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## ENGLISH INFLUENCE ON (THE LATEST) SPORTS TERMINOLOGY – THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PROJECT

The article introduces theoretical and methodological assumptions of the project recently launched at the WSB Merito University in Poznań. The project aims at an orderly and in-depth analysis of the English influence on Polish sports jargon. The analysis will be based on live coverage of the major sports events broadcast on the widely known streaming platforms. The study will focus on the most up-to-date language of sport by examining the terminology used by sports commentators in a variety of disciplines, not only the widely known ones, such as tennis or football, but also sports which have been introduced to Poland in the recent years, such as futsal or lacrosse. The particular sub-corpora (related to individual disciplines) will be obtained from the coverage of a number of international events, such as the Olympic Games, the World Games, World or European Championships (in respective disciplines). The examination of the language of commentators (who often are former competitors) assures access to the proper jargon used within a particular discipline, both with respect to the formal and colloquial registers. Additionally, it is believed that, since commentators often work under the pressure of time, they are responsible for the introduction of a number of neologisms, many of which might not have been recorded in dictionaries yet.

Keywords: sport, anglicism, neologism, borrowing, live commentary

### 1. Introduction

A lot has been written about the history of sport and its many disciplines (e.g. McComb 2004, Lipoński 2012, Berglund 2021), many of which have gained popularity worldwide. This refers not only to those sports which are part of the Olympic Games (e.g. track and field, cycling, swimming, etc.), but also to other

disciplines which are performed during various international championships, such as billiard sports or handball.

The increasing globalisation of sport today resulted in the development of an international language of sport, which – without a doubt – is English (McComb 2004). Not only due to the fact that it is one of the three official languages of the Olympic Games (next to French and the language of the host country), but also because it is the source of lexicon used to convey certain meanings incorporated into other languages, starting with the phrase *fair play* – known probably to every sportsperson regardless of their nationality (Lipoński 2012: 63, 608), through language calques, such as the Italian *pallamano*, Spanish *balonmano* and Polish *piłka ręczna* – from English *handball* (e.g. Cappuzzo 2008), to native formations inspired by English, as in the case of Polish *słoń* (from *swan* in the English phrase *swan's neck*) applied to designate a rest extension used by snooker players (Bator and Dębski 2022).

The undertaken project offers an orderly and in-depth investigation into the most recent English influence on Polish sports terminology. The objective is to investigate into the contemporary and most up-to-date language of sport and illustrate the degree to which it has been affected by the influence of English, which – as mentioned above – is said to have become an international language of sport. The study will be based on sports commentaries as, first of all, spoken language is the first to be affected by foreign influence; therefore, it is believed that many traces of English which have not yet been reflected in the written language will be found. Second of all, sports commentators are professionals (frequently former competitors in a particular discipline) who know exactly the nuances of a particular field, and thus, it is assumed that they shall be using the proper jargon<sup>1</sup> characteristic of a particular discipline. Third of all, commentators, who often work under the pressure of time, are believed to be responsible for the introduction of neologisms, as was the case with the snooker phrase *uderzyć po strońcu* – coined by Eurosport commentators and modelled on the English expression ‘to pot (a ball) off the side (of another ball)’ (Bator and Dębski 2022: 269).

## 2. A word on previous studies

Studies have shown that sports terminology belongs to one of the five semantic fields most prone to the English influence and the word *sport* itself has been among 30 most frequently used English loans in Polish (Kłaczyńska 2010). The earliest studies dealing with anglicisms<sup>2</sup> in this particular semantic area go

<sup>1</sup> The term *jargon* is used after (Biber et al. 2007: 43) with reference to “in-group vocabulary”.

<sup>2</sup> The term *anglicism* is broadly understood, after Witalisz (2016), as any language element which results from the process of borrowing from or via English.

back to the early 1960s, when professor Jacek Fisiak (1961, 1964) demonstrated that 25% of all the anglicisms found in Polish represent sports terminology. This proves “the special position of sports terms in the English vocabulary borrowed into Polish and indicates that they deserve separate treatment” (Fisiak 1964: 230). Borrowings related to sport were not only better assimilated into Polish than loans representing other semantic fields (Fisiak 1964), but the majority of the terms catalogued by Fisiak sixty years ago are still used and enjoy their popularity in contemporary Polish (Dylewski 2016, Dylewski and Bator 2021).

Following Fisiak’s publications, Ożdżyński (1970) classified sports vocabulary into words originating from (i) borrowing, (ii) word formation, (iii) polysemy and (iv) the combination of the latter two. The first group was further divided into loanwords, loan translations, and semantic loans (1970: 11-13). With time, more and more publications addressed the problems of sports terminology and/or foreign influence on Polish. In the recent studies, numerous scholars either attended to the English influence on Polish in general (e.g. Mańczak-Wohlfeld 1992, 1995, Witalisz 2007, 2015, Zabawa 2012), or concentrated on certain aspects of the influence reflected in single sports, such as fitness (Biesaga 2014), football (Kudła 2018), horse-racing (Wojtyńska-Nowotka 2021), climbing (Niepytalska-Osiecka 2014) or volleyball (Molińska 2011).

Similarly, much attention has been given to sports announcer talk. Scholars investigated, among others, selected syntactic properties of live commentaries (Ferguson 1983), synonymy and periphrasis (Koper 2012, Klégr and Bozděchová 2019), emotional value of the language (Lewandowski 2011, Grochala 2019), strategies used by sports announcers (Faron 2015), as well as various types of commentaries (Reaser 2003, Grochala 2012, Jarosz 2018). However, to our knowledge no extensive analysis of the English influence on sports jargon used by sports commentators has been undertaken yet.

### 3. The aim of the project

The rising popularity of various disciplines of sport has led to the introduction of numerous TV and online channels dedicated exclusively to coverage of divers sports events. New disciplines become more and more fashionable, which results in the need for coining terms to name new activities, equipment or sportswear. Additionally, those disciplines which have been known in Poland for years also develop, triggering lexical changes within the jargon. This, in turn, contributed to a much more professional and specialised coverage of the particular events than in the twentieth century. The commentators are no longer sports experts in general, but they are authorities in one or two disciplines;

as a consequence, the live coverage they provide is at the highest level of expertise.

The project offers a comprehensive study of sports terminology with reference to the impact the English language has on the jargon used in particular disciplines. Focus on the spoken language guarantees the most up-to-date findings, whilst gathering data from sports commentators' speech ensures that the terminology analysed will be specialised and relevant to the respective disciplines. By concentrating on spoken language, the latest borrowings – also those not yet depicted in dictionaries – will be detected. Bearing in mind that the most recent dictionary of anglicisms in Polish was published by Mańczak-Wohlfeld in 2010, there is an extensive gap to fill.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as the corpus is built upon live coverage of selected events, the language will – at least to a certain extent – be spontaneous, which will allow for extraction of not only officially accepted terminology but also the informal jargon related to particular disciplines. The register applied in the commentaries has been described as 'sports announcer talk', a concept coined by Ferguson (1983) with reference to radio commentaries and later extended to TV broadcasts (Reaser 2003). It usually consists of two components: "play-by-play description focuses on the action, as opposed to colour commentary which refers to the more discursive and leisurely speech with which commentators fill in the quite long spaces between spurts of action" (Holmes 2001: 247). Sports commentaries are usually performed by two commentators covering an event, who are usually a professional journalist and a sportsperson. As a result, the language used in such commentaries is full of specialised terminology combined with colloquial terms and distinctive lexico-grammatical features (cf. Lewandowski 2012).

#### 4. Theoretical assumptions

The theoretical framework of the study will be based on the typology of borrowings proposed by Haugen (1950) and narrowed by Haspelmath (2009) and Durkin (2014). Following their studies, two major categories, lexical and structural borrowing, will be distinguished. The former encompasses the acquisition of a new word form and/or word meaning (Durkin 2014); the latter

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<sup>3</sup> Currently a group of scholars are working on a dictionary of anglicisms. The dictionary is supposed to contain direct loans and calques recorded recurrently, and extracted from "written language: a) Internet articles, b) social media (...), c) gossip websites, and d) blogs, as well as spoken language: 1) information and breakfast TV programmes, and 2) videos available on YouTube." (Cierpich-Kozieł, Mańczak-Wohlfeld and Witalisz 2023: 9). Even though sport is one of the domains of interest, these sources are rather unlikely to provide as many adaptations from sports jargon as live commentaries, especially that "highly specialised terminology" will be excluded from the dictionary (2023: 19).

refers to syntactic, morphological or semantic patterns (Haspelmath 2009). The major categories of loanwords which will be distinguished are:

- (1) direct loans - in which case both the form and the meaning are borrowed, e.g. Pl *brejk* (from Eng. *break*);<sup>4</sup>
- (2) loanblends - which consist of at least two elements of two different origins, e.g. Pl *grać na sejfa* (from Eng. *to play safe*);
- (3) loanshifts, which may take the form of (a) loan translations – which consist in substitution of the original lexeme with a target language equivalent, e.g. Pl *luźna czerwona* (from Eng. *loose red*), or (b) semantic loans – which are expressed by adding a new meaning to an already existing native form, e.g. Pl *krzyż* ‘a shot across the table’ (from Eng. *cross*).

Additionally, neologisms which are not true borrowings but have been modelled on or inspired by English will also be included in the study. Following Witalisz (2016), they may take the form of:

- (4) pseudo-anglicisms, that is lexemes consisting (at least partly) of English elements, which, however, do not exist in such a form or with such a sense in English, e.g. Pl *swan* (from Eng. *swan's neck*);
- (5) loan-based creations – which resemble loanblends, as they consist of elements of two different origins; however, they do not imitate an English model, e.g. Pl *faul tekstylny* (no English equivalent);
- (6) loan creations - which are used instead of direct loans or loan translations whenever these are difficult to form. They consist of native elements and usually result from “the need to match designations available in a language in contact” (Weinreich 1953: 51), e.g. Pl *bila robiąca* (from Eng. *frame ball*).

The structural borrowings and neologisms will be further divided due to their structure, as they might be created with a number of morphological processes involved, such as compounding, e.g. Pl *dublowózek* (> direct loan *dubel* and the Polish lexeme *wózek*), derivation, e.g. Pl *banista* (> direct loan *ban* and the suffix *-ista*), conversion, e.g. Pl *auto-snooker* (from Eng. *to snooker oneself*), back-formation, e.g. Pl *invent* (from Eng. *invention*), or other word-formation processes. The lexemes might also differ in terms of the order, number and meaning of their constituents when compared to the original form they were borrowed from or modelled on, e.g. Pl *bila obiektowa* (from Eng. *object ball*), Pl *grać na sejfa* (from Eng. *to play safe*), Pl *bila z ręki* (from Eng. *ball in hand*).

The investigation into the degree of adaptation of the various types of anglicisms will be based on Mańczak-Wohlfeld's model (1995). It will involve phonological, morphological, semantic, and (whenever applicable) orthographic

<sup>4</sup> All the examples in this section come from Bator and Dębski (2022).

adaptation. As the research will be based on spoken language, with the aim to concentrate on the latest borrowings, it is anticipated that many of the attested lexemes will not have been reflected in written sources. However, each item collected in the course of the project will be looked up in a variety of Polish dictionaries (e.g. *Wielki Słownik Języka Polskiego*, *Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego*, *Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*, some thematic sports dictionaries, or *New Lexicon of Polish Anglicisms* – should any part(s) of this dictionary be made available in the course of the project duration) in order to check its attestations. Moreover, for a selection of sports the analysis of live commentaries will be supplemented by an analysis of thematic forums, blogs or interviews with coaches and competitors representing a particular discipline. Should any attestations of the anglicisms occur in the written sources, their graphic adaptation will also be discussed in the respective publications.

## 5. The corpus and methodology

The scope of the project encompasses the analysis of terminology used in as many sports as possible, including the well-known disciplines, such as tennis, volleyball or football, as well as the less familiar ones, such as lacrosse (which is “A North American game at ball, introduced into England from Canada. In the general arrangements it resembles hockey or football, but the ball is a small one, driven and caught with a crosse”, OED: s.v. lacrosse, n.), korfbal (that is “A game of Dutch origin, resembling basketball and netball”, OED: s.v. korfbal, n.) or wakeboarding (“The sport or practice of coasting on the surface of water, or performing acrobatic stunts and manoeuvres, by riding on a short, wide board resembling a surfboard whilst being towed by a motorized craft”, OED: s.v. wakeboarding, n.).

The database will be extracted from live coverage of major sports events, such as:

- (1) the Olympic Games – which encompass almost fifty disciplines (olympics.com);
- (2) the World Games representing almost forty sport categories (theworldgames.org); some of the categories cover more than one discipline, for instance, billiards sports include disciplines such as carom, pool and snooker. The World Games is a multi-sport event organised every four years; it incorporates many non-olympic sports, such as floor-ball, bowling or orienteering;
- (3) events of world or European prestige, such as UEFA Euro / FIFA World Cup (football), World Figure Skating Championship, Roland Garros / Wimbledon (tennis), or Giro d'Italia / Vuelta a España / Tour de Polonia (cycling).

The preliminary list encompasses the following disciplines (some of which may have more than one variant):

athletics, badminton, baseball, basketball, billiards sports, bobsleigh, boules sports, bowling, boxing, canoe, climbing, curling, cycling, diving, equestrian sports, fistball, fitness, floor-ball, football, futsal, golf, gymnastics, handball, hockey, judo, karate, kickboxing, korfbal, lacrosse, luge, netball, orienteering, powerlifting, polo, racquetball, rugby, sailing, sambo, skateboarding, skating, skiing, softball, squash, sumo, surfing, swimming, taekwondo, tennis, volleyball, wakeboarding, weightlifting, wrestling, and wushu.

Some of the related disciplines (e.g. judo, sambo and wrestling) will be investigated together, as many of the terms might recur.

The project consists of a number of stages, which will be repeated with respect to each sport selected for examination. Approximately fifty sports have been preselected for the analysis (some of which will be treated together). The corpus will be collected from TV and online coverage of selected sports events. The data for analysis will be obtained by recording the full coverage of at least one event per discipline. The coverage will be recorded with the use of Quick Time Player software, a tool which produces recordings of good enough quality for further processing. Then, the recordings will be converted to an editable and easily searchable (written) text. This will be conducted with the use of Trint software, a tool dedicated to speech-to-text conversion. This particular tool allows for identification of multiple speakers in the transcripts, which is especially important as some of the sports events are being commented by a pair / a team of commentators. Despite the fact that the chosen application offers high quality transcripts, as with any automatic tool and in order to assure the best quality of research, the transcribed material will be proofread manually. Once particular portions of the corpus are available, the linguistic analysis will take place. It will involve: (a) extraction of terminology borrowed from or modelled on English; (b) classification of the terminology following the adopted typology discussed above; (c) discussion on the degree of adaptation of the collected lexicon; and (d) analysis of possible rivalry with native synonyms.

The corpus analysis will be organised according to the sports under investigation: one discipline at a time (in the case of related sports, they might be analysed together, as the terminology used might be recurrent). First, all the (potentially) English elements will be extracted from the source materials and classified according to the chosen typology: (i) loanwords (or direct loans); (ii) loanshifts – including loan translations (or calques) and semantic loans (or loan meaning extensions); (iii) loanblends (or hybrids); (iv) loan-based creations; (v) pseudo-anglicisms; and (vi) loan creations. Then, the selected lexemes will be analysed phonologically, semantically and morphologically in order to

(a) categorise them into the right group of borrowings, (b) assign meaning to the new terms, and (c) discuss the degree of (phonological, morphological and semantic) adaptation of the particular terms in the Polish language system. Additionally, the collected lexemes will be searched for in a variety of written materials (dictionaries, online discussions, interviews and manuals) in order to detect their graphic representation.

The qualitative analysis will be conducted with the use of Atlas.ti – a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software – which makes large (textual) data analysis easier. Partial results of the project will be systematically published in the form of a series of articles.

## 6. Final remarks

Despite the fact that the Polish language soaks in lexemes of English origin, many new introductions are known to a narrow group of specialists only. The project provides an in-depth examination of lexicon within the semantic field of sport, specifically exploring how the English language influences the specialised terminology of various sports. It aims at revealing the lexicon often used by sports enthusiasts only, in order to unveil the nuances of the particular disciplines. The research will not only show the bulk of the English influence present in Polish sports jargon, but it will also reveal the latest trends in terms of the adaptation of borrowings and creation of neologisms modelled on English. Moreover, the findings will allow for the investigation into the rivalry of native and borrowed elements in the analysed lexical field. And the research may serve as the basis for further comparative studies with other languages, in order to reveal some general trends in terms of sports jargon as well as to add to the investigation into English as the international language of sport.

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