

Ling 194 – Language and Sports

Assignment 3

Due February 13

In this assignment, you will be paying close attention to the syntactic structures used by the broadcasters calling the Superbowl, on Sunday February 3. Your task is to look for and document instances of syntactic structures that appear to you to be specialized or adapted to the setting of a live broadcast.

Some of these structures may resemble those mentioned in Ferguson (1983) as typical of the speech register of Sports Announcer Talk (SAT), for example **predicate fronting** and **heavy noun phrases**. There will most certainly be other phenomena to discuss, such as the tense, aspect, or modality of the verb and its auxiliaries under different circumstances during the broadcast.

For each *type* of specialized structure you identify, (a) describe the structure, using some form of descriptive generalization, (b) discuss how the structure is probably adapted to live broadcasts (as opposed to being typical of speech anyway), both in terms of its form and function, and (c) provide several examples, noting who said them, what was happening as they said them, and when they said them (you can use the game clock as a meter). You should also discuss whether what you find is also described by Ferguson (1983).

Keep in mind some of the following background:

The structures used by the broadcasters will differ in notable ways depending on the circumstance as well as the speaker. The broadcast will use a play-by-play caller and a color commentator. They fulfill different roles in each circumstance during the broadcast, and their speech will differ. Different circumstances include (but are not limited to) speech produced:

- during actual play, that is, between lining up at scrimmage and the whistle that ends the play.
- while the video signal is live (and covering the field, sidelines, or bench) but play is dead.
- during non-live video replay.

You should find some way to record the broadcast (DVR, VHS, Tivo) because (a) you will need to watch some segments repeatedly and (b) you should enjoy the game when it is actually live.

You may prepare together but you must write your own work.
Type your work.