

Mia San Mia and Bergkamp in Marseille: Language and Identity in Football Locales

Aim: Explore intersection of football, museums, translation, and identity

Research question: How are language and cultural practice used to express cultural identity in football's physical spaces?

Method: Critical discourse analysis of interpretive football museum texts

Pilot study locale: Arsenal FC Museum

Research approach

Interdisciplinary approach using fields of language, globalisation, museology and cultural studies on football, and identity

- Globalisation – cultural/commercial flows; cultural and linguistic interconnectedness
- Museums – Importance in presenting narrative – e.g. Exhibition of British photographer – Chinese: 'profound friendship [...] towards Chinese people', English: 'imperialist gaze' (Liao, p. 85)
- Identity – Pluralities within complex, globalised world
- Football – Contact zone for collective identity expression
- Language – Key marker of identity expression

Identity at Arsenal Museum:

- Language reflecting positive authorial stance
- 'Dazzling', 'mythical marble halls', 'innovative spirit', 'cutting edge of sporting and social developments', 'ingrained into consciousness of world football'
- Contrasted with omission of important but potentially more contentious topics – e.g. no mention of Spurs, or club who lost the most players in WWII.

Cultural landscape of football

- Recent globalisation has caused cultural shifts, especially tensions between global and local cultures
- Cultural flows - growth in foreign influence and consumption
- Football also a specialised language - Interaction between global and locally embedded football cultures feeds into global vocabulary - catenaccio, libero etc.
- This also reflects massive influx of foreign professionals – now 'more than double the original number' who took part in inaugural Premier League season (1992/3) (Allen, 2022)



Fig. 2 – Entrance to Arsenal Museum

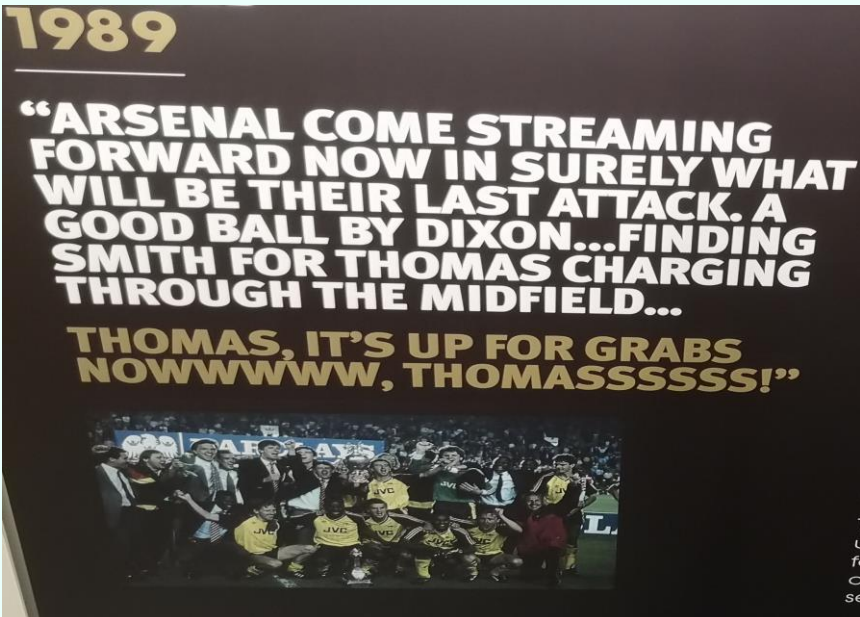


Fig. 1 – Photograph from personal research trip to the Arsenal Museum, television commentary from the last day of the 1988/89 English league season.



Fig. 3 – Premier League nationalities (66)

References:

Allen, T. (2022) 'How many foreign players can play in a Premier League team?', *Diario AS*. Available at: <https://en.as.com/soccer/how-many-foreign-players-can-play-in-a-premier-league-team-n/>

Fig. 2 – Foursquare (2023) *Ashburton Triangle and Arsenal Museum*. Available at: <https://foursquare.com/v/ashburton-triangle-and-arsenal-museum/4b82d308f964a52062e730e3>

Fig. 3 - FOX Soccer (2022) *Premier League Players by Country*. Available at: <https://twitter.com/foxsoccer/status/1554592149047414785>

- Liao, M.H. (2015) 'One photo, two stories: Chinese photos in British museums', *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, 1(2), pp. 177-191.



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