

A Study of Stylistic Features of Cricket Commentary: A Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This study is based on the analysis of language practices and features that different cricket commentators use in international cricket matches. This study explores that cricket commentary forms a complete register on its own with its field, tenor, and mode components. Data for this research have been taken from the 1992 World Cup, the 2015 World Cup, and the Ashes Series 2005 matches available on YouTube. Textual analysis technique has been employed for data analysis. After analyzing the data in the light of Halliday's notion of register comprising field, tenor, and mode, it is found that cricket commentary is characterized by special syntactic features such as ellipsis, extensive use of exclamatory sentences, the abundant use of the simple present tense and simple sentences, passive construction notably in elliptical form, first and third conditionals, and inversion. Use of idioms, certain action verbs, certain positive and negative adjectives, and certain adverbs are some of the salient features of cricket commentary. Cricket commentary also has a special jargon with words like 'knock', 'mid-on', 'mid-off', 'innings' and 'bouncer' etc. Cricket commentators also use certain aspects of connected speech such as weak forms of words, elision, and assimilation.

Keywords: Commentary, Cricket, Discourse Analysis, Register

1. INTRODUCTION

Cricket is the world's second most popular spectator sport after football with 2.5 billion estimated fans. Cricket originated in England and is now played across five continents (Alston, *et al.* n.d.). Australian economy benefited greatly from the year 2015 because the cricket World Cup “generated \$1.1 billion in direct spending and created the equivalent of 8320 full-time jobs” (Ironside, 2015, p. 1). In the subcontinent, (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) cricket is hugely popular especially amongst youngsters. In Pakistan, it is commonly observed that all age-groups, both male and female, not to mention children, love to watch cricket with great enthusiasm. Most of the viewers in the subcontinent watch cricket matches on televisions, on mobile phones,

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tablets, iPads and on computers through a live-stream or highlights. Cricket viewership is incomplete without commentary because it makes the game more interesting by engaging the audience with the commentators' ball-by-all analysis. Two or more commentators not only give a running commentary on a match but they do it in an interesting and engaging way to make it a pleasant experience for the spectators and viewers. The role of a commentator is to describe and analyse a game and to sound interesting at the same time and make a match interesting to watch.

Speech is a skilled activity; it is neither an automatic reflex like sneezing nor spontaneous like laughing. It is work as it requires effort and its degree of success depends upon the effort that is put into it. Speech also requires subject knowledge along with fluency that comes with practice. Keeping in view the two factors, it can be said that speech may be successful (i.e., received by the audience the way it was intended) at one time and not another and that some communicators will be better at speaking than others (Hudson, 1999). Hudson's view about speaking can safely be applied to cricket commentary. Cricket commentary is a skilled piece of discourse and commentators improve their art by practicing in matches. Generally speaking, commentators are articulate communicators and they use their knowledge of the game and their voice effectively to keep the viewers informed, entertained, and engrossed through their commentary. Cricket commentary is characterized by unique features that are discussed in this research paper. The present research paper draws heavily from Humpolik's (2014) and Balzer-Siber's (2015) theses on sports commentary. The present research paper explores the syntactic features, the lexicon, the formulaic nature, and some of the paralinguistic features of cricket commentary.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Cricket is a popular spectator sport and is played and watched in many countries. Television viewership of cricket is in millions and in this regard the role and the importance of the language of cricket commentary is vitally important, yet it has not been paid any significant attention, to the best of our knowledge, in the discourse of education in Pakistan, despite the fact that most youngsters avidly watch cricket matches in the subcontinent. The problem to be investigated in this research paper is the analysis of the language of cricket commentary in the light of Halliday's notion of register comprising field, tenor, and mode.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The review of literature shows that different researchers have analysed the language of football commentary. For example, Humpolik's (2014) and Balzer-Siber's (2015) have discussed football commentary in terms of its different features. However, little research has been conducted on the language of cricket commentary. This research article is important as the data analysis has shown that the language used in cricket commentary forms a distinctive register. Cricket commentary has potential benefits in English language classes. Keeping in view the popularity of cricket in Pakistan, this register can be helpful in English language classrooms to teach different aspects of language namely syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and even intonation. It can, for instance, be used to teach listening skills. It can also be used to teach vocabulary (words like *stunning*, *magnificent*, *outsmart*, *get the upper hand*) and to supplement the teaching of grammar (ellipsis, exclamatory sentences, and tenses etc.). Cricket commentary can even be used to teach pronunciation or even intonation in classes. With cricket as one of the most popular games in Pakistan, it is highly likely that the English language learners will take keen interest in language learning through cricket commentary. Hence, this research is conducted to investigate the linguistic features of cricket commentary.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Michael Halliday's notion of register that comprises *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. People communicating in recurrent communication situations tend to use similar kind of vocabulary, similar kind of intonation patterns, "characteristic bits of syntax and phonology that they use in these situations" (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 52). Such variety of a language is called register. As a set of language items, register is associated with certain occupations or social groups. Registers are often marked by the use of formulaic language, which often makes it easy for the communicators to speak fast (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Register is "a speech variety used by a particular group of people, usually sharing the same occupation (e.g. doctors, lawyers) or the same interests (e.g. stamp collectors, baseball fans)" (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 493). A doctor, for instance, uses one kind of register in hospital and another at home. One register is distinguished from another by its own distinctive words such as *deuce*, *love* etc. and its own grammatical structures such as the legal language. The components of register (field, tenor, and mode) are explained below:

1. Field of discourse refers to what is being said. Field determines:
 - i. Syntax
 - ii. Vocabulary
 - iii. Pragmatics
 - iv. Paralinguistic features
2. The tenor of discourse refers to the participants in a discourse, their relation to each other.
3. Mode of register refers to the medium being used whether written or spoken (Richards and Schmidt, 2010).

The data collected for this work have been analysed keeping in view the theoretical framework of register by Michael Halliday.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

On a daily basis, we engage in different types of communication. We, for instance, read the newspaper in the morning, listen to news/commentary on the radio, watch TED talks, make phone calls, and chat with colleagues. We may write a report assigned by our employer to us. All these instances of communication have their own characteristic features (Biber and Conrad, 2009). In short, it is hard to think of a situation not involving communication. We communicate with family and friends, discuss important matters with our boss, and wave our arms to an acquaintance in the street. In some cases, the source of communication is selected with great care and in some cases, it is spontaneous and almost unconscious (Blakemore, 1992). Crystal and Davy (1969, p. 125) have defined commentary as “a spoken account of events which are actually taking place”. Commentary is “a spoken description of an event that is given while it is happening especially on the radio or television” (Commentary, 2018). Commentary on a match is given in real time and in the case of cricket, it is almost always ball-by-ball commentary (Delin, 2000). Delin offers a linguistic analysis of football and racing commentary and discusses different features of football commentary. Delin says that sports commentary, as being a special register, has its specific vocabulary. For instance, special vocabulary that goes with horse-racing is:

Furlong, Make the running, Breast girth, Cap, Soft/fast ground, Divots

Delin (2000) in his discussion of clause constructions and their linking words reports that the most widely used conjunctions in sports commentary (including cricket) are ‘and’ ‘but and ‘as’. Crystal and Davy (1969) point out instances of ellipsis in football and racing commentary. The book cites some instances of ellipsis from racing and football commentary such as:

Dazzling lady// in the check sleeves

Rock Falcon// beaten

In the first sentence ‘is’ and in the second sentence ‘are’ have been omitted. Another feature of sports commentary pointed out by Delin is the speed with which sports commentators speak. According to her, a sports commentator produces more words per minute than a person who reads a passage non-stop fluently from a book though the commentator’s speech is spontaneous and unplanned. Radio commentary is even faster than that of television as it does not have the facility of visuals that are available to TV commentators (Beard, 1998 as cited in Delin, 2000). Delin further discusses that sports commentators achieve four functions with their commentary. They:

- i. Narrate and describe the happenings in a particular game.
- ii. Evaluate and give their opinions.
- iii. Elaborate and explain proceedings in a detailed way.
- iv. Summarize and give a summary of the game.

In the case of radio commentary, the listeners do not see the match and have to rely entirely on the commentary. In the case of commentary on TV, commentators know that the audience are watching the match and they know that a beautiful shot has been played and or that a catch has been taken (Delin, 2000). Humpolik (2014) has discussed the different features of the register of football commentators such as the use of the simple sentences, the use of formulaic language and having a distinctive vocabulary etc. Balzer-Siber (2014) also identifies some characteristic features of football commentaries. Some of these features are subject dependent inversion, topicalization, result expressions, heavy modifiers, diminutive expressions, deictic adverbs as signposting devices etc. Popov (2019) has conducted a comparative study of cricket, football, horse racing, and tennis commentaries. He has investigated the linguistic features of sports commentary. It was found that the media (radio or television) and the kind of sports do affect the language of sports commentary (Popov, 2019).

The theoretical framework for our research paper is Michael Halliday’s notion of register. Register is a speech variety used by a particular group such as lawyers and engineers. We speak differently on different occasions about the same topic. A person writing a formal letter may write:

‘We regret to inform you that....’

But the same person on another occasion may write:

‘I wanted to let you know that...’

This variation in language is what constitutes register (Hudson, 1999). Register has three dimensions, the first one is field, which answers the question: what is the discourse about? The following illustrates our point:

A superb 123 by Mahela Jayawardene set up a comfortable six-wicket win for Sri Lanka over Pakistan which gave them an unassailable 3-0 lead in the series. The tourists made 288-8 in their 50 overs, including 66 from Umar Akmal, brother of wicket-keeper Kamran. But Jayawardene’s belligerent ton-which included 14 fours and a six-coupled with Upal Tharanga’s 76, set up a 202-run opening wicket partnership. Despite losing wickets, Sri Lanka eased home with 21 balls to spare. (Jackson and Stockwell, 2011, p.78)

The second one is tenor. The tenor of discourse answers the question: who are the participants and what is their relationship to each other? Participants may have equal status, or they may have asymmetrical power relations. The status between the participants influences the way they address each other. Cricket commentators address or call the players by their first names as it is customary to use first names among friends or even by their nicknames. Level of formality is expressed through vocabulary the commentators use during commentary. Informality in speech is expressed through the use of idioms (including in cricket commentary), phrasal verbs, and colloquialism to show familiarity. In discourses (such as cricket commentary), speakers show their friendly attitudes to a greater extent through their commentary; the audience may be directly or indirectly addressed by the commentators. One commentator may address his co-commentator but in fact their commentary is mostly aimed at the audience watching the match on television, computer, or phone.

The third dimension of register is mode which refers to whether the discourse is written or spoken. In spoken discourse, interlocutors take turns to communicate. This may cause unfinished sentences, interruptions, or overlapping speech (Jackson and Stockwell, 2011). All these features have been discussed in this paper.

The language of sports commentary is a unique register with different stylistic features. Crystal and Davy (1969) explore the style of language used in sports commentary. According to them sports commentators have descriptive immediacy and fluency. They also discuss commentary in cricket matches. They elaborate on different sentence types in addition to many other things used in cricket commentary. Cricket commentary shares many features

with day-to-day spoken English. Spoken English is marked by an abundance of phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, and short forms etc. Spoken English often has strong regional features (Thornbury, 1999).

The analysis of the review of literature shows that commentary of different sports such as football and horseracing have been discussed from different dimensions by different researchers, but little research has been conducted on cricket commentary. Hence, the present paper attempts to contribute to the existing body of sports commentary by analyzing the different features of cricket commentary.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is qualitative in nature as textual data have been analysed in this paper. The data have been taken from recordings of different matches of the 1992 World Cup, 2015 World Cup final and the Ashes Series (2005), transcribed and analyzed. All the recordings of the matches can be accessed online (see the online links in the list of references). Recordings (spoken discourse) of the matches from the 1992 World Cup have been analysed first, followed by the analysis of 2015 World Cup final match commentary. Finally, the recordings from the Ashes Series are analyzed in this paper. Spoken discourse from these matches is transcribed and their syntax, vocabulary, and other unique features analyzed. Convenience sampling technique is used keeping in view the nature of the study. The data collected for this research are taken from matches played by able-bodied men.

The method of analysis for this paper is discourse analysis carried out in the light of Halliday's notion of register, comprising (i) field, (ii) tenor, and (iii) mode.

- 1) Field of the discourse refers to what the discourse is about (e.g., politics, sports, education, and medicine). In this case, the discourse is cricket commentary.
- 2) Tenor refers to who the participants in the discourse are and what relation they have to each other; in this case, two or more commentators, native speakers of English as well as non-native speakers who are former cricketers, give a running commentary on the matches.
- 3) Mode refers to whether the discourse is written or spoken. In this research paper, the spoken discourse of the commentators has been analyzed.

The discourse (cricket commentary) is analysed under *field, tenor, and mode* in the data analysis section of this study.

3.1.1. Rationale for the Selection of Data

The reason for taking data from the 1992 World Cup is that Pakistan won this cup and cricket-loving Pakistanis cherish the joyful moments of this victory. The reason for taking data from the 2015 World Cup is that world cup matches are generally more exciting and are watched by more people. The data from the Ashes series is taken in order to consolidate the results.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Register is “the combination of lexicogramatical choices appropriate to the social setting and context” (Llamas, *et al.* 2007, p. 227). This research article analyses the cricket commentary as a unique and specific register focusing on its lexicogramatical features. The different special features of cricket commentary that make this discourse unique have been explored.

4.1. Field of Discourse

Field of a register (Halliday, 1976) determines its syntax for instance. Ellipsis is an important register marker used by cricket commentators. Ellipsis refers to the omission of words or phrases from sentences or utterances where they are unnecessary or where they are clearly understood from the context (Trask and Stockwell, 2007). Ellipsis occurs in colloquial speech (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Ellipsis is a feature of spoken English (Cutting, 2002). *Noun(s), auxiliary verbs, main verb(s), the verb to be*, or a whole clause may be elided if the omitted words are clear from the context. Cricket commentary is characterized by the use of ellipsis. The following are some instances of ellipsis taken from the 1992 Cricket World final match between Pakistan and England. Note that authorial comments are enclosed in parentheses.

01 Commentator: Beautiful shot. (The full form is *This is beautiful shot*. The copula ‘*is*’ is omitted.)

02 C: Good start by Ramiz Raja. (The full form is *This is a good start by Ramiz Raja*).

03 C: Wonderful world cup. (Full form is *He/she is having a wonderful World cup*). This is said about a player who is doing well in the tournament.

Other instances of ellipsis are:

04 C: Five from the over, no wicket for nine.

05 *Got'im*. (Here *im*, short form of *him*, a person deixis, refers to the batsman being dismissed by the bowler). More instances of ellipsis from the same match are:

06 C: Sohail, very nervous.

07 C: Javed Miandad, wonderful player, great experience.

08 C: A fine shot.

09 C: Beautifully played.

10 C: So strong there (MSZ, 2018).

Some more examples of ellipsis taken from the World Cup final (2015) between Australia and New Zealand are:

11 C: Over the keeper. (Full form is *he is going to bowl over the keeper*).

12 C: Straight down the ground. (Full form is *the ball has gone straight down the ground*).

13 C: Just a single. (Full form is *He has taken just a single*).

14 C: Absolutely perfect. (Full form is *that is absolutely perfect*) (Seo (2015)).

The obvious reason for the excessive use of ellipsis is the context (provided by the visuals) in which these utterances are produced. Certain words or phrases are omitted because they are unnecessary, or they are understood from the context (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). In other words, many things are clear to viewers in the game and the commentator does not have to use the full forms because all the instances of ellipses will be clearly understood by the spectators/ viewers. Ellipsis is a fluency device that allows commentators to breathlessly give a ball-by-ball account of what is happening in the game. The use of ellipsis may save the commentators some energy and time and allows them to speak faster on the developments in the match that unfold before their eyes. In other words, through ellipsis the viewers are not burdened with information overload as commentators give a running commentary on the game.

Another syntactic feature that characterizes cricket commentary is exclamatory sentences. The extensive use of exclamatory sentences is another salient feature of cricket commentary. Exclamatory sentences show a speaker's emotions and feelings. Exclamatory sentences do not have a main verb and they end with an exclamation mark (Thorne, 2012). Exclamatory sentences begin with 'what' or 'how' and they do not reverse the order of the subject and the

auxiliary verb (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). An exclamatory sentence is a more forceful version of a declarative sentence (Seaton, 2003). Exclamatory sentences show the strong feelings of a speaker(s), in this case the commentators. Commentators, to express their surprise, shock, amazement, praise etc. at the quick happenings in a game, make excessive use of exclamatory sentences. Surprised by a bowler, amazed by a batsman, and may be stunned by a fielder, cricket commentators use exclamations to voice the feelings. The following are some instances of exclamatory sentences from different matches:

- 15 C: What a shot!
- 16 C: What a cracking delivery!
- 17 C: What a catch!
- 18 C: What a ball!
- 19 C: What a great delivery!
- 20 C: What sensational start!
- 21 C: What a bowler! (TS, 2015).

Any piece of discourse that is planned and edited has more complex sentences than any discourse which is spontaneous. Cricket commentary is spontaneous and therefore most of the sentences used in cricket commentary are simple sentences. There is one clause, a single subject, and a single predicate in a simple sentence (Downing and Locke, 2006). Simple sentences express a single idea and thus make it easy for the audience to absorb the information. Viewers of cricket matches are, of course, more absorbed in the match and might have difficulty understanding complex or compound sentences. Some instances of simple sentences created by different commentators from the Ashes Series are:

- 22 C: It was a scorching evening.
- 23 C: Peterson doesn't look happy.
- 24 C: He is shaking his head.
- 25 C: This now is trouble for England.
- 26 C: That was well-played.
- 27 C: That really did surprise him.
- 28 C: That went from nowhere.
- 29 C: That is a brutal ball to get.
- 30 C: That will go for four as well (TS, 2015).

The description of the game (both football and cricket) is in present tense while evaluation and elaboration are in the past tense. It can be seen that

the use of present tense outweighs the use of past tense in sports commentary. The occurrence of present tense and specifically simple present tense is an important feature of sports commentary including cricket commentary. The simple present tense makes the job of a commentator easy as he or she has to use fewer words to express an action that is in progress or to talk about a complete action. Some examples from the highlights of match 4 of the 2016 Asia Cup will illustrate the point:

- 31 C: He is gone for four.
- 32 C: It's a good shot.
- 33C: This is a tremendous comeback.
- 34 C: Not out, says the umpire.
- 35 C: And he goes.
- 36 C: Khurram Manzoor is gone for 10.
- 37 C: Captain goes for two. (Khan, (2017).

Sports commentators often use simple present tense in place of present continuous and present perfect tense to describe events in progress where the focus is on the succession of happenings rather than on the duration (Wren and Martin, 2016). Sports commentary shares this usage with news headlines too. The following sentences from different cricket matches will illustrate the researchers' point:

- 38 C: Mecallan gets up behind point (instead of *Mecallan has got up behind point*).
- 39 C: Gaffney calls it a wide (instead of *Gaffney has called it a wide or Gaffney called it a wide*) (Seo, 2015).

Cricket commentators use a plural verb with the names of teams such as:

- 40 C: Pakistan have won the toss and they have decided to bat first.
- 41 C: England have lost an early wicket.

In everyday conversation speakers mostly say:
Pakistan has and *England has*.

Here the plural form refers to all members of the team but if commentators use the singular form that would then mean the whole Pakistani or English nation and all its members which would be inaccurate. Another feature of cricket commentary is the inversion in sentences which is used for emphasis. In other words, the normal word order is changed to foreground a point. In fact, commentators use inversion to make a point. For instance:

42 C: Up she goes. (Full version is *she goes up*).

43 C: Up goes the finger. (Full version is *the finger goes up*).

44: C: Over the top he goes. (Full version is *he goes over the top*).

45 C: Underneath the scoreboard it goes. (Full version is *it goes underneath the scoreboard*).

Here in the context of a cricket game the pronouns *he* and *she* refer to the cricket ball and *he* is used for a (male) player also. Passive voice is another syntactic choice often used by cricket commentators. Passive voice is frequently used in speech (Eastwood, 2005, p. 143). For instance:

46 C: It's been superbly prepared.

The physical context makes it clear what the deictic marker '*it*' refers to. Viewers can infer from the context that *it* refers to the pitch. Other instances of passive voice are:

47 C: This pitch has been rolled nicely.

48 C: Toss has been won by Ricky.

Passive constructions may occur in elliptical forms also, e.g.

49 C: Well-driven by Tendulkar.

50 C: Well-timed by Saeed Anwar.

The register of cricket commentary includes the use of conditionals notably first and second conditionals. For instance:

51 C: If he gets to the last 10 overs, he'll cut loose.

52 C: If it doesn't get there, they'll get 4 runs.

53 C: That would have been a certain four if he had not stopped that.

54 C: Had he been in back to an orthodox position that might have been an easy chance.

The register of cricket commentary is mostly informal and commentators use simple, informal words with contracted forms and idioms. The use of contractions is a fluency device that enables the commentator to speak more efficiently. Cricket commentators often say:

55 C: That's his fifty.

56 C: He's enjoying this tournament.

57 C: That'll go for four

58 C: The ball is gonna get to the boundary.

58 C: That'll run away for another four.

Commentators often use idioms or idiomatic expressions to get their meaning across in a more forceful way. Some of the idioms taken from the data are:

59 C: He has taken to it like duck to water.

60 C: Clean as whistle

61 C: Straight as an arrow

62 C: Fast like bullet

63 C: He ran like a rabbit.

64 C: The ball went to the boundary like a bullet.

65 C: The pitch is as dry as bone.

66 C: He's leading from the front.

It is interesting to note that most of the idioms used in cricket commentary feature a comparison or simile to be exact. The point emphasized in the first idiom given above is the ease with which a particular batsman has begun to score runs freely and comfortably like a duck who swims effortlessly in water. Cricket commentators often make use of formulaic language: language or multi-word expressions, usually having a single meaning, stored, and used lexically as a single word (Wood, 2015). Certain formulaic expressions characterize cricket commentary. For instance, cricket commentators say:

67 C: The quicker they come, they go.

68 C: All the way.

69 C: By and large.

70 C: Day in and day out

71 C: Tough luck. (Often said by a commentator to a losing captain).

72 C: Keeping in mind.

73 C: Here we go.

74 C: Right from the outset.

75 C: In hand.

Certain verbs tend to recur in cricket commentary; most of these are action verbs with occasional use of the copula verb *to be*. The verbs most often used are:

Whack, hit, smash, race, play, strike, sweep, hook, bowl, time, stump, spin, swing etc.

A game like cricket is all about action and running around on the field. The use of the above-mentioned verbs is a testimony to the fast-paced nature of the sport. Certain adjectives and nouns characterize the discourse of cricket. The following adjectives and nouns are often used by cricket commentators:

Adept, big, deft, tremendous, terrific, consistent. Economical, expensive, excited, fast, slow, magnificent, wonderful, fine, massive, superb, excellent, powerful, horrible, hard, terrible, competitive, beauty, huge, blow, happy, sharp, sad, brilliant, delighted, splendid, marvelous, disappointing, unpredictable, unplayable, frustration, pace, jubilation.

All these adjectives express judgment of the commentators about the sportsmen or some aspect of their game. Most of the above-mentioned adjectives are synonyms or stronger versions of the adjectives ‘good’ and ‘bad’. Many of the adjectives used in cricket commentary are extreme adjectives. Certain adverbs also recur in cricket commentary. There is a great deal of variation in the use of adverb, its place and its style (Hoye, 2013). The following adverbs are frequently used:

“Certainly, no doubt, absolutely, perfectly, just, extremely, perhaps, comfortably, fast, slowly, particularly”.

The use of apostrophe often occurs in cricket commentary. For instance:

76 C: Pakistan’s batting.

77 C: England’s stuttering start.

78 C: Today’s innings.

The use of apostrophe may be considered a fluency device and it is used to make the commentators more fluent because they have to speak fast as developments unfold on the field. Another register marker is the use of interjections. Interjections are also used by commentators to show strong feelings of surprise, joy etc.

Register of a discourse is often characterized by a specific vocabulary or by the use of common vocabulary in a new sense (Trudgill, 2000). An important feature of register is its use of special jargon which is defined as specific vocabulary that goes with that field (Yule, 1999). Cricket commentary is also characterized by its jargon or common vocabulary with extended meanings expressed in standard British English. Many words have their specific meanings in the context of cricket matches:

79 C: He played a good knock.

80 C: He was out for a duck.

Knock means innings and *duck* means to get dismissed without making any run or runs. Other common terms used in cricket are: *Bye*: it is a run scored when the batsman does not hit the ball with bat or any part of his body. *Carry one's bat*: it refers to a batsman who starts his innings as an opener and remains not out till the end while all his teammates are out. *Dead ball*: it refers to a ball off which no run is scored, or a wicket taken. *To declare the innings*: it refers to a scenario when the batting side ends their innings before all the bowls have been bowled. It happens mostly in test matches when the batting side feels that they have scored enough runs and that the opposition will not be able to chase the score. *Dolly*: dolly refers to an easy catch taken by a fielder. *Doosra*: *doosra* is an Urdu word which means another or second. Saqlain Mushtaq of Pakistan invented this version of delivery. It is like a *googly* by an off-spinner bowler. *Duck*: duck in cricket means a score of zero. The full version is *duck's egg* which is like zero. In the 1992 Cricket World Cup, when a batsman was out for a duck, the image of duck was given in front of his name on the scoreboard. Any batsman no matter how accomplished he is can be out for a duck and getting out in this fashion can be a great source of embarrassment and frustration for a batsman. *Extra*: this refers to a run not scored by any batsman with their bat. *Full-toss*: this is a delivery which does not strike the ground. *Lifter*: it refers to a ball that rises in the air unexpectedly. *Lollipop* is an easy ball to strike. *Pair* refers to an unfortunate situation when a particular batsman is dismissed for zero score in two consecutive matches (Williamson, 2018).

It is interesting to see how some of the common terms of cricket are used in day to day conversation. One can hear people saying:

I have played my innings.

By this they mean that they have lived their lives. In other words, the end of their lives or careers is near. *Someone had a good innings* is used about a person who has died and that he led a long and healthy life. Some more terms that are used in day-to-day English from cricket are: *To be hit for six* which means to affect someone greatly like the news of his wife's sudden death hit him for six (To be hit for six, 2018). *Off your own bat* which means that you do something yourself without being asked or told by someone e.g. he made the arrangements off his own bat (Off your own bat, 2018). *Right off the bat* means to do something without any delay, for example, 'I was asked to make a speech right off the bat' (Right off the bat, 2018). *A sticky wicket* means to be in a

difficult situation e.g., the team is on a sticky wicket after losing the match. Sticky wicket in fact refers to a wet wicket which is not dry yet and is thus prone to bounces which causes batsmen problems (A sticky wicket, 2018). *To draw stumps* in cricket means to remove the stumps from the wickets to signal the end of the play. By extension, this metaphorical expression means to bring something to an end (To draw stumps, 2018). For example, he said he would draw stumps on his career soon. *To play a straight bat* is a term used to refer to a batsman who holds his bats vertically in order to deflect a ball. By extension, this expression means to act in an upright way like ‘He played with a straight bat in the election’ (To play a straight bat, 2018). *To stump someone* in cricket refers to a situation when a wicketkeeper dismisses a batsman out by removing the bails off the wickets when the batsman is out of the crease. In common parlance, stump now means to ask someone a difficult question which they cannot answer. In other words, to put someone in a difficult situation, for example ‘The interviewer stumped me’. *To be stumped for words* is a common collocation used in day-to-day conversation (To stump someone, 2018). *Googly* refers to a ball which it looks will turn in one direction but in fact turns in another direction baffling the batsman. *To bowl (someone) a googly* is an idiom which means to say or do something unexpected and is thus difficult for someone to handle, for example, the journalist bowled the prime minister a googly (To bowl somebody a googly, 2018). *To be a lame duck (from out for a duck)* is an unsuccessful person or thing (To be a lame duck, 2018). *The state of play* refers to the score in a sports match, especially in cricket. By extension, the state of play means the current situation or circumstances (The state of play, 2018). *It is just not cricket*, another common expression. Traditionally, cricket has been associated with fair play and sportsmanship. This expression refers to behaviour that violates common norms of decency and fair play (It is not cricket, 2018). *To bowl someone over* is to shock or surprise someone (To bowl somebody over, 2018). For example, ‘I was bowled over by his comments’. *To catch someone out* means to put someone in a difficult situation. For example, ‘The opposition caught the government out’ (To catch someone out, 2018).

The next feature that this paper looks at is paralinguistic features of cricket commentary as one of the features of register. Paralinguistic features include tone of voice that expresses a speaker’s attitude to what he is saying. Another feature to be discussed is intonation that makes commentators’ commentary interesting.

Cricket commentary features many aspects of connected speech such as weak forms of many words, elision, and assimilation. Weak forms are used when there is no stress on the word. For example, the weak form of *and* is /ən/ or /n/, as in *bread and butter*/bred n bʌtə(r)/. Weak forms of certain words

(almost 40 words in English) is a feature of spoken English (Roach, 1983) and cricket commentators use weak forms of words to sound natural. Some instances from cricket commentary are:

81 C: England 123 for 3.

The preposition ‘for’ is pronounced in its weak form by all commentators. *Look at that.* The preposition ‘at’ was pronounced in its weak form.

In recent years Imran Khan and his party-members have started using cricket terms in politics. The first author once heard Imran Khan say:
Ma eik he ball pa Asif Ali Zaradari aor Mian Sahb ki wicket loon ga.

I will bowl Asif Ali Zardari and Mian Sahb out on one ball.

By that he meant that he would knock them out of politics very easily and very soon. Imran Khan during his sit-in in 2015 against rigging in election is reported to have said:

Ab umpire ki ungli otne wali ha.

The finger of umpire is going to go up soon.

PTI clean-sweep karygi.

PTI will make a clean sweep of the election.

PTI ne PMLN ki eik aor wicket gira di.

PTI got another wicket of PMLN.

Imran Khan recently said in a gathering:

Imran dares PML-N: *I’m a good catcher; hurl a shoe and I’ll throw it back* (Butt, 2018).

Thus, cricket terminology is being regularly used by Pakistani politicians as metaphors in the discourse of politics and is a welcome addition to political discourse.

4.2. Tenor of Register (Cricket Commentators)

Tenor of discourse answers the question: who is producing the discourse and what is their relation to each other? In cricket commentary, two or may be more than two commentators give a running commentary on a game. Both commentators are equally expert in their field and they call each other by their first names. One commentator may be more senior to the other though. Commentators call the players by their first names too, giving the impression

of informality or friendliness. In the case of spoken discourse, something about the speaker(s) is generally known but in the case of written discourse, the writer may be unknown. Commentators are famous players turned commentators now. In spoken discourse, there may be interaction between the speaker and the listener. What is the relation between the speaker(s) and the listener(s)? Do they have equal status or is one superior to the other? Does one know more than the other? How much power the speaker and listener have will determine how they address each other. The social distance between the participants in a discourse determines the level of formality of the language. Calling someone by their first name indicates familiarity whereas calling someone by second name shows greater formality (Jackson and Stockwell, 2011).

4.3. Mode of Register (Spoken Cricket Commentary)

Mode of discourse refers to whether the discourse is written or spoken. Spoken discourse is characterized by the spontaneity of the participants with language produced instantly with no pre-planning. Participants in a spoken discourse take turns to speak. A speaker may ask an interlocutor to speak or an interlocutor may interrupt the discourse resulting in interruptions and overlapping speech etc. In a written discourse, sentence structure is complex and vocabulary formal (Jackson and Stockwell, 2011). In a particular cricket match, two or more commentators speak but they rarely interrupt each other; thus the turn-taking in cricket commentary is fairly smooth. The reason could be that when a bowler starts running, one of the commentators holds up the microphone which is an indication to the other commentator that only the holder of the microphone is going to speak. When he is finished speaking (giving his opinion, describing, elaborating etc.), the other commentator takes up the microphone and makes a comment which results in plain sailing. There are occasional false starts and repetitions. The commentators employ more repetitions to emphasize a point as repetition is a feature more of spoken English than written. They may say:

What a shot!

What a fielder!

When it comes to producing discourse, spoken, and written forms of language make somewhat different demands on language producers. The speaker has at his disposal paralinguistic features such as his voice in addition to facial expressions and posture etc. which he can use effectively (Brown and Yule, 1988). It is observed that cricket commentators do the same. The discourse of commentary occurs in spoken form and the voice of the

commentators is very important in this regard. Commentators have to use their voice effectively to sound interesting and to grab the attention of the viewers and keep them engaged in the game. Cricket matches are full of excitement and action and commentators often speak with a rising tone to show and portray that enthusiasm.

5. CONCLUSION

The current study establishes cricket commentary as a distinctive register with its distinct syntax and vocabulary features amongst other things. This research paper has revealed the following findings: Cricket commentary is mostly elliptical, i.e. sentences have certain words left out from them such as 'is gone', 'caught' 'well-driven' etc. Cricket commentary is replete with exclamatory sentences such as 'What a shot!', 'What a catch!'. Cricket commentators use present tense to talk about a complete action in the present, for example 'He takes a second run' instead of 'He has taken a second run'. Passive constructions especially in elliptical forms characterize cricket commentary, for instance, cricket commentators say 'Well-bowled by Wasim Akram', 'Well-played by the batsman'. Inversion is used in cricket commentary to emphasize a point for instance 'Up she goes'. Cricket commentary uses certain idioms, adjectives, and action verbs. It is also characterized by its own jargon which is now used even in day-to-day language also.

The commentator has to be not only expert in his field but also has to be an articulate communicator who engrosses and enthralls the audience in the game through his commentary. Cricket commentary can well be used in English language classes as an authentic material to present new language to students or to strengthen the existing language structure of students. Considering the love for cricket by our youth in Pakistan and considering the richness of discourse of cricket commentary, we would strongly recommend its use in ESL/EFL classes to hone different language skills of students. Cricket commentary can be used to help students improve their pronunciation, listening skills, or even to help them learn tenses. Vocabulary building exercises can also be built around cricket commentary.

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