NARRATIVES OF CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE PRISM

Natalya Zavyalova[*]

Ural Federal University (UrFU), 19 Mira street, 620002, Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation

(Received 12 September 2014, revised 29 September 2014)

Abstract

The article is focused around the past and the present narratives of cultural encounters through idiomatic perspective of British English, Chinese and Japanese. We proceed from the idea that communicative prism of idioms is conducive to our understanding of cultural reality of the past and the present. We perceive idioms as communicative fossils, shaping present socio-cultural existence through channelling verbalized cognitive practices of the past. With the help of the on-line electronic linguistic corpuses (Chinese corpus), KOTONOHA (Japanese corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese), BNC (British National Corpus) we identify common tendencies, which are conducive to our understanding of national identities, explicitly expressed through communicative channels. The central idea of the article is based on the concept of national identities, reflected in idioms. Traditionally scholars focus their attention on demarcation lines between representatives of different cultures. The focal point of this article is the cross-cultural points of similarity.

For our main analysis we used idioms with an 'eye' component. The analysis demonstrates that native speakers of Chinese, Japanese and English tend to rely on their visual perception and associate these perceptions with their feelings. This idea brings us to the conclusion that there are no stark differences in primary perception of representatives of the Eastern and Western cultures.

The results of our study have theoretical and practical applications. Theoretically speaking, we describe socio-cultural dynamics of idioms within the principle of information maximum. This principle can be further developed in various dimensions of arts and humanities. In practice the outcomes of our research are of much interest to experts, who study frequent narratives, typical of Chinese, Japanese and British cultures. The research results have been processed into a database, marked with the Rospatent Certificate № 2013620397, dated March 13, 2013.

Keywords: culture, British English, idiom, corpus, information

1. Introduction

This article is linked to the components of national identities. "Traditional regional identities take – like national identities – many generations to develop. They are rooted in a long political history linked to the development of the

---

[*]E-mail: N.A.Zavialova@urfu.ru

nation state." [1] Identities are publicly communicated through narratives. Narratives of cultural encounters are reflections of national identities.

The central question is focused around the type of communicative cultural encounters, which may be viewed as reliable cultural variables. The answer to the question lies within the framework of folklore and traditions revealed in communication. As S. Benhabib has objectively highlighted: "To be and to become a self is to insert oneself into webs of interlocution; it is to know how to answer when one is addressed and to know how to address others" [2].

Idioms are a part of communicative folklore, which represent a reliable evidence of national identity, constituted throughout the centuries of communication. From the point of view of neurology idioms are viewed as emotional units, analyzed by left hemisphere brain and right hemisphere brain in a pattern, similar to all nations. "Emotional words trigger activation in other areas of the LH, such as the amygdala, orbitofrontal cortex, and posterior cingulate gyrus, as well. These regions have been claimed to be part of the limbic system, which plays a key role in emotion processing." [3] "The data from a large body of research based on behavioral, electrophysiological, and neuroimaging methodologies appear to converge in indicating that both hemispheres are involved in the processing of words with emotional meaning, albeit in different, and probably complementary, ways." [3]

The main idea is of our study is to give the prospect of cultural identities in comparison. The comparative aspect of our study is built along the lines of Asian studies and structural paradigm of the West. The term 'Asian studies' is nowadays widely accepted in Europe. This academic field is largely concerned with the languages, peoples and politics of Near Eastern and Far Eastern countries. It also contributes a lot to the subject matter of Archaeology, History, Socio-cultural studies, Arts and Humanities in general. Unlike 'Oriental studies' with its imperialistic heritage with diminutive connotations, the term 'Asian studies' does not imply any derogatory meanings towards the peoples of the East.

Western structural paradigm embraces Anthropology, Sociology, Linguistics and other branches of Arts and Humanities. It is mainly concerned with the description of structural elements in their relation to a larger system. Structuralism describes various systemic levels, their interdependency and interaction. Our study of idioms is based on structuralism concept, according to which we draw lines of demarcation between several stratums of idiomatic resources of British English, Japanese and Chinese.

2. Data and methods

For centuries the development of idiomatic systems has been regarded as a culturally unique individual process, governed by extra linguistic reasons: politics, time factors and cross-cultural contacts. High role of idioms throughout the history can be successfully demonstrated with the help of Google books Ngram Viewer (GbNV) [GbNV, http:books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=

idiom&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=& direct_url=t1%3B%2Cidiom%3B%2Cc0, accessed on 10.07.2014]. The graph demonstrates frequencies of the 'idiom' ngram in digital books' library.

The analysis of the Google Trends (GT) graph testifies to the fact that 'idiom' component is a frequent search word in modern electronic communication [GT, trends.google.com/trends/ explore#q=idiom&cmpt=date, accessed on 10.07.2014].

Figure 1 effectively demonstrates the scope of modern socio-cultural phenomena where idioms are employed, according to Serelex System of semantically related words [4].
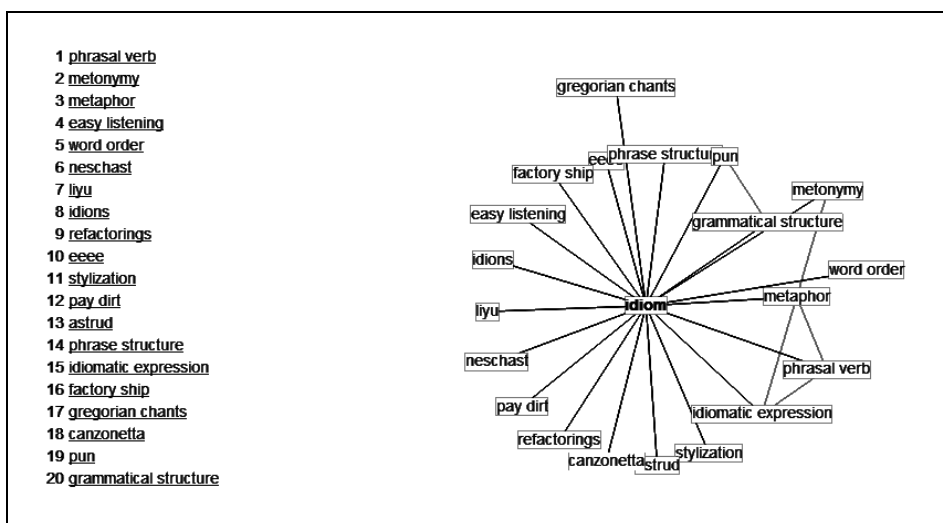
Figure 1. Serelex semantic proximity graph for the lexeme 'idiom' [serelex.cental.be].

We analyze idioms with an 'eye' component, belonging to 3 idiomatic systems: Chinese, Japanese, and British. With the help of the on-line electronic linguistic corpuses CC (Chinese corpus), KOTONOHA (Japanese corpus), BNC – we excluded American English described in COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) [www.corpus.byu.edu/coca, accessed on 10.07.2014] – we identify tendencies common to all these systems, which are conducive to our understanding of national identities, explicitly expressed through communicative channels. Each idiom is provided with the number of entries' indexes. Operating with huge masses of information, stored in corpuses, offers a reliable ground for making conclusions. The most frequent idioms are the ones, preferred by nations' representatives and represent elements of national identities.

Now we proceed to the description of each on-line corpus, which is the main research tool for us. For analyzing Chinese idioms' frequencies we used Chinese corpus from Leeds University. We provide each idiom with the frequency index, illustrating its usage frequency in the Internet and business Chinese. Japanese idiomatic system is described through frequency indexes, which we got from KOTONOHA on-line Balanced Corpus of Contemporary

Written Japanese. This corpus submits the contexts of a considerable time period, between 1880 and 2008, as well as the gender of the speakers.

As far as the English language and culture are concerned, we must bear in mind the following socio-cultural ideas, important for the national identity issues of modern Britain. "The English language in Britain evolves constantly. Foreign words have long been de rigueur (pilfered most notably from the French), and today they're absorbed from all over the place. In 2007, for example, the word wiki found its way into the Oxford English Dictionary, derived from a Hawaiian word meaning quick but now meaning quick but now applied to a certain type of Internet site. … Metaphor and simile are equally prone to rapid evolution. The British love new, glib phrases (it's a country where pretty much anything can go 'pear-shaped', particularly when it's 'cheap as chips'), repeated interminably for a couple of years until some intangible social code decides they're 'past their sell-by date'… urban Britain is particularly inventive, it's multicultural streets generating a new tongue for the 21st century with the unstoppable rise of Jafaican. Despite the name, experts claim it's not actually an affectation but a shift in language born of multicultural mingling in post-war Britain, most notably with the mix of Jamaican, West African and Bangladeshi cultures. Such has been Jafaican's growth that today you'll find youngsters from Tower Hamlets to Torquay calling each other 'blud' and discussing whether those 'skets' is butters." [5]

In many ways English is a dividing factor even to native speakers. "In any discussion of nationalism, identity, or current affairs, language is never 'innocent'. The choice of words reveals the underlying outlook of the speaker. So for example the word 'foreign' in English is much more hostile …than the German ausländer. Latent British xenophobia is revealed in the offensive tabloid expression 'Johnny Foreigner'. … to Welsh is to cheat or renege; to Scotch is to thwart, to squash, to prevent; an Irish lanyard is an untidy rope. In other words the names of the three 'subsidiary' nations in the British Isles have negative connotations in the language of the dominate one. Thus national prejudice is encoded in the English language." [6] We decided to use the official corpus, approved by linguistic authorities and scholars, which is BNC to avoid any prejudice and obtain reliable data for national identity analysis.

3. Results

We start our analysis of idioms from Chinese material. "In Chinese lexical system Chinese idioms are a typical unit. As an individual type in the domain of idioms, most Chinese idioms have some unique qualities. One of the design features of most Chinese idioms on the dimension of form characteristics is the four-character form the Chinese lexicon provides an exact number of the characters in such a unit. According to the statistics given in Zhou [7], up to 95.57% entries in Dictionary of Chinese Idioms are four characters. The uniformity in form regulates to a large extent some other linguistic characteristics of Chinese idioms, specifically phonological and semantic

distribution. Compatible with the rhythmical arrangement and prosodic features represented by the two-plus-two syllables, a great number of Chinese idioms consist of double substructures, mostly parallel with each other [8]. Branded with a distinct national style, Chinese idioms mirror the aesthetic pursuit of symmetry deeply embedded in oriental thinking." [9]

The results of the Leeds Chinese Language corpus analysis are as follows: *Ěr3 mù4 yī1 xīn1* – "something new for the eyes and ears" – new, original [the Internet Chinese corpus – 508; business Chinese corpus – 662]; *Gāng1 jǔ3 mù4 zhāng1* – "to bring to the eyes the main thing and understand it" – to begin with the main idea [the Internet Chinese corpus – 33; business Chinese corpus – 38]; *Cè4 mù4 ér2 shì4* – "to look askance" – to look with fear [the Internet Chinese corpus – 59; business Chinese corpus – 14]; *Chù4 mù4 jiē1 shì4* – "to touch all eyes"– to attract the attention [the Internet Chinese corpus – 39; business Chinese corpus – 13]; *Míng2 chá2 qiū1 háo2* – "to see every hair during an autumn moult" – to have a sharp eye [the Internet Chinese corpus – 87; business Chinese corpus – 53]. Chinese tend to associate eyes with understanding and emotions. The central fact of their national identity, deduced from the idiom analysis, is their tendency to rely on visual perception, which is common to other nations' traditions. We can't place Chinese to a special knish, stressing their difference from other nations. Though other scholars tend to stress the difference between Chinese and other nations. This difference is often observed in the reference to money attitude. "In China, some scholars have argued that luxury spending is socially beneficial to equalize wealth, under the assumption that the total endowment of resources is a fixed amount. This argument is not only consistent with Confucianism but also might point to another lesser known side of Confucianism that the luxury spending of the rich can be regarded as a wealth-transferring mechanism. Furthermore, luxury spending was encouraged for purposes of enjoyment; it did not involve the consideration of power and protection. This is in sharp contrast to the extravagance of the European nobility; their intention was to maintain a hierarchical structure …'the rich's luxury spending is regarded as a wealth-transferring mechanism, which is 'just like gambling in a room, the money does not flow out but circulates among the players." [10]

Now we proceed to Japanese idioms with an 'eye' component: *Gantyu:-ni oku* – "to put on the eyes"– to take into account [7 contexts, years of entry 1880–1930, male utterances – 7]; *Jibun-no me-o utagau* – "not to believe one's own eyes" – to doubt something very much [16 contexts, years of entry 1900 – 2008, male utterances – 45, female utterances – 9]; *Yokome-o tsukau* – "to use side eyes" – to make eyes at somebody [6 contexts, years of entry 1890–1960, male utterances – 5, female utterances – 3]; *Ikiuma-no me-o nuku* – "to seize the eye of the moving horse" – fast and skilful [14 contexts, years of entry 1920–2008, male utterances – 13, female utterances – 3]; *Me-ga takai* – "high eyes"– to understand things well, to have a perfect taste [25 contexts, years of entry 1920–2005, male utterances – 12, female utterances – 7]; *Me-kara hana-e nukeruyo:na* – "somebody who can penetrate from eyes into nose"– cunning, smart [4

contexts, years of entry 1880-1910]; *Me-mo aterarenai* – "it is impossible even to put an eye on this"– a deplorable state [29 contexts, years of entry 1920–2005, male utterances – 17, female utterances – 3]; *Me-ni amaru* – "excessive for the eyes" – unpleasant, disgusting [37 contexts, years of entry 1880–2008, male utterances – 19, female utterances – 3]; *Me-ni sawaru* – "to bother the eyes" – to bother, to annoy [13 contexts, years of entry 1920–2008, male utterances – 4, female utterances – 1]; *Me-no doku* – "poison for the eyes"– very beautiful, attractive [6 contexts, years of entry 1940–2008, male utterances – 1, female utterances – 1]; *Me-o kakeru* – "to put an eye on"– to take care of somebody, to help somebody [88 contexts, years of entry 1890–2008, male utterances – 55, female utterances – 10]; *Me-to hana-no saki* – "to be between an eye and a nose" – to be very close, not very far [101 contexts, years of entry 1920–2008, male utterances – 45, female utterances – 12]. Japanese idioms with an 'eye' component testify to the fact that Japanese tend to believe their eyes better than anything else in this world. They appreciate visible facts. This tendency forms the same pattern together with Chinese native speakers. Like in case with Chinese, we can draw lines of similarity with other nations, rather than concentrate on differences.

British 'eye' component idioms tend to reflect the world of feelings and emotions: "An eye for an eye" – [BNC – 10 entries]; "(To have) an eye for" – [BNC – 82 entries]; "To keep one's eyes open" – [BNC – 28 entries]; "To close one's eyes to smth." – [BNC – 7 entries]; "To cry one's eyes out" – [BNC – 7 entries]; "To make eyes at" – [BNC – 7 entries]; "A sight for sore eyes" – [BNC – 8 entries]; "To pull the wool over smb's eyes" – [BNC – 6 entries]; "To be more to someone/something than meets the eye" – [BNC – 43 entries]; "To see eye to eye" – [BNC – 41 entries]; "Public eye" – [BNC – 133 entries]. The analysis demonstrates that, like in case with Chinese and Japanese, British English native speakers tend to rely on their visual perception and associate these perceptions with their feelings. This idea brings us to the conclusion that there are no stark differences in primary perception of representatives of the Eastern and Western cultures.

4. Discussion

As any information system, the system of social communicative signs of idioms can be described in terms of mathematical laws. Our central idea is that idioms should be analyzed within the framework of Information Maximum (IM). The principle of IM firstly appeared in the works by Shannon [11] and later it was developed by Soviet and Russian scholars [12]. According to this theory, the system tries to find such response *y,* which enables the maximum of useful information about the given stimuli *x*

$$L (X, Y) = H(Y) – H(Y/X) – \text{ß} \cdot R(X,Y) \rightarrow \max \qquad (1)$$

where H(Y) – the entropy of the system's conditions, H(Y/X) – the entropy of the system's mistakes and its reactions to outer stimuli, R(X,Y) – the average consumption of the system's resource in Y condition within all X environmental

conditions, and ß – the indicator of the system's deficit (ß = 0, when the system has an unlimited energy resource, and ß = 1 when the system has a very big energy deficit) [12, p. 5].

According to the described above principle, all informational systems develop within 3 main strategies (Figure 2).
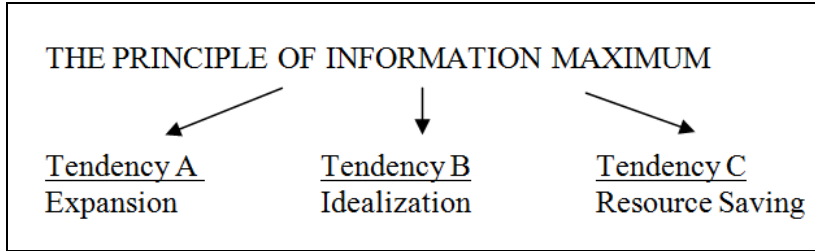

Figure 2. 3-stages' model of the principle of information maximum.

Our research is limited to the analysis of Chinese, Japanese and British English idioms, their strategies of expansion, idealization and resource saving. Using fossil communicative material of the past, these indexes are suggestive of socio-cultural dynamics in modern societies of China, Japan and Britain.

Expansion of Chinese, Japanese and British English idiomatic systems are realized by means of describing various fragments of day-to-day discourse in idioms. One and the same object of day-to-day routine may be used in various contexts.

4.1. Expansion of Chinese idioms

Expansion of Chinese idioms is realized by involving in idiomatic coding more and more objects of reality from day-to-day environment: *Dì4 dà4 wù4 bó2* – "big land, rich in things" – a large country rich in natural resources; *Lì4 zú2 zhī1 dì4* – "a place to put a foot on" – 1) to occupy a firm position, 2) a very small piece of land; *Cāng1 hǎi3 sāng1 tián2* – "a dark blue sea became a mulberry field" – radical changes; *Cáng2 wū1 nà4 gòu4* – "to keep and bring dirt" – to conceal criminals; *Yī1 pán2 sǎn3 shā1* – "a tray with sand" – absence of unity; *Jù4 shā1 chéng2 tǎ3* – "a big pagoda is built from small particles of sand" – all big things start from small ones; *Shì4 shì4 dài4 dài4* – "world, world, generation, generation" – from one generation to another; *Bō1 lán2 zhuàng4 kuò4* – "the storm of big waves" – magnificent, large-scale, outstanding; *Luò4 jǐng3 xià4 shí2* – "to throw stones down at the person, who fell down into the well" – to kick the man when he is down; *Hún2 hún2 è4 è4* – "muddy, muddy, dirty, dirty" – silly; *Chuān1 liú2 bù4 xī1* – "the river flows without stops" – to act continually, without stops; *Tóng2 zhōu1 gòng4 jì4* – "to help out each other in one boat" – to act together in a trouble; *Shuǐ3 shēn1 huǒ3 rè4* – "waters are deep, the flame is burning hot" – a big trouble; *Shuǐ3 dào4 qú2 chéng2* – "the water falls into canal naturally" – success comes naturally; *Shuǐ3 luò4 shí2 chū1* – "after the water is passing the stones are revealed" – important things appear

with the passage of time; *Shuǐ3 xiè4 bù4 tōng1* – "the water can't get in" – completely packed.

4.2. Idealization of Chinese idioms

Idealization of Chinese idioms is analyzed through frequency indexes, which we obtain using corpus data. For conducting this stage of research we also used Chinese corpus from Leeds University. As idealization is achieved through repetition of the most successful variants, 'conservative behaviour', we consider the most frequent idioms to be the agents of this stage of idiomatic system growth. The most frequent idioms are viewed as the best examples of idealization strategy. *Lín2 láng2 mǎn3 mù4* – "to hold precious jade in the eyes" – a feast for the eyes [the Internet – 701; business – 438]; *Tiān1 jīng1 dì4 yì4* – "right in the sky and on earth" – unalterable truth [the Internet – 673; business – 545]; *Gēn1 shēn1 dì4 gù4* – "the root and the base are firm" – deeply-rooted [the Internet – 642; business – 687]; *Dà4 míng2 dǐng3 dǐng3* – "a big name as a big tripod" – to enjoy extreme popularity [the Internet – 669; business – 432]; *Rú2 huǒ3 rú2 tú2* – "to be flaming red and bright as a water-lily" – in full swing [the Internet – 629; business – 682]; *Lái2 lóng2 qù4 mài4* – "the dragon is leaving, the mountain peak is coming" – ins and outs [the Internet – 614; business – 422].

4.3. Resource saving of Chinese idioms

Resource saving of Chinese idioms is achieved through a number of linguistic techniques: 1) the polyfunctional nature of Chinese characters; 2) frequent usage of 2-character idioms; 3) onomatopoeia; 4) parallel constructions; 5) repetitions; 6) borrowings from English, which enrich Chinese idiomatic system with new terms; 7) borrowings from the speeches and treatises of Chinese philosophers and politicians, which enable the enrichment of Chinese idiomatic system with new concepts. Let us consider these techniques in greater detail.

4.3.1. The polyfunctional nature

The polyfunctional nature of Chinese characters helps the users of the language to decode the message of the idiom, analyzing the ideograms, its parts and keys. The process of Chinese idioms decoding was successfully demonstrated in a brilliant experiment, described in the article 'ERP correlates of compositionality in Chinese idiom comprehension' [9]. All idioms under analysis were subdivided by the authors into 3 groups according to the criteria of compositionality. Here we also have to add that iconic nature of Chinese characters also help to decipher the meaning and save idiomatic resources. Despite the abundance of 4-character idioms we have to stress frequent usage of *2-character* idioms as well: *Hēi1 xīn1* – "black heart" – evil, cruel [the Internet – 512; business – 387]; *chì4 zì4* – "red letters" – budget deficit [the Internet – 587;

business – 591]. Thus, speakers of Chinese economize their pronunciation efforts and save idiomatic resources.

4.3.2. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia in Chinese is infrequent, but still we have an example of this kind: *Dà4 míng2 dǐng3 dǐng3* – "a name as big as a big tripod" – to enjoy extreme popularity.

4.3.3. Parallel constructions

Parallel constructions are widely-spread in Chinese: *Zì4 yóu2 zì4zài4* – "go through myself, live myself" – easy and free life; *Zì4 jǐ3 zì4 zú2* – "my feet give me" – to be self sufficient; *Zì4 chuī1 zì4 léi2* – "blow myself, beat myself" – the person praising himself; *Zì4 gāo1 zì4 dà4* – "I am tall and big myself" – self-important; *Gǔ3 sè4 gǔ3 xiāng1* – "old colour, old smell" – in old classical style. Here I should also mention the case when 3 initial characters are identical and the idioms differ only in their final element: *Lóng2 xiāng1 hǔ3 bù4* – "dragon's posture, tiger's *step*" – awesome, impressive; *Lóng2 xiāng1 hǔ shì4* – "dragon's posture, tiger's *look*" – ambitious (plans).

4.3.4. Repetitions

Repetitions of characters within one idiom: *Lěng3 yán2 lěng3 yǔ3* – "a cold word, a cold speech" – sarcastic comments; *Qì4 shì4 xiōng1 xiōng1* – "hot water is boiling" – awesome, frightening.

4.3.5. Borrowings

Borrowings of economic idioms from English: *Yǐng3 zī1 jīng1 jì4* – black market; *Yǐng3 z ī1 gǔ3 piào4* – shadow shares.

Borrowings from idiolects of Chinese philosophers have as the most popular source – Confucius: *Sàng4 jiā1 zhī1 quǎn3* – "the abandoned dog from the house of a dead person" – a lonely neglected person. This expression is ascribed to Confucius, who was left by his disciples during the period of Warrior States (V B.C.–221A.D.).

4.4. Expansion of Japanese idioms

Expansion of Japanese idioms is realized by means of describing new fragments of day-to-day discourse in idioms: Kakuchi-de iku – "to happen in every land" – to happen everywhere; *Chi-no mono* – "the person of the land" – a local citizen; *Gadeninsui* – "to direct the water only to one's own field" – to think only about one's own interests.

4.5. Idealization of Japanese idioms

Idealization of Japanese idioms is analyzed through frequency indexes, which we obtained using corpus data. The most frequent idioms are as follows: *Amakudari* – "the descending from the sky" – 1) directed from the heavens, 2) a pensioner [326 contexts, from 1930 to 2008]; *Shubi* – "the head and the tail" – the matter of the case [289 contexts, from 1910 to 2008]; *Kido:-ni noru* – "to sit on the track" – to take the right course [253 contexts, from 1920 to 2008]; *Yo-o saru* – "to leave this world" – to die [275 contexts, from 1860 to 2008]; *Kokoro-no soko kara* – "from the bottom of one's heart" – very sincerely [270 contexts, from 1890 to 2008];   *Kaze-o hiku* – "to stretch the wind" – to catch a cold [194 contexts, from1900 to 2008]; *To:ge-o koeru* – "to cross the mountain summit" – to overcome a critical point [160 contexts, 1890–2005]; *Issekinicho:* – "to kill two birds with one stone" – to achieve two goals at once [144 contexts, from 1910 to 2008]; *Hi-no kuruma* – "fire carriage" – extreme poverty [46 contexts, from 1860 to 2008]; *Neko-no hitai hodo* – "like cat's forehead" – very little [38 contexts, from 1920 to 2008].

4.6. Resource saving of Japanese idioms

Resource saving of Japanese idioms is achieved along the lines of Chinese idiomatic system. This trend may be explained by long contacts of Japan with China and a common hieroglyphic writing system. Thus resource savings of Japanese idiomatic system show a steady trend of resemblance with Chinese idiomatic system: 1) the polyfunctional nature of Japanese characters; 2) frequent usage of 2-character idioms; 3) onomatopoeia; 4) parallel constructions; 5) repetitions; 6) borrowings from English, which enrich Chinese idiomatic system with new terms; 7) borrowings from Chinese idioms.

4.7. Expansion of British idiomatic system

As in other languages expansion of British idiomatic system is realized by means of describing various fragments of day-to-day discourse in idioms. One and the same object of day-to-day routine may be used in different contexts: *better nature, one's true nature, against nature, second nature, to enter the field, to take the field, to stand one's ground, to be back to earth, to be down–to–earth, not for the world, world without end, to think the world of smb., red alert, to cut red tape, red herring, the red carpet, red light district, to paint the town red, (as) blue as the sky/heaven/the sea as green as emerald/sea, yellow jersey, in the pink (in the pink (of health)), yellow streak, brown study, true blue, red tape, black market.*

The most frequent British English idioms are as follows: *By the way* [BNC – 1520]; *In many ways* [BNC – 289]; *To make way for smb*. [BNC – 274]; *To lead the way* [BNC – 575]; *Black market* [BNC – 158]; *Red tape* [BNC – 130]; *To be down–to–earth* [BNC – 142]; *Silver lining* [BNC – 52]; *Mother*

earth [BNC – 40]; *To stand one's ground* [BNC – 78]; *Light at the end of the tunnel* [BNC – 34]; *Top dog* [BNC – 57]; *Second nature* [BNC – 80]; *Dark horse* [BNC – 20]; *To take the field* [BNC – 51]; *To enter the field* [BNC – 19]; *Under a cloud* [BNC – 34].

Resource saving of Chinese, Japanese and English idiomatic systems are achieved by the following common strategies: 1) alliteration, assonance; 2) 2-word idioms; 3) parallel constructions; 4) repetitions; 5) polysemy and synonymy; 6) decomposition of proverbs and sayings; 7) borrowings from other languages and literary works of native authors. This finding leads to the conclusion that the description of reality is driven by universal idiomatic mechanisms. Representatives of different nations have more common features, expressed idiomatically, rather than dividing aspects.

The results of our study have theoretical and practical applications. Theoretically speaking, we describe socio-cultural dynamics of idioms within the principle of information maximum. This principle can be further developed in various dimensions of Arts and Humanities. In practice the outcomes of our research are of much interest to experts, who study frequent narratives, typical of Chinese, Japanese and British cultures.

5. Conclusions

The communicative prism of idioms is conducive to our understanding of cultural reality of the past and the present. We perceive idioms as communicative fossils, shaping present socio-cultural existence through channelling verbalized cognitive practices of the past. Communicative units' analysis stresses the fact that it is possible to obtain a large number of common features in Chinese, Japanese and British cultures. These cultures use shared mechanisms of reflecting reality and have a lot of points of similarity. The analysis of 'eye' component idioms demonstrated common perceptive mechanisms among the representatives of Eastern and Western cultures.

Structurally speaking, all idiomatic systems follow the same patterns of expansion, idealization and resource saving. The results of these findings are relevant to multicultural societies, migration adaptation practices and global business development. Further research should contribute to analysis of expansion and resource saving strategies, frequency indexes of other idiom clusters and languages [13, 14].

References

[1]   K. Terlouw, GeoJournal, **77(5)** (2012) 707-721.
[2]   S. Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2002, 15.
[3]   E. Abbassi, K. Kahlaoui, M.A. Wilson and Y. Joanette, Cogn. Affect. Behav. Ne., **11(3)** (2011) 372-385.

[4]   A. Panchenko, P. Romanov, O. Morozova, H. Naets, A. Philippovich, A. Romanov, C. Fairon, *Serelex: Search and Visualization of Semantically Related Words*, Proc. of the 35th European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR 2013), Springler's Lecture Notes on Computer Science, Moscow, 2013, 837-840.

[5]   A. Whittaker, *Britain: Be Fluent in British Life and Culture*, Thorogood Publishing Ltd., London, 2009, 40.

[6]   M. Storry and P. Childs, *British Cultural Identities*, Routledge, London, 2002, 16.

[7]   J. Zhou, *A study on the structure of Chinese lexicon (hanyu cihui jiegoulun)*, in Chinese, Shanghai Dictionary Press, Shanghai, 2004, 230.

[8]   W.Z. Sun, *A study on Chinese idioms (hanyu shuyuxue)*, in Chinese, Jilin Education Press, Jilin, 1989, 77.

[9]   H. Zhang, Y. Yang, J. Gu and F. Ji, J. Neurolinguist., **26** (2013) 89-112.

[10] H.P. Peng and M.C. Chang, European Journal of the History of Economic Thought, **19(5)** (2012) 691-708.

[11] C.E. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana III, 1949, 20-80.

[12] G.A. Golytsin and V.M. Petrov, *Social and Cultural Dynamics: Long-term Tendencies (Information Approach)*, in Russian, Kom Kniga, Moscow, 2005, 24-27.

[13] N. Zavyalova, World Applied Sciences Journal (Education, Law, Economics, Language and Communication), **27** (2013) 445-449.

[14] N. Zavyalova, World Applied Sciences Journal (Education, Law, Economics, Language and Communication), **27** (2013) 439-444.