

Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**ASSIMILATION OF AMERICANISMS WITH
BRITISH ENGLISH SINCE 1962**
**(Diachronic analysis from the point of view of British
normative dictionaries)**
(Diplomová práce)

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(Diplomová práce)

Autor: Markéta Třetinová

Studijní obor: Anglická filologie

Vedoucí práce: Doc. PhDr. Václav Řeřicha, CSc.

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V Olomouci dne 20.8.2012

Markéta Třetinová

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Markéta Třetinová

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ABSTRACT

This diploma thesis reports results of a diachronic analysis of Americanisms represented in three British dictionaries of different generations. The thesis contains a description of the term Americanism and summarizes the standard facts of American English, including its history and its first vocabulary. In my practical part I compared all Americanisms found in the three dictionaries (published in years 1962, 1995 and 2008). A thorough analysis shows that while in 1962 there were only few words marked as Americanisms in a British dictionary, in 2008 there were already 586 words or their meanings marked as Americanisms. The semantic category, which includes the highest number of new Americanisms since 1995, is the category *food and drink*, followed by *education* and *sport*, which was very similar to the situation in 1995, when the most numerous categories of Americanisms in a British dictionary since 1965 was the category *food and drink*, followed by *sport* and *education*. Another proof, which the analysis points out, is that although there is a rising tendency of recording meanings of American English in British dictionaries, the approach to assimilate with into British English is rather slow. Since 1995 there are only 22 expressions which have fully incorporated in British English and are not recognized as Americanisms by British dictionaries anymore.

KEY WORDS: Americanism, American English, British English, assimilation, dictionaries, semantic categories, vocabulary

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce zobrazuje výsledky diachronní analýzy amerikanismů, které jsou zachyceny ve třech britských slovnících odlišných generací. V teoretické části tato práce obsahuje rozbor termínu amerikanismus a také shrnuje doposud všeobecně známá fakta o americké angličtině, včetně její historie a prvotní slovní zásoby. V praktické části jsem porovnávala všechny amerikanismy ze třech britských slovníků (vydaných v r. 1962, 1995 a 2008). Důkladná analýza ukazuje, že zatímco v r. 1962 britský slovník obsahoval pouze pár slov označených jako amerikanismus, v r. 2008 je takových označení již 586. Sémantická kategorie *jídlo a pití* obsahuje v r. 2008 největší počet

nových amerikanismů, následována kategoriemi *vzdělání* a *sport*. Velmi podobně tomu tak bylo i v r. 1995, kdy největší příliv nových amerikanismů od roku 1962 také zaznamenala kategorie *jídlo a pití*, následována *sportem* a *vzděláním*. Tato analýza také prokázala, že ačkoli amerikanismů v britských slovnících přibývá poměrně rychle, asimilace těchto výrazů s britskou angličtinou je velmi pomalá. Od roku 1995 britská angličtina přijala za své pouze 22 amerikanismů

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA: amerikanismus, americká angličtina, britská angličtina, asimilace, slovníky, sémantické kategorie, slovní zásoba

Abbreviations used in the thesis

Am	Americanism in CIDE 1995
adj	adjective
adv	adverb
AmE	American English
BrE	British English
C	countable noun
CALD 2008	Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
CIDE 1995	Cambridge International Dictionary of English
esp	especially
e.g.	for example
I	intransitive verb
i.e.	that is
infml	informal
n	noun
np	noun phrase
OID 1962	Oxford Illustrated Dictionary
pv	phrasal verb
T	transitive verb
U	uncountable noun
US	Americanism in CALD 2008
v	verb

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1 Introduction

The aim of my thesis is to examine the enriching of British vocabulary with Americanisms from diachronic point of view. I am going to focus on period from 1962 to 2008, which are the years of publishing of the dictionaries, which I am going to study. The three main dictionaries, published during the aforementioned period, are called *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (1962), *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995) and *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008). All of them are British dictionaries which demonstrate Americanisms with the specific abbreviation (Am) or (Us).

To find out if the British vocabulary is being expanded by Americanisms I have to make an analysis of all the three aforementioned dictionaries. One of the source will be my bachelor thesis, which includes a thorough analysis of Americanisms from the two previously published dictionaries, i.e. years 1962 to 1995. I focused only on Americanisms beginning with letters A to R. I made a catalogue of all the Americanisms found in *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* and compared them with the Americanisms in *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*. There were 339 meanings which were marked as Americanisms. The method, used for the bachelor thesis, has remained the same for this thesis: First, I am going to list all the Americanisms which begin with letters A to R in *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Next, I am going to check all these found Americanisms in *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. At this point I am going to start to analyse all the collected data. One of the most important tools will be the catalogue from the bachelor thesis and the latest catalogue compiled from *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. As the conclusion of my bachelor thesis states, within 33 years (1962 to 1995) 293 new Americanisms appeared in the British dictionary.(Třetinová 2006), I assume that since 1995 the number of Americanisms in British dictionaries have still been increasing.

Besides answering the question if there have been more or less Americanisms in British dictionaries since 1995, there are other research questions to be replied to: In which semantic category the growth of Americanisms has been the most numerous? From 1962 to 1995 the category with the biggest increase of Americanisms was the category of food and drinks with 33 words (Třetinová 2008). Is it going to be the same

semantic category in 2008? Are all the Americanisms from 1995 in the dictionary from 2008? If so, are they still marked as Americanisms or have they assimilated with British English? Or have they disappeared from the dictionary totally and there are completely new Americanisms which the British recognize newly as meanings of American English?

The theoretical part props itself upon the three main books and contains information about Americanisms and American English. Unfortunately, there is very little literature dealing with Americanisms and their impact on British English. The only thorough works are those by Peprník (*Slovník Amerikanismů*, 1994), Pyles (*Words and Ways of American English*, 1952) and Mencken (*The American Language*, 1945) and its two supplements, where Mencken has dealt fully with the word stock of American English, using hundreds of examples. However, the books by Pyles and Mencken are more than 60 years old. Unfortunately, there has not been any detailed study on this matter since 1960s' except for Peprník's *Slovník Amerikanismů*, which lists Americanisms in the alphabetic order but with no respect to British English. A lot of space in the theoretical part will be devoted to the definition of Americanisms and their history to see if the definitions of linguists and their comprehension of the term Americanism diverge. Differences between British and American English are a frequent topic in every standard English grammar book or book on English vocabulary. I will shortly summarize the general characteristics in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary of American English. I will also compare opinions of linguists on American English to find out if all the influential linguists share the same view and lean towards the theory that American English is only a variant of British English, or some lean towards the theory that American English is more a language on its own due to its many significant differences.

2 Americanism

2.1 What is an Americanism?

The term Americanism was invented by the Reverend **Dr. John Witherspoon** in a paper published in 1781 in the USA (Peprník 1994, 7). Witherspoon defined it as “a use of phrase or terms, or a combination of sentences, even among persons of rank and education, different from the use of the same terms or phrases, or the construction of similar sentences in Great Britain“ (Pyles 1952, 5). Thomas Pyles does not consider the definition very good because Witherspoon does not mention the fact that at first, the word may be characteristic of American usage and later on, pass over into British usage or even “become the common property of the entire English-speaking country” (Pyles 1952, 5).

In preface of **Noah Webster’s** *American Dictionary* (1828) the author describes Americanisms as follows: “they are new terms or new applications of old terms, unknown to the people of England, which cannot be explained by them and which will not be inserted in their dictionaries, unless copied from ours: plantation, senate, congress, court, assembly“ (Mencken 1945, 164-165). He made two categories of Americanisms:

1. words not belonging to the language of England
2. things in the USA which do not exist in the UK

The other lexicographer, who tried to categorize Americanisms, was **Robley Dunglison**. In the articles headed „Americanisms“ (Mencken 1945, 166), that he contributed to the Virginia Museum in 1829-30, set up two classes:

1. old words used in a new sense
2. new words of indigenous origin

He expelled words preserved or revived in America in their original sense because as he said, „if fashion induces the people of Great Britain to neglect them, we have the right to oppose the fashion and to retain them: they are English words“ (Mencken 1945, 166). On the other hand he did not approve native inventions that were not absolutely essential and thought they should be rejected (Mencken 1945, 167).

Sir William Craigie listed the following three categories of Americanisms in a paper in 1940 (Mencken 1945, 167):

1. words showing the addition of new senses to existing words and phrases
2. new derivative forms and attributive collocations or other compounds
3. words not previously in use, and not adapted from other languages of the American continent

H.W. Horwill (Mencken 1942, 170) distinguishes nine classes of Americanisms in his *Dictionary of Modern American Usage* (1935)

1. words whose meaning in America is entirely different from their meaning in England: billion, present, solicitor
2. words whose general meaning is the same in both countries, but which, in America, have acquired a specific meaning in addition: brotherhood, commute, senior
3. words whose normal use has, in America, been extended to cover certain adjacent territory: freight, graduate, bunt
4. words that, in America, have acquired different shades of meaning and therefore carry different implications: jurist, politics
5. words that retain in America a meaning now obsolete in England: apartment, citizen, conclude
6. words, that, in America, have acquired a figurative meaning not in current use in England: knife, pork, stripe
7. words that, in America, go to form compounds unknown in England: blue, night, scratch
8. words that, in America, commonly take the place of synonyms that are more generally used in England: (faucet for tap, mail for post, line for queue)
9. words of slightly varying form, of which one form is preferred in America and another in England: aluminum for aluminium, acclimate for acclimatize, candidacy for candidature

Thomas Pyles in his *Words and Ways of American English* summarized what everything a term Americanism can mean, in a very nice way:

A discussion of the distinctive word stock of American English obviously could not be limited to words adopted in the USA from other languages along with those which have first come into use here, either as innovations (like kodak, anesthetic), or as normal developments of the English

language in this country, like land office. It must also include words or expressions used in America with meanings different from those they bear in England, a number in which an older English meaning has been retained, and even some which, without any change of meaning, are nevertheless much more applicable to American than to English life and hence more widely used and understood in the USA than in England (Pyles 1952, 5).

Peprník in his *Slovník Amerikanismů* defines an Americanism, in short, as an expression characteristic of American English either now or in the past (1994, 7).

From historical point of view an Americanism Peprník (1994, 7-8) divides Americanisms into three categories:

1. An Americanism is a word or its meaning which originated in the USA and is still used there, while in British English there is either a different word for the same object (e.g. AmE elevator vs. BrE lift) or there is no British expression corresponding to the meaning. These are usually expressions describing specific American reality: fauna, flora, social events (e.g. fraternity, grizzly, and bayou). Some of these expressions appear only in literature describing the older period of life in the USA, because the depicted reality has disappeared (prairie, backwoodsman).
2. An Americanism is a word or its meaning which originated in the USA but nowadays is used in both American and British English (e.g. aerobics, bulldozer). This category is still expanding, mainly a lot of slang expressions have gone over or are on the border to British English (detention centre, freshman, and marshmallow) and it is only a matter of time when British English assimilates them completely. The extent of assimilation of American expressions depends on different factors, e.g. adopting American reality (supermarket). Within this group it cannot be unequivocally stated that the originally American expression is still specifically American because the extent of expansion in British environment is different with each of them. Some British speakers might already use these expressions actively, some passively but some British speakers might not be familiar with the expressions at all, depending on the social category, profession or generation of British speaker.

3. An Americanism is a word or its expression which originated in Britain, was used in British English for some time, became outdated in British English but are retained in American English, possibly in some British dialects (e.g. apartment, baggage, guess, sick)

Last but not least I would like to add the latest definition of an Americanism from the dictionary which I am going to work with in my practical part. The definition of an Americanism in the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008) is “a word or expression which was first used in the United States but is used by people in other countries, especially those where English is spoken,” (Walter 2008) is satisfactory, though it does not by any means tell the whole story.

2.2 Reasons for the existence of Americanisms

How can the existence of Americanisms be explained? This might be due to the independent development of the New World for nearly 400 years. The first English-speaking colonists in America found an immediate need for a large number of new words – different flora, fauna, and other extra linguistic realities. New objects that were presented to the new inhabitants and the novel conditions that marked their new life were necessary to be designated.

In preface of Noah Webster's *American Dictionary* (1828) its author explains the birth of Americanisms as a consequence of new reality:

The practice of hawking and hunting, the institution of heraldry, and the feudal system of England originated terms which formed, and some of which now form, a necessary part of the language of that country; but in the United States many of these terms are no part of our present language, and they cannot be, for the things which they express do not exist in this country. They can be known to us only as obsolete or as foreign words. On the other hand, the institutions in this country which are new and peculiar give rise to new terms or to new applications of old terms, unknown to the people of England (Mencken 1945, 164-165).

Pyles (1952, 3) shares Webster's view on finding new words but suggests also adapting old words, to express concepts and to name institutions, topographical features, flora and fauna which arose in the New World, which were new to the English speaking people.

2.3 History of Americanism

2.3.1 The earliest Americanisms (Indian Borrowings)

According to Mencken (1948, 169-180) the earliest Americanisms were probably words borrowed from the Indian languages – “words, in the main, indicating natural objects that had no counterparts in England” (Mencken 1948, 175). Most of these words came from the Indian languages of the Algonquian group. There were 36 words which survived in the American in 1945.

Some examples of such words with their meanings are (Mencken 1948, 169-180):

chipmunk (is related by Webster to the Ojibway atchitamou, meaning a squirrel and referring to the animal's habit of coming down a tree head first)

moose (was apparently borrowed from the Passamaquoddy Indians of the Main coast, but there were analogous forms in other dialects. The original Indian word seems to have had some reference to the animal's habit of stripping off the bark of trees for food. A number of derivatives are listed in dictionaries, e.g. moose-berry, -bird, -bush, -deer, -elm, -flower, -maple, -tick, -wood, along with such obvious forms as moose-hunter, -hide, -meat, -born, -skin, -tongue and -yard)

pecan (comes from one meaning any hard-shelled nut, and may have reached American English by way of Spanish)

porgy (is listed as an Indian loanword by Chamberlain and Webster intimates that it may be derived from the Spanish pargo, designating the same fish)

skunk (the original significance was „he who urinates; “it is applied to several species, all of them characterized by the ejection of a foul-smelling secretion when disturbed; the word has been transferred to various animals and plants; its application as a pejorative to human beings is traced to 1840)

squash (a shortened word of a Narragansett Indian word which Weekley gives as asquatasquash, the original significance of which seems to have been any fruit or vegetable eaten green; it appeared in the early chronicles as isquotersquash and squanthersquash but had acquired its present form by 1683; its derivatives include squash-bug, -beetle, -borer, -vine).

2.3.2 New words of English material

Quite many of the early Americanisms were borrowings from many languages of the immigrants but the great majority of necessary neologisms were made of English material– sometimes by giving an old English word a new meaning, but more often by arranging common English elements in new combinations. (Mencken 1945, 200) According to Mencken (1945, 200) “some of these combinations go back to the seventeenth century (e.g. snow-shoe, salt-meadow) but the majority date from the century following the Revolution. It was not until the beginning of the great movement into the West that the American language really began to flower.”

2.3.2.1 English elements in new combinations

Many of the early American terms had to do with food, e.g (Mencken 1948, 180-220):

buckwheat-cake (first recorded in 1774; buckwheat was being grown for human food in Pennsylvania so early as 1698, and was then sometimes called French wheat; in the South it seems to have been used, in the first half of the eighteenth century, only as hog and poultry food, or as a crop to be plowed in to enrich the soil; in parts of Appalachia, to this day, it is eaten much more extensively than wheat)

johnny-cake (first recorded in 1739; had acquired the variant form of journey-cake by 1754, and in consequence Noah Webster surmised that this may have been the original term, and that it signified a hard loaf baked for use on a journey.),

breadstuffs (first recorded in 1793; it is possible that it was invented by Jefferson, for the first recorded use of it was in his report of 1793; Jefferson defined it in his report as bread-grains, meals and bread) (Mencken 203).

2.3.2.2 Changed meanings

Mencken (1948, 204-220) points out that the more common variant of making Americanisms was giving new meanings to common English words by the English colonists in America, e.g. store, corn, rock, cracker, block, creek, spell, lumber, college, city, boot, shoe, bluff and bureau.

Store: In the sense of a retail establishment, it began to be substituted for the English shop early in the eighteenth century; to the English, store means primarily a large establishment, corresponding roughly to what the Americans call a warehouse/storehouse, but the English have been using the word in the American sense, to designate a cooperative retail store, since about 1850, and in later years they show a tendency to adopt it in the form of department-store. Contrariwise, there has been an increasing use of the English shop in the United States, not infrequently in the elegant form of shoppe.

corn: In the American sense, corn is known to the English only as an odd Americanism; they use the word to designate any sort of edible grain, but especially wheat, as in Corn Laws. They commonly call the American corn maize, which was its first name in America. The early Spaniards borrowed both the grain and its name from the Indians of the West Indies, and the English colonists took over both from the Spaniards. The word maize began to drop out of use in America so early as in 1629, being supplanted by corn to distinguish this New World corn from the grains which were called corn in England the latter were called English corn. To help in the differentiation maize was often called Indian corn, and indeed it sometimes is to this day, but by the middle of the eighteenth

century simply corn usually sufficed. At present the word is always understood, in the United States, to mean maize.

rock: To an Englishman, it commonly signifies a stone of large size. But the colonists apparently began to apply it to small stones during the eighteenth century. Some of the early American writers on speech tried to restore rock to its original English meaning, but in vain.

cracker: To indicate what the English commonly call a biscuit, it is traced to 1739. In recent years biscuit, in the English sense, has been borrowed in America, as in National Biscuit Company, and simultaneously the English have begun to make increasing use of cracker, which first appeared in England so long ago as 1810. The word seems to come from the verb to crack, and probably was suggested by the cracker's crispness.

block: In the sense of a group of houses, it is sometimes used in England, as in block of shops, but perhaps only as a conscious Americanism. The more usual term seems to be parade of shops. In the sense of the whole mass of buildings between four streets it goes back to 1815 in the United States, and is still exclusively American.

creek: In England, it means a tidal inlet of the ocean or of some large river, but in America it began to designate any small stream so long ago as 1637, and, along with run and branch, has since pretty well obliterated the English brook. It is still occasionally used in the United States in the English sense, but the English never use it in the more usual American sense.

spell: The use of spell in various familiar phrases, e.g. spell of sickness, is apparently indigenous to America. Spell of work is old in English, but the first known examples of spell of weather, spell of sickness, cold-spell, rainy-spell and hot spell are American, and so is the first recorded use of spell standing alone, as an indicator of „a time or while.“

lumber: In England, it means articles left lying about and taking up needed room, and in this sense it survives in America in a few compounds, e.g. lumber-room; in the sense of timber it is an Americanism, traced to the seventeenth century. In this American

sense, it „undoubtedly arose from the fact that ship masts, sawed timber, barrel staves, etc., as important but bulky commodities, once blocked or lumbered up roads, streets and harbors of various towns.“

college: In England, college ordinarily means one of the constituent corporations of a university, though sometimes it is also applied to a preparatory school; in the United States, since the seventeenth century, it has been applied to any degree-giving institution short of university rank.

city: In England city is restricted to a large and important town, or one that contains a cathedral; in America it has been applied since the early the eighteenth century to much smaller places.

boot: in England, it means what Americans, since the seventeenth century, have been calling a shoe; for American boot, signifying footgear covering the leg as well as the foot, the English commonly use other terms, e.g. Wellington

bureau: To an Englishman, it means an article of furniture including a writing desk- what the Americans ordinarily call a secretary; in the United States it means a chest of drawers for holding linens. The English use it occasionally in the American sense of a government or other office, but not often, they prefer office

2.3.3 The language after the WWII

British dictionaries rarely contained American variants until the end of the Second World War. As Mencken says

so many novelties swarmed in that it was quite impossible for the dictionaries to keep up with them; indeed, a large number came and went without the lexicographers so much as hearing of them. The Americans lived in an age and society given over to enormous and perhaps even excessive word-making- the most riotous seen in the world since the break-up of Latin. It is an extremely wasteful process, for with so many newcomers to choose from it is inevitable that large numbers of pungent and useful words and phrases must be discarded and in the end forgotten by all save linguistic paleontologists (Mencken 1945, 324).

In 1962, when *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* was published, quite many words were marked there as Americanisms (Třetinová 2006).

2.3.4 The language of today

In 1995 there were 339 Americanisms in CIDE 1995. At that time the semantic category food and drink contained the highest number of Americanisms. Nearly none of these expressions, evaluated as slang in *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, appeared in *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*. There was only one single word which was marked slang both in *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* and *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (**pen**) and two words marked infml in *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* and slang in *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (**plumb, buck**) (Třetinová 2006).

2.4 Expansion of American vocabulary

Pepník (1994, 34) assumes that American vocabulary is going to expand still more as the population of the USA is 5 times bigger than of the UK. Nowadays, there are 314 million American vs. 60 million British people. The expansion is not only about the population number. The political and economic roles of the USA indicate that it is the most powerful country in the world. Its importance in science, technology, literature and film industry is significant.

2.5 The Infiltration of English by Americanisms

According to the editor of the *Dictionary of American English* William Craigie the infiltration of English by Americanisms began on a large scale nearly two hundred years ago (Mencken 1945, 440): „For some two centuries, roughly down to 1820, the passage of new words or senses across the Atlantic was regularly westward; practically the only exceptions were terms which denoted articles or products peculiar to the new country. With the nineteenth century, however, the contrary current begins to set in, bearing with it many a piece of driftwood to the shores of Britain, there to be picked up and

incorporated in the structure of the language. The variety of the contributions is no less notable than their number.“

Even the incomplete material furnished by Thorton in *American Glossary* (1912) indicated more than two hundred such borrowings.

Craigie then proceeds to list some of the principal categories of these adopted Americanisms, as follows (Mencken 1945, 205-220)

1. There are terms which owe their origin to the fresh conditions and experiences of the new country, e.g. backwoods, blizzard, bluff, canyon, dugout, Indian-file, prairie, squatter
2. There are terms of politics and public activity, e.g. carpet-bagger, caucus, gerrymander, indignation-meeting, lynch-law
3. There are words and phrases connected with business pursuits, trades, and manufactures, e.g. cross-cut saw, elevator, snow-plow, to corner, to strike oil
4. There is a large residue of miscellaneous examples, e.g. at that, to take a back seat, boss, to cave in, cold snap, to face the music, grave-yard, to go back on, half-breed, lengthy, loafer, law-abiding, whole-souled.

Foster (1968, 73) describes the infiltration by Americanisms in a greater detail: “Words and phrases first learned in descriptions of the American scene are later transferred to a purely British context, perhaps semi-humorously in the first place, and finally are accepted by imitators who never realize that such expressions have ever been anything else but standard British.“ The whole process may take several years. The word appears in inverted commas, until the American origin is forgotten. The commas are dropped when the word is accepted as a standard member of the British vocabulary. The final stage in this type of evolution is reached when “heated Englishmen indignantly deny that the word could ever be considered as anything but a native term“ (Foster 1968, 73).

2.6 Perception of Americanisms by the British

The development of the USA in less than four centuries is mirrored to a large extent in the development of the American vocabulary. Some American words, like o.k. and telephone, are used all over the world (Wolfram 2005, 23). How much Americanisms have actually got into accepted English it seems to be impossible to say because there is a sharp disagreement among Englishmen. Some British speakers might already use

these expressions actively, some passively but some British speakers might not be familiar with the expressions at all, depending on the social category, profession, generation of British speaker, etc.

The other problem is that a large number have become so naturalized that the English dictionaries no longer mark them aliens, and even the most inflexible Englishmen have stopped to reject them. Others still have the sharp aftertaste of novelty and people, who are aware of their speech, try to avoid them. In the middle between these two extremes there is a large zone of Americanisms that has more or less current popularity but may or may not find its place in the vocabulary (Walter 2005, 6).

Foster in his *Changing English Language* (1968, 48) stresses that it must be clear that Americanisms infiltrating into the British scene do not meet with opposition. Indeed the well-known BBC announcer Alvar Lidell denounces „the tendency not to be so resistant to Americanisms. I am very much aware of them and dislike them“ (48).

Pyles (1952, 48) claims that in the early days the chief exchanges in both directions were on the upper levels of usage, and most of the Americanisms adopted in England were sponsored by such men as Jefferson, John Adams, J. Fenimore Cooper and Noah Webster, but since the beginning of the 19th century the chief English borrowings have been from American slang. It is generally agreed by English observers that American movies have been mainly responsible for this shift. The educated Englishman carried on a violent war upon Americanisms, but the English middle and lower classes found them perfectly satisfying. Soon, the Americanisms were introduced and used in large number, and many began to penetrate to the higher levels of speech. Americanisms get into English use on the lower levels and then work their way upward, but nearly all the Britishisms that reach the United States first appear on the levels of cultural pretension, and most of them stay there.

According to Alistair Cooke in 1935 every Englishman unconsciously uses thirty or forty Americanisms a day (Mencken 1945, 450).

Foster thinks that “if pressed, many Englishmen would probably admit that they think of American influence on the language as affecting only the realms of slang, and it is a strange paradox that as the flood of Americanisms in the standard language increases, so most people lose their ability to recognize them for what they are. This is doubtless a result of the fact that the process of borrowing in the linguistic sense is a largely unconscious one, especially when the words involved are not notorious Americanisms, easily picked out as such, like sucker, graft, or cinch“ (1968, 24).

Of course, American words pass relatively unnoticed into the British vocabulary because the phonetic structure is quite familiar, so they can easily slip into everyday use and are not felt to be strangers (Foster 1968, 20).

3 American English

It is worth remarking that English itself had evolved for a full millennium before the first truly American expressions were spoken. American English began as seventeenth-century British English. It was inevitable, however, that its subsequent development should diverge somewhat from that of British English, that a number of words, grammatical forms, and idioms lost in British English should survive in American English and, conversely, that American English should lose certain features of earlier British English which have been retained in England (Foster 1968, 35).

As Foster (1968, 41) states “it is a fact that any English-speaking person born after about 1925 is painlessly endowed with a good knowledge of American idiom (...). Modern youngsters in Britain hear hours of transatlantic dialogue every week of their lives because of films and television programmes (...). Some borrowings from the transatlantic vocabulary were starting to make their way to Britain (...) and this process has lately been enormously accelerated.”

3.1 Differences in the two Englishes

Despite the evidence that American has had a heavy influence upon English in recent years, it remains a fact that the two languages still show many differences on the level of everyday speech, not only in vocabulary but also in idiom, accent and intonation.

Pyles confirms (1968, 215) that “despite undeniable present differences in all phases of British and American linguistic usage, it is unlikely that there are very many characteristics of American pronunciation and syntax which can be shown to be of American origin or development. The most notable development of the English language in the USA has been in vocabulary.”

The differences between the two Englishes could be easily presented if both nationalities meet and talk. Mencken describes this situation and the problems which are likely to appear as follows:

When an untraveled American finds himself among Englishman for the first time these dissimilarities inevitably puzzle him. The English in many cases use different words of the same common objects, they give to common words quite different meanings, they make frequent use of

words and phrases that are seldom or never heard in America, they have different repertoires of everyday intensives and cuss-words, they pronounce many words differently and their talk is based upon different speech-tunes. The same thing, of course, runs the other way, but the Englishmen, talking one with another, find American considerably less difficult than Americans find English, if only because they have become so familiar with large numbers of American terms and idioms (Mencken 1945,453).

It is worth mentioning that many foreigners appear to find the American idiom in some way more accessible than British English: “Somehow or other American speech seems more potent, or easier to acquire than English speech“ (Pyles 1952, 136).

3.1.1 Difference in vocabulary

The difference goes far deeper than the trivial dualities so often cited in discussions of US/British differences (gas/petrol, elevator/lift, mail/post, etc.). More often the differences in vocabulary are complicated. As Foster claims, because of differences in the physical conditions of the two countries it often happens that British speakers and writers use American figures of speech which, “if interpreted literally, form no part of their own experience” (1970, 57). This is the case for a number of metaphors taken from the life of farm, field and wood, since Britain is much more urban in character than the USA (out on a limb, backlog).

Foster adds another issue when studying the difference in vocabulary. According to him some difficulties arise “when a British writer uses an American word in an American context, for here it is hard to know whether he intends it as an aid to creation of local atmosphere or as a part of his own normal vocabulary. Is the writer using it in his own right or speaking from the point of view of the American whose thought he is explaining“ (Foster 1968, 73). Of course, there is no real answer to this question.

Peprník (1994, 8-10) also agrees that the vocabulary system is much more complicated than the pairs what a typical reader imagines, e.g. elevator vs. lift. More often the meanings agree only partly; there are slight differences in the basic word meaning, in shades of meaning, stylistic categorization, frequency, grammatical relation, etc:

3.1.1.1 Differences in the basic meaning

The difference is in the fact that in American English the meaning of a word is wider than in British English or vice versa (e.g. sink in BrE means a large open container in a kitchen which holds water but in AmE it means also a washbasin). There are also more complicated examples, when the American expression is identical to the British one but they mean completely different thing (e.g. BrE suspenders is a fastener which is fixed by a short elastic strap to a type of belt which women wear round their waists under their clothes, and which is used for holding up stockings by their tops in AmE suspenders means a pair of adjustable straps which stretch from the front of the trousers over your shoulders to the back to hold them up). Finally there are cases when an expression has an opposite meaning in the two Englishes (e.g. inflammable in BrE means „burning easily“, in AmE then „not burning“).

2. The difference is a consequence of the differences between American and British extra linguistic realities (e.g. bartender is always a male in AmE because females do not tap spirits whereas in BrE it is a barman or barmaid in accordance with sex)

3.1.1.2 Differences in shade of meaning

Although the denotation of an expression is the same in both versions of English, the connotation differs, e.g. it is more positive or more negative, even pejorative (e.g. rhetoric in AmE is an ability to speak effectively (a positive meaning) whereas in BrE rhetoric means exaggerating, showing off (a negative shade of meaning).

3.1.1.3 Differences in stylistic categorization

BrE autumn is for AmE fall. In AmE autumn is known as a stylistic variation of fall, and is used as a poeticism. AmE inclines to luxuriance and pretentiousness in various styles of speech. It uses pseudo learned words which should impress by their length or sound (e.g. beautician, mortician, and sanitation engineer). The Americans exaggerate more than the British (e.g. AmE I'm greatly honoured is approximately BrE that's nice of you). Foster also points out that "American is sometimes more pompous and long-winded than British, as in the cumbersome **in the event that** for **if**, a phrase which is gaining ground in Britain though only very slowly" (Foster 1970, 59).

3.1.1.4 Differences in frequency

Some expressions are more common than the others. This happens usually with words that can substitute meanings of several more words (e.g. verb *fix* in AmE is more frequent because it can replace other verbs: repair, get ready, arrange matters, cook, comb, make up, strike, knock out, whereas in BrE *fix* means mainly to fasten (something) in a position, therefore it is less used in Britain (Peprník 1994, 8).

3.1.2 Words of American origin accepted in the UK

Quite many Americanisms got into British English last century and the trend will not stop, since in 1995 there were 293 new Americanisms in British dictionaries compared with the dictionary from 1965 (Třetinová 2006). Changed social habits facilitated and necessitated the introduction of certain Americanisms into Britain (*baby-sitter*) (Foster 1968, 56).

There are semantic categories which gave British English more expressions than the others (Foster 1968, 20-60):

3.1.2.1 Films and show business

It is not surprising that much of the technical vocabulary of films and show business is itself of American origin, since innovations in the entertainment world come mainly from the USA. But quite apart from the various technical terms of radio and television programmes which pass into general currency, there is the fact that broadcasting produces a tremendous number of American popular songs which engrave transatlantic words and idioms on the minds of millions of the young British. There is also the professional popularity of British song-writers for the American style of vocabulary which they consequently incorporate in their own compositions.

3.1.2.2 Theatre

Certain of the theatrical world have been accepted into the language of British politics. Political commentators often spend part of their professional lives in the USA.

3.1.2.3 Journalism, law, advertising, press

Journalism, lawyers, advertising, stock phrases of a conversational type are often of American origin (catch phrases), expressions relating to time and place, compounds in which first element adds emphasis and some vague idea of motion or distance (way over), constructions verb plus preposition (to meet up with), verb with the extra preposition (start in for start). The press has doubtless done more than books to popularize Americanisms in Britain, particularly when it is remembered that the British hold the world record for newspaper reading.

3.1.2.4 Travelling

It is not surprising that such inveterate travellers as the Americans have added new expressions to the vocabulary of the booking office and tourist agency (**round trip**, **freight train**). The terminology of rail travel is strikingly different in British and American English, for the obvious reason that the invention of the passenger railway took place well after American independence. (British **line** vs. American **track**, Br **sleeper** vs. American **cross-tie**)

To summarize this part, it is in specialized languages such as those of travel, sports, trades, and professions where can be noticed the most striking differences in word choice in the two countries. On the level of slang the differences are likewise considerable. But a great deal of the current slang of American teenagers is incomprehensible to their own parents; and among teenagers themselves there is considerable variation from section to section, and even from social class to social class. It is thus not particularly surprising that much American slang is incomprehensible to the Englishman, and that British slang is at least equally mystifying to the American. It is easy to give an exaggerated impression of genuine differences. It should be obvious that a great deal depends upon who is doing the talking, what the occasion is, and what is being talked about. In the intellectual reaches of language the differences are practically nonexistent (Pyles 1952, 231).

American English differs from British English not only in vocabulary but also in pronunciation spelling and grammar.

3.1.3 Difference in pronunciation

Professor Eilert Ekwall concludes in his *American and British Pronunciation* (1946) that “educated American pronunciation on the whole remains at the stage which British pronunciation had reached about the time of the Revolution, while modern British pronunciation has left that stage far behind“ (Pyles 1952, 66). There is a lot of evidence that American English preserves pronunciations which was current in standard British English in the latter years of the eighteenth century. Eckwall’s theory finds some support in vocabulary, for American use of many words can also be said to be about the same as British usage at the time of the Revolution. “Even though it is not possible to determine its extent with perfect accuracy, we cannot doubt the existence of this influence from the mother country, an influence which continued throughout the colonial period. There can be no doubt that the comparatively high degree of literacy which prevailed among the Yankee farmers and artisans has been an important factor in the development of American English “ (Pyles 1952, 66).

Some important differences in pronunciation:

1. stressed vowels are usually longer in American English (**packet**)
2. /r/ is always pronounced in American English
3. /t/ between vowels is pronounced as a soft /d/, so that **writer** and **rider** sound similar

3.1.4 Difference in spelling

Some important differences in spelling:

1. words which end in –tre are spelt –ter in American English (**center**)
2. words which end in –our are usually spelt –or in American English (**color**)

3.1.5 Difference in grammar

Some important differences in grammar:

1. Present perfect/Simple past: in American English the simple past can be used with already, just and yet. In British English the present perfect is used.

2. have/have got: In American English only *have* can be used in questions and negative sentences while in British English it is possible to use *have got* or *have* to express the idea of possession
3. *get/gotten*: In American English the past participle of *get* is *gotten*.
4. prepositions and adverbs: some prepositions and adverbs are used differently in British and American English (**stay at home** vs. **stay home**)
5. form of the adverb: In informal American English the adverb form ending in **-ly** is often not used: (He looked at me really strange)
6. shall: *shall* is not used instead of *will* in American English for the first person singular of the future or in polite offers (**I will be here tomorrow, Should I open the window?**)

3.2 Different views of American English

Practically all who have written upon the subject have noted that American English is characterized by a higher degree of uniformity. It is well to remember, however, that the conception of uniformity in speech must be to a large extent relative; that is, much depends upon who is doing the observing. He who looks for differences will surely find them. Such mass entertainment as is provided nowadays with help of the cinemas, the radio, and television has been on the whole a uniformizing influence (Pyles 1952, 70).

3.2.1 Archaic form of British English

The notion that American English is fundamentally only an archaic form of British English has been propagated by two groups of writers on language: “first, Americans who seek to establish the truth of Lowell’s saying that our ancestors, unhappily, could bring over no English better than Shakespeare’s,‘ and second, Englishmen who deny Americans any originality in speech, and seek to support their denial by showing that every new Americanism that pops up was used centuries ago by Chaucer, Spenser or Gower. It remains an undoubted fact that there is a recognizable amount of archaic English, or of English faded into the dialects, in the American vocabulary, and that it includes a number of terms that other alert Englishmen have denounced as American

barbarisms. Examples are: to guess, to advocate, to notify, to loan, and mad for angry“ (Mencken 1948, 224).

Foster opposes that American English has become “respectable, no longer regarded as merely quaint, barbarous or amusing appendage to the British original“ (1968, 18). The main reason for that Foster adduces “abrupt shifting of the political and economic centre of gravity of the western hemisphere from Europe to the United States“ (1968, 18).

3.2.2 Separate language

One of the linguists who considered American English the exact opposite, i.e. not only an archaic form of British English but more a separate language was Krapp who approves that:

the American community has not been segregated and relations with the parent country have never been discontinued. American English and British English are not identical, but they are and always have been equal citizens in the cosmopolitan world of the English language. The absurdity of describing American English as the archaic speech of an isolated community may be realized by considering what might have happened if the conditions favoring isolation had been present. If migration to New England had ceased in the year 1700, if New England had remained after that time a separate state, severed not only from Europe but from the rest of America, it is not improbable that something approximating the language of Dryden might still be heard in New England. But Dryden’s speech is forever lost in the medley of later voices that sound more loudly in our ears (Mencken 1945, 226).

Noah Webster and H.L. Mencken support Krapp’s view in the 20th century. They both gave good reasons why the American language should be considered as a separate language: “American English is not a mere variation of a true and proper English: it has its own standard forms derived from the distinctive character of the USA, its political history, its customs and conventions, and the values and character of its people“ (Davidson 2011, 7).

It is interesting to see that the International Academy of Tourism instituted by Prince Rainier of Monaco has concluded that English and American are two different

languages and so require separate dictionaries for the use of travellers because differences in the two vocabularies are particularly noticeable in the realm of tourism and travelling (Foster 1952, 19).

3.3 The history of American English

Once upon a time, the only recognized varieties of English were those found within Britain. As the years passed, the Englishes of the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, the Caribbean and Africa developed new lexical forms and distinctive ranges of pronunciation that further distanced their speech from any recognizable variety of English used in the British Isles. These varieties of English have developed their own standard forms and can no longer be usefully identified as offshoots of the English of Britain (Brown 2002, 7).

3.3.1 Phases of Settlement with impact on American English

Wolfram (2005, 29) differentiates three phases of settlements that generally take place:

“In the initial phase, a group of people moves to an area where there are attractive environmental qualities. The immigrants bring with them the culture of their origin.

In the next phase, available land is occupied, and a new cultural identity emerges, as cohesive society develops in the region. The creation of this new culture is often accompanied by the elimination of established cultures and ways of speaking. For example, in the process of forging an „American“ culture out of various European cultures, colonists, overwhelmed numerous Native American cultures- and languages. However, the Native American languages that the original European emigrants encountered when they first arrived in North America were almost completely supplanted by varieties of English, as well as other European languages such as Spanish.

In the third phase of settlement, regional populations define roles for themselves with respect to wider social groupings. The response to national commerce and culture becomes an important part of the definition of the localized population, as it maintains and adjusts aspects of its dialect in shaping a distinctive identity

The forerunners of the dominant cultural group in a given region typically establish cultural and linguistic boundaries that persist in time, although the original features that characterize each area may change in a number of ways, and other features

may take their place. Much has changed in English over the centuries of its existence in America, but the initial patterns of habitation by English speakers from various parts of the British Isles, as well as by emigrants and enslaved peoples who spoke languages other than English, are still reflected in the patterning of dialect differentiation in the United States today” (2005, 29-30).

3.3.2 The beginning of American English

The history of American English does not begin with the first arrival of English speakers in the New World. Some of the dominant characteristics still found in varieties of American English can be dated to dialect differences that existed in the British Isles before the British colonization of America began. The earliest English-speaking inhabitants in America came from different parts of the British Isles, where dialects were already in place.

Before there was any permanent settlement of English-speaking folk in this land, a number of Indian words had got to the English language by way of Spanish or Portuguese (Pyles 1952, 28).

The colonizers of this country were confronted with a land whose topography, meteorological phenomena, trees, plants, birds, and animals were frequently quite different from what they had known in England (Pyles 1952, 29). Contacts with other colonizing peoples have also contributed to the American vocabulary: language of Dutch, Germans, French, and Spanish.

It is perhaps not surprising, considering the ultimate reduction of the American Indians that the Indian element in American English is no larger than it is. As a matter of fact, if do not consider place names, of which there are an overwhelming number- more than half of American states bear Indian names, and a large portion of American rivers, lakes, mountains, towns, and cities as well- the Indian influence on American vocabulary must be described as insignificant (Pyles 1952, 36). The Indian languages were not, however, the only non-European influence upon the English of America in colonial days. More than a year before the Pilgrims landed in America, a group of people were against their will brought there from Africa, and sold into slavery. (Pyles 1952, 42) How did words from the language of slaves get into the speech of their white masters? According to M. M. Mathews, who devotes the final chapter of his *Some*

sources of Southernisms (1948) speculates that white children might have transmitted them, who did not consider the new words an inferior culture (Pyles 1952, 36).

3.4 Increasing influence of American English

It is unlikely that there are many features of normal, unaffected American speech which are not traceable to earlier usages in Great Britain, a phenomenon clearly demonstrable in many American local and regional word usages in the speech of the folk. It is hardly surprising that American developments should be more or less restricted to the rather superficial level of vocabulary when we consider the relatively short time that America has been separated from the mother country (Mencken 1945, 216). By the time of the fourth edition of *The American Language*, Mencken no longer believed that the English of America was diverging so markedly from the English of England as to become a distinct language. He even declared that “British English was becoming so much like American English that in time the Englishman might find himself speaking a kind of dialect of American“ (Mencken 1945, 218).

This might be slightly exaggerated, although it is quite true, that many Americanisms have entered the speech of England, some imperceptibly, some over a great deal of opposition. The transfer began quite early and there can be no doubt that the enrichment of British English by way of America has been considerably accelerated by movies and radio (Pyles 1952, 217).

3.5 American vs. British English now and in the future

The British have found a good many American expressions too colorful, useful, or economical to reject them and have adopted them, frequently with no awareness of their American origin. In far more fundamental respects, such as phonology, intonation, and morphology, there has been no influence of American on British. In the matter of vocabulary, there has been an exchange in both directions though there can be no question that England has gained more than Americans. However, there is not a slightest suspicion that American English will ever substitute British English in England (Pyles 1952, 220).

The differences usually occur, however, on a comparatively simple level of communication and for the most part consist of names of concrete objects. “The more

abstract or philosophical the subject matter of speech, the fewer the differences in word choice are likely to be. It is, as a matter of fact, principally in slang and in specialized vocabularies that we notice very striking differences. In the specialized language of motoring, sports, of the various trades and professions, of shopping (clothes), and of transportation the American vocabulary differs in a large extent“ (Pyles 1952, 222).

Comparative lists, with British word usages on one side of the page and their American equivalents on the other, are interesting to read, but sometimes misleading in the impression which they give (Pyles 1952, 224). Sometimes their items may not actually represent general use. Certainly some of the entries on the American side of most such lists are widely known in England, just as a good many of the expressions labelled British are known and used in America (Pyles 225). Some of Americanisms, whose use was not limited to exclusively American needs, have passed over into British English—usually after a good deal of objection of indignant British commentators (Wolfram 2005, 48). Frequently, it is simply a matter of degree— a question of a word or a phrase being somewhat more familiar in one country than in the other. “American English has preserved a number of older British usages which have never quite gone out of use in England; some of these have indeed reentered British English by way of America, to be much more widely used in England than the compilers of differential word lists lead one to suspect” (Pyles 1952, 226). Likewise, regional and local usages vary a good deal in this country, and a good many supposed Britishisms are in wide use in particular sections of the USA, even though they may not be known in Chicago or Los Angeles: **sidewalk** is the usual term in most parts of America for the part of a street reserved for pedestrians; however, in Philadelphia the term **pavement** is practically the only term used, as in British English) (Pyles 226). Moreover, as sometimes happens, Americanism of a word is nothing more than its greater frequency in the USA as compared with Britain (wireless vs. radio) (Foster 1952, 28).

4 METHOD

The main objective of the thesis is to study the assimilation of Americanisms with British English. For this study it is necessary to make an analysis of the Americanisms found in dictionaries of different generations: *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995) (CIDE 1995), *Cambridge Advanced Learner's dictionary* (2008) (CALD 2008) and *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (1962) (OID 1962). To determine the rate of Americanisms in British English, I have to work only with British dictionaries. All of them mark Americanisms in some way. CIDE 1995 and OID 1962 use the abbreviation *Am*, CALD 2008 the abbreviation *US*. These two abbreviations refer to words or their meaning used by speakers from North America. Items that are used in all varieties of English (North American English, Australian English and British English) are not labelled. I call these expressions general English. I also listed words or their meanings which were marked *esp US* or *mainly Am*. To set some limits I had to choose which Americanisms to deal with and which to omit. The following rules indicate the disregarded Americanisms:

1. Expressions that exist only in American English and do not occur in British English, e.g. **twist-tie** (n)
2. Expressions which differ from British English only in orthography, such as capital letters or variations in spellings, e.g. AmE **Assembly** vs. BrE **assembly**)
3. Expressions which differ from British English in a part of speech (e.g. AmE **advisory** (n) vs. BrE **advisory** (adj)
4. Expressions which differ from British English only in pronunciation (e.g. AmE **news** [nu:z] vs. BrE **news** [nju:z])
5. Expressions which differ in the use of collocations (e.g. AmE **beat off** vs. **beat sb off**)

First I listed all the Americanisms from CALD 2008 beginning with letters from A to R. I did not consider the historical point of view when I was listing all the Americanisms, i.e. I was not interested if an Americanism has its origin in the USA or in the UK. I simply listed every entry which was marked (*US*) and did not meet any of the points 1-5 (see above).

I worked only with letters A to R because I wanted to compare it with the catalogue of Americanisms which I created for my bachelor thesis. This catalogue included all Americanisms from CIDE 1995 beginning on letters A to R. There were 339 such entries. In my bachelor thesis I checked all these 339 expressions with OED 1962 to find out if, after 33 years, there are more or less Americanisms in British dictionaries. At that point I had enough data to start the analysis of the Americanisms found in these three dictionaries.

4.1 General reference to the main dictionaries

As I said before, I worked only with British dictionaries because the aim of my thesis is to find out if and in what extent Americanisms get into British English. Thus, the only possibility was to examine British dictionaries of more generations.

Which words appear in dictionaries? Walter (1995, 9) explains the pattern as follows: “Lexicographers get an access to all instances of any word within one hundred million words through the enormous software resource created by the international Cambridge Language Survey. The corpus covers major varieties of English (British and American English equally represented).“

To ensure that a dictionary contains a balanced and comprehensive coverage of new words that have entered the language in recent years, there is usually an editorial programme developed which monitors language. Besides, “many thousands of citations are studied and discussed in order to arrive at the new words, new meanings of existing words, new concepts, new usages, that are recorded in the dictionary. The human work is now augmented by the evidence of vast resources of computerized data, enabling the lexicographer to record with greater accuracy than ever before the living language of today (Makins 1991, 8).

Makins, an editor of Collins English Dictionary (1991), explains that in deciding what to include in a dictionary, the criterion for the editors has always been: is the general reader likely to come across this word and want to look it up? “Thanks to constant proliferation of new information, and hence new terminology, in so many walks of life, the areas of specialist coverage has been constantly expanded with vocabulary from different subject fields, such as education (that have changed or developed rapidly in very recent years), sport (where increasing television coverage has brought to wider audiences the terminology of, for instance, snooker and American

football), the environment (where public interest in green issues is reflected in an increasing number of ecology-oriented words and concepts), business (where the different areas of the financial world- banking, insurance, investment, marketing- all contribute their specialist jargon to the general language, and many others” (Makins 1991, 7).

4.1.1 Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1962)

The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary is a mixture of a dictionary and encyclopedia. It has been based on the Concise Oxford Dictionary and the definitions retain its historical ordering. Familiar words are less fully treated, and the phrases illustrating such words have been more sparingly used. But it also contains terms in everyday use even if they have technical or scientific character, the names of famous historical, contemporary or fictitious people, the names of important places and events (Petter 1962, 8).

4.1.2 Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995)

The *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995) is designed for the foreign learner of English and is the first mainstream monolingual dictionary published by Cambridge University Press (Walter 1995, 8). It provides 1700 pages of entries and examples, more than any other learner’s dictionary at that time. It covers British, American, Australian usages, pronunciations, spellings and grammatical patterns. North American English is marked by the abbreviation (*Am*). The lexicography of this dictionary is based on solid scholarly principles and using the latest computer techniques. In addition to clarity and simplicity, the biggest advantage of CIDE is the existence of the guide word which directs the users to the core meaning immediately (Walter 1995, 9).

4.1.3 Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2008)

The *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2008) is the third (and the latest) edition of this dictionary, which was previously published under the name *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. The first edition came out in 2003. On more than 1800 pages this dictionary includes clear definitions and guidewords which help to find

a word or its meaning fast and easily. There are all important variants of English labelled. North American English is marked by the abbreviation (*US*).

I chose these two dictionaries for my thesis because they were published in Britain and the meanings of American English are clearly distinguished with the abbreviation (*Am*) in the Cambridge International Dictionary of English and (*US*) in The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. CALD 2008 is a sequel to CIDE 1995, so the comparison of Americanisms would be as exact as possible.

4.2 Bachelor thesis conclusion

The conclusion and the catalogue from my bachelor thesis is an integral part of my diploma thesis. In my bachelor thesis I have elicited following facts:

In CIDE 1995 there were 339 words or their meanings which were marked as Americanisms. Out of these 339 words only 42 nouns/noun phrases, 3 verbs and 1 adverb had the same meaning in OID 1962. It means that these 46 words existed as Americanisms already in 1962, when OID was published and continued to be regarded as Americanisms in the same part of speech and with the same meaning in 1995. Significantly many more words or their meanings did not exist, or had a different meaning in 1962 than in 1995. 223 nouns/noun phrases, 48 verbs/phrasal verbs, 20 adjectives, 1 adverb and 1 pronoun newly appeared as Americanisms since OID 1962 was published. The overwhelming majority were those whose meanings could not be found in OID 1962 as Americanisms nor as general English. However, some of these meanings were found in OID 1962. 31 nouns and 3 verbs were considered general English in 1962 while in 1965 they shifted their meaning to American English (Třetinová 2006, 72).

One of my aims of the bachelor thesis was to uncover in which semantic categories Americanisms appear most often. I categorized single meanings according to their semantics. The semantic category *food and drink* contains the highest number of new Americanisms since 1962 (33 words), followed by *education* (19), *sport* (16), *love and sex* (15), *parties and social activities* (15), *evaluation* (15), *money* (12), *house and household* (11), *government and administration* (11), *crime and punishment* (10), *means of transport* (9), *medicine* (8), *animals* (7), *woman* (7), *clothes* (6), *body* (6), *man* (6), *mass media* (3).

Another interesting conclusion from my bachelor thesis was the fact that nearly none of the expressions, which were evaluated as slang or informal in CIDE 1995 appeared in OID 1962. There were only three exceptions which appeared in OID, evaluated the same way, i.e. informal or slang:

1. **pen** (slang n): a penitentiary
2. **plumb** (infml adv): completely
3. **buck** (infml n): a dollar

Last but not least, I pointed out that nearly half of Americanisms in CIDE 1995 designated a completely different denotate so the basic (shared) meaning could not be observed (Třetinová 2006, 79).

5 Analysis of CALD 2008

In my Bachelor thesis I went through all entries in CIDE 1995. I put down all the entries, whose at least one meaning was marked as general English and one as Americanism in that dictionary, i.e. words marked as (*Am*) in the dictionary. There were 364 such words (Třetinová 2008, 79).

This time I looked into CALD 2008. I put down all the entries, whose at least one meaning is marked as general English and one as Americanism, i.e. with the abbreviation (*US*) under an entry in CALD 2008. There are 586 in CALD 2008.

Then I checked if all the 339 Americanisms from CIDE 1995 which I listed in my bachelor thesis can be found as Americanisms in CALD 2008. 284 words are still marked as Americanisms in CALD 2008, i.e. they are still understood as American English expressions as they were in 1995 and they have not influenced British English in such a way, that they would fully incorporate in British English.

Out of the 339 words in CIDE 1995 there are 58 words which are not marked as Americanisms anymore in CALD 2008. I have divided these 58 words into two categories. The category 5.1 contains words whose American meaning from 1995 can be found in CALD 2008 but they are not marked as Americanisms, i.e. the American meanings have infiltrated into British English without being recognized as Americanisms anymore. The second category 5.2 includes words whose American meanings disappeared totally in CALD 2008, i.e. the American meaning has not infiltrated the British English and has left the dictionary.

5.1 Assimilated Americanisms

In this category there are American meanings with their definitions from CIDE 1995 which have become a part of British English and are not labelled, i.e. they are considered to be general English words in CALD 2008. The expressions are in the alphabetic order, followed by the abbreviation for their part of speech, the definition of the expression which is the same in both CIDE 1995 and CALD 2008, only without being recognized as Americanism in the latter one:

1. **blasted** (adj): (slang) drunk;
2. **buck** (n): (infml) a dollar

3. **choke** (v): (infml) to be unable to do something useful at a time when it is important to do it
4. **come on** (pv): (infml) to make your sexual interest known to someone
5. **detention centre** (np): a place where people who have entered the country without the necessary documents can be kept for short periods of time
6. **dugout** (n): a shelter for players along a baseball field
7. **finish off** (pv): (slang) kill (somebody);
8. **formula** (n): liquid food, like milk, for babies
9. **freshman** (n): a student in the first year at high school
10. **hack** (v): (infml) to manage to deal successfully with (something)
11. **hash** (n): a mixture of meat, potatoes and vegetables cut into small pieces and baked or fried
12. **hire** (v): to start to employ (someone)
13. **hooker** (n): (infml) prostitute
14. **hustler** (n): a prostitute
15. **ice-breaker** (np): something such as a game, joke or story that makes people feel comfortable in a social situation, business meeting, etc.
16. **knock up** (vp): (slang) to make (a woman) pregnant
17. **lick** (v): (infml) to defeat easily in a competition, fight, etc.
18. **make** (v): to cause (something)
19. **marshmallow** (n): (figurative) someone who is cowardly, easily frightened, or unable to make decisions
20. **parallel** (adj): an imaginary line around the Earth always at the same distance from the equator
21. **profit from** (vp): to earn money from something
22. **raft** (n): a large number or range; a lot

The interesting fact is, that all words which were marked as informal or slang in CIDE 2005, have kept the same level of formality in CALD 2008. Only two words, which were marked as slang in CIDE 2005 are marked as informal in CALD 2008 (**blasted**, **finish off**). The reason might be, however, simple. There is no word marked as slang in the whole dictionary CALD 2008. The dictionary uses only the term informal. There is another slight shift. The usage of the word **marshmallow** was termed figurative in CIDE 1995 while in CALD the usage was informal humorous.

5.2 Lost Americanisms in CALD 2008

The next category includes words, whose American meanings from CIDE 1995 do not emerge in CALD 2008. The meanings are included neither as American English nor as general English. This means that the American meaning did not influence British English in such a distinct way that it could infiltrate into general English and moreover, the American meaning has weakened in some way, because the British dictionary does not even recognize the meaning as Americanism anymore. This category is a bit more complicated; therefore I tried to comment on each entry.

1. **buggy** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a pram

CALD 2008: there is no American meaning under the term buggy; however, CALD 2008 says, a pram in American English is called **baby buggy** or **baby carriage**

2. **chippy** (n)

CIDE 1995: (slang Am): a female prostitute

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to a prostitute

3. **chisel** (v)

CIDE 1995: (Am) to use very clever or dishonest methods to achieve something

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

4. **choker** (n)

CIDE 1995: (infml Am) someone who can't come through when the pressure is on

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

5. **cook** (v)

CIDE 1995: (infml Am) to achieve what you want

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

6. **corned beef** (np)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a large piece of beef which has been preserved in salt water; (General English meaning in CIDE 1995: beef which has been cooked in salty water and often pressed into metal containers where it can be kept for a long time)

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English, only the General English meaning: cooked beef which has been preserved in salty water and spices, and which is often sold in tins

The reason why there is no US variant in CALD 2008 may be the unimportant difference between the two meanings from CIDE 1995 when already the two variants were very close

7. **doll** (n)

CIDE 1995: (informal dated especially Am) a form of address to a woman or a girl, esp. one considered attractive, used by men

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995;

the reason might be that the American meaning was in 1995 already dated

8. **elk** (n)

CIDE 1995: (especially Am) a number of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, a men's social organization

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

9. **Epsom salts** (np)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a bitter white powder which is used to wash injury to help reduce swelling;

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English, only General English definition, the same as in CIDE 1995: a bitter white powder that is mixed with water to make a drink that helps people pass solid waste

10. **fin** (n)

CIDE 1995: (dated slang Am) a \$5 note

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

11. **flannels** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) underwear made of flannel

CALD 2008: CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

12. **good day** (np)

CIDE 1995: (Am) an expression used when people meet, esp. in the morning or the afternoon; (dated Br) an expression used when people meet or leave each other

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English, only General English: used as a greeting or when saying good bye during the day

13. **handbrake** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a brake on a bicycle (the device operated by hand that stops it)

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English, only General English meaning which is the same as in CIDE 1995: a device operated by hand which locks into position and prevents a vehicle from moving

14. **hulk** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a part which continues from an old set of ideas or beliefs which are no longer accepted

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

15. **ice** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a sorbet

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

16. **illiberal** (adj)

CIDE 1995: (formal Am) unwilling to accept other or new ways of thinking or behaving

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English, only General English meaning which is the same as in CIDE 1995: (formal) limiting freedom of expression, behavior, etc; both variants were so close in 1995, that CALD 2008 has left out the American variant

17. **intern** (v)

CIDE 1995: (Am) to get practical experience of the work involved

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

18. **jazz** (n)

CIDE 1995: (slang disapproving Am) speech without real meaning; nonsense

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

19. **jellyfish** (n)

CIDE 1995: (figurative especially Am) a weak cowardly person

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

20. **jig** (n)

CIDE 1995: (infml Am) a trick

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

21. **left field** (np)

CIDE 1995: (figurative Am) somewhere far from the main activity or belief

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

22. **a lick and a promise** (np)

CIDE 1995: (Am) anything done quickly and carelessly

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English

23. **loan** (v)

CIDE 1995: (especially Am) to lend

CALD 2008: the American meaning to lend is presented as General English while the previously General English meaning to borrow is lost

24. **long-sighted** (adj)

CIDE 1995: (figurative especially Am) can make wise judgments about the results far in the future of an action taken now

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

25. **make** (v)

CIDE 1995: (slang Am) to have sex with

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

26. **make over** (pv)

CIDE 1995: (especially Am) to change or make again

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

27. **mince** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) mincemeat (a sweet, spicy mixture of small pieces of apple, currants and other fruit which is eaten, esp. at Christmas, inside pastry cases)

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

28. **minstrel** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a singer

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

29. **national service** (np)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a system in which young people spend a period of time doing useful work for their country, such as repairing old houses, putting out forest fires or teaching children

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

30. **pan** (v)

CIDE 1995: (especially Am) to cook food in a pan

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

31. **panther** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) a cougar

CALD 2008: only General English meaning a black leopard, which is the same as in CIDE 1995

32. **premise** (v)

CIDE 1995: (slightly formal Am) to make an introductory statement about something

CALD 2008: no meaning of American English or a meaning similar to that in CIDE 1995

33. **produce** (n)

CIDE 1995: (Am) especially fruit and vegetables

CALD 2008: only General English meaning which is the same as British English meaning in CIDE 1995: food or any other substance or material that is grown or obtained through farming, esp. that which is produced in large amounts, which means the word has lost its different meanings of English variants and is only General English

5.3 New Americanisms since 1995

I want to focus on the new Americanism, which have newly appeared in CALD 2008 since 1995 which was the year of publishing of CIDE. During this period (1995 and

2008) there are 302 new Americanisms. This means that 302 words share a new meaning which is used in American English. I have divided these Americanisms in different categories.

5.3.1 The division of new Americanisms according to semantic categories

The categories include new American meanings, which are supplied with brackets containing an abbreviation standing for part of speech, countability or uncountability, transitivity or intransitivity and the new definition of American English meaning. The most numerous category with 25 entries is food and drink, followed by sport 23, education 21, jobs 16, house and household 12, clothes 12, character 10, money 8, means of transport 20, government and administration 7, parties and social activities 7, evaluation mass media 7, medicine and drugs 6, law 5, container 5, body 5, man 4, crime and punishment 4, woman 3, love and sex 2, telephone 3,

Semantic category: food and drink

1. **baking soda** noun [U]

mainly US for bicarbonate of soda (a white powder used to make foods rise in baking)

2. **baloney** noun [C or U]

US a smoked sausage, sliced and eaten cold

3. **barley water** noun [U]

US a drink made from barley and water boiled together for the purpose of making an ill person feel better

4. **beet** noun [C or U]

mainly US for beetroot (the small round dark red root of a plant, which is eaten cooked as a vegetable, especially cold in salads)

5. **biscuit** noun [C]

US a type of bread usually baked in small, round pieces

6. **chip** noun [C usually plural]

US for crisp (a very thin, often round piece of fried potato, sometimes with a flavour added, and sold especially in plastic bags)

7. **cider** noun [U]

US (US and UK apple juice , Australian sweet cider) juice from crushed apples, used as a drink or to make vinegar

8. **crisp** noun

US for crumble (a sweet dish made from fruit covered in a mixture of flour, butter and sugar rubbed together into small pieces, which is baked and eaten hot)

9. **endive** noun [C or U]

US for chicory (a vegetable with white leaves that taste bitter and are eaten raw in salads)

10. **entrée** noun [C]

US the main dish of a meal

11. **French dressing** noun [U]

US a mixture of oil, mayonnaise (= a thick cold white sauce) and ketchup (= a thick cold red sauce) used to flavour salad

12. **freshen** verb [T]

mainly US If you freshen someone's especially alcoholic drink, you add more to it

13. **frost** verb [T]

US (UK ice) to cover a cake with frosting

14. **gumbo** noun [U]

US for okra (the small green pods from a tropical plant eaten as a vegetable or used to thicken soups and other dishes, or the plant itself)

15. **inhale** verb [T]

US informal to eat something extremely fast

16. **jelly** noun

US (UK jam) a sweet soft food made by cooking fruit with sugar to preserve it; It is eaten on bread or cakes

17. **kill** verb [T]

mainly US informal to drink all of something

18. **meal ticket** noun [C]

US for luncheon voucher (a type of ticket which people are given by their employer and which they can use instead of money for buying meals in some restaurants)

19. **moonshine** noun [U]

mainly US alcoholic drink made illegally

20. **nuke** verb [T]

mainly US informal to heat or cook something in a microwave oven

21. **orangeade** noun [U]

US for orange squash (a drink that tastes of oranges, made by adding water to very strong orange juice)

22. **pancake** noun [C]

US a sweet thick round cake made from flour, sugar, milk and eggs, which is cooked in a pan and eaten with maple syrup , usually for breakfast

23. **pickle** noun [C]

US a cucumber which has been preserved in vinegar or salty water, or slices of this

24. **pot luck** noun [C]

mainly US an informal meal where guests bring a different dish which is then shared with the other guests

25. **pudding** noun [U]

US a sweet soft food made from milk, sugar, eggs and flavouring which is eaten cold

semantic category: *education*

1. **academician** noun [C]

US for academic (someone who teaches at a college, or who studies as part of their job)

2. **all-nighter** noun [C]

US informal a time when you spend all night studying, especially for an examination

3. **associate** noun [C]

US someone who holds an associate's degree (the qualification given to a student by a junior college after successfully finishing two years of study)

4. **audit** verb [T]

US to go to a class or educational course for pleasure or interest, without being tested or receiving a qualification at the end

5. **bus** verb [T]

US to take children by bus to school in another area every day

6. **college** [C or U]

US university

7. **community college** noun [C]

US a two-year college where students can learn a skill or prepare to enter a university

8. **director** noun [C]

US someone in charge of a school for very young children

9. **fraternity** noun [C]

US a social organization for male students at an American or Canadian college

10. **grade** noun [C]

US a school class or group of classes in which all the children are of a similar age or ability

11. **graduate** noun [C]

US a person who has finished their school, college or university education

12. **high** noun

US informal for high school (when used in the name of a school)

13. **high school** noun [C]

a school in the US for children aged from 14 to 18, or from 16 to 18 if there is also a junior high school

14. **kindergarten** noun [C or U]

mainly US the first year of school, for children aged 5

15. **military academy** noun [C]

a private school in the US that expects obedience to rules, has uniforms and is generally run like the armed forces

16. **paper** noun [C]

US for essay

17. **probation** noun [U]

a period of time in which a student who has behaved badly must improve their work or behaviour in order to stay in a school

18. **promote** verb

US If a student is promoted, they go up to the next higher grade (= level in school) .

19. **public school** noun [C or U]

US in Scotland, Australia and the US, a free school provided by the government

20. **review** verb [T]

US for revise (to study again something you have already learned, in preparation for an examination)

21. **annual** noun [C]

US for yearbook (a book published every year by a school or other organization that gives various facts about the events and achievements of the previous or present year)

semantic category: *money and business*

1. **allowance** noun [C]

mainly US for pocket money

2. **appraise** verb [T]

US for value

3. **G** noun [C]

US informal 1000 dollars

4. **graft** noun [U]

mainly US the act of getting money or advantage through the dishonest use of political power and influence

5. **leverage** noun [U]

US (UK gearing) the ratio between the amount of money that a company owes to banks and the value of the company

6. **nickel** noun [C]

a US or Canadian coin worth five cents

7. **penny** noun [C]

in the US and Canada, a cent or a coin of this value

8. **barracuda** noun [C]

US disapproving a person who does business in a selfish way

semantic category: *house and household*

1. **AC** noun [C or U]

US abbreviation for air conditioner or air conditioning

2. **basin** noun [C]

mainly US a washbasin

3. **bath** noun [C]

US used to refer to a bathroom when describing a home

4. **bathe** verb [T]

US for bath (= to wash)

5. **bathroom** noun [C]

US a toilet

6. **bureau** noun [C]

US for chest of drawers (a piece of furniture with drawers in which you keep things such as clothes)

7. **condominium** noun [C]

US an apartment building in which each apartment is owned separately by the people living in it, but also containing shared areas

8. **counter** noun [C]

mainly US a worktop (= flat surface in a kitchen, on which food can be prepared)

9. **crib** noun [C]

US for cot (= a small bed for a baby)

10. **drain** noun [C]

US for plughole (a hole in a bath, sink, etc. through which water flows away and into which you can put a plug)

11. **elevator** noun [C]

US (UK lift) a small room which carries people or goods up and down in tall buildings

12. **open house** noun [U]

US a time when a house or apartment that is being sold can be looked at by the public

semantic category: *means of transport/travelling*

1. **box noun** [C]

US for box junction (a place where two roads cross with a square of yellow lines painted in the centre, which you can drive over only when the road in front is clear)

2. **block noun** [C]

mainly US the distance along a street from where one road crosses it to the place where the next road crosses it, or one part of a street like this, especially in a town or city

3. **carry-on** [C]

mainly US a small piece of luggage that you take onto a plane with you

4. **camper noun** [C]

US for caravan (US trailer a wheeled vehicle for living or travelling in, especially for holidays, which contains beds and cooking equipment and can be pulled by a car

5. **cart noun** [C]

US for trolley (small vehicle with two or four wheels that you push or pull to transport large or heavy objects on)

6. **cot** noun [C]

US for camp bed (a light bed which can be folded so that it can be easily carried and stored)

7. **cutout** noun [C]

a device which, for safety reasons, stops or interrupts a circuit , used, for example, in a motor or engine

8. **flat** noun [C usually singular]

mainly US informal a flat tyre

9. **fly** noun [C]

mainly US for flysheet (an extra sheet of canvas (= strong cloth) stretched over the outside of a tent to keep the rain out)

10. **inn** noun [C]

US a small hotel, usually in the countryside

11. **inside lane** noun [C]

US the part of the road nearest the vehicles going in the opposite direction

12. **intersection** noun [C]

mainly US the place where two or more roads join or cross each other

13. **merge** verb [I]

US for filter in (to join a line of moving traffic without causing other vehicles to slow down)

14. **muffler** noun [C]

US a silencer (a part of a vehicle that reduces noise from the engine)

15. **outside lane** noun [C]

US the part of the road nearest the edge, especially used by slower vehicles

16. **premium** noun [U]

US for four-star (petrol) (the highest quality leaded fuel that can be used in cars)

17. **ramp** noun [C]

US for slip road (a short road on which vehicles join or leave a motorway)

18. **red eye** noun [C]

mainly US informal a flight taken at night

19. **return ticket** noun [C]

US a ticket for the return part of a journey

20. **road test** noun [C]

US a test of a driver's ability to control a vehicle, which must be passed in order to get official permission to drive

21. **bodywork** noun [U]

US the process of making or repairing the outer shell of a vehicle

semantic category: *parties and social activities*

1. **burlesque** noun [U]

US a theatrical entertainment in the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that had funny acts and a striptease

2. **carnival** noun [C]

US for funfair and fête

3. **carousel** noun [C]

mainly US for merry-go-round (a large machine at a fair which turns round and has wooden or plastic animals or vehicles on which children ride)

4. **fair** noun [C]

mainly US for fête (a public event, often held outside, where you can take part in competitions and buy small things and food, often organized to collect money for a particular purpose)

5. **Independence day** noun [C]

in the US, the official name for the Fourth of July holiday

6. **kill** verb [T]

mainly US informal to make someone laugh a lot

7. **killer** noun [C]

US and Australian English informal

a very entertaining or skilful person, story or performance

mainly US informal to make someone laugh a lot

semantic category: *sport*

1. **all-American** adjective

US describes an amateur sports person from the United States who is considered to be one of the best in their sport

2. **backstop** noun [C]

US informal for catcher (in baseball, the player who catches the ball if the batter fails to hit it)

3. **birdie** noun [C]

US for shuttlecock (a small light object with a rounded end to which real or artificial feathers are fixed and which is hit over the net in the game of badminton)

4. **bowl** noun [C]

mainly US a large bowl-shaped building or structure which is used for important sports events or musical performances

5. **double** noun [C]

US in baseball, a hit that allows the batter (= person who hits the ball) to reach second base

6. **double Dutch** noun [U]

US a game played in the US by jumping over a rope

7. **dunk** verb [T]

US to slam-dunk (to jump up and force a basketball down through the net in order to score)

8. **eject** verb [T]

US (UK send off) to order a sports player to leave the playing area during a game because they have done something wrong

9. **end** noun [C]

US one of the two players in American football who begin play furthest from the ball

10. **goaltender** [C]

US a goalkeeper (the player who stands in the team's goal to try to stop the other team from scoring)

11. **gym** noun [U]

US for physical education

12. **hockey** noun [U]

US for ice hockey

13. **huddle** noun [C]

US a group formed by the members of a team in American football before they separate and continue to play

14. **meet** noun [C]

US a sports event

15. **midget** adjective

US Midget sports are organized competitions for children

16. **moundnoun** [C]

US the raised area in baseball from which the pitcher throws the ball

17. **overtime** adverb , noun [U]

US for extra time (a period of time in a football game in which play continues if neither team has won in the usual time allowed for the game)

18. **park** noun [C]

US an area of land for playing sports

19. **peg** noun [C]

US informal a low fast throw in baseball

20. **plate** noun

US informal for home plate (in baseball, the place that the player has to stand next to in order to hit the ball, and the last place they have to touch to score a point)

21. **racetrack** noun [C]

mainly US for racecourse (a wide, usually circular, path with a grass surface, on which horses race, or the whole area in which this path is situated, including buildings)

22. **rack** noun [C]

US (UK frame) a triangular frame used to arrange the balls at the start of a game of billiards , pool , snooker , etc.

23. **reel sth off** phrasal verb

US informal to win several games or points one after the other in a sports competition

semantic category: *love and sex*

1. **date** verb [I or T]

mainly US to regularly spend time with someone you have a romantic relationship with

2. **hook** verb [I]

US informal to have sex for money

semantic category: *clothes*

1. **anklet** noun [C]

US for ankle sock (a short sock which covers only the foot and ankle)

2. **apparel** noun [U]

mainly US clothes of a particular type when they are being sold in a shop

3. **cuff** noun [C]

US (UK turn-up) the part of a trouser leg that is turned up

4. **dress code** noun [C usually singular]

US a set of rules for what you can wear

5. **haberdashery** noun [C or U]

US old-fashioned clothing for men, or a shop or department in a large shop which sells this

6. **loafer** noun [C]

mainly US trademark a type of leather shoe with a wide strip across the top, which a person's foot slides into, without any way of fastening it to the foot

7. **one-size-fits-all** adjective

mainly US describes a piece of clothing that is designed to fit a person of any size

8. **pants** plural noun

US for trousers

9. **parka** noun [C]

US for anorak

10. **pill** noun [C]

US (UK bobble) a small ball of threads that develops on the surface of clothes or material

11. **pump** noun [C]

US (UK court shoe) a type of plain shoe with a raised heel and no way of fastening it to the foot which is worn by women

12. **robe** noun [C]

mainly US a loose piece of clothing which is worn before or after a bath or on top of clothing that is worn in bed

semantic category: *body*

1. **bod** noun [C]

US informal for body

2. **booty** noun C]

US slang the part of the body that you sit on; bottom

3. **headlong** adverb, adjective

US for headfirst (with the head going first)

4. **noodle** noun [C]

US informal for noddle (the head of a person, or their ability to think)

5. **part** noun [C]

US (UK parting) a line on someone's head made by brushing the hair in two different directions

semantic category: *man*

1. **bro** noun [C]

mainly US informal used mainly by Black Americans as a way talking to a male friend

2. **brother** noun [C]

US informal sometimes used by a black man to address or refer to another black man

3. **buddy** noun [C]

US used to address another man, especially if annoyed

4. **fag** noun [C]

US slang an offensive word for a homosexual man

semantic category: *woman*

1. **lady** noun

US used to talk to a woman in a way that is not polite and is considered offensive by many women

2. **pageant** noun [C]

US a competition for young women in which they are judged on their beauty and other qualities

3. **pin** verb [T]

US old-fashioned When a young man pins a young woman, he gives her a piece of jewellery to show that they love each other

semantic category: *medicine/drugs*

1. **blow** noun [U]

US slang cocaine

2. **be flying high**

US informal to be very excited or happy, often because of the effect of drugs

3. **gas** noun [U]

mainly US for wind (gas in the bowels or in a baby's stomach, especially that which makes you feel uncomfortable or makes noises)

4. **narcotic** noun [C]

mainly US an illegal drug such as heroin or cocaine

5. **pot plant** noun [C]

US informal a cannabis plant

6. **peaked** adjective

US informal peaky (informal slightly ill, often looking pale)

semantic category: *crime and punishment*

1. **homicide** noun [C or U]

US formal or legal (an act of) murder

2. **hit** noun [C]

mainly US slang an act of murder

3. **on the game**

US informal involved in illegal activities

4. **patrolman** noun [C]

US a police officer who regularly walks or drives around an area in order to prevent or deal with crime

semantic category: *mass media*

1. **air** verb [I or T]

US to broadcast something on radio or television

2. **anchor** noun [C]

mainly US an anchorman or anchorwoman (a person who is the main news reader on a television or radio news programme)

3. **antenna** noun [C]

mainly US for aerial (a structure made of metal rods or wires which receives or sends out radio or television signals)

4. **boob tube** noun [C]

US informal for television

5. **G** noun

in the US, a symbol that marks a film that is considered suitable for children of any age

6. **pratfall** noun [C]

mainly US a fall in which a person lands on their bottom, especially for a humorous effect in a play, film, etc.

7. **pre-empt** verb [T]

US to replace one television programme with another, usually more important one

semantic category: *evaluation*

1. **awesome** adjective

US informal extremely good

2. **beautiful** adjective

mainly US very kind

3. **off the charts**

informal mainly US extremely popular or successful

4. **pisser** noun [C]

US offensive something which is of very bad quality

5. **pisser** noun [C]

US offensive something extremely good or humorous

6. **royal** adjective

mainly US big or great

7. **baby** noun [C]

mainly US a word you can use when you are talking to your wife, husband or lover

semantic category: *government and administration*

1. **bailiff** noun [C]

in the US an official who is responsible for prisoners who are appearing in court

2. **bylaw** noun [C]

US a rule which governs the members of an organization

3. **carpetbagger** noun [C]

mainly US disapproving someone who tries to become a politician in a place away from their home because they think there is a greater chance of succeeding there

4. **caucus** noun [C]

in the US, a meeting held to decide which candidate a political group will support in an election

5. **chapter** noun [C]

US or formal a local division of a larger organization

6. **chief Executive** noun

US the president of the United States

7. **representative** noun [C]

US someone who has been elected to the US House of Representatives

8. **lame duck** noun [C]

US in American politics, an elected official whose power is reduced because the person who will replace them has already been elected

semantic category: *jobs*

1. **accounting** noun [U]

US (UK accountancy) the job of being an accountant

2. **conciierge** noun [C]

US someone employed by a large company to do jobs, such as shopping, for other employees while they are working

3. **CV** noun [C]

US a written description of the previous work of someone who is looking for a job at a college or university

4. **custodian** noun [C]

US for caretaker (a person employed to take care of a large building, such as a school, and who deals with the cleaning, repairs, etc.)

5. **dean** noun [C]

US someone among a group of people who has worked the longest in the particular job or activity they share, and who is their unofficial leader

6. **dick** noun [C]

US old-fashioned informal a detective (= someone whose job is to discover facts about a crime)

7. **director** noun [C]

US someone in charge of a school for very young children

8. **finest** noun [U]

US informal A city's finest is its police force

9. **flack** noun [C]

US informal a person chosen by a group or organization which is in a difficult situation to speak officially for them to the public and answer questions and criticisms

10. **gnome** noun [C]

US a person who works by using their mind, but does not talk to, and is not known by, the public

11. **handler** noun [C]

US someone who advises someone important

12. **attrition** noun [U]

US for natural wastage (a reduction in the number of people who work for an organization which is achieved by not replacing those people who leave)

13. **mover** noun [C]

US someone who helps people move their possessions to a different place to live or work

14. **picker** noun [C]

mainly US a person who chooses a particular thing

15. **resident** noun [C]

US a doctor who is still training, and who works in a hospital

16. **résumé** noun [C]

US for CV

semantic category: *character*

1. **cheap** adjective

US (UK mean) unwilling to spend money

2. **cranky** adjective

US informal easily annoyed or upset

3. **cunning** adjective

US old-fashioned attractive; cute

4. **dumb** adjective

mainly US informal stupid and annoying

5. **dumbbell** noun [C]

US for dummy (stupid person)

6. **far-sighted** adjective

US (UK long-sighted) describes someone who has difficulty seeing things that are close

7. **flaky** adjective

mainly US informal behaving in a way that is not responsible or expected

8. **homely** adjective

US disapproving describes a person who is ugly

9. **pill** noun [C]

US an annoying person

10. **bugger** noun [C]

US informal a person or animal, especially a young one that you like very much

semantic category: *telephone*

1. **call sb up** phrasal verb

mainly US to telephone someone

2. **call box** noun [C]

US a small box next to a freeway (= motorway) containing a telephone to use after an accident or other emergency

3. **phone booth** noun [C]

US for phone box (a small structure with a door, found outside in public places, containing a public telephone)

semantic category: *container*

1. **jug** noun [C]

US a large round container for liquids which has a flat base, a handle and a very narrow raised opening at the top for pouring

2. **out-box** noun [C]

US for out-tray (a flat open container on a desk for letters and other documents that have already been dealt with and are waiting to be sent to someone else or put away)

3. **package** noun [C]

US for packet (a small paper or cardboard container in which a number of small objects are sold)

4. **pitcher** noun [C]

US for jug (UK (US pitcher) a container for holding liquids which has a handle and a shaped opening at the top for pouring)

5. **in-box** noun [C]

US for in-tray (a flat open container where letters and other documents are put when they arrive in a person's office and where they are kept until the person has time to deal with them)

semantic category: *law*

1. **charge** verb [T]

US legal When a judge charges a jury , the judge explains the details of the law to them

2. **John Doe** noun

US legal a name used in a law court for a person whose real name is kept secret or is not known

3. **justice** noun [C]

US a judge in a court of law

4. **moot** adjective

mainly US legal having no practical use or meaning

5. **the Bar** noun

US all lawyers thought of as a group

semantic category: *shopping*

1. **barbershop** noun [U]

US for barber's (a shop where a barber works)

2. **hole in the wall** noun [C usually singular]

US a small, often unpleasant, shop, house or restaurant

3. **marketing** noun [U]

US shopping

5.3.2 Semantically uncategorized new Americanisms

These are Americanisms which newly appear in CALD 2008 since 1995 but their meanings did not match any aforementioned category.

1. **alternate** adjective [before noun]

US (UK alternative) An alternate plan or method is one that you can use if you do not want to use another one

2. **aspirate** verb [I or T]

US specialized to breathe in, or to breathe a substance into your lungs by accident

3. **author** verb [T]

mainly US to create something

4. **baste** verb [I or T]

mainly US for tack (US also baste) to sew with a long loose stitch which holds two pieces of material together until they are stitched more effectively)

5. **beep** verb [T]

US (UK bleep) to call someone, for example a doctor, by sending a signal to a beeper which they carry

6. **bomb** verb FAIL [I]

US informal to fail

7. **boo-boo** noun [C]

US child's word a slight injury

8. **boot camp** noun [C]

US a place for training soldiers

9. **braid** noun

1. [C] US for plait (a length of hair or other material which is divided into three parts which are then crossed over each other in a special pattern)

10. **brainstorm** noun [C]

US for brainwave (a sudden clever idea)

11. **bramble** noun [C]

US any wild bush with thorns

12. **break sth in** phrasal verb

US for run sth in (If you run in a vehicle, you use it carefully and slowly for a short time when it is new, so that you do not damage its engine)

13. **can** verb [T]

mainly US informal to stop doing something or making noise

14. **caretaker** noun [C]

US for carer (someone who looks after a person who is young, old or ill)

15. **casket** noun [C]

US for coffin (a long box in which a dead person is buried or burnt)

16. **check sth out** phrasal verb

mainly US to borrow books from a library

17. **chops** [plural]

US slang the way you hold your mouth when playing a wind instrument such as a saxophone , or more generally, your ability to play a musical instrument

18. **cipher** noun [C]

US a zero

19. **clinker** noun [C]

US old-fashioned slang a mistake, especially a wrong musical note

20. **come off sth** phrasal verb

US to have recently finished a period of time when something very successful or very difficult happened

21. **comport** verb [I]

US formal If an idea or statement, etc. comports, it matches or is similar to something else

22. **creek** noun [C]

US a stream or narrow river

23. **crystal** noun [C]

US a transparent glass or plastic cover for a watch or clock

24. **cut** verb [T]

mainly US informal to not go, especially to a place

25. **dirt** noun [U]

mainly US loose soil on the ground

26. **draft** [verb T usually passive]

mainly US to order people by law to join the armed forces

27. **erase** verb [T]

mainly US (UK usually rub out) to remove something, especially a pencil mark by rubbing it

28. **even** adjective

US (UK evens) equally likely to happen as to not happen

29. **Excuse me**

US (UK Pardon?, also I beg your pardon?) used to politely ask someone to repeat something they have said because you have not heard it

30. **express** verb [T]

mainly US to send something somewhere very quickly

31. **fall** noun [C or U]

US (UK autumn) the season after summer and before winter, when fruits and crops become ripe and the leaves fall off the trees

32. **fizzle** verb [I]

mainly US to gradually end

33. **flip-flop** noun

US informal when someone completely changes a plan

34. **fourth** ordinal number

esp US a quarter

35. **freeze** verb [I]

US (also freeze up) If an engine or lock freezes, it stops working because its parts have become stuck and can no longer move

36. **fuss** verb [T]

US to make someone nervous and angry by trying to get their attention when they are very busy

37. **give-and-take** noun

US an exchange of ideas or statements

38. **grange** noun [C]

US for farm

39. **ground** noun [C usually singular]

US for earth (a wire that makes a connection between a piece of electrical equipment and the ground, so the user is protected from feeling an electric shock if the equipment develops a fault)

40. **ground plan** noun [C usually singular]

mainly US the basic plan of action for something

41. **hustle** verb [I or T]

mainly US informal to try to persuade someone, especially to buy something, often illegally

42. **jive** verb [T]

US slang to try to make someone believe something that is untrue

43. **keep** verb [T]

US to watch and care for someone's children while their parents are away

44. **lemon** noun [C]

mainly US informal something that does not work

45. **locate** verb [I]

US to move to a place to do business

46. **mainline** adjective

usually US involving beliefs, methods, etc. which are most common

47. **marquee** noun [C]

US a roof-like structure which sticks out over the entrance to a public building, especially a theatre, and on which there is usually a sign

48. **mash** verb [T]

mainly US informal to violently crush part of a body or an object

49. **mess** verb [T]

mainly US (UK mess up) to make something untidy

Don't you dare mess my hair!

50. **mess sb up** phrasal verb

US slang to hit someone repeatedly so that they are badly injured

51. **mess with sth** phrasal verb

mainly US to try to change or repair something, but not carefully and usually without success

52. **nail sth down** phrasal verb

US informal to understand something completely, or to describe something correctly

53. **narrows** plural noun

US a narrow part of a lake or river

54. **one** number, determiner

mainly US used to emphasize an adjective

55. **paddle** verb [T]

US to hit a child on the bottom with a short, wide piece of wood

56. **pall** noun [C]

US the coffin itself at a funeral

57. **parcel** noun [C]

mainly US specialized an area of land

58. **pawpaw** noun [C or U]

US (the fruit of) a type of tree that grows in central and southern parts of the US

59. **pitch** verb [I or T]

mainly US to try to persuade someone to do something

60. **plug** noun [C]

US for jack plug (a metal pin at the end of a long wire joined to a piece of electrical equipment and used to connect it to another piece of electrical equipment)

61. **posy** noun [C]

US a flower

62. **punch** verb [T]

mainly US to hit with your fingers the buttons on a telephone or the keys on a keyboard

63. **punt** verb [T]

US informal If you punt something, you decide not to do or include it

64. **putter** noun

US (UK potter) a slow, relaxed walk around a place

65. **play the race card**

US disapproving to mention someone's race in order to influence the way people think about them

66. **rack sth up** phrasal verb

mainly US informal to gradually get more points, profits, etc.; to accumulate

67. **regular** adjective

US usual or ordinary

68. **rock** noun [C]

US a large piece of rock or stone

6 Conclusion

The main aim of my diploma thesis was to examine the enriching of British dictionaries with Americanisms. To collect all Americanisms which appear in *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008), compare these Americanisms with the catalogue of Americanisms compiled from *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995) and finally accomplish an analysis. I worked with British dictionaries which state clearly with help of abbreviations of *Am* or *Us* which meaning is used mainly or only in American English.

In 1995 there were 339 words or their meanings which were marked as Americanisms. Out of these 339 expressions there were 46 words or their meanings existed already as Americanisms in 1962. 339 words newly appeared as Americanisms from 1962 to 1995. The majority of them existed neither as Americanisms nor as general English (a meaning which is understood and used in the main 3 variants of English: British, American and Australian English) in 1962. Only 34 expressions out of the new Americanisms were already in OED 1965 but marked as general English, i.e. they shifted their meaning to a meaning of American English.

In 2008 there were 586 words or their meanings which were marked as Americanisms, i.e. within 13 years a British dictionary includes 1.7x more Americanisms than it did in 1995. Out of these 586 Americanisms 284 words or their meanings were already marked as Americanisms in 1995. This means that there have appeared 302 new Americanisms since 1995. Out of the 339 Americanisms from CIDE 1995, 55 meanings are not registered in CALD 2008. These expressions have either assimilated with British English (22 meanings) or left the British dictionary completely (33). All of these words have kept the same formality as in 1995, i.e. if they were marked as informal or slang Americanisms, they were marked as informal or slang general English terms in 2008. The problem within this category was that already in 1995 the dictionary often adduced an American variant which was semantically very close to the general English. In these cases the dictionary from 2008 omitted the American variant and used only the general English meaning.

As regards semantic categories, in 1995 the category *food and drink* contained the highest number of new Americanisms since 1962 (33 words), followed by *education* (19) and *sport* (16). In 2008 the situation was similar. The semantic category with the

highest number of new Americanisms since 1995 was again the category *food and drink* (25 words), followed by *sport* (23) and *education* (21).

In this thesis I have proved that the number of Americanisms in British dictionary has been increasing since 1962 when there were only few words or their meanings marked as Americanisms. It took 33 years between the years 1962 and 1995 to add new 293 Americanisms and only another 13 years to add another 302 expression. Relative to population of the USA which is approximately 5times bigger than the population of the UK and the main role playing on the field of entertainment such as films and pop songs coming to the British citizens every day, the amount of Americanisms in British dictionaries will keep growing in the future.

However, the British have accepted only 22 meanings of American English since 1995 which they have incorporated them in their own vocabulary. This operation shows that although there is a rapid tendency to record Americanisms in British dictionaries, the approach to assimilating Americanisms into British English is rather slow and mirrors the British typical conservatism.

Resumé

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo prozkoumat obohacování britských slovníků o amerikanismy. Metoda k dosažení cíle spočívala ve vypsání všech amerikanismů, které se vyskytovaly v *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008), porovnat je s katalogem amerikanismů ze slovníku *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995) a poté provést analýzu všech zaznamenaných amerikanismů. Pracovala jsem s britskými slovníky, které jasně pomocí zkratk *Am* nebo *US* označovaly daný výraz nebo jeho význam používaný výhradně nebo pouze v americké angličtině.

V r. 1995 bylo jako amerikanismus zaznamenáno 339 slov. Z těchto výrazů bylo 44 označeno jako amerikanismus již v r. 1962. Od r. 1962 se jich nově v britském slovníku objevilo 322 slov. Většina z nich v r. 1962 neexistovala ani jako amerikanismy ani jako význam obecné angličtiny (význam, který je používán ve 3 hlavních variantách angličtiny: britské, americké a australské). Pouze 34 výrazů z nových Amerikanismů bylo označeno jako obecná angličtina v r. 1965, tzn. jejich význam se posunul z obecné angličtiny na výraz z angličtiny americké.

V r. 2008 bylo označeno jako amerikanismus již 586, tzn. že během 13 let britský slovník obsahoval 1.7x více amerikanismů než v r. 1995. Z těchto 586 amerikanismů bylo 284 slov označeno jako amerikanismus již v r. 1995, to znamená, že od r. 1995 se objevilo nových 302 amerikanismů. Z 339 amerikanismů ze slovníku CIDE 1995, 55 významů se ve slovníku CALD 2008 nevyskytovalo. Tyto výrazy se buď asimilovali s britskou angličtinou (22 meanings) nebo zcela slovník opustily (33). Všechna slova, která se asimilovala, si ponechala stejnou úroveň formality, tzn. pokud slovo bylo v r. 1995 označeno jako slang nebo neformální, byla takto označena i v r. 2008. Kategorie amerikanismů, které opustily slovník byla trochu problematická, jelikož již v r. 1995 slovník uváděl americkou variantu významově velmi blízkou k angličtině obecné. V tomto případě pak slovník z r. 2008 americkou variantu již neuváděl a ponechal pouze význam angličtiny obecné.

Co se týče sémantických kategorií, v r. 1995 největší počet nových Amerikanismů (od r. 1962) obsahovala kategorie *jídlo a pití* (33 slov), následována kategorií *vzdělání* (19) a *sportem* (16). V r. 2008 byla situace podobná. Nejpočetnější kategorie s novými amerikanismy od r. 1995 byla opět *jídlo a pití* (25 slov), následována *sportem* (23) a *vzděláním* (21).

V této diplomce jsem prokázala, že počet amerikanismů v britském slovníku se od r. 1962, kdy bylo jako amerikanismus označeno pouze pár slov, zvyšuje. Od r. 1962 po r. 1995 (během 33 let) přibylo v britském slovníku 342 slov. Přidat dalších 302 nových amerikanismů trvalo pouze 13 let. Vzhledem k populaci USA, která je přibližně 5krát větší než britská a vzhledem k hlavní roli, kterou USA v oblasti zábavy jako je film a písně, hrají, se americká angličtina dostává k Britům každý den. Proto se dá předpokládat, že počet amerikanismů v britských slovnících se bude v budoucnosti stále zvyšovat.

Na druhou stranu Britové přijali z americké angličtiny od r. 1995 pouze 22 slov, které začlenili do vlastní slovní zásoby. Tento krok nám ukazuje, že ačkoliv tendence zachycení amerikanismů v britských slovnících roste rychle, přístup k asimilaci amerikanismů s britskou angličtinou je velmi pomalý a odráží tak typický britský konservatismus.

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