

**A STUDY OF SYNTACTIC FEATURES AND COMMUNICATIVE
FUNCTIONS IN ONLINE FOOTBALL COMMENTARY**



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ABSTRACT

This present study aimed to investigate the frequency of occurrences of syntactic features and communicative functions in 19 online football commentary reports published in Skysports.com from August 2012 to May 2013. The theoretical frameworks for the classification of syntactic features and communicative functions were based on Charles Fergsuon (1983)'s research article entitled "Sports Announcer Talk: Syntactic Aspects of Register Variation" and Judy Delin (2000)'s classification of utterance functions of football commentary respectively. Cumulative frequency tables were designed and employed as the main research instruments for collecting and scrutinising the occurrence of syntactic features and communicative functions, and their frequency of occurrences were presented in percentage. Regarding the frequency of occurrences of syntactic features in online football commentary, the results of the study showed that verb tense, particularly present simple tense form, was the most dominant syntactic feature (64.40%); meanwhile verb tenses in present continuous and past simple tense form were employed sporadically (6.08% and 2.02%, respectively). The second most occurring syntactic feature was simplification (18.27%). Three sub-types of simplification were ranged in descending order of occurrence proportion: head noun plus copula deletion (61.08%), copula deletion (35.50%), and head noun deletion (3.42%). Result expression was the third most employed syntactic feature (4.85%), and amongst two types of result expression, "for phrase" occurred more often

than “to phrase” (70.22% vs. 29.78%). Heavy modifier was ranked fourth (3.43%), and amongst two types of heavy modifier, post-posed modifier was more frequently detected than pre-posed modifier (79.25% vs. 20.75%). The least identified type of syntactic feature was routine (0.95%). Amongst two types of routine, numerical statement appeared more frequently than idiomatic phrase (81.82% vs. 18.18%). The undetectable syntactic feature was inversion: its occurrence was completely inexistent in the entire data (0.00%). Concerning the frequency of occurrence of communicative function, it was shown that online football commentary was mostly governed by narrative commentarial type (57.62%). The second most and the third most communicative function were evaluative (29.21%) and summarising (9.08%) respectively while the least occurring communicative function was elaborative (4.09%).

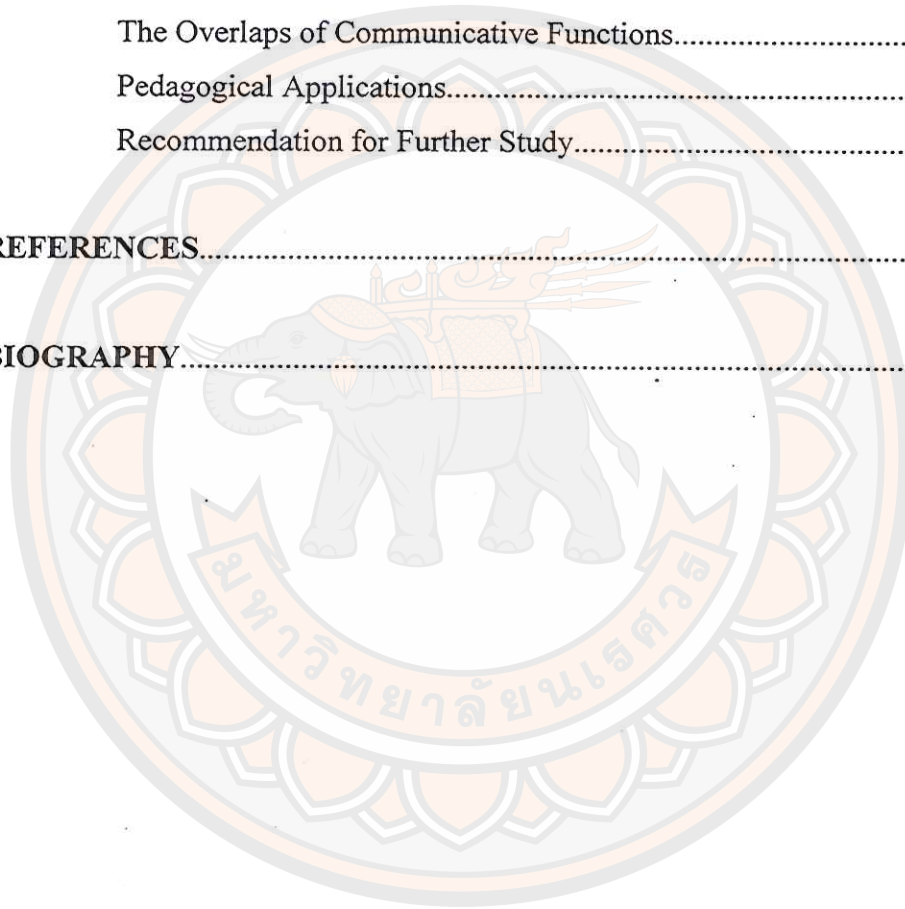


LIST OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Rationale for the Study.....	1
Purposes of the Study.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	6
Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	6
Definitions of Terms.....	7
II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
Differences between Spoken and Written Language.....	8
Integration of Spoken Language into Written Language and CMC.....	12
Register of Online Football Commentary.....	14
Discourse of Sports Report.....	19
Syntactic Features of Sports Commentary.....	21
Communicative Functions of Sports Commentary.....	31
Review of Related Research.....	33
III METHODOLOGY.....	38
Data.....	38
Data Collection.....	38
Instruments.....	39
Data Analysis.....	47
Counting Frequency of Occurrence.....	52
Statistical Analysis.....	55
Reliability of the Study.....	56
IV RESULTS.....	57

LIST OF CONTENTS (CONT.)

Chapter	Page
V DISCUSSIONS	72
Findings.....	72
Discussions.....	73
The Overlaps of Communicative Functions.....	105
Pedagogical Applications.....	110
Recommendation for Further Study.....	112
REFERENCES	114
BIOGRAPHY	120



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Factor Differentiating Speech and Writing.....	10
2 A Summary of Syntactic Features and Reasons of Use.....	30
3 A Summary of Communicative Functions.....	33
4 Frequency of Occurrence of Syntactic Features.....	39
5 Types of Simplification.....	40
6 Types of Inversion.....	41
7 Types of Result Expression.....	41
8 Types of Heavy Modifier.....	42
9 Types of Tense Usage.....	43
10 Types of Routine.....	44
11 Frequency of Occurrence of Communicative Functions.....	45
12 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Syntactic Features.....	57
13 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Simplification.....	60
14 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Result Expression.....	62
15 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Heavy Modifier.....	63
16 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Routine.....	65
17 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Inversion.....	66
18 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Communicative Functions.....	67

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Study

In recent years, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has been growing rapidly as a crucial constituent of communication media, thanks to the advancement of computer and the increasing accessibility to the Internet. In addition to the communicative values, CMC is also considered an invaluable platform when employed in pedagogical circumstance, particularly in English language education. Through CMC environments, non-native English learner's development is noted by a considerable number of researchers, especially in the areas of metalinguistic aspects, language components, and language skills (Nguyen, 2008).

Regarded as one of the metalinguistic aspects, intercultural competence is broadly defined as learner's multiple skills in communicating effectively and appropriately with people from different linguistic and cultural background (Fantini, 2006). Since CMC is viewed as a device that offers "convenient, authentic, direct, and speed access to native speakers and their cultures" to the learners (Kramsch and Thorne, 2002, p. 100) the cross-cultural ability of learner is evidently facilitated via involving in CMC. For instance, the study conducted by Bateman (2002) indicates that learners engaging in CMC environment exhibit more positive attitude and curiosity towards the target culture and have a better understanding of cross-cultural differences. Jin and Erben (2007) also point out that learners within CMC context are more sensitive to cultural diversity by showing greater respect to the speaker of the target language when interacting and exchanging ideas in real time.

Concerning the development in language components, the learner's participation through CMC is in accordance with their improvement in linguistic and grammatical developmental process, as suggested by Kern (1995) who finds that the language produced by learners engaging in CMC settings is more grammatically correct and more structurally complex. The study by Shang (2007) also supports the previous result. He manifests that the text-based nature of CMC promotes learner's

richness in linguistic accuracy and complexity in the production of language. Not only does CMC benefit learners in the aforementioned language areas, but it also enhances learner in other areas such as lexical and oral competence. Concerning learner's lexical enhancement, the comparative study conducted by Fitze (2006) reveals that learners can better use and practice a wider range of vocabulary that is relevant to the topics in written electronic conferences than in face-to-face interaction. In terms of oral development, Beauvois (1997) reports that learners who participate in CMC surpass their non-CMC peers in oral performance examination, particularly when the pronunciation is assessed.

The improvement of specific language skills is also related with CMC learning activity. Davis and Thiede (2000) argue that the writing skill is enhanced via authentic communication in CMC because a variety of language forms in CMC exhibits similarity to written language. Levy and Stockwell (2006) also note that, through CMC, learner is provided with meaningful reading which results in their development in reading skill. In addition, not only does meaningful practice via CMC increase learner's focus on language forms, but it also results in the increase of their written output of the target language (Blake, 2000).

Apart from being the beneficial resource in media and education, CMC also attracts linguists' interests who, over the past few years, have paid increasing attention to its language and attempted to give a descriptive term to this diversity of language. For instance, the term "electronic discourse", first coined by Davis and Brewer, is referred to as "writing that very often reads as if it were being spoken – that is, as if the sender were writing talking" (Crystal, 2001, p.25). Another term "Netspeak" is given by Crystal (2001) to conceptualize four cybernetic communications: electronic mail, chat rooms, online communities, and web information systems. Although Netspeak is the combination of both written and spoken languages, Crystal argues that the trait of written language is more obvious. In a wider scope, Biber and Conrad (2009) regard online language as a subvariety of "electronic registers".

With the dawn of the Internet age, it is undeniable that people's accessibility to instant information through electronic register has become a way of life. Amongst various areas of public interests presented through electronic register, sport reporting, particularly football commentary, can partially simulate traditional commentary

by taking advantages of speech-integrated characteristics into its text-based nature. Despite its newness, the electronic commentary of football match has been firmly established its role as one of the most newly-introduced electronic registers and well-received by many football fanatics.

Football varies in appearances and terms. The American try to differ football from their indigenous sport, American football, by naming it “soccer”, the term that sounds slightly awkward to most people when compared to “football” (Seddon, 2004, p.3). For instance, the American term of football is the name of best-selling periodical, *World Soccer*. In common sense, passionate football fans call their beloved sport “the beautiful game”, “the people’s game”, or “the world’s game” (Bergh and Ohlander, 2012, p.11). The notion of football as the world’s most famous sport is evident and not illusory. The statistical data collected by International Federation of Association Football reveals that approximately 270 million people actively participate in footballing business as players, referees, and authorities (Kunz, 2000, pp.10-15). This astonishing number still does not encompass those football audiences who passively participate in footballing activities through television and internet live broadcast. For example, 2006 World Cup Final is an unprecedented phenomenon that attracted almost half of the global population, over three billion people, to witness the same event at the same time (Goldblatt, 2007).

The sport of football and the language of English are intertwined. The last century has seen a globalization of the English language. The rapidly growing phenomenon of the language has made it acknowledged as a worldwide lingua franca. In the midst of English internationalisation, an Englishmen’s brainchild sport, football, has also gained status as the most popular sport in the world as mentioned earlier. Although the history of English’s world dominance is not directly interrelated to global football fever, the strong connection between the English language and football can be perceived to a certain extent. In a broad view of cross-linguistic influence, Bergh and Ohlander (2012) suggest that some English football terminologies like *forward*, *dribble* and *offside* are linguistically transferred to a number of languages in the form of loanwords. Moreover, in many languages across the globe, English football terms have equivalent words which often come in the form of semantic loans or loan translation. The examples are the German word *abseits* for *offside* and

the Italian independent native expression of *calcio* for *football*. At public level, the bond between English and football can be seen as well. For example, two of Swedish football magazine have the anglophilic names, *Offside* and *FourFourTwo*, respectively. The former gives a reflection of a common rule of the game while the latter refers to one of the best-known tactical formations used in football strategy. At interpersonal level, English is regularly used as a medium language between player and coach as well as between player and player in a number of football clubs where the members are from multi-linguistic background (Giera, 2008). Lastly, at domestic level, in Thailand, an obvious example is a football weekly magazine *Star Soccer* whose name reflects that the concept of 'football' or its synonym 'soccer', which is one of the best-known English words in the world (Seddon, 2004, p.8).

In the light of the English language and football present day dominance, some truth might lie within the statement by Sir Bobby Charlton, the legendary English footballer, "football and English are the only truly global languages" (as cited in Thaler, 2008, p.391). Therefore, the English language used in communication about football in various contexts and settings is worthwhile to be investigated on a scholarly basis.

One of the current trends in CMC study is to identify the integration of spoken language features into the text-based nature of CMC. Regarded as one of the newest sub-genre of CMC, online football commentary (OFC) is generally referred to as the real time internet football reporting. This internet mediated console is invented to report the latest and detailed football event in chronological narrative order. However, OFC has not received due consideration from linguists. This is with the exception of small scale studies conducted by Pérez-Sabater, et al. (2008) and Lewandowski (2012). Identically, both of these studies share one of the hypothetical statements that the written language of OFC, on some levels, could be influenced by the unique quality of traditional spoken sports commentary. Albeit there are certain elements, varying from prosody to lexis, to name a few, that can also distinguish the language of sports commentary from ordinary language variation, one of most noticeable clues is **syntactic features**. By definition, the syntactic features of a particular language register could be comprehensively described as "the identifiable markers of language structure and language use, different from the language of other

communication situations” (Ferguson, 1994, p.20, as cited in Lewandowski, 2012, p.65). Regardless of the fact that the study of syntactic features in OFC is not the newest or the most pioneering attempt, from the researcher’s point of view, it seems that there is still room to extend the previous research by carrying out large-scale study. This effort is also spurred by the previous OFC researchers who call for a further research by writing in their concluding remarks that OFC is worthwhile to be analysed more quantitatively (Lewandowski, 2012, p.75).

Whilst the first purpose to study the syntactic features of OFC at the fuller extent is set, there raises a looming question whether OFC could be investigated from other perspectives. Again, not only does Lewandowski (2012)’s comment suggest his successive researchers to investigate the syntactic features more thoroughly but it also paves the way to other areas of OFC that deserve more scholarly attention. Amongst his recommendations for the further study, one area that has not been explored yet in all of the previous studies of OFC is **communicative functions** of utterances employed by the online football commentators. It is stated that the communicative functions are amongst the significant factors that govern a particular language communication. The language of sports commentary, in particular, is the recognisable discourse that is highly structured and distinctively patterned by its unique functional utterances (Ferguson, 1983). Unsurprisingly, some scholars have already put attempt to classify the types of communicative functions employed by the sportscasters in spoken context (Morris and Nydahl, 1983; Delin, 2000; Reaser, 2003; McGuire and Armfield, 2008). Despite the fact that OFC has the written nature, as opposed to conventional commentary, it is seen as a sub-category of sports commentary register which is shaped by the similar communicative functions. Therefore, it is safe to assume that OFC could share more or less functional utterances with the oral commentary.

Given the aforementioned facts that still there are areas left unfulfilled and unexplored in the previously conducted study of OFC, this study, in consequence, has the aims to fulfil the gap in the lack of the quantitative depth for the identification of syntactic features as well as to further the knowledge of the communicative functions used in OFC. Therefore, it should be worthwhile to identify the syntactic

features and its functional utterance in order to have a clearer picture of this unique language register as a whole.

Purposes of the Study

1. To identify and determine the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features in online football commentary
2. To identify and determine the frequency of occurrence of communicative functions in online football commentary

Significance of the Study

In identifying the syntactic features and the communicative functions of online football commentary by respectively using theoretical frameworks of Ferguson (1983) and Delin (2000), this study could contribute and be a stepping-stone to further academic research in field of the newly-established electronic register. This is because the results indicate that the aforementioned theoretical guidelines can be applied in analysing the sports-related English language register, not only in the traditional setting of spoken commentary but also in the innovative setting of web-based commentary.

In addition, since many leading English language news publishers based in United Kingdom have the live football commentary as a part of their online sports section, this study could be useful for English as foreign language learners who are interested in football and want to participate in authentic language source.

Lastly, this study could be pedagogically beneficial for English educators in designing learning materials for the students who are interested in sports, particularly football.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study aims to study the syntactic features and communicative functions in online football commentary. The data of this study consists of a season-long online football commentary reports published on the website, *Sky Sports.com*, starting from August 2012 up to May 2013. The data is limited to only Manchester United Football Club's official match schedules and it is selected in the odd numbering sequences.

To specify, the sequential order the nineteen reports selected to be analysed are ranged 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 37.

Concerning the study of syntactic features, this study follows Ferguson's (1983) research article on spoken sports commentary, "*Sports Announcer Talk: Syntactic Aspects of Register Variation*". In his study, Ferguson proposes that sports commentary is characterized by a series of syntactic features, namely: 1) simplification, 2) inversion, 3) result expression, 4) heavy modifier, 5) tense usage, and 6) routine.

Regarding the attempt to study the communicative functions in online football commentary, this study adopts Delin (2000)'s proposal on utterance functions of football commentary as the theoretical framework. The frequency of occurrence of the following utterance functions of the football commentary, which are: 1) narrating, 2) evaluating, 3) elaborating, and 4) summarising, will be investigated.

Definitions of Terms

Syntactic features refer to a set of the distinctive language traits, which considered by Ferguson (1983) as syntactically marked elements for sports commentary register, namely, *simplification, inversion, result expression, heavy modifier, tense usage, and routine.*

Communicative functions mean the sports commentator's intentions in producing a given message to communicate with the audiences of sports commentary, such as *to narrate, to evaluate, to elaborate, and to summarise*, as classified by Delin (2000).

Online football commentary refers to the real-time football report that is chronologically presented by means of the web pages in online sports section of established newspapers or news broadcasters, generally written by professional journalists.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this study is to identify and determine the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features and communicative functions in online football commentary. In this chapter, certain related literatures are reviewed. The content is divided into seven main topics as the followings 1) differences between spoken and written language, 2) integration of spoken language into written language and CMC, 3) register of online football commentary, 4) discourse of sports report, 5) syntactic features of sports commentary, 6) communicative functions of sports commentary, and 7) review of related research.

Differences between Spoken and Written Language

It is widely acknowledged that human beings deliver their thoughts through two main language mediums: spoken and written forms. The majority of human language is the spoken language, the natural language in which words are uttered through oral cavity. On the other hand, written language is created to represent a language through any possible form of a grapheme. A number of scholars have made an attempt to conceptualise the distinguished features between spoken and written language. Through a broad perspective, speech and writing can be differentiated according to its form, norm, and syntactic and social functions.

Viewing language as an object, Crystal (2000) argues that the most notable difference between spoken and written language is their physical forms. From his explanation, speech possesses “phonic substance” as a medium of delivery, whereas, writing is delivered through “graphic substance”. Gregory and Carroll (1978) also share the conceptually similar ideas with Crystal by claiming that the two language forms are completely different in their nature and substance of medium. To support their claims, they illustrate that written English is a chunk of symbolic letters lined up on a paper surface while spoken English is a series of recurring and changing voice.

In addition to the distinction in physical appearance between spoken and written language, another difference is the norm that governs the two language forms. Nystrand (1982) concludes that the norm of spoken language is transitory while the norm of written language is permanent. In other words, the production of speech is processed in real time, heavily relies on the linear passage of time, and has an internal temporal structure; on the other hand, the written norm is not significantly related to the temporal linearity of the process of production.

Nystrand also adds that another major difference between spoken and written language is its syntactic device. The example is that, in spoken English, it is apparent that speaker can use intonation to convey different meanings. To exemplify, by only changing the level of intonation, speaker can exclaim or even make a question in the form of affirmative sentence structure without the need to rearrange the structural pattern of the utterance. In contrast, to convey expected thoughts and meanings in written English is dependent on the use of grammatical device like punctuation marks, conjunctions, and subordinators.

Lastly, spoken language is different from written language in its social function. According to Chafe (1982), spoken language exhibits a higher level of “involvement” while the quality of “detachment” is more obvious in written language. Writer is limited to encode meaning only lexically and syntactically because of the lack of paralinguistic channels – a term adopted in suprasegmental phonology to refer to variations in tone of voice which include features like intonation and stress to convey different attitudes and meanings and social roles. In contrast, the availability of paralinguistic channels in oral interaction provides the speakers with more ways to deliver their thoughts. Coulmas (1991, p.170) concludes that written language characterized by “involvement” is “oral-like”, while spoken language is “written-like”.

In a narrower view, there are also other factors that differentiate spoken and written language. Crystal (2004) proposes the seven categories of factors that distinguish speech from writing including: 1) situational context, 2) time, 3) feedback, 4) unique feature, 5) words and constructions, 6) general function, and 7) opportunity to revise final language product.

Table 1 Factor Differentiating Speech and Writing

Speech	Writing
<p>1. Speech is time-bound, dynamic, and transient. It is part of an interaction in which both participants are usually present, and the speaker has a particular addressee (or several addressees) in mind.</p>	<p>1. Writing is space-bound, static, and permanent. It is often the result of a situation in which the writer is usually distant from the reader, and often does not know who the reader is going to be.</p>
<p>2. The spontaneity and speed of most speech exchanges make it difficult to engage in complex advance planning. The pressure to think while talking promotes looser construction, repetition, rephrasing, and comment clauses ('you know', 'mind you', 'as it were'). Intonation and pause divide long utterances into manageable chunks, but sentence boundaries are often unclear.</p>	<p>2. Writing allows repeated reading and close analysis, and promotes the development of careful organisation and compact expression, with often intricate sentence structure. Units of discourse (sentences, paragraphs) are usually easy to identify through punctuation and layout.</p>
<p>3. Because participants are typically in face-to-face interaction, they can rely on such extralinguistic clues as facial expression and gesture to aid meaning (feedback). The lexicon of speech is often characteristically vague, using words which refer directly to the situation (deictic expression, such as 'that one', 'in here', 'right now').</p>	<p>3. Lack of visual contact means that participants cannot rely on context to make their meaning clear; nor is there any immediate feedback. Most writing therefore avoids the use of deictic expressions which are likely to be ambiguous. Writers must also anticipate the effects of the time-lag between production and reception, and the problems posed by having their language read and interpreted by many recipients in diverse settings.</p>

Table 1 (cont.)

Speech	Writing
<p>4. Unique features of speech include most of the prosody. The many nuances of intonation, loudness, tempo, rhythm, and other tones of voice cannot be written down with much efficiency.</p>	<p>4. Unique features of writing include pages, lines, capitalisation, spatial organisation and several aspects of punctuation. Only a few graphic conventions relate to prosody, such as question marks and underlining for emphasis. Several written genres (e.g. timetables, graphs, complex formulae) cannot be read aloud efficiently, but have to be assimilated visually.</p>
<p>5. Many words and constructions are characteristic of (especially informal) speech. Lengthy coordinate sentences are normal, and are often of considerable complexity. Nonsense vocabulary is not usually written, and may have no standard spelling ('whatchamacallit'). Obscenity may be replaced by graphic euphemism (f***). Slang and grammatical informality, such as contracted forms (isn't, he's) may be frowned upon.</p>	<p>5. Some words and constructions are characteristic of writing, such as multiple instances of subordination in the same sentence, elaborately balanced syntactic patterns, and the long (often multi-page) sentences found in some legal documents. Certain items of vocabulary are never spoken, such as the longer names of chemical compounds.</p>
<p>6. Speech is very suited to social or 'phatic' functions, such as passing the time of day, or any situation where casual and unplanned discourse is desirable. It is also good at expressing social relationships, and personal opinions and attitudes, due to the vast range of nuances which can be expressed by the prosody and accompanying non-verbal features.</p>	<p>6. Writing is very suited to the recording of facts and the communication of ideas, and to tasks of memory and learning. Written records are easier to keep and scan; tables demonstrate relationships between things; notes and lists provide mnemonics; and text can be read at speeds which suit a person's ability to learn.</p>

Table 1 (cont.)

Speech	Writing
7. There is an opportunity to rethink an utterance while it is in progress (starting again, adding a qualification). However, errors, once spoken, cannot be withdrawn; the speaker must live with the consequences, interruptions and overlapping speech are normal and highly audible.	7. Errors and other perceived inadequacies in our writing can be eliminated in later drafts without the reader ever knowing they were there. Interruptions, if they have occurred while writing, are also invisible in the final product.

Source: Crystal, 2004, pp.26-28

Integration of Spoken Language into Written Language and CMC

The historical phenomenon concerning linguistic tendency of English spoken language integration into written language has been well illustrated by many scholars. For instance, the shift towards “colloquialisation” in people’s public discussion throughout the last two centuries is first emphasized by Leech (1966) who describes it as “a popular style of communication which might be called public-colloquial” (Leech, 1966, p.75). In his study, Leech finds that the language of advertisement, serving as a part of public discourse, exhibits high frequencies of informal language features such as the use of pronouns “you”, “he”, and “him”. The common trend of spoken language integration into a variety of written English over the last four hundred years is also noted by Biber and Finegan (1989, p.487). Likewise, this notion is supported by Haussamen (1994) who suggests that English sentence has been written in fewer words and in a more direct way throughout the same period of times.

Van Dijk (1999) studies this trendy shift of language and argues that the modern technology is a cause of the overlap between spoken and written language. Fairclough (1995) also scrutinizes the process of how spoken genre is mixed into written genre through a wider perspective of critical discourse analysis. Emphasising on the processes of informalization or conversationalization and technologization of discourse, he pinpoints that the overlap between written and spoken genres occur

because people in public discourse increasingly use “mixtures of formal and informal styles, technical and non-technical vocabularies, markers of authority and familiarity, more typically written and more typically spoken syntactic forms” (Fairclough, 1995, p.75). In his study, he finds that informal vocabularies such as “*mate*”, “*fancy*”, and “*bloke*”, are widely used in public discourse. The use of informal pronoun, as in “*an awful lot of people when you ask them*” is found as well. Through the analysis of how electronic discourse influences current public discussion, Fairclough (1995) claims that there is an interrelation between sociological awareness and text production of the public.

It is worth mentioning that all public discourses that have changed and mediated through modern technologies can be considered as the umbrella term of technologization. Under this consideration, studies on markedness of informal language in CMC have been conducted by a number of scholars. Since the last three decades has seen a rapid process of English language informalisation, this linguistic phenomenon seemingly has a longer history and attracts the attention of certain researchers. For example, Tuson (2006) argues that the contemporary technology has encouraged people, particularly juvenile persons, to engage in writing activities more often than before although it is considered casual writing. Cevera (2001) points out the tendency in incorporating spoken language into written language. Grijelmo (2001), by the same token, highlights the marked informality in the language of the Internet but shows negative attitudes towards this trend through the view of prescriptive grammarian. Armstrong (2004) also conducts a comparative study on the process of variation and colloquialisation of language between English and other languages. The informalisation of public discussion is studied by Pires (2003) who investigates the language of advertisings and newspapers.

All related studies on English CMC consider the fundamental quality of “Netspeaks”, the term coined by Crystal’s (2001), as a composite of oral and written discourse and highlight its characteristic features which consist of: “the use of colloquial and informal language, the use of rhetorical typography to simulate paralinguistic communication, the use of short sentences, the use of first and second person pronouns, and the frequency of spelling mistakes, among others” (Pérez-Sabater, et al., 2006, p.237). In addition, English written text, especially in

CMC, contains more degree of marked informality and oral traits than other languages.

Register of Online Football Commentary

Register theory can be broadly defined as “a variety associated with a particular situation of use (including particular communicative purpose)” (Biber and Conrad, 2009, p.6). One of the most important prototypical frameworks for situational determinants of register is the one developed by Halliday (1978) who proposes that there are three variables that govern every register. The three register-governing variables, according to Halliday, are as follows:

1. **Field** consists of the contexts where communicative activity occurs and contains the purpose and subject matter or the topic of communication.
2. **Mode** is referred to as the channel or medium of communication.
3. **Tenor** displays how the addresser and addressee are interrelated.

The Halliday’s framework of situational determinants of register is then further developed and elaborated by many scholars. However, when it comes in term of “electronic register”, it seems that there are more specific controlling factors concerned. Possibly, the most up-to-date and thorough electronic register’s framework is the one put forward by Biber and Conrad. They propose that electronic register should be investigated through three stages of analysis including: 1) describing the situational characteristics of the register, 2) analyzing the typical linguistic characteristics of the register, and 3) identifying the functional forces that help to explain why those linguistic features tend to be associated with those situational characteristics (Biber and Conrad, 2009, p.47).

Based on Biber and Conrad’s proposal on electronic register analysis, Lewandowski (2012) describes seven situational factors that have impact on the language of online football commentary which are: 1) participants, 2) relation amongst participants, 3) channel, 4) production circumstance, 5) setting, 6) communicative purpose, and 7) topic.

1. Participants

Concerning the participants in online football commentary, the main addressee of this register is a sportswriter. As suggested by Lewandowski, the online

football commentator is the one who produces the commentary text while simultaneously keeping an eye on the game in front of the television. Below is an example of how a primary sportswriter from *Skysports.com* greets the audience before the game initiates.

...Welcome to our live coverage of SuperSunday - first up is the huge clash between Manchester United and Liverpool from Old Trafford. I look forward to hearing from you and I will endeavour to post as many of your thoughts, opinions and reaction as I can.

(Sky Sports, 2013)

Lewandowski also asserts that, in some cases, the online commentary text is co-produced by other participant, the peer-sportswriter. The secondary writer may attend the real game at its stadium and plays an assisting role in providing the primary writer with colour commentary which can include statistics, personal feedback and all other interesting background information. The colour commentary generally involves with play-by-play commentary when the game turns unexciting. The example below is a sort of colour commentary provided by the secondary sportswriter from *ESPN* who is witnessing a game (the 2010 World Cup final) at its actual venue (Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg).

...85' John Brewin, at Soccer City: It looks as if extra time beckons. Robben has again blown a golden chance. The Dutch bench claim foul play but they have a nerve. (ESPN)

(As cited in Lewandowski, 2012, p.68)

Regarding the addressee of register, online football commentary is invented with the intention to satisfy a group of football fans. The individuals who join the online football commentary are classified by Lewandowski into two groups. The first group are the fans who can not view the football game live through the television and radio broadcast for some reasons. But, they have the Internet access and can follow how the game is going on through the online live-update commentary.

Another group of addressee is the one who have both access to the television broadcast and online live-update commentary. They can follow the game via the two mediums at the same time.

2. Relations amongst participants

In online football commentary, interaction between the participants is found as well. Lewandowski adds that this kind of interactiveness in online football commentary is similar to other sorts of electronic register, but found to be relatively limited. Some websites with live football commentary section have an option for the fans to give their feedback by posting messages on electronic forum. Some of the posts made by fans can be also considered as a part of online football commentary discourse. Even though the two parties of participants do not personally know each other, they somehow do have some shared knowledge. The example below illustrates how the commentator and the fans interact with each other during the live commentary.

...I've had a lot of emails defending De Gea from Gary's comment. Alan says: 'we can do without cretinous comments about our goalkeeper...he's good and he could be there for 20 years...so get a life Gary or support another team.' but Rob says: 'De Gea has played over 100 games in top flight football in his career. It's not games he needs just more talent'

(Sky Sports, 2013)

Apart from the interaction between the sportswriter and the fans, Lewandowski adds that there is also an interaction amongst the audiences. The examples below exemplify how three fans are debating over the performance of a player while the game is continuing.

...Gary Hunter has been back in touch to say: 'Once again De Gea shows why he is not up to being United's keeper - He won't be playing at weekend that is for sure'

...Matt says: 'Back off De Gea Gary - he is a great shop stopper and distributor, he needs games and will be world class'

...Michael (from Montreal) says: 'Disagree Gary, that was a poor pass from Carrick and De Gea was left out to dry, as has been the case way too often this season. You can't judge a keeper while his defense isn't doing their job'

...Gary has qualified his earlier remark: 'Do have sympathy with De Gea, Michael & Matt - United have been shocking defensively most of the season and don't seem to be learning from their mistakes'

(Sky Sports, 2013)

3. Channel

As noted by Lewandowski, the sportswriter produces the live commentary texts in writing mode and instantly sends it to be digitally shown on the webpage.

4. Production circumstance

Online football commentary texts are produced under real-time condition because they are a pile of comments that are written minute-by-minute. This means that, according to Lewandowski, the sports writers inevitably have to work under massive time-pressure. Therefore, they rarely have the opportunity to revise, edit, delete, or add the language. Although it is possible for the sportswriters to change the content, which still depends on individual linguistic competence and writing speed, it is notable that they have far less chance to rewrite the produced language than those who write reports in the newspaper or other kinds of written register.

5. Setting

The participants in online football commentary are not at the same place when they are interacting with each other. In other words, the setting where the communication occurs is not shared by the addressor and the addressee. From Lewandowski's explanation, although the two participating parties do not share the place of communication, they do generally share the time of communication while interacting. Since online commentary text is produced by the sportswriter at the actual time of a game, it requires the reader to simultaneously join the website in order to keep updated on how the game is going on live. However, it is noted that the readers can also attend the live commentary after the game finished as well. This is because

these reports are digitally kept in online storage. As a result, the report, which is an online archive file, is freely available and can be viewed any time.

6. Communicative purposes

Lewandowski asserts that online football commentary has the primary communicative purpose of reporting how the football game is going on in the form of minute-by-minute updates. The examples are the following.

- 35th min Lull - no more chances yet.
- 36th min Saints keep good possession without threatening
- 37th min Puncheon tries to run into the right side of the box but uses his arm and the ref pulls him up.
- 38th min Ramirez tries to cross from the right byline towards Puncheon at the far post but United clear.

(Sky Sports, 2013)

The secondary purpose of online football commentary, as added by Lewandowski, is to involve the readers into the game. The sportswriter can create the reader's sense of involvement and excitement by employing a wide range of linguistic devices, which is a similar technique used by television or radio announcers. The following excerpt shows how the commentator excites the readers with the use of a series of exclamation marks after a team scores a goal.

...GOAL - ROONEY!!!! RVP whips the free-kick in deep, Evra meets the ball at the far post and heads back across goal, leaving Rooney with the easiest of tap-ins in the centre!!!

(Sky Sports, 2013)

Lewandowski also points out that the tertiary purpose is for entertaining which can be expressed through sportswriter's personal attitude, as the excerpt shows below.

...The Saints fans are singing 'we're going to win 3-2!' That's the spirit!!!

(Sky Sports, 2013)

7. Topic

The general topic of online football commentary is football. In particular, it has a focus on a football match. Lewandowski pinpoints that the sportswriter generally provides some background information in the introductory part in order to draw the reader's attention to the game that is about to begin. In the concluding section, the sportswriter can discuss the consequence of the today game's result, which can affect the team's future.

Discourse of Sports Report

Discourse analysts generally view sports report as a subgenre of news reporting and characterise them as media discourse with special register. Bell (1991) states that it is simply because sporting life and major sports event are socially distinct from the other domains of everyday activity. Ghadessy (1988) also studies the sports register and observes the two formative types, which are: 1) written sports reports and 2) radio or televised sports commentary.

Written sports discourse, in general, is the report of the narrative sport events that occurred in the previous period of time. According to Delin (2000), the main topics in written sports discourse are: subjective and affective. The subjective and affective contents primarily include the news writer's inference on the participants of the sports events, the broad comprehensive view of dramatic display of the game, and individual judgement on actions and decisions of player or other agents of the game.

Sometimes, in written sports discourse, the writer's emotional involvement to the controversial event of the game is expressed through the use of exclamation. In addition, written sports report directs a message to the attention of the readers from the predictable discourse community. This is because most of the readers engaging in written sports discourse are the supporters of the team or the sports fans who are highly interested in sporting life and identically share certain societal and cultural values. As a result, the news writers usually take these structural patterns for granted when writing sports report including: 1) a body of specific or background knowledge corresponding with the written terminology of a sport activity, the pertinent authoritative code of conduct of the game, and the historical matter of a sport; 2) a convention of sociocultural belief concerning reconstructed and constructed social

or national identities; 3) the social identity as expressed by the members of sports community who want to attend the sporting event and to distinguish themselves from the mainstream social domain

In the attempt to carry out the study of register of written sport language, one of the most acknowledged theoretical frameworks is the one proposed by Ferguson (1983). Ferguson's proposal puts emphasis on the locations of register rather than the components such as field, tenor, and mode. He argues that 'the parametric approach' of register variation is inapplicable when applying to the specific typology of register because of the overlap between the contextual linguistic features and the parameter itself. He also makes a suggestion that 'the label approach' is incompatible to be applied as the universal register framework since it fails to generalize the complete pattern of register variation. In light of this, he proposes the empiricist-inspired approach to register variation by placing main focus on the location of the register. His processes to locate the expected register are: 1) to detect contextual or functional traits employed by the writer with a noticeable language form, 2) to scrutinize the aforementioned traits in order to ascertain that they are linguistically significant to the identification of both the register location and variation within text.

Moreover, he suggests that there are three basic joint moves to perform in the process of identifying a register which are as follows: 1) to characterise the role of a discourse as a realization of a register; 2) to characterise the role of participants in the discourse; 3) to specify the body of knowledge, opinions and values shared by the participants in the attempt to determine the topics and subtopics of the discourse.

When viewing written sports report as a sub-register, its observable traits can be outlined as the following:

1. Written sports report is the unique type of register in which it chronologically narrates the already ended sports event and consists of news writer's individual judgement on the game and the players. Written sports report differs systematically from the radio or television broadcasted in the ways that, as suggested by Delin (2000), written sports report does not contain the messiness of language such as asymmetric turn-taking, noncanonical syntax, special intonation, non-fluency phenomena, etc. Another major difference between the two discourse parties is that

the radio or television reporters and the audience simultaneously see what happens in the game while the readers of written sports report can not see the actual event in real-time circumstance. Although the differences between the two discourse parties exist, there is the similarity between them. According to Beard (1998), written and broadcasted sports report shares the same stylistic genres of narrative, argumentative, and evaluative. Also, both of them have the same communicative purpose of entertaining and informing the audiences.

2. Dissimilar to the radio or television sports report which expects a wider group of viewer, written sports report is the continuous series of story that the news writer non-reciprocally delivers to the demographically and culturally narrowed group of readers. The plausibility of the written sports report's target audience has the influence on the writer's linguistic choice. Therefore, written sports report is considered a less formal but a more biased piece of writing. Moreover, the reader's negative feedback to publisher does not cause the changes in fundamental sports report structure.

3. Although written sports discourse entirely consists of new information, it is pre-specified for body of knowledge including international technical terminology, evaluation privately or publicly made by sports pundits or feedback from regular sports fans, and values (national, socio-political, moral, etc.) shared by the writers and the readers.

Syntactic Features of Sports Commentary

The components of sports commentary that are syntactically different from other varieties of public discourse are: 1) the report of ongoing sports event, and 2) the part of background information on such an event. This background information can be either recapitulation of the scores of the game or the brief profile of individuals and teams. To explain, while the game is running, besides from keeping the audiences informed on what is happening on the pitch, the commentators occasionally provide the audiences with information on player and team such as their origins, overall or in-game performances, and other related facts. Ferguson (1983) examines six syntactic features which he considers the marked elements of sports commentary, to wit:

1) simplification, 2) inversion, 3) result expression, 4) heavy modifier, 5) tense usage, and 6) routine.

1. Simplification

Simplification is one of the most frequently noticed features of sports commentary. It is the use of sentences with the absence of some compulsory materials, generally the omission of sentence-initial elements and copula.

Sentence Initial Components Deletion

The omission of sentence initial components or the so-called prosiopesis is a conventional feature of various register of spoken and written language (Jespersen, 1922 as cited in Ferguson, 1983, p.153). The deletion of sentence-initial element has very restricted types in sports commentary which are:

Sentence-initial noun phrase deletion is the omission of the personal pronoun or the subject that precedes the main verb that is followed by a noun complement. The examples, in which the ellipted pronoun is contained within square brackets, are:

1. [He] hit 307
2. [It] bounces into the seats
3. [They] score three times

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

Sentence-initial noun phrase plus copula deletion is the absence of the pronoun subject and the copula that precede a noun complement. The examples are:

4. [It's a] strike
5. [It's a] pitch to Winfield
6. [It's a] fastball.

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

According to the examples 4, and 5, it can be seen that only noun phrases that serve as the subject complement still remain since the pronoun subject, *it*, is ellipted together with the copula, *be*. It is noticeable that the indefinite article, *a*, is also dropped when there is no modifier preceding that noun complement. In the example 6, *a* is omitted together with the subject pronoun and copula since

“fastball” is seen a noun complement. Although “fast” of “a fastball” is seemingly an adjectival modifier, it is in fact a constituent of a compound noun.

However, there is also a condition that the indefinite article is not left out. The condition of occurrence is when there is adjectival or nominal modifier that comes before noun complement. The examples are:

7. [It's] a little bloop
8. [It's] a breaking ball outside
9. [It's] a bloop single

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

From the examples 7 and 8, the indefinite article *a* is not omitted since it is followed by a noun phrase which respectively has “little” and “breaking” as an adjectival modifier. In the example 9, *a* is not dropped because it is followed “bloop” functioning as noun modifier of “single”.

The absence of sentence-initial element is a common structural characteristic amongst a variety of public registers like headlines and foreigner talk. In sports commentary, reason for these omissions is that they function to “index the moment” as non-leisurely (you have to speak rapidly and concisely), informal (you mustn't sound too bookish), exciting (like-the attention getting language of headlines or advertising copy), and vignette-quality (like captions of pictures)” (Ferguson, 1983, p.153). In the language of advertisement, this structural trait is defined as an overcolloquialization or a tendency to go beyond colloquialism in stimulating the conditions of friendly, personal communication (Leech, 1966, p.9). Through the investigation of the fragmentary sentences of spoken English, it is concluded that the omission of the sentence-initial components has the function of making the expression less formal (Bowman, 1966, p.66).

Copula Deletion

Copula deletion is the omission of an explicit auxiliary verb, generally in a form of a verb *be*, in sentence construction. Although it is customarily recognized in standard English, its occurrence is very restricted under certain conditions of sports commentary.

The first condition under which the copula is dropped is when it locates after a single-word proper name, generally a player's name, at the initial position of a sentence. The following examples illustrate how the copula *be* is dropped under such environment.

10. Klutz [is] in close at third
11. McCatty [is] in difficulty
12. Milburn [is] remaining at first

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

It can be seen from the examples 10, 11 and 12 that all copula *be* are omitted when they are preceded by subjects denoting the player names.

Another condition under which the copula is omitted is when it is preceded by a noun phrase or a noun phrase with modifier that denotes a player or a team. The examples are as the following:

13. Milburn, with good speed, [is] at first
14. The A's [are] now hoping to get
15. A's right hander [is] pitching from

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

From the examples 13, 14 and 15, it can be seen that all subjects are noun phrase since they consist of individual subjects and modifiers. When the copula *be* is located after the noun phrase subject, it is dropped.

Ferguson (1983) suggests that the construction of event-reporting in sports commentary in which the copula is absent shares resemble function with those in news headlines. In sports commentary and news headlines, the copula deletion has emphatic function. To exemplify, the sentence "John arrested" with the absence of the copula, *be*, sounds more emphatic than "John is arrested".

2. Inversion

Inversion is the construction in which the subject of the sentence is preceded by the predicate. This construction occurs more frequently in written language while it is rarely found in spoken English. Even though inversion is used on rare occasion in spoken language, it is considered as one of the most recognized

features of sports commentary. "Sportscasting is one of the few situations where inversion are used in speech with any appreciable frequency" (Green, 1980, p.584, as cited in Ferguson, 1983, p.154). Ferguson (1983) asserts that in sports commentary the most frequently found inverted constructions are: 1) *Copula + Subject*; and 2) *Motion verb (e.g. come and go) + Subject*

The following examples are the use of inversion in which the copula precedes the subject in sports commentary.

16. Over at third is Murphy

17. On deck is big Dave Winfield

(Ferguson, 1983, p.154)

Concerning the examples 16 and 17, it can be seen that the subject of the sentence, which is commonly the proper name of a player, is preceded by the copula.

Another condition under which the word order is inverted is when the main verb of sentence denoting motion precedes the subject, as in the following examples.

18. Back for it goes Jackson

19. Coming left again is Diamond

(Ferguson, 1983, p.154)

From the examples 18 and 19, it can be seen that motion verbs such as *come* and *go* are located before the subjects. The normal word order of 18 and 19 respectively is "Jackson goes back for it" and "Diamond is coming left again".

Ferguson (1983) proposes that the practical function of inverted construction in sports commentary is to allow the commentator to have a little more time to identify the player whose action is being reported. Sometimes the commentator sees and describes what is happening on the pitch before being sure who the player is. Another related explanation of inversion in sports report is that its function is "to defer the name of the agent of an action, hence, it eases the sportscaster's encoding problem considerably" (Green, 1980, p.586 as cited in Ferguson, 1983).

Agreeing that the most likely reason for the inverted order of sentence is for identification purpose, Delin (2000) also suggests two other potential reasons for using inversion in sports commentary. First, the commentator places the player's name, which is the doer of the action, at the final position of the sentence in order to make it the most prominent part of the utterance. From Delin's explanation, in linguistics, new, unknown, or focal information can be located at the final position of a sentence. Second, placing the predicate at the initial position of a sentence can help the viewers to have more time to see and identify the description of action.

3. Result Expression

Result expression is the term coined by Ferguson (1983) and it is used when a commentator wants to inform the audiences that an action being reported leads to a certain condition, to which he refers immediately afterwards. A commentator can express this relationship in different ways such as "leading to", "resulting in", "which makes (made) it a", "and so it's (it was)" and etc. Nevertheless, according to Ferguson (1983, pp.155-156), "Two ways are very frequent in sports commentary and rare in other kinds of talk and, hence, are clear syntactic markers of the registers: *for* + noun and *to* + verb".

The examples of result expression using *for* phrase are:

20. Joe Ross's caught it *for* a touchdown
21. Has it *for* the out.

(Ferguson, 1983, p.155)

The examples of result expression using *to* phrase are:

22. And he just keeps alive, reaching out *to* foul-tip one back.
23. And it gives us a double to Mumphries *to* lead things off

(Ferguson, 1983, p.156)

The purpose and result constructions are not restricted to a specific sport, but are likely to occur in a various kind of sports commentary including baseball, football, basketball, etc. Ferguson (1983) finds that the use of *for* and *to* expressions is widely used in the language of sports commentary in United States and Britain, and he argues that the most likely reason for this construction is to save time.

4. Heavy Modifier

Another construction that is frequently employed by a sports commentator is heavy modifier. Heavy modifier is the way the commentator attaches brief and incidental information to the name of a player or any participant involved in the event reporting. The information attached can be a player's position, style of play, previous performance, or other kinds of descriptive material. Ferguson (1983) argues that sport commentators make the important use of heavy modifier, either in the form of *postposed* or *preposed* modifier.

The examples of heavy modifier postposedly attached to the noun are as follows:

24. According to Paul Pryor, *the plate umpire*.

25. Larry Milburn, *3 for 4 yesterday*, did not face

(Ferguson, 1983, p.157)

From the examples 24 and 25, it is obvious that the name of the player is postposedly attached with the modifier denoting background information. In other words, the phrasal modifier comes right after the noun it modifies.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to the use of postposed modifier, the sport commentator also frequently attaches the phrase modifier preposedly to the noun, as the following examples show.

26. *The quiet Texan*, Tommy John delivers

27. *First-base umpire*, Larry Barnett waited a while before

(Ferguson, 1983, p.157)

In the examples 26 and 27, it can be seen that preposed device is used with the phrasal modifiers preceding the nouns they modify.

Ferguson (1983) claims that the conversational device of interpolation or separate sentence employed by the commentator in sports discourse functions as the reference that adds immediate background information to the participant being reported. He also adds that the appropriate use of heavy modifier is a mark of professional sports commentator.

5. Tense Usage

The use of present simple and present progressive verb forms in the language of sports has attracted interests from a number of linguists (Close, 1962; Palmer, 1965; Hirtle, 1967; Leech, 1971; Scheffer, 1975, as cited in Ferguson 1983, p.158). According to Ferguson (1983), three tenses that a sports commentator uses regularly when describing the events they are visually experiencing are: 1) present simple tense, 2) present progressive tense and 3) past simple tense.

First, in direct reporting of events, the commentator uses present simple tense to refer to actions of short duration regarded as taking place at the moment of speaking. In play-by-play sports reporting, such as football or basketball, the way a commentator reports the play with a succession of rapid events is characterised by the use of present simple form of verb, as in:

- 28. Washington backhands it
- 29. They line up slot back formation

(Ferguson, 1983, p.158)

Second, present progressive tense is used when the commentator refers to the actions of extended duration or sums up the game or season. The present progressive is the characteristic form of verb used in reporting the continuous sports like boat and horse racing.

- 30. They're bringing that ball back to the 27-yard line
- 31. The Expos are perking

(Ferguson, 1983, p.158)

Third, when a rapid action is regarded as having already happened, the commentator employs past simple tense to recapitulate or to add descriptive material to an action already reported in the present.

- 32. There goes Haden back to pass...throws it...and Haden threw that ball high
- 33. He stepped up to the plate

(Ferguson, 1983, p.158)

6. Routine

One of the principal qualities of language is the rule that governs it. Varying from politeness formulas to proverbs and clichés, routine is seen as an essential part of everyday language. In sports commentary, a number of routines are also found either as an idiomatic phrase or a numerical statement.

Ferguson (1983) exemplifies the routine of *count* in baseball commentary. Count, in baseball, is the number of balls and strikes at a given moment of a player's time at bat (Nowson, 2001). The "idiomatic phrase" the commentators express with reference to zero count in baseball commentary is found to be very restricted although the combinatorics say there are many options in expressing it.

34. One and oh

35. Nothing and one count

(Ferguson, 1983, p.159)

The examples above illustrate how baseball commentary is routinized. There is a cardinal number and "and" as a connector within each routine. In the examples 34 and 35, it is always the case that the commentator expresses "oh" and "nothing" in reference to "zero" point. Additionally, Ferguson (1983) claims that the use of denotative referent of "zero" point can vary from sports to sports but it is found to occur orthodoxly. For instance, "love" and "nil" are referred to "zero" point in the game of "tennis" and "association football" respectively.

Another condition under which routine occurs in baseball commentary is when the commentator describes the score and a player's record by using the connector separating the two. This is the so-called "numerical statement".

36. 2 and 2 = two balls, two strikes, count

37. 2 for 2 = two hits, two times at bat, a player's record

(Ferguson, 1983, p. 159)

It is also asserted by Ferguson (1983) that the expression of figures in sports commentary can be considered as routine since it has the fixed structural word order. In British sports commentary, the hosting team's score is conventionally stated before the visiting team's score by the commentator.

The use of routine is not only evident in baseball but also apparent in other sports as well. In the attempt to identify routines, or formulas in horse race calling, Kuiper (1996) suspects that there are idiomatic expressions that are used at specific times in the race such as at the starting, or the finishing line. He proposes that these formulaic phrases are characterised by at least three linguistic qualities, which are:

1. The vocabulary combined into sequencing words.
2. The rule-governed or syntactic formation.
3. The particular usage which serves independently under a specific circumstance.

Kuiper also adds that the commentators store these word sequences in their memory and can automatically restore them as a whole unit when desired. The use of phrasal expression cannot be generalized to all sorts of sports. In other words, it seems that individual sport has its preferred use. In his study, Kuiper exemplifies the preferred expressions frequently employed by the horse caller when starting the race. It is the so-called start formula.

38. There they go
39. They're away and racing
40. They're off and racing now

(Kuiper, 1996 as cited in Nowson, 2001, p.20)

According to Kuiper, in addition to having the preferred formula at the start of a race, a horse caller seemingly has the preferred ways to use locational expression of the horse as well. He calls this locator formula.

41. Threading its way through
42. Getting through on the inside
43. Settling back a little bit

(Kuiper, 1996 as cited in Nowson, 2001, p.20)

From these examples, it can be gleaned that many routines have a variety of ways in making reference to the identical thing. A commentator can employ formula at times, which results in commentarial variety. In addition to varying the ways of reporting, Ferguson (1983) conclude that the use of routine in sports

commentary represents the communicative norm to avoid repetitiveness in continual communication by giving the information in abbreviated and summarised form. Table 2 below is a summary of all syntactic features and reasons of use in sports commentary.

Table 2 A Summary of Syntactic Features and Reasons of Use

Syntactic feature	Reasons of use
1. Simplification	Immediacy, Accuracy, Formality Vignette-quality, Excitement, Emphasis
2. Inversion	Identifying agent Making prominence on agent
3. Result expression	Saving time
4. Heavy modifier	Giving descriptive information
5. Tense Usage	
5.1 Present simple	1. Reporting immediate action that occurs simultaneously while speaking
5.2 Present progressive	2. Reporting prolonged action or summing up the event
5.3 Past simple	3. Adding description to the past action
6. Routine	Varying the ways of reporting Eliminating redundancy

Communicative Functions of Sports Commentary

For a better understanding of the focal point of this study, it is fitting and proper to technically define the terms of “text” and “discourse”. Text is a sample of language that occurs orally, literally or signally, with a meaningful purpose. It is generally a language unit with a determined communicative function. Discourse is a continuum of language, especially oral language. It is usually longer than a sentence

and is compound by a coherent unit (Carter and Nunan, 2001). Widdowson (1978) urges that when people use language, whether by means of spoken or written form, they do not produce decontextualised pieces of language, however; they are influenced by determined situation or context. The communicative function of a particular discourse, consequently, shapes its organization. In other words, it could be said that the production of texts heavily rely on their functions and rhetoric organization.

Rhetorical discourse is one of the fields that studies how different pieces of texts are organized according to their communicative functions. In other words, rhetorical discourse analysis can describe how texts with different communicative functions are started, proceeded, and finished. Amongst a number of rhetorical discourse analysts, Hatch (1992) proposes seven universal types of text which are characterised by different communicative functions. Text types, according to Hatch, include: 1) narration, 2) conversation, 3) description, 4) definition, 5) classification, 6) instruction, and 7) argumentation.

Likewise, in sports commentary discourse, basketball for instance, there are two main categories of communicative functions identified. By examining the commentator's utterances of men's basketball game, Morris and Nydahl (1983) proposes that the basketball commentary is governed by two utterance functions, or commentarial types in their definition, which are: **basic** and **elaborative**. The two commentarial types serve different functions: basic type is used for informative purpose while the elaborative type has the function of involving the audience with the use of dramatic language. Morris and Nydahl go even further by classifying the sub-types of the two major commentarial utterances. Basic commentarial type includes objective, interpretive, and historical. Elaborative commentary contains motivational, speculative, foreshadowing, etc. (Morris and Nydahl, 1983, p.199).

Football commentary is also viewed as a piece of discursive texts with the communicative functions as well. By analysing the extracts from football commentary transcription, Delin (2000) classifies communicative functions performed by the football commentator into four types including:

1. **Narrating:** Describing what is happening play-by-play.
2. **Evaluating:** Giving opinions about players, teams, coaches and referee's decisions.

- 3. Elaborating:** Giving background information about team and player records, the crowd, speculating on players' motives and thoughts.
- 4. Summarizing:** Giving an overview of the game so far.

(Delin, 2000, p.46)

Delin concludes that these communicative functions in football commentary can be categorised into two main groups: narrative and subjective. Narrative deals with time-critical utterances and is seen as the heart of live commentary. Another kind of utterance is subjective content that covers all other remaining types of communicative function including evaluation, elaboration, and summarisation.

The distinction between the two main types of communicative functions in football commentary is also supported by other scholars who do research on football commentary. Rosebuam (1978) agrees that football commentary consists of two main functions. The first function is for describing the action and the second one is for supplementary information (as cited in, Muller, 2008). Muller (2008) himself also distinguishes the two functional utterances in football commentary but uses slightly modified terminologies in which he labels "*description*" for narrative content and "*elaboration*" for the entire types of subjective content.

The preceding discussion on the communicative functions in football commentary can be summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 A Summary of Communicative Functions

Communicative Function	Intention of Using
1. Narrative	Describing play-by-play action
2. Subjective	Adding information
2.1 Evaluating	1. Giving opinions about players, teams, coaches and referee's decisions.

Table 3 (cont.)

Communicative Function	Intention of Using
2.2 Elaborating	2. Giving background information about team and player records, the crowd, speculating on players' motives and thoughts
2.3 Summarizing	3. Giving an overview of the game so far.

Review of Related Research

Since online football commentary is considered newly invented internet-oriented communication platform, there are very few number of researchers who study this topic and all of the previous works are conducted in a small scale, unlike other study on other sorts of electronic registers. Three of the major works in this area are the ones conducted by Chovanec (2007); Perez-Sabater, et al. (2008); Lewandowski (2012).

Chovanec (2007) studies online football commentary through discourse analysis perspective. From the analysis of four pieces of online football commentary published on the website, *The Guardian*, the study reveals that online live football commentary text consists of two particular themes. The primary theme is the report of an ongoing action and the secondary one is the verbal interaction between the writer and the audience. He also notes that there are some occasions when the subsidiary theme in which the participants of the discourse interact is so obvious that the primary theme is defocused. As a result, the live commentary text is not only the one-way communication, but it is also seen as informal conversation in which the two parties of discourse participants reciprocally interacting. The dialogue between the two groups generally involves humorous, disrespectful, exaggerative and ironic remarks. The communication between the two groups is not always in agreement and in harmony; there are some recurrences of conflict, disagreement, wittiness, and individual offense per se. The contradiction amongst the discourse participants later leads to verbal rivalry. The writer who has more power of authority within

the discourse is challenged by the audience. Chovanec concludes that the verbal competition within online football commentary is a part of male discourse community.

Another research in relation to online football commentary is the small-scale one conducted by Perez-Sabater, et al. (2008). By analysing six samples from online football commentary published in three different languages, English, French, and Spanish, the authors aim to investigate the oral-like characteristics in the text-based nature of online football commentary. Concerning the first oral characteristic of the average sentence and commentary length, it is found that the Spanish commentaries are written in obviously shorter sentences than the others. It is also shown that the English ones seem to have the longest commentary length. The second trait of orality is the unorthodox indicators of prosody and intonation which are employed in the forms of repetitive letters and punctuation and by means of capital letters. The result shows that capital letters are used frequently in the Spanish commentary but sparingly employed in both French and English. The third oral-like feature is colloquial, evaluative, and technical lexis. Two Spanish commentaries yield completely different use of colloquial lexis; they are totally absent in the first newspaper but used significantly in the second one. It is also noted that the two of French newspapers use colloquial vocabulary limitedly. Two of the English newspapers exhibit different rate of colloquial lexis. Rarely any are informal vocabulary found in the first English newspaper, but the second one has the important use of both evaluative and colloquial expressions. The fourth trait of oral characteristic is fragmentary sentences which are found most frequently in Spanish newspapers. The final feature of spoken language found in online football commentary is the use of first and second person pronoun. The result reveals that both Spanish and English newspapers share the relatively same amount of first and second personal pronouns, while they are non-existent in French

The last pilot study on online football commentary by Lewandowski (2012) puts an attempt to figure out the extent in which OFC shares the similar syntactic features with televised and written football commentary and which syntactic devices of OFC that can be considered distinctive from the other two related registers. The comparative analysis of this study is based on a corpus of 8 online football commentaries, 40-minute long transcript of a televised football match, and 12 pieces

of written report. The quantitative results of the study shows that online commentary characteristically resembles to televised commentary by having the frequent use of present simple tense and the absence of copula *be*. Another characteristic that is shared by both online and televised commentary is the common aim to create close and friendly atmosphere with the audiences via the use of salutations, closings, colloquial lexis, and casual questions. Lastly, online commentary is similar to written commentary with the frequent occurrences of noun and the lack of demonstrative adjective, this, denoting the players. Concerning the syntactic features that distinguish online commentary from the other two registers, it is found that online commentary exhibits comparatively lower occurrence of past tense than televised and written commentary. Another distinctive feature that exists only in online commentary and that is absent in other two varieties is the frequent use of reduplication of letters and punctuation marks.

In addition to the academic works that prioritise its main emphasis on the language of OFC, certain related researches on spoken and newspaper-based sports register, mainly football, are reviewed. The reviewed studies include: the analysis of real and computer game football commentary by Nowson (2001), the comparative analysis of lexical diversity in written football reports between newspapers by Politis (2007), and the corpus based study of subject ellipsis in different text types by Teddiman (2011).

Nowson (2001) analyses the recorded transcripts of authentic and virtual football commentary through the various views of linguistic features, grammatical error, and language tactics employed by both human and humanoid football commentator. Partly influenced by Ferguson's (1983) works, his analysis on syntactic feature shows that, in real football commentary, there are incomplete and context-dependent uses of result expression in the form of "for plus player name". He asserts that even though the result is not explicitly mentioned by the commentator, the result that is left out should be understood by the audience that a player passes the ball to the other one to play, as in "Weir with an excellent ball for Watson [to play]", (Nowson, 2001, p.32). Regarding the use of routine in oral football commentary, it is identified that the expression of game scores are highly routinised.

By comparing the use of lexis employed by football news writers from tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, Politis (2007) finds no major difference in the use of vocabulary among the two types of newspapers. The two newspapers share and have the following groups of key lexical features in common which are: the use of the words, "shot", "goal", and "ball", the referent of an individual or group of individuals, deictic expression of time and place, and the use of evaluative adjectives and adverbs. Regarding the evaluative language, he follows Martin's (2000) appraisal theory which divides evaluative adjectives into three main groups, namely, judgement, appreciation, and affect. Three of which can be expressed either in a positive or a negative way through the use of adjectives and adverbs. For instance, the adjectives, "good", "fair", "right" can be employed for making positive appreciation towards individual action while the opposite ones such as "bad", "cruel", and "unjust", can be employed the other way around to make negative reaction.

In Teddiman (2011)'s corpus-based study which investigates the occurrences of subject ellipsis in British English used in various sorts of text, it is found that the pronouns "I" and "it" are omitted most frequently in private speaking, unplanned one way speech, letters, and public conversation. In unplanned and one-way communication, particularly live sports commentary, "he", as pronoun, is frequently dropped when it is considered anaphoric referent, a word referring back to person previously mentioned in narration. Moreover, the use of verb coming after the sentential subject is varied by the text variations. The use of action verb appears most frequently in unplanned and one way speech while the use of mental verb occurs more frequently in letters and private conversation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to identify and determine the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features and communicative functions in online football commentary. This chapter will explain the research procedures employed in this study. The topics that will be discussed here are as follows: data, data collection, instruments, data analysis, and reliability of the study.

Data

The data of this study is a corpus of online minute-by-minute reports which were taken from *Sky Sports.com*. The website is an official part of Britain's number one sport-oriented and largest pay-per-view satellite channel with 10 million subscribers, *Sky Sports*. Having been noted as the broadcaster who played a pioneering role in the development of British sports commercialisation since the inception of the 90's, *Sky Sports* has been well recognized for its English Premier League football coverage. According to *Alexa Internet*, the website that offers analysis, rankings, and other information on 30 million websites worldwide, *Sky Sports.com* is the most popular sports-oriented website based in United Kingdom and is accessed by over 20 million Internet surfers monthly. Regarding the website's popularity, so far, the global ranking is 1,054th and the domestic ranking is 67th. The corpus contained the commentarial reports of 2012-2013 Barclays English Premier League, starting from August 2012 to May 2013, with 2,486 sentences in total. 19 match reports, all featured by Manchester United Football Club, were selected to be examined by basing on the club's odd numbering season fixtures. To be more precise, the chronological sequence of the 19 reports is 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 37.

Data Collection

To collect the data of this study, each online live commentary report, published in the website *Skysports.com*, was saved in the form of individual webpage

complete file. The file was named according to the date and the competitors of the game. To exemplify, the live commentary of the season-opening match between Everton and Manchester United on 20th August 2012 was saved and named as “2012.08.20 (Everton-ManUnited)”. This enabled the researcher to freely view the reports offline without having to connect to the Internet every time.

Instruments

To identify and determine the frequency of occurrence of syntactic feature that is considered by Ferguson (1983) as the explicit features of sports commentary register, namely, *simplification*, *inversion*, *result expression*, *heavy modifier*, *tense usage*, and *routine*. Tables 4-10 were designed in order to be used as the primary instrument in this study. All sentences taken from the corpus were recorded in Table 4.

Table 4 Frequency of Occurrence of Syntactic Features

Sentence		Syntactic Features								
M/D	No./Detail	S	I	RE	HM	Tense			R	O
						PreS	PreC	PasS		
Total										

In Table 4, the names of the participating teams and date were written down in the column, *M/D*. Then, all sentences compiled from a-season-long corpus were recorded and analysed for its syntactic feature by ticking (✓) in the *Syntactic Features* column. Within the column, there are six sub-columns that are named according to six syntactic features.

“*Simplification*” is abbreviated for *S*, “*Inversion*” for *I*, “*Result Expression*” for *RE*, “*Heavy Modifier*” for *HM*, “*Tense Usage*” for *T*, “*Routine*” for *R*, and “*Others*” for *O*.

By basing on their syntactic types, the previously-recorded sentences from Table 4 were written down in Tables 5-10 designed for classifying and determining the frequency of occurrence of each syntactic feature's subcategory.

Simplification is recognised as the deletion of some sentential components. In sports commentary, *the deletion of a head noun, a head noun plus copula, or copula* can occur on its own and result in simplified sentences. Simplification was examined by using Table 5.

Table 5 Types of Simplification

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Simplification		
		HN	HN+Cop	Cop
Total				

Table 5 was employed to record the simplified sentences. After writing down the sentence detail, its type of simplification was classified into three categories as follows:

1. **HN** for *head noun deletion*

Example: *[They] score three times.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

2. **HN+Cop** for *head noun plus copula deletion*

Example: *[It's] one and one.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.153)

3. **Cop** for *copula deletion*

Example: *McCatty [is] in a tough spot.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.154)

Inversion is the structure in which the predicate precedes the subject. The inverted structure can be found in sports commentary, especially in football commentary, since it is common for the commentators to make a positional switch

between *subject and copula* or *subject and verb*. Inversion was investigated using Table 6.

Table 6 Types of Inversion

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Inversion	
		Cop+S	V+S
Total			

Table 6 was used to record the sentences with syntactic inversion. The sentences were classified according to its class of inversion which are:

1. Cop+S for *subject-copula inversion*

Example: *And out right is Drew Hill.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.154)

2. V+S for *subject-verb inversion*

Example: *Up goes Sheringham.*

(Delin, 2000, p.53)

Result expression is the construction of purpose and result. It is put into practice as the commentators are due to report that one action leads to another. For this type of indication, the commentators generally employ the “*for*” and “*to*” phrases. Result expression was scrutinised by using Table 7.

Table 7 Types of Result Expression

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Result Expression	
		For Phrase	To Phrase
Total			

Table 7 was designed to collect the expressions that the sports commentators employ as they intend to indicate that an event being reported leads to a particular state. Considered as one of the most frequently-found constructions and the clear-cut syntactic features of sports commentary, the result expression, which is the combination between purpose and result construction, can come in the following forms:

1. **for phrase**, which is usually followed by noun

Example: *He throws for the out.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.155)

2. **to phrase**, which is generally come after by verb

Example: *There's a strike on the outside corner to make it 2 and 1.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.156)

Heavy modifier is a short piece of incidental data that is attached to a player's name, as a noun. In sports commentary, the heavy modifier occurs either before or after the noun it modifies. Heavy modifier was examined by using Table 8.

Table 8 Types of Heavy Modifier

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Heavy Modifier	
		Pre-posed	Post-posed
Total			

Table 8 was administered to record the sentence whose noun is attached with the heavy modifier. In sports commentary, there are two main types of heavy modifier including:

1. **Pre-posed modifier**, the formation that the modifier is precedingly attached to the noun

Example: *First-based umpire, Larry Barnett waited a while before.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.157)

2. **Post-posed modifier**, the construction in which the modifier comes after the noun it modifies.

Example: *Warren Cromartie, the left-handed hitter, swings.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.157)

Concerning the *tense usage*, the three main tenses that are used in sports commentary are *present simple tense*, *present continuous tense*, and *past simple tense*. Tense usage was investigated using Table 9.

Table 9 Types of Tense Usage

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Tense		
		PreS	PreC	PasS
Total				

Table 9 was designed to record the frequency of sentences taken from the corpus and to categorise its tense usage. In sports commentary, the sports announcer usually employs three tense types as follows:

1. *Present simple tense*, or PreS in abbreviated form, for referring to immediate and short term actions that occur simultaneously in the moment of reporting

Example: *He steps up to the plate.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.158)

2. **Present continuous tense** or PreS in abbreviated form, for:

2.1 Describing the actions of longer duration

Example: *Eric Gregg is umpiring at the first base.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.159)

2.2 Drawing conclusion of the match or campaign

Example: *The Expos are perking.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.158)

3. **Past simple tense**, or **PasS** in abbreviated form, for representing quick action that already took place.

Example: *Haden throws it and Haden threw that ball high.*

(Ferguson, 1983, p.158)

Routines are ways of giving details on some aspects of commentary. In commentary of sports, two ways of reporting that are routinised can be either the use of idiomatic phrase or numerical statement. Routine was scrutinised by using Table 10.

Table 10 Types of Routine

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Routine	
		Idiomatic Phrase	Numerical Statement
Total			

Table 10 was used to record the use of routines employed by sports commentator. In sports commentary there are two main types of routine which can be as follows:

1. **Idiomatic phrase**, the use of sequential words used in specific condition

Example: *Nothing across*, as reference to zero point

(Ferguson, 1983, p.160)

2. **Numerical statement**, the expression of score and record separated by connector

Example: *2 (to) 2*, as reference to the game score

(Ferguson, 1983, p.161)

In identifying and determining the frequency of occurrence of functional utterances, all sentences previously recorded from Table 4 were written down in **Table 11**, designed to analyse the two main types of communicative functions of

football commentary, as put forward by Delin (2000), consisting of **narrative** and **subjective**.

The analysis of communicative functions was conducted in two stages. The first step was to separate all recorded sentences in two broad commentarial types: narrative or subjective. Second, if the sentences are supposed to be **subjective**, they were further categorised into **evaluation**, **elaborating**, and **summarising**. Table 11 was used to analyse the four types of communicative functions.

Table 11 Frequency of Occurrence of Communicative Functions

M/D	Sentence No./Detail	Types of Communicative Functions		
		Nar	Sub	
		Eva	Ela	Sum
Total				

Table 11 was administered to analyse and to cumulate the frequency of occurrence of each functional utterance employed by the online football commentator.

Delin (2000) proposed that football commentary is governed by two general types of communicative functions. The two commentarial types serve different purposes and occur at different periods of commentary.

1. **Narrative**, abbreviated as **Nar**, mainly functioning in *describing what is happening play-by-play*, is regarded as the core constituent of football commentary and formed by the combination of time-critical utterance with reference to the present action. By definition, time critical utterance is “utterance which depends for their interpretation on their positioning in time, as in the countdown to a space launch, for example” (Delin, 2000, p.193).

As suggested by Delin, the narrative commentarial types can be either the commentator’s attempt to:

1.1 Describe the player with ball possession

Example: *Scholes having it back.*

(Delin, 2000, p.47)

1.2 Make explicit reference to the set piece or set play such as “free kick”, “corner”, and “throw-in”.

Example: *But it's England's corner which Anderton will take.*

(Delin, 2000, p.47)

2. **Subjective**, abbreviated as **Sub**, generally functioning in giving additional information, is viewed as the one that is subsidiary to narrative function. Dissimilar to narrative, subjective does not function in describing play-by-play action but in providing supplementary information. The subjective communicative function is likely to occur as an interrupting part of narrative or completely takes the floor when the game turns less intensive. This sort of commentarial type can be composed of:

2.1 **Evaluating**, or **Eva** in abbreviation, functioning in giving opinions about play, players, teams, referee decisions, etc.

Example: *Well kick to Romania.*

(Delin, 2000, p.47)

As can be seen, evaluative function is mainly composed of the commentator’s positive or negative judgement towards actions or the emphatic explanation of cause or quality of action.

2.2 **Elaborating**, or **Ela** in abbreviated form, functioning in giving background information about team and player records, the ground, the crowd; speculating on motives and thoughts of the players

Example: *Nothing much going right for Alan Shearer tonight but the one thing you can be guaranteed of (is that) he'll keep going and going in the ninety-first ninety-second or whatever.*

(Delin, 2000, p.47)

Apart from providing the audience with general information such as the reference of team or player’s past record and the surrounding atmosphere,

the elaborative commentarial type during the game can be the commentator's deep perception of a player's thought and the prediction of a player's future action.

2.3 **Summarising**, or **Sum** in abbreviation, functioning in giving an overview of play so far.

Example: *That's a couple of times that Hagi's been made to look very dangerous and finding some space in that particular area.*

(Delin, 2000, p.49)

The summarising commentarial type tends to occur at the end of two halves or during the game. Summarising function can come in a form of brief summary of the actions, important incidents, or team's performance the commentator has witnessed thus far.

It can be concluded that the utterance function of narration employed by the football commentator is closely related to the action of the game and serves to explain what is going on play-by-play. In stark contrast, the ones of subjective content consisting of evaluating, elaborating, and summarising are heavily based on the commentator's viewpoint which serves as secondary function to colour the commentary and to involve the audience.

Data Analysis

After the data was successfully collected, 2,846 sentences of 19-match live commentary reports, selected in odd numbering sequence. They were first analysed to identify the syntactic features that are considered the explicit markers of sports commentary register, as proposed by Ferguson (1983). These syntactic features are: *simplification, inversion, result expression, heavy modifier, tense usage*, and *routine*. Second, once all sentences were categorized according to their syntactic aspects, each of them was separately scrutinized for its syntactic sub-category. Last, all 2,846 sentences were analysed again in order to identify the communicative functions including **narrative, evaluative, elaborative, and summarising**, as proposed by Delin (2000). The data analysis consists of the following procedures.

Setting Criteria for Unit of Analysis

In this study, a sentence was regarded as a unit of analysis. Even though online football commentary is composed textually, it shares marked characteristics

with the sentence in both written and spoken language. *Sentence*, as broadly defined in The Glossary of English Grammar, is “the largest unit of language. In writing, sentences are marked by beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop (.), question mark (?) or exclamation mark (!)” (Leech, 2006, p.104). In spontaneous speech, the definition of sentence is vague because of the messy nature of language and the inexistence of such punctuation marks. With ambiguous definition of sentence, it is asserted that spoken English sentence should be treated as the largest grammatical unit of hierarchical grammatical order (Biber, et al., 1999, p.50). To explain the hierarchy of grammatical order, *sentence* consists of one or more clause; *clause* contains one or more phrases; *phrase* has one or more words; *word* comprises at least one *morpheme*, respectively.

With regard to the plausible overlap between written and spoken in online football commentary, the identification of sentence as unit of analysis should be based on its structural form and purpose. The classification of sentence unit based on structural scheme can be as follows:

1. **Simple sentence** is a sentence with only one independent clause comprising a subject-predicate unit which can convey a complete thought. The function of simple sentence is for foregrounding activities and ideas.

Example: *The teacher corrected him amiably enough.*

(Leech, 2006, p.104)

In reference to grammarian’s viewpoint, there are generally seven sub-varieties of simple sentence and each sub-category is differentiated by a verb type. The formations of seven types of simple sentence based on a type of verb are the following:

1.1 Simple sentence with **intransitive verb**

1.1.1 Subject+Verb or S+V

1.2 Simple sentence with **linking verb**

1.2.1 Subject+Verb+Subject-Predicate or S+V+SP

1.2.2 Subject+Verb+Adjective or S+V+A

1.3 Simple sentence with **transitive verb**

1.3.1 Subject+Verb+Direct Object or S+V+DO

1.3.2 Subject+Verb+Indirect Object+Direct Object or S+V+IO+DO

1.3.3 Subject+Verb+Object+Adjective or S+V+O+A

1.3.4 Subject+Verb+Direct Object+Object of Preposition or
S+V+DO+OP

2. **Compound sentence** is a sentence with at least two independent clause joined by coordinators including “for”, “and”, “nor”, “but”, “or”, “yet”, and “so”. Each independent clause in compound sentence can stand alone and convey complete idea by itself. The function of compound sentence is to foreground two clauses equally in sequence.

Example: *We went to meet her at the airport, but the plane was delayed.*

(Leech, 2006, p.24)

3. **Complex sentence** is a sentence which consists of an independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Although the dependent clause has subject-predicate unit, it can not stand alone as grammatical and meaningful sentence. Generally, the dependent clause is introduced by subordinators (e.g., before, if, though, until) or relative pronoun (e.g., who, whose, which, that). Complex sentence functions in backgrounding one idea to a main idea.

Example: *I ate breakfast before I went to work.*

(Leech, 2006, p.24)

The position of dependent clause in complex sentence could be varied. The dependent clause initialised by subordinators can come either before or after independent clause in a complex sentence as in “*Until I have my first cup of coffee, I cannot think about anything*” and “*I cannot think about anything until I have my first cup of coffee*”. Additionally, in complex sentence whose dependent clause is introduced by relative pronoun, the dependent clause can locate at the middle or at the end of sentence as in “*My car, which is a Honda, is very old*” and “*The freshman did the homework that was assigned*”.

4. **Compound-complex sentence** is a sentence that consists of two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause preceded by subordinator or relative pronoun. The function of compound-complex sentence is to juxtapose two foregrounded ideas with a backgrounded idea.

Example: *The dog lived in the garden, but the cat, who was smarter, lived inside the house.*

(Leech, 2006, p.24)

Regarding the clause position of compound-complex sentence, the dependent clause introduced by subordinator can be placed either before or after at least two independent clauses joined by coordinator, resulting in a compound-complex sentence. The examples are “*While Tom reads novel, Jack reads comic, but Sam reads only magazine*” and “*Tom reads novel, but Jack reads comic because books are too difficult*”. Also, the dependent clause can be embedded in one of the two independent clauses of a compound sentence making the entire sentence a compound-complex sentence. The example is “*People who read comic rarely read novels because they find books difficult*”.

It is noteworthy that a special criteria is set regarding the unit of analysis of either complex or compound-complex sentence. That is to say the unit of analysis of all syntactic features is set on clausal level, specifically the independent clause of a complex or compound-complex sentence. An independent clause is a meaningful clause that can stand alone and contains a subject and a predicate. It is defined in The Glossary of English Grammar as “one which is not part of (that is, is not subordinate to) another clause” (Leech, 2006, p.53).

Example: *He scored a goal and everybody cheered.*

(Leech, 2006, p.53)

The example above show that the compound sentence has two independent clauses connected by the coordinator, “and”. The predicates in both independent clauses are marked by past simple tense makers “-ed”. In such case, the sentence was treated as two in terms of unit of analysis according to a couple of past tense markers in both independent clauses of the sentence.

Online football commentary will not be entirely written in simple or compound sentence construction. It can be written more or less in complex or compound-complex sentence in which an independent clause is subordinated by at least one dependent clause.

Example: [*When he scored a goal*], and everybody cheered.

(Leech, 2006, p.53)

The example shows that “everybody cheered” as the main or independent clause is subordinated by the dependent clause “when he scored a goal”. In a case like this, the unit of analysis was regarded as one unit by basing on a verb with past tense marker in the independent clause.

In addition to structural form, the classification of a sentence can be based on its purpose including:

1. **Declarative sentence**, used for expressing statements, considered the most commonly found sentence type with Subject-Verb or SV formation.

Example: The FBI said white supremacists might be behind the attacks.

However, it is not always the case that declarative sentence must traditionally have S+V order or represent statement. For instance, some declarative sentences can be written in Verb+Subject or inversion form as in “At the root of the road were the little mountains that were the roofs of the Chinese village”. In addition, certain use of declarative sentence in subject-verb construction with rising intonation at the end of utterance is used for expressing question rather than statement as in “You felt alright when you left?”.

2. **Interrogative sentence**, used for making question, composed of three main types including:

2.1 **Wh-question**, specially used when the addressor wants to be provided with the absence of information that addressee known. “Who” “What” “When” “Where” “Why” and “How” are amongst the common Wh-words used to form an interrogative sentence.

Example: *Where does she live?*

It should be noted that, in real-time communication, only a wh-word can stand alone as a grammatical sentence although other sentential elements are elliptic. In the following example, only wh-word is employed to ask for repetition.

A: *Oh it's six o'clock isn't it?*

B: *What?*

Apart from functioning in asking for information, interrogative sentences can function as other expression such as opinion, “Who needs sitcoms?”,

rebuke, “Who do you think you are?”, invitation, “Why don't you come with us for an hour or so?”, or suggestion, “Why don't we go next week?”.

2.2 Yes/no-question, employed when a speaker wants to know if the statement is affirmable or deniable, and marked by auxiliary-subject form

A: *Is it Thursday today?*

B: *No, Friday.*

In spoken context, the elliptical yes/no question can occur grammatically, as in “You alright?”. It can be seen that “are” is omitted in the sentence. In addition to making question, yes/no interrogative sentence can serve other purposes as well such as expressing exclamation “Isn't that lovely!”, command “Will you behave!”, or request “Can we turn that light off please?”.

2.3 Alternative question, employed when the addressor wants to give options for the addressee in choosing between two things, sharing the similar structure with those of yes/no question in which auxiliary precedes subject.

A: *Do you want one or two?*

B: *Two.*

3. Exclamatory sentence, usually employed when the addressor wants to make a statement emphatically and emotionally.

Example: *He's a hooligan!*

In real life conversation, exclamative sentences is not limited to independent clause, but they can come in the form of phrase like “What a cheek!”. Furthermore, exclamatory sentences can be expressed in other forms of sentence types. They can be in the forms of imperative sentence “Look at that! Incredible!”, interrogative sentence “Isn't that infuriating though!”, or declarative sentence “Oh, that's a shame!”.

4. Imperative sentence, generally employed when the speaker commands the speaker to do or not to do something, structurally characterised by the use of irregular verb and the omission of a subject, modals, tense-aspect markers.

Example: *Get off the table.*

Don't forget about the deposit.

Counting Frequency of Occurrence

To count the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features, a sentence with identifiable syntactic item, namely *simplification*, *inversion*, *result expression*, *heavy modifier*, *tense usage*, and *routine*, was counted as one frequency.

In counting the frequency of occurrence of communicative functions of online football commentary, including **narrative**, **evaluative**, **elaborative**, and **summarising**, this study considered a sentence as a commentarial utterance influenced by at least one communicative function. Therefore, a sentence based on the classification of individual communicative function was counted as one frequency.

However, once the analytical process of communicative functions on sentential level was practically conducted, it was frequently found that a commentarial sentence could have more than one communicative function identified. That is to say, the overlapping of functional utterances on a sentential level is considered very general due to the fact that the intended message delivered by online football commentator is heavily affected by the messy forms and meanings of spoken language. The following set of comparative examples could be the illustration of how one or more than one communicative function(s) being detected and counted on a sentential level.

1. *“Johnson slides in on Valencia to win the ball again.”* (“Liverpool versus Manchester United”, 5th Match)
2. *“Good skills by Routledge.”* (“Manchester United versus Swansea”, 37th Match)
3. *“Home support now in full voice.”* (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)
4. *“All over here and United claim the win as we see no more goals in the second-half.”* (“Reading versus Manchester United”, 15th Match)

From the first set of example, it can be obviously seen that an individual commentarial utterance can be categorised and counted as one communicative function. 1 is a clear-cut narrative communicative function since it is an attempt of narrating the action of ongoing play-by-play action between two players “Johnson” and “Valencia” and the reference of “ball” is explicitly mentioned. 2 is a plain evaluative commentarial type on player’s performance with the use of the adjective

“good” in “Good skills by Routledge”. In 3, the utterance can be apparently classified as elaborative functional utterance since neither does the commentator narrate the ongoing actions on the pitch nor he asserts his opinionated comments, but it is simply the case of describing the lively reaction of the local crowds as written “Home support now in full voice”. In 4, the commentarial sentence is solely based on summarising communicative function which gives an overview of the game so far at the end of time division. All of which types of commentarial sentences are easy to be counted as one frequency by basing on its functional utterance.

As stated previously, in analysing the communicative functions on a sentential level, the overlaps of communicative functions in one commentarial sentence are inevitable. Moreover, to forcefully justify that a commentarial utterance must have only one communicative function could not reasonably reflect the actual frequency of occurrence of communicative function in online football commentary. Therefore, when encountering such kind of circumstance when a commentarial sentence was governed by more than one communicative function, a sentence with overlaps of functions was classified and counted according to its existing types of functional utterance. The set of examples could be as the following.

1. *“It is a case of so far, so good, as they are competing well in the early stages.” (“Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United”, 21st Match)*
2. *“Van Persie has not scored since early February and it is easy to see that his confidence his low. (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)*
3. *“Calls for a penalty from the home fans as Patrice Evra goes down inside the area following a goes shoulder-to-shoulder with Davide Santon, but the referee rightly waves away any appeals.” (“Manchester United versus Newcastle United”, 19th Match)*

As shown in the given examples, these commentarial sentences are individually governed by more than one communicative functions. Therefore, the frequency count was based on the types of communicative functions identified on a sentential level. All of the examples 1, 2, and 3, can be classified as an utterance governed by more than one communicative function.

To be specific, 1 is a combination of *evaluative* and *summarising* communicative functions: the independent clause is obviously the commentator’s

assessment represented through the use of the adverb and adjective “so” and “good” as written “It is a case of so far, so good”, while the dependent clause “as they are competing well in the early stages” can be regarded as summarising commentarial type in the form of general overview of a game in progress marked with the use of progressive aspect “competing” and the adverbial phrase of time “in the early stages”. Also, the use of the adverb “well” can also be considered as the writer’s evaluation on how promisingly the team has been performing thus far up to the present moment.

In 2, the commentarial sentence consists of two independent clauses: the former one is *elaborative* and the latter one is *evaluative* commentarial types. In the first independent clause, “Van Persie has not scored since early February”, can be classified as one elaborative commentarial type relating player’s poor goal scoring record, and the second independent clause is the commentator’s general evaluation on that player as written “and it is easy to see that his confidence is low”.

Lastly, in 3, three types of communicative functions were detected including *elaborative*, *narrative*, and *evaluation* on a sentential level. The commentarial sentence is composed of two independent clauses and one dependent clause: three of them individually vary in its type of functional utterance. The first independent clause, “Calls for a penalty from the home fans”, can be regarded as elaborative communicative function since it is a description of raging reaction of the local crowds demanding the match official to award their team a penalty kick. In the second dependent clause, “as Patrice Evra goes down inside the area following a shoulder-to-shoulder with Davide Santon” can be seen as the narrative commentarial type describing the action of the former player, “Patrice Evra”, collapsing inside the penalty area after being physically obstructed by the latter player or his opponent “Davide Santon”. In the third independent clause, “but the referee rightly waves away any appeals”, the use of adverb, “rightly” is an obvious sign of the commentator’s positive evaluation on the referring authority’s action who lawfully rejects the false penalty-giving request.

Statistical Analysis

In order to serve both research purposes, the frequency of occurrence of each syntactic feature and communicative function were computed. The figures were

presented in percentage based on overall frequency count. To perform such conversion, the following formula was applied:

$$\text{Percentage} = X/N \times 100$$

X = The total number of sentences in each syntactic feature or communicative function

N = The total number of syntactic features and communicative functions compiled from the corpus.

Reliability of the Study

Regarding the reliability of the study, repeatability method was employed. In determining the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features and communicative functions of online football commentary, the condition that needs to be fulfilled in the establishment of intra-rater reliability was to carefully analyse the collected data twice and the interval between the first and the second attempt was two-week long.

Second, in the establishment of inter-rater reliability, the researcher had consulted with the academic advisor if any problematic data were found throughout the process of analysis. Moreover, in problem-prone areas which need native speaker's linguistic proficiency to make a final judgement, the researcher had held meetings with at least two non Thai university teachers who are MA qualified to agree that the processed data are on the right track. One is a native speaker of English and a university teacher who has a strong interest in the language of football commentary across English language variation. The other one is a Filipino teacher who is experienced in teaching English at university level and possesses native-like English language proficiency.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings accordingly in order of study purposes, which are: 1) to determine the frequency of occurrences of syntactic features and 2) to determine the frequency of occurrences of communicative function.

In answering the first study purpose, concerning the frequency of occurrence of the six major types of syntactic features asserted by Ferguson (1983) as the characteristic of oral sport commentary, 19 online football commentary reports were scrutinised. Table 12 presents the frequency of occurrences of the six main categories of syntactic features by sorting in the descending order of occurrence rate.

Table 12 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Syntactic Features

Types of Syntactic Features	Frequency	Percentage
1. Tense		
1.1 Present Simple	2,989	64.40
1.2 Present Continuous	282	6.08
1.3 Past Simple	94	2.02
2. Simplification	848	18.27
3. Result Expression	225	4.85
4. Heavy Modifier	159	3.43
5. Routine	44	0.95
6. Inversion	0	0.00
Total	4,641	100

From Table 12, it can be gleaned that online football commentary is densely composed of verb tenses, particularly present simple tense, which is accounted for 64.40% from overall identified syntactic features. The use of present continuous tense and past simple tense is also identified but appears to be employed at much lower rate,

merely at 6.08% and 2.02% respectively. The second most frequent syntactic feature is simplification, which is calculated at 18.27% by basing on total frequency of identifiable syntactic features. Result expression amounts to 4.85%, making this feature the third most occurring syntactic feature. The occurrence rate of heavy modifier appears as the fourth in range with the calculated frequency of 3.43 %. The least frequent syntactic feature is routine, which is rarely found at 0.95%. The only inexistent syntactic feature from the total data is inversion: none is identified and accounted for 0.00%. Below are instances of the three types of verb tense which are excerpted from the collected data.

Examples of verb in present simple tense form are as the following:

1. "Rooney **whips** over the set-piece." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)
2. "Kagawa **plays** the ball out to Valencia on the right but his drilled low cross **is blocked** and West Ham **bring** the ball clear." ("West Ham versus Manchester United", 33rd Match)
3. "Rooney **skips** away from Titus Bramble before laying the ball off for Van Persie, but once again the prolific hitman **is swamped** by defenders and **has to** track back." ("Manchester United versus Sunderland", 17th Match)
4. Anderson **feeds** a pass into the feet of Van Persie and the striker **tries** a shot on the turn but **doesn't** really get hold of it and Tremmel **saves** comfortably. ("Manchester United versus Swansea City", 37th Match)
5. "Rafael again **makes** a good run on the over-lap, he **crosses** but **can't** find a United shirt and Villa **clear**, Scholes **looks** for quick ball back in - but it is not great and the home side **manage** to ease the pressure". ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

Examples of verb in present continuous tense form are shown below:

6. "United **are throwing** everyone forward but Anderson can't control Evra's cross in from the left." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)
7. "Chelsea **are really digging** deep now, as Azpliueta dips the ball into the box before Ferdinand defends well against Sturridge." ("Chelsea versus Manchester United", 9th Match)

8. "United **are holding** the ball in the Reading corner." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

9. "Liverpool **are continuing to look bright** despite being at a disadvantage in numbers." ("Liverpool versus Manchester United", 5th Match)

10. "We're in the final added minute and the Red Devils **are closing** on this convincing win." ("Newcastle United versus Manchester United", 7th Match)

Examples of verb in past simple tense form are illustrated as follows:

11. "Vidic with a foul on Lambert. The big forward **used** all his nous there to win that one." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

12. "With play back underway, Valencia goes down under a tackle from Zabaleta. Zabaleta is booked for the challenge. He **did** come through the back of Valencia and took his legs away." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

13. "Swing and a miss from Hernandez as the ball drops his way inside the box. He **did** have to watch it drop out of the air with his back to goal but, with Hughes having taken a tumble, he will be disappointed not to have got in an effort on goal." ("Fulham versus Manchester United 25th Match)

14. "Trademark Scholes challenge as he lunges in. Unusually, he **got** the ball with this one (much to the delight of the crowd)!" ("Manchester United versus Swansea City", 37th Match)

15. "Taylor is down after a nasty challenge from Welbeck. The United forward **went** in studs up." ("Manchester United versus Swansea City", 37th Match)

By sorting in the descending order of occurrence rate, Tables 13-17 present the frequency of occurrence and proportion of the subcategories of individual syntactic feature.

Table 13 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Simplification

Types of Simplification	Frequency	Percentage
1. Head noun plus copula deletion	518	61.08
2. Copula deletion	301	35.50
3. Head noun deletion	29	3.42
Total	848	100

As can be seen in Table 13, head noun plus copula deletion as well as copula deletion are the most and the second most frequent types of simplification with the proportion of 61.08% and 35.50%, respectively. By basing on total frequency of simplification, the least occurring one is head noun deletion, whose proportion is 3.42 %.

Examples of head noun plus copula deletion, as a subcategory of simplification, are illustrated below:

16. “[It’s a] Goal!” (“Manchester United versus Swansea City”, 37th Match)
17. “[It’s] Another great tackle from Jags as Kagawa advances near goal.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)
18. “[It’s] Javier Hernandez!” (“Manchester United versus Swansea City”, 37th Match)
19. “[It’s] A bit of a trademark challenge from Paul Scholes as the Englishman gets all of the man and none of the ball.” (“Manchester United versus Newcastle United”, 19th Match)
20. “[It’s a] Yellow card for Oxlade-Chamberlain following a crunching tackle on Anderson.” (“Arsenal versus Manchester United”, 35th Match)

Examples of copula deletion, as a subcategory of simplification, are as the following:

21. “United [are] desperate to take the sting out of this one with a period of possession.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)
22. “Silva [is] over the set-piece.” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)
23. “Ruiz [is] in behind this time.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

24. "United [are] pressing now, Villa [are] on back foot." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

25. "Hernandez almost makes Chris Samba pay, the R's defender [is] dispossessed by Nani who feeds his team-mates, but the striker's effort on goal is poor." ("Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United", 27th Match)

26. "Rodallega [is] twisting on the edge of the box." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

27. "Rafael [is] tripped by Toure on halfway." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31th Match)

28. "Nothing [is] given." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

29. "Arguments [are] still going on." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

30. "Upton Park [is] in good voice now after that thoroughly deserved opening goal." ("West Ham versus Manchester United", 33rd Match)

Examples of head noun deletion, as a subcategory of simplification, are illustrated below:

31. "[He] Tries to find Ward-Prowse at the far post but Ferdinand is back to rescue the situation." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

32. "Ramires thumps an effort on goal and [it] is not far off from a masterpiece." ("Chelsea versus Manchester United", 9th Match)

33. "Good challenge from Lowton on Rooney, but [he] felt it and is limping away." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

34. "[It] Did look like a Man United ball." ("West Ham versus Manchester United", 33rd Match)

35. "[It's] Carlos Cuellar with a good run from the right, but [he] is undecided inside the area which allow Smalling to close him down and clear the ball." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

Table 14 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Result Expression

Types of Result Expression	Frequency	Percentage
1. To Phrase	158	70.22
2. For Phrase	67	29.78
Total	225	100

Table 14 shows that, amongst the two categories of result expression, “to phrase” occurs more frequently than “for phrase”. Between the two types of result expression, proportions are calculated at 70.22% and 29.78%, respectively.

Examples of “to phrase”, as a subcategory of result expression, are as the following:

36. “Mackie pounces from three yards **to give QPR the lead and shake the home fans.**” (“Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers”, 13th Match)

37. “Van Persie, again, soars inside the area **to make a headed attempt on goal** but his effort is wide of the mark.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

38. “Tim Krul produces a stunning save **to keep out Robnin van Persie's initial effort**, but the striker eventually gets a second bite of the cherry and makes no mistake, slotting his effort into the bottom corner of the net.” (“Manchester United versus Newcastle United”, 19th Match)

39. “Smalling gets ahead of Benteke in six-yard box **to clear**, after good ball in from Lowton.” (“Aston Villa versus Manchester United”, 11th Match)

40. “Robin van Persie steps on for Welbeck **to make his Red Devils debut.**” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

Examples of “for phrase”, as a subcategory of result expression, are shown below:

41. “De Gea lifts a long kick upfield and it goes out **for a Toon throw.**” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

42. “Van Persie can't dig out a cross under pressure from Demel, and the ball bobbles behind **for a West Ham goal-kick.**” (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

43. “Ashley Young, however, can, but his effort is blocked for a **corner kick.**” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

44. “Rafael then scoops a pass down the line for **Valencia.**” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

45. “Riise fires long for **Rodallega** to chase.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

46. “He plants it in for **Jelavic**, who wins the home side their first corner.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

Table 15 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Heavy Modifier

Types of Heavy Modifier	Frequency	Percentage
1. Post-posed	126	79.25
2. Pre-posed	33	20.75
Total	159	100

As shown in Table 15, post-posed modifier is the more frequently identified type of heavy modifier, with the proportion of 79.25%, while pre-posed modifier has fewer occurrence rates, with the proportion of 20.75%.

Examples of post-posed modifier, as a subcategory of heavy modifier, are as the following:

47. “Arouna Kone, **who will be heading off the Africa Cup of Nations after today's match**, holds off Rio Ferdinand but then loses the ball as Michael Carrick retreats to win back possession.” (“Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United”, 21st Match)

48. “Kagawa comes on for Anderson, **who had a steady if not spectacular game.**” (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)

49. “The ball falls to Nani, **who tries his luck with a long-range effort which goes wide**, but has Howard furious at his back four.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

50. “Carrick into Giggs, **who clips the ball forward towards Van Persie.**” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

51. “**Van Persie with the dinked free-kick** but that's wide.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

52. “**Ward-Prowse with a quick one-two** and gets his shot off just wide of the post.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

53. “**Ward-Prowse with the cross to find Hooiveld** but Vidic just does enough.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

54. “**Giggs with a run down the left** and then whipping the ball into the box, but the Hoops defence does well to deal with the numbers in the area and clear the ball.” (“Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United”, 27th Match)

55. “**Suarez, finding plenty of space again**, weaves towards goal and wins another corner.” (“Liverpool versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

56. “**De Gea, sandwiched between Osman and Fellaini**, does well under pressure to deal with the corner after Baines lifts it in.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

57. “**Oscar is taken off with Azpilicueta the man coming on**.” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

Examples of pre-posed modifier, as a subcategory of heavy modifier, are as the following:

58. “**Van Persie coolly tees up an onrushing Scholes** inside the area off a one-two, but ginger-haired attacker is cut down before getting a shot off.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

59. “**An unmarked Le Fondre** on the six-yard box heads home.” (“Reading versus Manchester United”, 15th Match)

60. “**Perfect finish from the evergreen Giggs** after a good pass into the box from the edge of the area by Nani.” (“Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United”, 27th Match)

61. “**He wants a free-kick but referee Mason** is not interested.” (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)

62. “**Wayne Rooney makes way for experienced midfielder Paul Scholes**.” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

63. “**Goalscorer Gerrard goes down to win Liverpool** a free-kick” (“Liverpool versus Manchester United”, 5th Match)

64. "Everton's Leon Osman makes way for **Republic of Ireland** defender Seamus Coleman." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

66. "**Former United youth player** Campbell heads past De Gea at the far post off a good cross from Sessegnon." ("Manchester United versus Sunderland", 17th Match)

Table 16 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Routine

Types of Routine	Frequency	Percentage
1. Numerical Statement	36	81.82
2. Idiomatic Phrase	8	18.18
Total	44	100

As it is revealed in Table 16, the proportion of numerical statement is higher than that of idiomatic phrase, with 81.82% to 18.18%, respectively.

Examples of numerical statement, as a subcategory of routine, are as follows:

67. "Manchester United **1-2** Newcastle!" ("Manchester United versus Newcastle United", 19th Match)

68. "QPR **0-2** Man United." ("Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United", 27th Match)

69. "Chelsea **2** Man United **3**." ("Chelsea versus Manchester United", 9th Match)

70. "Reading **3** Man United **4**." ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

71. "Manchester United beat 10-man Liverpool **2-1**." ("Liverpool versus Manchester United", 5th Match)

72. "That's it, another remarkable United comeback sees them beat Villa **3-2**." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

Examples of idiomatic phrase, as a subcategory of routine, are as the following:

73. "Carroll heads it back across goal, and Vaz Te is on hand **to nod home** from close range." ("West Ham versus Manchester United", 33rd Match)

74. "The big defender heads against the post but Van Persie is there to **put home** the rebound with his left foot." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

75. "GOAL - WAYNE ROONEY - Rooney steps up to **slot home**." ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

76. "After Van Persie wins the corner he floats it into the box from the right and Evans rises above everyone to **nod it home**." ("Newcastle United versus Manchester United", 7th Match)

77. "The numbers advantage finally pays off for United, with van Persie initially hitting the post before Rafael fires the ball back into the box and Hernandez **pokes home** from close range." ("Chelsea versus Manchester United", 9th Match)

78. "GOAL - ROBIN VAN PERSIE - The Dutchman slots home after Rooney flick from Carrick balls finds him unmarked in the box and he does not miss those." ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

79. "GOAL - ADAM LE FONDRE - An unmarked Le Fondre on the six-yard box **heads home**." ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

Table 17 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Inversion

Types of Inversion	Frequency	Percentage
1. Subject copula inversion	0	0.00
2. Subject verb inversion	0	0.00
Total	0	0

It is shown in Table 17 that none of the two types of inversion is detected. Therefore, the proportion of subject-copula and subject-verb inversion are equally accounted for 0.00%.

To fulfil the second research purpose, relating the frequency of occurrence of the four types of communicative functions put forward by Delin (2000), the same set of 19 online football commentary reports is again analysed for categorising the functional utterance employed by OFC writer. Table 18 shows the frequency of

occurrences of the four commentarial types, namely narrative, evaluative, elaborative, and summarising in the descending order of occurrence rate.

Table 18 Frequency of Occurrence and Percentage of Communicative Functions

Types of Communicative Functions	Frequency	Percentage
1. Narrative	2,271	57.62
2. Evaluative	1,151	29.21
3. Summarising	358	9.08
4. Elaborative	161	4.09
Total	3,941	100

As it is presented in Table 18, it is obvious that narrative is the most frequent type of the communicative functions, accounted for 57.62% from the total identifiable functional utterance. Second to narrative, the communicative function of evaluative has the proportion of 29.21%. The commentarial type of summarising is ranked third with the calculated proportion of 9.08% and the least detected one is elaborative commentarial type, which has a share of 4.09%.

Examples of narrative, as a sub-type of communicative functions, are as follows:

80. "The ball is now back with De Gea, who takes no chances in having a touch before launching a clearance downfield." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

81. "Scholes, again, on the ball as he tries to feed Young with options briefly to the left and right of him." ("Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers", 13th Match)

82. "United soon have it back." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

83. "Toffees free-kick." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

84. "Evra over a throw for United." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

85. “**Corner** for Southampton now.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

86. “Rooney **feeds** Cleverley as the visitors get forward.” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

87. “Young and Evra **move** down the left.” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

88. “Gutierrez **flies** in with a rash **tackle** on Kagawa and is handed a caution by Webb.” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

89. “Evans **hacks** the ball **clear**.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

90. “Wickham, again, with a **shot** on goal that this time test De Gea.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

Examples of evaluative, as a sub-type of communicative functions, are as the following:

91. “**Excellent** play from Lennon, as he nudges the ball past Evra, the United left-back drawn into making the foul.” (“Tottenham Hotspurs versus Manchester United”, 23rd Match)

92. “**Awful** decision by the defender.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

93. “Giggs ensures United retain possession in Chelsea's final third, linking up play **splendidly** with the game surely over now.” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

94. But McAnuff **badly** misplaces a pass to give United a throw-in. (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)

95. “**Fantastic** football from Southampton now.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

96. “A very **uncharacteristic** start this from Chelsea.” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

97. “City knocking the ball around **nicely**.” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

98. “The visitors haven't **really** threatened.” (“Manchester United versus Swansea City”, 37th Match)

99. "Ferguson has picked a really **strong**, attack line-up for today and once can already see them probing for an opening up front." ("Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers", 13th Match)

100. "Arouna Kone thinks he has given Wigan a lifeline as he turns home Franco Di Santo's low cross from close range, but for the third time today we have a goal disallowed for offside and, for the third time today, it is a **good** decision." ("Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United", 21st Match)

101. "A bit **harsh**, not much contact." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

102. "Hunt is **correctly** booked for a studs-up, sliding challenge on Smalling." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

103. "Now a wonderful through-ball from Lambert finds Lallana but he is (**wrongly**) ruled offside." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

Examples of summarising, as a sub-type of communicative functions, are illustrated below:

104. "The home side **struggling** to get the ball up to Lambert *in the early stages.*" ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

105. "Hoops **coming** to live *in the closing stages of the first half*, with United now having to all the defending." ("Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers", 13th Match)

106. "United are **looking** for something *in these late stages.*" ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

107. "United still enjoying the majority of possession but their final ball is poor and Villa **have dealt** with them well, **thus far.**" ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

108. "GOAL! Robin van Persie **doubles** United's lead with a stunning goal as he **turns** inside Ivan Ramis, leaving the Wigan defender on his backside, and **curls** a right-footed finish past Ali Al Habsi and into the top corner." ("Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United", 21st Match)

109. "Red card for Ivanovic! Ivanovic **clips** the heels of Young as the United winger **sprints** through on goal, and being the last man, the Chelsea man is giving his marching orders!" ("Chelsea versus Manchester United", 9th Match)

110. "The whistle blows for half-time and it's Newcastle 0 Manchester United 2 after goals from defenders Evans and Evra." ("Newcastle United versus Manchester United", 7th Match)

111. "The full-time whistle goes and Manchester United have run out comfortable 4-0 winners over Wigan Athletic to strengthen their position at the top of the table. Manchester United still have a seven-point advantage in the title race after two goals apiece for Javier Hernandez and Robin van Persie gave them the perfect start to 2013, while Wigan remain just above the relegation zone after a demoralising home defeat." ("Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United", 21st Match)

Examples of elaborative, as a sub-type of communicative functions, are as the following.

112. "Passing statistics show this as 50:50 and that speaks volumes for Southampton's efforts here, especially as United dominated the early minutes." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

113. "Once again this season the Red Devils concede within the first 15 minutes after the restart and Ferguson won't be too impressed." ("Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers", 13th Match)

114. "That goal will come as a massive boost to the Magpies who have not won at Old Trafford since 1972." ("Manchester United versus Newcastle United", 19th Match)

115. "Wayne Rooney has scored seven goals in eight games at Old Trafford in 2013 (all competitions)." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

116. "Wigan's fans were already starting to stream out of the exits before that Van Persie goal and they are now heading out in their droves in an effort to beat the traffic." ("Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United", 21st Match)

117. "Goodison is rocking now, with the fans belting their support." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

118. "The rain is now very heavy at Old Trafford." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

119. "Villa starting to believe they could get something here." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

120. “United will feel that they should be in front.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

121. “With City having won 3-1 at Newcastle earlier, United will be more than ever determined to bag a three-point result today.” (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 17th Match)

122. “A failed Arsenal move breaks down on the edge of the box, but United aren't exactly breaking with urgency and it appears they may be happy to settle for the draw.” (“Arsenal versus Manchester United”, 35th Match)



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS

In this final chapter, the findings are discussed in accordance with the two purposes of the study, which are: 1) to determine the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features, and 2) to determine the frequency of occurrence of communicative functions in online football commentary. Besides, pedagogical applications and researcher's constructive recommendations for future studies are included.

Findings

This present study aims to investigate the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features and communicative functions in online football commentary. The cumulated frequencies are presented in percentage as follows. Concerning the rate of occurrences of six major syntactic features, the findings reveal that tense usage is the most dominant syntactic feature. By basing on the overall frequencies, the occurrences rate of present simple tense is accounted for 64.40% while that of present progressive and past simple tense are amounted to 6.08% and 2.02%, respectively. The second most identified syntactic feature is simplification, which is accounted for 18.27%. Result expression appears the third most frequent syntactic feature with the occurrence rate of 4.85%. Fourth in range is the use of heavy modifier whose occurrence rate is at 3.43%, and the least identifiable syntactic feature is the use of routine whose occurrence rate is computed at 0.95%. The entirely inexistent syntactic feature in this study is the use of inversion: none is detected and is accounted for 0.00%

Regarding the frequency of occurrence of communicative function, it is found that the most frequent commentarial type is narrative, with the occurrence rate of 57.62%. The second most frequent communicative function is evaluative, whose total frequency is calculated at 29.21%. With the occurrence rate of 9.08%, summarising appears the third most identified communicative function while the least identifiable one is elaborative function, whose rate of occurrence is amounted to 4.09%.

Discussions

The research findings are discussed in line with the first study purpose as stated next.

1. To determine the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features in online football commentary.

According to the investigation of syntactic features in 19 online football commentarial reports published in Skysports.com, five out of six main types of syntactic features, put forward by Ferguson (1983) as identifiable markers of spoken sports commentary register, are found, with an exclusion of inversion. The discussions of detected syntactic features are sorted in descending order of occurrence rates as the followings: tense usage, simplification, heavy modifier, result expression, and routine.

Tense Usage

Regarding the distribution of tense in online football commentary, three tense forms, consisting of present simple, present continuous, and past simple tense, proposed and classified by Ferguson (1983) according to its forms and discursive uses are all identified.

Present simple tense is the most frequently detected tense form, with the accounted occurrence rate of 64.40%. The present study's results of present simple tense, as the most frequently occurred tense, correspond with the previous findings by Lewandowski (2012) and Perez-Sabater et al. (2008), whose studies reveal that online football commentary register is extensively governed by present simple tense. Consequently, this obvious influence of present simple tense in online football commentary can affirm Ferguson (1983)'s prediction on tense usage in direct sports reporting. That is to say, sports commentary is mainly composed of reports of short-lived actions that take place almost at the same time as announcing. Therefore, the register is marked by the significant use of present simple tense. The following examples support and reaffirm the previously mentioned findings.

1. "Rooney **whips** over the set-piece." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

2. “Kagawa **plays** the ball out to Valencia on the right but his drilled low cross **is blocked** and West Ham **bring** the ball clear.” (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

3. “Rafael again **makes** a good run on the over-lap, he **crosses** but can't find a United shirt and Villa **clear**, Scholes **looks** for quick ball back in - but it is not great and the home side **manage** to ease the pressure”. (“Aston Villa versus Manchester United”, 11th Match)

It can be seen from the above-stated set of examples that the reports of instant play-by-play action are mainly governed by the use of present simple tense. The commentarial sentence can vary in its construction. In 1, the commentary is written in simple sentence construction with one predicate represented by the use of “whips” having morpheme {s} as the present simple tense marker. In 2 and 3, the commentarial pieces are employed to report more than one play-by-play action. As a result, they are composed of many independent clauses and predicates with a lot of present simple tense verb forms for singular clausal subject such as “plays”, “is blocked”, “makes”, “crosses”, and “looks”, as well as “bring” and “manage” for collective noun or plural subject.

The dominant use of present simple tense could be affected by the primary communicative function of narrative and writing situation of time-criticality. Narrative, functioning in describing play-by-play action, is regarded as the heart of commentarial football register. Lewandowski (2012) asserts that the main task of online football commentary author is to report the time-critical play, one-by-one, in chronological order. Moreover, when taking the medium of delivery of commentarial text into account, the reader's lack of imagery experience in online football commentary, as opposed to the televised one, could also play a crucial role in the high distribution of present simple tense. Because the entire online football commentary is composed textually, the writer may need to employ a series of verbs to describe the flow of events. On the contrary, television announcer can sparingly use verbs by relying on broadcasting motion pictures to depict the play instead (Lewandowski, 2012; Reaser, 2003).

Concerning the two remaining tense types, present continuous and past simple tense, the findings show that the occurrence rates of present continuous and

past simple tense appear at much lower rates of 6.08% and 2.02%, respectively. The present findings of the much fewer occurrence rate of present continuous and past simple tense than those of present simple tense are consistent with the former findings by Lewandowski (2012) and Perez-Sabater et al. (2008). It is proposed that, in sports casting, present continuous tense is employed either for reporting prolonged action or for summing up the game. The examples of present continuous tense distribution based on Ferguson (1983)'s description can be as follows.

4. "United **are holding** the ball in the Reading corner." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

5. "We're in the final added minute and the Red Devils **are closing** on this convincing win." ("Newcastle United versus Manchester United", 7th Match)

Considering example 4, it can be seen that present continuous tense is used for describing the play-by-play action that takes place for longer period of time. The use of the progressive verb form "are holding" can indicate that the players from Manchester United, as a whole unit, are maintaining the ball possession for a short while by safely passing the ball around to their team mates. In 5, present progressive verb form "are closing" in "the Red Devils are closing on this convincing win" is used for concluding the game that is approaching the end, and, from the commentator's overview, Manchester United, or the Red Devils, is becoming more and more likely the winning team.

Regarding the use of past simple tense, although employed quite infrequently in OFC, its distinctive use as proposed by Ferguson (1983) is apparent. The following examples of this study could ascertain that the past simple verb tense in sports commentary is clearly employed for restating or adding the description to an action that occurred shortly before.

6. "With play back underway, Valencia goes down under a tackle from Zabaleta. Zabaleta is booked for the challenge. *He did come through the back of Valencia and took his legs away.*" ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

7. "Taylor is down after a nasty challenge from Welbeck. *The United forward went in studs up.*" ("Manchester United versus Swansea City", 37th Match)

From the example 6, it is obvious that the last utterance of the three is the commentator's attempt to refer back to the previous incident. The third one gives the readers vivid and detailed flashback on how a player, Zabaleta, committed a foul on his opponent, Valencia, prior to being shown a yellow card, in past simple tense forms of "did" and "took". The actual incident of the former player being fouled and the latter then being booked are earlier reported in the preceding sentences by using present simple tense forms of "goes down" and "is booked". Similar to 1, after reporting the first incident of a player crumbling following his opponent high-footed tackle in present simple tense form, "is down", the use of past simple tense in the second utterance of 7, "went in studs up", again, is clearly employed to provide the detail of how aggressive the physical challenge between the two players was. Both tackles, which later result in the referee's disciplinary warning to the latter player, could be so ferocious that the commentator needs to portray it again instantly afterwards by using past simple tense. However, the frequency of such kind of past simple tense is rare. Lewandowski (2012) suggests that the low occurrence rates of past simple tense in OFC could be a result of the limited time condition under which the commentator has to work. When writing the online commentarial text under huge time pressure, the chances to recall previously occurred action in details by using past tense forms are considerably slim.

Simplification

The present findings also reveal that simplification, the use of sentences with some sentential constituents being deleted, is the second most frequently identified syntactic feature in online football commentary. Simplification has the frequency rate of 18.27%. The present results also correlate with those of Lewandowski's (2012); in his study, simplification is, as one of Ferguson (1983)'s syntactic features, is the second most employed.

Amongst the three types of simplified sentence, the omissions of sentence initial components of head noun plus copula are most frequently counted with the proportion rate of 61.08%. Such high occurrence rate of head noun and copula deletion correspond with Reaser (2003)'s study, where "copula absence does coincide with subject deletion at a significant rate" (p.313). This sort of omission can result in sentential noun complement in the forms of:

8. Single-word utterance: “[It’s a] Goal!” (“Manchester United versus Swansea City”, 37th Match)

9. Proper name: “[It’s] Javier Hernandez!” (“Manchester United versus Swansea City”, 37th Match)

10. Noun phrase: “[It’s a] Yellow card for Oxlade-Chamberlain following a crunching tackle on Anderson.” (“Arsenal versus Manchester United”, 35th Match)

The sentences with the omission subject including copula are believed to be used for reporting the actions in quick and precise, friendly, and eye-catching manner as proposed by Ferguson (1983, p.153). These subject less and verb less clauses or “noun-like constructions” representing action descriptions such as goal scoring, as in 8, or booking, as in 10, and players’ names, as in 9, are the clear signs of narrative function that dominates the overall football commentary (Delin, 2000, p.47).

Additionally, it’s mutually agreed by Lewandowski and Reaser that settings where commentarial languages are produced could also play a role in the frequent deletion of head noun plus copula. In online football commentary, the writer needs to write the commentarial report as rapidly and briefly as possible because of time limitation (Lewandowski, 2012, p.71). Therefore, such omission could help shorten the utterances and allow the announcer to produce the language much faster since head noun and copula are regarded as “relatively insignificant linguistic content” which can be omitted by not blurring the intended meaning (Reaser, 2003, p.313).

It’s also quite interesting that the use of one-word utterance and proper name, resulting from subject plus copula deletion, usually comes after by exclamation marks (!). Perez-Sabater, et al. (2008) propose that the use of these non-sentences in online football commentary could also be the linguistic devices that virtualise stress and intonation in oral commentary. Also, using exclamation marks is one of writer’s techniques to involve reader to decisive scenarios (Lewandowski, 2012, p.73). Obviously, noun like “goal” is related to make-or-break incident of the game, and proper name of a player, for instance, “Javier Hernandez”, clearly refers to the goal scorer. Therefore, attaching simplified nouns relating to important plays and persons with exclamation mark could add more prominence and emotion to the utterance.

Apart from subject and copula simplification, the present study shows that the omissions of copula occur at the proportion rate of 35.50%. The conditions

under which copula deletion occurs also affirm Ferguson (1983)'s analysis. That is, copula, functioning as main verb, is often omitted when it is located after either single-word proper name or common noun, at the initial position of a sentence. The examples of copula being omitted when located after one-word proper name are:

11. "Silva [is] over the set-piece." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

12. "Ruiz [is] in behind this time." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

From the examples 11 and 12, it can be seen that the copula *be* "is", functioning as a main linking verb of the sentence, is omitted when it is located in between the proper names, "Silva" and "Ruiz", and their locative complements, "over the set-piece" and "in behind", respectively.

Other set of examples of copula being dropped when preceded by common noun with or without modifier, denoting players or teams is:

13. "The R's [are] doing well to carry the ball down the middle and then out to the flanks for Townsend, Mackie and the new man Remy to create something." ("Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United", 27th Match)

14. "United [are] pressing now, Villa [are] on back foot." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

15. "Hernandez almost makes Chris Samba pay, the R's defender [is] dispossessed by Nani who feeds his team-mates, but the striker's effort on goal is poor." ("Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United", 27th Match)

From examples 13, 14, and 15, it is obvious that the copula is dropped is when it is preceded by common noun signalling teams' names such as "The R's" in 13, and "United" and "Villa" in 14. Example 15 is a special case of the condition of copula being left out when it is located after the common noun with modifier denoting player, "the R's defender": "defender" is seen as the common noun denoting a player while "the R's" is regarded as the adjectival possessive modifier indicating which team the defender belongs to.

In addition, it is found that another condition of occurrence of copula deletion is in accordance with Ferguson (1983)'s study. Copula, functioning as auxiliary *be*, either in progressive or passive voice sentence, is regularly left out.

16. "Rodallega [is] twisting on the edge of the box." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

17. "Rafael [is] tripped by Toure on halfway." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31th Match)

It is noted that the omission of copula in present continuous sentence could be the writer's aim to make the utterances vivid as if they are "captions on pictures" in newspaper; while the deletion of copula in passive voice construction functions to make the utterance more emphatic like news headlines (Ferguson, 1983, p.54). Copula omission in both structural contexts could be one amongst news writer's attention-getting techniques.

Moreover, the copula deletion could be another characteristic of impromptu communication where it is necessary for the audiences to connect the ideas via linguistic referent. When the name of a person, as referent, is introduced at the initial position of a sentence, it is seen as the focal part of utterance. Then, the copula "be", connecting the referent with its predicate representing authentic "action", "property", or "quality", can be reduced or understood by not being directly expressed (Orch, 1979 as cited in Delin, 2000). To explain from one of the given examples, in 17, "Rafael" is considered as emphatic referent and is succeeded by the predicate of his true action of "being tripped". Therefore, the copula be, "is", functioning as the link between the referent and predicate can be dropped to create the sense of immediate connectivity.

However, according to the findings, there are also certain copula deletions that occur in another circumstance, which is different from Ferguson's analysis. In other words, the copula can be also dropped not only when located after proper name or common noun representing the players or teams but in different settings as in:

18. "*Nothing* [is] given." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

19. "*Arguments* [are] still going on." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

20. "*Upton Park* [is] in good voice now after that thoroughly deserved opening goal." ("West Ham versus Manchester United", 33rd Match)

Examples 18, 19, and 20 can illustrate the condition of copula being dropped, particularly when it is not preceded by subject as proper name or common noun denoting a group of persons. In 18, “nothing” commonly belongs to the group indefinite noun, which is not specific in its reference, in 19, “arguments” can be categorised as collective noun, and, in 20, “Upton Park” belongs to the class of proper noun indicating location. Literally, none of which is supposed to represent team or player. The findings are supported by Reaser (2003) who suggests that the condition of occurrence of copula deletion can differ from Ferguson (1983)’s analysis (p.313). That is, copula is not only omitted when it is located after one word proper noun and common noun, or when it functions as auxiliary in present progressive and passive voice constructions but is also dropped in other circumstances as well.

The least identified type of simplification is head noun deletion, whose proportion rate is at 3.42%. In general, the reduction of head noun always results in sentence with subject ellipsis as follows.

21. “[He] Tries to find Ward-Prowse at the far post but Ferdinand is back to rescue the situation.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

22. “[It] Did look like a Man United ball.” (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

23. “[It’s] Carlos Cuellar with a good run from the right, but [he] is undecided inside the area which allow Smalling to close him down and clear the ball.” (“Aston Villa versus Manchester United”, 11th Match)

According to the set of examples, the subject pronouns often omitted in online football commentary are “he” and “it”. The findings are correspondent with Teddiman (2011)’s corpus-based study on subject ellipsis in British English across text types. “He” is found as the most frequently dropped pronoun in unplanned speech, especially in real time sports commentary. In 23, when a player’s name, “Carlos Cuellar”, is mentioned in the previous clause, the succeeding referent, “he”, can be then left out without obscuring the whole message. Also, Teddiman finds “it” is the most omitted pronoun in both public and private speaking. The frequent absence of “it”, as sentential subject, could be affected by the secondary theme of online football commentary to imitate casual conversation within the discourse as Chovanec (2008) proposed. Moreover, the simplified constructions in written online football

commentary could also be the techniques of writing block language, saving time, or imitating quick report in traditional spoken commentary.

Result Expression

The occurrence rate of result expression detected in this study appears as the third most employed syntactic feature with a percentage of 4.85%. In sports commentary, a specific consequence of an action previously reported can be represented by using phrasal construction of “for phrase” or “for plus noun” and “to phrase” or “to plus verb”

In this study, the frequency of “to phrase”, classified as “result expression”, is amounted to 70.22%. The examples of sentences using “to phrase” to represent the condition of previous action being succeeded by the result are illustrated below.

24. “Mackie pounces from three yards **to give QPR the lead and shake the home fans.**” (“Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers”, 13th Match)

25. “Tim Krul produces a stunning save **to keep out Robnin van Persie's initial effort**, but the striker eventually gets a second bite of the cherry and makes no mistake, slotting his effort into the bottom corner of the net.” (“Manchester United versus Newcastle United”, 19th Match)

26. “Robin van Persie steps on for Welbeck **to make his Red Devils debut.**” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

As the examples show, the commentator employs “to phrase” as the indication of the outcome of the formerly reported statement. When separating “to phrase” from the full utterance, it will be left incomplete in meanings. In other words, the results always have to come along with thier causes preceding them. To explain according to the example 24, “Mackie shoots from a close range” can be categorised as the action being reported. The result of “that shot (goal) by Mackie” is that “his team, QPR, is now being in front, and that the hosting team concedes a goal makes their supporters frustrated.”, as presented in “to give QPR the lead and shake the home fans”. In 25, the action of a goalkeeper performing a shot-stopping attempt is an action being reported as written in “Tim Krul produces a stunning save” and his action leads to the result of him successfully denying the first goal scoring attempt from the opposing team’s attacker as written in “to keep out Robnin van Persie's initial effort”. In 26, the action of two players making substitution is initially reported as

in “Robin van Persie steps on for Welbeck”. As a result, the former one coming in, Robin van Persie, has an opportunity to make his first appearance for his new team as written in “to make his Red Devils debut”.

In addition to “to phrase”, the use of “for phrase” is found as the less employed type of result expression with the proportion rate of 29.78%. The instances of sentences, with “for phrase” indicating the semantic relation between action and result, are as the following.

27. “De Gea lifts a long kick upfield and it goes out **for a Toon throw.**” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

28. “Van Persie can't dig out a cross under pressure from Demel, and the ball bobbles behind **for a West Ham goal-kick.**” (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

29. “Ashley Young, however, can, but his effort is blocked **for a corner kick.**” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

From example 27, 28, and 29, it can be seen that all of “for phrases” are succeeded by technical nouns denoting set piece or set play. According to the official rule of association football, set pieces like “throw-in”, “goal-kick”, and “corner” can occur very frequently during the game. Normally when a team have the ball gone out from the pitch or commit a foul, the game will temporarily pause and the opposing team will be given the ball back to restart the play by taking set piece or set play. In other words, using “for phrase” followed by set pieces, as nouns, can obviously indicate the results of the previous action carried out by the action doer and manifest the interchange of ball possession between the two participating teams. To explain in details by basing from the example 27, “De Gea from Manchester United kicks the ball out of the field” can be seen as the whole action being reported. What De Gea did shortly before results in “a throw-in which will be later retaken by the opposing team, Newcastle, who are nicknamed, Toon”. This can be seen as the result that comes immediately afterwards. Almost identically to 27, examples 28 and 29 show a case of a player from a team having the ball gone out of play, which is regarded as a reported action. The consequence of that action is that the opposing team are given the right to resume the play by taking set piece, as written “for goal-kick” and “for corner”.

Another type of noun that follows the “for phrase” is the proper noun indicating player’s name. The examples of sentences with for phrase considered as result expression can be in the following instances.

30. “Rafael then scoops a pass down the line **for Valencia**.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

31. “Riise fires long **for Rodallega** to chase.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

32. “He plants it in **for Jelavic**, who wins the home side their first corner.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

From the examples given, it can be seen that the proper noun denoting player’s name is preceded by the preposition *for*, combined as “for phrase plus proper noun”. The semantic link of action and result is apparent here since the unit of utterance reported prior to the “for phrase” is the action of a player passing the ball (e.g., “scoops a pass”, “plants it in”, and “lofts a long ball”). “For phrase” with another player’s name coming right after can indicate the consequence of the latter player receiving the ball from the sender and now having it in his possession. Although, in 30, the commentator does not state the consequence of the formerly reported action explicitly by only using for phrase plus proper noun “for Valencia”, the context should help represent it so. Nowson (2001, p.32) analyses the result expression in spoken football commentary and find many identical structures of incomplete and context-oriented result expression of “for + proper noun”. He asserts that although the result expression can be written in shortened form, it requires audience’s contextual knowledge to understand that the complete form should be “Rafael then scoops a pass down the line for Valencia [to play.]”. Examples 31 and 32 are even more evident and complete types of result expression: 31 is a full form of result expression since the proper noun is followed by the infinitive with to, “for Rodallega to chase”, indicating clearly what the ball recipient does subsequently. In 32, the heavy clausal modifier, post-nominally attached to the proper noun, can also describe what “Jelavic”, the ball receiver, does immediately after he is given the ball successfully, to certain extent, as written “Jelavic, who wins the home side their first corner.”

Heavy Modifier

In this study, the use of heavy modifier (HM) appears as the fourth-ranked syntactic feature, at the occurrence rate of 3.43%. Heavy modifier is the use of incidental information that attaches either before or after proper noun mentioning the name of participants such as player, coach, or referee.

Heavy modifier, placed post nominally, or post-posed modifier is higher in its occurrence with proportion rate of 79.25%. In this study, heavy modifiers attached after the proper noun can be categorised according to its forms including: non-restrictive relative clauses, adjective prepositional phrases introduced by “with”, and other types of post posed modifiers such as present or past participial phrases and apposition.

The first category of post nominal heavy modifier found in this study is non-restrictive clauses, which give additional information to the noun they modify. The so-called non-identifying relative clauses are set off by comma and relative pronoun “who”. The clauses are embedded in the middle or appear towards the end of the sentences, as the respective examples show.

33. “*Arouna Kone, who will be heading off the Africa Cup of Nations after today's match*, holds off Rio Ferdinand but then loses the ball as Michael Carrick retreats to win back possession.” (“Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United”, 21st Match)

34. “Kagawa comes on for *Anderson, who had a steady if not spectacular game*.” (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)

It can be seen, from the set of examples above, that these non-defining relative clauses share certain corresponding characteristics with the analysis on non-restrictive relative clause by Stockwell, Schacher and Partee, 1973 as cited in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, p.594) First, in 33, the use of heavy modifiers in the form of non-restrictive relative clauses is employed only to provide additional information but not to specify the proper noun, as in “Arouna Kone, who will be heading off the Africa Cup of Nations after today's match,”. Second, in 34, they could also be employed to modify the head noun in the form of a comment, as in, “Anderson, who had a steady if not spectacular game”.

Nevertheless, the present study finds that there are also other postnominal heavy modifiers whose form is similar to non-restrictive relative but functions differently by not giving the additional information to the modified proper noun. In other words, these non-restrictive relative clauses are more likely to report the subsequent action of the proper nouns, as the direct object or the indirect object of the first standalone clause. The examples can be illustrated below.

35. “The ball falls to *Nani*, **who tries his luck with a long-range effort which goes wide**, but has Howard furious at his back four.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

36. “Giggs fires long towards *Rooney*, **who controls on his chest.**” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

37. “Carrick into *Giggs*, **who clips the ball forward towards Van Persie.**” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

As the examples illustrated, apart from providing the modified proper noun with its background information, these non-defining relative clauses seem to have another function of linking two clauses with complete thoughts via the use of referent “who”. To be more precise, when the sentence is separated into two smaller clausal units, each individual clause can stand independently and meaningfully on its own. As in 36, two standalone clauses are “Giggs fires [the ball] long towards Rooney.”, and “Rooney controls [the ball] on his chest.” Therefore, it seems that to substitute the succeeding clausal subject representing the identical individual as direct or indirect object in the preceding clause with the referent “who” is another way to join two independent clauses that foreground the complete idea together in sports commentary. Delin (2000) proposes that, in the language of sports commentary, linking the previous main clause that is grammatically equal to latter main clause through non-restrictive form is sometimes more preferable to joining two independent clauses with coordinating conjunction. The latter clause introduced by the referent “who” can be connected with the proper name in the previous clause coherently and immediately. That clausal units being freely joined is the characteristic of “connectedness” in unplanned and impromptu language, which, to certain level, is the characteristic of online football commentary. Delin (2000)’s idea is also parallel with Stockwell, Schacher and Partee, (1973)’s analysis which asserts that the non-defining

relative clauses can be generated from two grammatically standalone clauses (as cited in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, p.594).

The second type of postposed heavy modifier is adjective prepositional phrases set off by “with” attached to the proper noun it modifies. The examples can be as follows.

38. “*Van Persie with the dinked free-kick* but that's wide.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

39. “*Ward-Prowse with a quick one-two* and gets his shot off just wide of the post.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

40. “*Ward-Prowse with the cross to find Hooiveld* but Vidic just does enough.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

41. “*Giggs with a run down the left* and then whipping the ball into the box, but the Hoops defence does well to deal with the numbers in the area and clear the ball.” (“Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United”, 27th Match)

According to the set of examples above, all proper nouns indicating player names are succeeded by the prepositional phrase introduced by “with”. It is also interesting that all of these utterances can fall under the simplification category of head noun plus copula deletion since “It's”, functioning as the sentential subject and main verb, is omitted. Moreover, some of the objects of the preposition “with” are the football technical terms, functioning as nouns, such as “freekick” and “one-two”, as in 38 and 39, while some of the objects of preposition are the nouns that can be used as verb per se such as “cross” and “run”, as in 40 and 41. Although the commentator can simply convey the equal meaning in the full sentential forms such as “Ward-Prowse crosses to find Hooiveld.” or “Giggs runs down the left.”, the utterances may sound too monotonous and predictable. Therefore, the reasons for using these heavy noun phrases, resulting from head noun omission, could be related with the discursive functions of simplification to make the utterance sound more attractive, friendly, and picture-like. In addition, according to Perez-Zabater et al. (2008, p.253), the heavy noun phrase, which generated from proper noun plus its post nominal modifier, is regularly used in online football commentary because it is the construction which is easy for the writer to expand.

Other types of post-nominal heavy modifier that occur less frequently could consist of present or past participial phrase and full appositive. The examples can be in the given instances.

42. “*Suarez*, **finding plenty of space again**, weaves towards goal and wins another corner.” (“Liverpool versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

43. “*De Gea*, **sandwiched between Osman and Fellaini**, does well under pressure to deal with the corner after Baines lifts it in.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

44. “Oscar is taken off with *Azpilicueta* **the man** coming on.” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

From the above-given set of examples, it can be seen that in 42, the proper noun, *Suarez*, is written with post-posed modifier whose form is present participial phrase, “finding plenty of space again”. In 43, the name of a player, *De Gea*, is followed by the past participial phrase, “sandwiched between Osman and Fellaini”, functioning as post-nominal heavy modifier. Lastly, in 44, the post nominal appositive, “the man”, is located right after the proper noun, *Azpilicueta*, whom it renames.

In addition to postposed heavy modifier, prenominal heavy modifiers are also found at the fewer occurring proportion of 20.75%. Identified in this study, pre-posed modifiers, functioning to provide additional information to the modified proper noun, can be categorised according to its forms as the following: reduced appositive, also known as epithet, and full appositive.

The first type of prenominal heavy modifier that modifies proper noun is epithet. It is the reduced apposition in the form of “article with attributive adjective”, as the following examples show.

45. “Van Persie coolly tees up **an onrushing** *Scholes* inside the area off a one-two, but ginger-haired attacker is cut down before getting a shot off.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

46. “**An unmarked** *Le Fondre* on the six-yard box heads home.” (“Reading versus Manchester United”, 15th Match)

47. "Perfect finish from **the evergreen** *Giggs* after a good pass into the box from the edge of the area by Nani." ("Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United", 27th Match)

It is proposed that using articles, "a", "an", or "the", along with attributive adjectives, or reduced apposition, to modify noun, which signals people's name, is considered stylistically common in poetic and journalistic writing, but unconventional in spoken language (English language and usage, 2011). The use of article with attributive modifier functions in describing temporary or special characteristic of the proper noun it modifies (Using English, 2006). To firstly explain from examples 45 and 46, "an onrushing" and "an unmarked" respectively describe the transitory state of "Scholes" sprinting forward and "Le Fondre" having free space: these conditions will last only for a short period of time and can be viewed as the modifiers that describe the transitory state of the subjects. In 47, "the evergreen" represents the exceptional quality of "Giggs" being historically the oldest and longest serving player but still playing an influential part for his team at 40 years of age. In other words, the modifier is supposed to describe that he possesses the unrivalled physicality of being forever young and fit. The existence of pronominal epithet in this study of written online football commentary could be influenced by the writer's journalistic writing preference. Also it corresponds with Ferguson (1983)'s discussion which states the preposed modifying devices frequently used by sports announcer are "rare in conversational speech" (p.157).

The second type of prenominal heavy modifier is full appositive, a noun or noun phrase that renames the proper noun located next to it. Heavy modifier, functioning as full appositive, can be one or more word(s) combined, as the examples show.

48. "He wants a free-kick but **referee** *Mason* is not interested." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

49. "Wayne Rooney makes way for **experienced midfielder** *Paul Scholes*." ("Newcastle United versus Manchester United", 7th Match)

50. "**Goalscorer** *Gerrard* goes down to win Liverpool a free-kick" ("Liverpool versus Manchester United", 5th Match)

51. “Everton's Leon Osman makes way for **Republic of Ireland defender Seamus Coleman.**” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

52. “**Former United youth player Campbell** heads past De Gea at the far post off a good cross from Sessegnon.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

As can be seen, all appositional noun phrases placed prenominal have the function to redefine the proper nouns. The supplementary information provided by the prenominal appositions are correspondent with Ferguson (1983)'s assertion. That is the brief incidental information attached to the mentioned participants could be the role, “referee”, as in 48, characteristic “experienced midfielder”, as in 49, previous performance, “goalscorer”, as in 50, and other related description such as nationality “Republic of Ireland defender”, as in 51, and historical background of an individual “former United youth player”, as in 52. These sort of prenominal heavy modifiers function similarly to non-restrictive apposition since they do not specify but rather merely add extra description to the modified noun. Without these preposed modifiers, the persons being referred to are still explicit and can be understood by the audience.

Routine

In sports commentary, routine is the use of rule-governed word combination for specific commentarial purpose in order to vary commentary from conventional language expression. In this study, the use of routine is found at relatively insignificant occurrence rate of 0.95%, either in the form of numerical statement or idiomatic phrase. The present finding of routines being identified as one amongst the least employed syntactic features is consistent with the previous work on online football commentary conducted by Perez-Sabater, et al. (2008) and the analysis of traditional spoken football commentary carried out by Nowson (2001). Concerning the use of numerical statement, the present findings reveal that the commentator's use of numbering expression occurs at the higher proportion rate of 81.82%. The use of routinised numerical statement is in accordance with Ferguson's (1983) analysis, at least to certain extent, in the following ways including: 1) they are generally presented in the briefest possible form, 2) they are in the forms of two cardinal numbers individually separated by connector or no connector, and 3) they are used conventionally in the way the hosting team's score is stated prior to the visiting team's

score. To be more precise on which side is considered a hosting or visiting team, it should be noted that there is a convention to read the home team's name before that of the away team in British football commentary (Ferguson, 1983, p.164). For instance, in "Manchester United versus Newcastle United", the name of the home team, "Manchester United", will come first in order while that of the away team, "Newcastle United", will be placed afterwards. This can be literally interpreted as "Manchester United" *host* or *are visited by* "Newcastle United". The examples could be as the following.

53. "Manchester United 1-2 Newcastle!" ("Manchester United versus Newcastle United", 19th Match)

54. "QPR 0-2 Man United." ("Queens Park Rangers versus Manchester United", 27th Match)

55. "Chelsea 2 Man United 3." ("Chelsea versus Manchester United", 9th Match)

56. "Reading 3 Man United 4." ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

According to the set of examples above, all of the numerical statements are written in simplified and summarised forms of noun phrase and the scores of the hosting team are reported first. 53 and 54 are particularly the case of numbering expression with dash, -, as the separator between two cardinal figures representing teams' scores. In 55 and 56, although the pair of numbers is not parted by dash, they can be seen as other possibility of using numbering expression with "no connector" as well, according to Ferguson's (1983, p. 160). In essence, the latter two are still restrictedly routinised by their use of simplified construction and words order, which the home teams' scores are initially reported. Nowson (2001, p.35) also detects the identical use of routinised numerical statements in oral football commentary: the present study's examples 53 and 54 are correlated with his analysis of "Team A lost X Y to Team B", and examples 55 and 56 are similar to his identified formula of "Team A X Team B Y".

Interestingly, there are certain uses of numerical statements that are in some ways not in accordance with Ferguson's (1983) proposal. First, these numbering expressions are written in full sentential form. Second, the winning team's score is

reported in the preceding position despite being the visiting side. However, to a noticeable extent, they still possess the other routinising characteristics of having fixed word sequences and being sparingly used for specific purposes obviously as the closing speech.

57. "Manchester United beat 10-man Liverpool 2-1." ("Liverpool versus Manchester United", 5th Match)

58. "That's it, another remarkable United comeback sees them beat Villa 3-2." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

From examples 57 and 58, it can be seen that the numerical statement is not stated independently but it serves as a conclusive part of the full sentential construction. In addition, the winning team's score is reported before the hosting team score and the verb "beat" is mutually employed. Therefore, it is obviously seen that these numbering expressions have the fixed formula of: "Team A beat Team B by X-Y", which is also parallel with Nowson (2001)'s analysis.

Apart from the use of numerical statement, the present findings show that idiomatic phrase is also used sparingly at 18.18%. However, this sort of routine detected in this study is employed restrictedly and repetitively for one purpose. This can, more or less, affirm Ferguson's (1983) and Kuiper (1996)'s mutual prediction. That is to say, the idiomatic phrase is the rule governed and fixed word sequence that can be automatically used by the commentator, in a particular circumstance. The examples of phrase with idiomatic property can be as the following.

59. "Carroll heads it back across goal, and Vaz Te is on hand **to nod home** from close range." ("West Ham versus Manchester United", 33rd Match)

60. "GOAL - WAYNE ROONEY - Rooney steps up **to slot home.**" ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

61. "GOAL - ADAM LE FONDRE - An unmarked Le Fondre on the six-yard box **heads home.**" ("Reading versus Manchester United", 15th Match)

According to examples 59, 60, and 61, the use of the "verb plus home" could be considered as the use of idiomatic phrase employed exclusively in football commentary to refer to scoring a goal with different parts of the body. As shown in 59 and 61, "to nod home" and "to head home" have an equal meaning of "scoring a goal with one's head". In 60, "to slot home" means "to score a goal with one's feet".

Also, when taking Kuiper's (1996) proposal of idiomatic qualities into account, it is obviously seen that, first, the word "home" does not have a direct or denotative meaning of "a place where one resides" and does not belong to the part of speech of noun, as opposed to its general meaning and form. Second, in this context, "home" cannot stand alone on its own and is always restricted in its position. It has to be placed only after the transitive verb and serve as the post-verbal particle, which makes the entire unit of word sequence complete syntactically and semantically. According to Oxford's online dictionary, one instance of "home" is classified as the integral part of the idiomatic phrase, "hit or strike home", which connotatively means "reach an intended target" (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2014). Third, although the use of "verb plus home" is used sparingly, it is repetitively employed in a specific situation of football commentary only when a team score a goal as it is shown in 59 and even more evident in 60 and 61.

Another concrete support of the idiomatic phrases, "nod home, slack home, and head home" being used exclusively only in a particular register of British football commentary, not in other types of language register, is the results displayed via the search query in British National Corpus Online, the large archives of language in use across publication types collected over the years. The corpus reveals that "nod home", meaning to score a goal with one's feet, is employed only in the context of football commentary, as in "Wright knocked the free kick head high across goal and Wilkinson escaped his marker to nod home at the far post" (British National Corpus Online, 2014). Regarding the use of "head home", 18 results out of 26 queries show that "head home" is used specially in football commentary, denoting to score a goal with one's head, as in "Dino Baggio rises above the Maltese defence to head home Italy's first goal in last night's World Cup qualifier in Palermo" (British National Corpus Online, 2014). In simple comparison, the use of "Rooney heads home" will have connotative or indirect meaning of "Rooney scores a goal with his head" only if the phrase is employed exclusively in the context of football commentary. In stark contrast, if the phrase occurs in the ordinary context, it will be denotatively referred to as "Rooney goes home".

Inversion

In this present study, the frequency of occurrence of inversion is accounted for 0.00% because none of the two subcategories of inversion, which are subject-copula and subject-verb inversion, is detected. It is mutually proposed by Ferguson (1983) and Delin (2000) that the use of inversion in spoken sports commentary is mainly for identification purpose. By fronting the predicate at the initial position of a sentence, the announcers are provided with enough time to specify who the subject actually is under real time condition. However, in the context of written sports commentary, the production of language is not as time critical as in oral commentary. The time difference in writing may allow the commentators to make sure who the doer of a particular action is before reporting it. As a consequence, the use of inverted construction for identification purpose could be regarded as unnecessary in written commentary setting. The present study's findings on the inexistence of inversion in online football commentary also correspond with the work by Perez-Sabater et al. (2008) who discuss that the use of inversion in written language of English is more characteristically related to literature or scholarly license than to a journalistic undertaking.

The succeeding discussions present the research findings with regard to second purpose of this study:

2. To determine the frequency of occurrence of communicative functions in online football commentary.

In addition to the investigation of syntactic features, this study also attempts to categorise the functional utterances employed by the online football commentary writer by basing on Delin (2000)'s classification of communicative functions in football commentary, namely, narrative, evaluative, elaborative, and summarising.

Narrative

Regarding the frequency of occurrences of communicative functions, in this study, the findings show that commentarial type of narrative is mostly employed and accounted for 57.62%. The results of narrative as the predominant communicative function can affirm Delin (2000)'s finding: the real time football commentary is chiefly composed of narration functioning to report the simultaneous play-by-play

action. The characteristic forms of narrative function found in this study are in congruous with Delin's explanation. First, narrative is the description of a player controlling the ball or having it at his disposal. The examples can be as follows.

62. "**The ball** is now back with De Gea, who takes no chances in having a touch before launching a clearance downfield." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

63. "Scholes, again, on **the ball** as he tries to feed Young with options briefly to the left and right of him." ("Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers", 13th Match)

64. "United soon have **it** back." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

Examples 62 and 63 show that the commentator attempts to describe the player with ball possession by clearly mentioning the ball. In 64, although the word "ball" is substituted by the referential pronoun "it", reader will obviously know that "it" is the reference of "the ball" by relying on the preceding or succeeding context.

Second, the commentarial type of narrative can be the mention of "set piece" such as "free-kick, throw-in, or corner". The narrative commentary with reference of "set pieces" functions to restart plays that are temporarily paused, as the following examples illustrate.

65. "Toffees **free-kick**." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

66. "Evra over **a throw** for United." ("Manchester United versus Manchester City", 31st Match)

67. "**Corner** for Southampton now." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

From examples 65, 66, and 67, the reference of "set pieces" can be seen as the writer's attempt to begin the narration of another sequence of previously occurred actions. Generally, free-kick is a result of a player committing a foul on its opposition, while "a throw and a corner" is a consequence of a team having the ball gone out, which an opposing team will be given right to restart the game afterwards.

Apart from mentioning the ball holder or set piece taker as Delin proposes, the communicative functions of narrative can be also related with all other

actions that take place timed-critically in the game such as the narration of players passing the ball, defending, moving, tackling, or attempting a shot, etc., as in the following examples.

68. “Rooney **feeds** Cleverley as the visitors get forward.” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

69. “Young and Evra **move** down the left.” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

70. “Gutierrez flies in with a rash **tackle** on Kagawa and is handed a caution by Webb.” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

71. “Evans hacks the ball **clear**.” (“Fulham versus Manchester United”, 25th Match)

72. “Wickham, again, with a **shot** on goal that this time test De Gea.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

It can be seen from the set of examples that “feed”, as in 68, “move”, as in 69, “tackle”, as in 70, “clear”, as in 71, and “shoot”, as in 72, are entirely related with the action description, which is the main intention of the narrator: to describe how events progress. The dominance of narrative commentarial type in this study on online football commentary, as a sub-genre of live sports commentary, could also generalise the main communicative function in live report of sports of all kinds as a whole, whether in written or spoken register. In oral football commentary, the functional utterances that primarily govern the whole register are based on the narration of sequential account of each action (Nowson, 2001 and McGuire and Armfield, 2008). Also, in other live sports of basketball, the most ruling communicative function that shapes and serves as main purpose of the entire register are interrelated with describing play-by-play action as well (Reaser, 2003; Moris and Nydahl, 1983).

Evaluative

Concerning the second most employed communicative function, it is revealed that the commentarial type of evaluation appears at the extent of 29.21%, second to narrative. The online football commentary writer’s opinions can be expressed towards all incidents and participants in the game, either in a positive or a negative way. It is also found that the majority of commentarial types of evaluation is explicitly

represented through the use of adjectives and adverbs. The examples of explicit evaluative commentary on the players can be as the followings.

73. “**Excellent** play from Lennon, as he nudges the ball past Evra, the United left-back drawn into making the foul.” (“Tottenham Hotspurs versus Manchester United”, 23rd Match)

74. “**Awful** decision by the defender.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

75. “Giggs ensures United retain possession in Chelsea's final third, linking up play **splendidly** with the game surely over now.” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

76. But McAnuff **badly** misplaces a pass to give United a throw-in. (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)

According to examples 73 and 74, the opinionated commentary is represented through the use of adjective. The positive evaluation in 73 is explicitly presented via the use of the adjective “excellent” after a player, Aaron Lennon, wins his team a free kick after triggering a foul from his opponent; while, in 74, the negative evaluation is directly exhibited through the use of the adjective “awful” to criticise a player who earlier committed a foul in the penalty box. In 75 and 76, the writer’s positive and negative evaluations are respectively demonstrated via the use of adverbs “splendidly” and “badly” intensifying how good and bad players do.

In addition to making opinionated comments based on an individual performance, the commentator can also express his evaluative judgements toward collective individuals or a team as the following examples show.

77. “**Fantastic** football from Southampton now.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

78. “A very **uncharacteristic** start this from Chelsea.” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

79. “City knocking the ball around **nicely**.” (“Manchester United versus Manchester City”, 31st Match)

80. “The visitors haven’t **really** threatened.” (“Manchester United versus Swansea City”, 37th Match)

As can be observed from examples 77 and 78, the commentator poses his evaluation collectively on the performance of a team or a group of individuals. In 77 and 78, the names of teams are stated. The adjectives “fantastic” and “uncharacteristic” can be regarded as the commentator’s indication of his glowing and unfavourable reference towards players from “Southampton” and “Chelsea”, respectively as an entire group. In 79 and 80, the positive and negative evaluations towards teams, “City” and “The visitor”, are indicated by using the adverb “nicely” and “not really”.

It is found that the online football commentary writer does not only give his opinions on players and teams as the main participants of football commentary, but also on other participants such as coaches and referees. Although these coaching and refereeing staff may play a less frequent role than those of players in a football match, their roles on certain occasions can be considered a make-or-break part of the game. The examples of online football commentary writer’s assessment of coach and referee could be seen in the following instances.

81. “Ferguson has picked a **really strong**, attack line-up for today and once can already see them probing for an opening up front.” (“Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers”, 13th Match)

82. “Arouna Kone thinks he has given Wigan a lifeline as he turns home Franco Di Santo's low cross from close range, but for the third time today we have a goal disallowed for offside and, for the third time today, it is a **good** decision.” (“Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United”, 21st Match)

83. “A bit **harsh**, not much contact.” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

84. “Hunt is **correctly** booked for a studs-up, sliding challenge on Smalling.” (“Manchester United versus Reading”, 29th Match)

85. “Now a wonderful through-ball from Lambert finds Lallana but he is (**wrongly**) ruled offside.” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

From examples 81, 82, and 83, the writer’s evaluative comments towards coach and referee can be obviously seen. In 81, the commentator speaks highly of Mr. Ferguson, the Manchester United’s manager, whose attacking-based strategy is working effectively and is becoming a threat to its opponent by admiring his team

selection through the use of the adjective “strong” in “a really strong attack line up”. In 82, the commentator praises the referee who makes a correct and lawful decision in disallowing three controversial goals by using the adjective “good” in “good decision”. On the other hand, in 83, the match official is criticised by the use of adjective “harsh” in what is supposed to be “It’s a bit harsh decision by the referee”, for he is too tough to give a foul which is viewed as a very soft one according to the commentator’s perspective.

In 84 and 85, the commentator’s utterances, represented through the use of adverbs modifying the present simple passive, project the commentator’s evaluation of the referee’s actions and decisions. When transforming the sentential constructions of 84 and 85 from passive into active voice, both will be “Referee books Hunt correctly for a studs-up, sliding challenge on Smalling.” and “Referee wrongly rules him offside.” If separating the commentary into smaller communicative function units, “Hunt is booked” and “Lallana is ruled offside” can be seen as narrative, describing what is going on, while, “That Hunt is booked is a correct decision” and “That Lallana is ruled offside is a wrong decision” can be respectively viewed as the online football commentary writer’s subjective arguments for and against the referee’s action with the use of adverbs “correctly” and “wrongly”.

The significant occurrence of evaluative commentarial type detected in this study could manifest that the alternative register of online football commentary still shares equally the same secondary purpose with the oral and written sports report in mainstream genre to involve the audience by using emotion-driven expression and subjective comments towards incidents and participants in the game (Ghadessey, 1988; Delin, 2000). Moreover, the primary use of adjectives and adverbs to express the writer’s opinion in this study is correspondent with the analysis of the core vocabulary in the written sports reports in newspapers by Politis (2007), who analyses evaluative adjective by basing Martin (2000)’s model of appraisal theory. Martin’s model classifies evaluative adjectives into three general groups; namely, 1) judgement, 2) appreciation, and 3) affect. The exemplified adjectives in this study such as “strong” can fall under Martin’s sub classification of the adjectives based in social esteem, as a sub category of adjective for judgement. Also, the adjectives “good” and “correct” are employed for expressing the positive viewpoints; while, “harsh”, and

“wrong” are for the negative viewpoint. Both of which can be classified as a social sanction which is another sub category of the adjective using for judgement per se. Furthermore, “fantastic” and “uncharacteristic” can be classified as the sub-categorical adjectives used for reaction and valuation in Martin (2000)’s type of appreciation adjective, respectively.

Summarising

Regarding the third most employed communicative function, the study reveals that the functional utterance of summarising can be accounted for 9.08%. In this study, the commentarial types of summarisation are put into practice at times by the commentator and can be categorised as: 1) general overview of the flowing play-by-play narration, 2) a flashback of decisive or controversial incidents that previously occurred such as goal scoring and sending-off, and 3) a sum-up of the game at the end of each time division.

First, the commentarial type of summarising can interrupt the narration and occur at various time period of the game. Instead of repetitively describing what is happening play-by-play in details in every utterance, there are certain occasions when the commentator shifts from narrating to giving the overview of the game at certain points such as at the beginning, at the middle, or at the ending part of entire commentary. This type of functional utterance of summarising can be classified into two groups by basing on its forms: 1) a summary in progressive aspect plus adverbial phrase specifying time, and 2) a summary in perfect aspect plus adverb of duration.

The examples of the summarising communicative function marked by the use of progressive aspect and adverb phrase of time specification could be as the following.

86. “The home side **struggling** to get the ball up to Lambert *in the early stages.*” (“Southampton versus Manchester United”, 3rd Match)

87. “Hoops **coming** to live *in the closing stages of the first half,* with United now having to all the defending.” (“Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers”, 13th Match)

88. “United **are looking** for something *in these late stages.*” (“Everton versus Manchester United”, 1st Match)

According to examples 86, 87, 88, the use of summarising commentarial type during the game is marked with collective nouns representing teams as subjects “The home side”, “Hoops”, and “United” as well as progressive aspects of present continuous verb forms “struggling”, “coming”, and “looking”. First, these characteristics can indicate the state of on-going game collectively as a whole rather than specifying what takes place individually step-by-step, as opposed to the communicative function of narrative. The use of present progressive verb form to summarise the certain parts of the game also corresponds with Ferguson (1983)’s suggestion that present progressive tense can alternatively function to sum up the events in sports commentary. Second, there is hardly any ball, set-pieces, or player with the ball possession mentioned in the summarising functional utterances occurring throughout the course of commentary. The absence of commentator’s reference to the ball and its possessor contradicts to the communicative function of narrative where the mention of the ball and individual player are heavily emphasised. Last but not the least, the commentarial type of summarising interrupting the narrative function is marked by the use of adverbial phrases of duration indicating general tendency of team performance in different time spans of the game such as “in the early stages”, “in the closing stages of the first half”, and “in these late stages”.

In addition to the form marked by progressive aspect and adverbial phrase indicating specific time, another form of summarising communicative function that occurs as an interrupting part of narration can be represented through the perfect aspect along with durative adverb as illustrated in the following instances.

89. “United still enjoying the majority of possession but their final ball is poor and Villa **have dealt** with them well, **thus far**.” (“Aston Villa versus Manchester United”, 11th Match)

90. “United **have enjoyed** the lion's share of possession **so far**, although they are yet to even test Tim Krul, whose only job so far has been to take goal-kicks.” (“Manchester United versus Newcastle United”, 19th Match)

91. “From back to front, West Ham **have been** exceptional **thus far**.” (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

When considering examples 89, 90, and 91, it can be seen that all summarising communicative function employed during the game can be also written

in perfect aspect marked by the use of have plus past participle verb form (e.g., “have dealt”; “have enjoyed”) and adverb (e.g., “thus far”; “so far”), implying how well teams or collective individuals have performed up to the time of reporting. It’s also quite noticeable that whenever the commentator attempts to summarise how a team has done up to certain point of a game in the perfect aspect, there is also a strong sense of evaluation added as it is presented through the use of evaluative adverbs (well) and adjectives (exceptional).

Second, the communicative function of summarising can be used when the commentator attempts to reiterate the crucial incidents of the game that occurred shortly before such as a team scoring a goal, a player being sent off, or other controversial events. The examples of the commentary types of summarisation being employed on such occasions could be in the following instances.

92. “GOAL! Robin van Persie **doubles** United’s lead with a stunning goal as he **turns** inside Ivan Ramis, leaving the Wigan defender on his backside, and **curls** a right-footed finish past Ali Al Habsi and into the top corner.” (“Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United”, 21st Match)

93. “Red card for Ivanovic! Ivanovic **clips** the heels of Young as the United winger **sprints** through on goal, and being the last man, the Chelsea man is giving his marching orders!” (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

It can be observed from examples 92 and 93 that the online football commentary writer always gives a detailed summary of a goal scoring, as in 92, as well as a booking, as in 93. Although, at first glance, this sort of summarising communicative function seems to share a few similar characteristics with those of narrative commentarial types in relation to the obvious use of present simple tense verb form and the portrait of play-by-play action, the most crucial characteristic that differentiates it from narrative is its non-time criticality. The narrative-like summary is regarded as the action that already occurred in the past, not at the moment of reporting, which is in stark contrast with the time-critical narrative. In other words, rather than narrating play-by-play action in real time, the communicative function of summarising is employed for thoroughly depicting the essential events that occurred in the not-so-distant past from narrative perspective using historical present tense (e.g., “doubles”, “turns”, “curls”, “clips”, and “sprints”). Therefore, the use of historical present in

online football commentary is for retelling the decisive incidents that took place in the past such as a goal being scored and a player being shown a red card. It could share the similar effect with the so-called dramatic present employed in other literary works to vividly highlight and to summarise the past events that are especially essential, as proposed by certain grammarians (Leech, 1971; Brinton, 1992; and Huddleston and Pullum, 2002).

In addition to the summarising communicative function used to give an overview on different courses of commentary and to retell the significant events in detailed and pictorial manner, third, the functional utterance of summarising can occur at the end of each time division, underlying the final results of each half or the entire game as well as recalling the major incidents that have happened so far up until final whistle. The examples could be as follows.

94. "The whistle blows for half-time and it's Newcastle 0 Manchester United 2 after goals from defenders Evans and Evra." ("Newcastle United versus Manchester United", 7th Match)

95. "The full-time whistle goes and Manchester United have run out comfortable 4-0 winners over Wigan Athletic to strengthen their position at the top of the table. Manchester United still have a seven-point advantage in the title race after two goals apiece for Javier Hernandez and Robin van Persie gave them the perfect start to 2013, while Wigan remain just above the relegation zone after a demoralising home defeat." ("Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United", 21st Match)

The above-mentioned examples show that the summarising communicative function employed by the online football commentary writer is mainly for summing up the scores at the end of the first or two halves of play as well as reminding the audience who were the goal scorers, as in 94. In 95, apart from generally reviewing the final results and goal scorers, the consequences of already finished game can be also discussed such as the points gained by the winning side, "seven-point advantage in the title race", or both teams' positions in the current domestic competition as in "strengthen their position at the top of the table" and "remain just above the relegation zone".

Elaborative

Regarding the least employed communicative function, the present study finds that the use of elaborative commentarial type is amounted to 4.09%. The reason why elaborative communicative function is employed infrequently in online football commentary can be because it is not entirely related to play-by-play action but merely functions to colour the commentary by providing interesting match statistics, previous background of teams and players, the description of the stadiums and the crowds, and occasional commentator's prediction on players' minds and their future actions. The examples of elaborative commentarial types of statistical information and teams/players' past records can be seen in the following instances.

96. "Passing statistics show this as 50:50 and that speaks volumes for Southampton's efforts here, especially as United dominated the early minutes." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

97. "Once again this season the Red Devils concede within the first 15 minutes after the restart and Ferguson won't be too impressed." ("Manchester United versus Queens Park Rangers", 13th Match)

98. "That goal will come as a massive boost to the Magpies who have not won at Old Trafford since 1972." ("Manchester United versus Newcastle United", 19th Match)

99. "Wayne Rooney has scored seven goals in eight games at Old Trafford in 2013 (all competitions)." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

According to the set of examples, the commentator, in 96, attempts to elaborate the commentary with the statistical figures indicating the overall ball possession between the two teams in "passing statistics show this as 50:50". In 97, the elaborative commentarial type is employed for providing background information that Manchester United, or the Red Devils, have had the unpleasant record of letting their opponents score an early goal in this year's domestic competition as it is presented in "once again this season the Red Devils concede within the first 15 minutes after the restart". In 98, the elaborative communicative function relating to historical background of a team, Newcastle, who have had poor away records at Manchester United's home ground, is provided in "the Magpies who have not won at Old Trafford since 1972". Lastly, in 99, the commentarial type of elaboration is

used to provide personal profile of an individual player, Wayne Rooney, who has an astonishing goalscoring record at his team's home ground this year as written "Wayne Rooney has scored seven goals in eight games at Old Trafford in 2013 (all competitions)".

Apart from providing the audience with statistical and historical facts based on teams' and players' records, the elaborative commentarial type can be used in the forms of explanation of what is happening outside the field where two teams compete such as the reaction of the supporters, the surrounding atmosphere, or even the climate which could have an insignificant effect on the game. The examples can be as the following.

100. "Wigan's fans were already starting to stream out of the exits before that Van Persie goal and they are now heading out in their droves in an effort to beat the traffic." ("Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United", 21st Match)

101. "Goodison is rocking now, with the fans belting their support." ("Everton versus Manchester United", 1st Match)

102. "The rain is now very heavy at Old Trafford." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 29th Match)

From the set of examples, it can be seen that the commentator employs the communicative function of elaborative by making description on the other incidents unrelated to the play-by-play action. In 100, the commentator attempts to describe the disappointing reaction of the local supporters who begin leaving the stadium before the game ends since their team are behind by a large goal margins and going to be embarrassedly defeated. In 101, the vigorous atmosphere inside the stadium where the home supporters are singing loudly and energetically after their team score a goal is indicated. In 102, instead of only reporting what is occurring on the pitch, the commentator shifts to elaborative function by describing the weather.

Lastly, the elaborative communicative function can be the commentator's speculation of an individual or a group of individual's motivational mind. The example can be as the following.

103. "Villa starting to *believe* they **could** get something here." ("Aston Villa versus Manchester United", 11th Match)

104. "United will *feel* that they **should** be in front." ("Fulham versus Manchester United", 25th Match)

105. "With City having won 3-1 at Newcastle earlier, United **will** be more than ever *determined* to bag a three-point result today." ("Manchester United versus Reading", 17th Match)

106. "A failed Arsenal move breaks down on the edge of the box, but United aren't exactly breaking with urgency and it appears they **may** be *happy* to settle for the draw." ("Arsenal versus Manchester United", 35th Match)

According from the set of examples 103, 104, 105, and 106, all of which are marked by the use of modal auxiliaries such as "could", "will", "should", and "may", which are grammatically a clear sign of possibility and prediction. In Leech's (2006) Glossary of English Grammar, modalities such as "could" and "may" are closely related with the concept of feasibility, "will" is associated with the idea of mental attitude or purpose, and "should" is connected with the notion of probability (p.64). In addition, it can be seen that the examples 103 and 104 are marked with the use of non-action or mental verbs conveying the ideas of what the subjects have in minds rather than concretely describing what the subjects do such as "believe" and "feel". In 105 and 106, the main verbs employed are the linking verbs "be" followed by the adjectives "determined" and "happy", representing the mental condition of the subjects, not the states of acting.

The Overlap of Communicative Functions

Since this present study's criteria for analysing the communicative functions are set on sentential level, it is found that the overlap of communicative functions in a sentence is frequently common. In this study, one of the most overlapping communicative functions detected in a commentarial sentence is narrative and evaluative. This could be because the online football commentary writers always assert their opinions along with what is happening on the pitch in order to make their commentarial utterances sound more exciting to the spectators. The example could be as follows.

107. "Good interchange between Valencia and Kagawa brings a corner for United on the right." ("Southampton versus Manchester United", 3rd Match)

From example 107, the commentarial utterance is the combination of evaluative and narrative communicative functions. When separating the sentence into analysable units, evaluative is represented by the use of the adjective “good” indicating the commentator’s positive judgement towards the linking up play between a pair of players, “Kagawa” and Valencia; while, narrative function is expressed by the play-by-play action of the former player sending the ball and the latter player receiving it.

Apart from the overlaps of narrative and evaluative, another concurrence of communicative functions in a commentarial sentence found frequently can be formed by summarising and evaluative. As stated previously, the summarising communicative function is employed at varied points of commentarial course generally during the game, shortly after the decisive incidents, or at the end of each time division. When making summary on such events, the commentators are also not prohibited to assert his opinions on what he has witnessed up to a point of commentary. The examples could be as the following.

108. Game's changed here, with the visitors now playing most of the threatening football. (“West Ham versus Manchester United”, 33rd Match)

109. Javier Hernandez steers home another fine finish from just inside the area after Robin van Persie's free-kick cannons into the defensive wall and drops perfectly for the Mexican. (“Wigan Athletic versus Manchester United”, 21st Match)
It's been a terrific half of football at Stamford Bridge, in which Chelsea are firmly back into after going 2-0 down early on. (“Chelsea versus Manchester United”, 9th Match)

As can be seen from example 108, the main communicative function of the commentarial utterance is a summary during one of the game’s periods. It is represented by the use of verb in perfect aspect, “has changed”, indicating how the momentum of the play has altered up to the present point of reporting. It can also be viewed that not only is the commentarial utterance based on the summarising communicative function but it also has another layer of evaluative communicative functions with the use of the adjective “threatening” in “with the visitors now playing most of the threatening football”, pointing the hosting team’s goal scoring potential.

The commentarial sentence of 109 is also governed by the summarising communicative function that is used for detailing the important incident of goal-scoring in the form of non time critical narrative with the use of verbs in historical present forms, “steers”, “cannons”, and “drops”. Since the utterance is mainly based on the action of goal scoring, it is common for the writer to assert his positive opinion on how spectacular the goal is being setup and eventually scored by the assisting player and goal scorer. Therefore, the positive evaluation towards the goal setting/scoring incident is expressed via the use of adjective “fine” and adverb “perfectly”.

Example 110 is also the commentarial utterance mainly governed by summarising communicative function with a strong shade of evaluative: it is employed for summing the game up at the end of first half by reminding the readers the finals scores and the major incidents as well as for giving an opinion on how entertaining the game has been during the first 45 minutes through the use of the adjectives “terrific” and “firmly”.

Observably, the sequence of communicative functions in the commentarial utterances is interchangeable: summarising can be succeeded by evaluative, and vice versa. For instance, in 108, a summarising communicative function in the form of an overview of the game thus far, marked by perfect aspect, in “Game's changed here”, is introduced first. Then, it is followed by an evaluative commentarial type in the form of phrasal modifier, “with the visitors now playing most of the threatening football”, which intensifies how the away team's performance gives them an advantage over the home team. Nevertheless, in 110, an evaluative communicative function appears prior to the summarising one. The commentator assigns a priority of evaluative communicative function via the use of the adjective, “terrific”, which modifies “half of football at Stamford Bridge”, before summing up what has happened in the first division of game so far in detail again in “in which Chelsea are firmly back into after going 2-0 down early on”.

Apart from the frequent overlaps of functional utterances between narrative and evaluative or between summarising and evaluative, it is also found that a commentarial utterance can be combined with other types of communicative functions as well. The concurrence of other dual-layered commentarial sentence of

summarising-elaborative, evaluative-elaborative, and elaborative-narrative could be as the following.

111. “Newcastle have now conceded two early goals from set-pieces and will have to tighten things up.” (“Newcastle United versus Manchester United”, 7th Match)

112. “It obviously means the world to Gerrard on such a significant day.” (“Liverpool versus Manchester United”, 5th Match)

113. “The home fans raise their voices in unison as Nemanja Vidic warms up on the sidelines.” (“Manchester United versus Sunderland”, 17th Match)

According to the examples, each commentarial sentence is governed by a couple of communicative functions. 111 is a combination of summarising and elaborative. Written in perfect aspect, “Newcastle have now conceded two early goals from set-pieces” can be classified as the summarising communicative function that gives the overview of how a team, “Newcastle”, has lost a couple of goals against its opponent in the initial part of the game; while “will have to tighten things up” can be regarded as the commentator’s speculation on their motivation to turn things around marked by the use of the modality, “will”.

Example 112 is also the commentarial utterance in which elaborative and evaluative communicative functions overlap. It can be interpreted as the clash between two of the fiercest rivals in football history –between Liverpool and Manchester United– which will be a very important match for the Liverpool’s captain, “Steven Gerrard”. This can be classified as the prediction on a player’s motives and thoughts which fall under the communicative function of elaborative; while the use of the adverb and adjective “obviously” and “significant” can be viewed as the writer’s evaluative opinion that intensifies how special the occasion is.

In example 113, the overlap between elaborative and narrative communicative functions can be identified. “The home fans raise their voices in unison” can be classified as elaborative communicative function that describes the hosting team crowd’s supportive reaction towards a player, “Nemanja Vidic”, who is preparing to make a home game appearance after having been absent from the first team squads due to long-term injury. The description of a player who is about

to substitute his team mate is also regarded as part of the ongoing game and can be classified narrative communicative function.

In addition, more than often, the overlapping phenomenon occurs especially when the commentarial utterance is composed of more than one independent clause or in the form of compound-complex sentence. The concurrence of communicative functions in one sentential commentarial utterance could reflect the high density of writing content executed by the online football commentary writer. The example of commentarial sentence that covers all four types of communicative functions is as the following.

114. "Massive penalty appeals from the home side now as Javier Hernandez's shot strikes the arm of Fabricio Coloccini inside the area, but the referee is adamant in his denial of a spot-kick, although replays show Manchester United might have had a case there as the defender's arm was well away from his body at the time of contact." ("Manchester United versus Newcastle United", 19th Match)

It can be seen from the example above that the commentarial utterance is quite long and written in compound-complex sentential construction. When separating the entire utterance into smaller and analysable communicative function units, four types of communicative functions will be identified in one instance. By basing on the chronological sequence of the event, first, "Javier Hernandez's shot strikes the arm of Fabricio Coloccini inside the area", "[There are] Massive penalty appeals from the home side now", and "the referee is adamant in his denial of a spot-kick" can be classified as narrative communicative function which describes what is going on play-by-play. To simply narrate, one player tries to score a goal but his effort is blocked by the opponent player in the penalty box. The offending side then asks the referee to give them a penalty kick, for they see that the defender intentionally uses one of his arms to prevent their goal scoring attempt. However, the match authority rejects their bid at all costs. Second, the use of the adjectives "massive" and "adamant" is obviously the sign of the commentator's subjective evaluation towards the penalty appeal incident that becomes more and more controversial with the reaction of the referee who stubbornly sticks to his opinion by not giving a penalty. Third, the commentator asserts his elaborative speculation on player thoughts of having reasonable argument to ask the official for what they appropriately deserve, as written

“Manchester United might have had a case there”. Fourth, the commentator supports his speculation by employing the summarising communicative function to refer back to that controversial hand ball incident in details again, stating that “the defender’s arm was well away from his body at the time of contact”.

In conclusion, the frequent overlap of communicative functions in a commentarial sentence can be mainly resulted by the following reasons. First, the complicated sentential construction, consisting of more than one clausal unit, can convey different ideas. A variety of content messages in a commentarial sentence is a result of different communicative functions. Second, the predominant use of adjectival and adverbial modifier is employed by online football commentators to add their evaluative comments to the utterances. Although a commentarial utterance can be mainly governed by the individual communicative function of narrative, elaborative, and summarising, the existence of adjectives and adverbs in a particular sentence can be an obvious sign of evaluative communicative function per se.

Pedagogical Applications

Since the main emphasis of this present study is based on a thorough analysis of the language structures and their meaningful functions, it is hoped that the final findings could be pedagogically applicable in both general and specific ways.

In the general view of English teaching and learning, this study’s analysis could benefit the specialised researching field of language usage in the Internet-based setting since it could reflect characteristics of how and the extent to which spoken language and written language features are integrated in online register. Also, it could be useful for English language practitioners who are interested in integrating Internet-based learning activities into their teaching courses. In a technology-driven and dynamic society, authentic English language learning is not only limited in the classroom but is also widely accessible and affordable through the use of the Internet sources where learners can be exposed to real life English language usages. Apart from being passive learners of the English language, students can also effectively act as active learners by experiencing the large amount of authentic language input via electronic language source. Moreover, since this study focuses on the language of football commentary, the English language practitioners can also be

inspired with some of the findings to design their classroom activities in order to engage students' interests with this worldwide renowned sport. Football is seen as a part of both English and popular culture: the sport can globally bridge the boundaries among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds by making them interested in the same matter. Therefore, using football-related English teaching content could help in promoting non-native learner's acculturated motivation, which will result in the increase of learner's aspiration to learn the language.

In a more specific view of higher level of English learning and teaching, the results of this present study, which indicates what types of the linguistic features frequently employed by the professional commentary writer, could be applicable in preparing English language learning materials in the classroom. For instance, with the use of result expression, first, the finding of such phrasal construction could be employed as another useful example of how a commentarial expert produces a brief yet comprehensive construction of action and result in real time situation. This is because this sort of cause-effect phrasal construction is mainly used by well-trained sports announcers for time saving purposes, according to Ferguson (1983).

Second, the use of sentential component omission such as head noun, head noun plus copula, and copula deletion could reflect how such simplified structures in sports commentary have literal effects on its audiences. For instance, according to Ferguson (1983), the omissions of sentential head noun and head noun plus copula have their discursive use of creating casual and friendly tones as well as avoiding the overly bookish sound in written or spoken conversation. Therefore, this sort of structures could be exemplified for students' non-academic English class activity such as creating dialogues for role play or fictional story in order to produce the language that sounds natural and authentic. For the use of copula deletion whose main usage is for making the sentence more emphasized and avoiding redundancy as proposed by Ferguson (1983), the examples could be demonstrated in non-academic writing composition such as writing news headlines or story titles. By exemplifying such structure, student could learn how to grab readers' attention and make them instantly informed.

Third, the findings on pre- and post-nominal heavy modifier could indicate how proper noun is purposefully modified in English. Pre-/post-nominal appositives

and post nominal non-restrictive relative clauses tend to background the modified proper noun with supplementary information; while post-nominal modifiers such as prepositional and past-present participial phrases are used more likely for foregrounding the complete ideas of the modified noun. Applying these functional uses of proper noun modifier in higher level of writing class could encourage learners to produce more complicated and sophisticated language construction.

Regarding the findings on communicative functions, first, the structural forms of present tense narrative could be used as another technique for writing third person narrative to engage the readers. The use of present tense narrative will make the audience feel as if the action of the character is as vivid as in real life story. Second, the findings on types of evaluative adjectives and adverbs could be used as another example of how to properly assert individual judgement towards persons or incidents in narration, both in positive and negative ways in different conditions. Third, with regard to the findings on the use of modality for speculation in elaborative commentary, it is hoped the learners would realize that using modal auxiliary in English helps to show the degree of certainty of the predictive statement. Lastly, the findings on summarising communicative function could be used as an example of how journalistic composition is usually summed up. Since apart from giving an overall view of how the events have ended, sometimes the writer also adds emphasis on the future consequence of the already ended incident.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Because this present study is determined to analyse only 19 online football commentarial reports, it could be worthwhile to carry out an even larger scale of data collection. If the data archives are analysed at a greater extent, there is a possibility that the identifiable syntactic features and communicative functions employed by the online football commentary writer could be denser in their frequencies of occurrence.

2. In this study, 19 online football commentarial reports were collected from the website Skysports.com, beginning from August 2012 to May 2013. Therefore, analysing the OFC reports from other renowned news publishers websites based in United Kingdom such as www.thesun.co.uk, www.theguardain.com, www.telegraph.co.uk,

and the likes, could manifest different results since all of these online news publishers are recognised for their unique writing styles or language registers which attract different groups of readers.

3. It is highly recommended to carry out the comparative study of the frequency of occurrence of syntactic features and communicative functions in online football commentary published in various news providers' official websites because the results could show what type of linguistic features and functional utterances that can be generalised in the online football commentary as a whole.

4. Since this present study restrictedly follows the theoretical frameworks of syntactic features based on Ferguson's (1983) seminar work, there are a few syntactic features that were not asserted by Ferguson (1983) and thus, were left unanalysed such as the use of "passive voice", "it-clefs", or "verb absence". Likewise, in addition to Delin (2000)'s classification of communicative functions in football commentary, there are other researchers who propose a set of communicative functions that are employed in other sports commentary but adaptable in analysing online football commentary as well such as the proposal by Reaser (2003) or Morris and Nydahl (1983). Consequently, the future researchers can fill in the shoes or adopt the frameworks that are different from this present study, if desired.

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