

MULTIMODALITY IN FOOTBALL FANS' BANTER ON TWITTER

BY

**Gabriel Adeyinka OKUNADE
(218562)
B.A. English (Ife), M. A. English (Ife)**

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Gabriel Adeyinka Okunade in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

Supervisor

A. B. Sunday

B. A., M. A., Ph. D (Ibadan)

Senior Lecturer

Department of English

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the Lord Jesus, the source and the giver of true wisdom.
All glory and honour belong to Him alone.

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ABSTRACT

Banter, a form of playful and humorous social communication, is deployed in football discourse on Twitter. Previous studies on banter focused largely on the social bonding function of banter in daily interaction and the workplace. However, little attention has been paid to the deployment of banter in football discourse on Twitter. Therefore, this study was designed to examine the use of banter on Twitter by football fans, with a view to determining banter categories, banter strategies, linguistic and non-linguistic devices and politeness strategies employed in the discourse.

Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar, complemented by M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's Face Theory, was adopted as the framework. The descriptive design was used. Twitter was purposively selected because it contains a large corpus of data on football banter through its football Twitter community platform. One hundred and fifty Tweeter handles were purposively selected because their tweets deployed both verbal and non-verbal modes. One hundred and fifty banter tweets, one from each of the Tweeter handles, were purposively selected. The selected banter tweets were retrieved through the Twitter advance search platform. The data were subjected to multimodal discourse analysis.

Five categories of banter were identified: football fans-targeted banter, football players-targeted banter, football managers-targeted banter, football clubs-targeted banter and match officials-targeted banter. Football fans-targeted banter foregrounded defeat-induced emotional trauma, hopelessness, and fear and anxiety as subcategories. Football players-targeted banter was marked by unprofessionalism, professional incapability, incurable obsession, unachieved personal ambition and injury proneness. Football managers-targeted banter was indicated by ineptitude coaching and defeat-induced emotional torture. Football clubs-targeted banter was characterised with financial incapability and unsuccessful transfer. Match officials-targeted banter was marked by poor and biased officiating. Eight banter strategies were employed, namely posturing, gesturing, dressing, sarcasm, symbolisation, stereotyping, gazing and name-calling. Posturing targeted torturing, subordinating and slipping; while gesturing featured ridiculing poor officiating, fighting racism, ridiculing boasting and mocking constant failure. Dressing was used for questioning professional ability; sarcasm for poor decision-making and unmerited awards; and symbolisation for mocking lack of achievement and incessant defeat. Stereotyping concerned discriminating against dressing style and naming system; gazing focused on scorning and teasing; while name-calling involved blackmailing. The banter categories and strategies were marked by transactional and non-transactional action and reactionary processes, and conceptual and symbolic representations. The linguistic devices employed in the banter were coinages, anecdotes, allusion, sarcasm, hyperbole and pun. Coinages were used for identity damaging; anecdotes were utilised for intimidating; sarcasm, pun and allusion were employed for mockery; while hyperbole was deployed for creating impossible scenarios for ridiculing. Off-record and positive politeness were used as face-saving strategies; while depicting emotional state, body-shaming, mocking professional failures, bald on-record acts were employed as face-threatening strategies.

Football banter on Twitter is marked with banter strategies, linguistic devices and politeness strategies aggressively deployed for ridiculing. There is need for policy and legislation formulation on use and control of social media.

Keywords: Banter strategies, Football banter, Politeness strategies, Twitter, Banter categories

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UEFA	-	Union of European Football Association
UCL	-	UEFA Champions League
EPL	-	English Premier League
PL	-	Premier League
FC	-	Football Club
EU	-	Europa League
RN	-	Right Now
GOAT	-	Greatest of All Times
FTA	-	Face Threatening Acts
BFTA	-	Blunt Face Threatening Acts
BSA	-	Body Shaming Act
VAR	-	Video Assistant Referee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Language, be it verbal or non-verbal, serves as a human communicative tool for the expression of emotions, thoughts or feelings. It is also a veritable tool in social and human interactions, as it is a core foundation upon which human and social interactions are anchored (Adeyanju, 2004). In addition, language, as a communicative tool in social interactions, can be used constructively or destructively (offensively or aggressively) by the interactants. When used constructively, it can help in building social bonding and in maintaining inter-personal relationships in social interactions (Norrick, 2007). However, when used destructively, it often has a negative emotional impact, which may lead to friction, aggression and conflict in social interactions (Culpeper, 2010).

Banter, as a mode of language in social interaction, is a human phenomenon which is understood to be a form of playful and humorous social communication designed to build social bonding and cohesion (Grainger, 2004; Norrick, 2007)). However, beyond its playful and humorous function, it can also be deployed as an aggressive and offensive social communication in certain contexts (Culpeper, 2010, Brown & Levinson, 1987). This suggests that banter, as a mode of communication in social interactions, can be positively used to build social bonding, rapport, solidarity and inter-personal relationship in social interactions (Norrick, 1993; Dynel, 2008), or negatively used to cause emotional harm, which may lead to friction and conflict in social interactions.

While banter has been investigated in the context of its social bonding function by scholars in different fields of study such as sociology and psychology and linguistics in workplaces and social groups (Plester & Sayer, 2007, Winkler-Reid, 2015 and Norrick, 1993), much attention has not been paid to its aggressive deployment in social discourse. As such, this study, apart from exploring the social bonding function of banter in the context of humour, also explores its aggressive use among football fans on social media.

The introduction of technological and digital tools as a result of multimedia technology has had a tremendous influence on modern communication and language use (Goudt, 2010). It has also influenced the way human and social interactions are being enacted. It has significantly led to the use of language in multiple communication modes as against only the verbal mode (Kress, 2013). For instance, football banter on social media, specifically on Twitter, is one aspect of social communication that has been greatly influenced by the introduction of technological and digital tools in social communication in the sense that it is characterised by the deployment of multimodal resources (verbal and non-verbal modes). This deployment of both verbal and non-verbal modes in banter discourse among football fans on social media has an affective significance in human communication and social interactions, in terms of its impact on the participants' emotions, feelings and mood.

Traditionally, before the advent of Internet technology, social interactions were usually based on physical social settings where physical contact could be initiated. However, with the introduction of multimedia technology, social and human interactions have gone beyond the conventional physical social settings to online or virtual communities where people express their emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas. One such virtual community where social interactions take place everyday is social media.

Social media provide platforms for different online communities of people to have social interactions (Zappavigna, 2012). A community where social interactions take place virtually is the community of football fans who usually take to social media, especially Twitter as a social interaction platform, to express their emotions, feelings and thoughts in the form of banter through the deployment of both verbal and non-verbal modes during and after football matches. Studies on banter have largely focused on the social bonding function of banter in daily interactions and the workplace. However, little attention has been paid to the deployment of banter in football discourse on Twitter. This study, therefore, investigates the use of banter on Twitter by football fans, with a view to examining banter categories, banter strategies, politeness strategies and linguistic and non-linguistic devices in the football discourse.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Football and banter discourses have enjoyed appreciable scholarly attention. For instance, scholars such as Crystal and Davy (1969), Ferguson (1983), Osisanwo

(1997), Chovanec (2006), Muller (2007), Gerhardt (2008), Rowe (2004) and Ademilokun (2011) have worked on football discourse with a focus on unscripted radio commentaries, English soccer commentaries, syntactic aspects in register variation in sports announcer talk and language of Nigerian university student football fans. Specifically, banter as a research domain has attracted scholarly attention from different fields such as psychology, sociology, linguistics and public relations. Additionally, from pragmatic domain, scholars have explored banter from a politeness or impoliteness perspective (Leech, 1983; Culpeper, 1996) and banter in the context of interpersonal relationships and humour (Nowik, 2007; Dynel, 2008). From other disciplines, such as sociology and psychology, banter has been investigated as a tool for social interactions in the workplace (Plester and Sayer, 2007) and banter as a tool for social bonding among people belonging to different speech communities (Boxer and Cortés-Condes, 1997)

In sum, existing studies on banter have interrogated banter in relation to its social bonding function in daily interactions, interpersonal relationships and the workplace. However, sufficient attention has not been paid to the deployment of banter in football discourse on Twitter and the social disintegration or conflict and crisis engineering function of banter in social interactions and human relations. The literature on banter has also largely focused on verbal-based banter while inadequate attention has not been given to the deployment of both verbal and non-verbal modes in banter discourse. Consequently, this study investigates the use of banter on Twitter by football fans, with a view to examining banter categories, banter strategies, politeness strategies and linguistic and non-linguistic devices deployed in the discourse.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the contents and forms of football banter on Twitter. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (i) explore the categories of banter in the selected football tweets
- (ii) describe the banter strategies employed in the selected football banter
- (iii) analyse the linguistic devices used in the selected football banter; and
- (iv) discuss the politeness strategies in the selected football banter

1.4 Significance of the study

This study contributes to studies on football and football fans' discourses, especially works that aim at exploring football fans' discourse. It provides a multimodal discourse

appraisal of football fans' banter on social media and explores how football fans employ different linguistic and non-linguistic modes in negotiating meanings. The study is also significant for linguistic studies on humour and comedy discourse as football banter on social media is replete with both multimodal and linguistic resources useful to studies in humour and comedy discourse. Similarly, the study contributes to studies in advertising discourse, as certain multimodal resources employed in football banter can be useful in the discourse of advertising. From societal perspective, the study provides a basis for the formulation of policies and legislation on the use and control of social media. It also serves as a guide for football governing bodies in addressing various critical football-related issues.

1.5 Scope and delimitation of the study

The study is restricted to football banter that combines both verbal and non-verbal modes in banter discourse as against football banter in verbal form only. This is because the exploration of football banter that combines both verbal and visual modes of communication would help in understanding how different multimodal resources that have affective significance among football fans are employed in banter communication for meaning-making. The study is also limited to football banter on Twitter as a social media platform. This is based on the fact that Twitter creates a social interaction platform for a virtual community of football fans where a corpus of data on football banter is readily accessible through its football Twitter community platform when compared to any other social media platform.

1.6 Social media

According to Hartshorn (2010), for a very long period, people generally appeared to have wrong perspective about the term social media, however, the emergence of one platform that gave people an opportunity to be content creators, controllers and transparent users, to a great extent, has changed this perspective. Social media refers to any programme or technology that enables people to collaborate with one another to create and distribute media resources and practises with other users through digital networking (Reinhardt, 2019). It is specifically connected to the usage of websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. Social media has evolved into a forum for human contact that allows users to share, discuss, and have fun while also fostering a sense of community or ambient association (Zappavigna, 2012). It has also evolved into a vehicle for communication between businesses and the general public, enabling

businesses to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of both their identities and their reputations (Huang-Horowitz and Freberg, 2016).

Social media also provide platforms for users to create content. Once this content is shared, it becomes a conversation, because all users who have accounts on social media platforms can interact with all posts (Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane, 2011). Social Networking is “the act of engagement,” while social media is the tool used to communicate with mass audience (Hartshorn, 2010). Social Media are the platforms that give individuals the opportunity to interact, using two way communication. This means that anyone who has online accounts can share his or her opinions with other social media users.

As noted by Hays, Page, and Buhalis (2013), social media are internet-based websites and services that encourage participant social interaction. In all, social media can be seen as emerging and new forms of social relations developed for all forms of social interactions. The emergence of social media is largely meant to provide information about what is happening in the world and link people from different locations. It also allows people to share information, pictures, videos, and files (Zappavigna, 2012).

In addition, scholars have also discussed other uses of social media. For instance, Kirschner and Karpinsk, (2010) opine that Facebook as well as other social network sites is an online directory that allows people to find their friends, family and colleagues through looking them up on social network sites

As noted by Pardo (2013), technology offers a platform for innovation, and allows its users to express their opinions about how they feel towards the information being published. He adds that, social media is also a platform that allows users to interact with one another. He also states that this type of interaction is “an essential part of how humans learn.

Ahn (2011) discusses in her research, a theory called ‘Signalling Theory’, this theory refers to how individuals on social network sites present themselves, and develop their identities and build trust with others. She also adds that, by having many friends on the different platforms, this causes the individual to lose the trust of their friends because they start adding people they do not know, to show others how popular they are.

O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) believe that there are negative uses of social media, which include using the platform to access inappropriate content and not

“understanding online privacy.” They also say that, there is online harassment and cyberbullying, which is mostly caused by risks of peer to peer engagement.

Meanwhile, according to AntonSon and Christopher (2014), there are two types of social media users; digital natives and digital immigrants. Digital natives are the ones who were born after 1980; they came to this world when the digital media existed. However, digital immigrants are the ones who were born before 1980 and adapted their lives to digital media. Social media platforms vary from Web blogs, to micro-sharing platforms, to lifestreams to social networks and much more.

1.7 Twitter as a social media platform

Twitter is a widely used free social networking tool that allows people to share information, in a real-time news feed (Mistry, 2011) through posting brief comments about their experiences and thoughts (Bristol et al 2010). Public messages sent and received via Twitter — or ‘tweets’ — are limited to no more than 140 characters and can include links to blogs, web pages, images, videos and all other material online. Despite the brevity imposed by this media tool, Twitter is extensively used in a wide variety of circumstances. As a communication tool, Twitter allows the free exchange of ideas nationally and globally, between people interested in similar areas of expertise, as well as providing the opportunity to engage in critical debate.

After setting up a twitter account (www.twitter.com), users establish a profile and a Twitter ‘name’ — for instance, @yinkerthinker — and can then send and receive tweets, accessed through any computer or mobile networked device. Once a tweet is sent, it appears in the user’s Twitter ‘feed’ and in the feed of anyone who is following them. Searching can also be used to find relevant tweets. This can be done through keywords, often identified by user-defined hashtags, identified by an initial ‘#’ symbol (for example, #football or #Championsleague). Hashtags help to locate particular areas of discussion (Bristol et al, 2010).

Twitter as a social media platform serves numerous purposes. These include keeping in contact with friends, sharing multimedia, reading news, promoting cottage businesses, communicating with voters, and obtaining real-time consumer feedback (Hardaker and McGlashan, 2016). It offers a platform for discussion, humour, updates, news, gossip, activism, mobilization for protests, public sensitization on various societal issues, and much more since it is a public-facing social network (Bristol et al, 2010). News about

current events, friendships, and education are also few of interesting and useful possibilities that Twitter offers. Users could, however, also encounter or participate in actions that endanger their own security, safety, and well-being.

As a social media platform, Twitter is a social networking platform where people communicate and interact in short messages, posts or comments referred to as tweets (Zappavigna, M. 2012). The platform allows users to tweet or communicate with their tweeter followers with the hope that their posts or tweets would be useful, interesting or attract engagement from the audience. It is also a useful social media platform for social and interpersonal relationships and human interactions as it allows people to freely express their feelings, thoughts and emotions or share their ideas with other users (Hays, S., Page, S. and Buhalis, D. 2013).

There are some terminologies associated to Twitter. Molett et al (2011) identify the following Twitter terminologies: “Follow”: This involves connecting to a Twitter user, be it an individual or organisation in order to have access to his or her tweets in real time. Following another user means that all their tweets would appear in the follower’s feed. Also, by clicking on the person to be followed’s user name (also known as the Twitter handle), his or her profile would appear with a conspicuous ‘Follow button’ beside it; the intending follower just needs to click on the button to follow.

“Unfollow”: This has to do with disconnecting from a Twitter user, be it an individual or organisation so that his or her tweets would not be available on one’s feed or timeline. To ‘unfollow’ a Twitter user, one needs to go to one’s following list and finds the user to be unfollowed and then click on the unfollow button. “Whom to follow list”: This is the list of Twitter’s suggestions of individuals or organisations that one might want to follow based on their points of similarity with one’s profile or the fact that one is interested in their contents or tweets.

“Block”: This is a preventive measure taken to restrict Twitter users who regularly constitute nuisance online. This category of users may be trolls, spammers or abusive users. They may be users whose tweets or comments are derogatory, racist or loded with contents that one is disinterested in. The block button when clicked on the user’s handle helps to guard against seeing any tweet or comment from the user as well as preventing the user from having access to one’s tweets or comments. “Retweet” with the acronym “RT” is another terminology associated with Twitter. This means sharing

another user's tweet that you see in in your feed. It may be atweet or comment that is retweeted or liked by another user. To retweet, one needs to hover above the tweet and select the Retweet icon. The retweeted tweet then goes to one's followers with a small icon that shows that the tweet is not originally one's tweet. Related to this is "Reply", which means to respond to another user's tweet. To do this, one just has to hover the tweet and select the reply button which then goes to the user's interaction section.

Other terminologies are "Mention", "Direct message (DM)", hastag (#), etc. "Mentions" means that one needs to check one's "Mentions" area or 'tab' to see when others mention one in a tweet by one's username. If one mentions others, this will appear in their Mention tab. Hashtag is used to categorise tweets. Popular topics are referred to as trending topics and are sometimes accompanied by hashtags, such as #Endsars, #Glazersout, etc. Clicking on any tweet categorised with # for a list of related tweets from many different users. Including already popular hashtags in your tweet may attract more attention to it. Hashtags are also used as part of 'back channel' communication around an event, be it a conference, a TV programme or a global event. In an event, audience can share comments, questions and links with each other while continuing to follow the formal presentation. Direct Messages (DM) are private messages that one can send to other Twitter Message users. To send or receive a DM, one only needs to click the envelope icon on one's DM in one's profile page. DMs are often sent between two users who are following each other.

1.8 Summary

The research and some of the basic parts of the study were presented in this chapter and explored; these topics are expanded upon in the thesis' main body. The next chapter outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the research, engages in the review of the literature, and explores pertinent ideas.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Preamble

This chapter focuses on review of the literature related to this research. It begins by reviewing related concepts to the study, related previous works on banter discourse, football discourse, politeness and some previous works on social media discourse. It also discusses Kress and van Leuwen's Visual Grammar, Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Brown and Levinson's Face Theory which were used in the analysis of the data for the study.

2.1 Conceptual review

2.1.1 The notion of banter

Leech (1983) describes the language phenomena of banter. According to him, banter causes the speakers to seem pretentiously courteous while secretly harbouring animosity against the addressee or an already made claim. This definition of banter seems to restrict it to simply an offensive and confrontational kind of communication. However, banter may also be beneficial in situations requiring cooperative or helpful dialogue, as well as for enjoyment and entertainment.

The term "banter" may also be used to describe humorous joking or jesting (Grainger, 2004). It is described as a fast interchange of hilarious lines geared towards a similar issue, however mostly focused on mutual enjoyment rather than topical conversation (Norrick, 1993). Similarly, it relates to making fun of or teasing a specific target (Bousfield, 2008) while it can be also seen as a ritualised style of speech used to make fun of other people (Labov, 1972).

Banter may also be seen as an offensive kind of social interaction. According to Hay (2002), banter can be viewed as verbal abuse and is more specifically known as dysphemism, which is defined as a term or expression with overtones that seem to be provocative based on the signification and/or to individuals discussed or

eavesdropping the utterance (Hay, 2002). In this research, banter is seen as a vehicle for making fun of and insulting the targets or the addressees as well as a means of communication for generating humour or entertainment where important football-related issues are addressed.

2.1.2 Categories of banter

Earlier studies on banter such as Culpeper (2010) and Norrick (2007) have identified two categories of banter. The first category is impolite or offensive banter while the second category is humorous banter. According to Culpeper (2010), impolite banter is that category of banter which is inherently offensive. For him, impolite banter is deployed in social interactions primarily to attack or offend the target of the banter.

Humorous banter, as categorised by Plester and Sayer (2007) and Norrick (2007) is the kind of banter employed purposely to create laughter or amusement. It is the category of banter that is used to achieve in-group social bonding and rapport. When effectively deployed in social interactions, it usually leads to cohesion and harmony among the interactants. In relation to this study, banter are categorised into visual and verbal banter. The visual banter focuses on non-verbal aspect of the discourse while the verbal banter features the linguistic related banter deployed in the discourse.

2.1.2.1 Visual banter

Communication is not only restricted to vocalisation or speech but also involves other forms of semiotic modes such as dress, gestures, posture and so on. According to Macneil (1992), communication consists of well-planned groups of understandable verbal and nonverbal behaviours. Non-verbal or visual communication, as defined by Goudt (2010), includes behaviours that are not speech-related but nevertheless include communication, such as facial expression, gesture, posture, and leg movement. Non-verbal communication is sometimes referred to as the "exchange of messages primarily through non-linguistic means" or as the "transfer of meaningful information from one person to another by visual means other than written or spoken language (e.g. gaze, facial expression, posture, touch)" cited in Goudt (2010). The concepts categorised as visual banter which are relevant to this study are gesture, gaze, posture, salience, angle and framing (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Goudt, 2010; Kidwell, 2005 & Godwin, 2003). They are discussed below.

A gesture is one of the divisions of kinesics and source of non-verbal communication. It is usually realised through the movement of some parts of the body. A gesture may be thought of as a mode, which is to say that it is a collection of semiotic resources that uses both temporal and spatial resources and whose usage is constrained by social and cultural norms in connection to the context of communication (Godwin, 2003). The term "gesture" also refers to the purposeful use of hands and other body parts in communicating. It is divided into motor gestures, iconic gestures, and symbolic gestures (emblems). Symbolic gestures are "thumbs up" kind of gestures usually found in campaign posters and other forms of advertisement posters. As for the iconic gestures, they are visuals used for representations of meanings. In the case of motor gestures, they are largely associated with beats and rhythm mainly used to mark a process of initiation of a new talk exchange. Turning to deictic gestures, they are sometimes referred to as "pointing gestures". Godwin (2003) further classifies gestures along with other communicative modes such as body posture, gaze, talk, etc. as an integral part of action established in human interaction.

Some semiological concepts such as social distance, behaviour and visual modality were identified and explained by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 122). The authors explain that there are ways in which interaction between the viewer and the person shown in the image is affected by the gaze of the person represented. Images usually force viewers to look directly at them. A person or participant's gaze or gesture demands something from the viewer. It demands from viewers that they must engage in some kind of imaginary relation with them.

According to Babad (2007); Ekman and Friessen (1969), gesture can be divided into five major categories. The categories are emblems, illustrators, affect displays, regulators and adaptors.

- (a) Emblems are gestures that may be employed in place of spoken communication because they have a direct, unambiguous and mutually understood meaning. An emblem is used on purpose. An emblem may be a "thumbs up" or a farewell wave, for instance.

- (b) Illustrations are speech-related gestures that support and amplify what is uttered vertically, with the arms spread wide, for instance, to suggest something substantial
- (c) The sender's emotional and psychological condition may be inferred via affect displays, which are motions. Facial expressions, which make up the majority of affect presentations, have been shown to share a common meaning. Compared to an emblem or illustration, an affect display is utilised with less awareness and less thought.
- (d) Conversational flow and back-and-forth engagement are regulated by actions like nodding and eye contact. A regulator needs not be purposeful or deliberate.
- (e) Adaptors are behaviours like head scratching and nail-biting that provide information about the sender's mood, anxiety level, and degree of self-assurance. An adaptor is utilised involuntarily, making it a potentially valuable source of unintentional information about the sender's psychological state (Goudt, 2010).

Posture is defined by Goudt, (2010: p.2) as an intentionally or habitually attained position of the body. He further illustrates the significance of posture as he states that whenever anyone feels scared when standing in front of an audience, his body stance will be very different from when he is confident. The scholar adds that the difference between the two is that in the latter, he stands relaxedly while attempting to draw the audience into the discussion. In the former, he will shrink his body a little by pushing his arms to his side and stomach.

From the above illustration, posture can be described as the body positioning of a person which portrays or reveals the person's mental state in terms of anxiety, nervousness, anger, frustration or depression. In the context of visual banter, posture can be seen as the deliberate use of the body position of the banter target for ridicule or mockery.

Gaze is an eye or head movement deployed for communication. The notion of gaze has been extensively analysed using a multimodal discourse analysis approach (Kidwell, 2005). Gaze covers all the communication and actions within a conversation that is performed by the eyes and has several functions (Kendon, 1967), cited in Goudt,

(2010: 2). When eye contact is used to start or begin a conversation or take turns in a conversation, such a gaze can be referred to as being regulatory. A gaze can also be used to monitor someone's behaviour by showing or expressing some concerns. It can also be used to elicit feelings and emotions, and sustain someone's attention in a talk exchange. Argyle and Cook, (1976); Vertegaal, Slagter, van der veer and Nijholt, (2001) explain that people tend to be more conscious, look and pay attention to their partners in conversation while listening than speaking.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) tag the situation where represented participants look or gaze straight at the viewers as "a demand" (from the viewers). They state further that in a facial expression (appearance), a smile could request a social bound from the viewers, while a stare could request that the viewers have an asymmetry relation whereas a suggestive look can request a desire. In sum, gaze can be described as a visual communicative strategy that involves the deployment of eyes to achieve certain functions in a discourse.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) emphasise the significance of viewing angles when using an image to visually explain a concept. This has to do with attitude with respect to visual art. They distinguish between two angles: vertical and horizontal. The relationship between the frontal planes of the image-producer and the participants who are being depicted determines the horizontal angle (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The angle can express whether the image producer and viewer are involved with the represented participants or not; a frontal angle indicates involvement. According to them, the angles in which a photograph is taken to the visual explication of meaning in visual work are important. They refer to a situation when the frontal angle is taken as indicating the involvement or alignment of the image-producer, and the presented participants; it is called a relationship of "you are like us" while the ones taken from an oblique angle show a relation of detachment between the producer and the image; a relation of "you are not for us". In the case of the former, viewers are addressed as ones who must align with the depicted message, whereas in the case of the latter, viewers are to detach from the depicted message. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) also argue that the angle at which a participant is reflected by the camera can symbolise power relations. For instance, a high-angle reflection of a represented participant

indicates that the interactive participant has power over the viewers while a low-angle reflection of the presented participant shows the opposite.

Saliency, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain, refers to how greater stress is given to some visual elements to make them attractive to viewers through pictorial aesthetics, which make them prominent. Saliency involves foregrounding certain parts of an object to make them stand out and noticeably different from the other parts. Kecskes (2014) describes saliency as the contingent outcome of important information as a consequence of how attention is processing communication in a certain circumstance, which helps or hinders the presentation of intention and the subsequent attainment of communicative outcomes.

As for framing, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) submit that it is used to depict individuality or identity. As a result, the presence of framing signifies individuality while its absence depicts group identity. Framing may also be performed in a movie by "cutting between different views of the characters in which each is segregated from the others by frame lines" or by "presenting two or more actors together in one shot, which suggests connectivity" (Leeuwen, 2006:203). In such a situation, the presentation will show disconnection.

2.1.2.2 Verbal banter

Verbal banter relates to categories of banter constructed through written and or verbal mode. They are verbalised forms of banter created through the deployment of linguistic resources. The categories of verbal banter relevant to this study are allusion, sarcasm, putdown, pun, anecdotes and irony. They are discussed below.

Allusion occurs when a literary work explicitly or indirectly alludes to someone from the past, a location or historical event from another work of literature, a passage from the Bible, etc. in order to make comparisons or associations. Making a reference to something that is not part of the discourse is called an allusion. Allusions rely on facts from everyday life that are already well-known.

Irony is a literary device that refers to the recognition of a reality different from its masking appearance. In this device, double meaning is put forward for appreciation. An ironic statement has a literal meaning that differs from the speaker's implied meaning. Technically speaking, according to Alvaro (2013), irony refers to a number of theories, including those that claim it is an indirect speech act, a violation of the maxim of manners, a phenomenon involving the interpretation of language, which is

explained as an echo or pretence (Sperber & Wilson, 1995), or even a confrontational tool or syncopation.

Sarcasm is often used interchangeably with irony. Although the negative form of irony is known as sarcastic irony, this should not be the case since sarcasm may not in any way be ironic. When someone uses sarcasm, they often say something inappropriate and frequently make fun of someone else. Paakkinen (2010) distinguishes between irony and sarcasm in this way: irony may be considered as a statement that is the exact opposite of what is intended while sarcasm can be understood as a similar kind of mocking remark.

Another kind of banter is an anecdote. It takes the form of a narrative. Norrick (1993) defines an anecdote as a hilarious narrative in which the speaker amuses the listener with a tale drawn from either personal experience or the lives of other people. Anecdotes often demonstrate a high level of artistic aesthetics flavoured with inventive non-verbal behaviour. Anecdotal narratives often include unpleasant events, but the narrator sometimes embellishes them with comedy to make the audience or reader laugh.

Putdowns are unmistakably hostile statements that are harsh without any thought of making the recipient laugh. It may seem like mockery or derision. An individual who is the direct subject of banter but is spoken negatively about may be present or not. The primary goal of using a putdown is to hit a target, maybe to make other people laugh in the process. In a conversation about football, the “banterer” may use a putdown to amuse the audience by portraying the targets of the banter in an odd way.

A pun is a hilarious expression that, prototypically, has two possible meanings created through intended word or phrase ambiguity (collocations or idioms). While utilising a pun, the punny ingredient appears in one (or two extremely similar) forms while communicating two distinct meanings (Dynel, 2009). A punner often creates a statement that has two meanings: one that leans towards comprehending the previous utterance and another that fits the expression but is based on a context-inappropriate reading of it. As a result, the witty turn conflicts with the subject and/or tone of the present discourse, but some linguistic feature stakes out its claim to a tenuous formal relevance. Although ambiguity is a key component of a pun, not all ambiguous words are puns (Attardo, 1994). Either phonological processes, like as homophony, or semantic ones, such as polysemy, are crucial to the realisation of puns. Puns are

divided into paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes by Ritchie (2004). The humour on the paradigmatic axis relies on the resemblance (or even identity) of a certain substring to another string that is not present in the text. Contrarily, a syntagmatic pun relies on the similarity (or detail) of two (or more) substrings that are present in the text.

2.1.3 Functions of banter

Banter clearly performs certain functions among participants in discourses, especially when discussed in relation to humour and teasing. The functions of banter in relation to humour and teasing, therefore, include the following:

2.1.3.1 Interpersonal function of banter

Banter is often deployed for interpersonal purpose. This includes achieving relationship and identity goals, particularly when it involves teasing. Banter may be used in relationship work to both include and exclude people. Banter may promote group cohesiveness and help establish or sustain intragroup or relationship connections. In the meanwhile, it could exclude others via an implied superiority complex, leading to the formation of out-groups (Haugh, 2010; Norrick, 1993; Boxer & Cortes-Conde, 1997). Negotiating interpersonal limits may also include banter in the context of teasing (Mills & Babrow, 2003). The identity work done via banter involves claiming and assigning identities, regulating group hierarchical status, and establishing interpersonal authority (Partington, 2008). This interpersonal function is also captured as reinforcing solidarity function by Culpeper (2011) in relation to mock impoliteness. The banter among football fans equally serves an interpersonal purpose as it can be used to establish and maintain in-group relationship among football fans of the same club or fans who share the same bantering opinions with the “banterer” and can as well be used to exclude rival football fans or the target of banter, thereby, creating out-groups.

2.1.3.2 Affective function of banter

Creating both good and negative emotional reactions among discourse participants is one of the affective purposes of banter in the context of teasing. This includes banter that is played or done for the players' delight or entertainment (Haugh & Bousfield 2012; Norrick 1993). This is often referred to as the entertaining or hilarious aspect of banter. However, it also contains more (covertly) aggressive banter, that is, banter that is intended to annoy, irritate, or even infuriate the target or to disgrace or shame the target (Pawluk, 1989; Harwood, 2010; Kowalski, 2007). In certain circumstances,

banter may be intended to cause displeasure or even shame for the target but entertainment for the audience (overhearing) (Sinkeviciute, 2014). In certain circumstances, banter may also be used to control displays of love and avoid offending or embarrassing others (Alberts, 1990; Mills & Babrow, 2003; DiCioccio, 2010).

2.1.3.3 Psychological function of banter

This function of banter is mainly concerned with banter that center on humour or serves as a form of entertainment. Current research on humour has resoundingly shown the importance of humour and its responses, such as laughing, a healthy lifestyle and overall welfare. It has proven helpful in reducing issues that arise on a daily basis that lead to sadness, suicidal thoughts, frustration, and other similar unpleasant psychological states. For instance, academic studies have shown that humour has favourable effects on immunity, digestion, blood flow, and muscular relaxation (Fry 1992; Borins 1995). As a result, humour has been shown to be innately healing for people. Humour seems to mitigate the impacts of stressful situations that might otherwise give rise to dysphoric feelings, according to enough evidence (Günther, 2003).

Research has also demonstrated that humour may be used as a coping mechanism by people to cope with stressful circumstances. According to Vaillant (1993), humour serves as a mature kind of defence in addition to its defence mechanisms, much like benevolence, sublimation, and repression. It is important to note that humour has salutary effects on physiological and psychological health. In the context of football banter, there is humour-based banter which can help to solve psychological related problems such as mental health issues among youth. Football fans both supporting winning and losing clubs can find humour-based football banter a means of coping with stress and mental depression.

2.1.3.4 Instrumental function of banter

When it comes to teasing, banter serves a number of useful purposes, such as pointing out moral failings (Drew 1987; Franzén & Aronsson 2013; Eisenberg 1986; Geyer 2010), integrating participants into group norms (Miller 1986; Tholander 2002), and encouraging conformity as a means of social control (Schiefflin 1986; Shapiro et al. 1991). In addition to praises or expressing gratitude, banter may also be used to carry out sensitive or delicate social activities (Shapiro et al., 1991); examples include

critiques, reproaches, and complaints (Mills & Babrow, 2003); (Alberts,1990; Haugh, 2014; Straehle, 1993).

2.1.3.5 Social bonding function of banter

We do not need to be courteous to one another: I may insult you, and you will reply to it as a joke, according to Leech (2014), who claims that banter is a technique of creating or sustaining in-group cohesion. In banter, the interpretation is reversed because the offensive comment cannot be taken seriously. As a result, banter is often used to foster social or intragroup ties among friends or other group members.

2.3 Review of related previous studies

This section contains reviews of relevant studies on banter discourse, football discourse, politeness, social media discourse and multimodal discourse. The importance of the reviews is to establish the gap that is needed to be filled and contextualize the study.

2.3.1 Studies on banter discourse

There is a robust scholarship on banter discourse. For instance, Leech (1983) carries out a pragmatic study on banter in the context of interpersonal relationships. The research views banter as "an inappropriate method of being nice" and "building or sustaining a sense of familiarity" with the hearer, and it connects it with mock impoliteness. The banter principle is described as a higher-order concept that allows a speaker to seem unpleasant while really being courteous as part of the notion of politeness. The work is insightful; however, its theoretical analysis is pragmatic in nature. The present study's analytical orientation is rooted in multimodal discourse. While the limitation of the study can be seen in how it leaves out the aggressive side of banter, it however offer useful insights on how human interactions and interpersonal relationships can be facilitated as it considers banter in the context of politeness only,. In a study on banter, Culpeper (1996) investigates banter in the context of a model of impoliteness. In the research, banter is seen as pretend impoliteness for harmony and surface impoliteness since it is not meant to offend. This is in line with Leech's theory of banter. The study categories banter as a communicative tool for teasing and the creation of humour. The study is significant in understanding how interpersonal relationships and human interactions are built and facilitated through banter; however, its subsequent exclusion of banter from the impoliteness model suggests a departure from its earlier treatment of banter in the context of impoliteness.

Dynel (2008) carries out a pragmatic study of teasing and banter within the framework of humour. The scholar treats teasing and banter as being a rapport-building tool against its dichotomous nature commonly postulated. He deemphasises the understanding and treatment of teasing and banter as being inherently aggressive. He also postulates the solidarity and rapport-building function of teasing and banter through humour or through discursive polite means to mitigate against face-threatening messages teasing or banter may carry. The study concludes by arguing that teasing or banter is devoid of genuine aggressiveness. Although the study contributes to how teasing or banter is employed for rapport and solidarity building, its description of teasing and banter as non-aggressive is not plausible in all situations.

In a banter-related study, Plester and Sayer (2007) conduct research on banter in the context of workplace interactions among employees. The close closeness of the interlocutors and nonverbal exchanges are quite important in this study. The research identifies six purposes of banter, including expressing a point, killing boredom, socialising, appreciating differences, showcasing culture, and identifying and showing status. According to the research, banter happens when it includes popular and well-liked coworkers who have successfully assimilated into the workplace culture. Ethnicity, gender, age, height, and clothing style are among the qualities and attributes of people that are used as targets for teasing. The study makes a significant contribution in terms of understanding how banter supports the operation of cultural systems at work, however it appears to not take into consideration instances of employees who have not fully integrated into the organisational culture that may find banter to be insulting, and demeaning.

In their work, Boxer and Cortés-Condes (1997) investigate the bonding role of teasing in two different speech communities. The researchers adopted ethnography of speaking approach in the study of conversational joking in the two speech communities. The study collected its data through the participant observation method. For the data, transcribed series of audiotaped conversations among family members, friends, acquaintances or strangers between ages 30 to mid-40s in various locations were used. The findings reveal that joking or teasing can be directed at two categories of addressees. The first category of the addressee is a conversational participant while the second category is an absent participant. The study identifies three types of humorous

speech genres: teasing, joking about and absent joking. The study submits that teasing can be biting or nipping while joking or self-denigration can be deployed for bonding purposes. The study also finds that joking used to portray social identity is influenced by the participants' gender and the distance between them. The study concludes that joking functions not only as a means of social control and display of identity but also functions in developing relational identity. The present study adopts the second categorization of the addressee made by the study, the absent addressee as the data used as banter are directed towards the absent addressees. The empirical nature of the study provides an objective analysis.

Flayih (2016), in his work, conducts a pragmatic examination of banter in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. The research highlights the connection between politeness, impoliteness, and banter as well as the contrast between banter and irony, genuine impoliteness, and virtual impoliteness to address the politeness element of banter. It also addresses the banter effect, which may be either good or bad. The article goes on to explore ways to react to banter, such as by smiling or by using more banter. Insightful as the study is, its orientation is different from the current study as it focuses on banter from a literary text while the present work focuses on banter on social media.

Furthermore, Houtman (2018) carries out a study on banter in the context of Palembang Malay language and culture. The study analyses politeness in the language used in banter from the cultural perspective of Palembang Malay language. It examines banter situations in Palembang linguistic community. It found that banter is used on various occasions and in a variety of situations for entertainment, jokes or humour purpose. As regards the aspect of vocabulary selection of banter, the study finds that the use of words both containing the value of politeness and violating the norms of politeness is used. It also discovers that in Palembang community, the use of words that are generally judged to be negative because they are not in accordance with the existing norms of politeness is considered a common practice in banter. As such, the research concludes that banter exemplifies mockery, arrogance and self-defence. The merit of the work lies in its empirical nature which allows an objective description and analysis. However, the research is too limited in scope resulting in limited data analysis.

In his work, Drew (1987) conducts a study on the verbal activity of teasing. It particularly investigated the phenomenon of pro-faced responses to teasing. Teases in natural conversations were used as its data. Teases recipients' responses to teases were analysed to account for the phenomenon of pro-faced responses. The data analysis is anchored on a conversational analytical approach. The work identifies the sequential environment where teasing occurs as the one that portrays the recipients as complaining, extolling and bragging in an exaggerated manner. The scholar, therefore, submits that teasing is a form of social control of minor conversational transgression and that teasing playfully attributes deviant actions or identities to the recipients. It concludes that recipients' responses to social control and negative deviant attribution are aggressive, describing them as pro-faced. The research adopts a conversational analytical approach. The study, given the natural nature of its data, allows for objective and empirical findings..

Haugh (2010) carries out an analysis of jocular mockery in the context of how it affects participants' relationships. The researcher investigates how interactional mocking is accomplished as an activity. Using lighthearted ridicule, he also investigates how participants align or de-align their replies with prior acts. The researcher also talks to other participants about their affiliative and disaffiliating positions. The research suggests that a practical strategy might help explore how lighthearted ridicule influences participants' developing relationships by using the findings and techniques of conversational analysis. The research concludes that a deeper explanation of jocular mocking than one that merely considers personal identity, public image, or individual desires explains how it affects the changing relationships between interactants. The study unlike the present study is pragmatically inclined and conversational in terms of its choice of data.

Theoretical considerations of semantic and pragmatic forms of verbal humour, particularly those that cannot be reduced to (packaged) jokes, are well-explained by Dynel (2009) in her paper. She draws a separate line between jokes and conversational humour, a general term for a number of semantic and pragmatic humour types that often appear in interpersonal communication, whether it be genuine (such as in regular conversations or television shows) or fictitious (film and book dialogues). She also clearly distinguishes between formal and stylistic aspects of humour. The essay's

discussion of many kinds and forms of humour provides a wealth of study material that may be analysed from a range of linguistic perspectives, including cognitivism, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, or translation. The research provides significant information for the current investigation, but it has limitations in the sense that it does not address any particular data and does not use any analytical methodology.

Coates (2007) investigates the connections between closeness in speech and laughing. The study makes an effort to define the term "conversational humour," concentrating on friendly, casual conversation and the conversational techniques used in hilarious speaking. She contends, in line with Bateson, that creating a "play frame" is necessary for conversational humour. After a play frame has been formed, speakers work together to create conversation in a style that is reminiscent of group musical performance, especially jazz. She argues that play and creativity are profoundly connected, and that joyful conversation is fundamentally collaborative. Despite being a very solid research, it pays little attention to humorous language use.

An intra-English language socio-pragmatic investigation of how behaviour like "banter" is exhibited, co-constructed, and used for social bonding reasons in both Australian and British versions of English is undertaken by Haugh and Bousfield (2012). The research focuses on explaining two specific bantering behaviour—jovial abuse and ridicule—in male-only interpersonal contacts in (North West) Britain and Australia, as well as contrasting the subjects of such abuse and mockery. According to the research, jocular abuse and mocking often lead to assessments of mock impoliteness. It categorises jocular mockery as mock impoliteness and not impoliteness per se. It further posits that jocular mockery is playful in nature, as such, it should not be treated as a form of impoliteness. It proposes the shared background knowledge between the speaker and the recipients or addressees as a key determinant in categorizing jocular abuse as impolite or polite. The study is different from the present one in terms of its theoretical approach to the analysis of jocular mockery or banter. For the description and categorization of jocular abuse, the study relies on shared background knowledge to categorise jocular mockery as mock impoliteness. It provides useful insights to the study of banter in terms of treatment of jocular mockery.

2.3.2 Studies on sport and football discourses

This section focuses on the review of some previous works on football discourse. It presents useful insights as well as observable shortcomings of existing studies on football discourse.

Ademilokun (2011) carries out a linguistic analysis of the language of Nigerian university student fans of the English premier league. The study is categorized as student football fans' discourse. The data for the study are transcribed audio-recorded conversations of the selected Nigerian University student football fans. The analysis of the study focuses on linguistic devices employed in the conversations of the selected University student football fans. The study adopted Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar for its data analysis. The study identifies linguistic devices such as hyperbole, sarcasm, allusion and other linguistic devices. Although the study focuses on linguistic devices employed in the University student football fans discourse, insights from the study on how linguistic devices are deployed are insightful for the present study. The study used data from transcribed audio-recorded conversations. While the study provides useful linguistic insights into football discourse, it is limited in terms of its choice of participants' settings and educational status.

In a study on live sports commentaries, Chovanec (2012) investigates how humour is constructed in a live sports commentary. The study documents how live online sports commentary exemplifies humour through incongruity, allusion and irony. It also adds that live online sports commentary constructs humour through quasi-conversational interaction between the online commentator and the virtual audience. Humour, according to the research, is essential for the interpersonal component since it not only fosters camaraderie among online fan communities but also serves as a kind of enjoyment for players during dull game periods. According to the research, viewers are amused by both the game itself and the language used to describe it while watching live sporting events online. This is known as "vicarious entertainment." While the research views humour as a collaboratively created discourse, it makes no mention of the processes that give rise to humour.

Research on radio soccer commentary in English is conducted by Osisanwo (1997). The research falls under the category of register. This research focuses only on linguistic aspects of soccer commentary, such as phonological, grammatical, and

lexical elements. The research names speed, loudness, and intonation patterns as phonological traits. Also, it lists the three musical styles that are often employed by commentators: falling, rising, and fall-rise songs. High-frequency terms such as nouns and verbs are classified as lexical characteristics, whereas simple and complex sentences, adverbial phrases, present tense, and ellipsis are identified as grammatical features. According to the research, a match's quantity of activity or lack thereof affects how quickly a commentator speaks during that time. When it comes to the volume of soccer commentary, it is discovered that crescendos are more noticeable than diminuendo. Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that there is a preponderance use of ellipsis and simple sentences as the commentator needs to catch up with the speed of the match. Despite its great insightful contribution in the exploration of many linguistic aspects of football commentaries such as phonological, grammatical and lexical features, the study fails to account for the use of stress which is an inherent phonological feature in soccer commentaries. The study however provides useful insights for football-related discourses.

Also, Okunade (2021) carries out a linguistic analysis of commentaries of selected European football matches focusing on lexical features in the commentaries. The data for the study are three selected Champions league final matches. The study anchors its data analysis on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. The study identifies lexical features such as synonyms, antonyms idioms, collocation, hyperbole, allusion, metaphor and sarcasm. The finding of the study reveals that allusion and sarcasm are employed to create humour or entertainment in order to make hypertensive or boring moments in the matches less hypertensive or less boring. Although the study differs from the present study in terms of its analytical orientation and choice of data, the insights it offers by exploring how certain linguistic devices such as allusion and sarcasm are deployed to create amusement during boring and inactive moments in football matches is, without doubt, useful for the present study.

In a sports commentary-related study, Crystal and Davy (1969) explore sports terminologies employed by sportscasters or commentators. The study identifies sport-related terminologies and describes them as being distinct to the context of sport. It maintains that in addition to the quick speech delivery, which is a well-known characteristic of sports commentary, the audience should also be familiar with the

game since the extralinguistic reality being portrayed is extremely particular and the sportscasters talk haphazardly. The author thinks that sportscasters should use the current terminology so they may more easily accomplish economies of grammatical structure, lessen repetition, and boost the "descriptive immediacy on which they so much depend for impact." He adds that the audience must be conversant with the terminology in order to get the desired impact. According to the study's findings, one of the ways sportscasters and their audience connect is via this explicit information that is communicated. The study offers great insights into sports terminologies that can be found useful in related studies.

Muller (2007) investigates how unplanned spoken language comes into existence in football commentaries. The research focuses on utterances made involuntarily in response to non-linguistic settings and occurrences in a football game, or extralinguistic reality. The research examines how spoken utterances are produced naturally, how language is divided into segments, and how intonation and syntactic components interact. In the research, intonation is noted as a divergence from conventional methods. Although classic linguistic theories focus on syntactic factors, the research claims that these factors fall short of adequately describing spoken language units. As a result, it concentrates on defining intonation units as boundaries for utterance spans. The non-linguistic context in which speech production has a place allows the research to split spoken language into intonation units. The research also detects non-linguistic events that occur in football commentary and associates each non-linguistic event with the specific verbal construction that produced it. The study provides an insightful depth to the study on football commentary and insights from the study would greatly enhance football-related discourses.

2.3.3 Studies on politeness

The politeness phenomenon has become a fruitful field of linguistic research over the years. For instance, the need for study on courtesy and politeness in transactional discourse is linked to Grice's (1975) seminal paper titled "Logic and conversation". The author proposes a cooperative principle and four maxims underlying transactional discourse. The study identifies maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relevance as the four maxims for human interactions and natural communication. The study submits that the cooperative principle is the basis for determining, ascertaining and interpreting

conversational implicatures rather than rules for participants in discourse to observe. The author further argues that to account for other aspects of language use, additional maxims such as politeness may be needed. The study offers great insights into how the basic principle of natural communication can be violated or observed.

Arua (2020) examines non-verbal cues and politeness strategies in interaction encounters between post office service attendants and customers. The data for the study are thirty-two naturally occurring interactions among the participants. The data collection is done through participant observation and tape recordings. The study adopts Lim and Bowers politeness theory and Spencer Oatey rapport management strategies as its analytical framework. The findings of the study reveal that the intuitive role of non-verbal cues serves as an implicature that helps in categorization of customers. The non-verbal cues also determine the type of social relationship enacted. Differential address forms and treatment of customers are determined by age, social class and gender. While no justification is provided for the selection of the participants and the data used, the study provides useful contributions in terms of the deployment of non-verbal cues as politeness strategies in the study,.

Ajayi and Tella (2016) investigate politeness strategies employed by Nigerian telephone mobile network providers in their unsolicited short message services (SMS). The data for the study were unsolicited messages from MTN (Mobile Telephone Network) and Airtel telecommunication network providers in Nigeria. The study adopts Brown and Levison's Politeness and Arundale's Face Constituting theories for its data analysis. The findings of the study reveal that positive, negative and bald-on-record politeness strategies are employed as persuasive marketing devices. The study provides useful insights into politeness communication strategies for marketing and building customer relationship purposes. The study differs from the present study in its choice of data. While the data for the study are verbal or written texts, the data for the present study is both verbal and visual. Also, although no information is provided on the procedure for the collection of unsolicited messages used as the data for the study, the study offers useful insights into politeness strategies in business and human communication,

In their study on politeness strategies employed in the Holy Quran, Jewad, Ghabanchi and Ghazanfari (2020) investigate the use of politeness strategies and politeness

maxims in two Suras from the Holy Quran. The research looks at how the Holy Quran employs politeness techniques and maxims. The portrayal of the key characters in the book is also examined in this research. To provide interpretations of certain passages, a qualitative method is used. According to the research, there are positive and negative politeness tactics. The results show that in the Sura of Cave, the positive politeness approach (offer and promise) predominates with around 22.2% of all texts, whereas in the Yusuf Sura, the negative politeness method (give reverence or respect) predominates with about 21.25% of all texts. According to the results, the chosen text contains many major maxims, including the humility maxim, approval maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. The investigation concludes that Suras does have politeness. While the study fails to justify the selection of the two Suras used as data, it offers great insights into how politeness strategies and maxims are employed distinctively in the Holy Quran,

Darics (2010) carries out an analysis of naturally occurring text-based synchronous interactions of a virtual club. The study investigates strategies for compensating for the lack of audio-visual information in computer-mediated communication, strategies to recompense for the technological limitations of the computer-mediated medium, and strategies to support interaction management from the perspective of interactional politeness. According to the study's results, it is necessary to reevaluate the politeness standards in a work-based virtual workplace about atypical spelling, capitalization, economising, emoticons, backchannel signals, and turn-taking techniques in computer-mediated conversation. The research concludes that language events in computer-mediated dialogue may be explained by the interactional politeness approach. The study provides great insights into how interactional politeness strategies can enhance conversations in computer-mediated discourse. However, the procedure and justification for collecting naturally occurring text-based online interactions are not spelt out.

The work of Zakaria and Syukri (2016) focuses on the politeness strategies used by male students and male teachers of Pondok Pesantren Salaf Al-Qur'an Sholahul Huda AlMujahidin Malang. The theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) serves as the foundation for the data analysis. The research finds many politeness tactics used by students and instructors alike. Male students were found to

employ the off-the-record politeness technique in formal settings, whereas male professors were shown to adopt the negative politeness method. Male professors employed a positive politeness tactic whereas male students used a negative one in an unstructured setting. The study's conclusions demonstrated three social factors—power, social distance, and imposition ranking—that drove students and instructors to use these strategies. Despite the study's useful insights on the many forms of politeness methods in the conversation between professors and students, it falls short of providing an explanation for the selection of participants who identified as men.

Iranian English language learners' written communication abilities are examined by Karimkhanlooei and Vaezi (2017) for their competency level, politeness tactics, and external/internal changes. A written Dialogue Completion Test (DCT), developed by Rose (1994), with eight (8) circumstances was given to 120 female and male EFL learners from Iran Language Institute—60 upper-intermediate and 60 intermediate—to elicit data. Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of politeness techniques and Faerch and Kasper's internal and external modifications were used to analyse the data (1989). The written request utterances that each participant submitted were examined for frequency, kinds of politeness strategies—positive, negative, bald on record, and off-record—as well as the use of external and internal alterations. The findings show that the types of politeness tactics and external/internal changes used by upper intermediate and intermediate learners differed statistically significantly. While it varies from the current research in terms of the textual type of its data and the participants' selection, the study nonetheless provides helpful information on politeness tactics.

In an effort to provide details on the linguistic elements that learners utilise in the new settings produced by information and communication technology (ICT), Iranian EFL students used a class blog as a platform for asynchronous interaction in response to their teachers and peers. Reza Adel, Davoudi, and Ramezanzadeh (2016) analyse politeness strategies such as negative politeness, positive politeness, bald on-record, and bald off-record strategies. Participants consist of fourteen (14) Iranian EFL students who were chosen depending on their degree of language competency. The study's data includes 1520 politeness utterances from all postings, including 800 from interactions between students and instructors and 720 from interactions between

students and their classmates. Both content analysis and computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) were used to assess the data that was gathered. The findings showed that students regularly displayed favourable behaviours as indicators of psychological closeness, reciprocity, and friendliness in a group. The research's choice of data sets it apart from the current study. While the study's data are conversational and dialogical, the present study's data are non-conversational since the majority of the addressees were absent. However, the study makes smart arguments about how to behave politely in computer-mediated interaction.

In the discussion portions of engineering textbooks in the disciplines of computers, telecommunications, nanotechnology, and robotics, Gil-Salom and Soler-Monreal (2009) study politeness tactics. The research uses a variety of tools to keep the writer-reader dialogue going throughout the dialogues in order to establish dependability and acceptance conditions and prevent face-threatening behaviour (FTAs). The study's research demonstrates how the authors of the chosen texts interacted with one another using both constructive and destructive politeness techniques. Also, the data reveal authors' preferences for the right phrase in resolving FTAs. The study's conclusions demonstrate that the reader actively participates in the discussion parts of engineering books. The author employs a positive politeness method to highlight collaboration and interaction with the scientific community and a negative politeness strategy to highlight reader independence. Also, using a good politeness method entails finding points of commonality and discussing sentiments, emotions, limits, and obstacles. When writers directly approach readers and invite them to join in the acceptance of claims, solidarity is evident. Although the negative politeness methods of ambiguity and depersonalization weaken the writer's commitment to their assertions, personalization preserves the reader's independence by taking full responsibility for both the writer's claims and denials and recognising the reader's alternative viewpoint. The research provides valuable insights into the politeness methods that authors might use to build reader engagement and unity. Nevertheless, no explanation is given for the choice of books utilised as the study's data.

Hutahaean, Herman, and Girsang (2021) examine politeness practises used in the Pesbukers Variety Show in another study on manners. The study's goals are to categorise the many kinds of politeness tactics, ascertain which kind is more common,

and ascertain what variables affect politeness strategies in Pesbukers' variety show. The study combines content analysis with a descriptive qualitative technique. The episode containing the most data for the research was episode 10, which aired on May 15, 2019, lasting 1 hour and 12 minutes. The process of gathering the data included familiarisation and organisation, coding and reduction, interpretation, and representation. The study's findings demonstrate that there were 37 politeness techniques used in Pesbukers' variety show: six bald on-record methods (16%), twenty-six positive politeness strategies (70%), four negative politeness strategies (11%), and one off-record strategy (1%). At Pesbukers' variety programme, positive politeness was the most prevalent kind of politeness technique. A social environment, excellent relationships, and interaction are facilitated by positive politeness on the parts of both the speaker and the listener. The choice for civility tactics among Pesbukers was influenced by circumstances. Two instances that deal with sociological factors are relative power (2%) and social distance (35) (95 per cent). With those who had more power or authority than them, those with relative power (P) were more courteous. Social distance (D) is a psychological construct that combines elements of age and social rank. The study comes to the conclusion that using the right civility techniques is necessary for talks to go smoothly. While the research does not explain why the event from which data were sourced was chosen, it offers some excellent insights into politeness tactics,.

2.3.4 Studies on social media discourse

Herring and Stoerger (2014) argue that linguists are increasingly turning to social media and networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, as they provide massive amounts of publicly and freely accessible, organically occurring, easily downloaded language data. Herring and Stoerger (2014) buttress this by asserting that activities on social media primarily consist of language use. As such, social media have become the research focus of linguists.

In social media-related research, Hardaker and McGlashan (2016) investigate the way sexual aggression is enacted and spread on Twitter. The objectives of the study are to investigate the language surrounding sexual aggression on Twitter and the discourse of abuse focused particularly on rape. A corpus of 76, 275 tweets which were Twitter comments targeted at a feminist campaigner were adopted as the data for the study. The data were collected during three months between July and September, 2013. The

study found that sexual aggression behaviour was a threat and a misogynistic weapon employed to control women online. It also found that women were predominantly the target of sexual threats as the discourses involving men and rape categorically exclude threatening and violent behaviour. The study concludes that the anonymity of users on social media platforms can be used as a shield form to attack, offend and damage others and still make easy identification and subsequent social or legal reprisal difficult or impossible. Although the justification for the corpus of tweets used as the data for the study is not provided, however, the study offers useful insights into language use on social media.

Zhao and Liu (2020) conduct a rigorous analysis of the filtering of both plain text and multimedia material on Chinese social media platforms in a different study. The research examines Weibo, a Chinese social media site, including both filtered and uncensored messages during the Honk Kong Umbrella Movement of 2014. The study's conclusions show that multimedia submissions were subject to more severe censorship deletion than simple text ones. Also, the censoring effort is more focused on multimedia material like photographs than text-based information. The study has important ramifications for censorship research, information management, and politics in the age of ICT. The report also emphasises the need for governmental regulation of harmful, offensive, and insensitive social media information.

Stern (2017) looks into a Facebook community that spoke Balinese. The research examines the use of social media to actively encourage teens to speak minority languages. It looks at a lively, teen-focused Balinese Facebook community. The research's conclusions demonstrate that the group, in defiance of official government laws, school practises, and family traditions creates a place for young people to speak Balinese 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using peer pressure and peer modelling. The study finds that social media may be a very efficient, affordable, and simple medium for ensuring language revitalization among the younger population. While the study's procedure for data collection is not well spelt out and justification for its choice of data is not provided, it offers insightful contributions on how social media can be useful in learning and revitalisation of minority languages,.

Christiansen (2019) interrogates how Mexican immigrants in the US utilised hashtags, memes, and multimodal resources on Twitter to build identities in order to better

understand how collective identities are created on social media. Students learned that identities were created for individuals, groups, and corporations. Also, they discovered that participants used hashtags, memes, and other multimodal resources to co-create an imagined experience on Twitter in which they participated in certain cultural activities in order to express their feeling of ethnic identification and connection to Mexican culture. The research provides insightful information on how to leverage multimodal resources on social media.

Tagg, Seargeant, and Wipapan (2012) examine the linguistic choices made by a community of native Thai speakers in online communicative encounters. The purpose of the research is to analyse language choice methods employed in online conversation and to offer a descriptive description of the language utilised. The data were taken from conversations on a social networking platform. The interactants' heterogeneous language repertoire as well as the factors influencing the choice of code, script, and register was investigated. In the research, complicated code-switching into English was seen, but it was agreed that face-to-face conversations should be conducted in Thai. The researchers discovered that bilingual Thai-English users on Facebook employ the repetition of letters to indicate group identification.

In exploring how social media are used by companies in interacting with stakeholders and constructing corporate identities, Feng and Wu (2016) examine the construction of corporate identities on Weibo across differential ownership in China. In the study, five corporate identities which include authentic identity, specialist identity, companion identity, journalist identity, and CSR identity are identified. The conducted research provides insights into how identities are constructed on social media.

Sun, Zhao, and Liu's (2020) investigate online speech expressions on social media in China's cyberspace. The study examines how the voices of various socioeconomic groups have been represented in social media by focusing on discourse power. It used class-based voice and longitudinal content analysis. Its findings show that online discourse in China's social media tends to discourse involution, where the ongoing splintering of the discursive power in cyberspace is caused by the growing appropriation of the Internet by various social classes. According to the researchers, asymmetric discursive expression, centralization of voice representation, and polarisation of emotional expression online all contribute to discourse involution.

Using a discursive and class-based approach, the paper gives insights into the ongoing debates on the social impacts of online interactions.

The interactional patterns discovered in computer-mediated communication are studied in Walther's (1996) research (CMC). His research sheds light on the degrees of interactional views that members of an online community bring to their interactions and anticipate from other members. For him, CMC is simultaneously paradoxically intimate, impersonal, and hyper-personal. He finds out that the absence of social constraints that face-to-face contacts impose on participants in a discussion gives the interactions a sensation of hyper-personality that is reinforced by the lack of awareness of the actual personalities hiding behind the virtual person of the co-interactant. The researcher submits that since each interactant realises that he or she is not alone online, there is a continual feeling of interpersonal that is required, pushing him or her to make assumptions about other people based on textually created impressions from transmitted information.

Facebook-based impoliteness discourse as a form of expressing situation moral judgement is investigated by Sinkeviciute (2018). The analysis focuses on negative and aggressive comments as a response to a post that claims the non-existence of Australia. The content of the post poses threats to the national identity of anyone who associates him or herself with the country. The data for the research were impolite comments made as responses to the post. The comments used as data covered one month from the date the post was made. The results of the analysis revealed four main strategies used to express judgement on the post's inappropriateness. The strategies include insults of the post's author's mental abilities and suspicion of drug use and violence-related discourse such as death threats. Another strategy is a counterattack on the author's national identity. While the research provides no justification for its choice of Facebook as the source of data, it however offers an insightful contribution to online impoliteness discourse.

2.4 Theoretical framework

This study is anchored in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar. Further insights are drawn from Halliday's (1987) Systemic Functional Grammar and Brown and Levinson's (1987) face theory. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar is preferred because it is relevant in exploring the non-verbal cues deployed in the

selected football banter while Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar assists to interrogate the linguistic devices used in the discourse. In addition, Brown and Levinson's (1987) face theory is chosen as it helps to explore how participants (football fans who engage in banter in the discourse treat addressees' face and how politeness strategies are constructed in the discourse.

2.4.1 Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar

The theory of visual grammar emphasises meaning-making from different communication modes (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). It holds that language is just one of the numerous modes of making meaning in social interactions (Kress, 2013). As such, it solicits the harnessing of various resources "that people use to make meaning into one descriptive and analytical domain" (Bezemer, Diamantopoulous, Jewitt, Kress and Mavers, 2012: p. 1). Those resources include modes such as image, gesture, gaze, posture, and media such as screens, 3D forms of various kinds, books, notes, and notebooks.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert that the visual, like other semiotic modalities, must fulfil a number of representational and communicative conditions in order to operate as a complete communication system. The authors, therefore, adopt Halliday's metafunctions of ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions, but with a little modification as they name the features of their approach representational, interactive, and compositional.

Representation deals with the means of encoding experiences in visual mode. In other words, it is the visual representation of the relations or interactions between humans, places, or things (participants) portrayed, projected, or expressed in an interaction. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: p. 42) contend, a worthwhile semiotic mode should be "able to represent objects and their relations in the world outside the representational system". To that end, the approach recognises two categories of visual representation, including narrative and conceptual representation. A narrative pattern is a representation of participants as being involved in an interaction (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). It subdivides into action, reaction, speech process and mental process, and conversion processes. Action processes and reactional processes are the only features relevant to this study, and they are discussed in turn.

Action processes are in the form of an action, which can have an ‘Actor’, who is the doer or performer of the action, and a Goal, who is the receiver of the action (transactional), or without a Goal (non-transaction), which is also akin to transitive and intransitive verbs dichotomy in language. Actions are always indicated in visuals by vectors, that is, the depiction of what the participants are doing for or to each other. It is similar to an action verb in the language (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). However, when representations of actions include only the Goal, it is called an Event, which implies that something is transpiring without a visible agent that is responsible for the occurrence (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

Reactional process denotes the representation of the reaction of participants depicted by the formation of a vector “by an eye line, that is, by the direction of the glance of one or more of the represented participants” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: p. 67). In this case, the participant who does the looking is referred to as the Reacter (which could be a human or an animal), while the receiver is called Phenomena. The Reactional process can also be transactional (Reacter has a Phenomenon that the viewers could see), or non-transactional (Reacter has a Phenomenon that the viewers could not see).

Conceptual representation refers to “representing participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, structure, or meaning” (Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: p. 79). Classificational, analytical, and symbolic processes are the three types of conceptual representation. Classificational processes, which are relevant to this study, compare participants with each other in hierarchical (overt taxonomy), or non-hierarchical (covert taxonomy) patterns. Put differently, the representation of participants is always in symmetrical or asymmetrical relations. Insights from the symbolic process as a type of conceptual representation in terms of meaning-making through symbolic representations are drawn for this study.

Interactive relations refer to the projection of the “social relation between the producer, the viewer, and the object (participant) represented” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: p. 42). Expatiating on interactive visuals, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) tag the situation where represented participants look straight at the viewers as a demand from the viewers. They state further that in a facial expression (appearance), a smile could request a social bond from the viewers while a stare could request that the viewers stay away, whereas a suggestive look can request a desire. However, in gesture, a posture

could demand a close relationship or a social distance. The scholars also refer to images that do not look at the viewer directly but are presented to viewers to be observed as an offer.

The importance of the angles in which a photograph is taken is also emphasised in the visual explication of meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). They refer to a situation when the frontal angle is taken as indicating the involvement or alignment of the image-producer and the represented participants; it is called a relationship of “you are like us”, while the ones taken from an oblique angle show a relation of detachment between the producer and the image - a relation of “you are not for us”. In the case of the former, viewers are addressed as ones who must align with the depicted message, whereas in the case of the latter, viewers are to detach from the depicted message. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) also argue that the angle at which a participant is reflected by the camera can symbolise power relations. For instance, a high-angle reflection of a represented participant indicates that the interactive participant has power over the viewers, while a low-angle reflection of the represented participant shows the opposite.

Composition indicates how “the representational and integrative elements are made to relate to each other, that is, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: p. 176). Visual integration is believed to be made possible through three interwoven networks, which are information value, salience, and framing.

Information value deals with the placement of visual elements with each other in certain positions (left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin), which may confer on them the value of information accorded such positions (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). For instance, left and right refer to known and new information, top and bottom deal with ideal and reality while centre and margin describe the nucleus and peripheral. In the case of salience, it refers to how greater stress is given to some visual elements to make them attractive to viewers. Lastly, framing is used to depict individuality or identity (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). As a result, the presence of framing signifies individuality while its absence depicts group identity. However, framing could also be achieved in a film through the presentation of two or more actors together in one shot, which indicates connectedness, or by “editing between individual shots of the actors in

which each is isolated from the others by frame lines” (Leeuwen 2006: p. 203), which denotes disconnectedness.

The importance of this theory to this study lies in its combination of many modes for meaning-making. The theory’s aspects of transactional and non-transactional action and reactional processes are central to the analysis and interpretation of the visual modes used in the data.

2.4.2 Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is attributed to Michael Halliday and has two aspects: systemic grammar and functional grammar. The systemic aspect explains the internal relationship or components as a system network. This system network also consists of the subsystem in which those using language make choices. The functional aspect explains language as social interaction. It also focuses on the pragmatic function of language which is concerned with the mechanism of text structure, function and meaning of language (Halliday, 1978, p. 96).

Language is seen as a social phenomenon in Halliday's SFG, that is, functional. This means that it is concerned with the mechanics of text structure and meaning. Since a specific lexico-grammatical choice is produced under the impact of the social and cultural setting, it marks the beginning of an investigation of language in a social context. In SFG, the linguistic decisions made at the paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels of speech, where words are placed in a phrase or text, produce meaning. This also means that, according to SFG, language serves two distinct purposes, namely the syntagmatic axis and the paradigmatic axis. The degrees of linguistic description are various. They include circumstance, content, and form.

Substance is the raw material of language. The form is the way in which sentences are organised into recognisable and meaningful events or bits of language while the situation is that in which language is used (Ojo, 2011, p. 24). In describing grammatical features, four categories are crucial as proposed by Halliday: unit, structure, class and system. Unit is used in accounting for different grammatical patterns; structure explains the kind of patterns that the unit takes; the grouping of unit members is usually taken care of by class while the system looks into how grammatical units are arranged.

Butt, Fahey, Spink and Yallop (1995) also add that the main concern of systemic functional grammar is the choices that the grammar makes available to speakers and writers. This is to say that SFG creates unlimited linguistic choices of ways for meaning generation. Bloor and Bloor (2004, p. 4) explain that the most important concern of SFG to carry out language investigation or analysis is the insistence on studying actual instances of language that have been used or (are being used) by speakers or writers.

In SFG, language has three metafunctions ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational function expresses the experiential and logical content of the text. It explains our experience of the outer world in the environment. The textual function is language-oriented and deals with cohesive and coherent text production by organising and structuring the linguistic information in the clause. Interpersonal function deals with the social and power relations among language users, it relates participants' situational roles to the discourse produced, (Halliday and Martin, 1981, p. 328). The three metafunctions in SFG which are ideational, interepersonal and textual are hereby discussed.

Ideational metafunction of language explains speakers' or writers' experiences in their internal worlds. Ideational function is represented by the transitivity system. Transitivity deals with the transmission of ideas that represent different processes such as actions, events, etc., (Halliday, 1985: 53). Process in this context refers to verbs such as: feeling, sensing, saying, etc., and what the process expresses such as: mental state, emotional state, physical state etc. Transitivity consists of six processes: material process, mental process, relational process, behavioural process, verbal process and existential process (Halliday, 1976:159). It also consists of participants with different labels such as Actor, Goal, Senser, Phenomenon, Carrier, Attribute and Circumstance including cause, location, manner and instrument.

Process is realised by a verbal group and centres on a clause structure. According to Bloor and Bloor (1995: 110), processes refer to what is going on in the whole clause and that part of the position encoded in the verbal group.

Martin and Rothery (1981), and Halliday (1994) define process types as verbs and verbal groups which describe actions or states of being. According to Halliday (1994), there are two types of processes: Major (material process and relational process) and Minor (existential and behavioural processes), (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:122).

i. Material Process

Material process according to Halliday and Mathiessen (2004) has only one participant which is the Actor. The process basically has to do with doing words. Examples can be seen in the following expressions:

- a. Bisi wasted the resources
- b. John shot the boy across the road.

In example A, Bisi is the actor or the one who performs the action of wasting while the goal here is that of “resources” which undergo the process of “waste”. In example B, it is also obvious that “John” is the actor or performer of an action while the “boy” is the sufferer or the affected. In some cases, the material process type can have three participant roles. For instance,

The man sent some money to his wife

The process here is realised by the lexical verb “sent”. The noun phrase “the man”, which is also the subject, is the actor, “some money” in the sentence is the goal while “to his wife” is the beneficiary.

ii. Mental Process

Mental process explains psychological events or state of being. It shows phenomena actions. This process type uses verbs such as please, see, want, feel, smell know, think, admire and so on. In a mental process, we have the senser and the phenomenon. The senser is sometimes called subject because it is the one that experiences the process while the phenomenon is that which is experienced and can be realised by complement.

Examples:

- a. I (senser) hate (mental process) football betting (phenomenon)
- b. I (senser) feel (mental process) bad (phenomenon)
- c. He (senser) admires (mental process) the cloth (phenomenon)
- d. You (senser) know (mental process) the place (phenomenon)

iii. Relational process

Relational processes are mainly realised by the verb BE or copular verbs: seen, become, appear (Bloor & Bloor, 1995, p. 120). This form of the process has a carrier and an attribute.

Examples;

- c. I (carrier) have (process) some money (attributive)
- d. The boy (carrier) is (process) very handsome (attributive)
- e. You (carrier) are (process) wicked (attributive)

In a relational process clause, things are not seen as a phenomenon of consciousness; rather, they are construed as one element involved in a relationship of being (Halliday and Mathiessen, 2004, p. 213). This means that the relationship of “being” is seen to be two separate entities. This form of process clause has two major types: identifying and attributive. Identifying explains the properties of two entities and their semblances, e.g. John is a handsome boy; the handsome boy is John. Attributive, meanwhile explains what some objects possess or have and where they belong.

The minor processes to be briefly discussed here include Existential process and Behavioural process.

i. The existential process

This process contains just a participant known as “the existent”. The existential process type is usually realised by a copular verb and an empty “there” as a subject. For instance:

- a. There were ten of us at the party
- b. There were fifty of you

The existent here is the circumstantial adjunct “there” which is also the subject. Again, “ghosts do not exist is a negative existential process: Ghosts (existent), “do not exist” (existential process) (Bloor & Bloor, 1995: 123).

ii. Behavioural process

This process has one participant just like the existential process. The participant in behavioural process is called “the behavior” (Bloor & Bloor (1995, p. 125) further explain that behavioural process also appears to be similar to the material process. For instance:

- a the car slid away
- b its police department number plate vanishing around a corner (p.126)

iii. Verbalised process

This is a process clause used in exchange of information. It is mainly an act of saying something. Halliday (1985, p. 129) explains that verbalised process relates to “any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning” or the ideas in human consciousness with their linguistic representation of sayer, the addressee labelled as Target and verbiage. The types of verbs here are mainly used to “say”, “tell”, “praise”, “boast”, and “describe”. The process has two participants which are “sayer” and “receiver”.

Interpersonal function of language is represented by two concepts. The first one is “mood and modality” which shows the role a speaker in a speech event is playing or performing and the role he assigns to the listener. Mood system focuses mainly on the subject within a sentence. The system is divided into two: Imperative and Indicative mood. The Indicative mood is subdivided into two: an indicative declarative and indicative interrogative. This is because there is the presence of the subject irrespective of the position it is occupying in the sentence.

Examples:

- a. The principal (S) flogged (P) the boy (CE)
- b. Did (P-) the principal (S) flog (P) the boy (CE)

The interrogative is further subdivided into: WH interrogative which uses WH elements like “who”, “why”, “when”, etc. to form its structure and achieve an interrogative construction.

Examples:

- a. Why did you travel yesterday?
- b. When did you arrive?
- c. Who is your father?

Another subdivision of interrogative is the tag interrogative. Tag is achieved when the subject and the auxiliary verb in the sentence are used, for instance,

- a. The students have been given their report cards. Haven't they? (negative)
- b. Super Eagles of Nigeria have not won the world cup. Have they? (positive)

The last subdivision of interrogative is the polarity interrogative. This form of question requires “Yes” or “No” for an answer. The auxiliary verb is usually fronted and is also followed by the subject when formed.

Examples:

- a. Will you complete the assignment tomorrow?
- b. Have you eaten?
- c. Are you still interested in the job?

For the imperative, there is no room for a subject. The subject in an imperative structure is usually omitted. Most imperative statements are realised by the predicator element and complement extensive and adverbs. For instance,

- a. Take your money
- b. Eat your food
- c. Get out of the class
- d. Shut your mouth

Textual function of language is realised by theme. According to Halliday (1985: p. 220), “the thematic element in a clause is the first element which results from choices. For Halliday (1981, p. 330), the theme is the message in a given text, which indicates the identity of text relations. This principally explains that thematic structure is

concerned with theme and rheme, and old or new information structure. Theme is primarily concerned with the form of the element occupying the initial position in the clause structure (Ojo, 2011, p. 238). Halliday (1985, p. 39) sees theme as the element that functions as the starting point for the message i.e what the clause is going to be about. The concept of theme is divided into Marked theme and Unmarked theme. Also important to the concept of theme are cohesion and coherence. The two concepts are discussed below

Cohesion is made to be a well-known concept in 1970s by Halliday and Hassan (1976), though it was first developed, according to Ogunsiyi (1990, p. 29), by Roman Jakobson. Cohesion is a grammatical concept used to link together different utterances in a way that the utterances flow from one to another within a discourse so as to have a well-written text. That is to say that it occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another. One presupposes the other in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it (Ogunsiyi and Olanrewaju, 2010, p. 71). They explain further that cohesion is the way in which a discourse hangs together as a meaningful unit. Cohesion can occur within or between sentences. When it is occurring within a sentence, it manifests in different forms such as through pronoun, repetition, punctuation, substitution and ellipsis.

Halliday and Hassan's efforts encouraged some scholars to further develop the concept; others applied the concept as a tool of linguistic analysis to literary and non-literary texts. Some of these scholars include Bloor and Bloor (1995). Taiwo (2012, p. 208) explains the concept of cohesion thus:

Cohesion is a term used to describe the relation of meanings that exists within a written or spoken language in which sentences can be interpreted as being connected based on the use of grammatical and lexical elements. Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another...

A text becomes meaningless and difficult to comprehend when it lacks cohesive ties. Cohesion can occur in both written and spoken discourse. Also, Eggins (2004, p. 30) in her own view, submits that cohesion means the way a bit of utterances are tied together or related. This means that cohesion appears to be like "super glue" that is mainly used to stick something together.

Cohesion simply means sticking together (Stern, 2001, p. 51). It is how words and sentences are grammatically brought together in a meaningful way. When a text is meaningless, uncoordinated and scattered, it means that it does not have cohesion. But when it makes sense, it means it has cohesion as explained by Halliday (1985). According to Ogunsiji, Dauda and Yakubu (2012, p. 55), for cohesion to be achieved in a text, there are five known and useful ways:

Referential cohesion: This means using pronouns or determiners to refer to the known nouns in a text. Backward referencing is known as anaphoric reference while forward referencing is called cataphoric reference (Ogunsiji, Dauda & Yakubu 2012, p. 55). For instance; John lives at Ile-Ife but he is not a native of Osun State. The pronoun “he” refers anaphorically to the noun “John”. Another example is: after several years that she has been in pain, Jumoke finally became free. From this example, the noun “Jumoke” refers to “she” cataphorically.

Conjunctive cohesion: This occurs or is realised when the principal coordinators such as AND, BUT and OR are used to achieve cohesion. For examples; (i) Nigeria is blessed with different mineral resources BUT the people are lazy in tapping them. (ii). some armed robbers attacked Ijebu Local Government chairman AND ran away with his car. The capitalised principal coordinators used in the examples above are used cohesively.

Elliptical cohesion: Ellipsis deals with omission of words or substitution by zero. In discourse, it is basically used to avoid repetition of words or certain utterances or expressions. Examples include:

- (i) John ate rice and beans and drank a bottle of fanta.
- (ii) The rich are getting richer; the poor, poorer. In example one, the omitted item is the subject “John” while the omitted item in second example is the verbal group “are getting”.

Substitution is also one of the ways in which cohesion is achieved in discourse. By this, it means the act of removing and replacing a linguistic item with another one. An example of this is: would you like a cup of coffee? Yes, I’d like ONE (Ogunsiji, Dauda & Yakubu, 2012, p. 56). “One” in the above example replaces “a cup of coffee”.

Lexical cohesion: This occurs when unity is achieved in a text using words. There are four varieties of lexical cohesion according to Ogunsiyi, Dauda and Yakubu (2012, p. 56): repetition, synonymy, antonymy and collocation.

Coherence as a concept in discourse explains how some utterances are related through the interpretation of illocutionary acts (Ogunsiyi, Dauda and Yakubu, 2012:57). Also, in discourse, coherence shows how a particular instance of language use complies with a shared knowledge. For instance:

Speaker A: I kept the cutlass at the back of the compound Speaker B: I'm not feeling fine.

Speaker A: alright

The discourse above can be clearly interpreted based on the social conventions of the interaction and the shared knowledge of the interlocutors. Speaker A demands from speaker B to perform an action of cutting the grass at the back of their compound while speaker B humbly declines by stating the reason why he cannot carry out such action and speaker A's last comment shows that he will take up the cutlass and perform the action of cutting the grass.

2.4.3 Brown and Levinson's face theory

In analyzing the fourth objective of the study, which focuses on politeness strategies or strategies employed in the data, insights were drawn from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, specifically relying on their notion of "Face" in social interactions. Central to Brown and Levinson's theory is the notion of face as proposed by Goffman's (1967). According to Goffman (1967, p.120), "Face is the positive social value of a person, effectively claimed for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact." Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) therefore conceptualized the face theory to explain politeness in social or human interactions. According to them, face refers to the public self-image that every individual in society wants to claim for himself (Brown and Levinson 1978; 1987). As further explained by Brown and Levinson, two faces are projected by individuals in social interactions, that is, according to them, face has two components: positive face and negative face. These are discussed below

The positive face has to do with the claim for the recognition and appropriate validation of one's social self-image or personality. It involves the want of every

member that his wants to be desirable to at least some other members of society and also the desire to be liked and appreciated. It can be regarded as the desire of every individual to have his or her personality or self-image appreciated. It is a desire for approval or acceptance by others. In short, a positive face is a positive consistent self-image or personality. Examples of positive face-threatening acts include complaints and insults; criticism or disapproval; disagreeing, asking for clarification; and evaluation.

Negative face is the desire of interlocutors or persons in social encounters to have their independence honoured, to have their claim to regions acknowledged, or to be free from imposition (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It is simply the upkeep, defence, and absence of restrictions of one's own region. The ability to be negative is inherent. It is the desire to be independent and respect other people's space. Autonomy, freedom from imposition, and the fundamental claim to territory, private preserves, and rights to non-distraction, or to freedom of action and freedom from imposition, may all be summed up as negative face. Orders and requests, advice and recommendations, threats and warnings, reminders, and calling in a debt are a few examples of unpleasant face-threatening acts.

In addition to the two components of the face, face-threatening activities are a crucial component of Brown and Levinson's face theory. A face-threatening act is one that can endanger the face of another person (Brown and Levinson, 1987, 1978). Face-threatening actions may endanger either the speaker's or the hearer's face, and they can endanger either the positive face or negative face. FTAs, also known as face-threatening actions, include saying "thank you," "sorry," "promise," and even doing nonverbal gestures like tripping or falling down (positive or negative). It also includes disapproval, reproach, commands, bad news delivery, and requests. Simple requests, for instance, put the target's wish to maintain autonomy at jeopardy since the target must comply with the request. In conclusion, FTA is an action that opposes an interlocutor's face desires. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when faced with the requirement to execute an FTA, the person must decide between carrying it out in the most direct and effective way possible and seeking to minimise its impact on the hearer's positive or negative face. The politeness techniques, as defined by Brown and Levinson, are the mitigating tactics. According to Brown and Levinson, there are four politeness techniques that may be used to lessen the likelihood of dangerous or

threatening behaviour. They are positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record and off-record politeness strategies. These politeness strategies which are employed in the banter discourse are hereby succinctly discussed.

Positive politeness caters for the positive face wants of the addressee. It is usually used by interlocutors involved in a communicative discourse to redress an attack or a threat to the positive face of the addressee while negative politeness is geared towards negative face wants of the addressee. It is often employed to redress threats to negative face of the addressee. Bald on-record politeness strategy occurs when the speaker is direct, blunt, unambiguous in the way he addresses the addressee. It involves going direct in the performance of FTA. Off-record is indirect and can be said to be closer to non-performance of FTA. It is a form of face-saving strategy that is geared towards avoiding threats to the addressee's face (Sunday, 2011).

Each of the theories discussed above is adopted to address the study's specific objectives. Specifically, Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar is geared towards examination of banter categories and banter strategies which are captured in the first and second objectives. Halliday's systemic functional grammar is adopted to address the third objective which focuses on the linguistic devices employed in the discourse while Brown and Levinson's face theory is useful in addressing the last objective which is geared towards exploration of politeness strategies used in the discourse.

2.5 Summary

The study's relevant themes have been thoroughly covered in this chapter. In addition, the chapter evaluated relevant studies on banter discourse, football discourse, politeness, and social media discourses, establishing the need for this investigation in light of the inadequacies in previous studies that had been noted. The theoretical foundation for the current investigation has also been described in the chapter's last section.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preamble

This chapter presents the research design for the study and the methods used for the collection of data. It also accounts for the choice of data and discusses the analytical procedure.

3.1 Research design

A descriptive research design was adopted to describe how football fans deploy non-verbal cues and linguistic devices in football banter on Twitter. The study used a qualitative approach to gain deeper insights into the discursive use of banter by football fans to project critical football-related issues through the adoption of appropriate non-verbal cues and linguistic devices.

3.2 Sampling technique

The purposive sampling technique was used. Twitter was purposively sampled among other social media platforms because it contains a large corpus of data on football banter through its Football Twitter community platform. One hundred and fifty Twitter handles were purposively selected because they are relevant in terms of thematic issues and they adopted both verbal and non-verbal communicative modes. One hundred and fifty tweets, one from each of the Twitter handles, were selected. The selected data were retrieved through Twitter advanced search platform. The data were subjected to multimodal discourse analysis.

3.3 Methods of data collection

The data for the study were gathered from the Football Twitter community platform and retrieved through Twitter advanced search platform and smartphone capturing. The justification for this was because the community, through advanced search platform provides easy access to large corpus of data.

3.4 Method of data analysis

The data collected were subjected to multimodal discourse analysis. This was done by studying and bringing out the multimodal resources employed in the discourse for

analysis. The analysis began by identifying the categories of banter which were employed in the selected data. The analysis of non-verbal cues employed as the banter strategies in the selected data was anchored on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar while linguistic aspect of the banter strategies was addressed by Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar; The politeness strategies in the data were analysed by adopting Brown and Levinson's (1987) face theory.

3.5 Research ethics

With regard to the ethical issues relating to the use of the data for this research, adequate care and caution were taken in the collection and usage of the data. The tweets employed as the data for the study as well as the selected Twitter handles were easily accessible in public domain, as such, there was no case of breach of ethical issue.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research design and data collection. It has also presented the sampling technique, the research ethics and the method of data analysis. The analysis of the data is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Preamble

This chapter discusses the categories of banter and the banter strategies employed in the selected football banter. It also identifies the linguistic devices and explores the politeness strategies in the selected football banter. Italic fonts are used for plates labelling while source of the data is put in bold fonts.

4.1 The categories of banter in the data

In the study, five banter categories are discovered in the selected football banter. They are football fans-targeted banter, football players-targeted banter, football managers-targeted banter, football clubs-targeted banter; and match officials-targeted banter.

4.1.1 Football fans-targeted banter

This category of banter foregrounds football fans as the banter target. As such, the banter in this category is targeted at football fans whose clubs are at the losing end of football matches. The plates below capture this category of banter:

4.1.1.1 Defeat-induced brooding and emotional trauma

Brooding and emotional trauma relates to the state of being emotionally depressing. There are instances of brooding and emotional trauma by which the banter targets are portrayed as a result of their clubs' losses or defeats. Here, the banter targets are portrayed as being emotionally broken or traumatized.

"Mum, it's happening again..."



Tweet your reply

Plate 4.1: Defeat-induced brooding and emotional trauma

(Source: @gleeddee

Date: 15/05/ 2019

In plate 4.1, a football fan mocks a Liverpool football club's fan for his club's failure to win English Premier League (EPL) for several years despite being close to winning it few times. The visual representation is recreated after Liverpool football club lost to Chelsea football club in an English Premier League match on 15th May, 2019. The plate instantiates a non-transactional reactional process featuring the Reacter (A Liverpool fan) reacting to his club's continuous missing out on English Premier League (EPL) trophy. As portrayed in the plate, the Reacter (the represented participant in the plate) is fixing his gaze on a Phenomenon (not presented in the plate) in a manner that suggests he needs an emotional help or comfort as a result of his club (Liverpool) failing to win the EPL trophy. As the plate portrays, the non-existent Phenomenon in the plate possibly indicates that the Reacter is emotionally lonely, having no one to give him an emotional consolation for his club's defeat.

Also, as portrayed in the plate, the gestural reaction of the Reacter, where he is projected with a teary face with one of his hands on the cheek, suggests that he is emotionally down or traumatized in relation to his club's loss. In addition, as it can be observed from the plate, there is a 'Demand' gaze from the Reacter (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The Reacter (the represented participant) depicted with a 'demand' gaze directly sets his gaze towards the viewer. With the deployment of gaze as a "Demand", the represented participant is evidently being portrayed as seeking or demanding for emotional attachment or help from the viewer, having been emotionally traumatized as a result of his club's loss. Also evident in the plate is the use of quotation combined with the use of apostrophe as captured in the label "Mum, it's happening again". It is employed to portray the Reacter as calling or addressing someone (his mum) as if the person being called or addressed is present or available to give the bantered fan an emotional support. The representation reduces the Reacter to a child through the use of vocative "Mum". Here, he is made to use the feature of child language. The plate is a representation of denigration. The language style deployed by the "banterer" is typically that of child language.

This is deployed to mock the targeted fan, and by extension, Liverpool fans, as being so emotionally depressing to the extent that they are looking for emotional support from close relations. Humorously, the incongruous phone calling gestural reaction of the Reacter (the represented participant portrayed as a Liverpool fan) has potential to

generate laughter or amusement; as it foregrounds the absurdity of a football fan initiating a phone call to his mum for consolation just because his club loses a football match. Thus, while this anomalous visual representation of the football fan attempts to ridicule him and other Liverpool fans, it also creates amusement and laughter for other football fans through anomalous visual representation.



Plate 4.2: Defeat-induced brooding and emotional trauma

Source: @Famos_D

Date:22/05/2021

Plate 4.2 is a representation of a football fan mocking Chelsea football club's fans after their club's Football Association (FA) cup final loss to Leicester Football Club. The plate centers on Chelsea Football Club's FA (Football Association) cup final loss to Leicester Football Club, features a non-transactional reactional process. As depicted in the plate, the Reacter (the represented participant, assumed to be a Chelsea football club fan) is portrayed with tears shedding gestural reaction and a reactional gaze fixed to a non-existent Phenomenon. This non-transactional reaction of the Reacter, by inference, indicates that the Reacter (representing a Chelsea fan) is portrayed as being emotionally troubled and lonely as a result of his club's defeat in the Football Association (FA) cup final against Leicester football club. In relation to the gaze of the Reacter, as evident in the plate, the Reacter's gaze foregrounds 'Offer' as the represented participant's gaze is directly not fixed on the viewer (Kress and Leuwen, 2006). Based on the 'offer' gaze, as depicted in the plate, the Reacter is portrayed as object of pity. By implication, the Reacter being offered as object of pity suggests that he is emotionally traumatized and as such, needs to be pitied after his club has been defeated. This is an attempt to ridicule the represented participant (representing Chelsea fans).

In addition, allusion is foregrounded in the plate. As observable from the plate, the label "Cry me a river (CRIES In Ekun EGBERE)" is traceable to Yoruba (an ethnic group in South West, Nigeria) mythology. In Yoruba mythology, the nominal item "Egbere" foregrounded in the label refers to a malevolent spirit that inhabits woods and is usually seen at night. "Egbere" is said to be shor, owns a (small) mat and characteristically cries at all times. In addition, it is believed in Yoruba mythology that whoever takes the mat, which is regarded as the mat of wealth, would be extremely rich. The label is thus used specifically as a reference to what is usually referred to as "Ekun Egbere" (teras of Egbere) in Yoruba mythology. Given the fact that "Egbere" is generally known for shedding ceaseless and unending tears, the "banterer" here alludes to 'Egbere' form of tears to mockingly portray Chelsea fans as ceaselessly shedding tears as a result of their club's defeat. The "banterer" relies on his or her socio-cultural knowledge to depict the Reacter (representing Chelsea fans) as having continuous tears as result of their club's defeat. The representation of the Reacter (the represented participant in the plate) through the figurative use of language in the form of allusion to Yoruba socio-cultural mythology is suggestive of contemptuous ridicule or mockery.

**Chelsea Men, Chelsea women,
Chelsea babies and Chelsea fans
right now**



Plate 4.3: Defeat-induced brooding and emotional trauma

Twitter handle: @OLUMAYORT

Date: 22/05/2021

The plate is a representational portrayal of Chelsea fans after their F.A cup final match loss to Liecester football club. The frame shows a non-transactional reactional process that depicts the Reacter (the represented participant portrayed as a Chelsea fan) directing his gaze downward to a phenomenon (not presented). This representation of the Reacter's downward looking gaze portrays the banter targets, Chelsea fans (represented by the Reacter) as being emotionally depressing after their football club got beaten. The plate also features the deployment of brooding gesture of the Reacter (the represented participant) to portray him as being emotionally damaged or down. This is evident in the Reacter being portrayed with his head being lowered down. Gaze is also used in the frame. The gaze of the Reacter is employed to portray him as being an object of scrutiny and ridicule on the basis of being emotionally depressed. Here, gaze is employed as an "Offer". As it can be observed in the plate, the Reacter is pictured as not having a directional gaze at the viewer. This shows a form of emotional detachment of the Reacter, thereby portraying him as an "offer" or an object of mockery. Through the 'offer' gaze, the Reacter is portrayed as being emotionally cut off from the viewer as evident in his downward-looking posture as against upward-looking gaze towards the viewer.

Appearance or dressing is additionally employed to portray the Reacter as being mentally insane and unstable. The inference of this can be traced to how a mentally deranged individual (especially in Nigerian setting) usually appears in a tattered manner. As evident in the plate, the Reacter is thus depicted with a tattered and unattractive dressing as well as an appearance that can be likened to a mentally or emotionally damaged person. This portrays the Reacter (portrayed as a Chelsea fan) as being emotionally unstable and traumatized due to his team's defeat. The discursive function of the banter is to ridicule and mock the banter target as being emotionally damaged and traumatized after his team devastating defeat. As it can be observed from the plate, there is also a humorous representation of the represented participant; the incongruity of the plate which is potentially humorous is the absurdity and anomaly of a football fan being portrayed with an appearance and dressing of a mentally deranged person on the basis of his club's loss.



Plate 4.4: Defeat-induced brooding and emotional trauma

Source: @particular6

Date: 15/05/2021

In plate 4.4, a Chelsea football club fan is being consoled after his club's defeat in a Champions league match against Real Madrid football club. The plate is an instance of transactional action process presenting the Actor and the Goal (Kress and Leuwen, 2006). The Actor is the represented participant portrayed as holding and consoling the Goal (the represented participant wearing Chelsea jersey and being held). In the frame, as evident in his gestural teary face, the Goal is depicted as being emotionally traumatized and broken as a result of his club's Champions league final loss to Manchester United. There is also an overt taxonomy of Superordinate and Subordinate in the classification of the Actor and the Goal where the Actor is presented with a bigger frame than that of the Goal. By inference, this classification portrays the Actor as the one consoling and the Goal as the one being consoled or suffering from emotional trauma. The frame is a hierarchical classification of the Actor as the consoler and the Goal as the consoled or the traumatized.

From the plate also, the label "We rise by lifting others" captures the use of sarcasm to portray the banter target (the Goal) as being emotionally down and thereby need emotional lifting. It is discursively employed to sarcastically ridicule and mock the banter target. The representation in the plate can be described as an instance of ridiculous empathy. This is foregrounded in the visual representation of the Actor appearing to be taking the picture of the Goal while at the same time consoling him. Discursively, the banter is designed for mocking and ridiculing the banter target (the Goal) for his emotional state after his team's loss. Also, the banter is useful for the creation of humour and amusement for the audience or other football fans. The humour is reinforced through the absurdity of the Actor consoling the banter target (the Goal) while at the same time taking a picture of him crying. It is anomalous and absurd to be taking a picture of a person who is emotionally broken while simultaneously appearing to be consoling him. This representation is laughable and amusing. It can also be described as an instance of ridiculous empathy.



Plate 4.5: Defeat-induced brooding and emotional trauma

Source: @bayou246

Date: 18/03/2021

In plate 4.5, a rival football fan mocks Manchester United football club fans after their club's loss against Real Sociada football club in a Europa league match. Here, there is a non-transactional reactional process featuring the Reacter with no Phenomenon presented. As evident from the plate, the Reacter (the represented participant, representing Manchester United fans) is portrayed showing emotional reaction to his club's loss in a Europa League match against Real Sociedad football club. In the plate, the Reacter is portrayed with a gestural reaction of frowning as well as a gaze fixed on a Phenomenon (not presented). Inferentially, the Reacter's frowning and weeping gestural reaction suggests being emotionally battered or troubled. In addition, the non-transactional reaction as shown in non-representation of the Phenomenon further shows emotional loneliness of the Reacter or that the Reacter is emotionally detached, failing to get the much needed emotional response.

As it can also be observed from the plate, the Reacter is projected with a 'Demand' gaze where his gaze is directly fixed on the viewer (Kress and Leuwen, 2006). By implication, the Reacter (the represented participants presented as representing Manchester United fans) is portrayed as demanding an emotional response in form of consolation or comfort from the viewer as a result of his club's defeat. The plate, by inference, thus portrays Manchester United fans, represented as the Reacter, as being emotionally troubled or down as a result of their club's Europa league loss. The label "Manchester United fans rn" is sarcastically employed to mockingly foreground the emotional state of the Reacter. From the label, "rn" is an acronym for "right now", a form of a time adverbial used to refer to the moment of the Reacter's emotional trauma.

4.1.1.2 Hopelessness and Despondence

Hopelessness or despair refers to a complete loss hope or faith in a cause. The banter in this category is employed to portray the banter targets as being hopeless and desperately despair about the club they support. Instances of this category of banter are presented in the plates below.



Plate 4.6: Hopelessness and despondence

Source: @TotalKimich

Date: 21/03/2021

The plate is targeted at Arsenal fans in relation to their club's inability to win trophies for years. It features embedding of representations: transactional reactional process and transactional Action process. In the transactional reactional process, the represented participant (the Reactor) is portrayed reacting to his club's failure to win trophies for years by focusing on reading a book to get a way out of his support for the club. The Reactor has a directional gaze at the Phenomenon (the book being read). The Reactor is presented in the frame as having a hopeless reaction as regards his club's (Arsenal) chances of winning trophies as suggested in the title of the book being read-- "How to Stop Supporting Arsenal". The plate thus portrays the Reactor as reacting to find a way out of his support for Arsenal by reading a book that can possibly give him tips or information on how to quit supporting his club that has been trophyless for years. Here, there is a semiotic transmutation of reading as a problem-solving task where the Reactor is portrayed with his gaze fixed on the Phenomenon (the book) as if he is desperate to get solutions to solve a problem in relation to his club's predicament. By inference, the Reactor (representing Arsenal fans) is mocked for his club's failure to win trophies and he is being described as hopeless.

The reactional representation also shows that Arsenal fans have no hope of seeing their club winning trophies, thus resulting to looking for a way out from a book. The representation of Action process in the plate involves the Actor and the Goal. The Actor is the represented participant in the plate, representing an Arsenal fan while the Goal is the book. The vector is the gaze of the Actor. The gaze is deployed in such a manner that the Actor fixes his eyes directly towards the Goal with undivided attention and seriousness. This suggests a desperate situation of the banter target (the Actor) to discover a way of escape from the hopeless predicament of his club. From humour perspective, the gaze vector also has a potential to engender amusement and laughter from the viewer or the reader. The absurdity of a football fan fixing his gaze on an imaginary book in an undistracted manner for the purpose of finding a way out of a football club can be amusing and funny. The absurdity and anomaly is further reinforced in the fact that a football fan does not need to rread any book if he wants to quit supporting his club.

Additionally, the plate features sarcasm designed to portray the hopelessness of the banter target, an Arsenal fan portrayed in the plate. The label "How to stop supporting

Arsenal” used as the title of the book is fictionally created by the “banterer” to sarcastically portray an Arsenal fan as having no hope about or already given up on his club, thereby reading a book on how to find a way of escape from the club. This portrays the banter target as being despondent about the chances of his club winning any trophy. The banter is functionally designed to ridicule and mock the banter target. The ridicule or mockery is conveyed and reinforced in the absurdity of portraying a football fan sitting down to read a book on how to quit supporting a football club.



Arsenal Fans in church today

Plate 4.7: Hopelessness and despondence

Source: @Desmund_Oris.

Date: 15/02/2022

The background of the plate is rooted in Arsenal fans complaining of being tired of their club not qualifying for Champions League or not winning trophies for years. The plate features a non- transactional Reactional process, depicting the represented participants (Arsenal fans) as the Reacter. The frame presents the Reacter (the represented participants) having their gaze downward on the Phenomenon (not presented, and possibly the Christian God, as suggested by the locative circumstance of the church setting). As it can be seen in the plate, the Reacters are either having their gaze downward or straight forward on the unseen Phenomenon (the invisible God). This representation of the Reacter, by inference, suggests that the represented participants (the Reacter) are in hopeless situation which warrants their presence in the church or their gaze being fixed on the unseen Phenomenon (probably God) to help them turn the hopeless situation of their club around. The locative circumstance of the church setting helps to reinforce the Reacter's desperate need for spiritual intervention. The portrayal of Arsenal fans as being in church with their club's jerseys, gesture is employed to depict the represented participants as being hopeless and despondent. The represented participants wearing Arsenal jerseys in the plate are portrayed with a sobering gesture conveyed through the lowering of their heads, thus, suggesting a group of people who are hopelessly helpless.

Functionally, the absurdity of portraying a group of fans as portrayed in the plate being found in a church in their club's jerseys in sober mood is sarcastic and it is aimed at ridiculing and mocking the banter targets. Dressing is deployed to instigate humour and amusement from the plate. This can be seen in the incongruous depiction of a group of church attendees all wearing the jerseys of a football club. The uncharacteristic portrayal of a group of church attendees all wearing a football club's jersey to church has potential to instigate laughter. The dark background of the plate which contains the label "Arsenal fans in church today" is equally significant. It is suggestive of a hopeless and gloomy plight of the represented participants. The place deixis is captured with the use of "in Church" performing the same communicative purpose as locative circumstance to show the setting of spiritual beam of hope for Arsenal fans. The time deixis, 'today' is employed to show the urgency of the spiritual intervention which Arsenal fans need for their club.

4.1.1.3 Fear and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety are often portrayed through football banter. This can be categorized as fear induced banter. It involves creating emotional fear for the banter target. In this sub-category of football banter, Through deliberately created uncertain and unknown situations, “banterer”s make the banter targets to lose courage and confidence about the football clubs or players they support. Instances of this banter category are presented below.

A rare pic of Man United refusing to play against Man city,ati they want Norwich



Plate 4.8: Fear and anxiety

Source: @Leninpark4

Date:06/12/2021

In plate 4.8, a rival fan ridicules Manchester United football club as being afraid of playing against their rival. The plate is an instance of a transactional reactional process containing the Reactor and the Phenomenon. As it can be observed from the plate, the Reactor (the represented participant pictured as a child solely standing directly in front of other represented participants) is portrayed having his glances or gaze being turned away from the Phenomenon (the represented participant appearing like medical personnel in the plate). This transactional representation of the Reactor, having his glance or gaze away from the Phenomenon, indicates that the Reactor is disinterested or afraid of facing or interacting with the Phenomenon. In reference to the context of the plate, the Reactor, representing Manchester United football club is therefore, portrayed as being afraid or not having the courage to face the Phenomenon, presented as Manchester City football club, probably because of the terrifying football form of the Phenomenon (Manchester City) as reflected in the way the club humiliates other opposing football club that have faced it. This is also complemented by the label “A rare picture of Man United refusing to play against Man City, they want Norwhich”. From the plate, the label suggests that the Reactor (Man United) is afraid of playing against the Phenomenon (Man City) but instead prefers to play Norwhich, generally believed to be a weak club. In addition, the plate presents a hierarchical classification of both the Reactor and the Phenomenon where the two are asymmetrically classified. As evident from the plate, the Phenomenon is portrayed with a bigger frame while the Reactor is pictured in a smaller frame. This indicates that the Phenomenon (Manchester United) is superiorly classified or classified as being superior while the Reactor (Manchester United) is classified as subordinate or inferior. The asymmetric hierarchical classification therefore, suggests that the Reactor (Man United) is afraid to face the Phenomenon (Man City) because its inferior or subordinate disposition.

Pls what's happening at Stamford
Bridge right now? 🤔 🙄

#CHEMCI Lampard Ziyech Mendy



Plate 4.9: Fear and anxiety

Source: @TheDewale

Date:03/01?2021

The plate stems from Chelsea's loss to Manchester City in a Premier league match. It is a home match played at their stadium known as Stamford Bridge. The plate contains a non-transactional Reactionary process depicting the Reactor (the represented participant, presented as a Chelsea fan as signified by the Club's jersey which he wears) showing a non-transactional gestural reaction and a gaze that appears fearful and terrifying towards a Phenomenon (not presented in the plate). As evident in the plate, the gestural representation of the Reactor as being overwhelmed and anxious coupled with his anxious gaze is discursively significant. In relation to the Reactor's club defeat, it can be inferred that the Reactor is fearfully overwhelmed to the extent that he tries to hide. As such, the locative circumstance of leaves where the Reactor is portrayed trying to hide lends credence to the reality of his fear and anxiety. In addition, as observable from the plate, the locative circumstance of the broken bridge (used to represent Stamford Bridge, the stadium of Chelsea football club which the Reactor supports) appears to create imagery of destruction intended to project fear and anxiety for the Reactor (represented as Chelsea fans). By implication, through the deployment of the Reactor gestures and the locative circumstance of a broken bridge and leaves, the plate portrays the Reactor, that is, Chelsea fans as being afraid and timid as a result of their club's defeat.

The gaze of the Reactor is also presented as a "Demand" (Kress and Leuwen, 2006). The demand form of gaze portrays the Reactor as trying to demand attention or emotional response from the viewer. This suggests that the Reactor is overwhelmed with fear and as such, he is in need of emotional response from the viewer. Humorously, the incongruity of the plate which has a potential for laughter or amusement is the absurdity of portraying the Reactor (representing Chelsea fans) as trying to hide himself behind leaves that do not have the capacity to cover him. The locative circumstance of exposing leaves where the Reactor tries to hide can instigate laughter as it is anomaly to try to hide behind something that one knows it doesn't have the capacity for covering. The plate also exemplifies the use of rhetorical sarcasm deployed to project the ongoing humiliating defeat in the club's stadium where the match is being played. The label "Please what is happening at Stamford bridge right now?" instantiates this.

Shocking scenes at Brentford's stadium as stewards are forcing Man United fans to stay and watch the game until the final whistle



Plate 4.10: Fear and anxiety

Source: @Jiji_Byte.

Date: 01/12/2022

The plate presents Manchester United football club's fans being pictured running away after their club's defeat by Brentford Football Club in an EPL match. The plate is a rerepresentation of an actual event. In the plate, there is a transactional Action process showing the Actor and the Goal. As reflected in the plate, the Actor (the represented participants presented as security stewards or personnel) is portrayed having a transactional action of grabbing and holding the Goal (the represented participant being surrounded and grabbed by the security personnel). Going by the context of the plate, the Goal, presented as a Manchester United fan is portrayed as trying to run away, probably from the stadium as a result of his club's defeat. This is reflected in the label "Shocking scenes at Brentford's stadium as stewards are forcing Man United fans to stay and watch the game until the final whistle". The label thus suggests that, the Goal (presented as a Manchester United fan) is being overwhelmed with fear as a result of his club's defeat against Brentford football club, thus resulting in his attempt to run away from the stadium.

From another perspective, the plate can also be said to be a transactional Reactional process featuring the Reacter, the represented participant portrayed having crying gestural reaction around the Phenomenon (the security stewards). Inferentially, the transactional gestural reaction of the Reacter (a Man United fan) suggests that he is unhappy as a result of his club's loss and as such he is trying to run away from the stadium. Within the context of the plate, the "banterer" tries to ridicule Manchester United for their club's defeat against Brentford football club by portraying them as being afraid through both transactional action and reactional processes.



Plate 4.11: Fear and anxiety

Source: @Sportbible.

Date: 21/03/2021

The plate is targeted at Ronaldo fans. This in relation to how Juventus Football Club (the football club Ronaldo plays for) struggles to qualify for Champions league and the club is about to be relegated to a less glamorous league, Europa league. The label “Ronaldo road to Europa league” is sarcastically employed to show the certainty of Ronaldo playing in the Europa league, a league that is considered less competitive in football. The use of sarcasm to affirm certainty of Europa league for the banter target’s club has a potential to create fear and anxiety for the fans of the targeted club as it can make them to start imagine the harrowing possibility of playing in a relegated league.

In addition, the locative circumstance of a smooth bridge and road is employed in the plate to reinforce and complement the use of sarcasm. In the plate, the locative circumstance of a smooth bridge and road signifies transition of the banter target (Cristiano Ronaldo) to Europa league without any obstacle or hindrance as the bridge projected in the frame is smooth and without any pothole. By inference, the use of the locative circumstance of a smooth bridge is intended to cause the fans of the banter target to have a sense of fear and anxiety about the possibility of their club and player being knocked to a relegated and unattractive league. Putting into context, the deployment of locative circumstance of a smooth bridge and road foregrounds the idea that nothing can stop the banter target (Cristiano Ronaldo) from playing in a league considered less prestigious.

Chelsea fans after getting Man City away in both cups



Plate 4.12: Fear and anxiety

Source: @Joshua_Ubeku.

Date: 06/12/2022

4.1.2 Football players-targeted banter

The banter in this category focuses on football players as the object of ridicule and mockery. Here, the “banterers” employ both non-verbal cues and linguistic devices in form of banter. The banter are manifested in form of ridiculing, scorning or mocking. The football players who are the addressees or the object of banter here are subjected to ridicule and mockery while the banter also serves as a form of amusement and humour for the reader or the viewer. The plates below illustrate this category of banter.

4.1.2.1 Unprofessionalism

Football as a sport is guided by rules in order to ensure orderliness, tranquility, acceptable conduct or behavior and professionalism from both players and managers. It also helps to safeguard against chaos, career threatening injuries for players, brutality, misconduct and unprofessionalism. As such, football banter is often employed to address issues relating to unprofessionalism, brutality and misconduct. The plates below foreground instances of this banter category.

The only success suarez tasted at Liverpool 🤔🤔🤔



Plate 4.13: Unprofessionalism

Source: @flo_perez

Date: 15/04/2021

The plate is a recreation of an incident in an English Premiership League (EPL) match between Liverpool and Chelsea football clubs, where Luis Suarez was seen deliberately biting Ivanovic, a Chelsea player. The plate is a transactional action process as the action of the Actor is specifically directed at the Goal. The Actor is the represented participant biting another represented participant while the Goal is the represented participant being bitten. The vector is the tooth of the Actor. The biting gesture of the Actor or the vector is deployed in form of banter to project and foreground the unprofessional and brutal conduct of the Actor. The plate foregrounds the use of the vector to depict how anomalous, unprofessional and absurd it is for a professional football player to engage in biting, especially on a football pitch while a football match is ongoing.

As such, the “banterer”, through transactional action representation, attempts to ridicule the Actor (Luis Suarez) by foregrounding the absurdity of his unprofessional action. In football, a player is expected to maintain certain level of professionalism through his actions, especially on football field. When a player fails to reflect professionalism, he is sanctioned and tagged unprofessional. From humour perspective, the anomaly of a professional football player who is expected to use his leg to play but deliberately using his teeth to bite another player is laughable. Also, the label “The only success Suarez tastes at Liverpool” is a form of sarcasm aimed at ridiculing and mocking the Actor for his unprofessionalism, brutality and professional misconduct against a fellow football player and for not winning any trophy at Liverpool. This sarcasm is further employed to ridicule the Actor by equating his biting gesture to his only trophy won at Liverpool. Equating the Actor’s biting gesture to winning trophy is also humourous as he is mocked for not winning trophies for his club. Pun is also foregrounded in the label “The only success Suarez tasted at Liverpool”. This is manifested in the verbal element “tasted”. Here, the word “taste” is played upon to equate the biting gesture of the Actor (the player pictured biting another player) to an act of taste.

kick off
Ramos 1 min later



Plate 4.14: Unprofessionalism

Source: MOSSABLCHM

Date: 19/03/2021

The plate is situated in the Champions league final between Real Madrid and Liverpool football clubs where the Ramos, a Real Madrid player made a malicious tackle leading to hand dislocation of a Liverpool player, Mohammed Salah. As it can be seen in the plate, unprofessionalism in relation to brutality of the represented participant on the field of play is foregrounded. The label “Kick off” and “Ramos 1 minute later” is used to portray the notorious and brutal habit of the banter target, Ramos. The label is a form of sarcasm employed to show the absurdity of the banter target’s habitual nature of brutality and unprofessionalism as a player. The plate is a transactional action process featuring the represented participant as the Actor with an invisible Goal whose hand is pictured being raised up by the Actor. The human hand of the Goal being raised up, probably after being broken by the Actor during a football match, is deployed to foreground the notorious and habitual brutality of the Actor. Discursively, apart from the plate being used to ridicule the banter target for his unprofessionalism and brutality, it can also instigate humour and amusement. The incongruity of the plate which has a potential to engender humour is the absurdity of a professional football player being portrayed as shamelessly and boldly raising a broken hand of a fellow player without any remorse.

I know who my goat is



Plate 4.15: Unprofessionalism

Source: @MidniteFtbl.

Date: 18/11/2022

The plate stems from constant argument among football fans on who is the Greatest of All Times (GOAT) as a player between Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. The gestural reactions of the two represented participants in the plate feature a transactional action process depicting a separate Actor in each of the two frames and a separate Goal in each of the frames. The Actor in the first frame is Lionel Messi while the Goal is Davies, a Bayern Munich player. The vector is the hand of the Actor. In the second frame, the Actor is Cristiano Ronaldo while the Goal is Jones, a Liverpool player. The vector here is the leg of the Actor used in kicking the player. The banter target is the Actor in the second frame pictured kicking the Goal. The leg vector of the Actor is used to foreground the unprofessionalism and brutality of the Actor. The plate portrays a paralleled distinction between the Actor in the first frame and the Actor in the second frame. The former is pictured helping the Goal up while the latter is pictured deliberately kicking the Goal. This dichotomy is employed to make a distinction between the professionalism of the Actor in the first frame and the unprofessionalism of the Actor in the second frame. The gestural dichotomy also helps to regard the Actor in the first frame as the GOAT which is the Acronym for the Greatest of All Times (GOAT) in football context. In all, the plate employs gesture as banter strategy to ridicule the banter target, Cristiano Ronaldo (the Actor in the second frame) for his unprofessionalism and brutality.

**Nottingham Forest or
Huddersfield aren't ready.**



Plate 4.16: Unprofessionalism

Source: @AfcGabeast.

Date: 05/11/2022

In the plate, the represented participant in red jersey, a player of Liverpool football club is targeted for mockery in relation to his unprofessional foul in one of club's match against Chelsea football club. The plate is an instance of transactional action process where the represented participant in a red jersey is portrayed as the Actor while the one in a blue jersey is depicted as the Goal. As it can be seen in the plate, the vector (the legs of the Actor) is deployed to foreground the unprofessionalism and brutality of the Actor. The plate portrays the Actor, through the vector, brutally and maliciously inflicting or wrecking injury on the Goal. The vector, (the legs of the Actor) as portrayed in the plate, brings to the fore the unprofessionalism of the Actor which manifests in form of a malicious tackle.

Based on the context of the plate, the Actor's (the Liverpool player pictured with a transactional action) is captured as unprofessional, as such, the "banterer" targets him for mockery, suggesting that the target player is going to continue to exhibit unprofessionalism against other players in subsequent matches. In addition, the label "Nottingham Forest or Huddersfield aren't ready" is a form of sarcasm employed to foreground or warn others about the unprofessionalism and brutality of the Actor (Naby Keita). The transactional action representation is, therefore, deployed to project the Actor as being unprofessional, having displayed a professional misconduct. The name (Keita) and the jersey number (8) of the Actor, in this case, the banter target, is also conspicuously displayed to mark out the identity of the banter target as the one being guilty of unprofessionalism.



Plate 4.17: Unprofessionalism

.Source: @josef_imma

Date: 29/10/2022

In the plate, a rival fan mocks Harry Maguire, the captain of Manchester United Football Club for his unprofessional display against a player of Brighton and Hoves football club in an English Premier League (EPL) match. The plate is an instance of transactional action process featuring the Actor (the represented participant in a red shirt carrying another represented participant). The Actor is Maguire, a defender and the Captain of Manchester United football club. In the frame, the Actor is portrayed having a directional action through an unprofessional use of hand vector to lift up the Goal (the represented participant being carried, a player of Brighton football club). The use of hand vector by the Actor in an unprofessional manner is employed to portray him as being unprofessional and brutal as it is unlawful and unacceptable for a football player to act in the manner presented in the frame. Rhetorical sarcasm is also used in the label “What was he doing?”. It is employed to foreground the absurdity of a football player (the Actor) lifting up another player (the Goal) in an unacceptable and unprofessional manner. As a way of creating humour, the incongruous depiction of a professional football player (the Actor) carrying up another player (the Goal) as seen in the frame can instigate laughter from the viewer.

4.1.2.2 Unachieved personal ambition

Football is ultimately about winning trophies, individual awards or players trying to reach a milestone or achieving football related ambitions. However, all these may be elusive. Thus, banter is often employed to ridicule or mock the affected players. Instances of banter of this category are presented in the plates below.

Someone said CR7 stands for:
'Couldn't Reach 7' and I...



Plate 4.18: Unachieved personal ambition

Source: @fumzeeygold

Date: 12/04/2022

The plate is based on Ballon D'or award rivalry between Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo (CR7) where the former won the award for the seventh time, and thus become the player with highest Ballon D'or, a milestone that has always been the personal ambition of the latter. The plate is an instance of non-transactional Reactional process presenting the Reactor (the represented participant, Cristiano Ronaldo, nicknamed CR7, who has a personal ambition to be a player with highest Ballon D'or award) as having a gestural action of crying due to his inability to win up to seven (7) Ballon D'or awards like his rival (Lionel Messi).

In the plate, the Reactor is portrayed crying to a non-existent Phenomenon. This suggests that the crying gesture of the Reactor is futile as it is directed to no Phenomenon. The gestural reaction of the Reactor as depicted in the plate further suggests that he is crying because of his professional failure to become the player with most Ballon D' or award (an ambition which has always confessed to have). Also from the plate, there is the use of distortion to mock the banter target for not winning seven Ballon D'or. The distortion takes the form of creating a negative acronym to represent the name and identity of the banter target. The label "Couldn't Reach 7" is distorted in the plate to serve as a substitute for Cristiano Ronaldo 7, which is represented with the acronym CR7. This is intended to ridicule the banter target for his inability to win up to seven (7) Ballon D'or and become the player with highest number of Ballon D'or which is his personal ambition.

Joseph Yobo, John Obi Mikel, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi showing off their international titles.



Plate 4.19: Unachieved personal ambition

Source: @Letter_to_Jack

Date: 17/02/2021

The plate is based on football fans' constant argument on the failure of Lionel Messi to win any trophy with his senior national team, despite all he has won at club level. The frame features bi-reactional process where two reactional processes are presented. The first reactional process features two Reacter (the two represented participants at the left side of the frame (John Mikel Obi and Joseph Yobo of Super Eagles of Nigeria) reacting to their African cup of Nations triumph. The two Reacters are presented with the Phenomenon (the African cup of Nations trophy). The Phenomenon presented with the first category of Reacters distinguishes them from the second category of the Reacter in the right side frame. The object of banter is the Reacter in the second frame (Lionel Messi) presented with a gas cylinder as the Phenomenon. The Phenomenon of the second Reacter is in sharp contrast to the Phenomenon of the first Reacter, as it is analogous to what a football trophy looks like.

The import of these representations is that while the first category of Reacters have their personal ambition of winning trophies for their country achieved, the Reacter in the second frame with gas cylinder as The Phenomenon (Lionel Messi) has his personal ambition unfulfilled due to the fact that he fails to win any trophy for his country. Thus, the "banterer" ridicules him (the Reacter in the second frame, Lionel Messi) for his failure to win any trophy for his country like the Reacter in the first frame.

The plate also features humour creation through the visual representation of the second frame as it foregrounds the absurdity of a player (the Reacter in the right side frame) holding a gas cylinder as an international trophy worth celebrating (as he is portrayed with a laughing gesture) despite the fact that the same player has no single international trophy to his name. This anomaly of a player celebrating a gas cylinder as a football trophy can easily generate laughter and amusement.



Plate 4.20: Unachieved personal ambition

Source: @TrollFootball_6

Date: 18/01/2021

The plate features different Reactional processes of the represented participants. In the frame, each Reactor (the represented participants in the frame), apart from one Reactor, has a similar or related Phenomenon. The Phenomenon is International player of the tournament award or trophy being held by every Reactor, except one). In the plate, a reactional processes is employed to bring to the fore the Reactor (represented participant) who is portrayed with a completely different and strange Phenomenon. As it can be observed from the plate, each of the Reactor, safe for the Reactor having a bottle of water as the Phenomenon, is projected with International player of the tournament award. By inference, the Reactor portrayed having bottle of water as the Phenomenon is marked out from the other Reactors for his failure to win any International player of the tournament award in all the International tournaments he has ever participated. The incongruous Phenomenon of bottle of water for a Reactor (the represented participant with a bottle of water) thus marks him out for ridicule and mockery, having failed gto be named “Player of the tournament” in any International competition.

From humour perspective, the incongruity of portraying a football player with a water bottle as his International player of the tournament award can generate amusement from the viewer. The label “Players with their International player of the tournament awrd” is sarcastically employed to ridicule the banter target (the represented participant holding water bottle). It is also deployed to create amusement through the anomaly of holding a bottle of water in place of the real trophy. In addition, salience is employed in the plate to foreground and make the banter target appear strange or look odd from the rest of other represented participants. In the plate, through the use of salience, one represented is visibly portrayed holding a water bottle while the other represented participants are depicted holding their player of the tournament awards. Salience is thus employed in the plate to portray the banter target as the only represented participant without a player of the tournament award to his name. The use of salience makes the banter target looks odd and absurd among other represented participants. This is a strategy employed to ridicule him for his failure of achieving a desired career goal for football players.

4.1.2.3 Professional incapability and poor performance`

This relates to deployment of both verbal and visual elements to portray the banter targets as lacking the ability to be a professional football player as a result of poor and unproductive performances. It involves depicting the targets of the banter as being unsuitable or incapable.

Eden Hazard trying to continue
Ronald's legacy at Real Madrid



Plate 4.21: Professional incapability and poor performance

Source: MadridFC

Date: 14/01/2021

The plate presents how a fan questions Eden Hazard's professional ability after being bought by Real Madrid to replace a departed Real Madrid player, Ronaldo. It is a transactional reactional process where the Reactor (represented with two legs) is presented with a reaction to the Phenomenon (the shoes). The Phenomenon, signifying Cristiano Ronaldo, is visually presented as being bigger than the Reactor (Eden Hazard). This is foregrounded in the asymmetric classification of the legs of the Reactor and the shoes which represent the Phenomenon. In the asymmetric classification, while the Reactor is portrayed as smaller, as reflected in the smaller legs which cannot fit into the bigger shoes, the Phenomenon is projected as bigger as foregrounded in the bigger shoes. By inference, the plate portrays Eden Hazard (the Reactor), who is just joining Real Madrid, presumably to replace Cristiano Ronaldo (the Phenomenon) who just left Real Madrid for another club, as unfit and incapable of adequately replacing Cristiano Ronaldo.

The plate also employs sarcasm in the label "Eden Hazard trying to continue Ronaldo's legacy at Real Madrid" to foreground the absurdity and impossibility of the banter target successfully replacing Ronaldo at Real Madrid. Sarcasm is further employed to cast doubt and question the professional ability of the banter target based on his performance since he was bought by the club. The deployment of an oversized shoe in the plate is further used to reinforce the professional incapability of the banter target. The plate is employed to portray the banter target as being professionally incapable as a player by depicting him as stepping into a shoe too big for him. Humourously, the plate has a potential to engender laughter or amusement. This is conveyed through the incongruous portrayal of an oversized shoe for the represented participant. The humour or amusement can be further found in the absurdity of portraying a professional football player with an oversized shoe.

Sheikh Abdullahi Bolingoli,
Akramakumullahi Lati Markhass
Agege.

[Translate Tweet](#)



Plate 4.22: Professional incapability and poor performance

Source: @segamavv

Date: 26/10/2022

The plate is based on a Chelsea's English Premier League (EPL) match where the club lost and Romelu Lukaku (a Chelsea football club's striker) is targeted for banter for failing to score. The plate employs distortion in the label "Sheik Abdullahi Bolingoli Akarakumullahi Lati Markhass Agege". The aforementioned label is a Nominal Group containing two modifiers, the head word and the qualifier. The head word "Bolingoli" represents the middle name of the banter target (Romelu Lukaku) while the modifiers "Sheik Abdullahi" and the qualifier "Akarakumullahi Lati Markhass Agege" are added to the head word "Bolingoli", which is his middle name of the banter target to portray him as an Islamic cleric rather than a professional football player. This is particularly evident in the first modifier "Sheik" often used for an Islamic cleric.

Thus, the modifiers and the qualifier are added to the name of the banter target as a form of distortion to portray him as someone more suited to be an Islamic religious preacher than a professional player. As observed from the label, the "banterer" relies on the shared Islamic naming knowledge in distorting the third name of the bantered player. By adding names, such as "Sheik" and "Abdullahi", which are mostly associated to Islam. Through this deliberate name distortion, the "banterer" appears to suggest that the player is not suitable to be regarded as a professional player but an Islamic cleric.

In addition, appearance and posture of the represented participant are also employed to portray him as incapable of being a professional football player. In the first frame, which is a non-transactional reactional process, the Reactor (Romelu Lukaku) is portrayed with an appearance (as it can be seen in the excessive beard of the represented participant) that foregrounds him as an Islamic cleric rather than a professional player. In the second frame, which is also a non-transactional reactional process, the Reactor (Romelu Lukaku) is projected with the circumstantial accompaniment (the medical personnel).

The frame, as the visual representation of the Reacter shows, foregrounds posture of the Reacter (the represented participant in a blue jersey) to portray him as having a posture that is incongruous to the posture of a professional player. This can be seen in the big buttocks of the Reacter. The second frame foregrounds the big buttock posture of the Reacter to portray him as being unsuitable to be a professional football player. Discursively, the banter is targeted at debasing the addressee (Culpeper, 2010). From humour perspective, the big buttocks with which the Reacter is portrayed has the potential to propel amusement for the viewer as it is incongruous and anomalous for a professional football player who is expected to be physically fit to have such heavy and big buttocks and body posture.

How am I going to tell my kids that Aubameyang missed from a few yards but Timo Werner score with all these defenders nearby...



Plate 4.23: Professional incapability and poor performance

Source: @WorldWideChels

Date: 18/01/2021

Here, a fan mocks Aubameyang, an Arsenal Football Club's striker pictured in the first frame of the plate, after missing a goal. The plate employs sarcasm in the label "How am I going to tell my children that Aubameyang missed from a few yards but Timo Werner score with all these defenders nearby" to foreground the absurdity of the banter target pictured in the first frame missing a goal within a close range when the goalkeeper is visibly no longer at goal-post. The use of sarcasm further questions the professional capability of the banter target having missed a goal from a position that is easy to score when compared to a distant position from where the striker in the second frame scores. Sarcasm is employed to ridicule the banter target as being professionally incapable for missing a goal that appears easy to score.

Also, the plate features the use of angle. According to Kress and van Leuwen (2006), the angle from which an image is taken represents an important visual explication of meaning. A frontal or close angle represents close relationship or attachment with the viewer while an oblique angle denotes detachment from the viewer. In the plate, the angle of the represented participant in the first frame is a close or frontal angle which may suggest ease of scoring while the angle in the second frame is an oblique angle suggesting difficulty and impossibility of scoring. Thus, the plate projects the absurdity of the represented participant (the banter target) missing a goal from a close angle while another represented participant in the second frame scores from an oblique angle. This is designed to ridicule the banter target for his professional incapability or poor performance.

4.1.2.4 Incurable obsession

This relates to how the banter targets are portrayed as being desperately obsessive to win trophies and football matches at all costs. It also involves mocking the banter targets as being habitually notorious with certain things such as scoring goal with both legitimate and dubious penalties.

Ronaldo: "I wanted to take that penalty"

De Gea: "But you can't take that penalty. It was for Watford" 😂😂
😂😂



Plate 4.24: Incurable obsession

Source: @WellBeast

Date: 28/10/2022

The plate is based on an English Premier League match between Watford football club and Manchester United football club where the former won while being given a penalty kick. The plate foregrounds transactional reactional process presenting the Reacter having a reactional action towards the Phenomenon. In the plate, the Phenomenon (the represented participant in red jersey being held by another represented participant and a player generally believed to be obsessed with penalty kicks) is portrayed as being warned by the Reacter not to take a penalty kick awarded to the opposing club against his own club. This reactional representation appears to ridicule the Phenomenon (Ronaldo) for being obsessed as it reflects the ironical situation of a player uncharacteristically eager to play a penalty kick awarded against his own club.

The plate also features quotation combined with irony in the conversational label “Ronaldo: ‘I wanted to take that penalty’ and De Gea: ‘But you can’t play that. It was meant for Watford’.” to portray the desperation of the banter target (Ronaldo). Irony and sarcasm are employed to portray the absurdity of the banter target, the first speaker in the conversation, Ronaldo, in being desperate to take a penalty kick which ironically belongs to the opposing club. As presented in the plate, it is ironical that a player is portrayed as being desperate to take a penalty kick given against his own club. This portrays the banter target as being desperately obsessed with penalties. In addition, humour creation is achieved through the ironical and incongruous depiction of a player being desperate to the extent of desiring to take a penalty awarded to an opposing club against his own club. This is conveyed through the anomaly of such a scenario in football.

Baba wan hijack the trophy 🤪



Plate 4.25: Incurable obsession

Source: @premierleague

Date: 29/10/2022

In the plate, Bruno Fernandez is described as being desperate to steal Europa league trophy after his club is beaten in the final. The plate features a non-transactional reactional process presenting the Reactor (Bruno Fernandez) portrayed as holding a medal (a loser's medal) and walking off the stage with his glance fixed downward while the trophy is stationed not far from him. The officials presenting medals to the players are presented as circumstantial accompaniment. The plate portrays the Reactor (Bruno Fernandez, the represented participant in front) as being unsatisfied and displeased with his team losing the trophy to another club, as it can be observed from his gestural reaction of frowning and downward gaze. By inference, from the displeased and sad non-transactional reaction of the Reactor, the "banterer" portrays him as being desperately obsessed to the extent of trying to snatch the trophy even though his gaze is not fixed towards the trophy. This ironical scenario projected in the plate is intended to ridicule the banter target (Bruno Fernandez). The label "Baba wan hijack the trophy" which is code-mixed to mean "The player wants to hijack the trophy" is sarcastically employed to depict the banter target as being too obsessed to win the trophy to the extent of stealing it.

4.1.2.5 Defeat-induced emotional brokenness

This category of banter focuses on ridiculing and mocking the banter targets by portraying them as being emotionally broken, damaged and traumatized as a result of their club's defeats. The plates below present this banter category.



Plate 4.26: Incurable obsession

Source: @Arsenal.

Date: 09/11/2022

The background of the plate is based on how Cristiano Ronaldo is mocked after his national team's (Portugal) Euro 2020 loss. The plate is a non-transactional teactional process presenting the Reacter (Cristiano Ronaldo, (the represented participant in the plate) reacting to his national team's European Nations cup defeat. In the frame, the Reacter is portrayed as having his gaze downward to a non-existent phenomenon and his hand touching his head suggesting that he is emotionally down as a result of his team's loss. The Reacter's gestural reaction to a non-existent phenomenon also suggests that he has no one to console him after being emotionally troubled. The label "It ain't easy" with smiling emoji is a form of indirect mockery employed to mock the banter target for his emotional trauma after his national team's exit from Euro 2020 tournament. The label is pretentious.

On the surface, the speaker appears to be consoling the banter target. However, the smiling emoji in the label reveals his mocking intent towards the banter target. The label may suggest that the "banterer" is trying to console the target but target (and by extension his fans) would understand it as mockery, given their shared knowledge of the situation, even though the mockery is not superficially obvious. This can be described as indirect jocular mockery (Culpeper, 1996). In addition, by projecting the emotional reaction of the Reacter (Cristiano Ronaldo) through non-transactional reactional representation, the "banterer" succeeds in mocking him for his team's defeat.

"Style like Gangnam..."



Plate 4.27: Incurable obsession

Source: @FabrizioRomano.

Date: 14/11/2020

Here, a rival fan mocks Thiago Silva after his club lost to Wolvermpton Football club in a Premier league match. The frame here is an instance of a non-transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Thiago Silva, the represented participant in the plate) is portrayed having his gaze on a Phenomenon not presented. The Reacter is presented in the plate reacting to his club's (Chelsea football club) loss to Wolves football club. The gestural reaction of the Reacter (the represented participant in the plate) foregrounds him as being emotionally broken due to his club's defeat in an EPL game.

As it is evident in the plate, the "banterer" vividly projects the Reacter as being emotionally broken after his club's defeat by deploying reactional process to depict his emotional state at the end of the match. The plate also exemplifies quotation as a form of allusion. The label "Gangnam Style" is a reference to a much imitated dance style in a viral pop music video named "Gangnam Style" produced by a South Korean artist. It is employed to mock the banter target by relating his emotional gestural reaction to the dance style, after his club, Chelsea football club lost a Premier league match to Wolves football club. It is an instance of indirect mockery of the target, as the "banterer", rather than directly mentioning the target, merely makes reference to a dancing style to project the emotional state of the target. The indirect mockery is reinforced through the visual representation of the banter target who is pictured being emotional broken. Given the shared situation knowledge of the banter target's club's defeat, the fans of the club whom are also targeted (by extension), would easily understand that the "banterer" is playing on their emotions or mocking them for their club's defeat.

4.1.2.6 Injury proneness

Football as a sport is physically and mentally demanding as such, given its physical nature, injuries do often occur. There are instances where some players are susceptible to injuries which make them object of mockery for their constant injuries. The banter in this category relates to mocking a player by using his injury predicament.

Dembele: Ya Allah, Please don't make me injured in the bed. That's all I ask from you.



Plate 4.28: Injury proneness

Source: @FIFAWorldCup.

Date: 22/11/2022

In the plate, Dembele, a player of Barcelona Football Club who just got married is mocked for his consistent injuries. The above plate is a non-transactional reactional process where the Reactor (Dembele, the participant represented in the plate) is presented as praying to a Phenomenon (not presented). As it can be observed from the plate, the Reactor has his gaze fixed on a Phenomenon (in this case, probably, God, not presented), as well as having his hand portrayed like that of someone offering prayers for divine intervention over a difficult situation, in this case, a recurring injury. The plate portrays the Reactor (Dembele, a Barcelona player) as having a gestural reaction in form of prayer to an invisible Phenomenon (God) to save him from a persistent injury that has been troubling his football career. From the non-transactional reactional process, the Reactor is thus portrayed offering prayers to an invisible being (the non-presented Phenomenon) in relation to his persistent injuries. This is an indirect way of mocking the player (the Reactor) for being an injury prone player.

Additionally, in the label “Ya Allah, please don’t make me injured in the bed. That’s all I ask from you”, a form of religious allusion, is employed to portray the target as being so emotionally traumatized for his perennial injuries that often keep him away from playing football to the extent that he is praying not to be injured even on the bed. The item “Ya Allah” which can be translated to “Oh, Allah” is deployed to present the banter target as praying to an Islamic God, often referred to as “Allah”, to help him not to get injured in a setting that is uncommon to sustain injuries. This is hyperbolic. This hyperbolic scenario is created to exaggerate the extent of his continuous injury so as to ridicule him. Thus, the plate foregrounds the emotional trauma in form of mental desperation of the banter target to the extent that he is praying not to get injured on the bed probably during sexual intercourse with his wife whom he just got married to. Humorously, portraying a player praying not to have injuries in an incongruous setting (on bed) where football related injuries hardly occur is absurd and can instigate amusement.



Plate 4.29: Injury proneness

Source: @Princey_IV

Date: 28/11/ 2022

Here, a fan ridicules Dembele (a Barcelona player) for having persistent injuries. The plate here features a non-transactional reactional process. As evident in the plate, the non-transactional reactional process shows the Reactor, presented as Dembele (a Barcelona player) with no Phenomenon being presented. In the first frame, the Reactor (Dembele) is portrayed with a gestural reaction in form of goal celebration as reflected in the visual representation and the two football objects being pictured inside the goalpost's net. This non-transactional of the Reactor and the visual representation of the football objects inside the goalpost net suggests that the Reactor is scoring and celebrating goals in pre-season (non-competitive matches). The label "Pre-season" in the first frame gives an indication that the Reactor (Dembele) scores goals in non-competitive matches (Pre-season).

However, in the second frame, the plate presents a sharp contrast to the first frame, where the Reactor is portrayed as being fit, scoring and celebrating goals. In the second frame, the Reactor is projected as being in hospital or having one of his legs tied to what looks like a hospital bed (as supported by a hospital related symbol in red colour). This non-transactional reactional representation of the Reactor (Dembele, a Barcelona player) suggests that he is being plagued with an injury when the season where competitive matches are meant to be played starts. By inference, the plate presents the Reactor in the second frame as being prone to injury, especially when he is needed for competitive matches while he is only fit during pre-season in non-competitive matches. The import here is to mock him for not being useful for his club (Barcelona football club) when he is actually needed as a result of his injury proneness.

4.1.3 Football managers-targeted banter

The banter in this category focuses on football managers as the object of ridicule and mockery. Here, the "banterer" employs both non-verbal cues and linguistic devices in form of banter. The football managers who are the addressees or the object of banter here are subjected to ridicule, scorning and mockery while the banter also serves as a form of amusement and humour for the reader or the viewer. The plates below illustrate this category of banter through the sub-categories identified.

4.1.3.1 Ineptitude coaching and tactics

Football managers are often praised and celebrated for their outstanding football coaching and tactics when their clubs win trophies; they are even given awards. However, when their clubs fail to win, they are always at the receiving end of criticism or sacking. The football banter in this category relates to ridiculing or mocking the banter targets for being clueless in relation to their coaching and tactical abilities. The plates below capture instances of this scenario.



Plate 4.30: Ineptitude coaching and tactics

Source: @talkfcb_

Date: 26/07/2022

The plate is targeted at Pep Guardiola, the manager of Manchester City football club, for being trophyless in his first season in the English Premier league (EPL) after winning practically every trophy in the previous leagues where he has been a manager of two different clubs. The plate here depicts a non-transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Pep Guardiola, the represented participant) is presented with a helpless reactional glance towards a Phenomenon (not shown). The Reacter's gaze depicted as being fixed on an invisible Phenomenon portrays him seeking help from an invisible Phenomenon (most likely God). By inference, the Reacter (Pep Guardiola), being a football manager, specifically the manager of Manchester City football club is portrayed as being desperately in need of help as result of ineptitude coaching, having failed to win any trophy in his first season in English Premier League (EPL) which is a sharp contrast to how he won in the previous leagues where he has managed. As it can be seen from the plate, the Reacter's hands are melted on the ground, also suggesting the Reacter's helpless state.

The sinking posture of the Reacter equally foregrounds his helplessness as a football manager. The sinking posture is employed to portray his coaching and tactics as failing or not working. In addition, the locative circumstance of the tattered or sinking ground depicts the Premier league as unconquerable league, indicating that the Premier league, unlike other leagues such as La liga and Bundesliga (the two leagues where the represented participant has previously coached), is a league where football tactics don't work. The label "Warning! PREMIER LEAGUE (LIGA AND BUNDESLIGA. TACTICS DON'T WORK HERE) also reinforces the fact that the football tactics of the banter target (Pep Guardiola) do not work. The Premier league puts in bold font appears to also foreground the league as different league where tactics don't work. All these are designed to describe the banter target (the Reacter) as being tactically clueless as a football manager.

CluelessTuchelToday



Plate 4.31: Ineptitude coaching and tactics

Source: @deezzzat

Date: 29/07/2022

The plate is a tweet aimed at mocking Tuchel, the manager of Chelsea football club after his club was defeated by Manchester City in a Premier league match. The frame captures a non- transactional reactional process projecting the Reactor (the represented participant) with a ‘demand’ gaze towards a Phenomenon (not presented) or the viewer (Kress and Leuwen, 2006). In the plate, the Reactor’s gaze is portrayed in form of a demand gaze, suggesting that he is demanding for a form of help. The demand gaze of the Reactor further indicates a confused and clueless disposition. Inferentially, the plate appears to portray the Reactor as someone who is clueless or ineptitude in relation to his coaching and tactics.

Also observed from the plate is the deployment of a distorted appearance and posture of the Reactor (the represented participant). The bald head with which the represented participant (Tuchel, the manager of Chelsea football club) is portrayed is a distorted appearance and posture evidently different from his original appearance, as the represented participant is not bald in real life. This visual representation of the represented participant is done to probably depict him as someone who has nothing to offer from his brain in relation to his coaching tactics, which results into his club’s losing woefully in a Premier league match. The label “Clueless Tuchel today” is sarcastically employed to create an anomalous representation of the represented participant. This is because the distorted visual representation of the represented participant is completely incongruous to what he looks like as a professional football manager.

4.1.3.2 Damaging defeat-induced emotional torture

Here, the banter targets are portrayed as being mentally tortured manifesting in emotional dejection or depression as a result of their club’ losses and defeats.

The damage Jurgen Klopp has done this season and it's great 🤔
@LFC



Plate 4.32: Defeat-induced emotional torture

Source: @InsideChelsea

Date: 28/07/2022

In plate 4.32, a Liverpool fan ridicules football managers of clubs that have been humiliated by Jurgen Klopp, the manager of Liverpool Football Club. The plate presents two non-transactional reactional processes and one transactional Action process targeted at three of football managers whose club have been defeated by Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool club. In the first frame, the Reacter (Alex Ferguson, represented participant who is a former manager of Manchester football club) is portrayed with a gestural reaction where his gaze is fixed towards a Phenomenon (not presented in the plate). The gestural gaze of the Reacter indicates frowning and sadness as a result of the defeat of his former club by Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool football club. The Reacter in the first frame is thus presented being emotionally tortured and broken. The same non-transactional reactional process is applicable in the second frame. The Reacter (Diego Simone, the manager of Atletico Madrid football club) is portrayed with a dejected and sad gaze set towards a Phenomenon (not presented). The dejected gestural gaze of the Reacter suggests that he is tortured emotionally after his club has been defeated in a Champions League match against Liverpool Football Club.

The third frame is a transactional action process where the Actor (Mikel Arteta, the manager of Arsenal football club) is pictured dragging the Goal (some other represented participants) as an emotional expression of frustration for his club's loss to Liverpool football club. As portrayed in the plate, the gestural action of the Actor, frustratingly dragging the Goal indicates that he is emotionally troubled and broken and thus venting his frustration against the circumstantial accompaniment (the represented participants who are just there as assistants to Jurgen Klopp, the manager of Liverpool club). The label "The damage Jorgen Klopp has done this season and it's great" is a form of indirect mockery employed to foreground the emotional brutality suffered by three banter targets. It is employed to portray the banter targets as victims of defeats from another football manager, which leads to emotional torture for them.

Think this perfectly reflects
mourinho in one picture 🤔
#LIVTOT



Plate 4.33: Defeat-induced emotional torture

source: @InsideChelsea

Date: 28/07/2022

In the plate, Mourinho as the manager of Tottenham Football Club is mocked after his club's humiliating loss to Liverpool. The plate features a non-transactional reactional process presenting the Reactor (Jose Mourinho, the manager of Tottenham football club) portrayed as having a gestural reaction occasioned by his club's defeat to Liverpool Football club. The Reactor is presented with a teary gaze towards a Phenomenon (not shown). The gestural gaze and reaction of the Reactor embodies emotional torture and brokenness. As such, the Reactor (Jose Mourinho and the represented participant) is presented in the plate as someone who is suffering from emotional torture after his club has been defeated. As it can be observed from the plate, the emotional representations such as tears and mouth spittle are pointers to the Reactor being emotionally troubled. Posture is also used in the plate.

As it is evident in the plate, the Reactor who is an adult is uncharacteristically portrayed with the posture of a child (imbecile), as reflected in spittle running out of his mouth. This is deployed by the "banterer" to further reinforce the fact that the Reactor is troubled and tortured emotionally. In addition, the label "I think this perfectly reflects Mourinho in one picture" is sarcastically deployed to portray the emotional state of the banter target (the Reactor). It is a direct mockery aimed at ridiculing the banter target by portraying him as being emotionally down after his club's humiliating loss. Humorously, the plate can also engender laughter or amusement, especially for rival fans, through the incongruous portrayal of a professional football manager as being projected naked or visualized as an imbecilistic child. The absurdity of portraying a professional football manager in the manner portrayed in the plate can instigate laughter or amusement for the rival fans.

2.5 years at Al Sadd
Barca

18days at



Plate 4.34: Defeat-induced emotional torture

Source: @SevillaFC_ENG

Date: 28/07/2022

Here, a rival fan ridicules Xavi Hernandez, the new Barcelona Football Club manager after failing to win his first two games at the club. The plate is an instance of heterogeneous representations of two non-transactional reactional processes targeted at Xavi Hernandez after failing to replicate the success and victories he had in his former football club (Al Sadd football club), in his new club (Barcelona football club), as a manager. In the first frame, the Reactor (Xavi Hernandez) is presented with a laughing and happy gaze towards a Phenomenon (not presented, likely the fans of the former club he managed). By inference, the Reactor in the first frame is happy, satisfied and emotionally alive as reflected in his happy gestural reaction (his laughter and celebration gesture). However, in the second frame, which is also a non-transactional reactional process, the Reactor (also Xavi Hernandez) is portrayed with a sad, frustrated gaze towards a Phenomenon (not presented but probably the fans of his new club, Football Club Barcelona). From the sad and frustrated gaze of the Reactor, it can be inferred that he is emotionally down or broken in relation to the woeful results in his current club, which is a sharp contrast to what he used to have in his former club. The gestural reaction of the Reactor in the second frame thus foregrounds emotional torturing and trauma.

Sarcasm is also employed to project the different emotional conditions or demonstrations of the banter target in two different clubs. The first emotional demonstration projected is emotional stability in his former club, Al Sadd while the second emotional reaction portrays him as being emotionally depressed as an indication of the bad state of his new club. This is evident in the label “2.5 years at Al Sadd and 18 days at Barca” which is buttressed by the different visual representations in the plate. From humour perspective, the obvious dissimilarity between the gesture of the represented participant portrayed in the first frame and the gesture portrayed in the second frame has a potential to generate laughter and amusement.

4.1.3.3 Ready-made flimsy excuses

This involves mocking football managers for not taking responsibility for the poor performance of their clubs. Here, football managers are ridiculed and portrayed as habitual excuse givers.

Liverpool lose or draw a match

Jürgen Klopp:

[Translate Tweet](#)



Plate 4.35: Ready-made flimsy excuses

Source: @goal

Date: 31/07/2022

In the plate, a football fan labels Jorgen Klopp (the Liverpool football club manager) as a habitual excuse giver for his attitude of always looking for excuses for his club's defeats. The plate here reflects a conceptual classification and symbolic representation. It presents a transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Jorgen Klopp, the manager of Liverpool football club, represented by a hand) is portrayed having a transactional reaction with the Phenomenon (the drawer). The Phenomenon is conceptually classified. It is a symbolic representation that captures the reaction of the Reacter. As evident in the label "Excuses" inked on the drawer symbol, the symbolic representation of the drawer indicates ready-made excuses of the Reacter (Jorgen Klopp). The Reacter is portrayed as having habitual reaction with the Phenomenon (drawer) which symbolizes excuses. As the plate suggests, Jorgen Klopp, the manager of Liverpool football club is described and ridiculed as always looking for excuses each time his club loses a football match. This is evident in his hand vector being connected to the drawer which symbolically represents excuses. Jorgen Klopp (the Reacter) is thus portrayed as a manager who always has a ready-made excuses (as contained in a drawer), rather than taking responsibilities anytime his club doesn't win. This is also buttressed in the label "Liverpool loses or draw a match" backed up by the drawer image in the plate.



Plate 4.36: Ready-made flimsy excuses

Source: @Jordan81206210

Date: 01/08/2022

Here, Jorgen Klopp is portrayed as embodiment of excuses by a football fan. There is a transactional reactional process in the plate. It presents a transactional reaction of the Reacter (Jorgen Klopp, the Liverpool football club's manager) with the Phenomenon. As it can be observed in the plate, the Phenomenon is the pie chart being held by the Reacter. The pie chart is a symbolic representation of a bunch of excuses. It is conceptually classified to foreground what the Reacter is associated with and known for. It represents a bunch of excuses such as "Too windy", "Allison (the goalkeeper) had cold feet", "AFCON", "Crowd were loud", etc. Based on the context of the plate, the symbolic representation of the pie chart indicates that the manager usually gives excuses embedded in the chart. The excuses include complaining about weather being windy, some of his players leaving for African Cup of Nations (AFCON), his goalkeeper (Allison) having cold feet or the opposing fans (the crowd) being too loud. The import of the conceptual classification of the Reacter and the symbolic representation of the pie chart is to project the Reacter (Jorgen Klopp) as embodying all the excuses in the pie chart.

Flopp making excuses instead of taking the blame



Plate 4.37: Ready-made flimsy excuses

Source: @Callmemendoza

Date: 02/08/2022

4.1.4 Football clubs-targeted banter

Football clubs as entities are often the targets of banter for several reasons. This section therefore, highlights banter that are football clubs focused. The sub-categories such as financial incapability, transfer failure, trophylessness and damaging defeats that feature under this banter category are discussed below.

4.1.4.1 Financial incapability

This sub-category concerns mocking football clubs for failures to meet their financial obligations in terms of payment of players' salaries and outstanding transfer fees.

Barcelona signed Raphinha on credit, September 2nd will be a good day.



Plate 4.38: Financial incapability

Source: @ODDSbible

Date: 02/08/2022

In the plate, a rival fan mocks Barcelona Football Club for buying a player on credit. The plate is an instance of a non-transactional reactional process where the Reactor (the represented participant, a Nigerian skit comedy maker, known as Sabinus) is portrayed with a laughing or smiling gaze or gesture to a Phenomenon (not presented, most likely the fans of the targeted club, Football Club Barcelona as the conversations in the plate shows). As observed from the plate, the non-transactional reaction of the Reactor (the represented participant) suggests that the Reactor is waiting eagerly to see the targeted club being mocked or ridiculed for the club's failure to meet up with the financial obligation of paying outstanding transfer fees. This is evident in the label "Barcelona signed Raphinha on credit, September 2nd will be a good day". The label complemented by the visual representation of the Reactor foregrounds the fact that the "banterer" is waiting to see how the targeted club would fail in its financial obligation in the date fixed for payment of outstanding fees. The "banterer" thus uses humour as an indirect mockery by deploying visual image of the Nigerian skit maker. For humour creation, the deployment of the visual representation of a Nigerian skit maker (Sabinus) has potential to instigate amusement or laughter within the Nigerian social setting, especially among the youth. This is because the image of the skit maker often provokes laughter in many social interactions among Nigerian youth who are familiar with his skit videos.

Xavi: I want Chelsea's entire defense.

Azpilicueta: I have family and they have to eat.



Plate 4.39: Financial incapability

Source: @aminu_jr1

Date: 03/08/2022

The plate captures how a fan ridicules Barcelona Football club for failing to sign a player due to financial inability to pay salaries. Here, a non-transactional reactional process is foregrounded. As evident from the plate, the Reacter (the represented participant) is presented having a non-transactional laughing reaction to a Phenomenon, not presented (probably the manager of the target club, who is the first speaker in the conversational discourse in the plate). The conversational discourse label “Xavi: I want Chelsea’s entire defense. Azpilicueta: I have family and they have to eat” foregrounds the reality of the targeted club (FC Barcelona) being financially incapable. The label reinforces the non-transactional gestural reaction of the Reacter to ridicule and mock the targeted club for falling short financially in terms of meeting financial obligations such as payment of her players’ salaries and allowances.

This can be seen in the second speaker’s response (Azpilicueta, who is a Chelsea’s defender) of not willing to join the targeted club (FC Barcelona) given that the payment of his salaries and allowances which he needs to take care of his family is not guaranteed if he joins the club. The plate thus indicates that the targeted club (FC Barcelona) is financially incapable to meet up with her obligations, as portrayed in the second speaker’s (Azpilicueta) response. Consequently, the conversational discourse created by the “banterer” in the plate as well as the reactional representation of the Reacter’s laughter, depicts the banter target, Barcelona Football Club as being financially incapable in meeting her financial obligations.

4.1.4.2 Unsuccessful transfer bid

This banter category relates to ridiculing football clubs for failing to acquire their transfer targets during transfer window mostly due to another club snatching the target players from them or the target player preferring to move to another club.



Plate 4.40: Unsuccessful transfer bid

Source: @devonsb01

Date: 04/08/2022

In the plate, a rival fan ridicules Chelsea Football Club after being outsmarted by Barcelona Football Club in the signing of a player. The plate is a transactional action process featuring the Actor and the Goal. The Actor (represented by two represented participants carrying the Goal on a stretcher) is Barcelona football club while the Goal is Chelsea football club. As suggested in the plate and the Nigerian English pidgin label “wetin kill am, He go follow Barca drag players”, the Actor and the Goal (Barcelona football club and Chelsea football club respectively) both made transfer bids for the same players during the transfer window. However, the Goal (Chelsea football club) had her transfer bid rejected by the players in favour of the Actor (Barcelona football club). As it can be observed from the plate, the vector is the stretcher through which the Actor (Barcelona football club, represented by two represented participants) carries the Goal (Chelsea football club, whose name is inked on a represented participant). The vector foregrounds death of the Goal which signifies its unsuccessful transfer bid.

The plate also exemplifies asymmetric classification of the Actor and the Goal. While the Actor is superiorly classified as demonstrated in the two represented participants in a walking posture carrying the Goal, the Goal is visually portrayed in a corpse posture being carried by the Actor. This asymmetric classification suggests that the Actor (Barcelona football club) is superior or in control through successful transfer bids while the Goal (Chelsea football club) is inferior as result of her unsuccessful transfer bids. Humorously, the incongruous representation of a football club being put on a stretcher because of unsuccessful transfer bids can propel laughter or amusement.

Barcelona are set to sign Jules Koundé after reaching an agreement with Sevilla, reports [@FabrizioRomano](#)



Plate 4.41: Unsuccessful transfer bid

Source: [@jeffrey_dailyop](#)

Date: 03/08/2022

The plate is an instance of a fan mocking Chelsea Football Club after another club, Barcelona Football Club snatches their transfer target, Jules Kounde. The plate features embedding of representation. It is an instance of two transactional reactional processes, having same Reacter but different Phenomenon. The Reacter in the first frame is Jules Kounde (a Sevilla player subjected to transfer bid or tussle from both Chelsea and Barcelona Football Clubs) while the Phenomenon is Tuchel (the manager of Chelsea Football Club). In the second frame, Jules Kounde (a Sevilla player subjected to transfer bid or tussle from both Chelsea and Barcelona football clubs) is also the Reacter while the Phenomenon is (Xavi Hernandez, the manager of Barcelona Football Club). The first frame shows the Reacter being portrayed as running away or having his gaze away from the Phenomenon (Tuchel, the Chelsea manager) who is standing and holding the blue jersey of Chelsea football club) who can be assumed to be waiting to receive the Reacter, after his club has made a transfer bid for the Reacter. However, as shown in the plate, the Reacter decides to run away, which indicates that the Reacter turns down the transfer bid from Chelsea football club, represented by the manager. This transactional reaction from the Reacter towards the Phenomenon suggests transfer bid failure of Chelsea football club, represented by the Phenomenon (Tuchel, the manager of Chelsea football club).

In the second frame, there is a transactional bi-reactional process with a Reacter and two Phenomenon. Here, the Phenomenon in the first frame (Tuchel, the manager of Chelsea football club) is also projected. However, unlike in the first frame, the Reacter is pictured hugging and celebrating with another Phenomenon (Xavi Hernandez, the manager of Barcelona football club). This transactional reaction of the Reacter with another Phenomenon here indicates a successful transfer bid for the club of the Phenomenon being hugged. As also observed in the second frame, being a bi-reactional process, the second Phenomenon (Tuchel) is pictured as circumstantial accompaniment who is mainly pictured in the frame angry as a result of his club's unsuccessful transfer bid. These different transactional reactional representations as captured in the plate are geared towards mocking Chelsea football club for the club's unsuccessful bids for a player.

Twerk session over because he rejected you 🥲🥲



Plate 4.42: Unsuccessful transfer bid

Source: @Tesi33652493

Date: 06/08/2022

Here, a fan ridicules Manchester United Football Club after a player refuses to move to the club. The plate here exemplifies a non-transactional reactional process where the Reactor (Frenkie, De Jong who rejects a transfer move to Manchester United football club) is portrayed having a non-transactional reaction to a Phenomenon (probably the fans of the targeted club, Manchester United). In the frame, the Reactor is portrayed drinking a bottled water, projected as Man United tears. This gestural reaction of the Reactor as portrayed in the frame suggests that the Reactor (Frenkie De Jong) is not interested or unbothered in joining the targeted club which has been working hard in the transfer window to convince him to join the club. The label “Twerk session over because he rejected you” captures a sarcastic response from the “banterer” to a Manchester United fan who is seen downgrading the Reactor (Frenkie De Jong), when he decides to reject Manchester United football club. Meanwhile, the same Manchester United fan had previously praised and hyped him,. The lexical item “Twerk” in the label, as used in this context suggests ‘hying’ and ‘praising’. It is used to foreground the hypocrisy of the Manchester United fan who is downgrading the Reactor after the latter rejects the former’s club. By inference, the plate brings to the fore an attempt to ridicule the targeted club (Manchester United) for her failure in the transfer pursuit of the Reactor.

Manchester United De Jong



Plate 4.43: Unsuccessful transfer bid

Source: @AcmGhazali

Date: 08/08/2022

In the plate, Manchester United Football Club is projected as being rejected during transfer market by Frenkie De Jong, a player of Barcelona Football Club. The plate is a non-transactional reactional process involving two different categories of reactional representations. In the first frame, the Reactor (represented as Manchester United football club) is portrayed having a non-transactional reaction to a Phenomenon, not presented (but most likely to be Frenkie De Jong, a Barcelona player who is a transfer target of the Reactor, as the plate suggests). As it can be seen in the first frame, the Reactor is visually presented engaging in what is socially known as ‘dabbing’, a form of social salutation and greeting or a social way of showing respect and honour. As demonstrated in the first frame, the Reactor is portrayed as trying to use respect and salutation to woo or entice the Phenomenon (Frenkie De Jong) to accept the transfer bid and join the club. However, as portrayed in the second frame, the Phenomenon in the first frame (Frenkie De Jong), who is now the Reactor in the second frame is projected having a non-transactional reaction away from the Phenomenon (supposed to be Manchester United football club that intends to woo the Reactor in the second frame). Based on the context of the plate, the non-transactional reaction of the Reactor in the second frame where he is turning away his glance or gaze away from the Phenomenon suggests that the transfer bid made by the Phenomenon of the second frame (Manchester United football club) is unsuccessful or rejected by the Reactor. This is reinforced as the Reactor in the second frame (Frenkie De Jong) is captured having his glance away from the Phenomenon (Manchester United football club).

4.1.4.3 Trophylessness

This sub-category of banter involves mocking or ridiculing football clubs for their failure to win trophies. Here, verbal and visual resources are deployed to ridicule the banter targets.

Manchester United haven't won a trophy since 2017 🙄



Plate 4.44: Trophylessness

Source: @FCforGRANDPAs

Date: 05/08/2022

In the plate, a rival fan mocks Manchester United Football Club for failing to win trophies. The plate here is a non-transactional reactional process. It features the Reactor (Manchester United football club, represented by the players presented in the plate). As observed from the plate, the non-transactional representation of the Reactor presents the Reactor (the represented participants) with no Phenomenon. Moreover, the Reactor (the represented participants, representing Manchester United football club) is portrayed with a gestural reaction that suggests sadness as reflected in the facial expression. Thus, in relation to the context of the plate, foregrounded by the label “Manchester United haven’t won a trophy since 2017”, it can be inferred that the Reactor is portrayed with a gestural reaction that indicates sadness and frustration as a result of the failure to win any trophy for years. Also evident from the plate is the deployment of gaze of the Reactor. In the plate, the Reactor is portrayed with an ‘offer’ gaze which indicates the Reactor being presented as an object of ridicule and mockery (Kress and Leuwen, 2006). The Reactor’s gaze as an ‘offer’ shows that the gaze or glance is not directly fixed on the viewer, as it can be seen from the plate. By implication, the Reactor, representing Manchester United football club, is portrayed as object of ridicule and mockery as a result of the club’s inability to win trophies for years.

Here's your only trophy for decades



Plate 4.45: Trophylessness

Source: @King_Bright

Date: 06/08/2022

In the plate, an Arsenal Football Club's fan ridicules Tottenham Football Club for their inability to win trophies for years. The plate portrays conceptual and symbolic representations. As it can be seen in the plate, there is a visual representation of incongruous trophy symbol to portray the targeted club (Tottenham football club) as being trophyless. This is based on the fact that the club has not been able to win trophies for years.

In the plate, the label "Here's your only trophy for decades" sarcastically brings to the fore the fact that the club has failed to win any trophy in decades. The visual representation of an incongruous trophy symbol as reflected in the label "We beat Man City" inked on the trophy presented in the plate indicates that beating Man City has been translated to winning trophy for the targeted club, having failed to have any success in terms of winning trophies. The two labels and the visual representation of incongruous trophy symbol thus foregrounds decades of unsuccessful attempts to win trophies for the target club (Tottenham football club) and the absurdity of boasting of the club's fans over defeating Man City, a club that has won many EPL trophies in the last decade.

4.1.4.4 Damaging Defeats

Football clubs are often targeted when they are heavily defeated in terms of the margin of goals against them. This form of humiliating defeats is described in this category as damaging defeats.

Chelsea mudded again 🤔🤔



Plate 4.46: Damaging defeats

Source: @Katwesigye

Date: 06/08/2022

In plate 4.46, a rival fan subjects Chelsea Football Club to ridicule after being defeated in a UEFA Champions League match against Real Madrid. The plate is a transactional action process featuring the Actor and the goal. The Actor is represented by two represented participants pictured as monkeys tendering and treating another represented participant also portrayed as a monkey while the Goal as shown in the plate is the represented participant (also a monkey) being treated. As evident in the plate, the Goal (presented as Chelsea football club) is portrayed as being wounded and brutalized and as such being given what looks like medical care or treatment by the Actor. By inference, based on the context of the plate, Chelsea football club (the Goal) is depicted as being wounded and brutalized in relation to the club's devastating defeat in the UEFA Champions League (UCL) match against Real Madrid. The label "Chelsea muddled again" observed from the plate is also used in reference to the damaging defeat suffered by Chelsea football club (the Goal). Contextually, the verbal element "muddled" captures the damaging defeat of the targeted club (Chelsea football club).



Plate 4.47: Damaging defeats

Source: @_kingjonah

Date: 03/08/2022

In the plate, a Manchester United Football Club's fan mocks Arsenal and Liverpool Football Clubs for their respective defeats against Manchester United football club in EPL matches. The plate instantiates a transactional action process where the Actor is portrayed having a transactional action towards the Goal. As it can be observed from the plate, the Actor is presented as Manchester United football club (as evident in the visual representation of the logo of the club) while the Goal is depicted as Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs (as seen from the visual representation of their respective logos). In the plate, the Actor (Manchester United football club) is portrayed with the vector stick and chain with which the Goal (Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs) are tortured and chained at the same time.

The deployment of the vector stick and chain in torturing the two clubs (the Goal) thus indicates that they are thoroughly defeated and beaten by Manchester United football club (the Actor). In addition, there is an asymmetric classification of the Actor and the Goal. As evident from the plate, in one hand, the Actor (Manchester United football club) is projected as being superior. This is evident from the vector stick and chain held by the represented participant, representing the club (the Actor). The vector shows that the Actor (Manchester United football club) is in a superior position to torture the Goal. On the other hand, the Goal is depicted as the subordinate, meaning that, it is inferior as evident from its being the tortured or the chained. The asymmetric classification of the Actor and the Goal therefore, portrays Manchester United (the Actor) as the victor or winner and Arsenal and Liverpool (the Goal) as the victim or loser in relation to their respective defeats.

4.1.5 Match officials targeted banter

In football, there are match officials such as the referees, the linesmen and officials saddled with the responsibility of being in charge of Video Assistant Referee (VAR). The actions of these personnel often have direct impact on the outcomes of football matches. As such, they are usually targeted by football fans for being poor or biased. **The** banter category here is sub-categorised into poor and biased officiating.

4.1.5.1 Poor and biased officiating

This sub-category of football banter often occurs when football fans feel that their clubs have been negatively affected as a result of poor decisions from match officials.

I know fully understand you pay your reff to do the wrong thing and protect them also . Gud league 🙄



Plate 4.48: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @RMA_Optimist

Date: 06/08/2022

In the plate, a Chelsea Football Club's fan complains against Anthony Taylor, an EPL referee for questionable officiating. The plate foregrounds multi-transactional action processes featuring four transactional actions. As observed in the plate, four Actor(s) and four Goal(s) are presented involving in different transactional actions. In the first frame to the left hand of the plate, the Actor is the represented participant (a Tottenham player) wearing a white jersey and pulling the hair of the represented participant wearing a blue jersey (Cucurella, a Chelsea player). Here, the Actor (a Tottenham player) is pictured having a transactional action by pulling the hair of the Goal (Cucurella, a Chelsea player), which is by officiating standard, a bookable offence or a malicious foul that should attract a penalty and a red card (a penalty in form of being sent off from the match). However, based on the background of the plate, the referee and the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) fail to spot the malicious foul or issue a red card. This, as reflected in the plate with the label "I know fully understand that you pay your reff to do the wrong thing and protect them also", suggests that the officiating in the league (EPL) in question is poor and that the league organisers deliberately allow the referees to officiate poorly.

In the second frame, there is also a transactional action process where the Actor, the Tottenham goalkeeper pictured using his leg to hit the Goal (a Chelsea player). This transactional action of the Actor is an obvious foul which escapes penalty from the referee. As such, the plate portrays it as poor and unacceptable officiating from the referee. The third frame is equally a transactional action process featuring the Actor (an Arsenal player) involving in a dangerous tackle by stepping on the leg of the Goal (a Chelsea player). This dangerous action also goes unpunished by the referee. Therefore, like the earlier discussed frames, this frame also foregrounds incompetent and poor performance from the referee. The last frame is another transaction action process portraying the Actor, a Manchester United player pictured raising his legs to hit the Goal (a Chelsea player). As evident from this frame, the Actor's destructive action is meant to be a foul deserving a red card but the referee overlooks it. As such, it is also portrayed in the plate as a questionable refereeing. In all, the four transactional action process frames bring to the fore unacceptable, questionable and poor referee decisions and performances.

Chelsea and arsenal
Favoured by VAR as usual



Plate 4.49: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @rohanbasur1702

Date: 06/08/2022

In the plate, a Manchester United Football Club's fan frowns at biased officiating in an EPL match involving Manchester United and Arsenal Football Clubs. The plate here exemplifies a transactional action process that features the Actor (an Arsenal player, wearing a black jersey, portrayed with a transactional action of raising his stud vector on the leg of the Goal (a Manchester United player, wearing a red jersey)). By football officiating laws, a player raising his stud in such a dangerous manner portrayed in the plate is deemed to be sent off from the football pitch. However, as suggested from the context of the plate, the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) and the referee fail to spot the dangerous foul. Therefore, as evident from the label "Chelsea and Arsenal Favoured by VAR as usual", the "banterer" indicates that the officiating is biased or done in favour of certain clubs (Chelsea and Arsenal football clubs).

Red if it was an Arsenal player



Plate 4.50: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @Khaleddinho

Date: 06/08/2022

In plate 4.50, an Arsenal Football Club's fan complains about biased officiating in a match involving Everton and Liverpool. The plate presents a transactional action process involving the Actor and the Goal. The Actor (Van Dijk, a Liverpool player, wearing a red coloured jersey) is portrayed as the Actor with a transactional action. As shown in the plate, he is involved in a dangerous and leg-breaking tackle on the Goal (an Everton player, pictured with a blue jersey). In reference to football rules, such a tackle (a transactional action) is documented to be a red card offence (sending off from the match). Biasedly, as sounded out from the label "Red if it is an Arsenal player", the match official (the referee) fails to issue a red card for the Actor (a Liverpool player who is pictured making the tackle). This is thus portrayed in the plate as a biased or sentimental refereeing.

VAR room while Cucurella's hair was being pulled



Plate 4.51: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @PedriEra

Date: 06/08/2022

In the plate, a Chelsea fan laments against Video Assistant Referee (VAR) for failing to spot a malicious foul on a Chelsea player (Cucurella). The plate portrays a transactional reactional process. As evident from the plate, the Reactor (VAR officials) are pictured having their glances fixed on the Phenomenon (the computer screens presented in the plate). In the context of officiating football matches, each Phenomenon, represented as the computer screens, is meant to be showing images of what is taking place on the football pitch, however, as evident from the plate, the screens are portrayed with images that are completely unrelated to football. This transactional reactional process presented in the plate suggests that each Actor, represented as VAR officials, is unfocused or unconcerned about the football match they are meant to officiate with an undivided attention. By reference, the VAR officials or the referees are portrayed as poor and unprofessional in discharge of their officiating duties.

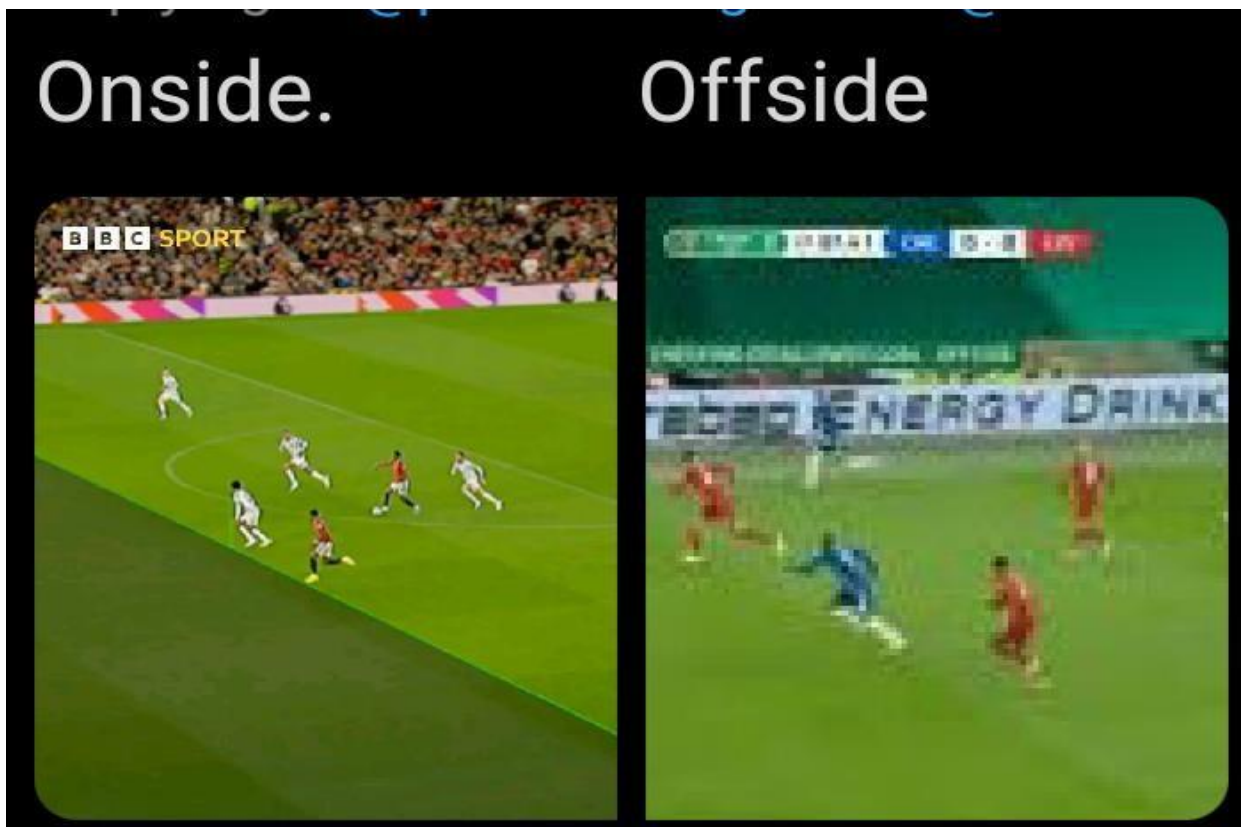


Plate 4.52: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @Just_Ben

Date: 06/08/2022

In plate 4.52, a football fan expresses his anger towards biased officiating involving two EPL matches. The plate is a di-transactional reactional process where the Reacter presented in the first frame is different from the Reacter presented in the second frame, and the Phenomenon in the first frame is different from the Phenomenon in the second frame. As it can be observed from the first frame, the Reacter (represented as the more advancing represented participant in a red jersey, Marcus Rashford, a Manchester United player) is portrayed as making a run to score a goal with his glance towards the Phenomenon (the more advancing represented participant in a white jersey). However, as evident from the plate, the Reacter in the first frame appears to be a little bit ahead of the Phenomenon, this is supported by the Reacter's leg being foregrounded as being ahead by the line drawn.

This transactional reactional process portrayed, in football context, indicates that the Reacter (a Manchester United player) is offside, meaning that the goal scored should be ruled out. However, surprisingly, it is counted as a legitimate goal by the referee. In the second frame, the Reacter (Lukaku, a Chelsea striker, wearing a blue jersey) is portrayed equally making a run to score a goal, with his glance towards the Phenomenon (the more advancing represented participant in a red jersey, a Liverpool player). The Phenomenon is pictured being ahead of the Reacter (Lukaku, the represented participant in a blue jersey). The transactional reactional process portrayed here indicates that, in relation to football officiating rules, the Reacter is onside and as such the goal scored should count as a legitimate goal. However, as reflected in the label "Offside", the referee rules the goal scored as offside. The plate thus brings to the fore the absurdity of a referee in the EPL upholding an illegitimate goal in the first frame while another referee in the same league cancelling or ruling out a legitimate goal in the second frame. From football perspective, this is ironical and it portrays biased or inconsistent officiating from the referees in the league.

Disgraceful VAR.



Plate 4.53: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @wizzaldo

Date: 01/08/2022

In the plate, a Manchester United fan blames Video Assistant Referee (VAR) after awarding a controversial penalty kick against Manchester United in a Europa League match. The plate is a transactional action process. As portrayed in the plate, the Actor (the represented participant in a black jersey and a Real Sociedad player) is pictured shooting the ball towards the Goal (the represented participant in a red jersey and a Manchester United player). In the plate, the vector ball is foregrounded as it shows the ball hitting the leg of the Goal and not his hand. This transactional action thus suggests that no offence has been committed by the Goal (Lisandro Martinez, a Manchester United defender). However, based on the context of the plate, as supported by the label “Disgraceful VAR”, the incident portrayed in the plate is wrongly given as a foul, indicating that the ball hits the hand and not the leg, and this is awarded as a penalty kick against the club of the Goal (Manchester United) in a Europa league match against Real Sociedad football club. As such, the plate as indicated by the label “Disgraceful VAR” depicts the officiating decision to award a dubious and questionable penalty kick against the Goal’s club (Manchester United) as a poor officiating decision.

PL referees and corruption



Plate 4.54: Poor and biased officiating

Source: @RunDRace

Date: 01/08/2022

The plate is a rerepresentation from A Chelsea fan accusing Premier League referees of poor officiating. In the plate here, there is a transactional action process. As it can be observed from the plate, the Actor (the represented participant, wearing a white jersey with number 17 and also a Tottenham player) is projected grabbing and pulling the hairs of the Goal (the represented participant whose hairs are being pulled). This transactional action of hair pulling as foregrounded by the hand vector is unprofessional in football context and should be sanctioned as a foul and even be awarded as a penalty kick in favour of the Goal's club (Chelsea football club). Unexpectedly however, the incident is ignored by the referee. As such, as seen from the label "PL referees and corruption", the referee neither spots it as a foul, sends the player (the Actor) off nor award it as a penalty kick (having happened inside the penalty box). As such, the Premier league (PL) referees are described as corrupt by the "banterer", most likely an angry Chelsea fan.

4.2 Banter strategies in the selected football banter.

Football "banterers" are observed to adopt different strategies as communicative tools in the selected football banter, based on the discursive context and the goal intended. To explore those strategies, the discursive conditions that accompany them are considered. This is because the circumstance in which the banter are used determines their meanings. The strategies employed by the "banterer"s in the selected tweets to perform various functions are: posturing, dressing, symbolization, gesturing, gazing, sarcasm, name-calling and stereotyping. They are discussed in the plates below:

4.2.1 Posturing as a banter strategy

Goudt (2010:2) defines posture as an intentionally or habitually attained position of the body. Posture is a significant non-verbal banter cue employed in the banter discourse. Posturing as a banter strategy involves the deliberate manipulation of posture of the banter target or the represented participants for the purpose of ridiculing, mocking, debasing or creating humour or amusement. This strategy is also marked with sub-strategies. They are torturing posture, subordinating posture, salipping posture and backward posture.

4.2.1.1 Torturing posture

When football players or managers fail to produce good performances in football matches, banter is often directed at them to mock and ridicule them. This subsection captures instances of posturing that depicts the banter targets as being tortured.

Where were u against Liverpool
fraudnaldo



Plate 4.55: Torturing posture

Source: @Annie_N150595

Date: 07/08/2022

In the plate, a Liverpool fan mocks Cristiano Ronaldo after his club's humiliating defeat to Liverpool. The representation in the plate captures a transactional action process where the Goal is at the receiving end of what can be described as a torturing transactional action from the Actor. As it can be observed from the plate, the Actor (the represented participant holding a stick) is portrayed having a transactional action towards the Goal (the represented participant being beaten with a stick). In addition, the vector stick is vividly foregrounded as tool through which the Goal is being tortured. In relation to the context of the plate, the Actor is Mohammed Salah, a Liverpool player whose club succeeds in defeating the club of the Goal (Cristiano Ronaldo).

As evident from the context of the plate, the label "Where were you against Liverpool" is used to reveal lack of any positive contribution or impact from the Goal (Cristiano Ronaldo) when his club is being thoroughly beaten. As such, the vector stick is employed as a torturing tool to indicate that the club of the Goal (Manchester United football club) is devastatingly beaten by the club of the Actor (Liverpool football club) and that the Goal (Cristiano Ronaldo, the represented participant being beaten) has a woeful performance in the match. There is also hierarchical classification of the Actor and the Goal in the plate. As evident from the plate, the Goal is projected with a stunted, smaller and tortured posture while the Actor is portrayed with a bigger posture. By implication, the Goal is depicted as subordinate and inferior who is helplessly subjected to torturing from the Actor portrayed as being powerful as reflected in his bigger posture.

Martinelli just dey bully this
Fofana ☒



Plate 4.56: Torturing posture

Source: @premierleague

Date: 07/08/2022

Here, an Arsenal Football Club fan ridicules Fofana, a Chelsea football club's defender for his poor performance against Martinelli, an Arsenal football club's striker. The plate represents a transactional action process featuring the Actor having a transactional action towards the Goal. As evident from the plate, the Goal (Fofana, the represented participant being chained and tortured as well as a Chelsea football club's defender) is portrayed being an object of a transactional action from the Actor (Gabriel Martineli, the represented participant projected holding a stick and channing another represented participant). The chain and stick vector with which the Actor is pictured brings to the fore what can be observed to be a torturing visual representation of the Goal. By inference from the context of the plate, Fofana (the Goal), having had a woeful performance as a defender against Gabriel Martinelli, a striker (the Actor) in an EPL match involving Chelsea and Arsenal football clubs, is portrayed as being tortured as seen in his torturing posture. Also, the label "Martinelli just dey bully this Fofana" is employed to complement the fact that the banter target (fofana) is painfully tortured as foregrounded by the lexical item "bully" in the label.



Plate 4.57: Torturing posture

Source: @DaudRemilekun

Date: 07/08/2022

The plate stems from how Juventus football club signed Ronaldo to help them win Champions league, having won it on several occasions for his previous club (Real Madrid football club). The representation in the plate is an instance of transactional action process featuring the Actor and the Goal. The Actor is Juventus football club represented in the plate with the represented participant holding a stick with the logo of Juventus football club on his cloth while the Goal is Ronaldo portrayed in the plate running away. In the plate, the vector is deployed as a torturing tool as the Goal is portrayed in the plate with a torturing posture through the use of the vector by the Actor for failing to help in winning the Champions league for the club, which is the original purpose of buying him. The label “And” is also employed to foreground the torturing posture. The label which is a coordinating conjunction used to show the resultant consequence of the failure of the Goal (Cristiano Ronaldo and the represented participant being tortured) to win Champions League for Juventus football club (the Actor). Also, as it can be seen in the plate, the absurd and incongruous depiction of the Actor, a football club pursuing the Goal, a professional football player with a stick has potential for instigating laughter and amusement.

4.2.1.2 Subordinating posture

Football usually involves debate among football fans on which football player, manager or club is better or which football player, manager or club is inferior to the other in terms of football performances during football matches. As such, banter is often employed to portray a player, manager or club as being inferior, especially when the player, manager or club produces a poor performance in a match. Posturing is therefore deployed here as a banter strategy to portray the banter targets as being professionally inferior. Instances of this are discussed in the plates below.

Where's messi this year?



Plate 4.58: Subordinating posture

Source: @gprincewill17

Date: 07/08/2022

Here, a fan mocks Lionel Messi for poor performance at his new club, Paris Saint Germaine (PSG) Football Club. The representation in the plate is a transactional action process that portrays the Goal (Lionel Messi, the participant being carried) as being helped by the Actor (Neymar and Mbappe, the represented participants carrying another represented participant, the Goal). As observed in the plate, the Goal (Lionel Messi) receives a transactional action from the Actor (Neymar and Mbappe) that portrays him as dependent on the Actor. In relation to the context of the plate, the player, Lionel Messi (the Goal), having moved to a different league (French Ligue 1) has a poor performance as he finds it difficult to score goals when compared to how he used to score goals in the previous league (Spanish La Liga) where he had played previously.

As represented in the plate, Messi (the Goal) depicted as being carried by Neymar and Mbappe (the Actor) suggests that he is subordinate or inferior to two other represented participants, the actor (Neymar and Mbappe). The plate also depicts an asymmetric classification or representation of the represented participants. While the Actors (the two represented participants carrying another represented participant) are portrayed with a standing posture and a bigger frame, the Goal (the represented participant being carried) is projected with the posture of a child being carried. The hierarchical classification of the represented participants in the plate thus portrays the Actor as being superordinate or superior and the Goal as being subordinate or inferior.

Licha will stop him when we both meet in the Europa league



Plate 4.59: Subordinating posture

Source: @_Big_Haj

Date: 07/08/2022

In the plate, a Manchester United fan mocks Gabriel Jesus (an Arsenal football club player) after failing to score in an EPL match against Manchester United. The plate represents a transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Lutaro Martinez, the represented participant sitting down and looking on another represented participant) is portrayed having his glance being set on the Phenomenon (Gabriel Jesus, an Arsenal player) after the Reacter (Lutaro Martinez, a Manchester United football club's defender) stops the Phenomenon (Gabriel Jesus, an Arsenal football club's striker) from scoring when the latter's club lost to the club of the former. In the plate, the representation features an asymmetric classification of the two represented participants. The hierarchical representation depicts the Reacter as being superordinate and superior as he is projected with a bigger frame and a complete posture of his image while the Phenomenon (Gabriel Jesus) is portrayed as subordinate or inferior as seen in the smaller frame and a stunted posture with which he is captured. Inferentially, Gabriel Jesus (the Phenomenon), an Arsenal football club's striker is being foregrounded as subordinate or inferior due to his failure to score any goal against the club of Lutaro Martinez while Lutaro Martinez is projected as superordinate or superior for stopping Gabriel Jesus from scoring.

The adult babies



Plate 4.60: Subordinating posture

Source: @ReshadRahman_

Date: 08/08/2022

The plate is rooted in the Champions League match between Napoli football club and Liverpool football club where Liverpool club was humiliatingly beaten by Napoli football club. The representations in the plate foreground both transactional action and transactional reactional processes. The transactional action process features the Actor and the Goal. As evident from the plate, the Actor is the represented participant (Koulibali, a Napoli defender) holding and carrying the two other represented participants, the Goal (Liverpool football club's attackers, Salah and Firmino). The hand vector of the Actor is used in holding and carrying each of the Goal. The vector hand can be described as ditransitive action process within the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar with the action of the vector being directed at the two Goal(s). In the plate, subordinating posture is foregrounded through asymmetric and hierarchical representation of the three represented participants. As it can be seen in the plate, each of the Goal is portrayed with a smaller frame and a stunted child posture and children snickers while the Actor (the represented participant holding and carrying other represented participants) is projected with a bigger frame and a full posture. As such, the asymmetric representations depict Salah and Firmino (the Goal) as inferior players, due to their failure to score any goal in their club's (Liverpool) Champions League match against the club of Koulibabali (Napoli football club) while Koulibali is portrayed as superordinate or superior as he is able to prevent the two attackers (the Goal) from scoring.

The portrayal of the Goal as subordinate or inferior also manifests in the deployment of hand vector deployed to hold and carry them, thus portraying them as dependent and subordinate beings who need to be held and carried by the Actor. There is therefore an overt classification of the Actor as the superordinate while each of Goal is classified as subordinate to the Actor as seen in the asymmetric representations. In the transactional reactional process, The Reactor (the represented participant holding two other represented participants) is projected having his glance towards a Phenomenon (Mohammed Salah). As it can be seen in the plate, the manner of the glance of the Reactor shows that he is looking down on a Phenomenon which suggests that the Phenomenon is subordinate or inferior while the Reactor is superordinate or superior. In addition, the incongruity of the plate which portends a potential for humorous banter is the absurdity of fully grown adult players being held and carried as if they were children who do not have the ability to walk on their own. The portrayal of the Goal as

wearing children snickers is also humorously incongruous as it foregrounds the absurdity of adult professional players uncharacteristically wearing children snickers.



Plate 4.61: Subordinating posture

Source: @dezizuoo

Date: 08/08/2022

Here, a Chelsea Football Club's fan mocks Barcelona football club for losing out to Chelsea football club in a transfer bid for players. The plate mirrors a transactional action process where the Actor is pictured with a transactional action towards the Goal. As it can be observed from the plate, the Actor (Chelsea football club) represented by the represented participant in a blue Chelsea jersey is vividly captured having a transactional action towards the Goal (Barcelona football club) by pressing legs on the head of the Goal while the Goal is pictured submissively smiling. By inference, based on the context of the plate, Barcelona football club (Goal) is being described as subordinate and inferior to Chelsea football club in relation to how the club loses out in transfer bids for players while Chelsea football (the Actor) is projected as superordinate and superior as regards the club (Chelsea football club) successful transfer bids at the expense of Barcelona football club.

The representation in the plate evidently also features a hierarchical and asymmetric classification of the two represented participants (Chelsea and Barcelona football club). As evident from the plate, the Actor (Chelsea football club), in one hand, is projected with a bigger frame as well as having a leg pressing down the Goal (Barcelona football club); on the other hand, the Goal is mirrored with a smaller frame and a suppressed or submissive posture as reflected in the the Actor pressing his head. These visual asymmetric representations, therefore, foreground the Actor (Chelsea football club) as superordinate and superior while the Goal (Barcelona football club) is demotedly visualized suggesting that the club (Barcelona football club) is subordinate and inferior to Chelsea football club. Additionally, the label "We bought Barcelona prime target and sold them our reject" is used to mock the banter target (Barcelona football club) for losing their transfer targets to Chelsea football club.

Ruben Dias with Haaland, Mbappe and Neymar



Plate 4.62: Subordinating posture

Source: @2022_renan

Date: 08/08/2022

The plate is based on a Champions'league matches between Manchester City and Borussia Dortmund; Manchester City and PSG football clubs where both Borussia Dortmund and PSG were defeated by Manchester City. Ruben Dias is a Manchester City defender Haland is an attacker for Borussia Dortmund while Neymar and Mbappe are PSG attackers. The plate is an instance of transactional action process depicting the Actor whose action is specifically directed at the Goal (Kress and van Leuwen, 2006). The Actor who represents a Manchester City player, Ruben Dias, is the represented participant holding the neck of each of the Goal who are Borussia Dortmund and PSG players (Haland, Mbappe and Neymar). Posturing is employed to portray the Goal with a posture of being suppressed, tamed and captured by the Actor. This strategy portrays each of the Goal as being subordinate to, and incapable of competing against the Actor who is depicted tightly holding their necks. As such, each of the Goal is portrayed as professionally inferior for failing to score any goal against the club of the Actor.

There is also an asymmetric classification of the Actor and the Goal through the posture of each represented participant portrayed in the plate. While the Actor is classified as the superordinate, as reflected in the visual representation of the represented participant holding the necks of other represented participants, each of the Goal is classified as subordinate, as captured in the visual representation of each of them. This asymmetric classification is designed also to portray each of the Goal as being a subordinate and an inferior professional to the Actor. Furthermore, the plate deploys anomaly to instigate laughter by portraying a single represented participant as having enough power and strength to comfortably hold or grasp the necks of other three represented participants. This is incongruous and anomalous. This abnormal visual representation of the Actor and the Goal is therefore amusing and laughable.

Penaldo missed a penalty 😂
#FACup



Plate 4.63: Subordinating posture

Source: @AcmGhazali

Date: 08/08/2022

The plate foregrounds the constant debate among football fans on who is superior between Messi and Ronaldo. The representation in the plate is an instance of transactional action process where the Actor is portrayed as performing an action specifically directed towards the Goal (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). As presented in the plate, the Actor is Lionel Messi, the represented participant carrying another represented participant while the Goal is Cristiano Ronaldo, portrayed as the represented participant being carried. Based on the visual representations of the two represented participants (the Actor and the Goal), the Actor is portrayed as superordinate, as evident in how he is projected comfortably carrying the Goal in his arms while the Goal is presented as the subordinate, clearly shown being carried without any resistance. Based on the context of the plate, it suggests that Cristiano Ronaldo (the Goal) missing a penalty kick for his club makes him a subordinate or inferior to Lionel Messi (the Actor).

The representation in the plate further shows a hierarchical and asymmetric classification of the two represented participants. This representation presents an overt classification of the Actor (Lionel Messi) as superordinate; this is reflected in the visual presentation of his full body posture as an adult professional football player and the bigger frame with which he is projected. In contrast, the visual representation of the Goal (Cristiano Ronaldo) with the body posture of a child or a stunted posture as well as a smaller frame presents him as subordinate or professionally inferior to the Actor. Humorously, the anomaly in an adult professional player being carried like a child by another professional player has a potential to instigate laughter and amusement, as it is laughable and ridiculous to imagine an adult professional player being effortlessly carried up in the manner portrayed in the plate.

4.2.1.3 Slipping posture

The category of banter here foregrounds the slipping posture of the banter targets to portray them as being incapable of competing professionally or professionally deficient. Posturing is thus deployed to undermine the football capability of the banter targets.

While we're digging things up...



Plate 4.64: Slipping posture

Source: @holarmarziano

Date: 23/08/2022

Here, a Chelsea Football Club fan ridicules Steven Gerard, the captain of Liverpool football club for his slip in a match against Chelsea football club. The representation in the plate features a partial transactional reactionary process presenting the Actor with a partially visible Phenomenon. As evident from the plate, the Reacter (the represented participant in a red shirt) is portrayed having a reaction by trying to run after a Phenomenon, not wholly presented and probably the ball (partially shown in the plate). In the visual representation of the Reacter in the plate, the Reacter is portrayed with a slipping posture as he tries to run after a partially presented Phenomenon (the ball being not completely shown). Inferentially, in relation to the context of the plate, Steven Gerard (the Reacter) is being mocked and ridiculed for his ingloriously famous slip that leads to his club (Liverpool football club) losing a match to Chelsea football club which would have guaranteed the club winning the English Premier League (EPL) for the first time in years. As shown in the plate, the two circumstantial accompaniments (the represented participant in a blue shirt, Demba Ba, a Chelsea football club's player and another player in a red shirt, a club mate of the Reacter) are only presented to bring to the fore the setting of the plate.

Raphinha got a taste of his own medicine 😄



Plate 4.65: Slipping posture

Source: @Samueldela12

Date: 08/08/2022

In the plate, a football fan expresses his satisfaction of seeing Raphinha, a Barcelona Football Club's player slipping after being dribbled. The plate exemplifies a transactional reactional process foregrounding the Reactor and the Phenomenon. As presented in the plate, the Reactor (Raphinha, the represented participant in an orange coloured jersey falling down at the right side of the plate and a Barcelona player) is presented having a transactional reaction towards the Phenomenon (the represented participant in a red jersey, a Bayern Munich player and a ball). The representation in the plate can be described as di- transactional reactional process where two Phenomenon(s) (a ball and the represented participant in a red jersey) are presented. As it can be observed from the plate, the transactional reaction of the Reactor is visually foregrounded with a slippery posture or deportment. By inference, based on the context of the plate, Raphinha (the Reactor), a Barcelona player is projected as being brought to the mud or disgraced in terms of being dribbled. The label "Raphinha got a taste of his own medicine" is an idiomatic expression which suggests that Raphinha (the Reactor) is famous for disgracing other player by his dribbling football skill and as such suffers what he has been dishing out to other players.

Absolutely nobody:

**Van Dijk everytime he sees
Mitrovic coming towards h
with the ball:**



Plate 4.66: Slipping posture

Source: @cfcjakes

Date: 08/08/2022

Here, a football fan portrays Van Dijk as a poor defender because of his slip. The representation presented in the plate here is a non-transactional reactional process where the Reactor is presented having his glance directed to no Phenomenon. As shown in the plate, the represented participant, representing Van Dijk, a Liverpool defender, is portrayed showing a non-transactional reaction to a Phenomenon not presented. The Phenomenon can be inferred, based on the context of the plate, to be Mitrovic, a player of Fulham football club. The visual representation of the non-transactional reaction of the Reactor (Van Dijk, a defender) portrays him slipping as he faces the Phenomenon (not presented, as the “banterer” only intends to foreground the Reactor). Inferentially, the plate describes Van Dijk, a defender for his club (Liverpool) through a slippery posture, as being incapable or physically deficient to face Mitrovic (the Phenomenon). Also evident from the plate is the gestural reaction of the Reactor. The gestural reaction of the Reactor portrayed in the plate suggests that he is afraid to face the Phenomenon as reflected in his facial expression.

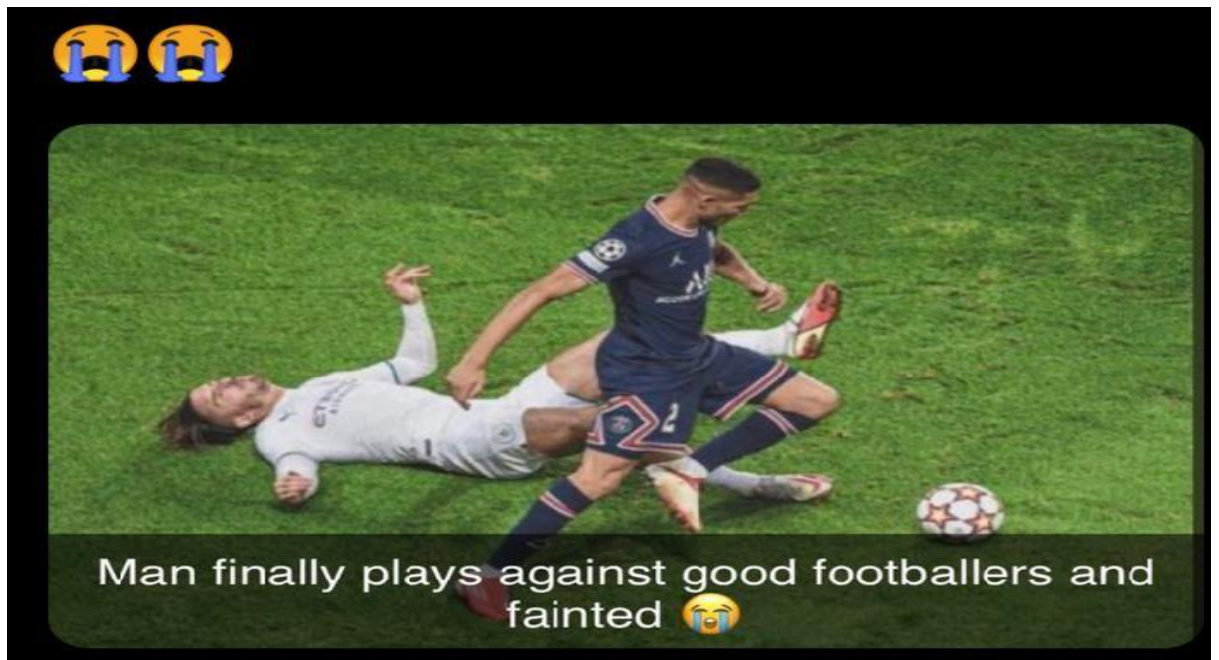


Plate 4.67: Slipping posture

Source: @SambBarcelynn2

Date: 09/08/2022

In plate 4.67, a football fan mocks Jack Grealish, a Manchester City Football Club's player after slipping in a match against PSG in the Champions league. The plate is an instance of a non- transactional reactional process as it depicts the Reacter (the represented participant on the ground in a white jersey, having his gaze fixed upward having lost touch with a Phenomenon). The Phenomenon is the represented participant in a blue jersey as well as the ball. As it can be observed in the plate, the Reacter is visually represented with an incapacitated posture on the ground. By inference, as equally reflected in the label "Man finally plays against good footballers and fainted", Jack Grealish (the Reacter), a Manchester City player, is being described as professionally incapacitated to compete with good players which results in his falling down. The verbal element "fainted" used in the label is also deployed exaggeratingly to describe the Reacter as not professionally good enough to compete with good players.

The non-transactional reaction of the Reacter with his glance set on no particular Phenomenon equally suggests that he has no connection with the ball and the player (the represented participant standing and moving away from him). This means that he has lost touch with his profession and as such, he is unsuitable to be a professional player. As also evident in the plate, the two represented participants are asymmetrically classified. In the asymmetric representation, the Reacter (Jack Grealish, the represented participant on the ground) is subordinately or inferiorly classified as seen in his falling posture while the other represented participant (the represented participant in a blue jersey) is projected with a standing position, suggesting that he is superior (regarded as a good player whom the Reacter cannot compete against).

Sorry my man Evra



Plate 4.68: Slipping posture

Source: @CFComari

Date: 09/08/2022

Here, a Barcelona Football Club's fan ridicules Patrice Evra, a Juventus football club player, after being dribbled by Lionel Messi in his club Champions league final loss to Barcelona. The representation in the above frame captures a transactional reactional process that features the Reactor (the represented participant pictured being on his knee in a white and black jersey) having a transactional reaction towards the Phenomenon (the represented participant in a blue and red jersey and the ball). As observable from the plate, the Reactor appears to be trying to mark the Phenomenon out but rather than successfully doing so, he ends up being on a kneeling position. Putting into the context of the plate, Patrice Evra (the Reactor), a Juventus player is portrayed as being professionally incapable to stop Lionel Messi (the Phenomenon), a Barcelona player in reference to their Champions League final match face-off where the club of the former loses to the club of the latter. The plate also reflects asymmetric and hierarchical classification of the represented participants (the Reactor and the Phenomenon). While the Reactor (Patrice Evra) is pictured with a subordinate posture as seen in his kneeling position, the Phenomenon (Lionel Messi) is projected with superordinate deportment as shown in his standing position. These visual representations bring to the fore the fact that Patrice Evra (the Reactor) is incapable while Lionel Messi (the Phenomenon) is professionally capable.

4.2.1.4 Backward posture

Here, the awkward position or deportment of the banter targets are employed to ridicule and mock them. This involves deliberately portraying the banter targets with anomalous facial direction or portraying them as being backward through a backward posture.

Replying to @premierleague

The premier league race has started #GGMU



Plate 4.69: Backward posture

Source: @Tafieycity

Date: 08/08/2022

In the plate, a football fan mocks Manchester United Football Club for being at the bottom of the EPL table at the beginning of the \season. The plate presents a form of track race which contextually refers to the English Premier League (EPL) title race. The representation in the plate presents two non-transactional reactional processes. As evident from the plate, four represented participants (the first category of Reacter), representing Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs as shown in the logos of each club, are portrayed having a non-transactional reaction to a Phenomenon (not presented but most likely, the EPL trophy to be won at the end of the season) in front while the other represented participant (the second category of Reacter), representing Manchester United football club as also shown in the logo of the club, is projected having his gaze set on a backwardly non-represented Phenomenon. As the plate suggests, Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs (the first category of Reacter) are foregrounded having a forward looking outlook aiming for the goal ahead, in this case, the Phenomenon (the EPL trophy) while Manchester United football club (the second category of Reacter) is captured as being backward in the EPL race in relation to the club sitting comfortably at the bottom of the league table.

The plate also features an assymmetric representation of the two categories of the Reacter. The first category of the Reacter (Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs) are portrayed as forward looking, as evident in their glances being set forward while the other Reacter is classified backward looking as reflected in here glance being set backward different from other Reacter. This suggests that, in relation to the context of the plate, the first category of Reacter, Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs are focused on winning the league title while other one, Manchester United football club is completely lost out of the title race.

14 (c): turn back, he's behind
u



Plate 4.70: Backward posture

Source: @Siphe_Sihle1

Date: 08/08/2022

Here, a fan ridicules Van Dijk after being dribbled by a Fulham player, Mitrovic. The representation in the plate captures different reactional processes of the represented participants (the Reactor) in the plate. The represented participant in a white jersey (the first category of Reactor) is portrayed in the plate having his gaze fixed on a Phenomenon (the ball) in front while the represented participant in a red jersey at the left side of the frame (the second category of Reactor) is projected having his direction or gaze elsewhere and his back facing the Phenomenon (in this case, the ball or the represented participant in a white jersey). The represented participant in a red jersey with number “14” at the right side of the plate is a circumstantial accompaniment who is fictionally portrayed in the plate as telling the other represented participant in a red jersey with number “4”. The circumstantial accompaniment is portrayed in the plate to bring to the fore the fact that the Reactor in the second category is backwardly positioned with his back facing the Phenomenon instead of his gaze. Contextually, Van Dijk (the Reactor in the second category or the represented participant in a red jersey with number “4” at the left side of the frame) is thus being described as professionally backward as a defender, suggesting that he is a poor defender having being humiliatingly dribbled by Mitrovic (the Reactor in the first category or the represented participant in a white jersey).

4.2.2 Gesturing as a banter strategy

This concerns using different gestural reactions of the banter targets to ridicule them. This strategy is sub-categorised into calling out biased and poor officiating, fighting racism, mocking boasting and unfulfilled promises, ridiculing constant failure and mocking defeats.

4.2.2.1 Calling out biased and poor officiating

In football, performances of referees and Video Assistant Referees (VAR) are often subjected to scrutiny and criticism from football fans and pundits. As such, various strategies targeted at the officiating officials are usually employed to project poor and unbiased officiating.

No penalty.
Penalty.

Ladies and gentlemen, the most
corrupt league in the world.



Plate 4.71: Calling out poor and biased officiating

Source: @CityJosxph

Date: 07/08/2022

In the plate, a fan frowns at inconsistent referees' decisions in EPL. In the plate, a homogeneous action process is presented. The action process is also transactional or directional as each Actor (the represented participants in the plate) is portrayed having an action towards the Goal (the ball) through the hand vector by touching or making contact with the ball with their hands. Based on rules guiding football, it is unlawful or punishable for football players to touch ball with their hands during football matches. If this happens (especially intentionally or when the hands are not properly positioned), a foul is adjudged to have been committed and punishment usually follows or a penalty awarded if the offence occurs inside the offender's penalty box. As portrayed in the plate, the above transactional action processes occur inside the penalty box of each offender (the Reacter) and a penalty kick should usually be awarded for both offenders. However, as suggested in the plate, a penalty kick is not awarded against the Actor in the first frame (Rodrigo, a Manchester City's player) while a penalty kick is awarded against the Actor in the second frame (Moutinho, a player of Wolves football club). By inference, the homogenous actions which attract different officiating decisions from the referee is thus described as biased in the plate.

Casemiro's father is probably the owner of La Liga. Ramos would easily see a red but not this guy! How????



9:41 PM · 26 Feb 22 · Twitter for iPhone

Plate 4.72: Calling out poor and biased officiating

Source: @ChelseaFC

Date: 06/08/2022

Here, a Barcelona Football Club fan complains against partial referees' decisions in the Spanish League known as La Liga.. The representation in the plate captures a transactional or directional action process. As seen in the plate, the Actor (the represented participant pictured dangerously hitting the leg of another represented participant) is presented having a directional action towards the Goal (the represented participant being hit). The directional action of the Actor (Casemiro, a Real Madrid player) is foregrounded through the leg vector. Usually, in football context, the directional action of the Actor projected by the leg vector is a foul that could attract a red card as it is most likely malicious or dangerous. However, as the label "Casemiro father is probably the owner of La Liga. Ramos would easily see a red but this guy. How???" reveals that the the transactional action of fouling done by the Actor on the the Goal (a player of Rayo football club) which should usually attract a red card if it were to be another player (Ramos, as mentioned in the label) goes unpunished from the referee. As such, the transaction action which captures an unpunished malicious tackle or foul is described in the plate as unfair or biased refereeing.

4.2.2.2 Fighting racism

In football, like in the larger societies, especially in the western world, racism is highly entrenched. Racism in football often involves players using racist comments against fellow professionals or football fans racially jeering players of opposing club. As such, football fans usually deploy banter to ridicule or mock players or individuals who are regarded as perpetrators of racism. Here, gesture is employed as a tool to frown at racism from the perpetrators.



Plate 4.73: Calling out poor and biased officiating

Source: @charliegilliesO

Date: 06/08/2022

In the plate, a football fan portrays John Terry, the captain of Chelsea Football Club as a racist for his alleged racist comment against a black player. The plate is a transactional action process where the Actor (the represented participant in red and white jersey kicking another represented participant in a blue jersey) is portrayed having a transactional and directional action targeted at the Goal (the represented participant in a blue jersey being kicked). Based on the context of the plate, as suggested in the label “#Arsenal fc, kicking racism out of football since 2007”, the Goal (John Terry, the captain of Chelsea football club) is foregrounded as embodiment of racism in reference to his alleged racial comment against a black player, Ferdinand, during an English Premier League (EPL) match. As evident in the plate, the vector leg of the Actor, an Arsenal player, Abu Diaby (represented as Arsenal football club) is deployed to bring to the fore the transactional action of kicking out racism, portrayed in the plate as the Goal. By inference, John Terry (the Goal) is being described as a racist portrayed as being kicked out by an Arsenal player, Abu Diaby (the Actor). The transactional action of the Actor, which is actually a punishable foul in football, is thus deployed as a fight against racism. From humour perspective, it is laughable and amusing that a punishable foul committed by a player against a fellow player is described as a way of kicking out racism. The absurdity of this scenario projected in the plate can propel laughter.



Plate 4.74: Calling out poor and biased officiating

Source: @Shadow194848751

Date: 06/08/2022

Here, a football fan mocks Toni Kroos, a German Real Madrid Football Club's player for his alleged racist comment against Aubameyang. The representation in the plate captures a non-transactional reactional process. As portrayed in the plate, the Reacter (Patrick Aubameyang, the represented participant covering his face with his fingers) is pictured with a gestural reaction, after scoring a goal in an Elclásico match (any match between Barcelona and Real Madrid) for Barcelona football club, directed to a Phenomenon, not presented but assumed to be Toni Kroos, a Real Madrid Player. This is suggested in the label "The best moment of the game, was Auba's trolling. Take this Toni Kroos". Based on the context of the plate, the gestural reaction is a goal celebration that captures the celebration of black and African race adopted from a popular movie titled "Black Panther". In addition, Toni Kroos (the Phenomenon, not presented) is alleged to have made a racist comment towards Patrick Aubameyang (the Reacter) in relation to black race. As such, the "banterer" calls out Toni Kroos for his alleged racist comment by suggesting that Patrick Aubameyang's goal celebration (the goal is scored against Toni Kroos's football club) is targeted at him.

4.2.2.3 Ridiculing boasting and unfulfilled promise

The strategy here relates to mocking the banter targets for failure to fulfil the promise of winning trophies or targeting the banter targets for past boasting.



Babanla @biolakazeem · 3h

When you promised to play like Guardiola but can't even play like Fatai



Plate 4.75: Ridiculing boastful and unfulfilled promises

Source: @TheJoshPage

Date: 06/08/2022

In the plate, a football fan mocks Thierry Henry, a former football player and pundit for failing to win matches as the manager of Monaco Football Club. Here, the representation is a non-transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Thierry Henry, the represented participant in the plate) is portrayed with a gestural reaction towards a non-existent Phenomenon. The non-transactional reaction of the Reacter that depicts him having a frowning gestural reaction to no Phenomenon suggests that he is completely detached or has no attachment with no one probably because he is lost in his thoughts due to emotional troubles occasioned by his club's recurring defeats as a football manager. As seen in the label "When you promised to play like Guardiola but you can't even play like Fatai Amao", the Reacter is a football manager who has once boasted when he was a football pundit or analyst on Television that he would implement football tactics of a highly rated football manager (Guardiola) when he becomes a manager. Unfortunately, contrary to his boasting and promises, he is unable to win matches let alone implement tactics of the highly rated manager.

As portrayed in the plate, the non-transactional gestural reaction of the Reacter is thus deployed to ridicule him for his failure to live up to his boasting and promise. He is downgraded below a Nigerian coach in Nigerian Premier League (NPL) who is not even rated in global football. Complemented by the frowning gesture is the use of sarcasm as seen in the label "When you promised to play like Guardiola but can't even play like Fatai Amao". The use of sarcasm is further deployed to bring to the fore the absurdity of his empty promise and boastfulness that can't be translated into reality when opportunity arises.



Plate 4.76: Ridiculing boastful and unfulfilled promises

Source: @Nicholas_Proty

Date: 06/08/2022

Here, a rival fan ridicules Lionel Messi as the captain of Barcelona Football Club for failing to bring back Champions league back to the club after his boasting. The plate instantiates a non-transactional reactional process portraying the Reactor (Lionel Messi, the represented participant in the plate) having a gestural reaction and his gaze towards a non-presented Phenomenon. As it can be seen in the plate, the non-transactional gestural reaction foregrounds frustration and emotional disturbance of the Reactor (this can be seen in his facial expression). Based on the mathematical and symbolic label featuring various scorelines (the match results of the Reactor's club (Barcelona football club) symbolically presented as "2-0, 3-0, 3-0, 4-0 and 8-2 against other clubs in the Champions league), the Reactor (Lionel Messi) is portrayed as having a gestural reaction in form of crying while holding a microphone. Drawing from Kress and van Leeuwen's theory, the microphone is a conceptual representation of the Reactor's boasting of bringing Champions League trophy back to Camp Nou (Barcelona football club's stadium).

As evident from the plate, there is however, a sharp contrast between the Reactor's boasting (conceptually represented by the microphone, the label "Champions league will come to the Camp Nou") and his crying gestural reaction. Here, Lionel Messi (the Reactor) is being portrayed in the plate as someone or a football club's captain who promises and boasts but can't fulfil or live up to the promise and boasting. The label "Bottlers Fc are going to be schooled tonight by Neymar" is sarcastically deployed to ridicule the represented participant (Lionel Messi and his Club) for failing to win despite being at advantage position against their rivals in the Champions league. The nominal "Bottlers" indicates that the Reactor's club (Barcelona football club) has a history of losing their scoreline advantage in previous football matches, as such, the "banterer" predicts that the club is going to bottle their advantage again.



Plate 4.77: Ridiculing boastful and unfulfilled promises

Source: @Niresh_STJ

Date: 05/08/2022

In the plate, a football fan mocks Cristiano Ronaldo (a Juventus Football Club's player at the time) after failing to win Champions League for the club. The plate here presents a transactional action process with multiple Actor(s) (the represented participants portrayed with the logos of different clubs) having a directional or transactional action towards one Goal (the represented participant being dragged or carried). As it be seen in the plate, the Actors are represented as Ajax football club, Olympique Lyonnals football club and Benfica football club while the Goal is Cristiano Ronaldo. As suggested in the Label "Wait, wait. I have to do the impossible to win Champions league with Juventus", the Goal boasts of his ability to win the Champions league trophy with his new club, Juventus but fails to live up to his boasting as his club (Juventus) get knocked out in three different seasons by the three clubs presented as the Actors. As such, he is portrayed in the plate as the Goal being at the receiving end of the transactional action of being dragged or humiliated by the Actors. The plate also presents a asymmetric classification of the Actors and the Goal. As evident in the plate, the Actors are foregrounded as the superordinate being in superior standing or position to drag the Goal while the Goal is portrayed as the subordinate, being dragged for his failure to win the Champions league trophy for his new club (Juventus) as boastfully promised by him.

4.2.2.4 Mocking constant failure

This involves mocking the banter targets for their constant losses in football matches, especially when the fans of the affected clubs have been waiting tirelessly for them to turn things around and start winning.

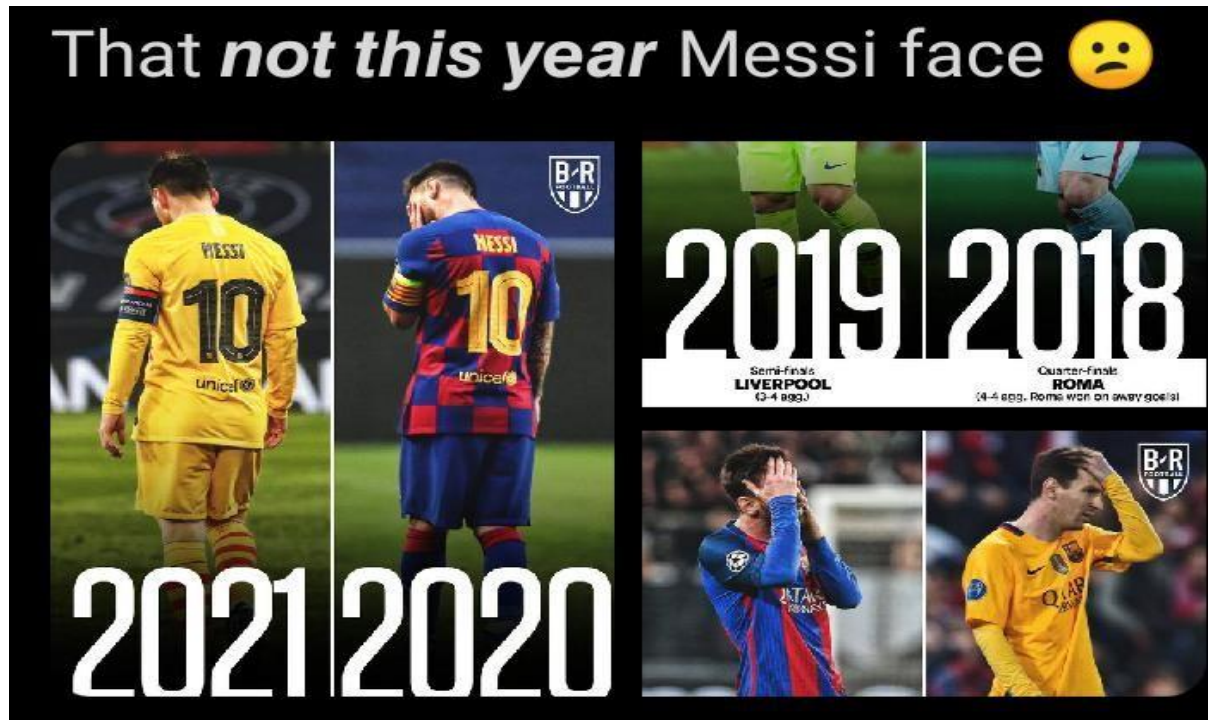


Plate 4.78: Mocking constant failure

Source: @deors

Date: 05/08/2022

In the plate, Lionel Messi is mocked for his club's (Barcelona) series of defeats in Champions League matches. The plate features different non-transaction reactional processes from the Reactor (Lionel Messi). As it can be observed in the plate, each reactional process foregrounds different gestural reactions of the Reactor. The gestural reaction is deployed to bring to the fore the frustration of the Reactor for continuous defeats of his club by different football clubs in different years and seasons of Champions league. In the first frame to the left side of the plate, the Reactor is pictured bowing down his head, looking to the ground, unable to have a directional gaze at any Phenomenon as a form of frustrating gestural reaction. Likewise, in the second frame, the Reactor's gestural reaction is portrayed in his hand vector touching his cheek while his head is lowered. This gestural reaction also indicates frustration due to another season of defeat in the Champions league.

In the third frame, another gestural reaction of the Reactor is foregrounded in relation to his club's (Barcelona football club) defeat by Liverpool as shown in the plate. As evident in the plate, the Reactor is portrayed with a gestural reaction where he employs his hand vector to cover his face, suggesting that the Reactor (Lionel Messi) is agonizing and emotional down. The same gestural reaction is applicable in the fourth frame. By inference, through different gestural representations of the Reactor (Lionel Messi), he is presented as embodiment of series of defeats or failures in the Champions league in different seasons against different clubs.

I



Plate 4.79: Mocking constant failure

Source: @_Just_Malik

Date: 03/08/2022

Here, a fan mocks Cristiano Ronaldo for failing to help his club win another Champions League match after previous defeats. The plate, which is a non-transactional reactional process, is targeted at Ronaldo, a Juventus football club player, for failing again to help his club progress to another stage in the Champions league. With insights from Kress and van Leuwen's theory, the non-transactional reactional process portrayed in the plate foregrounds the Reacter having a non-directional reaction or gaze as no Phenomenon is present. As presented in the plate, the gestural reaction of the Reacter (Cristiano Ronaldo) is foregrounded in form of crying and agonizing in relation to his club's (Juventus) constant defeats in the Champions league. In addition, the label "Where's Ronaldo ghosting again he is truly finished" buttresses the fact that Ronaldo (the Reacter) has been having series of defeats, as reflected in the verbal and adverbial elements "ghosting again". This is further portrayed through the mathematical symbols used to show the Reacter's club (Juventus) losing 2-1, 1-0 and 1-2 to Porto, Lyon and Ajax football clubs as shown in the plate. All the representations in the plate thus portray Ronaldo (the Reacter) as failing to perform or show up for his club in three different Champions league matches. The verbal element "ghosting" meaning disappearing or failing to perform captures the poor performance of Ronaldo for his club while the adverbial element "again" shows that the poor performance is constant or has been occurring in previous matches.

4.2.2.5 Mocking defeats

Here, "banterer"s foreground gestural displays of the banter targets to ridicule them for their defeats and losses football matches. It involves the use of gestural reactions to mock the banter targets.

Oh!
Erik Ten Hag is feeling the
pain.
United is finished.



Plate 4.80: Mocking defeats

Source: @SMiTHiE_

Date: 03/08/2022

In plate 4.80, a rival fan mocks Ten Hag (the manager of Manchester United Football Club) after his club defeat. The plate is a non-transaction reactional process where the Reacter (Ten Haag, the manager of Manchester United football club) is pictured with a gestural reaction to no Phenomenon. As evident in the plate, the gestural reaction of the Reacter is foregrounded through his hand being put in his mouth with his gaze fixed downward. This gestural representation of the Reacter (Ten Haag) portrays him as being emotionally down and broken in relation to his club's (Manchester United football club) defeat to Manchester City football club. The label "Eric Ten Hag is feeling the pain. United is finished" is also used to describe the emotional imbalance and dejection suffered by the manager due to his club's defeat. As used in the label, the nominal item "pain" foregrounds the emotional torture of the manager that is reflected in his gestural reaction portrayed in the plate.

Based on context of the plate, the "banterer" employs the non-transactional gestural reaction of Ten Haag, the manager of Manchester United football club to mock him over his club's loss to Manchester City in a Premier League match generally known as Manchester derby. The non-transactional reaction where no Phenomenon is present is also suggestive. It signifies that the Reacter (Ten Haag) is emotionally lonely as a result of his club's defeat. In the context of the plate, the gaze of the Reacter is equally significant. It is an "Offer" gaze where the Reacter's eyes are not directly fixed on the viewer. This indicates that the Reacter is completely detached and he is presented as object of ridicule in relation to his club losing a football match.

Pain.



Plate 4.81: Mocking defeats

Source: @Ziad_EJ

Date: 03/08/2022

Here, an opposing club's fan mocks Cristiano Ronaldo (a Manchester United Football Club's player) after his club's defeats against Brighton and Brentford Football Clubs. The representation in the plate features two non-transactional reactional processes involving the same Reactor (Cristiano Ronaldo). As evident in the plate, different gestural reactions of the Reactor are portrayed in relation to his club's defeats to two different clubs, Brighton and Brentford football clubs. From the gestural reactions of the Reactor foregrounded in the plate, specifically, in the first frame, the Reactor has his gaze away from the viewer, with a downward look. This gestural reaction suggests dejection or a sense of shame originating from his club's devastating defeat to Brighton, reflected in the 4-0 scoreline. In the second frame, a different gestural reaction of the Reactor is portrayed. The gestural reaction in this frame also captures emotional dejection of the Reactor after his club's defeat to a different club, Brentford football club. To portray this, the Reactor is projected holding his head with his face turned downward. As it can be observed in the plate, this gestural reaction suggests pain and agony induced from the defeat of his club. The label "pain" used in the plate equally captures the emotional state and mood of the banter target as reflected in his gestural reaction. By inference, the plate mocks Cristiano Ronaldo for his club defeats to different football clubs by foregrounding his gestural reaction as defeat induced.



Plate 4.82: Mocking defeats

Source: @Post_nobill

Date: 30/07/2022

In the plate, a “banterer” ridicules Bruno Fernandez (a Manchester United Football Club’s player) after his club fails to win an English Premier League match. The plate captures a non-transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Bruno Fernandez) is having an emotional reaction to no Phenomenon. As evident in the plate, the gestural reaction of the Reacter is portrayed through his facial expression. The facial expression which captures his emotional state suggests that he is emotional down as a result of his club’s defeat. The “banterer” equally claims that the Reacter (the represented participant portrayed in the plate) and his club (Manchester United football club) find it difficult to win matches because penalty kicks are not being awarded to them as it used to be the the norm, suggesting that their past victories have been dubious and undeserving. This is reflected in the label “After they stopped getting penalties they found it difficult to win games”. By inference, from the plate, Bruno Fernandez and Manchester United football club are mocked for their defeat in an English Premier League (EPL) match using the non-transactional emotional and gestural reaction of the player.

The non-transactional emotional representation of the Reacter which features no Phenomenon as portrayed in the plate also indicates that the target player (the Reacter) is emotionally lonely and detached as a result of his club’s repeated defeats. Humorously, the code-mixed label “Wallahi we are going trophyless again” with crying emojis is fictionally and sarcastically deployed, as credited to the Reacter (Bruno Fernandez), to instigate laughter, as it is uncharacteristic or anomalous of a player to publicly state that his club is going to win no trophy. Thus, portraying the player (Bruno Fernandez) as making such uncharacteristic statement may propel laughter and amusement for the rival fans.

4.2.3 Dressing as a banter strategy

This strategy brings to the fore instances where the banter targets are deliberately portrayed with abnormal and anomalous dressing that is completely strange to their profession. Some of the in stances in the data are presented below.

4.2.3.1 Inappropriate and anomalous dressing

This relates to the deployment of a professionally inappropriate or strange dressing or appearance to portray and ridicule the banter targets as being incapable or incompetent, either as a professional football player or a professional football manager.

Arteta tonight as arsenal's
manager



Plate 4.83: Inappropriate dressing

Source: @Abbey07058155

Date: 30/07/2022

The plate is targeted at Arteta, the manager of Arsenal football club for losing a Premier league match with his club playing woefully. The plate is an instance of conceptual representation which is a non-narrative process “representing participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure or meaning” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 79). The plate does not feature the transfer of any action from one visual element to another but simply presents the represented participant in terms of class stratification using the non-visual cue of dressing. The plate is, therefore, an instance of classificational process of the conceptual representation wherein the represented participant is portrayed in terms of his more generalized and more or less stable and timeless features (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

As evident in the plate, the use of a cap that is often associated with an Islamic cleric is symbolic and instructive. This becomes more significant when the fact that Mikel Arteta (portrayed as the represented participant) is a professional football manager whose dressing as football manager is uncharacteristic of an Islamic cleric is considered. The plate thus portrays the banter target (Mikel Arteta) as unfit and incompetent. It suggests that the manager cannot be regarded as a professional football manager but rather, an Islamic cleric through the symbolic representation of a cap often associated with an Islamic cleric. This description, as reflected in the visual representation of the represented participant (representing Mikel Arteta) and the label “Arteta tonight as Arsenal manager”, therefore, demeans and renders the manager unsuitable to be a professional football manager. From humour perspective, the dissimilarity between the mode of dressing of the represented participant and that of a professional football manager is employed to create absurdity and anomaly which could propel amusement and laughter.

Lukaku forgot his boots in the dressing room



Plate 4.84: Inappropriate dressing

Source: @Beela1Cudjoe1

Date: 28/07/2022

The plate foregrounds a football fan mocking Romelu Lukaku after his poor performance for his club, Chelsea Football Club in a Premier League match. It foregrounds a transactional reactional process presenting the Reactor (Romelu Lukaku) with a getural and transactional reaction to the Phenomenon (the ball). As evident in the plate, the conceptual classification is reflected in the symbolic representation of the mode of dressing of the Reactor (Romelu Lukaku). The symbolic representation portrays the Reactor (a professional football player) with an anomalous and inappropriate dressing as the mode of dressing with which the Reactor is portrayed is uncharacteristic of the dressing of a professional football player. As also evident in the plate, the deployment of a jersey and a trouser is a symbolic concept. It is deployed to project the Reactor (Romelu Lukaku) as professionally deficient or incompetent. This is because it is strange or abnormal for a professional football player to be wearing a jersey together with a trouser and shoes while playing football or on the field of play.

The deployment of shoes, instead of football boots that are normally used by football players, is symbolically significant. It is deployed to project the Reactor, who is a stiker, as a poor striker whose goal-scoring ability is questionable. The football fan's intention to ridicule the bantered (Romelu Lukaku) for being professionally incompetent as a striker is equally captured in the label "Lukaku forgot his boots in the dressing room". This is used in reference to Lukaku's failure to score any goal for his club. The nominal item "boots" refers to football tools usually worn by football players to play football as well as score goals. It is metaphorically used to mean goal scoring. To create humour, the "banterer" employs dressing anomalies. This is evident in the deployment of uncharacteristic and abnormal dressing mode for a professional football player. These anomalies as evident in the representation of the player with a trouser and shoes can instigate laughter and amusement.

Most Robotic Farmer of all time



Plate 4.85: Inappropriate dressing

Source: @FcbKeviin

Date: 28/07/2022

The plate has its context in the classification of a player quality based on how competitive the league where such a player plays or the quality of players who play in the league where the targeted player plays. The plate is a transactional reactional process where the Reactor is portrayed having a gestural reaction with the Phenomenon (the hoe being held by the Reactor). The Reactor, (the represented participant), Robert Lewandowski, plays in the German league known as Bundesliga often regarded by many football fans as a Farmers' league because of monopolistic domination of a single football club, Bayern Munich, which is also the club of the banter target. As such, the players who play in the league are often classified as farmers, which is synonymous to sub-standard or less quality players. As it can be observed from the plate, there is a symbolic representation of the Reactor (Robert Lewandowski). This is particularly evident in the deployment of the hoe usually associated with farmers. The symbolic import of the plate is to describe the Reactor (Robert Lewandowski), a professional football player, as a farmer. This description projects him as being professionally unsuitable or inferior in relation to the league where he plays. The deployment of the hoe can be described as semiotic metonymy which is employed to project the player a farmer, rather than a professional football player.

Gazing, as it can be observed from the plate, is also deployed. There is a "Demand gaze" in the plate where the Reactor or the represented participant has his gaze directly fixed on the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), suggesting that he is demanding for an attachment with the viewer. The gaze is however, non-transactional as it is directed to no Phenomenon. By inference, this indicates that, based on the context of the plate, the player is completely detached in reference to being a player who plays in a league (Bundesliga) that is not competitive or does not have huge following. In addition, the label "Most Robotic farmer of all time" is metaphorically and sarcastically used to classify the banter target as inflexible and non-adaptive player who only plays in a non-competitive league.



Plate 4.86: Inappropriate dressing

Source: @sakasxn

Date: 28/07/2022

The plate foregrounds how a football fan describes Lionel Messi a delivery bike rider rather than a football player after his move to Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) Football Club. The representation in the plate foregrounds a transactional reactional process featuring a Reactor (Lionel Messi) portrayed as having a reaction with the Phenomenon (the motorcycle and the Uber Eats box). Based on the context of the plate, the Reactor (Lionel Messi), a professional football player, just moves from La Liga (the Spanish league) acclaimed to be a top league by Union of European Football Association (UEFA) to French League (Ligue1), generally believed among football fans to be a lower and non-competitive league. As such, the Reactor (Lionel Messi), by moving to a league believed to be less competitive, is portrayed as an Uber motorcycle rider who is involved in food delivery service rather than being a professional football player. This is foregrounded in the symbolic representation of the Phenomenon (the motorcycle and the Uber Eats box) with which the Reactor is having a reaction and the mode of dressing of the Reactor.

To put into context, Uber Eats is a food delivery platform where individuals can order for their favourite food. As it can be observed in the plate, the motorcycle and the Uber Eats box are symbolically instructive as they are deployed to portray the Reactor (Lionel Messi), a professional football player, as a food delivery service motorcycle rider. The reractional and symbolic representations of the Reactor (Lionel Messi), therefore, portray him as professionally unsuitable. From humour perspective, the anomaly in portraying a professional football player as a Uber Eats rider can instigate laughter and amusement even though it is designed to ridicule and mock the player.

Vinicius in the Clasico 🔥 🔥 🔥



Plate 4.87: Inappropriate dressing

Source: @brfootball

Date: 28/07/2022

In the plate, a Barcelona fan ridicules Vinicius, a Real Madrid Football Club's player for his poor performance in a Clasico match. The plate instantiates a transactional reactional representation where the Reacter (Vinicius Jr.), a top football player, is portrayed having a reaction with a Phenomenon (the phone being held and gazed at by the Reacter). As it can be observed from the plate, the Reacter is symbolically projected with a mode of dressing that is completely unrelated to what a professional football player usually wears during competitive football matches. The mode of dressing and the unkempt appearance of the Reacter (Vinicius Jr.) project him as unprofessional or a mere pedestrian who has nothing to do with being a professional football player. Another symbolic representation with which the Reacter is portrayed is the phone object being held by him.

As it can be observed in the plate, the symbolic representation of the phone object presents the Reacter as playing with his phone or focusing all his attention on the phone during an important and highly competitive match (known as El Elclasico) between his club (Real Madrid) and Barcelona football club. By inference, the player is being portrayed as unfocused, unbothered or professionally dormant in relation to his poor performance in the match. The circumstantial accompaniment of the bicycle, as portrayed in the plate, is also significant. It is deployed to project the Reacter (the player) as unserious, playful or having his attention away from the match. Humorously, the absurdity and anomaly in portraying a professional football player as focusing on or playing with his phone has the potential to propel laughter and amusement even though it is designed to mock or ridicule the player for having no positive contribution in the game.

4.2.4 Gazing as a banter strategy

Filani (2016) asserts that the analysis of gaze is concerned with organization, direction and intensity of looking. Gaze is deployed in the data as a banter strategy to ridicule and mock the banter target. It is also deployed for creating humour. Some of the instances found in the data are discussed below.

I swear these pics worth more than nudes 🤔 twitter.com/Kaylaatkins_/s...



Plate 4.88: Gazing as a banter strategy

Source: @niharranjan49

Date: 27/07/2022

Here, a “banterer” mocks Lionel Messi after his club losses to Liverpool, Bayern Munich and PSG football clubs. The plate foregrounds three different non-transactional reactional processes featuring the Reactor (Lionel Messi) portrayed with different gestural reactions after his club’s (Barcelona football club) defeats in different Champions league matches. As evident in the plate, the Reactor, in the first frame, at the left side of the plate, is projected as having his gaze being set completely away from the viewer and having his back view towards the viewer. This representation of the Reactor’s gaze is intended to ridicule him as not having courage, being timid, feeling ashamed or being afraid to show his face after his club’s defeat. In the second and third frames, at the right side of the plate, the Reactor’s gaze is upwardly depicted, directed to no Phenomenon or not directly fixed on the viewer. This gazing representation portrays the Reactor (Lionel Messi) as being completely emotionally detached or lonely after his club’s defeat. The representation is also an “offer gaze” that presents the Reactor as object of ridicule (Kress and van Leuwen, 2006). In addition, the label “I swear these pics worth more than nudes” is sarcastically deployed by the “banterer” to ridicule the player by describing his emotional ordeal as a source of utmost satisfaction which surpasses the one derived from seeing, probably, a woman’s nakedness. Humorously, the use of sarcasm that reveals the absurdity of putting more value in a person’s emotional trauma than having access to probably a woman’s nakedness has the tendency to propel laughter or amusement.

How it started
ended

How it



Pos	Team	P	W	GD	Pts
1	Man Utd	4	3	8	9
2	PSG	4	2	1	6
3	RB Leipzig	4	2	-3	6
4	Basaksehir	4	1	-6	3



Plate 4.89: Gazing as a banter strategy

Source: @Power_tuffgirl

Date: 26/07/2022

The plate is based on how Manchester United football club got knocked to Europa league (a lower league) after being in the top position of their Champions' league group stage. The gaze of the represented participant is deployed through a transactional reactional process. The Reacter is the represented participant whose gaze is shown in the plate while the Phenomenon is the represented (only his name, JANZEBE, projected) presented as consoling the Reacter by hugging him. As evident in the plate, the gaze of the Reacter (Bruno Fernandez) is visually portrayed in a manner designed to ridicule and mock him. To achieve this, the Reacter's gaze is downwardly portrayed in a manner that projects him as being depressed or dejected with possible traces of tears from his eyes. This is further visually reinforced with the image and the name of the Phenomenon, in this case, a circumstantial accompaniment (Kress and van Leuwen, 2006) being pictured consoling and hugging him.

Through gazing representation and transactional reactional process, the "banterer" portrays the banter target (the Reacter) as being emotionally down. This is done to ridicule him for his club's failure to make it to the next round in the Champions league competition. Another instructive gaze representation of the Reacter is the "Offer" gaze. In the plate, the Reacter, through his gaze projection, is presented as object of ridicule in the sense that his eyes are not directly fixed on the viewer. The plate, thus, presents him as someone who is emotionally detached and in need to be pitied. This is an indirect way of mocking him for his club's ordeal.

Mendy's face when when Saka scored that screamer 😭



Plate 4.90: Gazing as a banter strategy

Source: @BarcaWorldwide

Date: 25/07/2022

In the plate, Benjamin Mendy (a Chelsea football club's Goal keeper) is being mocked after conceding a goal against Arsenal Football Club's player (Bukayo Saka). The plate exemplifies a transactional reactional process featuring the Reactor (Benjamin Mendy, a Goal keeper) being portrayed with a reaction towards the Phenomenon (the ball being shown at the top corner of the goal-post). As it can be observed from the plate, the Reactor's gaze is depicted as being fixed on the Phenomenon (the ball) showing his reaction as the ball enters the net (conceding a goal). The gestural reaction of the Reactor portrays him as being emotionally troubled as evident in his facial expression when the goal is scored against him. In football, goal keepers are usually emotionally down when they concede goals and this often reflected in their facial expression. As it can be seen in the plate, the "banterer" thus, foregrounds the gestural gaze of the goal keeper (the Reactor) to ridicule him for conceding a goal resulting into his club's defeat. The mocking of the goal keeper is also buttressed in the label "Mendy's face when Saka scored that screamer". The label is sarcastically deployed as a form of ridicule. The projected gaze can also be described as an "Offer" which portrays the Reactor (the Goal keeper) as an object of mockery. As it is shown in the plate, the gaze is not directly set directly towards the viewer. This shows he is detached from the viewer and he is therefore, emotionally lonely or broken in relation to the goal he concedes that leads to his club's defeat.



Plate 4.91: Gazing as a banter strategy

Source: @ReshadRahman_

Date: 23/08/2022

4.2.5 Symbolisation as a banter strategy

According to Chandler (1998), a symbol is a mode in which the signifier is used to represent the signified. Peirce (1958) sees symbol as “a sign that refers to what an object denotes by virtue of a law and mainly based on its association of general ideas which helps in interpreting the symbol as referring to that object. In this study, symbolisation as a strategy is based on meaning- making through conceptual classification and symbolic representation where symbols are deployed to portray certain ideas. Here, symbolisation is deployed to foreground trophylessness, truncation of the banter target’s goal, defeat and suppression, and undue financial advantage. They are exemplified in the plates below.

4.2.5.1 Symbolising trophylessness

Here, the banter is focused on mocking or ridiculing the banter targets for not winning trophies or having no achievement in relation to football.



Plate 4.92: Symbolising trophylessness

Source: @omolabi_remi

Date: 23/07/2022

The plate has its background in FC Barcelona Football Club's Copa Dey Rey final loss to Athletic Bilbao Football club where Lionel Messi, the captain of the club is shown a red card. It instantiates two transactional action processes and one transactional reactional process, which are intertwined as they provide interrelated meanings. In the transactional action processes, the first Actor is the represented participant (the referee) showing the red card. The Goal is the represented participant wearing a red and blue jersey (Lionel Messi). The red card is directed at him. Here, the red card is the vector. It is conceptually classified and symbolically significant. It signifies the idea that the Goal (Lionel Messi) is outrightly banned or forbidden from winning the trophy, which is projected by the Reacter (the player lifting a trophy up). The second Actor is the represented participant (an Athletic Bilbao player) blowing a trumpet and directing it at the Goal (Lionel Messi). The vector here is the trumpet. It is a symbol of celebration. It also symbolizes publicity. The trumpet vector, as the context of the plate suggests, is thus deployed to depict the second Actor's celebration of his club's victory while attempting to also use it to ridicule the Goal for failing to win the trophy or for being sent off. In all, the two transactional action processes are geared towards mocking Lionel Messi, and by extension his club (Barcelona) for not winning the coveted trophy.

In the transactional reactional process, the Reacter (an Athletic Bilbao raising the trophy) is portrayed reacting to his club winning the trophy, after defeating Barcelona football club. The represented participant directly facing the Reacter raising the trophy is the Phenomenon. As evident in the plate, the manner in which the Reacter raises the trophy is instructive. It shows that the trophy celebration by the Reacter is targeted at the Phenomenon (Lionel Messi) whose club is defeated. In all, both action and reactional processes are designed to mock Lionel Messi, and by extension, his club (Barcelona). Humorously, the uncharacteristic and absurd action of the Actor (a professional football player) blowing trumpet to mock a fellow professional can generate amusement and laughter.



Plate 4.93: Symbolising trophylessness

Source: @theazulgrana10

Date: 23/07/2022

Here, a rival fan mocks Manchester United Football Club for being trophyless. The plate adopts symbolization as a strategy for the purpose of ridiculing the banter target for being trophyless. The represented participant in the plate tagged with the logo of Manchester United Football club is portrayed as being tested with the symbol of thermometer, a medical instrument usually used to test temperature. The plate is an instance of transactional action process. The represented participant being tested (projected as a Manchester United Football Club's fan) is the Goal while the human hand holding a thermometer is the Actor. The vector is the thermometer. The vector is symbolically deployed in the plate to portray the Goal as being emotionally and mentally depressed in relation to his club's defeat and as such, needs to be subjected to testing, probably, as a result of likely high temperature that might have been caused by his emotional disturbance. The vector is also used to portray the Goal, in this case, a Manchester United football club fan (represented by the represented participant being tested) as being trophyless. This is conveyed through the testing result shown through the vector which shows "4 years 0 trophy". The test result thus, portrays the state of the club or the mental state of the fan of the club depicted in the plate as trophylessness. Humorously, the incongruous or preposterous portrayal of thermometer meant to test temperature level but instead deployed to test the state of a football club in terms of trophies won can instigate amusement or laughter.

4.2.5.2 Symbolising Defeats

The deployment of symbols here is aimed at ridiculing the banter targets for being defeated or beaten in football matches.



Plate 4.94: Symbolising defeats

Source: @DeepFCB

Date: 22/08/2022

In the plate, a Barcelona Football Club's fan mocks Real Madrid Football Club after his club defeats Real Madrid football club. The plate foregrounds a transactional action process with symbolic representations of the Actor and the Goal. As it can be seen in the plate, the Actor (Barcelona football club) is visually represented with a human hand with the club's logo attached while the Goal (Real Madrid football club) represented by the head of a dog with the club's logo attached to it. In the plate, the Actor and the Goal are asymmetrically represented. While the Actor, through the visual representation of the human hand is projected as the superordinate with a superior posture to tame or suppress the Goal (Real Madrid football club), the Goal is depicted as the subordinate being tamed or suppressed. Symbolically, as represented in the plate, the Actor (represented by the human hand) signifies the tamer or the suppressor while the Goal (represented by a dog's head) is foregrounded as the tamed or the suppressed in relation to the football match between Barcelona and Real Madrid football clubs where the former (the Actor) defeats the latter (the Goal). In the context of humour, the absurdly incongruous visual representation of Real Madrid football club, which is represented by human beings as a dog's head being tamed or stopped from barking, even though insulting and offensive, can instigate amusement and humour through the anomaly of representing a human entity with a dog's head.

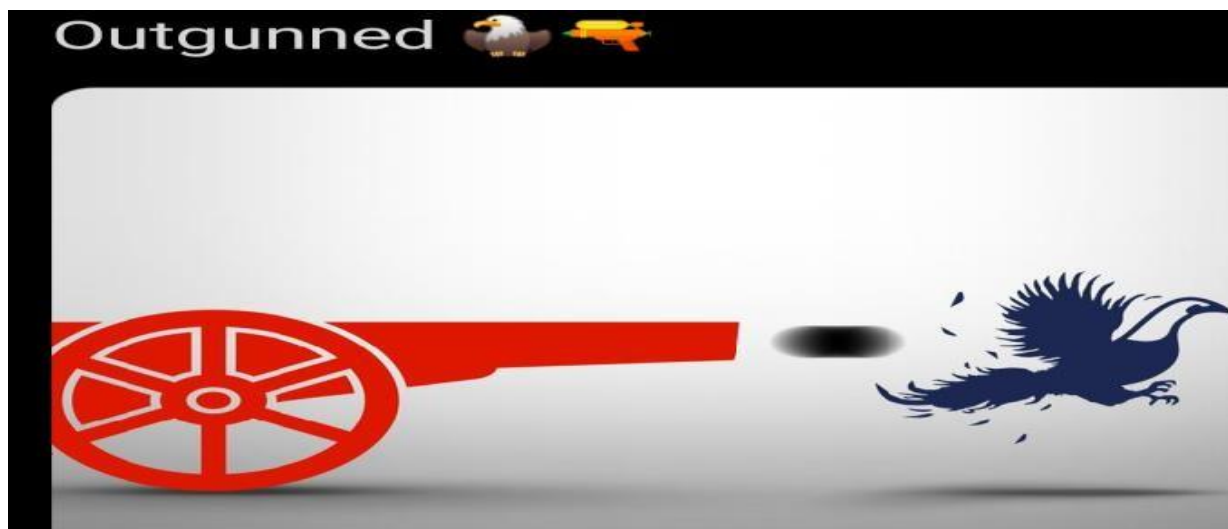


Plate 4.95: Symbolising defeats

Source: @BarcaWorldwide

Date: 24/07/2022

The plate stems from an English Premier league (EPL) match between Arsenal and Tottenham football clubs where the latter was defeated by the former. The plate is a transactional action process featuring Arsenal football club represented symbolically with the club's logo (the symbol of a gun). The Goal is Tottenham football club depicted with the club's logo while the vector is a gun bullet, emanating from the gun, interpreted as Arsenal football club. The plate foregrounds the deployment of the vector to portray the Goal as being gunned down in reference to their match defeat by the Actor. The portrayal of the Goal, depicted with the club's logo in the plate as being hit by the use of the bullet vector also signifies the defeat of the Goal. This is equally buttressed in the portrayal of some parts of the feathers of the bird, representing the logo of the Goal, Tottenham football club, as being cut away. The conceptual and symbolic representations through transactional action process, therefore, indicate that Tottenham football club (the Goal) is defeated by Arsenal football club (the Actor).

4.2.5.3 Truncating banter target's goal

This relates to the use of symbol as spoiler or destructive tool for the pursuit or target of the bantered. Here, symbols are deployed either through action or reactional process to signify the idea that the banter target's goal is truncated.

Manchester United stopped just as they were about to go level on points with Manchester City ▼



Plate 4.96: Truncating the banter target's goal

Source: @wizznaldo

Date: 23/08/2023

The plate originates from a Premier league match between Manchester United and Everton football club where the latter defeated the former resulting in the former losing its grip on the league's title race with Manchester City football club. The plate is a transactional action process involving the Actor (an Everton football club's player, wearing the jersey of Everton football club) and the Goal (a Manchester United football club's player, climbing a ladder). The transactional action process is also intertwined with a transactional reactional process where the Reactor (the Goal in the action process) is portrayed having a transactional reaction, climbing the ladder towards the Phenomenon. As it can be observed in the plate, the Phenomenon is represented by Manchester City football club manager, sitting on the chair with the logo of Premier league. In the transactional action process, the cutlass being held by the Actor is the vector. Given the representations projected in the transactional action process, the Actor is portrayed as a truncator, using the cutlass vector to cut off the ladder being climbed by the Goal (a player representing Manchester United football club).

The import of this, based on the context of the plate, is to foreground the fact that Manchester United football club (the Goal) is abruptly truncated or stopped from reaching her target or goal of reaching the top. Here, the top (where the Phenomenon in the transactional reactional process is) refers to winning the English Premier league trophy, as evident in the deployment of the Premier league logo on a chair being sat upon by the manager of Manchester City football club. Manchester City Football Club (the Phenomenon in the transactional reactional process) is projected as being on the top of the league where the Goal is striving to reach before being truncated by the Actor. In all, the representations portrayed in both transactional action and reactional processes show that Manchester United football club is defeated by Everton football club (the Actor), which leads to their hope of winning the Premier league trophy (their target) being dashed while Manchester City football club is projected as solely topping the league, with no one to challenge them.

4.2.5.4 Symbolising Professional deficiency

This involves ridiculing and mocking the banter target as being professionally deficient as a result of poor performance. Here, symbols and concepts are deployed by the "banterer"s in the presentation of the banter target's professional deficiency.

The utd defence this afternoon!



Plate 4.97: Symbolising professional deficiency

Source: @Arsenal.

Date: 09/11/2022

Here, a rival fan ridicules Manchester United Football Club's for conceding many goals against Manchester City Football Club. In the plate, the representation foregrounds conceptual classification. As it is presented in the plate, there is a symbolic representation of a broken building, probably a warehouse where eggs are being kept. In the plate, the symbolic representation of the broken building is deployed to portray the defence unit of Manchester United football club. In football, the defence is one of the three units in a football team, other two units being, midfield and attack. The defence is usually saddled with the responsibility of safeguarding the goal in order to prevent the attackers of the opposing team from scoring goals or prevent the team concerned from conceding goals. Based on the context of the plate, the broken building symbolically presents the defence of Manchester United football club as a leaking and broken defence that cannot safeguard the team from conceding goals. As it can be observed in the plate, the scattered creates of eggs indicate the club's deficiency in defence. The label "The utd defence this afternoon" is used to foreground how weak and poor the defence is in the club's match against Manchester City football club in relation to how the club conceded six goals against the opponent.

4.2.5.5 Symbolising undue financial advantage

In football, there is a rule known as financial fair play rule which ensures that football clubs do not incur expenses above their personal income. This is to guard against a club having undue financial advantage over other clubs. Clubs that break this rule are liable to being sanctioned. As such, football fans usually mock clubs which are seen spending too much money in transfer market.



Plate 4.98: Symbolising undue financial advantage

Source: @Joshua_Ubeku

Date: 06/12/2022

The plate foregrounds how a football fan mocks Manchester City Football Club for her excessive spending to buy players. It instantiates a conceptual classification, through a symbolic representation. It foregrounds the symbolic representation of coins. The presentation of the coins is symbolically significant. It is deployed to portray monetary or financial advantage. The coins being visually presented in the plate symbolise access to funds. In football, like in many fields of life, money is a necessary tool to achieve success. As such, each football club usually has a way of generating revenue or income to meet up with the increasing demands of modern day football management such as purchase of players, payment of salaries and other expenses. It is generally believed in football that football clubs with good financial standing or higher financial advantage are often positioned to buy quality or high profile players, and as such, clubs with higher financial advantage often end up being successful in terms of winning trophies. The deployment of the coins is therefore symbolically designed to conceptually classify Manchester City football club as a club with financial advantage over others. This, as suggested in the label “Without this, your club is nothing”, is the reason for the club’s success or achievement. The label as well as the symbolic representation of the coins suggests that the club is nothing without having financial advantage. Thus, the “banterer” here, in an attempt to mock the club or belittle their success, attributes the club’s ability to win trophies to the fact that they have access to more money than other clubs.

4.2.6 Sarcasm as a banter strategy

This banter strategy relates to the use of sarcasm to ridicule and mock the banter targets by revealing the absurdity of their actions or decisions.

4.2.6.1 Poor decision making

This involves the use of sarcasm to ridicule certain absurd decisions or actions of the banter targets. Banter is thus employed to portray the decision or action as being poorly made or poorly taken.

On the day Barcelona's title hopes ended with a 2-1 home loss to Celta, Luis Suarez scored his 20th goal of the season to keep Atletico top of La Liga.

Reminder: Barcelona let Luis Suarez leave for \$7M last summer.

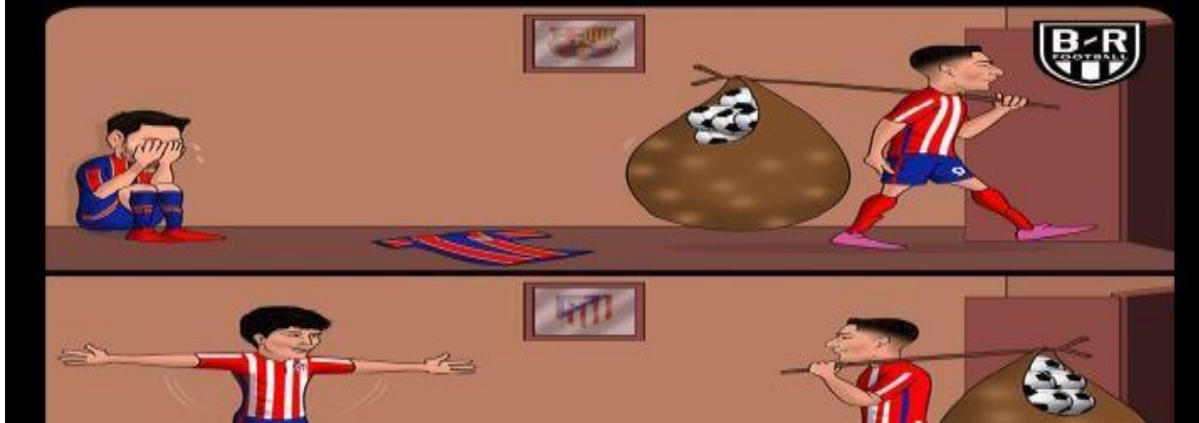


Plate 4.99: Poor decision making

Source: @fumzeeygold

Date: 12/09/2022

The background of the plate is based on how FC Barcelona Football Club willingly and disrespectfully told Luis Suarez, their player at the time to leave the club and chose to sell him for a peanut to a rival football club. Consequently, the same player they disrespectfully sold helped their rival to win the league at their own expense. The plate is an instance of sarcasm designed to ridicule the banter target, Barcelona football club, for the absurdity of letting a player go cheaply while the same is instrumental to how they lose the league title to their rival whom they carelessly sold the player to. Sarcasm is used to foreground the absurdity of the costly decision. The uncharacteristic nature of the scenario portrayed in the plate makes it potentially amusing and humorous as it unexpected and absurd for a football club to intentionally let one of their important players go for a small amount in the world of football while the same player indirectly stopped them from winning the league title. As portrayed in the plate through visual representations, there is a transactional reactional process to project the absurdity of the target club selling a player that should never have been sold or that should not have been sold cheaply.

In the plate, two transactional reactional processes are foregrounded. In the first reactional process captured in the first frame, the Reactor (Lionel Messi, a team mate of the player being sold) is portrayed having an emotional reaction of pains, as reflected in his gestural reaction (he is pictured covering his face with his two hands). The gestural reaction suggests an emotional feeling of sadness in relation to how his club sold his team mate. The team mate sold is Luis Suarez. He is the Phenomenon (the represented participant carrying a football object turning his back on the Reactor). In the second frame, another transactional reactional process is presented. Here, another Reactor (an Atletico Madrid football club player, Joa Felix) is featured. The Reactor in this frame is pictured welcoming the Phenomenon (Luis Suarez (the represented participant carrying a football object, wearing the same jersey with the Reactor here)). By inference, while the Reactor in the first frame is dejected and sad for how his team mate is sold, the Reactor in the second frame is happy (as shown in his gestural reaction) to have the player sold by the club of the first Reactor. In the plate, there is a sharp contrast between the reactional process in the first frame and the one in the second frame. This is presented to foreground the sad reality and absurdity of a club selling a quality player so cheaply, in one hand, and on the other hand, the joyous

mood of another club getting a quality player who eventually helps them to win the league trophy at the expense of the selling club.

Replying to @premierleague
Why did I let Mane go....



Plate 4.100: Poor decision making

Source: @fumzeeygold

Date: 12/09/2022

4.2.6.2 Unmerited recognition and award

This relates to making a decision or taking an action based on factors that have nothing to do with merit or qualified abilities. In football context, it involves recognising or giving an award to a player or a football manager without merit or corresponding ability or achievement.

Gerrard getting into hall of fame ahead of Scholes for this famous slip.



Plate 4.101: Unmerited recognition and award

Source: @Jiji_Byte

Date: 01/12/2022

The context of the plate is based on how a football fan expresses his annoyance against the selection of the target of the banter into the Premier league hall of fame ahead of Paul Scholes, a Manchester United Football Club legend who won not less than four English Premier League (EPL) titles. The image in the plate portrays how the bantered player (Steven Gerard) slips in a crucial match, leading to his club loss and ending the banter target's hope of winning a Premier league title in his career. Sarcasm is employed to ridicule the absurdity and preposterousness of recognising or naming a player, who is generally believed to be responsible for his club's failure to win the Premier league trophy, ahead of another player, Paul Scholes, who immensely contributed to his own club winning at least four of the same English Premier League (EPL) titles. In other words, it is deployed to foreground the absurdity of recognising a player who didn't win a single Premier league ahead of a player who won four of the same title.

The "banterer" ridicules and mocks the banter target for his unjustifiable inclusion and recognition. As it can be seen in the plate, this is further reinforced through a transactional reactional process where the Reacter (Steven Gerard, the represented participant in a red shirt) is pictured slipping as he attempts to run after the Phenomenon (the ball and the player in a blue jersey). Based on the context of the plate, Steven Gerard (the Reacter) loses the ball and the player in a blue jersey as a result of his slip. The transactional reactional process is thus deployed to reveal the absurdity of the banter target (the Reacter, Steven Gerard) being given recognition or award even after such woeful performance.

4.2.6.3 Disgrace-avoiding fouls

In football, some fouls are committed by players in an attempt to avoid being ridiculed. They are fouls usually committed with the intention of avoiding being disgraced or dribbled by a fellow player and such a foul often attracts only a yellow card as against a red card, as it is not malicious. Football fans are often interested in watching an opposing player getting dribbled or disgraced. As such, when an opposing player tries to avoid being disgracefully dribbled through certain means, he is subjected to ridicule. Instances of this are presented in the plates below.

You could've just asked for his shirt after the game, Leo.



Plate 4.102: Disgrace-avoiding fouls

Source: @goal

Date: 31/07/2022

In the plate, a football fan mocks Lionel Messi for holding the jersey of Luka Modric in a Champions league match. The plate is a transactional action process where the Actor (Lionel Messi, the player in a blue jersey holding another player's jersey) is foregrounded with a hand vector involving in a transactional action towards the Goal (Luka Modric). As evident in the plate, the Actor is portrayed, through the visual representation of his hand vector trying to stop the movement of the Goal or trying to prevent the Goal from bypassing him after being dribbled. By inference, the plate ridicules Lionel Messi (the Actor) by projecting his absurdity of holding the jersey of another player. While the player (the Actor, Lionel Messi) tries to avoid being disgraced, a way of saving his face after being successfully dribbled, as portrayed in the transactional action process, the "banterer" finds the action absurd and uses it to ridicule him.

This is equally buttressed in the label "You could've just asked for his shirt after the match, Leo." The label is sarcastically deployed as a way to ridicule the player holding another player's jersey. As the label reveals, it is ironical that a player holding another player's jersey is portrayed as the player coveting or enviously cherishing the opponent's jersey. This ironical import is designed to mock the player involved (the Actor). There is also an asymmetric classification of the Actor and the Goal. As portrayed in the plate, the Actor (Lionel Messi) is depicted as the subordinate or inferior trying to catch up with the Goal (Luka Moric) after being dribbled. The Actor is portrayed as the dribbled while the Goal is foregrounded as the dribbler. The dribbled (the Actor) is thus projected as inferior to the dribbler (the Goal).

Replying to @Gerrard44
Security of the team



Plate 4.103: Disgrace-avoiding fouls

Source: @FabrizioRomano

Date: 14/11/2022

Here, a rival fan ridicules Koulibaly a Chelsea Football Club's player for grabbing another player's jersey. The plate is also a transactional action process. It presents the Actor pulling the jersey of the Goal through the hand vector. As it can be observed in the plate, the Actor (Kalidou Koulibaly, a Chelsea football club's defender in a blue jersey) is pictured having a transactional action (pulling of the jersey towards the Goal (the player in a white jersey, a Leeds United football club's player). The Actor, having being dribbled by the Goal, is portrayed with his hand vector dragging and holding the jersey of the Goal in an attempt to stop the Goal from getting away. This transactional action is portrayed in the plate as abnormal or ridiculous. This is reflected in the label "Security of the team" which can be understood to mean a sarcastic and indirect way of questioning the defensive ability (Security) of the defender (the Actor) as well as a way of mocking the defender for pulling another player's jersey after being dribbled. The uncharacteristic transactional action of jersey pulling by the defender (the Actor) is therefore, foregrounded by the "banterer" to subject him to ridicule. The defender, as evident in the label "Security of the team", is also indirectly projected as a poor defender who has to pull another player jersey purposely to save himself from disgrace caused by his defensive deficiency.

4.2.7 Name-calling or abuse as a banter strategy

Banter, in many instances, can be aggressive in nature. This can manifest in form of name-calling or abuse. Name-calling or abuse can be regarded as a form of impoliteness or offensive utterances or expressions that threatens the face of the banter target. Instances of name-calling or abuse are presented in the plates below.



Plate 4.104: Name-calling and abuse

Source: @segamavv

Date: 26/10/2022

In the plate, a football fan abuses Cristiano Ronaldo for failing to win Champions league with Juventus Football Club. The plate is an instance of name-calling and a direct abuse towards the banter target. This takes different forms, as it can be seen in the plate, such as coinages, name distortion and negative substitution of names. In the label “Juventus went from winning 8 straight scudetto to fighting Europa league. All thanks to Portuguese Fraudinho Penaldo”. The lexical item “Fraudinho” is a form of coinages realized through a number of morphological processes. These range from suffixation which merges “dinho” (introduced for the purpose of creating similar phonological pattern with the name of a footballer known as Ronaldinho” with the free morpheme “Fraud”. The lexical item “Fraud” is realized through prefixation and deletion. Here, the name “Ronaldo”, which is the name of the banter target, is deleted or removed and replaced with a negative word “Fraud”. In relation to the context of the plate, the football fan describes the banter target a fraud for failing to win Champions league trophy for his club (Juventus football club) through the use of prefixation to merge “Fraud” with “dinho” to name the banter target “Fraudinho” instead of his real name Cristiano Ronaldo.

The lexical item “Fraud” is also visible in the name on the jersey which the banter target (Ronaldo) is holding. Ideally, the name “Ronaldo” is inked on the jersey, however, this is deliberately substituted with “Fraud”, as the “banterer” intends to project the player as a fraud. Another lexical construct in the label is “Penaldo”. This lexical item is also realized through prefixation or substitution as a morphological process. The prefix “Pe” is introduced and used to replace the first syllable in the name of the banter target “Ronaldo”. As such, the first syllable in the original name of the banter target is substituted with “Pe”. This is a form of distortion. Contextually, the introduction of a new syllable which replaces the original first syllable in the banter target’s name is designed to describe him as a player who delights in scoring goals through penalty kicks rather than scoring ‘genuine’ goals during football matches. This can be seen in the first and second syllables in the name “Penaldo” are geared towards “Penalty”. The “banterer” relies on shared situation knowledge of the target player (Ronaldo) being regarded as a mere penalty kick taker by many football fans, especially rival fans.

I was studying in Turin and my professor told me that I couldn't use a pencil, I had to use a pen. I checked my bag, and all my pens were gone. after looking at the security footage, I saw that CRISTIANO PENALDO had taken all my pens! I was furious. Shame on you Penaldo

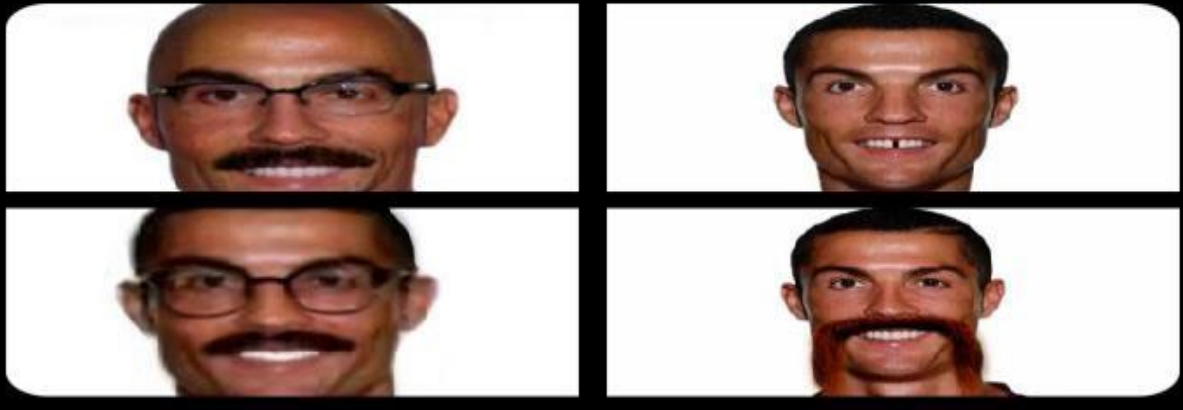


Plate 4.105: Name-calling and abuse

Source: @Callmemendoza

Date: 02/08/2022

In the plate, a football fan abuses Cristiano Ronaldo for failing to win Champions league with Juventus football club. The plate here features a form of fictional story telling. It is an instance of anecdotes. In the plate, the “banterer” employs the use of anecdotes, in form of a hilarious narrative, to portray the banter target a thief. As evident in the plate, the “banterer” asserts that the banter target (Cristiano Ronaldo steals his “pens”. Although the “pens” as deployed in the plate is in relation to penalty kicks usually awarded to a football club when an opposing player commits a foul inside the 18-yard box, there is literal abuse or name-calling. By ascribing stealing to the banter target, the positive self-image or his face has been threatened by the “banterer”. Here, the “banterer” makes recourse to the shared situation knowledge of the banter target’s assumed image of obsession of trying to have penalty kicks awarded in his favour even when there is no legitimate reason to do so. The “pens” as used in this context is an acronym for penalties in relation to football matches. Another lexical construct that features name-calling or abuse in the plate is the use of the word “shame” directed to the banter target (Cristiano Ronaldo). This can be seen in the label “Shame on you Cristiano Penaldo” employed by the banterer. It is a direct attack on the bantered player’s face and personality. In addition, name-calling is deployed through distortion of one of the names of the banter target. The first syllable of “Ronaldo” is distorted by the use of “Pe” in place of “Ro”. This distortion is an attack on the affected player image and identity.

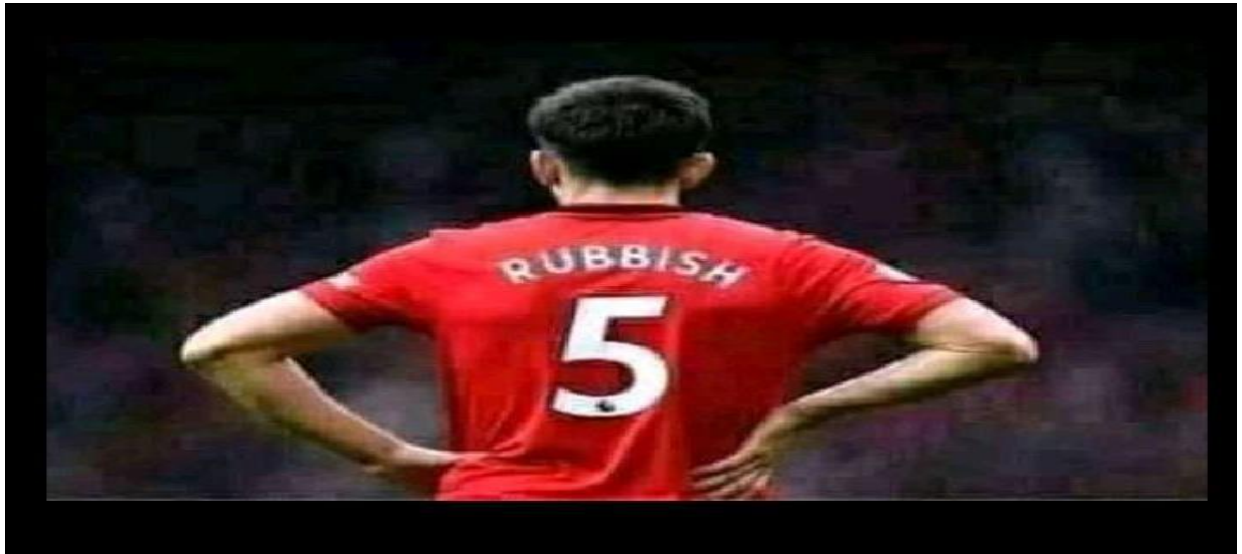


Plate 4.106: Name-calling and abuse

Source: @Callmemendoza

Date: 04/08/2022

4.2.8 Stereotyping as a banter strategy

This has to do with creating a widely held image or belief system to profile or discriminate against the banter target or using a particular way of life or systemic belief associated with the banter targets as a tool for mockery.

4.2.8.1 Dressing style stereotyping

This relates to using a mode of dressing generally associated with a group of people or a particular race, in this case, the banter targets, to discriminatorily ridicule them.

OIL CLASSICO.

#UEFAChampionsLeague2021



Plate 4.107: Dressing style stereo typing

Source: @FIFAWorldCup

Date: 22/11/2022

In the plate, conceptual classification that features symbolic representation of the football managers and some players of two football clubs, Manchester City and PSG Football Clubs, whose owners have been accused of funding or financing the two football clubs through external funding that runs contrary to financial fair play. In football, football clubs are obligated to run their affairs only within their internally generated finances, any attempt to do otherwise means flouting the financial fair play rule, which is sanctionable. Based on the context of the plate, the two football clubs are generally believed to be benefiting from external financing from their Qatari owners, who are associated with oil related finances. The external financing is also believed to have been giving undue advantage to the two football clubs in terms of the number of trophies won. As such, the “banterer” stereotypically portrays the two clubs through conceptual and symbolic representations by deploying a mode of dressing associated to their owners who are of an Islamic state known for a particular mode of dressing.

As evident in the plate, the represented participants, who are the managers of the two clubs (Pochettino and Guardiola), and some players of the two clubs (Messi, Neymar and De Bruyne), are conceptually classified through symbolic representation of the mode of dressing of their clubs’ owners. Even though the represented participants (the managers and players projected in the plate) are, by their religion, Christians, they are portrayed with an Islamic related dressing mode. This is an attempt to project them with the identity of their owners. It suggests that the two football clubs are nothing without external ‘illegitimate’ financing from their owners.

The conceptual classification also, by extension, stereotypically categorises the owners of the two clubs as alien or disruptive elements who disrupt equal financial status among football clubs by giving undue financial advantage to their clubs. The label “Oil Clasico” in the Plate is coined from “El Clasico” generally known in football world as any match between Real Madrid and Barcelona football clubs. The coinage is metaphorically used to ridicule and mock the banter targets as having a questionable source of funding. The introduction of the word “Oil” as a substitute for “El” in “El-Clasico” is achieved through the process of prefixation and substitution. The use of “Oil” here indicates an illegitimate source of funding associated with the two football clubs.

4.2.8.2 Naming system stereotyping

This involves subjecting the banter targets to ridicule and mockery by portraying the naming system in a society as absurd and incongruous.



Plate 4.108: Naming system stereotyping

Source: @devonsb01

Date: 04/08/2022

In the plate, a “banterer” uses names of players who are all of English origin to mock them. The plate presented here features extension of semantic import of names of English Premier League (EPL) players who are English or British citizens. As it can be observed in the plate, the names “COOK”, “RICE”, “DRINKWATER” and “CHILWELL” are native names of certain players who are English or British. Given the fact that it is strange to have people who bear names like these in other climes other than the British setting, especially in Nigerian setting or any other African setting, the “banterer” (most likely a non-British) finds it absurd that people are bearing names which have other semantic import both in British and other settings. For instance, COOK can mean “to prepare food or a person who specializes in cooking”; RICE can be “a type of cereal food”; DRINKWATER can indicate “to take water”; CHILWELL can be interpreted as “calm down”. The polysemous nature of these names are therefore deployed to create absurdity of English naming system where native citizens are given names which have other semantic nuances in other climes.

To further reinforce the absurdity of the naming system, the “banterer” deploys a syntactic arrangement where the names, when syntactically connected can be used to form a sentence with a particular meaning. In the syntactic arrangement, a sentence such as “Cook rice, drink water and chil well” can be created. In relation to the context of the plate, this sentence is therefore employed as a way of sarcastically encouraging and consoling a football fan whose club has just been defeated. The plate is also deployed to create amusement by foregrounding the absurdity in a group of people being given names that appear to be uncharacteristic of names of human beings.

What ate your certificate? 🖐️



Plate 4.109: Naming system stereotyping

Source: @FCforGRANDPAs

Date: 05/08/2022



Plate 4.110: Naming system stereotyping

Source: @devonsb01

Date: 04/08/2022

4.3 Linguistic devices in the selected football banter

This section focuses on the linguistic devices employed in the data to create verbal banter in form of ridiculing or mocking as well as instigating amusement and humour. The linguistic devices identified in the data were allusion, coinages and distortions, hyperbole, sarcasm, pun,

4.3.1 Allusion

This involves making references to past events such as political, cultural and religious events for the purpose of ridiculing and mocking the banter targets. In allusion, a recourse is made to historically important social, political or cultural occurrences, such that, specific meanings are achieved in the discourse. The plates below present instances of allusion.

Replying to @omajawa

They already packed thier traditionally suitcase



Plate 4.111: Allusion

Source: @devonsb01

Date: 04/08/2022

In this plate, a Nigerian football fan alludes to a Nigeria-Ghana socio-economic experience in the past where Ghanaians, who massively migrated to Nigeria in search of greener pastures when their country was in economic crisis, were asked to leave Nigeria. The visual representation of the bags is significant. It symbolises what is being called “Ghana must go” representing symbol of exit of Ghanaians from Nigeria and the objects used to carry their loads when leaving Nigeria. The “banterer” also sarcastically refers to the bags as traditional suitcases, as it is evident in the use of noun phrase “traditionally suitcase” in the plate. Based on the context of the plate, by making a recourse to shared situation knowledge of past socio-economic experience of Ghanaian citizens who migrated to Nigeria, the “banterer” mocks the players of Ghana’s national football team, and by extension Ghanaian citizens who are rooting for their country’s national team, in relation to their exit from the African Nations Cup (AFNC). The exit is thus compared to the past forced exit from Nigeria.

Barcelona Women 4 - 0 Chelsea Women

Whatever Donald Trump said..



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

STOP THE COUNT!

7:42 PM · Nov 5, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Plate 4.112: Allusion

Source: @rohanbasur1702

Date: 05/11/2020

Here, a “banterer” mocks Chelsea fans after their Women football club’s humiliating loss to Barcelona Women Football Club. In the plate, the “banterer” relies on shared socio-political knowledge of 2020 American presidential election where the incumbent president and Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump alleges electoral malpractices in the election and demands that the counting of the election should be stopped or discontinued. As it can be observed in the label “Whatever Donald Trump said... STOP THE COUNT!”, a political reference is made by the “banterer” to sarcastically suggest the need for Barcelona women football club to stop scoring goals against Chelsea women football club. This is designed to portray the absurdity of the club conceding high number of goals so as to ridicule the club. In football, it is impossible to stop counting the goals being scored by a club against another club, as it is important part of a football match. However, making reference to such a prominent political situation helps to project the absurdity of a football club conceding high number of goals. It is an attempt to portray the club as being weak and poor.

WhatsApp people can't make heaven 😂😂😂'... but I like



Plate 4.113: Allusion

Source: @AyoOyalowo

Date: 26/12/2020

In the plate, a rival fan ridicules Chelsea Football Club's players. Here, the "banterer" (most likely of Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria) makes recourse to the shared cultural knowledge with other Yoruba interactants in relation to the cultural knowledge and meaning of "Sakabula" within Yoruba socio-cultural context. As it is foregrounded in the label "SAKABULA FC", Chelsea football club's players (evident in club's jerseys used in the plate) is metaphorically likened to a locally made guns usually used by Yoruba mainly for hunting. The guns known as "Sakabula" are not as potent as the western made or the highly sophisticated guns. It is generally believed to be limited in terms of potency or capacity. It also, unlike modern and sophisticated guns, has to be loaded with bullet frequently by its user to remain useful. In addition, its potency to cover a long distance is limitedly short. This largely informs the name 'Sakabula'.

Given this background, the rival football fan here indicts that Chelsea Football Club is nothing compared to the big football clubs which has capacity to win trophies. The fan suggests that the club is impotent to achieve big target or goal just like the locally made gun known as "Shakabula" is not potent enough to reach target in a far distance. The fan equally infers that the club needs to be constantly trained or equipped to avoid being disastrous, meaning that the club is prone to fail or disappoint the fans anytime. This also means that the club is unreliable or dependable when it comes to winning matches or trophies.

Arsenal pada L'ule 😄

Translate Tweet



Plate 4.114: Allusion

Source: @PedriEra

Date: 06/08/2022

The plate here foregrounds and alludes to a popular political utterance made by a leading presidential candidate in Nigeria (Bola Ahmed Tinubu). The label “Arsenal pada lule” (Arsenal finally falls or slips) is a reference to an utterance made by the leading presidential candidate and the presidential candidate of All Progressives Congress (APC) to describe the incumbent Nigerian president’s, President Muhammad Buhari’s serial defeat at the polls before he was supported by him. The utterance has thus become a popular expression to describe a person who fails or loses in an adventure. Morphologically, the word “L’ule”, which contains two morphemes, is derived from the words “Lu Ile” through deletion as a morphological process.

The newly derived word “L’ule” consequently assumes a new meaning from the meaning of the words “Lu ile” where it is formed. In this context as used by the presidential candidate (Tinubu), it means to fall or fail. This is completely different from the meaning of the words “Lu ile” which literarily means to beat or hit the ground. Given the context of the plate, where Arsenal football club is defeated or beaten, the rival football fan thus alludes to the political utterance to mock the club, describing the club as a being finally beaten after it appears they appear to be winning. The visual representation, as portrayed in the plate, also depicts the football club (represented by the fans wearing the club’s jerseys) as falling or defeated. This can be seen in the visual representation of all the fans having their knees on the ground.



Plate 4.115: Allusion

Source: @_Big_Haj

Date: 07/08/2022

Here, an Arsenal Football Club's fan mocks a new generation of players of Arsenal football club. The plate features a dichotomy between the club of old generation of players of Arsenal football club who won so much trophies, making them even regarded as the invincible, and the group of new generation of players of the club who have not won major trophies in years. The use of "Unknown Gunmen" in the second frame of the plate is a form of allusion in reference to faceless human killers in Nigerian setting generally labelled as "Unknown" because their identities are mostly unknown. Allusion is thus employed as a banter strategy to label and describe the new Arsenal footballclub's players as unknown, suggesting that they are unrecognised as a result of their poor performance and their failure to win trophies like the old set of players who are known as "Gunners" a nickname of the club. The use of "Unknown Gunmen" for the new set of Arsenal football players also mean that they cannot be identified or regarded as genuine or real Arsenal football players.

If you live by penalties, one day
you will die by those penalties



Plate 4.116: Allusion

Source: @_Big_Haj

Date: 07/08/2022

The background of the discourse is based on the Europa league final match between Manchester United Football Club and Villareal Football club where the former lost through penalties shootout. There is use of biblical allusion in the plate. The expression “If you live by penalties, one day you will die by those penalties” is an allusion to a biblical assertion in Matthew Chapter twenty six verse fifty two (Mathew 26: 52) which reads as “Those who live by sword will also die by sword”. This is deployed as an allusion to ridicule the banter target (Bruno Fernsandez, a Manchester United football club’s player, portrayed in the plate), for his obsession and desperation to always look for a way to win football matches through dubious or questionable penalty kicks, in form of diving to deceive the referee. As revealed in the plate, the “banterer” indicates that it is ironical that a player who is generally known to be obsessed with winning through penalty kicks, tragically suffers the same thing he has enjoyed against opposing teams, as his club loses a match by having a penalty kick awarded against it. The biblical reference is thus employed as warning against the banter target in relation to his obsessive action of always looking for a way to win through questionable penalty kicks.



Plate 4.117: Allusion

Source: @_Big_Haj

Date: 07/08/2022

4.3.2 Linguistic coinages and Distortions

Distortion, according to Dynel (2009), makes references to linguistic units or longer texts, significantly changing the original forms and meanings. In the banter discourse, new words are coined from the existing words or certain parts or syllables of words are distorted, thus, changing the identity of the addressee.



Plate 4.118: Coinages and distortions

Source: @_Big_Haj

Date: 07/08/2022

Here, a “bantere” distorts Ronaldo’s name for his desperation to always want to play penalty kicks. The label “Penaldo” as foregrounded the Plate is a negative distortion of the name of the banter target, Cristiano Ronaldo. The distortion, as it can be seen in the label, takes place in the first syllable of the nominal item “Ronaldo” which is the main name the banter target is famously known for and called in the world of football. The use of deletion and substitution as a morphological process is equally evident in the distortion of the name of the banter target. In the label “Ronaldo”, the first syllable “Ro” is completely deleted and substituted with the syllable “Pe”. In the context of the plate, the substituting syllable or the newly introduced syllable “Pe’ is derived from the first syllable of the nominal “penalty”, which refers to a form of foul awarded against a football team for an infringement committed inside its own 18-yard box. It is usually a direct kick where a player directly kicks the ball from a close range towards the goalkeeper. The banter target, Ronaldo, is often perceived by rival fans as being obsessed with having penalties awarded in favour of his club, given that he is usually a designated penalty kick taker for his club. As such, the “banterer”, a rival fan, with the intention of projecting the banter target as nothing but an obsessive penalty kick taker, negatively distorts his name. In football, the name a player bears foregrounds his identity. Therefore, by distorting the banter target’s name, the “banterer” suggests that the banter target should not be identified by his real name but rather be identified as obsessive penalty taker.

Pep Fraudiola without Messi..



Plate 4.119: Coinages and distortions

Source: @rohanbasur1702

Date: 06/07/2022

Here, a “banterer” distorts Pep Guardiola’s name for failing to win Champions league since he has been managing football clubs without Messi. In this plate, there is a negative distortion to the name of the banter target. As it can be seen in the nominal item “Fraudiola”, foregrounded in the label “Pep Fraudiola without Messi”, the last name of the banter target, which is “Guardiola” is distorted in the first of the three syllables. This distortion is achieved through deletion and substitution. As evident in the nominal item “Guardiola”, the first syllable “Guard” in the last name of the banter target is distortedly deleted and substituted with a negative lexical or free morpheme. The lexical morpheme “Fraud” which is used as a prefix is then merged with the second and third syllables of the real name of the banter target “iola”. These morphological processes are therefore employed to create a new word, foregrounded as the new name of the banter target. Putting into context, the newly substituting syllable “Fraud” is deployed to tag the banter target, currently a Manchester City football club’s manager, a fraud. This is in relation to his failure to win Champions League (CL) trophy for his two subsequent football clubs without Lionel Messi, after he left Barcelona football club, where he won so many trophies, including the coveted CL trophy with Lionel Messi being the protagonist. Among football fans, it is believed that the banter target would not have won the trophies he won in his previous club (Barcelona football club) without Lionel Messi. This is evidently reinforced by his failure to win CL trophy after moving to two different clubs. It is in this context that the “banterer”, through negative distortion of the banter target’s name, labels him a fraud for failing to win CL trophy without Lionel Messi in his team.

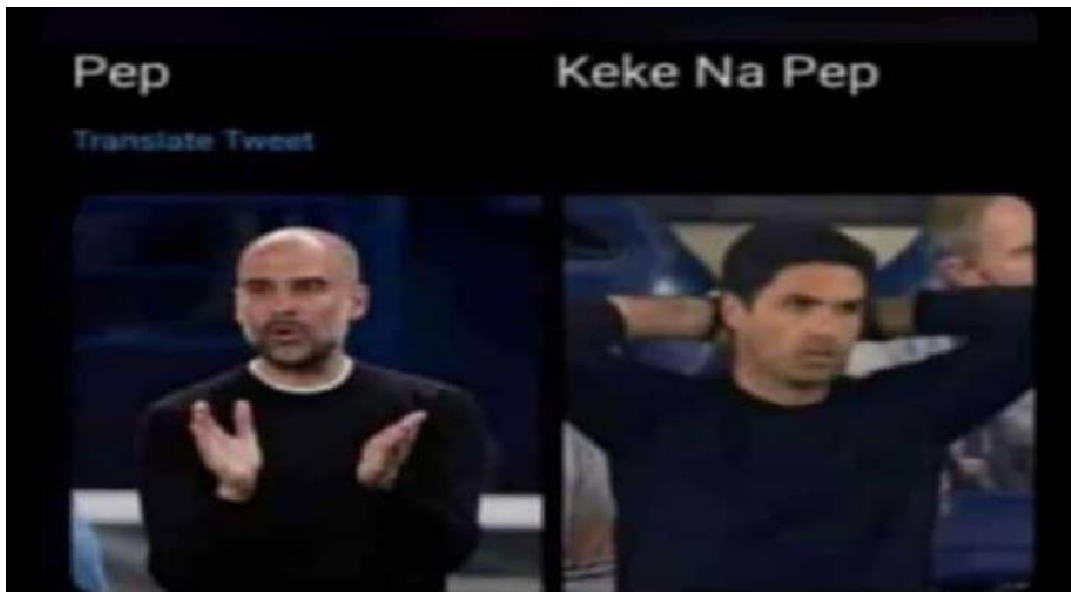


Plate 4.120: Coinages and distortions

Source: @premierleague

07/08/2022

Here, a “banterer” mocks Arteta, the Arsenal manager for failing to win matches with his club after leaving his position as assistant manager to Pep Guardiola at Manchester City. The plate is an example of coinages. The label “Keke na Pep” is coined from the name of the football manager, Pep Guardiola, whose image is presented in the first frame of the plate. Among football fans, the manager with the name “Pep Guardiola” is generally regarded as a great or world class manager due to the fact that he has won so many trophies for the football clubs he has managed while Mikel Arteta, the banter target, whose image is projected in the second frame of the plate was once the assistant manager to Pep Guardiola. However, having being appointed as the substantive manager of Arsenal football club, he has been unable to replicate the success which his former boss (Pep Guardiola) had while they were together. As evident in the labels “Pep” and “Keke Na PeP”, there is deployment of homonym, specifically, homography as a type of homonym. This can be seen in the nominal “Pep” that is repeated in the two labels used in the plate. In the first label, the nominal “Pep’ refers to the first name of Pep Guardiola, the manager who has won so many trophies while the nominal “Pep” in the second label is part of the name of a tricycle known as “Keke na Pep” in Nigeria setting. “Keke na Pep” is a form of intra-city transportation system usually used to carry passengers (especially market women) as well as goods.

While the tricycle may be used to transport passengers (up to four and sometimes five) and goods like some vehicles, it cannot be in any way be compared to a vehicle in terms of speed, strength, distance coverage, comfortability, among other things. In relation to the context of the plate, the use of homonym (homography) foregrounds the fact that, while the two managers may be related (in the sense of being in the same profession), they are at different levels. The discursive import of this is that one (Pep Guardiola) is professionally capable and superior while the other (Mikel Arteta) is professionally incapable or inferior. By extension, just like the nominal “Pep’ as the name of a football manager, and as part of the name of a tricycle are related by spelling or pronunciation, but are different in their meanings (homographic sense), the two managers are also different in terms of professional capabilities, in the sense that one has won so many trophies while the other still struggles to win football matches. Here, the “banterer” demeans, belittles and ridicules the professional competence of the banter target (Mikel Arteta).

Varcelona is back



Plate 4.121: Coinages and distortions

Source: @amitrmfc

Date: 17/03/2021

In the plate, a rival fan labels Barcelona football club as being dubiously helped by Video Assistant Referee (VAR). The label “Varcelona” as foregrounded the Plate is a negative distortion of the name of the banter target, Barcelona football club. The distortion, as it can be seen in the label, takes place in the first syllable of the nominal item “Barcelona”. The name “Barcelona” is the name of the banter target, which is generally known among football fans. The use of deletion and substitution as morphological processes is equally evident in the distortion of the name of the banter target. In the label “Barcelona”, the first syllable “Bar” is completely deleted and substituted with the syllable “VAR”. The deployment of the substituting syllable “VAR” also exemplifies prefixation where the prefix “VAR” is merged with other three syllables in the nominal “Barcelona”. In the context of the plate, the substituting syllable or the newly introduced syllable “VAR’ is deployed as the acronym of Video Assistant Referee. VAR is a technological mode of officiating football matches. It is designed to assist referees to be effective in their officiating duties. It is basically deployed to remove errors that may have significant impact on the outcomes of football matches. However, the prefixation of VAR to the name of the banter target, Barcelona, distortedly written as “VARcelona” is ironical and sarcastic, in the sense that a technological mode of officiating matches which is meant to remove officiating errors is projected by the “banterer” as being responsible for dubious decisions in favour of the banter target, Barcelona football club. Consequently, the merging of VAR through prefixation of VAR and deletion of the first syllable of the name of the banter target is a form of distortion meant to foreground Barcelona football club as being assisted by VAR to win football matches.



Plate 4.122: Coinages and distortions

Source: @dstv

Date: 24/11/2022



Plate 4.123: Coinages and distortions

Source: @premierleague

Date: 07/07/2022

4.3.3 Sarcasm

Sarcasms are usually deployed to reveal absurdity of certain actions. They are sometimes used to indicate instances of irony. In the context of banter discourse, they are employed to ridicule the banter targets by describing their actions as absurd or abnormal. Instances of sarcasms are presented in the plates below.

Don't worry, you performed better than Arsenal

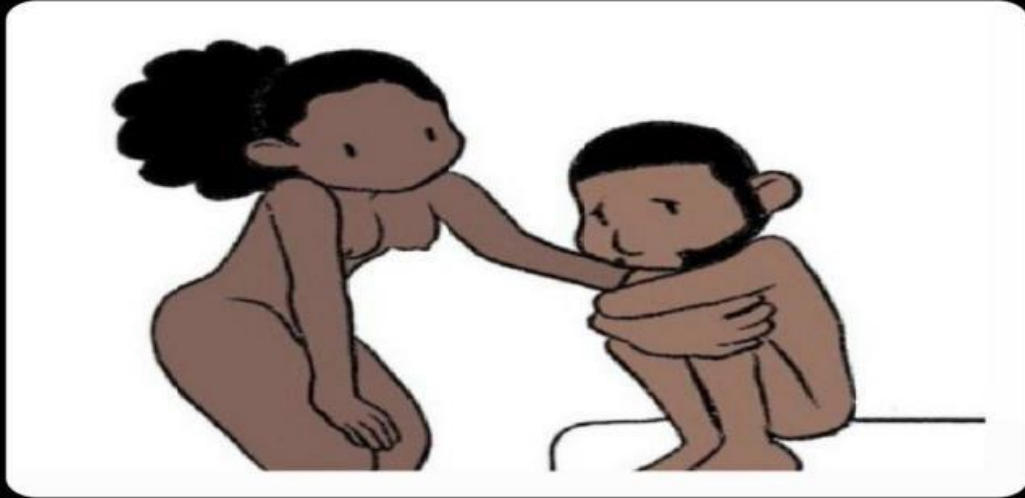


Plate 4.124: Sarcasm

Source: @itan4sam

Date: 22/12/2020

Here, a rival fan ridicules Arsenal Football Club and its fans for poor performance. In the Plate, sarcasm is employed in relation to sexual performance of a man. The “banterer” appears to use a fictional conversation of a woman encouraging her husband who is depicted as feeling bad for his inability to perform sexually well. The “banterer” deploys shared situation knowledge of what sometimes happens when a man is unable to maximally satisfy a female partner sexually. From this shared situation knowledge, the “banterer” portrays a scenario where ironically, a female partner who should ordinarily be complaining or ridiculing the man for non-satisfactory sexual performance, is portrayed encouraging the man, that he does better sexually when compared to the performance of Arsenal football club in football matches. While this situation portrayed in the plate is ironical, in the sense that, it means the man actually performs below expectation or he is sexually ineffective, the fact that he is perceived as even performing better, despite his below par performance, reveals the absurdity of the state of Arsenal football club in terms of their extremely poor performance in football matches. Humorously, the situation portrayed in the plate where a woman who is not sexually satisfied is encouraging a sexually incapable man by rating his sexual performance better than that of a football club (Arsenal football club is incongruous and anomalous. This incongruous situation can instigate laughter.

Man Utd fans about to sleep.
Few mins later: Why Ole no comot
De Gea put Henderson? 🤔 .

 **ANGRY TIGER** @angrytigerrr · 05 May 20

Bombooclaat



Plate 4.125: Sarcasm

Source: @Post_nobill

Date: 30/07/2022

The plate sarcastically projects the agony and pains of defeat. It is targeted at Manchester United fans in relation to their football club's devastating defeat to Manchester City football club. As it can be observed in the label "Manchester united fans about to sleep.Few minutes later. Why Ole no comot De Gea and put Henderson", the "banterer" absurdly portray the banter targets, Manchester United fans, as being unable to sleep or as having sleepless night after their club's defeat. Through sarcasm, the "banterer" creates an imaginary scenario where the banter targets try hard to sleep but find it difficult doing so, as the thoughts of their defeat and what the manager, named "Ole' could have done to prevent the devastating defeat. Ironically, the portrays a situation where the banter targets are ridiculously blaming the manager for not using the goalkeeper of the opposing club, Henderson, by substituting their own goalkeeper, David De Gea just to avoid defeat. This is ironical in the sense that it is absurd or ridiculous for the banter targets to be so desperate to the extent of asking the manager to use the goalkeeper of the opposing club. The scenario portrayed in the plate where a club's goalkeeper is substituted for the goalkeeper of another club is impossible and unimaginable in football. It is unlawful and absurd in football context. Here, the "banterer" deploys anomaly and absurdity to sarcastically mock the banter target for their club's defeat by creating an imaginary absurd situation.

all 11 did

 **Manchester United**  @ManU... · 06 Oct 14
They shall not pass. #mufc



Plate 4.126: Sarcasm

Source: @utdGerald

Date: 26/05/2021

The plate has its background in a pre-match tweet from Manchester United praising their goalkeeper ahead of the Europa league final. The label “All 11 did” is sarcastically employed to foreground the absurdity of the banter target, Manchester United football club, boasting ahead of an Europa League match against Villareal football club by declaring that no opposing player would score against their goalkeeper. However, contrary to their pre-match boasting, the match ends in a penalty shoot out, where all the eleven (11) opposing players score against the goalkeeper. As such, the “banterer”, through the use of sarcasm projects the absurdity of a goalkeeper conceding eleven (11) goals from eleven opposing players despite the fact that his football club has confidently boasted of impossibility of seeing any player scoring against him. As suggested in the label “All 11 did”, the “banterer” sarcastically mocks the targeted club and the goalkeeper by foregrounding the absurdity of a goalkeeper who has been muted not to concede any single goal to ridiculously end up conceding eleven goals.

The only success suarez tasted at
Liverpool 🤔🤔🤔



Plate 4.127: Sarcasm

Source: @flo_perez_

Date: 15/03/2021



Plate 4.128: Sarcasm

Source: @Post_nobill

Date: 30/07/2022



Plate 4.129: Sarcasm

Source:

4.3.4 Pun

A pun is a humorous verbalisation which has two (prototypical) interpretations couched in purposeful ambiguity of a word or a string of words. In the discourse, new semantic nuances are deliberately created as a discursive strategy to mock or ridicule the banter target or the addressee. In essence, words are played upon in a manner that other meanings, other than the original meaning of the word, are created for the purpose of banter.

Wan Bissaka has two Sterlings stuck in his pocket.



Plate 4.130: Pun

Source: @UtdMoh_

Date: 17/04/2021

The context of the banter discourse is rooted in an English Premier league match between Manchester City football club and Manchester United football club where Wan Bisaka, a Manchester United defender, stops Raheem Sterling, a Manchester City attacker from scoring any goal or having any meaningful impact. Pun is deployed as a banter tool in the plate. The word “Sterling” used in the plate is ambiguously employed to have different interpretations the first interpretation of the word “Sterling” is an official monetary currency of the United Kingdom (UK) while the second is the name of a player, an English player known as Raheem Sterling. As evident in the label “Wan Bisaka has tow Sterlings stuck in his pocket”, the “banterer” sarcastically equates the second semantic construct, which is a personal pronoun (the name of a player), with the first semantic construct, the name of the United kingdom currency by suggesting that a player (Wan Bisaka) has two Sterlings in his pocket. In normally situation, what can be found in a person’s pocket is the “monetary sterling”. However, the banter employs the Sterling that is associated to a person’ name to create an absurd scenario where the person whose name is Sterling is also put in the pocket like the monetary sterling. This is ironical in the sense that it is impossible to put a human being inside a pocket. The use of pun where the word “Sterling” kis played upon is thus designed to demean and ridicule the banter target, Raheem Sterling for his inability to score any goal or make any positive contribution in the match.



Plate 4.131: Pun

Source: @utdGerald

Date: 26/05/2021

The discourse background stems from Barcelona fans regular boasting and naming of their new players after the names of their past players who won them many trophies when they were at their peak. The banter in the plate is conveyed through the use of pun to ridicule the banter target, Barcelona football club. The plate features the use of the word “New” from two semantic senses. The first semantic sense is as an adjective qualifying, describing and naming the new Barcelona players while the second is used in reference to the name of a club New Castle football club, regarded as lowly and small. The second semantic sense of the word is thus employed to equate the banter target, Barcelona football club, a big European club to Newcastle, a small club in terms of trophies won. In the plate, the word “New” is played upon and used as an adjective to the names of former players of the club, Barcelona football club (the banter target). This is in relation to the club’s fans having nostalgic feelings about their past players who won so many trophies for the club, by always naming their newly bought players after the names of these former players. As such, when these newly bought players fail to perform well by winning trophies like the former players, The “banterer” uses the word “New”, which is usually deployed to name the newly bought players, to rename Barcelona football club as Newcastle. The import of this is to project Barcelona football club (a big European football club) as a lowly and small club just as Newcastle football club, having been struggling to win trophies. It is also designed to ridicule the fans of the club for labeling the low quality new players of the club a replica of the former great players of the club.

3-1...



Pentagon



Octagon



Hexagon



Top4gone

Plate 4.132: Pun

Source: @utdGerald

Date: 26/05/2021

4.3.5 Hyperbole

Hyperbole has to do with exaggerations. In hyperbole, situations or actions are exaggerated beyond the usual occurrence. In this study, the deployment of hyperbole involves creating impossible or unassailable situations to subject the banter target to ridicule. Hyperbolic instances are presented below.

Chelsea fans in the 200th minute
waiting for an equalizer 🤔



Plate 4.133: Hyperbole

Source: @MrHagan

Date: 15/05/2021

The background of the Plate is based on Chelsea fans eagerly hoping for their club's equalizer against Leicester football club in the FA cup final. Hyperbole is employed in the plate to exaggerate the eagerness of the banter target, Chelsea fans for an equalizer, which their club desperately need after conceding a goal against the opponent in the match. The use of 200th minute, as evident in the label "Chelsea fans in the 200th minute waiting for an equalizer", is hyperbolic in the sense that the normal duration for a football match is 90 minutes while a match that goes into extra-time is expected to last for 120 minutes. As such, "200th" as deployed in the label is hyperbolically foregrounded to create an impossible, unassailable and unrealistic scenario where the banter targets, Chelsea fans are absurdly ridiculed. It is used to project their desire and aspiration to see their club equalize and stand a chance of winning the trophy as futile and absurd. The "banterer" deploys hyperbole to also suggest that no matter how extended the match is, the possibility of an equalizer by Chelsea football club is unrealistic and impossible. Humorously, the absurdity and anomaly of a group of football fans waiting eagerly, as portrayed in the plate, for their club's equalizer till a duration that is anomalous within a football match can instigate laughter and amusement.

Lewandowski scored so many goals, he was given the whole of Arsenal 🏆😂🏆

#AVLCHE #UCLfinal
#sundayvibes



Plate 4.134: Hyperbole

Source: @Peter01

Date: 23/05/2021

The plate stems from the symbol of the award being held by the represented participant which resembles Arsenal football club's logo. The plate features hyperbolic representation of an award given to a football player (Robert Lewandowski). As suggested in the label "Lewandowski scored so many goals, he was given the whole of Arsenal", the "banterer" portrays an unrealistic, untrue and impossible situation through which the banter target is demeaned, belittled and reduced to an undesirable status. Putting into context, the situation depicted in the plate is hyperbolic in the sense that it is impossible to give a football player no matter his achievement, to give a whole football club as an award to him. In the plate, hyperbole is used by the "banterer" to achieve two things; the first is to exaggerate the achievement of a player (Lewandowski) to depict him as being a superior to or bigger than Arsenal football club (the banter target) while the second is to ridicule the banter target, Arsenal football club, as not more valuable than an ordinary award. The hyperbolic representation of the award is thus deployed to reduce the worth and value of the banter target. In relation to humour, the anomaly and absurdity which is projected in the plate where a whole football club is given as an award to a single player has potential to make football fans, especially rival fans, laughed or amused.



Plate 4.135: Hyperbole

Source: @theazulgrana10

Date: 23/08/2022

4.4 Politeness strategies in the selected football banter

In this section, various politeness strategies observed in the data were identified and discussed with recourse to Brown and Levinson's face theory earlier discussed. As such, the politeness strategies identified and discussed were depicting the emotional state, projecting professional failures or deficiency, body shaming, off-record, positive politeness and bald on-record without redress.

4.4.1 Depicting emotional state

In the discourse, the "banterer"s perform Face threatening Acts (FTA) when depicting the emotional state of the bantered or the banter targets through on-record, baldly enacted as well as blunt and humiliating gestural representation of the addressee's emotional plight. Instances of this are presented in the plates below.

Ten hag face looks dope after the second goal

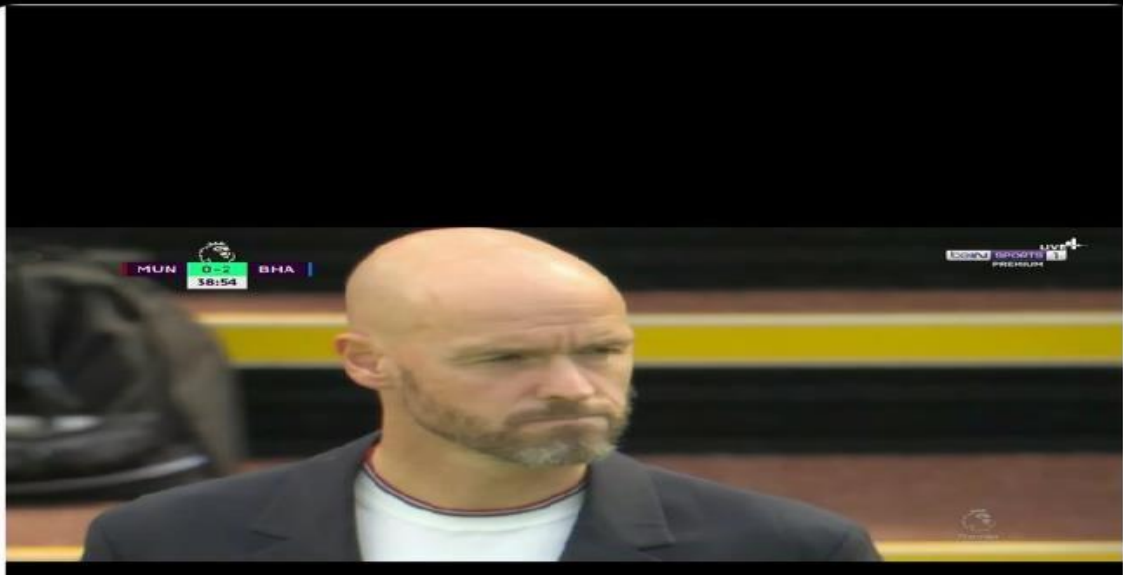


Plate 4.136: Depicting emotional state

Source: @BarcaWorldwide

Date: 24/07/2022

In the plate, Ten Haag (the manager of Manchester United football club) is being mocked after his club's defeat. The intention of the "banterer" here is to mock the addressee (Ten Haag) after his club concedes the second goal in the defeat against Brighton and Hove football club (as reflected in scoreline in the plate). The "banterer" employs on-record baldly enacted through blunt visual representation of the emotional state of the addressee who is visibly portrayed as being depressed and emotionally down after his club has been defeated by another club. As a football manager, it is bad enough to be beaten or defeated in a football match. However, to be mocked and ridiculed after a defeat cause greater damaging effects on the emotional state. The visual representation of the addressee's gestural reaction which foregrounds his emotional state while his club is being beaten is a Blunt Face Threatening Act (BFTA) which shows direct and insensitive disposition to the emotional plight of the addressee. It is also a threat to the positive face of the addressee as his positive self-image has been attacked. Meanwhile, even though the "banterer" is blunt and insensitive in the depiction of emotional state of the addressee, he employs off-record politeness strategy. This is evident in the label "Ten Hag face looks dope after the second goal". The label, though sarcastic and ironical, appears to be a redressive face-saving strategy after a blunt depiction of the emotional state of the addressee. In a probably a face-saving move, as it can be seen in the declarative statement label, the "banterer" describes the face of the addressee as "dope" which connotes being attractive or appealing. This redressive politeness strategy has the potential to militate against the possible attack on the face of the addressee.

Ronaldo with Portugal vs Messi with Argentina



Plate 4.137: Depicting emotional state

Source: @FcbKeviin

Date: 28/07/2022

Here, Lionel Messi is being mocked by a Ronaldo fan for his failure to win any trophy with Argetina. The “banterer” in the plate (most likely a Ronaldo fan) deploys on-record, bluntly and baldly enacted, to ridicule the address (Lionel Messi) for his inability to win any International trophy for his country (Argetina). As it can be observed in the plate, there is an asymmetric classification of two addressees (Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi). In the first and second frames, Ronaldo (the player holding and kissing a trophy as well as celebrating with his club mates in Portugal national team) is projected as a winner (as suggested in his trophy holding and celebration) while in the third frame, Lionel Messi (the addressee being bantered) is visually portrayed as being emotionally broken or down, as reflected in his crying gestural reaction after his country’s national team (Argetina national team) loses a Copa Dey Rey final match to Chile national team. This depiction of emotional state of the addressee classifies him as a loser, crying after a defeat. This is imposing and direct. It is an on-record baldly enacted positive face threatening act, without redress. The “banterer” employs no redressive strategy, probably because of the rivalry between the two opposing fans of the two players (Ronaldo and Messi).

This "painment" is sweet to watch.



Plate 4.138: Depicting emotional state

Source: @FcbKeviin

Date: 28/07/2022

Thomas Muller's tears
gives me immense joy and
happiness



Plate 4.139: Depicting emotional state

Source: @brfootball

Date: 30/07/2022

4.4.2 Body shaming act

Body shaming act (BFA) focuses on how the body posture or physical make-up of the addressee is targeted or foregrounded. Here, the face wants of the addressee to have his personality or self- image protected or respected is attacked or damaged.



Plate 4.140: Body shaming act

Source: @Abbey07058155

Date: 30/07/2022

In the plate, a ‘banterer’ shames Joan Laporta, the president of Barcelona football club. The addressee in this plate is Joan Larporta, the president of Barcelona football club. As evident from the plate, the belly of the addressee, the represented participant in the plate, is foregrounded. This is complemented by a rhetorically sarcastic utterance contained in the label “WHAT DID HE EAT? The label as well as the visual representation of the belly of the addressee shows that he is being body-shamed for his big belly. As it can be deduced from the plate, the focus is on the size of the belly of the addressee. The addressee as the president of a big European football club undoubtedly has a public self-image that he would want to be appreciated or respected.

Following Brown and Levinson’s theory of face, the label “WHAT DID HE EAT?” constitutes a form of mockery or insult as it is sarcastically employed to ridicule or insult the addressee for his big belly. As portrayed in the plate, the visual representation of the big belly of the addressee also ridicules him. This, within the framework of Brown and Levinson, is insulting and categorized as an act that threatens the positive face wants of the addressee to have his personality and self-image appreciated or respected. The sarcastic utterance contained in the label as well as the visual representation of the belly of the addressee is therefore a threatening act against his face as an individual as well as the president of a big club. In addition, as evident in the label “WHAT DID HE EAT?”, the plate features off-record strategy through indirect questioning where the “banterer” appears to question the eating habit of the addressee that makes him to have a big belly. With insights drawn from Brown and Levinson’s face theory, the autonomy or negative face of the addressee that requires him to have his freedom respected and be free from imposition has been threatened by the utterance in the label that seems to question his freedom to eat what he chooses and be free food imposition.

Busquets and Adama in training



Plate 4.141: Body shaming act

Source: @BrazilianAlves

Date: 27/01/2022

In the plate, a “banterer” subjects two Barcelona football club players, Sergio Busquets and Adama Traore to mockery for their body posture. The plate focuses on two addressees, the first addressee, Sergio Busquet, the captain of Barcelona football club, represented in the plate by the slim represented participant at the left side of the plate, is generally known to have a slim or non-fleshy body shape while the second addressee, Adama Traore, a new Barcelona player, presented at the right side of the plate, has a huge and muscular body shape. As evident in the visual representation of the two addressees, there is asymmetric representation of the two addressees. While the first addressee (Sergio Busquet) is portrayed as being slim and non-fleshy, the second addressee (Adama Traore) is projected as being muscular and huge. This asymmetric classification of the body posture of the two addressees appears to classify one (Sergio Busquet) as the bullied while the other (Adama Traore) as the bully.

Following Brown and Levinson’s face theory, the projection of the two addressees’ body posture or physical make-up as the bullied or the bully can be classified as a threat to their face wants to have their personality and self-image appreciated or respected. The representation also constitutes insults, abuse or disapproval of their self-image which are equally elements of face-threatening. From another angle, the representation of an addressee as being slim or non-fleshy further portrays him as weak and subordinate when compared with the other addressee, portrayed as strong and superior, thus, with insights from Brown and Levinson’s face theory, the portrayal of an addressee as being weak or subordinate shows disapproval or a demeaning disposition on his personality or self-image and can serve as a threat to the image or personality he may want to project.



Plate 4.142: Body shaming act

Source: @Abbey07058155

Here, a ‘banterer’ mocks Frenkie De Jong (a Barcelona player) for having one of his testes being pulled out during football match. From close observation in the plate, the private part, specifically, one of the testes of the addressee, Frenkie De Jong, (the represented participant whose image of his testes is pictured in the plate) is being projected. While all other parts of the body of the addressee such as legs, thighs, hands, etc., are seen in the plate, the part which attention is drawn to in the plate (as evident in the pointing arrow symbol used to foreground one of the testes being pulled out) is one of the testes of the addressee being projected. This visual projection of the testes of the addressee is complemented by the label “You played your balls out man” with laughing emojis. The nominal item “balls” in the label is employed beyond the conventional meaning of “round object usually being played with foot”. It is used by extending the semantic nuances of the word to mean “human testes”.

By relying on Brown and Levinson’s face theory, one of the face wants of the addressee to have his self-image protected (positive face) has been attacked or threatened through the deliberate visual foregrounding of one of his testes. Similarly, the deliberately visually projection of the “balls” of the addressee, within the face theory of Brown and Levinson, constitutes a threat to negative face as it is a threatening act against his desire to have his personal territory respected. This is also classified as encroachment into his personal space (Sadeghoghli & Niroomand, 2016). However, The label “You played your balls out man” exemplifies the use of off-record. Here, the “banterer” employs indirectness in body-shaming the addressee. The label is metaphorical and figurative. Figuratively, the label means “playing one’s part to achieve something or making the most efforts to achieve a thing”, whereas, it is employed to body shame the addressee. As such, while the “banterer” intends to body-shame the addressee, he uses off-record strategy, through indirectness to do so.

4.4.3 Mocking professional failures and deficiency

Here, banter targets or addressees are mocked or ridiculed for their professional failures in terms of failure to win matches, failing to score goals or missing goal scoring opportunities. In this category, the “banterer”s employ bald on-record as a face threatening act as well as off-record and positive politeness as face-saving strategies.

All hail the physical education teacher.

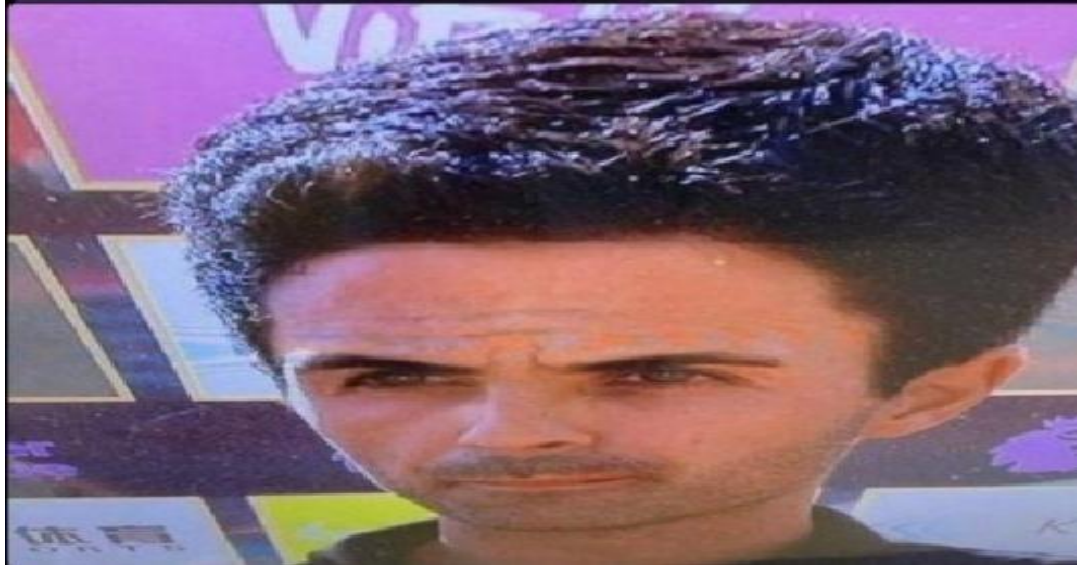


Plate 4.143: Mocking professional failures and deficiency

Source: @fimiletoks

Date: 08/04/2021

The plate is directed to Mikel Arteta who is the professional manager of Arsenal football club for his club's woeful performance in an English Premiership League (EPL) match. As evident in the label "All hail the physical education teacher", the addressee (Mikel Arteta) who is legally approved as a licensed professional football manager by virtue of his managerial training is projected as a "physical education teacher". Based on the knowledge of who a physical health education is, a teacher, who by profession, is saddled with the responsibilities of teaching students in a school as well as training them in physical exercises. He or she is not a trained professional football manager. The description of the addressee, who is a professional football manager, is demeaning and downgrading.

Following Brown and Levinson's face theory, the description threatens the addressee's positive face as it attacks his face wants to be perceived as a professional football manager. The addressee's "public self-image that others might share when a person makes good showing of his profession or religion" (Brown & Levinson, 1987) is also threatened as he may be viewed as being professionally incompetent. Thus, his "competence face" as proposed by Lim and Bowers (1991) is attacked or damaged. In addition, the distorting visual representation of the image of the addressee is a threat or damage to his self-image. The visual representation is imposing and projected baldly on-record. Meanwhile, while the "banterer" intention is to describe the addressee as incompetent, he however, employs positive politeness as a mitigating strategy against potential damage to his positive face. This is evident in the deliberate use of the word "hail". The word "hail", though pretentious, is deployed to reduce the threat to the positive face of the addressee's professionalism and competence that has been attacked as a result of being described as a physical health education teacher. Another face-saving strategy used by the "banterer" is off-record. The label "All hail the physical education teacher" is an indirect and subtle way of describing the addressee as incompetent and professionally incapable as a professional football manager. This indirect and subtle method of describing the addressee is employed to redress the potential attack to his face. The impersonalisation of the addressee (though betrays by his distorted visual representation) is also an off-record strategy used to avoid direct identification of the addressee.

Gary Neville Coached
VALENCIA for just 14 games!
He lost all 14 🤔



Plate 4.144: Mocking professional failures and deficiency

Source: @Abbey07058155

Date: 30/07/2022

In the plate, a football fan mocks Gary Neville, the manager of Valencia football club after he fails to win any of the matches he oversees as the manager of the club. As evident from the label “Gary Neville coached VALENCIA for just 14 games! He lost all 14” with a laughing emoji, the speaker or the tweep (the Twitter account holder who tweets) chronicles the brief managerial career of the addressee (Gary Neville) and foregrounds his poor and woeful performance as a football manager. As such, the addressee is portrayed as losing all the games he manages or failing to win any of the games managed. The descriptive label as contained in the plate thus projects the addressee as being professionally incompetent. This is buttressed with the label “coached VALENCIA for 14 games... lost all 14”. The import of the tweep’s tweet addressed to the addressee is that the addressee is professionally poor or incompetent for losing all the games he manages. With insights from Brown and Levinson’s face theory, the positive face of the addressee which involves his face wants to have his personality or self-image respected has been threatened. This is because the tweep’s act of portraying the addressee as losing all the number of games he manages as a manager damages or threatens his professional or managerial image or the self-image he may want to present as a competent manager.

The label also shows disapproval on the addressee’s managerial competence or ability which is a positive face threatening act. As it can be observed from the plate, there is use of bald on-record politeness strategy without any face-saving strategy to mitigate the face threat. The bald on-record manifests in the tweep’s act of directly raising the issue of addressee’s game losses or managerial incompetence without any face-saving utterance to redress or restore the face. The description of the addressee’s professional experience is direct, blunt and unmitigated. The laughing emoji deployed by the tweep in the label is equally instructive and significant as it signifies mockery or ridicule for the addressee which may have an emotional effect on his personality. This is also a threat to the addressee’s positive face. Another significant positive face threatening act that can be observed from the plate is the gestural representation of the addressee as it can be seen in the visual presentation of his image in form of frowning. The frowning gestural representation of the addressee threatens his positive face as his emotional personality is attacked or damaged. This is equally on-record baldly enacted.

**Koulibaly dribbled past 2
times in 7 mins**



Plate 4.145: Mocking professional failure and deficiency

Source: @theazulgrana10

Date: 23/07/2022

The addressee targeted in this plate is Kalidou Koulibaly, a Chelsea football club's defender, in relation to his professional ability in his position as a defender. As a defender, he has a duty or he is trained to defend against any attack from an opposing club and prevent the opposing attackers from scoring goals against his club that may result into his club losing a match. As evident in the label "Koulibaly dribbled past 2 times in 7 mins", the "banterer" tries to foreground the absurdity of a trained football defender to be "dribbled past" within shortest possible time. The verbal elements "dribbled past" are used to portray how the addressee is rendered incapable by an opposing player while the nominal items "2 times and 7 mins" bring to the fore the unexpected number of times the incident occurred and the unacceptable interval of the incident. By inference, the "banterer" appears to suggest that the addressee is professionally incompetent or incapable to have allowed himself to be dribbled in the manner described in the plate. However, there is use of off-record politeness strategy achieved through indirectness in the description of the professional ability of the addressee as well as giving hints as opposed to adopting direct and blunt approach in describing the addressee. The description is not directly condemnatory and demeaning. An off-record politeness strategy is employed as a face-saving approach to mitigate against the addressee's professional competence.

Replying to @katalann...
**Katalann PARASITEE'S are
the reason**



Plate 4.146: Mocking professional failure and deficiency

Source: @Joshua_Ubeku

Date: 21/01/2022

The “banterer” here is a Barcelona fan who is angrily dissatisfied with the poor performance of the club in both the Spanish league (La Liga) and the Champions league. He thus expresses his annoyance and frustration by accusing the four Barcelona captains (Sergi Roberto, Sergio Busquet, Gerard Pique and Jordi Alba) who are of Catalonia origin (known as Catalans) in Spain. The captains are visually represented in the plate. As evident in the label “Katalan PARASITEE’s are the reason”, the “banterer”’s description of the addressees as the reason for the poor situation of the club is derogatory, insulting and condemnatory. Through the use of a declarative statement, the “banterer” passes a direct, categorical, clear and indicting claim about the professionalism and competence of the addressees. The label is indicting and accusatory. It is a baldly on- record enacted to question and demean the professional competence of the addressees. The “banterer” in clear and unambiguous terms hold the addressees as being responsible for the club’s woes. The act of the “banterer” is a blunt face threatening act without any face-saving strategy. This may be due to his frustration and dissatisfaction about the terrible situation of the club in terms of failure to win trophies and inability to compete well in the Champions league.

The use of the word “Parasite” is also derogatory, abusive and insulting. A parasite is an unwanted and destructive organism that lives in an host (a body) that derives nutrients from the host. By inference, the “banterer” describes the addressees as being destructive and unwanted in the club. He describes them as merely drawing salaries from the club without making any meaningful contribution. Although the description of the addressees is a bald on-record face-threatening act, the use of the word “Parasite”, though derogatory, insulting and attacks the positive face of the addressees, is an indirect use of language in form of metaphor which can be regarded as off-record face-saving strategy.

Most overrated player



Plate 4.147: Mocking professional failure and deficiency

Source: @theazulgrana10

Date: 26/07/2022

In the plate, Lionel Messi is being mocked by a football fan for scoring only a non-penalty goal against Saudi Arabia in a world cup match. The “banterer” here employs bald on record without redress in his description and opinion of the addressee. The addressee in the plate, Lionel Messi, is regarded by many football fans and players as one of the greatest players to have ever played the game. However, as it is evident in the label “Most overrated player”, the “banterer”, through a declarative utterance, is direct, unambiguous, assertive and categorical in his evaluation of the addressee. The “banterer” uses on-record baldly to belittle and putdown the addressee. From the perspective of the “banterer”, the addressee is nothing but an overhyped player. This is in contrast to the opinion of many other people in football community who rate the addressee as one of the best players in the world as a result of his many great exploits in football. Based on the context of the plate, the “banterer”, even though is not unaware of the many exploits of the addressee in terms of scoring incredible number of goals and winning many trophies, nevertheless belittles and questions the highly rated professional ability of the addressee as being held by many.

This blunt evaluation of the “banterer” as seen in the direct and assertive utterance “Most overrated player” is premised on the failure of the addressee to score any goal, other than a “penalty goal” in his country’s opening match in the 2022 world cup against Saudi Arabia. The “banterer” believes that the addressee who is a player highly rated by many should be scoring many goals against a country’s national football team, considered to be weak, rather than scoring a “penalty goal”. Thus, the “banterer” foregrounds his professional failure of not scoring a non-penalty goal in his country’s opening match in the world cup and describes him as being professionally deficient and overrated. In addition, the visual representation of the addressee with the inscription “Miss Penalty” is an instance of baldly enacted on-record as the addressee’s professional ability is bluntly reduced to scoring goals through penalty alone and he is mockingly projected and identified as “Miss Penalty”. This can be seen as an attack to the positive face or the self-image of the addressee as a professional football player.

4.4.4 Bald on-record face threatening act.

Here, the “banterer”s are blunt, direct and categorical in their description of the addressees. They do not employ positive politeness or any strategy to redress threats to the positive face of the addressees, Instances of bald on-record acts in the study are presented below.



Plate 4.148: Bald on-record face-threatening act

Source: @joeballa47

Date:28/08/2021

The plate foregrounds how a 'banterer' subjects Arsenal football club to ridicule after being humiliated by Manchester City Football Club. In the plate, the addressee targeted by the "banterer" is Arsenal football club, and by extension, Arsenal fans. The "banterer" threatens the positive face of the addressees. This can be seen in the use of the expression "Arsenal being molested by their molesters". By describing and projecting the addressees as the molested in relation to their humiliating defeat by Manchester City football club, the "banterer" succeeds in damaging the positive self-image of the addressees. In social relations or human interactions, no one appreciates being labelled as being molested given the negative social image associated to molestation. In the description of the addressees, the "banterer" employs on-record enacted baldly as he is direct, blunt, abusive and derogatory. The "banterer" does not employ positive politeness strategy in his description of the addressees to mitigate against the attack to the positive face of the addressees. In addition to the label "Arsenal being molested by their molesters", the "banterer" equally presents the addressees as being sexually abused or molested. This can be seen in the representation of players of the victorious club (Manchester City football club) who are men while the addressee (Arsenal football club), as it can be observed by the club's logo, is visually represented as a sexually abusive or molested lady.

This visual representation of the addressee is socially insensitive. It demeans and makes the addressee worthless, thus threatening the addressee's positive face. Here, the "banterer" performs face threatening act (FTA) without redress as he is blunt and direct in his description of the addressee. Another recipient of FTA of the "banterer", though not the primary target, is Manchester City players and manager visually presented in the plate. As evident in the plate, Rodri, Gundogan, Pep Guardiola (the manager of the club), Bernado Silva and Gabriel Jesus are portrayed as the molesters. This description is a blunt attack to their positive face (even though it is in relation to their club's victory over Arsenal football club). Projecting the players and the manager through the verbal expression used and visual representation in the plate is a baldly enacted on-record.

Unlike certain fraud



Plate 4.149: Bald on-record face-threatening act

Source: @BenUrey51

Date: 14/08/2021

The addressee here (as pictured in the plate) is Lionel Messi, a Barcelona football club player who just moves to become a new Paris Saint Germain's (PSG) player. Based on the context of the plate, the "banterer", a Barcelona football club's fan believes that the main reason the addressee (Lionel Messi) is leaving Barcelona football club where he is treated as a god or a legend is because of monetary gains or inducement from the new club (PSG). This is foregrounded in the visual representation of the addressee covering his eyes with money. This background leads to the "banterer" labelling the addressee (Lionel Messi) a "fraud" for choosing to leave the club where is the captain and an adorable legend. The label "Unlike this fraud" is a direct and categorical comparism of the addressee to another Barcelona player and legend (Xavi Harnandez who is regarded as being loyal to the club. The "banterer" describes the addressee a fraud for choosing to leave the club for Paris Saint Germain (PSG). He believes that he is leaving because of financial or monetary inducement or gains as he is being offered more salaries compared to what he earns at Barcelona. The utterance is indicting, accusatory, derogatory, direct and unambiguous. It projects the addressee as being fraudulent. This is imposing and indicting. It is an on-record baldly enacted that threatens the positive face of the addressee. It attacks the positive self-image of the addressee. The use of demonstrative pronoun "this" is also personalizing which is used to foreground the addressee as the direct recipient and bearer of the derogatory utterance.

Cheaters



Plate 4.150: Bald on-record face-threatening act

Source: @brfootball

Date: 24/07/2022

Based on the context of the plate, two addressees are targeted. They are Manchester United football club and a former manager of the club, Sir Alex Ferguson whose image is pictured in the plate. As it can be deduced from the plate, the “banterer” labels Manchester United football club as well as a former manager of the club (pictured in the plate) as “Cheaters”. This is because he believes that the two addressees, Manchester United football club and Alex Ferguson (renown for winning multiple trophies for the club) win many trophies because they allegedly have dubious decisions going their way. This is buttressed by the visual representation of the former manager, Sir Alex Ferguson uncharacteristically manning the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) which is meant to be manned by designated officials. The use of the word “Cheaters” to describe the addressees is accusatory, indicting and derogatory. It is also imposing as it labels the addressees with a particular negative identity. It is an on-record baldly enacted to portray the addressees as undeserving of all the trophies won. The “banterer” portrays the addressees as using dubious means to win trophies. This is evident in the visual representation of one of the addressees (Alex Ferguson, the former manager of Manchester football club) as being in charge of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) which is usually controlled by designated officials. This representation is deployed to project the addressee as having overbearing control and influence over referee or officiating decisions. The visual representation of the addressee manning VAR can also be seen as an indirect description of the addressee as “Cheaters” which is an off-record strategy.

4.5 Discussion

In the banter discourse, football related critical issues are addressed. Issues such as racism, financial recklessness, poor management or decision-making, favouritism, in terms of unmerited recognition or award, and poor or biased officiating are highlighted. In this manner, banter is employed in the discourse to reveal critical issues in the domain of football. This aligns with Culpeper (2010) that banter, with its aggressive nature, is a communicative tool in addressing certain germane issues in human endeavours.

The selected football banter or banter tweets also bring to the fore stereotypes in the form of dressing style and naming system stereotypes which reveal negative sentiments and conventionally held beliefs against certain banter targets such as club owners of certain origins or religion and players of a certain country. For instance, club owners of Qatari origin or Islamic religion as well as players of English origin are

discriminated against based on their mode of dressing and naming patterns respectively. These stereotypic representations in the discourse are deployed to ridicule and mock the banter targets. The finding on banter as a way of revealing stereotypes corroborates earlier studies such as Plester and Sayer (2007) on how banter is used to ridicule and mock people through stereotyping.

The categorization of the banter targets in this study is based on absent participants. The study identifies five categories of the banter targets. The categories are football fans-banter target, football players-banter target, football managers-banter target, football club-banter target and match officials-banter target. All the categories of banter targets identified in the study are absent participants. They are targeted for aggressive mockery and ridicule even though they are completely absent as the discourse is non-conversational. This categorization of the banter targets aligns with the position of Boxer and Cortes-Condes' (2007) that banter targets do not necessarily need to be absent before they can be subjected to ridicule or mockery.

In addition, the banter categories and strategies identified in this study are marked with aggressive deployment of multimodal resources as entrenched in Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Based on the finding of the study, the different categories of banter targets are aggressively subjected to ridicule through the deployment of both verbal and non-verbal resources. The banter strategies are also characterized with multimodal resources being geared towards ridiculing and mocking the banter targets. For instance, posturing, gesturing, name-calling, dressing and symbolisation are used as banter strategies in a manner that the banter targets are projected as object of ridicule. The banter categories and strategies being characterized with aggressiveness, mockery and ridicule corroborates with Haugh's (2010) and Culpeper's (2010) submission that strategies used in banter are inherent with aggressiveness and mockery.

The identification of linguistic devices in the discourse reveals that the linguistic devices are deployed to achieve certain communicative purposes. This is in line with Ademilokun's (2011) and Okunade's (2021) position that linguistic devices in football discourse are used to perform certain functions. Five linguistic devices are identified. They are linguistic coinages and distortions, allusion, hyperbole, sarcasm and pun. As deployed in the discourse, linguistic coinages and distortions are employed for identity and personality damaging; allusion is deployed to make cultural, social or political references for the purpose of mockery; hyperbole is used to create impossible and

unassailable scenarios for ridiculing the banter targets; sarcasm creates absurdity in the actions of the banter targets to project them as stupid; and pun is employed to create different semantic nuances for mockery. The vocabulary selection as entrenched in the linguistic devices is such that violates the norms of social interactions. This finding corroborates Houtman's (2018) submission that banter is replete with words that violate the norms of politeness.

Based on the politeness strategies identified in the discourse, it is found that non-verbal cues are simultaneously deployed with linguistic devices. Thus, the non-verbal cues are as important as the linguistic devices in the banterers' treatment of "face" of the banter targets. This allows for theoretical bonding of two theories, Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Brown and Levinson's face theory. The study's finding on the deployment of non-verbal cues in politeness strategies is in line with Arua's (2020) submission on how non-verbal cues form part of politeness strategies in the interaction encounters between post office attendants and customers.

Furthermore, in the discourse, face-threatening acts (FTA) are deployed as politeness strategies. There are four face-threatening acts employed to attack the 'face' of the addressees. They are depicting the emotional state, mocking professional failures, body shaming act and build-on record act. The strategies are aggressive and threatening. This finding aligns with the finding of Culpeper (2010) that banter is face threatening and that banter is characterized with face-threatening acts to show impoliteness.

Another important finding in the study is the identification of redressive strategies employed by the "banterers" to mitigate against the attack or threat against the banter targets. Redressive politeness strategies such as positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record strategies are deployed in the discourse. This finding corroborates earlier studies such as Gil-Salon and Soler-monreal (2009) and Ajayi; Sunday (2011) and Tella (2016) on how off-record, positive politeness and negative politeness strategies can be used as a way of mitigating potential attack or threat against the addressees in a discourse.

4.6 Summary

In this section, categories of football banter which are football fans-target banter, football players-target banter, football managers-target banter, football clubs-targeted banter and match officials-targeted banter have been identified and discussed. The section has also discussed banter strategies and linguistic devices in the selected

football banter. The last aspect of the study discussed in this section is the politeness strategies used in the selected football banter

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Preamble

This chapter, being a concluding part of the study, contains the summary of the study, the summary of the findings of the study, and the contributions to knowledge. It also presents suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary

This study is designed to investigate the deployment of banter in football discourse on Twitter. In the introductory chapter, we discussed the background to the study and the use of social media in communicative discourse, with a particular focus on Twitter as a social media platform, being the most pertinent to this study. In addition, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, scope of the study and significance of the study were presented. Chapter two comprised conceptual review of concepts such as banter, categorised as visual and verbal banter. Gesture, posture, gaze, angle, salience and framing were presented as visual banter while allusion, irony, sarcasm, anecdotes, putdown and pun were highlighted under verbal banter. Functions of banter such as interpersonal, affective, psychological, instrumental and social bonding functions were additionally discussed as well as the reviews of existing relevant studies. Chapter three explained the methodology which was employed in the study for collection of the data and the data analytical procedures. Data were analysed in chapter four. In the chapter, categories of banter, banter strategies, linguistic devices and politeness strategies were identified and discussed. In the same vein, sub- categories of the identified banter categories as well as sub-strategies of the identified banter strategies were discussed.

5.1.1 Summary of findings

The following are the findings of this study

1. Identification of the banter categories in the selected football banter

Five banter categories were identified in the study. They are football fans-targeted banter, football players-targeted banter, football managers-targeted banter, football clubs-targeted banter and match officials-targeted banter. Similarly, various sub-

categories associated with each of the banter categories were identified in the study. Defeat induced brooding and emotional trauma, hopelessness and despondence and fear and anxiety were highlighted as sub-categories of football fans-targeted banter. In the second banter category, unprofessionalism, unachieved personal ambition, professional incapability and poor performance, incurable obsession, defeat induced emotional brokenness and injury proneness were identified as the sub-categories. Sub-categories such as ineptitude coaching or tactics, ready-made flimsy excuses and damaging defeats induced emotional torture were foregrounded in the third category. In the fourth category, which is football clubs-targeted banter, unsuccessful transfer bids and financial incapability were identified as the sub-categories. Finally, the last category, match officials-targeted banter was sub-categorised with poor and biased officiating. In the identified sub-categories for four banter categories, defeated induced emotional trauma is common and present in all the banter categories identified, this was perhaps as a result of the fact that all the targets of banter in each category are characteristically prone or susceptible to being emotionally triggered.

2. Examination of the banter strategies in the selected football banter

Football fans employed different strategies in the deployment of banter in football discourse on Twitter. The banter strategies adopted were posturing, sarcasm, gesturing, gazing, dressing, stereotyping, symbolisation, and name-calling and abuse. Various sub-strategies were also employed in each of the banter strategies. Subordinating, torturing and slipping posturing were used as posturing sub-strategies. For sarcasm strategy, mocking poor decision making, ridiculing unmerited recognition and award, and satirising unprofessional foul were the sub-strategies used. Also, from the study, calling out poor and biased officiating, ridiculing boasting and unfulfilled promises, and constant failures were employed as sub-strategies of gesturing. Inappropriate or anomalous dressing was the only sub-strategy employed for dressing strategy. In addition, symbolisation strategy featured lampooning trophylessness, scorning defeat and suppression and foregrounding truncation of goal or target as sub-strategies while stereotyping strategy was marked with discriminating against dressing style and naming system stereotyping. Gazing strategy highlighted teasing and subjecting the banter targets to ridicule. Name-calling and abuse foregrounded public image damaging.

3. Examination of discursive functions of the banter strategies

The strategies employed in the selected banter were purposely designed to perform certain discursive functions. In the study, posturing was deployed to malign the identities and personalities of the banter targets or ridicule them as well as a tool for creating humour or amusement while gazing was also used for ridiculing the targets and creating humour. As a strategy, dressing was used for questioning, belittling and doubting the professional abilities of the addressees. Gesturing was used to depict emotional realities to mock the targets. Symbolisation was used for the deployment of symbols for ridiculing. Sarcasm was employed to create absurdity in the actions of the banter targets. In creating social and cultural discrimination, stereotyping strategy was deployed while blackmailing and public image damaging were achieved through name-calling.

4. Identification of linguistic devices used in the selected banter

In the study, “banterer”’s did not only employ visual modes but also the verbal modes. The verbal modes used were identified as the various linguistic devices used in the discourse. The linguistic devices employed were coinages and distortions, sarcasm, allusion, hyperbole, anecdotes and pun. Distortion was used for identity damaging; anecdotes were employed for blackmailing; sarcasm, pun and allusion were deployed for mockery while hyperbole was applied for lampooning as well as creating impossible and unassailable scenarios that generate humour.

5. Exploration of the politeness strategies used in the banter

Characteristically, in the banter discourse, the addressees were absent as they did not necessarily participate in the discourse. In addition, unlike many other discourses where only verbal or written modes were usually used, this study was characterised with both visual and verbal modes. As such, the politeness strategies were explored in such a way to address both verbal and visual resources used by the “banterers”. The politeness strategies employed were of two categories. The first category focused on face-saving politeness strategies. The face-saving politeness strategies were off-record and positive politeness strategies. While off-record was used as a politeness strategy to redress or mitigate against potential threats against the face of the addressees, positive politeness strategy was specifically employed redress threats that tend to damage the positive face of the addressees. In the second category, the politeness strategies were

face-threatening acts. They were, depicting emotional state, body shaming, mocking professional failures and non-redressive bald on-record.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has shown that banter as a human phenomenon could be an important communicative tool not only in creating social bonding or humour but also a tool for disintegration in social interactions. As such, the findings of the study have demonstrated that, apart from being a tool for the creation of humour or enhancing social interactions, banter also serve as a communicative tool for social disintegration or aggression. Going by the findings of this study, there is need for adequate attention to be given to addressing issues such as racism, body shaming or cyber-bullying, unprofessionalism, poor officiating, financial fair play and other issues permeating the world of football. Multimodal resources are deployed in the selected football banter to not only instigate humour or amusement but to also bring to light critical hidden issues in football. This domain of research has therefore been explored to help in addressing germane issues in football that have been foregrounded through banter as well as redressing social disintegration function of banter.

5.3 Contributions to knowledge

This study has made significant contributions in different ways. In the first place, its findings have provided insights into various critical football related issues that affect different stakeholders. It also serves as an eye-opener to the wrong and negative use of social media platforms and the potential danger many of the social media contents pose on the targets. Another important contribution of the study is the application of theories such as theory of visual grammar and systemic functional grammar in the study of football banter. As a result of this, it provides insights into how different communication modes could be aligned together or used simultaneously to create humour or amusement through linguistic and non-linguistic creation of anomalies. The theoretical bonding, therefore, could be a model for other studies. The application of face theory to visual and verbal related data also provides novel insights to the theoretical treatment of deployment of politeness strategies in social discourse.

In addition, the study serves as a novel exploration of football related data on social media, particularly on Twitter. The data provide evidence to many libellous contents that can be subjected to litigations in law courts as they are potentially damaging to the addressees.

The study does not only offer a new direction to discourse analysis and pragmatics but also expands the paradigm of computer-mediated discourse which would help individuals in the society and scholars on the innovative way of communication and social interactions through technological and digital tools.

The knowledge obtained from this study could also be helpful for policy formulators, organisations and football governing or regulatory bodies. For instance, policy formulators in governments may find the data used in this study useful on the need to regulate negative use of social media. Football regulatory bodies such as Federation of International Football (FIFA), European Football Association (UEFA), Football Associations (FA) in different countries would find the study relevant in addressing critical football related issues such as poor officiating, racism, unprofessionalism, etc. Twitter management or any other social media platform management could also find the study useful to put necessary regulatory mechanisms in place to prevent posting of dangerous and mentally damaging contents on various social media platforms.

The study additionally promises to offer immense benefits to digital skit makers, comedians, social media humourists, football journalists or football news casters and advertising practitioners. They may likely use the data of the study to complement and improve their works and presentations.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

The aim of this study was to investigate the deployment of banter in football discourse on Twitter. This study lays the groundwork for future research into how multimodal resources in banter discourse could be used to address critical issues in different fields of endeavours as well as tools for creating humour. As such, several areas remain untouched. One of such areas which could be a fruitful area for further studies is the deployment of multimodal resources as banter on social media in addressing critical issues in our society. Similarly, investigation into the relevance of multimodal resources related banter to address issues in political domain could also be carried out. In addition, data (banter related) from other sources such as football WhatsApp groups, Facebook and banterdiscourse on radio stations could be investigated. Cartoons related football banter could also be another domain of research investigations.

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