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**TURN-BY-TURN AND MOVE-BY-MOVE:
A MULTI-MODAL ANALYSIS OF LIVE TV FOOTBALL COMMENTARY**

This paper describes the interplay between live football commentary on television and the accompanying pictures. It demonstrates how commentators manage play-by-play reporting (PP) and colour commentary (CC) in the light of the ever-changing events on the pitch. Despite a number of studies on sports announcer talk (SAT), a micro-analysis of multimodality in this setting has so far not been undertaken. This paper traces the unfolding nature of SAT and how it is dependent on the players' moves on the pitch.

Since there is no one-to-one relation between events on the field and PP/CC, 'Ball Out of Play' does not automatically lead to CC, or a player kicking the ball does not mechanically result in PP. Instead, the commentators have to coordinate the two phases of commentary with the evolving talk and the game in progress. A number of strategies which the broadcasters use in this setting will be delineated, direct results of the ever-changing pictures and the problem that journalists are always lagging behind, due to the immediate nature of the players' moves and mental processing time. These factors result in different functions of SAT being realized by the sportscasters for the audience.

1. Introduction¹

Sports announcer talk (SAT) has been the object of study for a number of decades now. One vital characteristic, however, has not been treated so far: namely the minutiae of the interplay between talk by the commentators and pictures of the game transmitted. However, since the *raison d'être* of sports commentary lies in its accompanying nature, this connection seems to be at the core of sportscasting. Hence, in this paper, I will describe how the main commentator and the pundit (or colour-commentator) manage play-by-play announcing (PP) and colour commentary (CC) in the light of the ever-changing events on the pitch.

The data are taken from the BBC coverage of the FIFA World Cup 2002 in Japan/Korea. The corpus consists of three different games, namely Argentina vs. England (an early group stage game played on June 7th), Denmark vs. England (a second-round fixture from June 15th) and Brazil vs. England (June 21st), a quarter final which knocked England out of the tournament. The speakers are BBC journalists and pundits, often former football-players. The so-called 'international sound,' i.e. the noise from the stadiums, and the pictures are all taken over from the multi-feeds of a Swiss production company (HBS Host Broadcasting Service), which are based on 26 different cameras in the stadium. The BBC can choose between 15 different feeds (e.g. the stadium feed, player feed, permanent highlight feed, bench feed, permanent beauty shot feed, etc.) to make up their programme. Hence, cuts, camera angles, shots and other

¹ I would like to thank Neal Norrick and Susanne Ley for faithfully commenting on my papers, for this paper and all former ones. All remaining faults are entirely mine.

editorial decisions are generally not taken by the BBC, but they are part of the feed that is provided by HBS.²

The size of the data base makes it clear that the study is largely explorative in nature. It will describe certain mechanisms in this multi-modal setting and strategies used by the broadcasters, focussing on their function within this speech situation. It cannot venture to make predictions on their relative importance or the statistical frequency of their appearance in SAT in general. Instead, a close qualitative description of the broadcasters' strategies will illustrate the elaborate interplay between words and pictures: turn-by-turn (by the commentator) and move-by-move (on the pitch).

The main question will be: which moves are announced when and why? For this reason, the first section treats the connection between play-by-play announcing and the transmitted pictures. The interplay between the moves of the players and the announcement of the journalist(s) will be described with the help of an example. In a second step, a shift between the two phases, play-by-play announcing and colour commentary, will be described to trace the telecaster's decision to depart entirely from the concurrent pictures. Hence, this section will illustrate particular points in the broadcast at which the broadcasters cease to follow the pictures. Both the trigger for the shift and the strategies used by the speakers to cope with this situation will be analysed.

2. Play-by-play announcing

In the following part, a stretch of PP will be analysed regarding its connection to the pictures it accompanies. The 20 seconds of commentary represent an English attack culminating in a shot at goal. The matter-of-fact style at the beginning becomes more and more emotional as Heskey scores a goal. This phase was chosen because of its representative nature and common features.

1a.	<i>EB2 "low in"</i>		
	1	<i>Com</i>	<i>this is Scholes for England.</i>
	2		<i>(4.5)</i>
	3		<i>this is Mills.</i>
	4		<i>(2.1)</i>
	5		<i>did well,</i>
	6		<i>three in the middle for him.</i>
	7		<i>(0.4)</i>
	8		<i>four now,</i>
	9		<i>(0.5)</i>
	10		<i>Sinclair was there,</i>
	11		<i>(0.5)</i>
	12		<i>so too here is Heskey,</i>
	13		<i>(1.8)</i>
	14		<i>LOW in,</i>
	15		<i>HO,</i>
	16		<i>(1.6)</i>

² Interestingly, though, a feature about a day in the life of an HBS sports broadcast director (FIFA 2002) reveals that the production crew on that particular day were listening to British television (ITV during the game Senegal vs. Turkey) in the studio while the feed was produced. For this reason, one cannot rule out the possibility that, at least in this particular case, the commentary on British television may have influenced the directing.

After the transcription of the commentary, let us consider the images that are being transmitted concurrently. It proves rather difficult to render adequately the precise moves of the players on the pitch in a textual format. Not only is the ball perpetually in movement, but also the players orientate themselves towards it, as well as to their teammates and their opponents. A constant shifting of positions resulting from earlier moves and in anticipation of future actions characterise this skill- and strategy-based ball game. As in every kind of transcription or transliteration process, selectivity, and thus subjectivity and interpretation are inevitable (cf. Ochs 1979). For the current project I decided to concentrate on the ball as the central element of the game, and when it is being moved across the field by the players. The left column indicates the move of the player with the ball. The earlier transcription of the commentary has moved into the right column and the individual lines have been shortened for reasons of space. The underlined and bold parts in the right column indicate the exact moment at which the action described on the left takes place. If no words are uttered while the players make a move, the time-span elapsing between the start/end of the move and the start/end of the commentary is given in the left column. For ease of reference, the players from Brazil were named A, B, C... (from England Z, Y, X...) in the order of their appearance (unless their name is given in the commentary.) Further relevant information, such as the relative proximity of opponents, can only be given in the discussion following this table.

1b.

1	Scholes is passed the ball in the Brazilian half.	<u>this</u> is Scholes for England.
2	Scholes attacked by A runs sideways with the ball.	(4.5)
	Scholes passes to the unmarked Mills on the right wing.	
	The ball reaches Mills.	
	0.1 sec. later: Camera feed changes: instead of wide shot of pitch, now shot on Mills.	
3	0.3 sec. later:	<u>this</u> is Mills.
4	Mills is attacked by B.	(2.1)
	Mills passes B and runs towards Brazilian goal on the right wing.	
5	0.4 sec. later:	<u>did</u> well,
6	Mills changes his direction a little and heads more towards the middle.	<u>three</u> in the
	Camera feed changes: wide shot on penalty area.	<u>middle</u> for him.
7	Mills continues towards the penalty area.	(0.4)
8	Mills shoots right on the edge of the penalty box.	<u>four</u>
	Sinclair jumps up together with C and heads the ball on.	<u>now</u> ,
9	The ball crosses the penalty area in midair without anybody being able to reach it.	(0.5)
10	The ball bounces off the pitch to the left side of the box.	<u>Sinclair</u> was there,
11	Heskey moves into a position where he can intercept it.	(0.5)
12	Heskey stops the ball.	<u>so</u> too here is Heskey,
13	Heskey passes the ball into the goal area.	(1.8)
14	D intercepts the ball and deflects it to the goal line.	<u>LOW</u> in,
15	The ball bounces over the goal line.	<u>HO</u> .

Before continuing with the discussion of the transcription, let me note the time spans given here. The seconds, or mostly fractions of seconds, were measured using video transcription software. (Fassnacht / Woods 2004) Hence, the measurements as such are accurate. However, the beginning or end of the measured time span is not always straightforward. After all, the movements of the players are fluid with no clear-cut boundaries between one movement and the next. Furthermore, phonetically, only stops (and affricates) provide clear-cut boundaries in the stream of sounds uttered by the speakers. Hence, on both ends of the measured time spans, 0.1 seconds can often be added or subtracted. For these reasons, the numbers should be taken as relative to each other and indicative rather than exact.

In line 1, *this is Scholes for England*, the commentator resumes PP after a stretch of CC. The demonstrative pronoun *this* is used deictically here, referring to the player on the pitch (Marriot 1995). Hence, it directly links the words to the pictures. These direct links are common (cf. *this* in line 3, *there* in line 10, *here* in line 12) but not necessary since the link between words and pictures is generally implied (unless something else is signalled.) Hence, *Scholes* alone is sufficient (and name only is also a frequent form of announcement), since the setting allows the inference that it is Scholes' current move that is being pointed to and not some past action of his. Nevertheless, the deictics used (also past and present tense) help create and maintain an "electronically mediated inter-subjectivity" (Marriot 1995: 348), i.e. common ground between the telecasters and the viewers.

In line 3, shortly after the ball has reached Mills and the camera feed is changed to show Mills only, the formula (Pawley 1991, Kuiper 1996) is re-used: *this is Mills*. The 0.3 or 0.4 seconds intervening between Mills' getting the ball and the commentator announcing this fact are presumably due to mental processing time. Unless the commentator knows beforehand who is going to be on the ball, these few tenths of a second are quite usual before the announcement. The prepositional phrase *for England* is not reemployed in line 3. It is often used at the beginning of PP not so much for information about the affiliation of the player – the viewers generally know that Scholes plays for England –, but to underscore the fact that it is England, and not the opposing team, which is on the ball at that moment. The present tense is used as the players can be seen at the same time as the words are spoken, again underlining the common ground (Ferguson 1982, Marriot 1995, Marriot 1996).

In line 5, after Mills passes B, the broadcaster uses the simple past for an evaluation of Mills' move: *did well*, a briefing according to Ferguson 1982. In line with the semantic value of the past tense, this reflects the completion of Mills' action. Unsurprisingly, simply by using past reference the commentator, even during PP, can free himself from the demands of the ever-changing pictures without losing sight of the primary aim, namely to commentate the game. We will come back to further implications of the use of past reference in the analysis of line 10.

The journalist's next utterance (line 6), *three in the middle for him*, follows immediately without any apparent pause. Furthermore, lines 5 and 6 are connected with the help of the rising intonation of line 5, signalling continuation. These two features already indicate that these *three in the middle* and Mills doing *well* must have some kind of connection. At the same time, exactly at the moment the journalist starts talking, Mills redirects his run and moves more towards the middle of the field. Hence, the commentator must have planned his utterance **before** the player started turning.

Furthermore, as Mills approaches the penalty area and the journalist utters these words, the camera shot changes back to a wide shot encompassing the whole box. Only then can the television audience see the three players referred to. So both the broadcaster (verbally) as well as the production assistant (with the cut) re-focus from Mills to the penalty area. It is their expertise in football – which unites the production company, the journalists, and ultimately the TV audience – that establishes this connection: as Mills approaches the penalty area, the viewer starts wondering whether any team-mates are waiting for a likely pass; the journalist looks away from his monitor and to the pitch to ascertain whether there are any team-mates in the box; concurrently, the assistant chooses a wide shot to allow for this information to be available on television (cf. Morris 1987 on the viewer's contribution in understanding). This triple re-focussing by the journalist, the player, and the camera anticipates a chance for a shot at goal, the rule being: if an unmarked player runs on the wing with the ball towards the penalty area (and his team-mates are waiting for him in the box), a shot at goal is likely to arise.

This re-centring of perspective in anticipation of a relocation of the main action within the game cannot be gathered from the information that is available in the pictures. In other words, outside knowledge roughly in the form of the rule above has to be brought in by the commentator and the directing crew. Also, this re-focussing is only fully interpretable for a television audience with the same expertise in the game (Gerhardt 2006). This explicit knowledge of football tactics and common player moves, which arises not from reading the laws of the game, but from watching (and maybe playing) football, lies at the heart of this concurrent shift. Despite this analysis, by looking really closely at the pictures, it is possible to see that Mills also foreshadows this shift as he twice quickly glances left during his run (lines 4–5). Thus, the player's glances may also be a trigger for this shift of scene by the commentator. However, even though these glances indicate Mills' orientation towards the middle of the pitch, the knowledge that the positioning and number of his team-mates at that point becomes relevant still remains exogenous, i.e., it comes from general knowledge about football.

To sum up, the commentary does not remain glued to the moves of the player with the ball. It frees itself from the pictures if necessary, taking advantage of the privileged position of the journalist in the stadium. The concurrent cut from a close-up of Mills to a wide-angle shot of the penalty box indicates shared knowledge by the commentator and the production crew.

Then, as Mills decides to shoot, the commentator gives an update on the number of players Mills could pass the ball to: *four now*, (line 8). Hence, the commentator's continued attention is with the possibility of a shot at goal in the immediate future rather than with the ball's current location and Mills' current action. Just as in line 6, the commentator in referring not to the player on the ball, not to the immediate play, but to relevant tactical moves of other players, can point to the next move in the game (here: a potential assist) in his talk. The four may be there now: however, four players being somewhere is normally not mentioned. Only the possibility that the ball may reach them almost immediately makes mentioning them meaningful.

This leads to another consideration: if we imagine a viewer who does not know anything about common moves in football, he or she could infer that these three/four players have acquired importance for the game by the fact that they are mentioned. So for an uninformed audience, these two lines (6 and 8) mark significant moves by players who are not on the ball. In the long run, this strategy trains the ignorant viewer about

football since it points out relevant moves beforehand. Although here (in line 8) the players are visible on the screen as the commentator mentions them. Again, the immediate link between the move of the player with the ball and the commentary has been broken.

In the data, as the journalist starts uttering these words, the anticipated action indeed arises: Mills passes the ball into the penalty area. It is worth noticing how after line 8 all utterances finish with a rising intonation. Once the ball enters the box, the commentator signals on-going action by not using falling intonation. On the one hand, the viewer understands that all ensuing actions are part of one and the same English attack, one and the same event on the screen. On the other hand, this is also a means of alerting the pundit that the commentator intends to keep the initiative.

The ball is then intercepted quite early (without having travelled to a player with a chance to shoot) by Sinclair, who heads it on, so that C does not get it. Half a second later, as the ball bounces off the pitch on the left side of the penalty box, the commentator mentions Sinclair's header: *Sinclair was there* (line 10). Here again the past tense is used since Sinclair's action is completed. In contrast to the past tense earlier (line 5), which was used to evaluate a past action, here the action is only announced as it is already over. Two questions arise: first, why did the commentator wait longer than the usual 0.3 seconds which he generally needs to process a move that could not have been anticipated with certainty? Secondly, why does he announce a move that at the time of the announcing is already over? As for the elapsed time, it is significant that a shot at goal may be executed at any moment while the ball travels through midair from Mills via Sinclair to the left side of the box. As shots at goal are crucial in football and may result in a goal, commentators want to be ready to announce these decisive moves at the same time as they happen. Hence, here, in anticipation of a more critical move, the announcing of a less crucial move is postponed. As the ball then bounces out of play, the commentator finds the time to report *Sinclair was there*.

This belated announcement is relevant for a number of reasons: first, because of the wide angle of the camera, it is hard for the television audience to identify the players. They appear very small on the screen, identifiable by their back numbers only (as is usual in the World Cup), and, furthermore, they do not always have their backs turned towards the camera. In this case, it is impossible to assign a name to the player from the pictures alone. Hence, the commentator here clearly identifies (belatedly) the player for the TV audience. It is of further significance that Sinclair jumps up together with the Brazilian C, who is trying to mark Sinclair man-to-man. As Sinclair manages to head the ball, this ultimately also indicates that Sinclair has beaten C, i.e. an English player has beaten a Brazilian. It may be of significance that both Sinclair's success here and Mills' winning the tackle in line 5 are the only uses of the past tense in this stretch of SAT. Put differently, the past tense may systematically be used in live football commentary as a marker of intermediate or partial success, the commentators scoring with the help of them: "This tackle is won; this small victory cannot be taken from us anymore." A scan of the corpus suggests that this may indeed be the case. After all, there must be a reason why certain past moves are thus brought to the fore. As a final point here, because of the commentator's actually mentioning it, Sinclair's move also becomes more significant. In referring to their own team's, England's, successful moves, the commentators manage to slant their narrating of the game in favour of a positive outcome for their home team (for bias in reporting cf. Hansen 1999, ^{Beeftjes et al. 2002},

Billings et al. 2002, Billings et al. 2004, Eastman / Billings 1999, 2000 and 2001; for SAT as narratives cf. Martinez 1999, Morris et al. 1985.) By choosing from the innumerable possible moves that the pictures offer, the ones in which their team is successful, the TV journalists make the successful moves more significant than the failed or lost ones.

As for line 12, the commentator moves back into the present *so too here is Heskey*, comparing Heskey's current move to Sinclair's past one. Heskey then passes the ball into the Brazilian goal area: in this situation, a goal is imminent. However, before one of his team-mates, Z, can reach the ball, a Brazilian player, D, deflects it. As this happens, the commentator calls *LOW in* (line 14). This could be an imperative verb form elliptical for '*Shoot the ball low in*' (addressing the English player Z) or, in the sense '*Take it low in*' (addressing the ball) functioning as a direction on how to beat the goalkeeper. Ellipsis or 'colloquial reductions' (Crystal 1980) are characteristic of SAT (Ferguson 1982, Hoyle 1991). The increase in volume with its sense of urgency and directness underlines this reading. Nevertheless, the utterance could also be an elliptical present tense indicative meaning '*The ball comes low in*'. The increase in volume would then be explicable by the fact that a supposed goal is being described. The ensuing exclamation *HO*, in line 15, which often acts as a marker of surprise, does not help in determining the exact nature of the ellipsis either. What we are left with, then, is the surface form of a spoken utterance and the setting of the speech situation. The increased volume, the reduced form, and the exclamation flag a significant move for the viewer. The commentary has become rapid and emotional. Most notably (potential) goals are marked in SAT in this way. Hence, the audience is alerted that the attack by England has finally culminated in a shot at goal.

A short note to round off this discussion: the parallel syntactic (e.g. lines 1 and 3), phonetic (lines 14 and 15) or semantic/pragmatic forms (e.g. lines 6 and 8, lines 10 and 12), as well as the intonation patterns, add to the coherence of the text, making a story out of the images.

To conclude, unsurprisingly, tense is one way of achieving freedom from the demands of the ongoing game. By switching to past tense, the commentator achieves a return to less critical moves that were not announced earlier because a more crucial incident was pending. What is more noteworthy is that by going back to past moves, also in the form of evaluative briefings, the commentator assigns importance to them, since they merit PP despite being already over. Hence, these shifts back to past events allow slanting the reporting in favour of the home team. In addition, the example illustrates how a move is not announced because another more significant one is pending and the commentator is reserving room for its announcement in the flow of SAT. Furthermore, future moves are anticipated in the commentary by pointing out relevant details beforehand. Both the camera shot and the commentary here free themselves from focussing on the immediate actions of the player with the ball. On the one hand, this re-focussing from the current action to a relocation of the action in the immediate future is meaningful only to those with a knowledge of the game. On the other hand, it informs the uninitiated in the long run. Hence, it also becomes clear that PP is based on an explicit knowledge of the game which unites audience, commentators and production crew. In addition, intonational patterns structure the game and connect different moves to meaningful events such as 'an attack at goal'. Finally, variation in loudness and exclamations signal the significance of the moves being announced.

3. Alternating play-by-play announcing and colour commentary

After having described the connections between the game and play-by-play announcing, the next step is a description of the shifts from one phase of commentating to the next. Since longer stretches of colour commentary are characterised by a lack of connection to the immediate play, i.e. the pictures, for the current purpose only switches from PP to CC and back are of importance. Again the question is why at a given moment the broadcaster decides to depart verbally from the pictures. (For the coordination between two broadcasters, see Hansen 1999, Bowcher 2003). The following example³ should illustrate the workings of PP and CC based on the events on the pitch. In other words, it highlights how the events in the game determine the choice between PP and CC. The game broadcast is one from the group stage. The fixture is Argentina versus England. It is only 11 minutes into the game.

- 2a. EA1 “the first course of that lunch”
- | | | | |
|----|-----|----|--|
| 1 | Com | CC | that's- |
| 2 | | | how I see the main problem, = |
| 3 | | | PP =that's Beckham, |
| 4 | | | (0.6) |
| 5 | | | Placente, |
| 6 | | | (5.5) |
| 7 | | CC | I'm sure you've |
| 8 | | | delayed the first course of that lunch back at home, |
| 9 | | | or maybe you've already had it. {acc} |
| 10 | | | (0.7) |
| 11 | | PP | here's Scholes, |
| 12 | | | (0.8) |
| 13 | | | to Butt, |
| 14 | | | (4.9) |

Lines 1–2 represent an evaluation (Labov / Waletzky 1967) in a story about the ticketing in the tournament. The many empty seats in the stadium led to this discussion. Lines 3 and 5 consist of the commentator's announcing the players who are in possession of the ball. Lines 7 to 9 represent a reference to the domestic world of British viewers. This is followed by mentioning the players' names again.

In the rest of this section, we will concentrate on the shift from PP to CC in lines 5–7, and, conversely, from CC back to PP in lines 9–11. The letters A, B, C stand for Argentine players.

2b.

5	ball reaches Placente near the Argentine goal	<i>Placente,</i>
6	Placente passes backwards to A	(5.5)
	A passes sideways to B	
7	0.6 sec. later:	<i>I'm sure you've-</i>
8	long shot towards English goal by B	<i>delayed ... at home,</i>
9		<i>or ... had it {acc}</i>

³ This example was used in an earlier publication to illustrate the use of references to food in football commentary (Gerhardt, forthcoming).

	0.3 sec. later:	
	ball touches ground near centre circle where Scholes and C try to intercept it	
10	Scholes wins the tackle (pushes the ball to his team mate Butt)	(0.7)
11	0.2 sec. later:	<i>here's Scholes,</i>
12	ball reaches Butt, who heads it back to Scholes	(0.8)
13	0.3 sec. later:	<i>to Butt,</i>

In line 5, the commentator does PP by naming the player with the ball: *Placente* [pləsæntɪ]. This allows the well-informed audience to infer that the team which is currently in possession of the ball is Argentina. At the end of the turn on the high front vowel the ball reaches Placente near his own goal. The early announcement was possible because of the time it took the ball to travel to the player and because of the player's solitary position. However, this move is not particularly exciting.

This is also true of Placente's next move: Placente passes the ball back to A, another Argentine player. This move is not commented on by the journalist (line 6), whereas the fact that the ball reaches Placente is still stated, since it includes the information that Argentina and not England are now on the ball. Here the journalist departs from following the play move-by-move. A then passes the ball to a third player B. This subsequent move is across (by two Argentines) the front of their own goal. Furthermore, no English player is in sight. Again, the move is not announced. Instead, 0.6 seconds after this shot, the commentator commences CC: *I'm sure you've delayed the first course of that lunch back at home*. Hence, after a pass backwards and then one sideways, two moves which do not merit mentioning by the commentators since they have no immediate impact on the run of play, the commentator chooses to talk about matters not related to the game. The game simply does not merit close PP at that moment. As far as the utterances of the commentator are concerned, *post hoc*, one could assume that line 5 represents the end of PP. However, it has to be kept in mind that for the sports journalist's *ad hoc* commentary, the option to continue using PP was open until the beginning of line 7. If Placente had opted to pass the ball into midfield, the player receiving it would probably have been named (cf. lines 8–11,) if only to identify the team with the ball. Also, subsequently, if A had decided to start an attack, a comment would have been due. Hence, while the commentator awaits the subsequent moves of the players, the switch from PP to CC has not yet been undertaken. The time elapsing between one prior turn (here line 5, the last PP) and one subsequent turn is relevant for the decision whether to continue in PP or to switch to CC: the longer the gap, the greater the likelihood that the journalist will switch to CC. It is noticeable, though, that no exact time span can be given, since the commentary is not evenly spread across the game. For example, there is much more talk at the beginning of the first half than in the middle of the second half (all other factors being equal). While in the first half the TV broadcasters seem to use the gaps left by the match to give different kinds of extra information about the game, the venue, individual players, the tournament, etc., later on they seem to allow much longer pauses in their SAT. Interestingly, the verbal behaviour of the football fans who meet to watch games on TV together is similar. At the beginning of the game they talk a lot more to each other, both about game-related matters and other subjects, than towards the end of the match.

To continue with the example: when the commentator has reached *home* (line 8), the Argentine player B decides on a long shot at the English goal. The subsequent utterance by the journalist *or maybe you've already had it* (line 9) is offered much more quickly than the surrounding talk. The prior utterance (as in line 8, after the cut-off) being the most relevant one in terms of the relativeness of speech rates, consists of 11 syllables, and is pronounced in 2.1 seconds. The utterance in question, albeit a little shorter (9 syllables), is still produced in one second only. This marked acceleration allows the speaker to end his sentence before the ball moves midfield. The utterance ends 0.3 seconds earlier. This timing permits the journalist to be ready for PP when the game picks up again. Here, the time constraints the broadcasters are subjected to become evident (Wanta / Leggett 1988, Mackenzie 2004).

The “impulse constantly to shift the viewer’s perspective [...] in order to prevent their attention from wandering and their hand from straying to the remote control button” (Rowe 1999: 157, on the fast style in sports presentation on TV) may be one reason for this shift to CC. 5.5 seconds (line 6) are spent in silence before a new perspective is opened up for the viewers with the help of CC. However, with the data under discussion, World Cup matches featuring England broadcast in the UK, the likelihood of channel flicking seems remote. Taking this aspect into consideration, together with the finding that SAT decreases during the broadcast, other functions become apparent. The commentators at the beginning of the broadcast use the space left by the game to pursue secondary agendas which are part of SAT, but not possible in PP. For instance, they have to align themselves with the viewers to bridge the co-presence gap (O’Keeffe 2006) between presenter and audience in this mediated discourse. Also, relevant background information that seems necessary for a complete picture of the match has to be given sooner or later. So at the beginning of the game, shorter spaces are used to cover these secondary agendas since they are more pressing at the beginning than later on, when a relation to audience has been established and most extra information has been given.

4. Conclusion

This paper proposes a way of aligning the commentary and the game by transcribing and analysing the commentary during the run of play. By concentrating merely on two short stretches of SAT, a number of issues still become apparent.

The term ‘play-by-play announcing’ suggests that each and every move on the pitch is announced as it happens. The data suggest that the announcement is generally carried out approximately 0.3–0.4 seconds after the move due to the mental processing time. However, the announcement may also be realised beforehand because of the positions of the players on the pitch and the distance the ball has to travel. Depending on their relative importance, sometimes moves are simply not mentioned. Furthermore, the journalists also deviate from the pattern by commenting retrospectively. These deviations can allow them to slant their reporting in favour of the home team. The future, on the other hand, is also anticipated by pointing out aspects on the pitch which will only become relevant later. This re-focusing is based on the common knowledge of all participants: the producers, the commentators, and the television viewers. Deictics underline common assumptions about the game. However, commentators also take

advantage of their privileged position in the stadium. Colour commentary, on the other hand, is used to pass the time during uninteresting parts of the game. Secondary agendas, apart from the pure reporting of the players' moves, are served in this way. Journalists manage these different functions of SAT in the light of the ever-changing events on the pitch and time constraints. Variation in speech rate and loudness as well as voice modulation and intonational patterns, syntactically reduced forms, and exclamations mirror the different phases of the game linguistically.

A number of questions have had to be omitted. For instance, speaker change is another variable which adds to the complexity of the setting. Furthermore, quantitative studies (e.g. Reaser 2003) may investigate how frequently formulae such as *X for England* are used to resume PP or to what extent the use of the past tense does serve to slant the reporting in favour of the home team.

Transcription conventions

she's out.	falling tone in the preceding element; suggesting finality
so,	level, continuing intonation; suggesting non-finality
bu- but	cutoff or truncated intonation unit
(2.0)	timed pauses in seconds
and=	latching (continuation without pause)
=then	
{acc}	becoming faster

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