

Sports blogging: communicative strategies in contemporary sports discourse

Tetiana Biletska, Olha Havryliuk, Vita Goian & Oles Goian

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine)

tbelka3112@gmail.com, oliagavr@gmail.com, vitagoian@gmail.com,

olesgoian@gmail.com

Abstract

The article provides an analytical description of the pragmatic level of sports blogs, identifying the main communicative strategies used in sports blogs and describing the communicative tactics as well as their linguistic operationalisation. The pragmalinguistic approach is used to identify the linguistic features, communicative and pragmatic goals of the blog, shedding light on the mechanisms that make blogosphere language into an effective tool for interactive communication. The research examines both verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication in English-language sports blogs from 2020-2022. We conclude that modern sports blogs are data-driven and interactive, characterized by a transition from a descriptive to an analytical approach to the story.

Keywords: Internet communication, sports blog, blogosphere, communication strategies, communication tactics.

Resumen

Blogs deportivos: estrategias comunicativas en el discurso deportivo contemporáneo

El presente artículo ofrece una descripción analítica del nivel pragmático de los blogs deportivos mediante la identificación de las principales estrategias comunicativas utilizadas en los blogs deportivos, la descripción de sus tácticas comunicativas y su operacionalización lingüística. Se utiliza un enfoque pragmalingüístico para identificar los rasgos lingüísticos y los objetivos comunicativos y pragmáticos del blog, de tal modo que se arroja luz sobre los mecanismos que convierten al lenguaje de la blogosfera en una herramienta eficaz para la comunicación interactiva. Este trabajo examina los aspectos

verbales y no verbales de la comunicación en los blogs deportivos en inglés de 2020-2022. Se llega a la conclusión de que los blogs deportivos modernos se basan en datos, son interactivos y se caracterizan por la transición de un enfoque descriptivo de la noticia a otro analítico.

Palabras clave: Comunicación en Internet, blog deportivo, blogosfera, estrategias de comunicación, tácticas de comunicación.

1. Introduction

Nowadays people want to be constantly aware of the events taking place in the world, and the topic of sports is no exception. The important role here is played by mass media, especially the Internet, which is a source of both objective information and subjective or even highly engaged material. In blogs, for example, the author seeks not only to inform the reader about the current events, but also to influence them. Bloggers want to attract readers, interest them, and build a lasting connection with them, and therefore, they use a range of linguistic-discursive strategies as well as multimodal affordances (Roig Marín, 2017). The effective and accurate use of these strategies and resources holds the key to the successful and prosperous development of the blog, fostering continued interest among the blog's readers (Zou & Hyland, 2020).

The blogosphere occupies an honorable place among other spheres of Internet communication. Due to its popularity, blogs are increasingly becoming part of people's lives, and even gradually becoming the main source for finding information and entertainment. Anyone can become a blogger without giving their name and without investing any money in creating their own content. Success depends on talent and imagination. This, of course, is an advantage. But, on the other hand, a huge number of blogs, both successful and unpopular, have appeared recently, so fierce competition is currently ranging in this area. Today, in order to acquire a large and loyal audience, bloggers have to work hard to create gripping content and choose the right means to organize their material.

This study focuses on English language sports blogs, which can be considered a type of Internet discourse. Our aim is to study and describe the features of sports blogs as a type of Internet discourse, identifying the main communicative strategies and tactics used by the authors of English language sports blogs, as well as their linguistic means of realization.

Accordingly, the present study addresses the following questions:

- What communicative strategies and tactics are used by the sports bloggers to become and remain influencers in this sphere?
- Do the strategies used in sports blogging overlap with each other?

Responses to these questions will provide a deeper understanding of the role sports blogging plays in contemporary sports discourse.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the authors used the pragmalinguistic approach, the essence of which is to highlight communication in the broadest sense. According to Allwood (1976), the field of pragmatics includes the study of factors that determine what information is actually communicated by the addresser and received by the addressee of the message. It is about different communicative intentions, their goals, motives and reasons, as well as the relationship between the intention of the sender, the reaction of the recipient and all systems of emotions and relationships.

For this study, the authors selected the top 4 football blogs (ranked at the top of the Top 50 Sports blogs), i.e., the sports blogs which occupy the highest positions in standard popularity ratings, which focus on football (soccer) events (www.holdoutsports.blogspot.com; www.thefootballfaithful.com; www.foottheball.com; www.sportsaldente.com). As for time limits, we focused on the last 3 years as providing the most recent evidence, despite certain limitations on the attendance of sports events, competitions and championships because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Literature review

A significant amount of communication today takes place online, in a variety of formats. New media technologies and the interactive possibilities of Internet communication have led to the emergence and development of new discursive formations in which individuals interact in online spaces - social networks, forums, chats, blogs (Aleksandrova, Mendzheritskaya & Malakhova, 2017, pp. 98-99). Research interest among the scientific community has centered on the modification of existing types of communication when transferred to the digital sphere, and the adaptation of written communication to new conditions. The activity and development of

society in these conditions depends on its ability to perceive messages, satisfying individual and collective communicative needs. The lexical-semantic, linguistic-stylistic, syntactic and graphic linguistic means available in the blogosphere (Herring et al., 2005; Babenko & Shekera, 2017), and the sociocognitive features of blogs (Dean, 2010), have already been studied. Numerous research papers by authors such as Herring, Blood, Bouvier, Chik, Crystal, Dean, Jones, Hafner, and Kompantseva indicate a steady scientific interest in Internet communication. Currently, communication on the Internet is a focus of interest for scientists in several areas, including genre, communication, media linguistics, cognitive-discursive study. Communication in the Internet environment has certain linguistic features which has made it the subject of specific research that comprehensively studies the functional features of new language styles and forms online, including the blogosphere (Kompantseva, 2007; Littauer et al., 2012; Jurida, 2013; Tomaskova, 2021).

The blogosphere is best understood as a collection of all blogs built on constant communication between bloggers and readers, since in the blogosphere environment, submission is closely related to the perception and exchange of information. The origin of the term “blog” dates back to 1998, and according to a study by Blood (2000), was originally associated with the placement of links and comments on the Internet sites of users. In 1998, programmer Garrett compiled a list of similar websites and published it on his website. These links were a kind of notes for the Internet traveler (from the English log – logbook), by analogy with the ship’s logbook. Later the creators of similar sites sent him links to their pages to add to the list, and thus the first community of bloggers appeared. Today, the term “blogosphere” means the totality of all blogs as a community of communication, or a social network, as blogs contain links to each other, including links in comments and subheadings (Herring et al, 2005, p. 107; Dean, 2010; Kian, Burden & Shaw, 2011, p. 32). The essential feature of the blog as a type of Internet communication is its dialogic nature, which is reflected in the structure of the blog, providing the opportunity for users to comment. According to Bouvier (2015, pp. 153-154), their interactive nature may mean that blogs are a more reliable source of information for Internet users compared to traditional media.

The blogosphere today covers a significant volume of communication in the Internet space. As noted by Zhyhalina (2009, p. 213), blogging today is becoming one of the most popular formats for communication, which is far

ahead of personal pages, chats, and forums, in terms of the number of users. Some researchers on Internet communication note that due to their polyphony and their combination of markers of oral and written, formal and informal features Internet texts combine elements of many traditional genres (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Herring et al., 2013, p. 9). Building on this, Ulyanova (2017) expands the existing scientific ideas about the varieties, qualitative and quantitative characteristics of genres inherent in the modern blogosphere. This Internet genre constitutes a stable polycode type of Internet communication, in which technical characteristics condition the features of the language. We can define a blog as a type of Internet communication, published on a website, that contains dated multimedia records, arranged in reverse chronological order. Blogs create the environment in which group and mass communication are realized, through unique combinations of media, pragmatic, structural and semantic, linguistic and stylistic features.

The blog is a tool for professional self-presentation and for building networks of communicative interaction (Nardi et al., 2004, p. 41; Zou & Hyland, 2020). Obviously, social media users create messages in order to initiate further communication, involving communicators in an implicit dialogue (expressing agreement / disagreement with the content of the message, approval, admiration). A blog is an unconventional genre of Internet communication that exists only in virtual reality. Therefore, blogs are addressed to everyone and at the same time to no one. A feature of modern blogging is the lack of uniform standards and clear rules regarding the content and external representation of the blog. However, communication in the blog is subject to a number of regulations: there are no real (but only virtual) participants in the communication, no time limits and no pauses in the structure. The main requirement is to attract the readers' attention and constantly provide new information (Dergach, 2020, p. 292).

There is no single standard of exactly how and what to talk/write about, or what a blog should look like. However, in order to become popular today and encourage people to follow a blog, you need to make a lot of effort, create truly high-quality and interesting content, and gather a group of people with common interests around you. Content is important to bloggers because it represents their freedom of selection and presentation. What many bloggers find most compelling about blogs is the ability to combine the immediately real and the genuinely personal (Miller & Shepherd, 2004, p.

8). According to Dergach (2020, p. 291) at present one can observe “an active tendency to the evolution of the functional resource of the media language, that is explained by the democratization of information space”. This is manifested mainly “in the expansion of verbalization of the author’s vision of certain events, their interpretation and commentary or the ability of recipients to comment on blog information content” (Dergach, 2020, p. 293).

As blogging evolves and becomes increasingly competitive, it is not enough to just create an attractive page, one needs to appeal to a real audience. One of the characteristics of blogs is their multimedia nature, the simultaneous use of several semiotic systems in the communication process, for example, a visual and audio channel. Multimedia is also manifested in the connection of verbal text with non-verbal components, i.e., graphics, pictures, photos, animations (Pohrebniak, 2020, p. 232). Moreover, the multimedia nature of blogs is reinforced by hypertextuality as its integral component (Steblyna, 2016, p. 57). This gives blogs the opportunity to expand the horizons of their influence, or even to be transferred in whole or in part to other platforms. Hypertextuality provides the possibility of unlimited information presentation.

Speaking about sports blogging, we should note that sports blogging combines elements of Internet discourse, media discourse and sports discourse. According to Shuhaiev (2019, p. 173), as a genre of media discourse, sports blogging is aimed at influencing and stimulating the recipient/addressee. The communicative goal of the sports blog is to inform readers about facts, news, notable moments, and well-known personalities in the world of sports, focusing on positive or negative moments from an objective-subjective position. A sports blog is distant in time from the sports event in question, but only by a small amount of time, because otherwise the information would lose its novelty.

As a rule, a sports blog has the following main components and features. It comprises short paragraphs describing outstanding moments of the game, where the text can be divided into thematic sections about relevant incidents within the game, important events or sportspeople highlighted in the main part of the text. Another structural feature of the blog is that it is equipped with a feedback mechanism. The addressee can comment on the addresser’s posts, agree or enter into a controversy with them. All comments are displayed on a special link, so all blog readers can see them and can join the

discussion on the topics proposed by the addresser. Sports blogs possess all the features of hypertextuality. The texts are accompanied by hyperlinks (different social media, personal web pages of the people mentioned), quotes with links to Twitter or other sources of information, photos, and videos of the key players or moments of the game, which perform an additional informative function. There is no traditional introduction or greeting as in the journalistic article, as the blog post usually starts with the most memorable moment of the game with an informative statement or rhetorical question.

Until recently, the linguistic aspects of the sports blogosphere have rarely been studied, but now academic research in this area is actively responding to social events in the communicative Internet space. Various aspects of communicative interaction in blogs (Herring et al., 2004; Zemliakova, 2010; Abusa'aleek, 2015) have now been comprehensively studied, multidisciplinary research on blogs has been carried out: psycholinguistic (Nardi et al., 2004), sociocognitive (Dean, 2010), national and cultural (Combi, 2016). However, the communicative and pragmatic features of the sports blogosphere need further study. To analyse the blog as a type of Internet communication we need to establish a link between the communicative goals of the blogger and the means of their implementation.

3. Methodology

Using the pragmalinguistic approach, the authors identified and analysed the main communicative strategies and tactics used. A number of other methods of linguistic analysis were also applied, namely: (i) linguistic stylistic analysis (to clarify the role of individual lexical and textual elements in the implementation of the communicative and pragmatic intention of the participants); (ii) contextual analysis (to observe language in context, compare it and define the evaluative functions for expressing the main content and additional implicit information); (iii) general analysis and synthesis of information (for practical identification of the lexical-grammatical and communicative-pragmatic features of the sports blog). The research methods of linguistic observation and systematization of the data were also used.

4. Findings

Communication in sports blogging is becoming increasingly effective due to the appropriate use of communicative strategies and tactics. The present study identified the communication strategies in sports blog posts and found five main strategies. In the material analysed, five main communicative strategies were identified: informative, evaluation, self-presentation, regulatory and metacommunicative strategies, which were implemented by different sets of communicative tactics. The main and most frequently used strategies in English sports blogs are presented in Table 1.

Strategy	Communicative goal
informative	to inform the reader
evaluation	to express personal thoughts, evaluations, emotions
self-presentation	to create an image of a blogger
regulatory	to change the behavior of the interlocutor, the course of the communicative event
metacommunicative	to attract the interlocutor's attention, initiate communication, make sure how the communication channel works

Table 1. Strategies of English sports blogs and their communicative goals.

This division is notional to some extent because in the real situation of communication authors do not clearly identify their goals and there may be some mixing: for example, providing information occurs alongside presenting factual information with the expression of personal opinion or an amateur analysis of ongoing sports events. In what follows, we discuss each strategy and the tactics used within each one.

Informative strategy

Sports blog posts are mostly stories about recent or past events and activities where bloggers create a verbal and visual presentation of this information. Within the framework of the informative strategy, seven communicative tactics were defined:

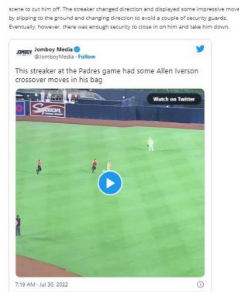
1. *The tactic of concise and neutral presentation of information.* The factual information is expressed both verbally and through infographics, as the blogger aims not so much to evaluate anything, but to provide readers with information about the subject of the message (1):

- (1) The 19-year-old scored during Borussia Dortmund's 2-1 defeat at Manchester City on Wednesday and is now the highest-scoring English

teenager in Champions League history. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 15, 2022)

In the next case the blogger accompanies the textual form of presenting information with video attached to the text of the post (see Figure 1). This combination of verbal and visual forms is used to realize the tactic mentioned above:

The stalker changed direction and displayed some impressive moves by slipping to the ground and changing direction to avoid a couple of security guards. Eventually, however, there was enough security to close in on him and take him down.



(www.holdoutsports.blogspot.com – July 30, 2022)

Figure 1. The combination of verbal and visual forms.

2. *The tactic of presenting external information* is realized through the hypertextual form of the blog. Each blog has a set of hyperlinks on social networks like Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram (see Figures 2-3), intended either to share this blog or to add extra information about an event, data, outstanding sportsperson or a blogger, which can be obtained by clicking the highlighted names or corresponding title of a blog post by another author:

Player Profile: Manchester United target Matheus Cunha

by Harry Diamond · about a month ago



(www.thefootballfaithful.com – August 16, 2022)

Figure 2. Hyperlinks on social networks.

Read – [Heroes and Villains: Premier League Matchday 8](#)

Read Also – [Premier League Team of the Week – Matchday 8](#)

(www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 20, 2022)

Figure 3. Hyperlinks on events, data or famous people.

3. By using *the tactic of specification*, the blogger refers to the relevant information (names, clubs, place and time of the event, participants and relationships between them, etc.), to make their blog more informative for everyone. It helps better understand the essence of the blog post. Here is an example of parenthesis that gives extra information about the relevant sports club of the above-mentioned football player (2):

- (2) The biggest example is Manchester United capturing the signings of Ibrahimovic (PSG), Pogba (Juventus) and Mkhitarjan (Dortmund) during the season they'd play the Europa League. (www.foottheball.com – May 25, 2022)

Moreover, infographics help the blogger create the full informative picture covering ongoing issues with accurate detailed information (statistics, previous experience, achievements, etc.) (see Figure 4):



(www.foottheball.com – May 25, 2022)

Figure 4. Infographics for specification.

4. *The explanation tactic* serves to give extra information to the reader through explanation of the essence and significance of the current event (3-4).

- (3) McGregor, *who became the fifth oldest player in Champions League history at 40 years and 226 days*, kept Rangers in the game at 0-0 and made two penalty saves ... (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 15, 2022)
- (4) There are some things in football which are never said out loud but are accepted as the norm. At Valencia or a West Ham United, *if a player does*

well, it's an underwritten pact that he will look to move on to a "bigger" club.
(www.football.com – May 25, 2022)

5. Presenting information is achieved by the tactic of *historical reference*, that is the extra information about the previous achievements and results of a sportsman (5-6):

- (5) The Mannschaft were knocked out of the *2018 World Cup* in the group stages and would want to redeem themselves in Qatar. (www.football.com – May 25, 2022)
- (6) It has been there *since the year 1956* and clubs compete in their respective leagues to qualify for Europe. (www.football.com – September 17, 2022)

6. *The tactic of annotating information* from the original source is one of the ways to filter information in review posts, in which bloggers can briefly present the information not from one but from several sources, which reflects the informative focus of the post (7-8):

- (7) *The Telegraph are reporting* that the Reds are leading the race for Bellingham, with Jurgen Klopp having made 'no secret' of his admiration for the former Birmingham City player. Klopp discussed how his leading transfer targets were not available during the summer, increasing speculation that Bellingham was on the club's shortlist. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 15, 2022)
- (8) *According to The Sun*, that figure makes Ramos an attainable target for Erik ten Hag who is working on a reduced budget following the club's record summer spending spree. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 20, 2022)

This tactic involves a summary of the content of the original source with reference to it without evaluative judgements by the author. In the analysed material, annotation of information is carried out not only for verbal written sources, but also for media content, full acquaintance with which requires a long time (9).

- (9) In his dialogue with GOAL, Messi confirmed that he actually did desire to leave the club. He justified his reason for the same and his desire to play elsewhere so as to win more trophies. [Watch video] "I WANTED TO GO BECAUSE I THOUGHT ABOUT LIVING MY LAST YEARS OF FOOTBALL HAPPILY. LATELY I HAVE NOT FOUND

HAPPINESS WITHIN THE CLUB” (www.foottheball.com – September 5, 2020)

7. *The tactic of direct citation* with reference to the original site or hyperlink to the relevant post is also used by bloggers (10).

- (10) “I’m extremely pleased. He’s showed a lot of character and a lot of guts,” Gerrard told Sky Sports. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 19, 2022)

Evidenced by the researched material, at the present stage in the hypertext environment of the Internet, direct citation (see Figure 5), to give the information message authenticity, tends to give way to hyperlinks.

• **Marteen Vandevoord:** *Belgium’s young goalkeeper is part of the next golden generation*

(www.foottheball.com – September 14, 2022)

Figure 5. Direct citation.

Using these tactics, bloggers try to present information as objectively as possible, giving the readers the opportunity to determine their own attitude to it.

Evaluation strategy

Given that a blogger is a charismatic personality who acts as a role model for a great number of people, the position of the blogger is more clearly presented through use of explicit and implicit evaluation strategies. The study identified the following tactics for implementing this strategy:

1. *The tactic of condemnation or approval* is implemented by means of adjectives which explicitly reflect the evaluative attitude of the blogger. The bloggers not only provide explanations and comments on the original source, but also give a certain assessment which marks their subjectivity, mostly expressed in a succinct, restrained way (11-14).

- (11) The current situation is *bad* and the Argentine is *helpless*. He doubts the future success of the 2019-20 campaign as well (www.foottheball.com – July 18, 2020);

- (12) His challenge on Jack Grealish was *high, reckless and rash*, with his attempt to plead his innocence falling on deaf ears after a *waist-high studs-up challenge* on the England winger. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 19, 2022)
- (13) From Lionel Messi's *stunning* header against Manchester United to Ronaldo's *incredible* overhead kick against Juventus, we have witnessed some *magical* moments throughout the years. (www.foottheball.com – September 17, 2022)
- (14) Galtier, therefore, is a *true match*. (www.foottheball.com – November 4, 2021)

2. *The tactic of interpretation* implicitly expresses assessment by means of:

• Modality (15):

- (15) Recalled to the Rangers side, the veteran goalkeeper *could hardly have done more* to keep his side in the contest against Napoli. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 15, 2022)

• Metaphors (16):

- (16) This overperformance was one of the best in Europe. With Adeyemi and an improved defence, they could finally have an excellent chance to dislodge Bayern Munich's *iron grip* on the Bundesliga. (www.foottheball.com – May 25, 2022)

3. *The Comparison tactic* is a kind of implicit assessment which reveals the blogger's attitude to the issue. The combination of both explicit and implicit assessment can be seen in example (17):

- (17) No wonder losing him [Messi] feels so shocking, then so numbing, *like losing a limb*. (www.foottheball.com – September 9, 2020)

4. *The tactic of direct citation with hyperlinks* implements the evaluation strategy by adding the assessment of outstanding people (sportsmen, coaches, etc.):



(www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 15,2022)

Figure 6. Direct citation with a hyperlink.

Considering the key purpose of the sports blog, i.e., to inform the reader of the latest sports events from the perspective of a blogger, a subjective perception is inevitable. Therefore, the evaluation strategy reasonably goes with or overlaps with the informative one (18).

- (18) The club has always emphasized developing players rather than buying them, a *hugeby successful tactic*. – except informing, the blogger adds his subjective assessment of the event. (www.foottheball.com – May 25,2022)

It is worth mentioning that a sports blog is a story or/with an analytical commentary of the latest sports events with the elements of evaluation provided by sports bloggers themselves. Thus, the interconnection between the informative and evaluative strategies is evident (19).

- (19) Xhaka has created an average of two chances per game and has three assists in seven league games, just one less than the past two seasons combined. Operating in the inside left channel, it is a position that *maximises Xhaka's ability* on the ball, while he has *the tactical intelligence* to cover the *marauding runs* of Oleksandr Zinchenko or Kieran Tierney from full-back. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 21, 2022)

Self-presentation strategy

A special place in the blog is taken by self-presentation strategies, which are performed both explicitly and implicitly. These are implemented by:

1. *The descriptive tactic of the blogger's life reference*. This is presented by a brief abstract about the blogger, and demonstrates the key facts about the blogger to create their image with or without the corresponding picture and a hyperlink to his/her personal web page on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or other social networks (see Figures 7, 8).



(www.football.com – May 25, 2022)

Figure 7. Blogger's life reference with a photo



(www.holdoutsports.blogspot.com – July 30, 2022)

Figure 8. Blogger's life reference without a visual form.

Notably, due to their explicit presentation in the blog, the above-mentioned examples instantiate an overlap between informative, evaluative, self-presentation, regulatory and metacommunicative strategies.

2. *The tactic of identification with the audience or ongoing blog* comprises the elements of inclusive deictic 'we', which denotes a circle of people to whom the blogger and the readers belong, united by common values and worldview (20-21):

- (20) A lot of clubs are actively involved in the transfer market as *we* speak. (www.sportsaldente.com – July 22, 2022)
- (21) Having witnessed the ugly side of the event, *we* respect Messi and shall continue to. *We* hope to see you play well, wherever you may go! (www.football.com – September 5, 2022)

As we see in the example above this tactic is accompanied with evaluation strategy to create a common attitude of praise for the football player.

3. *The tactic of subjective modality* to reflect the author's confidence, uncertainty, their doubts about the situation, some cases, the player's capabilities, or the validity of the referee's decision. This is achieved by using relevant adverbs, such as *surely*, *undoubtedly*, *perhaps* (22-23):

- (22) Manchester United have produced many great legends, and Ryan Giggs is *undoubtedly* one of them. (www.football.com – September 17, 2022)
- (23) *Perhaps*, this list below can answer your question. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – January 24, 2022)

Regulatory strategy

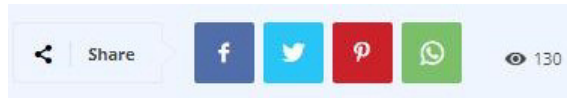
This is one of the main strategies in sports blog communication, which is used to influence the readers’ attitude, namely to persuade, command or request the audience to follow the blogger’s intention. It is aimed at transforming the worldview of the addressee, to make them get interested in the blog or event. The regulatory strategy is implemented through:

1. *The tactic of request* that guides the reader’s actions or thoughts, like “Add comment” (see Figure 9), “Reply”, “Share” (see Figure 10), “Read replies”, with hyperlinks which make them follow the directive utterance. It provides the blogger with feedback, and thus ensures that the communication is effective.



(www.sportsaldente.com – August 5, 2022)

Figure 9. The tactic of request (hyperlink “Add comment”).



(www.football.com – May 25, 2022)

Figure 10. The tactic of request (hyperlink “Share”).

A typical directive “Follow me on ...” with a hyperlink to the relative network of this sports blog (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) is mentioned in the brief life review block about the blogger (24).

- (24) *About Michael James*

Moonlighting as a blogger to pursue my interest and enjoyment of sports. Former high school and Division I athlete (now a “retired” family man) that loves watching and discussing all sports. *Follow me on Twitter (@HoldoutSports)* and like *Holdout Sports* on Facebook. (www.holdoutsports.blogspot.com – July 30, 2022)

2. *The tactic of emphasizing information* to focus the addressee’s attention on a certain event. It makes the reader concentrate on that exact statement in the post. It is achieved by means of:

- Adverbials of different types (time or purpose)

(25) *Once again*, before the 2020-21 campaign, they had to sell top-scorer Victor Osimhen along with key defender Gabriel. *Not to be deterred*, Galtier identified top replacements in Burak Yilmaz. (www.foottheball.com – November 4, 2021)

- Inversion

(26) *Not only* did he shape the future of Barcelona, he would also be the inspiration for many a player and future manager, with Pep Guardiola’s brand of football firmly based on the principles of his former coach. (www.thefootballfaithful.com – March 24, 2021)

3. *The tactic of intrigue* which allows the blogger to use interrogative sentences that make the readers confused for a moment. At the same time the blogger does not wait for feedback, since there are no pauses in the structure of the blog and no time limits, but rather she/he gives the immediate answer to the question that is of interest for the audience. She/he directs the flow of the addressee’s thoughts: first, he/she makes them stop and think, and then he/she guides them to the answer. Moreover, the blogger determines what the readers are interested in and attaches the hyperlink (see 27 and Figure 11) for further information. This tactic is used at the very beginning or in the middle of the blog post.

(27) Where To Watch English Premier League In The US, UK And Australia?

We have all the answers to your questions. For example, where can one watch the English Premier League? You will find the answer in this article, so don’t stop reading. (www.sportsaldente.com – July 22, 2022)

Ever wondered *why PSG's stadium is called Parc des Princes? Here's why*

(www.football.com – March 23, 2021)

Figure 11. Hyperlink to keep the readers intrigued.

Metacommunicative strategy

Regarding the implementation of the metacommunicative strategy, it demonstrates the specificity of the blog as a type of Internet communication, which illustrates the bloggers' understanding of their blogs as personal space. Metacommunicative elements available on the new media are divided into the following: (i) pictorial metacommunicative elements (emoticons, emojis, stickers); (ii) alphabetical metacommunicative elements (abbreviations, words, phrases); (iii) intuitive metacommunicative elements (nonverbal – voice tone, silence, pauses).

Metacommunicative elements of face-to-face communication are understood as the non-verbal cues (tone of voice, body language, gestures, facial expressions, etc.), whereas sports blogs as instances of Internet communication covers only pictorial and alphabetic elements. These either enhance or disallow what the blogger means owing to the hypertextual features of the blog. Therefore, the metacommunicative strategy here is implemented by:

1. *The tactic of grabbing the reader's attention* via hyperlinks to other social networks or other blog posts. Looking at the informative, neutral but colourful, and vivid infographics (see Figure 12) the readers understand that they are to click and shift to the next post or the site on the other social network that this blog links to.



(www.sportsaldente.com – August 5, 2022)

Figure 12. Colourful infographics.

2. *The tactic of providing extra information.* Here is an example of direct citation in sports blog where this tactic is implemented by means of pictorial metacommunicative elements, namely stickers (blue bird as a symbol of Twitter, blue and yellow hearts – the colors of the Ukrainian flag – denote the blogger’s support for Ukraine in its hardest times) and alphabetical ones (word ‘follow’ in a blue colour, the typical colour of Twitter) with hyperlinks to the networks they link to (see Figure 13):



Figure 13. The tactic of providing extra information (hyperlinks to the networks).

Notably, the above-mentioned tactic implements both metacommunicative and regulatory strategies by focusing the reader’s attention and regulating it by underlining the words behind the messages (textual, graphic).

3. *The tactic of the graphic expression of speech prosody.* The use of graphic means gives the opportunity to the addresser (a blogger, sportsperson, coach, an outstanding person) to express their emotions as a reaction to the ongoing sports event. It is implemented by punctuation devices and uppercase letters. Here is an example of a story accompanied by a capitalized statement “*FULL-TIME JOB*” which evokes the relevant ideas about the efforts of the football players and the intensity of the moment in the minds of the target audience (28):

- (28) ... they jokingly suggest that it is a competition made up of people who take up “actual farming” as their *FULL-TIME JOB* and then play football after their respective shifts. (www.foottheball.com – March 23, 2021)

The next hypertextual direct citation from the website of Manchester City uses punctuation, particularly an exclamation mark at the end of the

sentence, which adds expressiveness to the evaluative meaning of the sentence (see Figures 14, 15). It creates an additional level of emotional perception of the event.



(www.football.com – April 5, 2021)

Figure 14. The graphic expression of speech prosody (exclamation mark).



(www.thefootballfaithful.com – September 15, 2022)

Figure 15. The graphic expression of speech prosody (exclamation mark and capitalization).

The above-mentioned hypertextual direct citation is a unique example of sports blog strategies overlapping. The metacommunicative strategy is implemented through the tactic of graphic expression of speech prosody by using upper case in the directive utterance, duplication of the letters with acoustically lengthened vowels, an exclamation mark and emojis that demonstrate a hyper-emotional reaction and favourable evaluative attitude of the addresser towards the sportsman, as well as the adjective “ridiculous” in its positive and comparative degrees. Moreover, this message, delivered in the form of direct citation due to its hypertextuality (hyperlinks to the source of the utterance) and pictorial metacommunicative elements (emojis), greatly attracts the readers’ attention, encouraging them to read it and even to visit the linked website. Therefore, it also implements the regulatory strategy. Evidently, this commentary about the ongoing actions also makes use of the informative strategy. All in all, we consider that the metacommunicative strategy is predominantly applied in close connection with other strategies used in the blogs.

5. Conclusion

This study of the dynamics of sports blogs was performed in line with the pragmalinguistic approach, which helped us identify the development of their linguistic features, communicative and pragmatic goals, through the study of mechanisms that make the language of the blogosphere as an effective communicative tool. The study of the English-language sports blog presented in the article made it possible to define sports blogs as a dynamic type of Internet communication, which is characterized by specific communicative, pragmatic, and linguistic characteristics.

From the results of the study, the authors of the article can conclude that sports bloggers use a number of strategies and tactics that allow them to generate feedback from the addressees, guaranteeing two-way communication that will ensure continuing audience interaction. Informative, evaluation, self-presentation, regulatory and metacommunicative strategies are considered along with the tactics of their implementation. To attract and retain readers, sports blogs should use a variety of the strategies and tactics analysed here, thereby achieving effective communication.

We would like to conclude this study by pointing to the possibility of further research on the sports blogosphere as an important digital genre. Further, our conclusions could serve as a basis for further study of the peculiarities of the construction and functioning of sports discourse in general.

Article history:

Received 7 August 2022

Received in revised form 14 November 2022

Accepted 30 December 2022

References

- Abusa'aleek, A. O. (2015). Internet Linguistics: A linguistic analysis of electronic discourse as a new variety of language. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 5(1), 135-145. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v5n1p135>
- Aleksandrova, O., Mendzheritskaya, E., & Malakhova, V. (2017). Dynamic changes in modern English discourse. *Training, Language and Culture*, 1(1), 92-106. <https://doi.org/10.29366/2017tlc.1.1.6>
- Allwood, J. S. (1976). *Linguistic communication as action and cooperation. A study in pragmatics*. PhD Thesis. Gothenburg University.
- Askehave, I., & Nielsen, A. E. (2005). Digital genres: a challenge to traditional genre theory. *Information Technology & People*, 18(2), 120-141. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09593840510601504>
- Babenko, O. V., & Shekera, O. O. (2017). Sports Internet discourse as a subject of linguistic research. *Young Scientist*, 11(51), 178-181
- Blood, R. (2000). Weblogs: A history and

- perspective. *Rebecca's Pocket*. http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html.
- Bouvier, G. (2015). What is a discourse approach to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social media: connecting with other academic fields? *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 10(2), 149-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2015.1042381>
- Combi, M. (2016). Cultures and technology: An analysis of some of the changes in progress – digital, global and local culture. In K. J. Borowiecki, N. Forbes & A. Fresa (Eds.), *Cultural Heritage in a Changing World* (pp. 3-15). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29544-2_1
- Dean, J. (2010). *Blog theory: Feedback and capture in the circuits of drive*. Polity Press.
- Dergach, D. V. (2020). Research variations of blog analysis: genre or format? *Notes on Ukrainian Linguistics. Suggestive Linguistics, Communicative Linguistics*, 27, 291-299.
- Herring, S. C., Scheidt, L. A., Bonus, S., & Wright, E. (2004). Bridging the gap: A genre analysis of weblogs. *Proceedings of the 37th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. IEEE Press.
- Herring, S. C., Kouper, I., Paolillo, J. C., Scheidt, L. A., Tyworth, M., Welsch, P., Wright, E., & Yu, N. (2005). Conversations in the blogosphere: An analysis "from the bottom up". *Proceedings of the 38th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. IEEE Press.
- Herring, S. C., Stein, D., & Virtanen, T. (2013). Introduction to the pragmatics of computer-mediated communication. *Handbook of Pragmatics of Computer-mediated Communication* (pp. 3-31). Mouton.
- Jurida, S. H. (2013). Linguistic properties and aspects of blogging within the context of Netspeak. *Jezikoslovlje*, 14(2-3), 517-536.
- Kian, E. M., Burden, J. W., Jr., & Shaw, S. D. (2011). Internet sport bloggers: Who are these people and where do they come from? *Journal of Sport Administration & Supervision*, 3(1), 30-43.
- Kompantseva, L. F. (2007). *Internet communication: cognitive-pragmatic and linguo-cultural aspects*. Doctor of Science Thesis Abstract. University of Luhansk.
- Littauer, R., Winters, J., Roberts, S. G., Little, H., Pleyer, M. & Benzon, B. (2012). Academic research in the blogosphere: Adapting to new risks and opportunities on the Internet. *Digital Humanities 2012 Conference Abstracts*.
- Miller, C. R., & Shepherd, D. (2004). *Blogging as social action: A genre analysis of the weblog*. University of Minnesota. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy. <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/172818>
- Nardi, B. A., Schiano, D. J., Gumbrecht, M., & Swartz, L. H. (2004). Why we blog? *Communications of the ACM*, 47(12), 41-46. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1035134.1035163>
- Pohrebniak, I. V. (2020). Blogging as a form of modern network art and journalism genre. *Scientific notes of TNU named after V. I. Vernadskyi*, 31(70), 229-233. <https://doi.org/10.32838/2663-6069/2020.3-3/36>
- Roig Marín, A. (2017). Keeping up with the digital age: New data sources in research on languages for specific purposes. *Ibérica, Journal of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes*, 34, 283-292. <https://revistaiberica.org/index.php/iberica/article/view/155/114>
- Shuhaiev, A. V. (2019). Media-discourse within the critical discourse-analysis and functional approach. *Research Journal of Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University. Series "Philology" (Linguistics)*, 11, 172-176.
- Steblyna, N. (2016). Thoughts on blog as a genre. To the problem of the web-text functionality. *Problems of Contemporary Literary Studies*, 22, 54-65.
- Tomaskova, R. (2021). University research blogs: constructing identity through language and images. *European Journal of English Studies*, 25(3), 385-403. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2021.1988257>
- Top 50 Sports blogs*. <https://www.scorebig.com/home/top-50-sports-blogs>.
- Ulyanova, M. (2017). *The category of emotionality and the means of its expression in the sports blogosphere*. PhD Thesis Abstract. University of Izhevsk.
- Zemliakova, O. O. (2010). *Linguistic characteristics of the English-language corporate blog genre*. PhD Thesis Abstract, University of Kharkiv.
- Zhyhalina, O. (2009). Blog as a hypergenre of Internet communication. *Psycholinguistics*, 4, 210-216.
- Zou, H., & Hyland, K. (2020). Academic blogging: Scholars' views on interacting with readers. *Ibérica, Journal of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes*, 39, 267-294. <http://www.revistaiberica.org/index.php/iberica/article/view/84/39>

Tetiana Biletska is a Ukrainian scientist, Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication in Scientific and Educational Institute of Philology at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, PhD in German Languages, the author of articles on discourse analysis and pragmatics. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5376-4819>

Olha Havryliuk is a Ukrainian scientist, Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication in Scientific and Educational Institute of Philology at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, PhD in German Languages, the author of research articles on sports discourse. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0365-3248>

Vita Goian is a Ukrainian scientist, Head of the Department of Cinematography and Television Arts in the Institute of Journalism at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Doctor of Science in Social Communications, Professor, member of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1207-3800>

Oles Goian is a Ukrainian scientist, Head of the Department of Television and Radio Broadcasting in the Institute of Journalism at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Doctor of Science in Philology, Professor, the author of textbooks and manuals, scientific articles and publications in theory of radio journalism and development of non-state broadcasting in Ukraine. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4264-2613>

