

**Dr. Gerhardt**

**c.gerhardt@mx.uni-saarland.de**

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Spectatorship - the negotiation and mitigation of conflicting roles

In my paper, I investigate the discourse of spectatorship, a category generally neglected in works on the language of sport (cf. Beard 1998).

Goffman (1981) has pointed out how participants in conversations are constantly changing the footing of their talk. This study investigates how the identities “football fan” and “football expert” are negotiated. Strategies typically employed to become ratified as a fan include e.g. emotive outbreaks. To become accepted as an expert, on the other hand, the spectators have to signal a neutral stance. Furthermore, the study discusses the strategies participants use to cope with conflicts that arise out of this straddling of roles. Sudden shifts from fan to expert may be taken as a betrayal of the common cause by the others present.

The data analysis is based on transcriptions from video recordings of natural conversation among home viewers of televised football games. Different groups were recorded: male-only dyads, mixed-sex groups of friends or roommates, and families. The age of the participants ranges from 14 months to over 70 years. The recorded are all British English speakers and generally side for the same team.

Beard, Adrian. 1998. *The language of sport*. London: Routledge.

Goffman, Erving. 1981. *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.