

Grammatical Cohesion in Online Minute-By-Minute Football Commentary

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ABSTRACT

Linguistic inquiry into football commentary has become prevalent in recent times. Despite the plethora of studies on football commentary, the cohesive elements within it remain unexplored. The present study, therefore, investigated the grammatical cohesive devices in Online Minute-By-Minute Football Commentary (OMBMFC). Three OMBMFCs from The Guardian news were collected, processed, and analysed. Drawing on Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion Theory, the study found that all four types of grammatical cohesive devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions) were employed in the OMBMFC. The most dominant grammatical cohesive devices were references followed by conjunctive devices and the least used were ellipsis and substitution. The study also found that these devices were employed to avoid repetition and to link sentences. It was recommended that an investigation of both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in OMBMFCs be carried out to ascertain a holistic view of the role cohesion devices play in these commentaries. The study extends research in cohesion studies, particularly in football commentary.

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INTRODUCTION

Football or soccer has developed to become more than just a game. It is a source of employment, a symbol of peaceful coexistence, and more importantly a form of entertainment. In terms of coverage, no sporting event or game comes close to football. The large viewership and followership of the game have created a form of “popular culture.”¹² As a form of entertainment, football has long been a source of amusement for its fans. One way it has done that is through the notable performance of its commentators. The duty of commentators has increased beyond offering a detailed description of what is happening during a game to incorporate entertaining their audience as well. Commentators, therefore, employ diverse rhetorical resources such as humour, irony, and metaphor to sustain their audience.³

One example of how the internet's increasing accessibility and popularity have altered contemporary journalism and communication is sports coverage.⁴ Traditional coverage of sporting events through printed sports newspapers, radio, and TV reporting has been overshadowed by new media where fans are offered sports updates instantly online. At a faster and more convenient rate, fans can now enjoy and follow sporting games live on various media platforms. The change from traditional coverage to online coverage of sporting events has resulted in the

¹ Arnaud Richard, “Televised Football Commentaries: Descriptions, narrations and representations of a non-victory,” *Language in performance* 38 (2008): 193-202

² Arnaud Richard, “Televised Football Commentaries: Descriptions, Narrations & Representations Of A Non-Victory. The European Club Championship Final 1976 (Bayern Munich Vs As Saint-Étienne),” *The Linguistics of Football*, 2008, 193–202.

³ Aliyu Yakubu Yusuf, “Conceptual Metaphor in the Language of Football Commentary: A Cognitive Semantic Study,” *Ganga Journal of Language and Literary Studies* 5, no. 4 (2016): 2–17.

⁴ Tim Vandenhoeck, “Minute-by-Minute Football Commentary: A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis of Tense and Community within Online MBM,” *CELE Journal* 23 (2015): 50–65.

emergence of new commentary genres or sub-genres of sports reporting.⁵ One such genre that has attracted considerable linguistic studies in recent times is online minute-by-minute football commentary (OMBMFC).

Unlike traditional forms of football commentaries such as live radio and TV commentaries which are oral, OMBMFC is written via a web page. Though new in the field of football commentating, the genre has gained popularity among fans of football largely due to its interactive nature. As Chovanec points out, interaction in OMBMFC is competitive with “the commentator always striving to top the reader through humour and criticism.”⁶ Unlike other types of football commentaries, OMBMFC allows readers to share their views on the game which are incorporated into the actual commentary itself. This makes the audience active participants in commentary creation. With the popularity that this new type of football commentary is gaining globally, an investigation into its textual structure is worthwhile to establish how such a text, which is created within a limited time frame, is structured. The present study, thus, investigates how OMBMFC texts are held together grammatically to help readers comprehend them. The study used the cohesion theory developed by Halliday and Hasan to analyse the OMBMFC genre’s structure in order to do this. This study is relevant since studies on football commentary have focused primarily on the figurative use of language,⁷ register analysis,⁸ contrastive studies,⁹ and comparative analysis,¹⁰ leaving the cohesive elements within football commentary underexplored.

The study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What types of grammatical cohesive devices are used in OMBMFC?
2. What are the discourse functions of grammatical cohesive devices in OMBMFC?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are considerable studies on cohesion in sports genres. Laybutt examined the practical use of collocation in written sports reports that are genre-specific (WSR).¹¹ He sought to identify significant patterns of collocation within a WSR in comparison to a larger corpus of general language. Match reports from the ‘Guardian’ on Champions League Football served as his corpus for WSR while Bank of English corpus (BofE) served as his reference corpus. A total of 111,136 words from the WSR corpus were analysed using a systemic functional linguistic approach. The study revealed that the corpus used surface cohesion in paragraphs. He added that collocation within the text provided both intratextual as well as inter-textual cohesion. The study equally identified metaphors as important collocative elements that contribute to intertextual cohesiveness. The present study is similar to Laybutt’s study since they both use Halliday and Hasan’s cohesion model to examine cohesiveness in sports literature. It must, however, be pointed out that Laybutt’s study is comparative with its focus on lexical cohesion whereas the current study is not comparative and focuses rather on grammatical cohesion.¹²

Moreover, Ahangar, Taki, and Rahimi looked at how conjunctions were used in Iranisports live radio and TV talks using 200 minutes of 20 different live radio and TV recorded programs as their data.¹³ Unlike Laybutt, Ahangar et al. adopted Dooley and Levinsohn’s model of cohesion as their theoretical framework and identified all four categories of conjunction devices in the two sub-corpora. The identified devices include associatives, additives, adversatives, and developmental markers. The study revealed that associatives were used the most in both radio and TV sports programs. The least used conjunctive element identified in both sets of research corpus is adversative. The scholars posit that the use of associatives and additives in both radio and TV talks suggests that they have an important role in facilitating communication between presenters and their audiences. The current study is related to that of Ahangar, Taki, and Rahimi in that they both investigated the grammatical type of cohesion in sports text. However, both used different theoretical frameworks.

In another study, Karim investigated how cohesive devices are used in sports news.¹⁴ The study sought to identify the most predominant cohesive devices used and their degree of cohesiveness. Like Laybutt, Karim used

⁵ Jan Chovanec, “Competitive Verbal Interaction in Online Minute-by-Minute Match Reports,” *Brno Studies in English* 32, no. 1 (2008): 23–35.

⁶ Chovanec, “Competitive Verbal Interaction in Online Minute-by-Minute Match Reports,” 23.

⁷ Gunnar Bergh, “Football Is War: A Case Study of Minute-by-Minute Football Commentary,” *Veredas-Revista de Estudos Linguísticos* 15, no. 2 (2011).

⁸ Radek Humpolík, “Language of Football Commentators: An Analysis of Live English Football Commentary and Its Types” (Masaryk University, 2014).

⁹ Carmen Pérez-Sabater et al., “A Spoken Genre Gets Written: Online Football Commentaries in English, French, and Spanish,” *Written Communication* 25, no. 2 (2008): 235–61.

¹⁰ Marcin Lewandowski, “The Language of Online Sports Commentary in a Comparative Perspective,” *Lingua Posnaniensis* 54, no. 1 (2012): 65–76.

¹¹ Brett Edward Laybutt, “Collocation and Textual Cohesion: A Comparative Corpus Study Between” (University of Birmingham, 2009).

¹² Laybutt, “Collocation and Textual Cohesion: A Comparative Corpus Study Between.”

¹³ Abbas Ali Ahangar, Giti Taki, and Maryam Rahimi, “The Use of Conjunctions as Cohesive Devices in Iranian Sport Live Radio and TV Talks,” *SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics* 9, no. 2 (2012).

¹⁴ Muhammad Fadhli Karim, “Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion Analysis in Sport News Text On The Jakarta Post” (University of Syarif Hidayatullah, 2015).

Halliday and Hasan's cohesion model to examine the different types of cohesive devices used in the text while Scinto's formula was used to measure the text's cohesiveness. The most utilized grammatical cohesive technique was a reference, followed by substitution, and conjunctions while for lexical cohesive technique, repetition was the most used followed by synonyms, super-ordinate, and collocation. The investigation of the degree of cohesiveness showed that grammatical cohesion was higher than lexical cohesion.

Again, Ahangar, Taki, and Rahimi investigated how cohesive techniques like morphosyntactic patterns were used in Persian live sports radio and TV talks.¹⁵ The two datasets were used to examine the morpho-syntactic pattern types proposed by Dooley and Levinsohn (the discourse-pragmatic structuring, echoic utterances, and consistency of inflectional categories). The study revealed that the use of tense marking and echoic utterances was similar in both radio and TV talks. Contrastingly, pragmatic structuring showed a significant difference. TV talks were reported to utilise it in speech more than their radio counterparts. Based on such similarity, the researchers concluded that there is the existence of considerable similarity in the application of morpho-syntactic patterns as a cohesive device in both live and TV talks. Similar to Ahangar, Taki, and Rahimi, Rostami and Gholami conducted a contrastive study of lexical cohesion used in sports texts of Washington Times and Tehran Times newspapers written by English native and Iranian non-native writers.¹⁶ Forty newspapers consisting of 20 each written by native and non-native authors served as the data for the study. They adopted Halliday and Hasan's model of cohesion as their theoretical framework. They found that in both texts, repetition was reported to be the most used lexical tie while hyponymy and antonymy were the least used.

Additionally, Roring examined cohesive devices in online football news published by two media outlets in different countries, Jakarta News-Post and The Guardian.¹⁷ He wanted to establish the role cohesive devices play in creating online football news articles. The researcher gathered six online football news articles each from the two media as data for the study. The study adopted Cook's theory of cohesive devices as the theoretical framework for the study while relying on other relevant theories like Frank's classification of pronouns (referring expressions), conjunctions, and parallelism. According to the study's findings, 'The Guardian' news outlet employed all the cohesive devices outlined by Cook whereas 'Jakarta Post' revealed no usage of substitution of all the seven cohesive devices.

Chovanec also investigated coherence in the language of online sports reporting also known as live text commentary or OMBMFC.¹⁸ The data used for the study was an online football match report of the semi-final football encounter between Germany and Turkey at EURO 2008. He argues that an understanding of online text commentary relies on readers' awareness and knowledge of the textual structure of the genre which is organised into two narrative layers. The first layer covers text segments and utterances related to the game while the second layer constitutes utterances unrelated to the match. These two different text types are merged to create OMBMFC making the whole text interactive and a co-constructed piece. He, therefore, describes online football commentary as heteroglossia, the coexistence of distinct linguistic varieties of discourse.¹⁹

The literature indicates that studies on the usage of cohesive devices in sports texts have largely given attention to sports news texts to the neglect of other sports-related texts such as sports commentaries. As such, this study, therefore, seeks to fill this lacuna in the research area by investigating the grammatical cohesive devices that are used in online minute-by-minute football commentary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cohesion Theory

Scholars started to pay attention to cohesion after Halliday and Hasan introduced the Cohesion Theory in 1976. The two scholars define cohesion as 'a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and defines it as a text.'²⁰ Cohesion 'expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another.'²¹ It

¹⁵ Abbas Ali Ahangar, Giti Taki, and Maryam Rahimi, "A Study on Morpho-Syntactic Patterns: A Cohesive Device in Some Persian Live Sport Radio and TV Talks," *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies* 7, no. 2 (2015): 1–24.

¹⁶ Gholamreza Rostami and Hamideh Gholami, "A Contrastive Study of Lexical Cohesion Used in Sport Texts of Washington Times and Tehran Times Newspapers Written by English Native and Iranian Non-Native Writers," *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research* 3, no. 1 (2016): 121–32.

¹⁷ Timmy Ardian Roring, "The Comparisons of Cohesive Devices Used in Online Football News Published by Jakarta Post and Guardian" (Widya Mandala Catholic University, 2016).

¹⁸ Jan Chovanec, "'Call Doc Singh!': Textual Structure And Coherence In Live Text Sports Commentaries," *Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse*, 2009, 124–37.

¹⁹ Chovanec, "'Call Doc Singh!': Textual Structure And Coherence In Live Text Sports Commentaries."

²⁰ Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (Routledge, 2014).

²¹ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 299.

deals with the linguistic or rhetorical means by which a text functions as a single unit or “the connectivity of ideas in discourse and sentences to one another in a text, thus creating the flow of information in a unified way.”²²

Cohesive ties or devices are linguistic or metadiscoursal resources that are used to create cohesiveness. These are language components that are used to put together coherent, understandable, and significant texts. This idea enables a text to be analysed in terms of its cohesive qualities and provides a methodical explanation of its textural patterns.²³ One can learn more about how authors organize their writings to guarantee discourse and grammatical flow by analysing these coherent ties.²⁴

To Halliday and Hasan, the use of conjunctions, ellipses, references, and substitutions to link concepts within a text is known as grammatical cohesion.²⁵ Reference to them is necessary when listeners or the audience must use another expression in the same context to determine the identity of what is being discussed.²⁶ They are part of language use which relies on something else for their interpretation rather than being semantically interpreted on their own.²⁷ There are ways in which reference can be realised. These are the use of the definite article, demonstrative reference, personal reference, and comparative reference. All these four types of reference fall under two broad classifications. They are either exophoric references or endophoric references. Endophoric references are those that can be discovered within the text, whereas exophoric references are defined as extratextual (referring to something outside of a text). Exophoric reference does not bind two elements in a text, in contrast to endophoric reference, which makes it coherent.²⁸

Substitution is defined by Ghasemi as replacing one item with another in a text.²⁹ Halliday and Hasan identified three types of substitution: clausal, verbal, and nominal.³⁰ They point out that *one* or *ones* and *same* or *the same* might be used to replace specific nouns that are present in earlier texts when it comes to nominal replacement. To them, ellipsis addresses “*what is unsaid but understood nonetheless*” or “the omission of elements normally required by the grammar which the speaker/writer assumes is obvious from the context and therefore need not be raised.”³¹ As such, it is widely acknowledged by them as substitution by zero.³² Depending on the grammatical form of the missing part, an ellipsis is classified into verbal, clausal, or nominal. A nominal ellipsis is used when the missing piece is nominal; a verbal or clausal ellipsis is used when the missing element is a verb or clause.

Conjunctions are regarded by scholars as units of grammar that occur between sentences or phrases in a speech.³³ According to Halliday and Hasan, they are “cohesive not in themselves but indirectly by their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse.”³⁴ They divide them into four types: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. Additive conjunctions (e.g., *furthermore*, and *likewise*) are described by Bahaziq as elements that connect units that share some form of semantic similarity.³⁵ Adversative conjunctions, on the other hand, express contrary opinions or results using words like *but*, *however*, and *in contrast*. While temporal conjunctions use words like *finally*, *then*, and *soon* to describe the temporal order of occurrences, causal conjunctions, use terms like *so*, *thus*, and *because* to introduce results or causes for things.

²² Eli, Hinkel, “What Research on Second Language Writing Tell Us and What It Doesn’t?,” in *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, vol. 2 (Routledge, 2011), 523–38.

²³ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

²⁴ George Yule, *The Study of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁵ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

²⁶ Lan Zhou and Qiang Sun, “A Contrastive Analysis of Explicit Cohesion in English Advertising Texts and Their Chinese Consecutive Interpretation Versions,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 9, no. 4 (2019): 465–72.

²⁷ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

²⁸ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

²⁹ Mohsen Ghasemi, “An Investigation into the Use of Cohesive Devices in Second Language Writings,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3, no. 9 (2013): 1615.

³⁰ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

³¹ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 142.

³² Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

³³ Benjamin Amoakohene, Richard Senyo Kofi Kwakye, and Osei Yaw Akoto, “Grammatical Cohesion in French Journal Abstracts and Their English Equivalence,” *The Journal of Languages for Specific Purposes* 9, no. 1 (2022): 37–54.

³⁴ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 226.

³⁵ Afnan Bahaziq, “Cohesive Devices in Written Discourse: A Discourse Analysis of a Student’s Essay Writing,” *English Language Teaching* 9, no. 7 (2016): 112–19.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research approach making use of content analysis. The study's data comprised three OMBMFCs by three live English football correspondents purposively sampled based on their popularity within the journalistic field of OMBMFC writing. The correspondents are Daniel Taylor, Rob Smyth, and Will Unwin. The data were retrieved from the website of *The Guardian*.³⁶ Table 1 below offers details of the research data by indicating the name of the football correspondent, the match they wrote live commentaries on and the competition of the respective games.

Table 1: Details of the data

Football Correspondent	Match	Competition
Daniel Taylor	Portugal vs. Switzerland	UEFA Nations League Semi-Final Match, 2019
Rob Smyth	Portugal vs. Spain	World Cup 2018 Group Stage Match, 2018
Will Unwin	Egypt vs. Senegal	AFCON Final Match, 2022

OMBMFCs were selected over other kinds of football commentary (live radio and TV football commentaries) because of two reasons. The first reason is that online OMBMFCs unlike live TV and Radio football commentaries are already in written form and therefore need no transcription. The second reason is the accessible nature of OMBMFCs. This type of data is a public document and as such is available and accessible to all on the website of *The Guardian* news platform.

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

The several grammatical cohesive devices employed in OMBMFCs were identified using Halliday and Hasan's cohesion model. First, the data were converted into text format to enable the researchers to do key searches of the various instances of reference and conjunctions using Anthony's concordance software (AntConc v. 3.5.8).³⁷ Figures 1 and 2 below provide corpus evidence of how the software was used to do key searches.

Figure 1 presents a pictorial view of how the software (Antonc) was used to identify conjunctive items within the research data. The searched conjunctive item here is the adversative *though*. In a similar light, Figure 2 shows the use of the software to search for reference items.

³⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/football>

³⁷ Laurence Anthony, "AntConc (Version 3.5. 8)[Computer Software]. Tokyo: Waseda University," 2019.

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 FINAL DATA.txt	a villain who leaves opposition fans foaming with impotent rage.	Though	I did briefly change this view while flinging all
2 FINAL DATA.txt	stood. I agree that the process isn't quite right	though.	Somebody will punch a referee before the tournament's
3 FINAL DATA.txt	Guedes. 16 min Spain are having all of the ball now,	though –	as we saw two years ago – are very well
4 FINAL DATA.txt	Zizo on the right. The referee does not book him,	though,	maybe he has lost his cards. Gabaski is trying
5 FINAL DATA.txt	min It's been a slow start to the half,	though	these things are relative. It's fascinating to watch

Figure 1: Concordance lines of *though* as an adversative conjunction in the data

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
47 FINAL DATA.txt	If he hadn't decided to give that penalty, would	he	have then consulted VAR for the decision he originally
48 FINAL DATA.txt	Your minute-by-minute reporter experiences minor technological problems as	he	kicks the plug of his computer out of its
49 FINAL DATA.txt	all wrong, miscuing it out for a goal-kick as	he	lifts the ball over the net tamely. 33 mins: Fathy
50 FINAL DATA.txt	break. Ronaldo, incidentally, has now scored at four World Cups.	He'	ll make it five in 2022. 10 min Spain's first
51 FINAL DATA.txt	is down on the deck bemoaning some ailment or other.	He	looks unhappy but he could just be desperately trying
52 FINAL DATA.txt	of it but the signs are better. 12 min I thought	he	made certain of the contact but that it was
53 FINAL DATA.txt	into the six-yard box for Diedhiou to attack but	he	makes no contact at the near post. 55 mins: Diallo
54 FINAL DATA.txt	made a few little mistakes and lacked concentration at times.	He	needs to refocus for this. Fair play to Egypt
55 FINAL DATA.txt	penalty, would he have then consulted VAR for the decision	he	originally gave at the other end? 66 min: Granit Xhaka
56 FINAL DATA.txt	in trying to pick out Joao Felix with a cross.	He	overcooks his delivery. 31 min: win a free-kick about 25
57 FINAL DATA.txt	He should be extremely proud of this brilliant performance, but	he	probably can't go there just yet. 63 min Bernardo
58 FINAL DATA.txt	mins: Mane lifts a pass through for Dieng to chase.	He	reaches the ball first and whacks a shot across
59 FINAL DATA.txt	Bouna Sarr speeds down the right to provide an overlap.	He	receives a pass on the byline and drives a
60 FINAL DATA.txt	gone close on a couple of other occasions. 45 min: Nineteen!	He'	s 19! Not 9. 44 min: Joao Felix ghosts in behind Ricardo
61 FINAL DATA.txt	his hands up in disgust. 21 min Beautiful play from Iniesta.	He	scoots into the box from the left, sends a
62 FINAL DATA.txt	but hits the post. Penalty shootout, Senegal 2-1 Egypt: Diallo scores.	He	sidefoots it just beyond the outstretched hand of the
63 FINAL DATA.txt	the bouncing ball over the bar with his right foot.	He	slipped in the act of shooting, which may be

Figure 2: Concordance lines of *he* as a personal reference in the data

Specifically, the reference item searched for in Figure 2 above is the personal pronoun *he*. Key searches like the ones exemplified above were made for all reference and conjunctive items identified by Halliday and Hasan.³⁸ These searches were then manually analysed to see if they had any cohesive effects. Substitution and ellipsis, the other two types of grammatical cohesion, were however manually analysed. Percentages were used to calculate the frequency of each device.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical foundation of the study is based on the cohesive device classification system developed by Halliday and Hasan. Coherent devices, both grammatical and lexical, were all broadly classified in the model. The research only looked at the grammatical cohesive devices because the goal of this study was to identify the cohesive devices employed in OMBMFC. The four categories of grammatical cohesive devices identified by Halliday and Hasan are conjunctions, ellipses, references, and substitutions.³⁹ The first three are referred to as presuppositional devices because they use the phrase “something that is already there - known to or recoverable by the hearer” to identify something.⁴⁰ There are further divisions under each type of grammatical cohesive device. The classification of grammatical cohesion by Halliday and Hasan is shown graphically in Table 2 along with examples.

Table 2: Classification of Grammatical Cohesive devices by Halliday and Hasan (1976)

Grammatical cohesion				
Reference		Substitution	Ellipsis	Conjunction
Personal		Nominal	Nominal	Additive
Existential I, you, we, he, she, it, they, one	Possessive My/mine, Your/yours, our/ours, his, her/ hers, its, their/theirs, one's	One/ones, the same, so		And, and also, nor, or, or else, furthermore, by the way, in other words, likewise, on the other hand, thus
Demonstratives		Verbal	Verbal	Adversatives
This/that, these/those, Here/there		Do be, have, do the same, likewise, do so, be so, do it/that, be it/that		Yet, though, only, but, however, at least, in fact, rather, on the contrary, I mean, in any case
Definite		Clausal	Clausal	Causal
The		So, not		So, then, therefore, because, otherwise,
Comparative				Temporal
Same, identical, similar (ly), such, different, other, else				Then, next, before that, first...then, at first, formerly...final, once, soon, to sum up, in conclusion

This classification was adopted because it has been judged by Moreno as the most effective and most comprehensive model of cohesion available.⁴¹ Xi reiterates the same by noting that the most well-known and comprehensive model of cohesion available is that of Halliday and Hasan.⁴²

³⁸ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 142.

³⁹ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

⁴⁰ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 144.

⁴¹ Ana L Moreno, “The Role of Cohesive Devices as Textual Constraints on Relevance: A Discourse-as-Process View,” *International Journal of English Studies* 3, no. 1 (2003): 111–66.

⁴² Yan Xi, “Cohesion Studies in the Past 30 Years: Development, Application and Chaos,” *Language, Society and Culture* 31, no. 1 (2010): 139–47.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Grammatical Cohesive Devices in OMBMFC

The results of the research showed that the OMBMFCs employed all four of the main categories of grammatical cohesive devices—reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions—that Halliday and Hasan identified.

Table 3: Distribution of grammatical cohesive devices used in OMBMFC

Type of grammatical cohesive device	Frequency	Percentage
Reference	1108	91.87%
Substitution	6	0.50%
Ellipsis	10	0.83%
Conjunctions	82	6.80%
Total	1206	100%

The distribution of the four grammatical cohesive devices in the data is displayed in Table 3. Table 3 shows that there are 1206 (100%) instances of the four grammatical cohesive devices in the data overall. With an occurrence rate of 1108 (91.87%) out of this total, reference was found to be the most commonly utilized grammatical cohesive device of all four categories, which was followed by conjunctions at 82(6.80%). The least frequent grammatical coherent techniques from the investigation, ellipsis and substitution, appeared 10 (0.83%) and 6 (0.50%) times respectively. The dominance of reference within the data is evident as its occurrence is eleven times more than the rest of the devices put together. Such dominance of reference within the data concurs with the findings of a study by Karim in his investigation of cohesive devices in sports texts.⁴³ Conjunctions, the second-most-used device in the data, likewise support the results of the same investigation. The reduced usage of ellipsis and substitution in OMBMFC, a type of sports text corroborates the findings of Roring.⁴⁴

An explanation of the dominance of reference in the data could be as a result of the limited time offered to writers of OMBMFCs to describe events and actions which eventually leaves them no choice but to resort to various referring items in the language. Commentators are able to avoid having to describe or mention previously mentioned individuals every time they reappear in the discourse by using personal pronouns to refer to them. With the short period afforded to these writers to present an objective description of events of any given match, the use of reference items is, therefore, a means to meet such a requirement while equally presenting a coherent text to their readers. Whereas the dominance of reference in the data can be attributed to the constant need to describe events, people, and actions, the least usage of substitution and ellipsis in the data is unsurprising. This is because this result corroborates the claim made by Halliday and Hasan that the two are more prevalent in spoken texts than in written texts.⁴⁵

The following subsections in turn offer a discussion of the distribution of each grammatical cohesive device within the data.

Reference as a Grammatical Cohesive Device in OMBMFC

The research findings revealed the presence of all three sub-types of references that Halliday and Hasan classified as a key category of grammatical coherent devices. Table 4 below presents the distribution of references within the data.

Table 4: Distribution of References

TYPE OF REFERENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Personal	553	49.91%
Demonstratives	510	46.03%
Comparatives	45	4.06%
TOTAL	1108	100%

Table 4 shows that the most used type of references in the data were personal references with an occurrence of 553(49.91%) closely followed by demonstratives which occurred 510 (46.03%) times. The least used type of references were demonstratives which featured 45(4.06%) times within the data. A possible interpretation of these results could be that OMBMFC commentators used personal references more than all other types of references owing to the constant need to describe events, actions, and persons in the course of commentary writing. The data

⁴³ Karim, “Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion Analysis in Sport News Text On The Jakarta Post.”

⁴⁴ Roring, “The Comparisons of Cohesive Devices Used in Online Football News Published by Jakarta Post and Guardian.”

⁴⁵ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

recorded no instance of possessive pronouns performing a cohesive function. Demonstrative pronouns and personal pronouns, the other types of personal reference, on the other hand, were used to create cohesion in the data. Extracts 1, 2, and 3 show the use of personal, demonstrative, and comparative references within the three OMBMFCs collected respectively.

- 1) “I had my booster jab at the Carlos Quieroz stadium complex here in Lisbon the other day,” emails Paulo Biriani.
- 2) It was a glorious free-kick, curled around the wall and into the right-hand corner of the net. *That* is astonishing. Before the free-kick, he was inhaling and concentrating as if he was about to take a penalty, not a free-kick from 25 yards. It’s spine-tingling stuff. His mental strength is off the charts.
- 3) In my lifetime, the two that come to mind are Argentina 2-1 France in 1978, a classic with higher stakes than this game, and Ireland 0-0 Norway in 1994. *Any other suggestions?*

The personal pronoun “I” in extract 1 is used to refer cataphorically to “Paulo Biriani” its antecedent. Thus one gets to know the speaker in that instance by tracing who the “I” refers to. In extract 2, the action mentioned in the previous sentence “*the taking of a glorious free-kick*”, is referenced again using the demonstrative “*that*”. Then in extract 3, the *any other* is used to solicit different suggestions regarding which match is the best in the history of football.

Substitution as a Grammatical Cohesive Device in OMBMFC

Information about the substitution distribution in the OMBMFC is included in Table 5. The data in Table 5 shows that nominal substitution occurred three times within the data while no instance of verbal substitution was recorded. The last type of substitution, clausal substitution, featured twice.

Table 5: Distribution of Substitution

TYPE OF SUBSTITUTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Nominal	3	60%
Verbal	0	0%
Clausal	2	40%
TOTAL	5	100%

As already highlighted, the least occurrence of substitution is not surprising as it is argued that they are more predominant in spoken texts than in written texts. The finding also concurs with a previous study by Roring.⁴⁶ Extracts 4 and 5 show the use of the various types of substitution within the data.

- 4) PENALTY FOR PORTUGAL! Steven Zuber appeals for a penalty at one end after being shoved in the back. Portugal sweep down the other end of the field and are awarded a penalty of their own when Schar trips Bernardo Silva in the Swiss penalty area. Sort that one out, VAR.
- 5) “Loving the AFCON final coverage,” emails Samuel Dodson. “Less so the actual match. Shades of England Vs Algeria at the 2010 World Cup (a game so painfully dull it is seared deeply into the sinews of my nervous system).

In extracts 4 and 5, the nominal substitute *one* and clausal substitute *so* are used in place of “penalty decision” and “*Less loving the actual match*” respectively.

Ellipsis as a Grammatical Cohesive Device in OMBMFC

Only nominal ellipsis—of the three types of ellipsis—was used in the data. Information about the ellipsis distribution in OMBMFC is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of Ellipsis

TYPE OF ELLIPSIS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Nominal	10	100%
Verbal	0	0%
Clausal	0	0%
TOTAL	10	100%

⁴⁶ Roring, “The Comparisons of Cohesive Devices Used in Online Football News Published by Jakarta Post and Guardian.”

The less use of ellipsis within the data as mentioned earlier is not surprising as it is said to be found more in spoken texts as compared to written texts. This particular finding is in harmony with previous studies by Karim.⁴⁷ Examples of nominal ellipsis within the data are presented in extracts 6, 7, and 8.

- 6) GOAL! Portugal 2-1 Switzerland (Ronaldo 88). Portugal takes the lead, with Ronaldo bagging his *second* of the night in what has been - as ridiculous as this sounds - a fairly lacklustre performance.
- 7) 2 min “Here’s what’s going to happen,” says Olly Wicks. “Spain will win comfortably and cruise to first place in their group. Meanwhile, Egypt will beat Russia and the Saudis and finish *second* in their group.
- 8) GOAL! Portugal 2-1 Spain (Ronaldo 44). Ronaldo gets his *second* thanks to a hideous mistake from David De Gea!

In extract 6, “goal” is eliminated from the nominal category “his second” in the second sentence. The fully expressed nominal category in that instance should have been “his second goal”. The numeral *second* is therefore elevated to become the head of the nominal group. In extract 7, “place” which was fully expressed as the head noun in the nominal category *first place in their group* in the first sentence is eliminated in the nominal group *second in their group* in the next sentence. Yet again, a numeral is elevated to the status of the headword within the nominal group.

Conjunctions as Grammatical Cohesive Devices in OMBMFC

The study’s findings showed that all four of Halliday and Hasan’s categories of conjunctive relationships—additives, adversatives, causal, and temporal—were used by the authors of OMBMFCs in their commentary. Table 7 presents instances of conjunctions in OMBMFC.

Table 7: Distribution of conjunctions

TYPE OF CONJUNCTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Additive	22	26.83%
Adversative	26	31.71%h
Causal	17	20.73
Temporal	17	20.73
TOTAL	82	100%

Table 7 shows that most of the conjuncts used were adversatives 26(31.71%). The second most used conjuncts were additives with an occurrence of 22(26.83). Both causal and temporal conjuncts featured 17 times (20.73) respectively. The most used additive in the data was *and* which occurred 11 times accounting for 50% of the total number of additives utilised in the commentaries. The data revealed that conjunctions (e.g. *and*, *also*, *and also*, *nor*, etc.) which all indicate an additive relationship within sentences (intra-sentential) were predominant. Their functions were, however, conjunctive. They acted as items of coordination which to Halliday and Hasan has no cohesive effect in the sense that their function within sentences is structural. Thus, it can be said that OMBMFC writers resorted to expressing related ideas or events within sentences more as opposed to extending them across sentences which would have created a cohesive effect. It can therefore be said that rather than using conjunctions with cohesive effects within texts of OMBMFCs, their writers employed them with a coordinative function to meet the time restriction they work within.

- 9) Messi was better from 2008-13, but I think Ronaldo has comfortably surpassed him in the last five years; I don’t really see how anyone can think otherwise. But it’s probably a discussion for another day. *And* neither of them is fit to clean Maradona’s bidet.
- 10) 62 min. The best part of this is the fact that he’s still young enough to have complete trust in me (the fool!). *As such* I have explained that Ronaldo is objectively the best footballer in the world, and the Messi apologists are simply wrong.”

⁴⁷ Karim, “ Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion Analysis in Sport News Text On The Jakarta Post.”

- 11) I always think football is better for having a villain who leaves opposition fans foaming with impotent rage. *Though* I did briefly change this view while flinging all sorts at Vinnie Jones when he celebrated in front of the United fans at Selhurst Park in 1997.
- 12) It was a glorious free-kick, curled around the wall and into the right-hand corner of the net. That is astonishing. *Before* the free-kick, he was inhaling and concentrating as if he was about to take a penalty, not a free-kick from 25 yards.

Extracts 9, 10, 11, and 12 are instances of the use of the additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions within the research data using the words *And*, *As such*, *Though*, and *Before* respectively.

Discourse Functions of Grammatical Cohesive Devices in OMBMFCs

The discourse functions of the different grammatical cohesive devices utilized in the data are discussed in this section.

Discourse Functions of Reference

Under this heading, a sub-division is further made to account for the functions of the various types of reference. Thus, the discussion would be grouped according to the various types of references.

Discourse Functions of Personal Reference

It was realised in the data that the personal references used to create cohesion comprised personal pronouns and possessive determiners. The data however revealed no instances of the use of possessive pronouns to create cohesion. Below are the functions of the two types of personal reference within the data.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns in the data were used to refer to either the speaker or other interlocutors within the commentaries. The interlocutors within the commentaries were; the match commentator (or match reporter), readers, and expert analysts. At any point in time, one of these interlocutors either takes the role of the speaker, the addressee, or the one being talked about. In such instances, personal pronouns were used to refer to them whenever they entered the discourse twice or more. This was to avoid repetition which would have made the commentaries redundant. The types of pronouns used were largely dependent on the role of the person it refers to (speaker or addressee) as well as his or her number (singular or plural). Singular persons performing the role of speakers used “*I*” to refer to themselves while “*We*” was used to refer to a speaker and other persons in the discourse. For the addressee role, however, the pronoun “*you*” was used for both plural and singular persons referred to. For the last discourse role of interlocutors, the person or thing talked about, the pronouns “*he/she/it*” and “*they*” were used for singular and plural antecedents respectively. The usage of personal pronouns within the data is exemplified in extracts 13, 14, and 15.

- 13) “*I* had my booster jab at the Carlos Quieroz stadium complex here in Lisbon the other day,” emails Paulo Biriani. “The place looked a bit worn out in places but the organisation was unbelievably efficient and lacking in any drama. Metaphors and all that ...”
- 14) “Please can *you* tell us what is happening at the half minute too?” asks Dr N. “We are on holiday on the African continent and very interested.” I hope you are enjoying this free service, Dr N.
- 15) 90+3 min Ronaldo has run himself into a state of exhaustion. I think he has a cramp.

In extract 13, the personal pronoun “*I*” is used to refer to “*Paulo Biriani*” cataphorically in an instance where he assumed the speaker role in the commentary writing process. In extract 14, the pronoun “*you*” in the question refers to the match reporter as Dr. N, a reader of the commentary requests for updates. In extract 15, *he* in the second sentence is used to refer anaphorically to “Ronaldo” which was mentioned in the preceding sentence. All these are instances in which personal pronouns are used to create a cohesive relation between sentences within the text. The cohesive effects they create lie in the fact that their interpretation is dependent on the antecedents (nouns) they refer to. It can therefore be seen clearly that personal pronouns were employed in the commentaries by match reporters and other interlocutors to avoid repetition of mentioned entities which enter the discourse more than once.

It must be noted that the use of personal reference to create cohesion in the data is dependent on who is speaking, who is addressed, and who is talked about. Such usage of personal pronouns is in tandem with the reference function of personal pronouns as highlighted by Halliday and Hasan. Personal pronouns, according to Halliday and Hasan, are all reference items since they all refer to something by defining its purpose or place within a context.

Possessive Determiners

Possessive determiners (his, their, its, etc.), much like personal pronouns were used in the data to avoid repetition. Nonetheless, whereas personal pronouns only referred back to their antecedents, possessive determiners created a cohesive effect within the data by referring to not only its antecedent but also a possessed quality or thing of its antecedents. Extracts 4, 5, and 6 are examples of the use of possessive determiners in the data with cohesive effects.

- 16) Spare a thought for poor old Sid Lowe, who had to file a coherent report on that classic BEFORE THE FINAL WHISTLE. If I was in *his shoes*, I'd have written nothing but wibble. Thankfully, Sid is a bit more accomplished.
- 17) "Dear Will," emails Jukka Itäkylä, "let it be known from Finland to anyone, let alone any doctor, that without this free service, I would be a sick patient in a hospital." One in the eye for Dr N. I hope you enjoy your holiday and that no one with access to *your house* invites a big dog round!
- 18) If there's one dressing room that should be self-governing, it's Spain's. *Their* squad has won almost 300 trophies between them, so they don't need that much guidance.

In extract 16, the possessive determiner "*his*" refers back to Sid Lowe as its antecedent. Additionally, it shows possession of some sort by modifying *shoes* in the second sentence. The second sentence in extract 16 ideally should be Sid Lowe's shoes but it has been replaced with a possessive determiner in the discourse to avoid repetition. The other two possessive determiners (*your* and *their*) in extracts 17 and 18 respectively refer to Jukka Itäkylä and Spain with the same cohesive effect as the one explained in extract 16 above. They (*your* and *their*) both refer to their antecedents as well as some possessed entity of theirs.

Comparative Reference

Comparative reference items in language allow speakers or writers to measure the quality or quantity of one thing to another. The comparison might be direct or indirect. Adjectives and adverbs are used in comparative reference to compare things in a text according to their identity or likeness. Analysis of the data revealed that comparative references used in the data included *such, different, other, else, better, similar, additional, less so, so, less, otherwise, same, and more*. The use of these comparatives afforded writers of OMBMFCs the opportunity to compare situations, matches, and people. Extracts 19, and 20, show the use of comparative reference within the data to compare one thing to another.

- 19) ...If I was in his shoes, I'd have written nothing but wibble. Thankfully, Sid is a bit *more* accomplished.
- 20) "Loving the AFCON final coverage," emails Samuel Dodson. "*Less so* the actual match. Shades of England Vs Algeria at the 2010 World Cup (a game so painfully dull it is seared deeply into the sinews of my nervous system).

The comparative item "*more*" in extract 19 allows the writer to compare two persons in terms of their ability to write coherent OMBMFCs. The type of comparison here is not that of quantity but quality in the sense that an attribute is what is being compared. The extract, clearly shows that Sid is better at writing coherent match reports as compared to the writer in that particular instance. In extract 20, the comparison is between Samuel Dodson's liking for the OMBMFC coverage and that of the actual match.

In all, the various comparative items in the data were used by speakers to identify things or persons (referents) by locating them in the discourse. This is what Halliday and Hasan describe as verbal pointing.⁴⁸ This finding of the study is therefore in line with the theory of cohesion by the two scholars. Thus, the finding is consistent with the two scholars' theory of cohesion.

Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference, according to Halliday and Hasan, is a reference that uses location on a proximity scale.⁴⁹ They are expressed using determiners and adverbs. The demonstrative reference items, *the, this, these, that, those, here, and there* were all used in the data to show the location of someone or something to the writer. They also indicated the occurrence of events whether in the present or past. The most utilized kind of demonstrative reference was the definite article "*the*". It was used cohesively to indicate a form of synonymous relationship between entities across sentence boundaries.

⁴⁸ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

⁴⁹ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

- 21) It was a glorious free-kick, curled around the wall and into the right-hand corner of the net. *That* is astonishing. Before the free-kick, he was inhaling and concentrating as if he was about to take a penalty, not a free-kick from 25 yards. It's spine-tingling stuff. His mental strength is off the charts.

Extract 21, the demonstrative reference item "*that*" is used to refer anaphorically to the immediate action that just occurred, the scoring of a free-kick which to the match reporter is astonishing.

- 22) "Thoroughly enjoying your MBM," Edward Graves states (I deserve praise for watching this and I will publish it), "in contrast to your experience with the actual match. Question: how does *this* compare to Greece's unlikely triumph in Euro 2004? Or Chelsea managing to take Bayern to penalties in the CL final in 2012? *Those* are the best examples I can think of ultra-defensive tactics paying dividends in a final."

Again, the reference item *this* is used to refer anaphorically to the current match being played (Egypt vs. Senegal) while *those* refer anaphorically to two matches (Greece Vs Portugal and Chelsea Vs Bayern Munich) that were played some years ago. The use of "*this*" here is associated with a present-time referent as opposed to the use of *those* which is associated with past-time referents.

- 23) "I had my booster jab at the Carlos Quieroz stadium complex here in Lisbon the other day," emails Paulo Biriani. "*The* place looked a bit worn out in places but the organisation was unbelievably efficient and lacking in any drama. Metaphors and all that ..." I assume Mo Salah is somewhere in this metaphor as *the* jab itself.
Get in the mood with some Jonathan Wilson.

In extract 23, the demonstrative item "*the*" in the first instance refers anaphorically to the Carlos "*Quieroz stadium complex*" while the second instance alludes to my "*booster jab*" which were both referenced in sentence one. This usage of "*the*" concurs with the explanation provided by Halliday and Hasan regarding its function as a reference item. For them, it often refers to a synonym, near-synonym, or another object whose meaning serves as a target for an anaphora.⁵⁰

Discourse Functions of Substitution in OMBMFCs

The analysis of the data revealed that substitution as a cohesive device was not predominantly used in the three commentaries gathered. There were only five instances of it in all the commentaries. Three of them were nominal substitutions while the other two were clausal substitutes. Thus, the data revealed no usage of verbal substitution. It was realised that the two types of substitution were all used to avoid repetitions within the commentaries just like references. Nonetheless, whereas nominal substitution avoided the repetition of a noun head by replacing it with *one*, clausal substitution as the name suggests was employed to avoid the repetition of previously expressed clauses using *so* or *not*. Extracts 24 and 25 show the use of nominal and clausal substitution within the data.

- 24) This is putting a lot more pressure on my typing and I am not sure I am up to it.
Judging by Egypt's love of a penalty shootout, I am assuming this *one* will be going all the way. Settle in.
- 25) "Loving the AFCON final coverage," emails Samuel Dodson. "Less *so* the actual match. Shades of England Vs Algeria at the 2010 World Cup (a game so painfully dull it is seared deeply into the sinews of my nervous system).

In extract 24, the nominal substitute "*one*" is used in place of "*match*" (Egypt Vs Senegal). The nominal group in that instance should have been "this match", but was avoided. Similarly, *so* in extract 25 is used in place of "Loving the actual match less" which is a clause that was expressed in the first sentence. They are both therefore means of avoiding repetition.

Discourse Functions of Ellipsis

As shown in Table 6, the commentaries used in this study employed only one type of ellipsis which is the nominal ellipsis. Thus no instances of verbal and clausal ellipsis were recorded. The usage of nominal ellipsis, just like, substitution and reference was to avoid repetition. Much similar to substitution in function, ellipsis realised in the

⁵⁰ Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*.

nominal group within the data avoided the replacement of head nouns. It rather omitted them all together allowing one of its pre-modifiers to act as head of the nominal group subsequently.

26) GOAL! Portugal 2-1 Spain (Ronaldo 44).

Ronaldo gets his *second* thanks to a hideous mistake from David De Gea!

27) GOAL! Portugal 2-1 Switzerland (Ronaldo 88)

Portugal takes the lead, with Ronaldo bagging his *second* of the night in what has been - as ridiculous as this sounds - a fairly lacklustre performance

28) 2 min “Here’s what’s going to happen,” says Olly Wicks. “Spain will win comfortably and cruise to first place in their group. Meanwhile, Egypt will beat Russia and the Saudis and finish *second* in their group.

In extracts 26, 27, and 28, the numeral “*second*” is elevated to become the most important word (head) within the nominal while the nouns they should modify are repudiated. In extracts 26 and 27 for instance, the head noun repudiated is “*goal*” respectively in both. Its repudiation is justified by the fact that the sentences that go before it already mention it. Thus, the omitted head noun can be recovered by referring back to the previous sentences.

Discourse Functions of Conjunctions

All four of the sub-types of conjunctions that Halliday and Hasan had discovered were found in the data, as Table 7 illustrates. The functions of these conjunctions (adversative, temporal, additive, and causal) are analysed in the ensuing subsections.

Additive and Adversative Conjunctions

These are elements that connect sentences or textual units that share a certain similarity. In the data analysed, it was realised that the genre of OMBMFC employed the use of various additive conjunctions to connect sentences that have shared ideas or meanings. Three types of additives were used in the data. They include, *and*, *or* and *incidentally*. The extracts below show how they were used in the OMBMFCs to link sentences that had a shared idea or similarity.

29) 15 min: Another mistake from Akanji leads to a Portugal corner. *And* then another, when Kevin Babu puts the ball out of play with an unconvincing attempt at a clearance.

30) “Thoroughly enjoying your MBM,” Edward Graves states (I deserve praise for watching this and I will publish it), “in contrast to your experience with the actual match. Question: how does this compare to Greece’s unlikely triumph in Euro 2004? *Or* Chelsea managing to take Bayern to penalties in the CL final in 2012? Those are the best examples I can think of ultra-defensive tactics paying dividends in a final.”

31) 11 min. An early goal is perfect for Portugal, who can sit and play on the break. Ronaldo, *incidentally*, has now scored at four World Cups. He’ll make it five in 2022.

In extract 29 above, the additive conjunction “*And*” is used to join sentences that share some commonality. In 30, what is shared is the idea of committing mistakes. The first sentence espouses a mistake made by Akanji, a player. The next sentence also raises the idea of a mistake again but this time by a different player. The two are therefore linked with the additive conjunction “*And*”. A similar relationship is established in extracts 30 and 31 respectively where two sentences are cohesively linked by the additive conjunctions “*or*” and “*incidentally*”.

Unlike additive conjunctions that express similarity between sentences, adversative conjunctions, express contrary opinions. It is appropriately termed as “contrary to expectation”. In the data, it was realised that writers of OMBMFC employed the use of adversative conjunctions to express contrary views to previously made statements. Extracts 22 and 23 from the data show how various adversative elements are used to create contrast between propositions.

32) The Greeks were huge underdogs, finding a way to win that may have been tedious but was in its way kind of impressive, given their limitations. “Egypt, *on the other hand*, seven-time winners, huge resources compared to most African nations, arguably the best forward in the world...

- 33) There is heightened interest thanks to the simple Sadio Mane v Mohamed Salah narrative as the Liverpool forwards go head-to-head to decide who is the king of Africa. There is, *however*, much more to Senegal vs Egypt.

In extract 32, *on the other hand*, is used to express the differences between two teams (Egypt and Greece) while *however* is used in extract 33 to explain the idea that the match between Egypt and Senegal is more than just a rivalry between two players (Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah).

Causal Conjunctions

These are conjunctions that are used to indicate the cause of something that has happened. Bahaziq argues that they introduce results or reasons for something using words such as *because*, *so*, *thus*, etc. In the data, causal conjuncts are in harmony with Bahaziq's view in that they introduce results or reasons for something happening. This is exemplified in extracts 34 and 35 below where the causal conjuncts *as such* and *so* expressed the results of the gullible nature of Matt Dony's son and the reason for Mendy being booked respectively.

- 34) 62 min "What I'm enjoying most about this, is watching my 6 year old son falling in love with football," says Matt Dony. "He's been so excited, and asks non-stop questions about players. The best part of this is the fact that he's still young enough to have complete trust in me (the fool!). *As such*, I have explained that Ronaldo is objectively the best footballer in the world, and the Messi apologists are simply wrong."

- 35) 17 mins: Mendy goes into the book for a foul on Marmoush. It looks like he catches him on the top of the boot, *so* it's fair enough.

Temporal Conjunctions

These conjunctions express the occurrence of events concerning time. Bahaziq posits that they convey the chronological sequence of events using words such as *finally*, *then*, *soon*, etc.⁵¹ They are therefore a way to convey events in a text that are connected by the times in which they take place. Extracted data with cohesive effects using temporal conjunctions is demonstrated in the following extracts 26, 27, and 28.

- 36) It was a glorious free-kick, curled around the wall and into the right-hand corner of the net. That is astonishing. *Before* the free-kick, he was inhaling and concentrating as if he was about to take a penalty, not a free-kick from 25 yards.

- 37) "Since I don't have Bein," says Joe Pearson. "I'm closely following your MBM as well. *At the same time*, really enjoying Boreham Wood leading Bournemouth 1-0 in the FA Cup with 20 minutes to go."

- 38) 89 mins: Mane chases the ball into the corner but loses his footing slightly on a loose bit of turf. *Soon* after the Liverpool forward is booked for a late challenge on Ashour.

It can be seen in the above extracts that the various temporal conjuncts *before*, *at the same time*, and *soon* are all used to show the sequence of events in succession. From the analysis, the researchers concluded that conjunctions are used in OMBMFCs to establish various kinds of relationships between sentences. These relationships include addition, contrast, causal, and temporal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, the researchers recommend that an investigation of both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in OMBMFCs be carried out to ascertain a holistic view of the role cohesion devices play in these commentaries. Further, it is recommended that a comparative study be carried out to ascertain the differences and similarities of the various cohesive resources used by different media outlets. For instance, a comparative study of the employment of grammatical cohesive devices in OMBMFCs of *The Guardian* and that of *BBC*. Again, future studies on the use of various cohesive devices in other sports commentaries should be carried out as well from which a comparative study of the commentaries of two different sports can be done.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this paper was to ascertain how Online Minute-By-Minute football commentary, a new and fast-growing type of football commentary that is created within a limited timeframe is textually structured using a sample of three OMBMFCs. To achieve this, the study used Halliday and Hasan's concept of cohesion as its

⁵¹ Bahaziq, "Cohesive Devices in Written Discourse: A Discourse Analysis of a Student's Essay Writing."

analytical framework to analyse how the genre is linguistically maintained. It was found that all four of the grammatical cohesive device types described by Hasan and Halliday were present in the data. References were the most common coherent grammatical technique; personal references topped this category, followed by demonstrative and comparison references. Adversative, additive, temporal, and causal conjuncts, in that order, dominated the conjunctive devices that followed. The coherent devices with the lowest recorded usage were substitution and ellipsis.

Additionally, data analysis showed that the several grammatical coherent devices employed in the commentaries performed two key functions: 1) to avoid repetition and 2) to link sentences. References, substitution, and ellipsis were all means through which writers of online Minute-By-Minute football commentaries avoided the needless repetition of mentioned entities (persons or things), events, or situations anytime they entered the commentary discourse more than once. These devices also created links between sentences by making their interpretation dependent on certain expressed entities in sentences that came before or after them. Conjunctions, on the other hand, were not employed to avoid repetition in the commentaries but they also performed a linking function just like reference, substitution, and ellipsis. They did so by establishing relationships between sentences. The relationships they established included addition, contrast, causal, and temporal. Thus, the above functions of the devices created what Halliday and Hasan termed *texture* since they helped in making the commentaries a unified whole.

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