



## **A COGNITIVE STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SPORTS COMMENTARY**

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### ***Abstract***

*Cognitive stylistics always endeavors to scrutinize texts thoroughly to examine the application of theories and concepts in cognitive linguistics to enhance the understanding of texts that condense information in few words. The current research paper sets itself the task of answering the following question: what kind of cognitive stylistic features are implemented in sports commentary and how cognitive stylistic concepts enhance the interpretation of this kind of discourse. As such, the paper aims to identify the cognitive stylistic features implemented in sports commentary by adopting the threefold model of Jeffries and McIntyre encompassing: schema theory, cognitive metaphor, and contextual frame theory. Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that cognitive metaphors are the most prevalent cognitive stylistic element implemented in sports commentary. The current paper is limited to the analysis of football commentary presented by two commentators who are John Helm and Peter Drury on four World Cup matches. Results of the analysis verify the above mentioned hypothesis.*

**Keywords:** *cognitive stylistics; cognitive metaphor; contextual frame theory; sports commentary, schema theory*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The cognitive revolution has significantly and broadly impacted science and literature recently. Mention should be given to the area of research known as Cognitive Stylistics, which is broadly described as the cognitive study of style, within the broad discipline of Cognitive Linguistics. In addition to analyzing the internal language components of a particular linguistic proposition or discourse segment, stylistics also examines external factors such as author, sociocultural setting, genre, and so forth. It is based on the fundamental tenet that a text purpose and meaning can be understood in the context of its formal features, interacting with formal description and its connection to a particular cognitive context (McIntyre, 2008).

Sports commentary is a discourse genre which stands apart from different spoken genre, and even non-sports fans can typically identify it due to its exclusive linguistic and stylistic features. Indeed, due to the fact that it entails reporting and analysis of events which appear in actual time. It is unlike any other kind of narrative discourse which merely reports past activities (Crystal, 2003).

To the best of the researchers knowledge, where as a good deal of linguistic research has been conducted on sports commentary discourse (Beard, 1998; Cotter, 2010; Lavric et al., 2008), it has not yet been approached through cognitive stylistics, examining how choices of language build up mental representations and meanings in listeners. Consequently, the current research paper sets itself the task of answering the

following question: what kind of cognitive stylistic features are implemented in sports commentary and how cognitive stylistic concepts enhance the interpretation of this kind of discourse. As such, the paper aims to identify the cognitive stylistic features implemented in sports commentary by adopting the threefold model of [Jeffries & McIntyre \(2010\)](#) encompassing: schema theory, cognitive metaphor, and contextual frame theory. Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that cognitive metaphors are the most prevalent cognitive stylistic element implemented in sports commentary. Accordingly, the present paper is limited to the investigation of sports commentary. More precisely, commentary on football matches has been chosen. The commentators selected are *John Helm* and *Peter Drury*. The analysis is conducted on four matches - two for each commentator. The football matches chosen for analysis are from the *World Cup* 2010 and 2022.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Sports commentary*

Sport and soccer have always been a common structure of entertainment. With the rise of TV broadcast and an increasing number of better filming technology, soccer has become commercialized, considered by way of millions and a common “form of famous culture” ([Richard, 2008](#)). It is nowadays considered by many to be the world’s most famous sport. Thus, the role of the commentators is very important. They have to provide commentary about the game and to entertain at an identical time. They have to deal with the unfolding occasions on the pitch linguistically besides hesitation. The nature of their job and the unusual linguistic putting is what makes their speech so specific ([Richard, 2008](#)).

Sports commentary is a discourse genre which stands apart from different spoken genres, and even non-sports fans can typically identify it due to its exclusive linguistic and stylistic features. Indeed, due to the fact it entails reporting and analysis of events which appear in actual time, it is unlike any other kind of narrative discourse, which generally reports past activities ([Crystal, 2003](#)). Since [Ferguson’s \(1983\)](#) influential register evaluation of baseball commentary, several research have explored linguistic aspects of sports activities commentary registers (or sub-registers), such as televised basketball commentary and online soccer commentary ([Lewandowski, 2012](#); [Perez Sabater et al., 2008](#)).

The latest development in sports activities commentary discourse is ‘alternative’ commentary, which is intended to present a light-hearted, humorous take on the action. These alternative commentaries have regarded several sports activities (including football, cricket, and rugby), and also throughout a range of media formats (*Ibid.*). The word commentary is typically understood as “a spoken account of activities which are actually taking place” ([Crystal & Davy 1983](#)). However, this is a vast definition that can apply to multiple linguistic activities. In such a situation, possibly a greater fitting sometimes the term sportscasting is used, and it was first employed by Ferguson who describes sportscasting as an oral reporting of an ongoing carrying activity, combined with coloration commentary ([Ferguson, 1983](#)).

### *Types of Sports Commentary and the Role of The Commentator*

In his conference about baseball commentary on radio, [Ferguson \(1983\)](#) suggested that the sports commentator’s role is in fact twofold: reporting the ongoing endeavor of the game (“play-by- play”), and presenting historical past data and

evaluation (“colour”). The play-by-play commentator is normally a professional broadcaster employed by means of the community which declares the game, whereas the color commentator is frequently a pundit – commonly a former educate or player (Lewandowski, 2012). However, the nature of play-by-play and color commentators’ roles varies according to the game and additionally the broadcast setting. So, as Ferguson (1983) highlights, the audience’s expectations of what reporting and explanatory function the commentators must fulfill differs for customary sports activities such as soccer (more assumed knowledge, and consequently much less detail) than for less famous sports activities such as elephant polo (less assumed knowledge, and so greater detail). The discursive practices used by means of commentators will also fluctuate according to the broadcast medium.

According, radio commentators grant greater detail in relation to spatial references, whereas there is much less want for television commentators to hit upon the action inside a specific house and time for viewers, who can see the action (Reaser, 2003; Rowe, 2004; Tolson, 2006). A further commentator role which Ryan (1993) identifies is the “demand for non-stop entertainment”. In terms of standard sports activities commentary, it is contended that this role is questionable or at least marginal.

### *Language of Sports Commentary*

Sports commentary language is unique to sports activities, and one example is the terminology used by sports commentators. So in football, we discover such terminology as back-four, wall, cross, and even slang terms such as ref(referee) and lino (linesman), every of which has a set that means inside the context of a soccer match, and some of which are no longer used outdoors of football. In addition, commentators frequently use routines or oral formula of appreciation by means of the audience and to reduce the commentators mental workload (Ferguson, 1983).

Example of other linguistic features that characteristic sports commentaries include starting and finishing with some formula phrases such as (“And we’re below way”, or “The referee blows for full-time”), as nicely as score recounting (such as “Mexico leads one-nil”, or “Sharapova leads five video games to four”). Because sports commentary generally includes reporting events which are quick in length and which happen in actual time, the easy existing tense, and mainly the “instantaneous” present is the predominant verb structure for example: “Gerard passes to Sterling” (Leech, 1987).

However, as Ferguson (1983) notes, existing modern constructions are also oftentimes used for prolonged durations of play or in colour commentators’ analysis (for example, “Argentina throwing all of their gamers ahead in search of an equalizer”).The above instance sentence additionally illustrates any other key linguistic feature of sports commentary the use of ellipsis, in particular deletion of sentence-initial nouns or pronouns, or omission of the copula verb be.

As with ellipsis, there is a purposeful factor to the use of inversion in sports activities commentary, which Reaser (2003) identifies. This technique of inversion confort the burden of the sportscaster by infusing lag time into the description of the action, whereby the announcer can confirm the responsible agent. Because some of the game action takes place very hastily (and generally some distance from the commentary box), commentators frequently use inverted sentences in order to verify who did what (for example, “the pass intercepted via Lahm”).

A final noteworthy characteristic of sports commentary language is the use of what [Ferguson \(1983\)](#) labels “heavy modifiers”. These heavy modifiers are used to furnish extra facts about players, and are typically non-finite relative clauses (“Cruden, who has just come on for Carter, kicks deep”) or appositive noun phrases (“Now it’s Kompany, the centre-half and captain”).

### ***Cognitive Stylistics***

Within the field of applied linguistics, cognitive stylistics examines how people communicate ([Gavins & Steen, 2003](#)). It speaks about the use of cognitive principles to language analysis. [Stockwell \(2002\)](#) claims that cognitive stylistics is a revolutionary literary analysis method that looks at literary texts by combining psychology and cognitive linguistics. But the main goal of cognitive stylistics is to offer a non-evaluative, objective study of a text's different language elements. According to Freeman literature and psychology are intimately related since both depict the results of cognitive processes in a social and cultural setting.

[Stockwell \(2002\)](#) elucidates that cognitive stylistics speculates that people are cognitive entities that utilize their past experiences and knowledge to interpret texts. This method, sometimes referred to as "cognitive style," helps readers comprehend a text's relationship to their thoughts, values, and circumstances on a deeper level ([Tamphu et al., 2024](#)).

Formalities and functionalist stylistics place more emphasis on assessing models according to the sentence and text, but cognitive stylistics highlights the significance of perception and contextual effects in logical space ([Nurhikmah, 2025](#)). The cognitive stylistics method, which emphasizes the script and the readers participation throughout the reading process, marks a move away from the textual to the contextual interpretation of art. This area of study looks into how readers interpret metaphorical images by using their prior knowledge, assumptions, and convictions. It describes how individuals use schematic knowledge and background knowledge from real life to understand literary works. Additionally, cognitive process is to restrict the readers ability to map between his actual schematic information and the experience of the material. Moreover, cognitive stylistics depends on readers responses to certain instances in the text and how they make use of schematic information to comprehend any text ([Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010](#)).

### ***Model of Analysis***

This study adopts the threefold framework of [Jeffries & McIntyre \(2010\)](#), in which schema theory, cognitive metaphor theory, and contextual frame theory are integrated. These three interrelated methods offer a comprehensive approach to stylistic analysis, highly suited to the examination of diverse argumentative discourse.

### ***Schema Theory***

Schema theory, according to [Jeffries & McIntyre \(2010\)](#), is a theoretical analysis of how humans organize our knowledge of the outside world and apply it to the understanding of texts. They clarify that the foundation of cognitive stylistics is the idea that readers actively participate in the process of creating meaning. This implies that readers negotiate meaning as they read by drawing on parts of their prior knowledge of the real world, rather than finding meaning only in the formal structures

of the text. Semino (1997: 125) also provides a helpful explanation of how readers primarily create visions of fictitious worlds by drawing a contrast between projection and building. She defines projection as texts that project meaning while readers fill it in. "Texts contain triggers which activate aspects of readers' background knowledge," according to Jeffries & McIntyre (2010). This then enables readers to create mental images of the text's worlds. The psychological divide between "bottom-up" and "top-down" processing is another helpful idea under schema theory. They clarify that when discussing text comprehension, "bottom-up processing" refers to the process of deriving meaning from textual clues, and "top-down processing" refers to the process of drawing on prior information to facilitate understanding.

### ***Cognitive Metaphor Theory***

According to Jeffries & McIntyre (2010), cognitive metaphor theory which was first created by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) has been one of the most influential facets of cognitive stylistics. Jeffries & McIntyre (2010) state that Steen (2007) and Crisp (2002) were among those who later developed the theory. According to Jeffries & McIntyre (2010), the cognitive metaphor hypothesis is based on the idea that metaphor is a common occurrence in all sorts of texts and is not just found in literary ones. They contend that metaphor is a concept that is essential to our conceptual framework and how we make sense of the world and ourselves, not just a linguistic device.

### ***Contextual Frame Theory***

Relational frame theory is another name for contextual frame theory. Relational frame theory, developed by Hayes, et.al., (2001) sees verbal occurrences as activities rather than products, making it an overtly psychological explanation of human language and cognition. Contextual frame theory, as highlighted by Stockwell (2002), is concerned with how readers follow references to characters and events in a book as they read it. It mandates that when new information about characters and places appears in the book being studied, the reader must make a number of adjustments, such as enhancing or changing those representations. According to this theoretical idea, readers create mental pictures, or "contextual frames," in their minds that incorporate characters and objects that are contained within the text's frame.

The three cognitive stylistic theories that reviewed above seem to be closely related to one another and rely on episodic attention to explain how readers navigate different types of texts. As a reader may utilize one theoretical notion to establish another in the context of a certain literary text in order to express an idea or a phenomenon, this shows that the tools appear to be related to one another in terms of approach.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study adopts the analytical framework proposed by Jeffries & McIntyre (2010), which combines schema theory, cognitive metaphor, and contextual frame theory to analyze discourse. Schema theory is employed to uncover underlying knowledge structures that shape text comprehension. Cognitive metaphor is used to interpret conceptual mappings that guide language and thought processes, while



contextual frame theory highlights the sociocultural and situational factors influencing discourse construction. These three approaches provide a comprehensive basis for examining the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of the selected texts.

This research paper is limited to the discourse analysis of football commentary provided by two commentators John Helm and Peter Drury on four World Cup matches. These commentators have been selected due to their extensive experience, distinctive commentary styles, and their high-profile status in worldwide football broadcasting, which provide good insight for discourse analysis. Below are short biographies for these commentators:

John Helm (born 8 July 1942 in Baildon, West Riding of Yorkshire) is an English sports commentator, who has commented on football, golf cricket and rugby league both for ITV and other broadcasters. Helm is known for being a commentator on the international broadcast feed of various FIFA tournaments; he has provided live commentary at the FIFA World Cup (since 1982), the FIFA U-20 World Cup (since 2001) as well as numerous international football tournaments including youth and women's competitions ([Wikipedia, 2023](#)).

Peter Drury (born 24 September 1967) is a British sports commentator who currently works for NBC Sports as the lead main (play-by-play) commentator for its Premier League coverage in the United States Prior to joining NBC Sports, Drury was the lead main (play-by-play) commentator for Premier League Productions. Drury freelanced for CBS Sports (US) on its English-language coverage of UEFA Champions League and the Europa League in 2020-2022. He had also freelanced with Pitch International for the English-language world feed of the EFL Cup through 2022. Drury was formerly with ITV Sport (UK) as its second-choice football commentator, a role he had held from 1998 to 2013 ([Wikipedia, 2023](#)).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal the cognitive stylistic features applied in sports commentary, as outlined through the following data.

### Data 1

This text is a commentary by John Helm on 2010 FIFA World Cup, Uruguay vs. Ghana ([FIFA, 2023](#)). A schema theory posits that an individual's knowledge is systematically categorized as a set of elements or attributes structures which are referred to as frameworks. In this instance, the text taps into the frameworks related to football and to the specific occurrence of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa in 2010.

- **Sporting Schema:** The words “quarterfinals”, “Uruguay”, “Ghana”, “South Americans”, and “Ghanaians” evoke from the audience's memory knowledge about the tournaments of football and the teams competing. This sporting schema assists the audience in comprehending the context of the match as well as the anticipated importance of the event.
- **Team Schemas:** The mention of teams like “Uruguay” and “Ghana” brings to mind what they have historically done in international football, and how they play and who their players are. For example, referring to Uruguay's players as a "dynamic spearhead" and referring to Ghana's changes due to injuries evokes pre-existing concepts around their strategies and imbalances.
- **Player Schemas:** Specific mentioning of names like “Edinson Cavani,” “Forlan,” “Suarez,” and “Sulley Muntari” come to our understanding of their

responsibilities and standing with respect to the tournament or even outside of it. The mention of their past accomplishments (e.g., Diego Forlan's part in Atletico Madrid winning) strengthens the cognitive schema we have about them as the basic components.

The text relies mostly on the audience's knowledge of diverse aspects of football, the World Cup, and the teams and players. Without this schema, to a person who does not understand football, this text may be rather confusing.

Cognitive metaphors help identify a communicative action from another in a different context or use figurative language. Different metaphors and metaphoric phrases are traceable in this text:

- “Dynamic Spearhead”: This metaphor explains the Uruguayan attackers, especially Cavani, Forlan and Suarez. It suggests that they form the offensive base of the team. The word "spearhead" conjures up images of leadership and power, suggesting that these players will be crucial to the team's performance in the game.
- “Struggling with the thigh injury”: This is a metaphor that blends the pain an athlete (Victorino) goes through with the struggle in a larger sense. The choice of the word “struggling” evokes imaginations of hardship which suggest that he really tried within the bounds of the physical limits that were placed on him.
- “Free-flowing Ghanaians”: This metaphor depicts fluidity and dynamism with contending Ghanaian team which suggests that the team plays in a smooth way with creativity and skill. It provides a contrast with the “South Americans” suggesting a more rigid approach to the game.

The metaphors provided gave the attention of the audience towards to both emotional impact as well as factual information of to take the match's conflict and drama to a different level.

The contextual frame theory breaks down the meaning of the discourse into parts for interpretation of context. The context includes the specific surrounding situation, social circumstances, cultural beliefs, etc.

- The Sports Commentary Context: This excerpt serves as a real-time commentary during the football match, which suggests that the words need to match the intensity of the drawn out action. The caller is repeatedly highlighting the statistics of the players (“Suarez scores again, That's three goals for him,” “Forlan has scored two amongst the ever exciting activities on the pitch”), “And Forlan 3 Scores” indicating the performance nature of the sprint and sport commentary, which is quite rapidly maturing and intensive with score accomplishments and half-time discussions.
- Cultural Frame: The excerpt also portrays the world cup of 2010 as the sports anthropologist's remarked in the Cultural Frame interpretation. References to “South Americans” and “Ghanaians” employed signifies a lot beyond mere national identity badges. Uruguay has been provided the label of an emerging strongest footballing nation as Ghana is perceived to be fluid in nature as “free-flowing”. These cultural tags are likely to influence the audience's images of the two countries, which is not a simple task.
- Relationships with Suspended Players: The commentary includes references to "Diddy I do" and "Jonathan Mensah," both players who are suspended, this impacting how the match plays out. As Kennedy was feigned to highlight, the method of absentees is a key a part of this situational body, as such

particulars can present a lot wanted context to the groups lineups and/or methods. The inclusion of the likes of "Sulley Muntari" and "Isaac Forcer" also highlights a tactical change from the team.

- I never envisaged the nuances a comment would have to juggle in order to land within the lexicon of the sport, but the commentary here engages not just with the immediate site of the football match but rather much larger registers of national pride, sporting strategies and the thrill of a knockout squared in a different section of an international tournament.

## Data 2

Argentina vs. Mexico 2010 FIFA World Cup a commentary by John Helm [FIFA \(2023\)](#). In this commentary, a number of schemas are evoked on the basis of audience common knowledge concerning football and World Cup tournament.

- Football Tournament Schema: The term "quarterfinalists of the 2010 FIFA World Cup" puts this description within the football tournament schema at an elite, high-stakes level. Presumably, this audience has a schema that goes with the World Cup and considers top teams contesting international prominence, which provokes expectations concerning how high in terms of playing standards and stakes the level would be at this phase.
- Team Schemas: Team-specific references like "Argentina" and "Mexico" activate information on the playing styles, previous performance, and characteristic players of the teams. For example, mentioning "Maradona" activates information about his icon status as a football idol and his influence on Argentina's strategic choices. Similarly, the mention of players like "Messi" and "Hernandez" triggers recognition of their talent and importance within the match.
- Player Schemas: The description denotes players' roles, such as "Gonzalo Higuain," who "scored a hat-trick against Korea," or "Hernandez" replacing "Guillermo Franco" as the "leader of the attack." This indicates that these players' performance is most important to their team. The reader knows that Higuain's hat-trick against Korea is a great achievement, and Hernandez's arrival can indicate a tactical switch for Mexico.
- Coach Schema: Uses of "Maradona" and "a number of coaches" that they will step down from their jobs after the World Cup provide a cultural element in which football coaching squads are as much part of the story as the players themselves. This is connected to a wider schema that football coaches' fates can be attached to the performance or otherwise of the teams they coach in prestige competitions.

This player, coach, and team schema framework provides a basis for understanding the intricacies of the game, from expectations to strategy. This commentary has various cognitive metaphors that help create the audiences conceptualization of the game and the players.

- "Who will stay and who will catch the red eye home": This metaphor places the outcome of the match as a life-changing decision, illustrating the fleeting essence of winning or losing in a tournament setting. The "red-eye" metaphor links the match's outcome with a deciding, irreversible move—players and coaches are either staying in the tournament or being shipped back home.



- "Spearhead of the attack": The "spearhead" is a metaphor used to describe Hernandez as a key player spearheading the Mexican attack action. This has imagery of a mission or warfare, suggesting Hernandez's function to be central in penetrating the Argentine defense.
- "Ricocheted off the back": This phrase uses the metaphor of a ricochet (a ball bouncing off something in a random way) to describe the unpredictable nature of the game. It conveys the dynamic and fast-paced nature of football, where the ball can change direction suddenly, just as the random twists in the game.

These metaphors not only provide a vivid description of the action but introduce into the match an atmosphere of drama and seriousness, as well as emotionally engaging the audience more with the outcome.

These different layers of context here influence how the reader reads the game and the information presented:

- The Football Setting: The setting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup is of utmost importance. The tension and drama of a knockout tournament where a mistake would result in elimination are reflected in the commentary. The initial question, "who will remain and who will take the red eye back home," finds its roots in the lofty stakes of the World Cup in which every game has a pivotal effect.
- The Venue and Atmosphere: The use of "Soccer City in Johannesburg" with a seating capacity of 88,000 gives a locational context that emphasizes the grandeur and spectacle of the match. The large venue emphasizes the significance of the game, not only for the players but also for the spectators.
- Team and Tactical Context: The elaborate line-up explanations and tactical adjustments fall under the contextual category. For instance, Maradona's choice to "fall back on his favored eleven" or choosing "Hernandez" as a striker instead of "Guillermo Franco" gives the audience information about how the teams are positioning themselves for the match. It makes the audience aware of the shifting strategies and the tactical implications of the availability or unavailability of each player.
- Political Context: The report that coaches could be considered for the sack after the World Cup ("several coaches have already intimated that they will not be remaining in their jobs") is an indicator of a broader cultural environment of football. The careers of coaches are generally tied to their teams' performance, and this adds one more layer of drama to the narrative. It reminds the audience that the responsibility is not just with the players, but also with the coaching staff.

The situational frames infused in the commentary establish the audience's expectation and emotional stakes, positioning the match as not just a sporting competition but a dramatic, high-stakes event with personal and professional implications for all concerned.

### Data 3

Peter Drury poetic commentary on Morocco's Victory over Portugal in Qatar 2022 ([rocQtainmment, 2023](#)). The current commentary is interactive with a variety of schemas related to football and the 2022 World Cup, and some cultural and historical schemas.

- **Tournament Schema:** The commentary situates the action within the schema of a grand contest, the World Cup, creating the high-stakes and world-importance environment of the game. Citing "quarter-final" and referencing Morocco's progress "since they outwitted Belgium" simultaneously creates this game as being within the combative, do-or-die schema of World Cup elimination contests, where life is at stake and advancement to the next stage is paramount.
- **Player and Team Schemas:** Morocco's "wily Atlas lion" and "wary and watchful" Portugal create a sense of familiarity with the teams' strategy, personality, and style. Morocco is portrayed as an underdog, arriving with quickness and stealth ("outwitted Belgium"), while Portugal is portrayed as going slowly, in expectation of threat from Morocco.
- **Schema of Historical Context:** The "16 years since the last Portugal" activates the historical memory for Portuguese fans, highlighting Portugal's previous World Cup experience and their current dreams of winning again. Similarly, the phrase "one more punch where that one came from" is connected with previous glories, particularly their shocking victory over Switzerland. The schema gives the context for grasping the here and now on offer in relation to the past of the team.
- **National and Cultural Identity Schema:** The commentary makes the cultural and national significance of Morocco by saying that the team is not playing just for Morocco, but for "Africa" and "the Arab world" too. That is evoking wider geopolitical schemas in which football is not so much a game—it's a site for cultural identity and national pride on the global stage.

The text activates multi-layered levels of cognitive structures of teams, history, and cultural relevance so that the audience can partake in the larger story behind the game. Cognitive metaphors employed in this analysis frame the action and emotional tone of the game, rendering it a larger-than-life drama:

- "The predatory Atlas lion has sunk its teeth into Spain": This is a metaphorical expression that likens the Moroccan team to a lion, which is the classical emblem of strength, courage, and agility. The image of a lion sinking its teeth into Spain creates a sense of fierce competition, and the fact that Morocco defeated Spain indicates that Morocco has proved itself to be a name to contend with. The "teeth" metaphor offers a visual image of aggression and dominance in the competition.
- "Licks its lips at the site of Spain Siberian Neighbors": This metaphor extends the previous lion imagery, suggesting anticipation and eagerness. "Licking of lips" is a metaphor for hunger, as though Morocco is waiting in expectation of its next challenge be it Portugal or any other team. This creates an image of a team that is not only content with what they've achieved but is eagerly awaiting their next victory. "One more punch where that one came from": The phrase "punch" continues the metaphor of combat and struggle, turning the match into a battle or a fight. The victory over Switzerland is framed as a powerful, decisive "punch," suggesting that Portugal is capable of further knockout performances.
- "Moroccan Miracle is still on" / "Moroccan Marvel": The use of "miracle" and "marvel" positions Morocco's World Cup run as beyond ordinary, greater than what can be expected of a team that is typically seen as an underdog. These

words emphasize the unexpected and almost magical nature of Morocco's triumph, provoking wonder and astonishment from the audience.

These metaphors create vivid and emotionally charged imagery that augments the commentary, adding drama and raising the stakes of the game.

The framework surrounding this match is heavily influenced by broader cultural, political, and historical factors.

- **Cultural and National Context:** The fact that Morocco is not just representing itself but "Africa" and "the Arab world" introduces a shared cultural context outside of the match. Commentary here ties into the larger narrative of football as an issue of national and continental pride, especially for Morocco as a country representing African and Arab cultures to the world. This is significant in the context of Morocco's position in global football history and the political significance of this World Cup as a representation of regional togetherness.
- **Geopolitical Context:** The application of the term "Europe's Western extremity from Africa's northernmost point" adds to the geographical context of the match. Morocco is at the gateway between Europe and Africa, highlighting the geographical and cultural difference between the two sides. This context influences the audience's perception of the teams, viewing the match as not only a sporting contest but a clash between two continents with historical, cultural, and political animosity.
- **The Underdog Scenario of the Upset Victory:** Using the word "miracle" or "marvel" to describe Morocco's victory refers back to the underdog storyline, which is so powerful in global competitions like the World Cup. Morocco's unexpected victories against Belgium and Spain tug at the emotional heart of this story, creating a greater level of drama and shock. The "Moroccan Miracle" trope also supports this underdog storyline, increasing the stakes and emotional investment for the audience, who will likely be hoping the team can continue their improbable run.

Through the application of such a viewpoint, this commentary goes beyond merely detailing a match and connects the event to wider cultural, political, and historical spheres, and as such, becomes more significant and engaging to readers and viewers of various backgrounds.

#### **Data 4**

Peter Drury poetic commentary on Argentina Victory over France (FIFA world cup Qatar 2022) ([Master, 2023](#)). This commentary resorts to extremely deep-seated schemata for football and cultural importance, specifically focused around iconic players and foundational events.

- **Football Tournament Schema:** This utterance is made at the climactic moment of a World Cup final, a competition under high stakes that requires global attention. Terms like "Ultimate Game" and "a nation's new throng of Immortals" conjure a schema of football as the pinnacle sporting achievement, where the best teams and players fight for the ultimate glory. The situation is not only as if a game, but as if a moment of immortal heritage.
- **Player Schemas:** The mention of Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé immediately conjures up rich mental schemas linked to their legendary status.

Messi, "looking up to his final Peak," is framed as the ultimate football icon his journey, struggle, and final triumph are deeply embedded in the audience's minds. Mbappé, "prowling in the foothills of greatness," creates a contrast with Messi, as if to imply that Mbappé is on the verge of greatness whereas Messi is already great. This contrast heightens suspense and drama of the match.

- Historical Context Schema: "*36 años desde Maradona y México*" evokes the historical memory of Argentina's triumph in the 1986 World Cup, evoking a sense of nostalgia and linking the current moment to previous achievements. Maradona's mythical status is imprinted in the viewer's mind, and this past-present link is used to establish an emotional connection for the audience between past heroes and current heroes.
- Cultural Context Schema: The Argentine football history, from Maradona to Messi, is the center of their national identity, and the reference to "a nation will Tango all night long" speaks to Argentina's cultural persona. Tango represents culture, and calling on it here is that the triumph transcends sport it becomes part of Argentina's cultural carnival.

This combination of player, team, and historical schemas simplifies it for the audience to understand the gravity of the situation, providing them with a structure by which they perceive the importance of the match.

Cognitive metaphors shape the manner in which the audience interprets the event, incorporating drama and feelings involved with it.

- "Messi stairs up at his final Peak": The metaphor of a "final Peak" ties Messi's career to a mountaintop, symbolizing the culmination of his journey his final and greatest achievement. The metaphor of climbing a peak suggests both the physical and emotional effort involved in reaching this point in his career, framing the World Cup final as a climactic, heroic moment.
- "Mbappé prowls in the foothills of greatness": This metaphor contrasts with Messi's "final Peak." Mbappé is described as still climbing, still on the ascent, creating a dynamic sense of competition between the two players. The "foothills of greatness" implies that Mbappé is close to reaching Messi's level of legendary status, but is not yet there, thus building anticipation around his potential.
- "A nation's new throng of Immortals": The figurative language here suggests that the Argentine team is not just winning a match but their status in history, becoming part of an immortal legacy. The metaphor lends the players mythical stature, suggesting that this victory will secure their place in football history for generations to come.
- "Messi has conquered his final Peak": This phrase serves as the metaphorical culmination of Messi's career. Conquering a peak implies a victorious struggle, further elevating the drama and significance of Messi's achievement. It portrays his victory as a final, climactic moment after years of effort, struggle, and longing.
- "Paradise": The employment of "Paradise" is an ultimate metaphor for the emotional and spiritual fulfillment Messi derives from his World Cup triumph. It signifies that the sensation of winning transcends the physical to a level of pure delight and satisfaction that approaches divinity.

- These metaphors extend beyond the match as merely a football match, and position it in a larger sense as a great event within both Messi and Mbappé's careers, with personal and historical stakes.

This commentary is not just describing a football game; it's engaging with the cultural and emotional meaning of the World Cup.

- **World Cup Final Context:** The commentary is placed in the context of the World Cup final, the very peak of global football. It's not just a matter of who gets the most goals the game is also about legacy, national pride, and the ultimate payoff of decades of effort. The commentary ratchets up tension by framing the event as the "Ultimate Game," an international event that will unite the world, capitalizing on the emotion and anticipation of the moment.
- **Generational Context:** The mention of Messi and Maradona, as well as of Argentina's previous victory in 1986, is based on the generational context of football giants. To everyone, Messi is the next chapter in the book of Argentina's football dominance, continuing where Maradona started. The generational tie places the final not just as a match between two teams, but as an event in history for Argentina itself as a nation. It creates a sense of continuity and legacy.
- **National Context:** The sentence, "a nation will Tango all night long," reflects the cultural joy that accompanies the win. Victory in football in Argentina is seen as a national phenomenon, wherein the sport becomes intertwined with the nation. Such a national context makes the victory more than sports it's a national and cultural victory.
- **Messi's Personal Context:** The focus on Messi's journey, particularly the emotional scene where "Messi fell to his knees," frames the victory as the culmination of Messi's personal struggles and aspirations. It emphasizes the personal context of Messi's quest for World Cup glory and ties his victory to his identity and legacy. This context makes the triumph feel deeply emotional and significant not just for Argentina, but for Messi personally.
- **The Global Context:** The expression "the planet unites around its Ultimate Game" captures the global significance of the game. The world's most popular sport, football, overcomes cultures and unites individuals, and the above observation places the World Cup in the context of something that unites countries across borders. Messi-Mbappé's game becomes a symbol of the greater human story of ambition, rivalry, and triumph.

By these settings in context, the commentary takes on a more richer, universal meaning, whereby the football match becomes a moment of fate in the lives of the players, the nations, and the world itself.

## CONCLUSION

By analyzing the four commentaries through Jeffries and McIntyre's framework of schema theory, cognitive metaphors, and contextual frame theory, we can see more clearly how the texts construct and convey the meaning of football matches within the broader context of international sporting culture. The analyses show that these commentaries are not simply reports of events, but highly constructed narratives that rely on deeply ingrained cultural, national, and personal meanings.

Schema theory plays a crucial role in the way each match is presented to the audience. By invoking schemas for football competitions, national identity, history, and mythical players, the commentators create a rich, multilayered schema that situates the game within broader cultural and emotional contexts. This allows the audience to empathize not only on the surface but also symbolically and at a deeper level with the actions. Cognitive Metaphor further amplifies the emotional overtones of the stories. The "ultimate Peak," "foothills of greatness," and "the Moroccan Miracle" type metaphors make the game extremely dramatic and more or less mythical, to the extent that they transform the soccer game into an epic saga of conquest, tests, and victory. They assist the commentators in making the teams and players heroic figures, with gigantic-sized competitions in progress. Contextual frame theory helps us understand the broader significance of these matches, positioning them not just as sporting events but as cultural phenomena. The commentary frequently evokes the weight of historical context, from referencing past World Cup victories to positioning players as inheritors of football legacies. Argentina's football history, with its reference to Maradona, acts as a frame that gives meaning to Messi's current achievement. With Morocco's unexpected campaign, their national and cultural pride in defending the Arab world and Africa adds layers of emotional depth to their experience.

To conclude with, such commentaries illustrate how language is used to turn a football game into an epic tale of national and personal significance. Besides, the use of Jeffries and McIntyre's model allows us to see how these texts do more than merely report on the action they engage with the reader on a deep emotional and cultural level, so that each match is part of a larger, shared experience. Football here becomes a mirror of shared identity, hope, and heritage, where every pass, score, and victory is imbued with meaning far greater than the stadium.

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