
THE USE OF ZOONYMS IN THE NAMES OF SPORTS TEAMS

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ABSTRACT:

This article studies the phenomenon of using zoonyms (animal names) in the names of sports teams. Animal words are often found in team names, reflecting the strength, agility or other positive qualities of the team. The article presents the reasons for this trend, linguistic and psychological aspects, as well as an analysis of zoonyms found in the names of sports clubs in different countries. It also discusses the impact of zoonyms on brand creation, attracting fans and the image of the team.

Keywords: Zoonym, sports teams, animal names, brand, linguistics, image, fans, sports clubs, psychological impact, marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The names of sports teams play an important role in their image and identification. Many sports clubs and teams use animal names - zoonyms in their names. For example, the names of teams such as „Chicago Bulls” (USA), „Wolverhampton Wanderers” (England), „Lokomotiv Panthers” (Russia) contain zoonyms that reflect such characteristics as strength, agility, dexterity and courage. This article analyzes the use of zoonyms in the names of sports teams, their linguistic, psychological and marketing significance.

Zoonyms are not used in the names of sports teams by chance. Usually, when a team chooses the name of an animal for its name, it wants to embody the characteristic features of this animal. For example:

1. Lion (lion, tiger, panthera) - a symbol of strength, courage, leadership;
2. Wolf (wolf, coyote) - teamwork, endurance, dexterity;
3. Eagle (eagle, hawk, falcon) - high flight, independence, speed;
4. Snake (cobra, viper, python) - sharpness, cunning, agility.

Sports teams are also named after animals for several reasons:

- Symbolism: Animals often embody the qualities that teams want to represent, such as strength, agility, and determination. For example, lions represent courage, while eagles represent freedom and vision.
- Identity: Animal names create a strong identity for a team. Fans can easily connect with an animal mascot, instilling a sense of pride and loyalty.

- Tradition: Many teams have historical ties to animal names. These traditions may be rooted in local culture or the wildlife of the region, giving them cultural significance.
- Marketing appeal: Animal mascots are visually appealing and memorable, and can enhance marketing efforts. They can be easily depicted in logos, merchandise, and promotional materials.
- Community Connection : Naming communities after local fauna can strengthen community bonds as residents can feel a connection to the wildlife in their area.

Overall, animal names in sports serve to create a strong and cohesive brand that resonates with fans and builds team spirit.

These animals in team names serve to represent the strengths of the team and increase fans' trust in the team.

From a linguistic point of view, the use of zoonyms has semantic and phonetic appeal. Animal names are easy to remember because they are short and catchy. For example, names like „Tigers”, „Bulls”, „Wolves” are simple and clear, easy to pronounce and remember. At the same time, they also embody strong metaphorical meanings.

Sports team names have a psychological impact on fans. According to research, animal names with strong and positive meanings in team names make fans' attitudes towards the team more trustworthy. For example, the „bull” in the name of the Chicago Bulls team symbolizes strength and aggression, and the team strives to act on these principles.

Choosing a name for sports clubs is not only a matter of identity, but also part of a marketing strategy. Using animal names, the club's brand is formed. For example:

- Logos and symbols - The emblems of many sports teams are decorated with images of animals (for example, „Detroit Lions”, „Leicester City Foxes”).
- Advertising and sales strategies - Sports clubs are inspired by animal names and produce various products (uniforms, souvenirs, T-shirts, etc.).
- Fan attraction - A team name associated with an animal increases fans' interest in the team.

Below are some of the famous teams that have used zoonyms in various sports:

- Football: Wolverhampton Wanderers („Wolves”), Leicester City („Foxes”), Tigres UANL („Tigers”)
- Basketball: Chicago Bulls („Bulls”), Atlanta Hawks („Hawks”), Memphis Grizzlies („Grizzlies”)
- Hockey: Florida Panthers („Panthers”), Pittsburgh Penguins („Penguins”)
- American football: Detroit Lions („Lions”), Philadelphia Eagles („Eagles”)

These teams use their names to convey a unique message to their fans and successfully build their brand in the sports environment.

In addition, the use of zoonyms (animal names) in the names of sports teams has a very ancient history. This trend goes back to the culture and mythology of different peoples.

In ancient societies, animals were a symbol of strength, protection, courage and agility. For example:

In the Roman Empire, legionaries depicted an eagle on their flags, which was a symbol of strength and superiority.

In ancient Greek and Roman sports competitions, animal names were given to strong wrestlers and warriors.

In Eastern countries, animals such as the lion, eagle and dragon were perceived as symbols of dominance and power.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when sports in Europe and the USA reached a professional level, teams began to use animal names in order to better introduce themselves to fans.

In 1901, the first team in the American baseball league to use an animal name was founded - the Detroit Tigers.

Throughout the 20th century, names such as „Lions”, „Wolves”, „Eagles”, „Panthers” became widespread in football, basketball, hockey and other sports.

Today, zoonyms are an important tool in building a sports brand. These names, in addition to expressing the spirit of the team, are also effectively used in marketing.

In short, the widespread use of zoonyms in sports team names is not accidental. These names reflect the strength, speed, agility or other positive qualities of the team, create a spiritual connection between the fans and the team, and serve as an effective marketing brand. With the help of zoonyms, teams strengthen their identity and achieve international recognition.

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