We may also *clausal* idioms since the clause is a unitary constituent and the meaning of such sentences , as shown in (12), is not a purely componential function of the meaning of their individual parts.

12.
(i) All hell broke loose.
(ii) The chickens came home to roost.

It is obvious that the choice of all three constituents (subject, verb and complement) in sentences (12) is fixed. Thus, if we try to replace the (subject, verb or complement by near synonyms , we get ungrammatical sentences, as shown in (13).

13.
(i) *The whole inferno broke free.
(ii) *The hens returned to nest.

However, what is puzzling about clausal idioms is that "auxiliaries can freely be inserted between the subject and the verb" (160), as shown in (14).

14.
(i) All hell will break loose.
(ii) All hell has broken loose.
(iii) All hell could have broken loose.

How then can we account for this freedom of the auxiliaries despite the fact that the choice of the subject, verb, and complement is