



Language, Identity, and Motivation in Albanian Sports Slogans: A Linguistic and Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the linguistic and motivational strategies employed in sports slogans used by Albanian teams, federations, and fan groups. Drawing on a corpus of 10 recent slogans from official campaigns, national team mottos, club mottos, sponsor campaigns, and fan chants, the research combines qualitative syntactic and stylistic analysis to explore how language constructs collective identity, national pride, and motivation. Findings reveal that declarative structures dominate official and federation slogans, while imperatives are prevalent in fan and motivational campaigns, creating direct engagement and action-oriented appeals. Stylistic devices such as parallelism, metaphor, personification, and alliteration enhance memorability, emotional resonance, and identity expression. Lexical choices emphasise unity and belonging, with recurring words such as we, one, nation, and Albania. English is strategically used in federation slogans for international reach, whereas Albanian slogans evoke local pride and emotional attachment. Overall, Albanian sports slogans function as performative and motivational texts that inspire action, foster solidarity, and symbolically represent national and team identity.

KEYWORDS: sports discourse, motivational slogans, Albanian, linguistic analysis, ESP, national identity.

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Introduction

Sports slogans are a distinctive feature of the discourse surrounding teams, federations, and fan communities, serving both motivational and identity-constructing functions. They are concise, memorable, and rhetorically powerful, often combining lexical, syntactic, and stylistic strategies to inspire athletes, unify supporters, and promote national pride. Within the broader field of sports discourse, slogans serve as symbolic and affective tools that reinforce belonging and shared values within communities of practice (Lebedev & Tsybina, 2024). In Albania, football and other sports increasingly use slogans in both Albanian and English to convey values such as unity, perseverance, and national identity, addressing domestic audiences while also reaching international observers.

Previous research has shown that sports discourse constitutes a distinctive linguistic genre characterised by its emotional intensity, ritualised expressions, and persuasive power (Lebedev & Tsybina, 2024). Within this genre, slogans serve as high-impact linguistic units that encapsulate ideological and cultural messages. For instance, Wu and Liu (2014) analysed Olympic Games slogans from 1984 to 2012 and demonstrated how they communicate broader ideological frameworks such as excellence, peace, and global solidarity. Similarly, more recent work by Zhang (2025) revealed that short slogans play a significant role in constructing and reaffirming national identity through collective linguistic performance in sports microblog discourse. These findings highlight that slogans in sports contexts are not merely decorative linguistic elements but carriers of socio-cultural and ideological meaning.

Beyond the sporting domain, the study of slogans has been approached through various discourse-analytic frameworks. Research on educational and institutional slogans has shown how such expressions encode aspirational values and shape identity positions within their communities (Dabadi, 2024; Ricahyono, Nurkamto, & Marmanto, 2021). Similarly, studies of university slogans in Nigeria found that they linguistically represent “significant others” and promote institutional ideals through syntactic parallelism and metaphor (Udo et al., 2021). These analyses, although outside the sports field, demonstrate that slogans are effective vehicles for constructing and communicating identity through stylistic and structural linguistic choices.

However, while slogan studies have gained attention in domains such as education and branding, research on sports slogans as a specific linguistic phenomenon remains limited. Most existing studies focus on major international events, such as the Olympic Games (Wu & Liu, 2014), or global sports brands (e.g., Nike’s motivational rhetoric; Pratiwi, 2022), leaving smaller national contexts underexplored. Moreover, there is a lack of attention to bilingual or multilingual sports slogans, particularly in countries such as Albania, where English serves as a global lingua franca for sports communication. The intersection of sports discourse and English for Specific Purposes (ESP)—primarily how slogans reflect communicative practices in sports management, marketing, and fan engagement—has received little scholarly attention.

To address these gaps, the present study analyses a corpus of recent Albanian sports slogans in both Albanian and English. It investigates their lexical, syntactic, and stylistic features and examines how these linguistic elements contribute to the functions of motivation, unity, and identity construction in sports communication. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to the emerging intersection of sports discourse analysis and ESP research. Furthermore, it highlights the interplay among language, culture, and motivation in the Albanian sports context, offering insights relevant to sports linguistics, intercultural communication, and English for Specific Purposes teaching.

Research Aim and Methodology

The corpus for this study consists of 10 sports slogans collected from recent Albanian campaigns, official federation announcements, national team mottos, club slogans, sponsor campaigns, and fan chants. Sources include the Albanian Football Federation (FSHF), UEFA promotional materials, club websites, social media fan groups, and news coverage. Both Albanian and English slogans were included to examine domestic and international communicative strategies.

The study employs a qualitative linguistic approach, combining syntactic, lexical, and stylistic analyses to investigate the features and functions of the slogans.

Syntactic Analysis: Classification of slogans into declaratives, imperatives, and rhetorical questions to identify patterns related to motivation and identity.

Lexical Analysis: Examination of recurring words and semantic fields highlighting themes of unity, national pride, and motivation.

Stylistic Analysis: Identification of rhetorical devices, including parallelism, metaphor, personification, alliteration, and brevity to assess memorability and emotional resonance.

Pragmatic Analysis: Evaluation of intended audience (domestic vs. international) and communicative function (motivation, unity, national pride).

Each slogan was systematically reviewed, with linguistic features, syntactic structures, and stylistic devices coded. Findings were tabulated to identify patterns and relationships between form, function, and audience orientation.

Research Results

Table 1

Corpus analysis of selected slogans.

Slogan	Syntactic Pattern	Stylistic Device(s)	Function / Effect
Football unites us, Albania welcomes Europe	Declarative (compound)	Alliteration, Parallelism, Metaphor	Enhances rhythm, memorability, conveys football

			as unifying force
Where is there anyone like you, my Albania?	Rhetorical question	Personification, Emotional appeal	Nation addressed as “you”; evokes reflection and pride
We are One	Declarative (simple)	Brevity / Ellipsis, Unity lexicon	Short, memorable; emphasizes collective identity
Forca Shqipëri! (Go Albania!)	Imperative	Motivational / Call to action	Directly mobilizes fans
Një Komb, Një Kombëtare. (One nation, one national team.)	Declarative with parallelism	Parallelism, Metaphor	Fuses nation and team identity; rhythmically memorable
Përjetë me ty, Partizon! (Forever with you, Partizan!)	Declarative / elliptical	Emotional appeal	Signals loyalty and long-term commitment
Një jetë, dy ngjyra, një skuader. (One life, two colors, one team)	Declarative with parallelism	Parallelism, Metaphor	Strengthens club identity and tradition
Albania welcomes Europe	Declarative	Simple structure, motivational	Internationally understandable; welcoming
Train insane or remain the same	Imperative / conditional	Motivational, Rhyme	Encourages effort and self-improvement
Dream big	Imperative	Motivational	Concise, aspirational, and memorable

Analysis of recurrent lexical items highlights themes of unity, pride, and collective identity. Words such as *we*, *one*, *nation*, *Albania*, *team*, and *together* appear across slogans, reflecting the overarching motivational and identity-building goals. English is strategically used in slogans aimed at international audiences, whereas Albanian is used to evoke local emotional resonance, particularly in fan chants and club mottos.

Slogans serve as performative acts that motivate both players and fans. They construct collective identity, connecting athletes, supporters, and the nation. Stylistic and syntactic choices are domain-specific, tuned to the purpose of each slogan: official/federation, team, sponsor, or fan. Parallelism, brevity, and metaphor ensure that slogans are memorable, emotionally engaging, and culturally resonant.

Discussions

The analysis of Albanian sports slogans demonstrates that language plays a crucial role in motivating athletes, engaging fans, and constructing collective identity. Declarative slogans dominate official and federation campaigns, emphasising national pride, unity, and identity. At the same time,

imperatives are predominantly used in fan chants and motivational campaigns, directly mobilising audiences and fostering emotional energy. Rhetorical questions, although less frequent, are strategically deployed to evoke reflection and a personal connection to the nation or team.

Stylistically, slogans employ parallelism, metaphor, personification, alliteration, and brevity to maximise memorability and emotional impact. Parallelism structures slogans rhythmically, metaphors and personification link abstract concepts like nation and unity to tangible ideas, and brevity ensures slogans are concise and practical for both spoken and visual media. Lexical choices such as *we*, *one*, *nation*, and *Albania* reinforce inclusivity and solidarity, highlighting a consistent thematic focus on collective identity.

Moreover, the strategic use of English in federation slogans, such as “Football unites us, Albania welcomes Europe”, illustrates a dual communicative function: appealing internationally while maintaining domestic resonance through Albanian-language slogans. These linguistic strategies underscore the performative nature of sports slogans: they do not merely describe, but actively motivate, unify, and symbolise the shared values of teams, supporters, and the nation.

Conclusions

This study reveals that Albanian sports slogans are carefully constructed linguistic tools that combine syntactic simplicity, lexical focus, and stylistic sophistication to achieve motivational and identity-building goals. Declaratives, imperatives, and rhetorical questions, alongside devices such as parallelism, metaphor, and personification, work together to inspire athletes, unite supporters, and convey national pride. The interplay of language and motivation in these slogans underscores the significance of discourse analysis in sports and ESP, offering insights for practitioners in sports communication, marketing, and language teaching.

Future research could expand the corpus to include a broader range of sports, sponsors, and fan campaigns, enabling quantitative analysis of frequency patterns and cross-cultural comparisons. Additionally, visual and multimodal features of slogans (e.g., social media graphics, stadium banners) could be incorporated to understand fully how language and imagery work together in sports discourse. Overall, Albanian sports slogans exemplify how concise linguistic forms can carry powerful motivational and symbolic weight, linking language, culture, and collective identity in the sports domain.

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