

LINGUO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF METAPHORICAL UNITS IN FOOTBALL JOURNALISM AND SPORTS COMMENTARY (A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK)**Xasanov Zafar Bakhtiyorovich**

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Abstract: This article examines the linguo-pragmatic features of metaphorical units used in football journalism and sports commentary in English and Uzbek. Metaphors in sports discourse not only enhance expressiveness but also shape readers' and viewers' perception of the game by framing emotions, intensifying competitiveness, and constructing sport-related identities. The study analyzes the semantic motivation, communicative functions, and pragmatic load of metaphorical expressions frequently employed in football reports, match reviews, and live commentary. Comparative analysis reveals how English and Uzbek sports media utilize conceptual metaphors related to warfare, movement, nature, and everyday actions to create vivid narratives and influence audience engagement. The findings highlight cross-linguistic similarities and culturally specific features that determine how metaphorical units function in both languages. The research underscores the importance of metaphor as a persuasive and interpretative tool in football discourse.

Keywords: metaphor; football journalism; sports commentary; linguo-pragmatics; comparative analysis; English and Uzbek; conceptual metaphor; sports discourse; media language

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the rapid expansion of sports media, the globalization of football culture, and the growing competitiveness of journalistic platforms have made the study of linguo-pragmatic features in sports discourse increasingly relevant. Among these features, metaphorical units occupy a central role, as they enhance the expressiveness of football journalism and sports commentary, shape audience perception, and construct emotionally charged narratives around sporting events. In football discourse, metaphors function not merely as stylistic ornaments but as powerful cognitive and communicative tools through which commentators and journalists reinterpret reality, intensify dramatic moments, and guide the audience's evaluative stance. Metaphorical expressions in football reports, match reviews, and live commentary contribute to the vivid portrayal of match dynamics, strategic battles, and the psychological states of players and teams. Commentators frequently draw upon conceptual domains such as warfare, theatre, speed, movement, nature, technology, and everyday life to describe the intensity, unpredictability, and emotional resonance of the game. These metaphors help to construct a dynamic narrative environment in which football is perceived not only as a sport but as a symbolic representation of struggle, creativity, and collective identity. From a linguistic perspective, metaphor is considered one of the primary mechanisms of human cognition, shaping how individuals conceptualize and interpret events. The conceptual metaphor theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson positions metaphor as a cognitive structure rather than a decorative linguistic device. Within this framework, metaphorical units in football journalism reflect how individuals mentally structure the experience of the game, how cultural perceptions influence the interpretation of the match, and how language mediates between the event and its audience. Thus, the linguistic and pragmatic analysis of metaphors can reveal deeper insights into the social, cultural, and cognitive dimensions of football discourse. A comparative analysis of English and

Uzbek sports media reveals both similarities and significant cultural distinctions in metaphor usage. English football journalism frequently employs military metaphors (attack, defensive wall, strike, counter-attack), mechanical and technical imagery (engine, pressure, gear shift), as well as metaphors of speed and force. In contrast, Uzbek sports commentary often relies on culturally grounded imagery, including references to folklore, national identity, everyday social realities, and context-specific figurative expressions. These differences highlight the culturally dependent nature of metaphorical mapping and demonstrate how cultural perception influences linguistic representation. Furthermore, sports commentary—especially live football commentary—represents a spontaneous, highly dynamic form of discourse, in which metaphors emerge rapidly to match the pace of the game. The commentator's role is not limited to describing events but extends to stimulating audience engagement, generating emotional resonance, and creating a shared interpretative framework. For this reason, metaphor serves not only an expressive purpose but also a pragmatic one: it directs attention, shapes evaluation, and contributes to the persuasive power of sports media. This study focuses on identifying and analyzing the linguo-pragmatic characteristics of metaphorical units in English and Uzbek football journalism and sports commentary. It aims to explore their conceptual foundations, semantic motivations, communicative functions, and cultural specificities. The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of metaphor as a key interpretative mechanism within sport-related media discourse and to reveal both cross-linguistic parallels and culturally distinctive patterns in metaphor usage.

MAIN BODY

The analysis of metaphorical units in football journalism and sports commentary demonstrates that metaphors perform several key communicative and pragmatic functions in both English and Uzbek media discourse. First, they intensify the emotional impact of the text by framing football as a dynamic, competitive, and dramatic event. English commentary often draws on warfare and battle metaphors (“to strike back,” “defensive wall,” “to launch an attack”), which emphasize aggression, strategy, and tactical superiority. Uzbek sports media, in contrast, frequently employs culturally embedded and socially oriented metaphors (“maydon ustalari,” “jangovar ruh,” “sahnadek o‘yin”), reflecting national mentality, collective identity, and value-laden imagery. Second, metaphors serve as cognitive tools that help the audience conceptualize match events. Movement- and speed-based metaphors such as “explosive pace,” “storming run,” or their Uzbek equivalents (“yashin tezligida yorib o‘tish,” “hujum to‘lqini”) reinforce the dynamic nature of the game. These metaphorical expressions simplify complex tactical maneuvers, making them more accessible and memorable for a wide audience. Third, metaphorical units in football discourse hold strong pragmatic value in shaping evaluative judgments. Journalists and commentators use metaphors to assess player performance, express criticism or praise, and influence audience perception—e.g., “midfield engine,” “creative architect,” or Uzbek phrases such as “jamoaning yuragi,” “himoyaning devori.” Such metaphors construct symbolic roles for athletes and contribute to narrative cohesion. A comparative examination reveals that while both languages rely on similar conceptual domains (movement, combat, nature, technology), their metaphorical realizations differ due to cultural and stylistic preferences. English discourse tends toward direct, action-oriented imagery, whereas Uzbek discourse incorporates more expressive, culturally resonant symbolism. This indicates that metaphor in football journalism is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a culturally embedded interpretive strategy.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that metaphorical units play a crucial linguo-pragmatic role in football journalism and sports commentary in both English and Uzbek. Metaphors

contribute to creating vivid, emotionally charged, and persuasive narratives that shape audience perception of the game. Far from being mere stylistic embellishments, metaphorical expressions function as powerful cognitive and communicative instruments through which journalists and commentators reinterpret match events, emphasize strategic tension, and reinforce the dramatic nature of football discourse. The comparative analysis has revealed that while English and Uzbek sports media share several conceptual domains—such as warfare, movement, nature, speed, and technology—their metaphorical realizations differ significantly due to cultural, stylistic, and linguistic factors. English football discourse is largely characterized by direct, action-oriented metaphors related to combat, machinery, pressure, and velocity, which highlight the tactical intensity and high tempo of the game. In contrast, Uzbek sports commentary often incorporates metaphors rooted in national identity, folklore imagery, social life, and culturally resonant symbols. These distinctions underscore the influence of culture, collective values, and audience expectations on metaphor selection and interpretation. The study has also shown that metaphorical units in sports discourse serve important pragmatic functions, including evaluating player performance, reinforcing narrative cohesion, framing team dynamics, and stimulating emotional engagement. Expressions such as “midfield engine,” “creative architect,” or their Uzbek equivalents like “jamoaning yuragi” and “maydon ustalari” construct symbolic roles for players and guide the audience’s evaluative stance toward events unfolding on the field. Through metaphor, sports journalists not only describe the game but also shape the interpretative framework within which the audience understands it. Another significant conclusion is that metaphors in football journalism embody the interplay between global and local discourse traditions. While English football language reflects the international, media-driven nature of contemporary sports communication, Uzbek football discourse demonstrates a greater degree of cultural specificity, relying on contextually meaningful and nationally grounded figurative expressions. This highlights the capacity of metaphors to act as markers of cultural identity and as mediators of cross-cultural differences in sports discourse. In summary, metaphorical units form an integral component of football journalism, enhancing the communicative, cognitive, and aesthetic value of sports media texts. They help expand the meaning of match events, activate the reader’s or viewer’s imagination, and elevate the overall expressiveness of commentary and analysis. The results of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of metaphor as a central interpretive mechanism in sports discourse and provide a valuable basis for further research in linguistics, media studies, sports communication, and cross-cultural pragmatics.

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