

Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric
Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: **Marie-Kristina Malá**

Title: *Comparison of idioms of the same reference in English and Czech*

Length: 69 pages

Text Length: 30 pages

Assessment Criteria	Scale	Comments
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See comments overleaf
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

The author states in her Introduction that *(t)he aim of this thesis is to compare English idioms and their Czech counterparts, introduce some interesting differences and origin stories of the analyzed idioms, but mainly to come up with a statistic*. Quite what one is supposed to make of or do with this statistic afterwards is not entirely clear but that is something which probably need not concern us here: the fact that some statistical count did indeed emerge from the research suggests the thesis should be considered a success on its own terms.

From a purely formal standpoint, the work is well organised, correctly referenced and the writing of a high standard. The only minor quibbles would be the use of the past tense to introduce citations when the present would be more appropriate, e.g. *Lipka (1992) stated ...*, *Ginzburg (1979) claimed ...*, *Kvetko (2009) distinguished ...* (all p. 4). On the other hand, as is evident from the examples just given, the author does employ a commendable variety of verbs of reported speech. Secondly there are some minor inaccuracies in some of the idioms quoted, e.g. *skating on a thin ice*, *lie in one's teeth* (p. 23); *be left on a shelf*, *birds of feather flock together* (p. 27); on p. 28 'buy a pig in a poke' is more accurate than *like a pig ...*

As regards content, despite the *interesting differences* not being the main focus of the work, it does seem a pity the author chose not to pursue this aspect of the topic in slightly more depth and using a more balanced approach. On pp. 27-28, for instance, there are details of the origins of some selected idioms in English but no corresponding entries for the Czech equivalents. This seems a missed opportunity for potentially enlightening cross-cultural comparisons, none more so than if they involve two of the most prominent literary figures not only in their respective native languages but in world literature as a whole. Thus we learn on p. 28 that the English expression *it's all Greek to me* is taken from Shakespeare, who back in the day had adopted the phrase from medieval Latin. Here, it might have been mentioned that the pragmatic Czech equivalent with its reference to *španělská vesnice* is transferred from German and originated from Goethe, who allegedly, given his fondness for Bohemia, decided to create an alternative to the existing German idiom for something unknown and incomprehensible, to wit *jemandem böhmische Dörfer sein*.

At this juncture it may be noted in passing that the above-mentioned 'all Greek' could be replaced by 'double Dutch' with no great difference in meaning, though intuitively one senses the latter might be considered rather more plebian than the classical reference. Perhaps a more pertinent example of two idioms in the same language having essentially the same underlying sense arises in the concluding sentence on p. 28: the author is justified in pointing out the bucolic connotations of both 'Make hay while the sun shines' and 'Kuj železo, dokud je žhavé'; however, 'Strike while the iron's hot' (not mentioned by Ms. Malá) is an equally common English saying and a much closer rendering of the Czech in terms of lexical equivalence.

Two final points which the author could respond to at the oral defence:

- (a) On p. 27 we are told: *As it was already mentioned, most idioms are informal, but here are some exceptions: be left on the shelf is an old-fashioned cliché, be six feet under is euphemistic and humorous slang, be wet behind the ears, couch potato, and he thinks he runs the show are disapproving*. Surely the categories being described here are not mutually exclusive, especially in the case of "humorous slang" which by its very nature would be considered informal.
- (b) Seeing *[s]ome idioms exist in a number of languages (it is not my cup of tea in English, není to můj šálek čaje in Czech ...)* on p. 14 struck this reviewer as problematic, having been taught as he was, aeons ago, that Czechs prefer coffee to tea. Somehow it seems appropriate to wind up with a statistic, so here is one for consideration: on the day this report was completed, googling <není to můj šálek kávy> yielded 19,700,000 hits, <není to můj šálek čaje> a mere 303,000. Might this information be of any value to an instructor teaching Czech as a foreign language?

Recommended grade: **velmi dobře**

Reviewer: Andrew Tollet

Date: 30th August 2021

Signature: