

TALKING TO, FOR AND ABOUT THE TV: AN ANALYSIS OF NFL FANS' DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Underrepresented in sport discourse literature, the usually private interactions among television viewers provided the context for this research. The present study built directly on previous findings regarding TV viewer interaction, sport discourse, and speakers' multiple identities by analyzing the linguistic features of interactions among four male family members while watching televised football in their home. Participants used prosodic features to frame utterances while taking on the voice of fan, coach, or commentator and talking to, for, or about the TV. In general, these viewers talked 'to' the TV as fans and coaches, 'for' the TV as commentators, and 'about' the TV in all three roles. The findings are of potential interest to researchers as well as marketing and advertising companies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Watching televised games is certainly not a recent phenomenon, but due to the ever-increasing popularity and lucrativeness of professional sports, corporations, consumers, and the media have invested billions of dollars in the industry. Televised sports are a regular part of many households, affecting the way people speak about sports and even relate to one another. Consider, for example, the various sport-based expressions used in daily speech (e.g., "hit a home run", "drop the ball", and "act like a Monday morning quarterback") as well as coined terms originating from sport contexts (e.g., wear "Jordans", "a grand-slam breakfast", and "a hail Mary"). In spite of the high level of interest and consumer participation specifically dedicated to televised American football, little is known about the usually private interactions among the viewers.

Previous sport-related research has examined commentator and coach discourse but very little has been published on fan interaction due, at least in

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part, to the practical challenges involved in gaining access to those interactions, many of which take place spontaneously in sports bars and private homes. Though underrepresented in the literature on sport discourse, television (TV) viewer interactions are an important context; information about fan and consumer behavior is of great potential value to professionals in marketing and advertising, as well as to researchers of popular culture and social communication.

Stereotypical portrayals of football fans are mixed with less exaggerated characterizations in popular culture. For instance, a casual perusal of sport-related advertising online reveals many images of men watching football on TV, even including comical photographs of some with their toddlers and babies strategically positioned in front of televised football. Women are stereotypically portrayed by many artists and comedians as football-haters; that is, they are believed to dislike football and not understand men who spend long hours yelling in front of their TVs. But, times have changed in that many more women are known to watch football at home, and there are a significant number of female viewers in sports bars, stadiums, and other public settings. In fact, according to a 2011 *Adweek/Harris* Poll, 64% of U.S. adults (73% of men and 55% of women) reported that they currently watch National Football League (NFL) football. Indeed, very recent research has focused on the experiences of female soccer fans and has encouraged future investigations to focus on gender-mixed fan settings (Pope, 2011; 2012). Other recent research has begun to look at fan-athlete interactions made available through new technologies (Kassing and Sanderson, 2012).

Nevertheless, the present investigation focuses specifically on the home environment and analyzes the linguistic features of interactions that took place among four male family members while watching televised football. In general, these viewers talked 'to' the TV as fans and coaches, 'for' the TV as commentators, and 'about' the TV in all three roles. The present research builds directly on previous findings regarding TV viewer interaction, sport discourse, and speakers' multiple identities (Gerhardt, 2006; Hansen, 1999; Matthewson, 1992; Tannen, 1996; 2001; 2004). It was motivated by the following research question: While these four males watched football together on TV, what was the nature of their interactions?

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Given the importance of televised football in North American culture, what happens off the field in viewers' homes is an underrepresented area of linguistic research. Although investigations have only begun to explore this particular discourse context, the findings of several previous studies are particularly applicable in classifying the typical speech characteristics of a fan, coach, and commentator.

Fan Speech Characteristics

Since no special training, formal education, licensing boards, or professional titles are required to legitimize a sports fan, potentially anyone can take on the role. A fan's commitment to a sport or team and the fan's resulting behaviors can range from ardent support to occasional, mild interest. These and more moderate positions on the continuum can be exemplified by imagining a fan wearing his favorite player's jersey, sitting in a living room with similarly-dressed friends on a couch decorated with a blanket woven in their home team's colors and logo, eating seasonally-available, team-named snacks while watching football on a blaring TV at the center of the room. Contrast that fan with the image of another who is happy to participate in small talk about a variety of topics while glancing casually at a football game broadcasted quietly in the background on a TV in the home of friends with whom he has just enjoyed Sunday dinner. Though both fans are aware of and interested in the televised game, it is likely that the conversation of the former fan would be quite different from that of the latter. Thus, the characteristics of fan discourse are quite broad and, compared to coach or commentator discourse, fan speech displays a greater range of "typical". Nevertheless, fan discourse has several distinguishing traits.

For example, Beck (1995) noted that fans typically display shared knowledge about teams, players, and the game itself, identify allegiance to a particular team, and participate in continuous discussion of the game from their unique perspectives as fans. These behaviors play out linguistically in fans' use of first person plural pronouns (e.g., "we" and "us"), interjections, non-verbal praise (e.g., applause), and football jargon. Moreover, Sherry, et al. (2004) studied gendered behavior in a Chicago-based ESPN Zone, a recreational business where sports fans gather publicly to watch televised games, play virtual reality simulations, and enjoy theme park attractions. Exploring the fans' perspectives of their experiences there, Sherry, et al. (2004) documented a fan who claimed that spectators often perform as commentators in this "forum where you can raise your opinions back and forth freely. You're the person that feels like the expert" (p. 155). Describing the spirited atmosphere in which they interacted, another fan claimed, "When the scores pop up you can hear the other people shouting 'yeah' or 'boo' and it's just like being at a Notre Dame game when everyone around you is shouting. ... I just started waving my hands in my seat with the folks on the TV" (Sherry, et al., 2004, p. 154). Their observations confirmed the tendency for fan speech to include opinions about games and players as well as emotional reactions to TV events, even to the point of participating in the same spontaneous, physical displays of support as fans attending the actual games.

More recently, Gerhardt's (2006) research focused on the practices and rituals of TV viewers watching soccer on TV. She highlighted the side-

sequences and conversational topic shifts that occur among friends and family members and found that multiple conversations among fans often take place at a time, resulting in a specialized organization of turn taking that can even include the TV commentator. And, as previously documented by Matthewson (1992) and others, in addition to expressing their own reactions to each other, soap opera and game show viewers directly address the TV while sports fans even shout at it to coach or cheer for their teams (Gerhardt, 2006).

Though mentioned only briefly, it is important to note that Gerhardt (2006) found fan speech directed to the TV to be “often marked by a rise in volume and high pitch” (p. 132). She explained, “By signaling in this manner to their interlocutors that they are not directing their talk to them, they, at the same time, seem to be trying to bridge the gap between the people on tv and their living rooms. Sometimes they seem oblivious to their surroundings and the other spectators, simply giving vent to their feelings” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 132). Thus, physically present interlocutors are rarely left to wonder if these statements require a response but instead recognize and accept them as parts of other “conversations”, a point to be taken up in the present investigation.

Coach Speech Characteristics

Success in sports is usually judged on the basis of win-lose ratios, and it is often seen as a coach’s obligation to motivate and organize players in such a way as to maximize opportunities to win. In addition to modeling hands-on, motor skills instruction (e.g., demonstrating blocking techniques or effective quarterback footwork), a theme explored in Hodges and Franks’ (2002) research on the process of skill acquisition and effective instructional techniques, coaches use language to teach their players the game (e.g., discussing the blocking strategy of offensive linemen or telling a quarterback how to read a particular defense).

On a more relational level, coaches also use language to encourage or criticize players. For example, in his study of high school football coaches and their exchanges with student athletes, Turman (2005) investigated the coach’s role and its relationship to the competitive nature of sports. He found that coaches reinforced the importance of winning by using messages that invoke regret, either counterfactual regret (reflecting on “a choice following an event”) or anticipatory regret (thinking through “potential alternatives to an event before it occurs”) (p. 117). In these messages, Turman’s (2005) data illustrate that coaches both praise and ridicule players.

Moreover, Masterson, et al. (2006) examined youth basketball coaches’ utterances directed toward their athletes, dividing them according to the communicative function they fulfilled: *informing* (instructing, organizing, and defining), *requesting* (confirming understanding, getting attention, and requesting information or action), *rewarding* (showing gratitude, encouraging and praising), *responding*, and *criticizing* (Masterson, et al., 2006). Overall,

these coaches' utterances typically consisted of simple sentences and many statements lacking verbs when uttered in active contexts as opposed to during stationary activities. They found that their coaches used semantically positive language more frequently than negative speech in that they spoke more about what the players should do as opposed to what they should not do or about what they had done wrong. Moreover, the coaches frequently used basketball-specific jargon (e.g. "block out" and "in the paint").

Commentator Speech Characteristics

In the context of broadcasting, Thornborrow (2001) acknowledged the legitimate nature of "expert speakers" whose rank, status, or affiliation often justifies their position as experts on a particular topic and warrants what they say. Though her research focused on public participation broadcasts and attempts of lay "call-in" speakers to build expert identities for themselves, her conceptualization of an expert can be easily applied to sports commentators, often former players or coaches whose own previous accomplishments and familiarity with the public earn them status as experts whose observations and opinions are considered worthy of attention.

Though perhaps it primarily suggests a record of events, commentary speech also includes varying amounts of emotion and bias. Commentators often do more than merely report facts; embedded in their comments are their own opinions and personal desires. Consider, for example, the different connotations of the following statements: "The Rams will play the Eagles on Sunday" versus "The powerhouse Rams will face the less able Eagles on Sunday" (examples adapted from Williams, 1977). The first statement, an objective report on the opponents scheduled to play in a particular game, does not carry the implications of the second, a somewhat indirect assertion that the stronger team (Rams) will likely beat the less competent team (Eagles). The descriptive as well as the dramatic or humorous features of commentators' discourse are also noted in Bryant, et al. (1977).

More recently, Hansen (1999) divided sport broadcasting commentary into two types of talk: first, a "play-by-play" description of the ongoing action, and second, a "color commentary" that includes an interpretation of the action as well as relevant background information and analysis. Hansen (1999) and Ferguson (1983) both claimed that when two commentators work in tandem, each usually takes the lead in producing commentary of one or the other types of talk, one descriptive and the other interpretive. Ferguson (1983) also noted that sports announcer talk, especially the "play-by-play" type, frequently includes sentences lacking subjects or verbs and contains syntactic variations such as inversions of the subject and predicate.

TALKING TO, FOR, AND ABOUT THE TV

The presence of a TV has been shown to influence the interactions of viewers who talk *to*, *for*, and *about* it. As previously mentioned, Gerhardt (2006) found that speakers often used changes in volume or pitch to signal physically-present interlocutors that an utterance was directed *to* someone on TV rather than to them. However, she was not the first to find that this type of speech, uttered in the presence of one who is not the intended recipient, can be marked by certain prosodic features. For instance, claiming that people talk *to* the TV with these communicative intentions, Matthewson (1992) explored “‘to’ utterances,” statements addressed to people on TV in the presence of other viewers. While they watched soap opera or quiz show episodes, these viewers’ most frequent ‘to’ utterances constituted insults, advice, or comments on characters’ actions. Moreover, Matthewson (1992) found that some ‘to’ utterances were either spoken or screamed “at moments of extreme emotional involvement” (p. 20) on the part of speakers; though most did not receive replies from fellow viewers many seemed to be made with the purpose of informing them of the speaker’s assessment of a situation on TV. Finally, Tannen (2001; 2004) also demonstrated that examples of constructed dialogue (i.e., animating speech in the voice of an other), ventriloquizing (i.e., animating speech in the voice of a non-verbal, physically-present other), and triadic exchange (i.e., addressing one party in order to communicate a message to another party) were often prosodically marked.

Interestingly, Gerhardt (2006) found that the soccer fans in her study, when speaking *to* each other or the TV, generally respected the commentators’ turns and organized their statements around them. In other words, though at times they answered the commentators’ questions or disagreed with their opinions, they usually accommodated the commentators’ talk as well as interacted with them as legitimate interlocutors. In doing so, they talked *to* or *about* the commentators, but not in place of them; they did not hijack the conversational space but instead talked with them, seemingly recognizing them as parties to their ongoing conversation.

Somewhat in contrast to the common notion of talking “with” someone is the practice of talking “for” them. Interestingly, Matthewson (1992), using the term “‘with’ utterances,” highlighted statements uttered by viewers who assume the role of, and produce language *for*, a person on TV. Viewers in her study spoke *for* TV characters, providing fellow viewers the speakers’ opinion regarding what the characters might think or say. Matthewson (1992) claimed that these ‘with’ utterances were designed to amuse fellow viewers who at times accepted and even joined in the speaker’s suggested dialogue. Thus, these speakers talked *for* characters and, in effect, took over the conversational floor. Therefore, given these findings, these statements might more logically be termed ‘for’ rather than ‘with’ utterances.

Cited in Matthewson (1992) are reports of much earlier research on the role of TV in conversational interactions (e.g., Bechtel, et al. (1972) and Comstock, et al. (1978)); these researchers reported that while watching TV, in addition to viewers talking *to* or conversing with the TV itself and even mimicking those on TV, they participated in general conversation, asking each other questions *about* the content of the TV program.

Moreover, as previous research has shown, sometimes the TV itself forms part of a conversation; that is, when viewers watch sports on TV, two streams of talk exist, one from the viewers and the other from those on TV, and together, these two streams can at times merge to form one, coherent conversation (Gerhardt, 2006). For example, after a TV commentator asks a question or expresses an opinion, Gerhardt (2006) found that viewers sometimes respond to the question or challenge the commentator's view, engaging in additional dialogue with the commentator, fellow viewers, or both.

In sum, as demonstrated in all of these cases, there is substantial evidence that TV viewers' talk *to*, *for*, and *about* the TV, at times respecting the turns of their TV interlocutors and at other moments expressing their own views or entertaining fellow viewers. The present study revisits these previous findings in light of the interactions of four male participants who regularly watch football together on TV.

PRESENT STUDY

Participants

The four male TV viewers are all part of the same immediate family: the father, Dan (59), and his three adult sons, Tyler (26), Chris (23), and Jake (21), all pseudonyms. As will be seen in detail below, all four are avid sports fans who thoroughly enjoy watching football together.

Context

The data were gathered in the family's home where the father and the youngest of the three sons still reside and where all the sons had grown up. The participants sat on couches in their living room as they watched games on their two large TVs. This room was the traditional setting where the family regularly gathered to watch sports. For this study, participants chose where to watch TV and during which specific games to record themselves; they were encouraged to move about and even leave the room as they wished as well as to use any electronic devices desired (e.g., cell phones, computers, additional TVs, etc.). Over a period of a few weeks, they recorded themselves watching two full-length NFL games (the Philadelphia Eagles versus the Dallas Cowboys (EC) and the New York Giants versus the Green Bay Packers (GP))

as well as an episode of the *RedZone* (RZ), a program broadcast on Sunday game days during the regular NFL season; directly operated under the *NFL Network*, the *RedZone* primarily consists of extended highlights from a variety of games with accompanying TV commentary.

Types of Data

Three types of data were collected as part of this study: a written survey (Appendix A), audio recordings of participants' interactions while watching TV, and a group interview based on previously prepared questions (Appendix B). Each participant responded independently to the ten survey questions about their sport and team preferences as well as their televised sport-watching habits. The audio recordings included approximately nine hours of participants' interactions spread out over three collection periods. Finally, the group interview was conducted in the participants' living room where they responded to ten questions regarding their overall experience in this study.

Data Collection

The written surveys were distributed to the participants and returned to the researchers prior to the game recordings. The audio data were captured using three wireless recording devices, which the participants themselves controlled and placed in various locations in the living room during the three separate sport broadcasts. Carrying out these recordings in the privacy of the family's home fostered an experience that was as typical as possible for the participants. Certainly the presence of the recording devices might have had some effect on the participants' behavior, but in an effort to minimize this influence, researchers were not present for the games. Thus, the participants themselves operated the recording devices, an arrangement that helped maintain the naturalness of the data. The recorded group interview was conducted by researchers with the three participants available at the time: Dan, Tyler, and Chris.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from all three sources were taken into consideration in the analysis. First, the nine hours of audio data were transcribed in preparation for coding and analysis. A coding scheme was established based on previous findings documenting typical characteristics of fan, coach, and commentator speech. Using this information, the researchers independently listened to the recordings and read the transcripts, highlighting the different voices (fan, coach, and commentator) and noting moments in which participants directly addressed or talked for the TV.

Identifying instances of participants' speech *about* the TV was a relatively straight-forward process; viewers' comments *about* players, coaches, penalties, game action, and league standings were fairly obvious in terms of content. No effort was made to distinguish comments *about* the TV at the time of recording from those *about* football in general since even their more general comments were sparked by the fact that they were watching a game at the moment. To identify utterances directed *to* the TV, participants' prosodic features (specifically changes in volume or pitch) and a lack of replies from fellow viewers were taken into account. These same prosodic changes signaled moments when the participants spoke *for* those on TV through ventriloquizing or constructed dialogue (Tannen, 2001; 2004). Contextually, speaking *for* another can occur when participants mimic those on TV (Comstock, et al., 1978) or interpret what they would or should say to others (Matthewson, 1992), actions that distinguished talk addressed *to* rather than uttered *for* the TV.

Eventually, for comparative purposes, these findings were triangulated with the survey and group interview data. Summarizing previous research findings, Figure 1 lists traits of these voices (fan, coach, and commentator): below.

There is evidence in previous sport-related research of considerable overlap among fan, coach, and commentator speech characteristics. For instance, Masterson, et al. (2006) found that coaches carry out communicative functions also associated with fan speech such as praising, encouraging, or criticizing. Gerhardt (2006) highlighted the seeming contradiction that exists within fans when their emotions conflict with their knowledge, that is, when what they as fans desire and feel does not match up to what they know and understand. For instance, there are moments when fans take on the voice of commentators, verbally expressing what they know to be fair or true even when it conflicts with their personal preferences as fans.

In the process of coding the present data, overlap among these categories was also acknowledged; thus, the categories were not perceived as mutually-exclusive but rather as typically representative of each of these voices. For example, in real life, both fans and coaches cheer; fans, coaches, and commentators all praise players; and, fans and coaches both reference teams using the first person plural "we" as fans often feel as if they have a personal stake in the success of sports teams as do the coaches. Nevertheless, for coding purposes, these instances in the data were evaluated in context by examining the surrounding speech (e.g., the nature of previous utterances, the response of fellow viewers, etc.) to identify the voice of a given speaker most accurately.

After two of the researchers had highlighted and coded the transcriptions, they together evaluated the results. First, they compared their independent analyses to determine if they had highlighted the same instances of talking to

and for the TV. Next, they compared their categorizations of that highlighted speech as fan, coach, or commentator.

Figure 1 Coding Features: Fan, Coach and Commentator

Voice	Typical Speech Characteristics
Fan	display of knowledge of shared teams (Beck, 1995; Sherry, et al., 2004); identification of allegiance to a particular team (Beck, 1995); use of 1 st person plural pronouns (Beck, 1995); praising, cheering, expressing reactions (Matthewson, 1992; Sherry, et al., 2004; Gerhardt, 2006); side-sequences, conversational topic shifts, and multiple, simultaneous conversations (Gerhardt, 2006) interjections (<i>C'mon, Alright, Here we go</i> , etc.) (Beck, 1995); greeting players/coaches or talking to TV people by name (Matthewson, 1992);
Coach	simple utterances (Masterson, et al., 2006); command verbs or lack of verbs (Masterson, et al., 2006); encouragement/criticism of players, praise/ridicule of players (Turman, 2005); informing, requesting, rewarding, responding, criticizing with sport-specific jargon (Masterson, et al., 2006);
Commentator	expert speaker voice (Thornborrow, 2001); play by play game narration (descriptive) (Bryant, et al., 1977; Williams, 1977; Ferguson, 1983; Hansen, 1999); interjection of emotion/bias in color commentary (interpretive) (Bryant, et al., 1977; Williams, 1977; Ferguson, 1983; Hansen, 1999); narrative remarks prior or in response to commentator's statements (Gerhardt, 2006);

The researchers' initial coding decisions were remarkably similar resulting in a rough calculation of 93% consistency; that is, in 93% of coding instances, the researchers independently categorized highlighted speech as

representing the same voice. In the handful of cases on which they did not initially agree, the researchers deliberated over the relevant speech characteristics and reached a consensus.

Overall, throughout the nine hours of recorded interactions, these participants talked to, for, and about the TV on multiple occasions. They also discussed football and other sport-related activities (e.g., basketball teams, college sports, the online purchase of tickets to a home football game, etc.), and they talked about other topics (e.g., a puzzle they were working on in an adjoining room, snacks they were eating, family members or friends, etc.). This study focused particularly on those moments when they engaged in one of the following: talk directed *to* the TV, addressing people who were not physically present; talk uttered *for* the TV, creating dialogue for someone on TV; and, talk conducted *about* the TV, discussing a topic or event presented on TV. In sum, when these viewers talked *to* the TV, they took on the voice of fan or coach. When they talked *for* the TV, they usually spoke as commentators. And, when they talked *about* what they were watching on TV, all of the three voices were evident. Thus, after describing the participants' commitment to football, the analysis explores their use of these voices in the following three sections: talking *to*, *for*, and *about* the TV.

FINDINGS

Participants' Commitment to Football

I mean we all sort of share a lot of the same opinions so it's, it's nice to be able to share them with each other, um cheer for the same teams, mostly...and we all have our jerseys on, we're all like we're all into the games. (Tyler, group interview)

I think it's more fun doing it together than me sit, say, sitting here alone watching a game, I mean, I could do it, I would do it but uh, with these guys around you know it's this much, much more enjoyable. (Dan, group interview)

It's always more fun watching it with other people that share your same opinions. (Chris, group interview)

These participants' group interview comments are representative of their high level of commitment to and enjoyment of watching football together on TV. Additionally, in their survey responses, all four identified NFL football as their favorite sport to watch. During a typical week of the regular season all four watch games both at home and in other locations, use online sources to access additional game information, watch pre- and post-game shows to keep up with league information, and finally, talk with friends and family members

about football while they watch games together as well as at other times. On the highest end, two participants watch more than 6 NFL games and dedicate more than 12 hours to NFL sport-related programs per week. All unanimously favor the Philadelphia Eagles and identify the Dallas Cowboys or the New York Giants as their least favorite teams. During the group interview, the participants explained that their common allegiances came both from family tradition and their personal loyalty as Philadelphia-based fans. They all value their overlapping team support and collective sports knowledge and, as a result, perceive their conversations as stimulating. Additionally, all four are active participants in *Fantasy Football*, an online game that allows users to manage their own virtual teams by buying and trading NFL athletes. Scoring is based on real players' individual statistics and team standings in the league.

TALKING TO THE TV

Before exploring particular examples, it is worth noting why participants claimed to talk to the TV. During the group interview, researchers asked the participants if they were aware of this behavior (lines 1-2 below).

- 1 I: Do you know that you guys talk to the players while you're
 2 watching?
 3 T: [laughing] I don't know, they can hear us, you didn't know
 that?
 4 I: Since you know obviously they can't hear you, why do you
 think
 5 you do that?
 6 T: That's a tough question
 7 C: Because you're just trying to have some sort of interaction on
 the
 8 game, you think it, uh does something, or you're just pumped
 up,
 9 you're just so happy about it
 10 D: I think it gets our feelings out too, like you know, I mean we
 both
 11 say that you know they can't hear us like you know but we'll
 say
 12 "You idiot!" you know, you know, I mean just, I think it's just
 a 13 way of sort of either getting frustration out or, or
 excitement out,
 14 too
 15 T [to D]: and even just letting us, you know, know how you
 feel, you
 16 know, you're upset "he's an idiot" we know that now
 17 C: Yeah.

18 D: Yeah.
(Group Interview)

After Tyler joked (line 3) about the players' supposed ability to hear TV viewers, the interviewer rephrased the question (lines 4-5), asking why the participants talked to the players since they knew that the players obviously could not hear them. Chris' response (lines 7-9) confirms the role emotion has in motivating this behavior. Though aware that what he said to players had no real effect, Chris' comment also implies that his desire to have an impact on the outcome of the game overtakes his logical awareness that his remarks go unnoticed by the players. His father Dan agreed with him (lines 10-14), explaining that emotions such as frustration and excitement find an outlet through talking to the TV. Interestingly, confirming Matthewson's (1992) finding that most statements directed to TV characters were insults, Dan highlighted a perfect example in line 12: "You idiot!". At this point in their conversation, Tyler physically turned to his dad and claimed that talking to people on TV was his way of letting fellow TV viewers know his feelings (lines 15-16). Finally, Chris and Dan agreed with Tyler's observation (lines 17-18).

Their conversation also confirms previous claims regarding typical TV viewer (Matthewson, 1992), fan (Sherry, et al., 2004; Gerhardt, 2006), and coach (Turman, 2005; Masterson, et al., 2006) speech characteristics. Though these previous investigations either documented examples from recorded data or were based on informant interviews, their findings did not include a comparison of more than one data source. Such a comparison is provided in the current study (i.e., recordings, survey data, and participants' own observations) since these football viewers talked to the TV and confirmed their awareness of doing so, pointing to their need to express emotional reactions as well as share opinions with each other as primary causes for addressing an inanimate object. Throughout the analysis, instances in which participants talked to the TV were categorized as reflecting either fan or coach speech and, thus, will be presented separately below.

Fan: Talking to the TV

When these participants spoke to the TV as fans, their language displayed characteristics of fan speech found in previous research: a display of knowledge, an identification of allegiance to a particular team, the inclusion of 1st person plural pronouns, praise, cheers, reactions, interjections, greetings of players/coaches, and calling people on TV by name (see Figure 1). Addressed to the TV, Example 1 constitutes an instance in which Tyler's comment, a biased description of what had happened on the play and an expressed compliment to the players involved, demonstrated what he knew about football as well as communicated his positive reaction to the play.

Example 1 *That's like a ten yard loss. That was awesome...good timing!*
(EC, Tyler)

Tyler addressed his “good timing” compliment to the athlete responsible for the play while he simultaneously expressed to his fellow viewers his overall perspective on this player’s performance. Similarly, Example 2 conveyed Dan’s positive reaction and directly addressed a Philadelphia wide receiver whose pass reception he praised. Following Dan’s comment, Chris echoed the compliment.

Example 2 *Yeah, yeah. Nice catch!* (GP, Dan)

The compliments offered to players in Examples 1 and 2 were marked by an increase in volume that identified the speakers’ intended TV recipients (Gerhardt, 2006). Except for Chris, who in Example 2 repeated the same compliment, no one responded to these statements, an apparent indication that their fellow TV viewers recognized Tyler and Dan’s utterances not as elliptical descriptions of the events (i.e., “I think that was ‘good timing’” or “He made a ‘nice catch’”) but as statements addressed to players on TV.

Examples 3 and 4 are even clearer cases of the same phenomenon due to Tyler’s explicit use of the intended recipients’ names. In Example 3, Tyler cheered for the Eagle quarterback, addressing him directly (i.e., “Kolb”) and using a supportive statement “Here we go,” containing the 1st person plural pronoun “we.” A previously documented characteristic of fan speech (Beck, 1995), the pronoun “we” communicates Tyler’s allegiance to the team. As will be seen later, this same “we” also surfaced when participants talked about the TV.

Example 3 *Here we go, Kolby Kolb baby!* (EC, Tyler)

In Example 4, using the common interjection “Let’s go”, Tyler cheered for the Packers who played against the Giants, a team Tyler did not like. In this case, rather than addressing a particular player, he addressed them by their team’s nickname.

Example 4 *Let's go, Packs!* (GP, Tyler)

Example 5 is one instance of many in which a participant shouted out the name or nickname of a particular player or coach when he appeared on screen, made a good play, or when some other kind of attention was drawn to him. In this sense, these participants behaved in ways similar to Matthewson’s (1992) soap opera and game show TV viewers who also addressed TV characters by name.

Example 5 *Josh Freeman!* (GP, Chris)

Finally, in the midst of a discussion that Tyler, Chris, and Dan were having about the possible purchase of box seats for an upcoming game, an event on TV interrupted their conversation. A referee had judged the legality of a receiver's catch but his decision was not well-received by these fans who disliked the Giants. Unhappy with the call, Tyler encouraged the Green Bay Packer's coach, Mike McCarthy, to challenge the decision (Example 6). In an effort to "push" McCarthy out on the field to fight the call, Tyler addressed him by name and told him not to react like Andy Reid, a former Green Bay coach infamous for remaining silent when an arguable call was made in disfavor of his team. His direct address of McCarthy was marked by an increase in volume.

Example 6 *Yeah you better challenge that. C'mon, McCarthy, don't pull a "Reid" here.* (GP, Tyler)

Tyler's three fellow viewers' responses revealed that they understood his specialized use of the coach's name to refer to a particular pattern of behavior (or lack thereof). That is, after Tyler's admonition to McCarthy not to "pull a Reid" was uttered, in a lower volume to his fellow viewers Dan replied that it was too early in the game to spend one of their limited team challenges. As such, Tyler's statements to McCarthy on TV sparked a brief discussion with Dan regarding the appropriateness of challenging the officials' call at that point. This conversation quickly led to Tyler's announcement that tampering charges might be filed against the Giants for not having made replays accessible to the officiating booth in the previous week. Dan and Jake said that they had heard about it, but Chris expressed some surprise. At that point, they returned to their original discussion of the possible purchase of tickets, specifically deliberating over which of their friends should have to tell another friend about their change of plan. In sum, confirmed in these data was Gerhardt's (2006) finding that effects of the TV on viewers' interactions include side-sequences (e.g., Dan's reply to his fellow viewers regarding the timing of the challenge), conversational topic shifts (e.g., the ticket purchase discussed among themselves, Tyler's talk to the TV, Dan's comment regarding the challenge, etc.), and multiple conversations at a time (e.g., ticket purchase, TV action, tampering charge, change of plans, etc.).

All of the above examples illustrate that these football viewers talked to the TV as fans, displaying typical characteristics of fan speech identified in previous research. However, participants also talked to the TV in the voice of a coach, the focus of the next section.

Coach: Talking to the TV

Coach speech has been characterized by simple utterances, command verbs, short sentences without verbs, expressions of encouragement, criticism, praise or ridicule, and the use of sport-specific jargon to inform, request, reward, respond or criticize (see Figure 1). In the following data, acting as coaches, these participants criticized and ridiculed the athletes, addressing them directly using the 2nd person singular “you” or their actual names. In the voice of a coach, Dan, Tyler, and Chris also used short, simple utterances lacking verbs or containing commands to criticize or even insult the players for past actions (Examples 7, 8, and 9) or to tell them what to do and to encourage them to follow through on a specific action in progress (Examples 10, 11, and 12). All of these utterances addressed to the TV were marked by a change in pitch or volume. Moreover, in Example 12, Chris used the command verb “Hit” that carries an implied subject “you,” reducing the need to include the player’s name; a recognized term in football jargon, this command was not intended as an instruction for the player to slap or punch his opponent but rather to block or tackle him.

- Example 7 *Oh c'mon, Chad. What are you doin'?! (EC, Tyler)*
- Example 8 *You were looking at the wrong line, idiot! (RZ, Tyler)*
- Example 9 *... lame how do you miss that? God you stink... (RZ, Tyler)*
- Example 10 *Go this way, Cooney. (GP, Dan)*
- Example 11 *C'mon Kolby, get taller! (EC, Chris)*
- Example 12 *Hit Him! (EC, Chris)*

Tyler’s statement (Example 8) again illustrates the dexterity with which these participants switched from one voice to another. Prior to Tyler’s comment, he and Chris were talking about the team’s lack of efficiency in executing the play [lines 1-2 below]. The TV commentator reported that the running back had successfully made a first down. As a real coach might reply to someone making the same mistaken observation in his presence, Tyler responded directly to the commentator by arguing that the player had not reached the required marker (line 3). His increased volume as he uttered the word “not” emphasized his point of disagreement as well as indicated that the commentator, rather than his fellow TV viewers, was his intended interlocutor. Seeming to respect Tyler’s “conversation” with the commentator, his dad expressed agreement, speaking in an almost whispered tone (line 4). Tyler repeated his viewpoint (line 5) to the commentator, criticized the team by modifying their name in a pejorative manner that emphasized their tendency to make mistakes (i.e., Bengals to Bungles), and then quite loudly

addressed the player, referee or commentator (the actual recipient is unknown from the context) he believed to be at fault, calling him an idiot (line 6). Thus, he first addressed the commentator, then the team, and then the specific player, referee or commentator, but ignored his dad's statement (line 4).

- 1 T: I don't like this at all.
2 C: It took way too long.
3 T: He's NOT on the first down.
4 D: [whispering]: He didn't get it.
5 T: He did NOT get it. Freaking Bungles! YOU WERE
LOOKING AT
6 THE WRONG LINE, IDIOT!

(RZ)

(Caps indicate utterances spoken at a higher volume than that of the surrounding dialogue.)

As documented in Gerhardt (2006), Tyler seemed oblivious to his dad's supportive comment (line 4) and was concerned only with venting his own feelings. Unsurprisingly, his physically present interlocutors did not mistake his statements as directed toward them but recognized them as part of other "conversations" he was having with those on TV.

At other times, the participants also addressed particular players in ways likely motivated by their involvement as coaches in the online Fantasy Football League. That is, they framed their statements in such a way as to indicate that a particular result was good or bad for them directly (see Example 13).

Example 13 *Alright Cini, do not xxxx this up for me. (RZ, Tyler)*

Tyler's admonition was spoken as if by a coach who would lose points or standing in the event of a bad outcome.

TALKING *FOR* THE TV

At times these participants also spoke *for* the TV, essentially assuming the role of the commentator who, in an expert voice, narrates and evaluates the action of the game (see Figure 1). And, unlike the soccer viewers in Gerhardt (2006), these football viewers did not consistently respect the TV commentators' turns or accommodate their talk. Though at times they did leave conversational space for their commentary, such as when Tyler argued with the commentator that the player had not reached the first down marker, on many occasions, these participants spoke over and interrupted the commentators. Moreover, their narrations or descriptions reflected varying degrees of emotion or bias.

For instance, during the full-length games, an occasional update or highlight from a college or professional football game interrupted the broadcast. During the Giant-Patriot game, Dan narrated the action of another game reporting that someone had scored, but his comment did not convey any particular emotion or bias (see Example 14).

Example 14 *[Team name inaudible] take a touchdown.* (GP, Dan)

On the other hand, during the Eagles-Cowboys game, Chris reported that their favorite team had scored (see Example 15); the excitement in his voice revealed his bias.

Example 15 *Philadelphia field goal!* (EC, Chris)

Similarly, in response to a *RedZone* clip, Tyler described the facemask penalty he saw during a play but prefaced his narration with the emotionally-charged interjection “Oo” (see Example 16). Though his intended meaning of “Oo” is outside the scope of this study, his narration of the play was accompanied with an expression of emotion or bias.

A similar bias was evident at many other moments. For instance, Example 17 includes an even more overt expression of Tyler’s personal reaction in that, within his commentary of the play-by-play action, he explicitly judged the result of the play as “bad” and described it overall as “crazy”.

Example 16 *Oo that’s a facemask.* (RZ, Tyler)

Example 17 *Oh, that’s a, that’s bad. That’s a fumble. I think he was out of bounds though. He was out of bounds. That was a crazy play!* (RZ, Tyler)

Most of the above remarks were made while the TV commentators were speaking but on other occasions, these viewers respected the TV’s conversational turns. For instance, in Example 18, Tyler again described the action from his perspective (i.e., the football was out-of-bounds) and, after pausing briefly, proceeded to provide his own evaluation of what those involved in the game should do in response.

Example 18 *Looks like that ball’s out. And they should.* (RZ, Tyler)

But, in this case, rather than talking over the TV, Tyler alternated his commentary with the referee’s statements, respecting and taking turns with him as if they were consciously participating in a dialogue (Gerhardt, 2006). That is, during the seconds between Tyler’s two statements in Example 18, Tyler paused as the referee publicly announced his official call that the play

had resulted in a fumble recovered by the defensive team for a touchback. The referee went on to say that the other team had decided to challenge this ruling on the field. At that moment, Tyler responded in agreement (e.g., “And they should.”). Convinced that the call was incorrect, Tyler believed the ball had been out of bounds when caught; thus, he communicated his support of the coach’s decision to challenge the referee. His comments about the situation on TV then resulted in a detailed conversation among the participants regarding the referee’s decision, the rules of football, and a previous occasion when a similar play had “happened to us” (Chris). Thus, Tyler’s remarks as a commentator sparked a related discussion that occurred simultaneously with a discussion among the real TV commentators about similar issues. Therefore, in this case, after Tyler talked *for* the TV, the result was a discussion *about* the TV, a topic taken up again later.

Especially toward the end of a season, commentators discuss league standings and hypothesize what will happen if particular teams win or lose certain games. There was evidence of this type of commentator discourse in these data. For instance, in Example 19, Tyler announced that if the Giants lost the game, the result would be that the Eagles (i.e., “us”) would advance to the playoffs.

Example 19 *So if the Giants lose today, that clinches us a playoff spot.*
(GP, Tyler)

Had this comment existed in isolation, especially given its inclusion of the second person plural “us” and the home team allegiance it communicated, it would likely have been coded as an instance of fan speech. But, following Tyler’s interpretive remark, the real TV commentator made the same observation and Tyler, his two brothers, and his father all laughed in response. One might expect laughter, perhaps motivated by ridicule or teasing, from one whose exact comment is repeated by a physically present speaker who was able to hear the initial statement. But in this context, these participants’ laughter seemed to have an almost mocking tone, perhaps due to their belief that their knowledge of the game might even surpass that of the professional commentators whose role they were able to imitate successfully by talking for them.

Thus, in Examples 14-19, the participants took on the speech characteristics of commentators as they spoke for the TV. On a couple of occasions, however, they also took on other voices. For example, during the Eagles-Cowboys game, a referee signaled that a player had been inbounds when he was tackled. Tyler agreed with the call (Example 20) and, taking on what appears to be the voice of a fellow referee, offered his personal view of the play to reassure his colleague. Thus, he talked *to* the TV to talk *for* someone on it.

Example 20 *No, no I think he was good. Yeah that looked fine.* (EC, Tyler)

Also, at one point during the *RedZone* episode, Tyler used constructed dialogue (Tannen, 2001; 2004) to convert the expression of disgust on Fred Pagac's face (linebacker coach of the Minnesota Vikings) into words after a referee made a call that hurt his team. Though not a non-verbal party, without a TV microphone Pagac was unable to address viewers at home. Thus, Tyler took it upon himself to speak *for* the displeased coach to his fellow viewers. In Example 21, Tyler prosodically altered his own voice to assume the identity of the coach in whose voice he spoke, assigning to him a statement of disgust.

Example 21 *Fred's like "I'm done!"*. (Tyler, RZ)

During the group interview, the researchers asked the participants if they believed they talked as commentators while they watched football on TV (lines 1-2). Tyler's response (line 3) alluded to his awareness that at times their comments were not neutral accounts of game events but rather emotional, biased interpretations motivated by their own fan allegiances to particular teams and players. His dad also acknowledged the commentator-like quality of some of their statements (lines 4-8) and explicitly pointed to situations like Example 19 above when they as viewers made remarks immediately echoed by the real TV commentators.

- 1 I: Do you think you ever sound like commentators when
you're
2 watching?
3 T: I think colored commentators maybe
4 D: Yeah, once in a great while, ... I'll say something and
then I'll say
5 something randomly and I'll say "I should have been a
6 commentator" you know, once in awhile, ... by accident
surely,
7 you know I'll see something that, that then they'll see it
too, ... you
8 almost feel like you're a commentator.

(Group Interview)

Thus, these participants acknowledged that their discourse reflected characteristics similar to those in the typical speech of the commentators for whom they spoke. As will be seen in the next section, these participants expressed preference for hearing and participating in their own conversations over those of the real TV commentators and did not care that their remarks

were sometimes uttered on top of those of the TV commentators, who Tyler evaluated as “pretty bad”.

TALKING *ABOUT* THE TV

Speaking *about* the TV resulted in participants’ use of all three voices: fans, coaches, and commentators. In fact, it was difficult to separate fan from coach speech when the participants discussed the game’s action and the consequences that different outcomes would have for the teams they followed most closely. In these instances, they often used first person singular or plural pronouns, emphasizing their team loyalty to the extent that they sometimes spoke as if they themselves were playing the game. These moments illustrate the close connections the participants feel to those in the game and highlight the overlap among the fan and coach voices. Though it is obvious that these viewers actually are fans rather than coaches, their discourse includes features that often extend beyond those attributed to fan speech. That is, their allegiance to a team can be so strong that they talk as if they were real members of the official team. Or, their shared experience as fans watching games can be so intense that their membership seems firmly grounded in their own group of fans.

For instance, if Example 22 (below) were heard out of context, one might understand Tyler’s comment not as fan speech but as a statement uttered by a player or coach whose actual personal experience would be affected by the outcome of this game. Thus, in talking about the TV as a fan, Tyler’s comment represented his virtual identification with the team he supported as he expressed his concern as if he were a member of their group.

Example 22 *Yeah I don’t want to play the Giants either.* (RZ, Tyler)

In other situations, this group membership extended beyond the speaker to encompass his fellow TV viewers. In Example 23, Chris used the inclusive “we,” as in “our team”, contrasting it with “them”, or the opposing team who would soon be faced in an indoor stadium. Talking about his team’s ability to perform better than the opposing team, Chris use of the collective “we” was expressed in a voice that might be used by a team’s coach.

Example 23 *Absolutely we are faster than them, and we will be much faster than them on turf.* (GP, Chris)

And finally, during a *RedZone* episode, Chris contemplated who his team would play if two other teams lost and expressed his thoughts similarly (Example 24).

Example 24 *All we need is Green Bay, Green Bay needs to lose, Giants need to lose, we play the Skins division in Chicago.* (RZ, Chris)

As previously mentioned, all four of the participants were actively involved in the online Fantasy Football League. This involvement influenced their dialogue and frequently was the main focus of their conversation. At times it was difficult to distinguish whether or not the participants were referencing the NFL game they were watching or the virtual games in which their Fantasy players were participating. In these moments, as if they were real coaches on the field, the participants talked about particular players as their own, using the possessive adjective “my” (see Example 25) or, as a TV commentator or coach might when addressing a coach or player, they evaluated a particular play in light of its effect on a fellow viewer addressed by the pronoun “you” (see Example 26)

Example 25 *Oh that's my guy, he'll catch it.* (RZ, Dan)

Example 26 *That's good for you.* (Dan, GP)

Example 27 *Okay, I thought you had some ulterior motive too.* (Dan, PG)

Dan's comment in Example 27 suggests that there can be a correlation, positive or negative, between viewers' personal desires as fans as opposed to their interests as Fantasy team coaches. He pointed out that accurately accounting for Tyler's unexpectedly high level of emotional attention to a previous play required reference to an investment in the outcome that went beyond that of typical fan interest.

As in Tyler's previously-documented use of the coach name “Reid” when addressing another coach on TV (Example 6), a final way that these viewers spoke about the TV involved their use of a player's name to refer to an event rather than to the person. These fans, who watched football together regularly, had established certain names they used to communicate in unique ways.

In this instance of talking about the TV, Tyler's use of “Tom Brady” indexed a previous moment during a game in which Tom Brady had made a particular football maneuver famous, at least among their TV-watching group (Example 28). As part of their subsequent discussion about the referee's call regarding the play previously mentioned in Example 17, Tyler referenced that earlier game's event to discuss this one.

Example 28 *when they did the uh “Tom Brady” uh, uh, what's that called, uh, yeah tuck roll, like they, they didn't call it out on the field. They went back into the booth and reviewed it.* (RZ, Tyler)

In sum, these participants enjoyed talking to each other about the TV. In fact, during their group interview, when asked if they were annoyed by the frequent talk among their group, Tyler expressed preference for conversing with his fellow viewers over being able to hear the “pretty bad” TV commentators (lines 5-6).

- 1 I: when you talk to each other, do you ever get annoyed
 with each
2 other that you're talking and you can't hear the
 commentator, you
3 can't hear what they're saying? Does it bother you when
 people
4 talk?
5 T: they're pretty bad ... it's because I really find the
 conversations we
6 have a lot more interesting than the conversations they
 have
(Group Interview)

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The participants in this study were (stereo)typical examples of diehard male sports fans who invested a considerable amount of time and attention in football. They often used prosodic features to frame utterances when they took on the voice of fan, coach, or commentator as they talked to, for, or about the TV. Overall, when they spoke to the TV, they took on the voice of fans or coaches who addressed players, coaches, teams, referees, or commentators. When they talked for the TV, they generally spoke as commentators, though there were also instances in which they took on the voice of a coach and even a referee. Finally, in talking about the TV, these viewers talked as fans, coaches, and commentators.

Their fan speech included characteristics documented in previous research (e.g., Beck, 1995; Gerhardt, 2006; Matthewson, 1992; and Sherry, et al., 2004); specifically, their comments displayed their knowledge of football and their allegiances to particular teams and players. Their fan speech also included 1st person plural pronouns, interjections, and the direct address of players and coaches, often by name. Also, their conversations as viewers were influenced by the actions on the screen and the TV commentators' remarks resulting in side-sequences, conversational topic shifts, and multiple conversations taking place at one time.

Their coach speech also reflected the findings of previous studies (e.g., Masterson, et al., 2006 and Turman, 2005); for example, when speaking as coaches, these participants used simple utterances and often included

commands or omitted verbs. They offered players encouragement, criticism, praise, and ridicule and incorporated football jargon as they carried out a variety of communicative functions.

Finally, their use of the commentator voice also confirmed the findings of previous research (Bryant, et al., 1977; Ferguson, 1983; Gerhardt, 2006; Hansen, 1999; Thornborrow, 2001; Williams, 1977); that is, these participants' discourse reflected characteristics of expert speakers, they provided both descriptive and interpretative commentary, and sometimes they respected the conversational turns of their TV interlocutors. However, these viewers did not respect their turns to the degree described by Gerhardt (2006); rather, they often interrupted and talked for or over speakers on TV, and even expressed a preference for doing so.

As in previous research, there was some overlap in their use of the three voices, especially in fan and coach speech. Moreover, these participants' utterances to, for, and about the TV often prompted further dialogue, and their utterances directed to the TV were intended for their fellow viewers. Finally, their interactions included some specialized use of player and coach names to refer to particular game moments or football maneuvers understood among their discourse group.

In her previous study, Tannen's (2004) participants talked to, for, and about their pets to mediate their conversations. Similarly, in this study, the participants used the TV as a conversational mediator to demonstrate their football knowledge, express their reactions to their fellow viewers, and initiate conversation with one another (as in Matthewson, 1992). The dialogue among these viewers was not limited exclusively to football, but their discussions were often centered on themes related to player and team statistics, league standings, and game-related events. In fact, when they were not speaking to or for the TV, they often spoke about it. Thus, these data also confirmed Matthewson's (1992) claim that the content of a televised program often serves to direct what viewers talk about.

In future studies, it would be interesting to analyze the speech *to*, *for*, and *about* the TV in different populations of televised-football viewers: for example, groups of female viewers, mixed groups (male and female; various ages; competing fans of different teams; etc.), groups of current/former athletes, or viewers who watch alone. Another discourse context worth exploring is that of fan interactions in more public contexts (e.g., sports bars, stadiums, etc.) or among fans of different sports (e.g., baseball, hockey, gymnastics, etc.); these contexts could lead to significantly different interactional patterns and behaviors. The findings could also be quite different if data were gathered from a group of TV viewers during a Super Bowl party, a context in which some viewers may not be interested in football but attend for merely social reasons. In all of these settings, the interactions would likely vary from those among the present, highly-engaged football fans since these

were all male, immediate family members who cheered for the same teams in the privacy of their own home.

Finally, these participants' involvement in *Fantasy Football* was briefly mentioned here but a more thorough investigation of that discourse context could prove worthwhile. Because this game allows the participants to virtually manage their own teams as coaches, it is no surprise that they then refer to the players as "my boy" or "your running back," assuming some kind of relationship and claiming a stake in their players' success.

These additional studies could also be useful to marketing and advertising companies who target sports fans and TV viewers. Knowing how people react to and interact with the TV in their own homes provides helpful information for creating commercials and products that resonate with them and their consumer behavior. And, finally, a better understanding of typical sport-viewer behaviors might lead to improved relationships among football fans and non-fans – or not.

APPENDIX A WRITTEN SURVEY

Name/Pseudonym: _____ / _____ Age: _____

1. Which sports do you like to watch regularly on television? (please circle all that apply)

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| ATP Tennis | NBA Basketball | NHL Hockey |
| MLB Baseball | NCAA Basketball | PGA Golf |
| MLS Soccer | NCAA Football | WPBF |
| Boxing | NASCAR | NFL Football |
| Wrestling | <u>other?</u> (please specify): | WWE |

2. What are your top three favorite sports to watch on television (please list them in order of preference)?

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

3. Please check all that apply to you in a typical week during the NFL season
___ I watch NFL games on television in my own home, in the homes of friends/family or in other locations (dorm rooms, sports bars, etc.).

___ I use online sources to access NFL game information (statistics, game schedule, team/player news, scores, etc.).

___ I read newspaper sports pages and/or sports magazines to keep up with NFL games, teams and players.

___ I watch pre- and post- game NFL shows and/or sports news shows to keep up with NFL games, teams and players.

___ I talk with friends/family about NFL games, teams or players while I'm watching a game on television and at other times as well.

___ I access NFL scores or other NFL-related information through my cell phone/PDA.

___ I listen to the radio to keep up with NFL games, teams and players.

4. How many NFL games (in full or in part) do you watch on television each week during the regular season? (please check only one)

- 0-1 game per week
- 2-3 games per week
- 4-6 games per week
- more than 6 games per week

5. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend watching NFL games and NFL-related sports shows on television? (please check only one)

- 0-3 hours per week
- 5-7 hours per week
- 8-12 hours per week
- more than 12 hours per week

6. Please list your most favorite NFL teams in order of preference (i.e., #1 is the team you like the most).

- #1 _____
- #2 _____
- #3 _____

7. Please list your least favorite NFL teams in order of dislike (i.e., #1 is the team you like the least).

- #1 _____
- #2 _____
- #3 _____

8. Describe your personal involvement in football (please check all that apply):

___ I have never played football as part of any organized team (pee wee football, Pop Warner teams, park leagues, high school, college, professional, etc.).

___ I have played football as part of an organized team (pee wee football, Pop Warner teams, park leagues, high school, college, professional, etc.). (Please circle all contexts that apply to you.)

___ I have never coached football as part of any organized team (pee wee football, Pop Warner teams, park leagues, high school, college, professional, etc.).

___ I have coached football as part of an organized team (pee wee football, Pop Warner teams, park leagues, high school, college, professional, etc.). (Please circle all contexts that apply to you.)

___ I have never worked as a commentator/sports reporter for football in any context.

___ I have worked as a commentator/sports reporter for football in some context.

9. True or false? (circle *true* or *false*) I like to watch televised NFL games with friends/family members.

10. For question #9, please explain why or why not with as much detail as you are willing to include. (Use back of page for more space.)

APPENDIX B GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are your NFL team preferences based on where you are from, where you live, on players you like or on other factors?
2. Did you enjoy the NFL games you watched together as part of this study? Explain.
3. What was it like being recorded while you watched these games? Do you think that your knowledge that you were being recorded changed your interactions during the games in any way? Explain.
4. Did you like the outcomes of the games you watched? Did you expect those outcomes or did you expect there to be different winners?
5. Would you consider yourselves to be fans of NFL football? Explain.
6. How do you think that your (not?) being fans shows itself while you are watching NFL games on television?
7. Do you know that you sometimes talk to the players and the coaches on television? Would you explain that?
8. What is the role of the commentators during an NFL game? Do you think you ever talk like commentators? Explain.
9. Does it bother you when people talk to you and each other while you are watching an NFL game on television?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to say about this experience or about watching NFL games on television?

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