

## IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING AND PROPER HANDLING SPORTS TERMINOLOGY IN TEACHING SPORTS ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the specific role of a teacher of Sports English in terms of his/her contribution to creating standardised sports terminology in Serbian mostly created by adaptation of the original terms from English through the process of translation and borrowing. Presentation is divided in three sections. The first outlines the role of an ESP teacher in sports, especially in the light of English as a global language of communication, the second proposes a teamwork model of standardising sports terminology in Serbian, whereas the third summarises conclusions.

**Key words:** *ESP, ESP teacher, sport, standardisation*

### Introduction

Using English in professional communication imposes a need to understand terminology in Serbian, not only semantically but also in terms of English-Serbian contact, due to the fact that it is mostly created in Serbian by adaptation of the original terms from English through the process of translation and borrowing. Thus teaching English for Specific Purposes, further referred to as ESP, must be considered within the frame of English as lingua franca in the world's communication nowadays. Natural consequences of such situation are numerous lexical borrowings in the languages getting in contact with English, especially in the field of terminologies. Current predominance of English does not mean that it has always been the sole privilege of English. Before that, Serbian borrowed a lot of words from Greek and Latin, which was followed by lexical borrowings from German and French. The above requires an emphasised ESP teacher's care of English and Serbian language standards alike. This also requires effort of an ESP teacher to initiate preparation of terminology books.

ESP teaching is specific in this region for one more reason. Contrary to other fields of social activities, in which women gradually catch up with men, it may generally be said that language teaching in this region is usually realised by women, and, what is more, those who are not very active in sports. In order to become a good language teacher in professional world, especially at university, these women must first undertake the process of self-training in the field of sports, after which they must incorporate it in teaching English as a foreign language. But this is not all. In order to channel the English-Serbian terminological contacts in a proper direction, they should incorporate English-Serbian contact and contrastive aspects in the ESP curriculum, as well as try to initiate the process of elaboration of prescriptive documents, such as bilingual dictionaries.

The following sections deal with current challenges facing an ESP teacher due to increased dependence of non-English languages on English in the field of terminology. Accordingly a model of terminological standardisation in Serbian is proposed, which includes six principles, each of which is defined and exemplified. As most sports terms in Serbian come from English, examples are shown using italics for English and small capitals for Serbian. In between, there is a sign ">", which indicates the direction of lexical borrowing, from English to Serbian.

## **2. ESP teacher's contribution to creation of standardised sports terminology**

In the light of unabated effect of English on all languages getting in contact with it, especially in the field of terminology, anyone dealing with sports is faced with a lot of English borrowings which must be adapted according to the language standard of Serbian, due to the fact that English as a giving language and Serbian as receiving language belong to two different types of languages. The former is analytic, while the latter is inflectional.

Thus the key issue to be dealt with is the question whether an English borrowing is needed or not. If the answer is positive, an English term should be adapted according to the Serbian standard in terms of orthography, phonology, morphosyntax, and semantics. On the other hand, if the answer is negative, it is recommended to use an existing Serbian word with the same meaning, use a general word and add terminological meaning to it, or create a phrasal term composed of domestic words.

In doing so, it is necessary to make effort to apply certain standards, which will be discussed in the following text.

## 2.1. Standardisation of sports terminology

In order to have a better insight of the field to be standardised, it deems necessary to define the concepts of term, terminology, and standardisation. The term is lexeme whose form is related to a particular concept, and whose meaning is defined in a particular register. Terminology is interdisciplinary scientific field dealing with identification of a term in a particular context, creation and standardization of terms, and compilation of terminological dictionaries. Standardization is the activity of establishing and recording a limited set of solutions to actual or potential matching problems directed at benefits for the party or parties involved, balancing their needs and expecting and intending that these solutions will be repeatedly and continuously used during a certain period by substantial number of the parties for whom they are intended" (Vries, 1997: 79). Standardisation assumes two basic requirements. These are matching various features of an entity (object, event, idea, process, etc.) and normativeness of a set standard. Since the research deals with terminology, the entities in this case are terms, and matching problems are their (a) linguistic, (b) technical and (c) pragmatic characteristics. Normativeness of the proposed standard assumes dictionary making, on one hand, and effort of the language community to accept, expend and cultivate the prescribed standard, on the other. A prescribed standard is not given once and for all, which means that it must be re-evaluated and recapitulated from time to time in accordance with the requirements of the professional field and social requirements in general.

Owing to the fact that the term is a linguistic sign it must be in accordance with linguistic standard of a given language, whereas the fact that it is a part of a particular thematic register sets a prerequisite of its preciseness and transparency. Eventually, pragmatic aspect of the term calls for its acceptability in terms of language economy and frequency of usage in written and oral communication.

## **2.2 Principles of terminological standardization**

Treatment of this subject in literature varies highly with respect to number, definition and hierarchy of selected principles. (see Bugarski, 1996; Dubuc, 1997; Šipka, 1997). The aim of the following discussion is to try to establish an optimum set of principles and to determine the order of importance of each one. According to the previous section, there are three basic aspects of standardization of sporting terminology in Serbian: (a) linguistic, (b) technical, and (c) pragmatic, whose priority is determined in the following way. Firstly, the fact that the term has a limited semantic content as it is related to a specific concept provides solid ground for giving preference to principles related to technical requirements of the term (preciseness and transparency). Secondly, the lexical nature of the term calls for linguistic principles (systematicity and productivity). Thirdly, there are pragmatic principles i.e. concision and frequency of the term in the relevant thematic register, which may not be fulfilled at any cost. In accordance with the above, a hierarchically ordered set of six principles may be singled out for the purpose of standardization of sports terms in Serbian. They are preciseness (2.2.1), transparency (2.2.2), systematicity (2.2.3), productivity (2.2.4), concision (2.2.5), and frequency (2.2.6). In the text that follows, each principle is defined and exemplified. The consequence of the process of standardization is reordering or modification of the existing translation equivalents, provided that the proposed term is always listed first. In the following examples, this term is designated as (1) in front.

### **2.2.1. Preciseness**

This principle is defined as the requirement that the term should represent only one concept in a thematic register (Dubuc 1997: 156). This principle is applied to (i) terms which represent the same concept, and which are thus interchangeable, usually referred to as translation doublets (GortanPremk, 1990: 19), which result from parallel adaptation of a term in Serbian (usually borrowing plus translation), and ellipsis. This principle is also applied to synonymous terms representing different concepts, which are not distinguished at the lexical level (ii).

Examples:

(ii) layin, syn. layup > (1) POLAGANJE U KOŠ, (2) POLAGANJE OD TABLE

(both English terms were formerly translated with the same translation equivalent

- POLAGANJE).

(i) pivot foot > (1) PIVOT-NOGA, (2) STAJNA NOGA (parallel adaptation - different translations)

(i) table clock > (1) SAT, (2) SAT NA STOLU (elided term plus full term)

As exemplified above, with terminological doublets, preference is given to the one which is better adapted according to the proposed six principles, whereas the synonymous terms translated with the same equivalent are distinguished at the lexical level by expansion or modification of the existing term, and by supplying proper gloss for each.

### 2.2.2. Transparency

This principle is defined as the requirement that the term should reflect characteristics of a concept which it represents (Šipka 1998: 129), and that it should be motivated etymologically, semantically or morphologically (Dubuc 1997: 156). Speaking of etymological motivation, the terms in Serbian originating from Greek, Latin, English, and French are generally transparent. The terms are also motivated morphologically in terms of derivation and composition. However, some terms are not motivated at the level of semantics. This is due to several reasons: (i) loss of a diagnostic feature, (ii) shift of a functional or collocation feature, (iii) use of non-standard language variant or archaic word, and (iv) use of acronyms or initialisms.

Examples:

(iii) diving > (1) BACANJE ZA LOPTOM, (2) SUVANJE (archaic)

(iv) - FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur) > (1) FINA, (2)

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- CB (central backcourt player) > (1) SREDNJI BEK, (2) CB

(i) 4-meter area (length-width) > (1) POVRŠINA ČETVERCA (length-width), (2) PROSTOR ČETVERCA (length-width-height)

(ii) substitute goalkeeper (modif. + subj.) > (1) GOLMANOVA ZAMENA (modif. + subj.), (2) ZAMENA GOLMANA (subj. + obj.)

(ii) violation of a rule > (1) PREKRŠAJ (PRAVILA), (2) POVREDA PRAVILA

(collocation)

After the process of standardization (i) extra or missing diagnostic features are omitted or added respectively, (ii) shifted functional or collocation features are adapted to the original term, (iii) archaic terms are replaced by non-archaic ones, and (iv) acronyms are kept unchanged but initialisms and abbreviations are replaced by full words.

### 2.2.3. Systematicity

The term is systemic if it is adapted to the linguistic system of Serbian, which implies the levels of: (i) orthography, (ii) phonology, (iii) morpho-syntax, and (iv) lexicography. Possible deviation might be the following: (i) writing compounds, semi-compounds, anglicisms, numbers and mathematical signs, (ii) phonological adaptation of the anglicisms, which is based on spelling or mixed spelling and pronunciation, (iii) hyphenated inflectional endings of anglicisms, (iv) and nonunified codification of lexical entries in dictionaries and glossaries.

Examples:

(i<sub>d</sub>) all-star team > (1) OLSTAR TIM (B) (adapted according to acoustic impression - see Vasić et al., 2001: 174)

(iii) FINA water polo rules > PRAVILA VATERPOLA FINE, (see Book of

Orthographic Rules for Serbian, 1995: item 148a)

(i<sub>b</sub>) formation 5:1 > (1) RASPORED IGRAČA 5 PREMA 1 (":" is spelt out)

(ii) goalcapable player > (1) TOBDŽIJA (formerly TOPDŽIJA - see A Book of Orthographic Rules for Serbian, 1995: item 76)

(i<sub>a</sub>) goal line > (1) GOL-LINIJA (W) (hyphenated - see A Book of Orthographic Rules

for Serbian, 1995)

(i<sub>d</sub>) play out > (1) PLEJAUT, PLEJAUTA<sub>Gen,Accus</sub> (inflectional ending is not

hyphenated - see Vasić et al., 2001: 111)

(i<sub>c</sub>) semicircle 6.25 m > (1) POLUKRUG 6,25 M (tenths are designated by coma in Serbian - see A Book of Orthographic Rules for Serbian 1995)

(i<sub>a</sub>) side line > (1) AUT-LINIJA (hyphenated - see A Book of Orthographic Rules for Serbian, 1995)

(iv)

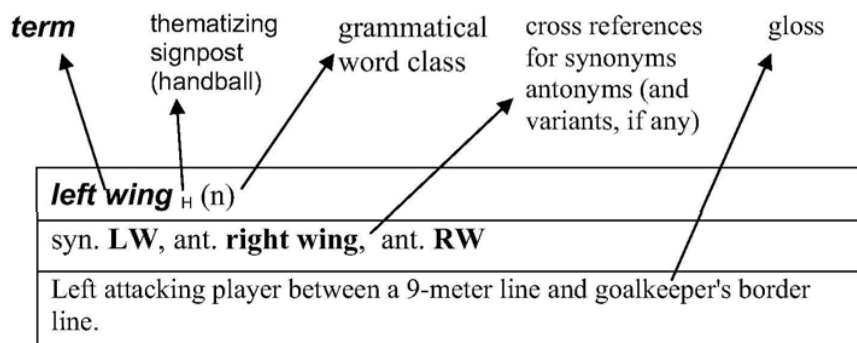


Figure 1. Model of a terminographic entry

As exemplified above, compounds and semi-compounds are written either hyphenated or non-hyphenated as per A Book of Orthographic Rules for Serbian, 1995: item 41, except for the anglicisms of this type which are in accordance with the standard of Vasić et al., 2001:11) (i<sub>a</sub>). Numbers are written in figures, while the mathematical signs ":" and "-" are written in words, which is the proposal of this paper (i<sub>b</sub>). According to A Book of Orthographic Rules for Serbian, 1995, tenths are designated by coma in Serbian (i<sub>c</sub>). Former anglicisms are to be in accordance with the phonological model of Filipović (1986: 72-76), while the recent ones (borrowed during the recent ten years) should follow the model of Prčić (1998: XXIV-XXVII) (i<sub>d</sub>). Voiceless consonants in front of the voiced ones get assimilated to the voiced pair consonants as stipulated by A Book of Orthographic Rules, 1995: item 76 (ii). Noun modifiers in a phrase (usually anglicisms) are replaced by inflectional form for oblique cases, and the hyphenated derivational or inflectional endings of anglicisms should not be hyphenated (iii). Lexicographic codification of sports terms (iv) should follow the model given in Figure 1, as realised in English-Serbian dictionary of sports terms (Milić 2006).

#### 2.2.4. Productivity

Productivity of the term is a characteristic of the language system which enables communicators (especially if it is their mother tongue) to encode and decode maximum number of higher-order terminological units). This principle must be viewed at two levels - (i) single lexemes and (ii) phrasal lexemes (see Prčić 1997: 129). At level (i), productivity is viewed in terms of derivation and composition, which is generally established in sports terminology. Level (ii), however, may partially be treated as derivation potential of the headword, but more likely in terms of productivity of a collocation. Generally, the phrases are productive if they contain fewer words in a collocation.

Examples:

(i) exclusion of a player with substitution > (1) ISKLJUČENJE SA PRAVOM ZAMENE, (2)

ISKLUČENJE IGRAČA SA PRAVOM ZAMENE

(ii) held ball > (1) NOŠENA LOPTA, (2) DRUGI KONTAKT S LOPTOM

(iii) thrower > (1) IZVOĐAČ AUTA, (2) IZVOĐAČ KOJI UBACUJE LOPTU U IGRU

As exemplified above, the desired collocation is achieved by (i) omission of extra words, (ii) direct translation instead of a functional equivalent, and (iii) phrasal lexeme instead of a relative clause.

### 2.2.5. Concision

Concision of the term implies that it should not be too long, that it is preferably single-worded or with fewer number of words (see Šipka 1997: 129). In the process of translation, more often than not, extra words are added in the equivalent, thus making it unnecessarily long. The reason may be a lexical gap, insufficient understanding of the lexical meaning of a term, or the need to avoid associating the term with another thematic register. As a consequence the translation equivalents take the form of (i) phrasal lexeme or (ii) relative clauses.

Examples:

(i) assisted hit > (1) ASISTENCIJA, (2) POMOĆ KOD NADIGRAVANJA

(ii<sub>a</sub>) tiebreak > (1) TAJBREJK

(ii<sub>b</sub>) guilty player > (1) PREKRŠILAC, (2) IGRAČ KOJI JE UČINIO PREKRŠAJ

(iii) w-formation > (1) CIKCAK RASPORED, (2) IGRAČ U CIKCAK FORMACIJI

It is often the case that extra words added in translation equivalents overlap semantically for which reason they can be omitted (i). In cases of lexical gaps, it is advisable to apply the derivation potential of the head word (ii<sub>b</sub>), or, else, borrow the term (ii<sub>a</sub>).

### 2.2.6. Frequency

Frequency implies how often a particular term is used in the relevant documents and oral communication of people involved in a thematic register. This principle is applied to terminological doublets, which are a consequence of a direct translation of terminological doublets from English (i<sub>a</sub>) and double adaptation of an English term, usually borrowing plus translation or calquing plus direct translation (i<sub>b</sub>). This principle is also applied to synonymous terms for which there is only one translation equivalent (ii).

As all translation equivalents of translation doublets occur in sporting documents, it is impossible to eliminate any of the solutions (i<sub>a</sub>) and (i<sub>b</sub>). Therefore it is proposed to arrange them in the order of frequency, provided the most frequent and most adapted one is at the first place as the proposed term with the designation (1). Accordingly, the gloss is given only for the term which comes first in alphabetical sequence. The terms classified under (ii) must be delimited both at the lexical and gloss levels, which means that there will be two lexical entries and two glosses.

Examples:

(i<sub>a</sub>) - attack line, spike line > (1) LINIJA NAPADA, (2) LINIJA SMEČIRANJA (with  
gloss)

- spike line, attack line > (1) LINIJA SMEČIRANJA, (2) LINIJA NAPADA (without  
gloss)

(i<sub>b</sub>) corner kick > (1) KORNER, (2) UDARAC SA UGLA

(ii) layin syn. layup > (1) POLAGANJE ODOZGO, (2) POLAGANJE OD TABLE

(formerly POLAGANJE for both English synonyms)

(i<sub>b</sub>) penalty area > (1) ŠESNAESTERAC, (2) KAZNENI PROSTOR

As exemplified above, translation equivalents of terminological doublets are reordered such that the proposed term for each is the one resulting from direct translation or calquing, and that gloss is given only to the one which is the first in alphabetical sequence (i<sub>a</sub>). Translation equivalents of terminological doublets are reordered, preferably applying this principle or a higher-order one (i<sub>b</sub>). English synonyms which have only one translation equivalent in Serbian are retranslated to get two entries with proper glosses (ii).

### 3. Conclusion

Even though belonging to a nonlanguage field, language teachers must familiarise themselves with a particular subject register to a certain level, which is sports on this occasion. By doing so, they can provide a role model for their students and encourage them to make greater progress in learning English as a foreign language. Besides, this also makes them qualified to be an equal team member to sportsmen in elaborating standard documents, such as glossaries, dictionaries, etc. By endeavouring to make contribution to standardised terminology, they preserve linguistic standard of Serbian, but they also introduce a certain amount of English-Serbian contact and contrastive aspects in ESP teaching at the university, which gets an increasing importance ongoing process of globalisation.

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