

Volume 04, Issue 04, 2024

Publish Date: 13-04-2024

Doi <https://doi.org/10.55640/ijllc-04-04-03>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

(Open access)

THE ELOQUENT FOOTBALL COACH: A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF SOME OF PEP GUARDIOLA'S MOTIVATIONAL PHRASES

Salih Mahdi Adai

Prof. (P. H. D), University of Babylon, College of Education, English Department, Iraq

Anmar Ahmed Kadhem

Asst. Lect., Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Education, Wassit, Iraq

ABSTRACT

The practices, that individuals in positions of responsibility adopt to enhance their teams, come in various forms and strategies. Pep Guardiola, one of the most renowned football coaches, is known for his motivational techniques. Using Chen's (2022) motivation model of pragmatics, this study analyzes some of the most powerful phrases used by Guardiola in front of his players. The analysis reveals two levels of motivations and their categories: transactional and interactional motivations. Guardiola's motivational practices also focus on enhancing both his image and his players' public image for effectiveness and motivation.

KEYWORDS: Guardiola, Interactional Motivation, Transactional Motivation, Motivation, Public Image.



© The Author(s) 2024. **Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third-party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. The Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication waiver (<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>) applies to the data made available in this article, unless otherwise stated in a credit line to the data.

INTRODUCTION

The field of pragmatics deals with the question of what someone meant when they said something. Knowing the meanings of the words and how they are arranged into a sentence is not enough to understand what someone

meant, we also need to know who said it, in what context, and be able to make inferences about their intentions. The utterance "there's one piece of pizza left" can be interpreted in several ways depending on the situation, such as an offer, a warning, or a scolding. People often mean more than what they say, so it's up to those they are speaking to, to figure out what other meanings they might have intended. When a psychiatrist asks a patient if they can express deep grief, it doesn't necessarily mean they're asking the patient to do so immediately. On the other hand, a movie director speaking to an actor might use the same question as a request for the actor to show deep grief. While the literal meaning of a sentence is concerned with semantics, the "additional meaning" is the domain of pragmatics (Birner, 2022, p. 1).

Sawyer (2013) discusses the nature of pragmatics in relation to linguistics. Traditional linguistic subfields are based on language's structural levels, which include phonetics, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Pragmatics focuses on language use in context, unlike semantics and syntax which examine words and sentences separately from their context of use. In most cases, the context of use is significant when interpreting the interactional meaning of any given phrase or sentence. Pragmatics has been primarily theoretical and introspective, rather than empirical. Levinson (1983, p. 9) provides the most suitable definition of pragmatics concerning the previous discussion: "Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language." This definition includes deixis, presupposition, and speech

acts.

The latest models of pragmatics have integrated the conventional components of language in use with context and psychological factors such as motivation. Motivation, as defined, is the process that commences, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. It is the driving force behind every action, whether it is getting a glass of water to quench one's thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge. In his recent work, Chen (2022, p. 22) has presented a motivation-based model for studying pragmatics, which is founded on a key assumption that "language use can be adequately studied by examining the motivation behind it." The essence of the model is that by scrutinizing the motivation behind language use, we can comprehend the way it is employed in a given context.

This study undertakes a comprehensive examination and scrutiny of specific motivational phrases articulated by Pep Guardiola, a highly esteemed coach with an illustrious coaching career that spans managing prominent football clubs such as Barcelona and Bayern Munich, and presently holds the managerial position at Manchester City. Guardiola's coaching methodology is widely acknowledged for its adeptness in invigorating and galvanizing players through his motivational oratory, which serves to imbue them with a sense of self-assurance and fortitude. His eloquent and persuasive speeches are instrumental in fostering a collective belief among players, thereby enhancing team cohesion and performance. The significance of Guardiola's motivational dictums is underscored by testimonials from notable figures like David Villa, who attests to their educational value for aspiring coaches seeking to refine their skills in delivering impactful team talks. This research endeavors to delve deeply into the nuances of Guardiola's motivational rhetoric, elucidating

its underlying mechanisms and implications for coaching efficacy and player motivation within the realm of professional football. (Balague, 2015).

Two important questions the researcher aims to answer throughout the study:

- 1 – What are the motivational aspects of Guardiola's phrases?
- 2 – What are the most noticeable pragmatic features of the phrases?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation and Pragmatics

Chen (2022) introduces a conceptual framework that offers a structured approach to the analysis of pragmatics, emphasizing the pivotal role of motivation in comprehending language dynamics. This model, as elucidated by Chen, posits a nuanced perspective wherein language usage is intricately linked to underlying motivational factors. Central to Chen's framework is the exploration of language within its contextual milieu, with particular emphasis on discerning the motivations that propel the deployment of various linguistic devices and pragmatic strategies.

Drawing upon foundational tenets in the field of pragmatics, Chen's model underscores the symbiotic relationship between language use and motivational impetuses. By anchoring the analysis within the customary definition of pragmatics, the model serves as a scaffold for elucidating the multifaceted interplay between language in context and the motivational substratum that informs its deployment. This integrated approach not only facilitates a more profound comprehension of pragmatics but also illuminates the intrinsic connection between language behavior and the underlying motivations that shape communicative acts. Chen's framework thus represents a substantive contribution to the scholarly discourse on pragmatics, offering a systematic framework for unraveling the intricate interplay between language use and motivational dynamics. Through a meticulous

examination of the motivational underpinnings of linguistic phenomena, Chen's model furnishes researchers and practitioners with a comprehensive toolkit for dissecting and interpreting the complexities inherent in human communication within diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Definitional Properties

The motivation model of pragmatics is defined as " the study of language use in context from the perspective of the motivation behind the employment of a linguistic device or pragmatic strategy". Presenting the model by Chen (2022, p.22) reviews many definitional properties that find their echoes in the pragmatic literature. " The study of language use in context" is also found in Mey (1993, p. 10) and Green (1989, p. 33). For Chen, Mey, and Green, context is defined " as any extralinguistic factor that bears on the expression of an intended meaning by the speaker and or the interpretation of that intended meaning by the hearer". The new thing in Chen's framework is the classification of the context into epistemic, physical, and sociocultural contexts.

Chen (2022, p. 26) sees the linguistic device and the pragmatic strategy as basic constructions in the definition of the motivation model. A linguistic device " refers to anything linguistic: a word, a phrase, a sentence, however, one defines it", and A pragmatic strategy " is added to cover things that speakers do that are not linguistic per se but are clearly relevant to meaning making". If I were to make a joke about you which you found unpleasant, you could choose not to laugh, or laugh in a way that seems uncomfortable, or look at me disapprovingly. Although none of these actions involve words, they would still be meaningful as they convey a message. Any theory of language use must take into account such non-linguistic tactics, which have been extensively studied by conversation analysts over the years. One such example is the use of silence, which

refers to the act of not speaking when one is expected to say something during a conversation. This phenomenon has been the subject of much research and is discussed in detail in a collection of papers edited by Murray and Durrheim (2019).

Motivation and Its Types

Motivation is the process that causes a person to initiate, direct, and maintain behavior toward the achievement of a goal or the satisfaction of a need. It is the driving force that compels individuals to act and move forward. Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are the two primary types of motivation. For instance, consider a player who is experiencing a difficult social and familial environment, and as a result, is not getting sufficient playing minutes because of a strained relationship with the coach. However, the player's motivation to improve his athletic performance is high due to his interest and enjoyment in training at a technical and physical level, and his drive to "better himself." This is an example of intrinsic motivation, which stems from internal factors of the athlete such as self-efficacy, personal causation, or curiosity, without any external rewards (Silverthorne, 2005).

In contrast, extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors rather than internal ones. For instance, pay, threats of punishment, or status in the fans' perception could all serve as sources of extrinsic motivation. So, returning to the player profile in the previous example of intrinsic motivation, if the player's primary motivation were his position in the dressing room, his role on the field, his coach's attitude, and his family and social environment, rather than his intrinsic motivation, it is logical to assume that his performance could be negatively impacted by these environmental factors guided by extrinsic motivation (2005).

Guardiola's Character

Pep Guardiola is highly regarded for his

exceptional coaching career, which showcases his astuteness, innovation, and unwavering dedication to excellence in football management. He is a pioneering figure in modern football, known for his profound tactical acumen, insatiable thirst for success, and commitment to developing talent and fostering team cohesion. Guardiola's coaching philosophy goes beyond tactical considerations, encompassing a deep understanding of the psychological intricacies of player motivation and team dynamics. He is known for his meticulous attention to detail and relentless pursuit of perfection, and he embodies the archetype of a transformative leader who inspires unwavering devotion and loyalty among his players and staff (Violan, 2014).

Guardiola's coaching philosophy is based on his exceptional ability to communicate motivational speeches that connect with players on both intellectual and emotional levels. His speeches are inspiring and passionate, instilling a sense of purpose and conviction in his team, which helps them work together towards a common goal. Guardiola's motivational language is more than just encouraging words; it shows that he understands what drives athletes to achieve excellence, both individually and as a team. His speeches help players develop a growth mindset, which emphasizes resilience, adaptability, and the pursuit of self-improvement. Guardiola's words inspire players to believe in themselves and to overcome obstacles in order to reach their collective goals. His motivational approach is characterized by honesty, sincerity, and a commitment to fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement within his teams. Whether he's giving a pre-match pep talk or speaking to his players during training sessions, Guardiola's speeches carry a weight and importance that goes beyond the football pitch, making them a source of inspiration and guidance for athletes and coaches alike (Balague, 2015).

METHOD

The study utilizes Cheng's motivation model of pragmatics (2022) to present a qualitative analysis of motivational phrases made by Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola.

The Model of Analysis

Chen (2022, p. 22), defines the motivation model of pragmatics as "the study of language use in context from the perspective of the motivation behind the employment of a linguistic device or pragmatic strategy". Two levels of motivation direct the analysis of the phrases. The first level is the "dynamic", and the second level is the "strategic" level; terms follow Hocking and Whiteford (2012, p. 34). The dynamic level has two categories; transaction "the transmission of information", and interactional "the relationship between the speaker and the hearer" (2022, p.22). The strategic level; the second level contains also two main categories and subcategories. The first main category; the transaction is classified into clarity and effectiveness; and it is about "maintaining the other public image and the maintaining of the public image of self"; are the subcategories of the second main category; the interactional category.

First-Level Motivation

Originally, Brown and Yule (1983, p. 2) originated the functions of language as transactional and interactional. Giving directions by a policeman, a doctor telling a hospital attendant how to administer medicine to the patients, or an insurance claim put by a householder, all are examples of transactional language. Transactional language is defined as "message-based, that is used to convey factual or propositional information" The social perspective of the motivations is embodied in the interaction language; "is language used to establish and maintain social relationships" (1983, p. 34). Chen (2022, p. 27) illustrates that the interaction between the speaker and the hearer looks to preserve social relationships regardless of the values of information. For example, A woman on a bus describes the

way a mutual friend has been behaving (getting out of bed too soon after an operation) and concludes her turn in the conversation by saying "Aye, she's an awfy [=awful] woman". Her hearer responds with the same exact utterance. There is no transfer of any information. The conversationalists go "on and on", seemingly "with no point of purpose".

Second – Level Motivations

Clarity is the first transactional motivation and it stems from the fact that language offers speakers many ways, more than one way to say the same thing. Different causes and motivations push the speaker to say the same thing in many different ways and the main cause is the socio-cultural factors. If I am an English speaker from rural South Africa and you know this, then you may not use "what's up?"; the Americanism phrase, as the intention might not be enough "clear" for me (Garver, 2009). Effectiveness is the second motivation of the transaction. It is defined by Chen (1993, p. 66) as "the impact that what is said produces on the hearer without explicitly taking into account of its processing cost on the hearer". To make a line between clarity and effectiveness, the practice of language in use shows that, a certain word has different meanings, and in such a way, the used language has bigger effectiveness not clarity for example:

- "Walking the dog – with a dash of pure Smirnoff. Whatever you do with it, it's neat", the word dash has two possible meanings; the word neat has three possible meanings; and the pronoun it has eight possible referents. Multiply these three numbers (2x3x8) and we get a total of 48 interpretations – all could be intended by the slogan. What seems to be a simple slogan conveys dozens of meanings simultaneously. "
- Similarly, the Nike slogan, "Just do it", invites the audience to interpret it to be anything and everything they do. Therefore, we see that clarity is not the motivation for ad writers" (Chen, 2022, p. 31).

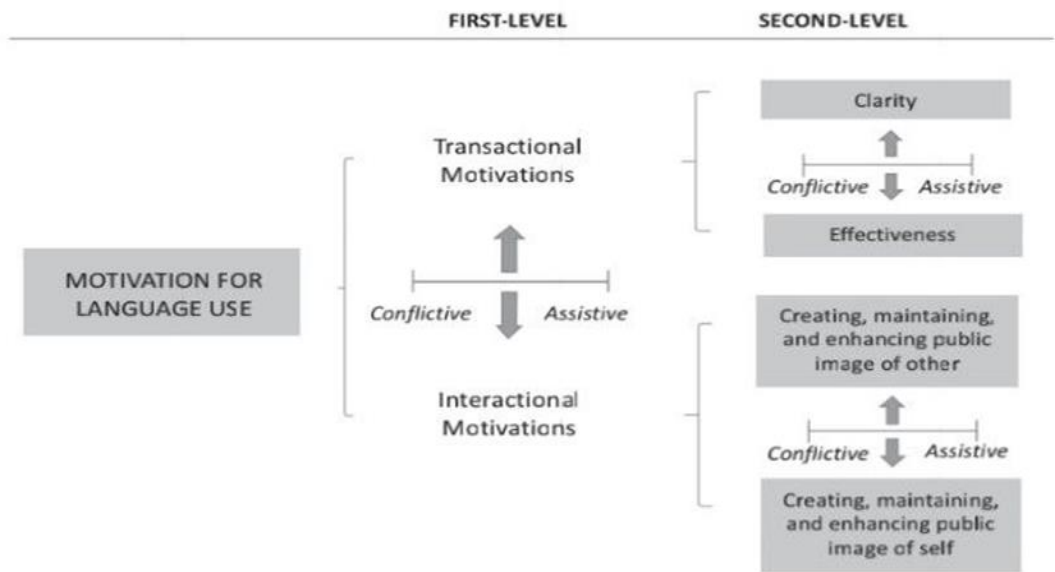
Considering high social values in the

second-level motivations is the domain of the subcategories of interactional motivation. The motivations here are about "creating, maintaining, and enhancing public image of other" and "creating, maintaining, and enhancing public image of self". Goffman (1979, p. 18) defines public image as: Public image refers to what a person is perceived by others. It covers elements of Maslow's top three needs: "self-actualization", "self-esteem", "and belongingness and love". It also overlaps with Alderfer's relatedness and growth needs. The need to have the desirable public image, further, is taken to be universal across cultures.

The complicated relationship between transactional motivations and interactional motivations can be conflictive in certain situations. For instance, when faced with a

scenario like standing at the edge of a cliff, the need to survive can come into conflict with the desire to be polite and deferential to others. In such a case, prioritizing the need to stay alive would take precedence over social niceties, leading someone to yell "help". However, there are also situations where transactional and interactional motivations can work together. For example, when asking for a ride to a car mechanic, using a polite and conversational tone such as "I am wondering if you have the time to take me to Bob's Garage" would reflect an interactional motivation while still fulfilling the transactional need. According to Chen (2022, p. 26), motivation model of pragmatics can be visualized as following:

Figure 3.1. The motivation model of pragmatics (Chen, 2022, p. 26).



The Data

The dataset pertains to three motivational phrases attributed to Pep Guardiola, which have been published on the official website of the renowned sports newspaper, "Marca". The information was publicly displayed online on the aforementioned media outlet's website on May 20, 2023.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis is not sectioned. The unified analysis is adopted to avoid redundancy, to practice the common constructions between phrases, and to detect the differences between them. The analysis starts with the following motivational phrase:

"Until the last breath, it doesn't matter what happens, fight to win the Premier League."

At the dynamic level of motivation, the transactional language plays a direct role in the relationship between Guardiola and his team, Manchester City. Guardiola assumes a dominant position as a leader or a general directing his players through the use of imperative constructions in his speech. His directive speech act is designed to motivate and urge the players to perform the perfect action. The social interaction is individual and is initiated by Guardiola's cognitive abilities. These cognitive tools are transmitted through the epistemic context to the players. There is mutual knowledge and a common recognition between the individual and the group, making the players understand the purposes and reasons behind their leader's words. Starting the epistemic message from the coach is preferable, so the message is not distracted, and it clearly refers to the basic motivation of winning the Premier League.

At the strategic level of motivation, Guardiola summons the soul of the team by playing on their psychological factor. The identity of the Manchester City team is a permanent icon, fighting till the end. The main contextual motivation, the Premier League, is glorified in a series of ways. It is the theme that is emphasized from the beginning of the message, so all the words and phrases before it are just a way to deliver the players to the ultimate goal. Guardiola employs a rhetorical strategy in which he emphasizes the intensity of his message by utilizing common, forceful expressions such as "last breath," "it doesn't matter," and "fight." The amplification of the message is both appropriate and effective, as these clauses serve as the central theme of his argument, appearing first and last in a poetic, rhetorical manner.

"Until May or June, this belongs to us,"

In pragmatics, the length of a phrase is not a significant factor, as the emphasis is not on its structure, but rather on the investigation of language meaning as it is used in practice. The term 'contextually' is particularly effective for several reasons. Firstly, it is

presented in a concise, unambiguous, and well-ordered manner that adheres to the maxim of manner. Secondly, it exploits the use of temporal expressions as metaphors or images that reflect tangible goals, which can have a significant impact on players due to the contextual factors at play. At the strategic level of motivation, Guardiola employs an elusive strategy that depends on the use of spatial deictic expressions such as 'this.' The use of the pronoun 'this' without a clear context can have multiple meanings. In this context, it refers to the Premier League trophy, indicating that it is currently in the possession or ownership of the speaker and the group they are referring to as 'us.' The use of 'us' implies shared ownership or possession among individuals within a specific group or community, which creates a sense of solidarity or collective ownership.

Guardiola's use of language also implies self-esteem and team esteem. The verb 'belongs' indicates ownership or possession, suggesting that the team and the speaker share ownership of the Premier League trophy. The inclusion of 'us' implies a sense of collective ownership and solidarity, which contributes to a positive team image and fosters a sense of shared responsibility and motivation. Overall, by exploiting the use of contextual factors, Guardiola's language use has a significant impact on the motivation and self-esteem of his team, contributing to their success on the field.

"To win something, the most important thing, you have to deserve it"

At the dynamic level, as a coach of the team, Guardiola reminds his players of the value of winning something by integrating the act of winning to the act of deserving. Here language is not only a channel of information but also a means to manage our social life. From the perspective of effectiveness involves considering how well it conveys its intended message and motivates action. The phrase is clear and direct in its message. It articulates that winning requires deserving the outcome, which implies a connection between effort, merit, and success. This

clarity makes it effective in communicating its central idea. The phrase is likely to have a motivational impact on the players who encounter it. By emphasizing the importance of deservingness, it encourages them to focus on their actions, skills, and qualities rather than solely relying on luck or wishful thinking. This motivational aspect can inspire the team to strive for excellence and put in the necessary effort to achieve their goals.

The message conveyed by the phrase is broadly applicable across various contexts, such as sports, academics, career pursuits, and personal development. Its universality increases its effectiveness as it resonates with people striving for success in different areas of life. The phrase promotes the idea of earning success through deservingness, which aligns with ethical principles of fairness and meritocracy. In contexts where fairness and integrity are valued, the message of deservingness can be compelling in guiding behavior and decision-making. Overall, the phrase "to win something, the most important thing, you have to deserve it" is effective in its clarity, motivational impact, universality, and alignment with ethical principles. It encourages individuals to focus on deservingness as a key factor in achieving success and can inspire positive action and behavior.

DISCUSSION

The paper presents a discussion concerning the answers to the questions of the study. Concerning question one, "What are the motivational aspects of Guardiola's phrases?"; the section of the literature review shows that the philosophy of Guardiola in coaching is based on the motivational speeches in the main part of it. The analysis shows that Guardiola uses the first level of motivation by adopting its two levels; the transactional and the interactional to pass several messages to his players.

He always reminds them about what will wait for them. He benefits the context of the game by taking into consideration the different types of context like the epistemic

and the sociocultural ones. At the level of strategic motivation, he uses the transactional category to create positive effects on the team. He always uses his interactional abilities to keep his public image and to enhance the identity of the team as a champion team by keeping the public image of his players; thus, he always refreshes their memory about the reality of themselves and the gist of the team.

About the second question of the study "What are the most noticeable pragmatic features of the phrases?" it is noticed that pragmatic constructions play a serious role in creating and managing motivation. Depending on the epistemic context, two of the most noticeable pragmatic components are used; mutual knowledge and common recognition. They are used to construct clear, and undistracted messages. The phrases are loaded with forceful expressions to raise both appropriateness and effectiveness. The phrases in general are presented in a concise, unambiguous, and well-ordered manner. They adhere to the cooperative nature and principles of pragmatics.

CONCLUSION

The examination of motivational language necessitates a pragmatic examination of language within its contextual framework. The motivation model of pragmatics delves into the intricate interplay between linguistic elements and contextual dynamics in communication. Upon evaluating levels of motivation, it becomes apparent that Guardiola has consistently leveraged diverse motivational strategies and facets throughout his coaching tenure to sustain player engagement across varying scenarios. The dynamic deployment of strategic motivations, characterized by their nuanced levels and pragmatic attributes, serves to engender favorable outcomes within the team environment.

REFERENCES

1. Balague, G. (2015). *Pep Guardiola: Another Way of Winning: The Biography*. Hachette
2. Birner, B. (2013). *Introduction to Pragmatics*. Wiley-Blackwell
3. Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge University Press
4. Chen, R. (1993). *Conversational Implicature and Poetic Metaphor. Language and Literature*. (Trinity University) 1993. 53-74
5. Chen, R. (2022). *Toward A Motivation Model of Pragmatics*. De Gruyter Mouton
6. Estepa, J. (2023, May 20). Manchester City share some of Guardiola's motivational speeches: Until the last breath!. Marca. <https://www.marca.com/en/football/manchester-city/2023/05/20/64693152ca47413a428b4573.html>
7. Garver, E. (2009). Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric. *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* .27 (1). 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rh.2009.27.1.cover>
8. Goffman, E. (1979). Footing. *Semiotica*. 25 (1 & 2) 1-30
9. Green, G. (1989). *Pragmatics and Natural Language Understanding*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
10. Hocking, C. & Whiteford, G. (2012). *Occupational Science: Society, Inclusion, Participation*. John Wiley & Sons
11. Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press
12. Mey, J. (1993). *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Blackwell
13. Murray, A. & Durrheim, K. (2019). *Qualitative Studies of Science: The Unsaid as Social Action*. Cambridge University Press
14. Sawyer, K. (2013). *Pretend Play As Improvisation: Conversation in the Preschool Classroom*. Psychology Press
15. Silverthorne, C. (2005). *Organizational Psychology in Cross Cultural Perspective*. NYV Press
16. Violan, M. (2014). *Pep Guardiola: The Philosophy That Changed the Game*. Meyer & Meyer Verlag