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Bakalářská práce

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Corpus based analysis of selected idiomatic phrases and their development in time

Korpusově založená studie vybraných idiomatických frází a jejich vývoje v čase

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Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá výzkumem historického vývoje vybraných idiomatických frází, konkrétně *keep one's word, speak one's mind, lend a hand, bury the hatchet, rock the boat* a *toe the line*. Analýza je založena na datech z korpusů English Historical Book Collection, Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence, Corpus of Historical American English a Hansard. Práce se zaměřuje na první výskyt idiomů, vývoj jejich formy, frekvence a možné případy pasivizace a interní modifikace. Výsledky studie syntaktické flexibility vybraných frází jsou dále porovnávány s již existujícími lingvistickými hypotézami a jsou zkoumány její možné důvody či pravidla. Bylo zjištěno, že některé z vybraných idiomů měli více forem, které po určitou dobu alternovaly, než se jedna z nich ustálila. Některé se stále vyskytují ve více podobách i ve 20. století. Obecně se z výsledků zdá syntaktická flexibilita vyšší, než je uváděno v citovaných teoretických pracích. Dále se z analýzy jeví pravděpodobné, že schopnost idiomů vytvořit pasiv nebo být modifikovány atributem by mohla záviset na jejich typu, který souvisí s jejich významem a významem jejich částí, na pragmatických okolnostech, ale také na jejich stáří a ustálenosti v jazyce, protože některé idiomy vykazují rostoucí flexibilitu.

Klíčová slova: diachronní korpusová studie, idiomy, typologie idiomů, syntaktická flexibilita idiomů, vnitřní modifikace

Abstract

The present thesis examines the historical development of selected idiomatic phrases, namely, *keep one's word, speak one's mind, lend a hand, bury the hatchet, rock the boat,* and *toe the line*. The study is based on data from the English Historical Book Collection, Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence, Corpus of Historical American English, and Hansard Corpus. The research focuses on the idioms' first occurrence in the corpora, development of construction, frequency, and possible passivization and internal modification instances. Additionally, the results on the expressions' syntactic flexibility are compared to the existing hypotheses of linguists, and its possible reasons and rules are investigated. It was found that some of the idioms had various forms, which alternated for a time before the norm was established. Some appear in different constructions in the 20th century still. Further, the syntactic flexibility seems to be greater than stated in the cited theoretical works. It is concluded that the idiom's ability to passivize or be internally modified might depend on its type, which is connected to its meaning and the meaning of its constituents, pragmatics, and even their age and established place in language, as some idioms show a growing flexibility.

Key words: diachronic corpus study, idioms, typology of idioms, syntactic flexibility of idioms, internal modification

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List of abbreviations

COHA/CO	Corpus of Historical American English
CQL	The Corpus Query Language
ECCO	Eighteen Century Collections Online
EHBC/EE	English Historical Book Collection
EEBO	Early English Books Online
HA	Hansard
L	Level
NP	Noun phrase
OED/OE	Oxford English Dictionary
PCEEC/PC	Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence
PDE	Present-day English
VP	Verb phrase

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1 Introduction

Idioms are a language phenomenon that is difficult to define. Generally, it is said that they are phrases whose meaning cannot be understood from the meaning of their individual parts. Nevertheless, it is not entirely accurate, as there are various types of idioms, for which the definition slightly differs. A considerable part of this work, then, focuses on defining idioms.

Idiomatic expressions can be classified in different ways. The earliest way to categorize them is to divide them on lexical and phrasal idioms, which does not consider semantics. Later, the meaning of the phrase, as well as its constituents, were considered, which gave rise to a functional typology of idiomatic expressions. The basic differentiation is between compositional and non-compositional idioms, later also between transparent and opaque.

Many linguists have also concentrated on idioms' behaviour in a sentence and how flexible they are. The most researched syntactic operation is passivization, and then also internal modification. The individual expressions' flexibility, as well as linguists' opinions on the reasons behind it, differ significantly, as the second chapter will show.

The practical part of the paper is based on a corpus study of six selected idioms (which are all three-word verbal phrases), namely, *keep one's word, speak one's mind, lend a hand, bury the hatchet, rock the boat,* and *toe the line*. The corpora used for the research are the English Historical Book Collection, PCEEC, COHA, and Hansard. The main aim is to investigate the idioms' historical development, which includes their frequency over the centuries, their possible variations, and their ability to passivize and undergo internal modification. Because the linguists' hypotheses are so varied, the paper also intends to support some of the arguments and refuse others based on the corpora evidence.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of an Idiom

In the Oxford English Dictionary (OED),, an idiom is described as "a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., used in a distinctive way in a particular language, dialect, or language variety; spec. a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from the meanings of the individual words" (Oxford English Dictionary, n. d.). This is an example of the traditional and somewhat simplified view on idiomatic expressions, which might be suitable for English textbooks but not for a study on idioms.

A bit more elaborate entry can be found in the Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (Bussmann, 1996, p. 533), which assigns three characteristics to an idiom. Firstly, "the complete meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of the individual elements," which corresponds with the OED definition. Secondly, "the substitution of single elements does not bring about a systematic change of meaning." An idiomatic meaning is not retained when one lexeme of the expression is substituted with a synonym, as in, for example, *scorch one's finger* (instead of *burn one's finger*). Some authors, though, would argue that such modifications can be created and used in case of certain idioms (see, for example, Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001). Lastly, the dictionary lists as a criterion for an idiom that "a literal reading results in a homophonic non-idiomatic variant," to which the first two conditions no longer apply (p. 533).

Brinton & Akimoto (1999) elaborate the second criterion by saying that it is related to idioms' lack of syntactic variability (p. 7), which results in the impossibility to create a passive form, to topicalize one element of the expression, or to modify it internally (for instance by adding an attribute). This is, nevertheless, rather a simplification and generalization, which this work will also try to prove.

As can be seen, the term *idiom* is rather broad, and there is considerable diversity within. Therefore, it might be convenient to look at idioms as a group of expressions with a number of characteristics that different idioms meet in various degrees. Langlotz (2006) describes idioms "as complex symbols with specific formal, semantic,

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pragmatic and sociolinguistic characteristics" (p. 3), and he lists four such features: institutionalisation (see also Fernando, 1996), compositeness, frozenness (Fraser, 1970) and non-compositionality. A detailed description is to be found in Table 1, which is based on Langlotz's one.

Table 1 Parameters for the definition of idioms

Term	Feature
institutionalisation	conventionalisation or familiarity
compositeness	multi-word units
frozenness	restricted syntactic and lexical variability
non-compositionality	meaning cannot be derived from the idioms' constituents

(adapted from Langlotz, 2006, p. 3)

The feature of institutionalisation seems universal, as well as compositeness. As for frozenness, all idioms have restricted variability, but they differ in its degree. Some idioms do not allow practically any syntactic operation, whereas others do. Perhaps the most variable aspect of idioms is non-compositionality. Some idiom's meaning actually can be derived from its constituents at least partially, as will be clear from the following chapters.

2.1.1 Idiomatization

As Bussmann (1996) states, "frequently there is a diachronic connection between the literal reading and the idiomatic meaning" (p. 533). He refers to the process of how an idiom can be formed, the process of idiomatization. According to Brinton & Akimoto (1999), it is "the linguistic process […] of reorganizing certain phrases into fixed/fossilized expressions, whose meaning have become more or less abstract and undecipherable" (p. 225). For Nuccorini, for example, it is a "process of metaphorization" (1990, as cited in Brinton & Akimoto, 1999, p. 13).

The wordings in definitions differ, but essentially, idiomatization is a semantic change in which a new figurative meaning is assigned to a phrase, which is completely

different from the literal one and cannot be easily understood from the expression's components.

2.2 Classification

Opinions on how to classify idioms changed over the course of the previous century. Although even today, authors and researchers do not agree on one categorization, a clear cut between the former and later viewpoint can be seen.

2.2.1 The Orthodox View

In general, the orthodox view sees all idioms as non-compositional and as exceptions from the rules of language, as observed from definitions of idioms from various publications:

> These are idiomatic in the sense that their meaning is non-compositional. (Chomsky, 1980, p. 149)

> Idioms are the "exceptions that prove the rule": they do not get their meaning from the meaning of their syntactic parts. If an idiom is treated as if it were compositional, false predictions are made about its semantic properties and relations. (Katz, 1973, p. 358)

> The essential feature of an idiom is that its full meaning, and more generally the meaning of any sentence containing an idiomatic stretch, is not a compositional function of the meaning of the idiom's elementary grammatical parts.(Katz & Postal, 1963, p. 275)

Typically, the idioms were categorized into two groups, lexical and phrasal (or phrase), and the primary purpose of this classification was to answer the question of how to treat idioms in the lexicon rather than to explain their semantic structure or syntactic behaviour. Lexical idioms were characterized as being "syntactically dominated by one of the lowest syntactic categories, i.e., noun, verb, adjective" (Katz & Postal, 1963, p. 275). As Langlotz (2006) points out, this category includes compounds as *redneck* or *telephone,* which do not behave differently from usual lexical units and are thus listed in the lexicon as such.

On the other hand, phrase idioms like *spill the beans* or *bury the hatchet* have a complex internal structure and should be dealt with accordingly. Katz & Postal (1963) come with a suggestion of dividing the lexicon into two parts: lexical-item part and phrase-idiom part, in which the wholes of the phrase idioms would be listed. The idea was then also described by Chafe (1968) and further developed by Weinreich (1969).

As all idioms were considered non-compositional, no detailed classification of phrasal idioms concerning semantics appeared in the early studies. What was analysed, though, were possible regularities in their restricted syntactic productivity, which will be discussed later.

2.2.2 Semantic considerations

One of the authors who analysed idioms' syntactic productivity, more specifically passivization, was Nunberg. He noticed certain tendencies and consequently discerned types of idioms based on semantics:

> What is interesting about these idioms is that they are particularly easy to decompose: we can discern just how each of the components contributes to the interpretation of the whole. (Nunberg, 1978, pp. 220–221)

He calls such idioms normally decomposable and mentions *pop the question* or *pass the buck* as examples (Nunberg, 1978, p. 227). The second type of idiomatic expression that Nunberg (1978) distinguishes is abnormally decomposable. Within them, we can also see how each constituent contributes to the idiomatic meaning, but it is not as straightforward as in the first category. The constituents refer to a metaphor through which we can deduce the meaning. Examples would be *line one's pocket* or *raise the roof*. The last category, non-decomposable idioms, contains phrases in which we cannot find any relation between the form and meaning (as *shoot the breeze*).

Nunberg et al. (1994) later formulate different terminology, discerning between idiomatically combining expressions, "whose parts carry identifiable parts of their idiomatic meanings" (p. 496), and idiomatic phrases, whose meaning is not distributed over their constituents at all (p. 497). Nevertheless, it was Nunberg's original

terminology that came to be used and further developed (for example by Cacciari & Glucksberg (1991), who call this idioms' feature analysability).

A thorough study that included practical linguistic experiments was conducted by Raymond Gibbs and Nandini Nayak (1989). They used two different classifications of idiomatic phrases. In the first one, they followed Nunberg's terminology. Their interpretation of the terms is depicted in table two.

Table 2 Idiom types based on their semantic decomposition

Term	Definition	Examples
normally decomposable idiom	each of the phrase's components refers in some way to the components of its idiomatic referents	*pop the question* *lay down the law*
abnormally decomposable idiom	the components do not refer to the idiomatic meaning directly but via some metaphorical relations	*hit the panic button* *raise the roof*
semantically nondecomposable idiom	the components do not refer to the idiomatic meaning in any way	*kick the bucket* *shoot the breeze*

(created on the basis of Gibbs & Nayak, 1989, pp. 105-106)

Additionally, they distinguished between transparent and opaque idioms. The differentiation is based on the relation between the literal and figurative meaning of the expressions, or more precisely if there is one or not. Gibbs & Nayak (1989) characterise transparent idioms as phrases whose "conventional, figurative interpretations are transparent extensions of their literal meanings" (p. 117). It can be further explained on the example of *skating on thin ice* – the idiomatic meaning is a metaphorical extension of the literal one (p. 117). In contrast, there is no such relation between the meanings of opaque metaphors.

The compositionality and transparency seem to be the most notable and, at the same time, the most variable characteristics of idioms. Therefore Glucksberg & McGlone (2001, following Glucksberg, 1993) based their classification on them as well. Developing Nunberg's (1978) ideas, they discern between fully compositional and noncompositional idioms. Nevertheless, the category of partially compositional

idioms is where they do not agree with previous studies. They explain that in such idioms, "some relationship between an idiom's constituents and its idiomatic meaning can be discerned and exploited" (Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001, p. 73). The relationship must not be in the area of semantics, though, as the authors exemplify on the phrase *kick the bucket.*

The idiom, which is mentioned in numerous studies while rarely used in speech, served to most researchers as a prototypical example of a noncompositional idiom. Glucksberg & McGlone categorise it as partially compositional for this reason:

> The idiom's literal meaning does constrain its use and comprehension. For example, the idiom can be used in the past, present, or future tense, as well as with modal auxiliaries. (Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001, p. 73)

As can be seen, the authors do not base the feature of compositionality on semantics only but on the idiom's behaviour in a sentence as well.

Compositional idioms can be further described as opaque or transparent. This differentiation, as opposed to compositionality, centres on meaning only, more specifically on "the extent to which an idiom's meaning can be inferred from the meanings of its constituents" (Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001, p. 74). It is followed by Philip (2011), who explains that "if an idiom's meaning is relatively clear from a compositional reading of its component words, it is said to be transparent" (p. 21). Thus, the mentioned idiom *kick the bucket* would be compositional opaque but, for example, *spill the beans* compositional transparent. But as Philip (2011) states, the differentiation between transparency and opacity is neither absolute nor entirely objective (p. 22).

The last and somewhat specific class is of quasi-metaphorical idioms, and it corresponds with Gibbs and Nayak's category of abnormally decomposable idioms. As Glucksberg & McGlone explain, "these idioms convey meaning via allusional content" (p. 75) and basically work as metaphors.

To summarize, Glucksberg & McGlone (2001) distinguish four types of idiomatic phrases: compositional transparent (as *pop the question* or *spill the beans*), compositional opaque (as *kick the bucket*), noncompositional (*lemon law*), and quasi-metaphorical (*skate on thin ice*). It is evident that Glucksberg and McGlone, as well as

Philip, based their categorization on previous studies. Nevertheless, by differentiating between compositionality and transparency clearly, they created a functional typology of idioms, which might serve as a starting point for further studies of idiomatic phrases, such as analysis of their syntactic productivity.

2.3   Syntactic flexibility

Even before developing a comprehensive typology of idioms, linguists studied idioms' behaviour in sentences. It is noticeable that idiomatic phrases function differently than non-idiomatic ones. More specifically, as Fraser (1970) writes, they "do not behave as predicted by their structure" (p. 34). In addition, we can hardly expect that all idioms function in the same way. Some can undergo certain syntactic operations, others cannot, and some can be internally modified. Researchers called the inability of idioms to perform certain syntactic operations "transformational deficiency" (see, e.g., Chafe, 1968), and they have been trying to find a pattern behind the variability since decades ago.

One of the most researched syntactic operations and a kind of starting point for further studies was passivization. Chafe (1968) considered idioms to be single semantic units. He looked at verbal idiom's one-worded meaning on which he based his assumptions about the idiom. He illustrates it with the examples of *kick the bucket* and *pull someone's leg*:

> We are now regarding 'kick-the-bucket' as a single semantic unit much like 'die'. But 'die' cannot be passivized; it is an intransitive verb. idiom 'kick-the-bucket' is an intransitive verb also, and is no more subject to passivization than any other such verb. We can contrast it with the idiom 'pull-X's-leg', which is semantically a transitive verb, and which can therefore be passivized. (Chafe, 1968, p. 122)

This rule would apply, for instance, to the idiom *bury the hatchet*, which might be translated as *to reconcile*, which is often used in the passive in the meaning of "making people become friends again after an argument" (Deuter *et al.*, 2015, p. 1288). Nevertheless, by far, not every idiomatic phrase can be translated into one word as unambiguously (or at all) as *kick the bucket*. Therefore, this explanation only applies

to a restricted set of phrases. Chafe also studied internal modification of idioms which will be the focus of the following chapter.

A much more comprehensive study was conducted by Bruce Fraser, resulting in his dividing idioms according to their syntactic flexibility, or as he calls it, syntactic frozenness (Fraser, 1970). He created a hierarchy for idiomatic phrases, ranking from completely frozen, which do not allow any syntactic operations, to unrestricted idioms, as which, nonetheless, no idiom can be classified. The complete scale, including a few of Fraser's examples, is presented in the following table.

Table 3 Levels of idioms' syntactic frozenness

L6	Unrestricted	–
L5	Reconstruction	*lay down the law, pop the question*
L4	Extraction	*break the ice, hit the nail on the head*
L3	Permutation	*give away the show, put down one's foot*
L2	Insertion	*land a hand, bear witness to*
L1	Adjunction	*pull up stakes, kick the bucket*
L0	Completely frozen	*let off some steam, kick over the traces*

(based on Fraser, 1970, pp. 39-41)

As can be seen from Fraser's terms for levels one to five, he based the differentiation on certain operations and if they are permitted in the idioms. As mentioned before, L6 does not contain any idioms because for the phrases to belong in this category, they would have to allow clefting, which Fraser found to be impossible (see Fraser, 1970, p. 33). The hierarchy is characterised by the fact that "any idiom marked as belonging to one level is automatically marked as belonging to any lower level" (Fraser, 1970, p. 39). It means that any idiom that is labelled L4 allows not only extraction but also every operation lower in the list.

Fraser lists many examples for each level and summarizes that "idioms can be analysed as permitting certain types of operations [...] and they fall into a hierarchy of these operations" (pp. 41-42). Nevertheless, he does not provide a reason or explanation of why the idioms behave in this manner and on what their level of frozenness depends. That is a question Cutler (1982) tried to answer.

The hypothesis of the study was that the longer an idiom exists in a language, the more frozen it becomes. What Culter found is that "frozenness and age are not perfectly correlated, but there is a reliable tendency for the more frozen idioms to have been longer in the language" (p. 318). It was further suggested that there is a process of freezing affecting idioms (p. 319). Understandably, this could not be true for all idioms at all and would need to be further investigated.

Nonetheless, Fraser's theory was criticised as well, for example by Newmeyer (1974), who claimed that "given the meaning of an idiom and the meaning of its literal equivalent, one can predict – to a surprising degree – its syntactic behaviour" (p. 327). Using passivization as an exemplar, it is said that if the phrase's predicate can be used in the passive voice in its literal sense, the same goes for its idiomatic counterpart. Idioms *pull one's leg, pop the question,* or *spill the beans* are listed as examples to the rule, and the explanation seems simple: "One's leg can be pulled literally as well as idiomatically" (p. 329). The rule might seem rather too simple for idioms even at first read, and it, indeed, cannot be called accurate, as was concluded by Nunberg (1978).

He lists the phrases *throw in the sponge* and *pop the question* as one of the instances where Newmeyer's rule does not apply. Nuberg (1978) then concludes that "if the behavior of idioms can be predicted neither by form or meaning alone, then it must be due to the relation between the two" (p. 213). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Nunberg then divided idioms into three categories: normally decomposable, abnormally decomposable, and non-decomposable. Further, he studied passivization of idiomatic verb phrases.

Generally, when speakers use passive voice, they want to put the object (of the verb in active voice) in the foreground to thematize it. Therefore, it is possible to use passive with idioms that are easy to decompose (p. 218). On the other hand, non-decomposable idioms cannot be passivized because we cannot discern any relationship between the individual components and the phrase's idiomatic meaning. Similarly, Nunberg (1978) deems it odd to use abnormally decomposable idioms in passive (p. 228).

Nunberg then summarizes that "the criterion relevant for predicting the behavior of passive with idioms [...] is whether the components of the idioms refer separately to

components of the referent" (p. 228). Nevertheless, he admits that the rule does not apply unconditionally, and other factors may come into play, such as the semantics of the particular NP and the context in which the idiom is usually used. Similarly, the conclusion that Nunberg et al. (1994) come to is:

> We predict that the syntactic flexibility of a particular idiom will ultimately be explained in terms of the compatibility of its semantics with the semantics and pragmatics of various constructions. (p. 531)

The conclusion is similar to the one of Glucksberg and McGlone (2001). Although it is said that noncompositional idioms are, in general, less flexible, what constrains the phrases more than their type is mostly the semantics and pragmatics. Generally, the semantics of the idioms' constituents must be respected, and most importantly, the syntactic operation must serve a clear communicative purpose so that the idiom's meaning is understood in the specific context (pp. 84-85).

Yet another approach to the syntax of idiomatic phrases is presented by Schenk (1995). In his treating of idioms, it could be said that he is a representative of the so-called orthodox view because he considers all idioms to be noncompositional. The reason for it is that "a compound idiomatic expression corresponds to one primitive meaning expression" (p. 253), which for Shenk implies that the individual components of the phrases do not carry meaning (p. 269). What syntactic operations the idioms allow then depends on whether the individual operations are applicable to meaningless expressions.

In the list of operations that can be carried out on meaningless expressions, and therefore on idioms as well, Shenk (1995) mentions raising, as in "John believes the beans to be spilled" (p. 260), verb-second, or passivization (p. 262). Looking at the syntax of idioms in this way nevertheless presents several conflicts with other studies. In the case of passivization, for example, the fact that it is not permitted with a proportionate number of idioms is not addressed. Further, internal modification is here considered as not applicable on idioms, which is not true for all idiomatic phrases at all, as will be discussed later in this paper.

On the contrary, Bargmann and Sailer (2018) claim that non-compositionality itself does not provide any reliable clues as to idioms' syntactic behaviour. Moreover, they propose a view that is against the very definition of noncompositional idioms:

> Semantically non-decomposable idioms [...] can and should be analyzed as consisting of individual word-level lexical entries that combine according to the standard rules of syntax and contribute a piece of the meaning of the idiom. (pp. 1-2)

Rather than dwell on the possible restrictions of the idiom types then, they take on a different, multilingual approach. The flexibility of English, German, French and Estonian idiomatic phrases was examined. The results indicate that the restrictions indeed may be language-specific. For instance, topicalization, in general, is far more limited in English than in German, which has an impact on idioms' ability to undergo this operation. In conclusion, the syntactic flexibility of idioms might be caused by constraints of the particular language, not of the idiom (p.2).

2.3.1 Internal modification

Apart from passivization, a syntactic operation studied extensively in connection with idioms is the internal modification, meaning adding a constituent to the idiomatic phrase. It is mostly a modification of the idiom's noun phrase, as in *break the proverbial ice.* Nunberg (1978, and Nunberg et al., 1994) focused primarily on passivization, but he mentions modification as well, and according to his study, the same rules apply. That is, it depends on whether the components carry meaning or not. Therefore, "the NP's of normally decomposable idioms can be modified" (p. 229).

As was mentioned earlier, Chafe (1968) studied the internal modification of idioms as well, and he illustrates why it is mostly impossible. Once again, he uses the example of *kick the bucket* and claims that because the individual words do not convey the idiomatic meaning in any way, they are not semantically present; hence we cannot modify them. Literally, Chafe says that "we cannot modify a semantically nonexistent 'bucket'" (p. 122). On the other hand, Glucksberg and McGlone (2001) mention this

very idiom as one permitting this kind of operation: "Some idioms can also be modified internally, as in *he kicked the proverbial bucket*" (p. 69).[1]

Similar to Chafe, Schenk (1995) lists internal modification as a syntactic operation that can only be carried out on meaningful expressions. Thus, following Schenk's view of all idioms as noncompositional, it is impossible to perform on the phrases. It is not further investigated in the study, which leaves some questions behind as many authors' studies as well as numerous corpora show that speakers do modify idiomatic phrases. One possible explanation of this phenomenon is presented by Nicolas (1995).

Nicolas claims that "meaningful modification of idioms' parts does not require that the parts themselves have meaning" (p. 235). In fact, he came to a discovery that "at least 90% of V-NP idioms, including many usually regarded as completely frozen, appear to allow some form of (syntactically) internal modification" (p. 233). Therefore, the typological differences between idiomatic phrases should not play any role in determining their ability to undergo this operation.

What Nicolas argues is that any idiom-internal modification can be interpreted as a semantic modification of the whole idiom (p. 233). For example, *lend a willing hand* corresponds with "help willingly." So, the added component is syntactically an attribute modifying the NP but semantically an adverbial modifying the whole idiom (p. 236). Which idioms are more likely to accept which modifiers (Nicolas distinguishes, for instance, manner, viewpoint, or time modifiers) then depends on the formal structure of the idiom based on which Nicolas classifies the idioms into seven classes. Nevertheless, according to the study, it is possible to use some kind of modification with all idiom types.

A new perspective on the syntax of idioms was brought by O'Grady (1998), who claims that idioms are "subject to an important grammatical constraint" (p. 282). Namely, it is the continuity constraint, which is based on the principle that "the head

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[1] This inconsistency hints to the general problem of the idiom *kick the bucket*. It is frequently (if not always) used as an example in the studies, although it is seldom used anywhere else than in research papers. Therefore, it is hard to say what operation can or cannot be realized with the phrase since speakers do not use it. The researchers, then, may work with their own linguistic intuition or with old data. Either way, the final assessment might not mirror the actual situation in the language.

licences its dependants in that its syntactic and semantic properties determine the number and/or type of other elements with which it can or must occur" (p. 283). According to the study, it provides an explanation for why modification can be added to compositional idioms. The addition simply should not alter the licensing relationship between the individual items (p. 286). If this requirement is met, the idiom can be modified.

As can be seen, the hypotheses as to idioms' syntactic flexibility, especially their ability to passivize and accept internal modification, vary greatly. The next part of the paper consists of a corpora-based analysis, which will try to highlight some of the views as possible and some as nonapplicable.

3 Material and Method

3.1 Aim of the Study

The general aim of this paper is to examine the historical development of the selected idioms, their frequency, and possible varieties. Further, their syntactic flexibility will be explored, more specifically if they appear in passive voice and internally modified. The findings will then be compared to the hypotheses of the authors cited in the previous chapter, concerning both the extent of such modifications and the rules behind them.

It is expected that the idioms' flexibility as evidenced in the corpora will be greater than stated in the theoretical works and that the reasons and rules for it will be manifold. It seems probable that it will be an interplay of the idioms' and their individual constituents' semantics as well as pragmatics. Further, it is possible that the role of each will differ depending on the particular idiom.

3.2 Material

The material for this paper consists of idiomatic phrases selected from previously cited works, especially Fraser (1970), Gibbs & Nayak (1989), and Nicolas (1995). Initially, fifteen idioms, all being three-word verbal phrases, were chosen. Based on preliminary research (taking the date of first appearance and overall frequency in the corpora into consideration primarily), six expressions were chosen for a more thorough analysis. These are *keep one's word*, *speak one's mind, lend a hand, bury the hatchet, rock the boat,* and *toe the line*.

3.3 Method

The research was conveyed with the help of the Old English Dictionary (online) and four corpora. The first database was English Historical Book Collection (EHBC), which combines EEBO (Early English Books Online), ECCO (Eighteenth Century

Collections Online), and the Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans. The collection contains texts printed between the years 1473 and 1820.

PCEEC (The Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence), which contains even earlier texts, more specifically letters from circa 1410 to 1695, was consulted, too. Nevertheless, not many examples of idioms were found there, and so it is only a secondary source of data. The use of idioms in the 19th and 20th centuries was examined in COHA (Corpus of Historical American English) and Hansard (Corpus of British Parliament Speeches). COHA is a balanced corpus containing a variety of texts, for example, from fiction, Time magazine, movie scripts, or news from the 1820s to 2010s. Hansard, on the other hand, is very focused, as it contains only the speeches from the British Parliament from 1803 to 2005.

In the English Historical Book Collection, accessed via *sketchengine.eu*, the research was done using the concordance CQL search. In the query, the lemma of the idiom's verb was searched, although consequently, the different forms of the verb were written down and searched to verify that the lemma query covered all the examples. The specific queries, then, were [lemma="keep"], and [word= "keep|keepe|keepeth|keepst|keepest|keeps|kept|keeping"], and the same for *hold, speak, tell, say, lend* and *bury*. It was then specified that the noun (*word, mind, hand, hatchet*) of the idiom should appear on the right from the verb in the proximity of the maximum of three words. The same applies to the search in PCEEC (accessed via *www.korpus.cz*). When searching for the idiom in the passive voice, the opposite was done. That is, the main query was [lemma= "hatchet"], and the context was specified as containing the lemma "bury" within three words to the right.

To eliminate cases in which the words did not create the needed phrase, the tool "frequency" was used, which shows the rate of recurrence of different words right after the verb form. Then, the ones that were not in agreement with the phrase's construction (such as a comma, punctuation, or any word that cannot be part of the idiomatic expression) were excluded from the search. Further, the results were sorted by release year of the documents.

COHA and Hansard were accessed via *english-corpora.org*, and so the queries for the two databases were the same. The verb was spelled in capital letters, which signifies

it is a lemma, and the results would include all its different forms. An asterisk was put after the verb, which stands for any word, and the noun after that. When searching for internal modifications or passive forms, more asterisks were put between the verb and the noun to ensure the search covers all the possible variations. Table 5 shows the specific queries, taking the idiom *bury the hatchet* as an exemplar.

Table 4 The queries for *bury the hatchet* in COHA and Hansard

The idiom	The query
Bury the hatchet	BURY * hatchet
	BURY * * hatchet
	hatchet * buried
	hatchet * * buried
	hatchet * * * buried

Both list and chart display were used during research. The list display shows the specific retrieved constructions and their absolute frequency over the centuries. The chart display reveals both absolute and relative frequency of all the results of the search in each decade. As the queries were rather specific, only in a minimal number of cases the results were not the wanted phrasal construction; hence they were handled manually. Further, confidence intervals were estimated with the help of corpus calculator (via *korpus.cz/calc*), using $\alpha = 0.05$, and inserted in the graphs.

The sample, which can be found in the appendix, is compiled of examples from the corpora relevant for this study. Each example represents a certain phenomenon, like the first instance found in the corpus, passivization, internal modification, or other possible varieties of the idiom. Further, some quotations are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary, as they are sometimes the earliest instances of the idioms.

4 Analysis

4.1 Keep One's Word

The idiomatic phrase *keep one's word* is the earliest one from the idioms analysed in this paper. According to the OED, it was used already in the Old English period. Nevertheless, to look further into the usage and meanings at that time would overreach the scope and ambition of this research. It can be said, though, that the idiom's shape, as well as usage and meaning, had changed over the centuries until it stabilized at today's form *keep one's word* and meaning "to honour one's promise" (Oxford English Dictionary, n. d.).

The first unambiguous example, which agrees with PDE usage, though in meaning more than form, comes from the first half of the 16th century and can be found in OED:

(1) They fered that ye Turke *wolde not holde his worde*.

In the corpus, this variant with the verb *hold* first appears in 1581. It was never truly productive, though. After eliminating non-idiomatic constructions, we are left with a frequency of 0,15 ipm (instances per million tokens), and the last example comes as early as the end of the 18th century.

Today's form of the idiom was more frequent from the beginning, then. The realistic numbers, though, are very difficult to extract. Even after examining the context and excluding numerous examples, the corpus shows frequency 2,54 ipm, which must still be inaccurate. The phrase took on different meanings apart from the idiomatic one as we know it today. Undoubtedly in most of such cases, the phrase is "keeping God's words," meaning paying attention to it and behaving accordingly:

(4) Be good vnto me thy seruant, O Lord, yt I may liue & *keep thy word*.

Approximate distribution of today's meaning on one hand and other meanings on the other in the 16th to 18th century can be ascertained from a random sample of 100 examples from the EHBC database. The results can be seen in the following graph.

Further, it is evident that the idiomatic meaning had become the more frequent one by the end of the 18th century.

Graph 1 Distribution of *keep one's word* in PDE vs. other meanings shown within a random sample from EHBC
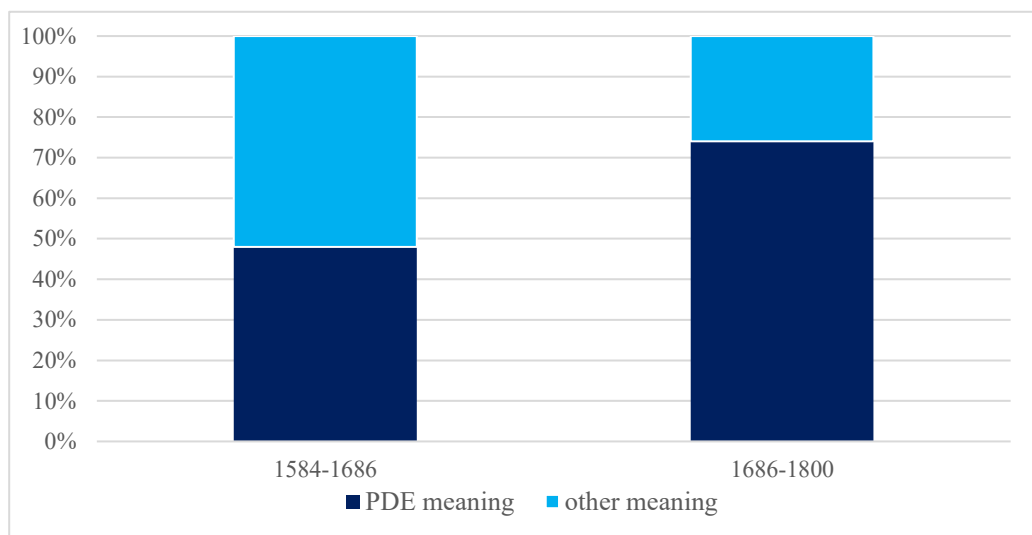
In the 19th century, the idiom saw an increase in its usage. There seems to be a difference between the registers of COHA and Hansard, which the graph below displays. The lower frequency of the idiom in Hansard may be due to the formality of the speeches, which it consists of.

Graph 2 Usage of *keep one's word* as indicated in COHA and Hansard Corpus
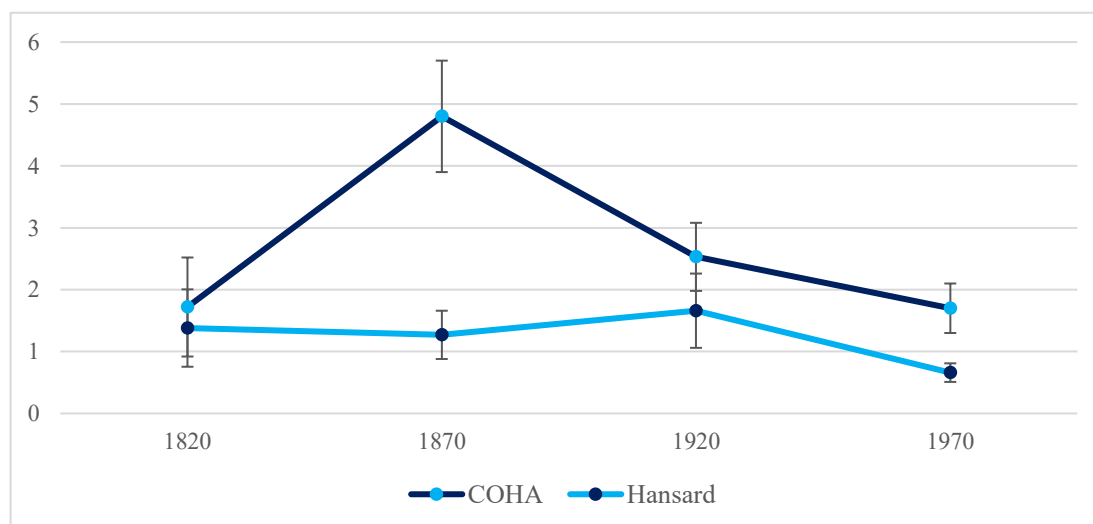
The frequency of the idiom is expected to be not as great as the graph shows because some percentage of the numbers constitute non-idiomatic constructions. Still, the discrepancy between the two corpora is evident. In American English, the idiom saw a high peak around the year 1870, and since then, its use declines. The latter is also true for English of the British Parliament, but the peak came in the 1920s and is negligible.

Further, the idiom shows some degree of syntactic flexibility. In the EHBC database, only one instance of a passive construction of the phrase with its idiomatic meaning was found (see example 9 in the appendix). Similarly, in COHA, two isolated examples appeared. Several more examples can be observed in Hansard, though they reach the frequency of mere 0.01 ipm.

Lastly, the idiom can be internally modified by an adjective. Although only in two cases, it appears already at the beginning of the 17th century:

(13) And yet you heare, he *holds his manly words*.

(14) I did ingage my selfe by promise to compose this booke, and now I am inforced to *hold my honest word*.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the modified idiom appears with the frequency of 0.03 ipm in COHA and 0.02 ipm in Hansard. The most recurrent modifications were *pledged, royal,* or *plighted.* In addition, a few examples of nominalization emerged from the corpora, namely in these forms: *keeping of my word* and *keeping one's word*. Even though such modifications are not very numerous, their usage shows that the idiom is not completely frozen, and its transformation is possible without losing its idiomatic meaning.

4.2   Speak One's Mind

The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms defines the idiom *to speak your mind* as to "express your feelings or opinions frankly" (The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms, 2004, p. 271). Similarly to the previous idiom, it took a few centuries before its today's meaning and form were definitively established. The verb *speak* formerly alternated with *say* and *tell*, as was indicated by the OED and confirmed by the corpora. The

earliest occurrence of the idiom (in the form of *say one's mind*) was found in PCEEC, and comes from 1534:

> (20) I am of my duety to God and the Kinges Grace bounden </paren> truly *say my mind*, and discharge my conscience, as becometh a pore honest true man.

As can be seen, it is used in a religious context, which was often the case in the early examples. In the most specialized sense, the phrase may be interpreted as "to confess a person's sins." But in a broader sense, the meaning is "to tell the truth," and if one goes even further and adopts a more general stance, one could get today's interpretation as well. Nevertheless, this is only one of the situations in which the phrase was used, which is shown on the next two examples from years 1545 and 1549, respectively:

> (22) What good thynges mē speake of shoting & what good thinges shooting bringes to men as my wit & knowlege will serue me, gladly shall I *say my mind*. </s><s> But how the thing is to be learned I will surely leue to some other which bothe for greater experience in it, & also for their lerninge, can set it out better than I.

> (23) Wherfore bee not afraied, say what ye will, and thinke with your selfe that ye may safely *say your mind* to me, for assuraūce wherof I promes you faithfully that I will open it to no man, neither speake anye thinge therof to anye man lyuing, but as you shalbe contented.

In example (22), by using the phrase *say my mind*, the speaker probably means he will say what he knows about the given subject, possibly even his opinion, which would bring it nearer to our current understanding of the idiom. Similarly, example (23) appears to be semantically rather close to PDE. The phrase surely seems to mean to reveal one's opinion or thoughts that have been kept secret so far.

The phrase with the verb *tell* appears mostly in the form *tell somebody one's mind*, respecting the verb's valency. It appears later in the corpus, in the year 1570, where it is used in a religious context, the same as the very first example. But only nine years later, the phrase is used with adverbial post-modification *plainly*, which suggests today's meaning:

> (25) I *tell* yée *my mind* plainely, I will not flatter any man.

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Nevertheless, the meaning was not consistent after that. At times, it stood for expressing one's idea, but frequently it was used in rather specific terms, for saying what was on a person's mind in the immediate context. It suggests that the basis of this idiom is a metaphor, in which the mind stood for one's opinion, truth, idea, knowledge, or simply one's thoughts. Accordingly, the phrase seems to be an apt example of a compositional idiom, as we can safely discern the individual components' contribution to the meaning.

The idiom's form as used today appeared around the same time as the previous variant, and all three forms alternated for several decades. Nevertheless, the wording *speak one's mind* seems to have a more consistent meaning from the very beginning, which might be the reason for why it prevailed. In graph 3 below, the development of the use of the three forms can be seen.

Graph 3 The alternation of *speak one's mind, say one's mind,* and *tell one's mind* from 1550 to 1950
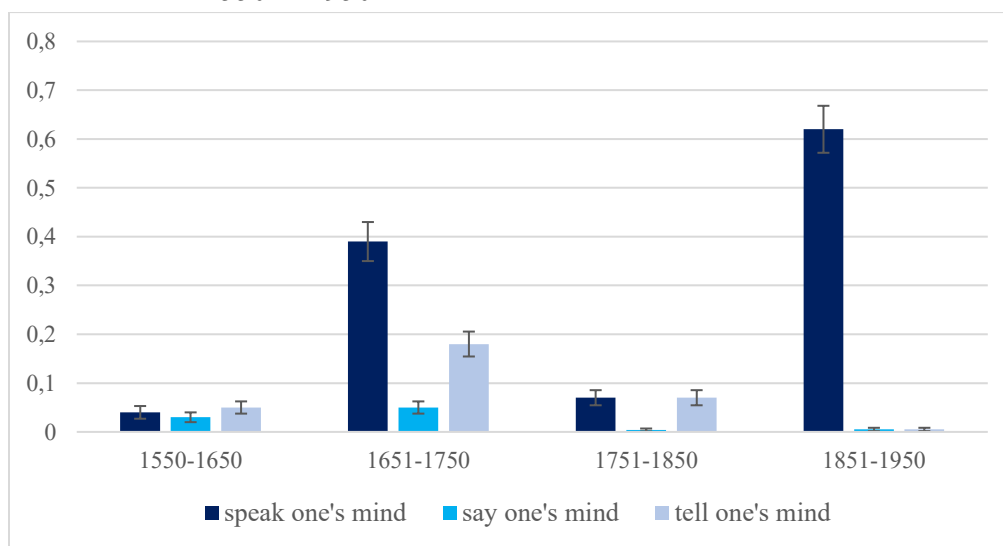
The vertical scale shows the relative frequency of the particular form of the idiom in the corpora (i.e., instances per million). The numbers are not exact, for it is possible that some of those examples were used in different, non-idiomatic contexts, however great was the effort to eliminate such cases. The low occurrence of the idiom in the period from 1751 to 1850 is most probably due to the weak coverage by the corpora in the early 19th century and therefore is not relevant for conclusions.

Passive constructions were not found in the corpora at all, but internally modified forms of the idiom *speak one's mind* are also included in the results. Even though they do not make a large share, a certain rise can be seen. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the phrase was mostly modified by adding an adverbial as *plainly* or *freely.* In COHA and Hansard Corpus, though, internal modification starts appearing. Examples of such are *speak one's full mind, speak one's whole mind* or *speak one's honest mind*, which were the most numerous. Therefore, it is indicative of a change toward flexibility, which would be worthwhile to further investigate in contemporary data.

We can see clearly from the graph that the idiom came to use around the half of the 16th century. At that time, the three forms alternated, and their distribution was fairly even. From around one hundred years later, the use of *tell* and *say* was gradually declining, eventually resulting in *speak one's mind* as the only possibility.

4.3   Lend a Hand

The idiom *lend a hand* is a very frequent one in the corpus (0.78 ipm in EHBC), which is probably due to its meaning to help, "assist in an action or enterprise" (Oxford Dictionary of Idioms, 2004, p. 134). It appears as early as 1563 in the EEBO database, and similarly to the previous idioms, it was often used in religious context in the early instances.

> (38) So mayst thou yet at length find ende / for this thy myserye. / O Son *lend me thy hand*, yf that / thou art a Paracide?

> (39) […] That God will neuer *lend his hand* to the wicked, but contrariwife:will put the enemies of good men to fhame, and haue pitie of th▪ good men continually.

As can be seen from the examples, possessive pronouns were used instead of the indefinite article at first, and often a personal pronoun with the function of an indirect object was added as well, as in example (38). Although the first instance of the idiom with the indefinite article appears already in 1592, it was a minor variant until the 18th century. Its development from the 16th to 19th century can be found in the graph

below, which shows the distribution of the idiom with the article on the one hand and the possessive pronoun on the other as represented in EHBC.

Graph 4 Distribution of *lend a hand* vs. *lend [possessive pronoun] hand* in EHBC
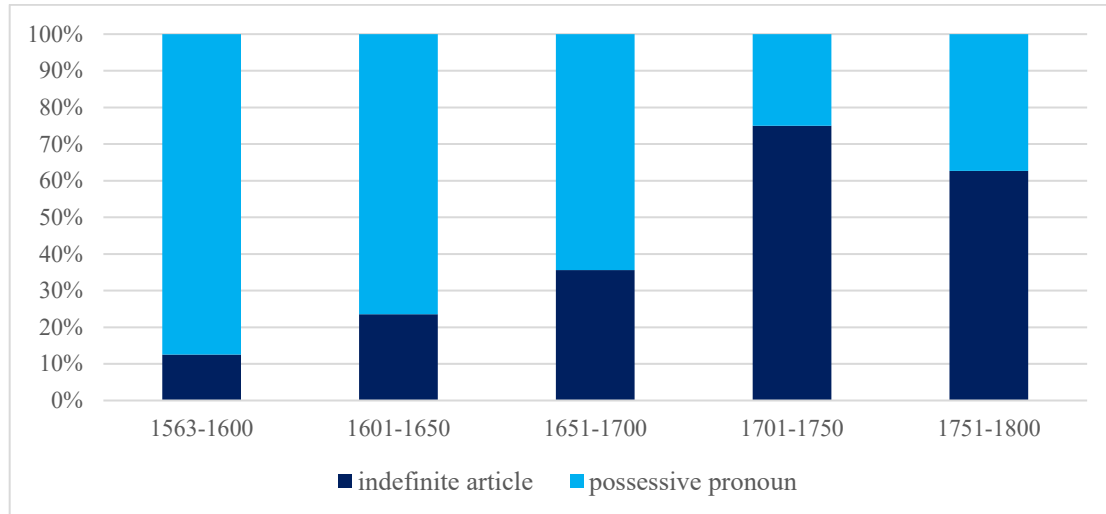
As is clear from the graph, the indefinite article has enjoyed a stable rise since the 17th century. In the period from 1701 to 1750, the corpus shows a very small number of the idiom's occurrences, and so no conclusions can be drawn from the peak, and consequent decrease of the indefinite article as is indicated by the graph. After all, COHA and Hansard corpus show that the trend of the rising article continues in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the pronouns appear only scarcely.

Apart from inserting an indirect object, an attribute is often added to modify the noun *hand.* In most cases, it is the adjective *helping.* This form of the idiom appears in the corpus already in 1574. As seen from the following examples, such modification was permissible after both the indefinite article and the possessive pronoun.

   (41) […] prerogative in governing the Commonwealth, that can *lend a helping hand* to brave and vertuous men, whom poverty or some other calamity doth keepe downe […].

    (42) To *lend our helping hand*, when our neighbours bodie is in any daunger.

The frequency of the idiom's different forms in COHA and Hansard Corpus are displayed in graph 5. Besides the much greater frequency of the idiom in COHA, it is

clear that the form *lend a hand* is the most common one in both corpora. Further, the second most recurrent construction is the one with the internal adjectival modification, of which almost 80% in COHA and 88% in Hansard is composed of *lend a helping hand*. Other adjectives were, for example, *willing* or *friendly*.

Graph 5 Frequency of the different forms of the idiom *lend a hand* in COHA
and Hansard
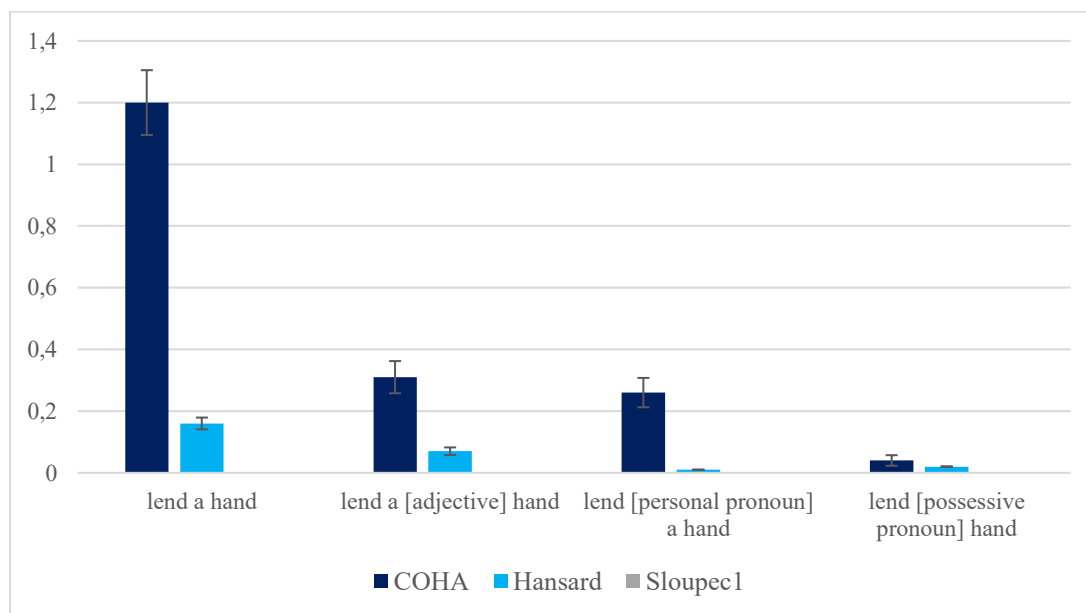
In the British Parliament, represented by the Hansard corpus, the two last constructions, as shown in the graph, are both marginal. In COHA, on the other hand, there is a considerable difference between them. The form *lend [personal pronoun] a hand*, represented by the example (47), is only slightly less frequent than the internally modified one, whereas the occurrence of the construction with the possessive pronoun (48) is significantly lower. Other constructions, such as *lend [possessive pronoun] [adjective] hand*, appeared only very rarely.

(47) I may need some help with this business and you're fixed just right to *lend me a hand*.

(48) He affirmed that no man, without Heaven's especial warrant, should attempt their conversion, lest while he *lent his hand* to draw them from the slough, he should himself be precipitated into its lowest depths.

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Passive constructions appeared only scarcely in the EHBC database with the frequency less than 0.01 ipm. No examples were found in COHA, and in Hansard there was only one, although rather noteworthy. Firstly, the noun is modified by an attribute, and secondly, there is a cleft sentence:

(56) Therefore, someone has to be able to lend a hand and it is almost, though not entirely, invariably *a female hand that is lent*.

As can be seen, the idiom has already been mentioned in the sentence, which might make it easier to understand it even in its passive and clefted form. Even though there is only one example, it shows that the idiom is well established in this context and in the speaker's vocabulary, since it can be transformed and still retain the idiomatic meaning.

To summarize, the idiom *lend a hand* has always shown considerable diversity in its form. Since its earliest appearance in the 16th century, essentially all the constructions possible today have been used, but its distribution has changed. Most significantly, the construction with the possessive pronoun was most frequent until the 18th century, and since then, the indefinite article prevails. Further, the internally modified variant of the idiom is very frequent, especially in COHA.

4.4 Bury the Hatchet

Bury the hatchet, which means to "end a quarrel or conflict and become friendly" (The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms, 2004, p. 42), is an example of a quasi-metaphorical idiom. As mentioned in OED, it alludes to the "custom among American Indian peoples of burying a hatchet when peace has been made after fighting" (Oxford English Dictionary, n. d.). It is further evidenced with a quotation originating in 1680:

(57) Meeting wth ye Sachem the[y] came to an agreemt and *buried two Axes* in ye Ground;..which ceremony to them is more significant & binding than all Articles of Peace the Hatchet being a principal weapon wth y^m.

Further, phrases with opposite meanings work with the same metaphor. To start fighting or begin a war can be expressed by saying *to take up the hatchet*, and *to dig up the hatchet* means "to resume fighting after a period of peace" (Oxford English

Dictionary, n. d.). As may be observed from the OED example from 2015, these phrases are still in use as well:

(60) Unable to set aside his pride, Trump *dug up the hatchet* once more.

The idiom *bury the hatchet* does not appear in great numbers in the 17th and 18th centuries[2], though from the very beginning, it is used in the active, as well as passive voice and as a nominal phrase (*burying the hatchet*). Table 5 below shows its relative frequency and percentage of occurrence, i.e., what share of the overall appearances of the idiomatic expression the individual forms constitute.

Table 5 Distribution of the different forms of *bury the hatchet* in EHBC

Form	Frequency (ipm)	Percentage
Active	0.015	56.5
Passive	0.01	30.4
Nominalization	< 0.01	13.1

There were a few examples of the phrase being used non-idiomatically in the passive, describing and explaining the actual ritual, such as:

(64) *The painted hatchet is buried* in the ground, as a memorial that all animoſities between the contending nations have ceaſed, and a peace taken place.

Such examples might explain why the idiom can be used in the passive without losing its idiomatic meaning. Because the literal meaning can be passivized, the idiom can inherit it and remain unambiguous since it alludes to the same ritual. Further, personal pronouns were used instead of the definite article occasionally. Nevertheless, after the end of the 18th century, the article became the norm, and the pronouns appeared only very marginally.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the idiom's usage saw a rise, which is especially noticeable in COHA, where its overall frequency reaches 0.28 ipm. The productivity

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[2] The variant *bury the axe* was searched as well.

is also true for modifications of the idiom, most importantly passivization. Examples of such construction from the corpus are:

(66) If all white men were like him, there would be no more fighting, for *the hatchet would be buried* forever.

(67) And when at last the fires burned low and the final song was sung, and it was declared that *the hatchet was buried* forever and all feelings of animosity between the lower classmen were at an end […].

Graph 6 shows the percentage of active versus passive voice in the 19th and 20th centuries in COHA. As can be seen, most of the occurrences of the idiom from the 19th century actually were in the passive. After that, the active voice took the lead as also the overall frequency of the idiom rapidly increased (from 0.05 to 0.2 ipm).

Graph 6 *Bury the hatchet* in the active and passive voice in COHA
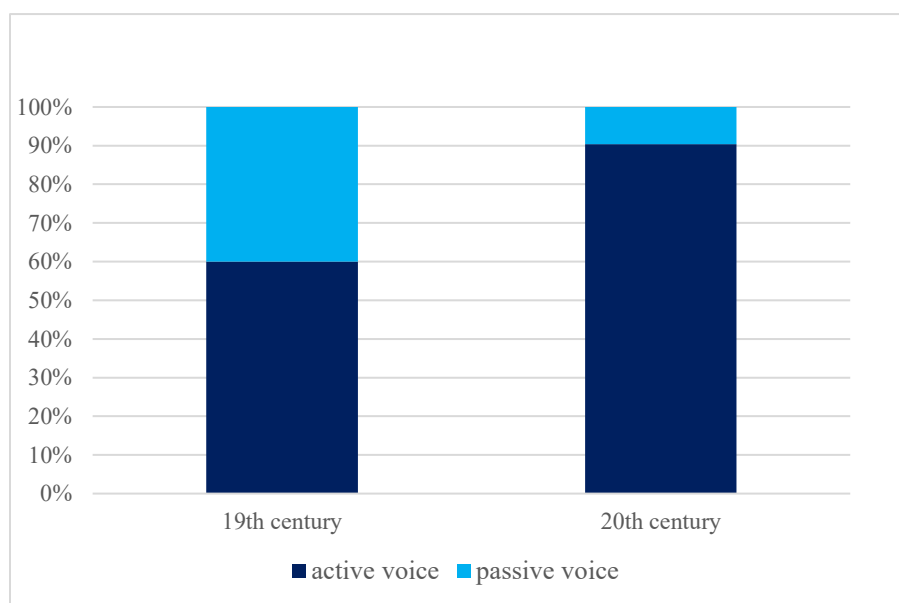
Graph 7 *Bury the hatchet* in the active and passive voice in Hansard
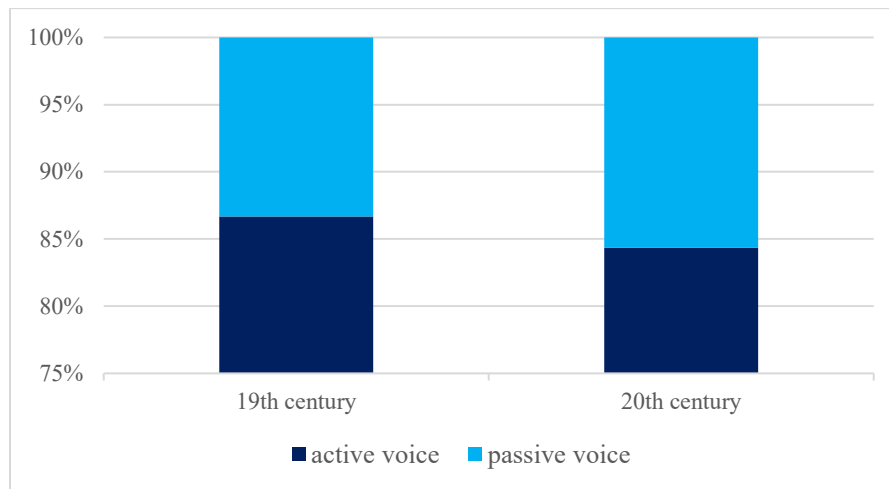
In Hansard corpus, the trend is opposite, as is displayed in graph 7. With the rising frequency of the idiom in general, its usage in the passive increases as well, though only slightly. Moreover, the percentage of the passive construction in the 20th century is greater than in COHA, as well as the diversity of the phrase, which is not limited to one tense or modality:

(69) […] time has been given by this Measure for healing to take place: I therefore think that at the end of three months it is right and proper that *the hatchet should be buried* […].

(70) He was very much mellower, very much more friendly to those sections of the Press that he had been previously attacking, and I thought that somehow or another *the hatchet had been buried* […].

(71) […] but for the action of the right hon: Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr: Churchill), who has endeavoured to bring about a class war, *the hatchet would have been buried* long ago.

In addition, several other transformations of the idiom were found in the corpus, such as internal modification, nominalization, and other constructions:

(72) When it comes to tourism, they seem to *bury the political hatchet* and get on with the job […].

(73) […] nothing less than political timidity and a fear of consequences led to *the burying of the hatchet* and the return of the Wisconsin Senator to the Senate with the slate clean.

(74) […] this situation is one that may only be resolved by patience, restraint and continuing negotiations: It is *a hatchet that must be buried*, and buried soon.

It is evident that the idiom *bury the hatchet* appears in many modifications, as it has since it began to be used at the end of the 17th century, and so is far from frozen. Moreover, though showed in only a few examples, the idiom can be internally modified by an adjective without losing its idiomatic meaning. Further, Nicolas's (1995) argument must be rejected in case of this idiom, for it is not true that the adjective would function semantically as a modification of the whole phrase, which can be seen in the example (72). The phrase cannot be paraphrased *to bury the hatchet politically* as it should, following Nicolas's thesis. On the contrary, *political* modifies, more precisely specifies, the *hatchet* both syntactically and semantically.

4.5   Rock the Boat

The idiom *rock the boat* is one of the later ones, emerging at the beginning of the 20th century. As is stated in OED, the phrase means "to disturb the equilibrium of a situation; to stir up trouble" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Although the first example of the phrase with its idiomatic meaning comes from 1919 in the corpora, OED cites fiction *Peggy O'Neal* (1903) as the first instance:

(75) The worst that both of us might do of public evil would hardly serve to *rock the boat.*

In the COHA database, *rock the boat* appears with the frequency of 0.37 ipm, with most of the examples coming from the 1960s (0.86 ipm). Nevertheless, the corpus includes a large amount of data from fiction, newspapers, etc.; therefore, some of the examples were used in a literal sense. Out of the sample from the 1960s, the literal usage of the phrase constitutes 8 %.

As for alternations of the idiom, there was only one instance of passive in the corpus and several examples of internal modification with the frequency of 0.02 (forming 4 % of all occurrences). These were only isolated instances often used in very specific situations, as shown in examples (81) and (82). Further, the modified variant of the idiom did not appear until 1947.

(81) Although Brown prefers Indianapolis as the fourth team, he's never been an owner who *rocks the NFL boat*. For that reason, he will support the majority if he believes it's in the league's best interests.

(82) Stockholders began asking questions; so did other branch managers, cramped in straight salaries. Bracy was *rocking the Kroger boat*. Early this year Kroger officials went to see Bracy about putting a ceiling on his earnings

The idiom's situation is somewhat different in the corpus of the British Parliament. The phrase first occurred in 1919, and it is already used idiomatically (in contrast with COHA). The literal meaning of the phrase does not appear at all in the corpus, which might be due to the phrase's meaning and the setting of the Parliament, in which its idiomatic meaning is more relevant. The idiom's frequency throughout the 20th and the beginning of 21st century is 0.12 ipm with its peak in 1990s (0.35 ipm). Several examples of passive voice were found in the corpus though they were rather sporadic.

Internally modified variants create 5.6 % of all the idiom occurrences. It might not seem much different from the percentage found in COHA, but the modifications in Hansard Corpus seem to be better established. As was mentioned before, the examples from COHA were isolated and often tied to a very specific context. Of course, the examples from the Hansard corpus are all connected with the context of the British Parliament. Still, some of them reoccur, and they are not as specialized as the examples from COHA, which are more difficult to understand without the knowledge of a broader context (cf. example 82). The following examples come from the Hansard corpus:

(86) I am amazed that, even given the natural inclination of many farmers not to *rock the Conservative boat*, they have not been more angry in their comments and positive in their actions

(87) I say to my noble friend Lord Barnett, with the greatest of affection and respect, that it seems to be madness, just over one year into devolution, to think about *rocking the financial boat*.

(88) If we had done so, we should have been accused of *rocking the national boat* and therefore causing a flight from the pound.

Moreover, a few examples of the nominal phrase *rocking of the boat* with the idiomatic meaning can be found in Hansard as opposed to COHA. Further, *rocking the boat* seems to function as a noun phrase more often in Hansard than in COHA. Graph 8 shows the percentile distribution of the phrase in active voice, passive voice, and as a noun phrase. The Hansard Corpus shows fairly larger diversity (which is true for internal modification as well, as mentioned earlier), and so it could be said that the idiom seems to be more flexible in the environment of the Parliament.

Although further research would be necessary, this might be indicative of the role of pragmatics on the flexibility of idioms. If the idiom's structure and semantics offer a possibility for transformation, what operations will be performed on the idiom might depend on the register, recipient, speaker's intention, and overall context. It is simply fitting, and it serves its purpose to modify this particular idiom in speeches in the Parliament more often than in fiction.

Graph 8 Flexibility of *rock the boat* in COHA and Hansard
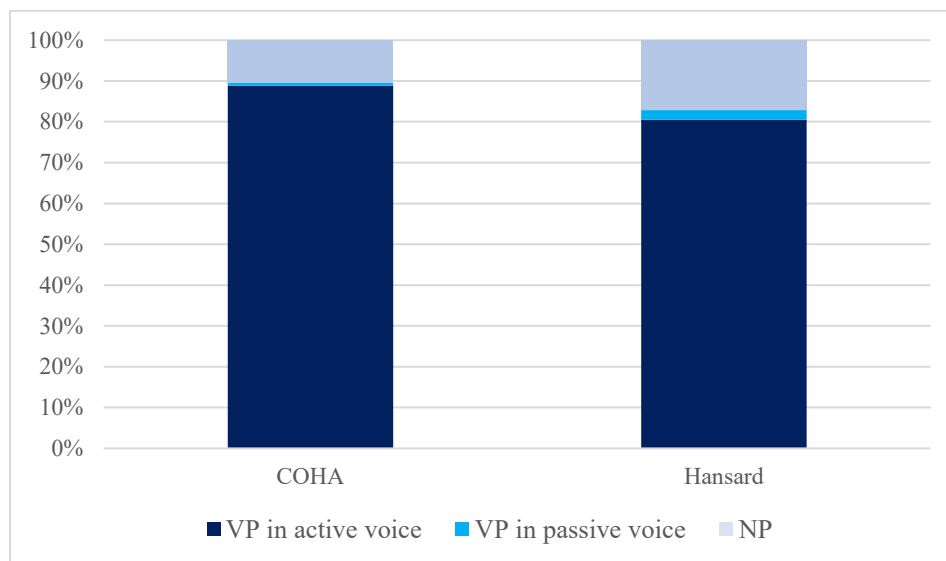
4.6 Toe the Line

For the idiom *toe the line,* the previous conclusion might apply even more noticeably, and thus it could support the hypothesis. The phrase's meaning is "to accept the authority, principles, or policies of a particular group, especially under pressure"

(Oxford Dictionary of Idioms, 2004, p. 294). But coming from the literal meaning, to stand with one's toes on a line, the phrase can also mean "to present oneself in readiness for a race, contest, or undertaking" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). In this analysis, the earlier mentioned sense is of primary importance.

The idiom first appears in the variant *toe the mark* in the COHA database, with the frequency 0.19 ipm, although it is often used in a literal sense. In the corpus, circa 35% constitute literal usage of the phrase (resulting from manual examination of the examples) though it is sometimes difficult to determine its meaning based on the restricted context. The first examples of the idiomatic phrase come from the 1850s:

> (91) I don't keep none o' yer cussed overseers; I does my own overseeing; and I tell you things is seen to. You's every one on ye got to *toe the mark*, I tell ye.

Toe the line appears later, namely in 1905 in COHA. It reaches the overall frequency of 0.16, which is slightly lower than *toe the mark*. However, the variant with *line* is used almost exclusively in the idiomatic sense, and the literal usage is very much marginal. Moreover, it seems to be the prevailing variant, as can be seen from graph 9, which shows that the frequency of *toe the mark*, in contrast to *toe the line*, significantly declined over the 20th century.

Graph 9 Development of occurrence of *toe the mark* and *toe the line* in COHA
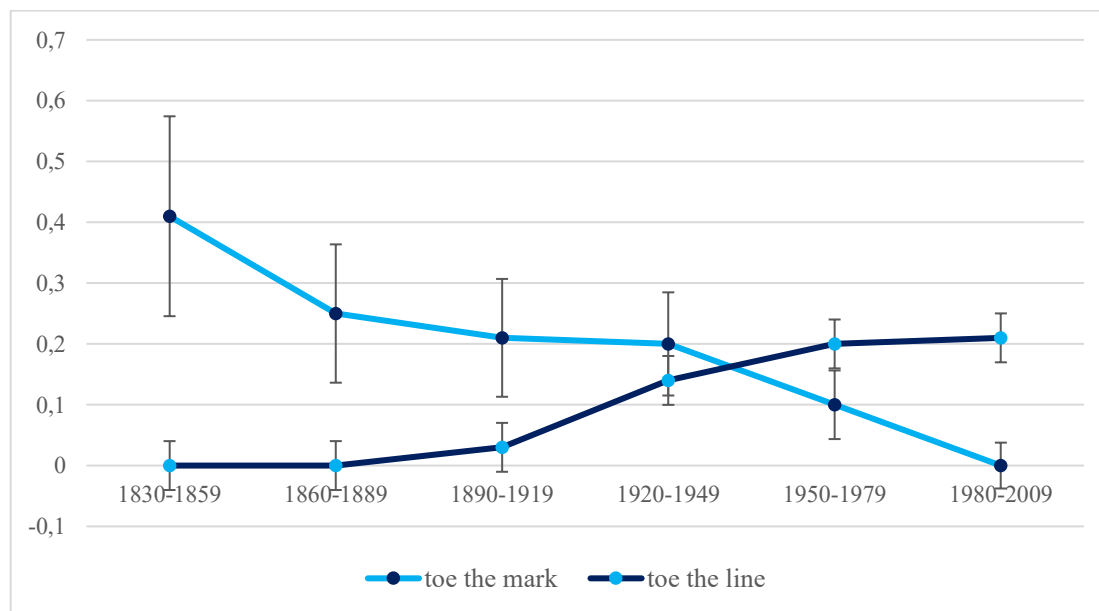
In COHA, no passive construction and only a few instances of internal modification were found. The form *toe the mark* appeared modified in the corpus only in one instance (see example 95 below). There were more numerous examples of modified *toe the line* (examples 96-98), but the only modification that repeated several times was *party;* others were only isolated occurrences. After excluding phrases used literally, the frequency is 0.03 ipm (around 11% of all the phrase's instances, including the variant *to the mark*). Further, other modifications of the expression, such as example (99) illustrates, appeared, though only scarcely.

(95) As remarkable as the sudden rebellious uprising in which pork-loving Congressmen had threatened to tear the Administration's Relief Bill apart only the week prior (TIME, June 7), was the willingness with which most of them *toed the Administration mark* last week.

(96) […] a campaign designed to intimidate his remaining opponents in the leadership, and to make them, toe the party line as he defined it.

(97) He also marries Carey, but, like all geniuses in fiction, is too much of a heel to toe the married line.

(98) The Soviet Union's lissome Galina Ulanova, 44, a celebrated ballerina who also nimbly *toes the political line* […].

(99) Senator John Kerry, who has no biological children with his current (second) wife, says marriage should be reserved for procreation, and, with few exceptions, the others *toe that line* too.

In Hansard corpus, the variant *toe the mark* appears with the frequency less than 0.01 ipm. Moreover, the instances are restricted to the period from 1890 to 1919. The very first occurrence of the idiom is already in the form of *toe the line* in 1892. The idiom's frequency in the corpus (in its non-modified form) reaches 0.27 ipm. But as it is clear from graph 10, displaying the idiom's developing frequency in the corpus, it peaked early on (namely in the 1910s), and from that point, its use has been steadily declining. The asterisks are used in the graph legend because the results showed that possessive pronouns or an indefinite article are occasionally used instead of the customary definite article.

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As in COHA, the idiom did not appear in the passive in Hansard. Internally modified variants of the phrase, on the other hand, did, and their frequency can also be seen in the graph. In contrast to the non-modified form, its frequency has been growing since its first appearance in 1902. The most recurrent attribute modifying the noun *line* is *party,* followed by *government* (see examples 105 and 106 below), but many other modifications appeared in the corpus. In fact, 24 different modifications were found, some of them used only once, fitting to a specific context.

> (105) I say that the Colonial Territories owe him a great deal chiefly because, when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies, he refused to *toe the party line*.

> (106) […] who are disciplined and, in fact, dismissed unless they *toe the government line*.

Graph 10 Development of the frequency of *toe * line* and *toe * * line* in Hansard
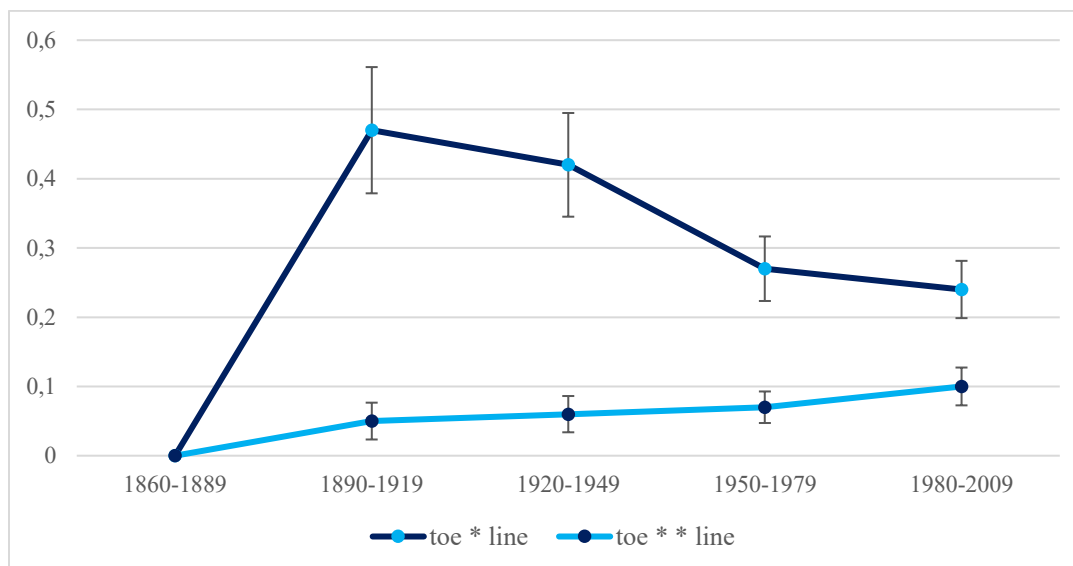
The internal modification of this idiom in the corpus seems to be well established and productive. Such variant of the idiom constitutes almost 20% of all the occurrences, which is significantly higher than in COHA. Further, the attributes are much more diverse, and as mentioned before, its usage has been rising steadily. Therefore, we can

conclude that the idiom seems to be more flexible in the context of the British Parliament than in the written texts of COHA.

It cannot be explained on account of the idiom's age, as it appears later in Hansard than COHA. The reason might be, as was already suggested for the previous idiom, of pragmatic nature. Firstly, the idiom as such appears in higher frequency in the Hansard corpus, creating a solid foundation for its further development. Then, modifications can be added without causing problems with understanding. The environment of the Parliament seems suitable for frequent usage of the phrase as such and also makes the modifications convenient.

5 Conclusion

Idioms are a language phenomenon that enjoys much attention from linguists as it is a heterogenous group, which is difficult to even define accurately. This paper presented the definition(s) and typology of idiomatic phrases and tried to summarize the most prominent studies on their syntactic flexibility, most importantly their ability to passivize and be modified internally. The conclusions of the papers were often found to be in conflict, and thus the practical part attempted at resolving some of the inconsistencies.

The analysis was conducted on the basis of data from four corpora: English Historical Book Collection, Parsed Corpus of English Early Correspondence, Corpus of Historical American English, and Hansard, and the usage of six idioms, formed of a three-word verb phrase, was studied. The aim was to examine the idioms' development from their earliest occurrences to the beginning of the 21st century, as well as their syntactic flexibility and variability.

It was found that most of the selected idioms appeared in various forms before one construction became relatively fixed. *Keep one's word* initially alternated with *hold one's word*; *speak one's mind* with *say one's mind* and *tell one's mind*. Furthermore, these phrases were initially used in more than one meaning. The idiom *lend a hand* was found in different variants as well, but here, the second constituent changed, and an adjective was often added. Even though the form with the indefinite article has been now in the majority, the alternations are still in use, too. Finally, *toe the line* alternated with *toe the mark*, though especially in COHA, until the second half of the 20th century.

The phrases *bury the hatchet* and *rock the boat* (and marginally *keep one's* word) appeared in passive voice in the corpora. Even though the numbers might not seem very high, it is necessary to consider the fact that passive voice as such is a minor construction in other than a highly formal register. It is deemed that the possibility of passivization, in this case, is firstly due to the types of the idioms. *Bury the hatchet* is quasi-metaphorical, and the latter is compositional, meaning we can distinguish each components' part in the idiom's meaning. This enables us to change the object into the subject and thus thematize it without losing the idiomatic meaning. Lastly, pragmatics,

especially the speaker's intention, comes into play as same as with passivization in general.

All the selected idioms were found to be able to undergo internal modification, which completely undermines Schenk's (1995) argument. Further, Nicolas's (1995) view was evidenced far from applicable to all, or even most, idioms since the attributes clearly both semantically and syntactically modified the noun of the phrases.

In addition, in the case of the idioms *rock the boat* and *toe the line*, higher syntactic flexibility was discovered in Hansard Corpus. It might be suggestive of the role of pragmatics. Same as certain idioms fit more into certain contexts (cf. *toe the line*'s higher frequency in Hansard), internal modification makes better sense in some environments and registers.

Moreover, some of the selected idioms' flexibility seems to be growing in time, which is the complete opposite of Cutler's (1982) suggestion. It concerns the passivization of *keep one's word* (though it is still a very marginal process), internal modification of *speak one's mind*, which only appears in the later corpora, and also *toe the line*. The Hansard corpus quite clearly suggests a continuing increase of the last idiom's modified variant over the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore, when an idiom has a solid foundation in the language, or in a certain context (such as the Parliament), it might be more prone to syntactic flexibility and modifications.

The idioms' flexibility might then depend on their type (if the role of each constituent can be discerned), their meaning, and pragmatics. Furthermore, their age might play a role. If an idiom is fully established in language or some context, speakers can modify it, and the recipients will still understand its idiomatic meaning. This conclusion is based on the analysis of six idioms, and thus further study would be necessary.

Most of the recent studies conclude simply by granting pragmatics a role in idioms' syntactic flexibility. But this area should be investigated further and examined on larger data from the corpora. The future papers might research if and/or how idioms' flexibility is influenced by the register and context, their age and position in language.

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7   Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vybranými idiomatickými frázemi, jejich výskytem a vývojem v čase. Předmětem teoretické části je definice idiomů, jejich klasifikace a syntaktická flexibilita. Obecně se jako idiom označuje fráze, jejíž význam nelze odvodit z významu jejích částí. Přesněji však idiomy můžeme vymezit pomocí několika vlastností, které různé idiomy splňují do různé míry. I proto, že idiomy netvoří jednu homogenní skupinu lingvisté pracovali na vytvoření klasifikace idiomů.

Na počátku se idiomy vymezovaly pouze jako lexikální a frázové podle toho, zda by ve slovníku měly být zapsány po částech, nebo celé jako jedno heslo. Později se začaly rozdělovat na tři základní typy. Kompoziční idiomy jsou fráze, u nichž lze jednoznačně určit, jak která jejích část přispívá k celkovému významu. Patří sem například *break the ice*. Opakem jsou idiomy nekompoziční, jako je *kick the bucket*. Posledním typem jsou idiomy, které pracují s metaforou nebo metonymií. Jako příklad můžeme uvést *bury the hatchet*, což odkazuje na rituál Indiánů, při kterém byly na znamení míru zakopávány zbraně.

Toto rozdělení, i když s malou obměnou termínů, používala řada studií. Někteří lingvisté ho ale ještě rozšířili. Glucksberg a McGlone (2001) například zmiňují také částečně kompoziční idiomy, u jejichž komponentů lze pozorovat nějaký vztah k celkovému významu či způsobu užívání idiomu. Jejich rozdělení ale nezávisí pouze na sémantice, nýbrž i na tom, jak jednotlivá slova nebo doslovný význam ovlivňují chování idiomu ve větě. Termínům kompoziční a nekompoziční idiomy tak v této studii odpovídají spíše pojmy transparentní a netransparentní (opaque).

Velká část výzkumu idiomů se zabývá také jejich syntaktickou flexibilitou, o které pojednává i další část druhé kapitoly této práce. Jedna z nejvlivnějších studií (Fraser, 1970) pojmenovává nemožnost idiomů podstoupit některé syntaktické operace zamrzlost (frozenness). Dále je rozlišeno několik úrovní, kam jsou idiomy zařazeny podle toho, jaké syntaktické operace jsou pro ně možné. Podstatná část výzkumu se zaměřuje na výskyt idiomů v pasivu. Teorie toho, proč je to u některých idiomů možné a u jiných ne, se různí. Někteří tvrdí, že záleží na typu idiomu, jiní, že na vztahu idiomatického a doslovného významu fráze, na věku idiomu, na gramatických

pravidlech konkrétního jazyka, nebo na pragmatice. Zatím se tedy nedospělo k definitivnímu závěru.

Podobná je situace i s vnitřní modifikací idiomatických výrazů, u verbálních frází nejčastěji adjektivem ve funkci atributu (např. *rock the political boat*). Zatímco někteří lingvisté tvrdí, že takto modifikovat idiomy nelze vůbec, jiní předpokládají, že to lze u některých typů. Nicolas (1995) se domnívá, že tyto atributy sice syntakticky rozvíjejí substantivum idiomu, ale sémanticky modifikují celý idiom. Další studie přikládá váhu obecnému gramatickému pravidlu (konkrétně „continuity constrait").

Cílem praktické části této práce je právě i srovnání výsledků z korpusů s teoretickými úvahami lingvistů. K podrobné analýze bylo vybráno šest idiomů, které jsou složeny z verbální fráze o třech slovech. Konkrétně jsou to *keep one's word, speak one's mind, lend a hand, bury the hatchet, rock the boat* a *toe the line*. Výzkum byl poveden za pomoci čtyř korpusů: English Historical Book Collection, PCEEC, COHA a Hansard, a také internetového slovníku Oxford English Dictionary.

U každého idiomu byl zkoumán jeho první výskyt v korpusu, a poté jeho vývoj v čase; to znamená vývoj jeho frekvence výskytu či možné alternace a následné ustálení jeho formy. Dále se výzkum zabýval modifikacemi jako je výskyt v pasivu či přidání atributu podstatného jména a jejich možnými důvody či pravidly, kterými se řídí. V rámci toho byla také porovnávány výsledky z databáze psané americké angličtiny na jedné straně a angličtiny britského parlamentu na straně druhé.

Nejranějšími idiomy se ukázaly být *keep one's word* a *speak one's mind* s prvním výskytem v první polovině šestnáctého století. Obě fráze se původně vyskytovaly ve více variantách. Sloveso *keep* v prvním idiomu alternovalo se slovesem *hold*, avšak *keep* bylo již od začátku častější a v devatenáctém století už bylo jedinou možností. Tento idiom se také používal ve více významech, v jeho raných obdobích to bylo především v náboženském kontextu. Stejně tomu bylo i u idiomu *speak one's mind.* Jeho forma měla tři podoby. Vedle té dnešní to bylo *say one's mind* a *tell one's mind*. Postupně se tyto dvě formy vytrácely a v devatenáctém století bychom je našli jen ve velice ojedinělých případech.

Dalším idiomem, kterým se práce zabývala, je *lend a hand*, který je z vybraných frází v korpusu asi nejhojněji zastoupený. Od prvních výskytů v podstatě až dodnes se

objevuje v několika podobách, jejich frekvence se ovšem liší. Zpočátku, tedy v databázi EHBC byla nejpočetněji zastoupena konstrukce *lend [přivlastňovací zájmeno] hand* (tedy například *lend my hand*). Přivlastňovací zájmena byla ale později nahrazována neurčitým členem, který je v pozdějších korpusech COHA a Hansard nejčastější. Další velmi (i dnes) častou formou je ta vnitřně modifikovaná, nejčastěji adjektivem *helping*, ale v korpusech se vyskytlo mnohem více atributů, například *willing* nebo *friendly.* Podobně modifikované formy idiomu byly nalezeny i v případě předchozích dvou idiomů, ovšem nebyly zdaleka tak časté.

Následující podkapitola se zabývala analýzou idiomu *bury the hatchet*. Jak již bylo zmíněno, ten patří do skupiny idiomů, které odkazují na nějakou metaforu nebo metonymii. První výskyty tohoto idiomu pocházejí ze sedmnáctého století. Vedle toho, že byla tato fráze často používána v doslovném významu, tedy k popisu daného rituálu, vyskytuje se také již od počátku v pasivu. V tomto tvaru se objevovala i v pozdějších korpusech, v britském parlamentu dokonce ve 20. století jeho frekvence oproti století devatenáctému vzrostla. Důvodem k poměrně vysoké frekvenci pasivu může přispívat typ idiomu (v pasivu se často vyskytuje i jeho podoba v doslovném významu a vzhledem k tomu, že význam idiomatický odkazuje ke stejnému obřadu, může být použit v pasivu bez ztráty svého idiomatického významu), ale také jeho sémantika a pragmatická stránka.

Dále vybraný idiom *rock the boat* se poprvé objevuje až v 19. století. I když podstatně méně než předchozí idiom, také se používá i v trpném rodě. Často také vystupuje jako nominální fráze a s přidaným atributem (například *rock the political boat*). O něco větší flexibilitu ovšem vykazuje v korpusu Hansard, tedy v prostředí britského parlamentu než v psaných textech z databáze COHA. To může naznačovat význam pragmatického hlediska právě na chování a flexibilitu idiomu ve větě, což ukazuje i poslední vybraný idiom.

Toe the line, s prvním výskytem v korpusu v polovině 19. století, se původně používal i ve formě *toe the mark*. Tato fráze byla ale často používána i v doslovném významu, i když spíše v korpusu COHA. Tam se vyskytlo také přibližně 8 % původního významu konstrukce *toe the line*. Tato fráze se poměrně často vyskytla v modifikované podobě. V COHA interně modifikované konstrukce tvoří okolo 11 %

z celkového počtu výskytů, zatímco v korpusu Hansard je to až 20 %. Zde byl nejčastěji používaným atributem *party*, ale bylo nalezeno dalších 24 užitých slov. Stejně jako u předchozího idiomu lze tedy říci, že flexibilita se zdá být vyšší v kontextu britského parlamentu. Celková frekvence užívání i modifikace idiomu se v tomto případě zdá být závislá na potřebách a záměru mluvčího a na kontextu.

Celkově tedy vybrané idiomy vykazovaly větší míru flexibility či variability, než naznačují studie zmíněné v teoretické části. Čtyři z šesti frází se používaly nebo stále používají (v případě *lend a hand*) ve více než jedné variantě, což poukazuje na neúplnost původního „ortodoxního" nahlížení na idiomy, které je považovalo za neměnné jednotky jazyka. Dále dva idiomy, konkrétně *rock the boat* a *bury the hatchet* (a marginálně také *keep one's word*), se v korpusech vyskytly i v pasivu. Důvodem této jejich flexibility může být jejich typ, ale také jejich sémantika a pragmatická stránka.

Všech šest idiomů bylo v korpusu užito i s vnitřní modifikací, tedy atributem. I přesto, že u některých z nich frekvence takto upravených frází nebyla příliš vysoká, ukazuje jejich výskyt, že je to možné, a to bez ztráty jejich idiomatického významu. U třech vybraných idiomů, *keep one's word, speak one's mind* and *toe the line*, z dat vyplývá, že jejich flexibilita časem roste. U prvního idiomu se objevil pasivní tvar pouze v pozdějších korpusech (i když stále jen zřídka), stejně jako u druhého modifikace. U poslední fráze je zřetelná tendence růstu modifikovaného tvaru v rámci korpusu Hansard.

Dále, u idiomů *rock the boat* a především *toe the line* byla významnější flexibilita, především právě interní modifikace, nalezena v korpusu Hansard. To může naznačovat význam pragmatiky. Pokud je tedy používání daného idiomu v jazyce či pouze v určitém kontextu dobře ustáleno a zakořeněno, může se dál vyvíjet a lze ho dále modifikovat bez ztráty idiomatického významu, pokud je to v dané komunikační situaci záhodné. Vedle toho může mít na syntaktickou flexibilitu vliv i typ daného idiomu a jeho sémantika.

8   Appendix

Keep one's word		
1	OE1524	They fered that ye Turke wolde not *holde his worde*.
2	EE1581	[…] to whō ye good mā anſwered, whē you ſhew me ſome aſſured ſign, of his deliuery: I wil *hold my word* wt you.
3	EE1791	[…] but I had promiſed the Baron, that I could not yet attempt it, and to him I *held my word* to be ſacred, whatever it coſt me to keep it.
4	EE1578	Be good vnto me thy seruant, O Lord, yt I may liue & *keep thy word*.
5	EE1577	If they haue *kept my words* they wil alſo kepe yours: but all theſe thinges ſhall they do to you for my names ſake: becauſe thei know not him that ſent me.
6	EE 1602	Be more carefull to *keep thy word* and promise, then the money which is committed to thee in trust: for honest and good men ought so to gouerne themselues […].
7	CO1881	I trusted him. He has not *kept his word*. He has broken the armistice.
8	HA1947	There always are delays because designers never *keep their word* on a delivery date.
9	EE1615	Ille haue them all cut off, and euery yeere/Be payd in such a tribute for my wrongs. /As for proud Saxon, Say *my word is kept*, /And bid him warily respect his owne.
10	CO1900	When her *word had been kept*, she released herself with a quiet and resolute dignity.
11	HA1975	Gentlemen will join me in thinking that there is no question of doubting that that *word will be kept* and that the existing houseboat owners will be protected.
12	HA1976	But if one's *word is not kept* when an oath is given, ultimately all human society is threatened.
13	EE1615	And yet you heare, he *holds his manly words*.

14	EE1623	I did ingage my selfe by promise to compose this booke, and now I am inforced to *hold my honest word*.
15	HA1945	Unless you have sanctity of treaties, unless nations are going to *keep their pledged word*, there is not even the minimum condition present for the coherence of international society.
16	CO1831	The king of Spain, for example, formally promise, immediately after his return, to establish a representative constitution; but, instead of *keeping his royal word*, restored in every particular the ancient system, and persecuted, with unrelenting vigor, all persons who had rendered themselves prominent among the friends of liberty.
17	CO1943	He should be loyal to his friends. He should *keep his plighted word*.
18	CO1888	There is a high regard for truthfulness and *keeping one 's word*, intense contempt for any kind of hypocrisy, and a hearty dislike for a man who shirks his work.
19	CO1940	But dear as it is to me, it is not so dear as the *keeping of my word*.
Speak one's mind		
20	PC1534	I am of my duety to God and the Kinges Grace bounden </paren> truly *say my mind*, and discharge my conscience, as becometh a pore honest true man.
21	EE1583	Thē ye bishop requiring him to say his mind plainely of his answeres aboue declared demaūded what he thought therof, whether they were true, or no.
22	EE1545	What good thynges mē speake of shoting & what good thinges shooting bringes to men as my wit & knowlege will serue me, gladly shall I *say my mind*. But how the thing is to be learned I will surely leue to some other which bothe for greater experience in it, & also for their lerninge, can set it out better than I.
23	EE1549	Wherfore bee not afraied, say what ye will, and thinke with your selfe that ye may safely *say your mind* to me, for assuraūce wherof

		I promes you faithfully that I will open it to no man, neither speake anye thinge therof to anye man lyuing, but as you shalbe contented.
24	EE1570	Whereof, albeit I am greatly adradde to speake: yet for all that, *I will tell you my mind* […].
25	EE1579	I *tell* yée *my mind* plainely, I will not flatter any man.
26	EE1600	It onely yet can cry, but when tis growne/Able to *tell his mind* in better words […].
27	EE1632	And to *tell you my mind*, I am much afraid some heavy thing is preparing for us, our sinnes are growne unto such a height.
28	EE1693	[…] I put into his hands the Orders, which I had been entrusted to deliver him, and told him my mind withal in these words; At length, dear Father, said I, Heaven has heard your Prayers.
29	EE1570	But now considering wyth my self, yt I might séeme vnto you a greater offēder in holding my peace, than in *speaking my mind*: when as saying nothing I might ingender an opinion in you, that I am obstinate, self willed, and h ue nothing to mislike but mine owne proper fansie.
30	EE1579	& surely if I may *speak my mind* I thik we shal find but few poets if it were exactly wayd what they oughte to be your Muscouian straungers […].
31	EE1697	'Tis true, I have all along *spoken my mind* with great freedom; and where I sound any thing amiss have not stuck to own it, tho'it seemed to reflect upon those of my own Order.
32	EE1653	[…] he reſolved to talk with her, and once in his life to *tell her his mind plainly*, ſo that he watched an opportunity of privacy, yet it was a long time before he could find it.
33	EE1698	But being desired by those present to *speak her mind freely*; whether he would or not, at length she Reply'd, That she was Affraid to do it.

34	CO1878	We believe that if this learned jurist had *spoken his full mind*, he would declared holding by a lady's hands a much better thing than holding by a strap […].
35	HA1872	Then the Dissenting clergyman who was invited to occupy the alien pulpit would not be free to *speak his whole mind* in it.
36	CO1908	For his own sake he should do what he can to make the public regard the critic, not as a mere megaphone for his advertisements, but as an honest man who *speaks his honest mind*.
37	HA1939	He is never afraid to *speak his own mind*, and I regard it as part of the duty of our representatives in positions like that to speak their minds freely to the Government at home.
Lend a hand		
38	EE1563	So mayst thou yet at length find ende / for this thy myserye. / O Son *lend me thy hand*, yf that / thou art a Paracide?
39	EE1574	That God will neuer *lend his hand* to the wicked, but contrariwiſe:will put the enemies of good men to ſhame, and haue pitie of th▪ good men continually.
40	EE1592	Nay Alexandro if thou menace me, *Ile lend a hand* to send thee to the lake […].
41	EE1631	[…] prerogative in governing the Commonwealth, that can *lend a helping hand* to brave and vertuous men, whom poverty or some other calamity doth keepe downe […].
42	EE1600	To *lend our helping hand*, when our neighbours bodie is in any daunger.
43	CO1877	but although he can not *lend a hand* at the early field work, this work must go on with promptness, and he * ust arrange in advance for its proper performance
44	CO1834	The case will then be as much mine as yours, and I'll *lend a helping hand* willingly.
45	CO1907	Our guests *lent a willing hand* at this tiring and difficult task, and thereby enabled us to finish it at two o'clock in the morning […].

46	CO1921	The financier had intended to do precisely what he had specified, *lend a friendly hand* to the old man's scheme.
47	CO1921	I may need some help with this business and you're fixed just right to *lend me a hand*.
48	CO1837	He affirmed that no man, without Heaven's especial warrant, should attempt their conversion, lest while he *lent his hand* to draw them from the slough, he should himself be precipitated into its lowest depths.
49	HA1938	[…] two men were killed this year by an electric cable: *I lent a hand* in conveying the bodies of the men from the pit to their homes.
50	HA1857	[…] and he was satisfied that they would be prepared, in their character of conservators, to *lend a helping hand* to the improvement of the river Thames […]
51	HA1956	[…] the Government will *lend a willing hand* to get those suggestions put into effect.
52	HA1835	The objections and arguments against a change or any alteration, will be without number, and unless the Government *lend a powerful hand* in support of the measure, there is not the slightest chance of its being carried into execution.
53	HA1932	This or that country is in a parlous state; can not we *lend them a hand*?
54	HA1967	The policy to which I *lend my hand* is co-existence between town and country.
55	CO1982	"The last chance I've got -- if you'll help me grab it." Vane shivered as if he felt the clammy cold. "A scam of	my own." His bleary eyes turned anxious. "If you'll *lend your able hand*?"
56	HA1985	Therefore, someone has to be able to lend a hand and it is almost, though not entirely, invariably *a female hand that is lent*.
Bury the hatchet		
57	OE1680	Meeting wth ye Sachem the[y] came to an agreemt and *buried two Axes* in ye Ground;..which ceremony to them is more significant &

		binding than all Articles of Peace the Hatchet being a principal weapon wth ym.
58	OE1754	We have ordered..our Governor of New York to hold an interview with them [sc. the Six Nations] for delivering those presents, [and] for *burying the hatchet*.
59	OE1753	Three Nations of French Indians..had *taken up the Hatchet* against the English.
60	OE2015	Unable to set aside his pride, Trump *dug up the hatchet* once more.
61	EE1794	Let us then, fellow citizens, unite heart and hand to *bury the hatchet* of natural antipathy, which the wicked policy of courts once inſtigated us to wield.
62	EE1798	*The hatchet was buried* on both ſides, and large belts of peace exchanged.
63	EE1794	Thus, when they make peace with any nation, with whom they have been at war, after *burying the hatchet* […].
64	EE1784	[…] *the painted hatchet is buried* in the ground, as a memorial that all animoſities between the contending nations have ceaſed, and a peace taken place.
65	EE1694	[…] so you ought to do your selves that Justice ànd Honour, to cause the Praying Indians of Canada to come and ask me *to bury my Hatchet* against them.
66	CO1895	If all white men were like him, there would be no more fighting, for *the hatchet would be buried* forever.
67	CO1904	And when at last the fires burned low and the final song was sung, and it was declared that *the hatchet was buried* forever and all feelings of animosity between the lower classmen were at an end […].
68	CO1941	[…] this time we really had something to celebrate. Sammy and Kit and I *buried the hatchet* in a bottle of Scotch.

69	HA1963	[…] time has been given by this Measure for healing to take place: I therefore think that at the end of three months it is right and proper that *the hatchet should be buried.*
70	HA1949	He was very much mellower, very much more friendly to those sections of the Press that he had been previously attacking, and I thought that somehow or another *the hatchet had been buried* […].
71	HA1929	[…] but for the action of the right hon: Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr: Churchill), who has endeavoured to bring about a class war, *the hatchet would have been buried* long ago.
72	HA1986	When it comes to tourism, they seem to *bury the political hatchet* and get on with the job.
73	CO1920	[…] nothing less than political timidity and a fear of consequences led to *the burying of the hatchet* and the return of the Wisconsin Senator to the Senate with the slate clean.
74	HA1986	[…] this situation is one that may only be resolved by patience, restraint and continuing negotiations: It is *a hatchet that must be buried*, and buried soon.
Rock the boat		
75	OE1903	The worst that both of us might do of public evil would hardly serve to *rock the boat*.
76	HA1919	If only Labour will stand still side by side with us, and not *rock the boat*, we, the British manufacturers, will pull the country through again, as we have always done in the past.
77	CO1923	After stating that he was "opposed to a boycott, to speculation and to hoarding," he advised the housewives "*not to rock the boat*."
78	CO1967	In fact, one reason for the difficulty in selecting a new president was the resistance of conservative members of the exchange to any candidate who might *rock the boat* too much.
79	CO1922	"[…] You are just to sit in the bow and enjoy yourself. Fenris, sit still and *don't rock the boat*!"

80	CO1961	"When I tip the boat over, climb on top of it as quickly as you can? and hang on!" Then he would deliberately *rock the boat* until it capsized.
81	CO2000	Although Brown prefers Indianapolis as the fourth team, he's never been an owner who *rocks the NFL boat*. For that reason, he will support the majority if he believes it's in the league's best interests.
82	CO1947	Stockholders began asking questions; so did other branch managers, cramped in straight salaries. Bracy was *rocking the Kroger boat*. # Early this year Kroger officials went to see Bracy about putting a ceiling on his earnings
83	CO1975	The identifier, by *rocking the normative boat*, becomes the accused and the deviant himself.
84	HA1993	The Commission is a political institution which is anxious, like any other Community institution, to see that the Maastricht treaty is ratified: Therefore, it is doing all that it can to avoid *rocking the boat* in the member states while the treaty goes through
85	HA1992	This is best expressed perhaps in the feeling that the business of Hong Kong is business and that *the boat must not be rocked* in the interests of stability and the future prosperity of the territory and its people.
86	HA1987	I am amazed that, even given the natural inclination of many farmers not to *rock the Conservative boat*, they have not been more angry in their comments and positive in their actions
87	HA2001	I say to my noble friend Lord Barnett, with the greatest of affection and respect, that it seems to be madness, just over one year into devolution, to think about *rocking the financial boat*.
88	HA1968	If we had done so, we should have been accused of *rocking the national boat* and therefore causing a flight from the pound.
89	HA2004	The right hon: Lady and her colleagues know well enough where their support lies--; now is not the time for the Labour party to be *rocking the union boat*.

Toe the line		
90	CO1835	Why, as only a certain number can *toe the mark*, we count all those who are not successful in getting up to the line […].
91	CO1852	I don't keep none o' yer cussed overseers; I does my own overseeing; and I tell you things is seen to. You's every one on ye got to *toe the mark*, I tell ye.
92	CO1905	And the teachers depend on the little friend At school in his place at nine, With his lessons learned and his good marks earned, All ready to *toe the line*.
93	CO1981	Late in the game Thomas was fouled while shooting and went to the line for a pair of important free throws. Up for the first, Thomas *toed the line*, took a deep breath, bent his knees -- and shot an airball.
94	CO1990	For more information on the Lobby's war of words with Dymally and its attacks on other members of the Congressional Black caucus who *don't toe the line* […].
95	CO1937	As remarkable as the sudden rebellious uprising in which pork-loving Congressmen had threatened to tear the Administration's Relief Bill apart only the week prior (TIME, June 7), was the willingness with which most of them *toed the Administration mark* last week.
96	CO1973	[…] a campaign designed to intimidate his remaining opponents in the leadership, and to make them, *toe the party line* as he defined it.
97	CO1951	He also marries Carey, but, like all geniuses in fiction, is too much of a heel *to toe the married line*.
98	CO1954	The Soviet Union's lissome Galina Ulanova, 44, a celebrated ballerina who also nimbly *toes the political line* […].
99	CO2003	Senator John Kerry, who has no biological children with his current (second) wife, says marriage should be reserved for procreation, and, with few exceptions, the others *toe that line* too.

100	HA1892	During the Debate, at least one independent Tory Member from Ulster has been induced to *toe the line* […].
101	HA1895	It will be the duty of the Home Rule Members in the House of Commons to make the Government *toe the mark*.
102	HA1991	If one does not *toe a certain line*, one comes to know what discrimination is really like.
103	HA2002	We will have the inspectors back soon enough unless President Bush makes good on his threat last Thursday to block their return unless the Security Council *toes his line*.
104	HA1902	He did not care much about the evidence, providing they could get a fair consensus of opinion that a grocer's licence ought to *toe the same line* as a public house licence.
105	HA1956	I say that the Colonial Territories owe him a great deal chiefly because, when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies, he refused to *toe the party line*.
106	HA1994	[…] who are disciplined and, in fact, dismissed unless they *toe the government line*.
107	HA1912	By threatening the masters with a strike, they forced them in this case to dismiss the men because they would not *toe the socialist line* […].