

Offside or On-Pitch? The Prosody of Sports Announcer Talk

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While the mass digitalisation of content has had a significant impact on consumers' habits thus drawing them away from traditional media, televised sports events seem to be less affected by this change. The idea of a live broadcast, unscripted and unpredictable, is among the most important factors preventing viewers from migrating to other platforms (Faribault County Register, 2023; Shaw, 2023; McCaskill, 2024). Sports, since as early as the first half of the 20th century, have been narrated in-real-time by commentators, now an integral figure during any match. Previous studies (see Trouvain and Barry, 2000 for horse racing, Müller, 2007, Kern, 2010, Humpolík, 2014, and Mathieson, 2016 for football) suggest that prosody, understood in the Firthian tradition, is a key component in delivering an engaging depiction of the ongoing activities. The description of paralinguistic features, especially their sociophonetic functions is mainly limited to tonetic approach or introspective generalisations. The present study therefore implements the interactional theoretical framework (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 2004, p. 21) to explore the prosodic variation in football commentary during the most emotionally intense stage of the game, that is, the goal. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set: 1) to determine which analysed prosodic features are the most susceptible to variation; 2) to analyse how the identified prosodic features manifest across the investigated samples, namely English, Lithuanian, Spanish, and Turkish. The data set consists of commentaries on the goals scored during the final game between Spain and England, 2024 UEFA European Football Championship delivered in several languages from different broadcasters. Preliminary results achieved using acoustic analysis methods show a marked contrast amongst the analysed languages in terms of variation in fundamental frequency, speech rate, and extension of the nuclei during the two analysed stages of the goal.

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Biography

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