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JARGON IN SPORT DISCOURSE: FORMATION AND FUNCTIONING

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**Abstract.** The paper discusses the major ways of sport jargon formation and the peculiarities of its functioning. Jargonisms come into the Russian word-stock through both borrowings from other languages (mostly English) and discourses. Among the productive means of word-stock enrichment are metaphorization, author's word-building, blending and others. The results of the texts analysis allow the authors of the paper come to the conclusion that there is an increase in the tendency of interpenetration of different discourses, which is caused by the great interest in the phenomenon of sport on behalf of different participants of sport discourse; by the dynamic nature of discourse practices; by the growing number of social relationships and the roles performed by linguistic personalities; by globalization processes.

**Key words:** jargon; sport discourse; globalization; metaphorization; neologisms; discourses interpenetration

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ЖАРГОН В СПОРТИВНОМ ДИСКУРСЕ: ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ  
И ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЕ

**INTRODUCTION.** Each social sphere of human life activity is characterized by certain forms of communication (verbal and nonverbal) which represent the most important instruments for achieving goals and satisfaction of the needs of either community. Any social institute as a form of organization of joint vital activity of the humans is characterized by the presence of a kind of discourse that includes specific socially and professionally marked signs. One can include special lexis, terms, phraseological units, paroimia, slang expressions, etc.

**MAIN PART.** This paper will dwell on some peculiarities of sport discourse which is characteristic for athletes, supporters, commentators, sports journalists and fans, and which is realized by the texts of different type coupled with situational (sporting) event. The linguists differentiate certain peculiarities of sport discourse: it conveys the meaning that defines sporting activity; sport discourse is a non-isolated phenomenon, as it is connected with the other types of discourse (especially with mass-media) [7, p. 12–16].

Within sport discourse, one differentiates smaller sub-discourses which are peculiar to a certain sport. Different sport sub-discourses are characterized by different set of linguistic means: one

means include the units that are more emotionally marked, the others – less. Thus, for example, the chess sub-discourse will be less emotional than the football one, and the discourse of fighting sports is more expressive than, for example, of golf. This depends on many factors: 1) a sport – martial arts, sport games or rhythmic sports; 2) the presence and development of the institute of fans; 3) quantity and composition of viewing audience; 4) spectacular display of sporting events; 5) sports popularity; 6) the age of players and fans; 7) sports commentary and personality characteristics of a narrator; 8) gender peculiarities of either sport.

In the present paper, we would like to deal with one of the linguistic features of sport discourse in more detail, such as forming and using jargons.

*Jargon (French jargon)* – speech of a social or professional group that is distinguished from the literary language by special vocabulary. Jargon is a kind of language which is «not according the rules», «language-parvenu», understandable in a particular surroundings, since there are many artificial, sometimes conventional words and expressions, but which actively paves the way to «high society». For many centuries of its existing, many jargonistic «words», originated from «lower strata», penetrated

into and fixed in a literary language. Though not everything in jargonism is acceptable, it appreciably makes speech vivid, flexible and unexpectedly witty.

Till the 90s, in Russian linguistics there were purism traditions connected with unacceptance of non-standard forms of language: jargons, slangs, occasional words, dialecticisms. But, as the studies show, attitude to a jargon in the 90-s and «nulls» became more tolerant. Jargon is mobile and changeable with time, presses respectable speech via the means of mass information and spreading mass culture which imprint on language of the whole nation. What until recently was considered below the standards of the speech of the literate people and not recommended for use, now sounds from the lips of the professors, businessmen, politicians, from the pages of the press and TV screens. To a large extent, the meaning and purpose of jargons consist in the fact that they give the brightness to speech, figurativeness, emotionality and expression with the hints of irony, joke, raillery, reproach, contempt, love and hate.

Currently, the need to study jargons is appreciated by many Russian scholars. During the past ten years, a great number of works dealing with the peculiarities and problems of jargon formation and functioning has appeared.

Every sport has its own jargons and slang expressions. Some phrases from the language of sportsmen are hard to understand to the uninitiated people, and sometimes – they seem odd. For example, when the handballer *бьет по ушам* / *batters to the ears*, it does not mean that he intends to inflict injuries on someone. Just by completing a shot on goal, the player directs the ball over the head of the goalkeeper to the so-called «мертвая зона»/«*dead zone*» where the ball is rather hard to reach. And when in the boxing ring, one fighter sends another *искать пятый угол* / *to search for the fifth corner*, this means that he was down for the count; being down for the count he may also *собирать мелочь* / *collect small change*, i. e., the boxer's attempt to get up being on his knees and elbows stands for this slang expression.

Recalling the results of the past world football championship in Brazil, ended for our team ignominiously, one can use the slang expression «А. Кержаков сегодня снова «полирует банку» / «А. Kerzhakov «*polishes a can*» again today, i.e., he remains sitting on the substitutes' bench, to describe the situation of vain expectations of fans for the forward of Russia football team to take the field and a radical turn of the course of the play with the national team of the South Korea.

The skaters use the expression *сработать в стуну* / *to work in the back*. This means that on the straight line of skating oval, one must join up with an athlete running front as close as possible, then, due to less air resistance, it will be possible to gain maximum speed.

One of the most spectacular elements of basketball is *a block shot*. Having snatched the moment, the defender has time to jump and, in the flight, to catch the ball flying into the ring. In the Russian-language variant, this technique has long been nicknamed with the word *горшук* / *pot*. But *горшук с крышкой* / *the pot with a lid* is considered to be even more valuable among the basketball players. They say so in the basketball world when the ball finally remains in the hands of the defender.

They say «запорол дохлый момент» / «*screwed up dead moment*» about the biggest mistake of a football goalkeeper, that is he did not realize a hundred-percent goal situation. For example, in hockey, it falls within the responsibility of a defenseman *чистить пятачок* / *to clean the snout*, i. e. to lean forward pushing the opponent out of the goalkeeper's area. In biathlon competition to describe the situation of failed shooting the slang word *застрелился* / *shot oneself* is used.

One differentiates general sport and highly specialized jargon. To the general sport jargon vocabulary one refers the following words and expressions understandable to the representatives of different sports: *технар* / *technician* - an athlete who can long hold the ball in the play of football or basketball, *технариться* - to hold the ball in the team sports too long and not to pass it to his partner, who takes a more advantageous position on the field or the playground, *порвать соперника* / *to break the opponent* - to have the great win, to win with an overwhelming advantage, *дохляк* (*dohlyak*) - weak athlete, *пикушка* (*pikushka*) - the peak of physical form.

Highly specialized jargon is used in various sports such as boxing and weightlifting of the athlete acting in lower weight class, it is called *мухач* (*mukhach*), and *кач* (*katch*) is an athlete bodybuilder.

The main methods of formation of sport jargons are borrowings, the development of meanings, formation of words via the word-building means from existing units, abbreviations, and other occasionalisms. Let us dwell on each of these methods.

**Borrowings** are abundant stratum of vocabulary in many languages. In the sports world discourse there is a great number of English borrowings, which is quite explainable, because «the concept «sport» is ethnocentric to Anglo-Saxon culture» [1, p. 78]. In

addition, the words without the "descent", created, as the phrase is, "from scratch" are extremely few in number, because a man is endowed with the ability to compare and transfer the properties of one object to another, thus giving it a new name, using the familiar material. And if one or another phenomenon has a name already, even if in another language, it is logical to use it. There are, however, countries that stand firmly on the positions of non-foreign-language borrowings [2, p. 136].

Let us dwell in detail on some borrowings. *Хет-трик/ Hat-trick* (calquing from English - a trick with hat: a hat - *шляпа*, a trick - *трюк, фокус*). According to one of the versions, this expression originated in England in the middle of the XIX century. Cricketer who turned three consecutive hardest blow were presented a cylinder in recognition of their excellence. According to another version, this word emerged in a competition being once popular in England, the aim of which was to knock the hat down with the ball from wooden figures. If a player was able to bring the three hats down in three consecutive attempts, the achievement was called *a hat-trick*. In football *хет-трик/hat-trick* means three goals scored by a player during a single match.

Predecessors of jargons can be professional sport terms of English origin which have already equivalents in the Russian language: *хавбек* (from the English *half* - половина, *back* - задний) - midfielder, a player of centreline of the team. *Хавбек* is a jargon and most used among the fans, the official term is «полузащитник»/«halfback». *Linesman* (from the English *line* - линия, *man* - человек) - the side referee in football. Today, these words are not perceived as slang and used as professional terms.

Adoption of some borrowings by the Russian language is accompanied by their grammatical and word formation Russification. For example, the borrowed word from the English language *фрирайдер / free rider* denoting an athlete who prefers extreme skiing comes from the English *free-rider*, which, in turn, was formed from the English *to free ride* – a style of biking or skiing, snowboarding that implies a ride on the complex, sometimes artificially erected routes using natural and artificial obstacles [Wikipedia]. In the Russian language, it is used according to the grammar rules of Russian: *экипировка фрирайдера (Genitive case)*/equipment of freerider, *проблемы фрирайдерства* (formation of the word with the help of suffix)/ the problems of freeriding, etc. *Стоппер* (from the English *stopper* - пробка, затычка) - a centerback, whose main responsibility is to prevent threats to the goal in the central zone of defense. *Корнер (corner* - English

*угол /Angle*) - a corner kick. *Дриблинг* comes from the English *dribble* (to dribble the ball, to demonstrate skills of ball controlling with maneuvers, unexpected for the opponent, with trickery of the players and skills of deceptive movements). According to the etymological dictionary [9] the verb *dribble* (1580) derived from the verb *drib* (1520) with the meaning of *to drop* (from the English *drip*). In the sport discourse it began to be used first in football (1863), and then - in basketball (1892) [9].

Foreign borrowings are by no means the only source of enriching the sport lexicon. ***Borrowings from the other discourses*** are quite popular. The most common are occasional, metaphorically reinterpreted lexical units of *military science*. This active influence of one discourse on another is a consequence of their having common characteristics: the desire to win, fight, presence of the opponents, tactics of military and sporting activities, i. e. of emulative, competitive nature of war and sport. And when the athletes are competing with aggressive attitudes towards each other, a sporting event is much closer to military confrontation. Some experts call the sport «war without weapons» or «war without fire» [4, p. 52]. The purpose of using of borrowings from the military discourse in the sport is strengthening of the emotional impact. This includes metaphorically reinterpreted military words and terms, which as a result of regular use have become part of common lexicon. These words came In sport usage both the ready expressive means of language that took a certain shape in language (*армия /the army, армейский, боец /army fighter, бомбардир/ bombardier, гол-скейпер, контрнаступление/ counter offensive, оборона /defense, обстрел / bombardment, разгром /defeat, тяжелая артиллерия /heavy artillery, штурм/ assault, штаб /staff* and others.). The word of this group are used to intensify the expressiveness of speech, most often acting as substitutes for the basic terms. For example, *оборона / defence* instead of the word *защита*; *баталья, война / battle, war* - a contest, game, match; *снайпер /sniper* - a good forward. As a result of the specialization, the words of military science have also become sport terms, they are labeled in all sports and general dictionaries, dictionaries with special note «sport». These terms include the following sports: *атака/ attack* - onslaught, technical and tactic action in sport; *контратака / counterattack* - attack in martial arts and sport games, carried out in response to the attack of the opponent; *защита / defence* - an actions of an athlete in the martial arts, of a player, a line or a team in sport games, with the aim to reflect the attack and not to

give to achieve results; *фланг* / *flank* - a section of a playing ground adjacent to its side line; *капитан* / *captain* - a member of a sport team who is entrusted to direct the actions of the rest of the participants.

Some words are borrowed *from the jargons belonging to the other professional groups*, for example, from the computer discourse: *чайник* (*kettle*) / *dummy* (the beginner) in the field of sport activities means a person who stood on skis for the first time and decided to make his first descent from a hill, *подвал* (*basement*) / *bottom* - this is the last position of the table. This jargon has been adopted from the journalistic jargon (*спустить в подвал* (*down to the basement*) – make the material at the bottom of the page, of the other material). Interestingly, there is also an opposite phenomenon, in the Russian language there appears the term antonymous to *подвал* (*basement*)- jargon *чердак* (*loft*) (the top of the league table), formed as an antithesis to *подвал*. *Халявить* / *to freeload* in the sport means bad training (borrowed from the youth jargon); *джокер* / *joker* - the player coming on as a substitution, who is able to dramatically change the game in favor of his team (borrowing from the card game of poker); *парафин* / *paraffin* is used in the meaning of shameful, weak game.

At the present stage, the sport jargon is an active source of lexical units to enrich the other types of discourse. For example, the expression *to fight back to the ropes* (word for word in Russian *бороться, отступая к канатам ринга* / *fighting by retreating to the ropes of the ring*) was originally used among the boxers and meant 'to fight to the end, to fiercely react', and then was used as a common lexicon, but there was reinterpretation of the original meaning and its phraseologization. A similar process occurred with a boxing *throw in the towel* (literally in Russian *броситься в полотенце*) - *to give up, to recognize oneself as a loser*. From the sport sub-discourse of horse racing the following expressions became popular: *lose by a neck* (отстать на голову) – drop behind (and, therefore, to lose); *neck and neck* (голова в голову / *head-to-head* (about horses) - on an equal footing, not lagging behind; *win by a neck* (опередить на голову / *win by short head* (about the horse) - a little ahead (and thus to win).

A productive way of forming jargons and slang expressions is *metaphorization*, i.e. semantic development of a word or a phrase due to emerging figurative meanings to intensify expressiveness. Via metaphorization the following words were formed, such as, *наук* / *spider* - movement of four strikes in box: left hook to the head and right to the body, left hook to the body and the right to the head; *баранка* /

*baranka* - a loss; *нырок* / *dive* - a way to simulate violation of the rules of football to «beg» the free-kick or a penalty kick; *трехи, трешники* (*trehi, treshniki*) - three-point shots in basketball, *бетон* / *concrete defence* - stonewall; *грыжа на лыжах* / *grays on trays* – an overgrown snowboarder; *футбольная вдова* / *football widow* - a woman who does not see her husband during the days of football matches. In hockey, *плавить лед* (*to melt ice*) means often falling on the ice; *катить по рельсам* (*to run on the rails*) – to play too primitive, unsophisticated. The one who acts so is called *трамвай* (*the tram*); *уйти в буфет* / (*go to the buffet*) - to lose the goal. In baseball, *быстрые ноги* (*fast feet*) are called wheels: *Man, he's got some wheels on him, I cannot believe he made that catch!* [10].

In different countries the fans themselves are called differently: *тиффози* (*tiffozi*)- in Italy, *торсида* (*torsida*) - in Brazil, *инчас* (*inchas*) - in Spain, *фаны* / *fans* – in England, *фанаты* / *fanatic* - in Russia. But there are many metaphorical names for the representatives of fan audience. So, in the language of sports fans of «Spartacus» -«мясо» / «*meat*» (because initially this team represented the Moscow meat processing plant), «Динамо» - «мусор» («*junk*») / *fuzz man* (as *musor* in the criminal jargon - a policeman, and that team represented the sports club of the officers), «Крылья Советов» / «*Wings of the Soviets*» - «*крылышки*» / «*wings*», «ЦСКА» / «*CSKA*» - «*кони*» / «*horses*» (this team represented the sports club of the Red Army).

One can find the examples of *metonymy* in formation of the sport jargons: *железо* (*iron*) in weightlifting is called rods, weights, additional weight; *качать железо* / (lit. *push iron*) / *work out with weights* - perform a variety of exercises with barbell, weights. Association are actively used in the formation of new slang words and expressions: желтая карточка / *yellow card* - *горчичник* (mustard plaster)

As a result of *negligence and erroneous translation* of the English fan, there emerged a new meaning of the word *вентилятор* (*ventilator*) / *fan* - a fan/ a supporter. This meaning gained popularity after a message left in Russian on the Russian forum of the world hockey championship by an English-speaking user who, having taken an advantage of online translator, translated the English greeting «*Hello to Russian fans*» to the Russian fans into Russian as «*Здравствуйте к русским вентиляторам*» (*Welcome to the Russian ventilators*) [6]. It should be noted here that the users of particular discourses react differently to such language errors. But among young people and fans such «*fun*» / «*веселое*» purchase as *вентилятор* /

*ventilator, fan* in the meaning of a fan has been immediately adopted. Moreover, it has been further spread in the field of the youth jargon. We find the following contexts: «Фанатская среда с конца 90-х постоянно срацивалась с ультраправыми, в нее приходили агрессивные подростки, которые хотели бы с кем-нибудь подраться, но в силу расовых причин не всегда принимались как свои расистскими группировками. Убийства, ограбления, гоп-стопы давно уже норма бритоголовых «вентиляторов» / «Since the late 90's, the fan medium constantly jointed the right ultras, there were aggressive teenagers who would like to fight with someone, but on the strength of racial reasons they were not always accepted by racist groups as friends. Murders, robberies, stickup have long been the norm of the skinheads «fans». [8]

**Occasionalisms, author's neologisms** actively replenish the vocabulary of sport jargons. In the practice of sports reportage one can find such occasionalisms as *обезмячить* (*obezmyachit*), *остолбенизм* (*ostolbenizm*), *бомбардирство* (*bombardirstvo*), *сподножнее* (*spodnozhneye*) / (goal), *бразильничать* (*brazilnichat*), i. e. *финтить* to play tricks ("финтить" is also a slang word before, which has now become a part of the official language in football, it means to demonstrate a highly professional ball control). Some sports occasionalisms emerged by converting names of prominent athletes: *бекхемновато* (*bekhemnovato*), *зиданить* (*zidanit'*), *кержакнуть* (*kerzhaknut'*), *дзюбиньо* (*dzyubinyo*). The word *зиданить* (*zidanit'*) (Z. Zidane a famous French attacking halfback, the winner of many football trophies and titles, was distinguished with the highest ball skills.) is used to sarcastically denote the desire of a football player to try to defeat all the opponents in football, one by one, as the famous footballer Z. Zidane did; *бекхемновато* (*bekhemnovato*) (D. Beckham – an English football player, halfback, reached the pinnacle of his career playing for the club, Manchester United, he is the face of many fashion houses.) means very stylish, with a chic, glamorous; *кержакнуть* (*kerzhaknut'*) (Alexander Kerzhakov - Russian footballer of the club «Zenit». The concept *kerzhaknut'* has been spread thanks to one English commentator after Euro 2012 being the memorial for Russian fans), *скержаковил* (*skerzhakovil*) is used when a player in a favorable situation loses the goal. *Дзюбиньо* (*Dzyubin'yos*) (player of «Spartacus» - Artem Dzyuba) are the players who are not able to perform the «feints», but trying to do it carefully.

The sport discourse is actively enriched via **word-forming means** from the already existing

words in the language. We find the examples of suffixal word-formation – *технариться* (*tekhnaritsya*), *пикушка* (*pikushka*), *фрирайдерство* (*frirayderstvo*), in English, *homer* means a sports fan who always supports the team of his native city (home - house); suffixal-prefixal word formation: *отпасовка* (*otpasovka*) - passing hockey puck from the hockey player of the attacking team because of the goal line or for the very goal to the partner in front of the goal. The following English jargons are formed by means of reduction and abbreviation: *ship* (*championship*), *ref* (*referee*), *JS* (*Jordan Shoes*) - Nike sneakers (the famous footballer who played in the sneakers of this company). By means of word forming the Russian *физкультурман* (*fizkultoman*), the English *linesman* are built. Semantization of quasi morphemes is also used to form new sport jargons. A productive model in the modern Russian and English languages is joining component - *голик* (-golik) to designate a person who likes something (or smth to do), which means as motivating. In the sport discourse, we find the word *спортголик* (*sportogolik*): «Вы одна из тех «спортголиков», которые непременно хотят перепробовать все занятия в фитнес-клубе? От кик-боксинга и body-pump до аэробики и степа. Тогда кроссовок Master Mid от Nike прекрасно Вам подойдет» [3] / «You are one of those «sportogoliks», who will certainly want to try all the classes in a fitness club? From kickboxing and body-pump up to step and aerobics. Then Master Mid sneakers by Nike will suit you perfectly» [3].

**Codified dropping, or univerbization** is a widespread way of forming a jargon in sport and other discourses. This is a transformation of the term, being usually long (consisting of two or more words) or difficult to pronounce, into a unified lexeme. The examples of such dropping can serve the words *разделка* - individual race with separate start, the experts designate the discipline of road cycling where riders start and go one by one to cover the distance in the shortest time; *договорняк* (*dogovornyak*) is called fixed matches; *strategic game* - *strategy*

The sport jargon is enriched with the words and expressions formed by phonetic mimicry (coincidence or formal similarity of semantically dissimilar words) and sound misrepresentations: *редька* (*radish*) - ретаболил (*retabolil*) (anabolic steroid), *клён* (*maple*) - clenbuterol (fat burner), *вестибюль* / (*vestibule*) - the vestibular apparatus, *ливер* (*liver*) - Football club «Liverpool».

**CONCLUSIONS.** Thus, stratification of sports lexicon is a difficult task because of « the extraordinary prevalence of physical education and

sport: on the one hand, the sport lexicon aims to meet the communication needs of the representatives of the sports circle, on the other hand, being regularly influenced by standard literary language and jargons, it tends to simplicity and loses «dry» specialization» [5, p. 126].

It is important to note that the scope of sport discourse is not isolated from other discourses: it is not only actively widened with new lexical units by borrowing them from the other discourses, but it itself is a source of replenishment of the vocabulary of the other professional groups. The tendency towards interborrowings between different discourses is an indicator of active interpenetration. This is because, firstly, of the very dynamic nature of the discourse as a flexible resource for social interaction, and secondly, ever broadening contacts between users of different discourses within the same culture, and thirdly, global processes, spanning the boundaries in communication of different cultures.

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