

# Italian

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**@genderedform**

# My research – background

- PhD (Lancaster University): Gender and language use in the Italian parliament -2014
- Since then, my research has focused on gendered language, mostly feminisation of job titles in high-ranking political roles (but also generic masculines in a corpus of web texts)
- I have written about sexual remarks towards female politicians in Italy
- I have researched forensic narratives of *femminicidio* in newspapers, the parliament and a TV show.
- I also touched upon fatherhood in Italy, showing the relationship between the parental role and policing of the sexuality of daughters.
- *At the moment, I am working on construction of gender in Giorgia Meloni's social media* (with Dr G. Evolvi)

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Article

**Uno**  
A corpus linguistic investigation of intersubjectivity and gender

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**Keywords:** gendered language, grammatical gender, Italian, extended intersubjectivity, masculine as a norm

**Abstract**

Generic masculines – masculine forms used for women – are employed in many languages, for example English (Mills 2008), French (Cosdy 2015), Spanish (Benquebra 2011) and German (Motschenbacher 2016), providing accounts of how gender is made visible in the language through morphological, lexical and syntactic units. These accounts are also linked with how gender is seen in societies and culture, reproducing an imbalance between women and men. Specifically, language discrimination against women is based on the idea that speakers orient themselves towards androcentric language, recognising ‘men’ as a metonym for the group ‘human being’ (Abanoub 2014), causing a linguistic invisibility of women. Similarly, studies in Italian have also discussed the use of masculine forms to refer to, talk about and describe women (Cavogno 2013), or have shown how these are used in specialised (Nardone 2016, 2018) or media corpora (Formato 2014, 2016, 2019). This article investigates the use of a specific (and underexamined) generic masculine in Italian – namely, the indefinite

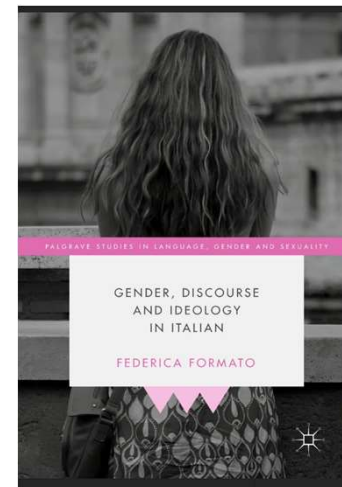
**‘Ci sono troie in giro in Parlamento che farebbero di tutto’: Italian female politicians seen through a sexual lens**

Federica Formato

**Abstract**

*Italian female politicians are increasingly gaining access to the institutional public space, in some cases breaking the glass ceiling that has blocked them from reaching high positions. However, language used to attack them for their possible wrong doings or employed to represent themselves demonstrates that a rearrangement of a gendered fixed order is constantly challenged by (those in) a culture and society that still see women as mostly pertaining to the private sphere. In this article, I qualitatively investigate sexual terms, directly and indirectly sexist, used by a variety of actors (journalists, comedians, politicians) attempting to prove women’s unsuitability for political roles and, more broadly, for operating in the institutional public sphere. To examine these terms, I developed a framework which takes into consideration communicative functions (stereotypes, gossip and self-representation), aimed at providing a comprehensive and context-dependent investigation into how language is purposefully used to re-establish a known gendered structure (only men in the institutional sphere). Nexus analysis, borrowed from anthropologist Roy Scollon and Suzanne Scollon, is here performed in order to show how language is intrinsically linked to an ideologically gendered order which speakers seem to reproduce through linguistic practices. This article contributes to previous literature on Italy as a highly sexist culture as well as that on representation of female professionals operating in domains which have been historically inhabited by men. It also*

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**Keywords:** Gendered language, Italian, media studies, sexism, women in politics

Linguistic markers of sexism in the Italian media: a case study of *ministra* and *ministro*

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the way that the Italian media use language to refer to female ministers in the last three governments. While Italian is a gender-specific language (e.g., a root of the job titles can be followed by either feminine or masculine endings, singular and plural), it is common to use masculine forms to refer to and address women. *Ministro* is one of those cases where masculine forms replace feminine ones – a practice which could be construed as sexist, is only rarely challenged in institutions, and to which attention has only recently been paid in academia (Fusco, 2012; and Bobavelli, 2012a, 2012b). The investigation presented here focuses on how grammar is translated in a way that reproduces women’s invisibility in a sexist society. A corpus-based quantitative analysis of feminine and masculine forms of *ministro*–used in three widely read printed Italian newspapers (*Corriere della Sera*, *Il Resto del Carlino* and *La Stampa*) is undertaken. Newspaper articles were collected in the period 2012–14 to cover the Monti technocratic government (three female ministers), and left-winged Letta (seven female ministers) and part of the Renzi (seven female ministers) political governments. This paper contributes to the literature on language reform and sexist language in traditionally male-inhabited physical and metaphorical (stereotypes, prototypes) spaces such as the institutional public sphere.

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# My research – gender-inclusive language

- My interest shifted from gendered language to gender inclusive language
- With Dr Anna Lisa Somma, we have published initial thoughts about gender inclusive strategies in Italian within sociolinguistic notions (e.g. communities).
- At the moment my monograph *Feminism, corpus-assisted research and language inclusivity* is being reviewed (Cambridge University Press).



# What's the book about

- A detailed literature review of gender inclusive languages
- A novel triangulation between FCDA and CADS
- An investigation of ə in a corpus of tweets from a quantitative perspective (based on some words pertaining to work, school, activism)
- An investigation of ə based on metalanguaging
- An investigation of the pragmatic and social functions of ə

