## CONTEXT

Within teams of any type, cohesion and communication are fundamental for success, especially in a high-level sport context. My study opens academic investigation on the communicative environment within eSport teams. This study was an exploratory development of eSports as a specific context, drawing from literature from sport and small-team studies that accommodate for the high levels of external pressure the athletes experience.

I aimed to investigate the research question of 'What is a successful communicative framework in eSports?' and to create an insightful mechanism that explains the process behind high-pressure decision making.

WHAT IS ESPORTS?

As with traditional sport, eSports are games played by athletes. At the top level, highly skilled players are paid and coached to practice and compete as part of a team, just like any high-level sport. In the same way Ronaldo only plays football, eSport athletes only compete in their area of expertise. The only difference is that it is on a screen and not played on a pitch or court. It draws fans, has the same regular league structures like the NBA or PBL, and even brags teams such as Paris St. Germain and sponsors such as Red Bull, T-Mobile, Nike, and Adidas.
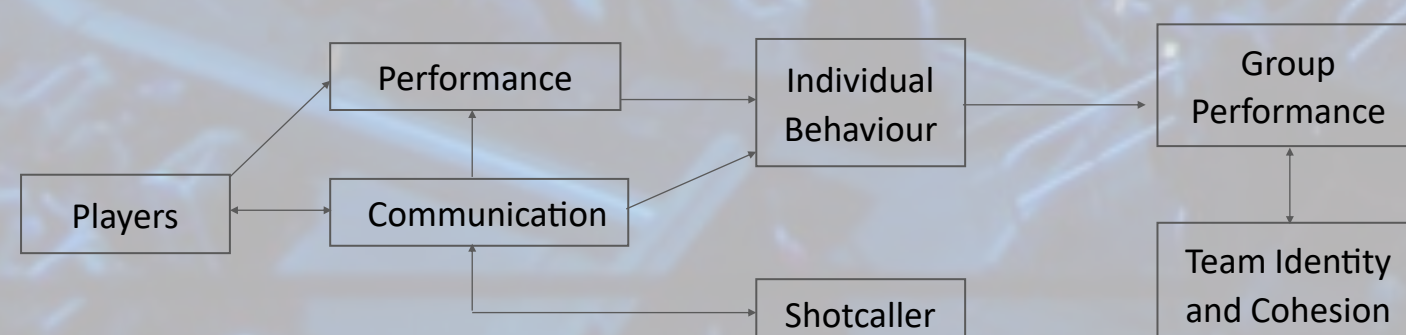
METHODS

4 games (2 hours of total data) of the UK's leading University team were recorded and transcribed. Then a 1 hour interview with a professional manager and other 2nd-hand public data were utilised to draw comparisons to the world-leading teams' in-game conversations.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

I analysed, coded and deconstructed key passages of speech to break down patterns and key terms that were used as linguistic decision making instruments.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

I recorded the frequency of words to strengthen the coding process and to reinforce the indicators that aided the construction of my findings.
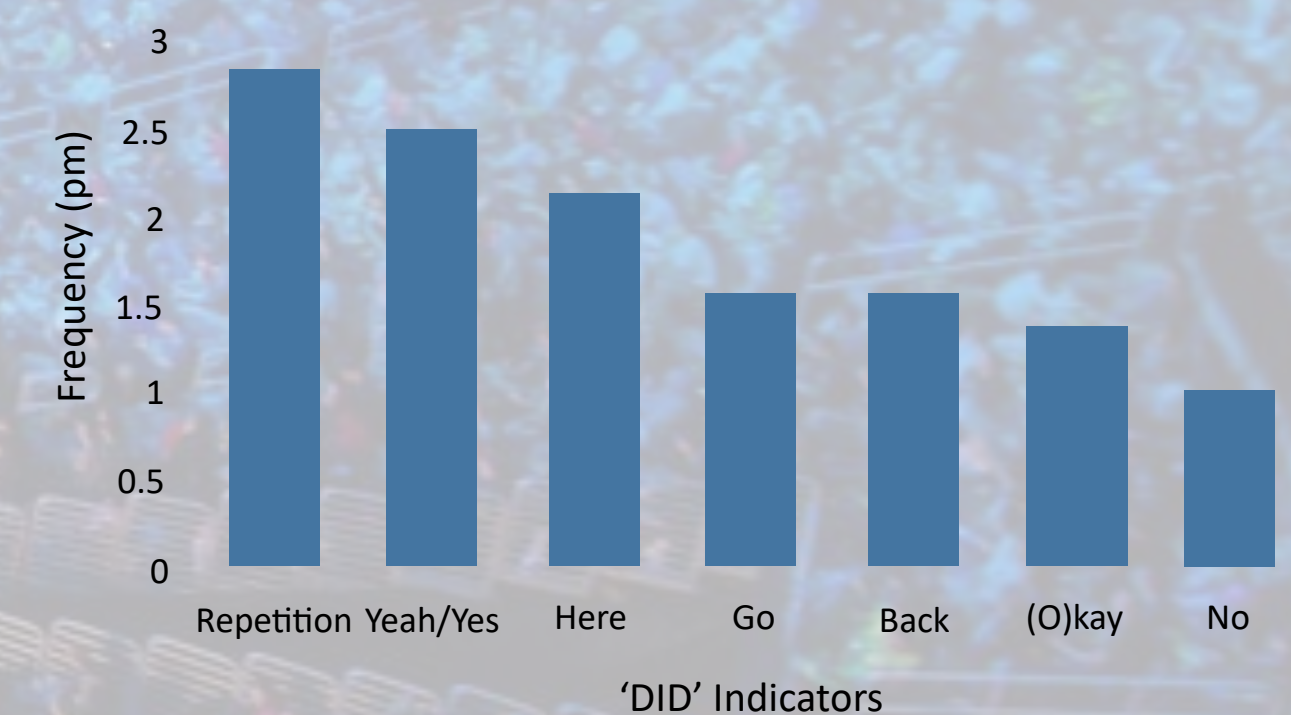
FINAL FRAMEWORK

The conclusions I made at the end of this project is the below framework. This outlines the hierarchical, cyclic structure that forms decisions. The continuous process spans each individual decision and in the space of one 'teamfight' it could be repeated multiple times. The process is a shotcaller-centric system that identifies one individual in the midst of each decision who makes the call as to when and what they focus on. Thus, successfully providing a precise understanding of how professional eSport teams make in-game decisions under pressure.
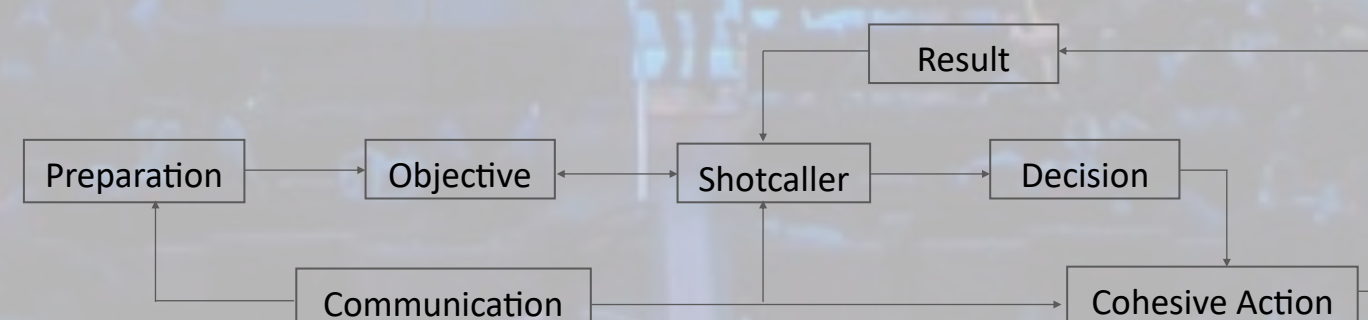
FINDINGS

The findings were a result of in-depth interactional analysis of the most high-pressure situations across the 2 hours of data. From this, I was able to grasp an understanding of why and how the teams use certain indicators to take on the role of 'shotcaller'. The indicators formed what I titled the 'DID' triad of lexicon: Declaratives, Imperatives and Deictic features. These all helped form the developed decision-making framework.

This went on to shape the conclusive decision-making framework for high-level teams.

Bar chart — Frequency (pm) vs 'DID' Indicators: Repetition, Yeah/Yes, Here, Go, Back, (O)kay, No

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ORIGINAL FRAMEWORK

Players → Performance / Communication → Individual Behaviour, Shotcaller → Group Performance, Team Identity and Cohesion

Preparation → Objective → Shotcaller → Decision → Result → Cohesive Action, Communication