

THE INVASION OF ENGLISH IN SPORTS TERMINOLOGY

NIKOLAY Paskalev*

Institute for Bulgarian Language, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, Bulgaria

*Corresponding author: ndymitrov@abv.bg

Abstract

This article is an attempt in the field of comparative lexicology. Observations have been made on basic basketball terms in Bulgarian and Romanian. The analysis of these terms in both languages has revealed clearly expressed trends of internationalization and increase in the use of their English equivalents. The author formulates a hypothesis about the reasons that may have led to these results. Attention has been paid to the stylistic differentiation in the Bulgarian and Romanian languages, namely the domination of English language terms in informal situations in contrast to the greater persistence of native tongue expressions in the sport administrative style.

Thus, the speech of basketball players and coaches, who are Bulgarian and Romanian native speakers, becomes markedly diglossic, if we adopt the terms of sociolinguistics. The final paragraphs of the article draw certain conclusions about the growing prevalence of English language terms and the possible consequences of this process.

Keywords: comparative lexicology, terminology, basketball, internationalization

Introduction

The constant permeation of English lexis in a growing number of fields of modern life is a fact, which would hardly be disputed by anyone. Sport is no exception in this respect. The present article examines the infiltration of English language basketball terms into two Balkan languages – the Bulgarian and the Romanian.

The issue approached

„There is an international cultural dynamics that accompanies all of this technology of integration. Hence, to explain English domination, one can point, in the first instance, to a host of technological, economic and political factors. English, more than any other living language, exists in association with an archi-culture whose elements though often sourced in the Anglophone world, are being accepted and elaborated internationally.” (Crystal, D. 2000).

In Bulgarian, some terms were adopted long ago and have never been in competition with the native expressions. These are now part of the basketball terminology, which is fully adapted morphologically, i.e. their morphological indicators for gender, number and definiteness are inherently Bulgarian morphemes. A large portion of the native speakers, incl. the frequent users of these terms, do not perceive them as foreign words. Such terms include, for example *пас* [*pas*] (masculine, singular), *пасове*, *пасът/а* [*pasove*, *pasat/pasa*] (plural and form used with definite article); *асистенция* [*asistentsiya*] (feminine, singular), *асистенции*, *асистенцията* [*asistentsii*, *asistentsiyata*] (plural and form used with definite article), *дрибъл* [*dribal*] (masculine, singular), *дрибълът/а* [*dribalat/dribala*] (form used with definite article), *дриблирам*, *дриблиране* [*dribliram*, *driblirane*] (derivative and verbal noun); *преса* [*presa*] (feminine, singular), *пресата* [*presata*] (form used with definite article), *пресирам* [*presiram*] (derivative); *зона* [*zona*] (feminine, singular), *зоната* [*zonata*] (form used with definite article), *бодичек* [*bodichek*] (masculine, singular), *бодичекът/а* [*bodichekat*, *bodicheka*] (form used with definite article).

Another group of terms are of native origin and are either formed locally (most frequently, by analogy with terms from other sports), or translated: *защита* [*zashtita*], *лична защита* [*lichna zashtita*], *зонова защита* [*zonova zashtita*], *нападение* [*napadenie*], *смяна между краката* [*stuyana mezhdu krakata*], *смяна зад гърба* [*stuyana zad garba*], *предна смяна* [*predna stuyana*], *смяна със завъртане* [*stuyana sas zavartane*], *стрелба* [*strelba*], *стрелба от два крака* [*strelba ot dva kraka*], *стрелба от средно разстояние* [*strelba ot sredno razstoyanie*], *стрелба за три точки (от тройката)* [*strelba za tri tochki / ot troykata*], *чадър*

[chadar], борба [borba], забивка [zabivka], поднасяне [podnasyane], кука [kuka], заслон [zaslon], контразаслон [kontrazaslon], прекъсване [prekasvane]. As for the names of the passing techniques, these add a Bulgarian complement to the already discussed term *пас* [pas] as in: *пас със земя* [pas sas zemya], *пас на гърди* [pas na gardi], *пас с една ръка (с две ръце)* [pas s edna raka / s dve ratse], *пас зад гърба* [pas zad garba]. The above-mentioned terms have been prevalent in basketball language until some ten years ago, when they started to actively compete with their English equivalents. Thus, in parallel with the Bulgarian denominations, we see the increasingly frequent use of *defense*, *offense*, *man to man*, *between the legs*, *behind the back*, *crossover*, *rolling*, *shooting*, *midrange shoot*, *three point shoot*, *block*, *rebound*, *dunk*, *layup*, *hook*, *screen*, *pick and roll*, *pick and pop*, *repick*, *timeout*. Today, at the end of the second decade of 21 c., the trend is clearly outlined: the English language terms are gradually pushing out their Bulgarian counterparts. This is particularly the case when the English term is shorter than the Bulgarian one (for instance, compare *предна смяна* [predna smyana] with *crossover*, or *смяна със завъртане* [smyana sas zavartane] with *rolling*).

It must be clarified that the described language situation concerns primarily the oral communication (conversations between players or between players and coaches). The utilization of the two groups of terms by many Bulgarian basketball players results in a kind of diglossia – they know and use both Bulgarian and English denominations depending on the communicational situation. More frequent use of the English terms is also typical for some sportscasters. In their speech, however, some traditional terms are still very much in use (at least for the time being): *защита* [zashtita], *стрелба* [strelba], *кука* [kuka], *забивка* [zabivka], etc. Undoubtedly, in basketball literature and official basketball-related documentation the terms in native tongue are most persistent.

The Romanian language shows similar stylistic differentiation with regard to the use of English and local terms. The above-mentioned written expression registers feature predominantly established Romanian denominations: *apărare*, *apărarea om la om*, *apărarea zonă*, (*dribling/pasă*) *prinre picioare*, (*dribling/pasă*) *pe la spate*, *piruetă*, *aruncare*, *aruncare de pe loc*, *aruncare de la semidistanță*, *aruncare de trei puncte*, *capac*, *recuperare*, *oferită*, *cârlig*, *blocaj*.

„The borrowings from the English language to the current Romanian language, especially from the American English, have been made between 1999 and 2000, representing the same tendency that all romance languages have of obeying the so called linguistic globalization as a consequence of the linguistic imperialism of the English language.” (Quirk, R., Gabriele Stein, 1990).

„Scientists have also identified in the Romanian language the presence of pseudoanglicisms – words created in other languages, for example: ”tenisman” or ”golaveraj.” (Theodor Hristea, 1973).

However, oral expression, much like in Bulgarian, show growingly increased use of English language terms. Part of these, such as *crossover*, *dunk*, *dribling*, *bodycheck*, do not have local equivalents and therefore, have become commonly accepted long ago (incl. in written linguistic registers). This group encompasses adapted terms with Latin roots like *pasă*, *assist*, *zonă*, *atac*, which are not seen as foreign, as they have broad non-terminological use beyond the strict confines of sports-based linguistic registers.

The most interesting cases connected with the described process of English language „invasion” in basketball language are the ones where a native and foreign term are used in competition with each other. The English language terms that increasingly „compete” with the traditional ones include, for instance: *defense*, *man to man*, *layup*, *pick and roll*, *midrange shoot*, *three point shoot*, *block*, *rebound*, *between the legs*, *behind the back*, *pick and roll*, *pick and pop*, *repick*, etc.

The examples under review show that in both Bulgarian and Romanian languages a similar process of internationalization develops, resulting in the more and more tenacious affirmation of English language basketball terminology. Undoubtedly, there are important extralinguistic factors, which contribute to that: the Bulgarian and Romanian basketball leagues feature a number of foreign players. A significant part of the coaches are also foreign nationals, which makes English the natural means of communication. The generation swap (young players are proficient in the English terminology) in addition to the „invasion” of the English language brought about by internet and international TV channels contribute further to the advancement of this process.

On the other hand, certain purely structural language factors are at play. The brevity of English terms and the transparency of their meaning for a growing number of Bulgarian and Romanian native speakers are yet another reason for the changes in the basketball-related terminological language system, which the two languages undergo.

References

- Crystal, D., (2000). *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge Press
Quirk, R., Stein Gabriele (1990). *English in Use*, London, Longman
Theodor Hristea (1973) *Contribuții la studiul etimologic al neologismelor românești*, LR, XXII, nr. 1, p. 3-19
Trofin, Aurel (1967). *Observații cu privire la adaptarea terminologiei sportive de origine engleză în limba română*, in *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai*, XII, 2, p. 125 – 130