

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Language is an essential means of human communication. Through language, people do not merely transmit information but also communicate intentions, attitudes, emotions, evaluations, and social relationships. The meaning of an utterance is therefore not always determined only by its grammatical structure or the literal meanings of its words. In many situations, an utterance can only be understood by considering who produces it, to whom it is addressed, where it is produced, and under what circumstances the interaction occurs. The branch of linguistics that examines meaning in relation to context is known as pragmatics.

Pragmatics focuses on how speakers use language and how hearers interpret meaning within a particular communicative situation. Levinson (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of the relationship between language and context that is necessary for understanding meaning. Similarly, Yule (1996) explains that pragmatics investigates the meaning communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. These definitions indicate that pragmatic analysis is concerned not only with what an utterance literally says but also with what the speaker intends to accomplish through it.

One of the major areas of pragmatic study is speech act theory. Austin (1962) proposed that speaking is a form of action because speakers perform particular acts when producing utterances. He divided speech acts into three related levels: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act refers to the act of producing a meaningful utterance, an illocutionary act concerns the communicative force or intention behind the utterance, and a perlocutionary act refers to the effect produced on the listener. For example, when a speaker says, "Thank you for supporting us," the speaker produces a meaningful sentence, performs the act of thanking, and may create a feeling of appreciation or emotional closeness in the listener.

Searle (1976, 1979) further developed speech act theory by classifying illocutionary acts into five main categories: representatives or assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Representatives commit speakers to the truth of a proposition; directives attempt to make listeners perform an action; commissives commit speakers to a future action; declarations create a change in an institutional or social situation; and expressives communicate speakers' psychological states or attitudes toward particular circumstances. This

classification provides a systematic framework for identifying what speakers accomplish through their utterances.

Among these categories, expressive speech acts are particularly relevant to interactions involving emotion, personal evaluation, achievement, loss, conflict, and social relationships. Expressive speech acts reveal a speaker's feelings or attitudes toward an event or situation. They may include thanking, congratulating, apologizing, praising, welcoming, complaining, expressing regret, expressing disappointment, and showing sympathy. In contrast to representatives, expressive acts are not primarily intended to establish whether a proposition is true or false. Instead, they communicate the speaker's emotional or psychological response to a particular state of affairs.

Expressive speech acts are important because emotions are not communicated independently of social context. According to Searle (1976), expressive speech acts function to reveal the speaker's psychological state or attitude toward a particular situation. Therefore, speakers may select particular expressions according to their relationship with listeners, the formality of the interaction, cultural expectations, and the possible public consequences of their statements. A speaker may express happiness directly, for example, or communicate it indirectly by praising other people, describing a shared struggle, or thanking those who contributed to an achievement. Consequently, expressive speech acts can perform several functions simultaneously. An expression of gratitude may communicate appreciation, strengthen solidarity, acknowledge support, and present the speaker as humble or socially responsible.

This function is particularly relevant to *NBA* press conferences because players and coaches communicate not only with the journalists who ask questions but also with a wider public audience. Sports-media interviews provide athletes with opportunities to express personal attitudes while simultaneously managing their public identity and relationships with others (File, 2018; Mirer, 2025). In this setting, expressions of gratitude, praise, disappointment, frustration, apology, and appreciation can reveal how *NBA* players respond emotionally to victories, defeats, individual performances, teammates, coaches, and public expectations. A recent study by da Silva and Roble (2026), for example, examines *Giannis Antetokounmpo's* widely discussed post-game press conference and demonstrates how his response to a question about failure communicated his personal stance toward competitive success and failure. Therefore, expressive speech acts in *NBA* press conferences can be

examined not only as expressions of emotion but also as pragmatic acts through which players and coaches construct their public identities, maintain relationships with teammates and supporters, respond to journalists, and position themselves toward particular events or situations.

Ronan (2015) argues that expressive speech acts remain less extensively studied than some other categories of speech acts. Through an analysis of naturally occurring spoken interaction, Ronan identified several expressive categories, including agreement, disagreement, expressions of volition, thanking, apologizing, exclamations, expressions of sorrow, and greetings. This demonstrates that expressives are not limited to explicit statements such as “I am happy” or “I am sorry.” They may also appear through evaluations, emotional reactions, brief exclamations, and context-dependent responses. Therefore, the identification of expressive speech acts requires attention to both linguistic form and communicative context. The importance of context becomes more apparent in public and institutional communication. When speakers communicate through television, online video, news coverage, or social media, their utterances are addressed not only to the person asking a question but also to a broader audience. Public speakers are aware that their statements may be quoted, interpreted, circulated, and evaluated by journalists, supporters, organizations, and online communities. As a result, an expressive utterance in a public interview can communicate personal emotion while simultaneously influencing the speaker’s public identity.

Professional sports provide a significant setting for investigating this relationship between language, emotion, and public identity. Although sporting events are primarily associated with physical competition, professional sport also involves extensive communication among athletes, coaches, journalists, supporters, sponsors, and sporting organizations. Athletes are expected not only to perform during competition but also to explain their performances, respond to criticism, acknowledge teammates, address supporters, and represent their organizations in public. Their language therefore becomes part of the wider construction of sporting narratives and professional identities.

One of the most visible forms of communication in professional sport is the post-game interview or press conference. These interactions take place after a sporting event and commonly require athletes to evaluate the game, describe their emotions, explain significant moments, respond to journalists’ questions, and discuss the contributions of teammates and coaches. Unlike statements prepared in advance, post-game responses are often produced

shortly after athletes have experienced intense physical and emotional pressure. This context can make post-game communication particularly valuable for pragmatic analysis.

Post-game interviews are nevertheless not completely spontaneous or unrestricted conversations. They are institutional media interactions in which journalists control the questions while athletes are expected to provide informative and publicly acceptable responses. Wilton (2021) describes the post-match interview as a recognisable media ritual with distinctive linguistic and interactional characteristics. Journalists commonly construct questions that foreground the athlete's direct experience of the match, allowing the player to appear as the person with the strongest access to the event. At the same time, athletes must formulate responses that satisfy the immediate question while remaining appropriate for teammates, supporters, sporting organizations, and the wider media audience.

Caldwell (2009) found that athletes in post-match interviews carefully negotiate evaluative language rather than expressing entirely unrestricted personal opinions. File (2015) similarly demonstrates that professional team-sport athletes strategically construct a "media identity" through their interview responses. This media identity enables athletes to present themselves positively while maintaining relationships with teammates and other members of their sporting organizations. More recently, Adams (2025) found that questions and answers in hockey post-game interviews contribute to the construction of "teamness," particularly through the management of praise, blame, individual responsibility, and collective identity. Together, these studies show that post-game communication is a structured form of public discourse in which emotion, evaluation, identity, and team relationships are negotiated through language.

Expressive speech acts are highly relevant to such interactions because athletes frequently need to express gratitude, pride, relief, admiration, disappointment, regret, or dissatisfaction. However, these emotions are not always presented as purely individual experiences. In team sports, athletes may shift from the pronoun "I" to "we," praise their teammates instead of themselves, dedicate achievements to supporters, or describe success as the result of collective effort. Such expressions can help athletes avoid appearing excessively self-centred while reinforcing their membership in the team.

The relationship between expressive language and team identity is particularly significant after major victories. A championship is both an individual and collective achievement. Each athlete experiences personal emotion, but the achievement belongs to a team, organization, and supporter community. Statements made after a championship may

therefore reveal how athletes balance personal feelings with collective responsibility. Thanking teammates, praising coaches, recognising family members, and acknowledging supporters can transform an individual response into a wider narrative of shared achievement.

The National Basketball Association, commonly known as the *NBA*, provides an important setting for studying this form of professional sports communication. As a highly publicised basketball league with an international audience, the *NBA* produces extensive media content before and after its games. Players routinely participate in interviews, media availability sessions, and formal press conferences. These appearances are distributed through television broadcasts, digital news platforms, official league websites, and social media. Consequently, the language used by *NBA* players can reach audiences far beyond the immediate press-conference room.

The present research specifically focuses on the *Denver Nuggets*' post-game press conference following Game 5 of the 2023 *NBA* Finals. Game 5 was played on June 12, 2023, between the *Denver Nuggets* and the *Miami Heat*. *Denver* won the game 94–89 and completed the series with a 4–1 victory. The result gave the *Denver Nuggets* their first *NBA* championship. The official *NBA* media archive also identifies separate post-game media coverage for the *Denver Nuggets* after Game 5, providing an identifiable and accessible source of spoken data for this research.

The historic context of this press conference makes it a meaningful object of linguistic analysis. The players were responding after completing an intense championship series and achieving a major milestone for their organization. Their responses occurred within an atmosphere of celebration, relief, exhaustion, and public attention. This combination created opportunities for various expressive speech acts, including gratitude toward teammates and supporters, praise for individual or collective performances, expressions of happiness and relief, and evaluations of the team's journey.

The *Denver Nuggets*' post-game press conference is important to examine through expressive speech act theory because it contains emotionally meaningful utterances produced immediately after the team achieved its first *NBA* championship. In this situation, the players expressed psychological states and attitudes such as happiness, pride, relief, gratitude, praise, and admiration toward their teammates, coaches, supporters, and organization. These expressions cannot always be understood only from their literal meanings because the players may communicate emotions indirectly by sharing credit, emphasising collective effort, or using

pronouns such as “we,” “us,” and “our.” Therefore, expressive speech act theory is appropriate for identifying the types of emotional expressions used by the players and explaining their pragmatic functions within the press conference. Through this theory, the researcher can also examine how the players’ utterances communicate individual and collective emotions, maintain solidarity, manage their public image, and construct the Denver Nuggets’ identity as a united team in front of journalists and a global audience.

The press conference also required the players to communicate within multiple social roles. They appeared as individual athletes with personal experiences, as members of the Denver Nuggets, as representatives of a championship organization, and as public figures speaking to an international audience. Their utterances could therefore reveal how expressive language helps connect individual emotion with collective identity. For instance, a player might answer a question about his performance by praising teammates, shifting attention from personal achievement to collective success. Such an utterance would not only express admiration but could also reinforce the speaker’s identity as a committed team member.

Previous studies provide valuable foundations for investigating language in sports interviews. Caldwell (2009) focused on evaluative language used by Australian Football League players. File (2015) examined how professional team-sport players strategically construct media identities in post-match interviews. Wilton (2021) investigated question design and the management of knowledge in football interviews. Adams (2025) examined how journalists and hockey players collaboratively manage praise, blame, and team identity. These studies establish that sports interviews contain distinctive linguistic practices and that athletes’ responses contribute to public identity construction.

However, the previous studies have generally focused on appraisal, interactional organization, questioning strategies, identity performance, or the distribution of praise and blame. They have not specifically combined the classification of expressive speech acts with an examination of their pragmatic implications and their role in reflecting collective emotions and constructing team identity in an NBA championship press conference. Furthermore, studies of sports discourse have more frequently examined football, rugby, Australian football, or hockey than professional basketball.

Research on expressive speech acts has also commonly used Data from films, political debates, talk shows, social media, or general interviews. Although these studies demonstrate the variety of expressive forms, their contexts differ from a championship press conference in

which athletes communicate immediately after achieving a historic collective result. Therefore, analysis of the Denver Nuggets' Game 5 press conference can extend expressive speech-act research into a specific professional basketball context.

This research addresses this gap by identifying the types of expressive speech acts used by Denver Nuggets players, examining the pragmatic implications of those utterances in professional sports communication, and analyzing how their functions reflect collective emotion and team identity. The research does not treat expressive speech acts merely as isolated grammatical sentences. Instead, each utterance will be interpreted according to its immediate question, speaker, referent, emotional situation, and broader championship context.

The study is expected to provide a more focused understanding of how professional athletes use expressive language when communicating after a major achievement. It can demonstrate how utterances of gratitude, praise, happiness, relief, admiration, or other emotional attitudes perform interpersonal and institutional functions. Through this approach, the research connects speech act theory with sports discourse, media interaction, emotional expression, and identity construction.

Based on the explanation above, the post-game press conference following Game 5 of the 2023 NBA Finals represents a relevant source for examining expressive speech acts. The event provides naturally occurring communication from athletes experiencing a historic victory while responding to journalists and representing their team before a global audience. Therefore, the researcher intends to investigate the expressive speech acts used by Denver Nuggets players and the ways in which those utterances communicate emotion, create pragmatic meaning, and support the construction of collective team identity.

1.2 Research questions

Here are the two main questions regarding to the research, based on the research background provided above :

1. What types of expressive speech acts are used by Denver Nuggets players in post-game press conferences in game 5?
2. How do the functions of expressive speech acts as pragmatic implications reflect collective emotions and the construction of team identity?

1.3 The Aim of Research

These are the following objectives from the research questions that is previously provided :

1. To find out the types of expressive speech acts that are predominantly appears from the post game press conference in game 5 of Denver Nuggets.
2. To Classify the functions of expressive speech acts as pragmatic implications that reflect collective emotions and the construction of the team identity.

1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it can expand the application of pragmatic theory, particularly Austin's and Searle's speech act theories, to professional sports discourse. Although speech act theory has been applied to various forms of conversation and media communication, the analysis of expressive speech acts in a championship press conference provides a more specific context involving intense emotion, public accountability, and collective achievement. The research can also contribute to studies of expressive speech acts by showing how their meanings depend on context. Expressions of gratitude, praise, relief, pride, or disappointment may have functions beyond the direct communication of emotion. They may acknowledge other participants, maintain social relationships, protect public image, transfer credit from an individual to a group, or reinforce the values associated with the team. Therefore, the findings may demonstrate that expressive speech acts operate at personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels. In relation to sports communication, the research can provide insight into how professional athletes manage the relationship between personal experience and team representation. The Denver Nuggets players speak as individuals, but their statements also represent the organization and contribute to public narratives surrounding the championship. Analyzing these utterances can help explain how athletes communicate emotional authenticity while maintaining solidarity with teammates and responding appropriately to journalists and audiences.

Practically, the findings may be useful for students and researchers in pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and sports communication. The research can serve as a reference for future studies investigating speech acts in athlete interviews, press conferences, podcasts, documentaries, and other forms of sports media. It may also be relevant to sports journalists and media trainers by showing how particular questions and expressive responses influence public interpretations of athletes and teams. Finally, this study is expected to provide

readers with a clearer understanding of the difference between athletes' physical performances during a basketball game and their communicative performances after the game. During the match, players communicate mainly through sporting actions, strategies, and physical interaction. During the post-game press conference, they must reconstruct the experience through language, evaluate what occurred, express emotional responses, and explain the collective meaning of the result. The press conference therefore constitutes an important communicative event in its own right.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

This research applies a pragmatic approach to investigate expressive speech acts used by Denver Nuggets players during the post-game press conference following Game 5 of the 2023 NBA Finals. Pragmatics is used because the intended meanings and functions of the players' utterances cannot be identified solely through their literal forms. The analysis must consider the questions asked by journalists, the emotional atmosphere after the championship victory, the relationship among players and teammates, and the wider media audience.

Speech act theory developed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1976, 1979) serves as the principal theoretical foundation. The analysis focuses on the illocutionary level because the researcher intends to determine what communicative actions the players perform through their utterances. Within Searle's classification, the expressive category is used to identify utterances that communicate the speaker's psychological state, attitude, or emotional evaluation of a particular situation.

The classification will not depend only on the presence of explicit emotional vocabulary. An utterance such as "I am very happy" can be identified relatively directly as an expression of happiness. However, statements such as "My teammates believed in me," "We worked for this all season," or "I cannot thank the fans enough" may communicate admiration, pride, gratitude, or collective appreciation. Consequently, the contextual relationship between the utterance and the journalist's question will be considered during classification.

The expressive speech acts expected to appear in the Data may include the following forms:

- a. Thanking, which communicates gratitude or appreciation toward teammates, coaches, family members, supporters, or other contributors.

b. Congratulating, which recognises another person's achievement or participation in the team's success.

c. Praising, which communicates approval or admiration for a teammate, coach, opponent, performance, or collective effort.

d. Expressing happiness or joy, which communicates the speaker's positive emotional response to the championship victory.

e. Expressing relief, which communicates the release of pressure following a difficult game, season, or championship series.

f. Expressing pride, which communicates satisfaction with personal effort, team development, resilience, or organizational achievement.

g. Apologizing or expressing regret, which acknowledges a mistake, limitation, previous failure, or negative situation.

h. Complaining or expressing dissatisfaction, which communicates a negative evaluation of a circumstance, performance, decision, or experience.

i. Expressing admiration, which acknowledges the exceptional qualities or contributions of another person or group.

j. Exclaiming, which communicates an immediate and emotionally intensified response that may not take the form of a complete statement.

These initial categories provide analytical guidance rather than a rigid list. The final classification will be based on the expressive forms that occur in the Data. One utterance may also perform more than one function. For example, praising a teammate may express admiration, distribute credit, reinforce solidarity, and construct the speaker as an unselfish team member.

After identifying and classifying the expressive speech acts, the research will examine their pragmatic implications. Pragmatic implication refers to the meaning or communicative effect produced beyond the literal wording of the utterance. This stage will consider how the players' expressions contribute to emotional communication, relationship management, professional image, audience engagement, and the representation of the Denver Nuggets.

The final stage of the framework concerns collective emotions and team-identity construction. Collective emotion refers to emotional experience presented as belonging to the group rather than only to an individual. It may be indicated through plural pronouns such as “we,” “us,” and “our,” references to shared struggles or sacrifices, praise directed toward teammates, and descriptions of the championship as a collective achievement.

Team identity refers to the way speakers linguistically represent themselves as members of the Denver Nuggets. A player may construct team identity by sharing credit, emphasising cooperation, defending teammates, recognising coaching support, or describing the team as united. Expressive speech acts are therefore analyzed as resources through which athletes connect individual feelings with the values, achievements, and relationships of the wider group. This analytical relationship is supported by sports-discourse research showing that athletes’ media responses can construct a strategic public identity and reinforce “teamness” through the management of praise, blame, and collective responsibility (Adams, 2025; File, 2015).

The main components of the conceptual framework are presented in the following table.

Component	Description
Context	Post-game press conference after Game 5 of the 2023 NBA Finals (Denver Nuggets vs. Miami Heat), where Denver clinched their first championship.
Subject	Denver Nuggets players and coach (e.g., Nikola Jokić, Jamal Murray, Michael Malone) during media interviews.
Speech Act Theory	Based on Searle's (1976) classification of illocutionary acts, focusing on the expressive category.
Expressive Speech Acts	Speech acts that express the speaker’s psychological state (e.g., thanking, congratulating, apologizing, praising, complaining).
Data Source	Transcripts and video recordings of the official post-game press conference (Game 5, 2023 NBA Finals).

Analytical Focus	Identification and classification of expressive speech acts used to convey emotions such as joy, relief, gratitude, and admiration.
Objective	To explore how athletes use expressive language to reflect personal and collective experiences after a historic sports victory.
Theoretical Implication	Contributes to the understanding of pragmatic functions of language in sports discourse and athlete media interactions.
Practical Implication	Useful for sports communication, media training, and linguistic analysis in high-pressure or celebratory professional contexts.

Based on this conceptual framework, the research positions expressive speech acts as a link between the players' emotional experiences and their public representation of the Denver Nuggets. The framework enables the researcher to move from identifying linguistic forms to explaining their broader communicative significance. It therefore directly supports the analysis of the types, pragmatic implications, collective emotions of the team. Addressed in the research questions.

1.6 Review of Previous Studies

Recent studies relevant to the present research can be grouped into four areas: expressive speech acts in public or digital discourse, speech acts in press conferences, pragmatic features of sports media interaction, and athlete identity or team identification. Together, they demonstrate the value of contextual qualitative analysis, but they also reveal a limited body of work on championship post-game discourse produced directly by basketball players.

Table 2.3 Summary of Selected Previous Studies

Study	Data and Method	Main Contribution	Relevance and Remaining Gap
Ogiermann & Bella (2021)	Closure signs from the United Kingdom and Greece; comparative pragmatic analysis.	Shows that greetings, apologies, thanks, and wishes perform emotional and relational work, with cultural variation.	Supports a dual emotional-relational interpretation; not sports discourse or spoken interaction.
Li et al. (2022)	Press-conference transcripts from 307 Olympic medalists; thematic analysis.	Identifies athlete self-presentation through gratefulness, expertise, protest, patriotism, stories, and achievement.	Directly supports analysis of athlete press conferences; focuses on self-presentation rather than expressive-act classification.
Daar & Jemadi (2023)	A political state-visit press conference; qualitative discourse analysis.	Demonstrates that several speech-act categories coexist within institutional press-conference communication.	Confirms the relevance of context and institutional roles; different domain, stakes, and participants.
Gunawan & Hikmaharyanti (2024)	Comments on Manchester United Instagram posts; qualitative classification.	Finds thanking, complaining, complimenting, wishing, and greeting in football-related digital interaction.	Provides useful expressive categories; examines fan comments rather than athletes' spoken responses.
Özsöz (2024)	Six transcripts of interpreted football interviews and press conferences; qualitative pragmatic analysis.	Shows facework, alignment, and the co-produced character of mediated sports interaction.	Illuminates press-conference dynamics; centered on interpreters and football rather than players' expressive acts.

Jucker (2024)	Contemporary theoretical synthesis of discursive, multimodal, and diachronic speech-act research.	Argues for analysis beyond isolated utterances and for attention to multimodal communicative action.	Strengthens the analytical framework; not an empirical study of sports Data.
Nuralam et al. (2025)	Jude Bellingham's YouTube documentary; qualitative descriptive analysis.	Links gratitude, pride, humility, and empathy to athlete authenticity and personal branding.	Closest recent athlete-focused expressive study; a curated documentary differs from a live championship press conference.
López-Gajardo et al. (2021)	Survey of 299 team-sport athletes; structural equation modeling.	Links team identification with leadership, sacrifice, and perceived performance.	Provides a social-psychological basis for examining “we” language; does not analyze discourse.

The studies show methodological convergence around contextual interpretation, but they differ in Data source and analytical focus. Digital-comment research offers detailed expressive categories but cannot capture voice, timing, and embodied delivery. Press-conference studies recognize institutional interaction but often examine all speech-act categories or self-presentation rather than expressive acts in depth. Athlete-focused work has begun to connect expressive language with identity, yet live basketball discourse after a historic team victory remains underexplored.

This synthesis also suggests that a stronger study should avoid two common limitations. The first is a purely taxonomic analysis that lists types without explaining their social meaning. The second is an expansive interpretation of identity that is not tied to linguistic evidence. The present research can improve on both by connecting each classification to its local sequence and then tracing repeated patterns of credit, emotion, pronoun use, evaluation, and group membership across the press conference.

1.7 Research Gap and Original Contribution

The reviewed literature leaves a specific gap. Expressive speech acts have been examined in signs, social media comments, political discourse, and selected athlete media, while sports press-conference studies have largely focused on self-presentation, interpreting, facework, or broad speech-act distributions. There is still limited research that integrates three levels of analysis in one championship setting: (1) a systematic classification of expressive speech-act types, (2) an interactional explanation of their pragmatic implications, and (3) an interpretation of how they construct collective emotion and team identity.

The proposed study addresses this gap through naturally occurring audio-visual Data from Denver Nuggets players after Game 5 of the 2023 NBA Finals. This setting is distinctive because the utterances follow a historically important team achievement and are produced under intense public attention. The Data make it possible to examine how celebration is verbally organized, how individual achievement is negotiated against collective credit, and how players publicly define what the championship means. Although speech acts have been widely investigated in various forms of communication, the use of expressive speech acts in NBA press conferences remains relatively underexplored. Previous research related to NBA discourse has mainly examined other pragmatic aspects, such as politeness strategies and face-maintaining behavior. For example, Tanaffasha (2023) investigated politeness maxims in Stephen Curry's NBA press conferences, while Tseng and Chen (2022) examined face-maintaining acts in interactions between NBA referees and players or coaches. However, these studies did not specifically investigate how NBA players employ expressive speech acts to communicate their emotional and psychological responses during press conferences. NBA press conferences provide a relevant context for such an investigation because players are expected to respond spontaneously to questions concerning victories, defeats, individual performances, teammates, coaches, injuries, criticism, and other competitive situations. In these interactions, players may express gratitude, praise, disappointment, apology, frustration, appreciation, or other attitudes through their utterances. These expressions do more than communicate emotion. They may also help players acknowledge teammates, maintain interpersonal relationships, respond to public expectations, and construct their public identities as professional athletes. Studies of sports-media discourse have shown that professional athletes and sports figures use language strategically when communicating in public media

settings, particularly when managing impressions and relationships with audiences (File, 2018).

Therefore, a gap remains in understanding the specific types and functions of expressive speech acts produced by NBA players in press conferences. Examining these utterances can provide a more detailed understanding of how professional basketball players linguistically express their feelings and attitudes while simultaneously responding to the social and institutional demands of sports media interaction. This study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on expressive speech acts in NBA press conferences and analyzing how these expressions function within the context of professional basketball communication.

The intended contribution is therefore both descriptive and interpretive. Descriptively, the study will document the expressive acts that occur and identify predominant patterns. Interpretively, it will explain how those acts manage relationships, emotion, public accountability, and group identity. Methodologically, it will combine transcript-based coding with attention to interactional sequence and relevant multimodal cues. The study does not claim to measure the players' private emotions; it analyzes how emotion and identity are publicly performed through language.

