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Voices of the Crowd: A Sociolinguistic Study of Fanatical Chants in Algerian Football Stadiums

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Abstract

This study aims to bridge the gap within the field of football chants in Algerian stadiums. Using Braun and Clark's (2006) framework for thematic analysis, the present study explores the linguistic devices and themes covered in Algerian Football chants. The corpus of this study includes the analysis of various videos of fanatical chants in Algerian football stadiums. Results of the study detect three main themes in Algerian football stadiums: political, social, and economic. The findings reveal the use of diverse linguistic devices, such as code-switching, hyperbole, mocking, and metaphor. Lastly, this study uncovers how football fans consider stadium chants as a powerful tool of communication loaded with emotions and beliefs.

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1. *Introduction*

Although football (soccer) is one of the oldest sports, football chants are a relatively recent phenomenon. Football stadium chants have a central place in today's attraction experiences. Most fans consider chants and cheers to have an indirect significance loaded with emotions, beliefs, protestations, and taunts. Furthermore, football chants tend to tackle multiple and diverse themes using different linguistic devices to have more significant effects on the attractiveness of the game (Clark, 2006). Collinson (2009) asserts that a considerable amount of cultural and social harmony is remarkably achieved by selecting appropriate chants that match the real world of a speech community.

Historically, it was not until the middle of the 20th century that football chants became a crucial phenomenon in stadiums, as Kopiez and Brink (1999: 17,68-71) point out. They also state that the song introduced by Gerry and the Pacemakers in the 1960s, "You'll Never Walk Alone" by FC Liverpool fans, is considered the pioneering chant that has ever existed in football stadiums (ibid). The song is characterized by its positive basic message, in which fans assert that despite all possible obstacles and holdbacks, our team will never walk alone, as we will always be supportive. However,

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this song was interestingly adopted by several football clubs worldwide, mainly in the United Kingdom. The reason behind such widespread popularity goes back to the fact that the song "You'll Never Walk Alone" has no references to specific clubs or names. (ibid).

One might not consider football chants worth studying because he consideres the semantic aspect of the chants solely, regardless of the contextual constraints. These latter are crucial for obtaining the correct use and analysis of the construction. In the context of a football match, the first prerequisite is that many singers (fans) sing the song together. Nevertheless, only selected individuals or leaders can initiate the chants. If individuals with less standing and shy impact try to begin the chants, they risk associating a potential face loss (Goffman, 1967) if their attempt is ignored by the fan block (Kopiez and Brink, 1999).

Furthermore, from a communication and psychological point of view, chants in football stadiums have a crucial self-revelation function (Schulz von Thun, 1981). He claims that chants can establish and reinforce the individual's identity and the joint fan block's identity. Thus, in line with the Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel (1978) i.e., the chants construct the individual's self-concept as a social group member. Moreover, the literature has proved to what extent chants and songs are essential in controlling, showing greater interest in the lyrics and the rhythm of those chants. Collinson (2009) asserts that football chants effectively create a spatial state of belonging and social identity.

Despite the interesting facts about football chants that we have seen, very few studies have been conducted on this phenomenon. Thus, this study aims to investigate the importance and construction of football chants in a field that has always been a significant field of study for linguists in Algeria.

Algeria has developed a complex linguistic profile through Arabic and its regional varieties, Berber in some areas, and French as a functional secondary language as a legacy of the colonial period (Bouamran, 1986). Furthermore, the English language is smoothly paving its way within Algerian society. Nowadays, it is considered the language of the economy, technology, social networks, and education with a higher degree. Such multilingual realization in Algeria yielded a severe diglossic situation among its speech community members. Thus, the investigation of football chants in Algeria is quite complicated since the linguistic situation in Algeria is complex to a fair extent.

Hence, this study aims to bridge the gap within the field of football chants in Algerian stadiums. It seeks to detect all the different themes tackled in football stadiums and the linguistic devices used. Thus, two research questions need to be answered;

1. What are the main themes tackled by football fans in Algerian stadiums?

2. What linguistic devices are used to express those themes?

In parallel with the two research questions, it is hypothesized that football chants in Algerian stadiums tend to tackle various themes vis-à-vis political, cultural, and educational chants. Furthermore, it is also hypothesized that these chants have a complex linguistic construction. Several linguistic devices may be detected, namely code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing, and taboos. The

latter is hypothesized to dominate football chants in Algeria due to the context of utterance, while the first three linguistic devices are hypothesized to be in correlation with the historical background of Algeria in the colonial era against France (1830-1962).

2. *Theoretical Background*

Hitherto, we have seen and established great significance as far as football chants are concerned. Many linguists emphasize the complex construction of such chants and how they serve much more than cheering and carnivals, but also form a sense of belonging among fans (Schulz von Thun, 1981). Nevertheless, minimal research was conducted to investigate such a phenomenon. Thus, this study tries to contribute and bring considerable significance as far as football chants are concerned.

This section covers some previous studies investigating football chants from sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives. In 2018, Argan et al. investigated the use of metaphors in football chants. Their study aimed to detect different metaphoric expressions implemented in football chants. Thus, 84 chants from 13 Super League Teams (Turkish League) were analyzed. Chants were selected using careful criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling strategies. The content analysis of detected metaphors upon listening to and reading the lyrics of chants was calculated using SPSS. The program revealed both frequency and percentage analyses.

Moreover, the metaphors used in the chants of all different teams were categorized vis-à-vis their common characteristics. Results of the study indicated a total of 526 metaphors. While analyzing all metaphors, the results suggested that the metaphors of "heart" and "love" dominated other types of metaphor mappings. Moreover, the most frequently used metaphors for all teams were categorized into six mappings: "passion", "power", "nature", "symbol", "life", and "fanatic". Nevertheless, "passion" metaphors were used more frequently in chants of most Turkish teams in the Super League. All in all, the study assumed that the intensity of emotions in chants is supported mainly by metaphoric expressions that stick in the minds of fans in the most influential and catchy way at the same time.

Furthermore, Knijnik (2018) conducted a sociolinguistic study that focused on the aspects that lead to imagining a multicultural community in an everyday football carnival: Chants, identity, and social resistance. His paper unveiled the vital social issues that form the basis of chants of the most culturally diverse cohort of Australian football fans. Using a theoretical approach based on diverse ethnographic fieldwork, the data interestingly reflect the fans' multicultural identity and beliefs for a non-conflictive community. The findings also indicate how football chants in Australia challenge mainstream fandom culture, expressing how fans resist the constraints of the current social harmony. Moreover, the results show how the fans' daily routine is greatly affected by the carnivalesque quality they are living in football stadiums. As a closing note, the study suggests a broader use of the methodology used in this research to investigate different codes in Australian sports and examine how multiculturalism is currently enacted in these contexts.

In 2007, Joanne Luhrs conducted a study that explored the role of football chants in the continuity of the traditional linguistic genre of "blason populaire". Roughly speaking, "blason populaire" refers to the conventional expressions that manifest group identities and rivalries. While many forms of

"blason populaire" have declined during the last hundred years, namely the older village rhyme and some county nicknames, football chants emerged as a significant vehicle keeping the genre alive in England today (Lavric 2008). Sung week in and week out at football grounds across the country offering boasts of the merits of one team against the deficiencies of the opposing team's representatives, they are an example of how "blason populaire" is being carried forward into the twenty-first century. The study was based on ethnographic data collected through participant observation during football games and interviewing some football fans. The study explores the nature of different football chants, assessing at the same time to what extent they resemble themes and functions constructing the "blason populaire". The study also investigates how chants in football stadiums create and maintain identities and rivalries. Findings suggest that football chants are critical factors that form and guide social identities in a carnivalesque context. Nevertheless, many surrounding issues were detected, such as censorship and taboo inspection. Such rigorous decisions may be a crucial factor that will prevent and proscribe chants from football stadiums, even though chants represent a symbolic icon for social identity and harmony among speech communities.

Last but not least, in his paper entitled "Cognitive Sociolinguistic Aspects of Football Chants: The Role of Social and Physical Context in Usage-based Construction Grammar", Hoffmann (2016) investigated the cognitive relation between stress and grammar in football chants. Relying on usage-based approaches to language, the study depicted how the stress of a speaker's mental grammar arises. Findings suggest that language chants in football stadiums are shaped by language use and that the resulting mental representations include vibrant contextual linguistic and non-linguistic pieces of information. Furthermore, various sociolinguistic studies have pointed out the great importance of both social and physical context factors and individual styles that speakers tend to draw on to construct their linguistic identities in authentic language use. Nevertheless, usage-based Construction Grammar approaches have not paid enough attention to similar phenomena. This paper, however, argues that such approaches ignore recent sociolinguist contributions to the active stylization of fans by dynamic linguistic acts of identity and social harmony. For this purpose, the study shows the significance of these insights, taking English football chants as a corpus for investigation. Findings illustrate how football chants can be analyzed as linguistic constructions constrained by social and physical context factors. It also argues that the two factors function as linguistic acts of identity and social harmony among fans, and the fact that they are not only relevant for such types of constructions but also through the need to be taken into account in usage-based Construction Grammar analysis in general, and chants in sports in particular.

However, little work was done to shed light on this phenomenon in the Algerian context. Hence, this pioneering study aims to bridge the gap and explore the linguistic construction of football chants in Algerian stadiums, exploring the themes tackled in those chants and the linguistic devices used to express those themes.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Aim and Significance of the Study

This study aims to investigate and describe the fanatical chants in Algerian football stadiums. Furthermore, this study seeks to identify the different themes and subjects that go beyond football cheering and rivalry abuse on the one hand, and to detect the linguistic devices used in those themes. Although football chants are considered a crucial phenomenon that serves as a linguistic tool for social harmony and identity construction, minimal studies have been conducted. For this purpose, this study attempts to shed light on football chants in Algeria, paying particular attention to how they treat themes surrounding their society. Moreover, the complex linguistic situation in Algeria inspires even more complex chant construction.

3.2 Corpus and Data Collection

This study adopts a descriptive approach and relies on the direct observation method in which the researcher firmly observes and analyses the corpus under scrutiny. The corpus of this study includes the analysis and investigation of several YouTube videos of fanatical chants in Algerian football stadiums. We relied on YouTube because it represents an objective database that voices the Algerian youth's views and raises their awareness (Said and Mouhadjer, 2023). Corpora were selected based on the number of views and ratings. Videos in this study range between 1:29 to 6:42 minutes long (a total of 21.30 minutes). The chants gathered were collected from the fans of four (4) different Algerian football clubs in the first league: 1-MCA (Mouloudia Club d'Alger), 2-USMA (Union Sportive de la Medina d'Alger), 3-CRB (Chabab Riyadhi de Belouezdad), and 4-USMH (Union Sportive de la Médina du Harrach). For ethical considerations, all the videos we analyzed to collect chants date back to 2017-2018-2019. Hence, the analyzed chants describe the events during or prior to 2019 maximum.

3.3 Data Analysis and Theoretical Framework

The gathered data will be analyzed using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis framework. This framework will help identify, analyze, and report themes within data in rich detail (social, cultural, economic, and political themes). Data analysis is divided into four main parts: 1- getting familiar with the data. 2- Generating initial codes. 3- Searching for themes. 4- Defining and naming themes. These four steps might be the appropriate tool to help detect any given theme in the data at hand.

Regarding the framework, "Thematic analysis" is a method that identifies, analyzes, and reports all detected themes (patterns) in the obtained data. The technique seeks not only to organize the data but also to describe it in detail. Nevertheless, thematic analysis is also used to interpret various aspects of research topics (Boyatzis, 1998). For this reason, this framework denies the active role the researcher always plays in identifying themes in the way the framework is responsible for selecting which themes are of interest to report to the readers (Taylor & Ussher, 2001).

4. Results and Discussion

Results of this study indicate the presence of diverse themes in Algerian football stadiums as hypothesized, suggesting that fans are not limited to cheering and rival censure but also express different themes to promote social harmony. Therefore, in this study, three distinct themes were identified:

political, social, economic, and cultural. Each theme will be analyzed and discussed in detail with examples, supported by tables and graphs that clarify the findings.

4.1 Political chants

The difficult period Algeria has faced in recent decades has led football fans to strongly express their attitudes and expectations regarding the political situation Algeria is experiencing. This paper identified a significant number of political chants within the corpus. Political chants were the most common among all other themes. The overall results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Political Chants in Algerian Football Stadiums

N°	Original expression	Literal Translation	Linguistic device
1	لي حاكيمنها ما خلاو حتى شي	Those who control it did not leave anything	Hyperbole
2	حلوا باب القنطة	They opened the door to misery	Metaphor
3	و نشهدو عليكم دم الشهيد	The blood of the martyrs will witness against you	Metaphor
4	passé ننسى jamais	We will never forget the past	Code-mixing + hyperbole
5	بانو العيوب البلاد هادي تقسمت عيناني	Flaws have arisen, as they split the country in broad daylight	Metaphor
6	هاذ system انا عياني	We are fed up with this system	Code-mixing
7	عيينا من les promesses كل يومhistoire	We are tired of promises, every day there is a new story	Code-switching
8	Passé neclassih في dossier noir	I will archive the past in a hateful chapter	Code-switching + metaphor
9	لي يهدر كلمة يدوه بعشرة	Those who stand up against them will be locked up for ten years	Hyperbole
10	نتوما كي المتهم و حنا الضحية	You are like the defendant, and we are the victims	Simile

As the table above illustrates, political chants are the most likely to be manifested in football chants as far as Algeria is concerned. The chants often tackle political situations, figures, and flaws of the Algerian government. Nevertheless, the data suggest that fans use different linguistic devices to express their attitudes and beliefs. Metaphors outnumbered all other linguistic devices, whereas code-switching/mixing (in French) was also highly frequent. Techniques such as hyperbole, simile, and mocking were also detected in the obtained data. Findings reveal that no literal meaning was detected among the political chants, proving that all political chants are uttered figuratively. The gathered data illustrated in Table 1 are explained as follows:

1. **Those who control it did not leave anything**: This passage employs hyperbolic language vis-à-vis the term “anything” to underscore the extent to which Algerian governors and politicians

plundered the nation's wealth. The exaggerated portrayal is set to emphasize the pervasive corruption, a claim that was substantiated in 2019 when numerous politicians faced judicial proceedings on charges of theft, fraud, and money laundering.

2. **They opened the door to misery:** Algerian fans firmly attribute their suffering to the actions of politicians. The metaphor employed in this expression encapsulates the depth of the fans' discontent regarding their social and economic conditions, thereby articulating a deep dissatisfaction with the country's stakeholders, specifically the political leadership. The metaphor emphasizes causality by mapping misery as a place Algerians can physically enter. By chanting " they opened the door to misery," the fans imply that politicians' actions allowed misfortune to take hold.

3. **History will mark you as traitors**: In this passage, the metaphor functions as a poetic linguistic device that condemns the political officials. Linguistically, politicians are conceptualized as embodiments of unfaithfulness. It highlights the lasting negative perception attached to political figures in Algeria's sociopolitical and historical context. Given Algeria's historically delicate narrative, the metaphor symbolizes politicians as unfading figures of disloyalty. The metaphor suggests that the legacy of politicians will remain irrevocably marked by unfaithfulness.

4. **We will never forget the past**: his passage answers a former Prime Minister who implicitly recalled the traumatic period of the Algerian civil war in the 1990s. Beyond its aesthetic and rhyming objective, the use of code-mixing is set to reach a broader audience by blending Arabic and French. However, employing hyperbole in this chant is to underscore the enduring terror Algerians witnessed in the 1990s. Consequently, the fans exhibit emotional awareness to emphasize that these past (bad) experiences must never be forgotten.

5. **Flaws have arisen as they split the country in broad daylight**: Fans using a metaphor is a vivid strategy to criticize the politicians. Through a dual-purpose metaphor, the chant perceives the imbecility of politicians while implicitly condemning them. The "cake" metaphor symbolizes the wealth of Algeria and underscores the awareness among Algerian youth, particularly football fans. The figurative language implies that the Algerian political leadership is the only one responsible for the Algerian crisis, and holds that everyone knows this through the term "in broad daylight".

6. **We are fed up with this system**: As we have seen previously, the use of bilingual codeswitching between Arabic and French is usually used to target a broader audience. This chant explicitly expresses the dissatisfaction of the fans with the Algerian political system. By highlighting the historical context of Algeria, the fans evoke public frustration and explicitly protest against the political corruption.

7. **We are tired of promises; every day there is a new story**: the chant explains how Algerians have been fed up with the empty promises and novel stories that politicians usually come up with and seldom fulfil. By showing their bilingual competence, the fans amplify the protest discourse to resonate with a larger audience who is familiar with both codes.

8. **In a black file, I will archive the past:** This chant is directly related to chant number (4). It answers Algerian politicians who used to remind and threaten Algerians of the past. Linguistically,

the use of a codeswitched metaphor serves to capture the complex political grievances and citizen dissatisfaction through evocative imagery. More specifically, the fans chose the colour "black" to convey negativity and secrecy. This is mainly to imply that the contents of this black file expose corrupt political practices.

9. **Those who stand up against them will be locked up for ten years**: the fans employ a hyperbole through an exaggerated claim that whoever stands against the system will be imprisoned for ten years. The metaphor amplifies the severity of punishment to draw attention to the political repression of dissenting voices.

10. **You are like the defendant, and we are the victims:** Mapping politicians as the defendant and people as victims manifests a linguistically solid ability in a poetic context. This simile employs a contrastive linguistic passage that explicitly depicts politicians as the defendant and the public individuals (the fans in this case) as victims.

4.1 Social chants

The second theme that was detected in the corpus is concerned with social chants. Algerian football fans consider stadiums the perfect context for total freedom of speech. Unlike political chants, social chants carry a considerable amount of literal meaning. These chants describe the social situation Algerians are living, making sure to include some actual social events that happened in Algeria in the recent decades. Data gathered from the corpus is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Social Chants in Algerian Football Stadiums

N°	Original expression	Literal translation	Linguistic device
1	مارانيش قادر نحمل هاذ لعذاب	I can't withstand such torture anymore	Metaphor/ hyperbole
2	Impasse المعيشة هاذيا	What a pitiful lifestyle	Metaphor/ Code-mixing
3	خليني نروح في بابور اللوح	Let me leave in a wooden canoe	Literal meaning
4	ابني لحباس، لمرا تخدم، والشبيبة راقدة	Build more jails, women are working and the youth are sleeping	Metaphor/l iteral

5	يا ناس يا ناس من l'Algérie انا عييت خلاص	O people, O people! I am tired of this Algeria	Vocative/code-mixing
6	Jeunesse perdue في هاذ البلاد قتلها الوسواس	The youth in this country are lost; hallucinations have killed all of them	Borrowing/ metaphor/hyperbole
7	لوكان جينا لاباس منحرڤوش لبلاد الناس	If we were okay, we wouldn't illegally migrate to other countries	Metaphor/conditional

The chants presented in the table above reflect the image of the social situation in Algeria. They tackle various situations that Algerians socially deal with. The most common subject in this thematic analysis is the illegal migration of the youth to Europe. Illegal migration, or "harga", has been Algeria's most standard social phenomenon in recent decades. News reports affirm that Algeria broke the record in illicit phenomenon migration with an average of 20.000 illegal immigrants (87% youth category) reaching Europe per year, namely to Spain, England, France, and Italy.

1. **I can't withstand such torture anymore:** both metaphor and hyperbole are used to articulate the harsh social experiences amongst Algerians. The metaphor maps the source domain of extreme physical pain onto the target domain of the difficult psychological state in the Algerian society. Additionally, the phrase “can’t withstand anymore” is a strategy to dramatize the fans’ breaking point. Consequently, this chant shows how the fans rely on both metaphors and hyperboles to articulate emotionally charged social chants.

2. **What a pity lifestyle:** by making the socio-economic critique impactful, this chant evokes empathy and shared suffering. The employment of a metaphor and code-switching is mainly to express profound frustration. The choice of the French word “impasse” (which means a dead end) is an attempt by the fans to conceptualize despair. Hence, the strategic use of French is expected to evoke a poignant tone. Overall, we assume that the complex linguistic structure of this chant reflects the complex socio-economic reality that the fans are complaining about.

3. **Let me leave in a wooden canoe**: The expression carries a literal meaning by youth to migrate, often to Europe. On the linguistic level, unlike metaphorical uses, the term “wooden canoe” functions as a deictic referent of a vehicle. However, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the “wooden canoe” carries a dual function. First, it signals fans’ alignment with the migratory ambitions. Second, it draws attention to the fatal danger of such journeys.

4. **Build more jails, women are working, and the youth are sleeping:** This chant can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically. Literally, it claims that the government is building more jails (a physical entity). Second, the fans claim that women are participating in the workforce more

than men. Lastly, they complain about Algerian youth being inactive and disengaged from any productive activity. Metaphorically, the jail stands for social mobility, working-women describes biased selection, and sleeping-youth describes the resignation of Algerian youth.

5. **O people, O people! I am tired of this Algeria:** this is the only chant where fans used the vocative to attract the attention of the audience. The vocative strategy triggers more social solidarity. Also, the double call amplifies the chant and expresses urgency. The chant seeks mutual recognition and a public complaint over the emotional, physical, and social exhaustion.

6. **The youth in this country are lost; hallucinations have killed all of them**: saying that hallucinations have killed all the youth is a strategic overstatement that totalizes Algerian youth. This linguistic strategy is a way to dramatize social severity in Algeria. Consequently, the fans employ both metaphor and hyperbole to map different abstract experiences onto extreme social imagery.

7. **If we were okay, we wouldn't illegally migrate to other countries**: describing a hypothetical situation, the fans evoke a causal relationship by framing the illegal migration as a direct consequence of their discomfort. Accordingly, this chant is believed to foster social solidarity through hypothetical reasoning.

4.3 Economic Chants

The results of this study also depicted economic chants in Algerian football stadiums. Fans, on the one hand, obviously seem to be aware of many economic affairs that the government is dealing with, as well as the corrupt figures and policies that the country has witnessed economically. There were many interrelated passages across all three themes in this study. The following table illustrates what kind of economic chants were depicted in the corpus, as it offers insights into the different linguistic devices used in these chants.

Table 3: Economic Chants in Algerian Football Stadiums

N°	Original expression	Literal translation	Linguistic device
1	غلقوا باب التقلاش	They closed the door of luxury	Metaphor/mocking
2	La jeunesse شبعت من saisie	Youths are fed up with their goods being seized	Code-switching/ metaphor
3	كاين لي فطر وما تعشاش	There are people who had lunch but not dinner	Literal/hyperbole

4	la richesse ولات héritage	Wealth became a heritage	Code-switching/ metaphor/mocking
5	لو كان جات فالبترول تجبدوه	If it were about oil, you would have found a solution to extract it	Mocking/conditional
6	دزاير بقرة راهم فيها قاع يحلبو	Algeria is a cow that everyone is milking	Metaphor

The results of this study were far from predicting the existence of economic chants in football stadiums. Regarding linguistic devices, metaphor was also the primary strategy, while switching codes and hyperbole were depicted to a lesser degree. Nevertheless, no literal meaning was retrieved in this section as opposed to the previous sections. Interestingly, these economic sections show, to a great extent, how the previous sections (political and social) are interrelated.

1. **They closed the door of luxury:** this chant employs a metaphor and mockery to criticize the economic measures held by the Algerian system in that period. The metaphor of the government "closing the door of luxury" explicitly conveys a sense of authoritarian repression vis-à-vis trade activities. From a linguistic standpoint, the juxtaposition of the metaphor and mockery expresses frustration to highlight youth marginalization.

2. **Youth are fed up with their goods being seized:** This figure of speech used in this chant describes the harshness of state measures in economics. It emphasizes the oppressive system that reduces the economic survival strategies among Algerian youths. The fans depict how youth are excluded from formal employment and relate it to chant number 4 we have seen in social chants.

3. **Who can afford lunch can't do so for dinner:** This chant functions on both literal and hyperbolic levels. Literally, it describes the actual struggle in affording basic meals and surviving in general. Figuratively, it amplifies those struggles to expose economic precarity. Hence, this dual interpretation enriches the rhetorical power embedded in the chant by targeting a larger audience (those who take it literally Vs those who take it figuratively).

4. **Wealth became a heritage:** this metaphorical mocking metaphor is an attempt to criticize the socioeconomic reality in Algeria. On the linguistic level, the metaphor functions as a cognitive shortcut to evoke the different socio-cultural interpretations of the word "heritage". Yet, in this specific context, mockery reinforces solidarity and allows marginalized groups to voice frustrations through mocking metaphors.

5. **If it were about oil, you would have found a solution to extract it:** Ayachi Mejdoubi is an Algerian citizen who passed away after authorities spent over a week trying to rescue him from a 30-metre-deep well (around the narrow 36-centimetre-wide pipeline) he had accidentally fallen into. This chant claims implicitly that if the government faced the same problem (Ayachi) with oil, it would have

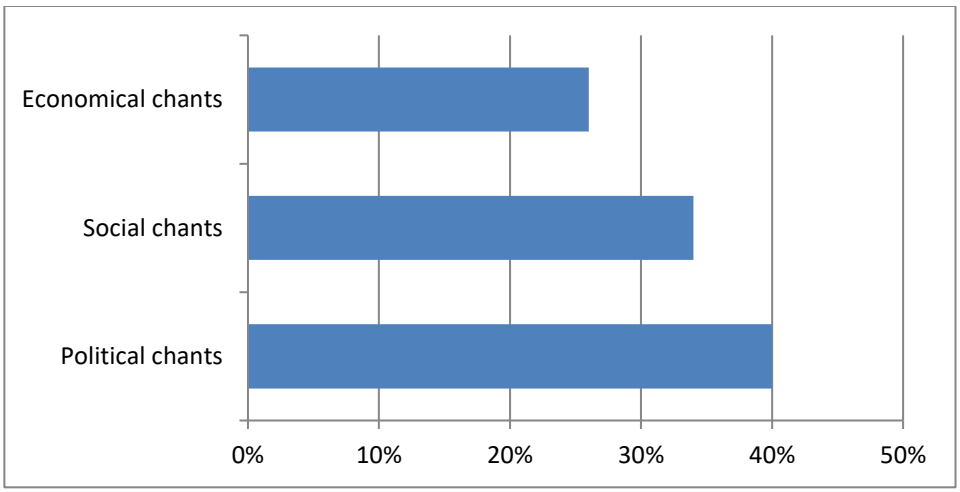
dealt with the situation much better. Fans uttered this mocking strategy to voice their socio-economic awareness. The explicit linguistic analysis of this chant sounds like a straightforward conditional statement about oil extraction. However, when considering the context, we get that the fans are implicitly and sarcastically accusing the authorities of incompetence and neglect.

6. **Algeria is a cow that everyone is milking:** mapping Algeria as a cow is a technique to depict the economic situation in Algeria. The country has natural resources, namely oil, gas, water, and solar energy, all of which are mapped as (cow). One possible interpretation of this metaphor is that the mapping of the cow embodies passivity and subordination. Hence, Algeria is claimed to lack agency over its economic system.

All in all, we have seen how the results of this study indicate the implementation of several themes that go beyond football chants. The study revealed three (3) primary themes: political, social, and economic, respectively. The fact that fans resort to chants inside stadiums to express their opinions on such delicate topics is a red flag to the local authorities, who pay considerable attention to these chants and their diverse content.

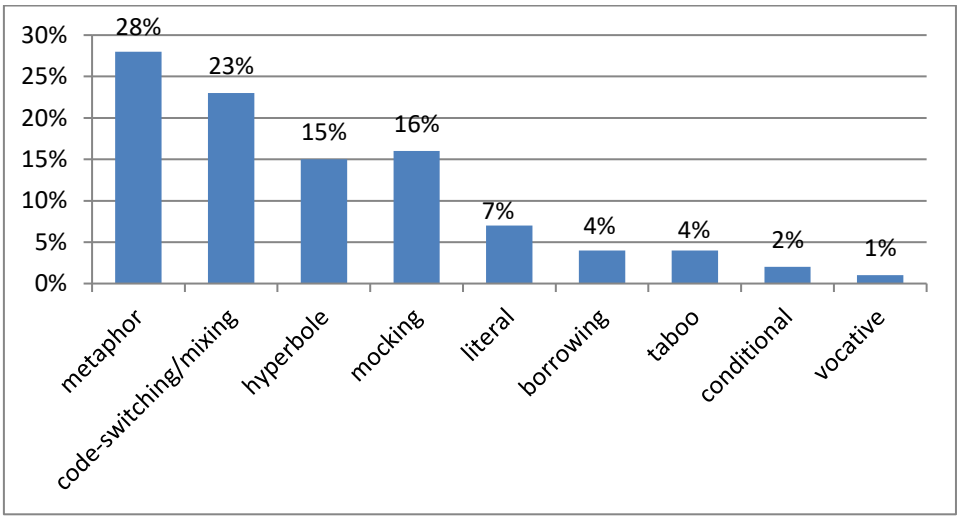
Moreover, we have seen how several linguistic devices were detected in these chants. Interestingly, metaphors, code-switching/mixing, and hyperbole appeared the most. The following graphs explain the obtained results and give statistical guidance to interpret the gathered data better.

Figure 1: Frequency of themes in Algerian football stadiums



This study shed light on the various linguistic devices detected in this thematic analysis. Algerian football fans seem to be aware of the political, social, and economic situation that the country is witnessing. The use of various linguistic devices gives rise to a serious question of who is actually behind such chants.

Figure 2: Frequency of linguistic devices used in Algerian Football Chants



One of the unexpected results is the detection of severely limited taboo terms in this study. Stadium contexts are noted to be contexts of taboo and vulgar chants. In the Algerian context, however, fans focus on delivering diverse thematic notions rather than offensiveness and vulgarity. From an opposite standpoint, Baeha (2025) reported that chants in English football stadiums carry a significant amount of vulgar and aggressive words. His study explores the chants based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to investigate how the social context is reflected in the chants inside the stadiums.

It is also important to note that the three themes appeared to be deeply interconnected. In many examples, the themes overlap and reinforce each other. This interrelation demonstrates how the language used in the chants contributes to a relatively broader understanding of the Algerian system. Hence, overlapping themes such as socio-political, socio-economic, and politico-economic come to the surface.

Rather than existing independently, these themes influence and reinforce one another, creating a cohesive framework. This interrelation highlights how each theme contributes to a broader understanding of the subject, demonstrating that they collectively shape the overall narrative or analysis

The results of the study indicate a finding similar to Argan's (2018) as far as the use of metaphor is concerned in football chants. Also, the findings fall in line with Hoffman's (2016) definition that football chants are remarkably rich contextual linguistic chants that are emotionally loaded. Accordingly, showing how fanatical chants in Algerian football stadiums represent the voices of the crowd proves what Bouziane (2023) asserted when saying that Algerians use poems and chants as a tool for cultural resistance.

5. *Conclusion*

From the research that has been conducted, it is possible to conclude that Algeria's complex linguistic and cultural situation is highly reflected in the football chants in Algerian stadiums. This paper has shown that Algerian football chants are not only sport-oriented, but they tackle different themes. As we have seen hitherto, the data detects three (3) primary themes that dominate the chants

in Algerian football stadiums: political, social, and economic. These themes are not exclusive but sometimes overlap. The results indicate that fans are more interested in political issues, and stadiums are nowadays the rostrum that describes different aspects in the Algerian context. Chants have also shown great interest in the country's social situation. Thus, the existence of such a phenomenon in a sports context gives an idea of how fans consider stadiums as a platform where they can freely express themselves.

Furthermore, we detected several linguistic devices that were used to express these themes. Although metaphor was the most used linguistic device, code-switching/mixing (in French), mocking, hyperbole, and simile were also detected in the data. Summing up the results, it can be concluded that fanatical chants in Algerian stadiums are not restricted to cheering, but they manifest a diverse thematic phenomenon that describes Algeria's political, social, and economic situations in detail.

To conclude, based on the promising findings presented in this paper, work on related and/or similar issues is still needed to test different hypotheses and validate the results discussed in this paper.

Thus, further research on this issue would be of greater interest. More specifically, we recommend investigating football chants as a form of identity marker and resistance. This study recommends that football fans need to be part of the research via interviews. Finally, it is highly encouraged to conduct more comparative studies, either between Algerian football clubs, regional (like Morocco and Tunisia), or global. This contrastive approach is expected to trace global-local dynamics rooted in football chants.

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