

Culture in sports news: “Intertextual” examples from English and French newspapers

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It is usually said that sports news discourse is of lower quality compared to other press sections. In our thesis we demonstrate that sports journalists discourse is (1) a studied discourse (2) a variation of *journalèse*. One of their usual device is to pick in rhetorical figures (metaphors, hyperboles, references, etc.) overused elements that become clichés.

“A Brazilian immigrant by the name of Roger (Guerreiro), who has barely been in Poland for two years and could well be quitting Legia Warsaw for **richer pastures** after the tournament.”

“But Lord, they went about things the hard way yesterday. **Frailty, thy name is Amélie; and thy second name is Nicole.**”

“**It’s a special kind of magic:** Rooney star turn thrills Capello the ringmaster.”

“**Du pain béni** pour Ronaldo qui se jouait des deux défenseurs pour venir crucifier Coupet dans un angle difficile.”

“L’équipe qui perdra, mardi 23 octobre, verra ses chances de qualification pour les huitièmes de finale réduites comme **peau de chagrin.**”

“Ainsi, faisait remarquer avec amusement la radio France Inter vendredi 25 janvier, la presse indienne faisait-elle moins de place à **Nicolas Sarkozy**, en visite dans le pays, qu’à deux de ses concitoyens désormais mondialement célèbres : ce fameux Tsonga et **Jérôme Kerviel, le trader dilapidateur de la Société Générale, qui a escamoté 4,9 milliards d’euros.**”

“Strauss, who will captain England Lions in a three-day match against the Indians starting at Chelmsford on Friday, showed signs of returning to form in **making 38**, including a **six and six fours**, but then pulled a long hop to **mid-wicket.**”

“Cooke in comfort zone for World Cup **hat-trick.**”

“Ainsi perdurent les facéties au coeur de systèmes tactiques archaïques, concerti harmonieux de **lobs** géniaux (Suazo, Messi), **sombrero** osé (Castillo) et penalties **en panenka** (Abreu, Riquelme).”

This alternate use of specialized and cultural elements aims at conniving with the readership and it allows references to shared knowledge and values.

After having developed what we call “intertextuality” in such a discourse, we propose to show the different kinds of shared knowledge: it goes from the basics of sport rules and terminology to sports news, and quite often about sportsmen and sportswomen’s life. This is what everybody can expect from a sport specialist. However they also use intertextual references from the Bible, well known literature (greek mythology, Shakespeare, Balzac, etc.), history or pop culture and make references to general news (politics, economy, etc.).

This smartness pushes to use all those references into rhetorical and syntactical clichés as religious metaphors, hyperbolic discourse and idioms. This leads to question the role of clichés into sports news discourse.

We will analyse rhetorical and linguistics devices that make sports journalism discourse an intertextual discourse thanks to articles published in both English and French written press.