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**ANGLICKÉ IDIOMY Z HLEDISKA  
SÉMANTICKÉHO A FORMÁLNÍHO**

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**ENGLISH IDIOMS FROM SEMANTIC AND  
FORMAL POINT OF VIEW**

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**Plzeň 2019**

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni, 24. dubna 2019

.....  
vlastnoruční podpis

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## ABSTRACT

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This undergraduate thesis deals with English idioms from the semantic and formal point of view. The thesis is divided into two chapters – theoretical background and practical analysis.

Theoretical background provides basic characteristics and definitions of idioms and the theory behind the semantic and formal approach necessary for the practical part.

The analysis is done in three steps. First, the 325 collected idioms are divided into 14 semantic scopes based on their common feature, and their meaning is further explained. The scopes include health, power, money, behaviour, sleep, amongst others. Second and third steps are comprised of the analysis of the collected idioms by their head phrase and level of semanticity.

From the formal point of view, it was found that the most used idioms are the ones with a verbal head phrase, while the least used phrases are adverbial. From the semantic point of view, in half of the cases, the meaning was partially recognizable from the metaphor. The other half was not recognizable at all, and only a small amount of cases with full semanticity have been found.

**Key words:** idioms, set expressions, semantics, meaning, head phrase, semanticity, metaphorical meaning

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## INTRODUCTION

Idioms are an important feature of everyday lives of English-speaking community. They are used very frequently in speech and writing, and their misinterpretation or misuse can lead to a confusion or awkward situations. Idioms enrich the language, they make it colourful, rich and lively. It is, therefore, very important to know their meaning and to be even able to recognize that it is an idiom what is in question.

Sometimes it may not be easy to use the idioms properly, especially for non-native speakers of English. Translation word for word usually does not make sense in a different language, but there are sometimes possible similar equivalents that can help the person identify the meaning.

This bachelor thesis focuses on general semantics of set idiomatic expressions, and their analysis from the formal and semantic point of view. The topic has been chosen based on the author's interest in translating. The idioms are very important in this field, because their misinterpretation can change the meaning of the conversation or writing.

The aim is to analyse which category of idioms is mostly used, and find out, whether the use of phrases is balanced, with the presumption, that it is. The semantic part consists of three steps. Firstly, we categorize idioms into semantic scopes based on common features. Secondly, we analyse their meaning, and lastly, we look at their level of semanticity.

Chapter 1 conveys theoretical background and is divided into two parts. First part deals with the idiom in general. The topics include general definition, identification, the use and origin of idioms, regional varieties, the non-native speakers' approach and additional types of idioms. Second part of chapter 1 deals with the semantic, formal and functional point of view in theory, with the emphasis on characteristics in semantics, different functions of idioms, different approaches in categorization and the structure of the idiomatic expressions.

In chapter 2, the methods used for the analysis are described. Firstly, the collection of appropriate sources is mentioned. Secondly, the analysis of chosen examples is described and lastly, the structure of the analysis is outlined.

The practical part, which is the main aim of this thesis, starts in chapter 3. There are 14 parts to this chapter, each focusing on one semantic scope. The semantic scopes include health, death, money, work, education, behaviour, relationships, problems, anger, happiness and love, anxiety and fear, sleeping, films and TV, and power. In total, 325 idioms are analysed. Firstly, the focus is on the meaning of every idiom collected, then we look at their categorization by their head phrase and their level of semanticity.

Finally, the results of the analysis are commented on and concluded.



# 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

## 1.1 IDIOMS IN GENERAL

### 1.1.1 DEFINITION OF AN IDIOM

There exist many definitions of the term idiom. All of them, however, agree on the main ideas. Idioms are set expressions the meaning of which cannot be interpreted from the meaning of each word. Idioms consist of multiple expressions put together in a way that does not seem logical and the meaning is suggested from the context of the whole utterance. Cruse (2011) defines this phenomenon as non-compositional expression – the meaning of a set expression cannot be predicted from the meaning of its parts.

Čermák (2007) defines an idiom as “*a fixed and stable syntagma of elements where at least one element is, as seen from the viewpoint of (at least) one other element, a member of a paradigm that is highly restricted, closed (in form always, though often also semantically)*” (p. 188). He adds that it is very hard to define an idiom generally, because every case is different.

Cruse (1986) claims that an idiom “*...is an expression whose meaning cannot be accounted for as a compositional function of the meanings its parts have when they are not parts of idioms*” (p. 37).

Essentially, idioms consist of two or more lexemes and each lexeme has its own meaning, but when put together in a certain phrase, their meaning becomes irrelevant. Neither lexeme can be substituted or replaced by a synonym, because the form is set. The constituents of an idiom are meaningless, and they do not fulfil their typical function. If a word does not have any meaning, it does not show the typical behaviour of a certain word class (Cruse, 2011).

Most idioms are homophonous and grammatically correct, however, there are many examples when this is not the case. We can consider the idiom *by and large* – these two words would not be usually put together because they are different word classes, but it works here in their purpose as an idiom. This phenomenon is called *asyntactic idiom* (Cruse, 1986).

### 1.1.2 IDENTIFICATION OF AN IDIOM

It is important to note, that not all set expression should be considered idioms. Idioms as such have a figurative meaning, whereas many other set expressions do not. Hatch and Brown (1995) claim, that the problem of identifying what truly is an idiom is rather difficult. Many dictionaries would classify certain set expressions as idioms, even though they do not fit all definitions of idiomatic expressions.

Let us consider the prepositional set expression *in front of* – it does complete the definition of an idiomatic expression in the sense that the parts cannot be changed, however, as mentioned above, there is no figurative meaning to this expression. Therefore, it should not be considered an idiom, even though many dictionaries say otherwise.

### 1.1.3 USE OF IDIOMS

Idioms are used widely throughout the English-speaking countries. They bring diversity into the language and make it more colourful and rich. Even though they are mainly colloquial expressions, they are used in both formal and informal settings and contexts. They appear primarily in spoken conversations, but one can find them in various styles of literature, such as poetry or prose, public speeches, magazines, news reports, films, songs or advertising. Even archaic writing, such as the Bible, contain idiomatic expressions.

They tend to be very well-known expressions to native speakers who use them on a regular basis. If a person is familiar with a certain idiom and its meaning, they immediately upon hearing think of the metaphorical meaning and not the literal meaning of each part. They may be used for emphasis, agreement, commenting on a situation or people, or just to catch the listener's attention. Hatch and Brown (1995) say, that we use idioms for the purpose of identifying with a certain social group. Moreover, they provide important cultural information, which is crucial for creating relationships, level of formality and our behaviour.

Sometimes it is not easy to know, whether it is appropriate to use certain idioms in different situations. Seidl (1988) argues, that idioms change their formality through time. The ones considered slang in the past have changed to informal or colloquial, whilst informal ones are nowadays considered neutral. In some cases, it is arguable to which level particular idioms belong to, therefore one must consider one's own view of the situation.

Many people believe the idioms are colloquial expressions which cannot be used in formal situation, however, in many cases, the idioms are considered formal. Moreover, their use may result in showing one's own creativity with the language.

Nunberg, Sag, Wasow (1994) say that idioms are conventionalized, “*their meaning or use can’t be predicted, or at least entirely predicted, on the basis of a knowledge of the independent conventions that determine the use of their constituents when they appear in isolation from one another*” (p. 492).

#### **1.1.4 ORIGIN OF IDIOMS**

The origin of an idiom can be sometimes unclear. Many of them originate from metaphors or metonymy, but for their frequent use, one does not generally think of the metaphoric meaning, but the idiomatic straight away. Cruse (2011) says that “*they become idioms when the knowledge necessary to interpret them is no longer current*” (p. 88). This means that once people lose the knowledge of its origin and lexical meaning, the expression becomes idiomatic.

Some idioms are rooted in history and culture and come from traditional skills, myths or literature. However, there are new idiomatic expressions evolving all the time. Some come from mass media, such as TV or Radio, some from social media, such as Facebook or YouTube, some from advertising or politics. Many of the idioms may be used for a long time to come, but some become very prominent in a particular time period and become forgotten in the future. Idioms are constantly influenced by the culture, current events or lifestyle, development in technology or political situation (O’Dell, McCarthy, 2010).

However, English is not the only language that idioms originate from. Some come from the languages that have been very important for the development of English – Latin or French. One of the most used Latin idioms is *Carpe Diem*, which means to seize the day. A *Faux-Pass* comes from French and means an embarrassing mistake. Some idiomatic expressions also originated from Greek – Greek mythology to be precise. For example, *Achilles’ Heel*, in the meaning of a person’s weak spot, comes from an old very well-known Greek myth of the hero of the Trojan War.

#### **1.1.5 REGIONAL VARIETIES**

Even though, most idiomatic expressions are widely known throughout all English-speaking countries, there are cases that are only known in one country. Sometimes we can find only small variations, such as *the icing on the cake* in Britain versus *the frosting on the cake* in the USA (O’Dell, McCarthy, 2010).

Some idioms Scottish people use on a regular basis can be misunderstood in the United States of America, or even the rest of the United Kingdom. We can consider an example

such as *Awa' an bile yer heid*, which translates into English as *Away and boil your head*. An American may not understand this idiomatic meaning and therefore would not know he's been asked to go away.

### 1.1.6 IDIOMS AND NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

One of the biggest challenges for learners of English is not translating idioms from their own language word for word. There is usually a fitting equivalent for either language, but the translated version would not make sense to a native speaker. A good example is for making a small problem seem bigger than it is – English version is *to make a mountain out of a molehill*, Czech version *dělat z komára velblouda* (literally: *to make a camel out of a mosquito*). To someone who is not familiar with Czech idioms, such expression would make very little sense and would cause confusion, or at least amusement.

Irujo (1986) conducted an experiment to see whether the native language influences the use of idioms in English with 12 subjects. The results showed, that when the idioms were similar or identical in both languages, the subjects were able to recognize the meaning, however, they struggled recognizing completely different idioms. They were able to construct identical idioms, however, the influence of the first language was shown in constructing even similar idioms. They struggled to understand and construct completely different idioms.

This experiment supports the idea that idioms are a very hard subject to learn for learners of English and that their native language can interfere with the production of these expressions. Therefore, learners often choose not to use the idioms, because they are not comfortable with them – both in the formal and semantic department.

### 1.1.7 SPECIAL TYPES OF IDIOMS

Many idioms do not fall into a certain category. They are set expressions which have become idioms by natural popularization. However, some idioms can be divided into a category because of their form. They include similes, binomials, proverbs, euphemisms and clichés.

**Similes** are a form of idiom that compare two things. They always include the words *as* or *like*. Because similes have a strong meaning, they are usually used to emphasise something. They are largely used for a humorous or sarcastic effect.

i.e. (*as*) *busy as a bee, to eat like a horse*

**Binomials** are two words joined together by a linking word, which is usually *and* or *or*. The two words can be synonyms, antonyms, the same word, alliterative or rhymes.

i.e. *rhyme or reason, fair and square*

**Proverbs** are closely tied with idioms. They too have a fixed form and one cannot guess the meaning of each individual word. They tend to be expressions used for advice or warnings. Proverbs are so well-known that sometimes, speakers would only use a certain part of it because it is clear what they are trying to say. For example, one could only say *The grass is always greener*, not having to add *on the other side*, presuming the meaning is clear without it.

**Euphemisms** are used as a substitute for words or expressions that might be offensive or inappropriate, either to avoid talking about a particular subject or in a humorous way.

i.e. *to put to sleep* instead of *euthanise*

**Clichés** are common expressions used very frequently and considered not original. They show the weakest level of idiomaticity. They are usually referred to as default patterns.

i.e. *only time will tell* (to become clear over time)

This subchapter addressed the basic introduction into the phenomenon of idiomatic expressions. It is clear, that idioms are an important feature of English and can have different forms and characteristics; therefore, they are very interesting topic to analyse.

## 1.2 SEMANTIC AND FORMAL POINT OF VIEW

### 1.2.1 LEXICAL SEMANTICS

*“Semantics is the study of meaning in language. It is concerned with what language means”* (Widdowson, 1996, p. 61).

Lexical semantics deals with the meanings of content words. Cruse (2011) says that *“...the notion of meaning probably has a stronger link with the idea of the word than with any other linguistic unit...”* (p. 17). The meaning varies based on the context, which sometimes gives the expression ambiguity.

The components of meaning include denotation or, in other words, the sense, connotation, which further involves expressivity, stylistic value and association. Furthermore, there are the components of collocability, inner form and integration (Peprník, 2003).

There are two possible meanings distinguishable – literal and figurative. *“Literal meaning refers to an abstract event or mental state, and the figurative meaning refers to a concrete action”* (Cacciari, Glucksberg, 1995, p. 45). Literal comes from the meaning of the constituents of the expression, whereas the figurative is usually tied to a certain metaphor or metonymy. Therefore, the idioms mainly deal with the meaning figurative.

### 1.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SEMANTICITY

The most important feature of an idiom is its meaning – it stays the same only if used properly and in correct form. The pronunciation is also very important – the stress is on the last “full” word – a noun, an adjective or a verb (Cowie, Mackin, McCaig, 1983). Even the slightest of changes can modify the meaning. There are a few general rules for the use of idiomatic expressions. The key word must be correct, the word-order intact, no adding or losing articles, amongst others (O’Dell, McCarthy, 2010).

There is, however, the possibility of internal modifying, which emphasises the purpose or the action. Adjectives or relative clauses can modify some parts of the expressions, as in *leave no legal stone unturned* – in this case, the adjective legal is not usually part of the idiom. Here it modifies only a part of the meaning, the meaning of the expression as a whole stays the same. This does not work in all cases, though. *“In order to modify part of the meaning of an idiom by modifying a part of the idiom, it is necessary that the part of the idiom have a meaning which is part of the meaning of the idiom”* (p. 500). Furthermore, some parts of the idiom can be quantified, as in *to pull even more strings*.

The notion is the same as in hereinbefore, the quantification only impacts part of the meaning (Nunberg, Sag, Wasow, 1994).

Another important note is that even though an idiom is used within a sentence, it does not make the whole sentence idiomatic. It is only the set expression that is idiomatic and said idiom is semantically equivalent to a word, because it can usually be substituted by a single lexical item. The other lexical items within a sentence can be changed without losing the idiomatic sense of the utterance (Cruse, 2011).

### 1.2.3 CATEGORIZATIONS OF IDIOMS

Many authors categorize idioms in different ways. Most of them, however, use similar approaches based on the meaning and grammar.

Cowie et al. (1983) distinguish expressions based on their level of idiomaticity. The categorization is as follows:

1. **Pure idioms**, such as *to kick the bucket*, have no literal meaning. Their meaning is purely idiomatic.
2. **Figurative idioms** are idiomatic, because there is no possible variation of the parts that form the expression. This group is closely tied to pure idioms and many expressions could be categorized in both, i.e. *to beat one's breast*. The literal meaning can be considered here, however, the expression is mainly used for the figurative purposes.
3. **Restricted collocations**, also called semi-idioms, have one word with a figurative meaning that cannot be found outside that particular expression, and the other word appears with its literal meaning (i.e. noun or verb). We can consider the example to *jog someone's memory* – memory has a literal meaning here, whilst the verb jog only appears in this sense in this particular collocation. As with the previous two types, this type is closely tied with the following open collocations, because there is, in some cases, possibility of variation.
4. **Open collocations** can be changed in any way. There is only the literal meaning of each part and the parts themselves are interchangeable.

Hatch and Brown (1995) use very similar approach, only in their case, they use the terms opaqueness and transparency. Not all idioms are transparent or clear in meaning. They describe 4 dimensions of transparency of phrases. **Opaque idioms** whose meanings is not possible to know from each individual word. Regarding **semi-opaque idioms**, it might be

possible to know the meaning from some of the words. Then there is the case of **semi-transparent idioms** which are usually considered metaphors. Lastly, the **transparent-non-idiomatic idioms** whose meaning is intelligible from the combination of words.

Cruse (2011) claims, that not all parts of set expression are semantically irrelevant. The semanticity of idioms can range from 0 to 100 percent. The examples are as follows.

- A) Zero semanticity suggests, that there are no lexical items within the idiomatic expression, that could help the speaker identify the meaning of the whole expression. This phenomenon occurs, because most idioms evolve from metaphors. If the metaphor originates from current customs or events, the idioms are more likely to have zero semanticity, because the knowledge of the origin is necessary for understanding. The examples of such phenomenon are *to kick the bucket*, *to cook someone's goose* or *to paint the town red*.
- B) Partial semanticity is possible when the default meaning has some relevance to the idiomatic meaning. The speaker is capable of guessing the meaning by the metaphorical sense in cases such as *to give someone's a piece of one's mind*, *to leave no stone unturned* or *to turn over a new leaf*.
- C) Full semanticity suggests that the meaning is fully understandable from the meaning of each part of the expression. The best example in this case are the irreversible binomials. The idiom *wait and see* is straightforward in meaning and the idiomaticity lies within the fact, that should the two words be reversed, the meaning changes.

Seidl (1988, p.13) establishes three main kinds of idioms based on the aspects of both grammar and meaning:

1. Idioms with irregular forms and clear meaning, i.e. *to do someone proud*
2. Idioms with regular form but unclear meaning, i.e. *to have a bee in one's bonnet*
3. Idioms with irregular form and unclear meaning, i.e. *be at large*

The widest group of idioms based on this categorization are the ones with regular form and unclear meaning. This also relates to the opaqueness of the idioms, because even in this category, some idioms are clearer in meaning than others. Some include a key word, which suggests the area the idiom refers to, but some have completely irrelevant lexical units.



#### 1.2.4 THE FUNCTION OF IDIOMS

The function of idioms in a sentence is formal and semantic. Formal function deals with the grammar and the function in a sentence, while semantic function deals with the meaning. Čermák (2007) says, that “*The valency ... determines the specific way in which it will be formally integrated in the context. This integration may ... entail a formal variation of the expression. In the context the idiom is even specified semantically. ... it’s meaning will incorporate some new features in keeping with the speaker’s intention*” (p. 115).

Čermák (2007, p. 115-118) furthermore distinguishes other functions – denominative, pragmatic, structural, aesthetic, economic, evaluative and metalinguistic.

- Denominative function is closely tied with the semantic nature of the idiom.
- Structural function tells us, that the idiomatic expressions form a closed structure, which cannot be broken down semantically nor formally.
- Pragmatic function lies within the ability of the speaker to modify the meaning of the communication, especially in the realms of emotions and attitudes towards something.
- Aesthetic function is based on the fact, that the idioms express metaphors or images.
- Idioms function economically, because their literal paraphrase is usually longer.
- Idioms are very helpful in expressing assessment, which is the base for their evaluative function.
- Lastly, the metalinguistic function’s purpose is to follow or correct the utterances.

#### 1.2.5 STRUCTURE OF IDIOMS

Cowie et al. (1983) suggest two main types of expressions – phrase idioms and clause idioms. The most common phrase patterns are as follows:

**a) Noun Phrase** can function as the direct object, the complement or as the object of a preposition.

determiner + adjective + noun + prepositional phrase/clause

i.e. *a clean bill of health*

**b) Adjective phrase** can function as complement of a clause or adjunct.

adv modifier + adjective + prepositional phrase/infinitive/clause

i.e. *as busy as a bee*

c) **Prepositional phrase** can function as an adjunct, complement, disjunct or conjunct.

preposition + object of preposition

i.e. *under one's feet*

d) **Adverbial phrase** usually functions as adjunct.

adv modifier + adverb + prepositional phrase

i.e. *as soon as possible*

The most common clause (**verbal phrases**) patterns are as follows.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a) verb + complement                      | i.e. <i>to be out of one's element</i>         |
| b) verb + direct object                   | i.e. <i>to bite the dust</i>                   |
| c) verb + direct object + complement      | i.e. <i>to hold someone responsible</i>        |
| d) verb + indirect object + direct object | i.e. <i>to pay someone a compliment</i>        |
| e) verb + direct object + adjunct         | i.e. <i>to avoid something like the plague</i> |

Another possible pattern are phrases with repeated element, called binomials, that have been already mentioned in chapter 1.1.7. In most cases they have to appear in the same order to be considered idiomatic.

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| a) noun + noun                         | i.e. <i>peace and quiet</i> |
| b) adjective + adjective               | i.e. <i>sick and tired</i>  |
| c) verb + verb                         | i.e. <i>wait and see</i>    |
| d) determiner + determiner             | i.e. <i>each and every</i>  |
| e) adverb + adverb                     | i.e. <i>now and again</i>   |
| f) two words from different categories | i.e. <i>home and dry</i>    |
| g) identical pairs                     | i.e. <i>step by step</i>    |

This subchapter dealt with the semantic and formal point of view of the idiomatic expressions, which is the main aim of this thesis. Therefore, the information is crucial for the following analysis. The practical part is based on the categorization described hereinbefore.

## 2. METHODS

In this chapter, the process of the research is accounted, and methods used in practical analysis are determined. The aim is to analyse idioms from the semantic and formal point of view.

### 2.1 COLLECTING OF APPROPRIATE SOURCES

The main task of this thesis is to collect and analyse idioms belonging to different semantic scopes. There are many idiomatic dictionaries that have been used in the initial research. They include *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* (1983) by Cowie et al., *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary* (2006) and *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* (1995).

Further resources include *Do you want to speak English as a native? Idioms do the trick* by Nesnidal (1990) and *English Idioms and Phrases* by Rebeková (2004).

Additional helpful resources have been the books *English Idioms in Use – Intermediate* (2002) & *English Idioms in Use – Advanced* (2010), both by O'Dell and McCarthy, as well as *English Idioms – Exercises on Idioms* (1989) by Seidl.

For the research of the most up-to-date idioms, the online *Oxford Dictionary* ([www.en.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.en.oxforddictionaries.com)) and *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)) have been used.

### 2.2 ANALYSIS OF CHOSEN IDIOMS

There were three steps to the analysis of the chosen idioms. First, it was important to find a way of selecting examples from the c. 20 000 possible idioms. The semantic scopes based on one common characteristic have been chosen.

I have chosen 14 different scopes that are commonly talked about and leave many options for idiomatic usage. The number of idioms within each category varies from 15 to 28 idioms. They include scopes of health, death, money, work, education, human behaviour, relationships, problems, happiness and love, anger, anxiety and fear, sleeping, power, and films and TV shows. The scopes of course overlap, many idioms could be selected in more than one category; however, for the purposes of the analysis, they are all used only once.

By no means, the list of chosen idioms is complete. The idioms have been carefully chosen as examples of the most used ones within a certain scope based on various dictionaries, on-line sources and personal experience.

The first step includes explaining the meaning, pointing out the possible synonymic expressions with the emphasis on the relevance within the scope.

Second step comprises of analysing each idiom from the formal point of view based on its *head phrase*. Set expressions are equivalent to definite classes of words or to be used to complete sentences. Therefore, we can distinguish idioms that are nominal phrases, verbal phrases, adjectival phrases, adverbial phrases and prepositional phrases which were mentioned in chapter 1.2.5. In some cases, we can also find larger block of words, called stereotyped phrases that are used as full sentences without the need to add any other words.

The third and final step comprises of the semantic point of view. The division is based on the categorization by semanticity by Cruse (2011) mentioned in chapter 1.2.3. Therefore, three levels of semanticity have been used – the zero semanticity, partial semanticity and full semanticity.

The semantic evaluation has been done by the author and there is the possibility of subjectivity. Some people can consider certain idiomatic expressions with zero semanticity, while others with partial semanticity, because it is based on everyone's own perspective. Sometimes the metaphorical meaning is clearer than other times. Therefore, the line between all the possibilities is very fine, and the analysis have been done to the author's best ability, considering all possible interpretations.

### 2.3 STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSIS

The formal and semantic analysis have been structured in a form of a simple table. The idiomatic expressions have been sorted alphabetically inside their scope.

the idiomatic expression	the type of phrase	the semanticity
--------------------------	--------------------	-----------------

The occurrence of phrases or semanticity is also shown in a table form.

type of phrase/semanticity	number of occurrences	percentage
----------------------------	-----------------------	------------

### 3. ANALYSIS

There are many areas of life that can be defined in idiomatic terms. They include relationships, health, character, social media, work, business, daily life, problems, opinions, experience, effort, possibility or memory amongst many and many others. Most likely there is no area of life that cannot be described by idioms. That is the aspect of idioms that makes them very interesting. Many people do not even realize they are using idioms in their everyday lives, because the expressions are very common. They can be used among adults, children, co-workers, family members, friends and others. Hereafter come only a few examples of the endless possibilities.

#### 3.1 HEALTH

There are many idiomatic expressions that suggest being healthy. One can be *as fit as a fiddle*, *as right as rain*, *full of beans*, *hale and hearty* or *in the pink of health*. Not feeling very well can be expressed by saying one feels *under the weather* or *off colour*. An individual is *the picture of health* when looking very healthy, whereas he looks ill when he is *blue/green/pale around the gills* or looks like *death warmed up*. Gaining energy after an illness is in other words *recharging one's batteries*. The best scenario is to have *a clean bill of health*, which means one is in satisfactory condition.

Person *racked with pain* is suffering from severe pain, while person in overall poor physical condition is *run down*. *Having a frog in one's throat* means to have a cough or a sore throat, causing difficulties to speak. Someone looking extremely thin is *a bag of bones*. One *goes under the knife* when undergoing a surgery.

Someone gets better, when he is *on the road to recovery* or *on the mend*. Once someone is fully recovered from an illness, they are *up and about*, *back on their feet* or *have pulled through*. However, if someone's condition worsens, it *takes a turn for the worse* and once they are very close to dying, they *have one foot in the grave* or *are on their last legs*.

#### Number of idioms: 25

<i>back on one's feet</i>	AdvP	Partial
<i>a bag of bones</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>blue/green/pale around the gills</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>a clean bill of health</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>death warmed up</i>	NounP	Zero

<i>(as) fit as a fiddle</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>a frog in one's throat</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>full of beans</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to go under the knife</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>hale and hearty</i>	AdjP	Full
<i>in the pink of health</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>off-colour</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>on one's last legs</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>on the mend</i>	PrepP	Full
<i>on the road to recovery</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>one foot in the grave</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>the picture of health</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to pull through</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>racked with pain</i>	AdjP	Full
<i>to recharge one's batteries</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>(as) right as rain</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>run down</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to take a turn for the worse</i>	VerbP	Full
<i>under the weather</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>up and about</i>	AdvP	Zero

Table 1.A: "Health" idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	6	24%
Verbal phrases	4	16%
Adjectival phrases	7	28%
Adverbial phrases	4	16%
Prepositional phrases	4	16%

Table 1.B: "Health" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	9	36%
Partial semanticity	12	48%
Full semanticity	4	16%

Table 1.C: "Health" idioms - occurrence of semanticity

### 3.2 DEATH

This scope includes many idioms, however, most of them are used in informal conversations and situations. The reason for that is the fact, that death is a very sensitive subject and therefore people use these idioms only when appropriate. Some of them are very insensitive and can be taken the wrong way.

These idioms collectively mean to die and have a very straightforward semantic meaning. The formal and polite way of talking about someone dying is to say that person *passed away* or *went to the better place*, the latter used while talking to a very sad and sensitive person, such as a child.

However, many idioms from this scope are either informal expressions or slang. They are mainly full idioms or frozen metaphors. One would be most likely to use these, when they do not like the person who has died, and they do not care about being sensitive or formal. These include expressions such as *to kick the bucket*, *to bite the dust*, *to pop one's clog*, *to give up the ghost*, *to push up the daisies* or *to fall of one's perch*. A humorous way of taking about someone dying is saying they have gone *to meet their maker*. Many people dying in the same period of time can be expressed by saying they *drop like flies*.

Even similes are represented in this scope and again, these can be considered insensitive and very informal. Somebody can be *(as) dead as a doornail*, *(as) dead as a dodo* or *(as) dead as a mutton*. These expressions are simply used to emphasize someone's death.

In many cases, the expression *to die* is used figuratively. When somebody suffers from a failed romantic relationship, they feel like *dying of a broken heart*. When they are very amused, they could *die laughing*, while being very bored, they could *die of boredom* (or *be bored to death*). Being very scared can be expressed by saying one is *scared to death*. If one is very exhausted and fast asleep, they could be considered *dead to the world*. These expressions are used mainly for emphasis and do not actually mean death.

#### Number of idioms: 19

<i>to bite the dust</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>bored to death</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>(as) dead as dodo</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>(as) dead as doornail</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>(as) dead as mutton</i>	AdjP	Partial

<i>dead to the world</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to die laughing</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to die of boredom</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to die of broken heart</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to drop like flies</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to fall of one's perch</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to give up the ghost</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to go to a better place</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to kick the bucket</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to meet one's maker</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to pass away</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to pop one's clog</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to push up the daisies</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>scared to death</i>	AdjP	Partial

Table 2.A: "Death" idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	0	0%
Verbal phrases	13	68%
Adjectival phrases	6	32%
Adverbial phrases	0	0%
Prepositional phrases	0	0%

Table 2.B: "Death" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	8	42%
Partial semanticity	11	58%
Full semanticity	0	0%

Table 2.C: "Death" idioms – occurrence of semanticity



### 3.3 MONEY

A very large semantic scope consists of idioms concerning money. One can say, that money can sometimes also be very sensitive subject, therefore the use of euphemisms and idiomatic expressions is in some cases required.

If a family is struggling for money, they have problems *to make ends meet*. They can also live *on a shoestring* or be *on the breadline*. If a person does not have much money at the moment, they are *strapped for cash* and they may have *to tighten their belt* in order to save money.

On the other side of the spectrum, rich people are *rolling in money*, live *in the lap of luxury* or are *well-off* (or *well-heeled*) or they simply have *money to burn* and they can buy anything they desire. Wealthy people can *spend money like water*, because they do not have to think about the cost. However, not many people can afford to just *throw money down the drain* and waste money on unnecessary purchases.

A *money spinner* is a person who has *money for old rope*, because his wealth is earned very easily, and he is successful in what he does. One can say that person can *be laughing all the way to the bank*, because of his wealth. Famous companies *make a killing*, because they are able to make money quickly and with no obstacles. A main provider of the family is *the breadwinner* and *brings home the bacon*.

Buying things can be either cheap or expensive. Some items may be so very expensive that people must *pay through a nose*, while other people would simply call an expensive item *a rip-off*. They are *paying over the odds*, because it costs more than it should. Should an item be sold for little money, *it is going for a song* without people having *to break a bank*, meaning of which is to find any way necessary to pay for something.

Some people would do anything for a small amount of money, they would even *sell their own grandmother*. They are sometimes so witty, that they can *take someone to the cleaner's* and take everything they own.

#### Number of idioms: 25

<i>to be going for a song</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>the breadwinner</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to break a bank</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to bring home the bacon</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>in the lap of luxury</i>	PrepP	Partial

<i>to laugh all the way to the bank</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to make a killing</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to make ends meet</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>money for old rope</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a money spinner</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>money to burn</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>on a shoestring</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>on the breadline</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>to pay over the odds</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to pay through the nose</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>a rip-off</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to roll in money</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to sell one's own grandmother</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to spend money like water</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>strapped for cash</i>	AdjP	Full
<i>to take someone to the cleaner's</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to throw money down the drain</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to tighten one's belt</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>well-heeled</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>well-off</i>	AdjP	Zero

Table 3.A: "Money" idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	5	20%
Verbal phrases	14	56%
Adjectival phrases	2	8%
Adverbial phrases	1	4%
Prepositional phrases	3	12%

Table 3.B: "Money" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	16	64%
Partial semanticity	8	32%
Full semanticity	1	4%

Table 3.C: "Money" idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.4 WORK

A hard-working person *slogs his guts out*, *pulls out all the stops*, *breaks his back* or *works his fingers to the bone*; all of these being informal and slang expressions. The boss is *at the top of the ladder*, whereas an employee is at the *bottom of the ladder*. A *head-hunter* is a person, who finds suitable candidates for a certain job. To be working in a low position in order to get a better job in the future is *setting a foot in the door*, while a job with no future is called a *dead-end-job*. When an individual starts a new job, they first have to learn what to do or simply *to learn the ropes*. A potential employer should first look at the candidate's *track record* – their achievements and failures.

An easy task is *a cushy number*, boring task *a run-of-the-mill*, necessary but dull task *a donkey work*, and a finished task is *done and dusted*. Wasting time on an unnecessary project *boils the ocean*. A humorous way of saying one has to return work is to go *back to the salt mines*. A person can lose his job by *getting the sack*.

Golden is a very prominent colour in the area of work. A *golden hello* is a large payment at the start of the job, whereas *golden handshake* comes at the end of the contract, either as a reward for the time served or as a settlement for terminating the contract. *Golden handcuffs*, however, is a term used in a case of paying large amount of money in order to keep a worker.

Closely tied to work is being busy, which can be expressed in many ways. A worker can *have his work cut out for him*, *have his hands full*, *be as busy as a bee*, *be on the go*, *be snowed under* or *be up to his eyes/ears*.

#### Number of idioms: 27

<i>at the bottom of the ladder</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>at the top of the ladder</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>back to the salt mines</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>to boil the ocean</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to break one's back</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>(as) busy as a bee</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>a cushy number</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a dead-end job</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>done and dusted</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>a donkey work</i>	NounP	Zero

<i>to get the sack</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>golden handcuffs</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a golden handshake</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a golden hello</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to have one's hands full</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to have one's work cut out</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a head-hunter</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to learn the ropes</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>on the go</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>to pull out all the stops</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>a run-of-the-mill</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to set a foot in the door</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to slog one's guts out</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>snowed-under</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>track record</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>up to one's ears/eyes</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>to work one's fingers to the bone</i>	VerbP	Partial

Table 4.A: "Work" idioms - division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	9	33%
Verbal phrases	10	37%
Adjectival phrases	3	11%
Adverbial phrases	1	4%
Prepositional phrases	4	15%

Table 4.B: "Work" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	18	67%
Partial semanticity	9	33%
Full semanticity	0	0%

Table 4.C: "Work" idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.5 EDUCATION

This scope mainly consists of informal colloquial language as it is used by young people in their everyday lives.

To *put one's thinking cap on* means to think in a serious manner. Sometimes teacher must *cover a lot of ground* in a short amount of time, which means there is a great deal of material to teach. Students have to often *hit the books* or *crack a book* in order to study. When an essay is due, they need to *crank out a paper*. Should the task be done on a satisfactory level, it *makes the grade* and if students have good grades, they *pass with flying colours*. Oftentimes pupils *learn by rote*, which means they memorise the material without considering the meaning. Should they *learn by heart* on the other hand, they simply memorise something word for word.

If a person asks a question, but does not receive a response, they *draw a blank*. Some topics are very easy, one might say they are *as easy as ABC*, however, if a topic is too hard, people might need to start over, in other words *go back to basics* or *back to square one*. A cheating student is *a copycat*. *An eager beaver* on the other hand, is very hardworking and enthusiastic. *A teacher's pet* is the teacher's favourite pupil and an enthusiastic reader is called *a bookworm*.

Students who do not go to school, *cut* or *skip class*. *A drop-out* is a person who fails college and they enter the *university of life* – the daily life and work, where they possibly learn more than they would in school.

#### Number of idioms: 19

<i>back to basics</i>	AdvP	Full
<i>back to square one</i>	AdvP	Partial
<i>a bookworm</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to crack a book</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a copycat</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to cover a lot of ground</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to crank out a paper</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to draw a blank</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>a drop-out</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>an eager-beaver</i>	NounP	Partial

<i>to hit the books</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to learn by heart</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to learn by rote</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to make the grade</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to pass with flying colours</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to put one's thinking cap on</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to skip/cut class</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a teacher's pet</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>university of life</i>	NounP	Partial

Table 5.A: "Education" idioms - division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	6	30%
Verbal phrases	11	60%
Adjectival phrases	0	0%
Adverbial phrases	2	10%
Prepositional phrases	0	0%

Table 5.B: "Education" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

### Occurrence of semanticity

Zero semanticity	4	20%
Partial semanticity	14	75%
Full semanticity	1	5%

Table 5.C: "Education" idioms – occurrence of semanticity

## 3.6 BEHAVIOUR

This semantic scope includes types of people, their behaviour and qualities.

Enthusiastic people have a lot of *get-up and go*, however, sometimes they can be a *loose cannon* for their unpredictability. Some people are often nervous, so much so, that they are *highly strung*. They are worried that someone in charge will *eat them for breakfast* and *give them a hard time* by a harsh critique. Arrogant people only *look out for number one*, because of their assumption of their own importance.

*A man (or a woman) of many parts* can do many different things from different areas of life. They basically *have plenty of strings to their bow*. A *whizz-kid* is someone very young, smart and successful. They can sometimes be also called *a mine of information*, because they can answer many questions without hesitation.

People sometimes *let themselves go*, which is usually associated with gaining weight, however, it can also mean to enjoy oneself in an exciting situation. It is very rude to *look straight through someone* and ignore them completely. Sometimes people do that because they have their differences and they are *not on speaking terms*. They ought to just *bury the hatchet* and stop arguing.

Nobody wants to spend time around *a wet blanket*, because they often spoil good times. But within a group of friends is usually also a person who likes to *play the fool* and make everyone laugh and turn a negative situation into a good one. However, some people should *keep a lid on their emotions* by controlling their anger and do not *make a scene* in public, causing awkward situations. They usually *blow something out of proportion* and *make a mountain out of a molehill* for no reason, which makes the situation look worse than it actually is.

#### Number of idioms: 20

<i>to blow something out of proportion</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to bury the hatchet</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to eat someone for breakfast</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>get-up and go</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to give someone hard time</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to have plenty of strings to one's bow</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>highly strung</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>to keep a lid on one's emotions</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to let oneself go</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to look out for number one</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to look straight through someone</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a loose cannon</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to make a mountain out of a molehill</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to make a scene</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a man (woman) of many parts</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>a mine of information</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>not on speaking terms</i>	PrepP	Full
<i>to play the fool</i>	VerbP	Partial

<i>a wet blanket</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a whizz-kid</i>	NounP	Zero

Table 6.A: “Behaviour” idioms - division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	6	30%
Verbal phrases	12	60%
Adjectival phrases	1	5%
Adverbial phrases	0	0%
Prepositional phrases	1	5%

Table 6.B: “Behaviour” idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	10	50%
Partial semanticity	9	45%
Full semanticity	1	5%

Table 6.C: “Behaviour” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.7 RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between people are an important aspect of our lives, therefore there are many idiomatic ways, in which we can express friendship, disagreement and other types of relationships.

People knowing each other for a long time *go back a long way* and if they spent a great deal of time together, they *lived in each other’s pockets*. Where *a tower of strength* can be relied upon to give a support any given time, *a fair-weather friend* offers their support only when convenient for them. While parting for a longer time, people promise each other to *keep in touch* in a way of texting or calling. People who just met, but get along well, *get on like a house on fire*, or if they simply like each other straightaway, one *takes a shine* to the other.

An individual, who likes someone very much, *has a soft spot* for that person. To *know someone inside out*, one knows someone’s character very well. Very similar people are *birds of a feather (flock together)* and very loyal friends are *as thick as thieves*. An individual, who *builds bridges*, helps people to cooperate. *To think the world of someone*, one has a strong admiration for that person.

People *at loggerheads* strongly disagree about a topic, whereas the opposite is to *see eye to eye* or be *on the same page* or *on the same wavelength*. When people do not



unintentionally discuss the same topic, they are *talking at cross purposes*. If an individual does *not give someone the time of day*, they ignore them.

In some cases, the idioms sound very similar and one must pay attention to every single detail, otherwise the meaning changes, as with the preposition here – *to have it in for someone* versus *to have it out with someone*. *To have it in* suggest a person has a tendency to criticize or disagree with someone, whereas *to have it out* means to have a serious discussion in order to end an argument.

*To keep someone at arm's length* means to be very careful when it comes to befriending someone. When people *move in the same circles*, they spend time with people of similar interests or work environment.

If a person *runs with a hare and hunts with the hounds*, he is not joining either party in an argument. A spouse is referred to as *a significant other* or *the better half*.

#### Number of idioms: 26

<i>at loggerheads</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>the better half</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>birds of a feather</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to build bridges</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a fair-weather friend</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to get on like a house on fire</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to go back a long way</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to have a soft spot</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have it in for someone</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have it out with someone</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to keep in touch</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to keep someone at arm's length</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to know someone inside out</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to live in each other's pockets</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to move in the same circles</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to not give someone the time of day</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>on the same page</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>on the same wavelength</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds</i>	VerbP	Zero

<i>to see eye to eye</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>a significant other</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to take shine to</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to talk at cross purposes</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>(as) thick as thieves</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to think the world of someone</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a tower of strength</i>	NounP	Partial

Table 7.A: “Relationships” idioms - division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	5	15%
Verbal phrases	17	65%
Adjectival phrases	1	4%
Adverbial phrases	0	0%
Prepositional phrases	3	12%

Table 7.B: “Relationships” idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	14	54%
Partial semanticity	12	46%
Full semanticity	0	0%

Table 7.C: “Relationships” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.8 PROBLEMS

Another scope that will be dealt with is concerning problems.

A person in a difficult situation is *in dire straits*, *in a pickle*, has *a millstone around his neck*, or he opened *a can of worms*. A very common idiomatic expression is *an elephant in the room*, which means there is a problem nobody wishes to discuss. If someone is *asking for trouble*, they are behaving in a way that may cause problems. The constant cause of a problem is *a bone of one’s life* and *a cloud on the horizon* is a very predictable issue that everybody can see coming. Once someone’s *alarm bells* start to ring, they begin to worry, because there might be a problem coming, however, once they *see light at the end of the tunnel*, they start to see signs of hope in resolving a certain problem.

Dealing with a more difficult problem than one can handle is *to bite off more than one can chew*. Somebody *dodges a bullet*, when they luckily avoid a problem and a person *in a tight spot* has been put into a difficult position. Once an individual *has come up against a brick wall*, they are not able to do anything about a situation and when *they dug themselves*

*into a hole*, they have to deal with a problem which is very hard to solve. The main part of a problem may be referred to as *the crux of the matter*.

To say someone is *papering over the cracks* or *sweeping something under the carpet* means that they are trying to hide a certain problem.

A *nightmare* is a terrible continuous problem and a *stumbling block* is a problem which stops one from achieving one's goals. Once *someone is in over one's head*, they are in a difficult situation they cannot deal with.

When someone is *clutching at straws*, they are trying to do anything to resolve a problem. A person who *has been left holding the baby*, has been left alone to deal with a problem.

### Number of idioms: 23

<i>to be asking for trouble</i>	VerbP	Full
<i>to be left holding the baby</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to bite off more than one can chew</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a bone of one's life</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a can of worms</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>a cloud on the horizon</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to clutch at straws</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to come up against a brick wall</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>the crux of the matter</i>	NounP	Full
<i>to dodge a bullet</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to dug oneself into a hole</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>an elephant in the room</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>in a pickle</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>in a tight spot</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>in dire straits</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>a millstone around one's neck</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a nightmare</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>one's alarm bell</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>(in) over one's head</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>a paper over the cracks</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to see the light at the end of the tunnel</i>	VerbP	Partial

<i>a stumbling block</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to sweep something under the carpet</i>	VerbP	Zero

Table 8.A: “Problems” idioms - division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	9	39%
Verbal phrases	10	48%
Adjectival phrases	1	4%
Adverbial phrases	0	0%
Prepositional phrases	3	13%

Table 8.B: “Problems” idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	13	57%
Partial semanticity	8	35%
Full semanticity	2	9%

Table 8.C: “Problems” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.9 ANGER

Some behaviour of people can be more open to idiomatic expressions than others. Anger is a strong feeling that can have many forms. Many of the following idioms are just different colourful expressions for anger or angry people.

A continuous discontent can lead to a person feeling *fed up to the back teeth*. They can express their feeling by saying that they *had it up to here* (usually used with a hand gesture). One can be worried the other person will get so angry, they will *throw a fit*, *blow a fuse*, *go off the deep end* or they *burst a blood vessel*, not being able to control their emotions.

Some people have the unique ability to make everyone around them annoyed – *rub them the wrong way*, *put their back up* or *ruffle their feathers*. Some actions or behaviour can *drive someone round the bend*, *get their goat* or *drive them up to wall* with anger. Making someone angry on purpose *rattles their cage* or *makes their blood boil*. The angry person wanting to tell someone how angry he is, he *gives them* either *a piece of his mind* or *an earful*. A sudden anger can result in *flying of the handle*, expressing one’s emotions in a loud way. One’s temper can *go through the roof* or *hit the ceiling*, causing strong anger.

Some colours are also associated with anger. The most prominent one being the colour red. A person can simply *see red*, while being very angry, or a particular action or statement can be like *a red flag to a bull* for them.

A person who is not having a good day is *in a black mood*, which can lead to being *out for blood* – just trying to find somebody to blame with no particular reason. *A bear with a sore head* is a person who is easily irritated. *To bite someone’s head off* or *eat someone alive* means a strong, and perhaps unfair, criticism.

**Number of idioms: 24**

<i>a bear with a sore head</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to bite someone’s head off</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to blow a fuse</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to burst a blood vessel</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to drive someone up a wall</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to eat someone alive</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>fed up to the back teeth</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to fly off the handle</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to give an earful</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to give someone a piece of one’s mind</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to go off the deep end</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to go through the roof</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to have it up here</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to hit the ceiling</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>in a black mood</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>to make someone’s blood boil</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>out for blood</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>to put one’s back up</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to rattle one’s cage</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>red flag to a bull</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to rub someone the wrong way</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to ruffle one’s feathers</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to see red</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to throw a fit</i>	VerbP	Zero

Table 9.A: “Anger” idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	2	8%
Verbal phrases	19	79%
Adjectival phrases	1	4%
Adverbial phrases	1	4%
Prepositional phrases	1	4%

Table 9.B: “Anger” idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	10	42%
Partial semanticity	14	58%
Full semanticity	0	0%

Table 9.C: “Anger” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.10 HAPPINESS AND LOVE

Idioms often express the positive feelings in a figurative way. Instead of saying one is happy, they have many other options describing what they are feeling. Closely tied to happiness is the scope of love, therefore the decision to combine them has been made.

Many informal idioms can express extreme happiness. A person can be *on top of the world*, *over the moon*, *in seventh heaven* or *on a cloud nine*. They can feel so good it is like *walking on air* for them. An individual who is always in a good mood is called a *happy-go-lucky* person. We can also use a simile, and say he is *as happy as Larry*. Being excited about a certain event can make one *jump for joy*.

A nice gesture may *make one’s day*, causing a person to feel delighted and happy. If an individual enjoys what he does, he *gets a real kick out of it* and when he does something dangerous but exciting, he *does it for kicks*. Excited people *have stars in their eyes* and are *full of the joys of spring*. Successful situation can lead to a person being *on a high*. Upon hearing some good news, one can say they are happy to hear it, or it is simply *music to their ears*. A good and exciting surprise can *blow someone’s mind*.

Hand in hand with happiness comes love, and there exist many (contemporary and colloquial) idioms about it. A couple who is inseparable and very good together is *a match made in heaven*. When an individual is very much in love, they are *head over heels* with somebody and they *love with all their heart and soul*. *Those three little words* is a euphemism for I Love You.

If people are *lovey-dovey*, they make it very obvious they are in a relationship. To ask someone to marry them can be simply to *pop the question*. And finally, when the couple gets married, they *tie the knot*.

### Number of idioms: 23

<i>to blow someone's mind</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to do it for the kicks</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>full of the joys of spring</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>to get a real kick out of something</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>(as) happy as Larry</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>happy-go-lucky</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>to have stars in one's eyes</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>head over heels</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>in seventh heaven</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>to jump for joy</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to love with all one's heart and soul</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>lovey-dovey</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to make one's day</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>a match made in heaven</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>music to one's ears</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>on a high</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>on cloud nine</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>on top of the world</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>over the moon</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>to pop the question</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>those three little words</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to tie the knot</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to walk on air</i>	VerbP	Zero

Table 10.A: "Happiness and Love" idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	3	13%
Verbal phrases	10	43%
Adjectival phrases	4	17%
Adverbial phrases	1	4%
Prepositional phrases	5	22%

Table 10.B: “Happiness and Love” idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	13	57%
Partial semanticity	10	43%
Full semanticity	0	0%

Table 10.C: “Happiness and Love” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.11 ANXIETY AND FEAR

In addition to anger and happiness, there are also the emotions of anxiety and fear. As we can see, emotions are very prominent in the department of idiomatic expressions. Idioms prove to be very useful in these scopes, because they can emphasize a certain feeling in many different ways.

Someone with *bated breath* is very anxious and excited for an upcoming event. One is *a bundle of nerves*, *has butterflies in one’s stomach*, *has the jitters* or *heebie-jeebies* while waiting nervously before a difficult or exciting situation. An extreme way of expressing the same is to *get one’s knickers in a twist*. A restless person is like *a cat on hot bricks*, whereas *to have kittens* expresses worry or fear. Nervous individual is continuously *on pins and needles* or *on tenterhooks*, the latter mainly in the state of suspense or excitement.

Anxiety can cause individual *to break out in a cold sweat* because of his nerves. A person can also *hold his breath* in anticipation for something to happen. Too much pressure causes inability to do something or, in other words, a person *can’t stand the pace*. One can be *tongue-tied* and not be able to speak because of nervousness, whilst having *nerves of steel* means never becoming nervous or frightened. Trembling with nerves or fear can be also called *shaking like a leaf*.

A person who is easily frightened is *afraid of his own shadow*, whereas a person who pretends not being scared *whistles in the dark*. An extreme shock results in *making one’s blood run cold* or *jumping out of one’s skin*. Scaring a person can *scare him out of his wits*, *scare daylight out of him* or have him *quaking in his boots*. He can become *scared stiff* and be unable to move.



There are many idioms concerning this scope that include the key word heart. Somebody can be so terrified or anxious, they *have their heart in their mouth* or *in their boots*. When *someone's heart misses* or *skips a beat*, they experienced a sudden shock or fear.

**Number of idioms: 26**

<i>afraid of one's own shadow</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>bated breath</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to be quaking in one's boots</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to break out in a cold sweat</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>a cat on hot bricks</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to get one's knickers in a twist</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have butterflies in one's stomach</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to have kittens</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have one's heart in one's boots</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have one's heart in one's mouth</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have one's heart miss/skip a beat</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to have the jitters</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>heebie-jeebies</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to hold one's breath</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to jump out of one's skin</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to make one's blood run cold</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>nerves of steel</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to not be able to stand the pace</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>on pins and needles</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>on tenterhooks</i>	PrepP	Partial
<i>to scare daylight out of someone</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to scare someone out of someone's wits</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>scared stiff</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>to shake like a leaf</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>tongue-tied</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>to whistle in the dark</i>	VerbP	Zero

Table 11.A: "Anxiety and Fear" idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	4	15%
Verbal phrases	17	65%
Adjectival phrases	3	12%
Adverbial phrases	0	0 %
Prepositional phrases	2	8%

Table 11.B: “Anxiety and Fear” idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	14	54%
Partial semanticity	12	46%
Full semanticity	0	0%

Table 11.C: “Anxiety and Fear” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.12 SLEEP

There are two types of people, *a night owl*, who stays up late, and *an early bird*, who is always awake very early or *gets up at the crack of dawn*. If one goes to sleep very early and wakes up very early, they *burn the candle at both ends*. Sleeping shortly during a day can be expressed by saying one takes *a catnap* or gets *forty winks*, while falling asleep briefly and with no intention is to *nod off* or *drop off*. Extremely tired person is *ready to drop* or *can barely keep his eyes open*. If someone falls asleep very quickly, they *go out like a light*. Having troubles sleeping is called *to toss and turn* or *to not sleep a wink*.

There are many ways of expressing going to bed – *to hit the hay*, *to hit the sack*, *to hit the sheets* or *to catch some Z's*. Sleeping deeply can be expressed by a simile as well, one either *sleeps like a log*, *a rock* or *a baby*. One can also be simply *fast* or *sound asleep*. To have a *lie in* or *a sleep in* means to stay in bed longer than usual. Individual, who is in a bad mood, *got up on the wrong side of the bed*.

The phrase used when going to bed is *Sleep tight (don't make the bugs bite)!*, whereas we wake someone up with *Rise and Shine!*.

#### Number of idioms: 27

<i>to barely keep one's eyes open</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to burn the candle at both ends</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to catch some Z's</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a catnap</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to drop-off</i>	VerbP	Zero

<i>an early bird</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>fast asleep</i>	AdvP	Partial
<i>forty winks</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to get up at the crack of dawn</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to get up on the wrong side of the bed</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to go out like a light</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to hit the hay</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to hit the sack</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to hit the sheets</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a lie in</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a night owl</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to nod-off</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to not sleep a wink</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>ready to drop</i>	AdjP	Partial
<i>Rise and Shine!</i>	Stereotyped	Partial
<i>a sleep in</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to sleep like a baby</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to sleep like a log</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to sleep like a rock</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>Sleep tight (don't let the bugs bite)!</i>	Stereotyped	Partial
<i>sound asleep</i>	AdvP	Zero
<i>to toss and turn</i>	VerbP	Full

Table 12.A: "Sleep" idioms – division by head and semanticity

Nominal phrases	6	22%
Verbal phrases	16	59%
Adjectival phrases	1	4%
Adverbial phrases	2	7%
Prepositional phrases	0	0%
Stereotyped phrases	2	7%

Table 12.B: "Sleep" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	11	41%
Partial semanticity	15	56%
Full semanticity	1	4%

Table 12.C: “Sleep” idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.13 FILMS AND TV

Film and TV are a very contemporary topics and the associated idioms are usually very informal and colloquial for their use in friendly situations.

There exist many different types of films. A *popcorn movie* is a type of film that is not particularly good or engaging, but it is fun and easy to watch. A *feel-good movie* does not deal with heavy topics, is fun and optimistic and is especially appreciated after stressful situations. A film that is very popular and successful in the cinemas is called a *crowd puller* or a *block-buster*. Sometimes these movies are so praised by critics and viewers, that other people hope it will *live up to the hype* and it will be as good as expected.

Many movies nowadays are *star-studded*, which means they star many famous actors and actresses. Actors love *having their name in lights* being the star of the motion picture. They try to make their performances memorable and *steal the show*, so to speak, hoping critics will call their performance a *showstopper*. Often critics find mistakes, *picking holes* in the plot or performances. Their critique can be very harsh or strong by doing a *hatchet job* on it.

A comedy can have the audience in the cinema *rolling in the aisles* laughing. A good thriller, on the other hand, *keeps viewers on the edge of their seat* the entire time, keeping them anxious and engaged in the story. A horror movie *sends shivers down one’s spine* by being frightening or scary.

A very well-known expression nowadays is *Spoiler Alert* – informing the viewers one is going to talk about the main plot of the movie, which can ruin the watching experience.

#### Number of idioms: 15

<i>a block-buster</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>a crowd-puller</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>a feel-good movie</i>	NounP	Full
<i>a hatchet job</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>to have a name in the lights</i>	VerbP	Partial

<i>to keep one on the edge of one's seat</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to live up to the hype</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to pick holes</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a popcorn movie</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to roll in the aisles</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to send shivers down one's spine</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>a showstopper</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>Spoiler Alert</i>	Stereotyped	Full
<i>star-studded</i>	AdjP	Zero
<i>to steal the show</i>	VerbP	Zero

Table 13.A: "Films and TV" idioms – division by head phrase and semanticity

Nominal phrases	6	40%
Verbal phrases	7	47%
Adjectival phrases	1	7%
Adverbial phrases	0	0%
Prepositional phrases	0	0%
Stereotyped phrases	1	7%

Table 13.B: "Sleep" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	5	33%
Partial semanticity	8	53%
Full semanticity	2	13%

Table 13.C: "Sleep" idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.14 POWER

The scope of power includes powerful people, their actions and behaviour.

People in power *call the shots, they hold the rains, carry the weight* or *rule the roost*. The most important individual in an organization is called the *top dog*, whereas *big fish in a small pond* is a type of person, who is very important and influential but works in a small company or group.

When someone threatens or intimidates other people into doing something, they *bulldoze them into it* or *crack the whip*. To pressure someone is also called *to put the squeeze on*. *To force someone's hand* means to leave someone no other choice but to do something. *To bring someone to heel* means forcing them to behave in a certain way.

Once someone *has other people by the short hairs* or *under his thumb*, he has them completely under control and he takes control by *gaining the upper hand*. When a powerful person uses others to achieve something, he is *pulling the strings*.

If one *reads the riot act* or *lays down the law*, one is firmly establishing the rules. Once a powerful person puts somebody in their place, he lets them know he is the one in power. A person, who does whatever he is told, is *dancing to someone's tune*. Usually partners are not equal in making the decisions, suggesting the one in charge *wears the trousers*.

Another important aspect of having a power is the perception. Sometimes there is a person behind seemingly powerful individual, who is *whispering into their ear* or has *the power behind the throne*, telling them what to do. The influenced person or organization can be in other words called *the paper tiger* – they are only seemingly in power. The set expression *might is right* suggests, that the people in charge are the most powerful and can do whatever they wish. They can say it is either *their way or the highway*, telling others they are making the decisions and the other people either support it or they can leave.

Sometimes people are threatening with having *friends in high places*, suggesting nobody ought to deny them. The friends in high places can give their *seal of approval* which expresses their full support. And finally, when there are *too many chiefs and not enough Indians*, too many people are involved in making the decisions, and not enough people do the actual work.

### Number of idioms: 26

<i>a big fish in a small pond</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to bring to heel</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to bulldoze someone into doing something</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to call the shots</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to carry weight</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to crack the whip</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to dance to someone's tune</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to force someone's hand</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>friends in high places</i>	NounP	Full
<i>to gain the upper hand</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to have someone by the short hairs</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to hold the reins</i>	VerbP	Partial

<i>to lay down the law</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>Might is right.</i>	Stereotyped	Partial
<i>my way or the highway</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>a paper tiger</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>power behind the throne</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>to put the squeeze on</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to read the riot act</i>	VerbP	Zero
<i>to rule the roost</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>seal of approval</i>	NounP	Partial
<i>too many chiefs and not enough Indians</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>top dog</i>	NounP	Zero
<i>under one's thumb</i>	PrepP	Zero
<i>to wear the trousers</i>	VerbP	Partial
<i>to whisper into someone's ear</i>	VerbP	Partial

Table 14.A: "Power" idioms – division by head phrase and semanticity

Nominal phrases	8	31%
Verbal phrases	16	62%
Adjectival phrases	0	0%
Adverbial phrases	0	0%
Prepositional phrases	1	4%
Stereotyped phrases	1	4%

Table 14.B: "Power" idioms – occurrence of head phrases

Zero semanticity	11	42%
Partial semanticity	14	54%
Full semanticity	1	4%

Table 14.C: "Power" idioms – occurrence of semanticity

### 3.15 RESULTS

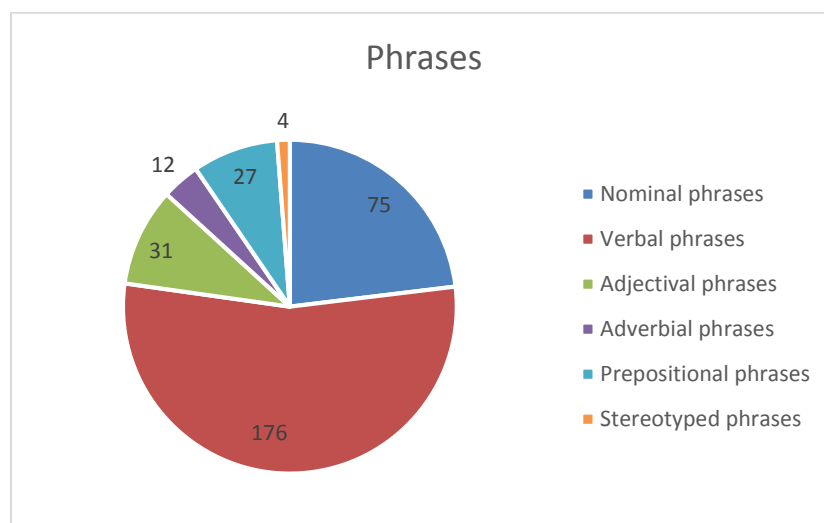
In this chapter, the results are counted, put in tables and graphs, and commented on.

#### 3.15.1 HEAD PHRASES

Nominal phrases	75	23%
Verbal phrases	176	54%
Adjectival phrases	31	10%
Adverbial phrases	12	4%
Prepositional phrases	27	8%
Stereotyped phrases	4	1%

Table 15: Total occurrence of head phrases

As we can see from the table hereinbefore, the verbal phrases with 54% are the most represented type. The second most represented are the nominal phrases (23%). The number of representations is very low in the last three categories of phrases. Only 10% adjectival phrases, 8% prepositional and 4% adverbial. Only a small number of stereotyped sentences were collected. The representation is shown, for better visualization, in the graph hereafter.



Graph 1: Total occurrence of head phrases

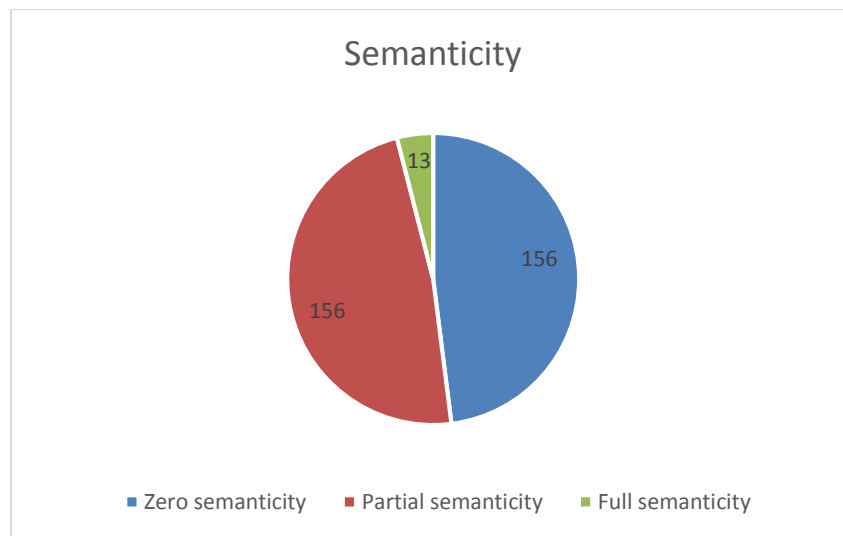


### 3.15.2 LEVEL OF SEMANTICITY

Zero semanticity	156	48%
Partial semanticity	156	48%
Full semanticity	13	4%

Table 16: Total occurrence of semanticity

The semanticity is balanced in the first two categories of zero and partial semanticity, both with exactly 48%. Full semanticity was found only with 4% of cases. Once again, for better visualization, the graph is provided below.



Graph 2: Total occurrence of semanticity

## CONCLUSION

All of the idiomatic expressions have been analysed from their formal and semantic point of view and now the conclusion is in order.

The theoretical background consists of two chapters. One is dedicated to definitions of idioms, their use, origin, identification and varieties. Second chapter describes the semantic and formal point of view. It deals with the characteristics, different approaches to categorization, as well as the function and structure of idioms.

In the analysis, the idioms were gathered from various sources and categorized by their common feature into 14 different scopes. In total, 325 idioms were collected and used for analysis in this thesis.

From the formal point of view, it was thought at the beginning of this thesis, that the occurrence of different types of phrases would be balanced. However, as it is clear from the analysis, the most used idioms are in the form of verbal phrases. More than half of the collected idioms belong to this category. The second most used expressions are nominal phrases, usually describing people's qualities and character.

The only two phrases that are more-or-less balanced in the occurrence are adjectival and prepositional phrases. Adverbial phrases have the least amount of representation; however, it is important to add, that many prepositional phrases function as adverbial, making the expression both prepositional and adverbial phrases.

The semanticity proved to be as presumed at the beginning of this thesis. The results show that the semanticity usually ranges from zero to partial. Not many cases of full semanticity have been found within these scopes. It seems that in half of the cases, a person ought to be able to tell the meaning of the idiom from analysing the metaphorical sense, but it is not always very easy. Another half is completely idiomatic, with no literal meaning distinguishable. The results prove that the knowledge of idioms and their meaning is very important.

All in all, this thesis provided theoretical background as well as large number of idioms from different semantic categories, proving that idioms are important feature in English language. Moreover, the number of collected idioms in only 14 scopes showcases, that they are widely used in everyday lives of the English-speaking community in all areas of their lives and ought to be taught as a part of curriculum in schools. For a further analysis, this thesis could be used as a base for analysing the knowledge of learners of English, for its wide range of collected idioms.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AdjP	Adjectival Phrase
AdvP	Adverbial Phrase
NounP	Nominal Phrase
PrepP	Prepositional Phrase
VerbP	Verbal Phrase

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato práce se zabývá analýzou anglických idiomů z hlediska sémantického a formálního. Idiomy jsou součástí každodenního života rodilých mluvčích a jsou podstatnou částí lingvistiky. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části, a to teoretickou a praktickou.

Teoretická část se zabývá idiomy a jejich základními charakteristikami. Součástí této části je užití idiomů, jejich vznik, regionální variace, identifikaci a přístup nerodilých mluvčích. Následně také rozebírá sémantickou a formální stránku idiomů z teoretického hlediska. Zabývá se zejména definicí sémantiky jako takové, funkcí a strukturou idiomů a zejména několika možnými druhy dělení idiomů.

Praktická část se skládá ze tří kroků. Prvotně je 325 shromážděných idiomů rozděleno do 14 sémantických okruhů z různých oblastí každodenního života. Tyto okruhy jsou z oblasti zdraví, smrti, peněz, práce, vzdělání, chování, vztahů, problémů, hněvu, štěstí a lásky, úzkosti a strachu, spánku, filmů a televize a moci. Následuje vysvětlení jejich významů. Dále jsou shromážděné idiomy analyzovány z pohledu hlavní fráze, která může být nominální, adjektivní, slovesná, předložková či příslovečná. Poslední krok se zabývá analýzou sémantivity daných idiomů, na základě jejich metaforických významů.

Z formálního hlediska bylo zjištěno, že nejčastěji používané jsou fráze slovesné a nejméně fráze příslovečné. Ze sémantického hlediska se zjistilo, že u necelé poloviny případů lze částečně poznat význam a u druhé poloviny nelze význam přiřadit žádné metafoře. Pouze u malého vzorku byla nalezena plná sémantická.



## APPENDIX

**Health**

back on one's feet  
 a bag of bones  
 blue/green/pale around the gills  
 a clean bill of health  
 death warmed up  
 (as) fit as a fiddle  
 a frog in one's throat  
 full of beans  
 to go under the knife  
 hale and hearty  
 in the pink of health  
 off-colour  
 on one's last legs  
 on the mend  
 on the road to recovery  
 one foot in the grave  
 the picture of health  
 to pull through  
 racked with pain  
 to recharge one's batteries  
 (as) right as rain  
 run down  
 to take a turn for the worse  
 under the weather  
 up and about

**Death**

to bite the dust  
 bored to death  
 (as) dead as dodo  
 (as) dead as doornail

(as) dead as mutton  
 dead to the world  
 to die laughing  
 to die of boredom  
 to die of broken heart  
 to drop like flies  
 to fall of one's perch  
 to give up the ghost  
 to go to a better place  
 to kick the bucket  
 to meet one's maker  
 to pass away  
 to pop one's clog  
 to push up the daisies  
 scared to death

**Money**

to be going for a song  
 the breadwinner  
 to break a bank  
 to bring home the bacon  
 in the lap of luxury  
 to laugh all the way to the bank  
 to make a killing  
 to make ends meet  
 money for old rope  
 a money spinner  
 money to burn  
 on a shoestring  
 on the breadline  
 to pay over the odds  
 to pay through the nose

a rip-off  
 to roll in money  
 to sell one's own grandmother  
 to spend money like water  
 strapped for cash  
 to take someone to the cleaner's  
 to throw money down the drain  
 to tighten one's belt  
 well-heeled  
 well-off

### **Work**

at the bottom of the ladder  
 at the top of the ladder  
 back to the salt mines  
 to boil the ocean  
 to break one's back  
 (as) busy as a bee  
 a cushy number  
 a dead-end job  
 done and dusted  
 a donkey work  
 to get the sack  
 golden handcuffs  
 a golden handshake  
 a golden hello  
 to have one's hands full  
 to have one's work cut out  
 a head-hunter  
 to learn the ropes  
 on the go  
 to pull out all the stops  
 a run-of-the-mill  
 to set a foot in the door

to slog one's guts out  
 snowed-under  
 track record  
 up to one's ears/eyes  
 to work one's fingers to the bone

### **Education**

back to basics  
 back to square one  
 a bookworm  
 to crack a book  
 a copycat  
 to cover a lot of ground  
 to crank out a paper  
 to draw a blank  
 a drop-out  
 an eager-beaver  
 to hit the books  
 to learn by heart  
 to learn by rote  
 to make the grade  
 to pass with flying colours  
 to put one's thinking cap on  
 to skip/cut class  
 a teacher's pet  
 university of life

### **Behaviour**

to blow something out of proportion  
 to bury the hatchet  
 to eat someone for breakfast  
 get-up and go  
 to give someone hard time  
 to have plenty of strings to one's bow

highly strung  
 to keep a lid on one's emotions  
 to let oneself go  
 to look out for number one  
 to look straight through someone  
 a loose cannon  
 to make a mountain out of a molehill  
 to make a scene  
 a man (woman) of many parts  
 a mine of information  
 not on speaking terms  
 to play the fool  
 a wet blanket  
 a whizz-kid

### **Relationships**

at loggerheads  
 the better half  
 birds of a feather  
 to build bridges  
 a fair-weather friend  
 to get on like a house on fire  
 to go back a long way  
 to have a soft spot  
 to have it in for someone  
 to have it out with someone  
 to keep in touch  
 to keep someone at arm's length  
 to know someone inside out  
 to live in each other's pockets  
 to move in the same circles  
 to not give someone the time of day  
 on the same page  
 on the same wavelength

to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds  
 to see eye to eye  
 a significant other  
 to take shine to  
 to talk at cross purposes  
 (as) thick as thieves  
 to think the world of someone  
 a tower of strength

### **Problems**

to be asking for trouble  
 to be left holding the baby  
 to bite off more than one can chew  
 a bone of one's life  
 a can of worms  
 a cloud on the horizon  
 to clutch at straws  
 to come up against a brick wall  
 the crux of the matter  
 to dodge a bullet  
 to dug oneself into a hole  
 an elephant in the room  
 in a pickle  
 in a tight spot  
 in dire straits  
 a millstone around one's neck  
 a nightmare  
 one's alarm bell  
 (in) over one's head  
 a paper over the cracks  
 to see the light at the end of the tunnel  
 a stumbling block  
 to sweep something under the carpet

**Anger**

a bear with a sore head  
 to bite someone's head off  
 to blow a fuse  
 to burst a blood vessel  
 to drive someone up a wall  
 to eat someone alive  
 fed up to the back teeth  
 to fly off the handle  
 to give an earful  
 to give someone a piece of one's mind  
 to go off the deep end  
 to go through the roof  
 to have it up here  
 to hit the ceiling  
 in a black mood  
 to make someone's blood boil  
 out for blood  
 to put one's back up  
 to rattle one's cage  
 red flag to a bull  
 to rub someone the wrong way  
 to ruffle one's feathers  
 to see red  
 to throw a fit

**Happiness and Love**

to blow someone's mind  
 to do it for the kicks  
 full of the joys of spring  
 to get a real kick out of something  
 (as) happy as Larry  
 happy-go-lucky  
 to have stars in one's eyes

head over heels  
 in seventh heaven  
 to jump for joy  
 to love with all one's heart and soul  
 lovey-dovey  
 to make one's day  
 a match made in heaven  
 music to one's ears  
 on a high  
 on cloud nine  
 on top of the world  
 over the moon  
 to pop the question  
 those three little words  
 to tie the knot  
 to walk on air

**Anxiety and Fear**

afraid of one's own shadow  
 bated breath  
 to be quaking in one's boots  
 to break out in a cold sweat  
 a cat on hot bricks  
 to get one's knickers in a twist  
 to have butterflies in one's stomach  
 to have kittens  
 to have one's heart in one's boots  
 to have one's heart in one's mouth  
 to have one's heart miss/skip a beat  
 to have the jitters  
 heebie-jeebies  
 to hold one's breath  
 to jump out of one's skin  
 to make one's blood run cold

nerves of steel  
 to not be able to stand the pace  
 on pins and needles  
 on tenterhooks  
 to scare daylights out of someone  
 to scare someone out of someone's wits  
 scared stiff  
 to shake like a leaf  
 tongue-tied  
 to whistle in the dark

### **Sleep**

to barely keep one's eyes open  
 to burn the candle at both ends  
 to catch some Z's  
 a catnap  
 to drop-off  
 an early bird  
 fast asleep  
 forty winks  
 to get up at the crack of dawn  
 to get up on the wrong side of the bed  
 to go out like a light  
 to hit the hay  
 to hit the sack  
 to hit the sheets  
 a lie in  
 a night owl  
 to nod-off  
 to not sleep a wink  
 ready to drop  
 Rise and Shine!  
 a sleep in  
 to sleep like a baby

to sleep like a log  
 to sleep like a rock  
 Sleep tight (don't let the bugs bite)!  
 sound asleep  
 to toss and turn

### **Films and TV**

a block-buster  
 a crowd-puller  
 a feel-good movie  
 a hatchet job  
 to have a name in the lights  
 to keep one on the edge of one's seat  
 to live up to the hype  
 to pick holes  
 a popcorn movie  
 to roll in the aisles  
 to send shivers down one's spine  
 a showstopper  
 Spoiler Alert  
 star-studded  
 to steal the show

### **Power**

a big fish in a small pond  
 to bring to heel  
 to bulldoze someone into doing something  
 to call the shots  
 to carry weight  
 to crack the whip  
 to dance to someone's tune  
 to force someone's hand  
 friends in high places  
 to gain the upper hand

to have someone by the short hairs

to hold the reins

to lay down the law

Might is right.

my way or the highway

a paper tiger

power behind the throne

to put the squeeze on

to read the riot act

to rule the roost

seal of approval

too many chiefs and not enough Indians

top dog

under one's thumb

to wear the trousers

to whisper into someone's ear