

The Syntactic Flexibility of Non-decomposable Idioms

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Introduction

Up to Now:

- Non-decomposable idiom like *kick the bucket* = **phrasal** lexical entry

Our Analysis:

- Non-decomposable idiom = syntactically free combination of separate **word-level** lexical entries:
 - ▶ Words find each other via collocation constraints.
 - ▶ Different words may contribute identical semantic parts.
- Motivation: Syntax and morphology of non-decomposable idioms:
 - ▶ regular form and inflection
 - ▶ possibility of adjectival modification
 - ▶ syntactic flexibility in languages like German, French, **your language**
- Framework: Lexical Resource Semantics (LRS)

Sketch of our analysis of *kick the bucket*

(1) Alex kicked the bucket.

$\exists e(\mathbf{die}(e, \mathbf{alex}))$

word	semantic contribution
<i>Alex</i>	alex
<i>kicked</i>	$\exists, e, \exists e(\gamma), \mathbf{die}(e, \delta)$
<i>the</i>	$\exists, e, \exists e(\eta)$
<i>bucket</i>	die , e , die (e, δ)

\Rightarrow *kick* and *bucket* contribute same index e and same constant **die**