



THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS AND EXCHANGING EXPERIENCE IN SPORT

Adaxamova Muazzamxon Maxammadismoil qizi
Languages Teacher Department of Practice Foreign
Andijan State Pedagogical Institute
e-mail: Muazzambrilliant!@gmail.com
phone: +998979921292

Abstract

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the role and importance of foreign languages, particularly English, in the professional activities of athletes. In the context of globalization, sport is becoming not only a means of physical preparation but also a field that encompasses intercultural communication and international exchange of experience. Under such circumstances, knowledge of a foreign language enables athletes to successfully participate in international competitions, access scientific and technical information, and communicate effectively with coaches and other athletes. The article highlights an integrative approach to language teaching for athletes based on modern educational methods such as CLIL, PBL, and TBL. It also presents the outcomes of practical experiments, surveys, and the analysis of experimental textbooks conducted in sports educational institutions in Uzbekistan, thereby substantiating the real results of language learning.

Keywords: Sports education, foreign language, English, CLIL, communicative competence, international exchange of experience, athletes, methodological approach, language and professional integration, PBL, TBL.

Introduction

In the context of globalization, sport has become not only a means of demonstrating physical strength and skills, but also an important platform for



international cooperation, cultural exchange, and the sharing of experience. Under such conditions, the knowledge of foreign languages—especially English—has become an essential factor for athletes in terms of their professional growth, representation on the international stage, and effective exchange of experience. An athlete who knows a foreign language can communicate freely with coaches, correctly understand the technical documentation of international competitions, read scientific articles, and present their professional activity to an international audience¹. This article explores the role of language in sport, its significance in achieving success and sharing experience, as well as the pedagogical and methodological aspects of the topic based on scientific sources.

Literature Review

Knowing a foreign language provides athletes with the following advantages:

1. Opportunities to participate in international competitions – Regulations, communication with referees, press conferences, and international press releases are all conducted through language communication [2].
2. Learning from international coaching and athlete experience – Michael Krüger highlights in his research that mastering international sports training technologies requires a good command of English [3].
3. Access to foreign scientific literature and conducting research – Thomas Reilly recommends that sports physiology and training-related scientific work be conducted in English for broader impact and understanding [4].
4. Participation in professional development and grant programs – Organizations such as the IOC and FIFA offer their training, grant, and project programs exclusively in English [5].

Moreover, recent years have shown the effectiveness of teaching sport and language in an integrated way using the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach. Coyle, Marsh, and Hood have theoretically substantiated the potential of this model to simultaneously develop both subject-specific and language competencies [6].

Research Methodology

In leading international sports organizations such as FIFA, UEFA, and the IOC (International Olympic Committee), English is recognized as the official working



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language. Since 2021, participation in the UEFA Pro Coaching Licence program (the highest coaching qualification) requires a minimum B2 level of English proficiency. The IOC's Athlete365 platform, which offers training, grants, and educational resources, is available only in English, French, and Spanish. As for the correlation between foreign language proficiency and athletic success, The Guardian (2020) analysis revealed that multilingual football players are at an advantage in international transfers—for example, Cristiano Ronaldo speaks four languages (Portuguese, English, Spanish, and Italian). Similarly, tennis stars Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic communicate freely in 4–6 languages, which allows them to engage in commercial deals, international media interviews, and global representation outside of sport. In Uzbekistan, several practical initiatives have been introduced to integrate language and sport. Since 2022, the National Olympic Committee of Uzbekistan has launched a campaign titled "The Olympian is Learning a Language," where English classes are taught in sports schools using professional sports terminology. At the University of Physical Education and Sport, a specialized course titled "Sport English" has been offered since 2023, combining sports science and English language instruction. Several sports federations (e.g., boxing, football, athletics) have emphasized the need for interpreters due to athletes' limited language proficiency, further highlighting the necessity of learning foreign languages. Additionally, a wide range of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) resources such as "English for Football", "English for Athletics", and "English for Coaches" are used in the UK to teach English to athletes and coaches in relevant contexts. One of the important initiatives in Uzbekistan is the original textbook "Successful English Learning in Sport", which integrates language instruction in the context of sports using educational strategies such as Bloom's Taxonomy, CLIL, CBL (Case-Based Learning), TBL (Task-Based Learning), and ABL (Activity-Based Learning). This resource has been positively recognized by university instructors and researchers as a breakthrough in contextual foreign language education for athletes.



Analysis and Results

At the 2023 Asian Games, 30% of Uzbek athletes were unable to give interviews in English, which resulted in limited international media coverage of their participation. Moreover, 60% of our national sports federation representatives reported using interpreter services when engaging in partnerships with China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and European countries. In contrast, those with language skills participated directly in negotiations and exchanges. Observations and experimental studies conducted with students majoring in physical education in Uzbek higher education institutions revealed the following outcomes: Students from the experimental group, who learned English using professional texts, sports terminology, and competition scenarios, increased their ability to read international sports news by 80%. They were also prepared to express their opinions orally in English within their specialization (in discussions, presentations, and Q&A sessions) [7]. According to a survey of athlete students, 78% considered foreign language skills essential to their professional career, and 65% expressed a desire to engage in communication with foreign athletes [7]. Furthermore, experimental lessons based on the “Successful English Learning in Sport” textbook demonstrated the possibility of simultaneously developing both language proficiency and professional skills [8].

Conclusion

In conclusion, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a factor ensuring competitiveness in sport. Proficiency in a foreign language allows athletes to: represent themselves internationally; stay informed about scientific and methodological developments; compare and improve their practices with those of other specialists; study, work, and receive professional training abroad. Therefore, it is crucial to teach foreign languages in a career-oriented manner to students in the field of sports. Instruction should be delivered in an interactive environment using methods such as CLIL, PBL (Problem-Based Learning), and TBL (Task-Based Learning) [9].



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