

LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE

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RĪGA 2016

UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**USE OF IDIOMS IN AMERICAN MOVIES ABOUT
STOCKBROKERS**

**IDIOMU LIETOJUMS AMERIKĀŅU FILMĀS PAR BIRŽAS
BROKERIEM**

BACHELOR THESIS

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RĪGA 2016

ANOTĀCIJA

Komunikācijas procesā ir neiespējami izvairīties no idiomām. Pat ja cilvēkiem nav vajadzība zināt angļu idiomās, daudzi tomēr mēdz ar tām saskarties skatoties Holivudas filmas. Šī bakalaura darba mērķis ir izpētīt idiomu lietojumu dažādās amerikāņu filmās saistībā ar biržas brokeriem no 1983. līdz 2013. gadam, un noskaidrot, cik labi latviešu auditorija tās izprot. Pētījumā izmantotās metodes teorētiskajā daļā ir literatūras apskats, un praktiskajā daļā – biežuma analīze, diskursa analīze un aptaujas pētījums. Biežuma analīze atklāj, ka idiomu blīvums pētāmajās filmās biznesa un finanšu kontekstos ir vairāk kā divreiz augstāks salīdzinājumā ar tiem, kas nav saistīti ar biznesu. Diskursa analīze parāda, ka idiomām ir dažādas funkcijas finanšu diskursā. Aptaujas rezultāti atklāj, ka latviešu auditorijas zināšanu līmenis par biznesa idiomām ir virs vidējā.

Atslēgvārdi: idiomās, finanšu diskurss, filmas par biržas brokeriem, biežuma analīze, diskursa analīze, aptauja

ABSTRACT

Idioms generally cannot be avoided in the process of communication. Even if people do not have the need to know English idioms, many still may come across them when watching Hollywood movies. The goal of this Bachelor thesis is to study the use of idioms in different American movies related to stockbrokers from the year 1983 to 2013, as well as to investigate how well the Latvian audience understand these idioms. The methods of research are literature review in the theoretical part, and frequency analysis, discourse analysis and questionnaire based survey in the empirical part. The frequency analysis reveals that the density of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance is more than twice as high compared to the ones not related to business in the movies under discussion. Discourse analysis demonstrates that idioms have various functions in financial discourse. The survey results reveal that the Latvian audience's knowledge about business idioms is above average.

Key words: idioms, financial discourse, movies about stockbrokers, frequency analysis, discourse analysis, survey

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INTRODUCTION

To start with, it is impossible to study the English language without encountering different types of idiomatic expressions. Regarding the term *idiom* as ‘a fixed word combination whose meaning cannot be inferred from, or is not the sum of, the meanings of its component words’ (Svensén, 2009: 188), in other words, if we come across a particular word combination in a text that does not make sense literally in the context, then, for the most part, the particular expression is an idiom. Some idioms may be more difficult to understand; others do not require *racking one’s brains* so much in order to understand meanings of particular idioms because, besides full idioms, there are also partial idioms and semi-idioms that possess a partially literal meanings (Svensén, 2009: 190). Nevertheless, idioms play an important role in different types of spoken and written discourses. Idioms are commonly used in spoken discourse, whereas the language of business and finance in particular is known to be very rich in idiomatic expressions and even has its own vocabulary of business idioms. Many non-native English speakers may not need to have a deep knowledge of common English idioms, not to mention business idioms, if they do not work in multi-national companies or need to use English on a daily basis; however, nowadays many people chose to educate or simply entertain themselves by watching various kinds of movies whose original language is English. American cinema, or in more specific terms – Hollywood movie industry, is known to be the leader of the movie industries around the world due to its high-flying marketing strategies, innovation, technologies and other areas, as well as reaching a large number of international audiences (*Historical Dictionary of American Cinema*, 2011: ix). To sum it up, even if people do not pay special attention to idioms, they still cannot completely avoid them. In order to fully understand the original language in small details, not just the message of particular context or movie in general, it is important to get acquainted with commonly used English idioms.

The author of this paper has decided to combine the enjoyable task with the practical one and explore the functioning of idiomatic expressions used in American movies that are meant for international audience and involve more or less business and finance related contexts, focusing on the language used by stockbrokers.

The theme of this paper is ‘Use of Idioms in American Movies about Stockbrokers’; the **goal** of this Bachelor thesis is to study the use of idioms in different American movies related to stockbrokers and finance from the year 1983 to 2013, as well as to investigate how well the Latvian audience understand these idioms.

Five **research questions** have been formulated:

1. What are the most frequently occurring idioms in the movies under discussion?
2. What is the density of idiom use in the contexts dealing with business and financial matters and in those discussing personal ones?
3. Which are the most frequently occurring business idioms and what is the frequency of business idioms compared to common idioms in the movies under discussion?
4. What are the functions of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance?
5. How well do the Latvian audience, who have studied business and finance in English, comprehend the most frequently used business idioms found in these movies?

In order to answer the research questions, the following **enabling objectives** are set:

- Analyze the theories on idioms, discourse, business discourse, financial discourse and American movie industry, as well as study different kinds of idioms and their meanings;
- Make a sample of idioms used in six American movies about stockbrokers and analyze the data based on the theoretical background;
- Design a questionnaire based on the sample of idioms and distribute it to the target audience;
- Process the data obtained, interpret the results of the study and draw the conclusions.

The basic theories on idioms, discourse and financial discourse by the following authors Svensén (2009), Jackson and Amvela (2004), Halliday and Hasan (1985), Swan (2005), Camiciottoli (2013) and Amernic and Craig (2006) have been studied. Dictionaries of idioms, e.g., *Oxford Idioms Dictionary* (2001), *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs* (2002), *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (2003) and *American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (2003) have been employed in the theoretical and the empirical parts. The research methods are literature review in the theoretical part of the research and frequency analysis and discourse analysis in the empirical part of the research. Lastly, a questionnaire based survey has been conducted, where questionnaires as a quantitative data collection tool have been employed in order to obtain the data from respondents. The target respondents are 35 graduate students from Modern Language and Business studies program and their mother tongue is Latvian. The selected movies for the analysis are as follows: *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), *Wall Street* (1987), *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010), *Margin Call* (2011), *Boiler Room* (2000) and *Trading Places* (1983).

The first chapter discusses the concept of idiom – definitions, characteristics, functions, types; and provides an insight in business idioms. Many examples of idioms are also presented in the chapter.

The second chapter briefly explains the term *discourse*, and discusses the core elements of it. The subchapters include the overview of the peculiarities of business discourse and a deeper insight in financial discourse is also considered in the chapter.

The third chapter summarizes the main aspects in relation to American movie industry, movie genres and movie production in general.

The fourth chapter deals with the empirical part of the research. It presents the data obtained from the scripts of the six movies, as well as the questionnaires distributed among the target audience. The results of the data processed are interpreted and discussed.

1. IDIOMS

The purpose of this research is to study idioms; therefore, this chapter is devoted to understanding of these complex figures of speech. The chapter begins with a preface regarding idioms and continues with a subchapter that explores definitions that are provided for this phenomenon. Further subchapters explain the concept of idioms, their characteristic features and functions in more detail. One of the subchapters investigates the types of idiomatic expressions that are generally found in discourse, and the final subchapter pays a special attention to business idioms that can be encountered in business discourse.

English is very rich in idiomatic expressions. Idioms are commonly used in spoken discourse, and they can be found in written discourse as well, e.g., in literary works, news articles, academic writing, etc. (*Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms*, 2003: 6). The term *idiom* originates from Greek *idiōma* meaning ‘private or peculiar phraseology’ and *idios* meaning ‘own, private’ (*Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins*, 2010). According to Atkins and Rundell (2008: 491), idioms belong to multi-word expressions, whereas other commonly used types of multi-word expressions include phrasal verbs, collocations, compounds, etc. Yet, all these expressions possess ‘some degree of idiomatic meaning or behavior’ (ibid.: 166).

1.1. Definition of Idioms

In order to understand what is meant by the concept of idiom, firstly, it is important to look at several definitions given by various sources.

According to Langlotz (2006: 3), an idiom is a heterogeneous multi-word expression that is composed of two or more ‘lexical constituents’. Idioms possess semantic and structural peculiarities, and their lexicogrammatical nature often cannot be explained by the general grammar rules (ibid.: 2). *Dictionary of Idioms* (2006: 5) states that ‘idioms are fairly fixed phrases that consist of more than one word, with a meaning that cannot be understood from putting together the meanings of the individual words’. *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (2003: 6) gives a similar description stating that idioms are fixed expressions that are usually fairly frozen, and the meaning of these expressions is different from the meanings of each word separately. Last but not least, Crystal defines an idiom as

A sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit. The meanings of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the idiomatic expression as a whole (2008: 236).

Even though, each of the sources above gives a slightly different definition, yet all of them agree to the point that an idiom is a fixed expression that consists of two or more words and it functions as a single unit. To add, the meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be summed by putting together the literal meanings of each word separately.

The definition given by Crystal (2008: 236) has been considered as the most applicable for this research and will be applied further on for this thesis.

1.2. Concept of Idioms

Since the definition for the term *idiom* has been established, we can proceed to explore the concept of idioms in more detail. The following subchapter explains the sophisticated nature of idioms and why it is important to know them.

Idioms are diverse figures of speech, and these expressions can often be very complex and cause confusion, especially for the learners of English (Langlotz, 2006: 1). Linguists often find it difficult to give a proper definition and classification for these multi-word expressions, because their 'lexicogrammatical behavior cannot be explained by the general grammatical rules of the given language' (ibid.: 2). Crystal (1987: 104) suggests that idioms are single units of meaning but they do not fall within the classification of the term *word*; e.g., the idiom *kick the bucket* contains three words, consequently, it is impossible to classify this expression as a *word*, but still it has a single unit of meaning 'to die' (ibid.).

It is stated that William Shakespeare (1564-1616), who is considered as the most iconic writer of the English language, has added more than five thousand words, idioms and expressions to the English language, and many of them are still used in modern times. Some idiomatic expressions produced by Shakespeare are also employed in contemporary business English, e.g., *to budge not an inch*, *to be in a pickle*, *what's done is done*, *method to one's madness*, etc. (Stirling, 2012).

Swan (2005: 232) notes that idioms are found in all kinds of English (formal, informal; spoken, written) and it may sometimes be difficult for foreigners to properly understand authentic texts in English or to communicate with native English users, because they are not acquainted with these expressions. Although, it is possible to communicate with others by using literal phrases instead and express oneself with a non-idiomatic language; however, a speaker with a poor knowledge of idioms will find himself/herself in an unprivileged situation, e.g., when reading a literary work or taking a part in a debate (*Dictionary of English Idioms*, 1986: 7). Besides, each language has its own unique set of idioms, which usually cannot be literally translated word by word into another language. Even though, some languages may share

similar idioms, still, these expressions can be difficult for foreigners to understand; e.g., a person knows the meanings of the words *break* and *even*, but by knowing these two words separately it does not help to catch the meaning of the idiom *break even*, which means ‘make neither profit nor loss’ (Swan, 2005: 231). For example, the English idiom *fifth wheel* (meaning ‘an extra and unneeded person’ (*McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs*, 2002)) has a literal translation and the same meaning in Latvian ‘piektais ritenis’. Nevertheless, such idiom as *burn the midnight oil* (meaning ‘stay up working, especially studying, late at night’ (ibid.)) does not make sense idiomatically in Latvian, if translated word for word as ‘dedzināt pusnakts eļļu’. Still, Swan (2005: 232) notes that the most common idioms are usually acquired naturally and there is no point in studying them all by heart, because many dictionaries of idioms often include obsolete instances that are barely used today.

Furthermore, English is either a national or an official language in many countries, e.g., the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, etc. Nevertheless, the usage of the English language slightly differs from one area to another, e.g., the form of English spoken in the United States is called American English (AmE), and English used in the United Kingdom is called British English (BrE). Some of the differences of these two forms include vocabulary, grammar, spelling, as well as idioms. There are many idioms in AmE and BrE that share the same meaning, but some of them present lexical differences (Online 1). Table 1.1 below demonstrates examples of AmE and BrE idioms that have the same meaning but slightly differ in wording (Online 2):

Table 1.1 Comparison of AmE and BrE idioms

American English	British English
<i>Knock on wood</i>	<i>Touch wood</i>
<i>A skeleton in the closet</i>	<i>A skeleton in the cupboard</i>
<i>Beating a dead horse</i>	<i>Flogging a dead horse</i>
<i>Sweep something under the rug</i>	<i>Sweep something under the carpet</i>

There are also idioms in AmE and BrE that express similar meanings but are written in a completely different form, e.g., in AmE speakers would say – *catch somebody red-handed* and in BrE – *bang someone to the rights*; either way both idioms express the same meaning that somebody was caught committing a crime. Other examples include: (AmE) *cut in line* and (BrE) *jump the queue*; (AmE) *do the dishes* and (BrE) *do the washing up* (Online 3).

To sum up, it is complicated to explain the nature of idioms because they do not conform to one standard criterion and often cannot be literally translated into another

language. Each language has its own idioms, and even different forms of English employ distinctive idioms. It is necessary to know some of the most frequently used English idioms in order to understand different kinds of spoken and written texts of the English language. The next subchapter speaks about the characteristics that describe idioms.

1.3. Characteristic Features of Idioms

This chapter discusses such concepts as ambiguity, origins and conditions that have influenced the creation of particular idioms. It also speaks about the syntactic peculiarities of idioms and in which cases the structure of idioms can be varied.

Ambiguity is a characteristic feature of idioms. In order to learn whether a particular expression is meant literally or figuratively, the context, in which the idiomatic expression is used, is crucial. For example, without a proper context the expression *to beat a dead horse* is quite ambiguous, because one may think that somebody is literally beating a dead animal; to the contrary, the figurative meaning of this expression is ‘to be wasting time discussing a matter that has already been closed’ (Jackson and Amvela, 2004: 67). Depending on the context a reader or a listener can determine in what sense a particular expression is meant, and once they realize that a certain expression is meant idiomatically, they will automatically drop the literal meaning and look for the idiomatic one (ibid.).

Idioms also possess special syntactic peculiarities, and they are often frozen, e.g., the idiom *to kick the bucket* does not permit the use of passive tense such as ‘the bucket was kicked by somebody’. To add, idiomatic phrases do not allow the substitution of words with synonymous ones (ibid.), e.g., in the idiom *connect the dots*, the word *dots* cannot be replaced by the word *points*, even if it is a synonym. Moreover, idiomatic expressions usually do not permit the omission of words, e.g., the expression ‘we are *looking forward seeing you*’ is used inaccurately, because the word *to* is missed after the word *forward* (ibid.). At the same time, Svensén (2009: 189) argues that ‘an idiom may also be varied by the addition or removal of words (with or without a change of meaning)’, e.g., *wash one’s (dirty) linen (in public)*. Many idioms containing a verb phrase also allow grammatical variation and change of tense, e.g., *she loses heart, lost heart, had lost heart*, whereas use of synonymous words in idioms are permitted as long as the meaning of the idiomatic expression is not altered (ibid.).

Regardless of the fact that idioms usually do not permit alterations, according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (2007: 183), there is also a term called ‘idiom chunk’ meaning that ‘a part of an idiom is separated from the rest by a syntactic process’, e.g.,

there is a common idiom *spill the beans*, but '*the beans were by then pretty well spilled*' is an idiom chunk meaning that 'some secret was out' (ibid.).

An interesting fact about idioms is that 'they all started sometime in history and were influenced by the living conditions, culture and lifestyle of the times in which they were created' (Online 4). In accordance with the *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* (2004), the idiom *grin like a Cheshire cat* (meaning 'have a broad fixed smile on your face') comes from Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865); the idiom *rattle someone's cage* (meaning 'make someone feel angry or annoyed, usually deliberately') originates from the action when a dangerous animal is teased by the spectators outside its cage. Other source adds that it is difficult to imagine that many of these figurative expressions once had a literal meaning, because many of them sound so violent – people would be *digging their own graves, breaking camel's backs, killing birds with stones, beating dead horses*, and so on (Online 5).

To conclude, idioms can be very ambiguous and only from proper contexts we can reveal whether a certain expression is meant literally or idiomatically. This characteristic feature can be explained by the fact that many idioms originally were phrases that literally described particular actions or situations. Even though, idioms are considered as almost frozen, they still allow grammatical and sometimes lexical variations depending on contexts. The next subchapter investigates the functions of idioms.

1.4. Functions of Idioms

The following paragraph explores how idioms function in different texts and contexts. Idioms are diverse figures of speech that often add color to the language. Yet, there are situations when idioms fulfil other functions, besides making the language sound more interesting.

Langlotz (2006: 3) believes that idiomatic expressions 'fulfil specific discourse-communicative functions'. Idioms are used to make the English language sound more colorful, but besides that, there are also other reasons why they are employed. Idioms may function as short and concise devices of expressing longer and more complex thoughts, e.g., instead of saying that something is 'a very small amount in comparison to the amount that is needed (*Cambridge Idioms Dictionary 2nd Edition*, 2006)', it is possible to substitute it with the idiom *a drop in the ocean* (Online 6). Idioms are also used for emphasis and to express opinions or feelings more clearly, e.g., when saying that something is *an uphill task*, anyone who has ever physically conquered a steep hill would automatically recall the effort involved, because 'idioms sometimes bring a clear mental picture to mind'. The use of idioms in the

language makes it sound more interesting and witty; nevertheless, it is important to use them with care and only when the meaning is perfectly clear in order to avoid misunderstandings (ibid.).

We have clarified that idioms are devices that fulfil certain communicative tasks – on the one hand, idioms are able to express longer sentences or concepts in just a few words; on the other hand, they can make the language sound more ambiguous and vague, especially, if the meanings of particular idioms are not clear to the reader or the listener. However, if the language user is generally acquainted with common idioms, knows when to use them and improves his or her knowledge of idioms from time to time, that opens up new opportunities to understanding and communicating the English language from a wider perspective. The next subchapter lists different types of idiomatic expressions that can be found in the English language and also demonstrates how they can be employed in order to fulfil some of the functions mentioned above.

1.5. Types of Idiomatic Expressions

Despite the fact that there are no concrete criteria that would clearly explain the nature of idioms, it is still possible to distinguish and define the most common types of idiomatic expressions. The following paragraphs explain the terms *full idiom*, *partial idiom* and *semi-idiom*, as well as give an insight in *proverbs*, *routine formulas* and *similes*, which are phrases that often possess a figurative meaning and are also recognized as idioms in various dictionaries.

Jackson and Amvela (2004: 66) distinguish *full idioms* and *partial idioms*. They refer to *partial idioms* as phrases where ‘some of the words have their usual meaning while the others have meanings that are peculiar to that particular structure’ (ibid.). For example, the expression *red hair* is considered as partial idiom because the word *hair* is used in its ordinary meaning; whereas, the word *red* is used idiomatically because it does not necessarily apply to the exact color tone. Many other examples of partial idioms also include employment of colors, e.g., *white coffee* and *white wine*, where the word *white* is used idiomatically because *white coffee* is still brown in color and *white wine* is usually yellowish (ibid.). The authors conclude that ‘partial idiomaticity can be a matter of degree and may in some cases be little more than a matter of collocational restriction’. Idioms in general is a matter of degree because such phrase as *make up a story* is used literally, *make up a fire* is partially idiomatic, whereas, the expression *make up one’s face* is completely idiomatic (ibid.).

Regarding *full idioms*, according to Svensén (2009: 190), they are referred to as idioms where none of the words possess a literal meaning. Full idioms can be subdivided in two groups – *partly compositional* and *non-compositional*. Partly compositional idioms can be analyzed in parts, where each part represents something different, e.g., in the idiom *spill the beans*, the word *spill* represents divulging and the word *beans* represents some secret. Whereas, non-compositional idioms cannot be analyzed in parts (e.g., *saw logs* meaning ‘snore during sleep’) because ‘none of the components can be taken to represent any of the components of a possible paraphrase’ (ibid.).

Some idioms can be categorized as *semi-idioms* because they possess a semi-literal meaning ‘which can be partly inferred from the meanings of their components since one of these has, to a higher or lesser degree, retained its literal meaning’ (Svensén, 2009: 190). Such phrase as *drive a hard bargain* is categorized as a semi-idiom because it literally speaks about bargaining, but the expression is still classified as an idiom (ibid.).

Other fixed multi-word expressions that are usually listed in dictionaries of idioms and referred to as idioms are *routine formulas*, *proverbs* and *similes*. In relation to routine formulas, these are ‘stereotyped word combinations’ and they fulfil pragmatic functions in recurrent communication situations (Svensén, 2009: 191). Routine formulas can be grouped according to their communicative function, such as discourse-organizing expressions (e.g., *I beg your pardon?*; *Wait a minute!*; *Don’t you think?*), metacommunicative expressions ‘i.e. phrases commenting on the ongoing conversation’ (e.g., *by the way*; *as I said earlier*; *to be quit frank*), politeness phrases (e.g., *you’re welcome*; *I’m sorry*, *nice to meet you*) and ‘phrases expressing feelings’ (e.g., *That’s too bad!*; *You don’t say!*; *How nice!*) (ibid.: 192).

Proverbs are usually constructed as full sentences; they are almost completely frozen in terms of grammar and do not permit change of tense, and in very rare occasions use of synonymous words is allowed. The purpose of proverbs is ‘to convey certain assertions about life’, e.g., *the early bird gets the worm*, *an apple a day keeps the doctor away* (Svensén, 2009: 192).

Similes are ‘fixed word combinations containing the word *like* or its equivalents’ and are ‘often of the ‘semi-idiom’ type’ because one of the components usually preserves its literal sense (Svensén, 2009: 192). Stirling (2012) believes that an idiom is a simile and it is used as a comparison in order to emphasize the issue or situation, and it is able to draw ‘a figurative picture using words’; e.g., when saying that someone is *hungry as a wolf*, one would visualize a wild animal that is very furious when hungry, therefore, this idiomatic comparison stresses someone’s level of hunger (ibid.).

After investigating the types of idiomatic expressions in a smaller detail, we can presume that only *full idioms* correspond to Crystal's (2008: 236) definition of idiom that 'the meanings of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the idiomatic expression as a whole', and such types as *partial idioms*, *semi-idioms*, *similes* and *proverbs* cannot fully be classified as idioms, because they possess a partially idiomatic meaning. Even if the latter types of idioms contain words that preserve their regular meaning, these expressions still have to be regarded as idioms because they function as a single unit in order to express something. On the one hand, idioms can be distinguished according to their structure; on the other hand, they can be grouped according to domains in which they are used, therefore, the next subchapter investigates the concept of business idioms.

1.6. Business Idioms

This chapter briefly explains the purpose of specialized idioms, as well as gives an interpretation for the term *business idiom*. Different examples of business idioms are also provided in the subchapter.

Different fields of study and practice, such as finance, law, engineering, physics, etc., 'have their idioms – their specialized diction adapted to and useful for the instruments, activities and actions professionals in those fields have to deal with' (Tredinnick and Whyte, 2010: 90). Hence, the author of this Bachelor thesis defines *business idiom* as a specialized idiom used in the field of business by members of the field in order to communicate their goals and deal with tasks and duties more efficiently and explicitly. This definition is the working definition in this paper.

Gillett (2006: 1-2) marks that idioms are widely used in the American workplace; therefore, it is important to get acquainted with the most common idioms that are used in the business environment in order to keep track of business activities. Idioms in American English originate from various sources, and many 'business-focused' idioms often come from military and sports related terms.

This provides some insight into the way Americans think about business: like war, it's a bitter competition with winners and losers. Like sports, it's a game, with the prizes going to those teams (companies) with superior strategy and execution (ibid.: 2).

Here are some examples of business idioms originating from the military (Online 7):

- *Bite the bullet* – 'to make a difficult or painful decision; to take a difficult step';
- *Rally the troops* – 'to do something to improve the morale of the employees and get them energized about doing their work';

- *Shape up or ship out!* – ‘improve your behavior or leave; if you don't improve your performance, you're going to get fired’.

Here are some examples of business idioms originating from the sports (Online 8):

- *Stay ahead of the game* – ‘to be leaders in the field/business environment’;
- *Plain sailing* – ‘an easy or simple situation’;
- *A two horse race* – ‘a close contest between two groups or companies’.

Here are examples of some of the most commonly used business idioms (Online 9):

- *Cut corners* – ‘to take shortcuts and find an easier or cheaper way to do something’;
- *Get down to business* – ‘to stop making small talk and start talking about serious topics related to business’;
- *Go the extra mile* – ‘to do more than what people expect from you’;
- *Take the bull by the horns* – ‘to directly confront a difficult situation’;
- *Under the table* – ‘something done secretly (and usually illegally)’.

To conclude, this chapter has summarized the core aspects in relation to idioms. Firstly, it has explored various definitions for the term *idiom*. Secondly, it has investigated the characteristic features and functions of idioms, and has distinguished the main types of idiomatic expressions. Last, but not least, the subchapter regarding business idioms has been included because it will be useful for the empirical part of this research. Now we can head to the next main chapter about *discourse* that will also include some examples that demonstrate the use of idioms in particular discourses.

2. DISCOURSE

The following chapter discusses the elements that revolve around the term *discourse*. It explores such concepts as *text* and *context*, and mentions the main features that characterize spoken and written discourses. The subchapters also include an overview about business discourse, whereas financial discourse is discussed in more detail.

The concept of *discourse* is very broad, and before exploring it, first, we have to define what is meant by the term *text*. Halliday defines text as ‘any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation’; in simplified words – ‘language that is doing some job in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences’ (Halliday and Hassan, 1985: 10). Text can be expressed in written and spoken mode, or any other means of expression imaginable. On the one hand, when a text is written down, in the first moment it may seem that it is constructed of words and sentences, but when going into detail, it is actually composed of meanings. On the other hand, meanings have to be encoded or expressed somehow, either in written characters or audio mode, in order to be perceived (ibid.). Text basically is a semantic unit and it has to be considered from two perspectives simultaneously: as a product and as a process.

The text is a product in the sense that it is an output, something that can be recorded and studied, having a certain construction that can be represented in systematic terms. It is a process in the sense of a continuous process of semantic choice, a movement through the network of meaning potential, with each set of choices constituting the environment for a further set (ibid.).

The terms *text* and *context* go hand in hand and one cannot exist without another. Such concepts as *the field*, *the tenor* and *the mode* help to understand texts that appear in different contexts of situation, ‘the environment in which meanings are being exchanged’ (Halliday and Hassan, 1985: 12). The *field* generally refers to the existent social situation, and answers the question ‘what is that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component’. The concept of *tenor* analyzes the participants in more detail, e.g. their statuses, roles and mutual relationships. The *mode* investigates the importance of the language and tries to find an answer to the question ‘what is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation’ (ibid.). In order to analyze how particular texts cohere in different contexts, two general approaches can be employed: *text analysis* that concentrates on written pieces of language and *discourse analysis* that focuses more on spoken and living language in practice (Crystal, 1987: 116).

For the reason that text and context are so interlinked, it is crucial to employ various kinds of cohesive devices in order to create coherent and logically flowing stretches of language. Cohesive devices are used to link together independent sentences, thereby creating more specified contexts (Halliday and Hassan, 1985: 48-49). Crystal (1987: 119) adds that ‘to call a sequence of sentences a ‘text’ is to imply that the sentences display some kind of mutual dependence; they are not occurring at random’. As a result, several types of cohesive devices have been identified:

- *Conjunctive relations* – something that is about to be said is directly related to something that has been said in the past, by employing concepts like *time*, *contrast* and *result*:

E.g. ‘I left early. *However*, Mark stayed till the end. *Lastly* there’s the question of the cost’.

- *Coreference* – parts of sentences that cannot be semantically interpreted without referring to some other parts in the text. Two types of references are distinguished: *anaphoric* reference that looks backwards, and *cataphoric* reference that looks forwards:

E.g., ‘*Several people* approached. They seemed angry.’ (*anaphoric*);

‘Listen to this: *John’s getting married.*’ (*cataphoric*).

- *Substitution* – one element is replaced by another:

E.g., ‘I’ve got a pencil. Do you have *one*?’

- *Ellipsis* – a part of a structure is missing, and can be recovered only from the previous context:

E.g., ‘Where did *you see the car?* ^ In the street.’

- *Repetition* – a phrase is repeated fully or partly:

E.g., ‘Canon Brown arrived. Canon Brown was cross.’

- *Lexical relationships* – one lexical unit engages into a structural relation with another:

E.g., ‘The *flowers* were lovely. He liked the *tulips* best’.

- *Comparison* – a compared feature is presupposed in the preceding discourse:

E.g., ‘That house was *bad*. This one’s far *worse*.’ (ibid.).

The chapter has generally explained the terms *text* and *context* and how important their mutual interconnection is. It has summarized different cohesive devices that can be employed to link together independent words and sentences, therefore, creating logical and meaningful contexts. The next subchapter speaks about the peculiarities of spoken and written discourses.

2.1. Difference between Spoken and Written Discourse

The following paragraphs discuss the main differences between spoken discourse (SD) and written discourse (WD), and mentions general characteristic features that each of them possess.

According to van Dijk (1997: 4), the essential indicator that distinguishes SD from WD is that spoken interaction happens on present time and demands face-to-face conditions between participants. SD concentrates on talk, which can be found in conversations and dialogues. For the most part, talk is spontaneous and improvised. SD is organized by turn-taking and, because the nature of talk can be unpredictable, participants are required to react consequently from what has just been said (ibid). SD can be characterized by the use of simple grammar and sentence structures. Talk is usually free-flowing and speech subjects and sentences tend to be short. SD usually comprises simple and more common vocabulary, whereas phrasal verbs are used instead of regular verbs (Swan, 2005: 292). Spontaneous talk often includes pauses, filler words, errors, repetitions, overlaps, repairs, etc. (van Dijk (1997: 4).

Written texts are usually well-organized and more controlled because they are not put under pressure by concept of time as in SD, so there is more time for revision and correction (ibid.). WD can be characterized by the use of more complicated grammar and sentence structures. WD is often produced in formal style and vocabulary tends to less common, employing more sophisticated and academic words (Swan, 2005: 292). However, such written genres as letters, e-mails and notes, when improvised spontaneously, also show many features that are characteristic to SD (van Dijk (1997: 4).

Now that we have clarified the main differences between SD and WD, we can move on to the next subchapter that explains the peculiarities of business discourse.

2.2. Business Discourse

The term *business discourse* is very diverse, and this subchapter briefly explains some of the most crucial aspects regarding the language used in different kinds of business related environments and situations.

According to Bargiela-Chiappini (2009: 2), business discourse (BD) is a process of ‘talk and writing between individuals whose main work activities and interests are in the domain of business and who come together for the purpose of doing business’. BD focuses on language that is employed in corporate and commercial environments (ibid: 305). BD is goal-oriented

and people use it to communicate and achieve their corporate goals. Business language can be characterized as persuasive, directive, promotional, informative or a combination of all (Salvi and Bamford, 2007: 11). BD incorporates many genres and covers various discourse domains, therefore it usually contains the language of finance, politics, organizational theory, statistics, accounting, etc. (Bamford, Cavalier and Diani, 2013: 48-49). To add, English is considered as the lingua franca of international business communication and it is the dominant language in the business environment (Trosborg and Jørgensen, 2005: 12).

Bargiela-Chiappini (2009: 24) suggests that BD can be analyzed from two prospects: one-speaker-one-culture and different-speakers-from-different-cultures. Ellis and Johnson (1994: 9) suppose that in the single-culture perspective, the language is more likely to be rich in vocabulary and employ more complicated grammar and sentence structures, as well as make use of many idioms, metaphors and other expressions, whereas in the mixed-culture environment, the language is more likely to be based on basic vocabulary and simpler grammar and sentence structures.

Businessmen often need to be explicit and very clear when communicating with others, for that reason they employ specific words and phrases, in order to use time more efficiently and avoid misunderstandings (Ellis and Johnson, 1994: 9). BD covers wide range of specialized vocabulary and many BD subgenres require even more sophisticated terminology. People need to get acquainted with specialized business terminology, as well as know common business abbreviations and acronyms, if they want to successfully communicate and operate in business environment (Salvi and Bamford, 2007: 107).

Spoken BD particularly concentrates on relationship-building because by ensuring closer relationships between businessmen and customers, an organization can foster its performance and in that way benefit financially (Handford, 2010: 150). Metaphorical language is used as a tool to intensify intimacy between interlocutors, yet it can also make the language sound more conflicting and ambiguous (ibid.: 212). Spoken BD can also be vague, speculative, instructive and hypothetical (ibid.: 123).

The subchapter has revealed that the purpose of BD is to get things done and the language can be used as a tool that ensures successful business transactions and outcomes. BD also employs language that is characteristic to other domains, such as finance and accounting, therefore, the following subchapter investigates financial discourse in more detail.

2.3. Financial Discourse

The empirical part of this paper deals with movies about stockbrokers, which implies that the language in these movies is more or less finance related, hence, it is necessary to investigate the peculiarities of financial discourse. This subchapter explores the concept of financial discourse (FD), as well as inspects the language functions and the vocabulary employed in the field of finance.

According to Camiciottoli (2013: 2), FD is a type of business discourse, and financial communication is very crucial for companies, as they are periodically requested to report their economic performance. Camiciottoli (2013: 9) states that FD is ‘any type of spoken and written text that is related to the management of assets and liabilities of companies’. The discourse covers written texts containing financial information, financial news and articles that are written by the individuals related to the field. Yet, financial communication is more related to the texts produced by companies in order to polish their corporate financial status (ibid.). As a result of globalization and multiculturalism, English has become the lingua franca of international business communication, i.e. the dominant language in the corporate world (ibid.: 30).

The field of finance covers wide range of written and spoken texts that comprise financial information, including annual reports and meetings, Chairmen’s statements and CEO’s letters, presentation of earnings, press releases, etc (ibid.: 13). Annual report is a common document in the financial genre (ibid.). A lot of attention has been put on investigating the language of annual reports. A research carried out by Rutherford (2005) revealed that certain sections of annual reports, instead of using neutral language, often employ ‘positively-charged lexical items’, making everything appear more positive than it actually is. Camiciottoli adds that annual reports show signs of accounting discourse and public relations discourse as well (ibid.: 14). Other texts of written financial genres include Chairmen’s statements and CEO’s letters, and also these documents are designed to make companies appear in a better shape in order to attract the reader (ibid.). The purpose of corporate press releases is improve companies’ corporate image, to maintain current investors as well as to attract new ones; besides they provide information about mergers and acquisitions, expansion and other turning points (ibid.: 15). Due to the developments in information and communication technology, teleconferencing has become a frequently used method, which allows companies and investors to interact more efficiently via electronic medium. These financial teleconferences are often called *earnings call* and this process includes a presentation of financial results, which is followed by question & answer part

(ibid.: 21). Since the end of 1990s, earnings calls have become the basic means through which companies communicate with investors and financial managers (ibid.: 22).

2.3.1. Language Functions in Financial Discourse

On the one hand, FD has an informative purpose to portray facts and numbers; on the other hand, it has a high rhetoric effect. The language of finance employs wide range of figures of speech and ‘story-telling’, and it is stated that these features originate from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. There are three modes of persuasion, according to Aristotle, and they are: *logos, ethos and pathos*. *Logos* is the speaker’s ability to tell the truth by using persuasive arguments, *ethos* is the speaker’s ability to make his speech believable by using his charisma, and *pathos* is the speaker’s ability to touch the hearts of his listeners (ibid.: 34). According to Amernic and Craig (2006: 10), company leaders often use such rhetorical concepts as hierarchy, religion, evolution and development because they are most appealing to the general public. Persuasion takes up a considerable proportion of the communications among the members of capital markets. Companies issue documents and give presentations in a way that is influential to the beliefs and values of investors (Winchel, 2008:10). Managers apply different persuasion strategies in order to maximize the trustworthiness of their message. For example, in certain cases additional information (e.g., earnings forecast, price targets) can be given that enhances the persuasiveness in that way boosting credibility in the eyes of investors or customers (ibid.: 11-12).

Amernic and Craig (2006: x) supposes that ‘CEO-speak is a language game’, which can be then analyzed from rhetorical, linguistic and ideological points of view. By the phrase ‘CEO-speak’ the authors mean any spoken or written words of CEOs in press releases, letters to shareholders, annual reports, speeches, interviews, etc. (ibid.: 3). Amernic and Craig add that ‘CEO-speak is used to construct the modern-day CEO of a mega-corporation as the equivalent of a great military leader of yore, but the battle waged by today’s warrior has a single goal: enhanced shareholder value (ibid.: x)’.

Words have an intermediary role between the companies and other major institutions, and they carry ‘symbolic, emotional, cultural, and political overtones’. People need to pay special attention to the words of CEOs because the manner how they express their views is able to influence the world system. The words executed by CEOs are accurately and strategically chosen. They use persuasive and powerful language and avoid neutral or passive vocabulary (ibid.: 4). Amernic and Craig state that ‘CEOs talk or write in a fashion that reacts to, creates, and justifies the world around them’ (ibid.: 5). Metaphorical language is also a

characteristic feature of CEO discourse because metaphors ‘conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another’ (ibid.: 11). Metaphors are used as tools that are able to influence or even control views and behaviors, and people have to accept them if they want to communicate with others in a particular society. In the field of business metaphorical language helps to recognize problem areas and reasonable solutions (ibid.: 12). Haviland (2011: 2) adds that the language of money implicates such powerful domains as love, war, politics, games, religion, etc. with a purpose to ‘seduce players to join and remain in its trading game’.

However, companies are not the only ones that need to be acquainted with FD. Consumers, who use services by insurance companies, banks or investment companies, also come across financial communication, and not all of them are familiar with the discourse. Consequently, financial marketers invest hard work to make financial communication more perceivable to the majority of customers (Wang, 2013: 1). Studies show that consumers with less experience in the field of finance are affected and persuaded by financial marketers more easily than consumers that are more experienced in the field. Though, it sometimes results in misunderstandings because inexperienced consumers may not properly comprehend the message that is being conveyed through financial communication. To the contrary, more experienced consumers process the information more efficiently and make decisions more deliberately (ibid.: 6).

Wall Street is a general term describing the main financial center in the USA, where most of the America’s leading banks, investment companies, stock exchanges and other important entities are located (Online 10). People of Wall Street believe in the American Dream (meaning that everyone has a potential to wealth, freedom, prosperity, etc.). By employing sophisticated language and wordplay, and using the ideals of the American Dream they are able to seduce general public to use their services, especially to buy in stock markets (Haviland, 2011: 3).

2.3.2. Financial Vocabulary

The financial sector covers wide range of different areas, and they include various types of banks – commercial, private; investment; money markets, currency markets, futures and derivatives markets and stock markets; investment companies, insurance companies, accounting and auditing companies, etc. (MacKenzie, 2008: 11). Each of these areas require specialized vocabulary and makes use of many finance (also business) related specialist terms, idioms, abbreviations, etc. Here are some examples of specialized vocabulary used in each area with examples taken from Kothari’s *Business and Finance Vocabulary* (2008):

- Banking: *bank reserve, deposit ratio, fixed rate loan, late charge, open end mortgage, point of sale, wire transfer, national housing bank, past due, payback clause*;
- Stock market: *bear cycle, best price, naked put writing, junk bond, blue chip, floating stock, authorized issue, unquoted shares, stale bull, spot delivery contract*;
- Accounting and auditing: *national balance sheet, natural accounts, net operating assets, internal audit, liquid asset, earnings management, statutory audit*;
- Insurance: *actual cash value, death benefit, liability insurance, simple mortgage, heavy insurance, umbrella policy, business risks, contingent beneficiary, etc. (ibid.)*.

Slang is widespread between the members of the financial areas. The insiders of the financial environment often communicate with each other through slang words or expressions that are often informal and incomprehensible to the outsiders (Online 11). Brounstein, Bell, Smith, Isbell and Orr (2010: 226) mark that ‘slang and idioms involve language that is used to create an image rather than to make a literal statement’, and they ‘tend to be too informal for many business situations’. Use of idioms and slang words vary and depend on location, where they are spoken (ibid.).

Here are some examples and explanations of financial slang terms (Online 11):

- *Bear hug* – ‘an approach a company makes to the board of another company, indicating that an offer is about to be made for their shares’;
- *Samurai bond* – ‘a bond issued in Japan by a foreign institution’;
- *Valium picnic* – ‘a colloquial name for a non-trading day on a stock exchange or other commercial market, a market holiday’;
- *Window dressing* – ‘any accounting practice that attempts to make a balance sheet look better than it really is’;
- *Killer bee* – ‘an investment banker who helps a business to resist a predatory takeover bid’ (ibid.).

In conclusions, this chapter has briefly explained the concept of discourse and then has paid a special attention to BD and FD. We have clarified that FD is a type of BD, which fulfils practical and rhetoric functions: on the one hand, it is used to report financial data; on the other hand, it incorporates the language that can be very vague, ambiguous and persuasive. The following chapter speaks about American movie industry and movie genres, which is completely unrelated to the previous chapters, but it will be useful further in the research.

3. AMERICAN MOVIE INDUSTRY AND MOVIE GENRES

This chapter summarizes the main aspects in relation to American movie industry and movie genres. It is necessary to include such information because the empirical part of this research deals with American movies. The chapter is introduced by a brief discussion regarding the core elements of movie production and concludes with short descriptions for the movie genres that correspond to the movies used for the analysis.

According to Brown (2013: 2), cinematography is ‘the process of taking ideas, words, actions, emotional subtext, tone, and all other forms of nonverbal communication and rendering them in visual terms’. A visual world (filming locations, lighting, costumes) plays a crucial role in movie production because on that depends how the audience will comprehend the story and the characters. In a good movie every visual detail is there for a reason, nothing can be random or circumstantial, because deliberately chosen elements help the story flow coherently (ibid.). In movie production it is important to make sure that the audience benefits from the story intellectually and emotionally. To add, not only the plot in general needs to be well developed, but each scene as well, so that the audience is left wondering about what happens next (ibid.: 14).

American cinema is probably the leader of the movie industry – it has a large number of movies, technological development and innovation, wide choice of genres, as well as powerful marketing department. American movies are shown internationally in most countries, and American actors, producers and directors are recognized all around the world (*Historical Dictionary of American Cinema*, 2011: ix). American movie industry is often referred to as *Hollywood*. Originally the American movie industry operated in New York and New Jersey, but soon after movie makers moved to Hollywood district in Los Angeles, because it was much more efficient to produce movies there. The movie industry in Hollywood started its development in 1910, and by 1920 the term became a well-known concept worldwide. Despite the fact that many American movies are not produced in Hollywood, the term *Hollywood* is still applied to American movie production in general (ibid.: xv). Hollywood movie industry is generally focused on a large global audience. Nevertheless, there are many movies that are meant to target smaller and more specific audiences, in other words, *niche audiences* – ‘smaller groups who share an interest in a film genre, style, or format, or who have other personal, cultural, or political ties’ (Davis, Dickinson, Patti, and Villarejo, 2015: 312).

Movies have been here for more than a century and a great deal of movie genres have evolved during this period of time. De Leeuw (1997: 89) suggests that a genre is ‘a category of artistic composition marked by a distinctive style, form or content’. Primarily movies were distinguished and categorized according to their content. However, with the development of different techniques that are applied in the creation of a particular visual style for movies, the categorization of movies is also dependent on their visual appearance, because certain genres are associated and expected to be presented in a particular style that the viewers are used to see. For example, comedies are usually presented in a bright and colorful style, whereas detective movies are often gloomy and obscure (ibid.). Nevertheless, the visual style is only one of the aspects that ‘add specific flavor’ to a movie, customizing it into a particular genre; yet there is no guidebook that would give directions as to what certain movie genres should look like, because it is only a matter of evolved traditions that similar movies have in common (ibid.: 90). Moine in her book *Cinema Genre* (2008) discusses various aspects concerned with movie genres, and why it is sometimes complicated to determine a concrete genre for a certain movie. Movies normally have a blend of different genres and cross-references, and each of the key words that are associated with a particular movie can be prioritized or differentiated by such elements as a country, a period, a producer, etc. (ibid.: 4). The *history movie* genre is a tricky category, and the term sometimes can be too vague when describing particular movies, because after a certain period of time everything becomes historical at some point (ibid.: 10). Despite many discussions around movie genres, it is still possible to distinguish some the most common genres (ibid.: 7-8): *comedy, drama, horror, biography, crime, adventure, science-fiction, action, war, history, cartoon, musical, erotic, western, documentary, fantastic, thriller, romance*, etc.

Here are general descriptions for the genres, which correspond to such movies as *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) and *Margin Call* (2011):

- *Drama* – this genre ‘investigates human frailties, disappointments, hopes (lost or to be gained) and dreams and even tragedies of life’, as well as reveal deep desires, feelings and needs. A drama usually is centered on the protagonist, who possesses his/hers strengths and weaknesses, so that the viewers are able to relate themselves with the character (Selbo, 2015: 52-53).

- *Thriller* – this genre is aimed to create suspense, anticipation and alertness in its viewers. Protagonists in this genre are confronted with a problem – ‘an escape, a mission, or a mystery’, and the level of tension is growing throughout the movie until it reaches climax. Thriller sub-genres often include *action thriller, crime thriller, film-noir*, etc. (Online 12).

- *Comedy* – this genre is associated with laughter, happiness, jokes, harmony, and lightness of tone. Comedy genre often occurs in hybrid genres, where each of them has its own peculiarities, and some of the sub-genres are as follows: *romantic comedy*, *situational comedy*, *black comedy*, *parody*, etc. (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012: 91-92).

- *Biography* – a biography movie is based on a real person (living or dead). Biographic movies are not intended to show the person's life from birth to death, instead they concentrate on a particular period(s), which are 'story-worthy' and caused major life changes. Common hybrid genres include *biography-sports* / *-war* / *-adventure*, etc. (Selbo, 2015: 54-55).

After we have clarified that American movie industry is, perhaps, the leader of the field and the purpose of it is to reach global and large-scale audiences, we can head to the next chapter which investigates the use of idioms in different Hollywood movies about stockbrokers. The chapter provides plot summaries for the movies which have been selected for the analysis and continues with an extended discussion of the results.

4. ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS IN AMERICAN MOVIES ABOUT STOCKBROKERS

This chapter deals with the empirical part of the research. Firstly, it gives a description of the research methods used in this chapter and provides some essential details for the movies under the analysis. The findings of the analysis are organized in subchapters according to the research questions. The criterion for the analysis is to discuss the data obtained based on the theoretical framework.

The empirical part comprises a sample of idioms obtained from the movies. Idioms have been analyzed in the context and provided with a definition(s) by various dictionaries of idioms such as *Oxford Idioms Dictionary* (2001), *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs* (2002), *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (2003), *American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (2003), *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary* (2006), *The Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms* (2010), or other online sources presented in the Appendix 1 (pp. 53-70). Every idiom has also been investigated in order to see if it corresponds to the definition of business idiom offered by the author of this Bachelor thesis. The next step was to check all the idioms detected in the scripts whether they appear in Stirling's (2012) *Business Idioms in America* or in other sources that provide glossaries of commonly used business idioms (Online 9; Online 16; Online 17).

One of the research methods used in the empirical part is frequency analysis, which has been applied in order to detect the most frequently occurring idioms and to study the frequency of business idioms compared to common idioms in the movies under discussion. The method has also been applied to determine the density of idioms in the movie scripts. The analysis has been carried out by counting the total number of idioms in each movie script, as well as counting the number of idioms occurring in different contexts. The findings of the analysis are presented in tables and expressed as a percentage.

Discourse analysis has also been performed in order to analyze the language in the movie scripts. The purpose of this analysis is to study the functions of idiomatic expressions, why idioms appear in certain parts of the text and what role they have in a broader context.

Last of all, a questionnaire based survey has been conducted. Online questionnaires have been used as a data collection tool, which contain single and multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire designed for the survey is presented in the Appendix 2 (pp. 71-73). 35 respondents have been selected for the survey, and the main selection criteria for the respondents are as follows: their mother tongue has to be Latvian, and they have to be the

graduate students from the Modern Language and Business Studies program provided by the University of Latvia.

Here is a description of the procedures of the empirical part:

- To watch movies, read their scripts and detect idioms;
- To write out all the expressions and their meanings from the scripts that are considered as idioms by dictionaries of idioms or other online sources;
- To detect the most frequently occurring idioms in the sample of idioms;
- To calculate the density of idiomatic expressions in the scripts; compare the density of idiomatic expressions that appears in the contexts of business and finance, and personal matters;
- To detect the most frequently occurring business idioms in the sample of idioms;
- To calculate the frequency of business idioms compared to common idioms obtained from the scripts;
- To investigate the functions of idioms and what purpose they have in the contexts related to business and finance;
- To see whether some idioms permit modified structure and wording;
- To develop an online survey that consists of ten most frequently occurring business idioms in the scripts.

4.1. Description of the Movies for the Analysis

In order to carry out the research, six Hollywood movies have been selected for the analysis, which have been recommended as one of the best movies in the field of finance (about stockbrokers, stock markets, investment banking, Wall Street) by major online sources (Online 13; Online 14; Online 15).

The selection criteria for the movies used for the analysis are as follows:

- Country of origin – the United States of America;
- The leading characters work as stockbrokers;
- Movies are at least 60 min long and their content includes at least 25% of business and finance related matters;
- Both movies and their scripts are available online.

The movies that have been selected for the analysis and meet all of the above requirements are listed below with general information and a brief plot summary provided by the internet movie database (Online 18):

1. *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), directed by Martin Scorsese, is a mix of *biography*, *comedy* and *crime* genres, and it is 180 min long. This movie is based on the true story about a stockbroker named Jordan Belfort, ‘from his rise to a wealthy stock-broker living the high life to his fall involving crime, corruption and the federal government’.

2. *Wall Street* (1987), directed by Oliver Stone, is a hybrid of *crime* and *drama* genres, and is 126 min long. The movie is about a young and high-flying stockbroker who is mentored by a ruthless corporate raider and both engage in many business activities, including illegal and criminal ones.

3. *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010), directed by Oliver Stone, is a movie of *drama* genre, and it is 133 min long. This movie is a sequel to *Wall Street* (1987), and it is about a Wall Street guru who has just got out of prison and wants to rebuild his empire by the help of his future son-in-law, who also happens to be a stockbroker.

4. *Margin Call* (2011), directed by Jeffrey McDonald Chandor, is a hybrid of *drama* and *thriller* genres, and is 107 min long. The movie story revolves around the period of the financial crisis of 2008, and it is about a failing financial company and employees (bankers, stockbrokers, stock analysts) working there.

5. *Boiler Room* (2000), directed by Ben Younger, is a mix of *crime*, *drama* and *thriller* genres, and it is 120 min long. The movie is about a college dropout who runs an illegal business, but then starts working as a stockbroker and becomes very successful in a short time, but the company he works for turns out to be illegitimate.

6. *Trading Places* (1983), directed by John Landis, is a movie of *comedy* genre, and it is 116 min long. This movie is about two stockbrokers who own a brokerage firm, and they create circumstances for two people, an investor and a street con artist, to be in completely reversed positions.

The movies vary in length – the shortest movie is 107 min and the longest one is 180 min, but the average length of the movies is 130 min. The movies differ in terms of genre; nevertheless, the most frequently recurring genres appear to be *drama*, *thriller* and *crime*. Additional genres include *comedy* and *biography*. All the movies (except for *Trading Places*, 1983) are rated as restricted or suggest parental guidance for children due to containing inappropriate material for minors. Judging by context of each movie, it can be stated that all of the movies are meant for general audiences; however, each movie varies in the use of business and finance related terms, where some movies employ more specialized language for niche audiences and some less, in order to adjust to broader audiences.

4.2. Findings of the Frequency Analysis

The **first research question** is ‘what are the most frequently occurring idioms in the movies under discussion?’. The frequency analysis reveals that the most frequently used idioms that reoccur four or more times in all the movies are as follows:

E.g., *as if* (4 times); *get axed* (4 times); *make a fast/quick buck* (4 times); *not give a shit* (4 times); *on the books* (5 times); *as far as* (6 times); *as long as* (7 times); *by the way* (8 times); *take care of sb/sth* (12 times); *I guess* (31 times).

It is evident that the most frequently recurring idioms are mainly discourse markers or routine formulas, such as *by the way*, *as far as*, *as if*, *as long as* and *I guess*, which according to Svensén (2009: 191) fulfil pragmatic functions in recurrent communication situations.

Nevertheless, due to their structure, these expressions still possess an idiomatic meaning and correspond to Crystal’s (2008: 236) offered definition of idiom, and are defined as idioms in various dictionaries of idioms, such as *Oxford Idioms Dictionary* (2001), *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (2003) or *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs* (2002). Apart from discourse markers and routine formulas, the most frequently recurring idiom is *take care of sb/sth*, which has recurred 12 times, out of which 9 times it appears in the contexts related to personal matters and 3 times in business and finance related contexts. Other frequently recurring idioms are mainly informal phrases that are often used in business related contexts, such as *get axed*, *make a fast/quick buck* and *on the books*, and the last most frequently recurring idiom is a very informal and rude phrase *not give a shit*.

Here is a list of idioms that recur three times in all the movies:

E.g., *at the end of the day*; *at this point*; *big deal*; *get laid*; *go to hell*; *holy shit*; *make a cold call*; *off the record*; *on board*; *on paper*; *puppy love*; *the bottom line*; *the party is over*.

Many frequently occurring idioms in the movies are common English idioms, such as *at the end of the day*, *at this point*, *big deal*, *puppy love*, *off the record* and *the party is over*. Several frequently occurring idioms, according to Stirling’s (2012) *Business Idioms in America*, are commonly used business idioms in the American workplace, e.g., *make a cold call*, *on board*, *on paper* and *the bottom line*. The last most frequently recurring idioms are very informal or rude idioms, such as *get laid*, *go to hell* and *holy shit*.

Here is a list of 39 idioms that recur twice in all the movies:

E.g., *a guinea pig*; *a piece of cake*; *all for naught*; *bear market*; *bend the rules*; *big picture*; *bring sb/sth to their knees*; *bull market*; *bury head in the sand*; *chickens come home to roost*; *close to home*; *corner the market*; *do your homework*; *for Christ's sake*; *for God's sake*; *give*

sb a break; go belly up; go nuts; go out of business; go through the roof; hand to on a silver platter; hit rock bottom; hot on sth; in the middle of; land on your feet; leave sb holding the bag; loose ends; lose your mind; make sense; make sth clear to sb; none of your business; one man's loss is another man's gain; pain in the ass; play hooky; sit tight; take no prisoners; teach sb a lesson; the Ivy-league; work your ass off; worst-case scenario.

The longest list of the most frequently occurring idioms comprises the ones that recur twice in all the movies. Many of them are common English idioms that can be encountered on a daily basis, e.g., *give sb a break, go nuts, lose your mind, make sense, make sth clear to sb, none of your business, teach sb a lesson, in the middle of*, etc. Various business idioms can be spotted as well, e.g., *bear market, bull market, corner the market, go belly up, hit rock bottom, go through the roof*, etc. Some frequently occurring idioms are considered as business idioms, according to Stirling (2012), however, they can also be found in other discourses and everyday speech, e.g., *a piece of cake, the Ivy-league, take no prisoners*, etc. Such expressions as *for Christ's sake* and *for God's sake* are commonly used for emphasis.

In order to answer the **second research question** ‘what is the density of idiom use in the contexts dealing with business and financial matters and in those discussing personal ones?’, first it is necessary to divide the scripts for the movies in two categories, where the first category comprises the contexts about business and finance related matters, and the second category comprises the contexts related to personal matters (love and family related issues, and other contexts not related to business and finance). The texts that are particularly related to business and financial contexts have been grouped accordingly in the first category. The texts that are related to other non-business issues have been grouped in the second category. Occasionally, there are scenes where it is complicated to distinguish, whether the particular contexts belong to the first of the second category.

Below in Table 4.1 the total number of words and the approximate number of words in different contexts is presented for each movie.

Table 4.1 Number of words in speech transcripts

No.	The Title of the Movie	The Total No. of Words in the Movie	No. of Words in the Contexts: Business and Financial Matters	No. of Words in the Contexts: Personal Matters
1.	<i>The Wolf of Wall Street</i> (2013)	18027	4836	13191
2.	<i>Wall Street</i> (1987)	12017	7809	4208
3.	<i>Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps</i> (2010)	11848	6256	5592

4.	<i>Margin Call</i> (2011)	9374	5094	4280
5.	<i>Boiler Room</i> (2000)	15364	9465	5899
6.	<i>Trading Places</i> (1983)	8753	2494	6259

The third column presents the total number of words for each movie. The number of words in each movie varies, depending on the length of the movie or the average number of words executed per minute. The fourth column presents the number of words in the business and finance related contexts in each movie. The fifth column shows the number of words in the contexts related to personal matters. The percentage of business and finance related contexts varies in each movie. The movies containing the largest percentage of business and finance related contexts are *Wall Street* (1987) with 65% and *Boiler Room* (2000) with 62%, whereas, the movies that have less percentage of business and finance related contexts are *Margin Call* (2010) with 54% and *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010) with 53%. The movies containing the smallest percentage of contexts related to business and finance are *Trading Places* (1983) with 28% and *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) with 27%.

Below in Table 4.2 the total number of idioms and the number of idioms found in different contexts is presented for each movie.

Table 4. 2 Number of idioms detected

No.	The Title of the Movie	The Total No. of Idioms Found	No. of Idioms Found in the Contexts: Business and Financial Matters	No. of Idioms Found in the Contexts: Personal Matters
1.	<i>The Wolf of Wall Street</i> (2013)	62	24	38
2.	<i>Wall Street</i> (1987)	106	85	21
3.	<i>Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps</i> (2010)	85	68	17
4.	<i>Margin Call</i> (2011)	81	58	23
5.	<i>Boiler Room</i> (2000)	75	52	23
6.	<i>Trading Places</i> (1983)	49	27	22

The third column presents the total number of idioms found in each movie. The total number of idioms detected in all movies is 458, and the number of idioms found in each movie differs. The movie that contains the largest number of idioms is *Wall Street* (1987) with 106 idioms, but the movie that contains the smallest number of idioms is *Trading Places* (1983)

with 49 idioms. The fourth column shows the number of idioms found in the contexts related to business and finance, and the fifth column presents the number of idioms found in the contexts related to personal matters. The total number of idioms detected in the contexts related to business and finance in all movies is 314, whereas, the number of idioms found in the contexts related to personal matters is more than twice as small, i.e. 144 idioms in all movies.

In order to establish more accurate data about the idioms detected in the movies and in different contexts in particular, it is necessary to take into consideration two aspects: the number of idioms detected and the number of words in the texts in which they appear. By applying frequency analysis, it is possible to calculate the density of idioms in different contexts. Below in Table 4.3 the density of idioms in each movie and the density of idioms appearing in different contexts has been calculated and expressed as a percentage.

Table 4.3 Density of idioms

No.	The Title of the Movie	Density of Idioms in the Movie	Density of Idioms in Business and Finance Related Contexts	Density of Idioms in Contexts of Personal Matters
1.	<i>The Wolf of Wall Street</i> (2013)	~0.003%	~0.005%	~0.003%
2.	<i>Wall Street</i> (1987)	~0.009%	~0.01%	~0.005%
3.	<i>Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps</i> (2010)	~0.007%	~0.01%	~0.003%
4.	<i>Margin Call</i> (2011)	~0.007%	~0.01%	~0.005%
5.	<i>Boiler Room</i> (2000)	~0.005%	~0.006%	~0.004%
6.	<i>Trading Places</i> (1983)	~0.006%	~0.01%	~0.004%

The third column reveals that the total density of idioms in all movies varies from ~0.003% to ~0.009%, on average ~0.006%. However, when looking at the density of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance and in the ones related to personal matters individually, the results are evidently dissimilar. The fourth column shows the density of idioms in business and finance related contexts; the density of idioms in these contexts varies from ~0.005% to ~0.01% in each movie, on average ~0.009%. The fifth column shows the density of idioms in contexts related to personal matters; the density of idioms in these contexts varies from ~0.003% to 0.005% in each movie, on average ~0.004%. Although, the average density of idioms in all the movies is ~0.006%, it is evident that the density of idioms

in the contexts related to business and finance is more than twice as high, i.e. $\sim 0.009\%$, compared to the contexts that deal with personal matters, i.e. $\sim 0.004\%$. This can be explained by the fact that financial discourse and business discourse in general employ relatively high frequency of various kinds of idiomatic expressions (Online 11; Ellis and Johnson, 1994: 9).

The data reveals that the movie containing the largest percentage of business and finance related contexts, i.e. *Wall Street* (1987) with 65%, has the highest density of idioms, i.e. $\sim 0.009\%$, whereas, *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), which has the smallest percentage of these contexts with 27%, has the lowest density idioms in the movie in general, i.e. $\sim 0.003\%$. The remaining four movies do not have such difference in the density of idioms and, although, they differ in percentage of business and finance related contexts, the average density of idioms in these movies is $\sim 0.006\%$. It appears from this that *Wall Street* (1987) is more suitable for niche audiences, i.e. for the viewers with a better understanding of business and finance related matters and a deeper knowledge of idiomatic expressions, while *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) is meant for wider and broader public because it does not require such a deep comprehensibility of both of these aspects, if the movies are being watched in English.

The percentage of business and finance related contexts appear to be more than 50% in four out of six movies (*Wall Street* (1987); *Boiler Room* (2000); *Margin Call* (2010); *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010)), and it appears from this that the viewers still have to have a general knowledge of business and financial discourses, if they want to fully understand the stories of these movies in more detail. To add, the density of idioms in business and finance related contexts in four out of six movies (*Wall Street* (1987); *Margin Call* (2010); *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010); *Trading Places* (1983)), is $\sim 0.01\%$, which is higher than the average $\sim 0.009\%$ in the corresponding contexts. This points that the viewers have to have a sufficient knowledge of English idioms, if they want to have a well perception of these kinds of movies, because the difference in the density of idioms in business and finance related contexts and other non-business related contexts is quite prominent.

The most distinctive movie from all the movies used for the analysis is *Trading Places* (1983), because this movie falls into the category of *comedy* movies. It has the second smallest percentage of the scenes comprising business and finance related contexts, i.e. 28%, therefore, this movie is suitable for larger-scale audiences, and like the *comedy* genre, it is characterized by lightness of tone and with a purpose to create an amusement in the viewers (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012: 91-92). Yet, the density of idioms in business and finance related contexts in this movie is still high, i.e. $\sim 0.01\%$, and the density of idioms in other non-

business related contexts is the average ~0.004%, just like in the rest of the movies, which, for the most part, are considered as a mix of *drama*, *crime* and *thriller* movie genres.

The **third research question** is ‘which are the most frequently occurring business idioms and what is the frequency of business idioms compared to common idioms in the movies under discussion?’. The frequency analysis of business idioms in the scripts reveals that the most frequently occurring business idioms are *get axed* and *make a quick buck*, and they occur four times in the scripts. Business idioms that occur three times are *on paper*, *the bottom line*, *on board* and *make a cold call*. Business idioms that occur twice in the scripts are as follows: *go through the roof*, *big picture*, *piece of cake*, *go belly up*, *take no prisoners*, *bear market*, *bull market*, *land on your feet*, *hit rock bottom*, *corner the market*, *the Ivy-League* and *a guinea pig*.

One of the tasks for the research is to determine the frequency of business idioms compared to common idioms in the movies under discussion. Table 4.4 below presents the percentage of business idioms detected in the sample of idioms in each movie, which has been calculated by taking into consideration the data from Table 4.2 above and the number of business idioms occurring in the movies.

Table 4.4 Frequency of business idioms compared to common idioms

No.	The Title of the Movie	Frequency of Business Idioms in the Movie	Frequency of Business Idioms in Business and Finance Related Contexts	Frequency of Business Idioms in Contexts Related to Personal Matters
1.	<i>The Wolf of Wall Street</i> (2013)	~13%	~33%	0%
2.	<i>Wall Street</i> (1987)	~30%	~35%	~5%
3.	<i>Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps</i> (2010)	~21%	~25%	~6%
4.	<i>Margin Call</i> (2011)	~19%	~22%	~7%
5.	<i>Boiler Room</i> (2000)	~25%	~25%	~26%
6.	<i>Trading Places</i> (1983)	~30%	~37%	~23%

The data reveals that roughly 23% of all idioms in these movies comprise business idioms (out of 458 of idioms detected in the movies, 106 idioms are business idioms). Approximately 86% of all business idioms (i.e. 91 idioms) are found particularly in business and finance related contexts, and about 14% of business idioms (i.e. 15 idioms) are found in the contexts related to personal matters.

The third column shows the total frequency of business idioms in the movies. It is notable that the lowest frequency of business idioms is in *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), i.e. ~13%, but the highest frequency of business idioms is in *Wall Street* (1987) and *Trading Places* (1983), i.e. ~30% in both. The fourth column presents the frequency of business idioms in business and finance related contexts in the movies, and the average frequency of business idioms in these contexts is ~30%. Another fact that cannot be unnoticed in the low frequency of business idioms that occur in the contexts related to personal matters (presented in the fifth column). For example, the average frequency of business idioms in *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), *Wall Street* (1987), *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010) and *Margin Call* (2011) is only ~5%. On the other hand, the movies *Trading Places* (1983) and *Boiler Room* (2000) contain comparatively high frequency of business idioms in the contexts not related to business, i.e. ~25%.

Here is a list of business idioms that have been found in the contexts related to personal matters:

E.g., *down the drain*, *the Ivy-league*, *get axed*, *burn the candle at both ends*, *back door*, *if the shoe fits (, wear it)*, *make a fast/quick buck*, *pick up the check*, *the hard sell*, *take to sth like a duck to water*, *day-to-day*, *catch sb red-handed*, *a guinea pig*.

Even though, these idioms are common in business discourse, some of them are still used in other contexts in the movies that are not related to business, in order to express particular ideas. The following examples from the movies demonstrate the use of these idioms in contexts related to personal matters, e.g., ‘He'll look after your *day-to-day* needs’, ‘I'm sure he'd *take to crime like a fish (duck) to water*’, whereas the idiom *if the shoe fits* is said as a full sentence in the context, when the characters are playing a poker game and talk about miscellaneous things. Other business idioms, although found in the contexts, where movie characters talk about personal issues, are mostly found in the sentences or in parts of them where they particularly relate to concepts that are more or less connected to business, e.g., ‘[...] it's illegal, you're running a *back door* card game!’, ‘[...] unless you went to an *Ivy-League* school...’, ‘You say you like the *hard sell* and the money’, ‘It was an experiment, they used us as *guinea pigs*, man’, ‘Look who's *burning the candle at both ends*’, ‘They turned everybody's phone off that they *axed* today’, ‘He used to run a full-time casino [...], now he just *picks up the checks*’, ‘Few thousand dollars *down the drain* [...]’. It appears from this that even when some business idioms are encountered in the contexts that are not generally related to business, they are still, for the most part, employed in fragments of texts that are somehow related to business concepts, such as money and work.

Here is a list of business idioms that have been detected in the contexts related to business and finance in the movies:

E.g., *the cutting edge, a track record, go through the roof, a smoking gun, big picture, to make a long story short, on the table, take up the slack, make a killing, off your rocker, on paper, a piece of cake, go belly up, jump all over sb, go the extra mile, white knight, take a bath, a golden parachute, the bottom line, put cards on the table, be in the same ballpark, the fine print, take no prisoners, get axed, no sweat, a zero-sum game, pull a rabbit out of a hat, a seal of approval, make a quick buck, make a cold call, bear market, bull market, land on your feet, white-collar, go into free fall, throw the baby out with the bath water, call it a day, go broke, dead cat bounce, compare apples to oranges, give sb/sth the green light, a sinking ship, pull the plug, dead in the water, give the go-ahead, big bucks, make a living from sth, on board, go out of business, a gray area, give sb a heads up, all hands on deck, water under the bridge, a game plan, learn the ropes, new blood, filthy rich, the sky's the limit, cook the books, show sb the ropes, play the market, the top dog, gold mine, hit rock bottom, monopoly money, flat broke, rock the boat, think big, corner the market.*

In total 91 business idiom has been found in contexts related to business and finance in the movies, but considering the fact that some idioms recur more than once, 69 unique business idioms have been detected overall. All of these idioms correspond to the definition of business idiom; however, some of the idioms are also found to be used in different contexts that are not related to business and, therefore, by discarding their business-focused meaning, they still function as common idiomatic expressions. Here are some examples of idioms that can be used in universal contexts, e.g., *a track record, big picture, to make a long story short, off your rocker, no sweat, water under the bridge, a piece of cake, compare apples to oranges*, etc.

4.3. Discourse Analysis

The **fourth research question** is ‘what are the functions of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance?’; to answer this question, discourse analysis has been performed in order to distinguish functions of idioms in different texts and contexts.

According to Amernic and Craig (2006: 5), leaders of finance are accustomed to talk or write ‘in a fashion that [...] justifies the world around them’, and the discourse analysis reveals that particular idioms are used to diminish the negativity of something that sounds bad, illegal, immoral, etc. Here are examples from the movies that demonstrate this assumption: ‘[...] find out from the inside if the *books are cooked*’ the idioms *cook the books*

is used instead of saying ‘companies financial records are falsified’; ‘Why do I get the sense there's an offer *in the air*?’ from the whole scene context it can be understood that the character actually wants to ask whether he has a chance to bribe the authorities but instead says ‘offer *in the air*’; ‘[...] *in the big picture* was a drop in the Swiss bucket’ here the characters talk about money laundering which would be a large-scale crime in their country but their actions would be justified, if done in the other country; ‘If it looks good *on paper*, we're in the kill zone’ here the characters talk about falsifying financial records and as long as it *looks good on paper*, they do not care what the situation is in the reality; when talking indirectly about tax evasion, the character says ‘*Piece of cake*, Gordon’ in that way stating that this crime is very easy to do and do not require much effort; ‘I'll *go the extra mile*’ here the character wants his boss to give him another chance and, by the *extra mile*, he actually means that he is willing to do anything, also illegal activities, to prove it; ‘It's a *zero sum game*’ the character describes the nature of stock speculations and that it is actually just a game, however, in the reality, there are still people who lose a lot of money because of that; ‘[...] and everybody *save his own skin*’ here again the characters talk about doing some financial activities that are in this case unethical, as long as they are not harmed in some way; when the company is about to fail because of illegal actions that it has performed, the boss tells his employees ‘But that is *spilt milk under the bridge*’, making them think like it is nothing significant and people have to move on; the character uses the idiom *gold mine* to describe his illegal source of income that generates huge amounts of money; the idiom *monopoly money* is used when talking about risky business investments, because the character pretends that it is just a game and he does not care about its value. These and many other examples can be found in the movies, where idioms are used to make characters’ actions, opinions and things in general, sound better than in the reality and in straight-forward language. In other words, it can be stated that idioms ‘sugarcoat’ the language and make it sound more appealing to people who are not very sure about the meanings or intentions behind them.

Gillett (2006: 2) states that idioms in AmE originate from various source domains and many ‘business-focused’ idioms often come from military and sports, because that is how Americans see business, i.e. a competition is war and a game is sports. Various sports and military related idioms have been spotted. Here are business idioms found in the movies that originate from military: *a smoking gun, make a killing, take no prisoners, a gray area, all hands on deck, no sweat*. Business idioms that describe business as sports or game are: *be in the same ballpark, a zero-sum game, play the market*. All of the idioms are used in the movies in the contexts that talk about the nature of business and how fierce it can be, and, on the other

hand, business is viewed as a game that can be played. The discourse analysis supports Gillett's (2006: 2) assumption that idioms originating from military and sports demonstrate the movie characters' vision of business and are used to justify and defend their point of view.

The use of very informal and rude idioms is evident in the movies. Business is goal-oriented and people use business discourse to communicate and achieve their goals (Salvi and Bamford, 2007: 11); therefore, the concept of business not only incorporates the idea of success but also failures. Brounstein et al. (2010: 226) add that slang and idioms often are too informal for many business situations. Discourse analysis unveils that the large number of informal and rude idioms in the contexts of business and finance that the movie characters use can be explained by fierce competition, difficulties and failures they experience while conducting business, managing their clients and dealing with other situations that are typical in their work environment; e.g., *cover your ass, go to hell, pain in the ass, go bat shit, down the toilet, cut the crap, be brain dead, life is a bitch, a hot potato, not give a shit, holy shit, pick up the slack* – these and other idioms are used to express frustration or metaphorically describe things like they are at some point.

On the one hand, use of idioms in business discourse can make the language sound more vague and ambiguous (Handford, 2010: 212), on the other hand, specialized idioms are useful language instruments for people who operate in a particular field (Tredinnick and Whyte, 2010: 90). Therefore, discourse analysis shows that business idioms which are used in the fields of business and finance can often be very helpful, and similarly as specialized terminology, they can function as specific terms describing particular situations or issues in a shorter and more accurate way, e.g., several times such business idioms as *bull market* or *bear market* can be encountered in the movies, and to people who do not operate in the field of finance or business these expressions may sound very unclear, on the contrary, to people who work, e.g., in stockbrokerages these phrases are well-known, and they function as short devices how to express situation in stock markets, when there is either an increase or a decline in stock prices. Many other business idioms in the movies have a similar function, and even if they may sound unclear to others, for the business insiders they are very commonly used, e.g., *the cutting edge, go through the roof, go belly up, a golden parachute, the fine print, make a cold call, dead cat bounce, new blood, cook the books, all hands on deck, hit rock bottom, corner the market, white knight, the bottom line*, etc.

Not only business idioms but idioms in general often function as shorter way of expressing longer and more difficult ideas or concepts (Online 6). Here are some examples that demonstrate this assumption, e.g., '[...]I was firing a bazooka right *under their noses*' by the idiom *under sb's nose* the character actually implies that he has been doing criminal and

illegal things for a long period of time but which still remain unnoticed by the authorities; the character describes some insurers as *old school* instead of saying that they hold views that were popular and important in the past, but which are irrelevant in with modern times; '[...] he gets all inspired by your *pep talk*' by the idiom *pep talk* is meant an encouraging speech that is given to people in order to work harder; the character uses the idiom *business is business* by that implying the purpose of business is to make a profit and such things as personal feelings must not interfere with it. These are just some examples that show how in just a few words idioms are able to express longer and deeper thoughts and many interpretations of idioms prove this fact, which is presented in the Appendix 1 (pp. 53-70) which comprises the idioms and their explanations found in the movies.

Brounstein et al. (2010: 226) claim that idioms 'involve language that is used to create an image rather than to make a literal statement'; they emphasize opinions or feelings in order to 'bring a clear mental picture to mind' (Online 6). The discourse analysis reveals that different idioms in the movies are employed to compare situations in a figurative sense in order to get a visual insight of those situations. For example, the character uses the idiom *bite off more than you can chew* describing all the duties and responsibilities he has but has a hard time managing them, and by this idiom one can imagine the situation, when a mouth is so full of food and cannot be moved; the character says that he '*wasn't losing any sleep over*' some actions he has done in the past, which means he was not worried about it, and one can imagine the feeling when you go to bed but cannot fall asleep because of over-thinking and worrying about something; when waiting for someone to *pull a rabbit out of a hat*, which means to do something surprising, one can imagine a prestidigitator performing the classic trick with a hat and a rabbit; the character says that he *feels like a kid in a candy store* when financial situation is in his favor, and again it is possible to imagine a situation when a child goes in a candy store and needs very little to be happy. It appears from this that even though idioms may be confusing at a first glance but, by paying a closer attention to them and using little imagination, some idioms can be quite easy to understand what is meant by them. These examples support the statement that many idioms originally have been influenced by culture, lifestyle and living conditions (Online 4).

Discourse analysis uncovers that, occasionally, some proverbs appear as well in the movies that function as meaningful statements that 'convey certain assertions about life' (Svensén, 2009: 192). Such proverbs as *chickens come home to roost*; *nothing is certain but death and taxes*; *life is a bitch (and then you die)*; *shoot first, ask questions later*; *no good deed goes unpunished*; *(fools rush in) where angels fear to tread*; *one man's loss is another man's gain* and *money is the root of all evil* have been employed by the movie characters.

Such routine formulas as *to make a long story short*, *so to speak* and *I guess* have been detected in the movies, which fulfil pragmatic functions in the speech (ibid.: 191). The idiom detected in the movie *be like a kid in a candy store* can be also defined as simile because, according to Stirling (2012), idioms are sometimes similes that are able to draw a visual picture in mind in order to emphasize the situation.

Idioms are often frozen and, according to Jackson and Amvela (2004: 67), they usually do not allow modification, i.e. substitution or omission of words. On the other hand, Svensén (2009: 189) claims that idioms ‘may be varied by the addition or removal of words’, as long as their meanings remain the same. Movies basically employ spoken discourse, which involves conversations, turn-taking and improvising, and since discourse analysis focus on spoken language in practice, one of the tasks for the research is to detect idioms that have modified structure and wording. The analysis of idioms reveals that there are many cases in the speech where idioms permit various kinds of modifications.

The following examples from the movies show idioms that have allowed removal of words with original idioms provided in the brackets:

E.g., ‘[...] there were pink sheets, skanks, *the bottom of the barrel*’ (scrape the bottom of the barrel); ‘Heard you were *a straight arrow*’ (straight as an arrow); ‘*Long story short* was Saurel ratted me out’(to make a long story short); ‘I think we’re *in the ballpark*’ (be in the same ballpark); ‘[...] the stock’s *in play*’(come into play); ‘[...] stop trading for the *quick buck*’ (make a fast/quick buck); ‘I’m talking the *old school* insurers [...]’ (from the old school); ‘This is *an honest living*’ (make an honest living).

Each of these idioms in the examples have omitted some words, nevertheless, they still preserve their idiomatic meaning.

The following examples from the movies show idioms that have altered wording with the original idioms provided in the brackets:

E.g., ‘[...] counting on you to *pick up the slack*’ (take up the slack); ‘*Gimme a break*’ (give me a break!); ‘I’ll *go the extra yard* for you’ (go the extra mile); ‘*Mixed emotions*, Buddy’ (have mixed feelings); ‘You don’t *have a chance in hell*’ (not have a hope in hell); ‘[...] you can *make the tail wag the dog*, huh?’ (let the tail wag the dog); ‘[...] it’s going to throw *gasoline on this fire*’(add fuel to the fire); ‘I *put 400 away for a rainy day*’ (save sth for a rainy day); ‘We’ve got *our fingers on the scales* in their favor’ (put your thumb on the scales); ‘So *keep your heads high*’ (hold your head high); ‘that’s not something you can *hide under the rug*’ (sweep sth under the rug); ‘But that is *spilt milk under the bridge*’ (water under the bridge); ‘Internet stock that *shot through the roof*’ (go through the roof); ‘You call *a spade by its name*’ (call a spade a spade); ‘I’m sure he’d *take to crime like a fish to water*’ (take to sth

like a duck to water); ‘*Get outta my face*’ (get out of my face); ‘Never *done a hard day's work* in your life, have you?’ (put in a hard day's work); ‘Always *go for the throat*’ (go for the jugular); ‘*Take head out of the sand*’ (bury head in the sand).

These examples show the idioms that have permitted a substitution of some of its containing words, mostly with a synonymous one, and that the meanings of these idioms in the context remain as the original one.

Some examples include idioms, where some of its containing words are used in a comparative form in order to fit to the context, e.g., ‘Let’s get *closer to home*’ (close to home), ‘Let’s *dig deeper*’ (dig deep), ‘[...] in the *bigger picture* our skills are not wasted’ (big picture).

Some idioms have a modified structure but still retain their original meaning, e.g., the idiom *bury head in the sand* has been transformed as ‘[...] *head-in-the-sand* manipulated statistics on productivity and inflation’, the idiom *down the line* has been used as an adjective as in ‘[...] it's time to start thinkin' about *down-the-line* time’; and the idiom *cook the books* is used in a passive voice as ‘[...] find out from the inside if the *books are cooked*’.

Several idiom chunks have been spotted as well, which means that ‘a part of an idiom is separated from the rest by a syntactic process’ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (2007: 183). Here are examples of idiom chunks that have been found in the movies with the original idioms provided in the brackets:

E.g., ‘[...] you were going to turn Bluestar around, not upside down’ (turn sth upside down); ‘I’m up to my ass in more nuts than a fruitcake’ (nutty as a fruitcake); ‘Look at the fucking smile on my face, ear to ear’ (smile from ear to ear); ‘[...] pushes my watermark higher and might cause redemptions’ (high-water mark).

All of the above modifications of idioms, including omission and substitution of words, can be explained by the features that generally characterize spoken discourse – talk is usually improvised and spontaneous, permit incomplete sentence and grammar structures, as well as contain many filler words, errors, repetitions, overlaps, repairs, etc. (van Dijk (1997: 4).

4.4. Survey Results

In order to answer the **fifth research question** ‘how well do the Latvian audience, who have studied business and finance in English, comprehend the most frequently used business idioms found in these movies?’, an online survey has been developed with ten single and one multiple choice question. The questionnaire is composed of ten business idioms provided with the contexts in which they appear in the scripts. Business idioms chosen for the survey have

been selected randomly from the sample of idioms that recur at least twice in the scripts. The last survey question is a multiple-choice question, and the purpose of it is to clarify what the respondents do when they encounter unknown phrases in English. The survey has been distributed to 35 respondents that have graduated from the Modern Language and Business Studies program provided by the University of Latvia. It means that the respondents are more or less fluent in English and have an academic background in business and finance. The average age of the respondents is 24.3 years. The complete questionnaire is enclosed in the Appendix 2 (pp. 71-73). The purpose of this survey is to investigate how well the foreign audience, who have a general knowledge of business and finance related vocabulary and terminology, would perceive these business idioms that occur in the American movies about stockbrokers, if the movies are being watched in English. The respondents for the survey have been picked by their mother tongue (Latvian), in order to obtain more accurate data and discuss the results from the Latvian-English perspective. Due to the fact that the survey has been conducted on-line, the respondents were kindly asked not to look up the meanings of the idioms in dictionaries or on-line before choosing their answer.

The survey results are presented below in Figure 4.1, which reveals the percentage of correct and incorrect answers for each idiom submitted by the respondents.

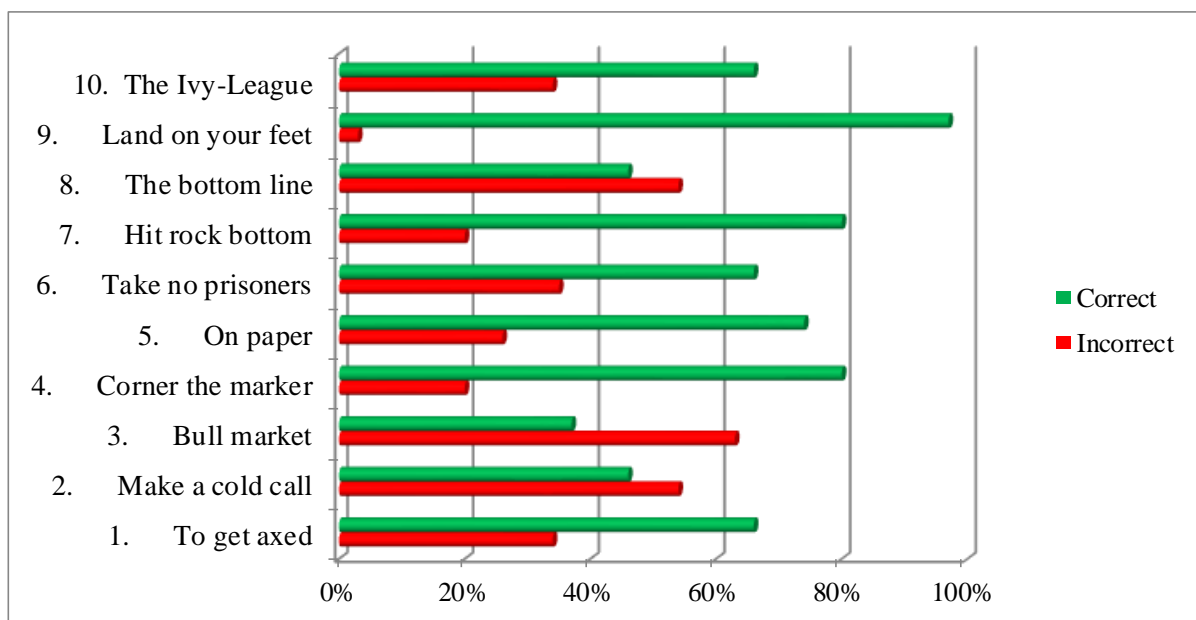


Figure 4.1 Percentage of correct and incorrect answers

The survey results reveal the audience's average knowledge of each listed idiom. The percentage of correct and incorrect answers vary from one idiom to another; however, when calculating the average percentage of correct and incorrect answers for all the idioms

discussed, the calculations show that the average percentage of correct answers is 66%. Therefore, the audience's knowledge of these business idioms has been considered as above average, and on the scale from 1 to 10, it can be rated as almost 7, which is good.

The following is a discussion of the survey results.

66% of the respondents have chosen the correct answers for the idioms *to get axed*, *take no prisoners* and *the Ivy-League*. The knowledge of the idioms *the bottom line* and *make a cold call* is below average and 46% of the respondents have marked the correct answers. The knowledge of the idiom *bull market* is the poorest and only 37% of the respondents have chosen the correct answer. 74% of the respondents have selected the correct meaning of the idiom *on paper*, and 80% of them have chosen the correct answers for the idioms *corner the market* and *hit rock bottom*. The correct answer for the idiom *land on your feet* has been indicated by 97% of the respondents, which is the highest percentage in the survey.

The overall knowledge of these idioms can be described as good, considering that English is not the mother tongue for these respondents. Only a couple of these idioms have a literal translation in Latvian and carry the same idiomatic meaning, e.g., the idiom *on paper* can be directly translated in Latvian as 'uz papīra' and, depending on the context, it can have the same idiomatic meaning 'in theory, hypothetically'. On the one hand, such idioms as *make a cold call* and *bull market* also have literal translations and possess the same idiomatic meanings in Latvian – 'veikt auksto zvanu' and 'buļļu tirgus'. On the other hand, the knowledge of the literal translations in Latvian is useless, if the meanings of these expressions are not clear no matter in what language. Moreover, these fragments of texts in which the discussed business idioms appear in the scripts are examples of spoken language in practice, to which people would need to adapt, if they want to understand and successfully communicate in business environment. In any case, business idioms in general have to be studied, in order to understand what is meant by them in particular contexts.

The final survey question is 'what do you usually do, if you come across some expressions of which the exact meaning is not clear to you, when watching a movie in English?' The respondents could choose more than one answer when answering this question. The survey results of this question are presented below in Figure 4.2 .

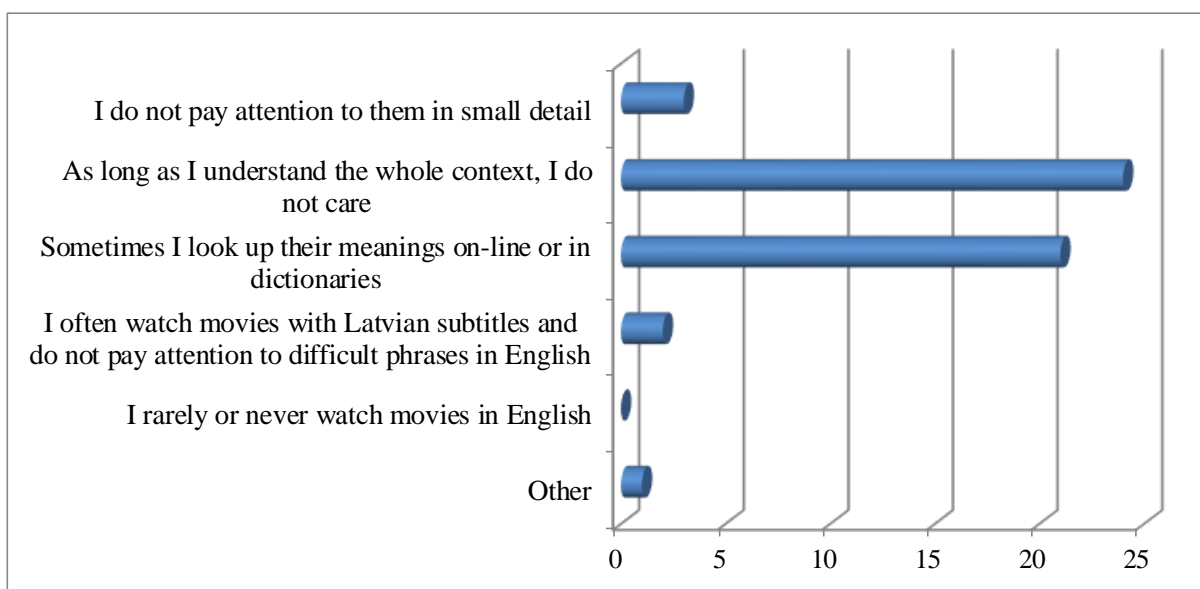


Figure 4.2 Respondent practice regarding unknown expressions

The survey data in Figure 4.2 reveal that the most frequently chosen answer is ‘as long as I understand the whole context, I do not care’, which has been selected by 24 respondents; nevertheless 21 respondents have also chosen the option that states ‘sometimes I look up their meanings on-line or in dictionaries’. Only three respondents have selected the option ‘I do not pay attention to them in small detail’, and two respondents have stated that ‘I often watch movies with Latvian subtitles and do not pay attention to difficult phrases in English’. One respondent marked the option ‘other’ but has not specified his or her answer, yet none of the respondents have chosen the answer ‘I rarely or never watch movies in English’.

To sum up, this chapter deals with the empirical part of the research, and such methods as frequency analysis, discourse analysis and survey research have been employed during the research. The frequency analysis reveals that the most frequently occurring idioms in the movies under discussion are *I guess*, *to take care of sb/sth*, *as long as*, *by the way*, *as if*, *as far as* and *not give a shit*. The average density of idioms in all movies is ~0.006%. However, the average density of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance is ~0.009%, whereas, in the contexts related to personal matters it is ~0.004%. The most frequently occurring business idioms in the movies are as follows: *get axed*, *make a quick buck* and *on the books*. The frequency analysis reveals that 23% of all the detected idioms in the movies are business idioms.

Discourse analysis reveals that idioms, and also business idioms in particular, function as short devices through which complicated and more explicit ideas can be expressed. Idioms in general add color to the language and foster ambiguity. To add, there are cases when

idioms are employed in order to diminish the negativity of something that sounds bad, immoral or illegal, making the language sound vague.

The Latvian audience, who have an academic background in business and finance that has been studied in English, would be able to understand business idioms in the movies about stockbrokers overall; however, the knowledge of these idioms is still not excellent and some idioms would have to be studied in addition, in order to understand the movie contexts in smaller detail. The respondents mostly would not pay attention to unclear phrases, as long as they understand the message; however, many would still sometimes look up the meanings of unknown expressions or idioms, when encountered in movies in English.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it is practically impossible to study English without encountering different types of idiomatic expressions because idioms can be found in all kinds of spoken and written discourses. The language of business and finance in particular is very metaphorical and dense with different types of idiomatic expressions. People who want to work in the fields of business and finance have to get acquainted with idioms, if they want to successfully communicate with others and reach their corporate goals. Furthermore, Hollywood movies are widespread among global audiences and many of them also employ the language of business, depending on movie story and genre, and even if people do not have the need to know English idioms, they still may come across them when watching these types of movies in the English language. The goal of this Bachelor thesis is to study the use of idioms in different American movies related to stockbrokers and finance from year 1983 to 2013, as well as to investigate how well the Latvian audience understand these idioms.

As regards the first research question, the most frequently occurring idioms in the movies are *I guess*, *to take care of sb/sth*, *as long as*, *by the way*, *as if*, *as far as* and *not give a shit*, which occur four or more times. In relation to the second research question, the frequency analysis reveals that the density of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance is remarkably higher compared to the contexts where personal matters are discussed. The overall average density of idioms in business and finance related contexts is ~0.009%, whereas the average density of idioms in contexts related to personal matters is ~0.004%, and the total average density of idioms in the movies in general is ~0.006%. Regarding the third research question, the most frequently occurring business idioms are *get axed*, *make a quick buck* and *on the books*, which appear in the movies four to five times. Out of the total number of 458 idioms detected in the movies, 23% of them are business idioms.

In relation to the fourth research question, particular idioms in business and finance related contexts are used to avoid straight-forward and literal language that would otherwise describe things or actions how they are in the reality and idioms make them sound not as bad, illegal or unethical. In many cases idioms function as short and concise devices that are able to express longer and more complicated ideas and concepts. Idioms are able to create a visual image in head, when comparing two unrelated situations and, in general, add color to the language. The analysis show that many idioms permit different kinds of modifications, omission of words or use of synonymy

Regarding the fifth research question, the survey results show that the knowledge of business idioms to people, who have an academic background in business and finance that has

been studied in English but to whom Latvian is the mother language, is above average and can be rated as almost good, and they would be able to understand the language in these business and finance related movies in a smaller detail.

The density of idioms in different contexts varies from one movie to another, depending on the movie genre and the audience to which these movies are targeted. For example, movies that are meant for broader audiences, e.g., *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) and *Trading Places* (1983), are likely to be less dense in idioms, whereas movies that are more focused on niche audiences tend to be denser in idiomatic expressions, e.g., *Wall Street* (1987) and *Margin Call* (2010). The analysis proves that people who work in the field of finance, stockbrokers in this case, use the language that justifies their actions and opinions (Amernic and Craig, 2006: 5). This is essentially because of the nature of stock markets and all the speculation it involves, and the movie stories also show the characteristic traits of stockbrokers and how greedy they are, therefore, they will use any means, including the language game, to get what they desire. Because movies in general employ spoken discourse, which compared to written discourse is more spontaneous and improvised, many idioms also permit modifications because of those factors but they still can be classified as idioms if they retain their original meanings. On the one hand, it is nearly impossible to know all English idioms, but people who study English will eventually acquire the most common idiomatic expressions. On the other hand, people who study business and finance in English and want to communicate successfully in those fields have to get acquainted with common business idioms; and by having a general knowledge of business idioms, people would be more able to understand such business and finance related movies in more specific detail.

During the research, the author of this paper has faced certain obstacles. Some movies that seem to conform to the selection criteria for the material for the analysis are not available on-line or for download, whereas some movies do not provide their scripts on-line. To add, many American movies that are suggested as *must-see movies about stockbrokers* first have to be watched, in order to see whether they conform to the selection criteria. Consequently, some part of movies proves to be irrelevant for the intended analysis because they actually display comparatively few scenes about stockbrokers in business environment. In relation to movie scripts for the movies used for the analysis, this is another drawback because all of the speech transcripts are not completely identical to the speeches that can be heard in the movies, while scripts for one movie also slightly differ one from another, therefore two scripts for each movie have been used to collect more accurate data. Last of all, because English is the second language to the author of this research, it cannot be guaranteed that all idioms in the movies

have been detected; therefore the movie scripts have been examined repeatedly in order to find as many idioms as possible.

As for the strengths regarding this research, it provides a sample of idioms that are employed in the American movies about stockbrokers, which can be used as a useful material for further investigations on the subject of use of idioms in movies. A similar research can be conducted about the use of idioms in British movies about stockbrokers, or analysis in the field of translation and interpreting can be performed by exploring how these idioms are translated and interpreted, e.g., in Latvian or Russian versions for these movies for foreign audiences.

THESES

1. The structure of idioms is very complex – they vary in length, degree of idiomaticity and functions. They can be employed in different situations depending on the purpose they need to achieve.
2. Some idioms, even if none of their words possesses a literal meaning, are not difficult to comprehend because it is possible to visualize what they mean using imagination.
3. On the one hand, financial discourse has a technical function to report financial records and statements; on the other hand, it is a language game that is able to convey particular values and beliefs for the benefit of somebody in charge.
4. Idioms in spoken discourse often permit modifications, removal of words and alternative wording due to the nature of spoken discourse.
5. Idioms add colour to language, make it sound more vivid and are able to express complex ideas or concepts more explicitly.
6. Stockbrokers and people who work in the field of business and finance often employ idioms so that they might not call certain things or actions as they are, and by using idioms they avoid describing either illegal or unethical activities in their favour.
7. American movies about stockbrokers in general contain roughly 0.006% of idioms, yet the density of idioms in the contexts related to business and finance is more than twice as high compared to the contexts that are not business related.
8. Business idioms function as useful devices for communication among people who work in the field of business and finance.
9. Although Hollywood movie industry focuses on reaching global and large-scale audiences, in order to fully understand movies about stockbrokers, general knowledge about the language of business is required.
10. The Latvian audience, who have some background knowledge in business and finance from the English language perspective, are able to comprehend a big part of the business idioms in these movies about stockbrokers.

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APPENDIX 1

Sample of Idioms

Abbreviations:

Oxford Idioms Dictionary (2001) → OID, 2001

McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs (2002) → DAIPV, 2002

Cambridge Idioms Dictionary 2nd Edition (2006) → CID, 2006

The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms (2003) → AHDI, 2003

Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (2010) → ODEI, 2010

Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms (2003) → CDAI, 2003

Something → sth

Somebody → sb

***The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), directed by Martin Scorsese, USA: Paramount Pictures.**

1. A drop in the bucket – a very small amount in comparison to the much larger amount that is needed (OID, 2001).
2. A heaven on earth – a place or situation where everything is perfect (OID, 2001).
3. A smoking gun – information which proves without doubt that sb committed a crime (CID, 2006).
4. A track record – all a person's or an organization's successes or failures in the past (OID 2001).
5. As far as – to the extent, degree, or amount that (AHDI, 2003).
6. As long as – on condition that (OID 2001).
7. At the end of the day – when everything has been considered (OID, 2001).
8. Batten down the hatches – prepare yourself for a period of difficulty or trouble (OID, 2001).
9. Be up to your eyeballs in sth – have a lot of sth to deal with (OID, 2001).
10. Beat a path to sb's door – if a lot of people beat a path to sb's door, they are all interested in sth that person has to sell, or can do or tell them (OID, 2001).
11. Behind the wheel – driving a car (OID, 2001).
12. Bend the rules – to allow sth to be done that is not usually allowed (CDAI, 2003).
13. Big picture – the situation as a whole (OID, 2001).

14. Bite off more than you can chew – attempt to do sth that is too difficult for you or that you do not have enough time to do (OID, 2001).
15. Blue-blooded – a person of aristocratic or wealthy ancestry (DAIPV, 2002).
16. By the way – in addition but of less importance (CDAI, 2003).
17. Chickens come home to roost – after a long time you experience the unpleasant effects of sth bad or stupid that you have done in the past (OID, 2001).
18. Cover your ass – to make sure that you cannot be blamed or criticized later for sth (CDAI, 2003).
19. For the record – so that the facts should be recorded or remembered correctly (OID, 2001).
20. Get laid – to have sexual intercourse (DAIPV, 2002).
21. Get sth out of your system – do sth so that you no longer feel a very strong emotion or have a strong desire (OID, 2001).
22. Give it time – be patient; in time, things will change (DAIPV, 2002).
23. Go through the roof – become very angry; (of prices, numbers) rise or increase very quickly (OID, 2001).
24. Holy Shit – what a surprise or how very unpleasant (CDAI, 2003).
25. I guess – a phrase that introduces a supposition; a vague way of answering 'yes' (DAIPV, 2002).
26. In the air – felt by a number of people to exist or to be happening (OID, 2001).
27. In the clear – no longer in danger or likely to be blamed, punished, etc. (OID, 2001).
28. Not give a shit – to not be interested in or worried about sth or sb (CID, 2006).
29. Not lose any sleep over sb/sth – not worry a lot about sb/sth (OID, 2001).
30. Off the hook – having avoided a difficult situation (CDAI, 2003).
31. Off the wall – unusual and amusing; slightly crazy (OID, 2001).
32. On fire – giving you a painful burning feeling (OID, 2001).
33. On the horizon – likely to happen or appear soon (CDAI, 2003).
34. On the table – used in business, to talk about a suggestion, plan or amount of money, which is being discussed or offered (OID, 2001).
35. One of these days – at some unspecified time in the future; before a long time has passed (OID, 2001).
36. One step ahead – slightly better prepared or more successful than sb else (CDAI, 2003).
37. Picture-perfect – perfect in appearance or quality (CID, 2006).
38. Rack your brains – try very hard to think of sth or remember sth (OID, 2001).

39. Scrape the bottom of the barrel – use things or people of a low quality because all the good ones have already been used (OID, 2001).
40. Shuffle off this mortal coil – die (OID, 2001).
41. Sick and tired of sb/sth – bored with or annoyed by sb, or by sth that has been happening for a long time which you want to stop (OID, 2001).
42. Straight as an arrow – in a straight line or direction (OID, 2001).
43. Take care of sb/sth – to care for sb/sth; to deal with sth; to handle or manage a problem or detail (DAIPV, 2002).
44. Take the cake – be especially surprising, annoying, etc. (OID, 2001).
45. Take up the slack – improve the way money or people are used in an organization (OID, 2001).
46. Teach sb a lesson – learn from a punishment or because of an unpleasant experience, that you have done sth wrong or made a mistake (OID, 2001).
47. Thank God! – used as an expression of relief (OID, 2001).
48. The cutting edge – the newest, most advanced stage in the development of sth (OID, 2001).
49. To make a long story short – used when a speaker is not going to describe all the details of sth, only the final result (OID, 2001).
50. Top of the line – the very best of sth (CDAI, 2003).
51. Turn your back on sb/sth – refuse to help or support sb who needs it (OID, 2001).
52. Under sb's nose – very close to sb, even though they cannot see it; used to talk about sth bad that happens over a period of time, but which nobody has noticed (OID, 2001).

Wall Street (1987), directed by Oliver Stone, USA: 20th Century Fox.

1. (Certain as) death and taxes – bound to occur, inevitable (AHDI, 2003).
2. (Put sth) in writing – in the form of a document (CDAI, 2003).
3. A bag of tricks – a set of methods or equipment that sb can use (OID, 2001).
4. A bleeding heart – sb who shows too much sympathy for everyone (CID, 2006).
5. A golden parachute – if an important manager in a company has a golden parachute, the company agrees to give them a very large sum of money if they lose their job (CID, 2006).
6. A piece of cake – very easy to do (OID, 2001).
7. A seal of approval – the formal support or approval of a person or organization (OID, 2001).

8. A zero-sum game – situation where two people compete and if one of them wins anything, exactly the same must be lost by the other (CID, 2006).
9. Ahead of time – early (OID, 2001).
10. As far as – to the extent, degree, or amount that (AHDI, 2003).
11. As long as – on condition that (OID 2001).
12. Be brain dead – if sb is brain dead, their mind is not working effectively, usually because they are very tired (CID, 2006).
13. Be in the same ballpark – be within the same area or range of figures, etc. (OID, 2001).
14. Bear market – a period when investors are pessimistic and expect financial losses so are more likely to sell than to buy shares (<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/bear+market.html>).
15. Big Apple – New York City (DAIPV, 2002).
16. Big deal – sth important or special (CDAI, 2003).
17. Blow the whistle – stop sb doing sth illegal or wrong by telling a person in authority about it (OID, 2001).
18. Broad strokes – if you describe a situation with broad strokes, you describe it in a very general way without giving any details (CID, 2006).
19. Bull market – a period when investors are optimistic and there are expectations that good financial results will continue (<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/bull+market.html>).
20. Come into play – operate or be active; have an effect or influence (OID, 2001).
21. Crash pad – a free, temporary lodging place (AHDI, 2003).
22. Cut the (umbilical) cord – to end support of sb or sth, especially financial support (CDAI, 2003).
23. Cut the crap – get to the point; state the real situation. (vulgar slang) (ODEI, 2010).
24. Do your homework – find out the facts, details, etc. of a subject in preparation for a meeting, speech, article, etc. (OID, 2001).
25. Don't have a pot to piss in – doesn't have anything of value; very poor (DAIPV, 2002).
26. Down the drain – wasted or lost (CDAI, 2003).
27. Down the toilet – wasted or lost (CDAI, 2003).
28. Drive nuts – to annoy or irritate sb (DAIPV, 2002).

29. For Christ's sake – used to emphasize that it is important to do sth or when you are annoyed about sth (OID, 2001).
30. Get axed – to get fired (DAIPV, 2002).
31. Give me a break! – used when sb wants sb else to stop doing or saying sth that is annoying, or to stop saying sth that is not true (OID, 2001).
32. Go bat shit – to become completely irrational; to react in an irrationally extreme manner (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/go_batshit).
33. Go belly up – if a business goes belly up, it fails (CID, 2006).
34. Go down the tubes – to fail or become much worse (CDAI, 2003).
35. Go the extra mile – make a special effort to achieve sth, help sb, etc. (OID, 2001).
36. Go to hell – used to tell sb to go away or to stop saying/doing sth because it is annoying (OID, 2001).
37. Have mixed feelings – have both positive and negative feelings (OID, 2001).
38. Have the guts – have the courage (OID, 2001).
39. Hit the road – to start a journey (CID, 2006)
40. Hot on sth – enthusiastic about sth, very much interested in sth (DAIPV, 2002).
41. I guess – a phrase that introduces a supposition; a vague way of answering 'yes' (DAIPV, 2002).
42. Jump all over sb – to criticize sb severely (CDAI, 2003).
43. Kiss sth goodbye – to lose sth; to end sth (CDAI, 2003).
44. Know your way around sth – to have the knowledge about how sth works (CDAI, 2003).
45. Let the tail wag the dog – used to describe a situation where a small, unimportant thing controls a larger, more important thing (OID, 2001).
46. Life is a bitch (and then you die) – said when you find a situation difficult or have had a bad experience (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/life-s-a-bitch-and-then-you-die>).
47. Make a cold call – to visit or telephone a potential but unknown customer from a list of people (<http://www.idiomconnection.com/business.html>).
48. Make a killing – have a great financial success, especially on a stock exchange (ODEI, 2010).
49. Make a quick buck – earn money quickly and easily (OID, 2001).
50. Make sth out of nothing – to make an issue of sth of little importance (DAIPV, 2002).
51. Nail sth down – to make sth certain or final (CDAI, 2003).

52. Nickel and dime sb – to charge sb small amounts of money for sth, often as an extra payment (CID, 2006).
53. No sweat – used as a way of saying that sth is not difficult or any trouble (OID, 2001).
54. Not have a hope in hell – not have any chance at all (OID, 2001).
55. Nutty as a fruitcake – completely crazy (OID, 2001).
56. Off your rocker – crazy (OID, 2001).
57. On a silver platter – give sth to sb without expecting them to do or give anything in return (OID, 2001).
58. On paper – considering sth from what is written down about it, rather than what is actually true in practice (OID, 2001).
59. Open the door for sb – provide sb with a chance or opportunity to do sth new, interesting, etc. (OID, 2001).
60. Over my dead body – used for saying that you will do everything possible to stop sth happening (OID, 2001).
61. Over the top – having gained more than one's goal; outrageously overdone (DAIPV, 2002).
62. Pain in the ass – a person or thing that you find annoying (OID, 2001).
63. Play chicken – to play dangerous games in order to discover who is the bravest (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/play-chicken>).
64. Play hooky – to stay away from school without permission, also from a job or avoiding a duty (CDAI, 2003).
65. Pull a rabbit out of a hat – to do sth surprising (CDAI, 2003).
66. Pull the trigger – the person who pulls the trigger is the one who does the action that closes or finishes sth
(<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/pull+the+trigger.html>).
67. Puppy love – mild infatuation; infatuation as in a crush (DAIPV, 2002).
68. Put cards on the table – talk honestly and openly about your thoughts and intentions, especially when these have been secret until now (OID, 2001).
69. Ring a bell – sound familiar; help you remember sth, but not completely (OID, 2001).
70. Roll the dice – to take a chance on sth
(<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/roll+the+dice.html>).
71. Roller coaster – a situation which changes suddenly and often between being good and being bad (CID, 2006).
72. Slash and burn – of a crude and brash way of doing sth (DAIPV, 2002).

73. Small fry – people, groups or businesses that are not considered to be important or powerful (OID, 2001).
74. Take a bath – to lose money on an investment (CDAI, 2003).
75. Take care of sb/sth – to care for sb/sth; to deal with sth; to handle or manage a problem or detail (DAIPV, 2002).
76. Take no prisoners – to be extremely ruthless with the opposition (DAIPV, 2002).
77. Teach sb a lesson – learn from a punishment or because of an unpleasant experience, that you have done sth wrong or made a mistake (OID, 2001).
78. The bottom line – the important conclusion, judgment, or result (OID, 2001).
79. The fine print – the parts of a written agreement or legal contract that are printed in very small letters, but which may contain important information (OID, 2001).
80. Turn sth upside down – make a place very untidy when you are searching for sth; cause large changes (OID, 2001).
81. White knight – sb who gives money to a company in order to prevent it from being bought by another company (CID, 2006).

Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (2010), directed by Oliver Stone, USA: 20th Century Fox.

1. A death trap – a building, road, or vehicle which is very dangerous and which could cause people to die (CID, 2006).
2. A gold digger – a woman who has relationships with rich men so that they will give her money (CID, 2006).
3. A hot potato – sth that is difficult or dangerous to deal with (CID, 2006).
4. A sinking ship – a company or other organization that is failing (CID, 2006).
5. Add fuel to the fire – to make a situation worse than it already is (CDAI, 2003).
6. As far as – to the extent, degree, or amount that (AHDI, 2003).
7. As long as – on condition that (OID 2001).
8. Be in pole position – to be in the best position to win a competition (CID, 2006).
9. Be like a kid in a candy store – to be very happy and excited about the things around you, and often to react to them in a way which is silly and not controlled (CID, 2006).
10. Bear market – a period when investors are pessimistic and expect financial losses so are more likely to sell than to buy shares
(<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/bear+market.html>).

11. Bet dollars to doughnuts – to bet sth of value against sth worth considerably less (DAIPV, 2002).
12. Between you and me – in strict confidence (AHDI, 2003).
13. Break the news (to sb) – to tell someone some important news, usually bad news (DAIPV, 2002).
14. Bring sb/sth to their knees – to destroy or defeat sb or sth (CID, 2006).
15. Bull market – a period when investors are optimistic and there are expectations that good financial results will continue (<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/bull+market.html>).
16. Bury head in the sand – to refuse to think about an unpleasant situation, hoping that it will improve so that you will not have to deal with it (CID, 2006).
17. By the end of the day – by the time when the workday is over; by the time that the sun goes down (DAIPV, 2002).
18. By the way – in addition but of less importance (CDAI, 2003).
19. Call a spade a spade – to call sth by its right name; to speak frankly about sth, even if it is unpleasant (DAIPV, 2002).
20. Call it a day – to quit work and go home; to say that a day's work has been completed (DAIPV, 2002).
21. Close to home – having a direct personal effect on you (CDAI, 2003).
22. Compare apples to oranges – to examine the similarities of things that are completely different (CDAI, 2003).
23. Cry wolf – raise a false alarm (AHDI, 2003).
24. Dead cat bounce – small, brief recovery in the price of a stock that has been going down; used for any case where sth makes a short, slight recovery during a serious decline (<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/dead+cat+bounce.html>).
25. Dead in the water – stalled; immobile (DAIPV, 2002).
26. Dig deep – to use a lot of your own money to pay for sth (CID, 2006).
27. Fall in love (with sth) – to become enamored of sth (DAIPV, 2002).
28. Fever pitch – if you say that a feeling or a situation has reached fever pitch, you mean that people's emotions have become so strong that they can only just control themselves (CID, 2006).
29. From the old school – holding attitudes or ideas that were popular and important in the past, but which are no longer considered relevant or in line with modern trends (DAIPV, 2002).

30. Get your mind around sth – to succeed in understanding sth difficult or strange (CDAI, 2003).
31. Give sb/sth the green light – to give permission for sth to happen (CDAI, 2003).
32. Go broke – undergo financial collapse, lose most or all of one's money (AHDI, 2003).
33. Go into free fall – if prices or the value of sth go into freefall, they lose value very quickly (CID, 2006).
34. Go to hell – to become ruined; to go away and stop bothering sb (DAIPV, 2002).
35. Go to hell in a bucket – to get rapidly worse and worse (DAIPV, 2002).
36. Have blood on your hands – to be responsible for violent injuries or deaths (CDAI, 2003).
37. High-water mark – the peak of sth, especially an achievement (AHDI, 2003).
38. I guess – a phrase that introduces a supposition; a vague way of answering 'yes' (DAIPV, 2002).
39. In a flash – quickly; immediately (DAIPV, 2002).
40. In one's hands – in one's responsibility, charge, or care (AHDI, 2003).
41. In touch – in contact with sb by letter or telephone; having self-knowledge (DAIPV, 2002).
42. Land on your feet – to be in good or improved condition after a difficult experience (CDAI, 2003).
43. Learn a/your lesson – to understand sth because of an unpleasant experience (CDAI, 2003).
44. Live happily ever after – to live in happiness after a specific event (DAIPV, 2002).
45. Make a fast/quick buck – to earn money quickly and often in a way that is not honest (CID, 2006).
46. Make sth clear to sb – to help sb understand sth (DAIPV, 2002).
47. Mind your own business – do not be so interested in what other people are doing (CDAI, 2003).
48. No good deed goes unpunished – this means that life is unfair and people can do or try to do good things and still end up in a lot of trouble (<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/no+good+deed+goes+unpunished.html>).
49. None of your business – do not interest yourself in matters that do not involve you (CDAI, 2003).
50. Not give a shit – to not be interested in sb or sth (CDAI, 2003).

51. Off the record – not intended to be known publicly or recorded officially (CDAI, 2003).
52. On paper – in theory, hypothetically (AHDI, 2003).
53. On the run – avoiding being found; while busy doing sth else (CDAI, 2003).
54. On the sidelines – observing rather than taking part, out of the action (AHDI, 2003).
55. Out of a work – unemployed; having lost one's job (DAIPV, 2002).
56. Out of control – acting wildly or violently (DAIPV, 2002).
57. Penny ante – of little value or importance (CID, 2006).
58. People who live in glass houses (shouldn't throw stones) – sth that you say which means people should not criticize other people for faults that they have themselves (CID, 2006).
59. Play ball (with sb) – to agree to do sth the way sb else wants you to (CDAI, 2003).
60. Play hooky – to stay away from school without permission; sometimes refers to staying away from a job or avoiding a duty (CDAI, 2003).
61. Pull the plug – to put an end to someone's activities or plans (DAIPV, 2002).
62. Save your own skin – to protect yourself from danger or difficulties, without worrying about other people (CID, 2006).
63. Shoot first, ask questions later – take action, even though you do not know enough to be sure if it is the right action (DAIPV, 2002).
64. Sit tight – be patient, take no action (AHDI, 2003).
65. Sour grapes – sth that one cannot have and so disparages as if it were never desirable (DAIPV, 2002).
66. Stand a chance – have a possibility or a hope of success (AHDI, 2003).
67. Take one's ball and go home – to cease participating in an activity that has turned to one's disadvantage, especially out of spite, or in a way that prevents others from participating as well
(https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/take_one%27s_ball_and_go_home).
68. Take one's time – to go as slow as one wants or needs to; to use as much time as is required (DAIPV, 2002).
69. Take sb under sb's wing – receiving sb's care and nurturing (DAIPV, 2002).
70. The Ivy-league – a group of old and very good colleges in the north-east of the US (CID, 2006).
71. Throw the baby out with the bath water – to get rid of the good parts as well as the bad parts of sth when you are trying to improve it (CID, 2006).

72. To the hilt – if you do sth to the hilt, you do it in the strongest and most complete way that you can; if you borrow to the hilt, you borrow as much money as you can, often so much that it is difficult to pay it back (CID, 2006).
73. Under pressure – facing or enduring sth such as pressure or a deadline (DAIPV, 2002).
74. Where angels fear to tread – where danger is (<http://esl-bits.net/idioms/id678.htm>).
75. White-collar – a white-collar worker is sb who works in an office, doing mental rather than physical work (CID, 2006).
76. Work your ass off – to work very hard (CID, 2006).

***Margin Call* (2011), directed by Jeffrey McDonald Chandor, USA: Lionsgate, Roadside Attractions, Benaroya Pictures.**

1. (All) for naught – without achievement or result (CDAI, 2003).
2. A gray area – a subject or problem that people do not know how to deal with because there are no clear rules (CID, 2006).
3. A pep talk – a speech that you give to people in order to encourage them to work harder or win a competition (CID, 2006).
4. All hands on deck – sth that you say when everyone's help is needed, especially to do a lot of work in a short amount of time (CID, 2006).
5. As far as – to the extent, degree, or amount that (AHDI, 2003).
6. At the end of the day – when everything else has been taken into consideration (DAIPV, 2002).
7. At this point – now, at the present (AHDI, 2003).
8. Back on track – running according to schedule again (DAIPV, 2002).
9. Big bucks – a very large amount of money (DAIPV, 2002).
10. Big picture – the situation as a whole (OID, 2001).
11. Burn the candle at both ends – to get little sleep or rest because you are busy until late every night and you get up early every morning (CID, 2006).
12. By the way – in addition but of less importance (CDAI, 2003).
13. Come to an end – conclude, terminate (AHDI, 2003).
14. Cry in one's beer – to feel sorry for oneself (DAIPV, 2002).
15. For God's sake – surprised or annoyed by this (CDAI, 2003).
16. For what it's worth – whether or not this is of value (CDAI, 2003).
17. Get axed – to get fired (DAIPV, 2002).
18. Get laid – to have sexual intercourse (DAIPV, 2002).

19. Give a second – to allow sb or sth a moment or brief period of time in which to do sth (<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/give+one+a+second>).
20. Give or take – plus or minus a small amount, approximately, more or less (AHDI, 2003).
21. Give sb a break – to stop criticizing or behaving in an unpleasant way to sb (CID, 2006).
22. Give sb a heads up – to give sb information or a warning (CDAI, 2003).
23. Give sth a try – to make a try at sth (DAIPV, 2002).
24. Give the go-ahead – to grant sb permission to proceed with some action or task (<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/give+the+go-ahead>).
25. Go out of business – to stop doing commerce or business (DAIPV, 2002).
26. Go south – to lose value or quality (CID, 2006).
27. Hold sb's hand – to support sb when they are doing sth difficult or frightening by being with them (CID, 2006).
28. Hold your head high – to show that you are not ashamed of your efforts (CDAI, 2003).
29. I guess – a phrase that introduces a supposition; a vague way of answering 'yes' (DAIPV, 2002).
30. In the middle of – busy doing sth (CDAI, 2003).
31. In the wrong place (at the wrong time) – unlucky to be somewhere (CDAI, 2003).
32. Leave sb holding the bag – to allow sb to take all the blame; to leave sb appearing to be guilty (DAIPV, 2002).
33. Loose ends – unfinished details, incomplete business (AHDI, 2003).
34. Make a living from sth – to earn a living from sth or by doing sth (DAIPV, 2002).
35. Make sense – be understandable; be reasonable, wise, or practical (AHDI, 2003).
36. Make sth clear to sb – to help sb understand sth (DAIPV, 2002).
37. On board – if sb is on board, they are working with an organization or group of people (CID, 2006).
38. On the books – part of the law (CDAI, 2003).
39. On the edge – in a precarious position; also, in a state of keen excitement, as from danger or risk (AHDI, 2003).
40. On the way – moving toward a place; advancing toward a new status or condition (DAIPV, 2002).
41. One man's loss is another man's gain – when one person loses sth, another person gets it (DAIPV, 2002).
42. Out of the gate – at or from the very beginning (CDAI, 2003).

43. Put a smile on sb's face – to please sb; to make sb happy (DAIPV, 2002).
44. Put your thumb on the scales – if you put your thumb on the scales, you try to influence the result of sth in your favor
(<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/put+your+thumb+on+the+scales.html>).
45. Save (sth) for a rainy day – to keep an amount of money for a time in the future when it might be needed (CID, 2006).
46. So to speak – as one might say; said a certain way, even though the words are not exactly accurate (DAIPV, 2002).
47. Sweep sth under the rug – to hide sth embarrassing (CDAI, 2003).
48. Take care of sb/sth – to care for sb/sth; to deal with sth; to handle or manage a problem or detail (DAIPV, 2002).
49. Take place – to happen (DAIPV, 2002).
50. The word is out – a piece of news is known, especially if it was secret or if it will cause changes (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/the-word-is-gets-out>).
51. Throw sb a bone – if you throw sb a bone, you give them a small reward or some kind words to make them feel good even if they've not really contributed much
(<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/throw+sb+a+bone.html>).
52. Water under the bridge – sth that has happened and cannot be changed (CDAI, 2003).
53. When all is said and done – when everything is finished and settled; when everything is considered (DAIPV, 2002).

***Boiler Room* (2000), directed by Ben Younger, USA: New Line Cinema.**

1. A game plan – a plan for achieving success, especially in business or politics (CID, 2006).
2. A roller coaster – a situation which changes suddenly and often between being good and being bad (CID, 2006).
3. As if – like sth was actually so (CDAI, 2003).
4. As long as – on condition that (OID 2001).
5. At the top of your lungs – as loudly as you can (CDAI, 2003).
6. Back door – a clandestine, unauthorized, or illegal way of operating (AHDI, 2003).
7. Bend the rules – to allow sth to be done that is not usually allowed (CDAI, 2003).
8. Big deal – sth important or special (CDAI, 2003).

9. Blow your mind – to surprise or excite you, or cause you to be extremely interested (CDAI, 2003).
10. By the same token – a phrase indicating that the speaker is introducing parallel or closely contrasting information (DAIPV, 2002).
11. Change sb's mind – to cause a person to think differently (DAIPV, 2002).
12. Cook the books – falsify a company's financial records (AHDI, 2003).
13. Do time – serve a prison sentence (AHDI, 2003).
14. Don't give me any of your lip – don't talk back (DAIPV, 2002).
15. Down the line – in the future (CDAI, 2003).
16. Filthy rich – people who are very wealthy (DAIPV, 2002).
17. Flip side – another aspect of a situation (DAIPV, 2002).
18. For Christ's sake – I am surprised or annoyed by this (CDAI, 2003).
19. From time to time – irregularly; now and then; occasionally; sometimes; not predictably (DAIPV, 2002).
20. Front some amount of money – to provide an advance payment of some amount to sb (DAIPV, 2002).
21. Get ahead of oneself – to do or say sth sooner than it ought to be done so that the proper explanation or preparations have not been made (DAIPV, 2002).
22. Get laid – to have sexual intercourse (DAIPV, 2002).
23. Go along for the ride – to attend some event or participate in some activity without playing an active or central role in the proceedings
(<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/go+along+for+the+ride>).
24. Go nuts – to become crazy, disoriented, or frustrated (DAIPV, 2002).
25. Go through the roof – if the level of sth, especially a price, goes through the roof, it increases very quickly (CID, 2006).
26. Gold mine – a rich, plentiful source of wealth or some other desirable thing (AHDI, 2003).
27. Hand to on a silver platter – provide with sth valuable for nothing, or give an unearned reward to; also, make it easy for (AHDI, 2003).
28. Holy shit – what a surprise or how very unpleasant (CDAI, 2003).
29. I guess – a phrase that introduces a supposition; a vague way of answering 'yes' (DAIPV, 2002).
30. If the shoe fits (, wear it) – an unflattering remark applies to you, so you should accept it (DAIPV, 2002).

31. In the know – having more information about sth than most other people (CDAI, 2003).
32. Learn the ropes – to understand how to do a particular job or activity (CDAI, 2003).
33. Leave sb holding the bag – to allow sb to take all the blame; to leave sb appearing to be guilty (DAIPV, 2002).
34. Look the part – to appear to be suited to a particular type of work (CDAI, 2003).
35. Make a cold call – to visit or telephone a potential but unknown customer from a list of people (<http://www.idiomconnection.com/business.html>).
36. Make a fast/quick buck – to earn money quickly and often in a way that is not honest (CID, 2006).
37. Make an honest living – to earn money by working hard at a job (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/make-an-honest-living>).
38. Make up your mind – to decide what to choose; to become very certain that you want to do sth (CID, 2006).
39. Money is the root of all evil – people do many evil things in order to get rich (DAIPV, 2002).
40. New blood – new people in an organization who will provide new ideas and energy (CID, 2006).
41. Nigger rich – living ostentatiously; spending money recklessly, especially a limited supply of money (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/nigger-rich>).
42. Off the record – not intended to be known publicly or recorded officially (CDAI, 2003).
43. On paper – in theory, hypothetically (AHDI, 2003).
44. On the line – speaking on the telephone (CDAI, 2003).
45. Out of one's mind – to be silly and senseless; to be crazy and irrational (DAIPV, 2002).
46. Pick up the check – to pay the bill (DAIPV, 2002).
47. Plant the seeds – to do sth that will cause a particular result in the future (CDAI, 2003).
48. Play the market – to invest in the stock market (DAIPV, 2002).
49. Show sb the ropes – to explain to sb how to do a job or activity (CID, 2006).
50. Sit tight – be patient, take no action (AHDI, 2003).
51. Smile from ear to ear – to look extremely happy (CID, 2006).
52. Smoke signals – a sign that sth is probably going to happen (CID, 2006).
53. Stay put – remain in a fixed or established position (AHDI, 2003).

54. Swing for the fences – to attempt to earn large returns in the stock market (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/swing-for-the-fences.asp>).
55. Take care of sb/sth – to care for sb/sth; to deal with sth; to handle or manage a problem or detail (DAIPV, 2002).
56. The hard sell – a method of trying very hard to persuade sb to buy sth even if they do not want to (CID, 2006).
57. The Ivy-league – a group of old and very good colleges in the north-east of the US (CID, 2006).
58. The sky's the limit – there is no limit (CDAI, 2003).
59. The top dog – the most important and powerful person in a group (CID, 2006).
60. Ups and downs – good times and bad times, successes and failures (AHDI, 2003).
61. Whet sb's appetite – to cause sb to be interested in sth and to be eager to have, know, learn, etc., more about it (DAIPV, 2002)
62. Work one's way up – to progress in one's work to a particular rank or status (DAIPV, 2002)
63. Work your ass off – to work very hard (CID, 2006).
64. Worst-case scenario – the worst possible future outcome (DAIPV, 2002).
65. You can't keep a good man down – sth that you say which means that a person with a strong character will always succeed, even if they have a lot of problems (CID, 2006).

Trading Places (1983), directed by John Landis, USA: Paramount Pictures.

1. A guinea pig – if sb is used as a guinea pig, new ideas or products are tested on them (CID, 2006).
2. As far as – to the extent, degree, or amount that (AHDI, 2003).
3. As long as – on condition that (OID 2001).
4. At the end of the day – when everything has been considered (OID, 2001).
5. Be sick and tired of sth – to be angry and bored because sth unpleasant has been happening for too long (CID, 2006).
6. Behind bars – in jail (DAIPV, 2002).
7. Big deal – a matter of great interest or importance; So what? Who cares? (AHDI, 2003).
8. Business is business – sth that you say which means the purpose of business is to make a profit, and that other things, such as personal feelings, must not be allowed to prevent this (CID, 2006).

9. By the way – in addition but of less importance (CDAI, 2003).
10. Catch sb red-handed – to catch a person in the act of doing sth wrong (DAIPV, 2002).
11. Come out on top – to end up being the winner (DAIPV, 2002).
12. Corner the market – buy all or most of a commodity or stock so that its price goes up (AHDI, 2003).
13. Day-to-day – a day-to-day activity is one of the things that you have to do every day, usually as a part of your work (CID, 2006).
14. Fall to pieces – to become emotionally upset (DAIPV, 2002).
15. Flat broke – having no money at all (DAIPV, 2002).
16. Get out of my face – go away (CDAI, 2003).
17. Get to the bottom of sth – to get an understanding of the causes of sth (DAIPV, 2002).
18. Go belly up – if a business goes belly up, it fails (CID, 2006).
19. Go for the jugular (throat) – to attack fiercely in order to have no doubt about winning (CDAI, 2003).
20. Good old days – back in an earlier time which everyone remembers as a better time, even if it really wasn't (DAIPV, 2002).
21. Hit rock bottom – to reach the lowest possible level or be in the worst possible situation (CDAI, 2003).
22. I guess – a phrase that introduces a supposition; a vague way of answering 'yes' (DAIPV, 2002).
23. In the blood – built into one's personality or character (DAIPV, 2002).
24. In the mood – having the proper state of mind for a particular situation or for doing sth (DAIPV, 2002).
25. In the poorhouse – in a state of poverty (DAIPV, 2002).
26. Kick (some) ass – to punish sb or to defeat sb with a lot of force (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/kick-some-ass>).
27. Lose your mind – to become crazy (CDAI, 2003).
28. Make a scene – to be loud and rude with other people or in public (CDAI, 2003).
29. Monopoly money – money that seems to have little or no value (CID, 2006).
30. None of sb's business – not of sb's concern (DAIPV, 2002).
31. Place an order – to submit an order (DAIPV, 2002).
32. Put in a hard day's work – to work very hard at one's job (DAIPV, 2002).
33. Right on time – at the correct time; no later than the specified time (DAIPV, 2002).
34. Rock the boat – to cause trouble where none is welcome; to disturb a situation that is otherwise stable and satisfactory (DAIPV, 2002).

35. Take a stand – to publicly express an opinion (CDAI, 2003).
36. Take care of sb/sth – to care for sb/sth; to deal with sth; to handle or manage a problem or detail (DAIPV, 2002).
37. Take no prisoners – to be extremely determined to get what you want (CDAI, 2003).
38. Take to sth like a duck to water – to learn how to do sth very quickly and to enjoy doing it (CID, 2006).
39. The party is over – sth successful has ended (CDAI, 2003).
40. The pot calling the kettle black – a situation in which one person criticizes another for a fault they have themselves (CDAI, 2003).
41. Think big – to form plans that are extremely difficult to achieve (CDAI, 2003).

APPENDIX 2

Survey: Business Idioms

An idiom is a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit. The meanings of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the idiomatic expression as a whole.

(Crystal, 2008: 236)

Do you know or can you guess the meanings of the following business idioms? All examples of idioms are provided with contexts taken from the American movies about stockbrokers and are marked in *italics*. Please, do not look up their meanings on-line before choosing your answer. (Only one answer possible)

1. 'Well, our boss *got axed* today, so technically he is our new boss'

To get axed:

- a) to suffer financial difficulties
- b) to get fired
- c) to take mandatory vacation
- d) to get in trouble

2. 'They can stop *cold calling* and start trading again.'

Make a cold call:

- a) to inform someone about a failed business transaction
- b) to use high pressure sales tactics
- c) a call made by a salesman on a potential customer without making an appointment
- d) to offer mortgage deals to a potential customer

3. 'Quick-buck artists come and go with every *bull market*.'

Bull market:

- a) a time when the prices of most shares are rising
- b) an illegal animal fighting contest
- c) a period when there is an economic downfall
- d) a fierce competition between successful companies

4. 'The Dukes will *corner the* entire frozen orange juice *market*, unless somebody stops them.'

Corner the market:

- a) to quit working until certain demands are met
- b) to suffer bankruptcy in a particular field of business
- c) to lay off most of the employees working in a company
- d) to control the supply or sale of a particular product

5. 'If it looks good *on paper*, we're in the kill zone.'

On paper:

- a) in a legal way
- b) in theory rather than actual performance or fact
- c) to be part of the law
- d) in a printed version

6. 'Make no friends and *take no prisoners*.'

Take no prisoners:

- a) to work independently
- b) to be very ruthless and determined to achieve something
- c) be on a slippery slope to becoming a workaholic
- d) not to mix business and friendship

7. 'So everybody's waiting for them to *hit rock bottom*, so they can buy cheap.'

Hit rock bottom:

- a) to be in the worst possible situation
- b) to suffer a financial setback
- c) go out of business
- d) experience a budget surplus

8. 'On settlement day, you endorse a check to Blue Horseshoe trading company, then I'll send you your cut, that's *the bottom line*.'

The bottom line:

- a) best and final offer
- b) the maximum amount of money someone is willing to bet
- c) the most important fact in a situation
- d) an alternative scenario or outcome

9. 'These cowboys of finance always seem to *land on their feet*.'

Land on your feet:

- a) to cause financial problems
- b) to be in good or improved condition after a difficult experience
- c) to be in a winning position
- d) to find legal loopholes

10. 'The larger houses don't really like to hire kids straight out of college, unless you went to an *Ivy-League* school.'

The Ivy-League:

- a) a group of old and very good colleges in the north-east of the US
- b) schools for the very privileged where admission is available only by invitation
- c) colleges with high athletic admission standards
- d) universities that select people by their potential leadership rather than high grades and SAT scores

11. What do you usually do, if you come across some expressions of which the exact meaning is not clear to you, when watching a movie in English? (Multiple answers possible)

- a) I do not pay attention to them in small detail
- b) As long as I understand the whole context, I do not care
- c) Sometimes I look up their meanings on-line or in dictionaries
- d) I often watch movies with Latvian subtitles and do not pay attention to difficult phrases in English
- e) I rarely or never watch movies in English
- f) Other _____

Dokumentārā lapa

Bakalaura darbs „Use Idioms in American Movies about Stockbrokers” (Idiomu lietojums amerikāņu filmās par biržas brokeriem) izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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06. 01. 2016.

Rekomendēju/nerekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītāja: lekt. Irina Sokolova

06. 01. 2016.

Recenzents:

Studiju metodiķe:

Darbs iesniegts Anglistikas nodaļā 06. 01. 2016.

Darbu pieņēma:

Darbs aizstāvēts bakalaura gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

2016. gada..... janvārī, prot. Nr., vērtējums

Komisijas sekretāre: