SYNONYMY IN SPORTS TERMINOLOGY IN ENGLISH AND SERBIAN

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Abstract: The paper deals with the typology of terminological synonyms in English and Serbian, focusing on the corpus of terms relating to five ball games – basketball, football, handball, volleyball and water polo. According to this research, there are two types of synonyms in English (real synonyms and quasi-synonyms), and four types in Serbian (terminological doublets, anglicisms as hyposynonyms, and false friends). However, if extended to the level of the general lexicon, this typology falls short of defining stylistically marked terms. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to add the additional category of terminologically marked synonyms. Thus the general conclusion of this paper is that, even though unwelcome in terminology, synonymous terms are a reality which should be controlled by the process of standardization.

Keywords: lexicology, sport, synonymy, terminology

1. Introduction

The following paper deals with the concept of synonymy and typology of synonyms occurring in sports terminology in English and Serbian. The intention of this analysis is to analyze, not only the types of synonyms developing in English as a source language, but also those developing in the target language as a consequence of translation and borrowing. This analysis will also show that terms can develop synonymic relations within the general lexicon too, which means that, besides being terminologically marked, they can also be stylistically marked, which gives ground for establishing an additional category of stylistic terminological synonyms. All types of synonyms are defined and exemplified using italics for English examples and small capitals for the Serbian ones, as well as the signs: “>/<” show the direction of adaptation (English-Serbian/Serbian-English), “=” for fully interchangeable synonyms, “≈” for partly interchangeable ones, and “≠” for non-interchangeable synonyms.

2. Definition of synonymy

From the point of general lexicon, there are various definitions of synonymy in literature, but they essentially imply that it is a sense relation (cf. Lyons 1977: 202, Cruse 1986: 88, and Murphy 2003: 146). Thus sense relation is tied to denotative sameness/similarity. However, denotative sameness (absolute synonymy) is rarely found in natural languages, and it is more likely to expect denotative similarity (near or graded synonymy) instead. Although such synonyms contribute different information, they are similar enough to be synonyms on the grounds of sense similarity. Different information is explained by the difference in expressive elements of meaning (connotation, affect, register, dialect, jargon), as well as differences in collocational restrictions, selectional differences and frequency.

From the point of terminology, the definition of synonymy can be treated as being the same as the one given for the general lexicon, except that the terminological near or graded

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synonyms refer to the same concept, but the conditions under which they are used are different not only in terms of geographic region of use, register, specific diagnostic features, but also synatagmatic and syntactic features. This is due to the fact that the terms are not predominantly single-worded units but rather multi-worded ones.

3. Typology of terminological synonyms

The following text deals with two typologies of synonyms, i.e. those established in English, and those created by the process of adaptation of original English terms in Serbian, including those which develop synonymous relations in the general lexicon.

3.1 Typology of terminological synonyms in English

According to Dubuc (1997: 121-123), there are three types of terminological synonyms: real synonyms, quasi-synonyms, and pseudo-synonyms.

Real synonyms represent the same concept and are generally interchangeable. They are fully interchangeable when they differ in terms of different characteristics of a concept, inventor's name as opposed to a characteristic of concept, different inventors' names, and borrowed terms as opposed to native terms. They might be partly interchangeable when they differ in terms of syntactic variants, morphological variants, spelling variants, ellipsis, and abbreviation.

Quasi-synonyms represent the same concept and are partly interchangeable, but the conditions under which they are used differ in terms of sociolinguistic labels, geographic labels, temporal labels, profession labels, and frequency labels.

Pseudo-synonyms belong to the same semantic field but differ by their specific characteristics, which essentially makes them non-interchangeable. To exemplify, Dubuc mentions *couch*, *sofa* and *loveseat*, which all refer to "an article of furniture, usually with arms and a back, designed to seat two or more people." However, they do differ in the fact that a *couch* can have one arm and a partial back, a *sofa* is a long seat which is often convertible to bed, and a *loveseat* usually seats only two people.

If applied to English ball game terminology, all three types are found.

3.1.1 Real synonyms

Consider the following examples of real synonyms:

(1) *base line = end line*
(2) *CB = centre-backcourt player*
(3) *corner arc = corner circle*
(4) *delay of game = stalling = time wasting*
(5) *disputed ball = ball in dispute*
(6) *free-throw line = 9-meter line*
(7) *infringement = violation*
(8) *passive play = time wasting*
(9) *shot clock = 30-second device*

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All above terms represent the same concept, and are fully interchangeable within the register of an individual ball game. Most often, they occur as a consequence of a changed perspective, focusing on one distinctive feature in one term and on another in the synonymous one/s, as in (1), (3), (4), (6), (8) and (9). In addition, synonyms are produced by the process of abbreviation, such as in example (2), as well as by syntactic variations (5). Example (7) is interesting as it points to the fact that some synonyms may be established at the level of ball games in general, where both *infringement* and *violation* are found. The former occurs in football and volleyball, while the latter is used in football, handball, and water polo (cf. Milić 2006: 105, 201).

3.1.2 Quasi-synonyms

The following are examples of quasi-synonyms:

(10) *center* = *centre*
(11) *defence* = *defense*
(12) *football* = *soccer*

Quasi-synonyms are also interchangeable but they tend to differ in conditions under which they are used, such as geographic labels, as in (1), (2) and (3), as well as temporal and professional labels which could not be exemplified on the analyzed corpus. Although Dubuc treats the above examples as synonyms, the proposal of this paper is to classify the ones characterized by different geographical labels as language variants of British English and American English (cf. Milić 2006).

3.1.3 Pseudo-synonyms

Listed below are examples of pseudo-synonyms:

(13) *coach* ≈ *trainer*
(14) *lay-in* ≈ *lay-up*

Unlike real and quasi-synonyms, pseudo-synonyms are not interchangeable because they are added specific diagnostic features which narrow their semantic contents. Both *coach* and *trainer* (13) denote a person in charge of a team. However, *coach* is a professional who is in charge of strategy and tactics of play, starting line-up, and substitutes for a match. On the other hand, *trainer* is in charge of maintaining physical and psychological fitness of players. Similarly, *lay-in* and *lay-up* (14) both refer to one-hand shot in basketball made from near the basket, but *lay-in* implies direct shot, whereas *lay-up* refers to playing the ball off the backboard.

Extending this analysis to the sports terminology created by transshaping[1] and translation from English to Serbian, it seems that a number of synonyms in Serbian can be generated by the process of transshaping and translation from English, which will be dealt with in the following section.

[1] The term transshaped is taken over from Prćić (2005: 124), and it refers to a new form with its inherent content taken over from English, which is adapted to the orthographic and semantic standard of Serbian (e.g. *corner* > KORNER).

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3.2 English-based terminological synonyms in Serbian

This analysis is based on sports terminology in Serbian created by adaptation of original terms from English through the process of transshaping and translation, focusing on a corpus of terms relating to five ball games - basketball, football, handball, volleyball and water polo. Thus different types of synonyms found in this corpus include the following: anglicisms as terminological doublets, anglicisms as hyposynonyms, false friends, and anglicisms as stylistic synonyms. All of them are defined and exemplified in the subsequent subsections.

Prior to focusing on the typology of terminological synonyms in Serbian, it is necessary to define the term of anglicism. The concept of an anglicism is broadly defined as any lexical item in Serbian borrowed from English (cf. Filipović 1986: 192). However, this analysis calls for a more detailed definition of an anglicism, which is essentially a slightly modified definition by Prćić (2005: 145). Accordingly, the term anglicism includes transshaped or non-transshaped lexical units (words and affixes) borrowed from English, as exemplified by *corner* > KORNER, or naturalized (mostly Latin) lexical units in Serbian with higher frequency of usage and/or semantic modification under the influence of English, such as *assistance* > ASISTENCIJA.

3.2.1 Anglicisms as terminological doublets

A terminological doublet is defined as an anglicism, which co-occurs in a synonymic pair with native or naturalized word in Serbian, which has different etymology and parallel usage, cf. Gortan-Premk (2004: 122). Even though referring to the same type, Dubuc treats these as real synonyms (1997: 121-123). Typology of English-based synonyms in Serbian according to Prćić includes two types of synonyms which might be treated as terminological doublets. They are anglicisms as inertial synonyms and translated anglicisms. As Prćić's analysis is based on media language, whereas Dubuc's classification is based on English only, the proposal of this paper is to use the term anglicism as terminological doublet for this type of English-based synonyms in Serbian. Anglicisms as terminological doublets in Serbian are created by the process of adaptation of original terms from English. They are either unjustified borrowings from English or subsequently created translation equivalents in Serbian. Thus this class of synonyms must be subdivided into two classes, i.e. anglicisms as inertial synonyms and translated anglicisms.

3.2.1.1 Anglicisms as inertial synonyms

According to Prćić (2005: 147-148), inertial synonym occurs in a synonymic pair, one of which is a transshaped/non-transshaped anglicism and the other is a local or naturalized lexeme in Serbian. These synonyms do not improve expressiveness in Serbian since they generally form doublet forms for the existing words or expressions. Having in mind their origin, they are rightly called inertial, but from the point of their mutual interchangeability they can equally be treated as terminological doublets, if belonging to a certain register.

(15) *7m line* > LINIJA SEDMERCA = SEDMERAC

(16) *attack line, spike line* > LINIJA NAPADA = LINIJA SMEČIRANJA

(17) *corner kick* > KORNER = UDARAC SA UGLA,

(18) *match* > MEČ = UTAKMICA,

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(19) *penalty* > PENAL = PREKRŠAJ,

(20) *score* > SKOR = REZULTAT.

Generally speaking, these doublet forms are usually created by double adaptation, i.e. transshaping and translation, in examples (17)-(20), by translation of terminological doublets from English (16), or by applying two different translation procedures, usually calquing and word-for-word (15). According to the analysis of sports terms in English and Serbian, doublet forms are used with approximately equal frequency, and tend to survive as doublets in spite of the possible interference by the process of standardization.

3.2.1.2 Translated anglicisms

Translated anglicism is also the type proposed by Prćić (2005: 147-148) according to the analysis of media language. It can be accepted for the purpose of terminology with a slight modification. Accordingly, translated anglicism occurs in a synonymic pair, one of which is a transshaped/non-transshaped anglicism and the other is its translation equivalent created later. Anglicism and translation equivalent are both marked terminologically and fully interchangeable as they refer to the same concept.

(21) *play-off* > PLEJOF = DOIGRAVANJE

(22) *play-out* > PLEJAUT = ODIGRAVANJE

(23) *penalty area* > KAZNENI PROSTOR = ŠESNAESTERAC

(24) *penalty kick* > PENAL = UDARAC SA UGLA

Even though anglicisms above have doublet translation equivalents in Serbian, they are not threatened by them. On the contrary, it is almost certain that the Serbian equivalents will disappear in the course of time, due to the fact that they have been created later and are not fully lexicalized as terms, especially multi-worded ones. The frequency of the Serbian translation equivalents of the above terms in the sport literature indicates that all except (3) have already been neglected in ball game terminology.

3.2.2 Anglicisms as hyposynonyms

The definition of this type of English-based synonym is fully in accordance with the one given by Prćić (2005: 147-148). Anglicisms as hyposynonyms co-occur in synonymic pairs/sets with a native or naturalized word in Serbian sharing the same descriptive meaning, provided that anglicisms have additional diagnostic or collocational features which narrow their semantic contents. Owing to the above, the native or naturalized word has the function of a hypersynonym (shaded), as exemplified below. It is important to note here that these synonyms assume cross-register semantic relations or the relation between terminology and general lexicon.

(25) *general manager* > GENERALNI DIREKTOR ≈ GENERALNI MENADŽER

(26) *list* > SPISAK (*list of players* > SPISAK IGRAČA) ≈ LISTA (*waiting list* > LISTA ČEKANJA),

(27) *scouting* > IZVIĐANJE (general lexicon) ≈ SKAUTING (sports – searching for talented players).

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For a long time, GENERALNI DIREKTOR (25) used to be the only equivalent to English *manager* and *director*. Due to the changed responsibilities in current sports business, GENERALNI DIREKTOR has developed the meaning of a person in charge of a sports team management, whereas GENERALNI MENADŽER is responsible for strategy, as well as its support, and implementation. SPISAK (< *list*) (26) occurs in sports terminology, and it is also predominant in general communication. However, the anglicism LISTA seems to be irreplacable by SPISAK in fixed collocations such as LISTA ČEKANJA < *waiting list*. Similarly, SKAUTING < *scouting* (27) has additional diagnostic feature in sports register, with the meaning of searching for talented players, whereas outside sports, it is translated as a neutral lexeme IZVIĐANJE.

3.2.3 False friends

Anglicisms as false friends co-occur in synonymic pairs with native or naturalized words in Serbian which are etymologically related and similar in form, but semantically divergent (cf. Granger and Swallow 1998: 108). False friends are most dangerous for the language system of Serbian, as they cause semantic shifts and misunderstanding.

(28) *corner* > ≠ UDARAC SA UGLA (*corner kick*) = KORNER (*part of field*)

(29) *frustrated* > ≠ FRUSTRIRAN = RAZOČARAN

(30) *gymnasium* > ≠ GIMNAZIJA = GIMNASTIČKA SALA

(31) FIZIČKA KULTURA < ≠ *physical culture* = *physical education*,

(32) *training* > ≠ TRENING = OBUKA.

As a consequence of ellipsis, *corner* (28) was adapted in Serbian with the meaning of *corner kick* and seems not to be ambiguous with *corner* as part of field in football, as translation equivalent UGAO (TERENA) is used instead. *Frustrated* and FRUSTRIRAN (29), both of Latin etymology, mean two different things in English and Serbian. English *frustrated* means *disappointed* whereas Serbian FRUSTRIRAN is lexicalised as clinically depressed. *Gymnasium* (30) i.e. club, building or a large room, usually containing special equipment where people go to have physical exercise or get fit, is formally equivalent to GIMNAZIJA which refers to a kind of a Serbian secondary school. Serbian collocation FIZIČKA KULTURA (31) with the meaning of physical education, is formally equivalent to *physical culture* in English, but such collocation does not exist in English. TRENING (32) was first semantically adapted in Serbian as a sports term with the meaning of developing a sportsman's physical fitness. However, due to its formal equivalence to an English *training* with its primary meaning of a process of learning the skills that you need for a particular job or activity, its use in Serbian has been extended to the full semantic range of the English lexeme. All along, TRENING was a false pair in Serbian until recently when its semantic range has been adjusted accordingly (cf. Vasić et al. 2001: 263).

3.2.4 Anglicisms as stylistic synonyms

All above types of synonyms are identified in sports terminology. However, if the scope of analysis is extended to the general lexicon, some terms turn out to be stylistically marked in the general communication, thus it might be justified to establish the category of stylistic synonyms too. Stylistic synonym is the one which occurs in a synonymic pair consisting of a

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transshaped/non-transshaped anglicism and a Serbian equivalent. The anglicism in this pair is marked stylistically, whereas the Serbian equivalent is general (cf. Milić 2008: 259).

(33) *fighter* > FAJTER (metaphoric) = BORAC (neutral),

(34) *record* > REKORDAN (metaphoric) = NAJVEĆI (neutral)

Thus FAJTER (<*fighter*) (1) in non-sports communication is meant to point out a person's persistence towards a goal by metaphoric reference to an extreme fight such as in a boxing match. Similarly, REKORDAN (<*record*) (2) stresses the fact that any non-sport concept has reached the utmost limit. Both lexemes have synonyms in the general lexicon, i.e. BORAC for the former and NAJVEĆI for the latter. However, since this type of synonym is identified at the level of the general lexicon, it cannot be established as a terminological category.

Even though terminology is expected to be synonymy-free, which, among other conditions, assumes the requirement that the term should represent only one concept in a thematic register (Dubuc 1997: 156), the above analysis proves that this principle is difficult to achieve. Just like lexemes in the general lexicon, terms can develop synonymous relations in the terminological and general lexicon alike. Thus terminological synonyms are a reality even in the source language, from which they get transferred to the target language through the process of translation. Target language is even more open to synonymy due to the process of borrowing, which is often uncontrolled and leads to creating terminological doublets, consisting of borrowed terms and their translation equivalents. It is a well known fact that translation equivalents have little chance to survive in competition with the trendy English borrowings. Thus, more often than not, they just disappear. Certain efforts have been made so far to control this process (cf. Bugarski (1996: 17-25), Prćić (2005), Šipka (1998), Milić (2006). In spite of this, standardization of terminologies in Serbian remains at the level of good intentions of linguists alone.

4. Conclusions

The essential requirement that the term should be non-synonymous, unless provided by an additional semantic feature, seems to be difficult to implement. In addition to the usual semantic differences which affect the typology of synonyms in general, terminological synonyms are also the consequence of the fact that terms are for the most part multi-worded units, which might lead to their syntactic and syntagmatic variations. The range of different types of synonyms in terminology tends to be even wider in terminologies created by trasshaping or translation, as a consequence of adaptation. Finally, terminological English-based synonyms are rather strongly lexicalized in Serbian, thus tend to push away their interchangeable Serbian equivalents which take the role of their subordinates, especially if extended to the level of stylistic means of expression in the general lexicon. Such a tendency can and must be brought under control by means of the process of standardization, in which hand in hand with linguists, technical specialists should set to work too.

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