



# ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИЕ LINGUISTICS

УДК 811.1/8

DOI 10.52575/2712-7451-2023-42-1-114-125

## English Idioms and Phrases as the Reflection of language and Culture Symbiosis

<sup>1</sup>Zherom Baghana, <sup>1</sup>Qi Wang, <sup>2</sup>Zhanat Bissenbayeva

<sup>1</sup>Belgorod National Research University,  
85 Pobeda St, Belgorod 308015, Russia;

<sup>2</sup>Almaty Humanitarian Economic University,  
43 Kunayev St, Almaty 050051, Kazakhstan

E-mail: [baghana@vandex.ru](mailto:baghana@vandex.ru); [Mimiracle123@vandex.ru](mailto:Mimiracle123@vandex.ru); [zhanat\\_2006@mail.ru](mailto:zhanat_2006@mail.ru)

**Abstract.** The article deals with the peculiarities of idioms productivity based on the example of English culture. The authors analyze the peculiarities of historical, cultural and language aspects of idioms functioning in modern English. According to the research work, English idioms are characterized as the language substance presenting its cultural heritage. Modern English is characterized by the development of figurative, idiomatic meaning in terminological expressions, still it possesses the characteristic features from the language and cultural past revealed in the form of idioms and phrases. The authors stress, that biblical idioms present the main part of idioms' units range typical for modern English usage today. Idioms of classic literature origin come next in popularity due to necessity to follow customs and traditions of national culture. Finally, idioms from artworks by W. Shakespeare and W. Scott outperformed other English authors in popularity while using idioms by common people in everyday life aspects. To conclude, the lexical level of modern English has some number of borrowed idioms from foreign literature authors: authors from the USA and France have had the most significant impact on the state of the English language today; so, American and French idioms are of productive usage level in the modern English language functioning.

**Keywords:** language and culture interaction, idiom, modern English, biblical idioms, borrowed idioms, idioms from literature

**For citation:** Baghana Je., Wang Qi., Bissenbayeva Zh. 2023. English Idioms and Phrases as the Reflection of language and Culture Symbiosis. Issues in Journalism, Education, Linguistics, 42(1): 114–125 (in Russian). DOI: 10.52575/2712-7451-2023-42-1-114-125

## Английские фразеологические единицы и свободные словосочетания как симбиоз языка и культуры

<sup>1</sup>Багана Ж., <sup>1</sup>Ван Ци, <sup>2</sup>Бисенбаева Ж.Н.

Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет,  
Россия, 308015, Белгород, ул. Победы, 85;

<sup>2</sup>Алматинский Гуманитарно-Экономический Университет,  
Казахстан, 050051, Алматы, ул. Кунаева, 43

E-mail: [baghana@vandex.ru](mailto:baghana@vandex.ru); [Mimiracle123@vandex.ru](mailto:Mimiracle123@vandex.ru); [zhanat\\_2006@mail.ru](mailto:zhanat_2006@mail.ru)

**Аннотация.** Рассмотрены особенности высокопродуктивных фразеологических единиц и свободных словосочетаний на примере английской лингвокультуры. В ходе исследования фразеологические единицы и свободные словосочетания английского языка характеризуются как

элементы, представляющие собой часть культурного наследия в рамках британской лингвокультуры. Для состояния современного английского языка характерной особенностью является функционирование фразеологических единиц, значение которых претерпело изменение, что обусловлено влиянием экстралингвистических факторов. Доказано, что английский язык обладает характерными чертами лингвокультурного прошлого, реализующимися в форме фразеологизмов и свободных словосочетаний. В исследовании подчеркнуто, что библеизмы представляют собой основную часть диапазона фразеологических единиц, функционирующих в современном английском языке. Вслед за библеизмами фразеологические единицы и свободные словосочетания, заимствованные из классической британской литературы, входят в ранг продуктивных и занимают вторую позицию по принципу продуктивности, что продиктовано необходимостью следовать обычаям и традициям родной культуры, отражающейся в произведениях английских классиков. Сделан вывод, что фразеологические единицы и свободные словосочетания, заимствованные из произведений У. Шекспира и В. Скотта, превосходят продуктивность заимствованных фразеологических единиц из произведений других представителей классической английской литературы и функционируют в ежедневной речи британцев. В заключении отмечено, что лексический состав современного английского языка содержит определенное количество заимствованных из французской и американской художественной литературы фразеологических единиц и свободных словосочетаний.

**Ключевые слова:** взаимодействие языка и культуры, фразеологические единицы, современный английский язык, библеизмы, заимствованные фразеологизмы, фразеологизмы из художественных произведений

**Для цитирования:** Baghana Je., Wang Qi., Bissenbayeva Zh. 2023. English idioms and phrases as the reflection of language and culture symbiosis. Issues in Journalism, Education, Linguistics, 42(1): 114–125 (in Russian). DOI: 10.52575/2712-7451-2023-42-1-114-125

---

## Introduction

Such linguistic brunch as Phraseology is a coherent system, it can be called a unique language and culture symbiosis substance since its units are fundamentally different in various languages, on the one hand, and the meaning of its units are not understood from its constituents. And on the other hand, idioms can not belong to free phrases elements, on the contrary, they are a part of a more complex system of the national language complicated structure, possessing certain relations types with different levels [Anderson, Pelteret, 2012, c. 33].

In our research work we analyze the idioms' peculiar features based on the example of the English language and culture. One must stress, various paradigms of idiom units are distinguished while the analysis of English culture. They are characterized as are unambiguous, homonymous, synonymous, antonymous substances.

## Methods

According to the research work two groups of methods are used: general scientific methods and special methods. The general scientific methods group uses word analysis and synthesis, as well as the method of generalization. These methods are used to comprehend the relevant theoretical and practical material. The group of special methods includes a descriptive method that allows identifying the characteristic features and relationships of linguistic units; a quantitative method which is used in the selection of linguistic material to measure the productivity of certain linguistic and cultural units of native speakers. In addition, methods of collecting and processing linguistic material are used as well, in particular, the method of illustrative examples selection for the certain linguistic phenomena from written sources.



## Results and discussion

Taking into consideration the criteria of stylistic features, it is necessary to distinguish stylistically marked and neutral idiom units, and the former make it possible to identify various layers in their composition that differ significantly in stylistic coloring and stylistic affiliation.

Syntagmatic relations of idiom units are characterized by “the possibilities of their compatibility with a certain range of lexical units; some idiom units are characterized by limited compatibility, for example, the idiom “*into the eyes of the public*” can have the combinations with the verb *to come, to be*, but can not be combined with the verbs *to become, to take*”, etc [Wright, 2002, p. 124].

Other idiom units are characterized by a single, closed compatibility, they can be used with only one single word. However, among idiom units there are many components possessing a variety of syntagmatic connections [Baghana et al., 2018].

It should be noted, that most idiom units are characterized by one possible word meaning, their semantic structure is quite monolithic, indecomposable. For example, “*from the first look*” – *on the first impression*, “*to daydream*” – *to indulge in disembodied dreams*.

But there are idiom units that have several meanings, for example, “*to play fool*” – 1. *do nothing*; 2. *behave frivolously, fool around*; 3. *to do stupid things*.

*The influence of Literature from artwork on Modern English*

Bible Studies and Biblical idioms in Modern English

Bible has been considered the limitless source of idiom units' variations analysis. The expressions used in the modern English speech of the biblical origin are:

– “*The apple of Sodom*” – *a beautiful, but rotten fruit*.

The idiom “*The apple of Sodom*” denotes two meanings variations: 1. *something that is promising high pleasure, enjoyment, on the one hand, but will bring only bitter disappointment, on the other hand (cute, but rotten)*;

2. *deceptive appearance of the person*. The word *apple* in the idiom is a hyperonym meaning “fruit” [Thomas, 1999, p. 45].

Examples:

1. “*I can't help admiring him though I know he's the apple of Sodom*”.

2. “*No, don't do it now, honey! It's just the apple of Sodom*” [Philip, 2007, p. 98].

– “*The beam (the mote) in one's eye*” – in accordance with the biblical text a *speck (in your brother's eye)* means:

1. *blind spot* – *sin or obstacle, lack of perception, failure, invisible area*;

2. *to see one's weakness*, for example:

“*He doesn't understand it! He has the mote in his eye*” [Thomas, 1999, p. 51].

– “*The blind leading the blind*” – this idiom is a part from the biblical sentence “*if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*” which is used about a failed experience, for example:

“*...Inviting him to the contest was no use, he has no talent for self-expression. It's The blind leading the blind*”;

– “*By the sweat of one's brow*” – this idiom is used to mention hard work of common people, for example:

“*..He must earn for his living by the sweat of his own brow. There's nobody to help him*” [Philip, 2007, p. 159];

– “*Can the leopard change his spots?*” – this idiom also has the variant “*change one's spots*”, and it means *the inability to change a person's nature*, for example:

“*Anthony is always late! I believe he'll be late even for his own funerals. Can the leopard change his spots?*” [Seidl, 1989, p. 35].

– “*A crown of glory*” – it means *laurel wreath of the winner, or a high award*, for example:

“*At the end of the project the winners will be awarded. A crown of glory moment will be great!*” [Philip, 2007, p. 159].

– “Daily bread” – *nourishment, food*, for example:

“The economic crisis is the reason why many people face up the daily bread problem today”

– “A drop in the bucket” – a minor attempt which can not be successful, for example:

“Everything has been done for me! My actions are like A drop in the bucket now” [Philip, 2007, p. 156].

– “A fly in the ointment” – the idiom is used to denote:

1. *a minor, unpleasant event that overshadows the situation;*

2. *a hindrance* .

The ointment (balm, ointment, incense) mentioned in this expression was used by the ancient Jews after bathing. Incense was prepared from special oils, as well as from fragrant, sweet-smelling substances and it was applied to hair and beard, as well as to the skin to make it soft. *To put incense on someone's feet meant to express special respect.*

“The plot of the story was great, as well as the performance itself But the fly in the ointment was we could not find our car afterwards”.

– “Loaves and fishes” – is used to mention *privileges*, often received by politicians who came to power, for example:

“His loge is completely changed now. He has all that loaves and fishes.

– “The prodigal son” – denotes *a man who has committed many sins and returned home for forgiveness*, for example:

“The Church is always ready to receive back her prodigal sons” [McCarthy, O’Dell, 2004, p. 78].

– “The promised land” - In the Bible, Canaan is described as God's promised land to Abraham and his descendants. Currently, this phrase can be used in relation to any place where someone is passionately striving to find happiness, for example:

“I can’t explain why, but my mom has always had the desire to live her life only in Scotland, calling it the promised land” [Seidl, 1989, p. 54].

– “A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country” – the idiom is used describing *a great, outstanding person who is recognized and accepted by everyone except people close to him*, they can be his own countrymen, family members; it can also be used to refer to *a remarkable idea or invention*.

In the modern English language there are also a lot of whole sentences-sayings and various nominal constructions with the main word noun to be borrowed from the Bible, the most productive of them are:

– “To bear one's cross” – it means *meekly endure all the vicissitudes of fate;*

– “To escape by the skin of one's teeth” – the idiom has the meaning as *barely able to escape*, for example:

“He understood it was the last chance for him, so it was the escape by the skin of his teeth” [Philip, 2007, p. 161].

– “To kill the fatted calf” - *to welcome someone cordially (like a prodigal son);*

– “To laugh to scorn” – has the meaning *laugh contemptuously;*

– “To sow the wind and reap the whirlwind” – means *to sow the wind and reap the storm, to suffer from one's own imprudence, to pay for something*, for example:

“... He’s very rude and impolite, you know. Therefore, he sows the wind and reap the whirlwind”

“To worship the golden calf” – *to value wealth, money* [McCarthy, O’Dell, 2004, p. 109].

It is necessary to stress, idioms of biblical origin differ in meaning in comparison with the biblical prototypes. This can be explained by the fact of the needed modern reinterpretation over time. Moreover, in the English language idioms of biblical origin do not correspond to the modern English word order and, therefore, archaic word are usually omitted. For example, the idiom



“to kill the fatted calf” from the parable “The prodigal son” originally was used to stress the direct meaning *to kill a fatted calf – to make feast and cook the best dish – a fat calf*. Time passed and this idiom had an additional meaning – *to treat the best food and dishes which were at home*.

Another ancient idiom “*gall and wormwood*”, denoting *something disgusting or shameful* was changed in its word order and the definite article was added. So, the currently used idiom is “*the wormwood and the gall*”.

The ancient English idiom “*whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap*” has an archaic verb form of the modern verb *to sow*. The characteristic feature of idiom meaning is a kind of shift changing in meaning from positive in archaic idioms to negative connotations in modern interpretations of biblical idioms, for example:

1. “*When thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*”.

This is the archaic idiom based on the biblical prototype which has the meaning “*when you give alms, let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing*”

2. “*Not to let one's left hand know what one's right hand does*” [McCarthy, O’Dell, 2004, p. 106].

This is the modern idiom based on the biblical saying stressing a kind of confusion, inconsistency in actions, when the decisions taken today contradict to the decisions taken the day before. It possesses negative connotation, depicting the examples of some official orders to be canceled by the orders or instructions on the same topic which are fundamentally different.

Some units of English idioms go back to the biblical story. One must mention, biblical concepts can be traced as parts of such idioms as “*forbidden fruit*” – *something forbidden to do*; “*Job's comforter*” – *somebody who is unable to help and is a kind of grief-comforter*; “*Judah's kiss*” – *expresses the highest degree of human treachery, as well as a symbol of betrayal*; “*a dead letter*” – *a law that has lost its meaning* [Seidl, 1989, p. 62].

The influence of Literature and idioms from W. Shakespeare artwork on Modern English

Modern English has a lot of idioms which are aimed at enhancing the aesthetic aspect of the language. Historical aspects of customs and traditions have been the reason of the idioms variations functioning in modern English. Still, the main influence belongs to the literary and artistic works’ peculiarities revealed in works by many outstanding English poets and writers. Therefore, works of the famous English classic W. Shakespeare are one of the most important literary sources of productive idiom units that have enriched the English language vocabulary. The most productive are “*Macbeth*”, “*Othello*”, “*Henry VIII*”.

Idioms from “*Macbeth*”:

Modern Business English has a widely used idiom “*Lady Macbeth strategy*” denoting “a takeover strategy in which a third party makes a better offer to the target company than the initial hostile bidder for the purchase of the company”, for example the company can initially act as a kind of “white knight”, and then it is united with the initial hostile bidder for the purchase of the company.

*ITC is not able to win. Let's play Lady Macbeth strategy!* [McCarthy, O’Dell, 2004, p. 178].

1. “*To make assurance double sure*” – *to be safe in any matter*.
2. “*The be – all and end - all*” – *the aspects which fill all spheres of life, which are everywhere*

3. “*The milk of human kindness*” – the ironic meaning is “*balm of good nature*”, it is also used to describe *compassion and humanity* towards a person, for example:

*“I really feel sorrow for all that. And you? Don't you feel milk of human kindness to sacrifice all you have?”* [Kachru et al., 2006, p. 206].

4. “*To screw one’s courage to the sticking place*” – *to gain courage, to dare to do something*, for example:

*No, I really don’t want to be a loser no longer! I will screw my courage to the sticking place and will be successful in all deeds!*

5. “*To win golden opinions*” – this idiom is used to denote a desire of a person who *wants to earn a favorable, flattering opinion about himself*, for example:

“*Coming to an agreement with Mr. White is you will win the golden opinions, I must say*” [Seidl, 1989, p. 109].

6. “*The sere and yellow leaf*” – *old age, decrepitude*, for example:

“*And don’t even think of my coming to the sere and yellow leaf, not yet*”

7. “*Pride of place*” – *high position, ecstasy of one’s own position, arrogance*, for example:

“*He really has achieved a lot! I would even call him a pride of place person*” [Anderson, Pelteret, 2012, p. 32].

8. “*Full of sound and fury*” – *loud, menacing speeches that mean nothing*, for example:

“*Your words are full of sound and fury. Only promises, no deeds*” [Seidl, 1989, p. 102].

Shakespeare’s work “Hamlet” ranks among the most productive in terms of idioms use in modern English. The most frequently used idioms from the work are:

1. “*To be or not to be?*” – *A key issue that imperiously requires a solution before a new serious step*, for example:

*What specialty to choose is a kind of to be or not to be question now.*

2. “*To cudgel one’s brains*” – *to puzzle over a difficult task*, for example:

*I don’t hate Maths, but all these problems cudgel my brains!*

3. “*The observed of all observers*” – *the center of everyone’s attention*, for example:

“*She’s so well-dressed and looks like a million dollars! She’s observed of all observers*” [Wright, 2002, p. 156].

4. “*To be hoist with one’s own petard*” – this idiom is used to describe a person who *fell into his own trap*, for example:

“*Fortunately, he was hoist with one’s own petard. Now we know the truth*”.

5. “*To do yeoman service*” – *to provide timely assistance*, for example:

*The accident happened last week. He provided with the yeoman service and soon will recover* [Seidl, 1989, p. 119].

6. “*Our withers are unwrung*” – the idiom is often used in the Court stressing that *accusation did not hurt the defendant*, for example:

*I promised you, everything will be fine! Our withers are unwrung, they will not beat us* [Wright, 2002, p. 196].

7. “*To shuffle off (this mortal coil)*” – this idiom is used in the situation describing the difficulties of the person to *wants to leave this mortal world, to commit suicide*, for example:

*Life is not the bed of roses for him. I am afraid shuffling off is in his minds.*

8. “*To give pause to (smb.)*” – *disconcerting or confusing somebody*, for example:

*Speaking in a loud voice only makes him giving pause. It’s useless! Give him more time to think, please* [Philip, 2007, p. 96].

9. “*To out-Herod Herod*” – this idiom is used describing a very cruel person, the one who *surpasses Herod in cruelty*, for example:

10. “*To know a hawk from a handsaw*” – this idiom is used denoting a person who is able to distinguish several things. It has also such interpretation variant as *to know a cuckoo from a hawk*, meaning *to be able to differentiate elementary things*.

11. “*Caviar to the general*” – this idiom is used to state the idea that there are unique things which can be understood only by some categories of people. In this case *caviar* is not the dish easily appreciated by the public – *general* which is unable to value the product as it has rough taste, for example:



*The analysis of the key crisis features is not for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it's caviar to the general.* [McCarthy, O'Dell, 2004, p. 109].

12. “*Germane to the matter*” – this idiom is often used in business meeting *to stimulate participants to start speaking up to the point.*

13. “*A towering passion*” – denotes *frenzy or rage*, for example:

*The boss was in a towering passion and fired her.*

14. “*The primrose path of dalliance*” – *the way of enjoyment or entertainment* [Philip, 2007, p. 116].

15. “*There's the rub*” – this idiom is used to denote *the idea of understanding the key matter or the main reason of difficulties*, for example:

*The just pretended to love, but she didn't. There's the rub!*

16. “*From whose bourne no traveler returns*” – describes *a place where no one has ever returned from*, that is, in the realm of *death*, for example:

*- I haven't seen him for ages.*

*- And probably will not see again. He has gone to the place from whose bourne no traveler returns.*

17. “*In the mind's eye*” – is used in order to mention something not real that *can happen only in imagination*, for example:

*Having my own apartment is just in my mind's eyes* [McCarthy, O'Dell, 2004, p. 99].

18. “*To the manner born*” – this idiom is used to denote *something that a person has been accustomed to do for a long time*, for example:

*He's good with numbers. He is making reports to the manner born.*

19. “*Sweets to the sweet*” – is used while giving gifts to the person you love and want to make happy, for example:

*I am happy today to give sweets to the sweetest sweet of mine* [Philip, 2007, p. 109].

20. “*To the top of one's bent*” – is used to stress *action done completely*, in full length; *to do something with your heart's content, as much as you like*, for example:

*I appreciate what you have done for me to the top of my bent* [Wright, 2002, p. 79].

Idioms from “Othello”:

1. “*The green-eyed monster*” – usually used to describe *a jealousy person*, for example:

*That's not excuse for rudeness! I am tired of this green-eyed monster type.*

2. “*To chronicle small beer*” – this idiom is used *to denote minor events, things which should be paid less attention*, for example:

*It's impossible to deal with him. He's a kind of person who always chronicles small beer, I hate his greediness* [Wright, 2002, p. 109].

3. “*To wear one's heart upon one's sleeve*” – *to have another unsightly side, the wrong side of something*. This idiom is often used while describing a person's character, for example:

*You should be careful with him, I dare say! He wears his heart upon his sleeve.*

4. “*Trifle light as air*” – it means *to flaunt one's feelings, to express feelings directly, not to hide emotions*, for example:

*He's to open-minded, he trifles light as air* [McCarthy, O'Dell, 2004, p. 89].

5. “*The head and front of*” – *the most important and essential thing*, for example:

*Finding a new source of income is the head and front of my reality now.*

6. “*A foregone conclusion*” – *biased opinion, conclusion*;

7. “*Ocular proof*” – *visible proof*;

8. “*Curled darlings*” – *prosperous admirers*, for example:

*Jeremy is not a match for her, don't worry. She's interested only in curled darlings* [Philip, 2007, p. 178].

#### Idioms from «King Henry IV»

1. “*To eat one out of house and home*” – *to ruin a person by living at his expense*, for example:

*His nephews and nieces have been living with him for three years already. No wonder if they will eat him out of house and home soon air* [McCarthy, O’Dell, 2004, p. 98].

2. “*The wish is father to the thought*” – this idiom is used to denote the idea that *the desire begets thought*; it is used to stress that *people believe willingly only in desired ideas*, for example:

*Nobody knows what will be with Andrew and Katie. We used to believe them to be ideally matching. The wish is father to the thought. Who knows...* [Wright, 2002, p. 109].

3. “*The better part of valour is discretion*” – *modesty is one of the bravery’s ornaments*, for example:

*John is a good example of a courageous person. But we should not forget that the better part of valour is discretion* [McCarthy, O’Dell, 2004, p. 102].

#### Idioms from “Twelfth Night”

1. “*Midsummer madness*” – *insanity*;

2. “*The whirligig of time*” – *vicissitudes of fate*;

3. “*Cakes and ale*” – *carefree fun, the period of enjoying life*, for example:

*Gap year is the best time for career choice. It’s not the cakes and ale period* [Wright, 2002, p. 107].

#### Idioms from “As You Like It”

1. “*How the world wags?*” – this idiom is used *to greet the person and to inquire about the person’s life*, for example:

*Hi Anthony, how the world wags?*

2. “*In good set terms*” – means *to do something with all the determination or severity*, for example:

*I want to warn you in good set terms, never even come to my house anymore!*

3. “*Lay it on with a trowel*” – *to exaggerate; to flatter crudely*;

4. “*Sermons in stones*” – *serious thoughts inspired by natural phenomena*, for example:

*Spring, it’s time to start the new project. Yes, it’s a kind of Sermons in stones to me* [Seidl, 1989, p. 39].

#### Idioms from “Midsummer Night's Dream”

1. “*Fancy free*” – this idiom is often used to describe *a person who is not in love with anybody, who is alone*, for example:

*Carl can do what he wants as he’s fancy free, you know.*

2. “*The beginning of the end*” – this expression denotes *a starting point of the catastrophe or a very important event which will come to an end soon*, for example:

*Here he comes with the results of the final test! I think it’s the beginning of my end in this college* [Philip, 2007, p. 102].

#### Idioms from “King”

1. “*Every inch a king*” – the idiom is used to describe *a real king - from head to toe*;

2. “*More sinned against than sinning*” – this saying denotes *a person who is unfairly offended, to whom others are more likely to be blamed for his drawbacks*, for example:

*It’s so hard to deal with her! She is really more sinned against than sinning* [Seidl, 1989, p. 59].

In modern English, idioms from Shakespeare works can be used with some changes in structure. For example, the expression “*to wear one’s heart upon one’s sleeve*” taken from “Othello” was originally associated with the medieval knightly tradition of wearing the colors of their lady on their



sleeves. In modern English, it is usually used in an abbreviated form “*to wear one's heart upon one's sleeve*”. Also, instead of the preposition *upon* another preposition *on* is used.

The idioms from Shakespeare artwork “*the better part of valour is discretion*” taken from “King Henry IV” has been changed in its structure, and at present it is limited to “*discretion is the better part of valour*”.

Borrowed idioms from Shakespeare artworks are quite popular in the modern English speech. They usually include archaisms which are not used anywhere except for this idioms, for example, the idiom “*from whom bourne no traveller returns*” representing *the place of death*, the word *bourne* is an archaism and denotes *a boundary or limit*, and it is used in modern English only within the framework of this idiom.

The modern English language has been influenced by works of other writers too, among them one can find idioms by Alexander Pope, Walter Scott, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton and Charles Dickens of great importance.

#### Idioms from works by Alexander Pope

1. “*Fools rush in where angels fear to tread*” – the idiom is taken from the written work “An Essay on Criticism” and is used to give a characteristics to the complicated event when *only a fool is ready to do something, but a wise man will never start it*, for example:

*Working for Mr. Black now is only fools rushing in but angels fear to tread it* [Philip, 2007, p. 108].

2. “*Damn with faint praise*” – this idiom was borrowed to modern English from the work “Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot” and is used to describe a kind of contradiction action *while condemning a person to pretend to praise him or her what he had done*, for example:

*Mr. Smith is a strange boss, you know. You'll never know his true attitude. Damn with faint praise, he's too weird* [Seidl, 1989, p. 14].

3. “*Break a butterfly on the wheel*” – the analyzed idiom is a part of everyday English now, and it was borrowed from the work “Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot”, denoting *a useless action taken by a person*, for a example:

*Having bought all that staff was breaking a butterfly on the wheel* [Kemertelidze, Giorgadze, 2020].

4. “*Who shall decide when doctors disagree?*” – his saying by Alexander Pope was taken from his written work “Moral Essays” and presents a rhetorical question denoting *a difficult situation while a common person does not know how to behave and what to say, but the opinions of experts differ*.

#### Idioms from works by Walter Scott

1. “*To catches mb. red-handed*” – this idiom was taken from the novel “Ivanhoe” and is still used in modern English. It describes the case when *a person was caught at the scene of a crime*, for example:

*I swear you'll be imprisoned as you've been caught red-handed* [Philip, 2007, p. 112].

2. “*Beard the lion in his den*” – this set expression was taken from the novel in verse “Marmion” and it means *to attack a dangerous enemy in his own home* [Turker, 2019].

3. “*Laugh on the wrong side of one's mouth*” – the analyze idiom was borrowed to modern English from the historical novel “Rob Roy” and is used to describe the emotional condition of the person of *getting discouraged after fun or going from laughter to tears*, for example:

*- The party seems cool! Why are you so sad, honey?*

*- It's just laughing on the wrong side of my mouth, you see* [Adelina, Suprayogi, 2020].

4. “*On one's native path*” – this idiom was taken from the historical novel “Rob Roy” and depicts the place of birth – *Motherland*.

5. “*A foeman worthy of somebody's steel*” – this idiom was borrowed to the modern English language from the poem “The Lady of the Lake” by Walter Scott, and it describes *a worthy opponent or a rival*.

### Idioms from works by John Milton

1. “*Fall on evil days*” – this set expression was taken from the novel “Paradise Lost” and is still used in modern English and depicts the hard period of life – *falling into poverty*. It describes the hardships of *dragging out a miserable existence*, for example:

*I was fired two months ago and haven't found a suitable job yet. One month more without income and I'll face falling on evil days* [Wright, 2002, p. 202].

2. “*Heaven on Earth*” – this expression presents a so-called *paradise on Earth*.

3. “*More than meets the ear*” – the idiom was borrowed to modern English from the epic poem “Paradise Lost”, and it describes *a difficult situation, not as easy as it seems to be at first*. [Bruening, 2019].

The statements of other English writers usually function as quotations. They are rarely used replenishing idioms of the English language, and in the majority of cases such quotations are typical for colloquial speech patterns, for example:

1. The expression “*man Friday*” from the novel of D. Defoe is used in modern English to describe *a faithful devoted servant* (named after a faithful servant in the novel “Robinson Crusoe”); *a gentleman's gentleman* – means *a servant* (based on the story “Everybody's Business”);

2. The expression “*an albatross about one's neck*” from the work by S.T. Coleridge has the following meaning “*a constant reminder of someone's fault*”; the expression *a sad circumstance* (from Coleridge's poem “The Ancient Mariner” is said about *a sailor who caused trouble on his ship by killing an albatross and was forced to wear a dead albatross around his neck as punishment*).

3. K. Marlo in his work used the expression “*to clip somebody's wings*” denoting *clipping the wings of someone*.

4. L. Chesterfield's expression *small talk* is used in modern English to denote *a chatter or talk about trifles, about the weather* (taken from the work “Letters to his Son”).

5. J.G. Byron in his poetry used the expression “*as merry as a marriage-bell*” to describe *a very cheerful period of life* (from the poem “Childe Harold's Pilgrimage”).

6. The main character of the comedy “Paul Pry” by J. Poole is the name to the person who *pokes his nose into other people's affairs*. The lexeme *Paul Pry* is used to describe *a very curious person* [Philip, 2007, p. 122].

Many idioms' units were not created by the writers themselves, but thanks to them they have become widespread in modern English. Here are some examples:

The saying “*to be on the side of the angels*” means *to insist on the traditional point of view* gained popularity thanks to B. Disraeli [Chen, 2020].

### Idioms borrowed from literary works of foreign languages and countries

Many idioms' units were borrowings into modern England from the USA. They relate to intra-linguistic borrowings. Some of these idiomatic units were created by American writers and have become widespread in modern English speech. Among those who influenced greatly to the conditions of modern English idioms functioning are:

1. V. Irving: the idiom expression *the almighty dollar* is usually used ironically. Another expression *a Rip Van Winkle* denotes “*a backward person*” (named after the hero of the story of the same name who slept for twenty years).

2. E. O'Connor: the expression *the last hurrah* describes *the last chance of the person*; this is a kind of “*swan song*”, and it is usually used about *the last election campaign*, or about *a politician ending his turbulent political career* (this idiom is the title of the novel by E. O'Connor).

3. F. Cooper: the idiom *the last of the Mohicans* is taken from the title of the story. The Mohicans are an extinct tribe of North American Indians. The popularity of Cooper's works contributed much to the introduction of idioms' units related to the life of Indians, these expressions from this novel are widely used in the modern English language, for example, “*to bury the hatchet*” which means *to make peace, and to stop the enmity* (the Indians buried a tomahawk in the ground at the point of coming to peace agreement); “*to dig up the hatchet*” – *to start a war*



(the Indians had a custom before the start of hostilities to pull out a tomahawk buried in the ground); *“to go on the war – path” – to enter the path of war, be in a belligerent mood* [Thomas, 1999, p. 92].

4. G. Longfellow: *“ships that pass in the night” – fleeting, random encounters* (taken from *“Tales of Wayside Inn”*). The popularity of the expression is also associated with its use as the title of one of the novels of the writer Beatrice Harraden (1893).

5. J. Howe: *“the grapes of wrath”* – the phrase is first found in the work of J. Howe's *“Battle Hymn of the Republic”* (1862), and it owes its popularity thanks to the novel by J. Steinbeck with the same name [Thomas, 1999, p. 101].

The number of idioms' units borrowed from American fiction is not that productive in comparison with those created by English writers.

Moreover, French fiction has made a considerable contribution to the idioms fund of the modern English language as well. Many works of French writers have been translated into English and are still widely popular in England. The most famous are works by such authors as Francois Rabelais, Jean Baptiste Moliere, Jerome d'Angers, La Fontaine:

1. *“Appetite comes with eating”* – the expression is first found in the essay *“On the Causes”* (1515) by Jerome d'Angers, a bishop of Le Mans; this idiom was later popularized by Francois Rabelais in his work *“Gargantua and Pantagruel”* [Beck, Weber, 2020].

2. The expression *“to make a cat's paw of somebody”* is connected with the same fable. It has the following meaning *“to rake in the heat with someone else's hands”* [Alrajhi, 2020, p. 320].

It should be noted that the number of idioms' units borrowed from French fiction into English is not large, but despite this, they are often used by English writers to enhance imagery and are widely used in modern English speech.

### Conclusions

Idioms are an integral part of any language, reflecting its historical aspects, language and cultural heritage, peculiarities of national identity, and the English language is not the exception to this rule.

The idioms' fund of the English language is impressive enough, therefore, there's a real need in its deep analysis of the diversity range of idioms, especially paying attention to idioms semantics and expressiveness peculiarities. Thanks to the literary works of writers and poets, both in the UK and foreign ones, the English language currently has a huge number of idioms' units.

Unfortunately, the use of expressions taken from the literature of Asian countries is not observed in modern English speech today. Only idioms borrowed from the literature of countries geographically and culturally close to the UK have become widespread in modern English. It should be noted that the number of biblical expressions in the English language is especially high and continues functioning today. Classic English poets and writers influenced greatly to the conditions of modern English, so, there are a lot of idioms borrowed from works by W. Shakespeare, W. Scott and A. Pope. Borrowed idioms and phrases to English from foreign artworks include idioms from American and French writers' novels, stories, poems, though they are not that productive as those of English origin, but too expressive and emotional while using in everyday communication patterns.

### References

- Adelina C., Suprayogi S. 2020. Contrastive analysis of English and Indonesian idioms of human body. *Linguistic and Literature Journal*, 1(1): 21–27. DOI: 10.33365/lj.v1i1.235
- Alrajhi A.S. 2020. Static infographics effects on the receptive knowledge of idiomatic expressions. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2): 315–326. DOI: 10.17509/ijal.v10i2.28596
- Anderson S., Pelteret C. 2012. *Work on your idioms*. London, Harper Collins Publishers, 127 p.
- Awonusi M. 2002. *Man-made language*. London, Routledge, 76 p.

- Baghana J., Prokhorova O.N., Voloshina T.G., Raiushkina M.Y., Glebova Y.A., 2018. Some Aspects of *African Study in the Era of Globalization. Espacios*, 39(38): 26–32 (in Spain).
- Beck S.D., Weber A. 2020. Context and Literality in Idiom Processing: Evidence from Self-Paced Reading. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 49: 837–863.
- Bruening B. 2019. Idioms, collocations, and structure. Syntactic constraints on conventionalized expressions. *Nat Lang Linguist Theory*, 38: 365–424. DOI: 10.1007/s11049-019-09451-0
- Chen L. 2020. Application of Compensatory Translation Approach to English Idioms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 11(6): 978–982. DOI: 10.17507/jltr.1106.15
- Kachru B.B., Nelson C.L., Kachru Y. 2006. *The Handbook of “World Englishes”*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 911 p.
- Kemertelidze N., Giorgadze M. 2020. One Approach to Idioms and Their Peculiarities in the English Language. *European Scientific Journal*, 16(11): 13. DOI: 10.19044/esj.2020.v16n11p13
- McCarthy M., O’Dell F. 2004. *English phrasal verbs in use*. Cambridge University Press, 208 p.
- Philip G. 2007. Idioms. In: *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*. Ed. K. Malmkjaer. London, UK, Routledge: 266–269.
- Seidl J. 1989. *English idioms*. Oxford University Press, 95 p.
- The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*. 2004. Ed. J. Siefring. New York, Oxford University Press Inc., 352 p.
- Thomas J. 1999. *Advanced vocabulary and idiom*. Longman, 129 p.
- Turker E. 2019. Idiom acquisition by second language learners: the influence of cross-linguistic similarity and context. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(2): 133–144. DOI: 10.1080/09571736.2016.1221441
- Wright J. 2002. *Idioms organizer*. Eds. J. Hill, M. Lewis. Heinle, Thompson, 294 p.
- Yule G. 2017. *The study of language*. Cambridge, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 116 p.

**Конфликт интересов:** о потенциальном конфликте интересов не сообщалось.

**Conflict of interest:** no potential conflict of interest related to this article was reported.

Поступила в редакцию 27.01.2023

Поступила после рецензирования 27.02.2023

Принята к публикации 10.03.2023

Received January 27, 2023

Revised February 27, 2023

Accepted March 10, 2023

## ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРАХ

**Багана Жером**, доктор филологических наук, профессор, профессор кафедры романо-германской филологии и межкультурной коммуникации института межкультурной коммуникации и международных отношений, Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет, г. Белгород, Россия

**Ван Ци**, ассистент кафедры второго иностранного языка института межкультурной коммуникации и международных отношений, Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет, г. Белгород, Россия

**Бисенбаева Жанат Николаевна**, доктор философии, ассоциативный профессор кафедры информационных систем и общеобразовательных дисциплин, Алматинский Гуманитарный Экономический Университет, г. Алматы, Казахстан

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Zherom Bagana**, Doctor of Philology, Professor, Professor of the Department of Romano-Germanic Philology and Intercultural Communication, Institute of Intercultural Communication and International Relations, Belgorod National Research University, Belgorod, Russia

**Qi Wang**, Assistant of the Department of the second foreign language, Institute of Intercultural Communication and International Relations, Belgorod National Research University, Belgorod, Russia

**Zhanat N. Bissenbayeva**, Doctor of Philosophy, Associate Professor of the Department of Information Systems and General Educational Disciplines, Almaty Humanitarian Economic University, Almaty, Kazakhstan