

## **‘It’s Unreal, but I Am here’: Transitivity Analysis of an Autobiographical Article on “The Players’ Tribune” Website**

**‘É irreal, mas eu estou aqui’: análise de transitividade em um artigo autobiográfico no website “The Players’ Tribune”**

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**ABSTRACT:** In 2014, former American baseball player Derek Jeter founded the website *The Players’ Tribune*, on which athletes of all sports can publish autobiographical pieces, to have in their hands a role that, for a long time, belonged to the traditional media – bringing their stories beyond sports performances to the public. These articles, however, can also be seen as a form of self-branding since the athlete holds the power of the story that is being written. Therefore, the objective is to analyse, with the help of Systemic-Functional Linguistics and Transitivity System, one of those articles, written by the Brazilian player Daniel Alves, to understand if the experience report works in favour of production the self as a role model.

**KEYWORDS:** *The Players’ Tribune*; Systemic-Functional Linguistics; Transitivity System; Language and Sports.

**RESUMO:** Em 2014, o ex-jogador americano de baseball, Derek Jeter, fundou o website *The Players’ Tribune*, no qual atletas de todos os esportes podem publicar artigos autobiográficos, assim, tendo em suas mãos um papel que, por um longo tempo, pertenceu à mídia tradicional: o de trazer suas histórias além das performances nos esportes ao público. Esses artigos, no entanto, também podem ser vistos como uma forma de self-branding, já que os atletas possuem o poder sobre as histórias que são escritas. O objetivo, portanto, é analisar, com a ajuda da Linguística Sistemico-Funcional e do Sistema de Transitividade, um desses artigos, escrito pelo jogador brasileiro Daniel Alves, para entender se o relato da experiência trabalha a favor da produção de si enquanto um modelo a ser seguido.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *The Players’ Tribune*; Linguística Sistemico-Funcional; Sistema de Transitividade; Linguagem e esporte.

## INTRODUCTION

Before playing the Champions League for Juventus, Brazilian football<sup>1</sup> player Daniel Alves wrote an autobiographical story called "The Secret".<sup>2</sup> The story, which is available in English and Portuguese, had great coverage in other media channels, too, brings details about his childhood, his first steps as a football player, his adaptation to Juventus and his love for his former club Barcelona. This was published on the website *The Players' Tribune*, founded in 2014 by the former American baseball player Derek Jeter, who, in the middle of a scenario where the athletes are often portrayed by the media away from their actions in the sport, decided to have a platform in which the athletes can be responsible for portraying themselves.

This website comes at a moment in which, with the facilities of the Internet, anyone can be responsible for producing its content. When analysing *The Players' Tribune*, Schwartz and Vogan<sup>3</sup> could understand that the website was, then, not only a platform for autobiographical pieces but also a way for these athletes to construct their image and in a chosen tone without the filter of the press – and, in this way, only changing the hands of who presents the athletes as commodities to their audience. *The Players' Tribune*, this way, can be a space for the self-branding of athletes through the discourse that is chosen to tell a story.

In the sense of understanding this constructed image in the texts of *The Players' Tribune*, this paper analyses the discourse of the English version of the article published by Alves since it became viral on the date of its publication. The intention here is to understand the experience reported through the Systemic-Functional Linguistics and its Transitivity System that helps us understand the speaker's knowledge in the world – internal or external.

With the Transitivity System, we can understand some questions such as how the report of this experience works in favour of the production of the self in a positive and inspiring light and the portrayal of a role model since there is an

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, the word "football" refers to Football Association, also known as football in the English language.

<sup>2</sup> ALVES. The Secret.

<sup>3</sup> SCHWARTZ; VOGAN. The Players' Tribune: Self-Branding and Boundary Work in Digital Sports Media.

emphasis on his skills and the work that he has done and keeps doing to maintain his status as a player throughout the entire analysis.

### **THE ATHLETE AS A COMMODITY IN SPORTS MEDIA**

When Debord<sup>4</sup> talks about the society of the spectacle, he tells us that this phenomenon is a social relation, mediated by images, which brings an ideal model of life, produced by a dominant system of production and a processed truth – being these points also carried by the fact that there is domination in social life ruled by the economy – transforming the image that anyone represents as the actual human being. "The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point that it becomes images".<sup>5</sup> So, the author also describes that when facing this reality, we face the commodities and the fetishism around them, generating a colonising social life. Hence, "the commodity contemplates itself in a world of its own making".<sup>6</sup>

In a society ruled by this paradigm, sports media cannot be different from that, playing a crucial role in constructing the image of the athletes and then transforming these images into commodities. As a result, sports came to a point where they are seen beyond the game – and it includes the individual ones that are there being part of this process. "Sports media – and sports writing in particular – are traditionally chided for adopting a celebratory posture toward the athletes they cover".<sup>7</sup>

Athletes, this way, are more than individual beings practising a sport: they become stars. For Andrews and Clift, who analyse the football stardom, athletes that are considered as stars are "the outstanding individual players, most frequently playing in high-profile positions that appear to have the most direct impact on the game's outcomes (i.e. those involving goal creation and scoring)". Using examples of football players, they also say:

Individuals such as David Beckham, Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, and Neymar are themselves highly prized embodied brands, whose image management teams look to secure lucrative advertising and endorsement relationships with an array of major corporations in an effort to

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<sup>4</sup> DEBORD. *The society of the spectacle*.

<sup>5</sup> DEBORD. *The society of the spectacle*, §34.

<sup>6</sup> DEBORD. *The society of the spectacle*, §53.

<sup>7</sup> SCHWARTZ; VOGAN. *The Players' Tribune*, p. 48.

manufacture and intertextually coherent and consistent imaged identity for the star in question.<sup>8</sup>

Celebrities' images in the media, as Simões<sup>9</sup> points out, are constructed by the conjunction of some factors as the social context, the media itself and the daily life of the portrayed individuals, being shaped from public and private experiences, their actions, and reactions in the world. The behaviour of the portrayed person will always be judged by the media, while the exposition of their public and private life to the media helps to construct the status as a celebrity.<sup>10</sup> There is also an urge to transform the stories involving those people in commodities, making a statement that the portrayed person is both subject and object.<sup>11</sup> As Silva and Rodrigues state, the spectacle determines the profile and the path of contemporary societies.<sup>12</sup>

It is fundamental to remark that it is not only the sports media that is involved in this capitalist model but also the sports itself<sup>13</sup> – so, a player that is seen as an idol in any sport must also perform well in the "areas of entertainment, advertising and daily life".<sup>14</sup> Kennedy and Hills also say that the media is responsible for commercialising and bringing a particular style to the sport, helping to build role models, celebrities, and ways of behaviour.<sup>15</sup> Important to say that sports, as we know, are a modern process, and it is a product of the globalisation process. It is also intrinsic to a "complex political economy that reflects the interests of the Western in general"<sup>16</sup> – reflecting in the media what is essential to selling to the public in general. For the media, "sports have evolved from a business that had a series of highly beneficial relationships with the media business to one of the central components of the increasingly global media entertainment industry".<sup>17</sup>

Since the 1990s, sports media have flourished in several new platforms, in addition to printed newspapers and television.<sup>18</sup> Online newspapers have been a

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<sup>8</sup> ANDREWS; CLIFT. *Football and Stardom*, p. 204.

<sup>9</sup> SIMÕES. *A mídia e a construção das celebridades: uma abordagem praxiológica*.

<sup>10</sup> PIMENTEL. *A construção da celebridade midiática*, p. 195.

<sup>11</sup> PIMENTEL. *A construção da celebridade midiática*, p. 201.

<sup>12</sup> SILVA; RODRIGUES. *A construção de celebridades midiáticas*, p. 155.

<sup>13</sup> SILVA; RODRIGUES. *A construção de celebridades midiáticas*, p. 155.

<sup>14</sup> SILVA; RODRIGUES. *A construção de celebridades midiáticas*, p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> KENNEDY; HILLS. *Sport, Media, and Society*.

<sup>16</sup> MAGUIRE. *Sport and Globalisation: Key Issues, Phases, and Trends*, p. 479.

<sup>17</sup> BELLAMY. *Sports Media: A Modern Institution*, p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> LAUCELLA. *The Evolution from Print to Online Platforms for Sports Journalism*.

critical piece in this new puzzle, mainly because they can offer real-time information about a match, for example. According to Fest,<sup>19</sup> these newspapers publish new content faster than the printed newspapers, while television tends to be more focused on the live match. It allows the online newspapers to publish a great variety of news regarding the same theme, but not only that – the online environment offers to the communication chains more opportunities to produce content and, besides that, other components of the game can also generate content, as well as the teams, the athletes, the fans etc.<sup>20</sup> With that, celebrities hold the power of creating self-branding for themselves without the mediation of a journalist.<sup>21</sup>

#### **SELF-BRANDING AS A RESPONSE: *THE PLAYERS' TRIBUNE***

Through the new possibilities on the Internet, it is easier for athletes and other celebrities to control the contents they spread about themselves. Even if there is a branding agency behind these contents, celebrities now withhold the power of keeping some information about them and creating the content that is going to be reported by the mass media.<sup>22</sup> Instagram, Twitter, and other social media accounts are filled with new content regularly, and these contents can be easily replicated by an even larger audience that has the choice of following the accounts of their preferred celebrities and feel themselves closer to this celebrity. It is when the capital accumulates and can be seen as tangible objects.<sup>23</sup>

With the celebrities in the power of doing their self-branding, they are following a trend and stating that this model is "a product of a particular set of economic, social, and cultural influences which have led to the valorisation of individualism, reflexivity, self-promotion, entrepreneurialism and self-governance".<sup>24</sup> Self-branding is also a "careful audience management, the selective disclosure of personal information in order to give off a sense of the self-brander's

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<sup>19</sup> FEST. *The Register of Sports News around the World: A Quantitative Study of Field in Newspaper Sports Coverage*.

<sup>20</sup> LAUCELLA. *The Evolution from Print to Online Platforms for Sports Journalism*.

<sup>21</sup> SCHWARTZ; VOGAN. *The Players' Tribune*.

<sup>22</sup> ANDREWS; CLIFT. *Football and Stardom*.

<sup>23</sup> DEBORD. *The Society of the Spectacle*, §50.

<sup>24</sup> WHITMER. *You Are your Brand: Self-Branding and the Marketisation of Self*, p. 2.

personality while remaining consistent and safe for work".<sup>25</sup> In sports, there is also a scenario in which the athletes can work themselves to create an image of a star. With social media, these stars can be reached more humanly, setting aside the image as a hero or a saviour, exposing the private self and "influencing the shaping of their imagined identities".<sup>26</sup>

In this sense, it is also true to remember that we still have someone in power-producing content and choosing what people, in general, will consume. These codes are naturalised and transformed to meet the habit of the viewers.<sup>27</sup> Bullingham and Vasconcelos,<sup>28</sup> who revisit the theory of the representation of the self in the daily life from Ervin Goffman applied to the Internet, understand that the online self is not dissociated from the offline one – so when it comes to sports athletes, what they do in this field can influence their life and their career as well. It comes to a point where "editing the self"<sup>29</sup> can also be seen as an option. Pitcan et al,<sup>30</sup> who analysed the behaviour of common people in this environment, depict the point that the self-branding in social media allows people to portray themselves more politely, what they call a "vanilla self": this can happen because the social media can create high chances of damaging success, so they are in control of this edited version of themselves. As a result, the self can always be portrayed positively.

Further than the daily contents in social media, Schwartz and Vogan realised that this type of construction is also present in environments such as the website *The Players' Tribune*. Founded by the ex-baseball player Derek Jeter in 2014, this website works as a platform for first-person stories from professional athletes. According to its creator, the site's goal is "to ultimately transform how athletes and newsmakers share information, bringing fans closer than ever to the games they love". With stories are written in the form of autobiographical accounts, the players can choose the starting point of their new story, sharing the facts and the points they

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<sup>25</sup> WHITMER. *You Are your Brand*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> ANDREWS; CLIFT. *Football and Stardom*, p. 208.

<sup>27</sup> HALL. *Encoding/Decoding*, p. 123.

<sup>28</sup> BULLINGHAM; VASCONCELOS. 'The Presentation of Self in the Online World': Goffman and the study of online identities.

<sup>29</sup> BULLINGHAM; VASCONCELOS. 'The Presentation of Self in the Online World', p. 110.

<sup>30</sup> PITCAN; MARWICK; BOYD. *Performing a Vanilla Self: Respectability Politics, Social Class, and the Digital World*.

choose themselves, without the mediation of a journalist. This can be seen as a form that "allows athletes to exercise control over their images by circumventing the potentially distortive circuit that journalists fashion between them and the public".<sup>31</sup>

On the website created by Jeter, players gain journalistic titles, although they can count on a team of "several established editors and journalists to oversee its activities and ensure their quality",<sup>32</sup> hidden from the public view. It is important to remark that the platform of *The Players' Tribune*, differently from the majority of social media employed to construct self-branding, does not allow comments.<sup>33</sup> However, the social media that belongs to the website is used as a delivery mechanism of the content with positive feedback only to people with a similar status. For Jeter,<sup>34</sup> the model established in *The Players' Tribune*, is a more genuine way of connecting athletes to their fans, promising stories without filters.

#### LANGUAGE AS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD

The experience of the self with the world can be portrayed through language. This is one of the fundamental assumptions in Systemic-Functional Linguistics<sup>35</sup> (from now on, SFL). Reading a text that someone produces allows us to understand not only the words but also the context in which they were created and their intended – conscient or not – message to the public receiving it.

Based on this, I intend to analyse one of the texts published in *The Players' Tribune* to understand the experiences that help the author construct his image in the article and how it relates to self-branding. It is also intended to understand how this image is constructed in the text – and what the reported experiences can tell us. As a first attempt, I chose a text from the website that was also amplified through some news<sup>36</sup> in Brazilian media: "The Secret", written by the Brazilian player Daniel Alves when he played in the Champions League for Juventus. In this text, Alves talks

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<sup>31</sup> SCHWARTZ; VOGAN. *The Players' Tribune*, p. 47.

<sup>32</sup> SCHWARTZ; VOGAN. *The Players' Tribune*, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> SCHWARTZ; VOGAN. *The Players' Tribune*, p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> JETER. *The Start of Something New*.

<sup>35</sup> HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*.

<sup>36</sup> Terra, Daniel Alves abre o jogo e conta 'segredos' da vida e da carreira. R7, Daniel Alves publica carta emocionante sobre superação às vésperas da final da Liga dos Campeões. *Catraca Livre*, Daniel Alves publica texto sobre sua vida e comove a internet.



about themes like his career as a player, from his childhood to the present day, the feeling that he still holds for his former club, Barcelona. The text was published in Portuguese and in English. For this paper, the English version is being considered for the analysis.

In the sense of analysing the experience reported, I rely on one of the systems of SFL that deals with finding "the meaning of the world in the form"<sup>37</sup>: the Transitivity System.<sup>38</sup> For Halliday and Matthiessen, the language has three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The Transitivity System relates to the first of these metafunctions and can build "a representational world and bring meaning to our experiences".<sup>39</sup> So, the Transitivity System deals with the experience of the world – internal or external.

In this system, we have these representations inscribed by the processes (verbal groups), the participants (nominal groups) and the circumstances (adverbial groups or prepositional phrases). In Image 1, it is possible to glance at the six types of processes.

So, the processes in the Transitivity System are Material (about actions that cause a change in the physical world), Mental (about the internal processes of the self), Relational (about the identification, attribution and belonging), Verbal (includes the verb "to say" and its variations), Behavioural (expressions of the self in the physical world) and Existential (the act of existing). Each process also has its actors, who change according to the process and the sentence. For the analysis carried out in this paper, the focus will be on the processes – that means the actors can be involved and the circumstances, but they are not going to be analysed at this moment, except for Alves, the speaker in question.

SFL analysis of sports-related discourse has very few works published so far. Some of these studies are in Caldwell et al,<sup>40</sup> one of the first attempts to understand the relationship amongst discourse, linguistics, sports, and the academic context. In

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<sup>37</sup> BARBARA; MACEDO. *Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional para a análise de discurso: um panorama introdutório*.

<sup>38</sup> HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*.

<sup>39</sup> LIMA-LOPES; PIMENTA. LIMA-LOPES; PIMENTA. #MulheresNoFutebol: transitividade e avaliatividade na identificação de padrões sexistas, p. 119.

<sup>40</sup> CALDWELL et al. *The Discourse of Sport: Analyses from Social Linguistics*.



Brazil, some researchers that follow a similar line of studies are Lima-Lopes and Pimenta,<sup>41</sup> who analyse a corpus of Twitter posts that contain the hashtag #MulheresNoFutebol (#WomenInFootball) and Pimenta,<sup>42</sup> who analyses which was the press approach to the racist attack suffered by Daniel Alves in April 2014, focusing on the actions that shaped the racist act itself.

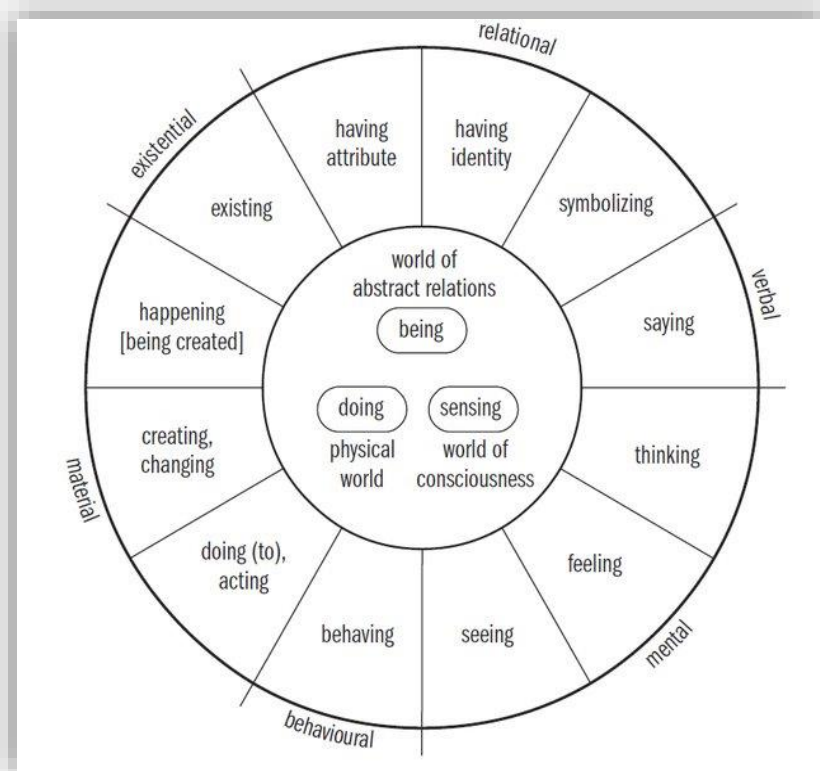


Image 1: Transitivity System schema, designed by Halliday and Matthiessen.<sup>43</sup>

## DISCUSSION

To start the analysis, Alves' text, that contains 3.085 words, was uploaded to the software Sketch Engine to make it easier to visualise the processes and look at them in the text in context. This work was developed through samples of text in which the principal processes were present. So, I first identified the most common processes

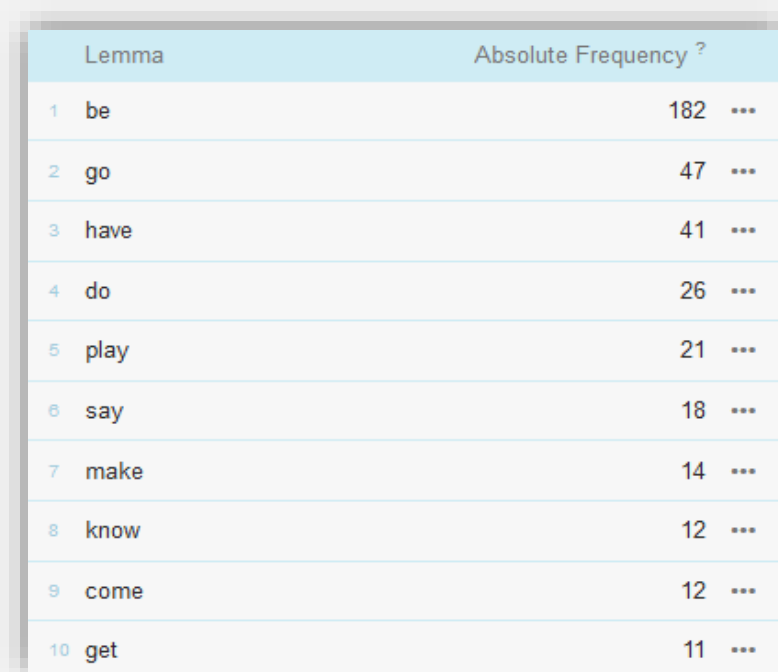
<sup>41</sup> LIMA-LOPES; PIMENTA. #MulheresNoFutebol, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> PIMENTA. *O discurso midiático e o racismo no futebol: uma abordagem sistêmico-funcional para a análise dos padrões de Julgamento*, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> HALLIDAY, MATTHIESSEN. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*.

in Alves' text. For that, the tool of Word List in Sketch Engine focused on the verbs can give us a list of these processes and the frequency of each of them in the analysed piece, as seen in Image 2.

The verb "to be" is the most frequent one, with a frequency of 182 times in the text. After that, we have "to go", with a frequency of 47 and "to have", with 41. For this analysis, due to the short length of this paper, I will rely on the first two verbs found on the list and understand how they can behave as processes in the text.



	Lemma	Absolute Frequency ?
1	be	182 ...
2	go	47 ...
3	have	41 ...
4	do	26 ...
5	play	21 ...
6	say	18 ...
7	make	14 ...
8	know	12 ...
9	come	12 ...
10	get	11 ...

Image 2: most frequent verbs in the analysed text (Sketch Engine output).

To understand the behaviour of the selected verbs as processes, we have to look at the context. Since they are also auxiliary verbs in the English language, it is impossible to assume their role and if they represent the process expressed in each entry. With the use of the second tool of Sketch Engine, "Concordance", we can click on each verb from the list and visualise them together with the pieces of text where they are. To understand its context, it is also too important to identify the other processes in the sentence, even if they are not connected with the selected verbs.

Below, there are Table 1 and Table 2 and their respective analysis with the help of the Transitivity system. These tables were generated with the help of the Concordance tool, in its modality of Shuffle lines, getting the six first results of each

concordance – that means, the examples analysed here are not chosen on purpose, and they come as a sample of what a complete analysis of the text could bring us.

1	1 or 2 in drive. You <u>are going to be</u> a warrior. You <u>are not going back</u> home, no matter what." The screen <u>fades</u> to black. Now <u>I'm</u> 18 years old, and <u>I'm telling</u> one of the only lies I've ever told in football. <u>I'm playing</u> for Bahia in the Brazilian.
2	Three months ago, when Barcelona <u>made</u> their incredible comeback against Paris St.-Germain in the Champions League, I <u>was watching</u> every moment from my couch. You might <u>think</u> from reading the newspapers that I <u>was hoping</u> my old club would <u>lose</u> .
3	But when my brother Neymar <u>scored</u> that beautiful free-kick? I <u>jumped up</u> from my couch and <u>was</u> screaming at the television. "Vamooooooooo!" And when Sergi Roberto performed a miracle in the 95th minute? Like.
4	At the end, before I <u>walk back</u> to the dressing room, I always <u>say</u> the same thing to myself. Shit, I <u>came</u> from nowhere. I <u>am</u> here now. It's unreal, but I am here. When I was 18, I moved across the ocean just for the opportunity to play for a club that.
5	felt like crying, too. I can imagine people reading this and asking why I <u>am</u> sharing these secrets. Well, the truth is, I am 34 years old. I don't know how much longer I will play. Maybe two or three years. And I feel as though people do not.
6	is on the same level. They will dribble past me once or twice. Sure, O.K. But I will attack them, too. I don't want to be invisible. I want the stage. Even at 34 years old, after 34 trophies, I still feel I have to prove this every time. But it.

Table 1: To Be.

As an auxiliary verb in the English language, the verb "to be" can be encountered in a series of different processes in these text samples. Two perceived moments are related to this process: the image that Alves has of himself and how he wants to portray himself as a player and the relation he has about other phenomena in sport – in this case, the matches of his former club, Barcelona.

In the first example, we can see that, in Sample 1, Alves relies on material processes done by himself – that means, acts that bring a change in the real world, as "You are not going back home" and "I'm playing" – to reach a relational goal: the player that he wants to be: a warrior. For that, he goes to the past to understand the player that he was before.

In Sample 4, Alves brings more material processes to establish his position as a player today ("I came from nowhere", "I am here now") and what he did to come to this status ("When I was 18, I moved across the ocean"). Sample 5, in the

meantime, brings a switch between mental and relational processes ("The truth is") to reflect on the time he still has as a player, although the principal verb analysed is connected to a verbal process ("I am sharing these secrets"). Sample 6 brings us significant glances of how Daniel Alves sees himself ("I don't want to be invisible", as a relational process) and the material ("I will attack them") and mental ("I still feel I have to prove") processes that he does to prove his point.

For the second perceived moment, in Sample 2, Daniel talks about Barcelona, his former club, and the behavioural and mental processes are brought to explain the feeling that he still has for the club. This is also portrayed in the same way in Sample 3, although this one brings only behavioural processes ("I jumped up", "I was screaming") to represent this feeling.

7	're going to miss me." I <u>didn't mean</u> as a player. Barca have plenty of incredible players. What I meant was that they were going to miss my spirit. They were <b>going</b> to miss the care I had for the dressing room. They were going to miss the blood I spilled
8	not the farm anymore. This <u>is</u> the real world, and the reason they <u>call it</u> the real world is because shit <u>is</u> real out here. I <b>go back</b> to my room, and I'm <u>starving</u> . We <u>train</u> all day, and <u>there's</u> not enough food at the camp. Somebody <u>stole</u> my clothes. I
9	. For example, the game against Real Madrid in 2010, when <u>we won</u> 5-0? Pep <u>told us</u> before the match, "Today, <u>you're going</u> to play like the football <u>is</u> a ball of fire. It never <u>stays</u> at your feet. Not even a half-second. If you <u>do that</u> , there will be
10	value defending above everything. Once again, <u>I was</u> the dog in the yard. I was staring at the invisible fence. <u>Should I go</u> ? But I <u>did not go</u> . At the beginning of the season, <u>I wanted</u> to make sure that the Juve players <u>understood</u> that I respected
11	Juventus this season, it was like <u>I was leaving</u> home again. I <u>did it</u> when I was 13, going to the academy. I <u>did it</u> again at 18, <b>going</b> to Spain. And then <u>I did it</u> again at 33, <b>going</b> to Italy. When I first <u>arrived</u> at Juve, it was like going to a completely new
12	<u>looking</u> at it, <u>like a dog</u> who's afraid to <u>cross</u> an invisible fence in his yard. Then, one game, for some reason, I just <u>let go</u> . <u>I have to be</u> me. I say, "Agora." And <u>I just go</u> . <b>Attack</b> , attack, attack. <u>It works</u> like magic. After that, the manager <u>says</u> ,

Table 2: To Go.

When looking at the examples for the verb "to go", that, as the verb "to be", can be auxiliary to different processes in the text, we can see that only in Samples 7 and 9 the verb is not related to a process experienced by Alves – in the first of these samples, he talks about the feeling that Barcelona would have in not having him as

a player. For that, he justifies this possible feeling from his former club with examples of behavioural processes ("care I had", "the blood I spilled") that justifies his capability as a player. In the second sample, he talks about Pep (Guardiola, former coach of Barcelona) and uses several material processes ("You're going to play", "It never stays at your feet", "If you do that") that indicates a desirable attitude in a football match.

In the other samples, the process related to the verb helped to tell the story of Alves as a player. Sample 8 talks about the beginning of his career, and he situates the scenario with relational processes ("This is the real world", "Shit is real") and switches between material ("I go back", "We train all day") and mental ("I'm starving") processes to talk about his experience. Sample 10 brings Alves using a relational process to situate the location of the experience reported ("I was the dog in the yard") and the material processes that are related to his attitude in this situation ("Should I go? I did not go"). The same occurs in Sample 12, where he also utilises a relational process to compare him with a dog in the yard afraid of crossing an invisible fence and then behavioural ("I have to be") and material processes ("I just go", "Attack", "It works") to justify what he did to face the situation.

## **DISCUSSION**

With the analysis of the transitivity processes, we can observe how Alves uses the process to report his world experience in favour of his image in the text. The material processes, for example, are present in moments where he describes a complicated situation and, then, brings to the text what he did to change it, at the same time that the behavioural processes justify his skills not only as a player but as a member of the club, and also as someone that still loves Barcelona, his former club. Relational processes are used two times: when he locates the situation narrated and to reflect about himself: what he wants and what he does not want to be. With the help of two auxiliary verbs, it is possible to see it related to different contexts, although a manual analysis of the entire text would be necessary to check if these patterns repeat in the same way.

As a conclusion of the analysis, it is possible to classify the autobiographical text of the Brazilian football player as a self-branding piece. In this analysis, it was possible to realise that he emphasises his skills and the work that he has done and keeps doing to maintain his status as a player – as also an image of someone who is not angry with the situation of leaving his former club and is ready for a challenge in a new club relying on the story of his own life. There is an intention to position himself more humanly, closer to the public, outstanding the role as the star in the game, but constantly the processes present in the text remember the image that he wants to be remembered for what he accomplished as a professional athlete and a person.

The article published in *The Players' Tribune* sells an image that afterwards was replicated by the media as something that “moved the Internet”.<sup>44</sup> The athlete can transform his own story into a commodity, a product to be consumed by his readers, and portray himself as a role model. As of today, the production and the publication of content can happen in an easier way<sup>45</sup>, they can be in the power of the story being told. It produces the self in a positive and inspiring light, with the filter being made by the person who wrote the piece.

In addition to a detailed look throughout the entire text, it would be essential to consider the analysis of other texts of *The Players' Tribune* for further studies, to understand if the same patterns are present in the construction of the images, as well as other theories related to Systemic-Functional Linguistics such as the Appraisal System that could be helpful to complement the meanings found through the Transitivity System. Other analyses also involve the construction of the image of a player like Alves and how self-branding favours him, like social media accounts and if the traditional media copes with the image that the athlete positions himself in.

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<sup>44</sup> Twitter. 01 jun. 2017.

<sup>45</sup> LAUCELLA. 2014

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