



A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Register In Copa Del Rey 2024/2025 Discussions on X

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history Received : January, 29th 2026 Revised : Feb, 19th 2026 Accepted : March, 25th 2026 OPEN ACCESS	This study examines the use of register in English-language discussions of the Copa del Rey 2024/2025 on X (formerly Twitter). The research aims to identify the linguistic forms of registers and to analyze their contextual meanings using Halliday's field-mode tenor framework. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the data were collected through documentation of seventy-five tweets posted during the semifinal and final stages of the tournament. The findings reveal that the registers used include words, phrases, abbreviations, blends, and symbols, with phrases emerging as the most dominant form. Contextually, the registers reflect intense rivalry, emotional expression, identity construction, and solidarity among football supporters. This study concludes that register variation in online football discourse functions not only as a means of information exchange but also as a sociolinguistic resource for expressing emotion, reinforcing group identity, and building virtual communities.
Keywords:	<i>Sociolinguistics, Register, Football Discourse, Field-Mode-Tenor, X, Copa Del Rey</i>

1. Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in human life as a primary medium for communication, knowledge transmission, emotional expression, and social interaction. Beyond its structural and grammatical elements, language functions as a social tool that both reflects and shapes cultural values, collective identities, and patterns of human interaction. Through language, individuals negotiate meaning, construct relationships, and maintain social order. The existence of diverse languages and language varieties across societies illustrates how linguistic forms continuously adapt to changing social needs, communicative purposes, and interactional contexts.

From this perspective, language cannot be separated from the social environments in which it is used. Sociolinguistics emerges as a field of study that systematically examines the relationship between language and society, emphasizing that language use is socially

motivated rather than random. As Wardhaugh (2010) argues, linguistic choices are influenced by a range of social factors, including context, participant roles, social settings, and communicative goals. This approach highlights that variation in language use is a natural and meaningful phenomenon, reflecting the social realities of speakers and communities.

One of the key concepts within sociolinguistics is **register**, which refers to language variation associated with particular situations, activities, or types of social interaction. Holmes (2012) defines register as a variety of language used for a specific purpose in a specific context, rather than a variety linked to the identity of the speaker. Register variation is shaped by three interrelated dimensions: **field**, **mode**, and **tenor**. Field refers to what is happening or the nature of the social activity; mode concerns how language is used, including the channel and role of language in the interaction; and tenor relates to the relationships and social roles of the participants involved. Together, these dimensions explain how language adapts to situational demands and communicative functions.

Register analysis is particularly relevant in contexts where language is used intensively to express emotion, identity, and social alignment, such as sports communication. In sports discourse, registers commonly appear in the form of specialized vocabulary, conventional slogans, abbreviations, and expressive phrases. These linguistic features enable participants to communicate efficiently while simultaneously conveying stance, loyalty, rivalry, and group belonging. Sports language, therefore, serves not only informational purposes but also important interpersonal and symbolic functions.

In the digital era, the expansion of social media platforms has significantly intensified the visibility and circulation of register variation. Social media environments encourage rapid, interactive, and multimodal communication, leading to the emergence of condensed and highly expressive linguistic forms. Among these platforms, X (formerly Twitter) stands out as a dynamic space for real-time interaction, allowing users to respond instantly to ongoing events and to engage with a global audience. Football discussions are among the most prominent topics on X, attracting fans, commentators, and analysts from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Within football-related interactions on X, users frequently employ abbreviations, slogans, evaluative phrases, emojis, and symbolic expressions to articulate their reactions. These forms reflect the constraints of the platform, such as character limits and fast-paced interaction, while also serving social functions such as expressing excitement, frustration, pride, or mockery. Through these linguistic practices, fans construct online identities,

reinforce group solidarity, and negotiate rivalries. Consequently, football discourse on X represents a rich site for examining how register operates within digitally mediated communication.

Several previous studies have explored registers in sports-related discourse, including fan interactions on social media, e-sport commentaries, and football journalism. These studies demonstrate that sports registers are shaped by both the nature of the sport and the communicative context in which language is used. However, research that specifically focuses on registers in Copa del Rey discussions on X remains limited, despite the tournament's historical significance, global reach, and high emotional intensity. Unlike league competitions, the knockout format of the Copa del Rey often generates unpredictable outcomes and dramatic moments, which tend to provoke strong emotional reactions and distinctive linguistic expressions from fans.

This gap highlights the need for focused sociolinguistic investigation of language use in Copa del Rey discussions on digital platforms. Accordingly, this study examines the registers used in English-language discussions of the Copa del Rey 2024/2025 on X, with particular attention to both linguistic forms and contextual meanings. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated approach, which not only documents the types of registers employed by football fans but also interprets their sociolinguistic functions using the field–mode tenor framework. By situating linguistic forms within their social and digital contexts, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of language variation in online environments. It offers insights that are relevant to sociolinguistic theory, sports discourse analysis, and digital communication studies.

2. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to examine register use in English-Language discussion of the 2024/2025 Copa del Rey on X (formerly Twitter). The qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on describing linguistic forms and interpreting contextual meanings within naturally occurring communication. The data consist of seventy-five English-language tweets related to the 2024/2025 Copa del Rey. The tweets were collected manually from X using the platform's search feature. Data collection focused on tweets posted during the semifinal and final stages of the tournament, from 26 February to 29 April 2025, as these stages generated the most intensive public reactions among football supporters. Tweets were retrieved using relevant keywords and hashtags associated with the tournament, including #RealMadrid#, #AthleticClub#, #CopaDelRey#,

and match-related discussions. Only publicly accessible tweets were included in the dataset. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select tweets relevant to the research objectives. Tweets were selected based on the following criteria: (1) the tweet discusses the Copa del Rey 2024/2025 matches, (2) the tweet is written in English, (3) the tweet contains identifiable linguistic forms representing register variation, and (4) the tweet provides sufficient contextual information for interpretation. Tweets consisting solely of images, hyperlinks, or unrelated content were excluded. The sample size of seventy-five tweets was considered sufficient for qualitative analysis because the study emphasizes depth of interpretation rather than statistical generalization. The dataset enabled the identification of recurring linguistic patterns and contextual meanings necessary for analyzing register variation in online football discourse. Data analysis was conducted through four stages: data reduction, classification of linguistic forms into words, phrases, abbreviations, blends, and symbols, contextual interpretation using Halliday's field-mode tenor framework, and conclusion drawing. All data were obtained from publicly accessible sources and used solely for academic research purposes.

3. Research Findings and Discussion

3.1 Research Findings

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the study on linguistic register use in online discussions of the Copa del Rey 2024/2025 on X (formerly Twitter). The analysis is based on seventy-five English-language tweets collected between 26 February and 29 April 2025, encompassing both the semifinal and final stages of the tournament. The data provide insight into how football fans employ diverse linguistic forms to communicate information, express emotions, assert identity, and negotiate social relationships in digitally mediated environments.

The dataset is divided between two major stages of the competition. Thirty-two tweets were collected during the semifinal phase, including both the first and second legs, while forty-three tweets were drawn from the final-stage discussions. Although the full dataset comprises 75 tweets, only 10 representative tweets—five from the semifinal stage and five from the final—were analyzed in depth to illustrate dominant linguistic patterns and contextual meanings. Each selected tweet was examined through Halliday's framework of field, mode, and tenor to capture how linguistic forms reflect social context and communicative purpose.

The semifinal-stage discussions reveal that fans frequently relied on nouns, short phrases, abbreviations, and creative blends to convey information, anticipation, rivalry, and humor. Many tweets served as concise announcements or commentary, resembling sports headlines, using proper nouns such as team names and tournament titles to convey factual information. These referential forms demonstrate that even within informal digital spaces, fans often adopt informational registers to frame discussions and orient other users to the context of the matches. In such cases, the field centers on match scheduling and competition structure, the mode is written and concise, and the tenor positions the writer as an information provider addressing a broad audience.

Alongside informative content, the semifinal stage also displayed strong expressive and symbolic language use. Short, emphatic phrases such as culturally loaded football terms were used to signal excitement and anticipation, particularly regarding potential high-profile matchups. These phrases, often written in full capitalization, functioned as markers of shared cultural knowledge and emotional intensity. Here, the field shifts toward anticipation and rivalry, the mode becomes emphatic and expressive, and the tenor reflects peer-to-peer interaction among fans who share familiarity with football culture.

Linguistic creativity was especially evident in tweets employing blending and wordplay. Fans manipulated lexical forms to produce humor and mock rival teams, drawing on shared phonological and semantic knowledge within the football community. Such playful expressions function not merely as entertainment but as tools for reinforcing in-group solidarity and highlighting competitive boundaries. In these instances, the field involves rivalry and evaluation of performance, the mode is informal and stylized, and the tenor is teasing and provocative, reflecting horizontal relationships among fans.

Supportive and affiliative language also emerged prominently in the semifinal stage. Fans used slogan-like phrases traditionally associated with stadium chants, adapting them into digital formats through emojis and symbolic elements. These expressions of loyalty demonstrate how offline football culture is recontextualized within online discourse. Linguistically, such slogans function as registers of solidarity, while contextually they reveal a field centered on team support, a mode that blends written text with visual cues, and a tenor rooted in shared identity and emotional alignment.

The use of abbreviations and emojis further illustrates the multimodal nature of online football discourse. Abbreviations such as “rn” (right now) and emotionally charged emojis allowed fans to express immediate reactions efficiently. These forms reflect platform-

specific communication norms that prioritize speed, brevity, and affective impact. The tenor in these tweets is informal and communal, relying on shared understanding of both football culture and digital slang.

The final-stage discussions exhibit a noticeable intensification of emotional expression and identity assertion compared to the semifinal data. As the tournament reached its climax, fans increasingly used symbols, idiomatic expressions, and evaluative language to celebrate victory, assert dominance, criticize opponents, and reflect on broader implications for Spanish football. Comparative symbols such as “>” were employed to convey rivalry and superiority with minimal text, demonstrating how digital discourse favors compressed yet semantically rich expressions. These symbolic forms allow fans to communicate their stance rapidly while maintaining high emotional resonance.

Celebratory language in the final stage often took the form of idiomatic phrases that emphasized loyalty and collective pride. Such expressions function as affirmations of group identity, reinforcing bonds among supporters. The field in these tweets revolves around victory and achievement, the mode is declarative and emotionally expressive, and the tenor reflects a communal voice addressing fellow fans in a shared moment of triumph.

Evaluative phrases framing one team as dominant over another were also prominent. Informal verbs and slang terms were used to express competitive hierarchy, reflecting the assertive tone typical of fan discourse during high-stakes moments. These linguistic choices underscore how fans position themselves socially through language, constructing narratives of superiority and rivalry that extend beyond the match itself.

Not all final-stage discourse centered on rivalry. Some tweets shifted focus toward media institutions, expressing gratitude for match broadcasts. These instances introduce a different register characterized by politeness and institutional address. The tenor in such tweets becomes more vertical, as fans engage with broadcasters rather than fellow supporters. This demonstrates the diversity of interpersonal relations present within football discourse on social media, where language use adapts to different social targets.

Additionally, reflective and evaluative statements expressing disappointment about the broader state of Spanish football highlight how fan discourse can transcend individual team loyalty. Such tweets adopt a more observer-like stance, using concise evaluative phrases to convey collective emotion. The tenor here is empathetic and inclusive, appealing to a shared sense of concern among football followers regardless of allegiance.

The quantitative distribution of linguistic forms across all seventy-five tweets further supports these qualitative observations. Phrases emerged as the dominant form, accounting for over half of the dataset. This prevalence indicates that fans favor short, expressive constructions capable of conveying emotion, identity, and stance efficiently. Words and nouns functioned primarily as referential anchors, while abbreviations reflected digital communication norms emphasizing brevity and shared knowledge. Blends and symbols, though less frequent, illustrated linguistic creativity and playful rivalry, adding expressive depth to the discourse.

Interpreted through Halliday's systemic functional framework, the findings demonstrate a consistent interaction between field, mode, and tenor. The field is anchored in football competition, evaluation, and emotional engagement; the mode is written, informal, and digitally mediated, often incorporating multimodal elements; and the tenor varies dynamically, encompassing solidarity, rivalry, humor, critique, gratitude, and reflection. Together, these dimensions shape the register of football discourse on X as an expressive and interactive social practice.

Overall, the findings confirm that language use in Copa del Rey discussions on X functions not merely to report events but to construct identity, express emotion, negotiate social relationships, and reinforce community bonds. Football registers in digital spaces and operates as a social resource through which fans participate in collective meaning-making. This study thus highlights the importance of register analysis in understanding how language adapts to contemporary digital contexts and how social media platforms shape evolving patterns of sociolinguistic interaction within global sports fandom.

4. Conclusion

This study examined register use in English-language discussions of the 2024/2025 Copa del Rey on X using Halliday's field-mode tenor framework. The findings show that fans predominantly employ phrases, words, abbreviations, blends, and symbols, with phrases emerging as the most frequent form. This pattern reflects the communicative demands of social media environments, which prioritize brevity, expressiveness, and immediacy. Beyond informational functions, register use in online football discourse serves important social purposes. Linguistic forms operate as resources for expressing emotion, constructing identity, reinforcing solidarity, and negotiating rivalry among supporters. The interaction of field, mode, and tenor demonstrates how language adapts to digitally mediated communication and reflects evolving patterns of sociolinguistic practice. Despite these

contributions, this study has several limitations. The dataset consists of a relatively small number of tweets, which may not fully represent the diversity of register use in broader online football discourse. In addition, the analysis is limited to tweets posted during the semifinal and final stages of the tournament, which may reflect heightened emotional intensity rather than everyday communication patterns. Furthermore, the study focuses exclusively on English-language tweets, thereby excluding register variation expressed in other languages used by football supporters. Future research is recommended to examine larger datasets, include multiple tournament stages, and explore multilingual online discourse to provide a more comprehensive understanding of register variation in digital sports communication.

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