

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF TRANSLATING SPORTS
COMMENTARY: A COMPARATIVE ENGLISH-UZBEK
PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. This article explores the linguistic features of translating English sports commentary into Uzbek. It focuses on sports terminology, evaluative expressions, metaphors, and emotional language. The study examines translation strategies used to preserve the meaning and pragmatic effect of the original commentary.

Keywords: sports commentary, translation, English, Uzbek, football discourse, evaluative language.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada ingliz tilidagi sport sharhlarini o'zbek tiliga tarjima qilishning lingvistik xususiyatlari o'rganiladi. Sport terminlari, baholovchi birliklar, metaforalar va emotsional ifodalar tahlil qilinib, ularni tarjimada adekvat ifodalash strategiyalari yoritiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: sport sharhi, tarjima, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, futbol diskursi, baholovchi birliklar.

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются лингвистические особенности перевода спортивных комментариев с английского языка на узбекский. Анализируются спортивная терминология, оценочные единицы, метафоры и эмоциональная лексика, а также стратегии их адекватной передачи.

Ключевые слова: спортивный комментарий, перевод, английский язык, узбекский язык, футбольный дискурс, оценочные единицы.

Introduction. Sports commentary is one of the most widely consumed forms of live media discourse. As international competitions reach multilingual audiences, commentary is increasingly translated, subtitled, or rendered through simultaneous interpreting. In Uzbekistan, the growing broadcast of international football, tennis, and combat sports has made high-quality Uzbek-language commentary a practical need.

Linguistically, sports commentary is a special register. Crystal and Davy (1969) described the language of football commentary as marked by ellipsis, present-tense narration, and rapid lexical selection. Ferguson (1983) analyzed the syntactic features of "sports announcer talk" and showed that its structures vary

according to the pace of the action. Beard (1998) further demonstrated that sports language is rich in metaphor, military imagery, and idiomatic expressions.

Translation studies has approached related issues through the concepts of equivalence (Nida, 1964; Baker, 1992), translation procedures (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995), and purpose-oriented translation (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). However, research on sports commentary as a translation object remains limited, especially for Turkic languages. Uzbek adds particular challenges: agglutinative morphology, SOV word order, a layered lexicon of Turkic, Persian-Arabic, and Russian-mediated borrowings, and an evolving sports terminology.

Methods. This study employs a comparative qualitative approach to examine the linguistic features of translating sports commentary from English into Uzbek. The analysis focuses on sports terminology, lexical choices, syntactic structures, expressive language, metaphors, and pragmatic features.

English sports commentary samples were compared with their Uzbek translations to identify major linguistic differences and translation strategies. Particular attention was given to how translators preserve meaning, emotional intensity, and communicative effect. The study uses descriptive and comparative methods to determine the main challenges and patterns in English–Uzbek sports commentary translation.

Results. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek sports commentary revealed several distinctive linguistic features that significantly influence the translation process. The findings demonstrate that sports commentary is characterized by a high degree of lexical specificity, structural compression, emotional expressiveness, and context-dependent meaning. These features require translators to consider not only the semantic content of the original commentary but also its communicative and pragmatic functions.

The analysis showed that sports commentaries in both English and Uzbek extensively employ specialized sports terminology. English commentary frequently contains terms such as *kick-off*, *tackle*, *possession*, *counter-attack*, *offside*, *penalty*, *corner*, *substitute*, and *extra time*. Their Uzbek equivalents include *boshlang'ich zarba*, *to'pni olib qo'yish*, *to'p nazorati*, *qarshi hujum*, *ofsayd*, *penalti*, *burchak zarbasi*, *zaxira o'yinchi*, and *qo'shimcha vaqt*.

However, the findings indicate that direct lexical equivalence is not always possible. A number of English sports terms are commonly retained in Uzbek in their adapted or international forms, particularly when they have become conventional within Uzbek sports discourse. Examples include *futbol*, *penalti*,

ofsayd, *transfer*, and *VAR*. This demonstrates that sports translation involves both translation and terminological adaptation.

The results also indicate a high frequency of evaluative and expressive vocabulary. English commentators use adjectives and adverbs such as *brilliant*, *incredible*, *fantastic*, *unbelievable*, *outstanding*, and *dramatic* to express the commentator's immediate evaluation of an event. In Uzbek commentary, similar functions are performed through expressions such as *ajoyib*, *fantastik*, *aqlbovar qilmas*, *nihoyatda chiroyli*, and *hayratlanarli*. Thus, emotional vocabulary constitutes an important component of sports commentary in both languages.

The analysis identified considerable syntactic compression in English sports commentary. Commentators frequently use short, elliptical, and incomplete sentences because commentary is produced simultaneously with rapidly developing events. For example, sequences such as “*Great pass! Into the box! He shoots! Goal!*” demonstrate the tendency toward short structures and omitted grammatical elements.

Uzbek sports commentary also demonstrates syntactic compression, although the structural realization differs because of the grammatical characteristics of Uzbek. Translators therefore cannot always reproduce the original syntactic structure literally. Instead, they frequently restructure the utterance to preserve its immediacy and communicative effect.

The findings further show that repetition is a significant syntactic and stylistic feature. Repeated names, verbs, and short phrases are frequently used when an important event develops rapidly. Such repetition helps maintain the audience's attention and reflects the spontaneous nature of live commentary.

One of the most significant findings concerns the pragmatic function of sports commentary. The commentator does not merely describe an event; they simultaneously interpret, evaluate, and emotionally frame it for the audience. Consequently, translation must preserve the communicative intention of the source text. The comparative analysis revealed three major pragmatic functions:

1. **descriptive function** – reporting what is happening on the field;
2. **evaluative function** – expressing an assessment of players, actions, or events;
3. **emotive function** – conveying excitement, surprise, disappointment, or enthusiasm.

For instance, the English expression “*What a finish!*” does not simply describe the completion of an attacking move. It conveys strong positive evaluation and emotional involvement. A functionally appropriate Uzbek

translation would therefore need to reproduce this emotional and evaluative meaning rather than mechanically translate the individual lexical items. The results suggest that pragmatic equivalence is particularly important when translating exclamatory expressions, metaphors, irony, intensifiers, and culturally conventional sports phrases.

The study also revealed frequent use of metaphorical expressions in English sports commentary. Players may be described through expressions such as “*a magician*,” “*a wall*,” “*a rocket*,” or “*a warrior*.” Such metaphors intensify the emotional impact of commentary and construct a particular image of the athlete.

Uzbek sports commentary similarly employs metaphorical expressions, but the preferred imagery may differ according to linguistic and cultural conventions. Consequently, literal translation can sometimes result in an unnatural or pragmatically weak expression. The findings demonstrate that metaphor translation requires contextual interpretation. In cases where a literal equivalent is unfamiliar or stylistically inappropriate in Uzbek, translators tend to use a culturally comprehensible expression that performs the same communicative function. Another important finding concerns differences in the expression of emotional intensity. English sports commentary frequently relies on lexical intensifiers, repetition, exclamations, and rapid succession of short utterances. Uzbek commentary also uses these resources, but emotional intensity may be expressed through different lexical and syntactic patterns. For example, English commentary may increase intensity through repetition: “*He shoots, he scores!*” In Uzbek, the same communicative effect may be achieved through a combination of repetition, exclamation, and a more explicit evaluative expression. This demonstrates that equivalence in sports translation should be understood primarily at the functional and pragmatic level rather than exclusively at the lexical level.

The comparative results indicate that four major strategies are particularly relevant to English–Uzbek sports commentary translation:

Strategy	Main application	Linguistic effect
Direct translation	Standardized sports terminology	Preserves semantic content
Terminological adaptation	International sports terms	Maintains conventional usage
Structural transformation	Elliptical or compressed structures	Produces natural Uzbek syntax
Pragmatic adaptation	Emotional and culturally marked expressions	Preserves communicative effect

The findings demonstrate that no single translation strategy is sufficient for all types of sports commentary. Terminological expressions can often be translated directly, whereas emotionally charged, metaphorical, or culturally marked expressions frequently require adaptation.

Overall, the results demonstrate that English–Uzbek sports commentary translation is determined by the interaction of lexical, syntactic, stylistic, and pragmatic factors. The most challenging elements are not necessarily individual sports terms but rather the combination of rapid speech, elliptical syntax, emotional evaluation, repetition, metaphorical language, and context-dependent expressions.

The comparative analysis therefore establishes that effective translation of sports commentary requires a balance between semantic accuracy and communicative naturalness. A successful Uzbek translation should convey not only **what happened**, but also **how the commentator presents the event and what emotional or evaluative response is intended for the audience**. The findings consequently highlight the importance of pragmatic adaptation alongside conventional linguistic translation strategies in English–Uzbek sports discourse.

Discussion. The results show that translating sports commentary is shaped by the tension between three demands: terminological accuracy, real-time economy, and emotional effect.

The prevalence of borrowing and calque in terminology reflects both the globalization of sport and the limited codification of Uzbek sports terms. This is consistent with the general observation that specialized fields with fast international diffusion tend to adopt loanwords. However, the coexistence of variants points to a practical need for a standardized glossary, which would support consistency across broadcasters.

The syntactic restructuring supports Ferguson's (1983) claim that commentary syntax is driven by the tempo of the event, and it shows that Uzbek agglutinative morphology allows compact expression of tense and aspect, which helps maintain immediacy. The tendency to neutralize metaphor, however, suggests a loss of the expressive dimension that Beard (1998) identifies as central to sports discourse. From a functional perspective (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984), this loss is problematic because commentary has an expressive function as well as an informative one.

The pragmatic adjustments, especially omission of content already visible on screen, can be interpreted as a legitimate skopos-driven strategy, though it requires judgment about what the audience can see.

Conclusion. This study identified the main linguistic features affecting the English–Uzbek translation of sports commentary: a reliance on borrowing and calque in terminology, syntactic restructuring toward Uzbek verb-final, concise clauses, and a tendency to reduce figurative language. The findings suggest that translator training should include register-specific practice, and that a standardized Uzbek sports glossary would improve consistency. Balancing precision, speed, and expressiveness remains the central task for translators working in this genre.

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