A Critical Stylistics Analysis of Sports Commentaries

Rafizah Rawian[1], Khairunnisa Mohad Khazin[2], T. Kasa Rullah Adha[3], Masitowarni Siregar[4], & Dedi Sanjaya[5]

[1] School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia

[2] Faculty of Education and Language Studies, University College of Yayasan Pahang, Kuantan, Malaysia

[3] Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

[4] Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

[5] Faculty of Education and Language Studies, University College of Yayasan Pahang, Kuantan, Malaysia

Correspondence: Rafizah Rawian, School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Bukit Kayu Hitam, Kedah, Malaysia. E-mail: rafizah@uum.edu.my

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Abstract

Drawing on Jeffries' Critical Stylistics Analysis, the current study was done on the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 commentaries to reveal the discursive strategies used by the commentators that contribute to the ideological themes embedded in their commentaries. Six matches from the tournament were recorded and transcribed. The commentaries were then analysed using Jeffries' Critical Stylistics Analysis toolkits called textual-conceptual functions. Though not prominent, the findings reveal traces of ideologies of representation of races and religion found in the commentaries only by using six out ten Jeffries' textual-conceptual functions toolkits. The current study helps sports commentators to comprehend how commentaries influence viewers' perceptions of sports and the world around us. The current study adds to the literature on ideological frameworks to determine distinct frameworks employed in sports commentary. This could be useful for scholars interested in the relationship between language and ideology, as it could give them an excellent grasp of how these frameworks are employed to develop and maintain specific worldviews.

Keywords: critical stylistic analysis, discourse analysis, sports commentaries, textual analysis, textual-conceptual functions, world cup

1. Introduction

Language and ideologies are inextricably linked because language can both express and support ideologies. An ideology is a system of beliefs or concepts that drive the behaviours and decisions of an individual or group. Language can be used to communicate these views and ideas and to guide how individuals think about and perceive their surroundings (Freeden, 2013). Certain political ideologies, for instance, may be associated with certain words or phrases used to communicate those views. Similarly, unique language and vocabulary may be linked with certain theological doctrines. Language usage can reflect and strengthen societal, cultural, and personal opinions. (Stewart, 1999). It is critical to understand how language can be used to express and reinforce ideas, as this can help us better comprehend the viewpoints and beliefs of others and communicate with them. Simultaneously, it is critical to acknowledge that language is not neutral and that how it is used substantially impacts how people think and act (Fowler & Kress, 1996). Language and philosophy can be seen in sports commentary as well. Certain words and phrases that the commentators use may represent their ideas or biases, which can influence how they describe and interpret events on the field. For instance, a commentator with a particular political philosophy may use language biased towards or against a specific team or player or use certain terminologies representing his/her opinions on social or cultural issues (Bardici, 2012).

The World Cup is one of the most significant sporting events held once every four years. The global population is interested in the tournament, from watching live games to finding out updates about the events. Having at least two commentators commenting on the live match during live matches is customary. Sports commentators must be mindful of their views and biases to provide a fair and unbiased depiction of events on the field. At the same time, listeners and spectators must be conscious of the possibility of biases and ideologies in sports commentary and use numerous sources of information while attempting to understand and interpret what is happening in a game. Commentators' vocabulary and phrasing in sports commentary can sometimes reflect their opinions and biases. For example, a commentator with a specific political viewpoint may use language that reflects their views on social or cultural issues or use biased terminology in favour of or against a specific team or player. Sports commentators must be aware of their perspectives and biases to present a fair and unbiased depiction of what is happening on the field. Listeners and viewers, however, must be aware of the possibilities of preferences and ideologies in sports commentary. While attempting to comprehend and interpret what is happening in a game, they must analyse multiple sources of information.

Numerous research studies on sports commentary have been done, covering various topics. For instance, some research has examined how the language used by sports commentators may impact viewers' perceptions of the games or the players (Sullivan, 1991; Tyler et al.,

2001; Frederick et al., 2013). Other studies have examined how sports commentaries influence popular culture's perceptions of sports and athletes (Van Sterkenburg et al., 2010; Harrison & Lynch, 2005; Parker & Fink, 2008). Still, other studies have concentrated on gender disparity (Kosofsky, 1993; Pratt et al., 2008; Hartmann-Tews, 2019; Sveinson et al., 2022). In general, research on sports commentary has aimed to comprehend better this kind of media's impact on people and society (JHally, 1989; Sullivan, 1991; Parker & Fink, 2008; Overby, 2011; Frederick et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2019).

Still regarding sport commentaries, Balzer-Siber (2015) conducted a study examining the functional and stylistic characters of sports announcer talk by analysing the language used in Major League Soccer (MLS) game television broadcasts. The study discovered that sports announcer discourse has a specific register distinguishing it from other spoken languages, such as news reporting or informal chat. This register is distinguished by a high rate of terminology and soccer-specific words, as well as a high level of formality and an emphasis on providing descriptive and instructive comments. The study also discovered that sports announcer discourse is distinguished by using figurative language, particularly metaphor, to convey complex information while simultaneously creating a sense of excitement and drama. Furthermore, it emphasises the significance of terminologies and figurative language in sports announcer speeches, which are intended to engage the audience and humorously represent the game's thrill. Watanabe et al. (2013) revealed in their study that the themes of sports commentaries during the Chinese Olympic broadcast were patriotism and personality, success and failure, unity and individuality, and the image of female athletes. Three generalised themes emerged from the study: televised sports heroes and heroines; observation of prejudice in terms of gender, ethnicity, and nationality; and collectivism and individualism portrayed by athletes in sports. Bernard (2012) conducted a study that examines the style of on-screen football commentary of the English Premier League and its relevance to Taita speakers in Kenya. The study uncovered that the commentary employs a mix of sport-specific terminology and vernacular idioms to deliver game facts while generating an entertaining and engaging viewing experience. The study also discovered that using sport-specific terminologies resulted in difficulties in understanding and may lead to confusion.

In addition to sport commentaries, scholars have paid much attention to the research of critical stylistic analysis. Coffey (2013) in her thesis, found common themes of representations of men that were being projected in women's magazines. Some of the themes were 'good' and 'bad' men, men are naturally aggressive, and heterosexuality. A study by Khalil and Sahan (2022) on "The Ideological Manifestations in War Poetry" concluded that the textual conceptual tool of analysis, negating, as a formal textual aspect guides into manifesting the text producer's concealed beliefs about war, and this is accomplished by creating a virtual positive world in the receptor's mind to be juxtaposed with the actual negated world in order to construct expectations. Jeffries (2015) further expands her study using textual-conceptual functions to demonstrate that texts exist in multiple meanings, namely contextual and interpersonal. She applied the toolkits on the infamous comedy show "The Big Bang Theory" which gave us the readers a clear view on the multi-layers of meanings in a single text. Through a critical stylistic examination of chosen young adult science fiction novels, Mustafa and Khalil (2019) seek to analyse how the societal themes of order and chaos are transmitted to young adults in young adult science fiction. Negation is the language tool used for critical stylistic analysis because of its widespread use in discourse in general, as well as its textual efficacy in rendering concealed ideologies, whether planned or unconscious. Because it offers a way to recognise and evaluate linguistic patterns, critical stylistics analysis can be helpful in analysing ideologies (Jeffries, 2014) in such commentaries by identifying and analysing literary devices that can be used to develop and perpetuate ideologies, such as metaphor and metonymy. For example, suppose a sports pundit regularly identifies a specific team or individual with characteristics such as strength and power. In that case, this could promote the concept that dominance and aggression are prized features in sports. Another way critical stylistics can be used to analyse ideologies in sports commentaries is by examining how language is used to construct and reinforce social and cultural ideologies. For example, by examining patterns of pronoun use, gendered language, or the depiction of race and ethnicity in sports commentaries, it is possible to identify ways sports commentaries construct and reinforce ideologies of masculinity, femininity, race, and ethnicity. Overall, critical stylistics analysis provides a means for understanding how language is used in sports commentaries to construct and reinforce ideologies and how these ideologies shape our understanding of sports and the sportspersons who partake in them (Al-Kaaby & Al-Zubaidi, 2023). A literature review on critical stylistics analysis would examine the various studies and theories developed in critical stylistics. This linguistics subfield focuses on language use in literature and other texts. In this case, the focus would be on past studies utilising critical stylistics to analyse ideologies in sports commentaries.

Despite extensive research on critical stylistic analysis in media discourse, this study has revealed some gaps it plans to fill. Previous study attempts by many researchers have explored language and style in media discourse. As a result, while considerable research has been done on the style employed in various newspapers, magazines, and editorials, little attention has been paid to style in sports discourse, particularly in sports commentaries. Given the opportunity offered to the author during the FIFA World Cup Qatar, the current study aims to contribute to the current information by undertaking a critical stylistic analysis of world cup commentaries. To extend this scholarship, the current study aims to analyse the commentaries using critical stylistic analysis to identify the styles adopted by the commentators during the live match and to disclose any hidden ideologies in the commentaries. Due to that, the research questions that this study targets to answer are:

RQ1. What toolkits do the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 commentators adopt during their commentaries?

RQ2. What hidden ideology are found in the commentaries?

2. Literature Review

Fairclough's main argument revolves around the concept of "discourse," which refers to language's role in expressing meaning. He posits that discourse is shaped by language and ideology and plays a crucial role in constructing social and cultural reality. According to Fairclough, language is not neutral but rather laden with ideology and acts as a site of power and identity conflict. Language usage reflects and influences our perceptions and interactions with the world. Jeffries (2019) introduced the concept of critical stylistics, which combines stylistic tools analysing language choices in a text with critical discourse analysis examining the text's impact in social and political contexts. Critical stylistics focuses on the connection between language and ideology, emphasizing how language is infused with ideology and shapes social and cultural realities. It particularly highlights how language in literature and other works reflects and reinforces power dynamics, and how critical stylistic analysis can uncover and resist these power dynamics. Additionally, it underscores language's role in shaping our worldview and the communication and support of ideologies.

Critical stylistics is a literary analysis method that employs linguistic techniques to investigate how language is utilised to discover its underlying ideologies and values. It is a type of critical analysis that focuses on the language used in a text and how it influences its meaning and impact. In critical stylistics, analysts aim to understand how the writer's or speaker's language usage decisions, such as word choice, grammar, and structure, contribute to the overall meaning and efficacy of the text. Examining how language is used to transmit power relations, express identity, or shape reader or listener perception is one example.

According to Saussure, ‘langue’ is the systematic (coded) interpretation, and ‘parole’ is the contextual and modifying meaning of language in use. This is what Jeffries (2014) highlights perpetually that texts can carry explicit types of meaning in various ways. Critical stylistics analysis was introduced by Leslie Jeffries as a result of her disappointment in critical discourse analysis (CDA), in which she talked about critical discourse analysis is shortage of methodology or framework for deep, thorough analysis on linguistic structures. On top of that, CDA is a narrow linguistic approach resulted from an axiomatic political view. Be that as it may, no texts or communicative products are free of ideas, thus of ideologies either done it apparently or subtly. Linguists care a lot more on the subtle ideologies being in any discourse since it is “more insidious” (Jeffries, 2010). Another profound dissimilar between CDA and CSA is that CSA believes that the producer of a text (spoken or written) may or may not desire the resulting ideational content from their communicative products. Correspondingly, the receivers of the products may react either deliberately or subconsciously to the notions that underneath the text's ideational value. Jeffries argues that no single conversation, knowingly or unwittingly, is free of ideologies. According to Hall (1985), ideology serves as a meaning-making system where ideologies are “frameworks of thinking and calculation about the world – the ideas which people use to figure out how the social world works, what their place is in it and what they ought to do”. Ideologies can be expressed through language and ideas in literature and other media types. By carefully examining the language and ideas in a text, it is possible to discover and comprehend the ideologies that the study reflects or promotes. This includes investigating how a text's language and themes promote or challenge prevalent ideas and how the text's language and themes may disclose the author's or creator's ideologies. The textual-conceptual functions toolkit developed by Jeffries (2014) which consist of 10 tools. The description of each tool is discussed below.

1) Naming and describing

Texts identify and characterize the entities in their imagined world. This function is more than just naming things, as it also involves choosing words and phrases with different connotations. The way in which noun phrases are constructed can also be significant. Adjectives and post-modification can be used to convey evaluative or ideologically sensitive information. Nominalized verbs are another interesting feature of naming. They reify processes and remove any indication of agents or actors, making it difficult to attribute actions to specific people or groups. In summary, texts do more than just name things. They also use language to create a world that is meaningful to the reader. The choices that authors make about how to name entities can have a significant impact on the reader's understanding of the text.

2) *Representing actions/events/states*

The linguistic portrayal of events can substantially shape readers' perceptions. Verbal choices, particularly verbs, hold the power to highlight diverse facets of an event while maintaining the core information unchanged. For instance, an event like someone conversing with their mother can be depicted using various verbs, such as "telling," "talking," "being close to," or "gossiping." These verb choices conjure distinct impressions—whether the action was deliberate, a conversation, or an unintended revelation. Simpson (1993) offers a transitivity pattern framework for text analysis, aiding in comprehending how authors' selections influence readers' event interpretations. It's noteworthy that the transitivity of a verb can be debatable, particularly within its context of use. In essence, authors wield significant influence through their verb choices, impacting readers' event perceptions. By opting for different verbs, authors can accentuate varied event facets, crafting distinct impressions. This technique can manipulate reader sentiment towards an event, altering its gravity or intent.

3) *Equating and contrasting*

The ability of texts to create unconventional synonyms and antonyms was noticed during a UK Conservative Party's election poster campaign. The campaign featured statements like "The Labour party describes him as black, while the Tories portray him as British," with images of an Afro-Caribbean man and an Asian man. The structure of using conventional opposites (Labour/Tory) suggests an expectation that the two object complements (black/British) should also be opposites. This reinforces an implicit racist ideology among the right-wing of the Conservative Party. Simultaneously, the text's surface-level interpretation suggests the Tories are 'color-blind' and non-racist,

appealing to more liberal voters. The concept was integrated into Jeffries' critical stylistic framework and further explored by Davies in subsequent works.

4) Exemplifying and enumerating

The well-known three-part series symbolizes completeness and is often employed as a rhetorical tool by politicians (Atkinson 1984). It encompasses a wide range of meanings, from itemized lists that enumerate category members to using items as mere illustrations without aiming for comprehensiveness. These various examples present a unique worldview in the text, defying easy classification. Jeffries (2010) explores the nuances of exemplification and enumeration, while Jeffries (2007) highlights the ideological implications of listing choices in the portrayal of the female body in women's magazines.

5) Prioritising

The arrangement of information in main and subordinate structures is a significant element of textual meaning, linking the systematic language structure with its contextual application. Subordination follows established syntactic rules, but the organization of information in main and subordinate clauses provides valuable insights. Reordering the subordinated parts can highlight different aspects of the same information, showcasing how prioritization shapes understanding and unveils the producer's values. Jeffries (2010a) delves into prioritization further, while basic grammar resources aid in recognizing subordination. The functions of implying and assuming within the text are termed as implicature in pragmatics and presupposition in semantics. While there's insufficient space for an exhaustive exploration of these textual meanings, a few examples illustrate their role in bridging the gap between de-contextual and fully contextual elements. Presupposition serves as an efficient means of conveying meaning, with potential ideological weight. It intersects with naming, as definite noun phrases presuppose referent existence. Logical presupposition triggers, like active verbs, assume the truth of their corresponding subordinate clauses.

6) Implying and assuming

Implicature, belonging to pragmatics, is expected to be under the interpersonal meta-function, but its textual nature and similarity between 'assuming' and 'implying' make it an ideational function as well. Like other textual-conceptual functions, implicature shapes a worldview reflecting the producer's (or narrator's) opinion, making it less interpersonal than a speech act, though it can still produce one. Implicature, initially developed for interaction, is applicable to written language, allowing the use of Gricean maxims when analysing politicians' statements that may contain excessive or insufficient information, leading to accusations of protesting too much or concealing the truth. Implicature is derived from Grice's co-operative principle, discussed in Levinson (1983), and is part of Simpson's model of point-of-view.

7) Negating

Negation can significantly influence readers' ideologies when the text producer aims to encourage envisioning the positive version. The level of detail in the negated version affects how likely the recipient is to imagine the positive counterpart. Nahajec's research (2009, 2012) demonstrates the influential role of negation in texts, regardless of text type or genre. Moreover, she shows that negated meaning operates at the textual level, striking a delicate balance between semantic and pragmatic meaning and between the system and its use.

8. Hypothesising

The Hallidayan modality system is seen as an interpersonal system by SFL followers, representing the producer's viewpoint. Modality plays a significant role in the production of meaning and aligns well with the ideational aspect of the critical stylistics model. It encompasses a prototypical form—the modal verb—and various peripheral forms, including non-linguistic expressions like a shrug. The ideological importance of modality lies in its ability to suggest uncertain ideas without seeming overconfident. Simpson (1993) presents a well-suited modality model for critical stylistics.

9) Presenting others' speech and thoughts

At the textual level, quoting others' speech and thoughts is an important aspect of meaning. Short (2012) extensively discussed the subtle effects of a wide range of possibilities in speech presentation. This includes indications of speech occurrence, varied versions of verbatim speech, and direct speech with the strongest claim of faithfulness. This function allows implicit attribution of words and thoughts to individuals without the risk of legal consequences, especially when modality is involved. Semino and Short (2004) confirm that speech and thought presentation operates across genres and at the textual level of meaning.

10) Representing time, space and society

Deixis is inextricably linked to interaction, as deictic words and phrases refer to real-world elements via referencing time, geography, or social systems. The use of deictic aspects in decontextual texts, particularly written ones, enables humans to explore uncharted "worlds" only through the text, whether they are fictional, mythological, or representations of the real world. This skill has enormous ideological consequences since it allows for the building of "text worlds" that reflect political realities and dogmas. The development of text world theory and its application to literary texts illustrate the textual nature of this meaning formation.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This empirical research adopted a textual research design. Belsey (2013) claims that for research that focuses on texts or seeks to

understand the imprint of culture in its artefacts, textual analysis is essential. Therefore, the present study is a textual analysis to uncover the latent meanings embedded in the commentaries analysed in this study that utilises qualitative analysis in analysing sports commentaries. McKee (2003) stresses that textual analysis involves scholars attempting to make sense of the language employed in a document in order to make educated guesses about some of the most plausible interpretations that could be made. Furthermore, Caulfield (2022) observes that textual analysis in literary studies needs to establish the author's intended meaning. It frequently investigates potentially unintentional links between texts, inquiries about what a text tells about the context in which it was created or attempts to interpret a classic work in a novel and unpredictable way. This study utilises textual construction by Jeffries (2014). She explains that textual-conceptual functions generally attempt to capture what a text is doing conceptually in portraying the world (or, in the case of literature, a fictitious world) in a certain way. They also describe how the linguistic system's resources are used to construct this conceptual meaning - this is the textual half of the process and distinguishes this approach as primarily stylistic.

3.2 Data

The FIFA World Cup, commonly known simply as the World Cup, is an international association football competition contested by the men's national teams of FIFA's member countries. The event has been conducted every four years since its inception in 1930. The structure involves a three-year qualification cycle to determine which teams move to the tournament phase. During the tournament phase, 32 teams battle for the title in locations throughout the host nation(s) over about a month. The host nations are automatically qualified for the tournament group stage.

Eighty national teams competed during the FIFA World Cup 2022, which was held in Qatar. The World Cup is the world's most renowned association football tournament and the most extensively observed and followed single athletic event. The 2018 World Cup had an estimated 3.57 billion viewers (almost half the global population). In contrast, the 2022 World Cup had more than 5.4 billion cumulative views across the month-long competition (beIN Sports, December 26). The World Cup tournament is considered one of the most significant sporting events worldwide, matches or games during FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 commentaries were selected and transcribed. The current study decided to use the commentaries from this tournament due to its popularity and worldwide coverage as Bergh & Ohlander (2012) said "*three billion people have never done anything simultaneously before"*. The commentaries within this tournament are of paramount significance due to their extensive reach, encompassing a diverse global audience rather than being limited to a specific geographical region. This prominence is primarily attributed to the tournament's substantial viewership, making these commentaries highly influential.

3.3 Collection Procedures

A total of six live games, which accounts for 10% of the total match in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, with varying stages, were recorded for easy access to the transcription process. The matches were randomly selected, starting from the grouping stage until the Semi-final matches. The commentators of all the selected matches were native speakers of English who were either retired professional footballers or experts in both football and have involved in sport commentaries for more than 10 years. They were Sam Matterface, Lee Dixon, Ally McCoist, Seb Hutchinson, John Hartson, Danny Murphy, Steve Wilson, and Danny Murphy. The selected matches were transcribed for a maximum of 30 minutes. The selected matches for this study are Morocco vs Spain, Argentina vs Croatia, England vs Wales, Argentina vs Saudi Arabia, France vs Morocco, and England vs Senegal. These matches were selected randomly from three different stages: two matches from grouping stage (Argentina vs Saudi Arabia and England vs Wales), two matches from round 16 (England vs Senegal and Morocco vs Spain) and two matches from semi-final (Argentina vs Croatia and France vs Morocco). "…*in qualitative research the central resource through which sampling decisions are made is a focus on specific people, situations or sites because they offer a specific – 'biased' or 'information-rich' – perspective* (Patton, 2002 as cited in Rapley, 2014). The matches, though they were randomly selected, the author had in mind that some of the matches were not only between favourite teams against the underdog teams since they should be 'information-rich' commentaries. The commentaries were transcribed verbatim using *oTranscribe* software, which is available for free on the Internet.

3.4 Triangulation Method

Triangulation in qualitative research refers to using many methods or data sources to comprehensively grasp occurrences (Patton, 1999). Triangulation has also been seen as a qualitative research approach for testing validity by combining data from disparate sources. The triangulation method ensured the transcribed texts' validity by asking another reliable person with an English background to listen to the audio and authenticate the transcriptions.

3.5 Textual Analysis

The transcribed commentaries were then analysed using Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistic Analysis toolkits. The toolkits are naming and describing; equating and contrasting; enumerating and exemplifying; assuming and implying; constructing time and space; and processes and opinions. Using these toolkits in the textual analysis can uncover if there are any ideologies embedded in the said sports commentaries.

4. Results

4.1 Toolkits

The findings showcased that the toolkits used in the commentaries are naming**,** describing, representing actions/events/states, implying

and assuming, negating and representing time and space. The findings can be found below.

The first part of the analysis is about the use of textual-conceptual functions in analysing the textual meaning of the commentaries. The analysis shows that not all CSA toolkits were used in the football commentaries. Only six of the ten toolkits that Leslie Jeffries introduced were found in the commentaries. The order of the list of toolkits is presented according to the frequency of its usage during the match commentaries.

4.1.1 Naming and Describing

Jeffries (2014) states that the most evident function of texts is to name - and describe - the live, inanimate, and conceptual 'things' that the text's projected world comprises. Without a doubt, other ranges of the same literal meaning of the exact words and phrases are different connotatively. Therefore, each phrase and word used by writers were chosen carefully. '*Naming and describing'* was used mainly to register the players and group them according to their nationalities and club players, such as

Excerpts [1]

"*Manchester City* teammate Rodri"

"*midfield of Manchester City* centre-back for Spain"

The use of nouns for names of countries and club names announces the background of the players. Apart from that, commentators also used it to acknowledge the players' achievements; "*premier league prodigy* Hakim Ziyech" and "*the 2010 world champion* Spain". One notable phrase that was used during a match between Morocco and Spain in the round of 16 knock-out stage,

Excerpts [2]

"…in 2022, they are the last of their *continent* and the last of their *creed* still standing at this stage…"

The lexical choice of '*creed'* and the possessive adjective '*their'* is rather impactful. The word *creed*, which means belief or religion, is rather peculiar in football commentaries. The word *creed* has no negative connotation, though for it to be used in sports commentaries shows that the sporting event has some effects on religion even when it should not. Using a nominal form plainly implies a quality shown as more permanent and intrinsic to the person than the adjective. "Thus, to call someone 'Jewish' is potentially less aggressive than to call them a 'Jew'" (Jeffries, 2007, p.72). During the match between Wales and England, where the commentators were announcing the singing of the national anthems of the two countries, the title of the said country's anthems were announced fully, unlike any other national anthems of other countries, "…the singing of the national anthems... '*God Save the King*' will follow '*Land of My Fathers*'…". It is probably because the commentators are from the United Kingdom, where the two nations belong to.

4.1.2 Representing Actions/Events/States

Based on 'transitivity' by Halliday (1994), the choice of verbs can connect or disconnect events, actions, and states to specific people and produce impressions. So, the same event can be told in various ways while maintaining the same meaning but with different impacts. Representing actions/events/states focuses on choosing verbs to describe actions, events, or states. Halliday's transitivity theory is about how meaning is characterised in a sentence. It shows how language is used to influence people and bring ideologies. There are four major processes: material action, verbalisation, and mental and relational process. The material action process specifies some actions going on, such as

Excerpts [3]

"…Morocco *face* another European heavyweight in France…"

The process of the clause is expressed by the transitive verb *face*, where *Morocco* is the actor and *European heavyweight in France* is the goal (affected participant).

Excerpts [4]

"…finishes for the first time ever an *African* boot *will touch* a ball in a World Cup semi-final…"

The actor, *an African boot* for a transitive verb, *will touch* for the goal *a ball* to show the world that this is the first time ever that an African nation is competing in a World Cup semi-final, so much so that the choice of verb is only the bare, minimum effort that any player even the most incompetent and inexperience player can do that much, touching the ball in a World Cup semi-final. Furthermore, the goal of the action is only the ball and not the team they are competing against.

Excerpts [5]

"…Morocco *have lost* the ball *rather cheaply*…"

As for this process, the action *lost* is added by the realisation of the adverbial group *relatively cheaply.*

Excerpts [6]

"…Can Messi drag Argentine to the World Cup final, or will Luca Modric to Croatia spoil another plot line…"

This line where the actor *Messi* to Argentina is paired with the verb *drag* and *Luca Modric* (the actor) is paired with the verb *spoil* to a goal of another plot line means Luca Modric will spoil Messi's dream of dragging Argentina to the World Cup final is imbalanced and

biased. One might ask why it is not the other way around.

Excerpts [7]

"…well not many performers could choose *their final stage*, that is only *preserved* of only the very greatest…*Lionel Messi already fixed* into that category…"

The verbs *are preserved* and *fixed*, which in another clause refers to Lionel Messi for the goal of the *final stage*. It shows that Messi is a football superstar based on his achievements, where *many performers*, referring to other players, could not choose where their last show would be.

4.1.3 Implying and Assuming

The term presupposition refers to assumptions that are built into the text. While they are frequently considered semantic rather than pragmatic, they remain ambiguous because they are not stored directly by the text but serve as the foundation upon which it is formed (Jeffries, 2010). It is the core concept of the third toolkit of implying and assuming. Iterative words are used to trigger logical presuppositions, where some earlier or later occurrence of the process is assumed:

Excerpts [8]

"…in 2022, they are the last of their continent and the last of their creed *still* standing at this stage…"

"…made the change last minute. The system *still* stays the same, yeah, but there's a blow for them…"

"…whether they play off a 4 or a 5...the principles are *still* the same…."

The iterative trigger (adverb) *is still* used in the above clauses, where it is assumed to exist before they are said. However, it can also be implied that the commentators meant to say it is supposed to be over by now, but it is not, such as the first clause where they expect that the Morocco team should not be in the World Cup at the round of 16 knock-out stage any longer.

Another iterative trigger is now used in the following:

Excerpts [9]

"…and you rather suspect that Saudi Arabia is facing an uphill battle *now*…."

The adverb *now* implied that before, the Saudi Arabia team had not had an uphill battle as *now* (the moment it was said), which, if we are to look at the context, was said after Argentina scored a goal.

4.1.4 Negating

Negating can have a significant ideological impact if the author persuades the reader to imagine an upbeat version. Negating is a literary practice with narrative and/or ideological importance. The speaker/writer can create a hypothetical version of reality, which may have some persuasive power. It can be negative or positive and can be used to create implicatures about other realities (Jeffries, 2010).

Excerpts [10]

"…Muhamed Alowais, *who is not the first-choice* goalkeeper for its club…"

Here, the commentator highlighted that Muhamed Alowais is the first choice of goalkeeper for the national team.

Excerpts [11]

"…well *not* many performers could choose their final stage…Messi already fixed into that category when Argentina's leading man."

This clause implies that Messi (mentioned in the second clause) is only one of the few players who could choose the final stage. While many negation clauses are insignificant in ideological terms, there are plenty where the mere mention of a circumstance that does not exist is enough to conjure up in the reader's imagination a new world in which the condition is real, which can have a variety of potential consequences (Jeffries, 2010).

4.1.5 Presenting Others' Speech and Thoughts

The ability to depict the words and thoughts of others has the potential to be quite manipulative of their ideology as well as the readers'. Presenting others' speech is divided into two categories: direct and indirect speech.

Direct speech excerpts from the commentaries:

Excerpts [12]

"…Oh, the way we go for Morocco, a historic occasion for so many reasons… "Aim for the sky", said their manager…."

"…just think to themselves...' can we do better than that?'... 'Can we be in the game for a longer period?' ..."

Indirect speech excerpt from the commentaries:

Excerpts [13]

"…For the Morocco manager, said Morocco be able to fill two stadiums if all the supporters could make it to Qatar…taking on

Spain…."

The main issue about indirect speech is whether the actual message is delivered to the audience/hearer. Non-verbatim reporting of speech can have two main effects on ideology. First, it allows the narrator to interpret the speech by moving away from the 'faithful' end of the range, allowing for slanting or misrepresentation. Second, readers/listeners are aware of the intervention of a narrator and will be sensitive to the distance between them and the original speaker when they encounter indirect speech. This can lead to an audience/hearer concluding that the narrator needs clarification on precisely what was said or is holding something back.

The ideological implications of the presentation of speech and ideas are numerous and diverse. The analyst must consider the text producer's perceived authority, the context and content of the text, the reader's background and views, the manner of speaking and the idea presentation.

4.1.6 Representing Space

In ideological terms, Jeffries (2010) explained that the essential effect of deixis is the ability of a text producer to create a deictic centre that causes the reader to mentally position himself/herself at that point in the deictic field formed by the text. Deixis is the use of general terms and phrases in context to allude to a specific time, place, or person, such as the words tomorrow, there, and they. Words are deictic if their semantic meaning is constant, but their designated meaning fluctuates with time and/or place.

Excerpts [14]

"…we spent about a month here *now,* and *anywhere* you go, you see fans of Morocco, not necessarily from Morocco but from the African and Arab world…"

"…them behind the goal away to our *left-hand side*, but more or less *everywhere* else you look is *red and green*…"

The excerpts are representations of space. The first excerpt for the word *anywhere* focuses on the tournament's location, Qatar, a Muslim country. Whereas the second one, the word *everywhere*, refers to the stadium as the location for the tournament, where it was filled with Moroccan supporters (*red and green*).

4.2 Ideology behind the Commentaries

This section of the study will answer to the second research question, i.e what hidden ideology are found in the commentaries? After the analysis using the textual-conceptual functions, now it is to discuss further on the ideology underpin in the commentaries. The comments made by the commentators during the matches were apparent on the representation of race and religion.

4.2.1 Representation of Race

Excerpts [15]

"...the first time ever an African boot will touch a ball in World Cup semi-final…"

"...you rather suspect that Saudi Arabia is facing an uphill battle…"

"...it's interesting to see how Saudi Arabia attempts to respond…"

"….yeah, they were brilliant in the group stages, but in the group, of course…"

"...we spent about a month here now, and anywhere you go, you see fans of Morocco, not necessarily from Morocco but from the African and Arab world…"

4.2.2. Representation of Religion

Excerpts [16]

"...they are the last of their continent and the last of their creed still standing at this stage…"

Comments like in the list above show the representation of the coloured people (or nation) team. At first, even for the author, these comments seem almost natural in this kind of tournament where it has always been monopolised by the white nations. However, Fairclough's (1995) concept of naturalization makes all these comments become 'common sense'. Naturalization is when people have become so used to that (saying or statement), it has become second to nature or self-evident.

Why a dual standard should exist within a tournament remains a question, particularly when fixture outcomes remain unknown. The inclusion of non-favoured teams in the World Cup alongside prominent counterparts signifies their potential to attain championship status. This consideration extends to commentators hailing from the UK, reinforcing the discourse on equitable representation and impartiality. The contemplation of why such a dichotomy exists becomes all the more intriguing when one considers that, at that juncture, no one possesses foreknowledge of the impending results.

5. Discussion

This section will discuss more on the findings of the current study as well as its implications towards the research world. The first of part of the analysis which answers the first research question focuses on the textual-conceptual functions toolkits that are absent in CDA. Out of ten toolkits, only six were found in the commentaries, namely naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, implying and assuming, negating, representing time and space, and presenting others' speech and thoughts. The usage frequencies of each toolkit are

different, naming and describing being the most frequent and presenting others' speech and thought being the least.

The second and last part of the analysis is, by applying the textual-conceptual textual toolkits, to unravel the ideologies hidden such commentaries. From the analysis, the language style that talks about the players' achievements and backgrounds is the most apparent. It is natural in sports commentaries, where commentators habitually comment on players' recent achievements or which club/nation they belong to.

Evidence or traces of ideologies exist in the FIFA World Cup Qatar commentaries. The evidence is evident when there is an apparent mismatch. A mismatch in the tournament is between one of the favourites (Spain, Argentina, or France) with one of the underdog teams, such as Saudi Arabia or Morocco. Nonetheless, a match between Wales and England has the least evidence of the toolkits being used in the commentaries. Hence, the hidden ideology of representation of race and religion that can be concluded from the analysis is that the commentators, through their speeches, made it very apparent that two unequalled nations vied against each other. These findings support studies by Billings & Eastman (2006) and Hardin (2010), which talk about media commentary being motivated by nationalist schemes and representing the power and identity of partaking countries.

Sociologists such as Sage (1998) and Coakley (2004) also claimed that recurring stress on selective racial teams to the dismissal of others highlights a *social hierarchy.* These occurrences in the commentaries may influence viewers' thoughts and opinions towards any players and teams. It is supported by Zheng (2015), where discourse analysis helps people become more aware of the distinction between the truth and personal opinion and more sensitive to ideology, which is frequently normalised and thus easily disregarded. The quintessential goal of this work is to raise readers' awareness of language's function to acquire a critical eye toward language use. Readers/hearers may or may not deliberately identify the ideation (and ideology) and may or may not agree or dispute the version of the world included in the texts, but for the purposes of interpreting the language, they must embrace the world construction as it is supplied in the text (Jeffries, 2015).

6. Conclusion

Any academic study of sports, including its language, must consider the reality that sports, whatsoever associations they might well have, do not exist in a vacuum but are part of the social, economic, and cultural aspects that form our lives. A basic concept in the academic study of sports is the argument that sports do not exist in a vacuum but are intricately connected with social, economic, and cultural issues. It emphasises the notion that sports are more than just physical activities or competitions; they are complex and varied phenomena that are profoundly ingrained in the larger context of human society. Race and ethnicity have also been key areas in sports studies, with researchers delving into issues such as racial discrimination, representation, and the social relevance of athletes from varied origins.

All in all, the presence of a double standard in a tournament structure evokes curiosity, particularly when considered against the backdrop of yet-to-be-determined fixture outcomes. The inclusion of non-favoured teams within esteemed tournaments such as the World Cup highlights the aspirational nature of sports and underscores the potential for unexpected outcomes. Amidst these dynamics, the role of commentators, regardless of their geographic origins, plays a crucial part in shaping the narrative and the audience perception. Embracing objectivity and diverse perspectives remains pivotal in ensuring a holistic and unbiased portrayal of the tournament's unfolding events (Kennedy & Hills, 2009).

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Authors contributions

Rafizah and Khairunnisa Mohad Khazin were responsible for study design and revising. T. Kasa Rullah Adha and Masitowarni Siregar were responsible for data collection. Dedi Sanjaya was responsible to draft and edit the manuscript and Rafizah Rawian together with Khairunnisa Mohad Khazin revised it. All authors did data analysis, read and approved the final manuscript. Moreover, all authors contributes equally to the study.

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