

FaR 2021**International Forum “Freedom and responsibility in pivotal times”****SOME FEATURES OF FRENCH SPORTS COMMENTARY AS A
TYPE OF SPONTANEOUS SPEECH**

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Abstract

The article considers sports commentaries in French, analyses the lexical and syntactic features of French sports commentators' spontaneous speech. Sports discourse is defined as a type of communication between participants of sports activities aimed at achieving communicative goals. The use of tropes in sports commentary allows making the speech of a sports journalist more expressive, adds details to the depiction and conveys evaluative and emotionally expressive meanings. This function is performed primarily by metaphors and comparisons that exist in the form of metaphorical terms, stable metaphorical comparisons and original (occasional) metaphors. The detailed occasional military metaphors are of particular interest. The metaphorical use of military vocabulary allows sports journalists to convey the drama of the competition. Another important feature of sports discourse is the use of slang. The paper studies jargon expressions based on proper names, which make up a special group of football vocabulary. Descriptive, more explanatory translation is often required to render such notions into Russian. In terms of syntax, sports commentators' spontaneous speech reveals such characteristic features as agrammatism, excessive use of language elements, use of sentences with an abbreviated syntactic structure. The stylistic and syntactic figures are used to solve several problems: they increase the expressiveness of speech, contribute to a more compact presentation of information.

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Keywords: Sports discourse, spontaneous speech, lexical borrowings, military metaphor, slang vocabulary, speech expressiveness



1. Introduction

The increase in the number of international sports competitions and the world community's growing interest in sports have led to the emergence of a new type of discourse that is the sports discourse. This term is relatively new in linguistics. In Russia the study of sports discourse was pioneered by Zilbert and Zilbert (2001), Karasik (2004), Malysheva (2011), who published their works at the end of the XX – at the beginning of the XXI century.

2. Problem Statement

Live reports from sports events and sports commentaries are instances of spontaneous speech and form a part of sports discourse (Razubaeva & Stepikhov, 2020). Following the Dolinin's (1987) definition, spontaneous speech is understood as unprepared, generated simultaneously with the formation of thought. Sports discourse is formed based on the symbiosis of sports with other social institutions. The participants, or actors, within sports discourse are groups of linguistic personalities who formulate and express their communicative intentions differently. A correspondent's or commentator's speech that accompanies a sports event and is produced within certain time limits is of particular interest for linguistic research.

3. Research Questions

Zilbert and Zilbert (2001) points out the tendency for the sports and mass media discourse assimilation, mass communication media being the main source of the sports discourse dissemination. It is noted that a sports discourse participant is always a representative of mass media discourse as well, e.g., a TV journalist, a correspondent of a print publication or a radio host who is an intermediary between the audience and a particular sport which one's report is about. In this case, the communication is one-sided, since there is no clearly distinguishable feedback. Its addressees are a large number of recipients. In addition, the television method of presenting information implies the simultaneous transmission of an image, a voiced text and, in some cases, a musical composition.

Sports activities are characterized by special emotional states, the so-called "sports emotions" (Acerenza, 2013). This increased emotionality contributes to providing educational and entertainment functions, as well as obtaining emotional discharge. The impact on "passive" fans is often limited to the information and entertainment functions, while in case of the "active" fans, the analytical, educational, and propaganda functions of sports discourse become important, too, alongside the information function, which makes sports news an integral part of everyday life. Such functional diversity is crucial for the genre structure of sports discourse (Fernandez, 2012, par. 7).

Thus, sports discourse can be defined as a type of communication between participants in sports activities (coaches, athletes, sports agents, fans and sports correspondents), which is aimed at achieving communicative goals.

4. Purpose of the Study

Despite a considerable amount of research in this area, many issues are still subject to debates and generate numerous discussions. This article will try to provide a more comprehensive and profound study of some of such issues.

The purpose of the present paper is to analyze the lexical and syntactic features of sports commentators' speech based on the French sports broadcasts.

The language material for the study includes the recordings of the sports commentary from the 'France v. Croatia' match of the 2018 FIFA World Cup final, the 'France v. Spain' game of the 2017 UEFA Champions League 8th Final, 2015-2016 Biathlon World Cup races in Pokljuka, the 'France v. Norway' game of the 2017 World Handball final, the 'France v. Mexico' match of the 2010 World Cup.

5. Research Methods

The methods used for the purpose of the present paper include a set of techniques for analysing factual material in accordance with the goal and objectives of the work (Roulet et al., 2001, p. 81). Descriptive and contextual-situational analyses are the main methods used in the present paper.

6. Findings

The sports correspondents' speech is full of special vocabulary, means of artistic expression, phraseological units. The peculiarity of sports discourse is due to fact that the basic information about the upcoming event is always known in advance, and the author of both written and oral reports has time to prepare, collect the necessary material, which is subsequently used when producing the report. But at the same time, most of the message will be spontaneous, dependent on rapid changes of the situation, which means that in the process of generating an utterance, the journalist will not have an opportunity to carefully consider if the selected visual-expressive and other means of influence are adequate enough (Barb ris, 1999).

Since a sports reporter does not have a clear plan, according to which an event shall be covered, adjustments to the text as well as informational, factual and stylistic error corrections are made on the spot, in the live broadcast mode, and are introduced by means of special comments: *Ah, oui / Il y avait un avertissement pour Cafu / Au match pr c dent / Pardon / C'est le dernier match de Coupe du Br sil. - Ah, yes / There was a warning for Cafu / To the previous match / Sorry / This is the last Brazil Cup match.*

6.1. Combinations of term with a figurative meaning

Sports commentators often use term combinations that reveal some figurative meaning, in most cases, metaphors. These are primarily term combinations that feature a verb in a figurative meaning and a word form depending on it: *prendre une longueur d'avance* (getting a head start), *pulv riser un record* (smashing a record), *sauvegarder la pr cellence* (safeguarding precellence), *gagner le prix* (win the prize), *consolider la primaut * (consolidating primacy), *marquer le but* (score the goal).

There are also three- and four-component combinations : *avoir un beau podium* (have a beautiful podium), *mettre la balle sous le coup* (putting the ball under the blow), *contrer son adversaire tournant* (counter his turning opponent), *prendre le jeu sous le contrôle* (taking the game under control), *assurer la position dans le classement générale* (ensure the position in the general classification), *défendre les couleurs de l'équipe* (defend team colors).

A special place is occupied by words and phrases of a professional nature that have penetrated into the sports discourse on the basis of similarity: *le score sec* (the dry score), *dos à* (back to), *la manière de jeu aggressive* (the aggressive way of playing), *les techniques fraîches* (fresh techniques), *le coup d'envoi complexe* (the complex kick-off), *un match brilliant* (a brilliant match).

Such term combinations are used only within the framework of sports activities, and therefore have a narrow specialization. The metaphor behind those phrases is 'muffled' due to their frequent use in the sports context (Hayat, 2018).

6.2. Borrowings

Borrowings are known to be one of the ways to enrich the French language and are widely used in the reports of sports events. English borrowings have penetrated into many areas of human activity and the sports world is not an exception. Lexical borrowings are the most common ones. Apart from the names of the sports: *le football* (football), *le hand-ball* (handball), *le rugby* (rugby), the following borrowings can also be found: *le finish* (to finish), *le penalty* (penalty), *l'outsider* (an outsider), *le goalkeeper* (a goalkeeper), *le halfback* (halfback), *le corner* (a corner).

Introducing words of foreign origin into this type of discourse is not harmful, as it contributes to the expansion of the lexical reserves of the sports sublanguage, the development of synonymy, allows saving speech resources, as well as indicates the existence of cross-cultural ties between the countries.

6.3. Expressive means of language

The use of tropes in the commentary of a sports event makes the speech of a sports journalist more expressive, adds details to the depiction and conveys evaluative (in the speaker's utterances) and emotionally expressive meanings. This function is primarily performed by metaphors and comparisons: *ce stade est une cathédrale* (this stadium is a cathedral), *ce qui est sûr, c'est qu'ils auront onze lions en face d'eux* (what is certain is that they will have eleven lions in front of them), *le roi Messi* (Messi the king), *et ça commence à ressembler à une catastrophe* (and it's starting to look like a disaster), *ils sont passés en trois semaines du paradis à l'enfer* (they went from heaven to hell in three weeks), *trois cadeaux de la défense* (three gifts from the defense).

With the help of hyperbole, a larger extent can be attributed to the events. The commented actions are described as extreme or excessive: *Messi, il est extrêmement dangereux* (Messi, he is extremely dangerous), *l'agressivité des défenseurs* (the aggressiveness of defenders), *la rage de Suarez, ça a provoqué un électro choc* (Suarez's rage, it caused an electro shock), *il est au bout de sa crise de nerf* (he is at the end of his nervous breakdown), *le ballon est parfaitement dosé* (the balloon is perfectly dosed), *cette équipe, elle est d'une autre planète* (this team is from another planet), *on va avoir cinq minutes de folie* (we're gonna have five crazy minutes).

Personification is one of the artistic representation techniques, consisting in endowing inanimate objects with human abilities and properties, e.g., the gift of speech, thoughts and feelings, has become widespread in sports discourse: *Le ballon près de côté brésilienne contrôle tout le jeu des jaunes* (The ball near Brazilian side controls all the game of the yellows). The active use of personification contributes to the implementation of one of the main functions of the mass media text: the author of the text enlivens the information message, adding emotionality to it.

The metaphorization of actions performed by athletes or people close to them within a specific sporting event serves the same purpose. For example, the expression *la tête du classement* in *La France a gagné le droit d'être à la tête du classement de football mondial* (France has earned the right to be at the top of the world football ranking) means 'the first position in the standings'.

The analysis of the frequency with which various means of expression appear in sports discourse proved the military metaphor to be the most used trope. It, just like that same type of metaphor in the political discourse, can be represented in the form of metaphorical terms, stable metaphorical comparisons or original (occasional) metaphors (Rial, 2009). Of particular interest are the detailed occasional military metaphors: *bataille des Titans de football* (battle of the Football Titans), *il reste sous la menace de la frappe de Neymar* (he remains under threat from Neymar's strike), *Ronaldo a tiré sur la droite* (Ronaldo shot on the right), *ils étaient venus pour morts et pourtant demain ce sont eux les barcelonais qui seront les vivants* (they had come for dead and yet tomorrow they are the Barcelona people who will be the living), *il n'a imaginé que cette défense de fer* (he only imagined this iron defense).

With the help of military metaphors, the sequence of the players' actions is shown: *aller à l'attente vigilante* (go to watchful waiting), *bloquer l'arrière* (lock back), *début d'assaut* (start of the siege), *ricochet à face* (face ricochet), *coup sur le but* (shot on goal), *tir de but* (goal shot). Thus, any sporting event appears before the eyes of the viewer as a battlefield.

There are a number of stable and conventional military metaphors, some of which have passed into the category of sports terms and have lost their affective power. Their use does not emphasize the destructive nature of the confrontation, but the intensity of the competition and the significance of the victory: *les bleus vont attaquer* (the blues will attack), *les rivaux sont obligés de se défendre* (rivals are forced to defend themselves), *l'équipe a conquis le ballon* (the team conquered the ball), *les batailles de tir* (shooting battles). As a result, this contributes to the sports positive assessment.

The widespread use of the military metaphor in sports discourse can be explained by the historical relationship and a certain set of similar rules typical of these two types of human activity. The metaphorical use of military vocabulary allows sports journalists to convey the drama of the competition, the increased emotionality of the audience in the stands, the struggle of the coaches and sports agents for the most powerful athletes.

The recorded examples of the use of metonymy are associated with state symbols and serve as a means of expressing political stereotypes, emphasizing the importance of sports at the country level. Thus, the colors and official symbols of the country are often used to refer to a team: *les jaunes* (the yellows), *les bleus* (the blues), *l'équipe jaune* (the yellow team), *l'équipe bleu* (the blue team), *les tricolores* (the tricolors). This underlines the team's duty to represent the state at a sporting event. Talking about the metonymic transfer, it should be noted that the examples of such a shift are not very numerous, since the

metonymic nomination of an actor or an object in sports discourse requires certain background knowledge on part of the audience and the lack of interpretational ambiguity.

As for the use of phraseological units, their presence in the sports commentators' spontaneous speech remains quite limited. The only phraseological unit was used when describing the loss of the French football team in the 2010 World Cup 'France v. Mexico', which the French lost 2:0: *C'est la bérézina pour les Bleus* (This is a disaster for the Blues). This phraseological unit appeared in the French language as a response to the famous historical event, the defeat of the army of Napoleon I in the 1812 war against Russia, and perfectly conveys that feeling of hopelessness, that the situation is not perceived as a minor loss, but rather a total and crushing defeat.

Thus, based on the abundance and variety of stylistic figures used in the spontaneous speech of sports commentators, it is possible to draw some parallels between sports discourse and fictional discourse. They are both designed to have increased expressiveness in order to produce a special effect on the recipient (Mathon et al., 2015, Conclusion, par. 1).

6.4. Slang vocabulary

Another important feature of sports discourse is the use of slang vocabulary. This is a jargon language that is understandable only in a certain environment; it has a lot of artificial, sometimes very specific words and expressions. As it happens in every sphere of life, every sport has its own slang. Some phrases of sports personalities seem incomprehensible to uninitiated people, and sometimes completely unacceptable. Well-known terms, despite referring to a professional matter, do not require clarification, but emerging jargon, e.g., football jargon, cannot be freely used outside the specific area.

An example from the football terminology is the well-known Russian jargon expression "mustard plaster" standing for the "yellow card", which is an official name for a warning given by the referee to a player who committed a violation. The French language provides another denomination for that same concept of "carton jaune" – *biscotte* – literally, a cracker.

A special group of football vocabulary consists of jargon words based on proper names. A more descriptive and explanatory translation is often required to render those terms into Russian. For example, jargon word *arconada*, a mistake made by a goalkeeper when he covers the ball with his body, and it slips out from under him. The appearance of this term is associated with the name of the Spanish goalkeeper Luis Arconada, who made this massive mistake in the 1984 European Championship final when deflecting a free kick made by Michel Platini. In the same way the occasional jargon word *guiançaçada* based on the goalkeeper's last name is used as an ironic word indicating his mistake during the decisive match. The jargon term *bakayokade* is associated with mistakes made by attackers, namely a mistake made by a player in front of an empty goal. The term is associated with the name of Ibrahim Bakayko, an Ivory Coast striker. In one of the football match reports a commentator uses this very jargon word in an emotional form after an annoying mistake committed by a football player who failed to score the easiest goal: *Ecker transmet pour Hemdani qui trouve Marlet en profondeur / complètement démarqué / contrôle du droit il est face à Baia et il tire // Dans les nuages, une bakayokade superbe* (Ecker transmits for Hemdani who finds Marlet in depth / completely demarcated / control of the right he is facing Baia and he shoots // In the clouds, a superb *bakayokade*). The jargon word *madjer* that means scoring the ball with the heel is derived from the

name of Rabah Madjer, an Algerian player, the author of such a goal in the 1987 European Cup final. The acrobatic kick on the ball from the *papinade summer* as a result of which the ball hits the goal, is named after the striker Jean-Pierre Papin. The *panenka* technique of taking a penalty kick was invented by Czech player Antonin Panenka. It implies that the player strikes the ball without running, directing it towards the center of the goal in order to deceive the goalkeeper, who is ready to rush to the side in anticipation of a strong blow. The analysis of the studied language material showed that this jargon term can pass into the terminological system of another sport, for example, handball: *Ce joueur de handball est parvenu à exécuter un geste que l'on ne voit qu'au football / la très connue panenka*. (This handball player managed to execute a gesture that is only seen in football / the well-known *panenka*).

Some jargon terminology does not directly reflect the names of football players, but is closely related to them and is widely used when covering football matches. The expression *coup du scorpion* (scorpion strike) meaning the movement in the jump, when the trunk is placed horizontally, and the kick is carried out with the heels, was fixed in the French language thanks to Colombian goalkeeper Rene Igitia. Another expression *main de Dieu* (the hand of God) can refer to a goal scored with the help of a hand. Its origin is connected with a deliberate hand strike by Thierry Henry. The existing jargon expression *sortie kamikaze* (kamikaze exit), the goalkeeper's exit from the penalty area towards the attacker, whom he is trying to knock down, can get the goalkeeper's name in case of repeated violations.

6.5. Syntax

A characteristic feature of the sports commentators' spontaneous speech syntax is the tendency to agrammatism, i.e., deviation from the syntactic and punctuation norms of the literary language on the part of the speaker (Krazem, 2011). One of the manifestations of the tendency to excessive use of language elements includes all kinds of repetition. Repetition is most often a means of reinforcement. In colloquial speech, a specific feature is an unintentional repetition associated with spontaneity, as well as caused by doubts about the correctness of the choice of a word or mental repetition of a linguistic element.

Lexical repetitions are one of the most prominent syntactic features in the sports commentators' speech: *Ronaldo qui va faire le coup franc se prépare / Oui / Il va faire le coup franc / Ronaldo* (Ronaldo who will make the free kick is preparing / Yes / He will make the free kick / Ronaldo).

Other syntactic features include hesitation, e.g., hesitations associated with the spontaneity of speech, pauses, non-lexical insertion sounds, parasitic words, word substitution, repetitions, stuttering, incomplete sentences (Vaseneva, 2003). A filled hesitation pause indicates the speaker's difficulty, gives time for reflection, supports communication; it is often found at the beginning of the answer to a question: *Alors / Encore un coup franc // Heu / C'était dangereux // Bah oui / Sans problèmes il récupère le ballon // (So / Another free kick // Er / It was dangerous // Bah yes / Without problems he gets the ball back //)*

Together with the phenomenon of redundancy, represented by hesitations, lexical repetitions and unfilled pauses, there is a phenomenon of insufficiency in the spontaneous speech of sports commentators Augendre et al., 2014, par. 12).

The speech of commentators of French sports programs is characterized, first of all, by statements in the form of incomplete sentences, interruptions, inverse word order. Emotionally colored sentences are

often of an exclamatory character: *Coup! / Encore! / Allez-y! / Et goal!* (Blow! / Again! / Go ahead! / And goal!)

One of the most commonly used methods of shortening an utterance is an ellipsis. Excessive brevity is associated with the omission of a word or phrase that is understandable to the author, but unknown to the listener. This type of error is caused both by the high rate of the commentator's speech and by the TV presenter's insufficient orientation to the poorly prepared part of the audience. Using professional terminology without a detailed explanation complicates the understanding of speech for the unprepared part of the audience. It is especially difficult to comprehend the excessively laconic final statements of the commentator, when the viewer must understand and correctly evaluate the result of the competition: *Un goal / Et c'est tout / Pour la France / Pour tout le monde.* (A goal / And that's it / For France / For everyone.).

7. Conclusion

When commenting on sports events, any stylistic and syntactic figures can be used, which, in addition to increasing expressiveness, solves other tasks, for example, contributes to a more compact presentation.

In conditions of limited time, the remarks used by commentators are most often short, catchy. The reporter strives to make the statement accessible to anyone. This leads, on the one hand, to an expansion of the sentence structure, which is manifested in the excessive word chains in speech. On the other hand, this results in a reduction in the structure of the utterance due to the economy of linguistic means, the use of sentences devoid of any dismemberment, but expressing a certain reaction or emotion of a person.

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