

International Sports Commentary Frame and Entertainment: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Commentary Differences in World Series Broadcasts

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Numerous studies examining the portrayals of gender, race, and nationality in sports commentary have been conducted through the years; however, comparative analyses of commentaries from different countries have been rare. This study examined commentary from 3 different countries (the U.S., Chinese Taipei, and South Korea) during a Major League Baseball (MLB) World Series. An entertainment theory schema was adopted and the 3 countries were categorized based on dispositional relativity (affiliation) with MLB. Findings indicate that South Korean broadcasts, which had the lowest affiliation with MLB, were biased toward the Boston Red Sox and presented the most evaluative commentaries; U.S. commentaries were generally positive and contained the largest portion of informative comments; and Chinese commentaries were unbiased and also provided a large number of informative comments. This implies that sports games using the same visual images can be framed differently by commentators based on the disposition (affiliation) level of audiences.

Keywords: framing analysis, entertainment theory, disposition theory, team identification

Baseball is one of the world's favorite sports. In the United States, Major League Baseball (MLB) is called the national pastime and has been evaluated as the best professional baseball league in the world. However, recently MLB has not been successful in bringing in television audiences in the United States. The 2009 World Series, in which the New York Yankees beat the Philadelphia Phillies, had a mere 11.7/19 average household rating/share, up 39% over the 2008 World

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Series, in which the Philadelphia Phillies defeated the Tampa Bay Rays (Hiestand, 2009). Although baseball is still considered the national pastime in the United States, football reigns supreme in the ratings. For example, in 2010, Super Bowl XLIV, in which the New Orleans Saints defeated the Indianapolis Colts, yielded a 46.4/68 average household rating/share. It was a 10% increase from the Super Bowl the previous year and the first TV program that surpassed the last episode of *M*A*S*H* in terms of the number of viewers, with 106.5 million to 105.97 million (the latter still the second-highest TV rating behind *M*A*S*H*), in history (Gardner, 2010). Brown and Bryant (2006) insist that MLB can no longer claim to be the national pastime in the United States.

On the global stage, however, MLB has been steadily growing as one of the world's favorite pastimes. In fact, in 2009, MLB International (MLBI) had agreements with 50 television and radio partners to broadcast MLB games in 15 languages to 233 countries and territories around the world. Another example of MLB's global growth is that many (45%) current MLB players were born outside of the United States. In this vein, the MLB commission launched the World Baseball Classic, an international baseball tournament, in March 2006 to satisfy the global fan base. The success of the tournament also led to the second series classic in March 2009 and showed organizers that the future of baseball may depend on its popularity and growth in East Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, Chinese Taipei, and China. In Japan alone, the Nippon Professional Baseball league had revenues of more than \$1 billion in 2007 and 20 million people in attendance (Whiting, 2007). Specifically, MLBI has helped the 10-year-old China Baseball League from the beginning, by inviting teams to MLB spring-training camps and hosting a national baseball tournament in mainland China. The efforts of MLBI cumulated with Chinese television airing the first national high school baseball tournament in 2006. In addition, MLB sent the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres to China to promote baseball for the Beijing Olympics. The efforts of MLBI to promote its league to the world have brought 256 foreign-born players from 16 different countries to MLB; foreign-born players not only create fans in their home countries but also facilitate profitable television contracts for MLB with foreign media outlets such as the *Nippon Hoso Kyokai*, or Japan Broadcasting Corporation, and the Korean Broadcast System. The enormous success of players from Japan and South Korea—such as Nomo Hideo, Suzuki Ichiro, Hideki Matsui, and Chan Ho Park—has ignited national pride and a passion for baseball among many people, leading to higher ratings on television for MLB.

It is important to note how MLB games are broadcast in terms of strategic perspectives for developing a loyal worldwide fan base. Bryant and Raney (2000) argued that television broadcasting eradicated the limitation of stadium capacity and provided a new element that creates audience enjoyment. Because sports commentators are the mediators between the audience and the game, they have a certain amount of power, knowledge, and respect. According to Bryant and Raney, this role becomes even more powerful and important if the game is held more than 3,000 miles away. Sports commentators certainly play a pivotal role in accelerating the growth of baseball's popularity. Boyle and Haynes (2004) wrote that "sport is 'a rich arena of myth, image, narrative and a compulsive world of story-telling'" (p. 4). Thus, sport broadcasting is in much the same vein as drama

in terms of generating enjoyment for audiences. Sports are often unpredictable, generate enormous amounts of suspense, and create drama through their characters. Peterson and Raney (2008) said, “As with fictional drama, sports suspense surely involves a viewer’s relative uncertainty about the game’s outcome” (p. 549). Sportscasters are able to accentuate this drama by creating suspense, sustaining tension, and making the audience feel like they have participated in an important and fiercely contested historic moment (Comisky, Bryant, & Zillmann, 1977). Sports commentators provide the audience with information and fill the knowledge gap left by the limitations of the visual image of television. Comisky et al. (1977) added one more role to sports commentators, adjoining histrionics to the “human drama of athletic competition” (p. 149).

Through the years, researchers have examined the impact of sports commentators, and the results have shown that sports commentary has sociological influences based on gender stereotypes and ethnic biases, as well as increasing the enjoyment and immersion level of the audience (e.g., Billings, 2008; Billings & Eastman, 2002; Bryant, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1977; Comisky et al., 1977; Eastman, Brown, & Kovatch, 1996). However, sports commentators in non-U.S. countries speaking non-English languages have not gathered much attention from researchers. In this context, the main focus of this study was to analyze different dramatization tactics of sports broadcasters of three countries—the United States, Chinese Taipei, and South Korea—during the 2007 World Series.

Literature Review

Typically, sports-commentary analyses are conducted from a sociological perspective, analyzing the intensifying of social bias against gender (e.g., Billings, 2008; Billings, Angelini, & Eastman, 2005; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Eastman & Billings, 1999) and racism (e.g., Denham, Billings, & Halone, 2002; Eastman & Billings, 2001). The entertainment perspective, however, has not been investigated since the earliest attempts in sports-commentary analysis (e.g., Bryant, Brown, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1982; Bryant et al., 1977; Comisky et al., 1977). Of course, it is an inevitable fact that this kind of analysis is highly influenced by framing analysis in political communication.

Sports Commentary Analysis

Framing Theory. The framing effects of news content are the changes in knowledge activation patterns of consumers (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). News-content frames are expressed by the parameters of story length, length of sound bites, genre of story, and congruency of audio and visual tracks (Watt & Krull, 1977); these factors help viewers, listeners, or readers interpret certain events (Guffman, 1974). According to Wenner’s transactional model (1989), society, the production complex, the mediated sports content, and audience experience with sports content interact with each other to influence how sporting events are framed. It is important to note that sports audiences are surrounded by the mediated-sports complex—which includes sports organizations, media, and journalists. Therefore,

the audience transactions of mediated sports content and the experience that the audience can use create a framework of interpretation for them.

Sports-commentary analyses share foundations with framing theory and framing studies. Billings and Eastman (2003) proclaimed that the “portrayals of gender, ethnicity, and nationality are altered through a network-controlled shaping function in which discourse and images are manipulated to appeal to the desired or anticipated Olympic viewing audience” (p. 571). In addition, Sullivan (2006) pointed out the importance of dramatic framing of sports commentary by emphasizing the emotional elements of sports. In terms of the perspective dimension, Billings and Eastman’s perspective probed sociological implications of sports commentary, whereas Sullivan’s perspective focuses on individual implications of commentary with entertainment or marketing perspective. Those two perspectives may represent different point of views, but they also have something in common; in both cases, they determined that commentary does have an effect on audiences.

Sociological Perspective. Billings and Eastman (2003) indicated that sports-coverage analysis, including commentary analysis, could be divided into three major categories: gender, race, and nationality. Gender differences—which are often referred to as sexual-difference issues—have been the most common subject among sports-commentary-analysis studies (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Feder-Kane, 2000). Duncan (2006) insisted that commentators have different culturally constructed metaphors for female and male roles. Usually, masculine is expressed as the default position of our society and feminine has been articulated as *the others*. For example, in Duncan and Brummett’s (1987) analysis of the 1986 men’s and women’s college basketball national championship, the findings indicated that commentators often trivialized the role of female players. Halbert and Latimer (1994) analyzed the commentary of a unique tennis match between Martina Navratilova, a female player, and Jimmy Connors, a male player. They focused on different descriptions of the same type of play made by the two players. They found that Navratilova’s strong serve was portrayed as a serve that set her apart in *women’s* tennis, whereas Jimmy Connors’ strong serve was declared the best serve in the game, without any gender qualification. In addition, Navratilova was criticized 41 times and praised 29 times, while Connors was criticized only 19 times and praised 70 times. The authors also emphasized that Navratilova was depicted as emotional and vulnerable, while Connor was characterized by his showmanship. Billings et al. (2002) also revealed that male athletes were often characterized by their physicality and athleticism, while female athletes were mostly characterized by their positive consonance, personality, appearance, and background. Eastman and Billings (1999) analyzed the 1994, 1996, and 1998 Olympics telecasts and found that female athletes’ level of attractiveness was more often commented on than their skill, while male athletes were praised for their athleticism and strength. Billings and Eastman (2002) also analyzed the 2000 Sydney Olympics and found that commentators often attribute male athletes’ success to their athleticism and commitment while attributing female athletes’ failure to their lack of concentration.

Another favorite topic of sociological sports-commentary analyses is the issue of race or ethnicity (e.g., Bruce, 2004; Denham et al., 2002; Eastman & Billings,

2001; Wonsek, 1992). The research just examined also found that Black athletes were praised for their athleticism and physicality, while White athletes were often praised for their leadership and intelligence. Grainger, Newman, and David (2006) argued that by praising Black athletes for physicality, commentators were portraying them as naturally athletic, emphasizing their ability to jump and their speed. Duncan, Messner, Williams, and Jensen (1990) found that Black athletes were often called by their first name, whereas White athletes were mainly called by their last name, indicating a hierarchy of naming. However, Bruce (2004) found that a mere 1.4% of commentary from a Final Four semifinal game called Black players by their first name, compared with 28% percent of commentaries for White players. Bruce discovered a reason for this reduction by interviewing one of the commentators, who explained that he had rehearsed his commentary styles after studying previous research on naming—which possibly gives scholars of sociology motivation to study this aspect of sports commentary.

Finally, Billings and Eastman (2002) examined nationality bias in sports commentary—specifically, the frequency of comments that were positively inclined toward the United States. Eastman and Billings (1999), not surprisingly, found that 63% of the Olympics commentary was about Americans. Billings and Eastman (2002) also pointed out that only 30% of the most-mentioned athletes were non-Americans. However, Billings and Eastman (2003) noted that commentators for the 2002 Winter Olympics mentioned non-American athletes much more than in previous Olympic Games. They concluded that progress is being made toward nationality-bias equity in sports commentary. They added that broadcasters could not understand the importance of pursuing “equity” in sports coverage because of their profit motivation. Meanwhile, scholars who have taken an entertainment perspective agreed with the broadcasters’ side and concentrated on the micro level rather than the macrosociological perspective.

Entertainment Perspective. Research has shown that commentary on sporting events has direct effects in encouraging audience immersion and can boost excitement about a sporting event in mediated spectatorship environments. Bryant and colleagues started analyzing sports commentaries and their effects on the individual as early as 1977 (e.g., Bryant et al., 1982; Bryant et al., 1977; Comisky et al., 1977). Their first systematic research examined sports commentaries from football broadcasts among the three national broadcasting networks of the time, ABC, NBC, and CBS (Comisky et al., 1977). They found that commentators actively created dramatic comments. This finding showed that sports commentators were not only filling a gap between the actual game and the audience but also strengthening the concept of the “human drama of athletic competition” (p. 149). Comisky et al. also conducted an experimental study of an ice hockey game and found that participants did not perceive rougher play with or without commentary as more intense or violent than normal play with the commentary stressing rough action. Later, Bryant et al. (1982), manipulating the commentary at a tennis match, found that participants recorded higher enjoyment on the comments when the rivalry was well expressed. Sullivan (2006) introduced the role of commentators of two types: play-by-play and color. According to Sullivan, play-by-play commentators took the objective side and summarized the action captured by the cameras, whereas color commentators often used their athletic jargon as game experts and bridged the

gaps in action, such as between pitches in baseball or between plays in a football game. Sullivan also highlighted their second function, dramatization, which was very important to maximize viewers' attention. Usually, dramatization included emphasizing aggressiveness, animosity between players, and iconic phrases—such as *Do you believe in miracles?*

Arguments of entertainment theorists might be contradictory against sociological perspective, which has emphasized equity of sports commentary; however, it clearly indicates the effectiveness of sports commentators.

Entertainment Theory. According to Bryant and Miron (2002), research on entertainment focuses on consumers' beliefs and their media choices. They argued that when watching entertainment, consumers might not know what they want to watch or be able to articulate the reason behind it. According to Zillmann and Bryant (1985), selective exposure, or affective dependent theory, posits that exposure to certain stimuli is an instinctive outcome drawn by physical body response. According to mood management theory, a practical form of selective exposure theory, people choose media content in accordance with their mood. This mechanism is highly related to humans' biomechanism. Bryant and Davies (2006) explained excitatory homeostasis as “the tendency of individuals to choose entertainment to achieve an optimal level of arousal” (p. 183). Basically, people tend to maximize their exposure to pleasurable stimuli and minimize exposure to aversive stimuli (Zillmann & Bryant, 1985). Disposition theory, as introduced by Zillmann (1980), suggests how to create pleasurable stimuli. According to this theory enjoyment is derived from viewing drama; therefore, liking characters' successes and disliking characters' failures is a key element of enjoyment. Finally, Zillmann, Bryant, and Sapolsky (1979) introduced the idea that disposition formation and higher levels of enjoyment can occur based on participants' team affiliation.

In terms of drama, Raney (2004) explained the mechanism of disposition in drama: “Once characters are liked, we are able to empathize with their plights and hope for their triumph over them. In fact, the stronger the positive feelings, the stronger our empathic reaction” (p. 351). Sports commentators' role of dramatizing sports games here includes creating a protagonist and an antagonist. In this vein, Owens and Bryant (1998) conducted an experiment on the impact of hometown announcers, in which announcers gave commentary favoring a hometown high school football team. Two groups of participants—students from the hometown high school and students from other high schools—watched the televised football game. The results of this experiment supported disposition theory, in that students from the hometown high school expressed much higher enjoyment than the other group.

MLB World Series Commentary Analysis

This research began with the assumption that there may be a neutral condition in sports. For example, according to MLB's Web site (www.mlb.com), the World Series has aired on Fox since 2000 and has been televised by a national broadcasting network since 1947. Because the World Series is nationally telecast, most nationally syndicated sports commentators do not typically attempt to create a protagonist

or antagonist between the teams but rather maintain some form of neutrality. In addition, as Sullivan (2006) mentioned, both play-by-play and color commentators mostly provide informative comments to fill the gap between pitches in baseball and use dramatic comments to draw an emotional appeal from audiences. Although Sullivan (1991) categorized aggressive commentary as dramatic comments, we consider positive or negative evaluative comments as dramatic comments, noting that disposition theory emphasizes creating a protagonist and an antagonist among the cast of characters. Furthermore, we examined commentary from three different countries, the United States, Chinese Taipei, and South Korea. Even though its popularity has waned in recent years, MLB has been the national pastime of the United States for the past 125 years. Thus, commentators in the United States have an audience that is more familiar with MLB than audiences in other countries. Chinese Taipei also had a strong MLB following, as there have been many MLB players from Chinese Taipei, such as Chien-Ming Wang, who was a successful pitcher for the Yankees before he was injured in 2009. The third country examined, South Korea, also had a large MLB following—mainly because of the success of Chan Ho Park in the mid 1990s. However, since 2007, there has been an increase of Korean MLB players returning to their homeland to play with the Korean Baseball Organization. That said, audience affiliation toward MLB teams or the league itself from the three countries should be different. Bearing this in mind, two research questions were posited:

RQ1: Are commentators in these three countries delivering different amounts of informative and evaluative comments?

RQ2: Does commentary from the three countries favor one of the two World Series teams, the Boston Red Sox and the Colorado Rockies?

To answer those questions, we conducted content analysis of televised comments.

Method

Sample

We limited our analysis to the televised commentaries in the United States, Chinese Taipei, and South Korea of MLB games in 2007 World Series games. Commentary depends on the telecast of visual images it accompanies. According to MLB.com, MLB made a contract for national broadcasting with FOX TV, which, in turn, shared video feed of the event with Chinese Taipei and South Korea. Consequently, the three countries' commentaries come from the same visuals, except for any additional data texts or text advertisements inserted by FOX TV or its contractual affiliates. The 2007 World Series resulted in a four-game sweep by the Boston Red Sox over the Colorado Rockies. The 12 games (four games for three countries) studied were divided into top- and bottom-inning segments, with the first and second game of the series only having a top of the ninth inning. After coding each country individually, this led to 210 inning segments being analyzed for commentary.

Independent Variable: Affiliations

As we have explained, the three countries were categorized as high-, medium-, or low-affiliated countries. The United States was categorized as a highly affiliated country, mainly because it is the home of MLB and baseball had been a national pastime of Americans for 125 years. Chinese Taipei was considered a medium-affiliated country, because it currently has a star player and two major MLB contracts with television broadcasting stations in the China region. According to MLB.com, MLB reached an agreement with ESPN Star, which covered Asia and FTV in Chinese Taipei. In addition, Chien-Ming Wang played for the Yankees, who competed to advance to the American League Championship Series. South Korea was considered the lowest affiliated country, because it did not have a star player after Chan Ho Park passed his career peak in 2001. In addition, most Korean major league players had returned to South Korea to play in the Korean domestic baseball league by 2007.

Unit of Analysis

We employed commentary analysis to measure sentence-centered frequency. Specifically, coders analyzed one commentary sentence as a basic unit of analysis. If one sentence contained a player's information and the next sentence provided the same information, this case was counted as just one, even though there were two sentences. On the other hand, if one sentence of commentary possessed information, as well as evaluations, this one sentence was coded more than once in each coding cell (specific measures will be explained).

Game numbers were assigned as a simple 1 through 4. Inning numbers were coded 1 and 2, with 1 being the top of the inning and 2 as the bottom of the inning. A game has 9 innings and 18 top or bottom innings, with the exception of games that end at the top of the ninth inning—such as World Series Games 1 and 2. The team that the comment was referring to was also coded; the Boston Red Sox were coded as 1, Colorado Rockies as 2, other MLB teams as 3, and commentary about others that are not related with any teams, as 4. Many of the commentaries in the game broadcasts mentioned not only the two opposing teams competing in the World Series but also other MLB teams—such as the New York Yankees and the Chicago Cubs—as well as the MLB system as a whole.

Dependent Variables

The commentaries on the games were coded for informative commentary and evaluative commentary (positive and negative). Simple play-by-play commentary, such as *strike*, *struck him out*, or *two strikes and one ball* was not analyzed.

Informative Commentary. Informative commentary was defined as commentary that explained plays through objective description, including stats, anecdotes, histories, and so forth. Informative commentary had four subcategories—(a) game process, (b) player, (c) team, and (d) MLB. (a) Comments that described the game itself included introducing the next batter, mentioning the score, and explaining the mood of the stadium crowd. (b) Comments that described a player included mentioning the hitter's batting average, explaining what types of pitches

the pitcher makes, and introducing the player's history or similar anecdotes. (c) Comments that described a team included explaining hitting order, mentioning team history, and introducing the team's bullpen. (d) Comments that described MLB in general included comments on MLB and World Series history, as well as past World Series highlights.

Evaluative Commentary. Evaluative commentary was defined as commentary that expressed praise or blame or a descriptive comment containing subjectivity, opinion, or prediction. This commentary had four subcategories—game process, player, team, and MLB. Comments about the game included whether the game is exciting or boring, how the crowd is behaving, or inserting personal opinion into predicting game processes—such as describing an upcoming opportunity or suggesting an appropriate alternative hitter. Comments about a player included how a player looks, whether a player is struggling, and so on. Comments about a team included how the team looks or anecdotal stories about the team's journey to the World Series. Comments about MLB in general included how the current MLB season had gone or a descriptive history of MLB. Each evaluative comment was categorized as negative or positive. (Each coder wrote down special features, which are unique or interesting points of sports commentary. Which topics the commentators discussed and which adjectives they used the most were recorded and discussed after coding was finished.)

Results

Intercoder Reliability

Scott's π —which is equivalent to Krippendorff's α for nominal variables—was employed as a measure of intercoder reliability in this study. First, all coders took 2 hr of training to establish complete knowledge of the coding protocol. Second, two coders independently analyzed four innings of the American World Series Game 1, and the resultant Scott's π was .85. Out of 36 extracted innings of World Series games, four innings (~10%) randomly selected were coded independently by two coders for each Chinese and Korean televised game. The intercoder reliability estimate of each country was satisfactory, with all above the acceptable point (the Chinese games' Scott's π = .80; the Korean games' Scott's π = .83). Once we reached satisfactory reliability estimates, three coders analyzed the remaining sample innings. A total of 10,613 sentence-centered commentary units were analyzed, and the total time duration of the games was 48 hr, 9 min.

Informative Versus Evaluative

As Figure 1 indicates, the ratio of commentaries in the United States—which was operationalized as the country with the highest affiliation level—revealed 73% informative and 27% evaluative commentaries throughout the games. Chinese Taipei commentaries were 62% informative and 38% evaluative. Interestingly, Chinese Taipei commentators tended to convey more information and evaluations than the other two countries ($n = 4,596$ out of 10,613). The commentary of South Korea, operationalized as the country with the lowest affiliation level, consisted of 59% informative comments and 41% evaluative comments.

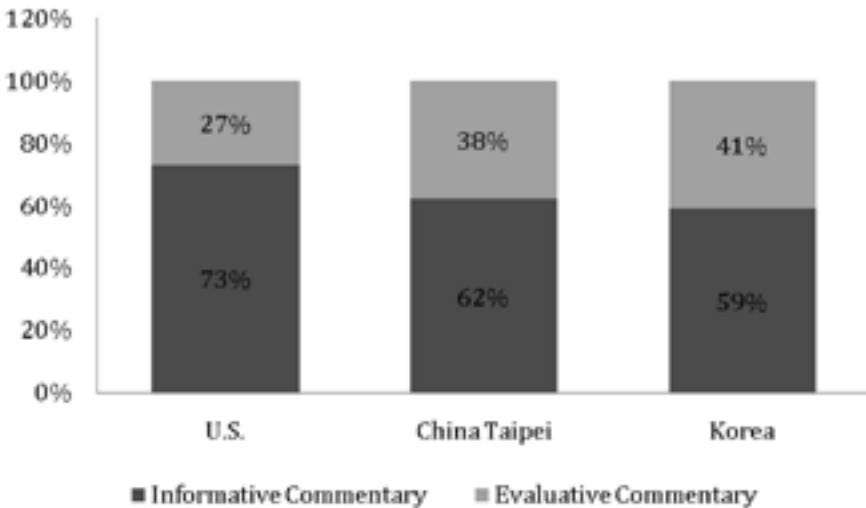


Figure 1 — Ratio of informative and evaluative commentary in the broadcasts of the World Series.

Nonparametric tests were conducted, because our dependent variables did not show normality. We conducted a Kruskal–Wallis test to determine whether the countries' amounts of informative and evaluative commentaries were statistically different. The Kruskal–Wallis test showed that the amounts of informative commentaries were significantly different among the three countries, $\chi^2(2) = 38.466$, $p < .01$. In addition, the amounts of evaluative commentaries were also significantly different among the three countries, $\chi^2(2) = 26.317$, $p < .01$. Bonferroni's multiple comparison was also conducted to look at the data in greater detail. It was found that Chinese Taipei commentaries contained a significantly large amount of evaluative comments ($p < .05$) and South Korean commentaries contained a significantly small amount of informative comments. However, considering that Chinese Taipei broadcasts contained more commentary than the other two countries' broadcasts ($p < .05$), it was still safe to say the country with the lowest affiliation contained a lower proportion of informative commentaries.

Subject of Commentary

As Table 1 indicates, South Korean commentaries mainly focused on players (63% of total informative commentary, 63% of total evaluative commentary). Other countries' broadcasts also contained large proportions of commentary about players; however, in the U.S. and Chinese Taipei broadcasts, commentaries about players tended to be evaluative. The U.S. commentaries were especially heavy on player commentary when evaluative comments were used. Much like Chinese Taipei and South Korea, informative commentaries from the United States were balanced between the game process and the players. For Chinese Taipei commentary, half the informative comments and over 60% of evaluative commentaries focused on a player.

Table 1 Ratio of Informative and Evaluative Commentary's Subcategories

Source	Commentary	Game process	Player	Team	MLB
United States	Informative	31%	46%	19%	4%
	Evaluative	12%	65%	20%	3%
Chinese Taipei	Informative	27%	50%	18%	5%
	Evaluative	21%	61%	17%	1%
Korea	Informative	20%	63%	14%	3%
	Evaluative	14%	63%	20%	3%

Note. MLB = Major League Baseball.

Table 2 Ratio of Two Teams' Commentary

Source	Boston Red Sox		Colorado Rockies	
	Total	Breakdown	Total	Breakdown
United States	53%	Info 38%	47%	Info 33%
		Eval-PO 12%		Eval-PO 9%
		Eval-NE 3%		Eval-NE 5%
Chinese Taipei	57%	Info 38%	43%	Info 25%
		Eval-PO 16%		Eval-PO 12%
		Eval-NE 3%		Eval-NE 6%
Korea	52%	Info 31%	48%	Info 27%
		Eval-PO 19%		Eval-PO 12%
		Eval-NE 2%		Eval-NE 9%

Note. Info = informative commentary; Eval-PO = positive evaluative commentary; Eval-NE = negative evaluative commentary.

Positive Versus Negative

Table 2 indicates that all three countries' commentators spoke about the Boston Red Sox more often and contained more positive commentaries about the Red Sox. Specifically, the gap between South Korean broadcasts' positive comments toward Boston and toward Colorado was the largest among other comparisons. The U.S. commentator, notably, kept a balance on positive commentary between the two teams. Nonetheless, a Kruskal–Wallis test disclosed that the amount of negative comments from the three countries' comments was not different, whereas all other variables turned out to be significantly different. For positive comments toward Boston, the result was $\chi^2(2) = 21.091, p < .01$. For negative comments toward Colorado, the result was $\chi^2(2) = 19.613, p < .01$. For positive comments toward Colorado, the result was $\chi^2(2) = 15.095, p < .01$. Bonferroni's multiple comparisons explained that Chinese

Taipei commentators made significantly more positive comments about Boston and Colorado ($p < .05$) than other commentators did. However, South Korean commentaries contained a significantly smaller amount of negative comments about Boston ($p < .05$) than those of the other commentators.

Discussion

Commentaries on sporting events have direct effects that encourage the audience's immersion and boost the excitement of sports under mediated spectatorship environments. This analysis of commentary patterns from countries where MLB has increased in popularity had several implications. Not only does it help develop an understanding about different baseball cultures and perceptions, but also it serves as a fundamental guideline for facilitating MLB globalization.

In this vein, the current study sought to find out the different patterns of commentary, assuming that different levels of dispositional affiliations to sporting events make for different commentary strategies. Based on the results and discussion among coders, there were three major findings that we can report.

The first finding was an answer to the research question about whether commentators from the three countries delivered different amounts of informative and evaluative commentary. We found that the lower the disposition level a country had, the more it depended on evaluative commentaries, which focused on affective stimuli for telecasting World Series games. This result can be explained from two perspectives. The reason that the U.S. commentary is well balanced might be that the U.S. commentators have been educated about not being biased, as Bruce (2004) pointed out. In addition, based on disposition theory, the U.S. commentators have no need to be inclined to a certain team, because they could assume that many Americans already identified with certain teams or with MLB in general. However, the reason that South Korean commentators created protagonists and antagonists can be explained by the assumption that they used evaluative comments to elevate drama in the broadcasts. The first finding supported the theory that South Korean commentators used more dramatic comments than other commentators did.

The second finding was an answer to the research question about whether commentaries from the different countries were inclined toward a certain team in the World Series. The results indicated that South Korean commentators heavily favored the Boston Red Sox. Surprisingly enough, the U.S. and Chinese Taipei commentators did not show a notable inclination toward one team or another. The reason for this should be in the same thread as the reason for the first finding. The coders' discussion revealed that when they analyzed evaluative commentaries of Korean commentators, they found that they focused on exclamatory evaluations such as "We are now watching world-class defensive play," "Amazing hitting skill," and "Josh Beckett shows what a Major League ace pitcher is supposed to look like." More extraordinarily, South Korean commentaries made negative evaluations more frequently toward Colorado Rockies players. In World Series Games 3 and 4, for example, South Korean commentators placed blame on Colorado's hitters for not focusing on hitting continuously, as well as their poor hitting strategy. South Korean broadcasts also inserted game summaries, team histories, or player

introductions at the beginning of each inning. This may indicate that they were creating protagonist and antagonist characterizations for many potential viewers who were not familiar with MLB.

The final finding was about the characteristics of the U.S. commentary. In the United States more than the other two countries, commentary particularly focused on game-processing information. Various more deeply informative comment styles such as introductory interviews with each team's hitting, pitching, and head coaches; employing field reporters' analysis; and disclosing interesting anecdotes about MLB players functioned to encourage audience excitement and involvement in the games. In addition, U.S. commentary was rarely negative. Comments made by U.S. commentators contained 91% positive evaluation, with only 9% negative. In other words, U.S. commentators tended to make positive evaluations about the teams rather than criticizing or blaming them. In addition, game-processing comments including game expectations and predictions, such as the pitcher's next ball combination, occupied a greater proportion of the evaluative commentaries.

It is no surprise that sports commentators from the three countries showed different broadcasting styles. The U.S. commentators seemed to keep balance in their comments between the Boston Red Sox and the Colorado Rockies. In addition, they limited their comments about the players and focused more on game process. Chinese Taipei commentators provided a massive amount of information to their audience. Their comments contained more evaluation than the U.S. comments did; however, like the U.S. commentary, the comments were not biased toward either team. South Korean commentaries contained the most evaluative comments and were unbalanced positively toward the Boston Red Sox. Considering the fundamental ideas of Bryant et al. (1977) and Comisky et al. (1977)—that dramatization enhances the level of enjoyment of spectators of mediated sports—the fact that South Korean commentators efforts had more leaning comments with more evaluative senses did not seem absurd, because MLB was not the most popular sport in South Korea. In addition, the U.S. commentators' efforts to provide more informative and unbiased commentary can also be well founded, because they have audiences with already established preferences toward certain teams.

The selective exposure phenomenon claimed by Zillmann and Bryant (1985) states that people are only exposed to what they would like to consume. It is much truer in the new online arena, where sports audiences are no longer passively surrounded by the mediated-sports complex suggested by Wenner (1989). Mahan and McDaniel (2006) insisted that "sports fans have gone digital to communities across the world equipped with the means to produce their own online content" (p. 424). As previous studies have revealed and this study supported, establishing disposition by dramatization of mediated sports is much more necessary to attract sports audiences in this digital era. It also implies that any imbalances in sports, as observed in many sociological commentary studies, would be solved by efforts on the part of sports broadcasts. For example, women's sports have been known as less enjoyable, partly because of their lower production values, such as infrequent use of slow motion and less dramatic opening commentary (Duncan, 2006). Unpopular sports have received less coverage, as revealed in previous studies; it would be more interesting to see if they have enough commentary to make audiences more interested.

Limitation and Future Study

Like other commentary analysis or discourse analysis, it is difficult to determine the real motive of sports commentators in this study. In addition, as a cross-cultural study, cultural aspects should be controlled appropriately. In other words, our findings can be explained by cultural differences, not by a different dispositional situation. Furthermore, other countries' commentaries—for example, Japanese commentaries—should be analyzed, because three Japanese players played for the World Series teams.

However, this study provided different views from those of previous commentary studies, because it focused on audience enjoyment, which is a fundamental assumption of selective exposure. In other words, it is an actual motivation people have to watch mediated sports. Future studies will also embrace sociological perspective in commentary studies. Sharpening the coding scheme of commentary analysis with more variety of sports, including less popular sports and commentaries from more countries, would suggest more valuable implications to the sports broadcast industry. In addition, surveys of members of the mediated-sports complex (sports organizations, sports media, and sports journalists) would be helpful to shed light on the value of commentary studies.

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