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CULTURALLY SPECIFIC IDIOMS IN BRITISH ENGLISH (BASED ON FICTION AND MASS MEDIA)

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Дослідження містить поглиблений аналіз англійських ідіом шляхом синтезу теоретичних висновків з практичними прикладами та структурними класифікаціями. Воно починається з розгляду наукового дискурсу навколо визначення та суттєвих характеристик ідіом, таких як некомпозиційність, переносне значення, фіксована структура та конвенційне використання. Хоча відсутність єдиного, загальноприйнятого визначення залишається предметом академічних дискусій, ці риси послідовно визначаються як визначальні риси, що відрізняють ідіоми від інших типів виразів.

У роботі досліджуються культурні та семіотичні виміри ідіом, підкреслюючи їхню роль як носіїв колективної пам'яті, культурних цінностей та соціальних норм. Через концепцію лінгвокультури ідіоми аналізуються як культурно вбудовані символи, що відображають світогляд та ідентичність спільноти. Дослідження підтверджує, що ідіоми є структурно різноманітними та культурно багатими лінгвістичними одиницями.

У результаті дослідження було створено словник ідіом з визначеннями. Також результати дослідження структуровано та подано у форматі таблиць, де відображено відсоткове співвідношення їхньої появи в дослідженому матеріалі.

Ключові слова: культурно специфічні британські ідіоми, переносне значення, лінгвокультура, референційний елемент.

ABSTRACT

The study provides an in-depth analysis of English idioms by synthesizing theoretical findings with practical examples and structural classifications. It begins with a review of the scientific discourse surrounding the definition and essential characteristics of idioms, such as non-compositionality, figurative meaning, fixed structure, and conventional use. The demonstration of a single, generally accepted definition remains a subject of academic debate. These features begin as defining features that distinguish idioms from other types of expressions.

The paper explores the cultural and semiotic dimensions of idioms, emphasizing their role as carriers of collective memory, cultural values , and social norms. Through the concept of linguoculture, idioms are analyzed as culturally embedded symbols that reflect the worldview and identity of a community. The study confirms that idioms are structurally diverse and culturally rich linguistic units.

The study resulted in the creation of a dictionary of idioms with definitions. Also, the results of the study are structured and presented in the format of tables, which reflect the percentage of their appearance in the studied material.

Keywords: culturally specific British idioms, figurative meaning, linguaculture, referential element.

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INTRODUCTION

The **relevance of the research** topic is due to the growing interest in intercultural communication and the need for a deeper understanding of the cultural code of native speakers. Idioms, as a bright component of the phraseological fund of the language, reflect national characteristics, mentality, historical events, and social values. In British English, they play an important role in literary texts and media discourse, giving speech expressiveness, emotionality, and imagery. The analysis of culturally specific idioms allows us to understand more deeply not only the linguistic picture of the world, but also the peculiarities of the communicative behavior of the British, which is important both for linguistics and for translation studies, literary studies, and media analytics.

Novelty. The use of culturally specific British idioms in fiction and mass media was investigated. The semantic and grammatical features of the selected examples were analyzed, and conclusions were drawn regarding the most frequently used structures of idioms.

The **aim** of the study is to study the structural and semantic features of culturally specific British idioms, their origin, function, and features of use in the modern English- speaking world.

The object of the study is idiomatic units of British English.

The subject of the study is culturally specific idioms in British English and the peculiarities of their structure and usage in fiction and the media.

The purpose of the study is to identify the features of the functioning of culturally specific idioms in British English, to analyze their semantics and role in reflecting national culture through examples from fiction and the media, and their structure.

To achieve **the goal**, the following **tasks** were investigated:

- To define the concept of an idiom and to clarify its general linguistic characteristics.

- To describe the main functions of idioms in language and communication.

- To analyze the classifications of idioms according to various criteria.

- To consider the semiotic and cultural aspects of idioms, in particular their ability to reflect national characteristics.

- To identify factors influencing the formation and development of culturally specific idioms.

- To investigate examples of the use of culturally specific idioms in British fiction.

- To analyze the structure and functioning of idioms in the British media as a means of reflecting cultural realities.

- To compile a vocabulary of culturally specific idioms

The **material of the study** was culturally specific idioms in British English, obtained by sampling from dictionaries, fiction and mass media with the usage of linguistic corpora. Namely, 300 idioms were studied and the analysis of 66 of them is presented in the work. The idioms were studied in the context of literary works of W. Shakespeare, C. Dickens, L. Carrol and others, as well as in the context of articles of Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The New Yorker and many others. The full scope of material is represented in supporting material.

A set **of methods** was used in the research process, including a descriptive method to determine the essence, functions, and classification of idioms; semantic and contextual analysis to reveal the meaning of idioms and the features of their functioning in literary texts and the media; a comparative method to identify culturally determined differences in the use of idioms; and a culturological approach

to analyze the specifics of the reflection of national and cultural realities in British idioms.

Structure. The work consists of an introduction, two chapters and conclusions. It comprises 59 pages, which do not include bibliography consisting of 45 sources and 54 supporting materials, and appendices with the table of the idioms studied in the first and second chapters and two tables containing the results of the study of the structure of the idioms.

I. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF IDIOMS IN LINGUISTIC STUDIES

1.1. Definitions and general characteristics of idioms

The definition and classification of idioms remain a subject of scholarly debate, reflecting their inherent complexity and interdisciplinary relevance. As multifaceted linguistic units, idioms are analyzed across diverse fields of study, contributing to the ongoing discussion regarding their precise nature.

The word idiom, dating back to 1565-1575, derives from the Latin idioma "special property," and from the Greek ἰδίωμα–idiōma, "special feature, special phrasing." [10, p. 8].

Numerous scholars, both native and foreign, have contributed to the definition of idioms, approaching the concept from various theoretical perspectives and, as such, pointing out the most important as to their mind characteristics of idioms. Some of these points of view are presented in this section.

It is important to note that terminological discrepancies exist between Eastern European and Western scholarship regarding the classification and definition of idioms. In her research, N. Negrych investigated this issue and noted that despite the different terms used to denote idioms (phraseological units, phrasemes, fixed expressions, idioms, etc.), they carry the same meaning, so it is possible to use this terminology interchangeably [3, pp. 102-103]. This explains why scientists use different terminology in their definitions and helps to structure these same definitions.

Thus, concerning the very concept of idioms, British professor of translation studies M. Baker defines idioms as frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their components [8, p. 63].

Similarly, Arabic linguist H. Ghazala, in his analysis, formulates what he considers to be a primary component of idioms. “Their most special and essential component is idiomaticity, namely, their metaphorical aspect” [14, p. 204]. Like the

previous scholar, he emphasizes the metaphorical meaning of the expression, but does not touch on other aspects of idioms.

In turn, I. Vasyliuk, a Ukrainian scholar, extends the definition, emphasising the functional role of idioms. He suggests that idioms are a set of communicative units, which coincide in form with words, phrases, or sentences, and function in a speech to express spontaneous, stereotyped emotional and volitional reactions to a speech stimulus or situation in a general, non-disaggregated form [1, p. 103].

As it is seen, despite the absence of a unified definition, scholars identify shared characteristics of idioms. German linguist W. Wagner proposes the following core features: non-compositionality, figuration, conventionality, and fixedness [37, p. 14-23].

W. Wagner says that non-compositionality consists of the fact that the meaning of individual words cannot be revealed from the content of the phrase in accordance with the syntactic rules or conditions of their use. For example, *beat around the bush* [37, p. 20]. (This idiom and all the others used in the work are presented in the appendices with definitions. See Appendix B.

As to the figuration (or imagery), W. Wagner concludes that it refers to the expression of something other than what is expressed by specific means of speech [37, p. 19]. For example, *"to boil the ocean"* [42]. However, this characteristic does not belong purely to idioms, but also to other phraseological structures such as collocations, cliches, formulaic greetings, and others.

The next characteristic of idioms that the author dwells upon is conventionality, although it also belongs to other multi-word expressions. It lies in the general acceptance of the surface structure of the phrase, which is not subject to change. For instance, such a stable and well-known expression as *"cost an arm and a leg"*[40]. This statement cannot be paraphrased without it sounding unnaturally clumsy or losing its meaning altogether. For example, it is impossible to say *the cost of an arm*

and a leg or *to cost a leg and an arm*. These changes will cause dissonance in the speaker's mind.

The next criterion consists of the syntactic and semantic stability of expressions and was called by various scholars as fixedness, inflexibility, and frozenness [37, p. 14-15]. For instance, *“the proof of the pudding”* or *“on cloud nine”* [43]. These statements are not subject to any grammatical or lexical changes.

However, there are still idioms that can undergo syntactic changes. For example: by adverb insertion (*hit the nail accurately on the head*), adjective insertion (*has a bee in his old bonnet*), passivization (*the bullet had to be bitten*), or nominalization (*bucket-kicking*).

Therefore, it can be concluded that a unified definition for the concept of idioms has not yet been established, a phenomenon attributed to its inherent complexity. Despite this lack of consensus, scholarly analyses consistently highlight the following defining features of idiomatic expressions: non-compositionality, figuration, conventionality, and fixedness.

1.1.1. Functions of idioms

The functions of idioms, as with other linguistic units, are variable. They are determined by the semantic content of the idiom and the addresser's communicative intent, specifically their desire to evoke particular emotions, thoughts, or associations in the addressee.

Specifically, idioms share the same two main functions as the functions of language use in general: communicative and thought-creative [2, p. 323].

Given their extensive usage and diverse functions, idioms have been examined across various disciplines, not solely within linguistics and philology. L. Pearsall Smith emphasized their paramount function, stating that idioms "to bring back ideas from the understanding to the sensations from which they were originally derived; to reincorporate them again in visual images and above all in the dynamic sensations of

the human body, its members, its attitudes and acts" [32, p. 276]. Consequently, the expressive function of idioms is characterized by specific stylistic nuances and enhanced semantic load, engaging both emotional and subconscious cognitive processes. For instance, *"butterflies in my stomach"* or *"couch potato"* [40].

The same conclusion is made by V. Tsybriy and O. Sytenko who say that idioms "serve in the text as intensifiers of the accuracy of the statement" and perform an emotional and expressive function, for example *"a man who eats like a pig ought to look like a pig"* [5, p. 280].

The Ukrainian linguist V. Uzhchenko also distinguishes such stylistic functions of the idiom as characteristic function, providing a humorous image, and laconization of the statement [4, p. 204-211].

Regarding the characteristic function, he emphasizes that idiomatic units can serve both to describe the appearance and the internal state or character qualities [4, p. 205-207]. Examples of such phraseological units can be *pain in the neck* which is used to describe someone or something that is very annoying, or *a hair out of place* which means that one's appearance is very neat[40].

The humorous function arises from the cognitive dissonance created by the integration of logically incongruous elements into a cohesive idiomatic unit. With the successful use of an expression or by changing a certain component of an idiom, it is possible to achieve a satirical coloring of what is said [4, p. 204]. For example, in the following idiom, the humorous coloring is achieved by the incomparability of the scale of the two elements, as in *storm in a teacup* [40]. Since such a small object as a teacup cannot contain such a massive phenomenon as a storm. In turn, the satirical effect can be achieved by replacing the original lexical items with others, which in turn changes the context of the idiom. Such examples are difficult to detect in the speech of a non-native speaker because in order to identify the wordplay, one must recognize the original. Example: *The early bird catches the worm* [40] may become *The early bureaucrat catches the promotion* in the appropriate context.

Laconization refers to the idiomatic unit's capacity to encapsulate a broader semantic scope than its constituent elements [4, p. 211]. The majority of idioms perform a similar function. Employing a concise and readily interpretable phrasal unit allows for the efficient conveyance of conceptualizations encompassing extended sequences of actions or intricate abstract constructs. For example, *to bite the bullet* means to make yourself do something or accept something difficult or unpleasant [40]. If we take a sentence *I'm going to bite the bullet and ask my boss for a pay rise*, then, to articulate the full semantic scope of this idiom without its direct usage, one would necessitate a more elaborate propositional structure, such as: *I'm going to take the difficult step and force myself to ask my boss for a pay rise*.

J. Smithback also mentions "idioms are vivid, verbal images which add life and verve to speech and writing. Without them, language would be very bland and unexciting" [33, preface]. Therefore, an aesthetic function can be attributed to idioms, as these established units facilitate the enhancement of communicative aesthetic value. For example, the expression *variety is the spice of life* [40].

To sum up, idiomatic expressions, mirroring the broader functions of language, serve primarily for communication and the facilitation of thought. Their efficacy extends beyond mere denotation, encompassing the evocation of sensory experiences, emotional resonance, and subconscious cognitive processing, thereby enriching expressive capacity. Furthermore, idioms function to intensify the precision of statements, often carrying a significant emotional and expressive load. Stylistically, they can characterize, generate humor (including satire through lexical manipulation), and achieve linguistic economy by encapsulating complex meanings concisely. Finally, idioms contribute an aesthetic dimension to discourse, injecting vividness and dynamism into both spoken and written language.

1.1.2 Classification of idioms

Similar to the definition, a unified classification of idioms remains elusive. Classifications vary based on syntactic functions (simple and complex sentence

models), the grammatical category of the referential word (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.), the mechanism of connotation generation, and the methods of semantic transfer employed in idiomatic formation (metonymy, metaphor, hyperbole, comparison, etc.).

For instance, Hungarian professor of English and linguist A. Makkai posits that all idioms fall within two primary areas of idiomaticity: lexemic (or the class of polylexical lexemes) and sememic (or the class of polysemic semes) [27, p. 117-122]. The first group includes expressions that consist of several words and may contain difficulties for an inexperienced listener to understand as a result of incorrect decoding [27, p. 153-154]. For instance, *“ to kick the bucket”* means to die [40] as this phrase has nothing to do with the physical act of kicking.

The next group includes expressions that have both a logical, direct meaning and a deeper moral meaning. An example of this idiomatic area can be *“don’t count your chickens before they are hatched”* [43]. This idiom has a perfectly logical literal meaning, but its figurative meaning means that you should not make plans that depend on something good happening before you know that it has actually happened [40].

Also, A. Mackkai classifies idioms already within these spheres into subcategories. Lexemic idioms: phrasal verb idioms *(give in)*; tournure idioms *(to fly off the handle)*; irreversible binomial idioms *(the White House)*; incorporating verb idioms *(to baby-sit)*; pseudo-idioms *(kith and kin)* [27, p. 21-23]. Sememic idioms: first-base idioms *(never to get to first base)*; idioms of institutionalized politeness *(may I ask who’s calling)*; idioms of institutionalized detachment or indirectness *(I can’t seem to find my glasses)*; idioms of proposals encoded as questions *(how about a drink?)*; idioms of institutional greetings *(how do you do!)*; proverbial idioms with a moral *(curiosity killed the cat)*; familiar quotations as idioms *(a little more than kin and less than kind)*; idiomaticity in institutionalized understatement *(it wasn’t exactly my cup of tea)*; idiomaticity in institutionalized hyperbole *(he won’t lift a finger)* [27, p. 21-23].

Slovenian scientist P. Kvetko and Canadian professor S. Glucksberg used a similar factor for their classification. P. Kvetko says: ”the degree of opacity of idioms divided them into pure or demotivated idioms in which there is no connection between the meaning of the phrase and its individual components; semi-opaque or partially motivated idioms with partial conjunction and semi-transparent or semi-idioms where one component is used literally while the other has a figurative meaning” [25, p. 106]. Following a similar criterion, S. Glucksberg classified idioms based on their degree of semantic transparency, or the ease of meaning derivation. He distinguished among compositionally opaque (illogical construction, but meaning derived from constituent semantics), non-compositional (meaning unrelated to construction), compositionally transparent (logical semantic relationship between components), and quasi-metaphorical idioms (meaning conveyed through allusion) [16, p. 74-75].

P. Kvetko also proposes a classification of idioms based on their construction. He singled out verbal idioms consisting of a verb and an object (*e.g. open somebody's eyes*); verbless idioms (*e.g. once in a blue moon*); sentence idioms that have the syntactic structure of a sentence *(e.g. talk of the devil and he'll soon appear*); and he mentions that some linguists distinguish also minimal idioms, which are idiomatic expressions consisting of one word (*e.g. by heart*) [25, p. 105-106].

Additionally, Kvetko suggested a classification of idioms grounded in their fixedness or stability [25, p.104-105]. He identified two primary types: unchangeable or fixed idioms, characterized by their immutability, and changeable idioms, which allow for specific variations. Among changeable idioms, P. Kvetko distinguished the following possibilities for variation:

1. grammatical variations can be such as tense, word order, form, articles variations *(e.g., have been in the wars – had been in the war);*

2. lexical variations refer to optional or mandatory variations *(e.g., last straw – final straw);*

3. orthographic variations refer to changes in spelling, using different punctuation marks, or using small or capital letters *(e.g., nosy parker, nosy Parker);*

4. geographic variations are preferred only in certain parts of the English-speaking world, and they can include any of the previously mentioned variations *(e.g., a skeleton in the closet (American English) – a skeleton in the cupboard (British English))* [25, p. 104-105].

The classification provided by J. Seidl and W. McMordie offers a division according to form and structure: "An idiom can have a regular structure, an irregular or even a grammatically incorrect structure. The clarity of meaning is not dependent on the 'grammatical correctness" [31, p. 13].

The group of regular forms includes the largest idiom subset. They are characterized by an unclear meaning, for example *"to cut no ice"*, *"to have a bee in once bonnet"* [31, p. 13]; and the group of idioms with irregular forms is divided into those with clear (*"do someone proud"* [31, p. 13]) and unclear (*"be at daggers drawn"* [31, p. 13]) meanings.

Scientists also note that idioms can be fixed, that is, those that cannot undergo any changes except for the conjugation of the verb by tense, and non-fixed, that is, those that allow limited changes in the non-fixed part (most often, these are lexical variations) [31, p. 13].

Furthermore, following the principle employed by J. Seidl and W. McMordie, idioms can be categorized based on their lexical composition: single-word idioms and multi-word idioms. These categories are then further classified according to the scheme in Table 1.1 (Appendices).

Thus, a universally accepted and comprehensive classification of idioms remains unrealized. However, commonalities exist among various scholarly approaches. Therefore, it is proposed that existing idiom classifications constitute a complementary and interconnected system for organizing phraseological expressions.

1.2. Semiotic and cultural aspects of idioms

Language, which combines vocabulary, grammar, sounds, and meaning, is the most important means of communication for people. As already mentioned, idioms have the same pragmatic significance as other parts of language. Accordingly, they also serve as a tool for human thinking and the social transmission of information [38, p. 295]. Considering that idioms are fixed phraseological units, the meaning of which cannot be deduced from their individual components, idioms can be regarded as semiotic units. Such an approach helps understand how meaning is constructed and negotiated within specific contexts.

Ferdinand de Saussure, the linguist who founded the science of semiotics, said, "Assuming that the new discipline (Semiotics) accepts these natural symbols, its main object will remain the entire system based on the arbitrary nature of the symbols. In fact, any means of expression used by people in society is, in principle, based on collective acts or, equally, on the basis of convention [30, p. 68].

Phraseological units, or idioms, function as complex semiotic signs, transcending mere lexical combinations to embody culturally encoded meanings. These fixed expressions, characterized by their inherent imagery and resistance to literal translation, operate as distinct semiotic entities, drawing upon the principles articulated by Roman Jakobson and Umberto Eco [18, pp. 89-90]. As national linguistic and cultural treasures, idioms encapsulate historical narratives, ancestral wisdom, and contemporary observations, thereby serving as potent vehicles for conveying diverse affective and cognitive content. The formation and utilization of idioms involve a dynamic interplay between linguistic elements and their corresponding cultural images, highlighting the semiotic process of signification [18, pp. 89-90].

Thus, semiotics is deeply connected to cultural and contextual elements that influence the interpretation and understanding of signs. The meaning of a sign is largely shaped by the cultural framework in which it is created and perceived. Roland

Barthes, a renowned semiotician, highlighted the impact of cultural myths on the connotations of signs [21, p. 471].

Based on this, idioms are culturally and traditionally formed units of language that are generally accepted by a specific ethnic group and are understood by its members in accordance with a shared historical and cultural background. Relying on this, it is possible to talk about the cultural aspect of idioms.

At this stage, it is appropriate to refer to the term 'linguaculture.' It was first described by a linguistic anthropologist to encompass the single universe of language and (the verbal aspects of) culture. He describes this phenomenon as “a domain of experience that fuses and intermingles the vocabulary, many semantic aspects of grammar, and the verbal aspects of culture; both grammar and culture have underlying structure while they are constantly being used and constructed by actual people on the ground. I will refer to this unitary but, at other levels, an internally differentiated domain or whole as “linguaculture” [13, pp. 306-307].

Somewhat later, Michael Agar borrowed this term for his research and further development, modifying it slightly: 'I modified it to ‘langua’ to bring it in line with the more commonly used ‘language’ ' [7].

This definition was later interpreted, supplemented, and adapted depending on the field of use (education, intercultural and interlingual studies, etc.) by different scholars. K. Risager, in turn, adds to Agar's concept of languaculture, which focuses on the semantics and pragmatics of language (in discourse), two other dimensions: the poetics of language and the identity dimension of language. According to her definition, the poetics of language is the dimension related to the kinds of meaning created in the exploitation of the interplay between form and content in the language. This concerns various forms of rhymes, puns, and other figures of speech and linguistic units that have poetic, stylistic, and other connotations and can be considered from a semiotic point of view as holistic units and pose difficulties during

translation due to the arbitrary/conventional relationship between form and content ("signifier" and "signified") [29, pp. 104-109].

There's an undeniable connection between culture and language, a bond that shapes how we communicate and understand each other. Specifically, as evidenced by the findings of scholarly research, this connection becomes particularly pronounced within the realm of figurative language. This form of language, which deviates from literal expression, is meticulously crafted through the creation of vivid imagery and the utilization of specific speech patterns, or signs, that collectively convey a comprehensive meaning. This meaning is not arbitrarily assigned but rather deeply rooted in a diverse array of factors shared amongst a particular group of speakers. Idioms, in essence, exist within the living, breathing context of a community's culture and language, serving as a vital tool for sharing and transmitting that community's unique perspective on the world. Consequently, these expressions act as mirrors, reflecting the distinctive characteristics and national identity of a people. By delving into the nuances of idioms, one can gain valuable insights into the intricate details of a country's culture, its historical journey, and its cherished traditions. Furthermore, possessing a solid understanding of the cultural background and historical context that has shaped a particular ethnic group significantly simplifies the process of comprehending and utilizing idioms correctly when learning their language [17].

Thus, idioms as complex semiotic constructs intrinsically interwoven with cultural and contextual frameworks. Their interpretation necessitates a comprehensive understanding of these frameworks, underscoring the inherent symbiosis between linguistic and cultural systems.

1.3 Reasons for the emergence of culturally specific idioms

As previously discussed, understanding British English requires examining its cultural and historical roots, which shaped its unique figurative language and idioms.

In today's interconnected world, learning a language separate from its culture hinders effective communication and intercultural understanding. "Linguoculture" highlights the deep link between a language's structure and its speakers' cultural knowledge and norms. Studying language alone limits comprehension to basic mechanics, missing subtle meanings and cultural communication styles.

Furthermore, a linguistic and cultural approach recognizes that language learning is fundamentally social adaptation, where encountering a new language means navigating a new cultural environment [22, pp. 24-25].

Studying language, culture, and history requires seeing their deep connections. Language changes with society and history, influenced by events like migration. It also shapes how we know history through stories and words. To understand communication's evolution, we need to combine linguistic anthropology, ethnohistory, and historical linguistics. This shows why history, religion, geography, customs, and sports are key to understanding idioms [39, pp. 156-157].

Combining these fields allows for a deeper understanding of how social and cultural processes, both personal and societal, intertwine with the core drivers of language change. Ultimately, this integrated view reveals the profound and mutual influence between language and the unfolding story of human history and diverse cultures. [12, p. 223].

Thus, the first important component of idiom formation and borrowing is history. When looking at the history of England over time, it is important to focus on the major events that brought about significant changes in people's daily lives, the workings of government, and even the development of the language itself. In this study, we will pay close attention to these key moments in order:

- The Roman Conquest (circa 43 CE);
- The Anglo-Saxon Invasions (commencing in the 5th century CE);
- The Viking Incursions (initiating in the late 8th century CE);

- The Norman Conquest (anno Domini 1066);
- Tudor England (1485 CE - 1603 CE);
- Industrial Revolution (1760 CE - 1840 CE);
- World War I and II (1914 CE - 1918 CE, 1939 CE - 1945 CE).

The Roman conquest of Britain, commencing around 43 AD, initiated a period of Latin influence on the developing English language. While Old English, the early Germanic form, persisted as the core, Latin permeated administrative and legal spheres. This historical impact is evident in the adoption of vocabulary. Furthermore, the proverb *when in Rome, do as the Romans do* reflects a pragmatic philosophy associated with Roman culture. The idiom "bread and circuses" also originates from this era, illustrating a Roman socio-political strategy of using public entertainment and food distribution to divert attention from significant governance issues.

Following the Roman withdrawal, the Anglo-Saxon invasions, beginning in the 5th century, established a foundational layer in English linguistic history. The Germanic language of these tribes supplanted existing Celtic languages, forming the structure and core lexicon of modern English. Idioms from this period reflect the Anglo-Saxon worldview and customs. The legal practice of trial by ordeal, where survival of dangerous physical tests determined innocence, is echoed in the idiom *go through fire and water*, conveying the concept of enduring extreme hardship. The expression "to have a spell cast on someone" also emerged during this time, indicative of prevalent cultural beliefs in magical intervention and supernatural agency as potential causes in human affairs.

The Viking incursions, starting in the late 8th century, introduced further linguistic complexity. Old Norse, the language of the Vikings, contributed vocabulary across various semantic domains, including concrete nouns (e.g., *club*, cognate with Old Norse *klubba*), zoological terms (e.g., *bug*, possibly from Old Norse *búkr*), and qualitative adjectives (e.g., *ill*, corresponding to Old Norse *illr*). These loanwords

became integrated into the English vernacular. The adoption of the base-12 counting system, a practical aspect of Viking influence, finds a parallel in the idiom *six of one and half a dozen of the other*, suggesting a pragmatic approach to equivalence that may have been reinforced by Anglo-Norse interactions.

The Norman Conquest in 1066 was a game-changer for the English. Norman French became the language of the top dogs, flooding English with French words, especially in law and culture. Idioms like *take French leave*, *stew in one's own juice*, and *return to one's muttons* are direct French leftovers, showing how deeply French got under English skin. Even the idiom *to kick the bucket* might have French roots, either from how pigs were hung up (*bucket* as a *yoke*) or from a French word for a dead animal container (*bote*), suggesting death went from handling dead animals to the saying itself. These idioms are a direct line to Norman ways.

Tudor England (1485-1603) saw English really blossom thanks to the Renaissance. People got into old Greek and Latin stuff, big-time, and scholars loaded English with words for science and art. Plus, English writers, especially Shakespeare, made the language even richer and more standard by inventing words and making others popular. So, the main language push in Tudor times came from deliberately grabbing Latin and Greek words because of the Renaissance buzz. For example, the idiom *dead as a doornail* was already kicking around in Shakespeare's time, showing how long some of these expressions have been part of the language.

The idiom *to rain cats and dogs*, though its exact origin is unclear, might have sprung from messy Tudor towns. Heavy rain flooded streets with waste, trapping and killing cats and dogs. Afterward, seeing their bodies scattered around could have created the image of them falling from the sky, leading to the saying [20, pp. 221-222].

The Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) sped up English vocabulary mainly through new English words for new inventions (*steam engine*) and processes. Though Greek and Latin still helped with science terms, English was the main driver. Idioms

like *full steam ahead* (full energy) and *well-oiled machine* (efficient system) were borrowed from the new technology. *Cog in the wheel* described feeling unimportant in a big system [6] [39, pp. 156-157] [34].

World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) rapidly changed English with new words for war. While some words came from allies, English itself mostly adapted. *Zeppelins in a cloud* became slang for sausage and mashed potatoes in wartime London, a funny twist on a scary German airship. The idiom *dodge the bullet* (avoid a bad thing) likely popped up with better guns, moving from literally avoiding bullets to figuratively avoiding any trouble, maybe because war made people more aware of close calls. [36].

Except for history, religious and belief systems have historically permeated many aspects of human life. Sacred texts and myths outlined ways to connect with the divine and offered frameworks for understanding reality. These often included rituals like prayer and sacrifice, aimed at gaining favor, protection, and well-being. Given the significant role of religion in past societies, it naturally influenced cultural practices and, consequently, language. Therefore, idioms within religious texts frequently embody core concepts of prosperity and significantly impacted social structures and individual behavior. [26, p. 131].

The Romans' arrival and later the adoption of Christianity in Britain were important moments that influenced the English language, especially in religious terms. The Romans first brought Latin, which mixed with early English over time. But when Christianity became widespread around 597 AD, it had a bigger impact. Churches and monasteries were built, making Latin the language of worship and religious study again. Schools in these places taught Latin, and slowly, Latin words became part of everyday English [15]. Over the following centuries, many Latin religious terms like "church," "bishop," "angel," and "psalm" became key parts of the English language. This long and significant flow of religious words clearly shows the lasting impact of Christian culture on how English was formed and grew after Old English times[11].

The Bible, rooted in ancient Judaism and translated over centuries, has deeply influenced languages like English, embedding numerous idioms into everyday speech. Reflecting core beliefs and stories, phrases like *the blind leading the blind*, *money is the root of all evil,* and *wolf in sheep's clothing* illustrate how Biblical passages became concise expressions for complex ideas. Their lasting power lies in conveying universal truths beyond religion, as seen in the poetic protection of *the apple of the eye*. [20].

Beyond the mentioned two, geographical factors also had an influence on people's style of life, world perception, and consequently on language. The natural environment, the basis of human life, significantly shapes the culture of different nations. Varying environments lead to different cultural adaptations, influencing beliefs, social structures, technology, and language. These environmental demands create unique ways of interacting with the world, fostering specific cultural practices tied to the habitat.

Therefore, the geographical context and weather of a culture's origin are important. The UK's island location in northwest Europe, surrounded by seas, has deeply woven sea-related words into its language. Words about the ocean, coasts, and sailing have long been and still are part of daily life, likely enriching this vocabulary, with some sea terms gaining broader meanings. As a result, English idioms show a link to Britain's island geography. Examples include *to be in deep water* (serious trouble) and *to follow the sea* (being a sailor), suggesting a cultural understanding of the sea and its challenges.

The UK's mild, wet climate, influenced by the surrounding oceans and the Gulf Stream, has also shaped its language. Frequent rain, especially in the west, and common fog in autumn and winter have led to a detailed vocabulary for describing rain and related weather. Living in this moderate climate, without extreme heat or freezing, might mean less emphasis on those temperature extremes in their language compared to continental areas. Weather shows up in idioms too: *steal my thunder*

means taking someone's credit, *as right as rain* means feeling healthy again, and *come rain or shine* means doing something no matter what [9].

British traditions and customs should not be excluded from the list of factors influencing the language. It has had a widespread influence on the English language, shaping its words and idioms in many areas. The historical divide between rural and urban life is seen in terms like *countryside* and *city dweller*, and the importance of gardens persists even in cities. The once-strong class system, while its clear language markers are fading, certainly contributed to past differences in accent and vocabulary based on social class. For instance, the idiom *born in the purple*, which first described royalty born in rooms draped in purple, directly shows how social status was encoded in language. Its later use for the children of aristocrats and high officials further illustrates how social structures and language evolve together, reflecting a broader idea of inherited privilege.

British national holidays, such as the widely recognized Christmas and uniquely English commemorations like Guy Fawkes Night, are woven into the fabric of the English language. For instance, the idiom *lit up like a Christmas tree* serves as a vivid description for a state of extreme happiness or excitement.

Furthermore, traditional English culinary practices, such as *fish and chips* and the *Sunday roast*, represent not just food but also cultural rituals that have found their way into the lexicon. Even everyday staples like *tea* have transcended their literal meaning to form the basis of idioms like *a storm in a teacup*, signifying a trivial fuss, and *as easy as pie*. Historical agricultural practices, such as the predictable yet indeterminate return of cows to their enclosures, gave rise to the idiom *until the cows come home,* meaning a very long time.

Beyond these tangible examples, broader British social customs and values have also shaped the English language. The historical emphasis on certain social behaviors and national symbols contributes to the nuances and connotations of specific words and phrases, collectively enriching the language's distinctive character. [23].

The British passion for sports and diverse forms of entertainment has significantly permeated the English language, enriching its vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. As the birthplace of numerous globally popular sports, including cricket, football, rugby, tennis, and boxing, among others, Britain has woven the terminology and concepts of these activities into the fabric of its language.

The historical prominence of "the sport of kings," horse racing, is particularly evident in the English lexicon. Idioms such as *win in a canter*, *win hands down*, *get into one's stride*, *straight from the horse's mouth*, *in the long run*, and *neck and neck* all originate from the world of horse racing, transferring the excitement, strategies, and outcomes of the track to describe various aspects of life, from business to personal relationships.

Boxing, with its formalization in 18th-century England, has also contributed its share of idioms. Phrases like *out for the count*, *below the belt*, and *pull one's punches* utilize boxing terminology to describe situations of defeat, unfair tactics, and holding back effort, respectively, demonstrating how the imagery of the ring has been metaphorically extended to broader contexts.

Cricket, often considered Britain's national sport, has deeply influenced the language. The very significance attached to the game is reflected in the saying *as significant as a game of cricket*. Furthermore, notions of fairness and unfairness are expressed through the idioms *that's no cricket* and *to play cricket*, showcasing how the values associated with the sport have become ingrained in the language to describe ethical conduct.

Beyond organized sports, the vibrant pub culture of Britain has also left its linguistic mark. As a central hub for community life and social interaction, the pub has given rise to idioms such as *small beer* (something insignificant), *cry in one's beer* (complaining self-pityingly), *on the beer* (drinking beer), and *chalk it up* (to record a debt or loss), illustrating how everyday social rituals and environments can shape idiomatic expressions [24].

In conclusion, British English idioms are deeply shaped by its history (Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Viking, Norman conquests, Tudor era, Industrial Revolution, World Wars), religious influences, geography, customs, national sports, and social life. These intertwined factors have created the unique figurative language we see today, making their understanding inseparable from Britain's rich cultural and historical context.

Conclusion Part I

Having analyzed previous developments in the field of definitions, characteristics, functions, classifications, as well as semiotic and cultural dimensions of idioms, we have provided a holistic picture for understanding this complex concept. Despite the ongoing scholarly discourse around a single definition, the basic set of features of idioms - non-composability, figurativeness, conventionality, and fixity - keep surfacing, emphasizing the unique nature of idioms as expressions whose meaning goes beyond their literal components. Functionally, idioms play an important communicative and cognitive role, enriching language through expressiveness, intensification, stylistic variation, and effective transmission of complex concepts. The various classifications proposed by different scholars, despite the lack of universal consensus, offer valuable additional frameworks for categorizing idioms based on their structural, semantic, and pragmatic properties.

As complex semiotic signs, idioms embody culturally encoded meanings based on shared historical narratives, social values, and collective experience. The concept of linguoculture emphasizes this inseparability, positioning idioms as an integral reflection of a community's worldview and identity. Therefore, the interpretation and effective use of idioms requires a deep understanding of their cultural and historical context.

The reasons for the emergence of culturally specific idioms were also considered, emphasizing the profound influence of historical events, religious beliefs, geographical factors, social customs, and cultural practices on their formation. A

preliminary analysis of specific historical periods in Britain illustrated how turning points and prevailing cultural norms influenced British phraseology. This proved that idioms are not arbitrary linguistic constructs, but rather deeply rooted in the life experience and evolving cultural fabric of their speakers.

II. THE USAGE OF CULTURALLY SPECIFIC IDIOMS IN BRITISH ENGLISH

2.1 Culturally specific British idioms in fiction

When examining idioms in literature, it is crucial to consider Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, a comprehensive depiction of medieval social diversity. This work vividly portrays the customs and way of life of citizens of that era, and furthermore, the narratives contained within its framework have inspired numerous subsequent authors and formed the basis of many later works.

This text is rich in comparative idioms – similes – which serve as an excellent illustration of the associations and imagination reflected in the imagery used for comparisons, rooted in the local (British) perception and background. For example: *Dark was the night as pitch, aye dark as coal* [55, p. 77]*; For always busy as bees* [55, p. 302]*; And myrrh, and incense, sweet as rose in bower* [55, p. 61]*; Her mouth was sweet as bragget or as mead/Or hoard of apples; Fat as a whale and waddling as a swan* [55, p. 68]*; Like seared box tree, or ashes, dead and cold* [55, p. 29]*; He was not pale as some poor wasted ghost* [55, p. 6]. As can be observed, some of these expressions persist in contemporary usage, while others have remained exclusively within the author's works. This is a common characteristic of similes, as they represent one of the syntactically simple types of idioms to construct. Grammatically, all these idioms may be characterised by the construction *to be + adjective + like\as + noun.* Therefore, their syntactic structure will be *Linking Verb + Adjective (Description) + Comparative Conjunction + Object.* In terms of Kvetko's classification [25, pp. 105-106], these idioms fall in the group of verbal idioms. Referential elements belong to the category of nouns, less often to phrases. Such idioms are mostly occasional and very variable, with their lexical items being flexible. Due to the fact that the comparison is based on the most clearly defined characteristic of the referential element, the meaning of such idioms is transparent and easy to derive.

Beyond similes, another idiom also presents society in this work. For instance, the expression *strike while the iron is hot* appears in the quotation: *that just as it is well to strike while the iron is hot, so should men wreak their vengeance while they are fresh in anger* [55, p. 138]. While its first written record is found in *The Canterbury Tales*, the idiom most likely existed long before, reflecting the blacksmith profession, which was typical for British society. Currently, it means "to take advantage of an opportunity as soon as it exists, in case the opportunity goes away and does not return" [40]. As to the syntactic structure, it is a sentence idiom as it has the syntactic structure of a sentence: *Verb + Time Conjunction + Noun + Linking Verb + Description (Predicative).* The meaning of this idiom can be called semi-opaque, considering the classification of A. Makkai [27] falls into the sub-category of proverbial idioms with a moral of the sememic idioms category. In this example, the referential element is presented by a noun phrase *iron is hot* since it is the main figurative image of the idiom, personifying something current and relevant, “hot”. The verb has grammatical variation.

The idiom *go in one ear and out the other,* which appears in *The Canterbury Tales* as *Oon ere it herde, at tothir out it wente* [55, p. 138], also has historical Latin origins. Long ago, the Romans used this expression to emphasize the fleeting nature of spoken words and human inattentiveness. Currently, the idiom signifies: "If you say that something you hear goes in one ear and out the other, you mean you quickly forget it" [40]. The structure of this expression is the following: *Verb+ Prepositional Phrase + Coordinating Conjunction + Prepositional Phrase*. The idiom falls into the category of verbal idioms, with *one ear* and *the other* being the object of prepositions. Just as the previous idiom, this one has grammatical variation.

Similarly, in the quotation *For loue is blynd alday and may nat see* [55, p. 42], one can observe the idiom *love is blind,* the earliest documented use of which in the English language appears in this very work. Although the precise origin of this expression remains uncertain, it is plausible to suggest a historical connection to Roman mythology and the depiction of Cupid (the god of love) as blindfolded. The

expression itself is used to say that people do not see the faults of the people that they love [42]. Nevertheless, despite this earlier usage, the expression gained widespread popularity later, after its incorporation by Shakespeare in his play *The Merchant of Venice*: *But love is blind, and lovers cannot see/ The pretty follies that themselves commit* [88, p. 71]. This idiom also falls into the sub-category of proverbial idioms with a moral of the sememic idioms category. It has a syntactic construction, namely *Subject + Linking Verb + Description (Predicative).* As to the referential element, it is proposed to separate a group of idioms where the referential element cannot be derived due to the fact that all components are equal for figurative meaning. This expression is stable and cannot undergo any variations.

This same work also contains the earliest recorded instance of the idiom *go through thick and thin*: *And with a neigh he went, through thick and thin* [55, p. 84]. The origin of this expression may be linked to the specific landscape of the region. Its initial form was *through thicket and thin wood*, signifying perseverance associated with the literal dense forests of Britain. Later, it transitioned to figurative usage, meaning "if you support or stay with someone through thick and thin, you always support or stay with them in easy and difficult situations" [40]. *Preposition + Object of Preposition.* The phrase refers to verbless idioms. The meaning of the phrase is not clear, which makes it categorised as opaque. This expression is stable. The referential element here is *thick,* and this means all types of situations.

Similarly, *The Canterbury Tales* marks the first recorded instance of the expression *all is for the best*: *That to a man which gives his soul unrest,/ And not his body, and all is for the best* [55, p. 237]. The expression may be used in two forms: *all for the best* and *all is for the best* as in the example. Thus, it refers to idioms that undergo lexical variation. Both are documented in the vocabulary and used to say that something will have a good result even though it was not the intended result [42]. However, it is suggested that religious writings influenced the formation of this idiom, as similar motifs are frequently mentioned in the Bible. For example: *We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called*

according to his purpose (Romans 8:28) [51]. The structure of the idiom *Subject + Linking Verb + Prepositional Phrase (Predicative)* and the idiom falls into the category of verbal idioms. The referential element here is represented by *all* as it bears the main figurative meaning of any situation that can be mentioned, making it applicable for any context.

In the study of British literature, the works of William Shakespeare are a key focus. He significantly enriched the English language, notably through figurative language. Shakespeare expanded the vocabulary of English. Research shows he created around 1700 new words by adding prefixes and suffixes, many of which we still use today. He also changed how words were used, turning nouns into verbs and verbs into adjectives. This process redefined and modernized English. Importantly, Shakespeare introduced about 135 new phrases that are still commonly quoted. His work played a crucial role in shaping modern English [35, p. 131].

For example, in the quote *O heart, <u>heavy heart,</u> / Why sigh'st thou without breaking?* [91, p. 173] the expression *heavy heart,* which means a feeling of unhappiness [40], comes from Egyptian mythology. Within this belief system, the post-mortem judgment involved the weighing of the deceased's heart against the feather of Ma'at. A *light heart* symbolized a virtuous life, while a *heavy heart* indicated moral transgression. However, the widespread adoption and entrenchment of this expression within the English lexicon are significantly attributed to its recurrent usage in biblical texts, as evidenced by the passage: *Why make ye your hearts heavy, as Egypt and Pharaoh grieved their heart(s)?* (Samuel 6:6) [51]. This idiom is a verbless idiom and lacks any syntactic structure, as *heavy heart* in different contexts may be, for instance, a subject or an object. So it can be represented only as *Adjective (Modifier) + Noun.* The expression is stable

Such a well-known phrase as crocodile tears was used in Othello: *If that the Earth could teem with woman's <u>tears,</u>/ Each drop she falls would prove a <u>crocodile</u>* [85, p. 100], that means "tears that you cry when you are not really sad or sorry" [40]. The origin of this phrase can be traced back to ancient Egypt. People there noticed

that crocodiles seemed to cry when they were on land. This crying was actually due to their eyes drying out in the air. However, people at the time thought it was a trick to attract prey. This expression came to English from Latin, possibly from the Roman philosopher Pliny the Elder, who wrote about it in his work *Natural History* in the first century AD. So, the appearance of the idiom in English can be attributed to historical factors. The idea became common in Britain by the 1300s. One of the earliest written examples of this belief is from the 1500s in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, which describes these crocodile-like creatures killing and eating people while appearing to weep: *The seserpents sley men, and eate them weeping, and they have no tongue.* [47, p. 312]. The idiom is a stable expression, the referential element of which cannot be deduced as the meaning will be lost. It falls into the category of verbless idioms and may be presented as an *Attributive Noun + Noun.*

Similarly, historically, the expression *Even you, Brutus?* came from Latin to English, which Shakespeare used in his play in French: *Et tu, Brutè?—Then fall, Caesar.* [83, p. 99]. The origin of this expression is directly linked to the historical account of Julius Caesar's assassination, perpetrated by a conspiracy of Roman senators, notably including Marcus Junius Brutus, a figure of close personal association and trust to Caesar. The idiom is predominantly used in French, which makes it a barbarism, but in English, it is used in some different variations. It may be *and you, Brutus?, you as well, Brutus?, also you, Brutus?* etc. Thus, this expression has lexical variations. Even though this expression lacks a verb, it is suggested to classify it as a sentence idiom, as thanks to the meaning and its usage, it will be classified as an elliptical sentence in any context. It has the following structure: *Conjunction + Pronoun + Vocative.* As to the referential element, considering the well-known historical context allows us to say that *Brutus* in this idiom bears the main phraseological meaning; nevertheless, the expression itself is a quote.

The next example can be the quote from Romeo and Juliet: *Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase* [86, p. 97]. The meaning of the phrase *wild-goose chase* refers to a search that is completely unsuccessful and a waste of time because the person or

thing being searched for does not exist or is somewhere else [40]. However, this refers to the figurative meaning, which was first documented in Shakespeare's work, but the direct meaning was known even before that. This idiom originally referred to a form of 16th-century horse racing requiring riders to follow a leader in a particular formation (presumably resembling a flock of geese in flight). Thus, the origin of this idiom is related to cultural customs, in this case, a type of horse racing. The expression is a verbless idiom and can be represented as Adjective (Modifier) + Noun. It is a stable expression.

Similarly, originating from British traditions and sporting events, the phrase *wear your heart on your sleeve* emerged. The idiom means to make your feelings and emotions obvious rather than hiding them [40]. While its popularization is often attributed to Shakespeare, who used the expression in Othello: *But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve* [85, p. 35], its genesis may well be linked to medieval jousting tournaments dedicated to specific ladies. Prior to combat, a knight's lady would typically bestow upon him a personal token, most often a scarf, which he would tie to his arm (sleeve) as a public display of allegiance and in whose honor he fought. Considering that the heart has long been a symbol of love and the belief that the heart is the seat of emotion, this idiomatic expression gains an even deeper understanding. The idioms' structure may be described as *Verb + Object + Adverbial Prepositional Phrase.* The idiom may have grammatical variations. It is a semi-opaque idiom, the referential element of which cannot be deduced as each element is equally important for the meaning.

Another illustrative case of an idiom exhibiting etymological ties to traditional British occupations, specifically the practice of fishing, is the expression *the world's someone's oyster,* a phrase attributed to the literary corpus of William Shakespeare: *Why then, the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open* [89, p. 61]. This connection underscores the influence of prevalent economic activities on the formation and evolution of idiomatic language within the British linguistic landscape. Also, it is supposed that the idiom might have been inspired by the fact that it is

possible to find a valuable pearl in an oyster that will open some opportunities for the owner. The meaning of the idiom is the following: If the world is your oyster, you can do what you want or go where you want [40]. Taking into consideration the origin of the expression, it is suggested that the referential element here is represented by a noun *oyster,* as a symbol of opportunities. It falls into the category of sentence idioms as it can act as a separate sentence: *Subject + Linking Verb + Predicative.* It can have grammatical variations according to the tense and person.

In the very same play, there is an idiom *a fool's paradise,* that means to be happy because you do not know or will not accept how bad a situation really is [40]. *Should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say* [86, p. 101]. The proliferation of this idiomatic expression is observed from the 15th century onwards, with its earliest textual attestation identified within the correspondence of William Paston, dating to 1462 (*I would not be in a folis paradyce*) [45]. The relative paucity of prior documented instances suggests a potential etiological link to prevailing conceptualizations of the cognitive landscape of individuals exhibiting diminished intellectual capacity. Thus, it is supposed that the genesis of this idiom is predicated upon a culturally salient perception of the subjective experience associated with limited cognitive function. This idiom can be presented as *Possessive Noun + Noun,* or just *Noun Phrase.* The referential element here is *fool's* as it conveys an image of mental inferiority and, accordingly, an insufficient level of knowledge to comprehend the full picture of a particular concept.

The phrase *a heart of gold* from the quote *The King's a bawcock and a heart of gold, a lad* [84, p. 139] experienced a notable increase in prevalence following its incorporation into the Shakespearean corpus, although evidence suggests potential prior, albeit less documented, usage. The semantic underpinnings of this phrase are posited to be rooted in the cultural valuation of precious metals, particularly the symbolic association of gold with concepts of intrinsic worth, purity, and preciousness. This metaphorical transfer from the material properties of gold to the characterization of human disposition underscores the enduring cultural significance

attributed to this element. The idiom itself means: to be very kind and generous [40]. It is also a verbless idiom with a stable construction that can be represented as *Noun + Prepositional Phrase.* The referential element here, according to the symbolism described, is *gold.*

The next example is *And if you <u>break the ice</u> and do this feat*, [87, p. 67]. This expression means to make people who have not met before feel more relaxed with each other [40]. The etymology of this idiom is highly likely to be rooted in the literal physical act of icebreaking to facilitate maritime navigation during winter conditions, a practice of considerable significance for an insular nation. Consequently, the idiom's genesis can be attributed to the domain of nautical activity. Subsequent semantic evolution led to the acquisition of its current figurative meaning. The earliest documented instance of this figurative usage appears in the literary record within Sir Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the noble Greeks and Romans*, in the phrase *to be the first to <u>break the Ice</u> of the Enterprise* [78, p. 812]. This textual evidence marks a key point in the diachronic shift from the literal to the metaphorical application of the expression. The expression has a structure of *Verba + Object.* It can have grammatical variations according to the tense of the sentence it is used in. The straight meaning of it can be easily derived from the surface level as well as the moral one from the deeper level. The referential element here is suggested to be *ice* that refers to the tension or “wall” between strangers.

Beyond his role in the dissemination and popularization of pre-existing idiomatic expressions within the British linguistic landscape, William Shakespeare also contributed significantly to the genesis of numerous authorial neologisms that have since become established as integral components of the English lexicon. For example, *<u>men of few words</u> are the best men* [84, p. 89]. The phrase *man of few words* means a man/woman who says very little [40]. Considering the positive connotation of this phraseological unit, it is suggested that taciturnity is perceived by English culture as a manifestation of good manners and high intellect, given that such an individual does not speak superfluously and tends to express their thoughts

deliberately and concisely. In this instance, one can posit a social factor in the formation of idioms. The expression has a verbless and variable structure as it can have lexical variations: *man, men, woman, women, etc*. Its structure may be presented as *Noun + Prepositional Phrase.* The referential element here is represented by a noun phrase *few words* as it carries the main image of silence, considerable speaking, and moderation.

This also includes the phrase *green-eyed monster,* which means jealousy imagined as a monster that attacks people [42], that was first used in *The Merchant of Venice: And shudd'ring fear, and green-eyed jealousy!* [88, p. 109] and later in *Othello: It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock* [85, p. 82]. This expression also illustrates the social aspect of idiom formation, as the comparison of a personality trait to a monster indicates the perception of this character aspect as a significant flaw. Simultaneously, one can posit the influence of religion, where jealousy is considered a sin. For example, James 3:16 says, *For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice* [51]. This expression also refers to stable verbless idioms and can be presented as *Compound Adjective (Modifier) + Noun.* The referential element here is *monster,* as it represents the idea of jealousy as something terrible.

Other authors also contributed to the creation of idioms. For example, the idiom *to pay through the nose*, which occurs in *The Rehearsal Transposed* (1672) by Andrew Marvell: *pay fer it moſt unconſcionably, and through the neſe* [72, p. 150], has a historical origin that goes back to the 9th century, when the Danes conquered Ireland. The new government imposed exorbitantly high taxes on the "nose," and according to legend, those who could not pay them had their noses cut. So the meaning of this idiom is to pay too much money for something [40]. It's a verbal idiom that can have grammatical variations according to the tense of the sentence it is used in, with the following structure: *Verb + Prepositional Phrase.* The referential element cannot be specified in this example as the full expression refers to a historical concept.

The next example is in Benjamin Disraeli's *The Young Duke* (1831) there is an expression *a dark horse* that was used in literary meaning but became so vivid and popular image that began to be used figuratively: *The first favourite was never heard of, the second favourite was never seen after the distance post, all the ten-to-oners were in the rear, and a dark horse, which had never been thought of, and which the careless St. James had never even observed in the list, rushed past the grand stand in sweeping triumph* [60, p. 67]. The idiom means a person who keeps their interests and ideas secret, especially someone who has a surprising ability or skill [40]. It is a stable verbless idiom that has both literary and figurative meaning and can be represented as *Adjective (modifier) + Noun.* No referential element cannot be derived from the expression as both components are equally important for the meaning.

The next example is an expression that has a historical origin, namely *to turn a blind eye*, which gained its popularity thanks to Admiral Nelson, who led British troops against the Danish and Norwegian forces under the command of Admiral Sir Hyde Parker in 1801. When he was signaled to retreat by the flags, he held his spyglass up to his right eye, which was wounded, and said that one eye was sometimes blind, after which he continued to attack and won the battle. Although it is likely that this expression existed even before this incident, it is thanks to Admiral Nelson that it became widely known. It is described in *The life of Horatio lord Nelson* by Robert Southey: *I have only one eye,—I have a right to be blind sometimes:" and then putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, "I really do not see the signal!"* [93, p. 247]. There is also an older and not-so-popular version of the idiom: *to turn the deaf ear and the blind eye*. This expression means to ignore something that you know is wrong [40]. The idiom falls into the category of verbal idioms, and its structure can be represented as *Verb + Object Modifier + Object.* It can undergo grammatical variations depending on the tense of the verb *turn.* The referential element in this example is represented by a noun phrase *blind eye* as it conveys the main phraseological image of indifference.

The next example of sports idiom is found in *Fools of Fortune* (1890), John Philip Quinn: *We will invest the first-named amount in a ticket and play it "straight;" that is, mark off ten spots* [80, p. 450]. This expression means to do something seriously, without making jokes or demanding too much attention [40]. This idiom can also be used in another form: *play a straight bat*. This expression refers to one way of holding the bat in the game of cricket. The idiom can have grammatical variation according to the tense the verb is used in. Also, as it is seen, it has lexical variation. Thus, the idiom can be of two grammatical structures: *Verb + Object + adverbial Modifier of Manner* or *Verb + Object.* In both cases, the idiom falls into the category of verbal idioms, but the referential element in the first case is represented by the adverb *straight* and in the second one by the noun phrase *straight bat.*

Further two examples of the same geographical idiom in one book. The first one in *The Lancet,* edited by Thomas Wakley (1885): *To cater for the Friendly Societies, as we have always pointed out, was to take coals to Newcastle; and to propose indiscriminate admission of every class to the advantages of cheap terms of medical attendance-terms* [96, p. 214]. And the second is: *Well, as regards the Church of England, that may be partly because they see no occasion to take coals to Newcastle; and as regards the Catholics, it may be from a keen feeling of the ceremonial differences between them* [96, p. 522]. The idiom *carry/take coals to Newcastle* dates back to the 15th - 16th centuries. It was then that the city began to be associated with coal and became the largest coal producer and supplier. The expression was first used in the form of the simile *as common as coals from Newcastle* [67, p. 32], which was used by Thomas Heywood in his work, but it was occasional and didn't become popular. However, the very concept later became the idiom we know today. It means to supply something to a place or person that already has a lot of that particular thing [40] or simply to do something pointless. The structure of this idiom is *Verb + Object + Prepositional Phrase.* It can have both grammatical and lexical variations. As to the referential element, it is suggested that it can be *Newcastle* as it is associated with coal, thus it may contribute more to the image.

The subsequent author for consideration is Charles Dickens. This literary figure significantly impacted the evolution of the English lexicon, notably through the widespread dissemination of vernacular vocabulary, reflecting his primary readership among the common populace. Consequently, his literary corpus exhibits a substantial incorporation of idiomatic expressions.

For example in the work *Great Expectations* by Dickens, there is a phrase *on the rampage*, the first written mention of which belongs to him: *"Well," said Joe, glancing up at the Dutch clock, "she's been* <u>*on the Rampage*</u>*, this last spell, about five minutes, Pip. She's a-coming! Get behind the door, old chap, and have the Jack towel between you"* [58, p. 10]. It is also associated with traditional activities and entertainment. The expression comes from the Middle Ages, when it was prestigious among the nobility to organize hunting, then the participants would set their dogs down, and when they caught up with the prey, they were said to be on the rampage, which meant they were furious. Later, the expression acquired an idiomatic meaning and came to mean to rush about angrily, violently, or in excitement, often causing great destruction [40]. The expression refers to minimal idioms as it consists of a noun and a preposition. Taking it into consideration, the very idiom in this case is a referential element.

Also in *The Pickwick Papers* (1837), the expression *devil-may-care* is found, which means not considering or worrying about the results of your actions [40]: *I once had the honour of being on intimate terms with a mute, who in private life, and off duty, was as comical and jocose a little fellow as ever chirped out a* <u>*devil-may-care*</u> *song, without a hitch in his memory, or drained off a good stiff glass without stopping for breath* [59, p. 523]. It is believed that this is a contraction of the phrase *the devil may care, but I don't*, which was used by pirates of the 18th and 19th centuries as an oath of new pirates to the captain. This period in history was called the "golden age" of piracy. The emergence and modification of this expression with the acquisition of figurative meaning may be related to seafaring as a historically

important activity of the British. It is also a minimal idiom represented by a compound adjective, and it cannot undergo any variations.

The next idiom found in *David Copperfield* (1850) has an element of social component, namely the class system in which wealthy people used silverware: *to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth*. The idiom is seen in the excerpt: *It completely conveyed the idea of a man who had been born, not to say with a silver spoon, but with a scaling ladder* [57, p. 347]. The context of the phrase's origin coincides with this meaning: to have a high social position and be rich from birth [40]. The expression was widely known even before Dickens used it. The idiom has the following grammatical structure: *Verb + Object Modifier + Object + Prepositional Phrase.* But as seen from the example, it can be used in a shorter variant. It refers to the category of verbal idioms and can have grammatical variations in the face of the grammatical form of the verb *have*. The referential element here is a noun phrase, *silver spoon,* as the main symbol of wealth.

Lewis Carroll also made his contribution to the development of the phraseological vocabulary, whose vivid and metaphorical expressions became established idioms. Considering *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, it is worth mentioning the expression *to chase a white rabbit*, which, thanks to the story's plot, acquired the meaning of chasing the impossible, a fantasy, a dream. Even though the expression is not used in such a variation in the book, it became popular in this very form. It can be presented as *Verb + Object Modifier + Object.* The idiom can have grammatical variations. The referential element here is *white rabbit* as a well-known character.

In turn, *go/fall down the rabbit hole* means entering into a situation or beginning a process or journey that is particularly strange, problematic, difficult, complex, or chaotic, especially one that becomes increasingly so as it develops or unfolds. It is seen in the excerpt: *the rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep*

well [54, p. 3]. The syntactic structure of the idiom can be presented as *Verb + Prepositional Phrase,* and it refers to the verbal idioms. It can undergo both grammatical (form of verb) and lexical (go/fall) variations. It is suggested that, thanks to the recognised motifs of the story, the referential element here is a *rabbit hole.*

The next example is *mad as a hatter/March hare*, which, thanks to the vivid image created by the author, gained the meaning of extremely silly or stupid [40]. *The March Hare will be much the most interesting, and perhaps as this is May it won't be raving mad— at least not so mad as it was in March* [54, p. 93]. The phrase refers to the verbless idioms and has the following structure of similes: *Adjective + as + Noun/ Noun Phrase.* The idiom can undergo lexical variations: *hatter, March Hare.* The referential element here is once more represented by the characters of the book: *hatter, March Hare.*

One more phrase that became an idiom is *grin like a Cheshire cat,* likewise entered everyday speech with the meaning smiling or grinning inscrutably [41, p. 62]. It is seen in the excerpt: *and a large cat which was sitting on the hearth and grinning from ear to ear* [54, p. 82]. This idiom is also a simile but it falls into the category of verbal idioms: *Verb + like + Noun Phrase.* It can undergo grammatical variation according to the tense, and just as in the previous examples, the referential element of the idiom is the character - Cheshire cat.

And, finally, it is also possible to say that the expression *the Queen of Hearts*, which symbolizes a dominant person obsessed with excessive control and commanding, is also an idiom. The cruelty of the Queen can be seen in the following words: *Queen was to find it out, we should all have our heads cut off* [54, p. 114]. This is an example of a stable minimal idiom that is represented by a proper noun.

This literary work, and the popularity of its imagery among people, serves as a compelling example of how the literary endeavors of British authors, in themselves, constitute a distinct category among the factors influencing the formation of phraseological expressions, often without the influence of external elements.

Another example is presumably related to the historical context, but within the country is *at sixes and sevens*, which appears in John Fowles' *The Collector* (1963): *She held out her hand. I shook it. I don't know how I got out of the room. She had me all* <u>*at sixes and sevens*</u> *that evening* [66, p. 29]. There is more than one version of the origin of this expression, but we are inclined to the version about the rivalry between the Skinners and the Merchant Taylors that began in the 14th century and was eventually resolved in 1484 with the sixes and sevens Billesdon Award, when the mayor of London introduced that both companies would swap places in the priority ranking (between sixth and seventh) every year. This case is even described on the official website of Skinners' Company [28]. The expression itself means being in a confused, poorly organized, or difficult situation [40]. Even though the idiom consists of four words, it forms a single prepositional phrase. Thus, it is suggested to refer it to the category of minimal idioms. It is a stable expression as it cannot undergo any variations, and the referential element cannot be derived here since it represents a historical event.

The next example can be seen in Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1969)*: I have colleagues in the academy who have* <u>*come within an ace of*</u> *convincing me that no such things as "The Romantic Movement" or "The Renaissance" ever existed not if one gets down to scrutinizing the microscopic phenomena of history* [82, p. 39]. The idiom means to almost achieve something [40]. The idiom comes primarily from a typical medieval entertainment - dice. Back then, an ace meant a one on a dice, which is the smallest number, so ace came to mean bad luck. Later, from the beginning of the 16th century, ace also meant a jot or a very small amount, which is where the expression comes from. The structure of the idiom is *Verb + Object,* therefore, it falls into the category of verbal idioms and can have grammatical variation. The referential object of the expression is *ace* as it carries the meaning of a small amount and is the most important for the meaning of the idiom.

There are also examples of idioms whose origin is connected with British national sports. For instance in the book *Sports Talk: How It Has Penetrated our*

Everyday Language (2017) by Colin McNairn, we can see such a sentence: *There's no denying that anyone who undertakes to explain cricket in simple terms is bound to be "on a sticky wicket"* [73, p. 102]. This expression means a difficult situation [40]. Since the early 19th century, the phrase has been used in its literal sense to refer to a cricket pitch that dries up after rain, becomes sticky and difficult to play on; a difficult or uncomfortable situation. So this phrase is a direct reference to the difficulty of playing on a wet and sticky field. However, in the early 20th century, the expression acquired its figurative meaning. In this example, the expression is used to give the text a humorous flavor, since it is an explanation of the rules of cricket, but the term for the same sport is used in a figurative sense. The idiom refers to stable verbless idioms and has the following structure: *Adjective (Modifier) + Noun.* The referential element cannot be derived from this idiom, as both elements contribute equally to both figurative and literary meaning.

Idioms related to the monarchy and class structure were also found to be common. For example, in the book *My Queen; A Romance of the Great Salt Lake* (2011) by Marie A. Walsh, there is the following example: *But when Oreana came to queen it over the harem, Sister Silea vowed vengeance. Years had not weakened this bitter feeling. Apart from the fact of being the favorite, Silea detested Oreana* [97, p. 226]. The expression *queen it over* is the feminine equivalent of the idiom *lord it over* and was first used by Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale* (1611): *Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,/ But milk my ewes and weep* [90, p. 165]. The idiom has the following meaning: if a woman queens it over other people, she behaves as if she is more important than they, in an annoying way [43]. The idiom *to lord it over* has the same meaning: to behave as if you are more important than someone and have the right to tell that person what to do [40], but it is either male or gender neutral. The expression most likely comes from a comparison of the behavior of subjects and upper-class people who behaved somewhat arrogantly as masters. Both idioms are verbal idioms, as *queen over* and *lord over* are phrasal verbs, and *it* is an object: *Verb + Object.* Accordingly, it can have grammatical and lexical variations. The phrasal verb itself is the referential element.

The next example is found in *The King's Highway* (1840) by George Payne Rainsford: *"The Earl says true, my Lord," replied Wilton. "But I have this very day seen Cook myself-I mean Peter Cook, the person that it is supposed will be permitted to turn king's evidence* [77, p. 42]. The expression means to give information (such as the names of other criminals) to the court in order to reduce one's own punishment when one has been charged with a crime [42]. The idiom dates back to the 16th century, when a law was passed that allowed a person to become a crown witness and avoid pleading guilty. The expression also has a variant *turn queen's evidence*. The use of this or that expression depends on whether the country is currently ruled by a king or a queen. The idiom has the following structure: *Verb + Object Modifier (Possessive Noun) + Object.* It can have grammatical and lexical variations. The referential element of it cannot be derived as it is a whole law concept.

The next example is seen in *An Englishman's house is his castle. In one act* (2016) by John Maddison Morton: *Pooh, pooh! I will straightway see this scientific doctor, and in mild but forcible language, (crossing L. H.) remind him that an Englishman's home is his castle; and desire him instantly to remove himself, his youthful wife, and his infernal machines to some other* [70, p. 9]. Here, the idiom is used in the title and is found in the text of the book. The expression is used to say that English people believe that they should control what happens in their own homes, and that no one else should tell them what to do there [40]. Like the previous phrase, the appearance of this idiom may well be due to the English judge Sir Edward Coke, who proclaimed in 1604 in a common law ruling strict limits on how sheriffs could enter homes to collect taxes and enforce the law. Until that time, an Englishman's home, roughly speaking, could not protect him from anyone, because it was legal for sheriffs to enter freely if necessary. The full quote from the resolution reads as follows: *The house of every man is his castle and fortress, both for his defense against injury and violence, and for his rest* [92]. The idiom’s grammatical structure can be presented as *Possessive Noun + Subject + Linking Verb + Predicative.* Thus, the idiom refers to sentence idioms and can be used independently. The expression can have grammatical and lexical variations since, as seen from the example, the

linguistic unit *house* may be replaced by *home.* The referential object here is represented by *house/home is castle* as it cares the main figurative load of the idiom.

British literature stands as a significant source and shaper of English idioms. Across centuries, authors and cultural contexts have generated a wealth of these expressions, enriching the language with concise and evocative ways of conveying meaning. Rooted in history, society, and creative expression, these idioms offer insights into cultural evolution and continue to be a vibrant part of the English lexicon.

2.2. Culturally specific idioms in mass media

Media platforms provide a significant array for analyzing language use in real time, characterized by a journalistic register that accommodates a number of formalities without the need for sublime poetic expression. Thus, the study of culturally specific British idioms in the global media is crucial for identifying current trends in their use and dissemination.

2.2.1 The usage of culturally specific idioms in articles

Pretty frequently idioms are used in the main body of the articles with different stylistic aims. For example, in an article by The Christian Science Monitor, the following expression is found: *But it is APEC's annual summits that are seen as one of its biggest selling points, offering a chance for leaders from North and South America, Asia and the Pacific to get together informally and chew the fat* [65]. Two potential etymological pathways exist for this expression. The initial hypothesis posits a connection to historical dietary customs and prevalent societal behaviors, specifically the practice of agricultural laborers consuming bacon around an evening fire following a day's work. Given its high fat content, bacon necessitated prolonged mastication, providing an extended context for interpersonal communication, thus leading to an association between the act of eating bacon and protracted conversation. An alternative hypothesis attributes the idiom's origin to a sociolinguistic phenomenon, namely the Cockney rhyming slang characteristic of a specific

demographic within London. This linguistic mechanism could have facilitated the substitution of *have a chat* with *chew the fat* due to their phonetic resemblance within the rhyming slang system. As to the grammatical structure, the idiom falls into the category of verbal idioms as it can be represented as *Verb + Object.* The referential element of it is *fat,* which, due to its similar sound to chat, embodies this meaning. It can undergo grammatical variations.

This expression is also found in the article for The Orange County Register: *Linger in his shop for a while, and it is just a matter of time before some of the locals drop in to eye a new guitar, buy some strings, or* <u>*chew the fat.*</u> *And inevitably, a few will strum out a song or two while waiting* [74].

The issue is what the consumption tax increase law represents. It is a capitulation of the DPJ's reform agenda, and <u>*a blank cheque*</u> *for the Finance Ministry to keep running Japan the unaccountable way it has for the last 60 years, often counter to the best interests of the Japanese people and the Japanese economy* [46]. The expression used in this article means complete authority to do whatever you think is best or the full right to use any amount of money you need [41, p. 67]. In Britain, the expression gained popularity long ago due to the practice of monarchs sending blank checks with an official seal to certain recipients, which allowed the latter to dispose of any amount of money they needed. Although it is believed that this expression was used as early as the Arab kings in the 4th and 5th centuries, it is possible that it developed in English due to historical practices within the country without the influence of any external factors. This expression refers to verbless idioms and has the following structure: *Adjective (modifier) + Noun.* This is an example of a stable idiom where it is impossible to deduce a referential element, as both components are equally important for transferring phraseological meaning.

Also, in an article for the Taipei Times, there is an idiom *not bat an eyelid*: I*n an article published on this page on Tuesday, Kaohsiung-based journalist Julien Oeuillet wrote that "legions of people worldwide would care if a disaster occurred in South Korea or Japan, but the same people would* <u>*not bat an eyelid*</u> *if Taiwan*

disappeared" [63]. This expression means showing no sign of surprise or worry when something unexpected happens [40]. Its origins are not known, but given the human need to blink to moisten the eye and the natural reaction to blink when we are in danger, the expression may have very deep roots despite the lack of its first documentation. The expression refers to verbal idioms and has the following structure: *(Negative Particle) + Verb + Object.* The idiom can have grammatical variation in the form of the tense the verb *bat* is used in and geographic variation, as *not bat an eyelid* is a British variant, whereas there is an American English variant *not bat an eye.*

A cancerous growth in his left kidney meant removing the organ. Six months later, his remaining kidney gave out. Dialysis was inevitable, but Stoffregen refused to see it as a ball and chain - or worse, a life sentence [69]. In this excerpt from the article, the idiom is used, which comes from the real historical fact of the use of ball and chain as a physical restraint in the period from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The idiom became most widespread during the Industrial Revolution, when people associated work with prison. Over time, this image began to be transferred to a broader context and now means someone or something that limits your freedom to do what you want [1, p. 15]. In this quote, for the sake of a broader associative picture, the image of *a life sentence* is also used in a figurative sense, which reinforces the meaning of the described idiom and supports the tone of the statement. Grammatically, the expression has the form of a noun phrase: *Noun + Coordinating Conjunction + Noun.* Taking into consideration the structure of the idiom and that it functions in the sentence as a compound noun and cannot be split, it is suggested to classify the expression as a minimal idiom,m, as it is verbless but does not have any other parts of speech. It is a stable idiom, the referential element of which cannot be deduced.

The use of the idiom *backroom boy* was also detected: *Lincoln meets the three adroit hacks and immediately understands them. He knows this side of the poltroons, the fixers, the back-room boys* [56]. This expression is relatively modern compared to

the others described, as it was first used in his Beaverbrook speech in 1941, when he praised the scientists, researchers, and technicians who worked anonymously behind the scenes in the UK during World War II: *To whom must the praise be given? To the boys in the back rooms. They do not sit in the limelight, but they are the men who do all the work.* So the meaning of this idiom is people in an organization whose work is not seen by or is kept secret from the public [40]. The expression can have grammatical variations that refer to the grammatical category of the number of the word *boy.* Also, it can have orthographic variations according to the spelling of the word *back-room:* separately, together, or with a hyphen. The structure of the idiom can be presented as *Compound Adjective (Modifier) + Noun.* Thus, it falls into the category of verbless idioms. The referential object of it is the *backroom* since it concerns the main image for the idiom: done secretly or without attracting attention [40].

Another good anxiety-reliever: Bust a gut laughing. In a recent study presented to the American Psychological Society, students who watched an episode of Seinfeld before giving an impromptu speech had significantly lower stress levels than those who did not. [52] The exact origin of this expression is unknown, but we can assume that it has been around for centuries, as it is associated with hard work, literally, work that causes crepitation in the abdominal muscles. The idiom means to work very hard or make a big effort to achieve something [40]. In this example, the idiom is used to emphasize the extent to which something should be done (laughing hard), adding some exaggeration and thus giving the sentence a brighter color. The idiom has the following structure: *Verb + Object.* It makes it fall into the category of verbal idioms. The expression can have grammatical variation according to the tense the verb bust is used. Also, according to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the idiom may have two forms *bust a gut* and *bust one's gut.* So, it can also have lexical variation. As for the referential element, it is assumed that in this idiom it is gut, since gut is a common figurative element in a large number of idioms such as have the guts, gut feeling, spill your gut, gut reaction, etc. It can be concluded that this lexical item carries a wide range of figurative meanings that are understandable to representatives of the British

and English-speaking society in general. Given the meaning of idioms with this element, it may be related to the expression of emotions by physical sensations in the stomach area.

We find the same example in Backpacker magazine: *You need to know which sections of the trail will be casual uphill jaunts and which ones will cause you to bust a gut. That way, you can psychologically prepare yourself, plus know when the seemingly endless switchbacks will end* [64].

A vivid example of the idiom with a British historical context can be found in an article for Drag Illustrated: *It's going to be the jewel in someone's crown, and with how the NAPA Supra's been performing, we're gunning for it* [81]. Collins Dictionary gives the idiom the following definition: If you refer to an achievement or thing as the *jewel in someone's crown*, you mean that it is considered to be their greatest achievement or the thing they can be most proud of [41, p. 223]. The origin of the expression is clearly related to the monarchy and the crown as its main attribute, which later began to be used metaphorically to refer to the king, queen, or royal family. Literally, gemstones occupy the main place on the crown and are very valuable, but metaphorically, the expression jewel in the crown became known when it was used to refer to India, a British colony, as the most valuable of the conquered lands. The idiom falls into the category of verbless idioms as its structure is *Noun + Prepositional Phrase.* The idiom can have lexical variations, as it can have the form presented in the example or *jewel in the crown.* The referential element cannot be deduced due to the unity of the historical phrase.

In the Wall Street Journal, the idiom described in the previous section was found: *Some of the nation's biggest and most powerful companies exploited an unprecedented human crisis to grow bigger and more powerful, making sure to shed crocodile tears for the losers.*

Also, there were found examples of idioms whose origin is related to culinary customs, such as *eat humble pie,* and an idiom with musical referential elements such

as *to play second fiddle*: *The Committee, bless us! of Two Hundred, insist upon his lending these trophies (of his own buying) to his arch-enemy and supplanter Hunt; the poor crest and chop fallen Burdett is to eat humble pie, and play second fiddle.* Historically, pies have become an integral part of British cuisine, as this format of food was convenient to take with you when traveling or going to work, and it was available to representatives of all social strata. The expression comes from *umble* or *numble pie*, which dates back to around the 14th century and meant a pie made from offal meat, which was a rather poor food. However, over time, through a play on words, the expression eat humble pie was formed, meaning to admit that you were wrong [40]. The expression *play second fiddle* comes from the time of the first orchestras, where there was a yearly flute/violin that led the main melody and secondary melodies. Accordingly, it means to be less important or in a weaker position than someone else [40]. Both expressions refer to verbal idioms with the same grammatical structure: *Verb + Object modifier + Object.* They can have grammatical variations due to the change of the verb form of *eat* and *play.* The referential element for the first idiom is the adjective *humble* as it bears the main semantic load. In the second idiom, it is the *second fiddle,* meaning "secondary importance".

The same semantic element is found in the article for The Irish Catholic: *"The nuns have a finger in every pie," she tells him when he suggests exposing Sarah's plight. There's only a wall, she points out, separating "that place" from the school* [71], which means to be involved in and have influence over many different activities, often in a way that people do not approve of [40]. The genesis of this expression is supposed to be situated within domestic culinary environments, potentially arising from observations of individuals exhibiting "hyperactivity" for sampling multiple pies. The structure of this idiom is *Verb + Object + Prepositional Phrase.* It falls into the category of verbal idioms and can have grammatical variations according to the tense the verb *have* is used in.

So, global media platforms offer a rich, real-time landscape for studying language, where British idioms are frequently employed within a journalistic register. These culturally specific expressions serve to communicate efficiently and engage audiences, drawing upon shared understandings. Their analysis reveals contemporary trends in language use and the ongoing dissemination of cultural nuances in a globally connected world.

2.2.2 The usage of culturally specific idioms in articles' headlines

Idioms are also often used in article titles. This is due to their expressive function, which engages the imagination and subconscious understanding of the expression, sometimes creating ambiguity and piquing the reader's curiosity. It can also be explained by the function of conciseness, which allows you to announce the main idea of an article with one apt phrase.

For example, the headline *Coach's career is on a sticky wicket* [79] catches the eye. The origin and meaning of which was described in the previous section. In this example, the idiom is used for aesthetic purposes and carries an emotional load, as this expression can be replaced with the simple "in a difficult situation".

Another example is the article titled *Another string to your bow: machine learning prediction of the pharmacokinetic properties of small molecules* [50]. This article is a narrative review focused on the use of machine learning (ML) models for predicting the pharmacokinetic (PK) properties of small-molecule drugs. So in this case, we can talk about a completely figurative expression. It is likely that the origin of this expression is related to traditional activities, such as archery. The image of the bowstring as an important element without which it is impossible to make a shot has shifted to the concept of skills, talents, and resources. Thus, *to have another/more* than one *string to your bow* means to have more than one interest, skill, or resource that you can use if you need to [40]. The idiom can have both grammatical (tense of verb *have*) and lexical (*another/more*) variations. It is a verbal idiom as its structure is *Verb + Determiner/ Modifier + Object + Prepositional Phrase (Object Modifier),*

and it cannot act as a separate sentence. The referential element here is represented by a noun phrase *string to your bow.*

It is interesting to use the title *Another string to your bow* [74] for an article about two unusual and non-traditional bows for stringed instruments (violin and viola). The author shares pictures and details about their unique construction and historical context. It is assumed that this wording is a play on words and is used here ambiguously. This level of opacity provokes thought-creativity among readers.

The headline of the article *Spain Badly Off for Coal She Really Has but Three Stations in Cuba and Her Supply Would Soon Be Cut Off in War* [94] in the archive of The New York Times for April 1, 1898, was also found. In addition, the article itself contains the idiom *badly off*: In this respect, it is ascertained that no country of her naval rank is so badly off as Spain. The origin of the phraseological expressions *badly off for* and *badly off* cannot be traced, but dictionaries indicate that it is a peculiarly British expression and is used mainly in this variant of English. For example, in the Oxford idioms dictionary for learners of English [44, p. 14], as well as The Free Dictionary Online, Longman, and others. *Badly off for* means not having enough of sth [44, p.14], and *badly off* means not having much money or not being in a good situation [44, p.14]. The article uses the second meaning. Both idioms are examples of stable minimal idioms as they have neither a verb nor a noun; they are adverbial phrases. Correspondingly, it is impossible to name the referential element of the idioms.

The following example of the idiom was also found in the archive for 1900: *Back at headquarters, however, there was no cheer. Federal regulators had just combed through the books and, shocked by the widespread bad loans they had found, "read the riot act," according to one insider. After four years of solid earnings, the bank was in a crisis* [98]. The origin of this expression is related to an actual decree called the Riot Act, which was passed in Britain in 1715 in response to the growing number of riots in the country. The Jacobite Catholics rebelled against the new Hanoverian King George I, so Parliament quickly created and passed a tough law that

prohibited groups of 12 or more people from gathering "unlawfully and riotously." Nowadays, this expression has only a figurative meaning, namely to speak angrily to someone about something they have done and warn that person that they will be punished if it happens again [40]. The idiom has the following structure: *Verb + Object* and refers to verbal idioms. It can have grammatical variations. As to the referential element, it is represented by *riot act* as it is the name of of real legal document that inspired the idiom.

The next example is the title of the article, which is about the author's personal reflection on the concept of the "peasant" and its unexpected connection to the "hustler" mentality and the path to success: *Work Like A Peasant, Live Like A King* [76]. In this case, the phraseology is used to emphasize the peaks that can be achieved by working hard. The meaning of the idiom *live like a King* is to have a luxurious (= spending a lot of money) way of life [40]. In the title, the author uses two similes at once. The first one is the author's own *work, like a peasant*, since it is not recorded in dictionaries and has no reliable written agreement. And the second one, *live like a King*, is an idiom of British origin, which appeared as a result of the long existence of the monarchy. In contrast to the life of the peasants and most of the non-privileged population, the benefits enjoyed by the king were seen as very luxurious. Together, the two similes form a proverb. The expression can have grammatical (tense of verb *live*), lexical (*king/lord*), and orthographic (*k/King*) variations. It is an example of comparative idiom (simile) and has the following structure: *Verb + like + Noun,* and refers to verbal idioms. The referential element here is *king.*

In the following example, the same idiom is used in the title *Hot Reads: A King's Ransom* and in the main body of the article: *The K-State fan base has affectionately dubbed Anudike-Uzomah "King Felix" - a suitable enough nickname considering the Horned Frogs would've happily paid a king's ransom to keep him out of their backfield. On that afternoon two weeks ago, Anudike-Uzomah was simply overwhelming* [62]. The article is about an American football player and the salary paid to him by his team. To reinforce the meaning of the idiom, the player is called

"King Felix" in the same topic, which once again emphasizes the "wealth" of his salary. The idiom *a king's ransom* means a large amount of money [40] and comes from the Middle Ages, when it became common to demand ransom for people, and the more noble and important the person was, the more they asked for it. Over time, the expression began to be used figuratively. It is a stable verbless expression that has a structure *Determiner (Possessive Noun) + Noun.* The referential element in this idiom is the same as in the previous example: *king's.*

In the article *Medieval Monday - A King's Ransom* [68], the author talks about her novel *The Faithful Heart,* the main theme of which is king's ransom. The author says that this term comes directly from our good friend King Richard the Lionheart and his exploits in the Third Crusade [68]. In the title of the article, the expression is used in a literal sense, but for the sake of creating a humorous effect, emphasizing the spread of this phenomenon in medieval times and, so to speak, its commonness.

The next example is *Trump calls Iranian shootdown of Navy drone a 'fly in the ointment.' Say what?* [95]. It is used by the President in the citation: *"I imagine someone made a mistake," Trump said. Instead of saying that Iran had gone too far, he dismissed the attack as "a new wrinkle, a new fly in the ointment."*[95]. This expression has a biblical origin: *dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor* (Ecclesiastes 10:1) and for a long time was used literally, but later it acquired a figurative meaning, namely a single thing or person that is spoiling a situation that could have been very positive or enjoyable [40.] The structure of the idiom is as follows: *Noun + Prepositional Phrase.* It makes it fall into the category of verbless idioms. The idiom cannot have any grammatical variation, and it is suggested that the referential element of it cannot be derived, as it is a unified notion with all the elements playing an equal role.

The following example of an idiom has two forms: *It's a no-brainer that drinking coffee or tea right before you hit the sack won't do you any sleep favors.*[49] The expression *hit the sack* or *hit the hay* means to go to bed in order to sleep [40]. These expressions probably derive from the historical practice of using canvas sacks

filled with hay as mattresses. To "beat" the hay or sack could mean both the process of lying down on such a bedding and the practice of fluffing the hay inside for comfort before going to bed. Initially, "sleeping in hay" had a more literal meaning - sleeping in a barn where hay was stored. The idiom has the following structure: *Verb + Object,* and can have grammatical and lexical variations. The referential element here cannot be derived as all the elements are important for the meaning.

The following example is the title *Why Human 'Gremlins' are Being Specially Trained to <u>Throw a Spanner in the Works</u> at Mega Car Plant* [99]. The expression put/throw a spanner in the works means to do something that prevents a plan or activity from succeeding [40]. The expression originated in Britain in the 1800s, when the Luddite movement emerged - these were the first spontaneous protests of factory workers against the introduction of machines and capitalist exploitation of labor. People would purposely throw spanners at the equipment to stop the workflow. Over time, the expression came to mean any disruption of plans or work. The use of this idiom in the headline creates a slight dissonance given the content of the article: Ford's deliberate use of unsuitable parts in the design of cars as a test to see if their quality control systems can detect them. It is a verbal idiom whose structure is as follows: *Verb + Object + Prepositional Phrase.* The phrase can have grammatical variation in the face of the verb *throw* and geographic variation since the American counterpoint for the word *spanner* is *wrench*. It is suggested that the referential element in the idiom is the verbal phrase *throw a spanner* as it personifies the process of breaking down spoilage.

The same idiom is found in the title of the article for Responsible Investor: *Will Brexit <u>throw a spanner in the works</u> of the UK's green finance ambitions?* [75]. The use of the idiom in this example is intended to add emotional load, as this figurative expression could be replaced with a simple "negatively affect" or "have a negative effect" or "harm" the business.

In the title *Brutally Honest Emmy Ballot: 'Westworld' Incomprehensible, 'The Crown' <u>"Not My Cup of Tea"</u>* [53], the idiom *not my cup of tea* це відповідь Emmy

Ballot у інтерв'ю: *I respect The Crown, but not my cup of tea — sorry* [53]. The origin of the idiom is linked to the popularity of tea in the UK. Around the beginning of the 19th century, the expression *my cup of tea* appeared, meaning something you like. Much later, almost a century later, its antonym was coined, which, by the way, became much more popular than its predecessor and means: If something is not your cup of tea, it is not the type of thing that you like [40]. The structure of the idiom is *(Negative Particle) + Determiner (Possessive Pronoun) + Object + Object Modifier*. It falls into the category of verbless idioms, and the referential element is a noun phrase *cup of tea*.

This expression is also found in another interview: *At the start of the event, Murray said he would give his speech on what happened in politics to get Donald Trump elected. "He's not my cup of tea," he said later at the event of president.* This fact suggests that the idiom not my cup of tea is widely used in oral speech.

The article named *A Fool's Paradise - Dr. Ed Brenegar* [61] is about the pervasive influence of fear in our modern, media-saturated world and argues that skepticism and questioning are essential for finding truth and breaking free from this fear. In this case, we can talk about the function of conciseness, as this expression aptly and concisely describes the situation in which humanity has found itself due to the excessive popularity of social networks and how it affects the psyche. The grammatical structure of the idiom was analysed in the previous section.

Thus, article titles often employ idioms for their engaging and concise nature, capturing reader interest and hinting at the article's core message in a brief, expressive way.

Conclusion Part II

For this research, the scope of approximately 300 idioms was analysed, with 66 British culturally specific phraseological units used in the Fiction and mass media included in the paper. The samples were also randomly selected using the Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms and Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English, as well as linguistic corpora, which ensures the impartiality of the conclusions.

The origins and factors that influenced the emergence of each idiom were identified, including external and internal historical events and socio-cultural components of the UK.

The structure of the idioms was analyzed, and it was found that verbal idioms are the most common type of idioms (30%), and the most popular structure was *Verb + Object* (14%). All results are summarized in Appendix C.

In addition, the referential elements of each of the idioms were identified and it was proposed to distinguish the category of idioms whose reference element cannot be separated, since each component of the idiom is either equivalent to understanding the figurative meaning or, despite the complex structure of the idiom, due to historical or other factors, the concept is integral and cannot be divided.

There is still a lot of room for further research, as there are many other areas of British culturally specific idioms usage that need to be explored.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

We investigated culturally specific British idioms and explored the concept of an idiom in itself, thereby structuring the variability of its definitions. The main features used by many scientists to describe the idiom were non-compositionality, figuration, conventionality, and fixedness.

Based on the works of A. Makkai, P. Kvetko, S. Glucksberg, J. Seidl, and W. McMordie, we learnt about the proposed classifications of idioms and highlighted the key characteristics of idioms that scientists rely on during classification. In addition, the functions of idioms and the difference in terminology for the designation of idioms and comparative idioms in Eastern Europe and the Western world were investigated.

The semiotic and cultural aspects of idioms were studied on the basis of works of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Umberto Eco, Michael Agar and K. Risager. It was established that idioms are inseparable multiword semiotic units that are deeply connected to cultural and contextual frameworks.

As complex semiotic symbols, idioms carry culturally embedded meanings shaped by shared historical narratives, social values, and collective experiences. The concept of linguoculture underscores the inseparability of language and culture, positioning idioms as vital representations of a community's worldview and identity. It was established that the main factors contributing to the formation of figurative expressions of certain ethnic group are history, religious influences, geography, customs, national sports, social life, and, as established in Part II, literature.

We achieved the goal of the research and investigated the grammatical and semantic features of British idioms based on contextual examples of the use of comparative idioms in fiction and mass media. The origin and factors which contributed to the formation of figurative meaning of the analysed idioms were also established. The most frequent among all the mentioned factors were external and internal historical events and socio-cultural components of the UK.

The conducted analysis demonstrates that verbal idioms make up the largest structural category (30%), with the most common pattern being *verb* + *object*, such as in the idiom *chew the fat.* This group represents 14% of the examples, while other structures, verbless forms, full sentences, and minimal noun compounds – are distributed from 1 to 10%.

From the perspective of idiom components, most are stable in form (57%), meaning their structure is fixed and cannot undergo any variations. At the same time, grammatical variation is relatively frequent (43%), particularly in verb tenses or passive/active constructions. This shows that while many idioms are fixed, others allow some degree of syntactic flexibility without losing their figurative meaning.

Finally, orthographic and geographic variations – each at 14% - demonstrate how idioms can differ in spelling (*back-room boy vs. backroom boy*) or regional preference (*not bat an eyelid in British English vs. not bat an eye in American English*). These variations reflect the living nature of idioms, which evolve in use depending on cultural and linguistic context. Overall, idioms are both fixed and adaptable, forming a vivid and expressive layer of the English language.

The research results are generalised and presented in the form of tables in Appendices depicting the linguistic landscape investigated.

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SUMARY

Бакалаврська робота присвячена дослідженню культурно забарвлених британських ідіом. У роботі здійснено грунтовний аналіз лінгвокультурологічних особливостей формування фігуративних мовних одиниць, а також розглянуто їх характнристики з точки зору граматичної структури, семантики, походження та функціональних властивостей.

В основі роботи лежить комплексний методологічний підхід із застосуванням аналітичних методів дослідження. За допомогою описового методу визначено сутності, функції та класифікації ідіом; семантичний та контекстуальний аналіз використовувався для розкриття значення ідіом та особливостей їх функціонування в художніх текстах та ЗМІ. Зіставний метод застосовано для виявлення культурно зумовлених відмінностей у вживанні ідіом; культурологічний підхід для аналізу специфіки відображення національно-культурних реалій у британських ідіомах.

Ідіоми становлять важливу метафоричну та ілюстративну складову англійської мови, що є широкозастосована у багатьох сферах.

Бакалаврська робота починається з огляду існуючих основоположних вчень про ідіоми встановлюючи різницю між термінологією східної та західної лінгвістичної школи та визначаючи основні фактори, що лежать в основі грунтовних наукових визначень поняття ідіоми. Це некомпозиційність, фігуративність, умовність і фіксованість. Також структуризовано функції ідіом і визначено, що ідіоми використовуються для посилення комунікативного ефекту і, залежно від значення та наміру мовця, можуть виконувати різні функції. Описано різні підходи до класифікації даних мовних одиниць та їх семіотичні особливості. Крім того у роботі описуються фактори, що впливають на появу ідіом, такі як історія, релігійні впливи, географія, звичаї, національні види спорту та соціальне життя.

Докладні практичні розділи присвячені аналізу британських ідіом в контексті художньої літератури та ЗМІ. В дослідженні проведено комплексний аналіз граматичних структур вибраних ідіом, їх походження, та сталості їх конструкції.

У ході практичного аналізу бакалаврської роботитакож було описано художню літературу як фактор виникнення культурно забарвлених ідіом на прикладі твору "Аліса в країні чудес" Льюїса Керрола.

Отримані дані свідчать про те, що найбільш важливим фактором для набуття виразом фігуративного значення є зовнішні та внутрішні історичні події та соціокультурні складові Великої Британії.

Усі ідіоми були поділені на категорії відповідно до сталості їх конструкції. Таким чином було виявлено, що 57% (*blank cheque, ball and chain*) ідіом з вибірки є сталими, тобто не можуть мати жодних варіацій, інші 38% можуть мати граматичні варіації (*chew the fat (chew/chewed), bust a gut (bust/busted), Not bat an eyelid (bat/batted*) і серед них 3% піддаються орфографічним (*backroom boy → back room boy, back-room boy*) і 2% географічним варіаціям (*not bat an eyelid (BrE) vs. not bat an eye (AmE*), а також 8% лексичним варіаціям (*all is for the best vs. all for the bes*t).

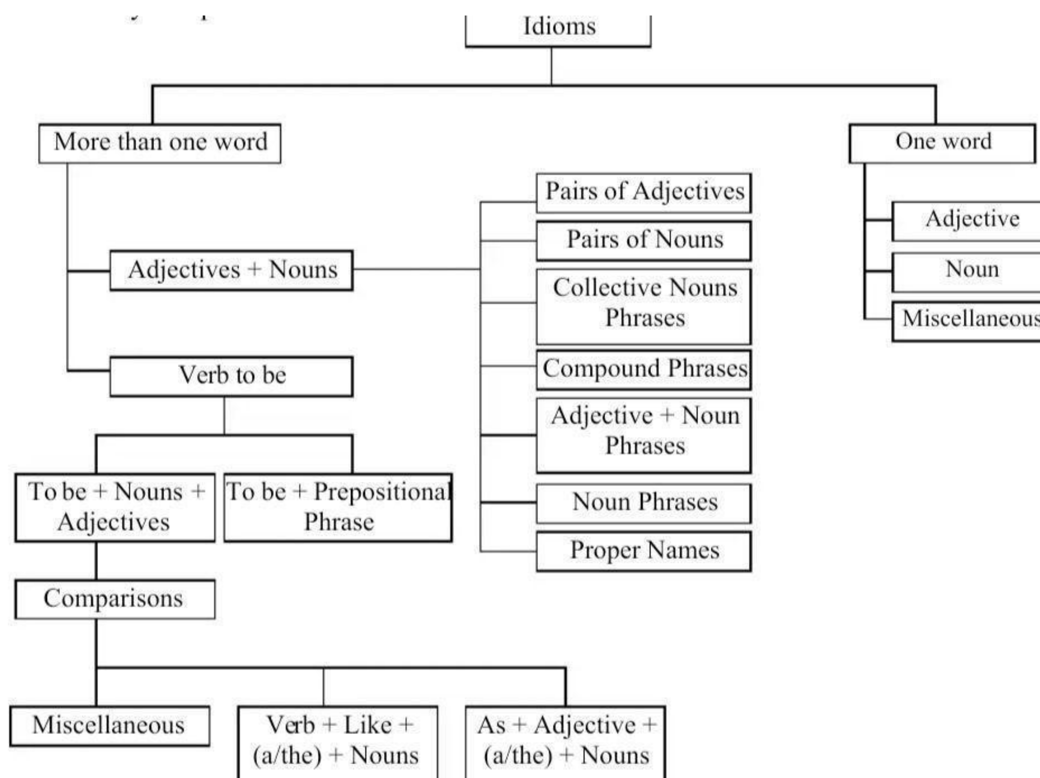
Також ідіоми були проаналізовані за граматичною структурою і виявлено, що найбільш вживаними є дієслівні ідіоми (30%), а найпоширенішою структурою є *verb + object* (14%). Крім цього було генералізовано та описано й структури ідіом, що відносяться до категорій бездієслівних, мінімальних ідіом та ідіом зі структурою речення.

Таким чином, у бакалаврській роботі комплексно досліджено культурно забарвлені британські ідіоми, виявлено їх лінгвокультурну природу, структурно-семантичні особливості, походження, функціональне розмаїття та ступінь стійкості. Аналіз практичного матеріалу з літератури та засобів масової

інформації підтвердив важливість історичних та соціокультурних чинників у формуванні цих мовних одиниць та їх важливу роль у комунікації.

APPENDICES

Appendix A



[19, p. 8]

Appendix B

№	Idiom	Meaning
1	A fool's paradise	A situation where a person is living in a false sense of happiness
2	A hair out of place	To look very neat and perfect
3	Always busy as bees	Very busy, constantly active
4	An ace	To almost achieve something, coming very close to it

5	As easy as pie	Very simple or straightforward
6	As right as rain	Perfectly healthy or in good order
7	As significant as a game of cricket	Something very important or serious
8	A storm in a teacup	A great fuss made about something trivial
9	Aye, dark as coal	Very dark, like coal
10	Backroom boy	Someone whose work is not visible or public
11	Ball and chain	Something or someone that limits your freedom
12	Below the belt	An unfair or inappropriate action
13	Born in the purple	Born into a position of privilege, especially royalty
14	Bust a gut	To work very hard or make a big effort
15	Come rain or shine	No matter what happens
16	Cry in one's beer	To complain self-pityingly
17	Curiosity killed the cat	A warning not to be too inquisitive
18	Devil-may-care	Not considering the results of actions
19	Don't count one's chickens before they hatch	Don't plan for something before it happens
20	Fat as a whale and waddling as a swan	Very fat and waddling awkwardly
21	Fly off the handle	To react in a very angry way
22	Get down to business	To start talking about the subject to be discussed
23	Get into one's stride	To start performing well after a slow start
24	Give in	To finally agree after resisting

25	Give someone the cold shoulder	To intentionally ignore someone
26	Go through thick and thin	To support someone in good and bad times
27	Go/fall down the rabbit hole	To enter a strange, complex, or chaotic situation
28	Go in one ear and out the other	To immediately forget or ignore something
29	Has a bee in his (old) bonnet	To be obsessed with some idea
30	Hit the nail on the head	To be exactly right
31	Hit the sack / hit the hay	To go to bed
32	In the long run	Over a long period of time
33	Jewel in someone's crown	The greatest achievement
34	Kick the bucket	To die
35	Like seared box tree, or ashes, dead and cold	Dead and cold
36	Lit up like a Christmas tree	To appear happy, excited, or flashy
37	Love is blind	Love makes people overlook faults
38	Neck and neck	Very close in a race or competition
39	Never to get to first base	To not even begin what you intend
40	Not bat an eyelid	To show no surprise
41	Not lift a finger	To not help
42	Not my cup of tea	Not something I like

43	Nosy parker / nosy Parker	A person too interested in others' affairs
44	On a sticky wicket	In a difficult or awkward situation
45	On cloud nine	Extremely happy
46	On the beer	To be drinking beer
47	On the rampage	To behave violently or destructively
48	Once in a blue moon	Very rarely
49	Open somebody's eyes	To make someone realize something surprising
50	Out for the count	Defeated, unable to continue
51	Pull one’s punches	To hold back from full force
52	Queen it over	To behave in a superior or bossy way
53	Skeleton in the closet/cupboard	An embarrassing secret
54	Skinners' Company	To be in a disorganized or difficult situation
55	Small beer	Something unimportant
56	Speak of the devil, and he shall appear	Used when someone appears while being discussed
57	Steal my thunder	To take credit for someone else's idea
58	Straight from the horse’s mouth	Directly from the original source
59	Strike while the iron is hot	Act immediately while the opportunity exists
60	Sweet as bragget or as mead	Very sweet
61	Sweet as a rose in a bower	Extremely sweet

62	That’s no cricket	Not fair or proper
63	The proof of the pudding	The real value is known only after trying
64	The White House	Official residence of the US president
65	Throw a spanner in the works	To disrupt or sabotage a plan
66	To baby-sit	To take care of someone’s child temporarily
67	To be at daggers drawn	In a state of hostility
68	To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth	To be born into wealth and privilege
69	To be in deep water	To be in trouble
70	To be someone’s cup of tea	To be liked or preferred
71	To beat around the bush	To avoid the main topic
72	To boil the ocean	To attempt the impossible
73	To chase a white rabbit	To pursue something unattainable
74	To cost an arm and a leg	To be very expensive
75	To cut no ice	To have no influence
76	To do someone proud	To treat someone well, often with food
77	To follow the sea	To pursue a maritime profession
78	To play cricket	To act fairly and ethically
79	Turn a blind eye	To ignore something wrong
80	Turn king's evidence	To inform authorities, often for leniency
81	Until the cows come home	For a very long time
82	Variety is the spice of	Diversity makes life interesting

	life	
83	Walking on air	Extremely happy
84	When pigs fly	Something that will never happen
85	Wild goose chase	A futile pursuit
86	Win hands down	To win easily and decisively
87	Win in a canter	To win without much effort
88	You can’t judge a book by its cover	Don’t judge by appearances
89	Your guess is as good as mine	I don’t know either
90	Zero in on	To focus on something

Appendix C

Type of idiom	**Structure**	**Examle**	**Percentage**
Verbal	Verb + Object	Chew the fat (chat informally)	14%
	Linking Verb\Verb (+ Adjective) + Comparative Conjunction + Object	Be busy as bees (be moving about quickly, doing many things)	9,9 %
	Verb+ Prepositional Phrase + Coordinating Conjunction +	Go in one ear and out the other (quickly forget sth)	0,6%

	Prepositional Phrase		
	Verb + Object + Prepositional Phrase	Wear your heart on your sleeve (make one's feelings apparent)	4%
	Verb + Prepositional Phrase	Pay through the nose (pay too much money)	1,3%
Verbless	Modifier + Noun	Blank cheque (full authority)	6,6%
	Noun + Prepositional Phrase	A heart of gold (to be very kind and generous)	2,6%
Sentence	Verb + Time Conjunction + Noun + Linking Verb + Adjective	Strike while the iron is hot (make use of an opportunity immediately)	0,6%
	Conjunction + Pronoun + Vocative	Et tu, Brutè? (and you (too)	0,6%
	Noun + Linking Verb + Predicative (Modifier)	Love is blind (loving someone makes you unable to see their faults)	2%

	Modifier + Noun + Linking Verb + Predicative	An Englishman's home is his castle (said to mean that people have the right to do what they want in their own home, and that other people or the state have no right to interfere in people's private lives)	0,6%
Minimal	Noun (compound)	On the rampage (rush about angrily)	5,28%

Appendix D

Types of Components	Examples	Percentage
Stable	Blank cheque, Ball and chain	57%
Grammatical Variation	Chew the fat (chew/chewed), Bust a gut (bust/busted), Not bat an eyelid (bat/batted)	38%
Orthographic	Backroom boy → back room boy,	3%

Variations	*back-room boy*	
Geographic Variations	Not bat an eyelid (BrE) vs. Not bat an eye (AmE)	2%
Lexical Variations	All is for the best vs. All for the best	8%