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## Research Paper

# "Iran will not go quietly!" The Identification of Promotional Metadiscursive Tokens in the Farsi and English Commentaries of the Match Between Argentina and Iran in the 2014 FIFA World Cup

Soheil Saidian

Department of Basic Sciences and General Courses, Faculty of Economics and Management, Khorramshahr University of Marine Science and Technology, Khorramshahr, Iran, [saidians@gmail.com](mailto:saidians@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

The analysis of nearly 205 minutes of the English and Farsi commentaries of the 2014 FIFA World Cup match featuring Argentina and Iran focused on the identification of the promotional metadiscursive tokens employed by the reporters covering this match in their respective vernacular. The sportscast transcriptions were inspected to uncover the various tokens with promotional characteristics. A thorough data analysis presented seven comprehensive categories of promotional components, namely adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, interjections, idioms, and honorifics. Adjectives and adverbs were the most common constituents implemented in both languages and they were divided into nine and five subcategories, respectively. Honorifics were only witnessed in the Persian sportscasts and were interpreted as cultural markers in the discourse. The research serves as proof that promotional metadiscursive constituents are a fundamental aspect of soccer sportscasts, and it can also be considered as a basis for inquiries in this unique discourse genre.

**Keywords:** Commentary; Promotional Metadiscourse; FIFA World Cup; Sportscasts; Genre.

## 1. Introduction

Commentary is an integral part of sports which anchors utilize to engage the audience with what is being broadcasted. While describing the events taking place, they add a "certain touch of information, opinions, and emotions" (Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016, p. 9) to the game being aired. In other words, the commentator connects the audience and the action. In a live soccer match, a sportscaster must strive to simultaneously describe the game and keep the audience interested (Beard, 1998; Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016; Whannel, 1992). Thus, such discourse requires maintaining a balance between common language and technical evaluations (Stiehler & Marr, 2002), which can only be expected from a quick-witted sportscaster with a great understanding of the sport and an excellent command of the medium of communication.

Another intrigue-inducing factor is the impromptu nature of the events and thus the language. Unpredictable and unscripted, the occurrences open avenues for anchors to get creative when covering matches and go beyond the usual jargons (Leigh & Woodhouse, 2004), especially on the international stage (Georgalou, 2009), where impartiality becomes difficult due to "factors pertaining to the teams involved and the commentator's interpretation of whatever is related to those teams, whether sports-related or otherwise" (Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016, p. 9). Examples of such tokens are "we" to mean "our team" or "our nation" (Georgalou, 2009, p. 116). This means many metadiscursive tokens exist in the discourse which are assumed to impact the audience as intended by the sports anchor.

## 2. Literature Review

Metadiscourse, as stated by Vande Kopple (1985, p. 83), is "discourse that people use not to expand referential material", but what they implement to aid the addressee to "connect, organize, interpret, evaluate, and develop attitudes toward that material". In other words, metadiscourse is a linguistic device used to convey attitudes through a variety of



discoursal components (the likes of attitude markers, code glosses, and so forth). This makes it central to the reporter when transferring ideas, emotions, viewpoints, potential tendencies, and the like, affecting their audience in a delicate or even obvious manner.

Research on metadiscourse has yielded different models (Crismore, Markkanen, & Steffensen, 1993; Hyland, 2005; Vande Kopple, 1985) mostly centered on academic discourse and the odd study outside of academia's language scope (see Gordon & Luke, 2016; Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016)—the category under which this research falls.

With the relative insufficiency of literature regarding sports discourse and the recognition of sports as an intrinsic element of the modern era and the fact that this is the language that people of all ages, genders and educational backgrounds are in contact with, further research is warranted to identify the role of metadiscourse in this genre. Since promotion makes up a large part of reporting, it deserves more attention than it has received so far. Therefore, this endeavor will undertake the task of identifying and comparing the promotional tokens used in English and Farsi reports of "the world's favorite sport, soccer, on its largest stage, the FIFA World Cup" (Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016). The findings of this study can contribute greatly to metadiscourse— especially regarding promotional metadiscourse.

### **2.1. The FIFA World Cup, Brazil 2014 and Soccer Research**

Internationally, the biggest soccer event is the FIFA World Cup. This competition has been held quadrennially since 1930. Currently, FIFA's 211 members are divided into six confederations, namely the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol (CONMEBOL) in South America, Africa's Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF), the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), and the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC). Under the present format, 32 of the 211 member countries can qualify for the tournament finals.

In 2014, Brazil was the host of the World Cup. The participating national teams played 64 games cumulatively from June 12<sup>th</sup> and July 13<sup>th</sup>, each team playing at least three group stage games during the competition, comprising a total of 48 games.

Research on soccer sportscasts has covered discourse regarding race, gender, nationality and ethnicity (Barnfield, 2013; Billings & Tambosi, 2004; Georgalou, 2009; McCarthy, Jones & Potrac, 2003; Richard, 2008; Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & de Leeuw, 2012), historical features in live soccer commentary (Haynes, 1998; Sandvoss, 2003; Whannel, 1992), as well as linguistic components and styles (Chapanga, 2004). Metapragmatics in soccer-related communication has also been researched (Kytölä & Westinen, 2015; Theodoropoulou, 2008) as has promotional metadiscursive functions (Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016). As can be seen from the studies listed above, with the exception of Saidian and Jalilifar (2016), the bulk of research on soccer commentary pertains to aspects other than metadiscursive features, and such tokens in specific.

### **2.2. Metadiscourse**

Communication involves the social and cultural engagement of interlocutors in an act of discourse. It not only surpasses the exchange of services, goods and information, but also includes the conceptions, perceptions, and dispositions of the speaker/writer. It deals with how text producers align themselves with their intended audience in a specific context. The interpersonal functions of texts have been emphasized in text analysis research (Hyland, 2004b), meaning that language, as the medium for communication, ensures the application of comprehensible and appropriate utterances. The initiator is obliged to predict the addressee's expectations, which in turn involves the audience by assisting them in how to perceive the intended message. This stresses the social and interactive exchange that takes place among the interlocutors (Hyland, 2004b, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004).

Metadiscourse, or "*beyond discourse*" (Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016, p. 10), is crucial in the organization of discourse and how it engages the audience, and how it is pivotal to interlocutors conveying their sentiment (White, 2012). It represents the concept "that communication is more than just the exchange of "information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating" (Hyland, 2005, p. 3). Metadiscourse refers to the oral or written linguistic elements that reflect the attitudes and conceptions of the writer/speaker and "help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the information given" (Crismore et al., 1993, p. 40).

Metadiscourse research has investigated corpora ranging from casual conversation (Schiffrin, 1980), science popularizations (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990), textbooks (Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 2004a), graduate dissertations (Bunton, 1999) to annual reports (Hyland, 1998b). Rhetorical discrepancies in the writing of nonnatives have also been researched based on their metadiscursive attributes (Crismore et al., 1993; Mauranen, 1993; Valero-Garces, 1996). Metadiscourse in medical texts (Taavitsainen, 2000; Validi, Jalilifar, Shooshtari, & Hayati, 2016) has received attention, as has the writing of second language learners (Hashemian & Farhang-Ju, 2018; Ortiz, Diaz, & Jesús Inostroza, 2020) and is considered among the features of good writing regardless of the writer’s native language (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996; Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). Persuasive and argumentative discourse also has metadiscursive components as key attributes (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990; Hyland, 1998a). Clearly, the majority of the materials of the literature—oral or written—are academic in nature.

The amalgamation of a variety of similar genres aiming to promote a phenomenon to a specific audience is promotional (meta)discourse. Thus, “a positive description and evaluation of the product, service or idea being promoted” (Bhatia, 2004, p. 133) is what promotional discourse offers. Advertisements, book blurbs, promotional letters, job applications, and here, sports commentaries are examples of this genre. Research on promotional discourse includes such diverse areas as press releases (Pander Maat, 2007), sales (Bhatia, 2014; Vergaro, 2004) and application letters (Connor, Davis, & De Rycker, 1995; Henry & Roseberry, 2001), grant proposals (Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Connor & Upton, 2004), academic introductions (Bhatia, 1997), blurbs (Basturkmen, 2009; Gea-Valor, 2005, 2007; Gea-Valor & Inigo Ros, 2009) and soccer sportscasts (Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016), with soccer reports getting a smaller, if not the smallest, share of attention in this regard.

### 2.3. This Study

As argued above, sportscasts—specifically pertaining to soccer—have not received the same amount of attention compared to the discourse of commerce and academia, particularly regarding promotional characteristics. If the media exposes people with a considerable amount of information (Fowler, 1991) and if television is considered one of the most accessible and influential media types, and if soccer is the world’s most popular sport (Palacios-Huerta, 2004; Saidian & Jalilifar, 2016), it seems reasonable that soccer report research receives recognition as well. Thus, this endeavor is an attempt to acknowledge the most globally popular sport via the identification of the existing promotional metadiscursive tokens existing in the live sportscast of the 2014 group stage game between Argentina and Iran in English and Persian, contrasting the two languages for similarities and differences. Beyond the issue of command over the languages under study and the ability to interpret them, this specific match was chosen because both Iran and Argentina are significant, soccer-loving countries in world soccer and this was deemed crucial to the performance of the commentators and the discourse they used to report the games. The fact that much of soccer reporting involves the promotion of all that is involved in the match, this investigation can shed light on this aspect of language beyond the usually researched texts, mainly academic and commercial. It is worth noting that though different frameworks associated with the promotional use of language exist—such as those previously stated—their orientations differ, thus stressing the need for a model unique to this genre.

Therefore, this study aims to:

1. identify the promotive tokens in sample English and Farsi soccer reporting
2. examine how they are similar or different in soccer reporting in the two languages.

### 3. Methodology

As there is a dearth of attention toward the promotional characteristics of the genre of soccer sportscasts, the literature requires a pertaining framework to follow with regard to the classification of such components. Hence, this study applied a qualitative approach to analyze the elements under study—a bottom-up approach to identifying promotional elements was taken. In other words, the data was gathered and analyzed, thus leading to a framework related to this genre.

### 3.1. Material Selection

As mentioned above, the FIFA World Cup is the biggest soccer event in the world. With the various teams and large number of matches played in the World Cup, the selection of games to analyze was not easy. Following the consideration of various variables, the researcher chose to analyze the Persian and English sportscasts of the group stage match involving Argentina and Iran, played on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 at the *Estádio Mineirão* in *Belo Horizonte*. Argentina are two-time World Cup winners and were the eventual runners-up of the tournament. With talented players in the most prominent leagues worldwide and arguably the best player in the world on its roster—Leonel Messi—their games are usually a spectacle. The fact that these great players possess and exhibit so much skill was not only exciting to viewers, but also to the reporters, influencing how they conveyed that excitement through the language they implemented. On the other hand, Iran had come to Brazil as Group A winners in the Asian qualifiers. They too possessed players plying their trade in top leagues. Also, the fact that the Iranian national team played against the mighty Argentina at the World Cup was a very important and thrilling prospect sportswise and this was especially evident in the Farsi sportscasts.

From the many channels broadcasting the game in English, a British free-to-air television channel, *ITV*, was chosen. This was due to different reasons. Besides the availability factor, the matches were reported in the British variation of English which many—the researcher included—believe best suits soccer commentary because the sport itself is historically attributed to Britain (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004). This specific game was covered by Clive Tyldesley as the commentator and Andy Townsend as the co-commentator.

For the Persian sportscasts, IRIB3 (*Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Channel 3*) was selected. The bulk of the games, this one included, was broadcasted on IRIB3, which usually covers important sports events live. These games were also broadcasted by other Farsi speaking countries, such as Tajikistan and Afghanistan, but the researcher chose those aired on Iranian television. This was because the Iranian variation of Farsi not only seems to have a larger audience, thus making it more popular, but was also more accessible. This game was initially reported by Mazdak Mirzaei, but due to technical difficulties, Adel Ferdowsipour commented the second half. Both of them were renowned commentators in Iran at the time of the study.

The duration of the sportscasts was 98 minutes and 56 seconds for the Farsi and 105 minutes and 51 seconds for the English, beginning and ending with the reporters' speech, before the start of the match and after its ending.

### 3.2. Analysis

The fact that a model specific to soccer reports did not exist, the researcher loosely borrowed the model put forth by Pander Maat (2007), which was obtained through the study of press releases, and tailored it to this sporting genre. Pander Maat states that elements qualify as promotional if they stress a proposition with regards to the interests and intentions of the audience. Another aspect of promotional tokens is that if they are substituted with the weaker equivalent, the grammaticality and meaning of the discourse will not be influenced. It is worth noting that suprasegmental features — although a potentially interesting facet for research in this genre — were not accounted for in this study because the main focus of this endeavor was on the tokens rather than their articulation, hence not fitting the scope of this study.

Pander Maat put forth four general promotional groups, namely premodifiers, adjectives, adverbial elements and connectives, and 11 subcategories, comprising 13 types of promotional constituents for the press release genre. Again, it must be stressed that although Pander Maat's model was not intended to be utilized in the analysis of the soccer reports under study, it contributed to providing ideas and options for labeling the existing promotional elements in the study data.

To ensure dependable findings, a pilot study was done. The reports were first accurately transcribed and examined according to definitions put forth by the researcher to identify the existing components with promotional attributes. These tokens were then classified according to their grammatic features. This was continued until all the components were identified and grouped, and no new classifications could be made. According to the proposed classifications, an experienced scholar in the field analyzed the data as well. This was to ensure that the analysis of the tokens was consistent among different coders; thus, confirming the transparency of the definitions. The inter-coder reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa Coefficient, with a degree of agreement of 89.8% in the Farsi reports and 90.0% in the English. The adjectives and adverbs of both languages had subgroups, making the degree of agreement regarding their identification also important. Using Cohen's Kappa Coefficient once more, the degree of agreement for

the adjectives in Farsi was computed as 87.9% and 85.3% for the adverbs. For the adjectives and adverbs identified in English, they were 93.7% and 92.0% respectively. The findings were all significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). As is the nature of interpretive research, there were discrepancies among the promotive features of the identified elements, but they were resolved through the arguments and justifications made by the analysts.

After four months, the intra-coder reliability between the analyses of the commentaries was calculated for consistency. In the English sportscasts, the degree of agreement was 96.4%, while it was 95.6% in the Persian. With regard to the degree of agreement of the adjectives and adverbs in both languages, it was 96.9% for adjectives and 94.7% for adverbs in English, while it was 94.7% and 95.1% in Farsi respectively, again resulting in significantly reliable and consistent results, thus confirming a well-founded basis for this endeavor.

Therefore, following the same procedure used in the pilot study, the reports were first meticulously transcribed and analyzed according to the researcher’s proposed definitions to identify the promotional elements present in the corpus. These components were then classified based on their grammatic attributes. Again, this process was carried on until all the tokens were recognized and classified, and no new classifications could be made.

#### 4. Findings and Analysis

Spoken discourse, like written language, is replete with metadiscursive markers, the promotional elements of which pertain to this research. These constituents can be observed in single or multi-unit tokens, modifying different constituents and serving different functions. It must be noted that the following entries used to describe the results may be inconsistent with more conventional categorizations and definitions. This customization — based on the researcher’s interpretation — enables a more detailed description of the findings, though they might disagree with how they are perceived by others. The examples are arranged with the English preceding the Farsi. If examples for one of the two languages are not provided, it means that they were absent in the data.

To make the text easier to comprehend, the following table has been designed:

Table 1. *Promotional Tokens*

Categories	Types
Adjectives	Intensifying
	Evaluative
	Property
	Descriptive
	Comparative
	Superlative
	Exclamatory
	Quantifying
Adverbs	Possessive
	Intensifying
	Manner
	Frequency
Verbs	Mitigating
	Time
	Nouns
	Interjections
	Idioms
	Honorifics

##### 4.1. Promotional Tokens

Sportscasters implement a variety of tokens to promote different components while they report. These elements are as follows:

1. Adjectives: Various adjectives are used for promotional purposes by reporters during a live soccer commentary:

## a. Intensifying adjectives: Adjectives with and intensifying or emphasizing effect:

- (1) This is the kind of fixture that only this **monumental** meeting of football cultures serves up.
- (2) bâzikonâye **gerân-qeymat-e** ârzântin tâ injâ natunestand kêr-e xâsi râ anjâm bedand (Argentina's **expensive** players haven't been able to do anything specific up to this point).

The presented adjectives convey intensification and emphasis.

## b. Evaluative adjectives: Adjectives applied to make positive evaluations:

- (3) The Charlton forward, Reza Ghoochannejad, was **tremendous** for them.
- (4) **Lovely** moment.
- (5) **Brilliant!**
- (6) havâye **molâyemi** ham injâ hast (the weather here is also mild).
- (7) **âli** kêr mikone, dežâgah (Does an **excellent job**, Dejahah).
- (8) modâfeân-e mâ ham por tedâd va **âli** kêr kardand (Our defenders also worked **great** and in numbers).
- (9) moraba-e tahâjomi-e **foqolâde-i** dare tim-e meli-e ârzântin (the Argentina national team has an outstanding front four).

Here, the sportscasters make positive evaluations of the events being reported. The difference between this group and the previous is the possibility that evaluations might differ from sportscaster to sportscaster. According to how they have been interpreted in this study, they also lack the intensifying factor.

## c. Property adjectives: Adjectives that signal a positive opinion toward a trait interpreted as intrinsic to what is being described by the commentator:

- (10) Argentina certainly do not lack for support in Belo Horizonte on this **sunny** Brazilian afternoon.
- (11) Always very **competitive** as we would imagine but he's been a top player.
- (12) And great credit to Carlos Queiroz, so **well-organized** and clearly, so **well-motivated**, is too.
- (13) He actually took an awful free kick about two minutes before he scored his **trademark** goal.
- (14) tim-e moqâbel ham tim-e **bozorgi-e** (The opposing team, too, is a big team).
- (15) modâfe-e **boland qad-e** tim-e ârzântin bud ke tup ro az kenâr-e darvâze be birun zad (It was the **tall** Argentine defender who kicked the ball out of play from beside the goal).

## d. Descriptive adjectives: Any adjective used to describe any phenomenon described by the sportscaster is by definition a descriptive adjective. Therefore, it can be argued that intensifying, evaluative and property adjectives should be categorized as descriptive adjectives. Nevertheless, the nature of the discourse of sportscasts and the fulfillment of the objectives of this study in detail have led to the broadening of the scope of how these adjectives are implemented, thus considering them as separate categories. Consequently, adjectives with descriptive properties used promotionally which cannot be regarded as intensifying, evaluative and property adjectives were listed under this title:

- (16) You can almost hear the **sharp** intake of breath when Messi gets free and starts to run at any defense in the world.
- (17) **Bullet** header away from Montazeri.

- (18) Day by day, some of the **stellar** names of the world game are finding their talented feet and leaving their mark on this tournament.
- (19) We are in Belo Horizonte and a **firm** meeting between the haves and the have-nots.
- (20) bâzi-e **javânmardâne** râ anjâm midan yârân-e tim-e ârzântin. (**Sportsmanship** from the Argentinians)
- (21) **xatarnâk**-e in tup (This ball is **dangerous**).
- e. Comparative adjectives: Comparative adjectives used promotionally during the reports fall here:
- (22) The Argentine names will be **more familiar** to most of you.
- (23) The headed opportunity that Jalal Hosseini had was probably **as good as anything** Argentina have created.
- (24) I sense that might have meant a little bit **more** to most Iranians that I draw here would, but in footballing terms, this would have to represent a **greater** result still, if they can somehow secure it.
- (25) tedâd-e havâdârân-e ârzântin be marâteb **bištar** az havâdârân-e iran-e (The number of Argentina’s fans is by far **more** than Iran’s)
- (26) sedâye havâdârâye tim-e meli-e futbâl-e kešvaremun be marâteb az unhâ **bištar** be guš mirese (The sound of our national teams supporters is by far **more audible**).
- f. Superlative adjectives: As with comparative adjectives, superlatives were also applied promotionally:
- (27) Argentina’s captain is probably the world’s **most famous** football face.
- (28) Pooladi, the left back, was probably Iran’s **best** player in the first half.
- (29) That’s what makes Lionel Messi the **best**!
- (30) Combinations with DiMaria just will be the **most** regular source of danger.
- (31) yeki az **behtarin** tim-haye in dore az reqâbathast (One of the **best** teams of this round of matches).
- (32) farâmûš nakonim, in bâzikon sâlhâst **behtarin** bâzikon-e jahân-e, agarče sâl-e gozašte ronâldo tup-e talâ ro bord, amâ mesi hamiše yeki az **behtarin**haye jahân bude (Let’s not forget, he is been the **best** player in the world for years, although Ronaldo won the golden ball last year, but Messi has always been one of the **best** in the world).
- (33) ye irâni o ârzântini dar **kamtarin** fâsele dar kenar-e ham qarâr gereftand (An Iranian and Argentinian are beside one another in the **least amount** of distance).
- (34) yeki az **hasâstarin** bâzihaye tim-e meli-e futbâl-e kešvaremun râ dârid tamâšâ mikonid (you are watching one of our country’s international soccer team’s **most important games**).
- g. Exclamatory adjectives: Adjectives used for the expression of surprise or sudden feelings towards something in the reports are exclamatory adjectives. An example of such a word is *what*, which can be used to show surprise or strong feelings by the commentator:
- (35) **Wow! What** a game!

- (36) **What** a goal, Clive!
- (37) lionel mesi va **če** tupi (Lionel Messi and **what** a ball)!
- (38) **če** tupi unjâ gereft ândo teymuriân (**What** a ball Ando Teymourian got)!
- (39) **če** ye-pâ-do-pâ-i mizane mehrdâd pulâdi (**What** a La Croqueta by Mehrdad Pooladi)

This type of adjective was absent in Pander Maat's (2007) study which is possibly due to the difference in the nature of the contexts being examined.

- h. Quantifying adjectives: Any adjective that describes the amount of something in the reports. Occasionally, quantifying adjectives are applied promotionally:

- (40) Leonel Messi's **40<sup>th</sup>** international goal for Argentina.
- (41) Only Gabriel Batistuta has scored **more**.
- (42) It's **another** real chance!
- (43) Javier Mascherano here winning his **100<sup>th</sup>** cap for Argentina, the **fourth** man to that milestone for this particular country.
- (44) **dah-tâ az sizdah** bâzi-e âxareš dar marhaleyê goruhi ro borde (They have won **10 out of 13** of their latest games in the group stage).
- (45) kâpitân nekunâm kârt-e zard ro gereft dar **142<sup>vomin</sup>** bâzi-e meli-e xodeš (Captain Nekounam got a yellow card in his **142<sup>nd</sup>** international cap).
- (46) âguero **21** gol-e meli dare (Aguero has **21** international goals to his name).

- i. Possessive adjectives: Possessives — in the form of free and bound morphemes — interpreted as stressing the accomplishments of whomever they referred to, belong to this group:

- (47) He got **his** goal.
- (48) Is it a Lavezzi with **his** craft and **his** running power?
- (49) sedâye havâdârâye tim-e meli-e futbâl-e kešvare**mun** be marâteb az unhâ bištar be guš mirese (The sound of **our** national team's supporters is by far more audible than theirs').
- (50) kâpitân nekunâm kârt-e zard ro gereft dar 142<sup>vomin</sup> bâzi-e meli-e **xodeš** (Captain Nekounam got a yellow card in **his** 142<sup>nd</sup> international cap).
- (51) Nemizârând, bače-hâye **mâ**, kêrešo anjâm bede (**Our** boys don't let him do his thing).
- (52) moqeiathâye gol dar nimeye dovom mâl-e **mâ** bude (the goal chances in the second half have been **ours**).

2. Adverbs: Adverbs are also used promotionally in live soccer reports:

- a. Intensifying adjuncts: Adverbs applied promotionally in an intensifying and emphatic manner. Because of the intensifying effect of quantifying adverbs, they have been placed here:

- (53) It's **really, really** well defended by Jalal Hosseini
- (54) Sabella's **certainly** been positive there, that's **for sure**.
- (55) There are **quite** a big team, Andy.
- (56) It's **so, so** difficult to stop.
- (57) They're going to be **very, very** dangerous and **very** good to watch.



- (58) **Only** at a World Cup. This is the kind of fixture that **only** this monumental meeting of football cultures serves up.
- (59) **Just** a moment, that’s all he needs. **Just** a split second. **Just** a half a chance; an opportunity.
- (60) haqiqi tup ro migire va **be šedat** ham morede tašviqe futbâldustan-e kešvaremun qarar migire (Haghighi catches the ball and gets **vigorously** applauded by our country’s football-lovers).
- (61) mâ ruye in zarabât-e šoru-e mojadad **xeqli** šâns dârim (have **a lot of** luck to score from dead balls).
- (62) az kenâr-e darvâze tup be šekli **foqolâde xatarnâk** be birun mire (the ball goes out from beside the goal **extremely dangerously**).
- (63) in bâr **ham** kâri az piš nemibare (They can’t do anything this time **too**).
- (64) sedâye havâdârâye tim-e meli-e futbâl-e kešvaremun **be marâteb** az unhâ bištar be guš mirese (The sound of our national team’s supporters is **by far** more audible than theirs’).

In example (59), *only* is used to emphasize the importance of the tournament. This constituent can also be regarded as a mitigator when it reduces the impact of something undesirable, therefore making it applicable as a *mitigating adjunct* depending on the situation.

b. Manner adjuncts: The promotion of the way in which an action is carried out in a broadcast:

- (65) Angel DiMaria is still down and, **sportingly**, Iran have knocked the ball out play.
- (66) **Well** played from Jahanbakhsh, was in it?
- (67) That’s **nicely** done by Shojaei.
- (68) **Effortlessly** into the path of Sergio Aguero.
- (69) qučân-nežâd **xub** kâr mikone (Ghoochannejad did **well**)
- (70) hozur-e bemoqeye hoseyni ke u ham dar in mosâbeqe **xub** kâr karde (Hosseini, who has worked well in this game, got there in time).
- (71) **foqolâde** bâzi kardim (We have played **extraordinarily**).
- (72) bâzikonâye mâ **xub** kâr kardan dar moqâbel-e ârzântin (our players have played **well** in this game).

c. Frequency adjuncts: Adverbs that signify the frequency of an event promotionally. Adverbs of quantity have been placed here as well:

- (73) Really good run **again** from the left back.
- (74) I’ve **never** seen a fullback under lap more than Zabaleta.
- (75) **ye bâr-e dige** ersâl-e xatarnâki ru be dahâneye darvâze (**Again**, a dangerous ball in on goal).
- (76) **bâz ham** defâ-e xub (**Another** good defense).
- (77) **bârhâ o bârhâ** az samt-e râst harekat karde (He has moved from the right-hand side **again and again**)

d. Mitigating adjuncts: Any adverb promoting a token through the mitigation of what is being modified belongs to this group. Negative adverbs such as *not*— including its different forms—and its Persian equivalent, the negative prefix *na-*, are good examples of such components:

- (78) Iran **will not go** quietly!
- (79) **Not frightened** of a tackle.
- (80) And they're **not afraid** to get in and around and get wide in there, as we've just seen them.
- (81) **farâmuš** nakonim, in bâzikon sâlhâst behtarin bâzikon-e jahân-e, agarče sâl-e gozašte ronâldo tup-e talâ ro bord, amâ mesi hamiše yeki az behtarinhaye jahân bude (**Let's not forget**, he is been the best player in the world for years, although Ronaldo won the golden ball last year, but Messi has always been one of the best in the world).
- (82) dar in bâzi ham mesle digar nafarât-e irân **bad kâr nakarde** (Like the rest of the players of Iran in this match he too **has not done** bad)
- (83) šâyad **fekrešam nemikardand** ârzântini-hâ ke 60 daqiqe **natunand** gol bezanand (Maybe the Argentinians had **not** fathomed that they could **not** score for 60 minutes). [double negatives are usual in Farsi]

e. Time adjuncts: Any adjunct used to compliment a timely action during the sportscast has been considered here:

- (84) **All of a sudden**, he just produces a stunning, stunning goal.
- (85) **felan** bâzikonhâye mâ bâzi-e xub o barâbari râ dar barâbar-e ârzântin be namâyeš migozârând (**For the time being**, our players have displayed a good and equal game against Argentina).
- (86) bâzikonâye gerân-qeymat-e ârzântin **tâ injâ** natunestand kâr-e xâsi râ anjâm bedand harčand ke bartari az ân-e unâ bude, amâ bâzikonâye mâ xub kârkardan dar moqâbel-e ârzântin (**To this point**, the expensive Argentinian players did not been able to do anything special although they have been superior but our players have done well against Argentina). 24<sup>th</sup> minute
- (87) **alân** dare keyli xub bâzi mikone [Haghighi] (He is playing very well **now**).

3. Verbs: Verbs have also been used as promotional metadiscursive facets in soccer sportscasts. Such cases here not reported by Pander Maat (2007):

- (88) But they **needed** him in the first half against the Bosnians in Rio.
- (89) Messi **will lead** his team into action against one of the unknowns.
- (90) But they did arrive here as the winners of the Asian qualifying process and they have **earned** their place on the stage alongside many people's favorites to win this World Cup tournament.
- (91) mâ be u **niâz dârim** (We **need** him).
- (92) dobâre ârzântinihâ bâzi vâ **gereftand** (Argentina **has taken** [control of] the game again).
- (93) nekunâm beheš **komak mikone** (Nekounam **assists** him).
- (94) čâhâromin bâr bâzikoni-e ke dar ârzântin be in eftexâr nâel miše (He is the fourth player in Argentina who **has attained** this honor. [Mascherano])

4. Nouns: nouns can be considered as carrying a promotive effect depending on the meaning they connote. Occasionally, proper nouns were implemented to emphasize a certain promotional point by the commentator. Nicknames can also be included here:

- (95) Plays with such **zest**, Lavezzi.

- (96) But they did arrive here as the **winners** of the Asian qualifying process and they have earned their place on the stage alongside many people’s **favorites** to win this World Cup tournament.
- (97) Like he does for Barcelona when he’s playing with **Iniesta and Xavi**.
- (98) Javier Mascherano here winning his 100th cap for Argentina, the fourth man to that **milestone** for this particular country.
- (99) **Diego Maradona** in attendance. (To signify the importance of the game)
- (100) He does resemble a **Harry Enfield character** I can’t quite put a name to.
- (101) farâmuš nakonim injâ **meydân**-e jâm-e jahâni-e (Let’s not forget that this is the World Cup **arena**).
- (102) ezekueâl gârây, bâzikone bâšgâh-e **benfikâ Lisbon** (Ezequiel Garay is a player of the club **Benfica Lisbon**).
- (103) mošaxase ke **extelâf**-e farâvâni beyne futbol-e 2 kešvar vojud dare (it is clear that there is a great **difference** between the soccer [level] of the two countries).
- (104) **mârâdonâ** ham bud dar varzešgâh (**Maradona** was also in the stadium)
- (105) man felan az hozuretân xodâhâfezi mikonam tâ âqâz-e nimeye dovom ke bâzham dar xedmat-e šomâ **azizân**-e binande bâšam (I say goodbye for the time being until the start of the second half when I will be at the service of you **dear** viewers again).
- (106) forsat! (Chance!)

In example 103, the commentator points out that *Garay* plays for *Benfica Lisbon*, one of Portugal and Europe’s historically big clubs, thus promoting the player.

5. Interjections: Sometimes during a live report, the sportscaster promotes an action just by using an interjection. Although some regard only exclamations like *gee*, *wow* and *oh* as interjections (see Goffman, 1981), a broader view, similar to that of Ameka’s (2006), has been considered here, to encompass terms and expressions for greetings, goodbyes, exclamatory phrases and so forth:

- (107) **Ooh!** Look at that!
- (108) **Oh**, Pooladi! Another superb drag back.
- (109) Messi shoo...**oh!!!** Splendid goal!
- (110) **Bâ salâm**-e mojadad hozur-e šomâ binandegân-e aziz o arjmand (**Greetings** again to you dear and honorable viewers).
- (111) Man felan az hozuretân **xodâhâfezi** mikonam tâ âqâz-e nimeye dovom ke bâzham dar xedmat-e šomâ azizân-e binande bâšam (I say **goodbye** for the time being until the start of the second half when I will be at the service of you dear viewers again).
- (112) **âhâ!** (Yeah!)
- (113) **oh, oh!** (Ooh!)

6. Idioms: Since “Idiom is an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways” (Moon, 1998, p. 3), it is used inclusively here, ranging from single words (see Cooper, 1998; Katz & Postal, 1963) to metaphorical expressions (see Moon, 1998). Hence, all phrases, idioms, expressions and jargons have been accounted for here:

- (114) **Going for glory**.
- (115) **Looking forward to it**.
- (116) A change in personnel and formation **did the trick** there.

- (117) Day by day, some of the stellar names of the world game are **finding their talented feet** and **leaving their mark** on this tournament.
- (118) **They've stood up to** the big boys here the best they can and for the most part, **kept Argentina at arm's length**.
- (119) DiMaria was **off like a flash**.
- (120) **Bedune tardid** tim-e ârzântin modâm hamle xâhad kard (**No doubt**, the Argentinian team will continuously attack).
- (121) **ye-pâ-do-pâ** ham mizane xode masud (Masud, himself, does a **La Croqueta**).
- (122) mâ navad daqiqe dar barâbar-e ârzântin bâzi-e **pâ-yâ-pâ-i** ro anjâm midim (For 90 minutes we have gone **toe to toe** with Argentina).
- (123) vâqean bâyard **be eftexâr-e in tim kolâhemun o bardârim** (We should really **take our hats off in honor of** this team).

7. Honorifics: An honorific is a term used when addressing or referring to somebody, with implications of prestige and respect, signaling the politeness of the addresser as well (Sharifian, 2007). These words are implemented in different languages and are of cultural significance. The Persian language holds a special place for honorifics. *Mister* (Mr.) is an example of a word that has the dual usage of title and honorific depending on how it is used in the context. In cases, for example, where it is used to modify a surname, it is considered a title, but when it is used before a first name or a professional title, it is considered as an honorific. Another example is the word *ostâd* in Farsi, which translates to *master*, *professor* or *teacher*, but may be directed at a person who is neither formally. This becomes promotional if we believe that language can be used in popularizing “goods, services, organizations, ideas or people” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 138)—the emphasis being on people here, of course.

It is important to mention that examples pertaining to honorifics were absent in the sportscasts of the match between Argentina and Iran, but they did exist in the Persian commentary of the pilot study:

- (124) azizânemun dar paxš va barnâmeye bist-čârda, âdel, **âqâ** rezâ o Mohamadhoseyn o **âqâye** doktor zolfağârnasab bâ šomâ hamrâh xâhand bud (Our dear [friends] in broadcasting, Adel, [Mr.] Reza, Mohamadhoseyn and [Mr.] Dr. Zolfagharnasab will be with you).
- (125) **ostâd** mortezâ mohases (**Prof.** Morteza Mohases).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The domain of metadiscourse—what assists the reader or listener arrange, understand and assess given information—is not restricted only to academic contexts, just as promotional metadiscourse—the positive representation and assessment of a promoted service, product or idea (Bhatia, 2004)—exceeds the discourse of business or academy. In this paper, I presented evidence that promotional metadiscourse is an aspect present in sports discourse, specifically in soccer sportscasts. The analysis of the English and Persian commentaries the World Cup tie between Argentina and Iran uncovered that constituents under such categories as adjectives, adverbs, nouns and so forth were implemented by the commentators reporting the matches to promote a wide collection of concepts, such as the weather, sentiments and actions of those concerned with the broadcast—players, spectators and all.

The promotional elements identified in the sportscasts—namely adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, interjections, idioms and honorifics, and their subcategories—were found to be relatively similar in the two languages with only the primary dissimilarity being what the commentators promoted and how they went about it. One can reason that the similarities are due to the sportscasters in one language, modeling the commentators of the other and loan translating pieces of the discourse used into their respective language and depicting it as their own—arguably borrowing from English to Persian. Also, the discourse used in the sportscasts seem to be idiosyncratic. In other words, they pertain to how the commentators perceive and prioritize what is occurring and the utterances they use to achieve what they wish to emphasize as promotional.

There was, though, a difference between the tokens identified with regards to the application of honorifics. In this data, only Persian witnessed such tokens. This may be because of how utterances are used to convey respect from one language to the next and the cultural significance that they bear. In Iranian culture, the speaker sometimes applies honorifics not only to show respect and admiration toward another person, but also as a sign of his/her humility, which is an admirable facet and culturally significant. It must also be mentioned that the application of such features depends on idiosyncrasies as not all speakers utilize such tokens in their speech.

This research is an attempt to provide examples of how various facets of discourse, such as promotional metadiscourse, are utilized in less explored, unconventional genres, like sportscasts. In essence, it aims to contribute to a better appreciation of the attributes of metadiscourse, specifically promotional aspects, stressing its influence on how interlocutors apply language with more effectiveness and influence. Evaluation of such features can be elicited through audience feedback. This can be obtained through different ways. One could be through random interviews on the relevant topic. Another could be by asking questions during sports programs in the form of contests in which the audience applies answers via text messages — which is popular in Iran. This entails questions with the capacity to elicit audience evaluations on reports and their preferences with regard to the content of the commentaries, like what would make sportscasts both entertaining and informing simultaneously, enhancing the reporter’s performance.

This study can also act as a catalyst to encourage research in the reports of others as well as possibly comparing commentaries across sports, investigating possible similarities and/or differences, broadly contributing to the genre of sports commentary. The discourse used in programs such as IRIB’s *Bist Chaharda* (see the notes) or ESPN’s *ESPN FC*, can also be subject to analysis in order to observe what promotive elements are utilized.

Undoubtedly, as is the nature of research, this study is a response to the shortcomings of prior endeavors and is subject to deficiencies of its own that should be addressed through further exploration into the topic. The findings of this study are relevant to the context of soccer commentaries, and are the result of the analysis of the World Cup match between Argentina and Iran; therefore, further research is required to generalize these results into other types of reports. Also, the reports investigated pertain to the language used by only four sportscasters, limiting the discourse to their idiolects. The different kinds of terms, structures and expressions as well as the catchphrases implemented are crucial to the outcome of such studies. In other words, studies of this nature would hugely benefit from a larger corpus. Also, investigating the promotional features in languages other than the ones examined here may complement the findings pertaining to research in this genre. The influence of suprasegmental characteristics as a promotional factor in the discourse of this genre can be a fruitful investigation, as can examining the promotional influence of text connectives and code glosses. The study of attitudinal markers implemented in reports may also lead to valuable results.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The term *soccer*, originally *association* in *Association Football*, has been used throughout the literature to avoid confusion with other kinds of football, such as American football, Australian rules football, rugby football and Gaelic football.

<sup>2</sup>*Bist Chaharda* was the name of a program specifically produced to cover the 2014 World Cup. This program comprised various segments, a part of which including the actual matches being played as well as the analyses pertaining to them.

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