

RHETORIC IN ISRAELI SPORTS JOURNALISM

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This article deals with emotive rhetorical devices used by Israeli soccer commentators focusing on their essence, function, and standing as means of persuasion in the written text. Thirteen articles, written by four commentators representing the three leading newspapers in Israel, published in the winter of 2002 and dealing with Maccabi-Haifa in the World Cup Championship and the Israel National Team's game against Malta, were examined. The research shows that the language of the commentators is distinctive in its use of low register words alongside high register words. Figurative speech is used, with metaphors being the most prominent figurative device and superlative intensifiers also prominent. There was almost no use of downtoners as these are more characteristic of academic writing. Sports commentators make frequent use of formulistic clichés from different fields that are usually paired clichés built on a consistent formula of adjective + noun. Many of these clichés are sports expressions from the playing field as are many of their article headlines. There is also frequent and varied use of ironic expressions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to investigate the emotive rhetorical devices used in the written press as demonstrated by the language of Israeli sports commentators. The most prominent of these means of persuasion in the text will be examined. Their essence, function, and status as devices of persuasion will be discussed.

The study will disclose the typical emotive rhetorical devices of sports commentators in the Hebrew press, present their distribution in the text, and discuss the rhetorical function of these devices, in order to create a representative linguistic-rhetoric profile of the sports commentators, that is, on the rhetorical structure of their text and on the rhetorical means integrated into it.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

As stated, this study will present a full description of the emotive rhetorical devices used in the language of sports commentators in articles in the written press. An examination was conducted of the devices of emotive persuasion in thirteen different articles about soccer published in the winter of 2002, dealing with only two topics: Maccabi Haifa in the European Cup

Championship and the Israel National Team in its game against Malta. The game of soccer was chosen because it is the most popular sport in Israel. Four soccer commentators were chosen who represent the three main newspapers in Israel: Sagi Cohen (*Maariv*), Shlomo Scharf (*Yediot Ahronot*), and Avi Ratzon and Ronen Dorfan (*Haaretz*). Two commentators from *Haaretz* were chosen because this newspaper gives more extensive space to sports commentators. These commentators often differ in the purpose of their commentary, as well as in the manner of their expression. To a great extent they are a representative sample of the types of commentators that exist in the post-modern era, in which sports commentary is not another profession, but an area in which professionals work alongside intellectuals who were not raised on the soccer field (as are the coaches, players, etc.) (Orieli et al., 2001).

The following is a short background, up to the winter of 2002, of the soccer commentators examined in this article:

Sagi Cohen (*Maariv*): He is an intellectual commentator (Philosophy Ph.D.) whose commentary is characterized by a multi-leveled approach and a complexity accompanied by cultural insights.

Shlomo Scharf (*Yediot Ahronot*): He is a former national soccer team coach. He is known for his direct blunt style and his view of soccer as a straightforward game.

Avi Ratzon (*Haaretz*): He is one of the pioneers of Israeli sports journalism. He has a provocative style and his writing is characterized by expertise and determination—sometimes bordering on pretension.

Ronen Dorfan (*Haaretz*): Dorfan has extensive knowledge of sports in general, and soccer in particular. Dorfan's writing is clear and fluent, integrating insights in his writing without utilizing prominent provocative elements.

The following is the list of articles used in this study:

- 2.10.2002, שגיאה כהן, "חצי הכוס המלאה", מעריב, 2.10.2002
Sagi Cohen, "The Half-Full Cup", *Maariv*, 2.10.2002
- 30.10.2002, שגיאה כהן, "ימים של תהילה", מעריב, 30.10.2002
Sagi Cohen, "Glory Days", *Maariv*, 30.10.2002
- 13.11.2002, שגיאה כהן, "נעמוד ונמחה כפיים", מעריב, 13.11.2002
Sagi Cohen, "Stand and Applaud", *Maariv*, 13.11.2002
- 14.11.2002, שגיאה כהן, "להתרגש לפני שנתרגל", מעריב, 14.11.2002

- Sagi Cohen, "To Be Excited before We Become Used to It", *Maariv*, 14.11.2002
- 1.10.2002, שלמה שרף, "לשחק חכם בהגנה", ידיעות אחרונות, Shlomo Scharf, "Playing Smart Defense", *Yediot Ahronot*, 1.10.2002
- 15.10.2002, שלמה שרף, "גרנט שידר פחד", ידיעות אחרונות, Shlomo Scharf, "Grant Projected Fear", *Yediot Ahronot*, 15.10.2002
- 29.10.2002, שלמה שרף, "ארבעה מפתחות בדרך אל האושר", ידיעות אחרונות, Shlomo Scharf, "Four Keys to Happiness", *Yediot Ahronot*, 29.10.2002
- 1.11.2002, אבי רצון, "נעים לראות נעים לגלות", הארץ, Avi Ratzon, "Nice to See, Nice to Discover", *Haaretz*, 1.11.2002
- 8.11.2002, אבי רצון, "לקח לשחר זמן אבל בסוף הוא הבין", הארץ, Avi Ratzon, "Shahar Took His Time but in the End He Understood", *Haaretz*, 8.11.2002
- 10.11.2002, אבי רצון, "לא ז'אוטאוטס יניב קטן", הארץ, Avi Ratzon, "Not Zutautas, Yaniv Katan", *Haaretz*, 10.11.2002
- 1.9.2002, רונן דורפן, "אובדן המומנטום", הארץ, Ronen Dorfan, "Loss of Momentum", *Haaretz*, 1.9.2002
- 29.10.2002, רונן דורפן, "השינוי שלנו החלק שלהם", הארץ, Ronen Dorfan, "Our Change, Their Part", *Haaretz*, 29.10.2002
- 31.10.2002, רונן דורפן, "ככה זה שמדובר בעסק", הארץ, Ronen Dorfan, "That's How It Is in Business", *Haaretz*, 31.10.2002

3. METHODS

We read each article and extracted the emotive rhetorical devices they contained (see Table 1) Many varied rhetorical devices were found. These devices were sorted by known rhetorical criteria (Kayam, 2000). We counted the devices found and decided to discuss only the most frequently used rhetorical devices. A separate section is devoted to each device, and subsequently the theoretical background of the topic under discussion, an analysis and discussion of the findings, and finally, a general summary and conclusions are presented. It should be noted that due to lack of space, this paper does not include a comparative analysis between the commentators, but rather the findings are presented as an aggregate of the devices used by the soccer commentators that were examined.

4. RHETORICAL DEVICES

The ancient Greeks developed the theory of rhetoric and Aristotle, Cicero, and others devoted well-known and famous compositions to it (see Aristotle, 1932, 1954; Cicero, 1986). In a survey of the research literature, a number of definitions of the term rhetoric are used, for example: Aristotle¹, one of the great Greek philosophers, defines rhetoric as “the art of investigation of the means of persuasion that can be used in various circumstances”; Brooks and Warren (1970) define rhetoric as “the art of using language effectively”; Perelman (1984) writes that rhetoric is “the art of soliciting and persuading people.”

Aristotle states that there are two kinds of means of persuasion—one relates to those things that are self-evident and require no proof and the other that require proof. He also claims that there are three types of arguments:

1. Arguments that stem from the personality of the speaker (Ethos) and are based on his credibility.
2. Logical arguments (Logos), which are meant to prove the speaker’s point or to give the impression that the point has been proven.
3. Emotive arguments (Pathos), which aim to create a particular mood in the listener.

This study will address only emotive arguments. Following Aristotle, Landau (1988) divides the linguistic study of rhetoric into two areas:

1. Stylistic/Emotive Rhetoric² that addresses the emotions and includes means of persuasion from the dictionary, semantics, and syntax.
2. Rhetorical Argument that addresses reason and includes logic and pseudo-logic, most of which is from the area of discourse analysis.

Researchers in the field of rhetoric differentiate between two types of persuasion: *convincing*, which appeals to one’s sense of logic, and *persuading*, which appeals to one’s emotions. Landau points out that the difference between convincing and persuading is expressed, inter alia, in that with convincing the speaker is interested in convincing the listener of the truth of his

¹ Aristotle, *Book One*, p. 1355; *Book Two*, pp. 26–27.

² In this article, the term “emotive rhetoric” will be used instead of “stylistic rhetoric” because the term “emotive rhetoric” seems to be more exact, even though the term “stylistic rhetoric” appears in Landau’s book.

or her arguments as they are determined by the intellect, while with persuading, the speaker is interested in getting his or her audience to agree with his or her position. Audience of listeners is a key concept in rhetoric, (Gitay 1991, 1996; Spiegel, 1973).

Landau (1988) also points out that the main characteristic of emotive rhetoric is that it generally does not raise arguments but rather gives an emotive-stylistic character to the text and provides the listener with pleasure from its manner of linguistic expression. In contrast, the aim of rhetorical argument is to raise arguments as a means of addressing reason and not emotion (of course, this division is not absolute, and there are rhetorical devices that include both). Another difference between emotive rhetoric and rhetorical argument is that the former focuses on words and their combinations and only sometimes complete sentences, while the latter employs sentences and units larger than sentences.

This article will conduct a comprehensive discussion of the most frequently used emotive rhetorical devices appearing in the language of Israeli soccer press commentators, while reviewing their essence, character, and function as means of persuasion in the text.

5. EMOTIVE RHETORICAL DEVICES

The aim of emotive rhetorical devices is to arouse a certain mood in the listener that will lead to agreement, by means of methods that address the emotion. Different researchers have addressed the importance of emotive devices. Hughes and Duhamel (1962) cite Socrates, who argued that it was possible to convince an audience by arousing their emotions without presenting any logical reasoning. Bryant (1974) argues that it is not sufficient to choose arguments and reasons and form a convincing speech in order to influence your listeners, that one cannot ignore appeals to emotions and to the emotional needs of the listeners. In "Rhetoric Bears Fruit," Horowitz (1996) states that persuasion is an emotional and thrilling event and thus arouses interest, because the basis of persuasion is a struggle, which involves multiple devices, both mental and emotional.

Perelman (1984) argues that presenting persuasive arguments without any scientific evidence aims to persuade the listeners to agree with the theses presented by the speaker on both an emotional and intellectual level, and to direct their thoughts, arousing or dampening emotions. Landau (1988) adds to Perelman that these same stylistic devices with no rhetorical value may fill an important role in persuasion, precisely because of the aesthetic plea-

sure and excitement that they awaken in the addressed. She also cites psychologists' remarks (Schwarzwald, 1978) that reflect the belief that this is also an effective means of persuasion.

Feingold (1990) believes that not in every case do emotive devices serve a deliberate rhetorical tendency or a direct rhetorical argument, but in retrospect they affect the reader's system of stimuli and means of persuasion at some level of effectiveness. He adds that the reader who is swept away by the "pure" aesthetic experience is not conscious of this, and at the conclusion of the process of reading finds that he or she holds a political or ideological position different from the one held at the start. And indeed, in the language of soccer commentators, we find considerable use of different means of expression, based on appeals to the emotion for the sake of persuasion. It would appear that emotive devices have an honored place in soccer commentators' articles, and there is frequent use of figurative speech, intensifiers, and clichés.

Presented below are the most frequently found rhetorical emotive (Do you want to stay with the order "emotive rhetorical"?) devices used by soccer commentators, followed by a comprehensive discussion of each.

Devices:

- High register words and low register words
- Figurative speech
- Intensifiers
- Clichés
- Irony

5.1 High Register Words and Low Register Words

5.1.1 High Words³

Koren (1996) lists several types of words: Latin words, professional-technical words and concepts, scientific words (words used in science and research), poetic words, and "rare" words (those words that are not in common usage, often biblical). These words belong to high register words and are mostly used by academics, judges, public figures, and parliamentary speakers.

³ R. Koren (1996) refers to these as "rare words," however, this seems inaccurate and so the term "high words" was chosen.

A speaker who employs professional or scientific terms is perceived as someone well-versed in the matter—an expert, and this perception on the part of the listener has ramifications, sometimes unconscious, which cause the speaker to be perceived as objective and credible. His or her words sound professional, therefore, the addressed attributes credibility to the speaker. Landau (1988) writes that a philosophical-scientific style can unconsciously be convincing due to the understated character of the style, which is addressed more to the intellect than to the emotion. Furthermore, these words, some of which belong to the semantic field of scientific intellectualism, have positive connotations, and using them grants the speaker the ethos of a person who is led by reason and intellect.

The use of high language and pompous words also has rhetorical value: Koren (1996) cites Perelman, saying that a speaker employing high words that conform to linguistic rules, exact syntax, and a slightly pompous lexicon, may subtly influence the listener. Obviously the context is not divorced from the content and is dependant on the target audience (Gitay, 1991, 1996) and other non-linguistic factors such as intonation and physical appearance (Grice, 1975). The listener moves quickly from “proper speech” to “spoken truth,” that is, he perceives the speaker’s words to be truthful.

The use of romance languages (mainly English and French) is considered high language, and is very widespread in Israel today. In fact, English has captured a place of honor in Modern Hebrew and evidence of this is the appearance of English words in Hebrew dictionaries. English words, which are considered “high,” are found today in every field of life, and characterize the speech of the well educated (or of one who pretends to be a “man of the world”). As will be shown below, the language of soccer commentators is not unusual in its use of high language, and it should be noted that soccer commentators do not use all of the parameters mentioned above but only use high register words—and those only infrequently. The reason for this is that sports columns have a populist-everyman character and as such are aimed at as broad a population as possible. It should be noted that this use of high language is found more with Sagi Cohen (who is an academic) and Avi Ratzon (who is a veteran journalist and the most experienced of those examined).

The following are two examples of high register words taken from the articles examined.

הוכיחה אמש שוב עד כמה נכונה לפחות בכדורגל האימרה המרקסיסטית הישנה 'ההוויה קובעת את התודעה'. תן למכבי חיפה הוויה של ליגת האלופות ותקבל את הנס הקטן והאופטימי שראינו אתמול: קבוצה ישראלית שמשחקת אתמול 90 דקות עם תודעה של ליגת האלופות.

It was proven again last night how true, at least in soccer, is the old *Marxist saying*, "The present determines men's thoughts and actions." Give Maccabi Haifa the experience of the Champions League and you will get the little miracle that we saw last night: an Israeli team that plays for 90 minutes like a Champions League.

(S. Cohen, "The Half-Full Cup").

"חזון אחרית ימיו של הכדורגל מתגשם בעצם היום הזה."

The *prophecy* from the end of days has come to pass today.

(A. Ratzon, "Shahar Took His Time").

5.1.2 Low Words

Low words refer to words that deviate from the norm. Some of these deviations relate to word structure or combinations, and others to proper syntax (Schlessinger, 1996). The following is a selection of low words from the articles examined.

"מבחינה מקצועית טכנית היא לא מציאה גדולה."

From a technical-professional point of view *it's no bargain*.

(A. Ratzon, "Nice to See, Nice to Discover").

"מכבי חיפה הייתה לוקחת אותו בהליכה אחרי ניצחון בגמר על הפועל תל אביב."

For Maccabi Haifa, it was *a walk in the park* after their victory over Hapoal Tel Aviv in the finals.

(A. Ratzon, "Nice to See, Nice to Discover").

"גברי לוי ואנשי צירלטון שכנעו כמה פריירים."

Gavri Levi ...convinced a few *suckers*.

(R. Dorfan, "Loss of Momentum").

”היה נעים לגלות שאלן סמית הוא לא רק שחקן מוגבל אלא גם ציחצ'ח בעל
שער מחומצן.”

It was nice to discover that Alan Smith is not only a limited player but also
peroxided low-life.
(A. Ratzon, “Nice to See, Nice to Discover”).

5.1.3 Combining High Words and Low Words

A device unique to the language of sports commentators is the use of a combination of high and low words in the same sentence or paragraph. Here are two examples:

”היה נעים לגלות שאלן סמית הוא לא רק שחקן מוגבל אלא גם ציחצ'ח בעל
שער מחומצן.”

It was nice to discover that Alan Smith is not only a limited player but also
peroxided low-life.
(A. Ratzon, “Nice to See, Nice to Discover”).

”תגידו ירדנו לגמרי מהפסים?.....אין אפשרות באתוס הספורטיבי שלנו חוץ
מהתבלטות והתנשאות?”

*Have we entirely lost our minds?...Is there nothing in our sports ethos besides
self-depreciation and condescension?*
(S. Cohen, “Stand and Applaud”)

5.2 Use of Figurative Speech

Figurative speech is the use of pictures and metaphors to express ideas. Landau (1988) says that the main function of figurative speech is to express the requested message in a picturesque and tangible way that will be absorbed by the listener's emotions rather than their thoughts. The impact of figurative speech is very strong because the message is made clear and tangible, and yet direct. When using figurative speech, complex ideas can be expressed in a brief text.

The most prominent form of figurative speech is the metaphor: A metaphor has a double meaning; it transfers the meaning from one semantic field to another semantic field; or it is a word or group of words that is given a second broader meaning (Nir, 1978).

In literary theory a metaphor is a word or group of words, which have been given a different meaning that is broader than their dictionary meaning

(Ochmani, *Lexicon of Literary Terms*). Tzarfati (1978) adds that the metaphor spices up picturesque speech, making it more forceful, and is thus of primary importance in literary writing. The power of the metaphor is its ability to bring alive, renew, and strengthen the impact of the message. A successful metaphor will leave a strong impression on the listener.

When examining a text for rhetoric, one must differentiate between over-used, worn out metaphors and whole picture metaphors, which have a real rhetorical effect in addition to the aesthetic pleasure and excitement they arouse. Nir (1978) states that the more complex the metaphor, the more impressive its effect. When a metaphor is used too frequently, its figurativeness is diminished to the point where the stylistic-rhetorical transformation becomes a permanent word in the lexicon (e.g., bottleneck). A metaphor's degree of figurativeness ranges from the one time use, which has the highest degree of figurativeness, to those metaphors so commonly used that their figurativeness is no longer felt and they become dead metaphors.

Metaphors are the most prominent figurative devices used by the sports commentators examined. As is well known, there are additional devices such as oxymorons, similes, and parables although in our study they were found less frequently or not at all.

Below are some examples that illustrate a variety of figurative speech from the articles examined, accompanied by a brief discussion of their character as rhetorical devices.

"יניב קטן, שיושב בשנתיים האחרונות, פורח אצל שום."

Yaniv Katan, who was *dried out* for the last two years, is *blooming* under Shum.⁴

(Sh. Scharf, "Playing Smart Defense")

"הצלחה בהבאת אותה רוח הקרבה וההתלהבות שכה בלטו ביום שלישי שעבר
בנצחונות בנוק אווט ולא רק בנקודות בקרבות אחד על אחד, היא גם אחד
התנאים לעבור את המשוכה הענקית הזו."

Success in bringing the same spirit of enthusiasm and sacrifice that was so evident last Tuesday in a victory by *knock out and not on points in one on one combat*, is also a precondition to *jumping this hurdle*.

(Sh. Scharf, "Playing Smart Defense")

⁴ Yitzhak Shum replaced the previous team coach.

In the above examples, simple, banal, and even worn out metaphors are used. In the first example, metaphorical images from the plant kingdom are used (use of the terms “dried out” and “blooming”). It is worth noting that these terms, besides being horticultural terms, have undergone a process of linguistic downgrading and today are slang.

In the second example, there is use of a metaphorical image from different sports, together with the use of clichés: “knock out” and “on points” (from boxing) and “jumping hurdles” (from track and field). Metaphors of this type do not always have rhetorical effect, and lack the beauty and vitality of living metaphors.

”אז מה לעזאזל הוא מצא ביושב ראש ההתאחדות שהוא חבר אליו, תומך בו
ומונע בגופו כל אפשרות לסלק אותו מתפקידו”

So what the *hell* does he see in the union head that he befriends him, supports him and *lays down his body* to block any attempt to remove him from his post?
(A. Ratzon, “Shahar Took His Time”)

The above example is notable in that it has a combination of different rhetorical elements intertwined: alongside “hell” (a biblical term, which has been secularized and transformed into common vulgarity), that strengthens the wonder of the rhetorical question, the metaphorical image (worn out as it may be) is structured in a layered fashion presenting both an emotional and physical defense of Gavri Levi, preventing his dismissal as head of the union.

”אבל רוחו של גרנט עדיין מרחפת בין רמת גן לקריית אליעזר ובין מלטה
לניקוסיה.”

Grant’s spirit still hovers from Ramat Gan to Kiryat Eliezer and from Malta to Nicosia.
(A. Ratzon, “Not Zutautas, Yaniv Katan”)

This example is notable in that the metaphorical image is taken from the Bible (Genesis: “The spirit of the Lord hovered over the face of the water.”). The writer wished to demonstrate the tremendous influence of Avram Grant, who was the Israel National Team coach and former Maccabi Haifa coach, by painting a godlike metaphorical image, and thus strengthening Grant’s influence by equating him, as it were, with God. It is worth noting the second part of the rhetorical image, in which the hovering is between places

where the Israel National Team and Maccabi Haifa play, does not mention the teams' names: Ramat Gan (symbolizing the Israel National Team), Kiryat Eliezer (symbolizing Maccabi Haifa), and in a matching parallelism (again a biblical element), from Malta (symbolizing the Israel National Team) to Nicosia (symbolizing Maccabi Haifa).

”גם אין יותר בעיות של סיבולת, אפילו השרירים הקצרים התארכו והארוכים התקצרו, כבר אין מי שמדגיש כי הכושר הגופני מספיק לישראלים למחצית אחת, שאחריה גוג מפגין את חוסנו ומגוג את חיתתו.”

There are no more problems with endurance, the short muscles have lengthened and the long ones shortened, no one is saying that the Israelis' physical fitness is only good enough for half a game, and that then Gog demonstrates his strength and Magog his power.

(A. Ratzon, “Shahar Took His Time”)

In this example there is a combination of several different types of rhetorical devices. There is cynicism and criticism towards those who cast doubt on the ability of the Israeli soccer player. The writer mocks the detractors who denigrate the physical stature of the Israeli soccer player and make assorted excuses for their failures, based on various physiological expressions (endurance, muscles, physical fitness). The use of word-play, “the short muscles have lengthened and the long ones have shortened,” implies gloating on the part of the layman, who has been forced for years to listen to learned physiological explanations, as it were, that did not pass a reality check in this game. In addition, the biblical reference to Gog and Magog—the use of an incomplete parallelism: “Gog demonstrates his strength and Magog his power,” the use of high register words (demonstrated his strength, his power); all these intensify the irony towards the detractors who exaggerate the gap between the Israeli player and his European opponent.

5.3 The Use of Intensifiers

Intensifiers, writes Landau (1988), are for the most part open and direct. Due to the power and force inherent in intensifiers, these devices tend to be flashy and exaggerated. Nir (1977) writes that intensifiers are words that express power. He brings examples from common speech, such as tremendous, wonderful, fantastic, etc. He adds that intensifiers are names or titles that are attached to other names as modifiers or objects in verbless sentences. (Note: Since Hebrew does not have the verb “is” there are verbless sentences with

just a noun and an adjective.) In Quirk's (1976) book on English grammar, there is a comprehensive description of intensifiers, which states that the common denominator of intensifiers is that they amplify or tone down a specific unit in the sentence. The intensifiers highlight a particular point on the amplification scale, which can be high or low. Intensifiers are divided into three semantic categories:

5.3.1 *Emphasizers*

Emphasizers amplify; their intent is to apply stronger emphasis. They emphasize the truth of the highlighted component, for example of course, certainly, truly, etc. Greenbaum (1970) terms them "intensifiers that take a position." Landau (1998) comments that according to other divisions, these adverbs are included in the wider group of modular expressions and include expressions of certainty as well as expressions of doubt, which have no connection to the intensifying element.

5.3.2 *Amplifiers*

This group is divided into superlative amplifiers and amplifiers of enhancement.

1. *Superlatives*: These include any adverb or adjective that is at the top of the amplification scale, for example "the most," "totally," "absolutely," etc. These amplifiers generally cannot have *most* added to them or the adverb *very*.
2. *Enhancers*: These include intensifiers that indicate an increase in size or strength in general, except for the word *more*, which is always in comparison to the size of something else. This category includes the semantic component "very" or "many," for example: "deeply" and "largely."

5.3.3 *Downtoners*

These intensifiers are divided into four categories:

1. *Compromisers*: These intensifiers strive for the norm but at the same time they lessen the power of the verb, as in "somewhat" and "more or less."
2. *Diminishers*: For example, "to a certain extent," "a little," "partially."
3. *Minimizers*: For example, "not at all," "almost never."

4. *Approximators*: For example, “almost.” The difference between this category and the others is that it denies the truth of the statement by changing a negative to a positive, as in “I almost failed = I did not fail after all.”

An analysis of the language employed by soccer commentators examined revealed the use of the two sub-categories of empowering intensifiers (superlatives and enhancers), but not to the same extent; superlatives were used significantly more often than enhancers. This can be explained by the emotive writing that characterizes the language of soccer commentators in general. There is almost no use of downtoners. It was also found that the more frequently used intensifiers were adjectives, especially those where the intensifier is a semantic component accompanying other linguistic elements. Sometimes the intensifying element changes the word to a harsh or unpleasant word when a negative connotation is attributed such as disgraceful or scandalous. The use of these types of words expresses the intensity of the commentator’s feelings toward the subject in question and helps him transfer that intensity to the reader in order to convince him or her of its validity.

The following are some examples of superlative intensifiers:

”הצלחה כבירה”

Outstanding success (S. Cohen, “Stand and Applaud”)

”תוצאה נפלאה”

Wonderful result (S. Cohen, “To Be Excited”)

”תוכנית משחק מושלמת”

Perfect game plan (S. Cohen, “To Be Excited”)

”הכי מדהים”

The most amazing (S. Cohen, “Glory Days”)

”השער הנפלא והלא יאומן”

The wonderful and unbelievable goal (S. Cohen, “Glory Days”)

”ההופעה המקצועית ביותר, הממוקדת ביותר והמרשימה ביותר”

The most professional, the most focused and the most impressive (S. Cohen, “Glory Days”)

”יכולת פנומנלית”

Phenomenal ability (Sh. Scharf, “Playing Smart Defense”)

”ויכוח נוקב”

Harsh argument (A. Ratzon, “Shahar Took His Time”)

”דיון רציני”

Serious discussion (A. Ratzon, “Shahar Took His Time”)

”יכולת עלובה”

Pathetic ability (A. Ratzon, “Nice to See, Nice to Discover”)

”ביקורת קשות”

Harsh criticism (Sh. Scharf, “Grant Projected Fear”)

”דרך שערורייתית”

Scandalous route (R. Dorfan, “Loss of Momentum”)

”התלהבות חסרת פרופורציות”

Disproportionate enthusiasm (A. Ratzon, “Not Zutautas, Yaniv Katan”)

5.3.4 *Enhancement Intensifiers*

”המשחק החלש ביותר”

The weakest game (Sh. Scharf, “Grant Projected Fear”)

”אחד מהאיצדיונים המפחידים ביותר”

One of the scariest stadiums in Europe (A. Ratzon, “Nice to See, Nice to Discover”)

”ליגת האלופות החזקה בעולם”

The strongest Champions League in the world (R. Dorfan, “That’s How It Is in Business”)

5.4 Clichés

The word cliché, a French word that has infiltrated into most languages, was originally a block, a mold, or a board that was used as a template in photography and printing.

The word underwent a metaphoric transformation and today is synonymous with a common, worn out expression that has lost some of its original meaning (Fruchman, 2002). Fruchman notes that the term does not have an

exact definition appropriate for all those expressions that are termed cliché, therefore, there is a great deal of vagueness in the ability to sort clichés by type.

Fruchtman divides clichés into five categories: common idioms that include basic stereotypes (e.g., Where there's smoke, there's fire); idioms from animal life (e.g., He works like a dog); slogans with no connection to truth (e.g., We will win); conversation fillers (e.g., Really!); template examples from different domains, such as sports, politics, and media (e.g., Hitting below the belt).

In an analysis of the clichés found in the language of the sports commentators examined in this study, it was found that most of their clichés were of the fifth type, that is, template expressions from different fields.

Rosenthal (2001) notes that, for the most part, in journalistic speech the regular clichés are paired clichés, based on a set format: adjective + noun, for example, “wasted game,” “brilliant move,” “phenomenal ability.”

It should be noted that the inflation of sports expressions from the field that are in common usage has transformed them into clichés in the sports themselves, for example: “Playing from Saturday to Saturday” (In Israel professional soccer is played only on Saturday); “Every game starts 0:0” (meaning, anything can happen); “The ball is round” (meaning, the winner of this game can be the loser of the next), and the like.

An interesting phenomenon in the domain of sport clichés is the transference of clichés from the purely sports domain to general non-sports related usage. Rosenthal (2003) calls these expressions “extra-sports brands.” For example, “the ninetieth minute” which refers to the last minute in a soccer game in Hebrew has come to mean doing something at the last moment. Other examples, such as “hitting below the belt” and “taking off the gloves,” are universally known to mean taking an unfair advantage and removing all restraints, respectively. Hebrew has many more such expressions, some of which defy translation; others have near equivalents in other languages, like “home court,” “opening line-up,” and being “benched.”

The unique language of sports commentators is reflected in the headlines of their articles, most of which are metaphorical clichés. According to Tenen (2002) and also Yahav (1987), the language of sports journalism is particularly graphic, and article headlines are bombastic and to a great extent clichéd. For example: “The Half-Full Cup,” Days of Glory,” “Playing Smart Defense,” and “Loss of Momentum.”

Below is a selection of clichés sorted by the above-mentioned domains:

5.4.1 *Template Clichés from Different Domains*

”משחק מבוזבז”

Wasted game (S. Cohen, “Stand and Applaud”)

”הגרוש ללירה”

A penny short of a pound (S. Cohen, “To Be Excited”)

”נקודת התורפה”

Weak spot (S. Cohen, “The Half-Full Cup”)

”לשים חותמת סופית”

Final stamp (S. Cohen, “The Half-Full Cup”)

”מהלך מבריק”

Brilliant move (Sh. Scharf, “Grant Projected Fear”)

”משדר פחד”

Projects fear (Sh. Scharf, “Grant Projected Fear”)

”יכולת פנומנלית”

Phenomenal ability (Sh. Scharf, “Grant Projected Fear”)

”טרף את הקלפים”

Reshuffle the deck (Sh. Scharf, “Grant Projected Fear”)

”בורג חשוב במכונה”

Key player (A. Ratzon, “Not Zutautas, Yaniv Katan”)

5.4.2 *Sports Clichés*

”רוח הקרבה והתלהבות”

Combative spirit (Sh. Scharf, “Playing Smart Defense”)

”פתח את המשחק בסערה”

Come out fighting (Sh. Scharf, “Playing Smart Defense”)

”לשלח למתפרצות”

Go on the offensive (Sh. Scharf, “Playing Smart Defense”)

”נצחון דחוק”

Very close win (A. Ratzon, “Shahar Took His Time”)

5.4.3 *Extra-Sports Brand Clichés*

”להוריד את הכפפות”

Taking off the gloves

”להרביץ מתחת לחגורה”

Hitting below the belt

”ניצחון בנוק אווט ולא בנקודות”

Win by knock-out, not on points

5.5 Irony

According to Quintilianus (in Weizman, 2000), irony is generally identified as having a hidden reversed meaning. This definition does not cover all cases, as irony does not necessarily involve reversed meaning. Weizman states that there are different views regarding the concept of irony. Grice (1975) sees irony as conversational implicature, Clark and Gerrig (1984) as pretense, and Spreber and Wilson (1981) as reverberation.

According to the examples found in the articles examined in this study, there is varied use of ironic utterances serving different functions. The following are examples, together with a concise discussion of the function of the ironic utterance.

”אחד טוען שלא גרנט צריך לצאת להשתלמות אצל פרגוסון אלא פרגוסון צריך לצאת להשתלמות אצל שום ושלישי גורס שהוא לא מבין על מה החגיגה חיפה סה”כ נצחה קבוצה בינונית.”

One claims that it is not Grant who has to go study under Ferguson but Ferguson who has to go study under Shum, and the other does not understand why all the celebration, after all, Haifa only defeated a middling team.
(S. Cohen, “Stand and Applaud”)

Cohen opposes those who experienced exaggerated euphoria over Maccabi Haifa’s victory over Manchester United as well as those who minimized that achievement. The irony is directed primarily toward those who overdo the euphoria to the point where they are ready to send the well-known coach of England’s champion team Manchester United to study under Israeli coach Shum.

The irony is expressed by reversed meaning, as it is clear to the speaker that a coach on Ferguson's level so far surpasses Shum that the utterance is purely ironic.

”מזל שה' ובקהאם ריחמו.”

It is lucky that God and Beckham showed mercy.

(S. Cohen, “Stand and Applaud”)

In this example the biblical reference to God's mercy reverberates. In this game, Haifa lost by five goals and the mockers muttered that only due to God and Beckham's (in the same breath) mercy did they not lose by even more.

”חזרנו לעידן כאבי לב?...קבוצה ישראלית משחקת טוב...ואז מקבלת שער

רשלני מכדור נייה, ועוד אחד בעזרתם הנדיבה של הזרקורים.”

Have we returned to the age of heartache?...An Israeli team plays well...then gets a negligent goal from a stray ball, and another with the gracious aid of the floodlights.

(S. Cohen, “The Half-Full Cup”)

In this example, there is a double reverberation: The age of heartache refers to well-known situations from the past when a negligent goal from a stray ball was made (the Israeli National Team against Australia and also against Austria), as well as a reference to goalie Dudu Awhat who blamed his failure to block a goal made by the German team on being blinded by the stadium floodlights. In this example, the perceptive reader will catch the ironic meaning and recognize the references and match them to the context in which the comments were made (Weizman, 2000).

”אבל רוחו של גרנט עדיין מרחפת בין רמת גן לקריית אליעזר ובין מלטה

לניקוסיה. כי אם ז'אוטאוטס הוא עשר למי יש מקום וזמן לזוטא אולימפית

ושמו קטן?”

Grant's spirit still hovers from Ramat Gan to Kiryat Eliezer and from Malta to Nicosia. Because if Zutautas is a ten, then who has the time or place for a junior Olympian like Katan?

(A. Ratzon, “Not Zutautas, Yaniv Katan”)

According to Ratzon, Yaniv Katan's ability and contribution to the game is no less than that of Zutautas, his overseas colleague, but Grant, the team

coach, ignored this and did not invite Katan to play on the Israel National Team. Ratzon uses his column as a means of criticizing and settling accounts with Grant. Ratzon achieves this using reverse irony by saying that Katan, who is worthy of wearing the Israel National Team uniform, is a “junior Olympian.”

”אין יותר בעיות של סיבולת, אפילו השרירים הקצרים התארכו והארוכים התקצרו.”

There are no more problems with endurance, the short muscles have lengthened and the long one shortened.
(A. Ratzon, “Shahar Took His Time”)

This example, which reveals a critical attitude towards those who support complex physiological explanations of the inferiority of the Israeli sportsman, is saying that there are no more excuses for the weak achievement of Israeli sport. The irony is expressed by the cynical use of those same professional terms used by expert physiologists.

”גברי לוי ואנשי צ'רלטון שכנעו כמה פריירים שדחיית הליגה והארכת המו”מ על זכויות השידור תעלה את מחירי הזכויות הללו.”

Gavri Levy and the people at Charleton convinced a few suckers that delaying the league games and prolonging the negotiations over broadcast rights would raise the price of those rights.
(R. Dorfan, “Loss of Momentum”)

Gavri Levy asked to delay the league games. The opposition to this move is expressed here by reverse irony, according to which extending the league and extending the negotiations would raise the price of the broadcast rights, while in reality the opposite was the case. For the reader who might inadvertently accept the Gavri Levy argument at face value and not grasp the irony, Dorfan adds that only “suckers” would accept this argument, which immediately changes the reader, who naturally does not want to be counted among the suckers, to a partner to the ironic meaning.

”היכולת להפעיל כוח פיזי עצום עם חלק הגוף העליון ובו זמנית לטפל בכדור בטכניקה רכה היא נדירה בכל מקום היא לא יכולה להתפתח בפלסטינה.”

The ability to apply great physical force with the upper body while simultaneously handling the ball with gentle technique is a rare talent anywhere and could not possibly develop here in Palestine.
(R. Dorfan, “Our Change, Their Part”)

Here Dorfan tries to present the inferiority of the Israeli soccer player in mastering the elements that integrate technique and force. He does this through the use of the reverberating significance of the term “Palestine.” Palestine, the British Mandatory term for the Land of Israel, raises associations with a distant past, old-fashioned, archaic, pre-State. Dorfan stresses the difficulty of acquiring these elements anywhere, but the ironic use of the term “Palestine” explains why “it could not develop” in Israel, and saves him the need to clarify the reason for this, because if the State of Israel is still “Palestine” then it goes without saying that it does not have the requisite resources to equip the Israeli player with the tools necessary to master complex elements.

”הכוכב הישראלי” הוא כיום ההוצאה הכספית הפחות אינטליגנטית בכדורגל שלנו.”

The Israeli “star” is the least intelligent expense in soccer today.
(R. Dorfan, “Our Change, Their Part”)

Dorfan’s use of irony is expressed here in the term, “least intelligent expense,” and is meant to mock all those who pay exorbitant fees for Israeli players. Dorfan deliberately chooses “least intelligent” in lieu of stating simply, “There is no point in spending so much money for an Israeli soccer player,” and thus emphasizes in a more mocking fashion the futility and lack of logic in such financial expenditures for Israeli soccer players. Also, the use of the term “star” expresses reverse and hidden irony, for if the expenditure is not intelligent then why is the player called a “star”?

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to present as complete a description as possible of the emotive rhetorical devices used in the language of Israeli soccer commentators in the written press. The emotive means of persuasion were

examined in thirteen different articles that were published over a short period (the winter of 2002) dealing with two topics: Maccabi Haifa in the European Cup Championship and the Israel National Team's game against Malta. Four soccer commentators were chosen who represent the three major newspapers in Israel.

The conclusions that arose from an examination of the emotive rhetorical devices in the articles that were examined in this study are discussed as follows:

1. High Register and Low Register Words: A prominent feature of sports commentators' language is the use of low register words. Words of different types were used side-by-side: sub-standard language, curses, slang, etc. It is unlikely that any other section of the newspaper would allow their writers to use such low language. Expressions like "disgusting" and "low-life" would be unacceptable to the editor of any section but sports. Nonetheless, soccer commentators' language is not always free from the use of high language, and it is worth noting that Israeli soccer commentators for the most part are satisfied with using high register words (and not words from romance languages, scientific words, poetic words, etc.), and these rather infrequently. The reason for this stems from the fact that sports sections have a populist/everyman character intended for as wide an audience as possible. The use of high register words is not widespread among the commentators. Unique to sports commentators is the use of high register words alongside low register words in the same sentence or paragraph. This is apparently due to the writers' desire to be perceived as authoritative, knowledgeable, and professionally credible, while at the same time appealing to a wide audience in everyday language.

2. Use of Figurative Speech: In the language of the soccer commentators that were examined, the use of metaphors was the most prominent form of figurative speech. Their use of metaphors was no different from that of standard use, and it would be difficult to point to any differences among the commentators in their use of banal metaphors, metaphors from different domains, etc. Although there are additional figurative devices such as oxymorons, imagery, and parables, some of which appear occasionally and others not at all among the commentators examined, it can be said that metaphors are the most prominently used of the figurative devices.

3. Use of Intensifiers: An analysis of the language of the soccer commentators examined in the study revealed the use of the two sub-categories of empowering intensifiers (superlatives and enhancers), but not to the same

extent: superlatives were used significantly more often than enhancers. This can be accounted for by the emotive writing that characterizes the language of soccer commentators in general. There is almost no use of downtoners, presumably because these are more typical of the philosophical register and of “careful” academic writing and not of the more blunt and aggressive language of soccer commentators.

4. Use of Clichés: Israeli soccer commentators often use clichés. An analysis of the clichés found that the majority were template expressions from different domains, generally paired clichés based on a set format: adjective + noun, as in the examples “wasted game” and “close win.” Many clichés used are sports expressions from the playing fields, whose routine use has turned them into clichés in the sports domain itself (e.g., “fast break,” “come out fighting”). An interesting phenomenon in the field of sports clichés is the transference of expressions from the purely sports domain to other domains (e.g., “hitting below the belt,” “taking off the gloves”). In addition, many of the titles of the articles examined in this study had a cliché character (“The Half-Full Cup,” “Loss of Momentum”).

5. Use of Irony: Israeli soccer commentators make extensive use of irony. According to the examples found in the articles examined in this study, there is a varied use of ironic utterances serving different functions (hidden inverse meaning, pretense, reverberation, etc.).

7. FUTURE RESEARCH

Research is currently being conducted comparing the similarities and differences in sports journalism in the Hebrew and Arabic press in Israel.

Appendix 1: Table of Rhetorical Devices

Article/ Device	Dorfan/ Change	Dorfan/ Momentum	Dorfan/ Business	Ratzon/ Took his Time	Ratzon/ Yaniv Katan	Scharf/ Happiness	Scharf/ Nice to See	Scharf/ Smart Defense	Scharf/ Projected Fear	Cohen/ Glory	Cohen/ Cup	Cohen/ Excited	Cohen/ Applause
Emotive: Low register		3	5	10		1	5	10	2	2	2	1	2
Simplification				2		1		1	2				
High register		1		10	1	1				1			1
Semantics: Graphic Language				4	2	1		2					
Irony, Cynicism	2	1		8	4	1	1				1		1
Settling Accounts				8	4	1		1	3		1		1
Clichés	4	5	1	9	3	3	4	16	6	1	5		3
Connotations		5		2				1					
Intensifiers		2	2	12	2		4	3	2	6		2	3

Appendix 2: Suggested Lesson Topics

This appendix is offered to teachers of different levels to help them utilize the material to encourage a better understanding of the different terms and devices through analysis of the examples given in the body of the article.

Lesson 1: Use of High and Low Register Words

Goals:

- To be able to differentiate high and low register words
- To be able to sort and categorize each group of words according to source (Bible, Proverbs, Modern Hebrew, Slang, etc.)
- To acquire the knowledge and tools of which register is appropriate to which situation

Lesson 2: Figurative Speech

Goals:

- To understand the concepts associated with figurative speech (metaphor, imagery, oxymoron, parable, etc.)
- To be able to identify and differentiate the different types of metaphors (simple, hackneyed, worn out, whole picture, etc.)

Lesson 3: Intensifiers

Goals:

- To understand the concepts (emphasizers, amplifiers, superlatives, enhancers)
- To be able to analyze and sort texts according to the different types of intensifiers. The daily sports section of the newspaper can be used as a source of texts.

Lesson 4: Clichés

Goals:

- Explanation of the term cliché and the problematic nature of this term.
- Familiarization with the different categories of clichés.
- To be able to analyze and sort texts according to type of cliché.

Lesson 5: Irony

Goals:

- Explanation of the term ironic expression.
- Understanding of the terms related to irony (reverse meaning, double reverberation)
- Analysis of ironic expression in conjunction with additional rhetorical devices.

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