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HOCKEY VOCABULARY IN CANADA

Summary

The paper focuses on the hockey terminology as used in Canadian English. Many examples given in the paper illustrate both literal and metaphorical use of the word and expressions containing the word hockey. The authors refer briefly to socio-logical and psychological aspect of sports games and hockey which has entered many walks of life in Canada.

Key words: hockey, Canadian English, ice hockey

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEM

As the hockey number one nation in the world, Canadians have developed a specific vocabulary for this sport and have integrated many hockey words and phrases in Canadian English (Wikipedia, n.d., a). Hockey has left a strong and an indelible impact on the national psyche and words related to this sport have entered many walks of life in Canada (Historical Foundation of Canada, n.d.). To ensure if the dictionary is

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truly Canadian English dictionary, as different from British English dictionary or American English dictionary, one can look at the entry hockey and its definition as “a game played on ice” or “a game played on a field”. For example, *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Barber, 2004), defines the word **hockey** as “a game played on ice between two teams of six players each, in which players try to shoot a puck into the opposing team’s net with sticks,” and *Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English* (Hornby, 1986), defines **hockey** as: “**field hockey** – game played with sticks on a field by two teams of eleven players each and a ball; **ice hockey** – game played on ice by two teams of six players each wearing skates and with sticks and a rubber disc (a puck)”.

To which extent is hockey important for Canadians can be drawn from the fact that many literature courses taught at Canadian universities are devoted to this sport (Society for International Hockey Research, n.d.). Of course, this means that there is writing where hockey is used as dominant motif, which uses hockey to express meaning and explore this sport in different ways and which is incorporated within the academic curricula (Jackson, 2008). A natural question is why sporty writers are thrilled by sport or hockey to write poems, novels or short stories about and what readers gain from this stuff. Or, in other words, what’s the relation between sport/hockey and literature?

Many pleasures of watching sport or reading a book are similar. Reading itself is breathtaking when we sometimes expect the end of the book excitedly and it could be compared to the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat in sports games. One of the explanations for such a thrill is that we all live quite monotonous repetitive work-worn lives and we want to identify with players in a game or characters in a book especially when they do superhuman things or the things we do not have chance to do in our normal lives (Jackson, 2008). When we understand the rules or structures of the game – whether that’s curling¹, hockey, lacrosse,² etc., or a short story, a novel, etc. – we are excited by the improbable and the extraordinary when it happens: *deus ex machina* which resolves the complex and almost insoluble tensions in the novel or the heroic and handsome sprinter who finishes his race last though he was meant to win or when the well known facts used in a novel mess with the elements of phantasy so that “willing suspension of disbelief”³ is needed on the part

¹ Curling – Scottish game played on ice in which large round flat-bottomed stones are slid across the surface towards a mark (Canadian Curling Assotiation, 2007).

² Lacrosse – a game, originally played by North American Indians, in which a ball is thrown, carried and caught with a lacrosse stick (Hayhurst, 2005).

³ “Willing suspension of disbelief” is determined by the English poet and aesthetic philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge to justify the use of phantastic or non-realistic elements in literature. Coleridge suggested that if a writer could infuse “a human in-

of the reader. And finally, by participating actively as spectators of sports games or readers of books we connect with a community and feel less isolated since we have the opportunity of sharing our ideas and experience with other people (Sugden, Tomlinson, 2002).

Hockey has played an important part in the life of every Cannuck.⁴ As related to vocabulary, if you look the word up in any Canadian English dictionary, you'll probably notice 13 entries for the word hockey, unlike any British English or American English dictionaries where there is just one entry. Most of the uses of the word hockey and its compounds are literal. Thus, you could find the following expressions related to the game of hockey in *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Barber, 2004):

Hockey bag – a large esp. nylon bag for carrying hockey equipment, usually with pockets for skates.

Hockey club – a hockey team.

Hockey cushion – (Canadian) a skating rink with hockey boards, esp. an outdoor rink of natural ice.

Hockey glove – a padded glove worn by hockey players for protection against slashing, etc.

Hockey hair (slang)- mullet (a kind of sea fish used for food).

Hockey jacket- (Canadian) an outer jacket, usually of nylon with a quilted lining, with a hockey team's crest on the chest and the owner's name, position, number, etc. embroidered on the arm.

Hockey mom (hockey mother) – a mother deeply committed to a child's hockey practice, career, etc., who spends much time, effort, and money to ensure the child receives the best training, advantages, etc.

Hockey pants – knee-length, high-waisted padded pants worn by hockey players to protect their thighs, hips and kidneys.

Hockey puck – 1. puck; 2. an object the size or shape of a hockey puck.

Hockey socks – long woolen leggings extending from thigh to ankle, held up by a garter belt and with stirrups for the feet, worn by hockey players.

Hockey stick – a stick with a flat, slightly curved blade at the lower end, used to control, pass, and shoot the puck in hockey. (Barber, 2004: 721)

Hockey tape – an adhesive tape used esp. on the blade of a hockey stick to strengthen it or on the handle to improve the grip. (Barber, 2004: 721)

In addition to this set of hockey expressions, there are others also related to Canadian English:

Puckster – (Canadian, slang) – a hockey player.

Puck board – (Canadian) – high density polyethylene in large sheets, used esp. for the boards surrounding a hockey arena.

terest and a semblance of truth" into a phantastic tale, the reader would suspend judgment concerning the implausibility of the narrative.

⁴ Cannuck – *informal* a Canadian.

Puck bunny – a young female hockey fan, esp. one motivated more by a desire to watch, meet, or become esp. sexually involved with the players than by an interest in the sports itself.

Puck carrier – the player in possession of the puck.

Puck handling – the ability to control the puck while deking, stickhandling, receiving passes, etc.

Puck handler (noun) – a person who controls the puck while deking, stickhandling, receiving passes, etc.

Puck hog – a hockey player who selfishly refuses to pass the puck to his or her teammates. (Barber, 2004: 1250)

Bantam – a level of amateur sport, usually involving children aged 13-15; a player in this age group. (Barber, 2004: 109)

Shinny – (informal) pickup hockey played usually without nets, referees, or equipment except for skates, sticks, and a ball or puck or an object serving as a puck; (informal) hockey; variant of “**shinty**”, a game similar to field hockey originally played in Scotland. (Barber, 2007: 143)

Stickhandle – skillfully control the puck with the stick; (Canadian) manoeuvre (a project, etc.) skillfully through obstacles. (Barber, 2004: 1528)

Faceoff –hockey & lacrosse – the action of starting or restarting play by dropping or placing the puck or ball between two opposing players’ sticks; a direct confrontation.

Faceoff circle – each of five circles on a hockey rink, roughly 9 m in diameter, where faceoffs may be taken, including one at centre ice and two in each end situated to the left and right of the net. (Barber, 2004: 531)

Deke – (N. American esp. hockey slang) – a fake shot or movement done to draw a defensive player out of position and thus create a better opportunity to score; deceive (a defensive player) with a fake shot or movement. (Barber, 2004: 397- 398)

Spinarama – (Canadian) – an evasive move, esp. in hockey, consisting of an abrupt 360° turn. (Barber, 2007: 143)

To rag the puck – keep possession of the puck by skilful stickhandling so as to waste time; (Canadian, slang) – waste time intentionally. (Barber, 2004: 1275)

Hockey words are not only used in the **ice palace** (Canadianism for hockey arena), but also in other venues, political arenas, for example, where hockey vocabulary is used metaphorically. Thus, one can **rag the puck** in politics, can make a **spinarama** move from time to time, or he can **drop the gloves** when the things get unpleasant or even **hang up the skates** when it’s over. Katherine Barber gives some interesting examples, journalistic descriptions of some politicians’ activities where hockey terminology is used:

“It won’t be long until David Tsubouchi can rag the puck for the entire question period without saying a word.”

“When you think about it, Mr. Klein’s entire governmental agenda is based on the spinarama.”

“Joe Clark must now stickhandle route to new federalism.”

“Joe Ghiz hangs up his skates because he is feeling too old and tired for the game of politics.” (Barber, 2007: 141)

Having such a strong hold on the national psyche, hockey is not played only in the hockey arena, but almost in every place suitable for the game. Thus, apart from **ice hockey**, in Canada you can find: **ball hockey** (a version of hockey played in a gymnasium or in an arena without ice, using hard plastic ball in place of a puck), **foot hockey** (in Ontario, a schoolyard game resembling soccer but using a puck-sized ball and hockey-sized goals, usually played on a paved surface), **pond hockey** (informal or disorganized hockey played on a frozen pond), **sponge hockey** (a form of hockey played on ice with rubber-soled boots and a sponge puck), **street hockey/road hockey** (a version of hockey played on a street usually by children using hockey sticks and a ball in place of a puck) (Barber, 2007: 142-144). No wonder that one of the most favorite topics for every Canadian is hockey game.

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РЕЧНИК ХОКЕЈА У КАНАДИ

Резиме

Рад се бави терминологијом хокеја која је заступљена у канадском енглеском. Многобројни примери у раду илуструју литерално и метафорично значење речи и израза који се односе на овај спорт. Аутори се кратко осврћу на социолошки и психолошки аспект спортских игара и хокеја који је ушао у скоро све сфере живота у Канади.

Кључне речи: хокеј, канадски енглески, хокеј на леду.