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***Resistance to Gender-inclusive language in Italian left and right political leaders:
a comparative discourse analysis of national vs. international contexts in speeches
in English and in Italian***

The Italian political scenario is notoriously divided into central-left and central-right parties that, in the last few years, have governed the country with a series of mixed political alliances (Russo et al 2021). All the governments that have followed one another have failed in issuing central guidelines that would promote and implement a gender-inclusive language in public institutions and administrative language in general terms (Formato & Somma 2023). Even though single public bodies (e.g., ministries, schools, universities, etc.) contain on their websites documents that illustrate to their staff and the public the kind of gender-inclusive language that is used by and within the single institution.

This absence is reflected in the approach to gender-inclusive language of the parties composing Italy’s political panorama: if left-wing parties usually hold more progressist views promoting the use of an inclusive language with the use of both feminine and masculine pronouns, as well as of the schwa ending for a neutral gender, which does not exist in Italian, right-wing parties are more conservative and resist these uses on supposedly moral grounds (Montecchio 2025). The current leaders of these two different views are Giorgia Meloni – Italy’s current PM and leader of the populist far-right party *Fratelli d’Italia* – and Elly Schlein, Secretary of the *Partito Democratico*, one of the main opposition left-wing parties.

The study identifies instances of resistance to gender-inclusive language in the two political leaders, Meloni and Schlein, and how they reflect – or do not reflect – in public contexts, the corresponding political stands with respect to gender inclusivity. To do so, speeches and official interviews delivered by the two leaders are examined by means of Critical Discourse Analysis. More specifically, materials in Italian and materials in English will be contrasted in order to assess any differences in the way in which the two politicians express themselves in the two languages in national vs. international contexts.

References

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Bionote

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