

# 18 The language of sport: Some remarks on the language of football

## 1. Introduction

For decades we have been able to observe an increasing popularity of sports as a media event. The presence of sport in the media (press, radio, TV and the Internet) has resulted in the language of sport becoming more significant. In the following study an attempt will be made to investigate some features of the language of sport and to present some research perspectives on the example of football as the most interesting sporting discipline in most European countries. The majority of the language examples comes from the Polish, German and English languages.

## 2. The definition and communication fields of the language of sport

The first question to answer is: Can we speak about the language of sport? The positive answer can be found in Lipoński (2009: 25) to whom,

[t]he language of sport has been existing since antiquity. The names of ancient sports, their descriptions and reflections on them have been preserved in classical texts. Since time immemorial the language of sport has been a rich area of specialist linguistic communication.

On the other hand, Ożdżyński (1970), a Polish philologist, regards the language of sport as a variety of the language of youth. This can be accepted only if one restricts the language of sport to the language of sport supporters. But the language of sport supporters is just one of several fields the language of sport appears in, and it cannot be reduced to just this one of its aspects. More problematic is the view of Polok (2002), who claims that we cannot speak about the language of sport but only about its technical or professional vocabulary “inserted” in the general language. According to Polok (2002: 120), there is just Polish sport vocabulary as a part of the general Polish general lexis.

Język sportu (...) nie istnieje. Istnieje pewien zestaw wyrażeń mniej lub bardziej inherentnie związanych z daną dyscypliną sportową, istnieje pewna terminologia sportowa (podobnie jak istnieje terminologia biznesu itp.), określająca kognitywno-mentalne desygnaty rzeczywistości związane ze sportem. Określenia te zanurzone są jednak w jednym [i jednolitym] języku natywnym (np. j. angielskim itp.) i podlegają syntagmicznym regułom w danym języku obowiązującym. Mówienie o tym, że istnieje język sportu (matematyki, biznesu itp.) jest fikcją, rodzajem samozadowalania się tych grup społecznych, które dany rodzaj (fizycznej) czynności zdecydowały się wykonywać.

This opinion can be accepted only if one would treat the lexis as the one and only linguistic dimension of the language of sport (It is necessary to underline that Polok describes the language of the sport from the perspective of the language acquisition with respect to the teaching of foreign languages at the academic level for students of sport). In this chapter the language of sport will be treated as a “specialised language or terminology” in the sense of the German term *Fachsprache*. Its features are present on several linguistics levels and do not contain just the specific lexis and specific grammatical constructions.

Firstly, there are common text types or classes of the language of sport (**text-linguistic view**). The main text type is football commentaries, which are different depending on the medium – television commentaries, radio commentaries, commentaries in the modern media, e.g. minute-by-minute commentaries on the Internet, but also commentaries sent as an SMS-messages for a mobile phone, and last but not least traditional commentaries in the newspapers. Other text types common to the language of sports are news combined with quotes from match participants, columns with analysis and opinion, information given in different ways (tables of teams, lists of scorers, matches, etc., other graphics and diagrams), short profiles giving the background information of a player with exact statistical data, and finally interviews.

Secondly, there are specific communicational situations in the sport communication (**pragmatic view**). The communication between referees or between coach and players are subjects of pragma-linguistic analysis. In the language of sport supporters, e.g. football chants, the regional identity can be expressed (cf. Schiering, 2008; Luhrs, 2008). The chants also exemplify the building of local and regional stereotypes (Luhrs, 2008), which are often used in the context of the supporters of the opposite team (see section 1.3).

Thirdly, the language of sport is a medium for knowledge transfer (**cognitive view**). To sum up, the language of sport shows characteristic features on several linguistic levels – lexis, phonetics, morpho-syntax, text, discourse, communication, and at least at the cognitive level.

According to Tworek (2000: 334-336), a German philologist, there are nine fields of communication activity in the language of sport, e.g. social language contacts with sport as a main subject:

- The language of regulation.
- The language of science.
- The language of the press.
- The language of television sport programs.
- The language of radio sport programs.
- The language of sportsmen and coaches.
- The language of sport supporters.
- The language of stadium announcers.
- The interview and conversation as a combination of the language used by journalists, supporters, sportsmen, and coaches.

In the list above the three general communication relationships of the special language according to Roelcke (2005) can be found – firstly the internal communication (*fachintern*), e.g. the language of regulation, science and also the language of sportsmen, coaches and referees; secondly the external communication (*fachextern*), which means the communication of experts with the world outside, e.g. the language of different media, and thirdly the communication between non-experts, e.g. the language of supporters.

It seems to be necessary to extend Tworek's list of communication situations in sport and to take into account such new forms as sports commentaries on the Internet. For more than ten years we have been able to observe the so-called minute-by-minute hypertext class – a hypermedial, interactive and synchronic form of communication. This extension would be necessary provided that the media have as a consequence of it modified the language of sport in a significant way. In this chapter four fields of communication activity are suggested:

- The language of regulation and science.
- The language of media (press, television, radio, the Internet, mobile).
- The language of supporters.
- The language of sportsmen, coaches and referees.

The language of stadium announcer noticed in Tworek (2000: 326) is only a combination of the language used in the media and by the supporters. The present proposed treatment is similar to the one of Burkhardt (2006: 8) to whom the language of football contains the special terminology of football (*Fußballfachsprache*), football jargon (*Fußballjargon*), the language of sports commentary (*Sprache der Fußballberichterstattung*) and the language of the fans (*Fans*).

The four fields of football communication are just prototypical situations, e.g. “das sind nur tendenzielle Zuordnungen – in der Praxis vermischen sich die vier Bereiche” (Burkhardt, 2006: 8). The language of the media contains the terminology of supporters when the journalists are using the language of the fans. In TV-commentaries the commentator is often attended by an ex-player as an expert, who represents the fourth field of the language of

football, the one of sportsmen. In the language of the media there are special terms like the medical names of injuries. In the following we try to show the main features of the football language used in the mentioned four communication situations.

### 2.1. The language of regulation and science

The language of regulation is used in such text types as the regulations of football, regulations of the competition, stadium regulations and rules, instructions explaining how to use football equipment, etc. In those text classes the language of sport contains features of the official and legal terminology (Tworek, 2000: 334) and there is also no immediate contact between the source and the receiver. Examples of structures from official and legal language are above all nominalisation (e.g. Polish nominalisations used in example (1): *używanie* ‘using’, *rzucanie* ‘throwing’, *spożywanie* ‘drinking’, *stanie* ‘staying’, *palenie* ‘smoking’, *używanie* ‘using’), and constructions without agents, like e.g. passive voice or reflexive constructions (e.g. *zabrania się* ‘it is not allowed’), as in the examples below, which is an excerpt from the Stadium Regulations of the Stadion Miejski in Poznań used by the local football team, Lech.

- (1) Podczas (...) meczu piłki nożnej zabrania się: używania obraźliwego słownictwa (...), rzucania przedmiotami; spożywania alkoholu, (...); stania w sektorach z miejscami przeznaczonymi do siedzenia; (...) palenia tytoniu (...); używania środków pirotechnicznych. (IS1)  
 ‘During the football match it is not allowed: to use swear words, to throw things; to drink alcohol; to stand in sectors scheduled for sitting; to smoke; to use pyrotechnics.’

Similar lexical and structural features are expected in the language of science, which contains in the case of sport additional terminology from related disciplines like physics, technology or medicine. The typical text classes are articles, essays or books, e.g. student books explaining the playing of football or football tactics. As mentioned, the language in this case shows similarities to academic language.

### 2.2. The language of media

To the language of the media belongs first of all the language in the press within the main text classes: reporting, coverage, commentary, and interviews. Of course it is necessary to distinguish between a TV-coverage when the reporter produces his commentary spontaneously and synchronously to the parallel performance on the pitch, and radio coverage, when there is no linking between auditory and visual input (from the perspective of the receiver). This linking in the case of television coverage allows the com-

bination of the report with a commentary, which is often used by football coverage on television. On the other hand, the language of radio coverage is more spontaneous and for this reason it is often chosen as an example for the investigation of spoken language (cf. Dankert, 1969).

From the perspective of text linguistics a new text type can be observed which is called online minute-by-minute commentary or just MBM (Chovanec, 2008: 255). This coverage on the Internet – for this reason it is of course of the hypertext type (digital genre) – showing features of digital orality, e.g. features of spoken language in the written, digital form similar to the language used in online chats. Football coverage on the Internet is also interactive, so that the receiver or user has the possibility of adding his comments, which can be used as a part of live reporting. The receiver can also choose the view, e.g. the view of the pitch, the profile of a selected player, up-to-the-minute modified statistical data, photos and videos from the just reported competition, or parallel radio commentary.

The language of the media because of its spontaneous character is a source of well-known quotes used often as jokes. Another reason for this is the tendency to use synonyms and antonomasia (see section 2.2 in this chapter) and phrases, idioms and metaphors as well. Sport journalism as always has “been traditionally viewed disparagingly as the ‘toy department’, a bastion of easy living, sloppy journalism and ‘soft’ news” (Boyle, 2006: 1). Collections of famous quotes of journalists are often published (e.g. Łuczak and Nawrot, 2006) and contain such examples as the sentences below used by one of the Polish commentators.

- (2) Trzeciak strzelił gola po indywidualnej akcji całej drużyny.  
‘Trzeciak scored a goal after an individual action of the whole team.’
- (3) Do końca meczu została godzina, czyli około 60 minut.  
‘There is an hour until the end of the match, it means circa 60 minutes.’

On the other hand, there are a lot of spontaneous quotations from players and coaches uttered during the interviews, sometimes influenced by strong emotions.

- (4) We lost because we didn’t win (Ronaldo, Brazilian football player; IS2).
- (5) Italians can’t win the game against you, but you can lose the game against the Italians (Johan Cruyff, Dutch football player and coach; IS2).

### **2.3. The language of supporters**

The language of supporters is a language of participants involved into the competition, and there are two general communication acts (Tworek 2000: 336): a message directed towards other supporters, i.e. supporters of the same team as well as supporters of the opposing team, and a message directed to those who create a football match:

- ❑ players (*My chcemy gola!* ‘We want a goal!’),
- ❑ referee (*Sędzia huj!* ‘Fucking referee!’),
- ❑ coach (*Miał być mistrz Polski!* ‘You wanted to be a Polish Champion!’),
- ❑ medical staff (*Co wy robicie?* ‘What are you doing?’),
- ❑ team management (*Gdzie te transfery?* ‘Where are those transfers?’),
- ❑ football association (*Jebać, jebać PZPN* ‘Fuck, fuck PZPN (= the Polish Football Association)’).

The communication with other fans of the supported team concerns the encouragement, like *Wszyscy wstają!* ‘Everybody stand up!’, *Cały stadion odpowiada!* ‘Everybody has to respond!’. The communication between supporters outside the stadium includes such forms as match programmes, a special official magazines written by the fans for the fans for every home match, and the discussion forum on the Internet. Both forms are often used as corpora of fans’ language in linguistic investigation for lexical or socio-linguistic studies (e.g. Jasiński, 2009). In the communication between opposite supporters there are ritual, standard expressions like *Coście tak cicho?* ‘Why are you so quiet?’ or *Co was tak mało?* ‘Why are there so few of you?’. The supporters of the opposite team are identified with the team and its results, e.g. *Auf Wiederseh’n, auf Widerseh’n, Zürich, Zürich auf Wiederseh’n!* ‘Good bye, good bye, Zurich, Zurich good bye’ sung in German by Polish supporters of Lech Poznań after the defeat of the Swiss team Grasshoppers Zurich 0:6.

From the lexicological point of view there is a characteristic terminology used by football supporters, e.g. *zgoda* ‘friendly supporters of the other team’ (lit. ‘agreement’), *kosa* ‘hostile supporters of the other team’ (lit. ‘scythe’), *piknik* ‘passive supporter, spectator’, *fana* ‘flag’, *ultras* ‘fanatic, active supporter; ultra-fan’. What is interesting, the last word *ultras* is used in the fan jargon in the singular, e.g. *jest ultrasem* ‘he is an ultra-fan’ versus *to są ultrasi*. ‘they are ultra-fans’. The fan terminology is also a combination of youth language, e.g. *kozaczyć* ‘to pretend to be a brave person’, *bluzgi* ‘insults, swear words’, and regional, local language, e.g. *wiara* ‘a group of people’, *wuchta* ‘a lot’ (cf. Schiering, 2008).

To the text types in the language of football supporters belongs such statements utterances as chants, rhymes and short shouts. The chants are usually based on hymns or pop songs like *You’ll Never Walk Alone* (Liverpool FC) or *Glory, Glory Man United* (Manchester United). The verbal communication of fans is often extended with graphics in the form of so-called choreographies shown during the football match.

#### 2.4. The language of sportsmen and coaches

The language of sportsmen, coaches, and also referees, appears in the communication of immediate participants of the competition. According to

Tworek (2000: 336) this communication is determined by the dynamics of the situation (for example during a football match) and a high degree of specialization of participants, which results firstly in special terminology and secondly in the simplified structures used by them. Examples are *plecy* 'the opposite player behind' (lit. 'back') and *na aferę* 'the ball played before the opposite goal, if one has no idea what to do'.

In the internal communication between players and coaches (*fachinterne Kommunikation*) we can observe the problem of multilingual communication not existing in the three communication fields mentioned previously before. Especially the development of football after 1990 depending on commercialisation and the treatment of football in the media, the EU-politics of free work-related migration, the increase of popularity of football in some major industrial and economic powers (Japan, the USA) as well as in Africa lead to multilingual teams<sup>1</sup>. The multilingualism leads to work on dictionaries and teaching materials, which are mentioned in section 3 about lexicography and teaching foreign languages.

### 3. Some features of sport terminology

The complete description of the language of football should contain all language levels, i.e. phonological-phonetic structures, especially in the language of supporters (chants), morpho-syntactic structures, especially in the language of radio and TV coverage, lexical items and structures, stylistic features, text linguistic aspects (e.g. the text types mentioned in section one) and of course pragmatics and discourse analysis. In this section some characteristic lexical features of the language of football will be investigated.

#### 3.1. Lexical description

A semantic-cognitive approach to the description of football terminology is given in an approach to pragmatic syntax of spoken language (Jürgens, 1999). The use of the semantic-lexical approach of Fillmore is proposed by the development of a multilingual database of football terminology (Schmidt, 2008). In the following, both approaches will be presented and discussed.

Jürgen's study is based on the pragma-linguistic theory of preference (Levinson, 1983: 332) or priorities (Dik, 1995: 34). A football game is constituted of several repeated events, which can be described by using the types of the events and acts. The main and general type of events is

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. in Italy there was still in the 1980s a regulation allowing just two foreign players in one team.

fussball spielen ‘to play football’, which contains the following information (cf. Jürgens, 1999: 119):

- ❑ HT1 ‘force of action’, e.g. *Mannschaft X* ‘team X’,
- ❑ HT2 ‘force of action’, e.g. *Mannschaft Y* ‘team Y’,
- ❑ LOK ‘place’, e.g. *im Weserstadion* ‘in the Weser-Stadium’,
- ❑ VERLAUF ‘course’, e.g. *nach torloser 1. Halbzeit* ‘after a goalless first half’,
- ❑ TEMP ‘time’, e.g. *in der Saison 1995/96* ‘in the season 1995/96’,
- ❑ SPIELGERÄT ‘game equipment’, e.g. *Ball* ‘ball’,
- ❑ RES ‘result’, e.g. *1:0* with two subordinated features:
- ❑ MOD ‘modyfing’, e.g. *verdient* ‘well-deserved’,
- ❑ CAUS ‘cause’, e.g. *durch den Treffer von X* ‘after a goal of X’

Apart from the main type of events presented above, Jürgens defines further types, i. e. *angreifen* ‘to attack’, *abwehren* ‘to defend’, *den Ball aufhalten* ‘to stop the ball’, *den Ball weiterbewegen* ‘to move the ball’, *ein Tor erzielen* ‘to score a goal’ and *einen Zweikampf führen* ‘to fight a duel’. All those types of acts are part of a frame called *Fussball spielen* ‘to play football’. The football vocabulary can be described on the basis of its belonging to one of various types of acts.

The type of acts *ein tor erzielen* ‘to score a goal’ contains at least one of the following entities constituting this type, which are here exemplified with German (Jürgens, 1999: 123):

- ❑ HT ‘force of action’, e.g. *Spieler X* ‘player X’,
- ❑ BEN1 ‘beneficent 1’, e.g. *für Mannschaft X* ‘for the side X’,
- ❑ BEN 2 ‘beneficent 2’, e.g. *gegen Mannschaft X* ‘against the side X’,
- ❑ TEMP ‘time’, e.g. *in der 10. Minute* ‘in the 10th. minute’,
- ❑ LOK ‘place’, e.g. *im Olympiastadion* ‘in the Olympia Stadium’,
- ❑ MOD ‘modifier’, e.g. *mit letztem Einsatz* ‘in the last action’,
- ❑ INSTR ‘instrument’, e.g. *mit dem Kopf* ‘with the head’,
- ❑ OBJ ‘object’, e.g. *Ball* ‘ball’,
- ❑ RES ‘result’, e.g. *zum 1:0* ‘to 1:0’.

Of course not all of the features above are realised in real text, i.e. in football commentaries and coverage. In the following example (2) there are realised just ht, instr, res, ben2 and temp twice.

- (6) [On 6 July 2010,]<sub>TEMP</sub> [Forlán]<sub>HT</sub> scored another long-range goal, this time [with his left foot]<sub>INSTR</sub> [to equalise]<sub>RES</sub> [against the Netherlands]<sub>BEN2</sub> [in the semi-final]<sub>TEMP</sub>. (IS3)

From the lexical and lexicographic perspective it is interesting to order lexical items to specific entities of the type of acts. In the type of act *ein Tor erzielen* in the role of INSTR the following lexical representations are

possible: *with his right foot, with his left foot, with his head/heel/knee or with his hand* (which is also possible in football, e.g. the famous goal of Maradona in 1986 against England). Of course, Jürgens (1999) concentrated in his study on the pragmatic syntax of spoken language.

The lexicographic description is the focus of Schmidt (2008) in his study based on the lexical semantics – both frame semantics and semantic relations between lexical units. The study is corpus-based and the aim is to build a multilingual dictionary of football terminology, beginning with English, German and French. The football terminology is ordered by scenes and frames, the prototypical event structures in football. Examples of scenes are *Shot, Pass, Goal, Foul, Chance, Motion*, etc. Each scene contains at least one frame, e.g. the scene *Substitution* contains three frames i.e. *Bring off, Bring on* and *Substitute*. Every frame will be characterised by lexical units (LUs) representing this frame and in the case of *substitution* there are lexical units in the analysed languages as presented in (7), (8) and (9).

- (7) Scene: *Substitution*  
 Frame: *Bring off*  
 Lexical units: *auswechseln; Auswechslung* (German)  
*bring off; take off; withdraw; withdrawal* (English)  
*sortir* (French)
- (8) Scene: *Substitution*  
 Frame: *Bring on*  
 Lexical units: *bringen; einwechseln; Einwechslung; kommen* (German)  
*bring on come on introduce introduction throw on* (English)  
*entrée entrer lancer* (French)
- (9) Scene: *Substitution*  
 Frame: *Substitute*  
 Lexical units: *durchwechseln; ersetzen; Wechsel* (German)  
*substitute substitution* (English)  
*remplacement; remplacer* (French) (IS4)

All lexical units are not only ordered by scenes and frames, but they are also positioned according to the relationship between them. The following semantic relations are considered: hypernymy – hyponymy, e.g. *player – striker*, holonymy – meronymy, e.g. *stadium – stands*, and troponymy e.g. *beat – thrash*. Those relationships allow us to establish the hierarchy of lexical units as it is partially presented in figure (10).

- (10) Individual actor

Akteur.n Spieler.n  
 player.n  
 joueur.n

Keeper.n Schlussmann.n Torhüter.n Torwart.n  
 custodian.n goalkeeper.n keeper.n  
 gardien\_de\_but.n gardien.n portier.n

Feldspieler.n

Abwehrspieler.n Verteidiger.n  
 defender.n  
 arrière.n défenseur.n

Innenverteidiger.n  
 central\_defender.n centre-back.n centre-half.n full-back.n  
 défenseur\_central.n (IS5)

### 3.2. Selected aspects of football lexis

The basis of both methodologies presented in the previous section are corpora of written and of spoken language. In this chapter we want to show just three interesting aspects of terminology, i.e. Anglicism, metaphor and antonomasia.

The large amount of Anglicism in the language of football can be explained with the history and the beginnings of football in England and Scotland. As a result, the first special terms in German (Burkhardt, 2008), Polish (Fisiak, 1964) etc. were translations from the English and they are represented in large numbers in the German and Polish language of sport today as well (Lipczuk, 1999). On the other hand, it is observed that some loan words used at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century disappeared from the general language. An example is German word *Corner* used today only in Swiss German while in the standard language *Eckstoß* 'corner' or *Eckball* 'corner' is used. The football match in Polish was called *match footballowy* like the title of a well-known poem of Kazimierz Wierzyński written in 1927, later replaced by *mecz piłkarski* 'football match' or *mecz piłki nożnej* 'football match'.

Another lexical aspect of football terminology is metaphors which gain insight into how the football game is seen. A conceptual metaphor will be defined according to Lakoff as a transfer of a concept from one domain, the source, to another domain, the goal, which is in this study the language of football. The source domain in the language of sport is above all war, theatre, technology and religion.

**Football as war.** The explanation for this source domain is the immediate contact of players during a game, as opposed to e. g. volleyball or tennis, where the players have no direct contact. Of course, another reason is also the fact that the popularity of football grew at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries, the time of several wars, including World Wars I and II. The military vocabulary can be found in verbs,

nouns, adjectives and adverbs, so in the main word classes of autosemantic words, e.g. Polish verbs *atakować* 'to attack', *napierać* 'to press', *bronić* 'to defend', *ostrzeliwać* 'to bomb (a goal)', nouns *twierdza* 'fortress', *atak* 'attack', *napór* 'pressure', *strategia* 'strategy', adjectives *bojowy* 'spirited', *agresywny* 'aggressive' or adverbs derived from the mentioned adjectives. The famous German striker in the 1970's, Gerd Müller, was called *der Bomber der Nation* 'the bomber of the nation' and the famous football matches are often called *battles*, e.g. *Battle of Santiago* (Chile – Italy 2:0, 1962), *Battle of Berne* (Hungary – Brazil 4:2, 1954) or *Battle of Highbury* (England – Italy 3:2, 1934). The examples below show the use of some verbs:

- (11) Fulham caught between a rock and a hard place here. **Attack** and leave themselves open, or **defend** a 4-0 defeat and show a lack of ambition (BBC, 21.11.2010).
- (12) Gerrard took it upon himself to improve things after the break as he **bombed** forward from the left, only to see his centre run across the six-yard line with no England player in sight. (BBC, 25.06.2006)

**Football is theatre.** The theatre as a source domain is the result of the seeing the stadium as a *theatre building*, the pitch as an *arena*, the player as a *actors*, the coach as a *director* and the football match as a *showing* or *performance*.

- (13) On July 11th, the world will focus on the 2 teams which will enter the Johannesburg Stadium for the World Cup final. However, 23 **actors** on the pitch will shine. (IS6)
- (14) Good comeback having been 2-0 down. What looked like a disastrous **showing** turned into a respectable **performance**. (IS7)

**Football is religion.** The next source domain used for describing football is religion. There are several sociolinguistic studies also concerning religious expressions (e. g. metaphors) in the language of football. The football match is in this case seen as a *religious ceremony* taking place in the stadium, the *temple*. The players are *worshiped* by the fans, the *believers*. Some examples:

- (15) [...] Wembley is supposed to be **the temple of football** (BBC, 15.5.2010).
- (16) Football is exactly the same [e.g. as a religion – J.T.]. People come together at a stadium, they sing, they cheer, they **worship** the players on the field (BBC, 14.06.2010).

Another example of metaphor in football language is orientational metaphors as defined in Lakoff and Johnson, in the sense of metaphors that give a concept of spatial orientation: *front – back*, *top – bottom* and *up – down*. The terms for player positions on the pitch are seen as relations *front – back*, e.g. *forward* (= *striker*) or *back* (= *defender*), also as it is used below:

- (17) He can play **at the front**, the back and I'm sure if I asked him he'd play midfield as well (BBC, 19.02.2005).
- (18) Brahim Hemdani is one option to replace him if he doesn't make it and he's played **at the back** in many occasions this season (BBC, 21.02.2007).

The position of a team in the table (so called *Tabellensprache* 'table language' according to Burkhardt, 2006: 10) is described in the terms of the relation *top* – *bottom*. The best team is *on the top*, the worst team *at the bottom*.

- (19) It would leave [Manchester] United going into Christmas **on top of the table**, undefeated and entering their traditionally strong second half of the season (BBC, 17.12.2010).
- (20) The draw left West Ham three points adrift of safety **at the bottom of the table** having played a game more Wigan and Wolves, who occupy the other two relegation places (BBC, 18.12.2010).

Lexical units expressing the same relation are the German compound nouns *Gipfeltreffen* 'summit clash' and *Kellerduell* 'bottom table clash' (lit. 'cellar duel').

The movement of a team between two levels is seen as a relation *up* – *down*, e.g. German *Aufstieg* 'promotion' (lit. 'climb') and *Abstieg* 'relegation' (lit. 'fall, drop') and the metaphorical expression *Fahrstuhlmannschaft* 'yoyo team' (lit. 'elevator team'), which means the team that keeps getting promoted and relegated.

The next lexical device is antonomasia, which means to denote by using a generic name to replace the proper name. This stylistic device is often used by sport commentators, and it concerns both teams and players. Examples from English are the names for the national teams, e.g. *Bafana Bafana* 'The Boys' (Republic of South Africa), *Les Bleus* 'The Blues' or *L'Equipe tricolore* 'The Tri-color Team' (France), *Squadra Azzura* 'The blue Team' (Italy), or for the clubs, e.g. *The Reds* (FC Liverpool), *The Gunners* (Arsenal London), *The Blues* (Chelsea London), also in Polish *Kolejorz* 'The Railway Worker' (Lech Poznań), *Wojskowi* 'Army men' (Legia Warsaw) or *Biała Gwiazda* 'The White Star' (Wisła Kraków), or in German *Alte Dame* 'The Old Lady' (Hertha Berlin), *Zebras* (MSV Duisburg) or *die Gelb-Schwarzen* 'The Yellow-Black' (Borussia Dortmund).

The interesting difference between the antonomasia used by Polish and German sports commentators is that the Germans often use antonomasia also for sportsmen, e.g. *Rekordkeeper* 'record-keeper' or *Torwart-Titan* 'goalkeeper-titan' used for German ex-player Oliver Kahn or *Dachdecker aus Wisła* 'the roofer from Wisła' for the Polish Ski jumper Adam Małysz, which paradoxically is never used by Polish commentators.

#### 4. The language of sport in the political discourse

The most important reason for the investigation of football language is its use in public communication, e.g. the language of politicians. Expressions describing a football match are rhetorical forms used by the politician and by the journalist as well. According to Zieliński (2002: 271) this phenomenon has been growing in Poland since 1989, which works together with the changes observed in football and its language in the last two decades. As examples we can give verbal expressions such as *to play for time*, *to score an own goal* and *to give someone a red card*, all of which are represented in English, German and Polish.

##### 4.1. The idiom *to play for time*

The expression *to play for time* describes in the language of football and other sport disciplines the situation when the players try to extend breaks because of a possible positive result. In general language the phrase means using “specious excuses or unnecessary manoeuvres to gain time” (OED), as in English (21), German (22) and Polish (23) examples below:

- (21) All parties were desperately **playing for time** in a last ditch attempt to break the impasse, but there were few signs that a breakthrough was imminent (BBC, 3.2.2000).
- (22) Nach dem direkten Angriff von mehr als 40 Spitzenmanagern, Wirtschaftslobbyisten und Wissenschaftlern **spielt** Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (...) im Streit um die künftige Energie- und Atompolitik **auf Zeit** (taz, 22.8.2010).
- (23) Ameryka gra o tarczę, Polska **gra na czas** (gazeta, 10.3.2008).

##### 4.2. The idiom *to be/score an own goal*

In the language of sport *an own goal* means ‘a goal scored against the scorer’s own team, usually unintentionally’ (OED) and in the figurative use in general language it means an “act that unintentionally harms one’s own interests” (OED). In the same way the German equivalent *Eigentor* (25) and the Polish translation *gol samobójczy* (26) are used exempli gratia in the political discourse.

- (24) However, the party **scored an own goal** when Tony Blair was accosted by angry Sharron Storer during a hospital walkabout (BBC, 05.04.2005).
- (25) „Die SPD **schießt sich ein peinliches Eigentor**, wenn sie mit dem Thema Vattenfall Wahlkampf treiben will“, konstatiert FDP-Generalsekretär Dirk Niebel (taz, 20.09.2008).
- (26) Schetyna o zawieszeniu Jakubiak: To zabetonowanie i **gol samobójczy** (gazeta, 09.10.2010).

### 4.3. The idiom *to give/show (someone) a red card*

The red card is a ‘card shown by the referee to a player who is being sent off the field for foul play’ (OED). In general language it means a warning, and it is used ‘with reference to the dismissal or rejection of a person’ (OED), usually for a politician or for management staff. The “milder” version is the phrase *to give/show (someone) a yellow card*.

- (27) **Red card** for white wine. (BBC, 12.06.1999)
- (28) Mit dieser Aktion **zeigen** wir den Konzernvertretern und Schwarz-Gelb, den Atomanhängern, **die rote Karte**. (taz, 22.04.2010)
- (29) Zawieszenie prezesa Urbańskiego i wiceprezesów Siwka i Bochenka to **czzerwona kartka** i wyraz niezadowolenia ze sposobu zarządzania spółką przez dotychczasowy zarząd (gazeta, 20.12.2008)

And the last two perspectives for investigating the language of football are lexicography and the teaching of foreign languages, two disciplines of applied linguistics.

## 5. The language of football from the view of applied linguistics

The beginning of sports lexicography can be dated back to the 18th century when *Sportsman’s Dictionary* was published. In the 19th century the first dictionary of Polish sport terminology appeared (Lipoński, 2004: 219). The reason for developing bi- and multilingual dictionaries of sport generally and of some particular sport disciplines was first of all the Olympic Games. In 1992 a Polish-Spanish-Catalan dictionary of sport terminology was published (Krzyżanowski and Murcia-Sorano, 1992).

An increasing number of sport dictionaries can be observed in the last two decades, especially for English and German, and in the last decades for Polish, e.g. the first great Russian-Polish sports dictionary (Fedus, 2006) as a continuation of Fedus (1979) and the first big Polish-Russian sports dictionary (Fedus, 2007), the first English-Polish and Polish-English sports dictionary (Jankowski, 2004).

The first football dictionary including the Polish language, in this case Polish-German and German-Polish, was published on the occasion of the World Championship in Germany (Taborek, 2006). Two years later in the year of Euro 2008 a small football dictionary for six languages including Polish was published by Klett Verlag, and a big dictionary for English, German, French, Polish and Russian is planned by Langenscheidt for 2012, seen as a continuation of Simmen and de Besse (2008).

Using the growing popularity of football in the society, its terminology can be taken into account in the teaching of foreign languages, e.g. English and German. A good example of this is the textbook *Deutsch für Ballkünstler* 'German for artists of the ball' prepared by Wiemann. The materials were seen as a basis for teaching German to foreign players in the German football clubs and were tested in some clubs, e.g. Bayer Leverkusen. On the other hand, the textbook can be used for teaching German generally, as it combines some lexical features (e.g. personal data, like *Ich bin geboren...* 'I was born...', *Ich komme aus...* 'I come from...') or grammatical features (e.g. spatial prepositions in German, like *an das Tor* 'beside the goal', *über das Tor* 'over the goal').

## 6. Conclusion

The language of football is a special language used in the specialised communication, and not just a variety of youth language or special terminology, because it appears in many fields of communication activity, e. g. regulation and science, media, players and coaches, supporters, and it appears in text types specific for this field. There are some models of describing football lexis, like the cognitive of Jürgens (1999) or semantic-lexical of Schmidt (2008), both presented briefly in this chapter. From the lexical richness of features we presented Anglicism, metaphors and antonomasia, and pointed to the bi- and multilingual lexicography and the teaching of foreign languages as two fields of applied linguistics.

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