САТИМНИЯЗОВ Шухратжон Бекниязович,

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**THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM “IDIOM”**

An idiom is a set expression, the meaning of which is different from the literal meanings of its components. It refers to a figurative meaning that is known only through common use. Idioms present a great variety of structures and combinations that are mostly unchangeable and often not logical and may not follow basic rules of grammar.

The Webster dictionary gives following definition: *Idiom is an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent element as kick the bucket, hang one's head etc., or from the general grammatical rules of language, as the table round for the round table, and which is not a constituent of a larger expression of like characteristics.*

Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of English Idioms gives us definition of “idiom”. The word ‘idiom’ is used to describe the ‘special phrases’ that are an essential part of a language. Idioms may be ‘special’ in different ways: for example, the expression *to kick the bucket* seems to follow the normal rules of grammar, although we cannot say ‘kick a bucket’ or ‘kick the buckets’ , but it is impossible to guess that it means ‘to die’. Phrases like *all right, on second thoughts*, and *same here,* which are used in everyday English, and especially in spoken English, are ‘special’ because they are fixed units of language that clearly do not follow the normal rules of grammar.

Another formulation of “idiom (Dubrovin M., 'Russian-English Idioms) is set phraseological units which meaning does not result from the meaning of its components.

The definition by Dean Curry is “the assigning of a new meaning to a group of words which already have their own meaning”. Idioms are informal in nature and although they appear in literature, they are not necessary considered to be “literary”. They are often colloquial, often slang, and through overuse can become cliches. Idioms may be adjectival, adverbial, verbal, or nominal. They also may take the form of traditional saying and proverbs.

**The origin of the word “idiom”**

In fact, the word *idiom* comes from the Greek root *idio,* meaning a unique signature. Thus, each language contains expressions that make no sense when translated literally into another tongue.

Some idioms of the "worldwide English" have first been seen in the works of writers like Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, Lewis Carroll or even in the paperbacks of contemporary novelists. An example of Shakespearian quotation can be found in the following sentence:"As a social worker, you certainly see the seamy side of life." Biblical references are also the source of many idioms. Sports terms, technical terms, legal terms, military slang and even nautical expressions have found their way to the everyday use of English language.

Many idioms are similar to expressions in other languages and can be easy for a learner to understand. Other idioms come from older phrases which have changed over time.  
*To hold one's horses* means to stop and wait patiently for someone or something. It comes from a time when people rode horses and would have to hold their horses while waiting for someone or something.  
*"Hold your horses," I said when my friend started to leave the store.*

Other idioms come from such things as sports that are common in the United Kingdom or the United States and may require some special cultural knowledge to easily understand them.  
*To cover all of one's bases* means to thoroughly prepare for or deal with a situation. It comes from the American game of baseball where you must cover or protect the bases.   
*I tried to cover all of my bases when I went to the job interview.*