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CULTURALLY SPECIFIC BRITISH IDIOMS IN ENGLISH

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. CHAPTER 1.....	5
1.1. The idiomatic expressions.....	5
1.2. The significance of culture in language studies.....	10
1.3. The notion of culturally specific lexis.....	13
1.4. The definition of Briticisms.....	17
1.5. The themes of stereotypical British culture.....	20
Conclusion to CHAPTER 1.....	24
2. CHAPTER 2.....	25
2.1. The idioms themed “British currency”.....	25
2.2. The analysis of the changing view on idioms.....	31
2.3. The comparative analysis of usage of idioms.....	33
2.4. The frequency of usage of idioms in modern media speech.....	39
Conclusion to CHAPTER 2.....	43
CONCLUSION.....	44
REFERENCES.....	46
APPENDICES.....	50

INTRODUCTION

The **topic** of this paper is “Culturally specific British idioms in English”.

The **object** of this paper is the idiomatic expressions in British English.

The **subject** of this paper is the idioms containing Britishisms that denote British currency.

The **relevance** of the paper lies in researching the loss of the cultural aspect of the idioms that belong to the category of culturally specific.

The **field** of research is linguistics, phraseology, lexicology and terminology, as well as cultural and historical studies. These spheres of linguistics have been of interest for scholars such as David Crystal, Steven Pinker, Mykhailo Kocherhan and others.

For the writing of both theoretical and empirical parts of this paper various **materials** were used, namely scientific articles, course books, dictionaries of idioms, and British and American Corpora.

The **aim** of this paper is the research of culturally specific idioms in British English and observing the preservation of its cultural aspect.

Before the writing of the paper the following **tasks** were defined:

- Describing the idiomatic structures in English
- Defining the notion of culturally specific lexis and Britishisms
- Exploring the thematic diversity of culturally specific idioms in British English
- Looking into the meaning of idioms that belong to the field of “British currency”
- Analysing the usage of such expressions in different corpora

For conducting the research, the following **methods** have been used:

- The analysis of written scientific materials

- The overview of the entries in the dictionary of idioms
- The exploring of the British and American Corpora
- The inspection of the social media

The paper consists of the **theoretical part** of the research, where the topics of definition of idioms, their cultural peculiarities, the notion of Briticisms and the themes of British culture are discussed, and the **practical part** of the research, which explores the theme of currency in the scope of the culturally specific British idioms, the change of focus from the cultural aspect of those idioms and the frequency of their usage in modern speech. In the end we have summed up the findings in the **conclusion**. The list of **references** used for writing this paper provided at the end of the work. The list of idioms is enclosed in the **appendices**.

1. THEORETICAL PART

This part of the paper will be dedicated to the theoretical research that was made before the empirical part of the paper. It encompasses some of the important notions that are used in this paper, such as the definition and classification of an idiom, the question of culture as a whole and culturally specific lexis in particular and the themes that are considered typical for the British culture and thus have been represented in the various idiomatic and phraseological expressions.

1.1. The Idiomatic Expressions

In this part of the paper, we will describe the notion of idiomatic structures, look into the main characteristics of an idiom, discuss the classification of different types of idiomatic expressions, and outline the definition of an idiom that will be used to analyse structures studied in the empirical part of the paper.

Idiomatic expressions can be found in different languages and cultures all over the world. Some idiomatic structures have been in use for centuries; some of them appeared more recently. The linguistic studies in this sphere are numerous because discovering, researching, and analysing new or existing idioms is of interest to many scholars. Research and studies conducted by such linguists as Noam Chomsky, Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., Christiane D. Fellbaum, and others show that the question of idiomaticity and its usage in written and oral speech is a topic worth exploring.

The idioms and similar expressions comprise a significant part of the lexis of each language, which is of interest to many scholars. For decades, linguists have been studying the appearance, usage, and meaning of idiomatic expressions in order to better understand the way language is used. This research is of particular importance in the study of historical linguistics, as tracing the history and development of idioms can give us insight into how language evolves. By examining these expressions and their evolution, linguists are able to gain a greater understanding of how language is used, not just in the present day but throughout its history. Furthermore, studying the origin

and usage of these expressions can also help to understand how language has been used in different contexts and communities.

An idiom may be considered from different points of view: as a multi-word expression, a phraseological expression, a formulaic or figurative expression, etc. Thus, it is important to look at these notions in more detail.

First of all, it is important to look into the notion of multi-word expressions.

According to scholars, a multi-word expression is defined as a linguistic object that is formed by two or more words that act like a unity and show some formal or functional idiosyncratic properties with respect to free word combinations. Throughout the study of such expressions, a lot of names were given to this phenomenon, among which: '*lexical phrase*' (Becker, 1975), '*syntactic compound*' (Lyons, 1977), '*fixed expression*' (Gross, 1996; Jackendoff, 1997; Moon, 1998), and others. Sometimes it is used as an umbrella term that describes all of the fixed phrases that consist of two or more heterogeneous units. [9]

Under the term "a multi-word expression," a classification of different notions can be found. Among them are idioms, collocations, complex nominals, locutions, and fixed expressions. It is worth noting that multi-word expressions have been studied separately from word formation and morphology; instead, they have been investigated in the spheres of phraseology, lexicology, terminology, psycholinguistics, and language acquisition. [9]

Secondly, an idiom can be regarded from the point of view of phraseology.

Phraseology as a branch of linguistics studies established, lexically indivisible combinations of words. It is one of the branches of linguistics where the national and cultural specificity of a certain nation is especially clearly manifested. [25] They represent what can probably be described as the most picturesque, colourful, and expressive part of the language's vocabulary. The basic units of analysis in phraseology

are often referred to as *phrasemes* or *phraseological units*, and, what is interesting, many western scholars also call them *idioms*. [17]

Thirdly, an idiom is studied from the point of view of figurative language as a formulaic expression.

Figurative, or formulaic, language refers to the use of words in a way that deviates from the conventional order and meaning in order to convey a complicated meaning, colourful writing, clarity, or evocative comparison. It consists of fixed expressions that you learn and understand as units rather than as individual words. Figurative language is a distinguishable feature of creative writing; it is widely used in fiction to make the text more descriptive and interesting. Idioms are a type of formulaic language, as they are made up of words or phrases that have a different literal meaning than the figurative meaning they convey when spoken. [32]

From this, we can conclude that the study of an idiom is a multi-faceted process that takes into account numerous aspects of a language.

Next, we have to look into the different definitions, as well as the characteristics of an idiom itself, provided by multiple resources, and draw up a definition that will be employed in the empirical part of the paper.

In order to better understand what an idiom is, we ought to look at its definition as presented in dictionaries and papers written by researchers and linguists.

To begin with, we will take a look at the definitions suggested by the dictionaries, namely the Cambridge Dictionary, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, and the Collins Dictionary. According to them, an idiom is:

[A] group of words in a fixed order that has a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own. [38]

[A]n expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements

(such as up in the air for “undecided”) or in its grammatically atypical use of words (such as give way). [40]

[A] group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one they would have if you took the meaning of each word separately. [39]

As we can see, all of the definitions talk about the same qualities of an idiom: that it is a group of words and that the meaning of this idiomatic phrase is different from the individual meaning of the separate words that it includes. The quality of a fixed sequence of words, which is an important aspect and characteristic of an idiom, is mentioned as well, although only in the definition proposed by the Cambridge Dictionary.

If we consider the works of linguists that studied this branch of linguistics, we can see that the definitions provided by C. F. Hockett, R. Moon, as well as M. Teresa Espinal and Jaume Mateu are more complex and take into account a larger scope of idioms’ properties. [8]

In his book “Idiom. Description, Comprehension, Acquisition, and Pedagogy”, linguist Dilin Liu presents diverse views on the definition of an idiom that have been provided by scholars over the years, from the broadest to the narrowest. For instance, idioms could be viewed as morphemes (C. F. Hockett), polymorphemes (J. J. Katz and P. Postal), or phrases.

Later, R. Moon, in her study, defines an idiom from a narrower point of view, providing a more precise and exact understanding of what an idiom is. According to her, idioms are “semi-transparent and opaque metaphorical expressions” that have both a literal and figurative meaning. [11]

More recent studies have raised more questions about the nature of an idiom and tried to find a definition that would encompass more aspects of it. For example, in the article “Idioms and Phraseology” by M. Teresa Espinal and J. Mateu, they provide a definition of idioms as “formulaic constructions whose interpretations are

unpredictable from individual lexical meanings under the effects of regular compositional rules.” Moreover, they state the importance the research of idioms has to syntactic and grammatical studies as well as the theory of communication and cognition. [4]

The next important thing that is taken into account when one tries to define an idiom is looking into its properties and characteristics.

The first feature that is to be noted when considering the properties of an idiomatic expression is its stable nature. Those phrases are often described as unchanging and fixed. This is an accurate characterization, as these expressions are made up of words that have fixed positions within the phrase. The placement and order of words in an idiom are crucial to its meaning, so any alteration of an idiom can significantly change its interpretation. As a result, the stable nature of idiomatic expressions is an important characteristic that allows them to be interpreted and understood correctly. [15]

Secondly, one of the most important features that is noted in most studies is the conventionality of the interpretation of the meaning of an idiomatic expression. The meaning of idioms cannot be entirely predicted on the basis of knowledge of the independent conventions that determine the use of their constituent parts when they appear in isolation from one another. Therefore, it is necessary to acquire an understanding of the underlying cultural context of idiomatic language in order to gain insight into its true meaning. This difficulty in the interpretation of idioms highlights the need to pay attention to their contextual and cultural nuances, as well as the importance of having a well-developed knowledge of language. [1;11]

However, some scholars argue that the arbitrary nature of an idiom – that is, the inability to guess the meaning of an idiom from the words it consists of – is not applicable in all cases. Nowadays, many claim that idioms are of a non-arbitrary nature, and the reason why certain words are used in an idiom can be explained and studied systematically. [2]

Thus, we can conclude that the main features of an idiom include its unique phrasing, the fact that its meaning cannot be guessed from individual words in the phrase, and its specific cultural context.

Now, we will look into the different types of idioms. It is part of a greater classification of units of figurative language, such as sayings, phrasal verbs, collocations, and others. However, idioms themselves can be divided into several groups based on a number of different criteria. For instance, we can classify idioms in this way, which was proposed by E. Lattey [7]:

- According to their grammatical structure (verb + noun, noun + noun, etc.);
- According to their figurative meaning (the idiom describes the notion of love, death, qualities of human nature, etc.);
- According to the literal meaning of their components (words used to express figurative meaning of an idiom belong to the categories of food, body parts, places, etc.).

The definition that will be used to identify the idioms used in the analysis is as follows:

An idiom is an expression that consists of two or more words whose direct meaning cannot generally be seen in the overall meaning of a phrase but can, in some instances, show how an idiom gained its figurative meaning.

In conclusion, we can see that idioms are an important field of study in any language that consists of many sub-types and encompasses a lot of expressions that are being used regularly in everyday speech. Linguistic research and the study of the interpretation of idioms are interesting processes.

1.2. The Significance of Culture in Language Studies

In this part, we will explore the concept and definition of culture and its various dimensions, including its impact on communication. We will also examine the role of culture in shaping individuals' worldviews and how it can affect their interactions with

people from different backgrounds. Moreover, we will look into the relationship between language and culture as it has been studied by scholars. Through this exploration, we hope to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of culture in our lives and its impact on society.

As written in T. S. Eliot's "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture", when defining the notion of culture, one must take into consideration three aspects that are crucial to its understanding, namely speaking of culture from the perspectives of the individual, group, and society. The author claims that in order to provide a clear and concise definition of this notion, all three aspects must be considered, as they cannot be isolated from one another. Likewise, they do not have to be distinct; on the contrary, the cohesion of culture may be obtained solely through "overlapping and sharing of interests, by participation and mutual appreciation". [3]

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, culture means the attitudes, behaviours, opinions, etc. of a particular group of people within society. [38] It plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals' identities and influencing their behaviour, attitudes, and perceptions. Culture can be expressed through various forms of art, language, music, literature, cuisine, and social norms. It is also a dynamic phenomenon that evolves and changes over time, adapting to new circumstances and influences.

Culture can have a profound impact on how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them, influencing their beliefs, values, and behaviours. Understanding these cultural differences is essential for building meaningful relationships and promoting inclusivity in diverse communities. Understanding the difference between cultures and being empathetic and open to them is especially important in a multicultural workplace environment. The employees have to be aware of the possible cultural clashes and barriers that may occur and learn to be respectful, flexible, and adaptable in order to work efficiently together.

Culture plays a critical role in language studies as it is intimately linked with the way people communicate, think, and interact with each other. Understanding the

cultural context of a language is essential for effective communication and avoiding misunderstandings.

The correlation between culture and language has been studied by many scholars. For instance, in “Language and Culture,” Claire Kramsch describes discourse studies that have been conducted in order to research the culture of people through the way they speak. For this, multiple audio and video recordings of spontaneous interactions have been analysed in terms of speech patterns as well as posture, facial expressions, and gestures. [6]

C. Kramsch also mentions other projects that were aimed at looking into the nature of the relationship between culture and language. Such speech acts as requests and apologies were analysed in the eighties by a number of scholars (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper) in a project called “multinational cross-cultural speech act realization project (CCSARP)”. By asking people from different cultures who spoke different languages to produce certain utterances, they studied the way apologies and requests are realised in this or that culture and noted which language means were used to do this.

From those studies, we can draw the conclusion that culture and language are closely tied together. In many instances, the culture is reflected in the way people speak, and vice versa, the language has an influence on the culture.

However, there are some studies that show that there is more depth and nuance to this relationship. For example, Susan Samata in “Cultural Memory of Language” describes her findings regarding the children from the immigrant families. From her studies, we may see that in many cases, those children, who often had very little knowledge regarding the language native to their parents, had a strong connection to their culture, such as its traditions, customs, food, etc. [16]

To sum up, different forms of art, language, music, literature, cuisine, and social norms can all be used to express culture. It is a dynamic phenomenon that adapts to new situations and influences as it changes and evolves over time. Culture has a

profound impact on how people communicate, think, and interact with one another; it is essential to language studies. A language's cultural context must be understood in order to effectively communicate and prevent misunderstandings.

1.3. The notion of culturally specific lexis

When conducting research in the field of linguistics, particularly figurative or non-literal language, the concept of culturally specific lexis is critical to consider. In this part of the paper, we will be looking closely at the notion of such a lexis: its definition, characteristics, place in the overall language system, and difficulties with translation into other languages.

The lexical items of each language vary depending on the specific culture they belong to, and these differences are reflected in the figurative expressions of each language. Therefore, when conducting research on the figurative language of any given language, the cultural context and the traditions of this culture should be taken into account. Researching the culture of a particular language can help us better understand the figurative expressions used in that language, allowing us to determine how they are formed, what their underlying meanings are, and why they might be used in certain contexts.

In order to fully understand the language and culture of a certain community, it is also important to examine the origins of their figurative expressions. By doing so, we can gain a greater appreciation for the creativity and complexity of the language and ultimately improve our ability to communicate within that community.

First of all, we have to give a definition to the notion of lexis as a whole and then the culturally specific lexis.

According to the entry in the Collins Dictionary, *lexis* is derived from Greek “word” and means “the totality of vocabulary items in a language, including all forms having lexical meaning or grammatical function”. [38] In other words, lexis encompasses all lexical structures, including words and phrases, of any given language. Although many scholars (Barcroft, Sunderman, and Schmitt) regard the terms *lexis* and

vocabulary as synonymous, others argue that there is a difference between them and that those notions should be separated.

This view was presented by linguist Stephen van Vlack, who described the relationship between the lexis and vocabulary in the form of a diagram (Figure 1). According to it, vocabulary is a notion that includes only single words and, consequently, is a part of lexis, which includes all lexical units: lexical items, lexemes, and vocabulary. [38]

For a long time, the problem of culturally marked lexical units has been considered by linguists in many aspects, in different directions, and from different angles. When discussing this notion, other terms may be used, such as non-equivalent vocabulary or *realia*, which are sometimes distinguished as parts of a culturally specific lexis.

Various researchers and linguists (Young, Van Compernelle, Bachman, Palmar, and others) agree that culturally specific lexis is a part of the vocabulary of any language that reflects the national-linguistic picture of the world of a certain nation, as well as the peculiarities of the economy, geography, social order, folklore, literature, all kinds of art, science, everyday life, and traditions of the speakers of the corresponding language. Examples of culturally specific lexis include words and phrases related to food, clothing, religion, and social customs.

The terms “non-equivalent” and “*realia*” reflect the different aspects of the culturally specific lexis. Non-equivalent vocabulary is vocabulary that describes things but has no analogies in other languages and therefore poses difficulties when translating or interpreting them in those languages.

Realia, or reality words, are vocabulary units that mean objects, concepts, and situations that do not exist in the practise of a foreign-speaking social group; they are words that mean various household items, material, and spiritual culture, that are characteristic only of a certain people. [24;26]

From those definitions, we can conclude that culturally specific lexis may be characterised in terms of the following aspects:

- **Culture-bound:** A culturally specific lexis is bound to a particular culture or social group, and may not be easily understood or translated by people outside of that culture.
- **Context-dependent:** The meaning of culturally specific lexis is often dependent on the context in which it is used. It may have different connotations or associations in different contexts and be used differently in formal and informal settings.
- **Nuanced meanings:** Culturally specific lexis may have subtle, nuanced meanings that are difficult to capture in translation. These meanings may be rooted in the history, customs, or beliefs of a particular culture or social group.
- **Symbolic significance:** Some culturally specific lexis has symbolic significance, representing important values, traditions, or beliefs within a culture. For example, the word “sacred” may have different connotations and associations within different religious and cultural contexts.
- **Evolving over time:** Culturally specific lexis may evolve and change over time, reflecting shifts in cultural attitudes, practises, and beliefs.

In order to understand the significance and importance of studying culturally specific lexis, it is necessary to look at it from the perspective of a language as a whole.

According to linguist Steven Pinker, every language has its own unique set of words, grammatical structures, and idiomatic expressions, many of which have no exact equivalent in any other language. However, S. Pinker also notes that most of the vocabulary of any language is shared by all languages, and that there are many common concepts and ideas that can be expressed across different languages. He points out that even if language “entrench[es] itself within a culture as parents taught their children”, later language becomes universal because those children “reinvent it”. [14]

On the other hand, according to the research and observations of Ukrainian linguist M. Kocherhan, the culturally specific, or non-equivalent, vocabulary encompasses about 6-7% of the whole scope of the lexis of any language, and almost all phraseological units are idiomatic in nature. [21]

The characteristics of the culturally specific lexis mentioned above pose problems in translating such words and expressions into other languages where such notions are not present. This can lead to a loss of meaning in the translated text, as certain nuances and connotations that are present in the original language may be absent in the translation. Additionally, this can also cause confusion for non-native speakers who are unfamiliar with the cultural context of certain words or phrases.

As stated by M. Baker in her course book on translation “In Other Words”, the translators may encounter difficulties from the very beginning, when they have to realise that a certain expression is not used literally and instead has a figurative meaning. Apart from this, several other problems occur, such as the challenge of finding the proper equivalent in the target language or the differences in the context of the source and the target texts. [1]

Therefore, it is important for translators to not only have a strong command of both the source and target languages but also possess cultural knowledge and sensitivity to accurately convey the intended meaning of the text. There are several ways that the translators use when they encounter a non-equivalent word in the text they work with.

First of all, the translator has to look for an idiom with a similar meaning and form in the target language they are translating to. Oftentimes, there are expressions in many cultures that express the same or a similar meaning to the notions and realia that are familiar to them.

The second way to render a culturally specific idiomatic expression is to give an expression that conveys the same meaning but is not as figurative as it was in the source text. Using paraphrases is useful when translating texts in a style in which idiomatic

structures are welcomed in source language but deemed inappropriate in the target language.

Thirdly, an idiom that has no equivalents in the target language and is not crucial for the understanding of the text may be omitted altogether, although this approach may make the target text blander and less interesting for the audience. [1]

Lastly, a translator may choose to translate those expressions word-by-word without rendering their meaning into the target language. In those cases, translators may also need to use footnotes or provide explanations within the text to help readers understand culturally specific words and expressions.

In conclusion, culturally-specific lexis, or non-equivalent vocabulary, is present in every culture and plays a crucial role in language and communication. Oftentimes, it is presented in figurative and formulaic expressions, such as idioms or proverbs, reflecting the realia that is unique to a particular community, its history, traditions, everyday life, and history. Consequently, understanding the socio-cultural context is of primary importance when one translates the text into other languages, as deeper meanings and nuances that are often lost in translation. Understanding and using culturally specific lexicon is important not only for effective communication but also for cultural preservation and appreciation. As language learners, we must strive to recognise and respect the cultural diversity reflected in the words we use and seek to learn more about the cultures and communities they represent. By doing so, we can enrich our language skills and broaden our understanding of the world around us.

1.4. The definition of Britishisms

If we are talking about the notion of words specific to British English, it is important to consider the notion of Britishisms.

Generally, the linguistic form of reality is diverse in each language; it reproduces the peculiarities of the nation's mentality at the lexical level, the level of word combinations, and at the level of discourse. The cultural component of the reality

words, or realia, can act as a criterion in the construction of a typology of linguistic reality units. According to the place of the cultural component in the structure of the lexical concept, such language units can be classified into four types. [19]

- The reality words of the first type have a cultural component identical to the denotative meaning of the reality words, dominating over their substantive features. They have no equivalents in other languages.
- The reality words of the second type have one of the denotative meanings of the word that carries a specific cultural connotation. Such words are partially non-equivalent, as some of the multiple meanings the word possesses are either well-known or present in other cultures.
- The reality words of the third type have a specific cultural reference that is presented in the connotative aspect of the meaning of the word.
- The reality words of the fourth type consist of collocations that represent the mentality of a certain nation or culture by using background knowledge regarding different common words that have no specific cultural meaning.

The notion of Britishness itself can be seen from different perspectives.

According to some of the sources [38], a Britishness, or Britishism, is a word or a word combination that is peculiar to Britain, its people, and its culture. They are words and phrases that are commonly used in British English but may not be as well-known or used in other forms of English. These linguistic expressions reflect the culture and history of the United Kingdom and are an important aspect of its unique identity. Britishisms are regarded in contrast to other varieties of English and are seen in juxtaposition to such notions as Americanisms, Australianisms, etc. [10]

One example of Britishness is “bloke”, which is a colloquial term used to refer to a man. This term is used in the UK as well as other countries such as Australia and New Zealand, but is less commonly used in American English. Another Britishness is “biscuit”, which is the British term for what Americans would call a cookie. Other

examples of Britishisms include “lorry” for a large truck, “boot” for the trunk of a car, “queue” for a line of people, and “pub” for a public house or bar. These words reflect the cultural and historical differences between British English and other forms of English and are an important part of the UK's linguistic heritage.

The use of Britishisms is not limited to vocabulary but also extends to grammar and syntax. For example, the British tend to use the present perfect tense more frequently than Americans, as in the sentence “I have just eaten” rather than “I just ate”. Similarly, British English tends to use the passive voice more often than American English, as in “The book was written by Jane Austen” rather than “Jane Austen wrote the book”. [28]

The switch between the British and American variants of the same word is part of the assimilation to the environment in a different country. This has to do with the fact that in a new place, not all of the idioms or culturally specific expressions are understood or perceived correctly by the natives. [34]

On the other hand, Britishism may be seen as a type of borrowing or loan word – a word, its separate meaning, an expression, etc. – that is borrowed from the English language, or translated from it, or formed according to its model and adapted into other non-English-speaking countries. It can often be seen in professional jargon, when new words appear to describe scientific and technological advances. This phenomenon may also be observed in the appearance and development of a specific slang in the Ukrainian language when certain English words have been adopted and transliterated or transcribed into Ukrainian, primarily by young people. It is common for such words to have changes in spelling and pronunciation. [20]

In conclusion, Britishism is an important aspect of British English, reflecting the unique culture and history of the United Kingdom. While some of these linguistic expressions are well-known and used in other forms of English, many are less commonly used outside of the UK. However, they are still an important part of the

UK's linguistic heritage and should be celebrated and preserved for future generations to appreciate.

1.5. The themes of stereotypical British culture

In the previous part, we established that in most cases, idiomatic expressions carry a culturally specific meaning that is unique to a certain nation and community. Thus, in order to have a better understanding of the idioms that will be discussed in the empirical part of the paper, we ought to look into the history, cultural peculiarities, and stereotypical characteristics of Great Britain that may be reflected in the figurative vocabulary of British English. This will enable us to analyse the idioms in their proper context, comprehend their underlying connotations, and appreciate the rich cultural heritage that they represent.

To begin with, we will take a look at the research that has been conducted by two Ukrainian scholars, L. Makaruk and I. Pundyk, in 2016 regarding the stereotypes about British people and British culture that are seen by Ukrainians as the most prominent. [22] The researchers analysed the answers of 75 respondents who were asked to provide five things or objects that come to mind when they hear the word “British”. According to the results of this study, they identified 12 stereotypical features. We will mention some of them, namely:

- Weather
- Tea
- Traits of character
- Specific humour
- Architecture
- Cuisine

In this article, the authors also presented other stereotypical features named by the respondents. These include associations related to famous personalities and literary characters, nationalities living on the territory of the UK, the Queen and the form of government, musical groups and musical instruments, sports, cities, educational

institutions, and geographical features of England. Additionally, we can name such themes as mythology and folklore.

In the following paragraphs, we will dwell on some of those characteristics and the reasons why they are often considered stereotypical for British culture.

According to the BBC journalist Linda Geddes, when it comes to weather, the geographical position of the British Isles results in its unpredictability. Moreover, it is thought to be more unstable and changing than in most of the countries (from the words of Professor Trevor Harley, who has a site dedicated to the British weather). [33]

On the other hand, social anthropologist Kate Fox explains in her book “Watching The English” that the famous British obsession with weather comes from the need to start a conversation with a neutral topic. She states that all the remarks about weather are seen as greetings, indications that a person wants their opponent to engage in a conversation, or so-called “fillers” to fill in the pause in the dialogue. [5]

According to K. Fox, tea (both as a beverage and a meal) is very important for British culture. The statistics show that the population aged 18 and older drinks about 4-5 cups per day, every day of the week. There exists a certain “classification” of people based on how they drink their tea, from lower class to upper-middle class, and the way the British do this can tell a lot about their origin, income, background, etc. However, it possesses a social significance as well, considering it sometimes acts as a “filler” (as it does with weather) when the conversation becomes uncomfortable. [5]

The topic of food, K. Fox states, is mostly related to the way the British consume food rather than to its quality, variety, or taste. In fact, she mentions many examples that showcase the notorious fame that British food has around the world, with some claiming the relationship that the Brits have with food to be a “loveless marriage”. The most famous dish of British cuisine is breakfast, usually referred to as the “Full English” or the “Full English Fry-up,” which includes eggs, bacon, sausages, toast, beans, and tea. [5;23]

The image that the British have in the eyes of the rest of the world is highly influenced by the traits of character that are thought to be stereotypically British. According to the research conducted by the British Counsel called “As Others See Us”, the most common characteristic that the respondents name among the most attractive about the UK is “polite and good mannered” (46%), followed by “educated and skilled” (37%), “friendly” (31%), “respecting the rule of law” (27%), and “sense of humour” (25%). When it comes to the negative traits, the top answers included such characteristics as “drinking too much” (27%), and “bad eating habits” (23%). These were followed by three characteristics that were closely related, namely “ignorant of other cultures” (22%), “too nationalistic” (22%), and “intolerant towards people from other countries” (20%). [27]

In her book, K. Fox mentions the importance that humour has in British everyday language and culture. As she says, “In other cultures, there is ‘a time and a place’ for humour; among the English it is a constant, a given – there is *always* an undercurrent of humour.” She calls this specific humour that consists of banter, sarcasm, irony, and wordplay a “reflex” that is characteristic of all of the British and is treated as a crucial part of their culture. [5]

We would like to note the place the government and politics have in everyday British culture. The monarchy is the oldest form of government in Britain and has been dominant for approximately 1200 years. [35] Nowadays, the version of monarchy that exists in Britain can be described in three words: hereditary, constitutional, and ceremonial. This may be explained by the fact that the crown passes from the ruling King or Queen to their direct heir, the main political power in the country is held by the Parliament and Prime Minister, and the Royal Family has a largely ceremonial and symbolic nature, nevertheless valuable to British culture. [13]

Folktales and mythology make up a significant part of any culture. In Britain, there are several important figures that shaped British culture and identity and found representation in many forms. Among them we can name Beowulf (a courageous

prince who slays a monster), Robin Hood (a rebel who robs the wealthy and gives their riches to the poor), King Arthur (a legendary British King) and the knights of the Round Table (a representation of chivalry and prowess), the Holy Grail (a symbol of grace), Saint George (a warrior-saint who serves as an ideal of selflessness), Britannia (a personified representation of Britain), and others. The tales and legends that these characters appear in have spread out around the world and become a crucial part of the cultural heritage of Britain. [12;29]

Apart from the stereotypical characteristics mentioned above, it is worth noting that the research of the historical peculiarities of Britain is also of importance if we seek to look into the way they are presented in the idiomatic expressions. The connection between language and history has been studied and researched for many years. One of the examples is the book “The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of English language,” written by David Crystal, where he describes the way history shaped the English language.

One way that language and history are intertwined is through the field of historical linguistics, which examines how languages change over time and how they are related to one another. Historical linguistics can provide insights into the history of a particular culture or region as well as shed light on the origins and migration patterns of different groups of people.

We will briefly describe some of the significant historical events in British history that helped shape the English language and may be reflected in idiomatic expressions.

Throughout its early history, the British Isles have been conquered and invaded by many other nations and tribes. They had a great influence on the language, politics, culture, and habits of the people who lived on that territory. The invasion of Romans, Anglo-Saxons, and Danes greatly impacted the lives of those people, and thus events, places, and people related to them may be reflected in the figurative language. Another important historical event that has influenced the social, political, and cultural

development of Britain was the conversion to Christianity that was implemented by Saint Augustus in the 7th century. [18]

Oftentimes, the idioms may be based on works of literature, contain allusions to novels and plays, mention characters, etc. The British Counsel report shows that the most popular British writer whose name comes to mind first and whose works are known and studied worldwide is William Shakespeare. Naturally, certain phrases from his plays have gained figurative meaning over time, as have the characteristics of the characters he wrote about.

To conclude, we may say that British culture, like many other cultures in the world, is sometimes perceived through the prism of stereotypes. Although, in most cases, those impressions about British culture may be true, they should not be viewed solely from one perspective, as certain aspects of culture specific to Britain have an underlying meaning. In the next part, we will look into the way these features are presented in the figurative and idiomatic expressions in the English language, and the way they are structured, used, and rendered in other languages.

Conclusion to CHAPTER 1

In conclusion, the use of culturally significant idioms and Britishisms in language is not only a reflection of cultural values and attitudes, but it also plays an important role in shaping our linguistic and cultural identity. These idioms and phrases may have originated in a specific cultural context, but they have often transcended those boundaries and become a part of the global lexicon. The prevalence and use of these idioms in today's society not only provide a glimpse into the historical and cultural context in which they originated but also serve as a testament to their enduring power and relevance. Understanding these idioms and their cultural significance is essential for effective communication and cultural understanding, particularly in a world that is increasingly interconnected and diverse.

2. Practical part

In the practical part of the paper we will deal with analysing a particular theme of British culture that was mentioned in the previous part and is presented in the different idiomatic expressions. We will look into their cultural meaning, as well as dwell on the frequency of their usage in modern every-day speech using the data provided by the British and American Corpora and the BBC and CNN news articles.

2.1. The idioms themed “British currency”

We will begin this part of the paper by describing the idioms that were chosen for the analysis from the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms and from a website that contains a compilation of popular phrases, informal expressions, and idioms. [36;41] The idioms presented in this part reflect British culture's attitudes towards money, the economy, and personal finance. They are an integral part of the British language, and understanding them can offer insight into the country's economic history, cultural values, and daily life.

The focal words used to form these idioms are words specific to British culture. Such notions as “*penny*”, “*pound*”, “*shilling*”, “*dime*”, “*quid*”, “*ninepence*,” and “*sixpence*” are types of currency that are used first and foremost in the United Kingdom, but some of them are also used in the countries that used to belong to the British empire.

The idiom “*a bad penny always turns up*” means that someone or something that is unwelcome or problematic will inevitably reappear, even if it has been absent for a long time. The phrase suggests that negative experiences or individuals have a way of coming back, often at the most inconvenient times, despite efforts to avoid or ignore them. It can also imply a sense of frustration or resignation with the situation, as the reappearance of the negative element is often seen as an inevitable and unwelcome development. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of something that is difficult to avoid or escape.

The idiom “*always late and penny short*” means to consistently be behind schedule or unprepared, often due to a lack of resources or planning. The phrase suggests that the person or situation is always struggling to keep up and is often unable to meet expectations or deadlines due to their lack of preparation or resources. It can also imply a sense of frustration or disappointment with the situation, as the person or group in question is often seen as unreliable or ineffective. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of being perpetually behind and ill-equipped to handle the situation at hand.

The idiom “*a penny for your thoughts*” is a common expression used to ask someone what they are thinking or feeling about something. It is often used when someone appears to be lost in thought or deep in contemplation, and the speaker wants to know what is on their mind. The phrase is typically used as a friendly or informal way of starting a conversation or showing interest in someone's thoughts or feelings. It suggests that the speaker is genuinely curious about what the other person is thinking and is willing to pay (symbolically) for their insights or perspective.

The idiom “*a penny saved is a penny gained*” means that it is just as valuable to save money as it is to earn it. The phrase suggests that even small savings can add up to a significant amount over time and that being frugal and avoiding unnecessary expenses can lead to financial stability and success. It can also imply a sense of wisdom or prudence in managing one's finances, as the person who saves money is often seen as more responsible and prepared for the future. Overall, the idiom encourages people to be mindful of their spending and to save whenever possible.

The idiom “*be quids in*” means to be in a financially advantageous or profitable situation. It suggests that someone has made a smart investment or has had good fortune in a financial transaction and, as a result, stands to make a significant profit or gain. The phrase is commonly used in British English and is often associated with gambling or other high-risk financial activities, such as investing in the stock market. It can also be used more generally to describe someone who has made a wise financial decision or has managed to secure a favourable outcome in a financial transaction.

The idiom “*cost a pretty penny*” means that something is very expensive or costs a significant amount of money. The phrase suggests that the cost of the item or service is so high that it is seen as extravagant or luxurious and often implies that the expense is not justified or necessary. It can also imply a sense of surprise or shock at the high cost, as the person making the purchase may not have anticipated the price. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of a substantial amount of money being spent, often more than what is considered reasonable or practical.

The idiom “*count the pennies*” is often used to advise someone to be cautious with their spending or to avoid overspending, especially if they are on a tight budget or have limited financial resources. It can also be used more generally to refer to someone who is very careful and meticulous with their finances and who makes a conscious effort to save money and avoid unnecessary expenses.

The idiom “*earn an honest penny*” means to make a living or earn money through hard work and legitimate means. It suggests that one is able to earn a decent living by working hard and being honest in their profession or job. The phrase often implies that the person has worked hard and diligently to earn their money and that they have done so without resorting to dishonest or unethical practices. It is often used to emphasise the importance of hard work and integrity and is sometimes used in contrast to those who may have come by their wealth through more questionable or unethical means. Overall, this idiom conveys the idea that it is admirable and respectable to work hard and make a living through honest and ethical means.

The phrase “*in for a penny, in for a pound*” reflects the British people's willingness to take risks and the belief that sometimes taking big chances is necessary to achieve success. The idea behind the phrase is that if you have already spent a small amount of money (a penny), you might as well spend a larger amount (a pound) to complete the task or achieve the goal. In other words, if you're already invested in something to a certain degree, you might as well go all the way and complete it rather than quitting or backing out halfway through.

“More kicks than halfpence” is an expression used to describe someone who has experienced a lot of setbacks, misfortunes, or difficulties in life. The phrase is derived from the idea that someone who is poor and has little money may be forced to wear shoes that are old and worn out, causing them to be kicked more often than someone who is better off. It can also be used more generally to describe someone who has had a difficult time or has been unlucky in some way. The “halfpence” refers to the British halfpenny coin, which was a small denomination of currency and therefore not worth much.

The idiom *“no more than ninepence in the shilling”* is a derogatory phrase used to describe a person of low intelligence or mental capacity. The expression is considered outdated and comes from the British currency system, where a shilling was divided into 12 pence. If someone was *“no more than ninepence in the shilling”*, it meant that they were missing a few pence and therefore not quite “all there” mentally. It can also imply that the person is somewhat simple-minded or naive and may not have a good understanding of the world around them. The idiom *“not the full shilling”* has a similar meaning.

The idioms *“not have a penny to bless yourself with”* and *“not have two pennies to rub together”* mean to be very poor or to have no money at all. Although the first one is considered to be more dated, both of them imply that the person in question is so financially destitute that they don't even have a single penny to their name. The phrases are often used to emphasise the severity of someone's financial situation and suggest that they are struggling to make ends meet and may not have enough money to cover even the most basic expenses. Overall, the idioms convey the idea of extreme poverty and financial hardship.

The idiom *“on a sixpence”* means to make a sudden and precise change of direction or movement. It is often used to describe someone who is very agile or nimble and is able to change direction or turn quickly and smoothly. The phrase comes from the British currency system, where a sixpence coin is small and round and therefore suggests a quick, agile movement. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of sudden and

precise movement and is often used to describe someone who is very skilled or talented in a particular physical activity or sport.

The idiom “*pennies from heaven*” refers to an unexpected gift or stroke of luck that brings financial gain or other benefits. The phrase suggests that the gift or good fortune comes as if from above, as if dropped down by a benevolent force like pennies raining down from the sky. It can also imply a sense of gratitude or appreciation for the unexpected blessing. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of unexpected good fortune or a serendipitous event that brings benefits or happiness.

The idiom “*penny pitcher*” refers to a person who is very thrifty or stingy with their money. The phrase suggests that the person is overly concerned with saving money and may be unwilling to spend even small amounts on necessities or pleasures. It can also imply a sense of negativity or criticism towards the person, as the term “pitcher” suggests that they are actively trying to withhold or hoard their money. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of a person who is excessively frugal, to the point where it may be seen as a negative trait.

The idiom “*penny wise and pound foolish*” means to be careful or frugal with small amounts of money but wasteful or careless with larger amounts. The phrase suggests that someone may be overly focused on saving small amounts of money but may end up spending much more in the long run due to their lack of attention to larger expenses or investments. It can also imply short-sightedness or a lack of strategic thinking when it comes to financial decisions. The origin of this idiom can be found in the title of a 1936 song called “Pennies from Heaven”. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of someone who is overly focused on minor details while neglecting larger and more important financial matters.

The idiom “*take the Queen's/King's shilling*” is an old expression that dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. It refers to the act of enlisting in the military or navy by taking the coin (shilling) offered by the monarch or their representative, symbolising the acceptance of a contract to serve in the armed forces. In those times, the coin was

often given to new recruits as a sign of their commitment to serving their country, and it was seen as a mark of loyalty and duty. However, taking the Queen's/King's shilling also had a negative connotation, as it was sometimes used as a way of tricking or coercing people into joining the military. Today, the phrase is mainly used to refer to someone who has joined a particular organisation or group without fully understanding what they're getting into or considering the possible consequences of their decision.

The idiom “*ten a penny*” means that something is very common or easy to find and is not particularly valuable or special. The phrase suggests that the item or thing is so commonplace that it is not worth much and can be easily obtained. It can also imply a sense of abundance or availability, as the term “ten a penny” suggests that the item is very common and can be found almost anywhere. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of something that is ordinary and unremarkable and may not be considered particularly valuable or desirable.

The idiom “*the penny drops*” means to suddenly understand something or to have a realisation about a situation or problem. It suggests that the person has been trying to figure something out for a while but finally has a moment of clarity or insight where everything falls into place. The phrase may also imply a sense of relief or satisfaction that comes with finally understanding something that was previously confusing or difficult. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of a sudden moment of realization or comprehension.

The idiom “*turn up like a bad penny*” means to reappear unexpectedly, often in an unwelcome or unpleasant way. The phrase suggests that the person or thing in question has a tendency to keep resurfacing even when they are not wanted or welcomed. It can also imply a sense of frustration or annoyance with the situation or person, as the reappearance is often seen as a negative or unwanted development. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of something or someone that just won't go away and is often associated with negative or unwelcome situations.

The idiom “*two a penny*” means something that is very common or easy to find, often of little value or significance. The phrase suggests that the thing in question is so common that it can be easily obtained or found almost anywhere and therefore has little value or worth. It can also imply a sense of abundance or oversupply, as there are so many of these things that they are not considered rare or valuable. Overall, the idiom conveys the idea of something that is very common or easy to obtain, often with little or no value or significance.

In summary, these idioms reflect the complex cultural values and beliefs of the British people regarding money, finance, and personal responsibility. They reveal a culture that values thriftiness, hard work, and risk-taking but also struggles with class consciousness and stigma towards those who are struggling. Understanding these idioms can offer a window into the rich and nuanced culture of the British people.

2.2. The analysis of the view on idioms

In the following part, we will look deeper into the peculiarities of usage of this group of idiomatic expressions, namely the way the focus shifted from their culturally specific meaning to general meaning.

Idioms are an essential part of language, often used in everyday conversation to convey complex meanings and ideas through simple expressions. However, idioms with culturally specific themes, such as those relating to British currency, can lose their Britishness when used in other parts of the world. This part of the paper will explore why this phenomenon occurs and what factors contribute to it.

The theme of money and currency is probably the most prominent one in the scope of British idiomatic expressions. They reflect the British culture's attitudes towards money, economy, and personal finance, and are an integral part of the British language. Understanding them can offer insight into the country's economic history, cultural values, and daily life.

The focal words used to form these idioms are words specific to British culture. Such notions as “penny”, “pound”, “shilling”, “dime”, “quid”, “ninepence” and

“sixpence” are types of currency that are used first and foremost in the United Kingdom, whereas some of them are also used in the countries that used to belong to the British empire.

It is evident from the lexical components of such popular idioms as “*in for a penny, in for a pound*”, “*a penny for your thoughts*” or “*not the full shilling*” that they come from the British culture. However, while it is expected that those idioms would be used specifically by people who are familiar with those cultural concepts, it is not necessarily the case.

Firstly, it is essential to understand that idioms are culturally specific expressions that reflect the experiences, beliefs, and values of a particular group of people. In the case of British idioms, they often relate to the country's rich history and traditions, including the use of the pound sterling as its national currency. However, when these expressions are used outside of the UK, they may not be understood or may lose their significance and attachment to British culture.

One reason for this is the globalization of language and culture. With the rise of technology and social media, people from different parts of the world are increasingly connected and exposed to each other's language and culture. Moreover, the popularity of English language and its status as an international language contribute to the interchanging of idiomatic expressions between different cultures that exist in the English-speaking cultures. As a result, idioms that were once unique to a particular culture or region are now more widely known and used. This has led to a dilution of cultural specificity, as idioms are adopted and adapted by other languages and cultures, sometimes losing their original meaning in the process.

Another reason is the changing nature of language and the way it evolves over time. Idioms are not static expressions; they change and adapt to reflect the evolving nature of the culture and language they belong to. As such, idioms with culturally specific themes such as “pound” or “penny” may lose their Britishness over time as language and culture change and adapt.

As people become more familiar with the idioms and their meanings, they begin to associate them more with their literal meaning rather than their cultural context. For example, the idiom “*penny wise and pound foolish*” may be used by someone who is not familiar with British currency and may not even know that a “pound” refers to British currency. They may simply understand the idiom to mean that someone is being careful with small amounts of money but careless with larger amounts.

Furthermore, the use of idioms in translation can also contribute to the loss of cultural specificity. Translating idioms is a challenging task, as they often do not have a literal equivalent in another language. Therefore, translators may opt to use a more general expression or idiomatic expression in the target language, which may not convey the original meaning or cultural significance of the original idiom.

In conclusion, idioms with culturally specific themes such as “pound” or “penny” may lose their Britishness when used outside of the UK due to various factors. The globalization of language and culture, the evolving nature of language, and the use of idioms in translation can all contribute to this phenomenon. However, it is worth noting that while these idioms may lose their cultural specificity, they can still convey meaning and significance in their new context, demonstrating the enduring power of language to connect people across cultures and borders.

2.3. The comparative analysis of usage of idioms

To illustrate the change of focus from the cultural origin of the idioms towards their overall meaning, we conducted a research on the Internet regarding the frequency of usage of idiomatic expressions described in the previous parts that contain words denominating the British currency. The results showed that the idiomatic expressions were used more frequently in their overall meaning rather than in reference to their cultural origin or the British currency. This suggests a shift towards a more universal understanding and usage of idiomatic expressions.

The research of the data provided by the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) demonstrated that idioms that

have a lexical component that denoted British currency can be divided into several groups according to the number of references they have in different contexts: the ones with more mentions in BNC, with more mentions in COCA, with equal amount and with no mentions. [30;31]

The findings shown the results which will be presented in the following table:

Idiomatic expression	Number of mentions in BNC	Number of mentions in COCA
A bad penny always turns up	–	–
Always late and penny short	–	–
A penny for your thoughts	2	27
A penny saved is a penny gained	–	29
Be quids in	2	1
Cost a pretty penny	3	41
Count the pennies	1	2
Earn an honest penny	1	–
In for a penny, in for a pound	11	47
More kicks that halfpence	–	–
No more that ninepence in the shilling	–	–
Not have a penny to bless yourself with	2	–
Not have two pennies to rub together	1	6

Not the full shilling	–	1
On a sixpence	3	3
Pennies from heaven	4	65
Penny pitcher	–	–
Penny wise and pound foolish	–	32
Take the Queen’s/King’s shilling	–	–
Ten a penny	8	4
The penny drops	6	18
Turn up like a bad penny	1	2
Two a penny	11	7

These findings suggest that the usage of British culturally specific idioms has become more widespread in American English, perhaps as a result of the growing popularity of British media and entertainment in the US. This trend could be attributed to the increasing globalization and interconnectedness of the world, which has made it easier for people from different cultures to interact and exchange ideas.

Moreover, the fact that many of the idioms analysed had more mentions in American English could indicate that these idioms have lost their cultural attachment and have become universal idioms that are no longer tied exclusively to British culture. This is likely due to the fact that many of these idioms are now commonly used in media and entertainment, which has helped to disseminate them more widely and make them more accessible to people from different cultural backgrounds.

However, it is important to note that while these idioms may be more widely used and understood, they still retain their original cultural connotations and may not

always be fully understood by those who are not familiar with the British cultural context. As such, it is important to use these idioms with care and consideration, particularly when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds.

During the analysis of some of the idioms we observed the tendency to use only a half of an idiom without changing its meaning. This shows the universal and widely-known nature of British idioms, as not all parts of an idiom are needed to understand the idea it portrays. This can be observed the most in the idioms that consists of two parts, such as “*in for a penny, in for a pound*”. In the following screenshots taken from BNC and COCA, we can see that some of the entries show incomplete idiomatic expressions that carry the same meaning.

+CONTEXT			HELP
1	KD8	S_conv	#well (pause) worth a go! (pause) In for a penny in for a pound! (pause) She were just telling me one of her
2	FY1	S_interview_oral_history	#mean i-- i-- if you could get in for a penny a week that was alright because when things got better you could build on
3	A0F	W_fict_prose	#can't fiddle the season ticket. In for a penny , in for a pound, that's what I say."
4	CKC	W_fict_prose	#I was an ignoramus. Well, in for a penny , in for a pound. Another doubtlessly ludicrous suggestion. We take it
5	AT4	W_fict_prose	#too while you're about it? In for a penny , in for a pound,' Mr Bean asked.' We'll
6	C98	W_fict_prose	#.' It's done now -- in for a penny , in for a pound. If you meet a young man.'
7	CEB	W_fict_prose	#faces. She hesitated, thought! In for a penny . In for a pound!' and began to walk towards the ramshackle
8	FAB	W_fict_prose	#she thought: Oh, well, in for a penny . Even Tippy was amazed when she heard George actually humming while he worked
9	FR9	W_fict_prose	#the turnstile operator who would let you in for a penny or five Capstan Full Strength. Fred Grummidge -- the lovable old groundsman who
10	JY8	W_fict_prose	#thunderous expression he wore. Still, in for a penny ...' Did you hear a scream?' she asked dulcetly, then
11	ADF	W_misc	#full of pride and presence.' In for a penny , in for a pound!' exclaimed Lindsay with reckless abandon to his

+CONTEXT			HELP	
1	2019	FIC	Analog	#are cutting into my palms. # In for a penny ... " Why do you guys bottle humans? " # And this is
2	2019	FIC	Analog	#. Well, as they say, in for a penny , in for a Euro. " I doubt that meet-up happened. Your
3	2018	ACAD	Social Justice	## American Civil Liberties Union 2010 " In for a Penny . The Rise of America's New Debtors' Prisons. " ACLU,
4	2017	FIC	Bk:BaggageCheck	#him? " # Rebecca sighed. In for a penny ... " You have heard of him. It was my friend Jake.
5	2016	MAG	Jezebel	#corsets, but it was wrong. In for a penny , in for a pound, that's what we like to say.
6	2013	FIC	MassachRev	#direction. In for a pound, in for a penny . Plus, speaking of pounds -- they're just falling away I'm
7	2012	TV	Boardwalk Empire	#to be privy to these revelations? in for a penny . Mm, I applaud your boldness. Secretary Mellon is in Manhattan today
8	2012	WEB	...the-day.blogspot.com	#think of the end. 518. In for a penny , in for a pound. 519. In the country of the blind
9	2012	WEB	...dersupportednews.org	#no turning back now;" in for a penny , in for a pound;" you have your foot in the
10	2012	WEB	minx.cc	#target in effect was an offensive act in for a penny in for a pound if you lit the target up you have attacked it
11	2012	WEB	...iamonds.blogspot.com	#Proud of yourself? # Finally, in for a penny , in for a pound -- governments have motives. All the time.
12	2012	BLOG	...france.wordpress.com	#to startling auburn. Oh well, in for a penny ... and with a bit of slap, her mask was also in place
13	2012	BLOG	redstate.com	## SoFiMil # .. # romeq # In for a penny , in for a pound. # Trying to give Peolsi credit for all
14	2012	BLOG	blogs.suntimes.com	#of dope from the truck? # In for a penny , in for a pound, so to speak. Now, that's
15	2012	BLOG	...rtoday.wordpress.com	#sour cream (5/5 stars)! In for a penny in for a pound (or 5 lbs!). # Went to
16	2012	BLOG	...lthouse.blogspot.com	#them are thinking, all right, in for a penny , in for a pound. When things really collapse (as seems predestined
17	2011	FIC	Bk:LinenQueenNovel	#a deep breath. Oh well, in for a penny , in for a pound, and I began to wield the scissors.
18	2011	TV	The Mentalist	#you planted one at Crosswhite's. In for a penny . I thought that... When I confessed, I would feel a weight

Another observation is connected to the change of the components of an idiom for other lexical units. For instance, the idiom “*in for a penny, in for a pound*” has been modified to “*in for a penny, in for a Euro*”, or “*in for a dime, in for a dollar*” in American context while preserving its initial meaning.

2	2019	FIC	Analog	#. Well, as they say, in for a penny , in for a Euro. " I doubt that meet-up happened. Your
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+CONTEXT				HELP
1	2019	FIC	Analog	#Katella. In for a dime, in for a dollar , Amber thought. " Okay. The open hatch might be noted.
2	2018	MAG	Slate Magazine	#in for a dime, you are in for a dollar . There is no half-way, polite way to do anything in Giuliani's
3	2012	BLOG	...orreia.wordpress.com	#, so in for a dime, in for a dollar . # You all have a very good point, and I've been
4	2003	NEWS	Atlanta	#that make name brands. WHO'S IN FOR A DOLLAR ? Major dollar store players, including stores where everything sells for \$1 or
5	2002	SPOK	NPR_ATC	#, a potato, they could get in for a dollar . And, of course, the food would be donated to the local
6	1997	MAG	HarpersMag	#step. In for a dime, in for a dollar . " Please, Pollan isn't in for a nickel. It is
7	1996	TV	Duckman: Private Dic...	#know. In for a dime, in for a dollar . (chuckles) And, uh... well, I... I'll
8	1995	SPOK	CNN_King	#in for a dime, you're in for a dollar . If you're going to say in your opening statement you're going
9	1995	SPOK	CNN_King	#THORNBURGH: In for a dime, in for a dollar . It's- GRETA VAN SUSTEREN: We'll continue our look at the O.J.,
10	1995	FIC	Bk:ConflictsInterest	#, " In for a dime, in for a dollar . " " Have some coffee. " " All I can say is
11	1994	NEWS	Chicago	#cliff overlooking the ocean. # Deciding in for a dollar , in for \$ 500, we splurged at the top of the line
12	1993	MAG	SportsIll	#why they're asking you to put in for a dollar . You can't tell East Carolina from North Carolina, and the last

Similarly, the idiom “*take the Queen’s/King’s shilling*” was not found in its primary form in either of the Corpora. However, a similar expression was presented in both BNC and COCA: “*take the monetarist shilling*” and “*take the Tokyo shilling*” respectively. This also shows that the meaning of the word “shilling” is not seen from a cultural perspective as belonging to British culture but simply as a unit of currency. The usage of “shilling” in different cultural contexts highlights its universal understanding as a monetary unit rather than a cultural artefact. This further emphasises the importance of context in determining the meaning of words.

CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT				HELP	SAVE	TRANSLATE	ANALYZE
1	FP6	W_fict_prose	its history if it's to succeed; go for growth, take the monetarist shilling .' He sighs, takes out the cigarette case again and holds it out				

CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT				HELP	SAVE	TRANSLATE	ANALYZE
1	2012	WEB	cars101.com	approximately ten seconds of on-screen appearance. De Niro's decision to take the Tokyo shilling , say Japanese advertising industry analysts, is surprising on several levels			

Such findings illustrate that the cultural component no longer has any significance, and that idioms and expressions are adaptable to different cultural contexts, reflecting the fluidity of language and its evolution over time. It also signifies the unstable nature of culturally specific idioms. From this we can conclude that even

the idioms that are deeply rooted in a particular culture can gain universal meaning and therefore evolve and change over time, often as a result of globalization and the spread of media and entertainment, reflecting the dynamic nature of language and culture. As these idioms were used more widely and became more familiar to people from different backgrounds, they gradually lost their original cultural context and became detached from their original meanings.

This process of cultural adaptation is often driven by the need for people to communicate more effectively and efficiently across language and cultural barriers. As a result, idioms that were once specific to a particular culture or language have become universal in their usage, and are now commonly understood and used by people from many different backgrounds. Moreover, while these idioms may have lost their cultural attachment, they still carry traces of their original cultural context and can be a way for people to connect with and appreciate different cultures. As such, it is important to be aware of these changes and adapt our understanding of idioms accordingly.

On the other hand, other categories of idioms, such as those denoting British places (*a London particular, all Lombard Street to a China orange, carry the coals to Newcastle, send someone to Coventry*) rarely transcend the cultural boundaries, and do not have changes or modifications to their structure, preserving their initial meaning and “Britishness”.

However, to understand the possible reasons for the difference in the number of mentions, it is important to take into account the number of entries in the corpora as well as their time periods. If we consider those factors, we can see that the Corpus of Contemporary American English is ten times bigger than the British National Corpus, with 1 billion and 100 million words, respectively. The first corpus encompasses entries dated 1990–2019, while the scope of the British corpus includes mentions from the 1980s to 1993.

Those factors contribute to the sometimes vast differences in the number of mentions. It is important to take into account the time frame of each corpus when

comparing the number of mentions, as language usage and frequency can change over time. Additionally, variations in the size and sources of each corpus can also impact the number of mentions. For this reason, it is important to regard this problem from different perspectives and analyse other sources apart from the British and American Corpora.

In conclusion, the research has shown that the usage of British culturally specific idioms in an American context has become increasingly common in recent years, due in large part to the influence of media and entertainment from the UK. While some people may struggle to understand the meanings of these idioms without prior exposure to British culture, their widespread usage has helped to bridge the gap between different cultures and foster greater understanding and appreciation of linguistic diversity.

2.4. The frequency of usage of idioms in modern media speech

In order to observe the distribution of culturally specific idioms in British and American English, we will take a look onto the number of mentions of some of the idioms carrying the lexical component of British currency, to be more precise, such idioms as “*a penny for your thoughts*”, “*cost a pretty penny*”, “*in for a penny, in for a pound*” and “*cost a pretty penny*”.

The decision to analyse the usage of idioms in the context of media, and specifically the BBC and CNN, was driven by the fact that these outlets are among the most influential and widely consumed news sources in both the UK and the US. By focusing on these news outlets, we sought to gain insights into how idioms are used in the everyday discourse of these societies, as well as how they are perceived and understood by a wide audience. This approach allowed us to compare and contrast the usage of idioms in two distinct cultural contexts and to identify patterns in their frequency and meaning. Additionally, analysing the usage of idioms in media sources allowed us to capture their evolving nature and potential for cultural transmission across borders.

While the research of the British and American Corpora has shown that the usage of the idioms mentioned above is more frequent in American context, the study of the news articles posted online stated the opposite.

Firstly, we will look at the number of times those idioms are used in the BBC news.

The idiom “*a penny for your thoughts*” was used 9 times, often in opinion pieces, where writers offer their thoughts on a particular topic or issue. It is also frequently used in interviews, where journalists ask their interviewees to share their opinions or insights on a topic. The idiom is generally used in a light-hearted and informal manner, and it is not uncommon to see it used in headlines or subheadings of articles.

The idiom “*cost a pretty penny*” in this exact form has been used 19 times. Generally, it was used to describe a situation where a large amount of money was spent, such as in the context of a business deal, real estate purchase, or luxury item. Its usage varies depending on the context and topic of the news story, and different variations of the same idiom can be found. Another 23 mentions included such expressions as “spend a pretty penny” (6), “make a pretty penny” (5), “save a pretty penny” (3), “worth a pretty penny” (2), “achieve a pretty penny” (1), “charge a pretty penny” (1), “fetch a pretty penny” or simply “a pretty penny” (5). Overall, this idiom and its variations were seen 42 times in the BBC news.

The idiom “*in for a penny, in for a pound*” was used as a full phrase 10 times in the BBC news articles. There also exist certain variations of this idiomatic expression, which demonstrate the flexibility of idiomatic expressions in language use. Some of those variations, such as expressions with exact number: “*in for a penny, in for £1.4bn*”; or extended expressions: “*in for a penny, in for a pound, in for a dollar*” preserve the initial meaning of an idiom, while in a modified phrase with negation “*in for a penny, not for the pound*” there is a change of meaning to an opposite one. Most frequently, the idiom was used in articles concerning making a risky and spontaneous

decision, indicating that the idiom is often employed in discussions of consequences and actions.

The idiom “*the penny drops*” is a phrase that is often used to describe a moment of realisation or understanding. In the context of the BBC news, this idiom was the most frequently used out of all of the idioms analysed in this part. It was mentioned 44 times in various news articles. The majority of the uses were in relation to political or economic news, with the idiom being used to describe a moment of realization in regards to a particular situation or issue. Overall, the use of the idiom “the penny drops” in BBC news articles highlights the importance of recognizing key moments of understanding or realisation in various political and economic contexts. It also showcases the versatility of this idiom, as it can be used to describe a wide range of situations beyond just personal experiences.

In comparison, the usage of the idioms chosen for the analysis is significantly lower in the context of CNN news articles.

The idiom “*a penny for your thoughts*” appears to be less common in CNN news than in BBC news. In the 3 instances that it was used, it was not prominently featured in headlines or subheadings but rather in interviews or opinion pieces. This suggests that the usage of this particular idiom may not be as prevalent in American English or may not have as strong cultural associations in the American context as it does in British English. Overall, while the idiom does appear in CNN news, it is not as frequently used or widely recognized as other idioms or expressions.

The idiom “*cost a pretty penny*” was used 5 times in the CNN news. It was used in various contexts, including reports on the cost of certain goods and services, such as luxury real estate, high-end cars, and medical treatments. The idiom was also used in the context of the economy, such as in articles discussing the rising costs of living and inflation. As in the context of the BBC news, there also exist different variations of this expression, namely “cost a penny” (4), “add a pretty penny” (1), “pay a pretty penny” (1), “sit on a pretty penny” (1), or simply “pretty penny” (2).

The idiom “*in for a penny, in for a pound*” was used 3 times in the CNN news articles, indicating that the usage of this phrase in the American context is not as prevalent as it is in the British context. The idiom was mainly used in articles discussing making major decisions and taking risks, which reflects the meaning of the phrase. However, unlike in the BBC news, there were no variations of this idiom used in the CNN news articles. This suggests that the idiom may be more standardized and less subject to variation in the American context. Overall, the usage of this idiom in CNN news appears to be relatively limited, compared to other more commonly used idioms.

The idiom “*the penny drops*” was used 8 times in the CNN news articles, which was considerably less frequent than its use in the BBC news. However, it was still the most commonly used idiom among those analysed, indicating its widespread use in both British and American contexts. The majority of the instances of the idiom in CNN were found in opinion pieces or analytical articles, where the author was attempting to convey a sense of realization or understanding. The idiom was used to emphasize the moment when something becomes clear, often in response to new information or a change in perspective.

In conclusion, the analysis of British idioms in the context of the most popular news outlets in Britain and the USA has revealed interesting findings. The research has shown that while the results of the previous analysis of the British and American Corpora indicated that the majority of culturally specific British idioms denoting British currency were more wide-spread in the American context, the overall tendency is that the usage of idioms is more frequent in the British news than in the American news.

The analysis of the usage of British idioms in the BBC and CNN news has shown that there are notable differences in the frequency and manner of usage between the two news outlets. Although some idioms, such as “*the penny drops*,” were used more frequently in the BBC news, they still had a relatively significant presence in the CNN news, indicating the ongoing process of cultural diffusion and the adoption of idioms into new contexts.

The fact that these idioms were used multiple times in both news outlets and the differences in the usage of British idioms between the BBC and CNN news articles suggest that the cultural exchange between Britain and the United States is not always a two-way street, and that language is a crucial element of cultural identity. Moreover, the analysis highlights the dynamic nature of language and culture, as certain idioms continue to be adopted and adapted in different contexts. Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights into the role of idiomatic expressions in language and cultural communication and highlights the importance of considering the cultural context and nuances of language when analysing media content.

Conclusion to CHAPTER 2

To summarise the findings provided in the second chapter of the paper, we can conclude that the study of idioms with the names of British currency in British and American English has highlighted the importance of considering both the cultural and linguistic aspects of idiomatic expressions. While the usage of these idioms may differ across contexts, their cultural component remains an essential part of their meaning. However, it is also evident that as these idioms become more widely used in different cultural contexts, the focus shifts towards their meaning rather than their cultural origins. As such, it is necessary to acknowledge the dynamic nature of language and the ongoing process of cultural diffusion.

Moreover, the analysis has also demonstrated the significance of idioms in language and communication. Despite the differences in usage, the fact that these idioms are still widely used in both British and American English media indicates their continued relevance in modern language. As such, it is essential to consider the role of idioms in language teaching and learning, as well as in cross-cultural communication. By understanding the cultural and linguistic components of idiomatic expressions, we can better navigate and communicate across different cultural contexts, contributing to more effective communication and mutual understanding.

CONCLUSION

In this part of the paper, we will provide conclusions regarding our research and present the possible aspects of further study in this area. In the course of the writing of the paper we completed the tasks that were defined at the beginning.

The first part of our paper provided a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework related to idiomatic expressions in the English language, in the process of which we outlined the definition of an idiom. Next, we emphasised the importance of cultural context in language studies, discussing the notion of culturally specific lexis and the role of Briticisms in shaping our understanding of stereotypical British culture. The findings of this section suggested that the English language has a wide range of idiomatic expressions and that cultural connotations often contribute significantly to their meaning.

However, the second part of the paper focused specifically on the usage of idioms with cultural significance related to British currency, and the results of the analysis of 23 idioms showed that these idioms have been widely adopted in other English-speaking countries, namely the United States of America. The results of the analysis of Corpora and news outlets helped us discover the distribution of the idioms with names of British currency in modern British and American English.

The results of this paper indicate that while idiomatic expressions may have originated in a specific cultural context, they have the potential to transcend cultural boundaries and become part of the global lexicon. While money and currency is one of the spheres of life where the Brits are very conservative and preserve their own nomination, in everyday communication they may lose the association with Britain itself and become part of the global discourse.

In our study, we conducted a comparative analysis of the usage of culturally specific idiomatic expressions in the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The objective was to examine how these idioms are employed in both varieties of English and to investigate any potential

differences in their frequency of use. The results show that in American English they are even more frequently used than in British. Moreover, they may be used in a fragmented form, some elements may be replaced by other words, or they may be restructured. While these idioms may still carry some figurative or metaphorical weight, their connection to their original cultural origins may become less pronounced. This further indicates the loss of their cultural meaning.

The findings suggest that the globalisation of these idioms has led to a shift in focus from their cultural component to their meaning, as they are now used more widely in a variety of contexts, often divorced from their original cultural significance through the change of lexical components. The analysis showed a loss of initial cultural meaning of idioms, which makes integration into other variants of the English language easier and erases their belonging to Britishisms. All this shows that the most significant feature is that those idioms lose their Britishness, and their meaning is reduced to quantitative characteristics. They are no longer seen as specifically units of British currency – but rather as the words representing the concept of money in general.

Overall, this research highlights the dynamic nature of language and the importance of considering cultural context in our understanding and usage of idiomatic expressions.

Further research can focus on other categories of culturally specific British idioms that were mentioned in the theoretical part, such as food and history, as well as delve into the reasons behind the differing patterns of usage and explore the mechanisms that lead to the adoption of certain idioms into a new cultural context.

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APPENDICES

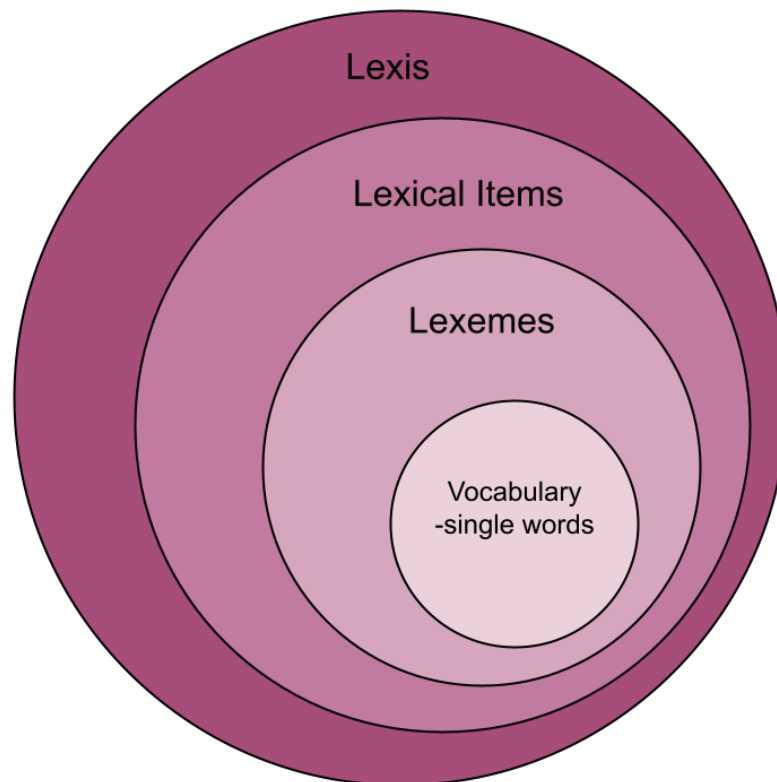


Figure 1. The difference between, vocabulary, lexemes, lexical items and lexis - a diagram

Glossary of idioms

1. A bad penny always turns up – a person or thing which is unpleasant, dishonorable, or unwanted tends to appear (or reappear), especially at inopportune times.
2. Always late and penny short – someone who is late with a birthday or anniversary wish.
3. A penny for your thoughts – used to ask someone what they are thinking about.
4. A penny saved is a penny gained – a maxim for thrift that says that money not spent may be spent later, or may earn interest in the meantime
5. Be quids in – be in a position where you have profited or are likely to profit from something.

6. Cost a pretty penny – cost a large sum of money; be expensive.
7. Count the pennies – be careful about how much you spend.
8. Earn an honest penny – earn money by fair means, especially by hard work.
9. In for a penny, in for a pound – used to express someone’s intention to see an undertaking through, however how much time, effort, or money this entails.
10. More kicks than halfpence – more harsh treatment than rewards.
11. No more than ninepence in the shilling – of low intelligence.
12. Not have a penny to bless yourself with – be completely impoverished.
13. Not have two pennies to rub together – lack money; be very poor.
14. Not the full shilling – not mentally alert or quick-thinking.
15. On a sixpence – within a small area or short distance.
16. Pennies from heaven – unexpected benefits, especially financial ones.
17. Penny pitcher – one who spends little money; one who is very frugal or cautious with money.
18. Penny wise and pound foolish – careful and economical in small matters while being wasteful or extravagant in large ones.
19. Take the Queen’s/King’s shilling – enlist as a soldier.
20. Ten a penny – plentiful or easily obtained and consequently of little value.
21. The penny drops – someone finally realizes or understands something.
22. Turn up like a bad penny – inevitably reappear or return, of something or someone unwelcome.
23. Two a penny – plentiful or easily obtained and consequently of little value.