

THOSE “DAMN” WOMEN: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE PLAY-
BY-PLAY DIALOGUES WITHIN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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ABSTRACT

THESIS PROJECT: Those “Damn” Women: A Content Analysis of Male and Female Play-by-Play Dialogues within the National Football League

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This study presents a quantitative analysis of the dialogues from four primetime national television play-by-play broadcasters within the NFL. In 2017, Beth Mowins became the first woman in the history of the NFL to step into a primetime national television booth. Mowins called the second opening-week ESPN *Monday Night Football* game between the Los Angeles Chargers and the Denver Broncos on September 11, 2017. After the telecast, Mowins was met with an outcry of complaints from fans on social media. Many of the remarks were steeped in sexism. This study examines the root of those complaints, while using Impression Formation Theory as the guiding framework. Through a content analysis, four of the NFL’s primetime television announcers (Jim Nantz, Al Michaels, Joe Buck, and Beth Mowins) are tested through 10 variables. Those variables include the handling of scoring plays, the frequency of corrections, bias, historical knowledge, NFL rules knowledge, terminology, questions to their analyst, airtime, access, and statistical use. Tested through chi-squared (also written χ^2 test) and Fisher’s exact test, this study shows there is little to no difference in the language use between Mowins and the three male broadcasters within these 10 variables. Therefore, this study suggests the social media complaints by fans cannot be based upon Mowins’ ability to provide a television play-by-play call of an NFL game.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the past, present, and future women who choose to pursue a career in sports media. The opportunity for women to work within sports and sports media is steadily growing. This atmosphere creates for a desirable time for females. Those women pursuing the industry are helping break down gender stereotypes and issues of inequality within sports. I dedicate this project to them.

I also dedicate this thesis to my father, Mike, and my mother, Lonnie, for always allowing me to pursue my goals and dreams, regardless of the sacrifice. To my sister, Molly, along with my countless extended family members who have offered constant love and support through this process, thank you. Lastly, I dedicate this project to Chris Taylor, a lecturer of telecommunications at Ball State University. Without him the idea of graduate school would have never crossed my mind. I owe many of my successes and accomplishments to him and his fostering guidance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and History

“The only thing that really bugs me about television’s coverage [of sports] is those damn women they have down on the sidelines who don’t know what the hell they’re talking about,” remarked Andy Rooney, a former CBS News and 60 Minutes commentator. The degrading comment was made in October 2002 on the Boomer Esiason Show airing on the Madison Square Garden Network (Grubb & Billiot, 2010, p. 89). Rooney added, “I mean, I’m not a sexist person, but a woman has no business being down there trying to make some comment about a football game.”

A decade later in January 2013, ESPN’s Brent Musburger signed off a national college basketball telecast by inserting a similar, yet unexpected, sexist remark toward his female sideline reporter, Holly Rowe. “Once again, your final score, Kansas 61, Baylor 44. Coming up next, SportsCenter. For Fran Franschilla and Holly Rowe, who was really smokin’ tonight, I want to say so long from Lawrence.” Musburger placed a heightened emphasis on “really smokin’” to slyly deliver the sexist comment. These two examples summarize the longstanding perception many sports fans and members of the sports media industry hold toward female sports broadcasters (Chase, 2013).

Viewers have perceived women, for years, within sports media as sideline eye candy (Doyle, 2013). As a result, female sportscasters have been, and continue to be, pigeon holed into reduced roles and struggle to establish credibility. The ongoing lack of inclusion of women in prominent on-air roles in major American professional sports television, lends to a belief that female announcers are not as adequate as male broadcasters. Ongoing debates over a female sportscaster’s place in a male locker room continue to linger among media critics. Other issues, such as viewers holding women sportscasters to differing standards of evaluation, have drawn

attention for the last several decades. Each of these issues funnels into a greater, more concerning, societal trend pertaining to gender roles and inequality in sports.

Throughout the centuries, sports have been a domain dominated by men. In many ways, men define their masculinity through sports. Strength and bravery are qualities traditionally associated with males. The ongoing competitive nature of sports serves as a continual mechanism for building, validating, and highlighting manliness. As a result, sports foster opportunities for men to display and express their masculinity (Grubb & Billiot, 2010). This nature creates considerable challenges for females (like Mowins) who attempt to enter and establish careers in the venue which sports are shown and consumed. This venue is commonly known as sports media or sports television.

Research Question & Goal

Substantial research exists on topics like gender stereotypes and gender inequality in the work place, which will be reviewed in the second chapter. A number of researchers have even narrowed into studies examining the sports industry and specifically sports media. That research has found women face differing standards than their male counterparts when attempting to enter and work in sports media as commentators (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 187). Prior literature also confirms a gender bias still exists today in regard to female sports broadcasters. These studies confirm females are seen as less credible than their male counterparts (Gunther, Kautz & Roth, 2005). Similar to Rooney’s 2002 remark on the Boomer Esiason Show, other sexist comments suggest viewers stereotypically define female sportscasters as less knowledgeable than male commentators. As a result, women struggle to find their way into prominent roles like a lead play-by-play broadcaster.

For example, Gayle Sierens became the first woman to provide television play-by-play commentary of a National Football League (NFL) game in 1987 (Aferiat, 2018). However, since that single regional telecast on NBC, a woman did not receive this assignment again for another 30 years until Beth Mowins in 2017 (Katz, 2017). Mowins called the opening night *Monday Night Football* game on ESPN between the Los Angeles Chargers and the Denver Broncos on September 11, 2017. Following Mowins’ barrier breaking telecast, an outcry from fans on social media followed. Many of the comments complained over the sound of her voice calling it “shrill” and “grating” (Dicaro, 2017). Some went as far as to say Mowins has no place in sports television. Mowins’ colleague, Andrea Kremer said, “I have no doubt that ‘hating the sound of her voice’ is code for ‘I hate that there was a woman announcing football’” (Dicaro, 2017).

Most of the existing research and prior literature on this topic attempt to analyze a viewer’s perception with qualitative responses. Most of these attempts are aimed at identifying the perception of female sportscasters. In addition—similar to Gunther, Kautz, and Roth’s 2005 study—prior researchers have generalized the term “female sportscasters” into one community within their studies. They have packaged play-by-play announcers, color analysts, sideline reporters, studio hosts, anchors, and other on-air positions into one category. In doing so, research has failed to look solely at the perception of women in individualized on-air positions such as play-by-play.

Sparked by the sexist response following Beth Mowins’s NFL debut, the goal of this master’s thesis is to separate those on-air roles, focusing solely on the position of play-by-play within the NFL in an attempt to examine the root of this sexist perception. The following research question will be examined: *What differences exist in the language use between female and male primetime television play-by-play announcers within the National Football League?*

These questions will be tested through a content analysis of NFL television broadcasts. The findings will be applied to Impression Formation Theory. This communication theory, initially derived by Solomon Asch (1946), explains the process by which people gather pieces of information about another individual to form a global impression of the individual. This narrow focus will help more closely determine the reason for the current perception toward female sportscasters. In doing so, it will help confirm or deny the broader societal issue at hand that suggests a sexist attitude still exists in sports and sports media to this day.

History of NFL and NFL Television Coverage

As it exists today, the NFL is the nation’s most popular sport valued at \$74.8 billion—nearly twice as much as every other major American professional sports leagues [Major League Baseball (\$38.6 billion), the National Basketball Association (\$37.4 billion), and the National Hockey League (\$15.2 billion)] (Gaines, 2016). The average NFL franchise in 2016 was valued at \$2.3 billion (Gaines, 2016). During the 2017 NFL season, over 14-million fans tuned in weekly for a regular season game (Rovell, 2018). Each year, the most frequently viewed television series—sports and non-sports programming—is NBC’s *Sunday Night Football*. Not to mention, the most viewed live television event each year is the Super Bowl, the NFL’s championship game. In order to understand the magnitude and current cultural significance of the NFL in American sports and television, it is necessary to review the history of the league. This brief historical analysis also provides some foundational framework for the dynamic of television coverage and the roles within NFL television.

Despite the NFL’s roaring success in American culture, its humble beginnings as the American Professional Football Association (APFA) trace back to 1920 inside Ralph Hay’s

automobile dealership in Canton, Ohio (Klein, 2014). Prior to 1920, professional football remained in the shadows of college football. Restricted to primarily small industrial cities across the Midwest, professional football struggled to gain popularity during its early years. Sky rocketing player salaries were bleeding team owners dry as the sport lacked popularity as a whole. Fourteen men, including Ralph Hay, owner of the Canton Bulldogs, gathered in August 1920 to agree on a new association. A month later on September 17, 1920, a deal was ready to be struck. Team representatives from the Canton Bulldogs, Cleveland Indians, Dayton Triangles, Decatur Staleys, Hammond Pros, Massillon Tigers, Muncie Flyers, Racine Cardinals, Rochester Jefferson and Rock Island Independents gathered on the showroom floor of Hay’s dealership to review the terms. The group formed a confederation known as the APFA, and unanimously named Jim Thorpe as the president. Thorpe was a standout, 32-year-old member of the Canton Bulldogs (Klein, 2014).

The first organized game conducted by the APFA was held on September 26, 1920, between the Rock Island Independents and the St. Paul Ideals. By the end of the 1920 season, three teams had joined the league, expanding the league to 14 teams. With Thorpe struggling financially, Joe Carr, owner of the Columbus Panhandlers, replaced Thorpe as president of the APFA on April 30, 1921 (Klein, 2014). The APFA under Carr’s direction underwent a rebrand and became known as the National Football League. With college football drawing crowds of 100,000-plus in the early 1920s, the NFL hoped to piggyback on the success of professional baseball by placing teams in similar markets, and in some cases, sharing venues with MLB teams (Klein, 2014).

Four years later in 1925, professional football gained some traction in popularity when a famed college halfback from the University of Illinois entered the league. Nicknamed “The

Galloping Ghost,” Red Grange was a three-time college All-American who led Illinois to the 1923 national championship (Eskenazi, 1991). His arrival and passionate fan following helped legitimize the league as he signed with the in-state Chicago Bears—roughly 140 miles from the campus of the University of Illinois (Klein, 2014). In 1933, eight years after Grange’s arrival, the NFL strayed from college football in its rulebook by allowing forward passes to be thrown. With long arching passes and an increased scoring rate, the sport became more exciting for fans. Due to this excitement, professional football spread into larger cities and markets, while teams such as the Green Bay Packers and Pittsburgh Steelers headlined the league (Craig, 2011).

At the tail end of the 1930s, television was introduced to the NFL for the first time. The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) became the first network to televise an NFL game on October 22, 1939. The game featured the Philadelphia Eagles and the Brooklyn Dodgers, an NFL team from 1930 to 1943. The two teams played at Ebbets Field, a Major League Baseball stadium in Brooklyn, New York. With 13,050 fans in attendance, the infant television station consisting of only two affiliates broadcasted the first NFL game on television. NBC used an elevated sideline iconoscope camera at the 40-yard line. This angle was suited for displaying yardage, and eventually became the standard in NFL television coverage. Allen “Skip” Walz, a former NYU football star, announced the game as the play-by-play announcer (“Pro Football Hall of Fame: The 1930s and the First Televised Game”, n.d.).

“It was a cloudy day. When the sun crept behind the stadium, there wasn’t enough light for the cameras,” said a reminiscing Walz. “The picture would get darker and darker, and eventually it would go completely blank, and we’d revert to a radio broadcast” (“Pro Football Hall of Fame: The 1930s and the First Televised Game”, n.d.).

Just six years after the NFL’s television debut, regular broadcasts of the NFL began on the heels of World War II in 1945. By 1948, the first championship game¹ was televised between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Chicago Cardinals. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) covered the game. Harry Wismer, a sportscaster from Port Huron, Michigan, known as a “namedropper” of celebrities, served as the play-by-play announcer (“The Public Calls it Sports”, n.d.). By 1950, the Washington Redskins and the Los Angeles Rams became the first teams to have all of their games televised—home and away. That year the DuMont Network paid a record amount for the rights to broadcast the 1951 NFL Championship nationwide. The contract in 1950 totaled \$75,000, which in present day would run upward of \$800,000 (Warren, 2016).

From 1953 through 1955, DuMont also televised NFL games on Saturday nights. Those broadcasts served as the first weekly primetime exposure on national television for the NFL. The DuMont Network folded in 1955; the same year NBC presented the first color telecast of college football (“NBC Sports History Page,” n.d.). With DuMont’s closure, NBC paid \$100,000 to the league for the television rights for the NFL Championship. The 1955 championship game featured the Cleveland Browns and the Los Angeles Rams. With NBC handling the coverage, this was the first time an NFL Championship was played on a Monday night. Chris Schenkel, an Indiana-native sportscaster recognized for his smooth delivery and baritone voice, called the first half with former halfback, Red Grange. By this time in 1955, it had been 20 years since Grange’s playing career ended. Grange was now an established television analyst of NFL and college football games. Jack Brickhouse, the well-known voice of the MLB’s Chicago Cubs, then replaced Schenkel as play-by-play at halftime and broadcasted the second half with Grange

¹ The championship game was not referred to as “*The Super Bowl*” until the 1966 season.

(Sandomir, 2005). This system of split halves between play-by-play announcers was common during early NFL television coverage.

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) began airing select regular season games the following year in 1956. Two years later, the 1958 NFL Championship between the New York Giants and Baltimore Colts, played at Yankee Stadium in New York, exponentially increased the national attention of professional football. The game was watched widely across the country on NBC. Schenkel once again called the first half, with Chuck Thompson following in the second half. The game went into overtime and finished in dramatic fashion. It was later dubbed the “Greatest Game Ever Played” (Katzowitz, 2015). Viewership hit an all-time high for an NFL championship. Popularity then grew as television coverage simultaneously increased.

In October 1959, respected NFL commissioner of 13-years, Bert Bell, unexpectedly passed away. In response, Pete Rozelle became the league’s commissioner at 33-years-old. Rozelle worked aggressively to assure that all games, league wide, were aired on television. His first petition to Congress ultimately led to legislation that legalized single-network television contracts for professional sports leagues. In 1961, CBS signed for an annual fee of \$4.65 million to broadcast the 98 regular-season NFL games (Wallace, 1996). This contract left NBC out of the NFL picture. NBC began to look toward a new professional football league.

Right before the television contract was signed with CBS, another upstart professional football league began fielding teams, known as the American Football League (AFL). As a competitor to the NFL, the AFL was stocked full of team owners clinging to grievances with the NFL. Midway through the 1960s, the AFL started to gain attention by stealing top-level draft picks from the NFL in bidding wars. Most notably, in 1965, a gun-slinging quarterback from the University of Alabama named “Broadway Joe,” or formally Joe Namath, was signed to an AFL

team over an NFL team. Namath signed a mammoth \$427,000 contract over three years with the AFL's New York Jets. That contract more than doubled the opposing offer from the NFL's St. Louis Cardinals, who offered \$200,000 and a new Lincoln Continental (Warren, 2011). The same year, the AFL also signed a ridiculous \$36 million television contract with NBC. The money from the television contract helped ensure the league's operations, financially sustaining the league (Warren, 2011). The AFL flourished, while the NFL held onto a now measly \$4.65 million television contract with CBS.

As the battle over top college prospects like Namath intensified, alongside the increasing amount of television contracts, the two leagues—AFL and NFL—agreed to merge on June 8, 1966. However, due to the television contracts with each league running through 1970, the two could not officially combine until the contracts expired. So for four seasons the leagues agreed to play an AFL-NFL World Championship between the champions of each respective league. Since CBS had the rights to the NFL, and NBC had the rights to AFL, the merged league determined both networks would televise the first AFL-NFL championship game. The Green Bay Packers (NFL) and the Kansas City Chiefs (AFL) met on January 15, 1967, for the first ever “Super Bowl.” It was the first and only time two networks simultaneously broadcasted the Super Bowl (Sabol, 2014). On the CBS coverage, Ray Scott, liked for his minimalist broadcasting style, performed play-by-play during the first half. Jack Whitaker, best known for his golf and horse racing coverage, had the call in the second half. Over on NBC, versatile broadcaster Curt Gowdy handled the game as the play-by-play announcer.

Even with two networks covering the game, only portions of those broadcast tapes remain because soap operas were later recorded over the top of the recordings (Sabol, 2014). The following three Super Bowls were divided between the two networks as NBC covered Super

Bowl III (Curt Gowdy, play-by-play); while CBS televised Super Bowl II (Ray Scott, play-by-play) and Super Bowl IV (Jack Buck, play-by-play) (Warren, 2011).

After the merge, the combined league divided its teams into the American Football Conference (AFC) and the National Football Conference (NFC). A combined league office, known as the NFL, governed the two conferences. Initially, CBS owned the television rights to all the NFC teams, and NBC signed contracts for the television rights to all the AFC teams. Cross-conference games were assigned based on the conference of the visiting team. For the Super Bowl, CBS and NBC had a rotation system. During the next 14 years, Gowdy broadcasted five Super Bowls for NBC and Dick Enberg called the other two. Enberg was known for his phrase, “Oh, my!” on exciting plays. On CBS, men continued to dominate the coverage as well. Ray Scott (two) and Pat Summerall (five) called the Super Bowls as the play-by-play announcer on CBS’s alternating years.

This two-way rotation lasted fourteen seasons until 1985 when ABC was thrust into the mix. ABC initially agreed to broadcast one regular season game per week on Monday nights. This innovative, yet risky, primetime broadcast idea grew in popularity and became known as *Monday Night Football* (Bock, 2005). The Entertainment Sports and Programming Network (ESPN), which became synonymous with the Monday night package, had not formed when *Monday Night Football* commenced. ABC pushed the limits with its halftime coverage and celebrity guests. During its run on national television, *Monday Night Football* consistently ranked as one of the most popular broadcasts and helped shaped the current landscape of American sports television in primetime (Bock, 2005).

With the three networks—NBC, CBS, and ABC—now splitting the weekly coverage of NFL games, every single game aired on television. Each network utilized its own set of

announcers on each broadcast. Announcers became known for their own respective broadcasting styles, vocal sounds, and unique perspective of the game. These men became popular sports figures in their own rights paralleling the celebrity status of the athletes they covered. Howard Cosell, Frank Gifford, and Al Michaels came to fame on ABC. CBS developed talent such as Pat Summerall and John Madden. Curt Gowdy, Dick Enberg, Marv Albert, Jim Simpson, Kyle Rote, and Jim Lampley headlined NBC’s coverage (Levy, 2017).

The cadence and tone of their voices became synonymous with professional football’s largest and most iconic moments. For example, Pat Summerall’s “booming seriousness, expertly softened by the tinniest hint of twang,” as described by Dan Levy, became the soundtrack of professional football (Levy, 2017). Even Bleacher Report’s lead NFL writer, Michael Schottey shared on Twitter (@Schottey) the night of Summerall’s passing in 2013, “If you’re thinking of a football play and it’s not being announced by Pat Summerall or Keith Jackson, you’re doing it wrong” (Levy, 2017).

As these men came to fame and networks attempted to compete amongst each other, new graphic packages, animations, and innovative camera coverage were introduced. Up to this point in the 1970s, men dominated this rapidly expanding NFL television medium. In efforts to be innovative, network executives began searching for female announcers for the first time in supportive, secondary roles to the men. In 1974, Jane Chastain became the first female sports announcer to enter the NFL. She appeared on occasional telecasts as a commentator alongside Don Criqui and Irv Cross. The following year, CBS approached Phyllis George on becoming a co-host of their studio show, *The NFL Today* (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 187).

During the mid-1970s it was unusual to hear a woman’s voice during a major men’s sporting event (Bowen, 2017). Through the 1970s and 1980s women slowly began to enter the

sports media scene on local and national television, but most remained in secondary roles compared to their male counterparts' positions. These relegated roles included sideline reporting and studio hosting. Women were not asked to work in the booth as an analyst or play-by-play commentator providing the lead dialogue of the telecast. This pigeonhole of roles remained within the NFL through the 1980s. In 1987, an established, well-respected, female sportscaster from Tampa, Florida named Gayle Sierens became the first woman to provide play-by-play of an NFL game (Mead, 2010). But, following her single game assignment in 1987 a female was not afforded the lead opportunity for another 30 years by the networks. Women still appeared on the air in NFL television coverage, but they were reduced back to secondary roles of sideline reporter and studio host.

Around Sierens' NFL appearance in 1987, cable television was introduced. In response, coverage of NFL games and television contracts exponentially exploded. *Sunday Night Football* was created and picked up by ESPN in 1987 (Holloway, 2016). It was constructed from the mold of ABC's *Monday Night Football* (ABC is the parent company of ESPN). DirecTV released NFL Sunday Ticket in the mid-1990s, which covered every NFL regular season game on a satellite subscription service.

In 1993, with expiring contracts looming between CBS and the NFL, another network known as the Fox Network jumped into the sports television scene. At the time Rupert Murdoch's Fox Network was just seven-years-old. The company offered \$1.58 billion over four years to the NFL to broadcast NFC games (Sandomir, 1993). In 1993, the NFC was the more attractive conference for television networks as it was the older, more established of the two conferences. It featured teams in major television markets like New York, Chicago, and Detroit. It also contained league powerhouse and four-time Super Bowl champion, the San Francisco

49ers. The NFC also had the Dallas Cowboys, widely referred to as “America’s Team” for its coast-to-coast fan following (Sandomir, 1993). Fox offered \$1.58 billion, even though they lacked a division within the network established to cover sports. As soon as the contracts were signed, they began immediately constructing a sports division to handle their newest property. As a result, Fox signed over many popular CBS announcers like Summerall (Sandomir, 1993). The NFL largely benefitted as a league with Fox’s arrival as a new era of multibillion-dollar television contracts was escorted into American sports. CBS reentered the NFL in 1988 and began rebuilding itself after many of their announcers left for Fox. CBS and the NFL agreed to a \$4 billion television contract to broadcast AFC games over eight years. As a result, NBC lost their coverage of the AFC.

CBS still currently holds the rights to the AFC and Super Bowl every three years. Fox has held onto the rights to the NFC. NBC regained their NFL rights in 2005. Their package looked identical to ABC’s previous contract with the primetime telecast and the Super Bowl every three years. In this setup, the NFL is now able to select and change games in their marquee primetime broadcast to avoid non-competitive games being shown to a national audience. In doing so, the main primetime broadcast shifted from *Monday Night Football* to *Sunday Night Football*. ESPN elected to take over *Monday Night Football*. Longstanding NFL play-by-play announcer, Al Michaels left ABC and the *Monday Night Football* booth to join NBC on the new primetime *Sunday Night Football* (Holloway, 2016). Michaels still holds this role. ESPN NBA studio host, Mike Tirico slid into the *Monday Night Football* booth starting in 2006. He left 10 years later in 2016 when he joined NBC under Michaels to work on *Sunday Night Football* as the main studio host replacing Bob Costas. ESPN’s current contract with the NFL excludes the Super Bowl (Holloway, 2016).

Each network now pays on average roughly \$3 billion annually for their current television contracts running through 2022, which is 60% higher than their previous \$1.93 billion they collectively paid through 2013 (Badenhausen, 2011). The NFL launched a *Thursday Night Football* package in 2006 airing on its NFL Network property. Thursday Night Football still exists to this day. Fox announced in January 2018, they would be assuming the television rights to the *Thursday Night Football* package in a \$3 billion deal spanning five years (Crupi, 2018).

According to the Statistic Portal in 2016, the NFL’s television contracts ranked first at \$6 billion per year among all sports worldwide even over soccer and Olympic coverage. The next closest in worth was the FIFA World Cup worth \$4.8 billion. The NBA ranked fourth at \$2.6 billion and Major League Baseball (MLB) followed at \$1.6 billion (“Largest sports league TV contracts worldwide”, 2016). The Super Bowl is the most-watched show on television every year with over 114.4 million in viewership. It continually sets record numbers each year for the most-watched program in American television history – sports and non-sports (VanDerWerff & Zarracina, 2017). In the current landscape with NBC, CBS, ESPN, and Fox, play-by-play announcers such as Al Michaels (NBC), Joe Buck (Fox), Jim Nantz (CBS), Ian Eagle (CBS), Kevin Burkhardt (Fox) Greg Gumbel (CBS), Joe Tessitore (ESPN), and others have emerged as football icons in their own right—many assuming coast-to-coast celebrity status

As the NFL has grown into the most popular sport, the once male-dominated league has seen females step into prominent jobs across the league. The NFL and its teams now employ females in coveted positions such as team owners, chief security officers, vice presidents, and even game officials. As viewers and consumers, women now account for 45% of the NFL’s fan base (Hampton, 2017). From 2009 to 2013, female viewership grew by 26%, as 53 million women were reported watching the 2015 Super Bowl in the United States. Those 53 million

accounted for nearly half the total viewers (Hampton, 2017). Despite these inclusive trends, networks are still hesitant to crew women as lead play-by-play announcers on their coveted NFL television coverage.

History and Inclusion of Women in Sports and Sports Media

For years, since its beginning, sports broadcasting as an industry was the considered the “Good Ol’ Boy Network.” Prior to 1972, sports were seen as an entertainment product for men. They were played by men, viewed by men, and discussed in bars and offices by men. Therefore, it only made logical sense; men would provide the dialogue of the game as the commentators (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 187). This mindset is clearly evident by the history of the NFL and NFL television coverage. Networks, outside of NBC’s Gayle Sierens experiment, hired strictly men (mostly white) as play-by-play announcers.

With the arrival of an age characterized by protests and revolutions in the early 1970s, women’s rights burst onto the legal scene with Title IX². Two societal trends emerged. One, more women began participating in sports beginning in grade school levels extending to the professional ranks. Two, the number of women attending sporting events and watching on television increased.

Publicly funded schools were now mandated to have equal opportunities for females. High schools and colleges across the country added girls’ basketball, softball, volleyball, and track programs. Although Title IX mandates equal opportunity, it does not mandate equal opportunity in specific sports. For example, football does not have an exact feminine equivalent in publicly funded schools, such as a “girl’s football” program. By law, females are presented

² Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 is a federal law that states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (“Title IX”, 2017)

with other options besides football like volleyball or field hockey. They have equal opportunity, but it does not mandate a female equivalent of each sport has to be offered. Some schools, on occasion, permit females to join the male football team since an equivalent female football team is not offered. These occasions are rare and usually end up as a news story in local publications and television outlets due to the novelty of the occurrence. Some schools offer female participants the chance to play in “powder puff” football games. However, it is not a sanctioned athletic program played between schools. Powder puff football games usually consist of a single event where girls are divided into teams by classes within a single school and play one game of football where tackling and contact is removed (Person, n.d.).

A handful of amateur and semi-professional female football leagues do exist across the country. None of these leagues have grown into popular televised sports like women’s college and professional basketball, softball, track, and volleyball. The most popular female equivalent of professional football is the Legends Football League (LFL). The LFL formed in 2009 and was originally known as the Lingerie Football League. Branded as the “women of the gridiron” the LFL is a condensed 7-on-7, sexist version of contact football in which female players wear shoulder pads, helmets, and lingerie-type clothing items (Nianias, 2014).

Among these societal trends emerging from Title IX in the 1970s, women began to appear on camera in sports media for the first time as a subsequent result. Previously, sports media was a venue strictly for men, but now women began to provide commentary and dialogue for sports. As referenced, Jane Chastain became the first ever-female sportscaster on local regional television in Miami, Florida. After several years at WTVJ-TV in Miami, CBS hired Chastain as the first female sports announcer on national television. Despite the barrier breaking accomplishment, Chastain was treated poorly in many different accounts (“Jane Chastain”,

2010). She was assigned to interview sports wives as opposed to the athletes. Producers asked her to comment on the attractiveness of players as opposed to their play on the field. She was even forced to wear her hair in a bun and remove her makeup per requests of CBS executives. After covering the NFL and NBA, Chastain did not renew her contract, stating her time at CBS was the ‘most miserable of her career’ (“Jane Chastain”, 2010).

Donna De Varona and Jeannie Morris are also considered a part of the initial large wave of female sportscasters. Morris, a Chicago sportscaster, encountered countless acts of sexism during her 24-year career. She was assigned to cover a Chicago Bears and Minnesota Vikings NFL game. Blizzard conditions blanketed Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, Minnesota, as Morris sat outside the press box in the snow. ‘Women and children were not allowed inside the press box’ as it was written on the press passes (Haugh, 2014). Once women reporters, like Morris, were finally allowed in the press box years later, only male bathrooms were made available to the media. Female reporters were forced to use the same bathrooms as the fans, which were located far away from the press area (Schwartz, 1999). An angry Ted Williams, manager of Major League Baseball’s Texas Rangers, also kicked Morris out of his team’s dugout at Comiskey Park in Chicago, Illinois. Williams shouted, “What’s this shrimp female doing in here? Get the hell out!” Years later, Morris would be named the first female winner of the Ring Lardner Award, honoring local Chicago sportscasters and writers (Haugh, 2014).

During the mid 1970s, Phyllis George, 1972 Miss America Winner, became one of the first female commentators to have a prominent on-air role in NFL television coverage. CBS promoted George as ‘America’s Pioneer Female Sportscaster’ across the network. She joined Brent Musburger, Jimmy “The Greek” Snyder, and Irv Cross on CBS’s pre-game show, *The NFL Today*. George flourished, but similar to Chastain, she was relegated to asking players about

their marriages as opposed to their play on the field (Tanier, 2017). Critics also heavily criticized George for her lack of journalistic background. Executives publicly voiced their dislike of George’s hire and inclusion. They stated the media industry as a whole had started to value appearance of reporters rather than their journalistic skills and reporting background.

Those criticisms hit an all-time high when George stepped away from sports to become the permanent anchor of *CBS Morning News*. “I am heartbroken,” said former CBS News president, Richard Salant. “Quite a number of people at CBS share the view that it’s the last straw on the question of where the hell are we being made to go these days. It demeans our business. If they want to [reach outside the ranks of broadcast journalism], put the show in the entertainment division. Get it out of news. Once we start playing those games we lose all our credibility” (Smith, 1984). Adding to the criticism, George’s replacement on the sports side was Jayne Kennedy, another beautiful woman with a sparse professional broadcasting background (Schwartz, 1999).

Following Chastain and George, the 1970s and 1980s saw an influx of women taking jobs in sports media as anchors, reporters, and hosts including Lesley Visser, Robin Roberts, and Leandra Reilly Lardner (Schwartz, 1999). Visser became the first female to cover the Super Bowl as a sideline reporter for Super Bowl XXIX on ABC. A portion of Visser’s job contained interviewing players after games (Sobel, 2001). “When I first started I used to have to wait in the parking lot for players [as opposed to entering the locker room],” said Visser in an interview with U.S. News & World Report. “I remember a game in the mid-‘70s. Terry Bradshaw was the quarterback. I’m standing out in the parking lot—a late fall game, it was cold. Finally, he came out and I went to ask him a question. He took my notepad, signed an autograph, and handed it back to me.”

Despite the influx, opportunities for females to hold lead play-by-play positions remained almost non-existent in the early 1980s. A few women were afforded chances on rare occurrences outside of professional sports, but the biggest breakthrough came in the late 1980s when Lardner and Sierens were hired by NBC (Rosenthal, 2017). Executive producer, Michael Weisman was determined to crew a female as a play-by-play announcer on an NFL game. Weisman was a creative, innovative producer for NBC Sports (Fennelly, 2017). The two women were paired with sports talent coach Marty Glickman and began calling practice games. Glickman had Sierens call three practice games. Sierens, a former athlete at Tampa Catholic High School and communications major at Florida State, had experience in play-by-play through various equestrian events and freelance assignments for ESPN. After working with Glickman, NBC and Weisman assigned Sierens as the play-by-play announcer on a Seattle Seahawks and Kansas City Chiefs regular season game on December 27, 1987 (Rosenthal, 2017).

“It wasn’t just me – everyone was nervous,” Sierens reflected (Fennelly, 2017). “Nervous for me. I didn’t feel the burden of being embarrassed if I was bad. I felt the burden of screwing it up for a lot of other women if I was bad. I wanted to be good enough to where the door did not get slammed closed.”

Reporters filled the press box to not only cover the game, but to follow this national story of a female NFL play-by-play announcer. At halftime of the cold, wintery game at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, her husband had to escort her to the bathroom through the crowd of reporters. A man approached Sierens’ husband, grabbed his arm, and said, “I just want to tell her [Sierens] she’s doing a great job. I’m Lamar Hunt, the Chiefs’ owner” (Fennelly, 2017).

Weisman offered Sierens six more games for the following season (Deitsch, 2014). However, due to a contract dispute with her regular employer, WFLA-TV in Tampa, Florida, she faced a decision (Mead, 2010). She was given an ultimatum from her station manager at WFLA-TV to focus on news or part-time sports work for NBC. Sierens chose to stay home and work within news. Lardner on the other hand stayed in sports, working on the air as Leandra Reilly (maiden name). In 1988, she became the first woman to do play-by-play of an NBA game. The game featured the New Jersey Nets and the Philadelphia 76ers, airing on SportsChannel (Rosenthal, 2017). Despite breaking into the NBA, Lardner never ventured into professional football as a play-by-play broadcaster.

After Sierens, Weisman tried to develop Andrea Kremer, an NFL Films host at the time, into another female NFL play-by-play announcer. However, Weisman was let go when Dick Ebersol took over NBC Sports, thus concluding Kremer's development (Deitsch, 2014).

Female anchors proliferated in the early 2000s when audience research suggested viewers wanted to see women on television (Allen, 2003). This was evident outside of the NFL. Women began to appear in more prominent on-air roles across a multitude of sports. Ann Schatz, who now works as a broadcaster for CBS Sports Network, ESPN, Pac-12 Network, the Portland Thorns FC, and Westwood One, began a career in sports broadcasting off inspiration from George and Kennedy. Schatz started in the late 1970s in her hometown city of Omaha, Nebraska (Biga, 2016). When her family relocated to Portland, Oregon, in 1989 she became the first female sportscaster on the air in the Portland television market, market No. 25 in the United States. Since then, she has found a niche juggling play-by-play assignments for the Big East Conference, Conference USA, and the Pac-12. Those events primarily consist of women's sports such as basketball, soccer, and softball. Her primary assignments include women's college

basketball as a play-by-play announcer for the Pac-12 Network and occasionally a freelance assignment for nationally syndicated radio broadcasts on Westwood One (Godett, 2018).

In 2000, Pam Ward became the first female play-by-play announcer on a nationally televised college football game, despite being advised by an agent in 1990 to forget any notion of becoming a television play-by-play announcer (Shapiro, 2007). Ward’s jump was groundbreaking for women in football. Shortly after Ward in 2005, ESPN’s Beth Mowins became the second woman to provide the lead dialogue on a nationally televised college football game (Bucholtz, 2017). The inclusion of Ward and Mowins into the college football scene was monumental for sports media, but the NFL still remained distant from the idea in the mid-2000s.

During this time, other female sports broadcasters began to establish careers in prominent on-air roles within other major professional men’s sports. Doris Burke, a former point guard for the Providence Friars women’s basketball team, found herself as one of the lead analysts in the NBA (Godett, 2017). She was the first female to be given a full regular-season role at the national level as an NBA analyst for ESPN. In 2017, Debbie Antonelli, a former basketball player at North Carolina State, became the first woman since Ann Meyers in 1995 to serve as an analyst on the coverage of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament. Jessica Mendoza also became a recognizable voice as an MLB analyst on ESPN’s *Baseball Tonight* and *Sunday Night Baseball* (Sapakoff, 2017). Brook Weisbrod (ESPN and Big Ten Network) and Suzyn Waldman (New York Yankees radio) have also enjoyed careers as analysts in other sports (Godett, 2017).

A few female radio play-by-play announcers covering men’s sports outside of the NFL have started to appear in recent years. In Minor League Baseball, Kirsten Karbach serves as the voice of the Clearwater Threshers, the advanced-A affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies (Brennan, 2015). In 2009, Jon Chelesnik and the Sportscaster Talent Agency of America began recognizing

the country’s top collegiate student sportscasters. The All-America program ranks the top 20 student sportscasters, the No. 1 ranked broadcaster is then awarded the Jim Nantz Award, and the next five subsequently named All-Americans. By 2014, Bianca Buono, an Emerson College senior, became the first female to be recognized as an All-American. She remained the only female until St. Cloud State University senior, Katie Emmer won the award in 2018, ranking No. 1 overall nationally (Chelesnik, 2018).

All of these women are recent examples of female announcers who have worked to help crack the glass ceiling within sports media. Some worked into play-by-play roles across varying sports. Others found a niche as analysts within male sports. A select few have even been able to find their way into play-by-play positions within male sports. However despite the NFL’s popularity among women, for 30 years Sierens was still the only woman to perform play-by-play on a regular season NFL telecast. That thirty-year drought however ended in 2017 upon Beth Mowins’ arrival. For the first time since Gayle Sierens, a woman held the lead play-by-play position in an NFL television booth for a regular season game (Finn, 2017).

Current Role of Women in NFL Television Coverage

Many of the current female sportscasters in the NFL hold positions of reporting facts. These roles encompass sideline reporters and studio host as opposed to positions of opinion-based evaluations like an analyst or play-by-play commentator. On CBS’s NFL coverage Tracy Wolfson and Jamie Erdahl receive regular assignments on the sidelines. Erin Andrews, Pam Oliver, Kristina Pink, Jennifer Hale, Laura Okim, and Shannon Spake are crewed weekly as sideline reporters as well on Fox’s NFL coverage. Michelle Tafoya and Heather Cox see similar sideline assignments on NBC’s coverage. Lisa Salters headlines ESPN’s coverage as the lead

sideline reporter on the *Monday Night Football* package (Perez, 2017). Although important for the sake of inclusion, each of these women fulfill a very traditional gender role for females in sports television as a sideline reporter.

Prior to Mowins, the history of female NFL broadcasters in nontraditional roles outside of Sierens is slim. Lesley Visser worked as a color commentator for one game on a Westwood One/CBS Radio broadcast in 2001. In 2009, she also became the first female to serve as the color analyst on a televised game. The game, however, was a preseason game between the New Orleans Saints and Miami Dolphins. Mowins additionally called preseason games for the Oakland Raiders starting in 2015 on regional telecasts. Lastly, Kate Scott handled two games as the preseason radio play-by-play voice of the San Francisco 49ers filling in for the primary voice, Bob Fitzgerald, who switched to television (Deitsch, 2014).

With the current television contracts with the NFL including CBS, Fox, NBC, and ESPN around 20 play-by-play positions are available each year for NFL television coverage. For 30 years, not a single spot was given to a woman—not even an entry level spot on the networks with multiple announce teams such as Fox and CBS (Deitsch, 2014). Atkins (2012) argued this was one of the few remaining glass ceilings yet to be fully cracked in sports media. NFL color analyst positions on network television are primarily reserved for former players and coaches. This trend provides explanation as to why a female has yet to serve this role on a regular season since there has yet to be a female player in the NFL. The only professional equivalent of football to receive television coverage is the LFL, and even that is a sexist modification of football, not viewed as a serious sport. Not to mention, the LFL has only been around since 2009—not even a full decade. In historical examples (reviewed in Chapter One), Red Grange filled the analyst role as a former standout halfback after his playing career. Recently, former players such as Tony

Romo, Dan Fouts, Cris Collinsworth, and Troy Aikman (all white males) hold these roles in modern day NFL television (Perez, 2017).

But, this is where Atkins (2012) based his argument. Contrary to the analyst, men who have no playing or coaching experience assume a majority of the lead play-by-play positions on network television like Al Michaels, Joe Buck, and Jim Nantz (all white males). Michaels is a graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in radio and television (Stewart, 2003). Buck is the son of the late, legendary St. Louis Cardinals (MLB) announcer, Jack Buck. Joe Buck went to Indiana University for telecommunications, but did not finish school before starting a professional broadcasting career with the Cardinals alongside his father (“Joe Buck to receive honorary degree”, 2016). Nantz, known for his opening tagline “Hello friends,” played golf in college at the University of Houston while rooming with Fred Couples. However, Nantz focused his future on a career in broadcasting (Tolson, 2018). Although their credentials as broadcasters are certainly worthy of the positions (Michaels, Buck, and Nantz) most network play-by-play announcers are college graduates of journalism or broadcasting programs with little to no athletic experience at a professional level.

“Most of the NFL play-by-play announcers anyways are wise men with skinny arms that have never played a down in the NFL, let alone big time college football,” wrote Atkins. He among others began to question, if males without playing experience are assuming network television play-by-play roles, why does the NFL still lack a female presence (Atkins, 2012).

In 2017, ESPN assigned Beth Mowins to the second opening-week *Monday Night Football* game. The game featured the Los Angeles Chargers and the Denver Broncos on September 11, 2017. Mowins was assigned to work alongside an unseasoned, first-time analyst, Rex Ryan (former NFL coach) and a newly introduced, international sideline reporter named

Sergio Dipp. With Sierens’ 1987 telecast airing regionally on NBC, Mowins’ 2017 broadcast additionally marked the first time a woman called an NFL game on primetime national television. Twenty minutes prior to kickoff, ESPN ran a segment on SportsCenter in tribute to Mowins. A voiceover remarked during the tribute, “This particular doubleheader is especially meaningful. It also signals to female sports journalists and budding female broadcasters that a career in sports is a legitimate possibility. Because this Monday, regardless of gender, the most qualified person has been given the job” (Finn, 2017).

Colleagues and those within the sports media industry praised Mowins on many accounts after the telecast for her play-by-play performance and barrier-breaking milestone. Writer Chad Finn commented in a Boston.com article, “...she got it right in the game’s biggest moment.” The comment referred to Mowins providing the viewer with Chargers’ kicker, Younghoe Koo’s condensed, personal story in the seconds before lining up for the potential game-tying kick (Finn, 2017). CBS’s Wolfson even shared on Twitter (*@tracywolfson*), “Listening to Beth Mowins I can’t help but envision how many other girls are watching, saying ‘that’s what I want to do’ #breakingbarriers” (Garcia, 2017).

Mowins was paired with an unpolished analyst in Ryan. The New York Post went so far as to describe Ryan’s debut as a “surprising ESPN disaster” (Bell, 2017). This, too, provides evidence for role stereotyping; assuming former coaches and athletes (like Ryan) can transition into broadcasting seamlessly without years of training like their play-by-play partner.

“I truly would have loved to have seen her with someone that was a little bit better than Rex Ryan,” Sierens said in response to Mowins’ telecast (Bell, 2017). “I think she just so far outshined him.” The San Diego Union-Tribune echoed Sierens statements saying Mowins “provided needed polish” to make up for Ryan’s shortcomings. Despite the high praise, NFL

fans and viewers shared negative feedback on Twitter and other online outlets. Julie DiCaro’s (2017) *New York Times* article entitled “Safest Bet in Sports: Men Complaining About a Female Announcer’s Voice” streamlines some of the negative feedback from NFL fans.

“Not a fan of this #MNF commentary team, Rex Ryan is far too reserved and dull, and Beth Mowins has a really weird annoying voice #LACvsDEN” - @TDJenno

“Hey @espn, I commend you for giving Beth Mowins a shot, but her voice is annoying to listen to on #mnf” - @KirkLOlson

“Beth mowins voice super annoying. Please replace her immediately. #MNF” - @timezanillusion

“I’m sure Beth Mowins is a nice person but her voice should not be on tv. I feel like she is scolding me for throwing snowballs #MNF” - @DefoeD

“God Beth Mowins voice is so annoying” - @AdamJCarley

Other comments in regard to Mowins’ voice consisted of “shrill,” “grating,” “like listening to my ex nag me,” and “sounds like my mom yelling at me” (Dicaro, 2017). On the reputable sports broadcasting website, AwfulAnnouncing.com, staff writer Andrew Bucholtz admitted the *Monday Night Football* broadcast “...didn’t go over very well with the viewers” (Bucholtz, 2018). Some fans directed comments to Mowins criticizing more than just the sound of her voice. Those comments are shown below.

“Can we have Beth Mowins not call any of our games again? Just terrible.” - @BomisHawg

“Beth Mowins is just awful. I Can’t watch this anymore. Just as bad as it gets. #LACvsDEN #why #bethmowins” - @glenpridgen

“MNF ruined by Beth Mowins.” - @Caleb12304Caleb

“MNF sounds so small time with Beth Mowins. She just lacks ability. Don’t know why they insist on using her.” - @gregghenson

“I swear @espn, is Beth Mowins going to be calling MNF all the time? If so, goodbye. I absolutely hate, despise, can’t stand her voice and the way she calls games. This is torture! I’m watching with mute on!” - @VOLUNTEERS_TN

“Beth Mowins. Worst announcer I’ve ever heard. She tries so hard to sound like one of the guys.” – Anonymous fan [retrieved from online message board] (“ESPN female announcer”, 2014)

“The negative online reaction to Mowins’s football play-by-play calling is steeped in sexism,” said Rebecca Martinez. Martinez teaches women’s and gender studies at the University of Missouri (Dicaro, 2017). Martinez elaborated, “The comments, mostly from men, have focused on her voice being annoying to the point of not wanting to listen to her. They’ll focus on the naturally higher pitch of women’s voices and ‘shrillness,’ all the while claiming their critiques of higher pitch have nothing to do with sexism. Women who have high visibility, particularly in settings that are traditionally male, will experience backlash.”

Andrew Dzurisin, an assistant professor of sociology at Middlesex County College reasoned that hearing a woman do the play-by-play of the sport that most fits the traditional definition of masculinity is beyond comprehension to some men (Dicaro, 2017). Of the three major American professional sports, football is seen as one of the most closely linked to the definition of masculinity due to its rough, violent, tribal nature. Football is culturally laced into masculinity.

Mowins’ primary role is men’s and women’s college sports for ESPN. As a native of North Syracuse, New York, she joined ESPN in 1994. Since joining she has broadcasted college championships in basketball, softball, soccer, and volleyball including being the voice of the

Women’s College Softball World Series for over 20 years (“Beth Mowins: Play-by-Play Announcer”, n.d.). The former captain of the Lafayette College women’s basketball team, Mowins graduated in 1989 before earning her master’s degree in communications from Syracuse University in 1990. Her credentials and experience in play-by-play broadcasting are comparable to male play-by-play announcers at any network.

After Mowins’ *Monday Night Football* debut, she called the Indianapolis Colts and the Cleveland Browns regular season game alongside Jay Feely a few weeks later. The game aired live on CBS on September 24, 2017 from Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. This marked the first time a woman had performed play-by-play of an NFL game on CBS’s networks. By season end, Mowins had called five NFL games on television—one on ESPN, and four on CBS.

ESPN has continued to utilize Mowins on NFL broadcasts. In 2018, following her NFL debut in 2017, Mowins handled the season-opening *Monday Night Football* doubleheader on ESPN. Unlike 2017, in 2018 ESPN had Mowins handle the first of the two games, New York Jets vs. Detroit Lions, with ESPN’s newly introduced *Monday Night Football* crew (Joe Tessitore, Jason Witte, Booger McFarland, and Lisa Salters) calling the second game (Bucholtz, 2018).

As later chapters will explain, that 2018 *Monday Night Football* telecast will be used in this study through a content analysis alongside three other NFL broadcasts. Similar comments attacking the sound of Mowins’ voice followed after each telecast. Other comments degraded not only the sound of her voice, but her ability to deliver a play-by-play call. This study will examine whether or not there is a significant difference in the language use between Mowins’ play-by-play dialogues and three male, primetime, NFL television play-by-play announcers.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter, organized into sub-sections, reviews the existing literature and research on four topics, each central to this study. The following sub-sections review (one) how sports serve as metaphors for gender roles, (two) the ongoing problems women face in sports media, (three) the theoretical framework for how individuals form perceptions about other human beings through Impression Formation Theory, and (four) how the credibility and authoritativeness of sportscasters are perceived by viewers.

Sports Serving as Metaphors for Gender Roles

Gender roles are best defined as culturally dependent, social constructs that influence the perception of individuals within genders. These constructs lead to gender stereotypes, which in turn can result in gender inequality. In a broad general sense, according to gender stereotype theory, females are perceived as more feminine than men, while men are typically perceived as more masculine than women within the American culture (Kachel, Steffens, Niedlich, 2016).

Traditional feminine characteristics and stereotypes suggest females are more emotional, nurturing, submissive, weak, small, and petite than men by nature. These traits are not universal in women but are seen as traditional characteristics of feminine. In contrary, the term masculinity simply represents the possession of the appearance or qualities by an individual that most resemble a man. Gordon (2014) lists traditional masculine traits found in men as competitive, assertive, aggressive, confident, independent, and passionate. For example, as previously referenced in chapter one, Grubb and Billiot (2010) commonly associate strength and bravery as traditional male qualities. For centuries, sports and athletic competitions have provided opportunities for men to validate their masculinity.

The first recordings of organized sports trace back to 776 B.C. with the ancient Olympic Games in Greece (Winsor, 2018). These athletic competitions included variations of boxing, wrestling, racing, jumping, and throwing. It was noted these competitions—typically full of blood, passion, and aggression (all traditional masculine qualities)—served as the social and cultural highlight of the Ancient Greek calendar for nearly 12 centuries. Women were not allowed to compete, nor were they permitted to even attend the games as a spectator (“Welcome to the ancient Olympic games”, 2018).

Accelerate from 776 B.C. to the 19th century, when Baron de Coubertin founded the modern Olympic Games in 1896. He reasoned the participation of women in the Olympics would be “impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic, and improper.” Many, during the late 1800s, even held a belief that a woman’s participation in sports would hinder their ability to have children and fulfill motherly duties later in life (Katz & Luckinbill, 2017). This would later be deemed as incorrect with advances in scientific studies of motherhood. With society progressively evolving into the 20th century, women were slowly implemented into the games as participants. By 2012, when female boxing was included, women were now allowed to compete in every sport at the Olympics (Katz & Luckinbill, 2017).

As initially discussed in Chapter One, Title IX brought forth a wave of change in society in the 1970s. Women were now allowed to participate in sports at publicly funded schools. This served as a monumental milestone for gender equality. However, Hardin and Greer (2009) conducted a study, published in the *Journal of Sports Behavior*, and found that even youth who have grown up with Title IX still view sports as an expression of masculinity. These findings suggested that gender stereotyping within sports is resilient even post-Title IX. Hardin and Greer therefore concluded the rising participation rates post-Title IX are doing minimal work to help

alter gender stereotyping in sports. Regardless of the participation of women, sports are still seen as a venue for men to validate their masculinity (Hardin & Greer, 2009).

Knight and Giuliano (2003) had argued a few years prior, when people challenge or alter traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes (such as a woman participating or working in sports) they are seen as atypical and in violation of stereotypical perception. They even found women (who participate in sports that require skills and characteristics traditionally linked to masculinity—like strength, aggression, and assertiveness) present an image problem for female athletes. Others (particularly males) see them as overly masculine. Hoiness, Weathington, and Cotrell (2008) also found an interaction in respectability ratings in a survey study between the gender of the survey participant and the type of sport played by females. Male survey participants rated female athletes participating in basketball, softball, and soccer (sports requiring more traditional masculine qualities) as being less respectable than female athletes who participate in track, tennis, and figure skating. Women, on the other hand, rated female athletes participating in basketball, softball, and soccer as more respectable than females who participate in track, tennis, and figure skating.

These findings are rather important when examining the perception of women in sports. This helps confirm that women seem to respect other women who challenge gender roles and stereotypes within sports, but men view those same women as being less respectable than their more traditional feminine counterparts (Hoiness, Weathington, & Cotrell, 2008). This study (conducted in 2008) is similar to Hardin and Greer’s study (2009) as both examined individuals who grew up post-Title IX. These confirm gender stereotyping still exists within sports even among generations after Title IX.

Of all the major professional sports in America—football (NFL), basketball (NBA), baseball (MLB), and hockey (NHL)—football is one of the most linked and connected to traditional values and characteristics of masculinity. Football expresses aggression, strength, bravery, confidence, and passion—all characteristic used to define masculinity (Dicaro, 2017). With physical contact and collisions it displays a traditional view of manliness. Deace (2013) argues this is a reason why football is so popular in American culture compared to other sports. “Masculinity is celebrated, not feminized [in football],” wrote Deace. “[In football], fortune favors the bold.”

Dicaro (2017) on the other hand attests, “Sports are commonly perceived to be an arena for men, by men, of men—and anything that disrupts that [such as a female participant or female commentator] makes some men uneasy.” She went on to add, “...some men insist they turn to sports to get a break from women” (Dicaro, 2017).

Problems Women Face in Sports Media

Even though laws prevent employers and media outlets from publicly admitting it, women sportscasters continue to face daunting hurdles within the industry that men do not. Those hurdles include differing standards on (a) physical looks, (b) harsher evaluations by viewers, (c) relegated roles, (d) access into male locker rooms, (e) issues of motherhood, and (f) the sound of their voice being naturally higher pitched than the sound of a traditional male voice (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 190). These issues point to evidence that gender stereotypes have not only persisted within sports, but sports media as well. Within this sub-section of chapter two, each of these issues will be explored in more detail through existing research and literature.

A. Physical Looks

“There is more pressure on a woman to look more attractive than men,” said Robin Roberts, anchor of ABC’s *Good Morning America* and former ESPN sportscaster (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 191). “With all due respect, I work with male colleagues who aren’t the best looking people in the world...maybe a little overweight...but no one seems to care if a man is perhaps bald or a little paunchy. But they would care if it were a woman. If a woman is a little too heavy or not pretty, she probably won’t have a job.”

Beauty and attractiveness can be difficult to define and differentiate from viewer to viewer. However, research shows universal characteristics of youth, smooth skin, symmetry, and proportion are linked to attractiveness and beauty within the American culture. Americans also attach a deeply rooted stereotype that physically attractive people possess desirable characteristics like social skills, confidence, competence, and intelligence (Fox, 1997).

Applying these characteristics alongside a glance into the current landscape of women in NFL television shows this need for beauty is true. The lead NFL sideline reporters between CBS, NBC, ESPN, and Fox have many of the above characteristics linked to beauty and attractiveness in American culture. Erin Andrews (Fox), Tracy Wolfson (CBS), Michele Tafoya (NBC), and Lisa Salters (ESPN) have all appeared in online lists that tab the most attractive women in sports and television. These women often appear on-camera after detailed makeup sessions perfecting their smooth skin and appearance. Their hair is nicely done with stylish professional clothing to portray youthfulness. Everything is accented by a symmetrical smile. The current landscape proves there is a need for beauty and attractiveness.

This precedent does not diminish their experienced resumes or skillsets. Andrews (degree in telecommunications from the University of Florida) has covered two Super Bowls, NFC

Championship games, and the World Series of Major League Baseball (“Erin Andrews”, n.d.). Tafoya was the first woman to be nominated and win a Sports Emmy in 2011 (Bornhoft, 2018). Wolfson and Salters are both college graduates with decades of on-camera reporting experience. But as Hedrick (2000) argues, when these accomplished female sportscasters appear on television their knowledge, interviewing skills, and delivery are not the first thing noticed by viewers. It is indeed their physical looks. This creates one of many hurdles that women face that men do not.

B. Harsher Evaluations by Viewers

Women face harsher evaluations, and sometimes even totally different standards, when trying to establish credibility within sports media. To verify this problem, 93% of female sports journalists surveyed worldwide believe they face impediments that their male counterparts do not encounter when it comes to establishing credibility (Hernandez, 1996). This belief hinges upon gender stereotypes that women, stereotypically speaking, are not as knowledgeable about sports. “There was this sense that if you are a woman, you can’t possibly know as much about sports as a man,” said Tafoya (Bornhoft, 2018). This sexist, stereotypical belief is evident, consider the opening comment in the first chapter by Andy Rooney, “...those damn women...who don’t know what the hell they’re talking about” (Gross, 2002).

Another example within the NFL occurred during a midseason Carolina Panthers press conference on October 4, 2017. Jourdan Rodrigue, a female sports reporter for the Carolina Panthers, asked quarterback Cam Newton about his wide receiver Devin Funchess (Lyles, 2017). The question by Rodrigue was worded,

“I know you take a lot of pride in seeing your receivers play well. Devin Funchess has seemed to really embrace the physicality of his routes and getting those extra yards. Does

that give you a little bit of enjoyment to see him kind of ‘truck sticking’ people out there?”

Before Rodrigue could finish her question, Newton smiled and looked down toward the podium. As Rodrigue finished, Newton started his sexist response with a smile on his face,

“It’s funny to hear a female talk about routes. Like it’s funny.”

Newton emphasized the word ‘routes’ in his remark, lingering on the early vowel sound. He paused after making the sexist comment. His smirk stretched ear-to-ear in a grin as his eyes looked over the top of the reporters in front of him. The pressroom remained silent. He continued turning his focus back to Rodrigue,

“But, ‘Fun’ is coming along, man. This is a big game for him.”

According to a statement issued by Rodrigue to the Charlotte Observer, Rodrigue sought Newton out after the press conference as he left for the locker room. Newton, however, did not apologize for his comments. Rodrigue wrote in her statement, “...I was dismayed by his response, which not only belittled me but countless other women before me and beside me who work in similar jobs” (Lyles, 2017). This double standard has forced women to work harder than the average male pursuing the industry in order to meet males’ standards of knowledge.

“[As a female sportscaster] I had to be better. I had to be better than you. I had to be better than Bob across the way. I had to be better than Tony at the other station. I had to be better than all the guys because the little mistakes I made were absolutely magnified by viewers and critics,” said Ann Schatz (Godett, 2018). “If a [man] got the score wrong, people would say ‘Oh that Joel.’ If I got the score wrong it was, ‘See, she can’t handle it. You can’t rely on her. She’s not dependable. You have to always go back and mop up after her.’”

C. Relegated Roles

Women, such as Schatz, also find themselves with a tougher climb to the top level on-air positions like play-by-play announcer. In fact, Coventry (2004) found in a survey of women commentators, the least likely job for female sports announcers in the landscape of sports media is play-by-play. In support, Pam Ward said, “More than 90% of women asking for career advice aspire to do sidelines. That’s what they see as a possibility. They view it as a female role” (Gunther, Kautz, & Roth, 2005). Hedrick (2000) additionally supports this observation.

In 1989, Gayle Gardner opened the door to Major League Baseball for female play-by-play announcers, but few women followed. Ward broke the barrier for women in college football in 2000, followed by Mowins in 2005, but few followed in their footsteps. Ward after entering college football in 2000 was met with gender criticism for violating stereotypical gender roles. She was eventually let go by ESPN in 2012. Doris Burke and Jessica Mendoza made significant waves moving into prominent analyst roles within the NBA and MLB respectively. These moves broke ideology that women should only cover women’s sports. Burke had covered the WNBA for 20 years before jumping to the NBA. Mendoza was an All-American and Olympic softball player before leaping into the MLB as an analyst. But these are examples of analysts, not play-by-play announcers. Not to mention that examples past Burke and Mendoza within the NBA and MLB are slim. Sierens paved the way for women play-by-play announcers into the NFL, yet it still took 30 years for another female to be afforded the opportunity (Bell, 2017).

“Now the challenge isn’t just getting women in sports broadcasting, it is getting women into untraditional sports broadcasting roles like play-by-play, and then play-by-play of men’s sports,” said Lisa Byington (Godett, 2017). Byington started working for the Big Ten Network in 2007 as a reporter. A random call from one of the executives a few years later left an offer on the table for Byington to serve as a play-by-play announcer for an upcoming women’s basketball

game at Michigan State. Byington had never entertained thoughts of a career in play-by-play, but the single game offer led to more opportunities (Godett, 2017). Byington since then has covered games as a play-by-play announcer, studio host, and sideline reporter on Fox Sports 1, Fox Sports 2, Pac-12 Network, ESPN, SEC Network, and CBS Sports Network (Aronson, 2017).

D. Females in Male Locker Rooms

Another ongoing issue women encounter that men do not is whether female reporters should be allowed in male locker rooms. Locker rooms in professional sports—and in some instances, college athletics—are open to the media before and after games and practices. The media receive exclusive access inside the doors. Players surrender some privacy, but gain daily publicity through the access. This increases fan following as behind the scenes content is delivered across all platforms—print, television, and web (Uberti, 2016). But, this all occurs at what price?

Due to the emphasis on real-time newsgathering, reporters rush into the locker rooms at the first available chance with the pressure of breaking stories. However, within the locker room, players walk around with hardly any clothes. Interviews are conducted with athletes sitting in front of their cubby changing station with nothing but a towel around their waist. Scenes of shirtless, hardly dressed, sweat-soaked athletes answering questions to a sea of microphones have become an iconic commonality and a compelling source of content. This creates for an uncomfortable position for female sports reporter who are asked to chase these interviews into the locker room (Uberti, 2016).

As a result, it is common to see female reporters interviewing coaches and athletes directly outside the locker rooms. This is the case with the television coverage of the NCAA

Men’s Basketball Championship with CBS sideline reporter, Tracy Wolfson. Wolfson will interview both head coaches before and after each game in a tape-delayed interview outside each locker room. In early years female reporters were blocked from entering male locker rooms at all. This placed females at a disadvantage to male reporters. The first access to athletes and stories occur in the locker room after games and practice. In many cases, the athletes have not had an opportunity to fully shower or change before they are expected to answer questions. The locker room, by nature, is an environment in which an athlete feels comfortable due to the natural privacy of the locker room. However, as reporters rush in violating that privacy, without athletes having a full chance to shower and change, they are left vulnerable in this moment. This equation of comfort and vulnerability lead to compelling quotes and engaging content.

This frequently debated issue of women in male locker rooms was the center of conversation on a 2015 episode of “The Herd with Colin Cowherd” on Fox Sports between Kristine Leahy and host, Colin Cowherd. The dialogue from Leahy followed when Cowherd asked if she is ‘uncomfortable with the nakedness’ inside the locker room,

“Yea, its extremely uncomfortable. There are actually players who will purposefully drop their towel when I turn around. Some of them shouldn’t be doing it. But they do it on purpose because they want to see if you’ll look. It’s really awkward. Even for the guys who aren’t doing it on purpose, I don’t want to be hovering over some guy that is trying to get dressed or put his towel on. That just feels disrespectful. But at the same time, there are so many people in the media trying to get around, you have to get close, or you’re not going to get the interview. It’s pretty awful. They’re just needs to be a separate room for it all together” (Cowherd, 2015).

This debate has strung on for the better part of four decades. This further suggests gender inequality is still an issue in sports and sports media in the 21st century. Many female sportscasters, reporters, and journalists seem to step above the issue. Lesley Visser, the first female NFL beat writer and sideline reporter to cover the Super Bowl, has stepped out publicly claiming the issue has received a disproportional amount of attention. Visser noted that the

locker room is only 3% of her job. However, within her first ten years in the industry, it received 90% of the attention (Sobel, 2001). Regardless of the percentage, sports and sports media are not in the majority of industries when it comes to asking women to step into a locker room full of half clothed, naked men.

E. Motherhood & Family

Two separate studies conducted by Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002) in addition to Hardin and Shain (2005) found similar trends and themes among issues women face in sports media that men do not, but elaborated a little further as to why many women left the industry. They found frustrations over sacrificing time and family relationship as the primary reasons why many females abandoned sports media, not discrimination and harassment. This theme matches with historical examples as well. After Sierens’ NFL telecast of the Seahawks-Chiefs game, she was offered more games by NBC, but faced an ultimatum. She could stay home at WFLA-TV in Tampa with her family, or pursue part-time work on a national stage with NBC and the NFL. With Sierens now pregnant and the decision looming, she faced a gendered workplace debate, motherhood or profession? Sierens chose the more stable and secure option, staying home in Tampa with WFLA-TV (Bell, 2017). Sierens situation reflects a similar trend that Hardin and Shain (2005) discovered as a cause for women to leave the industry.

The decision did lead Sierens to a broadcast career honored with an Emmy award, but her one NFL telecast still remains as one of Sierens’ most recognized professional achievements. The question lingers, if Sierens had selected the national work with NBC and the NFL as opposed to the safer route with WFLA-TV, would that thirty-year gap between women be

condensed? Would there be more women be in prominent play-by-play role among major male professional sports, since an example would have been present?

Bell (2017) blames this issue on the gender role socialization factor of motherhood. Bell additionally argues women trailblazers (like Sierens, Ward, Burke, and Mendoza) face additional pressure that male sportscasters do not. Each woman referenced the daunting pressure to not “screw it up” out of fear doors might close for future generations of female sportscasters upon their failure. Those responses match Schatz’s concern from earlier. Women sportscasters are forced to meet male standards. Bell argues all of these problems are ongoing issues of gender inequality within sports and sports media that need to be addressed (Bell, 2017).

F. Female Voice

Female commentators often receive criticism from fans over the sound of their voice (Dicaro, 2017). By nature, a female’s voice is higher pitched than a male’s voice. Julie Dicaro, a female weekend host on 670 The Score in Chicago and a columnist for CBSChicago.com, said her voice has been criticized for being “too high,” “too low,” “too young-sounding,” “too Chicago-sounding,” “too harsh,” “too soft,” and even “obnoxious.” All of these criticisms sound oddly similar to the criticism of Mowins’ voice after her NFL debut referring to it as “grating” and “shrill.” The only time Dicaro received a compliment over the sound of her voice occurred when she was suffering from bronchitis. A number of men called in to 670 The Score to tell Dicaro her voice was “sexy.” As referenced earlier, Kremer attests this voice complaint is code for hating the fact a woman is broadcasting sports (Dicaro, 2017).

From a general standpoint, social cognition and impression formation confronts the complex processes of interaction among individual structures of knowledge and new information regarding specific people, places, and objects (Brewer, 1988). Understanding how impressions are formed has been a concern of humans since the beginning of mankind (Uleman & Kressel, 2013). Rossano (2007) argued that in early human species (late Stone Age; 45,000 to 10,000 B.C.E.) human beings showed uncanny levels of social organization and cooperation in examples of living arrangements, beliefs, communication, and the formation of religions. As culture changed throughout generations, so did psychological theories and thoughts on impressions. Indigenous ethnic groups, such as the Quechua living within the Andes, held the belief that each person consists in two states: the everyday self and the individual of altered states of mind, such as dreaming or drunkenness. This is an early example of deeper thinking on psychological theories. Western societies advanced through the fifth and 15th centuries, while the Roman Catholic Church dominated. Advancements in ideas on morals, philosophies, and politics began shaping the way humans thought of impression formation (Uleman & Kressel, 2013). In more modern times, aspects such as politics, gender, physical appearance, religion, and trait characteristics all help mold and form these theories.

The first signs of social psychology arose in textbooks in 1908. The texts studied human reactions to other people as stimuli. In 1920, American psychologist, Edward L. Thorndike found there are three types of intelligence: mechanical, abstract, and social (or “the ability to manage and understand people”) (Uleman & Kressel, 2013). Asch (1946) began studying person perception and derived this human ability to form impressions on one another as a critical skill to human beings’ communication. With current mass media trends (digital, web, mobile), human beings are swamped on a daily basis with information regarding other individuals through

indirect and even direct communication. Therefore, social perceivers rely on inferences to condense information since they simply cannot process every single piece of information thrown at them on a daily basis (Kahneman and Tversky, 1973). They must classify and organize this social information into themes and groups.

From this idea, Asch developed the “trait adjective method.” This method requires a list of adjectives to be given to a person to help portray a subject. Asch found traits such as “warm” or “cold” as central in forming impressions and the meaning of other subsequent traits. He then examined the effect and importance of the order of traits. The first terms of traits in the list affected the overall impression more than traits listed later. He therefore concluded impressions have structure and meaning, all depending upon which elements are available by the perceiver. Social perceivers create a holistic perception of the person because these initially inferred traits were organized to develop an entire impression of the person as opposed to the sum or average of the individual traits (Uleman & Kressel, 2013). Other psychologist like Krauss (1981) referenced Asch’s method as a fundamental framework for current impression formation theories today. In a second phase of impression formation studies, Anderson’s (1965) mathematical model of information integration operated on the assumption that individuals develop impressions through combining information by adding or averaging the value of each trait to form judgments on each other.

More recent models coupled the concepts from Asch and Anderson in order to suggest that perceivers continue to process and receive new information after developing an integrated impression (Carlston, 1980). Perceivers may develop impressions of a person not just solely on their individual characteristics, but also based on their social group characteristics. This new concept argued that prior impression formation researchers neglected to unpack category-based

impressions. As a result, researchers were unable to separate category-based impressions from person-based impressions (Brewer, 1988).

As more research surfaced concerning the process of forming impressions, the process was found to begin with a stage of identification. This stage serves a critical purpose in determining whether further information should be processed or not. Within this stage perceivers (viewers, in reference to sports broadcasting) categorize an individual (sportscaster) automatically based on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and skin color (Bruner, Shapiro, & Tagiuri, 1958). This is the most crucial phase of the process as it serves as the initial step in which the most impactful information is perceived. Once perceivers are given a single trait about a person (gender, age, ethnicity), they infer other characteristics about that person instantaneously (Taylor & Crocker, 1981). Those inferences lead to gender stereotypes that suggest males are more competent than females in areas of sports (Zebrowitz, 1990). The most recent theoretical models of impression formation confirm perceptions are formed through automatic, cognitive processes (Toro, 2005). This provides a theoretical context as to why even the most knowledgeable and accomplished women have a difficult time overcoming the stereotype of “another pretty face” in sports broadcasting.

Viewers are given information of the announcer’s gender through the sound of their voice and appearance on screen before they have an opportunity to process subsequent traits. Perceivers (viewers) are given limited information, yet through inferences they arrive at generalized conclusions that may—or may not—be accurate of the target person (sportscaster) thus effecting their perception of the individual. Therefore the viewer’s identification of the sportscaster’s gender immediately infers subsequent characteristics—mostly inaccurate—derived from gender stereotypes. This helps partially explain the perception of female’s sportscasters,

since females in gender stereotypes are seen as less knowledgeable, credible, and competent with sports.

Academic Studies on Credibility & Authoritativeness

Multiple academic studies have searched to confirm the impression of female sportscasters. Generally speaking, viewers tend to perceive female commentators as less credible, less authoritative, and less competent than male sports announcers (Grubb & Billiot, 2010; Toro, 2005). A number of academic studies have tried to unpack this issue of perception, and as a result, a wide spread number of results have been found. For example, through qualitative research, Gunther, Kautz, and Roth (2005) found a bias does exist toward women in sports broadcasting in this regard. However, quantitative results from a structured survey within the same study produced opposing results. An independent t-test discovered that viewers perceive women sportscasters as equally credible and knowledgeable as men commentators. In just this one example, opposing results were found within the same study. This is a common theme among existing research. This is usually caused because the subject matter is too broad and not well defined. In this instance, both the qualitative and quantitative approaches accumulated all female sportscasters of all positions into one studied category. Reporters, analysts, hosts, and play-by-play announcers were all packaged into this singular category of “female sportscasters.” Neither results analyzed the perception of female within individualized roles. This suggests possible error in research. Plus, the researchers did not look at a sport-specific fan base. In fact, in the way the survey was structured, the respondents may not be sports fans at all. So to definitively extract from this study “sports fans perceive female and male

sportscasters equally” because of quantitative findings would be erroneous. Not to mention, their qualitative findings suggest otherwise.

In order to more accurately determine the root of the perception the roles need to be separated. Once separated, the communication must be broken down into a process in order to design a study. An understanding must be reached on how a play-by-play broadcaster’s credibility, knowledge, competence, and authoritativeness are perceived by viewers before the root of those perceptions can be tested. For the purpose of this study, this sub-section of chapter two will narrow into explaining (a) the process of communication, (b) the sender of the communication, and (c) the receiver.

A. Process & Components of Communications

David Berlo in 1970 established a model for explaining the process of communication. This model became known as the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) Model of Communication. As applied to sports television, the sender (or source) represents the sportscaster. The message is the actual information in which the sportscaster is trying to communicate. The channel serves as the medium the message is delivered, so in this scenario, television broadcasts. The receiver (or viewer) is the person on the other end who consumes that communication. Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1970) expanded upon Berlo’s early model and broke down the criteria cognitively used by receivers (or in this case, viewers) in evaluating message sources (sportscasters) into these three isolated components: safety, qualification, and dynamism.

Sources will be defined in terms of the perceptions of the receiver, not in terms of objective characteristics of the source. The safety component includes a general evaluation of the affiliated relationship between the source (sportscaster) and the receiver (viewer). The familiarity

the viewer has with the sportscasters can play a factor in determining credibility. If a viewer recognizes a sportscaster for covering other events on television, it can be beneficial in gaining credibility. The qualification factor deals with the expertise or general intelligence of the source. In other words, qualification represents the sportscaster’s expertise of a given sport. Results statistically indicate dynamism is independent from safety and qualifications, but the relative instability of dynamism suggests that it may not be psychologically independent of those two factors. Dynamism is articulated as an evaluating dimension that could be referred to as “disposable energy.” In other terms, the amount of effort and energy a source uses to argue, emphasize, stress, or implement their suggestion (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1970). This is just one theoretical process by which a viewer perceives a sportscaster and how each component of the perception correlates to each other.

B. Sender of Communication (Sportscaster)

Thirty-five years after Berlo’s studies, Pratkanis and Gilner (2005) found credibility is a function of the privileges and responsibilities associated with positions in a role-set. In comparison of a child and an expert, they stated an expert is most effective when arguing within a domain of expertise (technical issues) as opposed to common opinions. Experts serve as a more effective communicator when the message advocated makes use of the role of “being an expert” in providing an opinion on an issue within the expert’s domain. This feeds back into the qualification factor originally mentioned by Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz. Keene and Cummins (2009) shortly after applied these qualifications concepts to a sports commentator’s previous playing experience in order to analyze if the sportscaster’s former playing experience affected the viewer’s perception and credibility of the announcer. Announcers without previous playing

experience were found to be less credible and were even rated as less enjoyable and exciting by listeners as compared to those with previous playing experience. The perceived credibility was seen as a reflection of the commentator’s resume and previous experience. This reflects why networks slid former players (Red Grange, Cris Collinsworth, etc.) and coaches into analyst positions with no commentary background expecting them to seamlessly work.

C. Receiver of Communication (Viewer)

An Etling and Young (2007) study, focused on the receiver (viewer) as opposed to the source (sportscasters), found the sex of the listener and audience member consuming the sport product affects the rating of a sportscaster’s authoritativeness. Authoritativeness is used to quantify the sportscaster’s vocal command and confidence. Male listeners rated male sportscasters as more authoritative than the female sportscasters, therefore supporting the idea that male viewers perceive male sportscasters as more credible than female sportscasters. Female listeners rated male sportscasters significantly more authoritative than male listeners rated the female sportscaster. The women viewers accepted the authority of male sportscasters, but male listeners did not accept the authority of the female. This study’s findings help explain the complaints from men who struggled to accept Mowins’ play-by-play debut in the NFL. This coincided with an earlier study of tape-recorded messages by Robinson and McArthur (1982). They found male voices are labeled as more logical by perceivers than female voices. However, both of these studies were conducted solely from audio soundtracks, excluding a visual representation of the announcers.

Young, Faux and Mitchell (2011) then added to these studies later by studying the vocal pitches of sports announcers and how it affects the viewer’s perception of the sportscaster. Due

to the pitches of voices, male sportscaster were found to be more authoritative than female. But, male sportscasters with higher-pitched voices were also rated more authoritative than men with lower pitches (Etling, Young, Faux, & Mitchell, 2011). This notion contradicts that the higher pitched nature of a female’s voice hinders their perceived credibility and authoritativeness.

Hedrick (2000) suggested a female sportscaster’s credibility and authoritativeness is determined more by her physical appearance than displayed knowledge. Academic research confirms physical appearance and attractiveness can factor into determining a viewer’s perception of a sportscaster. To this, Engstrom (1996) found the age and sex of a viewer to matter when evaluating male and female sources in reference to their appearance and clothing. Older women (35 and older) provided the lowest ratings especially in their evaluations of female sources when as asked to evaluate their competence, character, and dynamism. Contrary, younger women (35 and under) gave the highest ratings, and men regardless of age rated all sources similarly. Additionally, a second study proved a sportscaster’s attractiveness is correlated with competence, expertness, dynamism, and trustworthiness (Davis & Krawcyk, 2010).

In summary, a multitude of factors can have an affect on the perceived credibility, knowledge, competence, and authoritativeness of sportscasters. Within process models, the qualification factor (past playing or coaching experience) plays an important factor on credibility and knowledge. The pitch of the sportscaster’s voice also plays a factor on authoritativeness and competence. It has been found male viewers have a difficult time accepting the authority of female commentators. Lastly, physical appearance matters, but it matters more for female viewers than male viewers.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Study

After a review of the existing literature, the history of the NFL, and the role of women in sports media, this chapter explains the selected method used to investigate the research question: *What differences exist in the language use between female and male primetime television play-by-play announcers within the National Football League?* This chapter will additionally highlight the hypothesis of the study.

Content Analysis Design

A content analysis is a form of unobtrusive research used to determine the presence of words or concepts within texts or scripts. This method is used within social sciences to objectively study human communication (Krippendorff, 2004). “Unobtrusive research” refers to research that does not collect data directly from human beings. This content analysis will examine the language use of four primetime NFL television play-by-play broadcasters [Beth Mowins (ESPN), Al Michaels (NBC), Joe Buck (Fox), and Jim Nantz (CBS)]. The point of this analysis is to study the dialogue of each play-by-play broadcaster, word-by-word from four separate broadcasts in the 2018 NFL regular season. That dialogue will be examined through 10 variables. Through those variables, the content analysis will help compare each broadcaster’s ability to display their credibility and knowledge of the NFL on a telecast.

As previously discussed, Impression Formation Theory provides a theoretical suggestion as to why even the most knowledgeable and accomplished female sports broadcasters have difficulties overcoming the gender stereotype of “just another pretty face” in sports media. The theory suggests viewers form global impressions and perceptions of a play-by-play broadcaster based solely off their gender and sound of their voice. As communications theories on gender

roles and stereotypes explain, women are stereotypically seen as less knowledgeable than men when considering sports. Therefore, based solely on these initial identifying characteristics, viewers erroneously perceive female sports broadcasters as less credible than male sportscasters. But, if women are actually less credible and knowledgeable than men, when examining the language use of both female and male play-by-play broadcasters, a difference in the dialogue will be present.

This content analysis will compare the dialogue from Beth Mowins’ (the NFL’s only national network female play-by-play broadcaster) NFL regular season telecast to the dialogue of three male NFL broadcasters (Joe Buck, Al Michaels, and Jim Nantz). The dialogue will be broken down by 10 variables in order to determine whether she is, or is not, as credible and knowledgeable as the male broadcasters. If the content analysis finds no significant difference in the use of the language displaying her knowledge and credibility, then Impression Formation Theory stands true. This would suggest hidden deep beneath the complaints of Beth Mowins’ play-by-play calls, a sexist stereotype is still true within sports and sports media. If the content analysis shows there is a difference in Mowins’ use of the language and ability to display her credibility and knowledge, then perhaps the complaints of women and the sound of Mowins’ voice are based on something other than gender stereotypes.

Sampling

The sample size for this study is four regular season NFL telecasts from the 2018 season. A study conducted by Forbes through the first seven weeks of the 2017 season, found the average length of an NFL regular season game to last 3:06:42 (Caldwell, 2017). This average implies four games would last roughly a total duration of 12:26:48. For comparison sake, Season

6 of *The Office*, an American television sitcom that aired on NBC, is 9:34:00 in total runtime. So factoring out commercial breaks, studying four NFL telecasts is roughly the equivalent in sample size to studying an entire season of one of American television’s most popular sitcoms.

In order to encompass the current landscape of NFL television in its entirety and each network presently holding rights, the lead primetime play-by-play broadcaster from CBS (Jim Nantz), NBC (Al Michaels), and Fox (Joe Buck) were selected for this content analysis along with ESPN’s Beth Mowins. This allows for each network to be represented in an adequate comparison of female and male commentators. In addition, Michaels, Buck, and Nantz all handle their respective network’s primetime telecasts. Michaels (NBC) handles *Sunday Night Football* weekly and the Super Bowl every three years. Buck (Fox) broadcasts *Thursday Night Football* and *America’s Game of the Week* on Fox along with the Super Bowl every three years. Nantz (CBS) calls the weekly national NFL on CBS broadcast following the regional telecasts, in addition to the Super Bowl every three years. When Mowins (ESPN) entered the NFL scene, she stepped into a primetime booth with *Monday Night Football*. So to appropriately compare her dialogue to other male play-by-play broadcasters, the primetime announcers for the other three networks were selected. The following telecasts were then picked for this study from Week 1 and Week 2 of the 2018 NFL regular season.

1. Joe Buck – Cowboys vs. Panthers; September 9, 2018 (Fox)
2. Al Michaels – Bears vs. Packers; September 9, 2018 (NBC)
3. Beth Mowins – Jets vs. Lions; September 10, 2018 (ESPN)
4. Jim Nantz – Jaguars vs. Patriots; September 16, 2018 (CBS)

Each telecast was watched and recorded through a digital video recorder (DVR). The recordings were reviewed and transcribed word-for-word by the primary researcher to aid in the coding process.

Variables

Each telecast was coded based on these 10 variables: handling of big moments, corrections, bias, historical knowledge, knowledge of NFL rules, football terminology, analyst integration, airtime, access, and statistical use. This section will define each variable and discuss how it showcases an announcer’s credibility and knowledge. In order to maintain validity in the research, Tom Hedrick and Joe Castiglione’s (2000) publication, “The Art of Sportscasting” was used to help define each variable. The publication, aided by the input from 76 sports broadcasters, was created as a comprehensive guide for sportscasters. Contributors included Curt Gowdy (former voice of the Boston Red Sox and NBC Sports announcer), Ray Scott (former NFL announcer with the Green Bay Packers), Bob Costas (NBC Sports announcer), Jack Buck (longtime voice of the MLB’s St. Louis Cardinals and NFL on CBS announcer), Jim Nantz, Keith Jackson (former ABC Sports announcer), Jon Miller (former MLB and ESPN broadcaster), Kevin Harlan (current NFL on CBS broadcaster), Bob Starr (former KMOX sports announcer), Wayne Larrivee (current voice of the Green Bay Packers), Bob Carpenter (longtime MLB announcer), and others. Excerpts from female sportscasters are used throughout the book, but a female is not highlighted as a key contributor for the publication.

1. Handling of Scoring Plays

At the most basic level, sports are a function of scoring—points (basketball), runs (baseball), goals (hockey), and touchdowns (football). The biggest moments from each

individual game usually occur on plays in which teams add to their score. These are known as scoring plays. This variable will analyze the language use on scoring plays (specifically touchdowns). In a direct side-by-side comparison, this will demonstrate the use of the language in the biggest moments by each broadcaster. How is the play-by-play announcer handling these scoring plays? By the use of the language a broadcaster can demonstrate the magnitude of a scoring play, therefore displaying their understanding of the game. As stated by Scott Janovitz of Bleacher Report, “...some of [sports] most illustrious moments are remembered for the announcers who called them” (Janovitz, 2014). The calls of each touchdown will be identified, listed out, and analyzed under the following structure. The play-by-play broadcaster’s factuality will be analyzed along with their ability to incorporate the context of the moment as it pertains to the game. An example of context would be, “that’s his second touchdown of the game” or “17 unanswered points by Denver.”

2. Corrections

Errors and mistakes directly hinder a sportscaster’s credibility. Presenting erroneous information such as incorrect statistics, misidentifying a player (p. 118), or mispronouncing a player’s name can be detrimental to the announcer’s perception (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 16). It is the same concept as reading a book littered with misspellings and grammatical errors. Regardless of the information, those minor mistakes negatively impact the reader’s perception of the author. This variable will analyze the frequency of those mistakes. Each time an announcer corrects a mistake, falsely identifies a player, or presents an incorrect statistic; it will be scored under this variable. Most corrected mistakes are catchable by a phrase such as “excuse me,” “check that,” or “correction.” Some announcers will not highlight a mistake and just present the

correct information following the mistake in attempt to seamlessly step forward without drawing attention to it. The frequency of mistakes and corrections will be compared between the four play-by-play broadcasters.

3. Bias

“Another trap to avoid is that of becoming a ‘homer,’ a sportscaster in favor of the home team,” said Larry Zimmer, Colorado Sports Hall of Famer and former Denver Broncos announcer (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 59). On network television, the audience is diverse in their following of teams. Some viewers passionately support one team, while others may support the opposition to the same degree. Another set of viewers may casually watch the NFL, while another group hardly watches at all. For this reason it is mandatory that a network television announcer presents equal representation for both teams. Unbalancing the conversation and giving one-sided attention to a particular team actively deteriorates a sportscaster’s credibility with viewers. Announcers at the highest professional level (such as Michaels, Nantz, Buck, and Mowins) are highly trained in shelving their personal bias. However, an unbalanced telecast can portray the idea to a viewer that perhaps the play-by-play announcer does indeed have a rooting interest, whether they do or not. This variable will analyze the play-by-play announcer’s ability to present a balanced telecast. Each time the play-by-play broadcaster mentions one team’s name or mascot it will be scored. For example, “Indianapolis Colts,” “Indianapolis,” and “Colts” would each equate for one mention. “Indianapolis Colts” does not denote two mentions. This system will be used to see if the telecast is presented in equal representation between each play-by-play broadcaster.

4. Historical Knowledge

As a league, the NFL goes to extensive ends to celebrate its history. Franchises will sew patches to their jerseys and place signage around the stadium signifying milestone anniversaries of existence. For example, 2018 marked the 100th season for the Green Bay Packers. A patch with the number 100 was sewed onto each player’s jersey. Official team merchandise with the same “100 emblem” was made available to fans for purchase in gift shops. The league makes a point to promote team and individual records, long-standing rivalries, and the historical aspect of the league. Individual teams also celebrate their history by hanging banners, inducting players into rings of honor, and retiring jerseys. To this, a broadcaster must understand the history of the league to showcase a deeper knowledge (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 30). Ernie Harwell, primarily known for an announcing career in professional baseball (but also spent time handling college and professional football early in his career) advised, “Give the listener the history of the game you’re calling, the series, and the rivalry” (p. 49).

This variable will log each time the play-by-play announcer makes a reference to the history of the NFL. An example would be the sportscaster making mention of the series history between two teams, a former player, or a historical game. Since each telecast aired during the first and second week of the 2018 season, the play-by-play announcer’s statistical use (discussed in variable No. 10) will largely be derived from the 2017 season. So in order to differentiate between the two, history will be defined as the 2016 season and prior.

5. NFL Rules Knowledge

As a network television play-by-play announcer, not only should the sportscaster display their historical knowledge of the league, players, and teams, but they should also know the rules

of the game down to the intricacies. The NFL understands this mandatory need for each announcer by hosting a preseason seminar each year to explain the rule changes from year to year (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 61). Challenges, booth reviews, and replays present opportunities for announcers to showcase their understanding and interpretation of the rulebook. Wayne Larrivee, Green Bay Packers announcer, studies referee’s signals for this purpose. “There is no excuse for not knowing the rules,” said Larrivee (p. 72). This variable will log and compare the frequency to which a play-by-play announcer explains a ruling or presents the language of the rulebook, helping establish credibility.

6. Terminology

Hedrick and Castiglione (2000) stress the importance of the use of vocabulary and terminology in sports broadcasting (p. 35, 61 & 73). An announcer can establish credibility by using the accepted vernacular of a given sport. This variable will identify the frequency rate of that terminology. Each time the play-by-play broadcaster mentions a player’s position or any variation of a position specific to football it will be recorded and compared in its frequency to the other announcers. Examples would include tight end, quarterback, and wide receiver. Variations would include Q.B. (for quarterback), corner (for corner back), or back (for running back).

7. Qualification Factor / Questions

As discussed in previous chapters, a trend within network television is to employ former coaches and players as color commentators in the booth. This is evident through recent examples of Troy Aikman (Fox), Tony Romo (CBS), and Cris Collinsworth (NBC). Historical examples also provide assurance to this point with Red Grange, John Madden, and others. Hedrick and

Castiglione (2000) draw reason that viewers “...salivate over the access to these football minds [in the booth]” (p. 98). That desire creates this trend. Kevin Harlan, NFL on CBS play-by-play announcer, commented on this dynamic, “...the play-by-play man is third behind the picture and the analyst.” (p. 98).

Play-by-play broadcasters, as a result, lean upon the analyst for inside knowledge and expert opinion. This is seen when play-by-play announcers ask analysts to predictively describe conversations in huddles, discussions during timeouts, and the thought process of players and coaches in specific moments. However, as Impression Formation Theory suggests, this relying on another subject’s credentials can potentially hinder the play-by-play announcer’s perceived credibility. Since the analyst has experience playing or coaching the game (and in these four cases the play-by-play lacks those credentials), the play-by-play announcer is seen as less credible based upon a direct comparison of the qualification factor of Impression Formation Theory. Rather than perceiving this as a consult for an expert opinion, some viewers incorrectly understand this as a question derived from a lack of knowledge. This counteractive variable will count the number of times each play-by-play broadcaster asks the analyst a question.

8. Airtime / Analyst Integration

With an understanding from Harlan’s words above, he also added, “...the color guy is the show” (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 98). Viewers watch broadcasts to see the game (picture) and hear the expert opinion of an insider (analyst). A play-by-play broadcaster who monopolizes airtime is therefore hindering this relationship. Viewers want to hear the opinion of the analyst (former player or coach), not the play-by-play broadcaster (no experience playing or coaching the game), as Harlan suggests. This variable will analyze how each play-by-play broadcaster is

integrating their analyst into the telecast. The primary researcher will count the number of words said by each play-by-play broadcaster and color commentator to create a direct percentage comparison. Those percentages will then be compared across each four broadcast crews. This will demonstrate how well each play-by-play broadcaster is integrating their analyst in airtime.

9. Access

Prior to each telecast, network announcers are granted access to practices, meetings, players, and coaches. Through this access, broadcast crews gather quotes and face-to-face information from league members. Hedrick and Castiglione (2000) emphasize this as a crucial process in the information gathering process for announcers (p. 36 & 51). The access variable provides an opportunity for announcers to build credibility. A play-by-play broadcaster stating they had direct conversations with a player, team, or league member helps legitimize their perception among viewers. This variable will record each time the play-by-play broadcasters mention having direct contact, inside access, or conversations with a team or league member.

10. Statistics

The use of statistical information demonstrates a play-by-play broadcaster's preparedness for a telecast. A broadcaster who displays a higher level of preparation is perceived as an informed and credible source (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 60, 65). This variable will track the number of statistics used during a telecast by each play-by-play broadcaster. Since statistics can be broad and sometimes undefined, for the purpose of this study the variable will be limited to numerical extractions found on stat sheets such as completions, carries, games played, receptions, averages, percentages, and total yardage.

Pre-Tests

Three separate pre-tests were conducted to assure the reliability of the research. A 10-minute stretch during the second quarter of Super Bowl LII (between the Philadelphia Eagles and the New England Patriots) was recorded and transcribed word-for-word. Three different volunteer coders participated in each respective pre-test. The pre-tests helped shape and narrow the focus of each variable. The volunteers were given the transcription and video clip. They were then asked to identify the frequency of each variable by identifying each line of dialogue in which a variable was present. Their codes were then compared to the primary researcher’s codes to check for reliability and error rates. In attempt to condense the error rate, the primary researcher took the comparing results of each pre-test, and used them to better define each variable’s definition to assure reliability. The results from the pre-tests were then used to calculate the value of Cohen’s kappa coefficient (κ), a statistic measuring inter-rater agreement (Fleiss & Cohen, 1973). The first pre-test produced a coefficient of $\kappa = 0.73$. Nine of the 12 variables saw agreement. The results are displayed in the table below.

Table 1

Variable	Primary Researcher	Volunteer No. 1
1. Handling of Scoring Plays	2	2
2. Corrections	0	0
3. Bias	9	9
4. Historical Knowledge	1	3
5. NFL Rules Knowledge	0	0
6. Evaluation	0	6
7. Terminology	3	2
8. Qualification Factor / Questions	0	0
9. Airtime / Analyst Integration	1,304 (Total) 747 (Play-by-Play) 557 (Color)	1,304 (Total) 747 (Play-by-Play) 557 (Color)
10. Storylines	4	5
11. Access	2	2
12. Statistics	3	3

From the results of the first pre-test, three variables (No. 4 Historical Knowledge, No. 7 Terminology, and No. 10 Storylines) were refined in definition and one variable (No. 6 Evaluation) was removed prior to the second pre-test. This refining and removing of variables was an important step between each pre-test to help lower the error percentage and raise the reliability rate of the coefficient. The same clip and transcript was then given to the second volunteer coder and primary researcher with the 11 variables. The primary researcher re-coded the transcript under the new variable definitions and compared the results to the second volunteer. The second pre-test produced a reliability rate of $\kappa = 0.89$. The results are displayed in the table below. Eight of the 11 variables saw agreement.

Table 2

Variable	Primary Researcher	Volunteer No. 2
1. Handling of Scoring Plays	2	2
2. Corrections	0	0
3. Bias	9	9
4. Historical Knowledge	1	3
5. NFL Rules Knowledge	0	0
6. Terminology	4	3
7. Qualification Factor / Questions	0	0
8. Airtime / Analyst Integration	1,304 (Total) 747 (Play-by-Play) 557 (Color)	1,304 (Total) 747 (Play-by-Play) 557 (Color)
9. Storylines	4	4
10. Access	2	2
11. Statistics	3	4

Prior to the third pre-test, one more variable was removed (No. 9 Storylines) and three variables (No. 4 Historical Knowledge, No. 6 Terminology, and No. 11 Statistics) were further refined and narrowed in their definition. The storylines variable was removed, despite having a one-to-one correlation, because it was vague in nature. A storyline was defined as “any unfolding

storyline pertaining to the game.” Some would classify statistics into this category or historical knowledge if made in reference to the current game. So the variable was removed to prevent any confusion. The third volunteer coder was again given the same clip and transcriptions from Super Bowl LII as the previous two volunteers. Both the volunteer and primary researcher coded the transcripts under the new definition of the variables and the responses were again compared. The third pre-test produced a reliability rate of $\kappa = 0.97$. Nine of the 10 variables were found to be in agreement. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 3

Variable	Primary Researcher	Volunteer No. 3
1. Handling of Scoring Plays	2	2
2. Corrections	0	0
3. Bias	9	9
4. Historical Knowledge	1	1
5. NFL Rules Knowledge	0	1
6. Terminology	4	4
7. Qualification Factor / Questions	0	0
8. Airtime / Analyst Integration	1,304 (Total) 747 (Play-by-Play) 557 (Color)	1,304 (Total) 747 (Play-by-Play) 557 (Color)
9. Access	2	2
10. Statistics	3	3

Coding

To aid in the coding process, the primary researcher transcribed each of the four NFL telecasts line-by-line, word-for-word. Every word or phrase spoken by the play-by-play broadcaster, color commentator, and sideline reporter were written down in Microsoft Word. The primary researcher used those transcriptions to code each of the 10 variables. Microsoft Excel was used to create a log and store the codes in order to derive charts and graphs for the results (shown in Chapter Four). To demonstrate a snippet of the coding process, the following play and

dialogue from the play-by-play broadcaster and color commentator will be used as an example.

The primary researcher’s code from the example line is show in the chart below.

Play-by-Play Broadcaster: *“They’re four wide here on 3rd and goal... Again the pump fake, and this time he will get sacked! Loses the ball, and Mack took the ball away! Khalil Mack already paying dividends in his first game as a Chicago Bear.”*

Color Analyst: *“When you play against Khalil Mack, what do you have to do? You have to help; you have to give him some help, and then he comes in, he jams the receiver, comes in, gets rid of the tackle Bulaga, takes the football, makes a little withdrawal on the check he was given by the Chicago Bears, welcome to Chicago. These are the kind of plays you see from Khalil Mack year after year.”*

Table 4

Variable	Frequency	Word / Phrase
1. Handling of Scoring Plays	0	N/A
2. Corrections	0	N/A
3. Bias	1	“Chicago Bear”
4. Historical Knowledge	0	N/A
5. NFL Rules Knowledge	0	N/A
6. Terminology	1	“Four wide”
7. Qualification Factor / Questions	0	N/A
8. Airtime / Analyst Integration	115 (Total) 41 (Play-by-Play) 74 (Color)	<i>All Words</i>
9. Access	0	N/A
10. Statistics	1	“First game”

Hypothesis

After a discussion through the first two chapters of the relevant literature and research, coupled with a layout of the method in the third chapter, the following hypothesis was drawn and

will be tested in this study: H1 – Little to no difference will exist in the play-by-play dialogue between Nantz, Michaels, Buck, and Mowins suggesting the complaints of Mowins cannot be based on her ability to provide play-by-play dialogue.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter reports the results from the content analysis in a direct side-by-side comparison with each variable. Charts are used to display statistical pieces of information. Since the duration of each game varied in runtime and total number of plays, some results will be written as a percentage rate—the frequency of the variable in the play-by-play dialogue per the total number of plays of the telecast. This information will be displayed within each section under the following format: “*Results of (Variable).*”

Beneath the chart of the results, the significance of those results is statistically tested with Pearson’s chi-squared (also written χ^2 test) and Fisher’s exact test. These tests examine for independence between two variables when the comparing groups are independent from each other and not correlated. The χ^2 test administers an approximation assuming the sample is large. The Fisher’s exact test, on the other hand, equates an exact procedure usually for small-sized samples (Kim, 2017). These tests are used to individually compare Mowins to the three male play-by-play broadcasters. Each variable will test Mowins to Nantz, Mowins to Michaels, and Mowins to Buck.

In the charts below, the value for “Exact Sig.” and “Fisher’s exact test” are outlined. According to these tests, if the value is less than or equal to 0.05, the test suggests there is a significant statistical difference. If the value is greater than 0.05, there is no significance difference between the variables. As the results are reported, H_0 will indicate there is no difference between Mowins and the male broadcasters (null hypothesis). On the contrary, H_1 will indicate there is a difference between Mowins and at least one of the male broadcasters (alternative hypothesis). In this scenario, H_0 will be rejected and H_1 will be concluded. The final chapter (Chapter Five) will provide a discussion and analysis of these results.

Variable 1 - Handling of Scoring Plays

Listed below is the dialogue from each touchdown call in the four telecasts. After sub-sections A to D, sub-sections E and F provide a breakdown of the context and factuality of those dialogues. Two charts show how frequently the play-by-play maintained context and factuality within each of the scoring plays. Each line of dialogue lacking context or factual information will be identified. Ellipses in the dialogue indicate a break in which the analyst inserted a remark prior to the play-by-play broadcaster completing the touchdown call.

A. Jim Nantz (6 Touchdowns)

1. **7:52, 1st Quarter** – *“That’s Grant the running back. Pass to the end zone, and it is pulled down, and it is caught for the touchdown! Donte Moncrief, the former Colt! ... Well, it was Gilmore who had the saving knockdown in the late stages of the AFC Championship game. And this time Bortles goes back in his direction, and throws the perfect pass for Moncrief to reach up and grab it for the touchdown.”*
2. **2:18, 1st Quarter** – *“First down from the Patriot’s 24. Going to the end zone. He’s there and it is caught by Cole! This time a much more conventional catch than the other one on this drive. Out of the stadium this time.”*
3. **0:14, 2nd Quarter** – *“Third and three. Bortles with time, lofts it, wide open, Seferian-Jenkins with the Jaguar touchdown! How about that drive Tony? 75 yards they go! ... Seferian-Jenkins, the guy who was saying, ‘Hey Patriots, you owe me one.’ They took that touchdown away from him last year when he was a Jet, that controversial play on the pylon. But no question about this one. Seferian-Jenkins open, Bortles finds him. Bortles with 200 yards passing right on the number and three first half touchdowns.”*

4. **1:47, 3rd Quarter** – *“Here’s Brady. Rifles it. Touchdown New England! Chris Hogan! They take advantage of the turnover by Chark, and the rookie drops his head, knowing how big that was, knowing the Patriots have life.”*
5. **7:48, 4th Quarter** – *“So now, still throwing, anything but conservative, Jacksonville crosses midfield. Westbrook still in bounds. Got a blocker on the outside, it’s Cole! He’s racing down the sideline for the touchdown! ... What a turn of events. The original placement that looked like it was good enough for a first down. The challenge won by Marrone and then what could have been a freebie for the Patriots when the Jags jumped, but he wasn’t touched. And then after all of that a deflating, if you’re New England, 61-yard catch and run for a touchdown.”*
6. **3:48, 4th Quarter** – *“Brady zips it. Got his man at the 20. It’s Hogan, Gronkowski there to draw a block, and Hogan has his second touchdown of the game! This one from 29-yards out.”*

B. Al Michaels (5 Touchdowns)

1. **7:16, 1st Quarter** – *“There’s Leno unattached again, flanked to the right, the left tackle number 72. Look at this formation. Trubisky is going to keep it himself and take it into the end zone. Well Bears fans how’d you like that for your coaches debut? Wow, 10 plays, 86 yards, Trubisky was 4-of-4, runs it in himself.”*
2. **0:50, 2nd Quarter** – *“Third and 19, and this time he’s going to go down. As it’s picked off by Mack. Mack with the interception. And Mack will take it all the way in for a touchdown! How crazy was that? Robertson-Harris extracted the ball. 28 yards and Khalil Mack is already the defensive MVP of the season. Second career touchdown for Khalil Mack.”*

3. **14:06, 4th Quarter** – *“Rodgers. Dancing. Throwing for the end zone, and it is hauled in, touchdown! Geronimo Allison! He beats Kyle Fuller 39 yard touchdown. ... It’s a game again.”*
4. **9:10, 4th Quarter** – *“Rodgers now 18-of-25, 199 yards. From the pocket, steps up, shoots it to Davante Adams, and Adams dives for the end zone, touchdown! ... Green Bay in this second half: field goal, touchdown, touchdown, and a 20 to nothing Chicago lead has now gone to 20 to 17.”*
5. **2:29, 4th Quarter** – *“Rodgers, surveys, fires. That’s caught. Randall Cobb into Chicago territory. Randall Cobb inside the 20-yard line. Randall Cobb is going to score! 75-yards that is crazy!”*

C. Joe Buck (3 Touchdowns)

1. **8:54, 2nd Quarter** – *“Manhertz in at tight end. Cam keeps. Cam scores! ... That for Newton, 55-career rushing touchdowns, the most by a quarterback in NFL history.”*
2. **14:16, 4th Quarter** – *“...Now, Armah, touchdown! ... And the 6th round pick from West Georgia from a year ago has a souvenir from Week 1, 2018.”*
3. **8:58, 4th Quarter** – *“High snap, option, Elliott, touchdown! ... This is a one score game in Charlotte.”*

D. Beth Mowins (8 Touchdowns)

1. **14:53, 1st Quarter** – *“And on his first play they are gonna’ let him roll out and look down field. Throw back across the field and it’s intercepted. And it’s gonna’ be a pick six for Quandre Digs on the very first play of Sam Darnold’s debut.”*

2. **4:26, 1st Quarter** – *“So Detroit loses a timeout as it loses its challenge. First and goal for the Jets. Isaiah Crowell finds a seam. Lunging for the goal line, and in, touchdown New York! ... His first T.D. as a New York Jet and after struggling through a lot of losses from his days in Cleveland.”*
3. **2:00, 2nd Quarter** – *“Sam Darnold with time, lookin’ deep down field into the end zone. Touchdown Jets! Robby Anderson! And the first T.D. throw of Sam Darnold’s career goes 41-yards.”*
4. **13:17, 3rd Quarter** – *“LaGarrett Blount will line up as receiver to the top of your screen. Empty set for Stafford. Pressure off the edge. Tate, wide open, inside the five, touchdown Lions! 24-yards, Stafford to Tate and Doug Middleton the guy that missed a shot at a tackle. ... So Detroit with the early lead, then 17 unanswered points by the Jets, and back-to-back scores now for Detroit.”*
5. **9:44, 3rd Quarter** – *“Second and five, out of the gun. Darnold, the quick release, and the catch is made by Enunwa. Inside the five, spinning towards the goal line. Touchdown Jets! 21-yards and its Darnold’s second T.D. throw.”*
6. **8:16, 3rd Quarter** – *“And he finds himself as though he’s found a quarterback, and another interception for the Jets defense. Darron Lee! It’s a pick six for New York, 35-yards, and they get Stafford for the third time tonight.”*
7. **7:20, 3rd Quarter** – *“Andre Roberts has been good on the punt return team tonight. Helped set up their first touchdown. He’s back at his own 25. And he’s going to give it a go, breaking a tackle out across the 40. Trying to get by the punter, Martin, dancing down the sideline, staying in bounds, touchdown New York! Andre Roberts with the punt return for six. And*

what a job of dancing down the line to stay in, let's check to see if he stayed away from the white line. ... 78-yards on the punt return, all three phases have scored for the Jets tonight.”

8. **1:04, 4th Quarter** – *“Powell hands it off to Crowell, the burst across midfield, streaking down the sideline, and Isaiah Crowell puts more on the board for New York, 62 yards! ... That is their 3rd score of over 40 yards, a 62-yard run, a 78-yard punt return, and the 41 yard touchdown pass from Darnold to Anderson.”*

E. Context

The only touchdown dialogue to lack context came from Al Michaels (Dialogue No. 5). On Randall Cobb’s 75-yard touchdown catch, Michaels failed to provide context to the play or moment. The play captured the lead for the Packers for the first time in the game after a heroic comeback from quarterback, Aaron Rodgers. Michaels failed to make mention of it simply saying, “...that is crazy.” The results are shown below of each announcer.

Results of Context (Variable No. 1)

Announcer	Context Included	Total Scoring Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	6	6	100%
Al Michaels	4	5	80%
Joe Buck	3	3	100%
Beth Mowins	8	8	100%

According to the χ^2 test, H_0 should not be rejected when considering the rate of the context on scoring plays. The results of the Exact Sig. and Fisher’s exact test (.791, .385, and .227) are all greater than 0.05. Mowins results are compared and tested individually with each male below.

χ² Test, Context - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Jim Nantz	6	7.0	-1.0
Beth Mowins	8	7.0	1.0
Total	14		

	Context
Chi-Square	.286 ^a
df	1.000
Asymp. Sig.	.593
Exact Sig.	.791
Point Probability	.367

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 7.0.

χ² Test, Context - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	4	1	5
Beth Mowins	8	0	8
Total	12	1	13

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.733 ^b	1	.188		
Continuity Correction ^c	.061	1	.805		
Likelihood Ratio	2.047	1	.153		
Fisher’s Exact Test				.385	.385
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.600	1	.206		
N of Valid Cases	13.000				

b) 3 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .38.

c) Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, Context - Mowins vs. Buck

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Joe Buck	3	5.5	-2.5
Beth Mowins	8	5.5	2.5
Total	11		

	Context
Chi-Square	2.273 ^a
df	1.000
Asymp. Sig.	.132
Exact Sig.	.227
Point Probability	.161

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 5.5.

F. Factuality

Only three scoring plays contained factually incorrect information as shown in the chart below. Al Michaels stated that on Khalil Mack’s interception for a touchdown (Dialogue No. 2) the return was 28-yards. The official box score listed the return as 27-yards. Beth Mowins had a similar error on Darron Lee’s interception for a touchdown (Dialogue No. 6). She called it 35-yard return, when it was a 36-yard return. Mowins’ second error occurred on second-string running back, Isaiah Crowell’s touchdown run in the fourth quarter (Dialogue No. 8). Mowins called it as though Bilal Powell, the starting running back, handed the ball to Crowell. Rather, quarterback, Sam Darnold handed the ball to Crowell, not Powell.

Results of Factuality (Variable No. 1)

Announcer	Factuality Maintained	Total Scoring Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	6	6	100%
Al Michaels	4	5	80%
Joe Buck	3	3	100%
Beth Mowins	6	8	75%

Considering the rate of factuality within scoring plays, the χ^2 test shows H_0 should not be rejected since the values (.473, 1.000, and 1.000) were greater than 0.05. Therefore no significance difference exists statistically between Mowins and the three males. The data from the χ^2 test is shown below in charts.

χ² Test, Factuality - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	6	0	6
Beth Mowins	6	2	8
Total	12	2	14

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.750 ^b	1	.186	.473	.308
Continuity Correction ^c	.304	1	.581		
Likelihood Ratio	2.486	1	.115		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.625	1	.202		
N of Valid Cases	14.000				

- b. 2 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .86.
- c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, Factuality - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	4	1	5
Beth Mowins	6	2	8
Total	10	3	14

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.043 ^b	1	.835	1.000	.685
Continuity Correction ^c	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.044	1	.834		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.040	1	.841		
N of Valid Cases	13.000				

- b. 3 cells (75.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.15.
- c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ^2 Test, Factuality - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	3	0	3
Beth Mowins	6	2	8
Total	9	2	11

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.917 ^b	1	.338		
Continuity Correction ^c	.006	1	.936		
Likelihood Ratio	1.434	1	.231		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.509
Linear-by-Linear Association	.833	1	.361		
N of Valid Cases	11.000				

b. 3 cells (75.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .55.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 2 – Corrections

The results from the corrections variable are listed below. The chart displays the information as a percentage—the observed number of corrections per the total number of plays.

Results of Corrections (Variable No. 2)

Announcer	Corrections	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	1	126	0.7%
Al Michaels	6	125	4.8%
Joe Buck	1	118	0.8%
Beth Mowins	7	126	5.6%

From the results, the χ^2 test shows there is no significant difference between Mowins and each of the three males. The null hypothesis (H_0) should not be rejected since the Fisher's exact test produced values (.066, 1.000, and .067) greater than 0.05.

χ² Test, Corrections - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	1	125	126
Beth Mowins	7	119	126
Total	8	244	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.648 ^b	1	.031		.033
Continuity Correction ^c	3.227	1	.072		
Likelihood Ratio	5.210	1	.022		
Fisher’s Exact Test				.066	
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.629	1	.031		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 3 cells (75.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .55.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, Corrections - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	6	119	125
Beth Mowins	7	119	126
Total	13	238	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.073 ^b	1	.787		.506
Continuity Correction ^c	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.073	1	.787		
Fisher’s Exact Test				1.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.073	1	.788		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.47.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, Corrections - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	1	117	118
Beth Mowins	7	119	126
Total	8	236	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.259 ^b	1	.039		.040
Continuity Correction ^c	2.904	1	.088		
Likelihood Ratio	4.817	1	.028		
Fisher’s Exact Test				.067	
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.242	1	.039		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 2 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.87.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 3 – Bias

The results from the bias variable are shown below. The mentions of each team only include the play-by-play announcer. The difference was obtained by subtracting the mentions of both teams. The percentages are a function of the differences per the total mentions.

Results of Bias (Variable No. 3)

Announcer	Mentions A	Mentions B	Difference	Total Mentions	Percentage
Jim Nantz	74 (Jaguars)	62 (Patriots)	12	136	8.8%
Al Michaels	77 (Bears)	57 (Packers)	20	134	14.9%
Joe Buck	79 (Cowboys)	65 (Panthers)	14	144	9.7%
Beth Mowins	106 (Jets)	58 (Lions)	48	164	29.3%

The χ^2 test (.000, .000, and .000 [rounded figures]) shows there is a significant difference between Mowins and the three male play-by-play broadcasters since the value was less than 0.05. The null hypothesis (H₀) should be rejected and H₁ should be concluded.

χ² Test, Bias - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	12	114	126
Beth Mowins	48	78	126
Total	60	192	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.350 ^b	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction ^c	26.797	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	29.919	1	.000		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.238	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 30.00.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, Bias - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	14	111	125
Beth Mowins	48	78	126
Total	62	189	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.403 ^b	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction ^c	22.979	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	25.502	1	.000		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.306	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 30.88.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ^2 Test, Bias - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	20	98	118
Beth Mowins	48	78	126
Total	68	176	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.554 ^b	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^c	12.523	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	13.895	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.499	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.89.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 4 - Historical Knowledge

The results from the historical knowledge variable are displayed below. The percentages display the frequency of historical references by each play-by-play broadcaster per total plays.

Results of Historical Knowledge (Variable No. 4)

Announcer	Historical References	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	34	126	27.0%
Al Michaels	44	125	35.2%
Joe Buck	38	118	32.2%
Beth Mowins	30	126	23.8%

According to the χ^2 test (.664, .053, and .155), H_0 should not be rejected. There is no significance difference between Mowins in comparison to Nantz, Michaels, and Buck.

χ^2 Test, Historical Knowledge - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	34	92	126
Beth Mowins	30	96	126
Total	64	188	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.335 ^b	1	.563		
Continuity Correction ^c	.188	1	.664		
Likelihood Ratio	.335	1	.563		
Fisher's Exact Test				.664	.332
Linear-by-Linear Association	.334	1	.563		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.00.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

 χ^2 Test, Historical Knowledge - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	44	81	125
Beth Mowins	30	96	126
Total	74	177	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.916 ^b	1	.048		
Continuity Correction ^c	3.387	1	.066		
Likelihood Ratio	3.933	1	.047		
Fisher's Exact Test				.053	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.900	1	.048		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.85.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, Historical Knowledge - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	38	80	118
Beth Mowins	30	96	126
Total	68	176	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.136 ^b	1	.144	.155	.094
Continuity Correction ^c	1.739	1	.187		
Likelihood Ratio	2.138	1	.144		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.127	1	.145		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.89.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 5 - NFL Rules Knowledge

The observed frequencies from the transcripts of this variable can be seen below. The percentages should be seen as a frequency rate of explanations per total plays for each broadcaster.

Results of NFL Rules Knowledge (Variable No. 5)

Announcer	Explanations of Rules	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	5	126	4.0%
Al Michaels	2	125	1.6%
Joe Buck	2	118	1.7%
Beth Mowins	2	126	1.6%

The results from the χ^2 test (1.000, .447, 1.000) show H₀ should not be rejected. There is no significance difference between Mowins and the three male play-by-play broadcasters.

χ^2 Test, NFL Rules Knowledge - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	5	121	126
Beth Mowins	2	124	126
Total	7	245	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.000 ^b	1	.994		.686
Continuity Correction ^c	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.000	1	.994		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.994		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 2 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.50.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

 χ^2 Test, NFL Rules Knowledge - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	2	123	125
Beth Mowins	2	124	126
Total	7	247	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.322 ^b	1	.250		.223
Continuity Correction ^c	.588	1	.443		
Likelihood Ratio	1.365	1	.243		
Fisher's Exact Test				.447	
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.317	1	.251		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 2 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.99.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ² Test, NFL Rules Knowledge - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	2	116	118
Beth Mowins	2	124	126
Total	4	240	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.004 ^b	1	.947		.664
Continuity Correction ^c	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.004	1	.947		
Fisher’s Exact Test				1.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.004	1	.947		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 2 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.93.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 6 – Terminology

The observed frequencies for terminology are displayed in the chart below. The percentage is the frequency rate of terminology per total plays for each announcer.

Results of Terminology (Variable No. 6)

Announcer	Terminology	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	43	126	34.1%
Al Michaels	40	125	32.0%
Joe Buck	40	118	33.9%
Beth Mowins	39	126	31.0%

H₀ should not be rejected according to the χ² test (.687, .892, and .682). There is no significant difference statistically when comparing Mowins to Nantz, Michaels, and Buck within this variable.

χ² Test, Terminology - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	43	83	126
Beth Mowins	39	87	126
Total	82	170	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.289 ^b	1	.591	.687	.343
Continuity Correction ^c	.163	1	.687		
Likelihood Ratio	.289	1	.591		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.288	1	.591		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 41.00.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table

χ² Test, Terminology - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	40	85	125
Beth Mowins	39	87	126
Total	79	172	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.032 ^b	1	.858	.892	.483
Continuity Correction ^c	.002	1	.966		
Likelihood Ratio	.032	1	.858		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.032	1	.858		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 39.34.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ^2 Test, Terminology - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	40	78	118
Beth Mowins	39	87	126
Total	79	165	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.242 ^b	1	.623		
Continuity Correction ^c	.126	1	.723		
Likelihood Ratio	.241	1	.623		
Fisher's Exact Test				.682	.361
Linear-by-Linear Association	.241	1	.624		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 38.20.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 7 - Qualification Factor / Questions

The observed frequency from this variable is displayed below. The percentage value is the questions per total number of plays of each telecast.

Results of Qualification Factor / Questions (Variable No. 7)

Announcer	Questions	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	9	126	7.1%
Al Michaels	5	125	4.0%
Joe Buck	5	118	4.2%
Beth Mowins	6	126	4.8%

Based upon the χ^2 test (.596, 1.000, and 1.000), H_0 should not be rejected. There is no significant difference statistically in frequency comparison of Mowins to Nantz, Michaels, and Buck within this variable.

χ^2 Test, Questions - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	9	117	126
Beth Mowins	6	120	126
Total	15	237	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.638 ^b	1	.424		.298
Continuity Correction ^c	.284	1	.594		
Likelihood Ratio	.642	1	.423		
Fisher's Exact Test				.596	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.635	1	.425		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.50.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

 χ^2 Test, Questions - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	5	120	125
Beth Mowins	6	120	126
Total	11	240	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.087 ^b	1	.768		.506
Continuity Correction ^c	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.087	1	.768		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.087	1	.769		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.48.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ^2 Test, Questions - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	5	113	118
Beth Mowins	6	120	126
Total	11	233	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.039 ^b	1	.844		
Continuity Correction ^c	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.039	1	.843		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.545
Linear-by-Linear Association	.039	1	.844		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.32.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 8 - Airtime / Analyst Integration

The chart below displays a percentage of airtime for each play-by-play broadcaster. The total words column is a culmination of the words spoken by the play-by-play and analyst on each telecast. The percentage is the play-by-play broadcaster's words per total words.

Results of Airtime / Analyst Integration (Variable No. 8)

Announcer	Play-by-Play Words	Total Words	Percentage
Jim Nantz	9,886	18,590	53.2%
Al Michaels	10,400	19,614	53.0%
Joe Buck	8,707	17,326	50.3%
Beth Mowins	10,090	20,385	49.5%

Comparing Mowins to Nantz and Michaels, the χ^2 test (.000, and .000 [rounded figures]) shows there is a significant difference. In this scenario, H_0 is rejected and H_1 concluded. In reference to Mowins and Buck, the χ^2 test (.145) concludes H_0 should not be rejected.

χ^2 Test, Airtime - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	9,886	8,704	18,590
Beth Mowins	10,090	10,295	20,385
Total	19,976	18,999	38,975

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.759 ^b	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction ^c	52.611	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	52.774	1	.000		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	52.757 ^d	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	38,975.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9062.00.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

d. The standardized statistic is 7.263.

χ^2 Test, Airtime - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	10,400	9,214	19,614
Beth Mowins	10,090	10,295	20,385
Total	20,490	19,509	39,999

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.746 ^b	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction ^c	49.605	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	49.757	1	.000		
Fisher’s Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	49.744 ^d	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	39,999.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9566.48.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

d. The standardized statistic is 7.053.

χ^2 Test, Airtime - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	8,707	8,619	17,326
Beth Mowins	10,090	10,295	20,385
Total	18,797	18,914	37,711

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.146 ^b	1	.143	.145	.073
Continuity Correction ^c	2.115	1	.146		
Likelihood Ratio	2.146	1	.143		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.145 ^d	1	.143		
N of Valid Cases	37,711.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8636.12.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

d. The standardized statistic is 1.465.

Variable 9 – Access

The results from the dialogues are shown below in the chart. The percentage is the observed frequency per the total number of plays for each play-by-play broadcaster.

Results of Access (Variable No. 9)

Announcer	Access	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	5	126	4.0%
Al Michaels	2	125	1.6%
Joe Buck	3	118	2.5%
Beth Mowins	7	126	5.6%

Based upon the χ^2 test (.769, .172, and .336), H_0 should not be rejected. There is no significance difference between Mowins and the three male announcers.

χ^2 Test, Access - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	5	121	126
Beth Mowins	7	119	126
Total	12	240	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.350 ^b	1	.554		
Continuity Correction ^c	.088	1	.767		
Likelihood Ratio	.352	1	.553		
Fisher's Exact Test				.769	.384
Linear-by-Linear Association	.349	1	.555		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.00.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

 χ^2 Test, Access - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	2	123	125
Beth Mowins	7	119	126
Total	9	242	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.840 ^b	1	.092		
Continuity Correction ^c	1.811	1	.178		
Likelihood Ratio	3.004	1	.083		
Fisher's Exact Test				.172	.088
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.829	1	.093		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 2 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.48.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ^2 Test, Access - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	3	115	118
Beth Mowins	7	119	126
Total	10	234	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.408 ^b	1	.235		.195
Continuity Correction ^c	.745	1	.388		
Likelihood Ratio	1.452	1	.228		
Fisher's Exact Test				.336	
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.402	1	.236		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 1 cell (25.0%) has an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.84.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Variable 10 - Statistics

The observed frequency of statistics is shown below. The percentage should be seen as the statistics per total number of plays.

Results of Statistics (Variable No. 10)

Announcer	Statistics	Total Plays	Percentage
Jim Nantz	100	126	79.4%
Al Michaels	77	125	61.6%
Joe Buck	94	118	79.7%
Beth Mowins	119	126	94.4%

H_0 is rejected based upon the results of the χ^2 test (.001, .000, and .001), and therefore H_1 is concluded. The difference in the observed frequency between Mowins and the three males is statistically significant.

χ^2 Test, Statistics - Mowins vs. Nantz

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Jim Nantz	100	26	126
Beth Mowins	119	7	126
Total	219	33	252

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.588 ^b	1	.000	.001	.000
Continuity Correction ^c	11.298	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	13.292	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.538	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	252.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.50.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

 χ^2 Test, Statistics - Mowins vs. Michaels

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Al Michaels	77	48	125
Beth Mowins	119	7	126
Total	196	55	251

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.560 ^b	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction ^c	37.664	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	43.384	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.403	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	251.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.39.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

χ^2 Test, Statistics - Mowins vs. Buck

	Outcome		Total
	Yes	No	
Joe Buck	94	24	118
Beth Mowins	119	7	126
Total	213	31	244

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.007 ^b	1	.001		
Continuity Correction ^c	10.712	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	12.536	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.001	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.958	1	.001		
N of Valid Cases	244.000				

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.99.

c. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

This final chapter offers discussion and analysis of the results from this study. In addition, the research question will be answered while providing a list of limitations and suggestions for future studies. The null hypothesis should not be rejected in comparison of Mowins to the three males when referencing scoring plays (Variable No. 1), corrections (No. 2), historical knowledge (No. 4), NFL rules knowledge (No. 5), terminology (No. 6), questions (No. 7), and access (No. 9). Statistically the χ^2 test shows there is no difference in their use of the language within those tested variables. Three variables suggested there is a significant difference between Mowins and at least one of the males. Those variables include bias (No. 3), airtime (No. 8), and statistics (No. 10). But, as the textual analysis will demonstrate, this study suggests Mowins is just as credible and knowledgeable as her male counterparts. The chart below shows a summary of the results.

Summary of Results

Variable	Result
1. Handling of Scoring Plays	H ₀
2. Corrections	H ₀
3. Bias	H ₁ (<i>Mowins to Nantz, Buck, and Michaels</i>)
4. Historical Knowledge	H ₀
5. NFL Rules Knowledge	H ₀
6. Terminology	H ₀
7. Questions / Qualification Factor	H ₀
8. Airtime / Analyst Integration	H ₁ (<i>Mowins to Nantz and Michaels</i>)
9. Access	H ₀
10. Statistics	H ₁ (<i>Mowins to Nantz, Buck, and Michaels</i>)

Analysis of Results

This section is divided into sub-sections by the variables. Analysis is offered on each variable based upon the tested results. Further suggestions are made based upon additional un-

tested textual trends of each play-by-play broadcaster’s dialogue. Those suggestions should not be seen as statements of facts, as they were not tested with the χ^2 test measuring the statistical significance. They should be seen purely as suggestions based upon textual analysis. Those suggestions could lead to future studies.

1. Handling of Scoring Plays

As the χ^2 test showed, little to no difference exists in the dialogue between the three males (Nantz, Buck, and Michaels) and Mowins in an examination of the scoring plays. All four play-by-play broadcasters handled scoring plays and the largest moments of the games in very similar fashions concerning context and factuality.

A limitation, that should be noted, the general frequency of scoring plays is a function of the game itself, not the announcer. In the case of Buck, his Panthers-Cowboys game only featured three touchdowns, while Mowins’ Lions-Jets game featured eight. The margin for error in the case of Buck is far slimmer, but Mowins on the other hand naturally has a higher chance of missing the factuality or context with the far larger frequency because of the game. Statistically, the χ^2 test shows there is no significance statistical difference in the frequency of the announcers’ touchdown calls. However, a brief textual analysis draws the similarities even closer.

The dialogue was structured with a point framing the context of the moment as it pertained to the game or individual player. For example, Nantz’s touchdown call (No. 1) of Donte Moncrief’s first quarter touchdown, maintained context in multiple different ways. The dialogue of the touchdown was delivered by Nantz and listed below.

“That’s Grant the running back. Pass to the end zone, and it is pulled down, and it is caught for the touchdown! Donte Moncrief, the former Colt! ... Well, it was Gilmore who had the saving knockdown in the late stages of the AFC

Championship game. And this time Bortles goes back in his direction, and throws the perfect pass for Moncrief to reach up and grab it for the touchdown.”

First, Nantz identified the receiver, Moncrief, as the “former Colt.” That line provides context to the player, who scored the touchdown. Secondly, Nantz referenced cornerback, Stephon Gilmore. In the AFC Championship game the previous season, Gilmore deflected a pass, saving the victory for the Patriots over the Jaguars. This second-week regular season game was the rematch from the 2018 AFC Championship game. That rematch storyline filled the headlines and airwaves in the week leading up to the game. Nantz not only makes mention of that prior game, but that specific moment in this touchdown call by saying, “Gilmore who had the saving knockdown in the late stages of the AFC Championship game. And this time Bortles goes back in his direction...” This structural trend was evident between all four play-by-play broadcasters. The only broadcaster to leave out the context of a touchdown call was Al Michaels. Regardless, the χ^2 test confirms a significant difference does not exist between Mowins’ frequency and the other three males concerning context of scoring plays.

Mowins had two factual errors on eight of her touchdown calls, the most frequent of the four broadcasters. However, the χ^2 test shows the frequency of factuality as statistically insignificant. An analysis of those mistakes should draw heavy parallel between Mowins and the male broadcasters. Mowins’ error on Darron Lee’s interception for a touchdown is the exact same error Michaels made on Khalil Mack’s interception. Mowins stated it was a 36-yard return (actually a 35-yard return), Michaels stated it as a 28-yard return by Mack (actually a 27-yard return). Both were a single yard off on the length of the return. It should be noted, this error is likely not the fault of the play-by-play announcers. Most network television announcers have people standing alongside in the booth (commonly referred to as “spotters”) who identify the

length of returns in these scenarios. These errors are likely the slight miscalculation on the part of the spotter not the play-by-play announcers. The second error by Mowins was simply a misidentification of players. Nantz, Buck, and Michaels all three misidentified players at other stages of the telecast. Not to mention, most viewers are not critically analyzing every word the announcer says, so most don't catch these subtle mistakes. To this point, the null hypothesis should not be rejected concerning the factuality of scoring plays. Statistically, there is no significant difference between Mowins and the male broadcasters in how they are handling scoring plays. A textual analysis shows further similarities between Mowins and the three male broadcasters.

2. Corrections

All four play-by-play broadcasters made very few corrections in the observed telecasts. The rates ranged from 0.7% (Nantz) on the lowest end to 5.6% (Mowins) on the highest end of the spectrum. Mowins corrected seven total errors, while Buck and Nantz corrected one, a difference of six. Statistically, the χ^2 test shows the difference is not significant. The null hypothesis should not be rejected. As mentioned earlier, casual viewers fail to catch every single corrected mistake by the play-by-play broadcaster; most are watching leisurely anyway (Hedrick & Castiglione, 2000, p. 60). In analyzing the dialogue however, the way in which Mowins corrected her mistakes differed from the three males. This textual analysis lends to a suggestion for a future avenue of research. Mowins corrected her mistakes by inserting a remark such as “excuse me,” “correction,” and “check that,” following the original incorrect piece of information. After the inserted remark, Mowins would then provide the factual piece of information. This insertion draws attention to the mistake. The three males on the other hand,

corrected their mistakes, but did not draw attention to the mistake. They instead provided the correct information or correct pronunciation and moved forward without drawing attention to the mistake with an inserted remark. The two examples below comparing a corrected mistake from Mowins and Nantz help characterize this difference.

“Stafford on the move, Golden Tate with the catch. A reminder that after our game, well, now we’ve got a penalty flag down first. Stafford, excuse me, Patricia will step up to talk to the official.” – Mowins (3rd Quarter)

“He’s tried to latch on with a few teams including Atlanta, the Jets, and Cleveland, and they brought him up, and waived Rashad Greene for Saturday’s walk through just incase ‘For-not’, Fournette, wasn’t ready to go.” – Nantz (2nd Quarter)

Mowins correction of the misidentification came alongside an inserted “excuse me.” This highlights the mistakes. Nantz on the other hand, mispronounced Leonard Fournette’s name. Rather than drawing attention to the mistake, Nantz provides the correct pronunciation and moves forward without an inserted “excuse me.” The vice president of broadcasting at IMG College, Chris Ferris, who hires play-by-play talent, drew attention to this point during a play-by-play seminar in Salisbury, North Carolina.

“Don’t draw attention to your mistakes by saying, ‘excuse me’ or ‘check that.’ Those interjections highlight your mistakes as a play-by-play announcer,” said Ferris. “Correct the mistake and move on don’t draw attention to it. Drawing attention to it will hinder your credibility” (Ferris, 2016). Again this variable tested the frequency of the corrected mistakes, not the way in which they were correcting them. There is no significant difference between Mowins and the three males regarding the frequency. The textual analysis leads to a possible suggestion that a future study could examine in more detail.

3. Bias

Statistically, the χ^2 test shows the bias variable is one of three in which there is a significant difference between Mowins and the three males. The question remains with how much value should this be held? First, the structure of this variable should be considered. This variable simply measured the amount of times the announcer made mention of one team over another. This is not the most accurate test of an announcer’s bias. Consider how a hypothetical example would score based upon this test. ‘Play-by-play announcer A’ broadcasts a game between ‘Team X’ and ‘Team Y.’ The announcer makes mention of ‘Team X’ 99 times on a telecast while saying the name of ‘Team Y’ only once. ‘Play-by-play announcer B’ broadcasts the same game, yet makes 50 equal mentions of ‘Team X’ and 50 equal mentions of ‘Team Y.’

Statistically, the χ^2 test would show there is a significant difference here in this hypothetical example. By this structure, ‘Play-by-play announcer A’ is presenting a biased telecast and ‘Play-by-play announcer B’ is not. However if ‘Play-by-play announcer B’ in all of the mentions of ‘Team A’ speaks negatively of the team, and in all the mentions of ‘Team B’ speaks positively, the viewer would see this as heavily biased toward ‘Team B.’ Even though ‘Play-by-play announcer B’ has equal mentions of both teams the viewer still perceived the announcer as biased. This shows this measurement is not a true measurement of bias. So, to this point, statistically yes, there is a significant difference between Mowins and the males, but by the design of the variable, it is not worth making significant conclusions.

Second, the outcome of the game is out of the announcer’s control. Mowins was presented the most lopsided game of the four. The Jets defeated the Lions by 31 points. The three males all broadcasted games that were much closer in margin of victory (Michaels: 1 point; Buck: 8 points; Nantz: 11 points). Given the games, the sample size, and the structure of the test, heavy conclusions should not be extracted from this variable.

4. Historical Knowledge

According to the results, Mowins’ frequency of historical references was the lowest among the four broadcasters (23.8% with 30 total mentions). Al Michaels owned the highest rate (35.2% with 44 total mentions). The χ^2 test shows the difference to be statistically insignificant, therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected in this scenario.

It comes with little surprise that Michaels led the four announcers in frequency rate of historical knowledge. Of the four announcers, Michaels has the most NFL experience and developed a personality ingrained in the history of the league. Michaels has been broadcasting NFL games in a primetime booth since 1986 and broadcasted 10 Super Bowls as a television play-by-play broadcaster. A number of Michaels’ historical references pertained to things he had witnessed first hand. For example, during the fourth quarter of the telecast, Michaels made a comparison of this *Sunday Night Football* game (Bears-Packers) to a *Monday Night Football* game back in 2003 between the Indianapolis Colts and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Michaels had broadcasted the 2003 game on ESPN. Indianapolis erased a 21-point deficit in the final 5:03 to force overtime, where they would eventually win (Franklyn, 2017). Michaels recalled that game comparing it to the Green Bay Packers fourth quarter comeback against the Chicago Bears that night. These references are frequently weaved in seamlessly by Michaels because of his ingrained nature with the NFL.

This textual trend seems to fit a theoretical framework as well. Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1970) suggest a viewer’s familiarity with an announcer affects credibility through the safety component of communication (as discussed in Chapter Two). NFL viewers and casual sports fans are familiar with the sound of Al Michaels’ voice. He has called some of the most iconic

moments in NFL history and American sports in general. For example his call, “do you believe in miracles,” of the United States win over the Soviet Union in ice hockey during the 1980 Winter Olympics has been a staple in American sports culture for decades. This safety factor cannot be left understated when discussing Michaels’ reputation among sports fans.

Not to mention, Michaels’ telecast featured a longstanding rivalry (Bears-Packers) that dates back to the formation of the league. The history between the Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers is rich and one of the deepest in the NFL. The opportunities for historical references were littered throughout the telecast. Drew Esocoff, director of *Sunday Night Football* telecasts, used endless production elements (graphics, statistics, camera shots, pre-produced packages, replays) during the telecast to construct the rivalry storyline. This was evident from the first camera shot of the telecast and opening remarks from Michaels. Esocoff used a panning camera shot of the Packers’ ring of honor to begin the broadcast. Michaels remarked, “And at Lambeau field, not too many rings of honor like that one – Lombardi, Davis, Nitschke, and all of the rest.” These opportunities afforded Michaels a higher rate of opportunities to insert historical references.

Regardless, this variable simply studied the frequency of each play-by-play announcer’s reference to league history. The results and χ^2 test show there is no significant difference statistically between Mowins and the male broadcasters. The null hypothesis is not rejected under these circumstances. The textual analysis of this variable does suggest several possible avenues for future studies. A future study could examine how production elements affect a play-by-play broadcaster’s credibility. It could take that thought one step further and study which production elements (camera shots, graphics, or replay packages) are the most effective in communicating various storylines. Another possible study could attempt to quantify the safety

component of the studies from Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz in reference to sports media and play-by-play broadcasters' credibility.

5. NFL Rules Knowledge

All four play-by-play broadcasters maintained relatively low frequencies when explaining any intricacies of the rulebook (Nantz: 5, Michaels: 2, Buck: 2, Mowins: 2). The χ^2 test shows there is no significance statistically between the numbers when comparing Mowins to the three males.

It should be accurately considered, this variable is dependent upon the game. Most television play-by-play announcers do not explain the intricacies of the rulebook unless questionable calls or replays occur. If the game does not present these opportunities, the announcer has little to no need to maintain a high frequency of detailed rule explanations. A majority of these examples consisted of the play-by-play broadcaster relying on the analyst for an explanation, or even a dedicated rules analyst (like Fox's Mike Pereira with Joe Buck). This will be demonstrated in the qualification factor variable (No. 7). Nonetheless, the variable shows there is no significant difference between Mowins and the males.

6. Terminology

The χ^2 test and results show there is no significant difference between Mowins and the three males pertaining to the use of terminology. The null hypothesis should not be rejected under this condition. One limitation to this variable is its specific definition of terminology. Terminology specific to football extends far past a glossary of words used to describe positions on the field (quarterback, wide receiver, running back). Terms such as blitz, zone coverage, read

option, I-formation, touchdown, goal to go, and numerous others are a part of the accepted vernacular within the culture of American football. For the purpose of this study and the reliability of the research, this variable was limited to just terminology dealing with player positions. So although the results show there is no difference, if a future study examined specifically the accepted vernacular of a sport in a deeper sense, perhaps a different result would be found.

Another untested trend that emerged from the dialogue dealt with terminology. Over 20 times throughout the course of the *Monday Night Football* (Jets-Lions) telecast Mowins used what could be described as an “abbreviation” of a “football specific term.” For example, “T.D.” would be an abbreviation of the term “touchdown.” Other examples include “Q.B.” (for quarterback), “I.N.T.” (for interception), “O-Coord.” (for offensive coordinator), “I.R.” (for injured reserve), “D” (for defense), “P.A.T.” (for point after touchdown or extra point), or “T.O.” (for timeout or turnover). Over 20 times Mowins used an abbreviation of a football term throughout the telecast. The frequency of those abbreviations increased in the game’s most critical moments such as scoring plays and turnovers, too. Three of Mowins’ eight touchdown calls used the abbreviation “T.D.” to describe a touchdown. The term “I.N.T.” and “T.O.” were both used on turnovers.

Combined together, the three males (Nantz, Michaels, and Buck) did not use a single abbreviation during their respective broadcasts. This textual trend could perhaps match one of the complaints Mowins received on social media and message boards. One anonymous fan writes on a fan board following one of Mowins’ college football telecasts on ESPN, “...She [Mowins] tries so hard to sound like one of the guys” (“ESPN female announcer”, 2014). The word “sound” in this instance could be referencing the vocal pitch of Mowins’ voice, or it could

be in reference to the dialogue she is using. Nevertheless, this specific line characterizes a large branch of the complaints made by fans about Mowins. This trend could suggest Mowins' over use of terminology (in the sense of abbreviating it) affects a viewer's perception of a sportscaster in a negative sense. Again these results were not tested as significant or insignificant. They remain as trends that could lead to possible future studies and possible textual examples categorizing one branch of complaints.

7. Qualification Factor / Questions

According to the χ^2 test, the null hypothesis should not be rejected in this variable. There is no significant difference between Mowins and the three male play-by-play broadcasters. This variable was used as a counteractive test, built upon the qualification factor of Impression Formation Theory. Although the play-by-play announcer is consulting an expert opinion by asking the analyst (former player or coach) a question, a casual viewer could perceive this as a lack of knowledge. By this stance, a lower frequency would be more favorable than a higher frequency. Michaels had the lowest observed frequency of questions, while Nantz recorded the highest frequency (Michaels 5, Buck 5, Mowins 6, Nantz 9).

Below are two examples from Nantz in the fourth quarter of the Jaguars-Patriots games. First, Nantz asked his analyst, Tony Romo (former Dallas Cowboys quarterback), "...It'll be 4th and 1. Now what do you do?" This question was used by Nantz to extract the real time decision-making process from a former NFL quarterback. This question provides the viewer inside access, however, it can be counter active as well. A viewer could potentially view this as Nantz inquiring out of a lack of knowledge or experience. A few plays later he asked Romo in reference to the location of the football on a Tom Brady pass, "...do you challenge it?"

Michaels (who had the most favorable frequency) asked a question to his analyst, Cris Collinsworth (former Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver) during the third quarter of the Bears-Packers game. The question was used to inquire Collinsworth’s interpretation of the rulebook as it pertained to intentional grounding. In reference to a specific replay, Michaels asked Collinsworth, “...was there a nearby receiver?” Collinsworth went on to explain a receiver was nearby and the officiating crew made the correct call.

These examples from Nantz parallel the questions Mowins asked her analyst, Brian Griese (former NFL quarterback). In the second quarter of the Lions-Jets game, Mowins asked Griese, “...third down, what will the Lions dial up here?” Griese then answered by identifying the defensive alignment and how the Lions should react offensively. Each of these observed examples derived from the play-by-play dialogue are similar in structure. This should further confirm the statistical results.

8. Airtime / Analyst Integration

This variable (as mentioned in Chapter Three) was designed on the structure that the play-by-play announcer on television is the third most prominent element of a telecast behind the picture (one) and the analyst (two). Viewers tune in to first, see the game, and second, to hear the opinions and evaluations of the analyst (usually a former player or coach).

The only play-by-play announcer to abide by this structure was Mowins. Mowins dedicated more airtime to her analyst (Brian Griese) than herself. This was configured by counting the total number of the words by the play-by-play broadcast and the analyst in each telecast. All three of the males (Nantz, Buck, and Michaels) integrated themselves into the telecast more frequently than their analyst based upon the total number of the words. The χ^2 test

showed there is a difference between Mowins and the male broadcasters. But, according to Kevin Harlan, an NFL and NBA announcer on national television, Mowins is the only one of the four broadcasters upholding this structure correctly.

Since the difference in ratio is slim, Mowins spoke 49.5% of the total words and Griese (her analyst) 50.5%, a viewer would likely not be able to catch this subtle difference over the course of a three-hour long telecast. The same applies with the three males. Nantz had the highest percentage of total words per telecast at 53.2%. Even that percentage is a subtle difference when considered in context of a three-hour long telecast. Romo spoke 46.8% of the total words. That is only a difference of 6.4%. If viewers are casually watching, this is likely an uncatchable trend. So although Mowins is upholding Harlan’s philosophy, it likely is not catchable by viewers. A second thought could be pursued; perhaps Harlan’s philosophy is indeed false.

9. Access

The χ^2 test confirms there is no significant statistical difference in the frequency of Mowins’ reference to her inside access to league members and the other three males. The null hypothesis should not be rejected in this variable. Mowins had the highest rate of frequency within this variable (Mowins: 7, Nantz: 5, Buck: 3, Michaels: 2). All four broadcasters referenced their access in similar ways. After a Jamaal Williams (Packers running back) carry in the second quarter, Al Michaels made mention of his face-to-face conversation with him by saying, “...we had him [Williams] in the meeting room the other day, laughing and smiling.” Additionally, when coming out of commercial break in the first quarter of the Lions-Jets game, Mowins comparably said, “...talking with Jeremy Bates, who was the Q.B. coach last year and

now the O.C.” This indicates Mowins has direct access and face-to-face conversation with a coach.

Buck and Nantz had similar language uses when incorporating information learned from their inside access. Nantz said during the second quarter of the Jaguars-Patriots game, “...They were talking about it openly with us this week.” That comment was made in reference to the Jacksonville Jaguars’ staff telling Nantz and Tony Romo their thoughts on having another chance to play the Patriots. Buck said during the first quarter of the Cowboys-Panthers, “...McCaffrey will be featured more as a runner this year, we’re told, than a year ago.” These examples further solidify the similarities in the dialogues, in addition to the χ^2 test showing there is no difference.

10. Statistics

The results of the χ^2 test show there is a significant difference between Mowins and the three male broadcasters in terms of their use of statistical information. However, the observed results reported Mowins at the highest frequency of statistical use (94.4% with 119 total uses recorded). Al Michaels recorded the fewest (77 total uses with a rate of 61.6%). Again the χ^2 test shows there is a significant difference between Mowins and the three males, but if statistical use is valued, then Mowins owned the most desirable frequency. This variable compares to airtime (No. 8). There is a significant difference, but the difference shines a favorable light on Mowins.

Research Question Answered

After testing the four dialogues, reporting the observed frequencies, and analyzing the results, the research question can be answered.

- a) Research Question – *What differences exist in the language use between female and male primetime television play-by-play announcers within the National Football League?*

The results and χ^2 test show there is no significant difference in seven of the 10 variables when comparing Beth Mowins to Jim Nantz, Al Michaels, and Joe Buck. Mowins is providing a very similar play-by-play dialogue to the three other male broadcasters. Those seven variables include Mowins’ handling of scoring of plays (No. 1), corrections (No. 2), historical knowledge (No. 4), NFL rules knowledge (No. 5), terminology (No. 6), questions (No. 7), and access (No. 9). Only three variables showed a significant difference between Mowins and at least one of the male announcers. Those variables include bias (No. 3), airtime (No. 8), and statistics (No. 10). Of those three variables, Mowins is observed to have a more favorable frequency in two of the three (airtime and statistics). In addition, the bias variable remains an inaccurate measurement of the announcer’s partiality, so the variable should not be considered with significant implications.

In conclusion, of the 10 tested variables not a single one conclusively points to Mowins as being less credible or knowledgeable than the males in her use of play-by-play dialogue. A textual analysis of the dialogues draws even closer parallels and similarities between Mowins and the males. Therefore, this study suggests the complaints made by fans and viewers of Beth Mowins are not based upon her ability to provide a play-by-play dialogue of an NFL game. The complaints must be based upon another area that was not examined in this study.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations worth identifying; some of those have already been mentioned within the analysis of the results. To begin, by nature a content analysis can only identify an observed frequency, but fails to reveal the underlying meaning of the observed results. Due to this, the research identifies ‘what,’ but can never explain ‘why.’ Attempts to draw conclusions in explanation can be subject to increased error as inferences about relationships are not factually based. They are simply suggestions left not tested due to the nature of the content analysis.

The context in which the dialogue was produced is disregarded as well when studying strictly the texts. This content analysis only analyzes scripts. It fails to consider the vocal pitch. It fails to incorporate tones and emphasis—all critically important elements to human communication, impression formations, and perceptions. It also fails to incorporate the visual element. The pictures the announcers are providing the dialogue for are completely disregarded in this scenario.

Another limitation exists in the transcription process. The primary researcher transcribed the four telecasts by hand. The possibility for errors in spelling, typing, and transmitting should be recognized since the scripts were not electronically recorded through a computer-based system (those systems are not without error either).

In order to maintain the reliability of the research and test, each variable was defined under specific parameters. For example, the terminology variable (No. 6) strictly focused on the vocabulary used to describe a player’s position. There are many other examples of football terminology outside of this narrow focus, but since they did not fit the variable definitions, they were therefore omitted. These terms included “blitz,” “cover two,” and “zone coverage.” This

should be recognized as a limitation because the specific definitions eliminated content that many of the play-by-play announcers were using to help establish their credibility.

Lastly, the possible sample size is not large enough to extract significant gender trends. This study was not designed to answer large societal trends. It was designed to investigate the complaints directed to Beth Mowins after her arrival into primetime NFL television. Any attempt to draw conclusions about all female sports broadcasters and all male sports broadcasters are not accurate. This study considers one position of sports broadcasting (play-by-play) within one sports league (NFL). Currently, only one female (Mowins) is filling that role on national primetime television. That one female has also only handled two national telecasts in primetime. The possible sample size is not large enough to extract significant conclusions about gender trends.

Future Studies

Several different branches could be explored for future research from this study—some of which have already been hinted at or recommended. To begin, the results from this study show there is no significant difference in language use by Mowins (one female broadcaster) and three male, primetime, NFL play-by-play broadcasters. This study was fueled by the complaints on social media from fans after Mowins’ initial debut on *Monday Night Football*. As stated, this narrow focus limits the results of this research from drawing overarching conclusions about the difference of all female and male broadcasters across sports media. A future study could open the focus of the research to include female play-by-play broadcasters from multiple sports (college and professional basketball, football, and baseball).

The NFL has examples of women calling preseason games on regional network television. In 2018, the NFL announced its first all female broadcast booth with Hannah Storm and Andrea Kremer. The broadcast airs as a secondary option to *Thursday Night Football* through Amazon Prime (not an over the air broadcast). Future research could broaden its focus to include these women. Future studies could also broaden from strictly analyzing play-by-play broadcasters to all broadcasters within NFL television (play-by-play, color, sideline, and studio hosts).

The four announcers used in this study have no professional or college football experience as players or coaches. Each of their respective analysts are former players. There are examples across sports where former players and coaches are holding play-by-play positions on television. Joe Davis (former college quarterback) handles college football assignments on Fox Sports. Pat Summerall played in the NFL as a kicker prior to holding a play-by-play role alongside John Madden on television. Does a viewer perceive a play-by-play announcer with previous playing experience as more credible than one without?

As it pertains to women, Mowins is the first female to arrive in the lead role within a primetime NFL television booth. Prior literature (as reviewed in Chapter Two) suggests the first women to arrive on the sports media scene in the mid-1970s shaped and molded the perception of future female sports broadcasters. One of the first female sports commentators to have a prominent role in NFL television coverage was 1972 Miss America, Phyllis George. By setting the precedent as one of the first, George inadvertently established the standard to which women were judged—looks first, knowledge second. George’s lack of experience in broadcasting further heightened this stereotype. George was not hired on the basis of her sports knowledge, ability to interview athletes, report stories, or broadcast a game. George was hired on the basis of her

physical appearance as Miss America. It was a sexist—yet marketable—hire in the 1970s. When she left sports for a career in news, another young, pretty girl Jayne Kennedy filled her role further enhancing this stereotype. Holding to this thought, perhaps a future study could examine the historical precedent and how it shapes the current perception of female sports broadcasters. Another study based upon Mowins (first female play-by-play broadcaster in a primetime NFL booth) could take a more futuristic look. George, Kennedy, and others set the precedent for women in secondary roles. Mowins is currently establishing the precedent for women in a primetime NFL booth. Can the trends of history be used to predict the future perception of female NFL play-by-play announcers on television?

A future study could be conducted in regard to female sports journalists. Can a reader depict whether a sports column is written by a female writer or male writer solely based upon the word selection? Does knowing whether a sports column is written by a female or male effect a reader's perception of the information's accuracy?

A future study could strictly study the vocal pitch of play-by-play announcers on scoring plays. Announcers are remembered for their calls in the biggest moments of the game. Nightly newscasts and highlight oriented shows like ESPN's *SportsCenter* habitually replay these moments. Those calls are also used in highlight montages year after year. How does the vocal pitch and sound of the voice affect the viewer's reception to the moment? Many announcers have been criticized for their vocal pitch in big moments. Joe Buck is a good example. He has been repeatedly criticized for the way in which he handled David Tyree's iconic behind-the shoulder catch in Super Bowl XLII and his final call of the 2016 World Series win for the Chicago Cubs.

Each variable could be studied more in depth as the sole focus of research. For example, a future study could examine the bias variable (No. 3), looking at how the rooting interest of the

viewer (which team the viewer supports or does not support) alters their perception of the broadcaster calling the game. The rules variable (No. 5) could be extended beyond just a count of frequency into looking at how announcers are articulating the rulebook. How does their explanation help build credibility?

There are endless avenues and branches that could be explored from this study. These are just a few of those options. Mowins was not well received by viewers during her debut. This study identifies the complaints are not based upon the dialogue within these 10 variables. The roots of the complaints are still unidentified; perhaps future research could help in this identification process.

Final Thoughts

Just as Andy Rooney characterized the sexist perception, there is still a crowd of people today who firmly believe “those ‘damn’ women have no business making comments about a football game.” The complaints directed at Beth Mowins solidify that. However, those complaints cannot be based upon her language use as demonstrated through this study. Mowins is delivering a very similar call as it pertains to her dialogues when compared to males in other primetime NFL booths. So the question remains, what is the root of the complaints? This study confirms it is not related to the dialogue as it pertains to the 10 variables, but a future study could use these findings to better identify that root.

Due to the limitations of a content analysis as stated, any further explanation from here should be seen as a suggestion. With that in mind, consider the framework of Impression Formation Theory. As the theory suggests, the initial identification phase is the most critical when forming a global impression about an individual. The first characteristic given to the

viewer about Mowins is the sound of her voice. From this initial identification phase, the human mind attempts to categorize people like a filing system when forming impressions. So as a viewer’s mind takes the initial identification characteristic and attempts to form a global impression it relies upon these categories. In the case of a play-by-play announcer, that initial identification is the sound of the announcer’s voice. That sound separates announcers into genders—male voices and female voices. On Mowins’ *Monday Night Football* telecast the initial camera shot right before kickoff panned over Ford Field as Mowins says, “*Monday Night Football* from Ford Field here in Detroit, the Lions hosting the Jets.” In this moment, before viewers even have a chance to visually see Mowins, they are able to identify the voice belongs to a female.

Within the gender category, a woman has never played in the NFL. Males on the other hand, have played for years. The viewer instantaneously considers this subconsciously as their mind attempts to form a global impression of her. The initial identification of Mowins’ gender confirms she lacks previous playing experience—which brings Keene and Cummins (2009) study into consideration.

Keene and Cummins found that viewers perceive announcers with previous playing experience as more credible than those without. Coupling Keene and Cummins’ findings to Impression Formation Theory, Mowins is stereotypically identified right from the start as less credible. However, to this point Nantz, Buck, and Michaels all lack the same playing experience that is discrediting Mowins. Why are the men not met with the same criticism? The framework of Impression Formation Theory suggests those three males are able to mask their lack of playing experience better than Mowins. The viewer categorizes the three males into a different gender category than Mowins right away based upon the initial identification. This gender

category associates that previous playing experience could be a possibility for Nantz, Buck, and Michaels. Secondly, a common stereotype held by casual sports fans is sportscasters tend to have previous playing or coaching experience. These two categories help sustain the credibility for males like Nantz, Buck, and Michaels. The initial identifications do not challenge those categories and it works to the males' benefit. As Hedrick and Castiglione (2000) additionally suggest, most viewers casually watch sports. They are relaxing, not taking notes on the edge of their seats (p. 60). So therefore most viewers tend to not investigate further. This theoretical framework could suggest why Mowins continues to be met with gender-related criticism. Buck, Michaels, and Nantz have all individually been met with different forms of criticism over the course of their careers, but those complaints have been unrelated to their gender.

Additionally, Nantz, Buck, and Michaels are also able to compensate for their lack of playing experience because viewers are familiar with the sound of their voice. Receivers evaluate message sources based upon three isolated components: safety, qualification, and dynamism (Berlo, Lemert & Mertz, 1970). Qualification is the aforementioned playing experience masked by these males. Safety refers to this affiliated relationship with the viewer and the announcer.

All three of these men have established themselves as credible voice within the culture of American sports and American television. All three have broadcasted multiple Super Bowls—the largest annual sporting event and live television show. Additionally, Nantz annually broadcasts the NCAA's Final Four and national championship of men's college basketball along with the Master's Golf Tournament. Buck not only handles national NFL on FOX telecasts, but is the voice of Major League Baseball's World Series every year. Michaels has logged more hours on primetime national television than any sportscaster in history. The safety component cannot be understated. Sports fans are comfortable with the sound of Nantz, Buck, and Michaels' voice.

Outside of these three, the safety component would also suggest viewers are generally more comfortable with the sound of the male voice on a primetime NFL telecast. A female has only served as a play-by-play broadcaster on a primetime NFL telecast twice (both by Mowins on the *Monday Night Football* opener in 2017 and 2018). Males on the other hand have appeared weekly for decades in primetime NFL booths. This suggests viewers are generally more comfortable with the sound of a male’s voice compared to a female’s in this role. Due to this dynamic, as Mowins steps into the *Monday Night Football* broadcast booth as the lead play-by-play broadcaster, she is met with skeptical viewers on the receiving end.

In order for women to establish a credible voice within the NFL there are a few barriers that need to be broken. Mowins opened the door to women as play-by-play announcers in a national primetime booth. However both of her assignments consisted of a single game each season. A female holding a full time play-by-play position on national television within the NFL would serve as a monstrous step. The NFL continuing to address locker room issues could be beneficial. Women continuing to land jobs in non-traditional roles as play-by-play and analysts will help establish the safety component (Shelton, 2014). Women like Doris Burke (NBA), Jessica Mendoza (MLB), and Beth Mowins (NFL) who have secured non-traditional positions in professional sports league will be even more effective to the future of female sportscasters. Perhaps most importantly, history would suggest in order for women to be accepted as a credible voice within the NFL, the sport (football) must first embrace women’s participation as players. Football is the only major American sport in which an equivalent is not offered at any level for females.

Women are afforded the chance to play basketball at the high school, college, and professional level (WNBA). Women’s basketball is an Olympic sport as well. Baseball is closely

offered in the form of softball at high schools and colleges. A few organized professional softball leagues exist as well. Ice hockey is offered in some publicly funded high schools for females. The NCAA governs two divisions of women’s ice hockey. Football is the only sport lagging behind in allowing women to equally compete. A few females have played on the male football team in some high schools and even fewer colleges, but most of these examples consist of a female kicker or punter. The NFL has women serving as league and team executives, coaches, and game officials (Connley, 2018). But, the sport as a whole has failed to include women from participating as players. A female equivalent of football is still not offered in any form as a sanctioned sport in publicly funded schools. In order for women to establish themselves as play-by-play announcers, the sport must embrace their participation as players by offering a female equivalent. These are just a few steps that the NFL could potentially address to help women establish credible voices as play-by-play broadcasters.

Those statements should be seen purely as suggestions; this study did not test that information. This study shows there is no significant difference between Mowins and the three males (Nantz, Buck, and Michaels) in their delivery of play-by-play dialogues. This concludes that the criticism made by fans is not based on Mowins ability to call a game. She is delivering a very similar call to the other male announcers in the NFL. The complaints are therefore derived from some other cause. Prior literature, historical examples, and previous researchers suggest there is an underlying sexism that still exists in sports and sports media and the components of Impression Formation Theory supply a possible explanation.

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