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A Critical Media and Appraisal Analysis of the Coverage on Mandela's Death in Arabic Language Media

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-method corpus-based study explores the language used by Arab politicians in a TV programme on the death of Nelson Mandela. Arabs from various Arab countries were asked the question, "What does Mandela mean to you?" From Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the *appraisal* system is used to investigate the evaluative language expressed by those politicians in response to this question. Moreover, this study attempts a critical media analysis of the discourse of those participants from various Arab countries, who may or may not share the same ideology related to Mandela's legacy. In addition to an analysis of the attitudes of participants towards the death of Mandela, ideologies deployed in the interviews and tweets are also analysed. The findings of this study have shown that Mandela's legacy is the most prominent theme in the entire programme. The findings have also shown that the programme centres on a number of subthemes, such as Mandela's principles and leadership styles, public reactions to Mandela's death, the unprecedented ways of mourning him, and comparisons between Mandela and other leaders. The *appraisal* analysis of the corpus revealed that Mandela and his legacy were favourably presented in the *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation* systems of evaluation. As for the frequency of resources, the findings show the tendency of Arab participants in the programme to express their attitudes through *judgement* followed by *appreciation* and *affect*.

Keywords: Death; Nelson Mandela; Appraisal; Attitude; Affect; Judgement; Appreciation; Critical Media Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 9 October 2024 | Revised: 28 October 2024 | Accepted: 29 October 2024 | Published Online: 17 December 2024
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i1.7465>

CITATION

Mohammed, T.A.S., 2024. A Critical Media and Appraisal Analysis of the Coverage on Mandela's Death in Arabic Language Media. Forum for Linguistic Studies. 7(1): 53–69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i1.7465>

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1. Introduction

Nelson Mandela is arguably one of the most influential leaders of our time. The widespread respect for Mandela throughout the Arab world illustrates how deeply his influence permeated through global leadership and human rights. Mandela's illness and death in 2013 were covered on Arabic news channels such as *Al-Jazeera*, *Al-Ekhbariya*, France 24 Arabic, *Alhurra*, among others. These media outlets and many local television channels in Arab countries aired special programmes to report on his illness, death, funeral service as well the legacy he left behind^[1]. The news of Nelson Mandela's passing triggered an overwhelming wave of grief that resonated deeply not only among political leaders but also across the broader Arab public. BBC Arabic allocated one of its programmes to explore the reactions of Arabs to Mandela's death. The program effectively captured the sentiments of Arabs from diverse countries within the Arab world, as well as those residing in the diaspora. The core question of the programme prompted participants to reflect on Mandela's legacy, asking: "What does Mandela mean to you?". The program provided a space for individuals to share their thoughts and draw comparisons between Mandela and the leaders of their own countries. The dialogue often extended beyond Mandela himself, serving as a medium for the expression and propagation of the interviewees' ideologies. While these ideologies are deeply rooted in the interviewee's national identities, they also collectively form elements of Arab identity and nationalism^[1].

In this sense, this study investigates how Arabs received the news of Mandela's death, the evaluative language they use to express their attitudes, the judgments they make and the ideologies they openly or implicitly uphold. This study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the major and secondary themes in the programme under investigation?
2. What *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation* attitudes are deployed in the speech of the Arab politicians that were interviewed?

Unlike other studies that have already attempted a critical discourse analysis on Mandela's speeches and his representation in the Arab media^[1, 2], this study is a critical media and discourse analysis of coverage on his death. This study is primarily based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)^[3, 4], which aims to analyze language in relation to

the social context in which it operates. The praxis of SFL covers a range of linguistic contexts, including critical discourse analysis (CDA), political discourse analysis (PDA) and media discourse.

2. Literature Review

Extensive research has been conducted on the representation of Nelson Mandela in the media and his legacy. A number of studies have investigated his great impact, his leadership, and the role he played in social and political transformation. Evans^[5], for instance, explored the early depiction of Mandela's image as an iconic politician. The study focused on the media's coverage of Mandela's court appearances before his imprisonment. The speech given by Mandela from the dock at the Rivonia Trial is considered to be a turning point in the establishment of a new moral tradition of protest as it set the stage for Mandela's later role as an anti-apartheid figure. In a similar vein, Muswede and Masvopo^[6] attempted a documentary analysis to determine the role film genre may play in transformative politics. The study focused on a documentary titled *Nelson Mandela: The Living Legend (1918–2013)*. The study showed that Mandela has been represented as an icon of resistance and transformation. The documentary emphasises Mandela's role in advocating reconciliatory politics over hostility, revenge, and violent confrontation. His leadership has been depicted as a blend of moral integrity and political acumen. This leadership style was particularly prevalent during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.

Furthermore, some studies have analysed the rhetorical strategies that Mandela utilised to inspire and mobilise the masses. In a recent study, Al-Afnan and Dishari^[7] conducted a critical discourse analysis and genre analysis of Mandela's speech "I Am Prepared to Die". The study concluded that the speech is coherent, and it abounds with various rhetorical styles.

The framing of Mandela and Thabo Mbeki in South African media has also been explored in many studies including^[8, 9]. These studies examined the image of the first two democratically elected presidents in South Africa during the period from 2002 to 2004. In so far as the representation of Mandela in Arabic-speaking media is concerned, a transitivity analysis of Al-Jazeera's coverage on Mandela's illness

and the *topoi* of Mandela's death in BBC coverage were conducted using systemic functional linguistics and a historical discourse approach respectively^[1, 2]. While numerous studies have addressed the appraisal analysis of various texts and discourses, these investigations are relatively few compared to studies on other aspects of systemic functional linguistics, such as the textual meta-function, and cohesion in particular. Several studies have investigated the use of the appraisal resources in media texts and speeches^[10], in news coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian war^[11], in editorial articles^[12] as well as in forensic texts. For instance, Bock^[13] conducted a discourse analysis of selected testimonies from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The appraisal theory has also been used in the analysis of literary texts such as *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald^[14] and the exploration of attitudinal judgment in British advertisements^[15]. In an educational context, the framework was used to analyse academic genres of grant proposals^[16] as well as in the analysis of the differences in evaluative language between English and Japanese in language arts textbooks used in 2nd to 4th grade classrooms^[17]. The appraisal theory has also been used to investigate how implementing an appraisal system affects English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students' reflective practices while analyzing and composing texts^[18]. In addition to extensive research on appraisal in the English language over the past decade, there is also a dearth of studies on appraisal in other languages, including Arabic. While Arabic has a rich lexicon and expressions that describe evaluation, few studies have dealt with the appraisal framework in Arabic. For instance, Mansour^[19] investigated the translation of appraisal resources between Arabic and English, while translating emotional adjectives in Arabic-English-Arabic dictionaries. In a similar vein, Al-Kenani and Banda^[20] explored the translation of some appraisal adjectives in humour genres, particularly political cartoons. These studies concluded that translating these adjectives is misleading, as the translations fail to convey the full meaning of the words used in the source text. It is obvious that these studies tackled some aspects of appraisal theory from a translation perspective.

This study differs from the surveyed literature by focusing specifically on how Mandela's death was portrayed in Arabic media, particularly through the lens of Arab politicians and their evaluative language. While previous stud-

ies have explored Mandela's representation in global media, leadership, and speeches, this study uniquely applies a mixed-method, corpus-based appraisal analysis to investigate how Arab political figures express attitudes towards Mandela's legacy. In addition, it highlights how these attitudes reflect broader ideologies in the Arab world, a gap not thoroughly addressed in earlier studies.

3. Theoretical and Analytical Approach

The theoretical and conceptual framework of this study is based on critical media analysis, which is an interdisciplinary approach aimed at critically exploring media content, including news articles, reports, films, television programmes, advertisements, images, and more. Critical media analysis is a research method that focuses on measuring the amount of specific elements, such as violence, negative depictions of women, or other factors, in a representative sample of mass-mediated popular form of art^[21]. Critical media analysis explores how media can reinforce or challenge societal norms, ideologies, and power structures. It also emphasizes critically assessing the media's influence on the distribution of power within society^[22]. Media content has been investigated using various approaches, including sociological methods^[23].

Beyond analysing media content and its dominant themes, critical media analysis investigates the dominant norms and discursive patterns perpetuated by media institutions. It often involves cultural critique, examining how media texts reflect and shape cultural norms and values, and how they represent different cultures, identities, and social groups. Some critical media analysts view media as a tool of hegemony^[24-26]. Even if some media do not deliberately aim to manipulate audiences, they are active agents in the production and reproduction of dominant ideologies and the reassertion and legitimation of a dominant worldview^[27]. Thus, critical media studies question the notion that media objectively reflects reality. Some critical media analysts view media as powerful and manipulative, with messages shaped by political, religious, and economic forces, often acting as a tool for the production and reproduction of dominant ideologies^[27]. This study contends that some schools of linguistics can be used effectively in a critical analysis of media texts

and one of these is Systemic Functional Grammar.

Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) adopts a social perspective on language, viewing it as a meaningful resource that enables individuals to interact within particular situational and cultural contexts. Halliday^[4] notes that SFG is a grammar theory focused on discourse semantics, which deals with meaning that extends beyond the level of individual clauses. Martin and White^[28] offer a concise overview of discourse semantics, explaining that it addresses several dimensions of discourse structure. This includes how people, places, and objects are introduced and tracked throughout the text (identification); how participants are linked through part-whole relationships and subclass-to-class distinctions (ideation); how interactions are structured to exchange goods, services, and information (negotiation); and how evaluations are established, amplified, targeted and sourced (appraisal).

Halliday^[4] states that distinct meaning is constructed through three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual, as shown in **Figure 1**.

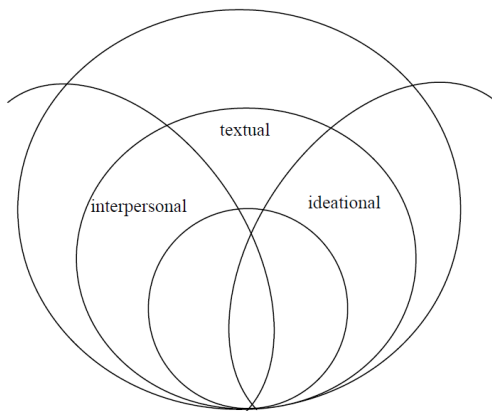


Figure 1. Meta-functional organisation of language.

The three meta-functions illustrated in **Figure 1** form the discourse semantics of a text, and are expressed through the lexicogrammar. Each meta-function is realised through a particular system which is associated with the situational aspects of register (i.e., field, tenor, and mode)^[3, 4]. In nearly every instance of language use, all three metafunctions work together to generate meaning within a given context. This occurs because different elements of grammar contribute to the ideational metafunction, while others represent the interpersonal metafunction, and still others express the textual metafunction^[29].

Appraisal is a resource of discourse semantics that construes interpersonal meaning. Martin and Rose^[30] define

appraisal as an evaluation system for “the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned”. Martin and White^[28] contend that the appraisal framework is closely linked to the concept of stance, as it involves the expression of a speaker’s or writer’s viewpoint in their communication. They suggest that whenever individuals speak or write, they inherently convey their perspective on the subject matter^[28].

The *appraisal* framework is comprised of three main systems: *attitude*, *graduation*, and *engagement*^[28]. *Attitude* is concerned with the semantic tools used to express emotions, judgments, and evaluations. In contrast, *graduation* and *engagement* are concerned with the mechanisms that amplify and interact with the expression of *attitude*.

Attitude refers to “our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behavior, and evaluation of things”^[28]. This system expresses either positive or negative feelings and is divided into three categories: *affect*, *judgment*, and *appreciation*. *Affect* refers to the semantic resources used to express feelings and emotions; *judgment* is concerned with resources for evaluating character or behaviour, and *appreciation* refers to semantic resources used for valuing the worth of things or their aesthetic quality^[30].

The *appraisal* systems of *graduation* and *engagement* are broadly categorized as intersubjective resources. *Graduation*, which includes the subcategories of *force* and *focus*, operates in conjunction with *attitude* to signal the intensity of the speaker’s or writer’s feelings toward the expressed attitude. In other words, the force of a message is modified to make it more or less intense. The focus of the message is modified once it is blurred.

Engagement resources also function alongside attitude, but unlike *graduation*, they go beyond merely expressing individual certainty or commitment. The *engagement* system, as developed by White^[31, 32], is rooted in Bakhtin’s dialogic view of language. Here, the speaker or writer interacts with prior discourse, affirming ideas, anticipating potential responses or objections, seeking agreement, and more^[33]. As White^[34] states the engagement system provides resources for dialogistic positioning. Such resources enable speakers to “negotiate a space for particular attitudes and points of view within the diversity of value positions operative in any speech community”^[31]. In a sense, through *engagement*,

additional voices are introduced into a discourse.

White’s system of *engagement* is based on the *heteroglossic vs. monoglossic* dichotomy. The former refers to utterances that engage with dialogic alternatives or “points of view,” while the latter refers to those that do not make reference to other voices and viewpoints. The heteroglossic proposition is classified into two categories: *dialogic contraction* and *dialogic expansion*. In *dialogic contraction*, alternate propositions are directly rejected or challenged and are categorised as *disclaim* and *proclaim*. Disclaiming occurs when the speaker/writer does not fully agree with the spoken or written message of somebody; outright denials and counterarguments are examples of disclaiming. Proclamation, on the other hand, includes not only pronouncements of personal statements but also endorsements of what someone else said. **Figure 2** illustrates the three systems of *appraisal* described above.

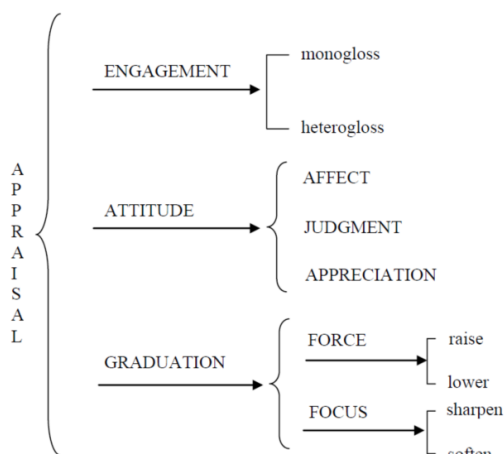


Figure 2. An overview of appraisal resources (adapted from [28]).

4. Materials and Methods

This is a mixed-method study that explores the *appraisal* system of *attitude* in a TV programme following the death of Mandela. In particular it analyses the attitudes of many Arab politicians and interviewees from a variety of Arabic countries towards Mandela’s death and his legacy. Transcripts of video versions for all talks were used to cross-reference exactly what each person said. Since the talks were originally in Arabic, this cross-verification was vital to ensure linguistic veracity. ELAN, which is an advanced multimedia annotation tool designed for audio and video resources, was used for the multimedia parts of the corpus.

This software package makes it easier to transcribe multimedia files and use text annotations for those files. A snapshot of the programme as well as the annotation and transcriptions modes are given in **Figure 3**.

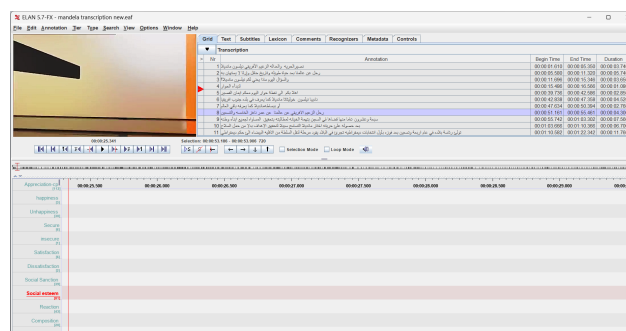


Figure 3. Transcription and annotations modes in ELAN.

Since ELAN is a tier-based system, annotations can be created across multiple layers. The layers in this study are the various categories of the *attitude* system as shown in **Figure 4**.

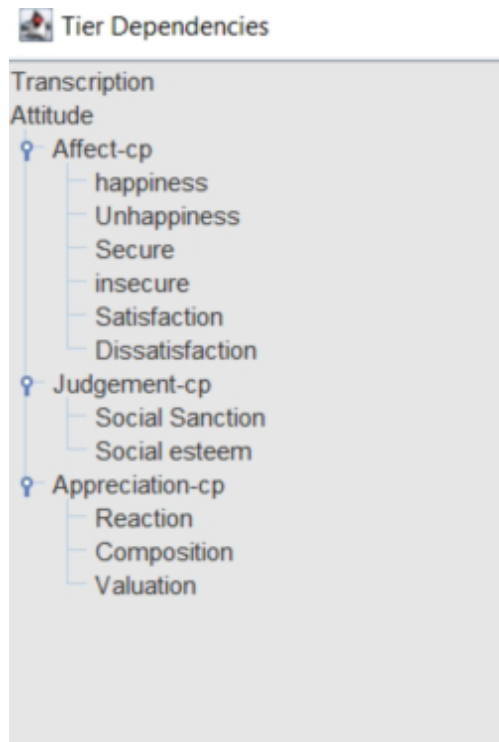


Figure 4. Tiers dependencies in the corpus.

Annotations can range from individual words to sentences, translations, notes, and comments, providing a rich framework for detailed analysis. This multi-tiered approach is instrumental for conducting both qualitative and quantitative multimodal research. It allows a thorough examination

of the media content and ensures that every relevant aspect of the data is captured and analysed. Another feature of ELAN lies in its output files such as XML format (EAF) that makes the data readily available for analysis or integration into other qualitative and textual analysis tools. This feature is especially valuable for researchers looking to conduct comprehensive analyses that combine textual and multimedia data. In this study, the output files were also used in the thematic analysis of the media content.

The corpus of this study includes approximately 6,636 tokens, which provides a sufficient dataset to explore the evaluative language and attitudes of the Arab politicians interviewed regarding Mandela's death. This size allows for a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative appraisal analysis of the various attitude systems, including affect, judgment, and appreciation. It is important to note that the analysis is solely based on the available corpus from the televised programme, and no primary data was directly collected from Arab politicians. This limitation, while inherent to the study's design, offers an opportunity for future research to gather primary data to enrich the findings.

5. Data Analysis

Research question one deal with the major and secondary themes in the programme under investigation. To answer this question, a trend analysis of the corpus was conducted to facilitate the thematic analysis.

5.1. Trend Analysis

Trend analysis is commonly utilised in qualitative textual analysis to identify patterns and themes in a text/discourse. This method effectively highlights frequency of words/expressions in a text/discourse and their actual contextual usage. It is a useful tool for revealing shifts and trends in discourse over time^[35]. In this study, trend analysis was employed to display how Mandela and his legacy were represented in the TV programme under investigation. Trend analysis enables the identification of recurring themes or topics in the programme. **Figure 5** provides the visualisation of collocations trends in the corpus.

The top words/expressions in the corpus are shown in **Figure 6**.

The Pareto chart in **Figure 6** represents the frequency

distribution of the top words in the corpus. The first few words (e.g. Mandela, Nelson, the man, the people, and prison) have significantly higher frequencies, contributing to a large portion of the total word count. Moving to the right, the frequencies of words decrease, with many words having very low frequencies (e.g. his death, personality and humanity). Thus, Mandela has the highest count, approximately 130, which is a clear indication of the centrality of his legacy in the TV programme. Many other prominent words are also epithets for Mandela and clearly refer to him.

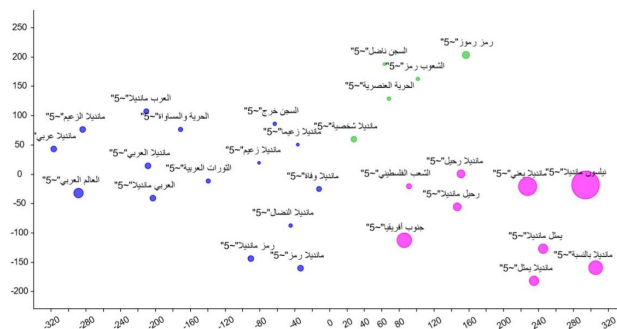


Figure 5. Trend analysis of the corpus (<https://shorturl.at/QPaLo>).

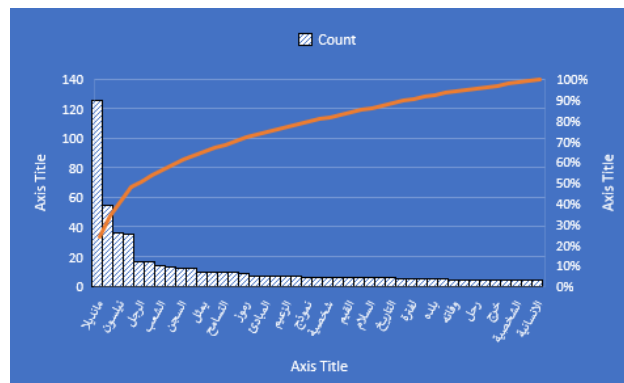


Figure 6. The top words/expressions in the corpus.

5.2. Major and Secondary Themes

The coding process of the transcript shows a number of major themes in the corpus. These major themes are Nelson Mandela's legacy, Mandela's impact on global and Arab audiences, public reaction to his death, comparisons of Mandela with current Arab leaders, and Mandela's principles. **Table 1** presents the codes and the unified themes.

5.2.1. Mandela's Legacy

The legacy of Mandela and his struggle for freedom, justice, and equality is the major theme in the entire pro-

Table 1. Generation of themes.

Codes	Themes
Freedom and justice Leadership and presidency Reconciliation and peace Global symbol	Mandela's Legacy
Inspiration Need for similar leadership	Impact on Global and Arab Audiences
Widespread mourning Tributes and remembrances	Public Reactions to Mandela's Death
Contrast with Arab leaders Call for ethical governance	Comparisons with Current Leaders
Peaceful resistance Equality and non-discrimination Humility and service	Mandela's Principles

gramme. Interviewees speak highly about Mandela, a man who spent 27 years of his life behind bars because of an inexorable belief in equality. Mandela's life is a symbol for the relentless pursuit of justice in South Africa and globally. His leadership during the first democratic election in South Africa was a turning point in the history of South Africa and it initiated historically significant changes in the direction of the country's governance. The presidency of Mandela in itself was not about office or power. He accepted the position to be able to fundamentally transform a society that was badly fractured over decades of racial segregation and oppression. Even though he spent 27 years in prison, he remained dedicated to the ideals of justice and human rights. The interviewees from the Arab TV programme repeatedly emphasize Mandela's tolerance and his decision to choose reconciliation and peace over revenge. Upon his release from prison, Mandela refrained from calling for revenge or retribution against those who had tortured and oppressed him and his people. This stance proved pivotal in averting a potential civil war and instead fostered a spirit of national healing and unity. Moreover, Mandela's influence transcends the borders of South Africa; he became a world symbol of freedom, justice, and human rights. Mandela's impact inspired millions of people and movements across the globe. His legacy of compassion, forgiveness, and commitment to the highest standards of equality and justice will resonate with all who seek a just society.

5.2.2. Impact on Global and Arab Audiences

The Arab world is known for many conflicts and uprisings, caused by issues like inequality, corruption, and lack of democratic governance. It is no wonder then that a personality like Mandela enjoys such respect in the Arab world. The impact of Mandela on global and Arab audiences cannot be underestimated. In many contexts of the TV programme under investigation, Mandela's leadership style was often compared to the leadership in the Arab world. Many participants in the discussion mentioned that Arab leaders might learn from Mandela's principles and his great efforts to instil unity and peace without using violence. The Arabs who participated in the TV programme were impressed by Mandela's decision to leave power after the end of his first term as president. To them, Mandela's choice is a clear indication of his devotion to democratic principles and his unwavering belief in a peaceful transfer of power. According to Arab interviewees, this stance is entirely different from that of many Arab leaders who aspire to be long-ruling autocrats. The debates highlighted a very strong desire for such a figure in the Arab world; a leader who is an embodiment of justice, equality, and reconciliation. Participants from several Arab countries expressed a longing for leadership that puts the well-being of the people and nation before personal power and gains. Amidst the conflicts and disorders in many Arab countries, from Yemen and Syria to Libya and Sudan, Mandela's legacy provides a template for the kind of leadership such countries need. His capacity to forgive his oppressors

and develop a new, inclusive South Africa is an example. Many Arab countries, for example, find themselves in great need of leaders who can bridge sectarian, ethnic, or political divides and introduce a culture of dialogue and peaceful solutions. Such sentiments were repeated more than once, calling for a Mandela-like leader who could lead the Arab world towards a peaceful, just, and prosperous future.

5.2.3. Public Reactions to Mandela's Death

The death of Mandela was received in waves of sorrow and tributes both locally and internationally. The TV programme shows that his death is not just something relevant to South Africa, but it explains Mandela's global appeal. His legacy of standing against apartheid and his subsequent work toward the establishment of a democratic, racially integrated South Africa have found resonance with millions across the world. Public mourning was evident not only in the streets of South Africa and the capitals of many European, Asian, and the American countries. The usually jam-packed streets in Pretoria, South Africa, quieted as flags were lowered to half-staff and its citizens assembled in solemn reflection. It was an atmosphere of profound loss that was mirrored across so many cities in the world. People of all backgrounds come together to celebrate a man whose life typified the victory of justice and equality over oppression and division. Vigils, memorial services, and spontaneous gatherings were organised. This worldwide outpouring of sorrow highlights Mandela's stature not only as a South African leader but also as a figure of profound global impact.

The corpus refers to the several tributes and accolades Mandela received from all over the world. While these tributes took so many forms, they shared a deep admiration and respect for Mandela's unmatched contributions to human rights and social justice. National tributes were particularly poignant. Governments declared periods of mourning, and official statements emphasised the role of Mandela in forming a better world. For instance, former South African President Jacob Zuma described Mandela as the greatest son of the nation and acknowledged the hole his death left not only in the nation but in the world too. Similarly, statements from former U.S. President Barack Obama, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and countless other world leaders, released emotional statements recognising Mandela's remarkable life and enduring legacy. Contributions of music, literature, and art were also significant parts of paying tribute

to the memory of Mandela. Artists and writers celebrated his life and the values he stood for through their creative works. In fact, these contributions not only acknowledged Mandela's legacy, but also continue to inspire future generations of humanity to keep following in the footsteps of Mandela.

5.2.4. Comparisons with Current Leaders

Many politicians compared and contrasted Mandela with current Arab leaders during the TV programme. They stated significant differences in leadership styles and governance principles between the two. Many felt that Mandela's humility, dedication to public service, and ethical leadership were ideals that many Arab leaders lacked. The discussions following Mandela's death served as a reminder of the need for ethical governance, voluntary transitions of power, and a steadfast commitment to social justice and equality. Should Arab leaders embrace these principles, they could establish more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous societies.

5.2.5. Mandela's Principles

The TV programme reflects Mandela's principles of peaceful resistance, equality, non-discrimination, humility, and dedicated service. These principles collectively form a legacy that inspired and continues to inspire individuals and movements around the world. His life clearly shows that ethical leadership and steadfast commitment to justice can have an enduring impact on society. Mandela's example should inspire and challenge current and future leaders to strive for a world where peace, equality, and human dignity are upheld and celebrated.

It is clear from the thematic analysis thus far that an overlap exists among these major themes. These various themes and subthemes are represented in the Python-based network analysis in **Figure 7**.

As the diagram shows, the central node is Mandela's Legacy. The primary themes include freedom and justice, impact on global and Arab audiences, and public reactions to Mandela's death. Secondary themes include Mandela's presidency, reconciliation and peace, inspiration, need for similar leadership, widespread mourning, tributes and remembrances, and comparisons with current leaders. Reference to Mandela's core principles such as peaceful resistance, equality, and non-discrimination, as well as humility and service dominate the discussion. Hence, this network analysis

shows the centrality of Mandela’s legacy and how various themes and principles are interconnected, and how they reflect Mandela’s multi-faceted impact on South Africa and the world.

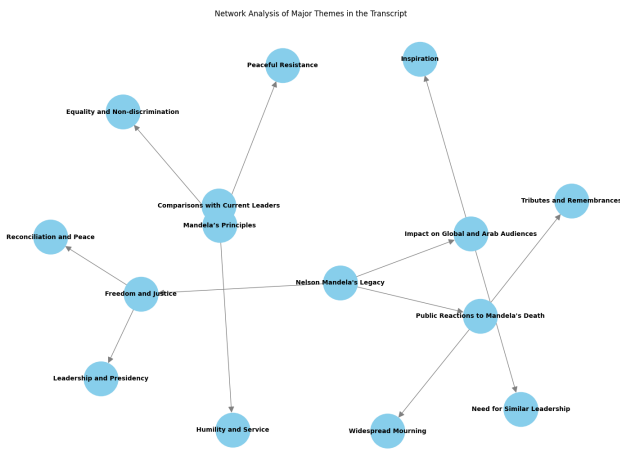


Figure 7. Network analysis of themes/sub-themes in the corpus.

5.3. Appraisal Analysis

To answer Research Question Two, “What *affect, judgement* and *appreciation* attitudes were deployed in the speech of the interviewed Arab politicians?”, the corpus was carefully coded in line with Martin and White^[28]’s categories of *attitude*.

Table 2 below provides the distribution of the sub-systems of *attitude* in the corpus and its various resources including *affect, judgement*, and *appreciation*.

Based on Table 2, the *attitude* resources in the corpus are represented in Figure 8.

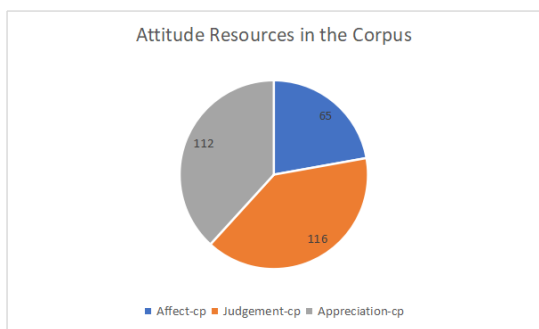


Figure 8. Attitude resources in the corpus.

The distribution of attitudes towards Mandela’s death across the various sub-systems of *affect, judgement* and *appreciation* is shown in Figure 9.

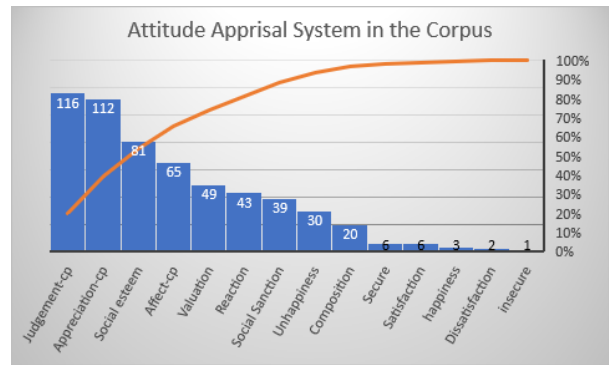


Figure 9. Attitude appraisal systems in the corpus.

In what follows, these various resources will be analysed with specific reference to selected extracts from the text. That is, examples of attitudes as defined in the *appraisal* theory across the categories of *affect, judgement*, and *appreciation* will be analyzed.

5.3.1. Affect

As stated above, the *affect* sub-system is concerned with resources for expressing feelings. Such resources answer the prompt: “How did/do you feel about it?”^[36]. This sub-system deals with feelings experienced by a human participant, referred to as an “emoter” or an “appraiser”^[28], who appraises another person or thing. The corpus reflects a profound sense of loss and sorrow among people worldwide, especially in South Africa, which reflects a shared emotional response to Mandela’s death. This collective mourning and the described shock despite the expected nature of his death highlight the deep emotional impact Mandela had on individuals globally. The participant’s feelings are usually construed within a culture as either “positive” or “negative”^[13]. The *affect* sub-system is organised into three major sets that deal with *un/happiness, in/security* and *dis/satisfaction*. Figure 10 illustrates the positive and negative *affect* attitude in the corpus.

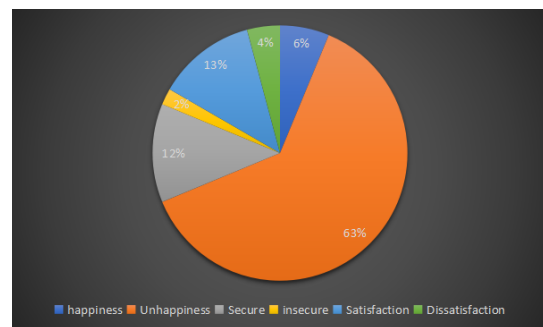


Figure 10. Positive and negative *affect* attitude in the corpus.

Table 2. Distributions of the sub-systems of attitude in the programme.

Tier	Number of Annotations	Average Duration	Median Duration	Total Annotation Duration	Annotation Duration Percentage	Latency
Attitude	259	2.891873	1.17	748.995	24.286	2.27
Affect-cp	65	2.529646	1.11	164.427	5.332	53.92
Judgement-cp	116	2.581595	1.12	299.465	9.71	2.27
Appreciation-cp	112	3.419018	1.24	382.93	12.416	5.605
Happiness	3	8.216667	1.8	24.65	0.799	1071.09
Unhappiness	30	3.047767	1.16	91.433	2.965	53.92
Secure	6	2.363333	1.545	14.18	0.46	763.385
Insecure	1	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.019	317.21
Satisfaction	6	4.335333	1.385	26.012	0.843	710.645
Dissatisfaction	2	2.131	2.131	4.262	0.138	399.28
Social Sanction	39	3.761436	1.56	146.696	4.757	57.777
Social esteem	81	2.425383	1.11	196.456	6.37	2.27
Reaction	43	3.551442	1.37	152.712	4.952	6.99
Composition	20	4.71805	1.25	94.361	3.06	56.557
Valuation	49	3.178918	1.28	155.767	5.051	5.605

As is obvious, the feelings of *unhappiness* dominate the corpus followed by *satisfaction* and *security*. This reflects the ongoing mood or state experienced by the emoters. The participants in the TV programme share the feelings of sadness following the death of Mandela with millions of people globally. They also share a sense of satisfaction with his legacy and the feeling of security about the present and future state of a country that opts for a culture of co-existence and tolerance after decades of segregation and racial inequalities. **Table 3** gives some examples of the various sub-categories of the *affect* system.

As **Table 3** shows, positive and negative *affect* attitudes were found across the various categories, as is clear in the following extracts from the corpus.

Extract 1: *'abdā ḥuznahu al-shadīd* [-Affect/unhappiness] *'alā wafāt Māndilā* (...expressed his deep sorrow over Mandela's death).

The phrase *ḥuznahu al-shadīd* (deep sorrow) directly conveys a negative emotional value, reflecting the sadness of people in South Africa and globally following the death of Mandela. However, extract 2 uses neutral ideational meanings that indirectly invoke a negative evaluation.

Extract 2: *raḥala wa-kullu al-'uyūn tabkīh* [-Affect, unhappiness] (He left, and all eyes cried for him).

Here, the phrase *kullu al-'uyūn tabkīh* (all eyes cried

for him) invokes a sense of loss and sorrow without directly stating it. Similarly, in extract 3, Mandela is described by one of the Arab politicians as *falta min faltāt al-tārīkh* (a rare event in history), which invokes a positive evaluation, suggesting that Mandela is extraordinarily significant.

Extract 3: *hādhā al-rajul huwa falta* [+Affect, satisfaction] *min faltāt al-tārīkh* (This man is a rare event in history).

In response to the question about the repercussions of Mandela's death and the possibility of South Africa descending into violence, an Arab politician expressed his attitude using an inscribed positive secure affect attitude, saying:

Extract 4: *'astaṭī'u 'an 'uṭma 'nnaki* [+Affect, Security] *ya 'nī wa-bi-ṣidq* (I can assure you sincerely).

In extract 4, the politician expresses his confidence that the legacy Mandela established left no room for violence after his death. He reminded the audience that at the time Mandela was released from prison, grudges were strong and the public mood was in favour of revenge, using another inscribed insecure *affect* attitude.

Extract 5: *mashā'ir al-kurh al-'ārima* [-Affect, Insecurity] *wa-l-raghba fī al-intiqām* (Intense feelings of hatred and desire for revenge).

The demise of Mandela was also described by many

Table 3. Examples of the various sub-categories of the affect system.

Arabic Extract	English	Attitude Type	Polarity
'ataqaddamu bi-l-ta'ziya al-hāra 'ilā kull 'ahrār al-'ālam.	I offer my heartfelt condolences to all the free people of the world.	[Affect/unhappiness]	Negative
'abdā ḥuznahu al-shadīd 'alā wafāt Māndilā.	Expressed his deep sorrow over Mandela's death.	[Affect/unhappiness]	Negative
'astaṭī'u 'an 'uṭma 'nnaki ya 'nī wa-bi-ṣidq	I can assure you sincerely.	[Affect/security]	Positive
mashā'ir al-kurh al-'ārima wa-l-raghba fī al-intiqām	Intense feelings of hatred and desire for revenge.	[Affect/insecurity]	Negative
hādhā al-rajul huwa falta min faltāt al-tārīkh.	This man is a rare event in history.	[Affect, satisfaction]	Positive
al-rajul 'amila min 'ajl al-muṣālaḥa al-waṭaniyya	The man worked for national reconciliation.	[Affect/Satisfaction]	Positive
raḥīl Māndilā kāna ṣadma bi-raḍuh.	Mandela's departure was also a shock.	[Affect/dissatisfaction]	Negative

participants using inscribed dissatisfaction *affect* attitude as is in extract 6.

Extract 6: *raḥīl Māndilā kāna ṣadma* [-affect,dissatisfaction] *bi-raḍuh* (Mandela's death was a shock).

Even though the death of Mandela was expected in terms of both his age and physical state, it was still shocking for South Africans and the world.

These examples are just a few of those that illustrate the *affect* system's applicability for evaluating Mandela's legacy. They reflect the subcategories of *un/happiness*, *in/security*, and *dis/satisfaction* in the corpus.

5.3.2. Judgment

The sub-system of *judgment* is concerned with the emoter's attitudes towards other people and their behaviour. Items of *judgment* can be identified using the prompts: "How would you judge that behaviour?" and "What did/do you think of that?"^[36]. The *appraisal* theory's sub-system of *judgment* evaluates people's behaviour based on social values. It distinguishes between *social esteem* (normality, capacity, tenacity) and *social sanction* (veracity, propriety).

The corpus shows that the judgements of the participants are mainly personal judgements involving admiration of Mandela, and few criticisms of his opponents. The corpus also reflects some moral statements of praise or condemnation; Mandela is praised, and the apartheid regime

is condemned. The participants' comments often express their evaluation of Mandela's behaviour as conforming to social norms and his opponents' behaviours as transgressing them. As shown in **Figure 11**, judgements of *social esteem* are much more frequent in the corpus at 81.68%. These judgments typically involve evaluations of admiration or criticism without legal implications. Judgements of *social sanction*, on the other hand, view the legality and morality of behaviour^[28] and they constitute 39.32% of the corpus. **Table 4** provides some representative examples of the *judgment* system from the Arabic corpus.

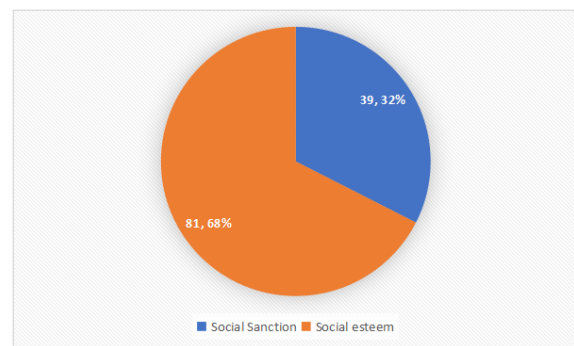


Figure 11. Sub-system of *judgment* in the corpus.

Thus, the corpus abounds with inscribed *judgment* attitudes as shown in extract 6.

Extract 6: *dhū shajā'a wa-jar'a kabīra* [+ Judgement, social esteem] (With great courage and boldness).

Table 4. Examples of the sub-system of *judgement*.

Arabic Extract	English	Attitude Type	Sub-Category/Polarity
<i>al-munāḍil al-ra'īs al-wālid al-sayyid Nīlsun Māndilā</i>	The fighter, the president, the father, Mr. Nelson Mandela	Social Esteem	Normality/positive
<i>ramz 'ālamī li-l- 'adl wa-l-musāwāt</i>	A global symbol of justice and equality	Social esteem	Normality/positive
<i>dhū shajā'a wa-jar'a kabīra</i>	With great courage and boldness	Social esteem	Capacity/positive
<i>lam 'arā tilka al-shakhṣiyya</i>	I did not see that character	Social esteem	Capacity/negative
<i>rajul ṣādiq</i>	A truthful man	Social sanction	Veracity/positive
<i>tuhmat al-khiyāna</i>	Charge of treason	Social sanction	Veracity/negative
<i>naṣīr al-ḥurriyya wa-l- 'adāla</i>	Champion of freedom and justice	Social sanction	Propriety-positive
<i>yad'ū 'ilā al-tasāmuḥ</i>	Calls for tolerance	Social sanction	Propriety-positive

The phrase *dhū shajā'a wa-jar'a kabīra* (great courage and boldness) directly inscribes positive *social esteem* judgements of Mandela in particular, his capability. Mandela's *social esteem* of normality is also described in extract 7, which clearly shows how unique Mandela was.

Extract 7: *ramz 'ālamī* [+Judgment, social esteem] *li-l- 'adl wa-l-musāwāt* (A global symbol of justice and equality).

His tenacity is also shown in different contexts, as is obvious in extract 8.

Extract 8: *nāḍala wa-ḥattā huwa fī al-sijn* [+Judgment, social esteem] (He struggled even while in prison).

Nāḍala wa-ḥattā huwa fī al-sijn (He struggled even while in prison) invokes a positive evaluation of resilience and determination without directly stating it. Similarly, the phrase *rajul ṣādiq* (truthful man) directly inscribes the positive judgement of *social sanction* by foregrounding Mandela's value of honesty and trustworthiness.

In the context of *social sanctions*, Mandela's stance, according to the Arab participants, was ideally guided by a balanced approach that emphasised the principles of justice, empathy, and societal well-being. His propriety is also described using inscribed positive attitudes in extract 9.

Extract 9: *naṣīr al-ḥurriyya wa-l- 'adāla* [+Judgment, social sanction] (Champion of freedom and justice).

These examples illustrate the *judgment* system's ap-

plicability when evaluating Mandela's legacy. They reflect both *social esteem* and *social sanction* perspectives in the Arabic context.

5.3.3. Appreciation (Evaluation of Things and Phenomena)

The *appraisal* sub-system of *appreciation* is concerned with the aesthetic quality of things. The prompt, "What did/do you think of that?"^[36] can be used to identify the evaluation of things and phenomena. In other words, the lexis of *appreciation* allows the appraiser to exchange information about how he/she feels about things. Unlike *judgement*, this subsystem does not relate to the evaluation of human behaviour. Appreciations can be further categorised into more specific sub-categories: our reactions to things (whether they catch our attention and please us), their composition (balance and complexity), and their value (how innovative, authentic, or timely they are)^[28]. **Figure 12** illustrates the frequencies of the sub-system of *appreciation* across these subcategories.

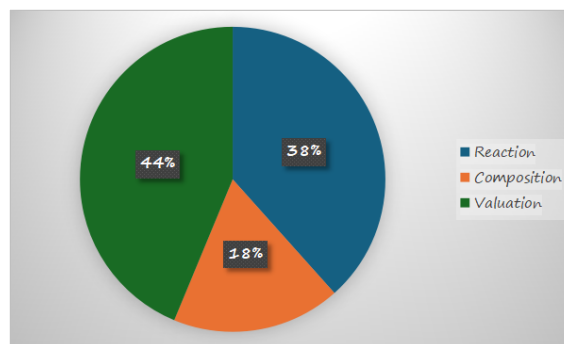


Figure 12. Categories of *appreciation* in the corpus.

Table 5. Examples of the various resources of appreciation.

Arabic Extract	English	Attitude Type	Polarity
'akbar khasāra li-l- 'ālam kullihī	The biggest loss for the entire world	Reaction	Impact/positive
ramz li- 'ifrīqiyā	A symbol for Africa	Reaction	Impact/positive
mashā 'ir al-kurh al- 'ārima wa-l-raqhba fī al-intiqām	Intense feelings of hatred and desire for revenge	Reaction	Impact/negative
shakhṣiyya tā 'rīkhiyya, shakhṣiyya alhamat al-taghyīr	A historical figure, a figure that inspired change	Reaction	Quality/positive
ḥukm dīmūqrāṭī	Democratic rule	Composition	Balance-positive
khalaqa mujtama ' jadīd fī janūb 'ifrīqiyā	Creating a new society in South Africa	Composition	Balance-positive
zurūf wuṣīfat waqtihā bi-l-sayyi 'a	Conditions described at the time as bad	Composition	Balance-negative
fīkratuhu al-munāhidā li-l- 'unṣuriyya 'ay kāna shaklu hādhihi al- 'unṣuriyya khālida	His idea of anti-racism, regardless of the form of racism, is immortal	Composition	Complexity-positive
nashāṭan mutazāyidan taḍāmuniyyan ma 'a al-sha 'b al-filasṭīnī	Increasing solidarity activity with the Palestinian people	Composition	Complexity-positive
ghiyābuhu kāna khasāra li-l-insāniyya wa-li-l-qiyam al- 'ulyā	His absence was a loss for humanity and higher values	Composition	Complexity-negative
ramz min rumūz ḥurriyyat al-shu 'ūb	A symbol of the freedom of people	Valuation	Worthwhile-positive
yastahiqqu kulla al-taqdīr	Deserves all appreciation	valuation	Worthwhile-positive
mas 'alat thānawiyya 'aw 'ādiyya	A secondary or ordinary matter	Valuation	Negative

Table 5 provides some representative examples of the various categories from the corpus.

For example, people's reaction to Mandela's death was described as a big loss for the world in extract 10.

Extract 10: 'akbar khasāra li-l- 'ālam kullihī [-appreciation, reaction] (The biggest loss for the entire world).

The phrase 'akbar khasāra (biggest loss) directly inscribes a negative value of the loss and it reflects the emotional impact of Mandela's loss.

In contrast, extract 11 presents a more affirmative perspective, emphasizing Mandela's inspirational qualities and historical importance.

Extract 11: shakhṣiyya tā 'rīkhiyya, shakhṣiyya alhamat al-taghyīr [+appreciation, reaction] (A historical figure, a figure

that inspired change).

Here, the phrase *shakhṣiyya alhamat al-taghyīr* (a figure that inspired change) invokes a positive evaluation. It suggests the quality and the extent to which Mandela's personality is significant and inspirational and it grabs the attention of people.

The post-apartheid South African community was positively described in extract 12 as:

Extract 12: khalaqa mujtama ' jadīd fī janūb 'ifrīqiyā [+appreciation, composition] (a new community in South Africa).

In a similar vein, the system of governance is positively described as *ḥukm dīmūqrāṭī* [+appreciation, composition] (democratic rule), even though the political and social conditions at the time were *zurūf wuṣīfat waqtihā bi-l-sayyi 'a* [-

appreciation, composition] (conditions described at the time as bad). By the same token, the complexity of Mandela's death and his absence are articulated in extract 13.

Extract 13: *ghiyābuhu kāna khasāra li-l-insāniyya wa-li-l-qiyam al-'ulyā* [-appreciation, composition] (His absence was a loss for humanity and for higher values).

Lastly, the valuation of Mandela's anti-racism policy is described in extract 14 as immortal.

Extract 14: *fikratuhu al-munāhiḍa li-l-'unṣuriyya 'ay kāna shaklu hādhihi al-'unṣuriyya khālida* [+appreciation, valuation] (His idea of anti-racism, regardless of the form of racism, is immortal).

6. Discussion and Conclusions

This study employed a mixed-method approach to explore the themes and subthemes in an Arabic TV programme following the death of Mandela. The findings of this study have shown that Mandela's legacy is the most prominent theme in the entire programme. The centrality of this theme is in line with many existing studies that dealt with Mandela's legacy including Dlamini^[37], who addressed his legacy of political thought, Maanga^[38] on his immense moral, religious, social, economic, and political contributions to society, as well as Sayed and Badroodien^[39], who examined his legacy of universal humanism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The findings have also shown that the TV programme under analysis centred on a number of subthemes such as Mandela's principles and leadership styles^[40, 41], public reactions to Mandela's death, and the unprecedented ways of mourning him^[42].

Another important theme in the coverage is the comparison between Mandela and other leaders. This theme is prevalent in many other studies including Mohammed, Banda, and Patel^[1] which showed that the contrast between Mandela and Arab leaders is one of the main *topoi* in a media corpus. In short, the findings of this study clearly show that Mandela was positively represented and framed in the TV programme under investigation. This finding is in conformity with the results of other studies, such as those by Pitcher, Frankland, and Jones^[43], which examined the representation of Mandela in his final years within the Independent Online

news repository in 2010 and 2013; Mohammed and Banda^[2], which investigated his portrayal in Arabic media; and Botha and De Beer^[8], which analyzed his representation in South African media.

Apart from the thematic analysis, this study has attempted an *appraisal* analysis of the media corpus. Various appraisal resources deployed during the programme as expressed by Arab politicians from various Arab countries were also analysed. The findings of this study clearly show that Mandela and his legacy were favourably presented in the *affect, judgement* and *appreciation* systems of evaluation. This positive representation demonstrates respect for Mandela as a global icon and reflects a sense of solidarity between the Arab nations and South Africa. The dominance of judgment over other discourses on Mandela's death was also confirmed in Susanto^[44], who examined attitudinal messages in a Friday sermon about death. Moreover, this finding is in agreement with the findings of Mintah^[45] that explored the attitudes of Ghanaian media towards the death and burial of Queen Elizabeth II and towards Britain in general. The findings show the tendency of Arab participants in the programme to express their attitudes through *judgement* followed by *appreciation* and *affect*. By engaging in more judgements, the Arab participants placed more emphasis on evaluating the behaviours of Mandela and other active participants in the TV programme. By the same token, the Arab politicians commented on Mandela's death through *appreciation*. It appears as slightly odd, however, that the programme under consideration is associated with the death, burial, and legacy of Mandela, but the politicians placed little emphasis on their emotional response to and disposition towards 'Mandela's demise. This finding is also in harmony with Mintah^[45] that found *affect* attitudes to be the least of the three categories despite the fact that in Ghana, and perhaps universally, the death and burial of cherished people triggers emotional responses.

However, this does not mean that *affect* attitudes are not featured in the corpus. There is a considerable number of occurrences of un/happiness in the corpus which depicts the atmosphere of sadness about Mandela's death. The dominance of unhappiness feelings also emphasises the feelings of loss.

Hence, the findings of this study reveal a distinctive portrayal of Mandela's legacy in Arabic media, particularly

through the evaluative language used by Arab politicians, which contrasts with prior research that primarily examines Western or South African perspectives. Unlike other studies that frame Mandela predominantly as a symbol of global justice or a national hero in Western and South African contexts, this study identifies unique themes in Arab media discourse. These include comparisons between Mandela's values and the political climate in Arab countries, as well as a marked emphasis on reconciliation and ethical leadership.

Furthermore, analysis through the appraisal system reveals that Arab politicians often express a strong alignment with Mandela's principles of peace and justice, frequently contrasting these principles with leadership styles prevalent in their own regions. This dual-layered representation, which both honours Mandela and subtly critiques regional leadership, distinguishes this study from others in the literature. In sum, this study demonstrates how Mandela's legacy is adapted and employed within a specific cultural-political discourse in the Arab world.

7. Limitations and Future Directions

This study has some limitations. Although BBC Arabic is ranked as one of the oldest international Arabic speaking media outlets in the Middle East, alternative channels like Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiyah also offered coverage on the death of Mandela. Across these channels, politicians and common people were interviewed and asked for their opinions on Mandela's legacy. Given the complexity of coding the various systems and sub-systems of the *appraisal* theory in a text of medium length, let alone in a transcribed corpus of thousands of words and tokens, future studies should examine the *appraisal* system in more programmes and newspapers to reveal nuances within Arabic-speaking media. Secondly, thematic analysis of a corpus like this may not give a complete grasp of the attitude of the general public in the Arab world. While the corpus refers to some politicians and to common people as well as some tweets, it seems that the perspectives of disagreement (i.e., those who might have some reservations towards Mandela and his legacy) are excluded. A thematic analysis of interviews with politicians who represent various stances seems necessary for a more holistic understanding of Mandela's death coverage. In addition, an analysis of a broader corpus that includes opinion columns,

editorials and op-eds could be attempted.

A more in-depth comparative analysis of politicians' responses across various Arab countries could be undertaken to explore variations in evaluative language and the underlying factors influencing differences in *judgment*, *affect*, and *appreciation*. The scope of this study, however, is shaped by the specific media corpus examined and the selection of politicians included in the program, thereby limiting our ability to conduct a broader cross-country comparison. Future research could address this limitation by incorporating a wider range of media sources and political figures from multiple Arab countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, Egypt, and Syria). Such a comparative analysis could reveal how cultural and political dynamics within each country shape attitudes toward Mandela's legacy.

Author Contributions

T.A.S.M.: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Funding

This work received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that

could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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