

# Linguistic Register in Snooker Commentary of the 2023 League Finals

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Submitted: 16/06/2025

Revised: 21/08/2025

Accepted: 30/08/2025

E-ISSN : 2579-4574

P-ISSN : 2549-7359

**Abstract.** Snooker commentary, though often overlooked in linguistic research, presents a rich site for exploring how specialized vocabulary functions in live sporting contexts. In the broader field of sports linguistics, most register studies have concentrated on outdoor sports or E-sports, leaving cue sports like snooker relatively underexplored. This study aims to investigate the linguistic register of snooker commentary by identifying specialized vocabulary and analyzing morphological patterns in two professional finals. Adopting a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through non-participant observation and note-taking from live broadcasts, comprising 9,146 words of commentary and 525 register-specific terms, which were analyzed using Holmes' theory of register and McCarthy's morphological framework with focus on affixation and compounding. The analysis identified 69 unique register terms (e.g., *frame-winning visits*, *potter*, *baulk color ball*), showing that commentators used specialized vocabulary selectively to balance precision and accessibility. Morphological processes such as affixation (*potter*, *doubler*) and compounding (*long pot*, *frame-winning visits*) were central to constructing efficient, context-sensitive expressions. These findings indicate that register in snooker commentary functions both as a tool for technical description and as a strategy for audience engagement, contributing to broader discussions in sports linguistics and media studies about how specialized registers adapt to diverse audiences in global sporting broadcasts.

**Keywords:** *Affixation and Compounding, Morphological Analysis, Register, Snooker Commentary, Sports Linguistics.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Register has become a central focus of sociolinguistic inquiry, as it reflects how language use is shaped by social context and specialized communities. Several scholars have extensively discussed this concept (Holmes, 2013; Wardhaugh, 2010; Lado, 1957), emphasizing how variations in language mirror variations in function and speaker identity. As Fishman stated in Chaer (2004), sociolinguistics is concerned with the interaction between linguistic variation, its function, and the social characteristics of its users. In this framework, register emerges as a socially embedded linguistic phenomenon.

According to Holmes (2013), register refers to particular varieties of language used by specific groups of people in specific contexts. It is commonly found in professional or interest-based communities, such as chefs, doctors, lecturers, and sports broadcasters, each employing distinctive lexical and grammatical features. These variations arise from the need to communicate efficiently and precisely within specialized domains. For example, sports commentators use unique terms and commentary styles that reflect the fast-paced and action-oriented nature of live sports. Holmes (2013) notes that the play-by-play style of commentary is one such feature, where the commentator delivers real-time narration of ongoing events.

Snooker, a cue sport played on a large table with 22 balls (Elmagd, 2019), provides an ideal context to examine linguistic variation. In snooker commentary, specific vocabulary is employed that may not be easily understood by outsiders. Recent studies confirm that terms such as “break,” “visit,” and “frame” carry specialized meanings that are central to the game’s dynamics and strategies (Collingwood et al., 2023; Rhys-Taylor, 2025). A *break* refers to the sequence of shots made during one uninterrupted turn at the table, a *visit* denotes the period of continuous play by a player until a miss or foul, and a *frame* constitutes a complete unit of play within a match. These specialized meanings illustrate how snooker vocabulary diverges from general English usage and serve as key indicators of player performance and strategy. This aligns with Holmes’ (2013) view that specialized vocabulary signals the identity and exclusivity of particular speech communities. Lewandowski (2008) also emphasized the role of professional broadcasters and experts in delivering precise and reflective commentary, particularly in sports like snooker that demand technical and strategic insight.

Previous studies have explored register in various domains to understand how language operates within specialized communities. Maharani (2021) analyzed register use in Instagram discourse and revealed that language variation in social media reflects specific communicative purposes and functions. Her study categorized registers based on their intended roles, such as expressing identity, promoting products, or narrating personal experiences. Similarly, Ningsih (2021) and Aziza (2022) examined registers used in sports journalism, particularly in online news and newspapers. Their findings included glossaries of specialized terms in football commentary, showing how lexical choices align with the characteristics of the sport and the identity of its users.

In live sports commentary, Pažanin (2022) conducted a comparative analysis between live text commentary (LTC) and sports announcer talk (SAT). The study

found that LTC tends to use compressed, telegraphic structures with limited grammatical markers, while SAT is more spontaneous and expressive. Both formats, however, share a core function: narrating events as they unfold with precise terminology that caters to audiences familiar with the sport. In the field of E-sports, Saputra (2021) investigated League of Legends casters and found that their register combined game-specific jargon with narrative commentary, serving both informative and entertainment functions. Prasetyo (2022), Pratama (2022), and Hanafi (2021) focused on Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang casters and consistently found that the register used involved command-like structures, gaming slang, and vivid adjectives to engage and instruct audiences.

Ningrum (2020) conducted a study on Dota 2 commentary and identified specific morphological and lexical patterns that facilitated faster and clearer communication among casters. The use of affixation, acronym, and compounding was prominent, indicating a trend toward linguistic economy and efficiency in fast-paced commentary settings. Ardianto (2020), in a study of the World Cup of Pool 2017 Final, highlighted how pool commentators balanced technical terminology with general language to accommodate both expert and novice viewers. His findings showed that while the register retained its specificity, it was crafted to ensure accessibility, especially in international broadcasts targeting broader audiences.

Although there is an increasing number of studies on registers in various sports, research on indoor sports such as snooker remains limited. Most prior work has focused on outdoor sports like football or on E-sports with similar gameplay structures and commentator roles (Prasetyo, 2022; Pratama, 2022; Hanafi, 2021; Ningrum, 2020). Ardianto's (2020) analysis of pool commentary is one of the few studies that examines cue sports, yet it still shows that snooker as a distinct domain has received little scholarly attention. This situation establishes a clear research gap that motivates the present study.

Accordingly, this study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the register used in two snooker finals: the 2023 Champions League Snooker Invitational Final (Judd Trump vs. John Higgins) and the 2023 Championship League Snooker Ranking Final (Shaun Murphy vs. Mark Williams). Following Holmes' (2013) theory of register and McCarthy's (2002) morphological framework, the research specifically examines specialized vocabulary and morphological processes (affixation and compounding) in snooker commentary. To make the objectives more explicit, the study addresses two main research questions: (1) *What types of register terms appear in live snooker commentary?* and (2) *What morphological processes are used to form these terms?*

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on cue sports, particularly snooker, which has been largely neglected in sports linguistics research. Unlike earlier studies that concentrated on football, e-sports, or pool, this research demonstrates how snooker commentary employs morphological strategies to balance technical precision with accessibility. Integration of register theory with morphological analysis enriches the description of linguistic variation in sports and offers a benchmark for interpreting how specialized vocabulary adapts to real-time, globally broadcast sporting events.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative design to explore how register is used in snooker play-by-play commentary. A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of language use in its natural setting, focusing on how words and expressions are shaped by context without manipulating the situation. As [Corcuera and Bernardo \(2024\)](#) demonstrated in their qualitative analysis of Filipino sportscasts, such an approach is effective for uncovering linguistic features and communicative biases in live sports commentary. Similarly, [Augendre et al. \(2018\)](#) showed that examining syntactic and semantic patterns in live sports commentaries provides valuable understanding of how discourse genres are constructed in real time. In this study, the researchers examined how snooker commentators used specific vocabulary and morphological patterns such as affixation and compounding to describe the game. The overall analysis was guided by [Holmes' \(2013\)](#) theory of register as the sociolinguistic framework and [McCarthy's \(2002\)](#) morphological model as the linguistic framework. It is important to note that the data were limited to two professional matches, which sets boundaries on the representativeness of the findings but still provides a focused and manageable corpus for in-depth analysis.

The process of data collection and analysis was carried out in a series of systematic steps. First, data selection was conducted by choosing two professional matches from the [Matchroom Multi Sport YouTube channel: the 2023](#) Champions League Snooker Invitational Final (Judd Trump vs. John Higgins) and the 2023 Championship League Snooker Ranking Final (Shaun Murphy vs. Mark Williams), both held at Morningside Arena, Leicester City, England. Second, the commentary from both matches, delivered by Phil Yates and Michael McMullan ([Dott, 2011](#)), was transcribed in full to obtain a complete textual dataset. Third, register-related vocabulary such as “break,” “frame,” and “rest” was identified through close reading of the transcripts. Fourth, the identified terms were classified into morphological patterns using [McCarthy's \(2002\)](#) framework, which distinguishes between affixation (e.g., *colors*, *rerack*) and compounding (e.g., *margin of error*, *baulk pocket*). Finally, [Holmes' \(2013\)](#) register theory was applied to interpret how the specialized vocabulary reflected contextual and social functions within live commentary.

Operationalization of the theoretical frameworks involved a coding process in which each lexical item was first categorized according to its morphological structure and then analyzed for its communicative function within the match context. The analysis was conducted through three interrelated stages: description of forms, interpretation of meaning, and functional analysis of their role in audience comprehension. While the research team worked collaboratively in identifying and classifying terms, formal inter-coder reliability measures were not applied, which constitutes a methodological limitation. Nevertheless, consistency was maintained through repeated cross-checking of the data and discussion among the researchers to resolve any discrepancies.

The research method combined non-participant observation, full transcription, lexical identification, morphological classification, and contextual interpretation. This systematic approach ensured that the specialized vocabulary of

snooker commentary was analyzed comprehensively, while also acknowledging the constraints of a relatively small dataset. The objective was to provide both a descriptive account of the register terms and an explanation of how morphological processes contribute to the communicative functions of live sports commentary.

**RESULTS**

The primary objective of this study was to identify the register used in snooker play-by-play commentary. To achieve this, the researchers conducted a detailed analysis of vocabulary items and morphological patterns found in two professional match recordings. Utterances from the referee were excluded, as the focus was strictly on the commentators’ play-by-play narration. According to [Holmes \(2013\)](#), play-by-play is a commentary style that focuses on the immediate action in the game and uses a clearly distinctive language separated from any other context. Based on this criterion, only the language used during active gameplay was transcribed and analyzed.

From the two selected matches, namely the 2023 Champions League Snooker Invitational Final and the 2023 Championship League Snooker Ranking Edition the Final, the researchers identified a total of 525 occurrences of snooker-related vocabulary, including repeated terms. These were drawn from a combined total of 9,146 spoken words, consisting of 5,759 words in the first match and 3,387 words in the second. A total of 69 unique register terms were identified. The proportion of register terms relative to the full word count was relatively low, suggesting that the language used by the commentators was adapted for general audiences. Register terms appeared only when relevant to specific moments in the match, showing the selective nature of technical vocabulary use in public broadcasts.

Vocabulary analysis was conducted by referring to [Holmes’ \(2013\)](#) framework of social factors, which include participant, setting, topic, and function. Definitions were cross-checked using the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary for general meaning and the Billiard and Pool Online Glossary for sport-specific interpretations. Morphological patterns were then categorized based on [McCarthy’s \(2002\)](#) theory, with particular attention to affixation and compounding processes. The researchers also provided a brief explanation of how these terms functioned in the commentary to enhance communication between the commentators and viewers.

Below is a simplified sample of 18 representative register items from the total of 69 terms found in the data. Each term includes its general dictionary meaning, its contextual meaning in snooker, and the number of times it occurred in the commentary.

*Table 1. Selected Snooker Register Terms and Their Contextual Meanings*

Vocabulary	General Meaning (Merriam-Webster)	Snooker Contextual Meaning	Freq.
Frame	A structural unit	A complete unit of play in snooker	42
Red	The color red	A red ball worth 1 point	104
Color	A visual perception	Any non-red ball (yellow to black)	8

Pot	A container	To pocket a ball	38
Rest	A state of inactivity	A mechanical bridge used in cue sports	3
Kick and Stick	–	A cue ball technique used to freeze after contact	1
Cannon	A large weapon	A shot involving contact with two or more balls	8
Plant	To place for growth	A shot redirecting one ball via another	1
Break	An act of breaking	A series of pots during one visit	10
Kiss	To touch with lips	Slight contact between balls	2
Margin of Error	–	Tolerance in angle or stroke precision	1
Double	Consisting of two parts	A shot bouncing off the cushion before potting	3
Snooker	A cue sport	To leave the cue ball obstructed from a direct shot	16
Century	A period of 100 years	A score of 100 or more in one visit	14
Pocket	A small bag	A hole at the table corners and sides	10
Jaw	Mouth bone structure	The inner edge of a pocket	2
Connect the Dots	–	A situation with well-positioned balls for clearance	1
Stun	To shock	A shot with no spin on the cue ball	4

This table illustrates how register in snooker commentary involves context-specific meanings that often differ significantly from their general definitions. Such differences reinforce [Holmes' \(2013\)](#) argument that register is deeply tied to shared knowledge within a community and may not be easily understood by those outside of it. The frequency data also shows that while some terms, like “red” and “frame,” are frequently used, others appear only once, further demonstrating how vocabulary choice is shaped by context during the live broadcast.

### Morphological Patterns in the Snooker Register

Another linguistic feature closely related to register is morphology. In this study, the researchers analyzed the morphological patterns of vocabulary used in snooker commentary based on the framework proposed by [McCarthy \(2002\)](#). Morphology, as defined by McCarthy, refers to the study of the internal structure of words and how morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning, combine to form complex lexical items. According to [McCarthy \(2002\)](#), two primary processes

contribute to the development of vocabulary: affixation and compounding. Affixation involves attaching morphemes to a root word, either at the beginning as a prefix or at the end as a suffix, while compounding involves the combination of two or more roots to create a new word. Compounding can further be classified according to the word classes involved, such as noun compounds, verb compounds, and adjective compounds.

The analysis of compounding in this study identified a total of 32 compound terms, of which 19 representative examples are presented in the table below. These terms were found in the commentary segments of the two snooker matches and appeared 94 times in total. The data show that compounding in snooker register appears in various forms, including combinations of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Examples include terms like *baulk pocket*, *kick and stick*, *frame-winning visits*, and *deep screw*. The compounds were primarily formed to describe techniques, positions, or game-related actions. Some compound terms were excluded from detailed analysis due to their rare occurrence or because they were not listed in either the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary or the Billiard and Pool Online Glossary.

Table 2. Compound Terms Found in Snooker Commentary

Term	Word Class Combination	Type of Compound
Baulk Pocket	Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Connecting the Dots	Verb + Noun	Noun Compound
Margin of Error	Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Kick and Stick	Verb + Noun	Noun Compound
Baulk Color Ball	Noun + Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Black Spot	Adjective + Noun	Noun Compound
Black Cushion	Adjective + Noun	Noun Compound
Frame-winning Visits	Noun + Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Big Breaks	Adjective + Noun	Noun Compound
Long Pot	Adjective + Noun	Noun Compound
Deep Screw	Adjective + Verb	Verb Compound
Slight Swerve	Adjective + Verb	Verb Compound
Playing Safe	Noun + Adjective	Adjective Compound
Near Jaw	Adjective + Noun	Noun Compound
Screw Back	Verb + Noun	Noun Compound
Middle Pocket	Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Check Side	Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Cue Ball	Noun + Noun	Noun Compound
Snooker Required	Noun + Verb	Verb Compound

In addition to compounding, the researchers also examined affixation processes found in the commentary. A total of 18 affixed words were identified, with 82 occurrences across the two matches. These included 17 suffixes and 1 prefix, which were further classified into inflectional and derivational categories. Inflectional morphemes do not change the meaning or class of the root word, but instead serve grammatical functions, such as indicating tense or plurality. Derivational morphemes,

on the other hand, result in a change in the meaning or grammatical category of the word to which they are attached (Tariq et al., 2020).

Table 3. Affixed Terms Found in Snooker Commentary

Term	Root	Affix	Type of Affix
Spotted	Spot	-ed	Inflectional
Potting	Pot	-ing	Inflectional
Centuries	Century	-es	Inflectional
Cushions	Cushion	-s	Inflectional
Frames	Frame	-s	Inflectional
Reds	Red	-s	Inflectional
Snookers	Snooker	-s	Inflectional
Jaws	Jaw	-s	Inflectional
Screwing	Screw	-ing	Inflectional
Safety	Safe	-ty	Inflectional
Clearance	Clear	-ance	Inflectional
Colors	Color	-s	Inflectional
Rests	Rest	-s	Inflectional
Pockets	Pocket	-s	Inflectional
Rerack	Rack	re-	Derivational
Potter	Pot	-er	Derivational
Cueing	Cue	-ing	Derivational
Doubler	Double	-er	Derivational

This morphological analysis reveals that both compounding and affixation are essential in shaping the register of snooker commentary. Compound terms are predominantly used to describe game actions, strategies, and positional references, while affixed forms often serve to describe ongoing actions, player roles, or game situations. Together, these morphological patterns demonstrate how specialized vocabulary in snooker is constructed and adapted to meet the communicative needs of the commentators during live play-by-play narration.

### Register Features and Contextual Functions in Snooker Commentary

The play-by-play commentary in professional snooker matches represents a distinct linguistic register used to convey real-time sporting action. This register is marked by the use of context-specific vocabulary, shaped by the social dynamics between commentators and their audience. Holmes (2013) emphasized that register cannot be separated from the social context in which it occurs, including factors such as participants, setting, topic, and communicative purpose. In snooker commentary, commentators such as Phil Yates and Michael McMullan use a mixture of general and specialized terms to describe the gameplay to viewers, balancing precision with accessibility. This study identified 69 unique register items from two final matches, but the overall frequency of register terms relative to the total word count was relatively low, indicating that while specialized vocabulary is present, it is selectively used to maintain audience comprehension.

Among the most frequently used terms is *frame*, which in everyday English refers to a structure, but in snooker denotes one complete game. The expression *he lost that frame* illustrates its meaning within the match context. This word also appears morphologically as part of the compound noun *frame winning visits*, describing a single inning that results in winning a frame. The plural form *frames* as in *two frames away from victory* demonstrates its inflectional usage. Another commonly used term is *pocket*, which typically refers to a small bag but in snooker indicates the corner or side opening where balls are potted. This appears in utterances like *the black's hanging over the pocket*. A compound example is *baulk pocket*, which combines two noun morphemes to describe a specific table position, while *pockets* mark the plural form.

The term *color* is also highly relevant in snooker, referring to any non-red ball (yellow, green, brown, blue, pink, or black). In commentary such as *Higgins needs a color*, the word generalizes across the available high-value options. A compound form, *baulk color ball*, appears when a player is aiming at a color ball near the baulk line, and *colors* is used to denote plurality, as in *clearing the colors*. Similarly, *pot* is a verb specific to cue sports, meaning to sink a ball. This appears in statements like *a good pot for one point*. The compound *long pot* refers to a shot from distance, while the derivational form *potter* (from *pot* + *-er*) denotes a player skilled in potting balls, such as in *long potter*.

The register term *break* differs from its general meaning of separation. In snooker, it refers to the total points accumulated in a single visit at the table, as in *Trump made breaks of 83 and 6*. The compound *big breaks* emphasizes high-scoring innings, while *breaks* serve as the plural. *Jaw*, usually referring to a body part, in snooker denotes the inner edges of a pocket. This term appears in *if the white had stopped in the jaws* and is also found as a compound in *near jaw*. Its plural form *jaws* convey the two pocket sides.

The word *century*, ordinarily meaning 100 years, in snooker refers to scoring 100 or more points in a single break, as seen in *his fourth century of the group*. Its plural form *centuries* are used in expressions like *two centuries*. The register *red* is perhaps the most visually intuitive, referring to the red balls valued at one point each. This term appears in commentary such as *next red is easier*, and its plural *reds* emphasizes the multiple red balls in play. *Double* refers to a bank shot, illustrated in *playing the double like that*. The derived term *doubler* refers to a player proficient in this shot type.

The tool *rest*, usually denoting inactivity, is recontextualized in snooker to mean a mechanical bridge used for difficult shots, as in *he's so good with the rest*. The plural form *rests* indicate various types of rests used in the match. The expression *connecting the dots* is another register example referring to a layout of balls that allows easy clearance, as in *it's just connecting the dots*. This phrase is a compound of *connecting* and *dots* and reflects precise, context-driven commentary.

Similarly, *kick and stick* are a descriptive term referring to a technique where the cue ball hits a rail before contacting an object ball and then stops. Although this term does not appear in standard dictionaries, its compounding structure from *kick* and *stick* conveys its meaning effectively. Another phrase, *margin of error*, defines

the acceptable range for successful shots. It is formed from *margin* and *error*, as in *the margin of error was even smaller than normal*. Lastly, *rerack* is used when a frame is restarted due to a stalemate, derived from *rack* with the prefix *re-*, changing both the meaning and grammatical function.

The use of these terms is shaped by the interaction between the commentators and their audience. The speakers Yates and McMullan target both seasoned fans and general viewers by carefully choosing when to use specialized vocabulary. The setting of these final matches, with high stakes and tension, demands accuracy and clarity. Some terms, like *red*, are accessible even to novice audiences, while others, such as *double* or *frame winning visits*, may require background knowledge or rely on visual support from the broadcast. The topics covered through these registers, including scoring, strategy, and the difficulty of shots, align with the communicative function of maintaining audience engagement and conveying expertise without overwhelming the listener.

In sum, register usage in snooker play-by-play commentary reflects the communicative needs of a specific sporting context. The use of affixation and compounding processes, as theorized by McCarthy (2002), and the contextual considerations outlined by Holmes (2013), illustrate how language is shaped to suit specialized domains. Through the analysis of vocabulary and morphology, this study shows how register contributes to clarity, entertainment, and the shared understanding between speaker and listener in snooker broadcasting.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed a total of sixty-nine register terms specific to snooker, drawn from 525 instances of vocabulary usage identified in the play-by-play commentary of two final matches, comprising a combined word count of 9,146 words. Among these terms, *red* was the most frequently mentioned, while terms like *cue*, *cut*, *swerve*, *split*, and *escape* appeared only once. The prevalence of *red* is linked to the rules of snooker, in which there are fifteen red balls and a player must pot a red ball before attempting to pot any other colored ball. Conversely, less frequent vocabulary items corresponded with rare or situational moments during the matches, such as *swerve*, which involves curving the cue ball and is not commonly required in every frame. This demonstrates how vocabulary frequency directly mirrors gameplay patterns and the rarity of certain shot types.

The main objective of this research was to identify the linguistic register used in snooker play-by-play commentary and to analyze the morphological patterns underlying those terms. The findings confirm that commentators employed a number of specialized terms that reflect McCarthy's (2002) framework on morphology, specifically affixation and compounding. Terms like *baulk color ball*, *frame winning visits*, *doubler*, and *potter* illustrate how new vocabulary items are constructed to describe specific actions or moments unique to snooker. At the same time, Holmes' (2013) perspective on register provides a crucial framework for understanding how these terms are shaped by social factors, namely the participants (commentators and viewers), the setting (a live sports broadcast), the topic (ongoing snooker play), and the communicative function (to inform, engage, and entertain). Rather than treating these frameworks separately, the present study shows how

morphology and register theory intersect: morphological formations are not merely structural but function socially to condense complex play actions into communicatively efficient units.

A notable feature of the data is the relatively low density of specialized register terms compared to studies of football (Lewandowski, 2008) or e-sports commentary (Saputra, 2021; Prasetyo, 2022). Whereas those genres exhibit highly technical vocabulary deployed continuously throughout the broadcast, snooker commentators appear to balance technicality with accessibility for a broader audience. This selective deployment suggests that cue-sport commentary embodies a hybrid register: precise enough to reflect the game's complexity but moderated to ensure comprehension by non-specialist viewers. Such modulation reflects broader commentary strategies in sports media, where commentators adjust terminology to maintain engagement across mixed audiences (Afriani & Sepdanius, 2025).

Register terms were employed selectively based on the match context. For example, color was used when the player targeted a non-red ball, pot described an attempt to sink the ball, and connecting the dots indicated a favorable layout for easy clearance. These terms carry highly contextual meanings and may otherwise be ambiguous without the visual or situational cues provided in a live match. This situational dependence aligns with Holmes (2013), while also reinforcing cross-sport comparisons: unlike football commentary, which often operates on a shared global lexicon (Lewandowski, 2008), snooker terms require real-time contextual anchoring to be intelligible.

The emotional and performative dimension of commentary also emerged as central. Terms such as long pot did not merely describe the mechanics of a shot but dramatized its difficulty, thereby amplifying audience anticipation. This echoes Seifried (2008) and Hoffmannová (2018) on the emotive power of commentary but also extends their claims by showing that emotive engagement in snooker is often achieved morphologically through compressed forms like potter and doubler. The reduction of complex sequences into compact expressions allows these forms to synchronize audience attention with the rhythm of play (Du Bois, 2023) while sustaining dramatic tension (Ramírez, 2024). In this sense, register functions not only as a linguistic code but as a performative strategy shaping both viewer experience and the cultural identity of snooker as a sport.

When compared to previous studies on sports registers, several similarities and differences emerge. Maharani (2021) focused on mapping and categorizing registers on social media platforms, with an emphasis on frequency and function rather than morphological construction. Meanwhile, Ningsih (2021) and Aziza (2022) analyzed sports registers in written news media, focusing respectively on football-specific grammar and phrasal construction across sports reporting. Although these studies contribute to the understanding of register usage in different media, they do not address the morphological processes that this study emphasizes. Similarly, studies such as Saputra (2021), Hanafi (2021), Prasetyo (2022), and Pratama (2022) examined the register used in E-sports (League of Legends and Mobile Legends) through casters' language, with a primary focus on identifying register types and their functions. In contrast, the present study integrates morphology into register

analysis, showing how affixation and compounding create compact, high-utility terms that are central to the communicative style of snooker commentary. This methodological move strengthens the contribution of sports linguistics by revealing how register is built not only through lexical choice but also through morphological economy.

In contrast, the work of [Ardianto \(2020\)](#) bears a closer resemblance to the current study. Ardianto also employed [Holmes' \(2013\)](#) register theory and [McCarthy's \(2002\)](#) morphological perspective, but focused on the register used in pool rather than snooker. While both sports fall under the category of cue games and share some terminologies, significant differences in context and terminology exist. For instance, break in pool generally refers to the opening shot of a game to spread the balls, whereas in snooker it denotes a series of consecutive pots resulting in cumulative points. Similarly, plant in snooker is functionally equivalent to combination shot in pool, and double in snooker aligns with bank shot in pool. These distinctions underscore the importance of sport-specific registers and reinforce that linguistic forms cannot be directly generalized across cue sports. Instead, they reflect different traditions of play, audience expectation, and discourse practice.

This study contributes to sports linguistics by documenting and analyzing a body of snooker-specific terms that have been underrepresented in existing glossaries such as the Billiard and Pool Online Glossary. Beyond cataloguing vocabulary, it demonstrates that commentary in cue sports is shaped by a dual imperative: to achieve technical precision through morphological strategies while simultaneously maintaining accessibility for global audiences. In doing so, the study advances three broader implications: (1) sports commentary strategies must be evaluated comparatively, considering how different sports balance technical and general terms; (2) register use is not only descriptive but also performative, shaping how audiences engage emotionally and culturally with the sport; and (3) cue sports deserve central inclusion in sports media studies, as their commentary practices demonstrate distinctive connections between morphology, register, and audience engagement.

## CONCLUSION

This study showed that while snooker is known for its technical complexity and distinctive terminology, the register employed in professional play-to-play commentary is relatively restrained. Commentators favored vocabulary accessible to general audiences rather than relying heavily on specialized jargon. Frequently used terms such as red and frame reflected the rules of the game, whereas less frequent items like swerve, plant, or kick and stick appeared only in specific contexts. This balance between precision and accessibility illustrates how register adapts to the communicative demands of live sports broadcasting.

Beyond describing vocabulary, the findings carry broader implications for both sports media and sociolinguistics. Morphological strategies such as affixation and compounding, evident in terms like potter, frame winning visits, and baulk color ball, demonstrate how commentary condenses complex actions into compact expressions. For sports commentary training, this suggests the need to prepare commentators not only in technical terminology but also in strategies for audience

adaptation, enabling them to shift flexibly between specialist and lay registers. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the study shows that register functions not only as a descriptive system but also as a performative practice that shapes audience engagement, sport identity, and global accessibility.

While the study is limited to two English-language matches, it opens pathways for future work on multilingual snooker broadcasts and comparative analyses with related cue sports such as pool or billiards. More extensive corpora would allow researchers to capture a wider range of linguistic strategies and contextual variations. The main contribution of this research lies not only in filling a gap on cue-sport commentary but also in offering a combined framework of register theory and morphological analysis that future studies in sports linguistics can adopt. This framework provides a basis for understanding how sports commentary operates as both a linguistic system and a communicative bridge between technical expertise and mass spectatorship.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the journal editor and anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments and valuable suggestions, which greatly contributed to improving the quality of this manuscript. As non-native speakers of English, we used language support tools such as *Grammarly* and *Chat-GPT* to improve grammatical accuracy and clarity. Nonetheless, the ideas, data interpretation, and arguments presented are entirely original and reflect the authors' independent scholarly work.

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