

Universal and National Cultural Features of the Naming in Sports

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ABSTRACT: The article deals with the issues of nominative processes in sports discourse. The authors describe the features of the sports language picture of the world in the context of the French culture of language, whose key element is the linguistic personality, who acts as the actor of the communicative process related to sports activities (both professional and amateur). The analysis of actual data is based on a linguosemiotic approach to their interpretation, usually within the framework of a discourse statement, as well as at the level of the nominative fund of the national language. The names of sports phenomena are interpreted as vectors of both cross-cultural and national cultural characteristics. The identification of the national cultural component of the lexeme in sports theme makes it possible to study sports names from the standpoint of detecting information about national culture, discourse, and language-based thinking in their semantics. The hypothesis is put forward that the semantics of language units with a sports component reflects the attitude of any linguistic culture to the fundamental concepts of being and thinking, while the methods of sports verbalization can be considered as elements of the language self-identification of the nation. The research prospects are seen in the development of new synergetic cognitive and communicative approaches to the study of language units with a sports component.

Keywords: naming, sportonym, sports discourse, language picture of the world, linguistic personality, linguistic culture.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, sports activity has experienced a boom on an interplanetary scale, although the sport has always played, and will continue to play a special role in the

life of any society. France is a sports country. Sports French discourse, which serves this area of human activity, is a subsystem of the national language and communication. Sports terminology plays an important role as an integral part of this type of discourse. Sports terminology is widely studied in the global scientific community (Elistratov, 2009; Yemchuk, 1976; Zilbert, 2001; Kozhevnikova, 2002; Sedykh, 2012; Blanchet, Lesay, 2012; Mahal, 2008). At the same time, there are a lot of blind spots in the study of French sports discourse waiting for researchers. The present research attempts to identify common and idioethnic features of the sportonyms functioning in French linguoculture. Identifying idioethnic characteristics through language means is an urgent task not only for cultural scientists, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists but also for linguists. Most sportonyms represent a kind of *localization* of the national cultural space. By the type of naming, they are often figurative means of language. Local images that are the basis of the sports naming arise in the course of oral communication of people, who operate with language meanings as the results of cognitive activity. Subsequently, these figurative language meanings become actual in a particular discourse situation, related, in particular, to sports activity. Sportonyms serve as one of the most effective means of expression of human's relationship to the reality surrounding him. This is an attitude of active interaction with the surrounding world, the desire to adapt the world to their needs, this is a "purposeful transformation of the world according to their values" (Novitskaya, 2007: 102). In linguistics of recent decades, the use of an ethnocentric approach to the analysis of language data is becoming increasingly relevant. The understanding of language semantics through a system of concepts and categories of objectively existing subjects and phenomena comes to the fore. One of the ways to study human behavior is to study discourse. Any object under study requires outlining the epistemological boundaries of interpretation of the terminology used in the analysis of research material. Contemporary French discourse also needs a categorization of this type.

Contemporary French discourse, like any discourse, is a complicated communicative phenomenon with differential features which some scientists associate with the product of vocal acts with its inherent semantic homogeneity, relevance (pertinence), attachment to a specific context, genre, and ideological affiliation (Demyankov, 2020; Olyanich, 2004), while others (Krasnykh, 2003; Sedykh, 2012) identify it with verbalized activity and its inherent correlation with an entire layer of culture, social community, and even with a specific historical period. The *unity* and *diversity* of personal characteristics of the national identity of a native speaker are often referred to as one of the most important categories of contemporary French discourse. According to E.I. Filippova: "The contradiction between the *unity* of the individual and its *diversity* is resolved within the framework of the role-playing theory or instrumentalist approach, where the tools are identity *carriers* or *markers* "< ... >". "The new understanding of national identity as a phenomenon of many faces and changes, which replaced the opposition of *naturalistic* and *culturalist* approaches, predetermined the special role of cultural *heritage*, or national *heritage*, as its *subject matter*". *National identity* is an emotional and intellectual connection with an expanded image of *us*, important for individual self-consciousness, which includes both contemporaries with whom the individual shares both a common name, a common language, a common territory, historical and cultural heritage and symbols, the past, present, and future, and previous and subsequent generations" (Filippova, 2010). As part of the research

priorities of the present work, it seems appropriate to note the importance of finding out how the contemporary Frenchman (**unity of personality**) communicates with national identity (**diversity of implementation**) within the framework of the functioning of sports discourse. Thus, in the language culture, the naming in sports performs several functions related to identification methods, topological models of reflection of reality, institutional, and axiological characteristics. Sports culture should be studied not only as a nominative mechanism but also as a communication phenomenon. All aspects of sports culture should be considered in terms of their saturation with communicative information (Ukhnaeva et al., 2020).

The main items of the research methodology for sports categories are categorical features that are identified at the level of functioning of language units in the discourse and communication space. The sportonym, becoming part of a special discourse, often loses its connection with a specific person or object, that is, loses its direct nominative function, ceases to be an expression of the ultimate singularity, and begins to generalize, resulting in a transformation of meaning. In other words, the sportonym partially loses its connection with specific individual concepts and acquires additional connotations. Despite the preferred universality of sports phenomena, sportonyms, more than any other part of the language vocabulary, are closely related to the history, traditions, and literature of the people who speak this language. This property is clearly manifested in phraseological units, whose components are sports lexemes. Sport is a popular, multivalued, and at the same time, a controversial social phenomenon that occupies an important place in the public life of France. This is a special type of communication that originated as a need to actualize the biological, psychophysical, spiritual, and creative abilities of an individual. It is proposed to consider the French sports discourse as one of the types of institutional communication with its inherent core and peripheral zones. The core zone can include any form of organizing sports events and their institutional discourse support, such as presentation, commentary, and axiology. The peripheral sphere includes all forms of indirect participation of individuals in sports events, which are reflected in speech manifestations of any type, from admiring quotes to negative-pejorative statements. The most important element of the present research is the analysis of the use of sports terms and phraseology in various types of contemporary French discourse: professional (media), institutional, and everyday conversation. In this sense, sports discourse is interpreted as an integral part of the national conceptual space of the French language and communication.

RESULTS

A key figure of the sports language picture of the world is a person (professional athlete, commentator), since, on the one hand, it is he, who is the source of sports discourse. On the other hand, the language itself often uses *human* qualities as basic attributes for naming sporting realities (objects, equipment, and techniques): **Main chaude** (avoir la): se dit d'un joueur qui réussit plusieurs tirs consécutivement (literally 'hot hand = refers to a player, who has made several successful hits/shots in a row'); **Mort**: un ballon est dit «mort» lorsque l'un des arbitres donne un coup de sifflet. C'est le cas lors des fautes personnelles ou des violations (literally 'dead ball = when one of the referees blows the whistle at the moment of impact, when it comes to a personal violation of the rules') [B]; **Love**: terme utilisé en anglais pour dire zéro lors du

décompte des points, 30-0 est donc annoncé *thirty-love* (literary 'love = a term from English tennis language to denote zero in the score, for example, 30-0 is called thirty-love') [LT]. Sport and the language picture of the world correlate, primarily, at the level of the nominative fund of national languages. It is the specificity of the naming in sports that makes up the range of language tools typical for each nation, which reflects the spirit of the folks. This phenomenon can be seen, for example, at the level of motivated nominees that designate sports games significant for national cultures, such as *lapta* (Russia), and *pétanque* (France).

Names of sports realities can have both universal and ethnocultural characteristics. Universal names include equivalents available in different languages and corresponding to identical referents, existing either as transliterated units, or as specific national nominees that do not require additional explications for speakers of autochthonous linguocultures: *board game* (English); *nastolnaya igra (настольная игра)* (Russian); *jeu de société* (French); *nastolnyya gulni (настольныя гульні)* (Belarusian); *nastilna gra (настільна гра)* (Ukrainian); *brettspiel* (German) / *dribble* (English); *dribbling (дриблінг)* = keeping the ball in football, basketball (Russian); *dribbling/drible* (French); *dribblaggio* (Italian); *driblaje* (Spanish); *dribbeln* (German); *dribble (дрибъл)* (Bulgarian). In terms of nomination mechanisms, these names have national characteristics that are dictated by the structure of national languages. Although the lexemes coincide in semantic features, they differ in terms of form, which is why they are of interest to researchers of national characters in the reflection of the attribute that is included in the nomination basis.

Ethnocultural nominations are motivated (both in terms of morphology, and in terms of semantic and connotative characteristics) for representatives of a particular nation, while for other linguoculture they often represent lacunary formations: *lapta, gorodki (ryukhi, chushki)* (Russian); *pétanque* (French = balls game); *limbo* (Trinidad and Tobago = sports dance under the crossbar). In onomasiological and toponomastic works dealing with the analysis of naming patterns in various groups of vocabulary, the concept of *motivational features* is gradually being formed in terms of their content, which is distinguished in the thematic group of words and characterizes certain aspects of the class of subjects expressed by this group. This concept is assigned to the term "principle" (sometimes: "method", "motive", "category") of the nomination.

Any lexical-thematic group (LTG) has differentiating features, which include the qualitative uniplanar nature of semantics and quantitative limitations of nomination features, which reflect "repetitive, stable, typical etymological features for terms of this group" (Merkulova, 1965: 72). This refers to the selection of motivational features of the nomination intended for a specific category of real objects. In linguistics, there are already similar classifications, for example for fish, but for sports realities, such a classification does not yet exist. This ambitious goal cannot be achieved within the framework of just a diploma study and must be solved in several stages. At the first stage, one can use the classification of I. Mahal, who suggests differentiating sports terms according to the *branch* principle:

1) **general scientific and interdisciplinary terms, as well as terms borrowed from other focus areas:** *psychological preparation, athleticism, abdominals, physical training* (from medicine); *passe, releve, ron de jamb* (of the arts); *motorcycle, spring, keel, sail* (from transport sector), etc.;

2) **general sports terms (branch) used in all sports:** *judge, victory, loss, coach, training, tournament, competition, final, preparation, etc.;*

3) **narrow-field (intersport) terms that are used in two or more sports:** *hockey stick, ball, ball catching, goal, goalkeeper, defenceman, kick, prick, infighting, race, hop jump, racket, sending-off, period, hat-trick, middlegame, matchup, etc.;*

4) **highly specialized terms that occur only in one sport, for example, in football:** *inside, corner, penalty;* in basketball: *block shot, zone defense 1-2-1;* in baseball: *batter, inning;* in fencing: *blade, rapier, sword;* in sailing: *quarter-ton class, three-quarter-ton class, etc.* (Mahal, 2008).

The authors of the present work propose a classification that takes into account the national specifics of the terminological nomination, which is manifested in specific language forms and structures:

1. A **general term** for all sports (*course, compétition; race, championship*). A **narrowly-specialized term** for one sport (*surplace* = *surplace* – a tactical method of conducting a race, expressed in standing on a bicycle on the spot; *tailler dans le bois dur* = literally, cutting hard wood = train intensively [DCT]).

2. **Interlanguage/intralinguage** (universal) **term** (*pace maker* = race leader [ABBYY]) / **Autochthonous term** (*lièvre* = 'hare' [C]).

3. **Ergonym. General sports term** (accepted in most languages of the world): (*tour du chapeau à la Gordie Howe* = hat-trick Gordy Howe = the player throws the puck, makes an assist, and participates in the fight during the same match; *Mukhina loop* – a backflip with a turn to 360° in the hanging; *Axel, Ritberger, Shekelton* / National term (*Lenin* – is a boxer, thinking a lot in the ring, but not distinguished by effective actions; *Katomsky death* – athlete by the name Katomsky died during horse races but despite this, he came first clutching the reins (Urnov, 1983: 58); *Korbut flip* – is a backward somersault on the uneven bars (Kozhevnikova, 2002: 140).

Based on the construction of epistemological oppositions, the described categorical scheme allows detecting not only the system properties of language and culture but also their dynamic implementation in verbal constructs. This classification makes it possible to identify typological (national) features of sports terminology in three types of French discourse: professional, institutional, and everyday that is the task of the next section. Naming in sports, like any type of naming, is subject to universal naming mechanisms, whose functioning is associated with this type of human activity. Taking into account the national cultural component (in terms of its lexical and semantic parameters), naming in sports is close to the alternative naming, which is considered by E.S. Kubryakova: "The study of alternative forms of describing a single object or a single situation (as evidence of the possibility of *folding* the same judgment about them into different structures) is a very promising way to study the real semantics of all these forms with very subtle nuances of their meaning" (Kubryakova, 2000: 21).

From the standpoint of linguosemiotics, names of sports denotations often represent alternative representations of one of the categories of objects of the corresponding topic. For example, in Russian, there are several lexemes to denote the football players' function (outdated or rarely used at present): *halfback* (midfielder), *back* (full back), *forward* (attacking player). Although in Russian, these terms are

borrowings (based on transliteration) from the English language, however, football fans of the thirties did not realize this. The specificity of national and cultural perception of sports realities is often reflected in the ways of naming them, which have historical roots. First of all, these are national terms formed based on word-formation models of the native language or using a previously borrowed word that has become Russified. For example, *balloon flights, ice climbing, dog sledding, rock climbing, playing in pairs, ball-neberuchka* (the ball that cannot be turned away), *snowmobile, lift, ski duathlon, decathlonist, rocking, archer, brake* were borrowed by the Czech language from Russian (Binderová, 2006). Words *fun, merrymaking, fistfight, gorodki* (similar to skittles), *wall to wall fights, taking the town, konyashki*¹ are native Russian names of the world "competition". National formations created by combining an element that is autochthonous for the Russian language with a foreign language (affix, or root morpheme) are hybrid expressions and derivatives, such as *crossbowman, post-match, stayer, triathlon, be a fan, futsal ball*², and *snowboard* (Binderová, 2006).

The next type of naming in sports includes borrowings (in the form of transliteration or semantic copying). According to V.R. Bogoslovskaya: "The majority of English-language neologisms in sports vocabulary belong to the so-called literal borrowings. Literal English-American sports borrowings in the Russian language of the end of the last century are represented by the following thematic groups: names of sports games and sports; names of athletes; names of movements, techniques, states, positions; names of sports equipment; names of mistakes, violations, and punishments; names of sports grounds and their parts; names of types and parts of competitions. During the recent decade of the last century, new sports came to Russia, which very soon lost their exotic flavor. They brought along the terminological microsystems that served a particular type of sport, penetrated the language of Russian sports, and were quickly mastered" (Bogoslovskaya, 2002): *fingerboard, bowling, squash, jogging, and streetball*. However, not only Anglo-Saxon terms are borrowed. The following words were borrowed, for example, from the Japanese language: *karate, kendo, aikido, karate-do, iaido, kyudo, ken-jutsu, jujitsu*; from Chinese: *kung fu, taijiquan, qigong, wushu*; from French: *savat, petanque, chaussee, billiards, lacrosse*; from other languages: *yoga* – from Sanskrit, *capoeira* – from Spanish, *skijoring* – from Norwegian, *rodeo* – from Spanish, *taekwondo* – from Korean, *korfball* – from Dutch (Binderová, 2006).

Since the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, anthroponomy naming (ergonyms, eponyms) has emerged in Russia, that is, the sporting naming used the surnames of athletes of sports achievements, legendary names, the surnames of famous people, who have performed a sports feat, such as the Korbuto loop (a gymnast stands on a high part of uneven bars and does a backflip, clinging to the upper crossbar of the bars with her hands. The element was performed at the Munich Olympics); Tkachev flight; Grancharova somersault (Bobyreva, 2012), etc. Slang words that reflect the realities of the Russian semiotic space: *baranka* (loss); *makhalo* (side judge at a football match); *bolshevik* (a team that conducts its matches effectively); *put a thermometer* (put a hockey stick in your armpit) [JS]. National names of native French competitions are: *Le*

¹ Boys act as "horses", and girls-as "riders". The main goal of the game is to keep yourself on your feet or in the "saddle", and, at the same time, make your opponent lose his balance. The winner is the pair that will keep their balance and stay on their feet the longest.

² The futsal ball is a low-bounce ball that is smaller than a normal outdoor soccer ball.

Jeu de la Truie; Le javelot sur cible; Jeu du Camembert; Les Quilles au Maillet du Gers. National terms created based on word-formation models of the native language or using a previously borrowed word that has become Frenchified: *ski alpin* (downhill skiing), *footballeur*, *breaker*. National formations, obtained by combining an element native to the French language with a foreign language element (with an affix, or root morpheme), are hybrid expressions and derivatives, such as *camping*, *recordman*; Imported terms: *basket-ball*, *match ball*, *bunker*, *coach*. As one can see, the national and cultural characteristics of the naming can be highlighted in the above language material. These characteristics can be used to extrapolate to the concept of national character, which leads to the idea of the relationship between mentality and language. As O.A. Kornilov notes, "the awareness of the value of national languages as derivatives of national mentalities, and as the most important ethnogenic and cultural categories inevitably entails the desire to fully and comprehensively interpret the language (primarily its vocabulary) exactly in this particular hypostasis" (Kornilov, 2000: 11). To find out the differentiating psychological features that distinguish one folk from another, the authors are guided by the following principles:

1. The character of an ethnic group is not the simple sum of the characters of its individual representatives: "to understand the character of folk, it is necessary to study, first of all, its history, social system, and culture; individual psychological methods are not sufficient here" (Kon, 1971: 124).

2. There are a certain number of mentality qualities, such as hard work, thrift, hospitality, etc that are characteristic of several nations rather than just one. The only issue is the uniqueness of the combination of their manifestations in each linguistic and cultural community. The thrift of the French and the thrift of the Russian are sometimes diametrically opposite concepts.

3. Socio-economic, geographical, existential, confessional, and axiological factors are important components when analyzing and identifying national mentality traits. The efficiency of Germans, Japanese, Africans, French, and Chinese are determined by the integrity of historical conditions and, as a result, the value of labor in each culture.

In the present study, the specificity of modeling national character through language is determined by sports descriptions at all levels of language and discourse organization (lexical, syntactic, lexicographic, phraseological, paremic, aphoristic, etc.), whose study reveals hidden connections between various phenomena of the surrounding reality. In other words, the profile component of the analysis is the existential factor, while socio-economic, geographical, confessional, and axiological data serve an illustrative material or a background to support the propositions put forward. The linguosemiotic approach to the language of sport allows considering the content characteristics of group identity, which obviously is most clearly manifested through integrative identification of the individual with the dominant attitude of the nation (external threat, intercultural, interpersonal contacts, etc.). In other words, individuals, like nations, have their character, that is, a certain set of features. Completely different representatives of the nation tend to have the same behavior, similar manners, assessments, and judgments, have a similar mindset, and common values. On this basis, as a rule, the principles of naming in sports are built and related to the semantics of the language sign, embodied in the forms dictated by the national language.

The naming in sports can be considered within the framework of the functioning of the pragmatonyms concept field, which is understood as conditionally united groups of nominative units that have denotations in the pragmatic sphere of human activity (Sedykh, 2012). The pragmatic aspect of human existence in the sports consumption sphere manifests itself in the appropriate language forms and structures, of which pragmatonyms are a part. Connotative semantics of this type of language unit is understood as a system of semantic consequences, cultural preferences of native speakers, necessary to clarify the *connotative repertoire* (term, coined by Sorokin, 1987) of a particular linguistic and cultural community in real terms of communication. Before identifying the universal and national-cultural preferences of the range of sports naming means, let specify the typological characteristics of pragmatonyms of groups that reflect various types of pragmatic (sports) human activity. So, the following groups of sports pragmatonyms, differentiated by functional characteristics, can be distinguished:

1. **Conceptual pragmatonyms** are sports pragmatonyms that represent sports concepts: *sport, jeu, courage, perfection physique*.

2. **Informing pragmatonyms** carry information about a specific time period, event or location of a sports event, serving as a means of characterization of the heroes of a sports duel meet: *c'est de la dentelle* (pinpoint pass), *gracieuse feinte* (graceful feint).

3. **Expressive pragmatonyms** express the author's feelings on sports topics and are designed to form an emotional attitude to the designated aspect. It can be about nonreferential use of nominees as part of stylistic means and their inclusion in the language game to create a comic effect: *switch on a meat grinder* (start a rough game), *a lamb, heel of the oar, cuff, fin, sickle, tendrils on the can, neck of the oar* (rowing) (Yemchuk, 1976: 72); *boxing tennis; Il est cuit, il pédale avec les oreilles* = he is exhausted, but pedals with his ears [BVC].

CONCLUSION

Thus, when considering language as a dynamic semiotic system, the structure of a sports sign forms a multidimensional subject matter. At the discourse level, the most important aspect of the functioning of the sports category is the interpretation mode as a stage of decoding the sign-based message associated with the sports format of communication and the features of the national language picture of the world. Sport and the language picture of the world correlate, primarily, at the level of the nominative fund of the national language. It is the specificity of the sports naming that makes up the range of language tools typical for any nation, which reflects the spirit of the folk. There are both universal and ethnocultural types of sports nominees. Universal terms belong to the general cultural memory of the individual, while ethnocultural terms are motivated and understandable to native speakers of the national language without additional explications. The sports repertoire of names for different cultures has historically formed patterns of formation and replenishment associated with the native national vocabulary, borrowed nominees, and adapted units. The language personality of a native speaker acts as an active element of the sports discourse. At that, discourse is interpreted as a phenomenon of communication. Sports communication, as well as everyday communication, is carried out through the text, which is interpreted as a

multilevel communicative structure and a vector of not only of universal characteristics but also national characteristics of communication. Universal and ethnocultural aspects are in dialectical interaction, being part of a discrete process of actualization of the meaning of a statement. Therefore, there is every reason to use sports discourse as the basis to analyze the characterological component of a statement. However, when analyzing any text, it is necessary to take into account extralinguistic factors related to the communicative competence of the recipient of the message.

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