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NOVEL ANGLICISMS IN MODERN MEDIA SPORT COVERAGE*Inna Zabuzhanska* * *Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnitsia, Ukraine**Lucia Furtáková* *University of SS Cyril and Methodius, Trnava, Slovakia***Corresponding author*

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Abstract: The paper examines novel anglicisms in Slovak and Ukrainian sport commentaries. The lexical material is excerpted from live sports coverage of the Olympic Games. The research findings highlight a notable difference in the extent and nature of linguistic (borrowings from English into Slovak and Ukrainian); however, they provide remarkably similar insights into how language functions in sporting environments and how culture and communication interact to increase audience engagement and satisfaction at sporting events.

Keywords: anglicism, borrowing, sport commentary, Olympic Games, discourse.

1. Introduction

English became the dominant language in the world around the second half of the 19th century. Data show that by 2023 there were around 1.5 billion people worldwide who spoke English either natively or as a second language (Dyvik 2024). As a lingua franca, English plays a key role in global communication and its influence extends into many areas of human life. A lingua franca is a language that people use as a means of communication when they do not share a common native language. Historically, such a lingua franca was Latin in medieval Europe, French in the 17th and 18th centuries, and now English has taken over this role (Crystal 2003). Its spread is a consequence not only of the colonial expansion of the United Kingdom, but also of the global economic and cultural hegemony of the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries. Today, English is the official or working language



in many international institutions, businesses, and cultural spheres, including sport (Graddol 2006; Uberman 2010; 2012).

In the field of sport, English is the lingua franca for international competitions and organisations that bring together people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. English is a universal language for not only official meetings and communication between sports officials, but also for athletes, coaches, and fans themselves. This has made it the main means of communication at global sporting events such as the Olympics, the World Cup, basketball leagues, or tennis tournaments. Phillipson (2009) explains that this phenomenon is not accidental, but the result of several historical, economic, and social factors. One of the main reasons is the globalisation of sport, which promotes transnational sports organisations and increases the mobility of athletes, coaches, and other professionals across countries. Another factor is the dominance of English-language media in sports journalism. Media such as the BBC, ESPN, or Sky Sports regularly cover major sporting events in English, reaching a global audience (Francistyová & Furtáková 2023).

One of the most important sporting events that reflect the importance of English as a lingua franca is the Olympic Games. The Olympics are an example of a global sporting forum, bringing together thousands of athletes, coaches, officials, and journalists from around the world. Since their revival in 1896, the Olympic Games have played a leading role in international contacts and the promotion of peace through sport. As one of the official languages of the International Olympic Committee, English is an integral part of the Olympic Games, particularly in official communications, media coverage, and interaction between participants (Mooney 2024). The employment of English at the Olympic Games is crucial to ensuring smooth interaction between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. English is used as the working language at press conferences, ceremonies, official announcements, and in all sports. The Olympic Games are therefore a platform where English as the lingua franca greatly facilitates the flow of information and ensures that international cooperation works at all levels (Seidlhofer 2011).

Alongside this globalised use of English is the phenomenon of the usage of English words and phrases in national languages, which is particularly evident in sports media coverage. Even though the national broadcasters (STVR (formerly RTVS) in Slovakia and Suspilne in Ukraine) own the rights to the Olympic Games, which are accompanied by commentary in the national language, English is so present in the video cast that viewers cannot help but notice it. Terms such as *penalty*, *offside*, *timeout*, or *coach* are often used instead of their national language equivalents, leading to linguistic

hybridisation (Phillipson 2009). Nowadays, it is becoming more and more common for sport announcers to use internationalisms or anglicisms in commentary on national television, even though the word or expression in question has an equivalent in their native language. The choice of the two languages – Slovak and Ukrainian – is deliberate as such comparative research is gaining rapid popularity and more and more cross language articles appear in the realm of linguistic science (Panasenko 2023; Prihodko et al. 2020; Stashko et al. 2022; Zabuzhanska & Greguš 2023).

For this reason, this study focuses on the use of English borrowings in the commentary of Slovak and Ukrainian sports commentators during the Olympic Games.

We begin this paper by introducing anglicisms and examining their infiltration into the Slovak and Ukrainian languages in Section 2 as well as presenting the linguistic peculiarities of sport commentaries. Section 3 describes the research material, aims, and methods employed. Subsequently, Section 4 outlines the main results for the Slovak and Ukrainian contexts, while Section 5 compares the results obtained and offers some conclusions of the current study.

2. Theoretical framework

An anglicism can be defined as a linguistic element borrowed from English (Mistrík 1993). Jesenská (2007) understands an anglicism in a broader sense, as an expression originating from a specific cultural Anglophone environment, including direct borrowings from English, foreign words mediated by English, or hybrid words containing an English element. Similarly, Vépyová (2010) aptly argues that anglicisms fill a gap in the vocabulary, enter people's consciousness through the media (Furtáková & Bôtošová 2022), and, although they have some signs of foreignness, especially in spelling and pronunciation, they quickly become established because they fulfil one of the basic functions of communication – they express concepts and ideas when an absolute equivalent is missing.

In the context of the penetration of English into national languages, we observe three phenomena that give rise to three types of adopted words, according to Onysko (2007): 1) **linguistic borrowing** – the transfer of units of form and meaning from the source language to the recipient language (e.g., '*doctor* – *doktor* – *доктор/doktor*', '*radio* – *rádio* – *радіо/radio*', '*police* – *polícia* – *поліція/politsiya*'); 2) **hybrid anglicisms** are units that consist of both source language and recipient language material. Hybrids can be of different types but this term is applied merely to the processes of word formation, including compounding and affixation (e.g., German '*Teilzeitjob*' – Eng. '*part-time job*'); 3) **pseudo-anglicisms** are words or idioms that are recognizably English in their form, but are used in the

vocabulary of the recipient language with a conspicuously different meaning in English (e.g. German '*Handy*' – Eng. '*mobile phone*') (Schaefer 2021: 572).

2.1 *The penetration of anglicisms into Slovak*

Although the infiltration of anglicisms into other languages is not a recent phenomenon, we do not know much about the history of their emergence in Slovak, as there are no specific studies describing when, where, and how exactly they began to penetrate the territory of Slovakia. In the 1980s, Mistrík (1993) documented about 5,000 words in Slovak that had been borrowed from English. Although many linguists consider the usage of anglicisms to be a negative manifestation of globalisation, Věpyová (2010) argues that the adoption of new words from foreign languages (in our case, from English) cannot be evaluated as a negative phenomenon. According to her, these words do not swallow the receptor language, but rather enrich it, making it usable in all spheres of our everyday life (Věpyová 2010). Some areas of life are more susceptible to anglicisms than others. Information technology is the area where the use of anglicisms is most widespread, which is linked to the fact that innovations in this field originate in English-speaking countries. Words such as *software*, *hardware*, *upload*, and *firewall* are common in Slovak vocabulary. Apart from IT, anglicisms are also widely used in fashion (*outfit*, *look*), business (*start-up*, *brand*), and sports (*team*, *goalkeeper*).

However, the employment of anglicisms in the Slovak language has a dual character. On the one hand, it facilitates communication in a global environment and contributes to the modernisation of the language. On the other hand, the excessive use of anglicisms can lead to linguistic and cultural homogenisation (see, e.g., Al-Haq & Hatamleh 2013; Luttermann 2014). According to Ološtiak (2017), it is important to be aware of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using a foreign expression, especially in the media. The language of the mass media has made a significant contribution to the development of the written language and has contributed a great deal to the stability of contemporary written Slovak. Nevertheless, Mistrík (1993) points out that while a century ago foreign words were rare in newspaper texts, in today's Slovak media every sixth word is non-Slovak. Jesenská (2007) adds that the influence of English on the Slovak language is particularly evident at the lexical level, which is the basis of media work. Many people criticise this state of affairs, especially in the context of journalism (including sports), which is where most anglicisms penetrate into Slovak. The problem, however, is that media workers often use anglicisms even where they are they double the native equivalents available in the receptor language, which lowers the threshold of comprehensibility of the text.

Frequent substitution of English words for Slovak ones can threaten the original identity of the receptor language and lead to a weakening of linguistic diversity. Linguists warn against so-called "linguistic imperialism", where the dominance of one language, in this case English, influences other languages to the detriment of their authenticity and originality. This phenomenon is often debated, particularly in relation to national identities and the preservation of linguistic heritage (Phillipson 2009). At the same time, the adaptation of anglicisms in Slovak can also be seen as a sign of linguistic adaptability and flexibility.

2.2 *The penetration of anglicisms into Ukrainian*

The number of anglicisms in the Ukrainian language has significantly increased during the past decades; therefore, their constant investigation is not a neglected area of Ukrainian lexicology. The reason for this is far more intense contact across geographical boundaries because of the removal of space and time barriers. The compilation of dictionaries of anglicisms flourished over the preceding decade, and so had the controversy regarding their presence in the receptor language. In particular, Arkhуpenko (Архипенко 2021) investigated the functional characteristics of anglicisms in the Ukrainian language, considering, summarising, and systematising the main factors that cause lexical borrowing. Bahan (Баган 2020) studied anglicization of modern Ukrainian communicative space, its causes, circumstances, and consequences, emphasising the unreasonable use of English words and phrases in Ukrainian speech that leads to the impoverishment of Ukrainian lexicon as well as distortion of its graphic and grammatical features. She argued that, in the context of globalization, it is important to avoid the uncontrolled introduction of English words into Ukrainian vocabulary in order to preserve the originality of the latter, increase its status and communicative power.

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine enriched the Ukrainian language with the war/combat-related lexicon. Let us recall such anglicisms as *кіборгу/ kiyorhy* (Eng. 'cyborgs' – the Ukrainian military who fearlessly defended Donetsk airport; this is the name given to every defender for their resilience, sacrifice, and invincibility, which is now associated exclusively with the people of Ukraine); *хаймарс/ khaimars* (the English abbreviation of HIMARS, meaning 'high mobility artillery rocket system'); *Стінгер/ Stinher, застінгерути /zastinheryty* (Eng. Stinger – a portable surface-to-air missile system), *Джавелін/ Dzhavelin, заджавелінути/zadzhavenyty* (Eng. Javelin – a portable surface-to-air missile system). In this way, *застінгерути/zastinheryty* and *заджавелінути/zadzhavenyty* is used by Ukrainian soldiers in the meaning of 'to kill with a Stinger or Javelin'. Along with this, people actively use *донат/ donat, задонатити/zadonatyty* (Eng. donate – give (money or goods) for a good cause), which has become associated purely with war

circumstances.

In a similar vein, Chornyi and Chorna (Чорний & Чорна 2024) suggest the strategies that will help to preserve the Ukrainian language while integrating into the global information space. On the other hand, some linguists (Мартінова & Кукушкін 2023) are understandably sympathetic to the appearance of loanwords in Ukrainian. They believe that languages must evolve intensively to reflect constantly changing tendencies and realities, and, when they come from outside, words borrowed from another culture are essential to express them. Moreover, insufficient adoption of borrowed words may complicate Ukraine's integration into the global information space and hinder the development of scientific and technological progress.

2.3 Sports commentary: Register perspective

Sport as a manifestation of mass culture is of great social significance in the present-day world, being a popular form of leisure and a successful competitor in the struggle for consumers along with other components of the entertainment industry. Sports discourse is constituted through various genres and registers, which are realised by different layers of language (The discourse of sport ...2016). With its globalised success, it has also become a profitable object for the media. The latter is becoming more and more commercialised. Therefore, the wider the audience is, the more income the broadcaster can receive. New technologies and the Web are changing sports discourse, in some cases radically via online commentary, social networking, and user-generated content are aimed at maximising the audiences (Shirato 2013). Live television coverage of sport has become full of knowledgeable commentaries-cum-evaluations since the 1960s, offering the prospect of spontaneous excitement, passion, and drama (ibid., 122).

In his seminal work, Ferguson (1983) introduced and defined sport announcer talk (SAT) as the oral reporting of an ongoing activity, combined with provision of background information and interpretation. Following the lead, many linguists still adhere to this term. However, Lewandowski (2012: 61) provides a simplified definition of sport commentary, claiming it to be a play-by-play reporting offered in real time on a minute-by-minute basis. He distinguishes two types of sport commentary – a play-by-play commentary and a colour sport commentary, which is a more discursive and leisurely speech (ibid., 67).

Live sporting telecasts have their own particular characteristics to stimulate "the feel" of being at the game (Shirato 2013: 115). One of the key aspects of sports commentary is language, which has a

significant impact on attracting and managing spectators. Sports commentary clearly differentiates its register and language style, combining official and colloquial language to appeal to the widest demographic (Shirato 2013: 116; Walsh et al. 2024). Linguistically, sport discourse possesses some characteristics on all language levels: lack of coherence, a high proportion of unfinished utterances, elliptical language, self-repairs, interruptions, copula *be* deletion and subject simplification, subject-verb inversion, excessive use of deictic expressions, verbless phrases instead of clauses, and informal vocabulary, to name just a few (Uberman 2019). In particular, the jargon and terminology is unique to each sport, as every sport has its own set of terms (e.g., *offside*, *home run*, *hat trick*) that create a shared understanding among its participants and fans (Ferguson 1983; Lewandowski 2012: 67-72). The deliberate utilization of novel loanwords serves as a tool to connect spectators from various cultures, thereby enhancing cross-cultural communication (Ihnatova et al. 2024).

3. Research material, aims, and methods

The research by Onysko (2007) and Schaefer (2019) provided some useful insights into the methodology of the current analysis, which strives to explore the extent to which Slovakian and Ukrainian sports commentators used anglicisms when commenting on the 2012 and 2024 Summer Olympics. Therefore, the ultimate **aim** of this research is to identify, categorise, and examine novel anglicisms in modern media sport coverage made by Slovak and Ukrainian sport commentators.

For the purpose of the study, the authors compiled online reports from two sources, STVR (formerly RTVS) (2024) in Slovakia and Suspilne (2024) in Ukraine as the most reliable and reputable information providers. The overall corpus of recorded media coverage of the Olympic Games (2012; 2024) consisted of 20 hours of sport commentaries made by Slovak and Ukrainian journalists and reporters, who presented the Opening Ceremonies of the 2012 and 2024 Summer Olympics taking place in London and Paris respectively. Along with this, to provide a comprehensive overview of the entire event, the analysis touched upon the sport performances at the Olympic Games. Such language corpora allowed observing language behaviour through authentic language data.

Anglicisms were first manually selected and arranged into a corpus that totalled 155 items for the Slovak and 384 items for Ukrainian. For further investigation, the identified anglicisms were checked for their documentation in the receptor language, i.e. in the common dictionaries: paper editions as well as e-dictionaries (Slovak – Slovník cudzích slov (<https://slovník.juls.savba.sk/>) and Slovník cudzích slov (akademický) 2005, Ukrainian – Словник англiцизмiв (<https://slovník-anglitsizmiv.slovaronline.com/>), Словник новiтнiх англiзмiв 2022), taking into account the meaning

of each anglicism as used in the corpus. Those anglicisms that did not have entries in the aforementioned dictionaries were marked as novel. Finally, a comprehensive overview of the detected novel anglicisms was provided for both languages (Slovak and Ukrainian) with the subsequent quantitative comparison. Firstly, the studied items were categorised as belonging to different semantic fields. Secondly, they were divided into borrowings, hybrids, and pseudo-anglicisms. The methodological approach of this corpus-driven study is based on both **qualitative and quantitative methods**. Structural-semantic analysis along with quantitative content analysis helped reveal the types of novel anglicisms and their frequency in SATs, while comparative analysis was applied to spot similarities and differences in the extent and nature of loanwords between the compared languages.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the detection and analysis of novel anglicisms in the media coverage of the 2012 and 2024 Olympic Games. Subsection 4.1 outlines the findings regarding the use of novel anglicisms in the Slovak sport commentaries. Subsection 4.2 highlights the language choice of Ukrainian sport commentators in relation to novel anglicisms.

4.1 Novel anglicisms in Slovak commentaries

Slovak commentators used a total of 155 anglicisms in their televised commentary of the Olympic Games. These were checked for their documentation in Slovak print dictionaries and their online versions (see Section 3). We found that 14 (9%) of them had no entries in popular dictionaries or their online versions and were therefore identified as new.

Subsequent analysis shows that these new anglicisms belong mainly to two semantic fields, namely **Sport** and **Entertainment**. When it was not possible to define the semantic field precisely, new anglicisms were classified according to the semantic field most relevant to their meaning in a given context.

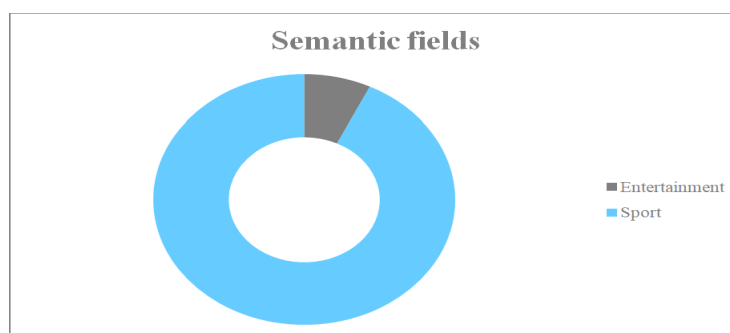


Figure 1. The semantic fields of novel anglicisms – Slovak. Source: Own processing

Fig. 1 represents the distribution of novel anglicisms regarding the semantic fields they fall into. Surprisingly, only two semantic fields – *Sport* and *Entertainment* – appeared in the Slovak commentaries, with the majority of the lexemes studied (93%) falling into the *Sport* category (e.g. *freestyle*, *breaker*, *breakdancerka*, etc.). These findings are linked to the fact that breakdancing has been included as a new sport in the 2024 Olympics. As breakdancing is not generally popular in Slovakia (although this dance style is not new to the country), these terms have not yet been codified. Another interesting fact is that the term *fair play*, which has been used extensively in (also Slovak) sports terminology for several decades, is still not included in any Slovak dictionary. The semantic field *Entertainment* includes 1 word (7%), *blendovanie [housu]* (Eng. *blend [of house]*), which refers to the fusion of house music with other musical styles.

The analysis showed that the Opening Ceremonies of the 2012 and 2024 Summer Olympics contained a lower number of novel anglicisms (37%) compared to commentary on specific sporting events (63%). As the Olympic Games in Slovakia were broadcast by the public broadcaster STVR, it had to follow the rules of *Act 157/2024 on Slovak Television and Radio*. According to this law, television and radio are obliged to develop the national consciousness and cultural identity of the Slovak nation – in other words, they must take care of the culture of the language they broadcast. The Opening Ceremony in 2024 was watched by 631,000 viewers, with individual sports being watched by an average of 120,000-200,000 viewers (STVR 2024). For this reason, commentators are more careful with their language and the use of grammatical Slovak. Another reason is that, among the anglicisms studied, there were mainly sports-related words (*breaker*, *tie-break*, *backhand*, etc.), i.e. specialised terminology that is more likely to be found in a specific sport than in an opening ceremony.

We have selected a number of anglicisms – **borrowings** – that have entered the Slovak language as the names of new concepts, including those expressed by international terms, especially for sports. The following examples illustrate this category:

(1) "*Jakub Jozef Orliński to je breaker, model, ale aj operný spevák*" [Eng. *Jakub Jozef Orliński is a breaker, model, but also an opera singer*] (*breaker* – synonym for breakdancer (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/breakdancer>))

(2) "*Aj toto posolstvo hovorí o tom, aká je dôležitá myšlienka fair play*" [Eng. *This message also speaks of the importance of fair play*] (*fair play* – respect for the fair or equal treatment of all concerned, or for the rules of a game or sport; just or honest conduct (<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=fair+play>))

(3) "*Cyklistický freestyle, skejtbording, či trojkový basketbal – to všetko sa bude konať s veľkou*

účastou parížskej verejnosti" [Eng. Bicycle **freestyle**, skateboarding or 3x3 basketball – all of them will involve the great participation of the Parisian public] (*freestyle* – a competition in which the contestant is given more freedom of choice than in related events (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/freestyle>))

Among these borrowings, there are anglicisms that have their Slovak equivalents and should have been completely replaced. However, the commentators left them in English. In most cases, these were technical sports terms, and they were used in fairly equal measure during the opening ceremonies and the sporting events:

(4) "Už zajtra sa športovci stretnú v olympijskom **ringu**" [Eng. *Tomorrow the athletes will meet in the Olympic **ring***]. The word *ring* was used by the commentators when referring to the athletes – boxers who were to fight together the next day. Although the word *ring* is often used in this context in Slovakia, its Slovak equivalent is *zápasisko*.

(5) "Táto športovkyňa bola v minulosti vyšetovaná pre **doping**" [Eng. *This athlete has been under investigation for **doping** in the past*]. The word *doping* can be replaced by its equivalent *dopovanie*. Another noteworthy example is *NBA*. This term has been adopted into the Slovak language, but according to the rules of latter it should be pronounced as /enbea/ – i.e., with the Slovak pronunciation. However, in its media, the English pronunciation /,en.bi:'ei/ is used in most cases. Within the analysed recordings, *NBA* was heard four times, each time with the English pronunciation.

During the analysis, we also found several cases of **hybridisation** of English words. In most of the cases it was the attachment of Slovak morphemes (derivational affixes and semi-affixes) to English stems:

(6) "Ruska doplnila komplet triumfov na **grandslamových** turnajoch" [Eng. "The Russian completed a set of triumphs at **Grand Slam** tournaments"]. In this context, the word was used as an adjective. Since the word *tournament* is masculine in Slovak, the suffix '-ový' was added to the word *grandslam*. At the same time, adjectives are declined in agreement with nouns, in this case the plural locative, so the suffix '-ových' was added to the stem word.

(7) "A vidíme vystúpenie známej **breakdancerky**" [Eng. "And we see the performance of a well-known **breakdancer**"]. The suffix '-ka' (is it a suffix or rather a suffix (-k-) and an ending (-a)) is used for feminine nouns in Slovak. In this example, the word is in the singular genitive, so the ending '-ky' has been added to the English stem of the word.

Fig. 2 demonstrates the classification of novel anglicisms in percentage. Of the examined novel

anglicisms, borrowings make up 66%, hybrid anglicisms 10%, and 24% are words that have a Slovak equivalent, but the commentators still used the English version of the word. It should be noted that, although the word *NBA* is on the edge between borrowings and words that have a Slovakian equivalent, we have decided to classify it as a borrowing.

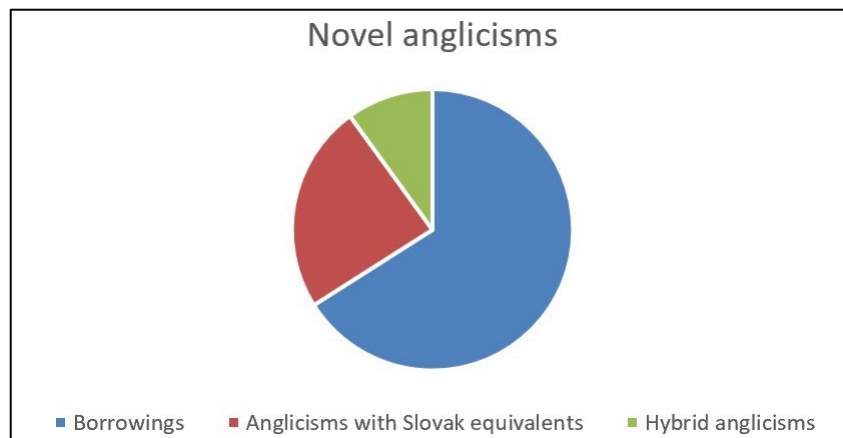


Figure 2. Distribution of novel anglicisms in the Slovak sport commentary
Source: Own processing

Regarding the assimilation of borrowings within the Slovak language, we note that most of the words studied are either fully assimilated or not assimilated at all. The fully assimilated borrowings include words such as *ring*, *doping*, *futbal*, *tenis*, or *NBA*. On the other hand, words such as *breaker*, *breakdancer*, *grand slam*, *fair play* or *time-out* are used in their original graphic form without modification. Some anglicisms, such as *coach* or *skateboarding*, are partially assimilated and used in the "domesticated" version: *kouč*, *skejtboarding*.

4.2 Novel anglicisms in Ukrainian commentaries

The media coverage of the Olympic Games made by Ukrainian sport commentators included 384 anglicisms that were checked for their documentation in Ukrainian print dictionaries and their online versions (see Section 3). Consequently, 51 (13%) of the anglicisms do not have entries in explanatory dictionaries and their online versions, thus being identified as novel.

The subsequent analysis shows that these novel anglicisms belong to such semantic fields as ***Sport***, ***Media***, ***Entertainment***, and ***Technology***. It is worth mentioning that, when it was impossible to define the exact semantic field, novel anglicisms were classified according to the semantic field most relevant to their meaning in the given context.

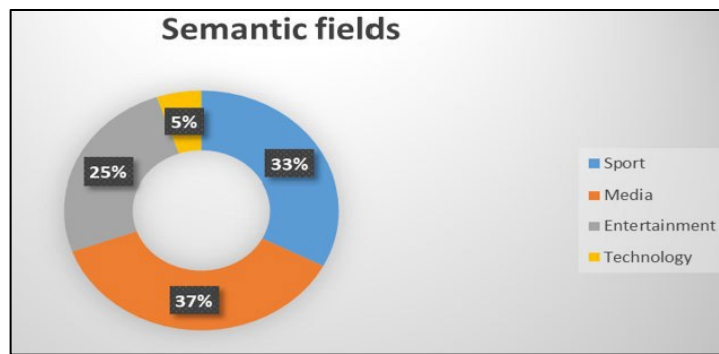


Figure 3. The semantic fields of novel anglicisms – Ukrainian
Source: Own processing

Fig. 3 represents the distribution of novel anglicisms regarding the semantic fields they fall into. Surprisingly, the largest proportion – 35% of the studied lexemes – belongs to the semantic field **Media** (e.g. *транслятор* ('*translator*'), *таймінг* ('*timing*'), *медійний* ('*media*'), *меседж* ('*message*'), *влог* ('*vlog*'), *риплей* ('*replay*'), *прайм-тайм* ('*prime-time*'), *дайджест* ('*digest*'), *хайлайт* ('*highlight*') etc.). These findings clearly illustrate the increasing power of media and the impact of mass communication on society. The semantic field **Sport** lags behind by a small margin, totalling 31% of the studied lexemes. The most vivid examples include *грэндслем* ('*Grand Slam*'), *дріблінг* ('*dribbling*'), *мастерс* ('*masters*'), *ватерпольний* ('*water polo*'), *таргет* ('*target*'), etc. Furthermore, 24% of the lexemes fall into the category of **Entertainment** (*сайт* ('*site*'), *івент* ('*event*'), *релаксно* ('*relaxing*'), *фейспалм* ('*facepalm*').). Finally, the semantic field of **Technology** accounts for 10% of the anglicisms (*навербенк* ('*powerbank*'), *фейсконтроль* ('*face + control*'), *андеїт* ('*update*'), etc.).

The analysis also revealed that the Opening Ceremonies of the 2012 and 2024 Summer Olympics contained the largest number of novel anglicisms (74%) compared with the sport performances at the Olympic Games (26%). The philosophy and ceremonial aspects surrounding the Olympic Games distinguish them from all other international sports events. The Ceremonies usually gather people to discover the culture of the country in which the Games are taking place (Olympics 2024). Therefore, the aim of the media coverage is to attract the attention of as many viewers as possible. Sports commentators use particular linguistic strategies to convey excitement, provide insight, and engage viewers: their speech is sometimes full of flowery language, sometimes stylistically and structurally simplified for infotainment purposes. Contrastingly, commenting upon the sport performance itself is more serious; the commentators seem to carefully select their wording. Nevertheless, the novel anglicisms denoting predominantly specific sport terminology are also found (*скейтбордінг* ('*skateboarding*'), *бі ем ікс* ('*BMX*'), *бі ем ікс спринт* ('*BMX sprint*'), *керлінг* ('*curling*'), etc.).

We singled out a few anglicisms – **borrowings** – that have come into the Ukrainian language as names of new concepts, including those expressed by international terms, notably in sports.

The following examples illustrate this category:

(8) "Хлопець, який займається **бі-ем-іксом**" [Eng. *The guy who goes in for **BMX***] (*BMX* – the sport of riding strong bicycles across rough countryside or on special tracks, racing them or performing stunts; BMX stands for "bicycle motocross") (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>).

(9) "Вона була призеркою на усіх **гренд слемах**" [Eng. *She was a prize-winner at all the **Grand Slams***] (*Grand Slam* – all the important competitions that are held in one year for a particular sport when they are won by the same person (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>)).

However, among these borrowings, there are anglicisms that have synonyms in Ukrainian and can be fully replaced by the corresponding equivalents that make up the largest group. The commentators frequently use them, especially at the Opening Ceremony:

(10) "Команда вважалася одним із **фаворитів** у футболі" [Eng. *The team was considered one of the **favourites** in football*]. The word *фаворит* can be replaced by its equivalent "улюбленець".

(11) "Сподіваюся, ми багато будемо чути тут сильних меседжів з приводу України" [Eng. *I hope we will hear a lot of strong messages about Ukraine here*]. The word *меседж* can be replaced by its equivalent "повідомлення".

(12) "Ми відпускаємо Діану, аби вона зробила свій перший **дайджест**" [Eng. *We let Diana go to make her first **digest***]. The word *дайджест* can be replaced by its equivalent "огляд".

(13) "Ми не бачимо тут усіх цих перформансів" [Eng. *We don't see all these **performances** here*]. The word *перформанс* can be replaced by its equivalent "виступ".

Pseudo-anglicisms are few in number but also present in the research corpus:

(14) "Вони прибули, аби побувати під проливним дощем в **сайті**" [Eng. *They arrived to visit the **site** in the pouring rain*]. In the Ukrainian language, the word *сайт* means "a set of electronic documents (files) of a private person or organisation in a computer network united under one address (domain name or IP address)". However, contextually, the commentator uses the word *сайт* to denote a place.

(15) "Еліна Світоліна і Михайло Романчук у самому **фронті**" [Eng. *Elina Svitolina and Mykhailo Romanchuk are at the very **front***]. The word *фронт* in Ukrainian (Eng. *front*) is mainly used in a military sphere (a place or an area where military operations take place and where active troops are located during a war) and very rarely as a front part of something.

(16) "Ти сьогодні працюєш в одній із **локацій**" [Eng. *Today you are working at one of the **locations***].

The meaning of the word *локація* in Ukrainian is somewhat different: "determining the location of a body using a locator".

Our findings indicate a few cases of **hybridisation** that presupposes the attachment of Ukrainian morphemes (derivational affixes and semi-affixes) to English stems. In particular:

(17) "*Хлопці в ватерпольних шапочках*" [Eng. *Guys in **water polo caps***]. Here we have the suffix *-н-* and the ending *-ий-*, used to form most qualitative and relative adjectives in Ukrainian.

(18) "*Ти нам трішки усіх **заспойлерив***" [Eng. *You've **spoiled** them all to us a bit*]. In this very context *to spoil* means to destroy or reduce the pleasure, interest, or beauty of something. This novel anglicism contains the prefix 'за-' and the ending '-ув'. The past verb tense is formed from the stem of the infinitive (dropping the indefinite form ending) by adding the suffix and the ending indicating the masculine subject.

Fig. 4 demonstrates the classification of novel anglicisms in percentage, where borrowings make up 84%, hybrid anglicisms – 10%, and pseudo-anglicisms – 6% of the items under study.

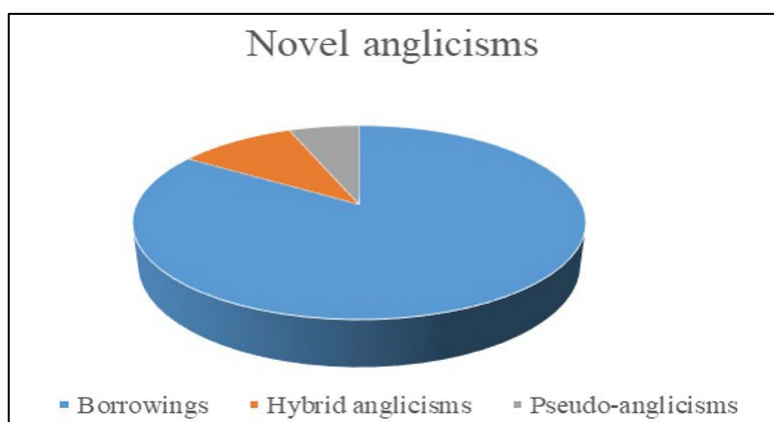


Figure 4. Distribution of novel anglicisms in the Ukrainian sport commentary
Source: Own processing

In terms of their degree of assimilation, the studied items are mainly partially assimilated words since they either retain their foreign pronunciation or foreign morphological characteristics, or else denote the realia which have no corresponding equivalent in Ukrainian. Thus, one can assume that linguistic borrowing is a widely spread phenomenon among Ukrainian sport commentators; and the online coverage of the Olympic Games is a valuable tool to promote this linguistic creativity.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study has explored the integration of anglicisms into Slovak and Ukrainian sports commentaries,

revealing the pervasive influence of English on linguistic practices in media, especially during global events like the Olympics. The data highlights a notable difference in the extent and nature of linguistic borrowing between the two countries. Ukrainian sports commentators adopt anglicisms within a wide range of fields, including media, sports, entertainment, and technology, suggesting a broader openness to linguistic integration. In contrast, Slovak commentators predominantly incorporate English terms related directly to sports, which reflects a more restrained approach, potentially driven by regulatory policies.

Building on these observations, it is evident that anglicisms serve a dual function within Slovak and Ukrainian sports commentaries. They provide linguistic efficiency and clarity, especially for specialized sports terms that may lack precise native equivalents, thus facilitating immediate comprehension among audiences familiar with English-dominated sports terminology. Terms like *freestyle*, *breakdancer*, *fair play*, *BMX*, or *grand slam* exemplify how English loanwords fill lexical gaps and streamline communication.

However, the analysis also raises concerns about linguistic preservation. In both contexts, there is a risk that an unchecked influx of English terms could overshadow native expressions, potentially leading to a gradual erosion of linguistic identity. The prevalence of English terms in Ukrainian commentary, particularly in contexts where native synonyms exist, highlights the influence of English not just as a convenience but also as a marker of modernity and cosmopolitanism. This trend could lead to the gradual sidelining of traditional expressions, particularly among younger audiences who may view English terms as more relevant or prestigious.

The contrasting approaches between Slovakia and Ukraine may also reflect broader cultural and regulatory attitudes. Slovakia's regulatory mandate for public service broadcasters to preserve linguistic purity might limit the adoption of English terms, fostering a more balanced integration that respects native linguistic structures. Ukraine, conversely, seems to embrace a more dynamic linguistic integration, possibly influenced by an ongoing alignment with Western norms and values, especially in light of recent geopolitical shifts. This linguistic openness could signify a strategic move toward greater inclusivity and international relevance, albeit at the potential cost of diminishing native lexical richness.

Notes

Translation from Slovak and Ukrainian into English was done by the authors.

List of abbreviations

GLT – Glossary of linguistic terms

IEED – Indo-European etymological dictionary

SAT – Sport announcer's talk

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