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The language of football: A sociolinguistic perspective

In recent years, the language of football has been gaining ground as a valid research topic within various fields of linguistics. This growing interest is reflected by a wide range of recent publications including dictionaries of football language (e.g. Taborek 2014), books (e.g. Lewandowski 2013) or edited volumes (e.g. Lavric et al. 2008). Also worthy of mention are conferences and thematic sessions on this topic, such as the Sociolinguistics of Football panel at the 19th Sociolinguistics Symposium in Berlin (2012), as well as various projects and initiatives, including the Innsbruck Football and Language Bibliography (available online) and SpoLaReG, the Sports Language Research Group in Poznań.

Applying a sociolinguistic approach, I will demonstrate in my talk that football language is a non-monolithic construct, which is composed of many fields of communicative activity, such as, for example, the language of football rules and regulations, the language of football players and coaching staff, football language in the media, and the language of football fans. Within these domains, it is possible to identify several registers, i.e. varieties of language that are linked with particular situations of use and are determined by social factors. Drawing on corpus data from three media registers (match reports, TV commentary, and online minute-by-minute commentary), I will then show how social determinants (e.g. the participants, the relations between them, the setting, the communicative purposes, etc.) have an impact on the pragmatic and lexico-grammatical features of these registers. Central to the subject matter of my talk will be the concept of variation, which is understood not only in the context of the differences across the registers in question, but also within them (intra-register variation).

Regarding the theoretical and methodological framework of my talk, I will draw mainly on Austin's and Searle's theory of speech acts as well as register theory, as elaborated primarily by Biber and Conrad (2009).

Selected references:

- Biber, D., & Conrad, S. 2009. *Register, Genre, and Style*. Cambridge.
Lavric, E., Pisek, G., Skinner, A., & Stadler, W. (eds.) 2008. *The Linguistics of Football*. Tübingen.
Lewandowski, M. 2013. *The Language of Football: An English-Polish Contrastive Study*. Poznań.
Taborek, J. 2014. *Das Wörterbuch der Fußballsprache: Polnisch - Russisch - Englisch – Deutsch*. Hamburg.