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Metaphor and Metonymy in Arabic and English Football Commentaries: A Contrastive Linguistic Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of conceptual metaphors and metonymies in English and Arabic oral commentaries of one of the Qatar World Cup's prominent football matches. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the study explores differences between the two languages in the use of conceptual metaphors and metonymies. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology utilising the theoretical models of Pragglejaz Group (2007) and Littlemore (2015) to identify conceptual metaphors and metonymies. The analysis shows that both commentaries commonly conceptualised football as a form of WAR and VIOLENCE and involved ATTRIBUTES OF ANIMALS OR HUMANS. The English commentary additionally demonstrated a more diverse range of conceptualisations, such as FOOTBALL IS ART. Conversely, the Arabic commentary leaned heavily towards WAR and VIOLENCE. Other unique conceptual metaphors in Arabic were also introduced. Regarding metonymies, the English commentary employed fewer types, focusing on PLAYER-RELATED associations, whereas the Arabic commentary utilised a broader range, incorporating elements such as a COUNTRY'S FLAG. Overall, the Arabic commentary relied extensively on metonymies, showcasing greater diversity than the English one. The study concludes that conceptualising football can be analysed simultaneously in terms of universal and culture-specific cognitive mappings. Each of these two types is attributed to particular cultural and universal justifications.

Keywords: Football Commentaries; Conceptual Metaphor; Conceptual Metonymy; Contrastive Analysis; English and Arabic

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1. Introduction

The study of conceptual metaphor and metonymy has generated a growing interest in the field of cognitive linguistics over the last few decades. Metaphors are an integral part of human cognition and the conceptual system. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003) pointed out that every concept we comprehend and experience is, in fact, a metaphor meant to visualise and understand abstract concepts in terms of other, more concrete ones^[1]. Accordingly, conceptual metaphors are not only a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another by saying that one is the other, but also they are the hidden analogy underlying the way we think about certain concepts^[2]. For example, expressions such as “*to get the most out of life*” underlie our understanding of the concept of LIFE as being a CONTAINER that contains other things; hence the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A CONTAINER^[1].

Conceptual metonymy, on the other hand, is recognised when one part of a whole concept, or one of its properties, is used to refer to the whole concept, yielding a figurative effect^[3]. In this connection, Zibin (2021) explicated the conceptual metonymy created by the expression “*I’m reading Shakespeare*,” where the author “*Shakespeare*” refers to one of the author’s works, producing the conceptual metonymy “THE AUTHOR FOR THE WORK”^[4]. The difference between conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymies is that the former occurs between divergent conceptual domains, while the latter occur within the same conceptual domain^[1,3,5–7].

The present paper explores conceptual metaphors and metonymies as types of conceptual mapping in sports discourse in the Arabic context, in both English and Arabic, focusing on the interplay between language, culture, and cognition. It also examines the types of conceptual metaphors and metonymies found in sports commentaries, specifically in English vs. Arabic football commentaries of one of the significant games of the Qatar Football World Cup 2022 involving an Arab national team. Given the richness of the language of football commentaries and the popularity of football among all sectors of society, this study aims to uncover the potential of this kind of discourse in shaping people’s perceptions and reinforcing stereotypical thoughts through conceptual metaphors and metonymies. Further, there appears to be a lack of research on oral discourse in sports, especially in Arabic, in contrast to English. This study at-

tempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the prevalent and recurrent conceptual metaphors and metonymies utilised in the English and Arabic commentaries of one Qatar World Cup 2022 football game involving an Arab cultural context?
- 2) What are the differences in the conceptual metaphors and metonymies utilised in the two languages (Arabic vs. English)?

Understanding the variation in conceptual representations across cultures might help reinforce cross-cultural communication and understanding, as it holds cultural insights specific to each language. It is essential to note that sports commentaries carry emotional weight and are used by commentators to create a particularly charged atmosphere, aiming to engage the listener and spectators more effectively. By influencing the perception of football fans regarding players’ representations and identities, commentators may purposefully construct certain realities for their listeners to adopt and internalise immediately. As a result, the significance of this research lies in its demonstration of how language is used to impact sports fans’ understanding of football games, players’ identities, and biases. Examining these phenomena in spoken discourse will contribute to the existing knowledge of how conceptual mappings influence our communication in sports.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Studies on Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy in Written Sports Discourse

Sports discourse has been the focus of linguistic research for the last few decades. It is usually discussed as being either written or oral discourse, with the majority of research focusing on the written form of sports news and reports^[7–12]. This focus is understood in light of the assumption that such discourses maintain the crucial role in the participants’ conceptualisation and formation of emotions and life concepts^[13]. For example, Pérez-Sabater et al. (2008) examined the form and content of online sports commentaries based on oral genres in English, French, and Spanish^[7]. The study revealed the prevalence of oral genre traditions in these commentaries, based on the assumption that English has a strong tendency towards orality. The study

also demonstrated that this type of discourse attempts to establish a more immediate and oral atmosphere that directly connects with the readers.

To zoom into the use of conceptual metaphors in sports discourse, several researchers focused on the study and analysis of conceptual mapping in such a kind of discourse, confirming its richness and effectiveness as one type of popular discourse^[7–12]. For example, Raffaelli and Katunar (2016) were among the first to analyse the sports discourse in terms of the conceptual metaphors SPORTS IS WAR and SPORTS IS FORCE^[8]. They classified Croatian metaphors into three categories based on their conventionality: “(a) conventionalized, (b) semi-conventionalized, and (c) innovative metaphorical expressions”. They also asserted that individuals comprehend all situations metaphorically, using such metaphors to communicate these conceptual situations through diverse linguistic expressions.

Alzawaydeh and Alghazo (2018) attributed the richness of football language to its popularity and universality^[9], as well as the fact that it primarily describes players' actions by drawing on concrete concepts. As a form of cognition, conceptual metaphors can help readers and viewers comprehend and visualise actions and basic concepts in sports language, whether written or spoken. By analysing football headlines in Arabic and English, Alzawaydeh and Alghazo (2018) concluded that football is conceptualised similarly in Arabic and English^[9], with eight similar conceptual metaphors out of ten. These include the conceptualizations that FOOTBALL IS WAR, FOOTBALL IS TENSE, FOOTBALL IS DRAMA, and FOOTBALL IS MONEY, among others. According to the study, this conclusion implies that human thought processes are uniform. This is in opposition to widespread assumptions that metaphors are basically culture-specific.

In a similar vein, Vorobei and Akimova (2021) examined the conceptualisation of SPORT IS WAR in Chinese sports media discourse^[10]. Their study succeeded in connecting this kind of conceptualisation with “paralinguistic peculiarities of military and sports activities”^[10]. This conclusion, however, contradicts the previous one, as it does not attribute the rise of such conceptualisation to its universality; instead, the researchers believe it is connected to historical political factors that yielded culture-specific concepts related to wins and defeats. In agreement with the previous conclusion, Fedorova and Argounov (2022) referred to the

abundance of expressive conceptual metaphors in the Yakut (a Russian variety) sports language^[12], which, they deduced, is due to the vivid narrative style of the language and to the cultural specificity of its traditions, history, and ethnic representation. Contrary to their claim of the abundance of metaphors, the dominant conceptualisation discussed was that of SPORTS IS WAR.

Within the same genre of written sports discourse, Hanh and Huyen (2020) tackled a different conceptual metaphor. They examined linguistic expressions conveying the conceptual metaphor “FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES” in Vietnamese sports news^[11]. Their study illustrated how the sports news conceptually constructed the players' exchange process in terms of a commodities exchange, which reflected the users' knowledge and thinking about this matter. Hanh and Huyen explained that the authors vividly portrayed the situation using conceptual metaphors, thus helping readers better understand the role and importance of footballers' skills and values in football practices. When it comes to metonymy, Chaerunnisah (2020) studied the type of metonymy and metaphor used in five selected news articles related to sports in *The Jakarta Post*^[14]. The study results revealed two prominent types of metonymies: THE REPRESENTED ENTITY FOR REPRESENTATIVE and WHOLE-FOR-PART. Chaerunnisah attributed the employment of REPRESENTED ENTITY FOR REPRESENTATIVE metonymy to the focus on athletes acting as the embodiment of their countries.

2.2. Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy in Oral Sports Commentaries

Oral sports commentaries were analysed and studied by a limited number of researchers interested in figurative and evaluative language manifestation^[15–18]. Caballero (2012) argued that the genre of oral commentary in tennis is an excellent starting point to learn more about the use and conventionalisation of metaphors^[16]. His study analysed post-match reports and the online forums that opened after Wimbledon's 2008 tennis final to explore the role of metaphors in depicting such a lively and interactive topic. Although the study was not conducted to analyse conceptual metaphors, it helped gain some insights into how they are linked to concepts like those of authority/ power, violence, and motion. Caballero concluded that “metaphor's interpersonal value” is not an

intrinsic property of its figurative schema, yet, he added, its value emerges from people's use of metaphor when discussing fundamental topics in communicative interaction, which also accounts for the endorsement of certain metaphors by specific discourse communities or cultures". This explanation raises interest in metaphor as part of a conceptual schema that is culturally constructed and conventionalized.

Both Chapanga (2004) and Cibulskiene (2014) highlighted the prominent use of the conceptual metaphors of war and conflicts in football and basketball commentaries, respectively^[15,17]. Chapanga (2004) analysed oral commentary in Zimbabwean Premier Soccer League (PSL) matches during the 2004 season^[15], aiming to emphasise the specific war-related metaphors commonly employed in such live broadcasts. Along the same lines, Cibulskiene (2014) investigated metaphor usage in basketball discourse^[17], specifically in a corpus of 46559 words of transcribed live basketball commentaries of the 2011 European Basketball Championship. They connected basketball's conceptualisation as a conflict with the notion of pathos proposed by Aristotle. This conclusion highlighted the impact of such conceptual mappings on the spectators' "subconscious minds".

Regarding the analysis of metaphors and metonymies in Arabic sports discourse, we believe there is a notable lack of research in this field. Except for Alzawaydeh and Alghazo's (2018) study on conceptual metaphors in written sports discourse^[9], no other studies were found on the same issue in Arabic sports discourse. A few studies addressed the issue of metaphor and metonymy translation into Arabic, including Bani-Khalid (2010) and Alzaabi and Rabab'ah (2023)^[19,20]. In contrast, others have compared the use of different conceptual metaphors between Arabic and English, such as Zibin and Hamdan (2019) and Farghal and Haider (2023)^[21,22]. Lastly, some focused only on a particular dialect of Arabic, such as Bani Mofarrej and Rabab'ah (2020)^[23], Younes and Altakhaineh (2022)^[24], and Zibin (2020)^[6].

Reviewing the literature revealed the richness of the sports discourse and the increasing interest in its metaphorical nature. It also demonstrated the focus on the written discourse concerning the conceptual relations therein. Given the emphasis placed on watching football matches instead of only reading about them, it is believed that considering football oral commentaries in terms of their conceptual environment could be beneficial in revealing how these relations

express cultural values and considerations about this popular game. Conceptual metaphors and metonymies are considered crucial elements of language that formulate and mould people's perception of sports events and, hypothetically, of societal processes implicated by such a cognitive tool, which connects human thinking with daily events and processes.

To conclude, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there appears to be a dearth of research explicitly targeting the conceptual mapping of metaphors and metonymies in the oral football commentaries in English and Arabic contrastively. Football commentaries are a rich and complex discourse that primarily depicts players' actions and describes events in terms of metaphorical constructions, facilitating their comprehension. This preliminary research into previous studies has indicated the role of conceptual metaphor in the culture and narrative of sports discourse; studying these phenomena in oral discourse will add to the body of knowledge about how conceptual mappings shape sports communication.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

This study investigates the conceptual metaphors and metonymies employed in the oral commentary of a football game during the 2022 Qatar World Cup. The game chosen involves one of the prominent Arab football teams, the Saudi national team, versus another prominent team, the Argentina national team. The English commentary was downloaded from the FIFA Plus online video platform, and the corpus was created by transcribing the video using the specialised website, Otter.ai. We verified and revised the resulting text, with the final version comprising 14,429 words. In contrast, the Arabic data were downloaded from the online video platform YouTube.com, and the corpus was created by transcribing the video using the voice typing tool embedded in Google Docs. The researchers verified and revised the resulting text, with the final version amounting to 10551 words. Two separate MS Word documents were created for each database. The resulting transcription was verified meticulously by listening carefully to the game and matching the oral and written commentaries. It should be noted that any commentary produced in between the two match halves or after the match ended was removed from the final transcript in order to keep the

focus on the live commentary describing the events of the match.

3.2. Contextual Background

This study investigates conceptual metaphors and metonymies employed in the spoken commentary of a prominent football game during the latest World Cup, which took place in Qatar in 2022. The chosen game features one of the prominent Arab football teams, the Saudi national team, versus another prominent team, the Argentina national team. This game was chosen as the study sample due to its significance and impact among the Arab and international communities. Given the weight placed on this football match, its commentary is considered a valuable source of linguistic evidence of how conceptual metaphors and metonymies are employed in shaping and formulating the commentators' as well as the viewers' perceptions. Furthermore, the researchers' previous knowledge of football commentaries provided them with adequate experience to judge these oral commentaries, especially the Arabic ones, as rich in metaphorical and figurative language.

Various newspapers highlighted the Saudi Arabian national team's victory over Argentina in the 2022 World Cup, including *Al-Ain.com* (2022)^[25], *Sabq.org* (2022)^[26], and *Alarabiya.net* (2022)^[27]. According to *Al-Ain Online News* (2022)^[25], the surprising win elicited diverse opinions and emotions from newspapers worldwide, as the Saudi national team "turned the tables" on their Argentine counterpart. The same article noted that some international news media received this victory with shock and predicted its historical implications. Notably, the British newspaper "The Sun" referred to this victory as the "Arabian Sting." In contrast, Argentine newspapers termed their national team's defeat "a historic defeat" and a "nightmare". *Sabq Electronic News* (2022) also cited the Turkish newspaper *Fotomac*'s description of the game result as the end of Argentina's "unbeaten streak" of 36 matches^[26]. *Al-Arabiya* (2022) also applauded the victory, stating that the Saudi team achieved its "best start" in its history in the World Cup tournaments^[27].

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The study employs a qualitative and quantitative descriptive analysis to identify conceptual metaphors and

metonymies, grouping them based on similarity. The analysis is grounded in a cognitive linguistic framework and draws upon established procedures in metaphor and metonymy identification. To serve the purpose of the current study, the researchers applied the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) MIP method to analyse conceptual metaphors and Littlemore's (2015) Metonymy Identification procedure to analyse metonymies^[28,29].

A word is considered metaphorical if its contextual meaning contrasts with its more basic meaning but can be understood by comparison. The analysis followed these steps: 1. Reading the entire text to get a general understanding. 2. Identifying lexical units (words or phrases) in the discourse. 3. Establishing the contextual meaning of each lexical unit in the commentary. 4. Determining the basic meaning of the same lexical unit using monolingual dictionaries—specifically, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) for English and *Al-Mawrid Dictionary* for Arabic—to trace conventional, non-contextual meanings. 5. Assessing metaphorical use: If the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but is related by resemblance, the unit is marked as metaphorical.

Pragglejaz Group's (2007) 5-step approach was followed to recognise and identify conceptual metaphors in the study data^[28]. These steps include: finding a metaphorical focus, recognizing the metaphorical preposition, determining the metaphorical comparison, identifying the metaphorical analogy, and lastly, establishing the conceptual metaphorical mapping. A set of prepositions on which the metaphorical expressions were mapped was hypothesised. A preliminary list of hypothesised metaphors included: SPORTS AS WAR, FOOTBALL AS VIOLENCE, and FOOTBALL DEFENSE AS STRUCTURE.

After individual metaphorical expressions were identified, they were grouped into conceptual metaphors using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) formulation of metaphors as mappings between a source domain (a more concrete or physical experience) and a target domain (an abstract or less clearly structured concept).

Another analytical procedure is Littlemore's framework, which entails a 4-step procedure: first, metonymic words are recognised; second, a proposition is suggested; third, the domain of comparison is identified; and lastly, the exact conceptual relationship employed in the expression

within that domain is articulated. Various typologies were proposed to classify and propose metonymic relationships.

Metonymies were classified using a modified typology adapted to the specific nature of football discourse, based on conventional patterns of usage in both languages. The categories include: A PLAYER'S BODY PART FOR THE PLAYER, A PLAYER'S SHIRT COLOUR FOR THE TEAM, A GAME'S INSTRUMENT FOR THE USER, A PLAYER'S NATIONALITY FOR THE TEAM, A COUNTRY'S FLAG FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, A COUNTRY'S LANDMARK FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, A PLAYER'S ACTIONS FOR THE TEAM, A PLAYER'S NAME FOR THE TEAM, A TEAM'S TOOL FOR THE TEAM. Each metonymy was analysed for its role in discourse and its cognitive motivation, particularly in relation to how it indexes collective identity, national pride, or individual performance.

4. Findings

4.1. Conceptual Metaphors

Although the English and Arabic commentaries on the football match intended to convey the events and literally

depict the players' actions during the football match, their language was not free from metaphorical language and conceptual mapping. The analysis of the English commentary revealed that 15 types of conceptual metaphors were utilised in the study sample, while the Arabic data analysis unveiled 11 types of conceptual metaphors. All in all. The English commentary utilised 96 total metaphors, while the Arabic commentary utilised 66 total metaphors.

4.1.1. Common Conceptual Metaphors in the English and Arabic Commentaries

It has been found that Arabic and English sometimes utilise similar conceptual metaphors in the domain of FOOTBALL. According to the analysis, common conceptual metaphors between the two commentaries include FOOTBALL IS WAR, FOOTBALL IS A HUMAN ATTRIBUTE, FOOTBALL IS VIOLENCE, FOOTBALL IS A NATURE ATTRIBUTE, FOOTBALL IS ART, FOOTBALL IS A JOURNEY, and FOOTBALL IS TENSE. **Table 1** below demonstrates a summary of the common conceptual metaphors found in the English and Arabic commentaries, their frequencies and percentages in the study sample, along with illustrative examples.

Table 1. Summary of the Shared Conceptual Metaphors in the English and Arabic Sample Commentaries.

Conceptual Metaphor	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor	Translation
FOOTBALL IS WAR	26	27%	"I guess Romero was feeling comfortable getting all the way forward to join into the attack."	-
	43	65%	ولله الحمد بطل من أبطال المملكة في هذه الملحمة الكروية الرائعة غادر أرضية الملعب	And thank God, a hero from the heroes of the kingdom in this beautiful football epic leaves the field.
FOOTBALL IS A HUMAN ATTRIBUTION	14	14.5%	"What do you do? You feed him the ball, put the game on his back."	-
	4	6%	الذي يحاول بكل تأكيد بأن يضع يصمته أخيراً مع المنتخب من خلال حضوره الأخير في منافسات بطولة كأس العالم	They are trying to make their mark with the national team in their last appearance in the FIFA World Cup.
FOOTBALL IS VIOLENCE	10	10%	"It's an aggressive defense. So, they've got a judo league."	-
	5	7.5%	"انهض يا سعود قاوم يا سعود تقدم يا سعود اضرب يا سعود اطرحه أرضاً يا سعود واصل التقدم يا سعود"	Rise, Saud, resist, Saud, advance, Saud, hit, Saud, bring him down, Saud, and continue advancing, Saud.
FOOTBALL IS TENSE	9	9%	"It's one of those games that is still on the knife's edge."	-
	2	3%	"تمضي الدقائق تمضي الدقائق ويالها من دقائق بطيئة"	"The minutes pass, The minutes pass, and what slow minutes they are"

Table 1. Cont.

Conceptual Metaphor	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor	Translation
FOOTBALL IS A NATURAL ATTRIBUTION (ANIMAL AND PHYSICAL)	8	8%	Now <u>play pouring</u> into the box	-
			A big goal for Argentina that <u>get</u> the <u>building rocking</u>	-
	5	7.5%	العويس في المكان المناسب وكانه تهيأاً للأيام الجميلة يعود لحماية العرين، أسد والله يا محمد ”ولو وصل إلى المباراة النهائية سيحطم رقم لوثر ماتئوس كأكتر اللاعبين لعباً للمباريات في بطولة كأس العالم“	Al-Owais is in the right place, as if he is ready for beautiful days, returning to protect the den, a lion, I swear, Muhammad. If they reach the final, they will break Lothar Matthaus' record for the most World Cup appearances.
FOOTBALL IS A JOURNEY	5	5%	“There’s much traffic right in front of alleyways with the ball steps up, maybe rushes it a bit.”	-
	1	1.5%	وعلى ما يقدمه المنتخب السعودي في هذه المواجهة في رحلة استعادة الذكريات المتميزة للمشاركة الأولى في بطولة كأس العالم في عام 1994	Based on what the Saudi national team presents in this confrontation, it is a journey to relive the distinguished memories of their first participation in the FIFA World Cup in 1994.
FOOTBALL IS ART = A MUSICAL COMPOSITION AND A DANCE + DRAMA	3	3%	Argentina is just <u>getting an early rhythm</u>	-
	6	9%	you had about 15 minutes to go to <u>change the narrative of this story</u>	-
			لا زالت قائمة لا زالت حاضرة للمنتخب الأرجنتيني رقصة التانغو الأولى جاءت بأقدام ميسي برقصته الأخيرة في المونديال حتى هذه اللحظة تكتب فيها المعاناة للمنتخب الأرجنتيني والحضور والسطوة والجمال والحلم هنا من خلال هذا اللقاء	The list is still present for the Argentine national team. The first tango dance came with Messi’s feet in his last dance in the World Cup. Until now, suffering has been destined for the Argentine national team, and the presence, dominance, beauty, and dream are in this match.

Findings of the analysis reveal that the conceptualization of football as WAR dominates the commentaries’ discourse, especially in Arabic, with a striking percentage of 65% of the total number of conceptual metaphors identified in the sample. This metaphor comprises 27% of the total number of metaphors in the English sample. It can be concluded that both languages tend to construct a heroic image of the football game, in which the combative endeavors of the players are celebrated. However, the Arabic commentary emphasized the epic narrative and how it results in raising the national pride, as seen in example (2) discussed in the discussion section below. The next most frequent conceptual metaphor in English, which is also shared between the two commentaries, is FOOTBALL IS A HUMAN ATTRIBUTE, comprising 14.5% in the English sample and 6% in the Arabic commentary. This finding can be interpreted in terms of agency of the players, where higher responsibility is placed on them for the success of the game in English,

while Arabic highlighted collective roles instead. The next conceptual metaphor found is FOOTBALL IS VIOLENCE, which is not at all lacking in both corpora, scoring 10% and 7.5% in English and Arabic, respectively. This metaphor further reinforces the portrayal of the game as an arena of physical fight and heroic confrontation. Metaphors comparing football to a TENSE situation were found in both corpora, with a marginally higher percentage in English (9%, compared to 3% in Arabic). In Arabic, the FOOTBALL IS TENSE metaphors scored a comparatively low percentage, which might indicate a lower focus on the hidden psychological nature of the game or its suspenseful unfolding. Both English and Arabic commentaries conceptualized football in terms of NATURE and ANIMAL ATTRIBUTES, with almost equal percentages of 8%, highlighting the elements of instinct and physicality in the football game. For example, sentence (7) resembles a goalkeeper to a lion. Metaphors comparing football to a JOURNEY were also found in both

corpora, with a higher percentage in English, scoring 5% compared to 1.5% in Arabic. This might be another indicator of the reduced focus on the unfolding of the game as a process in Arabic compared to its focus on the heroic combative actions of its players.

Furthermore, Arabic notably makes use of the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS ART, comprising the arts of dance and drama, making a percentage of 9% compared to 3% in English. With references such as Messi's "tango dance" in example (10), it seems that Arabic applies an aesthetic cultural lens to view football as a cultural artistic tradition. Overall, while both corpora employ similar conceptual metaphors, the Arabic commentary foregrounds heroic

and emotional narratives, often linked to collective identity and national pride, whereas the English commentary frames football as a competitive and strategic encounter shaped by players' conscious decisions and individual agency.

4.1.2. A Comparison between the English and Arabic Commentaries

(1) Conceptual Metaphors in the English Commentary Only

Table 2 below demonstrates a summary of the conceptual metaphors found only in the English commentary, their frequencies and percentages in the study sample, along with illustrative examples.

Table 2. Summary of the Conceptual Metaphors Found Only in the English Commentary.

Conceptual Metaphor	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor
FOOTBALL DEFENSE IS A STRUCTURE	6	6.3%	"They try to move it forward, but how quickly <u>they break down that white side.</u> "
FOOTBALL IS EMOTION	4	4%	"This result holds not only one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history."
A FOOTBALL FIELD IS A SPATIAL CONCEPT	3	3%	"trying to keep this field as tight as possible."
FOOTBALL IS POWER = FOOTBALL PLAYERS ARE ENGINES	2	2%	"There was one before with Ali bag <u>coming into the engine Alpha Mirage</u> right at the end of the first half."
FOOTBALL IS HEAT - FOOTBALL IS A HEATED ACTIVITY	1	1%	It's a slow start to this game, but <u>it's gonna heat up now</u>
FOOTBALL IS NEWS MATERIAL.	1	1%	Messy on it to <u>be a headline</u> that shocks the world

Another set of conceptually significant metaphors was only found in the English corpus, enriching the portrayal of football in commentaries and its connection to human cognition. Among those, FOOTBALL DEFENSE IS A STRUCTURE registered 6.3%, revealing an inclination to depict the football defense strategy as an architectural system that can be built, maintained, or dismantled with strategy. The metaphor FOOTBALL IS EMOTION emerges at 4% showing how commentators sometimes preferred to frame football as an affectionate experience that sometimes surpasses its meaning as a strategic game. Next comes the metaphor: A FOOTBALL FIELD IS A SPATIAL CONCEPT, which appears in 3% of the identified metaphors in the English corpus. Just like in example (18), "keeping the football field as tight as possible", the discourse appears to place some importance on the spatial organization and positioning of the football field and team, which are essential elements in the game, as much as the combative or violent elements are.

The football players are depicted as a dynamic source

of energy and momentum, especially as they are framed as "engines" in example (22). Hence, football is represented by the metaphor FOOTBALL IS POWER in 2% of the corpus. The last and least frequent metaphors found are FOOTBALL IS HEAT and FOOTBALL IS NEWS MATERIAL, which each account for 1% of the total number of metaphors. The heat of the game is built up gradually with the increased intensity, causing energy that is likened to the heat energy produced by fiery explosions. Football is framed as an important news and headlines topic, which is true as it holds a journalistic value and actually has a major impact on the public audience.

(2) Conceptual Metaphors in the Arabic Commentary Only

Table 3 below demonstrates a summary of the conceptual metaphors found only in the Arabic commentary, their frequencies and percentages in the study sample, along with illustrative examples.

Table 3. Summary of the Conceptual Metaphors Found Only in the Arabic Commentary.

Conceptual Metaphor	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor	Translation
FOOTBALL IS A POLARITY OF POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE	2	%3	انتهى اللقاء الأول بالتعادل الإيجابي	The first meeting ended in a favourable draw.
FOOTBALL ACHIEVEMENT IS A SCALE	1	1.5%	العالم بينما يعزز مكانته هدافاً تاريخياً للأرجنتين في كل البطولات والمنافسات	Messi enhances his position as Argentina's historical top scorer in all tournaments and competitions.
FOOTBALL IS EDUCATION	1	1.5%	ومن أراد أن يفتح مدرسة في محاولة الصمود والثبات والهمة والقمة والعودة والتسجيل فليُنظر إلى ما فعله الأخضر	Whoever wants to establish a school in an attempt to teach endurance, perseverance, aspiration, and reaching the summit, return, and score should look at what the Green Team has achieved.

The final set of conceptual metaphors identified in our study was only found in the Arabic corpus. These three metaphors reflect an evaluative take on football discourse. With a percentage of 3%, the metaphor FOOTBALL IS A POLARITY OF POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE reflects a tendency to use evaluative terms to describe football game outcomes, such as “التعادل الإيجابي” “a score draw” in example (24). Such evaluative language seems to load the match results with extreme subjective assessment about failure and success. The metaphor FOOTBALL ACHIEVEMENT IS A SCALE appears only in 1.5% of the corpus. Although a less frequent metaphor, it suggests that players’ performance is framed as a rank of hierarchical nature, depicting how players’ progression is measurable, such as Messi’s description as “هدافاً تاريخياً للأرجنتين” in example (26). Another metaphor that achieves the percentage of 1.5% is FOOTBALL IS EDUCATION, which conceptualizes football in an image of a pedagogical institution where people can go to learn endurance and gain aspiration (example 27). From this metaphor, we can perceive the ideological stance in the Arabic discourse, which depicts football as a moral domain that guides people to acquire social and national values through learning from the players’ exemplary athletic and moral actions.

This set of metaphors, however statistically marginal, uncovers certain ideological and evaluative frames through which football games and players are discursively constructed in Arabic discourse, highlighting moral, affectionate, and nationalistic undertones.

4.2. Conceptual Metonymies

Similar to the conceptual metaphors shared between the two studied commentaries, the English and Arabic cor-

pora of this paper, it was found that the two commentaries share their conceptualization of a number of metonymies. The analysis of the English commentary exhibited that only 7 instances of conceptual metonymies were utilised in the study sample, while the Arabic data analysis disclosed 40 instances in total. Overall, only two types of conceptual metonymies were shared between both corpora; the English one uniquely utilized another two types, while the Arabic one uniquely utilized four types.

4.2.1. Common Conceptual Metonymies in the English and Arabic Commentaries

Table 4 below demonstrates a summary of the common conceptual metonymies found in the English and Arabic commentaries, their frequencies and percentages in the study sample, along with illustrative examples.

The analysis reveals that the most frequent metonymy utilized in both languages, which is expressed as A PLAYER’S SHIRT COLOUR FOR THE TEAM, signifies the conceptualization of the collective value of the team’s players as representatives of their country. It accounts for 43% of the metonymies in the English corpus compared to 77.5% in Arabic. Example (30) “كلنا الأخضر” affirms this finding by stressing how the colour “green” stands for the national pride and the collective identity of the players in the Saudi national team and their fans. It helps reinforce group affiliation and the value of the game as a marker of national identity. The Arabic goes further to frame the color of the team as a symbol of national unity and perseverance, as it is shown in the same example in “تسقط الألوان ويبقى اللون الأخضر هو السائد”. This is similar in English to examples like “green jersey” in example (28).

Table 4. Summary of the Shared Conceptual Metonymies in the English and Arabic Sample Commentaries.

Conceptual metonymy	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor	Translation
A PLAYER'S SHIRT COLOUR FOR THE TEAM	3	43%	There's a green jersey following.	-
	31	77.5%	”كلنا الأخضر دربنا أخضر هنا في مباراة اليوم ومن خلال أحداث هذه المواجهة تسقط الألوان ويبقى اللون الأخضر هو السائد“	We are all Green, our path is Green here in today's match, and through the events of this confrontation, colours fall, and the colour Green remains dominant.
A PLAYER'S BODY PART FOR THE PLAYER	1	14%	All eyes are on him and what he can do in this World Cup	-
	4	10%	”بمحاولة بأقدام القائد ليونيل ميسي، لأن الأمل تتعلق على أقدامه“	An attempt now by the captain Lionel Messi because hopes are pinned on his feet.

The other shared mytonymy, A PLAYER'S BODY PART FOR THE PLAYER, accounts for 14% of the metonymies in English, while it accounts for only 10% in Arabic. These metonymies attempt to highlight the most important parts of the players, to which they are reduced. For example, sentence (31) ”لأن الأمل تتعلق على أقدامه“ shows how the player is precisely his feet in a game like football, underscoring the skills required from him to demonstrate to the eyes of the spectators.

It is worth noting that such symbolic uses of metaphorical and conceptual language not only contribute to the vividness and appeal of the commentary but also highlight the hidden cognitive connection between the game and its repre-

sentation as a symbol of national identity. In addition, it is an embodiment of players as elements of a broader global view and understanding of sports in general, and football in particular.

4.2.2. A Comparison between the English and Arabic Commentaries

(1) Conceptual Metonymies in the English Commentary Only

Table 5 below demonstrates a summary of the conceptual metonymies found only in the English commentary, their frequencies and percentages in the study sample, along with illustrative examples.

Table 5. Summary of the Conceptual Metonymies Found Only in the English Commentary.

Conceptual Metonymy	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor
A GAME'S INSTRUMENT FOR USER	1	14%	“We want to hear that final whistle”
A TEAM'S COUNTRY FOR THE TEAM	2	28.5%	“I think in this first match is very important for Argentina just to feel out Saudi Arabia.”

Consistent with the overall conclusion that sports commentary is characterized by a rich and figuratively vivid style, the English commentary employed a limited number of metonymies, two of which were unique to the English corpus. The most common metonymy used, A TEAM'S COUNTRY FOR THE TEAM, scores a ratio of 28.5% of the total metonymies in the corpus. As seen in example (36), “very important for Argentina just to feel out Saudi Arabia”, the country name is used to represent only the national team (THE WHOLE FOR THE PART). This can be interpreted as a rhetorical strategy that helps reinforce the spectators' bonding and identification with their team on one side, while highlighting the country's presence in the global sports arena

on the other. The second metonymy, A GAME'S INSTRUMENT FOR THE USER, which falls under the wider schema of (THE PART FOR THE WHOLE), is clarified in examples (34) and (35) below, where the whistle and flag stand for the referee. This metonymy was found in 14% of the total metonymies in the sample. This style adds to the vividness and dramatization of the game as it indirectly references the action and players' performance in the match, igniting the audience's enthusiasm and raising their curiosity and suspenseful reactions.

(2) Conceptual Metonymies in the Arabic Commentary Only

Table 6 below demonstrates a summary of the conceptual metonymies found only in the Arabic commentary, their frequencies and percentages in the study sample, along with illustrative examples.

Table 6. Summary of the Conceptual Metonymies Found Only in the Arabic Commentary.

Conceptual Metonymy	Frequency	Percentage	Example Metaphor	Translation
A COUNTRY'S FLAG FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM	1	2.5%	”وارفعني الخفاق الأخضر ينشر النور المسطر“	Raise the Green flag, spreading the marked light.
A COUNTRY'S LANDMARK FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM	1	2.5%	”وبهمة السعودي همته مثل جبل طويق وجبل الطويق عالي وبالتالي همته ما تنكسر“	With the determination of the Saudi, his determination is like Mount Tuwaiq, and Mount Tuwaiq is high, so his determination does not break.
PLAYERS' ACTIONS FOR THE TEAM	1	2.5%	”وتواصلت أساطيره ما بين أقدام باتيستوتا وتمريرات فيرون ولمحات ريكلمي“	continuing their legends between the feet of Batistuta, passes from Veron, and glimpses of Riquelme.
PLAYERS' NAMES FOR THE TEAM	1	2.5%	”ويسجلون ويتقدمون ويضعون الكرة في شباك مارتينيز“	All the names present in the lineup of the Argentine national team

In the Arabic sample, national symbols are employed to elicit feelings of national pride and unity among the fans of the national team. Four types of metonymies were only seen in the Arabic corpus, including: A COUNTRY'S FLAG FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, A COUNTRY'S LANDMARK FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, PLAYERS' ACTIONS FOR THE TEAM, and PLAYERS' NAMES FOR THE TEAM. Each of these metonymies occurred only once in the Arabic commentary, scoring a percentage of 2.5% of the total metonymies found in it. Examples can be found in sentences (37–40) below. In (37), raising the green flag in “وارفعني الخفاق الأخضر” is clearly linked to the Saudi flag, underscoring the collective national accomplishment the team is achieving by winning the game. Similarly, the Saudi well-known mountain in (38) “وبهمة السعودي همته مثل جبل طويق وجبل الطويق عالي” represents the Saudi players in their high dignity and elevated unbreakable resolution. Cognitively, these expressions attempt to incorporate the team's performance within the framework of patriotic sports discourse, which stands for the nation's strength and asserted identity. From a different perspective, examples (39–40) employ individual players' actions and names to stand for the whole team: “أقدام باتيستوتا وتمريرات فيرون” and “شباك مارتينيز” all reinforce the personalized view of the team members' performance, yet additionally contribute to magnifying the narrative about the team's collective performance.

These metonymies help weave a harmonized narrative and discourse where national and individualistic achievements are intertwined, transforming the whole image of foot-

ball to one of a patriotic national moment achieved by the feet of national heroes through the use of symbolic language.

Typical of football and sports commentaries, such use of conceptual metaphors and metonymies is more like a rhetorical method to emotionally charge the games. However, this rhetorical usage is simultaneously linked to the audience's cognitive processing of the sport as a whole—its teams and players—framing them as integral to the audience's national identity and emotional investment. It also satisfies the audience's desire for narrative and dramatic engagement.

5. Discussion

5.1. Common Conceptual Metaphors in the English and Arabic Commentaries

The primary metaphors employed in the English and Arabic commentaries to conceptualise football are outlined below, supported by illustrative examples from data analysis.

5.1.1. Football Is War

Various examples from the English Commentary are motivated by this conceptual metaphor. Below is an analysis of some of these examples:

- 1) “I guess Romero was feeling comfortable getting all the way forward to join into the attack.”

This example depicts the player progressing forward, putting his utmost effort into play, and scoring in the game.

The use of the word *attack* invokes the image of two opposing armies on the battlefield, where one army tries to move aggressively forward to the land controlled by the other army. This image links our experiences with the domain of WAR to the new domain of FOOTBALL, which results in the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS WAR. Similarly, various linguistic metaphors were found to be motivated by the same conceptual metaphor, FOOTBALL IS WAR, in the Arabic commentaries. The following example illustrates this:

- 2) والله الحمد بطل من أبطال المملكة في هذه الملحمة الكروية الرائعة
غادر أرضية الملعب
“And thank God, a hero from the heroes of the kingdom
in this beautiful football epic leaves the field.”

In this example, players on the football pitch resemble heroes on the battlefield, which gives them war-like roles in the football match. Soldiers who achieve great successes in battles are commonly referred to as heroes, admired for the honourable actions they took on the battlefield. When the commentator refers to the players as heroes, he maps the FOOTBALL domain onto the WAR domain. For example, the words “بطل” (hero) and “أبطال المملكة” (heroes of the kingdom) map onto distinguished warriors in battle, “الملحمة الكروية” (football epic) is compared to a glorious war, and “أرضية الملعب” (the football pitch) maps onto the battlefield. In this sense, the commentator’s description of the players’ actions evokes a sense of pride and emotional engagement in the audience. This means that the similarity between the language used to describe FOOTBALL and the language used to describe WAR gives rise to the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS WAR.

In line with previous research on the conceptualisation of sports, this study confirmed the almost unanimous finding that FOOTBALL is conceptualised in terms of WAR [8–10,12,15,17]. This successfully indicates the universality of this conceptual metaphor and connects it with human cognition and a universal understanding of sports.

To affirm our previous hypothesis, more recent research suggested a universal pattern of human cognition in relation to sports across diverse languages and cultures [30–33]. Others also confirmed that conceptual metaphors used in sports are employed to simplify their abstract complex concepts, and that is how such metaphors become rooted in human cognition [34,35].

5.1.2. Football Is a Human Attribute (The Ball Is Agent)

According to data analysis, this conceptual metaphor depicts football events in terms of human activities and projects human characteristics to the way the ball is perceived in the game. This finding agrees with Alzawaydeh and Alghazo (2018)^[9], who concluded that this mapping is established because humans attribute their qualities and actions to the game to render the events more relatable to the audience. The English commentary includes the following example of this metaphorical schema:

- 3) “What do you do? You feed him the ball, put the game on his back.”

In this example, football-related actions seem to resemble human behaviour. The verb “feed” is a human action that indicates providing support and important nourishment to others in need. In the context of football, it is clear that the ball is not something that performs the act of feeding or eating. Instead, it indicates that passing the ball to a teammate is similar to the act of feeding due to its significance. Hence, what makes this expression “You feed him the ball” metaphorical is that the commentator utilised familiar human qualities, such as support and nourishment, to describe actions in the FOOTBALL domain, which suggests the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS A HUMAN ATTRIBUTE. Similarly, the Arabic commentary includes the following examples of this metaphorical schema:

- 4) الذي يحاول بكل تأكيد بأن يضع بصمته أخيراً مع المنتخب من خلال
حضوره الأخير في منافسات بطولة كأس العالم
“He is trying to leave his mark with the national team
in his last appearance in the FIFA World Cup.”

In this example, the idiomatic expression “يضع بصمته” (to leave his mark) indicates the player’s attempt to do something memorable that has a lasting effect. In real life, humans put much effort into achieving recognition and success or becoming famous and influential. Therefore, this expression is metaphorically used to depict football events in terms of human activity and contribution and to project human characteristics to the way the ball is perceived in the game.

This finding agrees with Alzawaydeh and Alghazo (2018)^[9], who concluded that this mapping is established because humans attribute their qualities and actions to the

game to render the events more relatable to the audience. As individuals, we draw upon past experiences with similar activities beyond football, creating a connection between football and prior personal encounters.

5.1.3. Football Is a Natural Attribute

The English commentary provided a few examples of football being conceptualized as a natural attribute. The following is one example.

- 5) “A big goal for Argentina that gets the building rocking”

The expression “gets the building rocking” means that the goal scored by the Argentine team generated a high level of excitement and energy among the spectators, causing them to become animated or loud, similar to the effect generated in an earthquake. Therefore, the symmetry between the goal’s effect on spectators and the effect of nature on buildings gives rise to the conceptual metaphor “FOOTBALL IS A NATURAL ATTRIBUTE.” On the other hand, Arabic commentary employed two sub-metaphors within this general schema: FOOTBALL IS A PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTE and FOOTBALL IS AN ANIMAL ATTRIBUTE. The following are two examples that present both sub-schemas.

- 6) “ولو وصل إلى المباراة النهائية سيحطم رقم لوثر ماتيس كاكتر اللاعبين لعباً للمباريات في بطولة كأس العالم”
“If they reach the final, they will break Lothar Matthaus’ record for the most World Cup appearances.”

Utilising the verb “break” in the above example is metaphorical since nothing seems to be broken. Instead, it refers to the process of exceeding a previous statistical achievement. In this sense, the FOOTBALL RECORD is visualized as a FRAGILE OBJECT that is more likely to be broken than any other hard material. This means that the mapping involves conceptualizing RECORDS, in the domain of FOOTBALL, as physical OBJECTS, in the domain of nature, that can be shattered; hence, FOOTBALL is seen as a NATURAL PHYSICAL FORCE.

- 7) “العويس في المكان المناسب وكأنه تهيأ للأيام الجميلة يعود”
”لحماية العرين، أسد والله يا محمد”
“Al-Owais is in the right place, as if he is ready for beautiful days, returning to protect the den, a lion, I swear, Muhammad.”

In Arabic, as is the case in many other languages, people are usually compared to lions, who are well-known for their bravery and strength, especially when defending their dens. In the example above, utilising the word “lion” means that attributes of a lion, like bravery, strength, and leadership, are mapped onto the Saudi goalkeeper, which gives rise to the conceptualisation of FOOTBALL as AN ANIMAL ATTRIBUTE.

This finding is consistent with Alzawaydeh and Alg hazo (2018) and Argounov (2023)^[9,31], who pointed out that football can quickly relate to nature since it is played mostly in outdoor areas and is sometimes conceptualised in terms of natural events to make its actions closer to the human imagination. More recently, Beliutin (2025) and Boguslavskiy et al. (2024) agreed that football is conceptualized in terms of familiar natural and social events^[36,37], rendering its events more accessible to the human experience.

5.1.4. Football Is Art

An example in the English commentary on this metaphor exhibits two sub-schemas that can fall under this general umbrella. The first is FOOTBALL IS A MUSICAL COMPOSITION (see Example 8), while the second is FOOTBALL IS DRAMA (Example 9).

- 8) “Argentina is just getting an early rhythm”.

“Rhythm” refers to the harmonious patterns of words or musical sounds used in music. Music has a remarkable impact on our emotions and physical states as it motivates happy or sad feelings in listeners. Besides, the compatible coordination and timing among musical band members increase the effect of music on listeners. With this in mind, all of these aspects of rhythmic music map into the domain of FOOTBALL, a completely different domain, resulting in a metaphorical use of “rhythm”. Therefore, utilising the expression “getting an early rhythm”, the commentator suggests that the Argentine football team starts gradually to coordinate and perform well at an early stage in the game, similar to a musical rhythm established in the early stages of a piece.

- 9) “You had about 15 minutes to go to change the narrative of this story.”

The narrative is the sequence of events in a story. A

storyteller usually arranges the events in a way that gradually reveals them to invoke suspense in the audience. At a specific point in the story, the narrative changes in a way that usually satisfies those who are reading the story. However, in this context, it is clear that there is no story to tell. Instead, the linguistic expression “to change the narrative of this story” is used metaphorically. Elements of a story, such as plot change and narrative, are mapped onto the domain of FOOTBALL. Besides, the commentator seems to understand that narrative change is a time-sensitive topic, i.e., it may take longer than needed. That is why he specified the time, 15 minutes, the Argentine football team needed to win.

Examples from Arabic are also divided into two sub-schemas: FOOTBALL IS DANCE (Example 10), and FOOTBALL IS DRAMA (Example 11); the following examples are illustrations of both sub-schemas:

- 10) “لا زالت قائمة لا زالت حاضرة للمنتخب الأرجنتيني
رقصة التانغو الأولى جاءت بأقدام ميسي برقصته الأخيرة
في المونديال
“The first tango dance came with Messi’s feet in his
last dance in the World Cup.”

As an integral part of Argentina’s national identity, the Tango is a couple dance where the man’s moves represent authority, strength, and leadership while the woman’s role is to be graceful and passionate. In this example, therefore, it is clear that the aspects of the Tango dance are mapped into the Argentine team’s playing style and skills in the context of FOOTBALL. Besides, selecting “بأقدام ميسي” (Messi’s feet) is also metaphorical because Messi is not dancing in the match. Rather, he is playing football. This means that the role Messi is doing in the football match is as crucial as the role performed by the masculine dancer in the Tango dance. Overall, utilising such a linguistic metaphor creates a culturally rich image of the Argentine football team’s coordination and Messi’s prominent role by linking it to the dancer’s performance in the Tango dance, producing the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS DANCE.

“حتى هذه اللحظة تكتب فيها المعاناة للمنتخب الأرجنتيني
والحضور والسطوة والجمال والحلم هنا من خلال هذا
اللقاء
“Until this moment, suffering is destined for
the Argentine national team and the presence,
dominance, beauty, and dream in this match.”

When writing a dramatic narrative, writers typically include elements of excitement, suspense, and tension to evoke a vivid image in readers. In this Arabic commentary, two central metaphors are identified. For instance, when using the expression “تكتب فيها المعاناة للمنتخب الأرجنتيني” (the suffering of the Argentine team is being written), elements of a dramatic narrative are mapped onto the challenges and suffering that the Argentine team encounters during the match, which may indicate the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS A TRAGEDY for the Argentine team. The second metaphor includes the abstract elements of “والحضور والسطوة والجمال والحلم” (and the presence, dominance, beauty, and dream), which are mapped onto the domain of FOOTBALL to indicate the high quality of the Saudi team’s performance. This may suggest that the two metaphors jointly work to establish a narrative-like nature of this football match, giving rise to the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS DRAMA.

Broccias and Canepa (2012), Medvedev (2021), Boguslavskyi et al. (2024), and Al-Otaibi (2025) agree with this finding and concluded that among the many various source domains to which it is compared to highlight its value as a form of art, and capture its beauty and creativity^[37–40].

5.1.5. Football Is a Journey

Examples of this conceptual metaphor in English reveal one more sub-schema under this general schema, i.e., FOOTBALL IS A VEHICLE.

- 11) “There’s much traffic right in front of alleyways with the ball steps up, maybe rushes it a bit.”

The use of words like “traffic” and “alleyways” is metaphorical in the context of football; the commentator employs them to describe the challenges and difficulties that the Argentine team encounters during the match. When the commentator uses the word “alleyways”, he suggests that there are minimal spaces in the field, making the attacks toward the Saudi team’s goal difficult. What makes the situation even worse for the Argentine players is the fact that there is “much traffic”; i.e., many Saudi players are blocking the narrow way to their goal. Utilising the expressions “the ball steps up” and “rushes it a bit” metaphorically indicates that the ball is visualised as the VEHICLE that helps the Argentine players advance in these narrow spaces.

In Arabic, the conceptualisation of FOOTBALL AS A JOURNEY is found in only one example:

- 12) “وعلى ما يقدمه المنتخب السعودي في هذه المواجهة في رحلة استعادة الذاكرة المتميزة للمشاركة الأولى في بطولة كأس العالم في

عام 1994

“And based on what the Saudi national team is presenting in this confrontation, in a journey to relive the distinguished memories of their first participation in the FIFA World Cup in 1994.”

In the 1994 World Cup, the Saudi national team performed incredibly and advanced to the second round—the play-off round. This was a great success and a memorable achievement for the Saudi people. Therefore, using the expression “رحلة استعادة الذاكرة” (the journey to relive the distinguished memories) metaphorically indicates the Saudi team’s efforts to achieve significant glory similar to that of the 1994 World Cup. Thus, the word “رحلة” (journey) evokes the image of a movement from one place or time to another, from the present into the past, in this case, which suggests that FOOTBALL is seen as a journey to regain past achievements. In addition, MEMORIES are also seen as PRECIOUS OBJECTS that the Saudi team is trying to regain.

Among previous literature, some showed how football can be conceptualized as a journey in order to make the narrative more engaging, to highlight its progress and motivation, and to connect viewers with its challenges and achievements. Those include Belyutin (2022), Argounov (2023), and Surahman et al. (2024)^[31,33,41]. Others mentioned similar findings not only in football but also in sports in general, such as Najjari and Mohammadi (2018)^[42].

5.1.6. Football Is Tense

Analysis of the English commentary yielded the following example:

- 13) “It’s one of those games that is still on the knife’s edge.”

The linguistic metaphor “on the knife’s edge” conveys the image of balance, uncertainty, and tension. When something is on a knife’s edge, it can easily fall in the direction of one side or the other. In this sense, it means that the final result of the match is uncertain, i.e., there are equal chances of winning or losing for the two competing teams. Such a critical situation creates tension and demands careful handling, as any mistake might lead to a drastic loss on either side. As such, FOOTBALL is visualised as a critical situation that develops TENSION among players in the field,

which indicates the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS TENSE.

Analysis of the Arabic commentary yielded the following examples:

- 14) “تمضي الدقائق تمضي وبإلها من دقائق بطيئة”

“The minutes pass, The minutes pass, and what slow minutes they are”

In this example, the concept of TENSION is indirectly expressed, yet it is still apparent. Although using the expressions “وتمضي الدقائق” (minutes pass) and “دقائق بطيئة” (slow minutes) indicate that TIME is seen as a MOVABLE OBJECT, it is the result of that movement which matters in our example. In a competitive sport like football, time passes slowly for the team that might win but swiftly for the team that might lose. This means that the less time available for players to score, the more the mental load and fatigue, which will, of course, affect their physical performance^[43]. In mind, the slow movement of time in FOOTBALL indicates the game’s TENSE nature, which suggests that the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS TENSE is the final outcome of this critical situation in this match.

Pertaining to the dramatic development of actions and events in the football match, many authors agreed that football is conceptualized as tense, even as part of broader schemes like FOOTBALL IS POLITICAL CONFLICT or FOOTBALL IS WAR^[32,33,40].

5.1.7. Football Is Violence

Football games and players’ performances are depicted in this game as an act of violence; the following examples from the English commentary explain this conceptualisation:

- 15) “It’s an aggressive defense. So, they’ve got a judo league.”

Literally, the word “aggressive” indicates a behaviour that is directed toward harming or injuring other people, i.e., it involves some acts of VIOLENCE. However, in the context of football, the expression “aggressive defense” metaphorically means that the team’s defensive players are competitive and have the forceful determination to win the game by all means possible. This means that “aggressive defense” is a tactical behaviour, rather than harmful, used by players to prevent their opponents from scoring goals and winning

the match. Linking this kind of defense to “a Judo League” supports this claim in that “Judo” is a martial art involving techniques and tactics intended to master the opponent and turn his force to one’s own advantage.

The commentary also conveyed a lot of football conceptualisation as VIOLENCE in Arabic; here are some examples.

- 16) انهض يا سعود قاوم يا سعود تقدم يا سعود اضرب يا سعود اطرحة أرضاً يا سعود واصل التقدم يا سعود
 “Rise, Saud, resist, Saud, advance, Saud, hit, Saud, bring him down, Saud, and continue advancing, Saud.”

This Arabic commentary includes various acts of VIOLENCE. Verbs like “اضرب” (hit) and “اطرحه أرضاً” (bring him down) literally indicate the commentator’s encouragement for the Saudi player, Saud, to perform a harmful behaviour against the Argentine players. Nevertheless, these Arabic verbs are used metaphorically rather than literally in this context. The commentator’s previous knowledge of the rules of football matches supports the metaphorical use of these verbs; i.e., the commentator knows that any player who hits or brings an opponent down will be punished and possibly kicked out of the match, which might result in his team’s loss. Therefore, it is likely that the commentator is not advocating for violent physical interactions, but rather for defensive acts that prevent the other team from reaching their goal and scoring.

According to Alzawaydeh and Alghazo (2018)^[9], FOOTBALL IS VIOLENCE draws connections between football occurrences and instances of violent behaviour, whereas FOOTBALL IS TENSE encompasses psychological stress and strain. It is evident that football, being a sport marked by physical interactions among players, fan-related movements and disturbances, and other such incidents, often experiences moments of both physical and psychological stress.

In accordance with Newson (2019)^[44], the “identity fusion” theory can explain the way some sports like football are shaping the extremely violent behaviours of some of its fans, especially as the language of the media reinforces the use of violence-related conceptual metaphors. Newson also revealed similarities in this cognitive effect across different cultures.

5.2. A Comparison between the English and Arabic Commentaries

5.2.1. Conceptual Metaphors in the English Commentary Only

A. Football Field is a Spatial Concept

- 18) “Trying to keep this field as tight as possible.”

Generally, the football field is rectangular and marked with boundary lines; i.e., it has a fixed space that can never be tightened or loosened. This means that utilising the word “tight” to describe the football field is, therefore, metaphorical; i.e., when the players of a team come closer to each other, they limit their opponent’s attacking options and prevent any scoring chances. Therefore, “to tighten the field” is a strategy to limit the opposing team’s movements and create an organised defensive structure to limit the other team’s movement in the field space. In this sense, the FOOTBALL FIELD is visualised as A spatial concept that can be tightened.

This seems to come in agreement with Deyneko et al. (2023) on the effect of football spatial orientation on the young players’ spatial thinking and cognitive abilities^[45]. This supports our paper’s claim that the game’s settings and organization, along with the way these settings are expressed in the commentators’ metaphorical language, are principally connected to human cognitive thinking.

B. Football is Emotion

When players or spectators are excited by the game atmosphere, they typically exhibit positive emotional reactions, such as admiration, happiness, and/or enthusiasm^[46]. On the other hand, if the team is not successful in the football match, players as well as spectators show anger, sadness, and/or disappointment.

- 19) “This result holds not only one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history.”

This means that football games are events that stimulate emotions, as can be seen in Example (19). The commentator metaphorically describes the Argentine team’s loss against the Saudi team as “one of the biggest upsets” because it was a surprising and significant result. As such, losing a football game causes emotional breakdowns and upsets, giving rise to the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL IS EMOTION.

Belyutin (2022) also believed that fans of German football games use metaphorically loaded language in a way that induces emotions and connects the game to actual emotional situations that make it easier to express their frustration or excitement^[33].

C. Football is Heat

In Example (20), the commentator is aware that in opening games, football players tend to be cautious and usually start the game slowly to avoid any missteps that can lead to an early defeat.

20) “A slow start to this game, but it’s gonna heat up now.”

As time passes, players from either team begin to become faster and more active, enabling them to score and win the game, which is metaphorically referred to as “heating up”. In this sense, there is an anticipation that the game will become more energetic, dynamic, and intense, akin to an increase in temperature. This means that the concept of HEAT in the domain of temperature is used to understand the intensity and activity in the domain of FOOTBALL, giving rise to the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL (INTENSITY) IS HEAT.

Surahman et al. (2024) and Addi and Kadhim (2022) both corroborated this finding and concluded that football’s metaphorical language sometimes includes its conceptualization as a source of heat^[41,47].

D. Football is a News Material

Under this schema, we can also extract another sub-schema: LOSING A FOOTBALL GAME IS A PHYSICAL SHOCK. This is considered news material and can also be dealt with under another conceptual schema, namely, FOOTBALL IS EMOTION.

21) “Messi on it to be a headline that shocks the world.”

It is usual for a team that is ranked third in the world, unbeaten for a long time, and, more importantly, has a player like Messi—the most famous football player of all time—to win a game against a team like the Saudi team that is ranked forty-eight. Thus, for these reasons, the Argentine team’s loss in their opening game against the Saudi team will evoke a sudden reaction of amazement and surprise in

the world. We believe that the word “shock”, in example 21 above, makes the expression more metaphorical than it looks; i.e., the intense and sudden reaction of surprise and amazement is similar to experiencing a physical sensation like an electric shock. As such, LOSING A GAME is visualised as an unpleasant PHYSICAL SHOCK that causes pain and unhappiness, not only for Argentina but for the whole world.

It is important to note that this finding is not corroborated by any of the previous studies this paper reviewed.

E. Football is Power

Example (22) shows that football players move in quick and powerful movements; hence, they are like powerful engines. Although this metaphor shows some resemblance to the conceptualisation of FOOTBALL AS A PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTE, I preferred dealing with engines and unnatural powers as separate from natural attributes.

22) “There was one before with Ali coming into the engine Alpha Mirage right at the end of the first half.

Surahman et al. (2024) and Argounov’s (2023) findings about conceptualization in football’s discourse put its emphasis on football as an intense situation^[31,41], where language focuses on explosiveness and strength, which might be seen as a broader umbrella covering the conceptualization of football as power.

F. Football Defense is a Structure

23) “They try to move it forward, but how quickly they break down that white side.”

The term “break down” in Example (23) implies a physical dismantling of a defensive structure, akin to tearing down a wall or a building. This suggests that defences can be a vulnerable structure and subject to exploitation, emphasising the need for teams to maintain their defensive integrity.

Charteris-Black (2004) and (2006) explained how political and sports discourses employed plenty of architectural schemas in mapping their main abstract concepts while attempting to connect with their audience’s cognitions^[48]. Moreover, Keränen (2024) and Cornelius et al. (2024) explored such types of structural metaphors in football commentaries^[49].

5.2.2. Conceptual Metaphors in the Arabic Commentary Only

A. Football is a Polarity of Positive or Negative

Examples (24) and (25) make clear that the metaphor “FOOTBALL IS A POLARITY OF POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE” implies that the results of matches can be conceptualised in terms of value judgments. A more neutral result, such as a “positive draw,” can be interpreted optimistically, for instance, as a match that, despite not having a clear winner, exhibits redeeming qualities like good performance or teamwork. Conversely, a “goalless draw” has negative connotations: uninteresting, disappointing, without goals, and therefore frustrating for players and fans. Taken together, these examples demonstrate how football outcomes are either negatively or positively conceptualised.

- 24) “ انتهى اللقاء الأول بالتعادل الإيجابي ”
“The first meeting ended in a positive draw.”

This metaphorical framing suggests that sports outcomes can be evaluated in terms of their positive or negative impact.

- 25) “ انتهت بنتيجة التعادل السلبي ”
“It ended with a goalless draw.”

This kind of metaphor is discussed by Surahman et al. (2024) and Beliutin (2025)^[36,41], who shared the finding that football discourse utilises orientational metaphors to describe the highs and lows of the games. Furthermore, Al-Otaibi (2025) noted that such conceptualization might reflect broader societal attitudes towards winning and losing^[40].

B. Football Achievement is a Scale (Football Achievement is Construction)

- 26) “ بينما يعزز ميسي مكانته هدافاً تاريخياً للأرجنتين في كل البطولات والمنافسات ”
“While Messi enhances his position as the historical top scorer for Argentina in all tournaments and competitions.”

In Example (26), the commentator frames Messi’s scoring ACHIEVEMENT as a figurative “position” on a SCALE of historical top scorers, emphasising the continued success. For instance, the verb “يعزز”, which means to improve the

quality or strength of something, and the expression “مكانته”, which indicates Messi’s reputation as the best goal scorer of all time for the Argentine team. As such, the commentator shows that improving one’s reputation and achievement is similar to constructing a physical structure, which may suggest that Messi’s ACHIEVEMENT is seen as a CONSTRUCTION that can be enhanced or reinforced.

A few social cognitive theories back up this finding. For example, Martin and White (2005) in their appraisal theory discuss how some types of discourse^[50], especially the ones that exhibit evaluative language, does employ dimensions of scales, especially to rank players and teams. This attests to our finding about the conceptual metaphor “achievement is a scale”.

C. Football is Education

- 27) “ ومن أراد أن يفتح مدرسة في محاولة الصمود والثبات و الثبات والهمة والقمة والعودة والتسجيل فلينظر إلى ما فعله الأخضر ”
“Whoever wants to establish a school in an attempt to teach endurance, steadiness, aspiration, how to reach the summit, and return, and score, should look at what the Green Team has achieved.”

In Example (27), the commentator utilises the expression “ يفتح مدرسة ” to open a school to direct the listeners’ attention to the place where qualities like endurance and perseverance are usually taught. Besides, the expression “ فلينظر ” “should look at what the Green Team has done” links the process of establishing an example to follow with the process of creating an educational institution. As such, we may argue that SETTING AN EXAMPLE is akin to OPENING AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION. Further, abstract concepts like “الصمود”, endurance, “الثبات”, steadiness, and “الهمة”, aspiration, are compared to the subjects that can be taught at such an educational institution.

This may suggest that ABSTRACT CONCEPTS are seen as CONCRETE SCHOOL SUBJECTS. Overall, the example above refers to the current game as a school that teaches endurance, steadiness, and aspiration, suggesting that the actions of the Saudi players are an example to follow and should be taught to the coming generations.

No doubt, many proclaimed that sports in general, football in particular, are a good source of education. This is also confirmed in research^[51–53]. Moreover, Stephens et al.

(2007) reported that football can metaphorically represent a tool for education and a process for teaching teamwork and physical resilience^[54]. Accordingly, it seems sound to conclude that the metaphor FOOTBALL IS EDUCATION is considered a conceptual metaphor in football commentary.

5.3. Conceptual Metonymies

In cognitive linguistics, metonymy is dealt with as one of the essential characteristics of our cognition; i.e., it is a cognitive device used for the conceptualisation of numerous abstract concepts. Just like metaphor, metonymy involves an interaction between two conceptual domains, a source domain and a target domain (Kövecses, 2002; Kövecses & Radden, 1998; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Littlemore, 2015)^[1-3,29,55,56]. Kövecses (2010), for instance, maintains that in metonymy, we use one entity or thing to provide mental access to another entity, and that “we try to direct attention to an entity through another entity related to it”^[2]. This means that while the two concepts belong to entirely different domains in metaphor, they are closely related within metonymy.

5.3.1. Common Conceptual Metonymies in the English and Arabic Commentaries

It has been found that various linguistic expressions in both languages utilise similar metonymical conceptualisations. Some linguistic expressions may contain a metaphor alongside a metonymy, but we are only interested in analysing metonymies in this section. The following are some conceptual metonymies showing this similarity between the two languages.

A. A Player's Shirt's Colour for the Team

Examples from the English commentary include the following:

- 28) “There's a green jersey following.”
- 29) “There's plenty of green and white in the seats cheering on their country”.

Examples from the Arabic commentary are presented below:

- 30) “كلنا الأخضر دربنا أخضر هنا في مباراة اليوم ومن خلال أحداث

هذه المواجهة تسقط الألوان ويبقى اللون الأخضر هو السائد”
 “We are all Green, our path is Green here in today's match, and through the events of this confrontation, colours fall, and the colour Green remains dominant.”

Generally, it is common for most, if not all, football teams to wear uniforms inspired by their countries' flags. The Saudi flag has a green background with white Arabic inscriptions and a sword underneath it. Fans and players of the Saudi national team wore green and white uniforms during the match, meaning that their shirts and their country's flag are highly related. This means that when the commentators use the colour GREEN, they mean the players and/or fans of the TEAM, suggesting that THE PLAYERS' SHIRTS' COLOUR is used to stand for THE TEAM. In line with Chaerunnisah (2020)^[14], the commentators, in both languages, metonymically utilise the colour of the team's shirt to refer to the team itself. In addition, this metonymy is extensively discussed in the literature about metonymies, for example, Cristiano Broccias (2007) and Littlemore (2015) discussed how jerseys' colours and numbers are used to refer to players instead of using their proper names or team names^[29].

B. A Person's Body Part for the Person

Examples from one of the English commentaries include the following:

- 31) “All eyes are on him and what he can do within this World Cup.”

Our eyes are the sensory organs with which we can observe, monitor, and perceive the visual images of the world around us. However, in the example above, the word “eyes” means the viewers and players monitoring and observing Messi to see what he can do in this particular match and the World Cup in general. Since watching involves mainly the body organ “eyes,” it seems self-evident that a part of his body will refer to the people watching, which suggests that the BODY PART stands metonymically for THE PERSON as a whole. Examples from one of the Arabic commentaries include the following:

- 32) “بمحاولة بأقدام القائد ليونيل ميسي، لأن الآمال تتعلق على أقدامه”
 “An attempt now by the captain Lionel Messi because

hopes are pinned on his feet.”

33) “يأتي التعادل بأقدام صالح الشهري ”

“The draw comes from the feet of Salem Al-Shahrani.”

Even though players can score goals using any part of their bodies except their hands, it is usually the foot with which most players score and pass the ball to a teammate. In the above examples (32 and 33), Messi’s and Saleh Al-Shahrani’s feet are mentioned simply because the two players score their goals using their feet. However, the body parts—feet—are mentioned to indicate the player as an entity, which suggests that the BODY PART is used to stand for THE PLAYER, which goes under the general conceptual metonymy THE PART FOR THE WHOLE. Only Chaerunnisah (2020) reported a similar conclusion^[14]. However, this metonymy is well established in literature, even if not in relation to sports. For instance, Kraska-Szlenk (2019), Vu et al. (2020), Wijana (2022), Farghal and Alenezi (2022), and Ibršimović (2023) all proved the universality of this metonymy across different languages and contexts^[57–61]. In fact, a few researchers, like Hsu (2008) and Dhafer (2020)^[62,63], linked this metonymy to human cognitive behaviour, suggesting that it is culturally shared across the varied cultures.

5.3.2. Conceptual Metonymies Only in the English Commentary

A. The Instrument for the User

34) “We want to hear that final whistle.”

35) “The flag is up... in an offside position.”

In Example (34), the whistle is an instrument that referees blow to indicate the beginning and/or end of a match, to show that a foul is committed, or to stop the match for any reason. This means that the “final whistle” indicates the time when the referee blows this instrument to announce that the game is over. As such, THE INSTRUMENT (the whistle) stands for THE USER (the referee). In example 35, the flag is a tool used by referee assistants to help the referees with offside decisions, throw-ins, and substitutions, among other decisions. Therefore, the “flag”, in this example, is used to refer to its user, giving rise to the conceptual metonymy THE INSTRUMENT FOR THE USER.

B. The Country (Whole) for the Team (Part)

36) “I think in this first match is very important for Argentina just to feel out Saudi Arabia.”

In this example, the country’s name is used to refer to the team, not to the country as a whole. The word “Argentina” is used to refer to the Argentine national football team, and the same applies to the Saudi team. In this sense, the WHOLE, i.e., the country, is used to stand for the PART, i.e., the football team. Referring to the teams by their countries is claimed to show that the players’ actions and achievements are precious and essential not only for the team but also for their countries. It can be claimed that the English commentator intentionally utilises this kind of conceptualisation in order to tap into a certain feeling of loyalty, thus evoking a sense of responsibility within the players towards their countries while they pursue success and wins. Panther & Radden (1999) discussed the geopolitical affiliation of the team as part of the WHOLE FOR PART metonymical schema^[64], in addition to Kövecses (2010) and Littlemore (2015), who provided examples of it under the part-whole metonymical relationship^[2,29].

5.3.3. Conceptual Metonymies Only in the Arabic Commentary

A. A Country’s Flag for the National Team

37) “وارفعي الخفاق الأخضر ينشر النور المسطر ”

“Raise the Green flag, spreading the marked light.”

It is common in various sports events to play the national anthems for the winning athletes or teams as a form of pride and respect. In the example above, the line is part of the Saudi national anthem, which the commentator chants in order to announce the Saudi team’s victory against Argentina. The green flag refers to the Saudi flag, symbolising the team’s victory as a representation of raising the country’s flag. In this sense, the COUNTRY’S FLAG is utilised to stand for THE NATIONAL TEAM.

This conclusion has been attested by Forceville (2008) and Littlemore (2015) earlier as they explored the use of visual symbols to represent countries or the figures who stand for them^[29,65].

B. A Country’s Landmark for the National Team

38) “وبهمة السعودي السعودي همته مثل جبل طويق وجبل الطويق عالي ”

وبالتالي همته ما تنكسر“

“With the determination of the Saudi, his determination is like Mount Tuwaiq, and Mount Tuwaiq is high, so his determination does not break.”

The name Tuwaiq, which originates from the Arabic “طوق”, meaning “surrounding in the shape of a ring”, refers to a series of mountains surrounding the capital city of Riyadh. The Tuwaiq mountain is one of the most famous landmarks of Saudi Arabia. In the example above, the Saudi team’s strength and determination are compared to this famous Saudi Landmark, which indicates the conceptualisation of the Saudi national team in terms of a landmark related to its own country. In other words, THE LANDMARK is metonymically utilised to stand for THE NATIONAL TEAM. It is worth noting that the example above is quoted from Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman’s speech during the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh.

Panther & Radden (1999) were among the first to introduce the metonymy conceptualizing the place for the constitution it represents^[64]. In another reference, Forceville (2008) did not fail to demonstrate that visual symbols like famous landmarks are capable of awakening feelings of national belonging and collective identity, especially in sports advertisements^[65].

C. Players’ Actions for the Team

- 39) “وتواصلت أساطيره ما بين أقدام باتيستوتا وتمريرات فيرون ولمحات ريكيلمي”
 “Continuing their legends between the feet of Batistuta passes from Veron, and glimpses of Riquelme.”

The words “Veron”, “فيرون”, “Batistuta”, “باتيستوتا” and “Riquelme”, “ريكيلمي” are the names of some of the most famous Argentine players. The word “أقدام”, “feet”, refers to Batistuta’s ability to score goals with his feet, “تمريرات”, “passes”, refers to the brilliant passes that Veron was able to make during matches, and “لمحات”, “glimpses”, refers to the distinguished act of the player, Riquelme. This means that the commentator connects the actions, passes, and glimpses of the players to the success of the team to which they belong, which suggests that the PLAYERS’ ACTIONS are used to stand for their NATIONAL TEAM.

Similar to previous findings, previous literature included this kind of metaphor under the broader schema of PART FOR THE WHOLE. Both Panther & Radden (1999)

and Littlemore (2015) demonstrated that such cognitive mappings draw on the salience of the individual actions to stand for those of the team^[29,64].

D. Players’ Names for the Team

- 40) “ويسجلون ويتقدمون ويضعون الكرة في شباك مارتينيز”
 “And they score, advance, and put the ball in Martinez’s net.”

In this example, the Saudi team scores in the Argentine goalkeeper, Martinez’s, net. This does not mean that the net is only for Martinez; instead, it belongs to the Argentine team. As such, the goalkeeper’s name, Martinez, is used to refer to the Argentine team as a whole.

This finding agrees with previous literature and similarly explains this metonymy under the schema of PART FOR THE WHOLE.

In conclusion to our discussion section, the sports commentary proved to be a good example of the mutual relationship between language, human cognition, and culture. With sports being a daily part of humans’ lives, calling on their basic instincts and needs for physical activity and competition, sports discourse integrates many of the humans’ models for conceptualizing the world and understanding sports. This leads to the conclusion that sports discourse manifests an abundance of universal conceptual metaphors and metonymies that are shared across languages. Our study proved this hypothesis to be true; the English and Arabic commentary sample analyzed herein exhibited a fair number of common conceptual expressions, agreeing with previous research on other languages.

However, the study also revealed a variation in the metaphorical and metonymic expressions found between the English and Arabic football commentaries. This variation can be attributed to the socio-cultural embodiment of meaning, which in turn developed certain mental models in the human minds, according to van Dijk (2008)^[66]. van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model interprets such variations by highlighting the socio-cultural impacts on language and discourse. The sports discourse is no different. Humans’ shared knowledge, inherent social roles, and embedded ideologies all cultivate specific mental models, drawing a similar framework of thought for people from the same culture and society. As for Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who introduced the theory of conceptual metaphors, this is how such metaphors

are originally created; they are not there by their producer's conscious choice to add some type of ornamentation to the discourse. These metaphors indicate which kind of culture nurtured the text producer.

Our analysis showed that the Arabic exclusive metaphors and metonymies, such as FOOTBALL IS A POLARITY, FOOTBALL ACHIEVEMENT IS A SCALE, and FOOTBALL IS EDUCATION, and A COUNTRY'S FLAG FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, highlight a cultural hunger for competition in addition to national pride and collective identity. This is especially perceived in the metonymies such as: A COUNTRY'S LANDMARK FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, A PLAYER'S ACTIONS FOR THE TEAM, and A PLAYER'S NAME FOR THE TEAM, which reflect a cultural inclination toward symbolic representation of collective identity and memory.

For the English culture, the findings seem to prioritize a culture of strategic planning and organization, such as in the metaphors: FOOTBALL FIELD IS A SPATIAL CONCEPT, and FOOTBALL DEFENSE IS A STRUCTURE. While other expressions revealed an inclination towards individual progress and psychological reflections, such as in the metaphors: FOOTBALL IS EMOTION, FOOTBALL IS HEAT, FOOTBALL IS A NEWS MATERIAL, FOOTBALL IS POWER. A theory by Wierzbicka (2006) on cultural scripts affirms our conclusion as her theory distinguishes between the communicative norms in English and Arabic^[67], where the former tends to encode individuality in its different types of discourse, whilst the latter prioritizes national affiliations and group identity. Studies such as Ali and Ghourdou (2023) corroborate this finding. They reinforced the point that Arabic sports discourse connects the teams' achievements with broader national, religious, and Arab identity. They interestingly unveiled the contrast with the English sports discourse that mostly enjoyed a professional tactical tone, sometimes more neutral and direct. There is no doubt, then, that sports discourse is a site of cultural and social manifestations, creating different meanings for different audiences.

6. Summary of Findings

The conceptual metaphor and metonymy analysis of a football match commentary in English and Arabic revealed

that both commentaries are rich in conceptual metaphors and reflect the highly metaphorically and conceptually loaded language of sports discourse. Moreover, the number of shared metaphors between the two commentaries exhibits the nature of universal cognitive patterns across all languages.

English and Arabic share several conceptual metaphors and metonymies, reflecting the universal behaviour of cognitive mapping concerning football discourse. Shared conceptual metaphors include FOOTBALL IS WAR, FOOTBALL IN ART, FOOTBALL IS A JOURNEY, FOOTBALL IS A HUMAN ATTRIBUTE, and FOOTBALL IS A NATURE ATTRIBUTE.

From a different perspective, English uniquely uses conceptual metaphors that seem specific to the English culture, including FOOTBALL FIELD IS A SPATIAL CONCEPT, FOOTBALL IS EMOTION, FOOTBALL IS HEAT, FOOTBALL IS A NEWS MATERIAL, FOOTBALL IS POWER, and FOOTBALL DEFENSE IS A STRUCTURE. These findings suggest a focus in the English language on physical engagement, while putting some emphasis on emotional engagement as well.

In Arabic, the commentary unveiled a group of Arabic-culture specific conceptual metaphors, comprising: FOOTBALL IS A POLARITY OF POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, FOOTBALL ACHIEVEMENT IS A SCALE THAT GOES UP AND DOWN, and FOOTBALL IS EDUCATION. These findings might be connected to cultural values that are specific to the Arabic culture.

As for conceptual metonymies, both English and Arabic commentaries shared several metonymies in their cognitive systems, such as A PLAYER'S SHIRT'S COLOUR FOR THE TEAM, and A PERSON'S BODY PART FOR THE PERSON, which both belong to the conceptual framework of "A PART FOR THE WHOLE," that is shared in both languages.

Two conceptual metonymies were found only in the English commentary, those are: THE INSTRUMENT FOR THE USER, and THE COUNTRY FOR THE TEAM, whereas the Arabic commentary uniquely utilized the metonymies: A COUNTRY'S FLAG FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, A COUNTRY'S LANDMARK FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, A PLAYER'S ACTIONS FOR THE TEAM, and A PLAYER'S NAME FOR THE TEAM. Those culturally embedded metonymies pertain to the profound

nationalistic trend in the football discourse.

7. Conclusions

This study was motivated by the hypothesis that conceptual metaphors and metonymies are influential tools in shaping and constructing the cognitive frameworks of individuals, influencing their thoughts and opinions. Considering the linguistic richness of football commentaries and the widespread popularity of football across diverse societal segments, this research attempted to explore the capacity of such discourse to mould people's perceptions. Consequently, this study investigated the categories of conceptual metaphors and metonymies in sports commentaries, particularly in English versus Arabic football commentaries of a significant match from the 2022 Qatar Football World Cup, which featured an Arab national team.

The study findings highlighted several similarities between Arabic and English commentaries in the conceptualisation of football. These similarities indicate a universal cognitive understanding of football as a violent game simulating a war context. Both commentaries found other conceptualisations, suggesting the inner comprehension of players' actions as human or animal attributes. Differences between the two commentaries emphasise the culture-specific aspects of sports conceptualisation. Arabic viewed the successful football game as a form of EDUCATION, whereas the English commentary expressed the game in SPACIAL metaphorical terms, yet to display one difference between the two.

Although metonymic expressions exhibited a higher similarity between the two commentaries, the Arabic commentary showed a greater variety of conceptual metonymies than the English one. However, the findings revealed an agreement between both commentators' styles and the universal tendency of other commentators to refer to players and teams by their shirt colours, body parts, and the instruments they use.

The study confirmed that enhancing cross-cultural communication and understanding can be facilitated by comprehending the diversity in conceptual representations across cultures, as it provides culture-specific insights for each language. In seeking to influence the perception of football fans regarding players' representations and identities, commentators may intentionally construct specific realities for their

audience to adopt and internalise promptly.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.S.S. and G.R.; methodology, S.S.S. and O.B.M.; validation, S.S.S., G.R., and O.B.M.; formal analysis, S.S.S. and O.B.M.; investigation, S.S.S.; resources, S.S.S.; data curation, S.S.S.; writing—original draft preparation, S.S.S.; writing—review and editing S.S.S., G.R., and S.A.; visualization, S.S.S.; supervision, G.R., and S.A.; project administration, G.R., and S.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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