



## Between the Hoops: A Linguistic Examination of Media Biases Among Filipino Sportscasters

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### ABSTRACT

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In the field of linguistics, sports is one of the domains left unexplored. As a result, the study of the language of sports continues to be a relatively neglected area. Moreover, there also exists a scarcity of studies examining media biases across different domains and sectors. In order to fill this gap, this study is primarily aimed at identifying the various forms of media biases present in Filipino sportscasts and exploring how nationalistic positioning influences these biases in local sports broadcasts. In examining the language of sportscasting, a qualitative approach was employed to uncover the lexico-semantic, discourse and pragmatic constructions of these media biases. Data used in this study came from the transcribed coverages of the games of the Philippine Men's Basketball Team, during the 19th Asian Games. Specifically, the study corpus was taken from the local sports coverage of One Sports+, which was accessed through the Pilipinas Live application. Furthermore, manual qualitative coding was conducted to identify various types of media biases. The occurrences of media biases in the study corpus were also tabulated and examined. Findings of the study underscores the significant impact of nationalistic positioning on the language choices of sportscasters. Moreover, the analysis also uncovered pervasive media biases across all examined games, with local sportscasters predominantly favoring athletes from the Philippine team despite their efforts to maintain neutrality. These biases, which are likely the result of sportscasters' connections to their home country, underscore the difficulty of maintaining objectivity in the face of audience expectations during live sports broadcasts. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding diverse linguistic cues that influence audience interpretation of the sportscasters' commentaries. Findings of the study also suggest potential areas for future research which are focused on understanding the roles of media biases in sports media.

### KEYWORDS

sports linguistics, sportscasting, media biases, Gilas Pilipinas, basketball

## 1. Introduction

The internet has completely transformed the way people consume news and information by providing access to a vast array of interactive sources and platforms; however, this ease of access to information poses challenges, particularly about media bias. Furthermore, the internet has also exerted considerable influence in popularizing sports as these technological advancements enabled the media to maintain a professional relationship with the sports industry (Coakley and Pike 2014). It has also significantly diversified the sports market (Choi 2022), with sports fans displaying unparalleled dedication to understanding sports figures by actively seeking pertinent information tailored to their needs, especially updates on their favorite teams and personalities (Blumler and Katz 1974, Ganz and Wenner 1991).

As one of the primary sources of knowledge and information, the media also equip individuals with fundamental tools necessary to make informed decisions and shape their perspectives. Whether through newspapers, television, radio, or online platforms, the media serves as the vital link that connects global events to the general public, ensuring that people stay well-informed about the world around them. However, in the digital era, the media's capacity to offer unbiased news and reliable information is being called into question, as instances of misinformation, disinformation, and falsehoods proliferate, notably online.

Meanwhile, in the field of sports and athletics, sports fans also rely on the media to get updates and information. They also frequently view game highlights (Cavalier 2011), making the broadcasting of various sporting events a topic of national interest in different countries (New and Le Grand 1999). With this, it is imperative for the media to be more objective in presenting news and information to the public. However, numerous studies have demonstrated that the media, particularly in the field of sportscasting, frequently contains hidden media biases (Whannel 2000). With the huge influence of the media on the number of people who watch sporting events on television, it becomes evident that this phenomenon should be viewed as a fundamental challenge.

Furthermore, sports media also exerts a substantial influence on the societal perception of various forms of physical activity, including sports and exercise. Through these media channels, these activities are seen to transcend their mere entertainment value by highlighting that they have a deeper significance (Pilar et al. 2019). In addition, sports media also plays a significant role in elevating the status of major international sports events, which offer a unique opportunity to examine the varied cultural identities that influence various nations (Anderson 1983). However, it is crucial for sports enthusiasts to acknowledge that the portrayal of sports by journalists may not always provide a faithful representation of reality.

In the digital age, the media showcases the realm of sports and athletics in various ways, with sportscasting standing out as a particularly popular avenue. With this, it is of paramount importance for sportscasters, who hold a pivotal position in delivering news, to uphold the responsibility of offering objective and trustworthy content. However, because of the rapid pace of events during sports broadcasts, sportscasters are placed in a high-pressure situation where they are expected to simultaneously inform and entertain the audience, which leaves them little time to choose their words carefully. In light of this, sports commentators may inadvertently reveal their own underlying beliefs, attitudes, and values (Rada 1996).

On another note, in the field of languages and linguistics, sports is one of the domains left unexplored and uncovered. As a result, the study of the language of sports continues to be an overlooked field and a relatively neglected area. With this, there is a noticeable gap concerning the understanding of the intricate relationship between language and sports. Moreover, despite the profound influence of sports on cultural identity and communication, scholarly investigation into this intersection remains limited. Yet, venturing into this uncharted

territory holds the potential to uncover a wealth of linguistic phenomena intertwined with the dynamic world of sports.

Moreover, there exists a scarcity of studies examining media biases across different domains and sectors. While there may be existing literature on media biases within the realm of politics, research regarding media biases in the sports sector is notably lacking. Specifically, there is a dearth of scholarly investigations on the effects of media biases to various sports personalities. Moreover, there is also an absence of various frameworks that would show where these media biases begin and how they can be managed by the sports media. Finally, the effects of nationalistic positioning on sportscasters remains inadequately explored. This study seeks to fill this knowledge gap and assess how understanding this phenomenon can aid in managing these media biases, thus preventing sportscasters from being perceived negatively as impartial or biased.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

This study explored and investigated the roles and functions of media biases in Filipino sportscasting. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. In Filipino sportscasting, what types of media biases are apparent?
2. How do Filipino sportscasters construct biases, and what linguistic, discursive, and pragmatic elements are involved in their formation?
3. How does nationalistic positioning influence the perpetuation of media biases in Filipino sportscasting?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Language of Sportscasting**

In the modern media landscape, the significance of broadcast announcers and commentators, as well as broadcasting technology, is growing (Kim 2021). This is attributed to the enhanced accessibility to live sports events (Hwang and Lim 2015) and game-related information (Larkin and Fink 2016) facilitated by sports broadcasting. Moreover, sportscasters also play a crucial role in delivering live sports content, providing analysis, and informing sports fans of recent events, which best explains why they play a vital role in making sports broadcasts successful and effective.

Considering that sportscasters have a significant responsibility not only in addressing the needs and preferences of their audience, but also in promoting a positive image of sports, they must address both the entertainment and informational needs of the sports fans (Hawkins et al. 2001). With this, the language they use must be more impactful and must be able to emphasize conflicts to heighten fan excitement (Bryant et al. 1977). Undeniably, contemporary sportscasters must possess a variety of skills in addition to their traditional on-air duties for them to be effective and efficient in carrying out their job responsibilities.

Furthermore, the language of sportscasting is a dynamic combination of analytical, descriptive, and emotive components that collectively mold narratives and impact how viewers interpret sporting events. In the digital era characterized by unprecedented levels of global sports coverage, the language utilized in sportscasting serves to convey not only the immediate developments occurring on the field but also more extensive cultural nuances, prejudices, and localized affiliations. Additionally, the language that sportscasters use also reflects the ever-

changing nature of the sports industry by embracing technological advancements, inclusivity, and adaptability in order to engage audiences on an international scale.

Moreover, live sports commentary also serves as an essential and, at times, controversial component in the distribution of athletic competitions. Due to its distinctive complexities and capacity for amusement and fallibility, it attracts considerable interest and examination in the domain of sports media discourse (Rowe 2004). Consequently, if the sports broadcasts provide the information and entertainment their audience requires, sports fans are more likely to return to various game broadcasts and coverage (Ball-Rokeach and LeFleur 1976).

On another note, considering that the behavior and biases of one generation of sports journalists are transmitted to the subsequent generation, it is a must for sportscasters and sports commentators to cultivate a positive culture by emphasizing characteristics such as accuracy, enthusiasm, fairness, captivating storytelling, and audience engagement (Billings 2010). In spite of this, the sports media continue to exhibit instances of media bias (Whannel 2000), which may affect their credibility as a source of information. However, this also suggests that despite other factors or circumstances, the presence of biases in sports media remains prevalent and noteworthy.

Undeniably, media bias has also proven itself functional in making a news organization thrive by attracting more readers. In an effort to increase sales and readership, certain media outlets have been prone to manipulate data in accordance with the preconceived notions of consumers (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2006) with the belief that readers are susceptible to confirmatory bias and tend to ignore stories that contradict their existing beliefs (Lord et al. 1979) and that they tend to value narratives that align with their preconceived notions, unless they are so large as to change those beliefs (Mullainathan and Shleifer 2002).

Given that the problem of media bias is extremely complex, and that it appears difficult to find a clear solution to it (Park et al. 2009), scholars have studied the effect of media bias on shaping public opinion, and its influence on media corporations that have grown significantly over the past few decades (Hamborg et al. 2019).

## **2.2 Objectivity in Sportscasting**

Objectivity is essential in sports broadcasting because it permits accurate and impartial reporting of the events. It also enhances the broadcast's credibility and the audience's trust in it by preventing the influence of personal opinions and biases on the reporting (Kretzschmar 2008). Moreover, the increased presence of objectivity and credibility in sports media (Hahn et al. 2018) may benefit both producers and fans.

In the field of sportscasting, when sportscasters aim to be fair and impartial, they make the broadcast better by showing viewers a balanced view of the game. This not only keeps the broadcast objective, but it also helps the sports fans understand what is happening accurately. Likewise, when sportscasters are seen as trustworthy, more people tune in and stay engaged (Hahn and Cummins 2014). Indeed, by consistently giving viewers reliable and balanced coverage, sportscasters build a stronger bond with their audience by boosting their credibility and influence in sports media.

Furthermore, in observing objectivity in sportscasting, the sports media provides valuable insight into the performance of a team or athlete by using statistics that indicate precision and veracity (van Dijk 1988). This is because articles with numerical data are perceived as more credible than those without (Koetsenruijter 2011). However, regardless of all these efforts to observe objectivity, there are still biases in sports broadcasting, particularly in network-level sports where subtle biases are observed in production techniques, athlete profiling, program scheduling and studio announcing (Eastman and Billings 1999, Sabo and Jansen 1994).

Indeed, the issue of media bias is complex, and finding a clear solution to address this phenomenon is very challenging; however, according to Park et al. (2009), there are two different perspectives that can be taken when

considering potential solutions to this problem: approaches at the production stage aim to prevent bias during the creation process, and approaches at the post-production stage hope to address biases that arise from the content produced. Additionally, addressing biases during content production emphasizes proactive steps, such as setting guidelines and utilizing technology to aid creators in detecting and addressing biases. Conversely, post-production strategies recognize the persistence of biases, employing methods like algorithms and manual assessments to identify and rectify them.

Undoubtedly, understanding the importance of objectivity in sportscasting helps the sports commentators comprehend the importance of objectivity in sportscasting and why it is essential to refrain from making biased comments during live broadcasts. It also contributes to the development of trust and credibility among the audience by providing a fair representation of athletes and events through impartial commentary.

### **2.3 Media Biases in Sportscasting**

Media bias, including slanted news coverage, can strongly impact the public perception of the reported topics especially when individuals are unaware of its existence (Hamborg et al. 2019). Social science research highlights three significant ways in which media bias shapes the public's perception of news: priming, agenda setting, and framing (Druckman and Parkin 2005). Likewise, Bernhardt et al. (2008) also found that media bias has a significant effect on individual and public perceptions of news events and on political decisions.

Furthermore, as highlighted by Baron (2006), media bias also has both *ex ante* and *ex post* implications. On one hand, *ex post* takes place when consumers read news articles and develop a greater sense of skepticism regarding the veracity of media-disseminated information, which makes them less likely to take immediate action based solely on the presented information. On the other hand, *ex ante* occurs when media bias influences the selection of stories to be reported, thereby influencing the likelihood that individuals will respond and act in response to the news.

Notably, in the Philippines, the media has also been implicated in perpetuating biases and prejudices, as well as actively shaping social reality through its reporting (Aguja 2016). It has been a common practice for the media in the Philippines to select, frame and transform ordinary occurrences into newsworthy events because the reporting of events in the news industry is influenced by ongoing developments and controversies. Certainly, in Philippine media, controversy generates news value and peaks in media coverage (Navarro et al. 2011).

Meanwhile, in the field of sports and athletics, the presentation of information about different sports personalities and events by sports media reflects various forms of media biases, which can affect how the sports fans and supporters view and perceive the sports industry (Corcuera and Bernardo 2024). Moreover, sports serve as a platform for nations to exhibit their solidarity and national pride on an international level (Kim and Billings 2017). Even if sports are frequently perceived as a domain unrelated to politics, it is worth noting that these sporting events possess an extraordinary capacity to transcend national boundaries and nurture a shared sense of identity by bringing countries together. In fact, according to Kösebalaban (2004), the media presents sporting events to boost national pride and a shared cultural identity beyond borders. With this, it is not surprising that sports media observe media biases to promote nationalism, and this practice is known as nationalistic positioning.

While some may view the phenomenon of nationalistic positioning, where journalists and broadcasters exhibit bias towards their own nation in their reporting, as inappropriate in the media, the promotion and advocacy of nationalistic viewpoints are widely accepted in the domain of sports and athletics. In addition, this practice also allows the sports media, particularly, sportscasters, to be instrumental in fostering unity among millions of

spectators and fans throughout international sporting events by capitalizing on the combination of entertainment and emotional connection (Raney and Bryant 2009).

#### **2.4 Common Forms of Media Biases**

The most prevalent forms of media biases observed by sport media, particularly in sportscasting, include confirmation biases, absence of fairness and balance, story selection bias, tone bias, false balance, demographic bias, partisan bias and perceived superiority bias. These various forms of media biases can affect how the public views the sports industry.

Confirmation bias is characterized by individuals selectively seeking information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs while disregarding contradictory evidence (Kappes et al. 2020). In the field of sports and athletics, this form of media bias becomes evident when sportscasters express predisposed opinions regarding the skill levels of specific players (Corcuera and Bernardo 2024). Additionally, in the context of sports fandom, passionate supporters often exhibit confirmation bias by favoring information that aligns with their team loyalty while dismissing dissenting viewpoints (Sherman et al. 2000). On the other hand, the absence of fairness and balance is also seen as a form of media bias given that this phenomenon results in showing a biased representation that may favor certain perspectives while ignoring others. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014), achieving journalistic balance is a difficult endeavor because it is inevitable that some perspectives are more significant or valid than others. Undoubtedly, the lack of fairness and balance in media reporting has also affected the domain of sports journalism and media. In fact, in sportscasting, there are cases wherein sportscasters tend to give more exposure to the teams representing their own nations rather than their counterparts.

Furthermore, another common form of media bias is story selection, which occurs when media outlets choose only to feature and cover a part of an issue in their news reports and broadcasts, leaving the other possible events unattended (McCarthy et al. 1996). This selective approach has the potential to greatly influence the public's comprehension of intricate matters, including sports-related information and concerns, through the presentation of an incomplete or distorted account of events. Another common form of media bias in sportscasting is tone bias, which also has a significant effect on public opinion (Zaller 1996). Sheaffer (2007) seconded this idea as he shared that the media could influence how individuals evaluate and perceive certain topics by employing specific tones to create either a positive or negative attitude toward them. With this, tone bias occurs when the presented information may be skewed towards a particular viewpoint. In sportscasting, tone bias manifests often during crucial moments of the games and sporting events where the sportscasters consistently maintained an optimistic demeanor, injecting their commentary with elevated enthusiasm (Corcuera and Bernardo 2024).

On another note, false balance is another form of media bias, which is known for reflecting neutrality with unequal validity (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). Journalists must be able provide a 'neutral' account of a conflict by giving both sides equal weight (Hopmann et al. 2012), which best explains why observing balance is crucial in journalism. Moreover, when journalists attempt to balance a story by giving each side equal weight, it can hinder their ability to convey the truth accurately since invalid claims can be given legitimacy, perhaps unintentionally (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). Indeed, false balance can lead to skewed reporting despite attempts to appear unbiased. In addition, demographic media bias serves as another influential factor in the increased perceived impartiality of sports media. This type of bias is often evident when media outlets and news organizations hire individuals, including journalists and editors, who share similar backgrounds and perspectives. Meanwhile, in the realm of sports, this form of bias is commonly observed whenever the sports media favor specific demographic profiles that they think will excel in the field (Corcuera and Bernardo 2024). Specifically, demographic bias is

seen particularly when sportscasters express their beliefs that certain physical attributes, particularly being tall and physically fit, give athletes an advantage over the other players.

On the other hand, partisan bias is practiced and observed by media outlets whenever they favor and prefer a particular viewpoint, group of people or ideas. Moreover, Conroy-Krutz and Moehler (2015) found that partisan bias can foster a stronger national identity and play a moderating role in public discussions by exposing individuals to a variety of differing perspectives. Furthermore, in the field of sports and athletics, it is undeniable that sports media, particularly local sportscasters, observe partisan bias frequently during international tournaments where their home country is playing. These sportscasters observe nationalistic positioning as they try to support their respective national teams, which heighten and increase cases of partisan bias. Finally, the last type of media bias to be discussed in this paper is the perceived superiority bias, which is also known as illusory superiority bias. This type of media bias occurs when individuals believe they have qualities, abilities, or attributes that exceed those of the average person (Alicke 1985, Zell et al. 2020). In the field of sports and athletics, it must be noted that sports journalists and commentators often convey a sense of superiority by employing positive language and imagery to highlight the achievements and skills of different sports teams and athletes, depicting them as outstanding and dominant in their respective domains (Corcuera and Bernardo 2024).

Indeed, these different forms of media biases shape and affect viewer perceptions, particularly the identity of athletes and various sports personalities. In addition, these biases influence the construction of narratives around sports events, the portrayal of athletes, and the allocation of favorable coverage to certain teams, thereby contributing to the concepts of fairness and representation in sportscasting. Certainly, it is imperative to comprehend and understand the roles of these media biases in order to improve and enhance the quality of broadcasting and news reporting within the sporting world.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In order to offer a comprehensive understanding of how sportscasters can identify and address media biases during live broadcasts of various sports events and games, this study adopted a qualitative approach. According to Neergaard et al. (2009), qualitative research is ideal for delving into human behaviors and perspectives, allowing exploration of the "why," "how," and "what" aspects of the subject. Furthermore, this approach is also helpful in understanding people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions (Pathak et al. 2013). It is also used when numerical data alone cannot adequately address the questions (Cleland 2017). With this, given that the study delves into explaining human behavior, which is the tendency to be biased, a qualitative approach was chosen.

Moreover, an exploratory approach was used to improve the researchers' comprehension of the research phenomenon being investigated. According to George (2023), exploratory research is carried out when a deeper understanding of an issue is required. Rather than seeking definitive answers, the primary goal of exploratory research is to generate new ideas and hypotheses that can serve as the foundation for future research (Joseph 2022).

Furthermore, the research utilized qualitative transcripts of sportscasts as its source material and the study corpus. These transcripts were produced and generated by carefully listening to the recordings of the sportscasts. Each sports broadcast was meticulously reviewed, with close attention paid to the spoken commentary, descriptions, and interactions between the sportscasters. Following the transcription of the qualitative data from the sportscast recordings, the research proceeded with the identification and examination of the occurrences of the media biases

present in the study corpus, along with the lexico-semantic, pragmatic, and discourse elements that may indicate the presence of these biases.

### 3.2 Data Collection

The data utilized in this study came from the corpora selected and analyzed by the researchers. Moreover, the study utilized a specialized corpus that captures language use in specific domains to provide nuanced insights. Transcribed coverages of the games belong to this type of corpus given that these documents document the language used in sports broadcasting, including its distinct discourse conventions and communication styles. Analyzing them reveals language patterns, biases, and narrative strategies that can help improve the public's understanding of sports media language.

Specifically, the study corpus are the qualitative transcripts of the recorded sports broadcasts of the games of the Philippine Men's Basketball Team, known as Gilas Pilipinas, during the 19th Asian Games Men's Basketball event, which took place from September 26, 2023 to October 6, 2023 in Hangzhou, China. In addition, these recordings were taken from the local media coverage of One Sports+, together with Cignal TV and TV5, which were shown through the Pilipinas Live application, a streaming platform of Philippine sports.

Furthermore, the researchers opted for the 19th Asian Games as a result of the Philippines' exceptional performance in the Men's Basketball 5x5 event. After a span of over six decades, the Gilas Pilipinas successfully won their first gold medal. In order to further investigate this momentous occasion, the researchers directed their attention towards the analysis of the last three Gilas Pilipinas matches, which included the quarterfinal, semifinal, and final rounds. Table 1 offers a comprehensive overview of the game coverage that OneSports+ provided during these crucial Gilas Pilipinas matches at the 19th Asian Games.

**Table 1. Results of Gilas Pilipinas Games during the 19th Asian Games**

Competing Teams	Final Score	Date	Duration
Iran VS Philippines ( <i>Quarterfinals</i> )	83-84	October 3, 2023	1 hour and 40 minutes
Philippines VS China ( <i>Semifinals</i> )	77-76	October 4, 2023	1 hour and 54 minutes
Jordan VS Philippines ( <i>Finals</i> )	60-70	October 6, 2023	2 hours and 15 minutes

To ensure accuracy of the transcription, the researchers produced intelligent verbatim transcriptions by retaining the essential spoken content while omitting filler words and non-verbal utterances during the sports coverage. In addition, the study followed Moreover, a validation procedure was also performed by manually checking if the content of transcripts were precise. Specifically, the researchers checked and compared the transcriptions to the recorded sports broadcasts to determine any possible errors. It was then followed by the manual analysis of the corpus by detecting the media biases present in the study corpus and analyzing their lexico-semantic, discourse, and pragmatic constructions.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

In this study, the researchers focused on analyzing sportscasters' utterances extracted from transcripts of the sports broadcasts. Unlike simple sentences, utterances serve as the basic unit for analyzing spoken communication given that they are viewed as dynamic expressions of thoughts and emotions during conversation rather than static sentences (Bakhtin 1986). Below are examples of utterances taken from the study corpus:



*S2: You gotta admire the energy of Scottie Thompson. His motor doesn't run out.*

*S1: He just doesn't run out, and this is a guy that injured his wrist prior to the World Cup.*

*S2: Yes. He's the one that averages the most number of minutes for Gilas, about 27 minutes in the ball game.*

Furthermore, the data collected in this study underwent manual qualitative coding, corpus analysis and pragmatic analysis. The study ought to analyze the study corpus manually to closely investigate sportscast transcripts for linguistic cues, tone, framing, and other subtle signs of bias that automated tools may overlook. Moreover, by manually reading through the content of the sportscasts, researchers can easily identify patterns of bias in the language, focus and story selection of the sportscasters, thus providing a comprehensive approach to detecting biases in sports broadcasts. Meanwhile, corpus analysis which is a widely recognized method for describing and analyzing language (Aijmer and Altenberg 1991) that facilitates a clear macro-view of textual content (Kutter 2017), and pragmatic analysis, was performed to thoroughly extract and examine linguistic patterns, features, and usages within a diverse range of contexts found within the corpus.

Likewise, pragmatic analysis was also utilized to identify biases in sports broadcasts, as it focuses on the examination of the nuanced use of language to convey implicit messages. Through this investigation, the study was able to detect subtle cues that indicate underlying biases present in the sportscasters' language. In addition, this method of analysis also allows for a more holistic examination of biases, taking into account societal norms and media narratives within a larger social and cultural context while uncovering contextual elements and implicit meanings. For instance, in the given utterances above, there were numerous presuppositions and implicatures created. In the first two statements, the sportscasters presuppose the audience's familiarity with Scottie Thompson's energetic playing style and his wrist injury while in the third utterance, they presume the audience understands the concept of "averaging the most minutes" in basketball games. On the other hand, the sportscasters also created an implicature in the first utterance by emphasizing that Thompson's resilience is admirable given his impressive performance despite a previous wrist injury. Meanwhile, the second line implies Thompson's importance to Gilas Pilipinas based on his high average minutes per game while the third utterance suggests and indicates respect and appreciation for Thompson's determination to return to peak performance following a lengthy injury recovery.

Corpus analysis was also performed manually in this study by identifying instances where the local sportscasters committed and observed media biases in their utterances during the recorded sports broadcasts. These biases were subsequently categorized according to their respective forms. After this, each type of media bias underwent scrutiny, starting with an examination of lexico-semantic constructions to discern word choices indicating biases, followed by an investigation into how figurative language, narrative flow, and style contributed to bias indicators (Corcuera and Bernardo 2024).

In this study, the researchers concentrate on analyzing sportscasters' statements extracted from transcripts of sports broadcasts (Brown and Yule 1983). Unlike simple sentences, utterances serve as the basic unit for analyzing spoken communication. Scholars emphasize their significance, viewing them as dynamic expressions of thoughts and emotions during conversation rather than static sentences (Bakhtin 1986). These critical analyses consider factors such as tone, context, and speaker interaction, offering insights into the complexity of human communication. Below are examples of utterances.

Lastly, to strengthen the validity of the findings of the study, two intercoders analyzed the same texts to ensure a high level of accuracy in the data analysis and interpretation. With the huge amount of data to analyze, intercoder reliability (ICR) becomes more essential. In this study, joint intercoding was executed where an intercoder agreement was formed. More than 60% of the data collected were validated, which exceeded the 30% norm. Both

intercoders, who are doctoral students in English Language Studies, examined the process of identifying media biases in the corpus.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Effects of Nationalistic Positioning to the Frequency of Media Biases in Local Sportscasting

After a thorough analysis of the data, the study revealed that all the local sports broadcasting coverages of the games of the Philippines Men’s Basketball team during the quarterfinal, semifinal and final round of the 19th Asian Games contain and manifest various forms of media biases. Moreover, the results also showed that the number of occurrences of media biases increased as the tournament went on, which means that local sportscasters tend to observe more media biases when the stakes of the game were higher, and this was because they were affected by their nationalistic positioning. In addition, these sportscasters often get too excited and passionate about supporting their country, affecting how they offer commentary about the games and making them show clear favoritism towards their own team. The number of occurrences of media biases present in the study corpus are illustrated in Table 2. In determining the number of biases per game, all detected biases, regardless of type, were added and combined.

**Table 2. Frequency of Media Biases in Gilas Pilipinas Games across Stages of the Tournament**

	Quarterfinal Round	Semifinal Round	Final Round
Total number of sportscasters’ utterances containing media biases	78 occurrences	82 occurrences	146 occurrences

Table 2 shows the frequency of media biases present in the sportscasters’ utterances. As presented, there were 146 occurrences, the highest number of media bias frequency took place during the finals game between the Philippines and Jordan while the lowest, with 78 occurrences, was seen during the quarterfinal game between the Philippines and Iran. It is likely that this may be attributed to the fact that local sportscasters found it challenging to remain impartial, particularly during such a significant sporting event as the 19th Asian Games, given their Filipino identity. Their strong sense of national pride, coupled with the anticipation of addressing an audience predominantly composed of patriotic supporters, drives and motivates them to show unwavering support for their country’s athletes. Furthermore, the heightened emotions of the game can also make it hard for them to stay fair and unbiased during the entire coverage. In addition, the phenomenon of nationalistic positioning also makes them feel that they have a responsibility to make their country look good, even if it means being entirely impartial.

### 4.2 Frequency of Media Biases in Local Sportscasters’ Utterances

The study results indicated that during all three crucial games of the team, local sportscasters consistently exhibited greater displays of biased media tendencies. The frequency of these media biases was significantly influenced by the phenomenon of nationalistic positioning, in which sportscasters’ strong allegiance to their country shaped their commentary. However, in addition to their nationalistic fervor, audience expectations, and professional identity may also increase the likelihood that they will exhibit media bias, especially when the stakes are at their highest. Furthermore, the study highlighted that the most common type of bias observed among local

sportscasters was partisan bias. This finding underscores how strongly nationalistic tendencies influence their reporting. The number of occurrences of the various forms of media biases are presented in Table 3. Specifically, biases in the sports broadcast were identified through contextual analysis, involving scrutiny of content, presentation style, and broader context. By carefully examining these elements, the study was able to identify subtle cues and patterns that hinted at different types of biases present within the broadcast.

**Table 3. Frequency of Various Forms of Media Biases during Gilas Pilipinas Games**

Forms of Media Bias	Frequency of Media Biases Observed by Sportscasters	
Confirmation bias	2	0.66% (8th)
Absence of fairness and balance	27	8.88% (6th)
Story selection bias	71	23.36% (2nd)
Tone bias	45	14.80% (3rd)
False balance	3	0.99% (7th)
Demographic bias	37	12.17% (4th)
Partisan bias	90	29.61% (1st)
Perceived superiority bias	29	9.54% (5th)
Total	304 occurrences	

Table 3 presents an analysis of media bias types observed among local sportscasters in the study corpus. The data reveals that all forms of media biases were present in the sports broadcasts. In addition, results showed that among all types of biases, partisan bias was the most prevalent, occurring 90 times, followed by story selection bias at 71 occurrences and tone bias at 45 occurrences. In contrast, confirmation bias and false balance were least frequent with each appearing only 2 and 3 times, respectively. Moreover, data also implies that nationalistic bias affected the way local sportscasters delivered their commentaries. Furthermore, the impact of nationalistic positioning on the commentary of local sportscasters shaped their depiction of sporting events. As a result, they tend to manifest biases and impartiality as sportscasters. However, it must be acknowledged that while it is natural for sportscasters to harbor pride for their own country's sports entities, upholding objectivity is essential for maintaining credibility among viewers.

#### 4.3 Media Biases in Support of Gilas Pilipinas and their Adversaries

Following a comprehensive analysis of the recorded sports broadcasts, the study showed that the local sportscasters displayed more bias in favor of the Philippine Men's Basketball team compared to their opponents. This bias was observed by giving more airtime and focus to the Gilas Pilipinas in their commentary. When Gilas Pilipinas was in the lead, the focus shifted to highlighting the leading scorers and emphasizing the team's exceptional performances. Conversely, when the opposing teams took the lead, local sportscasters shifted their attention to analyzing what strategies the team needed to employ to make a comeback and secure victory. As shown in Table 4, it was apparent that the local sportscasters showed a preference for players from the Philippines compared to those from other national teams like Iran, China, and Jordan.

Table 4 displays the occurrences of media biases favoring Gilas Pilipinas and their opponents. Results of the study revealed a notable disparity in media biases among local sportscasters, with a striking 77.63% of biases favoring Filipino athletes, in contrast to a mere 22.37% to the benefit of their counterparts. Furthermore, it is important to note that among various forms of media biases, the most substantial contrast arose from partisan bias, as sportscasters recorded 90 instances favoring Gilas Pilipinas, with none observed in support of their adversaries. This clearly supports the idea that despite the need to be impartial, all the sportscasters still displayed nationalistic bias.

**Table 4. Frequency of Media Biases Favoring Gilas Pilipinas and their Opponents**

Forms of Media Bias	Frequency of Media Biases in Favor of the Gilas Pilipinas	Frequency of Media Biases in Favor of the Opposing Teams
Confirmation bias	2	0
Absence of fairness and balance	25	2
Story selection bias	55	16
Tone bias	35	10
False balance	0	3
Demographic bias	11	26
Partisan bias	90	0
Perceived superiority bias	18	11
Total	236 occurrences (77.63%)	68 occurrences (22.37%)

On the other hand, it must also be acknowledged that the local sportscasters observed more occurrences of false balance and demographic bias backing the opponents of the Gilas Pilipinas in their commentaries. This shows that there were attempts for them to observe neutrality in their sportscasting and that they recognized the traits and physical attributes that can make the players of the opposing teams as outstanding basketball players.

#### 4.4 Common Forms of Biases and Its Implications in Local Sportscasting

##### 4.4.1 Confirmation bias

After careful examination of the study corpus, it was found that there were very few manifestations of confirmation bias compared to the other forms of media biases in the selected game coverages as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Frequency of Utterances Showing Confirmation Bias**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Confirmation Bias
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	0
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	1
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	1
Total		2 occurrences

Table 5 summarizes the number of occurrences of confirmation bias in the sports broadcasts analyzed in this study. As can be seen, despite all games analyzed in this study being high-stakes, those carrying greater significance exhibited manifestations of confirmation bias, which implies that sportscasters exhibit heightened emotional investment during high-stakes games, potentially leading to increased pressure to affirm their pre-existing beliefs. Moreover, sportscasters may feel more obliged to align their commentary with the perceived audience expectations and preferences during higher-stake games, thereby increasing the likelihood of confirmation bias.

Furthermore, confirmation bias was evident when sportscasters exhibited preconceived beliefs about the skills of local players, often praising and affirming their excellence on-air. The use of the assertive terms, which are underlined words below implies that there is a positive common understanding and perception of Alas’s skills and playstyle without considering other perspectives.

S4: We know how streaky Kevin Alas can be.

S3: Born scorer.

Likewise, after performing a contextual analysis of the pragmatic constructions of the utterances, the study also found that the use of intensifiers helps emphasize the certainty of the sportscasters. By incorporating such terms, sportscasters were able to demonstrate a stronger way of asserting their commentaries. As seen below, the underlined word helped display a notable conviction and showed a strong belief regarding Team Philippines’ proficiency in bench scoring. Indeed, the use of these assertive terms suggest that the sportscasters hold a firm belief in the capacity of Gilas Pilipinas to excel in this aspect of the game.

S6: Bench scoring, definitely, the Philippines’ domain.

On the other hand, looking at the pragmatic point of view, the use of the underlined word in the utterance posted above expresses a presupposition that the audience were aware of the concept of bench scoring in basketball and that they understood the importance of contributions coming from the bench players in a team’s overall scoring output. In addition, it also creates an implicature that the team has a strong reserve of players who can contribute significantly to Gilas Pilipinas’s scoring output. In addition, this utterance also indicates that the team has a roster that is well-balanced, featuring skilled players who are capable of contributing significantly to scoring even when not part of the starting lineup. Furthermore, this implicature also suggests that the depth of the team is a valuable asset in basketball, for this can be utilized to sustain and enhance the team’s scoring efficiency.

To sum up, the inclusion of terms such as “we know” and “definitely” contributes to the manifestations of confirmation bias in sports broadcasts. These expressions help sportscasters show how they affirm their preexisting beliefs without fully considering alternative perspectives without the need of conducting exhaustive research. Such occurrences may result in prejudiced depictions of athletes, teams, and game results, thereby undermining the credibility and objectivity of sports broadcasts as a whole.

#### 4.4.2 Absence of fairness and balance

After a comprehensive analysis of the data, the study revealed that the local game coverage of the Philippine Men’s Basketball Team during the 19th Asian Games contained utterances that marked absence of fairness and balance as illustrated in Table 6.

**Table 6. Frequency of Utterances Showing Absence of Fairness and Balance**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Absence of Fairness and Balance
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	11
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	8
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	8
Total		27 occurrences

The occurrences of the utterances manifesting absence of fairness and balance are presented in Table 6. Upon closer examination, it was observed that this form of media bias appeared in all games, proving that it is normal for sportscasters to practice nationalism by featuring their national teams more than their adversaries. In addition,

it was also noticeable that the sportscasters observed an absence of fairness and balances especially when providing individual and team performance, including the gameplays and strategies run by the players.

*S1: He's got to feel good after hitting three triples in the first quarter and knocks down both free throws as well.*

*S2: You look at the field goals, Gilas is really shooting well in today's ballgame. 50%, the best so far that we've seen especially from the three-point area, 40%.*

*S6: Justin Brownlee is not waiting for the second half before he takes and makes shots, only had six points in the first two quarters against China. Right now, he has 10 of the first 24 and is perfect from the three ball.*

Furthermore, upon closer examination of the pragmatic constructs within these utterances, it becomes apparent that the sportscasters demonstrated a lack of fairness and balance by predominantly spotlighting narratives revolving around the Gilas Pilipinas players. For instance, the first utterance suggests an assumption that successful plays evoke positive emotional reactions. Moreover, the underlined words and phrases in the first and second utterances above also create an implicature that proficient shooting is a crucial aspect of basketball and significantly influences a team's chances of victory. In this instance, the team displaying superior shooting proficiency was Gilas Pilipinas, thereby indicating that the local sportscasters exhibited media bias in favor of their team.

On another note, the lack of fairness and balance was also apparent in the sportscasters' commentaries, as they selectively shared information that could impact the performance of Filipino athletes without acknowledging similar factors for their counterparts. This bias was particularly evident in the following utterances where the sportscasters discussed the potential fatigue experienced by Gilas Pilipinas after playing on consecutive days while neglecting to mention any comparable circumstances for opposing teams.

*S1: Are we sure that Gilas just played yesterday? Not much rest but no problem for Justin Brownlee.*

*S3: You have to remember the fatigue factor for Gilas Pilipinas, playing for the third straight day.*

After analyzing the utterances provided, the study found that the sportscasters emphasized Gilas Pilipinas, specifically Justin Brownlee, stamina and basketball prowess, which became apparent when they acknowledged the team's performance despite limited recovery time, underscoring their sustained effectiveness on the court. Conversely, from a pragmatic standpoint, these statements subtly suggest that the sportscasters were shaping the viewers' perception of Gilas Pilipinas's performance, prompting a call for understanding and empathy towards the team's challenging circumstances. In fact, the underlined phrases likely evoke a sense of concern among the audience regarding the physical strain endured by the players, particularly of Brownlee.

Additionally, the absence of fairness and balance among sportscasters was also evident when they provided the impressive statistics and playing time of the players from the Philippine team without mentioning their opponents. The underlined words in the excerpts below underscore the significance of incorporating quantitative data to enrich the coverage of multiple athletes. Moreover, by detailing the duration of each player's time on the court, the sportscasters effectively communicated their respective roles and contributions to the game.

*S4: 34 minutes for Calvin Oftana, 34 minutes for Justin Brownlee, 28 minutes for Scottie Thompson.*

*S4: You can see June Mar Fajardo, Scottie Thompson, Justin Brownlee and Scottie Thompson putting a lot of minutes into this ball game.*

From a pragmatic perspective, these utterances aim to inform the audience about the players who have been extensively involved in the game, the repetition of player names and the mention of their playing time suggest their significance in the ongoing match. Furthermore, by detailing the duration of each player’s time on the court, the sportscasters also effectively communicated their respective roles and contributions to the game. Certainly, these utterances effectively address key details about the players’ participation in the game. On the contrary, instances of biased coverage favoring opposing teams were infrequent. Instead, the sportscasters predominantly highlighted the leading players of rival teams, especially those already established in the basketball community.

#### 4.4.3 Story selection bias

The study findings revealed varying levels of bias across different rounds of the competition, with the least number of biases observed during the quarterfinal round and the highest during the final round, as detailed in Table 7.

**Table 7. Frequency of Utterances Showing Story Selection Bias**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Story Selection Bias
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	6
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	24
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	41
Total		71 occurrences

Table 7 showcases the frequency of the sportscasters’ utterances implicated with story selection bias. Undoubtedly, this form of media bias is prominently evident in all game coverages, especially during the championship game, and its persistent occurrence in the study corpus underscores the sportscasters’ endeavor to craft commentary centered on the Gilas Pilipinas players. Additionally, it must be acknowledged that as the significance of the games increased, the sportscasters demonstrated a greater tendency towards story selection biases. This trend indicates a heightened susceptibility of the sportscasters to nationalistic positioning phenomena during high-stakes matches, which was displayed when the sportscasters showed a growing preference for sharing narratives centered on their home nation.

Moreover, within the provided utterances below, instances of story selection bias are prevalent, particularly when sportscasters’ discourse focus on historical context, such as past victories and medal wins, predominantly highlighting players from the Philippine team. This bias is notably observed when sportscasters cite dates in their commentaries, which significantly contribute to shaping the perception of the Philippine team’s performance and its role in the nation’s sporting history.

*S4: First time, the Philippines is in the semi-finals. Philippines, looking to make it to the finals for the first time since 1990 or a good 33 years ago.*

*S6: 1962, this was the last time that the Philippines brought home the gold medal. Last time that the Philippines made it to the semis of the Asian Games was in 2002. Last time that the Philippines was in the finals was in 1990, 1993.*

*S6: Last medal for the Philippines was in 1998 for the centennial team wherein the Philippines brought home the bronze medal.*

On another note, upon further examination of the pragmatic aspects, it becomes clear that the sportscasters intended to emphasize the significance of the game for the Philippines, as they highlighted the team's first advancement to this stage in thirty years and emphasized the rarity of the event. Additionally, the sportscasters implied a sense of determination, which urged the Philippine team to strive for greater success through their directive speech act.

Furthermore, story selection bias was also manifested in the sportscasters' discourse whenever they emphasized the performance and progression of Gilas Pilipinas. This bias was notably demonstrated by accentuating the team's goals and aspirations, along with narrating instances of resilience. Such selective emphasis could sway audience perceptions, potentially overshadowing broader perspectives on the game. Meanwhile, the pragmatic examination of the given statements above indicates a confident tone, as both assert factual information.

*S1: He knows that the task at hand is to win and keep Philippines hopes alive in getting a medal in the Asian Games for basketball.*

*S6: In the game against China, China ran the Philippines on the ground in the first two quarters, but in the fourth, it was the turn of Team Philippines to impose its quickness, its inside offense and of course, its three-point magic coming from Justin Brownlee.*

Moreover, the sportscasters' remarks also imply the crucial importance of winning for the Philippine team, and finishing the Asian Games with a medal. On another note, the second statement also suggests that the team exhibited resilience and strategic adaptability in response to challenges during their match against the formidable China team.

Additionally, instances of story selection bias were also observed when sportscasters exhibited player recognition by emphasizing the players' accolades and when they recounted compelling narratives about past players, especially those from the Philippines Men's Basketball team. In addition, this form of bias was also evident when sportscasters highlighted key individuals who were present at the game and were actively supporting the team as they made history.

#### 4.4.4 Tone bias

The study discovered that local sportscasters consistently showed tone bias in their coverage of Gilas Pilipinas games during the 19th Asian Games as displayed in Table 8.

Table 8 illustrates the prevalence of tone bias within the study corpus, revealing its widespread occurrence across all analyzed games. Notably, instances of tone bias were consistently in double digits across the three examined games, underscoring its commonality among sportscasters. This suggests that local sportscasters often exhibit heightened enthusiasm and excitement, particularly when Gilas Pilipinas secures favorable game results, leading to a bias in accentuating positive aspects of the favored team.



**Table 8. Frequency of Utterances Showing Tone Bias**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Tone Bias
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	14
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	11
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	20
Total		45 occurrences

Furthermore, tone bias was observed oftentimes by local sportscasters to show admiration for the players' performance through their positive commentaries. Specifically, this was manifested in their commentaries through the underlined words below. The use of these words and phrases indicated a favorable attitude towards the mentioned players or teams, thus resulting in the observation of tone bias. In addition, these terms carry positive connotations.

S2: *I love how aggressive he is when he's on the floor. He is doing one thing and he's looking to score.*

S2: *Wow! I think that's a really good word right there. Stormed back into the fourth quarter, tying this ball game.*

S6: *The super Brownlee, an amazing performance in the fourth and final quarter versus China.*

S2: *Justin Brownlee, going crazy in the third quarter. 34 points in total for him. 15 of the 23 points of Gilas, coming from Justin Brownlee in the third.*

S1: *Wow, and he started doing that from the get-go.*

Additionally, looking at these utterances in a pragmatic way, the study also reveals that the sportscasters implicitly endorse the performance of Gilas Pilipinas through the use of the underlined terms given that these expressions helped convey their positive emotions and admiration for specific players or performances. Moreover, this form of bias was also seen whenever sportscasters aimed to recognize notable plays and performances by players irrespective of their teams as seen below.

S2: *What a big stop by Gilas there.*

S1: *A sigh of relief!*

S4: *Wow!*

S3: *That finish from China.*

However, it must be noted that instances of tone bias favoring the opposing teams were notably brief compared to those favoring the Philippine team. In essence, while acknowledging good and exceptional performances from all sides, the bias towards the Philippine team was more pronounced and extensive. The focus of their speech expressing emotional reaction to the observed event remains predominantly on praising Gilas Pilipinas players, which reflects a bias towards their home team.

#### 4.4.5 False balance

The study revealed that among the three high-stakes games, only the sportscasters commentating on the quarterfinal and semifinal match were the ones who exhibited instances of false balance, as indicated in Table 9.

Table 9 illustrates the frequency of utterances in the analyzed corpus that displayed signs of false balance. After careful examination, it became clear that local sportscasters refrain from practicing false balance and adopt a both-sidesing approach, especially when their respective national teams are playing, and this is largely due to their strong allegiance to their home countries. Additionally, they may also feel pressured by their predominantly Filipino audience, leading them to prioritize coverage of Filipino athletes by allocating more airtime to them.

**Table 9. Frequency of Utterances Showing False Balance**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting False Balance
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	2
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	1
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	0
Total		3 occurrences

Furthermore, it was also noticeable that the attempts to observe neutrality were carried out through short statements only. In the utterance presented below, the sportscasters briefly talked about the line-up of the national basketball team of Iran. However, this discussion followed an extensive analysis by the sportscasters of the composition of the Philippines Men’s Basketball team and their performance in previous games. This analysis even included evaluating the coaches’ decision to limit the playing time of certain starters due to their substantial lead.

*S1: Iran is parading a lineup that has eight players that joined the FIBA World Cup recently.*

Consequently, looking at it from the pragmatic point of view, the researchers noted that this utterance created an implicature that Iran’s lineup was strong because it was composed of skilled and experienced players. This is because the sportscaster mentioned that their team participated in the prestigious FIBA World Cup, where only the top teams in the world qualify. In fact, participating teams in the said tournament must win a series of regional and global qualification tournaments and the number of qualifying spots allocated to each region is very limited. With this, this statement also implies that Iran’s squad was anticipated to be well-prepared for the tournament, given that they faced the most formidable teams in the world in the FIBA World Cup a month prior to their participation in the 19th Asian Games.

On another note, after a thorough analysis of the utterances below, particularly their lexico-semantic elements, it can be observed that the sportscasters failed to specify the names of the players from the opposing team. Specifically, in the first statement, the sportscasters failed to identify all members entering and exiting the game for the Iran Men’s Basketball team, despite numerous substitutions, unlike the Philippines, where players’ names were mentioned during a single substitution. Furthermore, in the subsequent utterance, the names of the players who scored for China were omitted, despite a detailed mention of all the Filipino players who contributed to the team’s overall score.

*S1: CJ Perez checks in for the first time, replacing Chris Newsome. Couple of subs as well for Iran.*

*S2: Thompson with 11, Fajardo with 6, Brownlee with 6, Oftana with 4, and Chris Newsome with 3 points and those are the only five players who have scored for the Philippines ng kabuuang [in total of] 30 points while for China, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 players, one pointer better, for total of 48 points after a 29 point quarter in the previous 10 minutes.*

Certainly, this selective emphasis on the actions of the Philippines team while downplaying those of the opposing team contributes to a biased narrative that may influence viewers’ perceptions of the match. Indeed, this omission is indicative of a false balance bias that favors the Philippines. Moreover, after examining the lexico-semantic characteristics of the provided utterances, it became apparent that the underlined words featuring the opposing teams were significantly fewer in number compared to the references made to the Philippine team.

Likewise, a pragmatic analysis of this utterance would demonstrate that sportscasters aim to fulfill the informative function of sports commentary by providing timely updates on player substitutions and scores during the basketball game. This is evident in their choice of language, which is clear, concise, and focused on conveying essential details to the audience. Additionally, the sportscasters’ use of specific basketball terminologies, such as "checks in", "replacing" and "scored" reflects their understanding of the audience’s familiarity with the game’s conventions. Indeed, this pragmatic analysis serves to update the audience on the evolving dynamics of the game and is a common practice in sports commentary to provide real-time information to viewers.

#### 4.4.6 Demographic bias

Data revealed that demographic bias was present in all the games examined in this study. As shown in Table 10, this type of bias is among the most common in the study corpus.

**Table 10. Frequency of Utterances Showing Demographic Bias**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Demographic Bias
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	13
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	13
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	11
Total		37 occurrences

Table 10 displays the frequency of demographic biases observed by sportscasters during live broadcasts. It is evident that in all the analyzed games, sportscasters exhibited double-digit occurrences of this bias type. This suggests that it is common for sportscasters to praise and commend various demographics, particularly traits and characteristics, during their commentary.

Demographic bias is frequently evident in sportscasting when game commentators analyze players’ attributes. They often emphasize certain physical traits and characteristics, such as height and speed, as highlighted in the underlined words below. As seen below, whether possessed by their home team or opponents, sportscasters recognize and highlight these traits given that these attributes were noted as contributing factors and advantages that enhance players’ dominance on the court.

*S1: Brownlee steps back, guarded by a bigger Meisam. He’s got the quick disadvantage.*

S2: Bohannon and Al Dwairi, number one and two in block shots.

S1: 6'11

S2: 7 feet and 6'11.

S5: Two free throws delivered by the quick man, the captain of the team Ahmad Al Dwairi.

Furthermore, these utterances create an implicature that disadvantages in quickness and height may pose challenges in basketball, while also suggesting a competitive advantage. On another note, this form of bias is also evident in commentaries when sportscasters discuss the age of players, especially young ones demonstrating veteran moves and playing styles to their game. The underlined words below exemplify this finding.

S4: This young man was able to get to the line and finish on the other side of the court.

S3: Only 24 years of age.

S1: Youngest player on the court, Cui Yongxi, only 20 years of age for China, splitting his free throws.

Likewise, the inclusion of age-related commentary, as highlighted through the underlined words above, offers viewers insight into the players' abilities. By emphasizing their age, these statements underscore that these players are exceeding expectations, framing their contributions within the context of their youth or experience on the court. Consequently, doing this also makes their performance more remarkable, as these utterances also show a speech act demonstrating acknowledgement.

#### 4.4.7 Partisan bias

Considering that the study corpus featured local sportscasters covering an international game of their home nation, it was noticeable that these game commentators committed numerous occurrences of partisan bias as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11. Frequency of Utterances Showing Partisan Bias**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Partisan Bias
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	27
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	18
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	45
Total		90 occurrences

The frequency of partisan bias occurrences in the study corpus is shown in Table 11. Comprehensive analysis reveals that local sportscasters are heavily influenced by nationalistic tendencies. When their home team plays, they naturally favor their own team, making partisan bias the most common type of bias observed in the study.

Consequently, partisan bias was evident whenever local sportscasters praised the performance of the Philippine team by emphasizing their strengths and advantages. As seen in the utterances below, this type of media bias was clearly visible when sportscasters used first-person personal pronouns, effectively aligning themselves with the team.

S4: *Defensively, we were tougher. The half-court defense was really good for the Philippines*

S6: *Very good first quarter defensively for team Philippines as we kept the offensive Jordan to only 12 points.*

S5: *And we're fighting for every rebound.*

This practice was consistently observed in the study corpus, indicating that local sportscasters frequently portrayed themselves as integral members of the team. Indeed, the use of these pronouns exemplifies partisan bias, for it shows active support towards their home team and it reinforced a shared sense of identity among the sportscasters, athletes and coaches. In addition, pragmatic analysis would show that these utterances also signify their commitment and respect for the basketball players representing their country.

Furthermore, partisan bias in sports commentary often extends beyond mere support for a team to evoke a deeper sense of national pride and identity. In the provided utterances below, this bias is evident through statements that emphasize the achievements of the Philippine team and their role as representatives of the country on the international stage.

S6: *We have a set of basketball heroes carrying the flag of our country.*

S5: *We are back in Asia at least for now.*

Likewise, the sportscasters also contributed to enhancing the athletes' stature by dubbing them as "basketball heroes" representing their nation, which also highlighted their symbolic significance as national team players. Moreover, through expressions of pride in the team's achievements and the inclusive use of "we," the sportscasters were also able to foster a collective celebration of success, nurturing a sense of unity and national pride among the audience.

#### 4.4.8 Perceived superiority bias

Within the study corpus, manifestations of perceived superiority bias among sportscasters were observed by the researchers as detailed and presented in Table 12.

**Table 12. Frequency of Utterances Showing Perceived Superiority Bias**

Competing Teams	Competition Stages	Occurrences of Utterances Exhibiting Perceived Superiority Bias
Iran VS Philippines	Quarterfinal Round	5
Philippines VS China	Semifinal Round	6
Jordan VS Philippines	Final Round	18
Total		29 occurrences

The number of occurrences of perceived superiority bias in the Gilas Pilipinas games during the 19th Asian games are presented in Table 12. As can be observed, it must be noted that an increase in the frequency of perceived superiority bias was evident as the significance of the game rises. Specifically, during the championship match, this bias strongly favored Filipino athletes. Additionally, the presence of this perceived superiority bias showcased

the pride of local sportscasters in their home team, especially considering the challenges faced by the Philippine team prior to the final round.

In addition, the study noted that the manifestations of perceived superiority bias are common whenever sportscasters extensively praise the skills and performances of certain players and portray them as exceptional and superior in their abilities. In the utterances below, the underlined phrases highlight specific attributes and achievements of the players, which strengthen the perception of their superiority on the court. These terms point out the exceptional abilities of the players in playing basketball as it emphasizes their unique talents and contributions to their respective teams. In addition, by citing and referencing their individual statistics, sportscasters can easily highlight these players' excellence and demonstrate why they stand out among their peers.

*S2: Justin Brownlee, just a cut above the rest.*

*S4: One of the best blow-by-blow players in the country, Kevin Alas getting the last say.*

*S5: Early on, defensively, we see Hollis Jefferson already on Brownlee.*

*S6: Right. These are two of the best rim protectors in the competition.*

*S6: One of the best two-point field goal shooters in the competition in the top ten but nearing the 70 percent level is June Mar Fajardo.*

Pragmatically speaking, these expressions also indicate that these athletes possess a high level of competence and effectiveness as basketball players. Additionally, these utterances also create an implicature that the sportscasters are confident and assured in the players' skills and capabilities. On another note, perceived superiority bias was also observed when sportscasters emphasize how the athletes overcome challenges and make successful plays, runs and decisions during the game.

*S3: Tough shot, no problem for Justin Brownlee.*

*S4: That's so good, he was born a winner, definitely, and he'll go down in his one of the best reinforcements ever to play in the country, of course.*

*S4: That was a good look down to the ball inside June Mar, one of the best inside operators for the Philippines.*

In the provided utterances above, the underlined phrases distinctly convey the players' excellence and exceptional performance on the court. By focusing on their outstanding performance, the sportscasters effectively convey the players' superiority on the court compared to their peers. Moreover, after careful examination of the sports broadcasts, the study also found that sportscasters often use idiomatic phrases when observing perceived superiority bias as presented in the utterances below.

*S2: You know, we have three headed monsters so to speak that get co-scored, but you also like how CJ Perez, coming off the bench.*

*S4: This was a youth wonder for China, first three-pointer for China since the early part of the first quarter to get them another 11-point lead.*

In the given statements, the idiomatic phrases, which were underlined above, add color and vividness to the commentary and heighten the game's drama. Additionally, these expressions allow sportscasters to effectively convey the sense of superiority and dominance that they perceive in certain teams or players, by emphasizing their exceptional abilities and skills. Indeed, in these utterances, sportscasters employ pragmatic elements like implicatures and speech acts to convey evaluations and assessments of players' performances, informing the audience and game spectators about their skills and achievements while simultaneously shaping their perception of the performance of the athletes and their respective teams.

## 5. Discussion

The research delves into the impact of the nationalistic positioning phenomenon on media biases in local sportscasting, specifically the coverage of the games of the Philippines Men's Basketball team during the 19th Asian Games. Results of the study uncovered a consistent presence of various forms of biases in all matches, which underscores the strong influence of nationalistic bias on sportscasters' commentary, often resulting in apparent favoritism towards the Philippine team. Additionally, despite efforts to remain impartial, the data indicates a significant bias in favor of Filipino athletes among local sportscasters, which highlights the difficulty of remaining objective in the face of patriotic fervor and audience expectations. However, occasional instances of false balance and demographic bias toward opposing teams demonstrate attempts at impartiality, albeit overshadowed by prevailing nationalistic biases.

Furthermore, after careful examination of the data, results of the study also showed that confirmation bias is prevalent during high-stakes games, with sportscasters reinforcing their beliefs and intensifying praise for local players. Conversely, sportscasters also lack fairness and balance in the coverage after favoring Gilas Pilipinas and overlooking achievements by opposing teams and focusing only on the narratives that elevate the Philippine team. Meanwhile, tone bias is also evident in enthusiastic commentary towards Gilas Pilipinas, while false balance downplays opposing teams' actions and decisions. Indeed, local sports commentary demonstrates a clear bias toward the Gilas Pilipinas.

Moreover, sportscasters frequently prioritize discussing the accomplishments of Filipino athletes over attempts at impartiality. Likewise, the numerous occurrences of partisan bias also reflect the sportscasters' strong support for the Philippine team, which at times could lead to elevating players to national hero status. Furthermore, as the game's importance grows, sportscasters also tend to emphasize Filipino athletes' superiority by employing idiomatic expressions and statistics to underscore their exceptional talents and instill national pride in the home team. However, results of the study also showed that sportscasters are fond of highlighting player demographics and skills, regardless of team affiliation, with a particular emphasis on age-related commentary.

Additionally, the expressions of each type of media bias are characterized by unique linguistic, discursive, and pragmatic elements. For instance, confirmation bias is apparent in the use of intensifiers by local sportscasters to substantiate their strong opinions, while tone bias is characterized by modifiers that emphasize admiration and favoritism in their commentary. Meanwhile, demographic biases frequently manifest through references to players' physical attributes, particularly their height, while partisan bias is defined by the frequent use of first-person pronouns, which foster a sense of belonging to their respective teams. Perceived superiority bias is evident when sportscasters utilize idiomatic expressions and figurative language to communicate a sense of superiority.

It is possible that the existence of these media biases reflects sportscasters' nationalistic tendencies and shape viewer perceptions of the game. Indeed, it is inevitable for local sportscasters to avoid nationalistic biases when

commentating during live broadcasts. These biases may arise from their allegiance to their country and home team since they are advocates of their own nation, making them emotionally influenced and affected. Likewise, the audience also prefers patriotic coverage given that the public's perception is often influenced by media organizations. In addition, in an effort to achieve higher ratings, news outlets also often place emotional appeals, such as patriotic stories, above objective reporting. Finally, the framing and interpretation of events by the media are frequently shaped by nationalistic bias in coverage that stem from historical rivalries, political tensions, and societal factors.

In addition, local sportscasters also face an array of expectations when covering international basketball games featuring the Philippines Men's Basketball team, which impedes their impartiality and leads to implicit support for Filipino athletes. Furthermore, fully appreciating the team's historic victory during the 19th Asian Games poses a significant challenge for sports spectators, particularly local sportscasters who not only have a passion for basketball but also an unwavering allegiance to Gilas Pilipinas. Nonetheless, it is critical for the sports media to understand the implications of taking a nationalistic stance on the audience's perception, particularly in terms of the formation of identities of the national team players and athletes.

## **6. Conclusion and Implications**

There is no doubt that there is a widespread recommendation for sports media, particularly sportscasters, to maintain impartiality by abstaining from favoring any specific team. However, this guideline tends to oversimplify the presentation of news and information within the sports domain, particularly during live commentaries, as it disregards crucial additional factors integral to live sports broadcasts. These factors include audience feedback, comments, and criticism, as well as the journalist's personal views and beliefs, and the influence of advertisers and sponsors.

In light of this, this study examined sports broadcasts, specifically the Gilas Pilipinas's quarterfinal, semifinal and final games during the 19th Asian Games and provides practical insights for sportscasters and media organizations that cover international sports events. The analysis was focused on identifying media bias and assessing its impact on audience perception, especially concerning the formation of athletes' national identity. Furthermore, an exploration of the effects of nationalistic bias was also conducted to determine its influence on the language used by local sportscasters during the coverage of the aforementioned international sporting events.

The study's findings highlight the complex interplay between language and sports, shedding light on the diverse roles languages play in athletics and among athletes. Exploring this relationship is critical for gaining a thorough understanding of how languages influence sporting dynamics and narratives. Furthermore, the study also emphasizes the importance of scrutinizing the language used in sports broadcasting given that unraveling the nuances embedded in sportscasters' discourse reveals a number of issues that may impede their ability to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities as part of the media team. It emphasizes the substantial nationalistic bias present among local sportscasters, which affects the manner in which games are reported and the perceptions of fairness in sports journalism held by viewers. Indeed, mindful language and linguistic decisions are essential for local sportscasters to consistently maintain their credibility as public figures. In order to maintain professional standards in sports commentary and ensure impartiality, they should avoid relying solely on habitual terms and practices and instead carefully consider the implications of their words and expressions. Likewise, local sportscasters should also prioritize impartiality by employing insightful language and commentary. Certainly, by investigating these linguistic nuances, stakeholders can work to improve the quality and impact of sports commentary, ensuring that it remains informative, engaging, and inclusive.



Additionally, the study underscores the significance of understanding diverse linguistic cues, discursive strategies, and pragmatic constructions that influence audience interpretation of the sportscasters' commentaries. In order to enhance the credibility and trust of their audiences, media organizations should establish guidelines as regards the language that can be used by local sportscasters to improve the quality of sports broadcasts. Indeed, identifying the linguistic elements associated with each type of media bias yields valuable insights into their potential positive use in sportscasting and the importance of avoiding their negative connotations.

To conclude, findings of the study also underscore the necessity of tailoring sports commentaries to align with the diverse needs and preferences of the audience and other media stakeholders. While the primary function of sportscast is to inform and engage, it is also equally vital to ensure that it resonates with the lived experiences, expectations, and values of sports enthusiasts, particularly, the local sports fans. However, it must be acknowledged that achieving this alignment in local sportscasting transcends mere delivery, as it also requires careful consideration of language choices, as well as an understanding of the pragmatic implications and interpretations that come with them. Rather than merely seeking to mitigate media biases in coverage of international sporting events, sportscasters should proactively explore how they can use these biases to communicate effectively with their audiences, thereby enhancing comprehension and understanding of the game's proceedings.

Moreover, it must be noted that the study's applicability to broader contexts may be limited by its emphasis on specific tournaments and players. Future research could be expanded to include a greater number of international sporting events and teams. Certainly, having a bigger sample and scope would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and observed in this study.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Tertiary