



## READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and choose the correct answer for the questions below.

### CAN WE REALLY TRANSLATE THE LANGUAGE OF FOOTBALL?

When we were recently asked by CNN what we thought about the proposal from Japan's 2022 World Cup bid to offer travelling supporters a device that would translate football language, we were intrigued. The idea of electronic translators does sound appealing but, as two teachers who have to deal with students using translation software on a regular basis, we have to say we are still to be convinced of their accuracy. Furthermore, the fact that we feature a weekly football phrase on our podcast in order to help language learners who love the game perhaps demonstrates that the translation device would have to be fairly sophisticated in order to capture the subtleties of this kind of language. To translate a specific discourse such as football, we wonder if indeed it would be possible to capture the nuances and the sub-texts of the beautiful game.

When I lived in football-crazy Spain many years ago, the former Irish international (and current Canal+ co-commentator) Michael Robinson literally translated the phrase 'six of one and half a dozen of the other' into 'seis de uno y media docena del otro', which caused instant bemusement among my friends there as, of course, it meant absolutely nothing to them. Since then, however, it has become part and parcel of the Spanish game; one that means a decision could go either one way or the other. Continuing with the Spanish related examples, the coach Rafa Benítez, who speaks very good English after his stint as Liverpool coach, recently came out with a literal translation of a Spanish expression involving a mountain of sugar and a priest, again cue much head-scratching among football fans, this time here in the UK, where we think he means that something is extremely obvious, but we are not 100% sure.

Sometimes, however, literally translating a phrase from one language to another can work. Similar to Michael Robinson's creation of a new football phrase on Spanish TV is the expression 'to park the bus', which was first used by José Mourinho when he felt that Tottenham had been overly-defensive against his side, Chelsea. The opposing team had not wished to attack but instead defended with all of its players, they parked a bus in front of the goal, meaning it was almost impossible to score. The media loved the phrase and this has now entered into the football lexicon.

In addition to all this is the fact that, as far as I remember, when watching Japanese football coverage on TV, there were few football phrases or clichés involved during the commentary but instead lots of technical terms borrowed from English (corner is 'corner' for instance), as well as lots of statistics and background information about teams and players; perhaps to address the perceived lack of football knowledge among the general populace? With this lack of footballing tradition, coupled with the difficulties of producing advanced forms of translation software and the context-specific nature of football language, we are wondering, therefore, how an electronic translator might perform in the world of football?

## **Questions**

- 1. The writers of this article...**
  - a. Recommend readers to use this new gadget
  - b. Warn readers not to use it
  - c. **Are not too sure whether this device will work or not**
  
- 2. The main problem that is seen in this translation device is that...**
  - a. **It might not be able to provide users with precise translations.**
  - b. As it is really sophisticated, it will be able to produce accurate translations.
  - c. It might work because it is designed to capture the subtleties of football language.
  
- 3. According to the text, the expression 'to park the bus' refers to a situation in which...**
  - a. A team is extremely-attacking against the opposing team
  - b. **A team is excessively defensive against the opposing team**
  - c. A team has not decided to defend but instead attack with most of its players
  
- 4. In Japanese football coverage on TV, there are a lot of of technical words and information about football and players, and few football phrases due to the fact that...**
  - a. Football is not very traditional in Japan.
  - b. Japanese inhabitants don't have a wide knowledge of this sport.
  - c. **A and B are correct.**