'They parked two buses': a corpus study of a football expression

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Using corpus methods to gain insights into the development of popular phrases

Introduction

The Liverpool football manager, Brendan Rodgers, was clearly upset. He had just seen the title chances of his vibrant attacking team, scorers of more league goals than any other team in England, suffer a major setback, with defeat against Chelsea: 'They parked *two* buses, rather than one', he lamented of the Chelsea tactics in a post-match interview: 'from the first minute, they had 10 men behind the ball. We were the team trying to win, but we just couldn't make the breakthrough' (Bevan, 2014). A few days later, after Chelsea had lost to Atlético Madrid in the second leg of a European Champions League semi-final, after playing very defensively in the first leg, this defeat was celebrated by vengeful rival fans on twitter, drawing on the same 'park the bus' metaphor, e.g. 'when you park the bus, make sure it's not near any red lines' (the humour of which derives from Atlético playing in *red* and white stripes, while yellow *lines* in the UK forbid parking, so the bus is penalized for being in the wrong place) or 'Atlético parked 4 Ferraris and 2 Veyrons. TOO DAMN FAST. Chelsea bus cannot catch up with the speed bro!', where the Chelsea bus is ridiculed for simply being too slow (Footballburp, 2014).

Such creativity with the expression 'park the bus' is not entirely new, with humour sometimes created through hyperbole. For example, Jamie Jackson commented, in the Guardian in December 2012, on: 'a stubborn Reading side who positioned not just the bus but a whole multi-storey car park in front of their goal' (Jackson, 2012). Employing similar tactics several months later, San Marino's international team 'parked tractors, plumbers' vans and pizza delivery mopeds in their goal' (MSN, 2013), while Finland 'did not so much park the bus in their own penalty area as plonk it there, take off the wheels and abandon

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it' (Christenson, 2013). However, despite these colourful instances, which hint at popular use within a particular genre, we suspect that the expression 'park the bus' might still be relatively rare outside specific domains, since when we started discussing this expression with colleagues, some had never heard of it, even though they followed football. The purpose of our study is to learn more about where the expression 'park the bus' comes from, how it became established and spread, the ways in which it is being used, in a fresh metaphorical or tired clichéd way, and in which contexts. These goals will be achieved through analysing available corpora.

'Parking the bus' – where does the expression come from?

The expression does not yet appear in the Oxford English Dictionary, last updated in 2005. However, according to Languagecaster (2008), the concept of one team playing in a negative, boring, defensive way, focused on making it so difficult for the other team to score that it was as if there was a bus parked in front of the goal, first came to public attention in England through the Chelsea manager, Jose Mourinho. This may have been in 2004, when, in a post-match interview, Mourinho was quoted criticizing another team's defensive tactics: 'As we say in Portugal, they brought the bus and they left the bus in front of the goal' (BBC, 2004). In 2004, this metaphor may have seemed fresh in a British context to Mourinho, given the way he introduced it with reference to Portugal. However, since Mourinho had only been working in the UK for a few months at the time he spoke of Tottenham Hotspur's negative tactics in this way, one cannot discount the possibility that others might have used the expression 'park the bus' publicly in Britain with reference to football before him. Searching through corpora made up of millions of words, it would be possible to search for evidence of this. Evidence could also be sought in a corpus study for how quickly the expression 'park the bus' subsequently grew in popularity. After all, by 2008, in some eyes (Languagecaster, 2008), it had already developed into a 'cliché', i.e. a tired overworked expression that had lost its ability to surprise (OED online, n.d.).

Our corpus-assisted methodology

To conduct our investigation, we used the corpus tool Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff, Rychly, Smrz & Tugwell, 2004) to analyse three sets of data, specifically the British National Corpus (BNC), the SiBol/Port corpora and the enTenTen series. Before reporting on our study further, we will briefly explain each data set in more detail.

The BNC is a very general reference corpus of 100 million words and consists of samples of spoken and written texts largely produced between 1960 and 1993 ('What is the BNC?', 2010). We selected this as it would provide some information about whether or not there was any earlier evidence in British English of 'park the bus' being used in its football-related sense.

Our second data set is the SiBol/Port corpora (University of Bologna, n.d.). This is a collection of 787,000 UK newspaper articles assembled by Partington, Morley, Marchi, Taylor, Clark and Duguid. The articles (including those from *The Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Times, The Observer* and *the Sunday Telegraph*) are divided into three groups, according to year of publication: 1993, 2005, 2010. Given this sub-division into time periods, this data set (containing over 327 million words) is well suited to investigations charting the development of a new usage across time.

Finally, the enTenTen series was chosen to strengthen our investigation in several ways. Not only is enTenTen13 the largest corpus available via Sketch Engine (at nearly 20 billion words), but it is also 'web crawled'; the data consists entirely of Internet articles rather than those from just newspapers. A further advantage is that, as with the SiBol/Port corpora, changes over time can be examined. There are three versions of enTenTen; enTenTen08 consists of articles that were available in 2008, while enTenTen12 and enTenTen13 were produced using very similar parameters in 2012 and 2013. By focusing on the first and third of these, we would be able to examine growth in the expression 'park the bus' in Internet as well as newspaper articles over a period of five (recent) years. Having introduced our data sets, we now report on our results.

Results

From the BNC

Using the word sketch function of Sketch Engine, typing in the lemma 'park' (to also pick up the verb forms 'parks/parked/parking') and looking for collocations within a span of five words, we found that 'bus' (as an object) co-occurred with 'park' only 6 times in the 100-million-word BNC

corpus. Clearly, even in its conventional sense, 'park the bus' did not occur as an expression very frequently. 5 of these 6 occurrences were literal, referring to the actual parking of real buses. There was also one example of metaphorical use, though, from a spoken demographic source in 1992: '*Fucking hell love, you know I could have parked a bus in there sideways.*' However, while metaphorical, this has nothing to do with football. These data from the BNC suggest, then, there is no earlier evidence in British English of 'park the bus' being used in its football-related sense.

From SiBol/Port 1993

The above impression was confirmed when we turned to the SiBol/Port corpus of 1993, made up of broadsheet newspaper articles. We followed similar procedures to those described above, which resulted in us identifying 19 occurrences, all literal, e.g. *the 20-year-old hospital technician after parking his bus in a lay-by*... Clearly, the expression 'park the bus' was not yet being used by football writers and their interviewees, e.g. managers and players.

From SiBol/Port 2005

Unsurprisingly, given popular explanations of how the expression originated in British English with Jose Mourinho in 2004, the picture changes when we examine the SiBol/Port Corpus of 2005. There are 38 occurrences, 17 of which (45%) appear to be related to football, as the concordance lines reveal (see Figure 1, below).

Interestingly, many of these occurrences refer directly back to the context in which Mourinho had first spoken of Spurs (the short form of Tottenham Hotspur) parking the bus. Mourinho's name appears in 7 of the 17 lines, but he is alluded to directly in no fewer than 14 of these 17 contexts, sometimes through a referent pronoun or his nickname, the 'special one', and sometimes by opposing managers discussing their strategy in relation to his Chelsea team, e.g. '*we didn't just come here and park our bus in front of our goal,' smiled Keegan* (then Manchester City manager). It should be noted that having some background knowledge of football, e.g. with regard to Kevin Keegan's role in 2005 or that of Alan Curbishley, then Charlton manager at *'the Valley'*, helps the researcher make sense of such concordance lines and the wider contexts.

The frequent references back to Mourinho in the 2005 quotes are perhaps one indicator that the expression was relatively new in British English. A second indicator could be that some quotes

(5 of 17) enclose their reference to 'park(ing) the bus' in quotation marks (when no-one is being quoted). By drawing attention to the expression in this way, they seem to be signalling its newness.

Even though the expression is still new, there is some limited evidence in the SiBol/Port 2005 data, that it has already become sufficiently established for users of the metaphor to wish to extend it creatively to keep it fresh, e.g. '*Mourinho said Spurs parked a single-decker bus in front of the goal when they got a 0-0 at Chelsea. He then said we put a double-decker there!*' In this example, humour is created in a discussion of the nature of the bus being parked in front of the goal. There is also early evidence, in these data, of buses being contrasted with other modes of transport to comic effect: *Having returned from a holiday in India, Sparta's new coach, Stanislav Griga, had pledged to abandon the rickshaw and park a bus in front of his team's goal.*

This last is also an example of the expression being used more internationally, which could suggest that reports in the British media of Mourinho's comments about Spurs' tactics might have circulated overseas, perhaps helped by the television coverage of English football worldwide and the role of English as the global lingua franca. Interestingly, the only other international example in the data cites Cafu of Brazil, then playing for Milan who were about to meet Liverpool, as follows: *Jamie Carragher is the one whom the Brazil defender expects to park the bus in front of the Merseysiders' goal tonight.*

Of course, Cafu, as a Portuguese speaker, might also have acquired the expression earlier, through his native language; the original Portuguese expression is apparently: 'estacionar o autocarro em frente da baliza' (John Naysmith, personal communication, 24 June, 2014). We now turn to the SiBol/Port Corpus of 2010 to see how the expression developed in British newspapers.

From SiBol/Port 2010

Curiously, the SiBol/Port Corpus of 2010 offers only 29 occurrences of 'park the bus'; this may be partly because it is a smaller corpus, not including the Sunday versions of *The Times, The Telegraph* and *The Guardian*. However, 21 of these 29 (72%) relate to football. This represents an increase both in number (17→21) and percentage from the SiBol/Port Corpus of 2005.

There are other indicators that the term is becoming (at least slightly) more established. Mourinho's name appears in only one of these 21 concordance lines and the reference is clearly historical,

that I am against all gimmicks. The BBC News election *bus* was **parked** outside Westminster yesterday, before travelling the country
nine. "The most difficult thing opposing teams have here is **parking** their *bus* in the Valley," said Curbishley, who made six changes
ball that Fowler headed wide. ``We didn't just come here and **park** our *bus* in front of our goal," smiled Keegan. </p><p> Chelsea
Afterwards, Jose Mourinho didn't only make his memorable " *bus* **parked** in front of their goal" remark , he also sympathised with "
made sure they arrived before us and left before us. They even **parked** their team *bus* in front of ours. The message was clear - you
'how good is the red wine today, Alex?' Mourinho said Spurs **parked** a single-decker *bus* in front of the goal when they got a 0-
to back him. They are living in an abandoned city *bus* that is **parked** in the water lapping outside his dilapidated home. </p><p> It
very happy. But you won't get me driving it." </p><p> The *bus* is **parked** a few miles from John's house in a London suburb, and he takes
the last 10 minutes" - Jose Mourinho , who accused Spurs of " **parking** a *bus* " in front of goal when Chelsea last played there, on
15 minutes' driving, we reached the polling station. The *bus* **parked** at the end of the street less than 10m from the Jordanian police
first bomb yesterday exploded when the car rammed a small *bus* **parked** outside the Shuhada al-Taf mosque in Umm al-Ma'alef, a poor
nham Hotspur, according to the Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho, **parked** the team *bus* in their penalty area for the goalless draw at
fore meeting Sune Rose Wagner and Sharin Foo in their tour *bus* **parked** out front, a quick visit inside the venue is in order. Reeking
carry out four controlled explosions on a double-decker *bus* **parked** close to the Square Peg pub in Corporation Street in the city
ere were you? According to the Metropolitan Police photo I was **parked** in a *bus* lane by Vauxhall tube station. Luckily the pounds
e Clemenceau. The Discovery Channel's black-windowed *bus* was **parked** behind the start with Armstrong's rock star girlfriend Sheryl
incidents, including the issuing of a ticket to a *bus* while it was **parked** at a bus stop. </p><p> Last year the company was awarded the
and it's cracking fun," he says of the former Number 36 *bus* **parked** in his driveway. "It's basically like driving your sitting
Spurs are unrecognisable as the dullards Mourinho accused of **parking** their *bus* in front of Paul Robinson's goal in the match at
etroleum province to Cairn and to India." </p><p> Call for end to **park** *bus* ban </p><p> FOR 20 years, Phoenix Park has been off-limits
video images that are as smooth as Bond at his best. You could **park** a digital *bus* in the 80GB hard drive, and the fast DVD burner
Chelsea to a solitary shot on target without resorting to " **parking** a *bus* in front of the goal", as his opposite number would say
nagement came when he lamented Tottenham Hotspur's tactic of **parking** a *bus* in front of their goal. A year on and the self- styled
increased traffic congestion, Lampard's unfortunate habit of **parking** his Ferrari in the *bus* lane and the preponderance of tanning
escribed a defensively minded Tottenham Hotspur team as having **parked** a *bus* in front of goal. </p><p> That is exactly what the Barcelona
<p> at Stamford Bridge this season, he unfairly accused them of **parking** the team *bus* across the penalty box, as if visiting teams were
dead don't care what I wear," she said. She lives in a *bus* **parked** at the temple entrance. </p><p> There are so many volunteers
league in September, Mourinho complained that Tottenham had **parked** a *bus* in front of the goal. "Maybe an English bus, we have
double-decker," Jol said. "The way they play we may need to **park** the *bus* at some difficult moments. I think nobody can beat
the Barclays Premiership tomorrow, Mourinho accused Spurs of " **parking** a *bus* " in front of goal. Then, when his side drew 2-2 against
Evening Standard (July 21) reports that they left their car **parked** in a *bus* lane and disappeared about their business. They did
consultant was telephoned by a friend who told him that a *bus* **parked** opposite his home had a bomb on board. As he digested the informatio
etween Hackney Road and Shoreditch High Street. The *bus* was **parked** 50 yards up Hackney Road opposite the junction with Columbia
Jamie Carragher is the one whom the Brazil defender expects to **park** the *bus* in front of the Merseysiders' goal tonight. </p><p> Paolo
coach, Stanislav Griga, had pledged to abandon the rickshaw and **park** a *bus* in front of his team's goal and was true to his word,
were moved out and traffic stopped near a Radio Lancashire *bus* **parked** at Hutton, near Preston, after a BBC plea for wartime memorabilia
who love nothing more than taking on opponents. Or they can " **park** the *bus* ", which means conceding possession to the Brazilians
tracks and discarded CDs and bicycles. </p><p> Israeli tanks are **parked** at disused *bus* stops, while hundreds of yards away a multitude

Figure 1. Complete concordance showing *park* as a verb collocating with *bus* in the SiBol/Port Corpus, 2005

signalled by the use of the adverb 'once': *Mourinho, who once accused Tottenham of 'parking their bus' at Stamford Bridge*. However, at this time (2010), Mourinho was managing in Italy and it is likely that accordingly he would have been less in the spotlight of the British press anyway.

Nevertheless, a closer look at the extended contexts and referent pronouns reveals that Mourinho is still being reported on in the British media with regard to this expression and is still using the term creatively, e.g. in this quote when he discusses victory over Barcelona in the semi-finals of the Champions League: '*we beat them 3-1 at San Siro, not by parking the bus, or the boat or the airplane but by smashing them*'. In fact, 5 of 21

occurrences still relate to Mourinho, down from 14 of 17 in 2005.

So while, in the 2010 data from broadsheet newspapers, the expression is used to describe the tactics of various teams that have nothing to do with Jose Mourinho, including Fulham, North Korea, Paraguay, Bolton, Rangers, Aberdeen and Manchester United, the expression is clearly still associated with him. There is, however, evidence in these data of the expression being used to describe the tactic in more international contexts, including in Mourinho's Inter-Barcelona examples. There are also signs of the expression being used more philosophically, to describe an approach rather than a style, e.g. with regard to the effects of a potential

new policy of FIFA (the international governing body): *Ending extra time would simply produce a knock-on effect into normal time. Those teams who would have been extra cautious in the 30 additional minutes will only park the bus after an hour.*

Another interesting development is that, rather than being a marked expression, there is also evidence that use of the metaphor is becoming more closely integrated into the discussion of tactics: *Perhaps the first point to make clear is that teams are entitled to play any legal tactic they think fit. It is perfectly legitimate to harass, spoil, park the bus, triple-mark the local genius and play 11 men behind the ball. There is no legal or moral requirement to give Arsenal space and time to make their patterns.*

Interestingly, however, the authors of 4 of the 21 occurrences (as opposed to 5 of 17 in SiBol/Port 2005) still feel the need to enclose the phrase in inverted commas, which suggests a degree of self-consciousness about using it; there may be various reasons for this. As a low frequency term in print, 'park the bus' might still have been considered novel to some readers in 2010. However, at the same time, some journalists using the expression in 2010 might also have been conscious that the metaphor was already a cliché to others (Languagecaster, 2008).

Overall, the SiBol/Port corpus furnishes fascinating insights into how the expression developed in the British media. We now consider its growth on the Internet more broadly, moving on in our investigation to the enTenTen series.

From enTenTen08

Repeating the procedures used with the SiBol/Port corpora but also specifying 'uk' as top domain (since our focus is primarily on British English), we found just 35 occurrences of 'park the bus' in enTenTen08, with only three of these relating to football. Of these three, one referred back to the 2004 innovation (in British English), but with a twist: *Jose Mourinho once accused Spurs of parking the 'team bus' across the goalmouth at Stamford Bridge, but yesterday they performed like a stylish limo, driving all over Chelsea before running out of gas…* Another occurrence was similarly partisan: *Liverpools champions league campaign when they won it was just score an early goal and then park the team bus in front of their goal. It wasn't entertaining for 90 minutes. Another example is the FA Cup Final a few years back between Arsenal and Man U. Arsenal had no intentions of attacking…* The third occurrence refers to the performance of a small football team

in the north of Scotland: *Portlethen set their stall out well and parked a bus in front of the goal.* Curiously, this sentence combines two clichés in one, with 'set their stall out' suggesting a market, and evoking, perhaps, the closest forerunner to 'park the bus' in British English football parlance, in terms of describing defensive play: 'shut up shop'; well, we supposedly once were a 'nation of shopkeepers', according to Adam Smith (1776), whose phrase gave rise to the saying popularly attributed to Napoleon. The shift in 'conceptual' metaphor (Deignan, 2005) that is represented here (i.e. in the underlying mental structures involved) might reflect social change. We wonder if constantly travelling modern day football commentators and managers are more likely to be annoyed by tour buses and coaches clogging up hotel driveways than by shops inconveniently shut.

Repeating the procedure above, but without 'uk' as the top domain, and thus searching the entire 2.7-billion word enTenTen08 corpus, we found 204 occurrences of 'park the bus', of which 9 related to football. This suggests that the expression was still rare in 2008 on Internet sites. The additional 6 occurrences we found when we removed 'uk' as top domain all nevertheless also related to the UK in some way (e.g. English football club blogs or British media sources), which suggests the expression was still used more in Britain than elsewhere. There is something vibrantly jocular, though, about this use, e.g. *wigan on the other hand, will have a nice mud bath of a pitch waiting for us. they'll park a bus in front of the goal and will then defend, with what seems like 15 players.* There is also evidence of an emerging related expression, 'to pull a Jose Mourinho': '*They played very different games in their first two matches,'* BBC radio commentator Nick Cavell told me. '*In the South Africa match, they got the goal, then pulled a Jose Mourinho: They parked the bus and defended tightly.'* However, a Google search of 'pull a Jose Mourinho' reveals that it means very different things to different people, not only '*defend like there is no tomorrow*', but also '*play mind games', 'slide on (one's) knees in celebration*' or '*tap up (one's) former players'.* Clearly, various aspects of Mourinho's distinctive and at times controversial style of management have made an impression. We will now explore the largest and most recent corpus, enTenTen13, for 'park(ing) the bus'.

From enTenTen13

Searching the huge, nearly 20-billion word enTenTen13 Corpus, it is clear that the expression

has increased in usage since 2008 (with 2,736 occurrences as opposed to 204), and even allowing for the fact that enTenTen13 is approximately seven times larger than enTenTen08, this still represents considerable growth. Narrowing our search to those occurrences with 'uk' as the top domain, we found 88 of 277 related to football (up from 3 of 35 in 2008). The expression has clearly become more established.

Exploring international use first, without 'uk' as top domain, there is evidence of the expression being increasingly used in a diverse range of national contexts, e.g. Australia: '*I need to know that our new coach believes he can win with the players he has at his disposal. I need to know that he can build a team capable of attacking intent and not fixated on "parking the bus".*' Interestingly, though, the newness of this expression is marked for an Australian audience by inverted commas, as it is here for a German one: *And so it came that FC Bayern München 'Parked the Bus' in a European Cup final at a time where that term wasn't even invented yet. So the next time, my fellow Bayern fans, when you feel yourself loathing the likes of Chelsea...*

The data from international sources also turn up an example of 'parked' being used as an adjective (though we had specified 'verb') in a new fixed expression: the 'parked bus defense/defence': *One difference this season is that many teams have adopted parked bus defenses, and ALL Barca finishing has gone down against such teams.* Though it is outside the scope of this investigation, we did a quick Google search for this apparently new phrase; "Parked bus defence" drew 2,460 hits, and with the American spelling 'defense' there were 915 results. Most of these hits seem very recent, with the earliest apparently in 2008. Curiously, while the preference for British spelling in the 'parked bus defence/defense' seems further indicative of its spread through British English, there is also recent evidence, in enTenTen13, of 'park the bus' apparently crossing over into another sport, American football: *they gave up third down to protect against a scenario that we haven't seen in a decade. It wasn't even so much the fear of a turnover – it was completely parking the bus.*

While the expression still seems quite fresh in certain international contexts, stretching into new fields, when we narrow our search by 'uk' as top domain, we get a rather different picture. Indeed, there is evidence, in our 88 occurrences, of the metaphor being used increasingly as a cliché, i.e. rather unimaginatively, with such use occasionally leavened by profanities, e.g. *My advice to 'Arry would be this; don't make Gareth Bale think about tracking Sergio Ramos, don't lump the ball up to Peter Crouch all the time and, whatever you do, don't park the sodding bus.* Self-consciousness regarding the clichéd status of the expression is evident in some of the other adjectives used, e.g. '*the clichéd parked bus', 'parking the metaphorical bus'* and '*parking the proverbial bus'*, which occurs 6 times, e.g. *Hull would definitely settle for a point at Goodison Park and Steve Bruce would be forgiven for parking the proverbial bus in hope of securing a draw.* Moon (2008: 135) describes such use of 'proverbial' as 'a pre-emptive device, distancing writers/ speakers from their choice of lexis'. 'Park the bus' is also used less self-consciously with other clichés, e.g. *they can struggle when a team shuts up shop and parks the bus,* and while reflecting on language: *What is the most memorable image used in British football over the last thirty years? Parking the bus? Sick as a parrot? Over the Moon?*

There is less apparent interest in where the expression originated from in the 2013 data and there are far fewer instances of it being marked by inverted commas. However, despite there also being fewer references to Mourinho, who returned to manage Chelsea in September 2013, there is this: *Mourinho ponders parking the bus: Jose Mourinho admitted he may have to shut up shop after seeing Chelsea dumped out of the Capital One Cup by Sunderland.*

Regarding creativity, which seems to be in relatively shorter supply, much of this seems to be partisan, including that Chelsea-related. There is the positive: *Chelsea may well have parked the bus on Saturday – but come Sunday afternoon they were driving it around West London, holding aloft the European Cup*, and the negative: *I here Chelsea's next signing is going to be a parked bus to play in there new formation of bore bore two...!*

There is also an interesting example amongst the 277 occurrences from which we extracted the 88 of the basic concept being applied to a non-football context: *The minutes out next week will paint a picture of whether the Bank of England are considering any other moves, or whether they will park the bus and wait for a signal.* Though we found no such examples in the BNC of 'park the bus' having been used in the past in a similar way to suggest caution, lack of imagination, inaction or obstruction, our colleague, John Williams, consulting *ngrams*, which can be used to trawl Google Books 'to dig a little deeper into phrase usage' (Google, n.d.) in

different varieties of English, highlights an example from a description of the civil rights movement in Atlanta in 1958: '*Borders and King would lead groups of black ministers aboard a bus; the driver, on orders from the transit company, would park the bus and refuse to move, and a crowd would gather, creating an explosive situation*' (Martin, 1987: 288). This leads us to enquire whether the original concept, parking the bus to create an obstruction, could derive from descriptions of activism or civil disobedience (possibly in American English), and could perhaps have entered Portuguese in that way.

Though this question seems beyond the scope of our current investigation, particularly given our limitations in Portuguese, we did ask a Portuguese-speaking linguist, Ana Frankenberg-Garcia, to search for the 'estacionar o autocarro/ park the bus' expression with us to gain some brief insights into its history and use in Portuguese. A search for 'estacionar' (park) as a lemma, with 'baliza' (goal) to limit the context, produced no hits in a 180 million-word corpus drawn from one national newspaper (Público, 1991–1998). However, the expression is clearly present in the (2011) 3.2 billion-word ptTenTen11 corpus on Sketch engine, in a football sense. One example, curiously, has a distinctly English twist, apparently referring to Sparta Prague's frustrations against Liverpool (a team Braga from Portugal were next meeting in March 2011 in the Europa Cup), in particular Sparta's inability *to penetrate the double-decker bus that the English parked in front of the goal* (translation by Ana Frankenberg-Garcia). This brief exploration in Portuguese suggests that the expression may not necessarily be that old there. We wonder whether it could be a very low frequency expression in Portuguese, a local dialect form or even, perhaps, whether it may have originated with Jose Mourinho and his circle of associates.

As to the future of the expression 'park the bus', it seems that most of the more creative use with it is increasingly elliptical, based on the expression, but varied 'in some detail so that the expression is still recognizable but a wink of knowingness also is exchanged' (Dillon, 2006: 100). Moon (2008: 133) describes such creative language use in terms of 'metaphorical exploitation'. This is likely to continue, but possibly football managers, looking for original ways to describe the defensive tactics of opposing teams, will also move on to other concepts. Jose Mourinho provoked a media storm earlier this year when he labeled West Ham's defending as '19th century football': '*This is not the best league in the world; this is football from the 19th Century.*

The only thing I could bring was a Black and Decker (tool) to destroy the wall' (BBC, 2014). However, since this pronouncement was more of 'a general slur alluding to the dark, unenlightened pre-Premier League days of English football than an accurate comparison with the game's Victorian past' (Taylor, 2014), as 19th century football was actually quite attacking, the expression might not catch on.

Conclusions

Conducting this investigation has provided insights into how the football expression 'park the bus' has developed in British English. It is evident that the playful and inventive way that publicity-conscious football managers addressing their faithful media, trying to sound both original in the insights they offer and cutting in ascribing their own failures to force victory to the rather underhand tactics employed by the opposition, has had an important role in keeping the metaphor fresh. Broadcasters and journalists have also clearly had a role in this. The popularity of this 'conceptual metaphor' (Deignan, 2005) with these groups can probably also be explained by the relatively innocuous and absurd nature of the intervention it suggests (hardly the same as accusing an opponent of cheating), its capacity to conjure up a vivid concrete image and its association with contemporary lifestyles (with parked buses perhaps frequently impeding and frustrating those constantly traveling between airports, hotels and busy stadiums by luxury car). Yet the expression is increasingly seen in unmarked Internet discourse, too, in a rather clichéd way.

Following how a metaphor develops into a cliché is a rather novel undertaking in corpus linguistics, and there might be several reasons for this. Firstly, as Dillon (2006) reports, corpus linguists have tended to avoid the term 'cliché' itself because it suggests a prescriptivist attitude. However, while we acknowledge a pejorative association with 'cliché', as opposed to 'neutral' alternatives, such as 'fixed expression', we find the term 'cliché', in so far as it denotes language used in an uncreative way, quite useful, given the focus of this article. We would stress, though, that we are describing not prescribing, and are, of course, at least equally as interested in the continuing highly creative 'metaphorical exploitation' (Moon, 2008) of the 'park the bus' expression.

A second reason for the relative dearth of previous studies in this research area could relate to the lack of availability of suitable data sets until quite recently. We are grateful to the creators of the

SiBol/Port Corpus and of the enTenTen series for making investigations such as ours possible. Of course, our study would have been strengthened by greater access to spoken data, e.g. a corpus of recent football commentaries. With the anticipated future availability of such corpora, there will be the potential for follow-up studies.

Regarding other possible research directions, curiosity in the emergence and spread of fixed expressions extends far beyond football. For example, not so long ago, the term 'the full monty' captured the popular imagination (Kirkpatrick, 28 February, 1998). Corpus studies employing tools such as those we have drawn on here could be used more widely to examine how such expressions are developing.

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