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Bakalářská práce

**English and German idioms describing nations and
countries**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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1 Introduction

This bachelor thesis is a study of English and German idiomatic expressions focused on countries and nations. It deals with a selected group of idioms and proverbs and compares them on the semantic, lexical and formal level.

As this thesis deals with idioms and proverbs, it is necessary to explain these linguistic features at the beginning. There will be a number of definitions provided and the process of formation of an idiom will be explained. For the purpose of this thesis, the selected examples will be then divided into several categories and further analysed.

As mentioned above, this thesis captures the English and German idioms and proverbs and compares them. There will be several categories earmarked according to the correspondence between the two languages. The supposition is that there will be a decent correspondence between English and German, because both of the languages are Germanic. However, the English and German environment, cultural characteristics, habits and relations to other countries and to each other are very varied, therefore there will also be some diversity in the sphere of idiomatics. Whether these assumptions are correct will be supported by statistics and further commented on in the conclusion. Some Czech equivalents and/or translations of the examples will be mentioned too. However, the analysis of correspondence follows up only English and German idioms, the Czech counterparts' function is only to complete the collection.

For the purpose of this thesis, which deals with selected idiomatic expressions focused on nations and countries, there will be a part of it dedicated to cultural identities of nations and national stereotypes of selected countries and nations – those which are most common in the idiomatic language. These are for example Dutch, French or Chinese. The reason for this is the assumption that examples from the chosen category of idioms often originated on the basis of the national stereotypes.

As for the structure of this thesis, it is divided into seven chapters including this Introduction and the Conclusion with a summary of the results. The chapters 2 Idiomatics and Phraseology and 3 Meaning of Words cover the theory of the idiomatic language and provide the basic information for the reader to understand this thesis. In the chapter 3 Meaning of Words there are three ways of understanding the meaning of words and phrases described and a few examples are given to complete the idea of the meaning of words.

The chapter 4 Cultural Identity and National Stereotypes is the last one of the theoretical part of this thesis. In this chapter the topic which this thesis is focused on is further discussed and the matter of national stereotypes and identities is introduced. At the end of this chapter there are eight most common national stereotypes further presented.

The practical part of this thesis is covered in chapters 5 Analysis – Methodology and 6 Idiom Analysis. In the fifth chapter there are all the steps followed during working on this thesis described in detail. Firstly, in the 5.1 Corpus subchapter, there is a summary of how the collection of examples for this thesis was gathered. Further in this chapter the method of the comparative analysis of examples and the structure of the analysis is also described.

The second chapter of the practical part is chapter 6 Idiom Analysis and it is a crucial and most important part of the whole thesis. The analysis of idiomatic expressions deals with about fifty examples in both English and German language and compares them on the semantic, lexical and formal level of correspondence.

The analysis of the English and German idiomatic expressions and the comparison of them was chosen because it is an interesting topic and because knowledge of such phrases is a real enrichment of one's vocabulary and ability to use the language.

2 Idiomatics and Phraseology

This bachelor thesis serves as an analysis of idiomatic expressions. For this reason, it is important to introduce the terms *idiom* and *proverb* at the beginning. After the corpus – the collection of examples – is further created, the idioms and proverbs are analysed. As they belong to the study of Idiomatics and Phraseology, there is first a theoretical introduction focused on their main issues. Further there are definitions of the terms idiom and proverb taken from different sources and compared with each other.

“Phraseology and Idiomatics [...] are concerned with the study and description of phrases and idioms at all levels [...]. [Phraseology and Idiomatics do] not represent a special level of language [...] but [they are areas] of fixed anomalous combinations [...] which [are] complementary to the area of regular language combinations of all kinds and at all relevant levels.”[1]

The most important characteristic of an idiom is its meaning. The meaning of idioms and phrases has almost no connection to the meaning of the individual words, the connection is invisible. This matter is hereinafter to be discussed in the next subchapter.[2]

The main issue of Idiomatics and Phraseology is the diversity it brings into language. As every other system, the system of Idiomatics and Phraseology is constantly influenced by its interactions with the environment, various stereotypes and its own development process. It is open to changes and it is developing all the time. Therefore there is no real order, Idiomatics and Phraseology are continuously changing and there are irregularities and diversities in them.[3]

2.1 Theory and Definitions of Idiom

There are various definitions of an idiom. Different literature sources describe idioms diversely. Since this bachelor thesis deals with English and German idioms, definitions from both English and German sources will be taken into account. There will be also definitions from Czech sources mentioned to complete the view of idioms. In the end of this subchapter there will be a summary and one final definition, which will further serve this thesis, will be chosen.

2.1.1 English definitions of Idiom

There are different definitions of the term idiom. Hereinafter is mentioned a number of them from different English sources.

“An idiom is an expression, a colloquial metaphor, which has a figurative meaning that is known only through common use.”[4]

As stated in *Illustrated idioms* (2010), the meaning of an idiom is known through its use. Idioms are part of a colloquial language, which means they are used in spoken language more than in official written language. We cannot tell the meaning of an idiom from the meaning of each individual word.

We cannot state a general definition of a phrase or an idiom because there are many attributes according to which we can divide and describe them. Idiom or phrase is a kind of a compound word. It is composed of two or more lexemes. The lexemes can be used in other phrases or alone, but in that case they get a different meaning. They keep the meaning of an idiom only as long as they are used in that proper compound word or phrase. The lexemes can differ in their characteristics and that makes the character of an idiom differ too. That is the reason, why we do not have only one definition of the word idiom.

“Idioms are considered [to be a] part of the language’s culture and, in order to be understood, they require some knowledge, information or experience that the members of this culture share.”[5]

The aforesaid clearly states the differences and variety of idioms and completely fits purposes of this thesis. As the thesis deals with idioms focused on geographical terminology and describing countries and nations, the topic of international relations and different cultures will also be discussed, as mentioned in the introduction.

“Idioms are expressions which have a meaning which is not obvious from the individual words. [...] The best way to understand an idiom is to see it in context.”[6]

McCarthy’s definition of an idiom describes the understanding of the meaning. As mentioned above, an idiom is a phrase, a group of two or more words. These words lose their original meaning when they are put together in an idiom and they have a new one, the meaning of an idiom.

“An idiom is a special kind of phrase. It is a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually. [...] Idioms are typically metaphorical: they are effectively metaphors which become ‘fixed’ or ‘fossilized’.”[7]

The definition from Dictionary of idioms by HarperCollins Publishers more or less agrees with McCarthy. The essential characteristic of an idiom is the fact, that it consists of two or more words and the meaning of the idiom does not match the meaning of the individual words.

2.1.2 German Definitions of Idiom

Because this thesis deals with English and German idioms, there were used German sources focused on idiomatics and phraseology too. The following definitions are the image of how the German sources see the term idiom.

“The term ‘idiomatic expression’ is not exactly defined; many sources which offer such phrases and expressions do not have an exact system of a choice which expressions are idioms. However, there is no doubt that ‘proverb’ is not the same as ‘word’ and that ‘idiom’ and ‘proverb’ are two different terms too.”[8]

A proverb or a phrase is a group of words which is built from a verb, noun and other parts of sentence. Importantly, it has to be two words bearing a meaning, the compound of only one connected with a pronoun, particle or only article is not a proverb or phrase. In German there are many words, usually verbs, which are compounds. It is a question if we should describe these words as phrases. In most German sources they are not considered to be phrases but only words. However, even many native speakers of German see these compound verbs as something more than words, because their usage is sometimes very difficult and one needs advanced knowledge of the language to use them correctly.[9]

The German source written by Wolf Friederich also agrees with the English ones on the issue of the meaning of an idiom: “Idiomatic expressions are those phrases, which have a different meaning than is the meaning of the individual words.”[10]

Another source, the Duden dictionary, sees the issue of the meaning of idioms very similarly too. It sees the main characteristic of idiom in the fact that their form is hardly ever changing, because than the meaning would vanish. The meaning of an idiom is therefore fixed and it is different than the meaning of its parts.[11]

2.1.3 Czech Definitions of Idiom

When working on the definitions of an idiom, there have been used several Czech sources focused on Czech and English idiomatic and phraseology or on idiomatics and phraseology in general.

The idiomatic and phraseology is a study and description of phrases and idioms of all kinds. Because there are really many of them, we speak above all about compound lexemes in idiomatic and phraseology. It is an area of well known combinations of words which result in an idiom or phrase.[12]

Aforesaid, idioms are composed of two or more lexemes. However, the meaning of an idiom is not comparable with the meaning of its parts. Before we compose an idiom, we have a number of words from which everyone has its own meaning. After we put them together in an idiomatic phrase, they lose their original meaning and they get a new one, the meaning of the idiom. Components of the idiom could be considered more things: lexemes and their characteristics, combination of the lexemes and their sequence, the number of lexemes used and their function.[13]

2.1.4 Final Definition of Idiom

The aforesaid definitions of idioms are taken from different sources written in different languages. However, they more or less agree on the issue of the definition of idiom. The following definition is established on the basis of the definitions mentioned above and it is going to serve the purpose of this thesis. **Idiom is a colloquial phrase of two or more words which bears a different meaning than the meaning of the individual words.**

2.2 Structure and Form of Idioms

“The formal analysis [of idioms] must include a description and classification of the type of components involved [...]”[14] The syntactic structure and grammar is the cornerstone of the formal analysis of idioms. In the idiom analysis in this thesis there is a formal analysis too.

The idioms generally cannot be classified into any system. They are so-called combinations of words which could be differently divided into categories. “[However], three types of combinations [...] will be selected: (1) regular language combinations and structures only (if any), (2) those occurring only in idioms [...], and (3) those in which both fields overlap [...]”[15]

To practise this theory a few examples can be mentioned here. For example a phrase *to make a mistake*¹ is not idiomatic. Although it is a collocation, it is a regular language combination and its meaning is the meaning of the individual words. Another example *[to] be all eyes* (CID, 126) is an idiom and it means “*to watch something or someone with a lot of interest*” (CID, 126) and if we try to understand or translate the words individually, it would not make any sense. For (3) there is an example *eat out of someone’s hands* (NTC, 93). It is an idiom and it means “*to do what someone else wants; to obey someone eagerly*” (NTC, 93). However, if we put this phrase in a sentence *The horse was eating out of my hand.*, the meaning is literal and it is no idiom in this case.

¹ Examples and definitions are from now on written in italics.

2.3 Theory of Proverbs

As this thesis deals only with very limited thematic field, it was decided to classify here not only idioms but proverbs too. Proverbs are also a very important sphere of idiomatic language and it is often problematic to define whether a phrase is an idiom or a proverb. Therefore the theory of proverbs is shortly defined in this subchapter.

Proverbs – sometimes referred to as sayings – are traditional and creative phrases. Their form is symmetric and neat, they are logical and witty and often metaphorical. Thanks to their form they usually sound like true statements, thus their meaning is easy to understand and to believe. That is the reason why they are composed like this. They are not stating any facts but they are supposed to be understood that way. Also different proverbs used in different context can be found not having the same meaning. The meaning varies depending on the use of the proverb. Alternative uses of the proverb provide alternative ways of understanding the meaning and the proverb must fit the situation to be used properly. Therefore not only the semantic correspondence with the situation but also the social suitability is very important by the use of proverbs.[16]

3 Meaning of Words

When dealing with the issues of phraseology and idiomatics, the semantic view of the language is the most important matter. To properly know and use an idiomatic phrase it is crucial to know its meaning. For this reason, there are three different theories of meaning discussed hereinafter in the three following subchapters.

3.1 References

The reference is the direct relation between an object and a word. This relation is most visible and recognizable with proper names. When there is only one unique thing for one name, there is a one-to-one correspondence between them and the meaning of the proper name is understood immediately. The reference is on one hand a matter of proper names but on the other hand of common nouns too. Common nouns do not refer to one unique individual. They refer to sets of individuals. Verbs refer to actions, adjectives refer to characteristics and properties of individuals and adverbs refer to characteristics and properties of actions. However, we cannot compare the reference of proper names to the unique individuals or objects with the reference of common nouns to their objects. The reference between the expression *Michael Jackson* and the individual Michael Jackson is direct and clear because when we talk about the pop music legend, we cannot be mistaken. On the other hand the reference between the word *dogs* and the set of things which have the characteristics of a dog and can be referred to by using the word *dogs* is still quite direct but can be understood a little differently by various persons. This is an issue of one's power of visualization of the image of an object.[17]

3.2 Image

Another way to solve the problem of explaining the meaning is using the image of an object in one's brain. Naturally there emerges a problem of the exact form of the image, because everyone has their own imagination and view of the world and therefore two people can easily see a different image. “[For example] an owner of an Alsatian may have a radically different image of dogs from an owner of a miniature poodle, but it is not obvious that they thereby speak a different language. There is no image corresponding to what is shared between dogs [...]”[18] This is only one example of a problem which can come up when dealing with the image theory of meaning. Further difficulties are built by understanding of words in two ways. Firstly, there can be more than one image for an expression and secondly, there can be more expressions which can be represented by one image. For example a word *child* refers to either a boy or girl, in the age of less than approximately twelve years. Therefore there can be many different images. On the other hand, when we have an image of a small baby sleeping in a swaddling blanket or being breast-fed, we can name it differently – *a baby, an infant, a child, a baby boy, a baby girl*. In this case we have five (and more) expressions for one image. The image theory of meaning is therefore also problematic. However, the images vary from person to person and from occasion to occasion, and speakers are aware of that. The differences between the views of things can be significant, but the core meaning is usually similar and understandable from the context or situation.[19]

3.3 Concepts

The theory of meaning in concepts is a little similar to the image theory. However, it is more abstract and based on the experience with the language. The term *meaning* can be substituted by the term *concept* here. In vocabulary there are sets of words which have a semantic relation to each other and every one of them can be understood in the context of the others. For example a word *mother* can be – from the point of view of the image theory – understood differently,

because every person's image is a little different. Everyone's image of *a mother* is usually close to the appearance of their own mother. However, from the point of view of the theory of meaning in concepts, every individual knows the set of words describing a family – *a father, a mother, a child, a grandmother, a grandfather* – and from this context is the meaning of the word *mother* completely understandable to everyone.[20]

3.4 Meaning of Words – Summary

As mentioned above, there are three different theories of the meaning of words. There are specific difficulties for each one of them and moreover, there is a problem applicable to all. Namely, that is the meaning of conjunctions, words such as *and, because, or*, etc. There are no objects, which these words could refer to, there is no image of them and although they can be classified as one unit, as a concept, they do not correspond with this theory either, because there is no empirical experience which they could refer to. The meaning of such words is therefore known especially from the common use and knowledge of the language itself.[21]

In the analysis of idiomatic expressions in this thesis, the semantic level of correspondence between the two languages is the most important, as the meaning is the crucial aspect of idiomatic phrases in general. The meaning of the idioms and proverbs in this thesis in particular is yet quite easy to understand, because the lexicon of nations and countries is clear and the words usually refer to a concrete country or nation, which really exists. Therefore it is a direct reference and there is almost no threat of misunderstanding the words.

4 Cultural Identity and National stereotypes

There is a connection between the language spoken by members of a social group and their identity. For example by their accent or vocabulary, speakers identify themselves as members of a speech community. However, it is hard to decide which group one belongs to. There are other factors beside the language, according to which one can be identified. It is not only the nationality or the colour of one's skin. E.g. when Turkish parents move to Germany, which is very often nowadays, their children have Turkish nationality but they grow up in the German environment and learn German as their mother tongue. Are they then eligible to be considered German native speakers? It is difficult to decide which cultural community they belong to.[22]

“Although there is no one-to-one relationship between anyone's language and his or her cultural identity, language is *the* most sensitive indicator of the relationship between an individual and a given social group.”[23]

4.1 Native speaker

Because there are comments of native speakers included in the analysis in this thesis, it is necessary to introduce the nature of a native speaker in advance. “Linguists have relied on native speakers' natural intuitions of grammatical accuracy and their sure sense of what is proper language use to establish a norm against which the performance of non-native speakers is measured.”[24] Native speakers are considered to speak only their standardized mother tongue and live in their national culture.[25]

However, in reality it is often different. Also people not living in their home country are considered to be native speakers of their mother tongue, in spite of their knowledge of other language(s). Similar approach is followed in this thesis. There are two native speakers with whom the collection of idiomatic expressions was discussed. One of them is English and the other German. Both of them are not living in their home country, still they are considered native

speakers. The English native speaker comes from Australia therefore his approach to the English language is slightly different from both British and American English, which can create very attractive result. He has been working as a lecturer of English at one of the Grammar schools in Pilsen for about nine years.² The German native speaker is also a lecturer – she teaches at the University of West Bohemia.

4.2 National stereotypes

The philosophy of linguistics sees the opportunity to structure the whole world according to stereotypes. There are many stereotypes through which we can see our reality. And there are also stereotypes describing different ethnics and nations that lead to creation of idiomatic expressions which are discussed in this thesis. Perceiving of other nations and ethnics comes to our minds very early, at the age from six to ten. Even children this young can quickly teach to use phrases describing a nation and know their – usually negative – meaning.[26]

There are general stereotypes describing different nations based on their history, location and basic attitudes. The corpus of this thesis – the collection of idioms and proverbs – includes a number of nations and countries. Several stereotypes of those included in the corpus are discussed bellow.

1. **Americans** are considered to be arrogant but assertive and open-minded. They are well known for their US-centric point of view and that is the reason for anti-American attitudes of many European countries. However, in this thesis there is only an idiom *American as apple pie*, which is not related to the aforesaid issue.
2. **British** have a reputation of drinkers and smokers but they are also described as intelligent people who love their home and take care of it. The well known issue is also the *dry British humour*. As an evidence of this matter we can mention an English proverb “An Englishman’s house is his castle.” and German idiom *englischer Rasen* which means

² Information from 2015.

English lawn – the lawn which is carefully taken care of and treated, as the British do.

3. **Chinese** are seen on one hand as very intelligent people who are good at natural science, fast learners, very materialistic and keen on ruling the world. On the other hand thanks to their culture they are considered stingy and noisy, to have no respect to contract, copy everything and “eat everything that lives”[27]. In this thesis we can find only idioms referring to China as to a large and crowded country, where there is too much of everything and which is strange and very dissimilar to Europe.
4. **Dutch.** There are many idioms in English referring to Dutch people and describing them. They are considered to be polite and harmless but also a little bit stupid. They are seen as farmers taking care of windmills and tulip gardens. For this reasons English idioms containing the word Dutch are usually insults and mockery or they are offensive to the Dutch directly. Idioms of such kind are also a great part of this thesis.
5. **French** “do not like to work – prefer to strike”[28]. French are considered to be arrogant to other nations, very anti-American and dependent on the state. They also allegedly do not speak English and are rude to tourists. This makes them look very selfish and bumptious. On the other hand, they are said to be tender lovers, which is reflected also in the idiomatic language.
6. **Germans** are seen by the others as decent beer drinkers and gourmets (although with not very good taste, considering so many sausages and sauerkraut). On the other hand they are said to be mechanically organized and keen on leading the European Union (not only through the Monetary union). As an example here can be mentioned the German idiom *deutsches Sauerkraut gegessen haben* (*have eaten the German sauerkraut*) which means to have a good knowledge of German circumstances.

7. **Greeks** are also a nation bringing rather negative touch to the idiomatic language. They are considered to be disorganized, inefficient and also corrupt. This makes them untrustworthy for the other nations, which can be an origin of an English proverb *Beware of Greeks bearing gifts.*
8. **Spaniards.** The last nation which is mentioned in this section are passionate Spaniards. They are called the ones who “know how to live”[29] and considered temperamental, relaxed and cultured people. Nevertheless, the German idiom *Es kommt mir spanisch vor. (It seems Spanish to me.)* does not describe Spanish character. Its meaning applies to something that is strange or unknown to the speaker.

The aforesaid stereotypes cover some nations which are most common in the corpus of this thesis. Other nations’ stereotypes are not mentioned here because there are only a few or no idioms describing them or the idioms do not correspond with the general stereotypes.

5 Analysis – Methodology

As has been already stated, this thesis serves as an analysis of English and German idioms and proverbs focused on the field of nations and countries. In the process of working on this thesis first there was created a corpus, the collection of idioms and proverbs, which was then further analysed.

5.1 Corpus

Creating the corpus was the crucial part of this thesis. There had to be created a rich collection of idioms and proverbs at first, without which this thesis would not exist. Thereat there were a number of both English and German dictionaries used. The structure of the analysis is hereinafter described in the subchapter 4.3 Structure of Analysis. Here is the list of dictionaries used for the collection of idiomatic expressions. The abbreviations in brackets are further used to refer to the sources. These abbreviations are only formed to serve the purposes of this thesis. They are not officially connected to the sources.

The dictionaries used for finding English examples are:

- I. English dictionaries containing English idioms and proverbs: *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. (CID); *Longman American Idioms Dictionary*. Longman, 1999. (LAID); *NTC's American Idioms*. National Textbook Company, 1994. (NTC); *Dictionary of idioms*. HarperCollins publishers, 1995. (DHC)
- II. Czech dictionaries containing English idioms and proverbs: *Anglicko-český slovník idiomů*. Svoboda – Libretas, 1993. (ACSD); *Sbírka anglických idiomů & slangu*. ARGO, 1998. (SAIS); *Česko-anglický frazeologický & idiomatický slovník*. FIN Publishing, 1999. (FINA)

The dictionaries used for finding German examples are:

- I. German dictionaries containing German idioms and proverbs: *Duden in 12 Bänden. vol. 11., Redewendungen und sprichwörtliche Redensarten.* Duden, 1998. (DUD); *1000 deutsche Redensarten: mit Erklärungen und Anwendungsbeispielen.* Langenscheidt, 2000. (DREA); *Moderne deutsche Idiomatik: alphabetisches Wörterbuch mit Definitionen und Beispielen.* Max Hueber Verlag, 1976. (MDI)
- II. Czech dictionaries containing German idioms and proverbs: *Deutsch-tschechisches Wörterbuch der Phraseologismen und festgeprägten Wendungen = Německo-český slovník frazeologizmů a ustálených spojení. vol. 1 + 2.* C.H. Beck, 2010. (DWPW); *Česko-německý frazeologický & idiomatický slovník.* FIN Publishing, 1999. (FINN)

Other sources used in the process of collecting idioms and proverbs were internet websites and articles on the web. When there was an idiom found only on the internet, there is always a comment, whether an English or German native speaker knows this idiom.

5.2 Method of Analysis

After collecting the idiomatic phrases and thus creating the corpus of this thesis, the analysis began. Aforesaid this thesis serves as a comparative study of English and German idioms and proverbs. The most important aspect by comparing of the examples is the correspondence on the semantic level, the correspondence of their meanings. However all lexicological levels – semantic, formal and lexical – are taken into account in this thesis.

The method of analysis in this thesis is inspired by the method Jana Vokáčová used in her study *A comparative view of English, Czech, French and German idioms.*[30] The basis of this analysing method is dividing idioms into three main categories. The three categories are: Total Correspondence, Partial

Correspondence and Non-correspondence. Total Correspondence covers idioms, which correspond on all levels – semantic, formal and lexical. In the category of Partial Correspondence there are three subcategories. Each subcategory includes idioms corresponding on at least two levels – semantic and formal, semantic and lexical, formal and lexical. The Non-correspondence category has two subcategories and those are idioms corresponding only on the semantic level and idioms which have no equivalent in the other language. The accurate description of all categories and subcategories is hereinafter provided.

As a part of the idiom analysis there are also mentioned Czech equivalents or translations of some of the collected examples. However, the reader must keep in mind that the analysis is focused only on English and German language. The correspondence between English/German and Czech is not the purpose of this thesis.

5.3 Structure of Analysis

The analysis is structured in a table form. The example is given here:

English example	German example
-----------------	----------------

Below this table there is a commentary on the idiom or proverb. This commentary consists of the explanation and comparison of the semantic meaning of both the English and German example, the commentary on the form and lexicon and the acknowledgements of native speakers, whether they know the example. There is also the Czech equivalent or translation of some of the examples stated in this commentary. With every definition of the idioms' meaning there is a reference to the source. In case the meaning is taken from other than English source and was translated by the author of this thesis, there is an abbreviation "t.", e.g. (MDI, 80, t.).

6 Idiom Analysis

6.1 Total Correspondence

As mentioned above, the category of Total Correspondence covers idioms which correspond on all levels – semantic, lexical and formal. The correspondence on semantic level means that the meanings of the given examples are the same (at most with fractional differences). The theory of meaning has already been discussed in the chapter 3 Meaning of words. The lexical level of correspondence covers the similarity between the phrases regarding the vocabulary. If the same or very similar vocabulary was used to create the phrases, they correspond on the lexical level. The formal level of correspondence concerns the form of the phrase. How the phrase is built, what parts of speech are used and what syntactic form the phrase bears.

Idioms

Chinese water torture	chinesische Wasserfolter
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This compound noun describes directly the way of ancient torture in China. The definition is following: *“a form of torture in which water is made to drip for a long period of time onto a victim’s forehead to drive him insane”*[31]. The use of this phrase as an idiom is common to describe a somehow uncomfortable or annoying situation. For example *“When I saw this band in concert last year, it was Chinese water torture!”*. The German idiom is basically a literal translation of its English equivalent and works exactly the same.

The English native speaker knows this idiom. The German native speaker does not know this idiom, however, both the English and German example can be found online.

(to take a) French leave	sich Französisch empfehlen
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This idiom means “*to leave an official event or party without saying goodbye to the person who invited you*” (CID, 153). A *French leave* is also “*a period of time you are absent from work without asking for permission*” (CID, 153). The German definition is exactly the same: “*to secretly leave society/a social event*” (DUD, 217, t.). The German source also compares these two idioms directly to each other.

However, in German, there is one other form of this idiom – *auf Französisch Abschied nehmen* (DWPW, 606. The meanings of this idiom is identical to those mentioned above.

The English native speaker knows this idiom. The German native speaker does not know any of the two forms of this idiom, however as mentioned above, it was found in different printed sources.

Proverbs

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.	Etwas ist faul im Staate Dänemark.
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This idiomatic phrase is a saying – a quote – from one of Shakespeare’s most famous plays Hamlet. However, it can be used in the colloquial language too and its meaning according to the German source is following: “*something does not add up in this matter*” (MDI, 80, t.). The English equivalent was not found in any printed source, however, when googled, the same meaning was found online. Both the English and German native speakers know the examples.

All roads lead to Rome.	Viele Wege führen nach Rom.
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The meaning of the German proverb is “*there are more possibilities to reach one’s goal*” (DUD, 786, t.). The English equivalent can be found on the internet and its meaning is the same. There is a slight difference in the lexicon,

English uses the word *all* and German *viele* which means *many*. However, this proverb still falls into the Total Correspondence group because in German there is also another form of it – *Alle Wege führen nach Rom*.^[32] – which, although it was not found in any printed source, can be found when googled and its meaning is the same. Both the English and German native speakers know these proverbs.

Rome wasn't built in a day.	Rom ist (auch) nicht an einem Tag erbaut worden.
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The meaning of this English proverb is “*it takes a long time to do an important job*” (CID, 348). The German proverb works the same way. The only slight difference in the definition is that the German source defines this phrase as follows: “*a big project needs some time to implement*” (DUD, 588, t.). However the form and the lexicon fully correspond, this proverb is therefore in the Total Correspondence group. The English as well as the German native speaker know this proverb.

6.2 Partial Correspondence

The term Partial Correspondence in this thesis means that the idiomatic phrases correspond at least on two of the three (semantic, lexical, formal) levels or only on the semantic level. This sorting was chosen because the semantic level is the crucial type of correspondence between idioms and proverbs therefore it would not be felicitous to put such idiomatic expressions (those corresponding only semantically) into the Non-correspondence category.

6.2.1 Partial Correspondence – Type 1

The examples classified in this category are those which correspond on the semantic and formal level.

It's (all) Greek to me.	Das ist chinesisches für mich.
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The English definition of this idiom is “*something you cannot understand*” (LAID, 133). Its German equivalent means “*it is really*

incomprehensible” (DWPW, 348, t.), which is identical to the English one. There are some more similar idioms in both English and German, which are discussed in the subchapter Partial Correspondence – Type 4. The English native speaker knows the English idiom, the German native speaker does not know the German one.

6.2.2 Partial Correspondence – Type 2

The following idioms correspond on all levels apart from the formal level. That means they correspond on the semantic and lexical level.

a French letter	der Pariser
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This English idiom is rather old-fashioned, the definition is therefore quite descriptive and today one would only say that it is *a condom*. However, the definition from the English source is following: “*a thin rubber covering that a man can wear on his penis during sex to stop a woman becoming pregnant or to protect him or his partner against infectious diseases*” (CID, 153). The German idiom can be found on the internet and its meaning is identical. Also the German native speaker does know this idiom.

In English there is also another idiom with this meaning. It is *a Dutch cap* [33] and it can be used when describing different methods of contraception. The English native speaker knows both these idioms.

French sex	es jmdm. französisch /auf Französisch machen
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The English expression is an euphemism for oral sex. The meaning of the German equivalent is the same – “*oral sexual intercourse*” (DWPW, 606, t.). The English native speaker knows this idiom, however, says that it is rather old-fashioned and nowadays there are other expressions used for such meaning more often. The German native speaker does not know this expression.

6.2.3 Partial Correspondence – Type 3

The category of Partial Correspondence – Type 3 covers the idioms which correspond on all levels apart from the semantic level – that means on the formal and lexical level. However, in the sources used when collecting the examples for this thesis, there were no such idiomatic phrases found. Although it might be surprising for the reader, it is not a big problem. When focusing on the idiomatic language, the semantic level of analysis – the meaning of the phrases – is really the most important, therefore it can easily happen that in the two compared languages are no examples which would belong into the category of Partial Correspondence – Type 3.

6.2.4 Partial Correspondence – Type 4

The following examples correspond only on the semantic level. That means that they are not comparable on the level of their form or lexicon, only their meanings are the same. As this thesis covers idiomatic expressions focused on vocabulary from the field of nations and countries, there is one condition for the examples in the Partial Correspondence – Type 4 subchapter and that is as follows: At least one of the compared examples (English or German) must contain vocabulary from the topic this thesis deals with.

Idioms

Chinese whispers	Buschtrommeln
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The meaning of this English phrase has a number of slight variations. One of the meanings is “*the children's game [...] in which whispered messages were passed around the room and the version which came back to the starting point bore no relation to the original message*”[35]. The German equivalent to this phrase is *stille Post* [36], not *Buschtrommeln*, which is the same in Czech – *tichá pošta*. Another definition is “*gossip*”[37] and it is closer to the German example

Buschtrommeln [38]. *Buschtrommeln* or also *Buschtelefon* are in figurative meaning defined also as *gossip*.

It's double Dutch for me.	Das sind die böhmische Dörfer für mich.
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As mentioned above, these idioms are other ways to say, that something is hard to understand. The definition from the German source is that something is “*incomprehensible, inexplicable for someone*” (DUD, 123, t.). The Czech source compares this idiom with the Czech idiom *španělská vesnice* (ACSI, 60), which has the same meaning as these two idioms and also the ones mentioned before in the Partial Correspondence – Type 1 subchapter. The English native speaker knows this idiom.

There is one other idiom in German *jemandem spanisch vorkommen* (DWPW, 1967, t.) (could be translated as *to seem Spanish to someone*) with identical meaning. The German native speaker knows this idiom, just as the other form mentioned above.

to go Dutch	getrennte Kasse machen
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The definition of this English idiom is “*to share the cost of a meal, movie, etc. with someone*” (LAID, 88). The German idiom’s meaning is the same with a minimum difference – the German definition specifies that “*everyone pays for themselves*” (MDI, 240, t.). In English there is also an idiom *a Dutch treat* (CID, 113), which means “*an occasion when two or more people agree to share the cost of something, especially the meal*” (CID, 113) and it substantivizes the verbal form of this idiom. Both the English and German native speakers know this idiom.

Dutch courage	angetrunkener Mut
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The English idiom means “*the confidence that you get by drinking alcohol before you do something that you are frightened of doing*” (CID, 113). The

German equivalent can be found only on the internet, however, its meaning is the same as the meaning of the English one. The English native speaker does know this idiom. The German native speaker knows this idiom too and also adds the form *sich Mut antrinken* which creates a verbal form of this idiom.

Greek gift	Geschenk vom Feind ist nicht gut gemeint.
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The idiom *Greek gift* is an equivalent for Czech idiom *Danajský dar* (SAIS, 79) which means “*a gift which is not meant good or which brings you more problems than joy*”. The German proverb has the same meaning.

There is also one another proverb in English *Beware of Greeks bearing gifts*. [34], which deals with the same issue as those here mentioned and its meaning is identical. Although it was not found in any printed source it can be found when googled. The English native speaker does not know this idiom. The German native speaker does not know the German proverb, however, she fully understands the meaning and admits it can exist in this form.

Indian summer	Altweibersommer
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The English idiom has two various meanings. The first definition is “*a period of warm weather which sometimes happens in early autumn*” (CID, 209). This meaning is identical with the German one and also with the Czech idiom *babí léto*. The English native speaker knows this idiom. The German native speaker knows the German equivalent too.

The second definition is “*a successful or pleasant period in someone’s life, especially towards the end of their life*” (CID, 209). This definition has no equivalent, neither in German nor in Czech.

(to be) on the rag	der rote Indianer
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Both of these idioms are from colloquial language, the English one is considered to be also very impolite. Its meaning is “*a very impolite expression*

used about a woman who is having her period, especially when she is behaving in an unreasonable way” (LAID, 265). The meaning from the German source is, although less descriptive, the same: “*menstruation*” (DWPW, 1010, t.). Both the English and German native speakers know the examples.

village idiot	der deutsche Michel
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The meaning of the German idiom is “*typical German citizen*” (DWPW, 1381, t.). However, the German native speaker adds that this idiom bears rather negative meaning and calling someone that means usually that the person is rather stupid. That is why there is the English equivalent *village idiot* here. This idiom was suggested by the English native speaker and its meaning is found when googled. It is “*the most stupid or ignorant person in a village/town*”[39], sometimes also referring to the former American president George Bush [40].

(as) proud as a peacock	stolz wie ein Spanier
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These idioms are examples of likening. The explanation of their meanings is very simple, as the German source states, it is “*very proud*” (MDI, 448, t.). The English source agrees, it also states the meaning of this idiom is “*very proud; haughty*” (NTC, 17). The English native speaker knows this expression as well as the German native speaker.

When searching online there are also the exact equivalents of these idioms to be found. Those are *stolz wie ein Pfau* [41] and *proud as a Spaniard* [42]. However, they are not so common and the printed sources do not include them.

(to be) behind bars	hinter schwedischen Gardinen sitzen
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This English idiom’s meaning is “*in prison*” (CID, 21). The meaning of the German idiom is the same: “*to sit/be in prison*” (MDI, 434, t.). Its Czech equivalent can be an idiom *sedět za katrem*, however, it was not found in any printed source. The English native speaker knows this idiom and also suggested

another one: *to be in the clink* [43], which can be found when googled, however, was not found in any of the printed sources. The German native speaker knows this likening idiomatic phrase too.

to drink like a fish	wie ein Kümmeltürke saufen
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These two idioms are only two examples of many expressions describing drinking alcohol. The definition of the English one is “*to regularly drink a lot of alcohol*” (CID, 111). The German source states the meaning of the German idiom as follows: “*drink too much*” (DWPW, 1191, t.). Both of these idioms correspond semantically with the Czech expression *pít jako Dán* (DWPW, 1191), which could be as *to drink as a Dane* translated and its meaning is identical to the previous ones.

to work like a Trojan	wie ein Kümmeltürke arbeiten
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Both of these idioms have exactly the same meaning, which is “*to work very hard*” (CID, 466; DWPW, 1191, t.). There is one other form of this idiom found in the English source – *to work like a dog* (CID, 466), which has the same meaning and is perhaps used more often. Also the English native speaker knows this form of the example and adds that the *Trojan* version is not so frequent. The German native speaker knows this German idiom too.

to be in clover	wie Gott in Frankreich leben
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Both of these idioms describe very pleasant situation. The meaning of the English one is “*to be in a very pleasant situation, especially because you have a lot of money*” (CID, 76). The definition of the German one from the German source is “*to live in abundance*” (DUD, 439, t.). The English native speaker knows this idiom, however does not see it in a connection with money necessarily. The German native speaker knows the German idiom too.

Proverbs

to carry/take coals to Newcastle	Holz in den Wald tragen
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The meaning of the English proverb is “*to take something to a place or a person that has a lot of that thing already*” (CID, 76). The definition of the German equivalent taken from the German source is more general – “*to do something meaningless or useless*” (DUD, 347, t.). However, the German definition is also concerned on taking things to places, where they already are, because it mentions “*exporting coffee to Brasil*” (DUD, 347, t.). The proverbs therefore correspond on the semantic level. The Czech equivalent of these proverbs is very near to the German one. It is *nosit dříví do lesa* (FINN, 96), which is the exact translation of the German one – to carry wood into the forest – and its meaning is also identical. The German native speaker does not know this form of the proverb, however, she knows the proverb *Eulen nach Athen tragen* (DUD, 186), which has the same meaning and also has its equivalent in Czech – *nosit sovy do Athén* (FINN, 440).

It makes my head spin.	Da ist Holland in Not.
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The definition of the German idiom is “*then is one helpless/clueless*” (DUD, 346, t.). The Czech idiom with this definition is *jde mi z toho hlava kolem* (FINN, 131), which is an equivalent for the English one too. Both of these idioms therefore describe an obscure and unclear situation. The English native speaker does not know this English proverb, however, admits that it is understandable and it possibly exists in this form. The German native speaker agrees with this definition and knows the idiom.

When in connection to politics, this German idiom can also express a “*bad political situation*”[44]. For this meaning there is a following synonym in German: *Zustände wie im polnischen Reichstag* [45] which could be translated into English as *situation as in the polish parliament*.

When in Rome (do as the Romans do).	mit den Wölfen heulen
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The definition of this English proverb is following: “*when you are visiting another country, you should behave like the people in that country*” (CID, 348). This definition deals only with other countries, on the other hand the German proverb is more general: “*to join the majority (with opportunism)*” (DUD, 812, t.). But in general both of these proverbs’ meanings are almost identical. The Czech equivalent *Kdo chce s vlky žít, musí s nimi výti.*[46] is almost a literal translation of the German proverb and its meaning is also the same. The German native speaker knows this proverb.

6.3 Non-correspondence

This category covers two groups of idiomatic phrases: English and German examples. Those are idioms describing nations and countries from both English and German, which have no equivalent in the other language.

6.3.1 English examples

Dutch auction	
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A *Dutch auction* is “*an auction or sale that starts off with a high asking price that is then reduced until a buyer is found*” (NTC, 91). German has a word *Rückwärtsauktion* for this definition. However, the German equivalent was not found in any printed source, only online. The English native speaker heard this idiom before, however, is not sure about its meaning, thus the idiom is probably not used very often.

Dutch uncle	
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When we say that someone is a “Dutch uncle”, we say he is “*a man who gives frank and direct advice to someone in the manner of a parent or relative*” (NTC, 91). In Czech, we have an idiom *co na srdci, to na jazyku*, which could be

semantically compared with this English idiom. The English native speaker does not know this idiom.

Pardon my French.	
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The English idiom is used mostly in spoken English and it is “*used when you are sorry when you have used a swear word or impolite word and think that someone might be offended*” (LAID, 119). The English native speaker knows the idiom. The Germans would say *verzeihen Sie meine Ausdruckweise* [47], which was found online as an equivalent of this English idiom, however, it is no idiomatic expression.

to talk for England	
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When someone can “talk for England”, it means that one *talks a lot / talks so good they could win a price when representing their country* [48]. The English native speaker knows this idiom. However, he suggests that it does not necessarily have to be connected only to talking.

to fiddle while Rome burns	
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This English idiom deals with the common issue of procrastination. Its meaning according to an English source is “*to spend time enjoying yourself or doing things that are not important when you should be dealing with a serious problem*” (CID, 138). The English native speaker knows this idiom and adds that it is used when talking about postponing or ignoring really serious issues.

to beat the Dutch	
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This idiom is another example of idioms including the word Dutch and being rather offensive to the Dutch. Its meaning is “*to do something amazing*” (ACSI, 60, t.), so once again an idiomatic expression which is slightly against the Dutch. The English native speaker does not know the idiom.

on Greek calens	
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There is a Czech equivalent to this English idiom – *na svatého Dyndy* (ACSI, 83), which means “*never*” (ACSI, 83). The English native speaker does not know this idiom.

too many chiefs and not enough Indians	
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This idiom describes the situation of nowadays, when there are “*too many people [who] want to be the leader and not enough people [...] willing to follow to do the detail work*”[49]. It compares the working class to the members of the Indian nation. The English native speaker does know this idiom.

slow boat to China	
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This idiomatic expression is possible to be found online and it describes “*an activity that although it takes up a great deal of time to complete, it's an enjoyable experience nonetheless*”[50]. The English native speaker does know this idiom.

American as apple pie	
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This idiom serves as a likening and when you use it, you are saying, that something is “*typical of American culture or way of life*” (DHC, 6). The English native speaker does know this idiom.

to be in Dutch	
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This idiom is another from the Dutch group of English idioms, which is without any doubt the largest one. This idiom means “*to be in trouble*” (DHC, 115) usually with someone else with a preposition *with*. The English native speaker does not know this idiom.

Dutch wife	
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The idiom can refer to different things. One meaning of “Dutch wife” is a “*special body pillow*”[51], others are more controversial as for example “*a sex doll*”[52]. The English native speaker does not know this idiom.

Dutch comfort	
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The idiom “Dutch comfort” was also not found in any printed source, however, there are many explanations on the internet, for example: “*comfort derived from a situation not being any worse than it is*”[53]. The English native speaker does not know this idiom.

Queen’s English	
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This idiom refers to “*grammatically correct and coherent written expression in the English language*”[54]. The English native speaker does know this idiom and suggests also a wider form of this expression *to speak the Queen’s English*.

Trojan horse	
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This idiom is very similar to the previous one - *Greek gift* - mentioned in the Partial correspondence – Type 4 subchapter. It is close to the other idiom, because it has the same etymology – it comes from the story of the Trojan War. The *Trojan horse* is “*someone or something that attacks the group or organisation it belongs to*” (CID, 435).

(to bet) London to a brick	
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This idiom was suggested by the English native speaker and can be found when googled. Its meaning is “*absolute certainty*”[55]. When one would bet London to a brick, it means that they are absolutely sure they are right.

(not for) all the tea in China	
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This idiom was suggested by the English native speaker. Its meaning can be found when googled and it is the following: *“If a person won’t do it for ‘all the tea in china’, than they won’t do it no matter how much money they are offered.”*[56] The meaning of this English idiom is quite clearly understandable in view of the fact that there is really a lot of tea in China.

6.3.2 German examples

Idioms

	auf gut Deutsch gesagt
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This idiom has two varieties of its meaning in the German source. The first meaning is *“told without any further explanation and details”* (MDI, 84, t.). The second explanation of this idiom is *“told straightforwardly and clearly”* (MDI, 84, t.). The German native speaker knows this idiom and is inclined more to the second meaning.

There is also other form of this idiom, a proverb: *Du verstehst wohl kein Deutsch mehr?* (DWPW, 383) which verbalizes the idiom and puts it into a question and the meaning stays the same. The German native speaker knows this form too.

	ein gestreiftes Hochdeutsch sprechen
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This expression may seem to have something in common with the previous one. However, this idiom really describes the German language, not only a way of somebody’s talking. The meaning of this idiom is *“to speak German with a bit of dialect”* (DWPW, 966, t.). The German native speaker does not know this idiom.

	deutsches Sauerkraut gegessen haben
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This idiom is used when the speaker wants to express that someone “*knows the German circumstances very well*” (DWPW, 1760, t.). The German native speaker does not know this idiom. There is one another form of this idiom: *noch tief im deutschen Sauerkraut stecken* (DWPW, 1760), which means that someone is “*although abroad, still very affected and influenced by the German way of life*” (DWPW, 1760, t.).

	englischer Rasen
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It is a little debatable if this expression should be considered an idiom. However, according to the printed sources it is an idiomatic expression, and therefore it is included here. Its meaning according to the German source is “*a lawn which is particularly good taken care of*” (DWPW, 1631, t.). The meaning agrees with the aforesaid stereotypical view of the English, who take a good care of their homes. The German native speaker does know this expression.

	Zustände wie im alten Rom
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According to the German source, the DUDEN dictionary, when there are somewhere *Zustände wie im alten Rom*, there are “*unacceptable or unbearable circumstances or situation*” (DUD, 842, t.). The German native speaker does know this idiom.

	in Rom gewesen sein und den Papst nicht gesehen haben
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It is again questionable if this phrase is idiom or proverb. The meaning is quite obvious, however, it does not have to speak only about visiting Rome in particular thus it bears the idiomatic meaning too. The meaning of this idiom, found also in the DUDEN dictionary, is “*to ignore or overlook the important matters*” (DUD, 588, t.). The German native speaker does know this idiom.

	brüllen / schreien wie ein Indianer / wie zehn nackte Neger
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This idiom has its direct equivalent in Czech, which is *řvát jako Indián* (FINN, 153). The meaning of these idioms is known through its use and it is “*to scream/shout a lot*”. It could be translated into English as *to scream as an Indian*, which could be also used for this meaning, however, this form was not found in any source.

	Alter Schwede!
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This idiom is used when addressing a friend or a person one is familiar with. The definition according to the German source is “*Old friend!*” (DWPW, 1897, t.). This idiom also bears quite positive vibrations towards the addressed person in the meaning of shrewdness.[57]

	einen Türken bauen
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The meaning of this idiom is “*to claim something is true in order to deceive someone else*” (DWPW, 2197, t.). The German native speaker knows this idiom.

Proverbs

	Hier ist es wie in einer Judenschule.
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This proverb describes a situation in which there is a lot of noise and yelling. The Czech equivalent is almost the same – *je to tu jak v židovské škole* (FINN, 470). The German native speaker does know this idiom.

	Wenn... dann bin ich der Kaiser von China.
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This proverb is used when one does not believe something. Its meaning is “*I do not believe that this is true*” (DWPW, 1033, t.). Also, there is a Czech

equivalent of this phrase *jestli... tak jsem (čínskej) papež* (DWPW, 1033, t.). The German native speaker does know this example.

	Es interessiert mich genauso, als wenn in China ein Sack Reis umfällt.
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The meaning of this idiom is following: “*I don’t care about it at all. / It is like when something really insignificant happens*” (DWPW, 348, t.). The German source also adds another form of this proverb: *es interessiert mich genauso, als wenn in China ein Fahrrad umfällt* (DWPW, 348), which has the same meaning and only a slight difference in form. The German native speaker does not know this proverb, however, she immediately understands its meaning.

7 Conclusion

All the idiomatic expressions have been analysed and now follows the conclusion. The general supposition that there will be a slight correspondence thanks to the closeness of the English and German language has not completely proved to be true. However, there is a slight correspondence and there were at least a few idioms found, which correspond on all levels.

The following table shows the detailed results of the analysis. (The percentages are rounded.)

Idioms in total	53	100 %
Total correspondence	5	9 %
Partial Correspondence – Type 1	1	2 %
Partial Correspondence – Type 2	2	4 %
Partial Correspondence – Type 3	0	0 %
Partial Correspondence – Type 4	16	30 %
Non-correspondence – English examples	17	31 %
Non-correspondence – German examples	13	24 %

Given this table it is clear that the most idioms belong to the group of Non-correspondence. However, there are also many idioms in Partial Correspondence – Type 4, which are idioms corresponding only semantically. This result was expected as the English and German language are both influenced by different national stereotypes, the idiomatic expressions are not the same. Also, not all the examples in this category are from the thematic field of

nations and countries. However, they are still included here because they have the form of idiomatic phrase in both languages.

The following table shows the percentages of different nations and countries comprised in the English examples (in the form in that they occur in them). (The percentages are rounded.)

Idioms in total	34	100 %
American	1	3 %
Chinese	4	12 %
Denmark	1	3 %
Dutch	9	26 %
English	4	12 %
French	4	12 %
Greek / Trojan	5	14 %
Indian	2	6 %
Rome	4	12 %

As can be seen in this table, the most of the English examples are describing or talking about the *Dutch*, *Greek*, *Chinese*, *English*, *French* and *Rome*. The reason for this proportionality is that the idiomatic language is created based on the relations towards the other country and on the national stereotype. There are e.g. many issues between the English and French as well as between the English and Dutch. All of them are reflected in the idiomatics.

The following table shows the percentage of different nations and countries comprised in the German examples (t.). (The percentages are rounded.)

Idioms in total	29	100 %
Chinese	4	14 %
Denmark	1	3,4 %
German	4	14 %
English	1	3,4 %
French	4	14 %
Dutch	1	3,4 %
Indian	2	7 %
Rome	4	14 %
Jewish	1	3,4 %
Swedish	2	7 %
Spanish	1	3,4 %
Bohemian	1	3,4 %
Turkish	3	10 %

This table shows the percentage of nations and countries included in the German examples. The national stereotype of self-assurance and tendency to lead

the others is reflected here because *German* is among the most common nations in the idiomatics. Beside it there are *Chinese* and *Rome* with *French* and *Turkish* in their trail. Similarity between English and German can be therefore seen here because three of the most common nations are the same.

As mentioned in the commentaries of the tables, the most common nations included in English and German idiomatics are *Dutch*, *Chinese*, *French*, *German*, *Rome* and *Greek*. Some of them are common in both languages. The general assumption at the beginning was that there will be diversity in idiomatic language because of different attitudes of English and German speaking countries to the others. When studying idiomatic expressions describing nations and countries, it is the neighbour country, which have a big share on the idiomatic language. This can be seen for example on idioms containing words referring to *French* nation which are highly represented in both English and German language, because France is a neighbour of both Great Britain and Germany.

As mentioned above Germans are self-assured and proud and that is why there are many idioms and proverbs in the German language which describe the Germans directly. On the other hand British can be generally considered quite modest and we can see that the number of idiomatic phrases concerning the British or English is a proof of this fact.

To sum it up this thesis can serve as a brief introduction into the issues of idiomatics and phraseology. It gives number of examples to the reader and can be aimed at both English and German speaking individuals.

8 Endnotes

1. ČERMÁK, 2007, p.76.
2. Ibid. p.89.
3. Ibid. p. 126.
4. *Illustrated idioms*. 2010, p. 2.
5. Ibid.
6. McCarthy; O'Dell. 2002, p.
7. *Dictionary of idioms*.1995, p. iv.
8. FRIEDRICH. p. 6. t.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid. p. 7. t.
11. *Duden in 12 Bänden. sv. 11*. 1998, Vorwort.
12. ČERMÁK. 2007, p. 25. t.
13. Ibid. p. 31. t.
14. Ibid. p. 144.
15. Ibid. p. 145.
16. MIEDLER. 1994, p. 111-112. [online]
17. KEMPSON. 1977, p. 12-14.
18. Ibid. p. 15.
19. Ibid. p. 15-16.
20. Ibid. p. 16-17.
21. Ibid. p. 17.
22. KRAMSCH. 1998, p. 65-69.
23. Ibid. p. 77.
24. Ibid. p. 79.
25. Ibid. p. 80.
26. NEKULA. 1996, p. 87-92, t.
27. National Stereotype. [online]
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.

30. *Theory and practise in English Studies*. 2005, p. 163-171.
31. Free Dictionary. [online]
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33. National Stereotypes. [online]
34. Free Dictionary. [online]
35. Oxford English Dictionary. [online]
36. Dict.cc [online]
37. Global Gossip Game. [online]
38. Duden online. [online]
39. Urban Dictionary. [online]
40. Ibid.
41. Phraseo.de. [online]
42. Dict.cc. [online]
43. Free Dictionary. [online]
44. Široká. p. 68. t.
45. Ibid.
46. Atingo.eu. [online]
47. Dict.cc. [online]
48. Using English. [online]
49. Free Dictionary. [online]
50. Urban Dictionary. [online]
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Your Dictionary. [online]
54. Urban Dictionary. [online]
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Široká. p. 68. t.

9 Abstract

This bachelor thesis serves as an analysis of idiomatic expressions – idioms and proverbs. It is focused on a particular thematic field, on nations and countries. That means that the examples analysed here are describing a nation or country or contain words from this topic. Two languages were chosen for the analysis. English and German are compared regarding the correspondence in the idiomatic language.

In the theoretical part of this thesis there is an insight into the theory of idioms and proverbs, there are definitions of both *idiom* and *proverb* and also the meaning of words is further explained. The practical part of the thesis is the analysis of idiomatic expressions. There are seven groups of examples according to the correspondence between the two languages.

This thesis covers only a narrow part of examples from the idiomatic language. Its purpose is not to comprise a wide scale of many examples, it is to analyse a group of expressions from one thematic field, the field of nations and countries. Reading this thesis can bring an overview of idiomatics and phraseology as well as many interesting examples of idiomatic expressions and thus enrichment to ones language.

10 Resumé

Předkládaná bakalářská práce je analýzou idiomatických výrazů – idiomů a přísloví. Zabývá se konkrétním tematickým okruhem, kterým jsou národy a národnosti. Příklady, které jsou zde analyzovány, tedy popisují národy či národnosti nebo obsahují slovní zásobu tohoto tématu. Pro analýzu byly vybrány dva jazyky. Anglický a německý jazyk jsou zde porovnávány, co se týče korespondence mezi nimi v idiomatickém jazyce.

V teoretické části této bakalářské práce je náhled do teorie idiomů a přísloví, jsou zde uvedeny definice obou pojmů – *idiomu* a *přísloví*. Také je zde představena teorie významu slov. Praktická část této práce je právě analýza idiomatických výrazů. Příklady jsou rozděleny do sedmi skupin podle korespondence mezi analyzovanými jazyky.

Tato práce komentuje pouze užší skupinu příkladů z idiomatického jazyka. Jejím cílem není obsáhnout širokou škálu mnoha příkladů, je jím analýza skupiny výrazů z konkrétního tematického okruhu, kterým jsou národy a národnosti. Přečtení předkládané bakalářské práce čtenáři přinese základní přehled o idiomatice a frazeologii, mnoho zajímavých příkladů z této problematiky a tím obohacení jeho slovní zásoby.

11 Resümee

Die vorgelegte Bakalaureatarbeit ist eine Analyse idiomatischer Begriffe – Idiome und Sprichwörter. Die Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit einem konkreten Thema: Völker und Länder. Die Beispiele, die hier analysiert werden, beschreiben also die Völker oder Länder oder beinhalten die Vokabeln zu diesem Thema. Für die Analyse wurden zwei Sprachen gewählt. Es wird verglichen in wie weit die Idiomatik im Deutschen und im Englischen miteinander korrespondiert.

In dem theoretischen Teil der Arbeit gibt es eine Einsicht in die Theorie der Idiome und Sprichwörter und die Definitionen von beiden Ausdrücken – *Idiom* und *Spruchwort*. Dort wird auch die Theorie von der Bedeutung der Wörter vorgestellt. Der praktische Teil dieser Arbeit ist die Analyse der Idiome in beiden Sprachen. Die Beispiele werden in sieben Gruppen unterteilt, entsprechend dem Grad der Übereinstimmung zwischen den zwei analysierten Sprachen.

Diese Arbeit umfasst nur eine engere Gruppe von Beispielen. Es ist nicht der Zweck dieser Arbeit, eine breite Skala von Beispielen der Idiome zu vorstellen, sondern eine auf das Thema Völker und Länder bezogene Analyse von Begriffen zu erstellen. Diese Arbeit bringt dem Leser einen primären Überblick über Idiomatik und Phraseologie, viele interessante Beispiele von dieser Problematik und dadurch die Bereicherung seines Wortschatzes.

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13 Appendices

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13.1.2 German examples

13.1.1 English examples

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Rome

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