

Professional paper

LOAN WORDS IN SPORTS TERMINOLOGY IN SERBIAN

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Abstract. *The fact that sports terminology in Serbian shows an increasing tendency towards lexical borrowings imposes a need both to the sport specialist and to the linguists to take care of the terms. The sport specialist could help by standardizing the semantic content of the term, whereas the linguist might be included at the stage of adapting the term at semantic, phonological and morphological levels, so that the term is in compliance with the valid standards of the language. In doing so, the following target characteristics of the term should be pursued: transparency, internationality, brevity, stability, quality of being systemic, precise and nonsynonymous (Šipka 1998:128).*

Key words: term, lexical borrowings, standardization

INTRODUCTION

Terminology is a subsystem of the general lexicon, which means that it must be in compliance with the general lexical standard (R. Bugarski, 1988).

According to Šipka, the difference between the term and non-term is the following:

- Term has lexical meaning;
- The essential form of the term is the written one whereas it is the pronounced form with the lexeme in the general lexicon;
- Terms are the consequence of conscious intervention;
- There is terminological correlation between different languages;
- Synchronic dimension is particularly important for the term, as opposed to diachronic one as a characteristic of the non-term (D. Šipka, 1998).

One of the word formation processes in terminology is borrowing words and abbreviations from other languages. The number of such words in the sports terminology is

high (in the corpus of terms in athletics, it is as high as 57.47%). Most of the loan words come from English.

The most common reason for lexical borrowing is a lexical gap for a particular notion.

Before the borrowed term is integrated into the lexicon, it should be adapted on the semantic, phonological and morphological levels so that it may function as the domesticated item of the Serbian lexicon.

In addition to the problem of adapting loan words, mostly English, in the sports terminology, there is also a problem of the transcription of the English proper names.

DISCUSSION

Although many loan words from English have not been subjected to adaptation due to the unimplemented standardization of the sports terminology, as well as due to the negligence by the linguists, a number of terms do not deviate from the lexical standards in Serbian. For example, E. *record* ['rekɔ:d] – S. *rekord*, E. *sprint* [sprint] – S. *sprint*, E. *start* [sta:t] – S. *start*, E. *steeplechase* ['sti:plʃeis] – S. *stiplčez*.

a) Phonological adaptation

Abundance of terms has come to Serbian in their original written form, retaining the foreign pronunciation as well. As an example, *ironman* (event in triathlon), which is pronounced in English as [aɪrənˌmæn], came into the domestic terminology in its original written form as *ironman* with pronunciation which is closer to English than to Serbian, i.e. *ajronmen*. According to the well-known rule by the reformer Vuk Stefanovic Karadžić "Write as you speak, read the way it is written", naturally, letters should correspond to the sounds, thus *ajronmen* should be written as *ajronmen*.

As a difference from the above term, the English term *corner* ['kɔ:nə] is correctly spelled and pronounced as *korner*.

b) Semantic Adaptation

Semantic deviations are numerous too. Examples are the following:

- Translation equivalent for the English ball game *handball* is *rukomet*, which is incorrect, as *rukomet* is the translation equivalent for *team handball* (The Sports Rule Book: 1988);
- The word *korner* borrowed from English indicates both the angular portion of the soccer field and the corner kick. The English term for *korner* as a part of the field is *corner*, whereas *udarac sa ugla* (commonly referred to as *korner* in Serbian) is matched by the English *corner kick*;
- English terms *record holder* and *record breaker* have only one translation equivalent in Serbian: *rekorder*. However, there is difference. *Record breaker* is a sportsman who beats the previous best result in a sport, while the *record holder* indicates the one who has achieved the top sports result. Accordingly, the former might have the translation equivalent *novi rekorder*, whereas the latter might be matched by *rekorder*.

- Well-known English word *trainer* [treinɔ] indicates, in Serbian, an expert who trains the team in a particular sports event. In English, this definition corresponds to the term *coach* [kəʊtʃ]. Serbian term *trening* indicates, besides developing sports skills, the time of the day when it is performed. The English *training* [treiniŋ] covers only the nuance of developing skills and not the time when it is performed; thus, the Serbian *trening* (meaning time spent) is matched by the English term *training session*;
- The English term that has been domesticated since long ago, *team* [ti:m] is matched by the translation equivalent in Serbian as *tim*. However, *basketball team* is most commonly translated as *košarkaška ekipa*, *handball team* as *rukometna ekipa*, *volleyball team* as *odbojkaška ekipa*, whereas *national team* is *reprezentacija*. It is unreasonable to introduce the translation equivalent from French if the term *tim* has already been naturalized;
- English compound *treadmill* is translated either as *pokreti traka* or as *tredmil*. *Tredmil* is more common as it is shorter and because it is recognizable for a new, and at the time, non-existent product imported from the English speaking region.

c) Morphosyntactic Adaptation

As for the morphology, there is a significant share of the foreign suffixes in sports terminology. The most frequent are **-ing** and **-er** (*džoging*, *trening*, *strečing*, *sprinter*, *bokser*, *fudbaler*, etc.). Syntactic loans in Serbian are the use of proper names in function of modifiers of another noun or noun phrase (*NBA liga*, *IBF federacija*). There is also an increasing tendency to avoid suffixation for derivation of adjectives out of common nouns. For example, there is *trijatlon klub* instead of *trijatlonski klub*. Besides, suffixation is also avoided in derivation of case endings, such as with *tempo trčanje* instead of *trčanje određenom brzinom*.

d) Adaptation of Acronyms and Abbreviations

The destiny of borrowed acronyms is particularly interesting. They are most commonly borrowed from English with phonetic values of the English letters. Examples are: NBA [enbi:ei], MVP [emvi:pi:]; the only missing part in Serbian is the phonetic representation of long vowels. The same has happened to abbreviations such as: DNC [diensi:] (Did Not Compete), CR [si:a:] (Championship Record), DNF [di:nef] (Did Not Finish). In the traditional phase, when the abbreviation is still not naturalized, i.e. while it takes the form of the compromise replica (R. Filipović, 1986), the translation equivalent usually takes the form of noun phrase, namely, for DNC, *nije se takmičio*; for CR, *rekord šampionata*; and for DNF, *nije završio takmičenje*. In the course of time, and when the abbreviations become naturalized items of the lexicon, they will most probably be represented as in English, i.e. in the form of abbreviations with the phonetic values of the English letters ([diensi:], [si:a:], and [di:nef]). The only difference will be in substitution of the English long vowels with the corresponding short vowels in Serbian.

e) Adaptation of Proper Names

Adapting proper names is interesting too. The practice so far has shown that they are borrowed from English in their original written form, but their pronunciation is similar as that of acronyms, i.e. they have the phonetic values of the English letters. As, until recently, there have not been any rules for transcription, one name often appeared in more pronounced and written forms. This can be perfectly illustrated by the example, by the author Tvrško Prčić, who quotes the name of the late British writer Graham Green that ended with six different forms in Serbian: Grejem, Grejam, Greem, Grem, Gream and Graham. Correctly adapted name of the writer would be [grejam gri:n] (T. Prčić 1998 a). It is worth pointing out that the problem of the transcription of English proper names is successfully resolved in the *Novi transkripcioni rečnik engleskih ličnih imena (New Transcription Dictionary of English Proper Names)*, by Tvrško Prčić (1998).

The transcription system offered in the above Dictionary provides solution to overcoming irregularities in phonetic adaptation, that occur especially in derivation of possessive adjectives and cases endings of proper nouns, which are usually adapted by adding the Serbian suffix to the name in its original written form. It is particularly worth stressing that the transcription system offered in the Dictionary might also be applied for phonetic adaptation of other word classes borrowed from English.

CONCLUSION

The language as a cultural i.e. social phenomenon, is subject to the same rules as the society itself. In order to fulfil its needs, the society imports goods and services, even culture. Everything that is new brings a new name along with it, which is the subject of import too. Thus, the import of new words is natural. One should mind, however, not to overexploit the possibility, or as stated by B. Brborić "With moderation but without aversion".

The first question to be asked with borrowing loan words is whether there is a word in Serbian with the same meaning. If the answer is no, the loan word is justified. If, there is a word with similar meaning, the loan word should be endowed with such a semantic content that it might function as a synonym to the domestic word. For example, the Serbian terms *šampion/-at*, have the same meaning as *prvak/-enstvo*. As both are already naturalized in Serbian, they should be semantically delimited. *Prvak/-enstvo* might be endowed with the meaning relative to any sports achievement, whereas *šampion/-ant* might represent only the top sports achievement. Thus, the *šampionska igra* of Crvena Zvezda (E. *play of the champion*) might be synonym to *master play*, and not only *the play of the champion i.e. the Cup winner*.

The following stage in adaptation of loan words is phonological adaptation. Care should be taken to accept the loan word in its transcribed form, i.e. with the phonetic values of Serbian letters. To this end, the aforementioned Dictionary for the transcription of English proper names by Tvrško Prčić is recommended.

Eventually, morphosyntactic importations should not be used, as Serbian belongs to the class of inflective languages where any noun can be turned to adjective by adding proper suffixes so as to function as the modifier to a noun or phrase. As for the foreign suffixes that have already entered into Serbian, such as the English *-ing/-er*, they should be treated as an integral part of the Serbian lexical standard.

In addition, it is an urgent need, imposed primarily on the sport specialist, to standardize the sports terminology in which process the following target characteristics of the term should be aimed at (D. Šipka 1988):

- Transparency;
- Quality of being internationally recognizable (at phonetic and morphological levels);
- Stability (the term is to be generally recognized and accepted);
- Brevity;
- Quality of being systemic (consistency in relation to application of word formation elements: *start/-ovati/-ni/...*);
- Non-ambiguity;
- Precision in covering the semantic content of the term (e.g. *rabbit - zec* (in relay races, the first competitor whose task is to encourage the opponent runners to run faster so as to exhaust them too soon and save the strength of his teammates for the successful finish);
- Non-synonymy

To finish with, the well-known man of letters, Matija Bećković will speak on behalf of the authors:

"There is nothing more precious than to have such a monument in the language and from the language, nor greater sin than to abuse it" (Slavko Gordić *Drugo lice* M. Bećković).

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REČI STRANOG POREKLA U SPORTSKOJ TERMINOLOGIJI U SRPSKOM JEZIKU

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Činjenica da u srpskoj terminologiji u srpskom jeziku ima sve više reči stranog porekla nameće obavezu, kako stručnjacima iz oblasti sporta, tako i lingvistima da vode brigu o terminima. Stručnjak za sport bi mogao da pomogne standardizacijom semantičkog sadržaja termina, a lingvista bi mogao da se uključi u fazi adaptacije na semantičkom, fonološkom i morfološkom nivou tako da termin bude naglašen sa pravilima opšteg standardnog jezika. Pri tome bi trebalo imati za cilj sledeće karakteristike termina: transparentnost, internacionalnost, ustaljenost, sistemnost, preciznost i nesinonimnost (Šipka 1998:128).

Ključne reči: *termin, reči stranog porekla, standardizacija.*