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## The Metaphors Used in France Football Magazine

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### Abstract

This article analyzes metaphors within 'figures of speech' that discuss the top six leagues in the UEFA rankings in a French football magazine *France Football*. These articles were chosen because they generated the most news items on the magazine's website and because high ratings of a respective league tended to confirm its quality. It was found that metaphors are mainly refer to 5 elements in football: 1) football players and coaches; 2) football teams; 3) football techniques; 4) football devices; 5) the circumstances that occur in football matches and that they are used to promote a deeper impression to the reader about diverse football elements as the writer highlights an element by making it appear more important than perhaps it is. The use of metaphorical expressions in football terminology becomes one of the factors that make this sport news increasingly popular. These forms of figure of speech are most often found in literary works, but it was also found that these devices are becoming increasingly important in other forms of writing for various purposes.

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## Introduction

According to *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA), football is one of the most popular sports in the world (History, n.d), with approximately 250 million football players and more than 1.3 billion people interested in the sport. According to Koller dan Brändle (2002/2015), football originated from England in the 19th century, and it was highly influenced by the social development during the Industrial Revolution. FIFA also states that the first football association was established in England in 1863 (History, n.d). Over time, the sport had spread to other countries around the world, including the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Argentina, Uruguay, and New Zealand (History, n.d). Eventually, mass media played an active role in the



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development and spread of the sport to other countries.

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) stated that a society tends to develop a certain addiction to mass media in order to meet their need for information regarding politics, sports, entertainment, etc. In this regard, mass media has undoubtedly played an essential role in the development of football. Boyle and Haynes (2004) mentioned that football and television have become inseparable. They also added that mass media has really taken advantage of the demand from football fans. As a result, football-related news reports have become more diverse in order to attract as many readers as possible.

In regard to print media, the figurative language style is employed to garner the most attention. For instance, note the simile in the following excerpt from *FranceFootball* magazine on April 16, 2016: *Et que dire de Brandao... L'ex-Stéphanois a traversé le match comme un fantôme* ('And about Brandao... the former football player of Saint-Étienne that played football like a ghost'). In addition to the use of similes, metaphors are frequently used by football journalists to denote the basic elements of the sport.

In linguistics, metaphors have more functions than merely making a sentence more attractive. Since the metaphorical element easily blends into the language, communication, thoughts, and attitudes of individuals (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), any word can be used as a metaphor. According to Cristea (2001), a metaphor is a form of expression based on the likeness in which a word or phrase literally denotes one object or idea that is used in place of another. In addition, a *sémème* is a unit of meaning (transmitted or intended) that gives impression to a word (Mortureux, 2001, p. 68). As an example, Mortureux (2001) explains that the meaning components of *chaise* (chair) include: "to sit," "made from stiff material," "for one person," "with legs," and "able to lean on." These components can be drawn from the denotative meaning in the dictionary, the connotative meaning and from our own experience in life. Moreover, in metaphors, there are similarities in the meaning components of a word, which can be used to better explain certain aspects. To help understand the meaning of football terms, the authors have used the book *Simple Football* (2007) written by Robert Cohen, and *Le Petit Robert Micro* (2013) ecumenical dictionary to find the denotative meaning of each metaphorical expression.

Rarasati (2006) studied metaphors in *On-line Kicker* football magazines for her undergraduate thesis. She tried to describe the players and football team of a country based on semantic and syntactic aspects. There were 28 metaphors describing the team and players with noun metaphors. The football team and players have their different characters and specialization that they have their own nick names in metaphorical forms by the magazine. Another previous study was led by Khairina (2012). She compared between metaphors for Indonesian football magazine, *Bola* and German football magazine, *Kicker*. This undergraduate study used the same theory to analyze 29 metaphors: 18 in German and 11 in Indonesian. Khairina found that metaphors used are war vocabulary.

Therefore, the present study examines the use of metaphors and how they are applied to describe the basic elements of football to those interested in the sport. The data for this study is obtained from the March and April 2016 issues of *FranceFootball* magazine. These issues were chosen since the metaphors were only selected from the articles that featured the six leagues with the highest 2015/2016 *Union of European Football Associations* (UEFA) ranking and the most news exposure, namely: Spain's *La Liga*, Germany's *Bundesliga*, England's *Premier League*, Italy's *Serie A*, Portugal's *Primeira Liga*, and France's *Ligue 1*.

## TYPES OF METAPHORS

In his book titled, *Structures Signifiantes et Relations Sémantiques en Français Contemporain* (2001), Cristea categorizes metaphors into three types: 1) *La métaphore nominale* (noun metaphors); 2) *La métaphore verbale* (verb metaphors); and 3) *La métaphore adjective* (adjective metaphors). This section will discuss the types of metaphors that appear in *FranceFootball*, based on this categorization. In order to understand the elements of football denoted by the metaphors, the *Semantic Triangle* of Ogden and Richards (1923) is used. In this

triangle, there are three components: symbol, reference, and referents (as shown on Figure 1).

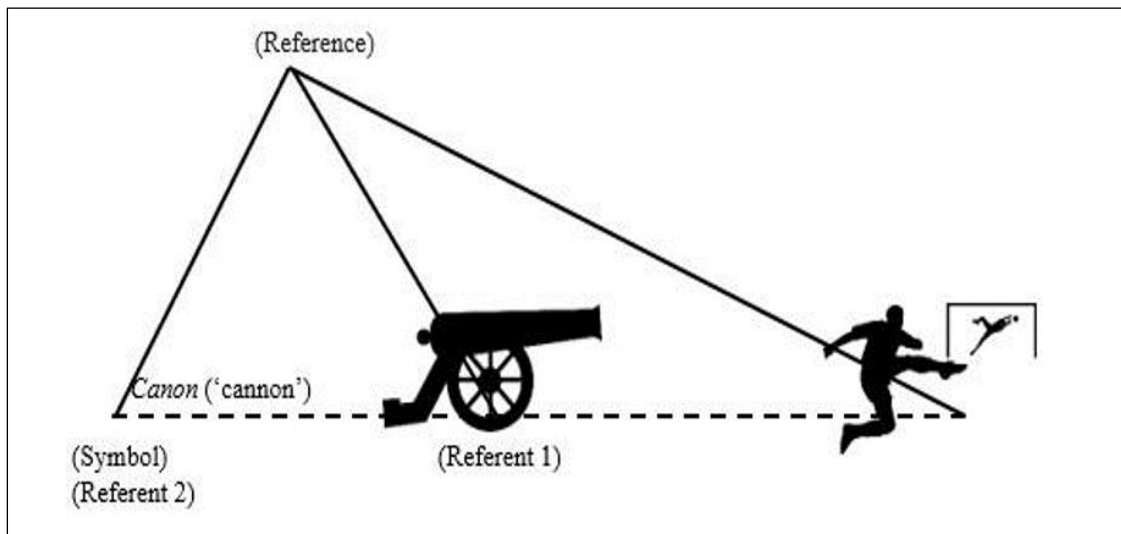


Figure 1 Weapon used to shoot a projectile from a long distance

This example is taken from the March 6, 2016 issue of *FranceFootball* in which the metaphorical word *canon* (cannon) is used in the following sentence: *Les Milanais ont dû courir après le score sur un coup de canon de Duncan*. This sentence states that AC Milan was left behind by Sassuolo after Alfred Duncan shot the ball into the goal net with his strong kick. By referring to the semantic triangle, the word *canon* symbolizes the words “strong kick.” Then, “the weapon used to shoot a projectile” is the *Reference* of the word, while the word *canon* constitutes *Referent 1*. From this analysis, it can be stated that the meaning of *canon* has changed into a long-distance shot, which becomes *Referent 2*. In this case, the meaning components of *canon* include: “a heavy weapon,” “to shoot a projectile,” and “from a long distance.” As previously mentioned, the ball kicked by Duncan was so strong and so far from the opponent’s goal net that the speed of the ball and the distance covered resembled a projectile that was launched from a cannon.

The following section will discuss several metaphorical words found in *FranceFootball* magazine. They are categorized into Cristea’s (2001) three types of metaphorical expressions: noun metaphors, verb metaphors, and adjective metaphors.

### Noun Metaphors

In *FranceFootball*, noun metaphors are frequently used to describe the basic components of football. For instance, between March and April 2016, nine noun metaphors were found: *canon* (cannon), *diamant* (diamond), *héros* (heroes), *scénario* (scenario), *cage* (cage), *baptême* (baptism), *technician* (technician), *géant* (giant), and *renard* (fox).

*Diamant* appeared in the following sentence on March 20, 2016: ***Diamant*** brut à polir, l’attaquant formé à l’Olympique lyonnais excelle dans les appels à la limite du hors-jeu. Pour suivre Anthony Martial, il faut s’accrocher. This sentence states that Martial is one of the most talented football players in his generation. However, the phrase *diamant brut à polir* (“a diamond that needs to be polished”) indicates that Martial is a good young football player with skills that could be further developed. In terms of its meaning components, the word *diamant* includes: “valuable,” “the most remarkable,” “the hardest,” “having a high price,” and “always protected by the owner.” Thus, the meaning components of “valuable,” “having a high price,” and “always protected by the owner” all refer to Martial, who is considered a valuable football player for his team. In regard to the first two meaning components, Martial’s current transfer price (according to transfermarkt.com) is 32 million Euros. However, Martial, who is currently playing for Manchester United, was transferred from his former club, AS Monaco, for 50 million Euros. This figure is undoubtedly very high for a football player who is only 20 years of age. As for the meaning component of “always protected by the owner,” his outstanding performance this season with

Manchester United is the main reason why the team does its best to retain him.

Meanwhile *héros* was found in an article published on March 5, 2016: *Il a fallu attendre la 55e minute pour voir la rencontre basculer en faveur de Leicester. Evidemment grâce à l'un des héros de la saison, Riyad Mahrez*. The article discussed how Mahrez helped his team, Leicester City, to win by scoring the only goal in a game against Watford. Moreover, on Leicester's official website it was mentioned that Mahrez had until then played 35 times, scored 17 goals with a further 11 assists. Leicester finally succeeded as English Premier League champions in the season 2015/2016 thanks to Mahrez who played extraordinarily that season. From the explanation, it can be seen that *héros* has transferred its meaning to a player who became the subject of the talk in the article, namely Riyad Mahrez. Judging from its usage, *héros* has the following meanings: "legendary character", "brave character", and "extraordinary experience". Looking at the above explanation it can be seen also that the meaning component of "experiencing extraordinary events" has been transferred to Mahrez. From that meaning component, it is known that an *héros* is someone who has experienced an extraordinary incident. Similarly, with Mahrez, he had similarly had an extraordinary season in 2015/2016. With 17 goals and 11 assists, Mahrez was Leicester's second top scorer that season and the highest rank in achieving Mahrez was also included in the Player of the Year (PFA Player of the Year) Nomination for the Season 2015/2016 (PFA Awards 2016). All these achievements made him similar to *un héros* in the articles of *FranceFootball* magazine because, Leicester was not a club reckoned as a contender for the English Premier League title. However, thanks to Mahrez's brilliant games throughout season 2015/2016, Leicester succeeded to become English Premier League champions and consequently Mahrez was considered a hero (*héros*) by Leicester City.

The next emerging metaphor is the *scénario* which is taken from an article written on March 2, 2016: *Marcelo Brozovic a signé un doublé et grandement contribué au scénario fou de cette rencontre*. In the original article, it was explained that the club of Marcelo Brozovic, Internazionale, who had suffered a 3-0 defeat in their first game against Juventus in the Italian Cup Tournament had to score at least 3 goals in their second match against Juventus if they were to qualify for the Italian Cup final. It was certainly not an easy task for Internazionale to recover a three-goal deficit against a big team like Juventus. Then the above sentence described how Brozovic scored two goals to help his team equalize to 3-3. It can then be seen that the sentence diverted the meaning of the word *scénario* to a football device describing a team plan to win a game. To face a match, a football team must have a proper plan for the game. Judging from its usage, the meaning components of *scénario* consists of "description of action", "collection of technical information", "dialogue", "a story" and "made by a writer". The meaning of "action description" explains that a team's plan to win a game certainly contains a description of how players in the team need to play to achieve victory like a screenplay in a movie. Furthermore, the meaning component of "a collection of technical information" explains that the team's plan must contain a collection of technical information such as who the player will play against; who is the captain; in which positions will the players be, etc. This is certainly similar to what is in a scenario that contains a collection of technical information for actors in a movie. Finally, the meaning of the component "made by a writer" explains that a football team's plan to win the game is of course created by a coach who trains the team. Just like a scenario written by a *scénariste* or a scriptwriter that is played by actors, a football team coach also makes a well-considered plan that is to be used by his players on the pitch.

Furthermore, the metaphorical expression, *cage*, in the sentence: *L'Italien a gardé sa cage inviolée à sept reprises en dix-neuf matches cette saison* (FranceFootball, March 5, 2016). From this sentence, it is described that the Italian goalkeeper (Gianluigi Donnarumma) has kept his goal-sheet clean for 7 games in 17 appearances. However, what makes the article interesting is that the author uses the word *cage* to replace the word *poteau de but* which is the equivalent of the word "goal". Judging by its usage, *cage* has meaning components "closed place", "used to enclose", "enclosed by a fence or boundary" and "forbid something to enter". Looking at the explanations mentioned above, the word *cage* has transferred its meaning to a device in a football match connected with the goal. According to the rules of match play made by FIFA in 2012, the goal must

consist of two straight poles and a horizontal pole made of wood or metal in the middle of the goal line and fitted with a net behind it. From this definition of the goal by FIFA, the meaning components of *cage* that can be transferred on to 'goal' includes "there is a fence or boundary" and "forbid something to enter". The "fence or border" meaning means that a goal is blocked by the line (goal line) and also a fence (net and goalpost) that is very similar to a *cage* or enclosure. Then, the meaning component "forbid something to enter" explains that a goal is certainly guarded by a goalkeeper who always tries to repel every ball that would go into the goal, just as a *cage* or enclosure is always closed to the things that are trying to get into it.

The next metaphor found is *baptême*. This metaphor appears in the phrase *A 23 ans, l'Autrichien David Alaba est déjà un pilier du Bayern mais surtout l'un des meilleurs joueurs défensifs d'Europe. (...) Six mois après son baptême à un poste de latéral gauche que LVG lui a fait découvrir, il remporte le doublé Coupe-Championnat avec les Bavarois* which was an article published on March 6, 2016. In the article it was described that at this time David Alaba was transformed into one of the players on which his club, Bayern Munchen, relied and had been further described as one of the best defenders in Europe today. The dramatic improvement in Alaba's performance was also due in part to a positional change made by his coach, Louis van Gaal (LVG). Alaba who previously played as a midfielder, was moved to the left back by LVG to later become the mainstay of the German team. From the explanation, it can be seen that the meaning of *baptême* has been transferred to one of the circumstances that occur in football referring to a change of position of the player. *Baptême* itself has meaning components of such as "holy ceremonies", "to cleanse the sins", "make the one who does it as a Christian", and "done by using holy water". However, looking at the above explanation, the meaning component *baptême* has been transferred to a change of position experienced by the player. It explains that someone is inducted in to the Christian faith and thus turn his or her status in to one of being a Christian. Similarly, Alaba, when van Gaal was still a Bayern Munich coach, his position was changed from before as a defensive midfielder became a left back. Thus, LGV inducted Alaba in to his new position and he went on to become one of their regular and most effective players.

Another metaphor contained in the *FranceFootball* magazine article is *technicien*. This metaphorical word appears in the sentence: *Massimiliano Allegri, l'entraîneur de la Juventus, a décidé de se passer de Patrice Evra et Paul Pogba. Mais le technicien peut se le permettre: sa formation s'est imposée 3-0 lors du match aller* in an article written on March 2, 2016. In this brief article, it was reported that the coach of Juventus decided not to let Evra and Pogba play in the game against Internazionale after they beat Internazionale 3-0 in the first game. But interestingly, in the article the word *technicien* is used to replace the word *entraîneur* (coach). In *Règlement du Brevet d'Entraîneur de Football* (2012) published by the French Football Association or *Fédération Française de Football* (FFF), it is explained that a football coach oversees all the safe training activities in a football club. It further explains that a football coach should develop a coaching plan within the club which he handles; directing team exercises, evaluating the results of training activities; designing and organizing team games; as well as participating in the communication and management of the club. Thus, from the explanation, the meaning of *technicien* has been transferred to one of the trainers discussed in the article, Massimiliano Allegri. In view of its usage, *technicien* has four meaning components, first "one who controls a technical science", second "one who controls the practical and economical instruments of a science", third "work under the command of engineers", and the fourth "sends instructions to under workers". The meaning components of "someone who mastered a technical science" explains that a coach is equated with *technicien* because the coach is the one who masters a certain science, that is the science of football coaching, just like a *technicien* who masters a certain technical science. Then, the meaning component of "one who controls the practical and economical instruments of a science" explains that a coach is a person who controls practical instruments (team practice) and economics (team finances) in the same way as a *technicien*. The meaning component of "work under the orders of engineers" explains that a coach also works under the orders of the football club president who hires him. This is certainly the same as a *technician* who works under the orders of an engineer. Finally, the meaning component of "sending instructions to workers under them" explains that a

football coach gives instructions to players who are trained both at the time of training and during matches, just as technicians give instructions to the workers below them. These components of meaning equate to make the word *technicien* (technician) often used by magazines or football papers in replacement of the word *entraîneur* (coach).

The next metaphor found in the *FranceFootball* magazine article is *géant*. This metaphor appears in an article published on March 22, 2016 in the sentence: *Les chiffres parlent encore: sur les 42 rencontres où il a été buteur, le SLB s'est toujours imposé. Le géant lisboète a déjà bien rentabilisé un joueur laissé libre par les Ché et qui lui a coûté, en 2014, 1.3 millions d'euros en "services d'intermédiaire"*. This does not focus exclusively on club SLB, but there is some explanation that the SLB was at the top of the Portuguese League. Further information on SLB is obtained from the official website that the SLB had so far been the Portuguese League champions 34 times, Portuguese Cup champions 25 times, and European Champions League winners twice, which diverted the meaning of *géant* to refer to the football club SLB. *Géant* itself has meaning components of "someone who has a very large body size", "has great strength" and "cannot be matched by ordinary people". It can then be seen that the meaning component of "having great power" explains that *géant* can be a person of thing that has great power. As mentioned above, SLB is one of the great and powerful clubs in Portugal. With the achievements of being 34 times Portuguese League champions, 25 times Portuguese Cup winners and twice European Champions League winners, SLB certainly has great players and coaches and because of their consequent great strength and power they have made considerable achievements in club and international football tournaments. Then, the meaning component of "incomparable to ordinary humans" explains that *géant* is a figure whose powers cannot be matched by ordinary people and in context, ordinary people has been diverted into ordinary clubs whose ability is mediocre, while SLB as one of the big clubs in Portugal has an above-average team strength that other ordinary clubs will certainly find it hard to compete against. This is proven by their first position in the Portuguese League standings (Classificação detalhada, Jornada 30).

The last nominal metaphor that appears in the football magazine article *FranceFootball* is *renard*. This metaphor appears in an article published on May 13, 2016 in the sentence: *Miroslav Klose, excellent au cours de la victoire 3-0 de la Lazio à Palerme (deux buts de renard des surfaces, une passe décisive à Felipe Anderson)*. The sentence describes how Klose scored two victory goals for his team, Lazio. Klose is known as one of the best attackers in Europe. Although he is not young anymore, Klose is still able to trouble the defensive player of opposing teams. In addition, Klose is also known as the all-time leading scorer in the World Cup with 16 goals (Lynch, 2014). From the explanation, the meaning component of *renard* "hunter" has been transferred to Klose. The meaning element of "hunter" explains that as an assailant, Klose is in charge of scoring as many goals as possible. Like a *renard* or a fox that hunts its prey, Klose also hunts prey that is the opponent's goal. He will always try throughout the game to hunt for the opponent's goal in order to score as many goals as possible. Furthermore, the meaning component "cunning" has also been transferred to Klose. It explains that Klose is a cunning attacker like a *renard*. In this case, the intention of being cunning is that Klose can always fool defensive players and finally be free from the guard of the enemy. Then, the meaning component "elusive" has also been transferred to Klose, explaining that Klose is an elusive attacker. Klose is known as an elusive attacker because of his very good idea of placement position. His expertise makes him known as one of the most dangerous attackers ever to come from Germany. Thanks to his skills, Klose has scored more than 330 goals throughout his football career.

### Verb Metaphors

Verb metaphors are also used in *FranceFootball* to describe certain components of the sport. For example, between March and April 2016, two verb metaphors were found: *fusiller* and *crucifier*. *Crucifier* appeared in the following sentence on April 25, 2016: *jusqu'à ce que Simone Zaza, entré en jeu 30 minutes plus tôt, ne crucifier Pepe Reina d'une frappe contrée de 25 m*. This sentence states that Simone Zaza, who joined the game in the second part of the match, scored a goal into Pepe Reina's net from 25 meters away. However, the most interesting part of the

sentence is when the author uses the word *crucifier* to explain how Zaza scored the goal. In terms of its meaning components, the word *crucifier* includes: “to tie one on a cross,” “to let one die on the cross,” and “to make one stand still or unable to move.” According to the sentence, the word *crucifier* was used to denote one technique in kicking the ball; that is, kicking the ball toward the opponent’s net and making the goalkeeper unable to move. More specifically, when a striker is aiming the ball toward the goal net, the goalkeeper will attempt to block the ball by spreading his arms as wide as possible, thus resembling a person being crucified. Hence, one of the meaning components of *crucifier*, i.e., “to tie one on a cross,” is associated with this kicking technique. In regard to the meaning component of “to make one stand still or unable to move,” if the technique is performed quickly and efficiently, the goalkeeper will (in a sense) be unable to move as he watches the ball hit the net.

The metaphorical verb *fusiller* appears in an article published on March 5, 2016 in the phrase *Pourtant, en début de rencontre, ses coéquipiers avaient fait le boulot pour depuis la douzième minute et un sublime center extérieur du pied droit de Jérémy Pied pour Valère Germain qui fusillait Dreyer de près (1-0, 12e)*. It should be noted that this sentence was written at the time of *imparfait* (past). In the sentence it was explained how the Nice players tried to score against Troyes. The result, in the 12th minute, Valère Germain scored after getting a pass from Jérémy Pied. However, the interesting thing about the phrase is the use of the word *fussiler* to describe how Germain’s ball kicking to score a goal. That is why the word *fussiler* in this article has diverted its meaning to a football playing technique of kicking the ball hard and accurately. An attacker who wants to score in the opponent’s goal has to kick the ball hard and accurately so that the enemy’s goalkeeper is unable to stop the ball from reaching the goal net. From the explanation above, the meaning component of “firing a rifle” has been diverted to an attacker’s technique that will kick the ball hard and accurately when he has an opportunity in front of the opposing goal. This kicking technique looks like shooting using a rifle because the ball kicked by the player is as hard and as accurate as a bullet coming out of a rifle.

### Adjective Metaphors

Adjective metaphors are also used in *FranceFootball* to describe aspects of the sport. For instance, between March and April 2016, one adjective metaphor was used: *muet* (mute). This metaphor appeared in the following sentence on April 9, 2016: *On commence presque à s’inquiéter pour Lionel Messi, muet depuis plus de six heures en Liga*. This sentence states how football fans nowadays have placed Lionel Messi in the spotlight, since he has been unable to score any goals after 360 minutes of match time in Spain’s *La Liga*. However, what is most interesting is that the author chose the word *muet* to explain Messi’s circumstance. In regard to its meaning components, the word *muet* includes: “the condition of being mute,” “not expressed in words,” and “no sound or voice produced.” According to this sentence, the word *muet* is associated with the condition of a football player who is unable to score a goal. It is important to note that a striker (like Lionel Messi) is a player whose main objective is to score goals for his team (Cohen, 2007:20). If he fails to do so, then he is considered a “mute” player. Thus, the meaning component of “no sound or voice produced” explains Messi’s situation since he cannot produce a single goal as a striker.

### Conclusion

The present study discussed the metaphors used in *FranceFootball* magazine as well as the elements of football that were represented by this figure of speech. Overall, three types of metaphors (noun, verb, and adjective metaphors) were used a total of 12 times between March and April 2016. In addition, four metaphorical words referred to a football player and coach, one metaphorical word referred to the football team, three metaphorical words referred to the football technique, two metaphorical words referred to the football equipment, and two metaphorical words referred to the condition during the football match. These findings are supported by the choice of metaphor’s type. Majority of metaphors are noun metaphors that describe the players, how they played and the coach. This study supports also the work of based on these findings, it

can be concluded that the metaphors were effectively used in the articles to describe the basic elements of the sport and promote the interests of the readers. As there is only one adjective metaphor, we can conclude that we can attract readers by all types of metaphor. The implication of the findings is that metaphorical expressions can be an effective way to promote a certain sport in print media.

Finally, there are two limitations of this study that must be noted. First, this study only focused on the use of metaphors by examining certain articles in a specific football magazine. Thus, future research should focus on the readers' responses/reactions to such writing as well as other examples of print media. Second, this study only analyzed the metaphors used to promote readers' interests in football. Thus, future studies should examine other aspects of the figurative language style and how they are used in mass media.

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