاب العائدين من جبهات القتال، وتأمين احتياجات أسر القتلى والمفقودين	*In the 'eighties, the National Guard played a major role during the Iraqi-Iranian war. But when the war put down its woes* [was over], *the ruling elite realized that it was necessary to accommodate soldiers returning from fighting and to secure the needs of the families of the dead and missing soldiers.*

In the first two examples, the conjunctives بعد and ما show the temporal sequence in which the events took place. In example 5.35 بعد (*after*) shows that the idiomatic expression وقع الفأس في الرأس refers to an event (Mu'ena's marriage) which happened before the event mentioned in the first clause, i.e. her family discovering his bad deeds. In example 5.36 ما (*when*) show that the idiomatic expression وضعت الحرب أوزارها (*when the war put down its woes*) refers to the authorities becoming aware of having to deal with the results of the conflict. The inclusion of these conjunctives plays an essential role in deciding the meaning of the idiomatic expression by linking it with another event. Without such conjunctives, the text meaning is incomplete as the text will lack unity.

It is worth noting here that some temporal connectors indicate the place where the event took place, as in the following example:

Example 5.37

وتم نقل الضابط إلى المستشفى حيث لفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة هناك.	*The officer was taken to the hospital, where he breathed out his last breath.*

In the above example, the underlined connector حيث (*where*) indicates the place where the action referred to by the idiomatic expression took place, i.e. that the officer died in the hospital. The existence of such a conjunctive facilitates the interpretation of the idiomatic expression by linking it to the remaining text.

5.2.4 Lexical Cohesion

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 274) maintain that lexical cohesion is the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary. They further observe that its contribution to the meaning of an utterance is provided by the continuity of lexical meaning that is created by the different groups of words inside the text. Johnstone (2002:103) argues that lexical cohesion is created via the repetition of a lexical item or the use of words that point to one another such as hyponymy, antonymy, and synonymy.

These types of cohesive ties differ from the previous ones in that they are not grammatical but lexical, producing linkages in the text by the use of vocabulary. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 274) identify two types of lexical cohesion, namely collocation and reiteration. The former refers to expressions which coincide together, whereas the latter can be divided into four sub-types: the same word, a synonym/near-synonym, a superordinate, or a general word (Halliday and Hasan (1976: 279-280).

The term collocation can be defined as a syntagmatic association related to the underlying forms of lexical items, meaning in practice that whenever a particular word is mentioned, it is usually accompanied by another specific word. The cohesive role of collocation lies in the predictability of this co-occurrence of lexical items, since with collocations, when one word occurs, it is extremely likely that its associated word will occur in its vicinity (Sinclair, 1991: 71).

Collocations will not be examined here with idiomatic expressions because there is already an implied type of collocation between the components in the latter (see Chapter Two) but not with co-text due to the fact that idioms are treated as a unit not as a single word.

With regard to reiteration, Halliday and Hasan (1976: 278) define this as the form of lexical cohesion which involves either the exact repetition of a lexical item or the use of some kind of synonymy in the context of reference. No examples of exact repetition were found in the data sample texts simply because idiomatic expressions are structures rather than single words, although sometimes a full sentence may be repeated for the purpose of assertion or emphasis.

However, there were multiple examples of reiteration as a lexical cohesive device amongst the examples of idiomatic expressions selected from *Al-Riyadh*. The following discussion focuses on the most common type of reiteration i.e. synonym and near-synonym.

Synonymy usually occurs when an idiomatic expression is used to assert the meaning of what has already been said in the previous sentence, as shown in example 5.38:

Example 5.38

وليس له علاقة بشيء من ذلك كله، وليس له ناقة ولا جمل،	*He has nothing to do with all of this, and he has neither a she--camel nor a he-camel.*

Here, the idiomatic expression ليس له ناقة ولا جمل in the second part of the statement is synonymous with the opening assertion ليس له علاقة بشيء من ذلك كله since both of them convey the same meaning: that the individual in question has no involvement or interest in the issue under discussion. In this instance, then, the meaning of the idiomatic expression can be easily inferred by reference to the preceding synonymous statement. The occurrence of such synonymy creates a particular type of lexical tie, linking the idiomatic expression with the previous sentence and ensuring the continuity of the text.

A similar type of reiteration occurs which involves a word-for-phrase rather than a phrase-for-phrase synonymy in which one word in the MSA text is synonymous with the meaning of the whole idiomatic expression. Consider the examples below:

Example 5.39

ويوضح الشاب سطام أنه لا يعرف متى يقرر الزواج ولم يكن المال عائقا كبيرا له لكي يكمل نصف دينه لكنه يعتبر نفسه صغيرا على تكوين أسرة .	*Sattam explains that he does not know when to get married. Money is not a problem for him to complete half of his religion, but he thinks that he is still too young to take the responsibility of a family.*

Example 5.40

بل جملتهم خافوا حتى بلغت القلوب منهم الحناجر	*Indeed, all of them were frightened until hearts reached throat* [were so frightened they had their hearts in their mouths]

Example 5.41

من جانبها قالت بشرى العمري إن أكثر ما أسعدها وأثلج صدرها هو المشاركة الفعالة من سيدات الأعمال الفتيات والمشاركات بالأعمال الفردية مثل خياطة الشنط والابواك	*Bushra al-Omari says that what warmed her chest* [warmed the cockles of her heart] *and made her happy is the active contribution of business women in individual industries such as garment manufacture.*

Example 5.42

هذا الخبر أثلج صدري وسرني كثيرا	*This news warmed my chest* [warmed the cockles of my heart] *and I was extremely pleased.*

Example 5.43

يمشي على خوف وتردد يقدم رجلا ويؤخر الأخرى	*He was frightened and hesitant, moving one foot forwards and the other one back* [taking faltering steps].

In the above examples, the idiomatic expression is synonymous with one word, as indicated in the underlining in the text, although this is not always apparent from the English translation. Thus, in example, the idiomatic expression يكمل نصف دينه (*to get married*) is synonymous with the previously mentioned الزواج (*marriage*). Examples

5.41 and 5.42 feature the same idiomatic expression أثلج صدرها which functionally means *to make one happy*, and is synonymous with the words أسعدها (*to make her happy*) and سرني كثيرا (*extremely pleased me*) respectively. In the final example, the idiomatic expression يقدم رجلا ويؤخر الأخرى (*moving one foot forward and the other backward*) is synonymous with the words خوف و تردد (*frightened and hesitant*).

Some cases occur in which an idiomatic expression consisting of a single unit appears as a synonym of another single unit.

Example 5.44

رب كلمة أو خطبة أو رأي تتناقلها الوسائل الاتصالية قد تشعل الشارع فهل الوضع اليوم يسمح بأكثر اشتعالا؟ ثم ما الفائدة من إيغار الصدور وتلك العنتريات التي يطلقها البعض بين آونة وأخرى في منابرهم ؟ هل يمكن بناء الأوطان بالشعارات الرنانة والخطب النارية ؟؟	*A single word or speech in the media may inflame the situation on the street. What is the point of provoking people and threatening them from time to time? Can reform be achieved by fiery slogans and fiery speeches?*

In the above example, the noun خطبة (*speech*) is synonymous with the idiomatic expression العنتريات which is used to refer to very strong speeches. This creates lexical ties between the idiomatic expression and its synonym, which in turns helps to keep them connected.

5.2.5 Other Types of Cohesion

The investigation of the cohesion of idiomatic expression using the data collected from *Al-Riyadh* reveals a number of cohesive devices that were not mentioned in Halliday and Hasan's model (1976). This may be explained as resulting from the differences between the linguistic structures found in MSA and English. These cohesive devices are discussed in the following sections.

5.2.5.1 Exclusion/Exception

The existence of an exclusion particle before the idiomatic expression connects it with another element in the text. The existence of such particles means that the successful understanding of the idiomatic expression involves referring the second

element of exclusion process. In the following example the exclusion particle -سوى connects the idiomatic expression with its co-text.

Example 5.45

لا نحتاج سوى لفتيل يشعل النار	*We only need a fuse to ignite fire*

Example 5.46

المسألة تُقرأ من خلال سياقات وتراكمات واختناقات لا تنتظر سوى القشة التي تقصم ظهر البعير.	*The question can be read through accumulated discrepancies and pressures that only need the straw that breaks the camel's back* [that will be the final straw]

The exclusion particle سوى in both these examples connects the verbs لا نحتاج and لا تنتظر with their respective idiomatic expressions فتيل يشعل النار, and القشة التي تقصم ظهر البعير. By doing so, a referential tie is created between the exclusion particle and the idiomatic expression. This lends connectivity to the text.

5.2.5.2 Assertion/Emphasis

The use of the emphasis particle قد in Arabic serves as a device to connect the idiomatic expression to what has been written previously in the text and to add emphasis to its meaning. To understand what this particle emphasizes, it is necessary to refer back to the preceding text. Consider the following examples where the particle قد functions cohesively:

Example 5.47

كان الرأي العام في الخارج يعرف أن النجاح الأمني الذي تحقق لم يأت من دون رؤية عميقة للمجتمع ومشكلاته الفكرية بخاصة، وإن ظل يقف الخارج موقفا فاترا من منطلقات هذا النجاح، فإن الداخل قد أدار ظهره بهدوء لكل ذلك.	*Public opinion knows that the security success was not achieved without an in-depth look at society, especially its intellectual problems. Although public opinion displayed a warm attitude towards this success, the private*

individual, in reality, turned his back to it [was not interested].

Example 5.48

ليعلم المُجرم قاتل الأطفال أنه بفعلته الشنيعة هذه يقطع كل خطوط تراجع الثوار أو من يتردد في الانضمام إليهم. إنه قد حفر قبره النتن بيديه.	*Let the criminal, the childkiller, know that by this repulsive action, he provoked the rebels and encouraged others to join them. In fact, he dug his grave with his hands* [he sentenced himself to death].

Among the assertion styles in MSA is the use of قد with the past verb. In the two examples above, we see that the idiomatic expression is made more cohesive with the text (its linguistic context) by adding قد before the past tense verbs forming the expressions. In the first example this draws attention to the change in public attitude and ignores the security issue whilst in the second example it emphasises the inevitability of the fate of the child murderer.

5.2.5.3 Changes to the Structure/Wording of Idiomatic Expressions

Sometimes, the structure or wording of an idiomatic expression is changed for the purposes of applying the meaning of that idiom in a particular instance. This can entail the replacement of a lexical item within an idiomatic expression in order to fit a particular context. This creates referential ties that cement the unity of the text. This phenomenon can be seen in the following example:

Example 5.49

في مصر جاءت حادثة مقتل خالد سعيد البشعة شرارة الثورة، ليس لأنها حادثة فريدة ونادرة، ولكن لأنها جاءت في مرحلة كل شيء فيها مهيأ لاضطرام تلك الشرارة، وجاءت انتخابات مجلس الشعب المزورة بالكامل بمثابة القشة التي قصمت ظهر النظام.	*In Egypt, the horrible murder of Khaled Said was the spark of* [sparked off] *the uprising, not because it is rare, but because it occurred at a stage when everything was flammable* [volatile]. *The entirely fraudulent parliamentary election*

was like the straw that broke the system's back.

The original idiom in Arabic, القشة التي قصمت ظهير البعير, literally refers to a straw which broke the back of the camel, similar to the English expression *the straw that broke the camel's back* or *the final straw*. In example 5.49, the usual word البعير is replaced by a different noun النظام to order to apply the meaning of the idiom specifically to the situation pertaining at that time in Egypt, when the murder of Khaled Saed coming on top of electoral malpractice caused Egyptian citizens to take to the streets in defiance of the regime. In this instance, then, part of the understanding of this idiom depends on linking this to the preceding text (and more broadly, to the sociohistorical context to which it refers). In this case, a cohesive tie is created between the idiomatic expression and the remaining text which helps link them together and keep them unified.

5.2.5.4 Linking the Idiomatic Meaning with Figurative Meaning

Abdou (2011) argues that idiomatic expressions can acquire additional meaning when they are used in conjunction with other lexical items which help create cohesion between idiom and co-text, as seen in example 5.50. Moon (1998) also observed that sometimes the meaning of an idiomatic expression occurs when metonymy or metaphor is used.

Example 5.50

(أبو ناصر) رجل في التاسعه والخمسين من عمره يعمل مديرا عاما يشار اليه بالبنان ويُقدّم في صدور المجالس ويلجأ اليه الناس بعد الله في قضاء حوائجهم،	*The 59-year-old Abu Nasir is a well-known General Manager; usually, he sits at the front in public meetings and people turn to him to solve their problems.*

The idiomatic expression يشار اليه بالبنان is used to imply that someone is famous or well-known. In the example above, this expression was followed by another metaphoric expression, i.e. يقدم في صدور المجالس, which means that someone sits at the front in public meetings as a sign of respect for him and to show his higher social

status. Thus, the second expression يقدم في صدور المجالس is a result of the first one يشار اليه بالبنان, i.e., being a well-known man makes people ask him to sit at the front. This creates cohesive ties between the two idiomatic expressions and leads to the continuity of the text.

5.3 Co-text/ Linguistic Context Analysis

5.3.1 Linguistic Context/Co-text and Idiomatic Expressions

The importance of linguistic context/ co-text stems from the fact that it helps to distinguish literal from metaphorical meaning in an idiomatic expression. According to Brown and Yule (1983), the words which occur in discourse are constrained by their co-text; the more co-text there is, the more grounded the interpretation is. Therefore, co-text is of great importance in limiting the interpretation of what follows. It also prepares the reader to understand what is said next. In order to determine the semantic meaning of idiomatic expressions, the surrounding linguistic context or the whole text is needed. In fact, linguistic context plays a major role in allowing readers to distinguish between the literal and the metaphorical meaning or other possible metaphorical meanings of an idiomatic expression. Whether the meaning of an idiomatic expression is fairly simply and straightforward, or ambiguous and unpredictable, the linguistic context assists in making clear its meaning through synonymy and/or other semantic relations between the expression and the text.

The meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be easily ascertained by looking up its component linguistic units in a dictionary. Instead, its specific meaning must be inferred from the context in which it is used, as illustrated in the examples below which concern the expressions رفع العقال (*lifting the headband*[8]) or رفع العقال (*He lifted the*

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[8] *Al-iqal* is the black circlet placed atop the traditional headgear worn by Saudi males and translated here as head band. More will be said about this item and its use in idiomatic expressions in the chapter on culture.

headband), as a verbal sentence. Depending on the context in which the expression appears, it can take on a range of different meanings.

Example 5.51

وأوضح أنّ بعض المعلمين يستخدمون عدة أساليب من التخويف من بينها: التخويف بسجن الطالب في مستودع المدرسة أو في دورة المياه، أو تهديد الطالب بضربه بالعصا إضافة إلى النظرات الحادة التي يرعب بها المعلم طالب المرحلة الابتدائية واستخدام عدد منهم ضخامة بنيته الجسدية كسلاح لإرهاب الطالب وتخويفه ، أو استخدام الصراخ العالي داخل الفصل، أو **رفع العقال**، أو الضرب على طاولة الطالب، مشدداً على ضرورة استخدام الأساليب المنهجية التربوية الصحيحة، التي تؤدي الغرض مع الحفاظ على صحة الطلاب والطالبات النفسية، ويكون قريباً منهم، ويشعرهم بجو من الأمن والطمأنينة، ويتيح الحرية للطلاب للتعبير عما في أنفسهم والحديث عن رغباتهم في حدود المتاح وفي دائرة المنهج المقرر.	*He made it clear that a few teachers use intimidating behaviour like threatening students by locking them in the stockroom or in the toilet or threatening to hit them with a wooden stick. Others frighten pupils by staring at them, using their big bodies as a means to scare them. Other teaching staff members frighten students by repeatedly shouting at them,* ***lifting the headband,*** *or hitting the desk inside the classroom. He also emphasised the need to use modern teaching techniques to keep students psychologically healthy and allow them to express their views and needs within the limits of the curriculum.*

It is clear from the context of example 5.51 that رفع العقال (*lifting the headband*) must convey the meaning of threatening and frightening as the text includes other indications of this type of negative behaviour. In this linguistic context, the writer employed a number of words to express the concepts of classroom bullying, including verbs related to threatening, hitting, staring, and shouting at pupils, making the meaning of this expression clearer. The writer of the text tries to reflect this threatening and frightening behaviour and calls for the introduction of less damaging educational methods.

Example 5.52

فيما قال رئيس البلدية "عند الساعة الواحدة وخمسين دقيقة بعد خروجي من العمل باتجاه المنزل وعند التوقف عند احدى الاشارات واذا بسيارة تنطلق مسرعة باتجاهي محددا موقع الهدف باب السائق للتركيز ولتأكيد قصد الاذى	*The head of the municipality said: "After I had left work, I stopped at a traffic sign at 1:50 PM; at that moment, another car deliberately crashed into my car. In order to harm me and carry*

*out his previous threats, the driver (a former employee in the municipality) got out of the car and **lifted the headband** to hit me. He also shouted and swore at me…*	الشخصي وتنفيذ الجريمة وتهديدات سابقة وقرائن ترتبط بما تم اتخاذه من تعليمات وانظمة ليصطدم بسيارتي بقوة احدثت تلفيات ويترجل من السيارة موظف سبق طي قيده قبل عدة سنوات من البلدية لغيابه ويتجه لي بسيارتي رغم هول الصدمة وعدم القدرة على الترجل من السيارة من التلفيات التي لحقت بها **ورفع العقال** لضربي وصوت عال والفاظ بذيئة وتهديدات حتى تدخل بعض المواطنين وتم إبعاده عني ومن هول الصدمة المقرونة بالهمجية لم اصحوا الا في المستشفى ."

In this example 5.52 the idiomatic expression appears in the form of a verbal clause رفع العقال (*lifted the headband*), which implies both an action and a time. The implied action here is clearly ‘hitting’, which is manifested via the words immediately following the expression under consideration, i.e. ‘to hit me’. The context suggests that someone targeted the head of the municipality, initially by attacking his vehicle in the street and then threatening him with physical violence to his person. From the example 5.52 as the major action ‘crash’ actually happened, then hitting with the headband is very likely to happen as well.

<u>Example 5.53</u>

*Once upon a time, a group of young people were hiking. One of them, although brave and clever, slipped and fell. His headband was the first thing to hit the ground. Another member of the group **lifted the headband** and said: “Your headband is quite dusty”, while the man was still bleeding.*	حدث ذات يوم أن كان هنالك مجموعة من الشباب يقومون برحلة برية، ومن بينهم واحد ممن اشتهر بينهم بميتة القلب، رغم ذكائه الحاد، كان صديقنا يحتضن إبريقاً من الشاي مشروبه المفضل على مدى الساعة، ويتكىء مع أصدقائه على سفح أحد الجبال.. وعندما تدهور أحد رفاقهم الذي كان يحاول تسلق السفح الأملس ليسقط بينهم، حيث كان عقاله أول الواصلين إلى الأرض ليسقط بالقرب من صاحبنا الذي كانت ردة فعله الأولية.. **رفع العقال** بين يديه بعد أن عفره الغبار وقال متألماً: (أوه تغبر عقالك يا فلان!).. في الوقت الذي كان فلان هذا ينزف من غير مكان، ويتحسس مواجعه!.

Here, the main focus will be on the linguistic context and the meaning of the idiomatic expression رفع العقال (*lifted the headband*). However, the situational context of this example will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis (see 6.6.6). From the context of the text above, it is clear that a man fell down while hiking, and that his headband also fell down. A friend of his lifted the headband. The meaning intended in this context is literal, i.e. he lifted it from the ground, using his hands. Being dusty is also another clue to this meaning.

Example 5.54

فاجأ النائب الإسلامي الكويتي وليد الطبطبائي الحضور وكاميرات التلفزة والإعلام التي تواجدت بكثافة **برفع عقاله** احتراما لرئيس الحكومة الفلسطينية المقالة إسماعيل هنية ورفعه لنعاله متوجها بالنقد لرئيس السلطة الفلسطينية محمود عباس.	*The Kuwaiti Islamic deputy Waleed Tabatbai surprised the delegates and mass media by **lifting his headband** to express his respect for the former Premier of the Palestinian government, Ismail Haniyyeh, and lifting his shoes to criticise the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas.*

The linguistic context of this text implies that lifting the headband is connected to expressing one's respect for another individual in a formal manner, especially because this action involves a Kuwaiti deputy, welcoming the former Palestinian Premier, Haniyyeh. This is clearly marked in the use of the word احتراما (*in respect for*) immediately following the expression. The syntactic function of this word is مفعول لأجله (*causative object*), which explains the reason behind the action. In other words, the reason for lifting the headband is showing respect.

From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that رفع العقال (*to lift the headband*) may be usefully compared with the English expression *to take off one's hat to someone*. In Arabic, this idiomatic expression may convey five meanings, depending on its linguistic context:

1. To threaten someone
2. To hit someone using *al-'iqal*
3. To express one's respect for someone
4. To request something from someone in a polite manner

5. To remove one's *'iqal* (literal meaning)

A further example which highlights the importance of the linguistic context in determining the literal or figurative meaning of an idiom concerns the expression وقع الفأس على الرأس (*the axe fell on the head*). A number of examples featuring this idiomatic expression appeared in the data sample and they merit closer contextual examination.

Example 5.55

ربما تكون اللحظات التي يتعرض فيها الإنسان للنقد من أصعب اللحظات لديه !! خاصة إذا كان النقد من شخص يعرفه جيداً .إذ أن أثر ملاحظاته يمكن أن يكون لاذعاً وسريع الأثر ويصل الى العظام. وقد يكون **أكثر ألماً من وقع الفأس على الرأس**.	*The moments of criticism that one is exposed to are perhaps the toughest, most particularly if this criticism comes from someone he knows well, since the effect of his remarks would be bitter and effective to the marrow* [would cut to the quick]. *In fact, it would even be* ***harsher than the impact of an axe blow to the head****.*

The previous example relates to receiving criticism from a friend which is extremely painful and difficult to take and in a literal sense could feel more painful than being struck by an axe. This possible literal meaning of the idiomatic expression وقع الفأس على الرأس is implied through the inclusion of words such as العظام (*bones*) and ألم (*pain*). In addition, the literal meaning is expressed through the utilization of the word أكثر which serves a good purpose in comparing the pain of criticism to that of an axe blow to the head.

Example 5.56

الحكومة السورية في هذه الأيام تتخبط في عمل إصلاحات، وتحاول أن تستجيب لجامعة الدول العربية بعدما كانت رافضة لذلك في وقت سابق!! محاولة إجراء بعض الإصلاحات الجذرية، ولكن بعد ماذا؟ **بعدما وقع الفأس في الرأس**!! وهل يصلح العطار ما أفسده الدهر؟	*Currently the Syrian government is in a state of utter confusion regarding reformatory measures. It is trying to respond to the Arab League after previous refusal. It is seeking some radical reforms, but after what?* ***After the axe already fell in the head*** [the

	die is cast]. *A crow is never the whiter for washing!!* [A leopard cannot change its spots] *Can the herbalist fix what has been spoiled forever?*[It is like putting a sticking plaster on a broken leg]

Example 5.56 highlights the fact that the Syrian government was slow to respond to the Arab League's demands for reform there. Here the expression وقع الفأس في الرأس is used in a figurative sense, appearing along with two other idiomatic expressions to convey the message that the reforms have come too late (*the die is cast*), that this was as expected (*A leopard cannot change its spots)*, and they are futile (*It is like putting a sticking plaster on a broken leg).*

A final example يده مغلولة (إلى عنقه)/ مغلول اليد (*his hand is bound/bound to his neck*) is analysed here to highlight the importance of using linguistic context to help determine the literal or figurative meaning of an expression. Four different texts are examined below:

Example 5.57

لا يزالون يذكرون حتى الآن ذلك المشهد في التلفزيون العراقي الذي اطل فيه الرئيس صدام حسين قبيل اعدامه **وهو *مغلول اليدين*** واذا به يطلق عبارة واحدة يرددها عدة مرات: انا عراقي انا عراقي بمعنى افتخاره	*They still remember the scene on Iraqi TV when President Saddam Hussein appeared* ***handcuffed*** *before execution, repeating: "I am an Iraqi, I am an Iraqi" to express his pride.*

Example 5.58

سافر صديقان إلى خارج المملكة، أحدهما كريم جداً يرخي القرش، والثاني يقضبه قضبة الأعمى شاته، إذا صرف فكأنما يصرف من نور بصره، لكنّ هذا الشحيح **المغلول اليد** مرح جداً وهو ما صبّر صاحبه عليه	*Two friends went travelling outside the Kingdom* [Saudi Arabia], *one of them is very generous and finds it easy to spend, and the second is very mean; he holds onto his money like a blind man holds onto his goat. It seems that when he spends money, he brings the money*

from the light of his sight. But this miser ***whose hands are tied*** [tight-fisted] *is very cheerful (and has a sense of humour), and that what made his friend put up with him.*

Example 5.59

دخلي الشهري (5400) ريال هذا الراتب الذي لا أعرف غيره (كالوقت الإضافي - الشرهات - الملح.... إلخ) سأخنق نفسي في التعامل معه، **وأجعل يدي فيه مغلولة** إلى عنقي ....

My monthly income is only 4,500 Saudi Riyals, and I have nothing except this salary; no overtime. I will try my best and ***handcuff my hand to my neck*** [tighten my belt] *to manage it.*

Example 5.60

عندما يقول الرئيس إن كل الخيارات مفتوحة - فواقع الحال يقول أن **يد الرئيس مغلولة،** وخياراته محدودة. فالإيرانيون، لكي يحموا منشآتهم النووية من ضربة أمريكية محتملة، قد (شتتوا) هذه المنشآت ...

When the President says that all choices are open, then the reality of situation assumes ***that the President's hands are tied*** *and his options are quite limited... The Iranians saved their nuclear facilities from a probable American attack by dispersing these facilities.*

To analyse the use of this idiomatic expression يده مغلولة the occurrences of this phrase were traced and it was found in 16 different texts. In every instance, it was the linguistic context that helped to pinpoint the exact meaning of the idiomatic expression. Analysis revealed that the idiomatic expression was used literally meaning *with hands bound* in four instances (see example 5.57). In the remaining 14 examples, it was employed figuratively/metaphorically to convey three different meanings: (1) in three instances the phrase was used metaphorically in reference to someone who was mean with their money, similar to the English expression *tight-fisted* (example 5.58); (2) in one instance

it had the related metaphorical sense of having to economize, similar to the English expression *to tighten one's belt* (example 5.59), and finally (3) in eight instances it conveyed the feeling that one has no choices or is unable to do anything (see example 5.60).

5.3.2 The Role of Linguistic Context in Conveying the Meaning of Idiomatic Expressions

The examples above show the importance of linguistic context in determining the meaning of an expression. As discussed, the example رفع العقال (*lifting the headband*) specifically encompasses a number of metaphoric meanings as well as a literal one, its precise meaning in each context needing to be clarified by means of the text which precedes and follows this expression.

The following examples highlight the role that the linguistic context plays in clarifying the meaning of an idiomatic expression to make it more understandable. Sometimes, an idiomatic expression may appear to be synonymous with an idea or concept already expressed in the text. Consider the following examples below:

<u>Example 5.61</u>

وفيهم من خاف، بل جملتهم خافوا حتى بلغت **القلوب منهم الحناجر** في غزوة الخندق.	*Some of them were really frightened. Indeed, all of them* ***were frightened until hearts reached throat*** [were so frightened they had their hearts in their mouths] *in Al-Khandaq War*.

In example 5.61, the idiomatic expression بلغت القلوب منهم الحناجر (*hearts reached throat*) is preceded by a sentence referring to fear بل جملتهم خافوا (*all of them were really frightened*). The semantic function of this expression here is thus synonymous. However, it does not only express fear, but also suggests an extreme degree of fear. The general idea being expressed is the men's fear in combat, but looking closely at the text shows that the phrase بل جملتهم خافوا (*all of them were frightened*) is followed by the word 'until'. This means that fear had reached an extreme degree, and this is expressed through the chosen idiomatic expression.

<u>Example 5.62</u>

هناك نوعٌ من الناس يقلّب رأسه في وسط هذا الحراك الاقتصادي والاجتماعي ليس في ذلك الأمر كله، وليس له علاقة بشيء من ذلك كله، **وليس له ناقة ولا جمل،** ولكنه يحشر نفسه في كل مسيرة ويرتاد كل حفلة ويدخل في كل تجمع	*Some people poke their noses into* [interfere in] *this economic and social movement, even though* ***they have neither a she-camel nor a he-camel*** [the whole matter is of no relevance to them]. *They poke their noses into every rally, go to every party and join any assembly.*

In example 5.62, the idiomatic expression ليس له ناقة ولا جمل (*he has neither a she-camel nor a he–camel*), asserts the meaning given by the preceding sentences that some of the economic and social activists have nothing to do with these activities. Being synonymous with other expressions makes it easy to define the meaning of this idiom and avoid any other possible meanings.

<u>Example 5.63</u>

جاءه السكرتير يحمل في يده ورقة واحدة ولكنه على غير عادته يمشي على خوف **وتردد يقدم رجلا ويؤخر الأخرى**	*The secretary came to him carrying a single sheet of paper in his hand, but contrary to his habits, he was frightened and hesitant,* ***moving one foot forward and the other back*** [taking faltering steps].

Clearly, the meaning of the pragmatic function of the idiomatic expression is to show that the secretary was unusually worried. The meaning of this idiom is clarified through its previous synonym يقدم رجلا و يؤخر الأخرى (*moving one foot forward and the other back*).

Sometimes, an idiom is followed by a synonymous phrase that unfolds its metaphoric meaning, as shown in the following examples:

<u>Example 5.64</u>

أمر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بحفر خندق حول المدينة بناءاً على مشورة الصحابى الجليل سلمان الفارسي رضى الله عنه، وذلك فى غزوة الأحزاب مخافة أن يتسلل المشركون إلى معسكر	*Relying on the advice of Companion Salman, the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) ordered the Muslims to make a long trench around Medina to*

المسلمين، وكانت الأجواء شديدة البرودة، والرياح عاتية، **وبلغت القلوب الحناجر** من شدة الإرهاق والخوف والتعب الذى حل بالمسلمين فتولى الله سبحانه وتعالى المهمة، وهزم الأحزاب وحده، حيث اشتدت العاصفة ليلاً؛ فهدمت خيامهم وأطاحت بقدورهم ومواشيهم وشتتهم الله، فلم يجدوا بداً من الإنسحاب والفرار عائدين بالخيبة والحرمان	*prevent the disbelievers from penetrating into the front of the Muslims' camp. It was very cold and stormy, and* ***hearts reached throat*** [their hearts were in their mouths] *due to exhaustion, fear, and tiredness.*

The idiomatic expression بلغت القلوب الحناجر (*hearts reached throat*) conveys the meaning of extreme fear. This meaning is asserted by the following synonymous expression من شدة الإرهاق والخوف و التعب due to exhaustion, fear, and tiredness.

<u>Example 5.65</u>

سلوى عبدالرحيم العمري مشرفة القسم النسائي للتدريب بالجمعية التعاونية للتدريب ومدربة دولية بالتخطيط الاستراتيجي تقول لأول مرة في تاريخ المملكة 30 سيدة يدخلن مجلس الشورى السعودي -وقالت ايضاً- **هذا الخبر اثلج صدري وسرني كثيرا**	*Salwa Abdul Rahim Al-Omari' (Senior Women's Department for Training Cooperative Society for Training and international strategic planning trainer) commented: "For the first time in the history of the Kingdom 30 women appointed as members in the Saudi <u>Shura</u> Council. This news* ***warmed my chest*** *and I was extremely pleased".*

Similarly, the idiomatic expression أثلج صدري (literally, *freezes my chest*) conveys the meaning of being happy. This meaning is linked to the synonymous expression that follows و سرني كثير (*makes me feel happy*). It is worth noting that this idiomatic expression was frequently used in different structures in the data sample e.g. هذا الخبر أثلج صدرهم (*this news freezes their chest*), هذا الخبر أثلج صدره (*this news freezes his chest*), etc.

Sometimes, no specific synonymous expression follows or precedes the idiomatic expression and its understanding and interpretation depends on the whole linguistic context. In example 5.66 a doctor responds to a patient who is complaining of severe pains caused by taking folk medicine:

Example 5.66

أم هتان تقول إنها ذهبت إلى معالجة شعبية لعلاجها من سوء الهضم وأعطتها علاجاً مكوناً من مسحوق وكذلك خلطة عشبية مع عسل وقالت استخدميها لمدة عشرة ايام. وكانت قيمة تلك الوصفتين 600 ريال وبدأت استخدامها إلا أنني في اليوم الرابع شعرت بحرقان شديد في البول وألام في الظهر في اتجاه الكلى. لقد توقفت عن استعمال الدواء ولكن الآلام شديدة ومستمرة فماذا افعل؟"

[الطبيب يجيب السؤال:]

" الأخت أم هتان لقد حذرنا كثيراً من عدم الذهاب الى مثل هؤلاء المعالجين لأنه لا توجد لديهم اي خلفية عن ما تسببه بعض الأدوية العشبية من مآسٍ وخاصة ان بعض الأدوية العشبية لها اضرار جانبية على الكلى والكبد والعقم والمعالجون الشعبيون بشكل عام لا يعرفون هذه الأضرار ويعتقدون ان الأعشاب اذا ما افادت لم تضر وهذا اعتقاد خاطيء، **والآن وقع الفأس في الرأس** فما عليك الا مراجعة اي مستشفى حكومي وعمل فحوصات شاملة على الكلى والمسالك البولية

Um Hatan says that she went to a herbalist because she was suffering from indigestion. The alternative medicine therapist prescribed a powder, in addition to a herbal mixture with honey to be used for ten days. The two prescriptions cost 600 Saudi Riyals. Um Hatan says she began to take the medicine, but on the fourth day she began to feel severe pain while urinating and also in here back near her kidneys. She stopped taking the medicine, but the pains continued and got more severe. "What should I do?"she asked.

[*The doctor answered as follows:*]

"Um Hatan, we warned you repeatedly about going to such therapists since they do not have any background knowledge about the problems that certain herbal prescriptions can cause. Some herbal prescriptions have side effects on the kidneys and the liver. They may even cause infertility. Herbalists, generally, do not know about these harmful effects. Rather, they believe that even if herbs do not prove useful, they cannot inflict harm. This conviction is utterly wrong. ***Now the axe fell in the head****.* [The die is cast.] *Therefore, you've got to check with a public hospital where a comprehensive examination of your kidneys and urinary*

system will be conducted”.

In the previous example, the whole text leads to identifying the meaning of the idiomatic expression وقع الفأس في الرأس (*the axe is already in the head*) since it uses one specific example of Um Hatan to caution people not to rely on folk medicine which can do more harm than good. Thus this idiomatic expression is used by the doctor to summarise the whole situation: what has been done cannot be undone.

The final example shows how preceding causal linguistic context helped to explain the meaning of an idiomatic expression.

Example 5.67

احترق جسده **قبل أن يلفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة متفحماً**	*his body was burned* ***before breathing out his last breath.***

The idiomatic expression يلفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة متفحماً which means *he is dead* is the result of the previous linguistic context *somebody burning*. Therefore, one of the possible situations for someone being burned is death. Moreover, the adjective phrase after the idiom describes the situation of death by indicating that the body is charred which gives the interpretation of death.

The idiomatic expression is preceded by the expression احترق جسده meaning that his body was burned. This serves as a clue to the meaning of the idiomatic expression, i.e. that he died as a result of burning. The meaning of the above idiom is further clarified by the circumstantial accusative متفحما (*charred*), which shows that the victim had already died as a result.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter finds that the idiomatic expression as a syntactic and semantic structure connects to the co-text through a number of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. This chapter began by demonstrating that conjunctions are the most frequent cohesive devices and supported this with the analysis of idiomatic expressions. It was also noted that specifically, the coordinating conjunction و [*waw*] (*and*) is frequently used to link idiomatic expressions with their co-text. The use of reference was established to be the next most used device, with personal pronouns

being the most frequent type of reference. It was argued that this frequency of use of reference as a cohesive device can be attributed to the fact that many MSA verbs tend to occur with two or more nouns; most often, these nouns are not repeated but replaced by a pronoun. It was also noted that ellipsis was not found to have been used as a cohesive device in any of the sample instances and that substitution was also very rare. This can perhaps be explained by reference to the fact that, to a certain extent, idioms are fixed forms and have a figurative meaning, as that as a result this places limitations on deleting or substituting lexical items, since this might change their meaning.

Halliday's model of cohesion does not cover all the data examples because it was originally developed to analyse English language text rather than the Arabic idiomatic expressions used in the study. However, other cohesion devices were found in the study sample. The new devices include exclusion/exception, assertion/emphasis, and change of word order to achieve cohesion with the text and co-text of the idiom.

Analysis of these examples has shown that idiomatic expressions are cohesive with their immediately surrounding text. At the same time, they also contribute more generally to the cohesion of the whole text by means of the use of lexical and grammatical cohesive ties.

Analysis of multiple examples also showed that linguistic context has a significant role to play in helping to reveal the functional meaning of idiomatic expressions. It was found that these expressions were used in a range of contexts, and that they assumed different meanings as the context shifted. Thus, for example, the idiomatic expression يده مغلولة occurred in some 16 different texts and was used both literally and figuratively. In all instances, it was the linguistic context that helped to convey the exact and intended meaning of the idiomatic expression.

Chapter Six: Situational and Cultural Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Four explored the notion of context and its vital importance in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expressions. In this chapter, the focus is on explaining the importance of both the context of situation and the context of culture in understanding the meaning of MSA idiomatic expressions. After considering two central concepts, namely context of situation and context of culture, these will be used to investigate a sample of idiomatic expressions. Some of these are culturally specific relating to Saudi Arabia whilst others are common to Arab cultures in general. A framework consisting of five sub-categories of idioms, based on the work of Newmark (1988) and Katan (1999; 2004), will be used to analyse the sample of idiomatic expressions collected from the Saudi newspaper *Al-Riyadh*.

Before proceeding with this situational and cultural analysis of the data, a brief review of the concept of context of situation is provided. Here, the ultimate goal is two-fold: firstly, to introduce this notion and, secondly and more importantly, to demonstrate that a sound understanding of the meaning of some Saudi idiomatic expressions requires an examination of the idiomatic expression in its situational context.

6.2 Context of Situation

To understand the intended meaning involved in the use of an idiomatic expression, it is important to separate the idiomatic expression from its context of situation, that is to say, the environment in which it is used. This section will explore the notion of context of situation in order to examine its role in helping readers to understand idiomatic expressions, especially those that are semantically ambiguous and/or those with a linguistic structure which creates comprehension difficulties. Three elements of Halliday and Hasan's model (1976; 1985; 2004) are particularly helpful in

providing an accurate characterization of the context of situation in this analysis of data from *Al-Riyadh*, namely field, tenor and mode.

It is worth noting that the examples from the data which are analysed in this chapter have been categorized in accordance with the frameworks of culture proposed by Newmark (1988) and Katan (1999; 2004) respectively. This analysis also draws on Halliday and Hasan's (1976; 1985; 2004) concept of context of situation.

6.2.1 Analysis of Examples

The idiomatic expression مسح الجوخ literally, *to wipe the baize*, and its functional meaning is *to be hypocritical*. This expression was found in a number of texts in *Al-Riyadh* but examples for analysis were chosen specifically in those occurrences which the co-text does not help to clarify its intended meaning. Thus, it serves as a good example for the purposes of demonstrating the significance of the context of situation in understanding the intended meaning, by applying the field, tenor and mode aspects of Halliday and Hassan's model, as the following example highlights.

<u>Example 6.1</u>

"ظل الإعلام الرياضي الناقد الناصح الامين على رسالته طوال الفترة الماضية وتحديد بعد إخفاق "مونديال"2002 يحذر من تداعيات انهيار الكرة السعودية ووصولها إلى مرحلة صعبة، ولم يرج هذا الإعلام من أي مسوؤل او جهة معينة أن يقولا له شكرا لإيمانه التام بأنه يؤدي رسالته الإعلامية والأخلاقية بعيدا عن الانتهازية والمجاملات ومع هذا لم يسلم من التشكيك والطعن والانتقاص من قيمته والتقليل من دوره ومحاولة تكميمه وتحميله الفشل الرياضي....وخلال الأعوام الماضية عمدت رعاية الشباب واتحاد الكرة إلى انتقاء نوعيات معينة خصوصا من الإعلاميين لإشراكهم في اللجان واختياراتهم لبعض الاتحادات الرياضية في سبيل (تكميم الأفواه) وتركيع من لا يستطع المقاومة،	*The sports' media has been doing its job properly and responsibly, especially after the failure in the 2002 World Cup. The media warned of harsh setbacks following the collapse of Saudi football. Though it delivered its message faithfully, the media was viewed with suspicion, undervalued, and accused of failure. Over the last few years, the Youth Care Centre and football league selected certain journalists to participate in committees and chose some sport unions to rein in and humiliate other journalists and*

والبعض منهم ترك الجمل بما حمل مجرد أن عرف الغرض من ضمه، والبعض وهم قلة مازالوا **(يمسحون الجوخ)**، وبعد خروج المنتخب السعودي من بطولة العرب التاسعة خالي الوفاض ..... خرج من يحمل الإعلام الرياضي مسؤولية الإخفاق والتأكيد على انه وراء تدهور حال الرياضة، ونسى هؤلاء ما كانوا يغدقونه عليه من عبارات الثناء ومحاولة التقرب إليه.	*officials. Some reporters quit when they discovered the reason for their selection, but a few of them still* ***wipe the baize****, [*being hypocritical opportunists*]. After the failure of the Saudi national team in the ninth Arab League competition, some of them shifted the responsibility of failure onto the sports' media and forgot their previous admiration and attempts to build strong relations with it.*

In example 6.1, the *field* is an article talking about Saudi sports' broadcasting and its role in reporting the failure and shortcomings of Saudi football, especially in the light of the continuing failure of the national team to qualify for international competitions. As for the *mode*, it is a written text used to criticize an issue in Saudi sports' broadcasting. The writer highlights the deterioration of Saudi football, focusing on the media's role in deceiving people because they choose not to comment on the weaknesses both in the footballers and at administrative level in the game. In this example, *tenor* is represented by the football correspondent; the recipients can be said to be other Saudi sports' writers and administrators.

In this example the writer criticizes the hypocrisy of the Saudi media, for keeping silent and failing to highlight the deficiencies of Saudi footballers; he also criticises the administrators who are responsible for this deterioration because they allow sports' journalists to work in this way. As a result, reporters are not able to do their job properly which is to investigate the problems of Saudi sport and diagnose suitable ways to improve this. So the author describes the first type of journalists and critics as مسح الجوخ (*wiping the baize*) worn by the chief sports' administrators which means they grovel to and fawn over the chief of official sport administrators.

These three elements, field, tenor and mode, constitute the context of a text which enables its nature and purpose of this text to be identified and categorised. After examining the context of situation, it becomes easier to understand the idiomatic expression مسح الجوخ. From a situational perspective, this expression refers to the

hypocrisy of the Saudi media which does not objectively uncover the errors or deficiencies in the field of sport in the Kingdom. Rather, they choose to flatter administrators, seeking to be close to them, whilst neglecting national interests.

Another example which clearly emphasizes the value of the context of situation in understanding the meaning of certain idiomatic expressions is بلغت القلوب الحناجر. Literally meaning *hearts rose into throats*, this idiomatic expression appears in a number of *Al-Riyadh* articles in the sample, usually when a problematic situation or dilemma is being described, and conveys the meaning of being extremely frightened. It can be compared to the English expression *to have one's heart in one's mouth*.

Example 6.2

وأضاف د.الجحني ..... الكلمات الأبوية التي أمطر بها خادم الحرمين الشريفين ابنه الأمير محمد بن نايف التي حملت العديد من الإشارات المهمة التي منها: التقدير الكبير لكل من يعمل ويضحي من أجل هذا الوطن من رجال المؤسسة الأمنية وغيرهم، والدعم الأبوي والروحي لسموه في معركتنا على الإرهابيين وكل من يخل بالأمن والاستقرار وفي وقت **بلغت القلوب الحناجر** حتى تنفسنا الصعداء عندما طمأننا خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك عبد الله بن عبد العزيز بتلك اللفتة الإنسانية الوطنية عندما قام بزيارة الأمير محمد بن نايف والاطمئنان على صحته وتهنئته بالسلامة من هذا الاعتداء الآثم الذي لم يكن يستهدف الأمير محمد فحسب, بل كان موجهاً إلى كل مواطن ومواطنة في هذا البلد الكريم الآمن.

Dr. Al-Jahni added: "The fatherly words of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the Prince Mohammad Bin Nayef carried a number of important indications and high praise for all the security officials who work for the benefit of the country. These words also reflect the fatherly and spiritual support for the Prince in the battle on terrorists and saboteurs at a time when ***hearts rose into throats*** [our hearts were in our mouths] *until we breathed a sigh of relief when King Abdullah paid a visit to the Prince Mohammad and reassured him. The King congratulated the Prince on having survived and emphasised that an attack of this kind is directed at the whole nation".*

The field of this text refers to an article in which Dr. Al-Jaḥni discusses the attempt to assassinate the Saudi Deputy Interior Minister , followed by the appearance of King Abdullah (also known as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques) to reassure him and to convey a message to the Saudi people that the war against terrorism is a public duty to keep their country safe. The tenor comprises the writer, a Saudi academic, who published this article in *Al-Riyadh* describing people's reactions and their awareness of the need to keep the country safe. He also wishes to thank the King for his kind words and his support of the Deputy Minister and for the people in their fight against terrorism. The mode is a written article in *Al-Riyadh*.

Tracing the context of situation, the writer reflects on the difficulties of the situation when people learnt about the terrorist explosion targeting the Deputy Minister of Interior, a terrifying moment for all Saudis. This situation is best described by the writer with the phrase في وقت بلغت فيه القلوب الحناجر (*hearts reached throats*), denoting that at the height of the crisis, everyone was extremely frightened, until the King announced that the Prince was in good health. During the aforementioned crisis, the Saudi people began to realize the great danger that terrorism posed to their lives in general and to the ruling royal family in particular, and the implications of this for the people’s safety and happiness, and for national security. Knowing this helps all readers, Saudi and non-Saudi, to understand the meaning involved in the use of this idiomatic expression. Al-Jaḥni’s article reflects the attitudes of Saudis and voiced their desire to eradicate terrorism.

The third idiomatic expression explored here is يندى لها - له الجبين (literally, *to make the forehead wet*) which in functional terms means to be very sorry and ashamed of something bad which has happened. This example is classified under the non-compositional expressions, meaning that it is not an easy task to understand its intended meaning from its lexical meaning only. Therefore, knowledge of the context of situation is crucial when attempting to comprehend this expression, as will be demonstrated from the following text.

<u>Example 6.3</u>

هذا التباطؤ أو التلكؤ العربي هو للأسف خذلان *The Arab League announcement has*

really disappointed the Syrian people. It can be justified only on the pretext that Arabs do not believe that crimes and genocide are committed against innocent people on a daily basis. After we have seen massacres and humiliation on the ground, will forming an investigation committee stop the killing machine? Or did the Arab League, out of generosity, give the Syrian regime legitimacy to stay for three more years to commit more crimes which ***make the forehead sweat*** [make one feel ashamed] *and bodies tremble* [shake with rage].	للشعب السوري الحر، حيث لا يوجد له من تفسير منطقي يبرر حدوثه، إلا اللهم إن كان العرب لا يصدقون فعلا بأن هناك جرائم تُرتكب بحق أبرياء بشكل يومي؟ وهل المناشدات والنداءات وإيفاد لجنة لتقصي الحقائق بعد كل ما رأيناه وشاهدناه على الأرض من مجازر جماعية وأساليب إهانة وترويع وإذلال، كافية لإيقاف آلة القتل، أم أن الجامعة العربية وبتفضل منها أعطت النظام السوري فرصة وشرعية بقاء لمدة ثلاث سنوات لكي يوغل في جرائمه التي **يندى لها الجبين** وتقشعر لها الأبدان.

With regard to the field of the text above, it is an article in *Al-Riyadh* that describes the carnage and the extreme violence committed by the Syrian regime and the disappointing stance adopted by the Arab League towards the humanitarian crisis there, reflected in their recent announcement. The author also criticises the Syrian regime's response to Arab League call to put a stop to the killing.

The article's author, Dr. Zuher Al-Harithy, is a member of the Human Rights Commission and has published a number of critical, political and cultural articles in the Arab Press. This accounts for the tenor of this article. The target readers of this text, both Saudi and non-Saudi, are those who are interested in the Syrian crisis, including human rights activists and politicians. The mode is a text written in *Al-Riyadh*.

Analysing the three patterns of this text, collectively producing the register, it is possible to grasp the intended meaning of this expression since the writer used it to describe the deliberate and systematic acts of genocide and terrorism committed by the Syrian regime, referred to by Al-Harithy as جرائم يندى لها الجبين (*crimes that make the forehead wet*) indicating they are perceived to be shameful and expresses the extent of extreme sorrow at events there.

In example 6.4 the field of the text refers to the situation regarding the Libyan Revolution. The Libyan people were engaged in fighting, while the then Libyan President Qaddafi and his son were busy delivering rousing speeches in which they claimed that they would never surrender. Tenor describes the relationship between Qaddafi (the president and dictator) and his people, highlighting his power over ordinary citizens. Mode refers to the president's speech to the Libyan people. Considering the formal context of situation, it is clear that the speech addressed to the people by their ruler is viewed as a threat.

Example 6.4

في ليبيا الضحايا بالآلاف والصور واللقطات المصورة تتحدث عن كارثة إنسانية بكل ما تعنيه الكلمة، والتلفزيون الليبي يبث أغاني تراثية وكأن ليبيا تعيش احتفالات وليست مجازر، العقيد القذافي وابنه يعلنان بصوت واحد ويشتمان الفضائيات لأنها كاذبة وغير صادقة، .... "عيب يا عقيد، عيب يا ابن العقيد" كم رددها من يشاهد بألم وحزن ما يجري حالياً في ليبيا، الصورة لا تكذب، **الخطب العنترية** والتنظير والوسوسة، لا مكان لها حالياً	*In Libya, thousands of victims and images reflect a real human catastrophe. At the same time, Libyan television broadcasts classical songs as if Libya was celebrating not suffering. Colonel Qadhafi and his son simultaneously declare that the satellite channels are lying and insult them. "Enough, Colonel! Enough, son!' many people have said sorrowfully. The camera does not lie. Now, it is not the time for* ***rousing speeches*** *and arguing…*

As is the case for the other three examples discussed above, understanding the context of situation is essential in determining the meaning involved. In the light of Halliday and Hasan's framework of field, tenor and mode, the meaning involved in the use of الخطب العنترية (*Antar's speeches*) as used above is situational since its meaning would be clear and significant to anyone with knowledge of Qaddafi's rhetorical style of delivery. (There is more discussion of the origin of الخطب العنترية in a later section of the chapter).

Generally speaking, when some idioms are used on certain occasions, they can not be understood without knowing the situation of the text in which they appear. In light of the literature review, and according to both Gibbs and Nayak (1989), and Fernando (1996), idiomatic expressions can be divided in terms of three main categories:

1. Literal idioms (Compositional meaning): These are the idiomatic expressions whose meanings can be determined by examining their constituent elements. For instance, أخذ الجمل بما حمل (literally *to take the camel and its load*). In many cases, these expressions can be understood without reference to their situational content.
2. Semi-idioms (Metaphorical meaning): In this type of idioms, the significance of the idiomatic expression is not deduced from the relationship between the internal components of the expression. Rather, it is based on the metaphorical meaning that stands behind its use. Examining the context of situation involved in the use of these expressions is crucial in determining the meaning involved (see example 6.1 above).
3. Non-compositional idioms (Pure idioms): These idiomatic expressions communicate a meaning different from the apparent meaning of their constituent parts. For example, وجه مغسول بمرق (literally, *his face is washed with soup*, meaning he is not shy).

By and large, the two last types, i.e. semi-idioms and non-compositional idioms, whose single lexemes do not contribute to the understanding of their meaning, are connected to a situational context. Therefore, in the light of examples 6.1-6.4 above, it can safely be argued that understanding the meaning involved in the use of these expressions is closely connected to their context of situation. Moreover, some of these idiomatic expressions are culture-specific, and therefore need more than the context of situation to be understood, as the next section explains.

6.3 Context of Culture

In Chapter Three, various meanings and definitions of culture were discussed. However, in this section a sample of idioms will be analysed in order to consider their context of culture, the aim being to identify the major role that the cultural

context plays in helping readers, Saudis, non-Saudis and other readers of Arabic, to understand the meaning of particular idiomatic expressions. Before proceeding with this cultural analysis of the data, a brief review of the relationship between idioms and culture is provided since types of idiomatic expressions depend on their cultural context. Here, the ultimate goal is two-fold: firstly, to introduce the concept of context of culture and, secondly and more importantly, to demonstrate that a sound understanding of the meaning of some Saudi idiomatic expressions requires that the idiomatic expression be examined in its cultural context.

6.4 Idiomatic Expression and Culture

Like other linguistic styles (e.g. proverbs, metaphors, jokes, newspaper headlines, and advertisements) idioms involve a form of language use which is clearly connected to a specific culture (Carter, 1997: 167). Thus in order to ensure that a text has been correctly interpreted, it is necessary to possess suitable cultural knowledge (Carter, 1997: 168). The degree of idiomaticity (fixedness) is associated with the general idea that the more opaque a set of words is, the more difficult the interpretation of their meaning will be. According to Boroditsky (2011: 62), the shaping of various “constructions of reality” is a mechanism that is indigenously rooted in and supported within each culture’s language. Idioms therefore play a crucial societal role within the culture of the language in which they are found. Idiomatic expressions are deeply embedded in the culture of a language and also reveal differences across cultures regarding many different topics.

As a carrier of culture, idioms constitute an indispensable part of culture, and can best be described as a *culture vehicle*. In the literature, they are referred to as “culture bound”, “culture specific” or “culture-dependent structures” (Solomon, 2013). It can be argued, then, that the nature of idiomatic expressions is largely motivated by the culture from which they have been derived. For instance, it is useful to study the cultural aspects relating to how generosity or courage is expressed by idioms in the Arabian Peninsula because understanding the figurative nature of such idiomatic expressions may prove confusing to those from outside this region. Since idiomatic expressions originate in the history, literature, religion, and traditions of a certain community, they can be said to reveal the way of thinking of a community which is typically reflected in language (Solomon, 2013).

As a particular form of speech, idioms often consist of a condensed meaning, grammatical structure and usage. Certain idiomatic expressions can even present comprehension difficulties for some non-Saudi Arabic native speakers because their meanings cannot be determined through an analysis of their individual words; sometimes the situation is not enough to convey the intended meaning. Unlike literal language, it is impossible to explain the idiom from the literal meaning of the individual words. Thus, idioms are difficult to understand and acquire, because they as a combination of two or more words function as one complex unit of meaning. More specifically, the use of idiomatic expressions often involves metaphorical or figurative meanings that are cultural specific; that is, they are to be used and understood in certain cultural contexts.

Language is said to be a crucial part of culture; being mutually influential, they shape each other. As part of this dynamic process, language bears the traces of culture whilst culture in turn provides the lexicon of language. Therefore, cultural features can be created from language and language issues can be explained with reference to culture. As a special form of language, idioms are strikingly good at condensing cultural scenes, carrying large amounts of information about history, geography, religion, custom, national psychology, and beliefs. Therefore, they can be considered to represent a nation's heritage and history and to be a product of its culture. Consequently, studying idioms reveals a great deal about a national culture.

Cultural knowledge plays an important role in understanding how figuratively intended concepts are lexicalized in any given language Bortfeld (2003), suggesting that knowing a culture's background is a good strategy for ensuring a better understanding of its idioms. Moreover, comprehending idioms cross-linguistically is strongly attributed to cultural differences, for example, English speakers say *spill the beans* to reveal a secret or a surprise, while Latvian speakers use the expression *spill [the] water*. McGlone, Glucksberg, and Cacciari (1994) used this idiom as an example of why speakers would not use a mass noun to represent something that refers to a count noun. However, Bortfeld (2003) observes that Latvian speakers argue that the idiom *spill the beans* in English seems strange to them, simply because beans can be picked up whereas the action of spilling is best linked to water

because it is impossible to reverse, in the same way that one cannot reverse the outcome of revealing information.

Another cross-linguistic example from MSA and English are the idiomatic expressions used to denote a feeling of happiness on hearing good news, namely أثلج صدري (literally, *to freeze one's chest*) in MSA and *to warm the cockles of one's heart* in English. In cultural terms, this difference can be attributed to environmental factors. Since many parts of the Arab world experience very high temperatures, the sensation of icy coldness on the skin would be a very welcome one. Hence the expression أثلج صدري is used to denote the positive feeling produced by good news. On the other hand, in the colder climate endured by the British, heat is a more welcome sensation, so the arrival of good news is associated with the positive feeling of warmth, reflected in the idiom *to warm the cockles of one's heart*.

It is worth noting that some idioms can be understood without reference to the specific cultural context in which they are used since variants of these idioms are also widespread in other languages, and they rely on common experience or knowledge from a specific domain e.g. idiomatic expressions connected to football. In the case of Arabic, its widespread use as a language means that some idiomatic expressions are culture specific e.g. صدره شمالي (denoting someone with great patient) is used exclusively in Saudi society, since the cultural stereotype of the Bedouin in the north of the Kingdom is that they are patient people. Some idioms are used throughout the Arabian Peninsula such as حبة خشم, (literally, nose kissing, a ritual form of greeting) whilst others are in widespread use in the whole of the Arab or Muslim world such as يكمل نصف دينه (*to complete half of one's religion*) meaning *to get married*.

6.5 Categories of Culture

As previously noted, the notion of culture is very broad to be examined as one entity. Therefore, both sociologists and translation theorists argue that an in-depth investigation of the concept of culture requires that this concept be divided into what are usually described as 'forms', 'patterns', and/or 'categories' of culture (Williams 1981; Newmark 1988; Katan 1999; 2004).

To closely examine 'forms' of culture as investigated by sociologists and translation theorists, three categorisations of culture will be discussed here. The first of these focuses on the work of an academic who came to be closely associated with the field of Cultural Studies, Williams (1981), whilst the second two examine work by theorists from Translation Studies, namely Newmark (1988) and Katan (1999;2004). The ultimate goal is to categorise samples of data following their model of culture, which will be of particular relevance to the analysis of the idiomatic expressions used in *Al-Riyadh* newspaper.

One of the best known attempts to categorize different forms of culture appears in the work of Williams (1981: 11). Williams argues that culture can be divided into two main forms: 'idealist' and 'materialist'. The former category is extensive, covering the whole way of life, including customs and traditions, art and religion. In short, everything from clothing to social practices and institutions, and the structure of society itself. The second category refers more narrowly to the multi-cultural societies in which different forms of culture are visible and the notion of variety is accepted and encouraged.

It is clear from his categorisation that Williams sees the notion of culture as an all-encompassing one and emphasizes this vision by considering culture in terms of a whole system of life under which various other sub-systems can be recognised. In Williams' own words:

> *It would be wrong to suppose that we can ever usefully discuss a social system without including, as a central part of its practice, its signifying systems, on which, as a system, it fundamentally depends. For a signifying system is intrinsic to any economic system, any political system, any generation system, and, most generally to any social system* (1981: 207).

In short, Williams sees culture as the main system of life, under which many other systems are realized, e.g. the social, the political, the economic, the religious, etc.

Williams' attempt to dissect this broad notion of culture makes a good starting point for a consideration of the role of language in culture, it is clear that he does not provide his readers with a detailed description of the sub-divisions which he identifies. This task was started by Newmark (1988: 95), who, like Williams, sub-divides the broad notion of culture into a number of elements. However, Newmark's focus was a specifically linguistic one, and his intention was to identify potential

sources of difficulties for translators operating across cultures and attempting to deal with culturally specific terminology or discourse. His list of cultural categories was as follows:

- Ecology, including flora, fauna, climate, and landscape;
- Material culture or ‘artefacts’, covering language related to:
- Food;
- Clothes;
- Houses and towns;
- Transport;
- Social Culture, covering work and leisure;
- Organisations, Customs, Activities, Procedures and Concepts.

The latter heading is further divided by Newmark into the following sub-categories:

- Political and administrative discourse;
- Religious discourse;
- Artistic discourse
- Gestures and habits.

Another more recent attempt to create a typology of culture with specific relevance to the study of culturally specific linguistic phenomena can be found in the work of Katan (1999/2004: 49-56). Katan argues that with regard to language, the broad concept of culture can be explored under six categories related to:

1. Environment;
2. Behaviour;
3. Capabilities/Strategies/Skills;
4. Belief;
5. Values;

6. Identity.

Following Williams' line of thought, the central argument postulated by the two translation theorists referred to here is that culture is an all-encompassing concept and that for the practical purposes of linguistic analysis, it is useful to divide this into various sub-categories when examining the difficulties involved in translating culturally specific terminology and language. With this in mind, an analytical framework was constructed which could be applied to the sample of 440 MSA idiomatic expressions collected from *Al-Riyadh*, and this was then used to categorise those examples. The following main headings relating to culturally related idiomatic expressions were employed:

- **Idiomatic expressions closely associated to Arab culture and qualities and identity/values.**

خطب عنترية	*Like the battle cries of Antarah*
حبة خشم	*nose kissing (a ritual form of greeting)*
رفع العقال	*raised the headband*

- **Environment expressions**

في مسألة لا ناقة لي فيها ولا جمل	*A matter which has never been related to me*
هذا الخبر أثلج صدري	*This piece of news warmed my chest*
كان في واد آخر	*He was completely distracted*
حمار شغل	*donkey work*
اختلط الحابل بالنابل	*A messy/chaotic situation*
القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير	*The straw which broke the camel's back*

- **Belief and Religious-related expressions**

بيض الله وجهك	*May Allah make your face to shine white on the Day of Judgement*
أعمى الله بصيرته	*Allah has made him blind*
قامت ناقة صالح	*Saleh's camel appeared*
لكي يكمل نصف دينه	*to get married*

- **Behaviour-related expressions**

يشار إليه بالبنان	*An individual of social prestige and high rank*
يقدم رجل ويؤخر رجل	*to be frightened and in doubt*
يبحث عن إبرة في كومة قش	*to search for a needle in a haystack*
ضرب كفاً بكف	*To strike palms together*
لفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة	*He took his last breath*
بلغت القلوب الحناجر	*hearts rose into throats*
مسح الجوخ	*to wipe baize*

- **Capabilities and skill-related expressions**

يطرق الحديد وهو ساخن	*Strike while the iron is hot*
يلعب على الحبلين	*Playing* [skating] *on thin ice;*

When the whole sample was analysed using the categories identified, some 54 idiomatic expressions from the total number of the collected examples were considered to be culturally bounded, meaning that without knowing the cultural context of their use, it would not be possible to understand their intended sense. Some 23 of these idiomatic expressions were found to be of religious origin. These results seem to confirm the idea that knowing the literal meaning of every single word in the expression is not enough; instead, having knowledge of the culture of a specific region, and particularly understanding the religious beliefs of the people who live there, can provide crucial cues to when attempting to grasp the metaphorical meanings of an idiomatic expression.

This analysis shows that here is a strong relationship between these linguistic expressions and Saudi Culture. One specific example of this can be found in the number of idiomatic expressions to Islamic religious beliefs and culture which featured prominently in the sample from *Al-Riyadh*. This reflects the fact that the Islamic faith is a central aspect of culture and daily life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as North and Tripp observe:

> *When Saudis greet each other, shake hands in greeting and saying farewell, they do not say 'hello' and 'goodbye, have a good day'. When they meet you, they will most likely say Al-Hamdulillah ('Praise be to God'). On leaving*

you, they will most likely say fee man Allah ('May God go with you'). During a normal conversation, God may be called to account to bless you, your children, your parents, though normally not your wife. (In Saudi Arabia, discussion of people's wives is akin to prying, and out of bounds in polite conversation.) God may be asked to protect you (Allah iyatech stir) or leave you in peace (Allah ihennik). God is continually praised (Subhanallah) for whatever might or might not be happening. The Saudi Arabic equivalents for 'probably' and 'maybe' are Inshallah —'if God wills it'— defining the Saudi expectation that God regulates the minutiae of everyone's life (North and Tripp 2003/2009: 31).

6.6 Cultural Analysis of Selected Examples

This section presents an analysis of some samples of idiomatic expressions which have been selected to represent the categories of culture in the analytical framework referred to above. The aim of this analysis is two-fold. Firstly, it will serve to highlight the significant role that cultural context plays in conveying the meaning involved in certain idiomatic expressions. Secondly, by discussing a representative example from each category in depth and in detail, it is hoped that this will suggest possibilities for further research within the various categories of culture, as suggested by Newmark (1988) and Katan (1999;2004). The main argument postulated here is that understanding the following examples requires contextualizing these idioms at their cultural level.

6.6.1 النائحة المستأجرة (The Wailing Women - Professional Mourning Women)[9]

This idiomatic expression can be considered to be a culturally sensitive expression which is frequently used in a Saudi newspaper. The term النائحة is used to refer to a woman who wails and sheds copious amounts of tears, especially when a relative or

[9] The technical term employed for this profession is a moirologist. For further details on the role of the professional mourner in various cultures, see Tom Lutz (1999). *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears*. New York: Norton, 1999

friend passes away. In this regard, two MSA expressions are commonly used. The first النائحة الثكلى refers to a woman who openly expresses her heartfelt grief in the form of wailing and tears to show how much she regrets the passing of a relative or close friend. The second expression النائحة المستأجرة refers exclusively to a professional mourner, a woman who is paid to create an atmosphere of grief and sorrow, by wailing, weeping, wringing her hands or even tearing her hair or garments at someone's funeral. Whilst the former, i.e. النائحة الثكلى, produces a true elegy in which the loss of a loved one is lamented, in the latter case, i.e. النائحة المستأجرة any eulogizing is wholly feigned. The use of professional mourning women of this type is considered to be a pre-Islamic custom and has been strictly prohibited since the inception of Islam.

Analysis of the sample reflects the fact that use of this idiomatic expression النائحة المستأجرة has been extended in MSA so that it is now also employed in reference to a hireling, either male or female, who is paid to produce an overt outpouring of emotion including shouting and even shedding fake tears,[10] usually for the express purpose of deceitfully persuading people to believe something which is untrue. This usage has been extended into a number of fields including mass media, human rights and politics respectively, as shown in the three examples below:

<u>Example 6.5</u>

من ضمن الخدمات المقدمة في أسواق لبنان وبازاراتها منذ زمن قديم، أن تشتري أو تستأجر **(شبيحاً إعلامياً)** يقوم بالدفاع عنك وعن قضاياك وصراعاتك في الصحافة سابقاً، أما الآن ففي برامج الحوارات الفضائية...	*Among the services that have long been provided in Lebanon and its bazaars is the procurement of **a loud-mouth hireling** journalist who will defend you previously in your fight in the Press and your current fight on the discussion programmes on the satellite channels...*

10 Cf. the English expression *crocodile tears* referring to a false or insincere display of emotion by someone.

Example 6.6

دور «النائحة المستأجرة» بات واضحا ومكشوفا ومن الأساليب التي تستخدمها المعارضة الطائفية في كل المجالات، فهناك **نائحة مستأجرة** إعلامية إذا كان الموضوع يتعلق بالشأن الإعلامي من خلال بيان لمؤسسة إعلامية في الخارج أو الداخل، وهناك نائحة مستأجرة حقوقية إذا كان الموضوع يتعلق بشأن حقوقي من خلال تصريح لشخصية تملك دكانا حقوقيا،	*The role of the professional mourning woman has clearly become a means that is used by the sectarian opposition in different fields.* ***The professional mourning hired woman*** *journalist is bought in when the topic relates to a domestic or foreign news agency, and the same happens when the topic relates to a legal issue resulting from a Press release by a certain individual.*

Example 6.7

"وقد تذكرت **"النائحة المستأجرة"** عندما قرأت تقريراً عما يفعله اللوبي الإسرائيلي في أمريكا.. فهذا اللوبي يذرف الدموع "المستأجرة" شفقة على إسرائيل المسكينة التي تستحق الرحمة! أما المأتم فقد أقيم في "لجنة العلاقات الخارجية" بمجلس النواب الأمريكي.. وملخص القصة هو أن مجموعة من النائحين المستأجرين قرروا أن يرفعوا عقيرتهم بالصياح من أجل إسرائيل المهددة بالغزو العسكري من مصر!!.	*I was reminded of "****the professional mourning hired woman****" when I read a report about the work of the Israeli lobby in the USA. This lobby sheds tears over poor Israel! The funeral wake was held in the Foreign Relations Committee in the US Congress. The story, in short, is that a number of these wailing hand-wringers decided to raise their voice to defend Israel against any possible Egyptian invasion.*

Analysis of these examples shows that several different aspects of the original meaning of النائحة المستأجرة have been incorporated into the metaphorical meaning which this expression has more recently acquired within a variety of fields, including mass media, human rights and politics, as illustrated above.

All the situations in which this usage occurs imply deception of an audience by someone who has been hired and paid specifically to perform this task. They all hint at the use of feigned emotion e.g. hand-wringing or shedding crocodile tears for the purposes of persuasion to achieve untruthful goals. Finally, they all suggest that what is said will be voiced at considerable volume, the louder the better, even though the content may be nothing but fabrication. Thus, on analyzing the linguistic content involved, a sense of discrepancy is also easily recognized since this usually takes place in situations where lying is common. In addition to the shades of meaning highlighted above, all these situations involve the use of verbal abuse.

To conclude, the idiomatic expression has been culturally extended not only to refer to a woman hired to provide professional mourning services, but also to any individual who is paid to exploit a particular set of tactics to persuade others of the validity of a particular viewpoint, regardless of its veracity.

6.6.2 الخطب العنترية (The Battle Cries of ᶜAntarah)

This idiomatic expression, الخطب العنترية (*the battle cries of ᶜAntarah*), is culturally associated with the renowned Arab poet-warrior عنترة بن شداد ᶜAntarah bin Shaddad al-ᶜAbsi, born in 530AD in an area then known as ᶜUyun al-Jawa' (present day al-Qaṣim, some 40 kilometres from Buraydah, the regional capital of North Central Region, Saudi Arabia).

From a cultural perspective, ᶜAntarah can be described as a symbol of romanticism and heroism, often described as 'a poet between love and war'[11]. On the one hand, ᶜAntarah is repeatedly described as the 'Arab lover', a romantic poet who adored his beloved ᶜAblah and explicitly expressed this in his verses:

يا عُبلَ إنَّ هَوَاكِ قَد جازَ المَدى وأنا المُعنّى فيكِ من دون الورى
يا عُبلَ حُبُّكِ في عِظامي مع دمي لمَّا جَرَتْ روحي بجسمي قد جرى

[11] Cf. [http://www.rabitat-alwaha.net/moltaqa/showthread.php?t=54960], accessed on 29/12/2013.

O ᶜAblah, my mistress, your love has exceeded the limits;
I love you more than anyone else;
Your love is in my bones and blood, there to remain;
A soul is in my body and love is in my heart.

On the other hand, he was viewed as a heroic warrior who bravely fought against the enemies of the Arabs. Three themes, namely, his undying love for ᶜAblah and his brave exploits in battle, together with his close relationship with his surrounding environment, form the core of his poetry.

The idiomatic expression الخطب العنترية has been used repeatedly in Arab culture in various structures, including: "كلام عنتري" "خطب عنترية" "اسلوب عنتري". This usage denotes harshness in both word and deed, as seen in the following examples:

Example 6.8

ثم ما الفائدة من إيغار الصدور **وتلك العنتريات** التي يطلقها البعض بين آونة وأخرى في منابرهم ؟	*So, what is the use of raging chests and these* ***battle cries of Antarah*** **[**rousing speeches**]** *delivered by certain people from time to time?*

Example 6.9

أيام الامتحانات تمثّل للطلاب فسحة أخرى تتاح معها فرصة الخروج باكراً، كما تتاح فرصة تغيير الفصل والخلاص من **عنتريات** بعض المدرسين	*The exam period is viewed by students as an opportunity to leave early, change their classroom, and get away from the* ***battle cries of Antarah*** [harsh threats] *made by some teachers.*

It is clear from the above examples that the use of خطب عنترية is usually connected with situations in which language users seek to show their power, dominance and strength, similar to the character of the warrior-poet ᶜAntarah in Arab culture, who

symbolizes the combination of physical power and poetic eloquence. The common line of thought involved in both situations is the use of language, i.e. خطب عنترية in order to achieve one's goals.

6.6.3 بَيَّض الله وجهَكْ (May Allah Make Your Face to Shine White)

Religion is one of the central pillars of Arab and Saudi culture. In the words of Tylor: ‘Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’ (Tylor 1871;1903: 1). The expression بَيَّض الله وجهَكْ (*May Allah make your face to shine white*) is a clear example of Islamic belief as a key part of Saudi culture.

This Saudi idiomatic expression is usually attributed to the Qur’anic verses below:

> يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ ۚ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُم أَكَفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
>
> Q 3: 106-107
>
> (106) *On the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black: to those whose faces will be black, (will be said): "Did ye reject Faith after accepting it? Taste then the Penalty for rejecting Faith.* (107) *But those whose faces will be (lit with) white, they will be in (the Light of) Allah's mercy; therein to dwell (forever)*

These Qur’anic verses draw a comparison between the treatment of two different types of people on the Day of Judgement. Those in the first group are those who disavowed their belief in Allah and the Prophets even though they were once believers. These Qur’anic verses detail their punishment: they will be condemned to Hell and their faces will be dark on that day. On the other hand, the Qur’an also confirms that believers will be rewarded with the Mercy of Allah, which in this specific context equates to Paradise, known in Arabic as Jannah (Ibn Kathir 1983, 1: 336; Al-Sayuti 1999, 1: 443).

Saudis repeatedly use the above idiomatic expression to refer to God’s reward to believers on the Day of Judgement, i.e. forgiveness and paradise. The expression

بَيَّض اللهُ وجهَك in this context communicates the meaning of *May Allah reward you with forgiveness and Paradise*, which is a central goal for true Saudi Muslims.

Example 6.10

وشاءت إرادة الله أن يصل عثمان بصاحبه للمستشفى وأن يستجيب الرجل للعلاج ، ويتشافى ويعود الرجل إلى بيشة ، وأصبح المسافرون على هذا الطريق كلما مروا بالموقع وضعوا حجارة بيضاء حتى أصبحت ردما ظاهرا ورمزا بارزا وكانوا يقولون : "**بيض الله وجهك** ياعثمان" وسمي المكان بياضة عثمان . وأصبح موقعا شهيرا تحكى حوله مروءة وشهامة الرجل.	*Allah assisted Othman to deliver his friend to hospital, and helped the man to recover and return to Bisha. Travellers along this route are accustomed to placing white stones on this site. Consequently, the site became well-known and people used to say "**May Allah make your face to shine white**, Othman". The place was consequently named "The whiteness of Othman", and it is now a famous place recalling the generosity of this man.*

Example 6.11

وكانت القصائد حاضرة بقوة بين المواطنين حيث كان الكثير منهم يبدع في طريقة إعدادها وإرسالها على شكل رسائل وسائط مدعومة بصور المليك الغالي ، وتحوي هذه الرسائل أعذب العبارات من شعب محب لمليكه منها (يا أبونا كلنا فداء لك، وعبارة جيت تحمل في يدينك الخير كله، وأعطيت يابو متعب فأغدقت ،**وبيض الله وجهك** يا وجه الخير،وجيتك مجيء الأمطار وتعجز عن شكرك الأحبار ...	*Composing poetry was very common among citizens; some people wrote wonderful poems and sent them to each other together with photographs of the King. The poems included kind expressions from people who love their King. An example is: "O father! We sacrifice ourselves for your security. You overwhelmed us with your generosity. **May Allah make your face to shine white,** O face of the good. Your coming is as welcome as the rain, and no words are sufficient to thank you ...*

In Arab culture, the colours white and black have a symbolic meaning. Thus, white is used when expressing praise for someone who has been helpful. It can also be used to express the idea that you are satisfied with what someone has done. Black, however, is symbolically used to refer to situations involving shame or sins. In this sense, the expression بَيَّض الله وجهَكْ is often used in connection with situations in which one has offered help to others and; therefore, a sense of gratitude is involved.

6.6.4 يكمل نصف دينه (To Complete the Second Half of His Religion)

Saudi people use this idiomatic expression either when praising those who have already got married, e.g. أكمل نصف دينه or when attempting to persuade young men to get married. This idiomatic expression has its roots in the Prophetic Hadith, which constitutes a central part of the Saudi culture. In the words of Rippin:

> *Muhammad is the central figure in Islam. Chosen by God to receive the revelation of the Qur'an, he has been taken by all Muslims to be the ideal man, the perfect embodiment of what it means to be a Muslim. Having lived a fairly normal existence in sixth century east central Arabia, at the age of 40, Muhammad revolutionized his society in ways which were both unexpected and long lasting* (Rippin 1993;2001: 39).

In the light of the above statement, it can be argued that a main part of the Saudi culture is based on the Qur'an (Gurab, 2005) and the Prophetic Sunnah (what Muhammad said, did or approved).

Muslims believe that marriage protects the believer from committing adultery**,** helps to provide mutual support and provides the young man with a woman who helps him to be aware of Allah. In short, marriage paves the way to a virtuous life, replete with belief and guidance.

Since, according to Islamic tradition, half of the way to Paradise in Islam is to be protected from committing adultery, the pathway to this protection in Islam is marriage.

Recapitulating the above, it can be argued that the idiomatic expression . أكمل نصف دينه is deeply rooted in Saudi culture, which is highly influenced by both the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Understanding the cultural implications of this idiomatic expression requires contemplating Muhammad's Prophetic Hadiths in which the theme of

marriage is highly recommended. This is the central reason why Saudis repeatedly uses this idiomatic expression in situations where marriage is the main topic. Consider the following example:

Example 6.12

ويوضح الشاب سطام أنه لا يعرف متى يقرر الزواج ولم يكن المال عائقا كبيرا له لكي يكمل **نصف دينه** لكنه يعتبر نفسه صغيرا على تكوين أسرة	*The young man, Sataam, explains that he does not know when he will decide to marry; money was not a major obstacle for him **to complete half of his religion** but he considers himself too young to have a family.*

6.6.5 أثلج صدري (It Freeze My Chest, Warms Up My Heart)

This MSA idiomatic expression closely reflects the influence of geographical reality on language. The climate of Saudi Arabia, as in many parts of the Arabic-speaking world, is generally marked by very high temperatures during the day and more moderate temperatures at night. Given these high temperatures in Saudi, this idiomatic expression is used metaphorically to communicate the meaning of both delight and relief in a situation. This expression is generally used when someone receives good news or hears/sees something good. Consider the example below:

Example 6.13

تحدث في البداية رئيس مركز البجادية الأستاذ عبدالرحمن بن محمد بن زايد النخيش قائلاً : أرفع أسمى عبارات التهاني والتبريكات للقيادة الحكيمة وللشعب السعودي بمناسبة نجاح عملية خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك عبدالله بن عبدالعزيز حفظه الله وهو الخبر الذي **أثلج صدر** كل مواطن سعودي وكل من عاش تحت ظل هذه القيادة الرشيدة بقيادة خادم الحرمين الشريفين، وندعو الله عز وجل أن يديم عليه صحته وعافيته،...	*The head of Al-Bigadiyyah Centre, Mr Abdel-Rahman Bin Mouhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nakheesh, delivered the opening address, saying: "On this occasion, I am pleased firstly to convey the most heartfelt blessings and congratulations to our wise leadership, and then to the Saudi people on the occasion of the*

> *successful operation on the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdel-Azeez, May Allah protect him. Indeed, this piece of news* ***froze my chest*** *as well as the hearts of all Saudis, who have lived under the protection of the sound and wise leadership, headed by the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdel-Azeez; we pray that God will continue to provide him with health and recuperation...*

An interesting note to be emphasized in this context is that the UK is closely associated with cold weather, whereas Arabic is used in a very hot environment in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, bearing in mind that language is an expression of the surrounding cultural reality, of which geography is one aspect, it is not surprising to notice that Arabs find the thought of icy coldness refreshing, whereas British users of English prefer to think of feelings in terms of ‘warming the heart'.

6.6.6 رفع العقال (Raising the Headband)

This idiomatic expression is another representative example of language as a basic component of culture and behaviour as a central pattern of culture. In general, Saudi culture places particular value on the upper parts of the human body. Thus, items of clothing worn on the head as part of male attire carry a specific significance. The circlet of black cord (*al-ᶜiqal*) placed atop the headdress (*gutrah*) worn by Saudi men (see figure 6.1) is used with a range of physical gestures to communicate various cultural meanings. These actual gestures have also been captured figuratively in several idiomatic expressions.

Figure 6-1 Traditional male Saudi headgear: the black circlet [^{c}*iqāl*] placed atop the headdress [gutrah].

The first of these idioms رفع العقال is functionally equivalent to the English expression *to raise one's hat to/ take off one's hat to*, which is used to mean "to remove one's hat as a gesture of courtesy or respect to someone" (OED).[12] In example 6.14 the idiomatic expression was also performed by the former footballer Fahd Al-Huraify who was captured by an *Al-Riyadh* photographer in the process of showing his personal feelings about an issue by removing his ^{c}iqāl from his headdress:

Example 6.14

رفع نجم فريق النصر السابق فهد الهريفي **عقاله** تقديرا عن إعجابه بشجاعة رئيس نادي النصر الأمير فيصل بن تركي الذي اتخذ قرارا شجاعا بتخليه عن اللاعبين الأجانب في النصر لتمثيل	*Al Nassr ex-star Fahd Al-Huraify* ***lifted his headband*** *to express his appreciation for the Chairman of Al Nassr Club, Prince Faisal Bin Turkey,*

[12] Cf. Also the English expression 'to doff one's cap to'.

الفريق في لقاء اليوم أمام فريق الهلال بعد امتناعهم من خوض اللقاء بسبب تأخر استلامهم مستحقاتهم.	*who bravely discarded/abandoned foreign players who were to represent Al Nassr Club in the match against Al Hilal Club after they refused to play due to a delay in paying their salary.*

The central meaning communicated by this act is to express one's appreciation, respect or courtesy, as in example 6.15:

Example 6.15

أثار تفاعل وحماس الإعلامي السعودي داود الشريان في حلقة "قضية الجيزاوي بين الحقيقة والتدليس" من برنامج "الثامنة" التي عرضت مساء اليوم انتباه المشاهدين، حيث حوت الحلقة عدداً من الأمثال والمصطلحات الشعبية فضلاً عن **رفعه لعقاله** تعبيراً للتقدير والتحية أثناء الحلقة	*The enthusiasm of the Saudi journalist Dawood al-Shiryan in the programme Al Jezawi's case: between fact and fiction attracted the audience's attention. The programme also included a number of proverbs and popular expressions. He also expressed his respect and appreciation by **raising his headband**.*

The same idiomatic expression can also be used to convey a meaning of threat, i.e. a means of warning someone not to do something unless he/she wishes to face punishment:

Example 6.16

لو كنت رئيس نادي الا ترى ان الادارة وفق سياسة العين الحمراء **ورفع العقال** هي الانسب ام ترى ان ذلك يعيدنا الى الخلف عشرات السنين؟	*If you were the Chairman of a club, would you see the policy of the red eye and **raising the headband** the most appropriate? Or do you think that would take us back decades?*

A third important usage of this idiomatic expression is in the context of persuading someone to do something. This is normally accompanied by the act of throwing one's *ᶜiqāl* at someone else's leg, which symbolically expresses the idea of giving

one's most precious possession to someone as a means of asking for their help and support. Ethically and culturally, custom demands that the recipient quickly retrieves the *ᶜiqāl* and places it on his own head, as a means of conveying that he values the other man's reverence and dignity as much as he himself values his *ᶜiqāl.*

In conclusion, رفع العقال is commonly used in many situations and is indeed a culturally sensitive idiomatic expression which is deeply-rooted, central component of Saudi masculine culture.

6.6.7 حَبَّة خَشْم (Nose-to-Nose Greeting)

In the Arabian Peninsula in general and Saudi Arabia in particular, the act of males greeting each other by nose-to-nose touching is considered to be another deeply rooted masculine tradition.

Figure 6-2 Traditional Saudi nose-to-nose greeting between males.

As figure 6.3 illustrates, this type of greeting between two males is done by touching together noses once, twice, or sometimes three times, while the hands are free or sometimes the greeter may place his hand on the receiver's chest. A younger man may sometimes touch the nose of the older man with their own nose as a symbol of

respect and reverence. In addition, the younger man kisses the elder's head, especially when this involves a son and father or a young man with a father figure. Immediately after this act, the interlocutors start chatting and discussing life matters.

As previously noted in Saudi culture as elsewhere on the Arabian Peninsula particular value is placed on the higher parts of the human body e.g. the nose and the forehead, since these metaphorically symbolize dignity, magnificence, veneration, and splendour. The fact that the nose is viewed as a symbol of nobility has resulted in its use in numerous linguistic expressions, including صديقك هو خشمك (*your friend is like your nose*), for just as one cannot breathe without one's nose, one cannot get by without a friend), رغماً عن أنفه (*he will do it by force*), يحشر أنفه (*he pokes his nose in*), and على خشمي (*I am at your disposal, I will happily do it*).

The idiomatic expression حَبَّة خَشْم is used in many Saudi situations. Consider the text below:

<u>Example 6.17</u>

"أيعقل بعد سنوات من الانتظار، أن يكافأ المواطن بإيقاف قرضه، وتقتل فرحة أسرة كاملة! بسبب غير مقنع .... إذن؛ كان من الأولى على المواطن الذي بنى عقاراً سواءً كان مقترضاً من بنك أو من (تحويشة العمر)، أن يكتب معروضاً مع "**حبة خشم**"- كالعادة- قائلا: سعادة مدير صندوق التنمية العقاري – حفظه الله- أتقدم لسعادتكم وكلي أمل في النظر إلى قضيتي التي امتدت أكثر من خمسة عشر سنة، وأنا في انتظار قرضي الذي أمر به ولي الأمر لكل مواطن	*Is it rational after years of waiting, that the citizen is rewarded by his loan being stopped thus ending all his family's joy! By no means [...] thus the citizen who builds a property, whether by taking out a bank loan or using his personal savings, should write a plea, with* ***nose kissing*** [paying all due reverence] *'as usual', saying: Your Excellency, Director of the Real Estate Fund, I greatly hope that you will take into account in my case that I have been waiting for 15 years to get my loan sanctioned by the officials for every citizen.*

The text above is an example of the use of حبة خشم for the purpose of pleading for a special favour from someone in authority. Another situational usage for حبة خشم can be seen in the text below:

Example 6.18

المهم انه بعد عام كامل من الجلسات القضائية والمشاورات انتهت بتراجع المؤسسة عن قرارها ونقل العمالة إلى مكان آخر. ويحكي لي احد الشاكين بقوله: تصدق ان المسألة حُلّت بطيب خاطر ونية صافية من الطرفين، وعلى قولهم "**حَبّة خَشم**" مع احد المسؤولين في المؤسسة، وان الدعوى كانت ستستمر سنوات دون حل	*After a year of lawsuits and consultations, the institution changed their mind and decided to transfer the workers elsewhere. A complainant told me that: "The case was resolved as a result of goodwill between both parties and as said with **nose kissing** to show respect for one of the officials. Otherwise, the lawsuit may have lasted for years".*

The text above refers to another situation in which the idiomatic expression حَبّة خَشم is used as a symbol of good faith between two parties. A third situational usage of the expression حَبّة خَشم is attached to the emotional dimension in the use of this expression, namely love and intimacy. Below is an example:

Example 6.19

حبة خشم بو زايد لبو خالد أكبر معاني الحب والتقدير.	*A **nose-to-nose touch** from Abu Zayed to Abu Khaled acts as a sign of great love and appreciation.*

To sum up, the idiomatic expression حبة خشم can be said to be another key culture-sensitive idiomatic expression in Saudi culture. It is a commonly used expression which can be used in different cultural situations to communicate various meanings, including love, intimacy and respect, particularly in a family setting, good faith, and 'special pleading' to others.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the context of situation was analysed applying the three criteria (field, tenor, and mode) adopted from Halliday's framework for idiomatic expressions. This revealed that the reader's recognition of the context of situation which is connected to the text helps create a deep understanding of the exact

meaning of any idiomatic expression used in such texts. The structure of the examples selected for discussion here is figuratively manifested because they belong to those non-compositional idioms which are semantically ambiguous. The analysis conducted here strongly suggests that the more ambiguous or opaque an idiomatic expression is, the greater the effort needed to interpret its meanings. In such instances, we resort to the second phase, the non-linguistic context, because the co-text alone is not sufficient and the meaning of the idiom is never merely the sum of the literal meanings of its components.

In the second section, the focus shifted to the correlation between the cultural dimension and idiomatic expressions. As it is the third phase of context (context of culture) an utterance needs to be clear and understood. For this purpose, data taken from *Al-Riyadh* covering several different cultural categories was analysed. This analysis began with idiomatic expressions used in Arab Islamic societies which have their origins in the religious beliefs shared by all Muslims. This was followed by examination of some idiomatic expressions which are restricted in their usage to the society of Saudi Arabia or to other Arab Gulf states. It was noted that some of these expressions are inspired by local traditional dress (e.g. رفع العقال), customs (e.g. حبّة خشم) or environmental features (e.g. صدره شمالي). It was clearly demonstrated that culture acts as a key aspect of understanding the real meaning of certain idiomatic expressions which could not be predicted from the literal meaning of their constituent parts.

Cultural references were identified in some 56 of the 440 idiomatic expressions and these purely figurative expressions (opaque idioms) could not have been understood without knowledge of their cultural context. Of these culturally specific idiomatic expressions, some 23 related to religious beliefs whilst the others related to diverse aspects of Saudi/Arab culture. The examples which were analysed highlight the role played by culture in the linguistic context as a means of disambiguating this type of expression. It also illustrates how a Saudi newspaper such as *Al-Riyadh* reflects this profound influence of Islamic belief in their texts.

To conclude, then, a broad knowledge of Saudi, Arab and Islamic cultural references as well as their context of use promotes a clearer understanding and interpretation of MSA idioms, and helps readers, Saudis and non-Saudis, to comprehend their different uses.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study analysed a sample of idiomatic expressions sourced from the Saudi newspaper *Al Riyadh*, focusing on their structure and context. **Chapter One** outlined the research questions and the methodology used in this study. The literature review followed in **Chapter Two** and covered various topics related to idiomatic expressions including definitions, and a detailed discussion of the idiom and other language structures (collocation, proverb and metonymy), considering research in both MSA and English. The relation between idiomatic expressions, metonymy and metaphor, and the difference between literal and figurative meaning were also established in the review of literature. In **Chapter Three,** textual and contextual methods were addressed using a text linguistics approach. The structural analysis of idiomatic expressions made up the content of **Chapter Four** which was subdivided into four sections. The first of these examined the patterns and frequency of idiomatic structures. Internal structures/grammatical relations and external or grammatical functional relations were analysed in sections two and three respectively. Finally, structural variations of the idiomatic expressions were considered in detailed with the aim of identifying their degree of fixedness and the range of possible changes and variations which idiomatic expressions can undergo. Textual analysis of the idiomatic expressions was undertaken in **Chapter Five.** This focused on co-text and cohesion, to explore how idiomatic expressions cohere lexically and grammatically with co-text, and to identify the impact of co-text on interpreting idiomatic expressions. **Chapter Six** contained a contextual and cultural analysis of a sample of idiomatic expression with the aim of establishing the role of situational and cultural context in understanding this linguistic phenomenon. The concluding chapter **Chapter Seven** presented the principal findings of this study in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter one, namely:

1. What are the structural patterns of idiomatic expressions which appear in *Al-Riyadh* and what is their degree of frequency?

2. What are the structural relations between the lexical items in the idiomatic expressions and the linguistic context (co-text)?

3. Do changes in the structure of idiomatic expressions affect their meaning? To what extent can the idiomatic expression undergo change and still maintain its meaning and what types of changes occur?

4. How do idiomatic expressions cohere with the linguistic context?

5. How do linguistic and cultural context contribute to the interpretation of an idiomatic expression?

The findings in relation to these five research questions are presented in detail in the next section of the thesis.

7.2 Findings

Drawing on the results of the analysis of the structure of idiomatic expressions and their concurrence in the study sample from *Al-Riyadh*, the study found that verbal structures form 47.6% (nearly half) of the overall structural patterns, genitive structures 17.2%, preposition phrase patterns 8.4%, and adjectival patterns 7.7%. The results in section 4.2 show that there was variation in the structure of idioms in the sample, with changes occurring from one pattern to another. The most frequent change was from the verbal to the genitive pattern and vice versa. This is thought to be due to the variability of the texts and contexts in which the idiomatic expressions originally appeared. It was noted that some idiomatic expressions had been manipulated to fit into the context. The study reveals that the main reason for these changes relates to the co-text, which plays a major role in determining the grammatical function of the idiom.

When the MSA idiomatic expressions were divided up structurally, using grammatical analysis, it was revealed that a number of idiomatic expressions took a new form that did not exist in previous studies. This form was designated as ‘the incomplete structure’ since its structure needs an agent/subject or predicate to achieve its full meaning as a sentence (see 4.4.10).

As highlighted in section 4.2, in previous studies such as that by Husam Al-Din (1985), some patterns were dealt with by depending on traditional syntactic structures or on semantic rather than structural features. However, in this study, a number of structural patterns were dealt with as genitive structures as they required an addition between two words.

Other studies like that of Abduo (2011) only include verbal, nominal, adjectival, adverbial, and prepositional patterns. However, one key contribution of this study has been to provide more detail about the structural patterns of the idiomatic expressions analysed. The structural study was divided into nine different patterns (see 4.4.2 to 4.4.10). It was established that in the verbal pattern, idiomatic expressions must include a verb, an agent or an object. In other patterns like the nominal, genitive, and adjectival, the study found that the most frequent structures consisted of a head noun and a modifying element.

The study also revealed that the structure of idiomatic expressions is close to that of normal phrases. However, the structure of the former remains distinctive in regard to its semantic sense, as certain structures may change an idiomatic expression into a normal statement with no distinguishing structure or semantics.

A further finding of this study is that the structural syntax of idiomatic expressions complies with that expected in MSA. Analysis of the internal structural relations of the idioms (see 4.5) showed that these expressions may consist of an independent sentence (verbal or nominal), a phrase, or a compliment. Consequently, the internal relations between the verb, agent, and object; the preposition and noun; and the subject and predicate reflect the ability of the writer as well as the native speaker to produce and structure idiomatic expressions.

It emerged from analysis that the most common structure found in MSA idioms is the verbal one. Some 145 of the 210 verbal idiomatic structures (69%) have a transitive verb (V S O), 16.7% are structured as V + S + prepositional phrase, and 14.3% have an intransitive verb (V + S). The study also revealed that the relation between the verb and the active/passive form in verbal structure patterns can be divided to three types. In the first type, the relation between the verb and agent is static, i.e. it cannot be transformed into a passive form. In the second type, the relation between the verb and agent is not compulsory, i.e. the structure of the idiomatic expression may be transformed from an active to a passive voice and vice

versa. In the third type, the relation is compulsory and exclusive between the verb and passive verb, i.e. it cannot be transformed to an active voice. This finding explains why some passive idiomatic expressions cannot be transformed into active structures.

The study also showed that the genitive structure appears in 76 idiomatic expressions and that this structure may perform the idiomatic sense independently or be part of a larger structure (verbal or nominal sentence).

Analysis of contextual relations between the idiom and text showed that an idiom may take the form of a sentence, phrase, or an incomplete structure. However, when it forms part of a longer sentence or text, it has only one syntactic function, that is similar to a one-word function (one language unit). Similarly, study findings showed that the idiom can have a function similar to that of a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. As long as the idiomatic expression is dealt with semantically as one word, its grammatical function determines the relation between the expression and the co-text. In other words, it may be used in substitution of a noun and may perform the function of agent, object, second part of a genitive structure, etc. It can be concluded that idiomatic expressions are utilised in a range of contextual and structural relations. In this respect, they are like many other structures.

The study revealed that the idiom has a specific meaning, and this is what distinguishes it from other structures. Although previous studies have highlighted that the structure of the idiomatic expression is fixed, variation was found in the structure of some idioms in the study sample, and utilising Moon's approach (1998), it was confirmed that idiomatic expressions are flexible in structure, composition and syntax. This flexibility allows for greater creativity in their use since it means that the idiomatic expression may change its form in order to comply with the context (see 4.7).

The study made use of the compositional/non-compositional approach in assessing the structure of the idiom and as a result of applying the transformational fixedness approach used in previous studies on the English language, the study concluded that the structure of non-compositional idioms is more fixed than that of compositional idioms.

The results for analysing variation in idiomatic expressions show that 60.77% of the sample has lexical substitution or transformation (lexical and grammatical

variations). The verbal structure displays the highest level of variation at 97.1%, followed by the incomplete structure at 57.1%. The structure of comparative and coordinative patterns shows less than 5% variation, suggesting these structures are nearly fixed. In addition, it appears that the longer the structure (e.g. those consisting of a sentence or a phrase), the more variation it tolerates. Fixedness increases in short structures i.e. those consisting of just two words.

The study found that the level of fixedness in idiomatic expressions is varied. It suggests that in all contexts the idiomatic meaning should be retained rather than influenced by these variations. Analysis confirmed that idiomatic expressions contain a 'head word' and a 'tail', which retain the meaning of the expression. These two key components cannot be subjected to substitution, transformation, or ellipsis as any change in the head word affects the meaning of the expression.

The study samples were taken from different texts and written by different journalists in *Al-Riyadh*, and analysis confirmed that writers make changes in the structure of the idiomatic expression in order to fit the context. This variation remains within the MSA syntax governing the structure of the expression, taking into account the structural features of the expression, which are, in turn, governed by the semantics of the expression. This result is compatible with Halliday's functional linguistic approach (1994) in that the semantic and structural features are subjected to the writer's will to express the intended meaning.

The second part of the study adopted Halliday's contextual theory (1976, 1985, 1989, 1994, and 2004) in cohesion, situation, and culture, to analyse the internal context and co-text together with the external situational and cultural context of the sample of idiomatic expressions. The study found that as a syntactic and semantic structure the idiomatic expression connects to the co-text by means of a number of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. Conjunctions were the commonest and most important connecting devices, الواو [waw] (*and*) being the most frequently used when connecting the idiom with the co-text. Other conjunction devices – conditional, temporal, casual, and adversative – are also used, but less frequently than additives like الواو. The use of reference is also noticeable in connecting the idiomatic expression with the text. Substitution is rarely used; only one example of variation was found. The results also show that ellipsis was never used when connecting the idiom with the text because, as noted previously, idiomatic

expressions tend towards fixedness in their structure and specific figurative meaning. This means that ellipsis and variation will rarely be used, as either of these processes will result in a change in the structure or even the overall meaning of the expression itself.

Results for cohesion show that the idiom connects to co-text by means of cohesive tie in terms of Halliday's model. However, since this model was originally applied in an English context and the sample of expressions used in the study are all MSA, it is perhaps not surprising that other cohesion devices were found in this study. The new devices which have been identified in this research include exclusion/exception, assertion/emphasis, and change of word order to achieve cohesion with the text and co-text of the idiom.

From a broader point of view, although the idiomatic expressions are cohesive with the surrounding co-text, the study showed, however, that the expression usually creates cohesion in the text as a whole. The writer chooses an idiom that fits the topic e.g. idiomatic expressions that relate exclusively to criticism, behaviour, sports, etc. The function of this choice is to create cohesion or textuality.

The study examined the importance of context in understanding the meaning of the idiomatic expression, and the first type of context examined was co-text or the internal linguistic context surrounding the text (see 5.3). The study also highlights the importance of context in distinguishing the literal from the figurative meaning of the idiom. In addition, the context determines all other possible meanings and limits the intended meaning of the expression.

The study found that some idiomatic expressions need to be understood on a broader level than simply the co-text. This type of expressions belongs to non-compositional idioms or those which are ambiguous in meaning and need a broader context of situation to be understood. The study makes use of Halliday's approach (1976, 1985) in the context of a situation represented in the three patterns of context: field, mode, and tenor. Knowing the text type, its contexts, the participants and their background greatly determines the meaning of the idiom. This was clear for many different topics in the examples examined in this study (see 6.2).

Culture-bound idiomatic expressions, in particular, need a level above co-text or text of situation in order to precisely determine their meaning. The study analysed a number of idiomatic expressions which had been categorised using Newmark's

(1988) and Katan's (2004) frameworks, and shows that a background knowledge of culture-specific expressions is very important in determining their intended meaning.

Analysing the cultural dimension of some expressions in *Al-Riyadh* reveals a range of cultural references. Some expressions, for example, are exclusive to Saudis and Gulf State nationals e.g. those related to clothing such as رفع العقال (*raising one's headband)* or to customs and traditions such as حبة خشم (*a nose-to-nose greeting*). Some expressions relate to Arab Muslim society in general such as أكمل نصف دينه (*he completed half of his religion*).

Cultural analysis of these idioms shows that 56 expressions out of 440 cannot be understood from their literal meaning and their cultural context must be known in order to understand them. Culturally-specific expressions are found to be the most ambiguous when compared to other types of expressions. Although the sample of idiomatic expressions was selected from a diverse range of texts with regard to subject matter and authors, there was a noticeable prevalence of religious expressions with some 23 of the 56 culturally specific expressions being in this category. Other expressions are related to categories including customs, clothing, and behaviour.

The original contribution of this thesis lies in the fact that this study is the first to focus on MSA idiomatic expressions in the Saudi Press. Among the issues discussed for the first time and presented in the study is the nature of the cohesive tie between the idiomatic expression and the text. This study is also innovative in its treatment of relationships and variations occurring at the structural level of the idiomatic expression and their influence on meaning. The study contributes to understanding the relation which exists between linguistic and non-linguistic context and idiomatic expressions, and more broadly, its influence on understanding meaning through theories of text linguistics. Furthermore, the study opens up new horizons for further research on the phenomenon of idiomatic expression from different perspectives. In addition, the results of this study can serve as a first step for researchers interested in exploring problems related to the translation of idioms.

7.3 Limitations

The study focused exclusively on a single Saudi paper, namely, *Al-Riyadh*. The sample for the research also concentrated on idioms found in the MSA of the Press and did not cover idiomatic expressions used in Saudi variants of Arabic.

The study was not concerned with other aspects of idiomatic expression including the relation between figurative and intended meaning. These aspects could not be handled in this study as this type of linguistic study would have required other research methods such as questionnaire and interviews.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This section addresses the limitations of the current study by proposing a series of recommendations for future research. This research has provided a foundation for further investigation on idioms. The study has opened up the way for a comparative study of idiomatic expressions in different Saudi dialects to explore similarities and differences amongst the different varieties of Arabic spoken in the Kingdom. It would also be useful for future research to explore the origins of idioms in MSA in terms of semantic fields/themes. The present study analysed models of idioms from a textual and cultural perspective, and this could be insightful in other areas of linguistic and cultural studies, leading to the compilation of a glossary or dictionary of lexical and cultural idioms.

It is worth noting that studies in MSA which concern learning and translating idioms are quite limited in comparison to western studies on idioms. The translation of idioms is a contentious issue that usually raises issues of translatability and/or untranslatability. In addition, more studies about idioms in MSA are needed, especially in regard to the relation between the literal and figurative meaning of idioms. There are interesting topics for further research such as studying the idiomatic expression from a cognitive and pragmatic perspective.

Applying a different type of research methodology e.g. a questionnaire would have been effective for investigating other aspects of idioms. A comparative study of idioms in English and MSA would also make an interesting topic for further research, especially since during the course of this research, it emerged that there are some similarities between idioms in the two languages.

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Appendix A

In the following appendix, the data of idiomatic expressions collected from *Al-Riyadh* newspaper are presented in Arabic. However, the idioms which are used in this thesis are translated into English.

	Idiom		
1. تعبير فعلي	137.يرى النور / يخرج إلى النور 138.يريح ضميره 139.يريق/ اراقة ماء الوجه 140.يزن كلامه 141.يزيد الطين بله 142.يسابق الريح 143.يسابق الزمن 144.يسبح عكس التيار 145.يستعرض عضلاته 146.يسرق الأضواء 147.يسرق الفؤاد 148.يسلط الضوء على ... 149.يسلم نفسه للشيطان 150.يسوى حسابه مع فلان 151.يسيل لعاب شخص / يجري ريقه 152.مما يُشار إليه بالإصبع/بالبنان 153.يشب عن الطوق 154.يشمر عن أكمامه (يستعد لعمل شاق) 155.يشوه (وجه) الحقيقة 156.يصطاد في المياه العكرة 157.يصيب كبد الحقيقة 158.يضرب عرض الحائط 159.يضع اللمسات الأخيرة 160.يضع النقاط علي الحروف	66. غض الطرف عن 67. فاض/ طفح الكيل 68. فت في عضده 69. فتح الله عليه 70. فتح/فغر فاه 71. فتحت الصحف النار على الشيخ 72. قامت الدنيا ولم تقعد 73. قُضي الأمر 74. قطع الشك باليقين 75. قلب ظهر المجن 76. كأنما ابتلعته الأرض 77. كسر شوكته 78. كفوا يده عن العمل 79. لا (لم) يصدِّق عينيه 80. لا تقوم له قيامة 81. لا يحرك ساكنا 82. لا ينبس ببنت شفه 83. لفظ أنفاسه الأخيرة 84. لم تسنح الفرصة 85. لم يغمض لي جفن طول الليل 86. لم ينبس بكلمة 87. لمعت الفكرة في عقله (رأسه) 88. ما جاء إلا بشق الأنفس 89. نكص على عقبيه 90. وافته المنية 91. وضعت الحرب	1. (يرى/ يُري) النجوم في عز الظهر 2. (يضخ) دماء جديدة 3. (يعرف) مفاتيح اللعب 4. ابتلع لسانه 5. أثقل كاهله الأمر 6. اختلط الحابل بالنابل 7. أدلى بدلوه 8. إذا قامت ناقة صالح 9. ارتعدت فرائصه 10. استتب الأمن 11. أسدل (يسدل) الستار (على) 12. أسقط في يده 13. أسلم الروح إلى بارئها 14. اسودت الدنيا في وجهه (عينيه) 15. أشار بإصبع الاتهام 16. أشرق وجهه 17. اصابته عين 18. أصبح في خبر كان 19. أطلق ساقيه للريح 20. أفل نجمه 21. اقرأ مابين السطور 22. أكل الدهر عليها وشرب 23. امتقع لونه 24. امسك لسانك

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6. تعبير مفرد	1 التطبيل 2 سلحفاة 3 أذن 4 ثور 5 جمل 6 الداران 7 الثقلان		
7. تعبير معطوف	3. يوم لك ويوم عليك 4. أذن من طين وأذن من عجين 5. باع وذراع	1. قلبا وقالبا 2. العصا والجزرة (الثواب والعقاب)	

8. تعبير تفضيل	1. أسرع من البرق 2. أجود من حاتم 3. أحلى من العسل 4. أبطأ من سلحفاة 5. ابيض من اللبن		
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