
COACH'S COMMUNICATION DISCOURSE AND PLAYERS' EMOTIONAL LIVING IN FOOTBALL

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- Communication patterns,
- Anxiety,
- Self-confidence,
- DAT,
- Verbal communication,
- CBAS.

Abstract:

The paper investigates coach's verbal discourse and its reflection in players' emotional living (pre-competitive anxiety and self-confidence) during football match. Our research was applied on football coach and youth players of 1. FC TATRAN Prešov in category U14 that are league champions for 2012/2013. Video and audio recordings of coach's communication were captured during match. Recorded materials were coded according to a communication typology and CBAS coding scheme. Sequential analysis of coded material was computed by using DAT software. Players' level of pre-competitive anxiety and self-confidence were diagnosed using CSAI-2R questionnaire. The most frequently used statements posted by coach were instructions and emotional statements with the prevalence of positive ones. Coach posted 66% of verbal statements that occurred individually and 34% in chain sequences when frequent disorders in feedback composition were caused by using punitive or negative emotional statements. Players' perception of motivational climate inclined to MASTERY one (M=5.12) in comparison to EGO one (M=2.66). Players experienced less intensive and less frequent intrusions of somatic (M=1.76; M=2.61) and cognitive anxiety (M=2.01; M=3.06) and higher intensity and frequency of self-confidence (M=3.26; M=4.43).

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication systems are vitally important for the success of any sport team. Coach is a key person who plays important role in creating fundamentals for communication development or maintaining the development of the communication system [12]. Moreover, coach instils the aspects of collective work, time management and team leadership through his own communication [5].

Within the research of social interaction between coach-player [15] refer to chasmal difference between real coach behaviour and preferred coach behaviour by players. Furthermore, the research realized by [7] pointed on the difference between how players perceive communication and behaviour of coach and how coach perceives his own behaviour.

Sport psychologists suggest that the effectiveness of coaching is directly dependent on the perception of coaching by players [17]. Mastery climate surrounding proved itself as more supporting for youth players than ego climate [4]. Comparing to ego oriented players, those who showed higher values of mastery orientation have the increased feeling of competency, the enjoyment of doing sport activity, inner motivation and the amount of given effort [6]. Correlational studies point to the fact that mastery orientation is related to lower levels of

cognitive anxiety and pre-competitive state anxiety [20] and the perception of ego climate positively correlates with higher level of competitive anxiety [14].

On the basis of above mentioned knowledge is therefore inevitable to refer to important aspect in solving the problem of communication effect's diagnosing. Compatibility of perception and awareness of changes in communication stereotype, on the part of coaches and players, makes the application of intervention programmes and diagnosing of communication effect more effective.

THE AIM OF THE WORK

The aim of the study was to compare different diagnostic methods for analysing coach communication discourse in relation to communication effect reflected in motivational climate and the level of pre-competitive anxiety.

THE MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Our research was applied on football coach and youth players of 1. FC TATRAN Prešov in category U14 that are league champions for 2012/2013. The selection of research methods was focused on two main approaches namely for diagnostics of perceived and observed coach's communication behaviours in relation to players' emotional living.

Procedure

For diagnosing *observed coach's communication* discourse, video and audio recordings captured during football match were used. Any coach's communication that occurred during football match was transcribed in programme *Aegisub 2.1.8*. Methods of audio visual observation and transcription of coach's verbal discourse lead off from research task (VEGA č. 1/0455/08) that analyse communication between coach and old school age athletes in ball games: football, handball, volleyball [16].

CODING PROCESS AND ANALYSIS USING CBAS AND DAT

Two methods were used for diagnosing observed coach's communication discourse, the first one using *DAT software programme* [8] that focuses on analysing continuous chain sequences of coach's verbal communications and the second one, using CBAS coding scheme [18].

One transcribed data set was created in which coach's verbal discourse was divided into verbal statements, defined as discrete sentences or phrases spoken by individual [8].

Within the first approach, verbal statements in transcribed data set were coded using *CBAS categories* divided a modified into reactive (*Positive reinforcement, Mistake-contingent encouragement, Mistake-contingent technical/tactical instruction, Punitive verbal/non-verbal reaction, Punitive technical/tactical instruction, Behaviour control*) and spontaneous (*General technical/tactical instruction, General encouragement, Organisation and administration, General communication out of context*).

In the second approach we divided statements in transcribed data set in two groups. The first group consists of independent verbal statements (IVS) that are not part of continuous statement chains (e.g., „Pass the ball“). Continuous statement chains consist of dependent verbal statements (DVS) that created statement chains composed of two or more verbal statements in sequence (e.g., *combination of three statements EVF+→IVF→IVF, “Good job Stefi – Move to the line – Hold your position!”*).

Each message within each verbal statement was coded once only as a type of statement according to a communication typology from Bowers [3] which was modified by Lausic [10]. We partly modified the typology dividing statements in the way: *emotional statements positive, emotional statements negative, action statements, punitive action statements, acknowledgements, uncertainty statements*.

After coding process the sequential analysis and frequency analysis of coded dependent and independent verbal statements was computed by using *Discussion Analysis Tool software DAT* [8]. A software program was created to facilitate the analysis and visualization of discourse patterns in human communications [10]. To define which observed transitional probabilities could be supposed as a „pattern“ in the coach`s discourse, the software DAT computed z scores to determine whether each observed transitional probability was significantly higher or significantly lower than the expected probability tested at alpha $p < .05$ [2].

For diagnosing *perceived coach communication* was used extended version of *The Perceived Motivational Climate Questionnaire in Sport PMCSQ-SK (modified version derived from Newton [13])* that players administrated after training unit. The 67 item scale contains of 6 subscales that identify the dimensions of task/mastery-oriented climate and ego-oriented climate. The task-oriented dimension contains the subscales of co-operative learning (“players help each other to learn”), important role (“each player contributes in some important way”), and effort and improvement (“players feel good when they try their best”). The ego-oriented dimension contains the subscales of punishment for mistakes (“the coach gets mad when a player makes a mistake”), unequal recognition (“only the best players get praise”), and intra-team rivalry (“players are encouraged to outperform the other players”). The participants responded to items on a scale from 1 true to 6 not true.

Players` level of pre-competitive anxiety and self-confidence were diagnosed using *Revised Competitive State Anxiety Inventory CSAI-2R* [11] administrated 30 minutes before football match. Questionnaire diagnoses three dimensions of pre-competitive anxiety (somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and self-confidence) from the aspect of intensity (1-4), direction (-3-3) and frequency (1-7) of intrusions.

RESULTS

THE ANALYSIS OF OBSERVED COACH`S DISCOURSE

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of spontaneous and reactive CBAS categories for investigating observed coach`s behaviours

Spontaneous CBAS categories	freq.	%
General technical/tactical instruction	154	53.66
General encouragement	70	24.39
Organisation and administration	37	12.89
General communication out of context	26	9.06
Total	287	100
Reactive CBAS categories	freq.	%
Positive reinforcement	51	28.65
Mistake-contingent encouragement	5	2.81
Mistake-contingent technical/tactical instruction	66	37.07
Punitive verbal/non-verbal reaction	21	11.80
Punitive technical/tactical instruction	21	11.80
Behaviour control	13	7.30
Others	1	0.56
Total	178	100

Legend: freq.= frequencies

For investigating specific communication patterns within observed coach`s discourse two approaches were applied using two different coding schemes. The first approach dealt with the analysis of CBAS categories that represent spontaneous and reactive coach`s behaviours occurred during match (*Tab.1*). Analysis revealed prevalence of general technical

instructions used by coach (154) as well as mistake-contingent technical/ tactical instructions (66) that were repeatedly posted in a short form to players before and after actions. Higher frequency of positive statements represented by general encouragement (70), positive reinforcement (51) and mistake-contingent encouragement (5) were part of motivational feedback posted by coach. On the other side, data showed that coach used frequently negative verbal statements (punitive verbal and no-verbal reaction = 21, punitive technical/tactical instruction = 21) as a part of formative feedback to players. Sport psychologists consider three levelled feedback (compliment – future intended instruction - reinforcement) to be important for positive players` self-motivation to better performance in comparison with negative motivation to avoid failure [19].

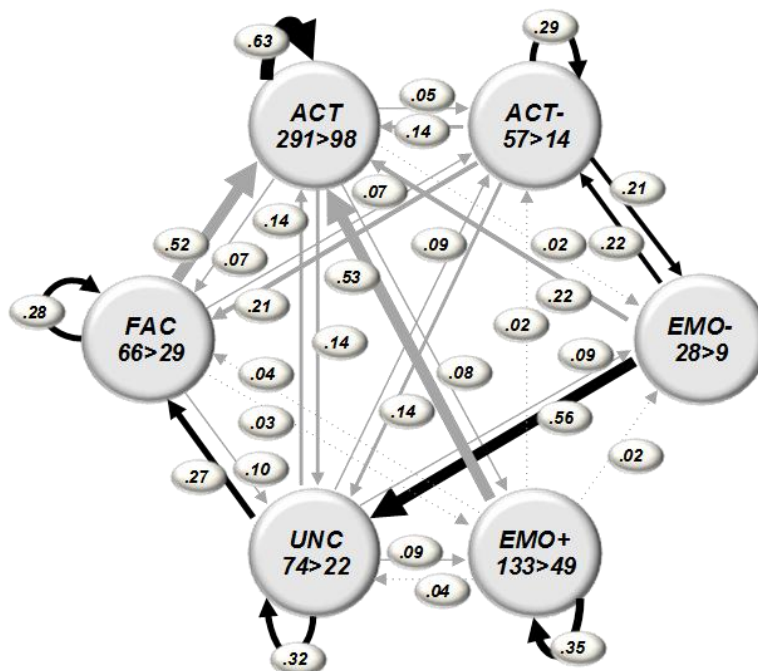


Figure 1 Communication Flow of Coach's Verbal Statements. ACT = action statements; ACT- = punitive action statements; EMO+ = emotional statement positive; EMO- = emotional statement negative; FAC = factual statement; UNC = uncertainty statement; For example: out of 291 instructions (ACT) outspoken by coach, 98 instructions occurred in chain sequence with other statement spoken by the same coach (in 63% the first instruction was followed by next instruction – ACT or in 8% positive emotional statement following instruction EMO+ etc.).

The second approach that dealt with finding out communication patterns using DAT software reveals whether statements posted by coach occurred individually or in chain sequences (*Fig.1*). Similarly like the results that were gained using CBAS coding scheme (revealed utterances with specific function); the most frequent statements posted by coach were dependent and independent instructions ACT (291>98) and emotional statements positive EMO+ (133>49) what is congruent with previous researches [9]. UNC statements occurred 22 times mostly with instruction (ACT) in chain sequence as last word expressing reproach in a question form. Majority of statements were used individually (66%) while 34% of posted statements occurred in chain sequences expressing specific linguistic functions. Analogous to CBAS results, we analysed punitive instructions ACT- (57>14) as well as emotional statement negative (28>9) within “one-shot” negative feedback (19 of 28), less

frequently in chain sequences as a part of continual feedback (9 of 28). The most frequent verbal chains within coach's discourse were: ACT-ACT (63%); EMO+-EMO+ (35%). Communication flow showed that instruction within formative or motivational feedback was preceded by positive reinforcement or encouragement (53%), or by another instruction (63%); however, it was also preceded by punitive instruction (14%) or negative emotional statement (22%) what is not considered to be adequate for ideal feedback.

THE ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED COACH'S DISCOURSE

Table 2 Ego and Mastery Climate Means and Standard Deviations of PMSCQ-SK for investigating perceived coach's

MASTERY Climate				
Dimensions	Q	n	M	SD
Cooperative Learning	7	11	5.18	1.711
Effort/Improvement	18	11	5.5	1.250
Important Role	9	11	5.54	1.246
Others	10	11	3.94	2.121
Total	44	11	5.12	1.672
EGO Climate				
Dimensions	Q	n	M	SD
Intra-Team Member Rivalry	2	11	3.13	2.076
Unequal Recognition	3	11	2.08	1.781
Punishment for Mistakes	13	11	3.28	2.118
Others	5	11	1.19	0.786
Total	23	11	2.66	2.045

Legend: n=number of participants; M=mean; SD=standard deviation; Q=number of questions for each dimension

One of the variable that can be influenced by coach's discourse and behaviour is motivational climate. Results showed (*Tab. 2*) that within mastery climate dimensions players considered their coach as a person who creates surrounding for cooperative learning (M=5.18) through his communication discourse and players identify themselves with their team roles and perceived it through coach's communication (M=5.54). The perception of effort and improvement by players through coach communication was revealed (M=5.5); moreover results of CBAS and DAT analysis remitted on higher frequency of positive reinforcement statement posted by coach. Ames [19] described a mastery climate as one in which coaches define success in terms of self-improvement, task mastery, and exhibiting maximum effort and persistence. Data gained from CBAS and DAT analysis showed on higher posting of punitive and negative emotional statements (*Tab.1, Fig.1*); furthermore, the perception of verbal and non-verbal punishments posted by coach was probably reflected on results within EGO climate dimension (Punishment for mistakes, M=3.28). In all, players' perception of motivational climate inclined to MASTERY one (M=5.12) in comparison to EGO one (M=2.66).

Another variable that can be influenced by coach`s behaviours and communication is the level of pre-competitive state anxiety experienced by players. Results of CSAI-2R questionnaire (**Tab.3**) revealed that players experienced less intensive and less frequent intrusions of somatic (M=1.76; M=2.61) and cognitive anxiety (M=2.01; M=3.06); on the other hand, intensity and frequency of self-confidence experienced before match were higher (M=3.26; M=4.43). Correlational studies point to the fact that mastery orientation is related to lower levels of cognitive anxiety and pre-competitive state anxiety [20]. Unfortunately, data reflected experiencing of intrusions` direction (*whether experiencing is facilitative or debilitating for players*) seemed to be confusing for players.

Table 3 Anxiety and Self-Confidence Means and Standard Deviations of CSAI-2R for investigating inner emotional living of players

Dimensions	Somatic Anxiety (Q-6)			Cognitive Anxiety (Q-5)			Self-confidence (Q-5)		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Intensity scale (1 ↔ 4)	15	1.76	0.95	15	2.01	0.65	15	3.26	0.62
Direction scale (-3 ↔ 3)	15	0.08	1.61	15	0.01	1.46	15	0.95	1.63
Frequency scale (1 ↔ 7)	15	2.61	1.70	15	3.06	1.47	15	4.43	1.53

Legend: n=number of participants; M=mean; SD=standard deviation; Q=number of questions for each dimension

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to compare different diagnostic methods for analysing coach communication discourse in relation to communication effect reflected in motivational climate and the level of pre-competitive anxiety. Finally, following results can be concluded:

a) both approaches revealed that the most frequently used statements posted by coach were instructions and emotional statements with the prevalence of positive ones;

b) 66% of verbal statements were posted individually and 34% in chain sequences when frequent disorders in feedback composition were caused by using punitive or negative emotional statements;

c) players` perception of motivational climate inclined to MASTERY one (M=5.12) in comparison to EGO one (M=2.66);

d) players experienced less intensive and less frequent intrusions of somatic and cognitive anxiety and higher intensity and frequency of self-confidence.

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