Original Article

Discursive Construction of Lionel Messi as a Legend; A Critical Discourse Analysis of FIFA World Cup 2022 Media Commentary

Waqasia Naeem[1] , Muhammad Ibrar Nafees Mewati[2] , Muhammad Saeed[3]

[1]Associate Professor, School of English, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan.
[2]PhD Scholar, School of English, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan.
[3]PhD Scholar, School of English, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan.
Email: drwaqasia.eng@mul.edu.pk[1]

ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The study aims to explore the discursive construction of Lionel Messi as a great player during the FIFA world cup 2022. The data selected for this study are the matches played by Argentina in FIFA world cup 2022 which are seven in total.

Methodology: Discourse-Historical Approach of Wodack (2001) has been used as an analytical framework which works in three dimensions e.g., specific contents, discursive strategies and linguistic means are examined as types. The commentary has been analyzed with the theme of the identity construction of Lionel Messi as a GOAT (Greatest of all time).

Findings: The findings are that the commentators have called Messi during the match with different nouns which are used for heroes who lead from the front to remain triumphant. These nouns are equipped with adjectives which make them more meaningful and descriptive. The lexical choices are also very descriptive as well. The verbs used by the commentators show that Messi is a triumphant fighter and winning the battle like a restored hero. These verbs show the importance of his performance for his nation and country. Adverbs are used to define the verbs more explicitly. Adverbs remind the context of the struggle which Messi had been doing over the past years for this crowning moment. The linguistic devices employed by the commentators are highly important as the number of followers following Messi on social media has increased to a very high level. On Instagram, Messi has broken the record of most likes ever in history.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the language of commentators leaves a great impact on the viewers when the listen about the favorite players from the commentators. The commentators use linguistic features to portray the players as legends.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, FIFA, Discourse, Commentary, Linguistics, Messi.

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Introduction

Sports is globally recognized as a form of entertainment liked and followed by people of different age groups. Sports is played in different form of games and football, without a doubt, is believed to be the most popular sports (Humpolik, 2014). Football is liked internationally for its exuberant features, dramatic moves, rivalries and sensational responses of fans inside and outside the ground. Football is played in all over the world but major events of football leagues are organized in Europe. The increasing investment of the Middle East in football shows that football will be played in Asian countries very soon. FIFA world cup 2022, organized by Qatar, shows huge Asian interest in the world's most popular game.

Lionel Messi is world renowned player who is loved and liked in almost all parts of the world. On different social media accounts, Messi owns 539 million followers (ESPN, 2023). After winning the FIFA world cup in 2022, Messi is the most social media followed player in the world. Search record reached its highest ever traffic in 25 years during the final of FIFA world cup and it was like the entire world was searching about one thing and that was Lionel Messi (Sportico, 2022). Messi posted his picture of holding world cup trophy on Instagram which was viewed by 75 million people and commented on by 20 million which is a milestone in itself. This post broke the record of all-time likes on Instagram which was liked by 48 million people.

Figure 1: *Lionel Messi, with the player of event award, kissing the world cup trophy*

The language of sports, comprehensively defined, is the linguistic expression of sports activity and this activity is performed according to certain defined rules (Spurr, 2001). In order to make the commentary more colorful, a commentator must have encyclopedic information about the game. Every commentator utilizes his different styles and lexical choices for the description of teams and players which helps them construct the identity and quality of the players during the matches. The discursive strategies adopted by these commentators construct the image of the player as GOAT (Greatest of all time). The commentators of live games of football make the game more thrilling with the help of their spoken account of events which are actually taking place (Crystal, 1969). On the other hand, (Ferguson, 1983) termed football commentary as sportscasting. He argues that by sportscasting means the oral reporting of a live activity of sports which can be coined as color commentary. The play-by-play comments, during the game, keep the audience stuck with the television and build their interest in the events of the game.

The football commentary has its own unique register with features which are applied for the description of match events, teams and players. Several studies have been conducted to examine the linguistic features of football commentary(ies). (Lappin, 2000) linked the lexical and syntactic features of both live television and radio commentary of the English Premier league and evaluated the nouns, pronouns, proper nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Paralinguistic, lexical and syntactic features of live football commentary were analyzed by (Humpolik, 2014). (Blazer-Siber, 2015) pointed out the functional and stylistic features of major football leagues organized in the US. These studies proved that the register of football

commentary is different from other media discourses. The sports commentary has syntactic features of simplification, ellipsis, substitutions, word order, heavy modifiers, tags and result expressions.

Reports say that almost three billion fans across the world watch football matches live on TV (Dawn, December 2022). Other than the TV networks, it was estimated that the sponsors are going to pay $1.72 billion for the advertisement which a record amount in itself. Chinese companies were the biggest sponsors with the amount of $1.4. The event indeed broke many records of expenditures and earning as well. Most notably, it was the last world cup for the world's two greatest player e.g., Lional Messi and Christiano Ronaldo. A record amount of $440 million were allocated as the prize money for the winners. All these stats raised the interest of the people and brought them in front of TV. On TV, the commentators, with the colorful commentary, captured the attention of the viewers which will make football a globally liked game played in every continent of the world.

Language is a powerful tool to construct identities. Language portrays individuals as history making men or men who will be remembered for a long time. The same is the case of football commentary when it portrays athletes as great players of all time. Players struggle to achieve greatness and they often fail to do so. They again try to win the confidence of their nation and make them believe in every possibility. One of the examples of this kind was seen in FIFA world cup 2022 when the Argentinian team lost its first match against Saudi Arabia. This was the time when Messi struggled to keep the nation with the belief that they are going to perform well in the next matches. Messi and his team fulfilled their promises to the nation. During FIFA world cup 2022, the discursive practices were employed to portray Messi as the greatest of all time. He was presented as a matchless player who left the great players of history e.g., Pele, Maradona and Zidane behind. The linguistic tools employed by commentators, especially Peter Drury proved that he is a player of 21st century.

Research Objectives

- To unveil the language of identity construction used for Lionel Messi in FIFA 2022 world cup

- To study the linguistic patterns used by the football commentators to present Lionel Messi

Research Question

1. What kind of discursive strategies are employed by football commentators in their commentary on Lionel Messi during FIFA World Cup 2022 for his portrayal as GOAT (Greatest of All Time)?

Significance of the Study

The study focuses on the linguistic pattern e.g., nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, hyperbole, rhetorical devices and synecdoche. The study will find out the role of language in presenting Lionel Messi as a great player of football. The discursive strategies applied by the commentators put an impact on the fans during the match that they are watching something very valuable. The critical analysis of football commentary highlights that the commentators practice different discursive strategies to develop a soft image of players like Lionel Messi.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the commentary of FIFA World Cup organized by Qatar in 2022. Furthermore, the matches selected are only the matches played by Argentina led by Lionel Messi. Argentina played seven matches in total in the competition. Argentina reached the final match which it played against France.

Literature Review

It is clear from the perspective of applied linguistics literature review that quite good work has been done on sports and media discourse with the help of different analytical tools. The aim has been to point out the linguistic features of football commentary which distinguish it from other forms of discourses in the 21st century. (Mathieson, 2016) observed how alternative football commentary (online gaming) is similar to

the standard football commentary. He took the data from the FIFA World Cup 2014 from group stage matches and compared it with the videos which were available on the internet. By applying the three-stage register analysis, he concluded that the commentary of alternative sports (online gaming) can be coined as the sub-genre of standard sports discourse. It was found that both of commentaries used present tense, simplified constructions of sentences. Alternative football commentary was with more usage of ellipses.

The term discourse is diverse in its nature and interrelated to other disciplines and social researches as well. Discourse elaborates the larger units which are happening during social interactions which can be in digital form in the modern world. (Burr, 2003) presents discourse as a combination of meanings, metaphors, images, statements, portrayals, and other units of language usage which are used to produce specific descriptions. Discourse can be coined as a picture which provides an image of the situation which is being communicated during social interactions. It presents individuals, their social classes and presents them in a certain way which helps people more to understand the individuals and the situations in which they are presented. Discourse is a form of language in use. It is used in form of a social practice which brings about the picture of individuals as special members of society and their social powers.

While investigating national identity or identities, the point of departure for (Wodak, 2006) is that national identities are specific forms of social identities that can be constructed with discursive practices and can be transformed with language and other semiotic expressions. In sports meetings, the idea of nationalism or national community becomes reality through the discourses which are launched by those who narrate or announce it. Resultantly, the discursive construction of national identity becomes the discursive construction of differences, distinctiveness and uniqueness. Discourses can be seen as materials which build identities and reflect social relations among individuals and the nation as a whole.

Hearle (1995), with the help of randomly selected ten football commentaries, found that in the FIFA World Cup 1994 an attempt was made to construct a positive image of the United States of America as a nation contributing a lot for football. The image construction was purposefully done as the USA was a country that never performed well in the major event of FIFA. The commentators employed the discursive strategies of catchy headlines, meaningful metaphors and stereotypical images for the projection of not only the playing team of the USA but also the nation as great contributors to the game of football.

Gender differences in football commentaries were analyzed by (Messner, Duncan and Jensen, 1993) with the help of an analysis of two major FIFA events. They reached the result that language of television commentary presents a glimpse of gender and racial hierarchies. They pointed out that the commentators believe that women athletes don't capture much attention of the common public and are a little away from the mainstream of sports.

Reaser (2003) studied the register of sports commentary. Applying the (Ferguson, 1983) qualitative description of register as the analytical framework, he pointed out four linguistic features that make the discourse of sports different from other discourses. He concluded that subject deletion, copula absence, subject action inversion and the usage of heavy modifiers are the prominent features which distinguish sports commentary as a separate genre for the live description of the game.

The discourse-analytical styles used by the Austrian scholars have evolved with the passage of time at the international level. (Reisigl, 2017) is of the opinion that DHA is a very much flexible and productive variety of CDS that always goes for problem-oriented perspectives. He considered DHA as one of the most critical approaches to studying the discourse and its main focus has always been on studying the contexts and their relationship to meaning-making. In this way, it is easy to identify the themes in the light of the context in which the discourse is generated.

Defining identity in modest words, (Djité, 2006) states, "Identity is the everyday word for Peoples' sense of who they are" (p. 6). (Kroskrity, 1999) explaining the notion of identity in terms of linguistics says,

"Identity is defined as the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories" (p. 111). Identity is a concept with numerous meanings and interpretations.

Language serves as a tool for developing insights and views, shaping perceptions, and constructing individual and social identities. Hence, there is a two-way relationship between language and identity as a language not only displays the identity of its speakers but also helps in the creation and negotiation of their identity. In fact, linguistic meanings need to be studied and comprehended with reference to the identities of both the speakers and the listeners. (Mills, 1997) believes that new meanings added to language have helped attain acknowledgement under structuralist and post-structuralist belief systems. Socio-linguists now believe that without the concept of identity, language does not hold any meaning. Language has its own determinative effect on the way people think and express themselves. Language is not perceived as merely a tool of communication and representation. It not only enables us to display our identity in terms of who we are but also how we want others to perceive us (Paltridge, 2006). Regarding the interrelation of discourse, identity and culture, (Zaidman, 2001) affirms that culture is one of the most significant elements that affect the identity patterns of the speakers. People having different cultural backgrounds are identified within a group owing to their discourses which are influenced by their respective diverse cultures.

Societies or social groups produce legends as role models through media and media discourse. The hero-athlete achieves a social status demonstrating the path of self-improvement, hard work and a way of challenging the difficulties to achieve success, putting into place a mythical model (Campbell, 1997). In this sense, media coverage constructs sports and viewer's experiences by depicting sports as a plot where rivalries are hyped up and used to serialize stories through and across seasons; conflict and chaos are highlighted with a predictable cast of "good guys," "bad guys," "heroes" and "redemption" stories (Coakley, 2007). The media, as secondary socialization agents, plays a central role in providing guidelines on ideologies, representations, values and behaviors to be followed by a certain audience. At the same time, the media reflects the ideologies and representations that are operating in their social environment. Thus, feeding and explanation of celebrities is not an automatic phenomenon. Audiences may accept the proposed heroes or rather question them. The concept of articulation, as used by (Kellner, 2001) helps us to conceptualize this two-way relationship between the media and its social environment.

Analytical Approach

This study aims to explain the discourse of sports language which constructs the personalities of the players and the magnitude of team spirit to win for the fans and nations. In this respect, this study builds on the set of categories proposed in Discourse-Historical Approach by (Wodak, 2001). This study looks for specific language characteristics which are used for identity construction of legendary football player.
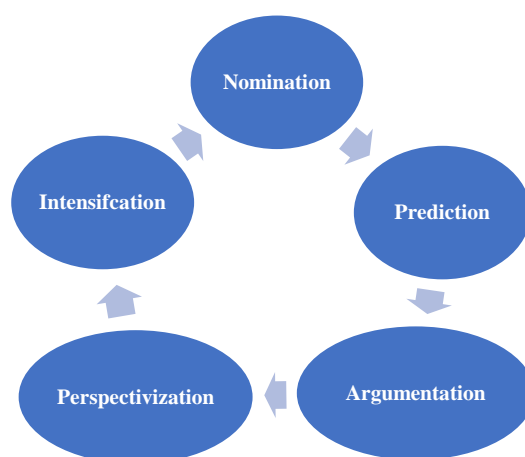

Figure 2: *Discourse Historical Approach stages of discursive construction.*

Concerning the discourse analytical approach, (Wodak, 2015) argues that the DHA is three-dimensional:

a) having identified the specific contents or topics of a specific discourse

b) discursive strategies are investigated

c) linguistic means are examined as types, and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realization are examined as tokens.

Data and Method

The qualitative data was based on the football matches played by Argentina in Football World Cup 2022 organized by Qatar. Overall, 32 teams participated and 64 matches were played. The data has been reduced to the matches only played by Argentina. Team Argentina played overall seven matches in total. Three matches were played at group stages, one in a round of sixteen, one in quarterfinals, one semifinal and the last one was the final match of the world cup played at Lucail Stadium, Qatar. Peter Drury performed the job of commentary in all matches played by Argentina. The data is based on the comments given on Lionel Messi by Peter Drury who is known as the poet of football. The commentary taken for the analysis is taken as color commentary and not as minute-by-minute commentary. The purpose of selected commentary is only to take the description of Argentinian star Lional Messi. The data is even based e.g., goals, shots on target and penalty shootouts. The data selected are the nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and rhetorical devices. The categories for description have been divided in five categories as per the selected framework of Ruth Wodak (2009), which are nomination, perspectivization, prediction, argument and intensification. All categories are provided with the proof of linguistic tool applied by the commentators.

Data Analysis

The data has been analyzed with the help of descriptions given in the table and divided into the linguistic categories, highlighted with the aim of linguistic realizations and descriptions to understand the purpose of language used in commentary. The first analysis of the study shows how Lionel Messi has been named in the matches played by Argentina. It provides a clue that how linguistic construction strategies have helped commentators in constructing Messi as a star player of the event. The commentary of Peter Drury has been selected for this study as the selected commentators is world renowned and holds a large number of fans following. On the basis of his quality, he has been declared as Shakespeare of football.

Table 1: *Nouns used for nomination strategies*

Noun Phrases

Sr #	Match	Noun Phrases used for Messi	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Strategy	Discursive Goal
1		Greatest of them all	Adjective	Nomination	Use of superlative adjective to present Messi as a top-level player
2	**Argentina** vs **Mexico**	The magic man	Adjective	Prediction	Use of Adjective "magic" to show quality of Messi's game
3		Your star man	Pronoun	Persuasion	Use of pronoun "Your" to persuade the attachment of viewer with the player
4		He is one of them	Pronoun	Nomination	"Them" to nominate Messi as a prominent member of Argentinian

					Nation
5		One of the world's greatest of all time	Superlative Adjective	Referential	The superlative adjective shows his place in football world
6	**Argentina** vs **Australia**	The right man	Qualitative Adjective	Nomination	The adjective "right" has been sued to prove the accuracy level
7		The top man	Adjective	Nomination	Qualitative Adjective 'top' has been used to show him as a prominent player of the match
8	**Argentina** vs **Croatia**	Man of Spotlight	Adjective	Argumentation	Use Noun "Spotlight" to prove that he is the focus of cameras when he gets the ball
9		Classic Messi	Adjective	Persuasion	"Adjective" used shows Messi as a player matched with former great players
10	**Argentina** vs **Netherlands**	Number 10	Adjective	Nomination	"Proper Noun" has been used which is associated with Messi because of shirt's number
11		Center of things	Noun	Prediction	Noun Phrase used to show how manages the game

In the table, different nouns and noun phrases have been shown. The used nouns and noun phrases show the commentators' admiration of Lionel Messi as a great player of FIFA world cup. The nouns used for an athlete like Messi show his class in the game and his contribution to the beautiful game of football. Messi was playing his fifth world cup in 2022 and his services for Argentina have always been remarkable. This was his last world cup as he announced his retirement after the world cup from the Argentinian national team. He pumped the fans from the country to believe in the team and promised to win for them. The nouns used for Messi show that he has been presented as the representative of the whole Argentinian nation. On the other hand, he has been presented as the beauty of the game. Words like star, magic and greatest show that the people are the admirer of the quality of his game.

Another fact behind the nouns used for Messi shows that motivation of commentators for describing him is very important. That is, Argentina won its last world cup under Dieggo Maradona in 1986. He was considered as the greatest Argentinian footballer of all time. The difference between him and Messi was only the world cup trophy. Similarly, Pele had been considered the greatest of all time because he led his team to world cup glory in 1958, 1962 and 1970. The only difference between other great players and Messi was the winning of the world cup. In 2022, Messi won the title of winning captain. Apart from being a winning captain in 2022, Messi also secured the title of unarguably the greatest player of all time. This proves that Messi deserved the titles as mentioned in the table. That's why he has been described by the commentators with the help of noun phrases equipped with qualitative adjectives.

Table 2: *Adjective used for add intensification in player's description*

The Adjective & Adjective Phrases

Sr #	Match	Adjectives used for Messi	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Strategy	Discursive Goal
1	**Argentina vs Netherland**	A goal of sumptuous geometry.	Adjective	Intensification	"sumptuous" proves the quality of goal
2		There is no other credible candidate.	Adjective	Perspectivization	Adjective used shows the viewpoint of commentator
3		Reaches out for more history.	Quantitate Adjective	Intensification	"More" proves the intensity of new achievement
4	**Argentina vs Croatia**	Then any other man in world.	Determiner	Argumentation	"Any" argues that Messi has proved himself a matchless player
5		Stares into the eyes of another world cup final.	Adjective	Predication	Adjective "another" predicts that Messi will do it this time
6		Lional Messi 11 world cup goals.	Quantitate Adjective	Intensification	"11" maintains a clear image that Messi stands with Meradona
7		Record equaling 25 world cup games.	Quantitate Adjective	Intensification	Quantitate adjective usage proves the statistical equality of Messi
8	**Argentina vs Australia**	Incredible goal.	Qualitative Adjective	Argumentation	The commentator argues that the goal scored is of quality
9		Right Man, Right Time.	Adjective	Intensification	Repeated adjectives intensify the situation in which the goal is scored
10		Once again, top man.	Adjective	Evaluative Attribution	He is constant in his performances in top level games
11	**Argentina vs France**	Lional Messi stares up at his final peak.	Adjective	Intensification	The last game has been intensified by the commentators
12		A breath, a heartbeat and Messi.	Noun	Mitigation	Messi missing penalties in even has been mitigated

13		Messi is now the great player of all time.	Qualitative Adjective	Perspectivization	The commentator, at the end of the games, gives his perspective

Qualitative and quantitative adjectives have been employed by the commentators to show the class of Messi. It proves that Messi is portrayed colorfully with the utilization of linguistic features in football commentary during the world cup of 2022. It is believed that whenever Messi gets the ball, he shocks the opposite side and fans stand to capture every moment attached to him. Similarly, the viewers leave their seats when they are in front of TV. The adjectives used for Messi remain very appealing to the fans and add to the entertainment and excitement level of viewers. The adjectives are thought provoking for the viewers and their admiration of Messi's class extends when not only they watch the game but also listen to such a class color commentary on TV. This can be one of the reasons of 1.9 billion people watching the final match of FIFA world cup.

Table 3: *Verbs used by commentators for creating argumentation and predictions*

The Verbs & Verb Phrases

Sr #	Match	Verbs used for Messi	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Strategy	Discursive Goal
1		He excels.	Stative Verb	Argumentation	"Excels" moves forward to the glory of the game.
2	**Argentina** vs **Australia**	He punishes Australia.	Action Verb	Intensification	Shows how Messi has hurt the opposition.
3		Messi cuts them in half.	Processive Verb	Litotes	The Verb "Cuts" has been sued to show the process of goal.
4		Messi wriggling away.	Action Verb	Intensification	The intensity of goal and its process has been shown.
5		Messi embraces his moment again.	Stative Verb	Explicit Comparisons	Messi shown in form to play the last game better than 2014.
6	**Argentina** vs **Croatia**	Stares into the eyes of another world cup final.	Stative Verb	Allusions	Shows how good is he to play at big stages.
7		He will have. He will have his ultimate game.	Model Verb	Prediction	Model verbs sued Show the commentator's trust in Messi.
8		Lional Messi has a shot at his crowning moment.	Stative Verb	Argumentation (Justification)	Argument has been built to state Messi's involvement to achieve glory for himself.
9	**Argentina** vs **Netherlands**	Craftily taken by Messi.	Action Verb	Intensification	The adverb used intensifies the action of getting the ball.
10		He ripples the net.	Action Verb	Intensification	The dance of Messi has been intensified.

12		Messi reaches out for more history.	Action Verb	Prediction	The commentators predict about Messi's dream to achieve something big.
13		Messi answers the call.	Action Verb	Nomination	He has been shown as the hope of the nation.

Verbs used for describing Lionel Messi's actions or moves show that how Lionel Messi has been distinguished with other Argentinian and world players. These verbs sound unique in their nature. Messi has been presented in power over other teams and his victories have been portrayed as historical achievements. Messi has been shown as a powerful contributor for Argentinian team. On the other hand, Messi's actions have been linguistically presented as the actions of someone who is highly reliable for the fans of the national side. It seems as if the whole team relies on him. Not only he plays himself but also helps others to play a good game with the help of his assists. A viewer feels that Messi is controlling the game by himself. Whenever he gets the ball, he is expected to do something very wonderful and surprising.

Table 4: *Adverbs used for creating argumentation, intensification and prediction*

The Adverb & Adverb Phrases

Sr #	Match	Adverb Phrases used for Messi	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Strategy	Discursive Goal
1		Craftily taken by Messi.	Adverb	Argumentation	Shows how technically the action of scoring goal has been performed.
2	**Argentina** vs **Netherland**	Driving beyond Dumfries.	Adverbial phrase	Prediction	Claims that how game has been better played than the opposite side.
3		Not quite immaculate from the spot.	Intensifier	Intensification	Penalty spot has been shown as a familiar spot for Messi.
4		Eight years ago, at Sao Paulo.	Adverb of time	Euphemism	The failure has been buried in the time mentioned.
5		He scored twice from this spot.	Adverb of quantity	Argumentation	Success rate has been clearly defined.
6	**Argentina** vs **Croatia**	He is more accustomed to the spot light.	Intensifier	Nomination	Presented as a player who is always better.
7		Lionel Messi embraces his moment again.	Adverb of time	Persuasion	The fans are convinced about their dream moment.

Sr #	Match	Linguistic Devices	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Strategy	Discursive Goal
8		Lionel Messi has a shot at his crowning moment.	Adverb of time	Perspectivization	Shows that how much Messi has contributed as the biggest stage.
9		He is only gone and again.	Adverb of frequency	Intensification	States that how frequently has been a contributing or Argentina.
10	**Argentina** vs **Australia**	A thousand games and still.	Adverb of Frequency	Hyperbole	Consistency of performance has been mentioned.
12		He is better now for Argentina.	Adverb of time	Nomination	Messi presented as all time great player for the nation.

Every action done by Messi or performed is well described by the commentators to prove his class. Every time when he picks the ball and applies his trick on it is picked by the commentators and beautifully described with well-chosen adverbs. Every moment is well defined with colorful vocabulary as if that moment is the moment of history or history in the making. This shows the admiration of commentators of Messi class acts on the pitch during the major tournaments. Messi has been hunting for a big title since 2006, he reached the final phases but failed to win the event. But in 2022, he won the belief of his nation and of the footballing world as well that this time he is to achieve something historical. This is what makes the commentators capture every moment linguistically and they construct him as all-time great player.

Table 5: *Linguistic (Rhetorical) devices to framing the theme*

The Other Linguistic Devices

Sr #	Match	Linguistic Devices	Linguistic Realization	Discursive Strategy	Discursive Goal
1		And the Earth trembles to its core. (**Hyperbole**)	Hyperbole	Rhetorical Figure	Captures the attention of fans to the intensity of the game.
2	**Argentina** vs **Netherland**	When there is no credible candidate, when there is him. (**Q/A Pair**)	Q/A Pair	Argumentation	Crats an argument that he is the main man for Argentina.
3		Messi still alive. Argentina still alive. (**Topoi**)	Topoi	Argumentation	Argentina's place in the WC has been made a subject for fans.
4		Perhaps his moment for infinity. (**Hyperbole**)	Hyperbole	Rhetorical Device	Messi's place among the greats has been intensified.
5	**Argentina** vs **Croatia**	But who is more accustomed to the spotlight than any other man in world football?	Rhetorical Question	Framing	Creates a dramatic effect for the audience.

		(**Rhetorical Question**)			
6		He scored against the Saudi's. He scored against Mexico. He scored against Australia. He scored against the Netherlands. And now he scored against Croatia. (**Repetition**)	Repetition	Intensification	Intensified that how valuable the goals are for the fans and for Messi's place in the WC.
7		And he will have. He will have his ultimate game. (**Modality**)	Modality	Intensification	Achievement has been intensified as it was most waited for years.
8	**Argentina** vs **Australia**	A thousand games and still he excels. (**Hyperbole**)	Hyperbole	Rhetorical Device	Shown as a constant threat for opposite sides.

The usage of linguistic devices sheds light on intensification and mitigation. This is done by the commentators to prove that how a legend is going to win his final crown and how fortune is favoring the brave. Hyperboles used show that the excitement level of the audience has been raised by the commentators. All linguistic devices utilized show that Messi is a great player whose identity has been constructed by the commentators through quality language.

Conclusion

The combative features of football game allow the commentators and media to construct not only celebrities but also sports heroes. The players become the role models for the youth of the nation. The characteristics of heroes are presented in such a way that their followers are valued and considered as role models. They become the symbol of professionalism and perseverance, leadership and consistency in hard work and a symbol of resilience. The attributes given to the players display them as national heroes who become representatives of a country at the global level. The combination of these traits is transmitted in the nation through discourse. Sometimes the results of the game don't meet the expectations of the fans but they still believe their heroes as fighters of the nation. Their linguistic portrayal makes them historic figures who are remembered for a long time.

ORCID iDs

Waqasia Naeem [1] https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3364-6280
Muhammad Ibrar Nafees Mewati [2] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5910-5198
Muhammad Saeed [2] https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9609-8157

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