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Conceptual Metaphor in Saudi Football News: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Headlines Published in Arriyadiyah in the 1990s and 2022–2024

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors in non-literary writing give a sincere reflection of thought and culture. However, recent studies on conceptual metaphor have addressed its use in blogs and newspapers to describe harsh times or negative things (i.e., obesity, cancer, COVID-19, etc.). Thus, this study aims to explore how Saudi journalists conceptualize football in news headlines drawn from a Saudi sports newspaper, Arriyadiyah, since football is considered a widely popular, entertaining game in Saudi Arabia. The Pragglejaz Group's identification procedure of metaphorical use was employed to identify words and expressions embodying metaphors in 300 headlines. The theoretical framework known as the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was also utilized to facilitate qualitative analysis. Further, this study is quantitative and diachronic based on two time periods (i.e., the late 1990s and 2022–2024). Results show that a variety of source domains have been employed, especially in headlines of the 1990s, to depict football. For Saudi journalists, football is not only war. Moreover, the diachronic analysis of headlines indicates that Saudi journalists have started to view football from an aesthetic perspective. Additionally, in headlines of the 1990s, Saudi journalists borrowed a few linguistic expressions from the political and social news trending in the 1980s and 1990s. The study has important implications for scholars, as headlines reflect political, social, and cultural changes. Hence, it would be insightful if researchers examined how conceptual metaphors pertaining to football occur in clusters drawn from different source domains and how this contributes to discourse coherence.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory; Diachronic; Football; Cognitive Pragmatics; Headlines; Metaphor Identification

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1. Introduction

The use of *metaphor*, defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as using a word or a phrase to give a meaning that is different from its literal sense, in non-literary texts helps convey more about thought and culture^[1]. However, recent studies (e.g., references^[2–4]) on metaphor have paid considerable attention to the use of metaphor to describe diseases (e.g., obesity, cancer, COVID-19), where researchers have reported a few types of metaphor. Nevertheless, in recent years, the study of metaphor in football writing has gained some attention. Football enthusiasts, including journalists, football news reporters, and commentators, use metaphor creatively to offer football fans a better insight into the game. For some, football has become an integral part of life, and thus it has been associated with war, drama, games, journeys, violent encounters, etc. More precisely, using metaphor in 'sports talk' enhances precision in communicating meaning^[5, 6]. Hence, metaphor has become a defining feature of football language.

Matulina and Čoralić^[7] reported that Bosnian, Croatian, Austrian, and German newspapers mark their football writing with a variety of metaphors. Nevertheless, some studies have focused mainly on English data^[2, 8–11], whereas only a few^[12–16] considered other languages. For instance, Lewandowski^[14, 15] has addressed Polish, whereas Alzawaydeh and Alghazo^[12] have examined Arabic. Others, such as Krisnawati^[13] and Thalhammer^[16], have explored metaphor in Indonesian and German, respectively. The focus on English as the main language of football is partially attributed to the fact that football originated in Britain in the 1800s^[17]. Bobby Charlton once declared that "Football and English are the only truly global languages"^[18]. This shows that metaphor and football terminology are deeply rooted in English. Further, Thalhammer^[16] has proven that metaphor is more pervasive in English than in German. As a result, many English football words have been borrowed by other languages^[19], and some have been translated between languages. This also applies to metaphorical expressions only if some languages allow for their use in football discourse. For some (e.g., reference^[17]), football language is sometimes

considered another lingua franca (i.e., common language) that brings people together.

Just recently, the interest in football has gone beyond the borders of European and South American countries. For example, in some countries in the Middle East, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the huge interest in football is triggered by some social, economic, and industrial development. Focusing on Saudi Arabia, the investment in football is initiated because of the Saudi Vision 2030. Hence, the Saudi Public Investment Fund acquired about 75% of the stakes in four main clubs^[20]. Consequently, many first-class players have transferred to Saudi Arabia to play in the Saudi Pro League (SPL). Thus, writers of Arabic football newspaper reports and commentators strive to describe football matches, players, coaches, etc., in a very enticing manner. More specifically, writers of Saudi newspaper headlines (i.e., titles in newspapers summarizing the content of news reports; Van Dijk^[21]) abundantly use metaphorical language to build associations that go beyond war, violence, and fights. Metaphor offers a better depiction of thought and culture^[1]. Hence, it is assumed that writers of football news reports want to prove that football penetrates every aspect of life. This conceptualization of football is well presented in headlines, as they provide the summary of the content of news reports, besides their typical function of attracting readers' attention^[22, 23]. Though the importance of headlines to news reports, studies conducted to analyze metaphors in football language considered mainly commentaries^[11, 16, 24], news reports^[14, 25], reviews^[26], interviews^[26], images^[27], but a few have examined headlines^[12].

As stated above, the various social, economic, and cultural changes that Saudi Arabia has witnessed in the last ten years may trigger a shift in how Saudi journalists think of football. Hence, in the present study, the researcher adopts a diachronic approach to the pragmatic analysis of metaphors, focusing on two time periods (i.e., the late 1990s and 2022–2024). The diachronic exploration is not strictly qualitative, but it is also quantitative. The quantitative analysis helps one statistically confirm findings with regard to any emerging trend in thinking. Thus, this study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. How do Saudi football news writers conceptualize football in two time periods?
 - a. What are the common conceptual metaphors identified in Saudi football news headlines in Arriyadiyah in the late 1990s and in 2022–2024?
 - b. What are the least common metaphorical associations found in Saudi football news headlines in Arriyadiyah in the late 1990s and in 2022–2024?
2. What are the similarities and differences between headlines written in the late 1990s and in 2022–2024 in terms of the identified metaphorical constructions?
3. To what extent can one identify a shift in how Saudis conceptualize football?

The results of the present study are expected to contribute to one's understanding of how Saudis conceptualize football in the past and the present. Thus, one may expect to identify some effect of Saudi social and political news on writing about football. The diachronic investigation of metaphor in football news headlines sheds light on the importance of interpreting football writing with reference to the social context.

2. Review of Literature

There is only one study (e.g., reference^[12]) that has addressed the use of metaphor in Arabic football news headlines. Thus, there is some need to analyze the metaphorical use of language in football headlines published in a Saudi newspaper, as Saudi Arabia is known for its huge investment in football and entertainment. This section elaborates on the definition of metaphor adopted by the researcher and gives an overview of previous research examining metaphor in commentaries, news reports, reviews, etc., published in English, Arabic, Indonesian, German, Finnish, Swedish, and Spanish. The data used in such studies were drawn from different countries such as Great Britain, Australia, the United States of America, South Africa, Finland, Indonesia, and Germany.

2.1. Metaphor

Metaphor is a Greek word, and it originally means 'transfer'^[28]. Scholars have offered different definitions of metaphor. For Aristotle, for example, the metaphorical mean-

ing of a word or a phrase is basically the literal meaning of another. Hence, his theory became known as the 'substitution theory of metaphor.' An example of a metaphorical use is the phrase 'leg of a table.' The word 'leg' cannot be used to refer to 'tables' unless the domains (i.e., entities in this case) of *tables* and the *human body* are similar. Thus, Aristotle acknowledged the role of resemblance between the two domains^[28]. Others, such as Richards^[29], proposed a distinction between elements of metaphor that license any metaphorical use. For example, he distinguished between (a) the vehicle, which is the word or expression that is used metaphorically (e.g., the word *leg* in the example above), (b) tenor, the metaphorical meaning of the word or the expression (i.e., the metal sticks that support the table, not the lower part of the human body), and (c) the ground (i.e., the similarity in meaning between the two domains that allows for any metaphorical use, e.g., the position of the legs in the human body and that of a table leg in a table). For cognitive linguists, Lakoff^[30] reports that metaphor is not restricted to literary texts, but it is pervasive in language, and it is thus interpreted effortlessly^[28].

2.2. Previous Research on the Use of Conceptual Metaphor in the Language of Football

Apparently, the language of football is clearly marked with nouns and verbs that suggest conflict, violence, and fighting because of the similarity between the domains of *war* and *football*. Donoghue^[31] confirms that war metaphors provide the writer with some dramatic connotations that help the reader form a complete picture of any football situation. It has been postulated that for years football is understood in the context of hunting and fighting. Just recently, football is associated with art and entertainment shows.

The prominence of war-related metaphors in football discourse has been documented by many researchers. For example, in a study by Hussein^[11], the researcher analyzed live text commentaries on twelve football matches of the 2018 World Cup published in the Guardian to find out how prevalent conflict-related metaphors are in football writing. The researcher reported that words suggesting war, fights, and violence are more frequently used in the corpus and estimated to cover about 88% of the metaphors used. Hussein^[11] confirms that such words have become an indispensable part of football language, as they are frequently used by commen-

tators, reporters, and football enthusiasts. Moreover, in examples drawn from British newspapers (e.g., commentaries on the 2008 European Football Championships published in the Guardian), Bergh^[9] found about 672 metaphorical words in a corpus of 21,000 words that were used to describe wars. He asserts that war metaphors help one better understand football. Further, some basic football terminology is based on war metaphors. Currently, words such as *attack*, *defend*, or *shot* are much more associated with football than warfare. However, one problem with Bergh's^[9] list of war words is that it includes words of violence and human attributes such as *cruel* and *brave*. In another research, Kellett^[27] conducted two studies in the Australian context to explore how rules are expressed using the war analogy in two Melbourne newspapers. Kellett^[27] followed a semiotic approach where texts and images were analyzed. Results showed that the battle theme is emphasized in football language in both the tabloid and the broadsheet. On the other hand, in the second study, four images of coaches interacting with players were given to undergraduates of sports marketing, and they were asked to describe one image in writing. Students consistently referred to coaches as generals and players as soldiers, which indicates that war-football metaphors are so pervasive in language and thinking.

Since language users relate football to something they are familiar with to understand it, some researchers report that football writers associate football with various domains depending on their culture, thinking, and history. Some of those domains are not essentially based on the battlefield. For example, Deluliis^[10] focuses on World Cup coverage by three newspapers from three different countries (i.e., the United States of America, Great Britain, and South Africa). Such newspapers were selected because of their popularity among their readers and nationalism. Results revealed that war-related words, such as *clash*, *battle*, *kill*, *fired*, etc., were used to support the idea of nationalism where players are viewed as heroes. Further, Deluliis^[10] noted that American newspapers relied on warfare metaphors in reference to America's superiority in wars. On the other hand, the South African newspaper used metaphors to show unity and support for players. Yet, the English newspaper had a mixture of nationalism and warfare metaphors. Likewise, Palomäki^[32] examined the use of metaphor in English, Finnish, Swedish, and Spanish football writing. The researcher found that the

use of war metaphors to describe football is common in Finnish, Spanish, and English newspapers. This is due to the fact that such countries were involved in wars in the 20th century. Thus, some languages embrace football war metaphors only if the country's journalistic and cultural conventions allow for assimilating them.

Other studies confirm that football is not only war. For instance, Alkio^[25] examined football news reports in the British newspaper, the Guardian, in the 1980s and 2018. The researcher reported that the use of war metaphors is well-established in the 1980s and 2018, as they became conventionalized in football language, and it is difficult to find substitutes for them. On the other hand, the use of violence metaphors is more prevalent in the 1980s than in 2018. However, in the 2018 Guardian, news report writers tend to shed light on the aesthetic aspect of football where football is viewed as a show or a work of art. One more recent study by Sopa^[17] focused on football commentaries by male and female commentators to explore the purpose and usage of 207 conceptual metaphors. The researcher reported a number of source (i.e., familiar) domains such as those of *war*, *physical fights*, and *shows* to understand the target (i.e., unfamiliar) domains of *ball* and the *football pitch*. On the other hand, focusing on football news published in Indonesian newspapers in September 2013, Krisnawati^[13] notes that metaphorical associations are not necessarily universal claiming that a football pitch can be a hunting ground and not a battlefield, whereas goals are viewed as *gold* and *crops*. Likewise, Toivonen and Pounds^[33] considered Finnish female footballers and asked them to describe their emotions before and after matches. Out of the 604 metaphors identified in their descriptions, about 94% are unique metaphors built on the source domains of *food*, *animals*, and *abstract objects*.

Comparing Arabic with English, Alzawaydeh and Alghazo^[12] collected 400 Arabic and English headlines from popular online football websites. They employed the Pragglejaz Group's^[34] metaphor identification procedure and found that associating football with war is very common in English and Arabic. Other source domains identified by the researchers were found both in English and Arabic such as those of violence, human attribution, nature attribution, and drama. Alzawaydeh and Alghazo^[12] noted that Arab writers tend to use metaphorical language more than their English

counterparts. Additionally, Thalhammer^[16] analyzed English and German commentaries and found that war-related words and expressions are more commonly used in English than in German. Thus, when such English expressions or words are translated into German, they lose their metaphorical meaning. Further, in another study on German football writing, Wilinski^[26] followed a corpus-based approach to examine metaphor and collected biographies, interviews, reviews, news reports, etc., published online in German online websites in Yahoo and Google in the last five years. The compiled corpus is of 500,000 words. MonoConc Pro was used to extract metaphorical lexical units. Besides the use of common source domains (i.e., journey, fights, conflict, and animal and human behaviors) in the corpus to describe football, results revealed the emergence of less common source domains, such as those of *race*, *military campaigns*, *animals*, *kingdoms*, *sailing ships*, *card games*, *chess games*, *celebration*, etc. From the discussion above, it is apparent that the war-football analogy is well-established in English.

Based on the reviewed studies, football enthusiasts from different cultures write about football to reflect their cultural values, beliefs, and experiences. Accordingly, they use analogies to convey meanings of competition and rivalry in the case of war metaphors and those of entertainment in metaphorical examples involving drama and shows. As some studies^[10, 12, 32] took a synchronic approach to examine newspapers from different countries, others (e.g., reference^[25]) followed a diachronic approach to historically examine the metaphorical use of language in football writing in the past and the present. Thus, one can easily trace a shift in thinking where language users associate football with entertainment shows in place of what it has been traditionally associated with (i.e., wars). More importantly, there is only one study that focuses on Arabic headlines. However, the study compares Arabic and English conceptual metaphors in headlines. Thus, there is some need to tackle how Saudi journalists think of football nowadays taking into consideration cultural and social changes.

3. Methods

The present study is qualitative and quantitative where an in-depth analysis of the use of conceptual metaphor in Saudi football news headlines is given. The objective of

the study is not only to count examples of *war* or *violence* metaphors to state how pervasive they are in football language, but also to identify instances of metaphorical use and associations that peculiarly describe one domain and one period and whether or not there is a shift in the thinking of how football news journalists and enthusiasts conceptualize football. Further, instead of exploring how Saudi journalists think of football in their commentaries, reviews, news, etc., the researcher focused on a single instance (i.e., news headlines) of the phenomenon under investigation^[35]. Thus, this research is also considered a case study, and it is diachronic in nature because of its focus on the types of conceptual metaphors used in Saudi football news headlines in two time periods. The first time period extends from 2022 to 2024, covering the news on the Qatar 2022 World Cup until December 2024. On the other hand, the second time period covers global football news published in the years 1997, 1998, and 1999. In other words, there is a span of about 20 years between the two time periods. This difference in time helps identify any shift in the way Saudi journalists conceptualize football. The analysis was initiated with the qualitative phase, where football news headlines have been coded for various source domains, and then the quantitative analysis was utilized to identify any statistically significant shifts in thinking.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is the one developed by Lakoff and Johnson^[36], which became known as the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The theory was proposed to refute the traditional view that metaphor is only used in literary texts^[37]. For cognitive linguists, metaphor is a way to better understand many abstract things in life such as life, argument, time, etc. According to Cserep^[38], one of the tenets of the theory is that "...language is saturated with metaphors, rooted in recurring bodily experience, and our language is metaphorically simply because our conceptual system is metaphorical". According to Lakoff^[30], metaphor is not strictly a feature of language or literary works, but it is a way of conceptualizing things. Kovecses^[37] states that in the cognitive linguistic view one conceptual domain (i.e., the concrete, familiar domain related to bodily experience) is used to understand another, which is abstract in nature. The concrete domain is the source domain, whereas

the abstract domain is the target domain that one wants to understand^[36]. The result of this established comparison is a set of associations between conceptual elements in Domain A and some corresponding elements in Domain B^[37]. Since such mappings are conceptualized in the mind, the source domain provides similar characteristics to the target domain. An example of such conceptualization is comparing football to a *war*, where players are warriors, and hence there are defenders, strikers, generals, soldiers, losers, shooters, winners, etc. (see the example below). The semantic field of *war* feeds football writing with a number of metaphorical associations that help add suspense to the description of various football events. According to Lewandowski^[15], the war metaphor is so prevalent in news reports and commentaries on football.

Football is war

Example

“We took over the ball deep in their *territory*.”^[36]

In the example above, a football pitch (i.e., source domain) is viewed as a battlefield (i.e., target domain) where *players* are like *warriors* who can invade the opponent’s territory if they show full control of the football match. Utilizing specific source domains drawn from some semantic fields highlights some features of the target domain. For instance, using *war* as the source domain in football discourse sheds light on how a football match can be very competitive^[39]. However, comparing *football* to *school* emphasizes the educational aspect of football. Since the researcher adopts Lakoff and Johnson’s^[36] approach to metaphor, football metaphors in this study are analyzed from the perspective of cognitive pragmatics. Pragmatics is essentially cognitive because of pragmatics’ reliance on Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory, in which “what is meant” is referred from “what is said”^[40]. The purpose of the present study is not to outline the functions of conceptual metaphors in football writing but to interpret them in terms of the wider context of Saudi culture.

3.2. Data Collection

The corpus compiled for this study consists of 300 Arabic headlines. The first sample is of 150 headlines found on the online website of the Saudi sports newspaper, Arriyadiyah

(<https://arriyadiyah.com/>). This sample is based on global football events that took place during the Qatar 2022 World Cup until December 2024. The second sample, however, was drawn from the archives of the same newspaper found in a national library. It contains 150 news headlines published between the 7th of November 1997 and the 16th of February, 1999 in the section of global football events. Arriyadiyah was chosen specifically because it is the first daily newspaper published in the Kingdom to cover sports events. It was first released in 1987, and it is published online and in hard copies to reach all Saudi football fans.

3.3. Sampling Procedure

To select headlines with conceptual metaphors, the Pragglejaz Group’s^[34] identification procedure of metaphorical use (Metaphor Identification Procedure or MIP) was utilized. First, the headline and its context (i.e., news report) were examined to understand their meaning. Secondly, the lexical units that indicate any metaphorical use were underlined. As suggested by Lewandowski^[15], the focus was on metaphorical expressions and words that have been employed to realize conceptual metaphors. Considering lexical items occurring before and after such units, the contextual meanings of words and phrases (i.e., how they relate to an entity or attribute) were established. If such units were used more commonly in other contexts to give their basic meanings (i.e., concrete or older meanings or those of bodily actions), but they were used in the context of football to evoke a contextual meaning that helped in understanding a specific football situation, the lexical unit would be marked as a case of metaphorical use^[34]. Since the MIP was employed to reach a judgment on what to include from headlines, the sampling technique utilized can be described as purposive^[41]. The corpus of headlines consists of 1,844 words (i.e., 1,020 words make up the 1990s corpus, whereas 824 words contributed to the corpus of headlines drawn from the years 2022–2024).

3.4. Coding Data

In the qualitative phase, the researcher used MAXQDA 24, a software developed for qualitative analysis^[42], to code words and phrases used metaphorically. The software helps in creating multiple color codes for various source domains.

Further, it aids in coding the same headline twice or more for different source domains. More notably, the Program can create a table of headlines sharing the same source domain,

and one can insert comments beside each headline in the table. **Figure 1** illustrates the source domains identified for the qualitative analysis and the coded Arabic headlines.

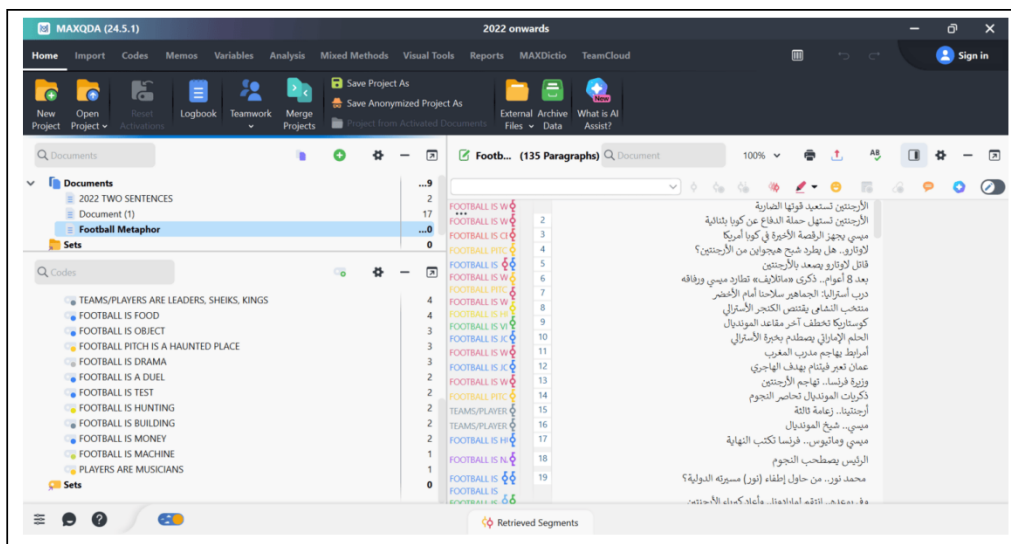


Figure 1. The qualitative analysis of data using MAXQDA 24 to annotate metaphorical words and expressions.

3.5. Data Analysis

Lewandowski's^[15] list of less violent source domains that he identified in English and Polish football news reports has been used besides what has been emphasized in the literature. Lewandowski^[15] highlighted some less violent domains that can be associated with football such as *Football is food* (e.g., Weary and Thirsty: World Cup Fans Try to Find Joy at a Complicated Tournament), *A soccer match is a test* (e.g., Gareth Southgate admits England will face the “biggest test” of their World Cup ambitions when they face holders France in a blockbuster quarter-final on Saturday), *A soccer match is a theatre performance* (e.g., World Cup: A tragicomic spectacle of theatre on the grandest stage), *Footballing superiority is royal power* (e.g., Real Madrid dethrone Manchester City after Rüdiger holds nerve in shootout), *A soccer team is a machine* (e.g., German machine takes World Cup title), *A soccer team is a building* (e.g., Guardiola must rebuild his central defense), *An outstanding soccer performance is a work of art* (e.g., He's the midfield maestro who scored at the FIFA World Cup in 1978, 1982 and 1986), *An outstanding soccer performance is magic* (e.g., Jay-Jay Okocha: A magician with the ball at his feet!), and *A soccer match is a journey/voyage* (e.g., As

the world countdowns to the 2022 FIFA World Cup final, discover Argentina's journey to the end and the route that got them there). As some researchers (e.g., references^[15, 25]) included examples of orientational metaphor (i.e., metaphorical use that is based on spatial orientations, where in football *The winning team is ahead; The losing team is behind*) in their research, only examples of conceptual metaphor have been considered in the present study.

Some source domains show some overlap, and others can be subsumed under one major source domain. As noted by Lakoff^[30], major and minor metaphors occur in a hierarchy where lower levels of metaphor inherit the structure of that of the higher level. For example, human attributes and human activities can be grouped under the general domain of *human beings*. Some verbs used metaphorically (e.g., [go up] يصعد, [write] يكتب, and [make] يصنع, [sit] يجلس, and [climb] يتسلق) describe human activities, but there are some that can be for attributes, such as ‘tightening one’s fist’ to show full control of the situation for the phrase على قبضته, [awakening] صحوه, [flirt] يغازل, [challenge] يتحدى, and [hold up] يصمد. However, they have been put in one group of *human beings*. Further, there is some overlap between the domains of *violence*, *boxing*, *duel*, *fights*, *wrestling*, and that of *war*. Generally speaking, verbs re-

ferring typically to what is happening in a ring of boxing, wrestling, or during a duel such as [surrender] يستسلم, [confronting someone] يواجه, [struggle being heated up] يهتدم الصراع, and [hitting] يضرب were subsumed under the general domain of *fights*. More specifically, [surrender] يستسلم and [confronting someone] يواجه were coded as examples of the *duel* domain. As for [struggle being heated up] يهتدم الصراع and [hitting] يضرب, they were included under the domain of *boxing*. The domain of *wrestling* was not considered because of the similarity between it and that of *boxing*. However, the *violence* domain includes verbs and nouns of [suicide mission] مهمة انتحارية, [threatening] يهدد, [revenging] يثأر, etc. On the other hand, the *war* domain includes verbs and nouns that involve [killing] يقتل, [tactical maneuvering] مناورة تكتيكية, [penetrating bullets] يستدرج العدو, etc. However, if the verbs and nouns describe [attacking] هجوم, [defending] دفاع, [weapons] أسلحة, etc., the headlines will be coded as examples of the *war* domain. Nevertheless, if verbs or nouns are used metaphorically to refer to [wounds] يجرح, [hemorrhaging] نزيف, and injuries in general, the words would be labelled as instances of the *human being* domain.

More importantly, referring to football matches as exams (e.g., [take an exam] يخوض اختباراً) or teams as teachers (e.g., [teach a lesson] يلقي درساً) might evoke the *school* domain. Thus, headlines of exams and lessons were subsumed under the domain of *school*. More notably, some of the human attributes (يركب [rides]) used to depict football can be recategorized in terms of other source domains, such as those of journeys or more specifically sailing ships as in the following example from headlines of the late 1990s. The example below has been translated literally to preserve metaphorical associations.

بطل فرنسا (يركب) الصعب ويوفنتوس يطارد (الثلاثة)

Literal translation: The French champion (rides) the difficult and Juventus chases (the three)

As stated above, one headline sometimes evokes two or more source domains as an instance of mixed metaphor^[43]. For example, in the following headline, the source domains of *violence*, *war*, and *animals* have been evoked. The verbs *explode*, *grab*, and the noun *fangs* help create a metaphorical and dramatic meaning of courage, power, fierceness,

etc. The match of Iran and Australia is viewed as a battlefield where Iran can surprise the world (i.e., surprising is compared to exploding a bomb), and the two teams are like animals fighting one another over a prey; more literally, to be qualified for the World Cup.

(the late 1990s)

إيران تفجر المفاجأة وتنتزع الأخيرة من أنياب استراليا

Literal translation: Iran *exploded* the surprise and *grabbed* the last card from the *fangs* of Australia.

3.6. The Quantitative Analysis of Data

The quantitative analysis involves computing the frequencies and the percentages of all the instances of conceptual metaphor occurring in football news headlines in two time periods. Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2), a nonparametric statistical test of association or independence, was used to measure the association between the two categorical variables (i.e., the two time periods and the various types of conceptual metaphor). Data given in the form of observed frequencies will be organized in a contingency table to initiate a contingency analysis, i.e., to examine if the variables are related or contingent. If the variables are unrelated, it means that the probability of the column variable with a specific value does not change that of the row variable and vice versa^[44].

3.7. Intra-Rater Reliability

The coding procedure of conceptual metaphor in headlines targets words and expressions that are used to realize various types of metaphors. The procedure is subjective but to ensure objectivity and accuracy, the coding of all the identified metaphors was revised after one month of initial coding. Intra-rater reliability (i.e., consistency in coding metaphorical constructions by the same rater; reference^[45]) would help in establishing boundaries between overlapping categories. As mentioned above, some constructions (i.e., pertaining to human beings, inanimate objects, or arts, e.g., music, drama, dance) were problematic and have been coded differently in the second round of data analysis. Hence, to ensure consistency, as suggested in prior studies (e.g., reference^[15]), each form of art is allocated a category. Out of the 361 codes of metaphorical constructions, there were 21

codes that were fixed in the second round of data analysis. Thus, the result of the test of percent agreement (i.e., a reliability test) is 94.18%, which suggests a reasonable level of consistency.

4. Results

Results revealed that Arriyadiyah used 361 metaphorical constructions in their 300 headlines drawn from two time periods. The number of metaphorical constructions identified in the time period of 1997–1999 is more than that of 2022–2024. There are 192 (53.18%) occurrences of conceptual metaphor in headlines of the late 1990s compared to 169 (46.8%) in 2022–2024. In this section, results on the similarities and differences between the source domains employed in football news headlines in the two time periods are given. Then, some frequency information on the most and the least common metaphorical associations is presented. On the other hand, the second section dwells on how Saudi journalists use various source domains to understand different components

of the target domain of football. The Results Section ends with the results of the quantitative analysis to decide on any statistically significant emerging trend of thinking.

4.1. Types and Frequency of Conceptual Metaphor Used in Arriyadiyah Football News Headlines

Generally, there are 25 types of metaphors that mark football news headlines of the late 1990s as opposed to 21 metaphors found in 2022–2024 headlines. There are 19 types of metaphors found in both groups of headlines (see **Table 1**). In other words, associating football with *war*, *machines*, *school*, *journey*, *farming*, *animals*, *human beings*, *building*, *hunting*, *food*, *money/gold*, *nature*, *boxing*, *duels*, *violence*, *objects*, *haunted places*, *music*, and *kingdoms* is common in both time periods. However, framing football in terms of works of *art*, *visits*, *card games*, *races*, *magic*, and *metals* is peculiar to football news headlines of the late 1990s. On the other hand, source domains pertaining to *drama* and *celebrations* are utilized only in 2022–2024 football headlines.

Table 1. Frequency results of source domains identified in football news headlines in two time periods.

#	Types of Conceptual Metaphor	Time Period		Percentage	
		The Late 1990s	2022–2024	The Late 1990s	2022–2024
1	Football is war	15	35	7.81%	20.71%
2	Players are machines	1	1	0.52%	0.5%
3	Football is school	10	2	5.21%	1.1%
4	A football competition is a journey	21	23	10.94%	13.61%
5	Football is farming	3	5	1.56%	2.9%
6	Players are animals	9	7	4.69%	4.1%
7	Teams are human beings	47	30	24.48%	17.75%
8	Football teams and competitions are buildings	10	2	5.21%	1.1%
9	Football is hunting	11	2	5.73%	1.1%
10	Football is food	6	4	3.13%	2.3%
11	Football is gold/money	3	2	1.56%	1.1%
12	Football is nature	5	6	2.60%	3.5%
13	A football match is a boxing bout	7	9	3.65%	5.3%
14	A football match is a duel	6	2	3.13%	1.1%
15	Football is violence	18	22	9.38%	13.01%
16	Teams/players/matches are objects	5	3	2.60%	1.7%
17	Teams are haunted	2	3	1.04%	1.7%
18	Players are musicians	1	1	0.52%	0.5%
19	Teams/players are kings	1	4	0.52%	2.3%
20	An outstanding performance is a work of art	1	0	0.52%	0%
21	A football match is a meeting/visit	4	0	2.08%	0%
22	A football match is a race	2	0	1.04%	0%
23	A football match is a card game	2	0	1.04%	0%
24	A team is a magician	1	0	0.52%	0%
25	A team is a metal	1	0	0.52%	0%
26	Football is drama	0	3	0%	1.7%
27	A football match is a celebration	0	3	0%	1.7%
TOTAL		192	169	100%	100%

Results also indicate that there are four important source domains used frequently in Arabic football news headlines in the two time periods. For example, war metaphors (i.e., 35 occurrences; 20.7%) were more commonly used than other metaphors in 2022–2024 headlines, whereas those of human beings (i.e., 47 metaphorical associations; 24.48%) were more used in the late 1990s. Further, in 2022–2024 headlines, using attributes of human beings to understand football came second (i.e., 30 metaphorical words and expressions; 17.7%), whereas in headlines of the late 1990s associating football with journeys ranked second with 21 metaphors (10.94). Other metaphors such as the ones pertaining to violence occupied the third place, with 18 examples (9.38%), in football news headlines of the late 1990s and the fourth place, with 22 (13.01%) instances, in 2022–2024 headlines. More notably, war metaphors (with only 15 metaphorical associations; 7.81%) followed those of violence in headlines of the late 1990s, and journey metaphors precede violence metaphors in 2022–2024 headlines because of 23 (13.6%) metaphorical words or expressions (see **Table 1**).

Less common metaphorical associations in headlines of the late 1990s are those involving school (5.21%), buildings (5.21%), hunting (5.73%), and animals (4.69%). On the other hand, framing football in terms of boxing (5.3%) came after source domains of war, journey, human beings, and violence in 2022–2024 football news headlines. Among the least frequent metaphorical associations in headlines of the late 1990s are between football and nature (2.60%), football and food (3.13%), football and duels (3.13%), football and boxing (3.65%), football and objects (2.60%), and football and visiting (2.08%). However, the source domains of animals (4.1%), nature (3.5%), and farming (2.9%) are among the least frequently used in 2022–2024 headlines. Other metaphorical associations have appeared only once, twice, and thrice in headlines of the 1990s such as those between football and machines, farming, gold/money, haunted places, music, kings, works of art, race, card games, magic, and metals. The same applies to the domains of machines, schools, buildings, hunting, money/gold, duels, objects, haunted places, music, drama, and celebrations in 2022–2024 headlines. In general, the source domains of machines, gold/money, haunted places, and music were the least used in both time periods.

4.2. Source Domains Used to Conceptualize Football

4.2.1. War Metaphors

A football match is very similar to a war. Hence, Arriyadiyah uses this metaphor frequently because of the endless associations that one can draw from the two domains of *football* and *war*. In other words, there are two groups fighting or competing with one another, and they can reap benefits after the competition or war. War metaphor and its components (i.e., armies, battalion, fighting, killing, missiles, spoils, catapults, occupation, invading, guillotine, etc.) are used to understand some constituent elements of *football* such as players, goals, matches, teams, match time, competitions or leagues, etc. **Table 2** is illustrative. Examples from the two time periods have been given in the same table to facilitate diachronic analysis.

Comparing a football *match* to a *war* means that *players* are *fighters* (15), *warriors* (17), *snipers* (4), *killers* (13). However, there are very *dangerous*, *powerful players* who are viewed as a *missile base* where their *goals* are compared to *missiles* (16). Some *players* are *warriors* because they are brave enough to break into a fortified area to get some *spoils* (i.e., *accomplishments*), as in example 9, or invade an area (8). The latter use is in reference to their market value. However, there are players who always lose matches in a way similar to losing a *battle* (11). Regarding competitions, some such as the SPL are very competitive to the extent that the *players* in the competition are perceived as *soldiers in a battalion* (17). More powerfully, *strong players* in a football team are depicted as members of a *military strike force* (10), and *strong players among defenders* are compared to a *siege* (4).

Matches are always compared to *wars*, but they differ in their importance. Some *wars* help in passing because another *army* (i.e., team) blocks the way (7), so this hinders marching on to the next level. Since *teams* act like *armies*, they can occupy a small space (i.e., to be ranked fourth in a group; 6) or do a tactical maneuver to prepare for a match (12). In other cases, *matches* are of value, like *wars*, because one can get *points* (i.e., *spoils*), as in Example 5. As for goals, some *goals* can kill like *killers* (14), but *time* can kill, too (1). Further, *goals* are perceived as *bombs* (3) that can blow up and affect a bigger area (i.e., a league). *Goals* are also *catapults* that can destroy *fortresses* (i.e., *goals* or pairs

of posts with nets), as in example 7. Additionally, *firing the coach* after losing consecutive matches can be psychologically devastating, and thus it is compared to *executing victims after wars using a guillotine* (2).

Table 2. Examples of *war* metaphors in Arriyadiyah football news headlines in two time periods.

Arabic News Headlines		Literal Translation
Late 1990s		
1	ركلة جزاء في الزمن القاتل تؤدي بحياة مشجع غاضب	A <i>killing</i> penalty kick caused death to an angry fan
2	فوجئت موعود بكتاب جينس وزاجالو يواجه المقصلة	Vogts is promised the Guinness Book and Zagallo is facing the <i>Guillotine</i>
3	هدف هولندي ينسف مسيرة الدوري الإنجليزي	A Dutch goal <i>destroys</i> the English Premier League
4	رقابة لصيقة على (الأشهب) وحصار منيع على القناص (الأصلع)	Carefully watching the grey man and impenetrable <i>siege</i> on the bald <i>sniper</i>
5	معركة نقاط تعلن المواجهة 127 في إيطاليا	A <i>war</i> of points declares confrontation no. 127 in Italy
2022–2024		
6	رينارد أشرك 23.. بدأ بفوز تاريخي.. وانتهى محتلاً المركز الرابع	Renard...starts with a historical win...and ends <i>occupying</i> the fourth position
7	موقعة العبور ... سيتي يك مرمى إيبسويتش برعاية	The <i>war</i> of passing...Manchester City <i>destroys</i> the fortress of Ipswich with 4 goals
8	مارادونا الجديد يغزو الأسواق	The new Maradona <i>invades</i> the market
9	لحق بهنري وتخطى بنزيما.. كانت قائمة الـ 10 الأوائل	He caught up with Henry and surpassed Benzema.. Kante <i>breaks into</i> the top 10 list
10	الأرجنتيين تستعيد القوة الضاربة	Argentina regains its strike force
11	نيمار.. رجل المعارك الخاسرة	Neymar... the man of <i>losing battles</i>
12	الأخضر يتأهب بمناورة تكتيكية	The green team (i.e., Saudi team) is getting prepared with a <i>tactical maneuver</i>
13	أستراليا تقتل الحلم التونسي.. وتعتبر	Australia <i>kills</i> the Tunisian dream ... and passes
14	قاتل لاوتارو يصعد بالأرجنتين	A <i>killing</i> goal by Lautaro lifts Argentina
15	رونالدو: إخلاصي لم يتغير.. قاتلت من أجل البرتغال	My loyalty does not change... I <i>fought</i> for Portugal
16	فالفيدي.. قاعدة الصواريخ	Valverde... the <i>missile</i> base
17	هيندري.. أول المودعين من كتيبة روشن	Hendry ... the first to leave from Roshn <i>battalion</i>

4.2.2. Football Metaphors Related to Machines, Journeys, Schools, Farming, and Animals

Other important metaphors established in the corpus of Saudi Arabic headlines are pertinent to the source domains of machines, journeys, schools, farming, and animals. Such metaphors have been employed to better conceptualize players, teams, matches, points, competitions, losing matches, difficult matches, feelings/desires (see **Table 3**). For example, in both time periods, comparing *players* or *teams* to *machines* is very common. This is strictly in reference to the German team (18 & 19). The analogy of Germans and machines arises, as Germany is known for making machines, and the players are known for their physical stamina. One infers that players are strong like machines. Further, writers in Arriyadiyah view *football* as a *school* where some *teams* act as *teachers* for other teams and give them harsh lessons (20).

This happens if one team does not perform well in matches, and another strong team beats it and performs very satisfactorily. Moreover, a *match* is perceived as an *exam* not only because of a specific opponent (i.e., team) who makes the match challenging, but there is no chance but winning (21). Another common association is comparing *football* to *farming* where teams can harvest *points*, collected from several matches, in a way similar to harvesting *plants* (25). More notably, one path for a team can be planted with *bombs* (i.e., *difficult matches*, 24). Additionally, in 2022–2024 headlines, another metaphorical association emerges between *football* and *farming* where *players* (26) and *feelings/desires* (27) are considered *plants*. Such associations are well-justified because the human body is similar to a plant or tree with a trunk, roots, and branches. In addition, feelings can be instilled in others in a way similar to planting in a fertile land.

Table 3. Football metaphors pertaining to the source domains of *machines*, *school*, *journey*, *farming*, and *animals* in Arriyadiyah football news headlines in two time periods.

Arabic News Headlines		Literal Translation
<i>Players are machines</i>		
18	Late 1990s	Samba stars defeat the German <i>machine</i>
	2022–2024	
19	الغضب يحاصر «الماكينات».. المنتخب صار قزمًا بالتدريج	Anger besieges the “ <i>machines</i> ”... The team has gradually become a dwarf
<i>Football is school</i>		
20	Late 1990s	France teaches England a harsh <i>lesson</i> and defeats it 2-0
	2022–2024	
21	الأرجنتين في اختبار صعب أمام هولندا	Argentina faces a difficult <i>test</i> against the Netherlands
<i>A football competition is a journey</i>		
22	Late 1990s	Arriyadiyah documents the Green team <i>journey step by step</i>
	2022–2024	
23	طموحات بلجيكا تصطدم بعقبة أوكرانيا	Belgium’s ambitions <i>collide</i> with Ukraine’s obstacle
<i>Football is farming</i>		
24	Late 1990s	France plays with two chances and Brazil’s path is <i>planted</i>
	2022–2024	
25	مانشستر يونايتد يحرص 40 نقطة ب هدف يتيم	Manchester United <i>harvested</i> 40 points with an orphan goal
26	بحذاء خاص.. جمال لا ينسى جنوره	With special shoes...Jamal never forgets his <i>roots</i>
27	الركاكي: زرعت الطموح في اللاعبين	Al-Regragui: I <i>planted</i> ambition in the players
<i>Players are animals</i>		
28	Late 1990s	Congo <i>preys</i> on the land owners in 3 minutes
	2022–2024	
29	لدغة ألمانية تقلص الفارق بين الأول والثاني	A German <i>bite</i> reduces the difference between the first and the second
30	النصيري.. حاربوه قبل المونديال.. وصنع تاريخ أسود الأطلس	Al-Nusairi... they fought him before the World Cup... and he made the history of the Atlas <i>lions</i>
31	فان جال: هولندا بلا أجنحة	Van Gaal: The Dutch team has no <i>wings</i>

Another common analogy is viewing *football* as a *journey* where *matches of a team in a competition* are collectively conceived as a *journey* (22), and thus there are stations on the way and sometimes *obstacles* (i.e., *losing a match*, (23)). More importantly, *teams* can be ferocious like *animals* (28), and they can bite like *snakes* (29). This is predicted if such teams simply win matches or score many goals within a few minutes. On the other hand, as some *teams* are perceived as *machines* (18 & 19), they can also be associated with *lions* (30). The Moroccan team is called so in reference to the lions living in the Atlas Mountains for years in the past before being killed by French colonists in 1922^[46]. One inference drawn from this analogy is the strength and history that the team is endowed with. In some cases, a *team* lacks some of

its wingers. Hence, it is described as a *bird* with no wings. Associating teams with birds is based on the similarity between *football wingers* and *bird wings* (31). Both need some wide space to function, and thus both are linked to the middle area.

4.2.3. Football Metaphors Related to Human Beings, Buildings, Hunting, Food, Gold/Money, and Nature

Saudi journalists in Arriyadiyah employed tangible domains of human beings, buildings, hunting grounds, food, gold/money, and nature to frame football elements of teams, winning the league or a championship, competitions, football pitches, players, goals, results, etc. As stated above,

the most important analogy is between *football* and *human beings*. A *team* can be asleep or fully awake like *humans*. The *awakening* period of a team mainly refers to winning and *performing well* (32). Further, a team's *full control of the league* is compared to *tightening one's grip of something* (33). *Teams* can also punish other teams like *humans*. This happens when Croatia has scored many goals against Canada (34). **Table 4** below is illustrative.

Table 4. Football metaphors pertaining to the source domains of *human beings*, *buildings*, *hunting*, *food*, *gold* or *money*, *nature* in Arriyadiyah football news headlines in two time periods.

	Arabic News Headlines	Literal Translation
	<i>Teams are human beings</i>	
	Late 1990s	
32	صحوة متأخرة لبرشلونة وريال مدريد تدفعهما للمركزين الثالث والرابع	A late <i>awakening</i> for Barcelona and Real Madrid push them into the third and fourth ranks
33	مانشستر يونايتد يحكم قبضته على الصدارة	Manchester United <i>tightens its grip</i> of the top
	2022–2024	
34	كرواتيا تعاقب كندا	Croatia <i>punishes</i> Canada
	<i>Football teams and competitions are buildings</i>	
	Late 1990s	
35	إيطاليا تتأهل للمونديال بـ(الأبواب الخلفية)	Italy qualifies for the World Cup through <i>back doors</i>
36	زاجالو بفرحة الزعامة: أغلقنا البطولة بمفتاح ذهبي وأكدنا أن الكرة مخ وليس عضلات	Zagallo, with the joy of leadership: We closed the tournament with a golden <i>key</i> and confirmed that football is about using brain, not muscles
	2022–2024	
37	القاتلة... إسبانيا تنجو.. كرواتيا تنهار.. صربيا أكبر مستفيد	With killing goals ... Spain survives... Croatia <i>collapses</i> ... Serbia is the biggest beneficiary
	<i>Football is hunting</i>	
	Late 1990s	
38	سقوط جوفنتوس في (فتح) كييف الأوكراني	Juventus falls into the Ukrainian Kiev <i>trap</i>
	2022–2024	
39	منتخب النشامى يقتنص الكنجر الأسترالي	The team of good deeds <i>captures</i> the Australian Kangaroo
	<i>Football is food</i>	
	Late 1990s	
40	الدوري البرتغالي: الثاني يلتهم ضيفه على نار هادئة	Liga Portugal: The second <i>eats</i> its guest on low heat
	2022–2024	
41	على حساب جورجيا.. تركيا تذوق أول فوز افتتاحي	At the expense of Georgia... Turkey <i>tastes</i> its first victory
	<i>Football is gold/money</i>	
	Late 1990s	
42	رأس ذهبية تعزز قمة Metz	A <i>golden</i> head enhances the peak of Metz
	2022–2024	
43	المغرب ... تعادل ثمين	Morocco... a <i>valuable</i> draw
	<i>Football is nature attribution</i>	
	Late 1990s	
44	عن زيدان: بدأ أمام التشيك وأخفق في إنجلترا وتوهج في فرنسا	About Zidane: He started against the Czechs, failed in England, and <i>brightened</i> in France
	2022–2024	
45	الرئيس يصطحب النجوم	The president accompanies the <i>stars</i>

One very striking metaphorical association is between *competitions* and *buildings*. In this unique metaphor, *competitions* have doors and keys. If a team reaches the competition after some struggle (i.e., as a runner-up), it qualifies for the World Cup through backdoors (35). Moreover, *guaranteeing a championship* is similar to *closing the door with a key* (36).

Recently, *teams* can be viewed as *buildings* since both can collapse. A team gets collapsed if it shows poor performance (37). Further, Arriyadiyah journalists conceptualize a *football pitch* metaphorically as a *hunting ground*. Thus, *teams* act like *hunters* laying a trap for their *preys* (i.e., other *teams*; 38) or capture them (39). Another common metaphor in football language is the use of *food* as a source domain. One team can eat another if they beat them. Hence, *teams* are viewed as *food* for other teams (40). More notably, *winning* has a taste like *food* (41). In addition, football enthusiasts perceive goals and results as *gold* or *money* with a value. If one team wins the other because of a headed goal, the *goal* and the *head* are viewed as made of *gold* (42). Moreover, if a team struggles to beat a powerful team, and the match ends with a draw, the weak team will perceive the difficult *draw* as a valuable one, similar to *gold* (43). One common metaphor that is based on nature is referring to accomplished *players* as *stars* who can shine (44) and whom you can accompany (45).

4.2.4. Football Metaphors Related to Boxing, Duels, Violence, Objects, Haunted Places, and Music

Saudi journalists in Arriyadiyah use the source domains of violence, boxing, duels, objects, haunted places, and music to better understand goals, matches, elimination tournaments, winning, achievements, teams, players (see **Table 5**). Very commonly, a *football match* is perceived as a *fight* or an act of *violence*. Under the domain of *fight*s, two sub-domains are evoked such as those of *boxing bouts* and *duels*. In a typical boxing match, one may hit or punch the opponent in their heads, which may cause a headache. Similarly, using the head to shoot a goal may create a difference in results. Thus, a *hit in the head* is associated with a *headed goal* (46). In some cases, one team may *beat* another in a way similar to a boxer *knocking down* their opponent (47). Likewise, a *football match* is simply considered a *confrontation* between two as in a *duel* (48) where an *elimination* from a tournament is compared to that in a *duel* (49).

Table 5. Football metaphors pertaining to the source domains of *boxing*, *duels*, and *violence* in Arriyadiyah football news headlines in two time periods.

	Arabic News Headlines	Literal Translation
	<i>A football match is a boxing bout</i> Late 1990s	
46	ضربة رأس نصيب نيوكاسل ب(الصداع) 2022–2024	A head kick gives Newcastle a headache
47	المغرب تسقط البرتغال.. وتدخل تاريخ المونديال	Morocco <i>knocks</i> Portugal <i>down</i> ...and enters the World Cup history
	<i>A football match is a duel</i> Late 1990s	
48	اليوم ستراسبورج وانترميلان في أخطر مواجهة 2022–2024	Today, Strasbourg and Inter Milan are in the most dangerous <i>confrontation</i>
49	قاتل يبقي على آمال المجر.. ويقصي اسكتلندا	A killing goal keeps Hungary's hopes up...and <i>eliminates</i> Scotland
	<i>Football is violence</i> Late 1990s	
50	الفريق الكاتالوني يتأهب لغسل العار في المحطة 14	The Catalan team is prepared to <i>wash away its shame</i> in Station 14
51	إنترميلان في مهمة (انتحارية) في فرنسا 2022–2024	Inter Milan is on a (<i>suicide</i>) mission in France
52	كرواتيا تخطف البرونز	Croatia <i>snatches</i> the bronze medal
53	ألبانيا تحبط انتفاضة الكروات بالتعادل	Albania thwarts the Croatian <i>uprising</i> with a draw

As for expressions peculiar to violence in 1990s headlines, *winning after a number of losses* is comparable to *washing away shame* (50). Further, when a team is pressur-

ized in the game away to win the match, it *should exploit any chance* it has in a way similar to *committing suicide in suicide missions* (51). In 2022–2024 headlines, on the other

hand, *achieving a bronze medal after experiencing difficulties* is similar to *snatching something* (52). Additionally, if a team *wins a few consecutive matches*, this is compared to a political *uprising* (53), especially after years of losing matches.

In other headlines, *teams/players/matches* are perceived as *objects* that can be destroyed, turned off, or exam-

ined carefully using a microscope (see **Table 6**). A *match* is yellow like a yellow *object* if it is full of yellow cards (54). Moreover, a weak *team* can be destroyed like *objects* (55). Further, *players* are treated as *a source of light* that can be switched off (56). More notably, *players* can be viewed as *objects* that can be closely examined through microscope lenses (57).

Table 6. Football metaphors pertaining to the source domains of *objects*, *haunted places*, and *music* in Arriyadiyah football news headlines in two time periods.

	Arabic News Headlines	Literal Translation
	<i>Teams/players/matches are objects</i>	
	Late 1990s	
54	مباراة صفراء تحكم قبضة برشلونة على القمة	A yellow match tightens Barcelona's grip on the top
55	بورثو البرتغالي يسحق بيرامار	The Portuguese Porto crushes Beira-mar
	2022–2024	
56	محمد نور.. من حاول إطفاء (نور) مسيرته الدولية؟	Mohamed Nour.. Who tried to <i>extinguish</i> (the light) of his international career?
57	صغار المونديال.. 5 تحت المجهر	World Cup young players... 5 under the microscope
	<i>Teams are haunted</i>	
	Late 1990s	
58	شبح الهبوط يخيم على توتنهام	The <i>ghost</i> of relegation overshadows Tottenham
	2022–2024	
59	بعد 8 أعوام.. ذكرى «ماتلايف» تطارد ميسي ورفاقه	After 8 years... the memory of “MetLife” <i>haunts</i> Messi and his teammates
	<i>Players are musicians</i>	
	Late 1990s	
60	الموسيقيار الذي يعزف النوتة بالمقلوب!	The <i>musician</i> who plays notes backwards
	2022–2024	
61	فهد الهريفي.. (موسيقيار) الحي لا يطرب!!	Fahd Al Harifi.. (the <i>musician</i>) does not enchant the neighborhood
	<i>Teams/players are kings</i>	
	Late 1990s	
62	مصر تعتلي عرش الكرة الإفريقية وتترك الحسرة للجنوب	Egypt <i>ascends</i> to the <i>throne</i> of African football and leaves the heartbreak to the south
	2022–2024	
63	أرجنتينا.. زعامة ثالثة	Argentina...a third <i>leadership</i>
64	ميسي.. شيخ المونديال	Messi...the <i>sheikh</i> of the World Cup

Other less common metaphors are of the source domains of *haunted places* and *concerts*. A *team* acts like a *human being* that can be *haunted* by memories of failure (59), spirits, or ghosts of relegation (58). In headlines written in 2022–2024 and the 1990s, *players* with superb performance on the pitch are perceived as musicians who enchant the audience with their music or performance (60 & 61). One more metaphorical association is between *winning competitions* and *seizing power* and *thrones*. *Teams* are like *emperors* who can be seated on thrones (62). Additionally, *teams* and *players* can be conceptualized as *leaders*, *bosses*, *managers*,

sheiks, and *kings*. For example, the *Argentinian team* is treated as *leaders* as in example 63, and Messi is a *sheik* (64).

4.2.5. Football Metaphors Peculiar to News Headlines of the 1990s or 2022–2024

There are a number of metaphors that are peculiar to one time period but not the other. Words denoting works of art, visiting, racing, card games, magic, metals, drama, and celebrations are employed to depict football performance, matches, teams, players, competitions, defenders, the foot-

ball pitch, football events, and football victory from a different perspective. Starting with headlines of the 1990s, for example, *an outstanding football performance* is compared to some work of art (65) to emphasize its superiority (see Table 7). Further, a *football match* is compared to a visit where there is a *host* (i.e., *visited team* doing a home match) and a *guest* (i.e., *visiting team* doing an away match; (66). Additionally, as a competition, a *football match* or *football competition* is compared to a *race* where *teams* or *players* are *runners* (67). Similarly, since *football matches* are sim-

ilar to other *games*, *matches* are sometimes referred to as *card games* where there are players, winners, losers, rivals, competition, etc. Thus, *teams* can shuffle cards like *humans* (68), and hence they can change results. Very rarely, some journalists think of *teams* as *magicians* who can fix a situation or treat bad luck. This happens when the winning team achieves a good result after a number of failures (69). In addition, in football discourse, teams are viewed as *metals*, and if they have *strong defenders*, it means they are solid like *steel* (70).

Table 7. Metaphors pertaining to headlines of the 1990s in Arriyadiyah football news headlines.

Arabic News Headlines	Literal Translation
65 <i>An outstanding performance is a work of art</i> الفن يناديكم ويباريس تهنيكم	Art is calling you and Paris congratulates you
66 <i>A football match is a meeting/visit</i> احتياطي تشلسي يروض الضيف	Chelsea reserve tames the <i>guest</i>
67 <i>A football match is a race</i> الفرنسية: شوط المباراة الأول جري على حبل مشدود	French newspaper: The first half of the match was a tightrope <i>run</i>
68 <i>A football match is a card game</i> مغمور يخلط أوراق الدوري الإيطالي	An unknown team <i>shuffles</i> the Italian League <i>cards</i>
69 <i>A team is a magician</i> المتصدر (يفك) نحس ال 10 سنوات خارج أرضه	The top team <i>heals bad luck</i> that extends over 10 years outside its homeland
70 <i>A team is a metal</i> أرسنال بالدفاع الفولاذي ومانشستر يونايتد بالهجوم الجارف	Arsenal with a <i>solid</i> defense and Manchester United with a sweeping attack

There are a few metaphors that describe football writing in 2022–2024. For example, *football* is sometimes associated with *drama*. *Players* are *actors*, and the *football pitch* is the *stage* (72). *Events* in a football match are thought of as being part of a *scenario* (71). More notably, some teams are referred to by what their country is popular for. For example,

a *victory* by the *Argentinian* and the *Brazilian teams* has been conceptualized as a *celebration* where *players* are *dancers* (73) who can dance and make their opponents dance with them after beating them and showing some football skills on the pitch (see Table 8).

Table 8. Metaphors pertaining to 2022–2024 headlines in Arriyadiyah football news headlines.

Arabic News Headlines	Literal Translation
71 <i>Football is drama</i> بعد 20 عاما.. المغرب يكرر سيناريو كوريا الجنوبية	After 20 years.. Morocco repeats the South Korean <i>scenario</i>
72 <i>A football match is a celebration</i> صربيا وسلوفينيا.. ميونيخ مسرح «ديربي» يوغسلافي	Serbia and Slovenia.. Munich, Yugoslavian “Derby” <i>Theater</i>
73 <i>A football match is a celebration</i> ميسي يرقص كرواتيا على التانجو	Messi makes the Croatians <i>dance</i> the tango

As shown above, *war*, as a source domain, contributes immeasurably to football discourse through a huge number of metaphorical associations to help football fans understand various football elements. Similarly, *fight* and *violence* metaphors are well-recognized by Saudi journalists because of the similarity between the domains of *football* and *fighting*. Nevertheless, some other associations pertinent to *entertainment* gained ground in the last two years because of a number of social reforms initiated because of the Saudi Vision 2030.

4.3. Results of the Quantitative Analysis

As for the quantitative analysis, **Table 9** shows significant changes in the types of source domains used to describe

football in the two time periods. Using Pearson's chi-square test, a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 51.074$, $df = 26$, $p = 0.002$) was found between the two time periods and the various types of conceptual metaphors. However, as observed in the table, 61.1% of the cells had expected values less than 5, making the chi-square test less reliable. Therefore, Fisher's exact test was employed for a more accurate analysis. After conducting Fisher's exact tests on all the 27 categories of conceptual metaphor and adjusting for multiple comparisons using the Bonferroni correction (adjusted significance threshold = $0.05 \div 27 = 0.001852$), the analysis reveals a highly significant change in frequency ($p < 0.001852$, significant after Bonferroni correction) for the category of *Football is war* ($p = 0.000423$).

Table 9. Pearson's chi-square results of the association between the two time periods and the types of conceptual metaphor.

#	Types of Conceptual Metaphor	The Late 1990s	2022–2024	Total
1	Teams are human beings	47 (61%)	30 (39%)	77 (100%)
2	Football is war	15 (30%)	35 (70%)	50 (100%)
3	A football competition is a journey	21 (47.7%)	23 (52.3%)	44 (100%)
4	Football is violence	18 (45%)	22 (55%)	40 (100%)
5	A football match is a boxing bout	7 (43.8%)	9 (56.3%)	16 (100%)
6	Players are animals	9 (56.3%)	7 (43.8%)	16 (100%)
7	Football is hunting	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	13 (100%)
8	Football is school	10 (83.3%)	2 (16.7%)	12 (100%)
9	Football teams and competitions are buildings	10 (83.3%)	2 (16.7%)	12 (100%)
10	Football is nature	5 (45.5%)	6 (54.5%)	11 (100%)
11	Football is food	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
12	A football match is a duel	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	8 (100%)
13	Football is farming	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	8 (100%)
14	Teams/players/matches are objects	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (100%)
15	Football is gold/money	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
16	Teams are haunted	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5 (100%)
17	Teams/players are kings	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
18	A football match is a meeting/visit	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
19	A football match is a celebration	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
20	Football is drama	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
21	A football match is a card game	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
22	A football match is a race	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
23	Players are machines	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
24	Players are musicians	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
25	A team is a magician	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
26	A team is a metal	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
27	An outstanding performance is a work of art	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
	Total	192(53.2%)	169 (46.8%)	361 (100%)

Pearson's chi-square = 51.074, $df = 26$, p -value = 0.002**

Table 1 shows that there were 15 occurrences (7.81%) in football news headlines of the late 1990s compared to 35 occurrences (20.71%) in 2022–2024 headlines. There was an increase of 12.90% with an odds ratio (3.08), indicat-

ing significantly higher odds in 2022–2024 headlines. This means that *Football is war* was about 3.08 times more likely to occur in 2022–2024 news headlines compared to their counterparts in the late 1990s. Several conceptual metaphors

showed substantial numerical changes in frequency between the two time periods, but they do not reach the statistical significance threshold. For example, *Teams are human beings* decreased notably from 24.48% to 17.75% ($p = 0.124594$), while *Football is violence* increased from 9.38% to 13.01% ($p = 0.314598$), and *A football competition is a journey* increased from 10.94% to 13.61% ($p = 0.519544$). These non-significant yet sizable shifts suggest potential evolving trends in football discourse.

Other less important shifts affect the use of certain conceptual metaphors, namely metaphors based on the association between *football* and *hunting*, *football* and *school*, and *football* and *buildings*, leading to some decrease in use over time. However, such shifts are not significant after Bonferroni correction ($p > 0.05$). Based on the above-mentioned results, one assumes that the association between *football* and *war* or *football* and *violence* has become stronger over time. Further, the typical framing of football in terms of journey persists to continue in football writing.

5. Discussion

The present study aims to explore how Saudi journalists conceptualize football in two time periods, and it also identifies the differences and similarities between utilized source domains. Different words and phrases have been borrowed from different source domains to build various metaphorical associations to better depict the target domain of football and its elements. Results show that football is commonly associated with war, journeys, human beings, and violence in both time periods. Further, as indicated by the results, metaphorical associations with drama and celebrations have only appeared in 2022–2024 headlines. On the other hand, comparing football to works of art, visits, metals, magic, card games, and races is peculiar to football news headlines of the 1990s. Generally speaking, a wide variety of source domains have been identified, and only in news headlines, which indicates that Saudi football news journalists tend to rely on metaphors to attract readers' attention and create a comprehensible experience for football enthusiasts^[12]. More notably, compared to English, the main language of football^[17], Arabic allows for an endless number of metaphorical associations^[12]. Hence, about 19 of the source domains have been employed in Arriyadiyah in the

two periods besides 8 domains describing one time period but not the other.

Further, football is an integral part of life in Saudi Arabia. The variety and number of source domains found in Saudi football writing are even more than those identified by Alzawaydeh and Alghazo^[12]. Lakoff and Johnson^[36] highlight that using many metaphors to understand one experience (i.e., football) is predictable, as one domain may help understand one aspect of the experience but not the other. Further, employing a wide variety of metaphors helps promote the news item, so a company can sell its product (i.e., ensuring more online subscriptions; reference^[26]). Hence, the source domains utilized in a headline do not semantically relate to one another in terms of Frame Semantics (i.e., a theory developed by Fillmore in which concepts are viewed in terms of a coherent structure). Nevertheless, they can be interpreted in terms of the Saudi context^[47] since metaphor is so pervasive in culture and language^[36]. Indeed, football was introduced to Saudis earlier than other games.

All the identified domains have been clearly established in previous studies (e.g.,^[12–16, 26]). This is mainly because they are conventionalized in almost every language. Nonetheless, the frequency of some specific domains in Arriyadiyah allows for some critical ideological investigation^[48]. For example, one can trace a slight shift in how Saudi football news journalists conceptualize football. Some domains (i.e., drama and dance) concerned with the aesthetic value of football appeared only in 2022–2024 headlines. A similar finding has been reported by Alkio^[25] in the analysis of the 2018 Guardian match news reports which suggests that this shift is a universal one. The shift to art domains is also due to the interest of the Saudi Government and its people in investing in different types of art as part of the Saudi Vision 2030^[49]. Though some might argue that magic, appearing as a source domain in headlines of the 1990s, is a form of art, some researchers (e.g., reference^[15]) hardly think of it as such.

Results reveal that war and violence-pertinent metaphors will continue to dominate football discourse. The prevalence of human, war, and violence-related metaphors in football writing has been confirmed by previous studies on Arabic and English^[12]. More specifically, the pervasiveness of war metaphors in football writing has been outlined in a number of studies (e.g., references^[37, 39]). Framing *football*

in terms of *war* activates an endless number of mappings or associations^[39], and it is elaborated using a wider range of linguistic expressions. However, the structure of the target domain restricts the number of mappings established between the target and the source domains^[30]. For instance, for war metaphors, a large number of associations have been given. Thus, war metaphors have been conventionalized in football writing. In other words, many language users can easily and unconsciously draw football metaphors from *war*^[15, 50]. Actually, the relationship between *football* and *war* is bidirectional, where each domain feeds the corresponding domain^[15]. Thus, war and, in general, fight-related metaphors are more common than others. Since metaphors are experientially motivated, fight-related metaphors, in essence, help preserve the “image-schematic structure”^[51] of the target domain of football.

Framing football in relation to drama, music, journeys, food, arts, etc., has been outlined by many studies examining German, Croatian, Bosnian, and Austrian football newspapers. This, in turn, suggests the universality of such associations^[7]. Conceptualizing football in terms of drama is meant to promote football as a special type of activity, as outlined by Kövecses^[37] and Lewandowski^[15]. However, referring to football as an act of dancing is used in reference to the Brazilian and Argentinian teams because they are notable for the samba dance and tango, respectively. This finding has been confirmed by Lewandowski^[15] in his examination of English and Polish data arguing that such metaphors are meant to highlight players’ technical abilities and their superb skills. On the other hand, results show that journey metaphors will continue to be capable of accommodating football analogies. They are related to the more general association between *purposes* and *destinations*^[15, 48]. Since the human experience in both is similar, there are paths, goals, travelers, hurdles, sailors, drivers, passengers, etc. More specifically, such journey components have been used in Saudi football headlines to better construe competitions, tournaments, and matches, etc.

Relating football to other types of games such as races, card games, duels, boxing bouts, sailing vessels, etc., has been confirmed by previous studies because of the similarity between football and other types of games^[13]. Boxing is known for its history, clear rules, and competitiveness. Thus, many components of boxing have been borrowed to

understand abstract elements of football^[13]. It is an important contributor to football writing. On the other hand, track athletics (i.e., racing) have also been used in football writing to highlight the intensity of the game (e.g., tightrope run). Apparently, football is a tense game^[12]. As for sailing ships, verbs (e.g., يركب [rides]) denoting the domain of sailing ships have been categorized as examples of human attribution, but they can also exemplify instances of the journey metaphor. It has been noted that associating sailing vessels with football emphasizes how competitions can be very difficult^[14]. As shown above, conceptualizing football using other games is more common in headlines of the 1990s because some games (i.e., card games and races) were very popular among Saudis in the 1990s before turning them into electronic games. Generally, football writing borrows source domains of sports that are well-established in history^[14]. Thus, source domains pertinent to basketball and digital games never appear in Saudi football news headlines.

Comparing headlines written in the 1990s with those of 2022–2024, the researcher found that the source domains of hunting and building are more common in headlines of the 1990s than in 2022–2024 headlines. However, construing superiority in football performance in terms of royal power gains prominence in 2022–2024 headlines, especially after Messi won the 2022 World Cup and wore a bisht (i.e., a cloak worn by sheiks and men on special occasions). Additionally, hunting, as a hobby, was more popular in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s than nowadays. In the past, there were a few restrictions on hunting and hunting grounds^[52]. As for metaphors based on building or construction, Saudis were more involved in building and designing their houses in the past than nowadays. Thus, borrowing from such source domains for 1990s headlines is well-justified.

There are certain domains used in Saudi football headlines, but they characterize people of another culture. For example, in this study, domains of mining, harvesting, and farming are employed to understand titles, goals, points, championships, players, desires, and records. Krisnawati^[13] refers to such domains as interrelated and deeply rooted in Indonesian culture. Similarly, such conceptual resources have contributed analogies to Saudi football news headlines, which suggests that Saudi journalists are aware of their readers and their diverse life experiences. Moreover, establishing football metaphors on the basis of machines is mainly for

the German team. As noted by Lewandowski^[15] on Polish football news reports, selecting specific source domains for football metaphors is not done at random but determined by culture, as Germany is known for making efficient machines. Hence, the machine-football metaphor denotes how collectively and efficiently the German team can function on the pitch.

Saudi football journalists used a number of linguistic expressions that are peculiar to Arab culture. For example, the specific use of the word ‘awakening’ in headlines of the 1990s reflects an important period (i.e., 1960s–1980s) in Saudi politics that is marked by a movement known as the ‘Awakening Movement.’ This social movement triggers some social changes, and its effect extended until the 2000s^[53]. Further, the expression of ‘washing away shame’ in headlines of the 1990s is used in Arabic to refer to acts of killing someone after finding them guilty of adultery or something shameful. Such acts of violence usually target women, and they were common in some Arab countries, besides Pakistan and Afghanistan, in the 80s and 90s, and they became known as honor killings^[54–56]. Likewise, suicide missions, where perpetrators sacrifice themselves for a cause, were common in news reports in the 1990s and 2000s^[57, 58]. Reference to such missions is given in football news headlines of the 1990s. On the other hand, one 2022–2024 headline uses the Palestinian uprising or Intifada that happened in the late 1980s and extended to the 1990s and again in 2000 to 2005^[59] to refer to achievements that do not last. Such expressions were commonly used in the news to describe events happening in some Arab countries. Apparently, football metaphors have been employed to convey thought and culture^[1] and, more specifically, what is predictable in the political news at some point in history. This illustrates the relationship between the language of football and that of politics^[60, 61]. Political and football news are the most read and discussed by people^[60]. More importantly, football language is used to understand politics and the opposite is true.

As manifested in the results, football elements that are meant for conceptual associations can be as straightforward as players and matches or as difficult as eliminations from tournaments or winning a few consecutive matches. Conceptual metaphors are unitized to enhance comprehension of football but sometimes in a compelling or forceful way. Journalists can create very powerful images of foot-

ball in a way that one can feel suspense. The language of football assimilates metaphor vocabulary to the extent that such metaphorical expressions are never considered to be borrowed from other disciplines or domains^[26].

6. Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications

The study aims to explore how Saudis conceptualize football in news headlines drawn from *Arriyadiyah*, a Saudi newspaper specializing in sports news. Following a diachronic approach, the researcher found that war metaphors, besides those pertaining to human beings, are pervasive in headlines. However, a variety of source domains have been used to better understand football which indicates the importance of this game in Saudi Arabia. More notably, for Saudis, football is not only war. Saudi journalists draw from various conceptual resources that are well-established in history. Some common terms and expressions used in the political news at some point in time have been borrowed to depict football in a powerful manner. Peculiar to 2022–2024 football headlines is the emergence of art-oriented domains, which emphasizes that football is not only war and that it can be described from an aesthetic perspective. This suggests a universal shift in how football is conceptualized. Football should be appreciated as any form of art. It should not be conceptualized strictly from a technical perspective.

It is important to note that the present study is not without limitations. The first limitation is the focus on only one Saudi sports newspaper, *Arriyadiyah*. Hence, findings cannot be generalized to other newspapers or news outlets. Further, headlines of the late 1990s were collected from whatever was available from the archives of *Arriyadiyah* in a national library. On the other hand, the corpus of 2022–2024 headlines was compiled from the Global News section of *Arriyadiyah*. Hence, future research might follow one way to collect data to make sure that the sample is representative. Moreover, the present study has important implications for football news journalists and scholars interested in the study of metaphorical language. For example, it would be intriguing if future research examines the use of conceptual metaphors in news reports and commentaries in Arabic, as the latter are spontaneous compared to the former. Further, the functions of metaphors deserve some further research because headlines

are meant to entice readers, but in commentaries and news reports, metaphors might serve a different function. More importantly, conceptual metaphors might be explored in relation to the theory of Frame Semantics to avoid any overlap of source domains. Similarly, it would also be insightful if one examines how conceptual metaphors, embedded in news headlines, are further developed in news reports and whether or not conceptual metaphors of a news report semantically belong to the same frame. In one news report, a number of source domains might be employed in a coherent way, as an instance of mixed metaphor, to strengthen one's argument and support their stance. Exploring mixed metaphor in football news reports might reveal important results in relation to discourse coherence and underlying social and economic conditions. More notably, as football commentaries are produced spontaneously, one might find that metaphor clusters serve an important function besides grabbing readers' attention. For example, they may make a piece of writing more dynamic. In other words, readers or listeners are prompted to extend or link evoked metaphors. Additionally, critical discourse analysis of headlines and news reports might reveal different results. As for football journalists, it is recommended to employ creative metaphors in headlines, news reports, and commentaries to grab readers' attention to the news item and enhance their understanding of football. Metaphorical associations that are pertinent to one's culture and based on trending social and political news are subject to recipients' acceptance, elaboration, and extension. Such associations may become conventionalized in football discourse.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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