

Coach Leadership during Technical Meetings in an Italian Soccer Team

by *Cristina Zucchermaglio**, *Francesca Alby**

The paper explores coach leadership through a qualitative analysis of three technical meetings of an Italian soccer professional team. Adopting the perspective of discursive leadership (Fairhurst, 2007), our research aims to show: 1. how some of the coach behaviors represented in the subscale Training and Instruction of the Chelladurai's Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) are enacted in talk and in contextualized encounters; 2. the possible presence of other relevant leadership behaviors not yet considered in the subscale. Findings show that leadership behaviors in naturally-occurring interactions partially overlap with the dimensions of the subscale. At the same time, there are relevant dimensions related to local features of the different encounters and to the relevance of other interactions besides the more known single-coach-single-athlete relationship.

Key words: *sport, team, leadership, meeting, conversation analysis.*

I

Introduction

1.1. Coach Leadership in Sport Teams

Many studies have focused on the role of coach leadership in sport teams. Chelladurai's (1990) model of leadership is the most extensively employed framework for studying coaching behaviours in sport. His Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) (Chelladurai, Saleh, 1978) is designed to assess five independent dimensions of perceived sport leader behaviours: *a*) Democratic behaviour; *b*) Autocratic behaviour; *c*) Training and instruction; *d*) Social support; *e*) Positive feedback. The scale is a self-reported questionnaire filled by the players who are required to judge some of the coach behaviours. Among the subscales, the Training and Instruction leadership subscale concerns the behavior of the coach that entails teaching the skills, techniques and tactics of the sport as well as arranging and conducting practice sessions in order to maximize the mastery of the skills and to coordinate and clarify the roles and activities of each of the team members (Chelladurai, Saleh, 1980). Such a subscale considers the technical issues involved in the relationship between coach and athletes (tactics, mistakes, skills, assignments, instructions).

* Sapienza University of Rome.

In this article we will analyze the same kind of coach behaviors related to technical issues in situations in which training and instruction of the players were the main objectives. We propose a qualitative analysis of the enacting of behavioural dimensions of leadership during technical meetings. Our aim is to show: 1. how some of the coach behaviors represented in the subscale are enacted in talk and in contextualized encounters; 2. the possible presence of other relevant leadership behaviors not yet considered in the subscale.

2

Meetings and Leadership in Action

In the literature on leadership in sport there are very few studies analyzing with qualitative methodologies the deployment and enacting of the behavioural dimensions of leadership during meetings and encounters between coach and athletes (cf. on this point, Faulkner, Finlay, 2005; Zucchermaglio, 2005).

Work meetings (cf. Schwartzman, 1989; Boden, 1994), very similar in some respect to the technical meeting of sport teams, recently became one of the most studied communicative contexts for describing how managers are “doing” leadership while talking in interaction (Asmuss, 2008; Clifton, 2006; Fairhurst, 2007; Ford, 2008; Nielsen, 2009; Svennevig, 2008). This emergent research area supports a social and contextualized definition of leadership¹ (as «a social process of interaction with reality being defined in a way, which makes sense to the participants, and also a system of dependency, in which individual entrust the power to interpret and define reality to others»; Nielsen, 2009, p. 46) or as «a social process in which locally produced understandings of reality are enacted through talk» (Clifton, 2006, p. 209). Through which strategies and dimensions is leadership enacted in talk during meetings?

Nielsen (2009) highlights that the practical accomplishment of doing leadership involves implementing strategies, to translate from executive level to smaller units, to create local relevance, interpreting shifting or problematic contexts, interpreting words and actions of executives, promoting organizational language and practicing socialization. Therefore «leadership can be defined as creating direction, framework and meaning» (Nielsen, 2009, p. 45), an activity of interpretative management, of «handling situations by doing interpretation» (Nielsen, 2009, p. 50). Thayer (1995, p. 259) underlines the centrality of the activity of world interpretation for a leader: «A leader is a meaning maker. His or her concerns are not the things of the world but the way people mind the things of the world».

Clifton (2006) shows, through the analysis of department meetings, that the interactional power of managers is based on the power of defining the meeting agenda and of formulating the conclusions reached, using specific communicative strategies for “doing leadership”. Van Praet (2009) found similar results: the

leader role is observable in the way he sets the line and the time agenda of the meeting and evaluates participants' actions.

Leadership strategies found in work meetings could be used to analyze leadership in sport as practical and interactional accomplishments "in situ" and "in vivo" during the encounters and meetings of teams.

Our hypothesis is that an analysis of coach leadership observed in its moment-by-moment construction during conversation in team meetings could offer some hints and suggestions to enrich and redefine the decontextualized items of the LSS scale and, in general, our picture of what to consider as effective leadership in sport teams. In particular we will focus on two main questions:

1. How are coach behaviours mentioned in the LSS scale enacted in talk during technical meetings?
2. How does the temporal location of the technical meetings, with respect to the matches (and their outcomes), affect coach leadership behaviours?

3 Method

3.1. Research Context and Data

Thorough ethnographic analysis carried out over a two-month period at the beginning of the regular season of the Italian championship "serie C" (cf. Zuccheromaglio, 2005) revealed the most communicative of the interactions among coach and athletes characterising the weekly routine of an Italian professional soccer team², with respect to its more technical phases³:

a) the meeting "after" the game. The team meets (usually Tuesday following the weekly game) to analyze and interpret the team's behaviour on the pitch. This meeting takes place in the locker rooms or in an area of the coaching field;

b) the meeting "before" the game. This meeting usually precedes the official game by about two hours and is devoted to planning the work to be done during the match. It takes place in a room at the official seat of the society.

Due to these characteristics, we chose to observe two technical meetings following two games with opposite results (a victory and a defeat) and a pre-game meeting: Meeting T1 took place two days after a victory in a match; Meeting T2 just before a match; Meeting T3 two days after a defeat. The players, the coach and the assistant coach participated at the meetings observed⁴. The researcher was present "at the scene" taking observational notes. Informed consent to audio-record the meetings was obtained from the participants and the team manager. The three technical meetings observed were audio recorded for a total of around two hours of conversation; they were completely transcribed using Jefferson's coding system (see *Appendix*; Jefferson, 1994). The entire corpus

consisted of 788 turns of conversation non-homogeneously distributed among the three meetings.

3.2. Data Analysis

From a methodological point of view, we used both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the conversations realized during the three meetings, considering also as variables their temporal location (before or after the game) and the game results (defeat or victory):

- 1. Distribution of coach and athletes participation in conversation;
- 2. Identification and analysis of interactive examples of the items of the subscale dimension “Training and Instruction” of LSS scale (cf. FIG. 1).

FIGURE 1
Items from “Training and Instruction” subscale

- 1. Sees to it that every athlete is working to his capacity
- 2. Explains to each athlete the techniques and tactics of the sport
- 3. Pays special attention to correcting athlete’s mistakes
- 4. Makes sure that his part in the team is understood by all the athletes
- 5. Instructs every athlete individually in the skill of the sport
- 6. Figures ahead what should be done
- 7. Explains to every athlete what he should and what he should not do
- 8. Expects every athlete’s to carry out his assignment to the last detail
- 9. Points out each athlete’s strengths and weakness
- 10. Gives specific instructions to each athlete as to what he should do in every situation
- 11. Sees to it that the efforts are coordinated
- 12. Explains how each athlete’s contribution fits into total picture
- 13. Specifies in detail what is expected of each athlete

4
Results

4.1. Coach Participation
as a Leadership Dimension

The temporal location and the result of the match influence both the amount of talk and the meeting’s duration: team’s members talked more and longer in the after victory meeting than in the other two meetings (cf. TAB. 1).

Especially remarkable is the difference between the two after game meetings. In T1 meeting the calm aftermath of victory had permitted more detached and general analysis by the team. This meeting mainly took the form of a collective brainstorming session, whereas T3 meeting, after the game lost, was a collective

and detailed reconstruction and analysis of “how things went” during which coach evaluated critical athletes’ behaviours which had led to defeat.

TABLE 1
Meeting’s total conversational turns

	T1 – After victory meeting	T2 – Pre-game meeting	T3 – After defeat meeting
Meeting’s total turns	616	76	96

The results of the match influenced also the coach participation (cf. TAB. 2). Analyzing his participation in the three meetings (expressed as number of his conversational turns on total turns) we see that coach is always the most active participant, a behaviour which could be considered an important marker of his role as group leader (Ng, Ang, Chan, 2008). This leadership behaviour is more marked in the case of the after-defeat meeting (T3) and in the pre-game meeting (T1) (50% of turns), whereas is less marked in the after-victory meeting (29.9%) in which more space is given to coach assistant (16.2%) (cf. TAB. 2).

TABLE 2
Coach and athletes participation in the meetings

	T1 – After victory meeting	T2 – Pre-game meeting	T3 – After defeat meeting
Coach’s turns	184 (29.9%)	38 (50.0%)	48 (50.0%)
Assistant coach’s turns	100 (16.2%)	2 (21%)	0
Athletes’ turns	332 (53.9%)	36 (47.4%)	48 (50%)
Total turns	616	76	96

Among the 11 athletes who were speakers in the meetings, only three (the team’s captain, the vice team captain and a senior Medfield player) participate in the three meetings for about 10% of total turns. We can also analyze the influence of the temporal location of the meeting and of the results of the match on these athletes participation (cf. TAB. 3).

Some athletes (here the team’s captain and two senior players) act as “mediators” between the coach and the team. Some players could be, more than others, active and expert participants in the technical analysis guided by the coach. Notable in this respect the extremely high participation of the team Captain (25%) in the post-defeat meeting, completely devoted to a technical

analysis of team “bad” behavior on the pitch. This result show how athletes are not always an homogenous group or undifferentiated “recipients” of coach leadership (Moran, Weiss, 2006) as forecast in the items of the LSS scale and in other self reporting instruments.

TABLE 3
Expert athletes participation in the meetings

	T1 – After victory meeting	T2 – Pre-game meeting	T3 – After defeat meeting
Team captain (DIF1)	48 (7.8%)	4 (5.3%)	24 (25%)
Vice team captain (CEN1)	74 (12.0%)	9 (11.8%)	2 (2.1%)
Medfield player (CEN2)	72 (11.7%)	9 (11.8%)	10 (10.4%)
Others	422	54	60
Total turns	616	76	96

4.2. How Does the Coach Enact Leadership in Talk?

The pre-game meeting (T2) was held just before a match, and its action centred on forecasting the likely course of the game. The coach behaviour is functional to constructing, with athletes, future technical scenarios intended to facilitate and coordinate the team’s collective action on the pitch. Given this general objective, the coach behaviour in this meeting could be described as “figuring ahead what should be done” (corresponding to item 6 of LSS scale) (see Excerpt 1).

Excerpt 1 (Meeting T2)

58 COACH: he should go and close him off (.) unless you want to pull Livio back, (2.5) otherwise Livio pulls back (.) Livio pulls back(2.2) here there are- this one should be just here, right? (0.5) if- Livio pulls back, (0.8) it’s Siroti (1.2) Fabio (0.2) >all right?< (0.5) who’s marking Livio? (0.2) Siroti (0.5) Fabio’s marking (0.2) and De Nicola and (.) Fresta, (0.8) he’s free (.) what does he do (0.2) where do we put him? (1.5) >he’s less of a marker than pa-< where shall we put him
59 CEN2: put him further forward

The coach proposes to athletes different possible game scenarios. These scenarios were animated by specific players (cited by surname or name) who moved around this “virtual” pitch as in a game simulation built by the coach itself for athletes’ instruction.

Again during T2 Meeting (see Excerpt 2), the coach propounds a fictional scenario of the “if...then” type with respect to the athletes’ actions to be performed during the forthcoming match.

Excerpt 2 (Meeting T2)

72 COACH: so the more we keep the ball on the ground, (0.2) <and move when the midfielders > Øor the defenders have the ball and there's movement (.) the more the cut-offs will be. (.) and the more they get into difficulties (.) the more likely they'll be (0.2) to commit fouls! (1.2) and so:: create difficulties for the central defenders who are (0.5) ball on the ground, it seems I can say that they're slow, right? (0.2) eh? (0.5)

The coach gave specific technical instructions to the team (similar to item 7 of LSS scale: "Explain to every athlete what he should and what he should not do" and also to item 10 "Gives specific instructions to each athlete as to what he should do in every situation") on how to deal with this specific adversary. In this case, keeping the ball on the ground as long as possible, also bearing in mind the characteristics of the opposing central defenders ("they're slow, right?"). Coach shares a repertoire of possible game actions with the players which make these latter more actively involved in, and aware of the team's technical choices. This behaviour is very similar to item 12 of LSS scale "Explains how each athlete's contribution fits into total picture".

The after victory meeting (T1) is a collective reflection on team's behaviours organized and guided by the coach and the coach assistant (see also TAB. 2 on this point), whose role is underestimated in the self reporting scale of leadership (see Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3 (Meeting T1)

1 COACH ASSISTANT: now we're going to do brainstorming (0.5) about: (.) a::a us °our situation° (1.2) I mean (0.5), a brainstorming >I write< a brainstorming session which is what this is. (0.2) and you with one word (.)each of you(0.5) you can also say two words. (0.2) ,and you can even say (0.2) the first crap that comes to mind. (.) in the sense (0.5) er:: (0.5) I mean you shouldn't be afraid to say: what you think. (.) just with one word, though, not a sentence (2.0) about (1.5) er:: (0.2) the differences in the team's performances. (.) right? (0.2) I mean why the team's performance is (0.8) excellent and er: (.) let's say(0.2) er: (1.0) less excellent.(1.0) so (0.2) let's take two practical examples (1.2) er: (0.8) Ancona and Crotone⁵ (0.2) right? (.) they were two completely different situations (0.5) why? (0.5) over to you (0.2) tell me the word ((*laughs*)) (0.5) I mean what was lacking (0.8) d'you understand? (0.2) with one word you've got to tell me what was lacking.=one word(0.5) come on (0.2) >each< (.) fre[ely]-

Players were invited by coach assistant to talk "freely" about why the team performed well on some occasions (like the match just won) and less well on others. With respect to the latter, the players were asked for what the team's performance was "lacking". This behaviour is very similar to item 9 of LSS scale

(“Points out each athlete’s strengths and weakness”) even though the recipient of this technical instruction is not the single athlete but the team as a whole. This is a crucial difference, on which we will come back later.

Moreover, the coach and his assistant “filtered” or proposed the behaviours or characteristics that should become part of the team’s shared repertoire. This leadership behaviour, not included in the items of LSS scale, is close to the activity of “interpretative management” described by Nielsen (2009). During the meeting they selected and stressed the “right points” to be shared which they then wrote on the blackboard as the provisional and incremental outcome of the brainstorming session.

An example of this filtering role is when the coach positively emphasizes the exemplary behaviour of player CEN1, who on entering the changing room had explicitly “exorcized the last away game” (which had been a defeat) (see Excerpt 4). Coach emphasizes this behaviour (and not others) in order to construct an attitude among all the players: they must confront each game without dwelling on the “history” of previous matches and “starting over again”.

Excerpt 4 (Meeting T1)

489 COACH: GOOD! (0.5) so he exorcized the last away game (0.2) >He came in and he was mad as hell < < FUCK OFF CROTON > (.) BECAUSE THEY’D GIVEN HIM A HARD TIME (0.2) or I don’t know (.) I think it was an (.) outburst at- (0.2)

490 CEN1: but not just to feel [better

491 COACH: [for making him (.) suffer a game] that:

492 CEN1: [suffer in an increasing – on a path we were following

493 COACH: [(it seems that you have to) start over again

Contrary to what is considered in the Training and Instruction subscale, in this meeting coach leadership behaviour is mainly focused on general (and not only technical) aspects of being an athlete and a team inside and outside the pitch. An example is provided when the coach underlines and filters as “good” one team attitude (desire to win) emerging during the match just won (see Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5 (Meeting T1)

499 COACH: (...) why did you win this game and lose the other one (2.5) because (0.2) in the first there was more desire in the second there was less (.) that’s the way it is, lads, believe me (0.2) that’s the way it is (1.0) when you want something and this is not about the game (.) in life (0.5) you get it (0.2)

The coach stresses that winning a game requires determination and commitment just as do everyday affairs. The long brainstorming session is an occasion for the coach to teach attitudes and emotional behaviours which are in some cases crucial for the positive performance of the team (see on this point,

Gould, Collins, Lauer, Chung, 2007). These behaviours belong to a non technical dimension of the coach leadership behavior which are not considered at the moment in the Training and Instruction LSS subscale⁶.

In after defeat meeting (Meeting T₃) , the coach sets the meeting agenda on the reconstruction of specific episodes of the lost game. This allowed the game to be “rewound” by the coach to highlight critical technical aspects and to make precise reference to the players’ responsibilities. We see an example of this when the coach reconstructs a phase of the game when the positions and movements of the players on the pitch were problematic (see Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6 (Meeting T₃)

57 COACH: Straight off (0.2) Sirotti had De Nicola, (.) Corazzini had, (.) where is he ((*looks around for him*)) Missing, (0.2) there were four (0.2) against four(0.5) right? (0.2) and I said to Beppe >now he is not here< get closer to the middle (.) did you hear me? ((*to player CEN 2*)) (1.0) get closer to the middle and lend a hand there (0.2)BECAUSE (0.5) we had an extra man in midfield (0.5) >instead of an extra man in defence< because they were bringing the ball to us: (.) we had an extra man there (0.2) and we didn’t need him there (.) we needed cover there (0.8) pulling back one midfielder °who was you°((*to player CEN 2*))(.) h in the middle we were two against two °who were dealing with:° (.) either Sinagra or (0.2) and

The coach both “explains how each athlete’s contribution fits into total picture” (item 12 of LSS scale) and also “pays special attention to correcting athlete’s mistakes” (item 3 of LSS scale). Coach behaves as leader having the power to reconstruct the “right” technical version and interpretation of the lost game, assigning also specific responsibilities to single athletes. Coach is acting as “meaning maker” (Thayer, 1995). Moreover, in this reconstruction, the coach depicts himself as the only person who had sought in vain to deal with the problem as the match unfolded.

Another example of coach meaning making is when he comments on the behaviour of the players after the referee whistles for a foul (see Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 7 (Meeting T₃)

68 COACH: when some of our players were fouled, they looked at the referee. (1.2) [...] we haven’t got the whistle, we go on to the pitch and we play. (0.2) a foul is at the discretion (0.2) of who’s unfortunately (.) got the whistle in his mouth. (.) UNTIL you hear the whistle(0.5) get on with it (0.2) bear with it, (1.8) but it isn’t like that (2.2) but it isn’t like that (0.5) I didn’t see one of the Juve Stabia players(.) h complaining because we’d committed a foul and the referee hadn’t blown his whistle >°if we’d got him to do it°< (1.5) >we were there< (0.5) we saw it together (0.2) there were at least two of us not just one (.) so (0.2) can you explain °this fact° to me (3.5)

The coach leadership behavior is again clearly pedagogical: he focuses again in “correcting athlete’s mistakes” (Item 3 of the LSS scale), explains what should have been done during the match (“Explain to every athlete what he should and what he should not do”, item 7 of LSS scale) and gives specific instructions for doing the right things for the next matches (“Gives specific instructions to each athlete as to what he should do in every situation” item 10 of LSS scale). In this meeting the coach is giving specific instructions (behavioural and technical) referring to specific and situated episodes of the lost game (while in T1 Meeting was speaking in more general terms).

In this reconstruction of the lost game guided by the coach, some players perform the parts of those who did not follow the coach’s instructions. The coach blames the problem of the delayed understanding and application of his instructions by the players on the pitch (see Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8 (Meeting T₃)

- 46 CEN2: (...) and: then we- we also: (.)we also took some time to understand how: to play against this Fontana, (0.2) because [:
- 47 COACH: : [I took twen-
- 48 CEN2: : [=when I was on the pitch
- 49 COACH: [I took twenty minutes explaining it to him.
- 50 CEN2: and I know [but
- 51 COACH: : [NO (.) but- to to obtain what was being asked, >I took twenty minutes < (0.2)
- 52 CEN2: but when I was on the pitch: I told Fabio to take him [bec-
- 53 COACH: [NO (0.5) I told you to take him! ((laughs))

The player CEN2 (one of the senior player of the team, cf. TAB. 3) seeks to oppose the coach’s version by proposing a reconstruction involving another player (Fabio) in the allocation of blame. The coach demonstrates his leadership by insisting that the responsibility lies with player CEN2 alone.

In this meeting the power of proposing an evaluation of the lost match is not the same for all members of the team: the coach has much greater access than the athletes (also the senior one as CEN2) to the making of the “right” technical meanings to be assigned to match’s specific episodes. This interpretative power emerges again (as in T1 Meeting) as an important dimension of coach leadership behaviour, not adequately forecast in the items of LSS scale.

5 Concluding Remarks

The technical meetings were occasions for the coach to realize his role as leader of the team. He was a particularly active participant, in fact: he made suggestions,

underlined errors, sanctioned wrong behaviours, and oriented the players toward the behaviour he wanted from them.

Considering the paper's objectives, we can outline four main results, which contribute to broadening our understanding of leadership in sport teams.

1. *Leadership: decontextualized or situated measure?* Results are showing overlaps but also some differences among items of the Training and Instruction subscale and the coach's leadership behaviours enacted in talk during the three technical meetings. It was not so easy to identify the items in the interactive deployment of the meetings: what is clearly separated in the subscale is strictly intertwined and overlapped in the interactions. Moreover, the three meetings are different both in their objectives and their interactional development. Considering the temporal location of the meeting and the results of the match, it emerges that coach leadership strategies are sensible to the different meetings objectives. In meeting T₁ (post-victory) coach analyzes and "teaches" good behaviours and general attitudes; in meeting T₂ (pre-match) he plans and shares with athletes future game scenarios and strategies; in meeting T₃ (post-defeat) he analyzes wrong and specific technical behaviours. This situated dimension of coach leadership behaviour claims for adding some contextual characteristics to the items of leadership scale (for example the type of encounter, since we have seen that in the different meetings coach leadership behaviour could be more or less frequent).

2. *The team: some coaches and different athletes.* Meetings' analysis showed how leadership is distributed among members of technical staff. In Meeting T₁ the coach assistant has a central role in the brainstorming session, which he conducts together with the coach. This distributed nature of team leadership (typical of the professional teams) is completely unnoticed by the LSS scale. Results show also that team athletes are not an homogeneous group: some athletes (captain, senior and expert players) act as mediators between the coach staff and the other players, whereas the self reporting instruments (such as the LSS scale) consider them just as undistinguished recipients of the coach leadership.

3. *Individual or Team Training and Instruction?* The items of the Training and Instruction LSS subscale is forecasting only an individual relationship among a coach and an athlete. Meetings analysis show that there could be a rich and notable amount of technical training and instruction that coach gives to the team as a whole, and not only to single athletes. Technical meetings, as collective encounters are important occasions for the coach to develop and sustain in the team a shared repertoire of technical aspects, interpretation and behaviours.

4. *Leadership enacted in talk.* Results show that there are some important and crucial dimensions of doing leadership emerging in talk but not foreseen by any of the items of the LSS scale. Among others the power of assigning the "right" meaning to events, the evaluation of athletes behaviours and the teaching of non strictly technical aspects of team behaviours inside and outside the pitch.

Such frequent collective encounters are occasions in which the coach gives a shared direction on the planning of future matches and on the interpretation of past defeats and victories. We hypothesize that this activity of sharing, as much as the construction of broader repertoires of common knowledge (such as knowing how to interpret behaviour on the pitch or specific episodes of a game), could have improved team cohesion (cf. also Turman, 2003) and may have had also an important bearing on the fact that this team won the championship that year.

The paper has therefore shown how classic themes in the psychology of sport (such as leadership) can be described, not only as individual cognitive characteristics, but also as interactional practices empirically observable. We acknowledge that this is a preliminary study with a number of limitations due to the observation of just one coach in relation with just one team, in only three meetings. Such a limited number of technical meetings makes it difficult to find any relation between coach behaviour and team performance. However it may suggest an empirical path for a more situated understanding of leadership in sport teams, that could usefully complete more classical analyses through LSS scale.

Appendix 1

Transcription symbols

The transcription notation system employed for data segments is an adaptation of Gail Jefferson's work (see Atkinson, Heritage, 1984, pp. IX-XVI). The symbols may be described as follows:

:	Colon(s): Extended or stretched sound, syllable, or word
<u> </u>	Underlining: Vocalic emphasis
(.)	Micropause: Brief pause of less than (0.2)
(1.2)	Timed Pause: Intervals occurring within and between same or different speaker's utterance
(())	Double Parentheses: Scenic details
()	Single Parentheses: Transcriptionist doubt
.	Period: Falling vocal pitch
?	Question Marks: Rising vocal pitch
Arrows:	Pitch resets; marked rising and falling shifts in intonation
° °	Degree Signs: A passage of talk noticeably softer than surrounding talk
=	Equal Signs: Latching of contiguous utterances, with no interval or overlap
[]	Brackets: Speech overlap
[[Double Brackets: Simultaneous speech orientations to prior turn

!	Exclamation Points: Animated speech tone
-	Hyphens: Halting, abrupt cut off of sound or word
> <	Less Than/Greater Than Signs: Portions of an utterance delivered at a pace noticeably quicker than surrounding talk
OKAY CAPS:	Extreme loudness compared with surrounding talk.
hhh .hhh H's:	Audible outbreaths, possibly laughter. The more h's, the longer the aspiration. Aspirations with periods indicate audible inbreaths (e.g., .hhh). H's within (e.g., ye(hh)s) parentheses mark within-speech aspirations, possible laughter.

Notes

¹ This line of research recalls studies of Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey, Blanchard, 1993; Fernandez, Vecchio, 1997) from which however differs for the methodology and the epistemology used.

² In that year the team won the championship at the end of the regular season.

³ The “match” and the interval between the two halves in the locker room could also be very rich with respect to technical communication between coach and athletes. The researchers did not have access to these situations, considering the inviolability of the area at official times due to Italian Football Federation security measures.

⁴ 18 athletes participate in meeting T1, 19 athletes in meeting T2 and 15 athletes in meeting T3.

⁵ Ancona and Crotone are names of opposing soccer teams.

⁶ Social Support subscale of LSS concerns welfare, positive group atmosphere and warm interpersonal relations among athletes.

References

- Asmuss B. (2008), Performance Appraisal: Preference Organization in Assessment Sequences. *Journal of Business Communication*, 45, 4, pp. 408-29.
- Atkinson J., Heritage J. (eds.) (1984), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Boden D. (1994), *The Business of Talk: Organizations in Action*. Polity Press, London.
- Chelladurai P. (1990), Leadership in Sports. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 21, 4, pp. 328-54.
- Chelladurai P., Saleh S. D. (1978), Preferred Leadership in Sports. *Canadian Journal of Sport Sciences*, 3, pp. 85-92.
- Idd. (1980), Dimension of Leader Behavior in Sports: Development of a Leadership Scale. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 2, 1, pp. 34-45.
- Clifton J. (2006), A Conversation Analytical Approach to Business Communication: The Case of Leadership. *Journal of Business Communication*, 43, 3, pp. 202-19.
- Fairhurst G. (2007), *Discursive Leadership: In Conversation with Leadership Psychology*. Sage, London.
- Faulkner G., Finlay S. J. (2005), Attributions and Accountability: Comments on Rees, Ingledew & Hardy. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 6, 2, pp. 205-11.
- Fernandez C. F., Vecchio R. P. (1997), Situational Leadership Theory Revisited: A Test of an Across-jobs Perspective. *Leadership Quarterly*, 8, pp. 67-84.

- Finlay S. J., Faulkner G. (2003), "Actually I was the Star": Managing Attributions in Conversation. *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 4, 1.
- Ford C. E. (2008), *Women Speaking Up. Getting and Using Turns in Workplace Meetings*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Gould D., Collins K., Lauer L., Chung Y. (2007), Coaching Life Skills through Football: A Study of Award Winning High School Coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 19, 1, pp. 16-37.
- Hersey P., Blanchard K. H. (1993), *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs (NJ) (VI ed.).
- Jefferson G. (2004), Glossary of Transcript Symbols with an Introduction. In G. Lerner (ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. John Benjamins, Philadelphia, pp. 13-23.
- Moran M. M., Weiss M. R. (2006), Peer Leadership in Sport: Links with Friendship, Peer Acceptance, Psychological Characteristics, and Athletic Ability. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 1, 2, pp. 97-113.
- Ng K. Y., Ang S., Chan K. Y. (2008), Personality and Leader Effectiveness: A Moderated Mediation Model of Leadership Self-Efficacy, Job Demands, and Job Autonomy. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 4, pp. 733-43.
- Nielsen M. F. (2009), Interpretative Management in Business Meetings. *Journal of Business Communication*, 46, 1, pp. 23-56.
- Schwartzman H. B. (1989), *The Meeting: Gatherings in Organizations and Communities*. Plenum, New York.
- Svennevig J. (2008), Exploring Leadership Conversations. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21, pp. 529-36.
- Thayer L. (1995), Leadership/Communication: A Critical Review and a Modest Proposal. In G. Goldhaber, G. A. Barnett (eds.), *Handbook of Organizational Communication*. Ablex, Norwood (NJ), pp. 231-63.
- Turman P. D. (2003), Coaches and Cohesion: The Impact of Coaching Techniques on Team Cohesion in the Small Group Sport Setting. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 26, 1, pp. 86-104.
- Van Praet E. (2009), Staging a Team Performance: A Linguistic Ethnographic Analysis of Weekly Meetings at a British Embassy. *Journal of Business Communication*, 46, 1, pp. 80-99.
- Zuccheromaglio C. (2005), Who Wins and Who Loses: The Rhetorical Manipulation of Social Identities in a Soccer Team. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice*, 9, 4, pp. 219-38.

Riassunto

L'articolo indaga la *coach leadership* attraverso un'analisi qualitativa di tre riunioni tecniche di una squadra di calcio professionista. Attraverso la prospettiva della leadership discorsiva (Fairhurst, 2007), la nostra ricerca intende mostrare: 1. come alcuni dei comportamenti rappresentati nella sottoscala *Training and Instruction* della scala LSS (*Leadership Scale for Sport*) di Chelladurai siano agiti durante la conversazione nel corso di riunioni locali di preparazione tecnica; 2. la possibile presenza di altri comportamenti di leadership rilevanti non considerati nella sottoscala. I risultati mostrano che i comportamenti di leadership in situazioni "naturali" sono parzialmente sovrapposti con le dimensioni della sottoscala. Allo stesso tempo risultano esserci dimensioni rilevanti legate alla specificità dei diversi incontri e all'influenza di altre interazioni oltre la più nota relazione fra singolo allenatore-singolo atleta.

Parole chiave: *sport, squadra, leadership, riunioni, analisi della conversazione.*

Articolo ricevuto nel settembre 2011, revisione del giugno 2012.

Le richieste di estratti vanno indirizzate a Francesca Alby, Sapienza Università di Roma, Dipartimento di Psicologia dei Processi di Sviluppo e Socializzazione, via dei Marsi 78, 00185 Roma; tel. (+39)0649917670, fax (+39)0649917652, e-mail: francesca.alby@uniroma1.it.