A Genre Analysis of a Non-Academic Genre: The Obituary

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Abstract

This paper presents a genre analysis of the contemporary obituary. Following a literary review, a mixed methods approach is employed to analyse a sample of obituaries of the same deceased person but from a variety of UK sources. The intention is to carry out a pilot project to explore the possibilities of some analysis techniques for genre description. Bhatia's (1993) seven steps for genre analysis are employed with special attention given to step 6, the analysis of the texts for discourse patterns. For this step corpus tools are employed to identify discourse patterns that characterise the sample texts and that could potentially indicate markers for obituary genre characterisation. This method has been employed both to investigate differences between the texts in the sample and also to identify common characteristics among the sample texts that could potentially distinguish the obituary genre from other genres. The texts are analysed for lexical density, readability, clause complexity, phrase complexity, and syntactic sophistication, among other things. Then a qualitative analysis is carried out to investigate the wider discourse aspects of the genre, also considering multimodal aspects of the contemporary obituary genre. The findings contribute to the knowledge of the discourse patterns of the obituary genre and could be replicated in further research activity to increase the reliability and generalisability of the findings, as well as furthering knowledge of discourse distinctions between different genres.

Keywords: Genre analysis, Discourse analysis, Corpus linguistics, Syntactical complexity, Intertextuality, Obituary genre, Lexical density, Multimodality

1. Introduction

Obituaries are an intriguing and multifaceted genre, evolving over time to fulfil multiple roles in society. Traditionally, they served as formal announcements of death, offering a brief

glimpse into the lives of those who had passed. Today they encompass far more, functioning as tributes, public records, and cultural reflections. This evolution has led to a rich and varied form, spanning newspaper columns, institutional publications, and digital platforms, each bringing its unique flavour and focus.

At their core, obituaries share a unifying communicative aim: to inform and commemorate. Yet, they are shaped by the discourse communities that create them and the cultural contexts in which they are situated. This dual influence gives rise to the genre's remarkable diversity, reflected in its structure, tone, and multimodal elements. Whether appearing in a newspaper (broadsheet, tabloid, national, local etc,) or organisational newsletter, obituaries adapt to meet the expectations and values of their intended audiences. This flexibility, coupled with the increasing role of digital media, underscores the need for a nuanced analysis that accounts for both linguistic and contextual factors.

This research builds on the foundation laid by genre studies, particularly Swales's (1990) work on academic writing and research articles. By turning the spotlight on obituaries, it extends these principles to a non-academic context, offering fresh insights into a genre shaped by both shared purposes and divergent practices. Obituaries were chosen for this analysis because of their similarity to research articles in the way they balance structure and purpose while being influenced by their producers' discourse communities. Unlike research articles, however, obituaries are crafted by a wide range of contributors, from professional journalists and institutions to individuals, all of whom bring their own intertextual resources and stylistic conventions to the task. This study's corpus includes obituaries from a mix of sources, such as The Guardian, The Telegraph, the Evening Standard, and institutional entities like England Football and Tottenham Hotspur FC, showcasing the genre's adaptability across different contexts.

The obituary genre also exemplifies what Lickiss (2020) describes as "multi-dimensional and multimodal multigenres." It is, at once, a news article, a biography, a eulogy, and sometimes even a commercial product. Its hybridity allows it to be interpreted differently by various audiences, as Santini (2007) notes, highlighting its socially constructed nature. The interaction between text, imagery, and other multimodal elements further underscores the genre's complexity, illustrating how it communicates on multiple levels to achieve its goals.

A key finding of this research is that the variability of obituaries stems from two main factors: the activities and accomplishments of the deceased, and the context of publication. Bhatia's (1993) genre analysis framework, paired with corpus tools like Coh-Metrix, has proven effective in identifying patterns that characterise the genre. Despite their diversity, obituaries display consistent features, such as syntactic complexity and lexical density, while their structure and focus are shaped by the producing institution and audience expectations. Additionally, an innovative time-based framework developed in this study provides new insights into how obituaries organise narratives, with preliminary findings suggesting that differences in content emphasis reflect the priorities of broadsheets, tabloids, and institutional platforms.

This research not only advances our understanding of the obituary genre but also demonstrates its potential as a window into broader questions of discourse, intertextuality, and multimodality in non-academic contexts. By combining established methods with new analytical approaches, it lays the groundwork for future studies that can further explore how genres mediate cultural and social practices across diverse communicative settings.

2. Literature Review

A genre comprises of a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. (Swales, 1990, p. 58)

With this definition Swales firmly places the study of genre within discourse analysis. Genre studies have evolved significantly since Swales's seminal work and many scholars have contributed to our understanding of genre. They have reaffirmed Swales's notion that to understand genre there is the need to understand the discourse community and extend the notion to intertextuality. Intertextuality refers to the way texts are interconnected through shared references, themes, or structures, shaping their meaning in relation to one another. Fairclough (1992) explains that intertextuality "points to how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize, and dialogue with other texts, reflecting and transforming social practices" (p. 84). Lemke (1999) says that "We construct genres by construing certain sorts of semantic patterning in what we consider to be distinct texts, and we say that such texts belong to the same genre. Co-generic texts are privileged intertexts for each other's interpretation." Kress (2003, p76) states that "genre is best used to describe one aspect of textual organisation, namely that which realises and allows us to understand the social relations of the participants in the making, the reception and the reading/interpretation of the text." Kress's definition underscores the social and relational dimensions of genre, emphasising that textual organisation is not merely a structural or linguistic feature but also a means of enacting and interpreting the social roles and relationships involved in text production and reception. This perspective complements the broader discourse analysis framework by highlighting the role of genre in mediating social interaction and meaning-making.

> [Genres are] staged, goal oriented social processes. They are staged because to achieve a goal more than one phase, move or stage is needed; they are goal oriented because there is a communicative aim that needs to be achieved for the interaction to be considered successful; and they are social because the audience type will influence the character of the text construction. (Martin and Rose, 2008, p. 15)

From this perspective, genres can be defined as recurrent configuration of meanings enacting the social practices of a given culture. Many linguistics scholars consider it impossible to separate language study, and so genre study, from multimodal analysis. They consider all communication to be multimodal as language itself is always mediated by the semiotics of the writing (letters are signs whose size, colour, relationship with other letters on the page are

a social construct of the discourse community) or the paralanguage of speaking (equally a construct of the discourse community).

Van Leeuwen (2005a, 2005b, 2015) explores the concept of speech acts and genre within the realm of multimodality, using these concepts to elucidate the manner in which multimodal communication is conducted, as opposed to just its content or how it is presented. A fundamental observation from his analysis of speech act theory is that a speech act serves as both an illocutionary act, which signifies its intended purpose, and a perlocutionary act, indicating its impact on individuals' thoughts and actions. Diverse modalities are employed within texts to generate a perlocutionary effect. Van Leeuwen highlights the role of genres as frameworks or tools that facilitate specific actions. Throughout human interaction, there exist established patterns through which the genres are enacted, often involving various stages that may incorporate multiple modes to ensure the successful completion of the transaction.

The concept of "stages" in discourse analysis is pivotal in understanding how genres function as structured frameworks within communication. Stages refer to the sequential phases or steps that comprise a particular genre, each serving a distinct purpose in achieving the communicative goals of the interaction. For instance, a transactional genre like a service encounter may include stages such as greeting, request, negotiation, and closure. These stages guide participants through predictable patterns of interaction, facilitating coherence and mutual understanding. In multimodal contexts, stages may be realised through the integration of various modes such as text, visuals, gestures, and speech, each contributing to the overall communicative effect. By examining stages, discourse analysts can uncover the underlying organisation of social practices and the ways in which meaning is collaboratively constructed and negotiated across different modes.

This notion is echoed by Bateman (2008, p. 10)"…. we can characterise regions of the multimodal genre space in terms of the traces that they leave in the particular forms and expressive resources employed by the documents that occupy them.". More recently, (Lickiss, 2020 p 197) has said that from a design standpoint, it is imperative to view genre through a multimodal lens, recognising the significance of form, medium, and resulting functionality. In the context of document sets with cross- and transmedia variations, a shift in available modes or the specifics of common modes often occurs, although not always. Consequently, when discussing a multimodal document, careful consideration must be given to the entire document set, as it is increasingly common for documents to exist in multiple forms across different media, each with associated variations in mode, including medium as a mode. An example from this research material could be the video obituary that often has little to no spoken communication, but often consists of short video clips celebrating a selection of achievements of the deceased, with melancholic music playing in the background, ending with a written text with the years of birth and death.

Lickiss also states that it can be beneficial to perceive a document as belonging to multiple genres, known as multigenre. A single document can be assigned different genres by different users, various genres based on users' familiarity with the document, or multiple genres simultaneously by one user (as well as all combinations of these). The categorisation into

different genres by different users has been researched by Santini (2007), who emphasises the social construction of genre. Graham and Whalen (2008) address a similar concept, introducing 'hybrid' user groups with distinct intentions and motivations for using a specific document, leading to a fusion of perceived genre classifications for that document. This is particularly relevant to the analysis of the obituary genre. Multigenres and genre hybridity, in the context of obituaries, encompass a wide array of textual forms and purposes aimed at commemorating the deceased and conveying information about their life and passing. Traditionally viewed as a newspaper article, the obituary serves as a primary vehicle for notifying the public of an individual's death, recounting their life's accomplishments, and extending condolences to the bereaved. This conventional format integrates factual details, personal anecdotes, and reflections on the deceased's legacy.

However, contemporary obituaries have transcended this standard model, adopting a variety of genres and hybrid forms. In some cases, obituaries act as expressions of solidarity, particularly when commemorating public figures or individuals connected to significant social movements, historical events, or specific institutions. By facilitating collective expressions of grief and commemoration, they provide a space for community reflection, reaffirming shared values and collective memory.

The commercial aspect of obituaries also warrants attention. Newspapers and online platforms increasingly capitalise on these tributes as a source of revenue. Advertisements and sponsored content embedded within obituary sections not only generate income but also offer businesses an opportunity to express condolences and demonstrate support.

The blending of diverse genres within obituaries reflects the changing landscape of commemorative practices and media. By embracing multigenres and genre hybridity, obituaries cater to a wide range of audience preferences, communication styles, and cultural contexts. This adaptability ensures their enduring relevance and emotional resonance in modern society.

One method often adopted to illustrate the organisation of a written work involves creating a formal model of the discussion, which signifies the subjects within the text (Polanyi, 1988). Within this kind of representation, each of the component topics within the text are marked and interconnected in a hierarchical manner, revealing the interconnection between each of the subjects, as termed by Brown and Yule (1983) as a topic framework. These structural presentations uncover the internal connections among the text's topics, demonstrating the parts of the text that are optional or obligatory, and projecting the sequential arrangement of the segments. While various branching diagrams may be suggested, the configuration of the tree structure is influenced by the arrangement of the components, their coexistence, and the optimal way to present the topics in a hierarchical fashion.

When considering the obituary genre, a number of differing approaches have been adopted to focus on the discourse patterns of the obituary and using the obituary to understand discourse in society. These include the role of obituaries in the context of the tabloid press (Rowe 2011); diachronic approaches of analysis (Phillips 2007) that studies obituaries from 1899-1999. Other approaches include linguistic analyses of euphemisms and metaphors

(Crespo-Fernández 2006, 2011) and a variety of sociological, cultural and media perspectives (Fowler 2005; 2011; Fowler and Bielsa 2007; Hume 2000; Hume and Bressers 2010; Kitch and Hume 2008).

Intercultural investigations delve into the comparative analysis of obituaries, aiming to discern distinctions among various demographics, cultures or languages (Marks and Piggee, 1999; Rusu 2017). Some scrutinise language (e.g. Josephi, Müller, and Friske, 2006; Barth, van Hoof, and Beldad, 2014). Additionally, research comparing obituaries across different religious affiliations mirrors the approach taken in language and culture comparisons. For instance, investigations into Christian versus Muslim obituaries are undertaken by scholars like Issa and Abuhakema (2011) and Samalweh (2019).

Researchers frequently establish specific criteria to define subsets of deceased individuals while gathering their material. A commonly drawn distinction is gender-based, where obituaries of males and females are often compared, the most recent work being Zehnter, Olsen, and Kirchler (2018). Obituaries can serve as valuable material for illustrating gender (in)equality, as evidenced by studies such as those Eid (1994, 2002), and also Moses and Marelli (2004). In a distinctive approach, Anderson and Han (2008) use obituary photographs to investigate ageism and sexism.

Of particular interest is Moses and Marelli (2004) article "Obituaries and the Discursive Construction of Dying and Living". The authors analyse obituaries from The New York Times from 1983-2002 to examine how obituaries reflect cultural beliefs about life and death. They compare professionally-written obituaries with family-authored paid obituaries. They find obituaries have a predictable structure with obligatory elements like the name, age, date and place of death, accomplishments, cause of death, and surviving family members. Order and content reveal what is seen as important. They use the previously mentioned Brown and Yule (1983) topic framework to illustrate this:
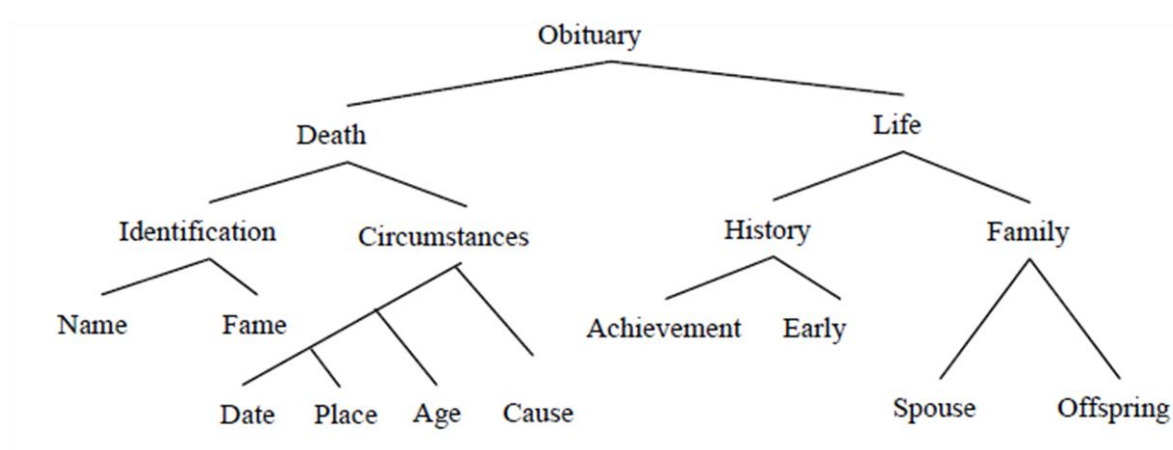

Figure 1. Obituary Topic Framework (Moses and Marelli 2004)

Numerous studies examine the obituaries of individuals belonging to specific professional groups, also adopting a critical perspective considering categories and social identities. However, the primary focus of these studies often extends beyond merely describing the

characteristics of the particular group. Obituaries become instrumental in analysing aspects such as mortality or life expectancy. Notably, these investigations frequently involve individuals from the same professional field, such as anesthesiologists (Katz and Slade 2006), physicians (Hermann 1989; Wright and Roberts 1996), veterinarians (Blair and Hayes 1982), artists (Miller, Blair, and McCann 1985), attorneys (Vieweg, Dougherty, and Barfield 2003), factory workers (Walrath, Decouflé, and Thomas 1987), and soldiers (Askildson 2007). Content-focused examinations of obituaries within specific professions aim to identify the professional and personal qualities deemed significant enough to merit mention in an obituary. Examples of such professions include academics (Tight 2008, Fowler 2015), librarians (Knutson 1981; Dilevko and Gottlieb 2004), psychologists (Kinnier et al. 1994), staff members of organisations (Heynderickx and Dieltjens 2016), atheletes (Heynderickx, Dieltjens, and Oosterhof 2019) politicians (Heynderickx and Dieltjens 2021).

These studies suggest that although obituaries are clearly recognised as a genre, there is a lot of intertextuality with the genres which dominate the discourse community which the deceased belongs to. This intertextual seepage characterises the obituary genre making it heterogeneous. Despite all these studies on obituaries, to the best knowledge of this researcher, there has not been a complete study of the genre that adequately explains the heterogeneity of the discourse type across all its media forms (newspaper print, newspaper online, institutional communication, radio/podcast, video). For this reason, this current study explores possible ways of identifying the characteristics of the contemporary obituary genre that could be later replicated and expanded to satisfy this gap in genre research. The research question can be identified as: how can the contemporary obituary genre be characterised?

3. Methods

Bhatia (1993) outlines a comprehensive seven-step approach to genre analysis, offering insights into how researchers conduct analyses in academic and professional settings: Placing the Genre in Context; Surveying Existing Research; Understanding the Discourse Community; Collecting a Corpus; Ethnography of Institutional Context; Analysis of the Corpus of Texts; Verification through Specialist Informant.

Steps 1-5 are reported below, step 6 'Analysis of the Corpus of Texts' is reported in the results section of this paper. Step 7 is not reported here due to limitations of space and time.

3.1 Placing the Genre in Context

The initial step involves situating a given genre-text within its contextual setting. The obituary genre is traditionally a published announcement of a death, often accompanied by a short biography of the dead person and a number of photographs. It is a complex and heterogeneous discourse type, which makes it particularly interesting for genre research. Traditionally obituaries are published in newspapers, with more space being dedicated to more important people. Currently obituaries are not only published by the paper-based and online newspapers, but also institutions associated with the deceased on their websites or in newsletters. They are also published by news agencies as radio obituaries (also podcasts), and video obituaries, for example Last Word by Radio BBC and the series of video obituaries by

the New York Times. The social function, however, remains the same: to inform the audience of the death of someone the producers of the obituary consider to have made a significant-enough impact on society to be newsworthy; acknowledging the importance of the deceased's contributions, offering condolences to family and friends.

3.2 Surveying Existing Research

Step two entails reviewing and studying the available research related to the identified genre. This step has been done and presented in the literary review section of this paper.

3.3 Understanding the Discourse Community

The third step refines the researcher's comprehension of the genre's discourse community. This encompasses identifying writers and readers, understanding their goals and relationships, and recognising the material conditions influencing their interactions. This is linked to Bhatia's step 5, the ethnography of institutional context, and is a key factor in the heterogeneity of the obituary genre and the intertextual seepage that comes from such a wide area.

As already said, obituaries are produced both by newspapers (and other media agencies for radio, video and podcast transmission), as well as institutions closely associated to the deceased. A particular newspaper will have regular journalists and a regular readership. However, the obituary is often written by someone with a greater knowledge of the deceased than a professional journalist, for example a family member, a colleague or a peer that belong to the same discourse community that the deceased belonged to. If written by a professional journalist, it is normally a journalist that specialises in that area of activity that the deceased participated in, be it sports, domestic politics, international politics, culture in all its taxonomies and so on, thus giving the journalist greater insight into the world, life and textual resources of the deceased. The discourse community is influenced by the context of activity the deceased participated in and is also reflected in the number of academic publications that focus on obituaries of specific professions (see literary review).

The obituary then goes through the normal editing processes before publication. The obituary will be read by a regular reader of the newspaper with a developed interest in the activity of the deceased. Alternatively, it could be read by a non-regular reader of the paper but who has a special interest in the deceased. It is also influenced by whether the newspaper is a local or a national newspaper, a tabloid or a broadsheet, each having a different ethnographic institutional context (Bhatia's step 5). The specific newspaper then mediates this writer/reader communication through the editing process before publication. The discourse community is thus influenced by this context of publication.

If the obituary is produced by an institution closely associated with the deceased, then the relationship between writer and reader is again potentially different. Not only does the discourse community change again depending on the area of activity, but also the motivations for publishing the obituary. Newspapers distribute information and opinion as their main activity. Obituaries for newspapers fall into their main aim, distributing information and opinion. Other institutions have their main activity as something else (theatre production,

sports activity, academic research, book production, industrial output etc.) and the usual distribution of information on their websites and in their newsletters is in support of this activity. Unlike newspapers, the obituaries published by institutions do not support their main activity; they do it due to a different motivation, as a sign of respect to someone that has contributed to their institution. This is not to say that newspapers do not show respect to the deceased, they do. However, they do it from the point of view of the ethnographic institutional culture that aims at distributing information and option. This changes the motivations for obituary publication between newspapers and institutions. The discourse community is thus further influenced by this context of publication.

Although the social function of the obituary genre always remains the same, the discourse community is highly varied. This means that the intertextual influences on the obituary genre are also highly varied. This is because the intertextual resources of one particular community is different to another community, explaining the range of intertextual seepage. For these reasons, the obituary genre is so heterogeneous, it is influenced by: the context of activity of the deceased (intertextual resources); and the context of publication: newspaper (broadsheet, tabloid, local, national) vs institution.

3.4 Collecting a Corpus

Step four focuses on gathering a corpus of the genre for analysis. In this case a sample corpus was created made up of five obituaries of a recently deceased person, in this case the late Terry Venables. These obituaries came from both newspaper and institutional sources. An overview of the corpus can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of Corpus

Source	Link	Date of Publication
Telegraph	https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2023/11/26/terry-venables-football-qpr-tottenham-hotspur-england-coach/	26/11/2023
Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/football/2023/nov/26/terry-venables-obituary	26/11/2023
Evening Standard	https://www.standard.co.uk/sport/football/terry-venables-obituary-b1122890.html	26/11/2023
Tottenham Hotspur FC	https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/news/2023/november/obituary-terry-venables/	26/11/2023
England Football	https://www.englandfootball.com/articles/2023/Nov/26/terry-venables-obituary-1943-2023	26/11/2023

3.5 Ethnography of Institutional Context

This introduces an ethnographic dimension, urging researchers to conduct an ethnography of the institutional context where the genre is utilised. This approach aims to provide a naturalistic understanding of the conditions in which discourse community members engage with the genre. The heterogeneity of the obituary genre seems to reside in the changing discourse communities in which the obituaries are produced and received. As has been explained in point 3 of this section, the obituary genre is heterogeneous because it is influenced by: the context of activity of the deceased (intertextual resources); and the context of publication: newspaper (broadsheet, tabloid, local, national) vs institution.

In this corpus there are three newspapers and two intuitions represented. There are two national broadsheets newspapers, the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph and one local tabloid, the Evening Standard. The intuitional representation is made up of the England Football organisation and Tottenham Hotspur FC, both of whom Terry Venables played for and later managed. Due to shortage of time and space, further explanation of ethnography of institution cannot be given here, but there is extensive information of these journalistic and football institutions freely available for the interested reader.

3.6 Moving From Context to Text

The sixth step involves transitioning from context to text, prompting researchers to decide on the level of linguistic analysis to explore. This may include lexico-grammatical features, text-patterning, or structural interpretation. The texts from the corpus were analysed according to a number of criteria. The quantitative data from each text was then compared to see if there were any similarities or differences that distinguish the texts from each other or potentially from other genres. The intra-corpus analysis was of primary interest, while the characterisation of the corpus data as a genre secondary. This data can be used for future research to contrast the obituary with other genres.

The criteria were:

Descriptive analysis (see appendix 1)

Word Count
Sentence Count
Character Count Including Spaces
Complex Word Count (3 or more syllables):
Average Word Length
Median Word Length
Standard Deviation of Word Length:
Average Sentence Length:
Median Sentence Length:
Standard Deviation of Sentence Length

Readability analysis (see appendix 1)

Gunning fog
Flesch-Kincaid
SMOG
Coleman-Liau

Syntactic complexity analysis (see Appendix 2) Coh-Metrix (Graesser et. al 2014)

SYNLE	Left embeddedness, words before main verb, mean
SYNNP	Number of modifiers per noun phrase, mean
SYNMEDpos	Minimal Edit Distance, part of speech
SYNMEDwrd	Minimal Edit Distance, all words
SYNMEDlem	Minimal Edit Distance, lemmas
SYNSTRUTa	Sentence syntax similarity, adjacent sentences, mean
SYNSTRUTt	Sentence syntax similarity, all combinations, across paragraphs, mean

Syntactic pattern density (see Appendix 2) Coh-Metrix (Graesser et. al 2014)

DRNP	Noun phrase density, incidence
DRVP	Verb phrase density, incidence
DRAP	Adverbial phrase density, incidence
DRPP	Preposition phrase density, incidence
DRPVAL	Agentless passive voice density, incidence
DRNEG	Negation density, incidence
DRGERUND	Gerund density, incidence
DRINF	Infinitive density, incidence

Lexical Diversity (see Appendix 2) Coh-Metrix (Graesser et. al 2014)

LDTTRc	Lexical diversity, type-token ratio,
LDTTRa	Lexical diversity, type-token ratio, all
LDMTLDa	Lexical diversity, MTLD, all words
LDVOCDa	Lexical diversity, VOCD, all words

Lexical Density Analysis (see appendices 6-10)

Lexical Frequency Analysis (see appendix 3-5)

Text Patterning and Sequencing Analysis (see appendices 11-15)

This full quantitative data from each text can be seen in the Appendices. A short qualitative analysis was also carried out looking at the texts for aspects of multimodal discourse patterns and is reported in the next section.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

	England Football	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
Word Count:	806	639	1143	1718	2444
Sentence Count:	24	22	43	60	99
Character Count Including Spaces:	4703	3694	6877	10104	14338
Complex Word Count (3 or more syllables):	105	78	177	232	341
Average Word Length	4.71	4.62	4.85	4.73	4.68
Median Word Length	4	4	4	4	4
Standard Deviation of Word Length:	2.48	2.39	2.58	2.61	2.53

The descriptive analysis of the texts in the corpus suggests that there is a great variety in word count of the genre, ranging from 806 to 2,444 words. However, these preliminary results suggest that obituaries produced by the professional institutions associated with the deceased are significantly shorter (average 722.5 words) than obituaries produced by newspapers (average 1768.33 words), with broadsheets having a longer word count than tabloids. This seems to be due to a greater need to introduce the deceased through less shared background knowledge, audience knowledge is taken into consideration.

The other parameters of the descriptive analysis show little difference between the texts, with a small but insignificant variation in the ratio of complex words (3 syllables or more) between texts, but with a highly uniform average and mean word length.

	England Football	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
Average Sentence Length:	33.58	29.09	26.53	28.37	24.68
Median Sentence Length:	34	28	27	28.5	24
Standard Deviation of Sentence Length:	9.47	14.9	9.99	12.7	13.5

When considering sentence length, we can see a greater variation between the texts, with the institutional produced texts demonstrating a slightly higher median and average length compared to the newspaper obituaries.

4.2 Readability Analysis

	England Football	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
Gunning fog	18.64	16.5	16.83	16.85	15.46
Flesch-Kincaid	15.78	13.72	13.52	13.68	12.13
SMOG	15.08	13.89	14.72	14.36	13.73
Coleman-Liau	11.62	11.18	12.39	11.78	11.47

In terms of readability there was no significant pattern in the results with all texts registering similar results and with the England Football registering the highest level in all tests except for the Coleman Liau test. The average results for all the tests are shown in the following table.

Test	Average
Gunning fog	16.856
Flesch-Kincaid	13.766
SMOG	14.356
Coleman-Liau	11.688

4.3 Syntactic Complexity Analysis

Coh-Metrix label	Coh-Metrix key	England Football	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
SYNLE	Left embeddedness, words before main verb, mean	4.889	3.636	5.605	6.71	4.404
SYNNP	Number of modifiers per noun phrase, mean	1.017	0.903	0.967	1.061	0.855
SYNMEDpos	Minimal Edit Distance, part of speech	0.589	0.668	0.698	0.624	0.667
SYNMEDwrd	Minimal Edit Distance, all words	0.892	0.907	0.925	0.894	0.916
SYNMEDlem	Minimal Edit Distance, lemmas	0.892	0.883	0.925	0.884	0.899
SYNSTRUTa	Sentence syntax similarity, adjacent sentences, mean	0.087	0.103	0.074	0.087	0.078
SYNSTRUTt	Sentence syntax similarity, all combinations, across paragraphs, mean	0.077	0.077	0.081	0.077	0.075

In terms of syntactic complexity, there was a good homogeneity among the texts of the corpus, suggesting that this is a genre feature, for the following parameters: SYNNP Number of modifiers per noun phrase, mean; SYNMEDpos Minimal Edit Distance, part of speech; SYNMEDwrd Minimal Edit Distance, all words; SYNMEDlem Minimal Edit Distance, lemmas. However, with the SYNLE parameter, both Guardian and the Tottenham texts can be considered outliers, this maybe be due to stylistic conventions. The Guardian was also an outlier for the SYNSTRUTa, Sentence syntax similarity, adjacent sentences, mean parameter. SYNSTRUTa Sentence syntax similarity, adjacent sentences, mean, also had an outlying result in the Evening Standard text. Further research is needed to understand how to deal with the outlying results on influencing overall average results. The following table shows average results for the texts on these parameters without outlying results:

SYNNP	0.9606
SYNMEDpos	0.6492
SYNMEDwrd	0.9086
SYNMEDlem	0.8966

4.4 Syntactic Pattern Density

Coh-Metrix label	Coh-Metrix key	England Football	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
DRNP	Noun phrase density, incidence	392.593	391.641	399.823	395.785	392.974
DRVP	Verb phrase density, incidence	137.037	143.963	148.279	152.225	190.359
DRAP	Adverbial phrase density, incidence	22.222	35.604	27.361	22.248	27.369
DRPP	Preposition phrase density, incidence	165.432	173.375	157.988	146.37	136.438
DRPVAL	Agentless passive voice density, incidence	3.704	4.644	9.709	10.539	8.578
DRNEG	Negation density, incidence	1.235	0	1.765	2.342	5.719
DRGERUND	Gerund density, incidence	23.457	29.412	22.948	25.176	14.297
DRINF	Infinitive density, incidence	8.642	7.74	7.944	10.539	20.425

When focusing on syntactic pattern density, the results show that DRNP noun phrase density incidence is homogenous among the texts, as it is for adverbial phrase density and prepositional phrase density. Some significant observations can be seen in the use of agentless passive voice density incidence that is significantly higher for the newspaper produced obituaries (median 9) compared to the institution produced ones (median 4). The

other results had some outliers that make their importance as genre markers less reliable. The averages are reported below with the more homogeneous markers in bold:

DRNP	**394.5632**
DRVP	154.3726
DRAP	**26.9608**
DRPP	**155.9206**
DRPVAL	7.4348
DRNEG	2.2122
DRGERUND	23.058
DRINF	11.058

4.5 Lexical Diversity

Coh-Metrix label	Coh-Metrix key	England FC	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
LDTTRc	Lexical diversity, type-token ratio,	0.7	0.682	0.703	0.718	0.668
LDTTRa	Lexical diversity, type-token ratio, all	0.446	0.476	0.455	0.435	0.392
LDMTLD	Lexical diversity, MTLD, all words	98.945	118.418	139.95	137.517	127.213
LDVOCD	Lexical diversity, VOCD, all words	92.102	110.068	115.302	109.752	117.543

In terms of lexical diversity, there is a consistency that runs throughout all the texts with only the Telegraph having a slightly lower LDTTRa (type-token ratio, all) score, and England Football having a significantly lower LDMTLD (MTLD, all words) and LDVOCD (VOCD, all words) score. The average results are as follows:

LDTTRc	0.6942
LDTTRa	0.4408
LDMTLD	124.4086
LDVOCD	108.9534

4.6 Lexical Density

	England FC	Tottenham FC	Evening Standard	Guardian	Telegraph
Nouns	34.24%	34.43%	35%	34.24%	34.11%
Adjectives	4.59%	4.38%	4.20%	4.59%	5.30%
Verbs	11.66%	11.58%	12.16%	11.66%	11.93%
Adverbs	2.61%	3.91%	4.46%	2.61%	3.26%

Prepositions	17.49%	16.12%	15.66%	17.49%	14.73%
Pronouns	3.97%	3.44%	4.11%	3.97%	3.84%
Auxiliary Verbs	1.74%	1.25%	2.62%	1.74%	3.14%
Lexical Density for Entire Text	53.10%	54.30%	55.82%	53.10%	54.60%

There is a strong correlation in lexical density that runs throughout all the texts with an overall average lexical density of 54.18%.

4.7 Lexical Frequency

The most frequent single words are all function words like 'the', 'and', 'in' and so on which dominate the first 7 or 8 most frequently used single words. The most frequent content words however, excluding the name of the deceased, start to appear around rank number 8 and are 'cup', 'England', 'manager', 'player', 'FA', Spurs', 'palace', 'spell', 'football', 'final', 'QPR', 'division', 'tournament', 'Tottenham', 'Dagenham', 'game', 'coaching', 'Chelsea', 'Barcelona', 'liga', 'coach', 'career', 'chairman', 'caps', and 'league'. These words make a clear lexical chain placing the content of the discourse in and around football.

Looking at word pairs, already in the 2nd rank we can start to see non-function, football related combinations appear with 'FA cup' in the Tottenham FC obituary. Other combinations include 'England manager', 'three lions', 'cup final', 'euro 96', 'la liga', 'first division', and 'England manager'.

The most significant result occurs with word triplets where football related lexical chains dominate the top positions and could potentially be used as a marker of genre regarding the context of activity of the deceased. In this case the top three rank levels of word triplets include: 'fa cup final', 'as a player', 'as England manager', 'of euro 96', 'cup final in', 'the first division', 'a penalty shoot-out', 'the fa cup', 'the three lions', 'the final of', 'club he had', and '1966 and made'. The only non-football related triplets were 'went on to' and 'one of the'.

4.8 Text Patterning and Structural Interpretation

It has already been noted in the first section of this paper, Moses and Marelli (2004) have created a topic-framework for obituaries. However, this structure method omits and overlaps information about the deceased, for example, there is no space for future impact of the deceased, also in this model 'Achievement' would overlap with 'Fame'. It also does not involve textual times and real times which becomes even more important in video obituaries as there can be multiple times working at once. It was also noted that this model gives no attention to the treatment of time in a genre that deals with biographical details. For this reason, a time-based structure annotation method was created to tag the relevant sections of

the texts. The time-structure places the moment of text production at 0 with '+' as after text production and '-' before text production. This analysis framework is as follows:

T +1 Future reactions, consequences and predictions

T 0 Time of text production

T -1 Death

T -2 Tribulations

T -3 Breakthrough & moments of success

T -4 Recognition as an established professional

T -5 Early employment & assignments

T -6 Schooling and training

T -7 Birth and early childhood

T-8 Pre-birth

An example of an analysis of a text can be seen in Appendix 5. Interesting points emerge from this analysis and could prove useful in future obituary genre research. Firstly, the framework is not complete. There are sequences of text that are unmarked which need to be assigned. These sequences mainly revolve around accompanying activity the deceased participated in other than their main profession and also family association. The level of detail in some of the examples suggests that the author is showing off and boosting credibility by providing specifics. Examples can be seen here:

England FC

- 'As well as his achievements as a player and coach, Venables was also a popular media pundit and in more recent years spent time living in Spain as a hotelier before retiring in 2019.'

Guardian

- 'In his youth Venables had also briefly tried a career as a Sinatra-style crooner. Later he owned a nightclub. Football never seemed a big enough world to contain his energies.'

- 'The young footballer was already enjoying the night life of the West End. His friends now included the singers Adam Faith and Tommy Steele, although his own show business aspirations ended after a single appearance with the Joe Loss Band at the Hammersmith Palais. Nevertheless the glamour of that world retained its appeal and he would go on to own Scribes West, a Kensington club where the regulars included footballing friends, Fleet Street sportswriters and the gangster "Mad" Frankie Fraser.'

- 'He and Williams had collaborated again on a successful series of detective novels that were turned into the Hazell series for Thames TV (1978-80), he launched a football board game and published two autobiographies, and in 2010 he recorded a version of an Elvis Presley hit, If I Can Dream, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, reaching No 23 in the pop charts. His later years were spent in Penaguila, near Alicante, as the owner of a hotel and restaurant, El Tel once more.

- A first marriage in 1966 to Christine Mccann, a dressmaker he had known since his apprentice days at Chelsea, ended in divorce in 1984. He is survived by their two daughters, Nancy and Tracey, and by his second wife, Yvette Bazire, whom he married in 1991.'

Telegraph

- 'There were the continued singing engagements and, in the most unlikely move of all, writing. At 18 Venables took a secretarial course to learn how to type. It was a skill that would prove useful before the end of his playing career, when he co-wrote a string of detective novels. These were eventually adapted by ITV into the television series Hazell.'

Evening standard:

- 'During his playing career, Venables co-wrote detective novels, which were later turned into the TV series Hazell about a wise-cracking cockney private eye. It ran for 22 episodes from 1978-79.'

- 'Having speculated in clubs and property, his final business venture began in 2014 when he opened a boutique hotel and restaurant with wife Yvette in Penaguila, Spain.'

Secondly, the amount of space/time and the order of the time sequence could also be used as an indicator of genre dealing with context of publication. For example, the Evening Standard focusses much more on tribulations and non-football related activity (gossip), which is in line with the focus of a tabloid, whereas the Guardian focusses much more on the deceased's early career development and adopts a more chronological development of the narrative. Although these are only preliminary results, this method of structure analysis shows great promise as distinguishing the obituary genre and highlighting differences within the genre and deserves further research.

4.9 Qualitative Analysis

As has been foreshadowed in the introduction, the multimodal design of a text is an important aspect of both genre and discourse analysis. Critical methods for multimodal analysis have been created (O'Halloran et al, 2017), but these require specialist software or require an investment of time for analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper. Also, efficient quantitative methods still have not been produced for multimodal analysis. However, an informed qualitative multimodal analysis can shed light on some interesting findings.

As already pointed out the context of activity of the deceased (intertextual resources); and the context of publication: newspaper (broadsheet, tabloid, local, national) versus the institution, have an impact on the discourse and the design. Without entering into analysis of the newspaper genres as whole, it is sufficient to point out that the newspapers tend to use more photographs (and videos) than the institutional websites and newsletters as can be seen by the use of one photo in the Tottenham FC text, although England Football text here carries four photographs. An interesting correlation is the coherence between the subject of the photographs and the lexical chains of each text. In the England Football text, aspects of Englishness, like England football shirts, the three-lions insignia, the deceased holding a cup of tea, the deceased talking to Gareth Southgate (the current England Football manager and ex-England player under the deceased in the Euro 96 campaign) help to communicate a similar content and as the lexical chains in that texts and the sending institution. The Tottenham FC text carries only one image of the deceased holding up the trophy of when he successfully managed that club to FA cup victory in 1991 and marked a successful moment in the career of the deceased in relation with the club. The interaction between images and text support each other, scaffolding the communicative aims to inform the public of the impact the deceased had within a specific area of human activity, while at the same time supporting the communicative character of the sending institution be it a newspaper or not. This confirms van Leeuvan's notion of the perlocutionary effect of multimodal texts.

Also worthy of note is that the Guardian newspaper carries the most photographs, which also portray the deceased in non-football contexts (singing or in the Spanish countryside) and with some historical photographs which also communicates the newspaper's more complete and chronological approach to its narrative. The Telegraph only carries one non-football photograph, a picture of the deceased in front of the high court, this is also coherent with the amount of time the telegraph dedicated to the tribulations of the deceased.

5. Conclusion

The obituary is an intriguing genre that in many ways demonstrates Lickiss's (2020) notions of multi-dimensional and multimodal multigenres. It is a single document that is a newspaper article, a biography, a eulogy as well as a show of solidarity as well as a potential vehicle through which to sell newspaper. As such it can be assigned different genres by different users (Santini 2007), and clearly emphasises the social construction of genre. This can be associated to what Graham and Whalen (2008) define as 'hybrid' user groups with distinct intentions and motivations for using a specific document.

After carrying out Bhatia's methods of analysis it is evident that the heterogeneity of the obituary genre is potentially due to the vast contexts of activity of the various deceased people that serve as intertextual resources for the discourse and the texts. Also, the context of publication plays a role on this heterogeneity as the obituaries can be published by news agencies in newspapers (broadsheet, tabloid, local, national) or by institutions associated with the deceased. The analysis of the discourse patterns suggest that Coh-Metrix has potential in offering markers that distinguish the genre. There was an encouragingly good homogeneity within syntactic complexity, syntactic pattern density, and lexical diversity, as well as lexical

density. These results suggest that further research using these methods could scientifically demonstrate the impact the context of activity and the context of publication have on discourse patterns in obituaries.

The innovative time-based method for sequence analysis developed for this project also sheds light on the focus of each text. Although still in the preliminary stages, this shows promise as a tool for defining the genre and distinguishing between differences within the genre (institution versus tabloid versus broadsheet) and could also be used when analysing radio and video obituaries as well as identifying generic structure potential. As has already been stated, the framework requires further development to eliminate the omissions observed. A possible solution could be to include a. 'non-time' sequence and an 'extra-activity' sequence. This model can be developed in future research as a moves analysis framework (Swales, 1990). Also of interest to future research would be a method to quantify the amount of time/space dedicated to each move, and the order of the moves for each text-type.

A major shortcoming of this present work is the lack of comparison with other genres, future research would need to fill this gap. Further investigation is still needed into the obituary genre, looking at a greater number of texts of different deceased persons, over a longer period of time and through different channels of transmission, however this type of research would also need to compare and offset these results with other genres.

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