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## THE USE OF METAPHORS IN THE LANGUAGE OF ITALIAN SPORTS COMMENTATORS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The popularity of sports in Italy has a historical origin (Porro 2008). One of the reasons why sports disciplines are so popular today is also due to the fact that television networks have a lot of sports events in their broadcast schedule. The commentary of events is a consistent part of sports broadcasting. In this regard, Murrmann / Surmaj (2015: 1) state that the importance of sport in the contemporary society cannot be underestimated, especially if we consider the interest in sports shown by the media. Gian Luigi Beccaria emphasizes that the language of sport should be defined as technical because of the precise and specific scope of the events analyzed and presented (Beccaria 1973: 46). On the other hand, Proietti (1993) views sports language as a technical and specific terminology of individual sports disciplines as well as different types of discourse aimed at reporting and commenting on sports events (Proietti 1993: 10; 2011). Although those authors have dealt with the written text, their views fully correspond to the use of language by sports commentators.

The task of sports commentators is to help the viewers to follow the matches by describing events on the court and to provide basic and more detailed information (Crystal / Davy 1969: 130; Proietti 2011), while at the same time addressing an audience that is unlimited, anonymous, undifferentiated from a cultural and social

point of view (Masini 2003: 12). The success of television programs is determined by their rating,<sup>1</sup> which is measured through the «entertainment value» (Lawler 2010: 422) of the produced content. Consequently, sports commentators are expected to entertain the audience. Since the comment is intended for an «unknown, invisible, heterogeneous audience» (Ferguson 1983: 150), commentators must also identify themselves with the viewers. Given that the commentary of sports events on television is in the form of a «monologue or dialogue on the scene» (Ferguson 1983: 150), one way for the commentators to create a common social experience with viewers is the use of everyday speech (Gergen / Gergen 2000: 1025). The spoken language is typically «implicit, context-dependent, engaging, lexical, interactive, poorly structured and dealing with many different topics» (Kaal 2012: 44).

Even though today, unlike ancient times, sport is not necessarily connected with military skills, it is not uncommon for matches to be metaphorically characterized as “wars”, and athletes, for example, as «gladiators» (Radović 2013: 2). In everyday speech, the metaphor is generally present because it is important for the formation of abstract thought, communication and culture, and its role covers a «wide range of written, spoken and other ways of expression» (Kaal 2012: 21). A metaphor is governed by the language principle according to which a concept is based on the idea that the structure of one concept is mapped onto another concept, with one concept being significantly recognizable and coming from the physical world, while the other is usually abstract and not sensibly intelligible, and its understanding is enabled on the basis of physical experiences (Klikovac 2004: 11-14). Lakoff and Johnson state that metaphors do not represent only the language or the words that we use, but that they are the representations of our life concepts (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 6; Lakoff / Turner 1989) because metaphors are based on the systematic correlations within our experience on the basis of which they occur. Therefore, a metaphor is placed in the process of thinking as «one of the organizational principles of the human concept system» (Klikovac 2004: 11) and is governed by the principle of unidirectionality, which requires that during conceptual mapping it must necessarily go from a concrete (physical, sensible) state towards the abstract one on the basis of the observed structural similarity.

In accordance with the above, the aim of this paper is to explore the use of metaphors in sports discourse, through a qualitative analysis of metaphorical concepts represented in the language of Italian sports commentators on television. The paper will also explore whether sports commentary requires the use of sports metaphors. These will be approached from a cognitive-linguistic perspective, relying on the theoretical postulates of discourse analysis.

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1 According to the final report for the FIFA 2014 World Cup, 1 minute of the broadcast was followed by 3.2 billion viewers globally, while each individual match had a reach of 186.7 million spectators on average (FIFA 2014: 7).

## 2. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is based on a qualitative analysis of the language of Italian sportscasters. In order to complete the qualitative analysis, we will focus briefly on quantitative data as well. The qualitative analysis was carried out on audio-video recordings of three tennis matches broadcast live.

The *women's final of the 2012 French Open* was broadcast by the Italian specialized sports tennis channel *Super Tennis HD*. The audio-video material without commercials lasted a total of 1 hour 31 minutes and 34 seconds. Only one commentator was present. The match was divided into three parts: 1) introduction; 2) first set (one section of a match) and 3) second set; and we analyzed all three segments. The commentator effectively spoke for 31 minutes and 38 seconds. This transcript is marked with  $T_{RG}$ , while each turn is marked with a number, so the place of a turn in the entire transcript is marked for example:  $T_{RG}$  198.

The *2016 Brisbane International tournament men's final* was also broadcast on the Italian specialized sports tennis channel *Super Tennis HD*. The match was divided into two parts: 1) first set; 2) second set, since the introduction lasts for a total of 36 seconds. Both segments were analyzed. The audio-video material without advertisements took a total of 1 hour 19 minutes and 12 seconds. The match was commented by two commentators. The commentators effectively spoke a total of 41 minutes and 7 seconds. This transcript is marked with  $T_{BI}$ , each turn is marked with a number, and given that the match was commented by two speakers, their statements are marked with A and B in order to distinguish one speaker from the other. The place of the turn in the entire transcript is marked for example  $T_{BI}$  29 A.

The *2016 Australian Open women's final* was broadcast on Eurosport with a commentary for the territory of Italy. The match was divided into five parts: 1) introduction; 2) first set; 3) second set; 4) third set and 5) award ceremony. Only the first four segments were analyzed for this match. This is due to the fact that in the last segment (award ceremony), the commentators only translate the protocol and the finalists' speeches. The audio-video material without advertising lasted 1 hour 51 minutes and 37 seconds. The match was commented by two commentators, who effectively spoke for a total of 53 minutes. This transcript is marked with  $T_{AO}$ , each turn is marked with a number, and given that the match is commented by two speakers, their statements are marked with the letters J and B in order to distinguish one speaker from the other. The place of the turn in the entire transcript is marked for example  $T_{AO}$  5 J.<sup>2</sup>

In all three commentaries, lasting (actual speaking) 2 hours, 5 minutes and 44 seconds, during which 19223 words were spoken, we have identified 898 metaphors.

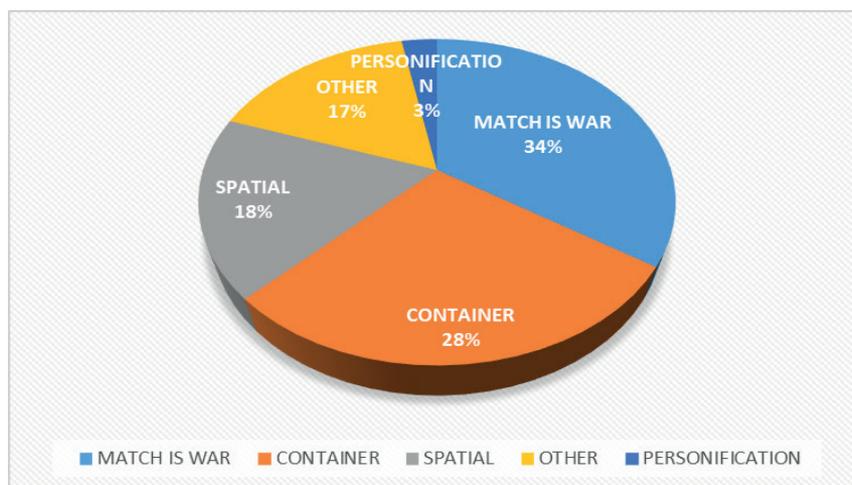
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2 The analyzed commentary was made by Jacopo Lo Monaco and Barbara Rossi.

The audio and video editing program Adobe Premiere Pro CC was used to transcribe the speech in written form for analysis of verbal aspects. The program was also used to measure the breaks in the speech, and a pause in speech was taken into account providing it was longer than two seconds. The videos were transcribed by the author into written form for the analysis of verbal aspects, since non-verbal aspects are not the subject of this research. The following characters were used for the transcription of spoken material for the purposes of this paper: the dash after an unfinished shape (inter-) denotes a break, (-) indicates a staggering of up to 2 seconds, (nvb) denotes non-verbal behaviour, (::) indicates a noticeably extended voice and can be repeated several times, CAPITAL LETTERS mark a louder speech, while (=) points to elements that are tightly bound, without any breaks; incomprehensible verbal behaviour is indicated by (). The omitted part of the text is marked with (...), while // indicate the moment when the speakers overlap. In addition to these signs, common punctuation (comma, point, exclamation and question mark) were also used to indicate intonation. Words that are underlined (partita) are highlighted for analysis (Stević 1997: 14).

### 3. FINDINGS

The metaphors and metaphorical concepts that are identified are listed in the order that reflects the frequency of use, namely, the number of examples we found in the analyzed text (see tab. 1).



**Tab. 1** Statistical data: Semantic field of metaphors.

Given that sports terminologies, which are an integral part of the speech of sports commentators, can also be formed through the use of metaphor (Radović 2010: 8; Murrmann / Surmaj 2015: 199; Proietti 2011), determining the metaphors and metaphorical concepts based on which those terms were created is out of the scope of this research. Hence the research carried out in this paper does not include the analysis of Italian tennis terms, such as *battuta* used simultaneously with the

synonym *servizio*, which indicates the start of the game (Zingarelli 1997: 1657), or *vincente, falco, verifica, etc.*

### 3.1 Structural metaphor

Sports competitions have attracted public attention since ancient times, because they were organized in disciplines that were in fact a part of military training, which was an important factor in everyday life (Radović 2013: 267). For this reason, in the corpus we have analyzed, the most common metaphor is the conventional MATCH IS WAR metaphor.<sup>3</sup> Given that metaphors in the conceptual system point to coherent and systematic relationships between concepts (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 106), in the MATCH IS WAR metaphor the internal structure of war is reflected onto the internal structure of the tennis match, and therefore the matches can be *won* or *lost*. Since tennis matches consist of points, different types of moves, games, sets, etc., the metaphor MATCH IS WAR can be considered a structural metaphor from which a number of other metaphors can be formed. Based on the structural MATCH IS WAR metaphor, we can identify a number of other metaphors, which are illustrated in the following examples:

POINT IS BATTLE

T<sub>AO</sub> 71 B: Lei che è abituata veramente a conquistare tanti punti con ace.<sup>4</sup>

GAME IS BATTLE

T<sub>RG</sub> 81: Sbaglia la risposta la Errani, dopo due *game* di fila dell'italiana la Sharapova torna a conquistare un gioco=venticinque minuti -- cinque giochi a due.<sup>5</sup>

We have listed the previous metaphors because they reflect the internal concept of war, which implies the conduct of battles. By forming the internal structure of the match, through the prism of war and warfare we were able to identify the following metaphors: GAME IS BATTLE, SET IS BATTLE, MATCH IS BATTLE, but also TOURNAMENT IS WAR, FINAL IS WAR, and LEVEL OF COMPETITION IS WAR.<sup>6</sup>

Based on these examples, the segments of the game were viewed as individual battles through *conquistare punti* (winning points), *conquistare game/gioco* (winning a game), *perdere set* (lose set), or as in the example:

3 In the convention established in *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff / Johnson 2003), conceptual metaphors, as well as the terms they refer to, are written in capital letters (Klikovac 2004) and printed in smaller letters (Kövecses 2004).

4 She, who is used to really winning a lot of aces.

5 Errani makes a mistake with the return, after two consecutive games for the Italian, Sharapova wins the game, twenty-five minutes, five games to two.

6 For example: first round, quarterfinal, semi-final, final.

T<sub>BI</sub> 251 A: Lascia andar il braccio, SPLENDIDO DRITTO LUNGOLINEA. Roger Federer perde un turno di battuta in cui era avanti trenta zero.<sup>7</sup>

In the previous example, *turno di battuta* represents a game in which one contestant is serving and means losing the service game.

Since the victory, as well as the defeat, is an integral element of any confrontation or conflict, we find examples of the verbs *vincere* (win), as well as the noun *vittoria* (victory):

T<sub>AO</sub> 3 J: (...) forse ha dato i tre anni migliori della carriera di Serena Williams; che vince Wimbledon, vince Stanford, vince le Olimpiadi, va a Cincinnati: non poteva vincere anche Cincinnati nel senso che poi lì a poco sarebbe iniziato l'US Open e aveva bisogno anche di prendersi una breve pausa. Poi vince l'US Open e vince anche i Masters.<sup>8</sup>

We have also identified the same metaphorical concept through the use of words that are closely related to warfare such as *battaglia* (battle) (T<sub>BI</sub> 49 A), as well as *sconfitta* (defeat) combined with *vendicarsi* (take revenge) (T<sub>BI</sub> 298 A), and in a very unusual use of the superlative adjective *lottato* (fighting, fought) (T<sub>RG</sub> 29):

T<sub>BI</sub> 49 A: Grande battaglia nel terzo set, Federer che rischiò il tracollo in apertura, due palle break nel primo gioco.<sup>9</sup>

T<sub>BI</sub> 298 A: Milos Raonic si vendica della sconfitta subita lo scorso anno qui al Brisbane da Roger Federer.<sup>10</sup>

T<sub>RG</sub> 29: Quest'anno ci ha preso gusto, ha già vinto a Stoccarda sulla Azarenka=vinto ancora a Roma al termine di una finale lottatissima contro Li Na.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the metaphors identified in the section above, based on the internal structure of war, and in accordance with the MATCH IS WAR metaphor, we can also highlight the following metaphors: STROKE<sup>12</sup> IS ATTACK, STROKE IS WEAPON, RACQUET IS WEAPON, TOURNAMENT IS BATTLEGROUND.

7 Let the arm (go), splendid straight parallel. Roger Federer loses a service game in which he was ahead by thirty love.

8 Maybe he gave the best three years of Serena Williams's career; winning Wimbledon, won Stanford, won the Olympics, goes to Cincinnati, couldn't win Cincinnati in the sense that the US Open would start very soon from there, and she also needed to take a short break. Then she wins US Open and also wins Masters.

9 Great battle in the third set, Federer who risked the collapse in the opening, two break points in the first game.

10 Milos Raonic takes revenge on Roger Federer for the last year's defeat here in Brisbane.

11 This year she took a taste, she already won in Stuttgart against Azarenka = won again in Rome at the end of a very hard-fought final against Li Na.

12 For example: service, forehand, backhand, etc.

We have also found examples in which the commentators use idiomatic expressions (Cameron 2008: 198) *Terra di conquiste* (land of conquer), *Terra di nessuno* (no man's land), *Portare a casa la pelle* (get home in one piece) and *Stare in vita* (staying alive, survive). These metaphors are closely related to the domain of war and war skills, and are metaphorically used to describe certain events or moves during the matches.

### 3.2 Ontological metaphors

Our experience with physical subjects provides the basis for events, activities, emotions and ideas. We consider them as entities and substances, and ontological metaphors serve to rationalize our abstract experience, since the concept obtained by the ontological metaphor can later be understood and concretized using structural metaphors. So, in the corpus we find:

T<sub>AO</sub> 205 B: Esatto! Quindi, insomma, la tensione aumenta per lei.<sup>13</sup>

T<sub>RG</sub> 151: QUARANTA quindici. Insomma, Sharapova che non ha una minima intenzione di farsi agguantare.<sup>14</sup>

T<sub>RG</sub> 76: Da zero quattro a due quattro dimezza lo svantaggio certo -- la strada è lunga ancora PERO' la Sharapova degli ultimi due game qualche speranza la lascia, sta concedendo senz'altro di più.<sup>15</sup>

In T<sub>AO</sub> 205 B *tensione* (tension) as a psychical state, through the use of metaphor TENSION IS ENTITY, is seen as an entity. Based on that we can further discuss that state, i.e. we can measure it, we can identify its aspects, and therefore we can quantify it. These examples show us that, based on that metaphorical concept, we can see “tension” as something that can actually grow (*la tensione aumenta* in T<sub>AO</sub> 205 B), or intention (*intenzione* in T<sub>RG</sub> 151), as having a “size”, as seen in the example, being minimal (*minima intenzione*). Similarly, in the example T<sub>RG</sub> 76 hope (*speranza*) is conceptualized as an object, and we can *leave* it to someone (*qualche speranza la lascia*).

We have also found the same metaphorical concept with *frustrazione* (frustration) where this entity is being contained (T<sub>BI</sub> 178 A) and *rischio* (risk) which as illustrated in T<sub>BI</sub> 44 B can be controlled.

T<sub>BI</sub> 178 A: molto delicato per Federer in cui doveva in qualche modo contenere la frustrazione.<sup>16</sup>

T<sub>BI</sub> 44 B: Anche ieri ha giocato tante seconde palle:: ad altissima velocità rischiando ovviamente -- questo è un rischio abbastanza controllato sul quaranta quindici.<sup>17</sup>

13 Exactly! So, in short, the tension is building up for her.

14 Forty fifteen. In short, Sharapova who does not have the intention to be caught.

15 From nil four to two four cutting the result in half, it is still a long road, but Sharapova in the last two games leaves some hope, by allowing more.

16 Very delicate for Federer in which he had to somehow contain frustration.

17 Yesterday he played many second serves :: at very high speed, obviously taking a risk

### 3.3. Container metaphors

The process by which physical and abstract concepts are viewed as a kind of vessel having their own inner and outer side is how a container metaphor works. Considering the fact that we learn about the world first and foremost by using our senses, we perceive it as something that is on the outside in relation to us and, because of that, we also project our own internal-external orientation to other physical objects that are limited by surfaces (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 27). The container metaphor is also widely present in the speech of Italian sports commentators. This is illustrated by the following example: a match (*il match migliore dove*<sup>18</sup>)(T<sub>AO</sub> 17 B), the semifinals (*in semifinale*)(T<sub>AO</sub> 72 B), the result through which the player takes advantage (*va in vantaggio*<sup>19</sup>)( T<sub>AO</sub> 96 J) or the decisive part of the game (*nel parziale decisivo*)(T<sub>AO</sub> 348 J) are viewed as containers:

T<sub>AO</sub> 17 B: E la- il *match* con Azarenka è il *match* migliore=che:: abbiamo visto giocare quest'anno=dove:: ha dimostrato di riuscire anche a tenere alte velocità, e di essere un po' più coraggiosa.<sup>20</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 72 B: Come l'ultimo *game* con Radwańska in semifinale, tre *ace*.<sup>21</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 96 J: Anche con questo *game* va in vantaggio come quello precedente.<sup>22</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 348 J: *Break* e contobreak, secondo e terzo *game*, due a uno Kerber nel parziale decisivo.<sup>23</sup>

Container metaphors through which tournaments, matches, points and levels of competition are viewed as a container are the most frequently used ones in the commentaries we have analyzed. According to the same metaphorical concept, the court can be “opened” (*aprirsi il campo*<sup>24</sup>), the point can be “closed” (*chiudere il punto*<sup>25</sup>) or one can “enter the game completely” (*entrare pienamente in partita*).

In the same way, the components of the court can be “opened” or “closed”:

T<sub>AO</sub> 269 B: usando tanto lo *slice* per aprire gli angoli.<sup>26</sup>

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- this is a fairly controlled risk on forty fifteen.

18 The best match where.

19 Have the advantage or take the lead.

20 And the - the match with Azarenka is the best match = that :: we have seen her play this year = where :: she has shown she can also keep up high speeds, and to be a little more courageous.

21 Like the last game with Radwańska in the semifinal, three aces.

22 This game will go into the advantage as well.

23 Break and re-break, second and third game, two one for Kerber in the decisive part.

24 To open the court to oneself.

25 Close the point.

26 Using so much slice to open the angles.

In this example, the “opening” of the angles (*aprire gli angoli*), actually refers to the game plan of the competitor and his/her movement on the court in relation to where the opponent is at a given moment, so that the player would be able to influence the opponents’ ability to score points.

Through the use of the container metaphor we can also conceptualize conditions. Therefore, we have found examples in which *difficoltà* (difficulty, torment) is seen as a container in *aveva messo in difficoltà la Kerber*<sup>27</sup> (T<sub>AO</sub> 481 J), or based on the conceptualization of *testa* (head) or *mente* (mind) as the container it is possible for us to *mettere nella testa qualche minimo dubbio*<sup>28</sup> (T<sub>AO</sub> 6 B), or *avere in mente*.<sup>29</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 481 J: Sbaglia l’attacco Serena, che è rimasta troppo a guardare la propria risposta che aveva messo in difficoltà la Kerber. Quindici trenta.<sup>30</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 6 B: Sì: in teoria, un *game*, ma dovrebbe cercare di stare vicino al punteggio di Serena Williams visto che spesso è in grado di rispondere; questo per mettere nella testa di Serena qualche minimo dubbio.<sup>31</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 53 B: (...) Sembra proprio avere in mente solo quello che deve fare.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.4 Spatial metaphors

Spatial metaphors imply the organization of the concept systems in relation to each other and are based on our physical and cultural experience (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 24; Cameron 2008: 209). The concept of spatial metaphors implies opposition, for example, up - down, inside - out, front - back and similar (Klikovac 2004: 23). The cognitive task performed by these metaphors is to «make a set of target concepts coherent in our conceptual system» (Kövecses 2004: 37), hence, one of the most frequent spatial metaphors is MORE IS UP. It helps to understand the concept on an experiential basis, because it «is grounded in the co-occurrence of two types of experiences: adding more of a substance and seeing the level of the substance rise» (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 119). It is also culturally conditioned. Lakoff / Johnson (2003) consider that most of our basic concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatial metaphors. We find spatial metaphors in the analyzed commentary below:

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27 (She) had put Kerber in trouble.

28 Put a minimal doubt in the head.

29 Have something in mind.

30 Serena makes a mistake in the attack, by remaining too much to look at her own response that had put Kerber in difficulty. Fifteen thirty.

31 Yes, in theory, a game but, she should try to stay close to Serena Williams' first points, to also try to put in Serena's head some minimal doubt thanks to the fact that she is able to answer more often.

32 It seems to me that she has to have in mind only what she needs to do.

MORE IS UP / BAD IS DOWN

T<sub>AO</sub> 134 B: La Kerber qui ha giocato veramente bene perché ha alzato ancora di più il ritmo.<sup>33</sup>

LESS IS DOWN

T<sub>AO</sub> 164 J: Continua a calare la percentuale di prime=adesso siamo vicini al cinquanta.<sup>34</sup>

We can also find, quite often so, the presence of both of those concepts used in the same context, and sometimes even in the same sentence, as illustrated in the following example:

T<sub>AO</sub> 4 B: E questo ci dice che:: Kerber potrà avere una minima chance : solo legata al rendimento di Serena Williams [...]. Invece Serena Williams ha alzato un po' l'asticella [...] quindi lei si pone sempre gli obiettivi più alti, ed è per questo che ha lavorato bene [...]. Spero per lei che riesca a viverla nel modo giusto emotivamente dando il massimo di quello che può dare in una partita dove parte comunque come sfavorita.<sup>35</sup>

In this example, we can see how the inference pattern about physical heights is mapped onto the inference pattern about amounts (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 180). On the one hand, in *una minima chance* (minimum chance) through the opposition big - small, the metaphor LESS IS BAD is used. On the other hand, in *alzato un po' l'asticella* (raised the scale) and *si pone gli obiettivi più alti* (sets higher goals) the concept is HIGHER IS BETTER, based on the opposition high - low. We can also identify the concept BIGGER IS BETTER through the use of *grandi campioni* (great champions), or a concept CLOSER IS BETTER in *stare vicino al punteggio di Serena Williams* (to be close to Serena Williams' first points), or *provare a dimenticarsi di essere così vicino al risultato* (try to forget to be so close to the result).

### 3.5 Personification

Personification represents a mechanism in which a physical object is designated as a person. It involves understanding the non-human entities or things by attributing human characteristics to them. Personification covers a very wide spectrum of

33 Kerber played really well here because she raised the rhythm even more.

34 The percentage of the first serve continues to drop, we are close to fifty now.

35 And this tells us that Kerber will have a minimal chance, depending on Serena Williams' attitude [...]. Instead, Serena Williams raised the level [...] because she always sets the highest goals for her, and because she worked well [...] I hope that she will succeed in the right way to survive emotionally, giving the maximum of what she can do in the match in which she starts as an outsider.

metaphors because it uses one of the best original domains, us, so we can begin to understand non-human entities better (Kövecses 2004: 39; 328). In the transcripts, we found the following examples (T<sub>AO</sub> 162 J, the move/stroke can speak (*doppio fallo di Serena diceva*), the ball can return (*la palla ti torna*) (T<sub>AO</sub> 80 B), the final can see (*la finale vide*) (T<sub>BI</sub> 46 A) or as illustrated in example T<sub>RG</sub> 63 the wind has the ability to allow the match to be played (*vento consente di giocare*) (T<sub>RG</sub> 63).

T<sub>AO</sub> 162 J: doppio fallo di Serena diceva allora ora sei tu che hai dei problemi.<sup>36</sup>

T<sub>AO</sub> 80 B: E se devi costruirti punto dopo punto, magari guadagnando spazio in avanti, però ti devi sempre aspettare che la palla ti torna.<sup>37</sup>

T<sub>BI</sub> 46 A: Nel 2015: la finale vide un primo set vinto in scioltezza da Federer per sei quattro.<sup>38</sup>

T<sub>RG</sub> 63: Non è proprio una bellissima giornata oggi a Parigi, c'è molto vento – detto che però – per il momento consente:: di giocare perché le nuvole non si possono fermare.<sup>39</sup>

Using the same concept, points can also travel (*possono arrivare punti; arrivano le prime palle break; arriva il break*), as we see in the following examples:

T<sub>AO</sub> 76 B: Bello vedere la Kerber così competitiva:: spinge anche Serena a dare il massimo. Possono arrivare punti spettacolari.<sup>40</sup>

T<sub>RG</sub> 32: Gran rovescio ha giocato la siberiana=attenzione – perché grazie a questa prodezza arrivano le prime palle break della finale – solo due::<sup>41</sup>

### 3.6 Combined metaphors

In our analysis, we also found a number of combined metaphors:

T<sub>AO</sub> 155 J: Angelique Kerber ha il servizio per chiudere il primo set. Avanti cinque giochi a quattro. Per due volte ha strappato il servizio di Serena, nel terzo e settimo game.<sup>42</sup>

36 Serena's double foul says now you are the one that has problems.

37 And if you have to build yourself point by point, perhaps gaining space in front, however you must always wait for the ball to come back.

38 In 2015, the final saw the first set won fluently (easily) by Federer with six four in the second.

39 It is not really a beautiful day today in Paris, there is a lot of wind - having said that - for the moment it allows to play because the clouds cannot stop.

40 Nice to see Kerber so competitive, this also makes Serena give her maximum. Spectacular points could arrive.

41 Great backhand played by Siberian, attention, because thanks to the courage the first break balls of the final are arriving, only two.

42 Angelique Kerber has the serve to close the first set. She is leading five to four in the games. Took the serve twice from Serena, in the third and the seventh game.

In T<sub>AO</sub> 155 J we found the following combination of metaphors: a) STROKE IS A WEAPON, built through the structural metaphor MATCH IS WAR in *ha il servizio* (has the serve), where the serve is conceptualized as a weapon; b) the container metaphor in *chiudere il primo set* (to close the first set). In this case, the set (component of the game) is conceptualized as a container and therefore the first set can be *closed*.

T<sub>AO</sub> 181 B: Insomma, intanto ci ha detto che Graf è in grandissima forma.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, in example T<sub>AO</sub> 181 B the spatial metaphor is combined with the container metaphor. The spatial metaphor is based on the opposition, small - big, and through the concept of BIG IS BETTER. Hence Graf is said to be in great shape (*Graf è in grandissima forma*). Also, as we can see in the following example:

T<sub>AO</sub> 445 B: E qui di personalità ne ha avuta tanta Kerber, capace ancora una volta di rispondere.<sup>44</sup>

The ontological metaphor is combined with the spatial metaphor. By using the ontological metaphor we have defined the notion of character (*personalità*) as an entity, which, with the help of a spatial metaphor, we can quantify, and in this case: “one can have a lot of it” (*ne ha avuta tanta*).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Through a thorough analysis of the commentary transcripts of three different tennis matches broadcast on Italian sports television, we have discovered that all the metaphorical concepts found in everyday speech are also present in the speech of sports commentators on television.

The most prominent metaphorical concept is MATCH IS WAR (cfr. tab. 1). It serves as a structural metaphor, since a number of other metaphors are derived from it. This concept, thanks to the socio-historical context, is rooted in the fact that the first athletes in history actually competed in military arts (Radović 2013: 267). In most examples of metaphorical concepts having war as the original domain (Steen *et al.* 2010: 762), apart from the most commonly used terms, we have also registered verbs that mirror the internal structure of war. The above-mentioned metaphorical concept was identified through the use of words, mostly nouns and verbs, that are closely related to warfare or martial arts, so in a great number of cases we came across the use of: *conquistare* (conquer), *battere* (beat), *difendere* (defend), *battaglia* (battle), *attaccare* (attack), *lotta* (battle) and similar.

The use of the container metaphor (cfr. tab. 1) is in line with the fact that the

43 She said that Graf is in great shape.

44 And here Kerber had a lot of character, capable once more to respond.

commentators of the analyzed tennis matches use a large number of expressions that allow both physical and abstract concepts to be viewed as a kind of container. Since one of the main postulates of cognitivism is that our basic concepts are largely based on one or more spatial metaphors (Lakoff / Johnson 2003: 24; Klikovac 2004: 11-14), which are the basis of our basic physical experience, the presence of spatial metaphors is expected.

In the analyzed commentaries we did not find a single sports metaphor, apart from the tennis terms that may also be formed through metaphors (Radović 2010: 8; Murrmann / Surmaj 2015: 199). The absence of this type of metaphors in the speech of Italian sports commentators is expected since the mechanism of sports metaphor relies upon the use of sports domains to explain some other domain (Steen *et al.* 2010: 760). Because of that sports metaphors are used to describe situations and phenomena in domains other than sports, that are analogous to situations or phenomena in the sport in which they originate.<sup>45</sup> We also noticed the presence of metaphors that are complex and combined. Among those metaphors there are some that are interconnected to enrich the language of the commentators.

The discourse of sports TV commentators shows the presence of metaphorical concepts equal to the vernacular. All the types of metaphors that we have identified in the language of Italian sports commentators are also used in everyday ordinary speech. This property of the language of sportscasters which allows it to differ from other languages for special purposes makes it accessible, easy to understand and helps the commentators to create a common social experience with the spectators, because it is very close to the everyday language used by spectators and fans alike.

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<sup>45</sup> Such as “pull your own weight” (rowing), “catch someone off guard” (boxing), or “send someone a curve ball” (baseball) (Palmatier / Ray 1989).

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