E-ISSN: 1116 - 2619 P-ISSN: 3026-8524
MPRI-JHLAR | INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES, LITERATURE AND ART RESEARCH
VOL. 04 NO. 6 – APRIL, 2024

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FOOTBALL MATCHES COMMENTARIES IN THE 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP

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Abstract

The goal of football commentaries is to captivate viewers and provide a more profound comprehension of the game beyond what is seen on the field. Existing studies on football commentaries have focused on syntactic analysis, the discourse features, and pragmatic features, exploring various Arabic and European football matches but none have explored the football commentary sequence, rhetorical strategies, and the Generic Structure Potential of football commentary. This study therefore examines the commentary sequence, rhetorical strategies and the Generic Structure Potential in the 2022 FIFA World Cup final and quarter-final matches. The study adopted Ansary and Babaii's (2004) discourse Generic Structure Potential (GSP) to reveal the Generic structures present in the football commentaries. The study showed that eight macro-structural elements characterized the generic structure potential of the football commentaries. Out of these, six were obligatory; two were optional, while three of them were iterative. The obligatory elements identified were Introduction [INT], Exposition [EXP], Half Analysis [HFA], Halftime Analysis [HTA], Post Halftime Analysis [PHTA] and Post Match Analysis [PMA]. The optional elements were Pre Match Analysis (PRMA) and (PEN), while the iterative elements were Half

Keywords: Football Commentaries, Discourse Strategies, Generic Structure, FIFA World Cup, Commentary Sequences.

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Analysis {[HFA]}, Halftime Analysis {[HTA]} and Post Halftime Analysis {[PHTA]}.The study further showed that there was a prevalent use of technical terms, statistical and historical information, and vivid descriptions; more importantly the exposition of the sequences the football commentaries follow. The study concludes that there is a distinctive discourse of football commentary and suggests that the model could be applied to other football commentaries.

Introduction

Language can be regarded as a set of arbitrary vocal symbols adopted by a specific group of people for the purpose of communicating. In the same vein, Soyele (2002) defined Language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which the people of a community communicate. This suggests that, language is systematic and has a mode of operation or method by which it works and rules guiding it for it to be meaningful.

Similarly, Gimson (1980) described Language as a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols used in various modes of thought and communication. Language, which is a major and important tool of human existence, is regarded as the principal means by which human beings interact with one another (Ishaya, 2023). As such, it can be referred to as being pivotal to the existence of a society as it stands as bedrock of communication which holds a society together.

Additionally, language is undeniably relevant to every field of human endeavours as there is hardly any aspect of human fields where language is not relevant or being used. According to Akamijian et al. (1968), human interaction takes place within the context of a fairly well defined social situation where the speakers share common knowledge. In this situation, rather than spell everything out, the speaker relies on shared understandings to facilitate communication. These instances of communicative actions carried out by language are known as discourse.

In that case, Language and Discourse can be said to be complementary due to the fact that discourse is language in use as indexed by context, hence it can be said that Discourse is language in real life events. Discourse analysis however, is a general term for many approaches to analyse written, vocal, or sign language used for any significant event. According to Brown and Yule (1983), the analysis of discourse means the analysis of language in use.

Clearly, the discourse surrounding football commentary, which is a subset of football and sport discourse, is a perfect example of how context-sensitive language is because it is characterized with distinctive language use different from any other discourse. Language can therefore be said to be context-bound, specific and sensitive as it can mostly be understood or interpreted based on context it is being used. Football commentaries discourse is one of many contexts where language is being used to describe the events on football pitches during football matches.

Furthermore, Football is regarded as one of the most popular sports globally, as it captivates audiences worldwide with its thrilling matches, captivating narratives, and passionate commentary. Football commentaries, the verbal accompaniment to these matches, play a crucial role in shaping the audience's experience, providing insights into the game's intricacies, and fostering emotional connections with the players and teams. Therefore, the FIFA World Cup, being one of the most watched events worldwide, presented a unique opportunity to scrutinize the discourse surrounding this genre.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Existing literature demonstrates that various scholars have examined the language of football commentary. For instance, Okunade (2021) conducted a syntactic analysis of commentaries from selected European football matches; Ahmed (2006) conducted a contrastive study of televised football matches in Egyptian Arabic and British English, where he tried to identify the linguistic features of televised football commentary while Abou Bakr (2022) also conducted a similar contrastive study of televised football commentary but focused on the pragmatic analysis of football commentary discourse. Similarly, some studies on Generic Structure Potential (GSP) were done on Football matches in Newspaper reporting and football texts from Nigerian Newspapers by Olagunju (2015 & 2019) while others have examined GSP of Banking discourse and Christian Apologetics (Akinseye, 2020 & Inya, 2012). However, insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to football commentary sequence, rhetorical strategies, and the Generic Structure Potentials in the 2022 FIFA World Cup final and quarter-final matches. This is the gap the paper intends to fill.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to investigate the discourse strategies deployed in the selected football commentaries in the 2022 World Cup using Ansary and Babaii (2004)

discourse Generic Structure Potential framework for analysis. The specific objectives are to:

i. identify and discuss the commentary sequences in the football commentaries
ii. explore the rhetorical strategies deployed in the football commentaries
iii. explain the Generic Structure Potentials in the football commentaries

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Football Commentary

Commentary can generally be understood as "a spoken account of events which are taking place". It is a linguistic description, in spoken form, of events, not necessarily limited to sport. Commentaries are done generally to give a detailed account of actions that take place during a particular event.

Football commentary, on the other hand, is an oral reporting of an ongoing football activity, combined with colour commentary. Colour commentary, according to Ferguson (1983), involves provision of background information in a given football match. This shows that football commentaries usually involve two commentators—one that focuses on Play-by-Play commentary and the other that provides background information in a football match i.e. the colour commentary (Ferguson, 1983).

However, Rowe (1999) sees the discourse of sports commentary as highly stereotypical. By this, he means, sports commentaries usually take the same process with little or no significant difference. So, to Rowe, sport commentating is not one of the particularly creative manifestation of language.

Consequently, as a swift response to Rowe's stance on lack of creativity in language use in sport or football commentating, various works that have been done on sport commentaries, such as Ferguson (1983), Crystal and Davy (1969), among others have shown that creative use of language is inherent in sport or football commentary. Football commentary has an ultimate goal, which is to tell people what is happening in the match. However, the aim goes beyond simply providing mere information about what is already seen with the eyes but engaging the audience and taking them beyond what they can see to a better understanding of why things might be happening.

Crystal and Davy (1969) also argue that there are points in the game when the sportscaster or commentator has to produce a rapid flow of speech to describe

the quickly unfolding events. These are the most characteristic parts of football commentary or Sport Announcer Talk as described in Ferguson (1983). Thus, although many sportscasters have a few prefabricated phrases to help them deal with the recurrent events, only spontaneous speech can sufficiently describe a fast game, that is, football.

Consequently, in the opinion of Rowe (2004), the demand of football commentary requires that sportscasters or football commentators "need a strongly developed ability to improvise" and are almost exclusively skilled professionals who can effectively deal with extreme situations. Therefore, scholars on sport commentaries such as Ferguson (1983); Muller (2007); and Delin (2000) suggest that the nature of football commentary means that it is the duty of football commentators to supply the audience with the information about what is happening on the pitch. This reporting has to correspond with the actual events that are happening in real time and since football is a relatively fast sport, the task is often not easy.

Furthermore, Chovanec (2009) opines there are often moments in the game that lack action which necessarily requires description and the football commentator has to retain the flow of speech, often with "quite extensive narrative stretches". Football commentators usually provide information relevant to the game or current events. They can also give some background information or opinion relevant enough to be uttered during the match at any moment (apart from those of heated actions).

In summary, the role and place of football commentaries and commentators are justified and inevitable, according to Richard (2008), given that, sport, and football in particular, have always been a common form of entertainment, and more importantly, in recent times, with the rise of television broadcast and increasingly better filming technology, football, which is presently considered by many to be the world's most popular sport, has become commercialized, viewed by millions and a common "form of popular culture".

As a result, the football commentators play a very crucial role. They have to offer commentary about the game while also offering entertainment at the same time. They have to deal with the unfolding events on the pitch linguistically without hesitation. The unique linguistic environment of football commentary, in particular, contributes to the language's distinctive and context-bound nature.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are various approaches to discourse analysis. Ansary and Babaii's (2004) Generic Structure Potential (GSP) framework which is adapted from the SFL approach to discourse analysis is adopted in this study. Part of the focus of SFL is the identification of recurring patterns that are used in the organization of the content of a specific genre and the relationship between these patterns and specific linguistic features. Genre is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1985) as a meaning which results from language which does a particular job in a particular contextual configuration. The term "genre-specific semantic potential" or "generic structure potential" (GSP) is used to describe a particular type of text which is different from any other.

The Generic Structure Potential (GSP) model, which is associated with Halliday and Hasan is built on the assumption that Contextual Configuration (CC), which is a specific set of the values that are used to specify the field, tenor and mode of a discourse, "permits statements about the text structures" to be made (Halliday and Hasan 1985). Specifically, a Contextual Configuration can predict the following about a text structure:

1. Obligatory elements – What elements must occur?
2. Optional elements – What elements may occur?
3. Sequencing of elements – What arrangements of elements are obligatory and optional?
4. Recursiveness – How often may what elements occur?

It is possible to express the total range of optional and obligatory elements and their order in such a way that we exhaust the possibility of text structure for every text that can be appropriate to a particular CC. This possibility is what is known as the structure potential of this genre or its generic structure potential (GSP). In other words, GSP captures the possible characteristics of texts belonging to a particular genre. In language study, numerous investigations into the GSP of diverse genres have been conducted. Examples include Halliday and Hasan (1989); Ansary and Babaii (2004); Olagunju (2015) et cetera. Halliday and Hasan (1989) presented GSP of shop transaction as: [(G).(SI)^] [(SE.) {SR^SC^}^S^] P^PC(^F). They identified nine rhetorical elements of shop transaction as Greeting (G), Sale Initiation (SI), Sale Enquiry (SE), Sale Request (SR), Sale Compliance (SC), Sale (S), Purchase (P), Purchase Closure (PC), and Finis (F). They further ascertained that

certain macro-structural elements such as SR, SC, S, P and PC are obligatory while G, SI, SE, and F are optional. Ansary and Babaii (2004) investigated the macro-rhetorical structure of editorial texts from Systemic Functional (SF) point of view. They applied Halliday's approach to propose a generic pattern of text development of English newspaper editorials. Ansary and Babaii (2004) noted four obligatory structural elements (Run-on Headline, Addressing an Issue, Argumentation and Articulating a position). The optional elements identified in the editorials were Background Information (BI), which either preceded Addressing an Issue (AI) or following it; Initiation of Argumentation (IA) which, in some cases was necessary to help writers start off their arguments, and Closure of Argumentation (CA) was sometimes used to nicely round off the arguments. Olagunju (2015) examines football matches in newspapers reporting using the GSP model and he identified ten macrostructural elements in which four were obligatory while six were optional; the obligatory elements identified were Title [T], Preamble [P], Online Thesis [OT], and Online Thesis Expatiation [OTE]. The optional elements were Voice Insertion (VI), Offline Thesis Insertion (OTI), Offline Thesis Expatiation (OFTE), Evaluation (Eva), Prediction (Pre) and Winding Up (WUp).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach, employing Ansary and Babaii's discourse Generic Structure Potential to reveal the discourse structure of football commentaries in the selected 2022 World cup matches. This GSP model is a framework for analyzing the structures embedded in a text or genre, through the identification of the obligatory, optional and iterative elements that characterize a particular genre. The recent 2022 FIFA World Cup matches were chosen due to their popularity and the amount of global attention it gained. The selected football commentaries were chosen from the 2022 FIFA World Cup competition because the commentators, Peter Drury, Alan Smith, Jon Champion, and Ally McCoist are all excellent models of English language usage. The secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, and the Internet. The data for this study were football commentaries downloaded and transcribed from Dailymotion.com, and Footyfull.com. The data were subjected to discourse analysis. However, it would be difficult to attempt transcribing every minute of the matches, selected parts of the texts were analysed. Also, the data was transcribed using Riverside, a transcription application, and areas where the utterances in the commentaries

were not clear were replaced with an asterisk sign "*". A total of 25 excerpts from the two football commentaries were used for analysis. Furthermore, the 2022 FIFA World Cup Final match between Argentina and France will be labeled as Commentary 1 while the 2022 FIFA World Cup Quarter final match between Morocco and Portugal will be labeled Commentary 2.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section focuses on the analysis of this study, using Ansary and Babaii's discourse Generic Structure Potential to reveal the discourse structure of football commentaries in the selected 2022 World cup matches i.e. the obligatory, optional and iterative elements. But first, the sequences, the selected football commentaries follow and also the rhetorical strategies employed by the commentators will be examined to achieve the aim of the study.

FOOTBALL COMMENTARY SEQUENCE

Football commentaries have a sequence that characterizes them as a genre of the discourse. The analysis of the data revealed that there exist three sequences that convey issues and details embedded in the discourse, namely the opening phase, match analysis phase, and closing phase. It is worthy of note that the data for this first aspect of the analysis will be chosen from the 2022 FIFA World cup final match (Commentary 1).

Opening Phase

The opening phase refers to the introductory part of the football commentaries. It serves as an appetizer to the audience for the actions that are about to unfold in the football match. Here, statistical information and analysis, historical context, and trends are given by the commentators; these further increase the viewers and listeners' interest and anticipation prior going to the match, as they are excited and eager to witness what is to come. Similarly, this phase includes the introduction of the teams i.e. the team line ups and the introduction of the match officials. This phase is displayed in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1, Example 1:

> **"The day of glory has indeed arrived; And when these nations last met in this manner; It was for a truly glorious game… The teams---**
> **---and with Emiliano Martínez in goal; Argentina selects the same**

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defence that started the semi-final; That nears a 100 cap for Nicolas Otamendi; And Nicolas Taliafico preferred at left back to Marcos Acuña… For the first time, the World cup final is overseen by a Polish referee; And Szymon Marciniak has already had charge of both contenders here; France against Denmark and Argentina against Australia… For France, Hugo Lloris can become the first captain ever to lift the world cup twice… In the back four; Varane is fine...Mbappe, 11 and a half years... He already has a medal… Argentina's number 10, Maradona, Messi; Each in his turn, they're supernaturally great; Maradona won the World cup; The complete utopian narrative demands of Messi that he also wins the World cup..."

The above excerpt substantiates the fact that the opening phase centers on the introductory part of the football commentary. As evident in the excerpt, the phase encompasses the commentators' focus building anticipation for the match by discussing the significance of certain players and the historical context surrounding the teams' performances in previous World cup finals. This is evident in Excerpt 1, where the spotlight was placed on "**Mbappe and Messi"** and their significance to the match. Furthermore, in this phase, the commentators analysed the teams' line up and profile of the match official, **Szymon Marciniak** and their possible effects to the match as seen in the above excerpt. Also, the above excerpt shows the commentators dropping analysis in the course of revealing the teams' line ups such as "**Emiliano Martínez** in goal, Argentina selects the same defence that started the semi-final; That nears a 100 cap for **Nicolas Otamendi**, In the back four; **Varane** is fine and so on. Hence, the introductory phase is one the important aspect of the football match and the discourse peculiarities have been showed.

Match Analysis Phase

This stage features football commentaries on the actual match occurrences. How the match actions unfold between the two teams is being expertly analysed for the audience. This phase encompasses the entirety of the match from the beginning of the first half to the end of the second half of the match. However, if the match extends to extra time and penalties, the match analysis phase will be

from the beginning of the first half till the end of the penalty kick. This phase is displayed in the excerpts 2 and 3 from the football commentary below:

Excerpt 2, Example 1:

> **"Fernandez, all through for Di Maria; (shout) touched on by Alvarez; Di Maria, away from Kounde; He's gone to ground, he's got a penalty;…" Lionel Messi (shout) Lionel Messi; Goal in the last 16; Penalty in the quarter final; Penalty in the semi final; Messi and the world;… And Messi ! ! ! A goal for evermore..."**

Excerpt 3, Example 1:
(The Penalty Shootout to crown the winner)
(Mbappe and Messi's penalty kicks)

> **" Switzerland because Kylian Mbappe failed against Yann Sommer with their final penalty; This time having twice already scored from the spot; And 3 times in all; Having scored; Mbappe stepped up first… Interesting that the two top men are going first; Messi went first against the Netherlands; He went first also in last summer's;Copa America shootout…"**

The above excerpts further substantiate the second sequence of the football commentary. This stage features the commentators' analysis on the occurrences between both teams in the match. In the Excerpt 2, the commentator is seen running commentaries on the penalty kicks of **Mbappe** and **Messi** in the penalty shootout. Excerpt 1 also shows the commentators' analysis of Argentina's goal and **Di Maria's** penalty incident that led to it.

Closing Phase

This is the final phase in the football commentaries. The commentator concludes the match by providing post match analysis in this phase. The post match analysis phase is the final element of the football commentary discourse. This analysis by the commentator comes at the end of a football match as the commentators give a brief review of the match and its result, as well as its implication to the competition at large. This phase is displayed in the excerpts 1 from the football commentary below:

Excerpt 4, Example 1;

> **"Argentina!!!!; Champions of the world; Again; At last; And a nation will tangle all night long; 36 years since Maradona and Mexico… That destiny dictated that, the little man; Would lift it after a stellar career… The greatest player of his age; Finally has the greatest accolade football can afford him; At the end of one of the greatest football matches ever played"**

The above excerpts substantiate the final phase of the football commentary. As evident in excerpt 1, the commentaries were run at the end of the match. The commentators in this phase are found giving a brief review of the match and its result, as well as its implication to the competition at large. This is evident in Excerpt 1, as Argentina's victory over France made them the champions of the world, which was stated by the commentator.

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

Rhetorical Strategies are techniques used to persuade, inform, or entertain an audience through communication. Rhetorical strategies are used by many persuasive speakers, writers, and effective communicators to drive their success. These strategies are used by commentators to enhance the effectiveness of their communication, spark emotional responses, and make their views and analysis more compelling and memorable. The following rhetorical strategies are realized in the two football commentaries selected and are discussed with instances from the football commentaries. The rhetorical strategies that characterized the texts are: vivid descriptions, technical terms and statistical and historical information.

Use of Vivid Descriptions

The use of vivid description in football commentaries is a common practice aimed at creating a detailed and sensory-rich narrative that immerses the audience in the game. Football commentators frequently use vivid language, metaphors, sensory details, and images to help audience visualize the game and become more emotionally invested in it. By using vivid descriptions, commentators bring game to life, making it more exciting and captivating for the audience. These descriptions help convey the intensity, drama, and emotions of the match, allowing listeners to visualize the action on the field and feel the thrill of the game

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through the commentator's words. The following uses of vivid descriptions are prevalent in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

> **Except 5: Whatever the outcome; He has had at least his moment; He and they, tens of thousands of them; Millions of them; Over the parks and squares; And bars and cafes of Buenos Aires.**
> **Excerpt 6: Messi, oh! Lovely, delightful…….. Angel Di Maria!!! (Peter screamed when he scored); Glorious goal; Argentine GOAT; That is just beautiful.**
> **Excerpt 7: Three against three here; Ah! It's an eight-foot finish all day; Ahh!! (The commentator exclaims in disappointment as the Moroccans shoots the ball off target); What a break waiting to pass this, Perfect.**

These excerpts are examples of vivid descriptions used by the commentators to convey the intensity, drama, and emotions of the match, allowing listeners to visualize the action on the field and feel the thrill of the game through the commentator's words. **Excerpt 5** evokes the images of Buenos Aires by painting a picture of celebration in the city of Argentina; **Excerpt 6** also shows the commentators using vivid descriptions and imagery to convey excitement and emotion of the match such as describing Lionel Messi's pass as "lovely" and "delightful", as well as Di Maria's goal as "Glorious" and "beautiful". **Excerpt 7** also shows the repeated use of exclamations to convey disappointment to the missed Moroccan chance, which further enhances the emotional impact and engagement of the audience.

Use of Technical Terms

In football, technical terms are essential to proper comprehension of the game at a deeper level. These terms cover various aspects of the sport, including player positions, plays and tactics. Gaining an understanding of these terminologies improves communication between players, coaches, analysts, commentators and spectators, which results in a deeper appreciation of the game. These terms, among others, form the foundation of football terminology, allowing individuals to discuss and evaluate the game with clarity and precision. The following uses of

technical terms are evident in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 8:Don't think *VAR* are going to overturn this.
Excerpt 9: Kylian Mbappe is *on a hat-trick*.
Excerpt 10: Attiat-Allah is in for Mazraoui at *Left back*.
Excerpt 11: Hanging about the edge of *the Box*.

The above excerpts are vivid examples of technical terms employed by commentators in the course of their analysis of the match. They include VAR, hat-trick, left back, dangerous area, and the box, which are crucial for understanding of the game at a deeper level. For instance, *VAR* in **excerpt 8** is a shortened form of Video Assistant Referee, and they are match officials charged with the responsibility of reviewing decisions using video footage and providing advice to the referee based on those reviews. Similarly *hat-trick* used in **excerpt 9** means a player scoring three goals for his/her team in the same match; *Left back* in **excerpt 10** refers to a position in the left-side of the defensive line while *the Box* in **excerpt 11** is a shortened form of an area of a football pitch usually called the 18-yard box or the penalty area. Casual football match viewers might find it difficult to grasp these commentaries; hence, it is pertinent for the audience to be grounded in the football terminologies; the same applies to the commentators too, as they have to be familiar with these terms to be able to run commentaries in the first place.

Use of Statistical and Historical Information

Football commentators frequently incorporate data from statistics and history into their commentaries to add context, valuable insights, and to enhance the audience's comprehension of the game. By integrating data-driven analysis and historical references, commentators can deepen audience engagement, provide expert insights, and improve narratives. This approach not only educates viewers but also adds depth and credibility to the commentary, making it more informative and compelling. Statistical information such as player performance metrics, team statistics, and historical references can add a storytelling element, connecting the present game to past events, rivalries, or significant moments in football history, creating a more immersive and engaging viewing experience for the audience. By leveraging statistical and historical information, commentators can provide a

comprehensive and insightful commentary that goes beyond mere play-by-play descriptions, offering viewers a deeper appreciation and understanding of the game. The following uses of statistical and historical information are evident in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 12: Nine who start here also started France's glittering 4-3 victory over Argentina at the last World Cup, four and a half years ago.

Excerpt 13: And Lionel Messi's 26th World Cup appearance represents a new record.

Excerpt 14: Today referee is from Argentina, Facundo Tello; Brandished 10 red cards in a domestic game only last month.

Excerpt 15: Morocco, the fourth African team to play in a World Cup' quarter final.

These above excerpts are examples of Statistical and Historical Information incorporated by the commentators into the game to provide context, insights, and enrich the audience's understanding of the game. From the **excerpt 13**, we can see the commentators giving statistical information about Lionel Messi's World Cup appearance to widen the audiences' knowledge of the game. Same applies to the information given on the referee, Facundo Tello in **excerpt 14** as regards the number of red cards brandished in his previous match and the supposed effect it might have on the match. Similarly, the others excerpts are vivid examples of the commentator providing contexts and insights to the events of the match, which in turn enhance the audience's understanding of the game.

GENERIC STRUCTURE POTENTIAL (GSP) ELEMENTS IN THE SELECTED FOOTBALL COMMENTARIES

As used in previous works of GSP, the following notations were employed for analysis of data in this study;

^ = The Caret sign shows the sequence of the elements
{ } = The recursive sign indicates that the element is iterative.
[ ] = The sign indicate that the element is obligatory.
( ) = The sign indicates that an element is optional.

Additionally, the discourse macro-structural elements identified in football commentaries selected for the study includes; [INT] ^ [EXP] ^ (PMTA) ^ {[HFA] ^

(HTA) ^ [PHTA]} ^ (PEN) ^ [PMA].The key to the symbols from the data analysis are as follows:

Introduction (INT)

This is the part of the football commentary in which the commentator welcomes the audience the football match. The commentator does not necessarily adopt the traditional way of greeting by uttering the "good afternoon or morning" statement but often welcomes the audience by giving Statistical information, Historical Data, discussions and trends prior to the match, and background information to provide context and insight, which allows for better understanding of the game. These in turn heighten the audience's interest prior going to the game as they are excited and eager to witness what is to come. The element is exemplified in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 16 (Commentary 1), Example 1:

"The day of glory has indeed arrived; And when these nations last met in this manner; It was for a truly glorious game; Nine who start here also started France's glittering 4-3 victory over Argentina at the last World Cup, four and a half years ago."

Excerpt 17 (Commentary 2), Example 1:

"Good Afternoon everyone; So it is the day when we find out if as Pele suggested; Nearly half a century ago; The axis of world football is ready to tilt in the direction of Africa; We've been here before of course; With Cameroun in 1990; Senegal 2002; And Ghana in 2010; But here at Al- Thumama; Shaped like a traditional Qatari hat on the edge of the Doha desert; The difference this time is that Morocco; Represent not just the continent; But the Arab world too; So many nations; Who in everyday life.."

The above excerpts further substantiate the introductory element as the commentators begins the commentary by giving Statistical information, Historical Data, discussions and trends, and background information to provide context and insight, which allows for better understanding of the game. **Excerpt 16** shows the commentator hyping up the final match as "the day of glory", and then further backed it with data of their previous matchup in the same competition. **Excerpt 17** also shows the commentator providing additional details on the significance of

Morocco winning the Quarter final tie against Portugal, and the effect it will have on Africa as suggest by a football great, **Pele**. These in turn heighten the audience's interest prior going to the game as they are excited and eager to witness what is to come. It also pertinent to note that, the commentator does not necessarily welcome the audience with "good morning/afternoon/evening" statement as evident in **excerpt 16**.

Exposition (EXP)

The exposition phase comes immediately after the introduction phase. Here, the revealing of the players and match officials are done, as the line ups and match officials names are being displayed on the screen. Comments are made by the commentators on team selection in comparison and contrast with previous matches as well as the effect it has on the match; details on the officials designated to officiate the matches and its effects are sometimes analysed too. This phase, somewhat gives an insight to audience of what to expect in the match. The element is exemplified in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 1 (Commentary 1), Example 2:

"……The teams------and with Emiliano Martínez in goal; Argentina selects the same defence that started the semi-final; That nears a 100 cap for Nicolas Otamendi;…For the first time, the World cup final is overseen by a Polish referee; And Szymon Marciniak has already had charge of both contenders here; France against Denmark and Argentina against Australia…For France, Hugo Lloris can become the first captain ever to lift the world cup twice…In the back four; Varane is fine..."

Except 18 (Commentary 2), Example 1:

"We may get to see history; We'll almost certainly witness hysteria; And the curtain goes up next; The eighth and last match to be played...For Morocco today two changes to the side that went the distance with Spain; West Ham Defender again is injured; So El Yamiq emerges from the shadows; Romain Saiss finished that game on Tuesday limping because of a hamstring problem but he plays; Attiat-Allah is in for Mazraoui at Left back;...Generated by Argentina and the Netherlands; You may

not have seen anything yet...Today referee is from Argentina, Facundo Tello; Brandished 10 red cards in a domestic game only last month...Again, no Ronaldo in the Portuguese starting 11; And how could it be after Gonzalo Ramos stole the show against the Swiss; In the end; One alteration, Ruben Neves returns to the midfield instead of William Carvalho; Dalot again preferred to Cancelo; Pepe made his professional debut when the new hero Ramos was in the year five months old"

The above excerpts further reveal what the exposition element is made of. As evident in the both excerpts from the two selected football commentaries, the commentators drop comments on the team selection and match official in the course of their revealing. **Excerpt 1** shows the commentator running analysis on the team selection in comparison with the previous line ups and match official such as "**with Emiliano Martínez in goal; Argentina selects the same defence that started the semi-final; That nears a 100 cap for Nicolas Otamendi... For the first time, the World cup final is overseen by a Polish referee; And Szymon Marciniak has already had charge of both contenders here; France against Denmark and Argentina against Australia...**" Also, **excerpt 18** shows the commentator running analysis on the team selection in comparison with the previous line ups and match official such as "**For Morocco today two changes to the side that went the distance with Spain; West Ham Defender again is injured; So El Yamiq emerges from the shadows...Today referee is from Argentina, Facundo Tello; Brandished 10 red cards in a domestic game only last month...".** This phase gives insights to audience of what to expect in the match; for instance, the Facundo Tello's brandishing of 10 red cards comment in excerpt 18 allows for the audience to expect a lot of red cards at the end of the match.

Pre Match Analysis (PMTA)

The Pre Match Analysis phase is an optional element of the football commentary. It involves comments about more historical context, statistical information such as head to head statistics, comments on obvious clashes between two good football players et cetera regarding the match. These approaches are employed to heighten the audience's enthusiasm going into the game. However, this stage is usually skipped as some of the information has been included by the

commentator in the introduction and exposition phase; time factor can also be a major reason for skipping the phase. The element is exemplified in the following excerpt from the football commentary;

Excerpt 1 (Commentary 1), Example 3:

"...Mbappe, 11 and a half years... He already has a medal… Argentina's number 10, Maradona, Messi; Each in his turn, they're supernaturally great; Maradona won the World cup; The complete utopian narrative demands of Messi that he also wins the World cup..."

The above excerpt further substantiates this phase as an optional element because it is only predominant in one of the football commentaries. **Excerpt 1** shows the commentators building anticipation for the match by pinpointing the significance of certain players, **Mbappe** and **Messi** to the match. The commentator also made comments on Messi having to replicate Maradona winning of the World Cup. These comments further heighten the audience's enthusiasm going into the game. However, this element was absent in the second football commentary as some of the information has been included in the introduction and exposition phase.

Half Analysis (HFA)

Half Analysis phase is an obligatory element of the football commentary. The game of football consist of two halves i.e. first half and second half. However, if a match cannot be decided in both halves, the game then goes to an additional extra time; which also consists of two halves i.e. the first half extra time and second half extra time. Hence, the analysis of this phase by the commentators is considered iterative. The element is exemplified in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 2 (Commentary 1), Example 2

"Fernandez, all through for Di Maria; (shout) touched on by Alvarez; Di Maria, away from Kounde; He's gone to ground, he's got a penalty;…" Lionel Messi (shout) Lionel Messi; Goal in the last 16; Penalty in the quarter final; Penalty in the semi final; Messi and the world;… And Messi ! ! ! A goal for evermore..."

Excerpt 19 (Commentary 1), Example 1:

> **"Lautaro Martinez, Lionel Messi, Fernandez; Martinez, Messi……; Offside, flag is up; Has he given offside? ; The referee is giving a goal; The referee is giving a goal; The little magic man from right on the line; An embrace of disbelief; Messi at millimeters; It's a goal; And that watch on the wrist to the ref does not lie; Lionel Messi perhaps has just scored; The winning goal in this World Cup final; Lionel Messi is conquering his final peak…"**

Excerpt 20 (Commentary 2), Example 1:

> **"Attiyat Allah; En- Nesyri!!! (The commentator screams as he nods the ball in the net); Goalkeeper's fault; No question about that; But more pertinently; Morocco are first to strike; Well he just wants it doesn't he?..."**

The above excerpts help substantiate the half analysis phase as an obligatory element of the football discourse. The half analysis refers to the comments dropped by the commentators on the football match actions in both halves of the game. Examples of this are evident in **excerpt 2** and 19 above, where the commentator analysed the foul on **Di Maria** that led to the penalty goal scored by **Messi**; likewise, the Morocco's goal analysed in **excerpt 20**. However, if a match cannot be decided in both halves, the game then goes to an additional extra time; which also consists of two halves i.e. the first half extra time and second half extra time. **Excerpt 19** shows the commentator's half analysis on **Messi**'s goal in the second half extra time. As such, the analysis of this phase by the commentators is considered iterative. Hence, it is important to note that the circumstances surrounding a football match determines the repetition of elements of the discourse of football commentary.

Halftime Analysis (HTA)

The Halftime Analysis comes immediately after the whistle is blown for the end of an half of a football game, as the players, coaches and officials leave for the dressing room. Halftime is the interval between the two halves of the match, which exist to allow players rest, strategize with their coaches, and recover

physically. The commentator gives a very brief summary of what happened in the concluded half and ends it by stating the score line. This phase becomes iterative if the match enters extra time. The element is exemplified in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 21 (Commentary 2), Example 1:

> **"Now that has been quite the closing stages; To this first period; Which ends with Portuguese protests (Protests against a penalty not awarded for them); Who need through Youssef En-Nesyri 42nd minute....header; Subsequently Bruno Fernandes hit the post; *********; But Morocco are potentially half way to history here; They lead Portugal 1 nil at the break."**

Excerpt 22 (Commentary 1), Example 1:

> **"Well, the script was seemingly written; The tie was seemingly cast; It was going to be Messi's world cup final; But Mbappe ripped up that script and contends that instead it can be his; Mbappe's penalty after 80 minutes; And then Mbappe's sensational volley to equalize very shortly thereafter; And there will be more; Argentina had led through Messi's penalty; Through Di maria's equally sublime strike, but that was one half; The last 10 minutes of the second have changed the dynamic altogether; And who knows who will be the world champions of 2022; At the end of 90 nights plus; It's Argentina two, France two and extra time follows."**

The above excerpts further corroborate the halftime analysis as a discourse element of football commentary. **Excerpt 21** shows the commentator giving a brief summary at halftime of what happened in the first half of the Quarter final match, and stated the score line. However, the phase becomes iterative if the match enters extra time. This therefore was predominant in the final match (**excerpt 22)** between Argentina and France, as the commentator gives a brief summary of what happened at the end of 90 minutes, and then goes further to state the score line.

Post Halftime Analysis (PHTA)

The Post Halftime Analysis, as it implies comes after halftime, before the start of another half (i.e. second half, first half extra time and second half extra time) of a

football match. In this phase, the commentator communicates his/her view on what is expected from both teams in the next half. Also, the commentator sometimes likens the game scenario to similar matches played in the past, giving the expectation of history repeating itself or otherwise; this further builds the audience's anticipation going into the next half of the game. This phase also becomes iterative if the football match enters extra time. The element is exemplified in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 23 (Commentary 2), Example 1:

> **"Morocco following in the footsteps; Of Cameroon and Ghana in taking the lead; In a World Cup quarter-final; So this for unable ultimately to see it through; they came mighty close; Cameroun In 1990 within eight minutes of beating; England in Naples; Coming to a couple of late Gary Lineker penalties… And Ghana...a passion of controversy of that Luiz Suarez's hand ball beaten on penalties by Uruguay in Johannesburg; Asamoah Gyan's penalty hitting the bar late in extra time; After Suarez's hand ball.."**

Excerpt 24 (Commentary 1), Example 1:

> **"That; When the final totting up is done here; Ought not to be forgotten; More previous period of extra time at this world cup; None of those have been conclusive; Croatia, Japan, Morocco, Spain, Croatia, Brazil; Argentina, Netherlands all went to penalties; Only one of those periods of extra time involve goals; Neymar for Brazil, but then Petkovic for Croatia in the same game…"**

The above excerpts further verify the post halftime analysis as a discourse element of football commentary. **Excerpt 23** shows the commentator comparing the Morocco vs. Portugal to previous African matchups in World Cup Quarter Final stages going into the second halfsuch as **"Morocco following in the footsteps; Of Cameroon and Ghana in taking the lead; In a World Cup quarter-final; So this for unable ultimately to see it through; they came mighty close..."** to engage the audience and make them anticipate the second half of the game, which in turn allows for a memorable experience. Furthermore, this phase becomes iterative if the football match enters extra time as evident in the final match between Argentina and France in **excerpt 24.** The commentator likened the final match to

the scenarios of previous matches in the knockout stage of the competition such as **Croatia vs. Japan, Morocco vs. Spain, Croatia vs. Brazil and Argentina vs. Netherlands** matches, to create a narrative on the probability of the similar trend of penalty shootout occurring in the final match or otherwise.

Penalty Shootout (PEN)

The Penalty Shootout involves a series of penalty kicks taken by players from each team against the opposition goalkeeper. Similarly, it is a tie-breaking method used to determine a winner in matches that would have otherwise ended in a draw. However, the penalty shootouts only take place during knockout phase of a competition, such as the final of a major international tournament like the FIFA World Cup, Euros or club competition such as the Champions league. Hence, it renders the penalty shootout an optional element of the football commentary as it only occurs when a winner cannot be decided in one twenty minutes of a knockout phase match. In the Penalty Shootout phase, the commentator analyses the actions that took place in the course of the penalty kicks. References are usually been made on situations and circumstances surrounding the penalty takers and the effects it has on them and scoring the kick. The element is exemplified in the following excerpt from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 3 (Commentary 1), Example 2:
(The Penalty Shootout to crown the winner)
(Mbappe and Messi's penalty kicks)

> **" Switzerland because Kylian Mbappe failed against Yann Sommer with their final penalty; This time having twice already scored from the spot; And 3 times in all; Having scored; Mbappe stepped up first… Interesting that the two top men are going first; Messi went first against the Netherlands; He went first also in last summer's; Copa America shootout…"**

The above excerpt further corroborates the penalty shootout as an optional element of the football commentary discourse due to its absence in the quarter final tie between Morocco and Portugal; the Penalty shootout only takes place when a winner cannot be decided in one twenty minutes of a knockout phase match, whereas Morocco won in the normal ninety minutes. However, the winner

of the final match could not be decided after ninety minutes and extra time, hereby rendering the match to penalties. This is further exemplified in **Excerpt 3**, where the commentator drops comments on the penalty kicks of **Mbappe** and **Messi** in the penalty shootout.

Post Match Analysis (PMA)

The Post Match Analysis phase is the final element of the football commentary discourse. This analysis by the commentator comes at the end of a football match. It is an obligatory part of the football commentary, as the commentators give a brief review of the match and its result, as well as its implication to the competition at large. The element is exemplified in the following excerpts from the football commentaries;

Excerpt 4 (Commentary 1), Example 2:

> **"Argentina!!!!; Champions of the world; Again; At last; And a nation will tangle all night long; 36 years since Maradona and Mexico… That destiny dictated that, the little man; Would lift it after a stellar career… The greatest player of his age; Finally has the greatest accolade football can afford him; At the end of one of the greatest football matches ever played"**

Excerpt 25 (Commentary 2), Example 1:

> **"History!!!; And hysteria!!!; A genuine tilt in the axis of world football; Because Morocco have smashed through that glass ceiling; Now the first African nation; To reach a World Cup semi-final; Ronaldo is exiting the stage in tears; His World Cup dreams surely over forever; But the spotlight belongs to a nation… What an achievement."**

The above excerpts substantiate the post match analysis phase of the football commentary. As evident in the excerpts, the commentaries were run at the end of the match. Also, the commentators in this phase are found giving a brief review of the match and its result, as well as its implication to the competition at large. This is exemplified in **excerpt 4**, as Argentina's victory over France made them the winner of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which was regarded as **"the champions of the world"** by the commentator, as well as Messi being "**the greatest player of his**

age" by winning the World Cup with Argentina. Likewise in the **excerpt 25**, the result of the match as stated by the commentator made Morocco **"the first African nation to reach a World Cup semi-final",** which is a highly important record in the World Cup's history. Portugal's loss also signals the end of Ronaldo's World Cup dreams as stated by the commentator.

FINDINGS

An analysis of the football commentary discourse using the discourse Generic Structure Potential has been attempted. This research then firstly, investigated the sequences the football commentary follow and the rhetorical strategies applied by the commentators before delving into the Generic Structure Potential of the two selected football commentaries form the 2022 World Cup matches.

Furthermore, it was discovered through the analysis of the data that there are three sequences that convey actions and details that are embedded in the discourse, namely the opening phase, match discussion phase, and closing phase. On the other hand, the opening phase concentrates on the introductory part of the commentary, and serves as a form of appetizer to the audience before the main action. The match analysis phase features football commentaries on the actual match occurrences i.e. how the match actions unfold between the two teams is being expertly analysed for the audience while the closing phase is the final phase in the football commentaries, whereby the commentator concludes the match by providing post match analysis, which involves giving a brief review of the match and its result, as well as its implication to the competition at large. These football commentary sequences were substantially backed with excerpts from the data.

In the same vein, the rhetorical strategies employed by the football commentators were also identified and examined. It was discovered that vivid descriptions, technical terms, and statistical and historical information were techniques employed by the commentators to aid the effectiveness of their communication, trigger emotional responses, and make their views and analysis more compelling and memorable. Various examples of these strategies being incorporated were being identified and analysed from excerpt of the football commentaries.

Consequently, the Generic Structure Potential elements were identified in the selected Football Commentaries and further analysed in the study. As a result, four notations (^, (), [], {}) were employed in the study to describe the features of the

identified elements in the football commentaries. The discourse macro-structural elements identified in football commentaries selected for the study were [INT] ^ [EXP] ^ (PMTA) ^ {[HFA] ^ [HTA] ^ [PHTA]} ^ (PEN) ^ [PMA]. The key to the symbols from the data analysis were Introduction [INT], Exposition [EXP], Pre Match Analysis (PMTA), Halftime Analysis {[HFA]}, Halftime Analysis {[HTA]}, Post Halftime Analysis [PHTA], Penalty Shootout (PEN) and Post Match Analysis [PMA]. Subsequent to the identification of the generic elements from the two commentaries, It was discovered that Introduction [INT], Exposition [EXP], Half Analysis [HFA], Halftime Analysis [PHTA], Post Halftime Analysis [PHTA] and Post Match Analysis [PMA] are obligatory, Pre Match Analysis (PRMA) and Penalty Shootout (PEN) are optional, while Half Analysis {[HFA]}, Halftime Analysis {[HTA]} and Post Halftime Analysis {[PHTA]} are iterative elements of the discourse. In a similar vein, it was observed that the circumstances surrounding a football match determines the repetition of the macro-structural elements of the discourse of football commentary.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the discourse of football commentary is distinctive as a result of the presence of the discourse structures, rhetorical strategies employed by the commentators, and the sequences the discourse follow. Furthermore, the model generated proves to have educational value, as it can aid scholars in the discourse community to effectively model their writing. Future research could also apply this model to other football commentaries aside from the World Cup matches to test its validity, while further research could also be carried out on the identification and analysis of more rhetorical strategies used in football commentaries.

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