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ANALYSIS OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN THE SPORTS PRESS IN SPAIN FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE: THE PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article addresses the persistence of non-inclusive language and gender stereotypes in Spanish sports press coverage of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Despite advances in gender equality and the increased visibility of women in sports, the media continues to play down women's athletic achievements and use stereotypical narratives. **Methodology:** This study employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses of 76 front pages from major Spanish sports newspapers, including *Marca*, *AS*, *Mundo Deportivo*, and *Sport*, during the Olympic period. The variables of interest include prioritization of news and use of inclusive language, with a focus on categories such as headlines, subheadings, and main text. **Results:** Qualitative analysis revealed the more frequent use of stereotypical expressions for women's achievements, such as "miracle" and "historic", compared to terms like "overcomes" and "great", which are used in men's sports. Furthermore, instances of the unnecessary highlighting and marginalization of gender were detected. **Discussion:** Although steps have been taken toward more equitable representation, the results indicate that female athletes continue to be presented through narratives that reinforce traditional gender roles. These practices highlight the necessity of a cultural and linguistic transformation in sports journalism. **Conclusions:** In order to advance gender equality in sports, the media must adopt inclusive language and narrative approaches that are free of stereotypes and that fairly recognize the achievements of male and female athletes alike. This will strengthen the perception of equality in society.

Keywords: communication, sport, stereotype, inclusive language, media.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the media has acted as an agent of socialization, establishing topics for public debate and shaping collective perceptions, even in the digital age (Antúnez, 2020; Lazo Serrano et al., 2022; Ribeiro et al., 2024). They contribute to the construction and reinforcement of images of social reality (Farfán & Requena, 2024) by visibly expressing the values and culture of each social group, as well as society as a whole. Thus, different media platforms position themselves as potential instruments of social control (Cruz Vilain, 2021), operating through the integration of norms, the use of symbols, and roles already internalized by audiences (Baum & Potter, 2008; Villa Gil, 2013).

Specifically, the media perpetuate gender stereotypes and roles by constantly and systematically transmitting these representations, which the public perceives as objective, unquestionable, and permanent (Gerardo, 2020; Tovar Lasheras et al., 2020).

Along these lines, the sports press is identified as a predominantly male space that prioritizes sports performed by men (Salido-Fernández & Muñoz-Muñoz, 2021). It exerts a special influence on consolidating cultural values that perpetuate recurring, stereotypical gender attitudes (Pfister, 2015). For example, male sports stereotypes

are related to athletes' physical qualities, while female stereotypes fundamentally value athletes' beauty (Pérez-Ugena, 2020).

In this regard, it should be noted that although there has been an evolution towards accepting women in sports in recent years, there is still resistance under the premise that some sports are valid for women and others for men (Casajús & Berdula, 2021; Méndez Sánchez et al., 2023).

Under this premise, studies such as that of Jesus Bento et al. (2020) demonstrate that women's participation in sports has been limited and constructed based on gender stereotypes. Consequently, the practice of sports requiring attributes perceived as masculine tends to be considered a male domain, resulting in an unequal distribution of male and female participation.

In this sense, although more and more women are practicing elite sports, the increase in their sporting achievements has been exponential in recent decades (Statistics and Studies Division of the General Technical Secretariat and Higher Sports Council, 2022). However, they are still not very visible in the sports press. Significant differences in media coverage of male and female sports perpetuate gender roles, incorporating beauty, motherhood, and the sexualization of female athletes (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2021).

Thus, the continued dominance of this approach in sports journalism limits the recognition and visibility of female athletes, reducing the potential impact of women's sports on gender equality (Rodríguez Torres et al., 2022).

The importance of reformulating this approach is widely recognized in current literature, which emphasizes the need to challenge gender stereotypes in sports media, public organizations, and private companies to equitably reflect the role of women in sports (Donoso Pérez et al., 2023; Menéndez Menéndez, 2020).

This challenge has led to a growing demand for research proposing more inclusive coverage models and measures (Ramon Vegas et al., 2020). Even though some media have adopted egalitarian models, the evolution is slow and uneven. This reinforces the idea that women are less interested in sports than men and perpetuates the notion of female inferiority (Galván Cárdenas, 2022).

1.1. The role of journalistic language in perpetuating gender roles

In this context, the role of journalistic language in perpetuating gender roles remains a critical issue in media coverage analysis. Through its linguistic choices, journalistic language contributes to the recovery and consolidation of stereotypes affecting public perception of women's and men's roles in society (Ross & Padovani, 2020).

Similarly, Calvo-Ortega (2020) analyzed print and digital media coverage and concluded that women are often presented in terms of their physical appearance or family roles. This limits their perception as figures of power and professionalism. Conversely, men tend to be described in relation to their achievements, authority, and competence, thus reinforcing traditional gender roles that associate leadership and rationality with the male gender.

For their part, and referring to the sports press, several authors such as Fanjul Fernández (2020) observed how the terms used to refer to women focus on aesthetic or personality traits, instead of using language that values their achievements and skills in the same terms as the achievements of men, promoting a more equitable vision and contributing to an equal perception in media coverage (Galván Cárdenas, 2022).

To this end, an inclusive language approach in the sports press would involve not only explicitly referring to female athletes with specific terms, but also avoiding the use of qualifiers that emphasize physical or aesthetic attributes over their sporting abilities (Roca Marín & Navarro García, 2022).

From this perspective, organizations such as the UN and UNESCO have developed guidelines for the media, promoting the use of language that avoids bias and fosters gender equality in all areas, including sports, recommending practices such as avoiding the unnecessary feminization of professions or positions, using inclusive pronouns when possible, and highlighting sporting achievements without gender connotations (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1999).

As a result of the preceding discussion, this research establishes the following premise: current sports media coverage in specialized newspapers perpetuates gender stereotypes through journalistic language.

To address the first issue, the following variables are considered:

1. Printed sports newspapers.
2. The most read sports newspapers in Spain.
3. Front pages prioritized over chronicles.
4. Hierarchy of information on front pages.

Regarding the first variable, multiple platforms exist for consuming sports content (Boyle & Haynes, 2014); however, print media continues to play an essential role in shaping and disseminating sports information to the general public. Despite digital expansion, the press maintains its influence and stands out for its ability to establish narratives and informative approaches with high social impact (Hutchins & Rowe, 2016).

According to recent data from *Estudio General de Medios*¹ (EGM) published by the *Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación*² (AIMC, 2024), a total of 5,645,000 newspaper readers were recorded during the second wave of 2024, which corresponded to the period between March 20 and June 4 of that year. Of those, 1,536,000 were sports newspaper readers.

Regarding the second variable, the sample focuses on analyzing the most widely read sports newspapers in Spain: *Marca*, *AS*, *Mundo Deportivo*, and *Sport*. These

¹ General Media Survey

² Association for Media Research

publications were selected based on the premise that the media significantly influences the Spanish population as consumers of information. Consequently, the primary selection criterion for this research was the daily readership of each publication. The data show a clear hierarchy in terms of reach: *Marca* tops the list with 950,000 daily readers, followed by *AS* with 506,000 readers, *Mundo Deportivo* with 253,000 readers, and *Sport* with 230,000 readers (AIMC, 2024).

Regarding the third variable, front pages are considered the initial point of contact between readers and newspapers, serving as publications' introductions (Weinberg, 2022). Recent studies show that the front page remains fundamental in terms of reach and social influence. It is one of the press's main resources for impacting its audience (Pérez Serrano & García Santamaría, 2018). Front pages also shape the agenda of other media outlets, such as television (Aruguete, 2017).

Additionally, front pages are often read not only by newspaper subscribers, but also by a wider audience who read only the first page. Their function extends beyond informing; they aim to capture the reader's attention through visual and narrative strategies that generate surprise (Sánchez Vigil et al., 2022; Suárez Ramírez et al., 2018).

Finally, to address the fourth variable, the components of the analyzed front pages were considered. The objective was to determine when women's sports, athletes, and their achievements were featured as main news, highlighted news, or included in the news summary. The collected information was then categorized as follows: headline, subheadline, and body text.

To address the second issue, it is evident that the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris have marked a turning point in the media's coverage of female athletes. These games achieved significant progress in visibility and inclusion, reaching gender parity with an equal number of male and female participants. This is the first time in Olympic history that this milestone has been achieved (ONU Mujeres³, 2024).

The Comité Olímpico Internacional⁴ (COI) supported this progress by issuing new guidelines for fair and balanced media representation. The COI urged broadcasters to highlight athletic achievements over appearance or other personal details (COI, 2024). This reflects a broader cultural shift in which the public increasingly celebrates female athletic achievements. This shift has had a positive effect on sponsorships and investments that support the global development of women's sports (Stroom, 2025).

In any case, it is clear that the Olympic Games have become a key platform for raising the profile of women's sports. For example, at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the media spotlighted female athletes like American swimmer Dara Torres and Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who received extensive coverage for their historic achievements. The media also emphasized these athletes' exceptional records and skills, and there was a trend toward decreasing the focus on stereotypical aspects and

³ UN Women

⁴ International Olympic Committee

concentrating more on their sporting accomplishments (Bruce, 2009).

Similarly, NBC's coverage of the London 2012 Olympic Games (Jones, 2013; Billings et al., 2014) devoted significant space to female athletes. During the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, NBC's primetime programming devoted more than half of its broadcast time—specifically, 58.5%—to female athletes (UDaily, 2016).

In March 2020, it was no coincidence that the COI made the momentous decision to require each Olympic delegation to include at least one woman and one man. Consequently, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, held in August 2021, marked a historic milestone as the first to feature women competing in every discipline (COI, 2021). However, female participation had already reached a significant milestone at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games: 5,059 female athletes competed, representing 45% of the total participants. This progress was reflected in both numbers and the diversity of disciplines, as women were included in sports such as golf and rugby for the first time. Furthermore, for the first time in Olympic history, all participating countries had at least one female athlete in their delegations (Salido-Fernández & Muñoz-Muñoz, 2021).

2. OBJECTIVES

Based on the arguments presented, the article's main objective is to determine if biases and inequalities in sports journalism perpetuate gender stereotypes and feminize sports. Reaching this objective will also allow for the achievement of the following specific objectives:

- 1) To analyze whether the sports press contributes to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.
- 2) To study whether the language used in sports newspapers reinforces inclusive language use.
- 3) To explore situations in which sports newspapers feminize or masculinize sports by making the gender of the athlete visible.

3. METHODOLOGY

This work is structured around an empirical study combining quantitative and qualitative content analyses. First, a quantitative analysis was conducted to determine the volume of information and categorize the type of content related to women's and men's sports in the sports press to explain the asymmetrical situation. Second, a qualitative analysis was conducted to further examine the media coverage of women's sports printed in newspapers by studying the language used.

3.1. The role of journalistic language in perpetuating gender roles

3.1.1. Sample selection

The selected sample is not intended to be a scalable representation of the given media coverage but rather a selection of a specific topic. In this context, the sample includes an analysis of 72 front pages from the print editions of the sports newspapers *Marca*, *AS*, *Mundo Deportivo*, and *Sport*, covering the official period of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games from July 26 to August 11, 2024.

Additionally, the front pages from July 24 and 25 are included because several competitions were scheduled before the start date. The basic criterion for selecting the front pages is the evolution of the teams and athletes up to the achievement of medals. Competitions that did not result in an Olympic medal for the Spanish delegation were excluded, except for the men's singles tennis category, which marked Rafael Nadal's retirement from professional tennis; Carolina Marín's injury, which forced her to withdraw from the badminton semifinals of the Olympic Games; and the participation of the men's basketball team, due to the significant media attention generated by the announcement of captain Rudy Fernández's retirement (table 1).

Table 1.

Sample Selection: Olympic Medals.

Olympic discipline	Medal	Selection
Waterpolo	Gold	Female: team.
Athletics (20 km walk)	Silver	Female: Maria Perez.
Basketball (3X3)	Silver	Female: team.
Artistic Swimming	Bronze	Female: team.
Tennis (Doubles)	Bronze	Female: team.
Mixed Relay	Gold	Mixed: Álvaro Martín and María Pérez.
Soccer	Gold	Male: team.
Sailing	Gold	Male: team.
Athletics (Triple Jump)	Gold	Male: Jordan Díaz.
Tennis	Silver	Male: Carlos Alcaraz.
Boxing (+92 kg)	Silver	Male: Ayoub Ghadfa.
Judo	Bronze	Male: Fran Garrigós.
Canoeing	Bronze	Male: Pau Echaniz.
Canoeing (C2 500)	Bronze	Male: team.
Canoeing (K4 500)	Bronze	Male: team.
Athletics (20 km walk)	Bronze	Male: Álvaro Martín
Handball	Bronze	Male: team.
Boxing (-92 kg)	Bronze	Male: Emmanuel Reyes Pla.
Men's tennis (singles)	No medal	Male: Rafael Nadal
Badminton	No medal	Female: Carolina Marín
Basketball	No medal	Male: team

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

3.2. Stages of the analysis plan: quantitative and qualitative approach to the research

The stages of the analysis plan are specified below.

3.2.1. Quantitative analysis plan

The quantitative analysis plan includes collecting data on the hierarchical organization of information on the front page. The systematization of data collection involved creating an analysis sheet that identified the newspaper's name and classified the content into the following subcategories: main news story, featured news story, and summary of featured news stories, taking into account the gender of the athletes (female/male), both for individual and team sports.

3.2.2. Qualitative analysis plan

The stages followed in the execution of the qualitative analysis plan (Saldaña, 2009) are the following:

- 1) Document preparation and management. This stage involved the collection of front pages relevant to the analysis. A comprehensive internet search was conducted, primarily utilizing the digital archives of the newspapers under scrutiny.
- 2) Raw data reduction. Data reduction entailed the extraction of the headlines from each front page that were pertinent to the research objectives. This process enabled the subsequent filtration and organization of the relevant information (Miles et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017).
- 3) Coding. The coding process was executed manually, in accordance with the tenets of the analytical process. This approach was undertaken to ensure the integrity and validity of the analysis, as evidenced by recent studies that have validated the use of both manual and digital methods (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). To be more precise, following the recommendations of the United Nations (n.d.), the use of gender-inclusive language was analyzed to identify expressions that perpetuate stereotypes about socially assigned gender roles, as well as expressions that fail to make gender visible when required by the communicative action, or, conversely, make it visible when unnecessary. Furthermore, an analysis of the hierarchical structure of the content was conducted, with the following categories being considered: headline, subheading, and body text.

The interpretation of the codes did not vary during the analytical process, and the information was organized according to the proposed scheme (MacQueen et al., 1998) (table 2).

Table 2.

Meaning of the codes CO1LenInclusivo, CO2NoViGen and CO3SiViGen.

CO1LenInclusivo	
Brief definition	Expressions that perpetuate gender stereotypes.
Broad definition	Description of the linguistic elements of the newspaper's front pages that contribute to perpetuating gender stereotypes.
When to use	Apply this code when any headline, subheading or text refers to terms that contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.
When not to use	Do not apply when the expressions correctly use inclusive language.
CO2NoViGen	
Brief definition	Lack of visibility of gender when required by communicative action.
Broad definition	Identifying the non-visibility of gender when required by the communicative action, avoiding the use of linguistic techniques such as doubling.
When to use	Apply this code when any headline, subheading or text does not refer to the genre, even if the communication action requires it.
When not to use	Do not apply when gender is made visible as required by the communicative action.
CO3SiViGen	
Brief definition	Gender visibility when not required by the communicative action.
Broad definition	Gender identification when not required by the communicative action, highlighting differences between male and female athletes.
When to use	Apply this code whenever a headline, subheading, or text refers to gender, even if the communication action does not require it.
When not to use	Do not apply when gender is not visible.

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Volume of information and categorization of content type

Of the total number of front pages analyzed (n=76), 14 front pages (18.4%) did not feature the Paris Olympics as the main story, 20 front pages (26.3%) did not include any main news item that referred to the gender of the athlete because it was a mixed discipline, as in the case of the 20 km race walking, and 3 front pages (3.95%) featured the achievements of non-Spanish athletes in their main news story.

Meanwhile, a total of 27 front pages (35.5%) included information related to Spanish men's teams as the main news item, and 13 front pages (17.1%) featured women's sport as the main news item (table 3).

Table 3.

Total main news items (absolute frequencies).

Diary	Total number of main news stories that revealed the gender of the athletes	Total main news items that revealed the gender of the athlete(s): male	Total main news stories that revealed the gender of the athlete(s): female
<i>As</i>	13	9	4
<i>Marca</i>	12	7	5
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i>	9	7	2
<i>Sport</i>	6	4	2

TOTAL	40	27 (67.5%)	13 (32.5%)
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Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

With regard to the analysis of the news highlighted on the front pages of the newspapers As, Marca, Mundo Deportivo and Sport during the Paris Olympic Games, a total of 71 news items were published, showing the gender of the sportsmen and sportswomen. More precisely, 52 highlights (73.2%) refer to men's sports and 19 highlights (26.7%) to women's sports (table 4).

Table 4.

Total featured news (absolute frequencies).

Diary	Total number of main news stories that revealed the gender of the athletes	Total main news items that revealed the gender of the athlete(s): male	Total main news stories that revealed the gender of the athlete(s): female
<i>As</i>	28	20	8
<i>Marca</i>	22	18	5
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i>	10	7	3
<i>Sport</i>	11	7	3
TOTAL	71	52 (73.24%)	19 (26.76%)

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

With regard to the number of news items included in the front-page summary of the newspapers analyzed, the total number of articles that identify the gender of athletes, both in team and individual sports, amounts to 118. Out of these, 73 news items (61.8%) refer to men's sports and 45 (38.1%) to women's sports (table 5).

Table 5.

Total news summary (absolute frequencies).

Diary	Total number of main news stories that revealed the gender of the athletes	Total main news items that revealed the gender of the athlete(s): male	Total main news stories that revealed the gender of the athlete(s): female
<i>As</i>	20	14	6
<i>Marca</i>	48	31	17
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i>	25	15	10
<i>Sport</i>	25	13	12
TOTAL	118	73 (61.86%)	45 (38.14%)

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

Finally, in terms of media coverage, differences are evident regarding the coverage of the Paris Olympic Games. In this respect, it is observed how the newspapers *As* and *Marca* deployed a broader coverage than the newspapers *Mundo Deportivo* and *Sport*, offering their readers a greater number of main news stories, highlights and more complete summaries.

4.2. Expressions that perpetuate gender stereotypes

Regarding expressions related to women, it is observed that the following linguistic elements take center stage in headlines about female victories: the nouns "magical", "miracle", "soul", and "queen"; the verbs "to crown" and "to break"; the adjectives "historic", "memorable", or "prestigious" to describe a victory, or "cruel" to describe a defeat; and linguistic expressions such as "miraculous pass", "to break again", or "passed the test". These expressions tend to emphasize emotional or extraordinary aspects, rather than focusing on technical or sporting achievements. This approach reinforces a journalistic narrative that positions female success as exceptional or improbable, in contrast to the normalization of male success.

Similarly, these expressions gain particular prominence in the main news stories and through headlines. Some examples are shown below (table 6):

Table 6.

Women's magazine covers perpetuate stereotypes.

Front page	Context	Content	News type	Text type
<i>As</i> 25/07/2024	Victory for the Spanish women's soccer team in their debut against Japan	Subject Passed	Main news	Headline
<i>As</i> 29/07/2024	Spanish women's soccer team advances to the quarterfinals	Magical Alexia	Main news	Headline
<i>As</i> 08/08/2024	Bronze for the women's artistic swimming team	A much-desired bronze	Featured news	Headline
<i>As</i> 09/08/2024	Preview of the women's water polo final	A new challenge for the queens of the water	Featured news	Headline
<i>As</i> 09/08/2024	Defeat for the Spanish women's soccer team against Brazil	The team wants to forget its poor performance against Brazil	Summary	Text
<i>Marca</i> 04/08/2024	Spanish women's soccer team advances to the semifinals	Heart of gold	Main news	Headline
<i>Marca</i> 05/08/2024	Injury to Carolina Marín	Our hearts were broken	Main news	Headline
<i>Marca</i> 06/08/2024	Silver for the women's 3x3 basketball team	The women's 3x3 team wins a historic medal after eliminating the US in the semifinals and losing to Germany by one point	Main news	Subheading
<i>Marca</i> 07/08/2024	Defeat prevents the women's soccer team from reaching the semifinals	Disappointing defeat against Brazil, but there is still a chance against Germany	Main news	Subheading

<i>Marca</i> 08/08/2024	Bronze for the artistic swimming team	Bronze for artistic swimming 12 years later	Featured news	Headline
<i>Marca</i> 09/08/2024	Semifinal match between the women's soccer team and Germany	Bronze is a gem	Summary	Headline
<i>Marca</i> 11/08/2024	Gold for the women's water polo team	Memorable first Olympic title for the water polo team	Main news	Text
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 30/07/2024	Victory for the women's water polo team in the group stage	Prestigious victory for the Spanish women's water polo team against the USA	Featured news	Text
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 04/08/2024	Victory for the women's soccer team. Advance to the semifinals	Miraculous entry into the semifinals for Spain after eliminating Colombia on penalties	Main news	Text
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 05/08/2024	Injury to Carolina Marín	And tears...	Main news	Headline
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 10/08/2024	Defeat of the women's soccer team in the quarterfinals	The women's team bids farewell to bronze with a cruel defeat against Germany	Summary	Text
<i>Sport</i> 29/07/2024	Victory for the women's basketball team against China. Group stage.	They pulled off a miracle in extra time	Summary	Headline
<i>Sport</i> 30/07/2024	Victory for the women's water polo team against the US. Group stage.	Historic victory against the USA	Summary	Headline
<i>Sport</i> 01/08/2024	Victory for the women's basketball team against Puerto Rico. Group stage.	Miracle in extra time	Summary	Headline
<i>Sport</i> 05/08/2024	Injury to Carolina Marín.	Dramatic injury to Carolina Marín	Summary	Headline
<i>Sport</i> 06/08/2024	Gold for the women's 3x3 basketball team.	Historic silver in 3x3	Featured news	Headline

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

The use of terms such as "queen" or "magical" serves to reinforce the feminization of sports (Pérez-Ugena, 2020), associating women with emotional or aesthetic qualities, while men are described with terms alluding to strength or leadership. This linguistic pattern not only renders invisible the technical and physical effort behind women's achievements but also reinforces the idea that women are "intruders" in a space historically dominated by men (Pfister, 2015). Furthermore, expressions such as "miracle" or "historic" have been employed to place women's achievements on a level of exceptionality, which can be interpreted as a subtle form of delegitimization (Galván Cárdenas, 2022). This linguistic variety is not utilized as often to characterize men's triumphs, thereby unveiling a bias in media reporting.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of terms like “soul” or “break down” to describe female defeats reinforces an emotional narrative that infantilizes or dramatizes sporting failures. This type of language not only perpetuates traditional stereotypes associated with female sensitivity but also limits the public perception of women’s sport as professional and competitive (Ross & Padovani, 2020). On the other hand, expressions like “queens of the water” or “passed the test” underscore traditional roles, linking them to royalty or the educational sphere, rather than highlighting specific sporting skills. This aligns with the findings of Fanjul Fernández (2020), who argues that this type of language shifts attention away from athletic performance and toward external or symbolic characteristics.

Regarding expressions related to men, the use of the following linguistic elements is noted: the nouns “giant”, “challenge”, “great team” or “duel”, the adjectives “solid” to characterize a victory, the verbs “to fight”, “to dominate”, “to sweep away”, “to subdue”, “to impose” or “to knock down”, sentences such as “they know how to suffer” and linguistic expressions such as “they have a great time” or “to get through the process”.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that, similar to the female disciplines, these expressions assume particular significance in the headlines and subheadings of major news stories (table 7):

Table 7.

Men's magazine covers perpetuate stereotypes.

Front page	Context	Content	News type	Text type
As 25/07/2024	Debut of the men's soccer team	The soccer team wins in the Spanish delegation's debut at the games.	Main news	Subtitle
As 28/07/2024	Men's soccer team advances to the quarterfinals	Spain defeats the Dominican Republic.	Featured news	Text
As 31/07/2024	Men's tennis doubles advances to the quarterfinals	Alcaraz and Nadal suffer against Griekspoor and Koolhof and are now one win away from fighting for the medals.	Main news	Subtitle
As 03/08/2024	Men's basketball team eliminated in the quarterfinals	Spain leaves with honor after fighting until the end.	Featured news	Text
As 04/08/2024	Men's singles tennis advances to the finals	Alcaraz, a giant obstacle for Djokovic's missing title: Olympic gold.	Summary	Text
As 06/08/2024	Men's soccer team advances to the finals against France	Spain is a great team.	Main news	Headline
As 09/08/2024	Men's soccer team final against France.	Golden challenge against the host.	Summary	Headline
As 11/08/2024	Victory for the soccer team	Spain dominates the world.	Summary	Headline

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<i>Marca</i> 28/07/2024	Advancement to the round of 16 for the tennis duo Nadal and Alcaraz	'Nadalcaraz' is having a great time.	Featured news	Headline
<i>Marca</i> 29/07/2024	Second round of men's singles tennis. Djokovic vs. Nadal	Today he faces Djokovic in the most anticipated match of the Olympic Games.	Main news	Subtitle
<i>Marca</i> 31/07/2024	Victory over Greece allows the men's basketball team to continue its upward trajectory toward the quarterfinals	The basketball team is a giant against Antento. Spain roars.	Main news	Subtitle
<i>Marca</i> 09/08/2024	Bronze in K4-500 and sixth medal for athlete Craviotto at the Olympic Games	Craviotto in the Olympus.	Main news	Headline
<i>Marca</i> 09/08/2024	Men's soccer team final against France	Gold challenge against the hosts.	Summary	Headline
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 29/07/2024	Men's singles tennis. Second round	The Manacori faces Djokovic today in an explosive second-round match.	Main news	Subtitle
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 31/07/2024	Victory over Greece allows the men's basketball team to continue its upward trajectory toward the quarterfinals	Scariolo's team defeats Antetokounpo's Greece	Featured news	Headline
<i>Mundo Deportivo</i> 06/08/2024	Reference to the top scorer of the match that sends Spain to the men's soccer final at the Olympics	Feminator. A midfield display, with a goal and an assist, put Spain in Friday's final	Main news	Headline and text.
<i>Sport</i> 30/07/2024	Group stage match between the Spanish men's soccer team and Egypt	Against Egypt, it's just a formality	Summary	Headline
<i>Sport</i> 31/07/2024	Advance to the quarterfinals: men's tennis doubles	How great!	Main news	Headline
<i>Sport</i> 10/08/2024	Gold medal in men's soccer	The team emulates its magnificent victory in Barcelona 92 and climbs to the top of the podium after defeating France in overtime in a fierce duel	Main news story.	Text

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2024.

The language used in media coverage of men's sports reinforces the association between sport and traditional values of masculinity, such as aggression, dominance, and competitiveness. Expressions like "dominate" or "sweep" not only glorify physical performance but also solidify a heroic image that positions men as almost invulnerable figures (Bruce, 2009). This approach, while celebratory, can have negative effects by imposing unattainable standards of physical and emotional strength. In turn, phrases like "they know how to suffer" reinforce the idea that men must endure pain and adversity without showing vulnerability. This type of narrative not only perpetuates the culture of extreme sacrifice in men's sports but also obscures real problems such as

injuries or the psychological impacts of high performance (Calvo-Ortega, 2020).

From a critical perspective, terms like "giant" or "super team" reinforce a hypermasculine view of sport that associates success exclusively with physical or collective superiority. This discursive construction (Donoso et al., 2023) not only limits the diversity of male representations in sport but also excludes other forms of success based on technical skills, strategies, or innovation. Furthermore, expressions like "just going through the motions" or "having a great time" trivialize certain sporting achievements by presenting them as inevitable or easy for men. This contrasts with the narrative used for female athletes, whose successes are frequently described as extraordinary or miraculous (Galván Cárdenas, 2022). This linguistic dichotomy reinforces an implicit hierarchy in the perception of men's and women's sport.

4.3. Expressions that do not make gender visible when the communicative situation does require making gender visible

It is important to note that the absence of gender expression in communication is evident in certain contexts, particularly when it is required by the communicative situation. For instance, the front page of the newspaper *Sport*, published on the occasion of the opening of the Olympic Games in Paris on July 27, 2024, stated that "The athletes traveled along the Seine in boats accompanied by musical performances from artists such as Céline Dion and Lady Gaga". This approach, however, did not include both female and male versions of athletes, thereby failing to ensure the inclusion of both women and men: "The sportsmen and sportswomen".

In a similar vein, the newspaper *AS* (August 8, 2024) highlighted on its front page the victory of María Pérez and Álvaro Martín in the mixed relay marathon. Notably, they became the first Spanish athletes to win two medals in the same Games, thereby effectively obscuring the gender of the female athlete.

4.4. Expressions that make gender visible when the communicative situation does not require making gender visible

On the other hand, there are reports of front pages that highlight gender when it is not required by the communicative action. Such is the case of the publication on August 11, 2024, in which, following the victory of the women's water polo team that earned them the gold medal, the newspaper *AS* ran the following headline on its front page: *Liquid gold. A generation of women's water polo crosses its final frontier: the conquest of the Olympic title*, highlighting the gender of the athletes when it is not necessary.

Similarly, on its front page on August 8, 2024, following the gold medals won by María Pérez and Álvaro Martín, the newspaper *Sport* published the following headline: *María Pérez and Álvaro Martín are crowned in Paris as masters of their sport, adding a historic gold medal in the debut of the mixed relay at the Games*, instead of using a noun without specific gender connotations such as "leaders".

5. CONCLUSIONS

The treatment of women's sport in the sports press in Spain during the Paris Olympic Games reveals a lesser presence of women's disciplines on the front pages of the main

newspapers, which systematically relegate the victories of female athletes to the featured news or incorporate them in the summaries of each edition, reserving the main news for men's sport.

Regarding the language used, although there is a narrative that, in general terms, brings women's sport closer to a vision increasingly focused on the sporting aspect, stereotypical expressions that reinforce gender roles still persist, classifying the achievements of female athletes as "miraculous" or "historic", in contrast to the victories of male athletes, which are usually described as "great" or "heroic".

As a consequence of all the above, it can be stated that, despite the advances in gender equality, the analysis of the sports press reveals a persistent invisibility of the sport practiced by women.

In general, sports media continue to dedicate limited coverage to women's sports, a consequence of the predominantly male audience. And when they do cover them, they often employ expressions and descriptors that reproduce gender stereotypes and traditional roles. These linguistic patterns not only limit the representation of women in sports but also reinforce social perceptions that place women's sports in a position of lesser relevance and prestige compared to men's.

Thus, it is common to find terms and expressions in the sports press that highlight women's physical or emotional characteristics, often emphasizing aspects such as "beauty" or "delicacy", which have little to do with their sporting achievements. This type of coverage, in addition to diminishing the professionalism and effort these athletes represent, perpetuates a biased view of women's competition in which gendered narratives prevail over their merits.

Similarly, the use of non-inclusive language is manifested not only in the lack of visibility of female athletes, but also in the use of generic masculine terms to refer to mixed or mostly female groups.

Finally, it is essential that sports journalism professionals embrace their responsibility as agents of change in media discourse, adhering to journalistic writing guidelines and best practices on inclusive language and gender. The effective application of these resources not only contributes to a more equitable representation of women's sports, but also encourages social media outlets to act in favor of cultural change in the social perception of women's role in sports.

Therefore, in order to move towards a fair and equitable representation of sport, it is necessary for the sports press to adopt inclusive language that not only makes female athletes visible, but also moves away from gender stereotypes and promotes a comprehensive and respectful view of all people involved in the sporting field.

This study has some limitations that should be considered for future research. First, the analysis is limited to the exceptional period of the Olympic Games, when coverage of women's sports tends to increase compared to the rest of the sporting year, which may not represent the general trend of the media under analysis. Second, the categorization of expressions as perpetuating stereotypes lacks a graduated scale that

would allow for distinguishing levels of impact, limiting the analysis to dichotomous categories. Furthermore, the study focuses exclusively on print media, while sports information consumption is also digital, especially among younger audiences. Finally, it should be noted that a historical analysis of previous series was not conducted to assess the evolution of sports journalism in past Olympic Games.

These limitations also give rise to future lines of research, such as a historical analysis that allows for a comparative evaluation of how this topic is addressed and its evolution over time. This analysis should also be extended to digital media and social networks, since this study is limited to print media. Finally, it would be interesting to have research that develops new models for evaluating inclusive language or measuring the degree of linguistic inclusivity.

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