

Making gender relevant in Spanish-language sports broadcast discourse

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Abstract

Using the US Spanish-language television broadcasts of the FIFA Women's World Cup soccer (football) tournament, the present study offers an analysis of the crucial role that language plays in the gendering of sport. Despite the framing of the coverage as a celebration of women's participation in sports, this was undermined by the sometimes covert, sometimes overt, objectification, trivialization and patronizing of the players and their sport during the broadcast. We examine the ground-level interactional practices through which this marginalization was achieved. First we consider references to persons, presenting overarching quantitative distributions as well as contextualized examples. We then highlight how gender is brought to the interactional surface and made relevant – to the speakers themselves and to the at-home audience – through the discursive dichotomization of women's versus men's soccer, with particular attention to the ways in which topicalization of gender-based differences can pave the way for the recreation of gender-based inequalities. Finally, we illustrate how gendering soccer reflects and transcends the game itself, invoking and reestablishing normative gender roles and expectations in and from society.

KEYWORDS: BROADCAST DISCOURSE; GENDER; CONVERSATION ANALYSIS (CA); MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIZATION DEVICE (MCD); PERSON REFERENCE; SOCCER/FOOTBALL; SOCIAL INTERACTION; SPORT

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Introduction: language, gender and sport

Although its ubiquity may make it seem transparent, sport is not a neutral or natural event. On the contrary, it is a socially constructed and ideologically loaded institution that is organized and negotiated by the society or culture of which it is a part. And so like other cultural products – from literature to film, art to music – sport is both *shaped by* as well as helps *shape* the larger, intricate framework of social life.

A crucial mechanism through which this social structure is constructed and *re-constructed* is talk. The linguistic mediation of sport (i.e. radio or television broadcasts of sporting events) is a rich, complex text in which the athletic competition through the physical interaction of players is described, contextualized and packaged for public consumption. As Meân and Halone (2010:254) explain, ‘the role of language, discursive practices, and related forms of communicative inter/action are pivotal aspects through which sport and culture manifest and from which the inter-connections and intersections ultimately arise’. That is, the very process that makes sport meaningful – the play-by-play discursive description of athletes’ actions and commentary about them, broadcast through sports media – functions to construct players’ identities as well as actively interpret their thoughts, motivations and behavior on (and off) the field of play. Talk is ultimately how we create winners and losers, heroes and villains, community belonging and exclusion, gender conformity or nonconformity, national pride or shame, and so on.

Zeroing in on gender, women have traditionally been seen as less interested in or capable than men at participating in sports (either as players or spectators), and organized, professional sport has thus been recognized as a hyper-masculine social sphere. Messner (1988:199) describes organized sport as ‘a crucial arena of struggle over basic social conceptions of masculinity and femininity, and as such [it] has become a fundamental arena of ideological contest in terms of power relations between men and women’. Some of the earliest feminist work on gender and language sought to demonstrate that gender-specific language practices and sexist language result from and reflect existing social inequalities and contribute to the maintenance of such inequalities (Lakoff 1975; Zimmerman and West 1975; Fishman 1978; Spender 1980; Maltz and Borker 1982). As women’s progress toward equal opportunity and participation in sport may threaten the hegemonic position of men – not only in sport but also in society more generally – marginalization has been the media’s dominant discursive approach to covering female athletes, who have been primarily described with reference to their sexual desirability or in terms of their roles as wives/

mothers. Furthermore, elite female athletes whose physical characteristics and/or performance challenge these sex roles have been portrayed as sexual deviants, thereby keeping the hegemonic system intact. Indeed, in a review of thirty years of research on the broadcast of the World Cup, Tudor (2009:238) claims that ‘stereotyping was *the* constitutive feature of the broadcasters’ discursive repertoire’. Of course, it should be noted that gendered construction in sports talk goes well beyond broadcast talk, for example, Sznycer (2010, 2013) on the self-presentation of female tennis players, Eliasson (2011) on children’s talk about football and gender, and Meân (2001) on referee–player talk.

There is a small but growing body of literature on sports broadcast discourse from a sociolinguistic approach, examining the connections between sport, media, culture, identities and language. Angelini and Billings (2010) describe how a television network’s agenda-setting establishes a frame through which viewers will see and read a sports broadcast in their analysis of a major US network’s coverage of the 2008 Olympic games. They explain that ‘media has the power to employ sometimes overt, but mostly covert, linguistic choices (see Walther 2004) that collectively (re)create gender dichotomies based on biological distinctions’ (Angelini and Billings 2010:364).

The advancement and progress of women in soccer¹ was the major storyline thread throughout the coverage of Mexico’s three matches in the 2011 Women’s World Cup as televised on Galavisión, a US-based, Spanish-language cable network. This framing of the broadcast as a kind of ‘state of the sport’ was ‘fraught with contradiction and ambiguity’, to borrow Messner’s (1988:203) phrase. While it seems that there was a concerted effort to highlight advances in women’s soccer, particularly in Mexico, this was undermined by the objectification, trivialization and patronizing of the players. Using the US Spanish-language television broadcasts of the Mexican national team’s three matches during group play (the initial stage) of the FIFA Women’s World Cup soccer tournament, held in the months of June and July 2011 in Germany, the present study explores the various ways that this marginalization was accomplished *on a moment-by-moment basis* – by analyzing the unfolding, situated social interaction between the games’ commentators. We aim to demonstrate how the issue of gender can effectively be ‘talked into being’ (Heritage 1984b) in sports discourse and therefore made relevant not only for the interlocutors themselves, but for the at-home audience as well. Furthermore, we illustrate the ways in which the gendering of soccer quickly *transcends* the confines of the sporting event itself and begins to tap into and therefore recreate the gendered norms of more general, non-sport-specific society as well.

Participants in sports commentary

In her analysis of radio sports commentary of rugby matches, Bowcher (2003) explains that the broadcasters' contributions and turns-at-talk are constrained and proscribed by their roles (cf. Clayman and Heritage 2002; Drew and Heritage 1992). She notes that research has identified two very well-established commentator roles: the *play-by-play* or *main commentator*, and the *analyst* or *color commentator*.² The play-by-play or main commentator's 'principal task is to relay the actions of the game as it takes place' (Bowcher 2003:449); in contrast, the role of the color commentator is to make 'analytical and evaluative comments on the game' (Bowcher 2003:449). It is not surprising, then, that the main commentator should talk more than the color commentator: in Bowcher's data, the main/play-by-play commentator was responsible for nearly three-quarters of the contributions. In comparison, the color commentator/expert analyst spoke much less, 13.6 percent of the contributions (Bowcher 2003:457). Bowcher also found that the main commentator takes about half of all turns, much of which is what she calls 'play-by-play talk,' or talk centered on the actions of players on the field, presented as a series of fluent, confident and objective descriptions, and not setting up an expectation for a reply.

In our data, the two commentators are Jorge Pérez-Navarro, who is a professional sportscaster, and Andrea Rodebaugh, a former captain of the Mexican women's team who appeared in the 1999 Women's World Cup. Pérez-Navarro (hereafter JPN) is the main/play-by-play commentator. He also serves as the host of the broadcast, welcoming viewers, introducing commercial breaks and reading advertisements for upcoming broadcasts, as well as informing viewers of the score and the score of other matches prior to and during the broadcasts. Rodebaugh (hereafter AR) is the expert analyst/color commentator. While these institutional roles are pre-established prior to the event and largely constrain commentators' contributions, they are also, to a small extent, open to contest and negotiation (cf. Heritage and Clayman 2010:21–2; also Whalen and Zimmerman 1987:77; Zimmerman 1998).

The data consist of a total of three video-recorded matches, with approximately 90 minutes of broadcast talk per match, plus additional introduction (prior to match), halftime (between the two 45-minute halves) and concluding talk (after the match).

Making gender relevant in interaction

While researchers from a wide range of disciplines attest to the fact that gender is not biological, but rather a socially constructed (and recon-

structed) phenomenon (cf. e.g. Butler 1990), how exactly to *analyze* that construction process has been the topic of heated debate. Among those in the ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic (CA) traditions, gender (along with other aspects of identity) is conceptualized as an everyday accomplishment (Garfinkel 1967). That is, it is through engagement in social interaction with one another that interactants effectively realize their/others' gender identity, or 'do gender', on a moment-by-moment basis (West and Zimmerman 1987; cf. also Goffman 1959).

Despite criticism of some discursive methodologies as being unable to (or even uninterested in) attending to gender at the micro-level of interaction, even a cursory look at the literature reveals that this is not the case (cf. e.g. the recent edited volume by Speer and Stokoe 2011). Rather, the vehemently bottom-up approach to sociality that is embodied in CA's requirement of 'demonstrable relevance' serves to guard against analyst-imposed interpretations of the talk which may have little to do with the understandings of the actual speakers themselves. Particularly with identity-related themes such as gender, the conversation-analytic method maintains that those specific pieces of identity must be consequential for and attended to by co-participants in talk if they are to be incorporated into the analysis. That is, they must be 'talked into being' at the ground level (Schegloff 1997; cf. also debates in Billig 1999a, 1999b; Schegloff 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Stokoe and Smithson 2001; Wetherell 1998). This being the case, Schegloff argues that, on the whole, studying co-participants in talk-in-interaction requires focusing on '*what they are doing, on how they are doing it, on the demonstrable uptake of that doing by co-participants, and on how the participants together shape the trajectory of the interaction*' (Schegloff 1988:100; emphasis original).

Referencing players in sports commentary

One of the most salient ways that gender can indeed become relevant in interaction is through reference to persons. Sacks's (1992) description of 'membership categorization devices' (MCDs) highlights the fact that there are indefinitely many 'correct' ways to refer to an individual: 'Ana', for example, is not only 'Ana', but she is also 'Miss Mendoza', 'a really good friend of mine', and 'one of the members of the MEChA organization on campus', just to name a few possibilities (cf. also Schegloff 1987, 2007). Because language provides its speakers with so many options with which to make reference to others, the selection of one particular reference formulation over another at any given point in interaction provides an opportunity for a speaker to do more than 'just refer' (Schegloff 1996; Stivers 2007).

Electing to use a description, for example, makes *socially* and *interactionally relevant* that particular aspect of the referenced individual's identity (used in the description) for the speaker's in-the-moment agenda.

Categorization through the deployment of reference forms can thus constitute one seemingly 'covert' method of accomplishing sexism in talk-in-interaction. Indeed, in researching broadcast coverage of female participants in the NCAA Final Four college basketball tournament and the US Open professional tennis tournament, Messner, Duncan and Jensen concluded that, while there was 'very little ... overtly sexist commentary' (Messner *et al.* 1993:125), there were 'stark contrasts between how men athletes and women athletes were referred to by commentators' (Messner *et al.* 1993:127). Note the parallels that can be drawn here with other societal '-isms' as well: reference forms and other discursive practices have similarly been shown to be significant in the moment-by-moment reconstruction of normativity with respect to sexuality (Kitzinger 2005a, 2005b; Land and Kitzinger 2005) as well as race (Bucholtz 2001; Whitehead 2009; Whitehead and Lerner 2009), with co-participants recreating – at the ground level of interaction – precisely what is the social norm versus what is divergent from it. Our goal is to examine how this is achieved with respect to gender in sports broadcast talk.

We divide our exploration of the data into three main sections. First we provide a panoramic overview of the referring practices present in this broadcast context by offering a distributional examination of the commentators' use of membership categorization devices. Quantified results as well as contextualized examples shed light on an overarching divergence in the sorts of naming practices employed by each of the two broadcasters. Next, because baseline reference to individuals is clearly not the only way that gender can be made relevant in interaction, we analyze how other discursive elements present in the broadcast talk can serve to categorize – and thereby dichotomize – women's soccer as distinct from men's soccer. Finally, we illustrate how this interactional gendering of men's and women's soccer can and does move beyond the confines of the game itself to gender men and women more generally. After these three sections, we offer a final discussion and conclusion.

An overview of membership categorization devices in soccer commentary

Distributional evidence

A first look at how the two broadcasters construct players' identities (i.e. how they locally manage membership categorization) reveals two striking

differences between the two broadcasters. The first and most obvious difference is that JPN uses many more membership categorization devices than does AR: his 296 tokens represent over 60 percent of the MCDs counted in the first game between Mexico and England. Second, and only slightly less obvious, is that JPN has a much broader variety of devices, while AR's choices are much more limited.

Calling a team by the country name (e.g. 'México'/Mexico, 'Inglaterra'/England) is by far the most popular choice for both broadcasters. Combining all the national teams that are the object of talk – Mexico and England (the teams that were actually competing in the broadcast) as well as future opponents and other teams in and out of the tournament – JPN used the country name 39 percent of the time and AR almost half the time (47%). For AR, the only other frequent descriptions are 'selección'/selection or national team (11%) and 'jugadora(s)'/player(s) (20%). In contrast, JPN uses a wider variety of descriptions, including nationality terms like 'mexicanas'/Mexicans (f.), which are marked for gender in Spanish (14%), and sex category terms such as 'chica(s)'/girl(s), 'muchachas'/girls, 'damas'/ladies and the diminutivized 'jovencita'/young lady. Though infrequent in relation to the total number of references, these terms stand out in that they are used solely by JPN.³

Both broadcasters use the term 'mujeres'/women, although JPN uses it more often. Note, however, that even when both broadcasters use the same term, they use it in very different ways: JPN uses the term frequently (75%) as part of the expression 'en mujeres'/in women to differentiate 'in women's soccer, ...' from 'in men's soccer, ...'. In contrast, AR uses the term 'mujer(es)' more frequently (75%) to describe the players as adult women.

This distributional evidence presents a panoramic but limited view of the reference practices used by the commentators. But before turning to a more contextualized, sequential exploration of MCDs in the following sections, let us briefly review the two broadcasters' different strategies for referencing individual players. Again, we find a stark difference between the two broadcasters. JPN's tokens ($n = 479$) far outnumber AR's ($n = 66$), although this is not surprising given that, as the play-by-play commentator, he speaks more than AR. Despite the difference in quantity of tokens, JPN and AR both refer to players using their full names most frequently, such as Maribel Domínguez (first name + last name) or Ceci Santiago (abbreviated first name + last name). In talking about the Mexican athletes, JPN uses the players' full names two-thirds of the time (when abbreviated first name + last name tokens are included with full first name + last name) and with the English team 96 percent of the time. While AR also uses players' full names the majority of the time (52%), she also frequently opts for players'

first names only (including abbreviated first names) (40%); nickname only is a distant third strategy for AR (5%).

AR's greater preference for first name only, as compared to JPN, could indicate her orientation as teammate/player or coach rather than analyst/broadcaster, or could reflect her interactional second position, following JPN's play-by-play (in which he uses a full name) with color commentary in which she uses first name only (cf. Sacks and Schegloff 1979). More relevant for our analysis, though, is a particularly salient difference in the use of one type of player reference: the 'Homeric nickname' – that is, a nickname comprised of a descriptive phrase (Kennedy and Zamuner 2006) – which is used exclusively by JPN and exclusively to refer to one particular player in reference to the player's physical attractiveness. During the first game, JPN refers to Mexican player Dinora Garza as '*la chica de la hermosa sonrisa*' / *the girl with the beautiful smile* nine times. Although this only represents 3 percent of his player reference tokens, its salience is remarkable as it is used only in the first broadcast and never in the subsequent two; moreover, AR not only does not use this nickname, but she never offers any sort of uptake when JPN uses it (cf. other nicknames used by JPN that do indeed receive uptake from AR, e.g. 'Marigol', discussed below). This finding parallels Billings's (2008) analysis of Olympic broadcast discourse in which women athletes received twice as many comments about their appearance from broadcasters than did men.

Membership categorization devices in action

A few situated excerpts might help illustrate how the aforementioned reference practices work in the context of the broadcast of Mexico's national team's group play in the World Cup. Crucially, these MCDs are being selected and used in the midst of doing other activities, such as narrating the play-by-play action on the field or introducing the players and referees involved in the match; thus they reveal which aspects of these individuals' identities are relevant for the speaker who produces them, as well as the presumed relevance of those identity features for the at-home audience. Complementing the overarching distributional evidence in the previous section, we assert that while JPN seems to emphasize physical attractiveness or size, young age and/or gendered roles through his referential practices, AR's selection of MCDs instead highlights professionally relevant characteristics of players'/referees' identities.

The first two examples illustrate the ways in which physical attractiveness becomes the basis for much of the referencing in broadcast discourse. In example 1, even in the midst of reporting the in-the-moment movements of the ball during a play, JPN employs the Homeric nickname for Dinora Garza

of the Mexican national team, mentioned in the prior section: ‘la chica de la hermosa sonrisa’/the girl with the beautiful smile. Garza is the only player (on either team, in any of the three games) to whom JPN gives such a nickname.

Example 1 La chica de la hermosa sonrisa (G1.P4.L14)⁴

01 JPN: Y para mover desde el cuadrante de la esquina derecha=
And moving from the quadrant of the right corner=
 02 =está Dinora Garza,=la chica de la hermosa sonrisa:..
=is Dinora Garza,=the girl with the beautiful smile.

This nickname is notable both for its focus on Garza’s physical attractiveness rather than, for example, her soccer skills, and also for its use of ‘chica,’ an MCD highlighting her (female) sex and (young) age.⁵ In contrast, the only other player with a nickname is Maribel Domínguez, Mexico’s most well-known player and, prior to the 2011 World Cup, the only one who had ever scored a goal in a World Cup match. Domínguez’s ‘hypocoristic’ nickname (Kennedy and Zamuner 2006), ‘Marigol,’ is created by blending her first name and the word ‘gol’/goal, a reference to her athletic skill. While AR does indeed use the nickname ‘Marigol,’ she never adopts JPN’s nickname for Dinora Garza.

Example 2, from game two, brings up again the question of players’ physical attributes and their use in the design of person references.

Example 2 La güerita (G2.P9.L37)

01 JPN: Avanza Luz del Rosario Soto Saucedo:..
Luz del Rosario Soto Saucedo: advances.
 02 Moviéndose hacia al centro=
Moving toward the center=
 03 =Haciendo jugar .hhh a Dinora Garza:..=
=Making Dinora Garza .hhh play.=
 04 =Y allá va la güerita:..
=And there goes the blonde:..
 05 (3.0)
 06 Roba la pelota Azusa Iwashimuzu:..
Azusa Iwashimuzu: steals the ball.

While JPN (for reasons we can only speculate about) stopped using a Homeric nickname to describe Dinora Garza (cf. example 1 above), he nevertheless still manages to bring her physical attributes into the interaction via use of the term ‘güerita’/blondie, little blonde in narrating this play.

In example 3, observe how the diminutivized category term ‘chiquita’/little girl co-occurs with other descriptions that underscore the player’s young age (‘barely nineteen’) and stereotypically gendered behavior.

Example 3 Chiquita (G2.P18.L16)

- 01 JPN: ... Desesperación y frustración.
 ... *Desperation and frustration.*
- 02 en esta **chiquita** Lidia: Nayeli Rangel:.
in this little girl Lidia: Nayeli Rangel:.
- 03 **Apenas diecinueve años de edad,**
Barely nineteen years of age,
- 04 **Jugadora tigrilla:,**
A little ti:gress player,
- 05 De las Tigres de la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León,
from the Tigers of the Autonomous University of Nuevo León,

When Rangel was taken out of the game at the start of the second half, she was seen on the bench, visibly upset, possibly crying. JPN focuses here on the player's emotional reaction, even going on to ask AR if she cried in 1999 when she herself was taken out of the game (not shown).

It should be noted that the players are not the only individuals subject to gendering through such discourse. In example 4 below, we see JPN using the term 'mujeres'/*women* instead of 'chicas'/*girls* or 'damas'/*ladies*, yet the description is not neutral.

Example 4 Las mujeres que impondrán disciplina (G2.P1.L42)

- 01 JPN: Al centro del campo.
At the center of the field.
- 02 Hoy vistiendo de negro con azul:,
Today wearing black with blue:,
- 03 (1.5)
- 04 JPN: **Las mujeres que impondrán disciplina.=**
The women who will impose discipline.=
- 05 =Al centro Christina Westrum Pederson de Noruega ...
 =*At the center Christina Westrum Pederson of Norway ...*

In an effort to provide women more opportunities within the game of soccer, FIFA, the governing body of the Women's World Cup, requires that all tournament referees be women. JPN's active selection of the category 'mujer', rather than 'árbitra'/*referee*, emphasizes the sex of the referees rather than their role/profession and carries with it cultural knowledge about the traditional, disciplinarian roles of women (wife, mother, school-teacher, nun), thereby undermining their professional status and training while tying their authority to more traditional sources.

In example 5, we see one of the ways in which AR's reference practices sequentially manage those initially produced by JPN. In her response here, AR resists JPN's use of an MCD that highlights gender in his turn's design of the design by instead topicalizing the players' identity as athletes.

Example 5 Muchachas/jugadoras (G1.P2.L.22)

- 01 JPN: Me resaltan Erica Vanegas, Liliana Mercado,
Erica Vanegas, Liliana Mercado
- 02 y Char- (.) Charlyn Corral.
and Char- (.) Charlyn Corral stand out.
- 03 Qué es lo que sientes de ver a tus **muchachas** allí.
*What is it that you feel seeing your **girls** there.*
- 04 AR: Ay me da muchísima felicidad.=Me da mucho orgullo,=
Oh it makes me very happy.=It makes me very proud,=
- 05 =Siento que son **jugadoras** que tienen mucho que dar,
*=I feel that they are **players** who have a lot to give,*
- 06 y que tienen muchísimo futuro.
and that they have so much future.

JPN's use of 'muchachas'/*girls*, which categorizes the players in terms of their sex (female) and age (young), contrasts with AR's use of 'jugadoras'/*players*, which, although marked for gender in Spanish, makes relevant their identity as athletes and pushes back on JPN's invocation of both their age and gender. A locally subsequent reference form such as 'ellas'/*they* would have tacitly accepted JPN's categorization, as would an altogether elided subject given that Spanish is a pro-drop language (e.g. 'Siento que tienen mucho que dar'/*I feel that [they] have a lot to give*). Thus the relative clause formulation effectively allows AR to recategorize those being referenced, while at the same time partially resisting the overall mother-daughter relationship initially put forth in the design of JPN's question (cf. 'tus muchachas'/*your girls*).

The final example in this section is from Mexico's third and final game in the tournament. (They were eliminated and did not move on to the quarterfinals.) Through close attention to the sequential context we again see how AR resists a categorization made by JPN. After a long silence, JPN brings up what he marks as a newsworthy item: the ranking of Natalie Vinti as one of the most attractive Mexican players (line 1). Of particular interest in example 6 is AR's lack of uptake in response to this announcement.

Example 6 Chicas más guapas (G3.P9)

- 01 JPN: De las **chicas más guapas** en la selección mexicana,
*Among the **prettiest girls** on the Mexican team,*
- 02 por lo menos así fue votada en una encuesta,
at least that is how she was voted in a poll,
- 03 Natalie Raquel Vinti Nuño Vidarte,
Natalie Raquel Vinti Nuño Vidarte,
- 04 estudiante de la Universidad de San Diego.
a student at the University of San Diego.

- 05 (3.5)
 06 JPN: Tu vecina:?
Your nei:ghbor?
 07 AR: heh heh así es,
heh heh that's right,
 08 °es° .hh (.) es mi vecina .hh (.) aquí en San Diego.
 °she's° .hh (.) she's my neighbor .hh (.) here in San Diego.

JPN again uses the sex category term 'chicas'/*girls* in his announcement of the news, which, in addition to making gender relevant, brings the player's physical attractiveness and (presumed hetero)sexuality to the interactional surface. Although not always the case in other institutional contexts (e.g. medicine, news interviews, courtrooms; Heritage and Clayman 2010), a non-play-by-play announcement in sports broadcasting seems to parallel ordinary talk in that the newsworthy item sets up the expectation for a response, particularly one that marks it as indeed news such as *Oh* (Heritage 1984a) or an affiliative newsmark like *Really?*. Here, however, AR's 3.5-second lack of uptake refuses to acknowledge the turn. That a response is due is oriented to by JPN who subsequently adds an increment in line 6 that overtly includes AR in its formulation through the possessive 'tu'/*your*, concluding the turn with rising intonation that further mobilizes response (Stivers and Rossano 2010). AR does respond to JPN's pursuit, albeit reluctantly (cf. laughter tokens and noticeably quieter/hesitant speech in lines 7–8); but note that she only attends to JPN's mention of the fact that both she and the player in question do live in San Diego. She thereby still resists treating JPN's initial item as newsworthy or giving any uptake to the comment about the player's physical attractiveness.

Reflecting on methodology

Prior to moving on to the next sections on gendering soccer in which we examine how gender can become topicalized in broadcast discourse beyond the use of MCDs, let us pause for a brief methodological reflection on the connection between the design of reference forms and the accomplishment of gender in interaction. Sex category descriptions are inference-rich; that is, they are bound up with cultural knowledge, assumptions and inferences about who 'girls' and 'women' *are*, how they (are supposed to) *look*, how they (are supposed to) *behave*, and so on. Although they represent a relatively small number of only one of the broadcaster's naming practices, they construct an image of the players that is in stark contrast with the overt celebration of women's soccer that is the theme of the broadcast of the international sporting event, and

they point toward the broadcasters' very different orientations to the athletes, other participants and the game as a whole. The categorization of these individuals in terms of their physical attractiveness, the emphatic (repeated, unnecessary) marking of their gender, and the trivialization of adult women by categorizing them as children all work to undermine the players and, by extension, the matches and the tournament on one hand, and women in general on the other.

While the brief excerpts included in the previous section do provide us with one sort of global evidence as to how gender factors into this data, the last two excerpts in particular (examples 5 and 6) illustrate how moving beyond looking at individual lexical items can further elucidate how participants are 'doing gender' in interaction. Indeed, Kitzinger (2007) cautions that mere use of a sex category term, such as 'women' or 'girl', does not necessarily make gender the most relevant aspect of identity for the participants in interaction. As the author points out, 'gender is imbricated into talk and interaction more generally in many ways other than overt labeling' (Kitzinger 2007:46). In the case of these data, an exclusive focus on naming practices could obscure an understanding of how speakers use more subtle resources to make gender relevant, how this is consequential for the on-going interaction, and what consequences this has for gender beyond the confines of the match. Additionally, the use of explicit sex category terms often occurs in turn-internal position, making it difficult to see interlocutors' orientations to these person references alone (as opposed to a reaction to the turn as a whole). Moreover, a lack of orientation could suggest that the use of these person references is the unoriented-to 'norm' in this environment.

Given this range of possibilities, an additional sort of evidence is warranted: We must seek out instances which illustrate not only how the individual broadcasters 'draw lines in the sand' between genders, but also how the co-participants in interaction then *orient* to those differences as relevantly gendered in nature.

Gendering soccer: 'men's' and 'women's'

The most common way for gender to become overtly topicalized and attended to by the commentators is through the dichotomization of 'fútbol varonil'/*men's soccer* versus 'fútbol femenino'/*women's soccer*. Such a line between these two 'types' of soccer is seen in the following example 7 in which AR describes the supreme importance of technique in women's soccer.

Example 7 Fútbol femenino versus masculino (G2.P28.L39)

- 01 JPN: Ocampo,
Ocampo,
- 02 el cabeZA:ZO que estaba logrando: .hhh conectar Tere Noyola_
the HEA:der that .hhh Tere Noyola was managi:ng to kick_
03 .hhh En el remate terminó yéndose muy abierto:..
.hhh In the shot she ended up going very wi:de.
- 04 AR: Es muy fiel a su estilo,
It's very faithful to their style,
05 dominan la técnica,
they dominate technical skill,
06 (0.3) y creo que en- en el fútbol femenino,
(0.3) and I think that in- in women's soccer,
07 (0.4) el dominio de la técnica sobre to- sodo-
(0.4) command of the technical aspect above a- abo-
08 sobre todo el pase,
above all the pass,
09 (0.5) es muy importante.
(0.5) is very important.
- 10 Por qué? Porque: por ejemplo: (.) eh:n el fútbol masculino,
Why? Becau:se for exampl:e (.) i:n men's soccer,
11 un hombre puede compensar un deficiencia técnica=
a man is able to compensate for a technical deficiency=
12 =con la fuerza.
=with strength.
13 (0.3) En el femenino, es muy difícil. °no?°
(0.3) In women's, it is very difficult. °isn't it?°
14 <'Tonces si uno N:O domina (.) la técnica?
<So if one does N:OT control (.) the technical aspect?
15 entonces eh:: pos ya: es otra:- otra en contra.
well uh:: well it's alrea:dy another:- another thing against you.
- 16 En el femenino es muy raro ver un cambio de juego completo.
In women's it is very rare to see a complete exchange.
17 de un lado del campo al otro.=
from one end of the field to the other.=
18 =Se requieren dos tiempos.
=Two movements are required.
- 19 A: algunos países como Alemania, Estados Unidos
So:me countries like Germany, The United States
20 ya lo empiezan a lograr,=
are already beginning to manage it,=
21 =Sin embargo la mayoría de las selecciones necesitan
=However the majority of the national teams need
22 do:s o tres movimientos para llegar,
two: or three movements to reach,
23 .hh completamente del otro lado del campo.
.hh completely from the other end of the field.
- 24 <Ahora si uno no domina .hh la técnica?
<Now if one does not control .hh the technical skill?

25 pos difícilmente lo va a lograr en esos dos tiempos.
well it will be difficult to manage it in those two movements.

26 Y Japón? Domina el pase,
And Japan? Controls the pass,

27 que finalmente es la base del juego no?=
*which in the end is the basis of the game isn't it?=
 =Y l- el: el pase? e-
 =And th- the: the pass? e-
 (1.5)*

30 Y es muy importante **en- en el femenino**,
And it is more important in- in women's,

31 y es algo que hay que: que destacar.=
and that is something that has to: to be stressed.=

32 =Es uno de los equipos más técnicos?
*=[Japan] is one of the most technical teams?
 (0.5) **en el fútbol femenino.**
 (0.5) **in women's soccer.**
 (1.5)*

In this excerpt, after JPN reports a play-in-progress, AR launches a description of the Japanese team's playing style, which she explains is quite skillful, particularly with regard to passing the ball. This commentary on the team's technique is then immediately followed by a justification as to why such skill would be necessary or relevant for the game. Crucially, this is done by making a comparison between 'fútbol femenino' (lines 6–8, 13–18) and 'fútbol varonil' (lines 10–12): while men can compensate for a lack of technique with sheer force by kicking the ball from one side of the field to the other, that is 'difficult' 'en el femenino' (line 13).

Messner (1988:206) argues that the liberal idea of equal opportunity in media coverage ultimately cannot overcome the idea that women and men are naturally unequal physically, and consequently media reporting on women competing in male-dominated sports provides 'incontrovertible evidence for the "natural" differences between males and females.' The above description of 'fútbol femenino' by AR – launched by the Japanese team having just realized what AR viewed as a skillful play – allows us to see *how* those unambiguously 'natural differences' are *socially re-constructed* (cf. Goodwin 1994): it is within the course of the ongoing talk that such distinctions are made specifically relevant for the co-present interlocutors as well as for the at-home spectators.

What is distinctly salient in this excerpt is not simply that AR makes a comparison between men's and women's soccer, but that such an account was deemed necessary in the first place. Such comparative discourse, while on the surface level appearing to praise the technical ability of women's teams over men's teams, simultaneously works to effectively reestablish the normativity and hegemony of the men's version of the sport. Simply put:

men's soccer (as the norm) is presumed and projected as readily understood, while women's soccer requires explanation (cf. Messner *et al.* 1993 on similar talk on difference in other sports). This analysis resonates with one of the claims put forth by Weatherall (2002), namely that gender differences are what provide the underpinnings for gender inequality.

An additional example of this is seen in the brief example 8 below, in which JPN contextualizes the North Korean team's good reputation as news for many of the at-home viewers:

Example 8 Corea del Norte (G1.P20.L30)

- 01 JPN: ... El otro .hhh es el equipo número uno del mundo.=
 ... *The other .hhh is the world's number one team.=*
 02 =Estados Unidos contra Corea del Norte.
 =*United States against North Korea.*
 03 .hh que **para muchos puede ser nuevo?**=pero:
 .hh *which for many may be new?*=*bu:t*
 04 .hhh **en mujeres?**,=
 .hhh *in women's?*,=
 05 =Corea del Norte es un equipo de MUcho cuidado.
North Korea is a team to REally look out for.
 06 AR: Asi es.
It is.
 07 Corea es un país e:ste m:uy disciplinado,
Korea is a uh:m ve:ry disciplined,
 08 .mhhh y muy aferrado.
.mhhh and very obstinate team.

Here, JPN orients to the broadcast nature of the discourse by projecting the at-home viewer as possessing the default or normative knowledge that North Korea's men's soccer team is not particularly noteworthy in terms of international standing. Note that he does not explicitly mention 'fútbol varonil' (cf. e.g. '... North Korea which for many *who follow men's soccer* could be new ...'), but rather is freely able to completely elide that referent due to its hegemonic prevalence, which the elision simultaneously reconstitutes (line 3). The overt contrast is then set up with the *but*-prefaced and contrastively stressed 'pero: .hhh en mujeres ...'/*bu:t .hhh in women's ...* (lines 3–4). That JPN's turn is explicitly formulated in this way as a news-worthy announcement for the broadcast, and is accepted as such by AR, again establishes women's soccer as counter-normative – not only with respect to gendered versions of the sport itself, but also with regard to the knowledge-based expectations that 'muchos'/*many* (spectators) are discursively portrayed as having *about* those distinct versions of the sport.

Topicalization of 'fútbol femenino' and 'fútbol varonil' as distinct entities is not always sparked by in-the-moment plays or upcoming matches, as in

the above examples 7 and 8. On the contrary, the gendering of soccer as a sport can be talked into being through other, non-game-related discourse as well. Take example 9 below, in which AR responds to a general background question from JPN, namely how much of a difference it makes for Maribel Domínguez that she has had experience playing on European teams.

Example 9 Europa (G1.P5.L29)

- 01 (1.0)
 02 AR: Es importante la experiencia internacional?
International experience is important?
 03 Porque:
Becau:se
 04 (1.5)
 05 AR: **por lo general, Europa está mucho más avanzado,**
in general, Europe is much more advanced,
 06 **que: e:ste: México y Latinoamérica=**
tha:n u:hm: Mexico and Latin America=
 07 **en cuanto al: al fútbol femenino,**
=with regard to: to women's soccer,
 08 .hhh En México ya se empieza a ver (.) universidades,
.hhh In Mexico we're already starting to see (.) certain
 09 eh: particulares que también están dando becas.=no?=
*uh:m universities that are also giving scholarships.=no?=
 10 =Entonces **las niñas** también ya pueden pensar?
*=So **girls** too are getting to think?*
 11 En llevar el: el deporte el fútbol en este caso,=
*About playing sports soccer in this case,=
 12 =de la mano con el estudio que es muy importante=
*=alongside their studies which are very important=
 13 Similar a lo que está pasando en Estados Unidos.
Similar to what is happening in the United States.
 14 .hhh Sin embargo el roce internacional en Europa,
*.hhh However the international connections in Europe,
 15 es un poquito: Es una competencia más fuerte,
*are a littl:e It's a competition that is stronger,
 16 y por ende: es>te e-< más exigente.
and therefo:re uh>m e-< more demanding.
 17 (1.5)*****

Why would European experience make a difference for one of these players? Because Europe is 'much more advanced' than Mexico and Latin America when it comes to 'fútbol femenino' (lines 5–7). Thus here we see how the more general framework of gendering the sport becomes implicated in a seemingly unrelated discussion about a specific player's background. Nonetheless, through this discussion, men's and women's soccer are overtly characterized and attended to as distinct from one another, with the latter depicted as still playing catch-up to the status of the former.

One final example of gender being talked into being through the gendering of 'fútbol femenino' versus 'fútbol varonil' is sparked, like example 9, by a seemingly non-gender-relevant discussion. In example 10 below, JPN utters a play on words of the colloquial soccer expression 'paternidad' / *paternity*, which is used to describe a relationship of domination between teams in which one team repeatedly defeats another team.

Example 10 Maternidad (G2.P9.L17)

- 01 (5.5)
 02 JPN: En los antecedentes entre estas dos selecciones,
In the record between these two teams,
 03 (0.5) es el octavo partido=
(0.5) it's the eighth game=
 04 =Cinco triunfos para Japón un empate:,
=Five triumphs for Japan one tie:,
 05 Y sólo una victoria para México Andrea:.
And only one victory for Mexico Andrea:.
 06 AR: Así es,
That's right,
 07 Fue en una de estas ocasiones el repechaje pero::
The repechage [wildcard] was one of those cases bu::t
 08 eh: por diferencia de goles pasó: Japón a:l mundial.
uh:m the difference in goals advanced Japan to: the World Cup.
 09 En el dos mil siete.
In two thousand seven.
 10 JPN: Y de hecho también en el dos mil tres,
And in fact also in two thousand three,
 11 eliminaron las japonesas a las mexicanas en un::
the Japanese eliminated the Mexicans in un::
 12 repechaje.
repechage match.
 13 AR: Así es.
That's right.
 14 Las dos ocasiones de partidos de repechaje
The two cases of repechage matches
 15 han sido (.) contra Japón?
have been (.) against Japan?
 16 Las: (.) últimas dos no,=
The: (.) last two no,=
 17 =En: mi época nos tocó Argentina.
=In: my day it was Argentina.
 18 (2.0)
 19 JPN: **Podemos hablar (.) <de maternidad,> entonces?**
Can we talk (.) <about maternity,> then?
 20 **>Porque< aquí no aplica el término de paternidad.**
>Because< here the term paternity doesn't apply.
 21 AR: heh heh heh .hhh Si:(h): sí claro. .hhh
heh heh heh .hhh Ye:(h):s yes of course. .hhh
 22 (6.0)

Not only is gender intrinsically built into the language of soccer, but that fact becomes relevant for the interactants who ‘play’ with that knowledge at the ground level of their ongoing talk. JPN’s tongue-in-cheek proposal that the announcers make reference to ‘maternidad’/*maternity* in place of the male-gendered standard ‘paternidad’/*paternity* is responded to by AR with laughter in line 21. While AR’s options for response may be somewhat limited by the public nature of the broadcast, her turn nonetheless helps co-construct and discursively re-establish men’s soccer as the ‘default’ or ‘standard’ version of the game by overtly differentiating it from women’s soccer: The game that *women* play is not the same as the game that *men* play. Thus example (10) is a case in which a gendered expression which might typically go unoriented to as a norm (cf. Kitzinger 2007, cited above) is indeed brought to the surface level of the interaction and responded to.

These sorts of sequences – be they questions or announcements, serious or joking, informing or proposing – marginalize and undermine the legitimacy of women’s soccer *at the micro-level of interaction*. It is through the invocation of difference between the men’s and women’s version of the sport that the hegemonic placement of the former over the latter is occasioned (Weatherall 2002). These are the very tools that allow the media to, in Messner’s (1988:206) terms, reproduce the ‘ideological hegemony of the dominant group’ while at the same time maintaining a ‘vener of objectivity and fairness’ (cf. Clayman and Heritage 2002: ch. 15–16 on ‘neutralistic’ practices in news interviews).

Beyond soccer: presuppositions about ‘men’ and ‘women’

Up to this point, we have analyzed the range of gender-based membership categorization devices used by commentators to reference persons within the context of a soccer match, as well as how those and other terms can be topicalized to create (and recreate) overt distinctions and hierarchies between ‘fútbol varonil’ and ‘fútbol femenino’. But does this gendered discourse serve only to construct divisions relevant to the soccer field? Or can the lines drawn between men’s and women’s *soccer* simultaneously work to invoke, establish and re-cement lines between men and women *in general*?

Take the simple case of the question JPN poses in the following example 11:

Example 11 Seleccionada versus seleccionado (G1.P18.L20)

- 01 (8.3)
 02 JPN: <Físicamente.>
 <Physically.>
 03 La puesta a punto de una <seleccionada.>
 The preparation of a <female national team member.>

- 04 **Qué tanto difiere de un <seleccionado.>**
How much does it differ from a <male national team member.>
- 05 (2.0)
- 06 AR: .hhh (.) **La exigencia es la misma.**
.hhh (.) The requirements are the same.
- 07 (.)
- 08 **Eh: se tiene que tener una exigencia,**
Uh:m one has to meet the same demands,
- 09 **y: una expectativa igual,**
a:nd expectations,
- 10 (.)
- 11 **Lo que no se puede hacer es pensar,=**
What one can't do is think,=
- 12 **=Ay como son mujeres,=**
=Oh because they're women,=
- 13 **=entonces No podemos exigirles tanto.**
=we canNot require as much of them.
- .
- .
- (AR describes push-up requirements)
- .
- 14 AR: **o sea: No existen lagartijas de mujer.=**
So: women push-ups don't exist.=
- 15 **=Hay lagartijas, y nada más,**
=There are push-ups, and that's it,
- 16 **No hay razón alguna por la cual una mujer=**
There is no reason why a woman=
- 17 **=no pueda levantar su propio cuerpo.=no?**
=can't lift her own body.=no?
- 18 **con l- con- con sus brazos.**
with h- with- with her arms.
- 19 **.hh Entonces,=**
.hh So,=
- 20 **=.hhh eso es l- Lo que uno no puede caer en pensar**
=.hhh that is w- one cannot make the mistake of thinking
- 21 **que como ↑son mujeres,**
that because ↑they're women,
- 22 **'tonces hacen las lagartijas con las rodillas abajo.**
then they do push-ups with their knees down.
- .
- .
- ((clarification for audience of what a 'lagartija'/push-up is))
- .
- ((AR gives additional example of weight training))
- .
- 23 AR: **Eh: las mujeres tienen que estar**
U:hm women have to be
- 24 **↑igual de preparadas, que los hombres.**
↑just as prepared, as men.
- .
- .
- ((AR gives additional example of running times))
- .
- 25 JPN: **Pues aquí está el comparativo=**
Well there's the comparison=

26 =entre el fútbol de hombres y de mujeres:.
 =between the soccer of men and of women:.
 27 (2.1)

JPN's question in this exchange (lines 2–4), at the surface level, is a question about the physical distinctions between players of men's versus women's soccer at the World Cup. Note firstly that the very asking of this question, in addition to its design, presupposes that there is a difference in the physical preparation of a male versus a female soccer player. Nonetheless, while the question itself topicalizes gender from within the confines of the game, it is derived from and instantly invokes more general distinctions between men and women *outside* of soccer as well. And, indeed, AR actively orients to both of levels of this question in her response.

After a two-second pause, AR comments that, at the soccer-specific level, the demands and expectations are the same for men and women players (lines 6–9). Immediately following this, she explicitly addresses the underlying, more general gender-based presupposition on which JPN's original question was based: 'Lo que no se puede hacer es pensar, Ay como son mujeres, entonces No podemos exigirles tanto.'/*What one can't do is think, Oh because they're women, we canNot require as much of them* (lines 11–13). AR then goes on to provide definite examples which evidence her claim: Women do push-ups just like men (lines 14–22), women do weight training just like men, and women have speed and distance requirements for running just like men. Throughout this multiturn monologue, there is overt, repeated emphasis against the 'Because they are women, then X' line of argumentation which was, as just described, the root presupposition from which JPN's initial question was launched. Thus, despite JPN's massively unaffiliative, sequence-closing summary in lines 25–6, this sequence was *not* simply a comparison of 'el fútbol de hombres y de mujeres'/'men's and women's *soccer*'; rather, it constituted a precise and pointed challenge to the marginalization and delegitimization of women's abilities *more generally*, initially talked into being through the underlying inferences motivating JPN's soccer-specific question.

Presuppositions about men's versus women's physicality can be invoked in response to happenings within the game as well. In example 12 below, JPN reacts to a physical conflict between two players in which they actively fought each other for control of the ball.

Example 12 Frágiles (G1.P27.L42)

01 JPN: En este tipo de: acciones?
In this type of actions?
 02 Podemos apreciar?
We can see?

03 que de **frágiles** no tienen **na:da**=
 that not one **bi:t** of **fragility** has
 04 =ninguna de estas [seleccionadas, eh?
 any of these national team members, huh?
 05 AR: [No: . Las dos luchan,=
 [No: . The two fight,=
 06 AR: =luchan por el- el balón,=
 =they fight for the- the ball,=
 07 =Lo tapan,
 =They cover it,

At first this assessment may seem to positively assess the players' physical aggressiveness. Nonetheless, it is apparent that JPN is expressing surprise at what is a completely normal and routine aspect of the game. This was not a case, for example, of an egregious foul or altercation, but simply two players jostling for the ball. The sole reason that this is surprising, and therefore constitutes an assessable action, for JPN is that the players in question are female, and women are expected to be 'frágiles'/*fragile* (line 3) and therefore less aggressive. In this way, JPN makes relevant an assumption about men and women more generally (physical strength and fragility) in the play-by-play broadcast discourse about women's soccer. AR takes up JPN's comment, expressing very strong agreement and upgrading her second assessment (Pomerantz 1984), using collaborative, turn-initial *No* (Mendoza-Denton 1999), overlap, and expanding on the description by giving additional detail about the players' actions. What AR does not do, however, is question the presupposition that underlies JPN's surprise, which serves to implicitly validate it.

Overarching gender-based presuppositions, embedded in discourse about soccer, are talked into being outside of the realm of physical abilities as well. Take example 13 below, in which JPN's question makes implicit reference to gendered norms of politeness as well as the presumed delicateness of women when it comes to 'colorful language' (i.e. cursing) on the field.

Example 13 Lenguaje más que florido (G2.P4.L22)

01 JPN: **Entre hombres** es muy común,
Between men it's very common,
 02 que los técnicos lleguen a: motivar a sus jugadores,
 for coaches to: occasionally motivate their players,
 03 .hhh en ocasiones con un: **lenguaje más que florido**.
 .hhh with a: **language that is more than colorful**.
 04 .hhh Cuando un hombre dirige a mujeres: ,
 .hhh **When a man manages women:** ,
 05 <suele darse igual?>
 <does it tend to be the same?>

- 06 (0.7)
 07 JPN: **O se cuidan más en el lenguaje >que< utilizan?**
Or are they more careful with the language >that< they use?
- 08 (0.5)
 09 AR: Tienden a cuidarse más,=
They tend to be more careful,=
 10 =Sin embargo: el juego por: eh::
 =*However: the game because o:f uh::m*
 11 lo ap:asionante que puede llegar a ser,
how p:assionate it can become,
 12 .h_{hh} eh:: sí s- Sí se da?
 .h_{hh} uh::m it do- *It does happen?*
- 13 Sin embargo lo importante es no ofender a la jugadora.=no?=
*However what's important is to not offend the player.=no?=
 14 =O sea las <palabras> .hh de ese tipo al aire:,
 =So <words> .hh like those in the ai:r,
 15 pues está bien.=
 well that's fine.=*
- 16 =Finalmente entre mujeres también,
Lastly between women also,
 17 Así se motivan.
That's how they motivate one another.
- 18 JPN: **Bravas entonces. Tremendas guerreras.**
Fierce then. Tremendous warriors.
- 19 Y la que porta el diez de las tricolores Dinora Garza: ...
And she who wears Mexico's number ten Dinora Garza: ...

JPN launches his initial question from an explicitly gendered perspective, one presupposition being a simple difference between coach–player interaction in men’s versus women’s soccer. What we see after AR’s response, however, is a sequence-closing remark which reveals a more general presupposition, related to the issue of fragility in example 12 above. These soccer-playing women are ‘Bravas entonces. Tremendas guerreras’/*Fierce then. Tremendous warriors*, against the emotional/attitudinal norm that one would expect from a ‘typical’ woman who would be offended by men’s vulgar language. This sequence-closing summary again undermines AR’s immediately prior explanation which worked to fight against this very presupposition (lines 16–17).

One final example captures the extent to which women’s soccer is presented as a world unto itself, so different from men’s soccer, and by extension women as so different from men.

Example 14 El trece es de mala suerte? (G2.P24.L.33)

- 01 JPN: Cerca está Kenti Robles.
Kenti Robles is close.
- 02 No tocó Fanny Mayor:.
Fanny Mayor: didn't touch it.

and the play-by-play commentator, employed a greater variety of MCDs and, although they were only a relatively small fraction of the total used, he alone made use of MCDs that highlighted players' youth and physical attractiveness. AR, the color commentator, opted most frequently for MCDs that related to players' identities as athletes and representatives of the national team. Nicknaming practices mirrored this dichotomy, particularly with regard to JPN's exclusive use of the Homeric nickname to draw attention to one player's physical attractiveness. A more detailed look at MCDs in situated interaction (examples 1–6) revealed how the broadcasters' use of MCDs is part of a more complex reality in which speakers' turn-taking, uptake, silence, laughter and other interactional resources work in tandem with the explicit mention of sex category terms to make gender relevant.

Discussion of examples 7–10 built on the analysis of individual person references by revealing how gender is talked into being through the gendering of 'fútbol femenino'/'de mujeres' (women's soccer) in contrast with 'fútbol varonil'/'de hombres' (men's soccer). It was demonstrated that this gendering of sport is more than a simple dichotomization of equals: On the contrary, talking into being a distinction between gendered versions of soccer occasions and supports sexist gender stereotyping, through which men's soccer is discursively (re)constructed as the standard by which all soccer is judged, and women's soccer is consequently a second-class, derivative and altogether unfamiliar version of the sport. This finding resonates with Bruce (2008:56), who argues that 'the overwhelming male focus of this coverage is seldom questioned. The association between sport and masculinity is so taken for granted that few people challenge the fact that media coverage is heavily weighted in favour of men.' The present analysis thus provides further evidence for the notion that gender differences pave the way for gender inequalities (Weatherall 2002), and inspires future research into how those differences and inequalities can be co-constructed through talk in diverse situated contexts.

In the last section of this article, examples 11–14 illustrated how broadcast discourse can effectively move *beyond* men's soccer and women's soccer, to embody a topicalization of more overarching gendered presuppositions. That is, although the broadcasters are talking about male and female *soccer players*, these distinctions are derived from and bring to the interactional surface assumptions about men and women *more generally*. From physical differences between the sexes to their comparative emotional/physical fragility or ability to tolerate taboo language, JPN's contributions work to bring about a strong distinction between the male and the female, even to the extent of suggesting that something well beyond the

world of soccer (i.e. a superstition about the number thirteen) might not apply equally to the two sexes. AR works within the confines of this public broadcast in her use of an array of strategies to manage the dichotomy and inequality that JPN invokes, sometimes seemingly collaborating through laughter and accepting JPN's presuppositions, and other times resisting, pushing back against JPN's presuppositions and even explicitly disagreeing. Finally, we noted JPN's methods for counteracting AR's pushback, cutting off discussion, summarizing, and reasserting the primacy of his orientation toward women's soccer and women more generally.

In sum, then, we have aimed to demonstrate how the two broadcasters' orientation to women and women's soccer diverge and how this is made evident – and relevant – in and through the turn-by-turn interaction of the commentary.

At this point one might wonder why this matters, particularly if one has no special interest in soccer. Except for the relative few who witness the matches live, broadcast discourse is what mediates viewers' experience of the spectacle of an (international) sports competition. Broadcast discourse impacts how the audience understands the behavior of the participants – their identities, their actions, the motivations behind those actions, and so on. When ideologies about gender are made relevant in such commentary – particularly when assumptions about women, their inferiority and/or their status as objects of the male gaze are 'talked into being' – it reproduces and reinforces gender inequality well beyond the playing field. On the one hand, in the Spanish-language coverage of the Women's World Cup we see an open celebration of female athletes and women's sports: While the coverage is less extensive and less thorough than, for example, the (men's) World Cup, the coverage of every game in Spanish on the US network represents a serious effort to cover a major, international, women's sporting event in which women (as athletes, referees, and, in smaller numbers, coaches) are highlighted. On the other hand, though, the moment-by-moment discursive practices that sexualize the athletes, undermine their athleticism, and undervalue women's soccer as a sport, *run counter to* and thus significantly *weaken* and *diminish* that celebration.

While lexical items are often most noticeable and frequently catch listeners' and viewers' attention, they do not reveal the whole picture; even without outright sexist statements, assumptions about gender can and do surface and subsequently become oriented to in interaction. Focusing on broadcast talk about soccer, this analysis has uncovered how, even in the absence of explicitly sexist discourse and within the context of a celebration of women's participation in sports, the interactional (re)construction of gender divergence can provide the impetus for the emergence of gender-

based inequalities. By examining the multitude of ways in which this is accomplished at the ground level of broadcasted social interaction, we uncover strategies and resources for making gender relevant, for invoking (and resisting) presuppositions about men and women, and for defining gender roles and norms – all of which are salient well beyond the soccer pitch.

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Notes

1. In this article, we use the term 'soccer', although we recognize that 'football' is the more frequent term in English to refer to the sport in question outside the US.
2. In Bowcher's rugby commentary data, there was also a sideline reporter and several around-the-grounds reporters, roles that are not found in our soccer data.
3. The term 'niñas'/girls is used only by AR (and not JPN), although it is important to point out that AR uses this term only to describe young girls (e.g. those whom she coached or recruited, or generic young girls who might be interested in pursuing a career playing soccer), and *not* the (adult) players competing in the World Cup (see example 9 below).
4. Transcripts follow the conversation-analytic conventions outlined in Jefferson (2004).
5. Unlike goalkeeper Cecilia Santiago, whose relatively young age (16 years) at the time of the tournament was the topic of much commentary, Dinora Garza, according to her FIFA.com player profile, was born on 24 January 1988, making her 23 years old at the time of the World Cup in summer 2011. See www.fifa.com/worldfootball/statisticsandrecords/players/player=302321.

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