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## IDIOMS OF DEATH IN GREEK AND IN SERBIAN<sup>†\*\*</sup>

The aim of this study is to examine the way death becomes ‘manifested’ by means of language, and more specifically, by means of idioms in two linguistic communities, the Greek and the Serbian, respectively. In order to discover similarities and differences in the idiomatic conceptualization of death, a number of idiomatic phrases have been collected from Greek and Serbian dictionaries, as well as online sources. These are analyzed and juxtaposed using the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lejkoř/Džonson 1980) and relevant works on idioms (Kevećeš/Sabo 1996; Nunberg et al. 1994). Moreover, certain definitions and approaches concerning idiom identification are studied and an attempt is made to determine the source domains since the various correspondences are not random (Lejkoř 1987: 381). For instance, in Greek reference is made to religious objects in some idiomatic phrases, such as candles, showing that religious rituals are an indirect way of talking about death i.e., *σώθηκε το λάδι του, σώθηκε το καντήλι του*, meaning that his ‘oil’ ran out, his ‘oil lamp’ went out. The same is observed in Serbian: *dogoreva njegova/njena sveća*, “his/her candle went out”. Overall, the study focuses on idiomaticity and the cultural stimuli that led to the creation of a number of idioms in the Greek and the Serbian languages.

**Keywords:** idioms, expressions of death, Greek, Serbian

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In most dictionaries, we come across the same definition, that is, death is the total cessation of life processes which occurs in all living organisms. However, death has always been treated as something mysterious and it is sometimes accompanied by superstitions. Hence, we also encounter a number of idiomatic expressions which involve cultural elements. Taking this into consideration, the goal of this specific paper is twofold: a) to identify a common perception of death between Greek and Serbian culture which underlies a number of idiomatic expressions of death and b) to assess these common idiomatic patterns which may ensure a systematicity in the way of thinking. In the empirical part, we analyze commonly used idioms in both languages. The results suggest a convergence rather than a divergence in the idiomatic language employed in Greek and Serbian.

### 1.2. The notion of idiomaticity

The relevant literature involves various definitions and characterizations of figurative expressions. In particular, idioms can be labeled as formulaic sequences (Šmit/Karter 2004), formulaic language (Vrej 2002), or prefabricated speech (Bolinger 1975), fixed expression (Karter 1998), fixed expressions and idioms (Mun 1998); characterizations that imply their holistic retrieval. In other words, they are recurrent word combinations that are stored, accessed and processed as if they were single words (Luis 1993).

Cacciari and Tabossi (1988: 668) propose the following definition:

Typically, an idiom is characterized as a string of words whose semantic interpretation cannot be derived compositionally from the interpretation of its parts. Thus, idiomatic expressions defy the standard view of language comprehension according to which understanding a sentence entails at least recognizing the individual words in the sentence, retrieving their meanings from the mental lexicon and combining them accordingly to their grammar relations.

Similarly, according to the relevant Cognitive Linguistics literature, idioms in a restricted sense (Vulović 2015: 24) are linguistic expressions whose meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of the constituent elements. Kövecses (2010: 233) underlines that “idioms are products of our conceptual system and not simply a matter of language”. The difficulty to predict the meaning of an idiom from its subparts is also stated by Kövecses and Szabó (1996). In the same line, the pragmatic view refers to idioms as phraseological units; phraseology is the theory of collocations which establish a fixed context (Amosova 1963; Štresler 1982). In a phraseological unit, more precisely, in the case of a global phraseologism (Mršević Radović 1987: 63), we cannot decide which constituent is the key-word and which contains the semantic features that have to be realized, i.e. *white elephant* (Štresler 1982: 23). Similarly, most of the idioms, both global and component idioms (Mršević

Radović 1987) that we have recorded and analyzed, cannot be interpreted based on their constituent words.

Idioms carry further characteristics related to the way they are formed. Their formation makes them fall into various classifications concerning the degree of idiomaticity and the opacity of their meaning (Vajnrajh 1969; Karter 1998; Fernando 1996), the key-words used to create them, their syntactic structure, their part-of-speech meaning, etc. The idioms which exhibit the highest degree of idiomaticity can be found as ‘pure idioms’ such as *kick the bucket*, or *blow the golf*. They are the most fixed and opaque, featuring the strictest sense of idiomaticity (Kouvi 1993).

The idioms in question are also highly idiomatic. As previously mentioned, their meanings cannot be worked out via interpretative strategies. However, within the Cognitive Linguistic approach idioms can get decoded if we consider idioms as complex but conceptual in nature, based on the correspondences between domains of experience. As Langacker (1987: 25) claims, “to regard an idiom as opaque or as primarily a fixed phrase is [...] simplistic. It is more accurately seen as a complex of semantic and symbolic relationships that have become conventionalized and have coalesced into an established configuration”. Hence, the meanings of idioms can be seen as motivated and not arbitrary (Kevečes 2010). Similarly, according to Gibbs (1992), idioms cannot be characterized as dead metaphors because they bear more complex meanings, motivated by conceptual metaphors.

Based on Kövecses (2010), it is no accident that idioms look the way they do; they have been motivated by conceptual mechanisms when they were coined. Kövecses (2010: 233) goes on to list the three most common conceptual mechanisms behind idioms: “The kinds of mechanisms that seem to be especially relevant in the case of many idioms are metaphor, metonymy, and conventional knowledge”. The idioms examined in this paper are based on conceptual metaphors and metonymies, something that shows a systematic motivation (Kevečes/Sabo 1996; Lejkof/Kevečes 1987).

Our focus on the domain of death is related to the fact that it is part of life. Since ancient times, death as a phenomenon has occupied human thought and it has become the subject of many philosophical, religious, anthropological, aesthetic-artistic, ethical and other debates. Most religions, and in our case Orthodox Christianity, view death as “the return of the body to the matter from which it was created, and the soul to eternal life” (Mršević Radović 2008: 170). The common religion justifies why the two countries, Greece and Serbia, embrace a common conceptualization of death. This is shown in various idioms presented below.

## 2. EMPIRICAL PART

### 2.1. Methodology

In order to discover the similarities and differences in the idiomatic conceptualization of death, a number of idiomatic phrases have been collected from Greek and Serbian dictionaries (Vlahopoulos 2007; Kriaras 1995; Babinjotis 2002; Matešić 1982; Marković 2001; Balać/Stojanović 2002; RSJ; RMS; RSANU), as well as online sources. These are analyzed and juxtaposed using the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lejko/Džonson 1980), Idealized Cognitive Models and relevant works on idioms (Kevečeš/Sabo 1996; Nunberg et al 1994).

The material of this paper includes indicative idioms that are associated with death and are used frequently in each language. Due to the common Christian religion, or else, the Orthodox faith and the geographical proximity of these two nations, we would say that the mentality concerning life and death does not differ. Thus, our initial expectation was that most idioms would coincide and only minor deviations would be recorded. The latter would be the result of specific cultural differences.

The idioms recorded fall into three categories depending on their content and will be presented below.

## 3. ANALYSIS

### 3.1. Idioms related to the domain of religion

As mentioned above, most idioms are related to religious aspects:

Greek:

- (1) Σώθηκε το φτίλι του.  
“The thread of the oil-lamp got burnt”.
- (2) Σώθηκε το καντήλι του.  
“His oil lamp went out”.
- (3) Σώθηκε το λάδι του.  
“His oil-lamp ran out of oil”.
- (4) Σβήνει σαν αγιοκέρι.  
“He/she is burning like a sacred candle”.

Serbian:

- (5) *Dogoreva njegova/njena svijeća.*  
“His/her candle went out”.
- (6) *Gasi se čija svijeća.*  
“His candle got burnt”.

In the examples above, we can see that the particular idioms are similar and they bring forth the image of the oil lamp or the burning candles. The oil lamp or the candles function metonymically building the image of a religious custom. This actually motivates the formation of the idioms.

The metonymic motivation embedded in these idioms can also be explained by the Idealized Cognitive Model as postulated by Lakoff (1987) and Panther and Radden (1999). An Idealized Cognitive Model is a conceptual structure of organizing the world. An Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) can be either general or cultural (Raden/Kevečič 1999: 21). For instance, the candle burning ICM focuses on the process of burning, which, in turn, is associated with special religious occasions. The burning candle or the oil-lamp symbolize light, they function as a manifestation of faith and we light them to glorify the saints and God, asking them to forgive the sins of the living and the dead. The burning process of the candle or the oil lamp also depicts metaphorically the decline of the human body. Moreover, in the church service of the Holy Week, all candles are gradually extinguished to commemorate the darkness at Christ's crucifixion. Here, the crucifixion is metaphorically extended to people's death in general.

The oil lamp respectively functions metonymically. It is connected to the funeral ritual. Christians light oil lamps for the soul of the dead. Even at cemeteries above the graves, there are lit oil lamps which burn for the protection of the soul of the dead. Metaphorically, there is also a link to light and darkness, to life and death (Panter/Raden 1999: 20). The idiom is occasionally met with a slight change since speakers either refer to the wick of the oil lamp or to the oil lamp itself.

If we analyze more profoundly the burning of the candle, we will see that the flame carries a symbolism, too. Extinguishing the candle's flame is metaphorically connected to the termination of the vital functions of the organism. The candle is a universal artifact present in burial rites and this explains why we find it in both cultures in synonymous phraseological units.

According to Tolstoy (1995: 269), death and afterlife, in Slavic folk tradition, are closely connected with the rite of lighting a candle at the time of an individual's departure from this world. It is believed that the dying makes the passage from the 'white light', or 'divine light' or 'from the world of sunlight' to the world of eternal darkness. In fact, the candle, as a religious-ritual object present in both cultures, inspired these idioms of death in both languages. Moreover, the lit candle<sup>1</sup> symbolizes "the immortality of the soul which is separated from the body, ascends to heaven" and it illuminates its path to "the kingdom of the dead and darkness" (RRP 2005: 383; Tolstoj 1995: 269). According to Vulović (2015: 116), the meaning of the

<sup>1</sup> Čajkanović, however, emphasizes another metaphoric motivation for the cult of lighting candles. In this case, the lit candle functions as a shield due to the fear that some evil soul will enter the body left by the soul and try to revive it, more precisely vampires (Čajkanović 1994b: 108).

candle as a prayer object used in religious practice is not stated in the descriptive dictionaries of the Serbian language, which is not the case in the Greek language (Babinjotis 2002: 883–884). The dictionary of symbols (RS 2004) reports that the symbolism of the candle identifies with the symbolism of the flame itself.

Another idiom which is common in both languages is the following:

(7) Μυρίζει λιβάνι/χωματίλα.

“It smells like incense/dust”.

(8) *Mirisati, zamirisati na tamjan, (o)kaditi kome tamjanom.*

“To smell, it smells like incense”.

The particular idiom is related to the funeral ICM. Setting a frame where a funeral takes place, the speakers construct an image of the ritual, the tomb, the grave, the candles burning and the burning of incense. There is a variation of this idiom in Greek, in which the word *incense* is replaced by the word *dust*. The incense and the dust metonymically create the bleak atmosphere of a funeral. Metaphorically, dust leads to the connotation that the human body after death turns into dust. The fragrance from the incense obtained from the wood of Boswellia tree (RSJ 2007: 1301), due to the strong smell it gets when lit, has an indispensable role in the Christian Orthodox religion and it symbolizes the offering (the sacrifice) and the praise (RBT 1980). It is another means of protection against all evil forces and spirits (Mršević Radović 2008: 213).

Other highly idiomatic phrases have to do with the bread as a symbol of life.

Greek:

(9) Θα φάμε κόλλυβα.

“We will eat sweetened boiled wheat”.

(10) Τα έφαγε τα ψωμιά του.

“He ate his bread”.

(11) Σώθηκαν τα καρβέλια του.

“He ate his loaves of bread”.

Serbian:

(12) *Nositi koljivo u džepu.*

“To bring sweetened boiled wheat in the pocket”.

(13) *Mirisati na koljivo (panaiju).*

“To smell of sweetened boiled wheat”.

(14) *Izjesti (pojesti) (nekome) koljivo (pana(h)iju).*

“To eat bread/sweetened boiled wheat”.

(15) *Mirisati pana(h)ijom zamirisati na pogaču.*

“To smell the cake”.

According to the religious scriptures, bread stands for the body of Christ and the wine for the blood of Christ during the Holy Communion. In other words, bread and wine symbolize life itself since the ritual brings the flock close to the Lord: “I am the living bread that comes down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever... He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life” (Jn 4:51, 54). Apart from the fact that bread has always been a basic good in many cultures, it is a constituent of the liturgy (SMR – Pantelić 1998: 353). Especially the act of eating bread or sweetened boiled wheat after liturgies and funerals “represents panspermia to the souls of the deceased and ancestors” (SMR – Petrović 1998: 249), that is the wheat and/ or the holy bread of the liturgy (as well as their pleasant fragrance) show that life exists throughout the universe, scattered as space dust.

Likewise, the scriptures say that he who does not eat of “the body of the Son of God” has no life in himself. It is important to say that wheat and bread are basic Christian symbols and they are considered to be sacrificial gifts with a “pleasant smell” (3 Moses 4, 23, 13). For the liturgy, the congregants also make a kind of cake (Bandić 2004: 60) or pies for the peace of the soul – *ψυχόπιτα* (Babinjotis 2002: 1994).

### 3.2. Idioms related to mythology

A different idiom in Greek depicts life as a thread which gets suddenly cut and life reaches its end.

- (16) *Κόπηκε το νήμα της ζωής.*  
“The thread of life was cut”.

This idiom brings to mind the ancient Greek myth of the *Moirai*. According to Ancient Greek mythology, the *Moirai* were responsible for humans’ birth, course of life and death. *Clotho* (“the spinner”) spun the thread of life onto her spindle. *Lachesis* (“the second one who drew the lots”) measured the thread of life with her rod. *Atropos* (“the unturnable”) was the third one who chose the manner of each man’s death and cut the thread of life. Metaphorically life is a thread that at some point is cut by a superior power or deity.

In Slavic mythology, we also encounter female entities who act like judges (*Sudaje*). More specifically, they are divine women who determine the fate of a child at the third night after the day of its birth. The first judge proposes its fate, the second usually proposes a different, an opposite fate, and in the end the third *Sudaja*, the youngest judge, chooses its fate (Čajkanović 1994a: 247–248).

- (17) *Γλίτωσε από του Χάρου τα δόντια.*  
“He escaped from Charon’s teeth”.

- (18) Βλέπω τον Χάρο με τα μάτια μου.  
“I see Charon with my own eyes”.

In this idiom, death is personified as a mythical evil creature that devours people. The teeth metonymically stand for the notion of eating and consuming in general. The mythological ferryman Charon used to transport the souls of the dead. The idiom is motivated by the metaphor DEATH IS A PERSON. We come across similar idioms in Serbian, however, they do not have a mythological background:

- (19) (Po)Gledati smrti u oči.  
“To stare/look the death in the eye”.
- (20) *Gledati opasnosti u oči.*  
“To look the danger in the eye”.

### 3.3. Ontological constructions

In the domain of death, there are also ontological idioms worth mentioning in Greek and in Serbian.

- (21) Τα κακάρωσε<sup>2</sup>

This idiom is recorded in dialects of northwestern Greece (islands of Kefalonia and Lefkada). According to Filindas (AD 187 ex.)<sup>3</sup>, the phrase originates from the word *καύκαλο* ‘kafkalo’ meaning the skull (skull) or the head (*κάρα* ‘kara’ in Ancient Greek). When someone drops dead, the head (the top, the center of conscience) is on the ground. Metonymically the head stands for the brain, the organ that along with the heart signifies life. Metaphorically death is connected to a downward movement.

Greek:

- (22) Τα τίναξε τα πέταλα / τα τίναξε.  
“He ‘shook’ the horseshoes” / “he threw them”.

Serbian:

- (23) *Otegnuti/ispružiti/ papke.*  
“He ‘shook’/threw the hooves”.

Death is also conceptualized as an animal and, in particular, a horse that dies<sup>4</sup>, falling in the ground while its legs are stretched upwards as if they had a cramp, or else, as if they experienced a muscle spasm, throwing away the horseshoes. Metaphorically, the throwing of the horseshoes outlines a downward course which once more shows that death is symbolically viewed as a fall to the ground (BAD

<sup>2</sup> If one tried to provide a word-to-word translation, it would be meaningless. The equivalent in English would be the euphemism “to kick the bucket”.

<sup>3</sup> The reference comes from the online source “Λεξικό του Λευκαδίτικου γλωσσικού ιδιώματος- Πανταζής Κοντομήτης”, <https://lexikolefkadas.gr/kakarono/>.

<sup>4</sup> In Serbian, the reference concerns the hooves of the pig.



IS DOWN). The image of the horizontal position of a numb body, is proved to be more productive in the Greek phraseological system. These phraseological expressions are slang-derived and extremely pictorial<sup>5</sup>. For this reason, they are characterized by a dose of irony and ridicule, since the death of a person is equated with the death of an animal.

Greek:

(24) *Πέφτει η αυλαία / τίτλοι τέλους.*

“The closing of the final curtain / the end of the show”.

The idiom is used in order to refer to the death of celebrities, specifically actors and various performers/artists. In the Greek language, in addition to the concept of DARKNESS, we also note the concept of SILENCE with which it is closely related. According to religious teachings, death occurs when the soul leaves the body and when the heart and veins (pulse) are silenced, that is, when silence occurs (RS 2004: 411). Silence is also an indispensable element of the process of dying, so that the soul would not accidentally lose its way. Hence, the domain of silence is mapped to the target domain of death in the Greek language. A seemingly equivalent expression in the Serbian language *pala je kome zavesa s očiju* would be that the curtain fell off one’s eyes, which would mean “what was unclear to someone becomes clear”. The Greek idiom can also be related to the metaphor LIFE IS A THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE or LIFE IS A STAGE.

#### 4. CLASSIFICATION IN TERMS OF DEATH PHASES

Having analyzed a number of prominent idioms, we can move on to other idioms which are not so opaque, as they are more transparent in terms of meaning and they show different phases of the journey to the afterlife. Such phrases seem to be easier to interpret in both Greek and Serbian, even out of context.

##### 4.1. Phrases that reflect the time period immediately ‘before death’

As we have already mentioned, ‘death’ is defined in both Serbian and Greek lexicographical sources as the ‘cessation of life’, hence this course to the ‘end’ is lexicalized with idioms which illustrate the phase of being near the end or approaching the end. They all bear the same meaning with a slight change in the use of verbs, i.e. “the end approaches” or “the end is near”, or “death is near”:

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<sup>5</sup>The equivalent in English could be “he croaked” (= utter a deep, hoarse, dismal cry, as a frog or a raven), which is also a slang expression as it refers to the sound that a frog or a raven makes.

*blizu je kome kraj, doći / približiti se kraj, βρίσκω άδοξο τέλος, μηδένα προ του τέλους μακάριζε, πλησιάζει το τέλος του, επίκειται / πλησιάζει / είναι εγγύς ο θάνατός του / το τέλος του* (“the end approaches” or “the end is near”, or “death is near”).

At the same time, when the soul leaves the body and life is extinguished, the nearness of death is understood as a farewell to life: *oprostiti se (praštati se) sa životom, rastajati se sa životom* “to say goodbye to life, to part with life”, or as “deleting oneself from life” in Greek: *διαγράφομαι από τη ζωή, εκμετρών τη ζωή τον βίον / το ζην*. The soul is metonymically understood as life. Christianity suggests an animistic understanding of life: the soul is the immaterial essence that imprints life on the material and tangible, human body (Drobnjak/Gudurić 2011: 239).

Death is also conceptualized in both languages as “the last debt that somebody has to pay”, “an obligation or a duty towards God”, “the last debt to God in order to pay off and make peace with God”: *poslednji dug Bogu platiti, otići Bogu na račun, namiriti se s bogom, otići vragu na račun, εκπληρώνω/εξοφλώ το κοινόν χρέος*. According to Čajkanović, one of the special offerings to the deceased, which dates back to ancient times, is giving money which is placed on the mouth, in the hand, in a pocket or thrown into the grave (1994b: 118–119). Making a gift in the form of money brings to mind the fee the ancient Greeks paid for transportation to Charon. Paying for crossing the borders between life and death is a funeral custom known to both Greeks and Serbs.

#### 4.2. Phrases that reflect the very act of ‘dying’

In both Serbian and Greek culture, there is at belief that the soul meets God on ‘Judgment day/hour’. Hence, the path to DEATH is measured in terms of time such as ‘days’, ‘hours’, ‘months’, ‘years’. Therefore, we come across the following phrases in both languages: *smrtna je došla, odbrojani (izbrojeni) su mu dani* “his days are numbered”, *kucnuo je poslednji čas* “the final hour has come”, *brojati poslednje dane* “counting the last days”, *dokončati svoje dane* “his/her days came to an end”. In Greek, respectively: *επέρχεται το μοιραίο / ο θάνατος, σώθηκαν οι μέρες του, είναι μετρημένες / λίγες οι ώρες (μέρες) του* “his days are numbered”, *ήρθε/σήμανε η ώρα του* “his time is up”, *έφτασε η στερνή του ώρα* “he is doomed to die soon”.

Moreover, the very act of death is associated with the image of the soul abandoning or leaving one’s body, or even surrendering the soul to God; in Serbian: *ispustiti dušu, ostavi koga duša, predati dušu, dati (predati) Bogu dušu* and the Greek equivalent: *βγήκε η ψυχή του, του βγήκε η ψυχή, μένω άψυχος*. In this case, we see the body as a container (THE BODY IS A CONTAINER) and the soul as the content. In other words, DEATH IS THE SEPARATION FROM THE BODY.

Some of the phrases also refer to the time of the funeral when family, relatives and friends say goodbye to the deceased for the last time exhibiting grief and respect

to them. Death is the last goodbye; in Serbian: *odavati/odati posljednju počast komu, ispratiti na posljednji ročinak (počivalište) koga*, and the equivalent ones in Greek: *ο τελευταίος αποχαιρετισμός/χαιρετισμός, τελευταίο/στερνό αντίο, έχε γεια*.

#### 4.3. Phrases that reflect the time period ‘after death’

Lastly, a certain number of idioms describe the time after the funeral or the burial, something which is instigated by the belief in the afterlife. Most idioms refer to the grave, the bones, or the dust: *ostaviti kosti, postati prah i prašina* (“to become dust”), *αφήνω τα κόκαλά μου/τα κοκαλάκια μου* “to leave my bones”.

The body’s ‘decay’ and its transformation into the original matter which the body is ‘made of’, such as dust and earth is a recurrent conceptualization (Mršević Radović 2008: 170). Even if such idioms are morbid, still they are frequently used. We also encounter idioms depicting the grave, a place believed to be quiet, dark and cold. The grave is evidenced by the terms *grobna tišina/šutnja/ćutnja* “grave silence”, *grobni mrak* “grave darkness”, and *mrtav hladan* “dead cold” (Matešić 1982: 173, 355). Respectively, in Greek: *αιώνιο σκοτάδι* “eternal darkness”, *έσβησε η φλόγα της ζωής* “the flame of life got extinguished”. Once more the contrast between light and darkness and life and death is apparent.

### 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, the paper focuses on idiomaticity and the cultural stimuli that led to the creation of a number of idioms in the Greek and the Serbian languages. The majority of idioms are related to religious aspects and a considerable number of them relate to the physiology of the body, to human nature and the way ‘the human vessel’ decays.

In both languages, we focused on idioms which are considered opaque in terms of meaning, or else they are highly idiomatic; their meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of their subparts. Among them, many phraseological units are based on Christianity and especially, the Orthodox doctrines, principles and norms, according to which at the moment of bodily death, the soul, which is described as “spiritual (mental and emotional) life” (RSJ 2007: 335) separates from the body, abandons it and continues its eternal journey. The particular idioms are motivated by metonymic mappings since they involve religious items such as the oil lamp in *έσβησε το καντήλι του* “his oil lamp went out” or in Serbian *dogoreva čija svijeća* “his candle went out” respectively, which build the funeral ICM. We came across idioms which employ other religious objects such as the *incense* or the *bread* of the Holy Communion which are also metonymically and metaphorically connected to the funeral ritual. Christians light oil lamps and burn incense for the protection of

the soul of the dead. Idioms which contain the lexeme *bread* and/or *sweetened boiled wheat* are related to the notion of death and they are also part of the funeral ritual, yet, they symbolize life: *θα φάμε κόλλυβα* “we will eat sweetened boiled wheat”, and in Serbian *nositi koljivo u džepu* “to bring sweetened boiled wheat in the pocket”.

Moreover, the idiomatic phrases in both languages reveal that death, even if it bears negative connotations, can also be depicted in a creative and euphemistic manner, which, in this case, is culture-specific. The culture-specific idioms that were recorded concern the ancient Greek myth of the *Moirai* and Charon, the ferryman of the dead. Similarly, in Serbian the relevant idiomatic phrases talk about female judges (*Sudajce*), whereas death is personified: *(po)gledati smrti u oči* “to stare/look the death in the eye”.

It is also important to stress that in both languages the ontological idioms that we analyzed have to do with animals and animals’ reactions. These idioms are motivated by metaphor and metonymy as well, since both mechanisms interact and lead to the creation of the idioms: *τα τίνιζε τα πέταλα/τα τίνιζε* “he ‘shook’ the horseshoes/he threw them”, and in Serbian *otegnuti papke /ispružiti papke/ odapeti papke* “he ‘shook’ the hooves/ he threw them”. Metonymically the hooves are mapped to the reaction of the animals while metaphorically, the throwing of the horseshoes outline a downward course which once more shows that death is symbolically viewed as a fall to the ground (BAD IS DOWN).

Overall, the analysis revealed that the majority of Greek idioms have an equivalent in Serbian. This is evidenced by the existence of many phrases in almost all languages that, directly or indirectly, signify death. The phraseology of each language is a reflection of the culture, customs, stereotypes of the people who speak that language and “is a reliable indicator of the inherent spiritual homogeneity of a community” (Mesinger 1997: 61). Our findings confirm a resemblance in the conceptualization of death in the two language communities. And this is true even in more transparent idiomatic phrases such as: *kucnuo je poslednji čas* “the final hour has come”, and in Greek *έφτασε η στερνή του ώρα* “he is doomed to die soon”.

In conclusion, we could say that the idioms analyzed carry folk beliefs and principles of Orthodox Christianity and define the identity of the specific communities. They are linguistic items that bear more similarities rather than differences.

## LITERATURE

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## ИДИОМИ СМРТИ У ГРЧКОМ И СРПСКОМ ЈЕЗИКУ

### Резиме

Циљ нашег истраживања био је да испитамо начине помоћу којих се смрт „манифестује“ посредством идиома у грчком и српском језику. За потребе анализе експериментално је корпус који обухвата већи број идиоматских фраза из грчких и српских релевантних речника (Влахопулос 2007; Криарас 1995; Бабињотиос 2011; Матешић 1982; Марковић 2001; Балаћ/Стојановић 2002), као и са интернет извора. Теоријски оквир овог истраживања почива на поставкама концептуалне анализе (Лејкоф/Донсон 1980) и релевантним радовима о идиомима (Кевечеш/Сабо 1996; Нунберг и др. 1994). Узимамо у обзир и методолошке приступе који се односе на идентификацију идиома (Лејкоф 1987: 381) с циљем да се студија фокусира на идиоматичност, али и све културолошке факторе који утичу на креирање идиома из домена смрти, на грчком и српском језику, који ће бити подвргнути нашој анализи.

И у српском и у грчком језику фокус је на идиомима изразите идиоматичности, чије се значење не може лако извести из значења њихових саставних компоненти. Већина ових фразеолошких јединица за основ своје позадинске слике има хришћанско учење, тачније, темеље се на православним принципима. Према православној вери, живот се наставља и после смрти. Српска и Грчка црква верују да се душа одваја од тела и наставља свој вечни пут. Стога, многи идиоми који лексикализују смрт описују погребне ритуале за заштиту душе и упућују на различите религиозне предмете. Могли бисмо рећи да су у оваквим идиомима метонимијска пресликавања доминантна будући да укључују религиозне артефакте из обреда сахрањивања, предмете попут кандила и свеће – *έσβησε το καντήλι του* (досл. ‘угасило се некоме кандило’) у грчком или *догорева чија свећа* у српском језику. У појединим идиомима заступљени су и други религиозни симболи попут тамјана, хлеба за причешће или заслађеног куваног жита – симбола жртвених дарова који су метафорички повезани са појмом смрти и такође представљају део погребног ритуала, на пример: *Θα φάμε κόλλυβα* (досл. ‘јешћемо жито’) у грчком, и *носити кољиво у џепу* на српском језику.

Заступљени су и идиоматски изрази који су укоренењени у митологији. Они представљају носиоце културних информација одређеног народа и основ су за специфична метафоричка мапирања. Идиоматски изрази у грчком језику мотивисани су старогрчким митом о Мојрама и Харону, лађару подземног света Хада. С друге стране, у српском језику, еквивалентни изрази су мотивисани Суђајама, док се смрт персонификује као у примеру (*по)гледати смрти у очи*.

Наша анализа потврђује сличност у концептуализацији смрти у оквиру две језичке заједнице, чак и у прозирнијим идиоматичним фразама, на пример: *έφτασε η στερνή του ώρα* (досл. ‘стигао је последњи час’) у грчком, односно *куцнуо је последњи час* у српском језику.



Подударност идиоматичних израза из домена смрти приметна је у готово свим језицима. Међутим, има одређених одступања, будући да је фразеологија сваког језика одраз културе, норми и стереотипа људи који говоре тим језиком и „поуздан је показатељ инхерентне духовне хомогености заједнице” (Месингер 1997: 61), као на примеру грчког идиома *τα κακάρωσε* (досл. ’шутнуо је канту’) који не бележи еквиваленту идиоматичну конструкцију у српском језику.

У закључку бисмо могли истаћи да су идиоми које смо анализирали углавном засновани на постулатима православног хришћанства и начелима српске и грчке културе, и представљају лингвистичке елементе које карактерише већи степен сличности него неподударности.

**Кључне речи:** идиоми, изрази с компонентом *смрт*, грчки, српски.

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