FROM CLASSIC CALLS TO MODERN JARGON: DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL CHANGES IN ENGLISH CRICKET COMMENTARY

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Abstract
This study examines lexical innovation and register shift in English cricket commentary between 1990 and 2025 with the goal of understanding the changes in match formats, media practices and technology and how these have impacted on the language of commentary over time. The data for this research is taken from available clips, highlights of the match, and full match commentary available from YouTube, so that coverage of various eras and formats of cricket are available. A purposive sampling method was used to select representative examples of commentary from Test matches, One Day Internationals and T20 matches that enabled specific comparison across formats and time periods. The analysis is informed by the register theory and sociolinguistic style shift theory which together offer a framework for exploring the ways in which language choices are made in relation to the context, audience and purpose of communication. The findings suggest that although the traditional vocabulary of cricket has stayed very stable, a number of lexical additions have been made, especially to the vocabulary, in reaction to the development of faster formats and greater focus on entertainment and analysis. The increasing use of technology and information on computer screens has additionally also led to the use of analytical and evaluative language in commentary. Overall, the study shows that cricket commentary has become a hybrid register balancing tradition and innovation as representing wider changes in the game, in broadcasting practices, audience expectations and in global media environment.
Keywords: *Diachronic, Sports, Cricket, English, Jargons, Commentary, Language, YouTube*

Introduction

Over the years cricket has evolved into various formats such as Test cricket, One Day Internationals, and the more modern form of Twenty 20 cricket, all of which have different paces, strategies, and audience appeal. Alongside the sport itself, cricket commentary has become an integral part of the viewing experience, offering real-time descriptions, analysis, and interpretation of the cricket game. Commentary not only describes what is happening on the field, but it also describes emotion, develops stories, and engages the audience in the cultural and historical aspects of cricket. As the game has spread internationally and adapted to the modern media environment the language of cricket commentary has also changed, making it a rich and meaningful site for linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis.

Cricket commentary plays an important role in the way that audiences understand and enjoy the game. Commentators do more than tell people what is happening on the field; they explain rules, make judgments about players, build excitement, and relate viewers to the match on an emotional

level. Due to the immense changes made in cricket during the last few decades, the language that is used during commentary has also undergone changes. New formats, new rules, and new ways of watching cricket have changed the way that commentators speak and what words they choose.

From 1990 to 2025, cricket transitioned from being primarily played in terms of Test matches and One Day Internationals to fast and entertainment-based games such as T20 cricket. These changes in format have had an impact on the speed, tone and style of commentary. At the same time, technology like Decision Review System (DRS), ball-tracking and on-screen statistics, have become a regular part of the broadcasts that has added new words and new ways of explaining the game. As a result, modern commentary sounds different to previous commentary, even though many traditional cricket terms are still in use.

This research is a study of the changing nature of English cricket commentary, focusing in particular on new words and evolving styles. Using the theory of recent registers and the sociolinguistic theory of style shift research, this paper addresses the changing of the language of commentary in relation to format, audience, and media context. The data is collected from the commentary of matches that can be found on YouTube streaming and match commentary available on YouTube, which focus on the evolution of cricket commentary over generations.

The morphological study of the vocabulary of the cricket game proves that the game is constantly producing new words and increasing the vocabulary, through compounding, clipping, and borrowing, and is in flux (Istiak, 2024). Simultaneously, the overall research into the diachronic semantics helps to remember that, evolving usage patterns of both social and technological nature, meaning change is trackable on corpus-based scales, including changing collocations and distributional profiles (Tahmasebi, Borin, & Jatowt, 2018).

Research questions
1. What are the most significant lexical additions, deletions, and survivals in English cricket commentary between 1990 and 2025?
2. How far do format changes (Tests vs ODIs vs T20s) are responsible for the emergence and stabilisation of new commentary vocabulary?
3. How has the rise of technology and analytical tools influenced lexical choice and semantic framing in commentary?

Research objectives
1. To identify and categorize the major lexical additions, losses, and continuities in English cricket commentary from 1990 to 2025
2. To measure diachronic frequency trends of core cricket terms across three major eras: Test-dominant, ODI-dominant, and T20/franchise-dominant periods
3. To compare lexical evolution across cricket formats (Tests, ODIs, and T20s) in order to determine format-specific contributions to commentary vocabulary change.

Significance of the research
The importance of this research is that it contributes to understanding the development of language in limited discourses about sports over time, in this case English cricket commentary. By looking at lexical change from 1990 to 2025, the study draws attention to the effects of sociocultural change, media change and changing audience expectations on spoken professional registers.

This research contributes to linguistic scholarship by connecting the registers theory and the sociolinguistic style-shift theory in a diachronic perspective, which is an underdeveloped area in

the field of sports linguistics. It also provides a window into the way traditional sporting language is adapting to modern entertainment driven and digital communication environments. Beyond the academic setting, the findings are useful for commentators, media professionals and sports broadcasters, who have a better understanding of the importance of language choices in providing audiences with the relevant engagement and providing expressions of an evolving identity in the globalized sports culture.

Literature review

Comparative sports-commentary research helps to further place cricket in a much wider family of live sports registers. Popov's (2019) doctoral thesis relates cricket to football, tennis and horse racing commentaries and finds common "live-talk" pressures of speed, unpredictability, audience co-presence resulting in similar linguistic solutions such as ellipsis, intonation-like punctuation and formulaic evaluative chunks.

As an exclusive sports register, featuring familiar lexis, syntax, and pattern of evaluation, cricket commentary has gained increasing focus. A prominent example of register-based examination is an analysis by Naveed and Umar (2021) of televised commentary on large-scale cricket (such as the 1992 and 2015 world cups) and who theorize that the commentary is a fully organized register that is arranged by describing the action of the field, alignment by tenor with players and viewers, and mode effects due to the constraints of the live broadcast. They demonstrate that commentators use compressed noun phrases, action verbs (drives, edges, hooks) and fast-clause chaining frequently, which is necessitated by the need to commentate on a fast-moving play at the moment of action (Naveed and Umar, 2021).

Changes of mode are also associated with lexical innovation. The move from radio dominant to TV dominant commentary, and then to digital and social media-integrated broadcasting alters the definition of what is appropriate register. Studies of live text sports commentary (mainly football) describe it as being a hybrid register of spoken immediacy and written features, interactivity, and humor and show that it evolves quickly as platforms change (Meier, 2022; Meier, 2023).

Diachronic corpus work on football live text commentaries from 2003-2020 finds an increasing informality, a greater addressation of fans and a greater lexical playfulness over time (Meier, 2023). Even though this is football, the logic of the media is similar: As cricket commentary becomes multi-platform (TV, streaming, app ball-by-ball feeds), it is likely under similar pressure towards a conversational style, memes and condensed digital shorthand. These researches offer methodological models for the measurement of register shift over time using corpora and frequency-based measures.

Register theory studies stress, which is that field-tenor-mode variables are not static but they reorganize as the social activity changes. Lukin, (2024) revisit Halliday's register model and argues that modern communicative settings often blur boundaries requiring researchers to look at the shifting of situational configurations historically. Applied to the game of cricket, field has changed via new formats, rules and analytics; tenor has changed via commercialization and the emergence of celebrity-commentators and ex-players; mode has changed via camera technologies, third-umpire replays, on-screen graphics and real-time social interaction.

Fatima, Latif, and Arslan (2024) present a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of Pakistani cricket commentary focusing on transitivity processes and their ideological functions. The study finds that material processes dominate the commentary, emphasizing action and performance and

constructing players as active agents in success narratives. Mental and relational processes are used more selectively to evaluate intention, emotion, and responsibility, particularly during moments of failure. The authors argue that these linguistic patterns are not neutral but reflect power relations, national identity, and evaluative bias in sports discourse (Fatima, Latif, & Arslan, 2024).

Ullah, Akbar, Faisal, & Hamid (2025) analyzed Pakistan vs. Australia ODI cricket commentary using Systemic Functional Linguistics. They study finds that the ideational metafunction is realized in the play-by-play representation of actions and events while the interpersonal metafunction is shaped by the evaluative wording which situates the position of players performances as successful, risky or disappointing. The study also underlines the textual metafunction as the appropriate choice of themes and cohesion serve in the commentators to maintain a clear and continuous narration across overs. Overall, the article supports the view that the commentary of the cricket game is not only descriptive but interpretive and crop linguistic choices that is patterned to guide the audience understanding and engagement (Ullah, Akbar, Faisal, & Hamid, 2025)

Saleem and Naeem (2025) investigated gender differences in cricket commentary through a Multimodal discourse approach with a focus on the collaborative construction of meaning through language and non-verbal resources. Their study showed that male and female commentators are different in their use of evaluative language, their descriptive focus and the ways in which they engage their audience within the same broadcast context. The authors contend that cricket commentary is a socially situated form of discourse in which the representation, authority, and interpretation of the game may be shaped by gender. This research is relevant to the studies of contemporary commentary in cricket because it shows how the commentary practices in modern cricket reflect the changing social dynamics in addition to linguistic change (Saleem & Naeem, 2025).

Ali and Mahmood (2022) engage in critical discourse analysis of Pakistani cricket commentary focusing on transitivity patterns in an attempt to understand how meaning and ideology are constructed in sports discourse. Their study revealed that material processes take precedence over commentary with an emphasis on action and performance with the mental and relational processes used in the evaluation of players intention, emotions, and states. The authors believe that these grammatical choices affect how responsibility, success and failure are ascribed to players. This research is relevant to the present study as it shows that the language of cricket commentary is not only ideologically charged but also systematically patterned which is a good foundation for the lexical and discourse change analysis over time (Ali & Mahmood, 2022).

Tanveer and Arslan (2025), Pakistani cricket commentary from a corpus based perspective. Their study revealed that the commentators use interactive markers (frequently) to organize information in a clear way and interactional markers (frequently) to express evaluation, certainty and engagement with the audience. These verbal strategies help the commentators guide the listeners through the complex match situation while at the same time projecting authority and expertise. The authors contend that metadiscourse is central to the persuasive and interpretive nature of cricket commentary as opposed to descriptions of play-by-play action. This study can be relevant to cricket commentary research, as it points to the selection of linguistic choices and their structure of meaning and audience involvement, which can provide understanding in relation to the changing styles of commentary in the real cricket discourse nowadays (Tanveer & Arslan, 2025).

Research Methodology

This study applied a qualitative research method for the study, investigating the changes in lexical choices employed in English cricket commentary over the years, with the data frame being the commentary from 1990 through to 2025. The qualitative approach is appropriate due to the fact that the study seeks to discuss patterns of language use, meanings behind lexical choices, and the social and contextual influences which influence commentary styles. The research takes interpretations of the way and reason why certain expressions, jargon or stylistic turns were used in the different periods of cricket broadcast.

Research design

The research design is a descriptive model that is diachronic in nature. This design enables this study to outline the changes in vocabulary over a thirty-five year timeline and how the language of traditional commentary has evolved into the jargon of modern cricket. The design entails gathering the commentary samples from 3 broad periods, namely early commentary (1991-2000), transitional commentary (2001-2010), and contemporary commentary (2011-2025). These divisions of time are useful to see long-term trends and not be distracted by individual changes. After collecting the data, the study compares the linguistic features in these periods in order to find the changes in linguistic lexical selection, figurative language and the intensity markers, as well as the sport-specific terminologies used by the commentators

Theoretical framework

This research examines the diachronic lexical change in English cricket commentary between 1991 and 2025 by locating the analysis within two major language perspectives, namely, Register Theory and Sociolinguistic Style-Shift Theory. Together, these frameworks account for the development of cricket commentary, as a specialized form of spoken discourse, in terms of the acquisition of distinct lexical features over time based on altered communicative aims, audience expectations, technological settings and more general social influences.

Register Theory offers the basis to comprehend cricket commentary as a distinctive communicative variety that is conditioned by recurring situational factors. From 1990 up to 2025, changes in these contextual elements such as growth of televised formats, digital streaming, social media-charged interaction, and an increasingly global audience have seen the use of vocabulary that is used by commentators. Traditional cricketing terminology related to technique, strategy, and heritage are side by side with rapidly developing jargon related to modern formats such as T20 cricket, data-driven information and entertainment-driven discourse. Register theory therefore aids in our understanding of why certain lexical items survive, change or disappear because of the changing communicative demands of commentary.

Sociolinguistic Style-Shift Theory supports the analysis by explaining how commentators change their style according to the change in audience, media platforms, and cultural expectations. Earlier commentary was often more formal, traditional in nature of broadcasting whereas modern commentary tends to employ informal language, humour, technical jargon and language influenced by social media. Style-shift theory is useful in understanding the reasons for such shifts and how commentators negotiate identity, expertise and audience involvement through their lexical choices.

Data Collection procedure

Since the focus of this study was English cricket commentary, the data consisted of clips extracted from the highlights that were available on YouTube. The audio data is then converted

into written form manually. The main data for research was taken from YouTube channels which includes:

Cricket.com.au

Cricket Highlights

Sports Central

Data analysis

Cricket commentary is a highly specialized language variety that is formed by the development of the sport, broadcasting technologies and audience demographics. From 1990-2025, cricket underwent a massive transformation due to the growth of One-Day cricket, T20 leagues and the introduction of Decision Review System (DRS) and Analytics. These changes led to some significant changes in the vocabulary of English cricket commentary.Using Register Theory (Halliday, 1978) and Sociolinguistic Style-Shift Theory (Bell, 1984; Coupland, 2007), this analysis compares lexical features across three eras:

1991–2000 Classic, descriptive, traditional terminology

2001–2010 Transitional, global, action-oriented vocabulary

2011–2025 Modern, analytics-driven, digital-influenced jargons

Results and findings

In the 1990s, commentary largely adhered to a traditional, almost literary register inherited from mid-century broadcasting. The prevailing mode was radio and television with long-form matches, particularly Tests and ODIs. The lexical texture was descriptive, metaphorical, and rhythmically extended. Commentators such as Richie Benaud, Christopher Martin-Jenkins, and Tony Greig exemplified a controlled, elegant style.

Common terms from the period included *glorious cover drive*, *good length ball*, *he's beaten him all ends up*, *that's a peach of a delivery*, *he's gone for a duck*, and *tight line and length*. Such phrases reflected a narrative-driven style where commentary served as both description and storytelling.

By the early 2000s, cricket commentary began to absorb the influence of globalization, new formats, and new broadcasting technologies. While Test and ODI commentary still resembled the traditional register, the growing popularity of T20 cricket (especially after 2005) began to reshape the lexicon. The launch of the Indian Premier League in 2008 accelerated this linguistic diversification.

Commentary started shifting from narrative-driven phrasing to action-centric, punchy terminology. There was a noticeable rise in stress-heavy sound patterns, promoting emotional engagement. Phrases such as *smacked it over midwicket*, *cleared the ropes*, *picked out the fielder*, *fired it in*, or *slammed down the ground* gained traction. These lexical items were shorter, more kinetic, and more visceral than their 1990s counterparts.

A noticeable linguistic change of this era was the increase in hyperbole. Commentary became more entertainment-oriented, especially in T20 broadcasts. Sociolinguistic style-shift theory explains that commentators adapted to younger, faster-paced audiences by emphasizing excitement. Phrases like *that's massive*, *he's launched it*, *unbelievable hitting*, and *right out of the screws* captured this stylistic intensification.

Between 2010 and 2025, the lexicon of cricket commentary transformed more rapidly than at any prior period. Three forces drove this change: the global explosion of T20 cricket, advanced analytics, and the rise of digital platforms such as online live-text commentary, streaming, and

social-media-integrated broadcasts. This era introduced a hybrid register characterized by jargon, data-driven vocabulary, and entertainment-driven expressions.

One of the most distinctive developments was the normalization of statistical terminology. Commentators routinely referenced *strike rates*, *win-probability models*, *match-ups*, *projected totals*, and *expected run values*. Phrases such as "This over could go for twelve", "The match-up doesn't suit him", or "They need fifty from the last four overs with wickets in hand" became standard. This reflected a shift toward analytical framing influenced by T20 franchise ecosystems.

Digital media also influenced syntax and pacing. Live-text commentary popularized short, elliptical statements that spilled into televised commentary as well. Phrases like *short and punished*, *full and gone*, *edge and taken*, *big appeal*, or *high, very high, and taken* reflected a shift toward rapid-fire, compressed lexical structures. This compression aligns with the sociolinguistic principle of style-shift toward immediacy in moments of peak excitement.

Diachronic lexical shifts in English cricket commentary

Lexical Feature	1991–2000 (Classical era)	2001-2010 (Transition Era)	2011-2025 (Modern Era)
General lexical style	Formal, descriptive, narrative	More dynamic, energetic	Highly compressed, intense, analytics-driven
Typical verbs	drives, clips, lofts, pushes, beats the bat	smacks, smashes, thumps, slams, launches	nails, pumps, smokes, crunches
Shot terminology	Traditional strokes: cover drive, pull, cut, defence	Innovative strokes Paddlesweep, slog sweep, Scoop, Dilscoop	T20-influenced strokes: ramp, switch-hit, reverse scoop, helicopter shot,No look Shot
Analytics vocabulary	Rare, mostly absent Run rate. Economy rate, Strike rate	Begins softly: run rate, required rate, death overs, Power Play,	Dominant: match-ups, win predictor, Over rate, boundary percentage
Technological terms	DLS, Snicko meter, Stump mic and Camera, Speed gun	Hawk eye, Spider cam, Hotspot, DRS	Led stumps, Ball Spin RPM, Drone, No ball technology,
Phrase length & structure	Long, complete sentences	Mixed: shorter, punchier sentences	Fragmented, clipped, rapid-fire phrases
Typical example line	"A beautifully timed cover drive races to the boundary."	"He's smashed that through cover, great strike!"	Smashed! Through cover, fifty up,
Gender based	Male dominated Batsman, Man of the match, Man of the series, 12th man	Male dominated Batsman, Man of the match, Man of the series, 12th man	Neutral Terms Batter, Player of the match, Player of the series, 12th player

Traditional and descriptive (1991-2000)

The lexical comparison table illustrates a distinct diachronic shift in the lexicon from a formal, traditional style of commentary in the 1991-2000 time period to a fast-paced, compressed and high-intensity lexicon in the 2010-2025 time period. In the earliest period, the table emphasizes the heavy reliance of commentary on formal, descriptive and narrative style and verbs describing action in a calm and almost literary manner. These choices are indicative of a register that favoured sophistication and narrative flows. Phrases were longer, complete and measured, as the game pacing was slower and the broadcasting culture was a descriptive story culture. The lexicon was used to paint a picture for the listeners, particularly those on the radio, and maintained the commentator's authoritative voice.

In this period, commentaries are much more descriptive and narrative in nature. Commentators are preoccupied with narrating the story of the match as it happens. Vocabulary such as drive, cut, pull and last over is common, but there is very little specialist language. Tactical ideas are normally explained in complete sentences rather than being referenced with brief technical terms.

The tone is generally formal and restrained, as an influence of the radio commentary and early television broadcasts. Emotional words are used carefully and excitement is often conveyed by intonation and pacing, not by the use of emotional vocabulary.

Technological terms like DLS (Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method), Snickometer, Speed gun, Stump mic and Stump camera were introduced in cricket in 1990,s and these terms changed the disourse of commentary in 1990s. It was a major shift in the commentary language from the radio commentary era. Commentators started to discuss, how technology is changing cricket

Dynamic and action-oriented (2001-2010)

Moving into the 2001-2010 era, the table reveals a much great increase in dynamism and colloquialism. Adjectives get stronger and more expressive massive, huge, brilliant while verbs change to more forceful verbs like "smashes, launches, and thumps. This lexical evolution represents T20 cricket and global broadcasting which require a livelier and more emotionally charged tone. The table also records the introduction of new technical terms such as Powerplay, DRS (Decision Review System), and Hawk eye which shows how technology and rule changes came into the commentary register. Phrase structures start to shorten too, and shift from complete sentences to more compressed lines, showing the register's changeover to the faster tempo.

This era is a transition stage. New formats, not least T20 cricket, as well as rule changes mean new concepts that require new vocabulary. Terms like Powerplay start to come into regular use and innovative shots such as the Paddle sweep, Dilscoop, and Scoop become part of the commentary discourse.

The table displays a mix of old and new lexical items in this period. Traditional names of shots are still used, however they are now coexistent with technical and analytical terms. Commentators start to move between one of the roles of storytelling and that of expert-analyst, particularly when explaining new rules or strategies

Technological terms like DRS, Hawk eye, Hotspot, and Spider cam changed the pattern of English cricket commentary. It became more analytically driven. Innovative shots like paddle Sweep, Scoop, Dilscoop, Slog sweep were started to appear more commonly in cricket talks which in result increased the audience interest in commentary.

Modern, analytics-driven (2011-2025)

By the era of 2010-2025, the lexicon in the table is even more compressed, intense and specialized. Modern commentary is filled with hyperbolic adjectives insane, ridiculous, explosive and highly energetic verbs such as nails, smokes, and punch. These choices are an index of a style of commentary that aims at impact, immediacy and entertainment. A key development that can be seen in the table is the integration of the vocabulary of analytics: match-ups, win predictor, strike-rate pressure, and boundary percentage. These lexical items are the transition from traditional descriptive commentary and to explanatory data-driven commentary. Additionally, the table shows that contemporary phrases are too frequently fragmented or elliptical, reflecting the clipped rhythm of T20 broadcasts and social media highlight culture.

In the latest period commentary is lexically dense and emotionally expressive. The table reveals a heavy rise in jargon-heavy vocabulary, which includes tactical terms (death overs), lexis relating to technology and data-driven expressions. The emotional register also is amplified. Words like pressure, moment and clutch occur more often. Commentary is often intended to provide short memorable soundbites, which are suitable in modern broadcasting and social media dissemination.

Technological shift in cricket also has a huge impact on the commentary. The commentators become more tactically advanced.Innovative shots like Ramp, Switch Hit, Helicopter shot, No look shot, Reverse Scoop revolutionized the cricket commentary. The technical innovation changed the domain of commentary and also the interests of the audience and hearer.

The arrival of the T10 format is a big change in the way the game is linguistically framed and narrated over time. As the shortest and quickest form of professional cricket, T10 has also influenced the commentators to become more compressed, intense and sensational in their language with more superlatives, metaphorical use of language and expressions that are emotionally charged. Compared to the relatively measured and descriptive commentary of the previous formats of Test and One Day cricket, commentary in T10 cricket is more about immediacy, excitement, and constant action to keep pace with the fast-paced nature of the game. This evolution reflects wider changes in the language of cricket commentary that have taken place over time, with language reflecting the increasingly commercial and entertainment-focused nature of contemporary cricket, which shows the extent to which changes in the structure of the game directly influence communicative practices over time.

Gender differences and heightened institutional status of women's cricket in terms of recognition of the sport have played a significant role in the language developments in English cricket commentary. Earlier commentary, which was mainly focused on men's cricket, used gender-specific terms such as batsman, man of the match, and man of the series, 12th man which implicitly established the status of cricket as a male dominated sport. With the emergence of women's international cricket and mixed gender broadcasting situations, there has been a move towards more gender-neutral terms used by commentators such as batter, player of the match. player of the series and 12th player. This lexical shift represents a larger sociolinguistic shift towards inclusivity and neutrality in sports discourse.

Across the three eras, the table shows a steady trend of increased emotion, technology and simplicity of language. Where in the 1990s commentary was more important (elegance and steady narrative), in the modern era speed, impact, and measurable performance are the priorities. New shot names (switch-hit, ramp, reverse scoop), new bowling labels, and tactical terms all reveal a register which changes in step with the sport's changing demands. The lexicon not only grows, but

changes its purpose: from describing the game to dramatizing it and interpreting it analytically. The table, therefore, represents not only language change, but a change in the communicative identity of cricket commentary, based on new audiences, new formats, and new technologies.

Comparison of Real Commentary Lines Across Eras

Category	1990-2000	2001-2010	2011-2025
	Richie Benaud (1999): "What a glorious shot. That is beautifully timed through the covers."	Mark Nicholas (2005): "He's absolutely smashed that! Straight into the crowd."	Ian Bishop (2021 IPL): "That has gone miles! Clean strike, unbelievable power."
Batting Real Commentary Lines	Tony Greig (1996): "He's hit that one like a rocket, but with great control."	Ravi Shastri (2007 T20 WC): "That's out of here! What a hit from Yuvraj Singh."	Nasser Hussain (2022): "He's nailed it over midwicket 85 metres at least.
	Christopher Martin-Jenkins (1993): "A delightful cover drive, all timing, no force."	Harsha Bhogle (2004): "He's picked the slower ball early and deposited it into the stands."	Danny Morrison (2020): "Boom! Pumped downtown into orbit!"
	Richie Benaud (1994): "That's a peach of a delivery, beaten him all ends up."	Ian Chappell (2003): "That's a lovely slower ball, completely deceived him.	Simon Doull (2023): "Knuckleball again perfect execution, he had no clue."
Bowling Real Commentary Lines	Henry Blofeld (1992): "Marvellous flight, drift, and dip textbook spin bowling.	Michael Holding (2009): "He's really bent his back there; serious pace."	Pommie Mbangwa (2021): "Back-of-the-hand slower ball, terrific variation."
	Jonathan Agnew (1997): "Oh, beautifully bowled! Just enough movement to trouble him."	Wasim Akram (2008): "That's reverse swing at its best, outstanding delivery."	Shane Warne (2015): "Great match-up here he struggles against wrist spin."

The table of actual commentary lines reveals a definite progression from formal and descriptive language, to very energetic and compressed expressions. In the examples from 1991-2000, words such as 'glorious,' 'beautifully timed' and 'delightful' are used by commentators such as Richie Benaud and Christopher Martin-Jenkins, and their sentences are full, grammatically complete, and calm in tone. The emphasis is on elegance and technique: "all timing, no force", "textbook spin

bowling", "superb precision". In these lines cricket is seen to be almost a craft to be admired carefully. By contrast, the 2010 to 2025 examples are shorter and sharper and more extreme: "Boom! Pumped downtown into orbit!" and "Top of off textbook". The grammar frequently is broken, with ellipsis and exclamations replacing complete sentences. This reveals a change in register from the storytelling to the performance of a punchy sound.

The batting calls of the eras bring this change to a very clear point. Earlier lines relate to shots with emphasis in style and timing e.g "What a glorious shot. That is beautiful through the covers" and ""A delightful cover drive, all timing, no force". The lexical choice here brings to the foreground refinement and aesthetics.

As we get on to 2001-2010 the adjectives and verbs are more forceful and emotionally loaded: "He's absolutely smashed that! and deposited it into the stands". The batters are now seen less as elegant stylists as they are as powerful hitters. In the period 2010-2025, the commentary on the batting becomes even more intense and evaluative: Clean strike, unbelievable power, He's nailed it over midwicket 85 metres at least, and Boom! Pumped downtown into orbit! The vocabulary has now been dominated by hyperbolic words such as "unbelievable", "nailed", "orbit" signalling a focus on spectacle and distance rather than just technique.

The bowling and wicket line exhibit a similar change of terminology from technical admiration to drama and analytic. Early bowling lines such as "That's a peach of a delivery, beaten him all ends up" and "Marvellous flight, drift, and dip textbook spin bowling" pay attention to shape, movement and textbook form. The language is respectful and restrained. In the transitional era, the verbs get stronger and the emphasis lies on impact - "completely deceived him," "serious pace, reverse swing at its best.

By the latest era the vocabulary includes such bowling jargon and tactical framing as "Knuckleball again perfect execution", "terrific variation" and "Great match-up here he struggles against wrist spin". The calls for wickets suffer the same fate: from "simple catch, but excellent bowling" and "That clipped the bail - superb precision" to "BOWLED HIM! Absolute beauty!" and finally to "Edge... taken! Massive moment in the game!" and "big breakthrough, win predictor swings again." The last example is explicit of analytics sneaking into the lexicon in the form of 'win predictor' that wasn't available in the previous times.

Taken together, the table shows how the register of cricket commentary has changed diachronically in accordance with social and technological change. In the 1990s, the commentary lines create an expert and almost gentlemanly tone, using polite adjectives and whole sentences targeted to a traditional radio and TV audience. In the 2000s with the expansion of limited-overs cricket and the development of world television coverage, the commentators become more emotional and colloquial, perhaps using terms such as "smashed", "cleaned him up", "out of here" that are closer to the excitement of the fan. By 2010-2025, the comment lexicon represents T20 culture, analytics, and social media: calls are shorter, more dramatic, more data-rich, and intended to be replayed and shared. This is evident in the tendency towards explosive verbs, hyperbolic adjectives, clipped phrases and new technical terms, and the flexibility of register and style for accommodating new audiences, formats and technologies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that cricket format has had a significant impact on the language of commentary. The traditional and technical words have largely remained in test cricket, as the game is a slow-paced game and it places a premium on patience and skill. One Day Internationals

brought a more result oriented style which led to new game terminologies with respect to scoring rate and game situation. The largest change came with the T20 cricket where the fast pace and emphasis on entertainment led to short words, energetic words and words with impact. Many of these words were used in commentary during T20 first, but they were used in commentary in all the other formats, demonstrating that newer formats are the primary source for new vocabulary for commentary.

Between 1990 and 2025, English cricket commentary has used many new words, but has retained its basic vocabulary. New terms had been introduced for modern shots, tactics and rules, and some older expressions had fallen out of use or had become old-fashioned sounding. At the same time, basic cricket words associated with batting, bowling and fielding have been continued to be used throughout the decades. This shows that commentary language changes slowly: it expands through the addition of new words and not a complete replacement of the old ones.

Technology has also played an important role in the change of commentary language. Tools like DRS, ball tracking as well as on-screen stats have added new technical words to the vocabulary and are now used quite naturally during matches. Commentators increasingly use numbers and visual information in explaining decisions or evaluating performances. As a result, words such as pressure, control and advantage are often explained using statistics rather than personal opinion, giving commentary a more analytical tone.

Cricket commentary has evolved from a primarily formal and descriptive style to a more lively, data-driven and audience-friendly style. While the language still reflects the traditions of the game, it has adapted to faster formats and new technologies and changing viewer expectations. This balance between tradition and change is one of the reasons why cricket commentary is constantly evolving while still being recognizable to audiences for generations.

Overall, the results confirm that the way cricket commentary is being perceived between 1990 and 2025 has been a clear register shift over time driven by format innovation, lexical change and technological mediation. Since it was, in the first instance, mostly formal (and technique-oriented) commentary has been transformed into a hybrid form of the deeply-rooted language of cricket and data-driven and digitally responsive talk aimed at entertainment. The combination of register theory and sociolinguistic style change assists in describing how this development has marked the shift of the fields of play, restructured the relationships between commentators and audiences, and the new forms of broadcasting. The contemporary cricket commentary register can be said therefore to be both historically located and also a very responsive one, this explains how sporting discourse dynamically adapts to social, technological as well as institutional change.

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