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## MASTER THESIS

English and Czech Idioms based on Sports and Games



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**TÉMA ČESKY:**

Anglické a české idiomy ze sportu

**NÁZEV ANGLICKY:**

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**ZÁSADY PRO VYPRACOVÁNÍ:**

V teoretické části bude zpracována problematika frazeologie, budou definovány hlavní pojmy v této oblasti. V praktické části budou české a anglické idiomy ze sportu vysvětleny v jejich doslovném i přeneseném významu, dále bude nalezen ekvivalent v tom druhém jazyce. V závěru se porovná četnost idiomů z určitého sportu v daných jazycích.

**SEZNAM DOPORUČENÉ LITERATURY:**

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*I hereby declare that I have completed this thesis including its appendices on my own and used solely the sources cited in the text and included in the bibliography list.*

6 May 2015

Eliška Dlouhá

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# Introduction

This thesis deals with phraseology and idioms within the world of sports in two languages, English and Czech. People always have and always will use idiomatic expressions, sometimes even without realizing that those particular words together do not make much sense because almost nobody is aware of the set phrases he uses in his mother tongue. For them they are nothing more than just quotidian phrases. Only when they start to study a foreign language, they come across that strange combination of words they do not understand because it is impossible to reveal the figurative meaning by analyzing it word by word.

It is necessary to say that phraseology units are not only a linguistic phenomenon, they can be considered a legacy of the national culture. Hundreds of sports exist in the world, and their prevalence differs in each state. There are some that enjoy great popularity worldwide, such as football, ice hockey or basketball; and others are more restricted to certain countries, for example cricket in the UK, or pelota in the Basque country.

The first part of this thesis can be called a theoretical part and it is subdivided into various sections and furthermore, chapters. This part will deal with various topics that are considered relevant for this work. Specifically, the first section will take a look at phraseology and will try to find a satisfactory definition of it with the necessary mention of terminological issues surrounding the struggle to define it. And then, it will engage in connection of phraseology to other linguistic fields.

The second section will go into one linguistic discipline in more detail, namely it will be cognitive linguistics. It will occupy itself with the specific application of this linguistic branch in phraseology and attention will be paid to two important theories for figurative units.

Third section will be concerned with the role of culture in phraseology which was given space primarily in cognitive linguistics. This not-so-usual topic requires a definition of culture and a reflection with the result of proof that sport is indeed a part of culture.

And lastly, this part will pursue the topic of phraseological units, their definitions, relevant features and classifications. There appears one separate chapter solely on idioms which are of core in this thesis.

All this is followed by the practical part of which the purpose is to collect sports and games idioms in the two languages and thereby create a corpus of

sport-themed idioms which yet does not exist in the Czech linguistic discipline. It is divided into smaller chapters according to sports; sports idioms then appear in categories based on particular language. Each expression is provided with an explanation in relation to the sport or game. Better to say the literal meaning is explained, then the figurative (or phraseological) meaning is brought into focus. For better understanding an example is also attached to the meaning. As this is a work about two languages, a translation into the other language is delivered, whether it is also figurative or it is a periphrasis.

And last but not least, there is a comparative part. This is where the practical part will be analyzed and where the outcomes will be presented. One aim is to compare if idioms from one particular sport outnumber the others, thus prove or deny a hypothesis that the more popular the sport is, the higher number of idioms relate to it. It also deals with the translating of idioms which provides some outcomes about culture and phraseology as well.

This thesis could serve for simple enthusiasts for idiomatic expressions because it covers everyday phrases and so-popular sports. Besides, it could serve as a material for future phraseological studies and since there is no work on Czech idioms in this area, it will hopefully contribute to broadening this linguistic science.



# Methodology

As it was said in the introduction, there is an easy division of this work. There is the theoretical part and the practical one.

The theoretical part can be divided into four sections. First one deals with phraseology as a discipline. There are various opinions of linguists and their definitions of phraseology and what it concerns. Its relation to other terms, such as idiomatology and idiomaticity, is also brought into focus. There are presented approaches to these words of various linguists. Last chapter, then, deals with the role of phraseology in diverse linguistic disciplines, such as generative grammar, contrastive linguistics or corpus linguistics. This is based mostly on two articles, *Cross-linguistic phraseological studies* (2008) by Colson and *Phraseology and linguistic theory* (2008) by Gries.

The cognitive linguistics's section was influenced most by theorists Piirainen, Dobrovol'skij and Baranov and their several articles. Their influence exceeds even into the next section on phraseology and culture where the most important thing is the classification of cultural components underlying phrasemes which was presented by two of them, Piirainen and Dobrovol'skij (2005 and 2008).

The section about phraseological units has a quite straightforward organization. There are stated definitions with criteria which were offered by Gries (2008) once again. Such a diverse and large group calls for an appropriate classification. There is presented one by Piirainen (2008) but also another by Čermák (2004 and 2007). The main focus has to be and is put on idioms because those are the phrasemes studied in this thesis. In this chapter, definitions can be found, then also parameters of idioms are shown which are adopted from Langlotz's book *Idiomatic Creativity* (Langlotz, 2006).

As it can be seen, most of the theoretical part of this thesis highly proceeds from studies published in a monograph *Phraseology: An interdisciplinary perspective* (Granger and Meunier, 2008) since it covers the important issues of this linguistic discipline and also the relevant topics for this work.

The practical part is divided into sections based on a particular sport or a game. Each sport is provided with a short introduction giving basic information that is essential for the comprehension of the phrases. This information is taken from the *Encyclopedia of World Sport from Ancient Time to Present* (Levinson and Christensen, 1999) for being one of the most all-embracing work on sport. Every idiom in those sections is provided with an explanation and a definition,

and of course an example for better understanding. The examples are taken from a dictionary or the Internet with a proper quotation. The sources are to be found separately in Appendices. There is always provided a translation to the other language. These equivalents were taken from a bilingual dictionary Lingea (2008); when translating Czech idioms, options offered by Čermák, Hronek and Machač (2009a) were used. When a specific fixed translation was not discovered, the author states a periphrasis or explanation so that this thesis could be used as a dictionary

The choice of these particular phraseological units, that is idioms, was mostly for their high degree of idiomaticity and yet their significant relation to the literal meaning; the meaning it expresses in sport itself.<sup>1</sup> However, such a numerous group had to be reduced somehow, and due to this fact this thesis limits itself only to verbal idioms, meaning those that function as a verb.

Now, it is necessary to describe the search and selection of Czech and English sports idioms. As there are not so many books or articles dealing with phraseology in the Czech language and even less which would be dedicated to a certain area of idioms, it was easy to choose a main source of the Czech idioms used in this thesis. It is probably the most important work in this discipline: *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* by František Čermák and the editorial staff. This dictionary is a four-volume compound of all phraseological expressions there are in the Czech language, originally published throughout the eighties, whereas here it is dealt with the updated editions from 2009a. Each volume deals with different idioms based on their function, there are verbal and non-verbal expressions, similes and sentential expressions. For the purpose of this monograph only the verbal expressions were taken into account due to the extent of the work. Since there is no division into categories and it is only ordered alphabetically, the selection itself resided in going through the pages phrase by phrase looking for one somehow connected with sports or games. Those were then divided into respective sports sections.

The process of acquiring the English idioms was quite distinct. The first selection of English idioms was taken from a website <http://sportsidioms.com/> and this afterwards was appended by idioms from a dictionary *Metaphorically Speaking* (Renton, 1990) because this had idioms thematically arranged with a section of sport thus it was easy to find suitable idioms. Later, a number of idioms was added to the list from various studies, articles and texts.

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<sup>1</sup>The topic about literal and figurative meaning can be found in Theoretical part on page 11.

All the idioms were then looked up in several dictionaries to prove their validity. The most important one was of course *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, 2009) and even though it is not an idiomatic dictionary it serves as the essence of English language, including figurative language. Then *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* (Siefiring, 2004), *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* (Sinclair, 1997) and *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (Walter, 1998) were used where idioms of both American and British English can be found. For strictly American phrases, there were three main dictionaries, namely *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary of American Idioms* (Spears, 2005), *NTC’s American Idioms Dictionary* (Spears, 2000) and *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (Heacock, 2003). If a sports idiom was found in any of these dictionaries mentioned above, it was considered valid and seen as a coined term, and therefore it could have been included in this thesis.

As far as the British and American English is concerned, the distinction is not a crucial factor in this thesis, because most idioms are used in both variants of this language<sup>2</sup>, nevertheless it is not ignored. If an idiom is restricted to British or American or Australian English, it is strongly pointed out.

To sum up, in this methodology chapter principal methods of acquiring the idioms were introduced, as well as processing of those aforesaid idioms and main approaches towards this topic in theory.

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<sup>2</sup>2007. “Idioms–Differences and Usage in American English and British English.” Accessed on 23 April, 2014. <http://merikari.wordpress.com/2007/01/23/idioms-differences-and-usage-in-american-english-and-british-english/>. The author here claims that “[i]n the old days English idioms rarely originated from any other form of English than British English.” However, he later adds that “[i]t is hard to find an American English idiom that has not established itself in “worldwide English” (usually British English).”

# Theoretical part

## Phraseology

Phraseology is not a completely new branch of linguistics but it is safe to say that it has come into more focus during last two decades (Gries, 2008, 3). Its approach varies within the academic field; that will be a matter for following chapters, though. Firstly, it is vital to define what phraseology is. There are of course sundry definitions and here there should be presented some of them, both from Czech and foreign sources.

OED explains phraseology as “the choice or arrangement of words and phrases in the expression of ideas; manner or style of expression; the particular form of speech or diction which characterizes a writer, literary production, language, etc.” (OED, 2009). This definition is quite far from what is expected because now this word is perceived by everyone (at least everyone versed in linguistics) as a discipline but it serves its purpose. It shows what phraseology is basically occupied with, namely specific expressions.

This is what is also quoted in *Slovník lingvistických termínů pro filology* (Lotko, 2003, 38) where the entry of phraseology reads “a collection of phrasemes, or idioms in a vocabulary of a certain language”, but also “a discipline studying phrasemes, or idioms” which gradually leads to a hoped-for definition.

In the Introduction of *Phraseology: An Interdisciplinary perspective* (Granger and Meunier, 2008, XIX) the term is presented as well, more specifically as “sub-field of lexicology dealing with the study of word combinations rather than single words” which is a sufficient definition and the one this thesis agrees completely with.

There could be quoted many more definitions that would essentially say the same so it seems more apposite to define the units phraseology is concerned with. However, that is a topic for the section about phraseological units which appears later in this part.

## Idiomatology, idiomaticity, phraseology

Lastly, it is becoming to mention some important terms used for and in phraseology, such as idiomatology and idiomaticity. František Čermák (2004, 189) states that phraseology and idiomatology practically overlap where one is concerned

with formal aspects whereas the latter engages in semantic ones. Nevertheless, in his newer work (Čermák, 2007, 24), he seems to use both terms interchangeably. Stanislav Kavka in his work (Kavka, 2013) dedicates whole one chapter to idiomatology and large part of it to idiomaticity. He states (ibid., 198) the difficulty of defining the latter term, also due to its absence in dictionaries. Nevertheless, later he introduces idiomaticity in broader and narrower sense. In a broader sense it “deals with multiword complexes that carry unitary meanings, which, of course, need not to be only idioms proper” (ibid., 200). This definition largely corresponds with what was called phraseology or idiomatology (by Čermák). In the narrower sense it is connected with primarily lexical sphere and is explained as an aspect of idioms, or let’s say semantic property. In the same spirit it is seen throughout the book *Phraseology: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. This book understands idiomaticity as follows: “that the global meaning of the whole combination cannot be deduced from the meaning of its components” (Granger and Meunier, 2008, 391).

This work specifically will consider phraseology and idiomatology synonymous while idiomaticity will be utilized in the meaning of semantic aspect of a word combination.

## Phraseology in linguistic theories

There are various points of view from which one can look at phraseology. Some people are interested in morphological aspects, others in pragmatic points and some pursue the role of sociolinguistics in phraseology. As it was said a few lines above, views of phraseology vary and Gries (2008, 10) says it is because “theoretical frameworks or approaches in linguistics differ widely in terms of importance attached to phraseologism”. He also adds it is due to different perspectives of phraseologisms.

In generative grammar, the role of phraseology has been rather minute since this discipline is concerned with grammar (which is not a big issue with phraseologisms) and lexicon which can have its say in phraseological units because it considers semantics and non-compositionality (ibid., 10). However, idioms allow several syntactic operations which cannot all be clarified by straightforward performance factors which is rather non-enticing for methods of generative grammar (ibid., 11). The little interest is proved by a Kavka’s statement (Kavka, 2013, 213) “[generative grammar] advocates are generally believed not to have

dealt with idiomatic expressions.” What was written above should not be read as disregarding or even spurning the generative grammar and its importance for phraseology because it has done its share of work and discoveries. It simply tries to say that it is not the ideal linguistic practice for idiomatology.

Corpus linguistics is very different from the previous discipline. For one, this is not a discipline per se, it is more convenient to call it a method. Plus, unlike the previous discipline, corpus linguistics is quite useful for phraseology. “Corpus-based approaches to lexical problems play a very important role in documenting the actual use of lexis in context, and its many interactions with phraseology” as Colson says (Colson, 2008, 198). It is also considered as “the single most frequently used method employed in the study of phraseology” (Gries, 2008, 16). That is not surprising given the fact that phraseologism is defined by frequency (as one of the criteria) and what else could give better information about lingual frequency than corpora.

With a transition to writing about contrastive linguistics, this chapter is getting to a more relevant area for this thesis. If there is any indication of a high incorporation of phraseology into this linguistics, it is an existence of a separate discipline called contrastive phraseology. There is however another related discipline, namely cross-linguistic phraseology. To point out some terminological issues, it is requisite to say that some consider these two branches synonymous and they both deal with comparison of set phrases in two languages (Colson, 2008, 194). Others support the narrower sense in which contrastive phraseology employs “a truly systematic comparison between two or more languages, on the basis of all their differences and similarities” (ibid., 194). Cross-linguistic is then left with only “simple comparison of idioms or metaphors in two languages” (ibid., 191). Following the latter theory, this work could be considered a part of cross-linguistic research.

The topic of cognitive linguistics and its relation to phraseology will be developed separately in the following chapter since it requires a larger insight.

## Cognitive approaches to phraseology

Cognitive theory is given its separate chapter because as Gries (2008, 15) wrote “phraseologisms do not just have a marginal status in [this] theor[y], but are rather at core.” Even though corpus and contrastive linguistics both deal with

idiomatology and its units markedly, this linguistic system is on an even higher level.

The elements that this discipline operates with are called symbolic units and the interesting thing is that when one looks at the definition of this unit and then compare it with the parameters of phraseologism, the explanations of both will be almost identical (*ibid.*, 13). Such as those, they do not have a special status and they are treated as any other units within cognitive grammar.

## Cognitive conceptual system

Cognitive linguistics in general pursues the influence of culture in phraseology because “it allows us to put aside any strong distinction between a synchronic and a diachronic level of analysis and instead place the relevant knowledge structures which underlie phrasemes at the centre of phraseological research” (Piiirainen, 2008, 207). These structures are called conceptual structures and consist of a wide range of cultural knowledge (*ibid.*, 207).

However, before engaging in the phenomenon of conceptual structures, it is necessary to explain the conceptual system existing in cognitive phraseology. When defining an idiom, this discipline does not agree with the “classical view” that idioms have arbitrary meaning; they see idioms as motivated units, meaning that “they tend to fit one or more patterns already present in the speakers’ conceptual system” (Dobrovolskij and Piiirainen, 2005, 8). And this system consists of two concepts. One is the target concept which is the phraseological or the actual meaning and the other is called source concept which is the literal one, it is the inner form of phrasemes.

Even though it may seem odd for phraseological study to deal with literal meanings, cognitive phraseology is interested in where a phraseme got its meaning. To quote Cacciari and Glucksberg (1995, 43): “the two levels of meaning—concrete vehicle and stipulated abstract meaning—are related via an inference based on culturally shared concepts and symbols.” In other words, it is the knowledge of the source concept that allows the reader or hearer to puzzle out the phraseological meaning, but that would not be possible without some primitive extra-linguistic knowledge (Baranov and Dobrovolskij, 1996, 413), very often cultural knowledge.

And such as source concept cannot be neglected of culture, the same is with conceptual structures<sup>3</sup>. They comprise of incoming stimuli which is structured into meaningful categories and stored in human mind where they later allow people to retrieve, process and project the concepts onto experienced reality to understand it (Langlotz, 2006, 61). They simply have to be culturally bound because they depend on prior experiences which cannot be outside culture.

It is not advisable to deal with separate source concepts when studying phraseology. To truly capture the cultural phenomena one should be concerned with entire conceptual structures (Piirainen, 2008, 215). And this is exactly what this thesis does, it occupies itself with the conceptual domain of sports. More specifically, with frames and scripts of concrete sports (e.g. American football, baseball or boxing).

To show some examples how the study of conceptual structures can work, let's take a look at Langlotz (Langlotz, 2006) who studies the source domain of sports as well. At one point, he is concerned with idioms denoting success, progress and failure (he calls them SPF-idioms) and states that one of the source domains for these idioms is the COMPETITION-model (ibid., 145). The competition scenarios such as races, card games and combat sports are "projected onto more abstract activities or states such as taking political decisions, dealing efficiently with a mental task, being in a successful position, acting cleverly, etc." (ibid., 149). Then, he examines specific frames and scripts, such as CARD GAME-script with the instances of card idioms such as *play/keep your cards close to your chest* and *play your ace/trump card* or BALL GAME-script with *set the ball rolling*, *keep your eye on the ball* or *drop the ball*. He explains the meaning of these idioms via the conceptual structures already stored in human mind and refers to the knowledge of the sport.

There are two cognitive theories using this conceptual system in different ways. They are greatly interrelated but nevertheless, for the purpose of better orientation they are introduced and explained separately here. One uses conceptual metaphors and the other pursues image components and in both, culture also has its say.

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<sup>3</sup>There is another term, conceptual (source) domain which is synonymous in work of Langlotz (2006) and Piirainen (2008); Baranov and Dobrovoľskij (1996) use designations of conceptual structures, cognitive structures, conceptual representations or conceptual images for this phenomenon.



## Cognitive Theory of Metaphor (CTM)

This specific theory was developed mainly by Lakoff and Johnson and it constitutes of using metaphorical models as a base for the meaning of phrasemes (Dobrovolskij and Piirainen, 2006, 28). In simpler words, it employs conceptual metaphor for explaining the meaning of various metaphorical expressions since they are motivated by different structures of knowledge.

This theory is best and most easily explained with an example. One of the favorite ones and often used is a metaphor ANGER IS A HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER. This concrete metaphor is based on physiological experience where the body can be heated and then it creates internal pressure. This, afterwards, leads to some kind of explosion. Picturing that, it is now simpler to understand idioms such as *blow your stack* or *flip your lid* or to use a Czech example, *vyletět vzteky* or *upustit páru*.

But since this thesis is about sports idioms, here there will be presented some sports-related conceptual metaphors given in the book *Idiomatic Creativity* (Langlotz, 2006, 149ff). One of those is A PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS FAST FORWARD MOVEMENT IN A RACE. Within this metaphor, the author offers phrases such as *have the inside track* or *get of the (starting) blocks*, but anything from the category of Track & Field in this thesis could be used for this metaphor. Other is, for instance, a metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS BOXING which “exemplifies the close association between aggressive competition in the daily struggle for life and its cultural transformation into an institutionalized sport” (ibid., 152). There are many boxing idioms in this thesis, ibid., 152 gives these examples: *come out swinging*, *keep your chin up* or *throw in the towel/sponge* among others.

It is important to say that culture is not excluded from this approach because some conceptual metaphors can be culturally bound (Piirainen, 2008, 217f). In this work, cricket-related metaphors fall within this category since cricket is restricted primarily to the UK and its former colonies.

## Conventional Figurative Language Theory (CFLT)

Even though CTM was and still is usable for analysis of idioms, it is definitely not the most appropriate because it “was not developed with the intent to analyze irregular features of idioms semantics and pragmatics” (Dobrovolskij and

Piirainen, 2006, 36). Such a gap is filled with a new theory called Conventional Figurative Language Theory.

This theory was introduced by Dobrovolskij and Piirainen and unlike the previous one, this could be considered as a significant breakthrough in phraseology within cognitive linguistics. This theory is by all means quite complex, therefore there will be chosen just some points germane for this work.

There are three basic criteria in CFLT which determine figurative phrases: *conventionalization*, *additional naming* and *image requirement*. *Conventionalization* is basically the process of establishing the phrase as generally accepted. *Additional naming* means that there are always more ways of expressing something; the idiomatic phrase is just the secondary, alternative denomination of reality. And last but not least, there is the *image requirement* which is “a conceptual structure mediating between the lexical structure and the actual meaning” (Colson, 2008, 195).

The requirement of an image component which underlies figurative units is crucial here because it “is influenced by the culture of a specific language and can therefore yield a lot of information about differences in culture” (ibid., 196). More concrete instances are given by Piirainen where she points out tatami–straw mats as image components for many Japanese idioms (Piirainen, 2008, 212) or Bible as a textual source of them (ibid., 210) or bulls which appear in taurine phraseology that is exclusive to Spanish (ibid., 216). Some examples of the sport image requirement can be seen on page 10 where there are stated some examples from Langlotz (2006).

## Cognitive theory and culture

Dobrovolskij and Piirainen (2005) and Piirainen (2008) elaborate in more detail the influence of culture on phraseologism and they divide the cultural knowledge involved in phrasemes into various types. However, before this will be examined in detail, it is necessary to define what culture is and why this work considers sport, and therefore sports idioms, as a part of culture.

## Definition of culture

“Even though we all know to which culture we belong, definition of the word has been notoriously difficult” (Katan, 1999, 16). But it is vital to try to find some satisfactory final definition that this thesis could work with.

As it was expected, OED offers many definitions, but it is fit to quote only one which states that culture is “[a] particular form or type of intellectual development. Also, the civilization, customs, artistic achievements, etc., of a people, esp. at a certain stage of its development or history.” This could be supported by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Sukhanov, 1992, 1869) which gives quite a similar explanation: “The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought.” This definition, however, is more pertinent to this work since it covers also the activity and basically all products of human work besides arts and customs. It is, thus, more suitable for the purpose of proving that sport is a part of culture.

To sum up, this thesis adopts an anthropological view which sees culture as a system of social interaction and human behavior of a particular group of people or society (Piiirainen, 2008, 209).

### Is sport a part of culture?

A question may not be the best type of title, but it was the most convenient since it shows the main issue addressed here. A quote will help to understand. In *Sport, Culture and Society* the author says the following about culture: “The term has been associated with sport in a number of different ways, ranging from ideas about culture that tended to exclude sport and other forms of popular culture to more inclusive definitions of culture that have recognised sport as an important purveyor of cultural meanings, values and identities” (Jarvie, 2013, 85). Now, the aim of this chapter is to prove that sport is a part of culture.

In linguistics this division of opinions shows as well. Various authors (e.g. Boers and Stengers, 2008, 63; Boers and Lindstromberg, 2008, 364) have sports idioms set aside in their own categories and they do not include them among the cultural phrasemes. But more important for this work are the others (e.g. Sabban, 2008, 236; Langlotz, 2006, 172) who talk about sports idioms as part of culture without questioning it and even without exploring the issue. Ergo, sport for them is naturally a part of culture.

As it was mentioned above, this thesis approaches culture from the anthropological point of view which “has tended to refer to culture as a whole way of life” (Jarvie, 2013, 70). Jarvie also introduces specific points in which sport manifests itself in culture such as that sport is a part of popular conflict between distinct social groups, it forms cultural identity and it helps to characterize a sub-culture. The topic of sub-culture is later on discussed in more detail where the author does not even question the position of sport in culture (*ibid.*, 268). One cannot omit that sport also contributes greatly to cultural identity and “in a positive way helps with recognition and representation” (*ibid.*, 71). These all are pleasing the goal this chapter was trying to achieve and on the ground of these arguments, it can be said that culture does include sport.

## Typology of cultural components

As Elisabeth Piirainen (2008, 207) says in the introduction of her article, “phrasemes are not only units of a sign system, language, but also carriers of cultures.” The role of culture is pretty obvious throughout cognitive phraseology and one can come across various terms, such as *culture-specific*, *culture-based*, *culturally marked*, *culturally significant*, *culturally tainted*, *culturally bound*, *culture bound* in various studies (*ibid.*, 209). And even though Sabban (2008, 231) argues that there are differences between these denominations and endorses culturally bound as preferable<sup>4</sup>, in this thesis all of these designations were and will be used interchangeably.

The actual typology given by Piirainen (2008) and Dobrovoľskij and Piirainen (2005) is comprised of five types of cultural aspects underlying phrasemes. There are:

- 1) *textual dependence*,
- 2) *pre-scientific conceptions of the world*,
- 3) *cultural symbols*,
- 4) *aspects of material culture* and
- 5) *aspects of culture-based social interaction* (Piirainen, 2008, 210).

Both sources distinguish between three types of culture which function as hypernyms to these categories. There is social and material culture which have

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<sup>4</sup>The author claims the phrase *culturally bound* is less frequent and yet should be used more because it forces to define the term culture since it “raises the question in which way a particular word or concept is culturally bound.” And secondly, it postulates that language and culture are separate phenomenon, yet closely interrelated (Sabban, 2008, 231).

their own categories (4 and 5) and then mental culture which is covered by the first three categories.

There is a slight discrepancy in terminology in Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005) which shows in the second type (*pre-scientific conceptions of the world*). They name this type *fictive conceptual domains*. Nevertheless, the concepts are the same in essence. Now, it is time to get to the explanations of the proper aspects.

1) Elements from these groups “can be traced back to an identifiable textual source” (Piirainen, 2008, 210). They are mostly quotations which developed into proper phraseological units themselves and/or allusions which refer to an entire text. One of the biggest source is Bible for all nations or for instance Shakespeare in English phraseology. This is not restricted only to books, there can be also just the titles of books or films and TV shows.

2) Image components in this group can be ascribed to pre-scientific conceptions of the world, or in words of Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, they are part of fictive conceptual domains. To be more specific, these components pertain to folk or ancient belief, superstitions, religion and folk medicine. The last conceptual domain also includes humoral pathology (the doctrine of the four fluids in the body where each fluid (and its color) represent a temperament). As an example can serve the connection between anger, envy and the color green and yellow and an idiom *to be green with envy*. The humoral pathology is a widespread source domain in phraseology.

3) In expressions that deal with cultural symbols, “the relevant cultural knowledge extends to mainly one single constituent and not to the figurative unit as a whole” (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2005, 22). It is vital to know the cultural meaning of a certain word used in the phraseme to know its symbolism. The meaning can lie in different cultural areas, such as mythology, religion, fine arts, popular customs, etc. This concept may seem very similar to the second type but this category is concerned with only one single key constituent that carries the relevant cultural knowledge (Piirainen, 2008, 211). An example can be a concept of wolf which can represent an economic despair (in *keep the wolf from the door*) or danger (in *cry wolf*).

It may be a bit far-fetched to try to find cultural symbols in sports but the explanation of this category does not have restrictions in what part of culture the cultural symbols have to be from. Therefore words, such as *stumps*, *wicket*, *innings* or Czech *betl*, could probably be the cultural key element in various

idioms. With the true understanding of those, it is possible to model the actual meaning.

4) The fourth type of material culture deals with aspects from everyday life, be it present or past. The image components here are ascribed “primarily to artefacts of a given culture, including all aspects of material environment” (Dobrovoľskij and Piirainen, 2005, 22). This is where sports fit likely more appropriately; they can be seen as material culture. Just as Piirainen (2008, 212) gives example of sauna as frequent concept in Finnish phraseology or winegrowing and winemaking in Luxemburgish phraseology, it is safe to say that American football or baseball is a frequent source domain for English phraseology (more specifically for American English).

5) The social interaction within one community, one culture is vital in this cultural type. It is the knowledge from these social experiences and behaviors that gives people the key to understand the figurative units of this type. There are various sub-categories, such as *semiotised gestures*, *gender specifics* or *bans and taboos* (ibid., 212).

It is of course impossible to allocate every phraseme into only one group, the lines between the types can be quite blurred; there can be even some units that would not fit into any. Nevertheless, this can function as a basic structure of cultural knowledge which appears in phraseological units.

The influence of culture in phraseology, however, did not elude the Czech linguists. Čechová in her book (Čechová, 2012, 127) mentions something called ‘cultural phraseology’ and in its narrower sense she defines it as “phraseology which is a part of cultural history, cultural heritage of a nation and its cultural life.” Then, she adds that this type includes Ancient and Christian phraseology, but also later cultural phraseologies. There is given no reason why the author chooses to point out these.

Furthermore, she divides the ‘cultural phrasemes’ (as she calls them) into three categories:

- 1) *figurative collocations of Ancient and mythological origin*,
- 2) *Biblical phrasemes*,
- 3) *culture-historical phrases* in the broader sense (ibid., 128).

In the first category, she states only some basic examples. In the second, it is dealt with phrasemes of Christian origin and the third category is not elaborated any further as well, there is given only an example of *The die is cast*.

On following pages, she dedicates herself to the topic in more detail and the reader can find out about other types called *cultural phrasemes of foreign language origin* or *phrasemes of quotation*. Why it was not included in the original division, is a mystery and considered as a deficiency.

There is one big flaw in Čechová's categorization and that is that she had not defined basic terms, such as culture. Therefore, it is hard to know what can be a part of cultural phraseology and which figurative units can be considered cultural. In her categories, in addition, there is no place for sports. Therefore, the classification of Piirainen (2008) and Dobrovolskij and Piirainen (2005) is considered more useful, organized and elaborated.

## Phraseological units

One does not have to be a genius to figure out that phraseological unit is the basic unit of phraseology. The aim of this section is to deal with how phraseological units are defined and what their classification is with the emphasis put on idioms.

## Terminological issues

But before it will be dealt with what actually is a phraseological unit, it is apt to dedicate to the issue of terminology concerning this phenomenon since there appears a lot of different terms throughout this section and the whole thesis.

In various sources appear various denominations for the same thing. Most common are noun phrases consisting of *phraseological* + noun, which can be *unit*, *phrase*, *expression* or the adjective *idiomatic* or *figurative* with basically the same nouns. In addition, there are two designations, *phraseologism* and *phraseme* which are not used so commonly in lay circles. And the last that is worth mentioning is *set phrase* which can be modified to fixed phrase or frozen phrase. Čermák, for instance, in his works (Čermák 2004, 189; Čermák 2007, 31) considers *idiom* and *phraseme* the same phenomenon which this thesis is strongly against. The same case applies to Cacciari (1993, 27) who uses *idiomatic expression* and *idiom* synonymously.

The frequency of the usage of course varies; there is no conclusion of which is used more or less or which is more appropriate to employ. There was only the goal of stating what is used synonymously in this work, and all the aforesaid are.

## Definition

There are various definitions from various authors and it is impossible to find one universal definition that all linguists would agree with. However, it is exigent to provide this thesis with a definition. Gries (2008, 6) specifies phraseologism as “the co-occurrence of a form or a lemma of a lexical item and one or more additional linguistic elements of various kinds which functions as one semantic unit in a clause or sentence and whose frequency of co-occurrence is larger than expected on the basis of chance.” It is quite a long definition; nevertheless it is fairly exhaustive and complete. To give a shorter simpler version, one could say that it is a group of words which has a meaning just like a single word.

His definition is not casual though. It is preceded by laying out a clear set of parameters which defines a phraseme. He states (*ibid.*, 6) that these six criteria should be core for phraseologists.

- 1) the *nature* of elements
- 2) the *number* of elements
- 3) the *number of times* an expression must be observed before it counts as a phraseologism
- 4) the *permissible distance* between the elements
- 5) the *degree of lexical and syntactic flexibility* of the elements
- 6) *semantic unity* and *semantic non-compositionality/non-predictability*

When one looks at the above-mentioned definition, one can see that it covers most of these points. To give an example of these parameters in practice, let’s take a look at a set phrase *drop the ball*. 1) nature of elements: words; 2) number of elements: two, 3) frequency of occurrence must be omitted in this example since there are no corpus data available; 4) distance of elements: the components usually co-occur adjoining, but it is possible to intervene a word; 5) flexibility of elements: the verb can change morphologically as the context requires, whereas *the ball* stays untouched; 6) semantics: this phrase functions as one semantic unit expressing ‘to make a mistake’.

## Classification

The group of phraseological units consists of a vast amount of expressions which necessitates a certain categorization. One of possible classifications is the one of Piirainen (2008, 213ff) who divides phraseologism into five homogeneous subtypes.



1) The first group she calls *idioms*. This is a topic to discuss separately in more detail in the following chapter.

2) The second are *similes*. This type has a specific structure of comparison which is connected via a particle (as or like).

3) *Collocations* can be understood in two ways, as Piirainen claims ([ibid.](#), 214), either “the co-occurrence of words in general, irrespective of their fixedness or convention of use, or as a word combination that co-occurs habitually.”

4) *Proverbs* are typical set of expressions which has its own discipline called paremiology. What sets them apart is that they are “general statements that are believed to express a universal truth” ([ibid.](#), 215) and they are always sentential.

5) The last group can have various names such as *routine formulae*, *communicative phrasemes* or *pragmatic idioms*. It is not always clear where the boundaries are between this type and others, but it is safe to say that communicative phrasemes are “tools of communication” and their main function is “the constitution of speech acts” ([ibid.](#), 215).

František Čermák, for example, has its own classification as well. Basing the classification on his volumes *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* (2009), he distinguishes between *similes*, *verbal expressions*, *verbless expressions* and *sentential expressions*. This division principally follows the theory that phrasemes and idioms are different in form but primarily in function ([Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009c, 14](#)).

With assistance of Čermák’s other book ([Čermák, 2007, 263ff](#)) another categorization can be introduced. He differentiates *lexical idioms* which are “made up of an anomalous combination of morphemes, whose principles are identical with any other type of idiom” ([ibid.](#), 274) from *grammatical idioms* which are called that way for their function. They “are functionally equivalent to all major word classes, such as verbs, nouns or adverbs ([ibid.](#), 290).

With a quick insight into only two of Čermák’s theories and also with a look inside of his books, it is safe to say that his approach is chiefly morphological which is not a very relevant approach for this thesis. He also distinguishes in quite a distinct way the two terms *phrasemes* and *idioms* where the second group encompasses expressions not suitable for this work.

Those are some reasons why this work refuses Čermák’s stance and accepts Piirainen’s classification. The author herself claims ([Piirainen, 2008, 213](#)) that the categorization of five types she presents is commonly accepted.

## Idioms

Since this thesis has worked with various dictionaries of idioms, it is fair to mention at least one because these types of sources usually offer quite plain, straightforward and user oriented explanation of the term. *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* proclaims idiom to be “a set phrase of two or more words that means something different from the literal meaning of the individual words” (Sukhanov, 1992, 3). A definition of this kind is perfect for a start. It familiarizes with the nature and number of elements and also informs of the high degree of idiomaticity (even though it is in lay words). There is no surprise Piirainen Piirainen (2008, 213) calls them “the central and most irregular category of phrasemes.”

One last specific definition that will be given is by Meščuk (1995, 167) which says: “an idiom is a multilexemic expression whose meaning cannot be deduced by the general rules of the language in question from the meanings of the constituent lexemes of expression, their semantically loaded morphological characteristics (if any) and their syntactic configuration.” Adding this on the top of the previous explanations and when looking at various other sources, it is possible to see that the definitions does not vary greatly, it usually concerns the opacity and that it is a multi-lexemic expression.

Such as phraseologisms in general had their defining criteria, the same is the case with idioms. Here there will be presented those by Langlotz (2006, 2ff). Each specifying parameter is equipped with a particular term which encapsulates the phenomenon.

1) The first criterion is called *institutionalization* which expresses the degree of familiarity throughout the nation/society.

2) *Compositeness* as a second parameter speaks of the number and nature of elements with a verdict that idioms are multiword units.

3) The third one called *frozenness* represents the expression’s lexicogrammatical behavior. It means that an idiom is syntactically, morphosyntactically and lexically restricted.

4) And last but not least is *non-compositionality*. This word represents a quality of idiom’s meaning which cannot be formed by the composition of the meanings of the elements involved.

These criteria are just a proof of the fact stated above: idioms are understood rather in the same way by many because the definitions contain all or most of these criteria.

The last topic this chapter will be concerned with is the non-compositionality and opacity of idioms. Because as it was said in the section of cognitive approaches and cognitive theory, the figurative meaning does not have to be completely opaque. It is possible to infer meaning using extra-linguistic knowledge where the concrete action can serve as a vehicle.

Cacciari even gives a hypothesis of the existence of four types of idioms based on the continuum from opacity to transparency (Cacciari, 1993, 39). There are *totally opaque idioms*, which does not need much explaining. The meaning here is not deducible. Another type is called *retrospectively transparent idioms*. It means that idioms are “transparent once you either know the meaning (and this allows one to trace the correspondence between literal constituents and figurative referents) or are reminded of the episode or setting that originated the idiom” (ibid., 39). Since the practical part basically consists of idioms and explanations of their literal meaning in connection with the figurative one, this category is where sports idioms of this thesis fall within. The third group of idioms is denominated *directly transparent idioms* where the meaning can be inferred “by means of the recreation of an analogical or metaphorical mapping” (ibid., 39). And the last category is of *figuratively transparent idioms*, which includes idioms composed of other idioms.

To summarize what have been written, idioms are multi-word units with a structure that is fixed or frozen and the elements are not variable. As far as the non-compositionality is concerned, the truth remains that it is not possible to deduce the meaning directly from the meaning of the constituents as many theorists claim. Nevertheless, the literal sense of the whole unit cannot be ignored as it can be used as a device to acquire the idiomatic meaning (Cacciari and Gluckberg, 1995, 44ff; Baranov and Dobrovolskij, 1996, 411ff).

# Practical part

This part is divided into categories according to sports where each sport is equipped with a short description. Then each sport category is further subdivided on the basis of the two languages, thus English and later Czech idioms follow. Each idiom has the description of its literal meaning and its usage in the sport situation which serves as an instrument for better explanation of the figurative meaning. For even better understanding there is always given an example. Furthermore, a translation is offered.

## American football

It is a ball sport played by two teams of eleven players on each side. It is based on a rugby game which originates in England. The ball used here is of more oblong shape with rather pointed ends. The goal of this game is to get the ball passed to goalposts. While the players are passing the ball by kicking or throwing or carrying it, it can get aggressive. It involves tackling so the players wear protective wadded clothes and helmets. The points are assigned depending on the way how the ball was passed behind the goalposts.

Since the rules of American football are similar to the ones of rugby — after all the former is developed from the latter — some phrases are used in both sports but no sources state in which sport precisely the expression originated.

## English Idioms

### Carry the ball

As it is written in the paragraph above, one way of getting the ball passed the goalposts is to carry it. It is not an easy job to run with the ball when everybody else tries to tackle him so if someone is the player who carries the ball, everyone relies on him to gain yardage and by that to score points.

The figurative meaning of the phrase has to do with the reliability of the player in the game. *McGraw-Hill's Dictionary's* entry explains the expression like this: “to be considered reliable enough to make sure a job gets done” but there is also this interpretation: “to be in charge” (Spears, 2005, 88). In *Oxford English Dictionary* can be found one more explanation “to do all or most of what

is required” (OED, 2009). As far as linguistic area of use is concerned, it will probably come as no surprise that it is a chiefly North American phrase, as OED mentions.

*Example:* There’s no need of carrying the ball for Sleepy Jimmy oratorically. He can speak for himself. (ibid.)

It is getting complicated to find Czech alternative here since there does not exist anything similar and the phrase has more figurative meanings. Based on the context, the idiom could be translated as *nést zodpovědnost* or *mít na starost*. It definitely does not comply with what we would like to find, however it is the only possibility.

### **Kick off**

The game of American football, or of rugby in that matter, starts by kicking the ball off. Therefore, the phrase signifies to start the game. Such is the case for the figurative meaning, it means to begin (ibid.).

*Example:* Two tournaments kicked off in Casablanca. [1]

The Czech language understands the phrase and has the same one for starting a game, *vykopnout* or *rozehrát výkopem*, yet for the figurative meaning the language fails to give an idiom. It would be translated plainly as *začít*.

### **Move the goal posts**

Goal posts are two poles at both ends of the field located at a firm position and teams score points by getting the ball behind the goal posts. If anybody moved them further, it would be, of course against the rules, but favoring one of the teams. That is why, in everyday life, when somebody moves the goal posts, he “unfairly alter[s] the conditions or rules of a procedure during its course” (Siefiring, 2004, 125). This phrase can be used in another sport that has goal posts, such as rugby.

*Example:* Facebook moves the goal posts again, businesses and marketers get upset. [2]

There is no expression with goal posts in Czech but there can be used a sport-related phrase even though it is any sport in general, not only American football. It would be *měnit pravidla hry* which largely corresponds with the figurative meaning of the English phrase (Lingea, 2008).

## Run interference

To explain the use of this expression in a game of American football, it is more appropriate to use a quotation: “it refers to the legal blocking of an opponent to clear a way for the ball carrier.”(OED, 2009) In the figurative sense it tends to collocate with a preposition *for* and it means “to help someone achieve something by dealing with the people or problems that might prevent them from doing so” (Walter, 1998, 205). Both dictionaries mention more common use in American English.

*Example:* Donohue runs interference for conservative attacks on the Pope. [3]

For the sports commentary the expression would be translated to Czech as *wolnit cestu blokováním soupeře* (Lingea, 2008). With the figurative use of the expression, Czech people are not so lucky, because they are left with a simple non-idiomatic phrase *zasáhnout*.

## Ball idioms

This category will include phrases with the word ball in it. Since this object is used in many sports and the expressions could be used in more than one of them, it seemed as a more limpid way to introduce the expression itself and then specify in which sports it can appear.

### English Idioms

#### Drop the ball

This phrase can be used only in sports where a person is supposed to carry the ball in his hands, such as rugby or American football. When a player drops it, it is a mistake because it gets away and the other team can get hold of it. Figuratively the expression means to make a mistake or fail in some way. (Spears, 2000, 100)

*Example:* President Barack Obama has for the first time acknowledged that the US “dropped the ball” in assessing the threat posed by Isis in Iraq and Syria[...] [4]

The phrase is quite informal, that is why for the Czech translation should be used something informal as well, for example *zkonit to* or *zpackat to*—the meaning of making a blunder is in both completely the same (Lingea, 2008).

### **Have the ball at/before *one's* feet/foot**

When somebody has the ball at his feet, he has his best chance of succeeding (Siefiring, 2004, 14), at least as far as the figurative meaning is concerned. There could be painted a picture where a player of football gets the ball before his feet and he can now score a goal which shows player's chance of succeeding in a game. The situation even corresponds with another explanation of the idiomatic sense given in *Oxford English Dictionary*, “to have a thing in one's power” (OED, 2009), because the player has at that moment the power of turning the game in his hands.

*Example:* One of the Judges of the Allahabad High Court, on hearing this news, is quoted as saying, “Malaviyaji had the ball at his feet but he refused to kick it.” [5]

The Czech language is not very lucky with phrases with the word ball in it so the counterpart here would be *mít příležitost něco udělat* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Keep/have *one's* eye on the ball**

In certain games, it is essential to keep one's eye on the ball; it gives the player a better chance to hit the ball the way he wants, for example in baseball, cricket or tennis. It is all about focusing. The idiomatic sense signifies the same. A person who keeps his eye on the ball is able to keep attention focused on a certain matter. There also exists a negative form of this phrase, *take one's eye off the ball* that means to stop focusing.

*Example:* One of the most important roles of the leader is to ensure that they, and their team, are keeping their eye on the ball at all times. [6]

In description of the sports act, the Czech would use *mít míček na očích*. However, it has no figurative meaning. For that, a simple *soustředit se na něco* would have to be chosen. For the phrase with opposite meaning, that is to *take one's eye off the ball*, the translation would go *spustit míček z očí*, nevertheless only for the literal meaning.

### **Keep the ball rolling**

An expression like this could be used for example in bowling where a person needs to throw the ball hard enough to keep the rolling ball moving. In the figurative sense, it means “to keep the conversation or an undertaking from flagging.” (OED, 2009) There should be mentioned here an alternative to this phrase, *keep the ball up* which has completely the same idiomatic meaning, to cause something to continue, but is probably more used in Britain in contradistinction to *keep the ball rolling* which is more common in North America.

Another idiom is in close affinity to this one and that is *set* or *start the ball rolling* which means to begin a conversation or a project of some kind.

*Example:* Mercedes–AMG has kept the ball rolling with its recent all–new 2015 C 63 unveiling, adding a special edition pack to the options list during the first 12 months of the car’s production. [7]

Looking for a Czech counterpart, a translator would have to settle for *udržet věci v chodu* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Play ball with *someone***

This phrase is quite self–explanatory as far as the literal meaning is concerned. It simply means to play a team ball game, such as baseball or cricket. *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary* also adds another meaning of tossing a ball back and forth with someone (Spears, 2005, 504), as it is usual between father and son. Both explanations of this phrase talk about an activity that requires collaboration, in a team maybe even a higher degree of one. That is why in non–sport situations, this phrase signifies to co–operate with somebody.

*Example:* Although John Morgan and Bowman played ball with the government, Marian Morgan did not. [8]

There is no such thing as playing ball in the Czech language in the sports domain, so clearly there could not be expected a similar phrase with the same figurative meaning. As a translation, a simple *spolupracovat* would do the job (Lingea, 2008).

### **Take/pick up the ball and run with it**

Of course, this expression can only be uttered in games where it is allowed to pick up the ball, such as American football, rugby or baseball. The collocation



can be best explained at the example of American football. When a player sees a ball on the ground, he just picks it up and runs for the goalposts and maybe scores a point. Or maybe not, but it is definitely worth trying.

When a person picks up an imaginary ball and runs with it, he “take[s] an idea or a plan that someone else has started and develop[s] it in order to see if it will be successful or useful” (Sinclair, 1997, 16). *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* also includes this phrase amongst its entries but the information of the usage in mainly American English is added. (Walter, 1998, 20)

*Example:* As Steen passed the word, others picked up the ball and ran with it by making donations and encouraging others to help. [9]

It is not arduous to find the Czech equivalent for the athletic expression as it is just a translation. It is the figurative sense wherein lies the rub. Here can be offered a Czech idiom, though not from sporting parlance and it is *chytit příležitost za pačesy* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Have *something* on the ball**

For a non-native speaker of English, this expression does not have to come as clear on the surface, yet it is not hard to expound. That *something* in the phrase refers to a skill that a player puts on the ball, such as speed or route. In the sport, you have to be skillful to have something on the ball, and that is exactly what it means in the figurative sense of the phrase, to be apt but also clever and smart (Spears, 2005, 293). There exists an alternative to this expression, *to have a lot on the ball* which has naturally the same meaning (or let’s say almost the same as the latter phrase only raises the ability) but *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* highlights its use in North America only.

*Example:* The founder generally has a lot on the ball—tough, a natural leader, and canny campaigner—but his son is unlikely to be so exceptional. [10]

There is nothing metaphorical that would work as a Czech equivalent of this sport expression. For the translation of the phrase with the idiomatic sense it is necessary to resort to a periphrasis, namely *být šikovný* or *být chytrý* (Lingea, 2008).

# Baseball

Baseball is a team sport popular primarily in the USA even though we can find its alternatives in Latin America or Finland. The basic rules are simple. It is played between two teams of eleven players on a baseball field. There are four bases there: the first, second, third and home plate. A batter stands on the home plate trying to hit the ball thrown by a pitcher. While the ball is in the playing field and before it gets back to home plate, he strives to run around the bases and by that score points.

## English Idioms

### Come out of the left field

To understand the figurative meaning, it is essential to understand what left field is in baseball. *Oxford English Dictionary* does a good job explaining: “the part of the outfield to the batter as he faces the pitcher” (OED, 2009). So basically, it is a place away from the center of activity.

As it is said in *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary* the phrase is used for a problem or a dilemma that comes out of the left field and it means that the problem is unexpected or comes from an unexpected place (Spears, 2005, 113). It is also a North American phrase (Sinclair, 1997, 140).

*Example:* With political parties in transition, something will come out of left field in 2015. [11]

There is nothing sports-related to find in Czech to serve as an equivalent to this phrase. In translation one would have to resort to informal phrases such as *z něčeho nic se objevit, objevit se odnikud* or *zaskočit* (Lingea, 2008).

### Cover all the bases

The rules of baseball are not of course that simple that it is enough to throw the ball far and then run. There is the condition that nobody of the opposite team can be on the base—otherwise he could put you out. That is why it is good for the team in the field to have somebody on each base, in other words to cover all the bases. In the figurative sense it means, according to *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms*, “to deal with every possibility” (Heacock, 2003, 20). Based on the source it is easy to presume that it is an American phrase but in the entry

in *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* it says we deal with American and Australian slang (Walter, 1998, 24).

*Example:* Insuring your veterinary practice: have you covered all the bases? [12]

Even though there exists a Czech phrase that could be utilized in the game and that is *pokryt všechny mety*, it does not work also idiomatically, unfortunately. In that case we have to go for a periphrasis, for example *zabývat se všemi aspekty*.

### **Get to first base (with *someone/something*)**

First, it is vital to mention all the variations of the phrase. The main verb can alter without a change of meaning to, for example, *reach* or *make it to the first base*.

Once a batter hits the ball, he runs to the first base. Once he is there, he can stay and be safe or risk it and make an attempt for the second, or as the case may be third base. The figurative meaning is perfectly explainable from the use in baseball. In *Oxford Dictionary* it is explained as follows: “achieve the first step towards something” (Siefiring, 2004, 16) and just like that for the batter, the first base is a metaphorical springboard for next bases and possibly scoring a point. In *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* it is also pointed out that the expression is chiefly North American.

*Example:* Nagasaki was the place where this hero of the late Edo period got to the first base of changing Japan. [13]

The Czech translation of this sport phrase is verbatim, *dostat se na první metu* yet the non-literal meaning cannot be found in Czech idiomatic dictionaries. Nevertheless, a bilingual dictionary Lingea states this as a figurative phrase for achieving the first step of succes (Lingea, 2008).

### **Go to bat for *somebody/something***

The literal sense probably does not need a great explanation; it is used when one position oneself to hit the ball. And such as it is an act of kindness and support in the baseball game, it is considered the same in a real everyday world. So in the figurative interpretation it means to give help or support. This information was found exclusively in *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* so this is yet another North American baseball phrase.

*Example:* Legislature went to bat for Potter Township. [14]

As far as the Czech language is concerned, one has to use periphrases when translating like *postavit se za někoho* or *podpořit* ([ibid.](#)).

### **Hit a home run**

The main goal of the batter is to hit the ball so that it flies as far as possible and he is able to run around all the bases and if he is lucky, he gets back to the home plate. That is what is called a home run and it is probably the best thing that can happen to a player in the game of baseball. Of course it will be a very positive thing as well in the metaphorical meaning. It means to be successful at something and it is (as most of the baseball phrases so far) used in American English for it was nowhere else to be found than in *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* ([Heacock, 2003, 190](#)).

*Example:* Good habits that improve digestive health benefits the whole body, so let's identify a few steps to hit a homerun for our digestive well-being. [15]

As baseball is not completely unpopular in the Czech Republic, there exists an expression of *homerun* even in the Czech language as a loan word from English. Unfortunately, it is only used literally and there is not a good equivalent for the figurative phrase.

### **Pinch-hit for someone**

There can come a time when the player is unable to step up to the plate and perform the job of the batter. In that case there has to be someone who will supplant him — or to use the phrase — who will pinch hit for him. *Oxford English Dictionary* add that it is especially “at a critical point in the game” ([OED, 2009](#)). Furthermore, there exists a noun phrase widely used for the replacing person and it is a pinch-hitter.

The figurative meaning here is quite obvious. If one pinch hits for someone, he acts as a substitute in basically any occasion. It is, once again, used mostly in American English.

*Example:* You can refocus your relationship with your parents when they need you to pinch-hit and help them stay in the game. [16]

In the Czech language there is no special term for this, only a paraphrase that can serve in all cases of substituting, it is *náhrada* or *náhradník* or informal *záskok* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Pitch (*someone*) a curve (ball)**

For a pitcher it is desirable to throw the ball in such a way that the batter misses the ball. One of these manners is called a curveball. It should be clear that it is the route of the ball that is curved, not the ball itself. It is of course an unanticipated direction of the ball so the person on the bat is caught by surprise. And that exactly is the figurative meaning of this phrase, as it is written in *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary*: “to surprise someone with an unexpected act or event” (Spears, 2005, 502). There also exists an alternative with the verb *throw* and it is utterly synonymous.

Just as with the phrase above, this one is probably used in American English exclusively because this expression was found solely in dictionaries with American English.

*Example:* Well peeps to be honest I have felt like the Lord truly has pitched me a curve ball these past couple of weeks and I was definitely not expecting it. [17]

The literal phrase has an equivalent in the Czech language, it is *hodit faleš* and it is used also in other sports where there it is good to make the ball rotate or curved, such as bowling, tennis, or cricket (Lingea, 2008). But unluckily, it has not adopted the figurative meaning.

### **Play hardball**

First of all, the term *hardball* is synonymous to baseball. This idiom arose in the aforementioned sport where they use a standard and harder ball as opposed to softball where the ball is softer. It does not affect the game very much, nevertheless the phrase transferred to describe acting strong and aggressive about an issue with somebody (Ammer, 1997, 818). It can also appear as a noun idiom, only *hardball*, as it is given in *Oxford English Dictionary*, with the same meaning, but the usage especially in political context is added. In addition to this, the dictionary suggests that another noun phrase was derived from the word *hardball* and that is a *hard–baller*, which means a person who “engages in aggressive or uncompromising activity.”

*Example:* “[...] the Clinton administration played hardball on a lot of things, and we’d gotten away from that,” Boxer said. [18]

Since for example politics but also other areas are considered to have rules and to be played by them, it is not extraordinary to use the verb *to play* in many occasions. The same is employed in the Czech language. Therefore in the given case, the equivalent would be *hrát tvrdě*. If one desired something more idiomatic, translation *jít přes mrtvoly* could be applied (Lingea, 2008).

### **Step up to the plate**

The explanation of the literal meaning is pretty straightforward. To step up means to enter the plate (or home plate) where a batter hits the ball with a bat as far as he can and tries to get some points.

There could be mentioned two figurative interpretations of the expression. One is by *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary* where it says: “to move into a position where one is ready to do a task” (Spears, 2005, 648) which is pretty obvious right from the phrase itself but in the second one there is added an aspect of responsibility in the action. In *Oxford English Dictionary* this explanation is explicated as such: “to take responsibility for something” (OED, 2009). It is vital to point out that the usage of this phrase is restricted to North America as *Oxford English Dictionary* informs.

*Example:* ECB must step up to plate and help resolve our mortgage issues. [19]

In certain linguistic circumstances, that is in the right context, one could consider *nastoupit na něco/k něčemu* as an appropriate Czech equivalent. It has the resemblance in that it could be used when the batter goes onto the home plate and the connotation of responsibility is also included in the meaning.

### **Strike out**

When a pitcher, the person who throws the ball, is able to pitch it according to all the rules and yet the batter misses it is called a strike. If the batter misses three times in a row, he is declared out, or in other words, he strikes out. In that moment, he basically failed to do his job. So is the figurative meaning of the phrase—to fail. It is probable this phrase is more commonly used in the area of the USA as in the *Oxford English Dictionary* we can find only an entry of

the literal sense of the phrase, not the figurative. In American dictionaries, for example *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary* (Spears, 2005, 655) or *American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (Ammer, 1997, 1013), there are given both meanings.

*Example:* Miss USA strikes out when asked what she would tell the terrorists if she had 30 seconds. [20]

One could consider a Czech phrase *vyautovat* but that is a suitable equivalent for the literal meaning and there is also a problem from the syntactic point of view. Strike out is an intransitive verb that means to fail whereas *vyautovat* needs an object of someone. For the figurative meaning, Lingea dictionary gives phrases such as *pohořet* or *neuspět* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Touch base with *someone***

When a baseball player hits the ball he has to run around the bases. For it to count he has to touch the plate and it is usually just a quick step on his fast way to the home plate. The briefness is pointed out for easier explanation of the figurative meaning. The entry in *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* reads: “briefly make or renew contact with someone or something” (Siefiring, 2004, 16).

*Example:* [...] Jets consultant Charley Casserly touched base with UCLA coach Jim Mora about the details of his buyout with the school. [21]

The Czech language fails to provide any phrase that would at least remotely be similar. We can only provide a non-idiomatic phrase that could work as a translation and it is *navázat kontakt* or *dotknout se tématu* which at least has the same verb (Lingea, 2008).

## **Billiard**

### **English Idioms**

#### **Put *someone* behind the eight ball**

Billiard is a game with balls on a rectangular table where a player scores points by putting his balls into pockets by means of a cue. There is one ball, the black eight ball, which cannot be touched without penalty. That is why, when someone

is behind the eight ball, he is at a disadvantage or a weak position (Sieftring, 2004, 93). The prepositional phrase *behind the eight ball* typically collocates with verbs like *be*, *get* or *have someone/something*.

*Example:* The French have been the best of all EMU members in not letting Germany's prices put them behind the eight ball. [22]

Although billiard can be included amongst favorite games in the Czech Republic, no similar phrase occurs in the Czech language. A periphrasis *znevýhodnit někoho* or *dostat někoho do úzkých* would be used for translating (Lingea, 2008).

## Boat sports

This chapter has a title of boat sports and it can include any sports which need boats and water, such as sailing, rowing, canoeing or kayaking. If any phrase is specific to any sport, it will be clearly pointed out.

## English Idioms

### Know the ropes

Since a sailboat is driven by wind, a crew needs to know how to work with the sail, to put in in the right angle so they catch the biggest wind. To control the sail, you have to be able to handle the ropes. The figurative meaning is extended to being able to control and do something, not only to steer a boat (Spears, 2005, 569). There can appear some variations of the phrase, such as *learn the ropes* which means that a person acquires how to do something or *show the ropes* where a person teaches the other an ability.

*Example:* It was assumed that they knew the ropes since they'd had kids themselves. [23]

The Czech language offers only periphrases for the figurative expressions, there are no idioms. Therefore a translator would probably go for phrases like *vědět co a jak* or *vědět, jak to chodí* (Lingea, 2008).

### Paddle *one's* own canoe

Everyone who has ever sat in a canoe probably knows how it works, nevertheless it is convenient to say a minimum of that canoe is a medium boat for one, two or



three people where they sit (or kneel) and propel it by paddling. The figurative sense is not hard to deduce, it means to do something by oneself, to make one's way alone, by one's own efforts (Spears, 2005, 487).

*Example:* Mr. Petty has paddled his own canoe ever since he was twelve years old. [24]

The Czech language does not have any idiomatic expressions for this one; the one good alternative might be *dělat věci podle svého* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Rest on *one's* oars**

An oar is an instrument used when rowing. When a person rests on his oars, he stops rowing by leaning on their handles and the elevated oars are out of the water. Basically, the rower in such a case relaxes and takes a break. That is what it also means figuratively, to relax one's efforts and take things easy. (Walter, 1998, 282)

*Example:* [A] 70 year-old [man] rests on his oars after marathon trip. [25]

When looking for Czech alternative, it suffices to take the main verb out of the idiom and go for a literal translation, *odpočívát* (Lingea, 2008). Unfortunately, that is the best option possible, since there are no corresponding idioms.

### **Take the wind out of *one's* sails**

Sailing is “a mode of transportation across water that uses wind to power sails” (Levinson and Christensen, 1999, 338). Without wind, the sailboat is unable to move so when someone takes the wind out of one's sail, he bereaves him of the only possible propulsion.

To interpret the figurative meaning of the phrase, here is what *Oxford English Dictionary's* entry reads: “to deprive of one's means of progress, put a check upon one's action, put at a disadvantage” (OED, 2009). The dictionary doesn't mention if it is an deliberate act, so both options — intentional or unintentional — are possible.

*Example:* Yet few members of the president's inner circle have taken the wind out of his sails quite like his long-serving attorney-general. [26]

For a change, it is not at all complicated with the Czech equivalent because there exists utterly the same idiom with the same meaning, *sebrat někomu vítr z plachet*. With this mentioned, it is befitting to interject there is a phrase using this concept, *nahánět někomu vítr do plachet* and it carries an opposite meaning (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 886).

## Czech Idioms

### Být u vesla

This expression alludes to being the one oaring, therefore being the one who is with the important function. Idiomatically it means, naturally, to be in control of something and be allowed to decide. Oar as a symbol of power appears also in phrases such as *chopit se/ujmout se vesla* or *dostat se k veslu* which represent the action of getting to the controlling position.

*Example:* Být u vesla pořád socani, tak už od Skadaru jedem po výmolech. To za demokratů vybudovali tuhle novou silnici. [27]

English offers a phrase *be at the helm* which is too a boating expression but unfortunately it is more a nautical term rather than a sports one (Lingea, 2008). Another counterpart that could be taken into consideration is *hold the reins* (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 867).

### Chytat vítr

The wind is the driving force of a sailboat hence the figurative meaning of intuiting a development of certain affairs and then accommodate to it to get ahead. This term arose by shortening a phrase *chytat vítr do plachet* which still can be and is used.

*Example:* Takže tímto "nevěrohodným" průzkumem bylo zjištěno, že Česká pirátská strana, zdá se, chytila vítr do plachet. [28]

Unfortunately, English does not have any idiomatical or even non-idiomatical phrase to serve as a counterpart. The only possibility for translation here is paraphrasing.

## Plout proti větru

It is a definitively unconventional method to sail against the wind hence the figurative meaning. It signifies to defy the general movement of things, to do something that is in opposition to prevailing tendencies.

*Example:* Plout proti větru může být zkrátka vyčerpávající a nerovný boj, o který se možná nemá ani cenu pokoušet. [29]

English offers a sports-bound idiom, *swim against the tide* as viable equivalent (*ibid.*, 880).

## Boxing

Boxing is a sport which consists in fist fighting with gloves and strict set of rules. There are two boxers in a ring, square shaped elevated area with ropes all around. It is played worldwide.

## English Idioms

### Be saved by the bell

In a boxing match, the common practice is to have it separated into a certain number of rounds, each announced and ended by the sound of a bell. It can be sometimes a fight on the verge of death so if the bell goes on and the round is over, boxers can no longer fight and one of them is saved. This expression can be used in any situation where someone is saved (it doesn't matter from what but it is supposed to be unpleasant) by timely intervention (*Walter, 1998, 28*).

*Example:* Arsenal were saved by the bell with a timely strike by Danny Welbeck to secure a 2–2 draw and avoid home defeat. [30]

The Czech language is unsuccessful to provide with an idiomatic alternative to this English phrase. The best translation would probably be *být zachráněn na poslední chvíli* (*Lingea, 2008*).

### Beat (*someone*) to the punch

In pugilism, it is all about strength but also about speed, being able to overtake the adversary and be fast enough to land a blow before he does. This is when

the commentator would call: “He beats him to the punch”. Surely, there is a secondary meaning to the expression. When one is beating someone to the punch, he forestall him or her in action or in speech and he does it or says it before they do (Spears, 2005, 38).

*Example:* The song is about a shy girl who is afraid to approach the boy she loves until he beats her to the punch and comes to her first.  
[31]

Unfortunately, there cannot be find any idiomatic expression in the Czech language for this, nor from the sport of boxing, neither from any other field. A translator has to be satisfied with a periphrasis, *předběhnout někoho*.

### **Come out swinging/fighting**

Boxers, as they come out from backstage to the ring, they try to impress their opponents by looking dangerous so they come out swinging their fists. Figuratively, “if someone comes out swinging, they defend themselves or something they believe in, in a very determined way” (Walter, 1998, 77). The source also states that the phrase *come out swinging* is used only in American English, whereas the *fighting* alteration is used also in British and Australian English.

*Example:* North Queensland co-captain Johnathan Thurston can at least see the funny side of their NRL title drought but hopes they come out swinging in 2015. [32]

Even though Czech boxers probably do the same to intimidate, nothing of this kind has entrenched in the Czech language. Periphrases like *nedat se, bránit se*, just to mention two, are the best option (Lingea, 2008).

### **Go the distance**

If a boxer goes the distance, he is able to fight all the rounds that were scheduled in advance. The expression with idiomatic meaning can be found only in dictionaries of American idioms therefore it is safe to say it is a North American phrase. In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* the entry reads: “to carry out a course of action through completion” (Sukhanov, 1992, 3125). Simplier said, it means to do everything needed, for example to play the whole game or run the whole race, or just finish something that has been set.

*Example:* This is the Drillers' sixth TLCS appearance and it will be the third time they have gone the distance — both previously were in best-of-7 series. [33]

In searching for Czech equivalent, one has to settle for a non-idiomatic phrase *(do)hrát až do konce* used in sport, or sometimes even figuratively, or an alteration *dojít až na konec* (which has no link to sport whatsoever, though) could be tolerated (Lingea, 2008).

### **Hit below the belt/the waistline**

In boxing there is “[...] a code of rules under which no blows may be inflicted below the waistline and none after the opponent has gone down“ (Levinson and Christensen, 1999, 59). So whenever one of the boxer hits the opponent below the belt, it is against the rules and deemed against a good sportsmanship. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* the figurative meaning of this expression is explained like this: “behave deviously towards someone, especially so as to gain an unfair advantage” (Siefiring, 2004, 144). It is a common set phrase for every situation in which someone is unfair or says hurtful things, generally on purpose.

*Example:* Lorde's not afraid to hit below the belt when it comes to defending pal Taylor Swift's derrière. [34]

Another variation exists in English and the only difference is that it is a noun phrase *low blow*. The Czech language has the same idiom used in the same meaning, *dát ránu pod pás* even though it is important to say that it is more commonly used as a noun phrase, *rána pod pás* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Lead with *one's* chin**

Chin is probably the most endangered part of the head in a fight, so if someone leads with it, it is seen not so much as brave but more as imprudent because he is left unprotected. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*, it means “to speak or behave incautiously” (Siefiring, 2004, 169) but there is also a slightly different interpretation by *Dictionary of American Slang* where the entry reads “to make oneself vulnerable“ (Kipfer and Chapman, 2007, 567) but since there is no similar explanation in British English dictionaries, it can be assumed that this meaning is understood like this only (or mostly) in American English.

*Example:* “Stop leading with your chin,” Holyday said of his advice for the embattled mayor, currently before the courts on two separate matters and having his campaign finances probed by an auditor. [35]

The Czech language once again fails to find an equivalent in any way connected to this one. There are some possible suitable translations, for example *říkat si o průšvih* or *koledovat si*.

### **Pull *one*'s punches**

Boxers give their best in the match and use their biggest strength in their hits. But there are cases when it is not so, cases when the sportsman holds back, or in other words pulls his punches (no matter the reason). The figurative meaning of this phrase denotes using less force than the person is capable of, to be lenient, especially in an argument or criticism (Spears, 2000, 323). It is vital to mention that in English we usually come across to negative use of this expression.

*Example:* I love how Maria Shiver doesn't pull her punches when talking about Alzheimer's and caregiving. [36]

In the Czech language there is no idiom with the same meaning that originates in this sport, nevertheless there are some idiomatic expressions, such as *držet se zpátky*. For the negative forms there exist some as well, namely *nebrat si servítky* or *mluvit bez obalu* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Punch above *one*'s weight**

So that the match is as fair as possible, boxers are divided into groups based on their weight and then fights are arranged only between opponents of nearly equal weight. As the phrase itself insinuates, a person punching above his weight would be naturally set up for failure. In everyday life the expression can be used when somebody is trying to succeed or participate in an activity that is beyond his abilities.<sup>5</sup>

*Example:* Six in 10 men 'punch above their weight' in relationships as they pair off with better-looking women. [37]

The Czech language does not offer a suitable counterpart, except for very informal (and not yet coined) phrase *hrát/být mimo svoji ligu*.

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<sup>5</sup>Oxford Dictionaries. Available at: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>. Accessed on 8 February, 2015.

## Roll with the punches

Two phrases above, the speed was mentioned as one of the key factors for a boxing match. A good boxer knows how to slide from side to side and how to dodge the punches to lessen their impact. To successfully move away from the full force of opponent's blows, he has to roll with the punches.

Such as the athlete has to be able to adapt to the movement and action of the other boxer, people are able to deal well with adversity, mostly by being flexible, in the figurative meaning of the expression. They can withstand the unfortunate events as they happen and adjust to them (Walter, 1998, 311). There is also a phrase to *roll with it* which could be consider a shortened version of the boxing one due to its high similarity and the same meaning but unfortunately there is no proved evidence these two are related.

*Example:* Learning to roll with the punches is a survival skill that can be honed and polished, ready to serve you when faced with the distress of a tough life situation. [38]

Regrettably, there cannot be found any idiomatic phrase with similar meaning, a fine translation is *umět se vypořádat s nepříjemnostmi* or *umět přijímat rány* (Lingea, 2008).

## Take the (full) count

When a boxer has been knocked down and lies on the floor, by the rules he has ten second to stand up and resume the contest. If he is unable to rise and takes the full count, meaning the referee counts to ten, the match is over and he loses the fight.

The same applies to the figurative meaning. If somebody takes the full count, he is defeated. That is at least the *Oxford English Dictionary's* explanation (OED, 2009). However, in *McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of American Idioms* the verdict is far graver, it means to die, nevertheless the phrase is slightly changed to *take the long count* (Spears, 2005, 680).

*Example:* As it turned out, the nasty fellow should have taken the full count to get back more of his strength. [39]

There is, unfortunately, no phrase that would be in any way similar or could function as an idiomatic alternative.

### Take *something* on the chin

Chin, as it was said above, as a part of a head sticking out, usually takes the most severe blow in a boxing match. If we look at the emblematic explanation of the phrase, that *something* is a metaphorical punch; that is any misfortune in general in figurative world (Spears, 2000, 391). It should be also mentioned that there is a connotation of enduring the trouble courageously.

*Example:* White Sox don't want to take it on the chin any longer.

[40]

If one searches the Czech language, he can find an expression with the same sense even though there is no connection to boxing. It is *jít do toho po hlavě* or *postavit se (k) tomu čelem* (Lingea, 2008). The connotation of persisting the bad news daringly is very strong here as well.

### Throw in the towel/sponge

Throwing in the towel, meaning throwing it in the ring, is an act usually made by the trainers, but sometimes even the boxers themselves and it is taken as a sign of defeat. After that the match should be halted. As a towel and a sponge are both used for the same purposes, that is to wipe the boxers face, trainers can use either to signal loss of their trainee. In everyday life this phrase means basically the same—to quit or admit defeat, whether in a match or in a life situation (Sinclair, 1997, 398).

*Example:* Bratušek denied on Facebook that she had thrown in the towel. [41]

Czech provides a literal equivalent, *hodit ručník do ringu*, which originates in the same sport and carries the same meaning (Lingea, 2008).

### Throw/toss *one's* hat in(to) the ring

Ring is of course a square elevated stage with ropes all around where boxers fight. To understand this phrase, it is necessary to go to the past when the ring was just a circled space in the crowd made by people themselves where men tried their chances in a fist fight. If anybody wanted to go fighting, he had to throw his hat in.



When a person throws a metaphorical hat into a metaphorical ring, he takes up a challenge. Unlike the literal meaning of the phrase where it is a boxing challenge, here it is any challenge at all as described in *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, 2009). However, in *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary of American Idioms* (Spears, 2005, 710) and also in *Dictionary of American Slang* it is explained quite differently. Not only that in *Dictionary of American Slang* it means “to issue a challenge” (Kipfer and Chapman, 2007, 938) and not accept it, but both sources emphasize the use of the expression for the occasion when somebody is running for an elective office or entering a competition. As both dictionaries are of American English, we can surmise there is a variance in use between American and British English.

*Example:* As more Republicans throw their hat in the ring for 2016, more Democrats drop out. [42]

In Czech, people throw a piece of clothing as well to take up a challenge. The phrase is *hodit někomu rukavici* but it did not originate in sport, it dates back to medieval times (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 702). Lingea dictionary gives a non-idiomatic translation to the meaning of running for an office and it goes *ohlásit svoji kandidaturu* (Lingea, 2008).

## Chess

Chess is a board game popular throughout the world played by two players on a checkered game board. There are sixteen pieces in play where each has certain restrictions of movement around the board. The goal of the game is to checkmate the opponent’s king, i.e. to put it in position from which it is unable to escape.

## English Idioms

### Hold/keep *someone* in check

Check is a position of a king where it is in danger but still stands a chance of fleeing, By all means in that moment it has to move and is under control of the opponent. This fact transferred to figurative sense where it signifies controlling someone or something, usually in order to stop them from “becoming too large or too powerful” (Walter, 1998, 64).

*Example:* His grandparents kept him in check, guiding him as best they could, but his high school was small. [43]

In Czech there exists a literal counterpart *držet někoho v šachu* ([Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 793](#)).

### Say checkmate

Checkmate is a move where the king, the most important chess piece, is put in an inescapable threat and the game thereby ends. Figuratively, it can be perceived as pronouncing one's victory or as the action of defeating the opponent ([OED, 2009](#)).

*Example:* My business finally said checkmate to check fraud. [44]

There appears to be a Czech chess idiom *vyšachovat někoho ze hry* that definitely can mean defeating someone in certain contexts but it more inclines to bereaving someone of the power and influence he has. Anyway, it is an applicable equivalent.

## Czech Idioms

### Být jen figurkou ve hře

Just as a chess piece is moved and manipulated by a player, the same applies for the figurative meaning where one is just a passive powerless participant customarily used for purposes of bigger powerful people.

*Example:* Poté, co vyhraje v televizní show nepříliš lichotivý titul „Pan průměrný“, se Jalil nevědomky stává figurkou ve hře velkého byznysu. [45]

In English there is a noun, *a pawn*, which in its figurative sense, used with a verb *to be*, could be used as a counterpart ([Lingea, 2008](#)). It also derives from chess, but it is more specific since in Czech it alludes to any chess piece.

### Dát/dostat mat

Explanation of what is a checkmate can be found above. In Czech, two idiomatic phrases appear; one can either *checkmate someone*, or *be checkmated by someone*. Figuratively, it denotes getting somebody into or being in a no-win situation where there is no way out.

Example: Bitcevský maniak dostal mat po 49 vraždách. [46]

In *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* there is an English equivalent *checkmate someone/be checkmated by someone* (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 360) and the truth is that bilingual dictionary supports this claim (Lingea, 2008). Nevertheless, English idiomatic dictionaries do not include these phrases in their entries.

### **Dát/dostat šach**

Check is a less serious move than checkmate because in this situation the king has a chance to escape the attack. That is why it is used in a dispute or competition when one divests the other of the possibility to continue or weakens opponent's position.

*Example:* Kasparovovi dal šach létající penis. [47]

Interestingly so, *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* gives the same translation as for the previous idiom (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 793). OED, however, states that the phrase *check* is used also figuratively (OED, 2009), therefore suddenly a literal counterpart is offered.

### **Provést rošádu**

The chess move called castling consists of interchanging the positions of the king and a rook. Figuratively, it involves arrangement of things in order to salvage something or somebody or to put someone in a more favorable position. The maneuver is usually complicated and thought-out (*ibid.*).

*Example:* Nejprve trenér provedl rošádu v sestavě a úspěch na sebe nenechal dlouho čekat. [48]

There is no source that would offer a counterpart to this idiom. In translation, however, one could use a phrase *shake up* that accords with the meaning quite well.

## **Cricket**

This sport could be called an archetypal English game. It has a quite complex set of rules which are not so easy to understand. In a simplified explanation, it is

a bat and ball game played by two teams of eleven players each where one team bats and one is in the field. The teams take turns which are called innings. In the center of the field there is a pitch where the batsman hits the ball and tries to run to the end of a pitch and score points.

## English Idioms

### Bat/be on sticky wicket

A wicket is a set of three stumps that the batsman tries to protect with his bat. However, in a transferred sense, as *Oxford English Dictionary* claims, it can also be “the ground between and about the wickets, esp. in respect of its condition; the pitch” (*ibid.*). The wicket is usually sticky after the rain when it is slowly drying out and it definitely is not a desirable attribute because it makes it harder to bat on it. In the figurative meaning a person who is on sticky wicket has to deal with great difficulties or finds himself in a tricky situation ([Sieftring, 2004, 312](#)). As the sport is typically English, the phrase is also used mainly in British English.

*Example:* [...] Rahul is on sticky wicket at his home and a revolt would have had a ripple effect across India ([OED, 2009](#)).

It cannot be expected that Czech language will offer any phrase connected to cricket since this sport is not played almost at all in the Czech Republic. But there are a lot of phrases to denote an awkward or tough position, such as *být v ošemetné situaci* or *mít těžkou pozici* ([Lingea, 2008](#)).

### Draw stumps

Stumps are pulled out when the game ends, therefore it figuratively means to “cease doing something” ([Sieftring, 2004, 85](#)).

*Example:* A cricket club has drawn stumps on a sponsorship deal with a sex shop chain after they were threatened with expulsion from their league. [49]

A Czech expression *přestat s něčím* can fully function as a counterpart for this cricket idiom even though it is a mere periphrasis.

### **Have had good innings**

In the introductory part to the sport, the term *innings* was mentioned as the time before the two sides change roles. However, it can also have a secondary meaning of the score of runs made by a batsman. As an idiom, it appears only in British English and it means to “have had a long and fulfilling life or career” (*ibid.*, 153). As it can be seen in the example, it does not have to apply only to people, but to things too. In this case it is a piece of luggage. The expression is specifically in the present perfect sense.

*Example:* She’s a bit dented but has had good innings — I’d recommend sturdier luggage for those taking similar flights. [50]

Looking up the phrase in a bilingual dictionary, the entry for Czech translation would read things like *dařilo se mu, mít za sebou úspěšné období* or *vše, na co sáhl/a, mu/jí vyšlo* (Lingea, 2008). In Czech it would be in simple past tense due to the absence of perfect tenses.

### **Have the runs on the board**

*The runs* stand for the score and if it is on the board, it is visible and valid. Therefore, if one has the runs on the board in life, he has a “demonstrable record of achievement” (Renton, 1990, 66).

*Example:* Mr Bender also said that the company had the runs on the board in terms of growing, processing and marketing salmon at a premium in the marketplace[...] [51]

There is not much to comment on as far as the Czech counterpart is concerned. For the figurative meaning for example a periphrasis *mít se čím pochlubit* could be used.

### **Hit/knock someone for six**

The number in this phrase signifies a scoring of six runs because the batsman struck the ball and sent it behind the boundary of the ground. In figurative sense, the expression means to affect somebody severely (Siefiring, 2004, 264), or even overpower somebody. It is also a chiefly British informal idiom, such as most of the phrases above.

*Example:* His wife hit Caddy over the head—a blow which he said “hit him for six” [...] [52]

The case is repeating itself as there is no idiom matching the meaning of the English one. At least there are many possibilities to choose from when translating, *otřást, šokovat, zdrtit, silně rozrušit, srazit na kolena, vyvést z rovnováhy* (Lingea, 2008).

## Football

Football is a very popular ball sport in Europe and Latin America, not so much in the US where it is outshone by be it ice hockey or baseball. It is played by two teams of eleven players on a playing field with the aim of scoring a goal.

## Czech Idioms

### Hrát (*to*) na obě strany

This expression can be used in many sports which have two teams against each other, such as American football, soccer, basketball and others. It means when a player helps both teams. In figurative sense the playing teams transfer to any opposing sides and it is used when a person is pretending to be involved in both without the other one knowing. By that he gains advantage from both sides. It is mostly used with a direct object *it* (*hrát to na obě strany*) and denotes an opportunistic behavior (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 770).

*Example:* Počepický byl při Němcích, pořádal pro ně hony a hrál to na obě strany. Dělal si už alibi na konec války. [53]

English language offers a little adapted idiom *play/work both sides of the street*, which is originally and chiefly a North American phrase (OED, 2009). Or *keep a foot in both camps* but this expression does not have a tincture of negative demeanor like the Czech one does, it solely means to have good relations with both sides (Sukhanov, 1992, 354).

### Kopat za špatný tým

There is no knottiness in this expression; it simply alludes to somebody who is playing for a team that keeps losing, hence a wrong team. In everyday life

it means to be a part of the wrong group of people, from a work team up to a politic party. The person is usually not aware of this fact or he is and nevertheless chooses to stay for he is trying to ameliorate the situation.

*Example:* Přiznat veřejně, že jsem celý život vlastně kopal za špatný tým podvodníků, je v jeho věku frajeřina. [54]

English does not provide a literal counterpart, therefore a periphrasis has to suffice.

### **Mít tah na branku**

This phrase basically signifies when footballer is endowed with an ability to be aggressive and to go to the front to score a goal. In transferred sense it denotes a self-confidence, purposefulness and ambition, simply being able to get the job done. It behooves to mention that only a noun phrase *tah na branku* frequently figures in the Czech language.

*Example:* Některé nemají tah na bránu prostě proto, že nechtějí. Ale co ty, které ambice mají a chtějí se v práci nebo třeba v politice výrazně prosadit? [55]

This idiom is best translated to English as *having a drive*.

### **Zahrát něco do autu**

*Aut* is the area outside the playing field. Once the ball is behind the sideline, the game is interrupted and that is why the technique of kicking the ball directly into touch is sometimes used when the team is in disadvantage. Figuratively it is usually used as a method in conversation when someone is trying to change the subject and gloss over something unpleasant.

*Example:* Že by měl někdo z papalášů zájem na tom, abych ho přikryl a zahrál to do autu, si už nevzpomínám. [56]

For the translation to English an idiom, which unfortunately is not sports-related, can be used. It is *sweep something under the carpet* (Lingea, 2008).

## Games and Cards

Cards playing is very popular all over the world and there are many card games, some are known worldwide, some are very specific to a particular country. Here there can be found phrases from card games in general, whether it is poker, gin, marriage, spades or any other.

### English Idioms

#### Cash *one's* chips

Chips are counters used in games of cards, such as poker. When they are cashed in, they are turned in after a player quits. That is why the term's meaning transferred to quitting anything. It can also mean to leave or to go to bed or even to die as it is given in *McGraw-Hill's Dictionary* which understands this phrase as finishing "the game of life" (Spears, 2005, 89). A phrase closely interrelated to this one is mentioned in *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* and it is *to have had your chips* and it means to be dead or dying as well (Sieftring, 2004, 53). The entry also read that the expression is used in British informal English.

*Example:* A showman until the end, he took the country for a ride and then, as he has always done, cashed his chips in the end. [57]

In translation of this fixed expression one would have to use substitution of the idiom for a different Czech idiom and that is *natáhnout bačkory* which, however, only works for the meaning to die (Lingea, 2008). For the others, *skončit* could be used.

#### Have a card up *one's* sleeve

When a player has a good card, it is favorable to conceal it and a sleeve is one of the favorite places to hide the card. Figuratively, it denotes "to have a plan, resources in reserve" (OED, 2009).

*Example:* A sad sad day in 2005, but the Mayor had a card up his sleeve, turn it into a giant park surrounded by residential and office buildings [...] [58]

Czech people also hide cards in their sleeves, but the idiom says it is an ace. The whole phrase reads *mít eso v rukávu* (Lingea, 2008).



### **Hold all the aces**

No player can literally hold all the cards; by that it is meant all the high cards, just as the aces are of the highest value. And when someone has them in his hand, he controls the game and is likely to win. Figuratively, it signifies to be in a favorable or controlling position (Sinclair, 1997, 1).

*Example:* A couple of decades ago, a car salesman held all the cards because the buyer had no idea what the real cost was. [59]

The Czech language provides a literal translation that goes *mít v ruce všechny trumfy* which is used in both the game and also in everyday life (Lingea, 2008).

### **Play into *someone's* hands**

In a card game someone can play a card that is very useful for the opponent to take it, if the game allows it. Or he can simply make it easier for the other one to make his move. In such cases, he plays into the adversary's hands. In the idiomatic sense, it expresses an action of doing "something that gives someone else an advantage over you, although it was not your intention" (Walter, 1998, 176).

*Example:* With the conditions like they were today, that played into my hands," he told reporters. [60]

Metaphorically and even literally a phrase *hrát někomu do karet* can be used as a counterpart for this idiom (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 275).

### **Play it/hold/keep the cards close to the chest/vest**

This phrase means all the same whether there is used the verb *play* or *hold* or *keep* and there is not even difference between *chest* and *vest*. Everything refers to a way of playing when a person is trying to hide their cards so that no opponent can see them. In everyday life, it means to be very secretive about something. *NTC's American Idioms Dictionary* specifies the use to mostly working environment because it says it is used when negotiating or working cautiously (Spears, 2000, 317).

*Example:* While he kept the cards close to his chest, his close associates yesterday revealed that negotiations have already started with some of the players he left behind, [...] [61]

The only possible Czech counterpart here is a periphrasis *dělat tajnosti*.

### **Play *one's* trump card**

This is an informal phrase used when somebody plays the best card he has, most probably the one that contenders did not know about and it comes as a surprise. Figuratively speaking, it signifies “to use a special trick; to use one’s most powerful or effective strategy or device” ([ibid.](#), 317).

*Example:* After a few minutes of a thread involving six or eight people — all letting her know she was in the wrong — she finally played her trump card. [62]

There needs to be used a little adaptation when translating to Czech because in the best counterpart there is used a verb *vynést* instead of the verb *play* and the idiom goes *vynést trumfy* ([Lingea, 2008](#)).

### **Put/lay *one's* cards on the table**

This phrase alludes to when a player puts his cards facing up on the table and shows them and by that he reveals everything. Basically the same it means metaphorically. It denotes to be honest and tell what your intentions are or just to be frank about one’s position on a problem ([Walter, 1998, 59](#)). The same meaning has another card-related idiom, and that is *show one’s cards*.

*Example:* There is no need for the eye to allow itself to be deceived, because the painter has laid his cards on the table. [63]

A literal counterpart appears to exist in Czech language, namely *vyložit karty na stůl*. And to complete this input, there is a literal equivalent for *show one’s cards* as well, it is *odkrýt karty* ([Lingea, 2008](#)).

### **Stack the cards/deck (against *someone/something*)**

Before dealing the cards, they have to be shuffled and stacked. This phrase alludes to a situation when they are stacked in a certain way on purpose in order to be dealt out to one’s advantage ([Walter, 1998, 638](#)). The idiomatic sense is easily inferable, it means to organize things against someone and possibly impede or even ruin their plans.

*Example:* Many of the demonstrators agreed that the legal system unfairly stacked the cards against Rasmea Odeh before her trial even started. [64]

In the Czech equivalent the action of stacking is substituted by shuffling and it is *zamíchat* or *pomíchat někomu karty* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Sweep the board**

When a player sweeps the board, he seizes all the chips and money and whatever somebody has bet. In a figurative way, it means to win everything and not just in a gambling game. One can scoop all the prizes and rewards in be it national lottery or school contest (Walter, 1998, 42).

*Example:* Gary Anderson has swept the board at the prestigious PDC Awards night in London. [65]

For translation to Czech a slightly idiomatic phrase could be used, *vyhrát na celé čáře* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Raise the ante**

Ante is “a stake put up by a player (usually, the eldest hand) before the draw” (OED, 2009) usually in poker but in other card games as well. Now it is clear it is a figurative denomination for money; that is why raising the ante means raising the price (Spears, 2005, 729).

*Example:* Clearly, Jagdeo raised the ante on the coming crisis of food security; that was in 2008. [66]

The best Czech equivalent is a periphrasis *zvýšit cenu, zvýšit své požadavky* (Lingea, 2008).

### **Throw/flip up *one's* cards**

There is probably no need to explicate phrase in the context of a card game but in figurative sense it means to give something up, to abandon something (OED, 2009). As it was cited only in one dictionary, specifically OED, and Internet search does not show many results, it is probably rarely used.

*Example:* I had taken one fair look at the city from the steamer, and threw up my cards. ‘I can’t describe this place, and besides, I hate Chinamen.’ [67]

Here, a different card idiom could be used, yet it has the same meaning. It is *složit karty* (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 276).

## Czech Idioms

### Dívat se *někomu* do karet

When a player looks into opponent’s hand to see his cards, it is considered cheating but it embraces certain advantages for him. Figuratively it means to observe someone and find out about his secret intentions which can be taken as a chance to get ahead. There also exists a similar phrase *vidět někomu do karet* which is the act of already knowing the intentions that are supposed to be secret but the knowledge is not necessarily gained by dishonest practices.

*Example:* Firmy žijící z půjček uvidí do karet dalšímu čtvrt milionu dlužníků. [68]

In English, there is a phrase *to be a fly on the wall* which also has the meaning of being an unnoticed observer but it does not contain the substance of cheating (Siefiring, 2004, 112). As far as the second idiom is concerned, here English offers not so idiomatic phrase, *see through one’s tricks* (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 275).

### Hrát to s *někým* na betla

This phrase originated in marriage, which is a card game very popular in the Czech Republic. The rules are quite complicated thus it is not viable to fully explicate the idiom and its connection to figurative world. Nevertheless, outside the game of marriage the phrase signifies a profit-seeking behavior when one tries to deceive and swindle someone, usually in a joint venture or in any cooperation.

*Example:* Nečas hraje v koalici betla. [69]

In English-speaking world the marriage is not as well-liked as in the Czech Republic; nevertheless it is not so difficult to find a fitting phrase for deceiving practices. *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* proposes these two as equivalents: *pull a fast one on someone* or *have someone on* (ibid., 46).

## Přiznat barvu

Such as the expression above, this one is used in marriage. It has many variations which should be introduced: *jít/muset (jít)/vylézt/vyjít s barvou ven* and they all mean the same. In the game itself it adverts to a rule when one has to add (and by that show) a card of the same color to a card played during the game. Figuratively it means to confess, it may be by force, to a secret fact. Basically, it denotes telling the truth.

*Example:* Na závěr vyzval, tento irský liberál, naše poslance, aby přiznali barvu. [70]

A well-known expression *come clean* functions as an appropriate English counterpart (Lingea, 2008).

## Vsadit na nepravou/špatnou kartu

Card games usually involve a little bit of gambling. When a player stakes his money on a wrong card, he loses. Metaphorically, it means to decide for a wrong alternative without sufficient forethought and lose.

*Example:* Giuliani vsadil na špatnou kartu a podle médií končí. [71]

When translating this idiom, English provides an idiom as well. Although it is not card-related at least it is sports-related. Specifically, it comes from horse riding and it is *back the wrong horse* (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 275).

## Vsadit na správnou kartu

This phrase is similar to the aforementioned one with a difference of one word which causes an opposite meaning. In this case a player stakes his money on the right card and wins. It is used for any situation where one is able to decide for the best option, usually based on a good assumption. It has a connotation of taking risk, though any staking has such a connotation in essence.

*Example:* Získává tak už třetí podobné ocenění, což dokládá, že Nissan velmi pravděpodobně vsadil na správnou kartu. [72]

*Be on the right card* is given as an English equivalent in *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* (ibid., 275). However, English dictionaries used in this thesis include no such idiom therefore it is not clear whether it is a coined term.

### **Vsadic/sázet (všechno/vše) na jednu/jedinou kartu**

This phrase finishes the trio of staking money on specific cards. In this phrase it is not clear whether the player wins or loses, it simply says that he bravely, or maybe out of desperation, stakes all he has on one card and one card only. In figurative sense, one decides for the only alternative one sees and simply hopes for the best. In this expression, the high risk is striking.

*Example:* Muž, který se celosvětově proslavil po teroristických útocích 11. září 2001 jako statečný "starosta Ameriky", vsadil všechno na jednu kartu. [73]

*Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* provides a literal English equivalent *stake everything on a single card* (*ibid.*, 275). Nevertheless, the same case repeats itself here because this expression could not be found in any dictionary used in this work. There is, however, one phrase with the same meaning, though not related to cards which could also be used and it is *put all one's eggs in one basket*.

### **Vynést/vyhodit trumf(a)**

Trump card can be here understood as a compelling, even winning argument and such as in the card game, when one plays the trump card he surprises everyone and usually wins, it is the same for figurative sense. There are several variations to this phrase, for example *vyhodit/vynést/vynášet poslední trumf* which just emphasizes that it is the last argument; or *vyhodit/vynést už všechny trumfy*. This idiom is pronounced when someone has exhausted all the arguments and is further without means of persuasion.

*Example:* Pokud ovšem chceme vysledovat přístup Spáleného ke zhudebňování básní, musíme se v první řadě zaposlouchat do Edisona, kde autor vynesl všechny trumfy, co měl v zásobě. [74]

In English counterpart, the trump card has to be replaced by ace. Then the phrase is *play one's ace* (*ibid.*, 689). Unfortunately, the same source does not offer any equivalent nor for the *last trump*, neither for *all the trump cards*.

### **Vyrazit někomu karty/trumfy z ruky**

Once it is clear what *vynést trumf* means, it is an easy task to explain this idiom since it basically refers to knocking out the cards of someone hands thus, in the figurative meaning, deprive someone of his argument and his upper hand.

Example: Měl jsem už myšlenky na prodloužení, kluci to ale na ledě skvěle udělali a vyrazili jsme Magnitogorsku trumf z ruky. [75]

To translate this phrase, one would have to resort to another sports idiom, concretely to sailing, and use *take the wind out of someone's sails* ([ibid.](#), 824).

## Horse racing

The sport of horse racing has many categories, for example harness, steeplechase, thoroughbred ([Levinson and Christensen, 1999, 170ff](#)). The phrases stated here does not distinguish between those, they can be used in all of them in general. There is one Czech phrase that is not in correspondence with horse racing per se, but it is, however, connected to horses. It originated in equestrianism.

### English Idioms

#### Back the wrong horse

Horse racing does not include only the sportsmen, one has to look to the stands and involve to the figurative world the people who bet on the horses as well. In this phrase one supports a horse or in idiomatic sense anyone and anything with no or little chance of winning ([Spears, 2005, 30](#)).

Example: Google may have backed the wrong horse when it decided to tie its Google Wallet payment app to the short-range wireless near field communications technology. [76]

Czech language provides a literal equivalent, *vsadit na špatného koně* ([Lingea, 2008](#)).

#### Hold *one's* horses

At the beginning of a race, jockeys have to hold their horses so that they cannot hit the track prematurely. And that is why the idiom denotes being patient or being able to wait. It is chiefly used in North America and it is commonly known as a sentential proverb *Hold your horses!* ([OED, 2009](#))

*Example:* Supporters of the city's carriage drivers told Mayor de Blasio to hold his horses—and three more City Council members said they agree. [77]

Among the Czech idioms from horse racing, there cannot be found anything that could serve as an equivalent, thus a plain periphrasis *čekat, neukvapovat se* is the most suitable one (*Lingea, 2008*).

### **Keep a tight/close rein**

Sometimes jockeys keep a tight grip on the reins for better control of the horse. When a person is not on a horse and yet keeps a tight rein, he watches and controls someone (or something) diligently (*Spears, 2005, 366*).

*Example:* Witnesses have portrayed Perez as a domineering leader who kept a tight rein on his young, mostly female followers. [78]

Czech provides a literal counterpart for this idiom that goes *držet otěže zkrátka* (*Lingea, 2008*).

### **Play the field**

Even though it may seem as a phrase from baseball or American football where they play on the field, this phrase “originated in British horseracing where it meant “to bet on every horse in a race except the favorite” (*Sukhanov, 1992, 821*) according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*. The same source says that this term transferred to other activities around 1930. Now it is used to describe the action of dating more people at once.

*Example:* The loveable Little Bird was a romantic who played the field but idolised his 11 children. [79]

To get a Czech equivalent, a periphrasis has to be used, namely *střídat partnery* or *randit s více najednou* (*Lingea, 2008*).

### **Set the pace**

When in race someone sets the pace, he starts the race. In the figurative sense it means “to lead the way in doing or achieving something” (*Siefring, 2004, 211*). However, *Oxford English Dictionary* gives a different definition of the sports phrase, and that is: “to proceed at a rate of speed to be followed by another” (*OED, 2009*) which can be supplemented by the idiomatic explanation in *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* where it says that when somebody sets the pace, they do something very well and quickly and others follow him and try to do the same (*Heacock, 2003, 289*).



*Example:* Kent County and West Michigan set the pace in latest jobless report. [80]

The same idiom can be found in the Czech language but only for the second definition from the two mentioned above and it is *udávat tempo* (Lingea, 2008). Such as for the English phrase, this too can be used figuratively and literally.

### **Win by a nose**

In a race wins the one who first crosses the finish line and it does not have to be the whole horse, but just to “touch” the finish line is enough. *By a nose* can be explained as “the narrowest margin by which a horse can win” (Siefiring, 2004, 202). Figuratively, it means a simple win by the slightest difference. There is also an alternative, *to win by a neck*; that one, however, did not originate in horse racing.

*Example:* In this particular race, Apple won by a nose. [81]

For a translation there is a slightly adapted phrase. In the Czech language, people (and horses) usually *win by chest* (*vyhrát o prsa*) (Lingea, 2008).

## **Czech Idioms**

### **Být v sedle**

Being in the saddle means to be in the ruling position, to have the upper hand over someone. In Czech there is a synonymous expression, namely *být na koni*. That is not, however, the only related phrase. There is *dostat se (opět) do sedla* which refers to the action of getting to the saddle or *sedět pevně v sedle* which for one describes that the position in the saddle is strong.

*Example:* Arsenal se po úvodním náporu Leicesteru rychle oklepal a dostal se do sedla. [82]

In *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* there can be found a literal English counterpart *be in the saddle* (Walter, 1998, 335). Since in *Oxford Idiom Dictionary* there is quoted only a noun phrase *in the saddle* (Siefiring, 2004, 251), it presumably can be collocated with various verbs. Therefore *get in the saddle* and *be firmly in the saddle* could be considered perfectly understandable and thus acceptable English equivalents for the other two idioms.

### **Mít (*někde*) svého koně (v *něčem*)**

*Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* explains this term as “having (somewhere, in someone) one’s obedient tool (and influence others by it)” (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 332).

*Example:* Zeman chce velvyslankyní na Slovensku Livii Klausovou. Hlavní zpráva dne. Tuto hlášku vypustil prezident Zeman, ačkoliv na tento post už Černínský palác měl svého koně. [83]

Unfortunately, *Slovník* does not offer an English translation in this particular entry. Looking for a phrase to cover the meaning, dictionary gives an idiom *cat’s paw* which would cover the role of the obedient tool.<sup>6</sup>

### **Pokračovat v krasojízdě**

This Czech fixed expression alludes to equestrianism and there is probably no reasonable explanation why it has transferred to idiomatic sense. Nevertheless, it has and now it denotes continuing to stay focused and keep doing something.

*Example:* Sborná chtěla pokračovat v krasojízdě, ale proti USA se jí zadrhl motor. [84]

The English equivalent for this idiom is also sports related, but it has nothing to do with horses. It is *carry on sailing* (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 310).

### **Pomoct *někomu* do sedla**

The phrases concerning being in the saddle have been introduced and explained a few paragraphs above. There exist yet two more that need to be mentioned. *Pomoct někomu do sedla* means to aid somebody to be powerful. The second, *vyhodit někoho ze sedla*, has the opposite meaning, specifically to knock out somebody from the strong and influential position.

*Example:* Snítily, který minulý pátek pomohl do sedla prezidentu Václavu Klausovi, neudělá krok bez ochranky. [85]

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<sup>6</sup>(Lingea, 2008), also Merriam-Webster Dictionary, available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com>. Accessed on 8 March, 2015

Finding an English equivalent is not a difficult task as far as the second phrase is concerned. Here English offers a literal counterpart *unseat someone* which can be also used figuratively (*ibid.*). The first phrase, however, does not have any appropriate idiomatic equivalent.

### **Prohrát/zvítězit o koňskou délku**

It is a measure used in horse racing which is given by the length of a horse from the nose to the tail; that is around three meters. In figurative meaning, it denotes to lose or win markedly. This measure is also used when describing a progress of a contest.

*Example:* V soutěži na kandidáta Hlavního města evropské kultury, dalo Brno přednost Ostravě. Ta prohrála „o koňskou délku“ s Plzní.  
[86]

When translating the idiom of winning, *win by a landslide* could be applied. As far as the losing one is concerned, the best periphrasis is *suffer a crushing defeat* even though it may sound a bit stronger than the Czech one (*ibid.*).

## **Hunting and Shooting**

This category is going to involve any idiom that is connected to shooting, no matter from which arms, and also the sport of hunting based on their close relation and the fact that some can be used in both. Unfortunately, it is not possible to say with certainty in which the idiom originated.

### **English Idioms**

#### **Give *someone/something* one's best shot**

There is no need for verbiage when explaining this idiom since it is very simple. It denotes “to try as hard as you can to do something” ([Sieftring, 2004, 260](#)). The source also points out the informality of this expression.

*Example:* It was not meant to be, but he gave it his best shot. [87]

A Czech translator has no other way than paraphrase this term to *dát do toho všechno* or *snažit se ze všech sil* (*ibid.*).

### Have/set *one's* sights on *something*

Sights is a device on a fire–arm that helps to take aim so naturally this phrase denotes aiming at something. Figuratively, “if you set your sights on something, you decide that you want it and try very hard to get it” (Sinclair, 1997, 351). A variation exists, *have something in your sights*, with the same meaning. However, if *something* is replaced by *someone* the sense slightly changes to trying to defeat and overcome that someone.

*Example:* [...] it seems Benedict Cumberbatch has his sights set on something far closer to home – a role in EastEnders, to be precise.  
[88]

In Czech there is practically the same idiom, *mít někoho na mušce*, but it corresponds only with the meaning of trying to overcome someone (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 402). For translating *have one's sights on something* a periphrasis has to be used, such as *dělat si zálušk*, *zaměřit se* or *soustředit se na něco* (*ibid.*).

### Hit the bull's eye

A bull's eye is itself a figurative term for the center of a target and hitting it is the best possible outcome of shooting. Figuratively it means “to achieve the goal perfectly” (Spears, 2005, 304).

*Example:* The Clint Eastwood–directed “American Sniper” hit the bull's–eye in its Christmas Day debut at the box office Thursday.  
[89]

There are many types of targets that include different colors in their patterns but in the Czech counterpart, *trefit se do černého*, the bull's eye has a black color.

With this Czech phrase mentioned, it is befitting to comment on a similar Czech expression, *mířit do černého*, which means “to be close to a depiction of an essence of something, to aim the right way” (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 97). It is especially used when thinking about a solution to a certain problem or a mystery.

### Lower/raise *one's* sights

*To raise one's sight* is explained by OED as follows: “to adopt a more ambitious objective” (OED, 2009). It alludes to someone raising his sights in order to shoot

farther. Even though OED does not provide a direct clarification of the phrase *lower one's sight*, it is obvious to anyone that it simply means the opposite. It is furthermore proved by an entry in *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (Walter, 1998, 352).

*Example:* With each setback Kloppers has lowered his sights, so his latest is the £7.5billion acquisition of PetroHawk Energy. [90]

The Czech counterparts are unfortunately only periphrases, specifically *zvýšit své nároky* and *slevit ze svých nároků* (*ibid.*).

### **Open season on *someone***

In hunting parlance this expression is collocated with an animal and it means to start a period of time when one can hunt that certain creature unrestrictedly. In transferred sense it is a time when someone is being criticized by everyone (Spears, 2000, 298).

*Example:* The court opened season on Ontario residents who possess under 30 grams [...] [91]

In the Czech language there is not any phrase expressing this meaning. One has to fall back on paraphrasing, which then highly depends on context.

### **Shoot/fire from the hip**

When a shooter fires from the hip, it is most likely without proper aiming although it is much faster. Outside shooting it is used when a person, generally out of ignorance or the necessity to answer, replies rashly without thinking it through (Walter, 1998, 192).

*Example:* In interviews, he shot from the hip at almost every topic that was tossed at him. [92]

The Czech language offers a literal equivalent *střílet od boku* with an alternative *vystřelit od boku* (*ibid.*). There is no divergence in meaning, only in perfect aspect of the verb.

## Czech Idioms

### Honit/lovit v cizím revíru

In hunting, ground is a very important issue and hunters are supposed to respect each other's grounds. That is why the meaning of hunting on somebody else's ground transferred to relationships and now it is utilized when a man seduces somebody else's wife or girlfriend. There is also a second figurative meaning which transcends to a working, or often political sphere. Here it means to "exceed one's authority" (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 668).

*Example:* Její miláček, jemuž víceméně obětovala dobrou pověst, údajně začíná lovit v cizím revíru. [93]

The same source provides an English equivalent which goes *poach on someone's preserve* (*ibid.*, 668). Even though the Internet is familiarized with this term, no dictionary used for this work includes it among its entries.

### Mít dobrou/špatnou mušku

*Mít dobrou mušku*, in a shooting situation, simply alludes to being capable of a good shot. Figuratively, it means "to be able to spot and sense the weak point (and aptly strike)" (*ibid.*, 402). *Mít špatnou mušku* plainly means the opposite both in literal and idiomatic sense. If only a noun phrase is taken out of the idiom, it can collocate with various verbs such as *projevit* or verb phrase *být proslulý pro*.

*Example:* Projevil v diskuzi dobrou mušku (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009b, 193).

*Slovník* quotes English counterparts for both phrases; they are *have a straight aim* and *be a bad shot*. There is not stated, however, if they are to use idiomatically as well (Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 402).

## Tennis

Tennis is a ball sport played on a court with strictly drawn lines and a net in the middle of the court. It is played by two or four players who try to hit the ball with their rackets to the opponent's part of the court in such a way that he is not able to return the ball. It is played worldwide and it is "among the most

thoroughly international of competitive sport” (Levinson and Christensen, 1999, 392).

## English Idioms

### Have the ball in *one’s* court

The literal meaning of the expression is very plain to explain. When a player has the ball in his court, he has to hit it back to the opponent’s side. He needs it so that the adversary may not score a point. In the idiomatic sense, it means that it is the person’s turn; when one is responsible for the next move (Spears, 2005, 294). This phrase is also common as a sentence idiom, *the ball is in one’s (or another) court* as it is quoted in *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, 2009).

*Example:* The Broncos now have the ball in their court as how to handle this entire situation. [94]

When searching for a Czech counterpart, it is easier to play it safe and go for a non-idiomatic version *být na řadě* (ibid.). However, a phrase *míč je něčí straně* could also function in the role of an equivalent. Although it does not appear in any Czech dictionary, therefore it is not entrenched officially, the phrase is used as a colloquial term in spoken language and on the Internet. It is not a word-for-word translation, *court* was supplanted by *side* but at least it is a phrase from sporting field.

### Draw the line

When somebody draws the line on the tennis court, he sets limits behind which the ball cannot go. In the figurative sense it means setting limits as well. In OED there is a more specific explanation, “to lay down a definite limit of action beyond which one refuses to go” (OED, 2009) This phrase requires a preposition *at*.

*Example:* I embarked on some entirely unsuitable activities for heavily medicated people—wine tasting; camping, with bears breaking into our supplies—but I drew the line at shooting after a stabbing incident at a barbecue. [95]

The best Czech equivalent is probably *odmítat* since it is more general. There is, however, a fixed expression that could fit too, *nejít za hranici něčeho* (ibid.).

## Track and Field

Track and field is a combination of athletic disciplines that consists of running, throwing or jumping. This category will deal with the discipline of track racing.

### English Idioms

#### Be off/out of the (starting) blocks

No one will be amazed at the meaning of this idiom. In figurative world it signifies to start (Walter, 1998, 38). It is commonly used with other verbs, just as *get*, *jump*, and *fly* just to mention three examples.

*Example:* Dempsey, who also serves on the New England Fishery Management Council, said the council has “failed to get out of starting blocks” on ecosystem-based management. [96]

Since there is no athletics-related expression, a periphrasis could work just as well, namely *začít* or *odstartovat*.

#### Get into *one's* stride

This phrase can be used also in horse racing discipline since just as a runner, even a horse can get into comfortable and efficient pace. In the fields outside racing it means to reach the most productive rate of doing something. There are two synonyms to this expression, namely *reach one's stride* and *hit one's stride* (OED, 2009). There appears also a variation of this phrase in English language and that is *put one off one's stride* which literally means to make a person deviate from his stride. As an idiom, it signifies to hinder somebody from his natural rate of progress (Spears, 2005, 530).

*Example:* [...] Jack quickly got into his stride and now specialises in working with large plant machinery. [97]

Czech language offers a literal translation for reaching one's stride, *dostat se do tempa* and even for putting one off one's stride, *vyhodit z tempa* (ibid.). Both function in literal and figurative way.



### **Have the inside track**

Everyone who has ever seen a race and knows a little mathematical law, realizes that the racing track is shorter when running on the inside part. If a competitor has the inside track he has an unquestionable advantage in the race. In idiomatic sense, it is utterly the same, to have advantage in something. *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* also informs the reader of the fact that “this expression is used mainly in American journalism” (Sinclair, 1997, 399).

*Example:* The Huskies, who started talking with Sterk last spring, had the inside track. [98]

Czech translator will have to rephrase this expression and use *být ve výhodě* because there is no Czech idiom that could serve as a better equivalent (*ibid.*).

### **Hand/pass on the baton to *someone***

A baton is a short stick used in the discipline of relay where racers run with it and pass it to their teammates as they continue in the race. When passing on the figurative baton, people hand over some kind of responsibility (Siefiring, 2004, 17). It is convenient to mention here related phrases *pick up* or *take up the baton* which basically signifies accepting the aforementioned responsibility.

*Example:* In the summer of 2007, he passed on the baton to current Chairman, Steve Morgan, handing over the Club for just £10 in return for a £30 million investment into Wolves. [99]

The literal translation to Czech would work here for both meanings, figurative and literal although it is bit adapted. *Předat štafetu* is an equivalent to *passing on the baton* and */převzít štafetu* is a translation for *picking up the baton* (*ibid.*). The adaptation lies in the substitution of the word *baton* by *štafeta* which is a word for the race of relay itself.

### **Jump the gun**

At the beginning of a race, runners are lined up at the start, feet in starting blocks and they wait for a pistol to fire which commences the race. When the competitors *jump the gun*, they set off before that gunshot. The transition to idiomatic sense of the expression is obvious—it describes when people “act before the proper or appropriate time” (Siefiring, 2004, 157).

*Example:* [...] Aereo “has jumped the gun in filing, without authorization, its motion for emergency consideration of preliminary injunction issues upon remand[...].” [100]

Although Czech athletes are no strangers to the action of jumping the gun, there is no special phrase for it in their language. *Předčasně vystartovat* would be a translation for the sports phrase, *unáhlit se* for the idiomatic one ([ibid.](#)).

### **Toe the line**

Toeing the line is the act of placing the runner’s toes on the starting lines. In transferred sense it means to accept and follow the rules. *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* furthermore adds that it is applied especially in a situation under pressure ([Siefiring, 2004, 294](#)).

*Example:* Deputy Prime Minister Beşir Atalay has declared that “Twitter now toes the line,” after the San Francisco–based social media platform began withholding two accounts [...] [101]

Paraphrasing would be the best method of translating this idiom to Czech which would be *podřídít se* or *držet se příkazů* ([ibid.](#)).

## **Volleyball**

Volleyball is a team ball sport played mostly inside, even though there are outdoor variations. There are two teams of six players who try to keep the ball up once in their part of the court, then they direct the ball over the net in the middle to the opponent’s half and hope it will be grounded there which would give them points.

### **Czech Idioms**

#### **Nahrát někomu na smeč**

A spike is a method used in volleyball which is very effective in getting the ball grounded in the opponent’s part of the court. It is a fast sharp hit of the ball directed over the net to the ground. The essential is setting the ball so the player is able to spike. In figurative sense it means an act in a conversation where one says something that gives an opportunity to the other for a sharp remark or

apt comment that may be uncomfortable. It can be done also unintentionally (alluding to a player who may set the ball to competitor's spike).

*Example:* Když mi některý student — či spíš studentka — namítl, že není bohemista, nahrál mi na smeč. [102]

English does not have any appropriate phrase to be used here, it is only possible to use some kind of elaborated periphrasis.

### **Vrátit někomu smeč**

It is not necessary to get too deep into this phrase as it is very similar to the one aforementioned. In this case, one is able to reply with the same aptness.

*Example:* Je nutné být natolik silný, abych byl schopen vrátit smeč žárlivecké provokace. [103]

The case here is the same as with the aforementioned phrase. These two expressions are so specific that there are no viable equivalents.

## **Wrestling**

Wrestling is a combat sport where two people are grappling and gripping each other in a contest of strength with a goal of throwing the other on the mat where it all takes place.

### **English Idioms**

#### **Go to the mat (for *someone/something*)**

When a wrestling match starts, the opponents have to go to the mat to fight that is why the figurative meaning is explained as “vigorously engage in an argument or dispute, typically on behalf of a particular person or cause” (Siefiring, 2004, 185). This usually lasts until one side is victorious, such as in a match of wrestling.

*Example:* Of all the issues facing Catholic schools and churches, this one seems like a strange one for Gainer to have gone to the mat on. [104]

The mat is a place where all the fighting happens and one basically goes there to fight for something and this is how the Czech alternative can be acquired — *porvat/poprat se za někoho/něco*.

## Czech Idioms

### Položit někoho na lopatky

The whole purpose of a wrestling match is to get the opponent on his back and hold him like that for a fixed period of time. It is called a win by fall, or win by pin. When Czech people use this phrase figuratively, it means they defeat somebody.

*Example:* Jenže ona to byla všechno pravda, všechno se to odehrálo.  
A to mě položilo na lopatky. [105]

There are many idioms in English that express defeat, for example *blow someone away*, *beat someone hollow* or a one with similarity in one word, *break the back of someone*, but none of sports origin (*ibid.*).

## Sports in general

This category consists of phrases which can be applied in more than one sport or they are somehow connected to sporting events, whatever activities they include.

## English Idioms

### Be out of *someone's* league

Sportsmen usually play in different leagues based on their ability and power. The less fit can never play in the big leagues for example. Idiomatically, it means when something (or someone) is too good for somebody ([Walter, 1998, 222](#)). It is mainly used in dating.

*Example:* He asked me if anything was wrong and I told him that he was way out of my league. [106]

When searching *být mimo něčí ligu* on the Internet via Google, there appear quite a lot results. However, nothing like that can be found in *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* so it is not a coined term even though it is used.

## Beat the gun

This is an interesting phrase regarding the resemblance to the phrase *jump the gun* on page 72. OED in the entry of gun consider these two the same, in both figurative and literal meaning (OED, 2009). However, in *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* only the phrase *jump the gun* can be found with no mention of now analyzed phrase. In addition to this, in *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary* both idioms are given but provided with different meaning. It can be thus assumed that since *McGraw–Hill’s Dictionary* is of American idioms, the distinction between those two phrases is more common in North America. The phrase of jump the gun has of course the same explanation as stated above, starting before the given signal (Spears, 2005, 364), but *beat the gun* has quite the opposite meaning. Since the gun can also be used to end the game, the expression signifies “to manage to do something before the ending signal” (ibid., 38). In the sporting events it refers to an action of seizing the opportunity and scoring points in the last seconds of the game before the gun shot announcing the end of the game.

*Example:* They have gained an undue advantage over other parties, or beaten the gun, in athletics parlance. [107]

The Czech language does not provide any preferable counterpart than just periphrases. For the sport occasion it is not such a great matter to say *zaskórovat na poslední chvíli*, however one could wish for a better equivalent for the idiomatic sense. Either way, depending on the context, the translation could go like *stihnout něco na poslední chvíli* or *zvládnout to za pět minut dvanáct*.

## Hand/pass on the torch to someone

Passing the torch is an ancient tradition from the Greek Olympic Games which has preserved to the modern Olympics only now the runners carry it much longer distances across countries. The idiom is used to signify “pass[ing] on a tradition, especially one of learning or enlightenment” (Siefiring, 2004, 295).

*Example:* Today, Betz is retired, having passed the torch to Coronado. [108]

The best translation here is a periphrasis, *pokračovat v tradici* but there appears to be a phrase *převzít pochodeň* which is similar yet it differs in that it is an action of accepting the torch and not handing it on (ibid.).

## Play in the big leagues

The big leagues denotes the highest professional level that an athlete can play at. In the US it denotes a major American baseball league (OED, 2009). In the figurative sense, it signifies to “be involved in something of large or important proportions” (Spears, 2005, 505).

*Example:* Harper’s people created a much bigger problem, and gave us all a good long look at the sleazy way the game is played in the big leagues. [109]

Even though there is *hrát první ligu* in the Czech Republic, it has not transferred into idiomatic sense. For that a method of paraphrasing would have to be used.

## Stay on the sidelines

Sidelines are the lines that mark the long edges of the playing area. When a sportsman stays there, he is left out of the game. In everyday life, it signifies “not to be actively involved in something” (Walter, 1998, 351). In *Cambridge Dictionary* in the entry of *sidelines* also figures a phrase *be left on the sidelines* which carries the same purport.

*Example:* Humanitarian aid, referring to aid following disastrous events, has mostly stayed on the sidelines of this discourse, [...] [110]

The best translation to the Czech language is an adaptation, where *sidelines* is translated as *ústraní*. Then the specific translations are *zůstat v ústraní* or *být vytlačen do ústraní* (*ibid.*).

## Take a rain check

This phrase is not used anymore in sport parlance but it nevertheless originated in sport. No one can predict weather and since sporting events had to be planned ahead, sometimes they got canceled because of rain. In such a case, visitors were given pieces of paper allowing them to go to the rescheduled event (Spears, 2005, 543). Now it is usually said when someone is invited somewhere and wants to turn down the offer with reassurance of attending the next time. The noun phrase *rain check* also commonly collocates with other verbs like *get*, *have* or *give*.

*Example:* Isn't it a good thing Yanukovych took a rain-check on his state visit to Malta last November? [111]

Nothing of this kind, getting a ticket for an event at a later time, exists in the Czech Republic, therefore there is not a literal equivalent in the language. A suitable translation would be a colloquial phrase *nechat něco na jindy* (*ibid.*).

## Czech Idioms

### Vytyčit mantinely

Boards are mostly used in hockey nevertheless this idiom is not exclusively hockey-related. It is more about borders that limit the sporting area. In figurative sense, it means basically the same except that the boundaries are determined for, say, business. The action of setting boards happens usually at the beginning of a new process where the rules are more than needed (*Čermák, Hronek and Machač, 2009a, 358*).

*Example:* Při výchově je důležité vytýčit mantinely, dospělý by měl být autoritou, která poskytuje pocit opory. [112]

For English counterpart, a periphrasis is the most viable option. Two phrases *demarcate something* or *delimit something* are both acceptable but there is a problem of high formality in contrast to the idiom which is more of an informal nature.

# Comparative part

The goal of this part is to comment on the idioms discussed in the practical part and compare the Czech and English ones. There will be presented two main points of view of the comparison, namely the relation of the idioms to sports, culture and the language and translation of the idioms.

## Idioms and sport

In the Introduction of this thesis, there was presented a hypothesis that the more popular sport is in certain culture, the more idioms it will provide. And even though this is not a corpus study and there are no definite numbers of the frequency of occurrence of the phrasemes, it is still possible to arrive at a certain conclusion about frequency; more specifically, about the number of phrases in certain sports. Simply by looking at the Table 1, one can see which sport offers the most expressions and which the least.

<b>Sport category</b>	<b>English Idioms</b>	<b>Czech Idioms</b>
American football	4	0
Ball sports	9	0
Baseball	11	0
Billiard	1	0
Boat sports	6	5
Boxing	13	2
Chess	7	8
Cricket	5	0
Football	0	4
Games and Cards	16	17
Horse racing	8	12
Hunting and Shooting	11	7
Tennis	2	0
Track and Field	8	4
Volleyball	0	2
Wrestling	1	1
Sports in general	6	1

Table 1: Number of idioms in each sport



## Issues with evaluating the idioms

Before this section will be concerned with specific idioms and sports, it is necessary to mention two things that can and in fact do affect the outcomes.

The results may not be as satisfactory as one might hope because this work incorporated only verbal idioms. If there would be included all figurative units – whether all kinds of idioms or even similes, the results may be more convincing. This, however, was not possible in the extent of this thesis.

And the other thing is that one must look at idioms and language and sports from a diachronic point of view — it is very important not to leave out that some expressions emerged many years ago and situation with sports was quite different from now. Therefore, even though not all idioms correspond to the popularity nowadays, it could correspond to popularity in the time of their emergence. It is, as a matter of fact, pretty likely that horse racing was more popular in the Czech Republic a few decades, or even centuries ago than it is now. The same it is with hunting and shooting, whether in the Czech Republic or the UK. Those all are discipline with rich history dating way back.

Unfortunately, this work does not look at etymology in all of its aspects here and thus is not possible to evaluate the phrases and their popularity back then.

## Analysis of the idioms and sports

The first nation that will be dealt with here is of English-speaking countries. Here it is quite necessary to distinguish at least between the USA and the UK which are still different countries in many aspects, not excepting sports.

The most popular sports in the USA are American football, baseball and basketball<sup>7</sup>. This shows in the idioms as well. The case of baseball is pretty straightforward since this sport offers the most idioms of all where 8 out of 11 are chiefly North American expressions.

When one looks at American football in the table, it is obvious that there are not as many idioms, but one must realize that a lot of idioms from Ball sports could have originated in American football and thus the number would rise a little. This category is interesting because even though it considers idioms of American football, chiefly American phrases do not predominate. This is because this sport is closely interrelated with rugby which is the third most

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<sup>7</sup>Sporteology. “Top Ten Most Popular Sports in America.“ Accessed on 2 April, 2015. <http://sporteology.com/top-10-most-popular-sports-in-america/>.

popular sport in the UK<sup>8</sup>, ergo there appear figurative units that are used in British and American English.

Talking about popular sports in the UK, one cannot miss out cricket which is their national sport. There is some considerable amount of idioms in this category although it is less than expected. The number of cricket idioms would naturally rise significantly if other types of idioms were included. But there is a proof that figurative language is restricted to specific nations because most of the phrases here are used only in British English.

Football is considered the most popular sport in the UK<sup>9</sup> and yet there are no phrases to be found. This can hardly lead to conclusions that the sport may not be as popular or that it is less popular than in the Czech Republic since there are more idioms in the Czech language. This could be explained by the fact that in the past football did not have the primacy it enjoys now. Probably, it was rugby, horse racing, cricket and others that were formerly preferred. Thus, the football idioms are still likely yet to come.

A very remarkable category is Boxing which affords many sports idioms in English language. Even though it does not rank amongst the most popular sports nor in the UK, nor in the USA, there were times, so-called golden ages, of professional boxing in the past, more specifically in the late 1700's, mid and later 1800's and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were two important times, 1920's and 1960's.<sup>10</sup> Although the popularity may have diminished in comparison with other sports, the strong roots helped to keep the idioms alive.

As for Czech idioms and Czech sports, it was more than expected that football will render numerous amount of expressions since it is the most popular sport in the Czech Republic.<sup>11</sup> Horse racing and chess for instance, nevertheless, have more expressions which can be explained by that those two have a more traditional position enrooted for a long time in the Czech culture.

One category was heretofore omitted, and that is Games and Cards. This category offers a substantial amount of idioms in both languages, in Czech it provides even the most. There are no data of how much cards playing is popular

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<sup>8</sup>Sporteology. "Top Ten Most Popular Sports in UK." Accessed on April 2, 2015. <http://sporteology.com/top-ten-popular-sports-uk/>.

<sup>9</sup>ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Freakonomics. "What Happened To Boxing's Golden Age? A Freakonomics Quorum." Accessed on 2 April, 2015. <http://freakonomics.com/2008/08/04/what-happened-to-boxings-golden-age-a-freakonomics-quorum/>

<sup>11</sup>Bauer. „Nejpopulárnější sporty v ČR a zahraničí.“ Accessed on April, 2015. <http://www.pohary-bauer.cz/clanky/nejpopularnejsi-sporty>.

in relation to other games or sports, but basing it on the information provided by this thesis, the popularity would be quite high. And it can be assumed that what makes this category so abundant, is the inclusion of all card games, there are no sub-categories of poker, spades, marriage, bridge or gin. Most of the phrases can be used in all or most of them.

It gets interesting when one starts to compare the two cultures and their figurative language because it reveals, at least in part, that idiomatic phrases do reflect the culture. There are no Czech idioms in the category of cricket, American football or baseball since these sports are not played in the Czech Republic. They may be known to or played by exiguous number of people but definitely not enough to find its way into the language. Unfortunately, it does not work the other way around. Except for volleyball and football, which in fact are popular worldwide, there is no sport exclusive to the Czech Republic.

The last thing to compare is the amount of sports idioms in each language. In this thesis, there were presented 106 sports idioms in English and only 63 in Czech. These numbers aspire to be fully corresponding to the real situation of sports idioms in each language. The admission that there may be some more idioms that were unpremeditatedly omitted exists of course. Nevertheless, the difference between two languages is still remarkable and can speak volumes about the fact that sport has found its way into the English language more than into Czech.

## **Translation of the idioms**

When translating figurative language, it is quite clear that one must come across several difficulties since the basis of this thesis lies in the understanding that figurative language is highly affected by culture. And translators “need to be well versed in the customs, habits and traditions of the two cultures they are mediating between” (Katan, 1999, 10). Without truly understanding the meaning of the phrase which is contingent on knowing the sport it is impossible to choose the right translation.

The case of sports idioms is quite special as far as translating is concerned because the literal meaning (that serves as a vehicle for the figurative one) can have a literal counterpart in the other language, such as cover all the bases and pokrýt všechny mety, yet when translating the figurative meaning, it is impossible

to use any other method than periphrasis. Nevertheless, here it will be dealt only with translating the idiomatic meanings.

There were used four methods of translating the idioms: *literal translation*, *adaptation*, *substitution* and *periphrasis* (Alousque, 2010, 137). *Adaptation* is a technique where some parts of the phrase were modified but the meaning corresponds. *Substitution* means when the phrase was substituted by a different idiomatic expression.

The following Table 2 allows to see how often each method was used. There is not stated the difference between translating to and from English. The methods are given in general.

Translating method	Number of uses
Literal translation	25
Adaptation	31
Substitution	26
Periphrasis	62

Table 2: Methods of translating

The best technique is naturally *literal translation* because there is no divergence in the meaning, the phrases in both languages mean (or at least should mean) utterly the same. Unfortunately, as it can be seen, this method is used the least. It is not very surprising since idioms are greatly culturally marked and not many idioms appear in more languages, especially when the idiom deals with *aspects of material culture* (Piiirainen, 2008, 212). There is one conclusion the table itself does not show. This technique is used mostly in the categories of chess and card playing which demonstrates the fact that when an activity is common to both languages and cultures, the idioms tend to be the same.

The next best is then *adaptation* and *substitution* because when translating it with a slight change in the idiom or substituting it with another idiom, the idiomaticity of the language and/or the informal aspect of language is preserved. These two techniques are used more or less in the same frequency. It shows that both languages offer distinct figurative phrases which can be used in similar situation.

And the most often method, as it was expected, was *periphrasis*. Most of the phrases are so specific that they cannot be found in another language and the situation they describe are often specific too; therefore the other language does not offer anything similar.

To sum up the outcomes this section has come to, it can be said that the idioms included in this thesis definitely express their cultural-boundness<sup>12</sup> even though it may not be as convincing. This could be solved by incorporating another types of phraseologisms which would make the case more compelling.

The culture-based feature of figurative language is supported also by the possibilities of translation. Since literal translation is the method least employed, there are only 19 idioms that are same for both languages, it surely demonstrates that sports idioms are not universal.

The concrete cases of translating can be seen in following tables which can also function as a bilingual idiomatic dictionary.

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<sup>12</sup>Even though this denomination is not gramatically correct as there is no such word as *boundness* in English, it originated in the adjective *culturally bound* and it is used in various studies (Sabban, 2008, 231).

## The list of English Idioms

Table 3: List of English Idioms

English idiom	Page	Idiomatic Equivalent or <i>Periphrasis</i>
back the wrong horse	62	vsadit na špatného koně
bat/be on sticky wicket	51	být v ošemetné situaci
be a bad shot	69	mít špatnou mušku
be a fly on the wall	59	dívat se někomu do karet
be a pawn	49	být jen figurkou ve hře
be at the helm	41	být u vesla
be checkmated by someone	49	dostat mat
be in the saddle	64	být v sedle
be off/out of the (starting) blocks	71	<i>začít, odstartovat</i>
be on the right card	60	vsadit na správnou kartu
be out of someone's league	75	být mimo něčí ligu
be saved by the bell	42	být zachráněn na poslední chvíli
beat (someone) to the punch	42	<i>předběhnout někoho</i>
beat the gun	76	zvládnout něco za pět minut dvanáct
break the back of someone	75	položít někoho na lopatky
carry on sailing	65	pokračovat v krasojízdě
carry the ball	27	<i>nést zodpovědnost</i>
cash one's chips	55	<i>ukončit něco</i>
come clean	60	přiznat barvu
come out of the left field	33	objevit se odnikud
come out swinging/fighting	43	<i>nedat se, bránit se</i>
cover all the bases	33	<i>zabývat se všemi aspekty</i>
draw stumps	51	<i>přestat s něčím</i>
draw the line	70	nejít za hranici něčeho, <i>odmítat</i>
drop the ball	29	zkonit něco
get into one's stride	71	dostat se do tempa
get to the first base (with someone/something)	34	dostat se na první metu
give someone/something one's best shot	66	<i>snaži se ze všech sil</i>
go the distance	43	dohrát až do konce

Table 3: List of English Idioms

English idiom	Page	Idiomatic Equivalent or <i>Periphrasis</i>
go to bat for somebody/something	34	<i>postavit se za někoho, podpořit</i>
go to the mat (for someone/something)	74	porvat se za někoho
hand/pass on the baton to someone	72	předat štafetu
hand/pass on the torch to someone	76	<i>pokračovat v tradici</i>
have a card up one's sleeve	55	mít eso v rukávu
have a cat's paw somewhere	65	mít (někde) svého koně (v něčem)
have a straight aim	69	mít dobrou mušku
have had good innings	52	<i>mít za sebou úspěšné období</i>
have had your chips	55	<i>umírat, zemřít</i>
have something on the ball	32	<i>být šikovný, chytrý</i>
have the ball at/before one's feet/foot	30	<i>mít příležitost něco udělat</i>
have the ball in one's court	70	<i>být na řadě</i>
have the inside track	72	<i>být ve výhodě</i>
have the runs on the board	52	<i>mít se čím pochlubit</i>
have/set one's sights on something	67	<i>dělat si zážitek na něco</i>
have/set one's sights on someone	67	mít někoho na mušce
hit a home run	35	<i>udělat něco úspěšně</i>
hit below the belt/the waistline	44	dát ránu pod pás
hit the bull's eye	67	trefit se do černého
hit/knock someone for six	52	<i>vyvést z rovnováhy</i>
hold all the aces	56	mít v ruce všechny trumfy
hold one's horses	62	<i>čekat</i>
hold the reins	41	být u vesla
hold/keep someone in check	48	držet někoho v šachu
check someone	50	dát šach
checkmate someone	49	dát mat
jump the gun	72	<i>unáhlit se</i>
keep a foot in both camps	53	hrát (to) na obě strany
keep a tight/close rein	63	držet otěže zkrátka
keep the ball rolling/up	31	<i>udržet věci v chodu</i>
keep/have one's eye on the ball	30	<i>soustředit se</i>

Table 3: List of English Idioms

English idiom	Page	Idiomatic Equivalent or <i>Periphrasis</i>
kick off	28	<i>začít</i>
know the ropes	39	<i>vědět, jak to chodí</i>
lead with one's chin	44	koledovat si
learn the ropes	39	<i>zjistit, jak to chodí</i>
lower one's sights	67	<i>slevit ze svých nároků</i>
move the goal posts	28	<i>měnit pravidla hry</i>
open season on someone	68	<i>někoho kritizovat po určitou dobu</i>
paddle one's own canoe	39	<i>dělat věci podle svého</i>
pinch(-)hit for someone	35	<i>nahradit, zaskočit za někoho</i>
pitch (someone) a curve(ball)	36	<i>překvapit někoho nečekaným činem</i>
play ball with someone	31	<i>spolupracovat</i>
play hardball	36	jít přes mrtvoly
play in the big leagues	77	<i>účastnit se něčeho velkého</i>
play into someone's hands	56	hrát někomu do karet
play it/hold/keep the cards close to the chest/vest	56	<i>dělat tajnosti</i>
play one's trump card/ace	57	vynést trumfy
play the field	63	<i>střídat partnery, randit s více najednou</i>
play/work both sides of the street	53	hrát (to) na obě strany
poach on someone's preserve	69	lovit v cizím revíru
pull a fast one on someone	59	hrát to s někým na betla
pull one's punches	45	<i>držet se zpátky</i>
punch above one's weight	45	hrát mimo svoji ligu
put all one's eggs on one basket	61	vsadit všechno na jednu kartu
put one off one's stride	71	vyhodit někoho z tempa
put someone behind the eight ball	38	<i>znevýhodnit někoho</i>
put/lay one's cards on the table	57	vyložit karty na stůl
raise one's sights	67	<i>zvýšit své nároky</i>
raise the ante	58	<i>zvýšit cenu</i>
rest on one's oars	40	<i>odpočívat</i>
roll with the punches	46	<i>přizpůsobit se nepřijemným událostem</i>
run interference	29	<i>zasáhnout</i>
say checkmate	49	vyšachovat někoho ze hry



Table 3: List of English Idioms

English idiom	Page	Idiomatic Equivalent or <i>Periphrasis</i>
see through one's tricks	59	vidět někomu do karet
set the pace	63	udávat tempo
set/start the ball rolling	31	<i>začít, spustit něco</i>
shoot/fire from the hip	68	střílet/vystřelit od boku
show one's cards	57	odkrýt karty
show the ropes	39	<i>naučit někoho, jak to chodí</i>
stack the cards/deck (against someone/something)	57	pomíchat někomu karty
stay on the sidelines	77	<i>zůstat v ústraní</i>
step up to the plate	37	<i>nastoupit na něco/k něčemu</i>
strike out	37	<i>pohořet, neuspět</i>
sweep something under the carpet	54	zahrát něco do autu
sweep the board	58	<i>vyhrát na celé čáře</i>
swim against the tide	42	plout proti větru
take a rain check	77	<i>nechat něco na jindy</i>
take one's eye off the ball	30	<i>přestat se soustředit</i>
take something on the chin	47	jít do něčeho po hlavě
take the (full) count	46	<i>být poražen; zemřít</i>
take the wind out of one's sails	40	sebrat někomu vítr z plachet
take/pick up the ball and run with it	31	chytit příležitost za pačesy
throw in the towel/sponge	47	hodit ručník do ringu
throw/flip up one's cards	58	složit karty
throw/toss one's hat in(to) the ring	47	hodit někomu rukavici
toe the line	73	<i>podřídít se, držet se příkazů</i>
touch base with someone	38	<i>navázat kontakt</i>
win by a nose	64	vyhrát o prsa

## The list of Czech Idioms

Table 4: List of Czech Idioms

Czech idiom	Page	Idiomatic Equivalent or <i>Periphrasis</i>
být jen figurkou ve hře	49	be a pawn
být u vesla	41	be at helm
být v sedle	64	be in the saddle
chytat vítr	41	<i>accomodate oneself to the development of certain affairs</i>
chytit příležitost za pačesy	31	take the ball and run with it
dát mat	49	checkmate
dát ránu pod pás	44	hit below the belt/waistline
dát šach	50	check
dívat se někomu do karet	59	be a fly on the wall
dostat mat	49	be checkmated
dostat šach	50	be checked
dostat se do tempa	71	get into one's stride
držet otěže zkrátka	63	hold/keep a tight rein
držet se zpátky	45	pull one's punches
hodit někomu rukavici	47	throw a hat into the ring
hodit ručník do ringu	47	throw in the towel/sponge
honit/lovit v cizím revíru	69	poach on someone's preserve
hrát (to) na obě strany	53	play/work both sides of the street
hrát někomu do karet	56	play into someone's hands
hrát to s někým na betla	59	pull a fast one on someone
kopat za špatný tým	53	<i>be with a wrong group of people</i>
měnit pravidla hry	28	move the goal posts
mít (někde) svého koně (v něčem)	65	have a cat's paw somewhere
mít dobrou mušku	69	have a straight aim
mít eso v rukávu	55	have a card up one's sleeve
mít špatnou mušku	69	be a bad shot
mít tah na branku	54	<i>have a drive</i>
mít v ruce všechny trumfy	56	hold all the aces/cards
nahrát někomu na smeč	73	<i>none</i>
natáhnout bačkory	55	cash one's chips

Table 4: List of Czech Idioms

Czech idiom	Page	Idiomatic Equivalent or <i>Periphrasis</i>
odkrýt karty	57	show one's cards
plout proti větru	42	swim against the tide
pokračovat v krasojízdě	65	carry on sailing
položít někoho na lopatky	75	break the back of someone
pomocť někomu do sedla	65	get someone in the saddle
postavit se něčemu čelem	47	take something on the chin
předat štafetu	72	hand/pass on the baton
převzít štafetu	72	pick/take up the baton
přiznat barvu	60	come clean
prohrát o koňskou délku	66	<i>suffer a crushing defeat</i>
provést rošádu	50	<i>shake things up</i>
sebrat někomu vítr z plachet	40	take the wind out of one's sails
složit karty	58	throw/fling up one's cards
udávat tempo	63	set the pace
vrátit někomu smeč	74	<i>none</i>
vsadit na špatnou/nepravou kartu	60	back the wrong horse
vsadit na správnou kartu	60	be on the right card
vsadit vše na jedinou kartu	61	put all one's eggs in one basket
vyhodit z tempa	71	put one off one's stride
vyložit karty na stůl	57	put/lay one's cards on the table
vynést trumfy	61	play one's ace
vynést poslední trumf	61	<i>give the last argument</i>
vynést už všechny trumfy	61	<i>exhaust all arguments</i>
vyrazit někomu karty/trumfy z ruky	61	take the wind out of someone's sails
vytyčít mantinely	78	<i>delimit something</i>
zahrát něco do autu	54	sweep something under the carpet
zvítězit o koňskou délku	66	<i>win by a landslide</i>

# Conclusions

Culture is an inherent part of language which especially shows in vocabulary, more specifically in figurative language. Idiomatic expressions comprise the idiosyncrasy of language, and therefore culture and one cannot look at those two phenomena separately. The aim of the present diploma thesis was to analyze idioms from the area of sports in two languages, English and Czech, and prove their cultural boundness.

First, it was necessary to introduce the theoretical ground on which the work could be based. The theoretical part itself suited the purpose of introducing the reader into the topic of phraseology with various definitions. It looked at several linguistic disciplines and their relation to phraseology and phraseologisms.

The cognitive linguistics was given more space as it is more relevant for studying phrasemes than the other disciplines mentioned. Not just that it does not deny the influence of culture on phraseologisms, it in fact considers cultural knowledge as the condition of understanding them. With this in mind, there was presented the main system of cognitive discipline and two theories relevant for this thesis

Furthermore, there was presented a definition of culture with an elaborated argument that sport *is* a part of culture. This was followed by a typology of cultural aspects underlying idioms where sports idioms could be incorporated in two of those, namely *aspects of material culture* and *cultural symbols*.

And last but not least, there was the section about phraseological units where definitions, defining criteria and classifications were presented. The main focus was put on idioms, naturally, as they are the phrasemes analyzed here. The essential in this chapter was to define what an idiom is, show defining parameters of these set phrases and discuss their idiomaticity and non-compositionality.

The proper analysis of idioms ensued. This resided in taking each idiom and describing its literal meaning with the connection to the sport and using it further as an implement for explaining the figurative meaning. Since this is a comparative work about English and Czech, there was given the best possible equivalent.

All the information in the practical part has led to several conclusions which are proposed in comparative part. The main is that phrasemes are truly culturally tainted as it was suggested in the introduction and also in theoretical part. This was proven for example by the absence of idioms from cricket, baseball or

American football in the Czech language but also by the translating techniques used here because most of the idioms had to be translated by periphrasis since there was no similar idiom to be found in the other language. When a sport, such as boxing and horse racing, or cards playing and chess was popular in both cultures, literal translations appeared much more and/or the number of idioms in the category was similar in both languages.

In conclusion, it may be said that this thesis has fulfilled its goal and showed high influence of culture, in this case sports culture, on language with a utilization of figurative units. It can also serve as a bilingual idiomatic dictionary with a thematic specialization which is not very commonly seen. Especially for Czech people this work could be valuable since there is no collection of Czech idiomatic phrases only from sports yet and as this thesis has worked with valid sources, it gives valid information.

# Závěr

Kultura je neoddělitelnou částí jazyka, což se projevuje v lexiku a zejména ve figurativním jazyce. Idiomatické výrazy obohacují a obzvlášťují jazyk, tudíž i kulturu a nedá se pohlížet na tyto dva jevy odděleně. Cílem této diplomové práce bylo zanalyzovat idiomy z oblasti sportu ve anglickém a českém jazyce a prokázat, jak úzce spjaté s kulturou jsou.

Nejprve bylo potřeba uvést teoretické podklady, na kterých tato práce staví. Tento účel splnila teoretická část, která čtenáře uvádí do tématu frazeologie a ukazuje několik definic tohoto lingvistického oboru. Následně nahlíží na několik lingvistických disciplín a jejich vztah k frazeologii a frazeologismům.

Větší prostor dostala kognitivní lingvistika, která je značně významnější pro studium frazémů než ostatní zmiňované disciplíny. Nejenže nepopírá vliv kultury na ustálené fráze, ale kultura je zde viděna jako podmínka pro jejich pochopení. Je zde představen konceptuální systém kognitivní lingvistiky a dvě teorie, jež jsou relevantní pro tuto práci.

Vzhledem ke snaze prokázat, že kultura je součástí jazyka, bylo nezbytné kulturu definovat a také ukázat, že sport je součástí kultury. Poté následuje typologie kulturních aspektů, které představují základ idiomů. Konkrétně sportovní idiomy by mohly patřit do dvou kategorií, a to materiální kultura a kulturní symboly.

Poslední sekce v teoretické části se zabývá jednotkami frazeologie. Jsou zde představeny definice, kritéria a klasifikace a přirozeně to byly idiomy, které byly následně ve středu zájmu. Hlavním zájmem bylo definovat, co to idiom je, ukázat definující parametry a zaměřit se na jejich idiomaticnost a neschopnost odvodit význam fráze z jejích komponentů.

Následovala samotná analýza idiomů, která spočívala v popisu každého idiomu zvlášť. Konkrétně byl nejdříve popsán doslovný význam ve vztahu ke sportu, ten byl dále využit pro lepší pochopení významu figurativního. Jelikož je toto práce o dvou jazycích, každá fráze je opatřena vhodným ekvivalentem.

Všechny informace uvedené v praktické části vedly k několika závěrům, které jsou předloženy ve srovnávací části. Hlavním závěrem je, že frazémy opravdu jsou poznamenány kulturou, jak bylo naznačeno v úvodu a také v teoretické části. Toto bylo prokázáno například absencí idiomů z kriketu, baseballu či Amerického fotbalu v českém jazyce, ale také použitými metodami překladu. Většina idiomů musela být přeložena parafrází, protože druhý jazyk nenabízel žádnou podobnou frázi. V případě, že nějaký sport nebo hra (v této práci to platí pro box, koňské

závody, karty či šachy) byli oblíbené v obou jazycích, doslovný překlad se dal použít mnohem častěji a/nebo počet frází v dané kategorii byl podobný u obou jazyků.

Závěrem je možné říct, že tato práce splnila svůj cíl a ukázala značný vliv kultury, a v tomto případě kultury sportu, na jazyk, za pomoci frazémů. Dále může práce sloužit jako dvojjazyčný idiomatický slovník, který je tematicky zaměřen, což není příliš obvyklé. Obzvláště pro české nadšence by toto dílo mohlo být užitečné, protože neexistuje práce, kde jsou shromážděné české idiomy pouze ze sportu. Tato práce také pracovala s aktuální a validní literaturou, tudíž lze považovat informace zde předvedené také za validní.

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## **Content of the attached CD**

The CD includes two files, an electronic version `dlouha.pdf` and a version for print `dlouha-print.pdf`.

### **Bibliografické údaje**

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## Anotace

*Tato diplomová práce se zabývá sportovními idiomy v anglickém a českém jazyce. V teoretické části se zaměřuje na frazeologii a poté konkrétněji na kognitivní frazeologii, která bere na vědomí roli kultury v idiomatickém jazyce. Dále jsou tématem frazeologismy s důrazem na idiomy. Samotná praktická část uvádí konkrétní výrazy, které jsou rozdělené dle sportů a jazyků. Každý výraz je opatřen vhodným překladem. V závěru se tato práce snaží prokázat hypotézu, že kultura opravdu ovlivňuje figurativní jazyk.*

## Synopsis

*This thesis deals with sports idioms in English and Czech. The theoretical part occupies itself with the topic of phraseology and more specifically with cognitive phraseology which acknowledges the role of culture in figurative language. Then, the phraseologisms are brought into focus with the emphasis put on idioms. The theoretical part itself covers the sports idioms divided according to the sports and languages where each idiom is provided with a suitable translation. Finally, this thesis tries to prove the hypothesis that culture does influence figurative language.*

**Klíčová slova:** idiom, kultura, sport, frazeologie, frazém, kognitivní frazeologie

**Keywords:** idiom, culture, sport, phraseology, phraseme, cognitive phraseology