

Pragmatic and Linguistic Features of English and Uzbek Football Discourse across Media Platforms

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the pragmatic organization of English and Uzbek football discourse across television commentary, live-text reporting, sports-analytical articles, X, and Telegram. The study is based on a purpose-built corpus of 130 source texts connected with the 2022 and 2026 FIFA World Cups, comprising 63 English and 67 Uzbek materials. The analysis combines comparative discourse analysis, pragmatic interpretation, contextual reading, and descriptive coding. Six central strategies are operationalized: evaluation, dramatization, heroization, identification, emotional impact, and audience engagement; irony and strategic-analytical orientation are treated as supporting categories. The findings show that evaluation constitutes the pragmatic core of the selected corpus, while its linguistic realization depends on medium and genre. Television commentary intensifies immediacy through intonation, repetition, exclamation, and spontaneous rhyme; live-text uses episodic sentences, concise metaphors, and statistical commentary; analytical articles guide interpretation through headlines, compositional segmentation, historical framing, and conditional contrast; X favors explicit evaluation, symbolic naming, hashtags, and public identity, whereas Telegram relies more heavily on ellipsis, local humor, precedent memory, and shared contextual knowledge. A major result is the deictic re-centering of Uzbek football discourse in 2026: external observation gives way to inclusive forms such as “we,” “our national team,” and “our people.” A control comparison of

The Guardian live-texts on Uzbekistan and England further demonstrates that discourse patterns are shaped not only by language, but also by team status, historical memory, audience expectation, genre, and platform.

Keywords: Football discourse, pragmatics, evaluation, dramatization, heroization, identification, live commentary, live-text, sports journalism, X, Telegram, deictic center.

1. INTRODUCTION

Football discourse is one of the most dynamic forms of contemporary media communication. It reports sporting action, but it also interprets, evaluates, dramatizes, and culturally reframes that action. A goal may be presented as a technical result, a historic turning point, a national achievement, a heroic act, or a collective trauma. The choice among these meanings depends on the speaker or writer, the audience, the communicative situation, and the media platform through which the event is represented.

Pragmatic analysis is therefore essential for explaining how football media does more than transmit information. Following Morris, pragmatics concerns the relation between signs and their interpreters [1]. Austin and Searle demonstrate that utterances perform actions rather than merely describe reality [2; 3], while Grice shows that much communicative meaning is reconstructed through context, implication, and shared knowledge [4]. In football discourse, these principles are visible in evaluative adjectives, rhetorical questions, ironic ellipsis, metaphorical headlines, collective pronouns, chants, and short emotional reactions. Such units guide the audience toward a preferred interpretation of the match, player, team, or tournament.

The media environment further modifies this pragmatic effect. Television commentary unfolds under real-time pressure and combines words with image, sound, pause, and intonation. Live-text reproduces immediacy in written form through time stamps, short episodic updates, statistics, and compact metaphors. Sports articles reconstruct events retrospectively,

using headlines, sections, evidence, and authorial evaluation. Social media compresses interpretation into short posts, emojis, hashtags, ellipsis, and forms of direct audience engagement. Bell, Whannel, Boyle, Rowe, Zappavigna, and Crystal have shown that news language, televised sport, sports journalism, and digital discourse are shaped by genre, audience design, and platform affordances [7-12].

The purpose of this article is to determine how evaluation, dramatization, heroization, identification, emotional impact, and audience engagement are realized in English and Uzbek football discourse across different media platforms. The analysis addresses three questions. First, which pragmatic strategies are most active in the selected corpus? Second, how does the same broad strategy change across television, live-text, analytical articles, X, and Telegram? Third, how did Uzbekistan's participation in the 2026 World Cup alter the deictic and identificational structure of Uzbek football discourse?

The article develops the third chapter of the author's doctoral research, but narrows the focus to the interaction of pragmatic strategy, media form, and audience position. Its central argument is that differences between English and Uzbek football discourse cannot be attributed to language alone. They emerge from the combined effect of language, cultural memory, genre, time pressure, platform design, team status, and audience expectation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PRAGMATIC MEANING IN FOOTBALL MEDIA

A pragmatic strategy may be understood as a recurrent way of organizing linguistic material in order to produce a communicative effect. In football discourse, the referential content of an utterance is only one layer of meaning. The same event can be framed as deserved success, painful failure, heroic resistance, tactical error, national celebration, or comic absurdity. The chosen frame influences how the audience evaluates the event and with whom it emotionally identifies.

Evaluation is the most general strategy because almost every football text positions a player, team, decision, or result on a

positive or negative scale. Dramatization organizes events as danger, turning point, suspense, collapse, revival, or final blow. Heroization elevates a participant by assigning exceptional ability, historical importance, moral resilience, or symbolic status. Identification links the event to a collective “we,” a nation, region, club, generation, or fan community. Emotional impact intensifies affect through exclamation, repetition, rhythm, phonetic play, graphic elongation, or metaphor. Audience engagement directly or indirectly invites the recipient to judge, predict, remember, support, or complete an implied meaning.

The distinction between explicit and implicit evaluation is especially important. English X posts in the corpus frequently employ overt epithets such as “sensational victory,” “10/10 display,” or “cult hero.” Uzbek Telegram posts often leave the judgement partly unsaid, as in “Marokash, bravo! Lukaku,...” (“Morocco, bravo! Lukaku,...”). The ellipsis does not eliminate evaluation; it transfers part of the interpretive work to an audience presumed to know the match context. In Gricean terms, the effect depends on implicature and shared knowledge [4].

Metaphor also performs pragmatic work. Lakoff and Johnson’s view of metaphor as a conceptual mechanism rather than a decorative figure is directly relevant to football media [13]. Expressions such as “back from the dead,” “there’s the dagger,” *ustigatuproqtortish* (“to cover with earth”), and *Wissavatugadibugissa* (“Wissa, and the story is over”) do not merely embellish description. They establish models of death, injury, burial, and narrative closure, thereby increasing the emotional and evaluative force of the event.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical basis is a targeted bilingual corpus of 130 source texts connected with the 2022 and 2026 FIFA World Cups. The English section contains 63 texts and the Uzbek section 67. Of the total, 122 texts form the principal comparative corpus, while eight England live-texts from *The Guardian* constitute a control corpus. The control component makes it possible to keep language, outlet, and genre relatively stable while examining

whether the historical status of the team changes the narrative frame.

Table 1. *Composition of the research corpus*

Corpus component	English	Uzbek	Total
2022 base corpus	32	59	91
Uzbekistan 2026 audio-video commentaries	0	2	2
English live-texts of Uzbekistan's 2026 matches	3	0	3
2026 analytical articles	5	6	11
England 2026 control live-texts	8	0	8
New English X posts	15	0	15
Total	63	67	130

The 2022 base corpus consists of television and written commentary, analytical articles, fifteen English X posts, and thirty-eight Uzbek Telegram posts. The 2026 extension includes two Uzbek audio-video commentaries, three English live-texts of Uzbekistan's matches, eleven analytical articles, eight England control live-texts, and fifteen new English X posts. The new X material brings the English social-media subcorpus to thirty posts, which is functionally closer to the thirty-eight Uzbek Telegram texts.

A source text and an analytical fragment were counted separately. A full commentary, live-text, article, or social-media post was registered as a source text. A microtext displaying a cultural code, evaluative stance, pragmatic strategy, or metaphorical model was treated as an analytical fragment. One source could therefore yield several fragments, and one fragment could receive more than one pragmatic code. Frequency figures are descriptive indicators of the selected material, not inferential claims about all English or Uzbek football discourse.

The methods included comparative discourse analysis, pragmatic analysis, contextual-interpretive analysis, and descriptive coding. The 2022 corpus was frequency-coded, while the heterogeneous 2026 extension was examined primarily through functional presence and close contextual analysis. This decision reduced the methodological distortion that would arise from treating a ninety-minute commentary, a long analytical article, and a short post as statistically equivalent units.

Table 2. *Operational model of the central pragmatic strategies*

Strategy	Operational formula	Typical markers	Primary effect
Evaluation	referent + positive/negative marker	epithet, contrast, judgement, ironic nomination	forms approval, criticism, or mixed assessment
Dramatization	event + danger/turning point + intensifier	suspense, death/revival metaphor, final blow, climax	raises the emotional stakes of the event
Heroization	participant + exceptional quality + historical/biographical frame	hero, leader, saviour, record, legacy	turns the player or coach into a symbolic figure
Identification	deictic/collective name + shared value	we, our team, nation, regional label, emblem	links the audience to a team or community
Emotional impact	exclamation/ repetition/ rhythm + affective reaction	intonation, elongated form, rhyme, interjection	produces excitement, sympathy, anxiety, or relief
Audience engagement	address/question/ imperative + shared context	rhetorical question, direct appeal, poll, ellipsis	makes the recipient an active interpreter

Two supporting categories were also used. Irony and humor cover evaluation achieved through incongruity, ellipsis, wordplay, or cultural precedent. Strategic-analytical orientation applies when the match is explained as a tactical system, calculation, spatial mechanism, or managerial problem. The formulas in Table 2 are not mathematical laws. They are operational devices that support consistent coding and transparent interpretation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. *Evaluation as the pragmatic core*

The 2022 baseline shows evaluation to be the most frequently recorded strategy. It appeared in 89 coded instances, followed by emotional impact with 66, dramatization with 57, audience orientation with 51, heroization with 42, identification with 41,

irony or humor with 37, and strategic-analytical orientation with 28. These totals overlap because a single fragment may perform several functions. The figures nevertheless demonstrate that football media rarely presents action in a neutral manner. It consistently directs the recipient toward an attitude.

Table 3. *Pragmatic strategies in the 2022 baseline corpus*

Strategy	Recorded instances	Typical media realization
Evaluation	89	rapid reaction in commentary; authorial position in articles; explicit epithet on X; ironic or colloquial judgement on Telegram
Emotional impact	66	intonation, exclamation, repetition, graphic elongation, affective vocabulary
Dramatization	57	danger, suspense, revival, collapse, decisive moment
Audience orientation	51	headline, rhetorical question, direct address, ellipsis, shared context
Heroization	42	historical or biographical elevation of a player or coach
Identification	41	nation, region, team emblem, collective pronoun, fan community
Irony / humor	37	hyperbole, wordplay, precedent memory, comic ellipsis
Strategic-analytical orientation	28	tactical scheme, spatial control, managerial calculation

Evaluation changes form across media. In live commentary it is often immediate and affective. In analytical prose it is embedded in evidence, comparison, and headline structure. On X it frequently appears as an overt epithet, while Telegram may make the judgement recoverable only through ellipsis or a culturally familiar joke. The English sentence “They could play for six millenniums and Mexico wouldn’t score” is a hyperbolic criticism rather than a temporal statement [14]. The Uzbek phrase *Lautaroningfoydasitegdiinsoniyatga* (“Lautaro has finally benefited humanity”) similarly exaggerates the value of a useful action, but its comic force comes from colloquial overstatement.

The difference is not a simple opposition between explicit English and implicit Uzbek. Both strategies occur in both

languages. The tendency observed in the selected material is more precise: English sports writing often packages evaluation in concise journalistic wit, whereas Uzbek commentary and Telegram more frequently draw on spoken rhythm, local associations, and shared cultural context. The relevant unit of comparison is therefore not language in isolation, but language operating within a particular genre and platform.

4.2. Dramatization and emotional impact in live commentary and live-text

Television commentary and live-text are the closest media forms to the unfolding match, yet they create immediacy through different semiotic resources. Television commentary combines lexical choice with volume, pitch, pause, acceleration, and visual synchrony. Live-text must reproduce temporal pressure in writing, relying on short episodic sentences, time markers, statistical inserts, and compact metaphors.

The English live-text phrase “there’s the dagger” frames a decisive DR Congo goal against Uzbekistan as a final wound (IShM-26-COD-F03; [21]). The expression is short, visually economical, and suited to written real-time reporting. By contrast, the Uzbek audio fragment *Vaaa! Wissavatugadibuqissa* (“Wissa, and the story is over”) combines exclamation, rhyme, and narrative closure. The proper name *Wissais* phonically paired with *qissa*, “story,” so the goal becomes both the end of the match narrative and an instance of spontaneous sound play. The difference illustrates medium-conditioned pragmatics: the English live-text maximizes written compression, while the Uzbek broadcast exploits phonetic rhythm and voice.

A related Uzbek example, *Mbukuavvalqildifol, keyinurdigol, hisobhali ham bir-u nol* (“Mbuku first committed a foul, then scored a goal; the score is still one-nil”), organizes foul, goal, and nol into a rhythmic chain. The translation cannot reproduce the original phonetic parallelism. In the broadcast, rhyme performs three functions at once: it compresses the event sequence, reduces tension through humor, and makes the fragment memorable. This confirms that the pragmatic force of oral

commentary cannot be fully reconstructed from lexical meaning alone.

English live-text also employs balanced evaluation. Uzbekistan's actions are described through phrases such as "a touch of class," "commendably," and "not faded" [19-21]. These expressions preserve the team's agency even in defeat. The discourse does not deny the result, but it prevents the losing side from becoming a purely passive object. Uzbek commentary performs a comparable face-saving function through historical analogy and consolation. The statement that many teams lose all three matches at their first tournament reframes failure as a stage of development rather than a final judgement.

Emotional self-disclosure is particularly strong in the 2026 Uzbek material. The fragment *Dada, men ko'ryapmanbuo'yinni! Yig'lab yuboraydeyapman. Oilaviydardbu* ("Dad, I am watching this match. I feel close to tears. This is a family sorrow") shifts the World Cup from institutional sports history into personal and generational memory. The address *dada* creates an intimate family axis, while "family sorrow" implies that the long wait for participation has been inherited across generations. Pragmatically, the commentator narrows the distance between professional broadcaster and audience by presenting himself as a participant in the same national emotion.

4.3. *Heroization, identification, and audience orientation in analytical articles*

Analytical articles do not share the temporal pressure of live commentary. Their pragmatic influence is produced through retrospective selection, headline framing, compositional segmentation, historical comparison, and evidence. The author can decide which player becomes the interpretive center, which statistics count as relevant, and which historical narrative gives the result meaning.

In the English 2022 materials, Messi is framed through biography and historical completion. Expressions such as "a cause, a rebellion," "one last dance," and a career that repeatedly "gets back up again" construct him as a figure whose sporting value extends beyond a single match [17; 18]. Heroization here is

not limited to praise. It places the athlete in a narrative of accumulated blows, endurance, unfinished destiny, and final legitimacy. The conditional contrast “If he fails... the shadow lies across his career; if he wins, it is a glorious culmination” makes the final a judgement on an entire career rather than a single result [16].

Uzbek analytical articles often combine strategic evidence with culturally accessible metaphor. *Shukurov, yashirinlider* (“Shukurov, the hidden leader”) and *jamoaningmotorivako'zlari* (“the engine and eyes of the team”) construct the player as both mechanical force and perceptual center [28]. *Portugal iyaxatonikechirmaydi* (“Portugal does not forgive mistakes”) personifies the opponent as a strict moral agent, while the recommendation to wait for set pieces “like a vigilant hunter” turns tactical opportunity into prey [29]. Such expressions translate professional analysis into vivid conceptual models without abandoning argumentation.

Audience orientation is visible in article architecture. The Guardian headline “Argentina v France: where the World Cup final could be won and lost” prepares the reader to interpret the match as a set of decisive tactical mechanisms [16]. Sections such as ‘Stopping Messi,’ ‘Stopping Mbappé,’ and ‘Stopping Griezmann’ transform the final into an analytical map. Uzbek articles use question-based organization, for example, *Nega Xorvatiyafinalgayo'loladi?* (“Why will Croatia reach the final?”). The question creates an information gap and positions the reader as an addressee awaiting reasons rather than as a passive receiver of a completed judgement.

The 2026 English analytical materials employ three recurrent frames. Opta Analyst presents qualification as the result of a “nationwide vision,” integrating youth development, institutional investment, and historical stadium memory [22]. Reuters connects the “defining moment” to “shared pride and joy,” combining institutional evidence with national identification [23]. FIFA organizes the story as a movement from “heartbreak” to qualification [24], while BBC uses a question-and-answer format to balance positive characterization with tactical limitations [25]. Houston Chronicle broadens the event beyond

the score by describing *do'ppi*, *plov*, *chapan*, music, diaspora, and supporter ritual [26]. Together, these sources show that international representation of Uzbekistan is not limited to the model of a weak debutant; it also includes national development, cultural performance, and global visibility.

Uzbek analytical writing makes national responsibility more explicit. Phrases such as *butunmillatsiz bilan* (“the whole nation is with you”), *umumxalq bayrami* (“a nationwide celebration”), and *kattadars* (“a great lesson”) bring the result into a collective ethical field [27-30]. Victory, defeat, and tactical weakness are evaluated not only as sporting facts, but as experiences belonging to the national community. The authorial “we” does not simply denote grammatical plurality. It organizes responsibility, expectation, consolation, and shared memory.

4.4. *The deictic re-centering of Uzbek football discourse in 2026*

One of the clearest results of the diachronic comparison is a change in the deictic center of Uzbek football discourse. In the 2022 material, Uzbekistan did not participate in the World Cup. Uzbek commentators and journalists discussed Argentina, France, Morocco, Croatia, Messi, and other external subjects from the position of observers and fans. The discourse was culturally localized, but the primary actors remained “they.”

In 2026, direct participation activated inclusive and possessive forms such as *biz* (“we”), *bizni* (“us”), *termajamoamiz* (“our national team”), *xalqimiz* (“our people”), and *yigitlarimiz* (“our players”). The statement *ko'ziqongato'lgan Portugaliyabiznikutib turibdi* (“an enraged Portugal is waiting for us”) positions the future opponent relative to an inclusive national center. *Kongohozir haqiqiy qoplonlardekyugurdi, endi biz haqiqiy bo'rilardek oldingachiqishimiz kerak* (“Congo ran like real Leopards; now we must advance like real Wolves”) combines the official team nicknames with direct mobilization. The shift is therefore both deictic and pragmatic: the narrator, audience, and national team are reorganized as one communicative side.

This re-centering should not be treated as a purely grammatical observation. It changes the structure of evaluation. When the team is external, commentary may admire, criticize, or

humorously localize it. When the team is “ours,” evaluation becomes linked to loyalty, responsibility, face-saving, and collective emotion. The discourse must negotiate the tension between professional criticism and national solidarity. The 2026 material does so through consolation, historical analogy, family memory, mobilizing imperatives, and inclusive pronouns.

4.5. *Social media pragmatics: X and Telegram*

X and Telegram perform similar broad functions: both provide rapid evaluation, audience participation, and social resonance. Their pragmatic styles, however, differ in the selected corpus. X generally addresses a wider and more public audience, while Telegram presupposes stronger continuity between channel author and regular readers.

In the thirty English X posts, evaluation is commonly explicit. Short phrases such as “sensational victory,” “first Uzbek player,” “cult hero,” “Three Lions,” “England badge,” “World Cup winning shirts,” and “second star” compress evaluation and identification into highly visible symbolic units. The 2026 post announcing Uzbekistan among the debuting nations uses flags and the concept of first participation to place the country within global football recognition [33]. The phrase “cult hero” reinterprets Abdukodir Khusanov through English club-fan culture, while “Three Lions” and “England badge” activate heraldic memory and national representation [34-37].

Uzbek Telegram uses a more implicit and locally anchored model. *Penaltideganso‘znixorvatgaalmashtirishnitaklifetaman* (“I propose replacing the word penalty with Croat”) praises Croatia’s penalty record through mock lexical reform. “Braziliyalik Bajooo” invokes Roberto Baggio’s famous missed penalty as precedent memory. *Raqamlarso‘zlaganda...* (“When numbers speak...”) allows statistics to perform heroization without an overt epithet. In these cases, the post is brief because the audience is expected to supply the missing cultural or football context.

Hashtags and emojis on X connect a post to a global topic and visually signal affect. Telegram relies more on ellipsis, elongated spelling, colloquial syntax, and authorial voice. The

contrast is functional rather than absolute. English X also contains internal fan criticism and historical coding, while Uzbek Telegram can include statistical and strategic analysis. The key difference lies in the audience model: X constructs a public, searchable, and potentially viral address; Telegram more often constructs a semi-stable community sharing previous discourse and local interpretive habits.

4.6. *Platform-conditioned pragmatics and the control comparison*

The findings confirm that the media platform is not a passive carrier. It conditions the selection of linguistic resources and the expected mode of audience response. Television favors prosody and simultaneity. Live-text favors episodic compression and written suspense. Analytical articles favor retrospective explanation and compositional guidance. Social media favors rapid judgement and participatory circulation.

Table 4. *Platform-specific pragmatic profiles in the selected corpus*

Medium	Dominant resources	Leading strategies	Audience effect
Television commentary	intonation, pause, repetition, exclamation, spontaneous rhyme	evaluation, dramatization, emotional impact	shared immediacy, suspense, collective feeling
Live-text	time stamp, short update, statistic, compact metaphor	rapid evaluation, episodic dramatization	written immediacy and guided match-following
Analytical article	headline, sectioning, evidence, contrast, historical frame	heroization, identification, audience orientation	retrospective interpretation and argument
X	epithet, hashtag, emoji, symbolic name, short quotation	explicit evaluation, public identification, heroization	global visibility, viral recognition, public debate
Telegram	ellipsis, local humor, colloquial wording, precedent memory	implicit evaluation, irony, proximity to audience	shared-context interpretation and community intimacy

The control comparison of *The Guardian* live-texts is methodologically important. Uzbekistan's matches are framed

through debut, first goal, first lead, resilience, and entry into football history [19-21]. England's matches in the same outlet and genre are more often organized through record, payback, pressure, rescue, heartbreak, and the memory of previous tournaments. Because language, outlet, and genre are held relatively stable, the contrast indicates that the narrative model also depends on the historical status of the team and the audience's expectations. Uzbekistan is represented as a new subject entering history; England is represented as an established football power carrying historical burden.

This result also requires caution in the bilingual comparison. English live-text and Uzbek audio-video commentary are not identical genres. Similarly, the English social-media material comes from X, whereas the Uzbek material comes largely from Telegram. The observed differences should therefore be formulated as tendencies within the selected English X corpus, the selected Uzbek Telegram corpus, the selected English live-texts, and the selected Uzbek broadcast commentaries. Such formulation avoids turning platform effects into unsupported claims about language as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The analysis supports the following conclusions. First, evaluation is the pragmatic center of the selected football corpus. Other strategies, including dramatization, heroization, identification, emotional impact, audience engagement, irony, and strategic explanation, frequently operate as specialized forms or extensions of evaluation.

Second, media form changes the realization of the same broad strategy. Television commentary intensifies experience through prosody, repetition, exclamation, and rhyme. Live-text produces immediacy through short written updates, statistics, and compact metaphor. Analytical articles influence interpretation through headline framing, compositional segmentation, historical narrative, and evidence. X favors public and explicit symbolic evaluation; Telegram favors context-dependent, colloquial, and often elliptical interpretation.

Third, the English and Uzbek materials share common pragmatic goals, but often activate different cultural and stylistic resources. English texts in the corpus more frequently use concise journalistic metaphor, professional-statistical framing, historical biography, heraldic symbolism, and global public address. Uzbek texts more frequently employ spoken rhythm, family and generational memory, local humor, culturally familiar metaphor, direct solidarity, and implicit evaluation reconstructed through shared context.

Fourth, Uzbekistan's 2026 participation changed the deictic structure of Uzbek football discourse. The movement from external observation to inclusive "we" reorganized evaluation around national responsibility, loyalty, consolation, mobilization, and collective memory. This deictic re-centering is a key lingvopragmatic result because it shows how participation in a global event changes not only the topic of discourse, but also the speaker's position and the audience's role.

Fifth, the control comparison demonstrates that discourse variation cannot be explained by language alone. The same English outlet and live-text genre frame Uzbekistan through debut and new history, while England is framed through legacy, pressure, record, and historical disappointment. Team status and audience expectation therefore function alongside language and platform as determinants of pragmatic choice.

The study is limited by the unequal length of genres and by the fact that English X and Uzbek Telegram are functionally comparable but technically different platforms. For this reason, frequency results are interpreted descriptively and qualitative claims are tied to the selected corpus. Future research may expand the audio-video English commentary component, compare the same social platform in both languages, and examine how pragmatic strategies develop longitudinally across tournaments.

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