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Culturally specific idioms in British English

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INTRODUCTION

The role of culture in our life is hard to overestimate. The underlying beliefs and assumptions that shape people's world perception are stored with its extents. Culture as a powerful tool can give a vivid representation of any nation telling a lot about its mentality, history, conventions, social tendencies and characteristic. Besides, it acquires a new perspective in analysis being an important source of formation and etymological peculiarities of linguistic units, because cultural components endow them with new, multi-faceted significance and help to reflect the national worldview.

The lexical-semantic structure of a language is always influenced by the aforementioned factors and as a result it is possible to single out a separate lexical group formed by the idioms.

The field of phraseology was investigated by both native and foreign scholars, such as R.P. Zorivchak, O.O. Selivanova, O.D. Ponomariv, C.Fernando, R.Gläser, R.Jackendoff, G.Lakoff, R.Moon and others.

The term "idiom" can be widely understood. Generally, idioms include word combinations that are characterized by their belonging the nominative units, full or partial idiomaticity, stability and reproducibility. Despite the large number of basic reseaches in the field of phraseology, there is no common term or definition of "idiom".

On account of the great number of terminological doublets there are divergent synonyms of the idiom, they are the following: a stable phrase, a phraseological phrase, a phraseological unit, a set phrase, a set expression, an idiomatism, an inseparable phrase, a phrase, a formula.

The **relevance of the research** is determined by the insufficient study of the English idioms with the culturally-marked components or etymological properties and the need for their complex understanding: the features of the component composition, significance of a cultural constituent, its evaluative properties and functions.

The **object** of the research is the concept of “culture” and its place in the phraseological system of the English language.

The **subject** is represented by the analysis and evaluation of the idioms with the origins influenced by different phenomena in the British culture.

The purpose of this work is to take a careful examination of the English idioms containing a component of a cultural denomination and determine their significance in the language picture of the world of the British people. The notion of culture as one of the most important categories in linguistics is involved in determining the manifestation of the common associations and particular vision of the native speakers. They reflect the cultural realia, help to identify the specific features of the idioms and study their origins. In the work, the primary focus is put on the idioms that relate to such thematic fields as historical development, geography, religion, customs and habits, literature, sport and entertainment, animals. Their formation and semantic potential are studied from the cultural prospects. The analysis also includes the category of evaluation. The concepts of the positive, the negative and the neutral give a better understanding of the world perceived by the representatives of a particular culture. The idioms with etymological implications are exemplified and analyzed in details in the second part of the research.

In order to fulfill the aim of the research, it is important to outline the following **tasks**:

1) To define the corpus of the English idioms with a cultural component.
2) To identify their origins and relation to the British culture.
3) To analyze the meanings of the culturally-marked idioms.
4) To group the idioms into thematic fields according to their cultural manifestation.
5) To categorize the idioms with a cultural constituent according to the number of the phenomena they indicate.
6) To point out how the presence of the cultural component influences the evaluative sense of the idiom.

7) To trace how the semantics of idioms have modified over time. with different color manifestations relate to the same thematic fields.

Solving the aforementioned set of goals is supported by the method of system analysis, which is of crucial importance for such type of investigation, and some other specific scientific **methods and techniques**:

- description (in characterizing structural organization, component composition, semantic properties and relationships of phraseological units);
- semantic identification (when identifying the meaning of a single unit, a whole group);
- comparison (in finding the differences or similarities in the origins of stable phrases; comparing evaluative meanings of divergent idioms with the same component);
- component analysis (in the analysis of component composition, structural features of the idiomatic units).

The **material** for the paper includes 255 idioms that was taken from the dictionaries of idioms: *Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English, Cambridge Dictionary, Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms.*

The study includes two parts. The first part encompasses 5 chapters. The first is devoted to linguistic features of the idiom, provides definitions proposed by different researchers, dwells on the systematics of the set expressions. The second chapter represents information about divergent classifications of the idioms provided by scholars, the functions of the idioms in the written and oral discourse. The third chapter focuses on the nature of formation and origins of the idioms. An issue in the fourth part is the “cultural concept” notion, its features, semantic potential and methods of interpretation. The meaningfulness of evaluation as a linguistic category is also examined. The aspects presented further on are connected to the linguoculturological studies, approaches to examine the cognitive basis of the idioms and their place in the national world perception.

The research part consists of eight chapters that introduce the detailed analysis of idioms with the cultural components referring to history, geography, religion,

traditions, literature, sports, entertainment and animals. The part suggests how the cultural constituent is connected to the meaning and how the semantic groups are expanded due to that phenomenon.

I. Theoretical Framework of the Research

1.1 Idiom as a linguistic unit: definition and general characteristics

Crystal said that in a general, pre-theoretical sense, the term unit is often used in linguistics to indicate any entity which comprises the focus of an enquiry. There are four main categories in Hallidayan linguistics that include such concepts, as the term, the class, the structure, the system. However, the notion of term has a special status. In addition, the unit is the stretch of language that conveys grammatical patterns, and within which the grammatical standards are applied. [46, p. 503]

DiSciullo and Williams (1987) stated that idioms may be stored in the lexicon. According to the researchers, listedness is the most crucial aspect of being part of the lexicon. [15, p.87] They write that an object in the lexicon must always possess a meaning which cannot be computed compositionally, that is why its sense must be memorized.

Their overall point is that listedness is no more intrinsically characteristic of words than it is of phrases. Some words and some phrases are listed, but infinitely many of each are not. Concluding the arguments, it was underlined that there is nothing more to say about the idioms than they are syntactic objects and that they are listed because of their failure to have a predictable property (usually their meaning).

American linguist Ray Jackendoff (1997) stated that an idiom is a lexical item whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of its parts and which can only be fully understood as a unit. The researcher asserted the significance of idioms with regard to knowledge of language. The author also placed the idioms in the lexicon and adopted a term listeme.

Being considered a part of lexicon an idiom implies a linguistic unit, that is why any idiom possesses internal linguistic structure: syntax, semantics, morphology,

phonology. It consists of elements that are invariable and cannot be divided from the stance of a certain level of segmentation of a text (phonological, morphological, etc.) and that are opposed to one another in the system corresponding to this level.

Generally, each language unit has a potential to exist solely, as it serves a particular purpose, that is performs a particular function, as distinct from another language unit.

As a result, idioms as linguistic units cannot be disintegrated into smaller units possessing a unique nominative function, as the whole meaning may be lost or distorted.

Some scholars tend to believe that idioms are stored in the conceptual system of a certain language and serve as products of it. Zoltán Kövecses in his fundamental study *Idioms: A View from Cognitive Semantics* (1996) states that idiomatic expressions are not simply a matter of language, i.e. a matter of lexicon. Their semantic peculiarities do not depend on the meanings of the separate constituent parts, they rather emerge from people's general world understanding represented in the system of concepts. In other words, idioms (or, at least, the majority of them) are conceptual, and not linguistic, in nature [24, p.330]. That is why they have a motivated meaning which was not reasonably chosen.

The latter idea was profoundly studied by Lakoff. According to the linguist, the main reason for the occurrence of certain words in a lot of idioms can be explained due to the mechanism of the cognitive thinking. It connects knowledge domains to the semantics of idioms. Lakoff distinguishes various tools, conventional knowledge being one of them. The researcher also underlined that such figures of speech, as metonymy or metaphors can also be integrated into the aforementioned structure [26, p.121].

The branch of linguistics that deals with fixed word-combinations characterized by stability in structure and certain transference of meaning is called phraseology.

In the present scientific world, there is no single definition of a *phraseologism* that would satisfy all the philologists. The major explanation is that each scientist has

his own set of characteristics that, in his opinion, distinguish set expressions from other lexical units, which he considers the most significant.

A typical definition of the term idiom can be found in the Cambridge Dictionary, it says: “an idiom is a group of words fixed in a certain order that have a particular meaning that is different from the connotation of the separate words” [50]. Because these expressions are, in the broad sense, metaphorical, one cannot usually discover their meanings by looking up the individual words in the dictionary; because they are more or less invariable, both in wording and in grammatical ways, they cannot be changed in the way literal expressions are normally varied, whether in speech or writing.

While inseparability is one of the important characteristics that distinguishes idioms from other linguistic units, it is also vital to note that the formation of phraseological units happens mainly through rethinking of the free phrases, that is through their metaphorization. The metaphorical transformation ensures a completely new semantic development and makes analyzing each component separately impossible. It provides the integrity of meaning to the phrase.

Another feature of an idiom is its expressiveness. Cognitive linguist Mark Johnson considered it to be an integral part of the idiomatic expressions, as they are endowed with an emotional intensity, despite the fact that they are figurative expressions. Some idioms are considered more expressive than others because of their vivid imagery or emotional impact. It is especially confirmed by the fact that phraseologisms express very concrete objects, for example, personality traits, practical human actions, emotions, etc. They do not name the concept or object as it exists, but reconsider and reevaluate them. The scientist believes that each idiomatic phrase contains unique qualities of a given language, is used to convey humor, sarcasm, irony and other forms if indirect communication. Johnson stresses the potential of an idiom to transmit complex ideas in a memorable way that goes beyond the literal meaning of words. Moreover, idioms can be used to create a sense of unity or belonging within a group or community that shares the same language and cultural

references. In that way, they can be an indicator of the cultural understanding [25, p.47-56].

Interestingly, Seidl and McMordie pointed out that in the long-term process of a culture development phraseological units tend to fix and pass on from generation to generation cultural beliefs, certain stereotypes, standards and archetypes. They represent the folk soul of any national language which expresses the spirit and identity of a nation. Phraseology is an important element of the linguistic picture of the world. Phraseological units always appeal to the subject, that is, they arise mainly in order to interpret, evaluate and express the subjective attitude to the world, and not to describe it. [33, p. 12-13]

Moon prepared a text-based study of idioms where she argues that fixed expressions can be entirely understood only if they are taken into account together with the texts in which they occur. As a lexicographer she provides a lexicological, rather than a computational analysis, and considers the area of lexis in detail. The author underlines the significance of the fixed expressions because they convey specific evaluations to the text. Moon defines the idiom as a unit that is fixed and semantically opaque or metaphorical, or, traditionally, 'not the sum of its parts', exemplifying this formulation with *kick the bucket* and *spill the beans* [28, p.4].

From a linguistic point of view, idioms present a number of interesting syntactic properties that distinguish them from other types of expressions.

First, an idiom is always an independent member of the sentence. Its components are never analyzed separable, only as a phraseological whole.

Second, idioms can also exhibit syntactic variability, which means that they can appear in different forms depending on the context in which they are used. For example, the idiom *kick the bucket* can be used in the present tense *(I'm afraid my grandfather is going to kick the bucket soon*), the past tense (*He kicked the bucket last week*), or the future tense (*If I don't stop smoking, I'll kick the bucket early*). This syntactic variability allows idioms to be used in a wide range of situations.

It should be noted that we cannot normally change the words, their order, or the grammatical forms in the same way as changing non-idiomatic expression. In other words, idioms are basically fixed expressions [8, p. 33].

Thus, summarizing the existing materials presented by various scientists in the field of linguistics, namely phraseology, regarding the definition of the term “idiom” we can conclude that there is no generally accepted stating of it, but the already existed definitions differ a little in their content, volume and style of the wording itself. But, it would be fair to say that, in general, the most important aspect of any definition is its essence, which remains more or less stable. Moreover, images that are embedded in phraseological units serve as a reflection of national identity of the people and therefore idioms may emphasize the national character.

1.2 Classification of idioms and their functions

The majority of linguists and grammarians state that the categorization of idioms is a huge challenge because there are a lot of aspects that must be taken into consideration while analyzing and referring them to a particular category. Various types cause differences in the ways the idioms are rendered and understood.

Generally, Swiss linguist Charles Bally was the first researcher who suggested the way to structure idioms into two main groups:

- free phrases - the phrases which can be disintegrated into components and incorporated into other word combinations and expressions;
- phraseological units – phrases that consist of related to each other words that individually make no sense. [6, p.89]

While this division was a starting point for further researches, a number of scientists consider it controversial, as there are no exact criteria for classifying idiomatic expressions. The aforementioned groups do not rely on specific linguistic basis, they rather imply a sense of language and one’s intuition while approaching the phrases. However, distinctive signs and systematic approach are the main factors of the classification concept.

There exist different ways of classifying idioms in modern linguistics. Scientists approach them structurally, semantically, grammatically, functionally and stylistically. The number of studies from a cognitive scientific perspective enabled the linguists to generate important psycholinguistic conclusions that show how idioms can be perceived and processed by human brains and mind.

Fernando stated that there are subsets of idioms: *pure idioms* which have almost no variation and always obtain figurative meaning. Moreover, idioms of this type are supposed to be *opaque* (e.g. *to spill the beans* doesn't imply the beans at all). It means that there is no semantic relation between the meaning of the idiom and its constituents. *Semi-idioms* usually have one or more literal components and only one with non-literal meaning. That is why it is possible to state that they are *semi-opaque* (e.g. *foot the bill* standing for 'pay'). *Literal idioms* can have little variation, in most cases they are constant. They are *transparent*, for they can be interpreted based on their components (e.g. *of course, in any case, for certain*) [16, p. 60].

The criteria that have been taken into consideration by linguists include the semantic transparency and the compositionality of idioms. Thus, there are *non-compositional, partially compositional, and fully compositional idioms* [9, p. 73].

In *noncompositional idioms*, there exist no semantic connection between the idiom's constituent parts and their connotation. In *partially compositional idioms*, it is possible to discern and use the meaning of the constituent parts to explain the meaning of the idiom. Is spite of the fact that one cannot immediately guess that the idiom *to kick the bucket* means to die, the factual meaning of the separate words limits the proper comprehension and its fields of use. In *fully compositional idioms*, the elements have the potential to display the idiomatic counterparts, as in the idiom *pop the question*.

The ideas of Glucksberg were supported by other linguists. However, Nunberg didn't consider *partially compositional idioms* as a separate group and prepared a more generalized classification outlining only two approaches to classify idioms:

- *non-compositional approach* which focuses on the analysis of idioms as long words that function as lexical entries with peculiar syntactical and semantic

characteristics. This method allows some basic associations of their nonliteral meanings with the free word arrangement;

- *compositional approach* is based on the syntactic and semantic features of the non-arbitrary inner structure of the idioms. Nurnberg provides this classification method with two more subclasses – decomposable and non-decomposable idioms. He argues that the components of the decomposable idioms influence the interpretation of the overall implication (e.g. *to pop the question* where *pop* stands for sudden and *the question* is a marriage proposal). In the non-decomposable idioms the original meaning of the words doesn't contribute to the overall sense, the components rather produce a new idiomatic meaning (e.g. *to kick the bucket*).

While cooperating with Sag and Wasow, Nurnberg introduced special terms to distinguish the idioms. They are *idiomatic phrases (IPs)* and *idiomatically combining expressions (ICEs)*. Idiomatic phrases have the same features as the non-decomposable idioms, because their components do not affect the overall meaning. Idiomatically combining expressions, however, mean the opposite, that is the semantics of the idioms is possible to predict from its constituent parts.

Another idiom classification is based on the orthogonal connotational aspects, such as transparency, compositionality and conventionality:

- transparency indicates the extent to which the primary motivation of the phrases in question is comprehensive;
- compositionality is the analysis of the idiom parts and their contribution to the general meaning of the expression;
- conventionality is about a degree to which the language picture of the world may be reflected in the idiomatic structural and semantic peculiarities. [29, p.498]

The researchers concluded the idiomatic phrases are unique expressions. Even though they have some general similarities with the idiomatically combining expressions, the triple distinction of connotative features demonstrates that idiomatic

phrases are characteristic of a lower degree of transparency, a higher conventionality and a lower degree of compositionality.

The classification of idioms provided by Vinogradov is one of the most significant and widely-used among scholars. The degree of motivation is correlated with the indivisibility, inflexibility and semantic unity of the idiomatic expression. He provided semantic features of idioms. So, it is possible to distinguish *phraseological collocations, phraseological unities and phraseological fusions*.

Phraseological collocations obtain the following characteristics: a word with a phraseological meaning, a word with a literal meaning, presence of these two components forms an absolute duality; absence of homonyms. It should be stressed that it is always possible to use some substitutions, but they must not destroy the metaphoric sense of the elements.

In the *phraseological unities* one can predict the meaning of the whole idiomatic expression from the separate components, the metonymical and metaphorical changes help to maintain emotive or evaluative imagery, which is usually influenced by homonyms. It is possible to divide these idioms, they syntactically unite parts of the sentences.

Phraseological fusions include archaic words, they do not possess homonyms. The meanings cannot be inferred from the implications of the unities' components. These are unmotivated expressions. [3, p.140]

Comparing the semantic classifications proposed by Vinogradov and Fernando, it is possible to trace the similarities between them. Pure idioms may coincide with phraseological fusions. The description of semi-idioms provided by Fernando is similar to the description of the phraseological collocations. Literal idioms, as Fernando stated, can be understood due to the direct meaning of separate components. It is related to the phraseological unities.

As to the grammatical classification, it was clearly defined by Seidl and McMordie. They assumed that idioms take various structures and forms. An idiom can be characterized by a regular structure, but also have an irregular and a

grammatically inaccurate form. The semantic clarity doesn't depend on the grammatical correctness. Thus, the researchers suggested the following classification:

1. Form irregular, meaning clear (e.g. *to do someone proud, to do the dirty on someone, to give someone to understand*);
2. Form regular, meaning unclear (e.g. *to cut no ice, to have a bee in one's bonnet, to bring the house down*);
3. Form irregular, meaning unclear (e.g. *to be at daggers drown, to be at large, to do great guns*) [33, p.13].

The linguists underline that the second group encompasses most of the English idioms, as they have a regular form, but the meaning is usually incomprehensible. Despite this fact, even in this group there are idioms more understandable than others (the meaning of the idiom *to give someone the green light, which means to allow, to give permission,* is predictable, as the green light often stands for approval, permission). Other idiomatic expressions can be challenging to interpret, as their separate words lack association with the primary meaning. For instance, *to carry the can, to call the shots, to drop a brick.*

Moreover, Seidl and McMordie mention the special category of fixed idioms the parts of which cannot be altered, with the exception of verb tenses. They include *to fight shy of something, to get down to business, to paint the town red* etc. The other number of idioms may sometimes deviate and assume variants: *to come to a bad/untimely/no good/sticky/nasty end; a hard/tough nut to crack.*

Seidl and McMordie devoted much attention to the etymological classification and outlined different groups:

1. military idioms *(on the front lines, armed to the teeth, arrow in the quiver);*
2. agricultural idioms *(to lead someone up the garden path, to separate the wheat from the chaff, to make hay while the sun shines);*
3. biblical idioms *(to put words in someone's mouth, to go the extra mile, to kill the fatted calf);*
4. literary idioms *(the green-eyed monster, it's Greek to me, to breathe*

one's last);

5. household idioms *(everything but the kitchen sink, to hit the ceiling, to wake up on the wrong side of bed);*

6. nautical idioms *(to run a tight ship, to go by the board, to be between the devil and the deep blue sea);*

7. animal idioms *(to have a cow, to look like mutton dressed as lamb, to make a pig on oneself);*

8. body part idioms *(to break a leg, on the tip of one's tongue, to cost an arm and a leg);*

9. colour idioms *(to feel blue, to tun a red light, a golden opportunity);*

10. cooking idioms *(cooking on gas, to turn up the heat, to eat a humble pie).* [33, p.5-8]

Such scholars as Seidl and McMordie (1955), I.V.Arnold (1981), Simpson (2003) stressed that idioms can be organized into parts of speech:

a) noun idioms – phrases that denote objects and living creatures *(a cog in the machine, the root of the trouble, a drop in the ocean);*

b) verbal idioms – phrases that denote actions, emotions, states *(to call a spade a spade, to do a bunk);*

c) adjectival idioms- phrases that denote qualities *(a bitter pill, a close shave, a black sheep);*

d) idioms with prepositions *(above board, in a scrape, on the stroke of);*

e) idioms with comparisons *(as bold as brass, as old as the hills, go like the wind).* [33, p.5-8]

In her study *A Corpus-Based Study of Idioms in Academic Speech (2003),* R.Simpson gives special attention to the lexical expressive means and stylistic devices of the English vocabulary, especially to the peculiar use of set expressions. An important conclusion outlined on the basis of her research is that almost every good writer or speaker will make use of language idioms, sayings and proverbs. Idiomatic expressions tend to enrich and elaborate the literary language. Their universalism lies behind the fact that they always help the author, speaker to convey

subtle implications to the readers and audience. Conciseness is another aspect of making the use of idioms. Sometimes they can easily substitute the sense of the whole sentences just in a few words keeping the complicacy of the meanings in the text. [38, p.419 – 424]

Generally, idiomaticity gives space for imagination by conveying the plurality of interpretation in the text. The primary implication of the author is to be preserved.

There are constant functions, which are relevant to all the phraseological units, and variable, which can be attributed only to some classes of phraseological units. Idioms encompass such constant functions as the nominative, cognitive and communicative ones.

The nominative function means that idioms have the capability to designate the objects of reality by means of language in the speech activity. This also includes the denotation of the processes, actions and activities.

The cognitive function supplements the function described before. It means that the objects of reality are reflected through the socially-determined factors in human consciousness. Thus, idioms provide interesting insights into the use of words and the mental processes of the speakers.

The communicative function is usually connected with the cultural identity of the utterance [18, p. 87]. Idioms are communicative or message means. Moreover, the communicative function encompasses some traits of the nominative and cognitive functions which arranges a unique kind of a dialectic unity. The idiomatic system of the English language is entitled in this function.

According to Cameron, the referential and pragmatic functions are two main categories which should be taken while considering the functional aspect of idioms. The pragmatic, or cognitive, function concerns the human interest, surprise and delight. As to the referential function, it appeals to the mental processes and states; it may describe a person, a concept, a certain quality, an object and an action. [10, p.41]

Fernando prepared a more detailed classification of the referential function of idioms. He mentions ideational, interpersonal and relational ones. They operate on the different levels. The functions have different characteristics:

- ideational function is used to denote the essence of actions (*to pull an invisible string*), people and things (*to make rather a fool of myself*), and situation (*to be under the thumb of one's family*);
- interpersonal function refers to interaction through directives (*to put it straight*), apologies (*I beg your pardon*) and greetings (*Good afternoon*);
- relational function occupies a special place in the study of idioms. It provides the discourse coherence and cohesion in the phrases. It may complete the integration of information *(on the one hand; on the other hand; in addition)* and also order it *(in the first/second place)* [16, p.115-124].

Hence, there have been several attempts to classify idioms. The structural, semantic and syntactic features were the most significant factors to make a distinction between them. It was also proved that the stylistic function plays another crucial role, as it serves for achievement of the speaker's intention. But it should be noted that the realization of this function is possible only through the fusion of emotional, expressive and evaluative connotations of language means because it provides the transmission of expressive, emotional, evaluative and aesthetic information. The majority of linguists distinguish characterological, descriptive, emotive and evaluative functions, but in the process of specific stylistic analysis it is always possible to outline some other, more peculiar categories of stylistic functions.

1.3 Origins and formation of idioms

The formation of idioms is the best proof that the language still functions. Ponomariv stated that if a phraseological unit is relatively new it is called a *phraseological neologism* [Ponomariv, p. 340]. He maintains the fact that these idioms are usually coined by one person and can be regarded as idioms only when people start intensively using it. The main disadvantage of this phenomenon is that the author remains unknown. In addition, famous people, publicists, writers also take an active part in the formation of idioms. They enrich the languages with the phraseological neologisms using them in fairy tales, fables, novels and works in general.

The creation of a phraseme is considered to be a linguistic phenomenon, but just like other lexical unit, idioms tend to vanish from the system of the language. According to the linguist Ponomariv, there exist two reasons for that and they bear inner and outer nature. Referring to inner reasons, the researcher points out that there are some obstacles that prevent an idiom form further usage and development: words in the idioms are substituted on a regular basis, people embody them with their own sense and associations, that is why an idiom becomes unknown to the next generation. The most dangerous result of it is that an idiom loses its valuable meaning and some important cultural roots that stand behind it. The outer factors lie in some inevitable processes in society. Any idiom seems unnecessary when it represents a figurative meaning of the objects that do not exist anymore. In this case, people reject the idiom because of its inanity. [2, p.25-38]

The sources of the origin of phraseological units in modern English are very diverse. Conventionally, all of them can be divided into two groups: native English and borrowed ones. Borrowings, in turn, are subdivided into interlingual and intralingual. Thus, three groups of phraseological units can be distinguished:

- native English phraseological units;
- interlanguage borrowings, that is, phraseological units borrowed from foreign languages by one or another type of translation;
- intralingual borrowings, that is, phraseological units borrowed from American and other variants of the English language.

Under the category of the native English phraseological units it is also possible to outline some groups of idioms which possess specific features and may be categorized among them. They do not have an author and are mostly associated with the social life, customs and traditions of the English people or with realities and historical facts. For example, the roots of the phrase *to be caught red-handed* may be found in the 15th-century Scotland. In the Scots law there was a remark that one should be regarded as a villain when their hands are covered with blood. It meant that a person butchered an animal that was not in their property. The Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott's deployed this expression in his novel "Ivanhoe" (1819) and it became

the first ever recorded case of its usage. The expression subsequently became more common as *caught red-handed* [47, p.135–136, 138].

Another phrase closely connected to laws is *the red line* which appeared in the beginning of the 20th century. There was a Red Line Agreement between British, American and French oil companies. Because of the end of the Ottoman Empire, the borders were not outlined and the companies could not achieve an agreement over their ownership. One businessman decided to draw an arbitrary line with a red pencil to divide the Empire. Today the expression is widely used in diplomacy and jury.

There were also some set phases connected to deep-rooted and well-accepted beliefs. For instance, *a black sheep* born on someone's farm was a symbol of a devil and bad superstition. For the farmers it equaled bad luck and hard times. In the course of time the idiom has become a part of a proverb (*There is a black sheep in every flock*), but is also widely used as an idiom itself.

Biblical expressions are the most important literary source of phraseological units. The use of quotations from it is a widespread phenomenon even nowadays as well. However, entire idiomatic expressions (often literal translations of Hebrew and Greek idioms) entered the English language from the pages of the Bible. Generally, there exist a lot of biblical expressions in the English language. This group of idioms is regarded as one of the most numerous.

Biblical phraseological units are fully assimilated borrowings. One may find a word collocation *a whited sepulcher*. Its primary meaning is connected to a painted coffin, but in the figurative sense the idiom describes a hypocrite and liar whose delusive pleasant appearance proves the opposite. A widely spread expression *the golden rule* also gained its roots in the Bible. It original meaning refers to the sentence: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12) [40]. The idiom has become one of the principles of treating others the way you want to be treated. This idea can still be found in various religion practices.

Generally speaking, phraseologisms of biblical origin strongly differ from their biblical prototypes. This complex and unexplored issue requires particularly careful consideration and analysis.

In terms of the number of phraseological units that have enriched the English language, Shakespeare's works rank second after the Bible. Their number is over 100. Such phraseological units are called Shakespearianisms, and since most of them are found in the works of the playwright only once, their form is clearly fixed. An example of one of the most famous phraseological units is taken from the tragedy "Othello" – *the green-eyed monster* which refers to an envious person. The play "Henry V" was marked by an idiomatic expression *a heart of gold*. It is attributed to a generous and light-hearted nature of people. One may also find *a wild-goose chase* in "Romeo and Juliet" which has its roots in a kind of a 16th century horse race common in England. Today the expression stands for the fruitless and pointless actions.

It is vital to note that Shakespeare was not the only writer who contributed largely to the idiomatic enrichment of the English phraseology. Among some other writers are Jeffrey Chaucer, John Milton, Jonathan Swift, Charles Dickens, Walter Scott and others. Scott was the first to use the idiom *strain at the leash* in his novel "The Talisman" (1825). It means to be very enthusiastic to escape one's control.

A large number of English idioms come from other languages. Some of them are associated with ancient history and culture. Not surprisingly that many of them are internationally used. For example, *the golden age* is the phraseological unit goes back to ancient mythology. This expression was first deployed by the Greek poet Hesiod in the poem "Works and Days". The author described the age of Saturn, when people lived like gods, without worries, strife, wars and hard forced labor.

Some expressions date back to the fables of Aesop and other ancient Greek fables or fairy tales. An example of such an expression is *to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.*

The English language contain a few phraseological units that came from the Spanish language and culture. For instance, *blue blood* refers to an aristocratic origin. In this way the Spaniards characterize a man of noble origin. This expression is a French calque *le sang bleu*, which, in turn, was calqued into Spanish. Initially, it was the name of the aristocratic families from the Spanish province of Castile, who prided themselves on the fact that their ancestors never intermarried with the Moors, or

peoples with a dark complexion. The expression implies that people with fair skin tones have the veins which are bluish in color which is not observed in people with dark skin.

Finally, a lot of idioms came to the English culture from an American one. They are called intralingual. Some of these phraseological units have become so assimilated that the mark of American origin has been removed. Such Americanisms include the expression *a green light* - freedom of action; *to paint the town red- t*o indulge in fun. As in many other phraseological units of American origin, there are no purely American words. Consequently, these phrases can easily be mistaken for the native English one. Their American origin is established on the basis of lexicographic data and analysis of sources. It is quite natural that some other idioms consist of American words: *a red cent* – a copper penny. Generally, American phraseological borrowings, especially slangs, are distinguished by vivid imagery and high expressiveness.

Concluding, the sources of the origin of phraseological units in modern English are very diverse. The idioms can be divided into two large groups: native English and borrowed ones. Borrowings can also be subdivided into interlingual and intralingual. They originated mainly from the Bible, Shakespearean times and different historical events. A number of phraseological units were borrowed from French, Spanish, Greek and American English.

1.4The semantic potential of a cultural component: features and evaluation

The importance of the cultural component concept in the phraseological studies is hard to overestimate. It carries the pragmatic function and covers a broad category of things expressed through language. Traditionally, it is regarded as a unique marker that embodies a group of images associated with a particular set of stereotypes in our minds. Clotaire believes that the cultural component enables us to understand the behavioral responses peculiar to that nation’s citizens. The key codes in

understanding specific behaviors differentiate between religion, gender, relationships, money, food, health, and cultures [12, p.51].

Sharifan and Palmer studied the significance of idioms with regard to their cultural properties. The researchers asserted language as a universal tool that operates in the creating of the cultural domains. They also called it as a cultural activity. Speakers invariably consider discourse situations structured by culture.

Cultural linguistics can be described as a syncretic phenomenon which combines different aspects. Palmer introduced the theories of a language that is governed by and develops within culture. [30, p. 99-108] The term *linguaculture* was used by the American anthropologist Paul Friedrich to refer to the language-culture continuum. He proposed the idea that language cannot be understood without considering its cultural context and vice versa [17, p.299]. Another anthropologist Michael Agar, whose researches in the fields of linguistics and ethnography are believed to be one of the most groundbreaking and profoundly studied, used the term *languaculture*. He emphasized the inseparability of language and culture and described the way the concepts reinforce each other. [7, p.18] The scientists assumed that the concept of language is not limited by its general features and essentials, but can be also expanded by physical experiences, culture and society.

Cognitive grammar views grammar primarily as reflecting attentional processes, such as the perception of relations between figure and ground, profile and base, and the dynamics of movement and force [39, p.67-75]. Secondly, it sees grammar as reflecting conventional construals of scenes and participants in terms of specificity, scope, and perspective (including subjectivity) [27, p.153]. Third, cultural and semantic categories are seen to build on a foundation of embodied or “emergent” categories [25, p.200]. But semantic categories and grammatical forms are cultural as much as physical. The cultural component of semantics constitutes the bulk of what linguists refer to as “world knowledge”, or “encyclopaedic knowledge” [37, p.1-2]. The vast majority of physical and emotional categories are structured by routines such as sleep, work, travel, and by artifacts such as architecture, tools, clothing and

other products, all of which are largely cultural experiences that find their reflection in the components of idiomatic expressions.

In the study of semantic and cross-cultural linguistic patterns Wierzbicka outlined two approaches to the analysis of cultural components – comparative and introspective.

In the comparative approach, cultural peculiarities and identity of the language are studied in relation to the other language. For instance, the British idiom *to be as busy as a bee* has its equivalent in German – *fleissig wie eine Ameise sein*. Although the meaning is similar – to be very busy and active - and the same reference to an insect is implied (the German word *die Ameise* is an ant), we see the difference in the component *bee – die Ameise*. Such a deviation in use owes to the cultural perception of the animalistic world and historical experience. The idiom *to be as busy as a bee* originated in the north of England, namely in Manchester. In the 1800s there were a lot of textile mills, commonly described as “hives of activity”, and workers were often compared to bees. The concept of a busy bee found its reflection not only in Manchester’s coat of arms given to the city in 1842, but also in the association between an insect and hard work which resulted into an idiom itself.

As to the German variant of the expression, it is important to refer to the most famous German books for children – “A hundred little moralistic tales for good children” (1863) by Philipp Körber. According to its fable “What you can learn from ants”, the child from a very poor family achieves the highest honours through relentless hard work and perseverance. The ant, who since biblical times has retained a reputation for being particularly industrious, is praised as “the first and only teacher” and the main character of the tale is said to be *fleissig wie eine Ameise* [4, p.64].

Thus, we see that comparative analysis helps to reveal the crosscultural traits and implications that refer to the same concepts but have the difference in semantics and social experience of the respective cultures.

In the introspective approach, the cultural component analysis doesn’t include the characteristics of other cultures and languages, thus relying on the concept of

immanent cultural and national phenomena. The objective of the research problem is to outline the national patterns as perceived by the native speakers. The most relevant research methods are the questionnaires, tests and interviews intended to reveal their picture of the world and its reflection in language, as well as to clarify the potential attitude to some language facts (for instance, when the native speaker finds a certain statement made by a foreigner inappropriate in his own cultural environment).

While both of these approaches represent a fundamental methodological basis to analyze the cultural component, the comparative one gives a more vivid insight into cultural subtleties. As idioms transmit a number of different culturally-specific connotations, they "can lead us to the heart of the whole complex of cultural values and attitudes" [44, p.38].

While there is no generally accepted classification of cultural components in linguoculturology, Selivanova expands on 3 major groups which were once outlined by Arsentieva (1989) in her researches.

- National-cultural distinctiveness manifests itself in phrases that have no equivalents in another language. The images underlying such phraseological phrases are clear to the representatives of the target language. They can be translated by means of loan, lexical and descriptive translation*: to jump the queue, high and mighty, that remains to be seen, an unknown quantity*.
- The national patterns are created by the presence of words specific to the given linguistic community. They are included in the phrase and contain geographical names (toponyms, hydronyms); anthroponyms; realities known only to speakers of one or more nations, linked by cultural or religious commonality;

For instance, the idiom *Billingsgate language* includes the toponym – Billingsgate - which is one of London's 25 wards famous for its seafood markets. According to *From Old Books dictionary*, the first definition of the idiom was described by Francis Grose in 1811 and it meant abuse, foul language because back then people often quarreled and fought amongst themselves, trying to get the freshest seafood at the lowest price [49].

There is also another idiom - Gretna - Green marriage - a marriage between runaway lovers. Gretna, or Green, the name of a village that was on the Scottish border where runaway lovers could get married without presenting proper documents. Thus, the English toponym in question English toponym, which is part of the phraseology, is a direct carrier of the national-cultural specificity of this phrase [47, p.135-136].

- The national originality may be stored in a prototype which reflects traditions, customs and beliefs. For instance, *to reach the wool sack* means to become a lord-chancellor. The woolsack was often a special seat for wealthy people. The type of this seat was originally introduced by the King Edward III of England. Stuffed with fine wool, it was a sign of prosperity, as the wool trade was one of the most common sources of wealth. Only representatives of the House of Lords were allowed to sit on such a wool seat.

It is important to note that the semantic features of idioms reflect their evaluative characteristic. As idioms represent a culture, their evaluation shows the attitude of the cultural representatives towards certain phenomena, historical events, etc. Very often we can find positive, negative and neutral evaluative meanings in phrases [45, p.558-590].

All in all, it is possible to state that the component of the idiomatic expressions may carry national patterns and embody various cultural and historical characteristics. Different scholars proposed some approaches to analyzing the cultural component. The generally accepted methods include the comparative and introspective ones. As to the categorization of national and cultural peculiarities, there are three levels of their manifestation found in the compositional and semantic aspect of phrases. The aforementioned facts lead to a conclusion that idioms largely reflect the culture.

1.5Idioms and culture

Each language possesses a unique sense of identity with the culture being the source of its distinctiveness. It makes the language not only a system, but also a valuable means of expressing culture [42, p.5-7].

The relationship between language and culture is studied within the framework of linguoculturological studies aimed at the investigation of the cultural manifestations reflected or fixed in the language. Farzad Sharifan, who laid the foundation of cultural linguistics and made significant contributions to its development, stressed the interdisciplinarity of this area of research. The relatively new branch of linguistics is the result of the intersection between a variety of subfields of linguistics – sociolinguistics, cognitive anthropology, complexity science and culturology. The cultural conceptualisations of the linguist are based on the cross-cultural pragmatics. He viewed language as a phenomenon rooted in the cultural level of cognition and examined it to establish a direct relationship between culture and linguistic structures.

The Ukrainian cognitive linguist Selivanova stated that linguoculturological trend in phraseology investigates interaction between language and culture by means of cultural-national consciousness and its phraseological presentation [45, p.16]. According to the researcher, “cultural information” is a number of culturally-marked knowledge distinctive for the bearers of a certain culture, represented in the language units, forms of communicative behavior and various semiotic systems [ibid.].

Another cognitive linguist Kövecses pointed out to the conventional knowledge as a powerful tool in the formation of idioms. He described it as a mechanism of cognition which is reflected in the “shared information that people in a given culture have concerning a conceptual domain” [24, p.56]. This conventional knowledge is variously called an “idealized cognitive model” (Lakoff, 1987), “schema” (Langacker, 1987), “cultural model” or “folk theory” (Holland and Quinn, 1987), or ‘frame’ or ‘scene’ (Fillmore, 1982) As Fillmore puts it, scenes are coherent organizations of human experience [24, p.340].

Holland and Quinn also used the terms “cultural model”, or “folk theory”, to refer to the shared, underlying beliefs and assumptions that shape people’s perceptions and behaviors within a particular culture [22, p.79]. Cultural models are often taken for granted and are deeply embedded in a culture’s language, social practices, and institutions.

Zorivchak considered phraseological units as the main objects of the linguoculturological studies, as they are endowed with “national memory and cultural marks” [1, p.341]and include valuable linguistic patterns in their internal form.

Some fundamental ideas regarding language and culture were proposed by Prussian linguist and philosopher Humboldt in the 19th century. He was the first to describe a special language vision of the reality regarding language as a thought-forming tool. The linguist stated that it is crucial to study the internal form of a language which is credible for creating images of the surrounding reality through human language. It also reveals the quintessence of a national spirit. This approach concerns a holistic theory that enables us to perceive the world around us and learn about it through eyes and language.

Tylor in his research *Primitive culture* (1871) considered culture as a complex whole which includes belief, collective knowledge, art, morals, custom and law [43, p.233]. The only thing all the aforementioned concepts find their rich reflection is language. While the formation of it was arbitrary, the language patterns were nevertheless affected by versatile social norms, conventions and cultural connotations.

Saussure in his *The General Linguistics Course* (1916) noticed that assuming that the new discipline (Semiotics) accepts social conventions as natural symbols, its main object will remain the entire system based on the arbitrary nature of the symbols. In fact, any means of expressions used by people in society is, in principle, based on collective acts or, equally, on the basis of convention [32, p.67]. It means that there is always an intrinsic link between language, its constituents and culture.

Leo Weisgerber was especially influenced by Saussaure’s linkage of form and content and developed the theory further. He contributed notably to the idea that language structures and determines our apprehension of the world. The researcher believed that a peculiar perception of the world is inherent to each language community. A language, according to its internal form, conveys to its speakers a worldview that differs from the worldview presented by other languages. Recognizing this as the most outstanding feature of language, we can define it as a

form of social cognition. Besides, Weisgerber pointed out that diversity between language communities and their perception may be proven by the words, phrases, expressions specific to each of them; concepts that acquire divergent connotations in distinct language environments; language codes that help to structure reality. Subsequently, languages suggest a 'world view' which generates constant cultural differences.

Importantly, Weisgerber introduced the term 'worten der Welt', or 'wording the world', thus contending that each language community is engaging in the process of it by means of its mother tongue. Conciliating between a variety of forms, i.e. words or grammatical structures, of a language and an external world, there exists a unique 'sprachliche Zwischenwelt', or 'a language inter-world' [5, p.95-103], which functions in part autonomously, directly or indirectly, in certain ways idiosyncratic to that language. While learning a language, a speaker will be unconsciously influenced by its peculiar structures and categorizations. These effects pervade the entire communities and shape their world perception, they also find their reflection in the linguistic units, such as idioms.

The metaphorical extensions carry important cultural connotations containing the historical roots, national background, lifestyle and a mode of thinking. Understanding traditional cultural patterns fixed in the idiomatic expressions enables one to have a deeper comprehension of the country and its features [25, p.199].

Examining the issue in his work "Through the language glass" (2010), Guy Deutscher pays special attention to the close connections between language and culture. He appeals to the process of culture-language-cognition intersection and believes that language has the potential not only to reflect its speakers' way of thinking but also to generate it. In one of the chapters Deutscher opposes the Canadian cognitive psychologist Steven A. Pinker who asserted that there is no scientific evidence that languages dramatically shape their speakers' ways of thinking" [31, p.58]. The linguist supplemented the "Sapir-Whorf theory" with his observations and concluded that, within certain natural categories, culture freely prescribes linguistic formation [14, p.268].

To sum up, a language picture of the world is considered as a representation of the real world in a system of concepts and categories of language. Linguistic processes (e.g. nomination) are closely related to the processes of identifying and understanding objects in the external world. The assumption is that the three interdependent basic concepts - culture, activity and language consciousness - reflect the activities conditioned by the system of cultural regulatives and the expression of these relations in communication through the units and categories of language. Thus, the language picture of the world is not limited to the objective reality, but also finds its reflection in structural elements of language, i.e. in its lexical and phraseological fund. It reveals the spirit, mentality of a particular nation and serves as a figurative expression of its historical experience, way of thinking and life.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

After analyzing the theoretical basis of the research, it is possible to conclude that an idiom is a stable linguistic unit that can be characterized by full or partial idiomaticity, reproducibility and expressiveness. The semantic integrity of an idiom is ensured by the metaphorical transformation of its lexical items.

Different approaches to study the idioms provided the possibility to classify them into groups. Traditionally, the set expressions are analyzed semantically, functionally, structurally, stylistically and grammatically. The numerous modern studies in the field of psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics enabled the scientists to analyze idioms from a cognitive perspective. Functionally, the idioms are further distinguished and may fulfill the descriptive, evaluative, emotive, expressive and characterological tasks. Some linguists expand this group stressing the importance of the referential and pragmatic functions.

The origins of the idioms fall into three main groups. The native English phraseological units represent expressions that were inspired by the culture, history, realities of the country. The interlanguage category includes units adapted from the foreign languages, while the intralingual one comprises idioms borrowed from the English varieties.

The semantic peculiarities of idioms generally entitle their evaluative characteristics. As an idiom is one of the means of the cultural manifestation, its evaluation shows the attitude of the cultural representatives towards versatile phenomena. The semantic analysis has a potential to show the positive or negative connotation. However, depending on the context they can acquire neutral meaning.

The importance of the cultural component should also be considered. It reveals the traits of the national character and worldview. The cultural marks serve as a tool that transmit a peculiar sense of identity and are often studied with regards to the various aspects of a culture in question. The comparative and introspective methods are the most efficient ways to analyze the cultural manifestation in the phrases.

Thus, idioms play a significant role in the language picture of the world. They embody the national phenomena relying on the specific cultural patterns.

II. Cultural component of British idioms: meanings and connotations

2.1 Culture of the United Kingdom

Marked by its diversity and uniqueness, the United Kingdom's culture has been crafted by centuries of historical, traditional, and inventive influences. From its earliest days as a collection of warring tribes to its current position as a global superpower, Britain has seen countless shifts in politics, economics, and society, each leaving its mark on the country's culture and language. The development of the country has been influenced by its location as an island nation, its history of colonization and empire-building, and its interactions with other cultures throughout the centuries.

Lasting throughout many years, the history of the UK is long and rich. The earliest evidence of human habitation dates back to around 800,000 BC, when early hominids inhabited the area. In the centuries that followed, various groups of people, including Celts, Romans, and Vikings, settled in the UK.

One of the most significant periods in history was the Middle Ages, when the country was ruled by monarchs and the Church had a dominant role in society. The

Tudor era, which followed, was marked by the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, and was a time of great change and upheaval. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries transformed the UK into a major industrial power and shaped the modern world in many ways. The country also played a significant role in both World War I and World War II, helping to shape the global political landscape.

As to religion, it has played a crucial role in British culture. Christianity has been the dominant religion since the Roman Empire, with the Church of England being the established church of the country. Other religions, including Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism, have also been present in the UK for centuries, and have influenced the country's culture and traditions. Today, the UK is a secular country, with a diverse mix of religious beliefs and practices.

It is worth noticing that the country has a rich artistic heritage, with notable contributions in literature, theater, music, and visual arts. Some of the greatest literary figures in history, such as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Jane Austen, hailed from the UK. The theater has not only provided entertainment but has also acted as a medium for social commentary, political critique, and cultural reflection. Many plays, both classical and contemporary, have tackled pressing social issues, such as inequality and political upheaval. Moreover, the West End district in London is one of the world's most famous theater districts. The UK is also renowned for its music being home to several prominent music festivals, including Glastonbury, Reading and Leeds, and the Isle of Wight Festival. They attract music fans from all over the world and have helped to cement the UK's reputation as a global hub for music culture.

Language is also a defining aspect of British culture, with English being the country's official language. British English has variations, with regional accents and dialects adding to the country's linguistic diversity. Idioms, or culturally specific expressions, reflect national beliefs and viewpoints. From the Shakespearean era to modern times, they have been used to convey meaning in a concise and memorable way. Some idioms, such as *to kill two birds with one stone* and *to let the cat out of the bag*, have become ubiquitous in the English language.

Concluding, the culture of the UK is diverse and multi-faceted, shaped by centuries of history, religion, arts, and language. From the Middle Ages to the modern day, the UK has played a significant role in shaping the world we live in today. Its rich cultural heritage and linguistic diversity continue to make it an important and influential part of the global community.

2.2 Historical development and idioms

The history of Britain is a long and complex one, marked by various stages of development and significant events that have shaped the modern country. In fact, the linguistic influence of each period is hard to overestimate. Many British idioms have a historical background and have evolved over time, reflecting the culture and social norms of the British people. Some of them originated from the profound processes that the country had to undergo.

It is possible to outline the key stages in the British history: Roman Britain (43 CE - 410 CE), Anglo-Saxon England (410 CE - 1066 CE), Norman Conquest (1066 CE - 1154 CE), 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). Each of the period is distinguished by the particular events and their idiomatic reflection is incorporated into the language.

When the Romans invaded Britain, they established Latin as the basis for the development of English, introduced their rule to Britain and got the local population acquainted with the new culture and technology. Bringing Latin had a significant impact on the language spoken in Britain at the time. It quickly became the language of the ruling class and the official language of the government and the military, and as a result, many Latin words were adopted into the local language. Latin words were used to describe new technologies and cultural practices that the British people were not familiar with. For example, the Romans introduced new building techniques, and words like *villa* (country house), *aqueduct* (water channel), and *colosseum* (amphitheater) entered the English language. Many Latin words and expressions, such as *et cetera* and *ad nauseam*, are still commonly used in English today. Their

role in the history of the country may be traced in some idioms. For instance, the idiom *crossing the Rubicon* means to take an irrevocable step that will have serious consequences. It originated from the fact that Julius Caesar, the Roman general, crossed the Rubicon River in 49 BCE, which was a boundary that he was not supposed to cross, and this led to a civil war in Rome. Another phrase *bread and circuses* refers to a government's strategy of keeping the population content through providing them with food and entertainment, rather than addressing deeper issues. It alludes to the fact that the Romans provided free bread and staged public spectacles, such as gladiator games, to keep the population happy. The expression *caveat emptor* originated from the Latin phrase *caveat emptor*, which was a legal principle in Roman times. Today the idiom is used to warn people to be cautious when making purchases. Such components as "Rubicon", "circus", words of Latin origins in the aforementioned idioms are cultural makers of the Roman Britain stage of the country's development.

After the fall of the Roman Empire in Britain in the early 5th century CE, the island was invaded and settled by various Germanic tribes, collectively known as the Anglo-Saxons. This period of history is referred to as Anglo-Saxon England, which lasted until the Norman Conquest of 1066.

The Anglo-Saxons brought with them their own Germanic language, which gradually displaced the Latin language that had been spoken during the Roman occupation. Old English, as this language is now known, was characterized by its complex grammar, with inflections for nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and a vocabulary that was heavily influenced by the Germanic languages spoken by the invaders.

During this period, the English language also saw the introduction of many idiomatic expressions that were derived from the Old English language. Many of these idioms reflect the Anglo-Saxon's warrior culture and their beliefs in magic and supernatural forces. For example, the expression *to go berserk* means to become uncontrollably angry or violent. It is derived from the Old Norse word "berserkr", which referred to a type of warrior who fought in a frenzy, often wearing animal skins and howling like wolves. The Old Norse word "odds", which signifies "point of

difference" or "division", is also preserved in one of the idioms, namely in the expression *to be at odds*. Today it is widely used to imply disagreement or to be in conflict. Another idiom *to keep one's head* implies remaining calm in difficult situation. It comes from the Old English word "heafod", which means "head", and reflects the importance placed on maintaining composure in battle. Anglo-Saxon's courage and willingness to face danger is incorporated into the idiom *to take one's life on one's hands*. It can be used in the situations when one has to take a risk or engage in a dangerous activity. There is also an expression *to have a spell cast on someone* and it reflects the Anglo-Saxon's belief in magic and the power of spells.

In 1066, after the end of the Anglo-Saxon period in Britain, the country was conquered by the Normans. They introduced French into England. The Normans spoke a variety of Old French known as Anglo-Norman, which became the language of the ruling class and was used in the courts and government. The impact of the Norman Conquest on the English language can be seen in vocabulary, grammar and idioms.

Many expressions that we still use today have their roots in Anglo-Norman French. For example, the idiom *to give someone the cold shoulder* comes from the French custom of serving an unwelcome guest a cold shoulder of mutton instead of a hot meal. The phrase "tirer la jambe" which means to trick someone has its roots in the English idiom *to pull someone's leg*. Another expression *to kick the bucket,* or to die, is thought to come from the French phrase "bote", meaning a wooden container, which was used to carry dead animals.

Although the first instance of the idiom *to break the ice* may be found in Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" (1589), it is believed to have originated from the practice of Norman ships breaking through the ice on the River Thames during the winter months. The Normans may have used the expression in a figurative sense to refer to any initial awkwardness or tension in a social situation. The expression *to pay through the nose* is also Norman. Its roots originate from the fact that Normans made conquered peoples pay tribute or taxes by placing their noses on a board and cutting them off if they did not pay.

Thus, we see that the Norman Conquest enriched English with the idioms reflecting different practices and expressions with French components or roots.

After the Norman Conquest, the English language continued to evolve and change over time. The period following the Norman Conquest is known as the Middle English period, which lasted from the 11th century to the 15th century. The notable development during the period was the emergence of a distinct English literature, which was heavily influenced by French and Latin literature. Many of the works written during this period were religious in nature, but secular literature also began to emerge, including works such as “The Canterbury Tales” (1392) by Geoffrey Chaucer.

Musical instruments were an important part of daily life during the Middle English period, used for entertainment, religious ceremonies, and communication. They were often associated with specific social classes or professions, and their use was highly regulated by cultural norms and traditions. As a result, idioms that incorporate musical instruments were likely seen as relatable and meaningful to a wide range of people. They were used to describe human behavior and experiences. The most vivid idiom is *to play second fiddle*. It is originated from the practice in medieval orchestras of having one person play the lead violin part and another play a secondary part. Using figuratively, the phrase means to take a subordinate or supporting role.

Another orchestra-related expression is *to blow your own trumpet*, or *to blow your own horn*. The musicians used to announce their arrival and gain attention from public blowing their musical instruments. The figurative meaning of the phrase developed over time, coming to mean “to boast about one’s own accomplishments” or “to promote oneself”.

As to the different customs and activities widely spread among the people during the times, we can mention food and entertainment as the best cultural phenomena. The culturally-marked expression *to turn the tables* has its roots in the game of backgammon, which was popular during the Middle Ages. People often reversed the board during the game, so nowadays it refers to any situation where the

fortunes of two parties are reversed. Another reference to a pastime activity can be found in the idiom *to bring home the bacon*. It comes from a medieval custom in which a man would be given a side of bacon if he could successfully complete a challenge, such as hitting a target with an arrow. Nowadays, the phrase means earning a living or achieving a goal.

Some idioms have the food-related terms. The culturally specific component "pie" is used in the idiom *to eat humble pie* which comes from the medieval dish "umbles pie", which was made from the entrails (umbles) of deer or other animals. The dish was considered a lowly one, fit only for the lower classes, and so *eating humble pie* came to mean being humiliated or brought down a peg. The allusion to pastry is incorporated into the idiom *to take the bread out of someone's mouth* which originated in medieval times when a person's livelihood often depended on having enough bread to feed themselves and their family. If someone *took the bread out of another person's mouth*, it meant that they had deprived them of their means of sustenance. The expression *to go against the grain* has its origins in the practice of milling grain during medieval times. The "grain" refers to the pattern of the wood in a piece of lumber, which can make it difficult to cut or shape. In the same way, going *against the grain* means doing something that goes against the natural order or way of things.

Moreover, to be confused or humiliated by a mistake or failure can be expressed in the idiom *to have egg on your face* which has its roots in the Middle English tradition of throwing rotten eggs at actors who performed poorly on stage. The egg on one's face would be a visible sign of the performer's failure and embarrassment. The idiom *to take something with a grain of salt,* or to be skeptical, is very common in a present-day English. However, its etymology dates back to the 15th century medieval practice of adding salt to food to make it palatable. If a person was suspicious of the quality of the food, they would take it "with a grain of salt" to lessen its unpleasant taste.

Other idioms with specific components are *to be at loggerheads* and *to have a chip on one's shoulder*. Both of them have the component that relates to an

instrument or a material. The idiom *to be at loggerheads* originated from a medieval instrument called a loggerhead, which was used for heating tar applied to ships. If two people were arguing and came into close contact, they could end up hitting each other with the loggerhead, hence the expression means to be in conflict or disagreement. Another phrase *to have a chip on one's shoulder* originated from a custom in medieval England in which a person would place a chip of wood on their shoulder as a challenge to someone else to knock it off. The phrase implies that a person is looking for a fight.

The next stage in Britain's development was the Tudor period spanned from 1485 to 1603. It was marked by the reigns of five monarchs from the Tudor dynasty: Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. The country underwent the English Reformation, the dissolution of monasteries, and the establishment of the Church of England. Many Latin and Greek words were introduced into the English vocabulary, particularly in the areas of science, medicine, and law. The printing press led to an increase in literacy and the standardization of English spelling.

Not many idioms were formed during this period, but it is worth mentioning some of them:

- *to make a clean sweep* means to get rid of the unnecessary things. During the Tudor era, it was customary to sweep the floors clean before important events;
- *to rule the roost* is to be in charge or to have control over a situation. The phrase stems from the widespread Tudor tradition of placing a rooster in a henhouse to assert dominance over the hens;
- *to have a heart of stone* refers to someone who is emotionally cold and unfeeling. The phrase was first recorded in William Shakespeare's play "Henry VI", (1592), Part 2 and was influenced by the era fascination with the classical world;
- *to set one's teeth on edge* implies a sensation of discomfort or irritation. The phrase is derived from the 16th-century practice of eating highly acidic foods, which would cause a tingling or prickling sensation in the teeth.

Analyzing the evaluative meaning of the aforementioned idioms, it is possible to state that most of them are marked by the negative connotation, except for the idiom *to make a clean sweep* which can be used in a positive or neutral context.

After the end of the Tudor period with the death of Queen Elizabeth I, one of the most famous events was The Riot Act initiated by the British government and passed into law by Parliament in 1714, during the reign of King George I. The act was introduced as a way to prevent civil unrest and riots, which were seen as a threat to public order and stability. The Riot Act gave the authorities the power to arrest those who refused to obey, with penalties including imprisonment and death. The phrase *to read the riot act* with the direct reference to the act of British parliament soon came to mean warning someone that their behavior is unacceptable and that they must stop or face consequences.

Lasting from the 18th century to the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution signified the next tremendous change in the formation of Britain. It was a time of rapid industrialization, with the development of new technologies and manufacturing processes that transformed the way goods were produced and traded. The idiomatic expressions reflected the new realities of industrial life. One of them is *to grease the wheels*, which means to facilitate the smooth operation by providing resources or support. The phrase originated from the practice of adding oil to the wheels of machinery to ensure they ran smoothly. The pipeline systems used in the transportation of oil during the rapid manufacturing period were incorporated into the idiom *to be in the pipeline* which implies that something is being planned or developed and will be available soon.

Another instance is *to be a cog in the machine*, which refers to someone who is a small, unimportant part of a larger system. This expression arose from the prevalence of machines and factories during the Revolution, where workers were often seen as replaceable parts of a larger machine-like system.

Thus, we see that the idioms with industrialization roots contain the components associated with machinery equipment or related to the manufacturing processes.

After the Industrial Revolution, Britain entered the Victorian era, which spanned from 1837 to 1901. This period was marked by the rise of the middle class, the expansion of the British Empire, and the growth of industrialization.

The period also saw the emergence of many idioms related to social class and hierarchy. For example, the phrase *noblesse oblige* reflects the Victorian belief that the upper classes, often idiomatically referred to as the *upper crust*, had a moral obligation to help those less fortunate than themselves. Meanwhile, the idiom *upstairs, downstairs* emphasizes the social divide between the wealthy upper classes who lived on the upper floors of grand houses, and the lower classes who worked as servants in the basement. The only phrase incorporating the ideal of self-reliance and hard work was *to pull yourself up by your bootstraps.*

The phrase commonly used in the UK to mean "there you have it" or "it's that simple" is *Bob's your uncle*. It is said to have originated when Arthur Balfour, the nephew of Victorian-era British Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, was appointed as Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1905. Critics claimed that he was given the job solely because of his family connection, leading to the phrase *Bob's your uncle* being used to describe situations where someone gets a job or opportunity through nepotism.

After the Victorian era, Britain experienced a period of significant turmoil and change with the outbreak of World War I. The soldiers coined many new phrases that reflected the harsh realities of life on the front lines. For example, the phrase *over the top* referred to the act of going over the top of the trenches and into no-man's land, often resulting in casualties. The concept of *shell shock* describes the psychological trauma experienced by soldiers after exposure to the constant bombardment. It also implies the emotional and mental effects of any traumatic event, not just war.

After the war, Britain experienced a period of prosperity and fashion during the 1920s and 1930s known as the "Roaring Twenties". Such idioms as *the bee's knees* and *the cat's whiskers* implied that something that was the best or most fashionable.

However, the period of the Golden Twenties was short-lived, as World War II broke out in 1939. Some new expressions reflected the struggles and sacrifices of the

time. For example, the phrase *dig for victory* was coined to encourage people to grow their own food during the wartime rationing, while *make do and mend* became a popular phrase referring to the need to use resources sparingly. Another idiom *in the crosshairs* describes a person or group of people who are being targeted for attack. There is an expression *jerry-built* which means to be constructed with low-quality materials. The term "jerry" was a derogatory slang word for Germans during WWI, and the phrase *jerry-built,* or *jerry-rigged,* originated as a way of describing hastily constructed German military structures. However, by the time of World War II, the phrase had come to refer to any poorly constructed structure, regardless of its origin.

Although Dunkirk is a French town, it played a crucial role in the British war history. Figuratively, the phrase *Dunkirk spirit* refers to the resilience, determination, and solidarity displayed by the British people during the evacuation of British and Allied forces from the beaches of Dunkirk, France, during World War II. Despite being under heavy fire from the German army, a vast flotilla of civilian boats were mobilized to rescue the stranded soldiers. *The Dunkirk spirit* is seen as a symbol of British fortitude in the face of adversity and is often used to describe a situation where people come together to overcome a difficult challenge.

As to the idiomatic expressions that have their origins from the period after the wars, they are mainly phrases that show different social phenomena. For instance, the mass migration of skilled professionals from the United Kingdom to other countries in 1960s was incorporated into the idiom *brain drain*. The evaluative meaning of this idiom is negative as it implies that the country is losing its skilled workforce. The term *brain drain* is derived from the word "drain" which means to remove or extract. Another idiom with a negative implication stems from the human's behavior in a society is *catch-22* which means a frustrating and impossible situation. The term was derived in 1961 from the title of Joseph Heller's novel of the same name, which was set during World War II and featured a military regulation that made it impossible for a soldier to be grounded for insanity unless he asked for it.

Another idiom that was formed shortly after the wartime, is *Ealing comedy*. The term is derived from the name of the Ealing Studios, located in West London. Its

movies were known for their witty dialogue, clever plot twists, and affectionate portrayals of British eccentricity. The term *Ealing comedy* is now used to refer not only to the films themselves but to a particular style of British comedy that celebrates the quirks and foibles of everyday life.

Overall, we can see that the number of English idioms that have entered the language during the various periods of England's development is significant. The Roman culture and its Latinisms gave the first cob of figurative expression, followed by the Anglo-Saxon tradition of warfare, belief in superpowers, and the introduction of the Old English language. The French influence during the Norman conquest brought many new words and contributed to the development of many idioms that are still in use today. Medieval Britain is reflected in idioms in such thematic fields as hard work and pastime; some expressions have a food component. As for Tudor rule, idioms mostly have a negative evaluative meaning associated with concepts of reign and class. During the Industrial Revolution, the English language expanded through the introduction of new technical terms and descriptive manufacturing processes, which can also be found in idiomatic expressions. Overlapping with industrialization times, the Victorian era included urbanization and the expansion of the British Empire. This period gave a special distinction between the different units of society, which can be seen in idioms built on antithesis. Important phases of wartime, as well as those that followed, reflected the changes in the moral mindset of society too.

2.3 Geography and idioms

The United Kingdom is an island nation consisting of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Its geography is heavily influenced by its location surrounded by the North Sea, the English Channel, and the Atlantic Ocean. The UK has a rich maritime history, and the sea has played a crucial role in shaping the lives and culture of its people.

A number of idioms with the "sea" component can possess different semantic features. *To be all at sea* means to be confused or disoriented, and it reflects the idea of being lost or adrift at sea; *to follow the sea* is to work as a sailor or to spend a significant amount of time at sea. The phrase is often associated with a sense of

adventure, freedom, and an independent lifestyle. The word “sea” can sometimes signify the concept of size, volume or quantity or is simply substituted by an adjective “a lot of”. This semantic peculiarity is attributed to such idiomatic phrases, as *a sea of troubles* (a lot of problems or difficulties), *a sea of faces* (a large crowd of people), *a sea of paperwork* (a bureaucratic or administrative task). These are common English idioms but the expression *a sea of something* can be complemented by other words.

The negative implications of trouble, depression and confusion are found in the expressions *all at sea* (it reflects the idea of being lost or adrift at sea) and *to be in deep water* (to be in a dangerous situation). Other negative idioms originated from the sea language are the following: *to make waves* (to cause trouble or create a disturbance), *to throw someone overboard* (to abandon someone), *to be on a collision course* (to head towards a conflict, it comes from the idea of two ships moving towards each other on a collision course), *to be in uncharted waters* (to be in an uncertain situation).

Some idioms contain nautical terms. One of them is *to be in the doldrums* which means to be in a state of boredom or depression, and it comes from the naval term doldrums for a windless area near the equator that was difficult for ships to navigate. Another is *to be on an even keel* which refers to the state of stability and balance. In maritime terminology, a keel is the main structural member which provides support, often described as the “backbone” of the vessel. When preparing for a difficult situation one may deploy the expression *to batten down the hatches* – it shows the idea of securing the hatches on a ship to prevent water from entering during a storm.

The category of positive evaluative meaning is preserved in the British idiom *to be a shipshape* (to be well-organized and tidy, it implies a ship in good order and condition); *to keep one’s head above water*, or to manage to survive, despite facing many challenges; the idiom *to weather the storm* is to endure a difficult period. *Smooth sailing* is a phrase used when things are going easily, like a ship sailing on calm waters.

Neutrality can be found in two idioms: 1) *to test the waters*, that is to try something out before committing to it, as the sailors test the temperature and depth of water before entering it; 2) *to be in the same boat* which refers to the idea of being in the same situation or predicament as someone else.

Fishing has been a source of livelihood for many people of the UK, providing food and income. There are a lot of idioms centered around this coastal tradition, such as *fishing for compliments* (seeking praise or admiration from others) and *the big fish in a small pond*. The latter describes a person who is influential in a limited environment, but may not have as much significance in a more competitive setting. There is also an antithetical combination of expressions, such as *like a fish in water* and *like a fish out of water*. The first idiom describes someone who is completely comfortable in a particular situation, like a fish in its natural environment, while the second one implies lack of security. Other idioms that relate to humans are *a cold fish* – a person who is emotionally distant or unfeeling; *to drink like a fish* – to consume a lot of alcohol. Deciding or taking action is incorporated into the British expression *fish or cut bait*. In the early 18th century, the phrase *a fine kettle of fish* described a situation that had become confused or chaotic. One theory suggests that it may have been derived from the practice of cooking fish in a kettle, which was a common method in Scotland at the time. If the fish was overcooked or burned, it would result in a fine mess or a "fine kettle of fish". The phrase *make fish of one and flash of another* means to treat people differently or unfairly. It is derived from the naval practice of dividing fish and meat into different categories for religious or dietary reasons. The phrase can be found in a play "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" (1594) by Robert Greene and Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night" (1601). Although the idiom *to cry stinking fish* is not common in contemporary English, it originated during the naval times of Britain. One theory suggests that when sailors were rioting on the ship, they made baseless accusations against their captain to discredit him. The "stinking fish" is a direct association with something that has gone bad. Another theory is that the phrase may have been used by fishmongers to advertise their wares. They would

cry out “stinking fish” to indicate that they had fish needed to be sold quickly before it spoiled.

Being a country in the North Atlantic Ocean, Britain has specific climate characterized by mild temperatures, high humidity, and frequent precipitation. So, idiomatically, London is often referred to as *a foggy capital*. Additionally, the rain component may be found in a number of idiomatic expressions, such as *come rain or shine* meaning that something will happen no matter what the weather conditions are like; *right as rain* implying that everything is in good order, *it never rains but it pours* which can be heard when things go wrong. The latter is believed to have originated from the English proverb “it rains every day in the year, but when it rains, it pours”. There is also an idiom *to save for a rainy day* - to save money for a future time of need. In early usage, it was more common to say “lay by for a rainy day”, which meant to store up supplies for a future time of difficulty. Negative implication is traced in the expression *fair weather friend* which describes someone’s selfish nature. The sense of impending trouble is captured in the phrase *the calm before the storm*.

Thus, Britain’s insular location predetermined its climate, creating a mild environment with frequent weather patterns from the Atlantic Ocean. This fact is fully reflected in the idioms which have different etymologies but are united by the place in the British culture. They encompass the components of “sea”, “fish”, “water”, “rain” which shows that the concepts are crucial for the language picture of the world of the British people and their world perception is inextricably linked to them.

2.4 Religion and idioms

The United Kingdom has a long and complex history with religion. Its religious landscape has been shaped by a variety of factors, including historical events, social and cultural changes, and immigration patterns.

Before the introduction of Christianity to Britain, the country had a diverse range of indigenous religions and belief systems that varied across different tribes.

They were often polytheistic worshipping multiple gods and goddesses. The practices included the Celtic religion, the Anglo-Saxon paganism and the Roman religion.

Britain's conversion to Christianity was a gradual process that occurred over several centuries. It influenced not only the life of people, but also their language. For example, the phrase *to turn the other cheek* comes from the Christian principle of forgiveness and suggests that one should respond to a perceived insult with patience.

Taking a careful examination of the idiomatic richness with religious roots, it is important to mention The King James Version (KJV), also known as the Authorized Version. It is an English translation of the Christian Bible that was commissioned by King James I of England and published in 1611. It is one of the most widely read English translations of the Bible, and has had a significant impact on the language, literature, and culture of the English-speaking world.

The book includes sections of the Pentateuch, Historical Books, Poetic and Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets and The New Testament. It is known for the use of formal and elevated language, rich imagery and poetic rhythms.

In his book "Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language" (2010), British linguist David Crystal provides crucial insights and examines the impact of the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible on the English language. The researcher dedicates a significant portion of the analysis to discussing the idioms that originated due to the KJV Bible. He notes that some of them have become part of the fabric of the language, and are often not recognized as biblical in origin [13, p.21-23].

Idioms originated in the King James Bible include the following expressions:

- *a drop in the bucket* - the idiom comes from Isaiah 40:15 in the Old Testament, where God tells the prophet that even if all the nations of the world were as nothing to Him, they would still be as *a drop in the bucket*. It refers to something that is insignificant or a small part of a much larger whole;
- *a fly in the ointment* can be found in Ecclesiastes 10:1; it alludes to a small issue or problem that spoils a larger situation or endeavor;
- *a house divided against itself cannot stand* from Matthew 12:25 implies a group or organization that is in conflict with itself and is likely to fail;

- *a labor of love* means work done out of passion, rather than for financial gain. It comes from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (1:3) in the New Testament, where he describes his ministry among them as *a labor of love*;
- *as old as the hills* is an idiom with comparison which comes from Job 15:7 and refers to something that is very old or ancient;
- *by the skin of my teeth* comes from Job 19:20 and refers to a barely successful escape from a difficult situation;
- *to cast your bread upon the waters* means to take a risk or make an investment, even if the outcome is uncertain comes from Ecclesiastes 11:1;
- *to eat, drink, and be merry* has a positive connotation, as it refers to enjoying oneself and living life to the fullest. The origin is Ecclesiastes 8:15;
- *to fall from grace* is a famous expression originated from Galatians 5:4. It is used refer to losing favor or respect, particularly in a moral context;
- *feet of clay* describes someone who has a hidden weakness or flaw, despite their apparent strength or authority. It comes from the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, where the prophet has a vision of a statue with a head of gold and feet of clay (Daniel 2:31-45). The same source can be traced in the idiom *the writing on the wall* interpreted in the story as a warning of impending doom;
- *to cast pearls before swine* has a negative connotative meaning, as the phrase means to offer something of value to someone who does not appreciate its worth. This idiom is based on a biblical verse (Matthew 7:6) and is a metaphorical reference to the idea of casting pearls, which are valuable and rare, before swine, which are seen as unclean and unworthy animals;
- *to cast the fire stone* comes from John 8:7, where Jesus intervenes in the stoning of a woman accused of adultery. The idiom is now used to describe the act of being the first to criticize or condemn someone, often hypocritically;
- *the powers that be* is a phrase from Romans 13:1 implying an authoritative figure who hold power;

- *scapegoat* is an expression found in Leviticus 16:10, where a goat is chosen by lot to be sent into the wilderness, symbolically carrying the sins of the people. Today, the word “scapegoat” is labeled to a person blamed for the wrongdoings of others;
- *to bite the dust* is to suffer or to die. The phrase is found in Psalms 72:9.

The aforementioned idioms provide a good example of the figurative language that was deployed by a committee of scholars and clergymen charged with producing a version of the Bible that would be acceptable to all factions of the Church of England.

It is believed that some expressions in the KJV were inspired by the English kings. Despite the fact that the Bible was translated in the early 17th century, several hundred years after the reign of King Richard, or Richard the Lionheart, one can find expressions with the cultural component “lion”. For instance, the phrase *a lion in the way* can be found in the Old Testament, specifically in Proverbs 26:13. In the King James Version, the verse reads, *“The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets”* [41]. The phrase means any perceived obstacle seen as insurmountable.

Other Biblical expressions that may have been inspired by Richard the Lionheart include such idioms, as *like a roaring lion* (the phrase alludes to someone or something that is threatening or dangerous and stems from 1 Peter 5:8), *to eat with the lions* (from the Psalm 22:21) and *in a lion’s den* (from the story of Daniel 6:16 in which the prophet was thrown into a den of lions as punishment for his faith) refer a dangerous situation.

In conclusion, King James Version of the Bible JV continues to influence the English language and culture to this day. The analyzed biblical idioms were taken from more than 15 chapters. They include different components possessing various connotative meanings and show the versatile nature of English idiomatic expressions. The analysis of the semantic features of the idioms with the “lion” component shows that they have mainly negative implications incorporating the concept of peril.

2.5 Customs & Habits and idioms

Defining the norms and values of the society, British customs are deeply rooted in the country's identity. They reflect people's sense of community, tradition, and respect for their history.

One of the most important British customs is politeness. There exist culturally marked idioms that allude to this concept. Perhaps, the most well-known idiom is *mind your Ps and Qs*. One version suggests that the expression originated from the printing industry in the 16th century, where typesetters had to be careful to distinguish between the lowercase letters p and q, as they were easily confused due to their mirror-image shapes. So, it is possible that printers used the expression *mind your Ps and Qs* as a reminder to be diligent and pay attention to detail when setting type. Another theory is that the expression originated in the taverns of England in the 17th century. Bartenders would keep a tally of customers' drinks on a chalkboard, marking down each pint or quart with a "P" or "Q". When a customer got too drunk and disorderly, the bartender would shout "mind your Ps and Qs!" as a reminder to drink responsibly and keep track of their tab. Despite the uncertainty about its origin, *mind your Ps and Qs* is still widely used today to remind someone to be careful and polite in their behavior and speech.

The phrase *manners maketh man* is originated from a 14th-century poem by William of Wykeham, who was a bishop and chancellor of England. The poem emphasized the importance of good manners and behavior, and the phrase has since become a proverbial expression. Another idiom *to bow and scape* comes from the traditional act of showing respect by bowing and scraping one's foot along the ground. It was commonly used in royal courts and other formal settings in the 16th century. Over time, the expression came to be used figuratively to describe an excessively deferential or subservient person. Referring to a formal social occasion where guests are expected to wear formal evening attire, the British often call it *a black-tie event*. A formal way of introducing a disagreement or criticism while still showing respect for the other person is incorporated int the phrase *with all due respect*. Generally, the British love for good manners is *a time-honoured practice*.

Being an idiom, the latter means a tradition that has been in place for a long time and is respected for its longevity. Similarly, a certain level of conformity to social expectations is *the done thing*. The 20th-century expression refers to a customary way of behaving in a particular situation.

Another important British habit is the love for tea. This long-standing tradition, especially the afternoon "tea time", is seen as a way of relaxing and socializing. The cultural phenomenon can be traced in different idioms. For example, the idea of expressing a lack of interest is seen in the expression *not my cup of tea*. It originated in the early 20th-century Britain as a way of politely declining a cup of tea that is not to one's taste. The idiom has since been extended to refer to anything that is not to one's liking or interest. Negative connotative meaning is preserved in the idiom *not for all the tea in China*. It expresses a strong refusal or reluctance to do something. In the19th century, tea was a highly prized commodity and China was the main source of the world's tea. The idiom conveys the idea that even the vast riches of China's tea would not be enough to persuade someone to do things they do not want to do. Another popular idiom with British origins is *storm in a teacup* which means a situation blown out of proportion. The image of a small teacup being tossed around in a stormy sea is a metaphor for a minor problem being exaggerated into a major crisis.

The exact origins of the idiom *have tea with the vicar* are unclear, but it is thought to have originated in Britain in the 20th century. At that time, the vicar was seen as a figure of authority and respect in the community, and having tea with him was a way to demonstrate one's good character and standing in society. Over time, the idiom has come to represent any behavior that is seen as being proper or respectable.

While tea is often served with milk, it is possible to find the "milk" component in a well-known idiomatic expression *to cry over spilled milk* that implies to regret things that have already happened and cannot be changed. The connotative meaning is negative. The phrase "spilled milk" refers to something lost or wasted. When British people want to stress the best quality, they use the idiom *cream of the crop*.

The phrase “cream” in this context refers to the richest part of milk that rises to the top.

Apart from tea, there is another important aspect of the British customs – traditional food. The cuisine is peculiar due to its puddings, pies, pancakes, full English breakfast, sausages, sandwiches, cheese etc. Some meals have become a part of the rich idiomatic heritage. Probably one of the most famous culturally-marked phrases is *proof of the pudding is in the eating*: this means that the true value of something can only be judged by testing it. The phrase “pudding” refers to a dessert or sweet course. The modern food historians Annie Gray and Andrew Hann in their book “How to Cook: The Victorian Way with Mrs Crocombe” (2020) state that the expression can be traced to the first recipes in the 14th century when “pudding” was a typical savory dish made with meat, suet, and grains. The proof of the pudding referred to the process of boiling the ingredients together in a bag or cloth, which made it difficult to tell what the finished dish would taste like [21, p.68]. The only way to determine the quality of the pudding was to eat it. The writers also mention the idiom *to sell like hot pudding* which means to sell quickly and in large quantities. Today people tend to say *to sell like hotcakes*. Other expressions are *plum pudding* (refers to a rich and enjoyable experience, often used in the context of a luxurious dessert) and *all of a pudding* (used when something has unexpectedly stopped).

The “pie” component in the idioms is also culturally marked. Pies have been a staple of British food for centuries. Traditional tarts include savory pies filled with meat, vegetables, and gravy, as well as sweet pies filled with fruit or custard.

Originally, pies were made with a thick, tough pastry called a “coffin” which was used to encase meat, fish, or vegetables. During the Tudor period, pies became more elaborate, with ornate crusts and fillings made from exotic meats such as swan, peacock, and venison. They were served at royal banquets. In the 17th century, pies became more common among the working classes, who would make “pot pies” using cheaper cuts of meat and vegetables. These pies were easy-to-make, often baked in earthenware dishes and covered with a crust made from flour and water. That was the time when the idiom *as easy as pie* originated. The idea of dividing a pie into slices

to share among a group is incorporated into the idiom *to have a piece of the pie*. Nowadays it means to have a share in something, such as a business or project. Another idiom *to have a finger in every pie* means to be involved in different activities. It relates to the idea of a pie with many different flavors. The expression can acquire positive and negative evaluative meaning depending on a context.

Relating to different snacks, one can state that British people have special love to sandwiches, butter, jam etc. They are popular in the UK for a variety of reasons.

Butter has been a main ingredient in British cooking for centuries. In the language picture of the word this ingredient is mainly associated with flattery and advantage, as in the idiom *to butter someone up* (to flatter or praise someone excessively in order to gain their favor) or *to have a finger in the butter* (to have a privileged position, often in relation to a group or organization). Butter is also a metaphor for strength or rigidity as seen in the idiom *to be as hard as butter*. The latter describes a person who is unyielding in their opinions and actions.

The modern sandwich is said to have originated in Britain, with the Earl of Sandwich famously requesting a piece of meat between two slices of bread in the 18th century. Since then, sandwiches have become a ubiquitous part of British cuisine. They are reflected in a number of idioms: *to be caught between two stools/sandwiches* (to be in a difficult situation where you are faced with two equally unappealing choices) and *to be a sandwich short of a picnic* (refers to a silly person). Both idiomatic expressions use the word “sandwich” metaphorically to describe a situation or certain behavior.

Finally, jam is a popular spread, often enjoyed on toast, scones, or in sandwiches. It is a major ingredient in many classic dishes like jam roly-poly or Victoria sponge cake. The British idioms reflect the various ways in which the word “jam” can be used, from its associations with sweetness and reward to its more negative connotations of being stuck, blocked, crowded (as in the idioms *traffic jam, in a jam, jam-packed*).

As to the positive evaluative meaning, there is a phrase *jam tomorrow* which refers to a promise of future rewards or benefits that may never materialize. It comes

from the Lewis Carroll novel “Through the Looking-Glass” (1871), in which the character of the White Queen promises Alice *jam tomorrow* [11, p.110] as a reward for her work.

The idioms with a “jam” component tend to refer to the lack of space. This phenomenon is traced in the expressions *in a jam* which means to be in a difficult or uncomfortable situation, often due to circumstances beyond one's control. The synonymous adjective to the idiom can be a metaphorical adjective *jam-packed*. It describes a space or event that is extremely crowded or full.

In conclusion, the politeness custom is reflected in the British idioms with positive evaluative meaning. Some national dishes and products, such as tea, milk, pudding, pie, butter, sandwiches, jam, were also incorporated into the language and represent a rich source of people’s preferences. They form a unique associative field relating to various concepts, such as hobbies, social behavior, emotions and actions.

2.6 Literature and idioms

British literature is rich in figurative expressions. A significant number of the English idioms come from the well-known literary works, they were introduced by the English writers.

Shakespearianisms, or phraseological units coined by the prolific English writer William Shakespeare, constitute a large part of the idiomatic corpus. His tragedies became a major source of the figurative expressions. For instance, the tragedy “Macbeth” (1606) explores themes of ambition, guilt, power, and the corrupting influence of unchecked desire. Some idioms implying the mentioned thematic concepts were also introduced in the work. For instance, the idiomatic expression *fair is foul, and foul is fair* is spoken by the three witches at the beginning of the play, setting the tone for the theme of deception and ambiguity. The idiom *milk of human kindness* comes from Lady Macbeth’s soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 5. She is contemplating her husband’s ambition and his tendency to be too kind to achieve his goals. The phrase is used to describe someone’s inherent kindness or compassion.

Such a positive connotation is also preserved in the phrase *a charmed life* which implies someone who seems to be protected from harm. The idiom was later popularized by the poet John Dryden in the 17th century. To accomplish something in a single moment can be replaced by the phrase *at one fell swoop* which appears in Act 4, Scene 3, when Macduff learns that his entire family has been murdered. While the original context hints negative connotative meaning, the phrase can be used in a variety of contexts. Unlike that phrase, *a sorry sight* means an unpleasant or unfortunate thing to witness. The word *sorry* in this idiom means distressing. After Macbeth murders King Duncan and is wracked with guilt and hallucinations, he repeats the phrase *sleep no more* which refers to the situations when one is unable to sleep due to intense guilt or remorse.

As to "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" (approx. 1600) there is not so much idioms compared to the playwright Macbeth. However, it is important to mention them, as they reflect the Shakespearean metaphorical way of thinking. Perhaps, the most famous phrase *to be or not to be* can be found in Hamlet's soliloquy in Act 3, Scene 1: *"To be, or not to be: that is the question."* [34, p.68]. It is often heard in the situations when one needs to contemplate existence and the choice between life and death. The evaluative meaning of the phrase is neutral. Negative connotation can be traced in the idiom *lily-livered* mentioned in Hamlet's description of his stepfather, Claudius, in Act 2, Scene 2. In the Medieval Ages, people believed that the liver was a source of human's bravery. The word lily, that was originally light or pale, was taken to imply the colour of a liver which having no blood would also turn pale. People with no blood and, subsequently, no fearlessness would be called cowards.

The concept of emotions and human feelings constitutes a number of idioms from other Shakespeare's works. In the play "Julius Caesar" (1599), Brutus describes the crowds as *foaming at the mouth*, or very angry and agitated. The synonymous phrase *hot-blooded* stems from Mistress Quickly in the play "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (approx. 1598) who describes Falstaff as *hot-blooded* and prone to anger.

Positive connotation is seen in the idioms *in stitches* from "Twelfth Night" (1601), which refers to laughing uncontrollably, and *cakes and ale*. The latter suggests a life of leisure, associated with drinking and eating rich foods. The idiom is marked with the component *ale* – a drink traditionally associated with British brewing. In "Othello" (1603), Iago accuses Cassio of *wearing his heart on his sleeve* and being too open about his feelings. Something worthless and unimportant can be referred to as *dish fit for the dogs* which Mark Antony uses this phrase to describe the assassination of Julius Caesar.

While the idiom *a heart of gold* is often attributed to Shakespeare because of its instance in the history play "Henry V" (1599), it is important to stress that the phrase may have been popularized by the character King Lydgate in Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" (1392), who was described as having "a herte of gold." The phrase signifies a kind person with a selfless and compassionate nature.

In "Romeo and Juliet" (1597), the character Mercutio uses the phrase *a wild-goose chase* to describe the futile pursuit of Romeo's love interest, Rosaline. The term came from hunting wild geese in the 16th-century Britain that are known for their erratic flight patterns and the difficulty of tracking them. Since then, the idiom has been used in various contexts to describe a search that is unlikely to produce results.

The idiom *forever and a day* was first recorded in Shakespeare's play "The Taming of the Shrew" (1589). We can find it in the speech of the character Biondello in Act 4, Scene 4: *"… If this be not that you look for, I have no more to say /But bid Bianca farewell for ever and a day"* [35, p.88] The phrase describes an indefinite or extremely long period of time, emphasizing the idea of eternity. The British have a reputation for being punctual and valuing time, and the phrase highlights this cultural trait.

Another idiomatic expression with its roots in literature is *good riddance.* It is a common way to express pleasure or relief after an unpleasant situation. The word *riddance* in this context means the act of getting rid of something and comes from the Old English word *riddan* which means "to clear". The phrase is first recorded in

Shakespeare's play "Troilus and Cressida" (1602), where it is used by the character Pandarus: *"Good riddance, be gone"* [36, p.29].

As to the negative evaluation, there is an idiom *dead as a doornail* from the play "Henry VI" (1592) which stands for completely dead or lifeless. The word *doornail* in this phrase refers to a large-headed nail used to secure doors in the Middle Ages. Another phrase *it's all Greek to me* means something incomprehensible. Although, the origin is attributed to the work "Julius Caesar" (1599), it is possible that the phrase was popularized during the Renaissance, when Greek became an important language in intellectual and academic circles.

The aforementioned idioms reflect the enduring influence of Shakespeare's works on the language, as they have become a part of the common lexicon. Each idiom reflects a particular aspect of behavior or emotion, and the fact that they continue to be understood centuries after their creation is a testament to Shakespeare's timeless insights into the human condition.

In fact, many other British writers contributed to the idiomatic fund of the English language. A very common phrase *every cloud has a silver lining*, implies that setbacks can lead to positive outcomes, was first used by the poet John Milton in his book "Comus" (1634). It was later popularized by the British writer, Charles Dickens in his book "Bleak House" published in 1852.

Enduring a painful situation with determination is incorporated into the idiom *to bite the bullet*. Its first figurative use is preserved in Rudyard Kipling's book "The Light That Failed" (1890). The etymology can be traced back to the 19th century when British soldiers would bite on a bullet during surgery to help them cope with the pain.

As the lion is regarded as one of the most important symbols of England, James Goldman wrote a play "A lion in winter" (1966) stressing the dignity of this animal. The title of his work is a figurative reference to a powerful figure who has become past their prime. The author dwells on the life of King Henry II comparing him to *a lion in winter* [20, p.23], as he is no longer authoritative he once was. This

idiom reflects the British culture's fascination with history and its ability to draw lessons from the past.

Another English writer Mary Shelley is known for her influential novel "Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus" (1818), which has inspired several idiomatic expressions. For instance, the term *Frankenstein's monster* is used to describe something that is uncontrolled and has turned against its creator. The idiom is culturally marked by the name of a famous fictional character. The writer also deploys a metaphoric expression *playing God* derived from the novel's central theme, in which Dr. Frankenstein attempts to create life in his laboratory. It alludes to a situation in which a person is attempting to control something that should not be tampered with.

Despite the popularity of the detective stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and their place the British literature, there is only one expression in the corpus of idioms directly related to them. For instance, the expression *Sherlock* is used in reference to someone who is particularly skilled at solving puzzles. It derives from the character of Sherlock Holmes, who is famous for his sharp intellect and deductive reasoning.

In addition to the Sherlock Holmes stories, English literature is often associated with Lewis Carroll. His writing is full of playful language and wordplay, which has led to the creation of several idioms in the English language. He is best known for his children's novel "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865) and its sequel "Through the Looking-Glass" (1871). The latter has become a popular idiom used to name something surreal or bizarre. Referring to odd situations British people also use one of the most famous Alice's phrases – *curioser and curioser* – which she deployed encountering unusual things in Wonderland. The way Alice fell into the fairy land is also an idiom: d*own the rabbit hole* implies a situation in which a person becomes deeply involved in something strange or unexpected. Another phrase *mad as a hatter* means to be completely insane. It originated from the toxic effects of mercury used in the manufacturing of hats in the 19th centuries. Hat makers were frequently exposed to poisonous mercury, which caused them to develop tremors, irritability, and

hallucinations. This led to the popular notion that hatters were “mad”. In Lewis Carroll’s works Mad Hatter is depicted as being completely crazy. The idiom *Cheshire cat grin* is marked by a distinctive component of the name of a fictional character and refers to a broad smile that appears to be hiding something or indicating amusement. *Jabberwocky* is a title of a nonsense poem found in the book “Through the Looking-Glass”. The word itself may have been inspired by the Middle English word “jabber”, which means to talk quickly or indistinctly. The poem features many made-up words, such as “slithy”, “brillig”, and “frabjous”, which have become part of popular culture. Thus, *jabberwocky* is a figurative representation of the language which is difficult to understand.

All in all, the examples provided in this chapter demonstrate the varied origins of idioms in British literature, and how they have evolved over time. The idiomatic expressions were taken from the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Goldman, Mary Shelley, Conan Doyle and Lewis Carroll. The evaluative meaning of idioms further enhances their impact and helps to convey the intended message effectively.

2.7 Sports & Entertainment and idioms

National perceptions related to various entertainment and sporting activities are also well reflected in idioms. They are often seen as a way to escape the stresses of daily life, socialize with others, and express oneself.

Many of the world’s most popular sports, including football, rugby, cricket, and tennis, were invented or popularized in Britain. Nowadays they are celebrated and enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds. Entertainment, including music, theater, and cinema, has also had a significant influence on the global entertainment industry. Idiomatically, these concepts express ideas of teamwork, competition, performance, and success, reflecting their role in British society.

Cricket is a bat-and-ball game that originated in England in the 16th century. It is a symbol of British integrity, as cricket is known for its emphasis on fair play, respect for the opposition, and adherence to the rules. The idioms *to play cricket* and

to play a straight bat imply to behave in a fair manner. In cricket, a batsman who plays a straight bat is more likely to hit the ball cleanly and win. Such expressions as *that's no cricket* and *it's just not cricket* express disapproval of dishonest behavior. Something of great importance is said to be *as significant as a game of cricket.*

Some idioms contain cricket-specific idioms that relate to the course of the game and its equipment. For instance, *wicket* is the playing surface in cricket, and when it becomes *sticky* due to dampness or other factors, it can make it harder for the batsman to score runs. The words fused into an idiom *a sticky wicket* as a reference to a difficult or problematic situation, in which progress is uncertain. The situation when everyone has an equal chance of succeeding is called *a level playing field*. The phrase alludes to the flat and even cricket field. Other idioms *to pull up stumps* and *to draw stumps* come from the act of removing the three wooden stumps that make up the wicket at the end of a cricket match, which signals the end of the game. Both of them have a meaning of abandoning or ending certain activity. Finally, talking about victory and defeat, one can use the idioms *hat-trick* and *hit for six* correspondingly. Having originated in the late 1800s, *hat-trick* refers to a bowler taking three wickets in three consecutive deliveries. The term comes from the tradition of a bowler being awarded a new hat by their team as a reward for achieving this feat. At the same time, hitting the ball for six runs is a significant achievement and can turn the game in a team's favor, so *hit for six* means to be the loser.

The aforementioned cricket expressions demonstrate the strategic and precise nature of the game, as well as the sense of honesty valued in British culture.

Along with cricket, the UK has a long history of soccer culture and fandom. The British often describe a football match as *a game of two halves* implying two teams with different outcomes and performances. *Six-pointer* refers to a match where both teams are competing for important points to avoid relegation or qualify for a major competition. The idiom *to play ball* is commonly used to refer to the start of a game. The expression used to celebrate a goal scored in football is *back of the net*, while the idiom *own goal* means the opposite and is used when a player accidentally scores a goal for the rival team. At the same time, if the ball has been kicked out of

play and it must start again from the beginning, it is possible to use the expression *back to square one*. It describes a situation where progress has been lost and you have to start over.

Another interesting phrase *sick as a parrot* is believed to have originated in soccer circles in the UK. It was popularized by the football commentator Brian Moore during the 1980s. The phrase refers to the disappointment felt by a football team when they lose a match. The use of *parrot* in the phrase is unclear, but it is likely that it is used to represent a pet that can become visibly upset or distressed.

Tennis is s a popular sport in the United Kingdom, with Wimbledon being one of the oldest and most prestigious tennis tournaments in the world. The event is held annually in London and is considered one of the most significant sporting events in the British calendar. The concept of competitiveness is incorporated into the idiom *to have the ball in your court* which comes from the idea of having the ball in your possession during a game of tennis. The evaluative meaning of this idiom is neutral, as it simply indicates that it is someone's turn to take action. The idiom *to play hardball* preserves the ultimate determination to win, but the connotation is negative, as it suggests that someone is being tough, uncompromising, and aggressive.

The Six Nations Championship, a rugby union tournament between England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, and Italy, is a major sporting event in the UK and is eagerly anticipated by rugby fans every year. A popular English idiom *to get the ball rolling* meaning to start is believed to have its origins in the rugby, where the ball is rolled along the ground to start play; *to drop the ball*, or to fail to perform a task, comes from the act of dropping the ball during a rugby game, which can result in a turnover or loss of possession. The idiom *out of bounds* comes from the boundary lines in rugby, which mark the edges of the playing field, so the expression implies to be unacceptable. A set-piece in rugby where the two teams come together in a tightly-packed formation to contest possession of the ball is called the *scrum*. The term is used in the idiom *to scrum down* which means to gather together to solve a problem or discuss an issue.

It should also be mentioned that British people entertain themselves in many different ways. Going to a pub is often seen as a quintessential part of the culture, as pubs have long been a central part of community life in the UK. They offer a range of drinks, including beer, ale, cider, and spirits, as well as food, such as traditional pub grub like fish and chips or Sunday roasts.

The British have a long history of brewing beer, and there are many traditional styles of beer that are unique to the UK, such as bitter, mild, and porter. Some idioms with the component beer include *on the beer* (to drink alcohol getting drunk), *cry in one's beer* (to express one's sorrows while drinking alcohol), *to have a few beer* (to consume a moderate amount of beer in a casual and relaxed atmosphere), *flat beer* (something disappointing or underwhelming), *small beer* (something of little importance or value). The latter comes from the fact that small beer is a low-alcohol beer that was commonly consumed in the past as a substitute for water.

Ale as a kind of beer is mentioned in the word combination *fighting ale* that is an old-fashioned term for strong, alcoholic beer. This idiom suggests that the beer is so potent that it might make people more inclined to get into fights or arguments. Drinking ale with enthusiasm and gusto is called *quaffing ale*. *To go on the ale* refers to going on a drinking binge, it implies that someone is drinking heavily.

Additionally, the traditional UK measurement of any alcoholic drink is a pint - a unit of volume that is equal to 568 milliliters (or 20 fluid ounces). It also serves as a cultural marker for some idioms: *to buy someone a pint* (to buy someone a drink), *pint-sized* (small in size), *half a pint* (relates to a person who is not very smart or capable), *to be a pint low* (to be short of money). The idiom based on a play of words is *pint of no return*. It suggests that someone has consumed so much alcohol that they have reached a point of no return and cannot stop drinking.

Concluding, sports such as cricket, rugby, and football are not just hobbies in the UK; they comprise an integral part of the country's identity inspiring a lot of idiomatic expressions. Likewise, entertainment such as going to the pubs reflects the people's love of socializing and relaxation. The culturally specific words include the names of drinks ("ale" and "beer") and measurement ("pint"). Although the idioms

have different etymologies and evaluation, they are united by the true concept of Britishness.

2.8 Animals and idioms

The interaction between humans and the natural environment suggests another important layer of study of the country's values, as many idioms have their origins in this very concept. Animals and the way they are perceived in the British worldview represent a unique insight into the cultural associative perspective.

Before taking a careful examination of the British idioms with a component of an animal, it is important to mention the term *zoonym*. It can be defined as the fauna-related denotation which arises from nation's outlook and world perception. Zoonyms have the potential of the metaphoric transformation and play a crucial role in the process of nomination of the phraseological units. Stemming from a cultural mindset, their use may have been inspired by the country's natural environment, historical or mythological significance, or association with certain qualities or characteristics.

As to the British culture, lion is a national animal considered to be a part of the country's history. It is traditionally associated with power, pride and nobility. The zoonym found its embodiment in the idiom *lion hearted*. It originated from the medieval legend of Richard the Lionheart who was a King of England known for his chivalry. The term "Lion Hearted" was first used to describe Richard's bravery during the Third Crusade in the late 12th century. The legend of the courageous man spread throughout Europe and became a popular subject of folklore. Other idioms are *to be as brave as a lion, as strong as a lion, as bold as a lion* and *to fight like a lion*. Similarly, they mean to be brave and fearless. As the lion is a symbol of courage and strength, this idiom reflects the British culture's admiration for these qualities.

Generally, feline represent a rich source of metaphoric characteristics. In Britain, cats have been domesticated since ancient times, and their presence in everyday life has led to the development of many idioms that incorporate them. For instance, *like a cat among pigeons* and its different versions such as *to throw the cat among the pigeons, to put the cat amongst pigeons, to set the cat among the pigeons*

mean to cause chaos or confusion in a situation. While the cat is not a lion, it is still a predator and shares some of the same qualities. The phrase was deployed by Agatha Christie in the title of one of her detective stories – *Cat Among the Pigeons* (1959). In general, the Norman invasion brought the tradition of building dovecotes. The idea of putting a cat into such an edifice was a kind of entertainment for people. Despite its origin, the idiom doesn't usually acquire positive evaluation, but can be rather used in any context.

The origin of the idiom *not enough room to swing a cat* comes from the practice of British military sailors whipping disobedient crew members with a cat-o'-nine-tails, a type of whip with nine tails. It was a widespread way of punishing in the British military in the 18th century. The limited space on ships required to do so was very small. Another idiom with the negative connotative meaning is to *let the cat out of the bag* which implies the phenomenon of disclosing confidential information. The idiom is believed to have come from the 16th-century practice of selling pigs in bags at the British markets. Sometimes, dishonest sellers would replace a pig with a cat, and if the buyer didn't check the bag, the cat would be let out of the bag, revealing the deception.

Some idioms with the zoonym component refer to feelings and emotions. One of them is *like a cat on hot bricks* which means to be extremely nervous or agitated. The peculiarity of the component *brick* here lies in the British tradition of manufacturing different types of brick and stone. The brickwork was highly praised by people and the process of laying down bricks under high temperature found its reflection in the idiom. As to the human traits, the idiom with an insect component *queen bee* is a comparatively new 20th-century expression used to describe an energetic and authoritative woman, especially in a professional context. It was influenced by the hierarchical structure of bee colonies (as paralleled to the modern top-down business companies), in which the queen bee is the dominant member. In British culture, the phrase describes a woman who wields significant influence over others. One more insect idiom *to have a bee in one's bonnet* means to be preoccupied and originates from the buzzing sound of a bee in a bonnet (hat). It was first recorded

in print in the monthly journal “The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine” (1863). One aspect that makes this idiom distinctively British is the word *bonnet*. The women used to cover their heads with this type of a hat following the tendency of the Scottish fashion of the 18th century.

A very popular idiomatic expression *to rain cats and dogs* has also got British roots. One theory suggests that it comes from the Old English word “catadupe”, which meant a waterfall or cataract, and was later modified into “cat-and-dog-up”. It is also believed that the expression originated in the rainy London due to the people’s observation: cats usually hunted mice during the rainfalls, and if it happened on the rooftops they were washed away from the slippery surface falling down on the ground.

While the zoonym cat has acquired predominantly positive connotation, the concept of a pig is negative: *to make a pig’s ear of something* means to make a mess. It is a reference to the way pigs eat. As to the origin of the phrase, “*ear*” is thought to be the best rhyming word to “*beer*” in Cockney. The expression *pig’s ear* was used instead of the *drink of beer* in English pubs. Another source of the idiom can be an old English proverb *You can’t make a silk purse of a pig’s ear* which is built on the antithesis opposing gentle material of silk to the animal’s body part. The British pub origin also refers to the idiom *to eat like a pig* and *to make a pig of yourself*, both phrases mean to eat a lot. The expression *couldn’t stop a pig in a passage* dates back to the Victorian times when people kept different animals in their backyards. They tried to catch pigs and those who couldn’t manage to do it were regarded as incompetent.

Another British idiom *donkey’s years* stands for long life. In Roman Britain, donkeys were a cheap way to transport goods and passengers, while in the Victorian times there were special donkey rides. The donkeys were usually special breeds with long ears, as they had a longer lifespan and hence the opportunity to compete. Thus, the expression *donkey’s years* is closely related with the kinds of donkeys which took part in the competitions, their ear shape played a special role indicating their longevity. However, the idiomatic expression with the neutral connotation took its

component *years* from the Cockney rhyming variant *ears*. The negative meaning is traced in the idioms *load of old donkey* and *stubborn as a mule*. Both phrases make up a reference to the aforementioned fact that donkeys were used to carry heavy loads, and are therefore associated with weighty and worthless things. So, a *load of old donkey* refers to something inessential. At the same time, donkeys are known for their stubbornness, this concept is seen in the expressions *stubborn as a mule*, or *stubborn as a donkey*.

Some British idioms include the reference to birds. Neutrality can be traced in the expression *to kill two birds with one stone* which means to achieve two things at once. Its etymology can be traced back to the ancient Romans who used the phrase "bis vivit qui bene vivit", or "he lives twice who lives well". The phrase was first used in writing by the British writer, John Heywood in his book "Proverbs" published in 1546.

The concept of cowardice is manifested in an idiom *to be a yellow-bellied chicken.* While chicken is traditionally seen as a helpless creature, the term *yellow-bellied* referred people who lived by the Lincolnshire's fenlands in the East of England. It is an extremely marshy area with a lot of originally black eels who turned yellow. People who lived there for a while also came to be compared to yellow eels. Thus, a combination of the name of a bird associated with weakness and its color yellow, also deployed to refer to people from East England, fused into the purely British phrase.

Another bird idiom is *a little robin redbreast told me*. The robin is often mentioned in the Celtic folklore and is a symbolic bird for the UK embodying trust and reliability. Its semantics reflect this fact, because the idiom is used when someone wants to keep the source of their information secret. The idiom which reflects the gentle nature of the lark is *to be up with the lark* or *to get up with the lark*. Its origin comes from the way of life of peasants in the 16th century when there were no advances in technologies (such as alarm clocks) and people used to get up early to begin their workday. In contrast to the usual peasants, there was an upper class in medieval England distinguished by its preferences and habits. For example, nobles

loved to take part in the royal sport of falconry, or hawking. Kings and lords trained special birds, mostly hawks, and used the birds of prey to hunt small animals. Therefore, hawk's ability to spot prey from high in the air and swoop down on it with great accuracy gave rise to the idiom *to watch like a hawk* describing a person who keeps a close eye on something. While hawks mainly incorporate preciseness, another bird, namely a peacock, is often mentioned as a symbolic representation of prestige, dignity and glamour. The idiom *to be as proud as a peacock* originated in the 14th century when the birds were introduced to the UK. They were regarded to be exotic and rare, so only rich people could afford to keep them. Sir John de Foxley was the first English aristocrat who brought peacocks from the territory of modern Israel. The birds represented the owners' wealth, pride and high ambition, so British people began to identify the bird with such traits.

From the aforementioned examples we can see that bird idioms predominantly acquire positive evaluative meaning, except for the idiom *to be a yellow-bellied chicken*. However, there is also an expression *a canary in a coalmine* which reflects the British history of industrialization. The practice of using canaries to detect toxic gases in the coal mines dates back to the First World War. The canaries would become sick or die before the miners, thus the idiom came to describe a warning sign of danger.

Interestingly, Britons adopted their own names for a male deer and a female bird, introducing the terms *stag* and *hen* respectively. These words are purely British and can usually be heard in a wedding context. They denote a party often arranged for a wife-to-be and her future husband. *A hen night* refers to the female party which resembles a reflecting, calm family meeting. The male's party has a stronger connotation and means a noisy celebration with loud music and a lot of fun. The idiom inspired by such a British phenomenon is called *a stag night*. Nowadays the phrases may be used for different gatherings, not necessarily for the pre-marriage ones.

The tradition of British horse racing has had a significant influence on a number of idioms. For example, the expression *horseplay* dates back to the 16th

century and originally referred to playful behavior exhibited by horses. Over time, the meaning shifted to describe similar behavior in humans. This idiom preserves positive connotation which can be also traced in the idiom *straight from the horse's mouth*. The phrase suggests that the best source of information is the person who has direct knowledge of a situation. The approach to decision-making often associated with the British temperament of being cautious and deliberate is attributed to the phrase *hold your horses*. It implies that one should take a moment to think before acting. The same neutral evaluative meaning is incorporated into the idiom *get off your high horses* which stresses British demeanor to stay grounded and humble, even in a position of authority or success. The concepts of humility, modesty, and respect for others are underlined. In horse racing, *a dark horse* is an animal relatively unknown to the betting public and has little chance of winning. The term has come to mean any person or thing that is unknown and unexpectedly successful.

Thus, zoonyms constitute an essential aspect of the English language describing different aspects of human character and life. Most of animal idioms containing the components of "cat" or other feline, "birds" and insects acquire a positive evaluative meaning in a context, but there are also expressions with neutral and negative connotation which possess the reference to a pig and a donkey. The number of idiomatic expressions with the animal concept shows how multifaceted their origins and meanings are.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

The cultural heritage of the United Kingdom is very diverse. It has been enriched by the centuries of historical development, political and social issues. The English language was heavily influenced by the events in the cultural life. Analyzing idioms is one of the best ways to define their role in the phraseological system of the language.

The group of idioms that originated during the key stages of the British history is the most numerous. Latinisms that entered English during the Roman period were the first words used in a figurative way. The processes of metaphorization continued

to shape the language during the Anglo-Saxon invasion with the introduction of Old English. The Norman conquest brought many French words that has become a part of various idioms. The reflection of the medieval times and Tudor rule can be found in the idiomatic expressions with the class and reign connotations. During the Industrial Revolution and the Victorian era the language was expanded by the terms relating to urbanization and the image of the British empire. The war expressions marked the hardships and turbulence reflecting the harsh realities of the time.

The beginning of the 17th century was a memorable period in the religious circles, as the English translation of the Christian Bible was published. The idioms taken from 15 chapters of the King James Version show the profound moral implications.

The weather components in the British idioms have a direct reference to the geographical position of the country and stress its isle peculiarity.

The thematic groups of sports and entertainment, customs and habits can be predominantly distinguished by the components that entitle the everyday life of people, their preferences and traditions they follow. Most of the literature idioms describe people's emotions referring to the book characters and their behavioral patterns.

The animal idioms stand for a specific category of the idioms, as almost all of them are built on the associative perspective of the people. However, some of them have historical etymologies and rely on the household practices.

Thus, the cultural components manifested in the idioms have origins from the various spheres of life of the British people and carry important evaluative features.

CONCLUSION

Stable units with a cultural component occupy an important place in the phraseological fund of the English language. Due to the fact that different phenomena can be uniquely perceived by the representatives of a specific nation, each of them should be studied in regard to the cultural processes and national beliefs. As the language is a direct reflection of people's world perception, it carries important cultural connotations containing the historical roots, national background, lifestyle and a mode of thinking. Understanding traditional cultural patterns fixed in the idiomatic expressions enables one to have a deeper comprehension of the country and its features. The research encompasses 7 culturally-specific thematic fields the analysis of which gives an important insight into the United Kingdom and its culture.

There were 255 culturally-specific idioms taken for the analysis. The study has shown that idioms display a wide range of concepts and have various connotations. The data was examined in terms of the idiom's cultural etymology and belonging to specific semantic fields which in turn manifested the opportunity to define the evaluation of set expressions. The outlined semantic categories are as follows: personal character traits, emotions, state of health, conditions and quality, physical appearance, professional occupation, weather conditions, moral manners, social biases, political issues. Such semantic fields as personal character features (79), emotions (61) and manners (30) are the most numerous. The meanings and origins of the expressions helped to define their evaluative properties, and, consequently, the way British people perceive the phenomena in question.

On the grounds of the whole research, it is possible to conclude that the concepts of idiomatic expressions can be regarded as the elements of national knowledge stored in the lexicon. They most vividly reflect the perception of the world. The diverse and multi-faceted culture of the UK, shaped by centuries of its history, religion, language, had a great influence on the richness of the idiomatic expression. The periods of historical background represent the largest culturally-specific thematic field. Different events, political achievement and the formation of

Britain as a country are incorporated into the figurative language. The British etymological patterns are marked not only by the time and place of their creation, but, more importantly, by the direct references to such key stages of a country's development, as the Roman culture, the Norman conquest, the medieval period, the Industrial Revolution, the Victorian era, World War I, World War II and the post-war recovery. The set expressions were mainly influenced by the people's way of life, political processes and social changes.

The concept of geography occupies a crucial place in the British phraseology, as Britain is an island country with specific climate, so there exist a number of idioms related to the maritime activities and weather conditions. Among the examined 37 idioms, 12 of them contain a "fish" component, 7 of them have the "sea" element, 7 expressions are marked by the word "water", 4 phraseologisms contain the "rain" constituent. There are 7 idioms which include nautical terms. The analysis shows that the idioms of the geographical category have mainly positive and negative evaluative meaning which demonstrates how the real phenomena are incorporated into the language picture of the world and perceived by the British people.

The idioms taken from the culturally-specific thematic field of sports and entertainment comprise the names, as well as the references to the British national sports, such as cricket, football and rugby, and favourite pastime of the country's representatives. The marker "ale" is the most common idiomatic constituent designating the beverage that originated in the UK. Others include the notions of "pint" and "beer" which signify a British unit of volume and another popular drink correspondingly.

The perception of animals in the British worldview represents a unique insight into the cultural associative perspective, as zoonyms arise from nation's outlook. They are built on association with certain qualities or characteristics. The idioms with the components of "cat" or other feline, "birds" and insects acquire a positive evaluative meaning in a context, while the "pig" and the "donkey" are seen negatively by the British people, as their semantic and etymological features imply.

The British writers made a significant contribution to the fund of the English phraseology. Among the examined 33 idioms, 21 of them originated from the plays written by William Shakespeare. Their semantics relates to the concepts of emotions, feelings and relationship between people. Another 6 idioms were coined by Lewis Carroll, they refer to the notions of eccentricity and odd behavior. One of the expressions is marked by the reference to the fictional character – the Cheshire cat. The idiomatic references to the characters of Frankenstein, Sherlock Holmes are preserved in the idioms introduced by Mary Shelley and Arthur Conan Doyle. They imply positive and negative character traits. Neutral connotation is entitled into the set expressions coined by the British poet John Milton and the playwriter James Goldman.

The careful examination of idioms with religious roots shows that The King James Version (KJV), or the translation of the Bible by King James I of England, contains a number of memorable proverbs and idioms. The analyzed units were taken from the New and Old Testament, as well as from the Poetic and Wisdom part. The sections in question include the expressions incorporated into the English language by James I. Ehey manifest the concepts which are common in the Christian practices, such as humanity, forgiveness, beneficence and morality.

The cultural manifestation of customs and habits is deeply ingrained into the idioms. The expressions tend to reflect the concepts of politeness, respect, politeness and formality, which are important elements of interpersonal interaction for the English. The idea of a traditional tea drinking is marked in by the components “tea”, “milk” and “cup”. As for food, British idioms can be distinguished by the presence of the elements “pie”, “pudding”, “jam”, “butter” and “sandwich”. The associations connected to the cuisine vary incorporating the connotations of long traditions, social phenomena and activities, behaviour.

Based on the conducted work, it is possible to conclude that such phenomenon as a cultural component of the idioms covers all aspects of life of British people, and can acquire both a positive and a negative assessment. The fact suggests that this multifaceted concept provides many opportunities for studying not only the language,

but also the way people perceive the world. The findings can be undoubtedly used not only in linguistics, but also in psychology and other fields of research.

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APPENDIXES

Culturally-specific thematic field	*Idiom*	*Meaning*
Historical development (54)	to cross the Rubicon	to take an irrevocable step
	bread and circuses	a way to keep one happy
	caveat emptor	to be cautious when making purchases
	to go berserk	to become extremely violent
	to be at odds	to be in conflict
	to keep one's head	to remain calm in a difficult situation
	to take one's life on one's hands	to take a risk
	to have a spell cast on smn	to charm, use magic
	to give smn the cold shoulder	to be unfriendly
	to pull smn's leg	to trick smn
	to kick the bucket	to die
	to break the ice	to get rid of tension
	to pay through the nose	to pay more
	to play second fiddle	to take a subordinate role
	to blow your own trumpet/to blow your own horn	to boast
	the red line	limit
	to turn the tables	to reverse the situation
	to bring home the bacon	to earn a living
	to eat humble pie	to be humiliated
	to take the bread out of	to deprive smn of smth

	someone’s mouth	
	to go against the grain	to do smth against the natural way of things
	to have egg on your face	to be confused
	to take something with a grain of salt	to be skeptical
	to be at loggerheads	to be in conflict
	to have a chip on one’s shoulder	to be offended
	to make a clean sweep	to get rid of unnecessary things
	to rule the roost	to be in charge
	to have a heart of stone	to be emotionally cold
	to set one’s teeth on edge	to be irritated
	to read the riot act	to warn
	to grease the wheels	to facilitate smth
	to be in the pipeline	to be in the process of development
	to be a cog in the machine	to hold a minor position in an organization
	upper crust	upper class
	upstairs, downstairs	upper class and lower class
	to pull oneself up by one’s bootstraps	to achieve smth by working hard
	Bob’s your uncle	easy
	blue blood	an aristocrat
	over the top	exaggerated
	shell shock	emotional trauma
	the bee’s knees	fashionable
		appealing

	the cat's whiskers	to cooperate, to demonstrate resourcefulness and resilience
	to dig for victory	a time of prosperity
		to use resources sparingly
	the golden age	attacked
	to make do and mend	hastily made
	in the crosshairs	
	jerry-built/jerry-rigged	determination to overcome difficulties
	Dunkirk spirit	migration of talented people
		a frustrating situation
	brain drain	a quirky style of a movie
	catch-22	
	Ealing comedy	
Geography (38)	to be all at sea	to be confused
	to follow the sea	to work as a sailor
	a sea of troubles	a lot of problems
	a sea of faces	a crowd
	a sea of paperwork	bureaucratic work
	a sea of smth	a lot of smth
	all at sea	to be lost
	to be in deep water	to be in danger
	to make waves	to case trouble
	to throw smn overboard	to abandon smn
	to be in uncharted waters	to be ignorant of smth
	to be on a collision course	to head towards a conflict
	to be in the doldrums	to be depressed
	to be on an even keel	to keep balance

	to batten down the hatches	to prepare for difficulties
	to be a shipshape	to be well-organized
	to keep one’s head above water	to manage to survive
	to weather the storm	to endure difficulties
	smooth sailing	thing going easily
	to test the waters	to try smth
	to be in the same boat	to be in the same situation as smn else
	to fish for compliments	to seek praise
	the big fish in a small pond	an influential person in a small organization
	to be like a fish in water	to feel comfortable
	to be like a fish out of water	to feel embarrassed
	a cold fish	an unfeeling person
	to drink like a fish	to consume a lot of alcohol
	fish or cut bait	to take action
	a fine kettle of fish	a chaotic situation
	to make fish of one and flash of another	to treat people differently
	to cry stinking fish	to experience smth that has gone bad
	a foggy capital	London
	come rain or shine	done regardless of anything
	right as rain	to be in good order
	it never rains but it pours	thins going wrong
	to save for a rainy day	to save money for a time of need
	fair weather friend	a selfish person
	the calm before the storm	impending trouble

Religion (20)	to turn the other cheek	to respond to a perceived insult with patience
	a drop in the bucket	smth insignificant
	a fly in the ointment	a small issue spoiling endeavor
	a house divided against itself cannot stand	an organization likely to fail
	a labor of love	work done out of passion
	as old as the hills	very old
	by the skin of one's teeth	a successful escape from a difficult situation
	to cast your bread upon the waters	to take risks
	to eat, drink, and be marry	to enjoy oneself
	to fall from grace	to lose respect
	feet of clay	hidden flaw despite one's apparent authority
	to cast pearls before swine	to offer a valuable thing to smn who does appreciate its worth
	to cast the fire stone	to criticize
	the powers that be	an authoritative figure
	scapegoat	a person blamed for the wrongdoings of others
	to bite the dust	to suffer, to die
	a lion in the way	a seemingly insurmountable obstacle
	like a roaring lion	dangerous

	in a lion's den	to be in danger
	to eat with the lions	to be in danger
	a whited sepulcher	a hypocrite
Customs & Habits (30)	to mind one's Ps and Qs	to be careful
	manners maketh man	acceptable behaviour
	to bow and scape	to behave as a subservient person
	a black tie event	a formal occasion
	with all due respect	expressing criticism showing respect
	a time-honoured practice	a long tradition
	the done thing	conformity to expectations
	not my cup of tea	a lack of interest
	not for all the tea in China	reluctance to do smth
	storm in a teacup	a situation blown out of proportion
	to have tea with the vicar	respectable behaviour
	to cry over spilled milk	to regret things one cannot change
	cream of the crop	good quality
	proof of the pudding is in the eating	the true value of smth can only be judged by testing it
	to sell like hot pudding/to sell like hotcakes	to sell quickly in latge quantities
	plum pudding	a luxurious dessert
	all of a pudding	unexpectedly stopped
	to have a piece of the pie	to have a share in business
	to have a finger in ever pie	to be involved in different activities

	to butter smn up to have a finger in the butter to be as hard as butter to be caught between two stools/sandwiches a red cent a green light to be a sandwich short of a picnic to paint the town red traffic jam in a jam jam-packed jam tomorrow	to flatter smn to have a privileged position a person unyielding in their opinions and actions to have a difficult choice a copper penny freedom to be silly to have fun be stuck be blocked crowded a reward for one's work
Literature (33)	fair is foul, and foul is fair to strain at the leash milk of human kindness a charmed life at one fell swoop a sorry sight sleep no more to be or not to be lily-livered foaming at the mouth hot-blooded in stitches	oppositions in particular aspects to escape one's control kindness, compassion a life protected from harm in a single moment an unpleasant thing to witness intense guilt, remorse to contemplate existence cowardly very angry prone to anger laughing uncontrollably

	cakes and ale	a life of leisure
	to wear one's heart on one's sleeve	to be open about one's feelings
	a green-eyed monster	an envious person
	a dish fit for the dogs	smth worthless
	a heart of gold	a kind person
	a wild-goose chase	the futile pursuit
	forever and a day	a long period of time
	good riddance	relief after an unpleasant situation
	dead as a doornail	lifeless
	it's all Greek to me	smth incomprehensible
	every cloud has a silver lining	a potential benefit that can emerge from adversity
	to bite the bullet	to be in a painful situation
	a lion in winter	once powerful figure
	Frankenstein's monster	smth uncontrollable, set against the creator
	to play God	to control something that should not be tampered with
	Sherlock	a logical person
	curioser and curioser	smth bizarre
	down the rabbit hole	to be involved in a strange situation
	mad as a hatter	insane
	Cheshire cat grin	a smile which is hiding smth or indicating amusement
	jabberwocky	an incomprehensible language

	to have a whale of time	to have a great time
Sports & Entertainment (37)	to play cricket	to behave fairly
	to play a straight bat	to behave fairly
	that's no cricket	expressing disapproval
	it's just not cricket	expressing dishonest behavior
	as significant as a game of cricket	important
	a sticky wicket	a problematic situation
	a level playing field	a situation when everyone has a chance to win
	to pull up stumps	to abandon certain activity
	to draw stumps	to end certain activity
	hat-trick	a winner
	hit for six	a loser
	a game of two halves	a changing situation
	six-pointer	to a match where both teams are competing for important points
	to play ball	to start a game
	back of the net	celebrating a goal in sport
	own goal	a goal scored for the rival team
	back to square one	when progress is lost and one needs to start over
	sick as a parrot	disappointed
	to have the ball in one's court	smn's turn to take action
	to play hardball	to be aggressive
	to get the ball rolling	to start

	to drop the ball	to fail to perform a task
	out of bounds	to be unacceptable
	to scrum down	to gather to solve a problem
	on the beer	getting drunk
	to cry in one's beer	to express sorrows
	to have a few beer	to drink in a casual atmosphere
	flat beer	smth underwhelming
	small beer	smth of little importance
	fighting ale	strong alcohol
	quaffing ale	to drink with enthusiasm
	to go on the ale	to drink heavily
	to buy smn a pint	to buy smn a drink
	pint-sized	small
	half a pint	a silly person
	to be a pint low	to be short of money
	pint of no return	a point of no return
Animals (35)	lion hearted	courageous
	to be as brave as a lion/as strong as a lion/as bold as a lion/to fight like a lion	to be heroic, brave
	to be like a cat among pigeons/to throw the cat among the pigeons/to put the cat amongst pigeons/to set the cat among the pigeons	to cause chaos in a situation
	a black sheep	a unique person
	not enough room to swing a cat	little space
	to let the cat out of the bag	to reveal a secret

	to be like a cat on hot bricks	to be nervous
	queen bee	an authoritative woman
	to have a bee in one's bonnet	to be busy
	to rain cats and dogs	to rain heavily
	to make a pig's ear of smth	to make a mess
	to eat like a pig	to eat a lot
	to make a pig of oneself	to eat a lot
	donkey's years	long life
	load of old donkey	an unimportant thing
	stubborn as a mule	obstinate
	to kill the two birds with one stone	to achieve two things at once
	to be a yellow-bellied chicken	cowardly
	a little robin redbreast told me	a secret source of information
	to be up with the lark/to get up with the lark	to get up early
	to watch like a hawk	to be attentive
	to be as proud as a peacock	to be very proud
	a canary in a coalmine	a warning sign
	a hen night	a female party
	a stag night	a male party
	horseplay	playful behaviour
	straight from the horse's mouth	an exact source of information
	to hold one's horses	to be patient
	to get off one's high horses	to stay grounded
	a dark horse	an unknown successful person

SUMMARY

The bachelor paper focuses on the English idioms with British origins. Culture as an important source of the language phenomena helps to trace the peculiarities of the national outlook reflected in the set expressions and also analyze their etymological and semantic properties.

The British culture has a long history. One of the ways to study it is to analyze the English idioms that are often by the cultural elements referring to the historical periods, traditions, religion, literature, sports activities, entertainment, foodб drinks, weather and fauna. The specific elements possess not only the peculiar origins; they can be also examined in terms of their evaluative meaning which helps to define the attitude of people to different things.

The **object** of the research is the concept of “culture” and its place in the phraseological system of the English language.

The **subject** is represented by the analysis and evaluation of the idioms with the origins influenced by different phenomena in the British culture.

The insufficient study of the English idioms with the culturally-marked components and the need for their complex understanding determine the **relevance** of the research.

The **purpose** of this work is to take a careful examination of the English idioms containing a component of a cultural denomination and determine their importance in the language picture of the world of the British people. The primary focus is put on the idioms, their formation and semantic potential studied from the cultural perspectives.

In order to fulfill the aim of the research, the following **objectives** are taken into account:

8) To define the corpus of the English idioms with a cultural component.
9) To identify their origins and relation to the British culture.
10) To analyze the meanings of the culturally-marked idioms.

11) To group the idioms into thematic fields according to their cultural manifestation.

12) To categorize the idioms with a cultural constituent according to the number of the phenomena they indicate.

13) To point out how the presence of the cultural component influences the evaluative sense of the idiom.

14) To trace how the semantics of idioms have modified over time. with different color manifestations relate to the same thematic fields.

Solving the aforementioned set of goals is supported by the method of system analysis and some other specific scientific **methods and techniques**:

- a descriptive method;
- a method of semantic identification;
- a method of comparison;
- a method of component analysis;
- a method of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The **material** of the paper comprises 255 English idioms with the direct and indirect references to the cultural motifs. They were taken the dictionaries of idioms: *Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English, Cambridge Dictionary, Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms.*

The outlined definitions presented in the first chapter of the theoretical part enable us to state that the term “idiom” is widely understood among scholars. However, all the existed definitions are united by the main characteristics attributed to the idioms, they include expressiveness, stability, full or partial idiomaticity, reproducibility. Traditionally, the idioms are analyzed semantically, functionally, structurally, stylistically and grammatically. Some modern studies in the field of psycholinguistics enabled the scientists to analyze idiomatic expressions from a cognitive perspective. Functionally, idioms are further distinguished and may fulfill the descriptive, evaluative, emotive, expressive and characterological tasks.

The origins of the idioms are very multi-faceted. The studied units mostly belong to the group of the native English phraseological units They are associated with the social life, history, politics, conventions, realia etc.

The historical development is the most frequently manifested concept among the analyzed set expressions with culturally-specific components. The language picture reflects different periods of Britain's complex formation as a country including the Roman and Norman periods, the medieval times, industrialization, the Victorian era, war and post-war experiences.

Another major group of the examined idioms relates to the category of geography. The Britain's isle location and climate are tightly connected to each other. This fact may be traced in the idioms originated from fishing, commerce and precipitation.

The thematic field of sports and entertainment is marked by the constituents of the British national sports and favourite pastime activities. The idioms also include indirect references to the sports regulations and rules.

The investigation of animal idioms allowed us to identify the underlying aspects within the framework of the British zoonyms which comprise idiomatic expressions. It is possible to trace how people endow animals with human characteristics, thus, expanding the figurative richness of the British culture.

The category of intralingual idioms which contain expressions from the literary works is exemplified by the idioms coined by English writers and poets. They are marked by the names of characters, well-known allusions and expressions.

The English translation of the Bible, called the King James Version, is a major source of the idioms with the religious etymology. The idioms were coined by King James I and manifest commonly known Christian practices.

The unique associative field relating to the preferences, hobbies, social behavior and emotions can be traced in the compositional and semantic features of the idioms from the customs & habits thematic field.

All in all, it is possible to state that the component of the idiomatic expressions carries national patterns and embodies various cultural characteristics. The aforementioned facts lead to a conclusion that idioms largely reflect the culture.