

Figurative Language In The Athletic Interview With Peter Drury: A Semantic Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the types of figurative language and the meanings conveyed through Peter Drury's reflections in an interview with *The Athletic*. Peter Drury is widely known for his poetic style of football commentary, and his interview provides rich linguistic material to explore how figurative expressions reflect personality, emotion, and professional identity. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, using a semantic analysis approach to examine the forms and meanings of figurative language found in the interview transcript. The analysis draws on the theoretical framework of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and other supporting semantic theories relevant to figurative meaning interpretation. The findings reveal that metaphor is the most dominant type of figurative language, comprising 81.8% of the data, followed by personification and idiomatic expressions at 9.1% each. Drury's frequent use of metaphor, such as describing his sensitivity to criticism as lacking "thick skin," expresses his vulnerability to public judgment and highlights the emotional burden carried by a public figure. Meanwhile, idioms and personification illustrate his deep connection with language as not only a tool for communication, but also a medium that shapes his identity and creative expression as a commentator. The study concludes that figurative language in the interview contributes significantly to constructing a narrative that resonates emotionally with audiences, revealing Drury's humility, passion, and philosophical outlook on his career. This research contributes to the fields of linguistics and media discourse studies by emphasizing the role of figurative language in shaping meaningful and memorable public communication.

Keywords: *figurative language, semantics, sports commentary, media studies, Peter Drury*

1. Introduction

Figurative language serves as a pivotal element in enhancing the expressiveness and depth of communication, particularly within the realm of sports commentary. It allows commentators to convey the dynamism and emotional intensity of sporting events, thus enriching the audience's experience. Figurative expressions, including metaphors, similes, hyperboles, idioms, and personifications, provide a nuanced way to describe moments that are otherwise difficult to encapsulate. Through these expressions, language becomes more vivid, imaginative, and emotionally resonant. Peter Drury, one of the most renowned football commentators, is celebrated for his eloquent use of figurative language, which adds a poetic and dramatic dimension to his commentaries. His ability to transform live events into narratives resonates with audiences worldwide, making him a unique voice in sports media. In an interview with *The Set Pieces*, Drury noted, "I've always had a fascination with words" (Drury, 2020), underscoring his deliberate and artful application of language as the core of his profession.

The significance of figurative language in sports commentary has been extensively explored in previous studies. For instance, Putra and Marlina (2024) analyzed the interplay between figurative language and neutrality bias in football commentaries from the 2022 FIFA World Cup Final. Their findings highlight how commentators use figurative language to evoke emotions and maintain audience engagement while still attempting to preserve neutrality. Similarly, Luo (2024) examined metaphorical images in the commentary of the 2022 UEFA Champions League Final, emphasizing how metaphors enhance the vividness of narratives and create a more engaging viewer experience.

While illuminating, these studies are predominantly centered on spontaneous language produced during live match commentaries, leaving a notable gap in understanding how figurative language functions in other settings, such as interviews or reflective conversations. The use of figurative language in interviews offers a unique opportunity to explore the intentional and introspective aspects of linguistic expression. Unlike the spontaneous nature of live sports commentary, interviews allow commentators to reflect on their experiences, philosophies, and emotions using carefully chosen words. Ahmed (2023), in his critical stylistics analysis of sports commentaries, argued that figurative language not only constructs and reinforces particular narratives but also reflects a commentator's personal style and thematic identity. This observation underscores the relevance of examining interviews as a complementary perspective to live commentary, where intention and self-representation become more transparent.

Building on these findings, the role of figurative language in sports commentary can be understood as not only a stylistic choice but also a communicative strategy that shapes audience perception and emotional connection to the game. Figurative language—such as metaphors, similes, hyperboles, and personifications—enables commentators to transform factual sporting events into emotionally charged narratives. Through this linguistic creativity, commentators bridge the gap between objective reporting and entertainment, appealing to both casual viewers and devoted fans. For instance, when a football commentator describes a player as “a lion in the penalty box” or “a magician with the ball,” these metaphors go beyond literal meaning to convey the player's dominance, skill, and charisma. Such expressions enrich the commentary, making it more memorable and dynamic than simple descriptions of actions or statistics.

Moreover, figurative language contributes to the construction of sports heroes and legends in the public imagination. Commentators often use grandiose and dramatic expressions that elevate players to mythical status, reinforcing cultural narratives of triumph, struggle, and perseverance. This process, as noted by Charteris-Black (2004), aligns with the persuasive function of metaphor in shaping ideological meaning. In sports contexts, it helps to build emotional identification between audiences and athletes, encouraging viewers to experience the game as a symbolic representation of broader human values—such as courage, teamwork, and resilience. This perspective is particularly relevant in high-stakes matches like finals or international tournaments, where commentators play a key role in framing the event as more than a game, but as a story of national pride or human achievement.

Additionally, the use of figurative language allows commentators to manage the tempo and rhythm of live broadcasting. Since sports commentary unfolds in real time, figurative expressions serve as rhetorical tools to maintain excitement during slower moments or intensify suspense during climactic scenes. For example, a phrase like “the clock is the enemy now” personifies time to dramatize tension, keeping the audience emotionally engaged even when no remarkable physical action occurs on the field. This function aligns with what Beard (1998) refers to as the “entertainment imperative” of sports commentary—the need to constantly sustain audience interest regardless of the gameplay's pace.

Furthermore, figurative language can function as a marker of identity and cultural familiarity. Commentators often draw on locally meaningful idioms, traditional sayings, or culturally resonant metaphors to connect with their audience. For instance, Indonesian sports commentators might use expressions rooted in everyday humor or traditional proverbs, while British commentators may employ allusions to literature or national sports history. This localization of figurative language not only enriches the commentary but also reinforces a sense of shared cultural belonging among viewers. It demonstrates how language choices in commentary reflect broader sociolinguistic and cultural dynamics within a particular society.

In conclusion, the use of figurative language in sports commentary serves multiple overlapping functions: it enhances aesthetic appeal, sustains emotional engagement, constructs symbolic meaning, and reflects cultural identity. These dimensions illustrate that commentary is not merely a descriptive activity but a performative and interpretive act that transforms live sporting events into rich narratives of human experience. Future research could explore how the intensity or frequency of figurative expressions varies across different sports, languages, and media platforms such as television, radio, or social media live streams—where audience expectations and linguistic conventions may differ significantly. Through this broader lens, the study of figurative language in

sports commentary continues to reveal how language shapes the way audiences perceive, feel, and remember sporting moments.

Furthermore, figurative language in sports media plays a critical role in shaping public perception and memory of sporting events. Prasetya (2023) found that metaphors and narrative-driven expressions used in sports reporting significantly influence how audiences comprehend and recall the essence of events, even long after they occur. This aligns with broader linguistic theories suggesting that figurative language enhances cognitive processing and emotional engagement, serving not just as decoration but as a fundamental tool for meaning construction (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In the case of Peter Drury, his use of figurative language in interviews not only reflects his poetic approach to commentary but also reveals his passion, vulnerability, and profound respect for storytelling in sports.

Addressing the research gap identified above, this study investigates the use of figurative language in Peter Drury's interview with *The Athletic*. The interview provides rare insight into his reflective and intentional use of language outside the immediacy and pressure of live broadcasting. By analyzing the semantic functions of metaphors, idioms, personifications, and hyperboles in this interview context, the study aims to uncover how these linguistic choices contribute to broader discourse in sports media and shape Drury's public persona as an articulate communicator.

The urgency of this research lies in its potential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of figurative language in sports media across different communicative contexts. Although previous scholarship has provided valuable insights into live commentary, it often overlooks the reflective and identity-constructive nature of language in interview settings. By focusing on Drury's interview with *The Athletic*, this study not only highlights the richness of figurative language but also explores its implications for audience engagement, media narrative formation, and the linguistic representation of sports culture.

This study seeks to complement existing works by shifting the analytical focus beyond live commentary toward interview-based verbal expression. The findings are expected to contribute new insights to the fields of linguistics, stylistics, media studies, and sports communication—particularly in understanding how figurative language functions as both a communicative tool and a marker of personal identity within mass media.

Semantics

Semantics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the study of meaning in language. Semantics as the systematic study of meaning, examining how words, phrases, and sentences convey information. In the context of sports media, semantics plays a crucial role in shaping audience perception and engagement. Understanding the semantics of commentary helps uncover how specific word choices and linguistic structures influence the way sporting events are interpreted and remembered by audiences.

Semantics is not only concerned with dictionary meanings but also with how meaning is constructed through context, speaker intent, and audience interpretation. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize the cognitive aspect of semantics, arguing that language is deeply connected to human thought and experience. This perspective is particularly relevant in sports commentary, where linguistic choices can evoke emotions, reinforce narratives, and shape the way fans experience a game.

In sports media, commentators strategically employ semantic techniques to enhance storytelling. For instance, the use of evaluative language, metaphorical expressions, and hyperbolic statements contributes to a more engaging and immersive viewing experience. Drury's interview with *The Athletic* provides a unique opportunity to analyze how a seasoned commentator reflects on his linguistic choices and the semantic impact of his expressions beyond the immediacy of live broadcasting.

Figurative Language

Figurative language is a linguistic tool that enhances communication by introducing expressive and imaginative elements into speech and writing. Figurative language defines as any deviation from the literal use of words to achieve a particular effect, often making descriptions more vivid,

engaging, and emotionally resonant. In sports commentary, figurative language is used to create compelling narratives that capture the excitement and drama of the game.

Figurative language allows commentators to go beyond factual descriptions, transforming sporting events into stories that resonate with audiences. Simatupang and Sihaloho (2020) highlight that figurative language differentiates sports commentary from straightforward reporting, enabling commentators to craft narratives that emphasize heroism, struggle, and triumph.

Types of Figurative Language

Several types of figurative language contribute to the richness of sports commentary. This study focuses on three dominant forms found in Peter Drury's interview with *The Athletic*: metaphor, idiom, and personification.

a. Metaphor

Metaphors establish implicit comparisons between two unrelated concepts, creating vivid imagery that enhances audience engagement (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In sports media, metaphors are frequently used to describe player actions, team dynamics, and emotional moments. Luo (2024) discusses how metaphorical language in football commentary makes the game more relatable by drawing comparisons to familiar experiences. In Drury's interview, metaphors such as "not having a thick skin" and "lover of words" illustrate his personal reflections and professional challenges.

b. Idiom

Idioms are fixed expressions with figurative meanings distinct from their literal definitions. They serve as a bridge between abstract concepts and concrete ideas, allowing commentators to convey emotions and experiences in a more accessible way. Ahmed (2023) highlights the power of idiomatic expressions in simplifying complex narratives and making them more engaging for audiences. In Drury's interview, idioms such as "taking a couple of steps back" reflect his self-awareness and ability to balance enthusiasm with perspective.

c. Personification

Personification attributes human qualities to non-human entities, making abstract concepts more tangible and relatable. In sports commentary, personification is used to animate events and imbue them with emotion and depth. Prasetya (2023) notes that personification enhances audience engagement by making inanimate elements of the game feel alive. In Drury's interview, phrases like "words have been my best friend and worst enemy" illustrate the dual nature of language in his career, revealing the profound impact of words on his experiences as a commentator.

Previous studies have extensively examined figurative language in live football commentary and sports journalism, but there is limited research on its use in interviews. While studies by Putra and Marlina (2024) and Luo (2024) provide valuable insights into the role of figurative language in enhancing live sports narratives, they do not address its reflective and intentional use in non-live contexts.

This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing Peter Drury's interview with *The Athletic*, focusing on the semantic functions of metaphor, idiom, and personification. By examining how Drury articulates his experiences and philosophy through figurative language, this research contributes to a broader understanding of sports media discourse. The findings will provide valuable insights for linguists, media professionals, and sports commentators, demonstrating the profound impact of figurative language beyond the immediacy of live sports events.

By integrating linguistic theories with empirical analysis, this study expands the scope of figurative language research in sports media. It highlights how commentators strategically use language to construct narratives, evoke emotions, and engage audiences, ultimately reinforcing the significance of figurative language as a key element in sports communication.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the use of figurative language in Peter Drury's interview with *The Athletic*. The qualitative method is considered appropriate for this research because it allows for an in-depth interpretation of language beyond its literal meaning, enabling the researcher to explore the semantic functions and communicative intent behind figurative expressions. By applying descriptive semantic analysis, the study focuses on how figurative language shapes Drury's identity and rhetorical style as a sports commentator who is widely known for his poetic use of words.

The data for this research were collected from the interview article titled *Peter Drury interview: "Words are my best friend and worst enemy"*, published on *The Athletic* website. This interview was selected through purposive sampling because it contains rich examples of figurative language and offers a reflective perspective on Drury's commentary style, as opposed to spontaneous language used during live broadcasts. The transcript of the interview was carefully read and re-read to ensure familiarity with its content, and all utterances containing figurative expressions were identified and extracted for analysis.

As the primary research instrument, the researcher conducted manual coding to categorize the data. Supporting tools such as digital annotation software and spreadsheets were used to organize the figurative expressions into several categories, including metaphors, similes, idioms, personification, and hyperboles. The classification process was guided by established theoretical frameworks discussed in semantic studies. After classification, each figurative expression was interpreted within its context to uncover the meaning intended by the speaker. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory served as the main analytical basis, especially for understanding metaphor as a cognitive tool that shapes how individuals conceptualize abstract ideas.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis following the procedures proposed by Hsieh and Shannon (2020), which involve identifying patterns and meanings embedded within textual data. Throughout the analysis, the researcher applied Silverman's (2020) discourse interpretation techniques to ensure that each figurative expression was examined based on its communicative function in constructing Drury's narrative. Statistical computation was not employed since the primary focus of this study lies in meaning interpretation rather than numerical measurement. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the researcher adhered to principles of trustworthiness in qualitative research, including theoretical triangulation and detailed contextual interpretation to ensure that the data were analyzed accurately and meaningfully.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

The analysis of Peter Drury's interview reveals three types of figurative language: Metaphor, Idiom, and Personification. Among the figurative language found in Peter Drury's language, metaphor is the most dominant, comprising 81.8% of the instances. Following metaphor, personification and idiom each appear with a frequency of 9.1%. These expressions highlight Drury's sensitivity to public opinion, his passion for language, and his commitment to impactful commentary. Through metaphors, he conveys his emotional investment and challenges with criticism; idioms reflect his balance between immersion and objectivity; and personification illustrates his complex relationship with language. Overall, Drury's use of figurative language enriches his commentary, offering audiences a relatable, thoughtful, and immersive experience.

Metaphor

Data 1

"But I am someone who doesn't have a thick skin.

This phrase is a metaphor, the expression *"not having a thick skin"* is a common idiom used to indicate a person's sensitivity to criticism or hurtful remarks (Cambridge Dictionary). The metaphor suggests that just as physical *"thick skin"* protects against injury, emotional resilience helps one withstand negative feedback. In this context, Drury is implying that he is vulnerable to external opinions and criticism.

Through this metaphor, Drury expresses his sensitivity to criticism, revealing his personal struggle with public perception. The use of this metaphor emphasizes his human side, showing that despite his professional success, he remains emotionally vulnerable. By stating that he prefers to protect himself by avoiding criticism—especially in an era dominated by social media—he highlights the mental toll that public scrutiny can take. This admission adds depth to his character, allowing the audience to relate to him as not just a commentator but as someone who grapples with the emotional impacts of their work.

Data 2

"A great lover of words," by his own admission, and passionate about football.

This phrase is a metaphor, the term *"lover"* in this context suggests an intense affection and appreciation for language (Oxford Languages). This metaphor illustrates the profound relationship Drury has with words, indicating that they play a significant role in his life and career.

Drury's metaphor of being a *"lover of words"* conveys his deep connection to language, emphasizing its importance in his identity as a commentator. This reflects not only his professional commitment but also a personal passion for articulating thoughts and emotions through carefully chosen words. Additionally, it highlights the artistry involved in commentary, where the ability to weave language into compelling narratives can elevate the viewing experience. This metaphor serves to engage the audience, inviting them to appreciate the nuances of language that Drury passionately embraces, while also underscoring the dedication required in his profession.

Data 3

"You've got people who have been a part of the furniture and when the furniture moves, some people won't like the change."

This phrase is a metaphor, Drury compares people to *"part of the furniture,"* suggesting they are long-standing and familiar elements in a setting (Cambridge Dictionary). The metaphor illustrates the deep-rooted relationships that form between audiences and commentators over time.

Through this metaphor, Drury conveys the resistance to change that often accompanies transitions in broadcasting, particularly in replacing a figure as established as Martin Tyler. By likening people to furniture, he emphasizes their role as constants in the audience's experience and how any change to that familiarity such as his appointment at Sky may initially unsettle viewers. This metaphor highlights the emotional attachment people form with familiar voices in sports commentary and the delicate balance required to win over an audience accustomed to a particular style. Moreover, it reflects Drury's understanding of the challenges he faces as he enters a space where long-standing relationships have already been established, underscoring his intent to earn the audience's trust and affection over time.

Data 4

Perhaps shrewdly for a commentator whose enthusiastic style can be a room-splitter, Drury quite emphatically eschews social media.

The term *"room-splitter"* is a metaphor. A *"room-splitter"* typically refers to something polarizing, which divides opinion among those present (Collins Dictionary). In this context, Drury uses

"room-splitter" to describe his commentary style, suggesting that it elicits strong reactions that might cause division among audiences. The metaphor captures the divisive nature of his enthusiastic style, which may be highly engaging for some viewers and too intense for others. Through this metaphor, Drury acknowledges the potentially polarizing effect of his enthusiastic commentary style, highlighting his awareness of the mixed reactions it may receive. By describing his approach as a *"room-splitter,"* he implies that his energy and passion in delivering commentary are deliberate choices, even if they lead to contrasting opinions among viewers. This insight suggests that Drury is comfortable with the possibility of differing opinions, demonstrating a confidence in his distinctive approach. By acknowledging this potential divide, he conveys both his authenticity and acceptance that his style may not appeal to everyone, adding depth to his character as a commentator who values impact over universal approval.

Data 5

I suppose over time you learn to self-edit better," he says.

"Self-edit" is a metaphor for the internal process of refining and restraining one's expression over time. To *"self-edit"* means to modify or control one's speech or actions before expressing them fully (Merriam-Webster). The phrase suggests that Drury has learned to monitor and adjust his commentary style, ensuring that his words align with his intentions.

By using the metaphor *"self-edit better,"* Drury conveys his growth in the ability to refine his commentary to deliver it more effectively. This statement reflects a level of self-discipline and self-awareness, emphasizing that his style is not only enthusiastic but also carefully calibrated. This metaphor suggests an evolution in his approach, as he becomes more adept at choosing his words to maintain authenticity without overstepping boundaries. Through this phrase, Drury implies a journey of learning from experience, which resonates with audiences by presenting a commentator who is as thoughtful about his impact as he is passionate about his delivery.

Data 6

Over time you learn to understand that there's a value in the silence

"Value in the silence" is a metaphor. Here, Drury uses *"value"* to suggest that silence holds significance or worth, especially in the context of sports commentary, where pauses can be as impactful as spoken words (Oxford Languages). This metaphor implies that silence can amplify the atmosphere or gravity of the moment.

Through this metaphor, Drury expresses his belief in the strategic importance of silence, acknowledging that commentary is not only about filling the air with words but also about knowing when to hold back. By assigning *"value"* to silence, he highlights his understanding of pacing and timing, recognizing that allowing moments of quiet can enhance the intensity of the experience for viewers. This reveals a sophisticated approach to commentary, where silence serves as a deliberate choice that can heighten the emotional impact. Drury's statement showcases his respect for the ebb and flow of the game, demonstrating a restraint that adds depth to his style by emphasizing the natural rhythm and drama of live sports.

Data 7

and there's certainly a value in the crowd noise.

"Value in the crowd noise" is a metaphor that, like *"value in the silence,"* implies an appreciation for elements beyond direct commentary. In this context, Drury describes crowd noise as something valuable, suggesting that the audience's reactions contribute significantly to the atmosphere and

storytelling (Merriam-Webster).

By referring to the "*value in the crowd noise*," Drury conveys the idea that the sounds of the audience are integral to the live experience of sports. This metaphor highlights his belief that commentary should not overshadow the organic energy of the crowd but rather complement it. Through this statement, Drury underscores the crowd's role in shaping the atmosphere of a match, acknowledging that their enthusiasm and reactions add a layer of authenticity to the viewing experience. This reflects his respect for the live ambiance, suggesting that his role is to enhance rather than dominate the moment. Drury's insight here reinforces his philosophy of balancing commentary with the natural sounds of the game, contributing to a richer, more immersive experience.

Data 8

He is someone who appears every now and then often with some gusto at major tournaments, or on occasional games from the 'world feed' broadcasts, or on clips that go around on social media.

"World feed" is a metaphor that describes a broadcasting stream designed for international audiences, allowing people worldwide to experience the same live sports events. The term "*feed*" conveys the notion of distributing or nourishing, as if supplying a "*global meal*" to fans around the world (Cambridge Dictionary)

By using the term "*world feed*," Drury emphasizes the broad reach and universal appeal of his broadcasts, suggesting that his commentary is designed for a global audience. This metaphor underscores the power of sports media to unite people from diverse backgrounds through shared experiences, regardless of location. Drury's reference to the "*world feed*" positions his role as a connector of cultures, where his commentary helps bridge gaps and fosters a sense of global community. The metaphor reflects his understanding of the unique influence his commentary can have on a worldwide audience, adding weight to the significance of his words and the responsibility he feels in shaping the viewing experience for fans across the globe.

Data 9

"I'm being invited into people's houses at four o'clock on a Sunday afternoon, and I absolutely will wipe my feet on the outdoor mat first and enter humbly."

This expression is an metaphor. Drury likens his role as a commentator to being a guest entering someone's home, emphasizing respect and humility. "*Wiping his feet*" signifies his desire to be mindful and considerate of the personal space he's entering (Collins Dictionary).

Through this extended metaphor, Drury conveys his appreciation for the privilege of broadcasting into people's homes, highlighting his humility and sense of responsibility. The image of "*wiping his feet*" illustrates his respect for his audience, implying that he approaches his work with care and gratitude. This metaphor reinforces Drury's understanding of his influence on viewers' personal experiences, especially during family time on a Sunday afternoon. His choice of words portrays him as a commentator who values the trust placed in him by viewers and seeks to honor that by delivering commentary that respects their space. The humility expressed here makes his commentary feel more personal, endearing him to the audience as someone who values the intimacy of the shared sports experience.

Idiom

Data 10

"If you take a couple of steps back and look at it, you might think, 'What is it you're getting excited about?'. But when you're in it, it's a fabulous thing and I don't apologise for being really very, very excited about it."

This is an idiom suggesting a perspective shift. The phrase *"take a couple of steps back"* means to view a situation with more distance or objectivity (Oxford Languages). It implies a figurative movement away from a focused viewpoint to gain a clearer, broader understanding.

By using this idiom, Drury encourages a more reflective approach to understanding his work, implying that stepping back can reveal insights that are less apparent in the moment. This perspective shift suggests a balance between being immersed in the excitement of sports and appreciating the spectacle's overall significance. Drury's use of this idiom implies that he understands the importance of both emotional engagement and objectivity, underscoring the layered complexity of sports commentary. This statement provides a glimpse into his approach, where he embraces the excitement but also maintains an awareness of its place in the larger picture, inviting viewers to share in both the immediacy of the moment and the overarching narrative.

Personification

Data 11

"I think that words have been often my best friend but sometimes my worst enemy, and I suppose over time you learn to self-edit better," he says.

This is a personification, Drury personifies words as both his *"best friend"* and *"worst enemy,"* attributing human characteristics to abstract concepts (Merriam-Webster). This personification emphasizes the dual nature of language, suggesting that it can provide support or cause harm, depending on how it is used.

Drury's personification of words reveals the complex relationship he has with language in his commentary career. By portraying words as both allies and adversaries, Drury highlights the intricate power of language: it can enhance moments of triumph but also lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations if misused. This duality underscores the high stakes of his role as a commentator, where each word must be carefully chosen to maintain authenticity and precision. Furthermore, this expression reflects Drury's self-awareness as a communicator, acknowledging that the impact of his words extends beyond the immediate context of a match, influencing public perception and emotional responses.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that Peter Drury predominantly employs metaphors in his interview with *The Athletic*, followed by personification and idiomatic expressions. The dominance of metaphor (81.8%) supports Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) view that metaphor is not merely a decorative linguistic feature but a cognitive tool that shapes how individuals understand abstract concepts. In the interview, metaphors allow Drury to articulate personal vulnerabilities, identity, and philosophy in a way that resonates emotionally with the audience. Expressions such as "not having a thick skin" and "being a lover of words" reveal his sensitivity to criticism and profound attachment to language, illustrating how metaphors function to construct a relatable self-portrayal.

The metaphors also reflect Drury's attempt to communicate the complexity of sports broadcasting as a profession that requires navigating audience expectations, emotional dynamics, and public scrutiny. His metaphor comparing commentators to "part of the furniture" highlights the significance of familiarity in audience experience and emphasizes the transitional tension he faces in the sports media landscape. This aligns with Ahmed's (2023) argument that figurative language not only conveys meaning but also reinforces narrative identity within the media.

Meanwhile, idioms (9.1%) in Drury's language serve to bridge immersion and objectivity. Phrases such as "take a couple of steps back" illustrate his awareness of balancing passion with reflective professionalism. Idioms allow him to acknowledge that while sports can be emotionally intense, commentators must also adopt a certain degree of distance to maintain clarity and narrative cohesion. These findings resonate with Putra and Marlina (2024), who found that

idiomatic expressions contribute to the communicative neutrality of commentary while sustaining audience engagement.

Personification (9.1%) further reveals Drury's artistic consideration of language as an active participant in his career. By describing words as both his "best friend" and "worst enemy," he attributes emotional agency to language, indicating its power to elevate or complicate his professional identity. This aligns with Prasetya (2023), who argues that personification in sports media deepens emotional engagement and contributes to the memorability of expressions. Drury's acknowledgment of language's dual nature reflects his belief that commentary is not only about delivering facts but also crafting meaningful emotional experiences.

Overall, the results demonstrate that figurative language in the interview functions beyond aesthetic enhancement. It becomes a medium for self-representation, emotional expression, and professional reflection. Drury's strategic use of figurative expressions supports Luo's (2024) findings that metaphorical imagery in sports discourse fosters vividness and makes commentary more immersive. Unlike live commentary, where spontaneity dominates, the interview provides space for deliberate reflection, making figurative language a tool for presenting deeper insights into his commentary philosophy.

Therefore, this study highlights that figurative language plays a crucial role in shaping narrative identity within sports media. Peter Drury's reliance on metaphor reveals his desire to emotionally connect with audiences while maintaining authenticity and humility as a prominent media figure. His figurative expressions frame commentary not only as a profession but as an art form—one that requires sensitivity, creativity, and self-awareness.

4. Conclusion

This study on the figurative language used by Peter Drury in his interview with The Athletic illuminates how metaphor, idiom, and personification serve as pivotal elements in expressing both his personal philosophy and professional insights as a sports commentator. Among the figurative language found in Peter Drury's language, metaphor is the most dominant, comprising 81.8% of the instances. Following metaphor, personification and idiom each appear with a frequency of 9.1%. Through the semantic analysis of selected phrases, it is evident that Drury's language not only conveys his passion for football and commentary but also unveils his complex relationship with language itself, portraying it as both a powerful ally and a challenging force. His use of metaphor, such as describing his sensitivity to criticism as a lack of "*thick skin*," reveals his vulnerability to public opinion, while phrases like "*lover of words*" demonstrate a deep-seated affection for language that transcends his role as a commentator. Similarly, his comparison of himself to a "*room-splitter*" and reference to the "*value in the silence*" capture the intricacies of his commentary style, showcasing his thoughtful approach to balancing enthusiasm with restraint.

This study contributes to the fields of linguistics and media studies by exploring how figurative language functions within a reflective context rather than live broadcasts, thereby broadening our understanding of commentary as a dynamic form of expression. For linguistics, the findings underscore the importance of figurative language in conveying multifaceted meanings and enhancing personal narratives. For media studies, it illustrates how sports commentary, when thoughtfully crafted, can transcend mere reporting to engage audiences on a more profound emotional level. By examining Drury's language choices, this research emphasizes that sports commentary, much like literary expression, relies on the deliberate use of language to create memorable, impactful narratives.

In conclusion, Out of the eleven lines analyzed from Peter Drury's commentary, metaphor emerges as the most dominant figurative language, accounting for approximately 81.8% of all instances. This significant use of metaphor highlights Drury's talent for drawing vivid comparisons that enrich the audience's experience and enhance the emotional impact of his commentary. Following metaphor, the use of personification and idioms are equally present, each accounting for about 9.1% of the figurative language identified. These additional elements, although less frequent, contribute to the overall expressive and imaginative quality of Drury's language, adding depth and character to his narrative style. Metaphor serves as the primary device through which Drury crafts his iconic commentary, supported by occasional instances of personification and idiom, creating a compelling and dynamic portrayal of the game for his audience. The semantic

depth of Drury's figurative language reveals a unique commentary style that resonates with audiences by capturing both the drama of the sport and the commentator's personal journey. His linguistic creativity affirms that commentary is not merely about relaying events but about fostering an emotional connection with the audience, thereby elevating the art of sports commentary. This study serves as a valuable reference for aspiring commentators and media professionals, illustrating the enduring power of language to inspire, provoke thought, and connect with audiences on an intimate level.

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