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COLLOCABILITY OF PARTITIVE NOUNS IN ENGLISH

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## **Anotace**

Bakalářská práce si klade za cíl poskytnout popis tendencí v ustálených kolokacích složených ze singulativ a nepočítatelných podstatných jmen. Konkrétně se zaměřuje na analýzu sémantických rysů podstatných jmen a následné stanovení jednotících prvků u daných výrazů, které vymezují kolokabilitu daného singulativu.

Teoretická část se věnuje popisu kritérií kolokability, především podmínkám selektivity a preference spojení. Tyto jevy jsou dále zkoumány v praktické části, která analyzuje výsledky z dat získaných v Britském národním korpusu. Kromě frekvence užití daných výrazů, se zaměřuje na popis sémantických oblastí kolonátů za pomoci komponentové analýzy a následné stanovení principů kolokability daného singulativu.

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to provide a description of the tendencies in collocations formed by a partitive and an uncountable noun. Specifically, it focuses on the analysis of the uncountable nouns and their semantic features leading to a consequent determination of their unifying characteristics in order to state the restrictions on the collocability of given partitives.

The theoretical part determines the criteria of collocability, focusing especially on features such as selection and co-occurrence preferences. The latter is examined in the practical part which analyses results based on research in the British National Corpus. Apart from the frequency of given expressions, it aims to describe through componential analysis the semantic domains the partitive noun tends to collocate with in order to determine the principles of collocability of the given partitive construction.

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to provide analysis of the collocability of partitive nouns, focusing especially on its principles and conditions in order to set its possible restrictions. In other words, its objective is to form a certain framework outlining the span of collocability, to which the collocates of the given partitive noun can be ascribed. This will consequently provide a possible guideline for the use of these partitive nouns with other potential collocates. The rules and limitations are formed by the concepts derived from the principles of syntagmatic relations together with the tendencies in examples of the collocates. For this reason, the thesis is divided into 6 chapters, which firstly present theoretical background providing concepts applied in the subsequent practical analysis of a sample of partitive constructions extracted from the data in the British National Corpus.

The theoretical part focuses on the description of the phenomena necessary for understanding the nature of the partitive construction in order to achieve the set aim. Generally, these partitive constructions, formed by an indefinite article, partitive noun, and a prepositional of-phrase with a mass noun, represent one of the means the English language uses to achieve the countable interpretation of mass nouns denoting uncountable phenomena. This is why the general concept of countability as a grammatical term as well as real world phenomena is discussed. Nevertheless, the analysis is subsequently focused primarily on language-immanent features concerning this construction. Therefore, the principles governing syntagmatic relations are firstly explored. Having established the construction, the parameters regarding its description and the assignment of its characteristics such as normality, abnormality, and co-occurrence preferences are presented in the third chapter. Lastly, in order to be able to state the restrictions on collocability based also on the typical features of the mass nouns, the concepts of lexical meaning are discussed to provide tools for the description of collocate examples. Additionally, the methods of data processing and approaches to their subsequent analysis such as corpus studies and componential analysis are explored.

The analysis in the practical part aims to assess with the help of concepts presented in the theoretical part not only the tendencies in the mass noun collocates, but also the interaction at the syntagmatic level with the aim of exploring the features necessary for the collocate of the given partitive phrase. The description of collocability is provided



for 17 chosen partitive nouns based on the analysis of results extracted from the British National Corpus.

## **Theoretical part**

The theoretical part focuses on the description and explanation of the concepts essential for understanding the collocation formed by a partitive noun and uncountable noun such as countability, selectional criteria, co-occurrence patterns, and lexical meaning. Therefore, it will present key premises of these phenomena and highlight the necessary terminology.

### **1. Key concepts**

#### **1.1. Countability**

The term countability denotes not only a grammatical category of English nouns but also a phenomenon of the real world. From the cognitive point of view, the concept of countability is generally based on the premise that “entities which are similar in their appearance or equivalent in their function may be subsumed under the same category and be counted” (Radden, Dirven 65). In other words, it would be rather unusual to count at the same time entities like *a dog*, *gold*, and *a window*. Additionally, the later example implies that we have to be able to recognise different things and concepts. The major division of things can be drawn between objects and substances. “In the grammar of English, the conceptual distinction between objects and substances is reflected in the distinction between count nouns and mass nouns” (Radden, Dirven 66).

On the whole, nouns, being either count or mass, denote things. This rather abstract term can be specified by stating that “the main characteristic of things is their conceptual independence or autonomy” (Radden, Dirven 63). Additionally, another typical feature is that “things are defined relative to a conceptual domain and extend over a certain region within this domain” (Radden, Dirven 63). The latter can be demonstrated in the example of three weather denotations, *fog*, *mist*, and *haze*, which form part of the “domain that may be called ‘weather of reduced visibility’” (Radden, Dirven 64). In general, things can be divided into different types. Nevertheless, the main distinction is between objects and substances. This division is based on various criteria. The first factor that is taken into account is boundedness. Things with well-defined

outlines are perceived as whole and discrete objects. “Substances such as ‘water’, by contrast, have no inherent boundaries and, as a result, are continuous rather than discrete and individuated” (Radden, Dirven 65). Another criterion is internal composition, which can be heterogeneous or homogeneous. “Things whose internal compositions are heterogeneous are seen as objects and therefore coded as count nouns” (Radden, Dirven 65). On the other hand, even though some substances are formed, from a physical or chemical point of view, of particles and consequently considered heterogeneous, the naked eye may not be able to discern said particles, so they are perceived as homogenous. Such entities are referred to in the form of mass nouns.

However, these correlations are not always so straightforward. Some of the peripheral objects or substances may not possess all of these characteristics. For instance, *rice* or *sand* “consists of particles, but these are too small to be worth counting. Moreover, their internal composition appears to be homogeneous so that we see them as substances and express them as mass nouns” (Radden, Dirven 69). Additionally, the mass noun *furniture* is not composed of homogenous and uncountable units since it denotes entities like *chairs, beds, etc.* On the whole, blending of objects and substances can happen in both directions, namely substances viewed as objects, or vice versa.

#### 1.1.1. Countable and mass nouns

The phenomenon of shifts in the grammatical interpretation of a given noun based on its use, as either count or mass noun, is called dual class membership. Words with this ability exhibit a rather regular pattern. Therefore, five basic categories of such instances can be distinguished.

The first group represents a shift in the interpretation between a denotation of matter and individual entity. Prototypical examples from this area are names of foods and drinks. “Names of drinks are primarily non-count<sup>1</sup>, but systematically allow count interpretation where the noun denotes a serving of the drink- *a glass, bottle, etc.*” (Huddleston, Pullum 336). Expression of matter can also be contrasted with the countable use when denoting a type or kind of substance such as the case in “*a slightly bitter coffee*” (Huddleston, Pullum 336).

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<sup>1</sup> *Non-count* is term used by Huddleston and Pullum, it is understood as equivalent to the term *mass noun* used in this thesis

Another category of shifts includes instances of interpretation varying between a state or activity and its singular expression of occurrence. An example of the latter is the phrase “*to have a pain in the knee*” (Dušková 54). Additionally, the change in countability can also occur when denoting a characteristic and the person it is attributed to. For that reason, *(a) beauty* can function as a count or mass noun. Lastly, the shift in countability may also be connected with a semantic differentiation such as the case with *(an) iron*.

Nevertheless, even mass nouns that do not correspond with the categories mentioned above can also be found in combination with the indefinite article. In such cases the noun is usually pre-modified or acquires a slightly different meaning. An example of the former can be seen in the contrasting use of the word *darkness* in the following examples: “*we got up in darkness vs. an oppressive darkness hung all round us*” (Dušková 57). On the other hand, an instance of the nuances in meaning is evident in the difference between: “*they showed little understanding and to reach an understanding*” (Dušková 57).

Additionally, the change in countability of the word can also be achieved by different means than only adjusting the grammatical determiners of the particular word. One possible way is the use of a different lexeme. Instances of such count and mass noun pairs are: “*a garment – clothing, a laugh – laughter, a 'permit – permission, a suitcase – luggage*” (Quirk et al. 248). Moreover, another possibility is the use of a partitive construction formed by a partitive noun and prepositional of-phrase with the given mass noun.

## **1.2. Partitivity**

Generally, partitive constructions serve to express the relation between a part and a whole. Nevertheless, the partition can be focused on various levels. Thus, it can be related to quality, quantity, or measure. Moreover, it can concern count as well as mass nouns. One of the additional features of the constructions with the latter is that it enables the countable use of mass nouns.

### **1.2.1. Partitive nouns**

Partitive nouns used in these constructions can be divided into various categories. For instance “the expression of quantity and thus countability may be achieved by means of certain GENERAL PARTITIVE NOUNS, in particular *piece, bit, item*, followed by an

of-phrase” (Quirk et al. 249). Additionally, the ones with more restrictive use are “TYPICAL PARTITIVES which form expressions with specific concrete noncount<sup>2</sup> nouns, such as the following: *an atom/grain of truth, a bar of chocolate/soap/gold/iron*” (Quirk et al. 250). Nouns expressing length, area, weight, etc. collocate with measurement partitives such as *a foot of cable*. In addition, quality partition is expressed by partitive nouns such as *a kind* or *a sort*. Due to the different focuses of each group and consequent semantic variation, the categories vary in their possible collocates since the general partitives allow more universal use than the restrictive ones.

## **2. Syntagmatic relations**

The interactions between words that consequently influence the choice of possible collocates is called syntagmatic relations. This term is derived from the “Saussurean distinction between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axes of the language” (Geeraerts 57), where the latter is ascribed to the possible integration of a word into a larger lexical unit. The resulting syntagmatic lexical units can be studied from different perspectives. Nevertheless, the two major approaches are generative and structuralist, which describe the phenomenon in terms of selectional restrictions and lexical solidarities respectively.

### **2.1. Generative approach**

The generative approach is based on the concepts formulated by Chomsky which were, however, later found to be rather limited and were developed further. On the whole, Chomsky’s aim was to “form devices blocking the generation of ungrammatical sentences” (Kastovsky 71) which consisted of four syntactically focused mechanisms. The latter included, for instance, a strict subcategorization rule or the selectional rule regarding the features of the syntactic components of verbs. However, taking into consideration only the syntactic arguments was later criticised since the coined sentences may be “treated as grammatically correct but will be regarded as semantically deviant” (Kastovsky 73). For that reason, the semantic aspects of the lexical units were later incorporated into linguistic theories.

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<sup>2</sup> *Noncount* is term used by Quirk et al., it is understood as equivalent to the term *mass noun* used in this thesis

### 2.1.1. Selectional restrictions

In correspondence with Chomsky's intentions, the aim of selectional restrictions is to "denote the features that restrict and prevent the co-occurrence of certain lexemes" (Lipka 175). However, the understanding of these concepts underwent various changes in which the developmental shift is represented by an inclination toward the use of semantic arguments. Nevertheless, despite the nuances in the exact wording of the theory, they generally represent "constraints in a synthetic linguistic theory" (Lipka 175).

The term selectional restrictions itself was firstly used by Katz and Fodor (1963) in their theory, that proposed the shift towards the semantic aspects since "the theory is supposed to select the appropriate meaning, in a specific context and thereby resolve the ambiguity of a lexeme" (Lipka 176). Therefore, the use of restrictions enables the disambiguated interpretation of the sentence such as "*The man hit the colourful ball*" (Lipka 177). In particular, the mechanism assesses that the ball in the meaning of a social event cannot complement the verb hit and so the ambiguity is eliminated. However, the principles of this theory were challenged and further adjusted.

The critiques mentioned in relation to the definition of Katz and Fodor develop the concept further with a greater focus on the semantic nature of the lexical units. For instance, Weinreich (1972) proposes the mechanism of transfer features which "are more active and less restrictive, and they can explain the interpretation of vague, unusual, or even conflicting combinations of lexemes, or rather lexical units, including metaphors" (Lipka 177). Additionally, another influential adjustment is the theory of presuppositions by McCawley (1968).

The latter represent the ultimate departure from the syntactic relations as it does not take into account only language-immanent phenomena. Generally, presuppositions can be seen as "assumptions about extralinguistic referents or denotata" (Lipka 178). However, such a pragmatic approach may convey various challenges as the world around us constantly changes. Therefore, a sentence such as "*She still loves her wife*" (Kastovsky 74) cannot be regarded as anomalous considering the current social norms. Nevertheless, this concept is criticised for having "the tendency to confuse meaning and reference" (Kastovsky 77). Additionally, having many external factors to be regarded, the approach can hardly be formalised.

## 2.2. Structuralist approaches

The same linguistic data can also be seen from the perspective of the structural, non-generative approach. Generally, it is based on the concepts included in theories such as Porzig's essential meaning relation (1934), and encapsulation stated by Lyons (1977), which on the whole describe the lexicalisation of a modifying syntagmatic element. In other words, it can be demonstrated that the item *foot*, for instance, is included in the semantic meaning of the item *kick*. This premise can also be found in Coseriu's theories since he states that one item is semantically implied in the other. Nevertheless, he denotes this phenomenon as lexical solidarities. The latter represents one of the most significant concepts since many other implications about principles of syntagmatic relations can be drawn from them.

### 2.2.1. Lexical solidarities

Coseriu's term lexical solidarities can generally be understood as a positive implication between the content of two lexical items. In a more precise way, the implication can be defined as "the determination of the content of one word by a class of other words, by an archilexeme, or by a specific other lexeme" (Lipka 179). Additionally, the word positive stands for the quality of representing "directed, orientated, unilateral implications" (Lipka 179). The latter can be demonstrated in the example of the relation between *kiss* and *lips*. The former's meaning includes the determining lexeme *lip*, but it could not be applied vice versa.

Developing the definitions provided further, different types of solidarities can be recognised. The first distinction can be based on the motive of content determination, which can be represented by a classeme, an archilexeme or a specific lexeme. In correspondence, the types are denoted as affinity, selection and implication respectively. However, it was argued that there is no need for the distinction between affinity and selection since "classemes often function as archilexemes and that in both affinity as well as selection semantic features are involved as opposed to implication, which only concerns specific lexemes" (Lipka 180).

Another distinction can be made between unilateral and multilateral solidarities based on the sufficiency and modification of the determining lexeme. "With the former, the absence of the determining lexeme is the rule" (Lipka 180). For that reason, explicit use such as "*He kissed her with his lips*" (Lipka 180) appears rather unacceptable. However,

with further modification of the determining lexeme, the words form a felicitous phrase such as “*He kissed her with his chocolate-smearred lips*” (Lipka 180). On the other hand, with the other group, namely the multilateral solidarities, presence of the determining lexeme is not necessary.

On the whole, lexical solidarities represent the implications that are inherent parts of the lexical item and therefore influence the choice of modifying items based on the necessity of complementation.

In conclusion, since the approaches, generative and structuralist, interpret the same phenomenon, namely the syntagmatic relations, a partial overlap is inevitable. For that reason, although they differ in their perspectives, it can be argued that they “can be regarded as mutually compatible” (Kastovsky 71). The reason for that is because “solidarities are positive semantic implications, while selection restrictions are constraints in a synthetic linguistic theory” (Lipka 175).

### **2.3. Collocations**

Nevertheless, the stated principles are not always applicable. For instance one type of language features that cannot be satisfactorily described by the means of these two principles are collocations as they are rather neutral to them. It is so since they “designate the co-occurrence or syntagmatic combinations of lexical items, independently of word class and syntactic structure” (Lipka 181). This phenomenon can be demonstrated in the example of the words open and window, which co-occur together the former being either an adjective or verb.

This ambiguity can be seen as a positive feature as collocations have “certain advantages in capturing syntagmatic relations between lexical elements” (Lipka 181). For instance, the relation does not have to be necessarily semantic but definitely syntagmatic. Therefore “collocations are syntagmatically associated, learned and memorised” (Lipka 182). In other words, once learnt that *strong* and *argument* may go together, one can form variations such as not only *strong argument* but also “*the strength of his argument, his argument was strengthened, etc.*” (Lipka 182)

This rather unsystematic quality implies that there are many differences between the given collocations. Therefore, some can have more restricted variation than others. Generally, combinations which are perceived as the most fixed are denoted idioms. Nevertheless, “there is no hard-and-fast dividing line between fixed collocations and

idiomatic turns of phrase” (Lipka 184). However, the latter representing another irregular lexical unit, cannot be analysed through the use of either selectional restrictions or lexical solidarities.

#### **2.4. Metaphor and metonymy**

Two other language features that violate the stated rules are metaphor and metonymy. However, such transgression can usually be explained when taking into account the pragmatic motivation of the speaker. These unusual structures, which may be suggested, for instance, by the specific intentions of the speaker, can be explained through the use of metaphor or metonymy since “the connection between two lexical units related through metaphor is similarity, in the case of metonymy it is simply contiguity” (Lipka 179). Additionally, apart from these concepts, more in-depth principles and patterns can be found in their usage.

The rules governing the choice of lexical items in these types of relations are described in conceptual metaphor theory. Generally they are based on three main premises. Firstly, “metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon, rather than a purely lexical one; second, the view that metaphor should be analysed as a mapping between two domains, and three, the concepts that linguistic semantics is experientially grounded” (Geeraerts 204). Additionally, the principles of metonymy partly correlate with those of metaphor since “metonymical concepts allow us to think of one thing in terms of its relation to something else” (Geeraerts 214). Moreover, the influence of the speaker’s attitude is also acknowledged. On the whole, the study, therefore, cannot be limited only to the analysis of the given syntagmatic unit formed by the lexical items but also the extra-linguistic patterns have to be considered.

The latter represents the main difference from constructions formed by selectional restrictions or lexical solidarities as they do not explicitly focus on the influence of language non-immanent phenomena.

### **3. Analysis of constructions**

The interaction between the lexical items in the established syntagma influences also the nature of the construction. The latter can be described through characteristics like normality or expectedness of the instances. In other words, it generally captures and describes the fact that, although some combination of words can be regarded as rather



unnatural, it can still be plausible to use such a phrase in a particular context. By analysing the normality or possible abnormality of the construction and its motivation, the features that become relevant for the description are for instance co-occurrence preferences, degree of expectedness as well as the direction of influence.

### **3.1. Normality and abnormality**

The first feature that can be recognised when analysing a construction is its normality or abnormality. Whereas some constructions seem natural, with some “it is impossible, or at least very difficult, to imagine a situation in which they could be used” (Cruse 179). The importance of such categorisation is the implication that when studying the motives of the ill-formed combination, principles governing the choice of a natural sequence can be discovered.

The mismatches in construction can be caused at a grammatical or semantic level. The corresponding type can be recognised through the use of the criterion of corrigibility as “it is claimed that grammatical anomalies are typically corrigible in the sense that it is obvious what the correct version should be” (Cruse 179). In contrast, the semantic anomaly can be eliminated by changes in the context of the co-occurring items. However, this principle cannot be universally applied since in some cases it is hard to define the intended phrasing and consequently adjust the correction. For that reason, it is more advisable to base the latter on the question “what is the minimum change to the sentence that will remove the anomaly” (Cruse 180).

Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that, even though some expressions can seem rather unusual, one can still understand them and interpret their meaning. For that reason, linguists distinguish the category of interpretation and normality of the given construction. The former is concerned more with the concept of the sense of the expression in contrast to the normality, which studies “to what extent is a combination normal or abnormal” (Cruse 182). These categories may overlap in some cases. Therefore, it is important to take into account the context in which each construction appears.

#### **3.1.1. Co-occurrence preferences**

Another feature observed when analysing a syntagmatic lexical construction are co-occurrence preferences that are used to describe typical and non-typical instances.

Nevertheless, it is again important to “describe the constraints on normal collocates of a word (its co-occurrence preferences), for each construal separately” (Cruse 182). Additionally, grammatical relations which are specific for the latter should also be taken into consideration together with the basic concepts regarding selection of collocates.

Generally, the principle of selectional restrictions is defined by semantic categories of the given lexical complement. Therefore, in the model construction “X drank Y” (Cruse 184), the Y should be represented by a liquid. Nonetheless, even though the feature of fluidity does not have to be explicitly stated, the construal can still be analysed as normal. This is because the principle that “if the patient of the verb is not specified, then the feature (liquid) will be transferred to them” (Cruse 184) as in the example “*Mary drank the medicine*” (Cruse 184). Additionally, as mentioned before, a violation of such rules can also be seen as a metaphor.

However, non-prototypical examples that at the same time follow the selectional restrictions occur to some extent. An instance of such a phenomenon can be the construction “*Mary drank petrol*” (Cruse 185). Despite its relative implausibility implied by the health dangers, petrol still belongs to the prototypical view of liquids. For that reason, it can be concluded that “there are no hard-and-fast rules for combining words, combinations are not either normal or anomalous, they are more or less normal” (Cruse 185).

### 3.1.2. Pleonasm

Changing the point of view and reasoning the abnormalities as well as the cause of the mismatch can be beneficial since it demonstrates the aspects of the influence between words which are hidden in naturally sounding combinations. Generally, there are two motives for the construction to appear abnormal. It can possibly be a semantic clash of the two respective meanings, or pleonasm in which “one meaning adds nothing new to another one with which it is combined and thus appears unnecessary or redundant” (Cruse 186). Nevertheless, since these phenomena are not directly relevant for the purpose of this work, they will not be discussed in great detail though some aspects from which implications can be drawn will be reviewed.

Pleonasm can be caused by various factors, one of which can be the lexical nature of the words, namely the degree of expectedness of features and their sufficiency. The former can be partly deduced from the necessity of the feature. In other words, if the word does

not entail the meaning of the other, a contingent relation can be expected. Sufficiency refers to a set of diagnostic features that allow us to recognise the given concept. In correspondence with its causes, there are more ways how it can be eliminated.

The process of correcting the pleonastic phrases is what can reveal the principles of the influence between items in the construction, particularly its direction. It is so since “the burden of providing extra information falls asymmetrically on the combined items” (Cruse 188). For that reason, it can be implied that one of the elements is the head and the other its dependant. Seeing the combination as a unit, a head therefore governs the relations with the other semantic elements. By considering an example such as “*the small table sneezed*” (Cruse 188), which sounds rather odd, we can determine as the head the word *table*. Thus by the changing of this word, we restore the normality of the sentence. The latter cannot be, however, achieved by substituting the word *small*. This conclusion is not only important for the analysis of ill-formed combinations but also of the normal one since it shows the principles behind the interaction of items and consequently provides methods for its study.

### **3.2. Directionality**

The concept of directionality can also be recognised within the lexical semantic combination. Generally, it derives from the premise that “the co-occurrence preferences between lexical items and its constraints have directional properties” (Cruse 183). In other words, one lexical item represents the selector, and the other that satisfies its preferences is the selectee.

The principle of the determination of the role can be demonstrated in the example “*hard match*” (Cruse 183) and its analysis. The latter is based on the comparison of other possible collocates for each lexical item in its corresponding meaning. For instance, the word *match* can be preceded by words such as *exciting*, *home* or *postponed*. On the other hand, the item *hard* can be followed by expressions like *game*, *problem* or *journey*. Looking at the given items, it can be stated that there is no umbrella term which would denote the modifiers of a match. However, a certain pattern encompassing the words co-occurring with *hard* can be implied, namely that they all denote “human activity requiring effort” (Cruse 183). Therefore it can be concluded that the word *hard* is the selector. The generalisation that can be drawn from the instance is that “adjectives select their head-nouns and verbs select their components” (Cruse 183).

Considering the partitive constructions, it can thus be stated that the partitive noun is the selector in the lexical syntagma and the mass noun is the selectee. For that reason, the significant implication is that the mass nouns should show a particular pattern.

#### **4. Lexical meaning**

Lexical meaning and meaning generally are both very complex phenomena which can be understood and consequently described from different perspectives depending on the aims of the analysis. For the purposes of this thesis, the description of basic principles of meaning and its components are of high relevance since they play a crucial part in syntagmatic relations. For that reason, approaches to the description of meaning and tools for the decomposition will be discussed. Nevertheless, firstly the prime distinction between the two major types of meaning, namely descriptive and non-descriptive, has to be understood.

##### **4.1. Descriptive meaning**

The essential concept of descriptive meaning is that it represents “this aspect of the meaning of a sentence that determines whether or not any proposition it expresses is true or false” (Cruse 195). In other words, it focuses on the literal propositions, which can possibly be questioned or negated. Developing further its definition, this aspect of meaning also limits the referents of the expression. Additionally, “it is fully conceptualised, that is to say, it provides a set of conceptual categories into which aspects of experience may be sorted” (Cruse 196).

For that reason, there are also many different parameters that enable description and comparison of words with respect to descriptive meaning. Thus, even though there are words that have some features in common as the example of words “denoting the activity requiring human effort” was mentioned, it enables the denotation of the subtle difference between them.

The first parameter that can be discerned is quality, which becomes prominent when contrasting two items. For that purpose, the phrase that tests and consequently demonstrates the difference between the two lexical items such as “not X but Y and not Y but X” (Cruse 197) is suggested. For instance, when completed with the words *yellow* and *grey*, the phrase does not evince any incongruity. However, the variation in quality “can be observed at all levels of specificity” (Cruse 200).

The latter represents another criterion in the analysis of the descriptive meaning. However for higher precision, it can be further divided. One of the subdivisions is type specificity denoting the feature of hyponymy. Since *rabbit* is more specific than *animal*, the former is considered the hyponym of the latter. The importance of this aspect lies in its aptness when forming definitions that later form parts of dictionary entries given the “scholastic conception of definition, an analytical definition is supposed to consist of a genus proximum, i.e. the next higher superordinate term in a taxonomy, to which are added differentia specifica, i.e. the attributes that distinguish the concept to be defined from its co-hyponyms” (Geeraerts 83). Additionally, these definitions are usual starting points for further meaning analyses.

Another subcategory of specificity is part specificity with its essential term meronymy. The suggested testing phrase for the latter has the form of “X is a part of Y” (Geeraets 88). Additionally, the last subcategory is intensity specificity which can be defined by stating that “one range of degrees of some property is included in another range” (Cruse 199). Thus, the instance of the words *huge* and *large* can be used such that *huge* entails *large*, but not vice versa.

However, intensity can be understood as a parameter of its own. In order to demonstrate this characteristic, the proposed phrase is “it wasn’t just X, it was Y” (Cruse 197). A possible example of words with different intensity that can be inserted into the testing phrase is the pair *scared* and *horrified*.

The last parameter for description of meaning is vagueness. “Meaning of a word is vague to the extent that the criteria governing its use are not precisely statable” (Cruse 199). Nevertheless, the latter can be due to different reasons, so two subtypes can be differentiated. Firstly, it is the ill-definedness that is typical for items denoting a grade on a conceivable scale as, for instance, *middle-aged*. It is not possible to precisely define it as there is no exact age limiting the start and the end of this period. The other type is laxness of application since “for some terms, their essence is easily defined, but they are habitually applied in a loose way” (Cruse 200). This feature can be demonstrated in the example of the word *circle*, which has a precise mathematical definition but people standing in a circle are not expected to form the exact shape. However, such laxness does not have to only be implied as there are lexical means for expressing it like stating *a sort of circle*.

## **4.2. Non-descriptive meaning**

In contrast to descriptive meaning, non-descriptive meaning can also be recognised. Generally, it focuses on the aspects of expressivity and evocation. Nevertheless, since the former is “restricted to the current state of the speaker” (Cruse 201) and evoked meaning is based on the associations drawn on register and dialect, its principles are not of high relevance to the analysis presented in this thesis. For that reason, it will not be discussed in greater detail.

## **4.3. Specification of word meaning**

Having determined the type of meaning by the use of basic terminology and tools for its description, it is necessary to adopt a certain approach when studying meaning. It is beneficial since it enables the use of tools with a more specific objective, corresponding to a certain conception of the phenomenon. Generally, there are two major concepts, namely the contextual and componential approach.

### **4.3.1. Contextual approach**

As it can be implied from the term itself, the contextual approach is a rather externally focused concept. More precisely, its grounding premise is to “see the essence of a lexical sense as inhering in its relations of one sort or another with other possible or actual sense” (Cruse 214). However, these relations can vary in correspondence with the diversity of possible modifying elements. Thus, this statement can be interpreted from various points of view.

For instance, modified to suit the structuralist interpretation of language, it is mostly contrasted with other items from the lexicon. For that reason, it presupposes that “the sense of the lexical item consists of the set of lexical relations that the item contracts with other items in the vocabulary” (Cruse 215). On the other hand, the influence of the context can be seen as based on the co-occurrence patterns. The latter can be studied by corpus linguistics through observing the correspondent data extracted from language corpora. Alternatively, the relevance of the word sequence can be taken into account, so the study is consequently concerned with the normality or abnormality of the construction. A fusion of all these concepts is the approach adopted by the linguist Haas, who proclaims the semantic field to represent the meaning of a word. The former is, nevertheless, composed of “two dimensions: a syntagmatic dimension in which all

possible contexts of the word were arranged in order of semantic normality and a paradigmatic dimension where in each context, the possible paradigmatic substitutes for the word were arranged in order of normality” (Cruse 217).

#### 4.3.2. Componential approach

Nevertheless, the meaning of a word can be studied also from the componential perspective which “sees meanings as being built up out of simpler semantic elements of some sort drawn from a central inventory” (Cruse 214). For that reason, it can be paraphrased that the aim of the analysis is to lexically decompose the item when studying its meaning.

Generally, the premise of meaning being composed of smaller semantic elements is backed up by the notion of partial similarities and correlations. The former represents the features that a pair of words share. It can be demonstrated in the instance of the pair “*mare-stallion*” (Cruse 220) where both items include the component horse and differ only in the gender element. However, “the examples of partial similarity which provide the most convincing evidence for lexical decomposition are correlations where the proposed components can be seen to be distributed independently of one another” (Cruse 220). In other words, the phenomenon demonstrated in the above-mentioned example can also be found in other pairs of words such as “*ewe* and *ram*” (Cruse 220).

However, some drawbacks may be ascertained. As Cruse states, “a two- dimensional correlation does not necessarily give a full analysis of the meaning of a word” (220). In other words, the components young and female, for instance, do not suffice for the meaning of *a girl* since the component of human has to be added. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that “when a polysemous word appears in a correlation, only one of the senses is intended to be operative” (Cruse 220).

Additionally, the semantic elements are not always explicitly manifested. Therefore, the decomposition of meaning is not necessarily connected with the morphological structure and composition. The examples demonstrating the latter are words such as untrue and false, which have considerably similar semantic analysis although they differ in the morphological complexity.

## **5. Methodology**

The first step in language analysis is to have relevant data, on which all the principles can be studied. One possible way how to obtain such data is through language corpora, which are phenomena created and studied by corpus linguistics. For that reason, the latter is also concerned with the principles of its usage.

### **5.1. Corpus linguistics**

Generally, corpus linguistics is defined as “section of linguistics which studies language through the use of corpora and derived methodology [translation from Czech to English is mine]” (Čermák 9). However, since it is a relatively new concept, some of its aspects remain open for discussion with regard to their understanding and application. For instance, one of the major disputes regards that “linguists often pose the question whether corpus linguistics should be regarded as a tool or as a theory in its own right” (Kubler, Zinsmeister 14). On the one hand, it can be seen as a theory since it raises and explains many fundamental questions such as those about the representativeness of a corpus, its annotation or reliability. On the other hand, it can be argued that the existence of language corpora also provides a tool as it enables finding evidence of high relevance thanks to its rather statistical nature. Nevertheless, the concepts discussed here will be concerned only with its findings that can be more directly connected with practical application in the analysis itself, namely with the phenomenon of language corpora and work with the data extracted from it.

#### **5.1.1. Language corpus**

Language corpus represents “an electronically available collection of texts or transcripts of audio recordings which is sampled to represent a certain language, language variety, or other linguistic domain” (Kubler, Zinsmeister 4). In correspondence with these different targets and consequently selected data, various types of corpora can be discerned.

The first criterion influencing the type of corpora is the number of languages included. Therefore, there are for instance monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual corpora. Other distinguishable types are synchronic and diachronic corpora, which reflect the conception of language evolution over time. Additionally, another division can also be based on the method of forming the corpora since the static one does not undergo any



changes in contrast to monitor corpora that “grow constantly or expand because they are based on texts that are scanned on a continuing basis” (Kubler, Zinsmeister 14). Moreover, annotated corpora include information from different levels of linguistic analysis.

An example of a language corpus is the British National Corpus (BNC), which is a monolingual, general, synchronic corpus containing 100 million words. Generally, it includes excerpts of written as well as spoken language. However, the former represents 90% of the data and “includes, for example, extracts from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, academic books and popular fiction, published and unpublished letters and memoranda, school and university essays, among many other kinds of text” (British National Corpus). The spoken part in the form of orthographic transcriptions thus represents 10% of the data. Its examples are chosen from various contexts differing in formality as well as the background of the speakers. The first version of the British National Corpus was released after 3 years of work in 1994. Nevertheless, since that time, it has undergone various revisions, so new editions were released in 2001 and 2007.

#### 5.1.2. Corpus studies

With regards to language corpora as a tool, their benefit is that they provide huge amounts of data. For that reason, their analysis can be carried out in various ways, using different techniques. “Such techniques range from finding a search term and observing its immediate environments, calculations of relative frequency, to annotation for such categories as word class, grammatical function or semantic class and frequency calculations based on such categories” (Hunston 4). Additionally, as mentioned before, it is also convenient when studying lexical meaning as it allows extracting the co-occurrence patterns of words.

However, despite its indisputable advantages such as its objectivity since it makes it possible for the analysis not to rely on the native speaker’s intuition, there are certain shortcomings mostly due to the formalisation and vast amount of data. For instance, one premise to bear in mind when studying word meaning is that, “a computer program can only recognise word forms and as a result, frequency data cannot be directly related to meanings” (Cruse 216). Moreover, it is necessary to take into account phenomena from the real world such as whether the elements are likely to co-occur together there. In

other words, the example of “*fried lettuce*” (Cruse 216) is not less numerous because of its impossibility or anomaly but rather because other substances like *tomatoes* are prepared in this way more frequently. On the other hand, it is also important to realise that people do not tend to mention the obvious. Therefore, “mere frequent co-occurrence of two items in the real world does not automatically lead to frequent joint mention” (Cruse 216). An example of that observation is the collocation *the Prime Minister breathed* (Cruse 216).

To sum up, language corpora is a good tool for language analysis. However, due to the formalisation, some statistical principles of work have to be kept in mind when drawing conclusions.

## Practical part

### 6. Data analysis

The analysis itself of the partitive phrases follows the concepts from the theoretical part not only regarding the explanation of the phenomena but also the methods used when processing the data. Additionally, all the above-mentioned procedures were applied in a certain order.

The sample of studied partitive phrases was extracted from Dušková's manual which is, to my knowledge, the only grammar book providing a comprehensive list of such constructions. Generally, English grammars describe the employment of lexical means in order to achieve countable use of mass nouns. However, they do not summarise the examples of the latter. In the manual, there are 17 partitive constructions mentioned regarding this phenomenon followed by examples of possible collocates.

The respective examples of partitive constructions were separately searched in the British National Corpus through the interface administered by Lancaster University. The parameters for the query were set with no restrictions on the frequency of collocates. In other words, even mass nouns with only a single occurrence were taken into account and studied as they demonstrate the breadth of the range of collocability.

On the whole, the examples of collocates were firstly sorted on the basis of whether they pertain to the category of mass nouns or not. Subsequently, the selected mass nouns were divided into various domains characterised by the respective semantic elements. Additionally, the syntagmatic relations in the phrase were studied through the use of the concepts of selectional restriction or possibly lexical solidarities. Lastly, the general tendencies of the given partitive constructions were compared. Based on the latter, they can be divided into 3 different categories regarding the restrictions on their collocability. This also provides the initial premise for the further subcategorization for the use of the presented analysis.

#### 6.1. Restricted collocability

The first group includes phrases with the most restrictive conditions of collocability. Generally, the latter can be demonstrated in various ways. For instance, the partitive meaning of the word *cake* is not very significant, so the only collocate of the infrequent phrase *a cake of* is the mass noun *soap*. On the other hand, the partitive *a loaf of* is

rather prominent and numerous. Nevertheless, it collocates exclusively with the mass noun *bread*. As can be concluded also from the summarisation presented below, the partitive nouns have got narrowly set restrictions that are met only by one respective collocate.

a cake of	hits in the BNC	4
	with partitive meaning	3
	number of types	1
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>soap</i> (3)
a loaf of	hits in the BNC	62
	with partitive meaning	62
	number of types	1
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>bread</i> (62)

## 6.2. Unrestricted collocability

In contrast to the first group, the other category can be characterised by rather unrestricted use of mass noun collocates. Generally, these partitive constructions have a high number of occurrences in the BNC as well as of collocates which cannot be classified into various well-defined domains that evince a certain pattern. In other words, the meaning of the partitive is rather vague and for that reason does not set narrow restrictions on the nature of the collocates. For instance, the scale of collocates of the construction *a bit of* is rather wide with mass nouns varying from concrete phenomena such as *money, cake, etc.*, through measurable concepts like *time* to abstract denotata represented by examples such as *fun, luck, etc.* Moreover, the numerous collocates of the phrase *a piece of* cover also concrete as well as abstract phenomena. Nevertheless, slightly more prominent tendencies can be discerned there as the former tends to denote certain paraphernalia or food and the latter is likely to contain the semantic element information. Generally, the use of these constructions based on the data from the BNC is summarised in the table below.

a bit of	hits in the BNC	5026
	with partitive meaning	2056
	number of types	689
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>time</i> (103), <i>luck</i> (97), <i>fun</i> (90), <i>money</i> (80), <i>work</i> (56) <i>paper</i> (49), <i>help</i> (30), <i>trouble</i> (26)
a piece of	hits in the BNC	2535
	with partitive meaning	2263
	number of types	470
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>paper</i> (337), <i>wood</i> (79), <i>string</i> (67), <i>land</i> (58), <i>bread</i> (56), <i>work</i> (55), <i>cake</i> (53), <i>equipment</i> (33)

### 6.3. Restriction analysis

The third category of partitive constructions is represented by phrases which have a rather average frequency of occurrences and are thus apt for the analysis since they provide a more illustrative example of the conditions of collocability. This is because the mass noun collocates which number is sufficiently representative and which also evince certain patterns. The latter, consequently, enables the application of concepts about syntagmatic relations, namely selectional restrictions or alternatively lexical solidarities, which allow setting the restrictions on their collocability. For that reason, the instances of this category will be discussed in greater detail.

Studying the nature of their collocates at the general level, few tendencies can be discerned. Concretely, some partitives also tend to collocate with both concrete and abstract mass nouns. However, the absolute majority is more likely to prefer one of these categories. Nevertheless, there is still a certain level of variety within these three groups as well as domains attributed to a given partitive noun. These phenomena will be the subject of further relevant description and analysis together with the principles of syntagmatic relations in the partitive construction. In order to present explanatory demonstration of the above-mentioned principles of variation in the extent of this thesis, half of the examples of partitive constructions from each category will be discussed in

great detail. The choice of the instances was made on the basis of simple random sampling.

### 6.3.1. Abstract collocates

Partitive phrases whose collocates tend to be examples of mass nouns are namely *an act of*, *a point of*, *a shred of*, *a stroke of*, and *a word of*. However, despite this unifying element, there are varying tendencies within their use, which will be demonstrated in the detailed description of three of them. The use of the rest of the partitive phrases is summarised in the frequency table below.

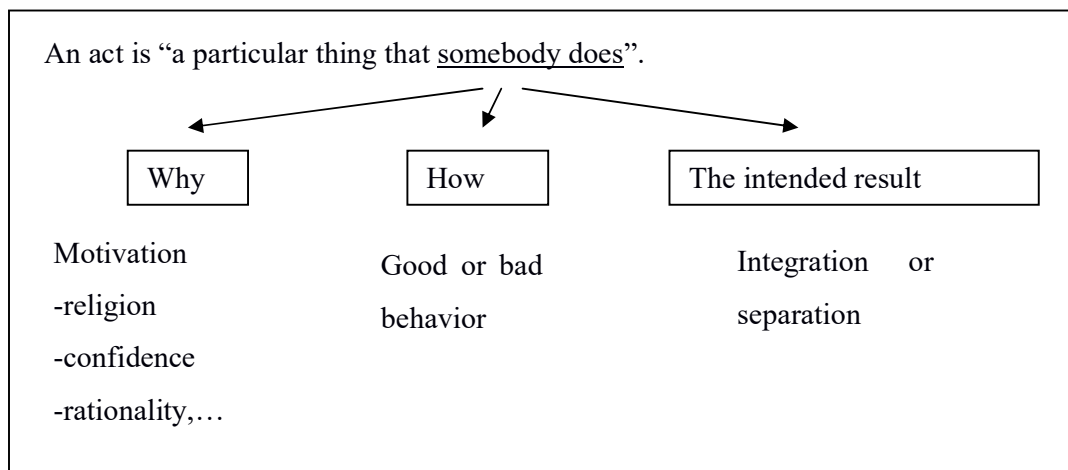
A point of	hits in the BNC	688
	with partitive meaning	464
	number of types	73
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>Order</i> (140), <i>view</i> (71), <i>law</i> (52)
A shred of	hits in the BNC	37
	with partitive meaning	35
	number of types	17
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>Evidence</i> (17), <i>proof</i> (2), <i>truth</i> (2)

#### 6.3.1.1. An act of

Number of hits in the BNC	723
Hits with partitive meaning	505
Number of types	218
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>faith</i> (35), <i>violence</i> (21), <i>will</i> (20)

As implied in the table, there is a great variety among the collocates of the partitive phrase *an act of*. However, many unifying tendencies can be found in the domains they represent. The biggest domain regarding the number of occurrences as well as lexical variety can be labelled as denoting behaviour. The most prominent semantic elements possessed by its examples are compassion (*an act of helpfulness, kindness, solidarity, etc.*), obedience (*obedience, respect, etc.*), lack of respect (*recklessness, exploitation, etc.*), disloyalty (*treachery, defiance, etc.*), or even violence resulting also in criminal acts (*brutality, treason, etc.*). Another criterion for the division of the phenomena into

domains can be based on the motivation of the acts. The latter can be, for instance, religion (*faith, worship, etc.*), confidence or possibly its lack (*assertion, altruism, etc.*), or rationality and irrationality (*speculation, madness, etc.*). Moreover, the resulting effect can also be implied in the meaning of the mass noun. For that reason, there are collocates expressing “putting together” with the elements of sharing and agreeing (*incorporation, establishment, etc.*) or “decomposition” (*separation, reduction, etc.*). Generally, all the collocates represent a certain description of behaviour varying in connotations, corresponding with the various domains presented above. However, following the concepts discussed in the theoretical part they should not only exhibit a certain pattern but should also fit in the restrictions set by the inherent meaning of the selector. On the whole, the word *act* is defined as “a particular thing that somebody does” (OALD). For that reason, the nature of the modifying element should be restricted to conveying additional information about the thing which is being done. Therefore, any word concerning behaviour generally adds the required element. To make this allocation more precise, the modification can generally concern three different areas as presented in the diagram below.



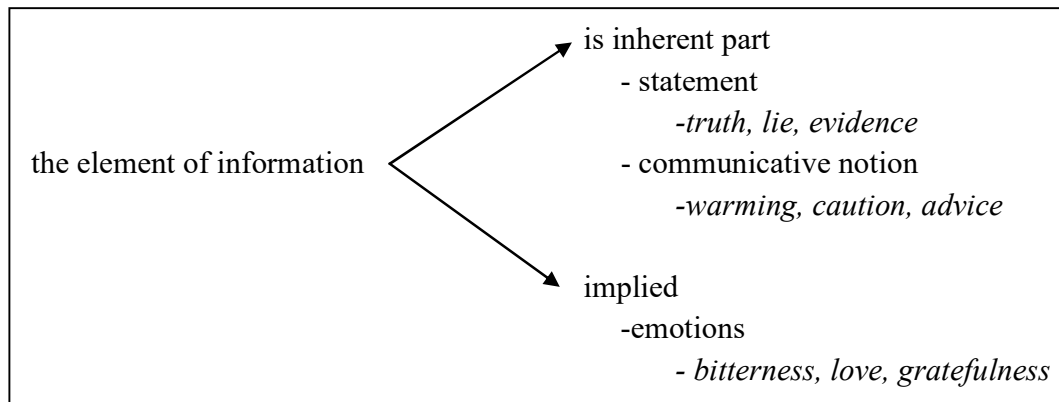
To sum up, the partitive construction *an act of* collocates with mass nouns that provide additional information about the event concerning, for instance, its nature, motivation, or intended result.

6.3.1.2. A word of

Number of hits in the BNC	288
Hits with partitive meaning	197
Number of types	59
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>Warning</i> (43), <i>caution</i> (21), <i>advice</i> (17)

Since a word is primarily seen as a unit of language, many of its collocates are from a domain denoting the latter. Therefore, examples such as *a word of English, French, Burmese, etc.* can be found in the data from the BNC. Additionally, these constructions are usually used in negative sentences ultimately expressing no knowledge of that particular language. However, as implied in the list of the most frequent mass nouns, the majority of collocates is connected with conveying certain information.

The semantic element of information can be inherent in the mass noun or can only be implied as it is suggested in the diagram below. The former is the characteristic of words providing a certain statement such as *truth, lie, prophecy, etc.* Moreover, examples of words such as *warning, caution, command, etc.* also convey certain information. However, they additionally include communicative features and values. In other words, they are of a more active or causative nature since they are uttered with the expectation of having a certain effect on the addressee. For that reason, this domain is formed by many deverbal nouns. On the other hand, as mentioned before, the concept of information can only be implied since the mass noun itself does not convey such a semantic element. In contrast, the word is usually formed by elements of emotions such as *love, gratefulness, austerity, etc.*



According to the concept of lexical solidarities, the partitive noun should possess semantic elements that imply the given domains of the collocates. Generally, a word as a unit of language should not only represent the things one says and consequently their



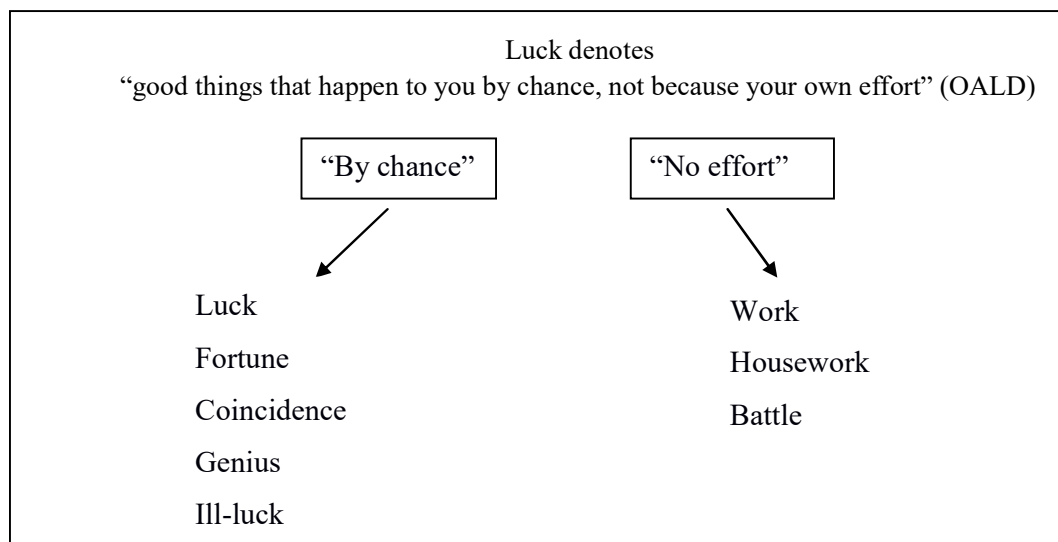
nature but also feelings one wants to express. In correspondence, all these qualities were found in the domains formed by the collocates.

To sum up, the construction *a word of* collocates with mass nouns which specify its nature, motivation, or information conveyed.

### 6.3.1.3. A stroke of

Number of hits in the BNC	61
Hits with partitive meaning	53
Number of types	8
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>luck (27), genius (9), fortune (7)</i>

The most prominent collocate of the partitive phrase *a stroke of* is the mass noun *luck* considering not only its frequency, but also, given it implies the two domains other collocates can be attributed to. As represented in the diagram with its definition, the domains generally can be described by the semantic elements of “happening by chance” and “no effort shown”.



The semantic element of “occurring by chance” is possessed by the collocates *luck*, *genius*, *fortune* and *coincidence*. These all happen without personal intention, or in other words, more as a consequence of a sudden divine intervention. Additionally, this phenomenon does not necessarily have to be used only with positive connotations since *ill-luck* can also be found in the data. On the other hand, the next group of words includes examples from the lexical field of work (*work*, *housework*) which generally

represents activities requiring certain effort. Nevertheless, these examples are used exclusively in negative sentences, ultimately expressing the fact that no action was performed, hence no effort was shown. An instance of the latter can be demonstrated in an excerpt from the corpus: “*He’s never done a stroke of work since*” (BNC). Moreover, the collocate *battle* can also be assigned to this domain as the general sense of the sentence where it appears expresses again no action happening at all in the end.

Having established these domains and their characteristics, the interaction between the partitive and mass nouns with regard to the selectional restrictions or possibly lexical solidarities can be analysed. Generally, a stroke is defined as “a single successful occurrence” (OALD), so its use with *luck* and *fortune* can easily be justified since they suggest its manifestation.

On the other hand, the examples from the domain “no effort” as they are used in sentences with negative polarity deny its manifestation. However, the wording of the definition itself restricts the use even more specifically, limiting the possibly compatible elements. For instance, the notion conveyed by the word *single* is reflected in the semantic element of suddenness and the non-continuous nature possessed by the collocates of the domain labelled as “happening by chance”.

To sum up, the partitive *a stroke of* collocates with phenomena containing the elements of suddenness, arbitrariness, and no effort shown either as a result of one’s decision or divine intervention.

### 6.3.2. Concrete collocates

In contrast, concrete mass nouns tend to collocate with partitive phrases *a lump of* and *a sheet of*. The use of *a sheet of* is briefly presented in the table below while the construction *a lump of* is discussed in greater detail in the following description.

A sheet of	hits in the BNC	350
	with partitive meaning	308
	number of mass nouns	56
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>Paper</i> (167), <i>glass</i> (21), <i>newspaper</i> (12)

6.3.2.1. A lump of

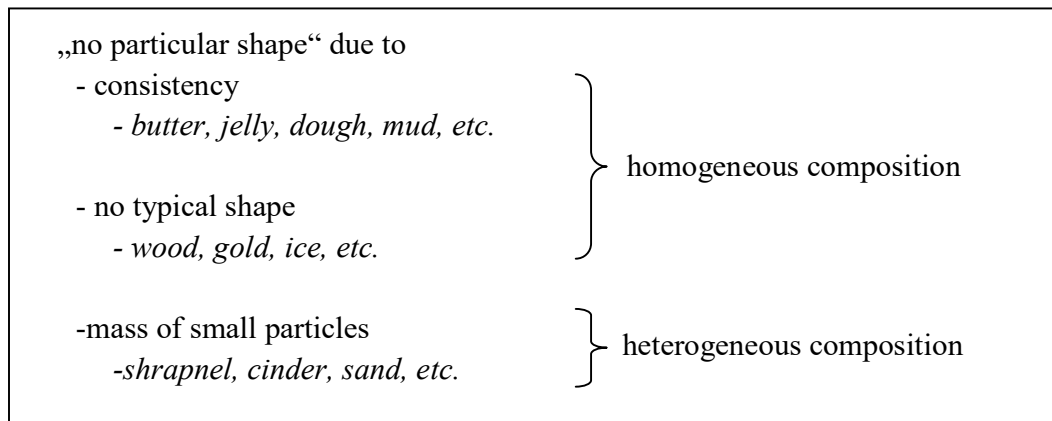
Number of hits in the BNC	133
Hits with partitive meaning	123
Number of types	62
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>Clay</i> (11), <i>ice</i> (7), <i>coal</i> (7)

As mentioned above, the majority of collocates of the phrase *a lump of* is formed by mass nouns denoting concrete phenomena. Nevertheless, the latter can still be further divided into four general domains.

One of the prominent domains can be characterised by the presence of the semantic elements denoting natural substances. Nonetheless, there is a big variety among this domain reflecting the diversity in nature. For that reason, it includes substances that can easily be found there (*clay, stone, mud, etc.*), various types of stones (*stone, rock, ore, granite, etc.*), purely chemical elements (*gold, iron, etc.*) or even substances of more synthetic origin (*metal, shrapnel, etc.*). Another diverse domain which can be recognised among the collocates of the partitive phrase is the one including various types of food. For instance many collocates have the semantic element of meat covering its different types (*pork, mutton*) or body parts of animals (*offal, gristle, bone*). Additionally, another significant unifying element of the collocates from this domain is a rather mushy consistency in cases such as *butter, jelly* or *dough*. Two additional, though not frequent, domains can be labelled as feelings and work based on their unifying semantic elements. The former group represented by *fog, grief, excitement, anxiety* mainly conveys the sense of negativity or worries. On the other hand, the domain of work does not concern only abstract phenomena (*procedure, data*) but also concrete ones (*string, machinery*). Having analysed the characteristic features of the given domains, it can be concluded that what they all have in common is a certain undefined nature motivated by either abstractness of the expression or a relative shapelessness of the substances.

According to the principles of lexical solidarities, the above-mentioned features should correlate with the elements implied by the partitive noun. Generally, a lump is defined as is “a piece of something hard or solid, usually without a particular shape” (OALD). On the whole, the shapelessness, as it is also presented in the diagram below, can be motivated by different factors. Firstly, it can concern homogenous substances whose

consistency is not firm or they simply do not have well-defined boundaries as they do have one prototypical shape due to their malleability. The former reason can be attributed, for example, to the instances of food (*butter, jelly, etc.*) while the latter is more likely to concern the natural materials such as *wood, gold, etc.* Nevertheless, the undefined shape can also regard mass nouns of a strictly speaking heterogeneous nature that are formed by particles too small and numerous to be counted. An instance supporting this premise is the collocate *shrapnel* which denotes “small pieces of metal that are thrown up and away from an exploding bomb” (OALD). Additionally, abstract phenomena are also inherently shapeless and thus fit in the restrictions set by the partitive noun which allows their use in the construction *a lump of*.



To conclude, the partitive construction collocates with mass nouns denoting substances with a rather undetermined shape of various characteristics being either of natural or artificial origin or homogenous or heterogeneous internal composition. Additionally, following this concept further, it can also be used with abstract phenomena, which need to be approximately quantified.

### 6.3.3. Abstract and concrete collocates

Abstract collocates as well as those with a certain physical aspect can be found with six partitive phrases, namely *an article of*, *a bar of*, *a fit of*, *a flash of*, *an item of*, and *a slice of*. The principle of their use is presented in detail regarding half of them while the rest are summarised in the table below.

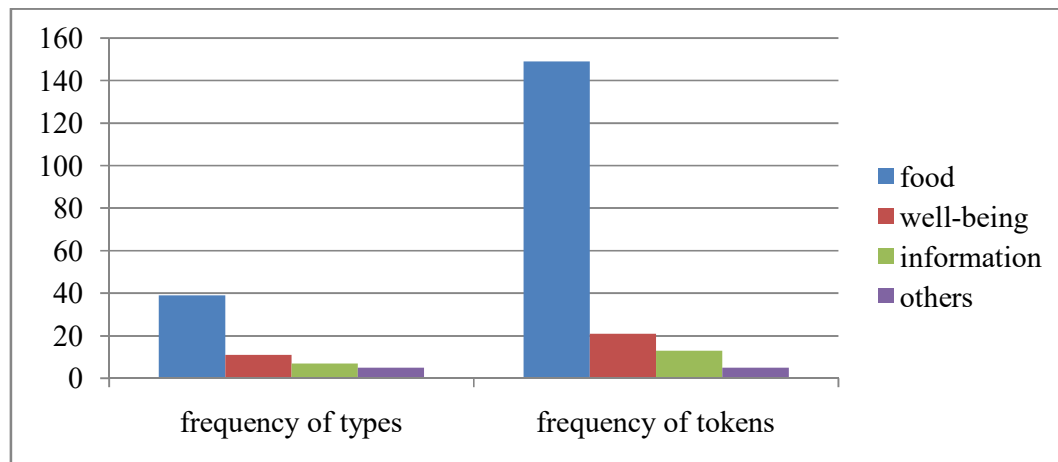
An article of	hits in the BNC	41
	with partitive meaning	29
	number of mass nouns	7
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>Faith (21), clothing (3)</i>
A bar of	hits in the BNC	87
	with partitive meaning	68
	number of mass nouns	8
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>Chocolate (33), soap (28), light (2)</i>
An item of	hits in the BNC	61
	with partitive meaning	59
	number of mass nouns	32
	most frequent mass nouns	<i>Clothing (8), property (4), food (4)</i>

#### 6.3.3.1. A slice of

Number of hits in the BNC	255
Hits with partitive meaning	204
Number of types	64
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>Bread (33), cake (25), toast (23)</i>

In correspondence with the most frequent mass noun collocates, the partitive construction *a slice of* is in the majority of cases modified by an instance from the domain of food as it can be seen in the graph below. However, collocates from this domain are not limited only to examples of baked goods (*bread, toast, pie, etc.*). There are also different varieties of fruits (*peach, orange, lemon, kiwi, etc.*), vegetables

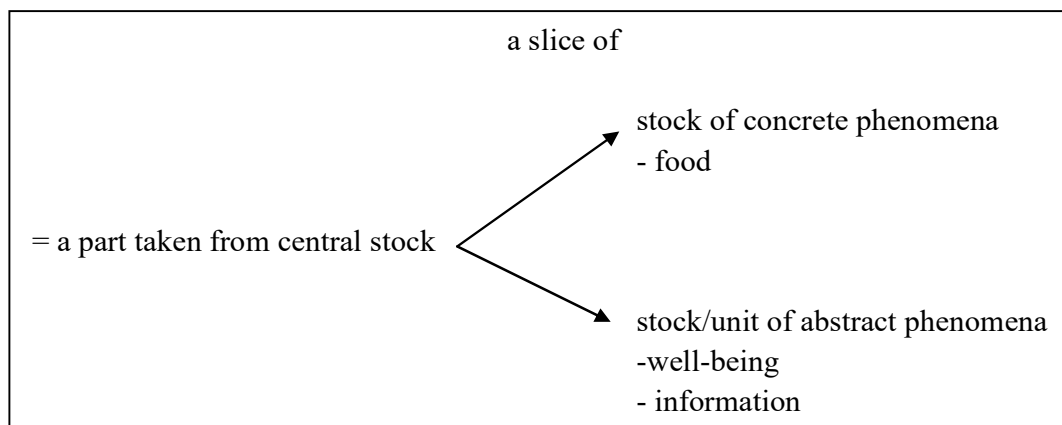
(*courgette, potato, etc.*), meat (*ham, chorizo, turkey, etc.*) and additionally, the popular dishes like *pizza, sushi, or quiche*.



Nevertheless, other domains of collocates can be discerned. One of the most prominent ones can be labelled by the umbrella term “well-being”. Firstly, the latter can be interpreted from the material perspective. Therefore, collocates with the semantic element of money can be found in this domain such as *income, cash, business, etc.*, However, expressions such as *a slice of fame, luck, etc.* can also be included there as they are components forming the general notion of well-being as well. Additionally, the example of the idiom *a slice of the action* which is used to express “a share in an interesting activity, especially in order to make money” (OALD) can be reasoned with concepts from this domain. Another important lexical field of the collocates can be assigned with the use of an idiom, namely *a slice of life* denoting “a film/movie, play, or book that gives a very realistic view of ordinary life” (OALD). For that reason, collocates from this domain express certain information (*autobiography, advice, judgement, etc.*). The remaining five collocates found in the data from the BNC cannot be classified into any of the above-mentioned domains, nor do they form one of their own. Consequently, they are represented by the category of “other collocates” in the graph.

Following the concept of lexical solidarities, the semantic elements implied by the word *slice* that influence its collocates are a thin flat piece. Therefore, the domain of food can be convincingly reasoned since this shape is obtained when cut. On the other hand, the domains of well-being and information are rather abstract and for that reason such qualities cannot be proven directly. However, a metaphorical interpretation can be used. Firstly, graphical representations of financial operations are very often in the form of a

pie chart, which may prompt the use of the partitive connected with food. Moreover, considering the general notion of cutting, it can be paraphrased that it is done with the aim of taking part of the substance as schematised in the diagram below. Therefore analogically, it denotes in combination with abstract phenomena taking a stake or share from the central stock of well-being. Alternatively, when applied to the domain of information, it represents the part of the message which is relevant in the given circumstances.

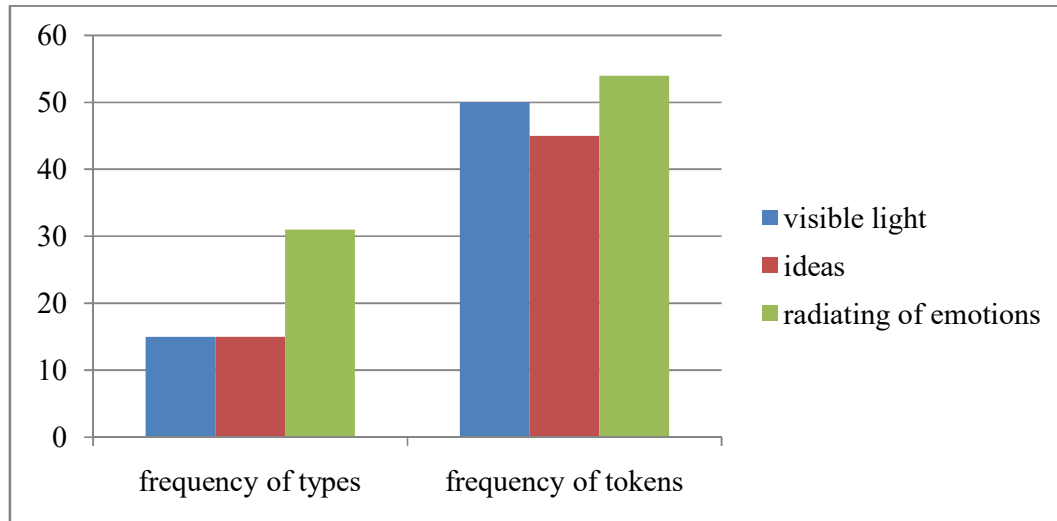


To sum up, the partitive *a slice of* primarily collocates with mass nouns denoting substances from the domain of food that can be cut into a thin flat shape. However, it can also be used with a word enabling the interpretation of being a share taken from a metaphorical supply or inventory.

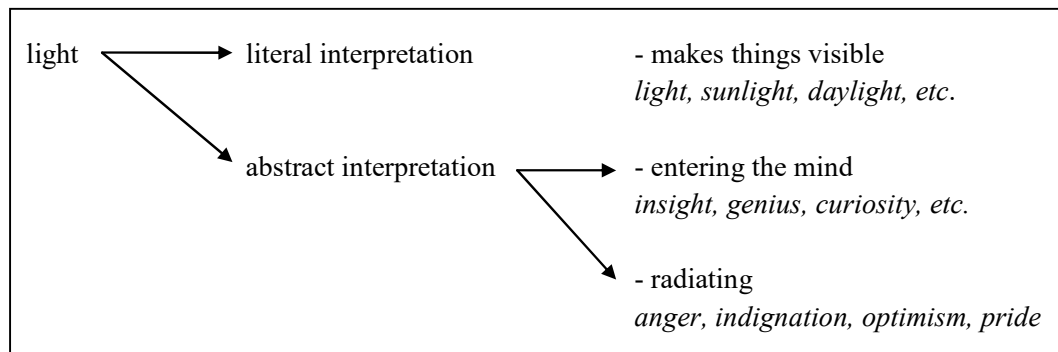
#### 6.3.3.2. A flash of

Number of hits in the BNC	190
Hits with partitive meaning	149
Number of types	61
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>Light</i> (20), <i>inspiration</i> (17), <i>lightning</i> (14)

In contrast to the concepts implied by the most frequent collocates, the partitive phrase *a flash of* is generally modified not only by two but three different domains of mass nouns. The latter vary in the nature but also in their proportional use as presented in the graph below.



However, among these three categories, there appears a unifying element, which is represented by the semantic element of light. Generally, the domains can be labelled in correspondence to the interpretation of the word *light* as it can be understood literally or metaphorically, representing either radiation of a certain emotion from the person or light entering the mind as it is represented in the diagram below.



Analysing the semantic elements of the given domains in detail can lead to the conclusion that the first one includes *light* in its literal meaning (i.e. the phenomenon that enables people to see things) and its hyponyms. Instances of the latter are *lightning, sunlight, daylight, etc.* Additionally, the word *light* can be omitted, and its characteristic colour, which is also an uncountable phenomenon, is the component of the partitive structure as it is for instance in *a flash of azure*. The other domains still contain the element light, though in its rather metaphorical interpretation. Firstly, it can be seen as light entering the mind in the form of an idea or knowledge as it in the instances of *a flash of enlightenment, insight, genius, etc.* These usually appear in one's mind not as results of the person's contribution and effort but rather more as divine intervention. Secondly, the light can be understood as a certain radiation that a person reflects when



going though rather extraordinary and thus temporary emotions. In other words, if a person feels *anger*, *venom*, *excitement* or *pride* it can be noticed in their facial expression, behaviour, etc.

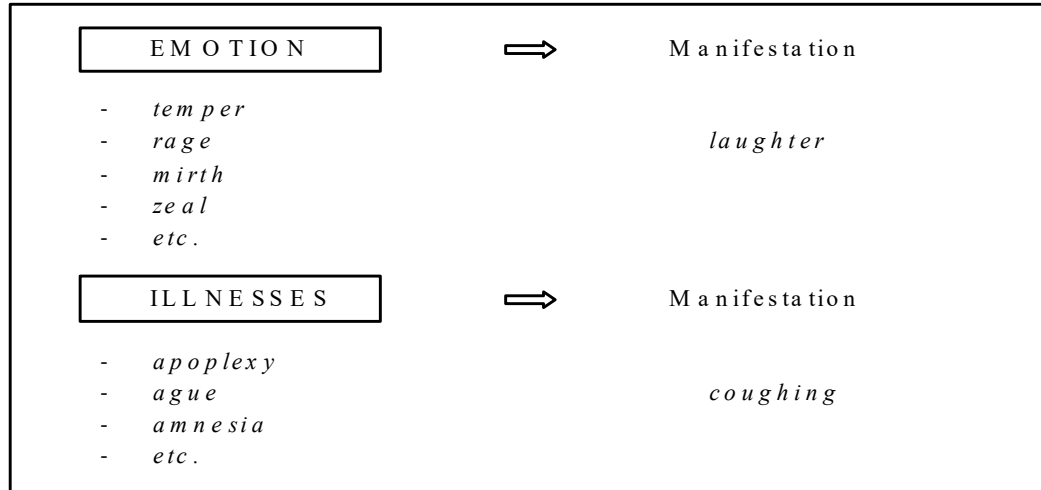
According to the concept of lexical solidarities, the partitive noun should possess semantic elements which imply the nature of the collocates. Since *a flash* is generally defined as a sudden appearance, it is compatible with the domains described above as they represent the subjects of the sudden action. The reasoning in the case of concrete phenomena is more illustrative as their appearance is verifiable. Nevertheless, the abstract one can also be accompanied by some visible aspects such as gestures, facial expressions, etc. Alternatively, the appearance can be understood in the abstract sense, seen as a result of an idea crossing somebody's mind.

To sum up, the partitive phrase a fit of collocates with mass nouns inherently possessing the element of possible sudden appearance. Nevertheless, it can also be modified with words only permitting such interpretation thanks to the nature of the phenomenon they denote.

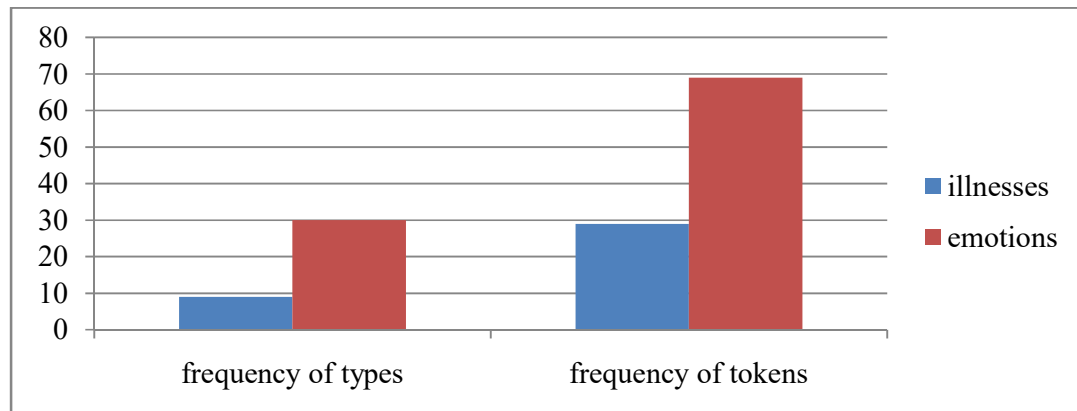
#### 6.3.3.3. A fit of

Number of hits in the BNC	126
Hits with partitive meaning	100
Number of types	41
The most frequent mass nouns	<i>Temper</i> (17), <i>coughing</i> (13), <i>pique</i> (6), <i>laughter</i> (6)

The partitive phrase *a fit of* generally collocates with the two types of domains. As presented in the table below, one of them includes various types of emotions (*temper*, *zeal*, *mirth*, *rage*, *jealousy*, etc.) and expressions such as *a fit of laughter* or *violence* which can be seen as symptomatic manifestations of these states of mind. However, some collocates from this domain partly overlap with the second one, represented namely by the lexical field of illnesses, since they can be seen as their symptoms. The latter is for instance *depression*, *madness*, *hysteria* or *panic*. Nevertheless, there are also examples of clear-cut illnesses affecting either physical or psychic aspects. Collocates from this domain are *amnesia*, *colic*, or *ague*. Additionally, the prototypical example of *coughing* can also be classified in this domain.



However, these two domains are not equal in their use. They differ not only in their relative proportions based on their lexical variety but consequently also in the frequency of the use of the domain. As can be seen in the graph below, the collocates from the domain of feelings are more prominent since they can be attributed to the higher frequency of tokens as well as types.



Nevertheless, on the whole, it can be generalised that they both denote a certain manifestation of physical or psychic states, which are usually of a temporary nature since they denote unusual and possibly uncommon personal attributes. This may also be the reason for the need of their interpretation as a singular and thus countable phenomena.

Additionally, based on the concepts of syntagmatic relations, what these domains have in common are projections of the lexical solidarities or possibly selectional restrictions implied by the meaning of the word *fit*. Generally, a fit can be described by the decomposition into the elements such as suddenness and short duration. These correlate

precisely with the collocates since the latter represent not permanent personal expressions.

Using this interpretation, the marginal collocate expressions such as *a fit of extravagance* and *activity* can be described as it implies a short duration of a phenomenon, which is rather unusual or unexpected in the particular situation.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the partitive construction *a fit of* is used to emphasise a short duration of a rather temporary state describing certain personal attributes.

## 7. Conclusion

In the six preceding chapters, the thesis aimed to determine and describe the collocability of partitive nouns that, when used in construction with mass nouns, enable their countable use. The theoretical background was chosen with the aim of providing concepts and parameters necessary for the practical analysis of the given examples. The later was focused on specification of the scope of the collocability in order to outline a certain framework into which all the possible collocates of the partitive noun should pertain. Let us summarise the most important steps in the procedure and highlight the results of the analysis.

The theoretical part proceeded from the general concepts of countability and partitivity to more language-focused phenomena. It gradually narrowed the target of the description according to the levels of formation of the construction and its consequent analysis. For that reason, it firstly discussed the principles of influence between words represented in the syntagmatic relations. The latter was explained through the use of two compatible concepts varying in the perspective, namely selectional restriction and lexical solidarities. Having established the construction, the parameters for its assessment on the basis of normality or abnormality and the consequent possible co-occurrence patterns were introduced. Later, the concepts about lexical meaning were provided in order to enable the description of the collocates. The latter was relevant especially for assigning the semantic elements that unify the collocates and thus form the essential aspects of the framework outlining the collocability. Additionally, the methods of data processing were discussed.

For the analysis in the practical part, 17 partitive nouns were chosen. Each partitive phrase was searched in the British National Corpus and the resulting list of their collocates was analysed. In correspondence with the findings of the general tendencies, the partitive nouns were later divided into categories based on the restrictions on their collocability. Each category was later discussed in greater detail providing the relevant frequencies and conclusions drawn from them. Additionally, some of the illustrative examples were analysed concerning all the aspects presented in the theoretical part. For that reason, 7 partitive nouns and their collocates were discussed with regard to the precise designation of the domains of its collocates. Moreover, the latter was consequently correlated with the use of selectional restrictions or lexical solidarities, with the attributes of the partitive noun.

As a result certain characteristic criteria for the collocates of the given noun phrases were stated.

On the whole, the results of the research showed varying tendencies among the given partitive collocates. Generally, some of them have more restricted collocability regarding their frequency of use or number and nature of their collocates. Nevertheless, with all of them, a conclusion concerning the general concepts expressed by their collocates and the limits of their collocability was reached.

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## Appendix

a cake of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
soap	3

a loaf of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
bread	62

an article of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
faith	21
clothing	3
decoration	1
furniture	1
belief	1
membership	1
trade	1

a bar of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
chocolate	33
soap	28
light	2
bubble-gum	1
cloud	1
iron	1
silver	1
rock	1

a stroke of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
luck	27
genius	9
fortune	7
work	6
ill-luck	1
housework	1
coincidence	1
battle	1

a shred of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
evidence	17
proof	2
truth	2
self-pity	1
paperwork	1
humanity	1
embarrassment	1
tobacco	1
substance	1
reputation	1
content	1
belief	1
feeling	1
doubt	1
help	1
paper	1
use	1



an item of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
clothing	8
property	4
food	4
equipment	3
news	3
service	3
information	3
gossip	2
mail	2
furniture	2
expenditure	2
plant	2
basis	2
grocery	1
merchandise	1
mourning	1
cutlery	1
costume	1
warfare	1
jewellery	1
fiction	1
entertainment	1
contents	1
text	1
stock	1
discussion	1
software	1
television	1
investment	1
income	1
account	1
evidence	1

a fit of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences
temper	17
coughing	13
pique	6
laughter	6
depression	5
jealousy	4
madness	4
anger	4
rage	3
hysteria	2
boredom	2
generosity	2
blues	2
despair	2
absence	2
unshyness	1
collick	1
warp-psychosis	1
prudishness	1
broodiness	1
acquisitiveness	1
apoplexy	1
ague	1
petulance	1
amnesia	1
self-pity	1
mirth	1
extravagance	1
zeal	1
impatience	1
lust	1
apprehension	1
vigour	1
gloom	1
hatred	1
courtesy	1
panic	1
anxiety	1
resistance	1
violence	1
activity	1

a flash of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

light	20
inspiration	17
lightning	14
insight	7
humour	7
anger	7
intuition	4
temper	4
irritation	3
genius	3
panic	3
white	3
revelation	2
rage	2
excitement	2
silver	2
pleasure	2
recognition	2
hope	2
memory	2
precognition	1
prescience	1
azure	1
bravado	1
sentimentality	1
helplessness	1
venom	1
ignition	1
antagonism	1
illumination	1
indignation	1
annoyance	1
envy	1
enlightenment	1
detachment	1
disbelief	1
generosity	1
gratitude	1
amusement	1
daylight	1
fury	1
curiosity	1
sunlight	1

blue	1
certainty	1
brass	1
disappointment	1
guilt	1
radiation	1
lighting	1
laughter	1
black	1
pride	1
awareness	1
steel	1
shock	1
vision	1
spirit	1
gold	1
understanding	1
health	1

a lump of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

clay	11
ice	7
coal	7
sugar	6
metal	6
mud	5
meat	4
rock	4
wood	4
granite	3
cheese	3
stone	3
gristle	2
lard	2
putty	2
dough	2
jelly	2
concrete	2
butter	2
bread	2
earth	2
glass	2
buffalo-dung	1
moussaka	1
foodstuff	1
cinder	1
offal	1
batter	1
excrement	1
toffee	1
shrapnel	1
mutton	1
paving	1
ore	1
vapour	1
charcoal	1
turf	1
pork	1
wax	1
foam	1
sulphur	1
fog	1
grief	1

bacon	1
crystal	1
tissue	1
flesh	1
bone	1
machinery	1
excitement	1
anxiety	1
string	1
sand	1
snow	1
iron	1
sky	1
procedure	1
gold	1
oil	1
data	1
matter	1
water	1

a sheet of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

paper	167
glass	21
newspaper	12
flame	10
ice	7
notepaper	5
cardboard	5
hardboard	4
parchment	4
plastic	4
water	4
polythene	3
iron	3
lead	3
film	3
charge	3
foolscap	2
laminate	2
acetate	2
lightning	2
aluminium	2
canvas	2
leather	2
card	2
fire	2
material	2
kitchen-towel	1
parafilm	1
copy-paper	1
tissue-paper	1
melamine	1
wadding	1
underlay	1
letterhead	1
sandpaper	1
mica	1
tarpaulin	1
hessian	1
plasterboard	1
vellum	1
lino	1
printout	1
netting	1

foil	1
wallpaper	1
slate	1
foam	1
spray	1
linen	1
mercury	1
copper	1
cloth	1
poetry	1
metal	1
rain	1
stone	1

a slice of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

bread	33
cake	25
toast	23
action	12
ham	11
lemon	10
history	7
market	6
pie	4
butter	4
cheese	4
life	4
luck	3
kiwi	2
melon	2
bacon	2
glory	2
fat	2
cash	2
business	2
areca	1
fruit-cake	1
starfruit	1
chorizo	1
meatloaf	1
fruitcake	1
sushi	1
brawn	1
gammon	1
courgette	1
quiche	1
cheesecake	1

avocado	1
salami	1
cheer	1
pineapple	1
abnormality	1
margarine	1
solitude	1
peach	1
autobiography	1
pizza	1
tomato	1
pudding	1
luxury	1
potato	1
fame	1
sunshine	1
orange	1
pig	1
salmon	1
income	1
lamb	1
fortune	1
turkey	1
exposure	1
judgement	1
meat	1
rock	1
reality	1
peace	1
advice	1
income	1
industry	1

a point of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

order	140
view	71
law	52
reference	19
interest	13
honour	11
departure	10
principle	10
return	10
clarification	9
information	9
orientation	7
contact	7
contention	6
pride	6
entry	6
origin	4
comparison	4
concern	4
transfer	3
weakness	2
collapse	2
logic	2
transition	2
integration	2
detail	2
agreement	2
light	2
policy	2
time	2
non-viability	1
embarkation	1
finality	1
intersection	1
dogma	1
culmination	1
mediation	1
stillness	1
orthodoxy	1
convergence	1
navigation	1
madness	1
similarity	1

transit	1
ignorance	1
despair	1
conscience	1
motivation	1
identification	1
grammar	1
confusion	1
dispute	1
anger	1
intervention	1
tension	1
focus	1
interpretation	1
independence	1
creation	1
definition	1
conflict	1
crisis	1
contrast	1
construction	1
credit	1
aid	1
discussion	1
safety	1
sale	1
difference	1
defence	1
growth	1
land	1

a word of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

warning	47
caution	21
advice	17
thanks	12
praise	7
encouragement	6
English	6
complaint	5
explanation	5
criticism	4
lie	3
command	3
reproach	2
reassurance	2
apology	2
welcome	2
appreciation	2
German	2
dialogue	2
comfort	2
French	2
hope	2
truth	2
knowledge	2
language	2
evidence	2
bird-language	1
gratefulness	1
disparagement	1
congratulation	1

Burmese	1
commendation	1
Norse	1
Russian	1
ransom	1
prophecy	1
mockery	1
interrogation	1
forgiveness	1
austerity	1
condemnation	1
greeting	1
consolation	1
crap	1
bitterness	1
kindness	1
gratitude	1
blessing	1
blame	1
Japanese	1
triumph	1
instruction	1
poetry	1
protest	1
preparation	1
approval	1
recognition	1
politics	1
agreement	1

an act of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

faith	35
violence	21
will	20
indecenty	17
defiance	15
aggression	14
worship	12
revenge	11
war	10
desperation	9
folly	8
love	8
treachery	7
treason	7
discrimination	7
vandalism	6
bankruptcy	6
terrorism	5
courage	5
charity	5
homage	4
goodwill	4
rebellion	4
grace	4
creation	4
commitment	4
justice	4
policy	4
cowardice	3
sabotage	3
piety	3
retribution	3
betrayal	3
generosity	3
obedience	3
ensorship	3
kindness	3
detection	3
solidarity	3
interference	3
imagination	3
trust	3
self-assertion	2

desecration	2
lunacy	2
irresponsibility	2
barbarism	2
bravado	2
atonement	2
derision	2
altruism	2
providence	2
conciliation	2
self-defence	2
mischief	2
devotion	2
injustice	2
confession	2
madness	2
loyalty	2
speculation	2
liberation	2
friendship	2
resignation	2
confidence	2
respect	2
union	2
service	2
power	2
self-emasulation	1
profanation	1
re-dedication	1
braggadocio	1
self-flagellation	1
self-abasement	1
long-sightedness	1
politesse	1
self-effacement	1
selflessness	1
reification	1
hijack	1
anti-Americanism	1
helpfulness	1
clairvoyance	1

self-advocacy	1
statesmanship	1
parricide	1
liberality	1
insubordination	1
mortification	1
debasement	1
impertinence	1
clemency	1
sacrilege	1
hedonism	1
depravity	1
spying	1
disloyalty	1
reinterpretation	1
self-sacrifice	1
expropriation	1
obstinacy	1
non-alignment	1
reparation	1
volition	1
ill-treatment	1
valour	1
larceny	1
rudeness	1
annihilation	1
genocide	1
quarantine	1
renunciation	1
illegality	1
euthanasia	1
penance	1
recklessness	1
stealth	1
authorship	1
carelessness	1
correctness	1
reclamation	1
thanksgiving	1
restitution	1
prudence	1
complicity	1
selfishness	1



superstition	1
fraternity	1
remembrance	1
dishonesty	1
reverence	1
collusion	1
bravery	1
nationalisation	1
adultery	1
humility	1
stupidity	1
incest	1
misconduct	1
brutality	1
helping	1
dispersal	1
provocation	1
prerogative	1
incompetence	1
vanity	1
intuition	1
violation	1
reassurance	1
incorporation	1
intimacy	1
fulfilment	1
communion	1
regression	1
honesty	1
reconciliation	1
sacrifice	1
cruelty	1
creativity	1
assertion	1
neglect	1
intercourse	1
convenience	1
mercy	1
submission	1
intent	1
humanity	1
contempt	1
despair	1
exploitation	1

compliance	1
hostility	1
sexuality	1
insight	1
corruption	1
integrity	1
exclusion	1
disability	1
disorder	1
pity	1
theft	1
suicide	1
fraud	1
separation	1
fighting	1
identification	1
passion	1
punishment	1
composition	1
destruction	1
judgement	1
protest	1
discovery	1
spite	1
conduct	1
anger	1
consent	1
abuse	1
skill	1
resistance	1
establishment	1
definition	1
reduction	1
challenge	1
consideration	1
recognition	1
favour	1
communication	1
balance	1
exchange	1
sex	1
peace	1
thought	1
responsibility	1

investment	1
defence	1
choice	1

a piece of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

paper	337
wood	79
string	67
land	58
bread	56
work	55
cake	53
equipment	33
furniture	28
wire	27
information	27
toast	26
card	26
plastic	25
history	25
meat	24
software	23
chalk	22
ground	22
glass	21
material	20
action	20
research	20
cheese	19
fruit	19
metal	19
cloth	18
tape	16
legislation	16
rope	13
chocolate	13
machinery	13
cardboard	12
parchment	12
fish	12
rag	11
advice	11
evidence	11
elastic	10
shrapnel	10
foil	10
bone	10
pipe	10

writing	10
news	10
board	10
tissue	9
silver	9
bacon	8
fabric	8
newspaper	8
rock	8
pottery	7
sculpture	7
copper	7
clothing	7
timber	7
cotton	7
leather	7
theatre	7
stone	7
property	7
art	7
tubing	6
plywood	6
piss	6
luggage	6
apparatus	6
jewellery	6
shit	6
butter	6
discourse	6
apple	6
poetry	6
luck	6
iron	6
data	6
prose	5
nonsense	5
wool	5
fiction	5
entertainment	5
carpet	5
ice	5
grass	5
text	5

gold	5
language	5
towelling	4
gauze	4
hardboard	4
fondant	4
netting	4
piping	4
dough	4
gum	4
lettuce	4
slate	4
plaster	4
pie	4
propaganda	4
ham	4
hardware	4
criticism	4
china	4
film	4
technology	4
behaviour	4
stripboard	3
reportage	3
quiche	3
driftwood	3
notepaper	3
tat	3
mutton	3
flannel	3
grit	3
graffiti	3
scaffolding	3
mushroom	3
peel	3
sausage	3
notation	3
junk	3
ribbon	3
cord	3
coral	3
velvet	3
linen	3

woodland	3
canvas	3
orange	3
verse	3
magic	3
clay	3
speculation	3
shell	3
chicken	3
silk	3
architecture	3
drama	3
steel	3
sheet	3
engineering	3
lead	3
space	3
matter	3
business	3
stottie	2
topside	2
lint	2
pitta	2
dowel	2
mystification	2
silverware	2
hosepipe	2
bitumen	2
statuary	2
kitsch	2
plasticine	2
calico	2
bogwood	2
lino	2
attire	2
pleading	2
muslin	2
crockery	2
venison	2
wasteland	2
polystyrene	2
flak	2
hardwood	2
sacking	2

celery	2
seaweed	2
felt	2
leverage	2
tart	2
acting	2
embroidery	2
hose	2
grassland	2
shorthand	2
wreckage	2
mesh	2
sponge	2
coastline	2
lavender	2
charcoal	2
jargon	2
uranium	2
granite	2
scum	2
pork	2
crust	2
terminology	2
nylon	2
scenery	2
thread	2
potato	2
treasure	2
armour	2
cork	2
concrete	2
dirt	2
knitting	2
aluminium	2
lace	2
documentation	2
gravel	2
lemon	2
soap	2
straw	2
beef	2
oak	2
fat	2
gear	2

mud	2
sociology	2
crystal	2
heaven	2
chain	2
sugar	2
soil	2
enterprise	2
tradition	2
literature	2
design	2
knowledge	2
class	2
food	2
sense	2
water	2
time	2
drawing-paper	1
spun yarn	1
duralinium	1
property	1
copy-paper	1
shortcake	1
apple-pie	1
glebeland	1
cork-board	1
dogshit	1
lightning-conductor	1
kidology	1
flapjack	1
pseudo-history	1
wrapping-paper	1
action-research	1
self-disclosure	1
canalization	1
regalism	1
antiquarianism	1
pasteboard	1
wickerwork	1
matzo	1
stalactite	1
scrimshaw	1
topiary	1

demagogu	1
beneficence	1
self-advertisement	1
baguette	1
spacetime	1
quicklime	1
balsa	1
smut	1
clip-art	1
tittle-tattle	1
doggerel	1
pastureland	1
window-dressing	1
sirloin	1
serendipity	1
exhibitionism	1
impudence	1
gristle	1
gateau	1
wadding	1
clingfilm	1
planking	1
selenium	1
handicraft	1
shortbread	1
plexiglass	1
beading	1
theorising	1
mozzarella	1
twine	1
horseradish	1
drainpipe	1
impertinence	1
crochet	1
self-deception	1
flotsam	1
baize	1
escapism	1
pinewood	1
wizardry	1
doughnut	1
chipboard	1
phraseology	1

theorizing	1
damask	1
bigotry	1
foolishness	1
lard	1
lunacy	1
pastel	1
plasterboard	1
swordfish	1
gingerbread	1
taffeta	1
vellum	1
guesswork	1
barter	1
opportunism	1
whitewash	1
paternalism	1
putty	1
teak	1
audacity	1
fudge	1
benevolence	1
reminiscence	1
footwork	1
bullion	1
cartilage	1
skirting	1
guttering	1
broccoli	1
sentimentality	1
sheeting	1
veal	1
notoriety	1
pewter	1
eccentricity	1
scone	1
campaigning	1
flex	1
casing	1
greenery	1
wrap	1
mysticism	1
trash	1
understatement	1

phosphorus	1
altruism	1
coursework	1
panelling	1
treachery	1
melon	1
patchwork	1
graphite	1
treatise	1
psychiatry	1
merchandise	1
teamwork	1
tapestry	1
quartz	1
morphology	1
filth	1
topaz	1
bamboo	1
ginger	1
fieldwork	1
vinyl	1
artwork	1
coconut	1
animation	1
masonry	1
hypocrisy	1
housekeeping	1
walnut	1
cod	1
carrot	1
bliss	1
mint	1
bedding	1
mischief	1
mythology	1
autobiography	1
bark	1
slaughter	1
bait	1
underwear	1
pizza	1
nostalgia	1
arrogance	1
jelly	1

pastry	1
apprenticeship	1
flint	1
rubber	1
arithmetic	1
pasta	1
turf	1
ivy	1
journalism	1
coke	1
silicon	1
costume	1
foam	1
litter	1
tomato	1
testimony	1
debris	1
limestone	1
homework	1
gossip	1
optimism	1
patronage	1
mechanics	1
yarn	1
membrane	1
intercourse	1
decoration	1
reasoning	1
rhetoric	1
folly	1
marsh	1
heather	1
hay	1
revision	1
pavement	1
exploitation	1
fantasy	1
correspondence	1
liver	1
lamb	1
cable	1
cinema	1
mathematics	1
tin	1

perception	1
rubbish	1
recording	1
net	1
excitement	1
psychology	1
experiment	1
territory	1
routine	1
spite	1
sand	1
DNA	1
intelligence	1
representation	1
talk	1
fuel	1
belief	1
reform	1
track	1
reading	1
search	1
wine	1
relief	1
video	1
play	1
skin	1
forest	1
stock	1
earth	1
competition	1
science	1
analysis	1
structure	1
money	1
fact	1

a bit of	
mass noun	frequency of occurrences

time	103
luck	97
fun	90
money	80
work	56
paper	49
help	30
trouble	26
weight	25
peace	22
practice	19
cake	18
space	17
stuff	16
bread	15
excitement	14
attention	13
cash	12
difference	12
land	12
sense	12
advice	12
company	12
life	12
stick	11
wood	11
news	11
heat	10
cheese	10
food	10
business	10
training	10
background	9
pressure	9
experience	9
support	9
wire	9
toast	8
imagination	8
shopping	8
light	8
research	8
interest	8

information	8
shock	7
string	7
comfort	7
respect	7
water	7
bother	6
sparkle	6
homework	6
encouragement	6
fat	6
meat	6
noise	6
success	6
music	6
class	6
spice	5
housework	5
bacon	5
humour	5
cold	5
dust	5
sugar	5
grass	5
inflation	5
lunch	5
reading	5
difficulty	5
speed	5
effort	5
tea	5
sex	5
thought	5
garden	5
sun	5
rest	5
room	5
power	5
bully	4
gossip	4
gardening	4
salad	4
revision	4

dancing	4
sunshine	4
make-up	4
beef	4
warmth	4
chicken	4
confusion	4
salt	4
drama	4
plastic	4
writing	4
dinner	4
freedom	4
rain	4
wine	4
exercise	4
pain	4
competition	4
heart	4
care	4
action	4
problem	4
fluff	3
elastic	3
hush	3
cardboard	3
rust	3
typing	3
pink	3
glamour	3
persuasion	3
discomfort	3
gratitude	3
plaster	3
potato	3
crack	3
praise	3
relaxation	3
patience	3
feedback	3
ham	3
rope	3
shit	3

mud	3
controversy	3
flexibility	3
chocolate	3
paint	3
cotton	3
drawing	3
publicity	3
pride	3
snow	3
bottle	3
breakfast	3
sport	3
discipline	3
fund	3
shape	3
confidence	3
gas	3
discussion	3
opposition	3
responsibility	3
fish	3
style	3
activity	3
history	3
change	3
scrubbin'	2
brainwork	2
photojournalism	2
bumph	2
icecream	2
naughtiness	2
roughage	2
spam	2
kip	2
dosh	2
leeway	2
concussion	2
pap	2
practise	2
self-discipline	2
indigestion	2
shrapnel	2
bounce	2

padding	2
decorating	2
clout	2
stir	2
polythene	2
Hype	2
Muck	2
ancestor	2
inconvenience	2
sewing	2
lipstick	2
beating	2
mischief	2
pastry	2
glue	2
wax	2
hesitation	2
thunder	2
diarrhoea	2
chat	2
chalk	2
breathing	2
irony	2
dirt	2
habitat	2
enjoyment	2
cleaning	2
lemon	2
palm	2
soup	2
cooperation	2
shade	2
rabbit	2
magic	2
adventure	2
washing	2
German	2
clay	2
chaos	2
tragedy	2
muscle	2
physics	2
cable	2
entertainment	2

courage	2
cloud	2
sympathy	2
harm	2
exposure	2
leather	2
apple	2
surgery	2
poetry	2
determination	2
sand	2
cream	2
initiative	2
sleep	2
French	2
ice	2
steel	2
fruit	2
brain	2
green	2
silver	2
newspaper	2
coal	2
profit	2
teaching	2
detail	2
coffee	2
wind	2
damage	2
truth	2
English	2
culture	2
variety	2
planning	2
blood	2
film	2
oil	2
America	2
energy	2
property	2
sea	2
fire	2
movement	2
security	2

knowledge	2
air	2
market	2
trade	2
sick-visiting	1
slapback	1
over-exhuberance	1
ill-rehearsed	1
fire-fountaining	1
coal-bag	1
oversell	1
clublife	1
skag	1
technic	1
cottaging	1
dynercaprol	1
hummus	1
fiddling	1
convincing	1
grog	1
contortion	1
arm-twisting	1
triage	1
vim	1
stodge	1
snog	1
taping	1
customisation	1
savvy	1
tulle	1
blarney	1
water-skiing	1
play-acting	1
flab	1
clingfilm	1
eventing	1
voyeurism	1
nous	1
whimsy	1
macaroni	1
motorcycling	1
ribbing	1
silliness	1

acacia	1
replenishment	1
coley	1
horseradish	1
drainpipe	1
phetam	1
verisimilitude	1
exorcism	1
crepe	1
grunge	1
frivolity	1
ochre	1
nastiness	1
tinsel	1
slippage	1
lycra	1
tumbleweed	1
scrambling	1
pout	1
spying	1
tracery	1
woodworm	1
cranberry	1
cauliflower	1
placenta	1
thallium	1
unpleasantness	1
decorum	1
misnomer	1
jaundice	1
sociability	1
spurt	1
toothache	1
reinsurance	1
physio	1
trellis	1
scuffle	1
guesswork	1
lino	1
rheumatism	1
discounting	1
angst	1
walling	1
horticulture	1

bustle	1
dexterity	1
fizz	1
panache	1
valium	1
cartilage	1
sleet	1
paintwork	1
fling	1
scratching	1
sawdust	1
seclusion	1
lightweight	1
admin	1
banter	1
flattery	1
poise	1
mascara	1
greenery	1
hardcore	1
evangelism	1
marzipan	1
weeping	1
zest	1
incense	1
computation	1
posterity	1
sightseeing	1
fertilizer	1
sacking	1
ambience	1
romanticism	1
flannel	1
foresight	1
rebate	1
sedimentation	1
basketball	1
cucumber	1
swamp	1
limelight	1
lemonade	1
graphite	1
crush	1
bicarbonate	1



subversion	1
grit	1
flare	1
slap	1
scrub	1
lakeside	1
companionship	1
custard	1
apathy	1
hassle	1
retaliation	1
booze	1
stew	1
manure	1
vodka	1
woodwork	1
arson	1
enamel	1
liner	1
upheaval	1
almond	1
decency	1
vandalism	1
ingenuity	1
solitude	1
cabbage	1
soda	1
stamina	1
diversification	1
hate	1
lettuce	1
parsley	1
filing	1
baking	1
cannabis	1
segregation	1
imperialism	1
spark	1
annoyance	1
bark	1
geometry	1
vibration	1
arthritis	1
steak	1

wallpaper	1
skiing	1
disgrace	1
nostalgia	1
friction	1
paperwork	1
lavender	1
rivalry	1
cycling	1
apprehension	1
laundry	1
sophistication	1
rubber	1
spin	1
stereo	1
flu	1
kidney	1
scrap	1
generosity	1
slate	1
asthma	1
bend	1
deception	1
torture	1
schooling	1
jealousy	1
bitterness	1
overlap	1
tolerance	1
tomato	1
feed	1
drift	1
cruelty	1
modelling	1
surveillance	1
fuss	1
fairy	1
consultancy	1
mould	1
garlic	1
litigation	1
manipulation	1
brandy	1
clearance	1

treasure	1
detection	1
realism	1
travelling	1
gloom	1
unrest	1
sailing	1
texture	1
grey	1
pepper	1
rhetoric	1
momentum	1
romance	1
frost	1
catering	1
resentment	1
fur	1
sweat	1
saving	1
hatred	1
beam	1
graph	1
knitting	1
descent	1
invention	1
privacy	1
modification	1
fever	1
lace	1
pencil	1
theology	1
rage	1
confirmation	1
finding	1
negotiation	1
corn	1
duck	1
echo	1
punch	1
tap	1
needle	1
celebration	1
human	1
ash	1

blue	1
aggression	1
powder	1
dignity	1
pavement	1
orange	1
continuity	1
bureaucracy	1
breeze	1
shelter	1
inspiration	1
grief	1
sauce	1
insight	1
interference	1
flavour	1
rhythm	1
boot	1
tobacco	1
lip	1
repair	1
fluid	1
circulation	1
motivation	1
seed	1
detective	1
nonsense	1
oak	1
commerce	1
juice	1
glory	1
devil	1
guilt	1
timing	1
accuracy	1
radiation	1
ceremony	1
wool	1
excess	1
swimming	1
chip	1
grain	1
wonder	1
cloth	1

mathematics	1
discrimination	1
crystal	1
chemistry	1
folk	1
running	1
drop	1
conversion	1
strain	1
farming	1
rubbish	1
mystery	1
carpet	1
delay	1
petrol	1
instruction	1
tongue	1
heaven	1
recording	1
carbon	1
burden	1
anxiety	1
psychology	1
camera	1
variation	1
infection	1
rent	1
tennis	1
cut	1
fight	1
airport	1
soul	1
depth	1
territory	1
fishing	1
landscape	1
tension	1
preparation	1
priority	1
licence	1
specialist	1
dream	1
height	1
talk	1

funding	1
maintenance	1
brown	1
sheet	1
enterprise	1
improvement	1
independence	1
lane	1
tape	1
criticism	1
milk	1
sky	1
atmosphere	1
definition	1
engineering	1
pleasure	1
faith	1
silence	1
conversation	1
challenge	1
waste	1
youth	1
assembly	1
estate	1
lead	1
notice	1
recognition	1
danger	1
sight	1
organization	1
spirit	1
relief	1
distance	1
fear	1
football	1
crime	1
foot	1
text	1
gold	1
trust	1
impact	1
horse	1
progress	1
stock	1

stone	1
influence	1
presence	1
district	1
protection	1
balance	1
organisation	1
character	1
earth	1
concern	1
importance	1
television	1
commission	1
risk	1
science	1
floor	1
wall	1
couple	1
choice	1
income	1
behaviour	1
growth	1
material	1
capital	1
story	1
force	1
ground	1
voice	1
authority	1
evidence	1
body	1
policy	1
use	1