How *crossing one’s fingers* and *holding one’s thumbs* manages to convey a similar semantic meaning

The cognitive motivations behind the understanding of three Swedish and English idiom pairs, with different words for body parts.

Hanna Lindblom
Abstract
Three idiom pairs were analysed in order to identify which conceptual motivation, in the form of metaphors, metonymies, embodied motivations and conventional knowledge, were present. Each pair had one Swedish- and one English idiom. They had a similar semantic meaning and they both contained a lexical word for a body part – but not the same body part. The aim was to find out how the idioms could have a similar semantic meaning without having the same structure and the same words. The aim was the research questions were answered by analysing the idiom pairs from a cognitive linguistic perspective. The result of the study showed there are cognitive and conceptual motivations for the underlying process, which makes people understand the idioms in a similar way. The reason for why the Swedish and the English idioms used different words for body parts seems to have been the notion of embodiment and of cultural and conventional knowledge. The different words for the body parts did not seem to affect the semantic similarity of the idiom pair.

Key words: Metaphor, metonymy, embodied motivation, idioms, body parts, comparative.
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1. Introduction

Have you ever wondered how it is possible for you to grasp the meaning of the saying you are barking up the wrong tree?

Lexically, it does not make much sense, since most human beings do not bark and almost never have any business in any of the trees in their vicinity. However, even though it does not look as if the saying could make any sense, a lot of people can understand that the meaning of this idiom is ‘to be looking in the wrong place, or ‘accusing the wrong person’.

Idioms are phenomena occurring in language that have a way of making people understand a hidden meaning behind what is actually being said. Idioms are used in many languages as a part of conversation and one can often find similar idioms in different languages. Consider, for instance, the use of feet and coldness in the following Swedish and English pair: get cold feet and få kalla fötter ([lit.] get cold feet). The semantic meaning of these idioms, which both contains words for body parts, is similar. The meaning is ‘to be nervous or afraid’. One can also see that the lexical structure of the idiom pair is exactly the same. This English and Swedish idiom pair is used to explain how one can get scared and want to back out of something and can successfully convey that meaning by using the same words. But, what about idioms that have similar semantic meaning but use different lexical structures in the Swedish and English versions? For instance, a bitter pill to swallow and bita i det sura äpplet ([lit.] to bite in the sour apple) both mean having ‘to accept an unpleasant fact’ but the two idioms manage to get that point across is quite different ways.

Previous research in the area of idioms is quite diverse, from analysing how well non-native speakers can understand idioms to comparative studies between languages and studies on how of lexical words for body parts are used in idioms. As the essay has a cognitive linguistic perspective, literature from authors such as Kövecses, Lakoff & Johnson and Ungerer & Schmid have been used as a framework, even though their research is not specifically focused on idioms.

Kövecses’s Metaphor, a Practical Introduction (2002) has greatly influenced this essay as has been the basis of my analysis on metaphors and metonymies in the idioms. His research on conceptual metaphors and metonymies and how thought processes are present in the forming of the different idioms has influenced me in the implementation and analysis of this essay. Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson’s Metaphors we live by (1980) was used for consulting the concept of conceptual metaphors.

There are studies on idioms from a cognitive perspective. For instance, Olza’s study on the
meaning of lexical words for body parts in Spanish idioms. This essay will have a greater focus on the comparative part between the English and Swedish idioms. However, an analysis on the difference in the words for the body parts will take place in my study as well. Deignan has done research in the area of the understanding of idioms and how they are used in everyday life. This study will also analyse the use of the idioms by using corpora and will complement her study on how the actual uses of an idiom can slightly change its meaning. Books study compares an English and Swedish idiom pair, with the same semantic meaning but with a different lexical structure. There are similarities with our study but I have separated this essay from his by analysing specific idiom pairs containing lexical words for body parts as well as analysed three pairs instead of just one.

In this essay I have chosen to add an extra ingredient in the analysis of the idioms, namely the fact that the idiom pairs have got to contain a lexical word for a body part. However, that body part is not the same in the Swedish and English versions. These variables were chosen because of the interesting phenomenon that two different languages have been able to create an idiom with similar semantic meaning and both felt the need to have a body part present in the lexicalisation of the idiom but the body part somehow differs between the two languages. The three pairs which are analysed in this essay are head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad ([lit.] up over the ears in love), keep your fingers crossed and hålla tummarna ([lit.] hold the thumbs) and lastly give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen ([lit.] give someone the cold hand). These three idiom pairs will be analysed in order to see if there are cognitive motivations for them being able to convey a similar meaning and using different words for body parts.
2. Aim and research questions

The aim of this essay is to study to what degree the idioms are similar, in their construction and semantic meaning, and how this is. The overall argument is that there are cognitive reasons for how idioms are understood. The conceptual motivations behind the semantic meaning could be metaphoric, metonymic, embodied reasons and conventional knowledge. More specifically, the essay aims to answer the following research questions regarding the Swedish and English idioms under investigation.

- How are the idioms similar or dissimilar in their construction and what evidence is there pointing to the similarity or difference in semantic meaning in the three pairs?

- What processes are involved in the creation of meaning in the idiom pairs and how do they operate?

- What does the lexical word for the body part seem to represent in the Swedish and English version of the idiom pairs and why are the body parts different?
3. Theoretical framework
To be able to successfully analyse if there are conceptual mechanisms to explain the reason for how the idioms are able to convey a similar semantic meaning, there is a need to concretize which these mechanisms could be. Kövecses book *Metaphor A Practical Introduction* (2002) is one of the main sources and is mainly used to explain the concepts of metaphor and metonymy. Kövecses briefly examines the subject of idioms in his studies and explains that idioms do not occur by chance. His book sets the tone for this particular phenomenon in language in this essay (2002, p. 233). Dobrovolskij and Piirainen have studied idioms and how to analyse them. In the study “Cultural Knowledge and Idioms” from 2006, they examine how metaphors can be used to explain the meaning of idioms as well as how cultural knowledge influences the understanding of idioms (p. 28). In this essay, idioms are going to be analysed from the perspective of metaphor and metonymy as well as embodied motivations and knowledge which can be said to be both conventional and cultural.

3.1 Idioms – what are they?
An idiom is a phenomenon in language which can be described in different ways. According to Kövecses (2002, p. 199) “Most traditional views of idioms agree that *idioms consist of two or more words and that the overall meaning of these words cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent words*”. That is, idioms are sentences or phrases which mean one thing but use an unexpected set of words to convey meaning. However, another way of looking at the phenomenon of idioms is by asserting the cognitive linguistic view. The cognitive linguistic view claims that idioms, and the understanding of their meaning, derive from a “more general knowledge of the world embodied in our conceptual systems”, and is thus not a lexical matter. (Kövecses, 2002, p. 201)

Giora explains, in her “Metaphors and Idioms” (2003), how idioms can be more or less familiar and are therefore more or less easily and quickly interpreted. Her research demonstrates that there can be multiple reasons for why and how idioms function in language. She also shows that there are many different kinds of idioms, which all have different ways of being interpreted (p. 49-50).

The different kinds of idioms show their broad area of usage in languages. Some examples of different types of idiom are sayings such as: *a chain is not stronger than its weakest link*, phrasal words: *fell through* (as in “My plans fell through so now I cannot go to Rome”), similes: *as busy as a bee*, pairs of words; *bells and whistles* and Lastly metaphors like *spill the beans* and metonymies like *throw up one’s hands* (Kövecses, 2002, p. 199). Metaphors and
metonymies are the two areas which will be analysed in this essay, hence, these phenomena will be described further in detail.

3.2 Metaphor

To communicate in speech and in writing by using metaphors is more common than many native speakers might be aware of and it is thus an important factor for understanding language. As Kövecses (2002) explains, metaphors are everywhere in the everyday language of most people and are often not even recognized because they are so common. There are generally two ways of analysing metaphors recognized, that is linguistic metaphors and conceptual metaphors. Linguistic metaphors are often easily noticed in language and are sometimes described as a saying or a variant of language. Conceptual metaphors are not just a concept in language but, rather a process of the mind. How these processes are shown in terms of language is what can be analysed. By analysing conceptual metaphors in languages, one can begin to understand the underlying thought processes. Conceptual metaphors are, thus, a bit more difficult to find in speech and in written text than the purely linguistic metaphors. Many conceptual metaphors are conventionalized, meaning they are so common that people do not even notice that there is an underlying metaphor in the thought process behind the phrases. So, conceptual metaphors are difficult to notice, not because they are not there but because they are established in our minds as a way of communicating, rather than in a specific saying. (p. 22)

In order to grasp the concept of conceptual metaphors one must know that the phenomenon is perceived as a way in which human minds function and not just a matter of language. The mental representation of conceptual metaphors means that people structure their thoughts around source- and target concepts. Even in their minds and not just when forming language, in that way, conceptual metaphors should be present when remembering, perceiving and acting as well as when using language (Casasanto, 2009, p. 127-128). Conceptual metaphors function in many instances as they refer to the underlying thought process of how a person thinks and furthermore, how that person chooses to describe a certain thing. The phenomenon of conceptual metaphors will now be more closely examined below.

This essay will focus on conceptual metaphors, which might represent the underlying meaning of the idiom pairs. The purely linguistic metaphor will not be studied. However, the linguistic surface structure of the conceptual metaphors will be analysed since it can provide important information on the construction of the idioms. As Lakoff and Johnson mention in *Metaphors we live by*, the linguistic surface structure is the connection to the underlying
conceptual metaphor. The construction of the idioms is important because it can guide one towards the conceptual metaphors relevant to the idiom (1980, p. 3-7). This will be especially important in this essay since the linguistic surface structure is dissimilar, with the exception that all idioms have words for body parts in their lexical construction.

Conceptual metaphors like SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS and ARGUMENT IS WAR are common in everyday conversations (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 114). These metaphors are embedded in the minds of speakers, so that they are not aware of them until specifically pointed out to them. Conventional metaphors give a clue to the culture’s, or the language’s particular conceptual system. The process of conceptual metaphors is that they can be expressed in a number of different linguistic ways but they all seem to refer back to the original concept in mind. For instance, sentences like; “This one particular branch of the company works especially well”, feel normal for a lot of people as the metaphor for SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS is used. Furthermore, sentences like “The children were caught in the crossfire between their parents”, where the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is used, also feels quite normal because of the metaphor being so common that one does not think about what is actually being said. (Kövecses, 2002, p. 23, 28)

As conceptual metaphors are able to function because of the pathways connecting the thing being referred to with the thing actually being said, it is important to understand the different features of conceptual metaphors in order to fully grasp how it can be used in analysis. Firstly, the definition of the two elements of great importance; namely the ‘explaining element’ – the source concept and the ‘explained element’ – the target concept are two of the cornerstones of understanding how conceptual metaphors function (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 119). The purpose of the source- and target concepts is to create a link between the thought process and how to express that thought.

The target concept is usually an abstract phenomenon and the source concept is a more concrete one, as a concrete phenomenon is easier to cognitively understand. For instance, one can talk about branches and roots of a company and thus, having concretized the target concept of SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS into the more graspable source concept of PLANTS (Kövecses, 2002, p. 28). The connection between source- and target concepts is called the mapping scope of that particular metaphor. It takes a lot of correspondences between the source- and the target concept to make the logic of one domain relate to another, that is why a rich mapping is important for a conceptual metaphor to become conventionalized and commonly used.

Furthermore, there are metaphors which have a large mapping scope, with many
correspondences between the source- and target concept and there are metaphors with a lean mapping scope which has only one or perhaps very few connections between the source- and target concept. (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 125-126)

In order for a metaphor to function in more than one sentence, saying or idiom it requires a functioning mapping. In the mapping, the elements of the target- and source concepts are made clear by connecting them together. Ungerer and Schmid (2006) describes there are certain reasons for a mapping scope to be functional. It could be that the image schemas of the metaphor is grounded in bodily experiences, it could be regarding how humans usually think regarding events and actions and lastly, it could be how culture affects the understanding of what words really mean. (p. 119-120)

Kövecses (2002, p. 32) describes the concept of mapping scope in his study and uses the example of SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS. For instance, in that conceptual metaphor, the mapping scope could look like this:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Source: } & \text{PLANTS} & \text{Target: } & \text{SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS} \\
(a) & \text{a part of the plant} & (a) & \text{a part of the organisation} \\
(b) & \text{growth of the plant} & (b) & \text{development of the organisation} \\
(c) & \text{death of the plant} & (c) & \text{the organisation failing/closing} \\
(d) & \text{the plant amongst other plants} & (d) & \text{the organisation and its competitors}
\end{align*}
\]

The mapping of this metaphor could be called a rich mapping since it holds many examples of how the source concept is used to concretize the more abstract target concept of SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS. The rich mapping suggests there is a conceptual structure on how we understand the target concept through the mapping and the grasping of the abstractness in the human mind. In lean mapping scopes, there are few connections between the source- and the target concepts. This is mainly found when a rather concrete target concept is being explained by another, concrete, source concept in order to highlight certain features rather than creating a complete conceptual structure. (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 127)

### 3.3 Metonymy

Like conceptual metaphors, metonymy is a mental phenomenon as well as a process which people use in their everyday language (Deignan, 2005, p. 54-55). The process of metonymy is to employ different strategies in order to convey one message without actually mentioning that particular thing. The notion of closeness is very important for the basic understanding of
metonymy as the entities referring to each other do this in regard to how close they are and not, as in metaphor, to how similar they are (Kövecses, 2002, p. 254). For instance, the metonymy PLACE FOR ACTION can be used in a saying such as “The Norwegians do not expect there to be another Utøya”, in which the PLACE; Utøya signifies the ACTION of a terror attack on Norway. Thus, Utøya is close to the sense of ‘terrorist attack’ since it was where it took place, but the location bears no similarity to a terrorist attack; as would be the instance if it was a metaphor.

To explain how metonymies work one has to be aware that in metonymy we employ one entity, like ‘Utøya’, to provide mental access to another, in this case ‘a terrorist attack’ (Kövecses, 2002, p. 144). The conceptual closeness links them together, which makes the metonymy work. Furthermore, we need to name the different entities and understand the mapping scope of metonymy. The word which provides mental access is called vehicle entity. Thus, ‘Utøya’ is the vehicle entity in the example above. The thing that the vehicle entity is referring to is called the target entity, which bears some similarity to how metaphors work, and in the example above it would be ‘a terrorist attack’ (Kövecses, 2002, p. 256). Thus, in metonymy, one can often narrow it down to the vehicle entity stands for the target entity (Kövecses, 2002, p. 145). Both the vehicle entity and the target entity are often a concrete concept in the mapping of metonymy. The connection between them is grounded in image schemas which are socially sanctioned or prototypical of a cognitive model. Thus, metonymy can be seen as having a referring function and is more straight-forward and basic than metaphors. (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 130-131)

According to how Ungerer and Schmid (2006) present the mapping scope of metonymy, there are certain parts which bear resemblance to the mapping scope of metaphors, such as the concepts. However, it is not to be confused with the mapping scope of metaphors, since metonymy works within a concept and not across two concepts and is regarding closeness and not similarity. Ungerer and Schmid define the vehicle entity as a source concept and the target entity as the target concept. However, in order to more easily separate the mapping scope of metaphor and metonymy, I will use the names provided by Kövecses for the mapping scope of metonymy. (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 130-131)

A prerequisite for both metonymies and metaphors is that the processes often demand all parties to have knowledge of a certain thing in order for them to be able to grasp the meaning of the cognitive linguistic phenomenon. For example, if a person would hear the sentence “The Norwegians do not expect there to be another Utøya”, he or she might have some difficulty understanding the meaning of the metonymy if he or she did not know that there
was a terror attack on Norway and on Utøya. For metonymies and metaphors to work in a larger speech community, there is a need for a certain portion of knowledge in the particular subject. Moreover, these processes need to be conventionalized in order to function. Conventionalized refers to the fact that one can say “I bought an expensive Monet” because there is a general knowledge on artists and their work. However, if one were to say “He was so embarrassed because he did a classic Lisa” there might only be a small circle of both the boy’s- and Lisa’s friends who could understand what is being referred to when “doing a classic Lisa”. So called outsiders would have to ask what he did in order to grasp this unconventionalized metonymy. (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, p. 130)

Kövecses is careful to describe the relationship between metonymies and metaphors and says that one does not exclude the other. For instance, if the metaphor ANGER IS HEAT is at work in a sentence such as “She was about to boil over”, it could still mean that the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE could be the underlying thought process (2002, p. 270-271). Deignan (2005) also emphasises the symbiotic relationship between metaphor and metonymy and argues that metonymy has gained its own place in the science of cognitive linguistics. She describes how metaphors are often thought of as having derived from a broader metonymy. She mentions an example of the metonymy BODY TEMPERATURE STANDS FOR EMOTION, which correlates to the metaphor EMOTIONS ARE TEMPERATURES. Hence, the two phenomena can complement each other in finding the conceptual meaning behind a saying (p. 54-59). Because metonymy and metaphor are so closely intertwined they both will have a part in the analysis of the idioms in this essay.

3.4 Embodied motivation and conventional knowledge
Ungerer and Schmid (2006) suggests that embodiment-of-language is a way for human beings to understand metaphors by recreating it with one’s own bodily experiences, as well as understanding the reality through metaphors. Moreover, as people experience the world through their bodies it makes the body an excellent source when talking about more abstract things. For instance, emotions are often linked to a bodily reaction as humans respond to one emotion in one way, and another emotion in another way. As shown earlier, this process has led to the metonymy BODY HEAT STANDS FOR ANGER. This metonymy is based on the bodily experience that when feeling the emotion of anger, one’s body temperature often rises. (p. 344-345)

The universality of the body as a way of experiencing the world, Ungerer and Schmid argues that embodiment-of-language (2006, p. 345) “explains, amongst other things, the
striking similarity of figurative expression in this domain in totally unrelated languages and cultures”.

Another, quite similar phenomenon present in the cognitively motivated meanings especially for the use of the different body parts is conventional knowledge. Conventional knowledge is the knowledge most human beings have and this includes how the body functions. Moreover, what primarily can be expected from the body’s limbs, but also things such as how emotions are expressed in most human beings. (Kövecses, 2002, p. 207-208)
4. Previous research
Comparing idioms from different languages has caught the interest of quite a lot of scientists, this is understandable since the concept of idioms and their function is a special phenomenon in language. A study on idioms, by Rachel Giora, is called “Metaphors and Idioms” (2003) and deals with the matter of idioms and how well they are understood in language. She found that familiar idioms are understood by their figurative meaning faster than by their literal meaning whilst non-familiar idioms were processed both literally as well as figuratively. The salience of the idiom is thus important for how it is understood. This is something to take into account, since the familiarity of the idioms could affect the way they are used in everyday language. It is something I might find evidence of when studying the corpora.

Another study which also used corpora is Alice Deignan, who studied metaphors and metonymy in everyday language. In her Metaphors and Corpus Linguistics (2005), she uses corpora to analyse language from a cognitive linguistic point of view, parts of which is taken into account when writing this essay. She thoroughly explains how corpora can be used to analyse the meaning of idiom and how they are used in language. As Deignan also discusses how the linguistic, as well as semantic, features of metaphors are used, her research is applicable to many parts of this essay and how I have chosen to conduct it.

This essay also will investigate whether there are other factors than metaphors and metonymies in the underlying thought processes of the idioms, Dobrovol’skij’s and Piirainen’s study “Cultural Knowledge and Idioms” (2006) will be addressed. Their study focuses on how cultural knowledge affects the figurative understanding of idioms. As this essay aims to discuss how the idioms are able to convey a similar meaning in the two languages, it is important to address the fact that cultural knowledge, conventional knowledge and embodied motivations could be a factor to take into account.

The use of body parts in idioms is something that has already been addressed by Olza (2011). She studied a number of idioms in Spanish which contained words for body parts. These idioms were then analysed in order to see what function the particular body part had in the idiom and if there was conceptual reasons for the use of them. Olza examined the idioms to see if metaphorical and metonymical reasons played a part in forming the idiom’s grammatical features and thus, the use of the word for the body part. Her study had some impact in how I conducted my study as the analysing of the words for body parts is a feature we both have in common. However, since I have a comparative part in this essay between idioms containing words for body parts in two languages; our research is not all too similar.

Idioms which have the same meaning, even though they are in different languages, are
special and have managed to attract the interest of the student Björn Book (2016). He analysed an idiom pair which had the same meaning but was lexically different. In his study, he was particularly interested in finding a reason for the use of different words for clothes and how they were able to convey the same meaning in the two idioms to step into someone’s shoes and att axla någons mantel ([lit.] to shoulder someone’s mantle). By analysing this English- and Swedish idiom from a cognitive and conceptual point of view he was able to compare them and explain how they were able to mean the same thing. By using strategies from Kövecses (2002), Book analysed the idiom pair from a metaphorical, metonymical and embodied point of view. In this matter, this essay will be similar to Book’s as I also want to explore which conceptual reasons there could be for Swedish and English idioms to be able to convey the same meaning even though not lexically similar. I have, on the other hand, chosen a particular topic in the idioms that I will compare in this study, namely the instance that they all should have lexical words for body parts in them, and the body part should not be the same in the Swedish idiom as in the English one. Another factor that separates our studies is that I will look at more than just one idiom pair.

5. Material and method

As the interest for idioms containing lexical words for body parts was the leading thing to start the investigation on this project, the first need was to find idioms. I used the book Norstedts Engelska Idiombok in order to find idioms in both Swedish and English. Idioms were identified which matched the demands that I had. The criterion was that the idiom pairs should have a similar semantic meaning and also include different words for body parts in the Swedish and the English idiom. After careful selection, three were chosen for closer analysis. These three pairs were: head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad, keep one’s fingers crossed and hålla tummarna and give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen.

Initially, it was necessary to describe how the pair of idioms was lexically different, that is, how the idiom was structured with different words and what these word-units meant in that language. In order to do so, dictionary entries were used in order to identify the meaning of the different word-units. Moreover, dictionary entries from dictionaries of idioms were used in order to find out the semantic meaning of the idiom as well as to see if the pair could be compared with each other. For the English idioms, Longman Dictionary of English Idioms and Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary were used and for the Swedish idioms Svenska Idiom by Luthman was used as well as Svenska Akademiens Ordlista. Norstedts Engelska
*Idiombok* was especially helpful in order to ensure the semantic meaning of the idiom pairs had some similarity as the dictionary often used the Swedish idiom to translate the English one and vice versa. The translations and comparisons will be shown furthermore in Table 2. The syntax of the idiom pairs have also been examined in order to provide important semantic information. The phrase structure trees will illustrate the syntactic analysis of the idiom pairs. The phrase structure trees aimed to illustrate how similar or dissimilar the idioms were. Moreover, they could function as a basis for the discussion, if the idiom pairs shown signs of conveying a slightly different meaning than first presumed.

English and Swedish examples from corpora were used in order to exemplify both the uses of the idioms and the metaphors and metonymies. BYU-BNC, the British National Corpus provided by Brigham Young University, was chosen for the English examples and Språkbanken Korp (SBK) was chosen for the Swedish. Both were chosen because of they are well established in each country and have a large data base. For examples of the idioms I simply entered the idiom or a fraction of the idiom, for instance *kalla handen*, instead of the whole phrase *ge någon kalla handen*. Examples were chosen from the first 50 sentences selected by relevance. When exemplifying the metaphors and metonymies I searched for words related to the metaphor or metonymy up for analysis. I wanted to show examples which suggested the existence of that particular conceptual metaphor.

**Table 1. Words or phrases searched for in BYU-BNC and SBK.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English idiom</th>
<th>Words/phrases searched for in BYU-BNC</th>
<th>Swedish idiom</th>
<th>Words/phrases searched for in SBK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Give the cold shoulder</em></td>
<td>Freeze out, icy, cold world</td>
<td><em>Ge någon kalla handen</em> ([lit.] give someone the cold hand)</td>
<td>Frysa ut (freeze out [lit.]), verka kall (seem cold [lit.]), isande, (icy [lit.])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Head over heels in love</em></td>
<td>In love, in awe</td>
<td><em>Upp över öronen förlåtskad</em> ([lit.] up over the ears in love)</td>
<td>Spricka av (burst of [lit.]), till brädden (to the brink [lit.]), tömd på känslor, (emptied on emotions [lit.])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Keep one’s fingers crossed</em></td>
<td>Hand seemed all thumbs, hands tied</td>
<td><em>Hålla tumann</em> ([lit.] hold the thumbs)</td>
<td><em>Tummen mitt I handen</em> (the thumb in the middle of the hand [lit.]), knäppa händerna (lock the hands [lit.]), finger med i spelet (finger in the game [lit.])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For instance, to find instances where one of the metaphors suggested to one of the idiom pairs (UNFRIENDLY IS ICY) was used in language, the corpora were searched for words like freeze out and in Swedish frysa ut.

Not mentioned in Table 1, above, is that the corpora were also searched for the idioms, in order to find examples of their uses in everyday language.

The Swedish sentences from SBK were also translated literally in order for all readers to understand it. The literal translation was the best suited option but it might, however, sound a bit awkward.

5.1 Definition and meaning of the idiom pairs

The definition of the English and Swedish idioms is crucial for being able to analyse them and compare them on a cognitive level. For this reason, they need to be explained more thoroughly lexically as well as semantically. The definition and the semantic similarity will be shown by Table 2 and then further analysed in the results and analysis section of the essay. When looking at Table 2, below, one can see how the idioms are described and defined in dictionaries in the two languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Idiom</th>
<th>English definition</th>
<th>Swedish idiom</th>
<th>Swedish definition</th>
<th>Definition in Swe-Eng dictionary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give the cold shoulder</td>
<td>OALD: Snub him, show distaste for his company. Longman: to be unfriendly to someone esp. by refusing to speak or meet him.</td>
<td>Ge ngn kalla handen</td>
<td>Luthman: Säga nej till ngn; nobba ngn.</td>
<td>Norstedts: Give the cold shoulder = ge ngn kalla handen, behandla ngn som luft, avspisa (ignorera) ngn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head over heels in love</td>
<td>OALD: topsy-turvey; deeply or completely. Longman: To become or be completely or deeply in love.</td>
<td>Upp över öronen förälskad</td>
<td>Luthman: Mycket kär; väldigt förälskad [lit. very much in love]</td>
<td>Norstedts: Head over heels in love = upp över öronen förälskad [lit. up over the ears in love]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep one’s fingers crossed</td>
<td>OALD: Hope for the best, that nothing will happen to upset one’s plans. Longman: To wish or hope deeply for success, good luck etc.</td>
<td>Hålla tummarna</td>
<td>Luthman: Önska innerligt att det går bra för ngn; lova att tänka på ngn inför ngt svårt [lit. Wish deeply for sbs success, promise to think of sb in hard times] SAOL: av hjärtat önska framgång få ngn [lit. to wish, whole-heartedly success for somebody]</td>
<td>Norstedts: Keep one’s fingers crossed = hålla tummarna [lit. hold the thumbs]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the meaning of the idiom pairs are semantically similar, the first step towards being able
to analyse them to see if there are cognitively motivated meanings for the similarity in their meaning has been taken. Moreover, it is also notable that the idioms are actually, in all three cases, noted as a translation of the other in the dictionary containing idioms in both Swedish and English. Lastly, some example sentences from the Swedish- and English corpora were selected in order to exemplify how the idioms are used in everyday language.

5.2 Analytical method

After having confirmed how the idiom pairs were similar or dissimilar in their construction the search for conceptual reasons for them being able to convey the same meaning began. The search for conceptual similarities within the idiom pairs and the similarities found were then analysed in order to establish if there might be a metonymy or metaphor being the reason for the similar semantic meaning. The target- and source- or vehicle concepts were established and a fitting metaphor or metonymy was searched for. When there was a conceptual metaphor which fitted both idioms (or in one case, there was two metaphors suggested for the pair), I suggested that the metaphor or metonymy was the underlying thought process and the testing to see if this could be a possibility began. However, to provide evidence that the metaphor or metonymy really was a conceptual one, a search for the particular conceptual metaphor or metonymy was conducted by entering linguistic metaphor, which could suggest the underlying process, in the corpora. Search words included in the idiom was entered in order to provide examples of how the idioms are used in language. The result of the search is what had been previously shown in Table 1.

Finally, the metaphors and metonymies were analysed. The analysis meant providing evidence of the mapping, as well as examining if there were any metaphorical entailment. The mapping singled out the source-, vehicle- and target concepts present in the idiom pair and made way for deeper analysis.

The very last thing to be done was to analyse the reason for the difference in the word for the body part in the English and the Swedish version of the idiom. In doing this, the meaning the body part was supposed to portray was analysed mainly from the perspective of embodiment and conventional knowledge. Any connection, between the embodiment and the target concept in the underlying metaphor or metonymy, could indicate there was a reason for embodiment to be present in the choice of the word for the body part in the idiom.
6. Results and analysis

The content of this chapter will be structured along the research questions. The first research question regarding the construction and the similarities between the idiom pairs will be answered under the first subheading; where all idiom pairs will be examined. The second and the third research questions will be answered in relation to one idiom pair at a time; therefore there will be one subheading for each idiom pair.

6.1 Similarities, dissimilarities in the construction and the uses of the idiom pairs

In section 5, material and method, it was shown that the idiom pairs do appear to have a similar semantic meaning when looking in dictionaries and cross-referencing in a bilingual dictionary. As they seemed to have some similarities in meaning, further examination on the reason for their similarities and differences are valid. Hence, it qualifies them for further analysis in order to find out how they are able to convey a similar meaning.

One of the idiom pairs is very similar structurally as well as lexically namely give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen ([lit.] give someone the cold hand), where it is only the word någon ‘someone’ that is dissimilar from the Swedish and English version and also, of course, the word for the body part. The construction of the idioms in the form of a tree diagram is as Figure 1 suggests.

![Tree diagram of idiom pairs](image)

**Figure 1.** Phrase structure tree of the first idiom pair.

As shown by Figure 1, the structure of the idiom pair are very similar as the indirect object someone has been added to the idiom in order to make it a full sentence.

Even though there are similarities in their syntactic construction it is important to remember that they are not exact replicas of one another. Hence, they are not exactly the same and should therefore not be treated as being exactly the same. Further analysis will show how this idiom pair is able to convey a similar semantic meaning.
The following examples sentences from the Swedish and English corpora serve to exemplify how the idioms are used in their respective language. With these examples one can see how the idiom pair are very similar in their meaning.

Examples for the English idiom *give the cold shoulder*.

1) … Romance could wreck their plans for stardom. So they have *given girlfriends the cold shoulder*. (The BNC)

2) She was sure that at some point *she’d given someone the cold shoulder* and hurt them badly without noticing. (The BNC)

Examples for the Swedish idiom *ge någon kalla handen*

3) *Kalla handen* och undanflykter är det vi trähusaktivister fått smaka på i snart två års tid nu. (SBK)

Lit: [The cold hand and evasions is what we tree house-activists have had to taste in almost two years’ time now.]

4) … Ledamot i den finska kommitté som nu tittar på frågan, *gav kalla handen* innan förhandlingarna ens inletts. (SBK)

Lit: […] member of the Finnish committee who is now looking at the question, gave the cold hand before the negotiations even had started.]

The English version of the idiom seems to be referring to being unfriendly towards someone and turning them down, as seen especially in example 2. The Swedish idiom seems to refer more to a blank ‘no’, as can especially be seen in example 4. Thus, in those two examples, 2 and 4, there is a slight difference in how the idioms are used. These are slight differences but even so, it is necessary to have noticed them before undertaking the analysis of the underlying thought processes which causes people to understand this idiom pair as similar in meaning.

The second idiom pair of *head over heels in love* and *upp över öronen förälskad* has few similarities in their construction. Lexically, the two idioms contain only one word which corresponds to the same one in the other language, namely; *over* and *över*. However, they both contain a word for the emotion of *love* (and in the Swedish version, the word *förälskad*). The verb *fall* has been added to the phrase structure tree as it is a verb often used together
with the phrase. The different structure is represented by Figure 2 below.

![Phrase structure tree of the second idiom pair.](image)

**Figure 2.** Phrase structure tree of the second idiom pair.

As seen in Figure 2, the constructions and lexical features of this idiom pair are not especially similar. It is also worth mentioning that the word for the emotion *love* and *förälskad* might not entail the exact same thing as well. As seen by Figure 2, the words for the emotion are an adjective in the Swedish idiom but a noun in the English one. The noun, *love*, is in a prepositional phrase which entails that the emotion is a location.

The imagery of the idioms are somewhat different as the English version is implying the emotion of love is around the person as he or she falls *in love* whilst in the Swedish version, that imagery is not quite the same. The English idiom seems to suggest the need for the word *falling*, hence, creating the phrase *falling head over heels in love*. The English idiom is therefore describing how the emotion is experienced. The Swedish idiom describes a *degree* of the emotion. This difference in the construction of the idioms makes me think that they might not be completely similar in their underlying thought processes.

To illustrate how the idioms are used in language a few examples from corpora will be presented and analysed.

Examples of the English idiom *head over heels in love*.

5) It wasn’t just the usual liaison: the two of them fell *head over heels in love*. (The BNC)
6) I was head over heels in love with our English teacher when I was about fourteen or fifteen. (The BNC)

Examples of the Swedish idiom *upp över öronen förälskad.*

7) Tiden har gått fort och jag är fortfarande *upp över öronen förälskad!* (SBK)
   Lit: [Time has passed fast and I am still up over the ears in love]

8) … och där stod jag, blottad och kär *upp över öronen* och visste varken in eller ut. (SBK)
   Lit: [… and there I was, exposed and in love up over the ears and knew neither in nor out]

The English examples are quite prototypical as well as the first of the Swedish example. The second of the Swedish examples is, however, a version of the idiom, where the idiom is not in its original form, but it seems to manage to get its point across anyway. The fact that there was an example of a version of the Swedish idiom in SBK is interesting because it might imply there are certain conceptual underlying thought processes in these two idioms. As seen in these examples, the Swedish idiom seems to suggest the emotion is filling the body and is a strong feeling inside of the person feeling it and the phrase *upp över öronen* suggests there is a degree of the emotion. However, the English idiom seems to suggest the emotion is surrounding the person. The person is in love, or falling in love, which points to a different underlying thought process of the emotion.

Interesting to note is that *falling head over heels* is also used when describing how a person can actually fall physically. Furthermore, the Swedish example can be used with words other than *förälskad* as well, for instance *skuldsatt* ([lit.] indebted). This shows how the idioms, or perhaps more specifically; the conceptual metaphor, is used in a number of different ways in each language.
In the one remaining idiom pair there are some similarities lexically and structurally as *keep one’s fingers crossed* and *hålla tummarna* ([lit.] hold the thumbs) have verbs which have a similar semantic meaning. OALD describes the verb *keep* as ‘hold on’ and SAOB describes *hålla* as ‘kvarhålla ngt’ (keep something [own translation]). The construction of the two idioms is shown in Figure 3, below.

![Phrase structure tree of the third idiom pair.](image)

**Figure 3.** Phrase structure tree of the third idiom pair.

The phrase structure trees show how the syntactic construction is quite different. To further analyse if the idiom pair has a similarity in meaning, even though quite different in construction, I will present a few examples on how the idioms are used in the two different languages in the corpora.

Examples of the English idiom *keep one’s fingers crossed.*

9) … You’ve just got to *keep your fingers crossed* that nothing happens to them in that period. (The BNC)

10) … the organizers will be *keeping their fingers crossed* that nothing serious happens again. (The BNC)

Examples of the Swedish idiom *hålla tummarna.*

11) Det låter som ett riktigt spännande och varierande jobb så ni får gärna *hålla tummarna* att jag får jobbet. (SBK)

Lit: [It sounds like a really exciting and varied job so you can please hold your thumbs that I get the job.]

12) Så mycket annat finns inte att välja på, än att *hålla tummarna* för att det ändå kan bli en nystart. (SBK)
Lit: [There is not much else to choose from, than to hold the thumbs that it, at least, can be a new beginning.]

The example sentences from SBK and BYU-BNC point to the similarity in the semantic meaning of the idioms as they seem to be used in similar ways. There are examples in Swedish as well as in English of wishing for success or hoping for the plans to work out for others but also for you.

6.2 Conceptual motivations for the idiom pair's similar semantic meaning

As the pairs of English and Swedish idioms appear to be able to convey a similar meaning, it is plausible that there is an underlying metaphor or metonymy which could explain how this could be. If there is a conceptual reason that fit both the Swedish and the English idiom, it could be the explanation as to how the two idioms are able to convey the same meaning. The analysis will continue with each idiom pair and will focus on answering the second and third research questions.

6.2.1 The case of give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen

In the idiom pair give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen, there is an action in both idioms which refer to giving a body part which is low in temperature. As earlier shown, these idioms have similar meanings, even though not exactly the same in every instance. As the idioms mean to ignore someone or to show the distaste in one’s company or to say ‘no’ to someone, this is essentially what the word cold stands for. There are several metaphors and metonymies concerning body temperature and one can also see a tendency that cold temperatures reflects a negative emotion or action, such as DROP IN BODY TEMPERATURE IS FEAR, FEAR IS COLD and UNFRIENDLY IS ICY. The last one of these is the one that matches best with the two idioms as they both seem to convey an unfriendly, ignoring attitude by presenting a cold body part to the person affected. Alternatively, the opposite of the metaphor FRIENDLY IS WARM could be used to explain the underlying thought process behind these two idioms. The alternative explanation of FRIENDLY IS WARM will be further discussed at the end of this section.

UNFRIENDLY IS ICY is described as a conceptual metaphor by Kövecses (2002 p. 123) and I will present a few examples found in corpora of how the metaphor is used in different instances in languages.
English sentences exemplifying the metaphor.

13) No one objects to companies making a profit, but not when they freeze out competition. (The BNC)

14) After days of reflection she decided to write back in the same icy terms Philip had used with her. (The BNC)

15) Her indifference to other people’s convenience and comfort could eventually leave her friendless in a cold world. (The BNC)

Swedish sentences exemplifying the metaphor.

16) Ett arbetslag kan på ganska själviska grunder frysa ut en kollega som de anser påverkar arbetet negativt. (SBK)
Lit: [A team could on fairly selfish grounds freeze out a colleague which they think affects the work in a negative way.]

17) Du kan verka kall och arrogant mot män men det är ditt sätt att skydda dig. (SBK)
Lit: [You can seem cold and arrogant towards men but that is your way of protecting yourself.]

18) Jag får en kall blick, sen tårar, därpå isande ord; - du älskar inte mig längre. (SBK)
Lit: [I get a cold look, then tears, then icy words; - You do not love me anymore.]

All of these examples of the UNFRIENDLY IS ICY metaphor give an indication that coldness is an unfriendly, disinviting saying or gesture. The sentences from corpora use phrases like freeze out and frysa ut in order to lexicalize how coldness is a gesture of unfriendly behaviour. Coldness is also present in both languages in the words icy and isande. These words are modifiers and are used to change how the communication between two people is played out in the sentences. In the same way that the giving of the cold shoulder and givandet av kalla handen ([lit.] the giving of the cold hand) is symbolising this underlying metaphor in the thought processes of the one’s using this idiom.
All of these examples of the UNFRIENDLY IS ICY metaphor give an indication that coldness is an unfriendly, disinviting saying or gesture. The sentences from corpora use words like freeze out and friya ut in order to lexicalize how coldness is a gesture of unfriendly behaviour. Coldness is also present in both languages in the words icy and isande. These words are modifiers and are used to change how the communication between two people is carried out in the sentences. The giving of the cold shoulder and givandet av kalla handen ([lit.] the giving of the cold hand) symbolize the underlying metaphor in the thought processes when these idioms are used.

The metaphor of UNFRIENDLY IS ICY takes the abstract concept of unfriendliness and converts it into the more concrete phenomenon of coldness. In order to exemplify how the metaphor uses the source concept to better explain the target concept, one can use mappings.

Source: ICY  Target: UNFRIENDLY
(a) cold on the outside  unfriendly appearance/behaviour
(b) cold on the inside  unfriendly feelings
(c) in an icy environment  being without friends/being alone

In the idioms, give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen, the relevant mapping is (a). The best suited example is (a) because of the meaning of wanting to show someone that one does not want anything to do with that person, or wanting to ignore that person.

As presented earlier, there is an alternative metaphor which also might function to explain this idiom; FRIENDLY IS WARM. This metaphor entails almost the opposite of UNFRIENDLY IS ICY. However, since the metaphor was more regarding showing unfriendliness, it was chosen as a better alternative for this particular study.

The reason for the two idioms to have different words for body parts could be a quite general metonymy. The metonymy, which is able to explain why there are different words for body parts used in the idioms, could be PART FOR WHOLE. The metonymy means a part of the body; shoulder and handen represents the whole person doing the ignoring or the showing of distaste.

Conventional knowledge and embodied motivations for the words for the specific body parts could be that if one turns their shoulder towards a person when he or she is speaking, it shows that the first person is not paying attention. Furthermore, if the person was paying attention, the face would be turned towards the speaker. In the Swedish version of the idiom, the speaker gives the cold hand which could suggest the conventional knowledge that
sometimes when someone wants another person to stop talking, he or she can hold up their
hand, almost like a ‘stop sign’. There is also the possibility that the Swedish idiom conveys
the opposite of another idiom, namely; att ge en hjälpare hand ([lit.] to give a helping
hand) when offering a ‘cold’ hand instead of a ‘helping’ hand.

The embodiment and conventional knowledge could also be an indication of the slight
difference in meaning which was noted earlier, when examining the construction of the
idioms and their usage. For instance, since give the cold shoulder seems to have an element of
showing distaste in someone and ge någon kalla handen does not seem to have this usage, it
could be reflected in how the embodiment of the idioms function. Because of the iciness and
presenting another person with a cold body part, they mean similar things. However, a slight
difference in meaning is that the shoulder seems to give the idiom a meaning of distaste,
which the word handen does not. The motivation for the body parts being different is because
they aim to present a slightly different meaning, in some instances.

To sum up, the metaphor UNFRIENDLY IS ICY is present in both the Swedish and the English
idiom. Even though the meaning of the idiom pair is not exactly the same, but very similar, it
is the underlying conceptual metaphor which is the reason for the similar meaning. However,
the reason for the use of the word for the body part shoulder in the English idiom and handen
in the Swedish seems to be a matter of embodiment. The words for the body parts signifies
either turning away from the person one is about to ignore or trying to stop them from being
heard by putting forward one’s hand. The use of the different body part in the idioms of the
two languages does not affect the understanding of the idioms too much; one would still say
they are able to convey a similar meaning.

6.2.2 The case of head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad
The idiom pair head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad both contain the
concept of body parts from the head area; head and öronen, which of course are located at
the top of the body. The idiomatic meaning of both idioms was, as explained in the definition
of the idioms, to become completely and deeply in love. However, as seen in section 5.1, the
two idioms use the emotion in different ways. The Swedish idiom seems to point to the fact
that the whole body and mind is filled to the brink with the emotion love. The English idiom
suggests the person falls into the emotion of love and therefore, the emotion surrounds the
person. Therefore, there will be two analyses for this idiom pair. There will, however, be a
discussion if this idiom pair is able to convey a similar semantic meaning even though it is
suggested that they have different underlying thought processes.
For the Swedish idiom, the metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS could be suggested. Below, a few example sentences provided from corpora will test if this really is a valid metaphor.

Swedish sentences exemplifying the metaphor.

19) Med Lundgren i mål känns det som att man kommer spricka av nervositet varje gång motståndarna närmar sig. (SBK)
Lit: [Having Lundgren as goalkeeper it feels like one is about to burst with nervousness every time the opposing team are getting closer.]

20) Jag ska fylla på med något ovärderligt, något som fyller mina sinnen till brädden. (SBK)
Lit: [I will fill it with something precious, something that will fill my senses to the brink.]

21) Han inväntade hennes kommentar, helt tömd på känslor, totalt likgiltig, och som vanligt gjorde hon honom förvånad. (SBK)
Lit: [He awaited her comment, completely emptied of emotions, totally indifferent, and as usual she surprised him.]

These example sentences from corpora are quite prototypical except for the last one, which instead of being full of emotions has the feeling of being empty. In order to talk about emotions, which is a rather abstract phenomenon, people often uses the metaphor of the body being a container for the emotions, thus, a more concrete phenomenon. Hence, EMOTIONS is the target domain and THE BODY AS A CONTAINER is the source domain.

Source: THE BODY AS A CONTAINER
(a) fluid inside the container
(b) fluid spilling over
(c) fluid bursting out
(d) empty container
(e) the amount of fluid in container

Target: EMOTIONS
the emotions
emotions showing
emotions out of control
lack of an emotion
the intensity of the emotion
These mappings can be found in the cases when this metaphor is in use. Moreover, in the idiom pair which I am analysing, the source domain and target domain would be equivalent with (a) and (e) and possibly (b). (a) because the emotion of love is filling the person all the way up over the ears. Moreover, the amount of emotion (e) shows in what degree the emotion is present, as it is all the way up over the ears. (b) could possibly also be relevant since the emotion is so intense that it is almost on the brink of the container: the body.

For the English idiom, the conceptual metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS is better suited for describing the idiom. The idiom suggests the manner in which the person is experiencing the emotion, which in this particular idiom is head over heels. The metaphor points to the location of the emotion love and how the person is either falling in to that location or is finding oneself in that location.

English sentences exemplifying the metaphor.

22) She plays a woman who falls in love with a transvestite. (The BNC)

23) But I was no longer in awe of Clive. (The BNC)

Both these sentences suggest the states of love and awe is a location in which one can be in. Example 22 also points to the fact that the woman falls into the location, perhaps suggesting the location of the emotion is a pool. To further analyse how the conceptual metaphor functions in regard to the idiom, the source- and target concepts are shown.

**Source:** LOCATIONS  
Target: STATES

(a) in a location  
(b) falling into a location  
(c) lost  

experiencing love  
starting to experience a state  
unsure of one’s state

In the idiom head over heels in love the emotion of love is surrounding the person, almost like the person is submerged in the love all the way from the heels to the head. Furthermore, when adding the verb falling, it emphasizes the location as being a pool of the emotion love. Therefore, both (a) and (b) could be used as underlying thought process.

There is another metaphor in use as well, MORE IS UP, which functions in combination with both the conceptual metaphor linked to the Swedish idiom, as well as with the conceptual
metaphor linked to the English idiom. It indicates that the person is very much in love because he or she is filled, in the Swedish, or surrounded by, in the English, with this emotion all the way to the top. The upward motion of the emotions in the idiom pair is noticed in the English version as the emotion of love surrounds the person from the heels to the head as the idiom states that the two body parts are connected in an upward motion as the head is on top of the heels. In the Swedish idiom the metaphor is exemplified by the words upp över as they signify how the emotion is filling the whole body to the brink.

As Kövecses explains, the “upward orientation tends to go together with positive evaluation” (p. 36). Moreover, the metaphor of MORE IS UP uses our knowledge of when something increases it usually means it rises on a vertical way, such as piling up things. The more things one piles – the higher the pile gets. Hence, when thinking about THE HUMAN BODY AS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS or STATES ARE LOCATIONS combined with the metaphor MORE IS UP then it is possibly to understand there are cognitively motivated meanings behind the idioms head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad.

The use of the different lexical words for the body parts of head, and öronen seems to be because of the body parts placement at the top of the person and is thus a matter of embodiment. The body part heels in the English idiom represent a reference point in which the head is located at. How the two idioms have managed to explain that the body is either filled to the brink with the emotion love, or is surrounded from ‘heels’ to ‘head’ with the emotion of love, has to do with the fact that the two languages chose body parts which are on the very top of the person – as we know that the head and öronen are.

To sum up, this idiom pair is able to convey a similar semantic meaning. However, there are fundamental differences due to the construction of the idioms. The reason for the difference is the underlying conceptual metaphors as processes but the similarity in meaning is still prominent, despite of this. The meaning of the difference in the underlying processes will be further analysed in the discussion.

6.2.3 The case of keep one’s fingers crossed and hålla tummarna

In the idiom pair of keep your fingers crossed and hålla tummarna there is a connection in the meaning of them both which indicates that the hand are not able to function properly. Thus, there is no more to be done except to hope and wish for good luck. The idiomatic meaning which is to hope for good luck seems to be represented by the hands not being able to function, so that would suggest that the underlying metonymy could be HANDS STAND FOR CONTROL. If this really is an underlying metonymy, there should be evidence of it in both the
Swedish and the English corpora.

English sentences exemplifying the metonymy.

24) However, the company’s *hands are tied* because the Government insists that the main consideration must be… (The BNC)

25) Carrie tried to mop up the mess with the edge of the table cloth… but her *hands seemed all thumbs*, and she couldn’t stop crying. (The BNC)

Swedish sentences exemplifying the metonymy.

26) Kina kanske också har *ett finger med i spelet* eftersom terroristerna får sina vapen därifrån. (SBK)
Lit: [China might have *a finger in the game* since the terrorists get their weapons from there.]

27) Pappa Niklas som inte har *tummen mitt i handen*, fick sätta upp en liten till belysning… (SBK)
Lit: [Daddy Niklas whom does not have *the thumb in the middle of the hand*, had to put some mote lights up.]

28) Det är bara att *knäppa händerna* och vänta då alltså. (SBK)
Lit: [All that is left is to *hold the hands together* and wait.]

All of these sentences found in corpora are very different but indicate that the source domain of the hands and parts of the hand; fingers and thumbs, are responsible for the action, and where there is a lack of action it is because the hands are not able to work. When the function of the hands is lost, it implies there is nothing more to be done. Hence, it is out of one’s control. The underlying thought process points towards the conventional knowledge that all one can do is hope for the best.
The mapping scope, that I have made, of the metonymy could look something like this;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle: HANDS</th>
<th>Target: CONTROL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) the hands</td>
<td>the control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) holding something in the hands</td>
<td>having control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) losing grip</td>
<td>losing control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) out of reach</td>
<td>out of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) dysfunctional hands</td>
<td>cannot control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the idiom pair *keep one's fingers crossed* and *hålla tummarna*, there is a metonymy present which affects the understanding of both idioms. The metonymy is that HANDS STAND FOR CONTROL and since both body parts; *fingers* and *tummarna* are a part of the hand, the metonymy is valid. If the hand stands for control, the holding of the thumbs and the crossing of the fingers would suggest that the hands are not able to function properly, thus indicating that there is nothing more to be done; one has got to rely on hope/luck/chance which is what this idiom pair wants to convey. There is a frequent use in both languages which points to the fact that if the hands cannot function or move, one cannot perform a task or change something. For instance, the sayings *my hands are tied* and *mina händer är bundna* ([lit.] my hands are tied) or *all thumbs* and *ha tummen mitt i handen* ([lit.] have the thumb in the middle of the hand), indicate that if there is something wrong with the hand. If the hand cannot work properly; one is unable to do anything about the situation.

The metonymy fits well, but a more precise underlying thought process could be an underlying conceptual metaphor. The metaphor is CONTROL IS HOLDING (SOMETHING IN THE HAND). This metaphor can be established by some other, quite similar, examples from Kövecses (p. 210):

- be in somebody’s hands (‘be being dealt with by someone with the necessary authority’)
- take something in hand (‘assume control over something’)
- get out of hand (‘get out of control’)

The metaphor works if using the concept which Kövecses called metaphorical entailment. This implies that we know that if there is no control over a thing or a situation, one usually has got to rely on hope, luck or wishing for success. This concept of metaphorical entailment depends on our understanding of how human beings usually act when there is nothing more to be done in an aspect that one cares about a lot: they wish. The entailment results in a
metaphor which describes both the Swedish and English idiom in greater detail as the meaning of them both can be described by the metaphor of HANDS NOT BEING ABLE TO WORK MEANS HAVING TO WISH FOR LUCK or NOT BEING ABLE TO DO ANYTHING MEANS HAVING TO WISH FOR LUCK.

Both the metonymy and the metaphor indicate that there are conceptual reasons for why the idioms work and why the limbs of the hand are important as the words for body parts in the idioms.

The English and the Swedish idiom pair keep one’s fingers crossed and hålla tummarna are able to convey a similar semantic meaning because of the conceptual motivations. These motivations are both metaphorical and metonymical as the idioms both uses underlying thought processes indicating if the hands are not working properly, there is nothing more to be done. Hence, if there is nothing more to be done, one has got to trust in luck or good faith.

The reason for the different body parts representing the paralyzing of the hand seems to be a question of embodiment. How can one embody the hands not being able to work properly? The English have solved the problem by intertwining the fingers and the Swedish by holding the thumbs locked in the middle of the hand. The use of the lexical word of fingers and thumbs are thus represented by the notion of being parts of the hand rather than the thumbs having a specific meaning in Swedish and fingers in English. Furthermore, these gestures of holding the thumbs and crossing the fingers are actually gestured which are practised in each country.
7. Discussion

As the aim of the study was to show how the English and Swedish idioms were able to convey a similar semantic meaning, the construction of the idioms within each pair, was essential to start the research. Furthermore, there was a need to establish that they do actually have a similar meaning.

The dictionaries used showed evidence that they had a similar semantic meaning. In one dictionary, the English idioms were even used to translate the Swedish idioms, pointing to the established similarity between them. The claimed similarity could be something to question since the idiom pairs head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad and the idiom pair give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen had some instances where they were able to convey dissimilar meanings.

Similar uses of the idioms confirmed what the dictionaries had pointed to. However, the construction of the idioms was different and not just in the form of having a different body part but in the construction of the phrases. By making a tree diagram of the construction of the idiom and then analysing its different components I was one step closer to finding the conceptual reason binding the two idioms together. This part of the analysis presented a problem with one of the pairs, namely head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad as I found that the syntactic construction meant they were slightly different in their meaning. The English idiom referred to a manner of which the emotion surrounded the person, as if the emotion was a location where the person experiencing it, was in. Whereas, the syntactic construction of the Swedish idiom referred to a degree of the emotion, and the person experiencing the emotion was filled with it, rather than having it surrounding him or her. Interesting to note is that the dissimilarity in this idiom pair does not seem to disrupt how it is used in both languages. It seems like they are able to convey a similar semantic meaning even though they do not share an underlying conceptual process. This fact could be interesting to look further into, if additional research will be done in this area.

Both the corpora research and the syntactic construction, shown by the phrase structure tree, were stages in the research which made me come to the conclusion that head over heels in love and upp över öronen förälskad might be more dissimilar than similar both in the construction but also in the underlying thought process. The fact that the idioms were still able to convey a similar meaning was something that Deignan (2005) suggested in her study on metaphors and corpus research. The corpora research also pointed to dissimilarity in the actual use of the idioms keep one’s fingers crossed and hålla tummarna as the English one
seemed to entail wishing to prevent something from happening rather than, like the Swedish, wishing for something to happen. This result did not seem to affect the result of the analysis on how they were able to convey a similar meaning but might instead be a factor of cultural differences between the languages.

Metaphors and metonymies were found which could fit both the Swedish and the English idiom in two out of three idiom pairs. UNFRIENDLY IS ICY was the underlying metaphor in the idiom pair give the cold shoulder and ge någon kalla handen. It was noticed than other metaphors, such as FRIENDLY IS WARM might also be able to explain how the process behind the idiom pair functioned and why they manage to convey a similar meaning. After some consideration, I came to the conclusion that the point of the essay was not to find all the metaphors that could be the underlying process of the idioms and therefore, no further analysis was made of this metaphor, since a plausible answer had already been found in the UFRIENDLY IS ICY metaphor.

THE BODY AS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTION as well as STATES ARE LOCATIONS combined with the metaphor MORE IS UP were present in the idiom pair of upp över öronen förälskad and head over heels in love. Two different metaphors were chosen as the slight difference in the structure of the idioms was noticed when the idiom pairs were first examined. The difference did not seem to change the fact that the Swedish and English idiom was used in similar ways, as seen by the examples provided from corpora.

Lastly, the metonymy HANDS STANDS FOR CONTROL was the underlying conceptual motivation for the idioms keep one’s fingers crossed and hålla tummarna which could then be elaborated into metaphors such as NOT BEING ABLE TO DO ANYTHING MEANS HAVING TO WISH FOR LUCK.

As in Olza’s research, the different uses of the idioms were examined through corpora, in order to establish the metaphors or the metonymy as the underlying reason for the similar meaning of the idioms. She found that by looking at how the idioms where used in spoken and written language, the conceptual reasons she had found could be tested to see if they were valid and thus being able to represent both idioms. Similarly in my study, corpora research showed that the idioms crossing one’s fingers and hålla tummarna might have a slight difference in meaning. However, by testing the metaphors to both idioms it was suggested they could still have the same underlying process.

The underlying conceptual metaphors and metonymy explain why the idioms pairs in this essay are understood in the same way. It did not explain why they used different words for the body parts. For understanding what could be the motivation for the usages of different words
for body parts in the idiom pairs the function of the body parts were analysed.

In the idiom pair of *give the cold shoulder* and *ge någon kalla handen*, the body part seemed to suggest how it aimed to create a distance to the affected party. The *cold shoulder* was an embodiment of someone turning away from someone, and the *cold hand* was rather a way of stopping someone from talking or joining the conversation, for instance. These slight differences in the choice of words also were appointed the slight difference in their meaning, according to the dictionary analysis in the beginning of the essay; where giving the *cold shoulder* could mean “showing distaste in someone” whereas *ge någon kalla handen* did not have this explanation in the dictionaries examined.

The choice of the words for the body parts *head*, *heels* and *öronen* in the second idiom pair *head over heels in love* and *upp över öronen förälskad* all made references to how the emotion either fills or surrounds the body from the bottom all the way to the top. As both the head and öronen are on the top of the body, there could be a cultural difference as to why the different languages have chosen to have different words when both seems to be referring to the top of the body, rather than the specific features of the body part.

The last idiom pair also shows signs of having cultural, as well as embodied motivations for the use of the words *fingers* and *tummarna*. As the mutual aspect of both idioms was that the hands could not function but the way the different idioms have managed to accomplish this is quite dissimilar in their embodiment. As Dobrovil’skij and Piirainens study suggests it might be a cultural thing, to either disable the thumb or to disable the fingers. The embodiment is also different as crossing one’s fingers and holding the thumbs is a gesticulation people actually do and thus the reason for the different use of words for body parts can be explained by using Dobrovol’skij and Piirainens study.

Finally, by comparison, Books study focused more on the conceptual metaphors and metonymies behind the actual word for the clothes rather than on the entire idiom and thus our studies differ quite a bit. I found the body parts did not seem to affect the understanding of the idiom in any major way, except how the word *shoulder* gave the idiom *give the cold shoulder* a possible meaning of ‘showing distaste for someone’, which the body part *handen* did not. Therefore, I found that in most cases it was a matter of embodiment of cultural or conventional knowledge which was responsible for the difference in the words for the body parts.

If there was more time, one could certainly examine the notion of idioms with different words for body parts in English and in Swedish further, especially on what reasons there
could be for the idioms to have chosen body parts to represent certain things as well as more detailed studies as to why the words for the body parts differ.

7.1 Conclusion
The three English and the Swedish idiom pairs could be both similar and dissimilar in their construction but still manage to convey a similar semantic meaning, according to dictionary and corpora research. Some slight differences were accounted for, for instance that *give the cold shoulder* could mean ‘to show distaste for someone’, which was a meaning which the Swedish equivalent idiom was not able to convey. Moreover, dissimilarity was found in the construction of the idioms *head over heels in love* and *upp över öronen förälskad*, which showed that the word for the emotion was a noun in the English idiom but an adjective in the Swedish. It was also suggested that the slight difference in the construction of that idiom pair meant a difference, which meant that the Swedish idiom tried to present the emotion of love in a degree, whilst the English emotion of love was described as a location. The idiom pair was therefore not suggested to have a mutual underlying process, but rather, two separate ones. These separate conceptual metaphors would make the idioms convey a similar semantic meaning.

Moreover, as the constructions were established, as well as making sure the idioms did in fact manage to convey the same meaning, the main question of *how* was examined. The underlying message of the three idiom pairs were established and fitting metaphors or metonymies was found and tested if they could be the conceptual reason for the idioms being able to convey the same meaning. Corpora were used to see if the metaphor or metonymy was valid in both languages and the mapping scope was established in order to see if it fitted the idioms and if metaphorical entailment was necessary to take into account.

For all three idioms, either a metaphorical or metonymical reason was found as the motivation for the idioms being able to convey a similar semantic meaning. For two of the three, the metaphor or metonomy was the same for the Swedish and for the English idiom, but in *head over heels in love* and *upp över öronen förälskad*, it was suggested that each idiom had a conceptual metaphor of its own.

The last research question regarded the difference in the usage of the word for the body part and what the motivation could be for them being different. The different body parts in the idiom pairs were mainly because of embodied reasons or reasons of conventional or cultural knowledge. The particular function of the specific body part, for instance the *thumb* or the *fingers* did not seem to make a difference in the understanding of the idioms, but their
function was rather that of ‘being part of the hand’. The motivation for the body parts being
different could, however, be more thoroughly researched in order to see if there are other,
more specific, features behind the motivation of the different words for body parts.
References

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