



A DIACHRONIC STUDY OF THE LEXICAL UNITS FORMING THE BASIS OF SPORTS COMMENTARY

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The language of sports commentary constitutes a distinct and dynamic subsystem within the broader lexical structure of a national language. Its foundation lies in specialized terminological units that ensure precision, efficiency, and professional coherence. The present article examines the diachronic development of lexical units forming the basis of sports commentary, with particular attention to terminology, terminological fields, neologisms, and occasionalisms. The analysis draws upon established theoretical approaches to terminology and considers both theoretical and practical dimensions of sports-related lexical units.

The study of terminology has long occupied a central place in linguistic research. In the twentieth century, scholars proposed varying definitions of the term, emphasizing its functional and semantic specificity. A.S. Superanskaya defined the term as a special word referring to a particular field of professional activity, functioning within specialized contexts and possessing a clearly delimited meaning within a given terminological system [Superanskaya]. Within such a system, the term ideally corresponds to one concept; when identical forms appear in different fields, they function as homonyms rather than as polysemous units.

Modern conceptions expand this view, defining a term as a lexical unit either a word or a phrase that performs a specific nominative function in a defined area of knowledge, such as sports, economics, law, politics, education, or diplomacy. From a semantic perspective, a term is confined to the boundaries of a specific conceptual domain. This restriction is not accidental: it ensures clarity, precision, and professional efficiency.

G.O. Vinokur emphasized the lexical-semantic distinctiveness of terms, noting their precision, intellectual transparency, and emotional neutrality [Vinokur]. R.A. Budagov further argued that a term strives for unambiguity and is characterized by the absence of expressive or emotional features [Bugadov]. These features differentiate terminological units from general vocabulary, which may exhibit polysemy, metaphorical richness, and stylistic variation.

Terminological field and sports commentary

Many scholars underline the importance of the "terminological field" when discussing specialized vocabulary. Every lexical unit emerges, develops, and functions within a particular conceptual sphere. Within this bounded system, terms acquire their defining linguistic features and maintain their stability. The terminological field is deliberately structured and protected from irrelevant lexical intrusions in order to preserve conceptual integrity.

Sports commentary represents a distinct terminological field. It integrates lexical units that are specific to sports practice, competition rules, strategies, and outcomes. These units include specialized terms, set phrases and abbreviations that enable commentators to describe



complex events accurately and concisely. The coherence of this field is maintained through standardization and consistent usage.

Theoretical significance of sports terminology

From a theoretical standpoint, sports commentary terminology possesses several defining characteristics.

First, it ensures precision and clarity. Specialized units are employed to describe events, rules, and tactical maneuvers in an exact manner, thereby minimizing ambiguity. In fast-paced live commentary, semantic economy is essential; a single term must encapsulate a well-defined concept.

Second, standardization plays a crucial role. Uniform terminology across sports discourse establishes a shared professional language, facilitating mutual understanding among commentators, analysts, coaches and athletes. Standardization also contributes to pedagogical clarity in the study of sports theory and practice.

Third, terminology enhances learning processes. Mastery of specialized lexical units enables a deeper understanding of rules, strategies, and techniques within a particular sport. Thus, terminological competence becomes a prerequisite for professional participation in sports communication [Sarimsokov].

Beyond theoretical considerations, sports terminology has clear practical significance.

In professional interaction, it facilitates effective communication among commentators, coaches, and players. The speed and intensity of sports events require rapid and unambiguous exchanges; terminological precision reduces communicative friction.

In analytical contexts, commentators rely on specialized vocabulary to interpret tactical decisions and strategic developments. Without such units, detailed and technically accurate commentary would be impossible. The use of field-specific expressions enhances the dynamism and authenticity of commentary, increasing spectator involvement. While classical theory emphasizes the emotional neutrality of terms, in practice sports commentary often blends technical precision with expressive delivery. This tension between theoretical neutrality and performative vitality is a distinctive feature of sports discourse [Sarimsokov].

The diachronic development of sports terminology inevitably involves the emergence of terminological neologisms. The expansion of sports culture, international competitions, and media globalization stimulates lexical borrowing and innovation. When an English sports term is introduced into Uzbek for the first time, or when it begins to gain widespread usage, it functions as a terminological neologism [Sarimsokov]. The frequency and stability of such neologisms correlate with the development and popularization of the respective sport.

Neologization reflects not only linguistic processes but also sociocultural transformation. As new disciplines, technologies, and strategies appear, language adapts accordingly. The diachronic study of these units reveals the stages of institutionalization: from initial borrowing or coinage to stabilization within the terminological field.

Occasionalisms in sports discourse

A particularly interesting phenomenon in sports terminology is the emergence of occasionalisms. Derived from the Latin *occasio* ("chance"), occasionalisms are author-created neologisms formed in accordance with linguistic norms but used within limited contexts. Unlike standardized terms, they do not necessarily enter the general lexicon.



In sports, occasionalisms often arise not from writers or poets but from athletes and coaches. When a new technique, movement, or tactical innovation is introduced, it may be named after its inventor. Such units initially function within a narrow professional circle. Some remain context-bound; others eventually acquire terminological status if they gain broad acceptance. This process demonstrates the fluid boundary between individual linguistic creativity and institutionalized terminology. Diachronically, certain occasionalisms transition into stable terms, thereby enriching the lexicon of sports commentary.

The lexical units forming the basis of sports commentary represent a structured and evolving terminological system. Their defining characteristics precision, standardization, and conceptual restriction distinguish them from general vocabulary. At the same time, the dynamic nature of sports practice fosters continuous lexical innovation through neologisms and occasionalisms. A diachronic perspective reveals that sports terminology is not static. It develops in response to technological advancement, international contact, and professional innovation. The interaction between theoretical principles of terminology and the practical demands of live commentary produces a unique linguistic domain one that balances clarity with immediacy, standardization with creativity.

Thus, the study of sports commentary terminology contributes not only to applied linguistics but also to our broader understanding of how specialized language systems emerge, stabilize, and transform over time.

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