

A Comparative Study of Idioms in English and Czech Tabloids

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá srovnáváním ustálených slovních spojení z anglických a českých bulvárních tisků a je rozdělena do dvou částí.

První část se zaměřuje na teorii. Poskytuje definice ustálených slovních spojení, objasňuje způsoby, jakými vznikají a dodává propracovanou kategorizaci. Poznatky z teoretické části jsou poté využívány v druhé části práce k rozpoznání a roztřídění slovních spojení.

Druhá část této práce je analýzou shromážděného souboru článků z anglických a českých bulvárních tisků. Nalezená slovní spojení tvoří anglickou a českou databázi, jejichž jednotlivá slovní spojení jsou mezi sebou různými způsoby porovnávána. Z těchto porovnávání jsou vyvozeny různé závěry, které například ukazují četnost ustálených slovních spojení, poskytují překlady nebo vysvětlují jejich využití.

Klíčová slova: ustálené slovní spojení, bulvární tisk, článek, anglický jazyk, český jazyk, ekvivalent, kategorie, sport, zpravodajství, celebrity

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with a comparison of idioms form English and Czech tabloids and is divided into two parts.

The first part is focused on a theory. It provides definitions of idioms, illustrates the ways they arise, and gives an elaborated categorization. The knowledge from the theoretical part is then applied in the second part for identification and classification of idioms.

The second part of the thesis is an analysis of gathered corpus of articles from both English and Czech tabloids. The identified idioms are listed in English and Czech databases and compered with their counterparts in various ways. These comparisons make several conclusions, which show the frequency of idioms, provide translations and clarify their usage.

Keywords: idiom, tabloid, article, English language, Czech language, equivalent, category, sport, news, celebrities

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is their bread and butter. When it comes to language skills, they know their onions. Sensational news, celebrity scandals and sportsmen failures is grist to their mill. Yes, talking is about journalists, more precisely, tabloid press journalists. Who else should be a master of language than somebody who makes a living from writing? And with regard to idioms, what other type of newspapers should employ figurative speech and emotionally coloured expressions than tabloids?

Idioms enrich language by making it more colourful and entertaining. They intensify the imagery of our thoughts, help us exaggerate our opinions, and make our statements more interesting and amusing. Likewise, the main purpose of tabloids is to entertain, attract and shock the readers and evoke emotions in them rather than to educate them or discuss some serious issues.

Idioms are important part of language and their knowledge is vital for the full comprehension. Since idioms are usually figurative and apply metaphors, they might be difficult to understand for non-native speakers and in some cases even impossible to guess.

In this thesis, I compare idioms found in both English and Czech tabloids and provide their equivalent idioms from the target language as well as their translations. The study, however, deals not only with the comparison of meanings, but also with the actual usage of idioms in tabloids. The aim is to find out what is the frequency of occurrence of idioms in contemporary tabloid newspapers, what kind of idioms are utilized, what are the most common idioms, in what situations they are used and how they influence the reader. The reasons why there are similarities or differences between English and Czech tabloids are then investigated and explained.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part and an analysis. The theoretical part defines idioms, illustrates the ways they arise, and gives an elaborated classification of them. The analysis is based on a survey of a corpus of articles from both English and Czech tabloids. The knowledge from the theoretical part is then applied in the analysis to identify the idioms from the researched articles and consequently to analyse them in various ways.

I. THEORY

1 DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Language can be considered as a living thing. As well as living things, language is continuously growing and keeps changing. This process has been going on for centuries. That, of course, also applies for English. The development of English language is not, however, recognized only by comparing texts from the Middle Ages with current English texts. The evolution of language is also perceptible in the present-day English as it grows continually by accepting new vocabulary, which is caused by new developments in knowledge. Usually, most such words and terms come from the English of special subjects like science, technology, sociology, psychology, politics and economics. On the other hand, there are many other ways, how new words are coined. For instance, words that already exist can gain a new meaning in a particular situation, or by changing their parts of speech. New words can be also made by adding suffixes or prefixes as well as by mixing words that already exist (Seidl and McMordie 1978, 1).

Fromkin (2003, 93-98) makes it clearer by identifying six most frequent word coinage processes. These processes include:

- Compounds - Compound words are new formed words that were made by joining two or more words together. Compounds can be created from words of the same grammatical category (*girl + friend = girlfriend*), as well as by combining different grammatical categories (*head + strong = headstrong, pick + pocket = pickpocket, over + take = overtake, etc.*). Compounds can be variously spelled with dashes, spaces, or nothing between the words.
- Acronyms - Acronyms are words that derive from the initials of several words and are pronounced as the spelling indicates - as a word (*NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Agency, radar - radio detecting and ranging, etc.*).
- Back-Formations - These words are created due to the incorrect morphological analysis. That can be demonstrated on the word *peddle* that was derived from *peddler* on the mistaken assumption that the *er* was the agentive suffix. This applies also for *hawker - hawk, swindler - swindle, enthuse - enthusiasm, etc.*
- Abbreviations - Abbreviation is a shortened form of an existing word or phrase that became lexicalized. For example *gym* is an abbreviation of *gymnasium*, *math* of *mathematics*, *ad* comes from *advertisement*, etc.

- Eponyms - Eponyms are words that derive from proper names and stand for certain things. For instance, the word *sandwich* comes from the name Earl of Sandwich who put his food between two slices of bread while gambling, *robot* firstly appeared in the novel R.U.R. by Karel Čapek, or the word *paparazzi* comes from the news photographer character Signor Paparazzo.
- Blends - Blending is a process of putting two or more words together in order to create a new word. For example, *smoke* + *fog* = *smog*, *motor* + *hotel* = *motel*, *breakfast* + *lunch* = *brunch*, etc.

Beside these processes, idioms can be considered as a word formation and thus as an enrichment of a language as well. They are usually created by putting two or more words together, where the new form acquires new meaning - different from the meaning of the individual words that the idiom is made of. Idioms should not be taken as an isolate part of the language which one can choose either to use or to omit, but they form an essential part of the general vocabulary of English (Seidl and McMoride 1988, 11).

Kvetko (2006, 23) claims, that since language is a very creative phenomenon, new idioms, as well as words, are coming into existence all the time. In most cases, idioms are the eventual result of the gradual process in which initially free and variable word groups become fixed combinations and gain a new sense - they fully or partially undergo figurative extension. According to him, it is worth mentioning that not only process of creating and borrowing new words and idioms, but also the fact that they may fall out of use, can be regarded as a language development.

2 DEFINITION OF IDIOMS

2.1 Characteristic Features

Idioms are usually treated and termed differently in dictionaries than they are interpreted in linguists' works. Therefore, there is no generally accepted definition of idioms (Kvetko 2005, 103).

Nevertheless, Kvetko states that they can be broadly characterized as follows:

- They have a multi-word character.
- They are institutionalized, which means that they are considered as units by a language community, and that they also operate as single semantic units.
- They are relatively fixed/stable combinations of words.
- Their meaning is non-literal, but fully or partially figurative and unique.

He also points out that although idioms are combinations of lexical items - words, and must consist of more than one word, they may be constructed from a various number of words. Idioms can be very short as: *at all, of course, at last*, or they can have a complex structure as for instance: *not so black as one is painted, cut one's coat according to one's cloth* (2005, 103).

Langlotz (2006, 2) also emphasizes the fact that idioms are difficult to define by saying that: "The colourful linguistic spectrum of expressions called 'idioms' directly reflects the considerable difficulties linguists face in finding an appropriate definition and classification of these linguistic phenomena and to explain their grammatical behaviour. The heterogeneity of idiomatic expressions stands in a dialectical relation to the abundance of linguistic terminology developed to capture and classify these constructions."

He, however, writes that in short, idiomatic constructions can be described as complex symbols with specific formal, semantic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic characteristics. This is further extended by saying that these idiomatic linguistic constructions have gone through a sociolinguistic process of conventionalisation to capture an idiom's degree of familiarity and conventionality (Langlotz 2006, 3).

In Baker's work *In Other Words* she mentions that: "Idioms and fixed expressions are at the extreme end of the scale from collocations in one or both of these areas: flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning." She adds that: "they are frozen patterns of

language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components” (1992, 76).

Fernando defines idioms as conventionalized multiword expressions and indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits and where no other words can be freely substituted or be recombinable (1996, 30).

2.2 Aspects of Idioms

Idioms make the language interesting, colourful and entertaining. They help us to accentuate effect of our thoughts, judgements, opinions, and explications, and thus make them more efficient and interesting as well. Although idioms may be difficult to understand and to learn by non-native speakers, for native speakers they represent quite useful communicative tool, because they carry relatively extensive and complex meaning in only few words. Idioms are widely used in colloquial English both spoken and written.

Seidl and McMordie however state that it is important to stress the fact, that idioms are not only colloquial expressions, as many people believe, but can also appear in formal language. Idioms are basically used in all forms of language from slang and jargon to the high formal style, from poetry to the language of Shakespeare or even the Bible. As a result of a language development, there can be even idioms that were considered slang in the past, which in some period of time incorporated in broadly used English and became colloquial or more formal than they have been before (1978, 4).

3 SOURCES AND WAYS OF IDIOM FORMATION

The most important thing about idioms is their meaning. Idioms are often grammatically incorrect which could make learners of English confused, while native speaker would not even notice that. This is due to the fact that native speakers take idioms as set phrases and as one single unit that is holding certain meaning. The meaning of an idiom has been learned and comes from well-known source (Seidl and McMordie 1978, 4-5).

Seidl and McMordie claim that: “many idiomatic phrases come from the every-day life of Englishmen, from home life”. These include idioms such as: *to hit the nail on the head*, or *to make a clean sweep of something*. Other idioms derive from food and cooking, for example: *to eat humble pie*, or *out of the frying pan into the fire*. Agriculture, seamanship and military life are the source of popular idioms like: *to put one’s hand to the plough*, *to be in the same boat*, *to be in deep waters*, *to cross swords with someone*. There are, of course, many other sources that brought known and used idioms to English. Parts of the body, animals and colours as well as historic books and even the Bible are amongst them (1978, 5).

Kvetko (2006, 23-26) elaborates this subject and makes it more complex by dividing sources and ways of idiom formation into three main groups. These groups include idiomatization, idiomatic derivation and borrowing.

3.1 Idiomatization

Idiomatization is a process of lexicalisation of free expressions where their meaning is re-evaluated. It means that the initial meaning of the words undergoes some change, the set of words become fixed idiom and gain a new meaning. Kvetko subdivide idiomatization into three subcategories - idiomatization of free combinations, fixed expressions or terms and citations.

3.1.1 Idiomatization of Free Combinations

Idiomatization of free combinations also called institutionalization is process of lexicalization of free word groups, where the source is people and their lives, activities, hobbies and nature they are surrounded by. These were basically some daily life expressions and phrases that in the course of time have become settled, and therefore idioms. For instance, these could include: *mother’s boy*, *fight like cat and dog*, *as old as hills*, *play the game*, *throw in a towel*, *hit below the belt*, etc.

3.1.2 Idiomatization of Fixed Expressions or Terms

Idiomatization of fixed expressions or terms is a process, where some steady, usually terminological expressions are extended into more broad spheres than their original field is, and usually receive new meaning without changing the form. For example: *carbon copy* - a person or thing that resemble to another, *gold mine* - a rich source of some desirable thing, *green light* - the signal to begin with something, *blank cheque* - any amount of money as is wanted, *blind alley* - a position with no further progress.

3.1.3 Idiomatization of Citations

Idiomatization of citations means that quotations of well-known persons, books, works, etc., became famous and broadly used in particular situations where they suited well. Thus, they acquire a new meaning, however quite similar, and became idioms in those situations. These include: *cast pearls before swine*, *an eye for an eye*, *wash one's hands*, *alpha and omega*, that come from the Bible. Shakespeare's work was a source of idioms such as: *cakes and ale*, *to one's heart's content*, *as good as one's word*, *salad days*, etc. Julius Caesar's quotes: *the die is cast*, and *cross the Rubicon*, are also broadly used as idioms nowadays. There are, of course, many other well-known people whose works and speeches served as a source to create idioms. Jonathan Swift's *rain cats and dogs*, or *cold war* and *the iron curtain* from Winston Churchill are the commonest ones.

3.2 Idiomatic Derivation

Idiomatic derivation is, in contrast to idiomatization, a process of forming new idioms from idioms that already exist. It implies that there is rather change of a form than of a meaning, although it may occur too. According to Kvetko, idiomatic derivation is usually attained by shortening, extension, conversion and analogous formation.

3.2.1 Shortening

Shortening is a method where one or more components of an existing idiom is cut off so the new short idiom emerges without meaning modification, e.g.: *new broom sweeps clean* - *new broom*, *forbidden fruit is sweet* - *forbidden fruit*, *speak of a devil and he will soon appear* - *speak of a devil*.

3.2.2 Extension

Extension is, on the contrary, a way of formation, in which new words are added to the origin idioms to be more suited to given situations. Those are for instance: *bad blood - make bad blood*, *green light - give somebody the green light*, *high and dry - leave somebody high and dry*.

3.2.3 Conversion

Conversion is a change of idiom's phrasal structure, usually from a noun phrase to a verb phrase and the other way round. e.g.: *a stab in the back - to stab in the back*, *a kick in the teeth - to kick in the teeth*, *to change one's tune - a change of tune*.

3.2.4 Analogous Formation

Analogous formation is a process in which new idioms are made by resemblance - analogy to the patterns of the existing idioms. Although the new idioms have similar structure, their meaning is different as in: *blue-collar worker - pink-collar worker*, or *the iron curtain - the bamboo curtain*.

3.3 Borrowing

The third way of idiom formation Kvetko introduces is borrowing. Borrowing is a process of taking over or translating idioms foreign languages as well as from different dialects of the same language. He distinguishes three types of borrowing:

3.3.1 Borrowing of the Original Phrases

The first type of borrowing is borrowing of the original phrases from different languages without any translation. These idioms are usually borrowed from Latin, French and Italian, e.g.: *viva voce, et cetera* (Latin), *the crème de la crème, faux pas* (French), *lingua franca, prima donna* (Italian).

3.3.2 Loan Translation

Loan translation is a literal translation of idioms or expressions from foreign languages. The new idiom has literally translated structure and adopts the principles and rules of the language it is translated to. These include idioms such as *blue blood*, which comes from Spanish "sangre azul", *castles in Spain* from French "châteaux en Espagne", *with a grain of salt* from Latin "cum grano solis", *lose face* from Chinese "tiu lien", etc.

3.3.3 Intralanguage Borrowing

Intralanguage borrowing is a process where idioms are taken over from different dialects of the same language. This usually happens between American and British English, e.g.: *paint the town red, on the warpath, bark up the wrong tree, give up the ship*, etc.

4 CATEGORIZATION OF IDIOMS

There are many ways of how idioms can be categorized and from what point of view they can be grouped. In this work, the four main categorizations are introduced - categorization of idioms from the point of view of their form and structure, categorization of idioms according to their type of irregularities, categorization from the semantic point of view, and categorization according to their function and usage.

4.1 Categorization of Idioms from the Point of View of Their Form and Structure

In *An Outline of English Phraseology*, Kvetko (2006, 27-28) divides idioms from the point of view of their construction into three groups. The first group contains phrasal idioms and is further subdivided into syntagmatic idioms and minimal idioms. The second group includes sentence idioms. The last one is a group of idioms that may have mixed structure.

4.1.1 Phrasal Idioms

As it is apparent from the name, these are idioms with the structure of a phrase. Kvetko distinguishes:

4.1.1.1 Syntagmatic Idioms

- Verbal idioms (semi-clause idioms) - idioms that have a structure of a syntagma containing a Verb. Kvetko states that the most frequent types are the following ones: Verb + Noun (*kick the bucket, smell a rat*), Verb + Preposition + Noun (*play to the gallery*), Verb + Adverb (*break down*) and Verb + Adjective (*come clean*).

In the book *Semantics* Palmer considers also phrasal verbs as very common type of idioms. There are phrasal verbs of combinations of verb plus adverb (*make up, give in, put down*), verb plus preposition (*look after, go for*), and verb, adverb and preposition (*put up with, do away with*). However, not all of these combinations are idiomatic. These can be considered as idioms only if the meaning cannot be predicted from the individual parts of the combinations. There are also some combinations that are both idiomatic and non-idiomatic, depending on the context (Palmer 2001, 80-81).

- Non-verbal idioms - idioms with a different syntagmatic structure having no Verb. These usually have the following patterns: Adjective + Noun (*big wheel, dark horse*), (as) + Adjective + as + Noun (*as white as a sheet, as cool as a cucumber*),

Adjective + Adjective (*prim and proper, cut and dried*), Noun + and + Noun (*tooth and nail*), like + Noun (+ Adjective, Preposition) + Noun (*like a fish out of water*), et cetera.

4.1.1.2 Minimal Idioms

Minimal idioms are non-syntagmatic phrasal idioms that contain one full, lexical word and one or more functional words that carry the form and fulfil the grammatical function. These are for example: *of course, by the way, at all, on the quiet, like hell, in a word*, etc. They might sometimes comprise only the functional words as in: *at that, as to*. These are, however, not considered as idioms by some linguists.

4.1.2 Sentence Idioms

Sentence idioms are idioms with a complete clause structure. This structure may vary in its type which could be simple, compound or complex sentence, e.g.: *the coast is clear, let sleeping dogs lie, don't look a gift horse in the mouth, make hay while the sun shines, spare the rod and spoil the child*, etc.

4.1.3 Idioms with Mixed Structure

Kvetko claims that some idioms may have mixed structure because they can have more variants where each belongs to different type. This means that one idiom may be classified in two different groups, depending on its form as in example: *at last* (minimal idiom) - *at long last* (syntagmatic idiom). Here are some other instances: *for good - for good and all, at hand - close at hand, break the ice - the ice is broken* (2006, 27-28).

Some idioms may have irregular syntax, which means they have unusual or incomplete structure, e.g.: *how's tricks, long time no see, like father, like son*, etc.

Fernando (1996, 34) states that although majority of multiword expressions in English conform to the grammatical rules of the language, there are some quite flagrant in their non-canonical grammar. The unusualness of those idioms may arise from deletion (*waste not want not, guess what?*), illogicality (*beside oneself*), figurative use (*white lie*), or a presence of a specialized subsense (*foot the bill*). There are also some other examples of more extreme deflections (*nothing loath, happy-go-lucky*, etc.).

4.2 Categorization of Idioms According to Their Type of Irregularities

As long as idioms are concerned, the most demanding thing for translators and non-native speakers is to be able to recognize that the given expression is actually an idiom. Since there are various types of idioms, some easily recognizable and some really difficult to be revealed, it is not always obvious that one has come across an idiom (Baker 1992, 78).

This is, according to Kvetko (2005, 107), due to the irregularity of idioms. He divides idioms depending on their type of irregularities into three groups, where the form of words, pattern of phrases and their meaning are taken into account:

4.2.1 Idioms with Irregular Structure of Words but With Relatively Clear Meaning

(*hold true, as sure as eggs is eggs, go one better, etc.*)

Seidl and McMordie also demonstrate this kind of idioms on the example: *I am good friends with him*, which obviously has ungrammatical structure, because of the singular *I* and plural *friends*, as well as because of the wrong preposition, which is supposed to be *of him*. They, however, state that native speakers are not consciously aware of this inconsistency as they are familiar with this idiom (1978, 5).

4.2.2 Idioms with Regular Structure of Words but with Unclear, Logically Strange Meaning

(*burn the candle at both ends, talk through one's hat, etc.*)

Seidl and McMordie also display this issue on the instance: *to have a bee in one's bonnet*. This idiom has a regular form but the meaning is not obvious. The meaning of this idiom is that one is obsessed by an idea, which is not clear as long as it is not learnt as an idiom (1978, 5).

4.2.3 Idioms with Irregular Structure of Words and Unclear, Illogical or Anomalous Meaning

(*be at large, be neck and neck, be at daggers drawn, etc.*)

Seidl and McMordie elaborate more the idiom *to be at large* claiming that the form verb + preposition + adjective without noun is strange and also the meaning is not clean and do not correspond with the words, since it means that prisoner or someone dangerous is free although they should not be. They also show some more examples such as: *to go through thick and thin, to be in the swim* (1978, 6).

They also remark that most idioms belong to the second group with regular structure but unclear meaning. However, even among these idioms there are types of idioms, where the meaning can be guessed because of some associations. For instance in *to give someone the green light*, the green light can be associated with the traffic lights where green means go, so the idiom can be understood as to give somebody a permission to start something. Other idioms from the second group can be better comprehended if they are put in a sentence or in some context. Nevertheless, there are many idioms that might be difficult to be guessed even when they are put in context. Seidl and McMordie mention the idiom *to tell someone where to get off*, which even in the given sentence: “*Jane had had enough of Mary’s stupid and critical remarks, so she finally told her where to get off*”, is not completely clear. This idiom means to tell someone openly and rudely what you think of him or her. For a non-native speaker, that might be hard to assume even from the context (1978, 6).

4.3 Categorization of Idioms from the Semantic Point of View

Unlike the irregularity, where grammatical features are considered, there is also categorization of idioms only from the semantic point of view. Accordingly, Kvetko (2006, 30-33) divides idioms into three groups: pure idioms, semi opaque idioms and semi-idioms. Idioms usually vary in the meaning in different contexts. They have so called twofold semantic structure, which means that one concerns the meaning of individual words and thus the literal meaning, and the other the meaning of the whole idiom - non-literal meaning. For example the idiom *a dark horse* could be considered literally as a horse of dark colour, or non-literally as a person who hides some special personal qualities. Therefore, idioms are treated as phraseological units, where the meaning of their individual components does not play the key role and the idioms cannot be understood literally.

Palmer adds that although idiom is semantically like a single word it does not have the function of it. He demonstrates it on the example *kick the bucket*. He claims that if it had the function of a single word the past simple would be *kick the bucketed*, which is obviously incorrect. “Instead, it functions to some degree as a normal sequence of grammatical words, so that the past tense is *kicked the bucket*.” (2001, 80)

Idioms are fully or partially opaque (transferred) expressions with multifarious character such as metaphor, metonymy, personification, hyperbole, irony, et cetera. Idioms

thus have stronger expressive value and emotional colouring than their non-idiomatic synonyms, and that is one of the reasons why they are so popular (Kvetko 2006, 31).

According to idioms' opacity and their different degree of motivation, Kvetko (2006, 31-32) elaborates the three groups in greater depth:

4.3.1 Pure Idioms (demotivated idioms, opaque idioms, phraseological fusions)

These are idioms, with no direct connection between the meaning of their individual words and the whole meaning. Therefore, these idioms are almost impossible to understand unless their meaning has been taught before. These include: *red tape* (excessive bureaucracy), *kick the bucket* (die), *spill the beans* (tell somebody something that should be kept secret), *lock, stock and barrel* (including every part of something), etc.

4.3.2 Semi Opaque Idioms (partially motivated idioms, semi-transparent, phraseological unities)

Unlike the pure idioms, in semi opaque idioms there is some connection between the literal sense of the individual constituents and the meaning of the whole idiom. It is possible to imagine or guess what the meaning of the idiom is just by understanding the literal meaning of it, e.g.: *add fuel to the fire* (to do or say something that makes people react more fiercely), *behind closed doors* (hidden from public or in secret), *bring somebody to his or her knees* (make somebody feel defeated or humble), *child's play* (easily accomplished task).

4.3.3 Semi-idioms (restricted or bound collocations, phraseological combinations)

These are idioms, where one or more words are used in figurative (idiomatically bound) meaning while the other one or more words carry the literal, direct meaning. It can be observed in the examples: *horse sense* (common sense), *promise the moon* (promise something that is unlikely to be fulfilled), *foot the bill* (pay the bill), *dirty money* (money obtained unlawfully or immorally).

Fernando states, that there may appear variations of semi-idioms where the word carrying some figurative meaning occurs with different words with literal meaning, but remaining the same meaning, and thus new idioms are created. He presents an example with the word *blue* that appears in semi-idioms such as *blue film*, *blue*

joke, blue gag, blue story, or blue comedian, where, in all cases, has the same figurative meaning - obscene (1996, 60).

Kvetko also remarks, that unlike words, majority of English idioms are usually monosemous, which means they have only one meaning. However, there are few idioms that can have diverse meanings in certain situations and they are called polysemous. These include for instance: *take care* (look after, be careful, deal with, kill, etc.), *go for a Burton* (be killed, be destroyed, or ruined), *on the run* (escaping, fleeing, or being busy), et cetera (Kvetko 2006, 32-33).

4.4 Categorization of Idioms According to Their Function and Usage

Since idioms form an important part of English vocabulary, they are used in all types of language. They occur in spoken language ranging from friendly informal conversation to the highly formal discourse as well as in all forms of written language. Some idioms may be limited to use only by particular social groups or in certain geographical region. Idioms have an important social function as they usually strengthen one's arguments, enhance emotional colourfulness, evoke associations and humour or make evaluations. Therefore there are various categorizations of idioms in terms of function (Kvetko 2006, 37).

4.4.1 Function of Idioms

In his book *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English*, Moon distinguishes five groups of idioms:

- Informational idioms - convey new information of various kinds by describing a process, state or quality, by providing circumstances such as time, place, manner, or by naming of entities, quantification, and description. These are for example: *in the red, behind bars, face to face, down tools*, etc.
- Evaluative idioms - transfer the speaker's evaluation and attitude to the given situation: *the icing on a cake, down to earth, work wonders, run out of steam, lame duck*, etc.
- Situational idioms - express conventions, clauses and exclamations such as greetings, farewells, apologies, congratulations, condolences, thanks, acknowledgements, and so on. These include: *never mind, no harm done, walls have ears, well done, long time no see*, etc.

- Modalizing idioms - indicate modality, truth values, and probability, add emphasis, doubts, advice, requests, and so forth: *in the short run, more or less, no doubt, at all, by the skin of one's teeth, no comment, at any price*, etc.
- Organizational idioms - organize texts by signalling logical connections between propositions, prefaces, summaries, and opinions. These are for instance: *by the way, for example, all in all, on the other hand, once upon a time, get someone's drift*, etc.

He, however, adds that some idioms may have more than one function (Moon 1998, 221-238).

4.4.2 Formality and Emotional Colouring of Idioms

Idioms are mostly used in informal contexts or very informal situations. They play a part in friendly conversations and are preferred especially by young generations. There is also an extensive number of idioms that are considered vulgar or taboo, including those with the F-word. Formal contexts and so called serious or official writings contain a smaller number of idioms compared to the informal ones (Kvetko 2006, 41).

In terms of formality, idioms can be divided into several groups:

- Informal idioms (colloquial) - *be my guest, give somebody a buzz, get the chop, bad hair day, not give a hoot*, etc.
- Very informal idioms (slang) - *take the piss out of, give somebody a finger, as pissed as a newt, shut your mouth, give a shit, take a leak*, etc.
- Formal idioms - *act and deed, null and void, a man of the cloth, to little avail, be so bold as to do*, etc.
- Literary idioms - *cut the Gordian knot, lose one's heart, plough a lonely furrow, the land of milk and honey*, etc.
- Old fashioned idioms (archaic) - *old maid, bib and tucker, give up the ghost, somebody's salad days*, etc.
- Foreign idioms - *faux pas, in flagrante, persona non grata*, etc. (Kvetko 2006, 41-42).

In dictionaries, idioms may be also divided into various groups according to the degree of emotions. Many idioms are emotionally coloured and thus labelled as:

- Derogatory idioms (impolite, disapproving) - *wet behind the ears, fat cat, with nose in the air, an old maid, bag lady*, etc.

- Offensive or very offensive idioms (vulgar, taboo) - *son of a bitch, go apeshit, what the fuck, shut your mouth, up shit creek*, etc.
- Humorous idioms (jocular) - *powder one's nose, bun in the oven, pardon my French, be no spring chicken*, etc.
- Ironic idioms - *big deal, clear as mud, need something like a hole in the head, and pigs might fly*, etc.
- Euphemistic idioms - *spend a penny, be economical with truth, not all there, put to sleep*, etc. (Kvetko 2006, 42)

5 TABLOIDS

Tabloids have traditionally been the most popular newspapers. Their aim is rather to amuse the reader than to deal with serious issues, economy or politics. They target at readers of both sexes from the lower socio-economic groups. Tabloids are also known as the "picture papers" since the articles in them usually include many large-sized pictures but rather less words. The main themes of tabloids are sport, in British tabloids particularly football, show business and celebrity stories (Cole and Harcup 2010, 22).

Johansson (2008, 402) describes tabloids as newspapers with sensational news style, which are celebrity oriented, having sexualised news agenda and which use aggressive journalistic methods such as paparazzi coverage.

The emphasis in tabloids is put on fun and enjoyment. Johansson explains the reason for this as it is "a response to day-to-day routines, where the newspaper reading can work both as a way to release unwanted emotions and as dealing with general anxieties" (2008, 407).

Important role in tabloids plays also the language which is easily accessible and readable. The tabloid language uses rhetoric but not a portentous, abstract style. The language devices are used with deliberate and consistent aim, however, through the application of metaphor, irony, alliteration, rhyme or parallelism. In the tabloid language, there is a certain tradition of metaphor, word play, categorization and compression of narratives (Conboy 2006, 14-15).

II. ANALYSIS

6 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

The aim of the analysis is to examine the usage and frequency of idioms in English and Czech tabloids. The intention of the research is to identify the idioms and subsequently scrutinize them and provide a comparison and translation. These processes employ the terminology from the theoretical part of the thesis. Idioms are used to put colourfulness and emotions to the language, to make the language more amusing and interesting. This applies to tabloids whose purpose is to entertain their readers, attract them or shock them rather than educate them or give information about serious issues. Therefore, it appeared interesting to me to find out what is the utilization of idioms in this type of journal. The difference in the use and in the quantity of idioms between English and Czech tabloids is also a subject of this study.

The analysis gathers corpus of online articles from three English and two Czech tabloids. For English tabloids I chose the internet versions of the *Daily Mirror*, *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, which rank among the most famous ones in Britain. These three tabloids also have a similar format and categories, although the *Daily Mail* is sometimes considered as a “middle market” newspaper, but yet tabloid. This fact makes the study more complex. The researched articles were collected from the three main categories that are common for all of these given tabloids, and are usual for British tabloids in general. Those categories are News, Sport and Celebrities. However, the News category is rather focused on crime stories. As representatives of Czech tabloids, I picked the internet version of *Blesk* and online magazine *Expres*, which is, however, not issued in printed version. The reason for this choice was that *Blesk* is the only Czech printed tabloid that has the same format as the British ones, and contains those three categories at the same time. Other famous Czech tabloids such as *Aha!* or *Šíp* do not involve the News and Sport category, therefore I picked *Expres*, which covers them all.

Since the theoretical part of the thesis is focused on English idioms, their features and categorization, the attention in the analysis is given rather to English idioms than to Czech ones. Hence, I analyse only two Czech tabloids and three English tabloids. There is, nevertheless, no significant impact on the comparative analysis, as the numerical comparison is mainly done in terms of frequency of occurrence.

The survey is based on a perusal of 15 articles in each category (News, Sport, Celebrities) in each tabloid, which makes the total number of 135 articles from the English tabloids and 90 articles from the Czech tabloids. All the articles from both the English and

Czech tabloids will be enclosed on a DVD in the PDF format along with the database of English and Czech idioms that were found in them.

I expect the English tabloids to contain more idioms than the Czech ones since English uses large amount of phrasal verbs which are often considered as idioms. Also the tabloid culture is more common in the United Kingdom than in the Czech Republic, which may be reflected in more varied and elaborated language in the English tabloids, or in a different length of the articles. The analysis, however, should not be generalized, since there are many other articles and tabloids, but should give an idea and evaluation through the use of the selected sample.

6.1 Clarification of Research Processes

As mentioned above, the research altogether involves 225 articles. For easier orientation I decided to name the articles by a number and two letters that stand for the name of the tabloid and the name of the category. The journals are marked by initials: m (*Daily Mirror*), s (*The Sun*), d (*Daily Mail*), b (*Blesk*) and e (*Expres*). The same method applies for the categories: n (News), s (Sport), c (Celebrities). Accordingly, the designation (4ms) represents the article number four from the *Daily Mirror* belonging to the Sport category. This marking is used in the analysis as well as in the databases and the attached documents.

Since it is vital for this analysis to identify idioms in the articles, several dictionaries are employed. For recognition and explanation of English idioms I use: *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary* (CID), *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (CDAI), *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (TAH), *Farlex Dictionary of Idioms* (FDI), and *Mcgraw-hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs* (MHD).

In order to determine Czech idioms these dictionaries are applied: *Slovník České Frazologie A Idiomatiky 2* (SČF2) and *Slovník České Frazologie A Idiomatiky 3* (SČF3). For translation of Czech idioms as well as for finding their English equivalents I use: *Anglicko-Český Slovník Idiomů* (AČSI), *Anglicko-Český Frazologický Slovník* (AČFS), *Anglické Idiomy* (AI).

When dealing with translation of Czech idioms, if there was an equivalent English idiom found in any dictionary, it is attached to the Czech idiom along with the dictionary reference. In case that no equivalent idiom was found, literal translation is given, with the meaning added in brackets. English idioms are provided with their Czech idiomatic equivalents that were looked up in given dictionaries. If no Czech equivalent is found, the

idioms are left with their Czech meaning explanation in brackets. Equivalent idioms are always written in italics while translations or meanings remain without any emphasis.

6.2 Introduction of the Journals

6.2.1 Daily Mail

The *Daily Mail* newspaper began to be issued in 1896. Initially it was regarded as respectable and unsensational paper that aimed at the lower middle class. That applied until the 1930s when the newspaper started shifting towards what we recognize as the tabloid culture today. The *Daily Mail* was also the first newspaper in Britain to sell million copies a day (Conboy 2006, 4). However, the *Daily Mail* is still considered as a middle-market tabloid which means that alongside with sensational stories it also covers some serious news events. Also the black-top heading and the size of the paper differs from the so called red-top newspapers such as the *Daily Mirror* or *The Sun*.

Beside the three categories I chose to analyse (News, Sport, TV&Showbiz), the online version of the *Daily Mail* (www.dailymail.co.uk) includes another nine categories such as for instance U.S., Australia, Female, Health, and so forth. The daily readership of the internet version is about 1,918,000 where 50.68% represents female (<http://www.newsworks.org.uk/Daily-Mail>).

6.2.2 Daily Mirror

The *Daily Mirror* was founded in 1903 and is, with its heavy emphasis on illustration, aimed at the lower end of the social spectrum and mainly at female readers. In 1935 the *Daily Mirror* introduced its own version of a tabloid with larger, darker type, shorter stories and fewer items on a page and took the popular newspaper in a totally new direction. The *Daily Mirror* became a symbol of the emergence of a British version of a tabloid newspaper, which can be stuffed into the pocket of overalls and can be read in brief intervals between manual work (Conboy 2006, 7).

The internet version of the *Daily Mirror* (www.mirror.co.uk) consists of News, Sport, Celebs, Football, TV & Film, Politics, and Weird News categories. Only the first three are applied in this thesis, since the football topic is also covered in the Sport category. The daily readership of the online version is approximately 594,000 where 55.56% represents male (<http://www.newsworks.org.uk/Daily-Mirror>).

6.2.3 The Sun

The Sun emerged in 1969 and began to change both the face of journalism and the face of Britain. It was considered as brash, vulgar and entertaining new variety of tabloid journalism with its appeal based on identification in language with its working class readers and their interests (Conboy 2006, 8).

The online version of *The Sun* (www.thesun.co.uk) has five categories in the main menu, which are Home, Football, Sport, TV & Showbiz and Video. In this study I work with the Sport category, which also incorporates articles from the Football category, TV & Showbiz for the celebrity stories and Home that includes news and criminal stories. The daily readership of the online version is around 133,000 where 51.88% represents male (<http://www.newsworks.org.uk/The-Sun>).

6.2.4 Blesk

The daily newspaper *Blesk* has been published since 1992. The publisher of *Blesk CZECH NEWS CENTER a.s.* - considers *Blesk* as its flagship due to the fact that it is the bestselling and most read national daily newspaper in the Czech Republic (<http://www.cncenter.cz/clanek/1819/about-us>).

The internet version of *Blesk* (www.blesk.cz) contains three main sections, which are Celebrities, News and Sport. There are also several subsections such as Prague, Health, Travel, Hobby and so on. According to the statistic of *Netmonitor*, the web site traffic is averagely about 500,000 visits a day (<http://kurzy.cz/~nr/netmonitor/blesk-cz/>).

6.2.5 Expres

The internet tabloid *Denní Expres* (www.expres.cz) was founded in 2015 and is operated by the media group *MAFRA a.s.* which is known for publishing newspapers such as *Mladá fronta DNES* or *Lidové noviny* (<http://www.mediar.cz/mafra-spustila-internetovy-bulvar-expres-cz/>).

The web site is divided into sections News, Celebrity, Sport, World, Viral and Video. The daily traffic is averagely around 70,000 visits (<http://kurzy.cz/~nr/netmonitor/expres-cz/>).

7 ANALYSIS IN FIGURES

7.1 English Tabloids

As mentioned in the introduction, the total number of analysed articles from English tabloids is 135. In these articles there were found 385 idioms. It follows, that the number of idioms per article is approximately 2,9. On average, there are almost 3 idioms in every article. This is, however, only an average and cannot be deemed as a rule, since some articles do not include idioms at all. In present study 15 English articles do not contain any idiom. The highest number of articles without any idiom belongs to the News category. There are 9 of these articles in the News category and 3 articles in both Celebrities and Sport sections. The reason for this is the fact that articles from News have more informative value and are more serious. Therefore, there is less space for figurative language and idioms. Considering individual journals, in the *Daily Mail* 7 out of 45 analysed articles appear without an idiom, followed by 5 in the *Daily Mirror* and 3 in *The Sun*. This can be attributed to the fact that the *Daily Mail* is the most respectable one among these three tabloids, and thus the language is less metaphorical and colourful but rather straight to the point. Nevertheless, in this case the difference among the journals is not that vast to make firm conclusions. An article with the largest number of idioms was found in the *Daily Mirror* in Celebrities section (2mc) and contained 14 idioms. It is also important to remark that each idiom was different.

The total number of identified idioms is 385. In the following chart you can see the division according to the tabloid in which they were found.

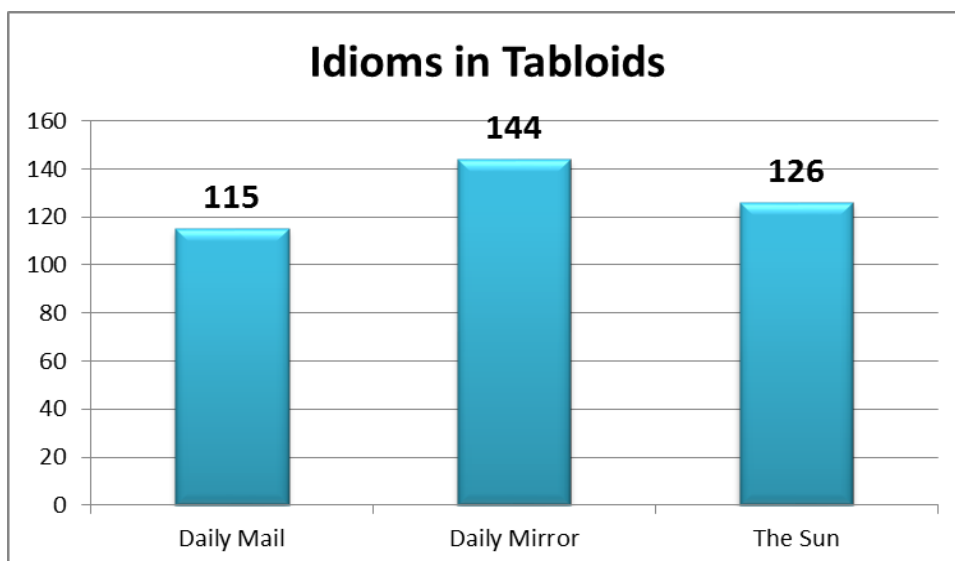


Chart 1: Number of English idioms in each tabloid (source: the author)

As obvious from the chart, the highest amount of idioms was found in the *Daily Mirror* while the lowest number of idioms was in the *Daily Mail*. This is again the consequence of the fact that the *Daily Mail* is rather middle-market tabloid so the emotional colouring of the language as well as influencing through the language devices appears not to be as strong as in the other two tabloids. Paradoxically, the *Daily Mail* contains the lowest number of idioms, although the articles were the longest.

The second chart shows how many idioms were contained in surveyed categories.

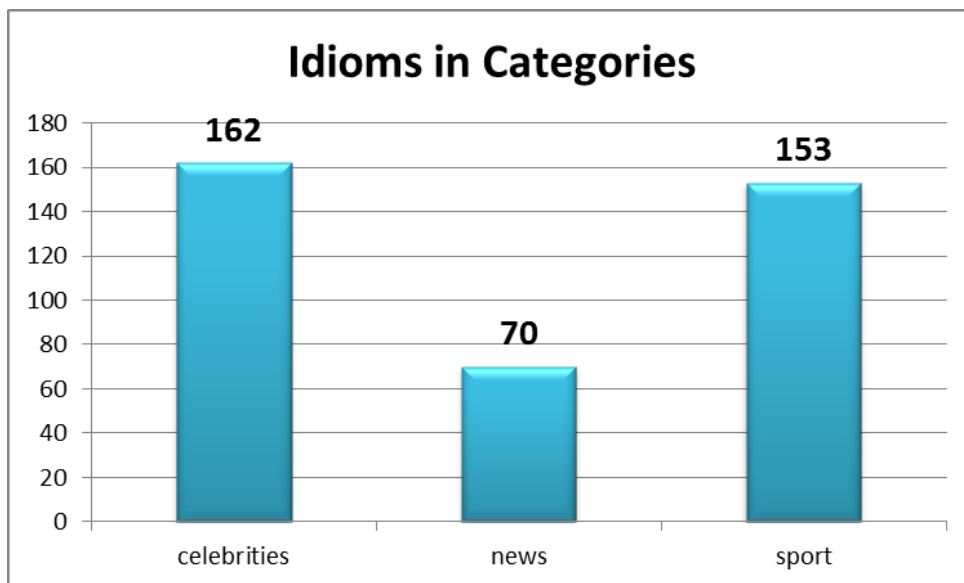


Chart 2: Number of English idioms in each category (source: the author)

This chart proves that the News category is the poorest in idioms as the function of the news articles is different from the celebrities and the sport ones. Although it is a tabloid, the theme is not intended to amuse the reader or to spread any rumours, which require idiomatic expressions, but it should rather inform or sometimes shock the reader thus the usage of idioms is lower to enhance the comprehension of the issue. In this study, the amount of English idioms in news articles is even more than two times lower than in the other two categories.

7.2 Czech Tabloids

This part of the research applies to 90 articles from the two Czech tabloids. The amount of idioms found in these articles is 96. Accordingly, it creates the average number, which is approximately 1 idiom per article. As many as 27 out of 90 articles do not include any idiom. Three of these articles, however, contain phrases that appear to be idioms but have not been found in any of the given dictionary. There were 19 likewise phrases in the other

articles that are also not registered in the dictionaries. Therefore, they cannot be included to the sum total, and also cannot be used for further analysis, although some of them even have an equivalent idiom in English. These are for example:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>hod'te kamenem</i> (12es) | <i>cast/throw the first stone</i> (TAH) |
| <i>je jiná/vyšší liga</i> (14es) | <i>not in the same league</i> (CID) |
| <i>vyjít z davu</i> (7ec) | <i>stand out from the crowd</i> (CDAI) |

Here are some of the other phrases that appear to be idioms, but are not in the dictionaries:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <i>zvedlo ze židle</i> (8bc) | lift somebody up from a chair (to make angry) |
| <i>cesta do pekel</i> (11es) | a road to hell (a way to failure) |
| <i>jako na dlani</i> (9bs) | like on a palm (have good view of something) |
| <i>za hubičku</i> (2ec) | for a kiss (really cheap) |

The most articles with no idioms fall into the News category (11), followed by Sport (9) and Celebrities (7). In terms of journals, 15 such articles appeared in *Expres*, while 12 were in *Blesk*. An article with the largest amount of idioms was in *Blesk* in Sport section (8bs) and contained 6 different idioms.

The following chart demonstrates the number of idioms in particular tabloids.

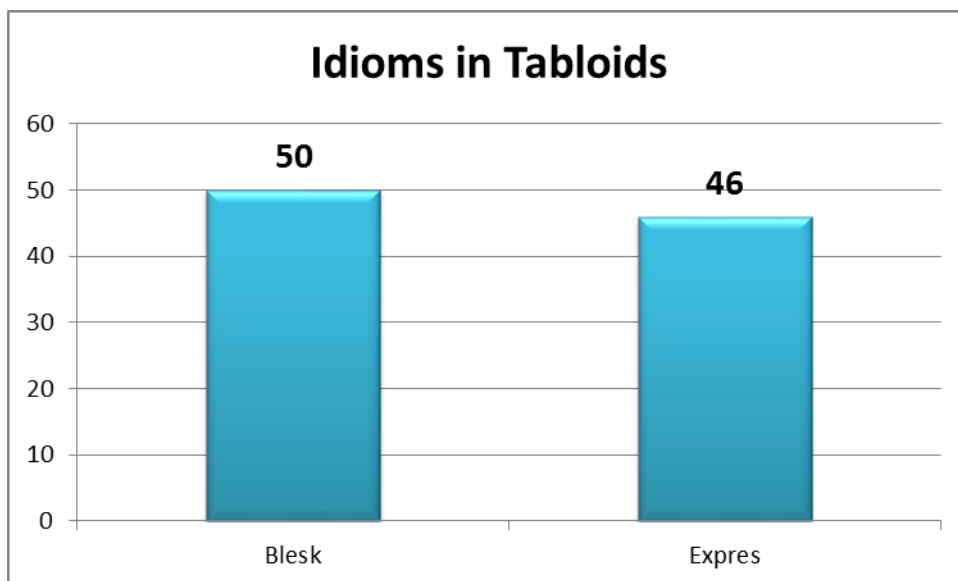


Chart 3: Number of Czech idioms in each tabloid (source: the author)

In the research, *Blesk* has more idioms in its articles and also less articles without idioms. This might be because *Blesk* has been published for much longer and is also issued in printed version. The language used in it is thereby more polished and carefully worked-out. The difference is, nevertheless, minimal and has little informative value.

The next chart shows how many idioms fall into each category.

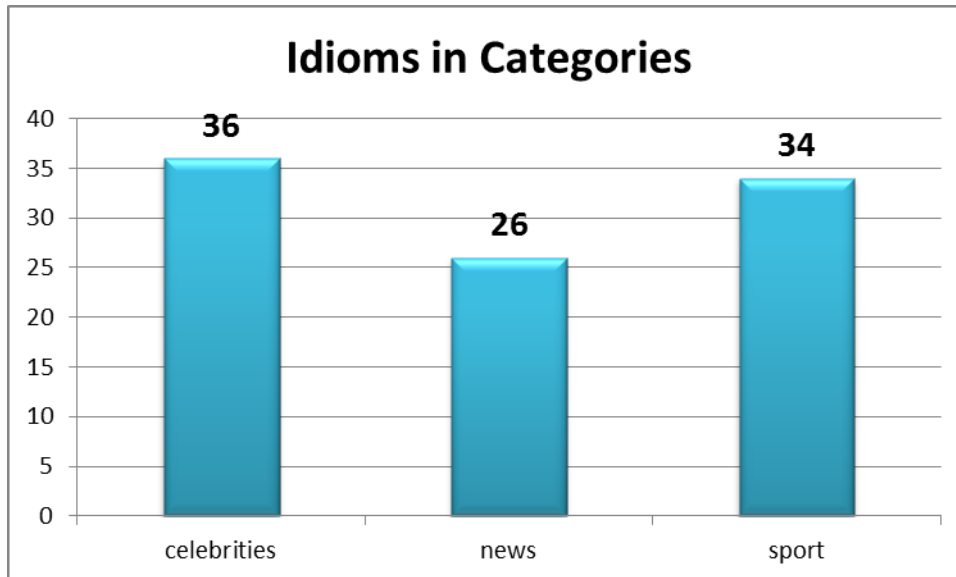


Chart 4: Number of Czech idioms in each category (source: the author)

As obvious from this chart, both Celebrities and Sport categories contain almost the same amount of idioms, while the News section is appreciably poorer. The reason for this is the same as in the English tabloids, even though the difference is not that striking.

7.3 Comparison

Although the amount of analysed articles from English and Czech tabloids differs, in terms of frequency of occurrence of idioms clear conclusions can be deduced. In English tabloids the occurrence is averagely 3 idioms per article, whereas in the Czech tabloids the average is 1 idiom per article. This is fairly significant difference. Moreover, in the English tabloids there are 15 out of 135 articles that do not contain an idiom which makes it approximately 11%. On the contrary, in the Czech tabloids the percentage of articles without idioms is 30%. The reasons are probably both the language itself and the inventiveness of the editors. English uses many phrasal verbs that are considered idioms and that are expressed in the Czech language by a single word. In addition, in the Czech tabloids the largest number of idioms in one article is 6, while in the English ones it is 14. There are also 24 other English articles that contain 6 or more idioms. This clearly demonstrates that, in terms of idioms,

the language in the English articles is richer and more figurative. In both, English and Czech tabloids, the articles without idioms most frequently occur in the News category.

As regards the categories, in both cases least idioms were found in the News category, while most appeared in the Celebrities one. The Sport category is, however, always surprisingly close to the first place. This is because sport articles in tabloids relate to rumours, gossips and personal lives of sportsmen rather than to information about actual sport events or the scores, and thus the opportunity for idiomatic expressions is greater.

8 MOST COMMON IDIOMS

8.1 Most Common Czech Idioms

The total number of identified idioms also includes several identical idioms that occur in different articles or that are repeated within the same article. This applies rather to the English part of the research, since there are only 96 idioms in the Czech part and the recurrence is not that probable. Nevertheless, there are 6 Czech idioms that appeared more than once:

8.1.1 Idioms Repeated within the Same Article

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i>přijít o věnec</i> (13ec) | <i>lose one's cherry</i> (FDI) |
| <i>ukázat (někomu) (svou pravou) tvář</i> (2es) | <i>show somebody's true colour</i> (CDAI) |
| <i>být (s někým) na nože / na ostří nože</i> (13ec) | <i>be at daggers drawn</i> (CID) |

8.1.2 Idioms that Occur in Different Articles

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>sloužit (někomu) za terč (něčeho)</i> (11ec, 14bn, 1bn) | <i>target someone or something as something</i> (MHD) |
| <i>fair play</i> (10es, 14es) | <i>fair play</i> (CID) |
| <i>vyrazit (někomu) dech / vzít (někomu) dech</i> (9ec, 7bs) | <i>take one's breath away</i> (TAH) |

8.2 Most Common English Idioms

The English part of the research is obviously richer in recurrence of idioms. The total number of idioms that appear more than once is 42, however, 21 of them repeat within the same article. The most frequently used idiom is *show off* which occur 27 times in 14 articles, followed by *a night out* with 9 appearances in 9 articles and *follow one's heart*, which was found 5 times, but in the same article. In this section, the attention is rather aimed at the idioms that occur in more than one article.

8.2.1 Idioms that Occur in Different Articles

The following table shows 21 most common idioms found in the researched articles sorted by the number of articles they occur in.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>show off</i> (11dc, 12sc, 13sc, 14sc, 1dc, 1ds, 2dc, 2sc, 5dc, 6mc, 6sc, 7ds, 7sn, 8dc) | <i>dělat ramena (AČFS), chtít se (před někým)</i> <i>ukázat, dělat frajera (SČF3)</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>a night out</i> (10dc, 14sc, 15ds, 1sc, 2sc, 5ds, 6dc, 6sc, 8sc) | (vyjít si večer) (AI) |
| <i>step out</i> (5dc, 6dc, 7dc) | (vyjít si, jít za zábavou) (AČSI) |
| <i>knock out</i> (11ds, 15ds, 8sn) | <i>položit na lopatky</i> (AČFS) |
| <i>pencil in</i> (4ms, 5ds, 6ms) | (mít prozatímní/nezávazný plán) (CDAI - trans. the author) |
| <i>face-to-face</i> (12mc, 2sn, 7ds) | <i>tváří v tvář, z očí do očí</i> (AČFS) |
| <i>kick off</i> (1ms, 4ds, 9ss) | (výkop, zahájení) (AČSI) |
| <i>put on a brave/bold face</i> (11sc, 6dc) | (tvářit se sebejistě) (AČSI) |
| <i>put on display</i> (1mc, 5dc) | <i>vystavit něco na odiv</i> (SČF3) |
| <i>laid-back</i> (10dc, 5dc) | (klidný, mírný) (AI) |
| <i>be all smiles</i> (7mc, 8sc) | (vypadat překvapivě vesele a šťastně) (CID - trans. the author) |
| <i>somebody's time is up</i> (1ss, 7ms) | (něčí činnost/působení skončilo) (CDAI - trans. the author) |
| <i>count the cost</i> (1ms, 5ds) | (uvědomit si, jaké může mít předchozí jednání vážné následky) (CID - trans. the author) |
| <i>number one</i> (11ms, 15ms) | <i>hrát prim</i> (AČFS), <i>být jednička</i> (SČF3) |
| <i>at least</i> (14ds, 8ss) | (alespoň) (CDAI - trans. the author) |
| <i>foul-mouthed</i> (5ds, 7sc) | <i>s nevymáchanou hubou</i> (AČSI) |
| <i>knock out of</i> (1ss, 3ss) | (tlouci do něčeho, dokud se něco nedostane ven) (MHD - trans. the author) |
| <i>take something in one's stride</i> (6mc, 9sc) | <i>zachovat (anglický/stoický/ledový) klid</i> (SČF3) |
| <i>why/what on earth</i> (7ms, 8mc) | <i>co/proč proboha?</i> (AČSI) |
| <i>tie the knot</i> (14dc, 5dc) | <i>praštit/uhodit/bouchnout do toho</i> (SČF3) |
| <i>leave little to the imagination</i> (1mc, 8dc) | (o oblečení, skrývat málo, být velmi odhalený) (FDI - trans. the author) |

The variety of English idiomatic phrases is enormous and new phrases constantly accumulate. This research shows how rich English is in terms of idioms, since the number

of repeating occurrences is relatively small. There is, however, appreciable connection between the most common idioms and the analysed categories. Idioms such as *show off*, *a night out*, *step out*, *put on a brave/bold face*, *put on display*, *leave little to the imagination*, and so on, are typical for the show business topic and their meaning relate to theme of fashion, appearance or entertainment. Therefore, they occur mainly in the Celebrities category. On the other hand, idioms like *knock out*, *kick off*, *number one*, etc. appear in sport articles, since they can be basically considered as sport jargon. Unlike in the news topics, in celebrity and sport articles the themes are usually similar and repeat very often. This is the reason why some idioms reappear in various articles, but it is noticeable that it mostly applies to the Celebrities and also Sport category.

9 CATEGORIZATION OF FOUND IDIOMS

A considerable part of the theoretical part of this thesis deals with various categorizations of idioms. In this section, I apply the knowledge from the theoretical part to the idioms found in English tabloids. More specifically, the categorization from part 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 is employed. Several randomly picked idioms from the collected database are analysed and then classified and assigned to the appropriate category. This shows the diversity of idioms used in the tabloids. In this part of the analysis, I do not translate the idioms, nor provide equivalents, since it only serves as a demonstration of the given classification. Although the categorization applies to English idioms, a few idioms from the Czech database are classified under the same rules to provide better illustration and comparison. Czech idioms subject to different grammatical rules, and therefore it is difficult to classify them under the same principles. Nevertheless, the suitable instances are always added at the end of each category in round brackets.

9.1 Form and Structure (4.1)

9.1.1 Phrasal Idioms

9.1.1.1 Syntagmatic Idioms

- Verbal idioms
 - V+N - *count the cost, break a record, strike gold, hit the road* (*být košer, vyrazit dech*)
 - V+P+N - *keep on track, put on display, stay in touch, be on alert* (*volat po změně, vstoupit do dějin*)
 - V+Adv. - *bring down, blow away, rain down, brush aside* (*téct proudem*)
 - V+Adj. - *catch red-handed, go pear-shaped, get hitched* (*stat se osudným*)
- Non-verbal idioms
 - Adj.+N - *token gesture, plain sailing, false alarm, peeping Tom, dark horse* (*slabý odvar, hlásná trouba*)
 - (as)+Adj.+(as)+N - *as busy as a bee*
 - Adj.+Adj. - *thick and fast, neat and tidy*
 - N+N - *surf and turf, salt and pepper*
 - others - *left, right and centre, water under the bridge, through and through, up-and-coming, think-tank* (*za žádnou cenu*)

9.1.1.2 Minimal Idioms

no go, at least, no doubt, at this stage, out of action, for example, double over (no go, o fous)

9.1.2 Sentence Idioms

put somebody through their paces, make somebody's skin crawl, give something the thumbs down, follow in someone's footsteps (nezůstala na něm ani nit suchá, čeho je moc, toho je příliš)

9.1.3 Idioms with Mixed Structure

foul-mouthed / be foul-mouthed, head to head / go head to head (nahrávka na smeč /nahrát na smeč)

9.2 Type of Irregularities (4.2)

9.2.1 Irregular Structure but Clear Meaning

set the ball rolling, through and through, plead guilty, from the word go, work up a sweat, be all smiles, face-to-face, day-to-day, no go, give something the thumbs down (každý svého štěstí strůjcem)

9.2.2 Regular Structure but Unclear Meaning

ride on someone's coattails, make somebody's skin crawl, be on the crest of a wave, lock horns with somebody, give somebody the boot (sypat si popel na hlavu, dělat z něčeho holubník)

9.2.3 Irregular Structure and Unclear Meaning

dress somebody down, go pear-shaped, thick and fast, up-and-coming, surf and turf (být na ostří nože)

9.3 Semantics (4.3)

9.3.1 Pure Idioms

go pear-shaped, call a spade is spade, head over heels, water under the bridge, tongue in cheek (potěmkinovská vesnice, pohnout někomu žlučí, strkat hlavu do písku)

9.3.2 Semi Opaque Idioms

leave little to the imagination, cover someone's tracks, drop to one's knees, blow someone a kiss, add fuel to the fire (nahrát někomu na smeč, mít z ostudy kabát, vzít někomu dech)

9.3.3 Semi-idioms

catch red-handed, worth every penny, woman of the hour, sell like hot cakes, grin from ear to ear, a poison-pen letter (přijít o věnec, dělat někomu těžkou hlavu)

9.4 Comparison

During the analysis and classification of idioms it turned out that in both English and Czech databases, an overwhelming majority of idioms have the function of a verb. This applies mainly to the Czech database where these idioms cover approximately 84%. In English database, the percentage of nonverbal idioms is more significant and thus the amount of idioms with the function of a verb is about 70%. It also emerged that the English idioms do not conform to grammatical rules more frequently than the Czech ones. Nevertheless, identification of idioms in the Czech articles was more complicated, since their form often differed from those listed in the dictionaries. Some idioms differ in preposition, polarity or parts of speech, but in a few cases even different word with similar meaning was used. Here are just a few examples of how the idioms in the Czech tabloids were modified (left column):

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>dostal jsem brouka do hlavy</i> (11bs) (I got a beetle into a head) | <i>mít brouka v hlavě</i> (to have a beetle in a head) |
| <i>nahrávka na smeč</i> (14es) (pass to a smash) | <i>nahrát někomu na smeč</i> (to pass (to someone) to a smash) |
| <i>odhodila svůj věneček</i> (13ec) (threw away her small wreath) | <i>přijít o věnec</i> (to lose a wreath) |
| <i>vlévá do žil novou víru</i> (15bs) (pour new faith into veins) | <i>vlévat/vlít někomu naději do žil</i> (to pour hope into veins) |
| <i>do povědomí se zapsala</i> (13bc) (wrote in awareness) | <i>zapsat se někomu do paměti</i> (to write in memory) |

There was even one Czech idiom found in *Expres* (7es) that contained an obvious mistake. The idiom is: *potěmikovou vesnicí*, where the first word is spelled wrong as the original idiom reads: *potěmkinovská vesnice* (*Potemkin village* (FAI), *window dressing* (FAI)).

The English idioms found in the articles were, on the other hand, much more consistent and solid, and varied only in tense or pronouns. Unlike Czech idioms, English idioms do not allow such distinct alternations and usually remain in a basic form. Only few idioms were significantly changed:

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>busy bee</i> (8dc) | <i>be as busy as a bee</i> |
| <i>the champers is on ice</i> (10ss) | <i>put on ice</i> |
| <i>one step further</i> (8mc) | <i>one step forward</i> |
| <i>riding the crest of a wave</i> (13ss) | <i>be on the crest of a wave</i> |
| <i>the oldest joke in the book</i> (5mc) | <i>the oldest trick in the book</i> |

10 SEMANTIC COMPARISON AND TRANSLATION OF ANALYSED IDIOMS

In this part of the analysis, I deal with semantics and translations of the found idioms. The aim is, however, not to explain the meaning of the idioms as such, but rather to find equivalent idioms in the target language. Translations of selected idioms and equivalent idioms are provided for better understanding of the level of diversity between the equivalents. First, idioms from both databases are compared with each other, in order to find out whether there are any equivalent idioms. If yes, they are divided according to the level of equivalency. Here I use the terms from Kvetko's book *An Outline of English Phraseology* (2006, 53-55) which are: absolute equivalents proper, similar equivalents, relative equivalents proper, partially different equivalents and deceptive equivalents.

Then, some idioms that have an equivalent idiom in the target language are picked from each database, and provided with their equivalents. These are again classified by the same principles.

It is necessary to mention that finding equivalent idioms in target language is quite demanding. Baker claims that idioms may have no equivalents in the target language and that the way a language expresses various meanings cannot be predicted and mostly does not match the way another language chooses to express the same meanings. "It is therefore unrealistic to expect to find equivalent idioms and expressions in the target language as a matter of course" (1992, 81).

10.1 Idioms Found in both the Czech and the English Tabloids

Both examined languages are abundant in idioms and varied in their usage. Although I compare articles of the same themes, the probability of occurrence of same idioms, or even absolute equivalents in the researched sample of articles is rather low. However, a few same idioms were found.

Absolute Equivalents Proper

Absolute equivalents proper have identical lexical and grammatical structure as well as symbolism and imagery (Kvetko 2006, 53).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>grin from ear to ear</i> (4sc) | <i>smát se od ucha k uchu</i> (12bc) |
| <i>no go</i> (5mn) | <i>no go</i> (14bn) |

The idiom *no go* comes from English and was used in the Czech article in a phrase *no go zóna* (no go area). However, the meaning (inopportune) is the same in both articles.

Similar Equivalents

Similar equivalents have identical symbolism and imagery but are grammatically or lexically different (Kvetko 2006, 53).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <i>be number one</i> (11ms, 15ms) | <i>být jednička</i> (1bs) (be one) |
| <i>be out of sight</i> (7ms) | <i>být v nedohlednu</i> (14bc) (be in nosight) |

Relative Equivalents Proper

Relative equivalents proper have identical meaning but different symbolism, imagery and lexical components (Kvetko 2006, 54).

| | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>bottle it</i> (10ss) | <i>nemít (na něco) nervy</i> (14bc) (do not have nerves (for something)) |
| <i>play havoc</i> (1mn) | <i>dělat (z něčeho) holubník</i> (13en) (do a hovecote (out of something)) |
| <i>shoot oneself in the foot</i> (2ds) | <i>podřezávat pod sebou větev</i> (15ec) (sawing off a branch beneath oneself) |

Partially Different Equivalents

Partially different equivalents have different symbolism and imagery but at least one common lexical component (Kvetko 2006, 54).

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>get back on track</i> (2ds) | <i>vrátit se do starých kolejí</i> (3en) (get back to old tracks) |
| <i>lose one's nerve</i> (10ss) | <i>nemít (na něco) nervy</i> (14bc) (do not have nerves (for something)) |
| <i>on the other hand</i> (11ms) | <i>na druhou stranu</i> (13bc) (on the second side) |

Deceptive Equivalents

Deceptive equivalents have formally literally equal lexical components but differ in meaning (Kvetko 2006, 55).

There were no such equivalents found in the surveyed databases.

10.2 Idioms Found in the Czech Tabloids

Absolute Equivalents Proper

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i>potěmkinovská vesnice</i> (7es) | <i>Potemkin village</i> (FDI) |
| <i>hrát roli (v něčem)</i> (4bc) | <i>play a role (in something)</i> (MHD) |
| <i>na vlastní nebezpečí</i> (6bn) | <i>at own risk</i> (FDI) |
| <i>otevřít dveře (něčemu)</i> (14bn) | <i>open the door (to something)</i> (CID) |
| <i>vlastní rukou</i> (5bn) | <i>by (one's) own hand</i> (FDI) |
| <i>zalézt do ulity</i> (7ec) | <i>crawl into (one's) shell</i> (FDI) |
| <i>zavrtět hlavou</i> (15ec) | <i>shake (one's) head</i> (TAH) |
| <i>fair play</i> (10es) | <i>fair play</i> (CID) |

Similar Equivalents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i>schovat hlavu do písku</i> (14bn) (hide (one's) head to the sand) | <i>hide one's head in the sand</i> (CDAI) |
| <i>nemít ani ponětí</i> (15bn) (not have even a clue) | <i>not have a clue</i> (CID) |
| <i>zkřížit (někomu) cestu</i> (9bn) (cross (to somebody) path) | <i>cross somebody's path</i> (CID) |
| <i>vzít (někomu) dech</i> (7bc) (take away (to someone) breath) | <i>take someone's breath away</i> (MHD) |
| <i>srovnat něco se zemí</i> (8bc) (raze something with the ground) | <i>raze something to the ground</i> (MHD) |

Relative Equivalents Proper

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>být ve hvězdách</i> (1en) (be in stars) | <i>be in the lap of the gods</i> (CID) |
| <i>mít brouka v hlavě</i> (11bs) | <i>have a bee in one's bonnet</i> (CID) |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| (have a beetle in a head) | |
| <i>hnout (někomu) žlučí</i> (7en) (move (somebody's) bile) | <i>ruffle (somebody's) feathers</i> (CDAI) |
| <i>nahrát (někomu) na smeč</i> (14es) (pass (to someone) to a smash) | <i>play into somebody's hands</i> (CID) |
| <i>vést to od desíti k pěti</i> (6ec) (lead from ten to five) | <i>go to rack and ruin</i> (CID) |

Partially Different Equivalents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <i>riskovat život</i> (1ms) (risk life) | <i>risk life and limb</i> (CID) |
| <i>zmizet ze světa</i> (8bs) (disappear off the earth) | <i>disappear off the face of the earth</i> (CID) |
| <i>ukázat (někomu) svou pravou tvář</i> (2es) (show (to somebody) own true face) | <i>show somebody's true colour</i> (CDAI) |
| <i>vlévat (někomu) naději do žil</i> (15bs) (pour (to somebody) hope into veins) | <i>pin (one's) hopes on</i> (TAH) |
| <i>sypat si popel na hlavu</i> (13ec) (pour ashes to own head) | <i>wear sackcloth and ashes</i> (FDI) |

Deceptive Equivalents

I did not find any deceptive equivalent for any idiom from the Czech database.

10.3 Idioms found in the English Tabloids

Absolute Equivalents Proper

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>behind closed doors</i> (9ss) | <i>za zavřenými dveřmi</i> (AČFS) |
| <i>put behind bars</i> (13sn) | <i>dát za mříže</i> (SČF3) |
| <i>hand in hand</i> (1sc) | <i>ruku v ruce</i> (SČF2) |
| <i>be in the saddle</i> (12ms) | <i>být v sedle</i> (SČF3) |

Similar Equivalents

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>be as busy as a bee</i> (8dc) | <i>být pilný jako včelka</i> (AČFS) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| | (be busy as a be) |
| <i>face-to-face</i> (12mc, 2sn, 7ds) | <i>tváří v tvář</i> (AČFS) (face to face) |

Relative Equivalents Proper

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <i>sell like hot cakes</i> (1ds) | <i>jít na dračku</i> (SČF3) (go on a tussle) |
| <i>in hot water</i> (5ms) | <i>být v bryndě</i> (AČFS) (be in a mess) |
| <i>raise eyebrows</i> (11sc) | <i>svraštit čelo</i> (AI) (wrinkle a forehead) |
| <i>tie the knot</i> (14dc) | <i>praštit do toho</i> (SČF3) (hit into it) |

Partially Different Equivalents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>sight for sore eyes</i> (2mc) | <i>podívaná pro bohy</i> (AČFS) (sight for gods) |
| <i>add fuel to the fire</i> (11ms) | <i>přilévat olej do ohně</i> (AČFS) (add oil to the fire) |
| <i>foul-mouthed</i> (7sc) | <i>s nevyváchanou hubou</i> (AČSI) (with non-rinsed mouth) |
| <i>music to one's ears</i> (12ms) | <i>rajská hudba</i> (AČFS) (paradise music) |
| <i>give somebody the boot</i> (10sc) | <i>dát někomu kopačky</i> (SČF3) (give somebody football boots) |

Deceptive Equivalents

I did not manage to find any Czech equivalents that would be literally and lexically the same as the English idioms, but with different meaning. The occurrence of deceptive equivalent idioms is very rare and the amount of the analysed idioms is probably too small to contain any of them.

11 FUNCTION AND USAGE OF IDIOMS IN TABLOIDS

The writing style of idioms also known as “tabloidese” is informal which gives a space for figurative expressions and idioms. Idioms can be highly formal but vast amount of idioms is informal, some of them even vulgar. There are many idioms with taboo subject and also those that contain the F-word. Van Dijk claims that the tabloid language emphasizes the extremes of human experiences and provides polarization or bias. The main rhetorical tricks of tabloids that make the style more exciting are dramatization, exaggeration and hyperbole (Van Dijk 1991, 219). These are the language techniques that require emotional colouring and figurativeness. Therefore, the usage of idioms is usually applied.

In this part of analysis I provide a few most significant idioms from both databases that use humour, mocking, euphemism, exaggeration, or vulgar language, and divide them accordingly. Idioms are shown in the actual form in which they appear in the articles, in order to provide a better understanding of the context.

11.1 Humorous, Mocking and Degrading Idioms

English articles:

- *association “rides on the coattails” of the men* (11ms)
 - to make one's good fortune or success on the strength of someone else's (MHD) - the mentioned *association* benefits from *the men* which is, in this case, used as an insult referred to the fact that it abuses the men.
- *desperate to get hitched* (4sn)
 - get married (FDI) - the idiom *get hitched* instigates a feeling that the person is literally tied to someone and that marriage means no freedom at all.
- *peeping Tom* (5sn)
 - a person who secretly watches others, especially for sexual gratification (TAH) - the idiom refers to someone who stalks others which is considered obscene or even illegal.
- *soap opera* (7ds)
 - real-life situation resembling one that might occur in a soap opera (TAH) - the idiom describes a sentimental and melodramatic situation in someone's relationship. It ridicules the situation since soap operas are considered excessive full of emotional and moral conflicts.
- *it was the “oldest” joke in the book* (5mc)

- *the oldest trick in the book* - a way of deceiving someone that is not new (CDAI) - In this case the word *trick* is replaced with the word *joke*. The idiom refers to a prank that is so hackneyed that is not funny anymore, and thus points out the bad sense of humour of the author of the joke.
- *Arsenal had shot themselves in the foot* (2ds)
 - foolishly harm one's own cause (TAH) - the idiom emphasises someone's misery in the imagery of clumsy and funny way. It helps to ridicule the fact that it happened by their own fault.

Czech articles:

- *je pod parou* (3ec)
 - *be three sheets in the wind* (SČF3) - be really drunk, the idiom degrades the condition of the actor mentioned in the article.
- *se přeorientovala na druhý břeh* (6ec)
 - (has changed her sexual orientation) - the idiom *druhý břeh* stands for homosexuality and provides an unconfirmed and mocking information.
- *má tak z ostudy kabát* (12es)
 - *be always making a fool of oneself* (SČF3) - the idiom creates the impression that the person should be ashamed of himself and that his behaviour is embarrassing.
- *je potěmikovou vesnicí* (7es)
 - *Potemkin village* (FDI) - be made to look grand and to make impression but with no real worth. In this case it refers to an atmosphere of some sport event and thus degrades the quality of it.
- *popel na hlavu si sype* (13ec)
 - *wear sackcloth and ashes* (FDI) - the idiom instigates a feeling that somebody has done a misdeed that is now ashamed of.
- *si spíše uřízla ostudu* (10bc)
 - *lose face* (SČF3) - the idiom creates a sensation that the celebrity mentioned in the article tried to boast but rather failed. It is, however, subjective impression which influences the reader.
- *vypadala jako strašák do zeli* (14ec)
 - *look like scarecrow* (SČF3) - look untidy and scruffy. This is an insulting idiom that dishonours someone's appearance.

- *jde to s ní od desíti k pěti* (6ec)
 - *go to rack and ruin* (CID) - someone's situation is getting worse. In this particular article an actress is slandered for her new look. The idiom encourages a perception that it is automatically a change for the worse.

11.2 Offensive and Vulgar Idioms

English articles:

- *In a year who'll give a f**k* (8mc)
 - *give a fuck* (MHD) - a vulgar idiom to describe someone's indifference. In this article the idiom is a part of a quote.
- *the girl repeatedly tells him to "f--- off"* (10dn)
 - *fuck off* - a command to go away (TAH). The idiom interprets what is being said in the attached video so it is not used deliberately by the editor.
- *stick it [the knife] up your goddam ass* (12sn)
 - *stick something up your ass* - a rude, vulgar invective expressing disdain, contempt, disgust, or anger to someone (FDI) - The idiom again only paraphrases a video, however, in this case without use of any swear symbols.
- *I'm a son of a b***** (7sc)
 - *son of a bitch* - a very horrible person. (MHD) The idiom even appears in the headline. Nevertheless, it is not referred directly to anybody since it is a quotation.
- *She tells him to shut up* (12sn)
 - *shut (somebody) up* - to stop talking or making noise (CDAI) - the idiom is used only as a description of what is happening in a video.

Czech articles: In the analysed articles, there is no idiom that contains vulgar or taboo word, or that could be considered offensive.

11.3 Comparison

As emerged from the analysis, the collected Czech idioms are more metaphorical and figurative than the English ones, and more often evaluate the situation by imposing editors' opinions. They are frequently used to ridicule, degrade or slander the discussed people or situations. On the contrary, the English idioms are often just short phrases, phrasal verbs,

or idioms that have only informative or organizational function. They are also more frequently used not to mock or defame but only to describe a situation figuratively but impartially. Naturally, idioms with vivid imagery and emotionally influencing function also occur in the analysed articles but to a lesser extent than in the Czech ones. The Czech journal *Expres* is apparently the richest one in the emotionally coloured idioms and the cheekiest and most impertinent in their usage. This might be a consequence of the fact that *Expres* is not issued in printed version, and thus can afford to be more irreverent.

However, no Czech idiom contains vulgarism or is extremely offensive. The English articles, on the other hand, include some of those. Although usually written with swear symbols (*, -) that replace letters in the expletives, some vulgar words appear in the analysed articles. Nonetheless, they are used in quotations and paraphrases so do not directly offend any discussed person or situation.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the analysis was to find out how idioms are used in English and Czech tabloids, compare the findings and give reason for possible differences. The first expectation from the introduction to analysis, that English tabloids would contain more idioms than the Czech ones, has been confirmed. The most significant difference between the English and the Czech tabloids is numerical. The occurrence in English tabloids was averagely 3 idioms per article while in the Czech ones it was only 1 idiom per article. Also the percentage of articles without any idiom was almost three times higher in the Czech tabloids (30%) than in the English ones (11%). The analysed articles in the English tabloids were in many instances longer than in the Czech ones but certainly not in such proportion as was the largest number of English idioms in a single article (14) to the largest number of Czech idioms in a single article (6). The reason for the numerical superiority is caused by the fact that unlike Czech, English language uses many phrasal verbs and short phrases that are considered idioms. What is, however, common for both, is the order according to the number of idioms in individual categories, where the Celebrities category wins, leaving the News category in the last place.

On the other hand, the other presumption saying that English articles would have more varied and elaborated idiomatic language is not that accurate. Although the number of identified idioms was noticeably larger in the English articles, the last part of the analysis proves that the Czech idioms were more metaphorical and imaginative, and more likely evaluated the situations by imposing editors' opinions. The Czech idioms also more often employed mockery, hyperbole and degradation, while in English articles idioms were more impartial. The reason is that one of the Czech tabloids has only an internet version, and thus can afford to be more cheeky and irreverent. Nonetheless, some of the English idioms included vulgar words and their meaning could be found offensive. The Czech databases contained no rude idioms at all.

Another discovery that followed from the analysis was that the form of the Czech idioms in the articles more frequently differed from the form listed in dictionaries. English idioms, on the contrary, were usually more consistent and solid, and varied in much lesser extent.

This research also shows how rich the languages are in terms of idioms, since the number of repeating occurrences was in both cases relatively small. Also the number of equivalent idioms that would appear in both the English and the Czech databases was

surprisingly small. There were only two such idioms. Number of idioms that have its equivalent in the other language, but do not appear in the other database is slightly larger. Nevertheless, it only proves how abundant and inventive the languages are in idioms.

This thesis proves that idioms are widely used in tabloid journalism and that their application increases the attraction and the entertainment value of the journals, and thus ranks them among the most popular type of newspapers.

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LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: Number of English idioms in each tabloid (source: the author)

Chart 2: Number of English idioms in each category (source: the author)

Chart 3: Number of Czech idioms in each tabloid (source: the author)

Chart 4: Number of Czech idioms in each category (source: the author)

APPENDICES

P I Corpus of the analysed articles (see the enclosed DVD)