

Generic Structure Potential of Football Matches in Newspaper Reporting

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Abstract: Existing studies on generic structure potential (GSP) were on shop transaction, advertisement, editorials, resolutions, court interactions and Christian apologetics, among others. Studies on generic structure potential of football discourse are on a rare side. This study intended to explore GSP application on football matches in newspapers. The study identified the elements of the text structure potential in terms of the obligatory and optional elements prevalent in selected 2010 World Cup football matches in newspaper reporting in Nigeria. Three purposively selected sport-based Nigerian newspapers namely: *Sporting Life*, *Soccer Star* and *Complete Sports* were used for the study. Each of the newspapers selected has a total of 128 lead reports; giving a total of 384 match reports from the sports newspapers. Of these 384 match reports, 36 reports were randomly selected from each the newspapers for analysis. These gave a total of 108 match reports all together from the three newspapers. These newspapers were selected because they had orientation for sport news reporting. The study showed that ten macrostructural elements characterised the generic structure potential of the texts. Out of these, four were obligatory while six were optional. The obligatory elements identified were Title [T], Preamble [P], Online Thesis [OT], and Online Thesis Expatiation [OTE]. The optional elements were Voice Insertion (VI), Offline Thesis Insertion (OTI), Offline Thesis Expatiation (OFTE), Evaluation (Eva), Prediction (Pre) and Winding Up (WUp). The study concluded that there is a distinctive genre of football reporting.

Keywords: GSP, macrostructural, football matches, online thesis, offline thesis, distinctive genre.

I. Introduction

This study investigates the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) of football match reports in selected sport-based newspapers in Nigeria. The choice of football match reports from the selected national sport-based newspapers in Nigeria was motivated by my personal interest in football and the popularity that soccer has gained all over the world in recent years. Football is very significant in many ways. Football has been a useful tool in peace building, conflict resolutions, promotion of Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), promotion of bilateral relationship, reconstruction of nations and reconciliation, among others. It is no gainsaying that football is significant to human race and studying the language of football plays a vital role in global development.

II. The Language Of Football Report

The language of football is a professional language and football is well recognised across the globe. In the field of sports reporting in newspapers, writers are required to be highly competent in language relating to sports as reading about sports requires a vivid representation of the game in readers mind. In addition, readers of sports sections in newspaper tend to be those who have emotional attachment to the game that they read about. In order to understand how sports are represented to the public, there is need to look at the language that is being used and the values and association which come with the language. Beard (1998) worked on the language in a text taken from a football fanzine called "Follow follow" which supports Glasgow Rangers. He notes that the type of language used is persuasive which is meant to support the idea that Rangers' fans must change their attitude towards black players. Beard (1998) notes further that the majority of metaphors identified in the newspaper reports on the game are used to describe the game itself, or such as winning and losing. The study concludes that the use of metaphor is relatively common in football reporting in Malaysian Newspapers.

Working on different types of sports writing, Beard (1998) notes that what is important is the primary purpose that lies behind such writings. In writing match reports, the main purpose is to inform readers about the game so that they pick up details of the matches as well as the actual description of how the game was played. Sometimes, reporters also try to persuade readers to take a particular point of view. Thus, when writing, writers also need to take the target readership into account. Beard (1998:83) is of the opinion that the purpose of sports coverage has gone beyond information but involves entertainment because certain level of gossip, intrigue and the personal lives of the players are usually involved.

Alvaro's (2004) work on the linguistic analysis of the narrative sections of football club Annual Reports reveals a lot on the language of narratives. In the work, the initial paragraphs of 2009-2010 English Football Club Chairman's statements, an informative and promotional business letter are analysed. The study utilises the model developed by Fortanet-Gomez (2009). Following the taxonomy introduced by Fortanet-Gomez (2009), the study reveals that football club chairman follows the same strategies developed by their counterparts in other industries. The study concludes that the chairman introduced the passionate element deliberately in order to sympathize with the team supporters. It could also be with the intention to omit negative financial information via the linguistic characteristic mentioned in the Fortanet-Gomez (ibid) such as the use of pronouns and possessives like 'we' and 'our' and how they are frequently used when introducing financial raw data and in the discussion of the company's future plan.

Khatijah and Shamsuddin (2008) investigate language used in media reporting of professional football language, The Merdeka Cup and The Asian Cup tournaments held in Malaysia as reported in two Malaysian English language newspapers, The New Straits Times and The Malay Mail. The work focuses on language use among Malaysia sports writers in their football match reports. Thirty newspapers reports were studied at the level of phrases and sentences. The study reveals that the majority of metaphor identified in the newspaper reports were used to describe the game itself as well as winning and losing and that Malaysian newspaper sports writers use metaphor for some other reasons such as economizing the number of words used, using metaphors in emotionally charged manner and also in order to persuade their readers to agree on a stance. The study concludes that the use of metaphor is relatively common in football reporting in Malaysian newspapers.

Selected Previous Studies On Football Discourse

Several studies have been carried out on football discourse. Some of these studies on football discourse will be discussed. Buyukkantarcioglu (1999) investigates critical report published in Milliyet after an international football match between Turkey and Moldova in 1999. The work adopts a critical discourse study approach and social psychological perspective to establish an ideological framework in the text and illustrate the functions of ideology in discourse. He notes the intentional selection of lexical, semantic and syntactic structures in the football discourse.

Dellema's (2005) work is on a post-match report on Euro 2004 (European Championship qualifying association football match between England and Slovakia). The work examines the cohesive properties of the text by analysing extracted sentences taken from post-match report of Euro 2004 earlier mentioned. The study reveals that, for the text to be coherent for the student of English, the teacher must pre-teach any exophoric knowledge (e.g. geographical references) to enable the reader to successfully decode any links found.

Mehler (2006) examines the football coverage of World Cup qualification in selected Ghanaian and Ivorian newspapers. The work investigates the way different political contexts influence style and context of football coverage and their likely implications. The work reveals that discourse within football coverage referring to political issues reflect dominant and, possibly contesting 'truth' which are linked to power relations and political struggles within a given society.

Georgalou (2009) analyses the football commentaries of the matches in which the Greek national football team competed during Euro 2004. She adopts the discourse historical approach, a theoretical as well as empirical approach in Critical Discourse Analysis. The work shed light on how football provides a setting in which the discourse of national identity is bound to be displayed and mediated by mass communication.

Generic Structure Potential (GSP)

Hasan (1984:79) describes the GSP of a particular genre as a statement of the structural resources available within a given genre. A GSP is thus an abstract theoretical notion. Halliday and Hasan (1989:64) note that it

...express(es) the total range of optional, (iterative), and obligatory elements and their order in such a way that we exhaust the possibilities of text structure for every text that can be appropriate to (the contextual configuration of that text).

Halliday and Hasan (1989:55) introduce the concept of contextual configuration using the acronym CC instead of the full label as an account of the significant attributes of a social activity. Specifically, each of the three elements of the context of situation, that is, field, tenor and mode, may be thought as variable that is represented by some specific value(s). Each variable functions as a point of entry to any situation as a set of possibilities and/or options. This means that any member of a related pair of options can combine with any member of any other to form a specific CC. Therefore, a CC is a specific set of values that realises field, tenor and mode, and permits statements about the text structures to be made (Halliday and Hasan 1985:56). In other words, contextual configuration plays an important role in the structural unit of texts and reveals the relationship between text and its context. Contextual Configuration can predict the following about text structure:

1 Obligatory elements- What elements must occur?

- 2 Optional elements - What elements may occur?
- 3 Sequencing of elements - what arrangement of elements are obligatory and optional?
- 4 Iteration - How often may what elements occur?

As regards the relationship between the elements in a configuration, Halliday and Hasan (1989) state that it is possible to express the total range of optional and obligatory elements and their order in such a way that we exhaust the possibility of text structure of every text that can be appropriate to a particular CC. This possibility is what is known as the structural potential of the genre or its generic structure potential (GSP). GSP captures the possible characteristics of texts belonging to a particular genre. It tries to identify and present preferred textual organisation for text in a genre. This preferred textual organisation is said to be based on the social/ communicative purpose that a genre sets out to achieve. The GSP is also a powerful device that permits a large number of possible structures that can be actualised. Specific contextual configurations of a text predicts the optional and obligatory elements of text structure, the generic structure being defined by the obligatory structural elements, allows for variations in texts. Halliday and Hasan 1989 also note that a GSP indicates the conditions under which a text may be regarded as reflecting a particular contextual configuration and may be actualised in a number of possible structures. Obligatory and optional elements and their sequences of occurrence are important in any GSP and this makes the text genre specific.

The obligatory elements of a text in the GSP model are considered genre specific as they define the genre to which a text belongs. Unlike the optional elements, the obligatory elements is determine through decoding, whether texts are complete or incomplete. The optional elements, on the other hand, are not considered as criteria for this. Hasan (1997:239) notes that if a particular text does not realise one or more of these elements (obligatory and optional elements), they may still be considered complete but may be classified as ‘brusque’, ‘business like’ bald, etc.

Hasan’s (1996:62) work on the nursery tale is within the framework of GSP and demonstrates how a complete GSP analysis will then produce linguistic statements of three kinds:

- 1 Statements about the elements of text structure
- 2 Statements of the crucial semantic features of those elements; and
- 3 Statements of the lexicogrammatical patterns that can realise those semantic features

Moore and Tuckwell (2006) state that Generic Structure theory is a theory of the dynamic, bidirectional relationship between a text’s structure and the relevant features of the context in which that text occurs. That is, it attempts to account for the way a particular combination of contextual features (a contextual configuration in Hasan’s terms) activates a particular textual structure (i.e. particular genre), and the way the contextual configuration is simultaneously constructed by the meanings of that textual structure. Following Hasan’s (1996:62) statements, Moore and Tuckwell (2006:208) state that the first two types of statements, when made with respect to some types of professional discourse, should be relatively ‘accessible’ to any expert participant in that discourse, since the structural elements in the GSP of a particular genre are defined functionally by the job they do in that contextual configuration. Hasan (1985:68) notes that the crucial semantic features of an element are essential to ‘moving a text along’ with regard to its social purpose. Hasan (1994:146) suggests that optional elements of a genre’s structure potential are related to the tenor and mode of the discourse.

For Fartousi and Dumanig (2012), the GSP model which is driven from the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) is a compact statement that shows the elements and their sequence in the structure of a text. These macro-structural elements, regardless of their size, hold the potential or possibility for a text structure or unity of structure (macro-connexity). The sequenced elements that make up the GSP of a genre offer at least a proposition.

The GSP approach to text analysis deals with the ordering and recursion of the generic elements in texts. There are different obligations in the sequencing of the generic elements in any text. Hasan (1989) states further that the degree of mobility varies from pair to pair of elements to other pairs of elements. A given element may occur in a fixed sequence vis-a-vis another specific element but not vis-a-vis some other(s). According to Hasan (1989), the permissible sequences of the obligatory elements are used as other criteria to determine the completeness and appropriateness of texts. The concept of Generic Structure Potential (GSP), introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1989), is particularly useful for the study of intertextual links between texts. The GSP denotes the range of obligatory, standard set of features in a text that essentially mark particular genre (Halliday and Hasan 1989:66). There are always some optional elements in any genre, which tend to vary, but the very notion of GSP is realised by means of intertextuality. Halliday (1990:34) maintains that the GSP model of the Systemic Functional Linguistic is particularly suitable for any investigatory study that enables us to analyse any passage and relate it to its context in the discourse, and also to the general background of text: who it is written for, what the angle on the subject matter is and so on.

Selected Previous Studies On The GSP Of Various Genres

Several studies have been undertaken on the GSP of various genres in linguistic scholarship. The studies include GSP of research articles, essays, newspaper editorials, shop transactions and quasi-judicial public hearing, among others, by Halliday and Hasan (1989); Ansary and Babaii (2004); Inya (2010); Unuabonah (2012), etc.

Halliday and Hasan (1989) present GSP of shop transaction as:

$[(G).(SI)^{\wedge}][(SE.)\{SR^{\wedge}SC^{\wedge}\}^{\wedge}S^{\wedge}]P^{\wedge}PC^{\wedge}(^{\wedge}F)$

They identify nine rhetorical elements of shop transaction as Greeting (G), Sale Initiation (SI), Sale Enquiry (SE), Sale Request (SR), Sale Compliance (SC), Sale (S), Purchase (P), Purchase Closure (PC), and Finis (F). They ascertain that certain macro-structural elements such as SR, SC, S, P and PC are obligatory while G, SI, SE, and F are optional.

Ansary and Babaii (2004) investigate the macro-rhetorical structure of editorial texts from Systemic Functional (SF) point of view. They apply Halliday's approach to propose a generic pattern of text development of editorials or what Halliday and Hasan (1989) refer to as the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) of a genre. A corpus of 30 English newspaper editorials culled from the daily electronic version of The Washington Times, representing the American newspapers was used. Ansary and Babaii (2004) note four obligatory structural elements (Run-on Headline, Addressing an Issue, Argumentation and Articulating a position). The optional elements identified in the editorials are Background Information (BI) which either preceded Addressing an Issue (AI) or following its, Initiation of Argumentation (IA) which, in some cases was necessary to help writers start off their arguments, and Closure of Argumentation (CA) sometimes used to nicely round off the arguments.

Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005) investigates the generic structure potential and intrageneric variation within a text type in relation to the socio-cultural context in which the communication takes place. Dontcheva-Navratilova notes that the generic structure potential analysis of resolutions was performed on the material of Resolutions, Volume of the Records of the General Conference of UNESCO adopted at the 30th session in 1999, which includes 114 resolutions, and 32nd Session in 2003, comprising 109 resolutions. The study reveals that UNESCO resolutions consist of a set of five obligatory elements and two optional elements, the sequence of which is fixed as the only structural elements that can change its portion in the linear arrangement of the text in the setting. Also, the differences between executive and preparatory resolutions are motivated by variations in the values of the variables of the contextual configuration. The study concludes that the impact of contextual constraints on text production and interpretation in the use of English as an international administrative code motivates a strong tendency toward explicit internal organisation, conventionalisation and stability of form to the detriment of variation. Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005) identifies the following macro elements of the resolutions: Title (Tt), Setting Indication (Set), Identification of Addressor (Ador), Preamble (Pre), Action Performative and Action non-performative (Actp/ np), Identification of Addressee (Adee), Future Behaviour (FB), and Resultant State (RS). Below are the catalogues of the resolutions:

Preparatory resolutions:

$T_T - [Set - Pr - Ador - Act_{p/n-p} - Rs^*] - Set_2$

Executive resolutions:

$T_T - [Ador - Pr_{(IR^*/SD^*)} - Act_p - Adee - FB^*/Rs^*] - Set$

Nugroho (2009) examines the generic structure potential of print advertisement of Elizabeth Arden's Intervene- the moisturizing cream. The study utilises the Systemic Functional Linguistic and Multimodal Discourse analysis approaches to analyse text and images in print media. The study adopts Cheong's (2004) model of generic structure of print advertisement in Singapore. Cheong's (2004) GSP of advertisement is categorised as Lead [^](Display)[^] Emblem [^](Announcement)[^] (Enhancer)[^](Tag)[^](Call and Visit Information). The study reveals that advertisement can be understood to project the image of younger healthy and happy look of not-so-young professionals when they use the moisture cream with its proven technology benefits as it has been proven through the product icon.

Inya (2010) examines the Christian apologetic discourse, an aspect of theological discourse that caters for the intellectual defence of the Christian faith. He identifies nine micro-rhetorical elements of text. The obligatory elements of Christian apologetic are: Title (TT), Author's Name (AN), Background Information (BI), Presentation of Contrary Positions (PCP), Articulating Own Position (AOP), Argumentation (A), Elaboration (EL), and Finis (F). Testimonials (TMs) is the only optional element identified. He clarified the recursive elements in the structure and they are: Presentation of Contrary Positions (PCP), Articulating Own Positions (AOP), Argumentation (A), and Elaboration (EL). The GSP catalogue that account for possible texts that belong to Christian apologetics is as follows:

$[TT^{\wedge}AN^{\wedge}][BI^{\wedge}PCP^{\wedge}.AOP^{\wedge}.A^{\wedge}.EL^{\wedge}(TMs)^{\wedge}[F]$

Unuabonah (2012) investigates quasi-judicial public hearing conducted by the Senate on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) administration in Nigeria. The study identifies the discourse macro-structural elements that characterise the generic structure of public hearing. The identified structural elements that are obligatory are: Affirmation Order (AO), Affirmation (A), Invitation of Perspectives (IP), Presentation (P), Interrogation (I), Interrogation Compliance (IC), Admission (A) and Finis (F) which are optional. The GSP of the genre of public hearing is as presented below:

$AO^A^A^IP^A[P(pr)]^A\{I^AIC\}n^A(PD)^A(pr)^AAd^A(F)$

The present study however is set to consider the GSP of football match reports which has not been done by any of the earlier mentioned scholars who have worked on the GSP of various genres.

III. Research Mythology

Three purposively selected sport-based Nigerian newspapers namely: Sporting Life, Soccer Star and Complete Sports were used for the study. The newspapers were selected because they have orientation for sports news reporting. The study focuses on the pre-match and post-match reporting of the 2010 World Cup tournament in the selected Nigerian newspapers. Each of the newspapers has a total of 128 lead reports giving a total of 384 match reports from the three sport newspapers. Of these 384 match reports, 36 reports were randomly selected from each of the newspapers for analysis. This gives a total of 108 match reports altogether from the three newspapers. The study adopts the Generic Structure Potential Theory propounded by Halliday and Hasan 1989 and Ansary and Babaii 2004.

GSP of Football Match Reporting

This section covers the GSP catalogue for football match report.

$[T]^A[P]^A[OT]^A[OTE]^A\{(VI)\} \{(OTI)\}^A\{(OFTE)\}^A(Eva)^A(Pre)^A(WUp)$

The key to the Symbols

T= Title

P=Preamble

OT= Online Thesis

OTE = Online Thesis Expatiation

VI = Voice Insertion


OTI = Offline Thesis Insertion

OFTE = Offline Thesis Expatiation

Eva = Evaluation

Pre = Prediction

WUp = Winding Up.

- In the catalogue, the caret sign (^) stands for sequence. The square brackets [] place a restraint on the elements within them. The round brackets () indicate that the element enclosed is optional while the  arrow shows that the element within is equal in degree of occurrence and the recursive sign { } indicates that the element is recursive.
- $[T]^A$ indicates that it is an obligatory element which must occur at the beginning of the text. It cannot occur in any other square brackets.
- $[P]$ indicates that it is an obligatory element which can only occur after the element preceding it. It can not occur in any other square brackets.
- $^A[OT]$ indicates that it is an obligatory element which can only occur after the element preceding it, and can not occur in any other square brackets.
- $^A[OTE]$ indicates it is obligatory, can only occur after $[OT]$ and cannot occur in any other square brackets.
- $^A\{(VI)\}$ indicates that it is optional and also a recursive element which can occur anywhere as long as it does not precede T, P, OT and does not come after WUp.
- $^A\{(OTI)\}$ indicates it is optional and recursive and can occur anywhere. It however, must not occur before $[T]$, $[P]$, $[OT]$, and cannot occur after WUp.
- $^A\{(OFTE)\}$ indicates it is optional and recursive and it cannot precede any of the obligatory element such as $[T]$, $[P]$, $[OT]$ and also a particular recursive element, $\{(OTI)\}$, and cannot come after WUp.
- $^A(Eva)$ it indicates that it is an optional element, can occur anywhere. It however, must not occur before $[T]$, $[P]$, $[OT]$ and cannot occur after WUp.

- \wedge (Pre) indicates that is an optional element, can occur anywhere, must not occur before [T], [P] and [OT] and cannot occur after WUp.
- \wedge (WUp) indicates that it is optional in the data, can only occur last in a sequence wherever it occur. It is a non-recursive element.

Explication Of GSP Elements And Findings

The following elements were identified in the data.

Title [T]: This element refers to the title of the text. It sets forth the theme and it is a sign post of the text because it gives direction on the message of the text. Some of them are phrases while some are clauses. It is however usually a short piece, not too wordy. A title usually reflects the theme and sets forth the direction of text. It is an obligatory element. Dor (2003:696) states that newspaper headlines are relevance optimizer: they are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers. This functional definition positions the headlines in its appropriate note as a textual negotiation between the story and its readers. Titles are foregrounded to make them different from the rest of the texts. The use of capitals all through for title or the use of capitals for initials of words in titles are salient.

Example 1

FIFA to Axe Nigeria Today

(Text A5, Sporting Life, July 5, 2010)

Example 2

WASTEFUL EAGLES CRASH OUT OF W/CUP

(Text B2, Complete Sports, June 23, 2010)

Example 3

LAGERBACK: Greece 'll Fall Today

(Text C2, Soccer Star, June 17, 2010)

Preamble [P]: It is an obligatory element. This element introduces the main idea in the text. Preamble is not in itself the main thesis but an introduction to the central theme of the text. The following are extracts from the data to illustrate the points being made.

Example 4

Super Eagles stars says they are ready to spill blood if necessary to ensure they get the maximum points in today's must-win group B game against Greece at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein.

(Text B1, Complete Sports, June 17, 2010)

This is an example of where the Super Eagles are desperate to win the match against Greece to make them qualify to play against South Korea in their final group game in their next round. This kind of the example prepares the readers for what to expect in the texts.

Example 5

Nigeria's Coach, Lars Lagerback has declared that the Super Eagles stand good chance of reaching the knockout stage of the 2010 World Cup despite losing their opening Group B match to Argentina.

(Text C2, Soccer Star, June 17, 2010)

The example above presents Lagerback's optimism about Super Eagles victory over Greece after losing their opening match to Argentina. The coach, Lagerback still believes the Super Eagles stand a good chance to perform excellently well based on the evaluation of the players and not previous defeat.

Example 6

Super Eagles goalkeeper, Vincent Enyeama could be moving closer to wearing the Jersey of Barclay's English Premier League side Arsenal FC of London next season if he replicates the stunning show he exhibited against Argentina at the Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg last Saturday, tomorrow against Greece.

(Text A1, Sporting Life, June 16, 2010)

The text discusses Vincent Enyeama, the Super Eagles goalkeeper's performance in the match against Argentina in Johannesburg. The section introduces the reader to Enyeama's outstanding performance as Super Eagles' goalkeeper. It was so impressive to Arsenal manager, Arsene Wenger that it made him desire to know more about Enyeama and the possibility of wooing him over to Arsenal after the World Cup

3. Online Thesis [OT]: This element carries the central or main idea in a text. It is an obligatory element of text. Text would be meaningless without stating the central issue(s). The reader and writer must identify Online Thesis to be able to understand and interpret the text. This is the thesis statement of the text. A text would be no text if there is no subject matter. This will be illustrated in the subsequent examples in this section.

Example 7

Nigeria must win then hope that Argentina especially overpower Greece in Polokwane in a match starting simultaneously, for the Super Eagles to reach the Round of 16 of Africa's first ever FIFA World Cup.

(Text A3, Sporting Life June 22, 2010)

This segment of text is giving information about the Super Eagles critical match against Korea Republic. It is a critical match because the Super Eagles need to win in order to reach the round of 16 of Africa's first ever FIFA World Cup.

Example 8

Defending the rating of the players, including goalkeeper, Vincent Enyeama, who did very well, the Soccer governing body, through its agent responsible for the ranking of players, Castrol, noted that their greatest undoing was crashing in the group stage.

(Text C5, Soccer Star, July 8, 2010)

The central issue of the text is the ranking of players by FIFA. The soccer governing body states that for any team to crash out in the group stage, the ranking would be affected. FIFA definitely scored the Super Eagles low based on the criterion. The Super Eagles crashed out of the tournament at the group stage. They could not play any further match in the tournament after they drew 2-2 with South Korea and this affected their position in the FIFA ranking of 2010.

Example 9

Despite having lost their first two matches victory for Nigeria in its win-or-burst Group B match in Durban, coupled with an Argentina win over Greece, would propel Super Eagles to knockout stage of tournament. Each player was told they would get 10,000 dollars for every victory in the first round of the World Cup. But no one is smiling yet to the bank as the team has yet to win a game in South Africa.

(Text B4, Complete Sports, June 21, 2010)

The main thesis of the text is that the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) felt that if the players were motivated by giving them a certain amount of money, they will be encouraged to work harder and beat South Korea which will make them to qualify for the Round of 16 of 2010 world cup. The Nigeria Football Federation promised to back the team up with a huge amount of money to serve as incentive for the players and aid their performance in South Africa 2010.

4. Online Thesis Expatiation [OTE]: This element of text identified in the data is a further elaboration on the online Thesis. It expounds the subject matter of discourse wherever it appears.

Example 10

Nigerians had clamoured for Obafemi and Osaze Odewinge to start against Greece, insisting that the duo have pace which needed to make an impact in the quest for survival in South Africa.

(Text A13, Sporting Life, June 20, 2010).

This element expounds the fact about the Super Eagles strategy for survival at the world cup. It elaborates on the fact that Obafemi and Osaze (Super Eagles players) have all that it takes to make an impact in the quest for survival in South Africa in terms of the duo's pace and speed like their Korean counterparts known for their speed on the pitch. Nigerians clamour for such defence to ensure the last minute victory and avoid crashing out of the world cup.

Example 11

They can only hope Argentina should beat Greece, while they face the herculean task of plucking at least a goal margin win over South Korea next week in their final group game.

They did not deserve to win against the Greeks who played the game of their lives and showed better tactical discipline as well as fitness. Never before had a game had a dramatic turn around as the Eagles surrendered their

initial dominance as well as lone goal lead shortly after Sani Keita retaliated an off the ball incident. And referee, Oscar Ruiz of Colombia promptly gave him the matching order in the 37th minute.

(Text C7, Soccer Star, June 18, 2010)

This segment elaborates on the thesis of the text. The Super Eagles' fate hangs on Argentina beating Greece. The uncertainty wielded at the qualifying stages also abounds with the Eagles as they wait till the last matches of the group for their fate to be decided. The Super Eagles need outright win over Korea. They want Argentina to beat Greece to ensure a passage to the Round of 16. If Argentina draws with Greece and Korea beats Nigeria, Argentina and Greece will qualify accordingly. The text below was written after Super Eagles' woeful performance at the world cup.

Example 12

The dispute began when Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan banned the national team and ordered a probe into alleged corruption at the Football Federation after the Super Eagles early World Cup exit.

Jonathan's decree breached FIFA rules which forbid governments intervening in football's affairs.

The Nigerian Football Federation on Sunday fired its top tow officials and offered an "unreserved apology" for the team's dismal performance in a last-minute bid to reserve Jonathan's directive.

FIFA confirmed that it had received notice of the decision from the Federation.

(Text B6, Complete Sports, July 7, 2010)

The extract above is an expatiation on the central issue of the text. Nigerian government interference in FIFA affairs concerning Nigeria is frowned at. The Nigeria government banned the Super Eagles and ordered a probe into alleged Football Federation account based on their performance at the 2010 world cup. FIFA does not want any government to meddle with her affairs. The ban was later lifted.

5. Voice Insertion {(VI)}: This element of text structure has to do with insertion of voice either directly or indirectly. Voice insertions are identified in the data with quotation marks and the use of personal pronouns. It is an optional element of text and can re-occur in a sequence.

Example 13

'The South Korea Coach may be right about saying that Nigeria versus South Korea match may be decisive. But first, we have to concentrate on the Greece game and try to win it. If we do that, then the third match against South Korea should be decisive,' said Lagerback.

(Text C2, Soccer Star, June 17, 2010)

Example 14

"We have now been officially informed of that and we are looking at this case" Maingot said at the daily World Cup briefing "We need a little bit of time."

(Text A8, Sporting Life, July 2, 2010)

The extract shows the exact speech of the FIFA spokesman, Nicolas Maingot at the daily world cup briefing. The writer used inverted comas to separate the segment from the rest of the text. Personal pronoun (Plural)'we' is also being used.

Example 15

"There is no discussion about slots for the future , we have 32 teams and we will have a meeting of the organising committee of the 2014 World Cup where we will discuss the rules and regulations, but there is no discussion at all about the number of slots per confederation. Anyone who is saying that is wrong" We need to continue supporting African Football. There is no discussion or reaction of that sort to say we will not have the same number of (African) teams next time around" Valcke said.

(Text B9, Complete Sports, June 8, 2010)

The above extract is another example of voice insertion. FIFA Secretary General made this comment to buttress the fact that FIFA has no intention to reduce Africa's slots at future world cup despite poor performance from African teams at the 2010 world cup tournament in South Africa. Jerome Valcke, FIFA Secretary General said this to debunk the rumour that FIFA wanted to reduce Africa's world cup slots.

6. Offline Thesis Insertion {(OTI)}: This is an optional element of text. Sometimes, the writer may include some offline issues in the report. Offline issues are issues that deviate from the main thesis of the text. We have examples of these across the data.

Example 16

Imagine Sani Lulu, the federation president disobeying a presidential and ministerial directive that he should hire an Arik airline plane to fly the Super Eagles to South Africa yet he went ahead and hired a Luiz airline that could not fly. That is enough for him to resign, Ghana FA Chairman resigned for a far lesser crime.

(Text C11, Soccer Star, June 21, 2010)

This extract foregrounds a deviation from the subject matter of the text. The issue being discussed in this segment is a deviation from the central issue of the discourse which is how Nigerian sports can be saved after the poor performances at the time the 2010 world cup was going and the team had lost two of its matches to Argentina and Greece respectively.

Example 17

Interestingly, Enyeama has confirmed that he had to switch off his phone from the day he was listed in Nigeria's 44 man squad to enable him to concentrate on the task of improving his skills and only talked with his family using public telephones.

(Text A1, Sporting Life, June 16, 2010).

The central idea there does not involve 'switching off phone' or 'using public telephones' it is an offline issue when one reads the text carefully. The main idea is that Vincent Enyeama, the Super Eagles goalkeeper's performance during Nigeria and Greece match has attracted him to the Arsenal Manager, Arsene Wenger who went ahead to make enquiry about him probably to invite him over to Arsenal Club.

Example 18

Former International footballer, Dahiru Sadi, who travelled 134 hours by bus from Richard's Bay to Bloemfontein for the match, said he expects a better attitude from the team against South Korea.

(Text B13, Complete Sports, June 19, 2010)

The extract from Text B presented above is an insertion of offline issues. The theme of the text is that of Super Eagles hopefulness in beating South Korea so that they can qualify for the Round of 16 in the world cup. The issue presented here is about Dahiru, the former international footballer who travelled by bus from one city in South Africa to the other for the match. The issue here deviates from the central thesis of the discourse.

7. Offline Thesis Expatiation {(OFTE)}: This element of text structure elaborates the offline thesis issues. It is an optional element of text. It cannot occur in text unless there are offline issues.

Example 19

Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Spokesman Ademola Olajire told the Association Press on Thursday that policemen came into their offices in Abuja after Jonathan announced his decision to pull the team from International Matches. However, Olajire said the officers came after they received information about an anti-government protest planned at the office.

(Text A8, Sporting Life, July 2, 2010)

The extract above expounded the expatiation of an offline issue. The offline issue presented anchors on the fact that Nigeria government planned to investigate corruption allegation surrounding the football federation. The extract is an expatiation of elaboration of an offline issue.

Example 20

That would mean he would be unaffected by the existing embargo as he is already under contract for the next season.

For Pompey, that would be a massive boost, with the embargo not likely to be lifted for at least another three weeks.

However, Andrew Andronikou has told the News the situation is a complex one. And at present the clubs are attempting to clarify the precise terms of Kanu's agreement.

Andronikou said there is a question with Kanu over whether he is still contracted with the club. He might have a one-year extension, which means he is already signed to us. It seems this was a verbal agreement with Peter Stovine at the time. It is something we are looking into and are in the process of clarifying.

(Text B11, Complete Sports, June 28, 2010)

This gives an elaborated detail about the offline issue raised in Text B 11. The extract further explained the irrelevant issue brought forward by the writer on Kanu dealing with Pompey despite the registration embargo based on age above 24years.

Example 21

In the past, he posed at his bar with footballing greats such as Messi of Argentina to give himself credibility, but Messi and others were unaware of his secret life as a match fixer.

It is alleged that he made a fortune by placing bets on matches and then bribing players to get the required result.

(Text C9, Soccer Star, July 10, 2010)

This example is an expatiation of offline issue. The offline issue presented is that of Croatian professional gambler who posed with some football stars for his own hidden intentions. How he made his fortune was further elaborated on in the extract. Below is the expatiation of offline issue presented in the text.

8. Evaluation (Eva): This is another element of text structure identified in the data. It is an optional element. Evaluation occurs when there is need to assess the team or individual players and their performance or the opposing team in the tournament. Most of the evaluations were post evaluation because they were meant to evaluate completed activities as against the interm evaluation which zero in on ongoing activities. It is usually a yardstick or standard to measure performance, activity, product plan, services, etc. Evaluation involves using some specific adjectives like fair, good, very good, excellent, etc., when it is on the approbative side. When evaluation is on the pejorative side, words like poor, bad, woeful, very poor are often used. The choice of evaluative register depends on the degree of appropriacy or the ratio, or otherwise the intuitive knowledge or empirical fact of the individual evaluator. Examples from the data shall be presented subsequently to justify the illustration on the nature of evaluation.

Example 22

‘He saved 20 out of 25 shots faced, a save percentage of 8 only, only the equal 14th best in the group stage which goes a long way to explain his average ranking. With the goalkeepers rating, we try to strip out the effort of defense. It is not how many saves he makes but his performance once you have assessed how good/bad the defense is. This means goalkeepers in good teams have a chance of being top of the Castrol index. Enyeama is an ok keeper in a team that performed disappointingly.

(Text C5, Soccer Star, July 8, 2010)

This element called evaluation is exemplified in this extract. The rating of the player by FIFA’s agent responsible for ranking as regards the Super Eagles’ performance was the subject matter of the discourse. In the extract, Vincent Enyeama was rated as being an ‘Ok Player’ and that he has a good chance of being at the top to the Castrol Index despite the fact that the team ‘performed disappointingly.’

Example 23

He said, I was a little bit sorry about all the time wasting. I don’t think it is a fair play. Its very disappointing and I think the (Nigerian) Players have done really well’

(Text A4, Sporting Life, June 23, 2010)

From the extract, Lars Lagerback felt that the opponent, that is the South Korea has played down the clock to let them secure a goal and that the game was considered a waste of time but ironically stated that the players have really done well despite the fact that there were lots of opportunities they missed, most especially, Yakubu Ayegbeni who missed more than four yards out with the entire goal gaping but only succeeded in ‘prodding the ball wide’. Lagerback was not happy and mainly bemoaned Korea’s tactics against the Super Eagles. The eagles could have easily won, they had many chances of scoring goals. Notably, Ayegbeni’s miss of one meter from an open goal was considered the greatest miss of 2010 world cup by the Super Eagles.

Example 24

The Super Eagles played fairly well but very determinedly. Right back, Chidi Odiah, was easily and surprisingly the best player on the night. Lars Lagerback, in an apparent display of sufficient knowledge of the Nigerian players, put Rabiu Afolabi a right-footed player whose left foot is only good for standing on, at left back. It turned out a poor decision as Nigeria concede the first goal as a result of his poor marking from a set piece.

(Text B5, Complete Sports, June 26, 2010)

This is another example of evaluation where the writer explained the evaluation of the Super Eagles as a team and also some of the Super Eagles as a team and also some of the players as individuals. The example of Chidi Odiah who was one of the players that attracted Lagerback's attention and commendation was mentioned while Rabiun Afolabi on the other hand, conceded their first goal to Argentina because of his miscalculations.

9. Prediction (Pre): Prediction is futuristic in nature. This element of text structure says something about the future event(s). Therefore, prediction must have future-direct content. Prediction appeals to the mental state of expectation about the event(s). A notable prediction on 2010 World Cup was that of 'Octopus Paul' who predicted that Spain would be the world football champion in the tournament while the 2014 winner was predicted by the Turtle 'Big head'. 'Big head' predicted that Brazil would emerge as 2014 champion but it was not in the section of the article selected for the analysis. In the data, there are predictions. Predictions are more of intuition than empirical facts. This textual element will be exemplified subsequently.

Example 25

Etuhu says the Eagles will soar above the Greeks today and hopes the result will go Nigeria's way. We all know what we must do on Thursday, it's victory or nothing and I'm glad we're ready to fire from all cylinders.

Hopefully, the result will go our way.

(Text B1, Complete Sports, June 17, 2010)

This is an example of the predictions made by the Super Eagles' Etuhu when they were preparing to face Greece in the Group B game at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein in South Africa, 2010 World Cup. In the extract, Etuhu is very confident that the Eagles will soar above Greeks. The Eagle as a bird has the attribute of soaring higher than any other birds. This prediction is rather assertive. He is very optimistic about his team winning against the Greeks.

Example 26

"We are not out of the World Cup yet. We will go back and correct the mistake that we have seen and I know the spirit in the boys that they would surely beat Greece. We will come out a better side against Greece and then we can take the remaining games as they come" he said.

(Text A2, Sporting Life, June 13, 2010)

This is another example of prediction. This prediction is born out of consolation after the Super Eagles lost 0-1 to Argentina in the Group B opening match of 2010 world cup. Lagerback was disappointed by the result of the game not on the performance of the players. He has bright hopes for the Super Eagles in the subsequent match against Greece. He still believed in the team's ability to beat Greece despite losing to Argentina. He says this probably to build their confidence in order to move ahead and come out better.

Example 27

"I see no problems beating Korea and Greece and I think we will qualify quite easily," predicted Enyeama, who said he would have readily trade his heroics against the South Americans for the three points at stake at the weekend.

(Text C3, Soccer Star, June 4, 2010)

This is another example of prediction where the Super Eagles goalkeeper, Vincent Enyeama expresses his feelings of hope about Nigeria beating Korea and Greece in the subsequent matches against the mentioned teams. Enyeama foresees no problem in the matches against Greece and South Korea and guarantees their qualification for the round of 16 'quite easily'.

10. Winding Up (WUp): This element of text structure is optional. Some of the reports do not have the winding up or conclusion as part of their elements of structure. The element signifies that the text has come to a close by restating the intention and position of the writer on the issue. Some of the texts end by restating or reminding the reader(s) of the idea(s) earlier discussed or by making a suggestion or recommendation on the issues. It signals the end of a discourse. Below are some of the examples.

Example 28

The PTF, whose membership included former internals Segun Odegbami and Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha, are expected to wind up their operations soon after their tenure was extended from after the qualifiers in November to after the tournament proper.

(Text B8, Complete Sports, June 28, 2010)

This winding up restates the intention of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) on the issue of world cup fund raised by the Presidential Task Force (PTF) established by President Umaru Musa Yaradua. The PTF was established to assist the NFF and ensure that Super Eagles qualify and perform well at the 2010 world cup. The PTF was charged with the task of raising certain funds for the NFF which they did but the amount generated were significantly different from the amount disbursed to the NFF which generated controversy and query from the Nigerian Government and NFF. The text closes by stating that the PTF needs to 'wind up their operations soon'. That is, they need to tidy up the issue of their account on how much was raised and disbursed before their tenure lapses.

Example 29

It would be recalled that Nigeria needs outright win over Korea, praying Argentina beats Greece to ensure a passage to the Round of 16.

Both games will be played at the same time on Tuesday

(Text C1, Soccer Star, June 20, 2010)

From the example, we can infer that the writer has come to a close by restating the intention and position of FIFA on the issue of how Nigeria could still qualify for the final matches despite the fact that the Super Eagles had not garnered a point, they could still beat South Korea. Beating South Korea would make them qualify for the Round of 16. The writer here is reminding the reader of what Nigeria needs to do to qualify.

Examples 30

Lagerback's fate will definitely be decided on Tuesday when the Super Eagles clash with South Korean in Durban.

(Text A18 Sporting Life, June 19, 2010)

The writer wraps up the text by stating that Lagerback's retention as the Eagles coach will be based on the outcome of their game against South Korea in Durban on the 22nd June, 2010. The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) may or may not retain Lagerback if the Super Eagles crashed out of the world cup and outcome of the game against South Korea will determine Lagerback's retention or exit as Super Eagles' Technical Adviser.

IV. Conclusion

The macrostructural elements that characterised football match reports include four obligatory elements: Title [T], Preamble [P], Online Thesis [OT], and Online Thesis Expatiation [OTE]. The six optional elements that characterised the football match reports are: Voice Insertion, Offline Thesis Insertion and Offline Thesis Expatiation, Evaluation, Prediction and Winding Up. The three recursive elements that are associated with football match reports are: Voice Insertion, Offline Thesis Insertion and Offline Thesis Expatiation. The three elements that are recursive are also optional. The study has a pedagogical value. It can be applied to the understanding of genre analysis. Inferences from the study could help linguistic scholars develop a register for football report as a sub-genre of sports. Further research can be carried out on the other types of football competition such as Cup of Nations, league competitions, etc.

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