

Abstract

Stylistics has much to offer in high-stakes environments. Forensic stylistics is an exciting (and growing) discipline that uses analytical frameworks and approaches from within stylistics in the pursuit of justice. This chapter outlines the current state of play within forensic stylistics and demonstrates its application in witness statement analysis particularly. The statements discussed were submitted by South Yorkshire Police following the Hillsborough Football Stadium Disaster (1989) in which ninety-seven Liverpool fans were killed in a deadly crush. Using stylistic methods of analysis, I show how institutional bias towards Liverpool Football Club fans is present in the reports. I also show that the ways in which police officers selectively reported events in the evidence-gathering process after the disaster constitutes the abuse of institutional power. I focus on the stylistic patterns across nine officers' witness statements and argue that they demonstrate institutional collusion. My analysis demonstrates the utility of stylistics as a nuanced and practical methodological approach to forensic text analysis.

Keywords: Hillsborough Disaster, forensic science, stylistics, witness statements

Key Points/Objectives:

1. This application of forensic stylistics demonstrates how police officers attempted to evade blame for a deadly crush at Hillsborough (UK) by wrongly attributing blame to Liverpool Football Club supporters;
2. I conduct an experiment to test the findings in Malcolm Coulthard's seminal article (1994b) in which an analysis of speaker variation casts doubt on the veracity of a conviction for murder (spoiler: my findings support Coulthard's);
3. I show how pragmatics, specifically implicature and relevance, are vital for understanding the context of utterances in the forensic domain

Introduction

The first recorded case using forensic stylistics was the analysis of four statements in 1966 from a murder suspect, Timothy Evans, who was executed on 9th March 1950 for the murders

of his wife and child four months earlier in London, England. During the police investigation Evans told police that he lied in parts of his statements in which he had confessed to killing his wife, because of his fear of being attacked by the police if he did not confess. In 1966, the linguist Jan Svartik examined Evans's statements 'to find out whether the intuitively based observations [contained in a report following a debate in the House of Commons (1953) and the subsequent Brabin Inquiry into the case (1965)] have any support from a more rigid, objective linguistic scrutiny' (1968 Part 1: 18–19). Svartik's analysis identified stylistic patterns including 'double negatives, substandard forms of verbs and relative pronouns, mixed constructions', as well as 'more formal features that are characteristic of written rather than spoken language' (1968 Part 2: 5) (confessions should be verbatim accounts and thus read like spoken rather than written discourse). Svartik found that Evans's 'confession' showed marked differences in the third statement (Dec 1950) between paragraphs (i), (iii), and (v) which he found were 'markedly different' from paragraphs (ii) and (iv), supporting Evans's contention that he lied in sections of his statement.

Svartik's analysis marked the emergence of a new, exciting field of study within linguistics that he termed forensic linguistics. More specifically, Svartik's analysis incorporates methodologies more closely aligned with *stylistics*.

Forensic stylistics

As a discipline, stylistics has come to be applied in a wide range of fields, from healthcare (e.g. Price 2022) to creative writing (e.g. Scott 2017) and covers a huge range of sometimes overlapping, diverse fields of study, from Critical Discourse Analysis to cognitive linguistics. The term 'forensic stylistics' can be broken down to convey the *context* of the work (i.e. in the forensic domain) and the *methodological approach* to the work ('stylistics'). Stylistics is interested in how meanings (and patterns in meanings) are produced and received by real people and how language operates on formal, structural, and pragmatic levels to create those meanings. 'Forensic stylistics' is a label that theoretically situates the work of stylisticians in the forensic domain. However, it can be a little ambiguous and not always helpful. Primarily, this is because it contains no explicit link to 'linguistics' and carries the not unlikely implication that a forensic stylistician performs hairdressing services on dead people. Again, these terms are only useful insofar as they help to orient the hearer to the kinds of work forensic linguists do, the specific areas of focus, and the kinds of approaches typically used. That said, forensic stylisticians are interested in how meanings (and patterns in meanings) are produced and perceived by real people in the forensic-layperson interface, and what those

patterns might mean in a forensic context. Forensic stylisticians are also interested in how the formal and pragmatic levels of language function to give rise to those meanings.

Stylistics uses rigorous methodological frameworks to identify linguistic patterns, and to analyse and explain how meanings are derived from these. Because it is concerned with ‘forms, patterns and levels’, and uses rigorous methodologies, stylistics is *systematic*. Simpson (2014: 4) refers to this systematic approach as the three ‘r’s’: that is to say, stylistic analysis is ‘rigorous’ (the analysis is not ‘ad hoc’ or ‘impressionistic’), ‘retrievable’ (the terms and criteria are consistent throughout and other stylisticians agree with these definitions and criteria), and ‘replicable’ (other stylisticians would arrive at very similar conclusions using the same approach).

Having said all this, there are conflicting understandings and sometimes misunderstandings of what *forensic stylistics* involves, particularly in academic circles. Until relatively recently, *forensic stylistics* was perceived more literally as being synonymous with a text’s ‘style’. This view is perhaps driven by forensic linguist Gerald McMnamin’s celebrated work (1993) which takes a descriptive linguistic approach to the style of a text. In his book *Forensic Stylistics* he describes ‘linguistic stylistics’ (and variously ‘forensic stylistics’) as the analysis of a text producer’s individual ‘style’ of the language they habitually use:

Linguistic stylistics is the scientific analysis of individual style-markers as observed and described in the idiolect of a single writer, as well as class style-markers as identified in the language or dialect of groups of writers. (McMenamin 1993: 115)

For McMnamin, ‘style’ is ‘the observable result of the habitual and usually unconscious choices an author makes in the process of writing’ (2020: 488). One job of stylistics, as this volume shows, is indeed to provide a systematic and rigorous analysis of a text’s style by identifying linguistic and paralinguistic patterns or ‘markers’. Identification of such markers is more closely aligned to ‘stylometry’, the analysis of style markers using data manipulation and visualisation techniques to show differences in styles (or to differentiate styles). However, McMnamin’s definition presented above is quite specific to forensic text analysis – in stylistics (and forensic stylistics) there is a robust body of work that goes beyond style markers and attends to meaning and meaning potential. The analysis of style markers (perhaps better known as ‘stylometry’) does not concern itself with interpretation and meaning, but stylistics does.

Historical overview

MacLeod and Grant (2017) write that the aim of forensic linguistics, and by extension, forensic stylistics is to ‘improve the delivery of justice through language analysis.’ Key models in stylistics offer valuable methodological approaches to enable forensic linguists to do this. For example, Coulthard et al. (2016), Wright (2013), Grant and Nini (2013), Argamon and Koppel (2012) have all demonstrated the value of stylistics in analyses of authorship. Stokoe and Edwards (2008) have shown how Conversation Analysis can address why police officers appear to ask ‘silly questions’ in eliciting evidence, while Ferraz de Almeida and Drew (2020) analyse turn-taking in police investigative interviews to examine the role and impact of ‘reformulations’ in evidential record-keeping (see also Clayman 1993; Ho, et al. 2018). Gales’s work on interpersonal stance (2010; 2015) examines ideological positioning in threatening communication using Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005) and corpus approaches (see chapter 23, this volume). Linked to ideological positioning, stylistic analyses of relevance can show how attitude and stance manifest in police reports of domestic abuse crimes (Canning 2022; Lynn and Canning 2021; see also Clark 1996 for an excellent discussion of relevance). Recent work on speech and thought presentation has been applied to studies of deception detection (Vrij 2015) including issues of veracity in hotel reviews (Visonà 2021). Coulthard has shown how pragmatics, specifically implicature, can expose the interference of institutional voices in alleged monologic confessions (1994a; 1994b; 2002), while Canning’s work on police investigations following the Hillsborough football stadium disaster (2018, 2020) shows how patterns of negation indicate police topic control in their attempts to elicit an institutionally preferred narrative. Additionally, studies such as Wang et al. (2016), Ho et al. (2018), and Canning et al. (2021) use Text World Theory (Werth 1999, Gavins 2007) to visualise linguistic patterning in evidential documents. The work noted above attests to the potential for stylistics as a powerful methodological toolkit in the forensic domain.

Part of improving the delivery of justice includes advocating for change in discursive policies and practices within the forensic environment. An example of a discursive practice is ‘policeseak’ (Fox 1993, Hall 2008), a habitual way of using language amongst police personnel (for example, the use of “persons” as opposed to “people”). Policespeak includes the formulation (and reformulation) of what suspects and witnesses say in their narrative accounts (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Clayman 1993) in ways that can carry additional meaning for institutional recipients such as prosecutors and judges. In suspect and witness accounts there are often two (or more) voices – a layperson one and an institutional one. For instance, a recent victim witness statement I worked on contained the following: “I do not

wish to submit a statement [...] I do not support a police prosecution”. The rendering of the negation “I do not wish” and of the noun phrase “police prosecution” is the officer’s, not the victim’s (see Canning 2022 for more on negation as a marker of institutional reformulation). Jönsson and Linell (1991) call the amalgamation of voices a ‘blurring of [authorial] source distinctions’, but by using forensic stylistic methods it can be possible to trace the different authorial sources. The presence of institutional voices means it is also possible to trace linguistic manifestations of power and control (Haworth 2006, 2010, 2018). Forensic stylistics can help in the post-investigation process. Heffer (2002) highlights semantic ambiguities in, and the difficulty of interpreting, legal language in the courtroom. An example of Heffer’s focus is the ‘misdirection’ by judges as they attempt to ‘narrativise’ legal directions in the courtroom arena. One instance of a legal direction is when a judge asks the jury to apply the concept of ‘reasonable doubt’ in weighing up evidence presented in court. From this short summary of some of the issues impacting forensic texts it is clear that forensic policies and practices can give rise to inaccurate, incomplete, or partial/subjective evidence in police-led investigations, and court-based presentations, all of which can negatively influence whether justice is served, or even whether it is achievable.

Critical issues and topics

One of the key areas of study for forensic linguists is authorship analysis. Coulthard’s seminal study (1994b; Coulthard et al 2017) is a case in point. Coulthard analysed the alleged confession of William Power, an Irishman accused (with five others) of planting two bombs on 21 November 1974 in Birmingham, England, killing 21 people and injuring many others. The six men, known historically as the Birmingham Six, were arrested and charged with the murders of 21 people. The men were all innocent. Coulthard’s analysis of Power’s confession compared it against a reference corpus to support his argument that it could not have been provided *only* by Power. This was because it contained repeated over-explicit noun phrases such as “white plastic carrier bags” which did not reflect natural speech patterns and thus could not be verbatim (which a confession is legally required to be). Part of Power’s ‘confession’ is reproduced below (the whole text can be found on the CAIN website here:

<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/events/other/1974/faul76a.htm>)

Walker was carrying a maroon holdall and two white plastic carrier bags. He was also carrying a black overcoat. Hunter was carrying three white plastic carrier bags, Richard was carrying one white plastic carrier bag and Hughie was carrying one bag. We went and got our tickets and then Hill joined us, he was carrying a suite [sic] case. Walker gave me the overcoat to put on and then gave me one of the white plastic bags

he had been carrying and then told Richard to give me one as well. So he gave me one. Hughie gave Johnny Walker his white plastic bag and then walked away with Richard, leaving me, Walker and Hunter together.

As Coulthard notes, the phrase ‘white plastic carrier bag’ flouts Grice’s maxim of quantity (1972), which is to say, it offers more information than is required (a more conventional pronominal substitution, ‘it’, or a contracted form, ‘bag’, would be more commonly used in spoken discourse). Additionally, there is little variation in *how* the object (bags/bag) was presented relative to the number of times the object was mentioned. Coulthard’s analysis convincingly demonstrated that the police interviewers most likely contrived some or all of Power’s confession text.

To test speaker variation across and within speakers I devised an experiment which I carried out in several university classrooms (each class had an average of 15 students) many times between 2019 and 2025. In total 280 students participated. The sketch was designed to elicit many iterations of the phrase “two white plastic carrier bags” in one narrative report. To achieve this, I entered the classroom with two white plastic carrier bags and deposited them at various points around the room and then retrieved them one by one. I asked the students to write an account of what they just witnessed giving as much detail as possible. The goal was to assess speaker variation across all authors’ narrative and also within each author’s narrative (see Canning 2023 for a detailed analysis of this experiment). To date, only one author has ever used the configuration ‘adjective+adjective+adjective+noun’ in this formation: ‘white plastic carrier bags’. And they used it only once. Another author used a similar construction but with a post-modifier in parentheses (‘two plastic carrier bags (white)’), and again only once. This experiment supported Coulthard’s findings: speakers do not repeatedly produce the same complex noun phrase in a narrative account. It also offers strong support for inter-speaker variability in that two or more speakers are extremely unlikely to produce long identical strings by chance (Coulthard 2004, Roig 2005). Most linguists agree that more than 6 words or 6-gram identical strings are unlikely to occur by chance in different speakers’ accounts.

Following on from the 90-second plastic bags experiment, it would be reasonable to expect that speaker variability would increase with longer and more complex events. The next section explores this contention by focusing on narratives documenting an eight-hour period in which a deadly disaster occurred at Sheffield Wednesday’s Football ground at Hillsborough, Sheffield, UK in 1989.

The Hillsborough Disaster

On 15th April 1989, at the FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough between Liverpool FC and Nottingham Forest FC, a disaster unfolded that led to the deaths of 97 Liverpool fans in a deadly crush. The deaths were caused primarily by police failings and an unsafe stadium which included poor signage and enclosed ‘pens’ (see the *Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP)* and Scraton 2016).

The data

Immediately following the crush, South Yorkshire Police blamed Liverpool fans, falsely claiming that many fans were ‘drunk’, ‘ticketless’, and ‘late’ to the ground (HIP, 2012). Police colluded to construct a consistent hooligan narrative (Canning 2018, Scraton 2016; HIP 2012) that shifted responsibility for the 97 deaths away from police failings. In an unprecedented move, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) officers were told to prepare their own statements which were later submitted as evidence to subsequent inquiries. In them, this hooligan narrative was presented hundreds of times with striking similarities. Additionally, the SYP statements were controlled by senior officers who, overseen by the force’s solicitors, amended or removed sections of evidential text in over 164 officers’ statements. These deletions contained information that predominately pointed to police failings (Scraton 2016; HIP 2012; Canning 2018). A stylistic analysis can help uncover more subtle evidence of collusion. Officers’ statements aligned on specific themes, namely alcohol consumption and hooligan behaviour. Claims of such behaviours were expressed in officers’ statements with little or no variation. One example is included below (*Extract 1*).

Extract 1:

We were positioned outside a public house named the GATE and our duties were defined as supervising the arriving fans who were walking down Halifax Rd towards us. We were instructed to form a filter lane of officers and to inform the supporters that all alcoholic drinks would be left at this location. From this position you can see a good distance up this Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could see I saw that there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway. The majority of these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men. A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location. Some of them left their drinks, others insisted on consuming them at this location. Generally they were all of good behaviour, they were drunk but not incapable or disorderly. From me and the other officers taking up this position the thing that became most apparent to me other than their drunken states was how late thousands of them **had left it to go to into the ground.** (PC Cobb S2229; statement date 19 April 1989, my emphasis)

This 227-word extract covers quite a bit of detail. In it, there are many complex sentences that contain embedded clauses as well as subjective and objective information, some of it heavily modified. It also contains one grammatical mistake (in bold). Yet, it appears in five other officers' statements (including a lead sergeant's statement) either verbatim or with very minor changes (see appendix). The following three consecutive sentences are examples of linguistic complexity and will serve to make the point about author variation.

i) From this position you can see a good distance up this Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could see I saw that there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway.

ii) The majority of these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.

iii) A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location.

In i), the sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, 'From this position', which aligns the addressee with the speaker in terms of positioning the latter with the former's focal viewpoint. The 'this' deictically marks the speaker (and the reader). The second 'this' in 'this Halifax Road', is also deictic, which is unusual because speakers tend to deictically refer to phenomena in this way only if there is doubt about referentiality (e.g. 'this book' to make clear which book out of a pool of possible books). As there is only one Halifax Road the inclusion of 'this' as a demonstrative is syntactically odd or at best, idiosyncratic. Therefore, it is significant that this verbatim sentence occurs in two other officers' statements (Officers Gant and Cobb) as can be seen in Figure 1 (see also the appendix).

Concordance		Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters/N-Grams	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Concordance Hits 8							
Hit	KWIC						File
1	you can see a good distance up this	Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could					COBB extr
2	you can see a good distance up this	Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could					GANT extr
3	point I could see a good distance up	Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could					TURNER e
4	pavement outside 'Gate Inn\xD5 Public House on	Halifax Rd. Many supporters had to be stopped and					HOOD extr
5	point I could see a good distance up	Halifax Road and as far as the eye could					SHERRATT
6	location you can see a good distance up	Halifax Road and as far as I could see					WARD extr
7	whom were Liverpool supporters walking down from	Halifax Road towards the ground. Due to the main					BRAIM extr
8	been parked and unloaded my serial resumed to	Halifax Road where we took up position outside the '					BRAIM extr

<Figure 1 near here> Figure 1: *Extract 1* results from AntConc software tool, version 3.5.9

As can be seen in Figure 1, there are seven officers' statements that include a variant of the text under discussion (all seven are part of the same police serial – Serial 34). Five statements show only minor deviations. One of the deviations is the omission of the demonstrative pronoun 'this' (from 'this Halifax Road') in three of the serial's statements (Turner, Sherratt, and Ward). The second-person pronoun 'you' that follows in '**you** can see' is a generic 'you' and it appears in two officers' statements verbatim, and a third with a first-person pronoun, 'I' (Sherratt). The 'the eye' in 'as far as **the eye** could see' (emphasis added) is also generic and it is used verbatim by four officers and by a fifth with 'eye' substituted for 'I'. Given the significant similarity in verbatim constructions it is possible that this section of the statement was dictated to officers, which could account for the substitution of the homophones 'eye' for 'I'.

In the rest of the sentence the officer refers to what they could 'see':

- (ii) a continuous flow + of Liverpool supporters + in groups + approx. 10 abreast + on both sides + of the carriageway

What is 'seen' (i.e. the Liverpool fans) is heavily marked and thus foregrounded grammatically - in five ways, in fact, attesting to the narrative significance of the fans' presence. The flow of movement is marked through the modifying adjective 'continuous';

their formation is marked by the noun, ‘groups’; their size is marked by ‘approx. 10’ and formation (again) is marked through post-modification ‘abreast’, and finally, their location is marked ‘on both sides of the carriageway’. The chance of two speakers independently producing even some of these clauses in the same string, in the same order, is highly unlikely, even for those trained in producing best evidence. Yet this section of the extract was found in five of the statements from within serial 34 in precisely this order (Figure 2) with variation in the lexicalisation of ‘approximately’, and in the numeral ‘10’ where it was rendered in two instances as ‘ten abreast’ and ‘10-12 abreast’.

Concordance Hits 5		
Hit	KWIC	File
1	flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway. The majority	COBB extr:
2	flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway. The majority	GANT extr:
3	low of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. ten abreast on both sides of the carriageway coming towards	SHERRATT
4	f Liverpool supporters in groups approximately 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway coming towards	TURNER e)
5	s flow of Liverpool supporters in groups of 10-12 abreast on both sides of the carriageway. The majority	WARD extr

<Figure 2 near here> Figure 2: Marking the Liverpool fans in the serial 34 statements

Moving on to the second sentence from the example:

- ii) The majority of these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.

The ‘majority’ of the Liverpool supporters are identified by gender and age, ‘males in the lower age bracket’. Additional information is offered in regard to a ‘large amount of alcohol’ they are reported to have ‘consumed’. Linguistically, there are some interesting grammatical constructions: ‘it was very apparent to me...’ signals an individual author, ‘me’, and the ‘very’ is subjective. The phrasing is missing a conjunction of some kind (e.g. ‘**and** it was very apparent...’). The whole sentence is syntactically complex which makes it idiosyncratic. Additionally, it is not terribly cohesive (note the comma after ‘bracket’), which again, renders it unlikely to be repeated by more than one author.

Concordance Hits 4		
Hit	KWIC	File
1	these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the	COBB extr:
2	these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the	GANT extr:
3	these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the	SHERRATT
4	rters were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the	TURNER e)

<Figure 3 near here>> Figure 3: Occurrence of ‘to me’ in *Extract 1* as it appears in the statements in serial 34

In summary, the complexity of the sentence (it includes 3 modifying adjectives ‘lower’, ‘large’, ‘vast’ and an adverb, ‘very’; lexical repetition ‘majority of these’; elegant variation ‘males’ vs ‘men’; and emphatic use of the object pronoun ‘me’) all serve to make this a unique utterance. In spite of this complexity, four of the officers in serial 34 use the sentence in precisely this configuration (see Figure 3) (including their Sergeant).

The third sentence of *Extract 1* is outlined below:

- iii) A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location.¹

The use of ‘halted’ is unusual, however such archaic lexis along with formal terms such as ‘intoxicants’ are a defining feature of policespeak (Fox 1993) and would be less marked in this type of discourse domain. Having said that, its replication across the serial raises questions about its authorship. The Liverpool fans are referred to anaphorically via ‘them’. As in sentence (ii), repetition is foregrounded through the grammatical subject ‘a large number of them’ making the sentence unnecessarily complex (is the second ‘large number of them’ a subset of the first ‘large number’ or a repeat of the initial referent?). Adverbs of number, such as ‘many’ or ‘some’ could have substituted for the second ‘a large number’ making the text more cohesive. Despite this syntactic complexity the full sentence appears verbatim in four statements, and in another statement (Ward) with some variation including the omission of the second ‘a large number of them’ as Figure 4 shows:

Concordance Hits 9		
Hit	KWIC	File
1	alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards COBB extra
2	of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and	a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their int COBB extra
3	alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards GANT extra
4	of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and	a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their int GANT extra
5	alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards SHERRATT
6	of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and	a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their int SHERRATT
7	alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards TURNER e>
8	of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and	a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their int TURNER e>
9	that a large amount of these supporters had consumed alcohol.	A large number of these supporters were in fact still drinking alc WARD extra

¹ The use of ‘halted’ is unusual, however such archaic lexis along with formal terms such as ‘intoxicants’ are a defining feature of policespeak (Fox 1993) and would be less marked in this type of discourse domain. Having said that, its replication across the serial raises questions about its authorship.

<Figure 4 near here> Figure 4: Repetition of ‘a large number of them/these’ in *Extract 1* of serial 34’s statements

It could be argued that if a group of officers is stationed together in one location, under one sergeant (i.e. a ‘serial’) it is likely they will see the same things. However, even if this was the case – which it was not, because the serial’s statements deviate in some sections, and in other places their accounts show linguistic variation - it would be extremely rare if the members of the police serial used the same lexis and syntax to write up their similar experiences, as my ‘white plastic carrier bags’ experiment attests. Therefore, the statements are not likely attributable to separate authors. To support the view that the statements are the work of one author, either by dictation or instruction, Table 1 below shows the level of variation in the reports of one instance with 24 participants in my experiment (so all 24 participants watched and reported on the same enactment of the scene). The findings show wide variation in verb choice – in column one there are nine variants of the verb describing the same process (e.g. ‘entered’, ‘walks in’), in column two there are eight variants of the process of placing the bags (e.g. ‘puts’, ‘dropped’, ‘placed’, and in column three there are thirteen variants of the verb (e.g. ‘took’, ‘leave’ grabbed’), and so on.

ID	First verb used	second verb	third verb	Fourth verb	Fifth verb
----	-----------------	-------------	------------	-------------	------------

PB92	entered	to put	dropped	took	
PB93	walks in	puts	puts	picks ... up	picks ... up
PB94	came in	put	took	picked up	
PB95	come inside	puts	leave		
PB96	entered	put	put	picked up	picked up
PB97	came into	put	put	picked up	
PB98	entered	put	picked... up		
PB99	walked in	set	grabbed		
PB100	came in	put	picking...up	picked up	
PB101	entered	dropped	picked... up		
PB102			pick up		
PB103	came in	put			
PB104	came into	placed	switched		
PB105	left	left			
PB106	entered	put	took...back		
PB107	walked into	placed			
PB108	walked	put	picked...up		
PB109	came in	placed	picked...up		
PB110	comes in	places	grabs		
PB111	left	left	took		
PB112	came into	placed	picked ... up		
PB113	came in	put	put	took	
PB114	came into	placed	placed	picked up	
PB115	comes in	put	takes		

<Table 1 near here> Table 1: Author variation in verb choice in 24 participants of the ‘white plastic bags’ experiment

To return to serial 34, it could be argued that the officers copied out one (or other) statement for economy rather than to collude to falsely blame fans. However, this is not the case. There are deviations from the verbatim ‘template’ that do not support copying for economy as differences in expression are more verbose in parts rather than more linguistically economical. Thematically, the verbosity is interesting because it concerns alcohol consumption. I will offer two examples. For the first, the sentence numbered (iii) above appears in a fifth officer’s statement in sentence (iii²) below. I have marked additions with underline to signal that they do not appear in *Extract 1* while substitutions are marked with *italics*:

(iii²) A large number of these supporters were in fact still drinking alcohol from beer/lager cans and bottles of spirits *and at this junction* they were *stopped* and *told* to leave the intoxicants at this location.

This officer has added detail to the verbatim sentence in (iii), firstly, by inserting an epistemic marker ‘in fact’, and secondly, by elaborating on the ‘alcohol’ (marked with underline).

These additions unnecessarily render a more complex statement and so an argument that aligns similarity to economy is difficult to sustain. I say ‘unnecessarily’ because the addition of ‘alcohol from beer/lager cans and bottles of spirits’ contains referentially equivalent terms (i.e. ‘alcohol’ + ‘beer/lager cans and bottles of spirits’). The italicised elements ‘stopped’ and ‘told’ substitute for ‘halted’ and ‘asked’ but otherwise the sentence is grammatically and lexically similar to (iii). The preoccupation with alcohol is foregrounded and is a key semantic category for most of the changes in the remaining statements. This brings us to the second example. Two of the statements in the serial – Turner’s and Sherratt’s are almost verbatim copies of each other (see HIP), except for one sentence which is foregrounded because of one particular deviation (underlined):

(iv) These drinks consisted of a variety of canned beers and lagers. (Turner)

(v) These drinks consisted of a variety of canned beers and lagers, bottles of wine, bottles of sherry. (Sherratt)

The addition of the over-lexicalised alcohol begs the question, to what purpose are they being put in these statements? It should also be pointed out that CCTV footage of the area on the day showed that no such alcoholic drinks were being carried or consumed. It is now widely documented that the officers’ claims (and corresponding claims of other SYP officers) were strongly refuted by fans and many residents (HIP 2012; Inquest findings 2016; Scruton 2016; Canning 2018; 2020), and in 2016 by the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron. Moreover, Theresa May, Home Secretary at the time, commended the fans’ ‘public spiritedness’ and acknowledge the ongoing ‘hostility, opposition and obfuscation’ they have faced for the 27 years preceding the 2016 inquests. May also alluded to the false narrative constructed by the SYP, saying that, ‘the authorities that should have been trusted, have laid blame and tried to protect themselves instead of acting in the public interest’ (May 2016).

Conclusion

Using the examples from the serial 34 officers, this analysis has shown how police officers colluded to contrive a biased narrative of a deadly crush that served the interests of the investigating police force. Examining the lack of variation across the serial's statements demonstrates how, and the extent to which the authorities 'tried to protect themselves' (Theresa May 2016) by laying blame upon the fans, by saturating their statements with key themes (e.g. alcohol), elaborating on negative behaviours, and inviting negative inferences of causation between alcohol consumption, late arrival, and the crush. Using stylistic analysis helps us see the patterns of language use in the officers' accounts of the day. Where stylometry stops short at identification (of linguistic elements), text-focused stylistics goes further and invites analysis of those patterns. Thus, stylistics offers ways of investigating not just language forms and the occurrences of such forms in a text or texts, but their meaning potential, too. Stylistics considers pragmatic inference, relevance, and implicature, whereas these aspects are not the focus of stylometry. The former, then, helps us see how meanings are arrived at through what is explicitly presented but also what is implied. In short, a stylistic approach to text analysis affords us the ability to identify and analyse the structural, syntactic, pragmatic, and lexical similarities within the SYP statements (yielding 84% similarity across the full statements including 17-gram units) and compare them to the significantly less similar (and shorter) plastic bags narratives where the greatest overlap is found in 3-gram strings. Given the brevity of the 90-second 'action' that the plastic bags narratives express, one might expect to find greater levels of linguistic overlap; after all, there are only so many ways one can reference a 'white plastic bag'. Conversely, given the nature and length of the hours of events captured by the SYP officers in their statements, one would expect to find significant levels of variation. Yet the opposite is the case in the SYP statements – this raises some interesting questions in relation to idiolect and authorship. In his work on authorship analysis, Grant (2010) argues that the 'linguistic preferences' speakers make reflect their 'different linguistic experiences' (512), and that one 'idiolectal question' might be to ask what makes 'one individual [...] use 'carry', whilst another individual [...] use 'bring' (513). When up to nine individuals use exactly the same idiolectal preferences then the question that has to be asked is which one wrote the lot?

Future directions

Stylistics is developing a firm foothold in the discipline of forensic linguistics. For example, pragmatic theories of relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1986, Clark 1996, 2013) can help tease

out seemingly non-relevant patterns of inclusions in officers' reports of domestic abuse (Lynn and Canning 2021) that correspond with patterns in (lenient) case outcomes. Additionally, the concept of transitivity has been used in the forensic analysis of texts to uncover victim-blaming strategies in police officers' reports to prosecutors of domestic abuse cases (Canning 2021). Any forensic discourse situation in which agency and intention is under scrutiny lends itself well to a transitivity analysis. Multimodal texts can also yield interesting patterns. For example, Karoline Marko's study (2020) explores whether sociolinguistic author profiling can be made on the basis of emoji use. Communication is developing all the time, and so memes, gifs, and other multimodal methods of communication provide more diverse elements to authorship than has previously been the case. In smartphones and tablets the use of the autocorrect function might problematise authorship or skew patterns and preferences of use, and so offers an interesting angle into authorship analysis. Another issue to consider regarding authorship analysis is that analysing the surface form of a text or corpus of texts does not necessarily tell us who the author is, only what the characteristics of the text are (it is not the role of forensic linguists/stylisticians to determine authorship in any case, but rather to report on likelihood supported by analysis). (It would be useful to consider Goffman's concepts of 'author', 'animator', and 'principal' in authorship analysis cases. See Goffman 1981). Given the many options open to us to communicate with each other (social media and smartphones) the medium and mode of communication plays an important role in any forensic linguistic analysis. For instance, threat assessment or hate speech may be more or less felicitous depending on the mode of communication. A case in point is the sorry tale of Twitter (now X) user Paul Chambers made a 'joke' threat to Robin Hood airport in 2010 saying he would 'blow' it 'sky high' if they did not 'get [their] shit together'. He was subsequently arrested and convicted of sending 'menacing electronic communication' (BBC News). Chambers was later released on appeal on the grounds that he didn't really mean it and the 'threat' did not satisfy the felicity conditions necessary to deem it such. Apparently, it was all just a bit of ill-judged banter. Way to go, Paul. Chambers's tweet raises an important question – does a public social media post carry the same gravitas and convey the same illocutionary force as a private threat would?

Stylistics is often referred to as a 'toolkit' (Leech and Short 2007), and that toolkit offers a range of methodological approaches to texts that may be of interest to analysts of investigative interviews. For example, speech and thought presentation can analyse reporting

clauses and evidentiality in reports of exchanges or the interview transcripts that precede those reports. A pragmatic approach using politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, see also Bousfield 2023) can analyse politeness moves which can help us understand the mechanics of power differences in investigative interviews (compare a fraud interview with a powerful CEO alongside a police interview with a powerless petty thief, for example). Such analyses may help investigators to develop rapport, an essential component in eliciting evidential information in investigative interviews.

One of the challenges with doing forensic stylistics, and indeed, any forensic linguistic analysis is access to data. Judicial institutions are rarely open to scrutiny, and laws of confidentiality and data protection mean that access to forensic texts is difficult, if not impossible. Some key databases have emerged over the last few years that go some way to addressing problems of accessibility – the Aston Institute for Forensic Linguistics at Birmingham has developed ‘FoLD’, a repository of forensic data that serves as ‘a permanent, controlled access online repository for malicious communication data, investigative interview data, and forensic evidence validation data for both speech and text’. You can access it here: <https://www.aston.ac.uk/research/forensic-linguistics/databank>. Additionally, the online repository ‘ForensicLing’ established by Tammy Gales (2014) and maintained by Dakota Wing, provides numerous resources and case studies of interest to forensic stylisticians. The site is available here: <https://forensicling.com/>.

Related topics

Critical stylistics, foregrounding, multimodality, modality, systemic functional linguistics, cognitive poetics, schema theory, quantitative approaches, politeness theory, relevance theory, speech and thought presentation.

References

Ferraz de Almeida, F., and Drew, P. (2020) ‘The fabric of law-in-action:’formulating’the suspect’s account during police interviews in England, *International Journal of Speech, Language & the Law*, 27(1): 35–58.

Argamon, S., & Koppel, M. (2012). A systemic functional approach to automated authorship analysis. *Journal of Law and Policy*, 21: 299–316.

Bakhtin MM (1986) 'The problem of the text in linguistics, philology, and the human sciences: An experiment in philosophical analysis'. In: Emerson C and Holquist M (eds) M.M.

Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, pp. 103–131.

Bauman, R., and Briggs, C. L. (1990), 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19: 59–88.

Brown, P., Levinson, S. C. and Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*, volume 4. Cambridge University Press.

Burke, M. (2005). How cognition can augment stylistic analysis. *European journal of English studies*, 9(2), 185-195.

Canning, P. (2018). "“No ordinary crowd”: foregrounding a ‘hooligan schema’ in the construction of witness narratives following the Hillsborough Football Stadium disaster', *Discourse & Society*, 29(3): 237–255.

Canning, P. (2020 'Retelling Hillsborough: A critical stylistic analysis of witness statements'. In. M. Lambrou (ed.) *Narrative Retellings: Stylistic Approaches*, pp. 143–161.

Canning, P., Ho, Y., & Bartl, S. (2021) 'Worlds of evidence: Visualising patterns in witness statements in the aftermath of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster', *English Text Construction*, 14(1): 25–67.

Cameron, David. *Hillsborough inquest verdict: Prime Minister's statement*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hillsborough-inquest-verdict-prime-ministers-statement>

Clark, B. (1996) 'Stylistic analysis and relevance theory', *Language and Literature*, 5(3): 163-178.

Clark, B. (2013). *Relevance theory*. Cambridge University Press

Clayman, S.E. (1993) 'Reformulating the Question: A Device for Answering/Not Answering Questions in News Interviews and Press Conferences', *Text* 13(2): 159–88.

- Coulthard, M. (1994a) 'On the use of corpora in the analysis of forensic texts', *The International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law*, 1(1): 27–43.
- Coulthard, M. (1994b). *Powerful evidence for the defence: an exercise in forensic discourse analysis. Language and the Law*, 414–427.
- Coulthard, M., Johnson, A. and Wright, D. (2017). *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics: Language in Evidence*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fill, A.F. (1986) 'Divided Illocution in Conversational and Other Situations and some of its Implications', *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 24(1): 27–34.
- Gales, T. A. (2010) *Ideologies of violence: A corpus and discourse analytic approach to stance in threatening communications*. University of California, Davis.
- Gales, T. (2015). The stance of stalking: A corpus-based analysis of grammatical markers of stance in threatening communications, *Corpora*, 10(2), 171-200.
- Goffman, Erving (1981) 'Footing'. In *Forms of Talk*. E. Goffman, ed. Pp. 124-159. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hall, P. (2008) 'Policeseak'. In *Dimensions of forensic linguistics*. J. Gibbons and M.T. Turell (eds.). John Benjamins, pp. 67–94.
- Haworth, K. (2006). The dynamics of power and resistance in police interview discourse. *Discourse & society*, 17(6): 739–759.
- Haworth, Kate (2010) 'Police interviews as evidence'. In Malcolm Coulthard & Alison Johnson (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of forensic linguistics*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Haworth, K. (2018) 'Tapes, transcripts and trials: The routine contamination of police interview evidence', *The International Journal of Evidence & Proof*, 22(4): 428–450.

Heffer, C. (2002). 'If you were Standing in Marks and Spencers': Narrativisation and Comprehension in the English Summing-up. In *Language in the legal process* (pp. 228-245). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Ho, Y., Lugea, J., McIntyre, D., Wang, J., & Xu, Z. (2018). Projecting (un) certainty: A text-world analysis of three statements from the Meredith Kercher murder case. *English Text Construction*, 11(2): 286–317.

Juola, P., Sofko, J., Brennan, P. (2006) 'A Prototype for Authorship Attribution Studies', *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 21(2): 169–178.

Grice, H.P. (1972) 'Logic and Conversation'. In Cole, et al. *Syntax and Semantics: Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). Brill.

Komter, Martha L. (2002) 'The suspect's own words: The treatment of written statements in Dutch courtrooms', *Forensic Linguistics* 9(2): 168–92.

Komter, M.L. (2003) 'The construction of records in Dutch police interrogations', *Information design journal* 11 (3): 201–213.

Leech, G. N., and Short, M. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose*. Pearson Education.

Labov, W. and Waletzky, J. (1967) 'Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 7(1–4), 3–38.

Lea, S. J., & Lynn, N. (2012). Dialogic reverberations: police, domestic abuse, and the discontinuance of cases. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 27(15), 3091-3114.

Malsch, M., Kranendonk, P. R., De Keijser, J. W., Komter, M. L., Boer, M. D., & Elffers, H. (2018). Reporting on police interrogations: Selection effects and bias related to the use of text, video and audiotape. *Investigative Interviewing: Research and Practice*, 9(1), 61-76.

Marko, K. (2020) 'Exploring the Distinctiveness of Emoji Use for Digital Authorship Analysis', *Language and Law / Linguagem e Direito*, 7(1–2), 36–55.

Martin, J. R. and White, P. R. R. (2005) *The Language of Evaluation: appraisal in English*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

May, Theresa. (2016) *Oral Statement to Parliament. Determinations and findings of the Hillsborough inquests* (27 April 2016).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/determinations-and-findings-of-the-hillsborough-inquests>.

McMenamin, G. (2020) *Routledge Handbook of Forensic Linguistics*.

Molek-Kozakowska, K. (2017). Stylistic analysis of headlines in science journalism: A case study of New Scientist. *Public Understanding of Science*, 26(8), 894-907.

McMenamin, G. R. (1993). *Forensic Stylistics*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Nini, A., & Grant, T. (2013). 'Bridging the gap between stylistic and cognitive approaches to authorship analysis using Systemic Functional Linguistics and multidimensional analysis', *International Journal of Speech, Language & the Law*, 20(2): 163–172.

Price, H. (2022) *The Language of Mental Illness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roig, M. (2005) Re-using text from one's own previously published papers: an exploratory study of potential self-plagiarism. *Psychological Reports*, 97(1): 43–49.

Scott, Jeremy (2017) Cognitive poetics and creative practice: beginning the conversation. *New Writing* 15(1): 83-88.

Scruton, P. (2016) *Hillsborough: The Truth*. Mainstream Publishing.

Shuy, R. (2003) 'Forensic Linguistics', in M. Aronoff and J. Rees-Miller (eds). *The Handbook of Linguistics*. Blackwell, pp. 683–691.

Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Stokoe, E., & Edwards, D. (2008). Did you have permission to smash your neighbour's door?' Silly questions and their answers in police—suspect interrogations. *Discourse studies*, 10(1): 89–111.

Tiersma, P. and Solan, L.M. (2002) 'The Linguist on the Witness Stand: Forensic Linguistics in American Courts', *Language* 78(2): 221-239. Linguistic Society of America

Visonà, M. W. (2021). Predicting veracity in online hotel reviews using types of reported speech, speaker identity and quotation marks. *International Journal of Speech Language and the Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1558/ijssl.20600>

Vrij, A. (2015) Verbal lie detection tools: statement validity analysis, reality monitoring and scientific content analysis. In P. A. Granhag, A. Vrij and B. Verschuere (eds) *Detecting Deception: Current Challenges and Cognitive Approaches* 1–35. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

Wang, J., Ho, Y., Xu, Z., McIntyre, D., & Lugea, J. (2016, July). The visualisation of cognitive structures in forensic statements. In *2016 20th international conference information visualisation (iv)* (pp. 106-111). IEEE.

Wright, D. (2019) “You can’t sit with us”: the value of non-forensic data in forensic linguistics. Plenary at The Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics (GSFL) Roundtable in Forensic Linguistics and Forensic Phonetics. University of Graz, Austria, September 5–8, 2019.

Wright, D. (2013) ‘Stylistic variation within genre conventions in the Enron email corpus: developing a text sensitive methodology for authorship research’, *International Journal of Speech, Language & the Law*, (1):

Appendix

Sentence number	PC Gant	PC Cobb	PC Ward	PC Turner	Sergeant Sherratt (serial lead)
1	We were instructed to form a filter lane of offices and to inform the supporters that all alcoholic drinks would be left at this location.	We were instructed to form a filter lane of offices and to inform the supporters that all alcoholic drinks would be left at this location.	We were instructed to form a filter lane of offices and to inform the supporters that all alcoholic drinks would be left at this location.	PC SHERRATT instructed my Serial to form a filter lane of officers along this pavement and the pavement on the opposite side of the carriageway and requested us to inform any supporters passing this position that alcoholic drinks should be left there and taken no further.	I instructed my Serial to form a filter lane of officers along this pavement and the pavement on the opposite side of the carriageway and requested them to inform any supporters arriving at their location that alcoholic drinks should be left at that location.
2	From this position you can see a good distance up this Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could see I saw that there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway.	From this position you can see a good distance up this Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could see I saw that there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway.	From this location you can see a good distance up Halifax Road and as far as I could see there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups of 10-12 abreast on both sides of the carriageway.	As I arrived at this location and took up this point I could see a good distance up Halifax Rd and as far as the eye could see I saw that there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approximately 10 abreast on both sides of the carriageway coming towards us.	As I arrived, at this location and took up this point I could see a good distance up Halifax Road and as far as the eye could see I saw that there was a continuous flow of Liverpool supporters in groups approx. ten abreast on both sides of the carriageway coming towards us.
3	The majority of these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	The majority of these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	The majority of these supporters were of the lower age bracket (less than 30 years old) and it was very apparent at this time that a large amount of these supporters had consumed alcohol.	The majority of these supporters were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.	The majority of these were males in the lower age bracket, it was very apparent to me that a large amount of alcohol had been consumed by the vast majority of these men.
4	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location.	A large number of these supporters were in fact still drinking alcohol from beer/lager cans and bottles of spirits and at this junction they were stopped and told to leave the intoxicants at this location.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location.	A large number of them were still drinking on their way towards the ground and a large number of them were halted and asked to leave their intoxicants at this location.
5	Some of them left their drinks, others insisted on consuming them at this location.	Some of them left their drinks, others insisted on consuming them at this location.	Some of them did leave their drinks, but others insisted on consuming the contents of their can/bottles before leaving them at the scene.	Some of them left their drinks, others insisted on consuming them at this location.	Some of them left their drinks, others insisted on consuming them at this location.
6				These drinks consisted of a variety of canned beers and lagers.	These drinks consisted of a variety of canned beers and lagers, bottles of wine, bottles of sherry.
7				The whole of the wall outside The Gate public house became heavily littered with these objects.	The whole of the wall outside The Gate public house became heavily littered with these objects.
8	Generally they were all of good behaviour, they were drunk but not incapable or disorderly.	Generally they were all of good behaviour, they were drunk but not incapable or disorderly.	Generally they were all of good behaviour, they were drunk but not incapable or disorderly.	Generally these supporters were all of good behaviour, they were drunk, but not incapable or unduly disorderly.	Generally these supporters were all of good behaviour, they were drunk but not incapable or unduly disorderly.
9	From me and the other officers taking up this position the thing that became most apparent to me other than their drunken states was how late thousands of them had left it to go to get into the ground.	From me and the other officers taking up this position the thing that became most apparent to me other than their drunken states was how late thousands of them had left it to go to into the ground.	The thing that became apparent to me now at this time (1445 hours) was, how late it was, for hundreds of them to be still walking toward the ground, and still further, what were the queues like at the turnstiles, and how long would it be before most of them would get inside the ground to see a football match.	It was apparent to me from the time I commenced my position at this location how late these thousands of drunken Liverpool supporters had left it to go to the ground in such a mass hoping to get into the ground before the commencement of the game.	It was apparent to me, from the time I commenced my position at this location, how late these thousands of drunken Liverpool supporters had left it to go to the ground in such a mass hoping to get into the ground before the commencement of the game.
10				I knew that there was little likelihood of them being there for the kick-off.	Having personal knowledge of the distance to the Leppings Lane end from my location I knew that there was little likelihood of them being there for the kick off.
11				I felt it hard to understand why these persons should travel so far to allegedly support their team and then (a) leave it far too late to get to the ground and (b) be in such a drunken condition so as not to be able to fully appreciate the match from the obtained admission.	I felt it hard to understand why these persons should travel so far to allegedly support their team and then, (a) leave it far too late to get to the ground and, (b) be in such a drunken condition so as to not be able to fully appreciate the match when they obtained admission.
12	This heavy mass of persons continued without any significant gaps appearing until about 1510 hours	This heavy mass of persons continued without any significant gaps appearing until about 1510 hours		This heavy mass of persons continued without any significant gaps appearing until about 1510 hours (1510).	This heavy mass of persons continued without any significant gaps appearing until about 1510.