

## **Bakalářská práce**

# **Analysis of adjectives used in sports journalistic discourse in terms of judgment and appreciation**

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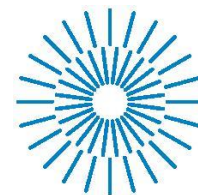
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## Zadání bakalářské práce

# Analysis of adjectives used in sports journalistic discourse in terms of judgment and appreciation

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## Zásady pro vypracování:

CZ:

Hlavním cílem bakalářské práce je identifikace frekventovaných přídavných jmen, které se vyskytují a nejčastěji používají ve sportovní žurnalistice. Daná přídavná jména budou analyzována na základě jejich hodnotících postojů, zda hodnotí osoby a jejich chování, nebo předměty, akce, či situace..

Metodologie: vytvoření speciálního korpusu, identifikace frekventovaných přídavných jmen, rozdělení podle jejich hodnotících postojů, následná analýza.

Požadavky: orientace v odborné literatuře, práce s korpusovými softwary, pravidelné konzultace.

EN:

The main goal of the bachelor thesis is to identify the most frequent adjectives in sports journalism. The identified adjectives will be analyzed according to their evaluative load, namely judgment, and appreciation.

Methodology: the creation of a special corpus, identification of frequented adjectives, distribution of adjectives according to their evaluation attitudes, and subsequent analysis.

Requirements: orientation in professional literature, work with corpus linguistics software, regular consultations.

*Rozsah grafických prací:*

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### **Seznam odborné literatury:**

Baker, Paul, Andrew Hardie, and Tony McEnery. *A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

Gablasova, Dana, Vaclav Brezina, and Tony McEnery. *Collocations in Corpus-Based Language Learning Research: Identifying, Comparing, and Interpreting the Evidence*. *Language Learning*, 67(S1). 2017.

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Jsem si vědoma následků, které podle zákona o vysokých školách mohou vyplývat z porušení tohoto prohlášení.

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## **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá přídavnými jmény používanými ve sportovním žurnalistickém diskurzu. Jejím hlavním cílem je identifikace frekventovaných přídavných jmen, která se vyskytují a nejčastěji používají ve sportovní žurnalistice. Dalším cíle práce je analýza těchto přídavných jmen na základě jejich hodnotících postojů, zda hodnotí osoby a jejich chování, nebo neživotné předměty, akce či situace.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě části, teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část obsahuje nezbytné informace o přídavných jménech, dále představuje problematiku hodnotících postojů na základě teorie vytvořené J. R. Martin a P. R. R. White. Druhá část práce, praktická část, popisuje proces celého výzkumu, jeho samotné výsledky jsou zobrazeny formou grafů a shrnuty v závěru.

Klíčová slova: přídavná jména, sport, žurnalistika, diskurz, hodnotící postoje, pozitivum, negativum

## **Abstract**

This bachelor's thesis deals with adjectives used in sports journalistic discourse. Its main goal is the identification of frequent adjectives that occur and are most often used in sports journalism. Another goal of the work is the analysis of these adjectives based on their evaluative attitudes, whether they evaluate persons and their behaviour, or inanimate objects, actions, or situations.

The work is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part contains the necessary information about adjectives; it also presents the issue of evaluative attitudes based on the theory created by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White. The second part of the thesis, the practical part, describes the process of the entire research; its results are displayed in the form of graphs and summarized in the conclusion.

Keywords: adjectives, sport, journalism, discourse, evaluative parameters, positive, negative

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# Introduction

The availability of information in today's world accelerated many times over, which greatly affected the development of journalism. Today, people no longer have to wait for paper newspapers to learn about the events of the past days. Everything is available now from anywhere in the world. The news thus informs humanity non-stop about what is happening in the world. This is also the case with news from the world of sports. Recently, however, it has been pointed out that newspapers inform people mainly about negative news, and positive news appears sparingly. It is said that bad news with a negative connotation attracts more readers than positive ones. Since I have been involved in sports all my life, I wondered if this is also the case with sports news. It never occurred to me to think about what interests the readers of sports newspapers more, whether news containing some negative information such as the failure of an athlete, a collapse, or a scandal, or whether people are looking for more positive news informing about the success of joy. Do journalists focus more on describing the performances themselves, or is their priority the athlete as a personality, and behaviour? This idea led me to the topic of my bachelor's thesis.

This bachelor's thesis focuses on the adjectives most often used in sports journalism, and the research aims to identify the subject of evaluation of these adjectives according to their evaluation load, whether the writers focus on the evaluation of persons (judgement) or inanimate objects (appreciation). Another goal is to determine whether these adjectives evaluating judgement and appreciation express a positive or negative meaning.

Essential theoretical background and knowledge, such as a summary of two different views on language evaluation theories or a basic overview of grammar and the issue of adjectives, are summarized in the first part of the thesis. The second part of the thesis represents the research itself, the results of which are presented as graphs.

# 1 Theories of language evaluation

This chapter deals with evaluation in language as such. As this is a broad term, there is a broad spectrum of interpretations. The most widely used definition of evaluation is the one presented by Huston and Thompson, who define it as:

“the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker’s or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about.” (Hunston and Thompson 2000, 5).

Multiple studies of evaluation have been undertaken by linguists like Barnbrook (1996), Jucker (2000), and Bednarek (2006) or J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White (2005), who came up with new theories and terminology. Evaluation is an instrument that conveys the author's emotions or attitude, according to Monika Bednarek (2006), who described it as "the phenomenon of speakers’ opinion" (3). In her statement, she confirms that "evaluation is concerned with the expression of speaker/writer opinion or subjectivity" (Bednarek 2012, 138). The term "appraisal" was introduced in the book *The Language of Evaluation* (2005) by P.P.R. White and J.R. Martin as an equivalent for the phrase "evaluation." Biber and Finegan are two additional linguists who have studied the phenomenon of evaluation. They presented their theory under another expression - "stance" (Bednarek 2006, 27).

## 1.1 Appraisal theory

It is essential to clarify the appraisal theory, which uses the evaluative parameters of judgement and appreciation, in more detail, because the practical part deals with analysis of adjectives precisely based on these parameters.

Three domains make up the appraisal theory, and they might affect each other. A means related to the author's feelings, thoughts, and behaviour is what is meant by *Attitude*, which Figure 1 illustrates as the most important and prominent domain of the system of evaluation (Martin and White 2005, 35). This domain incorporates three subcategories: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation which are discussed in the following chapters. *Engagement* is the second area covered by appraisal theory. The issue of "sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse" is the key subject handled in this domain (Martin and White 2005, 35). Heteroglossic and Monoglossic are the two main components of Engagement itself. Gradability, a phenomenon that allows categories to become blurry and feelings to be magnified, is explained by the final domain, *Graduation*. Linguists separated Graduation into two subcategories: Force and Focus. Force is a sort of graduation that deals with intensity, whereas Focus is primarily concerned with the sharpness/blurriness of the semantic categorization (Martin and White 2005, 37).

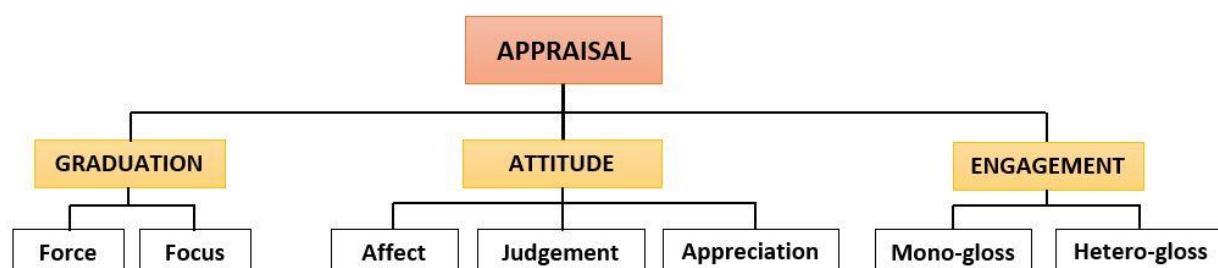


Figure 1 - Overview of Appraisal theory, adapted from Bednarek (2006, 27)

### 1.1.1 Attitude

The evaluation system's most extensive category is 'attitude'. It is a prominent and key area with a values-based orientation that the speaker requires in order to make sensible decisions and accurately determine how to feel in a given circumstance. As White (2005, 35) states, attitude is a generic term used to evaluate people's emotions, temperaments, and the value of things. The three sub-sections of attitude are *Affect* (which covers the assessing of feelings),

*Judgement* (which evaluates an individual's character), and *Appreciation* (which includes the value of objects).

### 1.1.1.1 Affect

Affect primarily deals with the origins of emotional reactions. According to White and Martin (2005, 46), it refers to the initial circumstances contributing to a certain reaction or feeling. The emotion can be positive, for example, the feeling of happiness during the wedding day, confidence after passing an exam, or on the other negative emotions such as the shock during some accident or the sadness after losing someone close (Bednarek 2006, 28).

Depending on the range of emotions, there are many ways of classifying them into subcategories. As Figure 2 shows, these subcategories can be identified based on of six questions or factors, which are foregrounded in the grammar of English.

1. The first factor focuses if the feeling is construed by the culture as positive (e. g. the girl was happy<sup>1</sup>), or negative ones (e. g. the girls was sad).
2. The second factor deals with whether the feeling is created as a rush of emotion which involves some kind of verbal and non-verbal communication, or if the emotion is experienced internally as a mental process. In other words, the question is if the emotion is expressed by the behaviour surge (for example: the girl cried) or by some inner mental process (for example: the girl felt happy).
3. The third factor discusses the question if the feeling is interpreted as being focused on or reacting to some particular emotional trigger (e. g. Singing makes her happy) or if this feeling is a general ongoing mood (e. g. She was happy).
4. The fourth factor notices how are the emotion graded. There are three types of grades, low (e. g. “She likes him”), median (e. g. She loves him.) and final (e. g. She adores him.).

---

<sup>1</sup> All examples that are used in this part of the chapter are taken from the book *The Language of Evaluation. Appraisal in English* (Martin and White 2005, 46-51)

5. The fifth factor focuses on the intention of the feeling. It examines the contrast between suitable and emotive processes.
6. The final determiner divides emotions into three major groups, which are related to un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. The group of emotions connected with un/happiness, such as cheer, love or gratitude, are the ones which can be expressed as “affairs of the heart”. The in/security variable consists of emotions regarding social well-being. These emotions include, for example, anxiety, depression, fear or peace. The last variable, which is having to do with dis/satisfaction, involves feelings concerned with chasing the goal such as respect, curiosity, frustration or interest (Martin and White 2005, 46-51).

<b>affect</b>	1.	positive	negative	
	2.	behavioural surge	mental process	
	3.	reaction to other	underdirected mood	
	4.	low	median	final
	5.	suitable process	emotive process	
	6.	un/happiness	in/security	dis/satisfaction

*Figure 2 – Affect, adapted from Pekarová (2011, 32)*

### **1.1.1.2 Judgement**

The next sub-system of the attitude section of the appraisal system is judgement. It focuses on the evaluation of people and their behaviour in positive or negative ways. Judgement is assigned to “social acceptability/unacceptability – assessments in terms of ethics, legality, honest, etiquette, reliability, capacity, normality” (White 2009, 34).

Martin and White (2005, 52) developed the division of judgement into two categories. The first category is social esteem which occurs more in spoken forms of culture and is expressed via jokes, humour or storytelling. It deals with the normality, capacity and tenacity of humans behaviour. Normality evaluates how extraordinary or special someone is (e. g. cool, odd). Capacity focuses on how capable someone is (e. g. sensible, foolish). The last one, tenacity describes someone’s reliability and how decisive someone is (e. g. brave, impatient).

The second category, social sanction, is found rather in written forms such as rules or laws and illustrates the veracity and propriety of someone’s behaviour. The veracity examines the extent to which a person is truthful (e. g. honest, lying) and the propriety points out how ethical someone is (e. g. kind, mean). As the examples show, all of these tools for evaluating human behaviour make it possible to assess behaviour from both a positive and a negative point of view (Martin and White 2005, 52). The following Table 1 provides the summary of the theory of judgement.

*Table 1 – Judgement, adapted from Martin and White (2005, 53)*

<b>SOCIAL ESTEEM</b>		
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Normality</b>	lucky, familiar, cool, stable, fashionable, celebrated	unlucky, odd, eccentric, unpredictable, obscure
<b>Capacity</b>	powerful, fit, experienced, humorous, clever, sensible, educated, successful,	weak, sick, immature, childish, naïve, foolish, ignorant, uneducated
<b>Tenacity</b>	brave, patient, careful, resolute, reliable, loyal, faithful, flexible	impatient, hasty, weak, distracted, unreliable, disloyal, suborn, unreliable
<b>SOCIAL SANCTION</b>		
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Veracity</b>	truthful, honest, discrete	dishonest, lying, manipulative, blunt
<b>Propriety</b>	moral, sensitive, kind, caring, polite, respectful	evil, unfair, mean, cruel, vain, rude, arrogant



### 1.1.1.3 Appreciation

The last sub-system of attitude is called appreciation. The concept of value for non-living things, situations, and performances is determined by appreciation (Martin and White 2005, 36). It is used as a means for evaluating the quality of performances and products and also human beings as entities (Bednarek 2006, 28). To evaluate things in a sense of appreciation, three criteria have to be considered. First criterion represents how people react to something. This reaction can be determined by questions such as whether the issue caught their attention or if they like it (e.g. This was **fascinating/boring**). The second criterion is the composition of evaluated things. It means a certain coherence and connectedness of things, whether they fit together (e. g. This was **logical/disordered**). The last criterion focuses on the values of the things being evaluated. This factor can be proved by asking a question about whether the issue was worthwhile (e. g. This was **valuable/useless**). As it was mentioned with affect and judgement, appreciation and all of its criteria also have positive and negative sides of evaluations (Martin and White 2005, 56).

### 1.1.1.4 Judgement vs Appreciation

To state the border between judgement and appreciation, it is possible to see judgement as a dimension which works with the field of human behaviour and states how people should or should not behave according to the norms given by state institutions, norms and morals. Whereas appreciation works with feelings in the field of the valuableness of things.

It is also possible to distinguish these two dimensions by their subject of evaluation, in other words, what constitutes a source of assessment for individual instruments or what they focus on. Talking about affect, conscious participants, institutions, associations and groups of people, all these human beings are considered as subjects to evaluation for affect. Subsequently, it is possible to evaluate the behaviour of these participants, and the judgment takes care of that.

On the other hand, abstract or concrete things, situations and all inanimate means are the main targets for appreciation.

- He is a **good** player. → judgement
- It was a **great** match. → appreciation

### **1.1.2 Graduation**

The second domain of the “appraisal system” is graduation. Graduation consists of values which are used by a speaker to increase or decrease = “graduate” firstly the intensity (in other words *force*) of the statement and secondly the *focus* of its semantic categorizations. That is why there are two subcategories called Force and Focus (Martin and White 2005, 35-37).

Graduation operates across these two realms of grading. Force works with grading according to intensity or amount. As Martin and White (2005, 137) explained, “Force has its natural domain of operation over categories which involve inherently scalar assessments.”

Focus deals with grading according to exactness and prototypicality, which form boundaries of categories. It classifies phenomena into scales based on their reference to the grade to which they coincide with some hypothesized core or exemplar of the semantic category (Martin and White 2005, 137).

### **1.1.3 Engagement**

The last domain of the “appraisal system” is engagement. According to Martin (2000), engagement is often associated with something, which is indicated as an epistemic modality, and it can modify the speaker’s commitment to the main point of one’s speech. “Engagement includes the linguistic resources which explicitly position a text’s proposals and propositions inter-subjectively” (White 2001, 8).

## **1.2 The parameter-based framework of evaluation**

Evaluation in general refers to a statement of the author's opinion, feeling, or subjectivity. As it was mentioned in the chapter 1, there are many theories of evaluation developed by several prominent linguists. One of them is Monika Bednarek who has made significant contributions to the growth of this area of linguistics by developing a new innovative framework for evaluation. She developed her own parameter-based approach, which is predicated on the notion that speakers may evaluate various elements of the outside world through multiple criteria (Bednarek 2006, 41). Nine criteria were generated as a result of the study, each of which focused on a distinct area of evaluation. Two further categories - core and peripheral parameters - were developed from those requirements.

### **1.2.1 Core evaluative parameters**

As defined by Bednarek (2006), the most crucial and significant core evaluative parameters are those that "relate to evaluative qualities ascribed to the entities, situations, or propositions that are evaluated, and involve evaluative scales with two poles, but also potential intermediate stages between them" (44). Comprehensibility, Emotivity, Expectedness, Importance, Possibility/Necessity, and Reliability are six attributes that have been formulated as a result of these requirements (Bednarek 2006, 45). An overview of these attributes is shown in Figure 3 below.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Sub-value</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Comprehensibility</b>	Comprehensible	<i>plain, clear</i>
	Incomprehensible	<i>mysterious, unclear</i>
<b>Emotivity</b>	Positivity	<i>a polished speech</i>
	Negative	<i>a rant</i>
<b>Expectedness</b>	Expected	<i>familiar, inevitably</i>
	Unexpected	<i>astonishing, surprising</i>
	Contrast	<i>but, however</i>
	Contrast/Comparison	<i>no, not, hardly, only (negation)</i>
<b>Importance</b>	Important	<i>key, top, landmark</i>
	Unimportant	<i>minor, slightly</i>
<b>Possibility/Necessity</b>	Possible	<i>could</i>
	Not Possible	<i>inability, could not</i>
	Necessary	<i>had to</i>
	Not Necessary	<i>need not</i>
<b>Reliability</b>	Genuine	<i>real</i>
	Fake	<i>choreographed</i>
	High	<i>will, be to</i>
	Medium	<i>likely</i>
	Low	<i>may</i>

Figure 3 - Core Evaluative Parameters, adapted from Bednarek (2006, 42)

### 1.2.1.1 The parameter of Comprehensibility

The first core parameter, comprehensibility, as the name implies, concentrates on the aspects of the evaluation by which the authors convey the level of understanding of the given situation. It analysed whether the described event seems obvious, clear, and easy to understand to authors, or on the contrary, whether they perceive the situation as unclear or difficult to understand (Bednarek 2006, 45). Based on the ideas of explicitness and vagueness, statements measuring intelligibility can be classified from the most understandable explicit phrases on the one hand to the most unintelligible vague statements on the other. As two sub-values of this parameter, Comprehension, and Incomprehensibility were created.

### 1.2.1.2 The parameter of Emotivity

Emotivity, the second core parameter, is according to Bednarek (2006, 45) concerned with the expression of an agreeable or disagreeable opinion. Through this parameter, the author

labels the aspects of a particular situation as good or bad based on his own conviction. This belief evaluating the given situation can then be formulated with the help of positive or negative phrases, which shows the author's attitude. As a result, the emotivity parameter has two opposing sub-values: Positivity and Negativity (Bednarek 2006, 46).

However, there are many complications and doubts uncertainties around this parameter. When it comes to evaluating something from the perspective of whether it is good or bad, positive or negative, opinions can diverge. Deciding on something in a positive or negative sense is a very individual thing. Each person has a unique mind, temperament, and way of thinking. Therefore, they might all have various perspectives on the same object. Every individual has a history of events and experiences concealed behind them that might influence their perception of the positivity or negativity of a particular element. Each person's unique assessment and perception of any given circumstance produces an analysis completely based on subjectivity (Košňarová 2018, 38).

### **1.2.1.3 The parameter of Expectedness**

The previous parameter evaluated the situation in terms of its positivity or negativity, while the third core parameter, expectedness, as the name suggests, focuses on the level of possible predictability of this situation. (Bednarek 2006, 48) The parameter consists of four sub-values that describe these individual levels of predictability and expectation. These sub-values are: Expected, Unexpected, Contrast, and Contrast/Compare. These last two sub-values are essential for the proper categorization of the signs of expectedness even though they are thought of as more peripheral than core because the Contrast sub-value works with contradictory ideas and phrases that contrast two things. Also, the fact that the Contrast/Comparison sub-value includes a state expressing negation. (Košňarová 2018, 38-39). However, Bednarek (2006, 49) points out the fact that these expressions that negate or compare two things are used mainly in unpredictable situations.

#### **1.2.1.4 The parameter of Importance**

The next is the parameter of Importance which according to Bednarek (2006, 50), enables one to "evaluate the world (and discourse about it) according to the speaker's judgement of its status in terms of importance, relevance, and significance." Based on the expression of the value of the given thing for the author and how much he cares about it, subcategories - Important and Unimportant were created (Košňarová 2018, 39).

#### **1.2.1.5 The parameter of Possibility / Necessity**

The concept of "what has traditionally been described as a deontic or dynamic modality, i.e. with the writer's assessment of what is (not) necessary or (not) possible" identifies another core parameter, namely the parameter of Possibility / Necessity (Bednarek 2006, 50). Based on the kind of modalities, the parameter is divided into four sub-values: Possible, Not Possible, Necessary, and Not (Košňarová 2018, 39).

#### **1.2.1.6 The parameter of Reliability**

"Evaluations of reliability are connected to what is generally described as epistemic modality, i.e. to matters of reliability, certainty, confidence and likelihood" (Bednarek 2006, 52). How to identify a reliable source and if the facts being delivered are correct and dependable, these are the questions that this parameter tries to solve. There are five sub-values for the reliability parameter. The evaluation of an entity's sincerity is the focus of the first two values, Fake and Genuine. To calculate the likelihood that a statement would be true, the remaining values Low, Medium, and High are employed (Košňarová 2018, 40), (Bednarek 2006, 52).

### **1.2.2 Peripheral evaluative parameters**

In this chapter, the second group of parameters, the peripheral ones are described. One of the most significant differences between these parameters and the core is that the evaluation process for these parameters is not displayed and performed using a rating scale. Additionally, in contrast to core evaluative parameters, they do not represent the same type of qualitative

assessment of items or circumstances (Bednarek 2006, 53). Evidentiality, Mental State, and Style are the three sub-values that are covered in this section. Figure 4 offers an overview of peripheral parameters in more detail including examples of expressions (Košnarová 2018, 40).

Parameter	Sub-value	Examples
Evidentiality	Hearsay	<i>[he said it was] "a lie"</i>
	Mindsay	<i>"well done" [he thought]</i>
	Perception	<i>seem, visibly, betray</i>
	General Knowledge	<i>(in)famously</i>
	Evidence	<i>proof that</i>
	Unspecified	<i>it emerged that, meaning that</i>
Mental State	Belief/Disbelief	<i>accept</i>
	Emotion	<i>fear, terrified, angry</i>
	Expectation	<i>is expected to,</i>
	Knowledge	<i>know</i>
	State-of-Mind	<i>concerned, ambitious, fierce, desperate</i>
	Process	<i>hope</i>
	Volition/Non-Volition	<i>forced, deliberately, has been shut</i>
Style	Neutral	<i>said, told, wrote, tweeted</i>
	Illocutionary	<i>blamed, promised, asked, ordered</i>
	Declarative	<i>was declared, was diagnosed, was proclaimed</i>
	Discourse signalling	<i>added, continued, concluded</i>
	Paralinguistic	<i>yelled, pointed, shout</i>

Figure 4 - Peripheral Parameters, adapted from Bednarek (2006, 42)

### 1.2.2.1 The parameter of Evidentiality

This parameter, according to Bednarek (2006, 53) "deals with writers' evaluations of the 'evidence' for their knowledge". She used six sub-values to further refine this parameter in her theory. Statements made by someone other than the writer are frequently put into the category of Hearsay. Mindsay is used for assertions that were not said but rather sensed or experienced by someone other than the writer. The following sub-value of perception is further broken down into three categories: "mental perception, sensory perception, and showing" (Bednarek 2006, 53). The emphasis of the General Knowledge sub-value is on appraisals that demonstrate something generally accepted as common knowledge, for both the writer and his target audience (Košnarová 2018, 40-41).

### **1.2.2.2 The parameter of Mental State**

When evaluating the situation, the current mood and mental health of the performers play a big role. The following parameter - Mental state - is also devoted to this. Given that the human psyche is influenced by many factors that can change a person's mood from minute to minute, Bednarek tries to classify these into certain categories such as belief, emotions, expectation, or volition. These categories correspond to sub-values of this parameter.

### **1.2.2.3 The parameter of Style**

The parameter of "Style" refers to judgement of the language employed. The assessment focuses on factors such as how the information is presented or what tone of language is used (Bednarek 2006, 56). This parameter includes five distinct sub-values: Neutral, Declarative, Discourse Signaling, Illocutionary, and Paralinguistic (Košňarová 2018, 42-43).

This chapter presented a basic overview of one of the theories of language evaluation - Parameter based theory created by linguist Monika Bednarek. The aim of this chapter was to state that there are several different perspectives and types of theories describing language assessment methods. Even though Bednarek's theory of evaluative parameters is impressive, the theory of Appraisal created by J.R. Martin and P. P. R White was chosen for processing the analysis within the practical part of the bachelor's thesis.



## 2 Adjectives

This chapter deals with the main topic of this research, which is adjectives. As it is a broad and comprehensive topic, there are many formulations of adjectives definitions that can be found in dictionaries.

One of them, Collins Cobuild Student's Dictionary (Sinclair 1990, 10) states that “adjectives are words which tell more about things such as its appearance, colour, size, or other qualities.” In addition, it provides further details such as the distribution of adjectives according to the position in the sentence to attributive and predicative adjectives.

Cambridge Dictionary<sup>2</sup> (2023) defines an adjective as “a word that describes a noun or pronoun.” In other words, adjectives adjust the properties or characteristics of people, animals, or things. Similar wording of adjective definition can be seen also in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Macmillan Dictionary or in Oxford Learner's Dictionaries.

Regarding Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 527-528), adjectives can be denoted as a part of speech that has the ability to modify nouns by adding specific properties usually associated with size, shape, colour, age, and many more.

### 2.1 Attributive and Predicative adjectives

According to the function of adjectives, there are two main types – attributive and predicative adjectives. These two types were described by linguists such as Dušková et al. (2003), Biber et. al. (1999), and Quirk et. al. (1985).

Quirk et al. (1985, 417) indicate that attributive adjectives function as a premodifier of a head of noun phrase. A similar description stands also in the Collins Cobuild Dictionary, (Sinclair 1990, 10) which defines attributive adjectives as those that can come only in front of nouns (e.g. plays set in **classical** times) whereas predicative adjectives can be placed only after

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<sup>2</sup> Available from: [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/adjectives\\_2](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/adjectives_2)

a linking verb such as be, find, seem, or feel (e.g. I am not **afraid** to ask questions; I wanted to be **alone**). Quirk et. al. (1985, 417) examine predicative adjective from the syntactical perspective and states that predicative adjectives work usually as a subject complement to noun phrases or object complement.

This division can be seen in other dictionaries such as the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995, 16) which describes this topic in more detail. It specifies the attributive adjectives to be formed from nouns by adding the suffixes such as –ar (an atomic bomb), -al (a polar region), or –ic (a chronic illness). Other functions of attributive adjectives listed in the Cambridge International Dictionary (Procter 1995, 16) are that these adjectives emphasize the following noun, decrease its reference, and highlight the relationship with the present (e.g. my old friend, last book, current employer). Predicative adjectives describe feelings or health (e.g. feeling all right / well / sick / stressed etc.) (Procter 1995, 16). Compared to the Collins Dictionary, one more group of adjectives is introduced here and these are adjectives after a noun which are mostly used in fixed expressions, after titles or to describe numbers or measurements.

In the following examples, attributive adjectives are bolded:

I saw a **big** spider.    I bought an **expensive** car.    Jim has a **cute** kitten.

In the following examples, predicative adjectives are bolded:

He feels **sick**.            This cake is **delicious**.            Anna seems **happy**.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 528-529) added one more category regarding the function of adjectives and it is a postpositive function. These adjectives stand in the place of a post-head internal modifier in a noun phrase. They generally state after compound determinatives, in other words, indefinite pronouns (e.g. someone, anyone, nothing, anybody).

## 2.2 Comparative and superlative adjectives

Another integral grammatical part of adjectives is their gradability. Gradability means that adjectives indicate different degree or level of quality. There are several variants for the gradation of adjectives depending on whether the adjective is regular or irregular. Regular adjectives are graded by modifying them into comparative or superlative adjectives.

“Comparative adjectives are used to compare two entities on a particular dimension” (Kennison 1998, 7). “Superlative adjectives are used to state that an entity is the top ranking entity on a particular dimension” (Kennison 1998, 7). In other words, they are used to indicate that something has the most or least of a specific quality.

Forming the comparative or superlative adjectives depends on the number of syllables. This process is described in many English grammar books such as Falla’s et. al. (2017, 131) Maturita Solutions Student’s book, or Haines and Stewart’s (2014, 161) Cambridge English First Masterclass. It is said when making a comparative adjective from a one-syllable adjective, -er suffix must be added (e.g. old → older, long → longer). If the monosyllabic adjective ends in a vowel -e, only -r suffix is added (e.g. safe → safer, nice → nicer). If the monosyllabic adjective ends in a short vowel and a single consonant, it is necessary to double the final consonant (e.g. big → bigger, thin → thinner). If adjectives end with a consonant -y, this consonant is changed into -i so the -ier suffix is added (e.g. dry → drier). Only a few two-syllable adjectives have a comparative form that ends in the suffix -er. Those are for example: gentle → gentler, simple → simpler, or narrow → narrower. Most of the adjectives which consist of two or more syllables are graded by the second rule of forming comparative adjectives and it is by using the word *more* (e.g. important → more important, difficult → more difficult) (Falla, et. at. 2017, 131).

Superlative adjectives “are typically preceded by the definite article *the*” (Kukačka 2023, 17). If the adjective consists of one syllable, superlatives are usually formed by adding the suffix

-est (e.g. old → the oldest, long → the longest). The same rules which were mentioned about comparative adjectives also apply to superlatives. Therefore when the adjective ends in -e, only -st suffix is added (e.g. safe → the safest, nice → the nicest), when an adjective ends in a short vowel and a single consonant, the final consonant needs to be doubled (e.g. big → the biggest, thin → the thinnest), and when adjectives end with a vowel -y, this consonant is removed and the -ier suffix is added (e.g. dry → the driest). If the adjective consists of two and more syllables, superlatives are formed by using the word *most* (e.g. important → the most important) (Falla, et. al. 2017, 131).

Haines and Stewart (2014, 161) mention the gradation of irregular adjectives such as good, bad, old, or far. Those adjectives do not follow the rules mentioned above. Their comparative and superlative forms are completely different. For example the second degree of the word ‘good’ is ‘better’ and the superlative form is ‘the best’, ‘bad’ is modified into ‘worse’ and ‘the worst’. Table 2 provides a clearer view and summary of this topic.

Table 2 - Comparative and Superlative adjectives, adapted from Falla et. al. (2017, 131)

TYPES OF ADJECTIVES	ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE FORM	SUPERLATIVE FORM
Adjectives with one syllable	long	longer	the longest
Adjectives with one syllables ending in -e	wide	wider	the widest
Adjectives ending with short vowel + single consonant	hot	hotter	the hottest
Adjectives with two syllables ending in -y	friendly	friendlier	the friendliest
Adjectives with two or more syllables	difficult	more difficult	the most difficult
Irregular adjectives	good bad	better worse	the best the worst

## 2.3 Order of adjectives

When describing something, more than one adjective can be used. In this case, there is a special rule theory about the correctness of word order. Regarding the British Council<sup>3</sup>, a noun is most often pre-modified by two adjectives, which can be divided into adjectives describing a general (e.g. She is a good / bad / nice / person) and a specific opinion (This meal is delicious / This sofa is uncomfortable). In most cases, the general opinion precedes the specific one. When there are three or more adjectives pre-modifying a noun, there is a specific word order scheme. In the first place occurs an adjective describing a general opinion. In the second place stands the adjective of specific opinion, then the description of size, shape, age, colour, and in the end goes the description of nationality and material. Table 3 provides a clear summary of this theory.

*Table 3 - Order of Adjectives in the Sentence, adapted from British Council<sup>4</sup>*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>General opinion</b>	<b>Specific opinion</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Shape</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Material</b>

Comparing this to the theory provided by Cambridge Dictionary<sup>5</sup>, we can see some differences. Cambridge dictionary brings a slightly wider range of word order of adjectives. One difference is that there is no division into general and specific opinions. The second difference is that Cambridge Dictionary adds one more category between the description of size and shape and in this category are adjectives relating to physical quality. The next five categories remain the same as British Council states but in the end, there are two more extra categories of adjectives. Adjectives describing type are penultimate in order, and adjectives

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<sup>3</sup> Available from: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/english-grammar-reference/adjective-order>

<sup>4</sup> <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/english-grammar-reference/adjective-order>

<sup>5</sup> Available from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/adjectives-order>

describing purpose are listed as last. This theory from the Cambridge Dictionary perspective is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Order of Adjectives in the Sentence, adapted from Cambridge Dictionary<sup>6</sup>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Opinion	Size	Physical quality	Shape	Age	Colour	Nationality	Material	Type	Purpose

## 2.4 Adjectives ending with -ed and -ing

Adjectives can be formed in several ways. They can be derived by adding suffixes to nouns (e. g. sun → sunny), and verbs (e. g. use → useful). When creating adjectives from verbs, two participles are being used - present and past participle. The newly formed adjectives are therefore called *participial adjectives*. English participial adjectives can be defined as “non-finite verb forms that function as adjectives” (Gao 1997, 3).

The present participle adjectives are made by adding the suffix -ing to the infinitive form of the verb (e. g. annoy → annoying sound, interest → interesting subject, win → winning team). These adjectives ending with the -ing suffix describe non-living things, ideas, places, objects, or situations (Hashemi and Thomas 2003, 59).

The past participle adjectives are derived by adding the suffix -ed to the base form of the verb (e. g. excite → excited, bore → bored). Adjectives ending with the -ed suffix describes feeling or emotion (Hashemi and Thomas 2003, 59).

This chapter presented an overview of basic knowledge about adjectives such as their gradation, organization in a sentence, or methods of formation because adjectives represent the pivotal point of the practical part of this bachelor's thesis. In the practical part, however, not all of this theoretical knowledge is present. The practical part and its research only use knowledge about the types of adjectives such as attributive ones, as well as the gradation of these adjectives.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/adjectives-order>

## 3 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Since the practical part of this thesis focuses on the analysis of adjectives from journalistic discourse and all the articles analysed had been brought from BBC Sport, it is an essential reason to introduce this journalistic phenomenon - BBC.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) represents an impartial, independent public broadcaster, that provides several programs to inform and educate people about world events and news.

### 3.1 History

The official BBC websites<sup>7</sup> (2023) summarize the entire development of this company from its inception, through all important historical moments and milestones to today's form. The beginnings of the BBC go back to the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specifically to the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1922 when the BBC was founded. John Charles Walsham Reith became the General Manager of the BBC on 14 December 1922. In January of the year 1927, the BBC was established as the British Broadcasting Corporation by signing Royal Charter. "The Charter defined the aims, powers, and responsibilities of the BBC." As the BBC's broadcasting services developed and improved, The BBC Television Service was the first broadcaster to begin a regularly scheduled TV service, in 1936. Due to the outbreak of World War II, the broadcast had to be partially interrupted. In 1948, BBC provided the first televised Olympic Games. The biggest and most watched event in 50 years was the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, which viewers had the opportunity to see live for the first time ever. BBC was the first broadcaster that provided the first full-colour TV service in Europe and the first programme of this new convenience was Wimbledon tennis. One of the biggest events, the most popular programme ever broadcast was the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

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<sup>7</sup> Available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/whatwedo/>

## 3.2 Services

Nowadays, BBC provides a wide range of UK public services on TV, radio and also online via social media. The main and also the most watched TV channel is BBC One which projects current news, affairs, or entertainment content such as comedies. Next TV channel BBC Two focuses more on detailed documentaries about history, arts, or science. There are other TV channels like BBC Three and Four which are less popular, and BBC CBBC and CBeebies whose main viewers are mainly children. The last two channels, BBC News and BBC Parliament, are offering news and information from the world of politics. BBC broadcast over the radio has 6 stations + 4 extra stations which provide more detailed programs. As technology evolves, the BBC also offers digital services including programs such as BBC Weather, BBC News, or BBC Sport.

For listeners and viewers from all over the world, the BBC offers an international broadcast section called BBC World Service. It provides programs broadcasted worldwide in many languages and regional services on the radio, television, and digital. Over 3 million people visit these services every week therefore it makes it one of the most indispensable cultural exports for the United Kingdom.



## **4 PRACTICAL PART**

### **4.1 Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology of the research of this thesis in detail. Firstly, this chapter provides the aims and research questions of the practical part. The following part describes the whole process of the research, including the information about collecting data and creating a corpus.

### **4.2 Research questions**

The bachelor thesis aims to identify the most frequent adjectives used in sports journalism. The identified adjectives will be further analysed according to their evaluative load, specifically in judgement which evaluates human behaviour, and appreciation which focuses on assessing non-living objects, events or situations.

There are three research questions which this thesis is trying to answer:

1. Which are the most frequent adjectives used in sports journalism?
2. Do adjectives conveying judgement and appreciation in sports journalistic discourse carry a positive or negative meaning?
3. Do adjectives in sports journalistic discourse evaluate more human beings and their behaviour (judgement) or inanimate objects (appreciation)?

### **4.3 Collecting data**

A corpus-based method was chosen for processing the analysis. The corpus consists of sports newspaper articles. Therefore, the first part of the research involved data collection from sports journalistic discourse. For this work, online journalistic discourse BBC Sport News available on the website: <https://www.bbc.com/sport> was used. Newspaper articles dealing with various sports like football, tennis, cricket, rugby, and athletics have been collected from this

site. Every single article was manually copied into Microsoft Office Word 2016 to ensure that only the preferred parts of the articles were copied. By the preferred part it means only the plain and original text of the article, without images, date, and author of the article, and above all, without discussions and comments in the forum under each article. In total, 151 articles were collected in this way. All information about articles is summarized in the table which consists of the number of the copied article, their headline, publication date, and the URL address where the article is available to find (see Appendix 1).

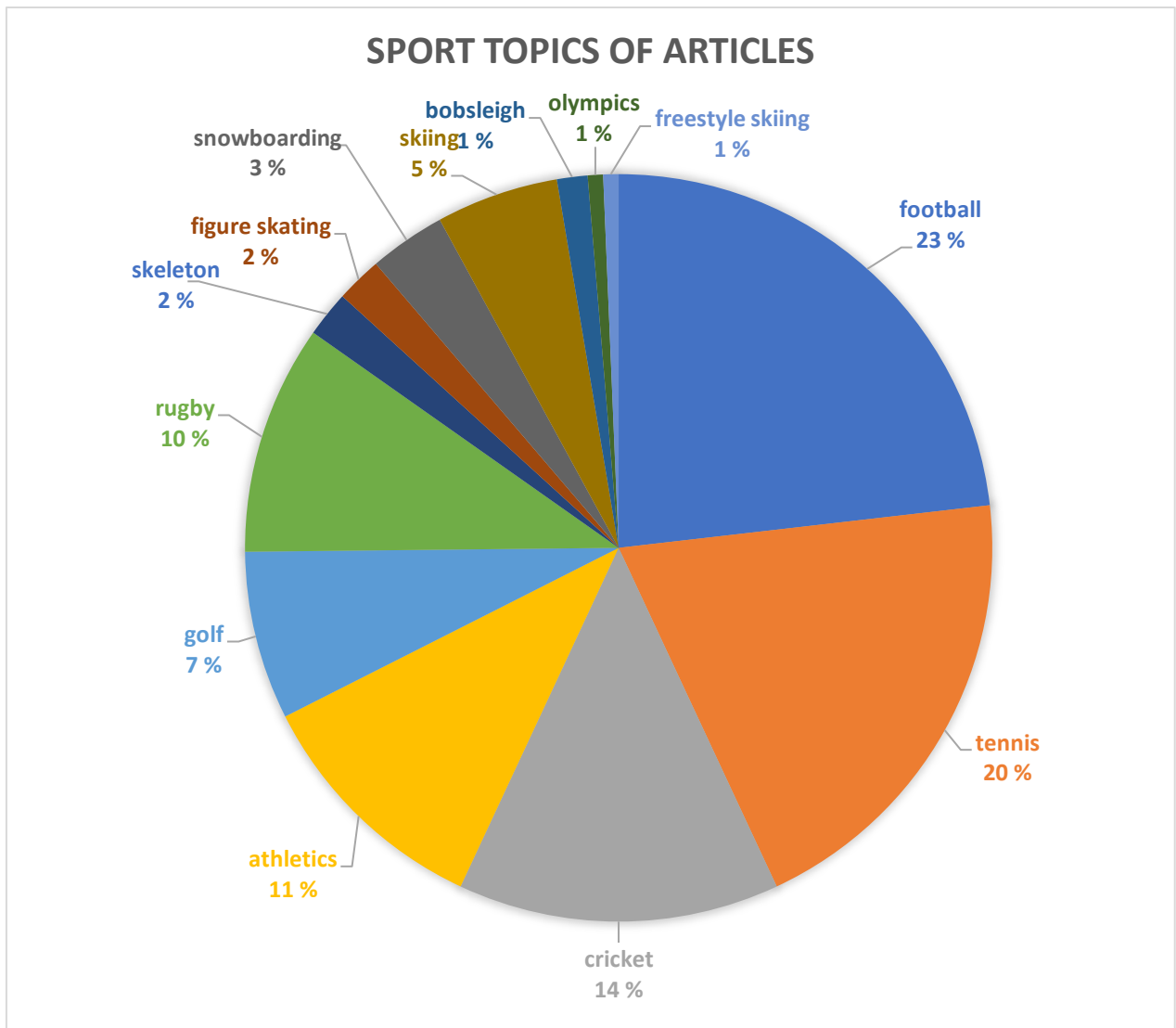
### 4.4 The Corpus

A corpus was created by inserting these 151 text files mentioned above into the software Sketch Engine. As Figure 5 shows, the newly created corpus consists of 100 893 tokens and 85 721 words which make up a total of 4 156 sentences.

COUNTS ⓘ	
Tokens	100,893
Words	85,721
Sentences	4,156
Documents	151

Figure 5 - Basic information about Corpus

The following Graph 1 shows the range of topics that the articles focus on. The articles were collected in the time period between the end of January and mid-March 2023. As can be seen, the most popular sport of this time was football, which makes up 23 % of all collected sports articles. The second most represented sport was tennis, which represents 20 % of all sports. The third in order was the sport of cricket which is equal to 14 %. This was followed by sports such as athletics and rugby. Both of these sports make up about 15 % of the total. As the next sport in order with 7% is golf. Less represented sports are skeleton, skiing, figure skating, bobsleigh or snowboarding.



Graph 1- Sports topic of articles

## 4.5 Analysis

This chapter describes the research itself in the form of an analysis of adjectives from a corpus focused on the topic of sport. In the beginning, the first category which is analysed is what are the most frequently used adjectives in sports discourse – in the created corpus. The main part of the analysis works with the most frequently used adjectives-noun co-occurrences. which are further analysed on the basis of findings from the ‘appraisal theory’ introduced by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White (see chapter 1.1). This research examines whether adjectives expressing a positive meaning predominate in the corpus, or whether, on the contrary, negative adjectives are represented in the majority. Through this analysis, it is possible to find out

whether the media and journalism focus more on positive news from the world of sport, or whether more readers are attracted to negative elements of news. The following analysis also assesses whether the authors of newspaper and media articles focus more evaluation of human beings and their behaviour (judgement), or rather on inanimate objects, in the case of sports articles it would be the performance of athletes, the atmosphere, etc. (appreciation).

#### 4.5.1 Most frequent adjectives

To find the most frequently used adjectives, there is a function ‘Wordlist’ in the Sketch Engine which provides “a list of all of the words that appear in a text or corpus, usually ordered alphabetically, or in terms of frequency, either with a raw frequency count and/or the percentage that the word contributes towards the whole text“ (Baker et. al. 2006). It filters out all the adjectives contained in the corpus and ranks them according to their absolute frequency (how many times the item was found in the corpus – number of occurrences) and relative frequency (the number of occurrences of an item per million tokens). Table 5 serves the first twenty most frequently used adjectives.

*Table 5 - 20 Most Frequently Used Adjectives*

<u>Number</u>	<u>Adjective</u>	<u>Absolute frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Adjective</u>	<u>Absolute frequency</u>	<u>Relative frequency</u>
1.	First	303	3 003.18	11.	Top	75	743.36
2.	Last	242	2398.58	12.	New	74	733.45
3.	Good	207	2051.68	13.	Third	72	713.63
4.	Second	129	1278.58	14.	Great	69	683.89
5.	Final	120	1189.38	15.	British	68	673.98
6.	More	99	981.24	16.	Other	67	664.07
7.	[number]	91	901.24	17.	Many	48	475.75
8.	Former	90	892.09	18.	Able	46	455.93
9.	Next	87	862.30	19.	Same	45	446.02
10.	Big	85	842.48	20.	Few	43	426.19

##### 4.5.1.1 Adjective: First

The most frequent adjective, as the table states, is adjective ‘first’. It occurs 303 times in the corpus. To put this word in context, it appears in the text in these examples:

- ...for the **first** time in three years...
- ...her **first** major gold medal...
- ...becoming the **first** team to win...
- ...became the **first** woman to land a quadruple jump...

If we focus on the most common collocations (considering one word on the right side) that are associated with the adjective ‘first’, the Sketch Engine shows that the co-occurrence ‘first time’ is number one with 42 appearances. After a deeper digging, it is possible to find, that ‘first time’ appears almost in every case in a form ‘for the first time’. The second most popular co-occurrence with ‘first’ is ‘first set’ with 16 appearances. All of these appear in the articles about tennis. The next most common combination with first is ‘first half’. Other co-occurrences follow such as: first round, first two, first match, first innings or first game. From all these examples it is clear that ‘first’ appears in the context as an attributive adjective, which premodifies noun.

#### 4.5.1.2 Adjective: Last

The second most frequent adjective is ‘last’ which appears 242 times in the corpus. There are some examples of context where the adjective ‘last’ can be found:

- ...**last** year was huge for me...
- ...in the **last** 50m it got away...
- ...**last** man James Anderson was caught down...
- ...scrambled a bye from the **last** ball to seal a dramatic win...

When searching for combinations with the word ‘last’, almost everyone would assume that it will be most often associated with words such as competitor, player, time or place, with regard to the sports theme of the corpus. However, after completing the analysis through the Sketch Engine, the results are different. They show that the word ‘last’ occurs in the overwhelming majority of cases as a time descriptor of sport events. Therefore, the most used combinations where the word ‘last’ stands on the front place are for example: last year, last week, last year’s, last most, last weekend or last season.

### 4.5.1.3 Adjective: Good

‘Good’ is the third most used adjectives with 207 occurrences, including its two gradational forms – better and the best. The basic form ‘good’ is the most frequent with 97 occurrences. The third and highest grade of good – ‘best’ is the second most frequent with 74 occurrences and with 36 occurrences goes the second grade of good – ‘better’. It can be seen in the corpus in these examples:

- ...setting a new world **best** time in the women's 3,000m...
- ...improving her **best** time to 50.68 seconds...
- ...lost against a very **good** team...
- ...second **best** team in the world...

All of these instances of the adjective ‘good’ appear in the attributive form. It means that in the majority of cases, the adjective ‘good’ function as a premodifier of the head noun in the sentence. However, there are few cases of a predicative form with a prepositional phrase as complement, see examples below.

- ...the result was **good for** us,
- ...I am **better for** that experience...
- ...Wolves were second **best for** large periods
- ...what is **best for** 2023...

Next combination is ‘good enough’. It occurs in corpus in a specific pattern: BE + (not) + GOOD + ENOUGH. In this case, the combination ‘good enough’ function in the sentences as a subject complement. Here are some examples from the corpus:

- ...Saturday's result was not **good enough**...
- ...it was not **good enough**...
- ...we are not **good enough** to play...
- ...there were 16 penalties which just is not **good enough**...

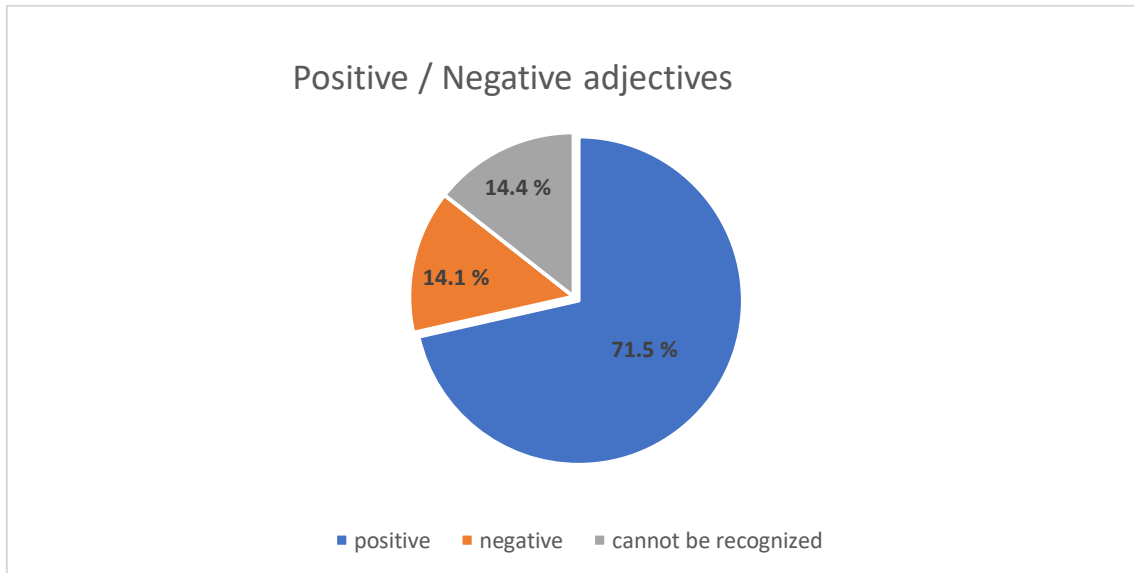
#### 4.5.2 Adjective-noun co-occurrences

From the first part of the research (see chapter 4.5.1), it is already known what are the most frequently used adjectives in sport discourse. This chapter focuses on a closer analysis since one of the goals of the bachelor thesis is the analysis of adjectives according to their evaluative load, namely judgment, and appreciation. For this part of the research it is therefore necessary to focus on the most common adjectives in combinations with nouns, in order to be able to distinguish judgment and appreciation. In other words, this part of the thesis analyses attributive evaluative adjectives.

At the beginning of the analysis, I used Sketch Engine and its function 'Concordance' with CQL (Corpus Query Language). By typing `[tag="J.*"][tag="N.*"]` in the search field, the list of adjective-noun combinations sorted by their frequency is filtered. The total number of adjective-noun combinations is 3085 items. However, it is evident that these are not only evaluative adjectives, phrases such as last week, former player, Australian Open, European football, French football, and many others appear in the corpus. Their non-evaluative load is evident, or disputable. Therefore, the first 200 types of evaluative adjectives were manually selected from these combinations (see Appendix 2) for further analysis. However, it is important to consider the number of representations of individual types of combinations in the text. Some word forms may appear more than once in the text and therefore it is necessary to count their specific appearance in the text. After considering this fact of frequency of individual word forms, the total number of items used for analysis increased to 403.

#### 4.5.2.1 Positivity / Negativity

The first parameter that the analysis dealt with was whether the adjectives used in sports journalism describe rather positive objects, events, performances, and players, or, on the contrary, whether negative messages prevail in sports discourse.



Graph 2 - Positive / Negative adjectives

Graph 2 shows that approximately 70 % of adjectives-noun co-occurrences express positive evaluation. Around 14 % of the remaining co-occurrences express negative evaluation, and for other 14.4 % it is not possible to determine whether they have a positive or negative attitude.

The most frequent positive adjective-noun combination with 8 occurrences is 'fast bowler'. It appears in the articles dealing with the sport of cricket. To see this combination in context, here are some examples from the corpus:

- ... risky move given the **fast bowler** had conceded 19 runs...
- ...former **fast bowler** Blain, who was capped 118 times by Scotland, has been "temporarily suspended"...
- ...England **fast bowler** stars against South Africa...

Second most used positive adjective-noun combination is 'top players' which occurs mostly in articles about golf and one representation can also be found in article about tennis. In



total, this combination can be found seven times in the corpus. There are some examples of sentences from the corpus where ‘top players’ co-occurrence appears:

- ...bring together all of the world's **top players** ...
- ...the **top players** are sticking around for four days...
- ... last year the PGA Tour gave 10 spots to the **top players** on Europe's money list...
- ... he [Zverev] was one of the **top players** in the world...

Other examples of positive adjective-noun combinations include: top flight, major winner, top level or straight victory. Many of them will be mentioned in the following chapters when other evaluation parameters (judgement and appreciation) will be added.

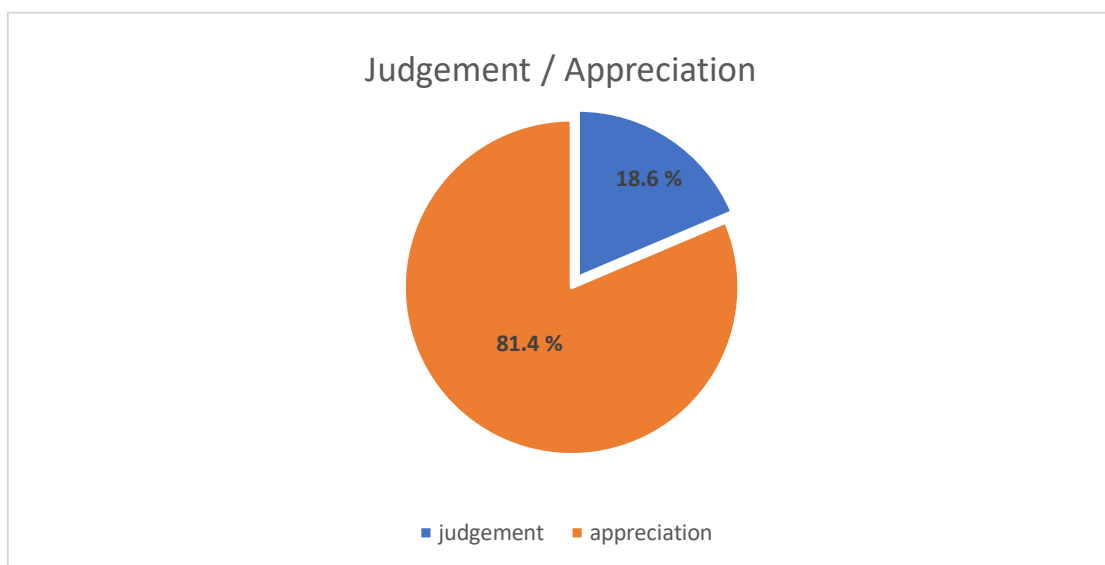
Looking at the opposite side, on the negative adjectives, one of the most common adjective-noun combinations is ‘double fault’ with 5 occurrences which appears most often in tennis discourse. With 3 occurrences are combinations such as ‘poor run’, which can be seen in articles about football or rugby, and ‘slow start’. There are several examples of these combinations in context:

- ...Potter has backing of Todd Boehly and club board despite **poor run** of form...
- ...given England fans endured a **poor run** of five wins...
- ...Murray hit a fifth **double fault** on match point...
- ...after that **double fault** , it didn't get much better for Sabalenka...

Other examples of negative adjectives used in sports discourse can be difficult period, wrong foot, or sloopy performance.

#### 4.5.2.2 Judgement / Appreciation

The second parameter that the analysis dealt with were the evaluation parameters. The analysis determined whether the adjectives used in sports journalistic discourse rather evaluate living beings and their behaviour (judgement), or, on the contrary, the evaluation of inanimate objects, events and things prevails (appreciation). This part of the research was carried out on the basis of findings from the theoretical part dealing with the Appraisal Theory created by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White (see chapter 1.1).



*Graph 3 - Judgement / Appreciation*

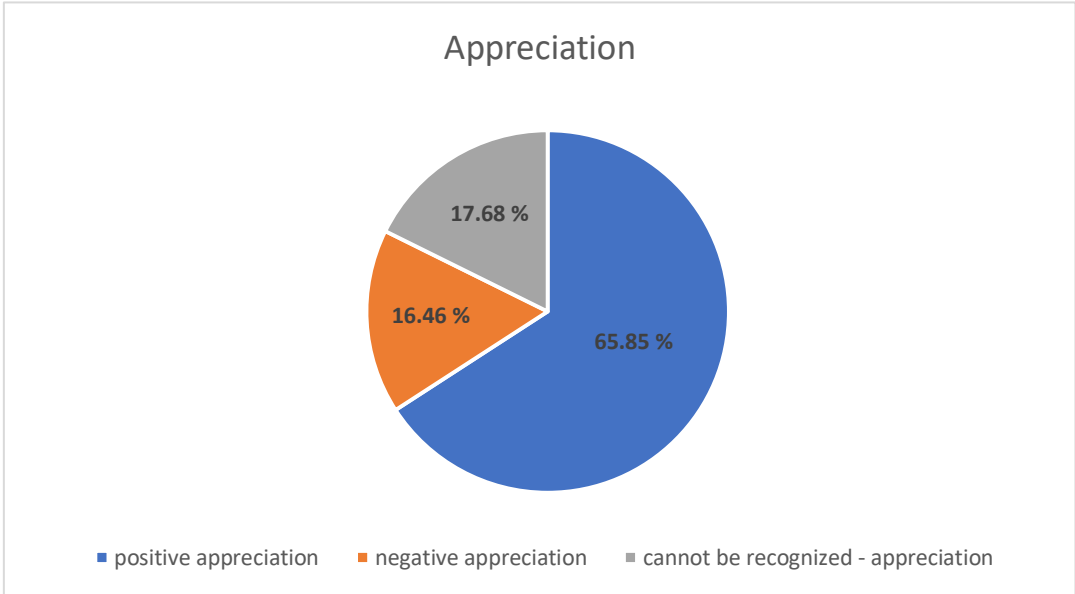
According to Graph 3, the vast majority of adjectives evaluate inanimate things – appreciation, specifically 81.4 %. The rest of the adjectives, approximately 15 % evaluate human beings – judgement. There were also a few examples that were complicated to determine whether to evaluate them as judgment or appreciation. One of them is the ‘top seed’ combination. Separately, this combination can be classified as appreciation, but based on experience, knowledge and subsequent check in the Sketch Engine, it was confirmed that this combination is usually further associated with a human being and is used in the form of ‘top seed players’ or with a concrete proper name of a person.

Based on the results of this analysis, it is possible to say that the authors of articles in sports newspapers focus more on the description and evaluation of their performances,

achievements, matches, and the atmosphere of sports events than on the personal assessment of players and competitors. The following chapters provide a more detailed analysis of these two groups of adjectives.

### 4.5.2.3 Appreciation

This chapter focuses on a more detailed and in-depth analysis of appreciation adjectives. It is already known from the previous chapter that in most sports articles, the subject of evaluation are rather inanimate things. In the corpus for this work, there are specifically 328 adjective-noun combinations, they can be included in this group of appreciation evaluative words. All these combinations can be divided into groups based on the evaluation or opinion that they attached to the given things. Whether they evaluate the given thing as bad, causing a negative opinion, or whether this thing makes a positive impression. There may also be cases where it is not entirely clear what evaluation this thing evokes, for example a conflicting evaluation. These cases are included in the category - cannot be recognised.



Graph 4 - Appreciation

The results of this analysis are processed in Graph 4. The statistic shows that around 65 % of appreciation adjectives evaluate the subject as positive. Only 16 % of adjectives

evaluate the subject in a negative way. In 17.7 % of cases, it is not entirely clear whether the evaluation is positive or negative.

The most frequent appreciation adjective-noun combination in a positive tone is ‘top flight’ which occurs seven times in the corpus. All occurrences of this combination appear in the articles about football. In general, the combination ‘top flight’ is used to describe something in the highest level or in the best quality. According to British Council<sup>8</sup>, in sports language, specifically in football slang, ‘top flight’ refer to the highest division in a league such as the Premier League is the highest level or so-called top flight of England football. In Germany, Bundesliga is the top flight. Here are some examples of this term from the corpus:

- ... the Rossoneri are fifth in the Italian **top flight**...
- ...Everton remain in the **top flight** at the end of a campaign...
- ...Blackburn have not played in the **top flight** since being relegated...
- ...Fulham have been an outstanding addition to the **top flight** this season...

Other instances of positive appreciation are the combinations such as ‘straight sets’ which occurs in tennis discourse, ‘top level’ and ‘top spots’ which both are used in football, athletics, tennis and golf discourse. With three occurrences, combinations such as ‘biggest victory’, ‘gold medal’, or ‘high standards’ appear in the corpus.

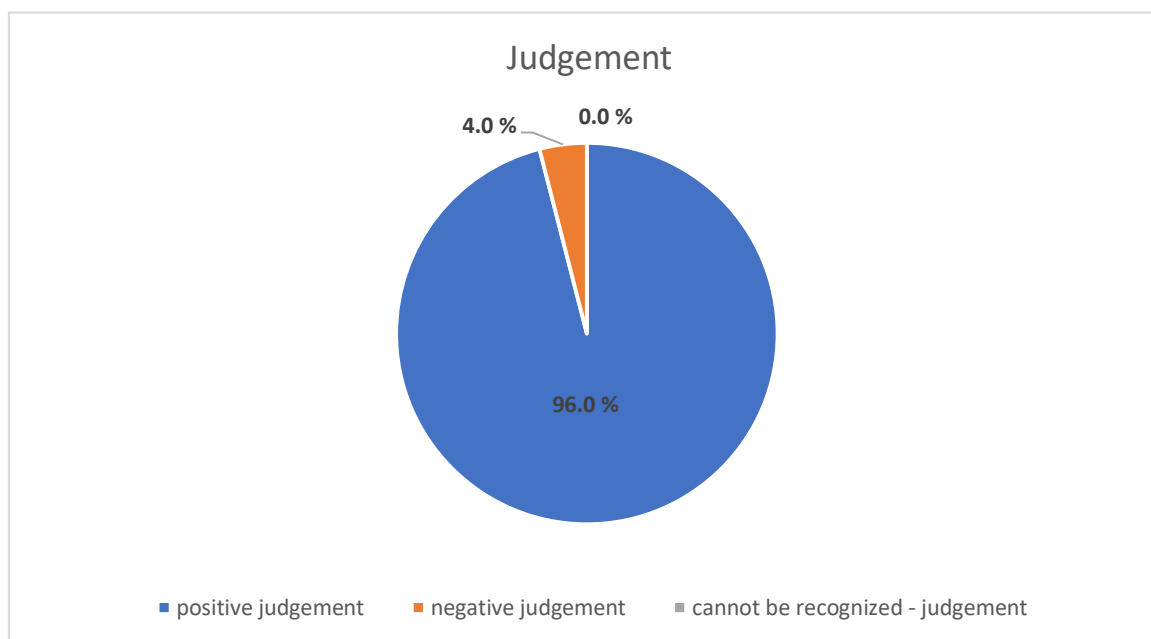
Among the negative appreciation adjectives, the most frequently used are ‘double fault’ which appears five times in the corpus, ‘poor run’, ‘slow start’ both with three occurrences. Only once in the corpus are the combinations such as ‘significant loss’, or ‘poor performance’. As already mentioned, there are also appreciation adjectives-noun combinations that cannot be determined in terms of positivity or negativity. Combinations such as an ‘emotional goodbye’, ‘flagship event’, or ‘hard toil’ can be included in this group.

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<sup>8</sup> Available from: <https://premierkillsenglish.britishcouncil.org/words/premier-vocabulary/hard-top-flight>

#### 4.5.2.4 Judgement

The previous chapter described the analysis of adjectives which focuses on evaluating non-living things by using the method of evaluative parameter appreciation. On the contrary, this chapter deals with the rest of the adjectives that deal with assessing human beings, which corresponds to the evaluative method of judgment.



Graph 5 - Judgement

According to Graph 5, it is safe to say that when the author of the article describes the human personality or its behaviour, in the vast majority of cases the evaluation is positive. Specifically, the corpus for this work contains 75 judgement evaluations and 96 % of them were positive. Only 4 % of judgement adjectives are assessing something in a negative point of view.

The most frequently used positive judgement combinations are 'fast bowler' and 'top players'. Both co-occurrences have already been mentioned and described in chapter 4.5.2.1 together with their examples in context. The third most used combination is 'major winner'. The following examples show sentences where this adjective-noun combination appears.

- ...the four-time **major winner** added in an interview with BBC Sport...
- ...the Norwegian two-time **major winner** had already been appointed captain...
- ...comparisons with 15-times **major winner** Tiger Woods...
- ...the three-time **major winner** , from Poland, beat second seed Pegula 6-3 6-0...

Other examples of positive judgement which occur in the corpus are ‘elite men’, ‘best players’, ‘diving champion’, ‘professional players’, or ‘elite athlete’.

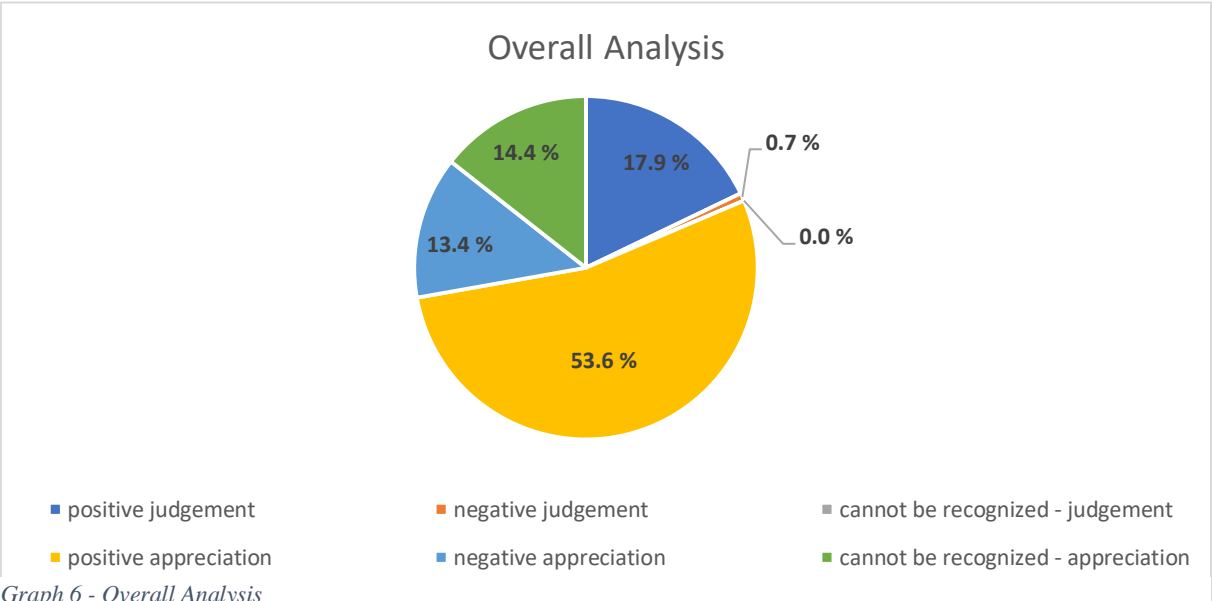
There are only three occurrences of negative judgement in the first 403 evaluative adjectives. The first example is ‘lowest scorers’ which occurs twice in the corpus, both in the articles about football. The second one is the adjective-noun combination ‘dejected players’ which appears in the article about football. It appears only once in the whole corpus, specifically in this exact sentence:

- ‘As the rain poured down at full-time and Leicester City's **dejected players** trudged off the pitch, Blackburn's supporters remained in their corner of the King Power Stadium.’

The results of the analysis confirm that there was no case of judgment where it would be impossible to distinguish evaluative load. All 75 occurrences express either a positive or a negative assessment.

**4.5.2.5 Overall analysis**

This chapter summarizes all findings and analysis results that were presented in previous chapters. Graph 6 shows the overall analysis with the final result, which contains all the already mentioned parameters (positivity, negativity, judgment, and appreciation) together.



Graph 6 - Overall Analysis

The results of the analysis processed in Graph 6 show that when focusing on the subject of evaluation and description in sports journalistic discourse, approximately half of the adjectives (53.6 %) focus on positive evaluation of inanimate objects (positive appreciation). In the sports environment, it means that almost half of the newspaper articles bring readers positive news, where the main topic is the evaluation of sports performances, sports events, and the course of tournaments or matches, but not the athlete himself as a human personality. As for the negative side of appreciation, it occurs in 13.4 % of sports journalism. In 14 % of cases, it is not possible to distinguish whether the article focuses on positive or negative appreciation. The rest of the attributive adjectives focus on evaluating human beings, their behaviour, (judgement), which, however, represents only 18.6 % of the total number of adjectives in the corpus. Specifically, 17.9 % of adjectives used in sports discourse evaluate judgment as positive, and the remaining 0.7 % express negative evaluation.

## 5 Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to identify the most frequent adjectives used in sports journalism. The identified adjectives are further analysed in the form of the most used adjective-noun combinations based on their evaluative loads, namely judgment and appreciation. At the beginning of the bachelor's thesis there is an introductory chapter, which gives the readers a kind of insight into the topic and issues that the thesis deals with.

The theoretical part of the thesis consists of several chapters that describe the necessary knowledge of the topics needed for the successful implementation of the research in the practical part. The introductory chapters are devoted to the description of two different theories on language evaluation. One of them is the appraisal theory by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White, which is subsequently used for processing the analysis in this work. The second theory that the theoretical part describes is the one created by Monika Bednarek. However, this theory was not chosen for research and thus serves as an illustrative example of another perspective on this issue. The rest of the theoretical part describes the main subject of this thesis, which is adjectives. The final chapter of this part is devoted to a brief description of the journalistic phenomenon that was chosen to collect data for the research, the BBC.

The following practical part introduces the reader to the aim of the given research and sets the research questions to be answered at the end of the work. The following is a description of the methodology including information about data collection process and the resulting corpus. The largest share of the practical part is devoted to the analysis itself. The results of the research analysis are processed in the form of graphs, where comments describing the graph in context are attached to each graph.

The first research question tries to find out what are the most frequent adjectives used in sports journalism. With the help of the internet software Sketch Engine, it was possible to find out what these adjectives are, and the results are summarized in Table No. 7. The first 20 most



used adjectives were selected for this table, together with their data on the number of occurrences and frequencies. More examples (200) can be found in the appendices.

The second research question deals with the issue of whether negative or positive adjectives predominate in sports discourse. As the results of the analysis already show (Graph 2), almost 3/4 of the adjectives found in the created corpus express positive evaluation and attitudes. It can clearly be seen here that in the world of sports, positive news and information outweigh the negative ones in large quantities.

The last task to which the analysis of this work is devoted is to find out whether adjectives in sports journalism are used more to evaluate inanimate objects - thus evaluating appreciation, or whether the evaluation of human beings and their behaviour prevails – it means evaluation of judgment. The results showed that appreciation makes up the majority of evaluation cases in sports articles, specifically 81 %, and approximately 2/3 of these evaluations express positive evaluative load. Evaluation of people and their behaviour occurs in sports articles only in less than 20 percent. However, if the author of the article has already decided to evaluate athletes specifically, the results confirm that the vast majority of judgment evaluations are aimed positively, and therefore the positives and achievements of these athletes are evaluated in particular.

It should be remembered that the results are based on a corpus that was generated of only 403 examples of adjectives that were selected from 151 sports articles. As a result, broad generalizations cannot be drawn from the findings with complete accuracy. However, it can be assumed that even with an increasing number of analysed examples, the results will be the same.

For future research, it would be interesting to focus on comparing how sports discourse differs from, for example, political discourse. Whether positive news outweighs negative news in other areas of journalism as well.

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## 7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of all articles

Appendix 2: A list of 200 most frequent types of adjective-noun co-occurrences

*Table 6 – A list of 200 most frequent types of adjective-noun co-occurrences*

NUMBER	FREQUENCY	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
1.	8x	fast	bowler
2.	7x	top	players
3.	7x	top	flight
4.	6x	top	seed
5.	5x	major	winner
6.	5x	straight	sets
7.	5x	double	fault
8.	4x	best	thing
9.	4x	right	things
10.	4x	professional	golf
11.	4x	top	level
12.	4x	top	spot
13.	4x	all-time	record
14.	3x	emotional	goodbye
15.	3x	flagship	event
16.	3x	poor	run
17.	3x	simple	things
18.	3x	high	standards
19.	3x	great	things
20.	3x	such	defeat
21.	3x	slow	start
22.	3x	third	place
23.	3x	biggest	names
24.	3x	big	game
25.	3x	important	thing
26.	3x	elite	men's
27.	3x	fourth	place
28.	3x	first	player
29.	3x	unfair	dismissal
30.	3x	high	level
31.	3x	back-to-back	wins
32.	3x	minimum	standards

33.	3x	gold	medal
34.	3x	hard	toil
35.	3x	good	year
36.	3x	best	players
37.	3x	clean	sheet
38.	3x	straight-set	victory
39.	3x	double	break
40.	3x	best	tennis
41.	3x	decisive	break
42.	3x	complicated	tie
43.	3x	biggest	victory
44.	2x	biggest	events
45.	2x	better	days
46.	2x	silver	medal
47.	2x	nice	touches
48.	2x	diving	champion
49.	2x	much	money
50.	2x	ranking	points
51.	2x	gripping	semi-final
52.	2x	lowest	round
53.	2x	strong	favourites
54.	2x	few	guarantees
55.	2x	big	change
56.	2x	bronze	medal
57.	2x	major	champion
58.	2x	good	team
59.	2x	professional	players
60.	2x	big	test
61.	2x	own	goal
62.	2x	great	feeling
63.	2x	top-flight	clubs
64.	2x	right	time
65.	2x	difficult	period
66.	2x	first	place
67.	2x	first	woman
68.	2x	professional	game
69.	2x	wrong	foot
70.	2x	fair	hearing
71.	2x	greatest	cup

72.	2x	strategic	alliance
73.	2x	important	step
74.	2x	key	moments
75.	2x	professional	footballer
76.	2x	good	outcome
77.	2x	best	time
78.	2x	best	finish
79.	2x	full	backing
80.	2x	massive	investment
81.	2x	thrilling	victory
82.	2x	sloopy	performance
83.	2x	elite	races
84.	2x	fastest	runners
85.	2x	biggest	win
86.	2x	best	run
87.	2x	fair	competition
88.	2x	inaccurate	advice
89.	2x	real	chance
90.	2x	right	foot
91.	2x	professional	carrier
92.	2x	prestigious	event
93.	2x	straight-set	defeat
94.	2x	drastic	cuts
95.	2x	right	direction
96.	2x	huge	achievement
97.	2x	two-shot	lead
98.	2x	elite	athlete
99.	2x	positive	opinion
100.	2x	poor	results
101.	2x	top-flight	games
102.	2x	good	performance
103.	2x	quadruple	jump
104.	2x	fastest	time
105.	2x	significant	drop
106.	2x	large	drops
107.	2x	emphatic	fashion
108.	2x	collective	mentality
109.	2x	middle	order
110.	2x	good	thing

111.	2x	serious	disadvantage
112.	2x	major	title
113.	2x	unfair	advantage
114.	2x	preferred	opinion
115.	2x	great	finishes
116.	2x	positive	test
117.	2x	nice	feeling
118.	2x	comfortable	victory
119.	2x	dramatic	win
120.	2x	top	end
121.	2x	great	position
122.	2x	professional	athlete
123.	2x	lowest	scorers
124.	2x	hard	work
125.	2x	special	effort
126.	2x	monstrous	win
127.	2x	key	moment
128.	2x	good	form
129.	2x	deciding	set
130.	2x	positive	decision
131.	2x	gutsy	win
132.	2x	perfect	recipe
133.	1x	crucial	point
134.	1x	best	night
135.	1x	absolute	legend
136.	1x	rapid	win
137.	1x	strong	starts
138.	1x	brilliant	game
139.	1x	proud	moment
140.	1x	massive	potential
141.	1x	massive	blow
142.	1x	good	results
143.	1x	fine	backhand
144.	1x	top-tier	honours
145.	1x	huge	boost
146.	1x	good	environment
147.	1x	greatest	cities
148.	1x	thrilling	finishes
149.	1x	perfect	line



150.	1x	well-worked	team
151.	1x	experienced	player
152.	1x	good	footwork
153.	1x	good	side
154.	1x	interesting	couple
155.	1x	big	work-on
156.	1x	insane	level
157.	1x	comprehensive	victory
158.	1x	big	moments
159.	1x	perfect	outcome
160.	1x	better	ones'
161.	1x	good	teams
162.	1x	incredible	player
163.	1x	better	team
164.	1x	total	disarray
165.	1x	best	performance
166.	1x	outstanding	defence
167.	1x	solid	win
168.	1x	exclusive	policy
169.	1x	smart	work
170.	1x	emotional	reaction
171.	1x	sensational	take
172.	1x	breathless	closing
173.	1x	good	lesson
174.	1x	challenging	tournaments
175.	1x	sensational	attack
176.	1x	great	sign
177.	1x	good	facilities
178.	1x	dejected	players
179.	1x	ridiculous	ways
180.	1x	poor	performance
181.	1x	good	reason
182.	1x	significant	support
183.	1x	initial	findings
184.	1x	impossible	situation
185.	1x	outstanding	motivator
186.	1x	entertaining	matches
187.	1x	lucrative	deals
188.	1x	major	winners

189.	1x	major	champions
190.	1x	popular	sports
191.	1x	major	championship
192.	1x	dedicated	fans
193.	1x	spectacular	spell
194.	1x	outstanding	talent
195.	1x	significant	loss
196.	1x	major	victories
197.	1x	turbulent	times
198.	1x	unbeaten	country
199.	1x	rare	talent
200.	1x	notable	win