

## Idioms from various languages

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Source: Huber-Kriegler, Lázár & Strange (2003). *Mirrors and windows: An intercultural communication textbook*, pp. 77–79.

### Estonian:

- “Rootsi kardinad” – Swedish curtains, meaning prison
- “Korras nagu Norras” – in order as in Norway, meaning in perfect order
- “Hiina viisakus” – Chinese politeness, meaning great politeness
- “Hädas nagu mustlane mädas” – in trouble like a Gypsy in a swamp, meaning being in great trouble
- “Igavene juut” – eternal Jew, meaning a homeless wanderer
- “Vene kirvest ujuma” – to swim like a Russian axe, meaning to be a poor swimmer
- “Vene värk” – Russian stuff, meaning a lousy thing

### French:

- “Etre soul comme un Polonais” – to be drunk as a Pole, meaning to be very drunk
- “Boire à la russe” – to drink up and throw away your glass
- “C’est du chinois / de l’hébreu” – this is Chinese / Hebrew, meaning this is incomprehensible

### Hungarian:

- “Cigány útra ment” – it went down the Gypsy road, meaning a piece of food going down the wrong way and making you cough
- “Még akkor is, ha cigány gyerekek potyognak az égből” – even if Gypsy kids fall from the sky, meaning despite the greatest difficulties
- “Csehül állunk” – we stand like Czechs, meaning we don’t have much money left

### Polish:

- “Polak, gdy głodny, to zły” – a Pole, when hungry, is angry
- “Mądry Polak po szkodzie” – a Pole is wise after damage has been done
- “Austriackie gadanie” – Austrian talk (gab), meaning old wives’ tales
- “Udawać Greka” – to pretend to be Greek, meaning to pretend that one does not know what is going on
- “Siedzieć jak na tureckim kazaniu” – to sit as if one were attending a Turkish sermon, meaning not to understand what’s going on

### Romanian:

- “Nu fa pe turcu!” – do not act as a Turk, meaning do not act as if you did not understand
- “Este turc, nu te poti intelege cu el!” – he is Turkish, we cannot get along
- “Minte de evreu!” – Jewish intelligence, meaning very intelligent



## Russian:

"Незванный гость хуже татарина" – uninvited guests are worse than Tatars

"вечный жид" – circling, travelling Jew

"китайская грамота" – a Chinese book, meaning it's incomprehensible

"китайские церемонии" – Chinese ceremonies, meaning superfluous compliments

## Slovenian:

"Biti španska vas" – that is a Spanish village to me, meaning you are completely ignorant about something.

"Narediti se Francoza" – to act as a Frenchman, meaning you intentionally act as if you didn't know something