



# Srovnání idiomů vyjadřujících množství v českém a anglickém jazyce

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# Comparison of Czech and English Idioms Containing Expressions of Quantity

## Bachelor thesis

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Cílem bakalářské práce je porovnat anglické a české idiomy, které obsahují číslovky, z hlediska významu a struktury.

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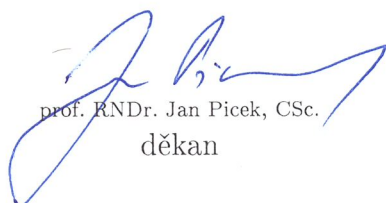
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## **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá komparací anglických a českých idiomů vyjadřujících množství. Práce se skládá z teoretické a praktické části. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na definování pojmu idiom, jeho charakteristické rysy a srovnání idiomu s ostatními ustálenými slovními spojeními. Praktická část analyzuje idiomy dle příslušných kategorií.

## **Klíčová slova**

Anglický jazyk, český jazyk, číslovky, ekvivalenty, idiom, původ, srovnání, význam

**Abstract**

The bachelor thesis compares English and Czech idioms containing expressions of quantity. The thesis consists of two parts: theory and analysis. Theoretical part focuses on the definitions of idiom, characteristic features and compares idioms with other figures of speech. Practical part analyzes idioms according to corresponding categories.

**Keywords**

Comparison, Czech language, English language, equivalents, expressions of quantity, meaning, origin



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## Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to compare Czech and English idioms which contain the expression of quantity. I decided to choose this topic because idioms are one thing many languages (including Czech and English) have in common and I think that an investigation of close counterparts of various idioms in these languages is an interesting aspect of linguistics. The reason why I decided to compare idioms especially containing expression of quantity is that I am quite interested in numerology. Numbers can show us which life path to choose when we need to make a decision. They can give us a clue about people's character, to give us motivation to do something or even the purpose of life. Furthermore, people attach great importance to numbers as they count money in everyday life. For the time being it is not possible to live without utilising numbers.

Idioms play an important part in a language and they can be a good indication of a learner's level of proficiency. There is a variety of idioms on expressing quantity. They are often utilised and quite common in daily conversations, which means it is a good idea to pay attention to them, their use and to compare them to the Czech language.

I consider comparing of Czech and English idioms dealing with counting, numbers and quantities as an interesting opportunity to learn more about this specific topic. With Czech being a language that bears many differences from the English language, I am confident that this work will deliver an interesting outlook on the comparison of both of these languages.

In Chapter One, I introduce idioms in general and present their definitions. The sources used will not only be linguists who were engaged in the studies

of idioms but also printed and online dictionaries. Various properties and attributes of idioms will also be included, along with the differences between idioms, metaphors and other figures of speech that may have similar properties and therefore are likely to become confused between each other.

Chapter Two contains descriptions of the languages included in this thesis: Czech and English. The focus will be specifically on the key morphological differences between these languages in order to better understand the later comparison of idioms.

In Chapter Three I introduce the origins of some idioms expressing quantity or containing numbers. Special attention is given to the most commonly used numbers and examples are given throughout.

Chapter Four deals with introducing and briefly describing the main sources of research used in the analysis itself.

Chapter Five introduces the methodology and research questions.

The analysis is reached in Chapter Six. I analyse and compare idioms that express quantity in the two previously mentioned languages. The level of correspondence between the idioms and their equivalents is included.

In Chapter Seven, statistics from the comparisons are provided. The Conclusion is drawn from these.

The Conclusion contains the overall summary of this thesis.

The Bibliography and List of Tables and Charts are documented in the last pages of this thesis.

# **1 Idioms and Idiomatics**

“Idioms (and phraseology/ study of idioms) are amongst the most difficult but interesting part of each language” (Kvetko 2009a, 13). Idioms represent an important part of a language as they are used by a lot of native and a number of non-native speakers of many languages in the world. If a person wants to increase their language skills and wants to understand native speakers, it is necessary to learn idiomatic expressions that are used in everyday English. However, “Teaching and learning idioms is one of the most difficult areas in which teachers and learners are involved” (Fotovatnia and Khaki 2012, 3).

Although there are many definitions of the word idiom, it is not easy to find a proper definition which would epitomise the character of them all. Every definition differs in one aspect or another, however the basis remains the same.

This is why several definitions are included in this chapter. While no single definition may do the term idiom justice, a collection of them may help paint a clearer image of what exactly an idiom is. The following parts present definitions as provided by various dictionaries and multiple linguists, as well as the differences between idioms and other figures of speech.

## **1.1 Dictionary Definitions**

Here is a multitude of definitions which were found in several well-known dictionaries. Some of the dictionaries share almost identical definitions, and others have their own. However, these definitions share the same basis and differ in minor aspects.

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (1995, 163) says: “The meaning of the idiomatic expression cannot be deduced by examining the meanings of the constituent lexemes. And the expression is fixed, both grammatically and lexically.”

Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (1998, Introduction) cites:

“Idioms are a colourful and fascinating aspect of English. They are commonly used in all types of language, informal and formal, spoken and written. (...) Idioms often have a stronger meaning than non-idiomatic phrases. (...) Idioms may also suggest a particular attitude of the person using them, for example disapproval, humour, exasperation or admiration so you must use them carefully.”

The Merriam-Webster (the official online version of the Merriam-Webster dictionary) online dictionary defines an idiom as “an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own” (“Idiom;” *Merriam-Webster*, n.d.).

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus, an idiom is: “a group of words whose meaning considered as a unit is different from the meanings of each word considered separately” (“Idiom,” n.d.)

The Oxford English Dictionary notes: “Idioms are a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., used in a distinctive way in a particular language, dialect, or language variety; spec. a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from the meanings of the individual words” (“Idiom,” n.d.).

The Macmillan Online Dictionary describes an idiom as “an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words” (“Idiom,” n.d.).

According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English an idiom is “a phrase which means something different from the meaning of the separate words from which it is formed” (in Kavka 2003, 5).

However, these definitions are retrieved from sources that deal with language in general and are therefore still too nebulous to be utilised in this thesis.

## **1.2 Definitions from Linguists**

Idioms by themselves have captured the attention of many linguists in the past and in the present day. As the nature of these phrases is rather complex, there is a significant interest in them.

“Idioms are anomalies of language, mavericks of the linguistic world. The very word *idiom* comes from the Greek *idios*, ‘one's own, peculiar, strange’. Idioms therefore break the normal rules.” (Flavell and Flavell 1992, 6).

There are many ways in which a linguist can think of defining the concept of an idiom. They can be viewed in the context of different languages, as Palmer (1981, 99) has: “We could, perhaps, define idioms in terms of non-equivalence in other languages. They cannot be directly translated.” By this, Palmer means an idiom is virtually untranslatable by normal standards. The idiom “Kick the bucket” cannot be translated directly into Czech, as it would not make sense in the raw form translation (Palmer 1981, 99).

A term Palmer (1981, 98) uses to explain idioms is “opaqueness”. According to him, the overall meaning of the phrase does not relate to the individual components, that it is “opaque”. He also continues to say that it is not an easy task, to decide what is and what is not “opaque”.

Seidl and McMordie (1978, 4) claim that "...an idiom is a number of words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone. The way in which the words are put together is often odd, illogical or even grammatically incorrect."

Kavka (2003, 12) states that the idiomatic expressions are "multiword chunks consisting of elements, or, constituents, which are bound together lexically and syntactically."

Čermák (2007, 142) uses a definition which says that an idiom is "a unique and fixed combination of at least two elements some of which do not function in the same way in any other combination (of the kind) or occur in a highly restricted number."

Kvetko (2009a, 17) denotes an idiom as "an institutionalised multi-word expression (a phrase or a sentence) with semantic integrity, certain imagery, and certain lexico-grammatical fixedness. (...) An idiom is here understood as an ideal and relatively fixed complex of variants and grammatical forms used in concrete utterances."

Langlotz (2006, 5) states: "An idiom is an institutionalised construction that is composed of two or more lexical items and has the composite structure of a phrase or semi-clause, which may feature constructional idiosyncrasy. (...) Its semantic structure is derivationally non-compositional. Moreover, it is considerably fixed and collocationally restricted."

Contrary to dictionary definitions which describe an idiom quite simply, the linguist definitions are more complex and not easily understandable to a layman. In the dictionary definitions the prevalent element shows that it is not possible to deduce the meaning of an idiom from the separate meanings of the constituents.



Although the linguists describe an idiom in a more complicated way, they agree on the same key feature of an idiom, which is also its non-compositionality.

### **1.3 Classifications and Specific Elements of Idioms**

Naturally, idioms have different elements and types, which will be listed. There are many ways in taking apart and classifying idioms, as almost every linguist describes the specific characteristics of an idiom quite differently. Here is a list of some of them.

Most of the linguists claim that idioms oppose the principle of compositionality which says that: “The meaning of a complex expression is a function of the meaning of its parts and of the syntactic rules by which they are combined” (Partee, Meulen and Wall 1990, 318). The linguists often use the term non-compositionality of idioms that points to the fact that “the meaning of the whole idiom cannot be predicted from the meanings of its respective components” (Kavka 2003, 30). However, not every idiom meets this requirement. There is a certain amount of idioms which can be understood from the literal meaning of its constituents.

Cristina Cacciari and Patrizia Tabossi (1993) shed some light on the structural properties of idioms. According to Cacciari and Tabossi and contrary to dominant conceptions, idioms are not frozen and limited in their forms, but, as written in *The American Journal of Psychology* (Keysar et al. 1995), “are actually not just semantically productive, but syntactically flexible as well. Idioms do indeed undergo many transformations in order to suit the situation” such as in the phrase “to spill the beans” it is possible to say it in passive form “the beans were spilled”. It shows that the form of the idiom is not frozen.

There are some approaches to illustrate the variety of idiom's flexibility. Here are demonstrated some of them.

“One version of the traditional approach has assumed that idioms are represented as unitary lexical entries comparable to long words” (Keysar et al. 1995). According to this approach, an idiom is understood as a total of single lexical units.

On the other hand, by taking the lexical approach, linguists Anne Cutler and Botelho da Silva (Keysar et al. 1995) take a contrary stance to the traditional approach, noting that for this model to be accurate, the meaning of the idiom and its form should be connected more directly. It follows that the meaning of an idiom directly depends on the form it is represented by. By other words, an idiom should be understood as the unique lexical complex regardless the lexical meanings of its components. “Using an incidental memory task, they found that subjects were more likely to recall the exact surface form of an idiomatic phrase than of a literal phrase, which was more likely to be paraphrased” (Keysar et al. 1995). It follows that these discoveries are in compliance with a perspective of idioms as unitary lexical units.

Glucksberg (2001, 75) proposes that it is possible for some component words contained in an idiom to contribute to its meaning. An example can be some words obtaining a new meaning after being frequently used in an idiom (e.g. to spill the beans, meaning to tell the truth has resulted the word spill to acquire a new synonym: tell).

Fernando and Flavell (1981, 47) go further by stating that there are five traits of an idiomatic phrase:

“The compositional sum of an idiom's constituents does not equal the meaning of the idiom.

It is an item that has a homonymous literal equivalent or at least has individual elements that are literal, although the idiom as a whole would not be interpreted in a literal manner.

- a) It is transformationally deficient in some way.
- b) It shapes a portion of a set expression in a language.
- c) It is institutionalised.”

Andreas Langlotz (2006, 2) emphasizes the following features of an idiom:

1. “semantic characteristics
2. structural peculiarities and irregularities and
3. constraints or restrictions on their lexicogrammatical behaviour which cannot be explained by the general grammatical rules of the given language. Nevertheless, idioms are
4. conventional expressions that belong to the grammar of a given language
5. fulfil specific discourse-communicative functions .”

By these statements Langlotz points out that idioms break some grammatical rules and may demonstrate indications of irregularity. Furthermore, idioms are considered as lexical units of the language and its' capacity is to convey experience or occasions.

Kavka (2003, 20) emphasizes idioms' conventionality: “it is conventionality that is the fundamental characteristics of all idiomatic expressions possible”. It means that idioms are accepted as lexical units of the language. He (2003, 17) adds that idioms “are typically associated with relatively informal and colloquial registers, namely with popular speech and oral culture.” Although it is possible to find a small group of formal idioms, idioms are more likely to be used in colloquial speech.

Another key feature of an idiom is that it is invariable and tight. In most of the cases it is not possible to change subject, verb or object. However, there is a minority of idioms that allow changes especially in person or time.

Kvetko (2009b, 103) summarizes the specific characteristics as follows:

- a. “They have a multi-word character.
- b. They are institutionalised - i.e., considered as units by a language community (they operate as single semantic units).
- c. They are relatively fixed/ stable combinations of words.
- d. Their meaning is non-literal, but fully or partially figurative and unique.”

The specific features of idioms described by various linguists are listed above. However, linguists also describe the classification of idioms in different ways.

Glucksberg (2001, 74) classifies idioms according to their transparency, or “opaqueness”, as was mentioned before.

Opaque idioms – the relations between the parts of the idiom and its meaning are opaque, but the meanings of the words individually can constrain use and interpretation (e.g., *pulling my leg*)

Transparent idioms – contain close semantic bonds between parts of the idiom and parts of its meaning (e.g., *keep it zipped*)

According to Kvetko (2009a, 27), if a construction of an idiom is taken into consideration it is possible to divide the idioms into phrasal and sentence idioms.

“Phrasal idioms have the structure of a phrase of different types.” Phrasal idioms can be further divided into two groups: “syntagmatic idioms and minimal idioms.

## **Phrasal idioms:**

### Syntagmatic idioms

- verbal idioms- idioms with a verbal syntagmatic structure such as V+N, V+ prep N, V+ Adv, V+ Adj, etc. (e.g. promise the moon, break down, play to the gallery)
- non-verbal idioms- their structure does not contain a verbal syntagma (e.g. big wheel, once in a blue moon)

Minimal idioms- contain one full (lexical) word and one or more functional words (e.g. like hell, on the quiet)

**Sentence idioms** are idioms with a complete sentence (clause) structure of different type (simple, compound, complex sentence, etc.) (e.g. all that glitters is not gold, let sleeping dogs lie)” (Kvetko 2009a, 27).

Linguists take different approaches in describing key features of idioms and classifying them as described above. Some of the key features, which were described in this chapter, are utilized to create a narrower group of idioms for the purpose of this thesis (e.g. conventionality or grammatical fixedness). Also the classification of idioms is included in this chapter because it relates to the characteristics of idioms and moreover it will be utilised in the analysis of idioms.

## **1.4 Differences between Idioms, Metaphors and Other Figures of Speech**

Idioms can often be confused with other figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, sayings, collocations etc. They have similar properties to idioms such as “multi-word character, institutionalization, relative fixedness, functional

and semantic unity, etc.” (Kvetko 2009a, 19). Therefore it is sometimes difficult to recognize which figure of speech is it.

It may not be easy to discern an idiom from a metaphor, as the first often involves the latter, among other types of figuration (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994, 492). A metaphor and an idiom share a common property when it comes to their use. When utilising either, a person chooses to say one thing, but means another. For clarification, here are examples of an idiom and a metaphor that demonstrate this property:

When somebody uses an idiom in a sentence such as “I killed two birds with one stone by taking that walk.”, we are not expected to take the literal meaning of actually killing two birds, but to see beyond that and understand that in fact, the person is trying to say that they managed to accomplish two things with a single action, in this case, a walk.

A metaphor would work similarly in this case. For example, when a person says “I’m not doing well in work this week; it’s a sea of troubles.”, they do not mean a literal sea of troubles, but troubling occurrences or a large number of problems they are facing at work this week.

So what is the difference between an idiom and a metaphor? Contrary to an idiom, a metaphor has the form of a comparison of two objects which are different. In a sentence where a metaphor is used, one word is replaced by another, or even more, to bring the meaning of the situation closer to the listener or reader. A metaphor is used to paint a more descriptive picture. For example, instead of saying “I have a lot of homework to do.”, one could instead use a metaphor and say “I have a mountain of homework to do.”

It is also possible to immediately understand the meaning of a metaphor in a sentence as it is possible to deduce its meaning from the rest of the text, compared to an idiom, which, most of the time, needs to be known to a person beforehand.

Another figure of speech being somewhat similar to idioms is a simile, although a chance to confuse them is minimal. The difference is that similes are more obvious comparison tools and therefore it is not difficult to recognize them. An expression that can be deemed a simile uses the words like or as to describe the comparison (e.g. “Donna stood as still as a statue.”). “Supposed qualities/ characteristics of animals and things are applied to people” (Kvetko 2009a, 21). They are also likely to be immediately understood without prior knowledge of the expression.

Also saying, sometimes called a proverb, can be confused with an idiom. The definition, according to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, says that it is “an old and well-known phrase that expresses an idea that most people believe is true.” (e.g. “The boot/ shoe is on the other foot – Karta se obrátila.”)

Collocation is also not to be confused with an idiom. Although they are both a sub-type of a phraseme, a collocation is a small number (two, most of the time) of words which frequently appear together (e.g. a hard question or once upon a time). Collocations are dominantly compositional, whereas when it comes to idioms, the meaning is developed beyond the literal meaning of the expression.

This chapter shows the existence of more multi-word expressions which share common features with idioms. As was noted, all of these figures of speech (excluding idioms) can be relatively easily understood without needing an additional explanation. Regarding idioms, the literal meaning and the meaning of the entire

expression usually differ completely. However, there are always expressions, for which it is not clear where they belong.

## **1.5 Definition Utilised in this Thesis**

Idioms, as seen in the previous chapters, are not clearly limited even with several definitions at hand. As previously expressed, idioms contrast in their characteristics and differ on a scale from those a person cannot comprehend without preceding knowledge and whose meaning cannot be foreseeable from their word form to those expressions which present a fairly metaphorical meaning frequently simple to identify and which can be even changed to some degree.

In this thesis, idioms are expressed by a phrase or a whole sentence.

However, linguists describe the key features of the idioms in quite different ways, there is a certain number of characteristics on which the linguist agree. Just some of these key features were chosen for the purpose of the investigation of idioms in this thesis so that it produces a narrower group of idioms.

To sum up, the following list of key characteristics is what will be used to define an idiom for the purpose of this thesis.

- 1) (Non-) compositionality.
- 2) Idioms are grammatically and lexically fixed.
- 3) Informality.
- 4) Conventionality.
- 5) Must contain an expression of quantity.



## 1.6 Expressions of quantity

This thesis does not deal with idioms of all kinds in general. Expressions of quantity play a role in the selection process of the specific idioms.

The expressions of quantity most of the time stand before the noun phrase. They give us information about how much or how many there is. The expression of quantity can function as a determiner, a pronoun or else another word class which does not modify a noun but stands in a sentence independently. Therefore determiners which express the quantity were utilized in this thesis because according to Quirk (1985, 253), “determiners occur before the noun acting as head of the noun phrase (or before its pre-modifiers).” Determiners are divided into three groups: pre-determiners, central-determiners and post-determiners. (Quirk 1985, 253)

Pre-determiners communicating the quantity include words such both, half, all, multipliers like twice, three times or fractions like one-third. “They can occur before certain central determiners.” (Quirk 1985, 257)

Central determiners, except for definite and indefinite articles and some other words which are not concerned in this thesis, also include quantifiers. A quantifier can play the role of the determiner. A quantifier is a word which precedes and modifies a noun and denotes the quantity (e.g. all, each, much, no). There is also a dictionary definition defined by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary which says that a quantifier is a word “that quantifies as:

- a) a prefixed operator that binds the variables in a logical formula  
by specifying their quantity

- b) a limiting noun modifier (as five in “the five young men”)  
expressive of quantity and characterized by occurrence before  
the descriptive adjectives in a noun phrase.”

Pre-determiners and central-determiners are followed by post-determiners. They cover cardinal numerals (e.g. one, six, etc.), ordinal numerals (e.g. first, fifth, etc.), general ordinals (e.g. next, other, last), closed-class quantifiers (e.g. few, many, little) and open-class quantifiers (e.g. a number of, a lot of).

A pronoun, generally speaking, is a word which replaces a noun or a noun phrase (Quirk 1985, 335).

These types of word classes are used in this thesis to specify an expression of quantity.

## **1.7 When an Idiom Is Used**

As was mentioned before, idioms are more often than not used in daily, casual speech and more frequently occupy the informal type. In England, idioms are popular in promotional material, adverts, entertainment shows, TV series, films or tabloid magazines, to name a few (O’Dell and McCarthy 2010, 6). A majority of these platforms seek to inhibit a friendly, non-serious atmosphere with the reader, viewer or listener, and therefore opt to use a tool most often used in informal language (for example the magazine *Pick Me Up*).

On the other hand, more formal instances tend to not utilise idioms, although this is not a rule. News channels opting for a more serious demeanour when reporting a story which they need to portray as important do not choose an informal manner

of conveying it (for example BBC News). However sometimes this can change with the reported topic and what it is related to (e.g. a televised hearing of a murderer would not foster the same approach as news relating to a singer's concert) (Bell 2016).

## **2 The Czech and English Language**

This chapter outlines the basic differences between Czech and English language. Since this thesis aims to compare idioms from Czech and English it is quite important to know in which linguistic elements these two languages differ because these differences may be reflected later in the analysis of idioms. The languages can be divided according to the main features of their grammatical construction into analytic and synthetic languages.

### **2.1 English**

The English Language is known as an analytic language. According to Eifring (2015, 5) “languages in which a word tends to consist of only one morpheme are called analytic.” High importance is placed on the order of words in a sentence, as they are key to the resulting meaning (Eifring 2015, 5). English, as an analytic language, does not use inflectional morphemes, (which alter the mood, number, person, tense or aspect of a verb) to convey grammatical relations, or rarely does so. However, English has evolved from being a synthetic language with many of these inflectional morphemes (Eifring 2015, 5).

### **2.2 Czech**

The Czech language is what is known as a synthetic language, along with many other Indo-European languages, such as Polish or Ukrainian (Čermák 2004, 69). According to Eifring (2015, 5) “languages in which a word tends to consist of more than one morpheme are called synthetic.” Often, synthetic languages are compared

to analytical languages, as they differ in their use of inflectional morphemes.  
“Synthetic languages have plenty of inflection, derivation and compounding”  
(Eifring 2015,5).

### **3 Etymologies of Idioms Containing Numbers**

Idioms containing numbers passed into common speech of the deeper structures of religion, magic and history (Fuchs 1996). They were evolving gradually through the ages and their content changed partially or completely (Kvetko 2009a, 23). Some come from counting livestock and keeping records in the household, with day-to-day dealings with grain, money, animals and so on (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Many numbers have special properties, mathematically, and according to some cultures are associated with special powers (Fuchs 1996). As will be mentioned later, the number zero not only took a while to be accepted in some regions, but was also regarded with curiosity and suspicion (Ifrah 2000, 380). However, zero is not the only number considered to have a special meaning. Below are some examples of these numbers and their use in idioms, along with their origins, as proposed by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, Oxford Dictionary of Idioms and the Dictionary of Idioms and their Origins (if either dictionary failed to provide a definition or the etymology, alternative online sources were utilised).

#### **3.1 Number Zero**

The origin of this word came to English from French. The number was not immediately understood or accepted and was treated with suspicion, especially in Europe. Incidentally the number zero is considered as “The Magic Number” in programming (Ifrah 2000, 383). Here are some examples of idioms containing this number:

To “zero in on someone/something” means to have a precise aim on a given target (“Matt zeroed in on me when he found out I played a significant role in the operation.”). The origin of this phrase may come from fine-tuning an aiming mechanism on a weapon to minimise the difference between the location of the sight points and the place where the projectile ends up.

“Zero hour” is a term describing a critical time in an operation, often the start of the event (“Zero hour came at 20:00 and we set out into the wild.”). “Zero hour” originates from the military, referring to the count of zero being reached during a countdown. It first started to be used in the First World War. Terms with a similar meaning include “D-day” or “Breaking point”.

### **3.2 Number One**

The first known use of the word for number one was recorded some time before the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Number one is also used to portray a single person (e.g. “One must be careful during these dangerous times.” or “I, for one, do not feel the need to accept bribes.”).

“At one blow” describes an action which was accomplished at once with a solitary, unequivocal move.

“The one that got away” means that something attractive has escaped. This expression originates from the fisherman's traditional method of relating the story of an enormous fish that has figured out how to escape after being practically caught: “you should have seen the one that got away. “

“One too many for” is a popular idiom meaning for something being too much to handle after crossing a certain limit (e.g. “I couldn’t take it anymore, the beating

was one too many for me and I passed out.”). The phrase comes from referring to drinking too many alcoholic beverages (“She’s had one too many beers tonight.”).

### **3.3 Number Two**

The number two is perhaps not as visible as the number one, but still holds a significance in language. While the word itself not always being directly used, its synonyms and related words are very common. Good examples could be the word “twins” (directly drawn from the word two) or the word “pair”, (describing two identical, or at least similar items or two people), or the word “couple”, bearing a similar meaning to “pair”. According to Merriam- Webster the word for two itself was also first used some time before the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

To “kill two birds with one stone” means to achieve, complete or get rid of two things or problems with one action (e.g. Instead of taking two separate trips, we can just take one and drop off the parcel when we go and walk the dog.”). One of the origin theories for this idiom comes from the Greek mythological tale of Daedalus and Icarus. Daedalus made wings from feathers which he obtained by hitting two birds with one stone. Other theories come from the Romans or 17<sup>th</sup> century Britain.

To “put two and two together” means to figure something out by discerning or deducing something, as in correctly guessing something, drawing from what a person has seen, heard or experienced (e.g. Tara and Wilson have been secretly fighting over who gets custody over Emily, but she put two and two together and found out about them by herself anyway.”). “Put two and two together and getting five” is also an idiom used, however was derived from the original halfway through the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



### **3.4 Number Three**

Often considered a magical number, three is widely used in song names, stories and legends (The Three Musketeers, The Three Blind Mice, Goldilocks and The Three Bears, etc.) and of course, idioms (Fuchs 1996, 26). The word, similarly to one and two, came to exist before the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

“Good things come in threes” directly refers to the rule of three. The origin of this expression is difficult to pin down, as it is universally accepted. Related to this are other similar idioms, such as “trouble comes in threes” or “death comes in threes”. Interestingly enough, the number three is more often associated with good luck, rather than the opposite, yet there are plenty of negative idioms that contradict this notion.

A “three ring circus” is a term that describes something utterly confusing and bewildering, but can also refer to something entertaining. The first known use of the phrase came to light in around 1902. It is based on a circus that hosts performances in three separate areas during the same time, hence the association with confusion and entertainment. Examples of this idiom used in everyday language can be as follows: “I am not interested in this class becoming a three-ring circus. I want you to all work hard at your work and take your studies seriously.” or “The politics in this country have taken the form of a three-ring circus; nothing seems to be done and everything seems to be upside-down!”.

### **3.5 Number Twelve**

The number twelve is also often referred to as a dozen. It is also multiplied and divided by the number two in many cases (e.g. “I collected half a dozen eggs

from the chickens today, Ma!” or “The tradesman wanted almost two-dozen silver pieces for the horse.”). The origin of the word dozen comes from the Latin “duodecim” (also related to “duodecimal” in English today) which later filtered through to the Middle English “dozeine”. It first appeared around the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

“A dime a dozen” refers to something being too common to have any real value (e.g. “You may think you are special, but pretty girls like you come a dime a dozen!” or “Honestly, Reginald, what you’re offering me comes a dime a dozen round the corner and is not worth even half of what you want for it.”). This idiom is allegedly of American origin (dimes are used in the U.S.A., not in Europe) from around the late ‘30s. However, if we look even further into the past, we can find that around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more than 100 years earlier, there were newspapers which literally sold for a dime per dozen papers. Whether or not the phrase was derived from this however, is not known.

To “talk nineteen to the dozen” means that somebody is speaking very fast, to the point of either not making sense, confusing listeners or simply not being clear enough to foster comprehension (e.g. By his third beer, he was talking nineteen to the dozen and nobody understood what he was going on about.”). The etymology of this idiom points to old copper mines which were often flooded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Steam-powered pumps were brought in to clear the water out and worked at a maximum of 19,000 gallons of water pumped out for every dozen bushels of coal used to fuel them. This tale is often associated with the phrase, however there is no way to be sure whether or not this is the true origin.

### **3.6 Other Numbers**

Naturally, other numbers than the above mentioned are used in idioms. Of course, even among the less popular numbers there are some favourites, especially if the number is round (e.g. 10, 500, 6000, etc.) or has a special meaning in a culture. Below are some examples of idioms which contain numbers which do not appear so frequently:

“Cats have nine lives” is a good example of the number nine seldom appearing in common speak. It stems from the famous myth of cats having multiple lives due to their dexterity and ability to land on all fours when falling. (e.g. Our cat Myrtle got hit by a car and survived; she must have nine lives!”).

For a person to get “Forty winks” means they are taking a nap of a short duration, usually in the course of the day and often not in bed (e.g. “You look tired Agatha, why don’t you take forty winks on the sofa over there?”). The origin of this phrase differs in various sources. One of them says that the first known use of this phrase was in 1821 by a man called Dr. Kitchiner in his self-help guide.

### **3.7 Words Describing Amounts**

There are many words other than numbers for the purpose of describing a quantity of something. They are also used in idioms, however obviously do not fall into the same category as numbers, especially as they are less specific and precise than them. Examples of such words are as follows: a lot of, many, few, all, both, plenty of and so on.

To “have plenty of guts” means that a person is brave and has a lot of courage (e.g. “I heard what you said to old man Jenkins the other day, it must have taken

a lot of guts!”). The idea that bowels contain the spirit of a person dates back to before the 14<sup>th</sup> century. From this, it is plausible that guts have become synonymous with courage and spirit.

If a person is considered to be “all thumbs”, it usually means they are clumsy with everything they do (e.g. “Oh no Deirdre, don’t let Horace touch the soup, you know he’s all thumbs!”). or “I couldn’t possibly carry that out so quickly, I never learn; I’m all thumbs!”). This phrase originates from the Collection of John Heywood from 1546.

## **4 Research Sources**

This chapter describes the most utilized research sources. For the main source of choosing idioms expressing quantity, I used the Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (CIDI) which not only contains most idioms in the English language and their explanations, but also provides examples for the reader to better understand the meanings. Oxford Dictionary of Idioms (ODEI) was also one of the main sources of choosing English idioms.

For finding equivalents to the chosen English idioms, I used a variety of resources including Lingea Lexicon 5 and other sources listed below.

If no suitable equivalent could be found using the above sources, I decided to use *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* to find either an idiom which was close to the original or an expression suitable enough.

### **4.1 The Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms**

The Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (CIDI) contains over 7000 British, Australian and American idioms with clear explanations and example sentences. The dictionary also has a section devoted to sorting idioms by topic, which is useful for people getting acquainted with the use of certain idioms in casual conversations. The Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms does not only contain traditional, pure idioms, but also includes idiomatic compounds, similes and other comparisons, clichés, sayings and exclamations. The etymology of some idioms is also given, in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the meanings. The dictionary also notes whether the expression is American, British,

Australian, or a combination of any nation, along with whether or not the expression is formal or informal.

## **4.2 The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms**

The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms contains over 5000 idioms explaining their meaning and some of the idioms also present their origin. The dictionary also includes metaphorical phrases, similes, sayings, and proverbs. The dictionary does not only contain traditional idioms but also contains more than 350 new idioms. The dictionary also notes whether the expression is formal or informal.

## **4.3 Lingea Lexicon 5**

Since Lingea is a company that manufactures dictionaries and other aids for learning a foreign language in electronic and print form, the electronic platinum version of *Lingea Lexicon 5* (made available in 2008) dictionary was one of my choices when it came to translating an idiom. The dictionary features many different assets, for example pronunciation (a recording with a native speaker pronouncing the desired word), related words to the word that was just searched (synonyms, antonyms, phrases, fixed expressions, etc.), a grammatical overview, morphology tables and many other tools.

The *Lingea Lexicon 5* was the dominant source of finding the counterparts of idioms expressing quantity from English to Czech. No other dictionary I used provided as many translations as *Lingea Lexicon 5*.

#### **4.4 Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky**

*Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* contains four volumes of Czech proverbs, idioms, sayings, phrases and other well-known quotations which are widely used or popular in some other way. This dictionary could be considered as something of a Czech counterpart to the previously mentioned Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms. English, German, Russian and French equivalents of some of the idioms are also included in the volumes, which further aided my research on the translations of some idioms. These foreign language counterparts also have some aspects included about them (for example meanings) in relation to the Czech expressions.

*Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* does offer a significantly wide range of Czech idioms and similar expressions, however it does little in the terms of grammar characteristics, as they are written out only in the negative sense (i.e. notes only the grammatical and textual limitations of an expression) and leaves out aspects of formality.

#### **4.5 Velký anglicko-český (a česko-anglický) slovník (J. Fronek)**

*Velký anglicko-český (a česko-anglický) slovník* by Josef Fronek (published in 2007) is said to offer more than 200,000 English words and expressions and more than 400,000 Czech counterparts to them. This dictionary focuses especially on the contemporary vocabulary from the standard Czech and English language and includes slang, along with specialised terminology.

#### **4.6 Sbírka anglických idiomů & slangu (Tomáš Hrách)**

Sbírka Anglických Idiomů & Slangu was published in 1998 and contains more than 4000 English idioms and slang phrases. Alongside each expression, the Czech equivalent is also presented. This was one of the bilingual sources used to find Czech equivalents of the chosen English idioms, alongside *Lingea Lexicon 5* and the remaining dictionaries listed.

#### **4.7 Česko-anglický frazeologický slovník (Milena Bočánková, Miroslav Kalina)**

Česko-anglický frazeologický slovník was published in 2004 and provides around 7000 phrases. It poses as another helpful tool in acquiring Czech equivalents to English idioms. However, compared to the former Sbírka anglických idiomů & slangu by Hrách, the dictionary is centred around listing Czech idioms and similar expressions and then providing their equivalents in the English language.

#### **4.8 Anglicko-český slovník idiomů (Břetislav Kroulík, Barbora Kroulíková)**

The final addition to the utilised sources was Anglicko-český slovník idiomů. The dictionary was published in 1993. The layout differs from the previously mentioned sources in the way it presents the idioms. Instead of entire phrases, the idioms are sorted under words, much like definitions in a classic dictionary. This provided a convenient way of searching for the desired idioms.



These were the dictionaries I used to search for English and Czech equivalents for idioms expressing quantity in this thesis. The *Lingea Lexcion 5* proved to be the most useful when it came to finding many of the corresponding idioms, however the others offered different versions of the same expressions which was also beneficial.

## **5 Methodology**

The intention of the practical part of this thesis was to analyse the level of correspondence between the English idioms expressing quantity and their Czech equivalents and to divide the idioms according to their structure. Forty idioms expressing quantity were chosen to be researched. What is the expression of quantity is defined in Chapter 1.6. Only idioms with their Czech equivalents were used in this thesis. Idioms were processed mainly quantitatively. However, some of them were processed qualitatively and their different and common features or their origin was described. The idioms were classified according to Kvetko's division of idioms. Idioms were divided into the tables according to correspondence categories. In Chapter 6.1 idioms were divided according to the level of equivalence while in Chapter 6.2 idioms were classified according to their structure. All of the tables were ordered alphabetically. The table in Chapter 6.1 has three sections: The English idiom, the definition in English and its Czech equivalent or equivalents. Some idioms were described more profoundly (e.g. different or common features, the origin). The table in Chapter 6.2 has only one section: English idiom. The statistics were drawn from these tables.

### **5.1 The Corpus of Idioms**

It was necessary to create the corpus of idioms expressing quantity so that I could classify them. Several dictionaries mentioned above were used to compile the corpus.

First of all, I collected 40 English idioms expressing quantity which meet the requirements of the idiom's definition for this thesis. These idioms were found in monolingual dictionaries such as Oxford Dictionary of Idioms or Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms. Later on, I used bilingual dictionaries previously mentioned to find the Czech counterparts. I used at least two bilingual dictionaries for an idiom to verify whether the idiom really exists in Czech. I recorded collected information into the tables in Chapter 6.1.

## **5.2 Correspondence categories**

When idioms are compared in two languages there are “idiomatic and non-idiomatic equivalents (a word, collocation/free word group or explanation). (...) An equivalent might be described as an idiom, free collocation or a word which can substitute the idiom of L1 in L2 with no change of significance” (Kvetko 2009b, 52). It is crucial that the equivalent corresponds to the original idiom as much as possible. In this thesis mainly idiomatic equivalents interested me.

The most ideal approach to analyze English and Czech idioms is to draw a comparison between content equivalence only. It is important to focus on different and mutual features of the equivalents (Kvetko 2009a, 52).

According to Kvetko (2009a, 53) we can divide the equivalents into four groups: “absolute equivalents, relative equivalents, deceptive equivalents and non-corresponding equivalents.” Furthermore he claims that “equivalency is influenced also by different semantic structure of individual idioms, presence or absence of variants, geographical variations, stylistic value of particular idioms, and other factors” (Kvetko 2009a, 53). The categories in which the equivalents are divided are as follows:

**Absolute equivalents** – idioms matching in a significant number of aspects such as “identical imagery, symbolisms, and literally or almost literally corresponding lexical component of their basic forms” (Kvetko 2009a, 53). Absolute equivalents are further divided into absolute equivalents proper and similar equivalents.

- “**Absolute equivalence proper** - contain literally corresponding idioms, they have the same lexical and grammatical structures, symbolism and imagery in both languages (...), these literal parallels usually express general wisdom, common cultural and social tradition (e.g. forbidden fruit- zakázané ovoce, blue blood - modrá krev, all roads lead to Rome- všechny cesty vedou do Říma, sixth sense - šestý smysl, play second fiddle- hrát druhé housle)
- **Similar equivalence** - contain idioms of identical (very close) symbolism or imagery, but having some grammatically or lexically different items, expressions and forms determined usually by the rules and principles of the particular language, as inflectional and analytical character of the language, word order, usage of articles, etc. (e.g. all that glitters is not gold - není všechno zlato, co se třpytí: different word order, hang by a hair- viset na vlásku: different preposition, a diminutive word in Czech)” (Kvetko 2009a, 53).

**Relative equivalents** – idioms showing a level of correspondence which is however not substantial enough for them to be considered as absolute equivalents. Although they have the same or very similar meaning, they differ in symbolism, imagery and in lexical structure. They can be subdivided into two categories: relative equivalents proper and partially different equivalents.

- **Relative equivalents proper** - idioms which are totally lexically different and vary in “symbolism and imagery in L2 (e.g. out of the frying pan into the fire- z bláta do louže (\*from mud into a pond), red tape- úřední šiml (\*official grey horse), after all- konec konců etc.)” (Kvetko 2009a, 54).
- **Partially different equivalents** - this group contain idioms which differ in almost all aspects, “but containing at least one common (literally corresponding) lexical component, e.g. basic verb in the verbal idioms, adjective in adjectival idioms etc. (e.g. the last straw- poslední kapka (\*the last drop), once in a blue moon- jednou za uherský rok (\*once during a Hungarian year), miss the boat- zmeškat vlak (\*miss the train))” (Kvetko 2009a, 54).

**Deceptive equivalents-** it is a small group of idioms where idioms which seem to have “literally equal lexical components but in fact different meaning of the whole” belong. For example *lose heart* does not mean in Czech *ztratit srdce* but the right equivalent of Czech equivalent is *věšet hlavu* or *klesat na mysl* (Kvetko 2009a, 55). The Czech idiom *ztratit srdce* (*zamilovat se*) is *lose one’s heart*, or *fall in love*.

**Non-idiomatic equivalents** – idioms with no corresponding aspects. Some idioms may not have idiomatic equivalents in the second language.

Kvetko’s division according to idioms’ construction was mentioned in Chapter 1.3. Idioms are divided into phrasal idioms, which are furthermore subdivided, and sentence idioms.

Statistics with tables are provided in order to find out how many idioms correspond with their equivalents and how many idioms contained the same

expression of quantity in both languages compared. Another table provides the data concerning the division according to the idioms' structure.

### **5.3 Research Questions**

I was interested in the research of the correspondence level between Czech and English idioms. Therefore I ask how many idioms corresponded with their equivalents. Since I was focused on idioms expressing quantity, the question of whether the expressions of quantity of English idioms corresponded with their Czech equivalents was also raised. As the idioms were also classified according to their construction, I raised the question which category dominated with the amount of idioms to others. The research questions for this thesis are therefore as follows:

When the idioms are compared, is the number of absolute equivalents, relative equivalents, deceptive equivalents and non-corresponding equivalents similar, or is there a group of idioms which dominates?

Is the expression of quantity of English idioms expressed by the same expression for their Czech equivalents?

Which category dominates when we take idioms' construction into consideration.

## 6 Analysing Idioms

The list of all the idioms analyzed is as follows.

1. A piece of cake
2. All in.
3. All in one.
4. At the eleventh hour.
5. Be all of a piece.
6. Be at sixes and sevens over something.
7. Be behind the eight ball.
8. Be one-up.
9. Be six feet under.
10. Be three sheets to the wind.
11. By the dozen.
12. Come down on someone like a ton of bricks
13. Enough to make a cat laugh.
14. Fall between two stools.
15. Fifty-fifty.
16. First come, first served.
17. Foursquare.
18. Habit is second nature.
19. Have half an ear on something.
20. Have one foot in the grave.
21. Have two left feet.
22. Kill two birds with one stone.
23. Like a cat with nine lives.
24. Look like a million dollars.
25. No sweat.
26. Not have two pennies to rub together.
27. One swallow doesn't make a summer.
28. Put all eggs in one basket.
29. Put two and two together.
30. Six of one and half a dozen of the other.
31. Six of the best.
32. Sixth sense.

33. Take forty winks.

37. Third time lucky.

34. Talk nineteen to the dozen.

38. To be in seventh heaven.

35. The 64000 dollar question.

39. Two peas in a pod.

36. The whole nine yards.

40. Two-bit.

## 6.1. Division According to the Level of Correspondence

### 6.1.1 Absolute equivalents

This category features idioms which correspond completely or almost completely with their Czech equivalents. Absolute equivalents can be further divided into absolute equivalents proper, which correspond literally with their counterparts and similar equivalents, which demonstrate some degree of irregularity.

<b>Absolute equivalence proper</b>	
Habit is second nature.  <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): An acquired behavior or trait that is so long practiced as to seem innate</i>	Fronek: Zvyk je druhá přirozenost.
Put two and two together.  <i>Definition (ODEI): draw an obvious conclusion from what is known or evident.</i>	Lingea: Dát si dvě a dvě dohromady.
Sixth sense.  <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): a supposed power to know or feel things that are not perceptible by the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch</i>	Fronek: Šestý smysl.
To be in seventh heaven.  <i>Definition (ODEI): in a state of ecstasy</i>	Fronek: Být v sedmém nebi.



<b>Similar equivalence</b>	
At the eleventh hour.	Lingea: V hodinu dvanáctou.
<i>Definition (CIDI): Almost too late</i>	

The English idiom “*At the eleventh hour*” differs from its Czech equivalent grammatically and lexically. The word order and expressions of quantity vary in this phrase. The Czech expression of quantity “*dvanáctou*” is placed at the end of the phrase while the position of the English expression of quantity is different. It is possible to place the word “*dvanáctou*” in front of “*hodinu*” in the Czech language but it is also possible to place it behind it, as the Czech language is synthetic language where the word order is not so important because grammatical forms of words are expressed with the help of endings. As mentioned in chapter two, English belongs to analytic languages where word order has a tendency to carry a lot of importance so it is not possible to change it freely.

Although both expressions of quantity are ordinal numerals, they differ lexically. The ordinal numeral “eleventh” is translated as the ordinal numeral “*dvanáctou*” in Czech. It is evident from its origin why it is expressed by “eleventh” in English. According to Oxford Dictionary of Idioms the origin of the idiom is biblical: “This expression originally referred to Jesus’s parable of the labourers hired right at the end of the day to work in the vineyard” (“at the eleventh hour”, n.d.). Dictionary.com says about the idiom: “This term is thought to allude to the parable of the labourers (Matthew 20:1–16), in which those workers hired at the eleventh hour of a twelve-hour working day were paid the same amount as those who began in the first hour.” Therefore the numeral “eleventh” is utilised in the idiom.

According to Čermák (2009) the origin of the idiom is also biblical but he does not say more about it.

<p>By the dozen.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): if something is being produced by the dozen, large numbers of that thing are being produced</i></p>	<p>Lingea: Po tuctech.</p>
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The English idiom “*By the dozen*” differs grammatically from its Czech counterpart. Although the expressions of quantity correspond lexically in both languages, they have different number. While the English one is in the singular form, the Czech one is in the plural.

<p>Fifty-fifty</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): if something is divided fifty-fifty, it is divided equally between two people</i></p>	<p>Lingea: Padesát na padesát.</p>
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These two idioms also vary grammatically. The only difference is that the Czech idiom uses the preposition “*na*” instead of a hyphen because the expression would not make any sense without the preposition. Moreover, an interesting note about this idiom is that Czech people often use the English equivalent instead of the Czech one.

<p>Have one foot in the grave.</p> <p><i>Definition (ODEI): be near death through old age or illness</i></p>	<p>Fronek: Být jednou nohou v hrobě.</p>
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The English idiom “*Have one foot in the grave*” differs lexically from its equivalent. The auxiliary verb “*have*” is expressed by the auxiliary verb “*být*” in Czech.

<p>Kill two birds with one stone.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): to manage to do two things at the same time instead of just one, because it is convenient to do both</i></p>	<p>Kalina: Zabít dvě mouchy jednou ranou.</p>
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These idioms vary lexically and grammatically as well. The word “birds” is expressed by “mouchy” in Czech and “stone” is expressed by “ranou” in Czech. However, the cardinal numeral “two” which expresses quantity corresponds with its Czech counterpart. Apart from this fact, the idioms differ grammatically. Whereas the preposition “with” is used in English, in Czech it is not necessary because the noun “ranou” is declined. From that it can be seen that Czech uses an inflection which is the main character of synthetic languages.

<p>One swallow doesn't make summer.</p> <p><i>Definition (ODEI): single fortunate event does not mean that what follows will also be good</i></p>	<p>Fronek: Jedna vlaštovka jaro nedělá.</p>
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These two expressions have grammatically, as well as lexically, different entries. While the expressions of quantity are identical, the word “summer” is expressed by “jaro” in Czech. From the grammatical point of view, the word order is different. Although the English idiom is composed of a subject, a verb and an object, the Czech one is composed of a subject, an object and a verb which is called “basic word order”(Eifring 2015, 1). As previously mentioned, word order in English is quite fixed unlike Czech. Moreover, in linguistics, there is a theory called Functional

Sentence Perspective which communicate which word is the most essential one in a sentence. According to this theory, the word which carries important new information is placed at the end of the sentence. Therefore the word “nedělá” is found at the end of the sentence because it gives us an important new piece of information. It is not possible to place “doesn’t make” at the end of the sentence because the object always has to stand after the verb in English.

### 6.1.2 Relative equivalents

This category contains idioms with a correspondence of a lesser extent than the previous category of absolute equivalents. These idioms agree with their meaning but differ in other aspects.

This group is further divided into relative equivalents proper, which are expressed by absolutely different lexical units and partially different equivalents, which have minimally one word in common.

<b>Relative equivalents proper</b>	
All in. <i>Definition (CIDI): to be very tired and unable to do any more.</i>	Lingea: Být celý hin.
Be behind the eight ball. <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): in trouble; in a weak or losing position</i>	Kroulík: Mít svázané ruce/Být nahraný.
Be one-up. <i>Definition (CIDI): to have an advantage which someone or something else does not have</i>	Kroulík: Mít navrch.
Enough to make a cat laugh. <i>Definition (ODEI): extremely ridiculous or ironic</i>	Hrách: To by rozesmálo i mrtvého.

Not have two pennies to rub together. <i>Definition (CIDI): to be very poor</i>	Hrách: Být chudý jako kostelní myš.
Six of one and half a dozen of the other. <i>Definition (ODEI): used to convey that there is no real difference between two alternatives</i>	Hrách: Jeden za osmnáct a druhý bez dvou za dvacet.
Take forty winks. <i>Definition (ODEI): short sleep or nap, especially during the day</i>	Kroulík: Dát si dvacet.

The origin of this phrase differs in various sources. According to ODEI (2004, 115) “this expression dates from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, but wink in the sense of 'a closing of the eyes for sleep' is found from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.” Another sources, such as Funk (1955, 55) mention that the origin is biblical. In the bible the number 40 appeared with a frequency (e.g. raining 40 days and nights, Moses spent 40 days on the mountain, etc.). It might be the reason why there is no other number than number 40.

Talk nineteen to the dozen. <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): if someone is talking nineteen to the dozen, they are talking very fast, without stopping</i>	Kalina: Mlít páté přes deváté.
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According to ODEI (2004, 286) “No convincing reason has been put forward as to why nineteen should have been preferred in this idiom rather than twenty or any other number larger than twelve.” The explanation was not found even in Czech.

Two peas in a pod. <i>Definition (CIDI): to be very similar</i>	Fronek: Podobat se jako vejce vejci.
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<b>Partially different equivalents</b>	
Be six feet under.  <i>Definition (CIDI): to be dead</i>	Fronek: Být pod drnem.
Be three sheets to the wind.  <i>Definition (CIDI): to be drunk</i>	Hrách: Být namol.
Come down on someone like a ton of bricks.  <i>Definition (CIDI): to punish someone very quickly and severely</i>	Lingea: Došlápnout si na někoho.
Fall between two stools.  <i>Definition (ODEI): fail to be or to take one of two satisfactory alternatives</i>	Hrách: Chtít sedět na dvou židlích.
First come, first served.  <i>Definition (CIDI): something that you say which means that the people who ask for something first will be the ones who get it, when there is not enough for everyone</i>	Hrách: Kdo dřív přijde, ten dřív mele.
Have half an ear on something.  <i>Definition (CIDI): to listen to something without giving it all your attention</i>	Fronek: Jedním uchem tam, druhým uchem ven.
Have two left feet.  <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): to move in a very awkward way when dancing</i>	Fronek: Mít nohy jako volšové.
Like a cat with nine lives.  <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): Cats can survive things that are severe enough to kill them.</i>	Kalina: Mít život tuhý jako kočka.
Put all eggs in one basket.  <i>Definition (TheFreeDictionary): to make everything dependent on only one thing; to place all one's resources in one place, account, etc.</i>	Kroulík: Vsadit vše na jednu kartu.

<b>Partially different equivalents</b>	
<p>Third time lucky.</p> <p><i>Definition (ODEI): after twice failing to accomplish something, the third attempt may be successful.</i></p>	Lingea: Do třetice všeho dobrého.

### 6.1.3 Non-idiomatic equivalents

This category features idioms which do not have equivalents in the form of idioms.

<p>A piece of cake.</p> <p><i>Definition (ODEI): something easily achieved.</i></p>	Kroulík: Snadná prácička.
<p>All in all.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): Thinking about all parts of a situation together</i></p>	Kroulík: Celkem vzato.
<p>Be all of a piece.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): if one thing is all of a piece with another thing, it is suitable or right for that thing</i></p>	Fronek: Být v celku.
<p>Be at sixes and sevens over something.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): to be confused or badly organized</i></p>	Hrách: Rozrušený, zmatený.
<p>Foursquare.</p> <p><i>Definition (Thefreedictionary): Marked by firm, unwavering conviction or expression; forthright</i></p>	Hrách: Konvenční.
<p>Look like a million dollars.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): to look or feel extremely attractive</i></p>	Kroulík: Vypadat skvěle.
<p>No sweat.</p> <p><i>Definition (CIDI): something that you say which means that you can do something easily</i></p>	Kroulík: Bez potíží.
<p>Six of the best.</p>	Hrách: Výprask rákoskou.

<i>Definition (CIDI): if you give someone six of the best, you punish them by hitting them, usually on their bottom with a long, thin stick</i>	
The 64000-dollar question.  <i>Definition (CIDI): an important or difficult question which people do not know the answer to</i>	Hrách: Zásadní otázka.
The whole nine yards.  <i>Definition (ODEI): everything possible or available</i>	Hrách: Dotáhnout to do konce.
Two-bit.  <i>Definition (CIDI): of very little value or not important</i>	Fronek: Mizerný, laciný.

## 6.2 Division according to the construction

This chapter deals with the division of idioms according to their structure.

<b>Phrasal idioms- Syntagmatic Idioms- Verbal idioms</b>
Be one-up.
Be all of a piece.
Be at sixes and sevens over something.
Be behind the eight ball.
Be six feet under.
Be three sheets to the wind.
Come down on someone like a ton of bricks.
Enough to make a cat laugh.
Fall between two stools.
First come, first served.
Have half an ear on something
Have one foot in the grave



Have two left feet.
Kill two birds with one stone.
Look like a million dollars.
Not have two pennies to rub together.
Put all eggs in one basket.
Put two and two together.
Take forty winks.
Talk nineteen to the dozen.
To be in seventh heaven.

<b>Phrasal idioms- Syntagmatic Idioms- Non-verbal idioms</b>
A piece of cake.
All in one.
At the eleventh hour.
Fifty-fifty.
Foursquare.
Like a cat with nine lives.
No sweat.
Six of one and half a dozen of the other.
Six of the best.
Sixth sense.
The 64000 dollar question.
The whole nine yards.
Third time lucky.
Two peas in a pod.
Two-bit.

<b>Phrasal idioms – Minimal idioms</b>
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All in.
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By the dozen.
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<b>Sentence idioms</b>
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Habit is second nature.
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One swallow doesn't make a summer
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## 7 Statistics

### 7.1 The level of correspondence

Table 1: The level of correspondence

<b>Idioms in total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Absolute equivalence</i>	10	
Absolute equivalence proper	4	10%
Similar equivalence	6	15%
<i>Relative equivalence</i>	19	
Relative equivalence proper	9	22,5%
Partially different equivalence	10	25%
<i>Deceptive equivalence</i>	0	0%
<i>Non-corresponding equivalence</i>	11	27,5%

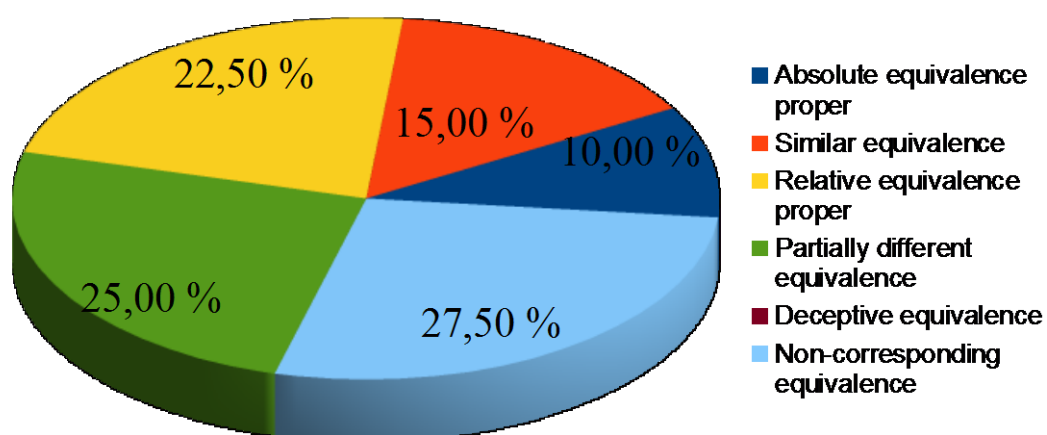


Chart 1: The level of correspondence

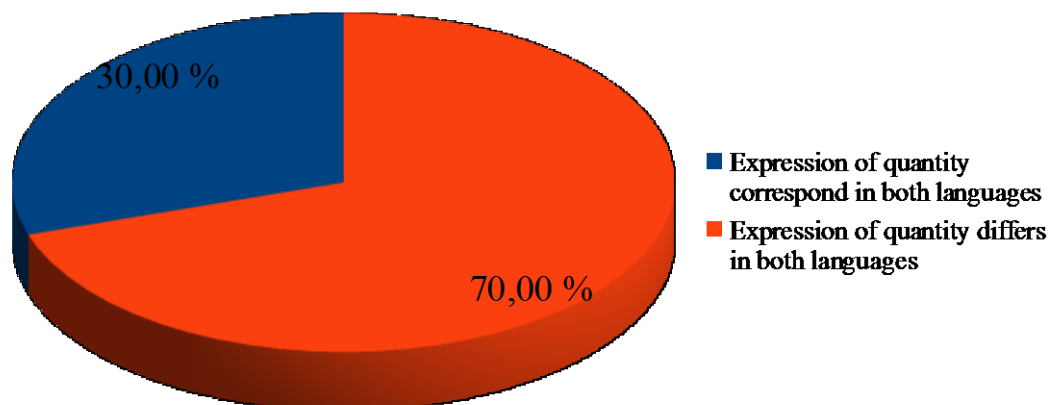
Table 1 shows idioms which were classified according to the level of correspondence into four main categories: absolute equivalence, relative equivalence, deceptive equivalence and non-corresponding equivalence. Absolute equivalents were furthermore divided into absolute equivalents proper and similar equivalents. Relative equivalents were subdivided into relative equivalents proper and partially different equivalents. The largest amount of idioms contains the group of relative equivalents.

The classification of idioms according to their structure demonstrates that idioms' ratio between these four groups is unequal. The group of absolute equivalents contains 10 idioms, 4 (10%) of absolute equivalents proper and 6 (15%) of similar equivalents. The group of relative equivalents contains the largest amount of idioms, 19 to be precise, 9 (22,5%) of relative equivalents proper and 10 (25%) of partially different equivalents. The group of deceptive equivalents does not contain a single idiom because just a little idioms belongs to this group in general. The group of non-corresponding equivalents includes 11 (27,5%) idioms.

## 7.2 Expression of quantity

*Table 2: Expression of quantity*

<b>Idioms expressing quantity</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
Expression of quantity corresponds in both languages	12	30%
Expression of quantity differs in both languages	28	70%



*Chart 2: Expression of quantity*

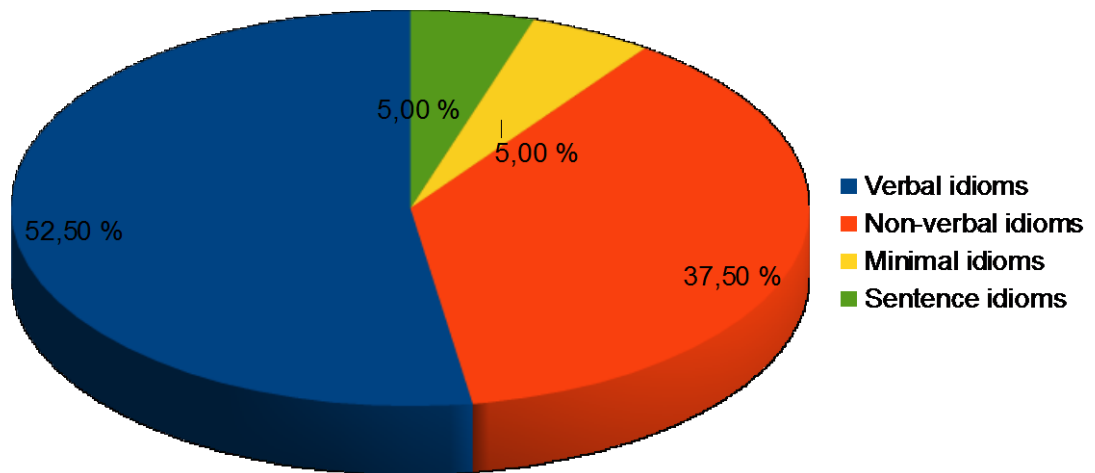
Table 2 demonstrates whether the expressions of quantity correspond with each other. The research showed that 12 (30%) of 40 idioms contain the same expression of quantity in both languages. On the other side, 28 (70%) of 40 idioms contain different expression of quantity.

### **7.3 Division according to the construction**

*Table 3: Division according to the construction*

<b>Idioms in total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Phrasal idioms</i>	38	
<i>Syntagmatic idioms</i>	36	
Verbal idioms	21	52,5%
Non-verbal idioms	15	37,5%

<i>Minimal idioms</i>	2	5%
<i>Sentence idioms</i>	2	5%



*Chart 3: Division according to the construction*

Table 3 demonstrates idioms which were classified according to their construction into two main categories: phrasal idioms and sentence idioms. Phrasal idioms were furthermore divided into syntagmatic idioms and minimal idioms. Syntagmatic idioms moreover include a group of verbal and non-verbal idioms.

The classification of idioms according to their construction demonstrates that idioms' ratio between these groups is unequal. A group of verbal idioms contains the biggest amount of idioms, 21 (52,5%) to be precise, closely followed by non-verbal idioms with the number of 15 (37,5%) idioms. Both groups minimal idioms

and sentence idioms contain only 2 (5%) idioms each. It follows that the most of the idioms employing quantity are expressed by a verbal syntagmatic structure.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis was to provide a comparative analysis of English and Czech idioms employing the expression of quantity.

Before the idioms could have been analysed, it was essential to give the reader a theoretical background which defined an idiom for the purpose of this thesis according to various linguists. Later on the corpus of 40 English idioms was compiled. Idioms were collected from different dictionaries and were classified into tables.

The idioms were classified according to Pavol Kvetko's theory. The crucial concept in researching the idioms was the level of correspondence between Czech and English idioms. The research also demonstrated how many idioms contained the same expression of quantity in both languages and the division of idioms according to their structure.

Having considered the level of correspondence between Czech and English idioms the analysis demonstrated that the group of relative equivalents was the most numerous one with the amount of 19 idioms while the group of deceptive equivalents with the amount of zero idioms showed that it is quite unlikely to find idioms which correspond lexically in both languages but have different meaning. The high amount of relative equivalents demonstrated that idioms employing the expression of quantity are most of the time expressed differently in Czech but the meaning remains the same.

As far as the expressions of quantity were concerned, the group of non-corresponding expressions dominated with the amount of 28 idioms to the group



of corresponding expressions with the amount of 12 idioms. It showed that most of the idioms are expressed by different expression of quantity.

Having taken idioms' structure into consideration it was found out that the group of phrasal idioms absolutely predominated to the group of sentence idioms in the ratio 38:2. It demonstrated that just a small amount of idioms is expressed by a whole sentence.

For the author this thesis has brought an interesting view on idiomatic issues. The author was surprised that almost three quarters of expressions of quantity did not correspond in both languages. As the author not only studies English but also Spanish the bachelor thesis would be a good resource material for further research which could deal with comparing the idioms employing the expression of quantity between three languages: English, Czech and Spanish. It could bring interesting results as these three languages belong to different groups of the Indo-European language family.

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