



International Research Networking Project

“Language and Gender: Academic Research and Practical Implementation”

January 19th. Workshop/Conference 1:
“Language and Gender: Achieving Conceptual Clarity”

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**“Lenguaje no sexista, inclusivo y neutro en el español:
evolución sociolingüística y retos actuales”**

*Non-sexist, gender-inclusive and gender-neutral language in
Spanish: its sociolinguistic evolution and current challenges*

Outline of the presentation

1. GFL key terminology in Spanish

2. **Where we come from:** sexist language in Spanish: 6 permanente examples

3. **Where we are headed:**

I. **Legal/linguistic evolution**

II. **GFL most frequent alternatives:** where and when

III. **GFL main criticism**

IV. **Spanish Royal Academy's stand**

4. **What does research say?**

I. Preliminary studies 1 & 2: Is masculine generics that all-inclusive?

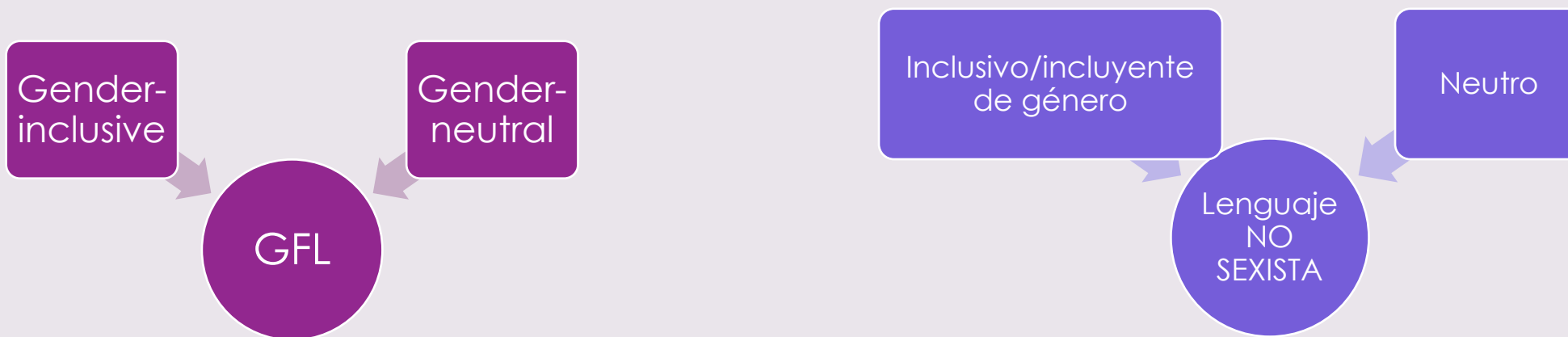
II. Preliminary study 2: What do male/female students conceptualize?

5. **Conclusions and challenges**

6. **Useful resources** for GFL in Spanish



Key terminology in Spanish



Other terms in Spanish since the 80s: *lenguaje paritario, lenguaje de género, lenguaje no discriminatorio, lenguaje anti-sexista, lenguaje sensible al género...*

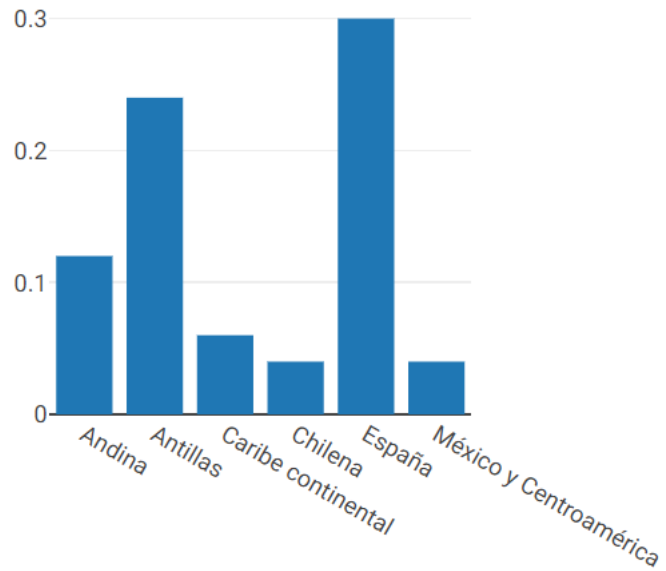
Which one is most common/preferred?

Spanish Ministry of Equality Guidelines:

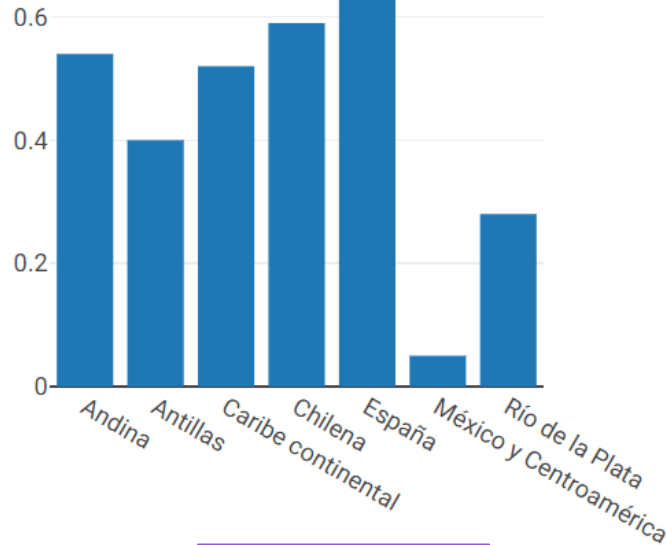
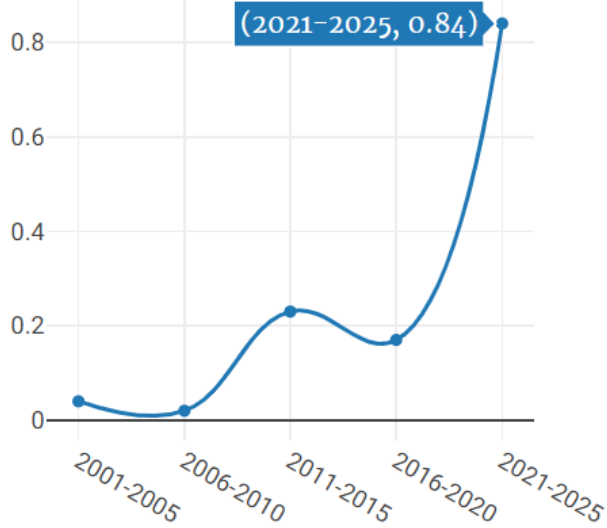
- **54 “no sexista”**
- 6 inclusivo / 2 incluyente
- 11 igualitario
- 0 neutro

Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI (CORPES)

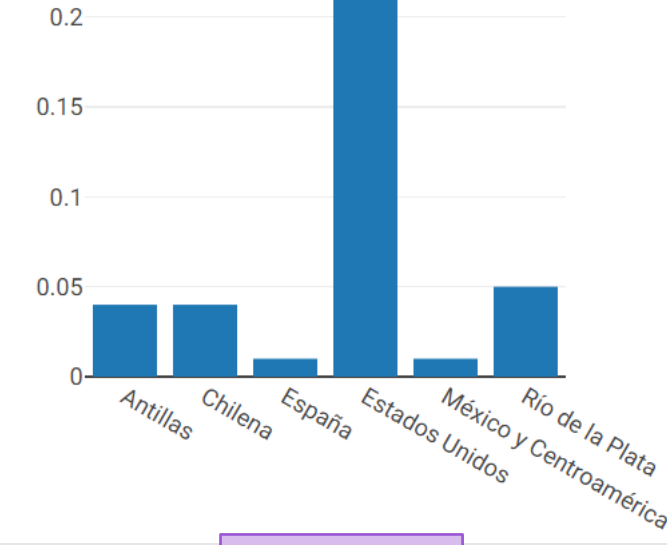
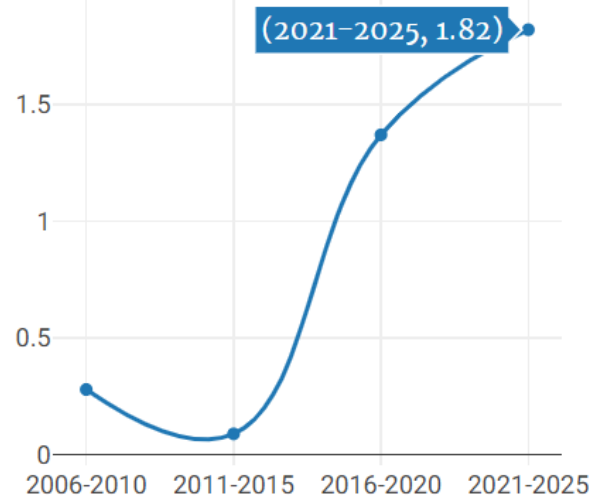
- 88 (0.22) “no sexista”
- **175 (0.44) inclusivo** / 12 (0.03) incluyente
- 4 (0.01) igualitario
- 9 (0.02) neutro



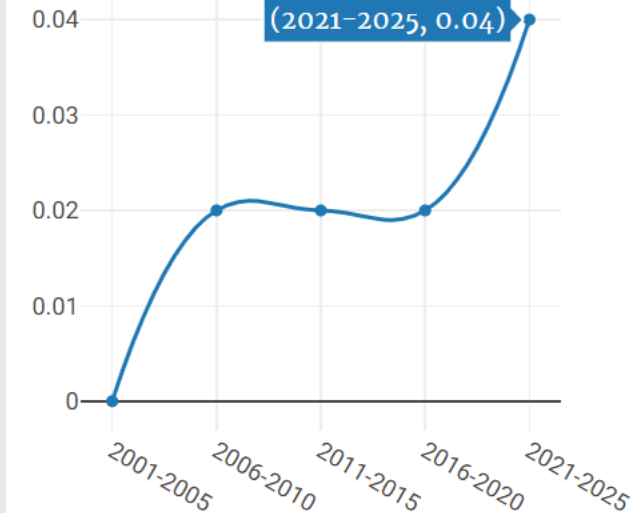
“No sexista”



“Inclusivo”



“Neutro”



Sexist language in Spanish examples: “where we come from”?

a) **Linguistic associations** that refer to **women = weak, passive, home and care, childish...**

“sexo débil” (“weak” sex), Señorita vs. Señorito (Miss vs Mister), “novios que ‘sacan’ a sus novias” (boyfriends who take their girls out)...

b) **Reference** to women only in their role as **mothers or wives “of”**

alcalde, desa +

Del ár. hisp. *alqádi*, y este del ár. clás. *qādi* 'juez'.

5. f. coloq. p. us. Mujer del **alcalde**.

Mayor's wife

cocinillas +

Tb. cocinilla.

1. m. coloq. Esp. Hombre que se entromete en las tareas domésticas, especialmente en las de cocina.

Men who meddles in the house chores, especially the kitchen



PB shines in the OG in Tokyo – The tennis player David Broncano's ex girlfriend, classified for...

Sexist language in Spanish examples: “where we come from”?

c) Hierarchical order to refer to men and then women: *padre y madre, hermanos y hermanas, o/a...*

d) Assymetry when referring to men and women in the same context/rol

Sánchez no consensuó con Irene Montero la ley de paridad que hoy aprueba el Consejo de Ministros

Sánchez did not agree with Irene Montero on the Equality Law...



JENNI MAKES ('LETS') RUBIALES FALL

UCLM Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha Facultad de Educación de Albacete

D/ª _____, Director/a del Colegio _____ (Localidad) _____
 Provincia _____ Teléfono _____
 Email _____

Autoriza al alumno/a _____ con DNI: _____, a realizar las prácticas de enseñanza de _____ curso del Grado de maestro en Educación _____

En _____ a _____ de _____ de 202__

(sello del colegio) El Director/a del colegio

Fdo: _____

Sexist language in Spanish examples: “where we come from”?

d) **Absence** of certain nouns to refer to **jobs in the female form**: piloto (pilot), arquitecto (architect), técnico (*technician*), soldado (*soldier*)...

- Make them less visible, more difficult to achieve, (dis)credit...

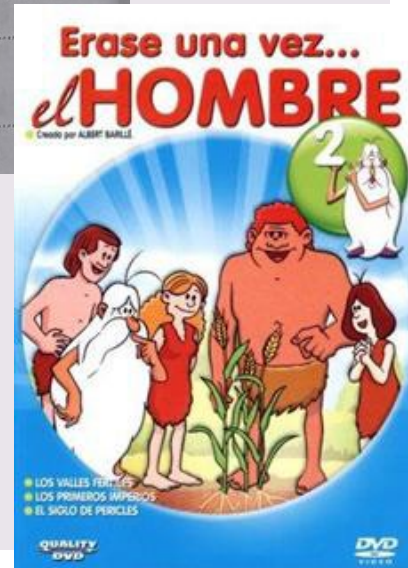
f) **So-called masculine ‘generics’** in grammatical gender languages → male = humanity

Translation 20 points

10 Translate the sentences into English.

1. El arquitecto diseñó un colegio nuevo.
2. El chef no cambió el menú.
3. El inventor creó un ordenador diminuto.
4. El presentador de televisión ayudó al político.
5. ¿Cómo salvó el piloto sus vidas?

New English in Use, ESO 1. Burlington Books



Médicos salmantinos crean un entrenador virtual que previene la depresión laboral

Investigadores del Ibsal ponen en marcha una aplicación para evitar que la enfermedad se inicie. ■ Espera llegar en una fase inicial a 3.000 usuarios para comprobar su efectividad

Doctors from Salamanca create a virtual coach that prevents depression at work.

Researchers at the IBSAL have launched an application to prevent the disease from starting. It hopes to reach an initial phase of 3,000 users to test its effectiveness.



Carmen Castaño, Olaya Tainayo, Emiliano Rodríguez y Cristina Bugones componen la investigación.

Legal-linguistic evolution in Spain

"The implementarion of non-sexist Language in the administrative field and its promotion onto all social, cultural and artistic levels" (3/2007)



1983
Instituto de la
Mujer



1987 UNESCO
conference

- **1988-90** I Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres (official docs)
 - **1990** LOGSE (Education)
 - **1990** 1st "Language Guidelines" published with gender perspective
 - **2007**: 1st Spanish Organic Law
-
- **1987-89** UNESCO "14.1 Resolution" and "109 report"
 - **1990** Council of Europe: elimination of all sexist language in institutions
 - **2003** European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality urgent concerns to foster equality through language
 - **2008**: Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament guidelines
 - **2011**: European parliament ruling norms...
 - ...

Main GFL alternatives in Spanish

Double forms (masc AND fem)

Los alumnos y alumnas que hayan terminado la tarea pueden salir del aula [The students who have finished may leave the classroom]

Slash form (masc/fem)

Querido/a lector/a de nuestra revista... [Dear journal reader...]

Collective forms, epicens, metonymics...

los médicos y las enfermeras; los profesores y los estudiantes → el equipo médico, el profesorado y estudiantado... [the medical and nursing team/body ; the teaching / student body]

El director de la empresa → La dirección de la empresa [The company's office]

Feminine generics (Bengoechea 2015)

Consejo de Ministras, ¡CAMPEONAS!...

'New' forms: @

l@s español@s, l@s estudiantes,

Newest forms: - x & -e

Lxs niñxs, les estudiantes, mes amigas...

Formal language:
administration,
journalism, education,
politics...

Specific language:
Majority of women
Sports & journalism

Digital language:
social media,
advertising, university,
activism...

Gender-Inclusive

Gender-Neutral

Main alternatives	Linguistic Criticism
Double form (-os y -as)	<p>“linguistic deviances” (Fernández García 2008, Roca 2009) Impossible to maintain all the time: redundant, difficult and against “economy of language”</p>
Slash form (-os/-as)	<p>Impossible to maintain (as double forms) Plausible in written language, impossible in spoken discourse/ reading <i>[What about -as/-os??]</i></p>
Collective forms (metonymy, epicens...)	<p>Require cognitive effort, abstraction and training “Unnatural language”</p>
Feminine generics	<p>Only accepted when conceptualizing men within women (sports) Accepted for stereotypically female jobs?</p>
New forms: @ / -x / -*	<p>Impossible to read or use in spoken language as there is no phonetic equivalent “Spoil” the Spanish language Lack of agreement on what we read: o? a? mute? Equally exclusive (non-binary?)</p>
“Newest” form: -e	<p>Lack of equivalents for all words (estudiante, interesante...) Equally exclusive (still no projection of -a) <i>[Non-binary people?]</i></p>

Spanish RAE stand towards GFL

«Los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas», «los niños y las niñas»



REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA

Este tipo de desdoblamientos son artificiosos e innecesarios desde el punto de vista lingüístico. En los sustantivos que designan seres animados existe la posibilidad del uso genérico del masculino para designar la clase, es decir, a todos los individuos de la

Such splitting is **contrived and linguistically unnecessary**.

[...]

It is therefore **incorrect to use the feminine to refer to both sexes together**, regardless of the number of individuals of each sex in the group. Thus, 'alumnos' [SP_MASC Plu] **is the only correct way of referring to a mixed group**, even if the number of female pupils is greater than the number of male pupils

El uso genérico del masculino se basa en su condición de término no marcado en la oposición masculino/femenino. Por ello, es incorrecto emplear el femenino para aludir conjuntamente a ambos sexos, con independencia del número de individuos de cada sexo que formen parte del conjunto. Así, *los alumnos* es la única forma correcta de referirse a un grupo mixto, aunque el número de alumnas sea superior al de alumnos varones.

- **Informe Bosque**
[SP_ 'Bosque's report']
(2012)
- "Libro de estilo de la lengua española según la norma panhispánica"
[SP_ **Style Book of the Spanish Language as per the Panhispanic norm**]
(ASALE 2018)
- **RAE's assessment on the Spanish Constitution**
(2020)

Masculine plural = inclusivity?

“Psychological studies have provided compelling evidence in GGLs showing that the usage of the masculine plural form intended as a generic interpretation evokes **less female representations than its female counterparts** as well as other gender neutral forms by **favoring stronger associations with the male gender**” (Sato et al. 2013).

- **German:** Braun, Sczesny & Stahlberg, 2005; Irmen & Köhncke, 1996; Stahlberg et al., 2001
- **French:** Brauer & Landry, 2008; Gabriel, Gygax, Sarrasin, Garnham & Oakhill, 2008;
- **Norwegian:** Gabriel & Gygax, 2008
- **Spanish:** ???

Grammatical gender is not sexist in Spanish?

(Muelas, under review; Yeaton, Muelas-Gil & Scontras 2023)

➤ **Likert** scale (1 = male / 9 = female)

A: "generic" masculine: *abogados*

B: generic + fem: *abogados/as*

C: feminine & masculine: *abogadas o abogados*

➤ **60** items (random from study 1)

➤ **117** participants (age 20.2)

A: 45

B: 46

C: 28

➤ **Aim:**

➤ To check amount of women in A/B/C option

➤ To update databases on Spanish linguistic stereotypes

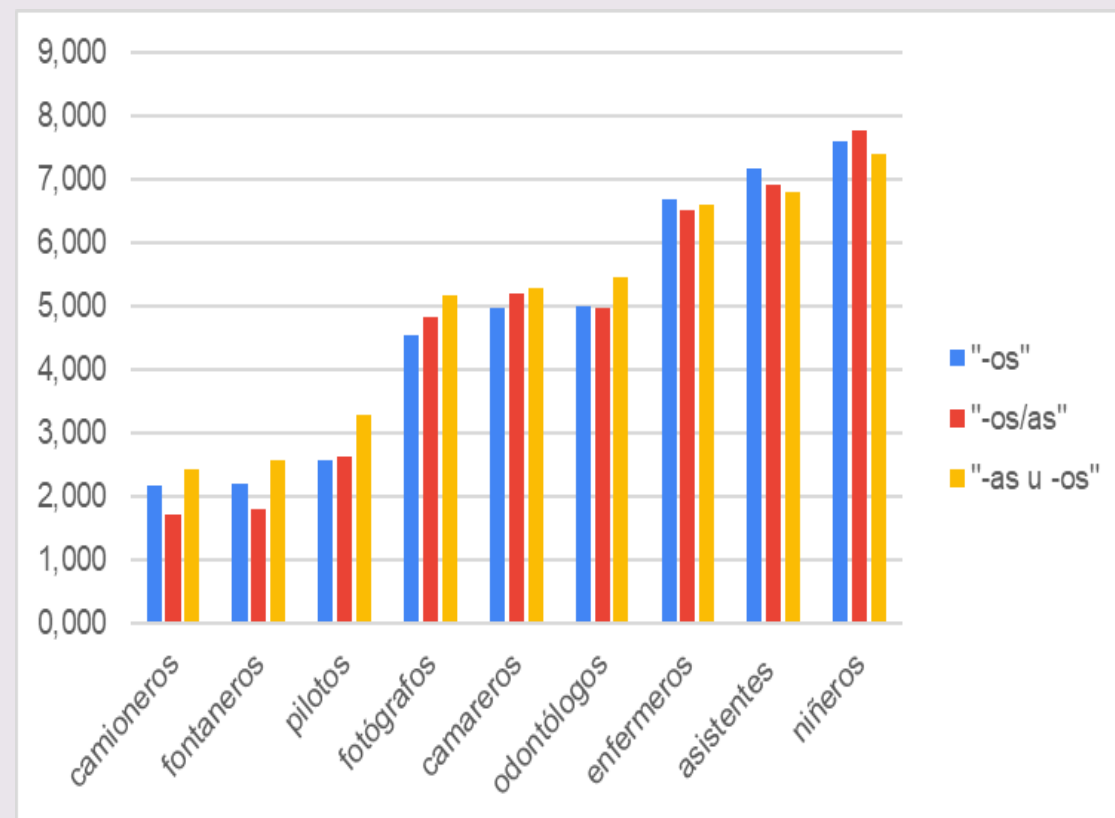
➤ **Results:**

✓ Values tend to be the highest with the double form of "-as and -os" in **stereotypically male and neutral jobs**

✓ For **stereotypically female jobs**, the value decreases

?? In line with previous views: higher acceptance of women doing stereotypically male jobs than the other way round

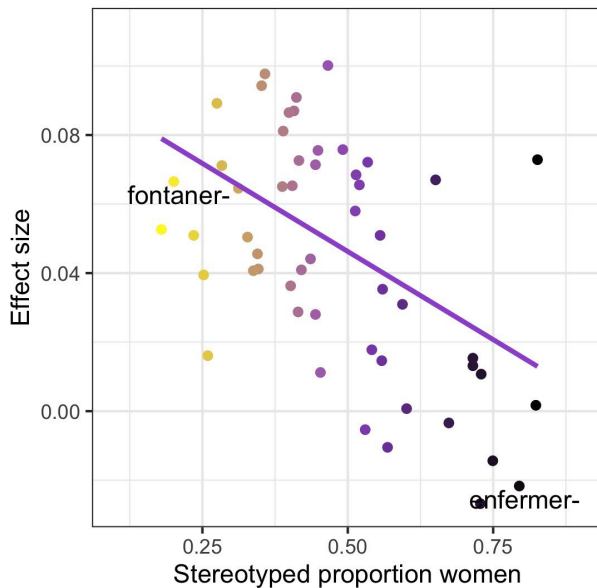
We rely on the "gen masc." except when specified -> stereotype



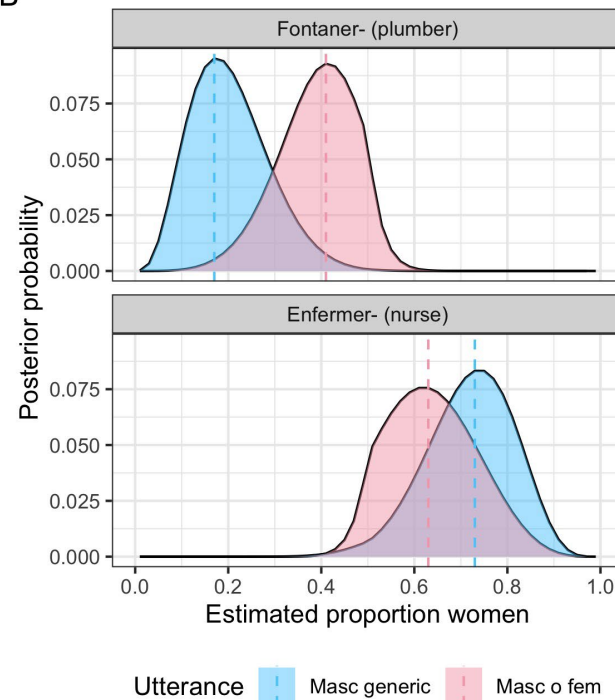
Grammatical gender is not sexist in Spanish?

(Yeaton, Muelas-Gil & Scontras 2023; Muelas, ongoing)

A



B



- **A: Behavioral results from stereotype survey.**
→ 60 jobs in **masc. plural** or double (**disjunctive**) form
→ **Results:** the disjunctive form yielded more inclusive interpretations relative to GM for highly-stereotyped professions (i.e., professions at either end of the x-axis).
- **B: RSA Model predictions** for the femaleness of two examples: *fontaner-* (stereotypically masculine) and *enfermer-* (stereotypically feminine).
→ **Red portions** represent the model's estimated proportion of women referents for GM; **blue portions** represent estimated proportion of women for the disjunction; dashed vertical lines represent maximum likelihood estimations.
→ **Results: the higher-cost disjunctive utterance does not necessarily signal more women than the low-cost masculine generic utterance, but can also be used to indicate more men** → the high-cost utterance is not used to indicate more women but rather to contrast with the listener's expectations about gender prevalence of the profession.

Rational Speech Act Framework: Frank & Goodman 2012

In a nutshell...

Notable **change concerning GFL acceptance by RAE and institutions** (changes in dictionary, “acceptance” of some **alternatives**
BUT! **Still reluctance** shown by RAE and some parts of society (**ideological imposition, oblivion of what it means for equality, rejection of potential linguistic change/threat...**)

GFL is more **easily used in FORMAL language** (academia, administration, journalism); more **difficult** to spread in an **INFORMAL** basis (cognitive effort... willingness and training)

Alternatives given as a reaction towards sexist language:

- **Linguistically correct, varied in acceptance: double form; slash form**
- **Linguistically “incorrect”, rejected by RAE: @, -x, -e**

On-going **debate towards the use of –e as gender-neutral or non-binary gender identity** form

Expanding **body of studies proving GFL in Spanish fosters more inclusivity of women**. More needed!
Scholars do see it happening “**partly**” and **slowly** (Lledó 2012, Bengoechea 2015, Medina Guerra 2016, Grijelmo 2019)

Availability of a myriad of **guidelines** that **give other options (but do not impose)**

The issue now is:
“do we want to make room for GF options in Spanish
society & language?”



Linguistic
“norm”

**25 years later, 'Titanic'
director James Cameron
concedes that Jack could
have lived**

There was still no way to guarantee it, but he could
have had a fighting chance.

GFL
options

Useful resource for Spanish GFL:

- List of available guidelines for gender-fair and gender-inclusive language in Spanish available at:

<https://www.inmujeres.gob.es/servRecursos/formacion/GuiasLengNoSexista/Guias.htm>



Alternatives that 'meet' the rules

Alternatives	Examples
Sustantivos colectivos	el interesado → la persona interesada Los alumnos y los profesores → el alumnado y el profesorado.
Sustantivos epicenos	cónyuge, persona, víctima, clientela, plantilla.
Sustantivos abstractos	dirección, presidencia, alcaldía, secretaría
Paráfrasis	El hombre → el ser humano Los administrativos → El personal administrativo
Cambio de tiempos verbales	Ana y Juan están concentrados en el examen → concentrándose
Omisión del sujeto y objeto	Los interesados pueden enviar su currículum → pueden enviar su currículum a... Buenos días a todos → Buenos días
Empleo de relativos	El estudiante que solicite la ayuda → Quien solicite la ayuda
Reformulaciones	Están muy interesados → Tienen mucho interés
Aposiciones explicativas	Se contratará personal docente, tanto hombres como mujeres , para...
Omisión del sustantivo en algunas construcciones	entrada gratuita para niños menores de doce años → menores de 12 años
Determinantes y pronombres sin marca de género	los participantes → cada estudiante

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