ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВО САНКТ – ПЕТЕРБУРГА КОМИТЕТ ПО ОБРАЗОВАНИЮ

# Государственное бюджетное общеобразовательное учреждение СОШ № 639

# с углубленным изучением иностранных языков

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**Scientific Research Project**

**Reflection of the National Mentality**

**in Idiomatic Expressions**

**(in English, German, Russian languages)**

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**1. Introduction**

***“A good expression is always to the point”***

*English proverb*

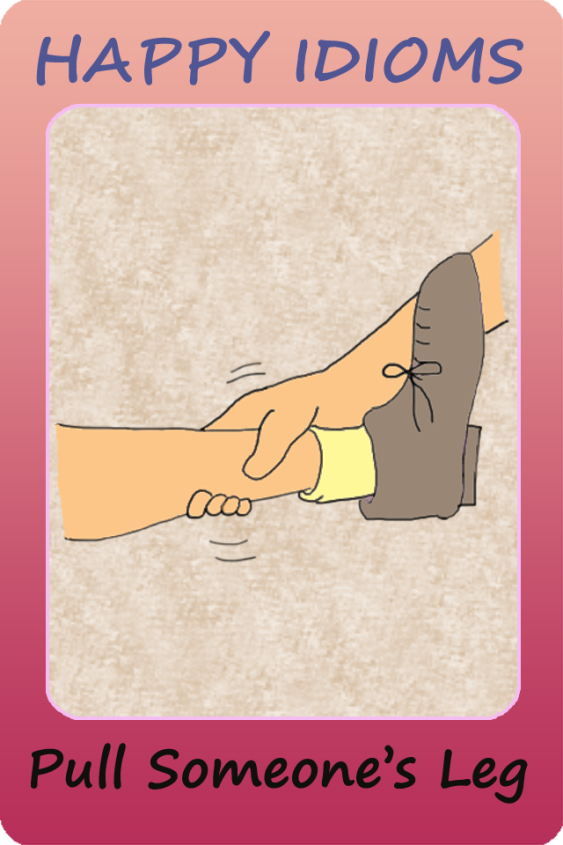
Speaking about the richness of the language, first of all, we think of the variety of expressive stylistic and vocabulary means the language possesses. One of such means is idioms.

In any language there are phrasal combinations the meaning of which is impossible to understand while translating word by word. All words can be well-known, but the whole meaning of the phrase is not understandable. That, “you are pulling my leg” means “you are cheating, deceiving me” or “Couch potato” means “ a lazy person who spends most time lying on the couch.”

For example:

* ***бить баклуши***
* ***couch-potato***
* ***Däumchen drehe***





* ***You are pulling my leg!*** – (Вы дергаете меня за ногу!)
* ***Mach keinen Wind vor!*** – «Не морочь мне

голову!», (***вешать лапшу на уши;******пудрить мозги).***

I have always been interested in the process of formation of such linguistic phenomenon as idioms. How and when did they appear in the language? Why do we say: “работать спустя рукава or бить баклуши”?

Why do English people say “When pigs fly” and The Germans say: “Es gießt wie aus Kannen”.

In my work I have tried to analyze and compare some idioms in three languages and to understand if they have anything in common and in what way they reflect the history, culture and character of the people.

**2. Relevance of the subject**

Idioms present an important part of the national cultural heredity.

They reveal specific features of the everyday life, customs and traditions, superstitions and beliefs of the particular people.

The comparison of the idiomatic constructions in different languages shows that the peoples who speak these languages have some common and at the same time some specific national features.

The correct appropriate use of the idioms makes our speech more vivid and expressive and differs the speech of the native speaker from the foreigner. So the knowledge of the idiomatic constructions helps to better understanding of the character and mentality of the people.

**3. Target and tasks of the work**

The target of my work is:

* Detection of the connection between the national mentality and the idiomatic constructions of the language of the particular nation.

Tasks:

* To define what can be referred to the idiomatic expressions.
* To analyze and compare idioms in Russian, English and German languages.
* To reveal the connection between the mentality of the people and the idiomatic expressions.

**4.The role of idioms**

An Idiom is a group of words in which individual parts (if taken separately) do not suggest the meaning of the whole phrase. It is an expression peculiar to a particular language the meaning of which cannot be predicted from the meanings of its elements.

An idiom is a [phrase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase) or a [fixed expression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixed_expression) that has a [figurative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figurative_language), or sometimes literal [meaning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meaning_(linguistic)). An idiom's figurative meaning is separate from the [literal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literal_and_figurative_language) meaning.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiom#cite_note-1) There are thousands of idioms, and they occur frequently in all languages. It is estimated that there are at least twenty-five thousand idiomatic expressions in English.

It is an allegory, figurative expression.

Idioms enrich the language, reveal its originality and singularity.

Idioms are used in any language not to name an object or an action but to characterize it emotionally. Idioms help the author to express certain feelings, f.e. delight, happiness.

For example:

***• To tread on air.***

***• Im siebenten Himmel sein.***

***• Быть на седьмом небе.***

***• сесть в калошу***;

* ***put one`s foot in one`s mouth***;
* ***in* die Tinte *geraten*** - попасть впросак.



Or for example:

* ***балалайка бесструнная***;
* ***a good mixer***;
* ***to have a big mouth***;
* ***schwatzen wie eine Elster*** - «трещать как сорока».

Many idiomatic expressions, in their original use were not figurative but had literal meaning.

For instance: *spill the beans* meaning to let out a secret probably originates in a physical spilling of beans which are either being eaten or measured out. The point is that the spiller certainly does not want to lose any beans. Or, alternatively, it may be that a person wants to share a secret, and finally, perhaps after prodding, does so, and when that happens it would be like spilling beans into a bowl or other appropriate container.

*let the cat out of the bag* : has a meaning similar to the former, but the secret revealed in this case will likely cause some problems. A cat was sometimes put in a bag to keep it under control or to pretend that it was a more saleable animal, such as a pig or a rabbit. So, to let the cat out of the bag suggests either that the ruse is revealed or that the situation is out of control. Or alternatively, it may be that the way a cat, once set free, will wander off was a good description of a secret that is revealed.

*break a leg*: meaning good luck in a performance/presentation etc. This common idiom comes from superstition. It was thought that there were gremlins or sprites, little fairy-like creatures, backstage in theaters who would do exactly the opposite of whatever they were told. To say break a leg was toensure the sprites would not in fact do the performers any damage, particularly to their legs.

So, idioms present an important part of the national cultural heredity.

They reveal specific features of the everyday life, customs and traditions, superstitions and beliefs of the particular people.

**5. Classification of comparative characteristics of idioms**

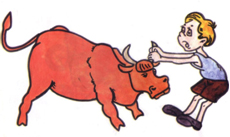
The comparison of the idioms of different peoples shows how much in common they have as they are based on the same values of life.

At the same time while being formed in different historical conditions idioms of different peoples to express the same idea often use absolutely different images which reflect the way of life of this people. So, carrying the same meaning they can express it through different characters.

* ***Купить кота в мешке.***
* ***To buy a pig in a poke.***
* ***To be busy as a bee.***
* ***Weder Rast noch Ruh kennen.***
* ***Вертеться как белка в колесе.***

In my work I have divided all idioms into the following categories:

**5.1. English and German idioms fully matching the Russian ones in meaning and expressive means**

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For example:

* ***Взять быка за рога.***
* ***Nehmen Sie den Stier bei***

***den Hörnern.***

* ***Seize the bull by horns.***

****

Or for example:

* ***Нет дыма без огня*** .
* ***There is no smoke without fire.***
* ***Kein Rauch ohne Feuer.***

* **Трещать как сорока;**
* **Schwatzen wie eine Elster;**
* **To chatter like a magpie.**

These idioms are similar as behavior, manners of people or some situations cause the same associations and feelings at different peoples.

There is a certain number of idioms based on the bible or borrowed from the classic literature and so match in meaning and in the way of expression.

For example:

* ***Ахиллесова пята.***
* ***Achilles' heel*.**
* ***Die Achillesferse.***
* Фома неверующий.
* Doubting Thomas.
* Der ungläubige Thomas - так говорят о скептике.

**5.2. Idioms matching in meaning but different in expressive means**

Such idioms in different languages have the same idea which is expressed with the help of absolutely different lexical units based on the specific cultural and historical features of the nation, on the geographic and climatic peculiarities.



For example:

* **«Лить как из ведра»**
* **«Es gießt wie aus Kannen» -**

Льёт как из кувшинов.

* **«It rains cats and dogs» -**

Дождь льёт кошками и собаками.



* ***Делать из мухи слона***
* ***Aus einer Mücke einen Elefanten***

***machen.***

* ***To make a mountain out of a***

***molehill.*** – делать из кротовины

гору

* ***Купить кота в мешке.***
* ***Die Katze im Sack kaufen.*** (Купить кошку

в мешке).

* ***To buy a pig in a poke.*** *(*Купить свинью в

мешке.)

*“****to let the cat out of the bag****”* (выпустить кота из мешка).

**5.3. English and German idioms which have no equivalent in Russian**

They reflect purely national features of the people. They are said to be closely connected with the cultural roots of the language.

For example:

* (***Give*** / ***get***) ***the cold shoulder*** –

which is translated as: холодное плечо. (It means -indifferently.) The word *shoulder* besides the main meaning – «плечо», has another translation “ a part of the beef carcass”.

In England the expected guests were treated to hot fresh meat. But the guests who were not expected were given *(cold mutton shoulder)*.

* ***To be in the black*** – быть в плюсе, не иметь долгов.
* ***To be in the red*** – нести убытки.

The origin of these two idioms is connected with the usage of red and black ink while bookkeeping.

The English accountants marked the debts of their clients in red colour and the income – in black colour.



One more very popular English proverb also has its explanation.

* **Love me, love my dog**.

People in Britain love pets more than in any other country of the world. Even walking with their dog in rainy weather they hold an umbrella above the dog first.

Here are some examples of the German idioms which don`t have equivalents in Russian.



* ***Alles Gute kommt von oben*** –

which means: All good comes from the sky.

This phrase is based on the bible, everything comes from God.

* *** Narrenhände beschmieren Tisch***

***und Wände***

It means: silly hands mackle walls. The origin of this idiom is unknown. It goes back to the Middle ages. Nowadays it is associated with vandalism.

The appearance of such idioms is connected with the fact that each people has its own perception of the world.

**6. The difference between the idioms with equal meaning in Russian, English and German languages**

We see that there are some phrasal combinations which have a very similar structure and meaning. But are they used in the same situations in different languages?

For example:



* **Сидеть в четырех стенах.**
* German: ***in den/seinen***

***eigenen vier Wänden (sein)***

The corresponding German idiom has a positive meaning of safety and reliability of your own home.

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* English - ***(to be) within one’s***

***one four walls***

While in English and Russian languages this idiom means being alone, staying in the atmosphere of boredom, and , of course, has some negative stylistic coloring,

So the same idiom in different languages causes absolutely opposite associations.

**7. Reflection of national mentality in idioms**

In any language there is a certain number of idioms based on the reality surrounding the people, on the traditions, customs and mentality of the particular nation. So, idioms reflect the main values of life of this or that people.



**Deutsch**

Thus, conscientiousness and scrupulousness are distinctive features of the German nation. German thrift and practicality are reflected in a lot of idioms.

* + ***Arbeit ist des Leben Wurze* –**

Работа-соль жизни.

* ***Morgenstunde hat Gold im***

***Munde*** –

у раннего часа золото во рту.

* ***ein alter Hase* – «мастер**

**своего дела»**.

* ***Wissen, wie der Hase läuft*** –

знать толк в деле.

* ***Zeit ist Geld*.** – «Время – деньги».

Thoroughness and love of order in the following expressions:

* ***«Ordnung muss sein»*** - Порядок прежде всего
* ***Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold*** - Слово - серебро, молчание – золото
* ***Eigener Herd ist Goldes wert*** - Собственный очаг, что золото.
* ***Zeit ist der beste******Ratgeber. Kommt Zeit, kommt Ratgeber****. -* Время - лучший советчик.

**English**

The English people are more practical and even prudent. They are also emotionally discreet and cautious. These features are also reflected in the English idioms.

* ***Safety first*.** – Осторожность – первым делом.
* ***Watch one's step*** –смотреть за своим шагом, ступать осторожно.
* ***Оn one's toes****. –* Дословно – на своих пальцах ног. Значение: бдительный, собранный.
* ***Save one's breath*** –экономить свое дыхание.
* ***Silence is golden***. – Молчание – золото.
* ***To have green fingers.*** *-* «Иметь зеленые пальцы».
* ***An еager beaver****. -* активный бобер.
* ***To be worth one’s salt* –** дословно «быть достойным соли» (Недаром ест хлеб.)

**Russian**

Our Russian national character is characterized by its hospitality, sociability, generosity, dismissive attitude to wealth. These features define Russian mentality.

Гостеприимство

***\*Хлебосольный.*  *\*(Стол) ломится от еды.* *\*Накормить до отвала.* *\*Двери нараспашку.* *\*Отдать последнюю рубашку.***

Общительность, дружбу

* ***\*Водой не разольешь.***
* ***\*Закадычный друг.* *\*Чувство локтя. \*Съесть (с ним) пуд соли.***

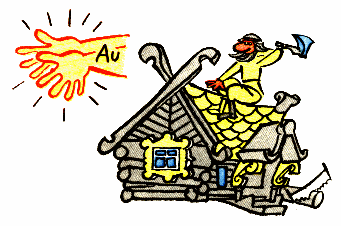
Великодушие, широту души

***\*Болеть душой. \*Душа нараспашку. \*Делить горе и радость.* \***[***Во всю Ивановскую***](http://englishteacher.kiev.ua/vo-vsyu-ivanovskuyu/)***.***

Некоторую безалаберность, непрактичность

***\*С бухты - барахты.*** ***\*Дым коромыслом. \****[***Без оглядки***](http://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%B7_%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BB%D1%8F%D0%B4%D0%BA%D0%B8)***. \*В ус не дуть***. ***\*Гол как сокол. \* Закидать шапками***[***.***](http://englishteacher.kiev.ua/vo-vsyu-ivanovskuyu/) ***\****[***Попасть впросак.***](http://englishteacher.kiev.ua/v-prosak-popast/) ***\*Держи карман шире.* *\*Куда глаза глядят.* *\*Когда жареный петух клюнет.***

Упрямство и упорство

***\*Загореться желанием. \*Закусить удила.* \***[***За пояс заткнуть***](http://englishteacher.kiev.ua/za-poyas-zatknut/)***. \*Разбиться в лепешку.***

Трудолюбие

*\** ***Засучив рукава.*** ***\*Вставать с петухами. \*Золотые руки.* *\*Мастер на все руки.***

**Патриотизм**

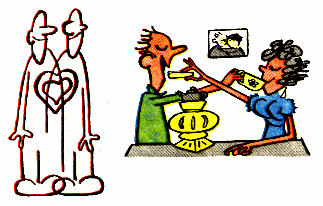
***\*Живота не пожалеть.***

***\*И кости по родине плачут.***

Пренебрежительное отношение к богатству

***\*За длинным рублем погнаться. \*Зашибать деньгу. \* Из грязи - в князи. \*Купаться в золоте. \*Пускать пыль в глаза.***

**8. Emotional aspect of phraseology in different languages**

Highly emotional Russian culture is reflected in the frequent usage of the word soul in the Russian idioms.

* [***Излить душу***](http://polyidioms.narod.ru/index/0-61)***.***
* [***Бальзам на душу***](http://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BC_%D0%BD%D0%B0_%D0%B4%D1%83%D1%88%D1%83)
* ***Болеть душой***
* ***Душа в душу***
* ***Как Бог на душу положит.***

The Germans are more reserved in expressing their emotions:

* ***Er trägt sein Herz in der Hand*** - (всем сердцем)

In English the word soul is very seldom used in the idioms, it is usually substituted by such words as heart, mind or feel.

* ***оpen-hearted*** - (с открытым сердцем)
* ***peace of mind*** - (душевное спокойствие)

English people appreciate emotional moderation and restrain and disapprove of the public expression of emotions.

They say: «A hedge between keeps friendship green» (Забор между соседями способствует дружбе).

So, comparing and analyzing idiomatic expressions in different languages we can conclude that the western world is more practical and rational, while for the Russian people spirituality, sincerity and sociability are more important.

**9. Conclusion**

* Comparing idiomatic constructions of different peoples we come to the conclusion that all nations have the same basic values.
* At the same time Idioms as an inseparable part of any language reflect national and cultural peculiarities of the speakers of this language.
* The correct and appropriate usage of the idiomatic phrases makes our speech vivid, emotional and expressive.

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