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Czech and English Idioms of Body Parts:

A View from Cognitive Semantics

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ABSTRACT

This thesis has analysed Czech and English idioms containing parts of the human body in order to support the hypothesis that these expressions are motivated by conceptual structures, such as general conventional knowledge and conceptual metaphors and metonymies. The conceptual theory developed mainly by George Lakoff has been used in order to find whether the figurative meaning of idioms containing body parts is predictable from the meanings of their constituent parts. The analysis presented in this study has shown that cognitive strategies are at work when Czech- and English-language speakers infer the figurative meaning of idioms containing parts of the human body. Also, the fact that during the process of inference of meaning speakers activate the key words in idioms suggests that the overall figurative meaning of many idioms is predictable from the meanings of their constituent parts. It has also been shown that there is a considerable degree of correspondence between Czech and English in that there are idiomatic expressions in both languages which share their figurative meaning as well as the same underlying conceptual strategies. This finding is also based on the likelihood of body metaphors in both languages. Some implications which these findings raise are discussed and related to second-language teaching and learning.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As we go through life, we collect vast numbers of images of what we see around us and store them in our memory[1]. Most of us probably have a more or less clear picture of a car as a means of transport which has four wheels, an engine, uses petrol to propel its engine, pollutes the air, saves our time when we want to get from one place to another quickly, has to be serviced regularly, and can cost very little money or an entire fortune.

All these images seem to create a concept of a car, which is more or less prototypical, i.e. there are certain features of this concept with which the majority of people would agree if asked to describe what they imagine when they hear the word 'car'. However, defining precisely what a car means to all people would be an immense, indeed an impossible, task. The reason is that each person views a car from a different perspective. For example, some people perceive a car solely as a means of transport which is an alternative to a bus or a train. These people would probably be most concerned with the car's function in their everyday life. Other people may see a car as an object of conspicuous consumption or social significance. If someone can afford to buy an expensive car, they are obviously doing very well financially. Yet another person may perceive a car as some kind of a toy through which exhilarating speed can be achieved, and see it as a means of entertainment.

When asked what a car is, each person will give a whole range of descriptions, depending on which particular features are most important in her or his life, and while doing that, will select from the vast number of potential images of a car those which stand out and carry most importance in the speaker's own eyes. One thing most of us will have in common is that we all have a mental picture of a car which we carry with us throughout our lives and which can be, and indeed is, altered as the number of images increases.

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[1] See Lakoff (1987:444).

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It is likely that people, in order to be able to give descriptions of objects around them, have to categorize them in a certain way, which is again dependent on what each individual considers most important about that particular object. The entire bundle of images people have in their memory clearly has to be divided into many categories in order for the individual speaker to be able to select those features which seem most important. Our brains select from the immense store of information gathered throughout a lifetime. Some features of a car, for example, will project themselves more clearly than others, and stand in the foreground of the speaker's memory. They will create a very individual and highly specific concept of 'car'.

This is all very well when we speak about concrete objects in the real world which we see every day. After all, most people could agree on the most significant, or prototypical features of a car because when asked they can very clearly visualize it and have concrete images of it. However, there are also abstract phenomena, such as love, anger, life, time, and suspicion, which are much more difficult to visualise and therefore also very difficult to describe. Here we would find it almost impossible to agree on any kind of 'prototypicality' (see Rosch, 1978: 35ff.) when talking about love or anger, as these concepts can mean something quite different to so many people.

When interpreting an abstract term such as 'love', we often have to resort to figurative language to explain as precisely as possible to ourselves (let alone to other people) what we mean. Thus we may say that 'love is sweet eternity', and it would take the hearer some time to puzzle out what exactly we have in mind (to a large extent also because eternity is another abstract term which could have many interpretations for each one of us).

To ascertain the way in which abstract terms are conceptualized in the human mind is a challenge which has been undertaken by many philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, and linguists especially. Many cognitive linguists believe that metaphors and metonymies play an important role in the way in which people

conceptualize the world around them[2]. According to cognitive linguists, metaphors are a way of thinking about things around us, not just a way of expressing ideas by means of language. We have access to metaphors which structure our thinking through the medium of the language we use. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:7ff.) give an example of how people conceptualize time by providing metaphors such as TIME IS MONEY. The language we use reveals how our concept of time is structured. It is reflected in our language in the following sentences: 'You are *wasting* my time.' 'How did you *spend* your time last night?' 'I would like to *save* your time somehow.'

Metaphors and metonymies are pervasive in everyday language[3]. This means that we very often use metaphorical expressions in everyday conversation which we do not feel to be metaphorical at all (e.g. 'I *bumped into* Jane last night' - also in the Czech 'Včera jsem se *srazil* s Janou'). Such expressions have become so conventionalized in a language through their frequent use that they have become lexicalized, i.e. they are not felt to be metaphors anymore but rather lexical units in their own right (other examples include the expressions *the right-hand man,* or *the hand on a clock*). Some linguists call these expressions 'dead' metaphors[4].

Idiomatic expressions in particular are usually very difficult to interpret. This is primarily because we are aware that they are motivated by metaphorical thinking (as the literal meaning of these expressions mostly does not make sense) but we are usually unable to interpret the underlying metaphors. We simply assume that they are some kind of an oddity in language, which is nonetheless colourful and we therefore tend to use idiomatic expressions at times when we may feel that ordinary language (i.e. literal) is not sufficient to express our thoughts forcibly enough. For example, the idiom *to let the cat out of the bag* encapsulates the intended meaning 'to reveal a secret' much better than its literal equivalent because it manages to convey evaluation which its literal counterpart is not capable of. When we consider that the cat in the idiom refers to the secret, that the cat was hidden in a bag and was (probably accidentally) let out, the idiom

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[2] See Lakoff and Johnson (1980:7ff.), Lakoff (1987:448), Ungerer and Schmid (1996:118), Kövecses and Szabó (1996:326).
[3] See Ungerer and Schmid (1996:117).
[4] See Ungerer and Schmid (1996:117).

makes much more sense to us and can be readily explained. We can then say that secrets can be conceptualized as a cat hidden in a bag which has accidentally been let out. It is much easier for people to imagine a cat being let out of a bag than a secret being revealed simply because a cat and a bag are concrete, tangible entities which people have experienced and have images of in their minds. Cognitive linguistics argues that people conceptualize abstract entities on the basis of concrete ones[5].

In this study, Czech and English idioms containing parts of the human body ('head', 'face', 'eye', 'nose', and 'hand' respectively) will be examined in order to show that their figurative meanings can be explained on the basis of the conceptual framework developed by cognitive linguistics over the past three decades. This framework claims that our entire thinking is metaphorical and that the language we use reflects the store of images in our mind which we gather as we go through life. If we accept that people structure their thinking in terms of concepts and that our thinking is largely metaphorical, there are bound to be conceptual metaphors and metonymies shared at least by the Czech- and English-speaking cultures. Although there may have been very few historical contacts between the Czech and British cultures, the fact that both cultures have grown in the European Christian tradition, and have shared the historical experience of the 20th century, means that both the Czech and British people are likely to relate to very similar social, moral, and perhaps even political values. All these values are likely to be projected to the language of a particular speech community. As Telyia, Bragina, and Oparina suggest (1998: 58ff.), channels through which language is penetrated by culture are the so-called cultural connotations (defined as 'the relation between the image contained in the inner form of a language sign and the content of a cultural pattern') which are especially vivid in idioms and restricted lexical collocations. These cultural connotations are likely to be highly specific to each speech community. However, there are also general social, moral and political values which will find a common ground with both the Czech and British cultures, such as, for example, the relation of both communities to women, impaired people, or marital relations, which certainly be viewed from a different perspective in some Muslim cultures. All these

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[5] See Ungerer and Schmid (1996:121).

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attitudes, which have developed in Europe throughout its long Christian history, are then reflected in language.

This study will attempt to show that people in the Czech- and English-speaking cultures share images of idiomatic expressions containing parts of the human body. The contention here is that idioms which make use of parts of the human body are more predictable than other idioms, simply because as human beings we are completely familiar with our perceptions of the shape, size, and functions of individual parts of our own bodies, because we experience them every day. This is why it is easier for us to interpret the meaning of idiomatic expressions containing parts of the human body than, for example, idioms which contain names of animals (e.g. *to call off the dogs*).

Next, this study will try to endorse the claim that the figurative meaning of many idioms is predictable because their constituent parts systematically contribute to the overall figurative meaning of these expressions.

The first, largely theoretical, part of this study will examine the way in which idioms have been treated in earlier works written from the formal, functional, and cognitive perspectives. It will become clear that cognitive linguistics, with its experiential theory, has brought a completely new alternative analysis to the study of idiomatic language. The assertion that our thinking is largely metaphorical, as claimed by cognitive linguists, will also be discussed to show whether cognitive strategies may be at work when people interpret idiomatic expressions. Terms such as 'conceptual metaphor', 'conceptual metonymy', 'source domain', 'target domain', 'conventional knowledge' and 'conceptual mapping' will be explained in order to see whether or not they are valid for this study.

The examination of idioms of body parts in English and Czech is central to this study. The second part of this study will therefore apply the theoretical framework developed by cognitive linguists to data collected from standard idiomatic dictionaries of English and Czech to examine the semantic features of idioms containing parts of the

human body by first ascertaining their conventional images and finding the conceptual metaphors and metonymies which help to create a link between the literal and the figurative meaning of idioms. My hope is to show that English and Czech idioms have much in common in terms of the conceptual metaphors and metonymies which underlie them, as well as in terms of the figurative meaning of idioms. This study will not be concerned with the grammatical features of idiomatic expressions.

The reason why I chose to examine idioms containing parts of the human body is that idiomatic language is mostly anthropocentric, i.e. it is focused on people, their behaviour, perceptions of their environment, their physical and emotional states, and their interaction with others. In Czech, for example, eighty per cent of idioms relate to human beings[6].

Another important reason for choosing to compare idioms in the Czech and English languages is that Czech is a minority language spoken by roughly ten million people around the world, whereas the English language has long been the *lingua franca* of global communication. It is therefore interesting to see how much these two languages have in common when we look at their phraseological potential. Also, as English seems to be developing much faster than Czech, it must be said that as this study is coming into existence, some idioms used in it may already be becoming bookish or slipping out of use. This, however, should not be a hindrance to their exploration.

A further reason is that examination of idioms across languages helps us to understand the way people think and gives us an invaluable insight into human psychology. This has wider implications than may at first appear. Languages are much more easily learnt and studied when the most obvious similarities between them are pointed out. When we set out to learn a new language, we are faced with a truly remarkable task. For it is not just the language we want to acquire, but also the immense world of culture, history, conventions and customs which we need to get to know in

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[6] See Čermák (1982:144).

order to be able to get as close as possible to the level of a native speaker of that particular language.

We not only make use of a newly acquired language in conversational exchanges, but also want to be able to use that language creatively. Here again, idiomatic language plays an important role, as some of us use the new language to translate or interpret. It is not only precision which is required of interpreters or translators, but also their ability to capture the spirit of the target language.

Although it is impossible to generalize with confidence about language in general from a restricted study such as this one, the fact that cognitive mechanisms may be at work in Czech and English would suggest that metaphorical thinking may also function in other languages. If people are made aware of the conceptual metaphors which underlie most of language, and idiomatic language in particular, they will be able to make much better use of it, whether as a native speaker or second-language learner. It is hoped that this study will make a modest contribution to this goal.

II. SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

II.1   Idioms and Idiomaticity from the Formal and Functional Perspectives

Over the past few decades, since the 1960s, English idioms have been receiving constant attention, both from the point of view of their meaning and also of their form. However, many scholars[7] agree has been that vocabulary and the particular field of idioms have been neglected in all respects.

Despite these claims, there is in fact a good deal of literature available on idiomatic and phraseological English concerned with its form, meaning, function, interpretation, and usage (see, for example, Ortony and Schallert, 1978; Swinney and Cutler, 1979; Lakoff, 1987; Nayak & Gibbs, 1990; Gibbs & O'Brien, 1990; Gibbs, 1980, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1995; Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988, 1993; Nunberg *et al.*, 1994; Kövecses & Szabó, 1996; Fernando, 1996). Their views and approaches will be discussed in more detail in this study.

Czech idioms and phraseology have received far less attention than their English counterparts. However, a good deal of work has been carried out in this field by Čermák (1982, 1988, 1994) who examined Czech phraseology mainly from the formal point of view in his *Idiomatika a frazeologie češtiny* (Idiomatics and Phraseology of Czech). However, since the 1980s, not much has been done in Czech linguistics with regard to idioms.

This is to a certain degree understandable if one considers that idioms and phraseological units in any language belong to the most difficult area of lexicology to define, grasp, and categorize. As Čermák puts it:

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[7] See, for example Weinreich (1969), Makkai (1972), or Fernando (1996).

The characteristic feature of phraseology and idiomatics as a discipline is ... that traditional and well-tested procedures, criteria, and methodological approaches mostly fail here, and that is for the simple reason that these procedures, criteria, and methodological approaches have been created for regular language and its phenomena (i.e. to which rules apply). However, what is in principle valid for phraseology is that it is always somehow anomalous, irregular (as a rule in many syntagmatic and paradigmatic aspects at the same time). (1987: 321)

The field of phraseology in any language is so varied and fascinating that one could spend an entire lifetime analyzing it and looking at it from various viewpoints.

It is, indeed, very difficult to define what an idiom is. Shall one consider the phrasal verb *to head for* as an idiom because its constituent parts complement each other to form its special meaning only in this particular combination and not in others? Should one consider the proverb *Two heads are better than one* as idiomatic because its meaning is metaphorical? Describing idioms and idiomaticity is a very complex issue which should be looked at from the formal, functional as well as from the semantic points of view. The following few pages will examine how idioms have been accounted for in the past. First of all, a working definition of idioms[8] which will be applied throughout this study will be presented.

For the purposes of this study, a working definition of idioms has been devised which draws upon the cognitive linguistics approach to idiomatic language, and to language in general, i.e. that human thinking is metaphorical and this is reflected in the language people use. Idioms, however intriguing their forms and interpretations may be, cannot be left out. The following definition shall apply to both English and Czech.

An idiom is a conventionalized multiword expression whose units are mostly semantically ambiguous, i.e. individual units of an idiom may have several meanings, such as in the idiom *to spill the beans* in which the word 'beans' also refers to legumes, however unlikely such an interpretation may be. (There are exceptions, though, e.g.

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[8] In this study, the term 'idiom' will be used interchangeably with 'idiomatic expression'.

spick and span or *kith and kin* which are not ambiguous at all). A 'conventionalized' expression is such an expression which has been used over time so frequently that it loses its special (e.g. metaphorical) features and with which many speakers of a particular language should be familiar.

Secondly, although usually the overall figurative meaning of an idiom cannot simply be derived from combining the meanings of its constituent parts, it is asserted here that the meaning of many idioms is partially predictable from the meaning of its constituent parts because, as has been shown[9], individual words systematically contribute to the overall figurative meaning of idioms. Moreover, this study will attempt to show that the meaning of many idioms containing body parts can be devised from the meanings of their constituent parts.

Thirdly, idioms involve figurative devices, such as metaphor (e.g. *to take a bull by the horns*), metonymy (e.g. *to give a helping hand*), or hyperbole (e.g. *it is not worth the paper it is printed on*). The relationship between an idiom's literal meaning and its overall figurative meaning is not arbitrary, but is motivated by conceptual devices, such as conceptual metaphors and metonymies, which help speakers to 'make sense' of the idiom's figurative meaning.

Fourthly, idioms are in many cases transformationally defective structures. They can, however, undergo some transformations (e.g. the expression *to kick the bucket* can be put into the past tense, as in *he kicked the bucket*, but it cannot be passivized, i.e. we cannot say that *the bucket was kicked*).

Such a definition is still fairly broad and the scope of this study does not allow for a thorough classification of idioms (for a detailed account, the readers are referred to the *Longman Dictionary of English Idioms* or the *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*). These include sayings (*a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*,

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[9] See Gibbs and O'Brien (1990:36).

or in Czech *lepší vrabec v hrsti nežli holub na střeše*), proverbs (*don't count your chickens before they're hatched*, in Czech *nechval dne před večerem*), similes (*to have a head like a sieve*, in Czech *mít hlavu jako cedník*), restricted collocations (*a blind alley*, in Czech *slepá ulice*), as well as open collocations (*hit the hay/sack*, in Czech *jít do hajan/na kutě*). In English, phrasal verbs (*to hand in*, *to head off*) should also be mentioned. These, however, do not have Czech equivalents and so they have not been included in the data analysis. The main properties of idioms as understood by cognitive linguistics will be discussed in the next section in more detail.

Adam Makkai, in his book *Idiom Structure in English* sees the following criteria decisive for characterization of idioms: 1. the term *idiom* is a unit realized by at least two words; 2. the meaning of an idiom is not predictable from its component parts, which are empty of their usual senses; 3. idioms display a high degree of disinformation potential, i.e. their parts are polysemous and therefore can be misinterpreted by the listener; 4. idioms are institutionalized, i.e. they are conventionalized expressions whose conventionalization is the result of initially *ad hoc* expressions[10].

The first point seems perfectly clear, as it is generally accepted that in order to be called idiomatic, a lexical unit should constitute of at least two lexemes which are used in that unit in their specific form (which may, however, undergo alterations) and with a special meaning given only to that unit.

However, the second point is debatable as some idioms are considered more transparent than others. For example, the expression *to have a good head on one's shoulders* is considered idiomatic because of its figurative meaning in which 'head' stands for intelligence or cleverness. However, because we can assume that people have a concept in their mind which tells them that the word 'head' is used in everyday discourse to represent intelligence, they can partially interpret the idiom simply from an understanding of its first constituent part. Since there are a large number of idiomatic phrases containing parts of the human body, it is likely that people would be able to

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[10] Makkai (1972:122).

predict their meaning just from looking at them. It seems clear, then, that the meaning of many idioms is partially predictable from the meaning of their constituent parts.

The third point raises the question of the role of context in interpreting and comprehending idioms. It is very often impossible to infer the meaning of a phrase until it is seen in its immediate context. Context is essential for the interpretation of literal language and doubly important in the case of idioms. Even literal expressions can lead to misinformation and confusion on the part of the listener/reader if they are outside their natural context. Let us take, for example, the expression *to put their heads together*. Taken out of context, it can have the literal meaning, 'to bring the upper parts of two/several bodies towards each other' or the figurative meaning, 'to discuss a problem with someone while taking their advice into account'. As this example shows, context cannot be avoided when defining what idioms are.

This point can be supported by recent findings by Cacciari and Tabossi who, on the basis of several experiments, found that 'there is only one processing of an idiomatic string - it is literal until the key word is found.' (1988:678-9)[11]. This should be a sufficient explanation as to why context is decisive in inferring idiomatic meaning. It is very likely that people do not store idiomatic expressions as separate lexical entries in their minds, but idioms are first processed literally and this processing is facilitated by the surrounding context[12].

Makkai's final point can be supported to the extent that over time many literal expressions have been re-used so many times in specific language situations that they have become conventionalized, idiomatic, and, to a certain degree, syntactically frozen. For example, the idiom *to kick the bucket* can undergo some transformations (as in *He kicked the bucket*, where the verb is put into the past tense without the idiom losing its figurative meaning), but it is not entirely flexible (e.g. we cannot say *The bucket was kicked* because this idiom would sound awkward if passivized). As will be shown,

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[11] See also Tabossi and Zardon (1993:153).
[12] See also Swinney and Cutler (1979:532).

Makkai's point that the meaning of an idiom cannot be predicted from its component parts is not quite valid and cannot be applied to idioms of body parts. If we take the idiom *to keep a cool head*, for example, it can be seen that the basic meaning of the word 'head' (i.e. 'the upper part of a human body') is considered during the processing of the idiomatic meaning of this expression. When we behave rationally, without emotions, we remain calm and the temperature of our body does not rise as is the case when we get angry. This physiological state is then reflected in the idiom's wording. Even this simple example based on human physiology shows that Makkai's argument is not entirely valid.

Weinreich's article 'Problems in the Analysis of Idioms' is an attempt to establish the criteria upon which to base the characteristic features of idiomatic phrases. Weinreich accepts as idioms only multiword expressions which have literal counterparts. Those expressions which cannot display this criterion are considered ill-formed and therefore disqualified as idioms. The reason he gives for not including units such as *by and large* is that they are merely stable and familiar. Weinreich gives his definition of an idiom as 'a phraseological unit that involves at least two polysemous constituents, and in which there is a reciprocal contextual selection of subsenses...' (1969:226).

Weinreich's argument seems convincing, apart from his claim that idioms must have literal counterparts. Rather, it is precisely the uniqueness of idiomatic phrases and their special nature which makes them what they are: very apt and precise expressions which can concisely encapsulate people's elaborate ideas, feelings, judgements, and impressions. It is not necessary to look for a literal counterpart to *to fly in the face of* as it would lose a lot of its semantic features and intended connotation. Also, as Gibbs claims, 'Simple literal phrases do not possess the same kind of specificity about the causation, intentionality, and manner of the human actions referred to by idioms' (1992:503). In other words, idioms are by their very nature richer in terms of their structure and mainly semantic features than literal language. Weinreich is not the only scholar who claims that idioms have literal counterparts. Palmer asserts that when people infer the meaning of idioms, 'the meaning of the resultant combination is opaque

- it is not related to the meaning of the individual words, but is sometimes (though not always) nearer to the meaning of a single word (thus *to kick the bucket* equals 'die').

Weinreich also claims that 'the semantic difference between idioms and their literary counterparts is arbitrary' (1969:229, 260). This should mean that the relationship between the overall figurative meaning of idioms and their wording (i.e. the selection of words in an idiomatic string) is completely *ad hoc*. As will be explained further, this claim cannot hold as it is very likely that 'the figurative meanings of idioms are not arbitrary, but are partially determined by how people conceptualize the domains to which idioms refer'[13]. For example, if people conceptualize the human head as 'life' in expressions such as *to put the head on the block for someone,* meaning 'to take responsibility for someone's wrong-doings', the way in which the word-string is selected will depend on the concepts of the human head which people hold. Since the head seems to symbolize life, we know that if we expose it too much in dangerous situations we set ourselves at risk of being harmed. It is the same when we set our life at risk for someone.

As can be seen, Weinreich's assertion that idioms must have literal counterparts cannot hold in a large number of cases, as idioms are unique in terms of their semantics. Also, the arbitrary nature of the link between idioms and their literal counterparts is doubtful when we consider that the way in which people conceptualize the world around them is reflected in the language they use.

In his book *Idiomatika a frazeologie češtiny* (Idiomatics and Phraseology of Czech, 1982), František Čermák distinguishes between *phraseme* and *idiom*, arguing that a phraseme is a more semantically transparent unit than an idiom. However, the difference between these two terms is very small, as both relate to the form and meaning of the phraseological unit. The basic criteria Čermák sets for defining idioms in general (i.e. not just in the Czech language) are 1. conventionality; 2. paradigmatic fixity, i.e. the inability of the elements of phraseological units to be substitutable in the same place in a

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[13] Gibbs and Nayak (1991:94).

particular context (This feature of idioms applies to quite a large proportion of them. See, for example, in the English idioms *to hit the sack/bunk/hay* where the meaning of each is virtually the same, i.e. 'to go to bed'.); 3. syntagmatic fixity, or the ability of elements of idiomatic units to combine only with particular elements; 4. idiomaticity, or a various degree of formal, semantic, and functional anomaly which is reflected in the number and restriction of transformations; 5. the ability to undergo various types of transformations of their base structure which he characterizes as 'a unit of phraseology semantically and formally irreducible' (1982:17), the transformations being structural (e.g. nominalization, adjectivization, verbalization) and grammatical (i.e. passivization, pluralization); 6. idioms are transformationally anomalous, i.e. they are unique combinations of words not created according to a certain pattern, and no other combinations can be created accordingly. From the formal point of view, this means that the combinatory abilities of idioms are not identical with the combinatory abilities of regular language. From the semantic point of view, the semantics of individual idiom components have no compositional function, i.e. the overall meaning of an idiom cannot be predicted from the meanings of its constituent parts.

Based on the above criteria, Čermák gives his definition of an idiom as:

A unit of phraseology/idiomatics [which] can be characterized as a conventionalized combination of at least two forms (morphemes, lexemes, collocations, sentences) which is in various ways anomalous from the formal, collocational and semantic aspects and creates a unit of an immediately higher level. It is defined in clear degrees by an integral consituational function and by a denotate which, from the perspective of their components, are not fully derivable, predictable, and which, in reverse, cannot be broken up into their components partially, or completely. (1982:115)

It is important here to note 'the integral consituational function' which helps to define idioms. This should be understood as the role of context in helping the speaker to infer meaning and correctly to interpret idiomatic phrases. Not many linguists in the early stages of research of idiomatic language have emphasized the importance context plays in this respect. They have tended rather to analyze idioms separately from their

natural environment. Also, what Čermák calls 'a denotate' here can be understood to mean the conceptual representation people have in mind when they produce or comprehend any kind of idiomatic phrase. It will be argued here that idioms are not in fact simply anomalous products of languages, but rather a reflection of how people conceptualize the world around them.

Another point to be mentioned is that Čermák stresses that from the semantic point of view, the meaning of idioms cannot be inferred from the seemingly obvious etymology of individual components and that we have to adhere to the meaning of the entire unit, as well as to its behaviour in a particular text. This point, however, is not entirely valid as it has been shown that the constituent parts of many idioms systematically contribute to their overall figurative meanings. Gibbs claims that

> ...when speakers judge that the idiom *to let off steam* is analyzable or decomposable, they essentially are finding some relationship between the components *let off* and *steam* with their figurative referents 'release' and 'anger'. This relationship between an idiom's words and their figurative referents is not arbitrary but is based on active metaphorical mappings between different source and target domains that structure much of our experience. For example, the noun *steam* and the concept of anger are part of the same semantic field because anger is undersood metaphorically, in part, in terms of heat and internal pressure. (1993:63).

This view demonstrates that the way people conceptualize the world around them is actually projected into the idiomatic language they use to express the idea of anger, for example.

Makkai's, Weinreich's and Čermák's accounts of idioms show that the early attempts to characterize them were mostly concerned with their form. Other accounts, such as Cowie *et al.* (1975, 1983), and Fernando (1996), represent views which have focused rather on the language user, the function of idioms in discourse and all the implications it brings.

In the two volumes of *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, Cowie *et al.* suggest that idiomaticity is largely a question of meaning. Grammar and meaning complement each other to create idiomaticity. In Volume 1 (1975), Cowie *et al.* list phrasal verbs with prepositions (*to look after*), with particles (*to step up*) or with both prepositions and particles (*to look up to*), as well as combinations of verbs, fixed objects, and particles (*to let the cat out of the bag*). Volume 2 (1983) covers phrases (*red herring*), semi-clauses (*to spill the beans*), and sentences (*What the eyes do not see the heart does not crave for*).

They call 'idiomatic' an expression which can be substituted by a single word. This point is relevant only when we talk about idioms included in Volume 1, i.e. phrasal verbs with prepositions, with particles, or with prepositions and particles. Otherwise it cannot be applied. As has been pointed out before, if we try to 'translate' an idiom into literal language, it very often loses its semantic richness and precision of meaning. Take, for instance, the idiom *beauty is in the eye of the beholder*, which can be 'translated' into literal language as 'it is only a matter of very subjective opinion who or what one considers beautiful'. As can be seen, the idiom *beauty is in the eye of the beholder* (as well as many other idioms) cannot be substituted by a single word as it is impossible to express its meaning by a single lexical unit without severely altering its meaning and omitting much of its semantics.

Cowie *et al.* see the following two features as the most important to characterize idioms: 1. compositeness, i.e. 'an idiom is a combination of two or more words which function as a unit of meaning' (1975:viii-xi); and 2. semantic unity, i.e. 'idiomaticity is largely a semantic matter, and ... it is manifested in much the same way in expressions of different structural types.' Here again, it can be seen that Cowie *et al.* support the common view that an idiom's overall figurative meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of its constituent parts.

From the extent of idiomatic expressions included in the *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, we can see that Cowie *et al.* include a great number of

expressions which display very strong idiomaticity, as well as idiomatic units which show a considerable degree of openness to change. Cowie *et al.* characterize them as pure idioms (*to kick the bucket*) which went from the process of being re-used to attaining a figurative extension and becoming petrified; figurative idioms (*to beat one's breasts*), where variation is seldom found and pronoun substitutability is unlikely; restricted collocations *(a blind alley)*, where one word has a figurative sense not found outside that limited context, and open collocations, where both components are freely recombinable (*to pursue a path/goal/someone*, etc.).

The function which idioms have in human communication is the principal concern of Chitra Fernando's book *Idioms and Idiomaticity* (1996). She argues that past accounts of idioms have focused mainly on their lexico-grammatical aspect. The fact that idioms are pervasive in everyday language has therefore, she argues, been largely neglected. Fernando's definition of idioms as 'indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits' and 'not usually recombinable' (1996:30), as well as referring only to 'those expressions which become conventionally fixed in a specific order and lexical form, or have only a restricted set of variants, acquire the status of idioms and are recorded in idiom dictionaries' (ibid.:31), encapsulates the basic characteristic features which can be observed in a great number of idiomatic expressions. Idiomaticity, according to Fernando, 'is exemplified not only in idioms and conventional *ad hoc* collocations, but also in conventional lexicogrammatical sequencing most apparent in longer text fragments' (ibid.:30).

Based on this definition and on Halliday's functions of language, Fernando divides idioms into three classes. Pure idioms (*to spill the beans*) she defines as 'a type of conventionalized, non-literal multi-word expression' (ibid.:36). Semi-idioms (*to drop names*) are idioms which have 'one or more literal constituents and at least one with a non-literal subsense, usually special to that co-occurrence relation and no other' (ibid.:36). Literal idioms (*on foot*) are invariant, or display restricted variation, and are less semantically complex than pure idioms and semi-idioms.

What is important about Fernando's definition of idioms is that she does not leave out their semantic aspect. In her view, the most salient semantic features of idioms are their semantic unity, their non-literalness which is intrinsic to the idiom regardless of the language-user, their semantic opacity, and the idiom's lexical fixity. This functional categorization of idioms provides a salient overview of idiomatic language and makes one wonder whether our speech is not more idiomatic than we think (1996:72 ff.).

Fernando further classifies idioms into three categories. Ideational or 'state and way of the world' idioms either focus on the message content and include actions (*to twist somebody's arm*), events (*to have blood on one's hands*), situations (*to be up a gum tree*), people and things (*a fat cat*), attributes (*from A to Z*), evaluations (*beauty is/lies in the eye of the beholder*) and emotions (*to lose one's heart*), or they characterize the message as being specific (*the question is*) or non-specific (*blah blah blah*). Interpersonal idioms are either interactional and include greetings and farewells (*how are you?*), directives (*let's face it*), agreement (*that's true*), 'feelers' (*what do you think?*) and rejections (*come off it*), or characterize the message in terms of its newsworthiness (*guess what*), sincerity (*as a matter of fact*), uncertainty (*mind you*) or they display calls for brevity (*get to the point*). Relational idioms secure the cohesion of discourse. Fernando categorizes them as integrative (*on the contrary, on the one hand ... on the other, at the same time*) or as ones which sequence information in space and time (*in the first place, one day*).

This account of Fernando's book brings us to a very important point regarding the way idioms and phraseological units have been treated in the past. In the previous description of all classifications and categorizations of idiomatic language preceding Fernando's, we can see that linguists have been mostly concerned with the form of idioms as opposed to their meaning. It was only from the mid-1980s onwards that discoursal functions of idioms became a focal point in the literature on idioms. This is perfectly relevant if one wants to find out how idiomatic language can be categorized. However, if one looks at the functions which can be inferred from idioms, how people use idiomatic language to express, for example, their opinions, feelings, emotions, evaluations of events, agreement with, or rejection of, other people's statements, we

must go further. Here it is very important to know the functional aspects which idioms carry within them because they help us to put yet another dimension to their place in language and the way people use them.

The way Fernando classifies idioms suggests that most of our language is indeed idiomatic. Interpersonal idioms such as greetings (*How is it going?*) or 'feelers' (*Are you well?*) cannot be replaced by any other literal phrases. According to Fernando, they are pervasive in our everyday conversational exchanges and indispensable for us as users of various languages. The most valuable point about Fernando's approach to idiomatic language is that she considers it from the standpoint of the language user. Her attitude shows that language should never be detached from the way people think, or from the functions it carries as people actually produce it in ordinary speech and writing. The primary function of language is to serve as a tool of communication, to formulate our thoughts and convey them in a way which is coherent to others. However, although Fernando considers idioms from their semantic point of view, she omits the view that idioms could somehow be motivated or that their meanings could be predictable.

Overall, it can be said that Fernando focuses on idioms as a principal facilitator of human communication. Makkai, Weinreich, Čermák and Cowie *et al.* would agree on the point that idioms are units of discourse in which the relationship between the literal and figurative meanings is purely arbitrary and whose overall figurative meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of their individual parts. This view is also supported by Swinney and Cutler who claim that 'an idiom is a string of two or more words for which meaning is not derived from the meanings of the individual words comprising that string' (1979:523). Similarly, Nunberg *et al.* suggest that 'an idiomatic phrase ..... is simply an idiosyncratic type of phrasal construction that is assigned its own idiomatic meaning.' (1994:507). These scholars seem to generalize about the predictability of meanings of idioms on the basis of their claim that the meaning of most idioms is not predictable from the meaning of their constituent parts.

However, there is a group of idioms whose meaning is at least partially predictable from the meaning of their component parts, and that is the group of idioms containing body parts. If we take, for example, the idiom *to have a good head on one's shoulders*, the key word, i.e. 'head', helps the reader/listener to guess that the meaning of this idiom will have something to do with intelligence as the head is mostly conceptualized in terms of intelligence or cleverness, simply due to the fact that our brain is situated within the skull. This knowledge is tacitly shared by most language speakers. As will be shown, this idiom is motivated by the underlying conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE, which helps speakers to make sense of the figurative meaning of the idiom, which is 'to be intelligent' (or 'to have common sense').

II. 2   Idioms in Cognitive Linguistics

While Makkai, Weinreich, Čermák and others study mainly the formal aspects of idioms, and Fernando's work classifies idioms according to the function they have in human discourse, linguists involved in the fast-developing area of cognitive linguistics take a completely different viewpoint. The leading figures of congitive linguistics, and in particular its experiential branch, George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Raymond Gibbs, have been systematically questioning and challenging the standard or 'traditional' view of the nature of meaning, the role of metaphor, metonymy, categorization of language and the relationships between form and meaning. These scholars have recently developed a substantial theoretical framework based on how people perceive, conceptualize and categorize the world around them. Idioms have certainly played an important part in the process of re-evaluation of language by cognitive linguists. In their study 'Idioms: A View from Cognitive Semantics' (1996), Z. Kövecses and Szabó compare the traditional view of idioms with the cognitive view. Kövecses and Szabó say that according to the traditional view, idioms are something special in language, and only a matter of language, detached from any conceptual system people have, as well as expressions whose meaning is unpredictable from their constituent parts and which have special syntactic properties. According to the cognitive view:

> Many, or perhaps most idioms are products of our conceptual system and not simply a matter of language (i.e. a matter of the lexicon). An idiom is not just an expression that has meaning that is somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituent parts, but it arises from our more general knowledge of the world (embodied in our conceptual system). In other words, idioms (or, at least, the majority of them), are conceptual, and not linguistic, in nature. (1996:330)[14]

Idioms are conceptually motivated in the sense that there are cognitive mechanisms (such as metaphors, metonymy, and conventional knowledge) which link literal meaning with figurative idiomatic meaning. This view is also shared by Gibbs who claims that 'idioms do not exist as separate semantic units within the lexicon, but actually reflect coherent systems of metaphorical concepts' (1997:142).

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[14] See also Gibbs (1995:113).

Kövecses and Szabó raise several important questions which are fundamental for further research into idiomatic language. If we consider that some idiomatic phrases are partially semantically transparent, and that their meanings can be established with the help of conceptual mappings from the source to the target domains, we can start describing figurative idiomatic structures in much more detail, not only in English but also in other languages. Can any shared idiomatic structures be found? Are any metaphors, metonymies, and aspects of conventional knowledge shared by all languages? Dare we speak of shared concepts in the way in which people conceptualize the world around them? These and other questions regarding idiomatic meaning and conceptual metaphors are precisely the questions with which this work is concerned.

Lakoff (1987:446 ff.) suggests that people have in their minds large sets of conventional images of the world around them, depending upon which specific culture they belong to. For instance, Czechs would normally have a more or less clear image of Prague Castle, of President T. G. Masaryk, of the inside of a typical Czech pub, and so on, which might be different from a foreigner's mental image of these same objects. Images are formed on the basis of our experience and form so-called 'image schemas'. Conventional images are not context-bound, but they are unconscious, since we presumably continue to carry an image of a shark in our heads for many years without needing to draw upon it, and so without consciously thinking about it.

Conventional images are the basis of the formation of new idioms and facilitate making sense of old ones. Lakoff (1987) calls them 'imageable idioms' and he suggests that 'in a very large number of cases, the meaning of idioms is not arbitrary at all' (1987:448)[15]. This view contradicts the traditional theory which holds that there is no connection whatsoever between the wording and the meaning of idioms, i.e. any idiom could have any meaning at all, since its meaning is completely arbitrary[16]. Lakoff further suggests that he does not intend to claim that the meaning of idioms is predictable[17] just

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[15] See also Wasow (1983:109).

[16] See Weinreich (1969:260).

[17] For a definition of predictability of idiom meanings, see Nunberg *et al.* (1994:495), who says: 'The meanings of an idiom cannot be predicted on the basis of a knowledge of the rules that determine the meaning or use of its parts when they occur in isolation from one another.'

from the meaning of the words which constitute the idiom. In this study, I will try to show that, as is the case with many idioms, but especially with idioms to do with parts of the human body, the meaning of a given idiom is at least partially predictable from the meaning of its constituent parts because we all share conventional images of parts of our bodies.

Predictability of idiomatic expressions, i.e. the degree to which the meaning of an idiom can be 'guessed' or predicted from its constituent parts, is a very important point in idiom analysis. Kövecses and Szabó raise this question in connection with motivation of idioms. According to Kövecses and Szabó 'motivation is a much weaker notion than prediction' (1996:330). This means that the more predictable the meaning of an idiom is, the clearer its motivation becomes. Consider, for example, how we interpret the idiom *to put one's head in a noose.* In order to infer its overall meaning, we first look for the key word in this idiom, which in this case is 'head'. Since our conventional knowledge tells us that to put one's head in a noose, when performed literally, sets the person at great risk of being harmed; and that such a person, should he do it willingly, could easily be harmed, we can infer the meaning of this idiom as 'to invite harm upon oneself'. But why is the word 'head' used in this idiom rather than, say, 'hand'? It is because the head is very often conceptualized in our mind as signifying life: by exposing our head carelessly, we set our life at risk. The underlying conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR LIFE makes the motivation of this idiom clear and facilitates our interpretation and understanding of it. Gibbs claims that 'idioms are more analyzable to the extent that their individual components share the same semantic fields with their idiomatic references. For example, the individual parts of *to pop the question* must be in the same semantic field, or conceptual domain, as their idiomatic reference 'propose' and 'marriage' for this idiom to be viewed as decomposable.' (1989:578). If we take the example *to put one's head in a noose*, it seems clear that the human head and life share the same conceptual domain and the idiom can thus be interpreted as referring to a person setting his life at risk. The word 'head' makes the meaning of the idiom partially predictable.

All of us have subconscious knowledge of the cognitive mechanisms (metaphor, metonymy, conventional knowledge) which link literal meanings to figurative idiomatic ones (Kövecses and Szabó, 1996:351). After all, these cognitive mechanisms come out when we are asked to produce images of abstract terms such as 'freedom', for example. The concept 'freedom to act' is nicely expressed by the idiom *to have a free hand*. Here, the underlying conceptual metaphor could be FREEDOM TO ACT IS HAVING THE HANDS FREE (ibid.:342). We know that if we are not required to perform a specific activity we can do whatever we wish. Thus the meaning of this idiom 'to act as freely as one wishes' is arrived at with the help of our conventional knowledge and a metaphor. It is the word 'hand' which makes the meaning of the idiom predictable, since hands are the 'tools' with which we perform various kinds of activities, whether voluntarily or under duress.

Gibbs and O'Brien have shown in a number of experiments that individual words systematically contribute to the overall figurative interpretations of idioms, e.g. *to spill the beans* is analyzable in the sense that the word 'beans' refers to the idea of a secret and 'spill' to the idea of revealing a secret (1990:36). Thus they overturn the traditional view of idioms as being semantically non-compositional.

Gibbs and O'Brien have also shown that people have tacit knowledge of the metaphorical basis of idioms and that speakers show remarkable consistency in their images of idioms with similar figurative meanings, even if their forms are different (e.g. *to spill the beans* and *to let the cat out of the bag*)[18].

Idiomatic language, just like literal language, is unexceptional in being motivated by conventional images. Lakoff formulates his definition of idiomatic motivation as follows:

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[18] Gibbs and O'Brien (1990:37).

The relationship between A and B is *motivated* just in case there is an independently existing link, L, such that A-L-B 'fit together'. L *makes sense* of the relationship between A and B.

He illustrates this point with reference to the idiom *to keep someone at arm's length*. He explains that the meaning of this idiom is motivated by a conventional image and that two metaphors, which exist independently in our conceptual system, provide the link between the idiom and its meaning. The metaphors, INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS and SOCIAL (or PSYCHOLOGICAL) HARM IS PHYSICAL HARM, map the physical knowledge of keeping somebody at arm's length and so protecting oneself from physical harm onto the meaning of the idiom, which is understood as 'to keep someone from becoming intimate, so as to protect oneself from social or psychological harm' (Lakoff, 1987:448). This example sufficiently demonstrates that many idioms have at their basis conceptual metaphors and metonymies which connect the concrete and abstract areas of knowledge, thus helping speakers to make sense of an idiom's figurative meaning. It should also serve as a perfectly logical explanation as to why idioms mean what they do - the cognitive strategies which are at work when speakers infer the figurative meaning of an idiom (i.e. conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies) facilitate most of the process of inference of meaning of idiomatic expressions. In the next section, the role of metaphor and metonymy in people's thinking will be examined, as well as the implications it brings for the study of idiomatic phrases.

II. 3   The Role of Metaphor and Metonymy in Our Thinking

Metaphor and metonymy have long been considered by many linguists to be an extension to regular, literal language, or else have been put aside and 'reserved' for more specialized language, such as journalism, poetry, or advertising. Metaphor and metonymy have been regarded as violations to the set rules of language, and therefore studied separately, as an interesting and challenging deviation to regular discourse. For example, a traditional definition of metaphor and metonymy can be found in Halliday:

> (i) *Metaphor.* 'A word is used for something resembling that which it usually refers to; for example, *flood...poured in*, in *A flood of protesters poured in following the announcement* (a large quantity came in). ... If the fact of resemblance is explicitly signaled by a word such as *like*, as in *protesters came in like a flood*, this is considered to be not metaphor, but simile'.
>
> (ii) *Metonymy.* 'A word is used for some thing related to that which it usually refers to; for example *eye...* in *keep your eye on the ball* (gaze)'.
>
> (iii) *Synecdoche.* 'A word is used for some larger whole of which that which it refers to is a part; for example *strings ...* in *At this point the strings take over* (string instruments).' (1985:319-320)

Metaphor, then, is traditionally defined and understood as a figure of speech where reference by one entity to another is made on the basis of any kind of resemblance as in *Simon flew past me the other day*, or in *The week flew past*, in which the verb 'to fly' expresses people's motion or the passing of time.

Metonymy, on the other hand, is defined as a figure of speech where the name of one entity is used to refer to the name of another entity on the basis of spacial, temporal, or causal contiguity, as in *to keep one's hands off something* (hands signify or 'stand for' the entire person). A sub-class of metonymy is synecdoche, where reference to the whole is made by reference to a salient part, as in *The steak upstairs wants his bill* (a customer is referred to by the name of a dish), or in *The whole town came to see the show* (inhabitants of a town are referred to by a place).

However, the fact that our language is largely metaphorical has been to a great extent discussed by George Lakoff in his now famous publication *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* (1987). In it, Lakoff argues that metaphor permeates language to the extent that much of our thinking is metaphorical. The way in which we conceptualize the world around us is based mostly on our sensory perceptions, as reflected in our tendency to rely on metaphor to convey even abstract meaning.

From the cognitive point of view, metonymy can be defined as a device which is anchored in the possibility of establishing connections between entities which co-occur in a given conceptual structure. For example, there is a metonymic relationship between the path followed by a moving entity, and any one of the points located on the path, as in *He walked* by *the office door* (path) and *He stood* by *the door* (place). Here, a linguistic form which designates a path can also designate a fixed place.

According to a cognitive analysis, metaphor is defined as a device through which the more abstract areas of experience can be conceptualized in terms of more concrete ones. Lakoff suggests that many areas of experience are metaphorically structured by means of a small number of image schemas, such as for example, containment. This is an image schema of a container with its inside and outside, in three-dimensional space. It is applied metaphorically to a large number of non-spatial domains. Forms of language and emotions are conceptualized as containers, as in *empty words, to be in love*. Another image schema Lakoff suggests is a journey and its parts in which life is conceptualized as a journey, as in *We're going around in circles*. Yet another example is front-back orientation. This schema is applied to human body. The front faces the direction people normally move. Here we can apply the schema to orientation in time. The future lies in front of us (*to look forward to the future*), whereas the past lies at one's back (*to look back on the past*) (1987:271ff.).

It should be clear from these examples that most of the image schemas are based on ways in which we conceptualize our bodily experience. This also explains how metaphorical extension is possible. Our everyday experience and the ways in which we

perceive ourselves and others in our environment, as well as the ways in which we relate to other people, make us retain specifically structured concepts of our own behaviour and the state of the world around us. Thus conceptual metaphors are possible.

Conceptual metaphors connect two areas of knowledge. One is the physical, concrete area of the well-known outside world, and the other is the abstract, not so well defined area in our mind. The former is called the 'source domain', and the latter the 'target domain'[19]. The target domain of the conceptual metaphor determines the general meaning of an idiom. For example, in the expression *to spit fire*, the domain of 'fire' is used to convey the domain of 'anger'. This means that anger is understood through the concept of fire, which suggests a conceptual metaphor ANGER IS FIRE (Lakoff, 1987:288). This view is also supported by Croft who claims that:

> Domains play a central role in the definition of a metaphor as a mapping of conceptual structure from one domain to another. Domains also play a significant (though not defining) role in most metaphors and some related lexical ambiguities... (1993:335).

Idiomatic phrases could possibly be understood as 'lexical ambiguities', as in a large number of cases, the component parts of individual idioms display a certain degree of ambiguity, as in the expression *to pick up/take up the glove* which is ambiguous until seen in its immediate context.

According to Kövecses and Szabó, the meaning of many idioms depends on the following factors:

1. source-target relationship, which determines the general meaning of idioms;

2. systematic correspondences, or mappings, between the source and target domains, which provide more specific meaning of idioms;

3. particular knowledge structures, or inferences, associated with the source domain, i.e. the general knowledge of the world;

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[19] Also called 'target scene' and 'donor scene' by Goossens (1990:332).

4. cognitive devices, such as metaphor, metonymy, conventional knowledge of
the world (1996:352).

Take, for instance, the expression *to keep half an eye on something*. Our general
conventional knowledge of the world (3) tells us that when we do not have enough time
to supervise an activity or somebody properly, we tend to devote less attention to them.
Our gaze is directed towards that activity or person and 'touches them', thus partially
supervising them. The conceptual metaphor (4) SEEING IS TOUCHING facilitates the
mapping (2) of the knowledge of physically looking at something only randomly and
occasionally (source domain) onto the meaning of the idiom, which is *not to devote full
attention to someone/something* (target domain) (1). This cognitive framework,
however, does not work in all cases. If we take idiomatic expressions such as *to kick the
bucket*, it is difficult to determine the source and target domains as well as the
conceptual metaphor/metonymy which facilitates the link between them. It is also highly
unlikely that people know the historical origins of this idiom in order to be able to
conceptualize it and refer to some concrete situation. This can be seen as a weak point in
the cognitive theory. However, if we consider idioms containing parts of the human
body, the cognitive framework can be applied very well as will be shown in the next
chapter where data collected from dictionaries of idiomatic English and Czech are
analyzed to support the hypothesis that the meaning of many idioms is partially
predictable from the meaning of their constituent parts.

Because metaphor is based on common human experience, we can easily find
many cross-cultural similarities, although some differences also exist. This also brings
us to the cognitive linguists' persuasive argument that language is actually partially
motivated by the conceptual framework we have in our minds.

As metaphor and metonymy have much in common since they facilitate mapping
from the source to the target domains, it is interesting to see whether they can actually
work together or be combined in this cognitive process. Goossens has examined a
number of idiomatic phrases to find out whether metaphor and metonymy can be joined

and underlie some idiomatic phrases. For his research purposes, he called the combination of metaphor and metonymy *metaphtonymy*. His results show that metonymy can be at the root of metaphor 'when the donor domain and the target domain can be joined together in one complex scene, in which case they produce a metonymy' (1990:336). As examples he gives the idioms *to beat one's breast*, or *to say something with one's tongue in one's cheek*. Goossens also shows that metonymy can exist within metaphor, when 'a metonymically used entity is embedded in a (complex) metaphorical expression. The metonymy functions within the target domain' (1990:336). The idiom *to bite one's tongue off* can be seen as a case of metonymy within metaphor. Goossens found that the case of metaphor from metonymy is most frequent in the English language. In this study, it will be shown that in some cases metonymy can indeed lie at the root of metaphor.

III. IDIOMS OF BODY PARTS IN COGNITIVE ANALYSIS

III.1 Introduction

In this chapter, cognitive analysis of some Czech and English idioms containing five parts of the human body, i.e. the head, the face, the eye, the nose and the hand, will be presented in order to support the claim that the figurative meaning of idioms containing parts of the human body is motivated by underlying conventional knowledge and conceptual metaphors and metonymies. The assertion that Czech and English idioms containing body parts are predictable from their constituent parts will also be put to test to show whether or not this assertion is valid. On the basis of this analysis, it should be apparent that Czech- and English-language speakers have much in common in the way in which they conceptualize the world around them as reflected in idiomatic expressions.

The cognitive framework developed mostly by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987), shows that most of our thinking is metaphorical and our everyday experience is reflected in the language we use. This is especially important in the case of idiomatic language which can be seen as largely metaphorical. It is presumed here that idioms should be more easily examined if they are related to one conceptual domain. As Gibbs claims,

> one of the advantages of not simply looking at isolated examples but instead examining groups of idioms, especially those referring to similar concepts, is that it is easier to uncover the active presence of conceptual metaphors (i.e., metaphors that actively structure the way we think about different domains of experience). (1995:104)

This is also a reason why idioms pertaining only to some body parts have been chosen for cognitive analysis.

The analysis proceeds as follows: firstly, idioms motivated by conventional knowledge will be examined. Conventional knowledge is understood as all the

information people have about the world around them. It is subconscious, i.e. people do not consciously recall it when speaking. Next, idioms motivated by conceptual metaphors and metonymies will be examined. Conceptual metaphors and metonymies are understood as cognitive devices which provide a link between the concrete knowledge of the world people hold in their memory and the figurative meaning of a given idiom, i.e. the abstract area in our mind which is not defined so well. The conceptual metaphors and metonymies presented in this study have been devised following examples in Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff (1987) and Kövecses and Szabó (1996). The headings of individual conceptual metaphors and metonymies have been structured in the way common in cognitive analysis, i.e. in upper case. The actual idiomatic phrases have been italicized, and their figurative meanings have been put in inverted commas.

383 Czech and 380 English idioms as well as their definitions have been collected from standard dictionaries of idioms (*Longman Dictionary of English Idioms*, *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, and *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky*). Other dictionaries of both English and Czech have been consulted in order to compare and verify the meanings of idioms given in the idiomatic dictionaries mentioned[20]. The full list of idioms containing the words 'head', 'face', 'eye', 'nose' and 'hand' can be consulted in the Appendices.

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[20] See References.

III.2 From Head To Toe

The word 'head' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is listed as having no fewer than seventy-four different uses. These include its literal and directly connected uses (e.g. 'in man, the upper division of the body, joined to the trunk by the neck', and 'the seat of mind, thought, intellect, memory, or imagination'), as well as the head as a thing or part of a thing resembling a head in form or position (e.g. 'any rounded or compact part of a plant, usually at the top of the stem'). Also listed are various figurative uses arising from the preceding two senses (e.g. 'a person to whom others are subordinate; a chief, captain, commander, ruler, leader, principal person, head man'), phrases containing this word (e.g. 'over one's head', 'from head to foot'), and attributive uses and combinations (e.g. 'at the head', 'head-boom').

The number of uses to which this word is put shows that it is very frequent and important in the English language. The hundreds of combinations this word helps to create are perhaps more pervasive in English than may at first appear. The situation is slightly different in the Czech language. *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého (Dictionary of the Standard Czech Language)* gives only fourteen uses of the equivalent Czech word 'hlava'. As Czech is an inflected language, the noun 'hlava' is the basis for many morphological derivations. So we can find words such as the adjective 'hlavní' (significant), the noun 'hlaveň' (rifle barrel), or the adverb 'hlavně' (mainly). However, even in Czech the frequency and malleability of this word shows it to be very significant.

Since the head can be considered to be the most significant part of the human body (it is here that our slightest movements are controlled by the brain, that most of our perceptory senses are based, that we receive food, and that our main organs of speech are situated - in other words, our entire existence is controlled by organs which are situated in or on the human head), it is not surprising that it will find many different uses in language which refer to its size, shape, function, position, and significance for humans.

This is one of the reasons why it is extremely interesting to examine idiomatic phrases containing the word 'head' to find out how people conceptualize this part of the body. As idioms often seem to be the most difficult lexical items to interpret, it is useful to look at the conceptual metaphors which undelie them as they will bring us much closer to understanding them. No Czech or English idiomatic dictionary so far has provided language users with the conceptual vehicles which connect the literal meaning of words constituting idioms to their idiomatic meaning. They will be looked at in more detail below.

Before turning to examples of idiomatic phrases which are motivated by conceptual metaphors and metonymies, we will first examine the general conventional knowledge which conceptually motivates the meaning of many idioms containing the word 'head' (or 'hlava') as the first cognitive mechanism which connects the physical (or 'source') domain of our knowledge about the head with the abstract (or 'target') domain of knowledge which arises when the word 'head' is used in idiomatic expressions or any other figurative language. Next, conceptual metaphors and metonymies which underlie various idiomatic phrases will be presented. To demonstrate that the same conventional knowledge and conceptual metaphors and metonymies can be found in both English and Czech, examples will be given from both these languages, thus enabling us to draw parallels between them.

Let us begin with conventional knowledge which motivates idioms. When we take the English idiom *to put their heads together* which means 'to talk to someone and get someone else's advice in order to solve a problem', we know from our everyday experience that when we need to solve a problem, we usually consult other people in order to get their opinion on a particular matter. In doing this, we are usually in other people's physical proximity and while talking to them we lean our heads forward in order to be able to hear them properly. Also, when we imagine a typical problem-solving discussion, we usually picture a group of people who are sitting in a circle and bring their heads closer to each other so that each one of them can hear the others better and speak to them all. In Czech, the idiom *dát hlavy dohromady* (literally 'to put heads

together') carries the same meaning and is motivated by the same conventional knowledge.

Another example of an English idiom motivated by conventional knowledge is *to dive into something head first* which can also be found in Czech as *vletět do něčeho po hlavě* (literally 'to fly into something head first'). We all know that when we dive into water, more often then not we jump with our head going first into the water, followed by the rest of our body. Also, we usually do not think much in advance about how we should proceed when diving into water. This general conventional knowledge of diving into water head first facilitates the meaning of this idiom, which is 'to proceed with an activity without first thinking about it in much detail'.

A further example may be considered here. The English idiom *from head to toe* which in Czech has its equivalent in *od hlavy k patě* (literally 'from head to heel') and whose meaning is the same, i.e. 'completely, thoroughly, all over', shows that conventional knowledge is again at play. When we look at somebody, we usually look into their eyes first. If we want to examine their body with our eyes, our gaze starts at the person's head and continues down towards the person's feet. In this way, we fully examine the person with our sight, i.e. from their head to their feet. Other examples of idioms motivated by conventional knowledge could be given in both languages, e.g. *to have a head like a flea's skating rink* (in Czech *mít hlavu jako klouzačku*, literally 'to have a head like a skating rink') meaning 'to be bald', or *to be taller by a head*, in Czech *být o hlavu větší* (literally 'to be taller by a head') meaning 'to be taller by the length of someone's head'.

We shall now turn to some of the most apparent conceptual metaphors and metonymies which underlie the motivation of many idioms containing the word 'head' in both English and Czech.

Conceptual metonymies

THE HEAD STANDS FOR THE PERSON

If we take the English idiom *not to have a roof over one's head* which has its equivalent in the Czech *nemít kam hlavu složit* (literally 'not to have a place to lay one's head down'), it can be clearly seen that one part of the body is taken to refer to the entire body. The conceptual metonymy underlying the idiom seems to be THE HEAD STANDS FOR THE PERSON. This metonymy motivates the meaning of the idiom which is 'not to have a place to stay'. The speakers of both Czech and English are able to infer this meaning because they subconsciously know that the head here is taken to mean the person. There are, of course, other examples of idioms motivated by this conceptual metonymy, such as

clever head	*chytrá hlava*
crowned head	*korunovaná hlava*
not to harm a hair of someone's head	*nezkřivit někomu vlásek na hlavě*

In the idiom *crowned head*, we can clearly see that the head is taken to mean the entire person. We know that during a coronation ceremony the crown is placed on a monarch's head, and this seems to be the most significant image people have of royalty. So this idiom means 'a crowned person, usually a monarch who is entitled to wear the crown on his head'.

THE HEAD STANDS FOR LIFE

In the English idiom *heads will roll* which has its Czech counterpart in *budou padat hlavy* (literally 'heads will fall'), the head is taken to mean 'life' because conventional knowledge tells us that in the past, people who had committed a serious

crime were sometimes executed by decapitation. Also, people who were in high positions in society and had to bear significant responsibility, were sometimes executed if they failed to perform their duties to the satisfaction of their superiors. Again, the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR LIFE motivates the meaning of this idiom, which is 'somebody will be punished for their wrong-doing'. The same metonymy probably also underlies the idiom *to cost someone his head* (in Czech *stát někoho hlavu,* literally 'to cost someone his head') which means 'to be punished', again because conventional knowledge tells us that in the past, people were sometimes decapitated for their wrong-doings.

An interesting extension of this idiom is the English expression *to put a price on somebody's head* which can again be found in Czech as *chtít hlavu někoho* (literally 'to want someone's head'). In the past (and sometimes even today) monarchs or other authorities put up notices for capture of dangerous criminals, for which a certain sum of money would be paid to the successful capturer. It was common practice then to execute the criminal. Here we can quite easily see the metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR LIFE, as the price for capture of the criminal was equal to what the criminal's life was worth to a particular community. The meaning of this idiom then is very similar to the previous one and is understood as 'to offer a reward for someone's capture, defeat, or ruin'. Yet another example of this metonymy is the English idiom *to put one's head on the block for someone* which can also be found in Czech as *dát za někoho hlavu na špalek* (literally 'to put the head on the block for someone'). As can be seen, all the mentioned idioms in which the head is used to conceptualize life, are based on people's experiences which they have carried with them in the course of history and which are reflected in idiomatic language.

THE HEAD STANDS FOR ORDER

The English idiom *to turn/stand something on its head* whose equivalent can be found in the Czech idiom *postavit/stavět něco na hlavu* (literally 'to stand something on the head') is a nice example of combining conventional knowledge and metonymy as a

basis of motivation of this idiom. The meaning of this idiom, 'to completely and radically change something, and give it a new sense or negate it' is based on our conventional knowledge that logically, the human body is positioned in such a way that the head is up and the feet are on the ground. If we stand on our head, the logical order of things is disturbed, or utterly reversed. The position of the head above the body as opposed to below it can be taken as being normal. If we change this normality, we also change the logical order of things. The conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR ORDER seems to be undelying this idiom.

Similarly, the English idiom *not to know whether one is on one's head or one's heels'* which can also be found in Czech as *nevědět, kde jednomu hlava stojí* (literally 'not to know where one's head is standing') seems to be based on the same metonymy. If we are required to do many things at once, we very often confuse them because we have to think about too many of them at the same time. We usually jump from one activity to another, which sometimes results in doing something wrong. This leads to a change in logical order of activity, i.e. doing one thing at a time, completing it and then moving on to another. Similarly, when we stand on our head, we confuse the logical order of things. The meaning of this idiom, 'to be in a state of total confusion' is very likely motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR ORDER. Another example of this conceptual metonymy could be the English idiom *not to be able to make head or tail of something* which has its Czech equivalent in *nemít hlavu ani patu/být bez hlavy a paty* (literally 'not to have a head or heel') and means 'to be completely baffled'.

THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE

There are a number of idioms, both in Czech and English, in which the metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE can be detected as the chief motivation. Take, for instance, the English idiom *to have a good head on one's shoulders*. Its Czech equivalent is *mít dobrou hlavu* (literally 'to have a good head'). In the sentence 'John has a good head on his shoulders', the way we understand the idiom is that we rely on the conventional knowledge which tells us that the brain is situated within the skull. Since we know that the brain is the seat of intelligence and the brain is

in our head, it is likely that we tend to take the head as a representation of intelligence. The meaning of this idiom is then conveyed by the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE, and language users make sense of the idiom via this metonymy and understand its meaning as 'to be intelligent' or 'to have common sense'.

Another example is the English idiom *to be above/over someone's head* which has its Czech equivalent in *být nad něčí chápání* (literally 'to be above someone's comprehension'). Here, the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE is the link between the concept of head and the concept of intelligence. We know that if someone's intellectual level is not high enough to comprehend something, they feel it is too much to take in, as if they were drowning in the amount of information. The intellectual level is conceived as too high, meaning that it is higher than their comprehension can reach. Speakers arrive at the meaning of this idiom ('to be beyond someone's comprehension') with the help of the above conceptual metonymy. This metonymy also motivates the Czech idioms *bystrá hlava* (lit. 'bright head'), *chytrá hlava* (lit. 'clever head'), and *být hlava otevřená* (lit. 'to be an open head'), and *používat hlavu* (literally 'to use one's head') or *myslet hlavou* (lit. 'to think with one's head' - this idiom is shared in English).

THE HEAD STANDS FOR TALENT

In the English idiom *to have a head for something* (in Czech *mít na něco hlavu*; literally 'to have a head for something'), the listener, in the process of arriving at the meaning of the idiom ('to have a gift, an aptitude for something') relates to the concept of the brain as the seat of the intellect. Also, the listener has a store of information, a concept involving the recognition that a talented person is exceptionally good at some activities or intellectually demanding work. The conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR TALENT helps to link these concepts together and the listener arrives at the idiom's meaning.

The English idiom *to be hot-headed*, which can also be found in Czech as *mít horkou hlavu* (literally 'to have a hot head') seems to be motivated by our conventional knowledge and the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR TEMPER. Our conventional knowledge of human physiology tells us that when somebody becomes agitated or angry, their bodily temperature rises slightly and they can feel the heat mostly in the upper part of the body as their pulse increases. With the help of this knowledge and the conceptual metonymy, people infer the meaning of this idiom, which is 'to be easily angered, to react abruptly'.

This conceptual metonymy also seems to motivate the idiom *to keep a cool head* (in Czech *zachovat si chladnou hlavu*, lit. 'to keep a cool head'). We know that if somebody is exposed to a difficult situation which needs to be solved without emotion and panic, and if they are not easily angered, they remain calm and manage to solve that situation without any problem. Because they do not get excited, their body temperature does not change, so it remains cool, as opposed to becoming hotter as is the case of an easily excited person. The conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR TEMPER seems to link this subconscious knowledge to the meaning of the idiom which is 'to act without great emotion and panic, not to overreact, to behave calmly'.

We will now turn to some conceptual metaphors which seem to motivate the meaning of many idioms containing the word 'head'.

THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER[21]

Probably the most frequent conceptual metaphor which motivates many idioms in English and Czech is THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER. It has to do with the size and shape of the human head which resembles a container such as a can or a box. Since we know that head is the seat of intellect and thought, we can say that THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER FOR THOUGHTS or THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER FOR IDEAS. These conceptual metaphors can be said to motivate idioms such as *to have one's head full of something* (in Czech *mít něčeho plnou hlavu*; literally 'to have one's head full of something'), or *to stuff one's head with something* (in Czech *nacpat si něco do hlavy*, literally 'to stuff something into one's head'). This conceptual metaphor, as well as many others, is most likely devised from what Reddy calls 'the conduit metaphor'. He explains that language functions as a conduit, as people insert their thoughts and feelings into words and 'words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts and feelings and conveying them to others'. While listening, people extract these thoughts and feelings from words (1979:290). It seems logical, then, that the conduit metaphor influences the way people think. Reddy illustrates this by giving the example 'ideas are in the libraries'. If we consider that people put their ideas into words, words are printed on pages, pages are in books and these books are stored in libraries, the conceptual metaphor LIBRARIES ARE CONTAINERS FOR IDEAS could easily be devised.

We know that a container is used to store things. In the same way, the head is perceived as a container for 'storing' ideas and thoughts of various kinds. The idiom *to have one's head full of something* conveys an image of a container being full of something which occupies the entire inside of the container. In the same way, if we think intensively about something or someone, all our thoughts are focused on them and there is no more 'space' in our mind to think of anything else. Our mind is fully occupied with thoughts about one thing. The metaphor THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER then

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[21] See Lakoff (1980).

links this subconscious knowledge to the meaning of the idiom which is 'to be fully (intellectually or emotionally) occupied with something and think only about it'.

The Czech idiom *mít prázdnou hlavu* (literally 'to have an empty head') which finds its equivalent in the English idiom *to be empty-headed* is another example of how the conceptual metaphor THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER links our knowledge connected with containers to the meaning of the idiom which is 'not to know much/anything, to be uneducated', or also 'not to have a thought at a particular moment'. We know that if a container is empty, it is of little or no use to anybody. In the same way, if somebody has no ideas or interesting thoughts, he comes across as an unthoughtful, uneducated or uninteresting person. The above conceptual metaphor then links this knowledge to the meaning of this idiom. Yet another example of this conceptual metaphor is the English idiom *to have a head like a sieve*[22]. In Czech, we can find the idiom *mít hlavu jako cedník* (literally 'to have a head like a sieve'). A sieve is a kind of a container which can hold some things of a particular size. However, if the holes in a sieve are too big to hold them, these fall through. In the same way, if we are not likely to remember things easily, our memory does not hold them very long, and they seem to 'fall through' it. In addition to the conceptual metaphor THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER, this idiom also seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR MEMORY. These cognitive mechanisms link the conceptual knowledge language users have about human head and memory with the figurative meaning of this idiom. Through this cognitive process, the speakers make sense of this idiom which means 'not to be able to remember things'.

There are dozens of idioms which seem to be motivated by the conceptual metaphor THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER, such as *to come out of someone's head* (in Czech *být z něčí hlavy*; literally 'to be out of someone's head') meaning 'to be someone's own idea', where the idea is 'stored' in the person's mind, or *to be all right in the head* (in Czech *mít to v hlavě v pořádku*; literally 'to have it all right in the head') which means to be intellectually normal. The idiom *to go to someone's head* (in Czech *stoupnout*

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[22] The idioms 'to have a mind/brain/memory like a sieve' are also very frequent.

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někomu do hlavy, literally 'to ascend to someone's head') implies the image of a container being filled up with something so that there is no other space left for anything else. In the same way, when we take one of the meanings of this idiom, 'to be made vain and conceited by success', a person who gets to such a state of mind really has his mind filled only with ideas and thoughts about himself. There is no space in his mind left to think about any other people. The conceptual metaphor THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER helps to link this knowledge to the meaning of this idiom. Other examples in which this conceptual metaphor seems to be at work include *to sort something out in one's mind* (in Czech *srovnat si něco v hlavě*, literally 'to sort something out in one's head'), meaning 'to be able to comprehend something logically', or the Czech idiom *provětrat si hlavu* (literally 'to air one's head'), which has its English equivalent in *to blow the cobwebs away*, meaning 'to refresh one's thought, to relax mentally'.

RESIGNATION IS HIDING ONE'S HEAD

In the English idiom *to bury one's head in the hands* which can also be found in Czech as *složit hlavu do dlaní* (literally 'to put the head in the palms of one's hands'), the conceptual metaphor RESIGNATION IS HIDING ONE'S HEAD can be detected. We know that if somebody is in a situation which does not seem to have any solution, if that person has tried everything possible to resolve it without success, he becomes resigned. The conventional gesture which most people have as an image is usually of a person sitting down, holding his head in his hands. Such a person 'hides' from the rest of the world by covering his face with his hands. The above conceptual metaphor helps to link this knowledge with the figurative meaning of this idiom, 'to feel resigned or defeated'.

In the idiom *to have one's head in the clouds* which has a Czech equivalent in *chodit s hlavou v oblacích* (lit. 'to walk with one's head in the clouds'), there are several cognitive mechanisms motivating this idiom. We know that THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER FOR DREAMS. Another conceptual metaphor which seems to underlie this idiom is TO DREAM IS TO BE DETACHED FROM REALITY. When we dream (whether during the day or night), we are not focused on the real world around us, but rather on the reflection of it in our mind. We disconnect ourselves from the physical things around us. Thus this

subconscious knowledge is linked to the meaning of this idiom, 'to behave unrealistically, to be a dreamer', with the help of the two conceptual metaphors.

The conceptual metaphor DISAGREEMENT IS SHAKING ONE'S HEAD can be found in the English idiom *to shake one's head*. It has a Czech equivalent in *vrtět hlavou* (literally 'to shake one's head'). We know from our everyday experience that the most usual conventional gesture for people expressing disagreement with something is the movement of the head in a way that the head is turning from side to side and then returns to its former, upright position. When we see somebody shaking their head, we know that they are expressing their disagreement with something or someone. The meaning of this idiom, 'to express disagreement', is arrived at with the help of our conventional knowledge and the conceptual metaphor DISAGREEMENT IS SHAKING ONE'S HEAD.

Naturally, there are many idioms in both Czech and English which are not shared by the other language. In Czech, for example, there is the idiom *zchladit někomu hlavu* (literally 'to cool someone's head for him') meaning 'to make someone cool down'. Here the underlying conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR TEMPER can be detected. Another example is the Czech idiom *mít hlavu jako starosta* (literally 'to have a head like a mayor') which means 'to bear a lot of responsibility and have many things on one's mind' and which seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE. Another example worth mentioning is the Czech idiom *mít hlavu jako koleno* (literally 'to have a head like a knee') which means 'to be completely bald'. This idiom is very likely motivated by conventional knowledge which tells us that the knees are bare and this is then applied when speakers infer the figurative meaning of this idiom.

Some idioms which can be found only in English are, for example, *to be/stand head and shoulders above someone* which means 'to be much better/greater than someone' and which seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE. Another example which is motivated by conventional knowledge is the idiom *to get one's head down* which means 'to get back to work'. In

this case, general knowledge tells us that when people work, they have to lean their head forward/down in order to see clearly what they are doing. This image is then reflected in the idiom.

As can be seen from the previous analyses, the conceptualization of the human head depends on conventional knowledge which we have about the placement, shape, and function of this part of our body and gestures connected with it. It is also suggested that the other two cognitive mechanisms, i.e. conventional metaphor and metonymy, play an important role in the way we store information about the human head in our memory. The human head can therefore be taken to represent the person, life, temper, talent, intelligence, order; it is also seen as a container for thoughts, ideas, memories and dreams. The meaning of the word 'head' partially motivates the meaning of many idioms containing it, as the head is the seat of the intellect, dreams, emotions, and is the most essential part of the human body which governs its existence. Although there are many more idiomatic expressions both in English and Czech which contain the word 'head', and which would require further analysis to confirm or refute the claim that the meaning of the constitutive parts of some idioms partially motivates their meaning, the examples given show that in many cases this is so.

III. 3   Face To Face

The face is the first thing people look at when they meet each other. The face is like an open book from which people can read a lot about others. The face tells us about the looks, attitudes, moods people have. The face, according to our own subjective opinion, can be beautiful, ugly, uninteresting, or fascinating to look at. The facial expressions people use help us to decide whether they are feeling well or miserable, whether they are bored or paying attention, whether they are angry or happy.

People undoubtedly have many images in their mind connected with facial expressions. Otherwise they would not be able to judge other people's mood, attitude, or state of mind. Various facial expressions also help people's communication or, on the other hand, prevent communication. If we see a friend frowning or laughing, his facial expressions will, to a certain extent, determine our behaviour towards him. The face can be a very precise barometer which influences people's communication. In other words, the face gives us an enormous amount of information about other people.

It is likely that our perceptions of people's faces and facial expressions will be stored in our minds as neatly organized (however overlapping) conceptual domains. The conceptual domain of the human face will include images of the shape, size, and parts of the face, as well as images of the functions of the individual parts of the face. This domain will also contain images of various facial expressions which will be connected with images of people's prototypical patterns of behaviour (for example, if someone has a sad look on his face, he will probably not jump around with joy). All these images are reflected in the language people use when they speak about the face.

There are many idiomatic expressions in English and Czech which contain the word 'face'. Again, it is very interesting to look at them in more detail as they can reveal a lot about the way people conceptualize this part of the human body. With the help of the three cognitive mechanisms, i.e. conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and

metonymies, we shall be able to see a bit more clearly how these idioms are motivated and how their idiomatic meaning can possibly be explained.

We shall begin with some of the conventional knowledge people have about the face. The English idiom *to have a face as smooth as a baby's bottom* which has its equivalent in the Czech *mít tvářičky jako dětskou prdelku* (literally 'to have cheeks like a baby's bottom') seems to be motivated by the conventional knowledge that people have about the smoothness of babies' skin. The simile conveys this knowledge in that it applies it to the smoothness of the face. So the meaning of this idiom ('to be very soft and smooth') becomes clearer.

Another example in which conventional knowledge seems to motivate the idiomatic meaning of an idiom is the English expression *someone's face was red*. It has a Czech counterpart in *být červený až za ušima* (literally 'to be red behind the ears'). Our experience tells us that when someone's facial colour changes to red, this person is not in his regular state of mind. Our knowledge of human physiology helps us to determine that when our face turns red we are usually embarrassed. Thus the conventional knowledge helps us to make a connection between the literal meaning of this idiom and the idiomatic meaning ('to be embarrassed'). Yet another example where conventional knowledge is very likely at work when speakers make sense of idiomatic meaning is the English idiom *to fall flat on one's face* (in Czech *spadnout přímo na hubu*; literally 'to fall directly on one's gob').

Conceptual metonymies

THE FACE STANDS FOR THE PERSON

In the English idiom *to laugh in someone's face* as well as in its Czech equivalent *smát se někomu do tváře/ksichtu* (literally 'to laugh in someone's face'), the

face is taken to represent the entire body (it is a typical example of synecdochy, where one part of a whole stands for the whole). The meaning of this idiom ('to express scorn/to mock someone') seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE PERSON as well as our knowledge that when we talk to someone, we look at his face, although we address the whole person.

Another example in which this conceptual metonymy seems to motivate the idiomatic meaning of an idiom is *to someone's face*. It has its Czech equivalent in *přímo do obličeje* (literally 'directly to the face'). The idiomatic meaning of this expression, 'directly to the person concerned', is very likely connected to its literal counterpart with the help of the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE PERSON. Here, when we take a sentence such as 'Say it to my face that you don't believe me', although during the conversational exchange we are looking at the face of the person concerned, we are speaking to the person, rather than just to his face. Speakers of both English and Czech would understand this idiom in such a way that the word 'face' refers to the person.

There are other examples both in Czech and English which show that the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE PERSON seems to be at work when we consider the motivation of idiomatic expressions. This conceptual metonymy seems to be linking the literal to the idiomatic meaning in idioms such as *strange faces* (in Czech *cizí tváře*; literally 'strange faces') which means 'strange/unknown people', or in the English expression *to lie to someone's face* which can also be found in Czech as *lhát někomu do tváře* (literally 'to lie to someone's face') and means 'to lie to someone'. Yet another example could be the English idiom *to smash someone's face in* which is also in the Czech language as *rozbít někomu hubu* (literally 'to smash someone's gob') and means '(threaten) to physically attack someone'.

In English and Czech, many idioms can be found which seem to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE FACIAL EXPRESSION. This cognitive mechanism seems to motivate idiomatic expressions such as *to put on a friendly face* (also to be found in Czech as *ukázat někomu vlídnou tvář*; literally 'to show someone a kind face'). Here, the speakers of English and Czech would take this idiom to mean 'to have a friendly expression on one's face'. Our everyday experience tells us that people's facial expressions can reflect their mood, or attitude, so this idiom could also be said to be motivated by another conceptual metonymy, which is THE FACIAL EXPRESSION STANDS FOR THE MOOD. This extension can help speakers to understand the meaning of this idiom and this makes it clearer.

In the English idiom *to be stony-faced*, as well as in the Czech idiom *mít kamennou tvář* (literally 'to have a face of stone'), the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE FACIAL EXPRESSION seems to be linking the literal to the idiomatic meaning ('to have a strict expression on one's face/not to move a single muscle in one's face'). Here again, the speakers of English and Czech would take the face to mean a facial expression.

There are other examples of idioms in Czech and English where the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE FACIAL EXPRESSION seems to be at work when speakers make sense of idiomatic expressions. These include the English idiom *to pull a long face* which is also in Czech as *protáhnout tvář/obličej* (literally 'to pull one's face') and means 'to have a discouraged, serious expression on one's face'. Another case where this metonymy seems to be the main motivating element is the English expression *to make/pull a sour face* (in Czech *udělat na někoho kyselý obličej*; literally 'to make a sour face at someone') which means 'to have an expression of disliking/disgust on one's face'.

All these examples seem to be included in one very general idiom which is to be found both in Czech (*dělat obličeje*; literally 'to make faces') and English (*to make/pull faces*). The meaning of this idiom, 'to put various expressions on one's face', is very likely motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE FACIAL EXPRESSION which seems to be the chief linking element between the literal and figurative meanings.

THE FACE STANDS FOR THE MOUTH

In the English idiom *to shut one's face* which can also be found in Czech as *sklapnout zobák/zavřít hubu* (literally 'to shut one's beak/to shut one's gob'), the cognitive mechanism which motivates the idiomatic meaning of the idiom ('to stop speaking, to close one's mouth') seems to be the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR THE MOUTH. Here, the speakers of English and Czech would take the word 'face' (or in Czech 'huba') to mean the mouth. One part of the face has been taken to represent the whole of it, which is a case of synecdoche.

THE FACE STANDS FOR RESPECT

There are some idiomatic expressions both in English and Czech in which the face is taken to mean respect. These expressions are *to lose face* (in Czech *ztratit tvář*; literally 'to lose face') or *not to lose face* (in Czech 'neztratit tvář'; literally 'not to lose face'). Here, the word 'face' somehow has to do with respect. Conventional knowledge tells us that facial expressions can reveal a lot about people's attitudes and state of mind. However, this is not sufficient to explain the figurative meaning of these expressions. It is very likely that the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR RESPECT connects the literal meaning of these idioms with their idiomatic meaning ('to lose respect/to be humiliated' and 'to avoid humiliation/not to lose respect', respectively).

There is one idiomatic expression in English containing the word 'face' which has to do with identity. It is the restricted collocation *faceless men* (it also exists in Czech as *muži bez tváře/bezejmenní muži*; literally 'men without faces/men without names') which implies anonymity. The way we seem to conceptualize individual people is that we have an image of a person's face to which we 'attach' a name. This can be called the conventional knowledge we have about people. Therefore, if a person is unknown to us, anonymous, we cannot attach a name to him. In our mind, the person 'has no face', we cannot identify him. The conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR IDENTITY seems to link the literal meaning of this collocation to its figurative meaning ('anonymous people').

Conceptual metaphors

When we consider other idiomatic expressions containing the word 'face', the conceptual metaphor which can be said to be shared by both Czech and English is CONFRONTING SOMEONE/SOMETHING IS LOOKING AT THE FACE OF SOMEONE/SOMETHING. This conceptual metaphor seems to be based on another metaphor which is THE FACE IS THE FRONT PART OF SOMETHING. In an idiomatic expression such as *to be faced with something* (in Czech *stanout tváří v tvář něčemu*; literally 'to stand face to face with something'), the literal meaning seems to be linked to the idiomatic meaning ('to be confronted with something') by the conceptual metaphor CONFRONTING SOMEONE/SOMETHING IS LOOKING AT THE FACE OF SOMEONE/SOMETHING. Our general conventional knowledge tells us that when people are confronted with a problem, they have to look at it realistically and start at its beginning (or at its front) to solve it. Another idiom would convey the previous sentence even better: 'Let us face it!'

Some idiomatic expressions should be mentioned which appear in one language and not in the other. These are the English idiom *face value* meaning 'outward appearance or nominal value'. This idiom is very likely motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR APPEARANCE. Interestingly, this cognitive mechanism also underlies the Czech idiom *prodat někomu něco jen tak na ksicht* (literally 'to sell something to someone for his face'). However, this idiom has a different meaning, i.e. 'to sell something without being given any guarantee'). Another English idiom which does not have a Czech equivalent is the expression *to have (got) the face to do something* whose figurative meaning (i.e. 'to be bold enough to do something') seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE FACE STANDS FOR IMPERTINENCE/BOLDNESS.

As can be seen from the above examples, the cognitive mechanisms which seem to be the main motivating elements of idiomatic meaning of many English and Czech expressions contaning the word 'face', i.e. our general conventional knowledge and conceptual metonymies and metaphors, can substantially help speakers of both Czech and English to make sense of a number of idioms. These cognitive vehicles can help us to understand why the face represents the person, the facial expression, respect, the mouth, a person's identity, as well as why people say 'let's face it'. In the next section, some Czech and English idiomatic expressions containing the words 'eye' or 'eyes' shall be examined, together with the cognitive mechanisms which motivate them and are shared by both these languages.

III.4   Cast Your Eye Over This ...

Through our eyes, we perceive the world around us. The eyes are like a camera with which we record everything which is going on around us. All images of people, objects, and activities which we perceive with our eyes are carefully stored in our memory and can be recalled without us seeing the particular people or objects or activities at a particular moment. Our eyes help us enormously to conceptualize the world around us and to categorize it. As with other parts of the human body, people have more or less similar images of the shape, size, position, and function of the eyes. They have images of the kinds of colour the eyes usually are, as well as images of various facial expressions in which the eyes play an important part (e.g. people squinting their eyes when they are dazzled by light, or are suspicious of something). All these images seem to be categorized so that people make no mistake in making sense of someone's winking at them, for example.

The way in which human eyes are conceptualized seems to be reflected in the language people use, particularly in idiomatic expressions. These can reveal a lot about people's perceptions of the shape, size, position, and function of the eyes, and thus help us to form a somewhat clearer picture people have of the general concept of the human eye.

In this section, some Czech and English idiomatic expressions containing the words 'eye' or 'eyes' (in Czech 'oko' or 'oči') will be examined with the help of three cognitive mechanisms, i.e. general conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies, which seem to be the key elements motivating many idioms. This analysis will hope to show how the eyes are conceptualized by people.

Let us begin with conventional knowledge. There are many idiomatic expressions in Czech and English which refer to the shape or colour of eyes. The English simile *almond eyes* which is also to be found in Czech as *mandlové oči* (literally 'almond eyes'), refers to the almond-like shape of someone's eyes. General

conventional knowledge tells us that almonds are oval-shaped on one side, and pointy on the other. Since many people have eyes of such shape, it is quite logical that this simile developed in language. General conventional knowledge helps us to connect the literal to the figurative meaning of this expression ('to have eyes in the shape of almonds').

Other examples of idioms in both languages in which reference is made to the shape or size of human eyes and where conventional knowledge seems to be the chief motivating element are the expressions *fish eyes* (in Czech *rybí oči*; literally 'fish eyes'), as well as *doe-eyed* (in Czech 'laní oči'; literally 'doey eyes').

General conventional knowledge also seems to be motivating the idiomatic meaning of the English idiom *to blacken someone's eye for him* (or *to give someone a black eye*). This idiom has its Czech idiomatic counterpart in the expression *udělat někomu pod okem monokla* (literally 'to make an eye-glass underneath someone's eye'). Our experience tells us that when people fight, they sometimes hit each other on the eye with a fist. The swelling around the eye which is the likely result of such a physical attack is usually of dark colour (though not necessarily black). We also know that if people fight, one person is probably punishing the other for some wrong-doing. This conventional knowledge seems to be motivating the figurative meaning of this expression, which is 'to assault/punish someone'.

Conventional knowledge also seems to motivate the idiomatic meaning of the English expression *not to be able to keep one's eyes open*, as well as of the Czech idiom *nemoct udržet oči otevřené* (literally 'not to be able to keep the eyes open'). Our experience tells us that when people are tired, their eyelids tend to drop because the facial muscles are affected by the body's fatigue. The idiomatic meaning of this expression, 'to be tired', is connected with the literal meaning by people's conventional knowledge of one of the visible signs of fatigue.

Conceptual metonymies

THE EYES STAND FOR THE PERSON

In the English idiom *before/under someone's (very) eyes*, as well as in the Czech idiom *přímo před očima někoho* (literally 'directly before someone's eyes'), the eyes are taken to mean the person. We know that if something happens in front of us, we are looking directly at it, we turn our eyes towards it. Speakers of both English and Czech seem to make sense of this idiom with the help of the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE PERSON which links the literal meaning to the idiomatic one ('directly in front of someone').

Another example in which the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE PERSON seems to be at work as the main cognitive mechanism motivating the idiomatic meaning, is the English idiom *not a dry eye in the house*. This expression is also found in Czech as *nezůstalo jedno oko suché* (literally 'not a single eye remained dry') and is the idiomatic equivalent of the English phrase. Here again, speakers of both languages understand that the eye is taken to mean the person. When speakers refer to someone's eye not being dry, that is to someone weeping, they naturally refer to the person being deeply moved and crying as a result of being so affected. Thus the literal meaning of this idiom seems to be linked to its idiomatic meaning ('everyone is deeply affected or crying') by the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE PERSON.

THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT

In several Czech and English idiomatic expressions, the eye/eyes are taken to mean one of the perceptory senses, namely eyesight. For example, in the English idiom *to pass one's eye over something/someone*, as well as in its Czech equivalent *přeletět něco/někoho očima* (literally 'to fly over something/someone with one's eyes'), the eyes represent the eyesight. People use their eyes to look at something/someone. The conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT very likely motivates this idiom

by linking its literal meaning to its idiomatic meaning, which is 'to look at something/someone briefly'.

In the English idiom *not to (be able to) believe one's own eyes*, as well as in the Czech idiomatic expression *nevěřit vlastním očím* (literally 'not to believe one's own eyes'), the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT seems to be the cognitive vehicle motivating these idioms. When people say they cannot believe their own eyes, they mean that they do not believe what they see. This way they express distrust towards their ability to see, or the perceptory sense which enables them to see, their eyesight. The eyes are taken to mean eyesight. Thus the literal meaning of this expression is linked to its idiomatic meaning ('to express disbelief at what one can see') with the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT.

This conceptual metonymy can also be said to be the chief motivating element in the English idiom *to see something/someone with the naked eye*, as well as in the Czech idiom *vidět někam pouhým okem* (literally 'to see something/somewhere with the naked eye'), which both mean 'to be able to see quite far without using glasses or binoculars'. Another example of the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT motivating idiomatic meaning is the English idiom *to turn a blind eye to something*, as well as the Czech idiom *přimhouřit nad něčím oko* (literally 'to squint an eye over something'), meaning 'to pretend not to see a fault in a person/thing'. Yet another example of this conceptual metonymy could be the English expression *to clap one's eyes on something/someone* which also very likely motivates the Czech expression *někomu padne zrak na něco* (literally 'someone's sight falls on something'). The idiomatic meaning of these expressions is 'to look at something attentively'. The last two idiomatic expressions also seem to be motivated by the general conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING, which implies that when we look at something/someone, our gaze follows a certain path towards the object or person and 'touches' them, so to speak.

There are some idiomatic expressions in Czech and English containing the words 'eye' or 'eyes' which somehow have to do with skills. For example, in the English idiom *to have a good eye for*, as well as in the Czech idiom *mít na něco oko* (literally 'to have an eye for something'), the eye is taken to mean a skill. The literal meaning of these expressions seems to be linked to their idiomatic meaning with the help of the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE SKILL. In order for people to learn a particular skill, they have to observe someone performing an activity and they have to try it themselves, using their hands, eyesight, and remember various steps of performing an activity by looking at it, as well as practising it. Being able to estimate something is also a skill which needs to be learnt by observation and practice. Speakers of Czech and English seem to arrive at the idiomatic meaning of this expression ('to be able to estimate something precisely and reliably') with the help of the above conceptual metonymy.

Another example where this general conceptual metonymy seems to be the main motivating factor is the English idiom *to do something with one's eyes shut*. This expression has its Czech counterpart in the idiom *dělat něco se zavřenýma očima* (literally 'to do something with one's eyes closed'). This idiom implies that someone is so skillful at some activity that he could do it without actually looking at it, keeping his eyes closed. The conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE SKILL seems to link the literal meaning of this idiom to its idiomatic meaning which is 'to do something without any difficulty'.

THE EYES STAND FOR ATTENTION

Several idiomatic phrases in English and Czech which contain the words 'eye' or 'eyes' have to do with attention. It is the case with the English idiom *to have eyes in/at the back of one's head*, as well as with the Czech idiom *mít oči (vpředu) i vzadu* (literally 'to have eyes (at the front as well as) at the back'). Our experience tells us that

when people pay attention to something, they usually watch it closely. Also, the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR ATTENTION seems to play an important role in the way speakers of English and Czech make sense of the above phrases, as this metonymy seems to be the linking element between the literal and idiomatic meaning ('to be extremely observant and attentive').

Another expression which seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR ATTENTION is the English idiom *to catch someone's eye*. This idiom can also be found in Czech as *padnout někomu do oka* (literally 'to fall into someone's eye'). It is very likely that these idioms are motivated by our everyday experience of being attracted by something and consequently looking at it, as well as by the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR ATTENTION, which seems to be the cognitive mechanism linking the literal and idiomatic meaning, thus helping speakers to make sense of the idiom. When our attention is drawn to a very attractive object or a person, we seem to be unable to look away. Here, our eyes are 'made prisoners' of the object or person. This experience, together with the conceptual metonymy, help speakers to decipher the idiomatic meaning of this idiom ('to attract attention'). The conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR ATTENTION can also be said to motivate the idiomatic meaning of some other idiomatic expressions in English and Czech, such as *to keep one's eyes open* (in Czech *mít oči otevřené*; literally 'to have one's eyes open'), meaning 'to pay attention to', or *to have eyes everywhere/all over the place/to be all eyes* (in Czech *mít oči všude*; literally 'to have eyes everywhere'), meaning 'to be extremely attentive'.

THE EYE STANDS FOR LIFE

There is one idiomatic expression in English, Czech, and many other languages, where the word 'eye' is taken to mean life. It is the biblical proverb *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth* (in Czech *oko za oko, zub za zub*; literally 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'). Speakers of many languages make sense of this idiom because they understand that the word 'eye' (as well as the word 'tooth') is taken to mean 'life'. However, it

seems that also the conceptual metonymy THE EYE STANDS FOR LIFE is important when speakers try to decipher the idiomatic meaning of this expression, which can be paraphrased as 'a revenge, a punishment which is as strict as a crime'. This metonymy helps them to make sense of the proverb.

Conceptual metaphors

SEEING IS TOUCHING

This very general metaphor seems to be motivating several idiomatic expressions in both English and Czech. If we take the English idiom *with one's eyes fixed/pinned/glued on something*, which has its idiomatic equivalent in the Czech expression *s očima upřenýma na něco/někoho* (literally 'with one's eyes fixed on something/someone') it seems that speakers make sense of these idioms with the help of the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT, as well as with the help of the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING. The image which English and Czech language users seem to have when they hear the idiom *with one's eyes fixed on something* (*s očima upřenýma na něco/někoho*) seems to be the actual gaze going towards and object or person and 'touching' them, staying fixed on them. The two cognitive mechanisms, conceptual metaphor and metonymy, as well as the speakers' image of the situation, are very likely the combination which helps the speakers make sense of the idiomatic meaning of these expressions ('to look intently at someone/something'). The idiomatic meaning of the expression *not to be able to keep one's eyes off someone/something* which has its Czech idiomatic equivalent in *nemoct od někoho/něčeho odtrhnout oči* (literally 'not to be able to tear one's eyes off someone/something') is very likely motivated by the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING. As in the previous idiom, language users seem to have an image of their gaze firmly fixed onto something very attractive. The conceptual metaphor then helps them to make sense of the idiomatic meaning of this phrase, which is 'not to be able to stop looking at something intently'.

There are other idioms both in English and Czech which seem to be motivated by the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING. Among those are the English idiom *to caress someone with one's eyes/gaze*, as well as the Czech idiom *hladit/laskat někoho očima/pohledem* (literally 'to caress someone with one's eyes/gaze'), both meaning 'to look at someone lovingly'. The English idiom *to feast one's eyes on/upon*, as well as its Czech idiomatic equivalent *pást se na něčem očima* (literally 'to graze one's eyes on something'), meaning 'to look at something with joy', seem to be motivated by the combination of the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING and the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT.

THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS

This is another very general conceptual metaphor which motivates the idiomatic meaning of a few idioms in English and Czech. The English idiom *to be able to tell from someone's eyes* which finds its Czech idiomatic equivalent in the expression *vidět někomu něco na očích* (literally 'to see something in someone's eyes') implies that the expression in someone's eyes can predict his intentions or aims. This idiom invokes an image of someone's intentions being contained in someone's eyes. Another image seems to be that of someone 'reading' or being able to guess these intentions from the look on someone's face. The more specific conceptual metaphor THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS FOR INTENTIONS seems to be the motivating mechanism when speakers of Czech and English make sense of the idiomatic meaning of this idiom, which is 'to be able to predict someone's intentions/ideas/thoughts from the look in his eyes'.

An extension of the conceptual metaphor THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS seems to be a more specific conceptual metaphor THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS FOR EMOTIONS which very likely motivates the figurative meaning of the English idiom *someone's eyes are full of love*, as well as of the Czech idiom *mít oči plné lásky* (literally 'to have eyes full of love'). This idiom creates an image of the eyes being some kind of containers which can be filled with emotions, in this case love. Czech and English speakers seem to be able to make sense of the figurative meaning ('to show love to someone by the

look in someone's eyes') with the help of the specific conventional metaphor THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS FOR EMOTIONS.

SEEING SOMETHING IS BEING AWARE OF SOMETHING

The English idiom *to open one's eyes,* as well as the Czech idiom *otevřít někomu oči* (literally 'to open someone's eyes') seem to be motivated by the conceptual metaphor SEEING SOMETHING IS BEING AWARE OF SOMETHING. Our experience tells us that when we try to make someone aware of something, when we attempt to make them understand or comprehend, we have to point them in the right direction, make them look the right way. In order for us to be able to do that, the other person's eyes must be fully open. This conventional knowledge, the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR EYESIGHT, as well as the conceptual metaphor SEEING SOMETHING IS BEING AWARE OF SOMETHING seem to be at work when speakers of English and Czech make sense of the idiomatic meaning of this idiom, which is 'to make someone aware of some fact/to make someone understand'.

There are also idiomatic expressions which are not shared by both languages but which are motivated by some of the cognitive vehicles examined. For example, the Czech idiom *promluvit si s někým mezi čtyřma očima* (literally 'to talk to someone only among the (four) eyes') which means 'to talk face to face with someone without any witness', seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE PERSON. The metonymy THE EYES STAND FOR THE SKILL seems to underlie the figurative meaning of the Czech idiom *podle/od oka* (literally 'by/according to the eye') which means 'to measure something roughly, without using any measuring device'. The English idiom *there's more to it than meets the eye* which has no Czech equivalent, seems to be motivated by conventional knowledge which tells us that by visual examination, we can only find out about outward appearance of things/people, i.e. what the eyes can see. If we then say that *there's more to it than meets the eye,* we mean that 'an idea/opinion/person is more important that at first can be seen'.

The selection of the above examples of idiomatic expressions in English and Czech has attempted to show how these idioms seem to be motivated. General conventional knowledge, conceptual metonymies or metaphors are cognitive mechanisms which seem to underlie the idiomatic meaning of many Czech and English idioms, and thus provide a clearer explanation of them. It is very difficult to tell how much weight to give to each of these cognitive vehicles as the motivator of various idiomatic expressions. It is debatable, for instance, whether in the idiom *to open one's eyes*, the share of conventional knowledge on the motivation of this expression is greater than the share of the conceptual metaphor SEEING SOMETHING IS BEING AWARE OF SOMETHING. The important point to be kept in mind here is that no matter how much each of these cognitive vehicles motivate idiomatic meaning, all of them seem to be a partial answer to what it is that makes speakers of English and Czech make sense and understand idiomatic expressions containing the words 'eye' or 'eyes'. During the process of idiom comprehension, speakers of these languages seem to relate their shared conceptual images of abstract entities, such as love, to their shared conceptual images of very concrete entities such as eyes, and all with the help of the three cognitive strategies. This process helps them to establish that the eye is often taken to mean the person, life, eyesight, or attention, as well as the fact that eyes are perceived as containers for emotional states or people's intentions. It is suggested here that these mechanisms play a key role in the way in which people understand idiomatic expressions of various kinds because they are the chief link between abstraction and concrete entities in the world. To support this suggestion a bit further, in the next chapter we shall examine some Czech and English idiomatic expressions which share the conceptual domain of the human nose.

III.5 Just Follow Your Nose

Although the conceptual domain of the human nose is not as significant as those of the human head or hand, when examined, it reveals some interesting points about the way people perceive the nose. Obviously, people across cultures share common images of the size, shape, position, and function of the nose, as well as images of its movements, changes of colour (when the body temperature changes), and also images of what the nose represents in the abstract sense (e.g. that sometimes it is taken to mean the person).

Even if speakers of Czech or English do not think consciously of what the nose actually represents in their mind, idiomatic expressions containing the word 'nose' (or the Czech 'nos') can bring us a long way in trying to establish some kind of a conceptual basis for the speakers' images and perceptions of this part of the human body. Again, with the help of the previously described cognitive mechanisms, i.e. general conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies, the motivation of many idioms becomes clearer and helps us to make sense of the figurative meaning of many expressions.

Let us first have a look at general conventional knowledge shared by speakers of English and Czech, which seems to be the main motivating element in many 'nose' idioms.

In the English idiom *to have a nose like a doorknocker*, as well as in the Czech expression *mít nos jak kliku od blázince* (literally 'to have a nose like a madhouse door-handle'), reference is made to the shape of someone's nose. We know that a doorknocker is usually in the shape of a hook or a ring so that people can hold it easily in their hand. In the same way, a door-handle is in the shape of a hook for ease of manipulation when opening the door. The shape of these devices is compared to the shape of someone's nose when it has an unusual shape (or, specifically, a shape similar to that of a doorknocker or a doorhandle) and a simile is created in a language. The

literal meaning of this phrase is linked to its idiomatic meaning ('to have a nose in the shape of a doorknocker/door-handle') by the shared conventional knowledge of the various shapes of doorknockers, door-handles and people's noses.

Conventional knowledge also seems to motivate the idiomatic meaning of other similes in English and Czech, such as *to have a button-nose* (in Czech *mít nos jako knoflík*; literally 'to have a nose like a button'), meaning 'to have a nose whose shape resembles that of a button', or *to have a hook-nose* (in Czech *mít nos jak skobu*; literally 'to have a nose like a hook'), meaning 'to have a nose whose shape resembles that of a hook', as well as *to have a Roman nose* (in Czech *mít římský nos*; literally 'to have a Roman nose'), meaning 'to have a nose which forms a continuous line with the forehead'. In all these expressions, reference is made to the shape of the nose and speakers make sense of them with the help of their shared knowledge of conceptual domains of the nose, the shape of buttons and hooks. The English idiom *to punch someone on the nose* has its idiomatic equivalent in the Czech idiom *dát někomu do nosu/po nose* (literally 'to hit someone on the nose'). Speakers are able to understand the idiomatic meaning of this expression ('to hit someone hard on the nose') with the help of their conventional knowledge. Based on their experience, people understand that if someone hits some other person on the nose, the other person has probably done something wrong to the first person and is getting punishment for it (needless to say, this punishment does not necessarily have to be justified).

In the English idiom *to turn one's nose up at something*, as well as the Czech idiom *pokrčit nosem nad něčím* (literally 'to shrink one's nose up at something'), reference is made to the specific movement of the nose, or rather the facial muscles which help to move it, so that it looks like it has been turned up or shrunk. At the same time, speakers of Czech and English recall in their mind the notion of someone having such facial expression. The speakers know that such a person expresses his contempt at something. So the literal meaning of this expression is linked to its idiomatic meaning ('to despise something') via the speakers' general conventional knowledge of these notions.

Conceptual metonymies

THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON

There are several idiomatic expressions in English and Czech whose idiomatic meaning seems to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON. For example, in the English idiom *to put something right under someone's nose*, as well as in its Czech idiomatic counterpart *přinést někomu něco přímo pod nos* (literally 'to bring something right under someone's nose'), the nose is taken to mean the person. Speakers of both languages know that when something is brought 'under someone's nose', it is brought directly in front of the person. This conventional knowledge, as well as the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON seem to help the speakers to make sense of the idiomatic meaning of this expression, which is 'to put something directly in front of someone'.

Another idiomatic expression where the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON seems to be at work is the English idiom *never to poke one's nose out (of doors)*. This idiom is also found in Czech as *nevystrčit ani nos ze dveří* (literally 'not to stick one's nose out of doors'). Here again, the nose is taken to mean the person. Speakers of English and Czech know this because they understand the idiomatic meaning of this expression ('to stay indoors all the time'), and the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON seems to be the link between the literal and idiomatic meaning here.

There are other examples which show that this conceptual metonymy is the key cognitive mechanism motivating idioms containing the word 'nose' (or 'nos' in Czech). Among those are the English expression *to slip past under someone's (very) nose*, as well as its Czech idiomatic equivalent *proklouznout někomu přímo před nosem* (literally 'to slip past right in front of someone's nose'), meaning 'to escape inconspicuously and quickly directly in front of someone', or the English expression *to wave something about in front of someone's nose*, which also exists in Czech as *mávat někomu něčím*

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před nosem (literally 'to wave something in front of someone's nose'), meaning 'to show something to someone victoriously while waving it very close to someone's face'. The last example to be mentioned in which the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON motivates its idiomatic meaning, is the English idiom *to shove something under someone's nose* which has its Czech idiomatic equivalent in the expression *strčit někomu něco pod nos* (literally 'to stick something under someone's nose') and means 'to show something to someone victoriously while putting it very close to the person's face'.

THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT

In the English idiom *to have a nose for something*, as well as in the Czech idiom *mít nos na něco* (literally 'to have a nose for something'), the nose is taken to mean instinct. Speakers somehow know this because they are able to make sense of this expression ('to be able to foresee something reliably'). This conventional knowledge seems to be based on the historic fact that people used to smell the air around them in order to find out various very specific things (e.g. whether it is going to rain, whether there is a danger of an enemy because one could smell smoke in the air). Based on such experience, people were able to predict these things very precisely. (In fact, even today people sometimes smell the air to find out whether the spring has arrived, for example - they are able to predict it on the basis of their previous experience). The combination of this conventional knowledge and the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT seems to be the main motivating factor which links the literal with the idiomatic meaning of this idiom.

Another example where the conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT is possibly at work and motivates the expression's idiomatic meaning is the English idiom *to follow one's nose* (in Czech *jít za nosem*; literally 'to follow one's nose'). The speakers of both languages share the knowledge that when we walk the direction our nose is pointing, we walk straight ahead. The idiomatic meaning of this idiom, 'to follow one's instinct', seems to be based on this conventional knowledge, as

well as on the more specific conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR SMELL. The conceptual metonymy THE NOSE STANDS FOR INSTINCT also seems to be involved in the motivation of this idiom.

Conceptual metaphors

TO BE PROUD IS TO HOLD THE NOSE UP

When we examine Czech and English idioms containing the word 'nose' (or 'nos'), there are not very many conceptual metaphors which seem to be shared by both English and Czech. One of these metaphors is TO BE PROUD IS TO HOLD THE NOSE UP. In the English idiom *to go/walk around with one's nose in the air*, which has its idiomatic equivalent in the Czech idiom *chodit s nosem vzhůru* (literally 'to walk with the nose up'), speakers of English and Czech seem to have the image of someone leaning their head in such a way that the nose is pointing upwards. The speakers also know that someone who is proud and contemptuous of others refuses to look downwards at what he considers below his social status or manners. Such a person 'looks up' towards people who are similar to him in their behaviour. This conventional knowledge, as well as the conceptual metaphor TO BE PROUD IS TO HOLD THE NOSE UP seem to link the literal with the idiomatic meaning ('in a proud and snobbish manner') and thus motivate this idiom.

TO BE INTRUSIVE IS TO STICK THE NOSE INTO SOMETHING

When making sense of the English idiom *to poke one's nose into something*, as well as of the Czech idiom *strkat do všeho nos* (literally 'to stick one's nose into everything'), speakers of English and Czech seem to rely on their conventional knowledge, as well as on the conceptual metaphor TO BE INTRUSIVE IS TO STICK THE NOSE INTO SOMETHING, both of which seem to motivate the idiomatic meaning.

Speakers probably have an image of someone who has his nose buried in some papers, trying to find a lot of information about someone else. This activity is viewed as very unpleasant and intrusive on the part of the 'someone else' concerned. The conceptual metaphor TO BE INTRUSIVE IS TO STICK THE NOSE INTO SOMETHING seems to be the linking element between the literal and idiomatic meaning of this idiom ('to interfere in another person's private business'). This case shows that motivation of idioms does not always come from a single source, i.e. only from people's conventional knowledge or from conceptual metaphors or metonymies, but rather from a combination of these cognitive mechanisms.

There are also idioms which are not shared by both languages, which however seem to be motivated by the three cognitive mechanisms. The English idiom *to keep someone's/one's nose to the grindstone*, meaning 'to keep (someone or oneself) working, especially hard and without rest', seems to be motivated by the conventional knowledge of someone who is concentrated on work and is leaning forward so that the nose is almost touching 'the grindstone' (which signifies 'work' in general). Similarly, the Czech idiom *zapřít někomu i nos mezi očima* (literally 'to deny one's nose between one's eyes') which means 'to lie about something which is so obvious that everyone can see it', is motivated by the conventional knowledge which tells us that the nose is something obvious about a person's face and it cannot be denied or hidden. This knowledge is projected into the figurative meaning of this idiom.

The knowledge which speakers of Czech and English seem to share about the nose concerns primarily its shape and also the fact that it is often taken to mean the person. The idioms examined show that conventional knowledge, conceptual metonymies and metaphors seem to help them to make sense of some idioms in both these languages and show us how the nose is conceptualized in their mind. It can be conceptualized as a person, instinct, an instrument with which people intrude in someone else's affairs, or as someone's negative behaviour. It can be suggested that there seem to be some common concepts in both English and Czech which native speakers rely upon when trying to make sense of idioms.

III.6   From Hand To Mouth

The hands could be described as people's indispensable tools. We use them as instruments in all kinds of activities, including writing, holding things, manipulating things, working with our hands, to give just a few examples. Also, we use hands in our communication with others: we shake hands with people to greet them or as a sign of sealing an agreement, we wave at people to attract their attention, to greet or bid them farewell. It is no wonder that the hands have found their way into all sorts of linguistic expressions, including idioms.

The way in which the hands are represented in language reflects the knowledge people have about their size, shape, and parts, as well as the various uses they are put to, and the gestures they are connected with. For example, the meaning of the idiom *to give a helping hand*, 'to help someone', is clear to us when we think that a typical person is an active person, that we perform various sorts of activities with our hands, and when asked to assist someone, we 'lend' our hands to them in performing an activity. It is this subconscious conventional knowledge which helps us to understand how the human hands are conceptualized in our mind.

In this section, idioms containing the words 'hand' or 'hands' will be examined with the help of conventional knowledge and conceptual metaphors and metonymies. If we begin with the first cognitive vehicle, conventional knowledge, we can take the English idiom *to have one's hands full* which has its Czech equivalent in *mít něčeho plné ruce* (literally 'to have one's hands full of something'). We know from our experience that typically, when we perform some manual activity, we use our hands to handle various things. Our hands are holding these things and so prevent us from doing something apart from focusing on that particular activity. This conventional knowledge helps us to link the literal meaning of having full hands with the idiomatic meaning, which could be understood as 'to be busy'.

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Another example of conventional knowledge which motivates idioms is *to have hands like shovels* which can be found in Czech as *mít ruce jako lopaty* (literally 'to have hands like shovels'). In this simile, we can detect conventional knowledge we have about the size of the hand and the shovel. If the hand is too big in size, we tend to compare it to some other instrument, in this case the shovel. So we can arrive at the meaning of this idiom, 'to have large hands'. Similarly, the English idiom *someone's hands are like slabs of ice* which can again be found in Czech as *mít ruce jako led* (literally 'to have hands like ice'), is motivated by our knowledge of human physiology. We know that when we are cold, the first parts of our body to be affected are the hands (or the feet) and the nose whose temperature drops slightly. Since we also know from experience that ice is cold to touch, we compare the temperature of the hands to that of ice and thus arrive at the meaning of this idiom which is 'to have very cold hands'.

Another example in which conventional knowledge acts as a linking element between the literal and idiomatic meaning is *an open hand* which has its Czech equivalent in *otevřená ruka* (literally 'an open hand'), meaning 'being generous', or *to live from hand to mouth* (in Czech *žít z ruky do úst*; literally 'to live from hand to mouth'), meaning 'to live off one's work only and not to have anything to spare'. Yet another example could be *to wring one's hands* which can be found in the Czech language as *lomit rukama* (literally 'to wring one's hands'), meaning 'to be satisfied with oneself/one's success', or *to put one's hands up*, in Czech *dát ruce vzhůru* (literally 'to put the hands up') meaning 'to surrender when being arrested'. We shall now move on to examining more idiomatic expressions in which the other two cognitive links, i.e. conceptual metaphors and metonymies, motivate the figurative meaning of idioms.

THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON[23]

In the English idiom *from hand to hand*, the hand is taken to mean the person, i.e. one part of the body is taken to mean the whole body. This idiom has its Czech equivalent in *z ruky do ruky* (literally 'from hand to hand'). We know that when we pass something to someone, we have to use our hands to hold it and the person receiving it uses the hands too. The conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON seems to act as the linking vehicle which connects the literal meaning of this idiom to its idiomatic meaning, which is 'to pass something directly, from one person to another'.

This conceptual metonymy can also be said to underlie the idiom *to ask for someone's hand* (in Czech *požádat někoho o ruku*; literally 'to ask someone for the hand'). Here, THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON actually refers to the person one wishes to marry. This conceptual metonymy links the literal meaning of the idiom, the act of asking a particular person for their hand, with the idiomatic meaning, which is 'to ask a woman to become one's wife'. The conventional knowledge which is also at work here is the image people have when a man asks a woman to marry him, that is usually holding the woman's hand in the process. This act probably comes from the traditional Christian marriage service in which the woman's hand is placed into the man's by her father or guardian. Finally, we could mention the idiom *to be someone's right-hand man* (in Czech *být pravá ruka někoho*; literally 'to be someone's right hand') which means 'to be someone's chief helper, advisor'.

THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY[24]

The conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY seems to motivate the figurative meaning of the idiom *to give a helping hand*, which can also be

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[23] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).
[24] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).

found in Czech as *podat/nabídnout někomu pomocnou ruku* (literally 'to give/offer a helping hand to someone'). Conventional knowledge tells us that people are usually active. We also know that the vehicle used in various activities is the hand. Here we can see a combination of conventional knowledge and the metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY at work when language users make sense of this idiom, whose meaning is 'to help someone'.

This metonymy can also be said to motivate the meaning of the idiom *to sit on one's hands* (in Czech *se založenýma rukama*; literally 'with one's hands/arms folded'). We know that if we do not use our hands to work, we are usually not manually active. The conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY seems to be connecting the literal meaning of this idiom with the figurative meaning, which is 'to be inactive, to do nothing'. Another example of this metonymy being at work is the idiom *to tie someone's hands* which is also in Czech as *svázat někomu/si něčím ruce* (literally 'to tie someone's/one's hands'). When our hands are tied together, we naturally cannot perform any activity with them. So the literal meaning of this idiom, having one's hands tied, is connected to its idiomatic meaning with the conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY which, in this particular case, is negated and renders the meaning of the idiom as 'not to be able to do anything.' On the other hand, the idiom *with one hand/both hands tied behind one's back* implies that something can be done very easily.

There are more examples of idioms in which this conceptual metonymy seems to be at play when motivating idiomatic meaning, such as *to put one's hands in one's pockets* (in Czech *chodit s rukama v kapsách*; literally 'to walk around with one's hands in one's pockets') meaning 'to deliberately do nothing', or *to do something with one hand tied behind one's back* (in Czech *udělat něco levou rukou*; literally 'to do something with the left hand' - here the left hand is considered to be more awkward or less capable than the right hand), meaning 'to do something without much effort, very easily'. The final example to be mentioned here is the idiom *to have a nice hand* (in Czech *mít vypsanou ruku*; literally 'to have a written-out hand') where the hand is taken to mean the vehicle with which we write. Here, there seem to be two conceptual

metonymies linking the literal to the figurative meaning ('to have nice handwriting'), i.e. THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY and THE HAND STANDS FOR THE VEHICLE.

THE HAND STANDS FOR THE SKILL[25]

In order for us to perform an activity successfully, we have to possess a certain skill to do it. Conventional knowledge helps us in this respect, as we know that to be skilful at something requires learning very precise movements of the hand as well as remembering certain procedures in the process of becoming skilful. The conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE SKILL, together with this conventional knowledge, seems to be the main motivation for the idiomatic meaning of the English expressions *to have something at one's fingertips* or *to have a hand in something* ('to have acquired the necessary skill to perform an activity') which has its Czech counterpart in *mít už něco v ruce* (literally 'to have something in hand').

THE HAND STANDS FOR CONTROL[26]

There are several expressions in Czech and English which have to do with the notion of control over someone or something. Take, for example, the English idiom *to rule someone/something with a hand of iron* which can be found in Czech as *vládnout někde/někomu tvrdou/železnou rukou* (literally 'to rule somewhere/someone with a hard/iron hand'). This idiom is probably motivated by the conventional knowledge of the past when rulers used to wear chain gloves. Also, the conceptual metonymy THE

HAND STANDS FOR THE VEHICLE seems to be at work here. The literal meaning of this idiom ('to act in an oppressive manner') is very likely connected with its idiomatic meaning by the conceptual metonymies THE HAND STANDS FOR CONTROL and THE HAND STANDS FOR THE VEHICLE, as well as conventional knowledge, i.e. people's experience from the past.

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[25] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).
[26] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).

Another example involving the conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR CONTROL is the English idiom *an iron hand in a velvet glove* (in Czech *tvrdá/železná ruka v rukavici*; literally 'a hard/iron hand in a glove') meaning 'with a strict attitude which is made to seem soft'. This metonymy can also be found in the idiom *to eat out of someone's hand* (in Czech *zobat někomu z ruky*; literally 'to peck out of someone's hand') meaning 'to be completely under someone's control, like a captive animal, especially a bird'.

Conceptual metaphors

CONTROL IS HOLDING IN THE HAND[27]

It is not only conceptual metonymies which motivate the meaning of many idioms in Czech and English. Many expressions which can be found in both these languages seem to be motivated by conceptual metaphors, as well as general conventional knowledge people share across cultures.

Take, for example, the English idiom *to take someone/something in hand*. It has its Czech counterpart in *vzít něco pevně do rukou* (literally 'to take something firmly into the hands'). We know that if we hold something in our hands, we can do whatever we wish with it. We have complete control over the thing (or person). The conceptual metaphor CONTROL IS HOLDING IN THE HAND seems to be connecting the literal meaning of this idiom (i.e. 'holding something in one's hands') to its idiomatic meaning, which is generally understood as 'to have complete control over something/someone'. Another example where this conceptual metaphor seems to be at work is *to fall into someone's hands*. The Czech equivalent is *padnout někomu do rukou* (literally 'to fall into someone's hands'). Here again, the language users of both languages know that if something or somebody 'falls' into our hands, it is probably done

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[27] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).

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unintentionally. Once we hold something in our hands, we are the chief manipulator, we decide what is going to happen to the thing or person. The conceptual metaphor CONTROL IS HOLDING IN THE HAND links this knowledge to the figurative meaning of this idiom, which is 'to unintentionally come under someone's control'.

There are other idioms, both in English and Czech, which further illustrate that this conceptual metaphor could be the element which plays a significant role in the motivation of these idioms. Such examples include the English idiom *to be out of one's hands* (in Czech *vymklo se mi to z rukou*; literally 'it has slipped out of my hands') meaning 'not to have any control over someone/something', or *to take the law into one's own hands* (also in the Czech idiom *vzít zákon do svých rukou*; literally 'to take the law into one's own hands') which means 'to avoid authorities and execute law and order'. This conceptual metaphor also seems to underlie the English idiom *to have something/somebody in the palm of one's hand*, as well as in its Czech equivalent *mít někoho v hrsti* (literally 'to have somebody in the palm of one's hand') meaning 'to assume complete control over somebody'. Yet another example where this metaphor seems to be at work is *to lay hands on someone* (in Czech *dostat někoho pod ruku*; literally 'to get somebody under the hand') meaning 'to catch/seize someone'.

AGREEMENT IS SHAKING HANDS

In the English idiom *to shake hands on it* which has its equivalent in the Czech idiom *potřást si na to rukama* (literally 'to shake hands on it'), the conceptual metaphor which seems to connect our conventional knowledge of the typical gestures associated with the human hand with the idiomatic meaning of this idiom ('to agree on something'), is AGREEMENT IS SHAKING HANDS. Apart from the conventional knowledge which tells us that shaking hands means greeting people, we also know that after people have negotiated something, they usually shake hands with each other (which signifies a promise and also confirms that their intentions are honest). This knowledge is based on our life-long experience with people shaking hands after they have agreed upon something.

POSSESSION IS HOLDING SOMETHING IN THE HAND[28]

The English idiom *to be empty-handed* which finds its equivalent in the Czech idiom *s prázdnýma rukama* (literally 'with empty hands') shows that the conceptual metaphor POSSESSION IS HOLDING SOMETHING IN THE HAND could be the cognitive mechanism which connects the literal meaning of this idiom with its idiomatic meaning, i.e. 'to be left with nothing (especially with no money)'. Our experience tells us that when we possess something, we can hold it in our hands. When we hold nothing in our possession, we cannot touch or hold it. This metaphor also seems to be valid for the English idiom *to be in good hands* (in Czech *být v dobrých rukou*; literally 'to be in good hands') which means 'to be well looked after'. Another example where the conceptual metaphor POSSESSION IS HOLDING SOMETHING IN THE HAND could be at work is the English proverb *a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush* which has its Czech equivalent in *lepší vrabec v hrsti nežli holub na střeše* (literally 'a sparrow in the hand is better than a pigeon on the roof') which means 'a smaller advantage which can be taken now is better than a bigger advantage at an uncertain time in the future'. The metaphor can also be found to motivate the idiom *to pass from hand to hand* (in Czech *jít z ruky do ruky*; literally 'to go from hand to hand') which means 'to change owners'. A further example could be mentioned here, e.g. *from first hand* (in Czech *z první ruky*; literally 'from first hand') whose idiomatic meaning, 'from the first owner/possessor' also seems to be linked with its literal meaning by the conceptual metaphor POSSESSION IS HOLDING SOMETHING IN THE HAND.

FREEDOM TO ACT IS HAVING THE HANDS FREE[29]

This conceptual metaphor very likely underlies the motivation of an idiomatic phrase which can be found in both Czech and English. It is the English idiom *to have a free hand in something* which finds its Czech counterpart in *mít volnou ruku/volné ruce v něčem* (literally 'to have a free hand/free hands in something'). We know that if our hands are not involved in an activity, we can decide of our own will what to do. Also, if

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[28] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).
[29] See Kövecses and Szabó (1996:337).

our hands are not full of anything, we are free to do what we wish. The conceptual metaphor FREEDOM TO ACT IS HAVING THE HANDS FREE seems to be linking the knowledge we have about the hand not being used in an activity with the image of freedom which is expressed in this idiom. Thus the meaning of this idiom, 'to be able to decide of one's own free will' is arrived at with the help of the conceptual metaphor.

COOPERATION IS HOLDING HANDS

In the English idiom *to join hands* (also found in Czech as *rukou společnou (a nerozdílnou)*; literally 'with joined hands') the conceptual metaphor COOPERATION IS HOLDING HANDS seems to be at work. We know that THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY and our conventional knowledge tells us that when we work together with someone, we join our efforts in cooperation. The conceptual metaphor COOPERATION IS HOLDING HANDS seems to be linking the literal meaning of the idiom to its figurative counterpart, which is 'to cooperate'. Another example which illustrates the point is the idiom *someone's left hand does not know what the right hand is doing* (in Czech *levá ruka neví, co dělá pravá*; literally 'the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing'). We know that when we perform a manual activity, we usually use both our hands in coordination so as to achieve the best desired result. When we use only one hand in an activity in which both hands are necessary, we are awkward and cannot easily reach our goal. The conceptual metaphor underlying the motivation of this idiom seems to be COOPERATION IS HOLDING HANDS. Another cognitive mechanism which helps us link the literal to the figurative meaning of this idiom ('the activities of an organization are not coordinated and there is confusion') is the conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON. With the help of these cognitive vehicles, the language users arrive at the idiomatic meaning of this idiom. A further example of the conceptual metaphor COOPERATION IS HOLDING HANDS is *to be hand in glove with someone* (in Czech *být s někým jedna ruka*; literally 'to be one hand with someone') which means 'to cooperate with someone in a perfectly coordinated manner'.

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There are several idiomatic expressions in both Czech and English which relate to honesty. It is the idiom *mít čisté ruce* (literally 'to have clean hands') which is also in English as *to have clean hands*. These expressions seem to be motivated by the conceptual metaphor TO BE HONEST IS TO HAVE CLEAN HANDS. This idiom is motivated by the knowledge of people who have committed a serious crime (usually murder) and have blood on their hands. The conceptual metaphor TO BE HONEST IS TO HAVE CLEAN HANDS helps to convey this knowledge to the figurative meaning of this idiom which is 'to be honest'. Another expression which illustrates the point is *to dirty one's hands* (also in Czech as *(za)špinit/namočit si ruce*; literally 'to dirty/soak one's hands') whose figurative meaning is 'to be involved in some dishonest/illegal activity'. An extension of this idiom is the expression *to wash one's (dirty) hands of something*, also in the Czech *(u)mýt si nad něčím ruce* (literally 'to wash one's hands over something') which means 'to transfer one's responsibility for one's wrong-doings to someone else so as to avoid it'. All these expressions seem to be motivated by the conceptual metaphor TO BE HONEST IS TO HAVE CLEAN HANDS which links their literal with their figurative meaning.

Naturally, there are idioms which are not shared by both languages. Such expressions, which do not have Czech equivalents, include the English idiom *to play a lone hand* which means 'to manage one's life/to do a project without cooperation', or the idiom *the devil finds work for idle hands* (meaning 'people who are lazy will usually resort to doing something mischievous'). Both these expressions seem to be motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON. A Czech idiom which does not have an English equivalent but which is also motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON, is, or example, *prodloužená ruka (zákona)* (literally 'the extended hand (of law)'), meaning 'institutions which execute law and order, usually the police'.

As can be seen from the above examples, people rely on many images of the hands which are anchored in everyday experiences they have about the uses, function, position, and shape of the hand. Thus the hand is taken to represent the person, the instrument, the activity, the skill. People also seem to conceptualize control, freedom to act, possession and cooperation on the basis of their images of the human hand.

III.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show that Czech and English idiomatic expressions containing parts of the human body are motivated by cognitive strategies such as general conventional knowledge of the world and conceptual metaphors and metonymies which underlie the figurative meaning of these idioms.

In total, 383 Czech and 380 English idioms have been analyzed in order to find the degree of correspondence of conceptual structures between the Czech and English languages (i.e. correspondence of idiomatic expressions whose figurative meaning is the same and which are motivated by the same cognitive structures). Out of the total number of idioms containing the word 'hlava' (or 'head'), approximately 46 per cent have been found which correspond in both languages. 50 per cent has been calculated in the case of idioms containing the words 'oko/oči' ('eye/eyes'). In the case of idioms containing the word 'tvář/obličej' ('face'), the percentage point was 60 per cent. 'Nos' and 'nose' idioms corresponded in 53% of cases, and in the case of idioms containing the words 'ruka/ruce' ('hand/hands'), the percentage point was 47 per cent. However, it is important to note that these figures are only approximate, as all idioms which have been analyzed in this study are only a representative selection from Czech and English idiomatic dictionaries. This is to say that the scope of this study has not allowed for a comprehensive and all-encompassing authoritative analysis of *all* existing idioms containing the five parts of the human body represented in this study. Such a task would require many years of systematic collecting and analyses of idioms which would provide a comprehensive and more precise account of idioms containing body parts (though not necessarily completely, given that new idiomatic phrases are very likely coined every day and many cease to be used every day).

Despite this drawback, one important point can be made at this stage. Although this study has not allowed for the listing of all conceptual metaphors and metonymies which motivate idioms containing body parts, it can be claimed that in most of these idioms (as listed in the Appendices) cognitive strategies are at work when speakers of

Czech or English make sense of the figurative meaning of idioms. For example, the English idiom *to have an old head on young shoulders* (which does not have its Czech equivalent) is clearly motivated by the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR WISDOM. This cognitive structure helps English speakers to understand that a person who is young and whose thinking and behaviour are similar to those of old and experienced people, will be considered wiser than other people of the same age. Since the head is the seat of the intellect, the figurative meaning of this idiom, 'to be wise and experienced at a young age', is understood via the mentioned conceptual metonymy. Similarly, the figurative meaning of the Czech idiom *pracovat hlavou* (literally 'to work with one's head') which is 'to do work which requires intellectual activity as opposed to manual activity' is understood via the conceptual metonymy THE HEAD STANDS FOR INTELLIGENCE. The implications which this finding brings will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

IV.1 Are Cognitive Strategies at Work?

When we hear someone say *when the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing*, we would probably imagine a person who is doing two different activities at a time, while using one hand for one activity and the other hand for the other activity. Very likely, we imagine such a person in a state of confusion because it is very difficult, if not impossible, to concentrate on two (or more) activities at once without difficulty. In this case, the result of such a situation is probably chaos in the person's mind which leads to confusing individual steps in both activities and poor results. This is a description of a concrete situation, a description which refers to the conceptual domain of the human hand. We could also imagine a company in which communication at management level is not very good and employees very often end up receiving contradicting messages from their bosses. It is obvious that cooperation is not very effective or very poor. In this case, we can also use the expression *when the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing* and thus refer to a state of confusion or chaos. In both examples, reference is made to concrete situations. However, in the second example, the word 'hand' does not refer to the actual part of the human body but to individual people. In the second example, the hand represents a person, it 'stands for' a person. The concept of 'hand' is connected to the concept of 'person' by the conceptual metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON. Also, the concept of working together is expressed by the conceptual metaphor COOPERATION IS HOLDING HANDS. The figurative meaning of the expression *when the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing*, i.e. 'the activities of an organization are not coordinated and this leads to confusion', is understood via this metonymy and metaphor.

By focussing on Czech and English idioms containing parts of the human body, this study has attempted to support the conceptual theory developed by cognitive linguists which claims that our thinking is metaphorical and this is reflected in the language we use. The claim that idioms are motivated by three cognitive strategies, i.e.

general conventional knowledge and conceptual metaphors and metonymies, has been tested on a number of idioms in both Czech and English.

Although the analysis is not comprehensive in the sense that it has been conducted with the help of standard idiomatic dictionaries of both languages and thus excludes informal idiomatic phrases (e.g. slang or colloquialisms), its results suggest that cognitive strategies are at work when people infer the meaning of idioms. This point is supported by Gibbs who claims that

> It seems clear...that our sense of what idioms mean partially depends on our tacit understanding of the conceptual metaphors that link these phrases with their figurative meanings. It is precisely because idioms are evocative of different metaphorical information that these phrases play such a significant role in our talk about everyday experience. (1992:505)[30]

Precisely because idioms are conceptually motivated, people make sense of their figurative meaning with the help of conceptual metaphors and metonymies. This view has been challenged by Keysar and Bly who suggest that:

> Idioms may be perfectly transparent once one learns their meaning, even without motivating conceptual structures. This suggests that some idioms in common use are of this sort - expressions that are transparent but are not motivated by systematic conceptual mappings. They are transparent only because people already know the meaning and are able to construct a 'story' to make sense of them. ... Because we know what an idiom means, we may be predisposed to look for, and find, a particular structure in the idiom. (1999:1572)

This claim cannot hold when we think of people learning a foreign language, for example. The meaning of an new idiom cannot be known by the learners in advance. It is probably true that most of the time they would learn an expression holistically as would be the case with children (i.e. they would 'attach' a meaning to a particular phrase without actually thinking about its metaphorical basis).However, advanced learners would probably look for the key word in an idiom in order to be able to

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[30] See also Nayak and Gibbs (1990:329).

remember and recall a given expression more easily. It is at this time that the learner would take into consideration the key word in order to make sense of an idiom. The figurative meaning would then be clearer to the learner since (as has been shown) individual constituent parts systematically contribute to the overall figurative meaning of an idiom. Also, such a learner would probably look for a corresponding phrase in his mother tongue to see whether these two could be 'stored' together and recalled later. When we relate this point to idioms containing parts of the human body, one possible explanation for the claim that cognitive strategies are at work is that because people in general are familiar with the shape, size and functions of their bodies, there is an a priori likelihood of body metaphors/metonymies which underlie many idioms. Inference of meaning of such idioms is then facilitated and made easier once the learner finds the key word in an idiom.

This also brings up the question of predictability of idiomatic expressions. It seems clear that the figurative meaning of idioms containing body parts should be predictable from the key words in these expressions, such as in the example *to have a head like a sieve*. The word 'head' should immediately evoke an image of the upper part of the human body, as well as a cluster of concepts connected with it, such as, in this case, the shape of the head which resembles a container. Since the sieve is a container which can only hold objects of a particular size (and which cannot hold liquid), the link is facilitated fairly easily. In this way, the word 'head' helps speakers to predict the meaning of this idiom, i.e. 'not to be able to hold things in one's memory and forget them very easily'.

The contention that idioms of body parts are predictable is closely related to the question whether or not the meanings of individual parts of idiomatic expressions contribute to their overall figurative meaning. This point is discussed by Titone and Connine who claim that 'given that word meanings are always activated during idiom processing, component words of idiomatic sequences may contribute substantially to the construction of idiomatic meanings' (1999:1671). Again, if we relate this point to idioms containing parts of the human body, it seems clear that since speakers take into consideration the meanings of the key words in idioms (in this case individual parts of

the body) in order to be able to infer their figurative meanings, individual components systematically contribute to the overall meaning of many idioms.

The analyses presented in this study can also be a partial answer to the question whether or not we may speak about cross-cultural concepts in people's minds. It is suggested here that there must be a certain degree of similarity in the way in which people conceptualize the world around them, otherwise no sensible communication via languages would be possible. If people in various cultures did not share many similar concepts of the world around them, and if their experience was not conceptualized in a similar way, they would hardly be able to make themselves understood, or to translate from one language to another, for example. This point is also considered by Taylor who says that 'since ... certain experiences are presumably common to all normal, healthy human beings, ... it comes as no surprise that we find both considerable cross-language similarity in metaphorical expression, as well as cross-language diversity' (1995:141). Cross-language similarity has been (at least partially) demonstrated in the analyses presented in this study.

By relating the concrete to the abstract areas of human experience, the cognitive framework seems to be a very useful tool in explaining idiomatic language. As Baranov and Dobrovol'skij put it:

> The conceptual metaphor in language investigation may be regarded as the basis for a new explanatory (in contrast to classificatory) paradigm in linguistics. (1996:428)

As has been shown, conceptual metaphors and metonymies help language users to make sense of the figurative meaning of many idioms containing body parts in that they link the physical domain of knowledge to the idiomatic meaning of such idioms. Even if it cannot be claimed at this stage that all idioms are understood in this way, this kind of analysis goes a long way towards explaining how idioms containing body parts are motivated.

IV.2 English Idioms in Use

This section explores the hypothesis that there may be a considerable degree of correspondence between the Czech and English languages with respect to idiomatic expressions which share their figurative meaning and the same underlying structures. Some informant testing was conducted to see whether native speakers of Czech would be able to 'make sense' of some English idiomatic expressions. The purpose of this exercise was to see whether individual components of idiomatic expressions help informants to decode the figurative meaning of idioms in a foreign language, thus contributing to the overall meaning of these expressions.

Informants were 16 first-year students of the English language at the J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, the Czech Republic, all of whom volunteered to participate in the testing. It is important to bear in mind that when students enter university in the Czech Republic to study a foreign language, their command of the language is expected to be on the upper-intermediate level. It was likely then, that the informants would be familiar with some commonly used idiomatic expressions which would make it easier for them to explain their meaning. It was not desirable that the informants automatically 'produce' a ready made explanation of an idiom's meaning and that is why, together with more familiar expressions, some less commonly used idiomatic expressions were chosen to make the decoding process slightly more difficult. A point worth mentioning here is that it may be much more difficult to decode an idiom which we have not seen before than an idiom we know and whose meaning we have retained and can automatically recall when using a particular idiom in discourse.

Informants were presented with a selection of 10 English idiomatic expressions containing the words 'head' and 'heart'. These idioms can be seen in Table 1 below.

Idiomatic expressions used in informant testing

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1. to be head over heels in love

2. to be headhunted

3. not to know whether one is standing on one's head or on one's heels

4. to turn one's head

5. to be off one's head

6. to wear one's heart on one's sleeve

7. to take something to heart

8. to one's heart's content

9. to have a heart to do something

10. to have one's heart in the right place

Table 1. **Idiomatic expressions used in informant testing**

The informants were asked to explain in their own words the meaning of each expression or, alternatively, to supply an equivalent phrase in Czech which would show that they had understood the meaning and know how to use it. Expressions 2, 5, and 6 were considered to be less familiar to most students than the other expressions and that is why it was interesting to see whether the informants would be able to assign the correct meaning to them.

Results and Discussion

Most of the expressions listed yielded satisfactory results: the informants guessed the correct figurative meaning of the expressions. This may be due to the transparency of many of these idioms or also due to the fact that many of these idiomatic expressions can be found in the Czech language as well. Also, informants may have encountered these idioms in context. However, the expressions *to be headhunted, not to know whether one is standing on one's head or on one's heels*, and *to wear one's heart*

in one's sleeve revealed some interesting information as to the figurative meanings assigned to them. These can be found in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Meanings Assigned	Number of informants
To be appointed to a position	1
To make a lot of effort	1
To be obsessed with an idea	4
To be crazy about something	1
To be promoted	1
To be put forward as a candidate for a post	1
To be persuaded to do something	2
To be forced to do something	3
Unanswered	2

Table 2. **Meanings assigned to the idiom *to be headhunted*.**

Meanings Assigned	Number of Informants
Not to know what to do first/not have enough time	9
To feel unwell	4
To have a headache	2
Unanswered	1

Table 3. **Meanings assigned to the idiom *not to know whether one is standing on one's head or on one's heels*.**

Meanings Assigned	Number of Informants
To be open and honest	7
To be afraid of something	7
To avoid problems	1
Unanswered	1

Table 4. **Meanings assigned to the idiom *to wear one's heart on one's sleeve.***

As the meanings assigned by the informants to the idiom *to be headhunted* show, the word on which most informants seemed to have focused when decoding this idiom is the word 'hunt', as can be seen from the meanings 'to be persuaded/forced to do something'. When people are persuaded/forced to do something, it takes a lot of effort on part of the other person to reach his or her goal. Sometimes, the one who is to be persuaded literally has to be 'hunted' into a position to say yes to a proposal. Such an interpretation may support the hypothesis that one part of an idiomatic expression does contribute to the overall figurative meaning. In this case, however, informants focused on the word 'hunt', a word which is more semantically 'loaded' than 'head'.

When we look more closely at the meanings which the informants assigned to the idiom *not to know whether one is standing on one's head or on one's heels*, it is again very interesting to find that the meaning 'to be unwell' should be considered here. After all, when people feel physically unwell, the logical order of things is reversed as they are usually not able to concentrate on work properly, their eating habits may be disturbed, and they are mostly unable to follow their daily routine. However, there is a clear indication that this idiom might not be understood as straightforwardly as would be expected.

This informant testing provided a proof that cognitive strategies are at work when people try to decode the figurative meaning of an idiom. However, since some informants were unclear about the exact meaning of some idioms, it may also be a proof that people need an explanation of an idiom before they are able to use it. Most

frequently, when idioms are placed in context, their meaning becomes clearer. This point will be considered in the next section.

IV.3   Some Pedagogical Issues

In his article 'Meaning and Memory', Bolinger challenges the widespread belief that children learn words as individual items:

> In the beginning stages a child apprehends holistically: the situation is not broken down, and neither is the verbal expression that accompanies it. That is why the first learning is holophrastic: each word is an utterance, each utterance is an individual word, as far as the child is concerned. It is only later that words are differentiated out of larger wholes... The whole chunks that we learn also persist as coded units even after the chemical analysis into words has partially split them up. An extreme example is 'How do you do?' That it is functionally a single piece is proved by its condensation to 'Howdy?' (1976:10).

This quotation suggests that learning of fixed expressions should be encouraged at very early stages of second language learning, as it seems that before learners of a second language are acquainted with the lexical and syntactic system of a language, they try to acquire almost any chunk of language in order to be able to communicate in that particular language. As long as they are not aware of the language system, they tend not to worry too much about making mistakes as is the case in later stages of language learning and acquisition.

The problem is that fixed expressions are not usually taught, although they are essential for learning progress[31]. The reason is that fixed expressions, such as idioms, are considered by many teachers of foreign languages to be the most difficult aspect of vocabulary for the students to master. This is, to a large extent, true and so most students of foreign languages when they get to an advanced stage of language learning, having mastered the most important grammatical rules, are left with a dilemma: if I learn an idiom, will I be able to use it properly in the right context? or should I avoid learning idioms altogether so as not to make a fool of myself by using them incorrectly? This reasoning is very often brought about by the fact that most authors of language textbooks, when faced with the task of presenting idioms and devising relevant

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[31] See Carter (1998:223).

exercises, just resort to giving a list of idioms selected on the basis of either the key word or topic which the students are supposed to fill into the gaps of exercises which follow. Other times, authors of textbooks supply synonyms to the selected idioms which, however, are sometimes inaccurate and do not facilitate the learning of idioms very well. If we consider the fact that it is not always possible for a student to be taught by a native speaker, students of a foreign language are thus ultimately left with memorizing idiomatic expressions together with their native language equivalents and using them in the context in subsequent revision exercises, which does not guarantee that the students will retain all the idioms presented to them and use them effectively in discourse.

However, faults should not only be found with teaching materials or teachers. Language learners sometimes avoid fixed expressions, simply because they consider them to be too difficult to master. Moon discusses this point by claiming that:

> ... learners typically avoid using multi-word items, even where the languages are closely related and have apparently parallel expressions. ... The most likely reason for this is that non-native speakers are suspicious of apparently cognate or identical items in the two languages. They have learned to be wary of 'false friends' and know only too well that there may be subtle but crucial distinctions in meaning usage, or register which may lead to misreadings and misunderstandings. (1997:60)

The cognitive analysis presented in this study could be useful in the teaching of idiomatic expressions to second language learners. It is suggested here that if learners of English (or Czech, for the matter) were made aware of the cognitive structures which underlie idioms, they would be able to grasp the figurative meanings of idioms more easily and they would probably retain these lexical items in their memory for a long time. This claim goes against the assertion made by some scholars who suggest that the meaning of many idioms cannot be discovered and that it has to be learned only from a context which motivates their usage[32]. However, context alone cannot facilitate learning and, what is more important, make learners retain idiomatic expressions reliably.

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[32] See, for example, McGlone and Glucksberg (1994:167).

It is possible that some teaching strategies which rely on the metaphorical basis of many idioms would help learners with acquisition of idioms and would also make learning more enjoyable. Such teaching techniques could involve the making of idiomatic expressions part of short conversational exchanges which would relate to specific conceptual domains (such as the human head, for example) and which would convey contradicting conceptual metaphors and metonymies. This would induce learners to think about the conceptual message involved in such conversational exchanges. Another way would be the collecting of idiomatic expressions relating to a particular conceptual domain by the teacher, writing them up on the board and making the students supply images which come to their mind when they see a particular idiom. In this way, conceptual metaphors and metonymies are bound to come up in the process of eliciting students' images. Yet another technique could be the setting of idiomatic expressions in short pieces of text with a relevant socio-cultural context. Students could then guess the figurative meaning of such expressions on the basis of their individual experience. The last point brings up the question of etymology of idioms. Historical origins of idiomatic expressions substantially contribute to the way in which idioms are conceptualized in the human mind and, in general, provide a useful guide as to how people organize their concepts of the world around them[33]. Making students aware of the etymological grounds of many idiomatic expressions is also constructive in that learners discover the historical experiences which people have carried with them in the course of history and which have been to a certain degree 'fossilized' in idioms.

Overall, it can be said that teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions could be made more enjoyable if both teachers and students focused on the conceptual framework which motivates the figurative meaning of many idioms and which makes idioms what they are: expressions which maintain discourse relations by providing in a concise way an ocean of information about how people conceptualize the world around them.

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[33] See Cacciari and Tabossi (1993:xii).

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APPENDIX A

CZECH IDIOMS

383 Czech idiomatic expressions containing the words 'hlava', 'tvář/obličej', oko/oči', 'nos' and 'ruka/ruce', respectively, as collected from <u>Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky</u>, are listed in alphabetical order. Similes are listed first, followed by Non-verbal idioms and Verbal idioms.

'Hlava'

Similes

mít hlavu/paměť jako cedník/děravý pytel

mít hlavičku jako cibuličku/kuličku

běží/utíká, jako by mu hlava hořela/jako když mu hlavu zapálí

vyvádět/mluvit, jako by mu v hlavě přeskočilo

vypadá/chová se, jako by to neměl v hlavě v pořádku

je toho/jich (tolik)/je to tak těžké, div mi z toho hlava nepraskne

být (malý)/nebýt větší než špendlíková hlavička

mít hlavu jako vrabčí hnízdo/rorejs/ježek

mít hlavu jako v kleštích

mít hlavu jako klouzačku/koleno

mít hlavu jako konev

mít hlavu jako starosta

mít hlavu jako stříbro

mít hlavu jako vertel

mít v hlavě jako vymeteno

strkat hlavu do písku jako pštros

chodit jako bez hlavy

je mu, jako by dostal kladivem/palicí do hlavy

nosit hlavu jako páv/vzhůru

Non-verbal Idioms

hlava na hlavě

bez hlavy a paty

od hlavy až k patě

hlavou proti zdi

hlava rodiny

hlava státu

bystrá hlava/hlavička

čistá/jasná hlava

dobrá hlava

hlava dubová/tvrdá/skopová/zabedněná

gypsová hlava

hloupá hlava

horká hlava

chytrá hlava

korunovaná hlava

otevřená hlava

(být) na hlavu padlý

(být) o hlavu větší

vtipná hlava

z hlavy

Verbal Idioms

bát se vystrčit hlavu

bít/mlátit někoho hlava nehlava

bít se do hlavy

blbnout někomu hlavu

blesknout někomu hlavou

brát si něco do hlavy

být na hlavu postavený

být o hlavu větší/vyšší

být z něčí hlavy

budou padat hlavy

dát hlavu v sázku za někoho/něco

dát za někoho/něco hlavu (na špalek)

dělat něco podle své hlavy

dělat někomu těžkou/velkou hlavu

držet hlavu zpříma

držet si hlavu v dlaních

házet někomu něco na hlavu

házet něco za hlavu

hodit hlavou

chodit s hlavou v oblacích

chtít hlavu někoho

chytat se za hlavu

klopit hlavu

kroutit/vrtět hlavou nad něčím

lámat si hlavu nad něčím

ležet někomu v hlavě

mít svou hlavu

mít hlavu na něco

mít hlavu a patu

mít hlavu na pravém místě

mít něčeho plnou hlavu

mít popletenou hlavu něčím/z někoho

mít prázdnou hlavu

mít něčeho (až) nad hlavu

mít něco/někoho v hlavě

mít (už/z něčeho) v hlavě

mít v hlavě drtiny/řezanku/slámu

mít z něčeho v hlavě galimatyáš

mít to v hlavě v pořádku/dobře srovnané

mýt/mejt někomu za něco hlavu

myslet hlavou

nalejt/nacpat (si) někomu něco do hlavy

napravit/spravit někomu hlavu

nasadit někomu psí hlavu

nechat (jednou) někde hlavu

nechat na hlavě

nechat si to/něco projít hlavou

nejít/nelézt někomu do hlavy

nemít kam hlavu složit

nemoct si to v hlavě srovnat

nezkřivit někomu vlásek na hlavě

nevědět, kde [mu] hlava stojí

omlátit někomu něco o hlavu

padat na něčí hlavu

postavit si hlavu

postavit něco na hlavu

pracovat hlavou

prohnat si kulku hlavou

provětrat si hlavu

přerůst někomu přes hlavu

pustit něco z hlavy

složit/dát hlavu do dlaní

srovnat si něco v hlavě

stát někoho hlavu

stoupnout někomu do hlavy

strašit někomu v hlavě

strkat hlavu do chomoutu/ohlávky

svěsit hlavu

sypat si hlavu popelem

utrhnout někomu hlavu za něco

vrhnout se/vletět do něčeho po hlavě

vyhnat někomu něco z hlavy

vykouřit se někomu z hlavy

vylíhnout se v hlavě někomu

vypadnout někomu z hlavy

vypsat něco/odměnu na hlavu někoho

zachovat (si) chladnou hlavu

zchladit někomu hlavu

zkrátit někoho o hlavu

změřit si někoho od hlavy k patě

ztratit hlavu

dát/srazit hlavy dohromady

'Tvář/Obličej'

Similes

mít tváře jako bochánky

mít tváře jako broskve

mít tvář jako kámen/z kamene

mít tvář/obličej jako masku

mít obličej/tvář jako měsíček v úplňku

mít tvář jako z mramoru

mít tvářičky jako dětskou prdelku

mít tváře jako struhadlo

Non-verbal Idioms

bez tváře

cizí obličeje/tváře

kyselý obličej

tváří v tvář

kamenná tvář

němá tvář

pravá tvář

Verbal Idioms

dát/prodat/půjčit někomu něco na ksicht

dělat (na někoho) kyselý obličej

dělat obličeje

lhát někomu do obličeje

mít dvojí tvář

mít něco napsáno ve tváři

neztratit tvář

odvrátit od něčeho/někoho svou tvář

plivnout někomu do tváře

pohlédnout něčemu do tváře

postavit se tváří v tvář něčemu/někomu

protáhnout obličej

říct někomu něco do obličeje

smát se někomu do obličeje

spadnout na hubu/tvář

ukázat někomu vlídný obličej/vlídnou tvář

zachránit si tvář

ztratit tvář

'Oko/Oči'

Similes

mít oči jen pro někoho

mít oči jako fialky/chrpy/šmolka

mít oči jako jestřáb/luňák/ostříž/rys

mít oči jako jiskry

mít oči jako kočka

mít oči jako korálky

mít oči červené jako králík

mít oči jako z Kašparovy krávy

mít oči jako laň

je jako by mu z oka vypadl

být tak krásný, až oči přecházely

opatrovat něco/někoho jako oko v hlavě

(kouká), div na něm oči nenechá

kouká, div mu oči (z důlků) nevypadnou/že/až mu oči lezou z důlků

Non-verbal Idioms

z očí do očí

mezi čtyřma očima

mandlové oči

pomněnkové oči

prostým/pouhým okem

rybí oči

s očima upřenýma (na něco/někoho)

na vlastní oči

od/podle oka

oko za oko, zub za zub

přímo před očima

Verbal Idioms

dělat něco se zavřenýma očima

dohlédnout/vidět někam pouhým okem

hodit okem po někom

mít na něco oko

mít něco v oku

ani okem (přitom) nemrknout

nezavřít/nezamhouřit oka

padnout někomu do oka

přimhouřit (nad něčím) (jedno) oko

sledovat něco jedním okem

být někomu stále na očích

být někomu z očí

být na obě oči slepý

číst někomu něco na očích

dělat na někoho oči

sotva držet/nemoct udržet oči (otevřené)

hladit/laskat někoho očima

chodit s otevřenýma očima

jednat (s někým) z očí do očí

jít někomu z očí

jít, kam [ho] oči vedou

klidit se někomu z očí

lhát někomu do očí

mít oči jen pro někoho

mít oči navrch hlavy

mít oči otevřené

mít oči plné lásky

mít oči k vidění a uši k slyšení

mit velké oči

mít oči (vpředu) i vzadu

mít oči všude

napnout oči

nemoct od něčeho/někoho oči odtrhnout

nespouštět někoho/něco z očí

nevěřit vlastním očím

nezůstalo oko suché

pro (samé) oči nevidět

obracet oči v sloup

otevřít někomu oči

pást se na něčem/někom očima

poznat někomu něco na očích

probodávat někoho očima

promluvit si s někým mezi čtyřma očima

přeletět něco očima

růst (někomu) před očima

říct někomu něco do očí

scházet někomu před očima

smát se někomu do očí

spát s otevřenýma očima

stoupnout v něčích očích

střílet po někom očima

svlékat někoho očima

trefit někam i se zavázanýma očima

třeštit (na někoho/něco) oči

tvrdit někomu něco do očí

udělat něco pro krásné oči někoho

udělat někomu, co někomu na očích vidí

udělat někomu pod okem monokla

vidět/číst někomu něco na očích

viset na někom očima

vyškrábat někomu oči

zavřít nad něčím obě oči

zavírat oči před něčím

zavřít oči

ztratit někoho z očí

'Nos'

Similes

mít nos jako bakuli/okurku/bramboru

mít nos jak kliku od blázince

mít nos jako knoflík

mít nos jak skobu

Non-verbal Idioms

cyranovský nos

orlí nos

řecký nos

římský nos

Verbal Idioms

bručet si něco pod nos

dát někomu do nosu/po nose

dát si do nosu

dát/přinést někomu něco až pod nos

dělat na někoho dlouhý nos

dloubat se v nose

chodit s nosem vzhůru

chytit se za nos

jít (rovnou) za nosem

krčit nos nad něčím

mávat někomu něčím před nosem

mít (dobrý) nos na něco

mít nos nahoru

natáhnout nos

nejít někomu pod nos

nevidět (něco) pro nos

ani nos odněkud nevystrčit

ohrnovat nad něčím nos

poznat někomu něco na nose

prohrát nos mezi očima

proklouznout někomu před nosem

propít nos mezi očima

přelítnout někomu přes nos

rýt nosem v něčem

sebrat někomu něco před nosem

strčit někomu něco pod nos

strkat nos do něčeho/všeho

tahat/vodit někoho za nos

udělat na někoho dlouhý nos

ujet někomu před nosem

věšet někomu na nos něco

vyčíst někomu i nos mezi očima

zapřít (někomu) i nos mezi očima

'Ruka/Ruce'

Similes

být jako bezruký

(mít) ruce bílé jako slonová kost

mít ruce jako led

(mít) ruce jako lopaty

mít ruce jako medvěd

mít ruce jako z mramoru

(mít) ruce (vytahané) jako opice

mít ruce jako pavouk

řádit někde jako černá ruka

má ji tak rád, že by ji na rukou nosil

Non-verbal Idioms

z ruky do ruky

ruka spravedlnosti/zákona

čisté ruce

z druhé ruky

ochranná ruka

otevřená/štědrá ruka

pevná ruka

pravá ruka (někoho)

s prázdnýma rukama

prodloužená ruka (někoho/něčeho)

z první ruky

rukou společnou (a nerozdílnou)

tvrdá/železná ruka v rukavici

se založenýma rukama

zkušená ruka (mistra)

zlaté ruce

ženská ruka

Verbal Idioms

vodit někoho za ruku

být někomu k ruce

být samá ruka samá noha

být s někým jedna ruka

být živ (jen) z ruky do úst

dát někomu na něco ruku

dát někomu něco pod rukou

dát/vložit za někoho ruku do ohně

jednou rukou dávat a druhou brát

dostat něco/někoho do ruky/rukou

držet nad někým (ochrannou) ruku

jít někomu na ruku

jít ruku v ruce (s něčím)

jít z ruky do ruky

levá ruka neví, co dělá pravá

mávnout nad tím/něčím/někým rukou

mít něco/někoho v ruce/rukou

mít (už) to/něco v ruce

mít něco (až) z druhé/třetí ruky

mít ruku vždy otevřenou

mít pádnou/těžkou ruku

mít (v něčem/při něčem) šťastnou ruku

mít volnou ruku (v něčem)

mít vypsanou ruku

nabídnout někomu pomocnou ruku

nabídnout někomu smírnou ruku

potřást si na to rukama

pozdvihnout proti někomu (vražednou) ruku

požádat někoho o ruku

přiložit ruku/ruce k dílu

sebrat všechno, co [mu] přijde pod ruku

skončit vlastní rukou

udělat něco levou rukou

umět něco vzít do ruky

vládnout někomu/někde tvrdou/železnou rukou

vztáhnout na někoho/proti někomu ruku

zobat někomu z ruky

žít z ruky do úst

bránit se holýma rukama

být v rukou někoho

být v dobrých rukou

být na obě ruce levý

být v pravých rukou

dát od něčeho ruce pryč

dát ruce vzhůru

chodit s rukama v kapsách

chodit se založenýma rukama

lomit rukama (nad něčím/někým)

mít něco/někoho ve (svých) rukou

mít v rukou něčí osud

mít ruce v klíně

mít děravé ruce

mít něčeho plné ruce

mít (něčím) svázané ruce

mnout si ruce

moct si (s někým) podat ruce

moct někomu ruce utrhnout

mýt si ruce nad něčím/někým

nevědět kam/co s rukama

padnout někomu do rukou

pracovat rukama i hlavou

rozdávat plnýma rukama

rozhodit ruce

rozkládat rukama

složit ruce do klína

špinit si (s něčím/někým) ruce

vydat někomu někoho/něco/se do rukou

vymknout se někomu z rukou

vzít do rukou opratě (něčeho)

začít s holýma rukama

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH IDIOMS

380 English idioms containing the words 'head/heads', 'face', 'eye/eyes', 'nose' and 'hand/hands', respectively, are listed in alphabetical order. As they have been collected from two English idiomatic dictionaries, idioms from the <u>Longman Dictionary of English Idioms</u> (LDEI) are listed first, complemented by idioms from the <u>Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English</u> (ODCIE).

'Head/Heads'

LDEI

above/over someone's head

to bite/snap someone's head off

to bury one's head in the hands

to call down (something) on someone's head

to bring/draw down (something) on someone's head

could do something (standing) on one's head

to come to a head

to bring to a head

to eat one's head off

to enter (or come into) someone's head

someone's eyes nearly popped out of his head

to fall/be head over heels (in love)

from head to foot/toe

to get something into someone's head

to get it into one's head

to get one's head down

to give someone his head

to let someone have his head

go (and) put your head in a bucket

to go to someone's head

to hang one's head

to harm a hair of someone's head

to have a (good) head head on one's shoulders

to have a head for heights

to have a head like a sieve

to have a maggot in one's head

to have an old head on young shoulders

to have something hanging over one's head

to have one's head in the clouds

to have one's head screwed on the right way

to be/stand head and shoulders above

to head for a fall

to head for the hills

head over ears

a head start

to hit the nail on the head

to hold a pistol/gun to someone's head

to hold one's head high

to hold one's head up

to keep/have a level head

to keep one's head/keep a cool head

to keep one's head above water

to keep one's head down

King Charles' head

to knock/bang/hit/run/bash one's head against a brick wall

to knock something on the head

to laugh one's head off

like a bear with a sore head

to make head or tail of something

to make someone's head spin/go round

to nod one's head

not to know whether someone is (standing) on one's head or one's heels

odd/queer in the head

off one's head

off the top of one's head

on/upon someone's (own) head

out of one's head/off one's head

over someone's head

pissed out of one's head

to place one's head in the lion's mouth

to put a price on someone's head

to put ideas into someone's head

to put/lay one's head on the block

to rear its (ugly) head

right in the head

a roof over one's head

to scratch one's head

to shake one's head

should have one's head examined

soft/weak in the head

to stand/turn something on its head

to stand on one's head

stoned out of one's head

a swollen/swelled head

to take it into one's head

to talk out of the top of one's head

to talk one's head off

to talk through a hole in one's head

to throw oneself at someone's head

to trouble/bother one's head

to turn someone's head

to use one's head

want something like one wants a hole in the head

to wet the baby's head

heads or tails

heads will roll

to knock their heads together

to put their heads together

two heads are better than one

ODCIE

to crow one's head off

to draw down (upon one's head)

to fling one's head back

one's eyes stand out of one's head

to stuff someone's head with something

to swear (on) [(my son's) head]

to head off

to clear one's head

to have eyes in/at the back of one's head/neck

have (got)/with a good head of hair

to have a head of steam

to have a thick head

to lose one's head

to meet something head on

a talking head

to count heads

to shrink heads

'Face'

LDEI

(as) plain as the nose on your face

to blow up in someone's face

to cut off one's nose to spite one's face

to face the music

face to face

face value

to fall flat (on one's/its face)

to fly in the face of

to grind the face of someone

to have a face like thunder

to have egg on one's face

in the face of something

to keep a straight face

to laugh in someone's face

to laugh on the other side of one's face

let's face it

a long face

to look someone/something in the face

to lose face

not to be just a pretty face

not to know where to put one's face

on the face of it

to put on a brave/bold face

to put one's face on

to set one's face against something/someone

to show one's face

to slam the door in someone's face

a slap in the face

to stare someone in the face

to talk/scream/complain till one is blue in the face

to throw something in someone's face

to someone's face

was someone's/one's face red

to wipe something/someone off the face of the earth

to wipe the smile off someone's face

to pull/make faces

ODCIE

to bury one's face

one's face clouds over

tear(s) roll down [one's face]

to screw up [one's face]

to smash someone's face in

to change the face of something

a change of face

full face

full in someone's/the face

to go green in the face

to go purple in the face

to go red in the face

to have a long face

a poker face

to shut one's face

'Eye/Eyes'

LDEI

the apple of someone's eye

beauty is in the eye of the beholder

a bird's-eye view

to cast/run an/one's eye over something/someone

to catch someone's eye

to do someone in the eye

an eagle eye

easy on the eye

the evil eye

an eye for an eye (and a tooth for a tooth)

to get one's eye in

to give someone the glad eye

to have an eye for something

to have/keep an/one's eye (up)on something/someone

to have an eye to -ing

to have/keep an eye to the main chance

if someone had half an eye

in one's mind's eye

in the public eye

in the twinkling of an eye

to keep/have an/one's eye open

to keep a weather eye open

to look (someone straight/right) in the eye

to mind one's eye

my eye

the naked eye

not to bat an eye

one in the eye for

out of the corner of one's eye

to pipe one's eye

to see eye to eye

a smack in the eye

to spit in someone's eye

there is more to it than meets the eye

to turn a blind eye

when you were just a twinkle in your father's eye

a worm's eye view

all eyes

before/under someone's (very) eyes

cannot believe one's eyes

cannot take one's eyes off something/someone

to cast/make sheep's eyes

to clap/set/lay eyes on something/someone

to close/shut one's eyes to something

to cry one's eyes out

to drop one's eyes

someone's eyes are bigger than his belly

'eyes down!'

someone's eyes nearly/almost/practically popped out of his head

to feast one's eyes on/upon something

to have eyes (only) for someone/something

to have set eyes on something/someone

in the eyes of someone

to make eyes at someone

to open someone's eyes

to pull the wool over someone's eyes

to remove the scales from someone's eyes

a sight for sore eyes

through the eyes of someone

to throw dust in someone's eyes

up to the eyes

with one's eyes closed

with one's eyes open

ODCIE

(not) to look in the eye

to pass one's eye over

to fix one's eyes on something/someone

to give [one's eyes] for something/someone

[one's eyes] glaze over

to keep one's eyes off something/someone

to rivet [one's eyes] on something/someone

to roll [one's eyes] at someone

to scratch one's eyes out

to screw up [one's eyes]

to shut one's eyes to something

to take one's eyes off something/someone

the beam in one's own eye

to blacken someone's eye for him

a gleam in someone's eye

have (got) with a roving eye

to hit/score the/a bull's eye

a jaundiced eye

not a dry eye in the house

out of the corner of one's eye

a private eye

to have bags under one's eyes

to have eyes at the back of one's head

not to know which way to turn one's eyes

'Nose'

LDEI

to bloody someone's nose

cannot see beyond the end of one's nose

to cut off one's nose to spite the face

to follow one's nose

to get up someone's nose

to have a nose for something

to (always) have one's nose in a book

to keep one's nose clean

to keep someone's/one's nose to the grindstone

to lead someone by the nose

to look down one's nose

to be no skin off someone's nose

on the nose

to pay through the nose

(as) plain as the nose on your face

to poke/stick/push one's nose into something

to put someone's nose out of joint

to rub someone's nose in it

to thumb one's nose at someone

to turn one's nose up at something/someone

(right) under someone's (very) nose

with one's nose in the air

ODCIE

to keep one's nose out of something

to pick one's nose

to punch someone on the nose

to slip past under someone's (very) nose

never to poke one's nose out of doors

'Hand/Hands'

LDEI

at second hand

a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

to bite the hand that feeds one

bound/tied hand and foot

cap in hand

(close/near) at hand

to come the heavy hand

to cross someone's hand with silver

a dab hand

to fight hand to hand

to force someone's hand

from first hand

a free hand

to get/keep one's hand in

to give/lend (someone) a helping hand

to give (someone) one's hand (up)on (something)

to give (someone) the glad hand

to go/be hand in hand

hand in glove

hand something to someone on a plate

hand over fist

to have/take a hand in something

to have someone eating out of one's hand

to have someone in the palm of one's hand

to have to hand it to someone

to hold someone's hand

in hand

an iron hand/fist (in a vellvet glove)

to know something/someone like the back of one's hand

to lift a hand

to live from hand to mouth

not to do a hand's turn

of hand

an old hand

on every hand

on hand

on (the) one hand...and on the other (hand)

out of hand

to put/dip one's hand in one's pocket

to put/lay one's hand(s) on something

someone's left hand does not know what his right hand is doing

to put one's hand to the plough

to raise/lift one's hand against

someone's right hand

to rule (someone/somewhere) with an iron hand

to see the hand of God in something

to show/reveal one's hand

to stay someone's hand

to strengthen one's/someone's hand

to take something in hand

to throw one's hand in

to hand

to try one's hand

to turn/set/put one's hand to

the upper/whip hand

to wait on someone hand and foot

with a heavy hand

with a high hand

all hands to the pumps!

at someone's hands

(one's) bare hands

to change hands

the devil finds work for idle hands

to get one's hands on something

someone's hands are tied

hands down

hands up!

someone has only got one pair of hands

to have clean hands

to have one's hands full

to have someone's blood on one's hands

in good hands

to keep one's hands off

to lay (one's) hands on someone

many hands make light work

on one's hands

out of someone's hands

to play into someone's hands

to shake hands

a show of hands

to sit on one's hands

to soil/dirty one's hands

to take one's life in one's hands

to take the law into one's own hands

to throw up one's hands

to wash one's hands of

ODCIE

to be empty-handed

(never) to lay a hand on someone

to bury one's face/head in [one's hands]

to do something with one hand tied behind one's back

to fall into someone's hands

to go through someone's hands

to spread out one's hands

to stick one's hands up

kiss your hand

a cloud no bigger than the size of a man's hand

a cool hand on a fevered brow

the dead hand of the past

(with) one's (own) fair hand(s)

to give someone a big hand

to play a lone hand

sleight of hand

to take the cash (in hand) and let the credit go

to be good with one's hands

on (one's) hands and knees

to wring one's hands

an open hand

to ask for someone's hand