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Bachelor's Thesis

ATTITUDE MARKERS IN SPORTS NEWS



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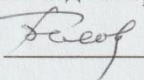
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ABSTRACT

Antonenko A.A. Attitude markers in sports news. – Bachelor's thesis.

The bachelor's thesis explores the evaluative language of written sports journalism, with a particular focus on match reporting and player analysis. This study is primarily based on the ideas of J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White's Appraisal Theory, specifically the Attitude subsystem (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation). The aim of this research is to study distinctive explicit and implicit attitude markers in sports discourse and their role in shaping editorial narratives and reader interpretation.

The first chapter presents the theoretical study of evaluative language and the Appraisal framework in media discourse. The second chapter is devoted to the practical analysis of lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic attitude markers, based on a selection of 19 articles covering key matches and central figures of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, sourced from The Guardian and The New York Times.

Particular attention is paid to the distinction between explicit lexical choices and implicit stylistic and grammatical devices. In addition, the thesis compares the two source publications, revealing differences between more immediate, event-oriented reporting and broader rhetorically and culturally enriched narrative presentation.

Methodologically, the analysis combines qualitative and quantitative research methods, including context-oriented discourse analysis, descriptive classification, and statistical comparison of marker frequencies.

The findings contribute to the field of sports and media discourse analysis by showing how attitudinal meaning is linguistically constructed in contemporary sports journalism. The thesis highlights the importance of grammatical and stylistic choices in shaping audience's perception of athletes and historically significant sporting events.

Key words: sports journalism, appraisal theory, attitude markers, evaluative language, sports discourse, The Guardian, The New York Times.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Антоненко А.А. Маркери ставлення у текстах спортивних новин. — Бакалаврська робота.

Бакалаврську роботу присвячено вивченню оцінної мови письмової спортивної журналістики, особливу увагу в ній приділено репортажам матчів та аналізу виступів гравців. Дослідження ґрунтується передусім на ідеях теорії оцінки Дж.Р. Мартіна і П.Р.Р. Вайта, зокрема на підсистемі ставлення (attitude): афекту (affect), судження (judgement) та оцінки (appreciation). Мета роботи полягає у вивченні експліцитних та імпліцитних маркерів ставлення у спортивному дискурсі та їхньої ролі у формуванні журналістських наративів і читацької інтерпретації.

Перший розділ присвячено теоретичному вивченню оцінної мови та системи оцінки в медіадискурсі. Другий розділ містить практичний аналіз лексичних, граматичних, синтаксичних і стилістичних маркерів ставлення на матеріалі 19 статей із The Guardian та The New York Times, присвячених ключовим матчам і центральним постатям чемпіонату світу ФІФА 2022 року.

Особливу увагу приділено розмежуванню експліцитних лексичних засобів та імпліцитних стилістичних і граматичних прийомів. Крім того, у роботі здійснено порівняльний аналіз двох досліджуваних видань, що дає змогу виявити відмінності між більш безпосереднім, фактологічним висвітленням подій та ширшим, риторично й культурно насиченим наративним викладом.

Методологія поєднує якісні та кількісні методи, зокрема дискурс-аналіз, описову класифікацію та статистичне зіставлення частотності маркерів.

Отримані результати є внеском у розвиток аналізу спортивного та медійного дискурсів, оскільки демонструють, як оцінне значення конструюється мовними засобами в сучасній спортивній журналістиці, та підкреслюють важливість граматичних і стилістичних виборів у формуванні читацького сприйняття спортсменів та історично значущих спортивних подій.

Ключові слова: спортивна журналістика, теорія оцінки, маркери ставлення, оцінна мова, спортивний дискурс, The Guardian, The New York Times.

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary media discourse, sports journalism has developed into far more than a medium for reporting match results and factual information. Sports news currently functions as a form of narrative construction that shapes public perception of players, teams, and historically significant sports events. Through the use of evaluative language, journalists are able to transform athletic performance and achievements into emotionally and culturally significant stories, portraying players as heroes, underdogs or symbols of national identity. As a result, sports discourse occupies a special place in media communication, as it combines factual reporting with interpretation, emotional engagement, and rhetorical creativity.

One of the main linguistic mechanisms through which this evaluative expression is realized is attitude. Journalists use a wide range of lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic resources to portray emotional reactions, evaluate behavior and performance, and aesthetically assess sports events. J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White's Appraisal Theory, particularly its Attitude subsystem, provides an effective framework for analyzing such evaluative meanings in discourse. While the Appraisal framework has been extensively applied to political, ideological, and news discourse, sports journalism remains comparatively underexplored despite its highly expressive and rhetorical nature.

The relevance of this research lies in the growing importance of evaluative language in contemporary media communication and in the increasing academic interest in media discourse analysis. Investigating attitude markers in sports journalism contributes to a deeper understanding of how language constructs emotional engagement, ideological positions, and cultural interpretation within one of the most globally consumed forms of media discourse.

The object of the research is evaluative language within contemporary English-language sports discourse.

The subject of the research is the lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic attitude markers utilized in sports match reports and player analyses from The Guardian and The New York Times.

The aim of the study is to identify, classify, and comparatively analyze explicit and implicit attitude markers within the analyzed texts using the Attitude subsystem of Appraisal Theory, and to reveal how evaluative meaning and editorial narratives are constructed in sports journalism.

To achieve this purpose, the following **objectives** were set:

- to explore evaluative language and the Appraisal Theory subsystem of Attitude (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation) within media discourse;
- to identify and categorize explicit lexical attitude markers (adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs) in the selected articles;
- to analyze implicit attitude markers realized through stylistic tropes (metaphors, allusions) and grammatical/syntactic structures (graduation, fronting, repetition);
- to conduct a quantitative and qualitative comparative analysis of the attitudinal strategies employed by The Guardian and The New York Times, which determine their distinct journalistic registers.

The research material of the study consists of 19 articles in total, including 9 articles from The Guardian and 10 articles from The New York Times, with an overall length of approximately 41 pages (18 pages from The Guardian and 23 pages from The New York Times). The selected texts include match reports, analytical pieces, and narrative-driven sports articles covering major international football events. The material covers four key matches from the FIFA World Cup 2022 (the games Saudi Arabia vs Argentina, Morocco vs Portugal, France vs Morocco, and Croatia vs Brazil) and central individual figures (Lionel Messi and Neymar). These events were chosen due to their high evaluative potential, unpredictability, emotional intensity, and symbolic meaning.

The study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative **research methods**. The qualitative aspect employs context-oriented discourse analysis and descriptive classification to understand how attitudes are formed within specific linguistic and situational environments. The quantitative aspect involves the

statistical calculation and comparison of marker frequencies across categories and publications to identify general rhetorical trends.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in its specific comparative approach to explicit versus implicit evaluative strategies in modern sports journalism. Although previous studies have classified sports vocabulary, this study demonstrates how different publications use the exact same sporting events to create fundamentally different journalistic styles.

The research structure. The paper consists of abstracts in English and Ukrainian, table of contents, introduction, two main chapters with interim conclusions, conclusion, references, list of data sources and appendix. The first chapter presents the theoretical foundations of the research, exploring the concepts of sports discourse, evaluative language, and the Appraisal Theory framework. The second chapter contains the practical analysis, divided into sections examining lexical, syntactic and stylistic markers, as well as final comparative analysis between the two source publications. The appendix contains the complete data table of the extracted attitude markers used for the analysis.

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ATTITUDE EXPRESSION IN SPORTS DISCOURSE

1.1. Sports discourse within the system of institutional and media communication

Discourse occupies a central place in contemporary linguistic studies, which allows for the analysis of language not only as a system, but also in relation to its functions and social context. The concept of discourse differs according to the theoretical paradigm. In a broader sense, discourse is seen not as a linear series of linguistic units, but rather as a complex communicative phenomenon that includes both the communication process and its result. It can be described as a global thought-communicative activity that integrates cognitive, social, and linguistic dimensions. This definition highlights the dynamic character of discourse, which unfolds in time and involves continuous interaction between participants [Shevchenko 2005, p. 8].

In modern linguistics, discourse is also interpreted as a text that operates in real-life situations by considering the social, cultural and psychological characteristics of the participants. In other words, discourse does not exist in isolation but always involves communicants, their intentions, social standing, and broader cultural context [Selivanova 2012, p. 119; Chrdileli 2019, p. 11].

Sports discourse belongs to the institutional type which defines its key features. Institutional discourse is connected to social structures (institutions) and normatively established forms of communication in which participants appear as representatives of such institutions and take on particular status-role relations [Havryliuk 2018, p. 308].

There is a variety of categories distinguished in the context of institutional discourse, such as political, administrative, legal, military, pedagogical, religious, medical, advertising, scientific, media, etc. [Chrdileli 2019, pp. 26–27]. The isolation of sports discourse as a separate research area relates closely to the growing importance of sports as a social institution. Sports performs many important social

functions, especially socialization, identity formation and transmission of cultural values [Lyuta 2003, p. 45]. For this reason, communication in the sports sphere receives institutional features and becomes subjected to linguistic analysis. Thus, media sports discourse emerges as a hybrid, formed at the intersection of two institutional domains: sport and mass communication.

The online discourse of sports media is defined as speech (oral or written) that conveys content related to sports activities (discourse as a process), as well as a set of texts produced that contain this process (discourse as a result). According to the structure of sports discourse, we distinguish three groups of speech personalities: athletes and their environment (coaches, judges), who aim to achieve a sports result; fans, who evaluate the actions of participants, as well as sports commentators and journalists, who document events, reporting them to the audience [Babenko, Shekera 2017, pp. 178–180].

In this context, sports media narratives fit into a wider phenomenon referred to as the “media-sports cultural complex“. This concept represents the idea that modern sports have become more than just a game, but a powerful cultural symbol whose images, through the media, influence all aspects of our daily lives. At the same time, the sports sphere and the mass media have grown so intertwined that today they exist as a single whole and cannot fully function without each other [Rowe 2004, pp. 4, 12].

In fact, this interaction has deep historical roots. The media has played a significant role in shaping modern sports as part of a national culture and sports have formed a basis for the popularity and success of the media. A well-known example of this is the creation of the Tour de France and Giro d’Italia cycling races by sports newspapers during the early 20th century in order to promote themselves and their commercial partners [Mauro 2020, p. 2].

Accordingly, the study of sport in the communicative sense started as early as the mid-1970s with the analysis of the Super Bowl broadcast. It demonstrated that television coverage of this event was framed in a way to emphasize the mythology of football as a ritualized expression of American identity. This shows that sports media

texts not only report events, but also actively construct national identity and values. Such an approach helps to better understand the roles of the participants involved in sports discourse where journalists work in the interests of all these groups [Billings, Butterworth 2022, pp. 8, 11].

In addition, the social aspect of discourse lies in its understanding as a form of social interaction that is closely connected to power relations, ideology, and social organization. From this perspective, discourse does not only reflect but also shapes social reality, acting as a tool for creating meanings and impacting the audience [van Dijk 2008, p. 119]. Besides their informational function, sports discourse also serves evaluative, persuasive and entertaining purposes. Therefore, media portrayal of a sports event is a primary factor of shaping public perception [Wenner 1998, p. 3]. As a result, sports discourse often combines factual reports with subjective evaluation, which is particularly evident in sports news.

Since different individuals may interpret the same communicative situation in different ways, their speech will also differ, even under similar conditions. For the purposes of this study, this means that the journalist's attitude is molded in the context of their own "contextual model" – how they interpret the events, assumptions about the audience, editorial policy, national values, etc. Hence, different journalists may evaluate the same sports event in different ways [van Dijk 2008, p. 120].

Thus, sports discourse can be viewed as a complex set of institutional and media phenomena, which serves informational, evaluative, and social functions. Its analysis therefore requires an interdisciplinary approach that considers linguistic, social, and cultural factors. A clear understanding of these theoretical foundations provides a basis for further research of the genre specificity and linguistic means of expressing attitudes in sports news.

1.2. Genre-specific features of sports news in print media

Sports discourse plays an important role within institutional communication, as it ensures the functioning of sport as a specific sphere of human activity. This type of discourse is realized through a diverse and dynamic genre system. Researchers

typically distinguish several key genres of sports journalism, such as a scientific article, interview, press conference, report, and commentary. Each of these has its own communicative tasks and follow specific structural and linguistic features [Havryliuk 2018, p. 309].

Within this system of genres, sports news occupies a special place. In the English-speaking tradition, it is often referred to as a written sports report (WSR). This genre refers to a chronological description of a completed sporting event, containing not only factual information, but also the journalist's personal interpretations or evaluations of the game and its participants [Politis 2009, p. 3].

If we look at sports media more broadly, materials are usually divided into three main categories: informational, analytical, and artistic-journalistic. Among these, informational genres form the core, mostly because sport is inherently eventful and competitive. This creates a constant demand for up-to-date results and comparisons [Voznyi 2025, pp. 7-8].

Informational genres include a note (or news), report, and interview. A note (or news) is the most concise genre, focusing exclusively on reporting a single fact. It is limited in length and prioritizes clarity and accuracy, allowing readers to quickly grasp essential information. [Voznyi 2025, p. 7] Reports, on the other hand, tend to be more detailed and expressive. They often create the effect of presence with the help of vivid descriptions, the use of the present tense, many details that set the emotional tone, and the author's personal perspective. In this sense, a report is not just a factual account of events but rather a competent interpretation of the event, which may include lyrical digressions and comments [Voznyi 2025, p. 25].

From a structural point of view, sports news typically consists of three components: beginnings (headline and lead), middles (body), and endings [Reinardy, Wanta 2015, pp. 35–36]. The **headline** aims to attract attention and convey the key idea concisely. It is characterized by the use of ellipsis (omission of grammatical elements), special tense forms, and specific punctuation. The lexical features of headlines include military terminology and combat vocabulary (like *fight*, *battle*, *clash*), names and nicknames of players, initials and abbreviations, stylistic tropes

and figures, as well as short words for a stronger impact. The **lead** is the first paragraph, which answers the key questions: what, where, when, who, why, and how. There are several types of leads (direct, lead-quote, lead-description, etc.), the choice of which depends on the nature of the event and editorial policy. The **body** of sports news, in turn, can be organized in different ways. The most common model is the inverted pyramid, where the most important information is presented at the beginning, and less important details are presented in descending order of importance. Other approaches are the chronological approach, which refers to a sequential presentation of events, and the feature approach, which involves greater freedom of presentation, the use of figurative means, and narrative elements [Reinardy, Wanta 2015, pp. 49–51, 92; Fensch 2013, pp. 79–82].

In the Western tradition, sports texts are also classified according to their temporal relation to the event. These include advance stories, which focus on expectations and predictions; game summary, which highlights key moments and emotions; and post-analysis aimed at more engaged audiences, who are more interested in the mistakes, technical details and the underlying reasons for victories or defeats [Rosenthal 2010, pp. 11–26].

Another important aspect concerns style. Since sports news is created post factum – after the event has ended – journalists have time to revise and refine their writing. As a result, these texts tend to be more structured and formal compared to live commentary. They often feature more complex syntax (e.g., time clauses), a higher frequency of nouns, and a wider range of vocabulary. Grammatically, since the event has already happened, the past tense dominates in the genre [Lewandowski 2012, p. 67].

At the lexical level, sports news is also characterized by a tendency to use thematic lexical groups that cover key domains: the event itself (names of matches, tournaments), player actions (kicks, passes, fouls), result (goals, wins, losses), and participants (players, coaches, referees) [Politis 2009, p. 4].

It is also worth noting that the register of sports news plays a more significant role than different regional language variations. In other words, communicative

situations and the language tools associated with them function the same regardless of whether the author uses the British or American language variant [Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 13].

To better define the place of sports news within the broader genre system, it is useful to compare it with related forms. Sports commentary, for example, is typically oral, spontaneous, and tied directly to live broadcasts. Unlike news texts, it is produced in real time and cannot be carefully edited [Grochala 2012, p. 105; Müller 2008, p. 67]. Sports reports, especially in radio or live online formats, also rely on the present tense to create a sense of presence [Lewandowski 2012, p. 70].

In turn, analytical genres, such as articles or commentaries, differ from informational ones in their depth. Their purpose is not simply to report events but to interpret them, draw conclusions, and sometimes make predictions. For this reason, they tend to include expert opinions, statistics, and clearly expressed author's position [Voznyi 2025, p. 8–9].

Finally, artistic and journalistic genres (such as columns or portrait essays) present events using artistic means, revealing the character of the hero or the author's perception. Thus, they require an individual style, authority, and the ability to analyze [Voznyi 2025, p. 10].

Overall, sports news can be described as a structured and relatively formal genre that combines factual reporting with elements of evaluation. It follows a clear composition (headline, lead, body, and ending), relies on specific stylistic conventions, and serves the primary function of delivering timely information about sporting events.

1.3. Emotivity and evaluation as foundations of attitude expression

1.3.1. The category of emotivity in linguistic theory

Emotions, as mental states of a person, find their expression in language. However, at the linguistic level, they are transformed into a specific category called emotivity. In modern linguistic studies, the distinction between the concepts of “emotionality” and “emotivity” is essential. Emotionality is understood as a

psychological trait of an individual, which manifests itself in the spontaneous and uncontrolled expression of emotions, while emotivity is the linguistic counterpart of this psychological category, that is, the verbal expression of emotions by means of language [Pikalova 2021, pp. 2–3]. To put it differently, emotionality is primarily associated with spontaneous, unplanned speech, while emotivity involves a more conscious and deliberate choice of language that achieves a particular communicative effect. Therefore, if emotionality belongs to the sphere of psychology, emotivity can be treated as a property of language and text [Kemin 2020, p. 5].

In linguistic theory, emotivity is considered a complex semantic, pragmatic, and functional category. It is the ability of language to convey emotional states using its own resources, which are reflected in the semantics of linguistic units [Nadozirna 2021, p. 45]. Speakers and writers use emotivity intentionally to influence the audience and shape interpretations. This means that emotivity is always oriented towards the addressee: the speaker or author of the text selects those linguistic means that are most likely to create the desired emotional response in the recipient [Tiutiunnyk 2024, p. 1].

Another important aspect of emotivity is its close connection to evaluation. In practice, it is difficult to separate emotion from evaluation, since any emotional expression usually implies a positive or negative attitude towards the object of speech [Nadozirna 2021, p. 46]. At the same time, the relation between these categories is not symmetrical. While emotional statements are almost always evaluative, evaluative statements are not necessarily emotional. Evaluation can be expressed in a neutral way, without strong emotional coloring, whereas emotivity assumes the use of sensual, emotionally charged language [Melko 2019, p. 15].

Emotivity is also closely related to the category of subjective modality, since both categories express the speaker's attitude to what is being said. Subjective modality is present in any statement that functions in the “addresser-addressee” framework, since the speaker inevitably expresses some form of attitude towards the message. Therefore, emotivity can be seen as one of the ways in which this attitude is expressed. Through emotionally colored vocabulary, specific syntactic patterns, or

even intonation, the author conveys not only information but also their personal attitude towards it [Hryshyna, Statkevych 2020, p. 2].

Emotivity as a text category is realized across different linguistic levels, which explains its complexity. Researchers typically distinguish several levels at which it can be realized. At the phonetic (or graphic) level, emotions may be conveyed through sound, stress, and intonation. At the morphological level, emotivity is expressed through evaluative suffixes or specific grammatical forms. However, one of the most prominent roles is played by the lexical level, which includes emotionally marked vocabulary, phraseological units, and interjections, and words that may acquire emotional coloring depending on context. In turn, the syntactic level involves structures such as exclamatory or interrogative sentences, repetition, inversion, or segmentation [Kemin 2020, pp. 3–4].

Empirical studies show that adjectives and adverbs are especially effective in expressing emotivity, as they not only describe features but also convey evaluation. Depending on their connotation, such words can significantly shape the reader's emotional response. Positively colored vocabulary may evoke feelings of satisfaction or trust, while negatively colored vocabulary can trigger anxiety, anger, or disgust. Graphic means, in particular such as exclamation marks, question marks, ellipses, and font variation, further enhance this effect, particularly in media and online discourse, where they are often combined for greater impact [Tiutiunnyk 2024, pp. 4–5].

Thus, emotionality is a multi-level semantic and pragmatic category that plays a crucial role in expressing the speaker's attitude and influencing the audience. It is closely connected to evaluation and subjective modality, and is realized across different levels of language. In the context of sports news, this becomes especially relevant. Journalists do not simply report events; they also aim to evoke specific emotions, such as excitement, disappointment, or admiration. Therefore, analyzing emotivity makes it possible to identify the linguistic mechanisms that shape audience's attitude.

1.3.2. Theoretical models of evaluative meaning (Stance and Appraisal)

The study of evaluative vocabulary is mainly based on two closely related models: the concept of stance and engagement of Ken Hyland, as well as the appraisal theory of James Martin and Peter White. Taken together, these approaches make it possible to analyze how authors express their views, position themselves in relation to the content, and interact with their audience.

According to Ken Hyland's approach, metadiscourse is a set of means that allows the author not only to report information but also structure the text, guide the reader, and express their own attitude towards both the message and the audience [Hyland 2005, p. 8].

The researcher identifies two main dimensions of metadiscourse. The first is the interactive dimension, which concerns the organization of the text in order to make it accessible to the reader and cater to their needs. It includes such elements as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and glosses, which help the reader to follow the logic of the text [Hyland 2019, p. 58].

The second one (which is more important for this study) is the interactional dimension. It focuses on how the author engages with the reader and expresses a personal stance. Hyland identifies five main categories of interactional resources. These include:

- hedges (which express the author's uncertainty and openness to other ideas, such as *maybe, probably*);
- boosters (which emphasize the author's certainty and exclude any other ideas, such as *undoubtedly, obviously*);
- attitude markers (which convey the author's emotional or evaluative attitude, such as *unfortunately, I believe*);
- self-reference (the use of the author's "I" or "we" that indicates the author's presence in the text);
- engagement markers (which directly address the reader, such as *pay attention, you can see*) [Hyland 2019, p. 58].

Hyland emphasizes that these resources are not secondary, but form an integral part of the semantic structure of the text, helping to “connect the text with its context” [Hyland 2019, p. 47].

This model is further developed and specified by James Martin and Peter White’s appraisal theory. While it also focuses on the interaction between author and reader, it offers a more detailed framework for analyzing evaluative language itself [Martin, White 2005, p. 35]. As Hyland himself notes, both approaches are grounded in the idea of discourse as a form of social interaction [Hyland 2005, p. 8].

Appraisal theory consists of three interconnected systems, the most central of which is the Attitude system. It encompasses three subsystems (Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation), which together describe different ways in which speakers and writers encode their attitudes towards people, actions, and phenomena [Martin, White 2005, pp. 42–43].

Importantly, these categories don’t operate in isolation, but they rather represent different perspectives on evaluation and often overlap in actual discourse. As Martin and White note, Judgment and Appreciation can be seen as more socially conventionalized or institutionalized forms of Affect, since they build upon basic emotional responses and extend them into socially shared systems of evaluation [Martin, White 2005, pp. 45–46].

Affect refers to the linguistic expression of emotions and emotional states. It captures how individuals feel in response to events, situations, or other people. According to Martin and White, Affect includes several basic domains, such as happiness vs. unhappiness, security vs. insecurity, and satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction [Martin, White 2005, pp. 49–50].

Furthermore, Affect can be oriented either towards internal emotional states or towards behavioral reactions. For example, a statement may describe how a person feels (e.g. *she was delighted*) or how they react (e.g. *he burst into tears*), both of which contribute to the overall emotional meaning of the text [Martin, White 2005, pp. 48–51].

Judgment, in contrast, is concerned not with emotions themselves but with the evaluation of human behavior in relation to social norms and expectations. It answers the question of how people should behave and whether their actions are considered appropriate, competent, or morally acceptable [Martin, White 2005, pp. 52–54, Križan 2020, p. 86]

Martin and White distinguish between two broad types of Judgment: social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem relates to qualities such as normality (how typical someone is), capacity (their abilities and skills), and tenacity (their determination or perseverance). Social sanction, on the other hand, involves moral evaluation and includes categories such as veracity (honesty) and propriety (ethical behavior) [Martin, White 2005, pp. 52–53; Walsh, White 2024, p. 119].

Appreciation differs from the previous two categories in that it focuses on the evaluation of things, processes, and phenomena rather than people. It is used to assess the aesthetic, structural, or social value of objects and events [Martin, White 2005, pp. 56–57; Anwar, Anwar 2021, p. 14].

Martin and White identify several key dimensions within Appreciation. These include reaction (the emotional impact of an object or event), composition (its structure, balance, or complexity), and valuation (its overall social or cultural significance). For example, a text can describe a performance as *exciting* (reaction), *well-organized* (composition), or *important* (valuation) [Martin, White 2005, pp. 56–58].

A key feature of the attitude system is that evaluation can be realized either explicitly or implicitly across all the subcategories. In the first case, meanings are inscribed, that is, directly expressed through clearly evaluative or emotional vocabulary (e.g., *wonderful*, *terrible*, *happy*, *frustrated*). In the second case, they are invoked, meaning that evaluation is not stated openly but emerges through context, descriptive details, or the representation of behavior. Martin and White emphasize that such implicit evaluation is a crucial mechanism by which a text “inserts itself into the reader’s attitude“. This allows the journalist to be subjective while

maintaining the appearance of objectivity. [Martin, White 2005, pp. 61–68; Macken-Horarik 2003, p. 299].

Overall, these theoretical models provide a solid foundation for the analysis of evaluative strategies in sports media discourse. They allow us not only to identify linguistic markers of evaluation but also to understand how these markers function within a broader communicative context. This framework will be applied in the practical part of this study to examine how evaluation operates in sports news texts.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

Sports discourse operates at the intersection of institutional and media communication, serving not only to inform the public but also to evaluate, persuade, and entertain. Within this domain, sports news emerges as a highly structured genre. It is characterized by specific compositional elements, such as the headline, lead, body and ending, alongside a tendency toward more formal, post-factum linguistic features compared to spontaneous live commentary. This structural and temporal distance from the live event allows journalists to carefully craft narratives that go beyond mere factual recounting, which allows them to embed subjective interpretations and cultural values directly into the text.

The foundation of this subjective interpretation lies in the linguistic categories of emotivity and evaluation. Unlike basic psychological emotionality, emotivity is a deliberate, addressee-oriented linguistic choice used by authors to convey their personal attitude and evoke a specific desired response from the audience. This intentional emotional framing is inextricably linked to subjective modality and is realized across multiple linguistic levels, particularly through carefully selected evaluative vocabulary and expressive syntactic structures. By employing these tools, journalists actively shape the reader's perception of athletic performances and sporting outcomes.

To systematically analyze how these evaluative meanings are constructed in texts, Martin and White's Appraisal Theory provides the most effective theoretical framework. Its Attitude subsystem categorizes evaluation into three distinct domains:

Affect, which deals with the linguistic expression of emotional states; Judgement, which evaluates human behavior and capacity against social norms; and Appreciation, which assesses the aesthetic, structural, and social value of phenomena and events. Furthermore, the theory's vital distinction between inscribed (explicitly stated) and invoked (implicitly suggested) evaluation is critical for media discourse analysis. This dichotomy reveals how journalists can strategically embed their attitudes within seemingly objective reporting through descriptive details, stylistic tropes, and grammatical nuances.

Finally, these theoretical perspectives demonstrate that sports news is a complex communicative phenomenon where language actively constructs meaning rather than passively reflecting reality. A clear understanding of the genre-specific features of sports reporting, the mechanisms of emotivity, and the comprehensive Appraisal framework establishes a robust methodological foundation. This theoretical base provides the necessary tools for the subsequent practical investigation into how specific lexical, grammatical, and stylistic evaluative strategies are deployed in contemporary English-language sports journalism.

2. THE FUNCTIONING OF ATTITUDE MARKERS IN SPORTS NEWS

This chapter presents an empirical analysis of attitude markers in sports news discourse, focusing on articles published by The Guardian and The New York Times. The analysis is grounded in Martin and White's Appraisal Theory, specifically the Attitude subsystem, which includes Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation.

The primary aim of the practical part is to identify, classify, and analyze attitude markers across the selected material, as well as to determine how evaluation is linguistically realized in contemporary sports journalism. Special attention is paid to the distinction between inscribed (explicit) and invoked (implicit) forms of evaluation. This approach makes it possible not only to observe what is evaluated, but also how evaluation is conveyed in language through structural and stylistic choices.

The research material consists of 19 articles in total, including 9 articles from The Guardian and 10 articles from The New York Times, with an overall length of approximately 41 pages (18 pages from The Guardian and 23 pages from The New York Times). The selected texts include match reports, analytical pieces, and narrative-driven sports articles covering major international football events. The material covers four key matches from the FIFA World Cup 2022, namely the games Saudi Arabia vs Argentina, Morocco vs Portugal, France vs Morocco, and Croatia vs Brazil. These events were chosen due to their high evaluative potential and strong narrative framing in sports journalism, particularly in terms of unpredictability, emotional intensity, and symbolic meaning.

In addition to match-focused analysis, the research material also includes articles centered on individual players, specifically Lionel Messi and Neymar. These players are represented as central figures both within the selected articles and in sports discourse overall. Their inclusion enables a more nuanced analysis of Judgement and Affect categories.

The analysis is conducted through a qualitative and quantitative approach. On the one hand, the qualitative aspect focuses on identifying how attitudes are formed within a given context, taking into account not only individual lexical units but also broader syntactic and stylistic patterns. On the other hand, the quantitative aspect

involves counting and comparing the frequency of use of different types of attitude markers in the selected texts, which makes it possible to identify general trends and patterns of distribution in the data.

Each article is examined for instances of evaluative language, which are then classified according to the Attitude categories. The classification process is context-sensitive, meaning that each example is analyzed within its immediate linguistic and situational environment in order to ensure accurate categorization.

To provide a clear and structured overview of these findings, all identified instances of evaluative language have been systematically compiled into a foundational dataset (see Appendix). This table presents the complete list of extracted markers, categorized by type, category and publication, and serves as the baseline for the qualitative and quantitative discussions that follow.

Additionally, the study differentiates between inscribed markers, where evaluation is explicitly stated lexically, and invoked markers, where evaluation is inferred through grammatical constructions or stylistic devices.

The use of this dual analytical model is justified by the nature of sports journalism, which combines the reporting of facts with expressive and narrative elements. A purely lexical approach would fail to consider the significant role of stylistic and grammatical devices in shaping attitude, whereas a purely qualitative analysis would lack an empirical foundation. Thus, combining qualitative interpretation with quantitative assessment provides a more comprehensive and reliable description of evaluative strategies and their role in shaping the reader's perception.

2.1. Lexical attitude markers in sports news

One of the main ways evaluative meanings is realized in sports journalism is through lexical choice. It constitutes the most transparent and directly traceable category of attitude expression. The analyzed material yielded a total of 160 explicit lexical attitude markers. These markers can be quantitatively divided into 38 instances of Affect, 55 instances of Judgement, and 67 instances of Appreciation.

Lexical attitude is realized through a range of grammatical classes, including adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs. Rather than operating in isolation, these grammatical classes provide structurally distinct mechanisms of evaluative expression.

2.1.1. Adjectival attitude markers

One of the most prominent resources for evaluation is the adjective, which frequently operates as a pre-modifier, embedding assessment directly into the description of entities and actions.

Adjectives constitute the largest and most varied class of lexical attitude markers in the selected texts, and their dominant structural position is the attributive pre-modifier. In many cases, these adjectives are grouped together to build a comprehensive evaluation. Consider the following examples:

1. *“Tireless, dangerous, physical and supremely well-organised”* [5].
2. *“Explosive, fast, skilful, and detailed in his precision”* [9].

In these instances, multiple adjectives create a cumulative assessment of a team's performance or a player's skill. The evaluative meaning builds up across the list rather than relying on a single word. In (1), four successive adjectives describe distinct qualities such as endurance, threat, physicality, and tactical discipline. In (2), a series of adjectives describes a player's speed and control.

Attributive adjectives also serve a more compact evaluative function. It means that even a single adjective standing alone as a pre-modifier is enough to inject a strong evaluative attitude into a phrase. These single-word markers are highly effective at conveying both positive and negative evaluations:

3. *“Commanding goalkeeper”* [5] and *“resolute Croatia defence”* [13].
4. *“Overconfident side”* [10] and *“unheralded and unfancied Saudi team”* [16].

In the examples in (3), single positive adjectives are used to evaluate tactical authority and psychological determination, condensing praise into a single word. Conversely, the examples in (4) use brief negative adjectives to criticize a team's arrogance or to reflect their unexpectedly low status in the tournament.

Furthermore, the grammatical resources in the selected texts do not always have a fixed evaluative category. A single adjective can be used to denote entirely different categories of the Appraisal framework, depending on the noun it modifies and the broader context. The adjectives “*remarkable*” and “*greatest*” provide clear examples of this flexibility:

5. “*It was a remarkable demonstration for Saudi Arabia*” [14] and “*remarkable, really*” [9].

6. “*Remarkable attacker*” [13].

In (5), “*remarkable*” functions as an Appreciation marker because it evaluates a situation or a collective performance as a phenomenon. However, when applied to a specific person in (6), the same adjective shifts to a Judgement marker, as it now evaluates the professional talent and personal capacity of an individual player.

The adjective “*greatest*” exhibits a similar cross-category flexibility:

7. “*One of the greatest upsets in the World Cup’s history*” [16].

8. “*Arguably the greatest player of all time*” [16].

In (7), “*greatest*” operates within the Affect category, serving to amplify the historical significance and impact of a sporting event. Yet, in (8), the exact same adjective functions as a Judgement marker, used to deliver the highest possible assessment of a human being's skill and historical status.

These examples illustrate that grammatical resources like adjectives do not carry an isolated, static evaluation. Instead, they dynamically acquire their specific evaluative category based on how they interact with their surrounding context.

Beyond assessing capacity and status, adjectives are frequently used to describe the aesthetic and physical aspects of the sport. Journalists often use vocabulary typically found in art criticism or human physiology:

9. “*Exquisite goals*” [5], “*masterful Croatian midfield*” [1], and “*sublime passing*” [4].

10. “*Breathtaking figure*” [1] and “*tense, enervating quarter-final*” [1].

The phrases in (9) frame football as an art form and the players as artists. In (10), physiological terms are used to describe the extreme physical and mental toll of the match on both the players and the audience.

Additionally, the analysis of the selected texts shows that adjectives are highly effective at expressing psychological and emotional states, categorized in this framework as Affect:

11. “*Visibly shaken but remarkably composed*” [10].

12. “*Visibly diminished, their faces drawn, eyes haunted*” [10].

Example (11) uses contrasting adjectives to highlight a player's psychological tension, while example (12) uses multiple adjectives to focus on a player's physical appearance to convey their emotional state.

2.1.2. Nominal attitude markers

Nouns also function independently as attitude markers. They can directly name emotional states, condense complex events into single words, or borrow terms from other fields to evaluate sports moments:

13. “*Disbelief*” [5; 10].

14. “*Stunner*” [12] and “*a beauty*” [7].

15. “*Blockbuster final*” [15] and “*marquee moment*” [13].

16. “*Legends now*” [8] and “*flightiness*” [1].

The simplest nominal markers are single nouns that directly name emotional or evaluative states. In (13), “*disbelief*” appears across multiple articles as a shared emotional framework used to process a highly unexpected, historical result (Saudi Arabia's victory over Argentina).

Nouns can also condense actions and abstract qualities into concrete entities. In (14), “*stunner*” is a noun derived from a verb. It compresses an entire upset into a single word, naming the event based entirely on the emotional shock it caused the observers. Similarly, “*a beauty*” takes an aesthetic description and turns it into a countable noun, making the visual quality of the goal a definitive, identifiable object rather than just a passing description.

Journalists also frequently borrow nouns from the entertainment industry to evaluate the significance of a match. The examples in (15) use terms typically associated with movies (*“blockbuster”*) or theater (*“marquee”*) to frame the World Cup as a massive cultural spectacle, elevating it beyond a simple sporting event.

Finally, abstract nouns can firmly establish a team's permanent status or character traits. In (16), the phrase *“legends now”* takes a term usually reserved for historical figures and applies it to a currently playing team. This instantly bridges the gap between a recent achievement and historical greatness. On the negative side, *“flightiness”* converts an adjective into a noun. This grammatical shift is highly evaluative: it turns an occasional erratic behavior into a permanent, defining flaw of the Brazilian team, making the criticism absolute and categorical.

Moreover, while single nouns are powerful evaluative tools on their own, their attitudinal force is significantly amplified when they combine with evaluative adjectives. In these compound noun phrases, the adjective and the noun work together to produce a concentrated, highly intense unit of evaluation that exceeds the impact of either word used in isolation. Consider the following examples:

17. *“Damaging humiliation”* [5].
18. *“Merciless reality check”* [10].
19. *“Unbearable burden”* [9].
20. *“Dreaded inevitability of disappointment”* [16].

In all of these instances, the grammatical fusion of modifier and head creates a deeply emphatic assessment. The adjective serves to elevate, quantify, or extend the core meaning of the noun. For instance, in (17) the adjective adds a sense of measurable, lasting consequence (*“damaging”*) to an already profound emotional state (*“humiliation”*). In (18), a human trait (*“merciless”*) is attached to an abstract situation, humanizing the *“reality check”* to emphasize its deliberate severity. Example (19) pushes the emotional strain of the *“burden”* to an absolute extreme by using a negative adjective *“unbearable”*. Finally, in (20), the use of a deverbal adjective *“dreaded”* creates the sense of an ongoing psychological process.

On the whole, this shows how combining adjectives and nouns can help journalists to capture the intense severity of a feeling.

2.1.3. Verbal attitude markers

While nouns and adjectives attach attitude to objects or qualities, verbs express attitude directly through action. Consider the following examples:

21. “*Sent his fans into raptures*” [5].

22. “*Relishing being the veteran orchestrator*” [9] and “*downplayed expectations*” [14].

23. “*Gripped for nearly two decades*” [12].

24. “*Swept a stunning shot*” [5].

In (21), while the noun “*raptures*” carries the emotional meaning itself, the causative verb “*sent*” establishes the player as the source of this emotional reaction, linking the fans’ affective response directly to the athlete’s actions. In this way, the verbal construction puts the subject’s agency to the forefront and presents emotion as something actively produced rather than simply experienced.

The examples in (22) illustrate how verbs can express both positive and negative evaluation depending on the context in which they are used. “*Relishing*” conveys active enjoyment and enthusiasm with a role, characterizing the player’s attitude in strongly positive terms, whereas “*downplayed*” implies a deliberate act of minimizing expectations. Thus, in both cases the evaluation emerges through the depiction of an action rather than through direct descriptive labelling.

The examples in (23) and (24) further demonstrate how verbs contribute additional nuance and intensity to attitudinal meaning, often through metaphorical or highly dynamic representations of action. In (23) the verb “*gripped*” metaphorically describes long-term control and dominance through the imagery of physical force. Similarly, (24) places the aesthetic evaluation into the movement itself: the verb “*swept*” evokes smoothness, fluidity, and elegance, allowing the action to carry the evaluative meaning rather than expressing it separately through direct description.

2.1.4. Adverbial attitude markers

Adverbs form a distinct and vital class of attitude markers. Rather than creating new evaluative meanings from scratch, they usually act as a secondary layer of evaluation. They modify other words to intensify, weaken, or adjust the certainty of a claim. Consider the following examples of intensification:

25. “*Supremely well-organised*” [5] and “*supremely gifted*” [16].

26. “*Totally disappointed*” [11] and “*simply too good for Japan*” [7].

The most crucial function of adverbs is to intensify a statement. In (25), “*supremely*” pushes a positive evaluation to the highest possible level. In (26), “*totally*” measures the complete, unlimited extent of a negative emotion, while “*simply*” frames a team's superiority as an obvious, self-evident fact that needs no further explanation.

Alongside straightforward intensifiers, some adverbs indicate how the writer knows the information or how it compares to prior expectations:

27. “*Visibly shaken*” [10] and “*visibly diminished*” [16].

28. “*Remarkably composed*” [10] and “*surprisingly good*” [16].

In (27), “*visibly*” grounds the evaluation in direct observation. It strengthens the claim by making it a matter of visual fact, while also strictly limiting the assessment to what could actually be seen. In (28), adverbs like “*remarkably*” and “*surprisingly*” evaluate a situation by comparing it to prior expectations. By signaling that a performance exceeded what was anticipated, the writer implies a previous negative assessment has been revised. This is a common technique journalists use to establish their analytical authority.

Finally, adverbs can evaluate the manner in which an action is performed or explicitly mark the writer's personal perspective:

29. “*Calmly and methodically*” [4] and “*defended stoutly*” [19].

30. “*Ironically*” [9].

Manner adverbs, like those in (29), evaluate how a process occurs rather than assigning a static quality to a noun. Here, the evaluation is inseparable from the action itself. Example (30) stands apart from the others because it reflects the writer's

own stance. By using “*ironically*“, the journalist highlights a gap between literal and expected meaning, making their personal interpretation explicitly visible in the text.

2.2. Syntactic and stylistic attitude markers in sports news

The attitude markers of sports journalism extend beyond single word choices. Journalists also use syntax, rhetoric, and style to convey attitude based on how language is organized. The studied articles yielded 58 non-lexical attitude markers. These can be divided into 30 stylistic devices (tropes like metaphors, similes, and allusions) and 28 grammatical markers (like specific sentence structures, modals and repetition). These non-lexical markers form a rich secondary system of evaluation that works alongside the vocabulary discussed previously.

2.2.1. Stylistic markers: tropes and figurative language

Tropes are figures of speech that change or extend the standard meaning of words. They convey attitude indirectly by comparing different ideas or by using culturally shared stories. **Metaphor** is the most common trope in the articles, appearing across all evaluative categories. Consider how metaphors express emotional states (Affect):

31. “*A little mourning period*“ [10].
32. “*Wondering out loud if they had just woken up from a nightmare*“ [10].
33. “*Breaking hearts... from Agadir to Amman*“ [15].

Metaphors often construct emotional states by comparing them to familiar concepts. In (31), a sporting defeat is framed as a loss of a loved one, though the word “*little*“ softens the sorrow to an acceptable level. In (32), a defeat is compared to involuntary psychological terror (“*a nightmare*“). Both examples allow the writer to describe intense emotions while maintaining a professional distance. Example (33) uses a common metaphor for grief (“*breaking hearts*“) alongside a geographic reference. This expands the scope of the emotion, framing the suffering as a shared experience across the entire Arab world.

Metaphors are also highly effective at summarizing complex professional and tactical assessments (Judgement) into brief, memorable phrases:

- 34. “*Made of granite*” [8].
- 35. “*Croatia had brought a vise to a gunfight*” [4].
- 36. “*Superb escapologists*” [8].

In (34), comparing the Moroccan team to “*granite*” condenses their defensive strength and psychological resilience into a single geological term. Example (35) adapts a common idiom “*bringing a knife to a gunfight*” by changing “*knife*” to “*vise*”. In such a way, the writer suggests that instead of arriving unprepared, Croatia arrived with a relentless, mechanical precision. In (36), players are compared to “*escapologists*” (performers who escape from physical restraints), evaluating their dribbling not just as skillful, but as a form of theatrical spectacle.

While metaphors imply a comparison, **similes** make the comparison more explicit. This structure is often used alongside cultural references to assign either absolute praise or strong criticism:

- 37. “*Jumped like Jordan*” [8].
- 38. “*At age 37, he arrived almost as an awkward tourist*” [12].

In (37), comparing a football player's jump to basketball legend Michael Jordan establishes a cross-sport benchmark for athletic greatness, making the positive evaluation absolute. Conversely, (38) uses a simile for negative evaluation. By comparing a veteran player to an “*awkward tourist*”, the writer characterizes him as someone who is struggling to navigate a place to which he no longer belongs.

Cultural allusions take figurative language a step further by invoking entire narrative frameworks rather than making simple, isolated comparisons. Consider the following examples:

- 39. “*Rocky Balboa*” [6].
- 40. “*Sacrificial lamb*” [16].
- 41. “*Raged against the dying of the light*” [15].

In (39), comparing a team to the fictional boxer Rocky Balboa portrays them as the ultimate underdog, emphasizing the triumph of willpower over superior, material

resources. By drawing on this widely recognized cinematic narrative, the journalist frames the team's physical exertion not just as an athletic effort, but as a serious test of character and a moral victory.

Example (40) uses a biblical reference of a passive victim to describe a team's expected status before the match. Since the team unexpectedly won, the metaphor gains a sharp, ironic tone. This subversion of a deeply rooted cultural archetype emphasizes the sheer magnitude of the upset. It transforms the expected narrative from inevitable defeat into a miraculous triumph.

In (41), an uncredited line from a famous Dylan Thomas poem elevates the team's refusal to quit to the level of literary tragedy. By including this allusion without quotation marks, the writer relies on the reader's cultural literacy. This shared understanding elevates the sporting event into a profound existential struggle. It creates a lasting aesthetic weight around the team's physical exhaustion and eventual elimination.

The most structurally complex figurative devices found in the articles are **tricolons** (lists of three parallel items) and **somatic idioms** (expressions relating to the physical body). These combine structural patterns with metaphorical meaning to produce an intensity in the narrative:

42. “*Slumping shoulders, that distant stare, that hollow grimace*” [16].

43. “*An embarrassment, an ignominy, a stigma scarred into Argentine skin*” [16].

44. “*Lump-in-the-throat moment*” [6].

A tricolon builds intensity through escalation. In (42), the writer decides to list three physical details in escalating order, from posture to gaze to facial expression, which creates a vivid, cinematic focus on a player's distress. Example (43) uses the same three-part structure to escalate the severity of a defeat. It moves from a common word (“*embarrassment*”) to a formal one (“*ignominy*”), and finally to a permanent, physical mark (“*stigma scarred*”).

Conversely, example (44) uses a well-known physical idiom to compress a complex emotional state (being on the verge of tears) into a single compound phrase.

This device relies heavily on the human body as the primary tool to make intense emotional states visible and tangible to the reader.

2.2.2. Syntactic markers: grammar and sentence structure

Beyond figurative language, grammatical structures themselves carry immense attitudinal weight. One of the most widely-found grammatical devices in the articles is **graduation**. It is the process of scaling evaluative force either upward (intensification) or downward (hedging). Journalists frequently use specific grammatical templates to scale up an event's historical significance while remaining within the bounds of professional moderation. Consider how the following examples of superlatives are used to achieve this intensification:

- 45. “*One of the greatest upsets in the competition's history*” [5].
- 46. “*One of the most startling results the World Cup has seen*” [14].
- 47. “*One of its darkest humiliations*” [16].

The journalists often use the “*one of the [superlative adjective]*” frame. In these examples, the structure ranks an event at or near the very top of a historically defined scale, intensely magnifying its significance. However, by using “*one of the*” instead of an absolute claim like “*the greatest upset ever*”, the writer technically hedges the statement, protecting it from being easily disproven. The frequent repetition of this exact structure across different articles suggests it functions as a near-formulaic device in sports journalism.

Writers also extend this logic of graduation into more individually crafted, complex sentence structures:

- 48. “*Argentina had the finest player on the planet — possibly the finest of all time*” [16].
- 49. “*Best, most cohesive teams in recent international memory*” [13].

In (48), the dash introduces what looks like a qualification but is actually a massive intensification. The sentence expands the scale of comparison by moving from spatial (“*on the planet*”) to temporal universality (“*all time*”). The adverb “*possibly*” acts as a hedge, but it paradoxically draws more attention to the massive

claim being made. In (49), the writer stacks two superlative adjectives before the noun. The second adjective “*most cohesive*” adds specific tactical detail to the general praise (“*best*”), making the extreme evaluation feel more objective and credible.

Graduation becomes even more complex when it interacts with **modal verbs**. These verbs allow writers to simultaneously scale up evaluative force of a sentence while regulating their own epistemic certainty:

50. “*Riyadh may have shook*” [5].

51. “*This may be his last match*” [8].

In (50), the writer uses the modal verb “*may*” to hedge a highly exaggerated, hyperbolic claim. By marking the event as a possibility rather than a documented fact, the hedge essentially gives the writer permission to use extreme language without being held strictly accountable for its literal truth. In (51), “*may*” is used to frame a potential career-ending moment. Because the statement sounds possible, it forces the reader to confront the emotional weight of the potential ending, giving the sentence its dramatic power.

This interaction between extreme claims and **grammatical hedging** can create significant rhetorical tension:

52. “*The latest ordeal might be the most painful yet*” [18].

53. “*Maybe it was naive to think [they] could make merry against such a practised enemy*” [1].

Example (52) is one of the most sophisticated instances of this tension. The modal “*might*” is layered directly on top of the strongest possible evaluation (“*most painful yet*”). This creates a construction where the writer simultaneously proposes a maximum level of emotional pain while refusing to fully commit to it as a fact. In (53), the adverb “*maybe*” functions similarly but in a conversational tone. It hedges a negative judgment of a team's tactical arrogance.

Generally, across all these instances, modal hedging performs a dual function: it protects the writer from accusations of overstatement, while simultaneously

intensifying the emotional or evaluative claim through the rhetoric of cautious possibility.

Journalists also use sentence structure itself to highlight their evaluations. One way they do this is by shifting the most important evaluative information to the front or focus of a sentence. A common method for this is the **pseudo-cleft construction**. This is a sentence structure (usually starting with a “*What...*” clause) that separates the evaluative meaning from the action it describes, making the evaluative statement itself the main subject of the sentence:

54. “*What made it even more spectacular was that he did so with his weaker right foot*” [7].

In (54), the writer does not simply state, “*He spectacularly scored with his weaker foot.*” Instead, the pseudo-cleft extracts the concept of “*spectacularity*” and promotes it to the grammatical focus. Combined with the intensifier “*even more*”, this structure guides the reader to pay direct attention to the specific quality the writer wants to emphasize.

Other grammatical structures encode the writer's personal stance directly into the form of the sentence. **Exclamatives** and **rhetorical interrogatives** are highly effective at this:

55. “*What an exceptional player he is, and he is not alone*” [8].

56. “*How foolish I was*” [13].

57. “*How on earth did Brazil let this slip?*” [1].

Example (55) uses an exclamative to upgrade a standard positive assessment into an expression of genuine awe, signaling that the player's quality exceeds normal, reportable facts. Example (56) uses a rare first-person exclamative where the journalist judges their own past assessment. By admitting they were “*foolish*”, the writer adopts a relatable, fallible persona, which ironically makes their reporting of the unexpected upset feel more authentic and trustworthy. Example (57) uses a rhetorical question to express deep astonishment. By framing Brazil's collapse as a question with no logical answer, the grammar itself evaluates the event as something that defies rational explanation.

Writers can also intensely amplify an evaluation by manipulating how they express negation. This can be done through **negative fronting**, a grammatical rule where moving a negative phrase to the beginning of a sentence forces the subject and the auxiliary verb to swap places (syntactic inversion):

58. *“At no point, not for a second, did it run out of fight”* [15].

In (58), the writer places two negative phrases (*“At no point”* and *“not for a second”*) at the very front of the sentence, which triggers the inversion. This complex grammatical structure directly mirrors the absolute totality of the claim: it categorically denies that Morocco ever gave up, stressing that their effort was completely unbroken across the entire temporal span of the match.

Finally, a structurally minimal but highly effective device is **syntactic parcellation**. This occurs when a writer deliberately severs a sentence fragment from its main clause using a full stop, isolating it as a standalone sentence for dramatic effect:

59. *“Brazil was going home. Again.”* [4].

60. *“The love-in... has not subsided. Yet”* [10].

In (59), isolating the word *“Again”* with a full stop forces a hard, rhythmic pause. This pause allows the historical weight and disappointment of Brazil's repeated tournament failures to fully register with the reader before they continue. Similarly, in (60), detaching *“Yet”* leaves the sentence's evaluative conclusion grammatically suspended. The isolated word hangs in the white space at the end of the text, creating a lingering sense of anticipation and implying an inevitable, negative change on its way.

The final group of grammatical attitude markers relies on **repetition strategies**. These structures intensify emotional and rhetorical effects not by introducing new vocabulary, but through saying something multiple times. Consider the following examples of deliberate repetition:

61. *“Fretted and frazzled and chased and hurried”* [16].

62. *“He wept and he wept and he wept”* [18].

Example (61) uses a grammatical device called **polysyndeton** (the deliberate overuse of coordinating conjunctions such as “*and*” here). Instead of using standard commas to separate a list of verbs, the writer connects each action with “*and*”. This grammatically slows down the rhythm of the sentence, forcing the reader to register each word as a distinct, heavy beat. The structure itself mimics the continuous, breathless pressure and panic the team experienced on the field. In this way, the grammar physically reflects the emotional state (Affect) it is describing.

Example (62) is the most extreme instance of repetition in the texts, demonstrating **epizeuxis**, which is the immediate, exact repetition of a word or phrase. In this case, the identical clause is repeated three times. Logically, repeating the action does not provide new factual information. Affectively, however, it emphasizes the relentless, enduring duration of the player's grief. This extreme repetition acts as a formal echo of an emotional breakdown. It shows that in the face of overwhelming emotion, standard, concise sentence structure fails, and language must repeat itself because the event defies a simple description.

2.3. Comparative analysis between The Guardian and The New York Times

The final analytical section of this chapter focuses on comparison of the two source publications: The Guardian (United Kingdom) and The New York Times (United States). While both are highly respected newspapers with international audiences, they represent distinct journalistic traditions.

The quantitative data for this comparison is summarized in the table below:

Source	Total Markers	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Lexical / Tropes / Grammatical
The Guardian	105	24	34	47	82 / 11 / 12
The New York Times	113	32	39	42	78 / 19 / 16

Figure 2.3. Quantitative distribution of attitude markers by publication

The data show similar overall totals (105 and 113 markers). The slight difference in volume is largely because the NYT sample includes one additional article. Their distribution across the Appraisal categories is also broadly similar, with one notable exception: The Guardian dedicates a higher proportion of its evaluation to Appreciation. Meanwhile, both publications invest similar amounts of evaluative language into Affect and Judgement.

However, the most significant analytical difference between the two publications is not what they evaluate, but how they express that evaluation. Specifically, they differ in their ratio of inscribed and invoked expression. The Guardian is highly explicit. Of its 105 markers, 82 (78.1%) rely on direct lexical choices, using only 11 tropes and 12 grammatical constructions. Conversely, The New York Times distributes its resources more evenly, using 78 lexical markers (69.0%) alongside a proportionally higher number of figurative and structural devices (19 tropes and 16 grammatical constructions).

This difference in numbers reflects two distinct approaches to the journalist's evaluative role. The Guardian tends to state its assessments directly, using heavily evaluative vocabulary to place its attitude in the foreground of the sentence. When describing matches and performances, the newspaper uses a wide range of tones: from casual and conversational to highly formal and artistic. However, regardless of the tone, the evaluation is always transparent. It may be observed in the following examples:

63. “*Wow*” [8], “*thrashed*” [11], and “*run like crazy until the end*” [2].

64. “*Exquisite goals*” [5] and “*sublime angled finish felt like a defining image of the winter*” [1].

65. “*Lump-in-the-throat moment*” [6] and “*a little mourning period*” [10].

The phrases in (63) exemplify everyday, emphatic language to assess the game, while those in (64) use elevated vocabulary to praise aesthetic quality. Despite the tonal difference, both sets directly state the evaluation. Even when the paper uses figurative language, as in (65), it relies on highly familiar cultural idioms. Because these expressions are so common, they function almost like regular words, delivering

emotion without requiring the reader to deeply interpret a metaphor. Overall, The Guardian presents an expert yet accessible voice, offering direct assessments without unnecessary rhetorical elaboration.

In contrast, the NYT tends to construct its assessments indirectly. By relying more heavily on rhetorical and grammatical architecture, the NYT encourages the reader to actively participate in interpreting the meaning, rather than simply handing them a direct conclusion. The paper consistently transforms match events into culturally significant stories, relying on metaphors, allusions, and syntax to create meaning:

66. “*Sacrificial lamb*” [16].

67. “*Raged against the dying of the light*” [15].

68. “*Brazil was going home. Again.*” [4].

Instead of just stating that Saudi Arabia was expected to lose, example (66) uses a biblical metaphor of predestined victimhood. This gives the team's subsequent victory a powerful sense of dramatic, narrative irony. Example (67) similarly avoids a simple description of the team's physical resistance. Instead, it elevates the match to the level of literary tragedy through the allusion to a famous Dylan Thomas poem. This assumes the reader is educated enough to recognize the reference. Finally, in (68), the writer uses syntactic parcellation to isolate the word “*Again*”. A standard sentence could have delivered the same fact, but isolating the word with a full stop forces a dramatic pause, making the reader feel the historical weight of Brazil's repeated tournament failures.

A similar division exists in how each publication expresses strong emotion (Affect). The Guardian prioritizes efficiency, while The New York Times prioritizes structural enactment. Consider the following approaches:

69. “*Joyful disbelief*” [5] and “*sheer, combusting relief*” [1].

70. “*Fretted and frazzled and chased and hurried*” [16] and “*he wept and he wept and he wept*” [18].

The Guardian uses compact, lexically direct ways of expressing attitude, as seen in (69). These phrases are densely evaluative but grammatically efficient. They

deliver the emotional charge without interrupting the forward momentum of the match report. In contrast, the NYT uses structural elaboration, as seen in (70). By using grammatical repetition (polysyndeton and epizeuxis), the NYT slows down the reading pace. It does not simply state the emotion, but it structurally reproduces the feeling of panic or relentless grief in the reading experience itself.

The difference between immediate observation and broad cultural expansiveness can also be traced in the papers. It is evident in their use of metaphors and figurative language:

71. “*Made of granite*” [8] and “*slow waltz to the brink*” [1].

72. “*Sacrificial lamb*” [16], “*a team of lily-livered mortals*” [13] and “*raged against the dying of the light*” [15].

The Guardian’s metaphors (71) remain rooted in the physical realities of the sport. They describe visible defensive qualities or the specific rhythm of a game’s unfolding. The NYT’s metaphors (72), however, reach far beyond the match into a much more intellectual and culturally expansive repertoire. By invoking biblical archetypes of predestined victimhood (“*sacrificial lamb*”), archaic theatrical idioms for cowardice (“*lily-livered mortals*”), or uncredited lines of modernist poetry by Dylan Thomas (“*raged against the dying of the light*”), the NYT transforms tactical moments into grand literary and historical narratives.

Ultimately, these patterns reveal two distinct journalistic identities operating within the same genre. The Guardian presents itself as an engaged, expert observer. It favors an event-centered approach where evaluation is carried by explicit vocabulary, the tone shifts easily from colloquial to elevated, and the primary frame of reference is always the match itself.

The New York Times, conversely, acts as a cultural interpreter. It favors a rhetorically elaborate style that uses grammar and culturally expansive metaphors to place immediate sports events into massive historical scales. It assumes a reader willing to engage with complex rhetorical structures to uncover these layered rhetorical meanings.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

The practical analysis of the selected research material confirms that contemporary sports journalism relies on a multi-layered system of evaluative language to construct narrative meaning. By applying the Attitude subsystem of Appraisal Theory, the investigation reveals that sports reporters do not merely document events; they actively shape reader perception through a complex interplay of inscribed and invoked linguistic strategies.

The examination of inscribed lexical markers demonstrates that individual parts of speech function as precise evaluative instruments. Adjectives provide a broad expressive range and directly attribute qualities to players and actions, while nouns frequently condense complex emotional states and aesthetic triumphs into concrete referential units. Verbs dynamically express attitude by assigning agency to actions, and adverbs serve as the primary mechanism for graduating the force of these claims or measuring the writer's epistemic certainty. However, these lexical items rarely function in isolation. Their attitudinal weight is usually amplified through compound phrasing, proving that inscribed evaluation is deeply linked to the grammar of the match report.

Beyond vocabulary, the analysis of stylistic and syntactic markers illustrates that attitude is just as powerfully invoked through structural form and figurative language. Tropes such as metaphors, similes, and cultural allusions extend evaluation beyond the physical realities of the sport, elevating tactical moments into broader narratives of heroism, tragedy, and historical destiny. Simultaneously, complex grammatical devices, ranging from pseudo-cleft constructions and negative fronting to syntactic parcellation and deliberate repetition (such as polysyndeton and epizeuxis), prove that sentence structure is not a neutral vehicle for information. Instead, the grammar physically recreates the emotional weight, pacing, and intensity of the sporting event within the reading experience itself, making the structure of the text an evaluative act in its own right.

Crucially, the comparative analysis of *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* highlights how these linguistic resources are distributed to establish distinct

journalistic registers. The Guardian predominantly utilizes an explicit, lexically driven approach, grounding its evaluations in the immediate, observable context of the match. Therefore, The Guardian presents itself as an engaged, expert observer. Conversely, The New York Times relies far more heavily on implicit, structurally elaborate, and culturally expansive devices. By consistently measuring sporting events against historical scales and literary archetypes, it adopts the role of a cultural interpreter.

Finally, this chapter proves that sports news discourse is a highly flexible rhetorical space. It reveals that the traditional journalistic ideal of objective reporting is an illusion. In sports media, “facts” are completely inseparable from the subjective, attitudinal structures that deliver them.

CONCLUSION

The language of sports journalism has long served as a captivating area of study for linguists and media researchers. In recent years, particular attention has been given to how written sports reports and player analyses employ evaluative language to construct engaging narratives and guide audience interpretation. This study offers an in-depth analysis of attitude markers in contemporary sports news, exploring their inscribed lexical formulations, their invoked stylistic variations, and the comparative rhetorical strategies defining the reporting of *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*.

Grounded in Martin and White's Appraisal Theory the study has aimed to identify, classify, and comparatively analyze how explicit and implicit attitude markers are used to construct editorial narratives. The findings confirm that contemporary sports discourse functions far beyond the mere reporting of facts. It is, in fact, a multi-layered rhetorical space where journalists actively shape public perception and historical memory.

The theoretical investigation establishes that sports media discourse operates at the intersection of institutional and mass communication. Within this domain, the written sports report stands out as a highly structured genre that allows for deliberate, post-factum narrative construction. The analysis demonstrates that evaluation in these texts is driven by the linguistic category of emotivity. By applying the Appraisal framework, the study confirms that journalists strategically shift from inscribed to invoked evaluation in order to seamlessly blend objective reporting of events with subjective interpretation.

The empirical analysis of 19 articles reveals that inscribed lexical markers form the foundational layer of attitudinal expression. The quantitative and qualitative examination proves that individual parts of speech operate as precise evaluative instruments. Adjectives, frequently deployed in clusters, provide a broad expressive range and directly attribute precise physical, tactical, and psychological qualities to players and actions. Nouns effectively condense complex emotional states and aesthetic triumphs into concrete referential units. Verbs dynamically express attitude

by assigning agency to actions, while adverbs serve as a critical secondary layer, either intensifying the force of evaluative claims or grammatically hedging them to maintain journalistic credibility.

However, the analysis further proves that a purely lexical approach is insufficient to capture the full depth of sports journalism. A rich secondary system of invoked evaluation is realized through complex stylistic and syntactic markers. Figurative language, including metaphors, similes, and cultural allusions, frequently extends evaluation beyond the physical boundaries of the pitch, elevating tactical moments into broader narratives of heroism, tragedy, and cultural destiny. Simultaneously, the study of grammatical structures demonstrates that syntax is not a neutral vehicle for information. Devices such as pseudo-cleft constructions, negative fronting, syntactic parcellation, and deliberate repetition (such as polysyndeton and epizeuxis) physically recreate the emotional weight, pacing, and intensity of the sporting event within the reading experience itself. In these instances, the structure of the text becomes an evaluative act in its own right.

The most significant analytical findings emerge from the quantitative and qualitative comparison of the two publications, which reveals fundamentally distinct journalistic registers. Although both outlets have reported on the exact same events of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, their linguistic strategies prove highly distinctive. The Guardian is found to heavily favor inscribed, lexically explicit evaluation, with over 78% of its markers relying on direct vocabulary. It grounds its evaluation in the immediate, observable realities of the match, frequently utilizing colloquial yet densely evaluative phrasing. Consequently, The Guardian constructs its editorial persona as that of an engaged, expert observer evaluating the sport on its own terms.

Conversely, The New York Times demonstrates a much greater reliance on invoked, structurally elaborate, and figuratively expansive devices. The publication consistently measures sporting events against massive historical scales, utilizing epistemic hedging to balance grand, all-time greatness claims with journalistic accountability. By routinely invoking literary, biblical, and cultural archetypes rather than straightforward tactical descriptions, the NYT demands a higher level of active

interpretation from its readership. In doing so, it assumes the role of a cultural interpreter, transforming fleeting athletic achievements into enduring human narratives.

Finally, this research demonstrates that attitudinal meaning in sports news is linguistically constructed through a highly calibrated mixture of vocabulary, grammar, and rhetoric. The precise linguistic choices made by journalists fundamentally dictate how athletes are characterized, how public emotion is directed, and how the cultural history of the sport is ultimately recorded.

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APPENDIX

The inventory of extracted attitude markers in selected sports news articles

Article	Attitude Marker	Type	Category	Comment
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"shocking World Cup story"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"joyful disbelief"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"one of the greatest upsets in the competition's history"</i>	grammatical/ figures	Appreciation	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"stupendous strike"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"unbeaten in 36 games"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"to embellish his historic career with the crowning glory"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"become fraught with danger"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"commanding goalkeeper"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"had precious little to do other than twice collect the ball out of his net"</i>	grammatical/ figures	Appreciation	Graduation via Focus (Down-scaling)
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"tireless, dangerous, physical and supremely well-organised"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"impassioned resistance"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"exquisite" (goals)</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"nonchalant penalty"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"unrecognisable attacking force"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"cut across a despairing lunge from Parades and swept a stunning shot"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"damaging humiliation"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"sent his fans into raptures"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.1 (Saudi Arabia stun Argentina...)	<i>"Riyadh may have shook"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Modal verb (may) – hedged graduation
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"utter disbelief, shock and sadness"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"merciless reality check"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"worst match ever of the Scaloni era"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"visibly shaken but remarkably composed"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"heavily hyped favourites"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"overconfident side"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"wondering out loud if they had just woken up from a nightmare"</i>	tropes	Affect	Metaphor – psychological distress
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"huge blow"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"none of the vitriol normally reserved"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"a little mourning period"</i>	tropes	Affect	Metaphor – grief framing
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"the love-in that has been in place since the Copa América was brought home 16 months ago, has not subsided. Yet"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Syntactic parcellation – detachment
G 1.2 (Shock, disbelief, sadness...)	<i>"the right team started the game"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"wearing the oversized Argentinian strip, which ironically feels too small for him"</i>	lexical	Judgement	Irony
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"It was also emotional"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"remarkable, really"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"unbearable burden" (playing for Argentina)</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"he is clearly relishing"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

Argentina...)	<i>being the veteran orchestrator of the national side"</i>			
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"The World Cup may or may not be a trophy Messi finally gets to lift later this year but the joy of playing for Argentina has undeniably returned for him"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"supernatural capacity"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 1.3 (Messi and Argentina...)	<i>"explosive, fast, skilful, and detailed in his precision"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"Even the country's de facto leader had downplayed expectations"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"was the sort of upset almost nobody in global soccer had seen coming"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"ranks as one of the greatest shocks"</i>	grammatical/figures	Affect	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"Nobody was more surprised, though, than the Saudis themselves"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"the country's lightly regarded, but well-supported, domestic league"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"Few had given the Saudis a chance of winning a game at the tournament, much less..."</i>	grammatical/ figures	Judgement	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"overcoming the might of Argentina and Lionel Messi, arguably the finest player the sport has ever seen"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"It was a remarkable demonstration for Saudi Arabia"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"Arabia's domestic soccer culture is passionate and organic, and its best club teams, some of the strongest in Asia,"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"...attract considerable crowds and carry devoted, and noisy, followings"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.1 (Even the Saudi Team Is Stunned...)	<i>"one of the most startling results the World Cup has seen"</i>	grammatical/ figures	Appreciation	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"slumping shoulders, that distant stare, that hollow grimace"</i>	tropes	Affect	Tricolon – physical manifestation of Affect
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"arguably the greatest player of all time"</i>	grammatical/ figures	Judgement	

NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"It was worse"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"an embarrassment, an ignominy, a stigma scarred into Argentine skin"</i>	tropes	Affect	Tricolon + metaphor – team humiliation
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"haunting possibility"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"one of its darkest humiliations, one of the greatest upsets in the World Cup's history"</i>	grammatical/figures	Affect	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"visibly diminished, their faces drawn, eyes haunted"</i>	lexical	Affect	Physical manifestation of Affect
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"The sunset of the most glittering career of all has been picked out, in no small part, in shadow"</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Metaphor – career trajectory
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"traumatic defeats, ... dreaded inevitability of disappointment"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"dispirited silhouette"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"unheralded and unfancied Saudi team"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"sacrificial lamb"</i>	tropes	Judgement	Cultural metaphor – power disparity

NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"the low-key coach ... proved surprisingly good at it" (coach Lionel Scaloni)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"Argentina had the finest player on the planet – possibly the finest of all time"</i>	grammatical/figures	Judgement	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"in a rich vein of form, a supremely gifted supporting cast and a vast army of fans at its back" (Argentinian team)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"the team looked self-confident, assured, something close to serene"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"taking the lead through a penalty won, a little fortuitously"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"fretted and frazzled and chased and hurried. There is a fine line between urgent and frantic"</i>	grammatical/figures	Affect	Polysyndeton – chaotic pace/panic
NYT 1.2 (Saudi Arabia Leaves Another Scar...)	<i>"It may be nothing more than a false start."</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Modal verb (may) – hedged graduation
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"Wow"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"Legends now"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"made of granite" (Morocco)</i>	tropes	Judgement	Metaphor – team resilience
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"delirious signal"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"This may be his last match"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Modal verb (may) – hedged graduation
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"Resisting is something Morocco do so well but do not think it is all they do"</i>	grammatical/figures	Judgement	Pseudo-cleft construction
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"What an exceptional player he is, and he is not alone" (Hakimi)</i>	grammatical/figures	Judgement	Exclamative clause
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"jumped like Jordan" (En-Nesyri)</i>	tropes	Judgement	Simile/Cultural allusion – player athleticism
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"Ronaldo disappeared down the tunnel in tears"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"superb escapologists" (Boufal, Ziyech)</i>	tropes	Judgement	Metaphor – player skill evaluation
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"That felt like the kind of moment that fate punishes you for, cruelty inevitably coming"</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Personification – fatalistic tension
G 2.1 (Morocco book historic semi-final...)	<i>"wild scenes"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"stunner" (Morocco upset Portugal)</i>	lexical	Appreciation	

NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"storybook run"</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Metaphor – Morocco's tournament narrative
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"iron-willed defense"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"fanatical support"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"ear-piercing whistles"</i>	tropes	Affect	Sensory epithet – crowd opposition
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"But at age 37, he arrived almost as an awkward tourist" (Ronaldo)</i>	tropes	Judgement	Simile – negative Judgement
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"his position in Portugal's starting lineup, which he had gripped for nearly two decades, was tenuous"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"scoring a stunning three goals" (Ramos)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"wall of whistles reached fever pitch"</i>	tropes	Affect	Metaphor – crowd pressure
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"produce one more heroic act"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"incessant waves of Portuguese attacks"</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Metaphor – offensive pressure
NYT 2.1 (This Is Now Morocco's World Cup)	<i>"hitting a strike from an improbable angle"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	

NYT 2.2 (En-Nesyri's header sends side to semi-final)	<i>"his side defended stoutly"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 2.2 (En-Nesyri's header sends side to semi-final)	<i>"Morocco's defenders made a very bad mistake"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 2.2 (En-Nesyri's header sends side to semi-final)	<i>"the context behind Attiyat Allah's impressive performance is why he deserves to be the player of the match"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 2.2 (En-Nesyri's header sends side to semi-final)	<i>"excellent in midfield" (Antoine Griezmann)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"fine defensive performance"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"200-1 shots" (Morocco)</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"Rocky Balboa" (Morocco, per Regragui)</i>	tropes	Judgement	Cultural allusion – underdog archetype
G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"lump-in-the-throat moment"</i>	tropes	Affect	Somatic idiom – emotional imagery
G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"played with their chests out" (Morocco)</i>	tropes	Judgement	Somatic idiom – team confidence/pride
G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"Raphaël Varane played a cute pass up the inside right"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	

G 3.1 (France bring Morocco's adventure...)	<i>"his side-on finish was a beauty"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"Morocco were a low-key entrant to Qatar 2022"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"especially given the extent of Morocco's walking wounded"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"coaxing painstaking defensive contributions ... demanding contributions"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"both are confident enough to execute some of the extraordinary flicks, passes and turns that fashion attack from defence in a few dizzying instants and are a beguiling hallmark of this side"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"inventive fashion"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"run like crazy until the end"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 3.2 (Morocco's odyssey changed the underdog...)	<i>"outstanding midfielder" (Amrabat)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"raged against the dying of the light"</i>	tropes	Affect	Literary allusion (to the opening

				line of Dylan Thomas's famous villanelle) – Morocco's resistance
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"At no point, not for a second, did it run out of fight"</i>	grammatical/figures	Judgement	Negative fronting with auxiliary-subject inversion
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"sort of blockbuster final"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"deliver arguably the finest player of all time his crowning glory"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"Today, Gianni Infantino feels very smug indeed."</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"this will always be Morocco's World Cup"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"a breathless, furious game"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"redoubtable goalkeeper" (Yassine Bounou)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"breaking hearts... from Agadir to Amman"</i>	tropes	Affect	Metaphor + geographic anaphora
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"Even then, Morocco did not seem overawed"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"tireless Azzedine Ounahi and Sofyan"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

	<i>Amrabat</i>			
NYT 3.1 (Morocco Gave Everything...)	<i>"simultaneously obviously flawed and smoothly imperious" (France)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.2 (France vs Morocco result...)	<i>"hard-fought 2-0 win"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 3.2 (France vs Morocco result...)	<i>"menacing as well as spirited" (Morocco)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.2 (France vs Morocco result...)	<i>"resolute defence" (Morocco)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.2 (France vs Morocco result...)	<i>"frayed French nerves"</i>	tropes	Affect	Metaphor – France's anxiety
NYT 3.2 (France vs Morocco result...)	<i>"deserved consolation"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 3.2 (France vs Morocco result...)	<i>"Unfortunately, that is the lot of the underdog"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 3.3 (Why Don't More Underdogs Contend...)	<i>"clock struck midnight" (for underdogs)</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Fairy-tale metaphor – end of improbable run
NYT 3.3 (Why Don't More Underdogs Contend...)	<i>"cold, unforgiving reality"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 3.3 (Why Don't More Underdogs Contend...)	<i>"one of the brightest prospects in Germany's Bundesliga"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 3.3 (Why Don't More Underdogs Contend...)	<i>"It is not impossible, of course, that a smaller team might one day lift a major</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Litotes – hedged graduation

	<i>trophy</i>			
NYT 3.3 (Why Don't More Underdogs Contend...)	<i>"a genuine outsider"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 3.3 (Why Don't More Underdogs Contend...)	<i>"the unheralded and the unfancied" (teams)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"This felt more like a slow waltz to the brink"</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Metaphor – match tempo/tension
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"sinking to the floor in tears" (Neymar)</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"tense, enervating quarter-final"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"it is another stunning tournament victory"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"does not understand the meaning of defeat" (Croatia)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"flightiness" (Brazil)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"another stunning tournament victory"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"their talisman's sublime angled finish felt like a defining image of the winter"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"outstanding" (Josko Gvardiol)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"impeccable tackle on</i>	lexical	Appreciation	

semi-final...)	<i>Fred</i>			
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"simple yet devastating pass"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"breathtaking figure" (Modric)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"At 37 he arguably topped it here"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"how on earth did Brazil let this slip?"</i>	grammatical/figures	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"lacked control"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"masterful Croatian midfield"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"they were vulnerable"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"played to perfection"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"making an aesthetically pleasing finish easier"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"exhilarating, joyful win"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"maybe it was naive to think [they] could make merry against such a practised enemy"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Hedged graduation (maybe)
G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"sheer, combusting relief"</i>	lexical	Affect	

G 4.1 (Croatia reach semi-final...)	<i>"recriminations will be bitter"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"thrashed"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"emotional Neymar"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"ashamed"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"turned their back"</i>	tropes	Judgement	Conventional metaphor – spectator rejection
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"in tears"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"totally disappointed"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"To sum up our attitude on the field, it was terrible"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.2 (Neymar left tearful after 6-0 loss...)	<i>"the biggest loss of Neymar's career"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"on the verge of tears"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"the most eloquent of statements"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"rocket and a lovely team goal"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	

G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"The match was an unusual affair"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"they were simply too good for Japan"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"The opening goal was bizarre and it chimed with the surreal atmosphere"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"What made it even more spectacular was that he did so with his weaker right foot"</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Pseudo-cleft construction
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"Neymar's performance was a mixed bag"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"He looked affronted"</i>	lexical	Affect	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"It was a beauty"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
G 4.3 (Neymar leaves Brazil press conference...)	<i>"The full-back's low cross was perfect"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"tense 90 minutes"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"resolute Croatia defence"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"favourites for the trophy"</i>	lexical	Judgement	

NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"a penalty shootout was inevitable"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"How foolish I was"</i>	grammatical/ figures	Affect	Exclamative clause
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"a team of lily-livered mortals"</i>	tropes	Judgement	Metaphor – archaic idiomatic metaphor for cowardice
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"disastrous case of poor morale"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"remarkable attacker" (Neymar)</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"attack became predictable"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"Croatia looked comfortable"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"this game was relatively contained"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"game-breaking"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"Neymar, the indisputable Brazilian great"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"magical football"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"marquee moment"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"best, most cohesive teams in recent international memory" (Croatia)</i>	grammatical/ figures	Judgement	Graduation via Force (Quantification)

NYT 4.1 (Croatia beat Brazil...)	<i>"fabulous duel"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"late shock goal"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"calmly and methodically"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"Its advancement had never been in doubt"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"sublime passing"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"a reset of the nation's annual expectations at sky high"</i>	tropes	Appreciation	Conventional metaphor – spatial metaphor for magnitude
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"Croatia had brought a vise to a gunfight"</i>	tropes	Judgement	Metaphor (idiom variation) – tactical dominance
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"Croatia, the team that will not be beaten"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"Brazil was going home. Again."</i>	grammatical/figures	Appreciation	Syntactic parcellation – detachment
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"disbelieving stare"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	<i>"it all went wrong"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	

Joy...)				
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	"a lightning-speed give"	tropes	Appreciation	Hyperbole
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	"giving Brazil a deserved, if delayed, lead"	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.2 (Croatia, as It Does, Squeezes the Joy...)	"Croatia's shootout was as clinical as its broader performance was methodical"	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"The saddest thing, perhaps, for Neymar is that..."</i>	grammatical/figures	Affect	Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"he scored a goal for the ages"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"he wept and he wept and he wept"</i>	grammatical/figures	Affect	Repetition (epizeuxis) – player's emotional breakdown
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"wrought scene"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"no fight left in him"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"broken"</i>	lexical	Affect	

NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"brutal, these penalty shootouts"</i>	lexical	Appreciation	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"exhilarating highs go hand in hand with excruciating lows"</i>	lexical	Affect	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"the latest ordeal might be the most painful yet"</i>	grammatical/ figures	Affect	Modal verb (might) – hedged graduation + Graduation via Force (Quantification)
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"He had been in brilliant form"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"obdurate opponents"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"peak Neymar"</i>	lexical	Judgement	
NYT 4.3 (Neymar weeps for the end of his world...)	<i>"flint heart"</i>	tropes	Affect	Metaphor – lack of empathy