

Hot Corner: Colloquial and Idiomatic Expressions used by American Baseball Commentators

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce se zabývá tematikou hovorových výrazů a ustálených slovních spojení užívaných baseballovými komentátory. V práci je zkoumána oblast mluveného jazyka, jejich změna významu a přesah do standardního anglického jazyka.

Teoretická část se zabývá historií baseballu a hlavních rysech mluveného jazyka baseballových komentátorů. Dále je zde obsažena problematika funkcí a stylů jazyka. Závěrem této kapitoly je teoretický náhled na ustálená slovní spojení a hovorové výrazy.

Praktická část práce se zabývá zkoumáním baseballového jazyka, terminologie a několika vybraných slovních spojení. U těchto spojení je vysvětlený význam a částečně i původ.

Závěr bakalářské práce obsahuje grafické znázornění přesahu baseballového jazyka do standardního anglického jazyka a celkové zhodnocení.

Klíčová slova: baseball, hovorové výrazy, ustálená slovní spojení, idiom, výrazy, mluvený jazyk, řeč, komentář, komentátor, změna významu

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with idiomatic and colloquial expressions used by American baseball commentators, players etc. Thesis explores the field of spoken language, its semantic changes and its overlap into the Standard English.

The theoretical part deals with the history of baseball and the features of spoken language used by baseball commentators. The functions and styles of language are covered. The theoretical background of idiomatic and colloquial expressions is included in the last chapter.

The practical part is concerned with exploring baseball language, terminology and selection of some expressions. These expressions are explained and in some cases is etymological background presented.

The conclusion of the bachelor thesis includes an illustration of the overlap of baseball language with the Standard English and final evaluation.

Keywords: baseball, idioms, collocations, expressions, spoken language, speech, commentary, commentator, semantic change

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INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis is written on the grounds of admiring the passion of Americans watching or playing baseball. It has a lot to do with their patriotism and the national pride. In our countries it is comparable with the passion for ice hockey or football. But the language of baseball is much more colourful than the language of ice hockey or football. Therefore it is a great field of language study.

The theoretic part includes a survey of history of baseball and baseball commentary, the classification of basic features of spoken language and description of idioms and collocations. The level of figurativeness and the fields of motivation of figurativeness are also discussed.

The practical part of the bachelor thesis is concentrated on a classification of the baseball vocabulary, the colloquial and idiomatic expressions used by American baseball commentators and players. These terms are divided into groups according to their purpose and specific usages. In this part figures of speech are also examined.

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to explore the overlap of the baseball collocations and idioms with the Standard English. We may expect large-scale overlap of these expressions with the special and common colloquial vocabulary.

To achieve this goal we had to investigate all the baseball expressions and their metaphorical meaning suitable for the everyday speaking. Not all of these expressions are used by commentators, but are commonly used in baseball surroundings.

I. THEORY

1 BASEBALL AS AN AMERICAN PHENOMENON

With regard to past times the baseball has always been an American phenomenon. To be precise, nowadays it is one of the three most famous American national sports. We can say the baseball is the most popular between the ordinary people. When playing baseball, you do not need to be tall as the basketball player needs to be, and also you do not need to be as strong as a football player has to be. The non-professional baseball player is just having fun. Thousands of American families support their children playing baseball.

The famous announcer Red Barber in 1991 said “Baseball is my favorite sport... because it is orderly. Football is organized confusion. Even the coaches don’t know anything about it until they get it on film. And basketball is just fellows running up and down in their undershorts.” (Dickson 2008, 42) The rivalry between these sports is still current issue.

The baseball culture had risen up in the middle of 19th century. Every single child wanted to be a baseball pitcher or a batter. The professional baseball gained the popularity and the baseball leagues were created. The National Association of Professional Base Ball Players was in operation until February 1876 when it was replaced by The National League. Nowadays, the National League has 16 teams divided into three divisions: East, Central and West. Since 1901 there is a second major league, called The American League. This league has currently 14 teams and divided are as in the National League. The difference of these leagues is in the playing style; National is faster and focused on the running while the American League focuses on the hitting home runs. (Dickson 2011)

Since 1903 the winners of both leagues meet in autumn in modern World Series. The World Series are the second part of the baseball supporter’s life. To play the World Series is rewarding experience for every player.

Baseball at the Summer Olympics has its own long history of demonstrating games, but the officially played games were only from 1992 to 2008 Summer Olympics. One of the reasons for voting out the baseball from the official sports may be the low rank of the worldwide representation.

However, the baseball is and will be very popular game in The United States. Naturally, people talked about baseball, used the new words that had to be created and day by day the new language was born. The baseball language is still developing and expanding into the standard language.

The baseball commentary is an extensive field of study. First of all, we need to focus on the topic of baseball. We will concentrate on the history of baseball, the commentary and what it means to be a commentator and his work description.

1.1 History of baseball

The baseball game is a very old game. It is not so easy to establish the beginning of the game, it was changing through centuries. Within the existence the game was called Stool Ball, Goal Ball, Town Ball, Boston Ball, Rounders and finally the Base Ball. We will find out the baseball did not originate in the North America, but it was carried from the Europe, apparently from the England during the colonial period.

The game of softball was developing simultaneously with baseball. The softball has slightly different rules, equipment and the field. The softball is considered to be safer and easier to understand for the beginners.

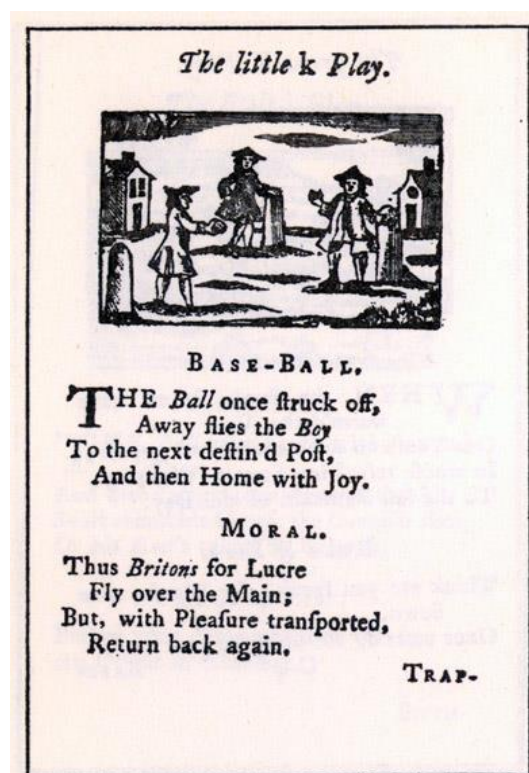


Figure 1: The page from *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* (Newberry 1762)

The word *base-ball* was mentioned in the first edition of a children's book, *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, published in 1744 in England by John Newberry. For example, see Figure 1 above. The book focused on the children, their education and their free times

activities. The first edition of the book by Newberry is not more in existence. However, it was re-published in 1762 in the town of Worcester in Massachusetts. In the list of the games we can find also a stool-ball, cricket and trap-ball. All games are rooted in the same principle. (Hellier 2004)

The second verifiable reference to baseball in North America is from 1791 when in Massachusetts the town of Pittsfield prohibited the game near the town hall.

The third and repeating reference is from about 1845 when there was codified the set of rules for the baseball game and since 1846 the rules has to be obeyed (Isport 2014).

1.2 History of baseball commentary

During the civil war (1861 – 1865) the baseball gained the popularity. The spectators were watching the game from their seats but the people who did not get into the stadium were deprived of the enjoyment. However, the radio was almost invented so they started to broadcast the games as soon as they could.

Talking about the broadcasting of the baseball game we need to have a look at the beginning of the radio broadcasting at all. Of course, there were lots of radio broadcasting during the First World War but these were not so easily discernible and were not official. The very first licensed station, KDKA in Pittsburgh, broadcasted the Harding-Cox presidential election in 1920. The boom of the broadcasting in the United States is dated back to 1921 - 1922 when during one year the number of stations increased to 200. The stations went on the air with political speeches, church services, entertaining sketches and finally the broadcasting live sporting events have arisen. The first sport broadcasting ever was the boxing match on April 11, 1921. (Patterson 2002)

August 5, 1921, was broadcasted first major-league baseball game. It was at Forbes Field in Oakland near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At that time the Pirates defeated the Phillies by a score of 8 to 5. (Patterson 2002)

Ernie Harwell, very appreciated announcer, in May 2002 (after 56 years as a broadcaster) said to St. Petersburg Times: “Radio was the most important piece of furniture in our house. That was when families stayed together and they felt a loyalty not just to teams but to players. Now, we’re listening to it in cars, on headsets. Radio has a niche because of its portability to the beach, the workplace, the kitchen. Radio is with us all the time. It’s background that TV can’t match.” (Dickson 2008, 235) This is the Harwell’s outlook for the importance of radio broadcasting, even after many years after the television

broadcasting was introduced. That assumes how much the radio important is even nowadays.

1.3 Being a commentator

What are the requirements to be a suitable commentator? That is not simple question. Of course, you must be interested in the sport you want to comment on, you must know the rules of the game, names of the players, coaches and their career. You must be able to analyse every part of the game based on your knowledge and previous experience. Very often, person who became a commentator used to be a player or a coach. But every commentator adds to his commentary speech something extra, something what makes him special and easily recognizable.

Red Barber's citation in *Christian Science Monitor*, August 27, 1987 about commentators: "Why is baseball the best sport to broadcast? The baseball announcer must know the game thoroughly, because the game is so open and the fans so knowledgeable. The slightest mistake is glaringly obvious." (Dickson 2008, 43)

1.3.1 Play-by-play Commentator

The play-by-play commentator is the one who is sitting in the room above stadium, so called *booth*. He is the one who is describing what is happening at the field. He gives us precise information about player's performances.

From the perspective of linguistics this commentator uses a wide scope of professional vocabulary, jargon, collocations and idioms. For non-involved audience these terms can be nonsensical and even misleading.

1.3.2 Colour Commentator

Colour commentator works together with play-by-play commentator. He can sit next to him in the booth or he can stay in the field so he can give us some information from the other perspective.

While play-by-play commentator relieves what is happening in the field in the particular moment, the colour commentator is giving the extra information e.g. about the player and his experience, or he adds some statistical information or even a joke. The usage of humour and catch phrases during the play is highly appreciated by broadcasters and some of the colour commentators are becoming famous among the audience. (Gresham 2014)

When watching a game on a television, the colour commentator is the one who fills gaps during the play. Otherwise, the television broadcasting would be for the watching audience not so impressing. On the other hand, the broadcaster should not over-inform the audience.

The NBC announcer, Tony Kubek Sr. said: “When the action is at the peak, you should shut up and let the scene tell the story. But some people, like Cosell, feel a need to be part of the moment and can’t stay quiet.” (Dickson 2008, 304) Speaking of TV broadcasting it is sometimes better for announcer to be quiet, and the people may enjoy the moment themselves. In the radiobroadcasting it is not possible. In such a moment the announcer must be prepared to portray the whole scenery.

We could categorize a colour commentator as a story teller. He uses meaningful sentences; his speech has some plot and an argument.

1.3.3 Side-line Reporter

The side-line reporter is another additional reporter, who goes into the deep of the issue. On the stadium can be more than one side-line reporter. One may be in the lockers room, another near the coaches’ bench, and another can interview the players’ family or followers.

The side-line reporter is watching the game from the different point of view, he is able to see what others cannot and this can be highly beneficial.

2 COMMENTATORS' LANGUAGE

On April 8, 1974 Milo Hamilton broadcasted a game. See the transcript: “Now here is Henry Aaron. This crowd is up all around. The pitch to him... bounced it up there, ball one. [Loud round of boos.] Henry Aaron in the second inning walked and scored. He's sitting on 714. Here's the pitch by Downing... Swinging... There's a drive into left center field. That ball is gonna beee... OUTA HERE! IT'S GONE! IT'S 715! There is a new home run champion of all time! And it's Henry Aaron! The fireworks are going! Henry Aaron is coming around third! His teammates are at home plate. Listen to this crowd.” (Dickson 2008, 231)

This is a typical announcer's speech during the game. It contains some baseball terms, idioms and collocations. The spoken form of the transcript is obvious via the usage of the incorrect grammar and unfinished sentences.

Some people may think they are just naturally describing what is happening on the field, but we will study the speech of the commentator in detail.

2.1 British vs. American English

British and American English were developing for centuries. Both of them were influenced by sociocultural background of each country. Not surprisingly, the languages slightly differ. The differences are in pronunciation, spelling, grammar and vocabulary.

The baseball language developed in The United States, so it is based on American English. According to David Crystal the American English has slightly different pronunciation of some words, for instance in *vase*, *leisure*, *herb* and other. The main stress in American English is on different syllables than in British English. The mixing of the pronunciation is appearing. Crystal claims that: “It has to be acknowledged that some US pronunciations have come to be increasingly used by young British people in recent decades. And older people who accommodate to them can end up with mixed usage.” (Crystal 2002, 265)

The spelling in American and British English is more interconnected and the differences have not strict borders. But some words are typically given to each country. For example the American English contains: *color*, *labor*, *inquiry*, *center*, *liter*, *offense*, and *jewelry* in contrast to *colour*, *labour*, *enquiry*, *centre*, *litre*, *offence* and *jewellery* from British English.

The grammatical aspect is not so complicated. The biggest differences occur when we deal with various dialects, idiolect and style. Major contrast is within the using of tenses, definite article *the* and *a/an*.

The differences in vocabulary within the American and British English is an extensive field of study, we may mention the well known as *cab/taxi*, *dessert/pudding*, *railroad/railway*, *movie/film*, *vacation/holidays*, *schedule/timetable*, *drug store/chemist* or *couch/sofa*. (Crystal 2002)

2.2 Written vs. spoken language

Based on Urbanová (Urbanová 2008) there are several differences between written and spoken language.

The spoken language is dynamic based on its readiness and immediateness while written language is static based on its preservability and surveyability.

Spoken language adopts acoustical and paralinguistic means of communication such as accent, rhythm intonation, pauses and timbre. These may be accompanied by so-called complementary factors as gesticulation, mimics, laugh or crying and more.

In some cases the non-verbal language may be predominant over the verbal language.

Written language is basically planned action and the understandability is given via well prepared expressing.

The language of newspapers, advertisement, television and radio broadcasting as well as e-mails, SMS and other messages is a hybrid form of communication, partly adopted features of spoken language and partly of written language. (Urbanová 2008)

However, the baseball commentators usually broadcast the games live and their speeches are unprepared. The hybrid form of language is used when the speech is at least partly prepared. Therefore, we will study the commentators' language as a spoken form.

2.3 Features of the spoken language

According to the Urbanová and Oakland (Urbanová and Oakland, 2002) there exist ten characteristic features of the spoken language:

- To get strictly to the point, the speakers tend to use short and simple words. They are avoiding periphrastic forms of the words, for instance instead of *is able to* the speaker uses *can*. (e.g. *go, get give, hit, run*)

- The speakers apply plenty of colloquial expressions. One short colloquial expression is able to substitute whole situation which would be otherwise long-windedness.
- The speech includes slang and words with emotionally negative meaning. The choice is up to the speaker only. He expresses his emotions related to the situation and shows his attitude. It can be used in a natural, unaffected and straight way as well as intended and exaggerating.
- Very often repeated are interjections and sounds. These are some kind of answers to the actual situation, unexpected happenings and responses; again, they might be used intentionally and also unwittingly. (e.g. *wow, bang, aha, ouch*)
- In a spoken language we can notice discourse markers, which are in fact meaningless and are used only to make the speech fluent and continuous. (e.g. *anyway, all right, hm, yeah, you see, right, fine*)
- The usage of the vague expressions (e.g. *a little, probably, something like that, a bit, a lot, a sort of*)
- The usage of deixis in spoken language is very natural. The speech is fluent and no repetition of the previous sentence, or part of the sentence, is needed. (e.g. *this, that, he, it*)
- Afterthoughts and additional remarks are used only in spoken language. In the written form this would be highly informal. (e.g. *correct me if I am wrong, it seems, I suppose, I believe, if you know what I mean, maybe*)
- Addressing the audience keeps the audience's attention. The addressing determines the relation between the speaker and the audience. It can be very formal, friendly or even negative. (e.g. *Our Yankee followers, all baseball fans, Dear Red Sox addicted*)
- The tenth feature is the uniqueness of the speaker. Every speaker adds to the conversation something that cannot be repeated.

These features are not suitable for the prepared speech like political speeches, motivational and encouraging speeches. In these situations is expected a higher level of expressing.

2.4 Professionalism

Peprník (Peprník 2003) claims that professionalism is used only between the fellow workers or among the people from the same social group and nobody else can understand.

The social groups using the professionalism are for instance: technicians, physics, students, soldiers, actors, politicians, clerks, gamblers, servicemen and finally sportsmen. In our case these are the baseball players, coaches, commentators and other members of the baseball game.

The latest named people are using the professionalism among them and they do understand to each other very well. They are using the professionalisms expressions on a daily basis. Only the commentator is able to transform the hidden message and makes it understandable for the audience. Therefore, besides other functions, the commentator has sometimes a function of a translator. And otherwise, the audience must be able to decode the message and deduce the point. So there is a condition of a knowledgeable audience. For instance, the ice-hockey player who is interested only in ice-hockey cannot catch the point of the baseball commentator speech as well as a ballplayer or a baseball follower.

2.5 The vocabulary

The baseball is very famous for its vocabulary. Some expressions had spread out of the baseball field; they were adopted by the other social groups, for example in the business or in a teenage slang. Lots of them are used in our everyday language.

Very frequent are idioms, collocations, slang expressions, simile, metaphors, metonymy and other figures of speech.

The whole terminology of baseball is extensive field of study. One of the main researchers of the *baseballese* is Paul Dickson. He wrote a number of works on the language of baseball, including also the unwritten language of baseball, the signs.

2.6 Figurative language

The figurative language resides in the ability of adopting the metaphorical meaning, resembling and involving the figures of speech. The figurative language has non-literal meaning. The baseball language is full of figurative elements. These elements have a different level of figurativeness.

The higher level of figurativeness is expected in pure and semi opaque idioms, as is described in the chapter 4.1 and in metaphors, allusions and other figures of speech.

The lower level of figurativeness can be found in semi-idioms, collocations and baseball terminology.

The level of figurativeness may differ according to the situation and the knowledge of people who are involved into the communication.

The motives for using a figurative language by a speaker could be to make the speech special, different from others, interesting and innovative. This is made partly intentionally, partly not. The figurative language is used to make a specific effect on each hearer.

3 FUNCTIONS AND STYLES OF LANGUAGE

In this chapter we will focus on the functions and styles of the spoken language. These terms can be misleading, so we need to give them exact definitions.

3.1 Functions of spoken language

According to Jakobson (Jakobson 1960) there exist six functions of spoken language. These are responding to the six elements of communication channel. Basically the *addresser* sends a *message* to an *addressee*. The message has to have a *context*; addresser needs to have a *contact* with an addressee and the message is *coded*.

The first function connected with context is referential function, also called denotative or cognitive function. The referential function “is the leading task of numerous messages, the accessory participation of the other functions in such messages must be taken into account by the observant linguist.” (Jakobson 1960, 353) It is hard to find a sentence without this function.

The second function is emotive, so-called expressive function. This function refers to an addresser who has some attitude to the message. Speaker is expressing his or her positive or negative attitude to the topic. Speaker tends to use an emotionally coloured words and interjections.

The third, conative function is focused on the addressee. Conative function should influence the addressee. The speaker is using addressing the audience directly. Usage of vocatives and imperative are very common. For example “*Dear Joe,*” or “*Listen to me!*”

The next function is phatic. This function is related to the contact. Speaker is verifying if the audience is listening or keeping attention. For instance, speaker uses utterances like “*Are you listening?*” “*Did you see it?*” “*Please, keep attention.*”

Another function is related to the code, so-called metalingual function. The speaker or the listener can check up if their language is based on the same code. Example: “*Do you know what I mean?*”

The last function is poetic. This function is focused on the message itself. When we are talking about poetic function, we do not speak about poetry in this case. Poetic function comprises all the collocations, idioms, proverbs, slang and other expressions. The speaker uses these words because they sound good or are accurate. As an example we can list some baseball expressions: *drop the hammer*, *easy cheese*, *spray hitter*, *spitball* or *a puff hitter*.

Even the baseball commentary is only one way communication and there is no response from the audience; the functions are preserved. The referential function, as have been said, is almost in every sentence.

Very frequent is the emotive function. The announcer gives his opinion into the topics, he can be passionate, frustrated, curious and surprised by the game and he is expressing his emotions through the speech.

The conative and phatic functions are also used. The speaker can address the audience during the opening ceremony, to please them to stand for national anthem, to make them applaud to some happening on the field and other situations. If the audience is bored the speaker can ask them “Are you here?” and wake them up this way, usually the audience screams and shouts. This is the only response he can get. Another example may be the widely quoted phrase by Mel Allen “How ‘bout that, sport fans?” (Dickson 2008, 12)

The metalingual function is not very frequent, because the announcer does not need to ask if audience understands. The speaker must be understandable at least for the partly-involved audience.

The poetic function is the most relevant function of the baseball commentator. He is expected to be very good speaker, to entertain the audience. The usage of the collocations, idioms and other expressions is appreciated.

3.2 Functional styles of language

Based on Miššíková (Miššíková 2003), there exist three main groups of functional styles: subjective, subjective-objective and objective. The publicistic style, where the commentary belongs, is partly objective and partly subjective. On the other hand the scientific and administrative style is highly objective.

The publicistic style has three substyles – journalistic articles, essays and oratorical substyle, which consist of speeches on political and social problems, television and radio commentary. The oratorical style shares common features of spoken language, as it was said in chapter 2.3.

4 IDIOMS AND COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS

The dictionaries and linguists give us slightly different definitions and categorization of each term. The boundaries between what is idiom and what is collocation are usually not very clear. It depends on what the linguist is focused. The differentiation fluctuates on the semantics, syntactic and others.

The understanding to the topic is conditioned by understanding to the keywords. There is a list of the keywords with definition adopted from the MacMillan Dictionary (Rundell, 2007, 282, 749):

- *Idiom* /noun/ - an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words.
- *Idiomatic* /adjective/ - expressing things in a way that sounds natural; containing idioms or consisting of an idiom.
- *Collocate* /verb/ - words that collocate are often used together.
- *Collocate* /noun/ - a word that is often used with another word.
- *Collocation* /noun/ - the fact that a word collocates with other words.
- *Colloquial* /adjective/ - used in informal conversation rather in writing or formal language.
- *Colloquialism* /noun/ - a colloquial word or expression.

Certain expressions which originated in baseball are used on daily basis nowadays. We may list for instance the expressions *first base* with the meaning of kissing and *the high five* – the phrase and the movement.

Kvetko claims that the American English become very evident in the English spoken in the worldwide measures. “More and more idioms of American origin have become popular, especially in the media, and gradually have become established both in British and Australian English as a consequence of the influence of popular American culture, sport and politics.” (Kvetko 2006, 49-50)

We may confirm this process is really happening. Some of the mentioned phrases, which will be concerned, we may know from our everyday speaking.

4.1 Meaning of idioms

The idioms are multi-word expressions. The meaning of these expressions is double, first is the meaning of the whole expression and the second is the meaning of every single word used in the phrase. Kvetko names them as literal and non-literal meanings. (Kvetko 2006)

It is possible to differentiate the types of idioms according to their degree of transparency (Kvetko 2006):

- Pure idioms (opaque idioms, demotivated idioms, phraseological fusions) are phrases when there is no connection between the literal and non-literal meanings. It is impossible to find out the real meaning without the previous clarification. For strangers it is one of the hardest things to learn. Usually, in translations, they lose the original meaning and are not easy to explain in default language. For example the idiom *four-ribeye steak*. In baseball it means the home run.
- Semi opaque idioms (semi-transparent, figurative idioms, transparent metaphors, phraseological unities) are more likely to understand. There exists some kind of semantic connection between the non-literal meanings. Stranger needs to think about the meaning for a while and he can somehow deduce the literal meaning. For instance the expression *coat-and-tie decision*. We can realize that the decision was made by someone who wears coat and a tie. So in the baseball terminology it is a decision made by a manager.
- Semi-idioms (bound collocations, phraseological combinations) are idioms where one part of the phrase has a literal meaning and the second part has a non-literal meaning. The stranger may understand to the part with the non-literal meaning but the literal meaning of the other part he must deduce or learn. The perfect example is phrase *bubble player*.

4.2 Function of idioms

According to Kvetko, the functions of idioms from the speaker's point of view are numerous. "They are used to name objects, actions or describe situations. They may express certain generalizations, truth, and advice, make evaluation, emphasize, organize the discourse; they may focus on individuals or the whole community..." (Kvetko 2006, 37)

He determined five basic groups of idioms' functions:

- Idioms with a nominative function – these are used to name things, actions, qualities and have a structure of a phrase. For example *green pea, bazooka, betsy*.
- Idioms with a communicative function – are used to mane situations and statements. They are structured as clauses. For example *to not get a bat off one's shoulder*.

- Combination of both functions – idioms mixing both functions and they have no strictly fixed structure. For example *clean their socks* or *their socks are cleaned*.
- Idioms without any of these functions – these are usually modal or interjectional phrases, for example *by the way*, *on the other hand*.

Some linguistics tends to divide the function of idioms differently. For instance Fernando, 1996, used a pragmatic point of view and created ideational, interpersonal and relational idioms. More detailed division made a linguist Moon in 1998. His functions are informational, evaluative, situational, modalizing and organizational. (Kvetko 2006)

II. ANALYSIS

5 ANALYSIS OF BASEBALL LANGUAGE

All the terms are from the book *The Baseball's Greatest Quotations* (Dickson 2008) and from the dictionary *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary* (Dickson 2011). We can designate these sources as a reliable. Paul Dickson wrote a number of editions of his books and he is appreciated linguist in The United States.

5.1 The baseballese

The term baseballese stands for the language of baseball. It includes all the official terminology, slang and jargon. We will focus on the basic vocabulary now.

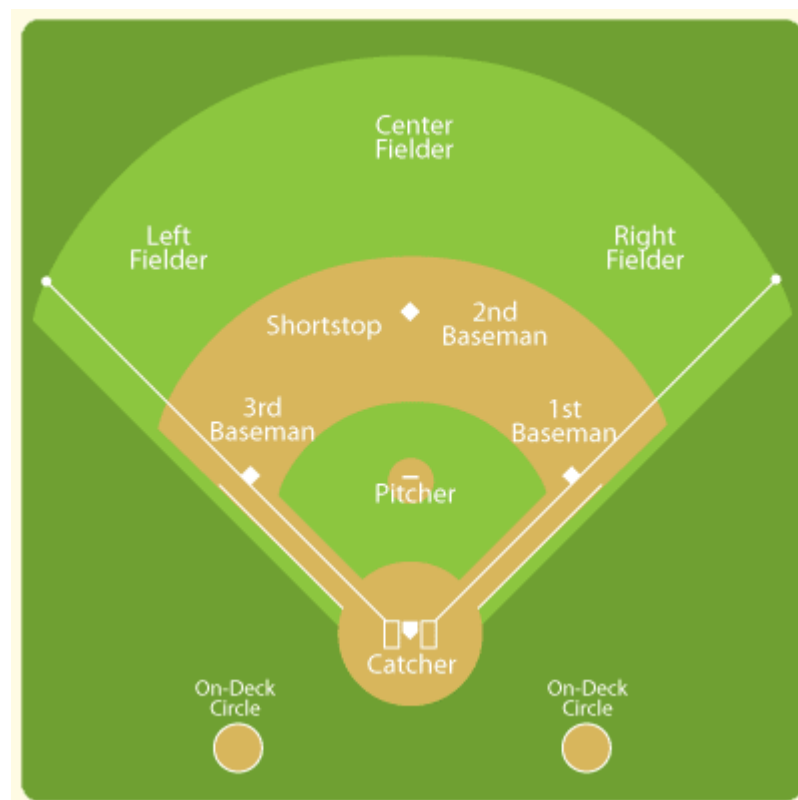


Figure 2: The baseball field

The basic vocabulary is very voluminous and still developing. The describing of the field would be the most exemplary, see Figure 2. Most of the given expressions were first time used in the rules set in 1845.

5.1.1 Home plate

The home plate as you may see on the Figure 2 is where the batters and catchers are. It has a role of the last base simultaneously. The abbreviation for the home plate is HP. This

expression has a lot of synonyms: *home, home base, home depot, home turkey, turkey, dish, platter, plate, pan batting station, counting house, counting pan, counting station, knocker's stone, pay station, receiving station, registering station, registry station, rubber, saucepan, saucer, scoring iron, slab, hearth stone, pentagon, dock, white* and others. These expressions should indicate you are safe, at home, when you get there you are the winner; that there is the station of the batters and catcher. The *home plate* has an extended use in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force jargon; there it represents a safe and home base too.

The *home plate* collocates with other words, e.g. *home plate umpire*.

The idiom *the home plate is jumping around* or *plate jumping* means that the pitcher misses the strike zone; from his point of view the home plate is changing position even if it is not true. The pitcher can use this idiom to excuse his failure. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.2 First base

The first base is in the right corner of the field. The player succeeds when he gets to the first base. This term extended to the American English as an initial success for instance in a job. In a teenage slang since 1930's the first base means the kissing. Synonyms are: *first, first corner, first position, first sack, first station, initial, gateway, gateway bag*.

The *first base* collocates with *coach, line, slot, umpire* and others. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.3 Second base

When the player gets to the second base, he is practically on the half way to home plate. It follows that the synonyms are *second, halfway mark, halfway station, middle bag, middle cushion, middle sack, middle station, midway, midway station, second corner, second sack, second station and keystone*. The abbreviation is 2B. In teenage slang the second base signifies petting above the waist.

The *second base* collocations: *second base combination, second base hit*. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.4 Third base

The player on the third base is one step from the home plate. This position is very difficult to manage. Players are more likely to make a mistake. From this situation emerged the synonyms *coffin corner, difficult corner, difficult station, hot corner, far corner, far station, far turn, odd corner, third corner, third sack, third station* and *third*. In the teenage slang it means petting below the waist. The abbreviation is 3B.

Third base collocations are *third base coach, third base hole, third base line, third base umpire* and others. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.5 Mound

The mound is the elevated spot in the middle of the field where is the pitcher's position. The first usage of the term is from the revised baseball rules in 1950. The mound is also called *pitcher's mound, pitching mound, hill, launching pad, parapet, peak, turtle back, turret, crest, knoll* and others.

The *mound* as an adjective is a synonym for *pitching*. It follows the collocations: *mound artist, mound assignment, mound duty, mound statesman, mound mainstay* and *mound savior*. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.6 Pitcher

Pitcher or *hurler* pitches a ball to the batter and catcher. Pitcher's aim is to miss a batter's bat and catcher to get the ball. Between the pitcher and catcher exists a number of unspoken signals which indicates the pitcher's intention. The pitcher was earlier called the *slabber*. The abbreviation for pitcher is P.

The pitcher collocates with a number of other terms. For example *pitcher fielding practice, pitcher park factor, pitcher run average, pitchers and catchers report, pitcher's battle, pitcher's best friend, pitcher's game, pitcher's box, pitcher's mound, pitcher's strike, pitcher's rubber, pitcher's paradise, pitcher's paradise* and many others. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.7 Catcher

Catcher gestures to the pitcher how he should throw the ball so the batter will not hit it. The catcher is behind the batter. The catcher has a mitt and the mask. The catcher is also called *backcatcher, hindcatcher, catch, backstop, backstopper, game-caller, grabber, hind snatcher, receiver, snatcher, stopper, wind paddist* and others. The abbreviation is C.

The catcher collocations: *catcher's balk, catcher's box, catcher's earned run average, catcher's equipment, catcher's interference, catcher's mask, catcher's mitt*. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.8 Batter

Batter's equipment is obviously a bat. His aim is to strike a fair ball. He is called *batsman, batsmith, sticker, stickman, sticksmith, stickster, striker* and others.

The collocations with batter are: *batter-fielder wins, batter park factor, batter-runner, batter's box, batter's eye, batters facing pitcher, batter's interference, batter's run average, batter's wheelhouse, "batter up!", batter win average.* (Dickson 2011)

5.1.9 Umpire

The umpire is an uninterested judging person. In the field are four umpires: first base umpire, second base umpire, third base umpire, home plate umpire and two additional near the foul line. The home plate umpire is also an *umpire-in-chief*. Umpires are also called as *an arbiter, arbitrator, blind Tom, blue, bluecoat, boy blue, Jesse James, Mr Guess, man in blue, shepherd* and *a tin cup*. To act as an umpire is to *ump*.

The *umpire* collocations: *umpire-baiting, umpire-in-chief, umpire's assistant, umpire's broom, umpire school, umpire's interference, umpire's signal, ukulele umpire, plate umpire* and so on. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.10 Infielders

The home plate, first base, second base and third base are creating a shape of the infield, so called "diamond". Infielders are defensive players in this diamond-shaped field. There is one for each base and one additional, the shortstop between the second and third base. Infielders have smaller and more flexible gloves than the outfielders. The abbreviation is IF. (Dickson 2011)

5.1.11 Outfielder

The rest of the field, without the diamond is the outfield. The outfielders, also called *gardeners* or *orchardmen*) are three: left fielder, the center fielder and the right fielder. They have bigger gloves than infielders. The abbreviation is OF. (Dickson 2011)

5.2 Idiolects

Next to the standard baseball language we might find different variety of language, idiolect. The idiolect is a variety of language specific to the individual person. The speaker may select words and grammatical elements on his own or the pronunciation may be slightly different.

One of the broadcasters who have his own idiolect is Dizzy Dean. His idiolect is very different from others and it has been named as the Deanism. His language is marked as destroying all the grammatical, phonetic and also spelling rules. For that reason he was

criticized by schoolteachers for example for his repetition of *ain't*. Dean has an answer for this case: “Let the teachers teach English, and I will teach baseball. There is a lot of people in the United States who say isn't, and they ain't eating.” (Dickson 2008, 134)

Schoolteachers also accused Dean of destroying students' syntax. His response was a bit ironic, based on the homophonic word *syntax* and phrase *sin tax*. “Sin tax? What will those fellers in Washington think of next?” (Dickson 2008, 135)

The repetition of *ain't* is not only one thing he was accused for, next is his variation of the word *slid*, so-called *slud*. “You know how I say, ‘Rizzuto slud into second.’ I keep saying ain't. Well, what's wrong with ain't? And as for saying ‘Rizzuto slid into second,’ it just ain't natural. Sounds silly to me. Slud is something more than slid. It means sliding with great effort.” (Dickson 2008, 137) That is how Dizzy Dean defences himself.

5.3 Borrowed expressions

A lot of the baseball terms were accepted by the Spanish language and afterwards they were adopted back into American English. Nowadays, in the language of baseball, there occur a huge number of Spanish terms. We can say that almost every basic baseball term has its own Spanish equivalent. For example *base por bolas* (base on balls), *base robada* (stolen base), *carrera* (run), *entrada* (inning), *lomita* (mound), *mariposa* (knuckleball) *lanzador* (pitcher), *lanzamiento rompiente* (curveball) and more. (Dickson 2011)

6 ANALYSIS OF THE SEMANTIC CHANGES

To achieve particular effects on the audience the commentator uses a variety of stylistic means and devices. These stylistic means and devices transfer or shift the meaning. Among the most frequently used are metaphors, allusions, simile, aphorisms, irony and others.

6.1 Metaphors

The language of baseball typically includes great number of metaphors. Predominant number of idioms is based on metaphors. In these cases person needs to use his creative imagination to deduce the original meaning of the metaphor.

According to Kvetko, the metaphor is the transfer of meaning determined by similarity of meanings. One thing resembles to the other. (Kvetko 2005)

Some of the baseball expressions have a metaphoric meaning only in the everyday language. For example, *the spring training*; in baseball it is the pre-seasonal preparation for players. In everyday language it may mean the situation when the preparation for some event is not taken into the account for the final outcome.

Another examples, the expressions related to describe a players' body, are listed in the chapter 7.2.

6.2 Allusions

This figure of speech is also very frequently used in the baseball language. Lots of them are made to food. There exists an idea that the whole field is *a plate* and everything on it is a food. The ball could be *an apple, cantaloupe, egg, lemon, orange, pea, potato or a tomato*. Other expressions as *a can of corn* (easily caught fly ball), *juice* (used as a verb, to hit the ball with great power for distance), *meat* (the thickest part of a baseball bat), *Grapefruit league* (the major league teams on the spring training and exhibition games in Florida), and *a cup of coffee* (a short trial in the major leagues by a minor league player), *fish cakes* (to earn small amount of money, low salary), *mustard* (a fastball), *pretzel* (a curveball), *banana oil* (a mythical solver for all problems on and off the field) and *a green pea* (young inexperienced player) are very common. Examples are adopted from *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary* (Dickson 2011).

6.3 Aphorism

Based on Miššíková (Miššíková 2003), the aphorism is used to create an effect of mutual closeness. The speaker approaches the audience via commonly known phrase and implies ideas to be interpreted on the basis of someone's specific background knowledge.

Dan Quisenberry is pitcher is Kansas City Royals and he is known as one of the greatest aphorists.

One of his widely quoted phrases belongs "Natural grass is a wonderful thing for little bugs and sinker ball pitchers." (Dickson 2008, 431) With this phrase he wanted to highlight the fact that the sinker ball pitchers throw a ball to the ground where the bugs are and it is nothing good about throw a sinkerball.

In 1981 Quisenberry was asked what the best thing about baseball is; and he answered "There is no homework." (Dickson 2008, 431) This may be implied as in baseball is nothing what annoys you at home.

When Quisenberry was asked what his plan is after the Series are over, he said: "I'm looking forward to putting on my glasses with the fake nose so I can walk around and be normal person." (Dickson 2008, 431) He may think he would become famous or on the other hand he may be hated for his performances during the World Series. And because famous people have a fans and lot of paparazzi he would rather wear the fake nose to stay incognito.

Quisenberry's phrases become widely used even after he died in age of 45 on cancer. His way of expressing was called Quisenberries. (Dickson 2008)

Another aphorism is *it ain't over 'till it's over* and means to go hopefully to the very end of the game until the last man remains. This phrase can be interpreted as the supporting words to not giving up until it is finished. (Dickson 2011)

6.4 Irony

Irony used in baseball has a function of a joke. For example some of the baseball phrases are mentioned in Bible and several people make a fun of this. "The first historical reference to baseball is in the Bible where, in Genesis 1:1, it says, "In the big inning." (Dickson 2008, 281) In Genesis 24:15 is mentioned a pitcher: "Rebekah came out ... with her pitcher," as well as in Exodus 32:4 is reference to a catcher: "And he received them at their hand." (Dickson 2008, 45) These ironical references to the Bible are widely quoted for more than hundred years.

The phrase “He fakes a bluff.” (Dickson 2008, 170) by broadcaster Ron Fairly is obviously an irony. No one can fake something what already fake is.

Fairly’s another expression “Last night I neglected to mention something that bears repeating.” (Dickson 2008, 170) is also an irony. The collocation originally *it doesn’t bear repeating* means something that cannot be repeated. The sentence as it is means, the thing he wanted to tell us yesterday he cannot say today. Therefore, the sentence is meaningless and ironic.

6.5 Simile

In Ernie Harwell’s essay *The Game for an America* is one phrase widely quoted. “Baseball? It’s just a game – as simple as a ball and a bat. Yet, as complex as the American spirit it symbolizes. It’s a sport, business – and sometimes even religion.” (Dickson 2008, 235) When using a simile, he wanted to emphasize what a baseball means to him. Also the antonymic adjectives *simple* and *complex* highlight the diverse opinions to baseball.

6.6 Repetition

The aim of using repetition is to emphasize. We can see it in the Ernie Harwell’s essay again. “Baseball is continuity. Pitch to pitch. Inning to inning. Game to game. Series to series. Season to season.” (Dickson 2008, 234)

One of the most thrilling moments of baseball broadcasting was in October 3, 1951 when Russ Hodges called a home run. His commentary is stream of consciousness with lot of repetition.

“... Branca throws. There’s a long fly. It’s gonna be... I believe... The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! Bobby Thomson hit into the lower deck of the left field stands. The Giants win the pennant! And they’re going crazy, they’re going crazy. Oooh boy! I don’t believe it, I don’t believe it, I will not believe it!” (Dickson 2008, 245)

Peter Verdonk claims that the stream of consciousness technique is: “A style of representation of thought which appears to be the freest form of direct thought and creates the illusion that, without narrator interference, readers have direct access to the random flow of thought of character, i.e. to their inner points of view.” (Verdonk 2002, 121)

7 THE EXPRESSIONS CATEGORIES

In the baseball language exist so many expressions and it is practically impossible to name them all. Therefore some of them have been divided into the categories according to their purpose. Major part of the phrases is adopted from *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary*, 2011.

7.1 Expressions related to the player's characteristic

The players earned many nicknames due to their abilities, performances, functions, appearance or personality trait. Many of them have become popular and now are generally used.

When the ballplayer is called as a *dust sprayer*, we can imagine him as a player who slides in a dust a lot. The dust sprayer can be also a *belly whooper* at one time. The belly whooper slides on his stomach and this way he is reaching the base.

The player who is sitting on the bench most of the playing time is a *benchwarmer* or a *bench polisher*. These expressions are also used when someone want to embarrass the backup man.

The nickname *Edison* stands for the player who is experimenting.

An *early bloomer*, *morning glory* or a *phenom* is a ballplayer who gains popularity during a short period of time and at the same moment he disappears and is forgotten.

The expression *rookie* stands for player who is playing his first season as a professional player. Rookies does not have it easy among the professionals, they are blamed, shamed and their colleagues make a fun of them. Rookie may be also called as a *busher*, *gazonie*, *green pea*, *jelly bean*, *recruit*, *yannigan*, *rook*, *rooky*, *buckleberry*, *kindergartner* and *budder*. Phil Rizzuto, a Yankee broadcaster, in 1977 said: "Those huckleberries in the National League didn't want to do anything that the American League wants to do." (Dickson 2008, 452) The term rookie was invented in 1908. (Dickson 2011)

The Angels, Giant and Mariners broadcaster, Ron Fairly in 1978 said: "... Many of us couldn't run when we were 21. So guys like us pinch-hit and get on base – and they send in a rabbit to run for us." (Dickson 2008, 171) The term *rabbit* stands for a runner who is very fast as a rabbit is.

7.2 Expressions related to a part of a player's body

The most frequent expressions describing a players' body are at the same time metaphors. These metaphors stand as attention grabbing parts of the language. Examples are adopted from *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary* (Dickson 2011):

- The player's arm: *gun, hose, wing, whip, rifle, soupbone, bazooka*
- Eyes: *lamp*
- Neck or throat: *a pipe*
- Head: *coconut, bean*
- Hands: *hooks*
- Legs: *wheels*
- Feet: *tires*

When a player comes to the field and meets another player, they make a hand-slap, so-called *high five*. The origin of this popular gesture is debatable. Some people claims it was invented by Los Angeles Dodgers in 1977, some claims it was invented by basketball player Derek Smith in 1979. The rivalry between these two sports occurs again.

7.3 Expressions related to the positions

When the runners are on bases waiting for a hit, they are like *ducks on the pond*. In everyday language it means a situation when is possible to be successful.

The team who is playing out of his home field is *abroad*. The baseball term may be seen on the schedule cards, where is written home or abroad.

If is something happening *between the white lines*, it means inside the foul lines. In extended use it may means what happens between white lines is official and it has to be taken into consideration.

The Broadway or *Main Street* is a place in the middle of the plate. All the people at the ballpark keep an eye on the player on Broadway/Main Street.

When an infielder is dangerously near the batter it is said he is *close to cannon's mouth*. The cannon imply the batter's ability to hit a ball with a great power.

When all the runners run from one base to another while the ball is pitched, the announcer may claim that *the carousel is spinning*. This term was introduced by announcer Brian O'Neil. The term *merry-go-round* can be used. The moving of players from base to base is also called *coconut snatching*.

The Catbird seat expression was popularized by red Barber. It implies a player who has a control over the game. In Standard English a person at the catbird seat has some advantage.

The seating for players who are not playing at the moment, managers and coaches is called *dugout*, *coop*, *bench* or *a pit*. When somebody is in the dugout, he is not participating. For example in everyday language, when speaking of some event and a person is not there, he is in dugout.

The expression *base on balls* means that the runners are free to run to another base after the second team mistake. This expression has a lot of synonyms, some them are: *walk*, *free check*, *free pass*, *free passage*, *free ticket*, *free transit*, *free trip*, *free ride*, *promenade*, *four wide ones*, *gift* or *life*.

The border between the dirt and the grass area is called *lip*. According to the lip, the ball which hits a lip is *the lipper*.

In the title of the bachelor thesis is a catch phrase *hot corner*. This is a synonym for the third base. The hot corner symbolizes the uneasy getting from the third base to the home plate. In the hot corner is higher possibility to make a mistake, the runner on the third base is stressed and when he success, he will score. (Dickson 2011)

7.4 Expressions related to the pitching methods

The fastball and the curveball are the most frequent pitches. Both of them have a huge number of synonyms and slang expressions.

The *fastball* is a pitch made with a great power at the maximum speed. The synonyms are *cheese*, *gas*, *hard one*, *heat*, *number 1*. The origin of the term *cheese* is from the slang dictionaries from 19th century when there the term means anything of the best quality, despite the fact that *cheese* is quite new term in baseballese. The term *cheese* elaborated in the baseball and we can differentiate *cheddar* or *ched*, the fastball above the 90 miles per hour speed; *the easy cheese*, *hard cheese*, *good cheese* and *high cheese*. All these terms have their exact characterization.

The *curveball* flies in the shape of a bow. It is called *curve*, *deuce*, *Uncle Charlie*, *yakker*, *yellow hammer* and *number 2*. The expression *yellow hammer* evolved from the yellow bird, bunting, which flies in the same height as the curveball. The term *Uncle Charlie* is difficult to explain. One of the versions is the term is onomatopoeic formulation for curveball.

The *knuckleball* is a slowly pitched ball which is difficult to hit. Synonyms are *knuckle*, *knuckler*, *bob-and-weave*, *bug*, *butterfly*, *floater*, *flutterball*, *dancer*, *mariposa*, *moth*, *bubble*, *ghost-ball*, *horseshoe*, *rabbit*, *raw-raw* and *tumbler*. Expression *butterfly* should indicate the motion of the butterfly; the ball is flickering or wavering. Out of this movements were evolved other terms. *Mariposa* is borrowed from the Spanish and means butterfly. Term *rabbit* has more meanings in baseball, one for the knuckleball, where ball imitates the jumping movement of the rabbit; and other meaning is for the player who is as fast as the rabbit. The combination of curveball and knuckleball is *knuckle curve*. Basically it is a curveball thrown with the knuckleball grip.

Other types of pitches are for example *cutter*, *four-seam fastball* and *two-seam fastball*, *screwball*, *slider*, *forkball*, *off-speed pitch*, *gyroball* and more. (Dickson 2011)

7.5 Expressions related to the naming of the ball and other equipment

The game of baseball tends to be very inventive in naming the frequently used equipment. The ball has a great number of synonyms within the baseball slang, where some are idioms based on metaphors or allusions. As have been said before, the ball could be *an apple*, *cantaloupe*, *bulb*, *egg*, *lemon*, *orange*, *pea*, *potato* or *a tomato*.

Another piece of equipment is a bat, also called *a pencil*, *betsy*, *wood*. The bat has an extended usage in some phrases. For example in everyday speaking about to do something immediately or from the start, we may use the phrase *right off the bat*. When somebody is successful but not in all cases, *he bats two for three* or *he bats three for four*. *To not get the bat off one's shoulder* means that someone was not given a chance. All these phrases were adopted by Standard English.

The catcher's mask is co-called *face mask*, *cage*, *wire cage* or *bird cage* according to its shape.

In the 1960s and 1970s the number of ballparks was built. They were made of the huge amount of a concrete with big parking places and rounded. Due to the external appearance of the ballparks they were called as *a concrete ashtray*, *concrete donut*, *donut* or a *cookie cutter*. Other collocation related to the building of the ballpark is a *cigar box*. It stands for the small ballpark. (Dickson 2011)

7.6 Expressions for home run

The *home run* stands for the situation when the hitter hits the ball usually out of the field and the batter scores. There exist many synonyms for home run. For example *homer*, *downtowner*, *four-bagger*, *tater* and others.

Since the radio broadcasting started some of the homerun calls become as famous as the home runs itself, sometimes even more.

Some of the homerun calls are: “Bye-Bye Baby.” by Russ Hodges, “Kiss it Goodbye.” by Bob Prince, “Goodbye Dolly Grey.” by Leo Durocher, “It might be. It could be. It is! A home run!” by Harry Caray, “Forget it.” by Vin Scully, “It’s going, going, gone.” by Mel Allen, “That ball is history.” by Eric Nagel and “That ball is out of here,” what is commonly used. All of these calls become popular because they fit to the particular moment and the background of the happening. (Dickson 2008, 246-7)

The phrase “Open the window, Aunt Minnie, here it comes!” (Dickson 2008, 247) become iconic for the home run calls at the stadium in Pittsburg where the sound of breaking glass often comes after the homerun. The announcer Rosey Rowswell came up with the non-real Aunt Minnie who might live across the street from the ballpark.

We can differentiate a lot of types of home runs. *The grand slam* is a home run when all the bases are loaded. This term is now used in many other sports or competitions. The grand slam has its own synonyms, e.g. *grand salami*, *grand slammer*, *grannie*, *jackpot*, *bases-loaded home run*, *demolition derby*, *four-ribeye steak* and others.

When somebody tries to hit a home run and uses maximum power, we can say, he is *swinging for the fences* or *swinging for seats*. This expression extended to everyday life conversation. When a person is swinging for fences, it means, he is trying to do the best. The same meaning have expressions *go for the downs*, *go for the fences*, *go for the pump*. (Dickson 2011)

7.7 Expressions describing the atmosphere and conditions in the ballpark

On April 3, 1990 Red Barber described the field conditions as: “The sky overhead is a very beautiful robin’s egg blue with, as the boys say, very few angels. It’s a very tough sky for players to look into and left field in Yankee stadium is the sun garden.” (Dickson 2008, 42) The expression *very few angels* mean not much of clouds. This expression explains *beautiful robin’s egg blue with* thanks to the utterance *as the boys say*. The term *boys*

counts for players. The last utterance, *left field in Yankee stadium is the sun garden*, is informing the audience that the left field in the Yankee stadium is a sunny place, where the sun may bother players. To make it simply explicated, the announcer was giving the information about the weather, and he was pointing out that the sun may confuse the players' ability to catch the ball.

When you are going to *cancel Christmas*, you already know that something bad will happen. (Dickson 2011)

CONCLUSION

In the theoretical part we have explored how much is the baseball rooted in American history and how much it could mean to the American citizens. We also explained the commentators' language features, and the function of the spoken language. In the last chapter of the theoretical part we mentioned the function and meaning of the idioms.

In practical part we described the basic terminology. We find out there exist also an idiolect and some terms borrowed from Spanish. We specified the tools of semantic changes which are frequently used. We divided the last chapter into categories and selected expressions were explained.

In the course of exploring the baseball idioms and collocations, we have described various expressions from the semantic point of view. Part of them has a literary meaning, e.g. the basic terms, but more of them have a partly or fully non-literary meaning. It signifies the high level of figurativeness. The tools for the figurative language are for example figures of speech.

The reason for using the figurative language is the level of attention-grabbing elements for the listeners. The listeners are very attentive and they expect an entertaining content of announcer's speech. These expressions are used on a daily basis, sometimes is easier to use an idiom or colloquial phrase instead of describing the happening or the situation in complex sentences.

The aim of the bachelor thesis was to explore the overlap of the baseball idiomatic and colloquial expressions with the Standard English. We expected a heavy occurrence of baseball phrases in special and common colloquial vocabulary, where the professionalism, jargon, slang and other colloquial phrases belong. The presence of baseball phrases in Standard English (SE) is also expected. In special and common literary vocabulary we may found the complex terminology of baseball. The overlap is very uneasy to measure but we may demonstrate it on the Figure 3: *Stylistic classification of English vocabulary* based on Miššíková. (Miššíková 2003)

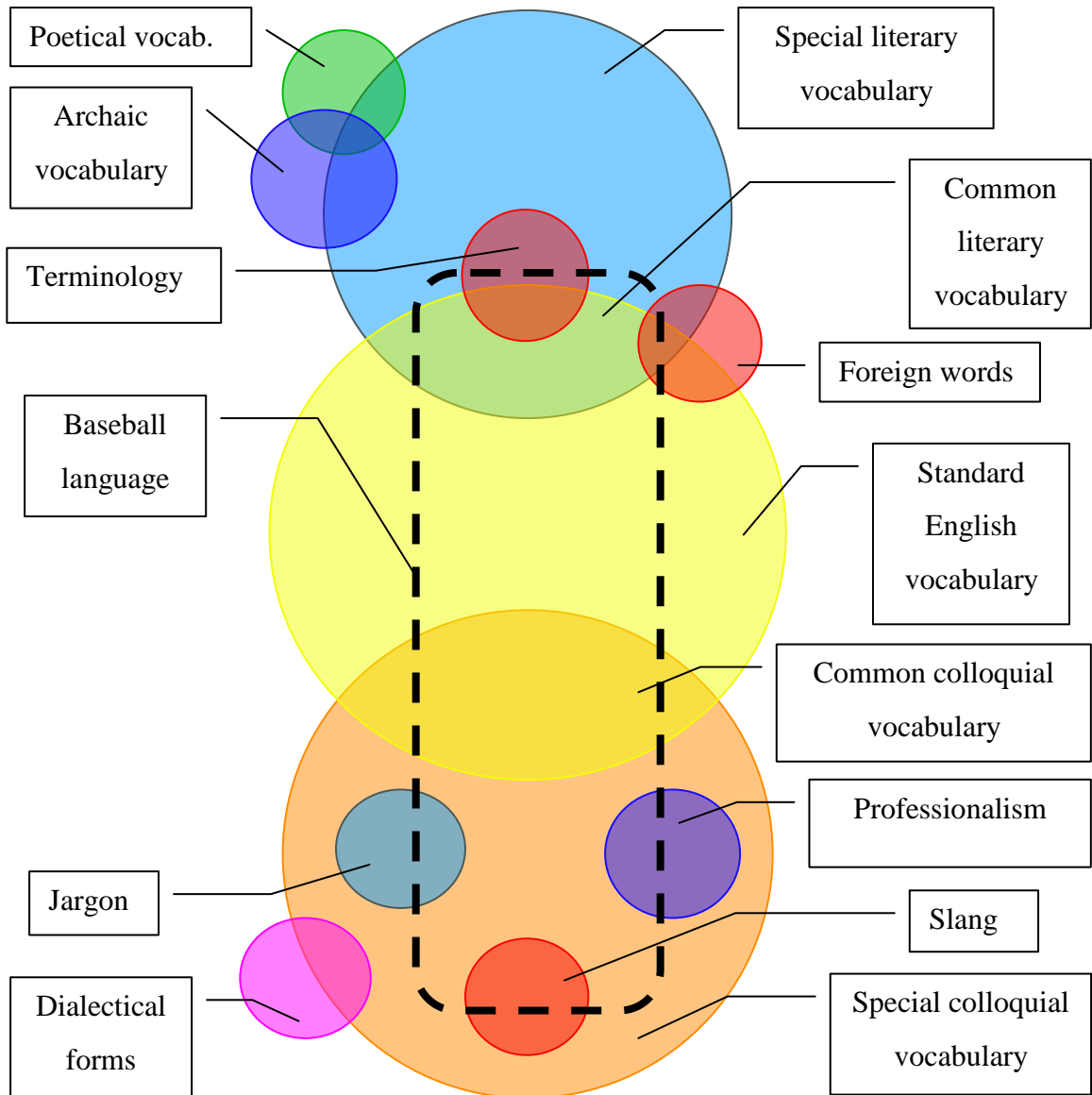


Figure 3: The stylistic classification of English vocabulary (self-made)

The space which baseball language occupies is wide. It comprises the slang, jargon, professionalism, and a considerable part of a common colloquial vocabulary. We cannot omit the part of Standard English which is essential for meaningful speeches and the part of common literary vocabulary where the terminology and foreign words are. Baseball vocabulary partly belongs to the area of special literary vocabulary.

We need to remember the language is not static but flexible and the circles may differ from individual to individual and from situation to situation.

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