



UK  
COACHING

SPORTS  
CULTURE AND  
COMMUNICATION  
RESEARCH  
COLLECTIVE

Talk 1:

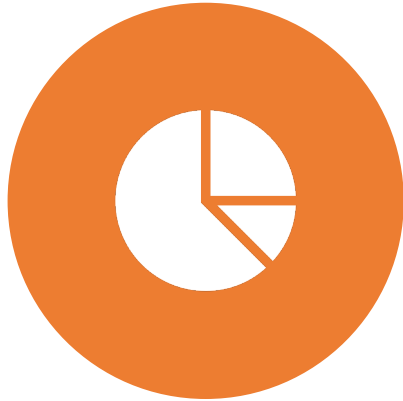
Introduction to Applied Linguistics:  
What do we do and how is it relevant to  
developing sports coaches?

Dr Kieran File

# Today at a glance

Time slot	Session focus	Lead speaker
9:30-10:00	Welcome, introductions and coffees	
10:00-10:45	Introduction to Applied Linguistics: What does an applied linguist do and how is it relevant to developing sports coaches?	Kieran File
10:45-11:30	The language of leadership: language choices and leadership style.	Stephanie Schnurr and Anastasia Stavridou
11:30-11:45	Coffee break	
11:45-12:30	Learning from athlete stories: what do athletes tell us about transition and how could coaches use these insights to improve team cohesion?	Daniel Clayton
12:30-13:00	Lunch	
13:00-13:30	Tour of Warwick's new Sport and Wellbeing Hub	
13:30-14:15	Humour in sports teams: a typology of humour styles in sports teams and their implications for group cohesion.	Sol Wolfers
14:15-15:00	The coach-player relationship: can coaches empower their players through their language choices?	Kieran File
15:00-15:15	Coffee break	
15:15-16:20	Round table discussion: applying linguistics to language, culture and communication issues in your context.	All
16:20-16:30	Closing	

# Today as a mission (for us)



Share insights from our research on language use in high performance sport



Raise the profile of Applied Linguistics as a tool through which to study social issues in sport



Provide practitioners and high performance sports advisors with a language to approach discussions and studies of coach language use



What do Applied Linguists do?



Linguistics: a typology of  
language analysis approaches

*Linguistics*  
*Phonetics and phonology*  
*Morphology and syntax*  
*Semantics*  
*Sociolinguistics*  
*Dialectology*  
*Psycholinguistics*  
*Computational linguistics*  
*Historical-comparative linguistics*  
*Cognitive linguistics (language acquisition)*  
*Geographical linguistics*  
*Descriptive linguistics*  
*Ethnolinguistics*  
.....

Sociolinguistics: exploring social meaning in language use

## Principles of an Applied (Socio)Linguistic approach

- Study social life in natural settings (wherever possible) using authentic language use
- Collect and work from data up to see how people use language to construct their social worlds (a person-oriented account)
- Focus on all manner of linguistic phenomena, no matter how mundane or seemingly unimportant
- Support any broader claims about social life with evidence in the data and with respect to the context speakers are operating in
- Aim for depth over breadth, specificity over generalisability

# TASK:

- What is going on in this interaction?
- Who are person 1 and person 2?
- What can you work out about their roles?

1. Person 1: do you know what the programme is tomorrow
2. Person 2: yep
3. Person 1: what are you supposed to be doing tomorrow
4. Person 2: going to that sponsor event==
5. Person 1: ==and then what
6. Person 2: training I think
7. Person 1: when are you coming to training
8. Person 2: two o'clock
9. Person 1: so + so where were you this afternoon for PD
10. Person 2: nah I just got here for PD==
11. Person 1: ==where were you before that for weights
12. Person 2: nah cos I didn't get the email so John text me
13. Person 1: so what is- whose whose email has John got
14. Person 2: possibly a different one
15. Person 1: well you better go and friggin see him now and /check\ that he's got the right details
17. Person 2: /yeah\ {nods}
18. Person 1: okay + fucking don't want any more fuck ups {said as he is walking away}
20. Person 2: yeah

Description

Interpretation



Critical  
reflection





# What insights can a linguist generate?

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- We highlight how social life works in interaction
  - We provide illustrations and accounts of authentic interaction and language in use
  - We highlight norms in interactional practices and processes (the Interaction Order)
  - We draw attention to how people negotiate complex social circumstances through language use
  - We diagnose social issues participants appear to be negotiating
  - We unpack beliefs and expectations that appear to underlie social practices

# What topics do we contribute linguistic insights to?

Understanding *how* big and often ambiguous social processes *work*, like...

- Leadership
- Relationships
- Identities
- Team work
- Cohesion
- Transition
- Socialisation
- ...



Our specific  
interests:  
language use  
and application  
in sport

“Our research interests include:

- How can coaches and players communicate effectively with each other?
- How do communication choices help and/or hinder team work and team cohesion?
- How does humour and banter function in professional sports teams?
- How do leaders in professional sports teams use language?
- How can we help foreign players adjust to life in British sports clubs?
- How can managers, coaches and players use language in the media to manage their impressions?

The language of  
leadership:  
language choices  
and leadership style

- **Some key questions we will address in this talk:**
  - How is leadership done in a basketball team?
  - Who is (not) doing the leading?
  - What is the role of language?
  - How can looking at language help us understand leadership?
- **Details of the setting this research was conducted in:**
  - An all male basketball team in the UK
- **Big social processes this research contributes understanding to:**
  - Leadership and teamwork

Learning from  
athlete  
stories: what do  
athletes tell us  
about transition?

- **Some key questions we will address in this talk:**
  - How can a focus on storytelling help us understand player transitions in teams?
  - How do shared stories serve to socialize new players and create cohesion?
- **Details of the setting this research was conducted in:**
  - University men's football team; university women's rugby team; university coaches
  - 3 year case study focus on men's team
  - 30 interviews; observations of key events; access to club documents, emails, etc.
- **Big social processes this research contributes understanding to:**
  - Team socialising practices

Team cohesion &  
sports teams:  
How team  
members negotiate  
cohesion through  
humour.

- **Some key questions we will address in this talk:**
  - How is humour used in sports teams?
  - What is team cohesion?
  - How does humour work in negotiating team cohesion?
- **Details of the setting this research was conducted in:**
  - 1 professional + 1 elite male football team from Germany
  - Data collection: May 2016 and June – October 2017
  - Observations, audio-recordings, interviews → focus on spoken data
- **Big social processes this research contributes understanding to:**
  - Challenging the understanding of team cohesion in sports teams
  - Illustrating how cohesion is negotiated (constructed, enhanced, threatened) through language and specifically humour



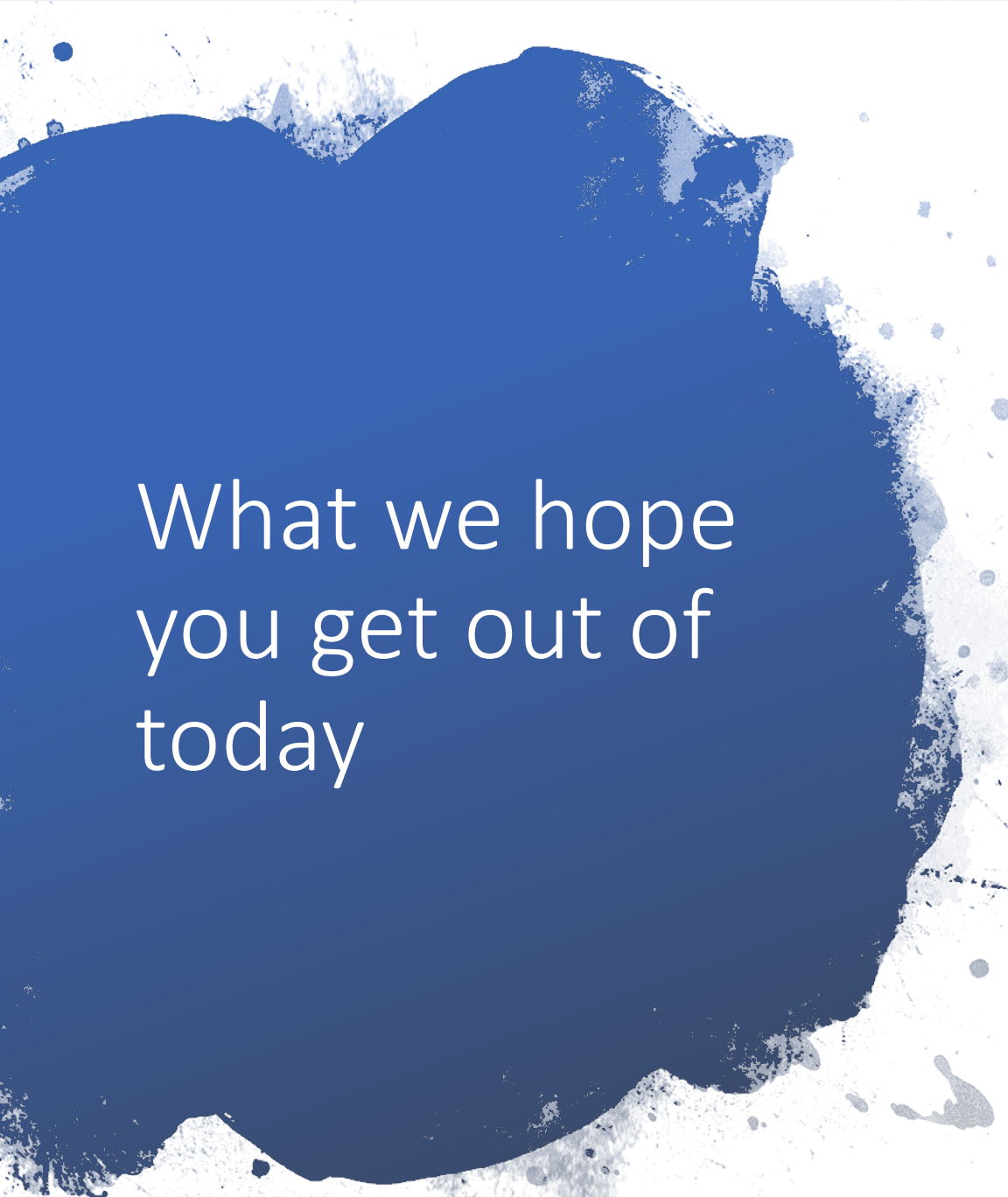
The coach-player relationship: can coaches empower their players through their language choices?

- **Some key questions we will address in this talk:**
  - What do language patterns between coaches and players tell us about power and empowerment in sports teams?
  - Is empowerment actually possible in typical coach—player interactional rituals and routines?
- **Details of the setting this research was conducted in:**
  - New Zealand professional rugby team
  - Three weeks of ethnographic research
  - Over 60 hours of recorded/observations interactions
- **Big social processes this research contributes understanding to:**
  - Professional relationships (and leadership)

# Roundtable session

- **Purpose:** to provide a space for you to (further) consolidate your understanding of how linguistics can be applied to examine issues in high performance sporting contexts
- We can do that by...
  - **Reflecting:** Giving you the chance to design and ask further questions, raise points, dig a little deeper on issues we have discussed today (and beyond)
  - **Connecting:** Trying to mind-map/draw semantic connections between the different topics of the day (and beyond)
  - **Designing:** Helping you consider how you might explore a particular issue in your context through attention to authentic language use
- Something else?





What we hope  
you get out of  
today

- An exhausting but thought-provoking and fun experience
- A greater or further appreciation of how language works in sports teams
- A better understanding of the social issues linguists are interested in and can explore
- Some insights to help you on your coach development tasks
- More questions than answers
- Free parking