

Lexical and grammatical markers for femininity in American and Italian sport journals – confrontational analysis

Anna Godzich and Szymon Machowski
(Adam Mickiewicz University, Adam Mickiewicz University)

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As a starting point, it should be mentioned that both authors are inspired by ground common between language and sociology (Bańcerowski et al. 1982, Wierzbicka 1997, 2014, Sapir 1921) and share interest in soccer terminology in transition due to an increasing number of female soccer contestants in the United States of America (cf. STATISTA report 2023) and Italy (D'Ascenzo 2022) that is also notified in sport journals. Interestingly, Italian female first league (Series A) soccer players have become professional since the 2022/2023 season (D'Ascenzo 2022). These facts led the authors to deciding to linguistically explore and specify purely lexical, syntactic and word-formative means Americans and Italians used to express femininity in this particular journalistic profession (cf. e.g. Jarosz 2020: 122). As the research has turned out to be feasible to be conducted by means of corpus linguistic methodology, the authors have formed two comparable lexical corpora consisting of 50 tokens in American English (e.g. *women's soccer; a young female player, this little girl*) and in Italian (female coaches' last names preceded by a feminine indefinite article - *la Rossi* to indicate their gender; female soccer players' last names consistently used with no article for the sake of language economy in the syntactic structures of the articles, *la giocatrice* /a female contestant/, *la calciatrice* /a female soccer player/ vs. *il portiere* /a goalkeeper; a consistent lack of feminine noun forms, *il numero 9* /a player with number 9/, *la Juventus Women, la Roma femminile, il Milan donne, la Champions League femminile, le ragazze bianconere*) from the 2022-2023 editions of two comparable soccer journals *New England Soccer Journal* regularly issued in America and *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in Italy. The latter one also has a column entitled *Calcio Femminile* (female soccer). The selection of the American and Italian soccer magazines as a source of naturalistic feminine lexical items was purposeful as they both have columns with men-authored narratives about female soccer players' efforts on the pitch. This gives the authors the opportunity to research the feminine lexical items as opposed to the masculine ones in American English and in Italian by analogy to the study on gender-marked words in Polish by Woźniak-Wrzesińska (2022). The final research outcome is envisaged to be a formation of a set of contrastive language-specific lexical and grammatical features of American English and Italian in the analyzed contemporary feminine soccer language items that are also indicative of an increasing significance of women in American and Italian culture.

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