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Bachelor's thesis

**LINGUISTIC COMPARISON OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHT'S COMMENTARY IN MATCHES OF
ENGLISH NATIONAL TEAM**

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a linguistic comparison of men's and women's football highlight commentary in matches of the English national teams. The object of this study is English-language football television commentary as a type of sports discourse. The subject encompasses the use of cohesive devices and figurative language in male and female football TV commentary, with particular attention given to lexical units, syntactic structures, pronoun reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, metaphors, and idioms. The research investigates how gender influences cohesion and figurative language in football commentary and their communicative functions in live sportscasting.

The bachelor's thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part outlines the theoretical foundations of sports discourse and its evolution, including its key linguistic and pragmatic features, and examines gender representation in sports media. The second part presents a comparative analysis of male and female football commentary from English national team matches, focusing on linguistic patterns such as vocabulary, syntax, cohesive devices, and stylistic choices, as well as the portrayal of players and teams and gender biases present in the commentary.

The analysis reveals shared conventions and distinct gender-based differences in football commentary. Both male and female commentary use fragmented syntax, rapid pacing, pronouns, ellipsis, and exclamations for narration, evaluation, dramatization, and engagement. However, male commentary shows greater lexical density, complex nominal structures, and more idioms and metaphors, often for evaluation or dramatization. Female commentary prefers concise syntax, more subordinate clauses, and a balanced narrative focusing on teamwork and technical execution. This linguistic disparity reflects and reinforces gender biases, portraying men as iconic heroes and women through narratives of growth and resilience.

Keywords: football commentary, gender representation, linguistic pattern, figurative language, English national team.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Ця бакалаврська робота присвячена лінгвістичному порівнянню чоловічого та жіночого футбольного коментування матчів національних збірних Англії. Об'єктом дослідження є англійське футбольне коментування як окремий різновид спортивного дискурсу. Предметом аналізу виступають особливості застосування лексичних та синтаксичних структур, засобів когезії та образної мови, зокрема займенникової референції, субституції, еліпсису, сполучників, метафор та ідіом. Дослідження має на меті визначити вплив гендерних відмінностей на використання зазначених мовних засобів у футбольному коментуванні, а також з'ясувати їхні комунікативні функції у контексті прямої спортивної трансляції.

Робота складається з двох частин. У першій висвітлено теоретичні основи спортивного дискурсу, його еволюцію, ключові лінгвістичні й прагматичні особливості футбольного коментування та гендерну репрезентацію в медіа. Друга частина містить компаративний аналіз чоловічих і жіночих коментарів до матчів збірних Англії, з акцентом на лексичних, синтаксичних і когезивних моделях, стилістичних засобах, образах гравців і команд, а також проявах гендерних упереджень.

Проведений аналіз демонструє як спільні риси, так і значущі гендерні відмінності у формуванні футбольних наративів. Коментуванню обох груп притаманні короткі, фрагментовані синтаксичні конструкції та стратегічне використання займенників, еліпсису й вигуків для викладу подій та драматизації. Однак чоловіче коментування вирізняється вищою лексичною щільністю та вживанням ідіом/метафор, тоді як жіноче тяжіє до лаконічного синтаксису, складніших підрядних речень і збалансованої розповіді, що акцентує командну роботу; ці розбіжності відображають гендерні упередження у спортивному дискурсі.

Ключові слова: футбольне коментування, гендерна репрезентація, лінгвістичні моделі, образна мова, національна збірна Англії

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ADVP – Adverbial Phrase
- BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
- CC – Coordinating Conjunction
- CD – Cardinal Number
- FIFA – International Federation of Association Football
- IN – Preposition or Subordinating Conjunction
- INTJ – Interjection
- JJ – Adjective
- L2SCA – L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer
- LTC – Live Text Commentary
- MLC – Mean Length of Clause
- NN – Noun, Singular or Plural
- NNP – Proper Noun, Singular
- NP – Noun Phrase
- OSC – Online Sports Commentary
- POS – Possessive Ending
- PP – Prepositional Phrase
- PRP – Personal Pronoun
- S – Sentence
- SAT – Sports Announcers' Talk
- SSCM – Strategic Sport Communication Model
- UK – United Kingdom
- VBZ – Verb, 3rd Person Singular Present
- VP – Verb Phrase

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of globalized mass communication, sports have emerged as not only a cultural phenomenon but also a powerful site of media representation. Among the various forms of sports media, football television commentary holds a particularly significant position due to its wide reach, spontaneous nature, and influence on audience perception. As an interdisciplinary field combining elements of linguistics, media studies, gender studies, and sociolinguistics, the study of football commentary offers valuable insights into how language functions in high-stakes, fast-paced, emotionally charged environments.

Scholarly interest in sports discourse has grown considerably in recent decades. Pioneers such as Ferguson (1983) introduced the concept of sports announcer talk (SAT), highlighting its distinctive syntactic and phonological traits. Crystal and Davy (1969) were among the first to analyze sports commentary as a specific register, emphasizing features such as ellipsis, repetition, and intonation. More recently, Jan Chovanec (2018) has focused on live text and spoken commentary, emphasizing the fluid nature of speech in high-pressure settings and its dependence on extralinguistic context. The pragmatic and functional aspects of football language have also been analyzed by Havryliuk (2018), Hlushchenko (2020), Kharabara & Dyakiv (2024), who identified cohesive structures, evaluative strategies, and the use of metaphorical language as essential tools in constructing meaningful, engaging narratives.

Parallel to these linguistic insights, gender-focused research has examined how male and female commentators may adopt different communicative styles, reflecting broader societal gender norms. Scholars such as Jennifer Coates (2003), and Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013) have long argued that language is a key site for gender identity construction. In sports commentary, these gendered patterns can manifest in stylistic variation, emotional framing, and the use of expressive or evaluative language. As highlighted by Syaputri et al. (2024) and Cooky et al. (2013), women's sports remain underrepresented in media, and even when covered, are often described through different linguistic lenses compared to men's events.

The **object** of the research is English-language football television commentary as a type of sports discourse. This discourse includes spontaneous verbal reporting of live matches, characterized by immediacy, emotional engagement, and the dual function of information and entertainment.

The **subject** of the study is the use of cohesive devices and figurative language in male and female football TV commentary. Particular attention is given to pronoun reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, metaphors, and idioms as linguistic tools that structure the narrative and influence audience perception.

The **purpose** of the research is to investigate whether gender differences influence the use of cohesion and figurative language in football commentary. By comparing male and female commentary, the research aims to determine whether certain linguistic strategies are more prevalent in one gender group than the other and what communicative functions these strategies fulfill in the context of live sportscasting.

Achieving the set purpose involves solving the following **tasks**:

1. to outline the theoretical foundations of sports discourse and its development over time;
2. to identify and describe the key linguistic and pragmatic features of football commentary;
3. to examine how gender is represented in sports media, with a focus on language use and underrepresentation of women;
4. to analyze linguistic patterns in football commentary of men's and women's matches, including vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, and stylistic choices;
5. to investigate how commentary functions in context, particularly regarding the portrayal of players and teams;
6. to identify and interpret gender biases in football commentary;

The multifaceted nature of the corpus enabled the integration of both general scientific and linguistic research **methods**. Among the general scientific methods employed were classification (used to categorize each example within the identified linguistic patterns), comparison (to examine differences between male and female

football commentary), measurement, including frequency counts, averages, and comparative charts (to provide qualitative insights supported by illustrative data), as well as interpretation, synthesis, and induction (to derive general conclusions from specific linguistic instances). From a linguistic perspective, a corpus-based approach was applied within a discourse analysis framework, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the texts. Analytical tools such as AntConc, spaCy, and the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA) were employed to examine sentence length, syntactic complexity, cohesion, and stylistic features. Manual annotation was used to identify and classify vocabulary and figurative language. In addition, sociolinguistic and contrastive analyses were conducted to reveal patterns of gender representation and to highlight the differences in the portrayal of male and female players.

The research **material** consists of two compiled corpora: one comprising male football TV commentary and the other female commentary from 2021-2024 seasons. The male corpus consists of 2 hours, 8 minutes, and 37 seconds of highlighted moments, drawn from 31 short videos (each 3-6 minutes long) posted on England's official YouTube channel, transcribed into a total of 12,547 words. The female corpus includes 1 hour, 46 minutes, and 28 seconds of footage from 15 videos (each 5-8 minutes long) on the same channel, resulting in 12,687 transcribed words.

The **scientific novelty** of this study lies in its comprehensive linguistic and social exploration of football commentary as a distinct and understudied genre. The research provides new empirical evidence of gender-based differences in live sports discourse. This comparative approach not only enriches the field of gender linguistics but also highlights the unique linguistic features of sports commentary, including its lexical, syntactic, and stylistic dimensions. By examining how language shapes the representation of gender in sports media, the research contributes to promoting gender equality and supports a more balanced portrayal of female voices in football coverage – an area that remains significantly underrepresented in both media and academic discourse.

This paper consists of a list of abbreviations and acronyms, an introduction, two main chapters: the first chapter outlines the foundations and scope of the study,

including the evolution of sports discourse, its linguistic and pragmatic features, and gender representation in sports media; the second chapter presents a comparative analysis of male and female football commentary from English national team matches, focusing on linguistic patterns, functional aspects, and examples of gender bias, followed by a conclusion, references, and six appendices containing supplementary data and visual representation of findings.

I. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SPORTS DISCOURSE

1.1 Sports Discourse and Its Evolution

In contemporary society, sport has evolved into a vast, polycentric domain of social activity that commands global attention. As a well-established and highly developed aspect of societal life, sport is prominently reflected in human communicative practices, making it a viable subject for discourse analysis (Havryliuk & Biletska, 2021: 117-122) . Sports discourse is a multifaceted communicative construct that reflects the goals and intentions of participants in sporting events while operating within a discursive community that shares communicative strategies and tactics. Its primary function is to represent sports as a mediated event. Despite its significance, the term "sports discourse" lacks a universally accepted definition, leading to ambiguities regarding its scope, structure, and fundamental characteristics. However, sports discourse encompasses a wide range of genres, with sports commentary, both oral and written, occupying a central place. It integrates features of other genres and serves as a verbal reflection of a sporting event, characterized by relevance, credibility, documentary accuracy, and the author's perspective (Havryliuk, 2018: 308-312).

An essential component of sports discourse is sports commentary, often termed sportscasting. Ferguson preferred the term sportscasting, which he defined as the oral narration of live sporting events accompanied by evaluative remarks. Sports announcers' talk (SAT) occurs under distinct communicative conditions, addressing a diverse, anonymous audience while striving to balance real-time reporting with entertainment. Commentators are expected to maintain continuous coverage, avoiding prolonged silence during slower phases of the game, while also being able to respond spontaneously and improvise during fast-paced, dynamic sequences due to time constraints. Furthermore, SAT must engage and emotionally resonate with the audience, particularly by fostering a sense of identification during international

matches. In addition to these communicative skills, commentators must possess a thorough understanding of the sport, including its rules, players, and specialized vocabulary. Based on these features, Ferguson argued that sports commentary constitutes a distinct spoken register, identifiable even through paralinguistic features such as tone, pitch, and intonation. (Ferguson, 1983: 148-166).

The development of sports commentary can be traced back to early radio broadcasts. Haynes highlights the pioneering role of the BBC sports commentator – a former barrister Seymour Joly de Lotbiniere, also known as Lobby, in shaping modern-day sports broadcasting. The first football match commentary was broadcast in 1927 by Henry Blythe Thornhill Wakelam, who, like most of those who followed in his footsteps, had a background in sports and had never originally intended to work in broadcasting. This highlights how it was often more practical to bring in someone with expertise in the sport rather than train someone in spontaneous speech delivery. Among other early figures was George Allison, both a director and manager of Arsenal Football Club, who represented a shift from ex-athletes to more professional broadcasters. As the style of sports commentary developed, relying on an accessible and relatable approach, de Lotbiniere helped shape a new sporting language that resonated with both sport and society. In a memorandum from December 1942, he outlined the essential components of effective commentary: setting the scene, describing the action, providing quick and clear updates on scores or outcomes, incorporating ambient sounds from the stadium (which should be acknowledged but not disrupt the narrative), and including relevant historical details, statistics, and personal background. Commentators were also encouraged to evaluate key moments, such as predicting potential winners and explaining their significance. Moreover, they were expected to adopt a tone that felt natural and friendly, begin and end their commentary memorably, build suspense toward a climax, speak confidently, maintain an energetic pace, structure their material clearly, and remain neutral to ensure objectivity. An additional role, known informally as the "Number 2" or a "Dr Watson"

– later referred to by Ferguson as color commentary –was introduced to enrich the broadcast with analysis and extra context (Haynes, 2009: 25-48).

Sports commentary exists in various modes nowadays, including television, radio, and live text commentary (LTC). The main feature of the first two is oral speech, whereas the latter is predominantly written online. However, there is a notable difference between post-match news reports, which focus on the result exclusively, and LTC where the chronological process is valued. Based on previously described Crystal and Davy's three constituents of the commentary, it may be considered that TV commentary is predominantly verbally descriptive, despite the visual aid provided. Thus, radio sportscasting is explanatory and descriptive to a larger extent with fluency of speech being of the utmost importance, which is subsequently juxtaposed with TV commentary's slower speed. Contrastingly, the readers do not expect much fluency in LTC, as 'silence' already implies lack of noteworthy moments. Another distinct characteristic of live text commentary is the absence of phonological level. Nevertheless, some imitative 'compensatory strategies', such as capitalization, assist in establishing emotional connection with the audience (Chovanec, 2018: 33-53).

The evolution of sports communication has been significantly influenced by digitalization. Duncan Samuel suggests that traditional TV sports coverage has adapted to the digital age, where highlights, replays, and statistics are readily accessible. Generation Z and millennials prefer "short sharp content packages," favoring flashpoints over lengthy narratives. For a sport to gain popularity, it must be visible and readily available everywhere. Subsequently, fans have a propensity of options at their disposal that enable their inclusion into sports discourse. While digital content supplements traditional broadcasting, it has not entirely replaced it. It rather acts as an enhanced supplement which promotes its source. Still, Duncan suggests reevaluation of the traditional "antenna cable TV" which has been superseded by streaming platforms that provide the same volume of content but on different terms and conditions and often with more opportunities to rewind the missed episode (Duncan, 2020: 70-84).

Highlighted moments are a critical component of modern sports media. Due to the shrinking attention span of audiences, computer science researchers have been developing models to automatically detect significant game events based on match overviews, commentators' speech, and moments of silence (Wang et al., 2004: 1-5). The integration of technology in sports communication has further enhanced accessibility and audience engagement. Therefore, research must be conducted in this specific field in order to establish some general regulations and describe generic peculiarities of the language used during the highlighted moments.

From an economic perspective, sports communication plays a vital role in the global sports industry, which generates billions in revenue (Pedersen et al., 2020: 5-83). The Strategic Sport Communication Model (SSCM) categorizes sport communication processes, highlighting its integration with advertising, branding, and social media engagement. With the rise of the Internet and social media, sports communication mechanisms have undergone significant transformations, leading to an abundance of high-traffic, sport-oriented content. McGillivray emphasized that digital platforms have revolutionized sports discourse more than any other form of communication, further expanding its reach and influence (McGillivray, 2016: 1080 – 1097).

Sports discourse is inherently dynamic and highly adaptable, continually evolving in response to broader socio-political developments. Major events such as Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly shaped the way sport is communicated, both in tone and content, highlighting the close interconnection between society and sporting language (Havryliuk & Biletska, 2021: 117–122). These disruptions have not only influenced the vocabulary and narratives used in sports media but also revealed how commentary and reporting adjust to reflect shifts in public sentiment, political climates, and cultural priorities.

This research explores the role of football within sports discourse, making it essential to define its position within the broader discourse system. While football discourse is not explicitly regarded as a distinct discourse type, it shares notable

characteristics with television discourse, albeit indirectly, through its affiliation with sports discourse. This relationship suggests a hierarchical structure: discourse → television discourse → sports discourse → football discourse. The latter encompasses all spoken and written texts related to football, including both oral communication and written materials that are intrinsically linked by football-related content and situated within the broader football domain. This classification highlights the embedded nature of football discourse within the larger framework of media and sports communication (Kalenjuk et al., 2024: 72-77).

All in all, sports discourse has evolved into a complex and multifaceted form of communication that mirrors the societal prominence of sport itself. Central to this discourse is sports commentary, which has developed distinctive characteristics across various media formats – radio, television, and digital platforms. From early radio broadcasts to modern live text commentary, the role of the commentator has expanded to include not only real-time reporting but also audience engagement and emotional resonance. Technological advances and digitalization have significantly shaped sports communication, emphasizing immediacy, accessibility, and interactivity. Football discourse, as a part of sports discourse, reflects the sport's global popularity and cultural relevance. As societal shifts continue to influence language and media, sports discourse remains a dynamic and evolving field.

1.1.1 Linguistic Features of Sports Commentary

Football commentary represents a specialized form of spoken discourse, characterized by its own distinctive linguistic patterns shaped by the demands of live reporting and audience engagement. Sports commentary, particularly in football broadcasts, has been widely studied as a distinct linguistic constituent of sports discourse with unique lexical, syntactic, and phonological characteristics. Over the years, various scholars have explored its defining traits, tracing its structure, evolution, and stylistic features.

Before introducing main linguistic peculiarities of the genre, it is necessary to clarify its purpose and substructure. Crystal and Davy were among the pioneering linguists who expressed the interest in commentary as a separate genre (Crystal & Davy, 1969). Foremost, they define three major categories, which are present in commentary regardless of the discourse: description, explanation and opinion. In most cases their proportion depends on the specific topic of the commentary and are not necessarily present in all types. Chovanec further refined this classification by placing them on a scale of dependence on extralinguistic events, with ‘description’ being the most reliant, ‘explanation’ less so, and ‘opinion’ the least dependent (Chovanec, 2018: 69). Additionally, Crystal and Davy observe that certain commentators manage to be highly engaging despite conveying minimal factual content, highlighting the dominance of phonological features – such as intonation, stress, and rhythm – over the actual words used. Through these vocal techniques, commentators effectively create a sense of relaxed, conversational spontaneity (Crystal & Davy, 1969). Still, they differentiate between the specific language used for play-by-play and color commentary. Among other distinctive linguistic peculiarities, loose grammatical linkage of sentences, enumeration, and occasional grammatical disruption occur. The majority of sentences are statements; however, some may be incomplete or minor in the form of noun phrases and adverbials. The number of questions is relatively small, and those used would be referred to as rhetorical (Chovanec, 2018: 303-314).

On the other hand, Ferguson advanced the concept of sports announcer talk (SAT), distinguishing it as a separate register. He described SAT as the spoken narration of a live event, which is complemented by contextual details and analytical commentary. His classification of commentary into play-by-play and color commentary remains widely accepted. Play-by-play focuses on real-time action and utilizes a rapid, descriptive style, while color commentary provides evaluative and analytical insights, often filling moments of low activity. His syntactic analysis of sports commentary identified frequent simplifications, inversions, result expressions, and heavy modifiers. The use of the present simple tense for direct reporting and the

present progressive for background information is another defining syntactic trait. Additionally, Ferguson emphasized that sports broadcasting is marked by the absence of immediate audience feedback, since commentators address a broad, invisible, and diverse audience with a vested interest in the event but no immediate interaction with the commentator and whose reactions cannot be directly observed (Ferguson, 1983: 154-157). Later studies, such as Müller's research, suggested that some linguistic routines in commentary are idiosyncratic, varying among commentators who develop distinct styles through lexical substitutions and nonce-word formations (Müller, 2008: 65).

Kharabara and Dyakiv state that the linguistic features of football live text commentary form a distinctive hybrid genre that combines elements of spoken and written language. Lexically, this genre is rich in football-specific jargon, emotional-evaluative vocabulary, and informal or colloquial expressions. Commentators frequently use anthroponyms, team nicknames, and figurative terms to vividly describe players and events. Syntactically, the genre includes interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative constructions, which simulate real-time interaction and heighten drama. Stylistically, hyperbole, capitalization, and repetition are used to imitate the intensity of oral speech. These linguistic tools serve not only to report the match but also to establish a connection with the audience, often incorporating reader comments and reactions into the commentary itself. Thus, live text commentary reflects both the immediacy of broadcast speech and the interactivity of digital communication (Kharabara and Dyakiv, 2024: 20-31).

Similarly, Taborek presented a comprehensive analysis of language used in TV broadcasts of English, German and French football games and concluded on the register features of sports commentary. He distinguished sports announcer talk from other spoken registers, for instance language of sportsman and coaches or supporters. This particular linguistic variety was characterized by a significant use of specialized terminology and soccer-related vocabulary, along with a formal tone and a focus on offering descriptive and instructional remarks. The research also found that the

language used by sports announcers feature a high density of figurative expressions, specifically metaphors, to communicate intricate details while also generating a feeling of thrill and drama. In addition, football was commonly represented using figurative language associated with war and theatre. (Taborek, 2012).

Lewandowski contributed to the study of sports commentary by analyzing online sports commentary (OSC), produced by professional sportswriters in online contexts on a minute-by-minute basis. He defines it as a hybrid between live TV commentary and written match reports. While OSC maintains elements of spontaneity akin to TV commentary, it lacks real-time phonological markers and intonation patterns. He reinforced Ferguson's distinction between play-by-play and color commentary, emphasizing the dominance of football-specific terminology, the present simple tense, inversion, ellipsis (e.g., deletion of subject and copula be), adverbs of time and place, and demonstrative pronouns. Syntactically, OSC resembles SAT in its preference for clauses over full sentences, with frequent unfinished utterances, self-repairs, and interruptions contributing to its fragmented structure (Lewandowski, 2012: 65-67).

Several Ukrainian researchers expanded this analysis to football commentary in the Ukrainian language, where football-specific and neutral vocabulary intertwines. Moreover, they registered a high density of anglicisms which could be explained by the British origin of the game. The oral nature of sports commentary presents perceptual challenges due to its reliance on spontaneous speech and extralinguistic factors. However, this expressiveness also makes it a compelling medium for audience engagement. Overall, football commentary is primarily informal in nature and characterized by the frequent use of specialized terminology and slang (Kalenjuk et al, 2024: 72-77).

To put it short, these studies confirm that sports commentary is a linguistically rich and dynamic genre. It is characterized by a distinct register that blends descriptive immediacy with evaluative commentary, specialized vocabulary with simplified syntax, and phonological variation with structural flexibility. The interplay of these features ensures that sports commentary remains both an informative and highly

engaging mode of communication, shaped by the linguistic creativity of individual commentators and the constraints of live broadcasting.

1.1.2 Pragmatics in Sports Commentary

Another feature that makes sports commentary a distinct genre within sports discourse is a unique set of pragmatic features implemented by the sports commentator that play a crucial role in the broadcasting process. As Hlushchenko outlines, these features include modal moderation; cognitive and axiological competence; descriptive and presentational statements; control over content redundancy, cognitive accessibility of information and its amount; targeted suggestion; evaluation; access to the language code of reality, localization of the current event and orientation in the language and situational continuum; imagery of the statement; semantic sufficiency; national, ethnic and social identity; emotional, psychological and linguistic tolerance; personal language and communicative experience. Additionally, commentators employ targeted suggestions, evaluations, and linguistic imagery to enhance viewer engagement. These elements align with the broader linguistic characteristics of sports discourse, serving as a verbal reflection of ongoing events while shaping the communicative profile of the commentator (Hlushchenko, 2020: 54).

The significance of sports commentary extends beyond mere description, influencing audience perception and engagement on multiple levels. A number of scientists highlight that televised sports have experienced a surge in viewership and media coverage, partially due to the role of commentators in heightening the entertainment value of broadcasts (Lee et al., 2016: 145-150). Other researchers found that audiences greatly valued a game modified by commentary instead of pure visual show. Some of the reasons for such popularity can be recognized on emotional (e.g., entertainment, suspense, thrill), cognitive (e.g., learning, aesthetics) and social (identification, affiliation) levels (Bryant et. al, 1977). It was outlined by Hirschman and Holbrook that hedonic needs can be considered as the most crucial factor, as fans were proved to appreciate the emotional background to a larger extent than the

envisaged result of the game (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). It has also been reported that viewers enjoy intense moments of aggressive behavior on the field and hostile relationship between the competing teams and subsequently high level of affiliation with a supported team, especially in the moments of their successes (Zillmann & Cantor, 1996). All these features of emotional influence are produced by commentators and announcers, whose job is not only to provide contextual facts and instant descriptions, but also to create ‘dramatic embellishment’. Lee and other researchers have found that audiences tend to prefer commentators who display a degree of bias by presenting the actions of the team or players they support in a positive light. Therefore, nationalistic color commentary, where distinct moments during the game are interpreted in a subjective way and help highlight specific features of a country, has become a dominant phenomenon in the world (Lee et al., 2016).

The role of commentators in shaping narratives and emotional engagement is further supported by Syaputri (Syaputri et al., 2024: 1116-1123). Their analysis, based on Smith & Higgins (2020) and Jones (2022), demonstrates that sports commentators merge official and colloquial language to create compelling storytelling. Moreover, sports commentators are crucial in media coverage as they help spectators introduce themselves, immerse and develop interest in the game. For this purpose, their mission is to establish emotional connection while describing the events. Commentators can also readily adjust to employing language that conveys excitement and calms the audience to share their happiness when a goal is achieved and each player's instinctive execution in implementing match strategies. Other targets include shaping the sense of togetherness by building a bridge between the players and fans. For example, announcers always support and use national rhetoric, common cultural knowledge and inclusive pronouns to help homogenize. However, apart from such highly emotive moments, formal and analytical style is dominant in phases of description and historical embedment. The case study into the 2022 World Cup has highlighted the spectrum of formats and languages used to reinforce the excited perception of the competition. Furthermore, sports commentators succeeded in encouraging viewers to develop their

identity in football culture. Some instances of code switching were spotted as a matter of cultural diversity and inclusion. In addition, football commentary as a genre strives to foster a non-discriminative environment where neutral explanations, mild criticism, respectful praise, and positive reinforcement are highly valued (Syaputri et al., 2024: 1116-1123).

Despite the unifying role of commentary, it can also serve as a medium for ideological influence. Rawian exemplifies that the language and philosophy can be recognized in sports commentary as a way to instill biases and ideology typically supported by the commentator and that this fact may indeed influence not only the interpretation of the game, but also the viewer's worldview. They claim that such social and cultural biases are better to be avoided, and, on the one hand, sports commentators should strive for a fair depiction of events on the field. On the other hand, spectators must be aware of the inclusion of these biases and ideologies in sports commentary (Rawian et al., 2023: 89-97). Applying Jeffries' (2014) textual-conceptual toolkit to sports commentary, they identify six prevalent functions: naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, implying and assuming, negating, presenting others' speech and thoughts, and representing time and space. During such critical stylistic analysis scholars were able to discover ideological utterances of race and religion, especially in the context of non-favored teams, such as Saudi Arabia and Morocco (Rawian et al., 2023: 89-97).

Havryliuk further categorizes the pragmatic objectives of sports commentary into three primary goals: informing, comprehensively covering, and evaluating events. These objectives are realized through three communicative strategies. The information-interpretation strategy employs tactics such as informing, explaining, commenting, and reconsidering information from new perspectives. The strategy of shaping the recipient's emotional state includes emotional appeal, unity, and value orientation considerations. Lastly, the argumentative strategy incorporates analogies, contrastive analysis, illustration, substantiated evaluation, inclusivity, and references to authority. Through these approaches, sports commentary not only conveys information but also

actively shapes audience perception, strengthens national identity, and fosters a sense of community among viewers (Havryliuk, 2018: 308-312).

Overall, sports commentary is a discourse that extends beyond relaying match events. It combines linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic strategies to engage audiences, create excitement, and reinforce social identities. While commentators enhance viewer experience through dramatic embellishment and emotional appeal, their language choices also have the potential to shape ideological narratives, making sports commentary a powerful and influential medium in contemporary mass communication.

1.2 Gender Representation in Sports Media

The interrelationship between language, gender, and sport, particularly football, provides a revealing lens through which to examine broader social dynamics. Far from being neutral domains, both language and sport serve as key sites where gender identities are constructed, maintained, and contested. This chapter explores how gendered norms are reinforced through linguistic practices, media representations, and the institutional structures surrounding football. Drawing on sociolinguistic, media, and sports studies research, it demonstrates how the alignment of football with hegemonic masculinity shapes discourse, audience perception, and participation, while simultaneously limiting the visibility and legitimacy of women's football.

1.2.1 Language and Gender

Contemporary gender theory challenges the notion of gender as a fixed identity, instead understanding it as performative and context-dependent. Coates (2003) and Joseph (2004) argue that linguistic behavior often reflects gendered social norms. In this context, normative masculinity is often associated with toughness, with male identity linked to competitive behavior as a means of asserting status (Campbell, 2000; Cleland & Magrath, 2019). Moreover, dominant masculinities adapt to social change while preserving power structures by suppressing behaviors deemed feminine. Women are more likely to use cooperative and polite forms. These patterns are not merely

stylistic but serve to reinforce social expectations. As Joseph notes, gender is not a trait acquired in childhood but a continual performance shaped by social interaction (Joseph, 2004).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet develop this idea further, introducing the concept of indexicality – the process by which linguistic forms point to social meanings. Individuals make language choices within structural constraints, meaning that gender expression is both agentive and socially shaped. Their practice-based model moves beyond traditional “difference” and “dominance” frameworks, proposing instead that gender is interactionally constructed through conversational structures. Practices such as interruption, turn-taking, and topic control often reflect broader gendered power imbalances. Women, for instance, are more likely to adopt indirect or polite speech, reinforcing traditional gender norms. Rather than serving as a neutral medium, linguistic interaction becomes a site of both conformity and resistance, through which social meanings – including those tied to gender – are negotiated and reproduced (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 88-158).

In sports commentary, for example, language often mirrors these norms. As Syaputri shows, male commentators focus on individual performance and strategy, using phrases such as "He's been outstanding today, dominating the midfield" and "His tactical decisions are influencing the game significantly" reflecting a competitive tone. In contrast, women's commentary emphasizes teamwork and unity, as seen in phrases like "Great teamwork there, the players are really supporting each other" and "Our defense is holding strong today, great effort by the backline." These linguistic patterns align with broader gendered communication styles and play a role in shaping audience perceptions of both athletes and commentators (Syaputri et al., 2023: 1121-1123).

1.2.2 Women's football

According to the diachronic analysis of women's football by Pfister this domain has historically been marginalized, with the sport's popularity and heroic status reserved for men worldwide. During World War I, women's matches gained temporary

acceptance, particularly in the UK, as teams like the Dick, Kerr's Ladies attracted large crowds while raising funds for wounded soldiers. However, institutional opposition soon re-emerged, with football federations banning men's clubs from supporting women's teams. In Germany, resistance was even stronger, with the media discouraging women from playing. Despite being treated as a spectacle in the 1950s, women's football gradually gained recognition, becoming Europe's most popular female team sport. By 2023, FIFA reported 16.6 million female players worldwide (Pfister, 2015: 640-652).

Football, particularly in its male-dominated forms, remains a key site for the performance of hegemonic masculinity. As O'Dwyer (2020) and Campbell (2000) suggest, toughness, aggression, and competitiveness are central to normative male identity. Hartmann claims that sports environments act as spaces for male bonding, where interactions among men serve to reinforce traditional masculine values. (Hartmann, 2003). Griffin similarly emphasizes that football is not just about athletic performance but about asserting status and dominance. Verbal practices within these spaces – cursing, teasing, and humor – serve to reinforce masculine identity. These linguistic behaviors function as symbolic resources, enhancing perceived authority and solidifying group hierarchies. In this way, language becomes a tool for maintaining gendered power relations in sports culture. Moreover, dominant masculinities adapt to changing social conditions by selectively incorporating new elements while preserving underlying hierarchies (Griffin, 1993: 109-126). Cleland & Magrath note that male identity continues to evolve, but always in ways that maintain power structures. Behaviors perceived as feminine – such as emotional openness – remain marginalized, contributing to the rigidity of gender norms in football (Cleland & Magrath, 2019: 2-14).

The media play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of gender and sport. Despite growing female participation and achievement, women's football continues to receive disproportionately low media attention. Cooky, Messner, and Hextrum found that women's sports received only 2–3% of sports coverage on major U.S. networks between 1989 and 2014 – a figure that declined rather than improved over time. This

underrepresentation was not only quantitative but also qualitative. When women's sports were covered, the stories were often delivered with less enthusiasm, excitement, or narrative depth compared to men's coverage. Rather than focusing on their athletic performance, media coverage often emphasized personal aspects such as appearance, family roles, or romantic relationships. Major women's sporting events were frequently overlooked, while men's events – even minor ones – received prominent and passionate coverage. The language used for male athletes tended to be dramatic and heroic, reinforcing a cultural association between sport and masculinity (Cooky et al., 2013: 10-28).

Bruce (2003) and Pfister (2015) argue that media narratives frequently further reinforce traditional gender roles. Female athletes are often infantilized, sexualized, or depicted in ways that emphasize “appropriate femininity” by highlighting women's physical and emotional traits that differentiate them from men. For example, during the 2011 Women's World Cup, German media outlets described players as “gorgeous girls” and “national elves,” reducing their athletic legitimacy. Women in sports must navigate a balance between athleticism and femininity to gain recognition, respect, and financial opportunities while resisting the pressures of sexualization. In addition, female athletes find themselves in a paradox – they must appear attractive to appeal to media and sponsors while avoiding stereotypes of androgyny or lesbianism (Pfister, 2015: 639-652).

Media bias extends beyond visuals to the very language of sports reporting, where men's events are the unmarked norm, while women's events require gender marking and are often trivialized. As a result, women's sports often receive less media attention, sponsorship, and financial support than men's sports. These patterns make it harder for female audiences to identify as sports fans. According to Peeters & Elling, male-dominated sports media provides minimal coverage – only about one percent of Dutch football articles focus on women's football – often justifying this with arguments about performance and lower newsworthiness. Journalists have reinforced these biases through dismissive rhetoric. There are instances of questioning the legitimacy of

women's football, pessimistic framing of the Dutch women's team, trivialization of footballers by highlighting their roles as mothers. Moreover, objectification remains an issue, with players often labeled as "football babes" or other diminutive terms. However, some journalists, managed to draw favorable comparisons between men's and women's football, highlighting progress. While media coverage of women's football has increased with its growing professionalism, comparisons to men's football still shape its legitimacy. A shift toward more serious and promotional reporting has emerged, yet full gender parity remains a distant goal (Peeters & Elling, 2014: 1-15).

Beyond media representations, institutional structures also reflect and reproduce gender inequalities in football. Allison identifies two competing logics that shape the development of women's professional soccer: business and cause. The business logic aligns with traditional, male-dominated models of professional sport, prioritizing profitability, marketability, and alignment with established commercial practices. In contrast, the cause logic frames women's soccer as a platform for social justice and gender equality, emphasizing the importance of expanding opportunities for women and challenging systemic discrimination. While these logics coexist, Allison argues that the dominance of the business model often marginalizes feminist values. Even initiatives aimed at increasing inclusion can end up reproducing inequalities when they are judged by male-centric standards of success. Structural issues such as unequal funding, limited media exposure, and reliance on volunteer support hinder the professionalization of the women's game (Allison, 2016: 1-23). Pfister notes that while FIFA aims to increase female participation to 60 million by 2027, gender disparities in funding and media visibility persist, particularly at the grassroots and semi-professional levels (Pfister, 2014: 1-15).

Audience engagement with football also reflects gendered socialization. Some researchers found that men and women are drawn to major football events for different reasons: men often seek achievement and analysis, while women prioritize social interaction and enjoyment of the atmosphere. These differences are not innate but reflect broader cultural patterns that shape how individuals relate to sport. Importantly,

the study shows that both genders value communal aspects of football fandom, challenging the stereotype that men are the “serious” fans while women are mere spectators. This finding suggests that marketing and media strategies need to move beyond binary representations and engage with the diversity of fan experiences (Schallhorn et al., 2017: 1118-1133).

The intersection of language, gender, and football reveals deep-seated social dynamics that shape both discourse and practice. Linguistic behaviors reflect and reinforce gender norms, while media and institutional structures continue to privilege men’s sport as the standard. Toni Bruce argues that major changes in the male-dominated world of sports media are unlikely to happen soon, even though more young people are showing interest in mixed-gender teams. This shows that growing popularity alone may not be enough to challenge long-standing gender bias in how women’s sports are covered. Despite progress in visibility and participation, women’s football remains marginalized, subject to underrepresentation, trivialization, and structural inequality (Bruce, 2013: 1118-1133).

Overall, the interconnection between language, gender, and football uncovers persistent structural and discursive inequalities that reflect broader societal power dynamics. Linguistic practices in sports commentary not only mirror but actively construct and sustain gendered norms, often aligning men with traits such as dominance, competitiveness, and authority, while framing women in terms of cooperation, emotion, and marginality. These patterns are reinforced through media representations that trivialize or sexualize female athletes and through institutional frameworks that prioritize profit over equality.

Conclusion to Chapter I

Drawing from discourse analysis, pragmatics, and media studies, it becomes evident that sports discourse is not merely a means of transmitting information but a complex communicative genre shaped by its context, participants, and medium.

Historically, sports commentary evolved from straightforward descriptive reporting into a dynamic and highly stylized form of live discourse. This evolution was driven by the demands of immediacy, audience engagement, and the growing intersection of entertainment and journalism. The transition from pre-recorded commentary to live broadcasting required new linguistic strategies that prioritize speed, coherence, and spontaneity, giving rise to unique structural and syntactic features that distinguish sports talk from other genres.

Linguistically, sports commentary occupies a hybrid space between speech and writing. It is characterized by rapid, often grammatically fragmented speech, a reliance on present tense narration, and the use of idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and culturally embedded references. The analysis confirms that both the “play-by-play” and “color” aspects of commentary contribute to a rich linguistic texture that reflects and reinforces the sporting event. These features highlight the genre's orality, immediacy, and performativity, particularly in the case of football commentary, which demands real-time description of fast-paced action.

On a pragmatic level, sports discourse serves multiple simultaneous functions: providing factual information, interpreting events, maintaining viewer interest, and conveying emotion. Commentators are tasked with navigating these functions while also responding to the social and cultural expectations of their audience. As shown through previous studies, commentators strategically use language to influence perception, establish authority, and construct narratives that resonate with viewers. Moreover, the shift towards digital platforms and social media has expanded the landscape of sports discourse, inviting audiences to participate in a dialogue.

An important dimension of sports discourse that has garnered increasing scholarly attention is its role in constructing and perpetuating gender norms. Traditionally male-dominated, sports commentary has often marginalized or stereotyped female athletes and commentators, both through underrepresentation and through discursive practices that frame women in terms of appearance, emotion, or novelty rather than skill. Although there have been notable shifts towards greater

inclusion, gendered language and asymmetrical power dynamics persist in many contexts. This not only shapes how athletes are perceived but also influences broader societal attitudes toward gender roles in sports and media.

Overall, sports discourse, particularly football commentary, represents a linguistically rich, socially situated, and rapidly evolving communicative practice. Its study offers valuable insights not only into the mechanics of language in action but also into broader issues of media, culture, identity, and power. As the media landscape continues to shift, future researchers must be aware of the ways in which technological innovations, global audiences, and ongoing debates around gender representation continue to reshape the nature and function of sports communication.

II. FOOTBALL COMMENTARY IN MEN’S AND WOMEN’S MATCHES OF ENGLISH NATIONAL TEAMS

2.1 Linguistic Patterns

2.1.1 Vocabulary Overview

A set of 37 football-related lexical items was selected to investigate lexical patterns within two distinct corpora. AntConc – a free, cross-platform corpus analysis toolkit developed by Laurence Anthony – was employed for this purpose, specifically its concordance tool and automated document search function, to quantify the frequency of each vocabulary item. The study focused on two separate corpora: male and female football coverage. The complete list of lexical items, along with up to three illustrative example sentences for each, is provided in APPENDIX 2. Subsequently, the lexical items were categorized into the following thematic groups: Skills and Actions with the Ball (see Pie Charts 1 and 2), Defensive Actions (Pie Charts 3 and 4), Mental and Physical Qualities (Pie Charts 5 and 6), Game Events and Outcomes (Pie Charts 7 and 8), and Positions and Areas (Pie Charts 9 and 10). These visualizations display the lexemes included in each category, along with their proportional distribution.

Passing is the most frequent action among both male and female players, though its prominence is far greater in the women’s game. “*Passes*” account for 31.4% of all ball actions in female data – over 11 percentage points higher than the male figure of 19.8%. This suggests a more possession-oriented approach in women's football. Male players exhibit a more balanced distribution of actions. “*Crosses*” (16.0%) and “*headers*” (15.1%) are close behind “*passes*”, followed by “*strikes*” (13.2%), “*kicks*” (11.3%), and “*deliveries*” (10.4%). Less common actions include “*shoot*” and “*first touch*” (each at 6.6%), with “*dribbling*” notably rare at just 0.9% (see Pie Chart 1). In contrast, female players rely more heavily on structured ball movement. After “*passes*”, “*crosses*” (19.5%) and “*deliveries*” (14.4%) are most frequent, while

“kicks”, “headers”, and “first touches” appear at lower rates. “Striking” remains present (12.7%), but “shoot” is barely recorded (0.8%), and “dribbling” is entirely absent (see Pie Chart 2). These differences may reflect broader tactical variations: women’s football tends toward controlled build-up play, while men’s football shows a more diverse technical application, including individual improvisation.

Defending is the most common defensive action for both groups. Male players record “defend” actions in 44.1% of defensive instances, closely mirrored by female players at 46.2%. However, a significant contrast appears in goalkeeping: “save” is the second-most frequent action and far more prevalent among women (38.5%) compared to men (20.6%). Among male players, a wider range of defensive techniques is observed. “Blocking” accounts for 16.2%, followed by “pressing” (10.3%) and smaller shares for “backpedal”, “nudge”, and “interception” (each 2.9%). For female players, “block” is used less often (5.8%), while “press” and “tackle” appear equally at 3.8%. “Nudge” is the least frequent at 1.9% (see Pie Chart 3, Pie Chart 4). These trends suggest that while both groups rely on core defending skills, male players diversify their defensive responses more than females, who focus more on goal prevention and positional discipline.

In the realm of physical and mental attributes, “run” is the dominant characteristic in both datasets. Among males, it accounts for a striking 82.6% of all observations in this category, underscoring the physical intensity of the men’s game. The remaining traits – “balance”, “composure”, “decision”, and “form” – are equally represented at 4.3% each (see Pie Chart 5). Female players also prioritize “running”, though slightly less (78.4%), with more variety in the remaining attributes. “Composure” and “form” each appear at 8.1%, while “balance” contributes 5.4%. Notably, “decision” does not appear in the female data at all (see Pie Chart 6). These findings suggest a greater physical emphasis in the male game, while female players show relatively higher engagement with “composure” and “form” – perhaps indicating a stronger focus on mental steadiness and technical consistency.

“Goals” are the most frequent event in both categories, accounting for 46.6% in male and an even higher 48.1% in female data. However, the types of secondary outcomes differ notably. “Penalties” are far more common among men (18.2%) than women (9.4%), which may suggest more aggressive or risk-prone attacking styles in men’s matches. Female players, by contrast, record more “corners” (19.4%) and “hat-tricks” (11.3%) than their male counterparts at 15.3% and 8.0%, respectively. Other events like “net”, “deflection”, and “equalizing” are relatively consistent across both datasets, though “ricochet” appears only in the female chart (see Pie Chart 7, Pie Chart 8). Overall, the women’s game demonstrates a slight edge in goal conversion and set-piece activity, while the male game shows higher incidence of fouls leading to penalties and a broader mix of event types.

The most notable spatial difference between the two groups lies in the “box” area. Female players demonstrate a strong concentration of actions “in the box” (57.9%) – a clear indicator of close-range play and goal-oriented positioning. In contrast, male players show a more balanced spread, with 34.3% of actions “in the box” and significant engagement in “attack” (22.9%), “onside” positions (17.1%), “midfield” (14.3%), and “overlap” areas (11.4%). Interestingly, the “overlap” zone is entirely absent in the female data, suggesting less emphasis on wide runs or overlapping play. “Midfield” activity is also lower in the women’s game (10.5%) compared to men, indicating a more direct attacking strategy (see Pie Chart 9, Pie Chart 10). These spatial trends further support the notion that the women’s game is more focused on finishing from central areas, while the men’s game leverages the full field through varied positioning and build-up.

Subsequently, a comparative cross-category analysis was conducted by quantifying all instances within each category and outlining the overall topical representation in male and female coverage (see Bar Chart 1).

In the male coverage, Game events and Outcomes dominate the lexical landscape, comprising 40.8% of the total vocabulary used. This high percentage reflects a strong media emphasis on tangible performance results such as match scores,

victories, or game-altering moments. Skills and Actions with the Ball follow at 24.6%, highlighting the focus on individual player techniques and offensive contributions. Defensive Actions constitute 15.8%, suggesting a moderate degree of attention given to non-offensive gameplay. Meanwhile, Mental and Physical Qualities and Positions and Areas make up 10.7% and 8.1% respectively, indicating a comparatively lower valuation of psychological traits and spatial or positional roles in media narratives surrounding male athletes (see Pie Chart 11).

In contrast, the chart representing women's coverage displays subtle but meaningful shifts. Game events and Outcomes slightly increase to 41.5%, maintaining their centrality in both genders' coverage, yet indicating a consistent journalistic focus on quantifiable performance results. Notably, Skills and Actions with the ball rise to 30.6%, which is 6 percentage points higher than in men's coverage. This suggests that media representations of female athletes may increasingly highlight individual skill, possibly in an effort to legitimize or valorize women's athletic performance in historically male-dominated sports discourses. However, Defensive Actions drop to 13.5%, and Mental and Physical Qualities to 9.6%, indicating a reduced emphasis on these aspects in the portrayal of women. Most striking is the substantial decline in Positions/Areas to just 4.9%, suggesting that spatial and tactical framing is even more marginalized in female coverage (see Pie Chart 12).

These patterns imply that while both male and female athletes are primarily framed around outcomes and skills, the lexical focus for female athletes leans more toward highlighting individual offensive prowess, perhaps as a compensatory strategy in media discourse to affirm the credibility of women's sports. The relative neglect of tactical, positional, or defensive elements in female coverage may point to a simplified or less nuanced portrayal, reinforcing gendered stereotypes that value flair over strategic depth in female performances. Such lexical trends are consistent with feminist critiques of sports journalism, which argue that media often frames female athletes through lenses that either overemphasize or under-contextualize their achievements (Bruce, 2015; Shifflett et al., 2016). Such framing ultimately shapes audience

perceptions, influencing how legitimacy and professionalism are perceived across gender lines in sport.

2.1.2 Syntactic Overview

For the purpose of analyzing sentence length in football commentary, all sentences were extracted and saved in a new document, with each sentence placed on a separate line to prepare the file for AntConc analysis. AntConc was then used to calculate the total number of words and sentences, with the number of lines representing the number of sentences. Based on this, the average sentence length was determined using the formula: average words per sentence = total words ÷ total sentences. The analysis revealed that men's football commentary contained approximately 10 words per sentence on average, while women's football commentary featured slightly shorter sentences, averaging around 8.5 words each. One possible assumption based on this difference is that women's commentary during key moments may favor even greater conciseness and immediacy, potentially reflecting a stylistic choice to enhance clarity and maintain a rapid pace during crucial game events. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from a women's match: *"Hemp shot. Save that Dongslaar got across. Oh, what a save by Van Dongseelaar. Well, the goal kick's been given here. Oh, no chance. It's a fantastic save. You can see it from here. I mean, that was going in. Brilliant play from Lauren Hemp. And not for the first time"* (England, 2023). Alternatively, it could suggest a tendency toward more segmented or reactive delivery. In contrast, the slightly longer sentences in men's commentary might indicate a marginally more descriptive or narrative approach, possibly shaped by established conventions in the broadcasting of men's matches. For example: *"Kane's lucky! And there he is again! Back home, continuing his goal-scoring feats. Goal number 55 for England's all-time record goalscorer. And they've found a way through. And the first up to another three points"* (England, 2023). This commentary, while still dynamic, demonstrates a tendency toward continuity and storytelling across the sentence sequence.

Syntactic complexity was automatically calculated using the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA), a powerful and freely available online tool developed by Lu (2010) for analyzing various dimensions of syntactic complexity in written texts. Due to a limitation of 1,000 words per analysis imposed by the tool, the corpus was divided into segments: eleven 1,000-word samples were selected from the men's commentary corpus (average word count per segment: 984), and twelve 1,000-word samples from the women's commentary corpus (average word count per segment: 914). The results were compiled in two Google Sheets tables, with a second sheet summarizing the average values for each syntactic feature under investigation. To ensure greater accuracy in the representation of decimal values – particularly for features such as Complex Nominals per Clause, Dependent Clauses per Clause, and Mean Length of Clause – an external average calculator was used, as minor inconsistencies were observed in Google Sheets' rounding and averaging functions. Final results may be found in APPENDIX 1 (see Table 1).

Despite the comparable total word counts – 10,829 words in the men's corpus and 10,964 words in the women's – the structural characteristics of the two datasets suggest subtle variations in the style of language used. On average, men's commentary segments (approximately 984 words each) contained 103 sentences, 118 verb phrases, and 105 clauses per 1,000-word segment. In comparison, women's segments (approximately 914 words each) featured 108 sentences, 117 verb phrases, and 107 clauses per segment. These figures suggest that women's commentary included slightly more clauses and sentences relative to the total word count, indicating a denser sentence structure with a tendency toward conciseness and higher clause frequency. The mean length of clause (MLC) further supports this pattern, with men's commentary showing longer clauses (9.552 words) than women's (8.575 words). This may imply that male commentators employ more elaborated clauses, potentially embedding more descriptive or referential material within each unit. Conversely, the shorter clause length in women's commentary might reflect a more concise and action-

focused narrative style, consistent with the earlier finding of shorter average sentence length.

The clause-per-sentence ratio was marginally higher in the men's data (1.032) than in the women's (1.011), suggesting that male commentary included slightly more multi-clause sentences. However, women's commentary exhibited a higher proportion of dependent clauses per clause (0.172 compared to 0.129), which may point to a more frequent use of subordinate structures – such as relative or adverbial clause – possibly to express cause, consequence, or temporal relations more explicitly (see Table 1).

Both corpora showed relatively low use of coordination at the phrase level, as indicated by the low coordinate phrase per clause values: 0.105 for men and 0.087 for women. This suggests that coordination using conjunctions like “*and*”, “*but*”, or “*or*” was not a dominant structuring strategy in either dataset. In terms of nominal complexity, men's commentary demonstrated a higher rate of complex nominals per clause (0.938) than women's (0.809), indicating a greater use of noun phrases with modifiers, embedded clauses, or prepositional phrases. This may further support the observation that male commentators tend toward slightly more information-dense and structurally layered expressions.

Overall, the findings highlight a difference in syntactic style: while both types of commentary rely on relatively simple and fast-paced structures suitable for live sports narration, men's commentary appears to favor slightly more elaboration at the clause and nominal levels, whereas women's commentary shows a tendency toward higher density of subordinate clauses within shorter clauses and sentences.

To analyze the syntactic depth of football commentary, the open-source Natural Language Processing library spaCy was employed (Python version 3.10.11). SpaCy automatically calculates the average Parse Tree Depth, a metric that reflects the syntactic complexity of sentence structure by measuring the number of levels from the root of the parse tree to its deepest leaf. For this analysis, two text documents were created containing all sentences (1301) from the men's football commentary corpus and 1481 sentences from the women's. The parse tree depth was computed automatically,

yielding an average depth of 4.35 for men's coverage and 4.22 for women's. To illustrate the nature of this metric, two randomly selected sentences from each corpus were analyzed and visualized using spaCy-style parse trees.

The sentence from male corpus "*Newcastle's 18 Premier League goal man – 4-0!*" exemplifies a compact yet syntactically layered structure typical of football commentary. At the root level, it is categorized as a sentence (S) comprising a complex noun phrase (NP) and an interjection (INTJ). The noun phrase itself includes nested structures: a possessive noun ("*Newcastle's*") and a stack of modifiers ("*18 Premier League goal*") preceding the head noun "*man.*" This creates a layered hierarchy of constituents, with the deepest path in the parse tree reaching four levels (S → NP → NP → NNP). The interjection "*4-0!*" stands as a syntactically independent element to express the score in an excited manner. The second example sentence "*Clinical calm from Wilson*" follows preliminary the same pattern. It is parsed as a sentence (S) consisting of a noun phrase (NP) and a prepositional phrase (PP). The noun phrase includes an adjective ("*Clinical*") modifying the noun "*calm,*" forming a concise evaluative phrase. The prepositional phrase "*from Wilson*" contains a preposition ("*from*") followed by a noun phrase headed by the proper noun "*Wilson.*" The parse tree reaches a depth of four levels along the path from the root to "*Wilson,*" S → PP → NP → NNP (see Figure 1).

As for female part, the sentence "*And she deserves it with her performance.*" presents a coordinated structure that blends both discourse connection and syntactic layering. It is parsed as a sentence (S) with an initial coordinating conjunction ("*And*") followed by an embedded sentence (S) consisting of a noun phrase ("*she*") and a verb phrase. The verb phrase includes the main verb "*deserves,*" the object pronoun "*it,*" and a prepositional phrase "*with her performance,*" which adds justification or elaboration. The deepest syntactic path in the parse tree follows the route S → S → NP → PRP, reaching four levels. The sentence "*Strength from Lauren James there.*" demonstrates a compact and elliptical structure commonly found in live football commentary. It is parsed entirely as a noun phrase (NP) serving as the full sentence, a

stylistic feature typical of spontaneous spoken discourse. The head of the noun phrase is “*Strength*” (NN), which is modified by a prepositional phrase “*from Lauren James*” and an adverbial phrase “*there,*” adding attribution and spatial emphasis. The deepest syntactic path in the parse tree reaches only three levels $S \rightarrow NP \rightarrow NN$ (see Figure 2).

Overall, the slight difference suggests that men's commentary may incorporate slightly more embedded or hierarchically structured sentence components. This could reflect a tendency toward more syntactically layered expressions – often involving noun phrases or clauses – which aligns with earlier findings related to longer clause lengths and higher rates of complex nominals in men's speech. In contrast, the slightly lower depth in women's commentary is consistent with the overall pattern of shorter clauses and sentences, possibly indicating a preference for flatter, more linear constructions that prioritize immediacy and clarity. However, both corpora show overall shallow syntactic depth, which is typical of live sports commentary, where speed, responsiveness, and clarity are prioritized over elaborate syntax.

2.1.3 Cohesive Devices

The analysis of conjunction use in the men's and women's football commentary corpora revealed notable differences in both frequency and function. The subordinating conjunction “*because*” appeared significantly more often in the women's corpus (12 instances) than in the men's (3 instances). In both cases, “*because*” served to explain or justify an action or outcome, often reflecting the commentators' efforts to provide causal reasoning or clarify events on the pitch. For example, in the women's data, it is used to explain physical contact or tactical decisions: “*Could have gone down because there's contact there.*” In contrast, the men's corpus includes instances such as: “*It's a difficult one because he's waiting for the ball,*” which similarly offer explanatory context, though with lower frequency. Conversely, the concessive conjunction “*although*” appeared once in the men's commentary but was entirely absent in the women's. Its single use – “*although the flag has just gone up anyway*” – functions to introduce a contrastive clause that slightly undermines the preceding statement. This

suggests that while causal relationships (“*because*”) are frequently verbalized in women’s football commentary, concessive structures (“*although*”) are either less commonly used or more often omitted, possibly reflecting stylistic or structural preferences in the discourse of each dataset.

The investigation of logical connectors in the two corpora revealed a clear preference for informal and conversational linkers, particularly the coordinating conjunction “*but*”. In the men’s data, “*but*” appeared 80 times, while in the women’s commentary it was even more frequent, with 111 occurrences. This high frequency reflects the dynamic and contrastive nature of live commentary, where “*but*” is commonly used to introduce unexpected outcomes or shifts in play. The coordinating connector “*so*” was used less frequently in both corpora – 8 times in the men’s and 6 in the women’s – typically serving to express consequence or result in a casual tone. More formal adversative and causal connectors such as “*however*”, “*therefore*”, and “*nevertheless*” were virtually absent from the men’s data, and only one instance of “*nevertheless*” appeared in the women’s corpus, in “*Not sure what Leticia is doing there playing offside when Lotto Ruben Moy is the last player clearly, but nevertheless England do well to get back.*” This suggests a strong tendency toward informal, speech-like cohesion in live football commentary, favoring natural spoken discourse over written-style connectives. The higher frequency of “*but*” in the women’s dataset may indicate a slightly more explanatory or evaluative tone, though both corpora clearly prioritize immediacy and accessibility in their use of logical connectors.

Further analysis focused on pronominal reference in the two corpora. It highlights distinct patterns in the use of third-person singular pronouns and their contribution to reference cohesion. In the men’s commentary, the pronoun “*he*” appears 182 times, typically referring to a player introduced at the beginning of an utterance. These references often connect several sentences, creating a longer referential distance between the antecedent and the pronoun. Nevertheless, cohesion is maintained due to the structured focus on a single player during a given passage, as illustrated in a sequence referring to Olly Watkins – “*It’s Olly Watkins. That would*

have been an instant impact from the England substitute. That would have been his second touch. And for him, it's a difficult one because he's waiting for the ball, he's just waiting for it there. But eventually, he does get his strike away. He's had a little look, waiting for the ball.” – where “*he*” is used repeatedly after an initial introduction. In contrast, the women’s commentary shows a slightly higher frequency of the pronoun “*she*” (195 instances), and the referential chains tend to be tighter, with shorter distances between pronoun and antecedent. Most references occur within the same sentence or in close succession, enhancing textual clarity and reducing ambiguity. Even in cases of rapid narrative progression or multiple player mentions, context and ongoing play descriptions ensure referential coherence: “*Kelly. On the hat-trick. Came so close to it. Again, brilliant play. I love how she just exploits space. The minute she sees a gap, she's going through it. There's no hesitation. Just watch here. Even though there's two coming over, she's there. Bang. You can't touch her. The minute she's in the box, you've got to foul her or you've got to let her go.*” Notably, the male corpus contained no instances of “*she*”, reflecting the gender-specific nature of the data and confirming that reference cohesion is shaped both by discourse structure and subject focus.

To examine the use of substitution and ellipsis in football commentary, a sample-based method was applied. One hundred subsequent sentences were randomly extracted from each corpus (men’s and women’s) and manually analyzed for instances of nominal, verbal, and clausal substitution and ellipsis. Each identified case was classified according to Halliday and Hasan’s cohesion categories (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). A simplified formula was then used to estimate the frequency of these cohesive devices across the entire corpora: $(\text{Count in 100 sentences} \div 100) \times \text{Total Sentences}$. While this method does not guarantee full accuracy – since cohesive devices require contextual interpretation on a sentence-by-sentence basis – it provides a useful approximation of their distribution and frequency.

The results reveal differences in the patterns and preferred forms of cohesion across the two datasets (see Bar Chart 2). In the men’s corpus (1297 sentences), clausal

ellipsis was the most frequent feature, with an estimated 298 instances. For example, in the utterance *“Support from Hoskinen as well, the defender,”* the possible predicate phrases *“He feels”* and *“who is”* are omitted in both parts of the sentence respectively. Verbal ellipsis (130), as in *“A goal [was] made in Newcastle,”* and nominal substitution, *“...it's going to be a yellow card for Scales, it's the second one, it's off,”* (104) followed, while verbal substitution and nominal ellipsis appeared less often. This suggests a reliance on ellipsis – particularly at the clausal level – to maintain pace and fluency in spoken commentary, likely due to the fast-moving nature of the game. In contrast, the women’s corpus (1291 sentences) showed a particularly high estimated rate of clausal ellipsis (530), substantially more than in the men’s data. An example might be *“Easy as you like for Ella Toone,”* where the subject and auxiliary verb are omitted, assuming the listener understands *“It was easy”*. Verbal ellipsis (155) and nominal ellipsis (130) were also more frequent than their corresponding categories in the men’s corpus, as seen in expressions like *“Five for England,”* where *“goals”* is omitted. Substitution (nominal: 40, verbal: 13, clausal: 13) occurred less often. These findings imply that ellipsis, especially clausal, plays a dominant role in creating cohesion in women’s commentary, possibly reflecting a stylistic tendency toward concise, context-dependent expression. For instance, instead of saying *“It is Bellingham with the ball,”* a commentator might prefer just *“Bellingham”*. Overall, while both corpora rely heavily on ellipsis, the women’s data demonstrate a more frequent use of this cohesive strategy, particularly in omitting predictable elements to maintain rhythm and clarity.

The use of interrogative structures in both samples reflects a common rhetorical strategy in spoken discourse, often used to involve the audience, express evaluation, or highlight uncertainty. In the men’s dataset, 30 interrogative instances were identified, many of which are rhetorical in nature or function as tag questions. Examples such as *“Can he finish it as well?”* or *“You wouldn't put it past him, would you?”* serve to create suspense or emphasize a player’s ability, while also engaging the listener in a shared understanding of the game’s dynamics. Similarly, in the women’s corpus, 39

interrogatives were found, including reflective and evaluative questions such as “*You think, is she going to go with her right foot?*” and “*Are we taking away another goal from Chloe Kelly?*” These questions often mirror the commentator’s thought process in real time, reinforcing the interactive and spontaneous nature of live commentary. The slightly higher frequency of interrogatives in the women’s commentary suggests a tendency toward more dialogic or speculative narration, though in both datasets, interrogatives function primarily to heighten drama, express judgement, or prompt audience reflection without expecting a direct answer.

2.1.4 Stylistic Choices

To outline the stylistic patterns of football commentary in key moments, the two corpora were manually analyzed with a focus on figurative language, specifically metaphors, idioms, and similes. A total of 51 instances were extracted from the male commentary corpus and 42 from the female. Each excerpt was categorized according to the type of stylistic device (metaphor, idiom, or simile) and further classified by its conceptual domain, inferred from the connotative meaning of the key lexical item. The results, along with detailed interpretations of each utterance, are provided in APPENDIX 3.

The slightly lower frequency of figurative language in the female corpus may be attributed to the comparatively richer expressive variety observed in male commentary. Male commentators often have more discursive space and tend to employ a wider range of creative, sometimes even clichéd, expressions. For example, the phrase “*...but Harry Kane is England's goal scoring king and that never gets old*” recurs multiple times in the corpus, functioning as a familiar rhetorical tool to elevate the team captain. Furthermore, male commentary displays a broader stylistic distribution, comprising metaphors (70.5%), idioms (27.5%), and similes (2%) (see Pie Chart 13 in APPENDIX 1). In contrast, the female commentary corpus demonstrates a marked predominance of metaphorical language, with metaphors accounting for 90.5% of the figurative instances and idioms for only 9.5% (see Pie Chart 14). This difference in stylistic

composition reflects not only varying narrative strategies but potentially also differing genre expectations, production constraints, or individual commentator preferences.

Prior to the analysis, it was hypothesized that male football commentary would exhibit a higher frequency of metaphors related to domains such as WAR, COMBAT, and HUNTING. This assumption was grounded in earlier lexical analysis, which revealed a predominance of terms such as *“attack”* and *“shoot”*, suggesting a tendency toward more aggressive and militaristic figurative framing in male discourse. However, the most prominent domains – CLOTHES (*“He's dirtied his gloves”*), WRITING (*“And this time, there will be no chalking off England's ninth goal”*), and BODY (*“He drove at the heart of the Greek defence and it crumbled”*), each at 7.8% – suggest that male commentators frequently draw on metaphors relating to physical presentation, textual performance, and embodiment, such as describing a defensive error with the expression *“a late blemish on their copy book.”* This focus indicates an emphasis on visibility, action, and evaluation. Other notable domains include SPORT and ARCHITECTURE (5.9% each), exemplified by *“It doesn't get much better than that as far as a dead ball strike is concerned”* and *“Deschamps analysing his three-mount wall.”* respectively, reflecting the physical and structured nature of football, while a large number of domains, such as NATURE (*“And he gets up like a salmon”*), COLOUR (*“Now Grealish surrounded by Hungarian red”*), and GEOMETRY (*“All square at Wembley”*), are evenly represented at 3.9%, showing that the stylistic repertoire is not overly dominated by any single metaphor type. Surprisingly, WAR metaphors are not as dominant as it was assumed, appearing at just 3.9% in sentences like *“England hit the front”* and *“And they have fired Finland their first warning”*, which may reflect a shift away from traditionally aggressive narrative styles. The presence of more domestic and relatable domains such as COOKING (*“Don't think there'll be any way of sugarcoating this one”*), HOUSEHOLD (*“And the cushion on his knee”*), and MARKETING (*“Flush is spared by Bellingham again, it's becoming a catchphrase”*) suggests a stylistic diversification and an effort to appeal to broader audiences (see Pie Chart 15).

On the other hand, the most dominant domain in female corpus is WAR (*“Bullet head up,” or “An extraordinary night for England putting Latvia to the sword and winning by 20, yes, 20 goals to nil”*), accounting for 12.2%, which interestingly exceeds its frequency in male commentary. This suggests that female commentators actively employ combative metaphors to convey intensity and competitiveness, possibly to assert authority or match the traditional dramatic tone of football narratives. A cluster of domains MOTION (*“England bounce back with a win”*), BODY (*“they have got bodies here”*), LIFE (*“The hopes of reaching the Nations League finals is still alive”*), FOOD (*“England hungry for more”*), WEATHER (*“The Lionesses lever Luxembourg on a night where it only rained goals”*), EVIL (*“...it's a fizzing ball nightmare for defenders”*), and ANIMAL (*“Could she really put some venom on it to make it harder?”*) each at 4.9%, indicates a broad spectrum of figurative strategies. These metaphors not only highlight the physical aspects of the game but also introduce symbolic, emotional, and moral dimensions, for instance *“Just buries it into the bottom corner.”* A wide array of additional domains, including COOKING (*“Lauren Hemp turned on the burners”*), ASTROLOGY (*“Lauren James, the star of the show”*), ART (*“You know, it's the art of just giving it a go”*), SERVICE (*“You give her the service and she doesn't let you down”*), and MONEY (*“Turning on a sixpence, turning the defender and smashing it straight into the back of the net”*), each at 2.4%, demonstrates a creative openness to everyday and culturally resonant experiences (see Pie Chart 16).

In conclusion, while initial expectations positioned male football commentary as more metaphorically aggressive, the findings reveal a broader and more detailed use of metaphor, with emphasis on presentation, structure, and evaluation rather than violence. Conversely, the prominence of WAR metaphors in the female corpus challenges stereotypical assumptions and underscores the dynamic and assertive nature of women's sports discourse. Overall, both corpora display a rich variety of metaphorical domains, reflecting diverse narrative strategies and a shared commitment to engaging, emotionally resonant storytelling.

Emotional and expressive language is a central feature of football commentary, particularly in the coverage of key moments, regardless of gender. A selection of 16 randomly chosen examples from each corpus is provided in APPENDIX 4. In men's coverage, expressions tend to lean towards grand, iconic, and heroic portrayals, with phrases like *“And there is his immortal moment”* or *“He is an all-time great”* elevating individual performances to legendary status. In contrast, women's commentary, while equally expressive, often places more emphasis on collective effort, resilience, and technical brilliance. Descriptions like *“Fantastic play from Chloe Kelly,”* *“Brilliant contact from Millie Bright,”* and *“Superb finish”* focus on skill execution and teamwork, frequently highlighting the process rather than just the outcome. Emotional engagement is also evident in the women's coverage through personal connection – *“Oh, I'm so, so pleased for Beth Mead”* – and storytelling, as in *“A fright on Halloween night for England.”* Overall, both styles are rich in expressive content, but men's commentary often dramatizes legacy and spectacle, while women's commentary underscores technical quality, determination, and team spirit.

2.2 Functional Context of Commentary

In football commentary, the linguistic features identified are not unexplained but serve distinct communicative functions tailored to the live, fast-paced context of the game. As Chovanec points out, these features help commentators deliver information efficiently while keeping the audience engaged and emotionally involved (Chovanec, 2018). Functional categories and example sentences from each corpus are showcased in APPENDIX 5.

One primary function is informative, where devices such as ellipsis, present tense verbs, and temporal adverbs (*“now”*, *“still”*, *“again”*) convey real-time updates with speed and immediacy. For example, rapid-fire phrases like *“Second England corner. Swung in by Saka towards Maguire. Kane! Blocked! Follow-up in”* (men's) or *“Now Zelem. Lovely clip ball from Zelem. Robinson, and it's in there again”* (women's) omit articles and verbs to prioritize pace. The descriptive and referential function helps

track the ball or players through pronouns and spatial deictics, exploiting shared visual context. Utterances like *“Will he get there? He will”* or *“She knows how to get the penalty there”* avoid repetition and maintain cohesion through substitution and pronoun use. Commentary also fulfills a dramatic and engaging function, using exclamatory and evaluative language to intensify the spectacle – *“I’ll tell you right now, it’s a magnificent goal. Magnificent goal, Bellingham and Kane”* and *“That’s absolutely brilliant. Absolutely fantastic. Beth England in a brilliant position”* show how repetition and adjectives build excitement. When the game slows down, the phatic function keeps the flow, often through filler phrases or side observations – *“And their next game England will play Finland”* or *“She might have made a mistake in that Netherlands game”* provide background and continuity. The interpretative function aids the viewer's understanding with modal verbs and causal connectors – *“Could have been an instant and very late hero for England”* or *“That might be Marriott’s first save”* interpret events and their implications. Lastly, the interpersonal function fosters a conversational harmony with the audience through first and second person pronouns and discourse markers, as in *“Well, away we go...”* or *“Do you know what he’s done three or four times?”* Overall, these functional layers together form the dynamic, multi-dimensional nature of football commentary, balancing speed, clarity, emotion, and connection.

2.2.1 Portrayal of Players and Teams

Next part explores the portrayal of individual players and teams, as well as naming strategy, in the men’s and women’s football corpus, drawing on five selected matches. The aim is to identify how commentary constructs narrative identities for players and how national teams, particularly England, are framed in relation to their opponents. These portrayals are significant for understanding the evaluative and affective dimensions of football discourse and how language shapes public perception. Examples of the top ten most frequently mentioned players from each corpus are provided in APPENDIX 6, offering contextualised excerpts.

Among the most frequently mentioned players, Harry Kane emerges as a central figure. He is consistently portrayed as heroic and decisive, with commentary describing him as someone who “*delivers,*” provides a “*breakthrough,*” and possesses a “*Midas touch.*” Such expressions go beyond technical assessment and contribute to a mythologized identity, as seen in phrases like “*all-time great*” and “*immortal moment.*” His goals are not simply documented as match events but are elevated to iconic status with terms such as “*record-breaking*” and “*golden cap,*” reinforcing Kane’s symbolic importance within the England squad. This narrative constructs him as a national leader whose contributions shape the historical trajectory of the team.

Jude Bellingham also features prominently in the commentary, positioned as a game-changer who consistently delivers in crucial moments. A striking example is the commentator’s line, “*Flush is spared by Bellingham again – it’s becoming a catchphrase.*” This not only praises Bellingham’s timely interventions but also reflects his growing reputation for reliability under pressure. The tone is both affectionate and admiring, casting him as England’s creative and relentless saviour.

Emerging players are often framed through celebratory language that marks their entry into the national football narrative. Anthony Gordon, Jarrod Bowen, and Taylor Harwood-Bellis, each scoring for the first time, are met with enthusiastic expressions such as “*His first ever England goal,*” “*What a debut,*” and “*Welcome along to the party.*” These utterances reflect a ritualized welcoming into the symbolic world of international football, highlighting the significance of debut goals as defining personal moments that also serve the collective progress of the team. The commentators’ tone conveys excitement and national pride in witnessing new talent rise to prominence.

However, not all portrayals are flattering. Some players are described with critical or ambivalent language, particularly in the face of errors or disciplinary incidents. Jordan Pickford, England’s goalkeeper, is one such case. He is described as having “*given it away*” or having “*missed it again,*” which signals vulnerability and underperformance. Yet this criticism is occasionally softened by reference to teammates’ interventions, such as “*Colwill has spared England’s blushes.*” This

comment redistributes responsibility and prevents an overly negative framing of Pickford's role, portraying him as a trusted but occasionally fallible figure. Another example of a rapid shift in narrative framing is seen with Liam Scales, whose disciplinary lapse is marked by the line: "*Yellow card... second one... it's off.*" The abruptness of this commentary highlights a fall from grace and marks a turning point in the match. It underscores the pivotal impact of individual errors on the broader team narrative and exemplifies how commentary can pivot quickly between appraisal and judgement.

Several players are also singled out for their technical excellence and stylistic contributions. Trent Alexander-Arnold, for instance, is described in glowing terms, with phrases like "*sensational strike,*" "*arguably the best passer,*" and "*seen it time and time again.*" These evaluations reflect a high level of technical appreciation and suggest a degree of consistency in excellence. Similarly, Jack Grealish and Bukayo Saka are praised for attributes such as "*vision,*" "*pace,*" and the ability to "*skip past defenders.*" Such commentary emphasizes not just effectiveness but also aesthetic pleasure, reinforcing football as both a competitive and performative sport.

Beyond individual players, the England men's national team, often referred to as the Three Lions, is portrayed as a determined and progressive force. Commentary describes "*Positive start,*" "*sharpened up their act,*" and "*stars aligned tonight,*" constructing a narrative of tactical growth and momentum. In matches with solid shorelines', such as the 4–0 victory referenced in the data, phrases like "*England hit the front*" and "*took the game away from the Finns*" underscore dominance and assertiveness. While moments of vulnerability are acknowledged – "*Late blemish,*" or "*exposed by a simple set piece*" – such comments are framed as momentary mistakes rather than structural weaknesses. The emphasis remains on England's strength and resilience. There is also a strong element of national pride in how England's victories and performances are reported. This becomes particularly evident in headlines or summary commentary, where the team is presented with grandiosity and certainty: "*The Three Lions are 100% and clear at the top of the group,*" and "*Clinical Three*

Lions Score Five.” While such references are less frequent during live match commentary, they contribute to a narrative around the team’s trajectory, reinforcing a sense of destiny and national belonging.

Opposition teams, by contrast, are primarily framed in relation to England’s performance. Italy, for example, is treated with historical respect: *“first win since 1961,”* and *“hugely significant”* both frame England’s victory as a major achievement against a traditionally strong side. In contrast, Finland is portrayed as a relatively weaker team, albeit one capable of threatening England’s control, as seen in the line *“Fired Finland their first warning.”* Greece is depicted less favourably, especially in the context of a rare setback for England: *“no way of sugarcoating this one.”* Here, the commentary suggests disappointment and frustration, portraying the result as an exception that disrupts England’s expected dominance.

In women’s coverage several players are depicted as elite performers who deliver at pivotal moments, embodying leadership and consistency. Lucy Bronze, for instance, is praised for her aerial ability and match intelligence, with lines such as *“Brilliant header,”* *“finds space,”* and *“she’s got the run.”* These comments underscore her dependability and experience, particularly in high-stakes scenarios. Bronze is positioned as a tactical asset – someone who rises to the occasion in key moments and reinforces England’s competitive maturity.

Similarly, Mary Earps is presented as a defensive cornerstone. She is frequently described in superlative terms – *“Top-drawer goalkeeping,”* *“absolutely brilliant save,”* and *“that’s why she’s the best.”* Her portrayal elevates her to heroic status, consistently credited with keeping England secure under pressure. Even when errors occur, as in the Netherlands match, they are similarly framed as exceptions rather than defining flaws. This approach upholds her broader identity as England’s *“wall,”* whose excellence is rarely questioned.

Lauren James also receives focused praise, particularly for her intelligence and technical precision in midfield. Lines such as *“That’s why I like her in that position,”* *“picks out Bronze,”* and *“doesn’t need to look”* frame her as a visionary player whose

instinctive decisions elevate the team's attacking strategy. The commentary constructs her not only as a playmaker but as a player whose spatial awareness and anticipation shape the game.

Emotionally resonant narratives are particularly prominent in portrayals of players returning from injury or periods of absence. Beth Mead's return is framed as both personal triumph and collective celebration. Expressions like "*So pleased for her,*" "*first goal in 15 months,*" and "*redemption*" position her comeback goal as a symbolic victory, one that transcends the scoreboard and resonates with fans and teammates alike. Similarly, Fran Kirby's reappearance on the scoresheet is marked with affection and recognition: "*Welcome back,*" "*no more popular scorer,*" and "*celebrated by everyone.*" In these instances, goals are not just technical achievements but emotional milestones loaded with narrative weight.

Particular attention is paid to creative intelligence and tactical awareness among midfielders and wide players. Chloe Kelly is consistently praised for her decision-making and precision, with comments like "*Intelligent way to cut it back,*" "*pinpoint delivery,*" and "*brilliant from Kelly.*" Similarly, Alex Greenwood and Keira Walsh are framed as players who guide the team's rhythm and structure. With descriptions like "*sublime pass,*" "*glides into the corner,*" and "*breaking pass,*" they are portrayed as those who provide control and fluidity to England's gameplay.

The team as a whole is cast in a positive and progressive light. Commentary often highlights their assertive starts and tactical dominance through phrases such as "*Perfect start,*" "*big moments,*" "*fantastic delivery,*" and "*England fly out of the traps.*" These depictions reflect a team that is confident, well-prepared, and capable of seizing early control. However, moments of vulnerability are not ignored. Expressions like "*Caught out,*" "*not doing this the easy way,*" and "*nervy final few minutes*" introduce an undercurrent of tension, suggesting that England's success is sometimes hard-fought rather than seamless. Similar to men's team, women's team is consistently referred to as "*the Lionesses*" – a term that evokes bravery, unity, and national pride. This naming alone anchors their identity in a long-standing tradition of sporting valor.

Headlines such as *“The Lionesses off to a winning start”* and *“The Lionesses lever Luxembourg on a night where it only rained goals”* further amplify their tradition. These narrative moments infuse their journey with a sense of purpose and symbolic weight, aligning their success with broader cultural aspirations.

As with the men’s commentary, opposition teams are primarily portrayed in relation to England. Scotland, for example, is seen as disruptive but ultimately beatable. Phrases like *“Big chance,” “cut short the celebrations,”* and *“boost before the break”* suggest an unpredictable but limited threat. Belgium, referred to by their footballing nickname *“Red Flames,”* are characterized as clinical and momentarily superior: *“Fine forwards,” “clinical,”* and *“Red Flames firing.”* The commentary frames them as a chaotic and dangerous side that demands England’s attention. Their temporary lead is described as a *“wake-up call,”* injecting urgency into England’s response. The Netherlands, meanwhile, are portrayed with respect and narrative contrast. *“Too good for England in the first half,”* followed by *“passive in the second,”* positions them as a team capable of dominating, but ultimately overtaken by England’s adaptation and persistence. This shift reinforces a redemption arc for England, emphasizing their capacity to overcome initial setbacks and reclaim control.

Overall, comparative analysis of men’s and women’s football commentary reveals both shared and distinct narrative strategies that shape public perception of players and teams. In both corpora, England is consistently framed as a team of destiny, resilient, talented, and symbolically important within the national imagination. However, while the men’s team (the Three Lions) is often portrayed with a tone of historical breakthrough and technical evaluation, the women’s team (the Lionesses) is narrated with a more emotionally resonant tone. Heroism and excellence are present in both, but in the women’s coverage, personal journeys, comebacks, and collective spirit are more foregrounded.

2.2.2 Naming technique

In football commentary, naming conventions follow consistent patterns that reflect both professionalism and audience familiarity. Predominantly, players are referred to by their surnames only, with 33 such instances in the male coverage, phrases like “Bellingham. Bowen, first touch” fit in this brisk, efficient style, well-suited to the fast pace of match narration. Full names, on the other hand, appear in 22 instances and are typically reserved for moments of emphasis, when introducing a new player, announcing a goal, or highlighting a key contribution, as in “*A sensational strike from Trent Alexander-Arnold...*”. This shift in naming heightens drama and builds recognition, especially for less familiar players. Notably, first-name-only references are absent, as they convey an informality that doesn't align with the professional tone of live sports broadcasting. A similar pattern emerges in women's football coverage. However, the ratio leans the other way: full names appear more frequently (33 instances) than surname-only references (21 instances) – e.g., “*It was Lauren Hemp with a follow-up from Millie Bright's header...*” versus “*Bright is in there. And she will score. It is Hemp who followed up.*” This suggests a subtle but significant narrative trend. The increased use of full names in women's commentary may reflect an ongoing need to establish player identity and visibility in a sport where women are still, to some extent, proving their place and earning recognition on equal footing. By fully naming female athletes more consistently, commentators may be deliberately reinforcing their presence, stature, and individual achievements in a historically male-dominated arena.

Additionally, unlike in men's coverage, first-name-only references do appear in women's commentary, with players like Lauren, Ella, Beth, and Niamh mentioned informally, like in “*Lauren does what she should do...*” or “*Brilliant work from Niamh.*” This use of first names introduces a tone of warmth and familiarity, possibly reflecting a more personal connection with the audience or a commentary culture that treats the women's game with slightly different social dynamics. While this can humanize the players, it also raises questions about whether such informality inadvertently undermines the perceived professionalism of the sport.

2.2.3 Gender Biases

As gender equality becomes essential in many areas of life, it's important to examine whether language still reflects and reinforces old stereotypes – especially in such a traditionally male-dominated sphere as sports. So, one of the topics of this study is to examine how gender bias manifests in football commentary with a focus on how language reflects different perceptions of athletic performance, value, and legitimacy.

Commentary from ten highlight videos of football matches – five men's and five women's – was analyzed. The analysis initially focused on the pragmatic function of language, with commentary grouped into three categories: individual-oriented, as in "Rico Lewis encouraged the shoot"; team-oriented, such as "*Plenty of possession for England*"; and impersonal or atmospheric, exemplified by "*It's finished in Helsinki*" (see APPENDIX 1 Table 2 & Table 3).

Quantitative findings revealed that 60 percent of the comments in men's matches were individual-oriented, highlighting players' names, achievements, and actions. Examples include "*Here's Kane again!*", "*He is England's all-time record goalscorer,*" and "*A sensational strike from Trent Alexander-Arnold that Radecky just couldn't keep out.*" Team-oriented commentary accounted for 19 percent, with phrases like "*England have sharpened up their act in the second half*" and "*Swinging by Saka towards Maguire.*" Impersonal or descriptive statements comprised 21 percent, such as "*Offside flag is up,*" "*What a hit,*" and "*A goal made in Newcastle.*" In women's matches, individual focus remained significant though lower, at 45 percent, with examples such as "*She takes that touch,*" "*Lucy Bronze is asleep on the far side,*" and "*Look at this run from Niamh Charles.*" Team-oriented commentary was comparatively higher at 30 percent, including lines like "*What a great team goal that was,*" "*This is the fourth time this year that England have scored four or more goals,*" and "*A fabulous header from Lucy Bronze but also a pinpoint delivery from Chloe Kelly.*" Impersonal commentary stood at 25 percent, with examples like "*That's a dangerous ball as well,*" "*We're waiting for the full-back,*" and "*That's why Lauren James is effective in that position.*"

These patterns suggest subtle but significant differences in the framing of athletic achievement. Commentary in men's football places a stronger emphasis on individual heroism and autonomous brilliance, while women's coverage shows a greater tendency to highlight collective effort and synergy. The relatively reduced frequency of individual-oriented commentary in women's matches may indicate persistent disparities in the attribution of excellence, where female athletes are more often praised within communal or cooperative narratives.

Qualitative analysis uncovered further disparities, particularly in the use of emotional and dramatic language. In commentary on women's matches, adjectives such as "*brilliant*" (17 instances), "*fantastic*" (6), and "*superb*" (2) were frequently used to describe actions that were technically sound but not extraordinary. Phrases like "*Brilliant from Kelly,*" "*Fantastic play from Chloe Kelly,*" and "*Absolutely fantastic ball from Katie Zelem*" exemplify this trend. While enthusiasm is a standard feature of sports commentary, the frequency and intensity of such evaluative terms may suggest a tendency to overcompensate, implying that female players require heightened affirmation to be legitimized.

Another pattern was the use of figurative language, such as: "*England hungry for more. They extend their advantage.*" This kind of language frames the women's team as striving to prove something – as if their legitimacy is still in question. This tendency continues across other matches. During the comeback win against the Netherlands, the description "*A lifeline. And that's where you want to see Georgia Stanway*" introduces a narrative of near-rescue and rebirth, portraying the goal as salvation. Emotional exaggeration is also used to boost the drama of individual performance, with lines like: "*England are not doing this the easy way at all*" and "*England's starting to believe*", the latter suggesting a journey from doubt to confidence.

A third notable feature in women's commentary is the "*redemption arc.*" For instance: "*Beth Mead with her first England goal in 15 months! And as it stands, England, unbelievably, are going top of Group A.*" This frames the story as one of

personal struggle and emotional comeback, rather than just professional performance. While these narratives can be inspiring, they also subtly suggest doubt – about the individual player’s ability or the team’s credibility. Similarly, Mary Earps's crucial save is highlighted in relation to a previous mistake, casting her action as an act of overcoming adversity, as in *“She might have made a mistake in that Netherlands game. She was distraught, but... this is top-drawer goalkeeping”*.

In comparison to women’s commentary, the emotional and dramatic language in men’s football coverage is typically reserved for landmark events such as record-breaking goals, dramatic victories or defeats, and historically significant achievements. One example is *“And he is England's all-time record goalscorer. He's beaten Wayne Rooney's record.”* This praise appears earned and grounded in actual performance, often contributing to the idolizing of already well-established players. Harry Kane, for instance, is described in glowing terms: *“It’s another golden moment for the man with the golden cap, the golden boots and the Midas touch.”* Similarly, Jude Bellingham is introduced: *“When you need a late goal, a late moment, a brilliance, who are you going to call?”*

Moreover, men’s commentary has a more strategic and confident tone. For example: *“And it’s a goal that ensures England are still in the race for automatic promotion.”* Here, the focus is on competition and results, without the need for emotional storytelling. When England scores, commentators often use decisive phrases like *“They’ve taken their time, but England hit the front”* and *“England have sharpened up their act in the second half and taken the game away from the Finns”*, both of which emphasize tactical dominance rather than emotional breakthrough. And again, moments of brilliance are described with a sense of calculated excellence, as in *“A sensational strike from Trent Alexander-Arnold”*, where the emotion is tied to the technical quality of the action, not exaggerated admiration.

In men’s football commentary, there is a consistent narrative of resilience and unquestioned excellence, often enhanced by metaphors and evaluative adjectives that elevate players to near-mythic status, as we have seen on the previous slide. For

instance, Harry Kane's record-breaking goal is described as "*his immortal moment*," framing it as a transcendent achievement. Even when mistakes occur, the commentary softens them. In Kane's mistimed run, phrases like "*that's not like him*" reduce the impact of the error, portraying it as an anomaly rather than a failure. These rhetorical strategies serve to protect players' reputations and preserve their elevated status, emphasizing professionalism and perfection in men's football commentary, contrasting with the more emotionally nuanced narratives often seen in women's football.

Overall, the linguistic disparity between commentary on men's and women's football subtly reflects and reinforces enduring gender biases in sports discourse. While men's matches are framed through a lens of individual heroism, strategic dominance, and unquestioned excellence, women's games are often narrated with emotional intensity, supportiveness, and redemptive framing. Such patterns suggest that male athletes are portrayed as inherently deserving of praise, with mistakes minimized to preserve reputations, whereas female athletes must continually re-establish legitimacy, often through dramatized narratives of struggle and triumph. However, compared to earlier studies (Pfister 2014; Peeters & Elling, 2015; Syaputri et al., 2024; Shifflett et al., 2016) – where women's physicality and technical skill were frequently ignored, and female players were framed in sexualized or maternal roles – the current commentary reflects a shift toward more respectful and performance-centered representation.

Conclusion to Chapter II

This part of the research has explored the linguistic landscape of football commentary across male and female match coverage, drawing on a complex analysis that included vocabulary usage, syntactic structure, cohesion, stylistic devices, communicative functions, the portrayal of players and teams and naming techniques. The comparative approach reveals both shared conventions and meaningful differences in how language constructs football narratives based on gender.

From a lexical perspective, both corpora prioritised outcome-oriented language, with "goals" as the most frequently mentioned item. Women's commentary prioritises immediacy and clarity, while men's allows for slightly more narrative development.

In terms of syntax, both corpora reflect the real-time demands of live commentary, favouring short, fragmented, and reactive sentence structures. Yet subtle differences emerged: women's commentary featured slightly shorter sentences and clauses, but higher rates of dependent clauses per clause, pointing to a more compact and context-dependent style.

The cohesion analysis revealed a strong reliance on ellipsis in both corpora, especially clausal ellipsis, but it was significantly more frequent in the women's data. Logical connectors were informal in both corpora, but women's coverage included more instances of causal conjunctions like "*because*," perhaps reflecting a more interpretive tone.

On a stylistic level, figurative language was prominent across both corpora, but its composition varied. Emotional and evaluative language was rich in both datasets, though men's commentary favoured mythic, heroic framings, while women's tended toward narratives of teamwork, resilience, and redemption.

In terms of function, commentary in both datasets served to inform, dramatize, interpret, and emotionally engage audiences.

The portrayal of players and teams was central to the discursive construction of football identities. In the men's commentary, players were presented as national icons, with mistakes downplayed and success framed as destiny. For women, narratives were focused more on personal growth, comebacks, and emotional milestones. Both teams were cast in a positive, progressive light. The men's team was depicted as tactically dominant and historically significant while the women's team was constructed as emotionally compelling and collectively resilient.

Naming conventions further reflected discursive priorities. Men's commentary predominantly used surnames, with full names reserved for moments of emphasis. In

contrast, women's commentary featured more full-name references and occasional first-name usage, creating a tone of familiarity and reinforcing player visibility.

These differences suggest that gendered communicative styles persist even in highly structured and goal-oriented genres such as football commentary. They also underscore the influence of cultural expectations and institutional norms in shaping not only what is said, but how it is said. Nonetheless, both styles contribute meaningfully to the genre, offering diverse narrative strategies that enrich viewer experience and engagement.

Overall, the findings confirm that while both male and female commentators operate within the shared conventions of sports announcer talk (SAT), their linguistic styles reflect broader gendered patterns. Male commentary tends to exhibit greater lexical density in describing outcomes, more complex nominal structures, and a higher frequency of idiomatic and metaphorical expressions, often rooted in evaluative or dramatizing frames. Conversely, female commentary demonstrates a preference for concise syntax, greater use of subordinate clauses, and a more balanced narrative that often highlights teamwork, process, and technical execution. Interestingly, the prominence of WAR metaphors in female commentary suggests not a stylistic conservatism, but rather an engagement with traditionally masculine registers, perhaps as a means of claiming legitimacy within a historically male-dominated discourse space.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine the linguistic features of football commentary through a comparative lens, focusing on male and female commentators covering matches of the English national team. By analyzing two balanced corpora across lexical, syntactic, cohesive, and stylistic dimensions, the study aimed to uncover gender-based variation in live football discourse, a genre characterized by immediacy, spontaneity, and performative evaluation.

The first objective (to outline the theoretical foundations of sports discourse and its development over time) was achieved through a review and contextualization of key academic frameworks, including those by Ferguson (1983), Müller (2008), and Chovanec (2018). The study placed football commentary within the broader field of sports discourse as a multimodal, fast-paced form of spoken communication shaped by immediacy, performance, and audience engagement. By drawing on discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and gender studies, the research traced the evolution of commentary from its early descriptive function to its current complex role as narrative-making, identity-building media language. This theoretical groundwork provided the basis for analysing how form and function intertwine in contemporary football coverage.

The second objective (to identify and describe the key linguistic and pragmatic features of football commentary) was addressed through detailed lexical, syntactic, cohesive, and stylistic analyses. The study found that both male and female commentary rely on distinctive linguistic features such as short, fragmented sentence structures, rapid lexical pacing, and the strategic use of pronouns, ellipsis, and exclamations. These features serve pragmatic functions including narration, evaluation, dramatization, and engagement. The analysis also identified specific cohesive devices such as verbal and clausal ellipsis, particularly prominent in women's commentary, reflecting the spoken and high-pressure nature of the genre.

The third objective (to examine how gender is represented in sports media, particularly through language and the underrepresentation of women) was pursued by

analysing not only the frequency and content of commentary but also the tone and narrative strategies used to describe male and female players. The study found that while both male and female athletes are praised, the styles of praise differ significantly. Men are more often cast as iconic, heroic, and tactically brilliant, while women are frequently portrayed through emotional, redemptive, or collective frames. Moreover, the relative underrepresentation of tactical detail and positional analysis in women's commentary, as well as the greater use of first names and affective language, suggests constant disparities in how credibility and professionalism are linguistically constructed. These patterns echo broader feminist critiques of media discourse and demonstrate that, despite progress, gendered asymmetries persist.

The fourth objective (to analyze linguistic patterns in men's and women's football commentary, including vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, and stylistic choices) was fulfilled through corpus-based comparison using tools such as AntConc, L2SCA, and spaCy. Quantitative and qualitative data showed significant differences across all levels. Lexically, women's commentary focused more on ball-related actions and goals, whereas men's data included more defensive and spatial vocabulary. Syntactically, men's sentences and clauses tended to be slightly longer and more complex, while women's contained more dependent clauses and shorter units. Cohesion was achieved primarily through ellipsis in both corpora but more frequently and densely in the women's texts. Stylistically, metaphors and idioms were common in both datasets, with men's commentary drawing on a broader range of conceptual domains and women's showing a surprising dominance of WAR metaphors, challenging initial assumptions.

The fifth objective (to investigate how commentary functions in context, particularly in the portrayal of players and teams) was addressed by categorizing and analyzing how linguistic choices build narrative identity. The portrayal of players like Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham in the men's data reflected a mythologizing rhetoric, emphasizing legacy, national pride, and consistent excellence. In contrast, women such as Beth Mead, Lucy Bronze, and Mary Earps were often framed through emotional

comeback stories, technical precision, or symbolic significance. Teams were described using familiar national metaphors – “*Three Lions*” and “*Lionesses*” – but with different narrative emphases: tactical dominance and historical achievement for the men; resilience, progress, and emotional connection for the women. Commentary thus serves not only to report on matches but to construct symbolic representations of players and teams that reflect broader cultural values.

The final objective (to identify and interpret gender biases in football commentary) was achieved through the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings. A clear pattern emerged in which men’s commentary privileged individual heroism and professionalism, while women’s relied more heavily on emotional validation and team cohesion. Descriptive adjectives such as “*brilliant*” and “*fantastic*” were more frequently used in women’s coverage, often applied to standard or expected performances, suggesting a possible overcompensation to affirm legitimacy. Meanwhile, rhetorical strategies in men’s commentary were more often linked to statistically validated excellence and historical impact. These linguistic patterns suggest not only different ways of narrating success but different thresholds for legitimacy. Male athletes are assumed to be elite, whereas female athletes are more often required to earn their place narratively.

This study has several limitations. First, although the corpora were designed to be balanced in word count and content type, they were limited to English-language commentary from YouTube highlight videos, which may differ from full-match broadcasts in style, tone, and structure. Second, the data were restricted to commentary in English and to coverage of the English national teams, which may not generalize to other cultural or linguistic contexts. Third, while gender of the commentator was inferred based on voice and known commentator profiles, mixed-gender commentary segments were excluded to maintain clarity, potentially narrowing the scope of stylistic diversity.

Future research could expand this analysis in several ways. A larger and more diverse dataset, including different national teams, broadcasters, and languages, would

allow for cross-cultural comparison of commentary styles. Longitudinal studies could track how commentary styles evolve over time in response to changing media practices or gender representation in sports. Additionally, integrating audience perception studies could reveal how viewers interpret and respond to linguistic variation in commentary, shedding light on the broader social impact of gendered discourse in sport.

Ultimately, this thesis affirms that football commentary, while often overlooked as spontaneous or formulaic speech, is a rich and revealing site of gendered language practice. As women gain greater visibility and authority in sports broadcasting, ongoing attention to their discursive strategies can challenge normative standards, diversify media narratives, and contribute to a more inclusive and unbiased sports discourse.

SUMMARY

Дослідження було присвячено порівняльному аналізу лінгвістичних особливостей футбольного коментування головних моментів чоловічих і жіночих матчів національних збірних Англії. Метою роботи було виявлення гендерних відмінностей у мовленні коментаторів, зокрема на лексичному, синтаксичному, когезивному та стилістичному рівнях. Жанр футбольного коментування розглядається як динамічний, емоційно насичений і спонтанний вид медіамови, що поєднує інформативну й оціночну функції.

У першій частині було розглянуто теоретичну базу спортивного дискурсу, що дозволило окреслити коментування як окремий мовний реєстр із властивою йому багатомодальністю, прагматикою і виражальною функцією. Футбольне коментування представлено як сучасна форма медіа-мовлення, яка формує наративи, ідентичності та культурні цінності.

Лінгвістичний аналіз показав, що чоловіче й жіноче коментування спираються на спільні мовні стратегії, а саме короткі фрагментовані конструкції, вигуки, займенники та еліipsis, які забезпечують темп і залучення глядача. Водночас, у жіночому коментуванні виявлено більшу частотність підрядних речень, коротші синтаксичні одиниці та активніше використання еліipsis. Чоловіче коментування, своєю чергою, виявилось більш лексично щільним, з частішим вживанням складних номінальних конструкцій і метафор.

Окрему увагу приділено аналізу репрезентації гравців. Чоловіки здебільшого зображуються як героїчні та тактично досконалі фігури, а жінки – через емоційні наративи, колективні досягнення й надихаючі історії повернення на поле. Також виявлено зміщення фокусу: попри традиційну перевагу найменування гравців за прізвищем або ж прізвищем та ім'ям, жіноче коментування використовує просто імена, тоді як в чоловічому – не знайдено жодного прикладу такого фамільярного звертання.

Стилістичний аналіз засвідчив використання метафор у обох корпусах, однак жіноче коментування несподівано виявило велику кількість метафор на

військову тематику, що кидає виклик поширеним уявленням про «м'якші» стилі мовлення жінок.

Нарешті, аналіз упередженості в мові показав, що чоловіки частіше постають як апріорі легітимні фігури, тоді як жінки, як ті, що мусять здобувати визнання через дискурсивні стратегії надмірного підкреслення заслуг. Навіть у випадках однакових досягнень, опис їх відрізняється стилістично та емоційно.

Попри обмеження (зосередженість на головних подіях матчу, лише англomовні трансляції, виключення змішаних коментаторських команд), дослідження підтверджує, що футбольне коментування є важливим об'єктом вивчення гендерних мовних практик. Подальші дослідження можуть зосередитись на порівнянні трансляцій різних країн, аудиторному сприйнятті коментування, а також на змінах у стилях коментування під впливом зростання ролі жінок у спортивних медіа.

Робота доводить, що мова футбольного коментування є не лише засобом опису гри, а й потужним інструментом формування уявлень про гендер, професіоналізм та легітимність у спортивному просторі.

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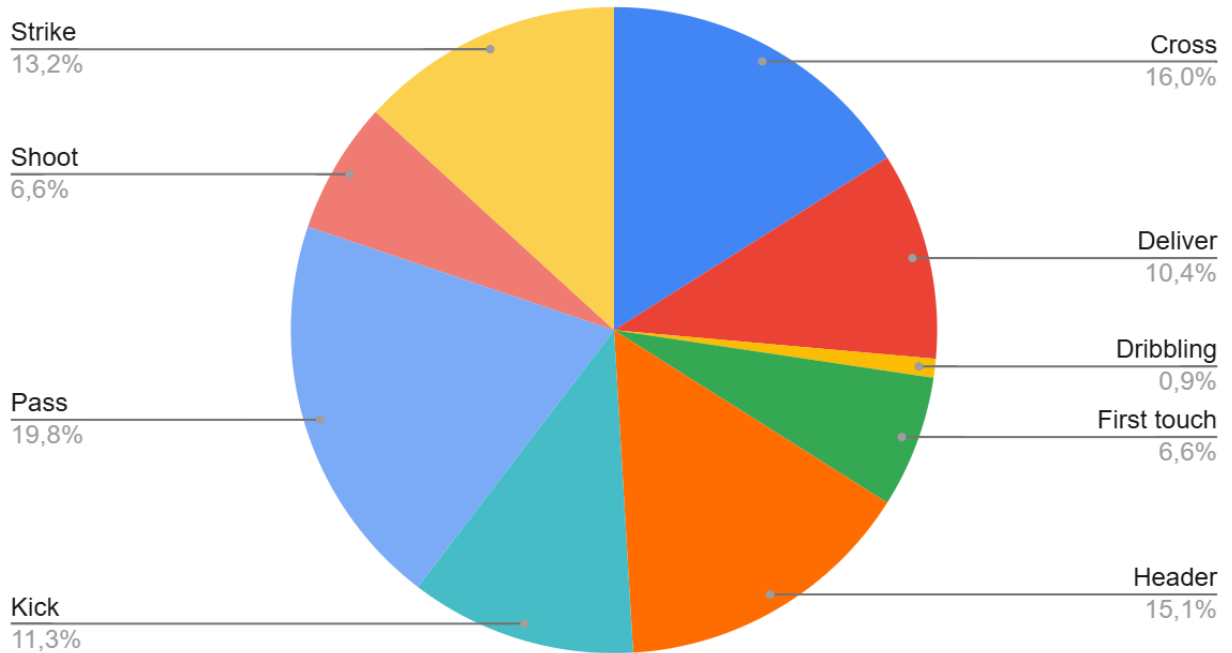
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APPENDICES

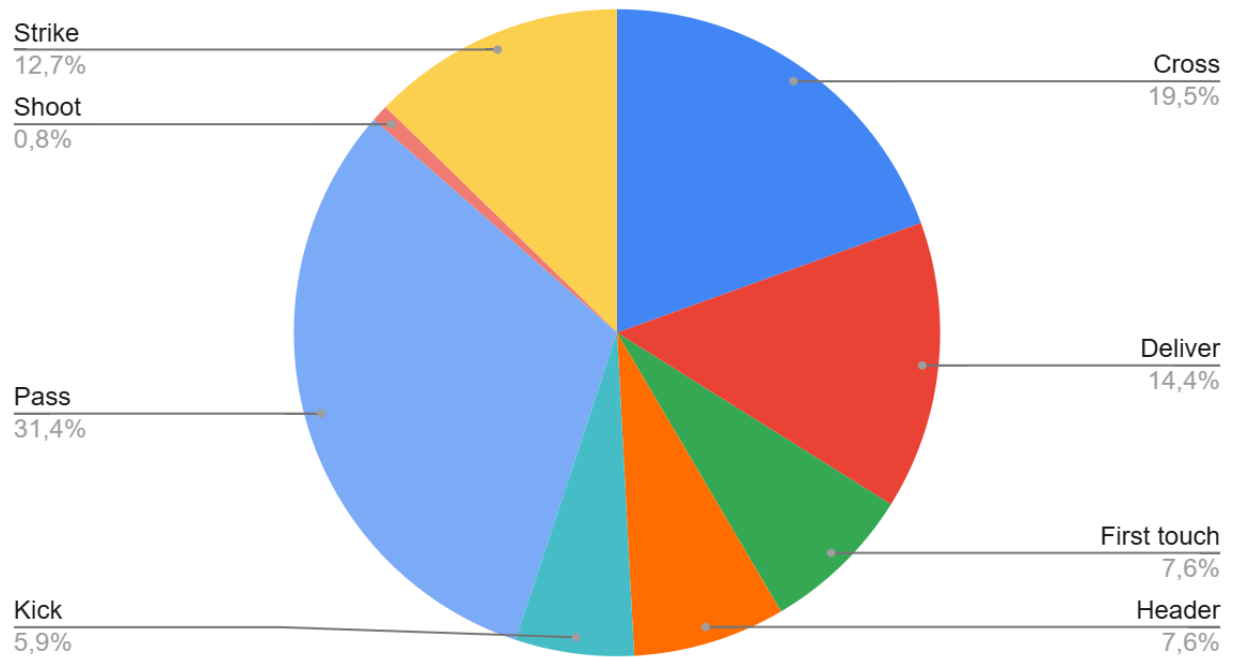
APPENDIX 1

Skills/Actions with the ball. Male



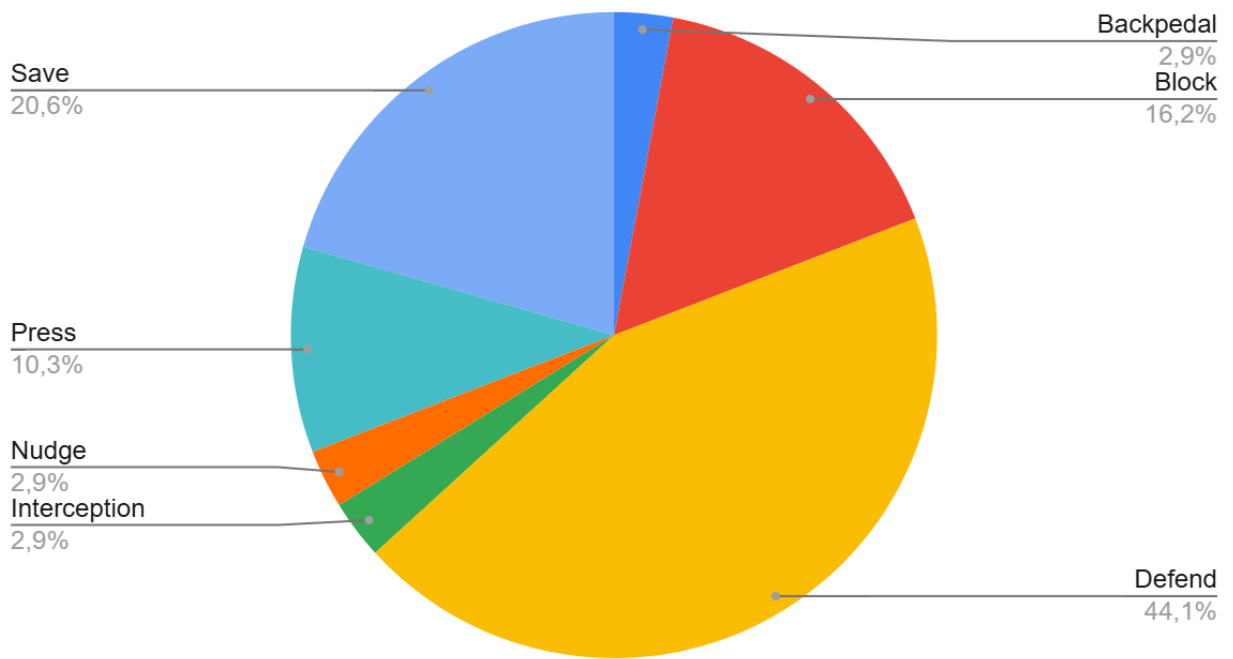
Pie Chart 1

Skills/Actions with the ball. Female



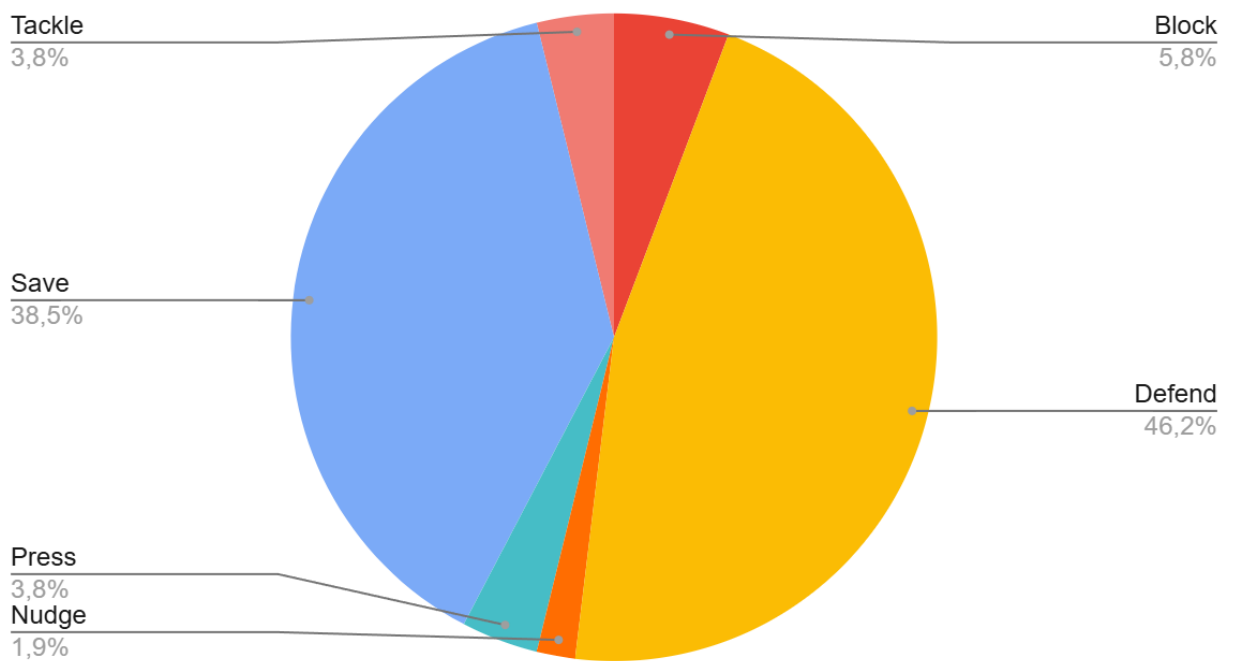
Pie Chart 2

Defensive actions. Male



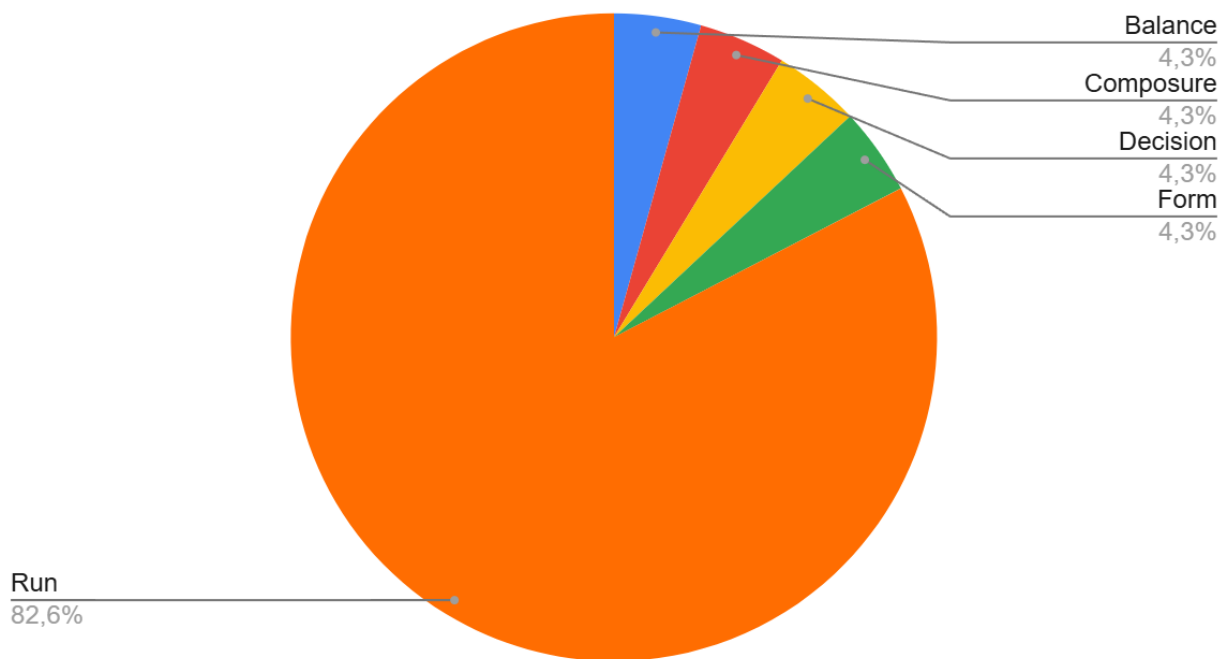
Pie Chart 3

Defensive actions. Female



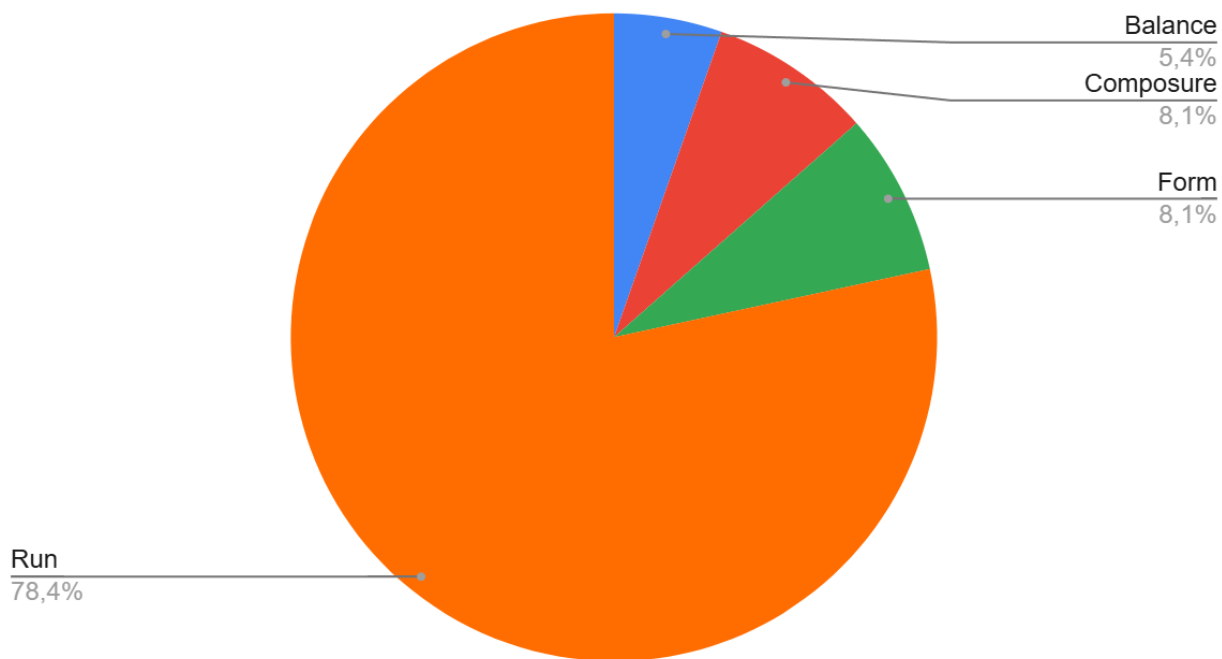
Pie Chart 4

Mental/Physical Qualities. Male



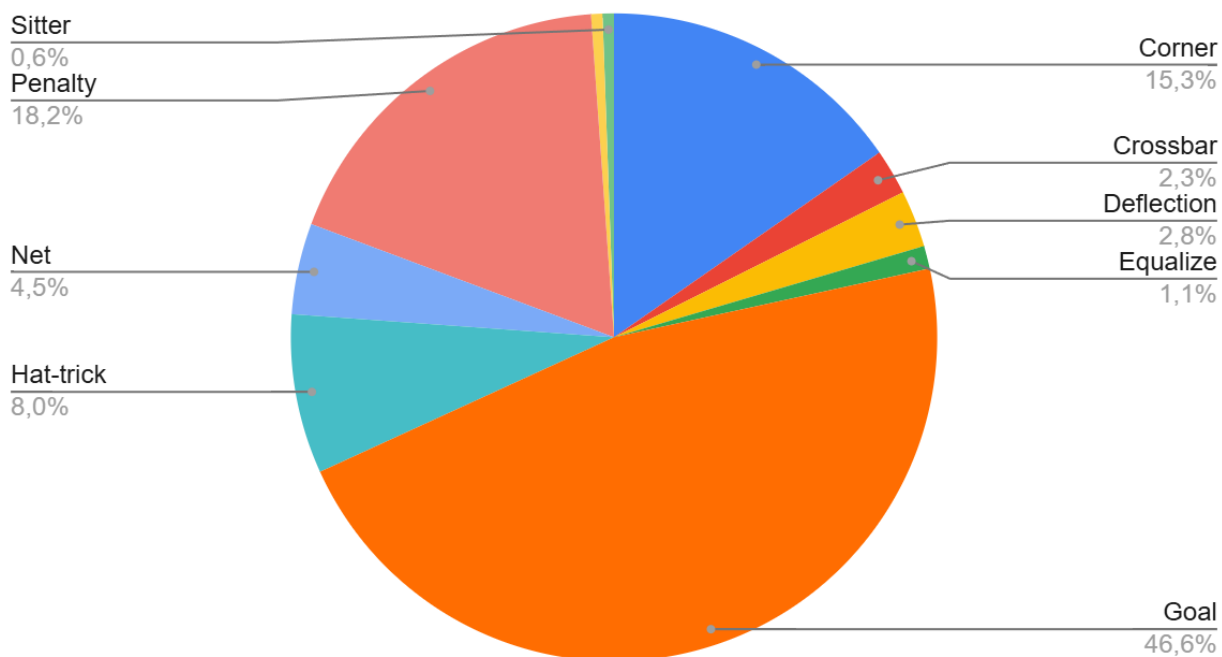
Pie Chart 5

Mental/Physical Qualities. Female



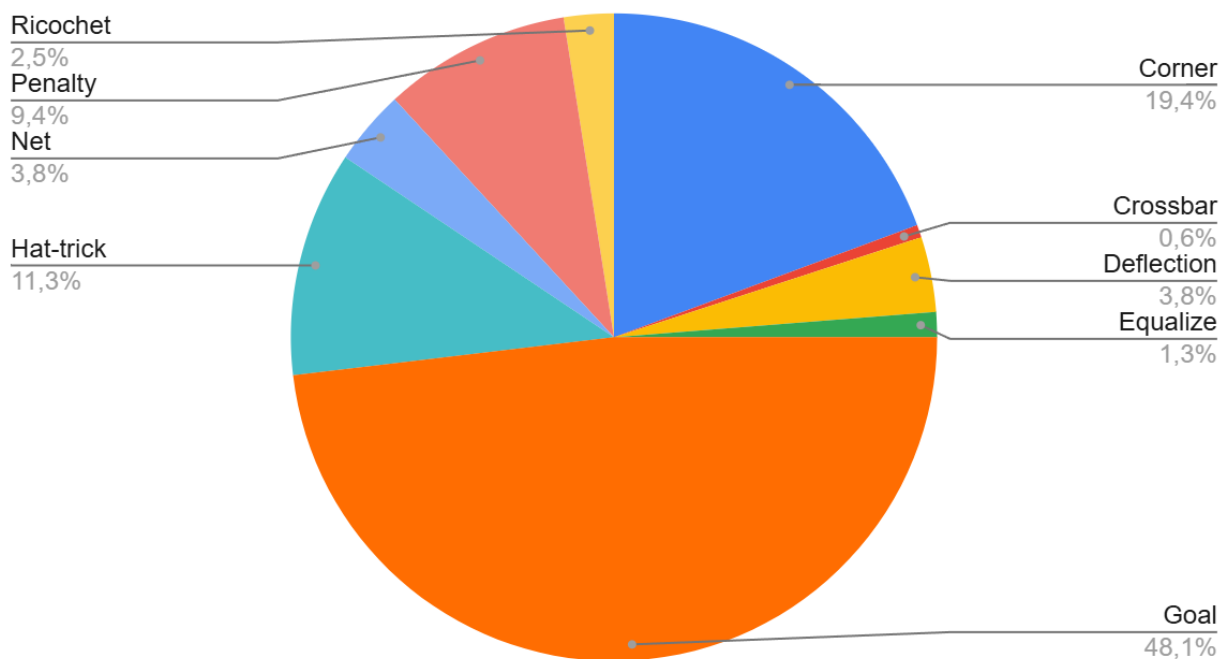
Pie Chart 6

Game events/Outcomes. Male



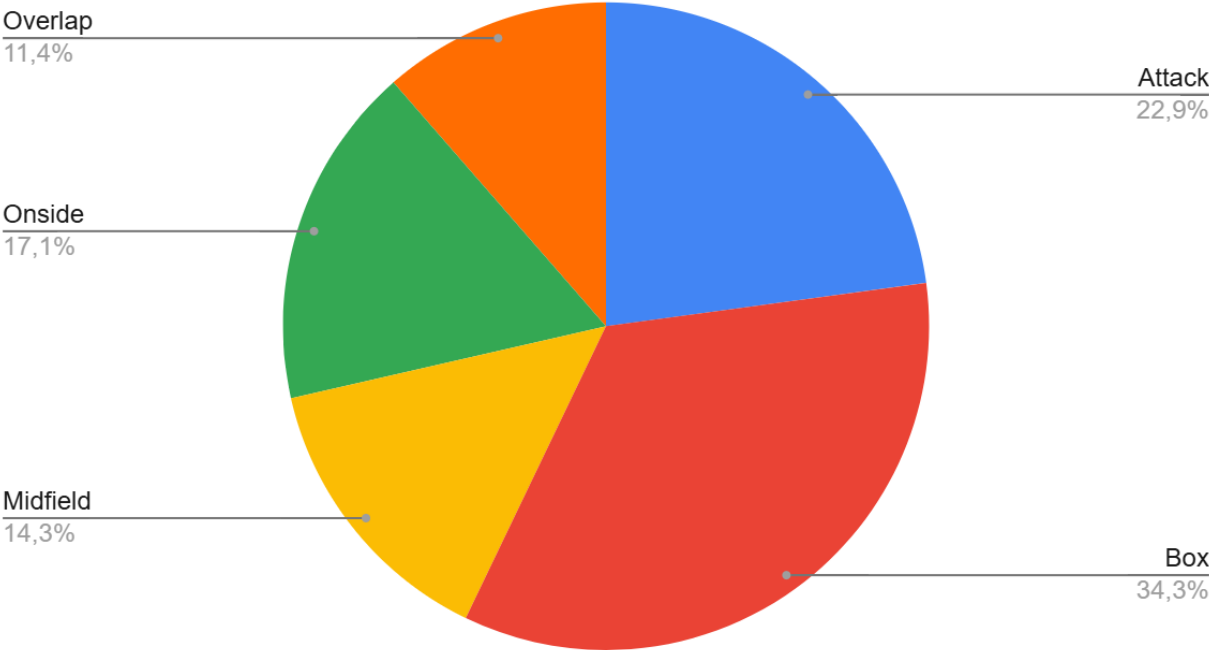
Pie Chart 7

Game events/Outcomes. Female



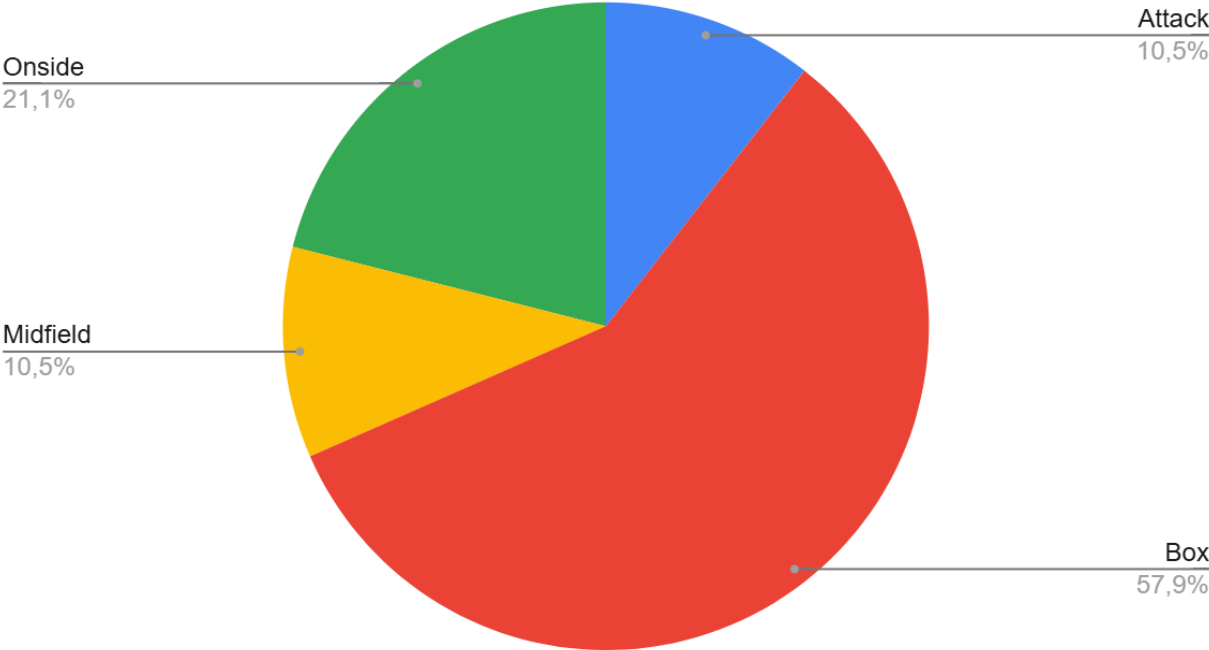
Pie Chart 8

Positions/Areas. Male



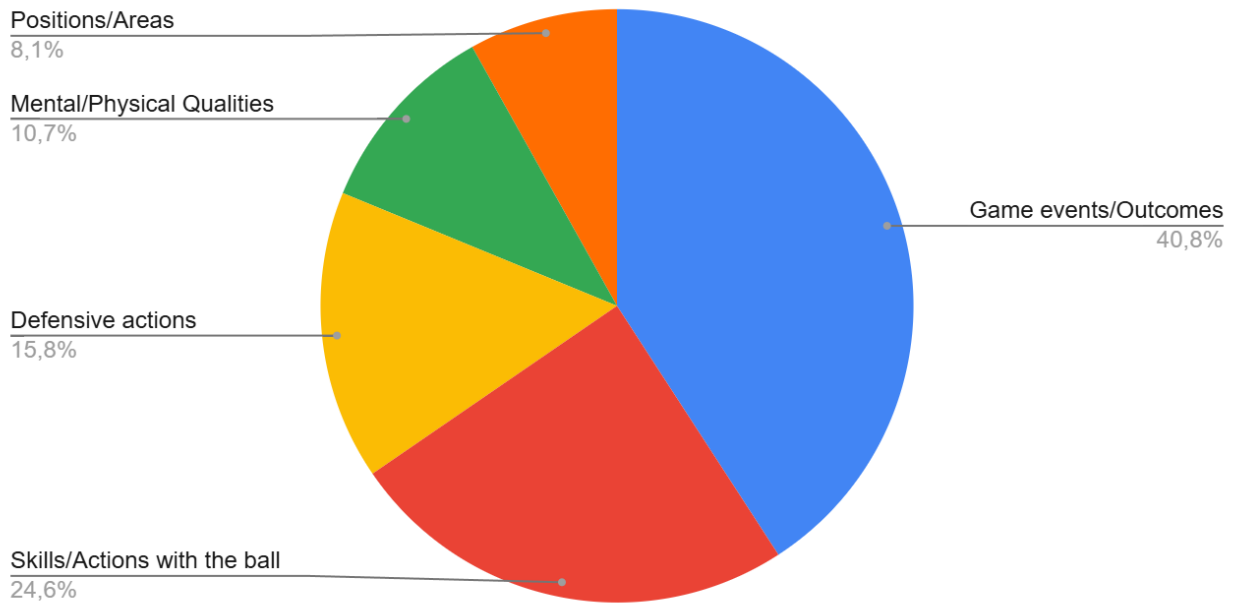
Pie Chart 9

Positions/Areas. Female



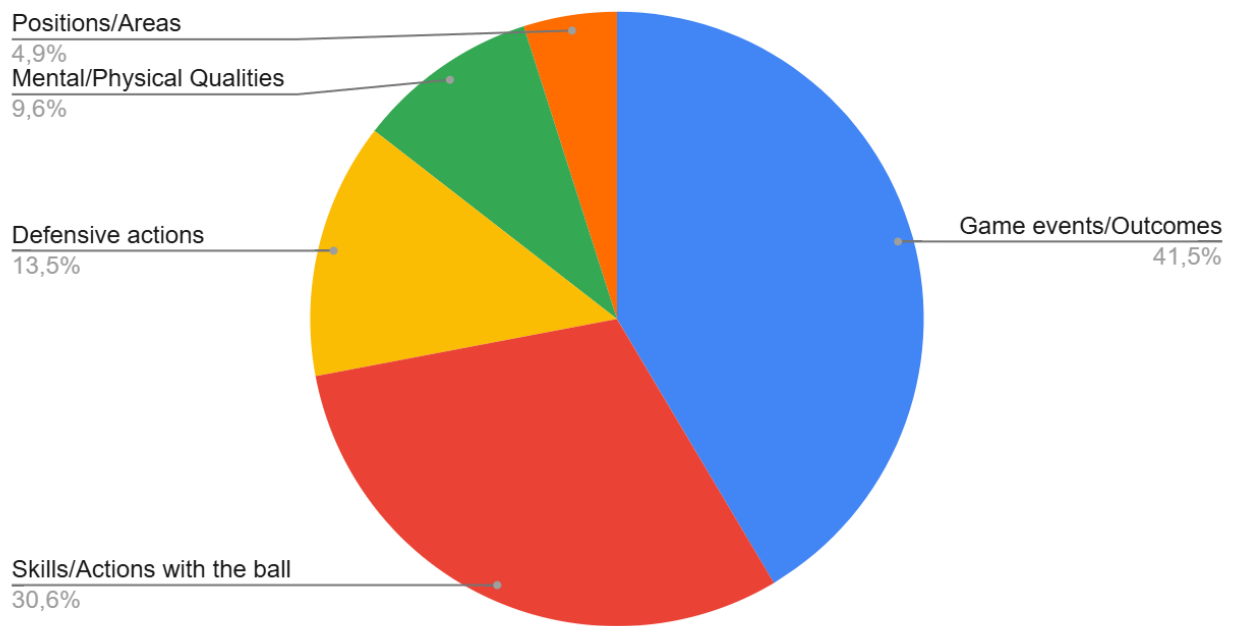
Pie Chart 10

Lexical Choice in Men's Coverage



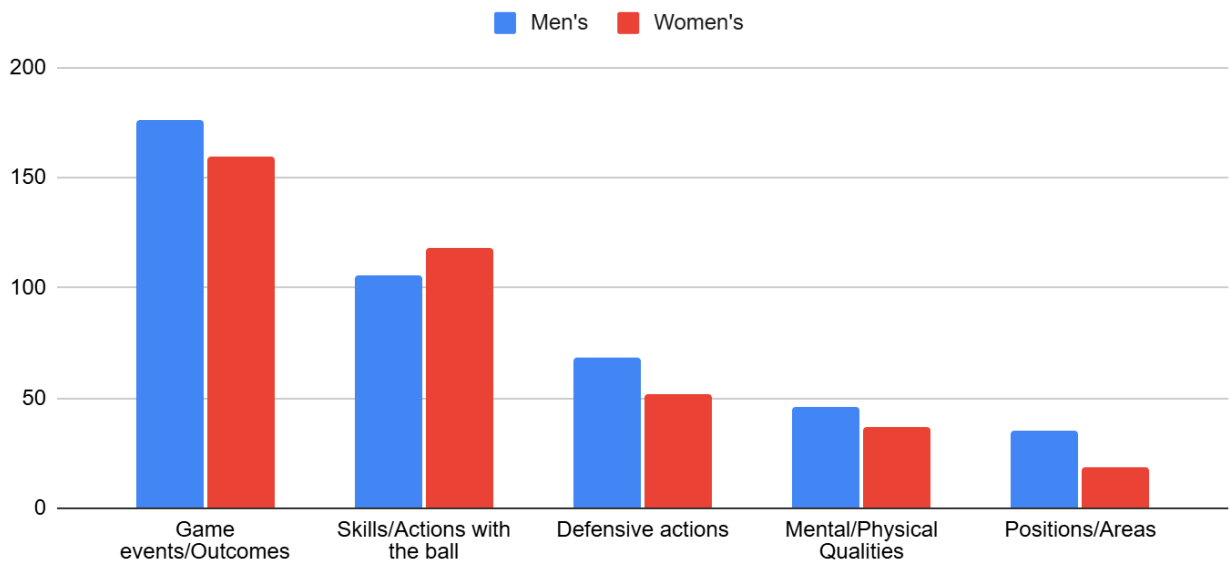
Pie Chart 11

Lexical Choice in Women's Coverage



Pie Chart 12

Lexical Categories



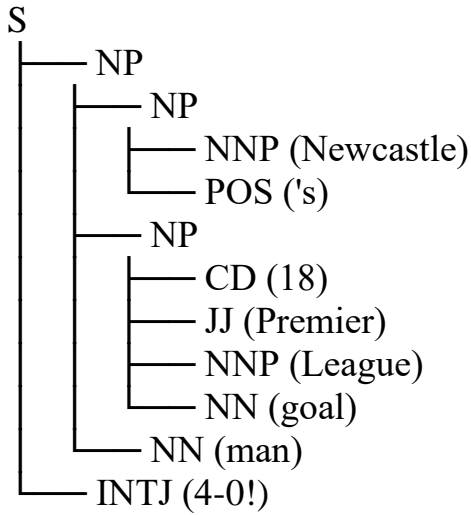
Bar Chart 1

Feature	Men's Coverage	Women's Coverage
Total Number of Words	10,829	10,964
Total Number of Sentences	1,297	1,291
Avg. Words per Segment	≈ 984	≈ 914
Avg. Sentences per Segment	103	108
Avg. Verb Phrases per Segment	118	117
Avg. Clauses per Segment	105	107
Mean Length of Clause (MLC)	9.552	8.575
Clauses per Sentence	1.032	1.011
Dependent Clause per Clause	0.129	0.172
Coordinate Phrase per Clause	0.105	0.087
Complex Nominal per Clause	0.938	0.809

Table 1

Male Parse Trees

“Newcastle's 18 Premier League goal man—4-0!”



“Clinical calm from Wilson.”

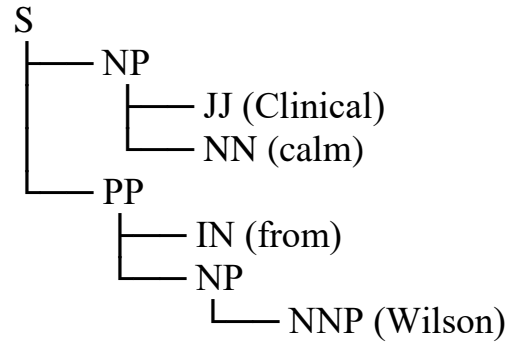
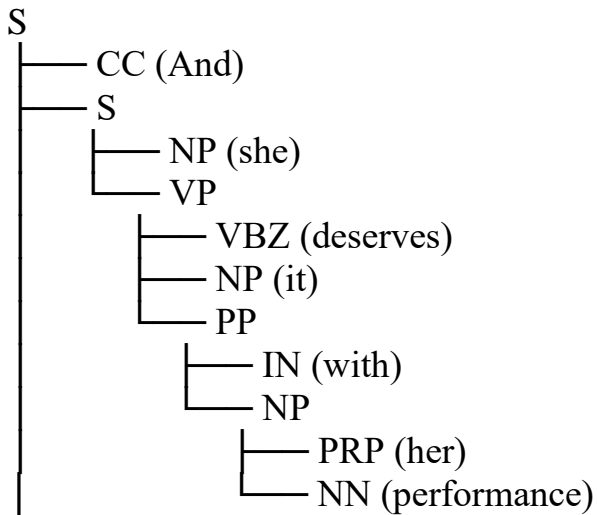


Figure 1

Female Parse Trees

“And she deserves it with her performance.”



“Strength from Lauren James there.”

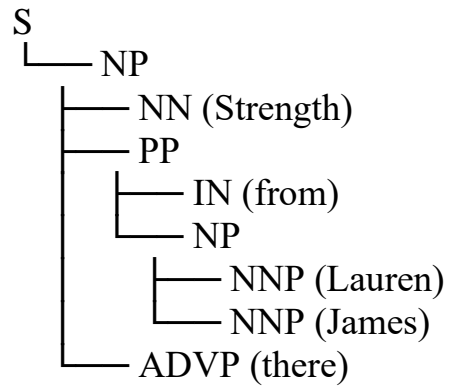
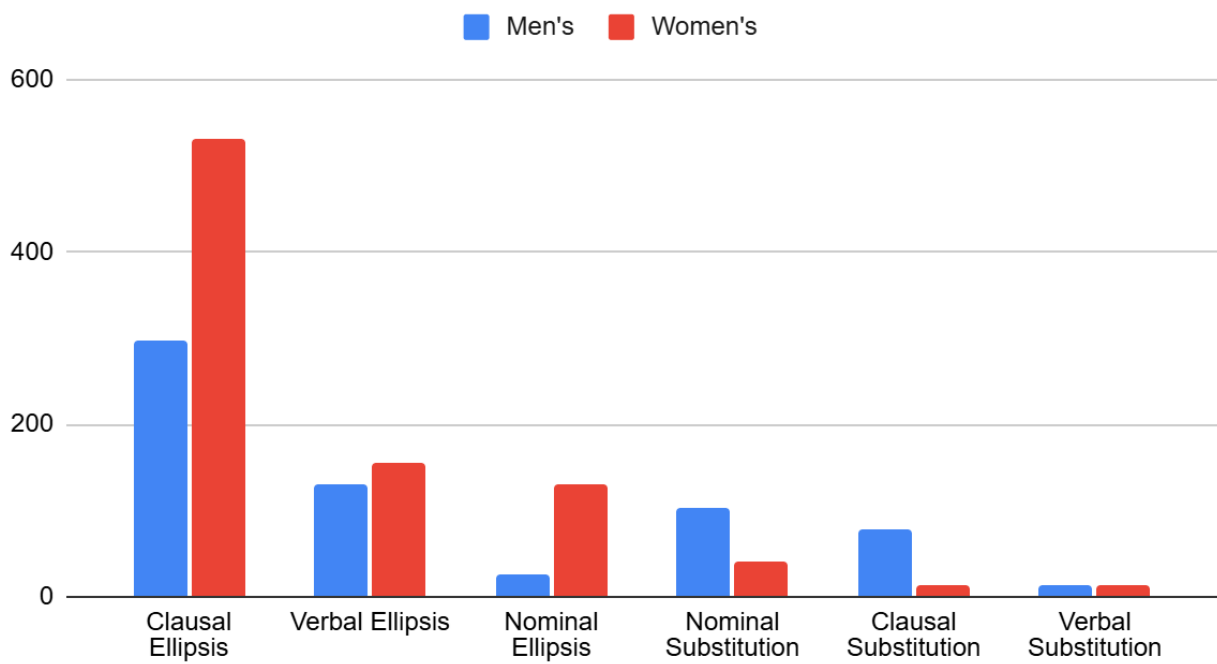


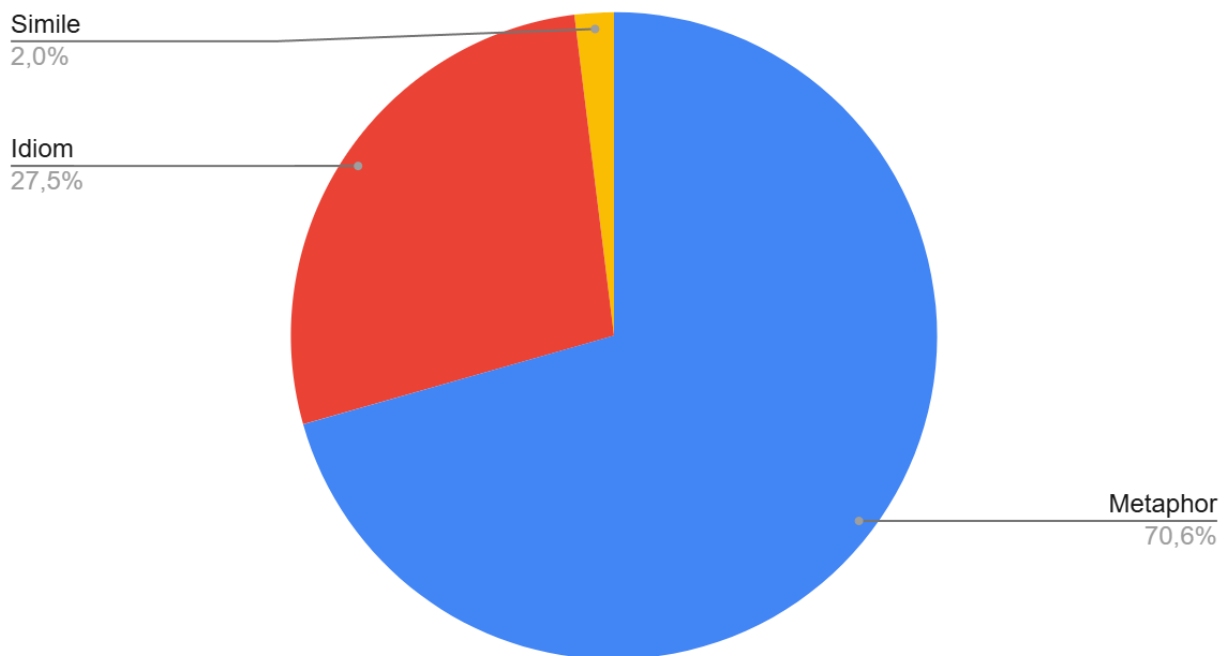
Figure 2

Ellipsis/Substitution



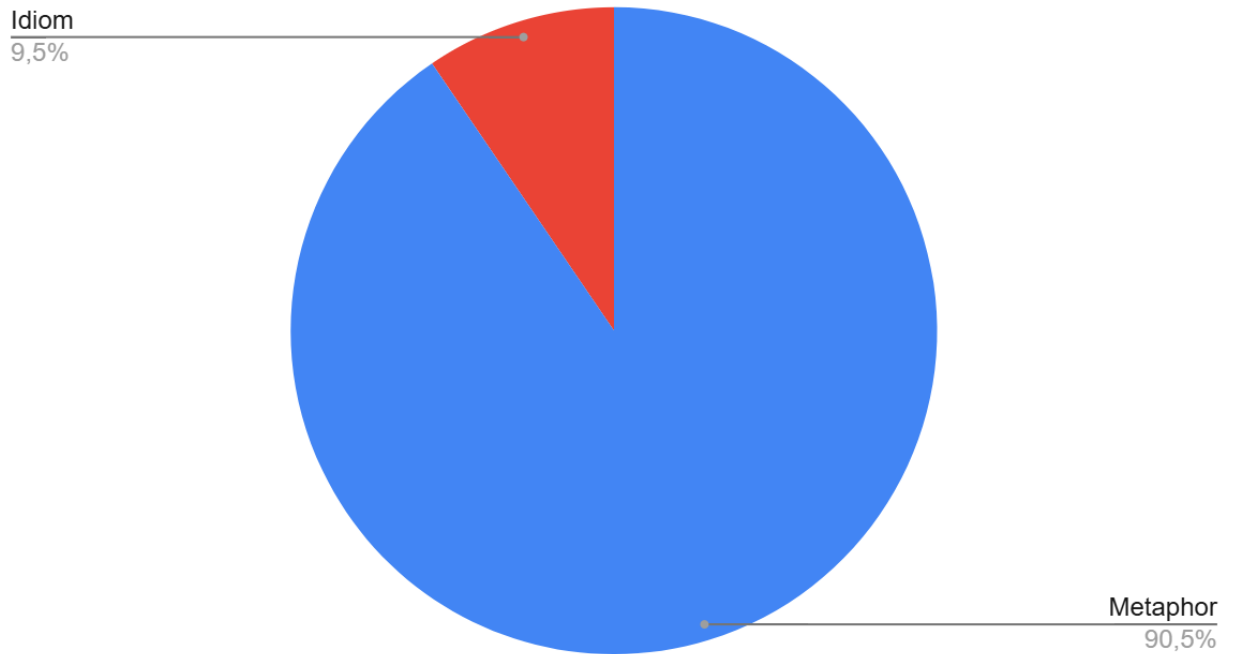
Bar Chart 2

Figurative Devices. Male



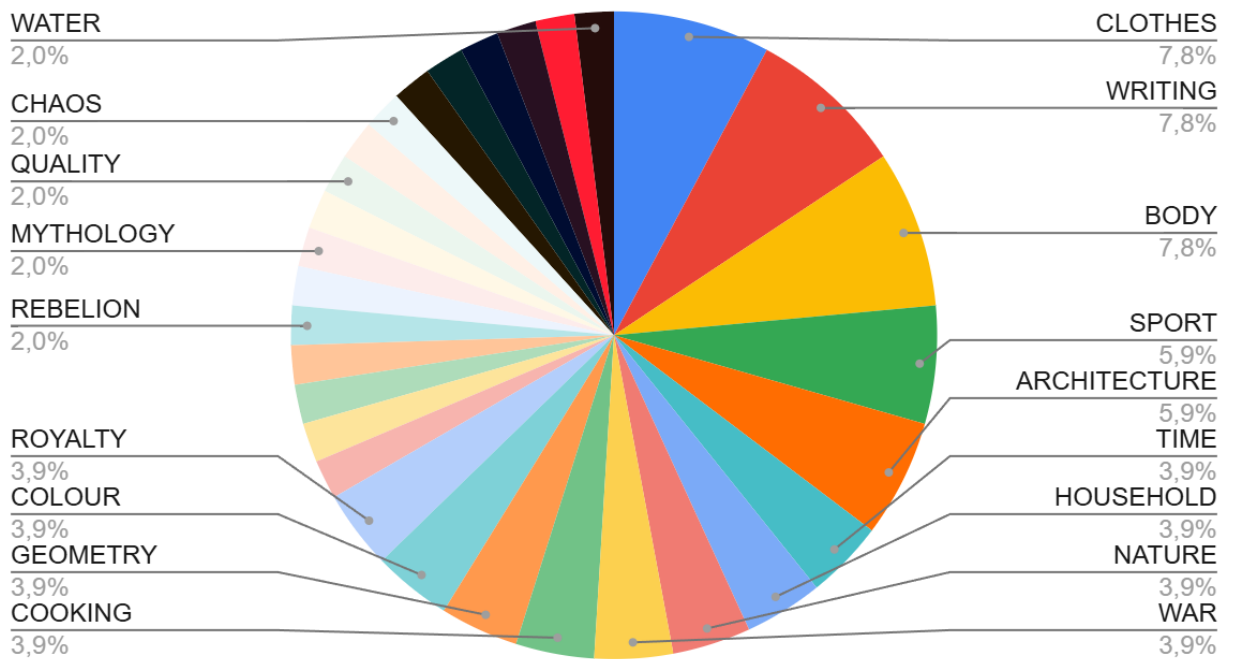
Pie Chart 13

Figurative Devices. Female



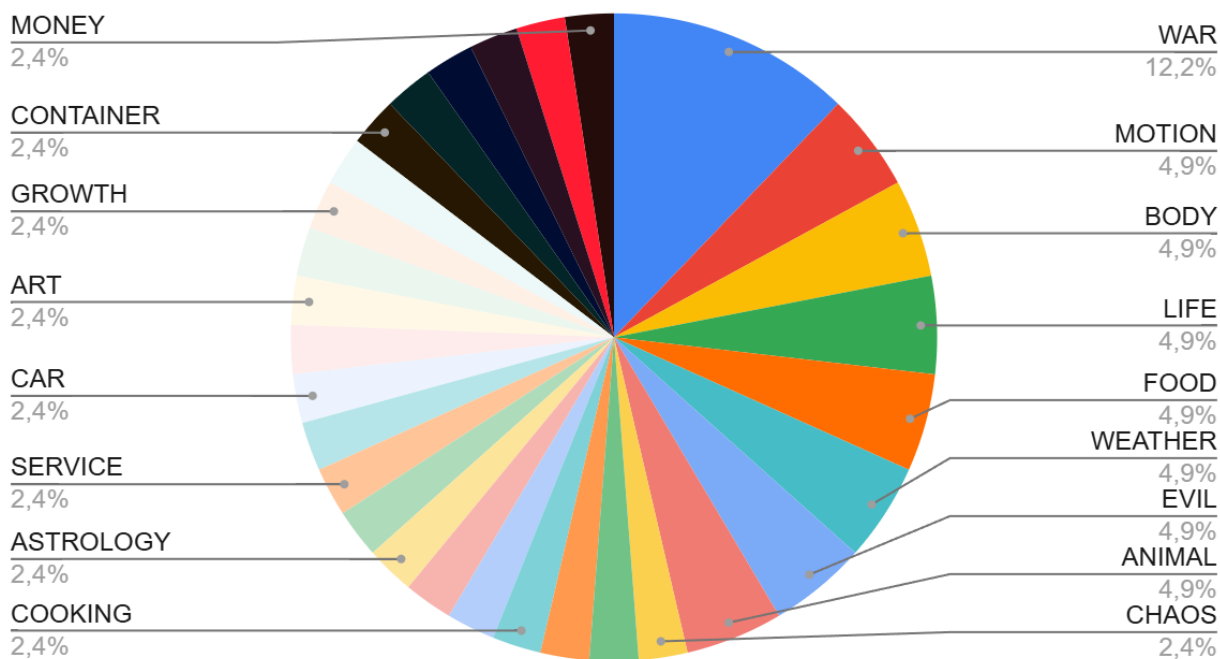
Pie Chart 14

Figurative Language Domains. Male



Pie Chart 15

Figurative Language Domains. Female



Pie Chart 16

Match. Male	Total Sentences	Individual (%)	Teamwork (%)	Impersonal (%)
England 5-0 Republic of Ireland	31	55	22.5	22.5
Finland 1-3 England	43	44	26	30
England 1-2 Greece	40	72.5	10	17.5
England 2-0 Finland	39	74	8	18
Italy 1-2 England	46	57	28	15
Average		60	19	21

Table 2

Match. Female	Total Sentences	Individual (%)	Teamwork (%)	Impersonal (%)
England 2-1 Scotland	50	38	36	2
England 1-0 Belgium	87	52	28	20
Belgium 3-2 England	58	47	33	20
England 3-2 The Netherlands	93	39	27	34
Scotland 0-6 England	103	49	24	27
Average		45	30	25

Table 3

APPENDIX 2

Football Vocabulary

Attack

Men's (8):

"Flashes just wide, just out of the reach of Phil Foden, who was attacking that far post."

"It's a rare attack though in this second half."

"... one of the best defenses in Europe and one of the most potent attacks."

Women's (2):

"Maybe one final attack here for England in this first half."

"Mead attacked it, but wide it goes."

Backpedal

Men's (2):

"Hoskin and backpedalling."

"Back in from Alexander-Arnold, Ryan backpedals."

Women's (0)

Balance

Men's (2):

"Saka ... just about keeping his balance."

"He's got brilliant balance, hasn't he?"

Women's (2):

"James is there. There's that balance again."

"I think she was slightly off balance when she took the shot."

Block

Men's (11):

"It's either a great block or a bad miss."

"Swinging by Saka towards Maguire. Kane, blocked."

"Oh, Lewis Dunk with a brilliant block."

Women's (3):

"Excellent block from Greenwood."

"Shot blocked and then fired over by Russo."

"Julie Nelson in the right place for the first one to get the block in."

Box

Men's (12):

"And Fidi Yanidis on the edge of the box."

"Bellingham, his feet on the edge of the box, he's all composed, he's waiting for that pass, just slides it through."

"So many goals in and around the six-yard box."

Women's (11):

*"The number of bodies England has in the box there falls to Beth Meade."
"Another excellent pass across the six-yard box and defended by Wienreiter."
"Straight entry into the box of the opposition."*

Composure

Men's (2):

*"And then he's got the composure and the eyes cool."
"Then you've got the composure, hold your defender off."*

Women's (3):

*"Lauren Hemp shows great quality and composure."
"Just showing that composure."
"Great composure from Beth Meade."*

Corner

Men's (27):

*"Decent ball towards the far post and Connor Cody underneath it has England's first real chance and they win a corner."
"England are claiming a corner."
"Here comes the England corner!"*

Women's (31):

*"Oh, that's guided into the far corner."
"Zelen with the corner, in towards Dele."
"We know she's got the ability to do this into the far corner."*

Cross

Men's (17):

*"It's a powerful cross."
"Shaw with the cross and it's a dangerous one."
"Now a crossing opportunity for Walker."*

Women's (23):

*"And the cross is working out perfectly for England in its first half."
"She digs the cross out towards the near post."
"There's a wonderful left footed cross across the face of goal."*

Crossbar

Men's (4):

*". Well, again, brilliant corner right on his head as the keeper gets something on it before the crossbar."
"It was after the crossbar."
"As you said, he just put one over the top of the crossbar the other night."*

Women's (1):

"Oh, and Bright just off the top of the crossbar."

Defend

Men's (30):

"Dragged the defenders towards him and that enabled him to get the pass out."

“This is just top draw, holding off your defender, getting there.”
“It's easy to say now, but that's what happens when you run at defenders.”

Women's (24):

“And you can see Alex Greenwood just gets in between two defenders...”
“It's a great finish, but it's really poor defending.”
“Split passes between defenders.”

Deflection

Men's (5):

“Trying to steer it in for Bellingham, what a save, comes back to Kane, and the deflection somehow takes it over the top.”
“Until it got that deflection.”
“Took a big deflection off Filippo Fabri.”

Women's (6):

“This just takes a slight deflection from Millie Bright.”
“And it's the massive deflection.”
“Takes a nice little deflection.”

Deliver

Men's (11):

“Foden delivers.”
“It's another Alexander-Arnold's delivery.”
“What a wicked delivery.”

Women's (17):

“It's also a pinpoint delivery from Chloe Kelly.”
“Incredibly dangerous delivery.”
“It's a good delivery from Katie Robinson.”

Decision

Men's (2):

“Neuer made the other decision and Kane couldn't find the target.”
“He kind of made the right decision coming out of his goal in the first place.”

Women's (0)

Dribbling

Men's (1):

“He's just watching far end of the goal for it to dribble in.”

Women's (0)

Equalize

Men's (2):

“And there was Kai Havertz to equalize.”
“... Kai Havertz put paid to that with that Germany equalizer.”

Women's (2):

"Italy did equalize at one point..."

"A record equalizer for Ellen White."

First touch

Men's (7):

"Bellingham. Bowen, first touch."

"What a cross field ball and what a first touch from Saka."

"It's a great first touch and the positivity from Foden."

Women's (9):

"James' first touch makes all the difference."

"What a lovely first touch by Alessia Russo."

"Lovely first touch from Beth England."

Form

Men's (2):

"He's got support in the form of Alexander-Arnold." 2x

Women's (3):

"And Ella Toone's fantastic scoring form for her country continues."

"Georgia Stanway, and the form she's in, she's definitely not missing from there."

"That was clinical from Beth Meade, whose fine form just continues."

Goal

Men's (82):

"Six England goals for Harry Kane."

"And Phil Foden has his fourth international goal."

"What a fabulous goal to finally break down the defensive line of Poland."

Women's (77):

"Wow what a great team goal that was."

"With her first England goal in 15 months!"

"Ten goals in each of England's two away games in qualifying so far."

Hat-Trick

Men's (14):

"He's looking to get another record which is to break the record for consecutive hat tricks and he's close to it now."

"Harry Kane has a fifth England hat-trick."

"His fourth England hat-trick."

Women's (18):

"Beth Mead another hat-trick in this qualification campaign for her."

"And Russo, is this a hat-trick?"

"And Meade has another one and she will be eyeing up another hat-trick."

Header

Men's (16):

"Square to Walker. Maguire's header."

“He gets up early as well, wins the header, and has Donnarumma stretching.”
“Kane with a header.”

Women’s (9):

“A brilliant header from a fantastic delivery from Ella Toon.”
“A thunderous header from Rachel Daly.”
“A fabulous header from Lucy Bronze.”

Interception

Men’s (2):

“And Walker with a crucial interception.”
“Rhys James with the interception.”

Women’s (0)

Kick

Men’s (12):

“Penalty kick for England.”
“Grealish won the free kick.”
“It has been disallowed for offside and it is a Malta free kick.”

Women’s (7):

“But in the meantime, England will take the free kick.”
“And the challenge from Harvard leads to a spot kick for England.”
“And I have to talk about England’s mentality and behavior from the kickoff.”

Midfield

Men’s (5):

“A glimpse of why Alexander-Arnold has been given a midfield role tonight.”
“How we love to see a run from midfield.”
“Phillips snapping away in midfield.”

Women’s (2):

“She drives into midfield...”
“The Arsenal midfielder makes her mark on what is a huge scoreline for the Lionesses.”

Net

Men’s (8):

“Phil Foden and into the back of the net.”
“Parma that’s excellent, we all expected that to finish in the back of the net Wembley waited...”
“It’s Harry Maguire to put through his own net...”

Women’s (6):

“Turning on a sixpence, turning the defender and smashing it straight into the back of the net.”
“...Lauren Hemp just potentially tries a little bit too hard to find the back of the net.”
“...Ella Toone arriving late into the box and just passes it into the back of the net.”

Nudge

Men’s (2):

“Malta’s delivery, and it’s too easy for Hoskinson to nudge in at the near post.”

“Jared Bowen with a head up at the far post. Nudge.”

Women’s (1):

“You see a slight nudge.”

Onside

Men’s (6):

“Saka stayed onside.”

“... he's onside, it's quicker and sharper from England...”

“... Watkins so close, he'd stayed onside too.”

Women’s (4):

“What she does is she gets back onside, gets in that position in between the two centre-backs onside.”

“Jordan Nobbs is onside, nice little pass.”

“She keeps herself onside.”

Overlap

Men’s (4):

“He's got Shaw, his Manchester United teammate on the overlap.”

“Overlapping him and Schoen taking on Grealish...”

“Canopier on the overlap.”

Women’s (0)

Pass

Men’s (21):

“Well, he's arguably the best passer of the ball on the pitch.”

“Dragged the defenders towards him and that enabled him to get the pass out to Trent Alexander-Arnold.”

“Sterling picked him out with the pass inside there into the run”

Women’s (37):

“The pass from Keira Walsh is absolutely sublime.”

“Stanway's pass isn't very good now.”

“Jordan Nobbs is onside, nice little pass.”

Penalty

Men’s (32):

“England penalty.”

“He's scored his next England penalty.”

“Scales brings him down, that's a penalty.”

Women’s (15):

“I think she knows how to get the penalty there.”

“You might say a telegraphed penalty there from Ellen White...”

“They wanted a penalty there.”

Press

Men's (7):

"It's good high pressure from England."

"Irrepressible for England at the moment."

"There's the England press."

Women's (2):

"There was failure to get pressure out wide here with Pullover."

"Again, good pressure regain."

Ricochet

Men's (1):

"Cox that arm back, it's a really good throw, right in his path, and then he's away he gets a bit of a little bit of a ricochet, just there, and after that, what a way to score your first goal."

Women's (4):

"Straight down the middle and it just ricochets into Toone on the edge of the box."

"A couple of ricochets."

"And ricochets fortunately back to Beth Mead."

Run

Men's (38):

"Brilliant run again, lovely pass, lovely waiting pass"

"How we love to see a run from midfield."

"Timed his run perfectly."

Women's (29):

"And just runs out of room, what a lovely ball from Alex Greenwood."

"Really clever play because that run allows Lauren James to drive inside..."

"...Millie Bright continued with her run."

Save

Men's (14):

"It's Anthony Gordon, Kelleher drops to make the save."

"Good save by Strakoshev."

"Keeper makes a good save actually..."

Women's (20):

"That's a good save, you have to say the teenage goalkeeper."

"Good save from Zinsberger."

"She hasn't had a lot to do so far, but she's made a top save here that's kept the clean sheet for them for now."

Shoot

Men's (7):

"Mason Mount to shoot."

"Shoot, he does!"

"Then he goes to shoot and then he just steers his skipper in."

Women's (23):

"Green would shoot from this sort of range."

Sitter

Men's (1):
"Absolute sitter."

Women's (0)

Strike

Men's (14):
*"But eventually, he does get his strike away."
"What a special strike from the 21-year-old."
"It doesn't get much better than that as far as a dead ball strike is concerned."*

Women's (15):
*"Gets a great strike in and Ella Toone follows in."
"England strike first."
"You can see Paris always looking to come on the inside as a second striker."*

Tackle

Men's (0)

Women's (2):
*"She ... makes it hard for defenders to tackle."
"She's just got a little bit distracted by the defender's tackle."*

APPENDIX 3

Stylistic Devices. Male

Expression	Type	Source Domain	Function
"he put the dress on"	Metaphor	CLOTHES	A situation where something is finished or prepared.
"in the blink of an eye"	Idiom	TIME	Something happening very quickly.
"Can Kane unlock the door?"	Metaphor	HOUSEHOLD	Breaking down a defense or solving a problem.
"England hit the front."	Metaphor	WAR	A sense of conquest or progress, much like a military force moving forward in a conflict.
"they're on the back foot with Livramento."	Metaphor	COMBAT	Being under pressure or defensive.
"And they have fired Finland their first warning."	Metaphor	WAR	Finland has been cautioned or warned by a strong move.
"he'll look down at the ground and hopefully see a bobble."	Metaphor	CLOTHES	Seeing a flaw or mistake.
"And England have sharpened up their act"	Metaphor	COOKING	Improving performance or behavior.
"And just as things were looking rather rosy for England"	Idiom	COLOUR	Things looking good, before a setback.
"England's stars were at least aligned tonight."	Metaphor	ASTROLOGY	In favorable conditions.
"Ollie Watkins also on the score sheet before a late blemish on their copy book from a corner."	Idiom	WRITING	A mistake or failure.
"And Levi Colwill has spared England's blushes."	Idiom	BODY	Avoiding embarrassment.
"He tries to tee somebody up."	Metaphor	SPORT	Setting up a play or pass.
"Flush is spared by Bellingham again, it's becoming a catchphrase."	Metaphor	MARKETING	Something becoming a familiar phrase.
"Don't think there'll be any way of sugarcoating this one."	Idiom	COOKING	Making something unpleasant seem better.
"just through that England wall"	Metaphor	ARCHITECTURE	Breaking through a defense.
"And it's another golden moment for the man with the golden cap, the golden boots and the Midas touch."	Metaphor	MYTHOLOGY	Extraordinary success or skill.
"And he's lurking, he's waiting."	Metaphor	HUNTING	A player waiting for an opportunity.

"Deschamps analysing his three-mount wall."	Metaphor	ARCHITECTURE	Organizing a defensive structure.
"All square at Wembley."	Idiom	GEOMETRY	A tie in the match.
"the French born player with an opportunity inside the first minute to write his name into Maltese football folklore."	Metaphor	WRITING	Becoming legendary.
"First time from Grealish, it's come to Lewis, Foden Manchester City triangle."	Metaphor	GEOMETRY	A coordinated play involving three players.
"And that is Harry Kane's 50th competitive goal for England. Another landmark."	Metaphor	GEOGRAPHY	A milestone or achievement.
"Vintage Harry Kane."	Metaphor	QUALITY	A high-quality, well-established player.
"he's got the composure and the eyes cool."	Metaphor	TEMPERATURE	Staying calm and concentrated.
"And England were scrambling."	Metaphor	CHAOS	A moment of panic or disorganization.
"Roar round Wembley."	Metaphor	SOUND	A loud reaction from the crowd.
"It doesn't get much better than that as far as a dead ball strike is concerned."	Idiom	SPORT	A ball is out of the field.
"Declan Rice not even in the picture yet."	Metaphor	IMAGE	Being absent or irrelevant.
"Well, the eras come and go, the personnel evolves, but Harry Kane is England's goal scoring king and that never gets old."	Metaphor	TIME, ROYALTY	Timeless greatness or continuity. Compared to a ruler.
"Goal number 17 in an England shirt."	Metaphor	CLOTHES	Scoring for English team.
"It's that boy Bellingham again. The instigator of drama."	Metaphor	REBELION	The central figure in an event or moment.
"He drove at the heart of the Greek defence and it crumbled."	Metaphor	BODY	Breaking down a defense.
"but that little flick from Curtis Jones has left the Greek defense in ruins."	Metaphor	ARCHITECTURE	A play leading to the defense's collapse.
"And now he has rubbed salt into the Irish wounds."	Idiom	BODY	Making an already bad situation worse.
"Jack Greenlees keeping it alive."	Metaphor	LIFE	Keeping a play or opportunity going.
"What a wicked delivery."	Idiom	EVIL	Impressive or exceptional pass.

"And Jude Bellingham accepted the gift."	Metaphor	PRESENT	Receiving an opportunity or advantage.
"It's seven heaven for England."	Idiom	HEAVEN	A moment of great success or joy.
"He's dirtied his gloves"	Metaphor	CLOTHES	Involvement in a messy situation.
"Crowned with a first England goal"	Metaphor	ROYALTY	Achieving something prestigious or notable.
"And this time, there will be no chalking off England's ninth goal."	Idiom	WRITING	An unchangeable goal.
"And the cushion on his knee."	Metaphor	HOUSEHOLD	A supportive situation or advantage.
"Well, the body language there of Alexander-Arnold."	Metaphor	BODY	Movements or positions of body that show other people how he's feeling.
"Now Sterling, plenty of grass to run into here"	Metaphor	NATURE	Open space or opportunity.
"Now Grealish surrounded by Hungarian red."	Metaphor	COLOUR	Under pressure or surrounded by opponents.
"England held by Hungary at Wembley tonight."	Idiom	SPORT	A tie or draw in the match.
"It's carbon copy, the ball, the angle ball, the run from out to in."	Idiom	WRITING	A situation being identical or highly similar.
"And he gets up like a salmon."	Simile	NATURE	Bouncing or moving energetically.
"Lingard running into traffic."	Metaphor	CAR	Being blocked.
"It took a while for the goals to flow"	Idiom	WATER	A delay in scoring.

Stylistic Devices. Female

Expression	Type	Source Domain	Function
"England win their opening game of the Nation's League and they win over their oldest of foes."	Metaphor	WAR	Emphasize historic rivalry, match as a battle.
"Belgium scrambling already."	Metaphor	CHAOS	A moment of panic or disorganization.
"England bounce back with a win."	Idiom	MOTION	Recovery and resilience.
"Final score from the king power."	Metaphor	ROYALTY	English team represented in terms of monarchy.
"It's a fright on Halloween night for England."	Metaphor	HOLIDAY	Connects to fear and timing

"Lauren Hemp turned on the burners"	Metaphor	COOKING	Acceleration and pace.
"A huge blow for England and their Olympic hopes."	Metaphor		
"And Lucy Bronze is asleep on the far side."	Metaphor	BODY	Lack of awareness or alertness.
"The hopes of reaching the Nations League finals is still alive."	Metaphor	LIFE	Still believing.
"It's the delivery from set pieces."	Metaphor	SPORT	Precise passing or execution.
"No, she keeps it alive, plays it to Lauren James."	Metaphor	LIFE	Ball control.
"England hungry for more."	Metaphor	FOOD	Shows ambition or aggressive intent.
"Running it through an iron and a needle."	Metaphor	CRAFT	Precision and difficulty.
"A flying start to the second period."	Metaphor	MOTION	Fast and energetic beginning.
"No wind coming to expect that."	Metaphor	WEATHER	Unpredictability.
"Lauren James, the star of the show"	Metaphor	ASTROLOGY	Central role.
"they have got bodies here"	Metaphor	BODY	Physical presence.
"just a taste there of what Valentina Jacinti can do."	Metaphor	FOOD	Preview of potential.
"It's good hunting there from Rach Daly"	Metaphor	HUNTING	Aggressive interception.
"You give her the service and she doesn't let you down."	Idiom	SERVICE	Providing help.
"it's a fizzing ball nightmare for defenders."	Metaphor	EVIL	Difficulty caused to defenders.
"looks like she's done it on top of her laces there"	Metaphor	CLOTHES	Striking technique.
"Could she really put some venom on it to make it harder?"	Metaphor	ANIMAL	Adding power or danger.
"England have shifted gears now."	Metaphor	CAR	Change in intensity or tempo.
"you can see it from the chemistry from the players already."	Metaphor	SCIENCE	Players' compatibility and cohesion.
"it's a nightmare for defenders."	Metaphor	EVIL	Difficulty caused to defenders.
"The Lionesses lever Luxembourg on a night where it only rained goals."	Metaphor	WEATHER	Producing a number of goals.
"You know, it's the art of just giving it a go."	Metaphor	ART	Creative attempt or risk.
"Merriam's has probably been cold all game."	Metaphor	TEMPERATURE	Inactivity or detachment.

"The nation developing, but facing one of the world's best here."	Metaphor	GROWTH	Team's success.
"Just buries it into the bottom corner."	Metaphor	DEATH	Final execution.
"And that's been England's performance, really, in a nutshell."	Idiom	CONTAINER	A concise summary.
"Bullet head up."	Metaphor	WAR	Power and precision.
"Such a weapon for England."	Metaphor	WAR	Player's skill as powerful.
"Northern Ireland all playing with fire..."	Idiom	NATURE	Risky play.
"England finally have their second and has just taken the game away from Northern Ireland now."	Metaphor	THEFT	Dominance shift.
"... and she will be eyeing up another hat-trick."	Metaphor	VISION	Goal-focused ambition.
"And it's a trademark Ellen White goal."	Metaphor	BRAND	Characteristic style.
"Turning on a sixpence, turning the defender and smashing it straight into the back of the net."	Metaphor	MONEY	Quickness and technique.
"An extraordinary night for England putting Latvia to the sword and winning by 20, yes, 20 goals to nil."	Metaphor	WAR	Destruction.
"And that was a stinger for Zinsberger, and Meade frustrated with herself."	Metaphor	ANIMAL	Pain and frustration.
"It's a heavy beating in the Baltics."	Metaphor	WAR	Devastating loss.

APPENDIX 4

Emotional & Expressive Language

Male

“What a ball from Harry Kane”
“A goal made in Newcastle”
“Another England player to register their first goal. What a debut.”
“He can’t believe he hasn’t equalised. Absolute sitter.”
“A sensational strike”
“And they have sharpened up their act”
“He just kept running and running”
“Exposed by a simple set piece”
“Their first ever goal at Wembley”
“Who else? When you need a late goal, a late moment of brilliance... who are you going to call?”
“He tries to tee somebody up”
“And there is his immortal moment”
“It’s another golden moment”
“He just burst the net”
“He is an all-time great”
“This one feels hugely significant”

Female

“What a chance, what a save from Erps!”
“A thunderous header from Rachel Daly.”
“Brilliant, brilliant header, brilliant goal for England.”
“And what a connection. Great header.”
“It’s another brilliant cross. It’s another brilliant header.”
“Brilliant contact from Millie Bright.”
“Fantastic play from Chloe Kelly.”
“A narrow one, but ultimately the three points are what are important.”
“A fright on Halloween night for England.”
“A fabulous header from Lucy Bronze.”
“Wow, what a great team goal that was.”
“The slice of luck that England might just need tonight.”
“England starting to believe.”
“Superb finish.”
“Oh, I’m so, so pleased for Beth Mead.”
“England hungry for more.”

APPENDIX 5

Functional Context

Function	Linguistic Devices	Men's Example	Women's Example
Informative Function	Ellipsis, temporal adverbs (“now”, “still”, “again”), present tense verbs	<p>“Second England corner. Swung in by Saka towards Maguire. Kane! Blocked! Follow-up in!”</p> <p>“Denied by the legs of Ramsdale.”</p> <p>“It's pitched by Rice and now Saka's got it.”</p>	<p>“Now Zelem. Lovely clip ball from Zelem. Robinson, and it's in there again.”</p> <p>“Bronze, often the first contact.”</p> <p>“Sent back in again by Williamson. And they've followed up. Russo. Well, a second for England.”</p>
Descriptive & Referential Function	Substitution and pronoun reference, spatial deictics (“there”, “here”), pronouns	<p>“Alexander-Arnold on the move. Will he get there? He will.”</p> <p>“Here is Kane again, looking for a fourth still.”</p> <p>“They're in front it's two nil, there he is on the attack.”</p>	<p>“Ella Toone running the channel here and getting herself into the box makes it hard for the defender.”</p> <p>“And who's there to follow up?”</p> <p>“Well, good play from Paris. I think she knows how to get the penalty there.”</p>
Dramatic & Engaging Function	Exclamatory sentences, repetition, evaluative language	<p>“Inspired substitution.”</p> <p>“It's Walker again and it came off!”</p> <p>“I'll tell you right now, it's a magnificent goal. Magnificent goal, Bellingham and Kane.”</p>	<p>“From Beth Mead on this left-hand side.”</p> <p>“That's absolutely brilliant. Absolutely fantastic. Beth England in a brilliant position.”</p> <p>“White is there!”</p>
Phatic Function (Filling Time)	Color commentary, filler phrases, descriptive observations, small talk	<p>“I mean, the pace... of Saka, the vision Harry Kane laying it off and really motoring into the box, running 50-60 yards.”</p> <p>“And their next game England will play Finland.”</p>	<p>“I mean, it's really, really good feet.”</p> <p>“Well away we go, England's first game of what they hope will be a brilliant 2023.”</p> <p>“She might have made a mistake in that Netherlands game.”</p>

Function	Linguistic Devices	Men's Example	Women's Example
		<p>“Two more wins will guarantee World Cup qualification.”</p>	
<p>Interpretative Function</p>	<p>Modal verbs (“might”, “could”), causal connectors (“because”, “so”), nominalisation</p>	<p>“Could have been an instant and very late hero for England.”</p> <p>“And for him, it's a difficult one because he's waiting for the ball, he's just waiting for it there.”</p> <p>“Oh, and then the mistake by Robertson.”</p>	<p>“That might be Marriott's first save in this qualification campaign.”</p> <p>“So they're able to control both the first and the second phases.”</p> <p>“The pass from Keira Walsh is absolutely sublime.”</p>
<p>Interpersonal Function</p>	<p>First and second person pronouns, discourse markers (“you know”, “well”)</p>	<p>“Do you know what he's done three or four times?”</p> <p>“Important moments here for Scotland, you sense.”</p> <p>“I think the final touch came off Appa.”</p>	<p>“Well away we go...”</p> <p>“You know, it's the art of just giving it a go.”</p> <p>“I hope you're still counting.”</p>

APPENDIX 6

Top ten most frequently mentioned players

Male Portrayal

#	Player	Mentions	Portrayal Summary
1	Harry Kane	~12	Heroic, record-breaking, clinical finisher, "Midas touch", England's leader
2	Jude Bellingham	~6	Game-changer, reliable in late moments, intelligent and composed
3	Trent Alexander-Arnold	~4	Technical excellence, free-kick specialist, best passer
4	Anthony Gordon	~3	Young star, first England goal, confident finisher
7	Jordan Pickford	~3	Mixed: hesitant under pressure, prone to errors, but still trusted
9	Ollie Watkins	~3	Impact sub, energetic, goal contributor, sometimes hesitant
5	Jarrod Bowen	~2	Impact substitute, debut goal scorer, enthusiastic framing
6	Taylor Harwood-Bellis	~2	Debut goal scorer, strong aerial presence, surprise impact
8	Declan Rice	~2	Composed, technical, goal-scorer, midfield presence
10	Jack Grealish	~2	Creative, sharp passes, part of effective attacking moves

Female Portrayal

#	Player	Mentions	Portrayal Summary
1	Georgia Stanway	~5	Penalty taker, calm under pressure, reliable finisher, initiator of scoring momentum
2	Lauren Hemp	~4	Direct runner, constant threat, key in buildup and assists, aggressive forward play
3	Alessia Russo	~4	Clinical striker, positioned well, “striker’s finish”, dependable goal scorer
4	Beth Mead	~3	Comeback narrative, strong return, creative presence, emotional crowd connection
5	Lauren James	~3	Technically gifted, influential on ball, confidence in possession
6	Ella Toone	~2	Energetic, attacking presence, creative playmaker
7	Rachel Daly	~2	Versatile, goal scorer, aggressive in final third
8	Millie Bright	~2	Defensive anchor, leadership presence, physical in duels
9	Mary Earps	~2	Calm in goal, vocal, dependable, brings stability
10	Chloe Kelly	~2	Late-game impact, pace and width, contributor to final scoreline