

Michele Sala (ed.)

**GENDER, LANGUAGE AND
TRANSLATION.
REPRESENTATIONS AND
TRANSCODIFICATIONS**

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Michele Sala (ed.)

Gender, Language and Translation:
Representations and Transcodifications

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MICHELE SALA¹

Gender, Representations and Transcodifications. An Introduction

Gender as a dimension of language has been extensively discussed in the course of the past decades and research – from a variety of perspectives (i.e. sociology, anthropology, linguistics, literature, philosophy, speech communication studies, media and feminist studies, etc. cf. Henley/Thorne 1975, Lakoff 1975, Miller/Swift 1980, Kramarae et al. 1983, Radway 1984, Kurzon 1989, Cameron 1990, 2006, Corbett 1991, Roman et al. 1994, Wodak 1997, Lazar 2005, Pascale 2007, Garzone 2020) – has significantly contributed to raising awareness about gender-related issues. Especially in recent times, as critical consciousness expanded about the importance of equality, inclusiveness, representation and empowerment of any marginalized group – or, conversely, of the dangers of any form of discrimination, concealing, or domination – the debate on gender has gained momentum and provided ground for in-depth analyses and discussions that, while moving in different directions and having different purposes, stem from two main epistemological apices: a predominantly linguistic one (assessing gender as a linguistic construct, typically in language and discourse studies) and a cultural, social, and political one (where gender is dealt with as a socio-cultural construct, notably by critical theories, CDA, cultural studies, feminist research, etc.).

The former set of approaches is mainly descriptive in character and aimed to explore how gender is openly or implicitly codified

1 The author wishes to thank Stefania M. Maci who – besides being the mastermind and main organizer of the 11th CERLIS Conference (*Translation, Gender, Profession* – 4th Valencia-Napoli Colloquium), Bergamo, 17-19 June 2019) where some of the contributors of the present volume have delivered their papers – also helped me with the organization (notably by keeping contacts with the authors) and editing of this volume.

through the means of language (i.e. lexis, morpho-syntax, sentence structuring, collocational preferences, pragmatic presuppositions, textual, stylistic and genre conventions, etc.), and, more precisely, investigates in what ways language may represent potentially sexist meanings and how it lends itself to be used – or is indeed exploited – to channel gender bias.

The latter group of approaches – which are primarily meant to point out the implicit sexism in discourse-as-social-practice, with the purpose of containing and neutralizing it (cf. Fairclough 2003, van Dijk 2011, Maass et al. 2013) – is based on the assumption that language contributes to establishing and corroborating gender stereotypes, relegating women to specific, secondary or less important roles than those rhetorically open to men or connoting female identities in terms of emotions, attitudes and other qualities markedly different from those associated to men.

The purpose of this volume is to examine the ways in which and the effect to which the two epistemologies can blend for the study of gender – the critical one providing clear orientation, analytic matrixes, and interpretive models, while the linguistic one offering the tools to locate, collect, structure and examine linguistic material.

In fact, since the idea of gender as a discursive representation of socially constructed identities – and not merely a biological feature – combines language, perception and (their effects on) experience, its investigation benefits considerably by merging and integrating the two sets of approaches where, notably, linguistic criteria (i.e. the notion of grammatical and natural gender, of markedness, of category availability, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of language relativity, etc.) may be – and have been – used by cultural research as methodological resources and, conversely, concepts from cultural theories (i.e. the notion of identity, power, bias, also interpreted in terms of oppression, control, discrimination, etc.) can be – and have been – resorted to in language studies as organizing principles and theoretical matrixes within which to frame both research and findings.

Given the slant of this volume – which, as reflected in the title, assesses the interplay between gender-related codifications and transcodings, and seeks to see in what ways and to what extent language ‘with’ or ‘about’ gender influences our representation, understanding, and response to it – it is worthwhile outlining the ways in which these

linguistic and cultural perspectives, despite their possible overlap, differ especially from a methodological standpoint, since this justifies and motivates their complementarity.

Linguistic analysis (from grammar studies to pragmatics and discourse analysis, from genre research to LSP) investigates language use by observing texts, distinguishing regularities and idiosyncrasies, identifying possible trends and establishing their relevance (through quantification, measuring, comparison, etc. notably in Corpus Linguistics) eventually attaining potential generalizations, whose validity needs to be tested and verified in broader contexts of use. It is a soft domain which is grounded in 'organized scepticism' (Merton 1973), where hypotheses require validation through empirical evidence (in data-based procedures) or, conversely, where evidence is made scientifically relevant through forms of model abstraction (in data-driven procedures): in both cases assumptions are questioned (to then be, ideally, verified), and linguistic data are investigated, considered in the light of their collocation, co-text, context and purpose, compared and contrasted with standard or similar phenomena (often by resorting to reference corpora), in order to allow for workable descriptions, tenable explanations and solid generalizations. This data-centred orientation may result in fragmentation of research (different foci, methods, contexts, perspectives, criteria of analysis, etc.) and results (similar analyses of comparable material may yield dissimilar results, cf. Gal 1989, Severiens/Ten Dam 1997, Maegaard 2005, Newman et al. 2008) without this hindering the soundness of the research, but actually contributing to the complexification and articulation of scientific knowledge (see also Baliotti et al. 2015). Precisely for its tentative and sceptical stance, linguistic research minimizes the expression of attitude, overt evaluation or judgement (Giannoni 2006, Gotti 2003): being mainly aimed at fostering the understanding of the functioning of language, even when it is meant to point out problems and promote changes which are felt to be beneficial for the community (because, for instance, inclusive or empowering for the minorities), emotive emphasis, judgment or (even common sense) opinion are likely to hinder and have a negative impact on the perceived soundness of the research.

Cultural and critical studies, on the other hand, offer frameworks by which to interpret gender as a social construct, providing abstract

interpretive models, paradigms or keys concepts, through which to make sense of it, and more precisely, by which to relate seemingly unrelated notions or experiences for them to cohere, and make gender-associated phenomena (linguistic, representational, experiential, cultural, etc.) cognitively manageable. Such models are abstractions whereby gender-related issues are seen in the light of general principles (i.e. power, control, patriarchy, etc., cf. Habermans 1991) and as resulting from the dynamic interplay of opposing forces (i.e. oppression vs resistance, identity vs fragmentation, etc.). Such generalizations are motivated and paradigmatic in character. They are motivated in terms of the analysts' stake, stance, interest, and goals (Delphy 1984, Jackson 1996, Haraway 2004, Harding 2004), and, as such, they are likely to systematize reality, perception and experience through processes of ordering, prioritization and hierarchy of meanings, typically by resorting to different perspectives and "a triangulation of various methods and theories depending on the question being researched" (Winter 2014: 249, cf Zohrabi 2013). Despite the fact that cultural research is anti-positivistic and anti-objectivistic (Grossberg 2010, Winter 2014) – precisely based on the assumption that reality-as-social-construct cannot be analysed 'objectively' – the models it offers have a paradigmatic character in that they are inferentially applied to phenomenological interpretation, thus conferring cognitive relevance, homogeneity and coherence to our reading of reality and allowing for a deeper understanding of it (Domholdt 1993).

On this basis, research on gender and/in language benefits from the combination and cross-fertilization of the two approaches, where the linguistic one provides tools and the cultural one, direction – the former offering material and workable ways to handle them, while the latter giving them critical shape. Or conversely, where the linguistic level substantiates abstractions, intuitions and models offered by the cultural level, and provides linguistic evidence to validate critically favoured interpretation. These forms of fertilization contribute to the advancement of the research on gender, and foster understanding which is best achieved interdisciplinarily.

The volume is divided into two parts. The former, consisting of three chapters, provides some general perspectives on gender in language and translation (respectively, answering research question such as: What do we mean by gender? How is research on gender and language carried out? How can culture specific and language internal traits -- among which gender -- be translated?). Each of the four chapters of the second part, instead, investigates how gender-related representations and meanings are codified and/or transcodified in media products, institutional texts, and legal discourse.

The opening chapter, by JANE SUNDERLAND, provides a near-comprehensive and articulate discussion of the concept of gender from various perspectives. On the one hand, it encompasses the notion of gender as a dimension of language and a linguistic resource: on a word and sentence level, morphological markings such as policeman vs. police officer and discursive preferences (e.g. generic vs specific third person pronouns) may affect both representational choices and interpretation, given still-prevalent 'male as norm' uses and understandings. On the other, more notably, it considers the idea of gender as a social construct – that is, what lies behind various linguistic and social behaviours through which identities are established, normalized and made (stereotypically) recognizable. These behaviours, consequently, are variously knowingly performed, favoured (by the media, education systems, institutions, traditions, cultural conventions, etc.), aligned to, corroborated in social actions, and sometimes resisted and subverted - with varying degrees of awareness and intentionality on the parts of social actors.

The second chapter, by MICHELE SALA, provides an outline of the main epistemological approaches through which to assess the study of gender and language and, specifically, points out the complexities arising from the blending of different research methods and perspectives. By distinguishing language research on gender (where the focus is on language) from gender research on language (the focus being on gender), the chapter discusses the possible misapplication of understandings and evaluations which are essential to gender as a social construct to language as a vehicle for social construction, or, from another angle, it assesses the problems of transferring notions concerning gender as a product of semiotization to language as a tool

for semiotization – as if language almost by default codified degrees of gender bias, rather than being a semiotizing tool whose potential is affected by the (conscious or subconscious) intentions and attitude of the users, the purpose of the communication and the context of its use. The chapter argues that, although the two notions can be combined in research, the essential distinction between gender-as-construct and language-as-code is relevant in order to study and promote gender equality in language use, so as to maximize inclusion and representation and minimize stereotyping and bias.

Starting from the consideration that in every culture there are forms of language use that are (stereotypically) considered to be preferred for/by women (as originally was hiragana in Japan) or textual realizations and genres which are thought to be more suitable than others to represent female identities and experience (like diaries in Heian era Japan), in her chapter YO TABAYASHI assesses the main issues related to the transfer of culture-specific elements (gender being one of them) between cultures which are markedly dissimilar (for history, tradition, social organization, culture, etc.), namely the Japanese, the Italian and the American one – using as a reference point the translations of the novel *Kitchen* (1988) by Banana Yoshimoto. After providing an outline of the ways culture-relevant meanings, in the translation process, can be exported – through imposing or persuasive strategies – or imported – through borrowing and amalgamation techniques – the chapter points out how, especially the latter techniques, are related to and bring about forms of domestication or foreignization.

The second part opens with a chapter authored by ROXANNE H. PADLEY that focusses on the semiotization and translation of gender-relevant meanings as they are codified in popular media products, notably TV series, by taking as a showcase the medical drama *Nip/Tuck*, an American series which dramatizes the lives and exploits/experiences of two plastic surgery doctors, a domain – that of plastic surgery, especially in its mediatization – that is ripe of stereotypes closely or remotely associated to gender identity and representation (i.e. the myth of beauty-seeking, the fear of aging, the problems of body consciousness, etc.). The chapter analyses how gender-related references are textualized and then translated – in accordance to their purpose being internal to the economy of the drama (i.e. depending on

the characters' attitude and sensitivity towards gender and gender related issues) or, more broadly, as depending on social and cultural factors (i.e. with respect to ideas of political correctness, female objectification, marginalization, etc.).

The next three chapters consider gender related issues and the problem of (fair) gender codification in institutional communication and legal settings. Starting from the idea that different languages have sensibly to drastically different ways of marking gender (grammatically, lexically, referentially, and socially) – this being due to their morphological structuring and etymological developments – and, on the other hand, given the necessity, especially in specific contexts such as the legal one, of representing individuals – or notably citizens – as equals, hence minimizing all differentiations among which gender-based ones, the chapter by GIULIA ADRIANA PENNISI investigates how EU guidelines and recommendations for non-discriminatory language metalinguistically handle intrinsic gender-related marking in the ways they are drafted, and does so by comparing the English version of such texts (English being a non-grammatically gendered language) with the Italian ones (Italian being a grammatically gendered language) so as to evidence the strategies and techniques which are used by drafters in both languages, not only to promote, but notably to lexicalize gender fairness.

A similar analytical orientation is to be found in the following chapter, whose authors, MICHELA GIORDANO and MARIA ANTONIETTA MARONGIU, examine the language exploited in the drafting of informative brochures issued by the European Institute for Gender Equality by comparing the English and the Italian versions of the same texts. On the basis of the (social and moral) problematicity of some of the contents dealt with in these brochures and their close or remote relationship to gender – ranging from, notably, genital mutilation and gender based-violence to disability, poverty, education, etc. – and in consideration of the different level of awareness and sensitivity towards gender and the notion of gender fairness shared by the two cultures, the chapter analyses how metadiscursive strategies, both interactive and interactional, are used to favour specific interpretations, codify recommendations, promote good practices and persuade readers about the relevance of gender equality.

The closing chapter discusses one of the paradoxes found in the language used in official EU websites and documents to lexicalize a specific role within the framework of EU institutions, namely the term ombudsman. Originally a loanword from Swedish (corresponding to commission + man), the term seems to have resisted the neutralization trend that has affected other English nouns for professions and roles. The chapter by MARÍA LÓPEZ-MEDEL points out that this paradox is two-fold. On the one hand, EU guidelines for gender equality – the ones that are expected to be primarily followed by drafters of official EU documents and producers of EU websites – expressly favour and promote the replacement of man-ending words with neutral alternatives (as ombudsperson would be); nonetheless, precisely in said outlets, the masculine form ombudsman is the preferred form by large (300 times more frequent than ombudswoman). On the other, the office of EU ombudsman has been held by a woman for almost a decade, hence a neutral term (representative, commission, authority, office, etc. are those offered by the author) would be, not only fairer, but more referentially transparent.

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Part I

JANE SUNDERLAND

When We Say ‘Language and Gender’, What Do We Mean by *Gender*?

Let me start by saying what I am not going to focus on here. Of late, the term *gender* has come to mean, in the public mind, questions of being cis or trans; of the rights and wrongs of self-identification as a woman or man, girl or boy; and whether people (especially children) can or cannot, should or should not, surgically or hormonally, change what is popularly seen as their biological sex – or, as trans activists and allies say, the sex they were assigned at birth. Feelings run high: the debate is often polarized, divisive, unnuanced and abusive.

Rather, in this paper, following Simone de Beauvoir’s claim that “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (1953/1949), I am largely considering what I am calling *social* (in contrast to *linguistic*) gender, i.e. the social constructedness of individuals in terms of expected, learned and enacted femininity and masculinity, construction which takes place through, *inter alia*, the family, friendship groups, workplaces, the media, institutional practices more generally; and through spoken and written language, images, and multimodality.

First, however, we will look briefly at one aspect of the *linguistic* understanding of gender. This is not a discussion of de Saussure’s ‘langue’ and the usual distinction of languages with *natural gender* (e.g. English) and *grammatical gender* (e.g. French) (see e.g. Corbett 1991), but much more specifically certain aspects of linguistic gender in English which have been considered sexist, and non-sexist alternatives to these (largely a question of ‘parole’). Four such features (but see also Mills 2008) are:

- masculine ‘generics’ (*he, man*); **instead**, e.g. *humanity, people; he or she, s/he*, singular *they* (see below)
- lexical/semantic asymmetry (*manager/manageress, stag party/hen party*), **instead**, e.g. *manager* for everyone, Dove Party¹
- male firstness (e.g. *Mr and Mrs, he or she*); **instead**, e.g. *she or he*
- derogatory terms (more for women than for men, especially in terms of appearance and sexual activity); **instead**, don’t use, call out others’ use of these

These items are not new, or ‘woke’: they have been the focus of concerns and campaigns since the early 1970s. Such linguistic sexism is of course characteristic of many languages. And while there is much *ostensible* confusion (“No-one knows what they can say and what they’re not allowed to say any more” – though do speakers who say this really believe it?), and much generalising, ridicule and closing down of arguments (‘political correctness gone mad’, ‘virtue signalling’, ‘woke’, ‘trivial’, ‘snowflakes’), for progressives, the actual reason for non-sexist language is not to ‘protect snowflakes from having their feelings hurt’, but because, following Foucault (e.g. 1981), language (use) is *constitutive*, meaning that it constructs as well as reflects, and that sexist language use is part of a bigger picture of sexism, and of patriarchal structures.

Taking the first of the four above-mentioned features of sexist language in English, masculine ‘generics’: a particular example of alternative, non-sexist language and indeed language change, with historical as well as new, contemporary resonances, is ‘singular *they*’ (and singular *them, themselves, their, theirs*), as in, e.g. “Everyone should bring their lunch”. While this form is evidenced in earlier writings, for example “A *person* can’t help *their* birth”, spoken by Rosalind in William Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1848), it was actively promoted during the second wave of Women’s Movement as a gender-neutral alternative to the ‘generic’ *he* (‘A person can’t help his birth’). The ‘generic’ *he* (and other masculine ‘generics’ *his, him, himself*, and

1 Not a widely used term but one recently employed by a young relative of mine to describe her own event

generic 'man') were found to promote the 'think male' phenomenon (Martyna 1980), i.e. not understood by readers and hearers *as* generic. Interestingly, since the 1990s, use of 'singular *their*' has been shown in corpus data² to be on the increase, at least in America, frequently replacing – and displacing – generic 'his'.

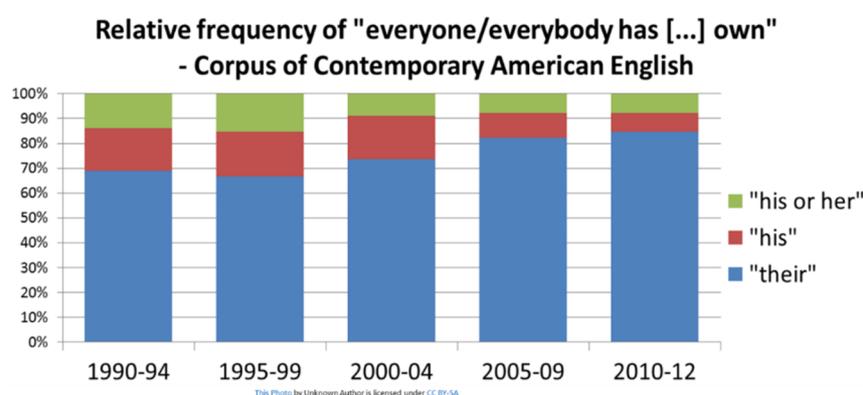


Figure 1: Increase in use of 'singular *they*'

Singular *they* has acquired a particular new relevance for those who identify as non-binary, i.e. who have "a gender or sexual identity that is not defined in terms of traditional binary oppositions such as male and female or homosexual and heterosexual" (see Zimman 2017). While some trans people and indeed some 'gender critical' people may see this as identity erasure, others also have *they* as their 'preferred pronoun', and here I would include anyone who sees gender marking (with *she* or *he*) as irrelevant or undesirable. Use of 'singular *they*' makes (and for several decades has made) the feminist point that

2 <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/> "The corpus contains more than one billion words of text (25+ million words each year 1990-2019) from eight genres: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic texts, and (with the update in March 2020): TV and Movies subtitles, blogs, and other web pages."

although biological sex is frequently not relevant, use of *he* and *she* makes it so³.



Figure 2: 'Preferred pronouns'/Pronouns in material practice

3 More basically, 'singular *they*' is also useful when no pronoun preference has been expressed or when biological sex is not known, e.g. of a taxi driver: "What time are they arriving?"

Non-sexist language is, however, importantly, not just a matter of individual words. In an article entitled 'Lost in translation: non-sexist language', Deborah Cameron points to the expression 'Women and children first', noting that the issue is neither the word *women*, nor the notion of discrimination against men, but rather the fact that "it belongs to a patriarchal discourse in which men are there to 'protect' women and children" (1998: 161). It makes sense, then, to consider sexist (and gendered) discourses articulated in language use as well as individual linguistic items (see e.g. Sunderland 2004).

In the rest of this paper I consider *social* gender, the main focus, in terms of (a) identity and ideology ('gender *as*'), and (b) behaviour and representation ('gender *in*').

Gender as *identity* means the sense humans have of themselves as women or as men (or as girls or boys). For *cis women/cis men*, i.e. most people, this identity will be related to the biological sex that they have been assigned at birth; for a minority, i.e. *transwomen/men*, and perhaps others, it will not. This sense of gender identity may change over time; further, its experienced or perceived relevance will vary with context, perhaps several times a day, and will perhaps be more strongly felt when one is in a minority socially. For example, a woman may not be conscious of being a woman in a group composed entirely of women, or a group with equal numbers of women and men. When she is the only woman in a group of men in a room, on the other hand, her experienced/perceived identity as a woman may be acute. Or it may not – until someone makes it relevant, for example by commenting on the gender imbalance in the room.

Identity can be related to associated, learned *behaviour*, including *inter alia* practices, actions, clothes, language use (*parole*) – all socially constructed, encouraged and shaped through a range of social agents including language (*langue*). These processes can, of course, also be recognized, resisted and indeed subverted. When women as a group and men as a group (or boys and girls as two groups) *do* something differently, then we can say that something to do with gender is going on. But care is needed here in terms of claims. Joan Swann, in a (2002) article entitled 'Yes, but is it gender?', warns against concluding that gender is relevant simply because, say, a speaker or even group of speakers are all women. Even large scale, quantitative

studies which rely on tests of statistical significance and which apparently show significant differences between groups of male and groups of females (e.g. 'variationist' studies) may not be valid if the two groups are not comparable in every other respect (Swann (p. 51) points to differences in employment, for example). Further, such 'differences' cannot be fully generalisable, given the importance of context and all that this entails. Swann similarly cautions about overuse of analysts' own intuitions or theoretical positions to make claims that gender is relevant in a given situation or context.

To see gender in behaviour in the past was usually to focus on *who* and often on *difference*. A range of studies in the 1970s and 1980s looked quantitatively at *talk*, the aim being to identify and reveal different forms of linguistic oppression of women by men. Coinciding with the second wave of the Western Women's Movement (see Cameron 1992), this included looking at gender variation in, for example, tag questions, overlapping speech and verbosity, initially in private and/or experimental contexts. While the finding concerning verbosity was invariably that men almost always talked more than women, no clear conclusions were reached with other linguistic features. Later work looked at public spaces and institutions, for example classrooms and parliament. The danger – and a trap which even feminist linguists for a while fell into – was that to see gender as difference was, ironically, in many ways reinforcing a 'Mars and Venus' understanding of women and men (e.g. Gray (1) 1992), i.e. that we are almost two different species, incapable of understanding each other (see also below in relation to gender representation in *Harry Potter*). Obsessing about and even trying to find 'gender differences' simply reinforces a gender binary that can be seen as sexist in itself.

One way out of this is threefold: to seek, acknowledge and, arguably, celebrate gender *similarities*; to refer to gender (or 'gender-differential') *tendencies* (if and when these exist) rather than absolute differences, tendencies which are likely very closely related to context; and to acknowledge huge variation/tendencies *among* women, *among* men, *among* boys, *among* girls – variation which is likely to be greater than cross-gender variation. It is also hugely important to acknowledge *performance* (Goffman, e.g. 1959): we don't just 'behave', we often act with awareness, if not intentionally – in particular contexts, in particular

ways, in relation to particular goals and topics (see also Butler 1990, 1999, on *performativity*). Because of their sense of gender identity, for example, a woman or man may (choose to) behave in a traditionally 'feminine' or 'masculine' way – related, of course, to context - for example, when women feel they have to behave in a 'ladylike' way, or when a teenage boy does what he does because he feels he has to act 'like a man'. In contrast, someone may wish to draw attention to their gender for progressive rather than traditional reasons.

As an illustration of just such a gender tendency, Federica Formato (2019) shows how on one occasion in the Italian parliament, when the subject of debate was violence against women, both women and men used the first personal plural form *noi* (and its equivalents) to construct 'discursive group' membership. The women politicians however constructed themselves as members of parliamentary *and* gender groups more so than did the male MPs, and thus made themselves visible (in particular in relation to this topic), by linguistically *marking* their visibility as woman through the construction of these two discursive groups 'women' and 'female MPs'. For example:

Sono queste discriminazioni, ormai sedimentate, che producono, in gran parte, i problemi con i quali ancora oggi **noi donne** siamo costrette a confrontarci.

It is this discrimination, established by now, that mainly produces the problems which **we women** are still forced to face.

This example nicely points to how meaning – gendered or otherwise - is what Cameron (1992) has described as "radically contextual", and that here there are gender similarities *and* variation, but also further confirms that spoken language does not come out of people's mouths 'just like that'; rather, at some level, it is planned, involving degrees of consciousness or even intentionality.

As a second, rather different example of a gender tendency, this time in spoken discourse more widely, let us look at this extract of classroom talk, from a mixed-sex German as a foreign language classroom in a UK secondary school. The children are in their first year, 11 and 12 years old. The teacher, who is careful to give equal attention to girls and to boys, is alternating between single-sex pairs, getting the

students to perform dialogues they have just written. The following extract of naturally-occurring data shows what ensues⁴:

Teacher: two more boys I think boys shh what about Simon and Neil no why not
 Lucy: we're boys
 Diana: we're boys
 Marie: we're boys miss
 Teacher: all right we'll have two more girls and then we'll see if the boys have got any courage

While this may seem highly idiosyncratic, the point is that no-one laughed, and the lesson continued. Later, Lucy and Diana were interviewed about this episode:

J: what are you saying she wants to get Simon and Neil and Simon and Neil don't want to do anything
 Lucy/Diana: we want we wanted to do it
 J: so what were you saying [*Plays tape again*]
 Lucy: yeah cos she was saying it was just boys and we were
 Diana: we were wanting to do it
 J: so why did you say 'we're boys'
 Lucy: well we were wanting to do that ... I just said it cos I wanted a go at the thing

Clearly, for Lucy and Diana, 'being' a boy was no big deal – a case of 'male as norm'? - and saying they wanted to be one could be used instrumentally. Two boys from the class (not Simon and Neil) were then interviewed:

J: [*plays tape*]: so they're saying 'we're boys' why why
 Oliver: I think they want to have a go
 Harry: I think they want to have a go
 J: now if it was the other way round if Dr M.... had said 'two more girls' and if you wanted to have a go might you say 'we're girls'
 H/O: no [*both laugh*]
 J: no

4 These utterances are transcribed here without interpretive punctuation.

- H/O: no way
J: why why not
Harry: I don't think boys like to (xxx) soft or stuff like that so that they wouldn't say that they're girls but girls aren't really bothered boys they have a limit what they can do and if they pass that limit they won't say anything
J: so what would have happened if you'd said 'we're girls' or if some boys had said 'we're girls'
Oliver: the response would have been that everybody laughed their heads off
J: so it wouldn't have worked right
Oliver: it was like sort of normal for a girl to sort of like shout out and stuff but like for a boy it's just not normal to say that you're a girl
(Sunderland 1995)

Of course, this 'telling case' (Mitchell 1984) cannot be generalized from. Not only is this about a very few members of the class, it is also highly context-specific, and may be also age-related – the children are in their first year at secondary school, the girls perhaps showing a confidence that would be expected from not yet being particularly concerned about what their male peers think of them. Nevertheless, the difference between the girls and the boys here is striking: these girls are happy to 'play' freely with different gendered identities, these boys, not at all.

The second two extracts are elicited rather than naturally-occurring data. Notably, however, the third clearly illustrates how these boys – and perhaps others - are constructing masculinity as 'not femininity', pointing implicitly to a rigid boundary round masculinity. There are limits and restrictions, masculinity thus entailing disadvantages as well as advantages. Here, the interesting thing is not only variation in the *who* of talk (speaker gender), but also *what is said* (about gender), i.e. gendered discourse (see Sunderland 2004).

So far we have looked at gender in (linguistic) behaviour in terms of variation or differential tendencies in the behaviour of women and men, girls and boys, itself. Gendered behaviour can however also be seen rather differently in the differential treatment *of* women and men, and *of* girls and boys, whether this is a matter of policy (the Taliban in

Afghanistan providing an extreme and highly binary example), or unintended practice. An old but telling example of the latter is Alison Kelly's (1988) meta-analysis of 81 studies of differential teacher treatment by gender in the classroom. Her finding was that:

It is now beyond dispute that girls receive less of the teacher's attention in class [...]. It applies in all age groups [...] in several countries, in various socio-economic groupings, across all subjects in the curriculum, and with both male and female teachers [...].

This meta-analysis allows us to claim that, here, gender *is* relevant (rather than, say, age). The last part of the quote provides a useful reminder that women teachers will not necessarily pay more attention to female students than will men. Kelly continues:

Boys get more of all kinds of classroom interaction. The discrepancy is most marked for behavioural criticism, but [...] boys also get more instructional contacts, more high level questions, more academic criticism and slightly more praise than girls [...]. (Kelly 1988).

'Behavioural criticism' means that boys are told off more – something which is unlikely to facilitate their learning, and may well hinder it. However, getting "more instructional contacts, more high level questions, more academic criticism and [getting] slightly more praise than girls" *are* likely to facilitate boys' learning. I propose that all 'differential treatment by gender', whether a matter of policy or, as here, unintentional practice, needs interrogating – why does it happen? This is particularly important in light of Dale Spender's (1982) work on gender and classroom interaction in which she found that even teachers who were aware of the tendency to give boys more attention and resisted it, did so themselves.

Part of the reason is that teachers were often *responding* to boys (either academically or behaviourally); equally importantly, this sort of behaviour is often because of the behaviour of a small *sub-set* of boys (see e.g. Sunderland 2000a). But this is not the whole story. Because we can pretty much dismiss biological and indeed social determinism,

i.e. that women just *are* this way, men that way, we need to explore how such tendencies come about through social construction. Social construction is a societal choice and, from a feminist perspective, is usually gratuitous and arguably harmful in that associating anything with boys rather than girls, women rather than men, restricts everyone's choices and opportunities.

First, in terms of behaviour, while it would be foolish to see the behaviour of (say) these young learners of German, or these Italian politicians, or the children in the classrooms investigated by Kelly and Spender, as autonomous, everyone always has a measure of agency, and accordingly, as we have seen, there is a sense in which people both actively perform gender (their own) as well as construct gender (their own and others; see Sunderland 2004) in talk and in their wider behaviour. But there also exists a whole set of ideological gendered structures and practices over- and underlying all these behaviours.

We can see gender itself ideologically, as *a systemic set of socially-shaped ideas* about desirable femininity and masculinity, ideas which are manifested in, *inter alia*, behaviour. Some of these ideas, which are often prescriptive and indeed restrictive, are clearly related to human biology – for example, that men tend to be better suited than women to heavy manual labour. But what about our classroom data? Small neurological differences may point to gender differential tendencies in first and subsequent language learning, but not to girls being willing to 'be' boys and not the reverse. Something else is going on. As Penny Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet persuasively argue: "Gender builds on biological sex, but it exaggerates biological difference, and it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013: 2).

As an example, a certain sticky tape manufacturer at one time produced tape on the dispenser of which was written 'Just for girls'. The packaging and holder were, of course, Barbie pink. I have been forbidden by the company from reproducing the marketing image or even mentioning the company name, but the point is clear. This is to see gender in (rather than as) *representation*, with such representations, along with gendered behaviour, indexing the notion of gender as a set of socially-shaped ideas. Representation, of someone or something, is not just a reflection of a pre-existing reality, but also constructs, e.g. the

phrase *ladies and gentlemen* linguistically constructs two binary groups. The tape constructs girls as associated with pink – and, more seriously, as girls and boys as different. Construction may go beyond the linguistic to shaping ways of thinking in viewers, readers and listeners, and it may also construct behaviour (for example, a boy – or his parents - may reject out of hand any tape marketed as ‘Just for girls’). This set of socially-shaped ideas which finds realization in both gendered behaviour and gendered representations is not arbitrary but rather, arguably, operates to the benefit of some (most crudely, the patriarchy), to the detriment of (most) women and girls, but ultimately, to the detriment of all.

The representation of gendered practices, identities, differences and relations occurs in a wide range of arenas. One is everyday, naturally-occurring talk. For example, consider the constructions in the representation of the wife in these two (invented but possible) naturally-occurring responses of man B to the question asked by man A:

- A: What does your wife do?
 B1: She’s not working right now. We’ve got a toddler and a new baby.
 B2: She’s not working outside the home right now. We’ve got a
 toddler and a new baby. Next year we swap. Maria’s keen to get
 back to work.

B1 is representing his wife as a mother, and is also representing childcare as women’s work (the underlying premise of his response). B2, in contrast, is representing childcare as work (inside the home); his wife as an employee, with a job she is keen to return to; and childcare as something that can be shared between female and male parents.

Gender representation is also found in most scripted-to-be-spoken, written, visual, multimodal, TV, film and digital texts. Representation here is often to a large extent a matter of choice – from available and less available pools of choices. But in the above text types it is never random, given the planning needed. For example, the writer of a report about women’s football may choose to report on the players’ appearance or may choose not to do so. They may choose an accompanying image which focuses on the women’s skill, their lack of it – or indeed their appearance.

In particular, the idea of 'gender differences' can, as indicated above, construct women and men, boys and girls as very different beings. As an example, let us have a look at some lines from fiction: J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), Book 5 in the series:

Hermione: "Quidditch! Is that all boys care about?"

Girls were very strange sometimes. (Harry's represented thought)

"She's [Tonks] gone a bit funny. Lost her nerve. Women," [Ron] said wisely to Harry. "They're easily upset."

In these examples, *boys*, *girls* and *women* are not mitigated (e.g. with *some*), representing gender as a binary. The idea of 'gender differences' as thus represented can construct women and men, boys and girls, almost as different species. By extension, in such a discourse, they have the potential not to understand each other, and this is evidenced in 'linguistic traces' of what I call the 'Mutual incomprehension of women and men' discourse (Sunderland 2004). Also in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Cho Chang and Harry, who are somewhat romantically involved, have met up on Valentine's Day. Harry asks Cho: "D'you want to come with me to the Three Broomsticks at lunchtime? I'm meeting Hermione Granger there." At which "Cho raised her eyebrows" and gets upset, which Harry doesn't understand. Later, Hermione tries to explain her behaviour to Harry and Ron:

"Look, you upset Cho when you said you were going to meet me, so she tried to make you jealous"

"Is that what she was doing?" said Harry....

"I'm not saying what she did was sensible," said Hermione. "I'm just trying to make you see how she was feeling at the time."

"You should write a book," Ron told Hermione as he cut up his potatoes, "translating mad things girls do so boys can understand them."

"Yeah," said Harry fervently. (p. 505)

(see Sunderland *et al.* 2016; see also Dempster *et al.*, 2014, 2015)

As a further example, a second set of potentially constitutive gender representations comes from foreign language textbooks. Through a large amount of research over the last five decades, these have been found to include more many male than female characters (visibility), with male characters carrying out a wider range of occupational roles than female characters (stereotyping) (see e.g. Mills and Mustapha 2015; Sunderland 2015). This is true of both images and written text. However, with a growing recognition (a) that gender is inseparable from sexuality (see Baker 2008) – not least because, given heteronormativity, women are in most contexts expected to be attracted to men, men to women, and (b) of the intersectionality of oppressions (Crenshaw 1989), e.g. the interaction of sexism and homophobia, analysis of gender representation in language textbooks has extended to sexuality.

This of course is not straightforward. While a broadly 50-50 balance might be expected for the representation of women and men, boys and girls, this cannot be applied to gay and straight characters, given their lesser distribution across populations, because the distinction is even less binary than women/men, and because, unlike sex/gender, sexuality is not evident from, say, an image of someone playing football.

What is evident is that language textbooks are *extremely*, if not gratuitously, heteronormative. As an old example, *Project English* (1985) includes an image of a rather young boy at the door of a house and asking, in a speech bubble, “Where’s Jane?”, but in a thought bubble sitting opposite Jane, saying “I love you Jane”. *Project English* also includes many overtly heterosexual two-parent families, along with traditional images, e.g. mum, dad and children eating dinner. Notably, there are more cases of *Mrs* than *Miss* and multiple cases of *Mr and Mrs*. *Mr and Mrs* is used even in a fantasy situation: ‘Mr and Mrs Fletcher’ book a holiday in space and send a postcard to ‘Mr and Mrs Kay’. Certainly there is no representation – and no suggestion - of anything other than heterosexuality. Old books are used way beyond their date of first publication, and change is slow. Fourteen years later, Scott Thornbury made the point that “[g]ayness is about as omitted

[from foreign language textbooks] as anything can be" (Thornbury 1999: 15; see also Nelson 2009, 2007, 1999).

Things have moved on in terms of a lessening of heteronormativity, but not much (see Gray (2) 2013a, 2013b; Paiz 2020). More recently (2015), a study of gender and sexuality representation in six Polish EFL textbook series - *New English Zone*, *Voices*, *English Explorer*, *Exam Explorer*, *New Matura Solutions* and *Evolution*, predictably also found many examples of heteronormativity, such as:

"we're on holiday on a barge in England! I'm with mum and dad and my sister. The barge is very small but it's fun! ..." (*Evolution 2*)

a listening exercise containing "I wouldn't know how to cheer up my friend if she broke up with her boyfriend." (*Exam Explorer*)

(Pawelczyk / Pakula 2015; see also Pawelczyk *et al.* 2014; Pakula *et al.* 2015)

Two key findings were that "All of the books were characterised by the omnipresence of a heteronormative lexicon regarding kinship terms, for example *husband*, *wife*, *girlfriend*, *boyfriend* – all in heterosexual partnerships" and that "None of the textbooks [...] featured any gay characters" (Pakula *et al.* 2015: 54).

Why? The reason has been identified and characterised as the 'PARSNIPS' principle, i.e. the avoidance in EFL textbooks of Politics, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, Isms and Pork. Including gay characters would imply *sex* and would point to *heterosexism*. Kathryn Aldridge-Morris (2016) writes that PARSNIPS is "a shorthand for things writers are told to avoid in their materials [...]. It's essentially self-censorship, but if you want your book to sell, you'll probably need to adhere to it" (2016: 66).

Of course, the representation of heterosexuality can be relatively covert, to the point of ambiguity. However, to return to the study of Polish EFL textbooks, it was found not only that "None of the textbooks [even] featured [...] *characters that could be characterised by an overtly ambiguous identity with respect to their sexuality*" (Pakula *et al.* 2015: 54, my emphasis). What happens when we test this? *Exam Explorer* (Tkacz *et al.*, 2012) includes the following opinions (in an

exercise involving gap filling with appropriate vocabulary, but also available for discussion):

I don't mind and hugging passionately in public.

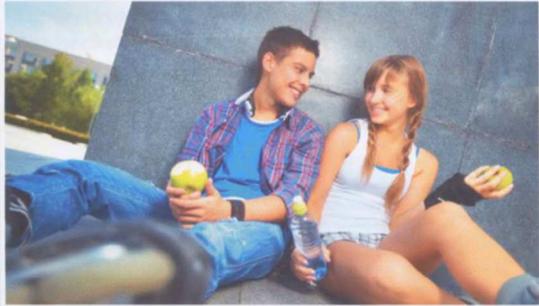
I wouldn't know how to cheer up my friend if she her boyfriend.

I think young people too early - it distracts them from school.

My parents don't approve of the person who's their teenage child.

All four examples are ambiguous as regards sexuality, and accordingly non-heteronormative readings of all are possible. That is, until we consider the associated image from *Exam Explorer* (below), and *multimodality* (the interaction of written text and image).

5 CD1/15 Posłuchaj nagrania i wpisz brakujące słowa.
Z którymi zdaniem się zgadzasz?



- 1 I don't mind _____ and **hugging** passionately in public.
- 2 I wouldn't know how to **cheer up** my friend if she _____ her boyfriend.
- 3 I think young people _____ too early – it distracts them from school.
- 4 I _____ but I can't **confide in** them.
- 5 Most parents don't **approve of** the person who's _____ their teenage child.
- 6 It's very easy to _____ when you're a teenager.

Figure 3. Multimodal disambiguation of sexuality ambiguity (*Exam Explorer*, p. 15)

The image removes that ambiguity (in particular, I propose, of examples 2 and 3), assigning the text a clear heterosexual meaning: "The possibility of a non-heteronormative reading has been 'multimodally disambiguated'" (Pakula *et al.* 2015).

But while this is true in principle, and likely to be so in practice for the text analyst, is it true of the real-life user(s)? It is necessary to consider how a given text is 'consumed' (Fairclough 1993), in the individual sense and more widely. Students are not passive 'receivers' of textbook texts, and some language learner 'consumers' of such representations are analytical, with a critical awareness, multimodally literate, resistant to surface readings and/or very aware in particular of representations of gender and sexuality. Others, however will more unquestioningly accept what they see and hear, and may well 'recycle' it uncritically in their subsequent interactions. So although representations of gender potentially construct gender, they do not do so in a straightforward or predictable way. 'Treatment', for want of a better word, is also an aspect of text consumption, in particular 'teacher treatment of textbook texts'. As regards gender representation in foreign language textbooks, it cannot be assumed that the teacher will uncritically recycle cases of gender bias – rather, they may comment on it and encourage the students to recognize and critique it. Of course, a teacher and their students can by the same token undermine a progressive text (see Sunderland 2000a, Thornbury 2013). Going beyond the text itself, there is also the matter of text production (who is a given text aimed at, how is it 'distributed' and to whom, and, in particular, how is it marketed? (Fairclough 1993)).

Conclusion

In the above I have shown how gender can be manifested (performed, constructed) *in* behaviour and *in* representation. These are of course related, in that gendered representation will bear some relation to gendered behaviour (the 'text producer' of the representation reflecting

what gender 'is', and by extrapolation and interpretation 'should be' or 'should not be'), and gendered thinking and behaviour may be shaped by gendered representations – although unpredictably so. Both representation and behaviour are however always in a state of flux: social and individual practices and behaviours change, and representations are removed, reformed, revised and replaced, though rarely radically.

Crucially, gender is in part identity, a sense of who one is: girl, boy, woman, man, cis or trans, gay or straight, or non-binary as regards gender and/or sexuality. This list is not comprehensive, and the complicated relationship between gender identity and biological sex is not one I am able to discuss here. Manifested, shaped by and in turn influencing gender in behaviour and in representation, this sense of gender identity is also in flux, as shown in Figure 4 (below), a 2-D 'working model' of gender which is open to further development. Gender identity is likely to change over time (each day, month, year, decade), and not necessarily in a linear way, with one's experience of gender varying in detail and intensity, depending on context. It also interacts with other aspects of one's identity, including ethnicity and social class, sometimes intersectionally if the experience is of, say, the oppressions of sexism and racism (Crenshaw 1989).

It would be a mistake to see gender as primarily individual. Sets of ideas surrounding biologically-sexed humans (or humans who have been assigned a particular sex at birth), i.e. about gender, are global, diverse, often intensely felt and often prescriptive. Being ideological, they are also systemic and institutionalised in terms of practices. In particular, gender as ideology is often based on essentialist thinking, with patriarchal practices operating against the interests of women and girls, but arguably men and boys too, through the creation of boundaries and restricting of opportunities. The relationship between gender identity and gender as ideology is organic and mutually-influencing: global understandings of gender, gender relations and accordingly demands for women's and human rights (e.g. recognition, protection) are always changing, influenced by individuals' own gender identities and their membership of social groups with comparable identities.

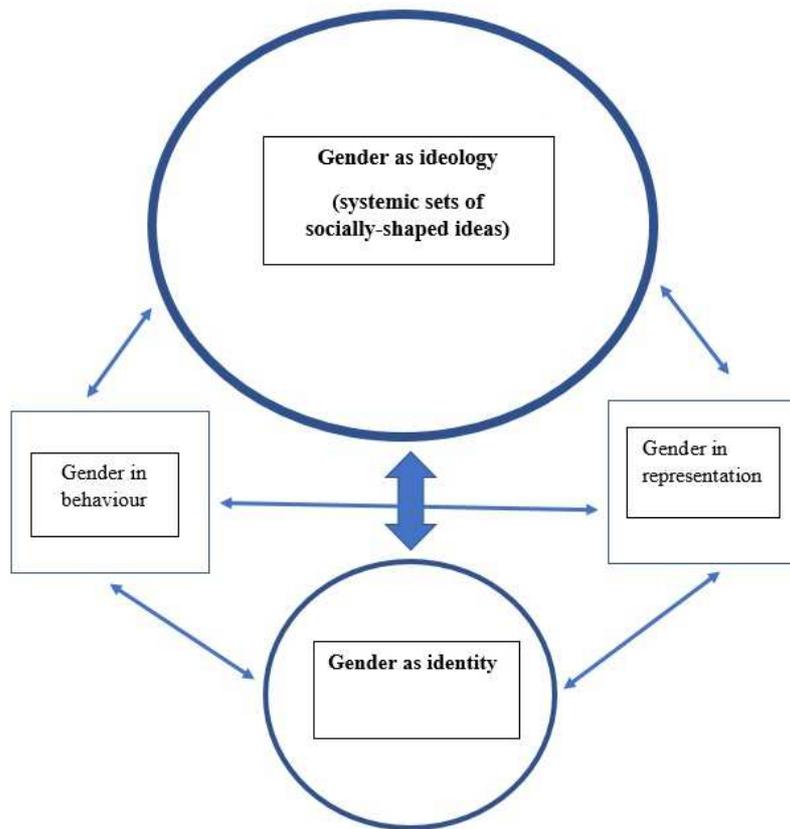


Figure 4. A working model of gender-in-flux

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Language Research on Gender and Gender Research On Language. Paradigms, Perception and Representation

1. Introduction

The study of gender in and through language may be – and has been – approached from two broad angles, an eminently linguistic one (discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, etc.) and a cultural and societal one, on the other. In very general terms, the former investigates how language – its structures and pragmatic uses – is employed to express gender and how it lends itself to channelling possible stereotypes or asymmetries, while the latter is concerned with pointing out entrenched forms of power – expressed in terms of disparagement, domination and marginalization – engendered in discourse and enforced upon language users.

Far from being mutually exclusive, the two perspectives – which can fruitfully be used in isolation – can indeed coalesce and may be resorted to complementarily for a deeper understanding of gender-related discursive practices. The former offering parameters for collecting and analysing representative language material, and the second providing evaluative criteria, direction and theoretical cohesiveness. However, possible risks may emerge from interpretive unbalance, when – used together – either view hegemonizes the other,

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i.e. when, under the guise of interdisciplinarity, frameworks or data are made to fit specific research goals and designs. This chapter investigates the possible dangers engendered by this unbalance.

For this purpose, and in order to have a workable understanding of the two orientations mentioned above – their research focus and methods – it is worthwhile to frame their epistemologies within the broader groups of disciplines they are part of.

2. Language research on gender vs gender research on language

Language studies – i.e. linguistics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, etc. – come from the research tradition originated with philology, linguistic ethnography, historical linguistics, etc., and are essentially concerned with investigating the structures and functions of language in texts and contexts. As such, they are eminently observation-based, descriptive in character and, even when combined with qualitative ones, they typically resort to quantitative methodologies, i.e. carrying out analysis (through collecting, organizing, measuring, comparing, evaluating data) on (relatively extended) collections of authentic texts, assembled on the basis of their representativeness (in that frequently found and conventionally resorted to) within specific discursive practices, in order to detect and account for regularities and idiosyncrasies in language use with respect to given parameters (cognitive, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, etc.). As observed by Halliday (1985), language research comprises two related stages: the first is text understanding, which assesses how language is used to create meaningful texts (quantities, frequency, distribution, co-occurrence, etc. are parameters used to establish what is standard, hence potentially efficient and cognitive accessible or, conversely, what is less conventional, marked and cognitively demanding/engaging); the second is text evaluation (which is only made possible by the assessments provided by the former stage) that enables the researcher to determine if and why a text is effective for its purposes and in its

context and also, notably, to hypothesize “the intentions of those involved in its production” (1985: xvi). In general, language studies, even when applied, are speculative in character: abstractions (from findings) are meant to expand disciplinary knowledge – their practical function, if any, is restricted to pedagogical contexts (see applied linguistics, the teaching of languages for specific purposes, etc.).

Critical studies, instead, originated in the 1970s as a reaction to the crystallization, stiffness and separateness of academic disciplines, and with the aim of making academic activities socially relevant. They centre on qualitative methodologies – drawn from social anthropology, philosophy, sociology, literary criticism, historical research, etc. – ranging from purposive sampling, case studies, content analysis, open-ended interviews, surveys, focus groups, researcher’s personal observation, grounded theory methods, etc. controlled by the researcher’s stance (Cibangu 2012, Zohrabi 2013, Gopaldas 2016). These are meant to assess people’s perceptions, experiences, meanings and relationships (Gentles et al. 2015, Polkinghorne 2005) by analysing natural and anecdotal evidence taken to be salient – or “politically interesting enough to be analysed” (Machin/Mayr 2012: 207) – through abstractions which result from the analyst’s intuition or references to the theory and the accepted literature, with the ultimate purpose of offering a ‘deep understanding of the particular’ (Domholdt 1993). Qualitative studies tend towards theory design, i.e. introducing knowledge resources and articulating theoretical threads (Leedy/Ormrod 2001) intended to corroborate and expand the existing interpretive paradigm². In critical research, the primacy conferred to the theory (West et al. 1997, Blommaert 2001, 2005, Richardson 2007) is meant for markedly operative and transactional purposes, namely for providing compelling tools usable to detect forms of domination (ideology, patriarchy, privilege, etc.) in order to raise awareness, favour social action and promote social change, that is “to produce (politically) useful knowledge [...] to help people to struggle against and to

2 ‘Intersectionality’, ‘systemicity’, ‘fluidity’, ‘microaggression’ etc. are among such (relatively) novel resources meant to show how articulated a given phenomenon is within social practices, at the same time revealing the level of notional articulation within the theory

transform power structures in order to realize radical democratic relations” (Winter 2014: 248).

On the basis of the above epistemological distinction, in the specific case of gender-related research, it is possible to broadly distinguish between language research on gender (LRG, henceforth) and gender research on language (GRL), the former stemming from the linguistic tradition (discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, etc.), and focussing on investigating, for instance, how different genders express referential and attitudinal meanings, codify gender-related or gender-sensitive contents, or lexicalize self-representation, etc.; the second stemming from cultural and critical studies (gender studies, women’s studies, feminist research, etc.), concerned with evidencing oppressive and controlling language entrenched mechanisms of gender representation and marginalization.

Over the last decades, LRG and quantitatively-oriented studies have been criticized for being too rigid (i.e. focussed on almost necessary correlations between language practices and socio-cultural factors) or even biased, namely, by the myth of objectivity in science (Ukavwe 2019, Machin/Mayr 2012) and the pushing forward of positivistic interpretive models of supposedly empirical data, taken to help understand ‘objective’ reality, but also, and critically so, because based on methods of data collection and analysis originally design to assess men’s speech – hence hardly suitable to asses women’s speech – and essentially flawed, in that “sex stereotypes have pervaded researchers’ explanations for differences that were found” (West et al. 1997: 129). GRL scholars, instead, abandoned what they considered empiricist models precisely on the assumption that the application of rigid principles would obscure understanding and hinder the possibility of an in depth interpretation of phenomena and, on the other hand, substituted such a rigidly principled research with the articulation of different models intended to provide progressive lenses to account for a fluid and ever-changing reality, or a “triangulation of various methods and theories depending on the question being researched” (Winter 2014: 249).

Given the importance that the cultural and critical orientation has acquired within linguistic research in general³ and especially for the relevance and framing potential offered by the paradigm – and, consequently, the possible shortcomings of its misapplication – this chapter focusses on GRL, which is distinct not only from LRG (where gender is only one of the possible dimensions of investigation) but also from gender studies as a whole (where language is one – if the most relevant – of the practices and behaviours investigated in relation to gender).

2.1. *Difference and dominance in GRL*

The assumption at the basis of GRL (the same found in critical theories and, notably, in CDA) is that gender – as any other trait of self- and other- representation – is constructed and channelled through language and its discursual use as a social practice. This idea stems from the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1929) (cf. Machin/Mayr 2012), according to which:

Language is a guide to ‘social reality’ [...]. It powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in the objective world [but] the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. (1929: 162)

Within GRL this notion has been used as either a heuristic or as a postulate, producing noticeably different approaches – notably a relativistic one, or the *difference* approach, and a deterministic one, or the *dominance*⁴ approach (Thorne/Henley 1975, cf. Manea/Manea 2011)⁵. The former is aimed to see when and how language influences

3 “[I]t is fair to say that most language and gender researchers would identify themselves as feminists” (Cameron 2012: 168).

4 The synonymic terms ‘dominance’ and ‘domination’ are here used with different meanings: ‘dominance’ refers to the deterministic slant within GRL; ‘domination’ refers to the overarching principle – or paradigm – of systemic asymmetry shared by both approaches.

5 Although some researchers are sceptical about such a distinction – or the coordinates underlying it (cf. Thorne et al. 1983) – we take it as workable, as defined by Manea/Manea (2011), for the purpose of this study.

our perception of reality and to provide theoretical lenses or theory-based hypotheses through which to study language as a vehicle for gender expression, gender stereotyping, and gender-related constraints. The latter is aimed to show how language determines reality, providing cogent classification tools and evaluative criteria with which to evidence gender oppression through language. Although sensibly different, both views share the same basic assumption, related to the linguistic marking of gender as a channel for the expression of sexist attitudes: in fact, simply marking (or having to mark – for morphological or syntactic reasons) gender even in contexts where such specification is not needed has the consequence of highlighting gender asymmetries (see Sunderland, this volume).

a. The 'difference' approach. While still theory-based (relying on tenets of the domination paradigm), this approach is little 'dogmatic' (a term that has sometimes been employed to downplay the methodological soundness of critical and gender studies in general). In fact, it recognizes language (*langue*, in Saussurian terms) as a set of readily-made, frequently used and socially favoured options which are usually aligned to (Cameron 1992), but it also recognizes discourse practices in terms of performance (*parole*) whereby interactants may consciously decide to either adhere to conventions or stereotypes or disalign and resist them (Butler 1999, Sunderland 2004) on the basis of contextual constraints (Swann 2002, Sunderland 2000), i.e. the type of communication, the gender of the other interactants, the roles involved, the purpose of the exchange, etc. (Cameron et al. 1988, Cameron/Coates 1988), and may even adopt the codes of either 'masculinity' or 'femininity' irrespective of their own biological gender. The difference model concedes that gender conventions – and related constraints and limitations – apply to speakers of all genders (even though men are usually favoured) and accounts for an articulated and nuanced view of gender differences in language use (without excluding gender similarities), which are to be seen as (more or less noticeable) tendencies rather than absolute and necessary traits, which may vary significantly even within the same gender group. As a consequence, *difference* scholars are sceptical in representing gender only in terms of male vs female opposition in that this view not only does reinforce a binary and potentially divisive *us vs them* perspective

of gender (Gray 1992), but, as such, it embodies a sexist attitude in itself. Finally – and this is particularly relevant especially in consideration of the predominantly qualitative analysis provided by GRL – findings resulting from even significant or ‘politically interesting’ samples are taken to be indicators of given trends rather than generalizable or empirical evidence.

b. *The ‘dominance’ approach.* This model tends to see language-as-a-system as a closed series of gender-imposing and gender-related limitations, prescriptions and proscriptions, structurally compelling and semantically disparaging for women (Thorne et al. 1983). By postulating the normative and performative character of the domination paradigm, language – exploited and governed by patriarchy, in general, or, situationally, by male interactants – is seen as the tool to exert power and an instrument to conceal or control women and their agency. This paradigm, or “broad pattern of sexism” (West et al. 1997: 121), is then found to be replicated – although with contextual adjustments – in virtually every setting of social life (domestic, professional, religious, aesthetic, media, conversational, pedagogical, humorous, etc.). As a consequence, female agency in discursive performance is not only constrained but women’s speech is systematically disempowered (Hornsby 1995). This view, which maximizes the binary male vs female dichotomy, is not intended for manipulative or divisive purposes, but rather to “change existing power structures” (Warhol-Down/Price Herndl 2009: xiii). Finally, rather than cautioning about possibly too wide-ranging abstractions and generalizations, the dominance approach stems from abstraction (i.e. the domination paradigm itself), and is aimed at positing abstraction matrixes (the notions of power, control, oppression, etc.) through which to interpret reality, whose decodification “involves more than simply which data we select but crucially depends on how we frame and analyse them” (Briggs 1997: 454).

2.2. Criticism

While the *difference* approach, precisely for its investigative (rather than evaluative) character, its hypothesis-generating and testing nature

(rather than theory-validation), has provided relevant insights and research parameters useful also for LRG, several linguists, from different angles, have pointed out why the *dominance* approach may be problematic.

In terms of object of investigation, abstracting the materiality of the language and considering it as a social practice primarily meant to determine power roles and exert domination does not account for element of cognition (van Dijk 1996, 2001, Chilton 2005), or for contextual, pragmatic and practical constraints (O'Halloran 2003, Garzone/Santulli 2004 Richardson 2007, Verschueren 1985), for instance overlooking the actual participants' (rather than the analyst's) response to given texts (Stubbs 1997, Widdowson 1995, 1998)⁶. Concerning theory-validation as a mode of knowledge-making, it has been pointed out that it may lack methodological soundness (Cruz 2012), in that "a priori statements on power relations [...] and social-theoretical concepts and categories [may be used] in off-hand and seemingly self-evident ways [ending up producing] highly simplified models of social structures and patterns of action" (Blommaert 2005: 51). The application of such models to selectively collected material is likely to yield results which are not only highly predictable, but leading to conclusions "likely to be the product of conviction rather than the result of step-by-step analysis" (Verschueren 2001: 65), thus offering grounds "not for *inspection* but for *belief*" (Blommaert 2005: 53, emphasis in the original, cf. Widdowson 1995). Finally, in studies where alignment (to the domination paradigm) is taken for granted, rather than continually re-negotiated, "mutual support seems to override mutual critique" (Verschueren 2001: 67), and the shared "radical social agenda of its practitioners" (Jones 2007: 366) may infringe their 'good intentions' (cf. also Stubbs 1997, Hammersley 1996). As we can see, such criticisms point to forms of analytical omission, conceptual stretch or simplification as being possible methodological flaws invalidating the soundness of research. The

6 In fact, "sociolinguistic perception and production are different; in production individuals can draw on a variety of variable forms to construct a social identity [however] listeners' attitudes and preconceptions as well as general cognitive constraints can limit what social meanings are detected in a speech event" (cf. Lindvall-Östling et al. 2020: 569; also Levon 2014).

function and problematicity of these cognitive ‘filters’ can be conceptualized in the terms of the Meta-Model theory (Bandler/Grinder 1975).

3. Representation as simplification

3.1. Simplification in general discourse

According to the Meta-Model Theory (Bandler/Grinder 1975, Bandler et al. 1980, Katan 2004), reality representation is made possible through simplifying mechanisms – namely, deletion, distortion and generalization (DDG) – that are often found in everyday discourse, popularization and media communication – hence contributing to forming, crystallizing and circulating models of coherence, ideas or repertoires (Even-Zohar 2005) that are then going to become part of our perception.

Deletion accounts, on the one hand, for the omission of elements which are apparently non-relevant, contrary to, or not accountable for in a given coherence model, and, on the other, for claims which are made compelling through strong assertiveness, emphatics, boosters or value judgements rather than – or more than – by reference to substantial evidence, which is indeed omitted (i.e. in terms of examples, descriptions, etc.), as can be seen in the following examples⁷:

Some of the [gender wage] gap can be attributed to factors that are measurable, such as differences in seniority or experience, but these types of observable factors cannot explain a portion of the gap. It is this unexplained portion of the gap that is often ascribed to reasons that are harder to quantify and detect such as discrimination.⁸

7 For this part of the analysis, examples have been chosen from various media outlets – hence not from GRL – on the basis of the fact that they reflect culturally shared views about sexism – namely, its being widely spread, systemic, and ingrained even in seemingly neutral social practices.

8 CAP - American Progress, 22 August 2019: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/racism-sexism-combine-shortchange-working-black-women/>

The only thing which is worse than racism in this country is sexism.⁹

The first example omits to mention the other conditions behind wage gap in the US (which are indeed listed in the 1963 Equal Pay Act, implicitly referred to here, together with seniority and experience, expressly reported here¹⁰): leaving these elements out contributes to fostering the causal link between the gap and discrimination. In the second one, a state of affairs (sexism worse than racism) is asserted without resorting to substantiation¹¹.

Distortion refers to those instances where evidence is bent, altered or somehow (forcibly) perspectivized to fit expectations, or lexically configured in a way for it to make sense within the model:

American men largely *do not* have faith in women as leaders. In fact, only 45 percent of American men say they are comfortable with the idea a female president.¹²

Distortion can be seen in the fact that the poll referred to was not about ‘having faith’ in women, but about ‘People who say that they feel *very comfortable* with a woman as the Head of Government’ (emphasis in the original)¹³. Secondly, numerically and statistically, 45% is not a negligible portion of voters (nearing half of them).

(emphasis added). (Last accessed, November 22, 2022 – as all other online texts in this chapter.)

9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lGMZVU5Fts> (emphasis added).

10 Such conditions are merit, quantity or quality of production and any “differential based on any other factor other than sex” (<https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/equal-pay-act-1963>), provided that the jobs held by men and women are substantially equal in terms of skills required, effort and physical or mental exertion, responsibility and accountability, and are carried out under the same working conditions, i.e. physical surroundings (temperature, fumes, etc.) and hazards (cf. US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, cf. <https://www.mcieast.marines.mil/Portals/33/fs-epa.pdf>).

11 The rest of the text (in the video), in fact, just describes the possible ways to contrast or bypass sexism, rather than provide evidence for the claim.

12 <https://gen.medium.com/ill-vote-for-a-woman-just-not-that-woman-9ed2db07321> (emphasis in the original).

13 The original poll (2019) by The Reykjavik Index for Leadership is not available online anymore, while its updated version (2020), which also contains the 2019

Generalization occurs when a single instance or episode – rather than its frequency and distribution over time and contexts – is taken to stand for a whole series or as being symptomatic of a general phenomenon:

‘A Woman, Just Not That Woman’: How Sexism Plays Out on the Trail.¹⁴

Several outlets – when discussing how women (mainly presidential candidates such as Hillary Clinton, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, etc.) are perceived in the political arena – have resorted to (versions of) the expression in quotation marks above – as if it were actual reported speech (the source is never mentioned, hence also a case of deletion) – and have imagined it as applicable to all cases of opposition to or dislike of a female figure and, as such, as an expressions of a general sexist attitude against women, rather than considering such attitude as being due to contextual factors or personal and ideological preferences.¹⁵

3.2. Simplification in research domains

DDG – whose labels are not intended with negative connotation, and are here used as such – are also to be found in all scientific research, since representation cannot but rely on such filters. More specifically the selection of the research field and the specific topic of investigation (hence omitting other possibly/equally relevant ones) is a form of deletion, the setting of an angle through which to assess the topic and

data, is available here: <https://www.womenpoliticalleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/The-Reykjavik-Index-for-Leadership-2020-Report-2-1.pdf> (cf. page 78). If the data are accurate, the percentage of men who in 2019 were ‘very comfortable’ with a female Head of Government is 49%, hence sensibly higher than the one referred to in the extract above (45%).

14 *New York Times*, 2 February 2019: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/11/us/politics/sexism-double-standard-2020.html>

15 This can be recognized as example of generalization – and, as such, relative and arbitrarily applied – if we consider that contextual factors and ideological preferences – and not gender – are instead used by the same groups/outlets (in this case the *New York Times*) to justify their negative attitude towards other female figures (with other political leanings), i.e. Margaret Thatcher in the UK; Sarah Palin or Amy Corney Barret in the US.; Marine Le Pen in France, etc.

carry out investigation (to see whether, to what extent and how phenomena align to expectation, thus by focussing on regularities and minimizing idiosyncrasies, etc.) can be a form of distortion, and any point to be made is likely to be based on generalizations (the theory) and possibly aimed to produce other generalizations (the replicability of the findings).

However, in natural sciences and a part of social science research, these filters are recognized, metatextually accounted for and critically handled, namely by:

- describing and substantiating the choice of material, methodology and research design (so as to motivate and control deletion);
- framing explicitly the analysis with respect to a specific and well-defined scope and purpose, thus circumscribing the research within a given range of interpretive possibilities (thus controlling distortion);
- questioning generalizations – hence generating hypotheses – and disclaiming or cautioning about the generalizability and applicability of research finding to other contexts (thus handling generalization).

The research condition by which assumptions are questioned, materials are investigated and hypotheses are tested to be either confirmed, discarded or refined is what is referred to by ‘organized scepticism’, one of the norms of the ethos of science (Merton 1973)¹⁶ and this holds for most linguistic research (LRG) and, for the most part, in relativistic *difference* GRL. Sensibly different is the case of the (more) deterministic (universalistic, essentialist) and deductive model of *dominance* GRL, which tends to push forward and favour readings which are in line with the accepted paradigm, corroborate given views

16 The literature (Merton 1973, Myers 1990, Gotti 2003, Giannoni 2006) lists other conditions for sound scientific research, among which the researcher’s disinterestedness (the lack of personal, political, ideological interest or agenda in proving that given claims are true), universalism and collegiality (related to the sharing of knowledge), replicability and the ‘significance to generalise’ (Schmied 2015, referring to end-of-process abstractions that can be generalized only when referring to factors which are found to be typical, salient, recurring, etc., hence likely to be replicated/found where similar methods or procedures are applied to similar material under the same conditions).

and validate the theory taken as a solid interpretive model. In this case, although the application of DDG is intended to sharpen analytical focus and provide a compelling perspectivization of phenomena, possible inconsistencies may arise from the omission of (relevant) referential material, the misapplication of categories or by extending particular meanings to a whole category.

4. Simplification in *dominance* GRL

In the following subsections we will discuss some of the analytical and methodological shortcomings produced by the application of DDG cognitive filters distinguished by type, namely, deletion as strong assertiveness, distortion as forcible perspectivization and nominalization, and, finally, generalization.

4.1. Deletion: strong assertion

As we have seen, strong assertiveness may be carried out by positing interpretive frameworks with a marked normative character which exclude alternative readings and/or by organizing meaning textualization in highly evaluative and rigidly controlling terms which leave little space for negotiation or objections. Examples of this can be found in the very idea of patriarchy, used in GRL as an analytical tool rather than a descriptive/referential handle, or the notion of the inherent sexism of language.

4.1.1. Patriarchy

Originally meant to refer to the role of the father over a household (Dialetti 2013), the term has then been associated to the idea of domination – hence of coercion, violence and ill-intended agency – on the part of men against women, and used as self-explanatory evidence for all (even apparently) disparaging linguistic behaviour. In GRL it is not infrequent to find claims like the following:

Tracing the historical development by which patriarchy emerged as the dominant form of societal order, I have shown how it gradually institutionalized the rights of men to control and appropriate the sexual and reproductive services of women. [...] Once established as a functioning system of complex hierarchical relationships, patriarchy transformed sexual, social, economic relations and dominated all systems of ideas [on the basis of the assumption that] men are ‘naturally’ superior, stronger and more rational, therefore designed to be dominant. (Lerner 1991: 3-4)

Human experience has been characterized by a history of male domination, control and violence – in short a history of patriarchy and power [...]. Although patriarchy is now draped in the clothing of postmodern civilization with all its superficial artifice and guile, it operates in exactly the same way as it did thousands of years ago. (Bahlieda 2015: 16)

[W]omen’s exclusion from the production and dissemination of medical/scientific views on women becomes part of the structures of patriarchy, a means by which men [...] establish control over their ‘patrimony’ or [...] try (sometimes unsuccessfully) to browbeat and humiliate women. (Green 2008: 317)

The universalistic character of the idea of patriarchy, as expressed in the extracts above, derives from the notion of the ubiquity of some universal structures governing social practices, drawn from poststructuralist critique. However, the problematicity of the normative and radical character of this notion has often been noticed even by feminist scholars: “The urgency of feminism to establish a universal status for patriarchy [...] has occasionally motivated the shortcut to a categorial or fictive universality of the structure of domination, held to produce women’s common subjugated experience” (Butler 1999: 6-7). Moreover, if “patriarchal power has exactly been in presenting itself as universal, natural and inevitable, [u]sing patriarchy as an umbrella term for gender inequality runs into the danger of replicating this universalism” (Pierik 2022: 74) by deleting alternative readings of reality.

As to its analytical effectiveness, it has been pointed out that the notion of patriarchy as “an overtly monolithic conception of male dominance [...] is treated at a level of abstraction that obfuscates rather than reveals the intimate inner workings of culturally and historically distinct arrangements between the genders” (Kandiyoti 1988: 274-275,

Hill/Allen 2021). Regarding its semantics and evaluative character, some scholars (within feminist research) have advanced a less polarized view, observing that, if women are “at a cultural, social and political disadvantage [...] this situation comes about through the institution of patriarchy, in which women and men have colluded equally” (Warhol-Down/Price Herndl 2009: xiii) – in that women are the prime nurturers – thus impacting on infants’ perception of reality – and notably, but not exclusively, in the Anglo-American culture, they are in charge of children and adolescents’ education in pedagogical settings (especially in pre-primary and primary education¹⁷) – hence, as it were, being (co)responsible of disseminating ‘patriarchal’ (or patriarchally approved) knowledge. Along the same lines, other scholars have remarked that, in thus defined patriarchal systems, forms of discrimination systematically applied to women are also applied to men in specific social groups, on the basis of their ethnicity, social position, religion, age, physical appearance and physical ability (Cox 1989, Warhol-Down/Price Herndl 2009, Tennakoon 2021).

From a different angle, especially in the cases of diachronic studies on patriarchal oppression, some analysts have pointed to the ideological undertones of the notion of patriarchy (as well as those of agency and empowerment) and notice that “applying late modern notions [...] to our analyses put researchers at risk of *anachronisms* – using the ideological lenses of our own culture to interpret past behaviours and decisions” (Stark 2016: 30, emphasis in the original, cf. also Comaroff/Comaroff 1992, Lukes 2005, Ortner 2006). As a matter of fact, if this asynchronous application of the paradigm, on the one hand, may help layout phenomena in ways which are easily processable for today’s audiences – in that they allow semiotization of past events and scenarios with respect to current parameters, recognizable roles and related agencies – on the other hand, it may border to forms of cognitive or confirmation bias (Butler 1999, Protasi 2020). In addition to this, the notion of patriarchal oppression seems to override or circumscribe female agency, possible women’s criticism or resistance against patriarchy, or any forms of ‘patriarchal bargain’. In fact, “[t]hese

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[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646191/EPRS_ATA\(2020\)646191_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646191/EPRS_ATA(2020)646191_EN.pdf)

patriarchal bargains exert a powerful influence on the shaping of women's gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts. They also influence both the potential for and specific forms of women's active or passive resistance in the face of their oppression" (Kandiyoti 1988: 275, see also Walby 1990, Bennet 2007). Finally – and somehow difficult to accept when one equates patriarchy with male violence – history scholars have remarked that such a system determines constraints for both oppressed and oppressors, where subordinates have little choice but to display "deference, humility and compliance towards the powerful" while dominants must "emphasize the legitimacy of their role, show a unified front and argue that they are working toward the public good" (Stark 2016: 34). In this sense, "[i]f subordination requires a credible performance of humility and deference, so domination seems to require a credible performance of haughtiness and mastery" (Scott 1990: 11) for it to be accepted and effective.

In sum, if the essentialist and deterministic notion of patriarchy is a readily available resource for political readings, its marked evaluative character may hinder its actual workability and dissipates its descriptive potential when it is applied to the study of language, rather than behaviours and practices: it is "a catch-all concept with no real meaning other than that differences of sex and gender will always produce differences between people that can be seen as structural oppressions when those people are compared as serialities" (Pierik 2022: 79-80), being, therefore, "analytically more or less useless" (2022: 74).

4.1.2. Intrinsic sexism of language

Another form of conceptual deletion carried out by establishing belief-based principles is represented by the idea that language is a social practice¹⁸ and intrinsically sexist, positing or presupposing gender asymmetries and inequalities, and favouring men over women.

18 Even though generally accepted, such a view excludes or backgrounds other interpretations of language ranging from "language as a cognitive system/faculty of the mind to language as action, [to] language as complex adaptive system, etc." (Sharifian 2015: 3).

If by sexism or gender-bias we refer to the lexical – and consequently referential – concealing of female agency, role and identity, and the consequent male-bias in mental representation, little objection can be moved to that claim. Sensibly different considerations need to be made if instead we refer to a normative and performative function of language, inclusive also of “(unintended) forms of social discrimination” (Sczesny et al. 2016: 4, cf. also Mucchi-Faina 2005) by which women are proscribed parts of experience, social roles, identities, behaviours and actions, in that discourse contributes to “perpetuating – by continued usage – entrenched, centuries-old oppressive power realities, early on incorporated into language: male rule, male ownership; [female] secondariness; [female] *exclusion*” (Olsen 2014: 164, emphasis in the original), or because through language “women are ignored, trivialized and deprecated by words used to describe them, [...] denied an autonomous existence [also because] career choices for women and men are segregated through distinctive occupational terms (waiter vs waitress, actor vs actress, Congressman vs Congresswoman), with modifying markers (woman doctor) added to exception to the rule” (West et al. 1997: 121), or, more drastically, because through language women are systematically marginalized, ostracized, silenced, stigmatized, harassed, or even abused (Pretorius 1990, Carli 1990, Stout/Dasgupta 2011, McCloskey 2019, D’Angelo 2020, de Lemus/Estevan-Reina 2021).

If we consider the hypothesis – somehow overlooked by the readings above – that language has an essential referential function (Halliday 1985: xiii, whereby we mark gender – either gender – when it is contextually relevant and lexically/morphologically possible or, conversely, we conceal gender specification when we feel they are not contextually needed), besides having a possible ideological one (for given groups to control reality or oppress other groups), and if we assume that terms are coined or morphologically produced to provide lexical handles with which to represent and make sense of reality, besides influencing and manipulating its interpretation, then the notion of category availability needs to be considered in order to assess the extent of (actual or potential) sexism in language.

In natural gender languages such as English, nouns can be distinguished into male (without or with morphological marking, i.e. *father* and *widow-er*, respectively), female (either without

morphological specification, i.e. *widow, sister*, etc., or with it, i.e. *princess, hero-ine, bachelor-ette*, etc.) or dual, which can be either male or female in reference as contextually required (Greenbaum/Quirk: 1990: 100, i.e. *friend, parent, guest, student, writer*, etc.). In general use, “where the sex of the referent is irrelevant [...] unmarked forms have traditionally been expressed as male while subsuming female” (Greenbaum/Quirk 1990: 101; ‘a poet and his poems’, ‘a reader and his reading list’, ‘a worker and job’, etc.): these are usually referred to as masculine generics. Even though this trend has been controlled since the 1980s (Martyna 1980), notably in published writing, by resorting to the gender pairs *his/her* (‘the poet and his/her poems’), the inclusive plural *they/them* (‘the doctor may appeal, if they wish’), sex-neutral terms (*chairperson, police officer*, etc.) – or, more recently, by the conscious switch to feminine generics (Cameron 1992, cf. McConnell-Ginet 2014) – it is precisely this ‘masculine rule’ that has been noticed as peculiar by both linguists and gender scholars and contested as sexist in GRL (Falk/Mills 1996, Briere/Lanktree 1983). However, while it could be objected that male bias associated to terms like *friend, citizen* or *scholar*, is little justified, essentially arbitrary and possibly sexist (Nicoladis et al. 2021), in other cases gender association is explained by category availability (Manea/Manea 2011, Hansen et al. 2016) – i.e. the number of male vs female representatives in the category – on the basis of experience or anecdotal evidence: *brick-layer, truck-driver, plumber, engineer, door-keeper, inspector*, etc. are referentially male connoted because these are traditionally male-dominated roles; also less male-typical terms have nonetheless acquired a male bias since in our experience, for instance, male attorneys, poets, singer-songwriters, stand-up comedians, etc. outnumber their female counterpart. The same applies to the female bias of nouns like *nurse, baby-sitter, caregiver, administrative assistant, teacher, librarian* (Martyna 1980) etc. Category availability is also the process by which female referents are almost by default excluded by the referential potential of terms like *rapist, serial killer, clown, cheat, buffoon, murderer* (Hansen et al. 2016), etc.

Category availability is likely to determine the production of some terms which are considered sexist in that exclusively male (i.e. *businessman, policeman*, etc.). More specifically, nouns of agency (Greenbaum/Quirk 1990) in English are morphologically constructed

by attaching suffixes to roots, which can be verbal (-er: *teach* → *teacher*; -ant/ent: *inhabit* → *inhabitant*, *study* → *student*) or nominal (-ist: *novel* → *novelist*, *art* → *artist*; -ian/an: *library* → *librarian*, *physics* → *physician*). In the latter group, the ending -man/men is/was also used to codify roles of agency carried out typically or predominantly by men, rather than exclusive to men (*Congressman*, *businessman*, *fireman*, etc.). With the increasing number of female agents in these roles, a change in the direction of a fairer language, or a neutralization of male bias, has been felt as necessary, but mainly because masculine terms are misleading on referential grounds, rather than exclusionary or ostracizing in ideological/political terms. The idea that language – if it may bias interpretation – does not preclude action can be evidenced by the fact that congresswomen and businesswomen entered congress or the business before the very term entered the dictionary (Vickers 1999, Maret 2019, Owens 2020), or that there are female *engineers*, *doctors*, *physicians* or *ombudsmen* (see López Medel, this volume) and male *nurses* even without a non-modified term to refer to them.¹⁹

The resistance to introduce gender fairer forms – which may be seen as a more or less conscious attempt at controlling female agency – may also be explained by the principle of linguistic economy or ‘of least effort’ (Zipf 1949, Kager 1999), by which the human mind – out of some form of organic inertia (Martinet 1955, Vicentini 2003) – tends to resort to the same sets of conventionalized options (Sinclair 1991) mainly because they are easily available and deemed to be transparent – as masculine generics are – and tends instead to remove or avoid forms which would require extra cognitive expenditure to be processed and disambiguated, unless they are needed for referential precision.²⁰ These are some of the reasons why the masculine generics are still the norm in everyday contexts. Some scholars have in fact noticed that the use of *she/her* markers to also include male referents – which is a

19 In Italian, there are even distinctively female terms to refer to typically or exclusively male roles such as *la guardia* (guard, watch), *la sentinella* (sentry), *la recluta* (recruit), *la spia* (spy), *la guida* (guide), etc.

20 A similar economy-based phenomenon is called ‘blocking’ in morphology, by which existing forms prevent the productions of newer forms with overlapping meanings (Plagg 1999, Embick /Marantz 2008).

frequent feature in feminist and gender research²¹ and is gaining currency also in soft/social sciences at large, intended as a “self-conscious expressions of certain gender ideology [signalling] user’s disavowal of default masculine generics” (McConnell-Ginet 2014: 33) – may still be perceived as confusing, especially in contexts where there is no special contextual prominence of women, in that the feminine markers are almost automatically taken to anticipate a predominantly female audience (Jacobs 2006, Gabriel et al. 2018)²².

However, if a part of GRL considers the unmarked male bias to be sexist – in that concealing female specification and marginalizing female agency (Murdock/Forsyth 1985, Sabatini 1987) – other studies (Eakins/Eakins 1978, Henley 1987, Miller/Swift 1976, Poynton 1989) claim that also the morphological marking of female gender may have negative implications:

The addition of feminine suffixes and adjuncts has a weakening, diminishing and trivialising effect [and] feminine markers contribute to the construction of negative semantic space for women because, no matter what women do, language marks them as being different (e.g. a female surgeon, a woman lawyer) or less important than men who do the same thing (e.g. waiter vs waitress, steward vs stewardess). However, in the case of adjunct it could be argued that gender marking is not just sexist but provides information about normative gender roles in general. For example, masculine markers may also be used to indicate that a man is entering a stereotypically woman’s domain (e.g. male nurse, male prostitute). (Wheatherall 2003: 24)

21 Deborah Cameron explained this choice in one of her studies as follows: “Most sex-indefinite and generic referents in this book will be she and her. If there are any men reading who feel uneasy about being excluded, or not addressed, they may care to consider that women get this feeling within minutes of opening the vast majority of books, and to reflect on the effect it has” (Cameron 1992: vii).

22 Interestingly, in 1980, where resistance against gender fair language changes was stronger (proposals towards it were deemed as being ignorant, irrational, ‘asinine’, chauvinistic, ludicrous, cf. Martyna 1980), while lamenting the sexism of masculine generics, Martyna claimed that: “If pronouns are as amusingly insignificant as some consider them to be, we should expect no outcry were the situation reversed, and the female pronoun become the generic” (Martyna 1980: 484). Today, in certain areas of social research, including parts of GRL, popularizations and even in some media outlets, female generics are indeed used and accepted with little outcry.

The apparent contradiction between the two views— i.e. the lack and the addition of female specification as being both sexist – acquires validation within the domination paradigm, whereby, potentially, any verbal act concerning or directed to women, either disparaging, patronizing or (rhetorically) inclusive, may be interpreted as an instance of male domination – even though unconsciously carried out (Pierik 2022). The apparent contradiction can also be disambiguated from a different angle, by which sexism is not just a matter of marking or concealing female specification, but has to deal with the type of referent that is precluded to or favoured for female agents.

As a matter of fact, while several studies have pointed out the (c)overt bias in terms like *businessman*, *congressman* or *craftsman*, it is virtually impossible to find studies which advocate for a less sexist use of terms like *hangman*, *hitman*, *gunman* or *garbage-man*, or lament the automatic male association activated by terms like *gangster*, *assassin*, *thug*, *coward*, *drunkard*, *sexual predator*, or *paedophile*, or would consider *female rapist* or *female clown* as disparaging expressions in that establishing normative male roles. Hence, gender-fair language does not seem to be a quest for mere language equality or inclusion, but notably – and understandably so – for equal rhetorical access to and representational authoritativeness in positive (or neutral) roles usually associated to men.²³

23 A quick, very little scientific, yet interesting survey carried out in one of my undergraduate classes (approx. 100 students) with an overwhelming majority of female students found masculine generics in teacher's informal comments like 'ottimo lavoro, ragazzi!' ('good job, boys!') to be less gender fair than 'ottimo lavoro, ragazze!' ('good job, girls!') – precisely on the basis of female predominance. The same class, however, found comments like 'pessimo lavoro, ragazzi...' ('very poor job, boys...') to be more acceptable and less disparaging than 'pessimo lavoro, ragazze...' ('very poor job, girls...'). What changes between the two cases is only the polarity (positive vs negative) of the comment, not the predominant gender of the addressees. On this basis, it is possible to assume that gender fairness, or conversely bias, may not only be language internal and systematic, but contend-related and situation-based, thus being a matter of perception as much as a matter of possible meaning entrenchment.

4.1.3. *Other forms of deletion*

Other forms of deletion can be found, for instance, where essentialist categories, instead of being critically introduced, explained, substantiated and expanded upon, are taken as interpretive frameworks to apply to virtually all linguistic realizations, as it is often the case with notions like *oppression, violence, discrimination, inequality*, etc. (all of which presupposing ill-intentioned agency on the part of men) to refer to expressions of gender-based or gender-associated asymmetries, thus determining their political interpretation, rather than allowing for open-ended critical investigation.

4.2. *Distortion: priority, perspective and nominalization*

Forms of distortion in terms of heightened prioritization can be found where data are organized and perspectivized in a way so as to cohere with given interpretive matrixes or larger paradigms. In GRL prioritization may depend on the criteria of data selection, ordering and classification which, although primarily intended to facilitate interpretation, may point to links of causation when only correlation is likely to apply, overemphasize some elements over others, or evidence trends whose relevance would probably dissipate if processed under different lenses, this being the case, respectively, of the causal relation seen between language asymmetries and gender gap, and, metadiscursively (Hyland 2005), the configuration of GRL research findings as evidence.

4.2.1. *Language asymmetries and gender gaps*

The idea of sexism in language as a way of channelling gender inequality has brought some scholars to look for some correlation between countries with a marked gender gap and their way of linguistically expressing or concealing gender specification.

[A study] revealed that the equality between the genders is smaller in countries with a grammatical gender language as an official language than in

countries with languages other than a grammatical gender language. (Frauenknecht et al. 2021: 12)

[U]sing the Global Gender Gap Index which “benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria”, Prewitt-Freilino et. al demonstrated that countries where >70% of the population spoke a gendered language scored lower on both the overall index and on economic subscales. In this context, it appears that language not only reflects and defines culture, but actually shapes cultural norms. (Harris et al. 2017: 932)

The way gender is encoded in a language may be associated with societal gender equality [...]. Countries with grammatical gender languages were found to reach lower levels of social gender equality than countries with natural gender languages or genderless languages. This suggests that a higher visibility of gender asymmetries is accompanied by societal gender inequalities. (Sczesny et al. 2016)

In terms of gender, language can be distinguished in three broad groups. *Grammatical gender languages* (or gendered languages, henceforth G) are those where every noun has gender as grammatically marked, pointing to or presupposing the gender of the referent – i.e. *professore* (m), *professoressa* (f), *freno* (m), *bontà* (f) in Italian, *maison* (f) and *livre* (m) in French, etc. – this being the case of Romance languages (i.e. Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, etc.), of Irish, German, Russian, Hebrew, Hindi, Arabic, Somali, Punjabi (official language in Pakistan and parts of India), Pashto (official language in Afghanistan), etc. *Natural gender languages* (N) are those where nouns have no gender marking, but gender specification are disambiguated pronominally (i.e. *he* vs *she*, in English) – namely, English, Icelandic, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. *Genderless languages* (GL) are those with no nominal or pronominal gender marking, like Finnish, Armenian, Persian (spoken in Iran, Iraq, parts of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan), Kurdish (in Iraq, with Arabic), Estonian, Turkish, Yoruba (spoken in Nigeria), Swahili (in Kenya and Tanzania) and Chinese.

Research has investigated possible correlations between countries with a specific language type (G, N, GL) and gender gap phenomena. Among the most solid and frequently referenced to (see extracts above), a study (by Prewitt-Freilino et al. 2012) which, in order to provide a larger perspective on gender gap, on the one hand, refers

to the ranking provided in *Global Gender Gap Index* of the World Economy Forum²⁴ (GGG henceforth) and, on the other, includes important covariates besides purely linguistic ones, notably, the geographical location of the countries (111 in total) where a type of language is spoken (Europe, North and South America and Oceania – which the analysts group together as Western cultures; and Africa and Asia – as Eastern cultures), its religious tradition (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, etc.), and its government form (grouped into democratic ones – Democratic Republics and Democratic Constitutional Monarchies such as Spain, Belgium, Sweden, etc.; and non-democratic ones like Absolute Monarchies, Authoritarian or Military Republics, Communist States, etc.). Although some consistency is noted between gender gap ranking and these non-linguistic covariates, the study claims that religion, geography and government cannot fully explain social gender inequalities. The study in fact emphasizes the correlation between gender marking (in G languages) and gender inequality (as can be read in the extracts above) – notably pointing out that countries where the gap is wider use G languages while the same gap appears to be less noticeable in countries with N languages and also, although less markedly so, in GL language countries. However, if we take the same data as they are presented in said study (relating to the GGG published in 2009, as in Previt-Freilino et al.’s original study, see Table 1 and Table 2²⁵, in Appendix), significantly different considerations can be made²⁶. Most noticeably,

24 <https://www.weforum.org/>

25 The Table in in Previt-Freilino et al. (2012: 274-276) has been here divided into two Tables on the basis of the overall means or average GGG score (0.68) so as to distinguish the top ranking countries (Tables 1) and the bottom ranking ones (Tables 2). The ordering of the entries, therefore, is not alphabetical, as in the original study, but in terms of their GGG ranking.

26 Some minor inconsistencies can be found in the Table in Previt-Freilino et al. (2012), ranging from the omission of the UK from the list of countries – which does not seem to be justified by the analysts’ selection criteria (namely, whether the type of the language – G, N, GL – could be neatly established), to the dubious classification of some languages in a specific category (firstly, Armenian and Bengali as G languages, whereas other classifications would consider them as “fully genderless languages”; or the opposite, Lithuanian as GL while other classifications would tag it as G, cf. <https://www.eltconcourse.com/training/common/gender.html> ; secondly, the

that language seems in fact to have a minor or less marked impact on gender asymmetries than the other factors.

Although it is difficult to find clear trends given the predominance and distribution of G languages in the Tables (spoken in 73/111 countries), by looking at the data we notice that, if it is incontestable that countries speaking G languages rank in the lowest positions (consider for instance the bottom 20 entries in Table 2, where 17/20 are countries with G languages, namely Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Korea R., Mauritania, Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Chad, Yemen), we can also see that those countries (with the exception of Korea R.) share both similar geographical positions (not just as Eastern cultures, but located mostly in the Middle-East and North Africa) and, notably, the same religious tradition (Islam for 17/20), and governmental organization (only 5/20 are democratic systems). Thus, it is possible to hypothesize that, besides gender marking in language, inequality may also be related to eminently cultural factors, in that in those countries social hierarchies and asymmetries (also in terms of gender) are regulated and institutionalized (Razavi/Jenichen 2010, Sibley et al. 2007). This may explain also why countries with different language types (Turkey, Iran or Cameroon, all GL) but the same or similar political and religious background all rank in similar positions (Cameroon 97th, and, notably, Iran 106th and Turkey 107th).

On the other hand, G languages are also spoken in countries topping the GGG Index – in 11/20 of the cases if we consider the top 20 positions (Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, Latvia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, France, Spain, Argentina, Belgium and Cuba). More specifically, we see that these positions (Table 1) are held by countries

classification of the language spoken in South Africa as GL, while the most widely-spoken languages, Afrikaans and English, are both G – notice that minority dialects like Xhosa and Zulu may be ranked as GL languages, but they are not spoken by 70% of the population, this being one of the selection criteria used by the analysts; thirdly, the tagging of the language spoken in Ireland as G – thus probably referring to Irish/Gaelic, which is however not spoken by 70%, but rather by 42% of the population, cf. Census 2006 Volume 9 - Irish Language). However, these seeming inconsistencies may be due to the fact that “languages may fall somewhere in between [categories]” (Stahlberg et al. 2007: 164).

where language type is more varied than other covariates which appear to be more stable, like religious tradition (Christian for 18/20), position (Western cultures for 17/20, notably Europe for 13/20 – and two of those not sharing the same geography, namely Australia and South Africa, were important colonies of the British Empire and are Commonwealth countries), and government form (democratic for 19/20). A possible evidence of the limited impact of language type on gender gap can be seen also by noticing that among the highest 6 positions we find countries sharing the very same geographical area – i.e. larger Scandinavia, including Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland – hence culture and tradition, but not all the same language type (only Finnish being GL, and the others N). A similar evidence can be found by taking the ‘overall means’ as a reference point (GGG index: .68), thus dividing the 59 countries ranking higher from the 52 ranking lower. In fact, between those groups little variation can be found in terms of language type (ABOVE: 36 with G, 13 with GL and 10 with N languages; BELOW: 37 with G, 13 with GL and 2 with N languages), whereas differences – and trends – are in terms of the other covariates (ABOVE: 53/59 have democratic systems of government, 47/59 share Christian tradition, and 46/59 stem from Western cultures; BELOW: 47/51 are from Eastern culture, 27/51 refer to Islam as a religion, and the predominance of democratic systems is less marked than ABOVE, i.e. 28/51).

If we then consider another relevant covariate not present in the original study, that is the actual language²⁷ rather than just its type – which would allow us to group different countries using the same language (Spanish, English, French, Arabic, etc.) – we would observe that the language types spoken in the top ranking and bottom ranking countries are very similar in number. In fact, countries better ranking speak 17 G languages (Russian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Irish, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Latvian, Macedonian, and the language spoken in

27 Where it was impossible to find correspondences between the classification (G, GL, N) provided by Prewitt-Freilino et al. (2012) and (the features of) the national or most spoken language in a given country, Prewitt-Freilino et al.’s classification was nonetheless used, but such languages are here indicated as ‘language spoken in X’. The same type of incongruity is emphasized by an asterisk in the Tables.

Sri Lanka), 13 GL languages (Chinese, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Mongolian, Thai, Uzbek, language spoken in South Africa, Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique), and 5 N languages (Danish, English, Icelandic, Swedish and Norwegian). Those below the overall means use 18 G languages (Arabic, Spanish, French, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Nepali, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, the language spoken in Ethiopia, Armenia, Bangladesh, Malta, Pakistan, and Maldives), 12 GL languages (Indonesian, Khmer, Malay, Persian, Swahili, Turkish, Vietnamese, Azerbaijani, the language spoken in Malawi, Ghana, Zambia, and Cameroon) and 1 N language (English). In the light of this, evidence in support of the analysts' suggestion is less compelling. In fact, not only are G languages as used in better ranking countries as they are in those with more evident gender gap, but the same applies to GL languages, which feature twice among both the top six countries (Finland and the language used in South Africa) and bottom ones (Turkey and Iran): on the basis of this, it would appear that linguistic genderedness alone, or predominantly, can hardly justify or explain gender inequality.

Another possible problem related to seeing a natural correlation between language and gender gap is represented by sensibly different rankings of countries with the same language. In fact, if some correlation can be seen in the contiguous positions of Portuguese-speaking countries like Portugal (with a GGG index of .70) and Brazil (.67), or some Spanish-speaking ones like Spain (.73) and Cuba (.72) or Ecuador (.72) – the ranking distance with other Spanish-speaking countries like Bolivia (.67), Mexico (.65) and Guatemala (.62) is harder to explain in terms of linguistic gendering. The same applies to the case of France (.73) and Senegal (.64), of the Arabic speaking-countries, like Kuwait (.64), Saudi Arabia (0.57) or Yemen (0.46), or English-speaking ones, like Australia (0.73) or Zimbabwe (0.65).

Finally, one aspect that cannot be used as a covariate, but which may shed light on the variation between the two groups of countries, above and below average, is the fact that in Western countries and cultures the debate on gender equality and inclusivity is particularly active and lively: some of these countries favour the dissemination of these ideas (through academia, the media, etc.) and alignment to guidelines and best practices (even through institutions, cf. the directives of the European Union concerning gender equality). In short,

the awareness of this debate and the perceived importance of this cause may contribute to impacting on people's perception, and developing their sensitivity to this subject and their sense of gender fairness, possibly pushing them to detect, isolate and smoothen asymmetries in interaction, and even accepting and promoting changes in terms of lexis and morpho-syntax in order to make texts and representations more inclusive.

4.2.2. Evidence

Distortion can be realized through nominalization, where specific labels – with their denotative, connotative and associative potential – determine interpretation over given referents. In GRL it is not infrequent to see findings (concerning linguistic sexism and its correlation to societal gender inequality) presented as evidence. While the terms are close in meanings, *evidence* presupposes objectivity (what is evident) while *findings* subsumes human perspective and possible limitations (what has been found). The tendency to resort to evidence – referentially or rhetorically – is typical of scientific and social research at large, as a condition through which to support claim and corroborate the validity of the analysts' intuitions²⁸. In GRL, even though evidence-based methodologies have been seen sceptically, as a dominant and controlling forms of knowledge-making “increasingly returning to rationalist, quantitative oriented forms of legitimation” (Cannella/Salazar-Perez 2012: 280), references to evidence abound, often, and accurately, used as synonyms of findings – hence in its relative meaning, referring to the material under observation; but in other cases the meaning overlaps with that of empirical evidence (hence, in its normative function, to refer to reality as we know/experience it). Empirical is the type of evidence that is not only clear and credible, but verifiable and replicable, that is applicable to phenomena that – after investigation and measuring (not only according

28 In general research, and in corpus-based LRG, references to evidence are also used to mark tentativeness: “We are also conscious that our four country cases rely on relatively small samples; therefore, the findings [...] should be treated as exploratory until corroborated by further empirical evidence” (Kislov et al. 2019: 696, note also the different use of the terms *findings* and *empirical evidence*).

to assumption) – are found in the same way in various contexts under the same conditions.

While there are indeed several studies evidencing gender inequality in several contexts, carried out through the principled measuring of extensive material (i.e. randomized double-blind analyses, bibliometrics, quantitative and comparative investigation, cf. Moss-Racusin 2012, Larivière et al. 2013, Horvath/Sczasy 2015, Steinpreis et al. 1999), in several GRL studies the term *evidence* – at times combined with the modifier *empirical* and/or assertive and non-mitigated research verbs like *prove*, *document*, *demonstrate*, *reveal*, etc. – is used to refer mainly to research findings or collection of data (which is instead ‘research evidence’ or ‘exploratory evidence’ – whose validity is limited to the data under observation), especially when they result from purposive selection and sampling of material – surveys, questionnaires, etc. – gathered for theory validation purposes or to corroborate codified knowledge (‘analogical evidence’, i.e. the positing of the theory followed by selected examples to support it), or stem from the observation of isolated cases (‘anecdotal evidence’), or just align with the literature, expert opinion and disciplinary doxa (‘testimonial’ or ‘anthropological evidence’) (cf. Blommaert 2001, 2005, Cruz 2012, Verschueren 2001), or – although very rarely – are arrived at through “‘irrational’ shortcuts to evidence, such as emotions, gut feelings, or habits” (Kislov et al. 2019: 696, Cairney et al. 2016). Although the phrase (*empirical*) *evidence* is not necessarily used manipulatively, but rather for its boosting function, it brings about presuppositions of objectivity and soundness that may call (and have called) for verification:

[R]eporting gender differences has become interesting in itself, and simple reporting without adequate statistical assessment of both statistical significance and size effects leads to confirmation bias and publication bias in behavioral research [...]. Second, lack of attention to size effects, context, causal mechanisms, and interaction effects between male and female subjects gives way to essentialist interpretations of the gender differences found, reinforcing gender stereotypes rather than questioning them. Essentialism in the behavioral literature either takes an explicit form (“women are found to be ...”) or an implicit form (through assuming that men and women make free choices based on their respective innate characteristics). (Sent/van Staveren 2019: 3)

[I]nspection of the publications that advance this theory reveals a lack of empirical data and a multitude of argumentation fallacies and misrepresentations. Whereas unconscious bias could theoretically take place and produce gender gaps in academia, the theoretical possibility should not be a substitute for analyzing real data. (Skov 2020: 12)

[T]wo recent economics survey articles claim to find ‘strong evidence’ that women are “fundamental[ly]” more risk-averse than men. Yet, much of the literature fails to clearly distinguish between differences that hold at the individual level (categorical differences between men and women) and patterns that appear only at the aggregate level (statistically detectable differences in men's and women's distributions, such as different means). [...] Additionally, one of the two surveys suffers from problems of statistical validity, possibly due to confirmation bias. Applying appropriate, expanded statistical techniques to the same data, this study finds substantial similarity and overlap between the distributions of men and women [...]. (Nelson 2016: 114)

As we see, the distorted – or popularized – use of specific research terms (according to their everyday meaning rather than specialized one), by superimposing two different frames of reference (expert vs general), is likely to be interpretively opaque, and while it may be unproblematically accepted by those focussing on the reasonableness of the content (i.e. when findings align to expectations – favouring anthropological or rhetorical reasonableness, cf. van Eemeren/Grootendorst 2009) it may belie forms of cognitive bias and require disambiguation for others (cf. Nelson 2014, Croson/Gneezy 2009).

4.2.3. *Other forms of distortion*

Besides the two cases discussed here, distortion can be found when studies resort to specific representational categories (statistics, quantitative model analysis, specialized lexis, etc.) not only to codify meanings but, notably, to confer emphasis and legitimation to given readings over others (i.e. misapplication of the model) or, conversely, when studies curtail and adjust representation of phenomena for them to be easily charted within recognizable models (i.e. misinterpretation of data), when phenomena different either in substance or for level of abstraction are equated, or when overlap between phenomena is taken as causation (or vice versa), as is the equivalence often reported between perceived gender inequality, for instance in job application

(psychological interpretation)²⁹, and actual female exclusion in recruiting (empirical experience)³⁰.

4.3. Generalization

Generalizations can be realized when elements or particular uses are abstracted from their context and taken to reflect overarching phenomena or epitomize a whole category, as is the case of the negative connotation of the Italian term *professoressa* or the trend towards pejoration of female words.

4.3.1. 'Professoressa'

An often reported example of the inherent sexism in grammatical gendered languages is the case of Italian terms whose feminine form is produced through the suffix *-essa* (Sabatini 1985, 1987, Cortellazzo 1995, Lepschy et al. 2002, Marcato/Thüne 2002, Merkel et al. 2012), like *dottoressa*, *studentessa*, *presidentessa* or, notably, *professoressa*, on which we will focus in this section. This female form is taken to refer

29 Even though the contiguity between psychological perception and experience of reality has often been noticed, in that bias in language “reinforce[s] sexist attitudes and behaviors in a subtle, psychological manner” (Gastil 1990: 630, cf. also Boroditsky et al. 2003, Gauche et al. 2011), equating impression with experience is a cognitive stretch.

30 A variety of studies have focussed on how linguistic bias correlates to gender discrimination in recruiting, however often revealing that women tend not to apply for – rather than being excluded from – gender-biased jobs or male-associated roles and positions (Bem/Bem 1973) – not just because the language in which applications are expressed sounds ‘ostracizing’ (Stout/Dasgupta 2011) – but rather because they perceive such positions as being little appealing (Gaucher et al. 2011), in that they either anticipate a less successful performance competing against male candidates, or they imagine their prospect career in stereotypically male-dominated roles to be less successful and more effort-consuming than their male counterpart (Chatard et al. 2005, Vervecken et al. 2013). Conversely, other studies have pointed out that gender prejudice is not exclusive to female experience, in that, irrespective of the use of masculine generics in applications, men tend not to apply for female-dominated jobs, or when they do, they tend to be turned down more frequently than female applicants (Levinson 1975, Riach/Rich 2006, Booth/Leigh 2010).

to a role which is “perceived as less persuasive” – or less authoritative – “than a man or than a woman referred to with the masculine form *professore*³¹” (Sczesny et al. 2016: 3, cf. Mucchi-Faina 2005, Cacciari/Padovani 2007), due to “the perceived lower social status of a professional ending in *-essa* as opposed to those ending in *-a* (e.g. *professora*)” (Horvat et al. 2016: 4, cf. Menegatti/Rubini 2017). The idea that the *-essa* suffix brings with it derogatory meanings (Marcato/Thüne 2002) is related to the fact that many *-essa* terms were introduced in the 19th century to openly derogate women (Thornton 2004; see *ministressa*, *sindachessa* – which, however, as reported in Italian dictionaries, are joking terms, maximally evaluative but with little referential value – and, as such, rarely attested in texts). One of the examples resorted to in language studies to show the sexist potential of *professoressa* is the following: ‘*Vuole fare la professoressa ma non sa niente!*’ (in Lepschy et al. 2001: 18; ‘She wants to be/acts like a (female) professor, but she doesn’t know anything!’). There are however some flaws in the claims above. In fact, in line with the studies reported above, also the Italian Accademia della Crusca (the institution which controls and establishes the legitimate use of the language in terms of spelling, syntax, semantics, etc.) notices that feminine terms in *-essa* were indeed often produced with either negative connotation or to refer to the wives of those exerting a given profession (i.e. *presidentessa* → president’s wife), and it is true that some scholars (notable Sabatini 1985, 1987) promoted *-a* suffixes to replace *-essa* ones (*professora* vs *professoressa*); however the Crusca academicians recognize that, not only *-essa* endings have remained in general use in that they are semantically transparent, but also that commonly used *-essa* words have lost negative undertones and become unmarked in the course of time and, notably, that today words like *professoressa* are “titoli assolutamente comuni e rispettati” (Coletti 2021: 214), i.e. commonly used honorifics conveying esteem and respect.

In fact, the term *professoressa* (like other words in *-essa*, i.e. *dottoressa*, *studentessa*, etc.) is currently mainly used for its referential

31 It should be pointed out that in Italian, however, referring to a female professor with the masculine *professore* is neither common nor referentially clear – if not, possibly, in inclusive unmarked plural forms like *i (miei) professori* (including both male and female professors).

rather than evaluative function. Secondly, the alternative form *professora* is unlikely to be taken as fairer, but, due to its markedness, it is very likely to be used and perceived as having ironic or disparaging undertones (as is the case, for instance, of *presidenta* instead of the more common *presidentessa*, Villani 2020). Thirdly, the disparaging meaning of a term found in specific contextualized use, or, in saussurian terms, in its *parole*, does not automatically inscribe such disparagement in its semantics, or in its *langue* (unless it is or becomes conventional and entrenched in frequently used expressions). With respect to the example above, it should be noted that the same derogatory potential would apply if the noun *professore* were used – ‘Vuole fare il professore, ma non sa niente!’ – without this derogation entering the *langue* of *professore*.

To verify the alleged negative potential of the word *professoressa*, a (very informal) survey-type investigation has been carried out by myself with three groups of respondents: students, language experts and peers. Although it has very little scientific validity (it has not been theoretically designed, principled, methodologically structured, etc.), it is nonetheless likely to provide an indication of the actual perception of the meanings associated to the words by actual speakers. The group of students included two BA classes (approx. 120 and 100 students respectively, 220 in total) and one MA class (approx. 40 students). The group of colleagues, very restricted, included 12 experts in the domain of linguistics, foreign languages, cultural studies and literature. The group of peers included 17 individuals, mainly friends and acquaintances of mine, with different education and occupations, not working in the academic domain. Three questions were presented, without anticipating what the purpose of the survey was: a) Do you find the word *professoressa* ‘problematic’? b) Are there potential ‘negative’ meanings associated to this role (irrespective of your possible negative experience with some *professoressa* at school)? c) Can you specify what these negative meanings are and why they are negative? Interestingly, only six out of 220 BA students sensed negative associations in the term *professoressa* but were unable to answer question (c). Three out of 40 MA students perceived some problematicity in the term, only two of whom noted that it was ‘possibly’ due to the female specification – without being able to argue this point further. None of the peers saw any negative meaning in the

term, on the contrary, they took it to be openly positive. Six of the experts found the term potentially or intrinsically derogatory – since it is morphologically derived from a masculine base, hence marking hegemonic male territories; three of them, however, despite being aware of the debate over such problematicity and the potential negative associations, did not really see this reflecting the everyday use of the term, unless it is charged with negative evaluation in context.

Although it would be interesting to further inquire about the fact that only some experts familiar with the theory (the derogatory potential of male-derived words) found the word *professoressa* actually derogatory, while all the other respondents (who, according to the theory, by keeping using it, contribute to corroborating negative gender stereotypes) resort to it or interpret it as a purely referential or expressly positive term,³² for the purpose of this analysis suffice to notice that, in the case of *professoressa*, generalization depends on seeing negative and sexist undertones – which can only be measured situationally – as being systemic and language-internal.

4.3.2. *Pejoration of feminine terms*

Another generalization, closely related to the case discussed above, is at the basis of idea that “words associated with women tend to pejorate over time (for example, *woman* came to mean *mistress* or *paramour* in the nineteenth century)” (West et al. 1997: 121, emphasis in the original). As we see, this claim embodies a major generalization in itself (one word => whole category), but other studies have pointed out that there indeed seems to be a general trend towards pejoration once a word acquires a female-related association (cf. Miller/Swift, 1976, Kochman-

32 If the reason cannot be entirely language-based, one possible explanation may reside in the political interpretation of the issue, that is, that the *-essa* ending, by adding gender specification, does lexicalize gender asymmetries, and the linguistic act of marking gender differences is in itself an expression of structural oppressions (West et al. 1997, cf. Pierik 2022). But, in the light of this, are *-essa* terms disparaging specifically because of their morphological marking, or is any reference to a given sensitive referent doomed to become such? In the latter case we should note that “[a]voiding such negative references is easy, but even the word *girl* has become tainted today; it is considered by be a derogatory way of talking about a person who should be called a young woman” (Tottie 2002: 198).

Haładyj 2007b, Kochman-Haladyj /Kleparski 2011; Mills 1992; Beirne 2019; Hughes 2006).

Among those, an interesting piece of research relates that “[t]he axiological study of historical synonyms of *girl/young woman* and *woman* shows that [...] the number of pejorative developments preponderates greatly over the number of ameliorative ones” (Kochman-Haładyj 2007a: 149), and, based on the entries of *The Historical Thesaurus of English*³³, offers lists of terms intended to document recognizable trends in pejoration. The pejorative synonyms of *girl* include *maiden, maid, wench, file, damsel, daughter, virgin, gill/jill, kitty, girl, trull, tib, nymph, tit, infanta, miss, baggage, jilt, chick, baby, sheila, chicken, kitten, flapper, queen, pusher* and *quail*. Those for *women* include *virago, quean, wife, woman, lady, carline/-ing, mare, female, stot, pigsn(e)y, piece, fair, teg, she, skirt, jade, mort, pinnacle, jug, pussy, smock, faggot, petticoat, moll, murrey-kersey, modicum, partlet, hen, gipsy/gypsy, cow, biddy, pintail, heifer, shickster, strap, tart, mivvy, dame, jane, muff, babe, bird, person* and *scupper*. However, if we look closely at each term, we can easily notice that, firstly, very few of them are synonyms of *girl/woman* – rather they are likely to have been (variably and in various contexts) associated to female referents – and secondly, in some cases, their pejorative potential (be it social, moral, aesthetic, etc.) can only be measured situationally, i.e. it is not part of their semantics (see not only the case of mainly referential terms like *daughter, wife, dame, lady, she* or *person*, but, notably, of other words like *bird, fair, female, virgin* or *queen*). Generalization in this case resides in seeing, on the one hand, possible context-based derogation of female-related terms as a form of systemic semantic pejoration, and, on the other, and at a higher level of abstraction, in seeing female-association as a cause and condition for pejoration. As to the latter point, in fact, it could be contended that, although less frequent, similar pejorative developments can be found associated to masculine terms, both semantically gendered (i.e. *patriarch, knave, churl, boor, jock, playboy, boy*, etc.) or gender-biased (i.e. *bureaucrat, boss, imperialist, nerd*, etc.) and a similar evaluative marking can/will be found also in all those male-biased terms associated to roles or functions which have become culturally marginal,

33 <https://ht.ac.uk/>

sanctioned or stigmatized (i.e. *peasant, drunkard, addict*, etc.). It could also be pointed out that even non-gender-related terms can pejorate (*awful, homely, naughty*, etc.). If we instead consider pejoration in terms of context-based derogation, that is, attained through terms which are used derogatorily to disparage a given gender, Risch provides an extensive list of ‘synonyms’ employed to referred to men – and notably a list of ‘Women's Derogatory Terms for Men’ (1987) – which, although related to their current use rather than their development across time, is nonetheless quite remarkable. Among such items we find *son of a bitch, bastard, ass, asshole, nice ass, dumb ass, jack ass, asswipe, candy ass, hard ass, head, shithead, dickhead, jockhead, bulge head, dick, prick, cock sucker, penis breath, tally wacker, dickless, hard shaft, boy, mama's boy, pretty boy, bulge boy, dough boy, foster boy, lover boy, choir boy, animal, bitch, dog, stud, hunk, fish-eater, piece of meat, juicy steak, dog meat, sweet meat, weiner, jerk-off, whore, slut, nice bulge, babe, honey, scoop, hard rocks, and jock strap* (1987: 356).

It may be objected, and reasonably so, that the two lists are hardly comparable – the female one being based on ‘historical’ uses (possibly drawn from literary texts), while the latter on current ones. However, it is precisely the lack of such specification, framing and detail in the former (concerning the type of texts where derogatory ‘synonymical’ terms were found, the context where such texts were written, the purposes, etc.) that produces generalizations which, as such, lend themselves to be measured or compared against other generalizations, rather than being critically deconstructed and methodically discussed.

In the light of the above, if it is indeed very likely that female-marked or -associated terms may be used derogatorily more frequently than masculine ones, also on the basis of the fact that there appear to be more negative words related to women than to men (Mills 1992, Beirne 2019, Hughes 2006), it is nonetheless a generalization to see in female-association a condition or a cause for default semantic pejoration.

4.3.3. *Other forms of generalization*

Other generalizations are found when personal or reported experience – hence anecdotal and likely subjective – is taken as the norm regarding a given phenomenon. Although not a language-based (but a context-based) example, this is the case of claims concerning the endemic

patriarchy in academia and research, or the resistance to accepting feminist ideas or hiring feminist scholars (Cannella/Salazar-Perez 2012, Sifaki 2016, Hearn 1982, Jenkins 2014). Although documented in some specific contexts, such cases do not seem to correspond to the state of the art (Braidotti/Vonk 2003, Davis et al. 2006, Griffin 2005, 2006), where feminist ideas started entering academic domains in the 1970s (Ginsberg 2008, Dahlerup 2015), mainly – but not exclusively (Béteille 1995) – in Anglophone countries and Western cultures, then steadily developed and became institutionalized (Silius 2002, Pereira 2017) – first in single modules in traditional degrees, then established and integrated in curricula in social sciences and humanity programmes, and finally in MAs programmes and PhDs on women’s studies (Kirschner/Arch 1984, Wiegman 2016). Contents dissemination was also followed by stages of ‘professionalization’ (women’s studies degrees got established and experts in the domain started being appointed as professors, cf. Caughie 2003, Griffin 2008a, 2008b, Hart 2008) and ‘disciplinisation’ (through teaching centres and research centres, McMartin 1993, Parker/Freedman 1999) through which research on gender has acquired the status of a fully-fledged and autonomous disciplinary domain “with accreditation, funding and degree-awarding rights”.³⁴

5. Concluding remarks

This paper was not just intended to point out conceptual or, more properly, DDG-dependent fallacies in GRL, in that all epistemological systems and domains are based on forms of deletion (selection), distortion (framing and prioritization) and generalization (abstraction

34 *The Impact of Women’s Studies Training on Women’s Employment in Europe* (2007) (http://cordis.europa.eu/docs/publications/1001/100124171-6_en.pdf). Cf. also *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe, Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programs in Gender Studies* (2010). (http://tuningacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RefGender-Studies_EU_EN.pdf).

and systematization)³⁵ and, on this basis, the DDG filterings discussed in the sections above would be little problematic in GRL if its focus were solely on gender. The aim of this analysis is rather to stress the problems of resorting to and applying notions, frameworks and paradigms drawn from other domains (literary criticism, cultural studies, feminist research, etc.) to the specific study of language, even if it is taken to be the arena for gender representation. In fact, while it can be seen as a social practice and, as such, as a tool to exert power and control, language is also, and more broadly, a semiotic tool for representing experience in meaningful exchanges – for situationally grounded purposes and context-relevant uses – whose realization, besides social conditionings, is affected by language-, culture-, context-, content-related and (inter)personal constraints which can hardly be reduced to political interpretations.³⁶

Owing to this complex articulation of dynamics and interplay between levels, all language research cannot but rely on DDG resources through which to – tentatively and empirically – assess, problematize, and understand processes of representation and semiotization (i.e. semiotization-as-process). This is the main characteristic of relativistic approaches: general linguistics, for instance, studies language as a semiotization tool conditioned by etymological, morpho-syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, cognitive, cross-cultural constraints; LRG assesses language as a tool for semioticizing gender on the basis of

35 For instance, Universal Grammar models rule out any behaviourist relationship between competence and performance, frame linguistic mechanisms only with respect to cognitive/transformational parameters, and generalize the applicability of these mechanisms to all languages. Corpus linguistics does not account for purely quality-based methods, prioritizes results and interpretations on numerical grounds and, on those, legitimizes generalizations, etc.

36 In this respect, scholars (Widdowson 1995, Verschueren 2001, Blommaerts 2005, Cruz 2012, see 2.2), especially linguists and discourse experts, over the years have pointed out the problematicity and the little methodological soundness of belief-based rather than evidence-driven approaches promoted by critical theories, in general, defined as ‘new dogma’ (Verschueren 2001), or have seen feminist and gender studies as grounded in ‘feminist paranoia’ (Menea/Menea 2011, cf. LeMoncheck 1997, Eckert/McConnell-Ginet 2003, Nurullaeva 2021). Such criticisms stem from acknowledging the multiple dimensions and purposes of language in use, which extend beyond the political one.

language-internal mechanisms and language-external purposes; *difference* GRL takes language as a resource for the semiotization of gender asymmetries (where the concept of asymmetry may be and has been taken ‘politically’ to also stand for inequality and presuppose form of domination). This way of doing research is carried out by posing questions about language-based phenomena (to what extent, in what ways, for what purposes, how frequently, how regularly certain phenomena occur) to then be investigated. Critical studies and, notably, *dominance* GRL, as we have tried to see in this paper, use DDG filters to instead produce a semiotization of reality (the paradigm, i.e. semiotization-as-product) that is then employed to evidence forms of domination in various social practices – language being among the most relevant ones – by selecting materials and interpreting language at various levels of abstraction mainly to validate the paradigm. In other words, this approach provides answers to gender-related questions, where findings are ‘largely predictable’ (Verschueren 2001) and “empirical evidence supports what feminists have long known” (Prewitt-Freilino et al. 2012: 270).

Secondly, the focus of the present analysis on weaknesses in the application of DDG filters and in the handling of the semiotization they produce in some GRL is primarily meant to help identify the main obstacles hindering a combined, coordinate and fruitful interdisciplinary approach of LRG and GRL to the study of language ‘as is’, thus integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, resorting to evaluation (even critical and political) to guide interpretation (only) when it is sustained by measurable and representative data – not only ‘politically interesting’ – that is without superimposing or prioritizing judgement over understanding. An integrated approach as such would eventually make it possible to evidence, from different epistemological angles, forms of gender asymmetries which are identified not just on the basis of the reasons why they are (perceived as) such, but also in terms of the reasons why they are problematic (their frequency, distribution, entrenchment, conventionalization, standardization, institutionalization, etc.) so as to possibly facilitate recognition, develop awareness and favour very specific changes in terms of discursive gender fairness and equality, before aiming at major societal ones.

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Appendix

Rank	Country	L. type	GGG index	Geography	Religion	Government	Language
1	Finland	GL	.83	Europe	Christianity	DR	Finnish
2	Iceland	N	.83	Europe	Christianity	DR	Icelandic
3	Norway	N	.82	Europe	Christianity	DCM	Norwegian
4	Sweden	N	.81	Europe	Christianity	DCM	Swedish
5	South Africa	GL	.77	Africa	Christianity	DR	Afrikaans/English*
6	Denmark	N	.76	Europe	Christianity	DCM	Danish
7	Ireland	G	.76	Europe	Christianity	DR	Irish/English*
8	Netherlands	G	.75	Europe	Christianity	DCM	Dutch
9	Germany	G	.74	Europe	Christianity	DR	German
10	Latvia	G	.74	Europe	Irreligion	DR	Latvian
11	Sri Lanka	G	.74	Asia	Buddhism	DR	Sinhala/Tamil*
12	Switzerland	G	.74	Europe	Christianity	DR	French, German, Italian, Romansh
13	Australia	N	.73	Oceania	Christianity	DCM	English
14	France	G	.73	Europe	Christianity	DR	French
15	Spain	G	.73	Europe	Christianity	DCM	Spanish
16	Argentina	G	.72	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish*
17	Bahamas	N	.72	North America	Christianity	DCM	English
18	Barbados	N	.72	North America	Christianity	DCM	English
19	Belgium	G	.72	Europe	Christianity	DCM	Dutch/French
20	Cuba	G	.72	North America	Christianity	CS	Spanish
21	Ecuador	G	.72	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
22	Lithuania	GL	.72	Europe	Christianity	DR	Lithuanian*
23	Mongolia	GL	.72	Asia	Buddhism	DR	Mongolian
24	Mozambique	GL	.72	Africa	Christianity	DR	Portuguese*
25	Namibia	GL	.72	Africa	Christianity	DR	English/Afrikaans*
26	United States	N	.72	North America	Christianity	DR	English
27	Belarus	G	.71	Europe	Christianity	AR	Belarusian/Russian
28	Bostwana	GL	.71	Africa	Christianity	DR	English/Tswana*
29	Bulgaria	G	.71	Europe	Christianity	DR	Bulgarian
30	Estonia	GL	.71	Europe	Other	DR	Estonian
31	Guyana	N	.71	South America	Other	DR	English
32	Kyrgyz R.	GL	.71	Asia	Islam	DR	Kyrgyz/Russian (?)

33	Moldova	G	.71	Europe	Christianity	AR	Romanian
34	Austria	G	.70	Europe	Christianity	DR	German
35	Israel	G	.70	Asia	Judaism	DR	Hebrew
36	Jamaica	N	.70	North America	Christianity	DCM	English
37	Kazakhstan	G	.70	Asia	Other	AR	Kazakh/ Russian*
38	Macedonia	G	.70	Europe	Christianity	DR	Macedonian
39	Nicaragua	G	.70	North America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
40	Panama	G	.70	North America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
41	Peru	G	.70	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish*
42	Poland	G	.70	Europe	Christianity	DR	Polish
43	Portugal	G	.70	Europe	Christianity	DR	Portuguese
44	Russian Fed.	G	.70	Asia	Other	DR	Russian
45	Slovenia	G	.70	Europe	Christianity	DR	Slovene
46	Chile	G	.69	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish*
47	China	GL	.69	Asia	Other	CS	Chinese/Mandarine
48	Colombia	G	.69	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
49	Croatia	G	.69	Europe	Christianity	DR	Croatian
50	Dominican R.	G	.69	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
51	El Salvador	G	.69	North America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
52	Honduras	G	.69	North America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
53	Hungary	GL	.69	Europe	Christianity	DR	Hungarian
54	Luxembourg	G	.69	Europe	Christianity	DCM	French/German
55	Paraguay	G	.69	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
56	Thailand	GL	.69	Asia	Buddhism	DCM	Thai
57	Ukraine	G	.69	Europe	Christianity	DR	Ukrainian
58	Uruguay	G	.69	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
59	Uzbekistan	GL	.69	Asia	Islam	AR	Uzbek/Russian*
	overall mean		.68				

Table 1. GGG top ranking counties (above the overall mean, .68+)

Rank	Country	L. type	GGG index	Geography	Religion	Government	Language
	overall mean		.68				
60	Czech R.	G	.68	Europe	Irreligion	DR	Czech/Slovak
61	Gambia	N	.68	Africa	Islam	AR	English
62	Italy	G	.68	Europe	Christianity	DR	Italian
63	Romania	G	.68	Europa	Christianity	DR	Romanian
64	Slovakia	G	.68	Europe	Christianity	DR	Slovak
65	Tanzania	GL	.68	Africa	Other	DR	Swahili/English*
66	Venezuela	G	.68	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
67	Vietnam	GL	.68	Asia	Irreligion	CS	Vietnamese
68	Bolivia	G	.67	South America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
69	Brazil	G	.67	South America	Christianity	DR	Portuguese
70	Ghana	GL	.67	Africa	Christianity	DR	Dagbani/Ewe/ Fante/English*
71	Greece	G	.67	Europe	Christianity	DR	Greek
72	Malawi	GL	.67	Africa	Christianity	DR	Chicewa/English*
73	Armenia	G	.66	Europe	Christianity	DR	Armenian*
74	Azerbaijan	GL	.66	Europe	Islam	AR	Adzerbajani

75	Belize	G	.66	North America	Christianity	DCM	English/Spanish/ Kreol
76	Indonesia	GL	.66	Asia	Islam	DR	Indonesian
77	Malta	G	.66	Europe	Christianity	DR	Maltese/English
78	Bangladesh	G	.65	Asia	Islam	DR	Bengali
79	Brunei Darus	GL	.65	Asia	Islam	AM	Malay
80	Malaysia	GL	.65	Asia	Islam	DCM	Malay
81	Maldives	G	.65	Asia	Islam	AR	Dhivehi
82	Mexico	G	.65	North America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
83	Zimbabwe	N	.65	Africa	Other	AR	English
84	Cambodia	GL	.64	Asia	Buddhism	DCM	Khmer*
85	Kuwait	G	.64	Asia	Islam	AM	Arabic
86	Senegal	G	.64	Africa	Islam	DR	French
87	Zambia	GL	.63	Africa	Christianity	DR	English*
88	Guatemala	G	.62	North America	Christianity	DR	Spanish
89	India	G	.62	Asia	Hinduism	DR	Hindi/English
90	Jordan	G	.62	Asia	Islam	DCM	Arabic
91	Nepal	G	.62	Asia	Hinduism	DCM	Nepali
92	Tunisia	G	.62	Africa	Islam	AR	Arabic
93	U. Arab Em.	G	.62	Asia	Islam	AM	Arabic
94	Algeria	G	.61	Africa	Islam	AR	Arabic/French
95	Bahrain	G	.61	Asia	Islam	AM	Arabic
96	Burkina Faso	G	.61	Africa	Islam	DR	French+
97	Cameroon	GL	.61	Africa	Other	AR	English/French*
98	Korea R.	G	.61	Asia	Irreligion	DR	Korean
99	Mauritania	G	.61	Africa	Islam	AR	Arabic
100	Syria	G	.61	Asia	Islam	AR	Arabic/Kurdish
101	Egypt	G	.59	Africa	Islam	AR	Arabic
102	Ethiopia	G	.59	Africa	Christianity	DR	Amharic/Somali/ Tigrinya
103	Morocco	G	.59	Africa	Islam	DCM	Arabic/Tamazight
104	Oman	G	.59	Asia	Islam	AM	Arabic
105	Qatar	G	.59	Asia	Islam	AM	Arabic
106	Iran	GL	.58	Asia	Islam	AR	Persian
107	Turkey	GL	.58	Asia	Islam	DR	Turkish
108	Saudi Arabia	G	.57	Asia	Islam	AM	Arabic
109	Pakistan	G	.55	Asia	Islam	AR	Uru/English*
110	Chad	G	.54	Africa	Islam	AR	Arabic/French
111	Yemen	G	.46	Asia	Islam	AR	Arabic

Table 2. GGG bottom ranking counties (below the overall mean, .68-)

YO TABAYASHI

What's Behind the Scenes/Texts? Transmission of *Kitchen* (1988) to English and Italian

1. Introduction: Backgrounds, Purpose, and Methodology of the Research

We are living in a globalizing world where people, commodities, and money travel physically fast and, in some cases, virtually at an instant. Traveling people meet new people, new things, and new cultures away from their own homes. Alternatively, even at home without traveling, people meet new people, new things, and new cultures arrived from other parts of the world. Some encounters bring us culture shocks and even conflicts or misunderstandings, while others benefit us. The history of humankind unfolds that cultural exchange started a long time ago, getting us to know, appreciate, borrow, transform, or reject new cultures.

The topic of gender and translation has evolved mainly in the area of feminist studies such as Sherry Simon (1996), Luise von Flotow (1997), and even Judith Butler (2019), that commonly address relationships among women, language/writing/literature, and translation. Simon refers to the identity and subjectivity of female translators, who have been marked “double inferiority” as “the weaker figures in their respective hierarchies: translators are handmaids to authors, women inferior to men” (1996: 1) and proposes to bring translation into cultural studies. Flotow points out that “women always have to translate when they move into the public

sphere” (1997: 12). Butler stresses the Anglo-centeredness of translation and the importance of translation in gender studies (2019). Another perspective is empirical research in linguistics, such as Denisa Bordag and Thomas Pechmann (2008), which explores the so-called gender interference when translating from Czech (L1) to German (L2).

In contrast, my research falls in neither feminist nor linguistic discourse but in cultural studies, since it focuses on transmission/translation in a broader context. This paper examines a Japanese novella, *Kitchen* (1988), by Banana Yoshimoto, Japanese writing systems, and Japanese culture. Looking at the novella in three languages, Japanese (original), English, and Italian, as a case of cultural transmission, including gender, we strive to clarify that a text is already enmeshed and multilayered in meanings by previous cultural contacts before it gets translated. Then what is behind textual transmissions? What does the text transmit when translated into another language? How is gender related to cultural transmission?

We will first refer to a theoretical framework by Tatsunori Koizumi (2004) to understand what happens during cultural transmissions. Then cases of food culture, writing systems, and translation of *Kitchen* in English and Italian will be discussed to shed light on complicated and manifold processes of the cultural transmission. As for other material, literature reviews on translation studies, comparative cultural studies, and governmental documents will be utilized.

2. Transmission of Cultural Artifacts: Non-text and Text

Socio-cultural/anthropological studies covering tourism, food, music, etc., have addressed the topic of cultural transmissions. They have also examined authenticity, commodification, and domestication/localization of cultures, either tangible or intangible (Tabayashi 2020).

In this section, we will discuss patterns of cultural transmission with some non-textual/textual cases.

2.1. Non-textual transmission among cultures

Cultures are transmitted when people get in contact with other groups of people. The process often takes place in the order of importation, reception, diffusion, and adaptation/fusion (plus exportation in cases) (Tabayashi 2019). As for a theoretical framework, we refer to four patterns of cultural transmission (Koizumi 2004) to understand and categorize various cultural transmissions/transformations depending on the relationship between the sender/supplier and the receiver/demander of the culture transmitted.¹

As we see in Figure 1, cultural transmission needs two social groups: one is the “sending social group” (sender/supplier of culture); the other, “receiving social group” (receiver/demander of culture). Koizumi (2004: 160) names four forms of transmission as Imposition, Persuasion, Borrowing, Amalgamation, focusing on who voluntarily initiates the transmission. As we see the arrows in Figure 1, both “imposition” and “persuasion” are initiated by the sender, who wants another society to accept or “learn” his/her own culture. In this case, the transmission is sender-/supplier-oriented. In “imposition,” often seen under colonialism, for instance, the supplier imposes an allegedly “superior” culture, often with violence, regardless of the receiver’s will. In “persuasion,” such as Christianization by missionaries, the supplier persuades the receiver to “voluntarily” accept a new culture. Imposition and persuasion of culture are together regarded as “exportation,” a willful outbound drive by sending/supplying societies to others.

1 There are many studies on the mobility of culture. However, generally, they focus on the migration of people and its effects on the host community and the immigrants themselves rather than the cultural transmission itself. See *Cultural Mobility* edited by Stephen Greenblatt *et al.* (2010).

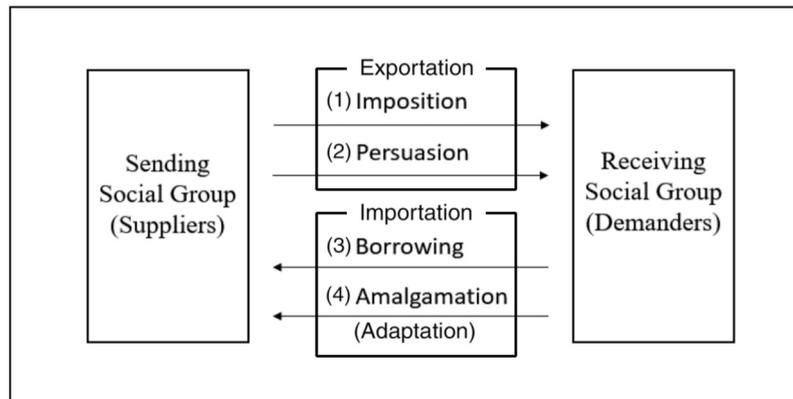


Figure 1: Four Forms of Cultural Transmission (adapted by the author from Koizumi 2004: 160)

Transmission such as “borrowing” and “amalgamation,” on the other hand, is receiver-/demander-oriented. The receiver/demander wants a culture and then imports or borrows it. However, as we noted before, culture usually changes after having contact with other cultures. Therefore, complete “borrowing” is unlikely to happen. For instance, many languages have borrowed words from other languages. However, they often change the pronunciation and spellings and coin new terms to express the same idea in their ways as French “ordinateur personnel” and Japanese “pasokon,” both meaning “personal computer.” Amalgamation, more likely known as adaptation, mixture, or fusion, is a type of transmission in which the sender’s original culture transforms, gets adapted in, and fuses with the receiver’s local one. The process of borrowing first, and then amalgamation, of culture, is considered “importation,” a spontaneous inbound drive by receiving/demanding societies, from sending/supplying ones.

To exemplify the process more in detail, let us look at food as a case of non-textual transmission. As for the case of exportation (outbound), imposition is hard to find anymore because, under recent emphasis on equality, democracy, human rights, and multiculturalism,

an imposition by force cannot be allowed at least *de jure*. Therefore, we would better visit the past, say, right after the end of WWII. At that time, Japan underwent an extreme shortage of food and malnutrition. Then, “Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia” (LARA) authorized by the US president, sent a gift of skim milk and flour, which were abundant in North America (Christian World Service). Thanks to the more than 16,000 tons of relief, school lunch in public schools started in 1947 after a one-year trial in Tokyo and its vicinity prefecture.² This generous gift was much appreciated, but it is critical to understand that bread and milk were new to the pupils since a few had ever had them either at home or western-style restaurants. Many school boards, let alone parents nor pupils, did have no other choice than to accept the lunch even if they disliked the tastes as if they were told, “You must eat this, as you all are malnourished.” We think this is an example of imposition, no matter how generous the offer was.

Conversely, cases of persuasion are easier to find. In Japan, we import flour, dry pasta, and other ingredients directly from Italy, and we eat pasta and pizza in restaurants or at home.³ Such ethnic cuisine from other countries allures and persuades us, whispering, “It is good, why don’t you try some?” Naturally, the exotic dishes attract the receiver who would look happy to be persuaded.

Having overviewed the sender-/exporter-initiated transmission so far, now it is time to consider the receiver-/importer-oriented drive, borrowing, and amalgamation. Japanese have borrowed many kinds of culinary styles and habits from Euro-America as well as China.

2 First school lunches were provided for children from low-income families in a Buddhist private elementary school in Yamagata prefecture (northern part of Japan) in 1889 and gradually spread over the country. In 1947 school lunches for all pupils began, though they were short of staple food, and children had to bring cooked rice from home. Then around 1952, they became complete also with bread. For detailed information, see National Institute for Educational Policy Research.

3 The dishes seem to have been more like American than Italian, since general “Italian food,” not more specific cuisines with names of the regions such as Toscana or Romana, was born in Little Italy in New York (Cinotto 2013). For instance, in Japan, the Americanized pizza, with tomato sauce, grated cheese, and tabasco, also spread earlier and more quickly than Italian pizza at Italian restaurants with Italian chefs after the 1960s.

Plates, cutlery, and how to serve/eat a course of dishes in the restaurants or for a wedding reception are mainly brought from France to Japan, where wooden chopsticks and plates of various shapes and colors (and lacquerware) were predominantly used. These styles have been observed in important diplomatic receptions such as those hosted by the emperor (see Figure 2). On the other hand, more straightforward ways have spread for private meetings in classy restaurants or wealthy homes. Furthermore, all these plates/cutleries are available in tableware stores: some are still imported, others manufactured domestically. This transmission is initiated by the receiver/importer who adores/admires the new culture, saying, “This looks fantastic. Why don’t we try the same?” as in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Dinner set for Imperial receptions (Nagasako 2020: 31)

Lastly, we will discuss amalgamation, the most prevalent among the four, as borrowing seldom occurs alone and usually accompanies amalgamation. The sender-oriented transmission, such as imposition and persuasion, is even less likely to happen as examined. When importing food, many ingredients are not available in receiving societies. So, they cannot help using locally available or alternative material suited to their tastes, hoping “It should be tasty if we cook

this way.” Some dishes are imported initially from Western countries and adapted to Japan, like curry and rice (from India via the UK).

2.2. Textual transmission among cultures

After having reviewed food culture as an example of non-textual transmission, we would like to address textual transmission according to the same order of imposition, persuasion, borrowing, and amalgamation. Textual transmission is distinctly different from non-textual one like food since the source text is translated into another language when traveling beyond the border. That means less discretion or freedom remains to the translator than the chef cooking dishes imported from other countries.⁴ There would be another big difference between the two regarding access to the source. In the case of *washoku*, Japanese cuisines are now available in many parts of the world, transmitted and localized. So not only native Japanese but also many others who know the “source cuisine” distinguish differences between the “localized (targeted) cuisine” and the so-called authentic “source cuisine.” On the contrary, in translation from one language to another, neither as many people understand two languages, nor are interested enough in comparing the difference in expression between the two. Eventually, this issue seems left to the professionals.

However, the transmission of the text shares an interest with the non-text over domestication/localization, known as readability/fluency. Readability in translation has been discussed for hundreds of years. More recently, during the past thirty years, the issue of domestication and foreignization, the key terms Lawrence Venuti introduced in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), has been one of the main concerns in translation studies. “Domesticating translation” prioritizes readability/fluency for getting a larger audience in the local target market by disguising ‘transparency.’ On the other hand, “foreignizing translation” sticks to the original expression by resisting against “ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and

4 Of course, the translator has discretion in paragraphing, choice of words, adding a glossary, and so on., the topic we will return to in the discussion on *Kitchen*.

imperialism” at the cost of readability for local readers (Venuti 1995: 16). “Foreignizing translation” could be understood as a drive for authenticity, too, which eventually retains foreignness and exoticism. In the following section, therefore, it would be pertinent to examine the textual transmission according to the order of imposition through amalgamation as we have done for the non-text.

Translation of literary works is usually initiated in the process of persuasion and borrowing, and in the process of the actual translation, adaptation usually occurs. Hence, we would like to glance at cases corresponding to each process as examples of textual transmissions. Imposition, a willful outbound drive, is hard to find in the textual transmission, so allow us to pick up a historical or somewhat fictitious situation. A secret document in intelligible letters is found under a compelling condition such as a war or colonialism. Since it has possibly critical information, a commander may order a captive, “Translate it, or you’ll be punished!” For a more probable case of persuasion, an author, publisher, or broker, tempts a translator or the counterpart in the receiving society, “Will you translate it since it’s good?”

Having said that, spontaneous inbound drives for translation, borrowing, and amalgamation are everywhere, especially in the contemporary globalizing world. As for borrowing, a translator, publisher, broker, or fandom group for anime videos initiates the transmission, looking for a translation of the source text: “Wow, it looks cool. Can I/we translate it?” Lastly, amalgamation/adaptation (including localization/domestication) evolves while translation is undergoing. The borrowers mentioned above get stuck with difficulties expressing the original text as accurately as possible. Some borrowers=translators, choosing readability/fluency, would go for a domesticated expression, maybe murmuring, “It’s hard to translate this expression, for we don’t have its equivalent. Give it a try with another expression to get better understood.” This case demonstrates amalgamation. We must not forget, though, others, in contrast, would be determined to stick to the source text and adopt foreign-sounding/-feeling words over domesticated expression, possibly with a glossary. This drive for accuracy, or loyalty to the original text, lies in-between borrowing and amalgamation. It can be

understood as foreignization for the sake of authenticity as much as possible. Both types of borrowers=translators cannot be rigidly separated since they vacillate to take sides in each word, sentence, and structure. We will discuss in more detail domestication/foreignization later in the discussion of *Kitchen*.

2.3. Japanese writing systems

We have exemplified four patterns of cultural transmission of non-text and text in the previous sections. As texts are products of writing, the textual transmission is deeply related to writing. In this section, we will overview the Japanese writing systems as an example of long-term cultural transmission.

2.3.1. Three components of Japanese writing

Japanese writing consists of three components, *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana*, and *katakana*, expressed as 漢字、ひらがな、カタカナ respectively in the Japanese language. Historically speaking, *kanji* was imported from China and spread in the 6-7th century to study Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Then, in the 9th century, looking for richer and freer expression, *hiragana* was created from *kanji*. Two centuries later, a novel entitled *The Tale of Genji* (1008, see Figure 3 below), known to be the first novel by a woman in the world, was written by Lady Murasaki, a court lady. The novel comprises *kanji* and newly established *hiragana*, without *katakana*, and the sentences are vertically arranged, as the images show. This oldest novel published (of course, by handwriting with a brush and ink) is already a product of cultural transmission, a showcase of borrowing and amalgamation.



Figure 3. *The Tale of Genji* (1008)

Regarding gender, here I am tempted to note that *hiragana* was mainly used by women until Kino Tsurayuki, a male writer, wrote *Tosa nikki* (Tosa Diary) around 935.⁵ Furthermore, he disguised himself as a woman, writing a diary with *hiragana*, since it was considered an inferior genre reserved for women. It is fascinating to know he wanted to express daily lives more in detail in this doubly negated way for a male. During Heian Era, when the court culture flourished, it was normative for men to write in *kanji*.

2.3.2. *Katakana as a case of amalgamation*

Like *hiragana*, *katakana* was invented from *kanji*, for the same purpose around the same period of the 9th century. Nevertheless, it has come to be used to indicate the foreign origin of words. When Japan started the business with Western countries in the 16th century, though in limited ways, numerous words were imported from the Portuguese and Dutch. These loanwords were written in *katakana* like italics in English.

5 Tosa is a region on Shikoku Island in southwest Japan.

More recently, its use for loanwords got institutionalized after WWII. In 1955 Monbusho (Ministry of Education, currently Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology) published *Gairaigo no hyoki, Shiriyoshu* (notation on borrowed words, a material) as the 27th issue of the collection series⁶ on Japanese language. Its preface gives a definition and brief explanation as indicated in (1) below:

- 1) Loanwords are mainly imported from western countries.
Loanwords are categorized into the following three types:
 - (1.1) Words which has been already integrated into the national language since long time ago, and the general public does not feel this as a loanword, such as たばこ(tobacco), かつぱ(kappa), and きせる(kiseru), etc.
 - (1.2) Words which still retains the feeling of a foreign language, such as オーソリティー(authority) フィアンセ(fiancé), etc.
 - (1.3) words which are ripe as a national language, but it still feels like a loanword, such as オーバー(overcoat), ラジオ(radio), etc. (National Language Council 1955: 3, my parentheses).

Contemporary native speakers of Japanese do not use some of the sample words anymore, and they already sound archaic. However, the rules shown in the material are still valid, and most of the literature published in Japanese, including textbooks, observe them for expressing loanwords.

2.4. Why and how does the amalgamation happen?

Why and how does this transformation take place? To answer the question, Figure 4 below would be helpful. The figure shows how a transmitted culture from other countries transforms itself and settles in the adopted culture. Three factors, spiritual environment, social environment, and natural environment, affect the transformation.

6 The collection aimed to improve the Japanese language and promote Japanese education (National Language Council 1955: 1).

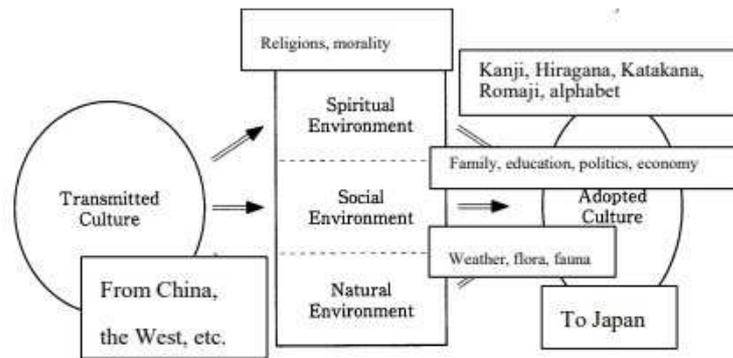


Figure 4. Transformation of the Transmitted of culture (adapted by the author from Koizumi 2004: 162)

Here we can grasp a transformation process of letters such as *kanji* transmitted/imported from China and the Roman alphabet from the West. Some cultures are adopted, but others are rejected because of various spiritual, social, and natural environments. *Kanji* stays with some amalgamation (Japanese *kanji* is different from that in China or Taiwan, and the current set is simpler than the one used before WWII). Remember *hiragana* and *katakana* are derived from *kanji*. Regarding the Romanized alphabet, contemporary Japanese occasionally write foreign words spelled in the source foreign languages such as “internet.” After WWII, children in elementary school started learning Romaji (Romanized Japanese) in the Romanized alphabet, as you see in the spelling of *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. Currently, beginners of Japanese as well as the Japanese pupils also learn Romaji. In modernizing Japan in the 1870s, even the first minister of letters, Arinori Mori, unsuccessfully attempted to make English formal language from grade school to governmental offices to compete with Western countries.

The Japanese language has complicated writing systems, already enmeshed with loanwords, transformed from the source words, and expressed in *katakana*. Loanwords in *katakana* do not have foreignizing effects after some time of borrowing. Usually domesticated in pronunciation, they become “transparent” and are

recognized as Japanese words. Japanese keeps *katakana* even after the markedness of the imported origin of a loanword fades away. In English, on the other hand, loanwords drop the italics as they get integrated into the target language and outgrow their markedness, eventually becoming “transparent” as in *sushi* to sushi.

3. *Kitchen* (1988): textual transmissions and behind the scenes/text

Kitchen is a Japanese novella published in 1988 by Banana Yoshimoto, the then-emerging female writer at 24. It gets translated into more than thirty languages: the first translation was in Italian (1991), followed by English (1993) and other languages. The story revolves around a young woman, Mikage Sakurai, after the death of her grandmother. Mikage feels herself pretty much an orphan since having been bereft of her parents some time ago. The story is simple, and her writing style sounded fresh and continues to be so, narrated from the first-person point of view. Thus, the book was received with great enthusiasm as well as critically acclaimed. She won two awards for a novice writer on this novella, and it has been attracting many readers, writers, and researchers, some of whom are from translation studies such as Harker Jaime (1999) and Eric Margolis (2021).⁷ This is why we will scrutinize *Kitchen* to explore textual transmissions with a scope of behind/beyond the written text.

3.1 What do the book covers of the novella tell?

A book cover, a “paratext,” entices the reader in general, and even some scholars like Hiroko Furukawa (2012: 215). Referring to

7 Harker praises the translation by Megan Backus as a “middlebrow translation strategy” (1999: 27), while Margolis criticizes it for being unable to present Yoshimoto’s “fluid and constantly moving” descriptions (2020).

Venuti's terminology, Furukawa pertinently maintains that the cover of *Kitchen* in the first UK edition (1993) with a weeping geisha girl is seemingly "foreignizing" but in fact "domesticating" by emphasizing a "typical Japanese image" generally shared by British readers (2012: 232). Then what about an Italian version, which was published prior to English translation? This time it would be worth checking out the covers and the text information of three editions (in Italy, the USA, and the UK).

First, let us focus on the cover of the original (1988). Figure 5 shows its photo, and Table 1 reads the information on them.

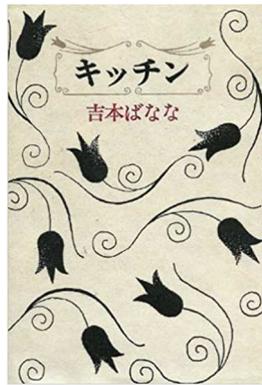


Figure 5. Original edition (1988)

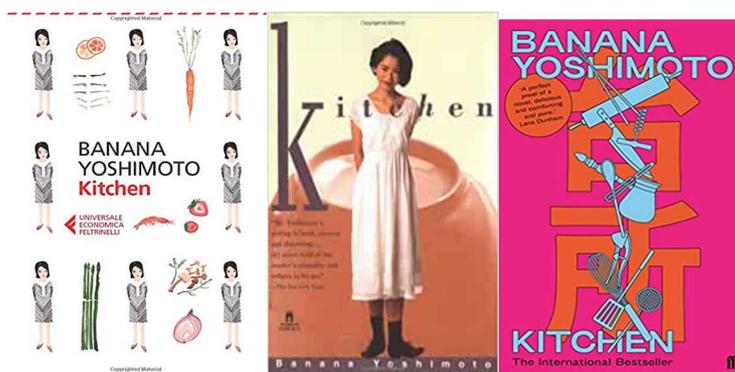
	Original	Types	Japanese	English
Title	キッチン	<i>katakana</i>	台所	kitchen
The author's family name	吉本	<i>kanji</i>		
The author's first name	ばなな	<i>hiragana</i>		banana

Table 1. Text information on the cover of the original

The text tells us the title and the author's (pen)name, aligned horizontally, which is not a traditional but prevalent way of today.⁸

8 The text inside is vertically aligned as *The Tale of Genji*, and pagination goes from the right end to the left, the opposite way to western books. This style is still standard for literary works, but many books in business and other areas

The cover displays all three components: the title in *katakana*, the author's family name in *kanji*, and her first name in *hiragana*. The small space on the cover, thus, generously unfolds the multilayered and rich Japanese writing systems, the fruit of cultural transmission, with illustrated flowers in black and white.



Figures 6. Italian, American, and British editions from the left to right

Then, what do other editions tell us? Even though the information on the cover is the same in each edition, with short excerpts from book reviews in the English version, it is worth paying attention to differences among them in Figure 6. The US version does not convey any foreignness or exoticism except for an Asian-looking girl since “kitchen” is originally English. As there are many Asian-Americans (including writers) in the US, no sign is apparent that this is a translation from Japanese. The UK version (paperback) with *kanji* 台所 on the background of the cover barely saves foreignness/exoticism. However, it would be hard for English-speaking readers to recognize the source language since China and Taiwan also use Chinese characters. The Italian version, in contrast, retains foreignness/exoticism by using the word “kitchen” without

follow the western style.

translating it to “cucina,” meaning both kitchen and cooking.⁹ And yet, it would not be easy for Italian readers to guess from where the book is. Just glancing at the title, they may think it is a translation from English.

3.2. “Foreignization” and “domestication” in the translation of the novella

The cover designs of *Kitchen* exhibit not only a short text of the title and the author’s name but also multilayered cultural transmission in translation. The Japanese text information consisting of three types of characters on the cover connotes the history of cultural contacts behind the cover. The cover designs suggest a degree of readability and foreignization. Then, we can expect further findings in the body text of the novella. Now let us focus on the terms “kitchen,” “Linus,” and “futon” to understand what is behind the scenes of translation.

3.2.1 The word “kitchen” in three languages

As demonstrated, the word “kitchen” in the three editions gives us a hint for cultural transmission. Throughout the novella, meaning a kitchen, Yoshimoto primarily uses *kanji* “台所” (*daidokoro*, Yoshimoto, 1988: 7) as used on the cover of UK edition, except for another term “厨房” (*chubo*, Yoshimoto, 1988: 57) only once for depicting a restaurant, and *katakana* “キッチン” (*kicchin*, Yoshioto, 1988: 70) only once other than the title. The term *daidokoro* has been used since earlier than the word *kicchin* appeared around the 1960s. That was when the “dining kitchen,” a combined space for dining with a table and chairs and cooking, was introduced.¹⁰ Since *chubo* refers

9 The latest paperback edition of “Universale Economica Ragazzi,” published in 2020, illustrates an Asian-looking young woman sleeping on the pillow on the hardwood floor in the kitchen surrounded by heaps of cooking utensils. The backside of the cover shows the book is in the collection for 12 years old and above.

10 Before then, *daidokoro* and the dining space with a low table and thin

to a professional cooking workspace, we should pay attention to the part where *kicchin* appears, comparing with its counterparts in English and Italian translation (cf. (2) and (3) and relative translations).

- (2) 私と台所が残る。(Yoshimoto 1988: 8, my emphasis)
 (2.1) Now only the kitchen and I are left. (Yoshimoto 1993: 4, my emphasis)
 (2.2) Siamo rimaste solo io e la cucina. (Yoshimoto 1991: 9, my emphasis)
- (3) 夢のキッチン。(Yoshimoto, 1988: 70, my emphasis)
 (3.1) Dream kitchens. (Yoshimoto, 1993: 43, my emphasis)
 (3.2) Le cucine dei sogni. (Yoshimoto, 1991: 45, my emphasis)

Regarding the term kitchen, difference emerges only in the article and forms of singular/plural in the English edition so that we do not find much foreignness in the text. With many other loanwords from the USA in *katakana*, the English version somehow looks like a reverse translation from English to Japanese and again to English. The translation thus sounds natural, assuring local readers of readability. In contrast, the Italian version uses *la cucina* (singular) and *le cucine* (plural) for the vernacular word *daidokoro* in *kanji*, differentiating it from the loanword kitchen in *katakana*, and as a result, being more faithful to the original.¹¹ Adding a glossary at the end of the book, however, the Italian version also guarantees readability while hanging on to foreignness.

3.2.2 Transmission behind the text: “futon” and “Linus”

As we have discussed in the previous section, the translation is a transmission of the text between languages, but non-textual transmission already undergoes behind the text. In the English translation, foreignness is not apparent since the original Japanese

11 Speaking of faithfulness, we confirm that paragraphing in Italian translation is the same as in the original, while it is much altered in English. Furukawa adequately mentions that the number of paragraphs is reduced to 430 in English from 516 in the original (2012: 217).

already accommodates many loanwords from English, sounding familiar to English readers. Following Furukawa calling Mikage, the protagonist, “a young Americanized Japanese woman (2012: 232), we are more likely to find “Americanized” the novella as a whole and Japanese society back then. Nevertheless, typically Japanese culture also travels to other countries. The quote below illustrates the importation of American culture (“Linus”) and the exportation of Japanese culture (“futon” meaning Japanese bedding) in the text and behind.

- (4) ...しんとひかる台所にふとんをひいた。ライナスのように毛布にくるまって眠る。
(Yoshimoto, 1988: 9, my emphasis)
- (4.1) I pulled my futon into the deathly silent, gleaming kitchen. Wrapped in a blanket, like Linus, I slept (Yoshimoto, 1993: 4-5, my emphasis).
- (4.2) [. . .] stesi il futon nella cucina silenziosa e splendente. Dormii raggomitolata nella coperta come Linus [. . .] (Yoshimoto, 1991: 10, my emphasis).

In the original, the name of a famous character in the Peanuts comic books, ライナス appears in *katakana*, while both translations use its original spelling “Linus.” The Peanuts was imported and translated into Japanese in the 1960s, and many goods like stationery or tote bags featuring its characters have been selling very well. Therefore, when *Kitchen* was published, most Japanese under their 30s should have known what the name meant. In the novel, the word “Linus” with a “blanket” helps portray a scene where the protagonist sleeps. The name gets naturally transmitted to the English reader without any foreignization since the character, always with his favorite old blanket, was created in the USA. Supposedly, few English readers are likely to notice the importation and exportation of the word and might recall that the novella is set in Japan. Hence “Linus,” the character, travels from the USA to Japan, returns to English-speaking countries, and goes to Italy with the book. A similar example is “Denny’s” (1993: 91), a chained diner brought from the USA. In contrast, specific proper names of a doughnut place and convenience store are replaced

with general “doughnut shop” (1993: 147) and “all-night minimart.” (1993: 46).¹²

Linus’s case exemplifies an importation of the comic strips from the USA prior to the exportation of *Kitchen* from Japan to other countries. The importation of comic books is “borrowing” accompanied by “amalgamation” when translated into Japanese. The exportation of the novella is “persuasion” to readers abroad. Nonetheless, Linus in *Kitchen* in English can be understood as his coming home or reverse importation without any witnesses of English readers. This transmission process concerning Linus, a character of comic strips, i.e., a non-textual cultural artifact, would apply to our second case, “futon,” the Japanese bedding.

The transmission of “futon” is more straightforward than “Linus” since it indicates exportation from Japan abroad. The process is neither imposition nor persuasion because only the term “futon” reaches the reader inside the book and does not physically travel as an object. Then we would be advised to come back to the word “futon” in the citation above. Spelled as in Romanized Japanese (though *hiragana* is used in the original) in both translations, the word is neither italicized nor annotated. Does this mean Italians and Americans are familiar with the word, do not regard it as a loanword anymore, and know what it means? It would be advisable to consider what the reader pictures when they see the word. With the same signifier “futon,” the signified may differ from a country to another.

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “futon” is defined as “a Japanese bed-quilt”.¹³ The first entry is 1876, but the following entries convey more what it is:

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- 12 The glossary in the Italian edition enters “Danny’s” (1991: 91), “Mister Donut” (1991: 143), and “Family Mart” (1991: 51) but not “Linus.” This suggests that in the early 1990s, all the stores were not so familiar with Italians, while Linus was known. The first translation of the Peanuts comic strips appeared in the early 1960s in the newspaper and in book form. Interestingly, they have a magazine titled *Linus* -- anthologies of translated American comic books.
- 13 The dictionary shows two types of pronunciation, but unsurprisingly both are different from the one in Japanese.

1885 E. S. MORSE *Japanese Homes* (1886) 212 The *futons*, or comforters, are [...] hung over the balcony rail to air.

1891 B. H. CHAMBERLAIN & W. B. MASON *Handbk. Travellers Japan* 8 Beds are still rare; but good quilts (*futon*) are laid down on the mats.

1959 *Encounter* Jan. 20/2 Their *futon*—the wadded quilt stuffed with cotton-wool which serves the Japanese for a bed.

However, we do not assume the reader of *Kitchen* looks for the word in the dictionary. Instead, the word is known as a sofa-bed, at least in the USA, as seen in the citation below (my emphasis) and Figure 7.

1984 J. DENTINGER *First Hit of Season* vii. 46 An empty vodka bottle stood on the floor by the futon sofa.

2012 E. LAYBOURNE *Monument 14* (2013) xxviii. 290 Sahalia was still lying with Astrid on one of the futon couches.



Figure 7. Futon available in the USA

The foldable sofa-bed is popular and available at any furniture store, so the American reader can imagine Mikage sleeps on the sofa, not the futon mattress directly on the floor. If the American reader pictures the furniture in the kitchen, the scene would significantly differ from the one the original describes.

Italian translation, on the other hand, has a glossary, as we mentioned. In the glossary in Italian edition reads “Futon: l’insieme di materasso e trapunta che costituisce il ‘letto’ giapponese. Il futon si stende direttamente sul pavimento e di giorno viene piegato e riposte negli appositi armadi” (1991: 149). The definition represents an accurate idea of what it is, such as a set of a mattress and a quilt that make up the Japanese “bed.” The futon lies directly on the floor, and during the day, it is folded and stored in the appropriate wardrobes. For native Japanese, the description in the glossary sounds more accurate than in the *OED*. So, thanks to it, Italians, even with insufficient knowledge of Japanese culture, can access the real “futon” without searching for the word in dictionaries.

The history of the word in Italy dates back to 1912 as the entry of “Orientalismi” shows in *Treccani*: Futon <<sottile materasso imbottito di cotone>> (1912).

Contemporary definitions in *Treccani* and *Lo Zingarelli* also read:

futòn s. m. [dal giapp. *futon*]. – Materasso giapponese di scarso spessore, imbottito con materiali naturali, che si pone direttamente sul pavimento o su un supporto rigido (*Treccani*).

futón [vc. giapp. 1939] s. m. inv.: grossa trapunta che si può stendere sul pavimento o su un basso supporto rigido e usare come materasso (*Lo Zingarelli*)

The definitions are almost identical, mentioning the hard frame for lower beds like Figure 8 instead of the sofa-bed in the USA.



Figure 8. Futon available in Italy

Considering the definitions and the history of the word, we can grasp that Italian and American readers were generally unfamiliar with a futon in the original sense. Since few westerners sleep directly on the floor and know the tatami mat on which the futon is put, it would not be easy to imagine the bedding as depicted in *Kitchen*. However, the primary difference between the two editions unfolds their standing position concerning readability and foreignization. English version values readability more without interrupting the flow of reading and lets the reader picture the scene as they like. Inversely, Italian translation is loyal to the original, letting the reader stop, think about the meaning, and go to the glossary.

3.3 Gender in *Kitchen*

We have overviewed the cover and the text information the novella transports, concentrating on the words like kitchen, Linus, and futon. Before closing this discussion, we would like to examine gender representation in three languages to capture what is behind the text.

Mikage, the heroine, narrates the story from the first-person point of view. Being a young woman, she often uses colloquial/gender-neutral language. Another main character, Eriko, is a trans woman who was born as a male. In the last message to “her” (originally his) son, “she” confesses the difficulty of writing as a man, involuntarily revealing “her” femininity by using final particles typical for women. However, though gently sounding, the English translation does not deliver the speaker’s gender as in the original.

- (5) 私ね、この手紙だけはきちんと男言葉で書こうと思ってかなり努力したんだけど、おっかしいの。恥ずかしくてどうしても筆が進まないの。私、こんなに長く女でいても、まだどこかに男の自分が、本当の自分がある、これは役割よって思ってたのに。でももう心身共に女、名実共に母ね。笑っちゃう。(Yoshimoto, 1988: 84-85, my emphasis)
- (5.1) Just this once I wanted to write using men’s language, and I’ve really tried. But it’s funny—I get embarrassed and the pen won’t go. I guess I thought that even though I’ve lived all these years as a woman, somewhere inside me was my male self, that I’ve been playing a role all these years. But I find that I’m body and soul a woman. A mother in name and in fact. I have to laugh. (Yoshimoto, 1993: 52)

In contrast, the Italian translation expectedly displays “her” gender as female. This part is printed all in italics to let the reader know it is the will letter.

- (5.2) *Avevo pensato di scrivere questa lettera al maschile, e mi sono sforzata di farlo ma, strano, mi vergognavo e la penna si rifiutava di scrivere. Anche se sono donna ormai da tanto tempo, credevo di essere ancora, in una parte di me, uomo, veramente uomo. ‘Questo in fondo è solo un ruolo,’ mi dicevo. Invece ormai sono donna, corpo e anima. Sono tua madre in tutti i sensi. Che discorso! Mi viene da ridere.* (Yoshimoto, 1991: 56-57, my emphasis)

Here the characteristics of target languages control the translation, no matter how the translator strives for sticking to the original. Especially grammar is the toughest since the translator should follow it, at least, to make the sentence intelligible. The impossibility to carry all the significance embraced in the original is destined for all translations. No wonder Margolis writes “How the English Language

Failed Banana Yoshimoto” (2021) though he sounds a bit too critical, overlooking the limitation meant to any translation.

We have come a long way to grasp what is behind the text when it is transmitted to another language, concentrating on *Kitchen* as a showcase. The book covers, with the text information, and the body text confirm the multilayered cultural transmission in and behind the text. The original consists of *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*, and displays rich transactions among cultures/languages, embodied in such words as kitchen, Linus, and futon. The words show the exportation processes (persuasion) and importation (borrowing/amalgamation) from each perspective, depending on where you stand. They exhibit, furthermore, an inclination of each translation toward readability or foreignness with the destined limitation of textual transmission.

4. Brief concluding remarks

Our journey to reach here was rather long, and finally, we are ready for brief concluding remarks. We have discussed the transmission of cultural artifacts of non-text and text, referring to Koizumi as a theoretical framework and scrutinizing exportation (imposition and persuasion) and importation (borrowing and amalgamation) with examples of food, writing systems, and *Kitchen*, a novella. For decoding the novella in terms of textual transmission, we compare its three editions, Japanese (the original), English, and Italian, concentrating on a couple of words, “kitchen,” “Linus,” and “futon.”

Now we are reminded of our research questions posited in the beginning: what is behind textual transmission? What does the text transmit when translated into another language? How is gender related to cultural transmission? To answer the questions, let us sum up the primary finding of this research. We discovered that a text is already enmeshed and multilayered in meanings by previous cultural contacts before it gets translated. Undoubtedly, translation, in general,

is not only a matter of text but involves/is based on the process of many other cultural transmissions. Concerning gender, we pointed out some differences in expression depending on the languages, both source and targeted, in the case of *Kitchen*. In addition, as passing, we saw *hiragana* letters and the genre of diary belonged predominantly to women. Due to the limited space, this paper could not elaborate on how non-textual transmission relates to gender, though our argument above suggests that it might have lesser involvement. My future research will focus on the issue as well as the process in which an imported culture like “Linus” develops in the receiving countries, representation of gender, etc. Hopefully, we have clarified the process and scope of textual transmissions behind and beyond the scenes/written text.

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Part II

ROXANNE H. PADLEY

“Tell me what you don’t like about yourself:” The Translation of Gender in *Nip/Tuck*

1. Introduction

1.1. Brief Overview of AVT

Within the scope of translation studies, audiovisual translation (AVT) first began to be identified as a field of its own during the nineties and 2000s during what can be labelled as its golden age, and when several prolific authors produced important studies within the field (Gambier 1995, 1996, 1998; Gottlieb 1997, 2000). Such an advancement is related both to developing technologies and wider access to films and other forms of media (TV series, sitcoms to name but a few), but also due to its emergence as a professional activity and a growing area of academic research (Díaz Cintas 2009).

AVT is not homogeneous in nature as the variety of different types of translation sources are numerous. While original studies of AVT categorised it within the same translation subgroup as film translation, and thus classified as an evolution of literary translation (Snell-Hornby 1995: 32), Fresco (2006) posits that AVT is indeed an autonomous discipline. Therefore, it cannot necessarily be considered as a subgroup of translation studies which can be grouped with literary and film studies. Indeed, contrary to original studies which highlighted a greater value in cultural transfer in film translation than in AVT (Delabastia 1989), the very nature and range of genres available in AVT (as well as varied target audiences) require diverse translation approaches and considerations (Díaz Cintas 2009).

The diversity of AVT not only renders it an autonomous discipline (Fresco 2006), but also brings with it a variety of challenges for the

translator who, first and foremost, may need to deal with issues such as fast paced dialogues, dialectal variations, overlapping speech, music and also cultural references. Díaz Cintas (2009: 6) offers the following considerations in such a case:

...we must view translation, and especially audiovisual translation, as a more flexible, more heterogenous phenomenon, one that is able to accommodate a broader range of empirical realities, to subsume new and potential translation activities within its boundaries and that therefore also calls for adapted research methods.

Thus, audiovisual translators are presented with considerations which broach the issue of managing the oral source text and selecting the relevant type of translation strategy. This most certainly depends on whether the translator is creating an oral source text to an oral target text reproduction (either through dubbing/revoicing or voiceover) or if the oral source text is then converted into a written target text i.e. in subtitles. However, while in the earlier days of AVT a translator's toolbox was limited in terms of translation strategies, this is no longer the case and specific research frameworks for both subtitling and dubbing are now extensively available (Díaz Cintas 2003; Chaume Varela 2004).

In terms of translating cultural elements between the source culture and the target culture, the dominance of Anglo-Saxon culture (and particularly that of the USA) is undeniable. The sheer quantity of cinema, television and online audiovisual production from the USA brings forth various questions regarding the feasibility of transferring the very same culture into all target languages and cultures. Díaz Cintas (2009: 9) highlights that "AVT is always constrained by the presence of the original production, which lives on semiotically through images (and sound) in the adoptive culture." Such a concept of course brings to the forefront Venuti's (1995, 1998) translation model of domestication or foreignisation, which has been widely applied as an effective translation tool. However, while the premise of this translation tool is that of foregrounding the 'invisibility of the translator' when opting to either represent the source culture in the target culture as 'self' through domestication or as 'other' through foreignisation, such an approach may not always be a feasible one in AVT. This is due to the culture bound elements which may be present in AVT as well as the semiotic

significance that goes beyond a linguistic dimension (Díaz Cintas 2009). Therefore, it could be argued that it holds true that AVT is indeed an autonomous branch of translation studies which has developed and will continue to develop its own sets of translation strategies and approaches.

1.2. Gender studies and translation

The study of gender translation and feminist theory was grounded much more firmly in studies regarding literary translation up until the early 2000s when initial studies into AVT and gender were addressed in greater depth (von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández 2018). In turn, this has led to relatively slow progress in the field of AVT in comparison to media studies which were already addressing the role of gender in films as early as the 1960s and 1970s when representations of women's lives were first examined (Cohen 1998). Topics such as glamourising women's lives and how they should be lived were addressed (Gallagher 2013: 24) as well as how stereotypes of women were portrayed (Tuchman 1978) and the sexualisation of the female body mainly presented for the male gaze (Mulvey 1999). Gallagher (2003) also highlighted how these initial analyses identified patterns of discrimination against women in the media and their role in society.

Furthermore, other early analyses of gender in the media identified clear indications of clichés of masculinity and heteronormativity reinforced throughout (Gallagher 2003: 24). Indeed, von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández (2018) posit that audiovisual products drive cultural and socio-political representations of gender and in turn this gender is intertwined with a particular socio-cultural behaviour and sexual identity. This is further emphasised by the fact that pre 2000s media generally represented women as connected to their relationship to men. Thus, while such themes were neglected in translation studies until more recent times, the norms and stereotypes of gender were already well embedded (and identifiable) in other fields from the 1960s onwards.

1.3. Audiovisual translation studies and gender

While studies into AVT and gender are more recent, the ways in which voices in narratives are translated from the source culture to the target culture (either through subtitling or dubbing) are fundamental. Beyond the initial studies regarding women's voices and their representation in media studies, more recent studies have also drawn their attention to non-binary voices and queering (von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández 2018). In terms of the ways in which AVT studies have developed gender themes, there are three main approaches which derive from feminist studies from the 1970s.

The first approach looks at the role of women within films from a feminist stance and generally observes the cultural and social translation strategies employed from Anglo-American media (thus English language) to romance language translations during the 2000s (Chiaro 2007; Bianchi 2008; De Marco 2012). The second approach examines the differences between subtitles and dubbed versions of audiovisual products and examines how gender may be represented through language to the target audiences through different translation choices (Feral 2011). Finally, a third approach examines gender issues in AVT (Lewis 2010; Chagnon 2016) by investigating non-binary and queer linguistic representation in translation (von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández 2018).

Within the scope of this study, the second approach will be investigated in terms of translational differences between subtitles as outlined above. Furthermore, the sociolinguistic aspects will be taken into consideration in terms of a specific interest in the differences in gender talk, mainly represented by male and female talk (Coates 2004) but also queer talk. The details of such are outlined in the methods section of this paper.

2. Dramatisation of plastic surgery: study context

Nip/Tuck is an American FX medical drama which aired from 2003 to 2010, totalling 6 seasons and produced by Ryan Patrick Murphy. During its time airing it received 45 award nominations and won one Golden Globe and one Emmy Award. The topic of plastic surgery covered within the TV series solicited a great deal of interest from the general public and medical professionals alike with a mixed reception. The first four seasons are based in Miami while the final two seasons are based in Los Angeles when the plastic surgery duo (McNamara/Troy) transfer their practice there.

The settings themselves are noteworthy in terms of the topic of glamour and plastic surgery as these two cities are well known hotspots for high rates of plastic surgery in general. Therefore, on the surface, this TV series falls in line with stereotypical principles (D'Agostino/Dobke 2017) surrounding plastic surgery (i.e. it is a medical discipline for the vain, beauty is intrinsically linked to happiness and plastic surgery can hold that very key to happiness).

There is no shortage of medical dramas on American television and indeed studies have shown that audience perception of medical professionals can be more negative after having watched medical TV series (Chory-Assad/Tamborini 2003). *Nip/Tuck* is no exception to this rule as, despite receiving acclaimed television awards, medical professionals in general expressed a relative degree of distaste towards the show. Hopkins Tanne (2003) gathered fellow plastic surgeons' opinions regarding the programme and conclusions were generally that it was not a realistic representation of plastic surgery private practice. Furthermore, McDonald (2009) echoes further dismay regarding the topics covered in the series and criticises the supposed satire present stating that the topics are over exaggerated, glamourised and generally excessive.

However, despite the criticisms put forward by the medical community, *Nip/Tuck* cannot be overlooked as a television series which is in line with much societal progress of the time (late nineties and early 2000s) regarding taboo topics and greater sexual freedom/expression as well as issues of gender, identity and anxiety to name but a few

(Lafrance/Manicom/Bardwell 2018). The protagonists themselves are two male surgeons in their thirties/forties, namely Sean McNamara (a family man on the surface) and Christian Troy (a single, charming lothario). The other main characters are the friends and family of the two lead protagonists and each episode (except the very first pilot episode) is named after the patient who is the protagonist of each individual episode.

Each episode begins with the famous line “Tell me what you don’t like about yourself,” (*Mi dica cosa non le piace di se stesso*) which is directed at the patient who proceeds to describe which part of their body they would like to enhance. During the consultations, there is usually a further psychological element (or at least hidden factor) presented by the patients, which the lead characters investigate in a variety of manners. What usually emerges throughout the different episodes is a series of crises (lived out by both the patients and the surgeons) as well as self-realizations. Therefore, it is critical to highlight that while this series may seem to address “superficial” topics on face value, each of the episodes tend to sway from glamourising plastic surgery (obscene sex scenes and gory blood in the operating theatre) to metaphors of life obstacles. The two main characters seem to base their decisions on their own moral compass which is linked to whether or not physical perfection may or may not equate to happiness. Indeed, what they appear to be selling is happiness (an almost God-like attribute), which arises from altering a patient’s body.

In terms of previous studies regarding *Nip/Tuck*, various themes arise in terms of morality and elective plastic surgery (Strauman/Goodier 2008) as issues regarding financial rewards as well as ethical legitimacy are directly and frequently called into question. Further questions surrounding morality (in particular moral ambiguity) are investigated by Gever (2010) who posits that this is indeed linked to anxiety. Lyons (2007) also echoes this concept by stating that there are a number of ambivalences which span moral and ethical behaviour to erotic and sexual behaviour and how these are enacted by the characters.

The representation of sex, gender and sexuality have also been investigated by some scholars who look at the ways in which plastic surgery is a kind of violence to the body (Tait 2010) drawing into question agency, empowerment and pathology. However, she states

that while this “violence” can be interpreted as anti-feminist, the very act of choosing (electing) to undergo plastic surgery is indeed indicative of “post-feminism which asserts our right to shape ourselves” (Tait 2010: 133). However, while Tait (2010) posits that the question of female gender and choice is embodied in post-feminism, Akass and McCabe (2007: 126) suggest that the TV series adopts almost a “misogynistic gaze”, particularly through characters such as Kimber Henry and Julia McNamara. Indeed, they claim that the show reinforces the ideal feminine beauty very much associated with Caucasian, slender, youthful and toned feminine bodies (as represented by Julia and Kimber) and thus could be considered as representing oppressive feminine standards.

Finally, other studies have investigated the representation of transgender characters within the show (Kaveney/Stoy 2011; Lafrance/Manicom/Bardwell 2018), which claim that the topic of transitional gender surgery is addressed on a moral and personal level whereby the struggles of the transgender patients are addressed and also supported by the protagonists. Therefore, the array of topics and scope for analysis within this television series is ample and only some of the above-mentioned topics highlighted will be addressed in the following sections, particularly in terms of gender and sexuality.

3. Study Aims

Based on the premise that the role of gender is intrinsically intertwined with the context of plastic surgery, this paper intends to investigate AVT and the cultural gender translation of the abovementioned television series *Nip/Tuck*. The study will adopt a twofold analytical comparison of the subtitles in the source text (English) and the target text (Italian) using corpus based quantitative methods and qualitative analysis of selected excerpts. The main interest of the investigation will be that of examining linguistic and cultural issues related to gender and the role of the two male protagonists in terms of their interaction and linguistic representation with the other main characters. The translation

of their identities and the interpersonal linguistic choices will be analysed making considerations on specific translation choices made.

4. Methods

4.1. Twofold analysis

The approach adopted for the analysis of this study makes use of corpus-based methodologies (Baker 2006; McEnery/Hardie 2012) in order to provide a quantitative overview of both the source text subtitles (English) and the target text subtitles (Italian) as well as a qualitative approach which employs a descriptive translation studies framework (Toury 2012).

4.2. Corpus collection

The *Nip/Tuck* subtitle corpus (NTSC) comprises the thirteen episodes of the first season of the television series (2003) and compares the linguistic translated features of the source language subtitles (English) with those provided in Italian (the target language). The subtitles were extracted from the DVD series and were annotated in order to include speaker identity and gender. The analysis was carried out using the corpus software Sketch Engine (Kilgariff *et al.* 2004). Multiword keyword analysis was performed on each of the subcorpora in order to provide an overview of the key topic areas and the reference corpora English Web 2020 and Italian Web 2020 were used for the respective languages. Qualitative comparative analysis was then conducted in order to delineate the identity construction of the main characters based on the key topic areas which emerged from the keyword analysis and in terms of questions of gender construct.

5. Corpus Analysis

5.1. Quantitative overview

An overview of all thirteen episodes, which were uploaded in their separate languages (English and Italian), produced a quantitative count of the two corpora. The source language subtitles (English) had a total of 72,160 tokens (56,139 words) and 7,291 sentences while the target language subtitles (Italian) had a total of 68,420 tokens (54,806 words) and 8,082 sentences.

5.2. Multiword keyness

A multi keyword analysis produced the following terms in the source language and only the first fifteen relevant terms are listed as they hold the highest keyness score when the focus corpus and reference corpus are compared (Table 1).

	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative frequency per million</i>
1	Plastic surgeon	15	207.87
2	Nose job	7	97.01
3	Tit job	6	83.15
4	Sophia Lopez	5	69.29
5	Tummy tuck	5	69.29
6	Julia McNamara	4	55.43
7	Midlife crisis	4	55.43
8	Reassignment surgery	4	55.43
9	Real father	4	55.43
10	Child molester	4	55.43
11	Grace Santiago	3	41.57
12	Kimber Henry	3	41.57
13	Porn party	3	41.57
14	Swingers party	3	41.57
15	Crazy bitch	3	41.57

Table 1. Multiword keyness analysis of the English source text corpus with the raw and relative frequency per million.

Terms 1, 2, 3 and 5 refer to much of the content of the episodes, which is an expected feature of the corpus considering the nature of the TV series based on a private plastic surgery practice. However, the terms which refer to actual operations are presented in their layman versions (i.e. *nose job* rather than rhinoplasty, *tit job* rather than breast augmentation and *tummy tuck* rather abdominoplasty). This is also an expected feature as the characters (and the patients) made few references to actual plastic surgery operation technical terms and opted for layman terms on the whole. Of interest, is the third example of *tit job*, which could be considered a vulgarised version of boob job and is one of the first indications of the sexualisation of the female body within this TV series, which will be investigated further qualitatively.

Other key multiword terms refer to some of the main female characters (interestingly the actual protagonists themselves are excluded). *Sophia Lopez* is noteworthy as she is a minor character and one of the patients (Episodes 4 and 9 are named after her), however, she returns throughout the first series (Episodes 9, 10 and 12) and represents a significant theme which will be investigated qualitatively, that of transgender and gender reassignment (example number 8 in Table 1). The other female characters who are highlighted as key are *Julia McNamara* (Sean McNamara's wife), who appears in all episodes, *Grace Santiago*, the clinic's psychologist, who also appears in almost all episodes, and *Kimber Henry* who makes recurring appearances as one of Christian Troy's significant love interests. All of these female characters will be investigated along with another female character, Liz Cruz, who is the clinic's anaesthetist and is also the most predominant homosexual character in the series.

Finally, other themes identified as key areas include *midlife crisis*, *real father*, *porn party*, *swingers party* and *crazy bitch*. Of particular note is the theme of a *midlife crisis* which can most certainly be applied to both male protagonists, and throughout all the episodes we see either Sean or Christian undergoing some kind of existential crisis, which is either supported or opposed by the other surgeon. Indeed, *midlife crisis* (*crisi di mezza età*) are identified as key in both corpora but rank higher in the English corpus compared to the Italian one (7th place versus 11th place respectively). The higher ranking in the English corpus is likely due to the statistical relevance in relation to the reference corpus but may also indicate the different emphasis placed on

the topic in the English version compared to the translation in the Italian one. Moreover, in line with identity crises (often related to a midlife crisis) in general, it is also a typical plot development to see one of the male protagonists criticise a particular characteristic of the other at the beginning of an episode (e.g. Christian's superficialness). This often creates friction which later leads to a realisation of a certain truth in that sense on behalf of that character.

Another example of a clear crisis, and recurrent theme throughout the whole series, is Sean's marriage crisis (eventually leading to infidelity), separation and then reconciliation in the final episode. Indeed, the concept of *real father* arises from such a marriage crisis and Julia carries out a paternity test for her son (suspecting he could be Christian's son rather than Sean's), the results of which are not revealed in this season. Finally, the other key areas of investigation relate to the highly sexualised topics throughout most episodes which range from pornstars and swingers requesting surgery as well as other sexual fantasies, desires and addictions which are explored throughout the season. For reasons of brevity, only some of these key terms will be explored qualitatively.

The same multiword keyness was performed on the Italian target corpus and produced the following initial terms (Table 2).

	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Rel. frequency</i>
1	Dottore Troy	33	482.32
2	Dottore McNamara	25	365.39
3	Dottoressa Santiago	11	160.77
4	Chirurgo plastico	16	233.85
5	Sofia Lopez	6	87.69
6	Julia McNamara	4	58.46
7	Paio di tette nuove	3	43.85
8	Riconversione sessuale	3	43.85
9	Tetta nuova	3	43.85
10	Tetta rifatta	3	43.85
11	Crisi di mezza età	3	43.85
12	Kimber Henry	2	29.23
13	Party scambista	2	29.23
14	Pazza psicotica	2	29.23
15	Naso nuovo	2	29.23

Table 2. Multiword keyness analysis of the Italian source text corpus with the raw and relative frequency per million.

As can be seen in the above table, many of the same characters and themes are repeated in the Italian target corpus (despite a different reference corpus being used). Of note, are the first three terms which introduce the two main protagonists (unlike the English corpus) and which place Grace Santiago in higher prominence. From a translation perspective, it is significant that these three characters are introduced by their titles (*dottore/dottoressa*) rather than by their names, which seems to be a more recurrent theme in the English corpus. This is an expected finding to a certain extent as within a medical context (as is the case with these three professionals), Italian culture tends to adopt the usage of professional titles more than the Anglo-Saxon culture does (Lobasso *et al.* 2018).

Further translation comparisons of keyness include the equivalent terms *crazy bitch* and *pazza psicotica* ranking 15th and 14th place respectively as well as the different representations of *tetta* in the target text. In the former case, the use of derogatory and misogynistic terms is an overall theme of this series (mainly related to the main character Christian) and will be investigated further in the following section. The use of the terms *tits* (*tette*), instead, has the same occurrence throughout both corpora (n = 6) but in English is represented purely by *tit job* while in Italian there are three occurrences of *tetta nuova* and three of *tetta rifatta*.

In light of the keyness identified in both the English source texts and the Italian target texts, and for reasons of brevity, only some of these themes will be investigated in the next section with examples of individual translation choices. Specifically, the themes of misogyny (mainly related to Christian), the gender identity of the main characters as well as the minor character Sofia Lopez.

6. Qualitative Analysis

6.1. Christian Troy's linguistic engagement with the female sex

On face value, Christian Troy embodies the frivolous, charming and superficial stereotype of a plastic surgeon who is driven by money, success and promiscuity with the opposite sex. His relationships and interaction with the opposite sex are frequently misogynistic and this in turn leads him into a variety of crises throughout the series. The crises he faces are usually brought about when he is placed before his behaviour by other characters in the series (particularly Sean as well as Julia, Liz, Grace and Matt).

The language which he employs when talking to (or about) women is often flagrant, derogatory and offensive throughout most of the season, as shown in some of the following extracts (1 and 2).

(1)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
K: "Right this way, ten." The perfect 10. That's what he calls me.	K: "Da questa parte, dea." Dea della perfezione, è così che lui mi chiama.
C: You fix the flaws, you could absolutely be a 10.	C: Ma, eliminati i difetti, potresti essere davvero una dea.
K: Well, what am I now?	K: E cosa sarei adesso?
C: You're an eight.	C: Una ninfa.

In this extract, Christian (C) and Kimber (K) have met for the first time the previous evening and spent the night together at Christian's apartment which is illustrated through a passionate sex scene (alternating with another monotonous sex scene between husband-and-wife Sean and Julia). In the English version of the dialogue, we see Christian deliberately diminishing Kimber's self-esteem by stating that she is by no means a "perfect 10" but rather an eight who has flaws that can be fixed. He dehumanises their relationship in that sense as he then goes on to highlight all of her "flaws" with a lipstick and proposes plastic surgery to her so that she can be "perfect" (a request made by Kimber) [Figure 1].



Figure 1. A still taken from the first episode where Christian uses a lipstick to highlight all of Kimber's "flaws" to be addressed.

In the first dialogue (1) between Christian and Kimber, the cultural reference which Kimber uses to refer to herself is the concept of the "perfect 10," which became a part of popular culture following the film "10" (produced and directed by Blake Edwards in 1979). The number 10 refers to a "beauty scale" whereby points are assigned for beauty with 10 being the highest and 0 being the lowest. Christian's choice to label Kimber as an eight shows his intention to belittle her rather than reaffirm her. From a translation perspective, the same cultural references are not transferred with the translator preferring references to Greek mythology and beauty (Goddesses and Nymphs) rather than the point scale in the source text.

Example 2 demonstrates Christian's level of superficialness and belittling even further as he claims that death is preferable to stopping striving for "perfection." The translation of "you might as well be dead" is intriguing in Italian (*sarà la tua fine*) as it softens somewhat the reference to death, expressing it only implicitly.

(2)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: Let your shortcomings and flaws fuel you. Let them push you further than you ever though you could go. When you stop striving for perfection, you might as well be dead.	C: Fa' che i tuoi difetti siano uno stimolo... per spingerti oltre ogni limite conosciuto. Quando smetterai di cercare la perfezione, sarà la tua fine.

The same point scale referred to in Example 1 is repeated in different episodes in connection to Kimber in Episode 6 (3) and then she herself uses the point system in Episode 9 (4).

(3)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: Look at you sweetheart. You're an eleven.	C: Guardati, dolcezza. Ora sei una dea.

(4)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
K: Yeah? Well, you'll still be a 4.	K: Rimarrai un cesso comunque.

In Example (3), Christian sees Kimber after some time and pays her a clear compliment. However, the translation does not effectively render the concept that she is now an eleven rather than a ten as the translation proposes the same for both i.e. *dea*. Example (4) instead is in response to a provocation that Kimber receives from another surgeon who says that she should leave Christian for him. Her response uses the same points scale against the man in this case and the translation corresponds the number 4 to *cesso*. The translation is arguably more offensive than the points scale in the source language.

Christian Troy does not limit himself to insulting only Kimber but, for space reasons, only a few more examples are illustrated of such language used against women below (Examples 5 and 6).

(5)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: Because you've got a carved face, and in my estimation...that's the worst tit job I've ever seen. Here's my business card. You want to look like a woman instead of a carnival freak, call me.	C: Perchè hai una faccia orrenda, e quelle sono le peggiori tette rifatte che abbia mai visto. Questo è il mio biglietto da visita...Se non vuoi sembrare un fenomeno da baraccone, chiamami.

(6)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: I sliced that bitch's wattle off 15 months ago.	C: Ho già affettato l'anno scorso il gozzo di quella stronza.

In Example 5, Christian has paid for the services of a prostitute but when she accuses of him of being homosexual as he cannot sustain his erection, he attacks her verbally and pushes her. The choice to use “carnival freak” (adeptly translated to *fenomeno da baraccone*) is extremely derogatory and once again reveals his linguistic choices in terms of the female gender. Example 6, on the other hand, is in reference to a patient who is being demanding and to show his frustration, he offends her by calling her a bitch and animalising her by comparing her to a cockerel's wattle. While bitch is arguably faithfully translated as *stronza*, wattle instead is translated as *gozzo* which is synonymous of a pathological neck swelling related to hyperthyroidism. Overall, Christian can be considered the main character who uses the most derogatory language when faced with the female gender with few consequences for such behaviour.

6.2. Homosexual Identity

Another recurring topic throughout the entire season is that of gender and sexual identity, which is first introduced in the second episode through the main character Liz Cruz (the anaesthetist). Her sexuality is first introduced by Sean who offers Liz health benefits for her partner (Example 7) in a bribe to ask her to return to work following a violent incident in the operating theatre in the first episode.

(7)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
S: Complete health benefits for your partner, Jean.	S: Cure gratuite per la tua compagna, Jean.

In the English source text version, it is not overtly obvious that Jean is a female name (in reference to her partner) but the gendered noun (*compagna*) in Italian makes this reference obvious to the Italian audience before it does so to the source audience. However, in the following lines, Liz explains that they have just broken up and refers to her partner by using the possessive adjective “her,” which then also subsequently clarifies her sexuality to the source public.

As the series progresses, Liz’s character is one of clear homosexual identification and is also one who challenges Christian’s misogyny. Christian tends not to assume misogynistic language to the same extent with her (despite their numerous disputes) but rather respects her role within the clinic (see Example 8). These dynamics could be related to either the fact he views her as an equal on a professional level or her character is not sexualised in his eyes (due to her sexuality).

(8)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
L: Every time I see what women do to themselves with these tit jobs... it makes me feel ashamed of what I do for a living. C: These tit jobs are 70% of our business, Liz. Think about that next time you slip your grossly overpaid ass... into your courtside seats at the WNBA.	L: Ogni volta che vedo cosa combinano le donne alle loro tette, mi vergogno di quello che faccio per vivere. C: Le tette rifatte rappresentano il 70% delle nostre entrate. Perché non ci pensi quando posi il tuo culone strapagato... in tribuna per assistere al basket femminile?

Example 8 is translated using appropriate colloquial references (i.e. tit jobs to *tette rifatte*). The reference made by Christian to Liz’s “grossly overpaid ass” however is rendered more misogynistic than it is in the source text. The choice to use *culone* as a translation draws into question Liz’s weight in the target text while this would not seem to be the source text’s intention, as “grossly” is in reference to her wage not

the size of her behind. Therefore, in this case, Christian is not actually employing offensive language but rather an informal colloquialism, which is not transferred into the target culture.

In terms of other homosexual characters, Matt (Sean's son) is in a relationship with a cheerleader (Vanessa) at the beginning of the series who then cheats on him and discovers that she is indeed homosexual. This relationship also explores sexuality in other ways as Matt is involved in three-way sexual intercourse with Vanessa and her girlfriend (Lexi) at a later point in the season. The language employed for the lesbian relationships that both Liz and Vanessa engage in is therefore worthy of note, as there are several occasions where terms such as "dyke" and "lezzie" are translated in a more elusive way (Examples 9, 10 and 11).

(9)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
L: I have a tattoo on my right breast. Two female symbols intertwined. C: Double dykes. L: I'm expressing my lesbian identity.	L: Io ho un tatuaggio sul seno destro. Due simboli femminili intrecciati. C: Due farfalline? L: Esprimo la mia identità lesbo senza falsi pudori.

(10)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Vanessa: Wait don't go. Lexi: Get your hands off me, dyke.	Vanessa: Aspetta, non andartene. Lexi: Toglimi le mani di dosso, lesbica!

(11)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Lexi: I'm not like you. I'm not a lezzie. Lexi's mother: What's a lezzie? Matt: Your daughter likes vagina.	Lexi: Io non sono come te, non sono dall'altra parte. Lexi's mother: Cosa significa, Robert? Matt: A vostra figlia piacciono le donne.

Example 9 illustrates a conversation which takes place in the operating theatre whereby Christian jests about Liz's tattoos. As can be seen from the translation offered, "double dykes" is translated as *due farfalline*,

which, as regards a tattoo, does not necessarily allude to sexual identity. The same censorship can be seen in Example 10 in an argument between Vanessa and her girlfriend where “dyke” is translated simply as *lesbica*. Instead, in Example 11, the references to both “lezzie” and “vagina” are entirely removed from the translation. Literature shows that the translation of topics such as sexuality into Italian for subtitles and dubbing is often in favour of such censorship (Beseghi 2016; Dore/Zarrelli 2018). While some argue that this is due to a lack of equivalence in Italian (Parini 2014), others claim that this is deliberate censorship (Díaz Cintas 2012). The translation presented in this series would seem to fall more in line with the lack of equivalence than a real wish to censor, particularly when considering the explicit sexual and bodily content which is explored in the rest of the series.

6.3. Transgender identity

The transgender character, Sophia Lopez, introduces the concept of transgender identity in a variety of ways, specifically through her interaction with different characters and also her reassignment surgery. As previously stated, Episode 4 is named after her and focusses on her request to repair a tracheal shave¹ which had left her scarred and she also reappears in a later Episode 9 entitled “Sophia Lopez II.” The episodes deal with many of the discriminatory issues faced by transgender individuals such as judgement regarding identity (12), parenthood (13), healthcare (14) and sexuality (15). Each of these is lived through a shared experience that Sophia has with one of the main characters namely Sean and Liz.

1 A tracheal shave refers to the reduction of the commonly referred to *Adam’s apple* and is an operation usually requested by trans women and non-binary trans individuals in order to reduce its size.

(12)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Sean: I'm afraid pro bono is out of the question. We do that type of work... on people who have suffered accidents or birth defects. Sophia: Being one gender inside and another on the outside... is a birth defect.	Sean: Spiacente, ma è fuori questione eseguire pro bono per un intervento simile. Prestiamo questo servizio... solo a persone vittime di incidenti o con difetti alla nascita. Sophia: Essere interiormente di un sesso e esteriormente di un altro è un difetto alla nascita.

This extract introduces the first concept of how many transgenders identify and forces Sean (who is the much more traditional and conservative protagonist) to confront this identity reality. The dialogue continues with Sophia asking if Sean has a problem with her, directly asking him if it is due to her identity. Sean claims that he does not but at this stage in the episode his judgement is apparent. Indeed, he reprimands Christian afterwards for not having warned him about his “transsexual patient” as he assumes Christian organised the appointment in order to prove how uptight he is. The translation is faithful in this extract.

(13)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Sean: Either you hand over what you have, or you find another surgeon. Your choice. Sophia: That's my son Raymond. Sean: I don't understand. Sophia: When a man and a woman love each other, they have sex and nine months later... Sean: You said you always knew you were a woman. Sophia: I didn't admit that to the world back in the day.	Sean: O mi consegna quel che nasconde, oppure cerca un altro chirurgo. Può scegliere. Sophia: È mio figlio, Raymond. Sean: Ma come l'ha avuto? Sophia: Sa, quando un uomo e una donna si vogliono bene. A volte fanno sesso. E poi, nove mesi dopo... Sean: Non ha detto di essersi sempre sentita donna? Sophia: E pensa che è stato facile ammetterlo?

This scene is from just prior to Sophia's surgery when she has a hidden photo with her. The questions of parenthood and identity are directly addressed in this scene. Of note, are the three interrogative forms used

in the Italian translation which are not entirely faithful to the source text. The question *Ma come l'ha avuto?* is much more explicit than the original version in expressing Sean's confusion and the closing comment is posed as a rhetorical question in Italian whereas in the source text, the meaning is much more explicit.

(14)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Sophia: A week ago she had a gender reassignment surgery... by the same doctor who did my neck. [...]	Sophia: Una settimana fa ha fatto la riconversione sessuale... dallo stesso chirurgo che mi ha operato al collo. [...]
Sean: What's the opinion of the doctor who examined her?	Sean: Cosa pensa il medico che l'ha esaminata?
Sophia: The nurse stuck us in here two hours ago. Nobody wants to touch her.	Sophia: L'infermiera ha fatto una capatina qui due ore fa. Ma nessuno vuole toccarla.

In this scene, Sophia calls Sean to the hospital where her transgender friend has some medical complications following reassignment surgery. What emerges in this scene is the discrimination faced within the healthcare system by transgender individuals. While the translation is faithful on the whole, the target text using the term *capatina* fails to render the concept that they have been left without attention to the same extent that it does in the source text. Following these encounters, Sean proceeds to help Sophia and other members of her community and the realisations that his character goes through are likely in line with the realisations that society were also confronting at the time of filming this season (2003).

(15)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Liz: Why get a sexual reassignment surgery?	Liz: Allora, spiegami perchè fai la riconversione sessuale?
Sophia: Because my façade is hiding my person. I'm not trying to be a beautiful woman.	Sophia: Perché la mia facciata sta nascondendo la mia persona. Non mi opero per diventare bellissima.
[...]	[...]
I'm just trying to get rid of the man on the outside as much as I can...	Cerco soltanto di liberarmi dell'uomo che appare all'esterno.

In this episode, the question of sexuality is brought to the forefront when Sophia decides to undergo gender reassignment surgery. She commences a relationship with Liz (who is homosexual) but states that she herself is not homosexual and that she identifies as a heterosexual woman. Her identity is also fortified as she clarifies that she wants to “get rid of the man on the outside.” This relationship draws into question the complexities of sexuality as well as its fluidity for the audience in both cultures. In fact, the translation is produced faithfully (except for the omission of “beautiful woman”), which is translated only as *bellissima*, therefore placing less emphasis on gender and more so on the aesthetic results. Sandrelli (2016) indicates that there are still very few LGBT characters in Italian mainstream media, even today, and therefore the character of Sophia Lopez within the timeframe of 2003 most certainly brings to the forefront key questions of sexuality that were arguments of greater polarisation than compared to the current day in both cultures.

6.4. Female identity

A brief note must also be made regarding the other two main characters who were identified as key within the corpus i.e. Julia (Sean’s wife) and Grace (the clinic’s psychologist). The two characters represent a relative degree of juxtaposition in terms of their personalities. Julia is initially portrayed as insecure about herself as she asks her husband if she needs an operation on her breasts (16) and their marriage is in crisis from the very beginning of the first episode.

(16)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
J: I kind of feel that my boobs are disappearing. Do you think I should consider something?	J: Ho l'impressione di essere piatta come un'asse da stiro. Pensi che dovrei prendere qualche provvedimento?

Her initial presentation to the show in the first episode is through these insecurities, however, despite her initial fragility, she then decides to revendicate her independence by returning to university to study medicine (previously abandoned due to falling pregnant). Julia’s is a complex character and confronts a number of highs and lows

throughout the season including a miscarriage, a paternity test for her firstborn as well as Sean's infidelity.

Grace, on the other hand, is first introduced as a self-confident professional who Sean initially finds attractive and then later employs as the clinic's psychologist. She is a single career woman with several academic qualifications, and she consistently challenges the two male protagonists' positions and points of view. However, despite her strength of character, she still has to defend her position as a woman within the plastic surgery clinic and is eventually seduced by Christian following an argument where she accuses of him of having an addiction to sex (17).

(17)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Grace: I've given you the information. What you do with it is up to you. Christian: Dr. Santiago, perhaps you should consider having your own orgasm... every now and then so that you don't have to live through mine.	Grace: Le ho fornito le informazioni. Sta a lei decidere ora. Christian: Perché non contempla la possibilità di avere, di tanto in tanto, un orgasmo suo? Così non dovrebbe vivere dei miei.

The translation is rendered faithfully in the target language and this excerpt is indicative of frequent interactions that Grace has with Christian. Of note, is the formality used, which in the source text is presented through the use of Grace's title (Dr. Santiago) and in the target text is achieved through the use of *Lei*.

The representation of these female figures is significant in terms of gender within this series as, while both women correspond to emancipated females, they also both "depend upon" the male protagonists in different ways. Therefore, overall, they still fall under the umbrella of female characters who exist in association with their male protagonist counterparts (von Flotow/Josephy-Hernández 2018).

7. Conclusions

The scope for investigating gender roles within this *Nip/Tuck* television series is ample. The main arguments addressed included the protagonists' interactions and relationships with the other main characters, questions of sexual identity, transgender identity and female gender roles. While the arguments of sexual and transgender identity would appear to be in line with the historical socio-cultural advancements of that time (2003), the female gender roles seem to be represented (and translated) in a more "traditional" way. Indeed, all of the heterosexual women in this series are sexualised to a certain extent and co-exist along with their relationships connected to the two male protagonists.

In terms of translation choices, considering the relatively explicit and sexual nature of this series, along with its flagrant (sometimes taboo) language in the source culture, there are several instances of censorship in the target culture. However, this is a feature which would appear to continue into the current day (Beseghi 2016; Dore/Zarrelli 2018). Despite this, the overall subtitled translation would appear to be appropriate and faithful even though there are clear instances of censorship into the target culture, regarding homosexuality in particular. Indeed, further investigation in this vein, as well as into topics which were not covered in this paper (i.e. sex and identity in terms of "body parts"), would likely lead to further interesting considerations and will be pursued in future studies which also include the successive seasons.

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What Gender-Neutral Legislation Owes to Grammar: The Concept of ‘Gender’ in Legal English and the Italian ‘Guidelines for Use of Gender-Sensitive Language in Legislation’

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, the instruction by which words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, establishes a convention that is merely linguistic (Doleschal 2000; Plaster/Polinsky 2010). However, one should consider the historical reasons that contributed to the establishment of this rule and determined the choice of the masculine to be used as an epicene for masculine and feminine. In the 1970s, the legislative drafting policy conventionally known as the masculine rule, whereby *he* includes *she*, raised opposition under the pressure of feminist movements in the United States and Europe, and calls were increasingly made to change such a sexist language. By the 1980s and 1990s, other social groups, such as the gay community, became aware of the need for gender-neutral legislation. In the 1990s and 2000s, the adoption of plain English style forced legislative drafters to basically avoid sentences of undue length, superfluous definitions, repeated words and gender specificity with the aim of achieving clarity, minimizing ambiguity, and enhance gender-neutrality. In this regard, Williams observes that (2011: 139)

with the burgeoning of the feminist movement in the western world during the latter half of the 20th century, the question of drafting legislative texts according to principles of gender neutrality emerged as part of a more general policy which aimed at removing the socio-economic differences resulting from long-standing discrimination against women.

Non-sexist language campaigns have been under way for a few decades now, especially focusing on gender-specific terms (but also pronouns), which in turn are parallel to women's liberation movements, to the increasing attention given to the LGBTQ¹ rights and other relevant societal changes.

Gender-neutral language, also called non-sexist, gender-inclusive, or non-gender-specific language², refers to language that includes words or expressions that cannot be taken to refer to one gender only. As a matter of fact, languages vary widely in terms of gender systems showing differences in the number of classes, underlying assignment rules and how and where gender is marked. In everyday speech, the word gender is usually associated with the biological and social differences between men and women (as in the case of Italian), and the view that grammatical gender mirrors natural gender is still evident in the terms masculine, feminine, and neuter that are used to label individual gender distinctions, especially in Indo-European languages (Corbett 2013). Certainly, not all languages function like this, and many languages do not have grammatical gender at all, as in the case of English. In order to give an account of this relevant distinction, Audring (2016: 2-3) observes

of those [languages] that do, some disregard the difference between male and female and assign all words for humans or for living beings to the same class. Yet other languages have a special 'vegetable' gender for plants, a gender for foodstuffs, a gender for large or important things, a gender for liquids or abstracts, and many more. Such patterns remind us that the word gender (Greek: γένος) originally meant 'kind' rather than 'sex'. While the split into male and female is the most common semantic base of gender systems, it is by no means the only option.

Considering the statements above, the aim of this research is to analyze the recent evolution of the EU norms and directions (Santaemilia 2013; Šarčević/Robertson 2013; Šarčević 2016) towards 'gender-equality' (Litosseliti 2006; Stefanou/Xanthaki 2008; Mclean 2013), and their effect upon the Italian legislative drafting. In particular, the focus will

1 Oxford English Dictionary defines LGBTQ an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (or questioning), viz. the LGBTQ community.
2 <Priority Gender Equality (unesco.org)>.

be on the specificities of the selected languages (i.e., English and Italian), and the lexico-grammatical strategies adopted by Italian legislative drafters (Sabatini 1978; Cavagnoli/Mori 2019) to provide a version of the EU normative acts (2008-2020) with a gender fair and symmetric representation of men and women.

2. English and Italian in comparison

The word gender is usually associated with the biological and social differences between men and women. In addition, people are probably aware of the fact that languages, such as Italian and Spanish, can have masculine and feminine words. So at first glance, it may seem that grammatical gender is a reflection of natural gender in grammar.

Research on gender and language has demonstrated that two categories of languages exist: gender languages and languages without grammatical gender³ (Corbett 1991, 2007, 2013; Hellinger/Bußann 2001; Audring 2016). Given the fact that a lack of grammatical gender in a language does not mean that gender in the broader sense cannot be communicated, gender-related messages can be constructed by resorting to a variety of linguistic means. For this reason, and notwithstanding an ongoing debate over the cross-linguistic analysis of gender, scholars working in the field of gender and language have generally agreed on the identification of four categories of gender, namely grammatical, lexical, referential and social gender (Bergvall *et al.* 1996; Unterbeck *et al.* 2000; Sunderland 2006; Prewitt-Freilino *et al.* 2012). For our purposes, the analysis has concentrated on the

3 Arabic, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, Spanish, Swedish and Welsh belong to the category of gender languages. Whereas, English, Finnish and Turkish are grouped in the category of non-gender languages.

differences/similarities in the field of gender and language between the two selected languages, i.e., English and Italian.

2.1. English language

In the case of the English language (hereafter, EN), while Old English had three gender classes (feminine, masculine, neuter), the category of grammatical gender was lost by the end of the 14th century due to the decay of inflectional endings and the disintegration of declensional classes. Unlike German and Italian, which have several elements inside and outside the noun phrase (determiners, adjectives, pronouns) that vary according to the noun's grammatical gender, Modern English shows no such morphological agreement. Table 1 below shows the categories of gender in EN.

grammatical	no longer a (grammatical) gender language	Old English (750-1100/1150 AD) had three gender classes→ the category of 'grammatical gender' was lost by the end of the 14th century
lexical	EN has a restricted class of personal nouns with lexical gender	their semantic specification includes a property [+female] or [+male] <i>mother/father; aunt/uncle; queen/king</i>
referential	linguistic expressions to the non-linguistic reality	it identifies a referent as female, male or gender-indefinite <i>citizen, patient, individual</i>
social (a)	the semantic bias of an otherwise unspecified noun towards one or the other gender	stereotypically <i>nurse</i> female persons <i>surgeon</i> male ones
social (b)	general human nouns	traditional practice prescribes the choice of <i>he</i> in neutral contexts <i>pedestrian, consumer, patient</i>

Table 1. EN's categories of gender

In the EN, for instance, family relationship nouns are lexically specified as carrying semantic property, female or male, that relate to the sex of

referent. For this reason, those personal nouns may be described as gender-specific, either female-specific or male-specific.

In the case of terms without lexical gender, i.e., gender-indefinite nouns such as *individual* or *person*, pronominal choice is usually, but not always, determined by the grammatical gender of the antecedent noun or subject to which they are related. Referential gender, therefore, identifies a referent as female, male, or gender-indefinite by linking linguistic terms to the non-linguistic realities. In referential gender, when reference is made to a particular subject, the “choice of anaphoric pronouns may be referentially motivated and may override the noun’s grammatical gender” (Hellinger/Bußmann 2001: 9). Most English personal nouns, however, are unspecified for gender, and can be used to refer to both female and male referents, e.g., *person*, *neighbor*, *engineer*, *movie star*, *drug addict*.

Then, social gender refers to the semantic bias of an otherwise unspecified noun towards one or the other gender, as in the case of *nurse* and *teacher* denoting stereotypically female persons, and *surgeon* and *professor* male ones. Social gender has to do with stereotypical assumptions about what the appropriate social roles for women and men are, including expectations about who will be a typical member of the class of, say, *surgeon* or *nurse*. Deviations from such assumptions will often require formal markings, for example by adjectival modification: *female surgeon* or *male nurse*. Even for general human nouns such as *pedestrian*, *consumer* or *patient*, traditional practice prescribes the choice of *he* in neutral contexts.

Languages with and without grammatical gender have generated processes of derivation and compounding which have an important function in the formation of gendered personal nouns, particularly in the use of existing terms and the creation of new feminine (f.) equivalent terms, as in the case of the area of occupational terms, for instance, f. *actress* from masculine (m.) *actor* and f. *chairwoman* from m. *chairman*.⁴

4 The suffix *-ess* entered the English language with French words such as *countess*, *duchess*, *adulteress*. Words like *authoress*, *goddess* and *jewess* date from Middle English. Modern English derivations include *poetess*, *actress*, *seamstress* and *stewardess*. Traditional descriptions of English word-formation

Then, the agreement establishes a syntactic relationship between a noun's satellite element, e.g., an article, adjective, pronominal or verbal form, and the noun's gender class. Traditionally, agreement has favored the masculine in coordination and, generally, masculine agreement has predominated. On the contrary, feminine agreement is female-specific and, in many contexts, non-obligatory and irregular, depending on the extralinguistic factors such as tradition, prescription or speaker attitude (Audring 2016). In this regard, pronominalization has been "a powerful strategy of communicating gender both in languages with and without grammatical gender" (Hellinger/Bußmann 2001: 14) as well. Pronouns may emphasize traditional and/or reformed practices, as when a speaker chooses between a false generic (i.e., *he*) or a more gender-neutral choice (i.e., singular *they*). The interpretation of pronominalization as one type of agreement remains controversial. English exemplifies a type of relation between noun and pronoun which is not syntactically motivated. Only reflexes of the original grammatical gender system remain in the third person singular pronouns (*he, she, it*), and the choice of anaphoric pronouns is controlled by lexical-semantic properties of the antecedent, by referential gender (including intended reference), or social gender. Corbett (1991: 169) concludes that pronouns "may be the means by which particular languages divide nouns into different agreement classes". However, this classification is semantically based, and the EN is not any more a gender language.

2.2 Italian language

The Italian language (hereafter, IT) belongs to gender languages that usually have two or three gender classes, and among them frequently feminine and masculine. Table 2 below shows the categories of gender in the IT.

discuss phonological variation in pairs like *author/authoress* vs. *governor/governess*, but do not even mention the gender-stereotypical semantic asymmetries involved in *governor/governess*, *mister/mistress*, and *major/majoret* (Hellinger/Bußmann 2001).

grammatical	two gender classes feminine (female) and masculine (male) often linked to biological sex	inanimate entities → gender assignment is semantically arbitrary animate entities → human vs. non- human entities
lexical	two subtypes	same lexical root <i>ragazza/ragazzo</i> (EN <i>boy/girl</i>) nominal root does not permit gender specification <i>insegnante</i> (EN <i>teacher</i>)
referential	linguistic expressions to the non-linguistic reality	their semantic specification includes a property [+female] or [+male] specified by external modifiers, e.g., definite articles <i>lo psichiatra</i> (m.) / <i>la psichiatra</i> (f.) → (EN <i>psychiatrist</i>)
social (a)	the semantic bias of an otherwise unspecified noun towards one or the other gender	stereotypically IT <i>tata</i> (f.) female persons → (EN <i>nanny</i>) <i>chirurgo</i> (m.), <i>giudice</i> (m.) male ones → (EN <i>surgeon, judge</i>)
social (b)	general human nouns	<i>Gli avvocati</i> sono stati convocati dal <i>giudice</i> (<i>he</i> includes <i>she</i>) → (EN <i>Attorneys</i> have been summoned to the <i>judge's</i> office)

Table 1. IT's categories of gender

The IT belongs to the eastern Romance languages of the Indo-European language family (Lockwood 1972), and in morphology, IT reflects the clear separation of verbal and nominal inflection characteristic of Latin, the latter inflection also including pronouns, determiners and adjectives. Nouns belong to one of two grammatical gender classes (feminine and masculine), they inflect for number (singular and plural), but not for case (Vincent 1988). As Thüne (2002: 189) observes,

grammatical gender has specific linguistic functions, but at the same time it is related to people's perception and experience of reality. Language is therefore not neutral, because it influences the symbolic systems of speaker. And it is precisely grammatical gender which is the principal category through which the difference between female and male may be represented symbolically.

For this reason, within the class of inanimate entities in IT, gender is an inflectional phenomenon and gender assignment is semantically arbitrary. In the case of animate entities, a further semantic distinction is made between human and non-human entities.

When considering lexical gender, the differentiation of feminine or masculine gender is made possible either through the inflectional morphology of nouns, or the use of satellite elements such as determiners and adjectives. As regards the morphology of nouns, two categories can be identified:

- in the 1st category two subtypes are identifiable: (i) there are nouns where referential gender is expressed by the same lexical roots, which have the corresponding grammatical gender and may be followed by gender-specific endings, such as f. (sg./pl.) *ragazza /ragazze* (EN *girl/girls*) and m. (sg./pl.) *ragazzo/ragazzi* (EN *boy/boys*); (ii) in a limited number of cases the suffix for the masculine singular is *-e*, such as m. (sg./pl.) *signore/signori* (EN *sir/sirs*);
- in the 2nd category, a huge number of cases the gender-specification cannot be derived from the nominal root, and satellite elements, such as determiners and/or adjectives, must be used in order to specify the gender. This class contains nouns such as (sg./pl.) *giudice/giudici* (EN *judge/judges*) and (sg./pl.) *insegnante/insegnanti* (EN *teacher/teachers*). In these cases, the suffixes *-e/-i* only signals number. Many agentive nouns can be found in this class.

Then, IT has a certain number of suffixes that form common nouns which have the same form for both genders. Here, referential gender is specified by external modifiers, such as determiners f./sg. *la psichiatra* and m./sg. *lo psichiatra* (EN *psychiatrist*).

As well as in the EN, social gender refers to the semantic bias of an otherwise unspecified noun towards one or the other gender, e.g., f./sg. *tata* (EN *nanny*) denoting stereotypically female persons, and m./sg. *chirurgo* (EN *surgeon*) male ones. Generally speaking, social gender has to do with the stereotypical assumptions about the appropriate social roles that have been traditionally considered for men and women, including expectations about who would be a typical member of the class, i.e., *tata* and *chirurgo*. Deviations from such

assumptions often require formal markings, for example by adjectival modification: *tata uomo* or *chirurgo donna*. Even in the case of general human nouns such as *passante* (EN *passer-by*), *consumatore* (EN *consumer*), and *paziente* (EN *patient*), practice has traditionally prescribed the choice of the pronoun *he* in neutral contexts.

Word-formation is a particularly sensitive area in which gender may be communicated in the IT as well. This is evident in the case of the recent formation words such as *ministra* (EN *female minister*) that derives from *ministro* (EN *male minister*), and *sindaca* (EN *female mayor*) that derives from *sindaco* (EN *male mayor*). Indeed, the IT female-specific suffix is *-essa*, such as *studentessa/studente* (EN *female student/male student*) and *professoressa/professore* (EN *female professor/male professor*), though the problematic nature of the suffix was already noted by Sabatini (1978), in that *-essa*, more often than other feminine suffixes (f.) *-trice/* (m.) *-tore*, as in the case of *scrittrice/scrittore* (EN *female writer/male writer*), may bear derogatory and offensive connotations (Robustelli 2000).⁵ Hence, the existence of alternative forms which follow the morphological patterns of male terms.

Reflecting the clear separation of verbal and nominal inflection characteristic of Latin, with the latter inflection also including pronouns, determiners and adjectives, Italian nouns belong to one of two grammatical genders (f./m.), they inflect for number (sg./pl.), but not for case, in addition to the rich inflectional morphology of Italian verbs that signals person and number of the subject in all finite paradigms. Personal pronouns are mostly used for emphasis, for example, when emphasis is placed on the referent to which the pronoun refers, as in the sentence “*Lei* ha scritto l'email, non Luca” (EN *She* has written the email, not Luca / *She wrote* the email, not Luca). With the

5 In this case, the corresponding masculine terms belong to one of many derivational classes, for example, the classes ending in *-o* (*avvocato* / EN *male attorney*) and *-e* (*conte* / EN *earl*). Historically, morphological feminine ending in *-essa* referred to the wife of the person denoted by the masculine lexical base (i.e., *baronessa* / EN ‘the wife of the baron’), or to the female counterpart of the referent denoted by the masculine term, such as *poetessa* (EN *female poet*) from *poeta* (EN *male poet*) (Thüne 2002).

exception of participial forms, that may show gender agreement with the object in active structures, as in the expression f./sg. “sei *arrivata*” (EN you are just arrived / here you are), gender has no direct morphological representation in the verbs.

Then, in the IT two sets of pronominal forms can be identified: the *free* (stressed) forms and the *clitic* (unstressed) forms. More specifically,

- *clitic* forms occur as if they were unstressed affixes of the verb, representing the unmarked pronominal realizations of direct and indirect objects, e.g., non *lo trovo* (EN I can't find *it/him*). Usually, gender is marked explicitly only in the third person singular and plural direct object forms f. and m./sg. *la/lo*, and f. and m./pl. *le/li* (i.e., *la chiamo stasera* / EN I'll call *her* this evening) and *lo chiamo stasera* (EN I'll call *him* this evening);
- *free* pronouns occur in both subject and direct/indirect object function and show gender-variable forms in the third singular person: *lui/lei* (EN *he, him/ she, her*) and *esso/essa* (EN *it*).⁶

However, in unmarked contexts, the masculine form is generally preferred in the case of both male and female references (m./pl. *li chiamo stasera* / EN *I call them* this evening).

3. Reforming legal language

3.1. EU Drafting guidance for gender-neutral language

The EU attaches great importance to gender issues, as it is clearly seen from the commitments in its texts to gender equality, and the establishment at the EU level of bodies or committees to focus on those issues. Among the most recent EU actions and policies taken to address gender issues it is worth mentioning *The European Institute for Gender*

⁶ In the case of m. *essi* / f. *esse* (EN *them*), this pronominal form is stylistically marked and syntactically restricted to written texts, such as scientific, legal and literary language.

Equality (hereafter, EIGE)⁷ founded in 2006 in accordance to the Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a European Institute for Gender Equality.⁸ EIGE is an autonomous body aimed at strengthening the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all the EU policies and the resulting national policies, and fighting against discrimination based on sex, as well as raising EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. Then, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (hereafter, *Istanbul Convention*),⁹ that entered into force in August 2014, represents the first instrument in Europe to set legally binding standards specifically to prevent gender-based violence, protect victims of violence and punish perpetrators.

In 2016, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on gender mainstreaming in which a number of tools are strongly recommended, including the attention on the use of specific terminology and definitions in relation to gender equality issues and promoting ex-ante and ex-post assessment of draft proposals for legislation¹⁰. In 2018, the European Parliament issued updated guidelines on gender-neutral language in the European Parliament. That booklet of some 12 pages contains words of caution: "Parliament's role as a European legislator also must be taken into consideration when seeking to achieve gender-neutral language. Not all solutions that could otherwise be applied can be used in the context of legislation, which requires clarity, simplicity, precision and consistency" (2018: 9).¹¹

In the case of the other EU institutions, the Council of the EU in 2011 adopted the 2011-2020 European Pact for gender equality¹²,

7 <European Institute for Gender Equality | European Institute for Gender Equality (europa.eu)>.

8 <EUR-Lex - 32006R1922 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)>.

9 <CETS 210 - Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (coe.int)>.

10 <Texts adopted - Gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament - Tuesday, 8 March 2016 (europa.eu)>.

11 <www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf>.

12 <EUR-Lex - 52011XG0525(01) - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)>.

whereas the European Commission treats gender equality as an important goal in its policy on fundamental rights.¹³

Notwithstanding those actions and policies, the issue of gender-neutral drafting in legislation is not even mentioned in the guidance drawn up by the legislative drafting experts of the EU institutions. It is noteworthy that the Joint Practical Guide for persons involved in the drafting of EU legislation¹⁴, is a text of about 45 pages updated in 2013 that in at least one instance is not drafted in gender-neutral terms: “*The author must indicate how he intends to implement that provision (12.2)*”. To find any guidance on the topic for EU drafters, it is necessary to look at the general guides on style in the EU institutions (Robinson 2020). A brief reference is found in the *Interinstitutional Style Guide*, which is designed to harmonize documents of every kind produced by all EU bodies:

Much existing EU legislation is not gender neutral and the masculine pronouns ‘he’ etc. are used generically to include women. However, gender-neutral language is nowadays preferred wherever possible.¹⁵

The *Interinstitutional Style Guide* gives some general suggestions on gender-neutral writing; yet much of these hints are not applicable to legislative drafting. This is, for instance, the case of pronouns:

Pronouns. If the text clearly refers to a specific individual on a particular occasion, and you know the gender of the person concerned, use a gender-specific pronoun:

The High Representative (Baroness Ashton) voiced her objections.

The President of the Commission (Mr Delors) said that he welcomed the common position reached at the Council (10.6 Gender Neutral Language).¹⁶

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- 13 The European Commission has adopted a Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 as the framework for work towards full gender equality <<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f3dd1274-7788-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>>.
- 14 First drawn up in 2000 with the current, second edition published in 2013 <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/content/techleg/EN-legislative-drafting-guide.pdf>>.
- 15 <<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-000500.htm>>.
- 16 Part Four, point 10.6 <<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-000500.htm>>.

Similar guidance is given in the *English Style Guide* issued by the English-language translators at the Commission in a section dealing more broadly with inclusive language, and providing some drafting techniques that resemble those adopted by most of the English-speaking jurisdictions.¹⁷ The extract below is taken from Part I.15 of the *English Style Guide*¹⁸ and provides some general indication on how to avoid gender-specific language:

In instructions, use the second person or the imperative: *You* should first turn on your computer” or “*First turn* on your computer instead of *The user* should first turn on *his/her* computer.

Where possible draft in the plural; this is very common in English for general references: *Researchers* must be objective about *their* findings.

Omit the pronoun altogether: The chair expressed dissent instead of The chair expressed *his/her/its* dissent.

Substitute ‘the’ or ‘that’ for the possessive pronoun: A member of the Court of Auditors may be deprived of *the right* to a pension.

In current usage, ‘they/them/their/theirs’ are used to refer to singular nouns: This does not apply when *a passenger misses* a connecting flight for which *they* have a reservation.

Repeat the noun: This does not apply when *a passenger misses* a connecting flight for which *that passenger* has a reservation.

Traditionally, the English texts of the EU Treaties and legislation have been drafted according to the masculine rule, whereby he includes she. At times, the EU legislative drafters resort to multiple personal pronouns:

Art. 234 TFEU

If the motion of censure is carried by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, representing a majority of the component members of the European Parliament, *the members* of the Commission shall resign as a body and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall resign

17 For more information on this issue, see Greenberg (2008).

18 <https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/english-resources-english-style-guide_en>.

from duties that *he or she* carries out in the Commission. *They* shall remain in office [...].

This extract, in particular, is one of the examples found in the *Treaty on European Union (TEU)* and the *Treaty on the Functioning of European Union (TFEU)*,¹⁹ that show the occurrence of a number of variants of gender-neutral drafting (i.e., plural *they*, alternative pronouns *he or she* repetition, etc.), some rather confusing.

3.2. Italian drafting guidance for gender-symmetric language

In the 1980s, the publication of *Il sessismo nella lingua italiana* (EN *Sexism in the Italian language*) (Sabatini 1987) contributed to the debate on gender in Italy and drew the attention of public opinion to the relationship between gender identity and language. By illustrating the role that language plays in the social construction of reality, it called for a language that neither privileges the male gender, nor raises prejudices against women, hence respecting both genders. Given the morphological distinction between grammatical masculine gender and feminine gender, the latter has been traditionally included in the masculine form. For example, *i consumatori* (m. /pl.) (EN *consumers*) can signify male consumers, and both the male and female consumers. This is the case of what Sabatini (1987: 25) defines ‘grammatical asymmetry’, i.e., the disparity in the treatment of men and women in grammatical forms, as opposed to the ‘semantic asymmetry’, which relate to the discursive differences and lexical usage (Thüne: 201-202). Likewise, the masculine form for professional titles and institutional roles has been the norm, even when it refers to a woman.

Apart from the asymmetries that have to do with the rich agreement system of Italian, another important area in which asymmetries are evident is in the use of pronouns. The masculine form is prevalent in the use of pronouns, not only when reference is made to both male and female persons, but also in cases where referential gender is indeterminate (as previously shown in Section 2.2.)

19 <EUR-Lex - 12012E/TXT - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)>.

Then, the theme of gender and language was resumed in the *Manuale di stile. Strumenti per semplificare il linguaggio delle pubbliche amministrazioni*²⁰ (EN *Style Handbook. Tools to simplify the language of public administration*) in 1997, and lately in 2007 the publication of *Misure per attuare parità e pari opportunità tra uomini e donne nelle Pubbliche Amministrazioni*²¹ (EN *Guidelines to implement equality and equal opportunities between men and women in the Public Administrations*) added further recommendations to use a non-discriminatory gender language in all working Italian documents. Several administrations have adhered to this invitation, such as the partnership between l'Accademia della Crusca and the city of Florence in the project *Genere & Linguaggio* (EN *Gender & Language*), and the publication of the first *Linee guida per l'uso del genere nel linguaggio amministrativo* (EN *Guidelines for the use of gender in administrative language*).²² Nevertheless, Sabatini's recommendations have remained largely unfulfilled, given the resistances to adopt a language representative of the two genders both in governmental communication and in ordinary spoken language.

Within this context, it is interesting to consider the Italian version of the *Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament*, the EU booklet on the use of gender-neutral and non-sexist language in parliamentary texts (2008) that addresses specific indications to the Italian legislative drafter. Firstly, the Italian version points out that in Italy the debate on the use of gender-symmetric language is still in its infancy; in the language currently used by the media, especially by the press, as well as in common spoken and written language, very few neologisms are used even today, and there is a tendency to use the masculine with neutral function as shown in the following extract taken from the handbook itself:

A) USO DEL TERMINE "UOMO"

Il termine 'uomo' nella lingua italiana non ha necessariamente una connotazione sessista e nella sua accezione idiomatica può essere utilizzato nella redazione di testi. Il termine 'uomo' o 'uomini' è infatti ammesso quando

20 Fioritto 1997.

21 <<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2007/07/27/07A06830/sg>>.

22 <lineeguidagenere - Cecilia Robustelli.pdf (uniroma1.it)>.

è sinonimo di ‘persona nel suo complesso di diritti e doveri’ o ‘essere vivente’, ‘essere umano’ o ancora come sinonimo di ‘genere umano’ (2008: 11).

Then, the booklet advises to specify the gender of *epiceno* (EN *epicene*)²³ nouns by using the feminine and the masculine articles as appropriate. In the case of the noun *giudice* (EN *judge*), it is recommended to use *il giudice* when referring to a *male judge*, and *la giudice* when referring to a *female judge*. Given the fact that the Italian professional world has a considerable number of *epicèno* words, such as *presidente* (EN *president*) and *ingegnere* (EN *engineer*), the booklet suggests distinguishing between:

- the function intended as a general category that describes the job the responsibilities and powers associated with it:

Con riferimento alle funzioni, è ammesso l'uso del maschile con valenza ‘neutra’ declinato al singolare quando ci si riferisce a una funzione in astratto, a prescindere dal genere della persona che la ricopre [...] e non fanno riferimento a persone fisiche, ma piuttosto a funzioni in astratto. (2008: 14)

and

- the physical person who carries out the function in order to find the proper noun (m. or f.) and the satellite elements:

Ove è noto il genere della persona fisica che esercita la funzione, va usato invece il genere grammaticale corrispondente [...]. (2008: 15)

In this regard, it is interesting to look at the instructions on the formation of the female version of the Italian male terms indicating professions that are typically accompanied with masculine determiners and/or adjectives

Per la formazione dei termini femminili vanno seguite le normali regole grammaticali di formazione delle parole, ovvero le parole che terminano in -o diventano -a: *avvocata generale, sindaca, ministra*;

23 *Epicèno* means both genders and does not distinguish between masculine and feminine (OED; Merriam-Webster).

le parole che terminano in -aio, -ario diventano -aia, -aria: *notaia, primaria*;
 le parole che terminano in -iere diventano -iera: *infermiera, consigliera*;
 le parole che terminano in -sore diventano -sora: *revisora, assessora*;
 le parole che terminano in -tore diventano -trice: *direttrice, redattrice*.

In this regard, it is worth noticing that *avvocata* (EN *female attorney*) is a term permeated by the Italian culture and by the supposed neutrality that the institutions attribute to the male gender, which is not neutral (Prewitt-Freilino *et al.* 2012). This is particularly evident in the meaning(s) of the word provided by the Italian dictionaries (Dizionario Treccani; Grandi Dizionari):

- *avvocata* has a religious meaning (i.e., the Holy Mary):

avvocata s. f. [femm. di avvocato]. – 1. Nel linguaggio teologico, protettrice, interceditrice, attributo della Madonna o di sante. 2. Sinon. non com. di avvocatessa. [...];

- it is considered a new word indicating *female attorney*, and not frequently deployed since *avvocato* (*male attorney*) is generally used to indicate both male and female persons working in the legal field;
- or, it used with negative (and rather offensive) connotations:

avvocato s. m. (f. -essa o -a) [dal lat. advocatus, propr. part. pass. di advocare «chiamare presso», nel lat. imperiale «chiamare a propria difesa», e con uso assol. «assumere un avvocato»]. – 1. Professionista forense che assiste la parte nel giudizio [...]. 2.estens. Difensore, intercessore, protettore [...]. 3. Locuz. particolari: a. delle cause perse, chi assume la difesa di cause o di opinioni insostenibili [...]. ♦ *Per indicare una donna che esercita l'avvocatura nell'uso giuridico è usato il maschile avvocato, ma sono sempre più frequenti, nell'uso com., i femminili avvocatessa e avvocatessa, quest'ultimo anche per indicare scherz. la moglie di un avvocato, o una donna che ha la parlantina sciolta, che si accalora nel discorrere e nel sostenere le ragioni proprie o altrui [...];*

avvocata s. f. 1 non com. Donna che esercita l'avvocatura; 2 scherz. Donna chiacchierona; 3 RELIG Colei che protegge, che intercede, riferito alla Madonna.

Lastly, this example is pivotal and suggests that any formation of a female version of professional male terms needs to be carefully adjusted

according to the Italian culture and the specific context where the new terms are meant to be used.

3.3. EU Directives: EN and IT versions

The comparative analysis of the EN version and the IT version of the EU acts issued after the publication of the *Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament* booklet (2008), confirms that the EU legislation still presents different approaches to gender issues. As the research reveals, this is particularly evident in the *Regulations and Directives* issued from 2016 to 2019. The following example is taken from Art. 20(1) of the *Regulation* (EU) 2016/679:

The data subject shall have the right to receive the personal data concerning *him or her*, which *he or she* has provided to a controller, in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format [...].²⁴ (EN version)

The EN version has the alternative pronouns *him or her* and *he or she* that are acceptably neutral. However, some English-speaking jurisdictions have begun questioning the use of *he or she* because it does not include “a body of persons incorporated or unincorporate”²⁵, nor does it refer to individuals who do not identify with a specific gender. Furthermore, it is not really gender-neutral and especially objectionable at a time where gender, in addition to masculine and feminine, includes LGBTQ. *He or she* introduces complexity into the sentence because a frequent repetition of it can be awkward, and concerns are expressed about the order of the personal pronouns (i.e., *she or he* instead of *he or she*). Lastly, not only *he or she* and *his or her* constructions are “short cuts that may be understandable in English but cannot be replicated in

24 <EUR-Lex - 02016R0679-20160504 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)>.

25 Greenberg (2008) warns about the drafters’ habit of using the masculine personal pronoun *he* in relation to a *person* despite the fact that Schedule 1 to the *Interpretation Act 1978* defines a *person* “a body of persons corporate or unincorporated”. Indeed, *he or she* can be used only in the case of provisions directed exclusively to individuals.

many other languages” (Robinson 2020: 29), but also, they could be possibly problematic with respect to the EU Guideline 5 that states:

Throughout the process leading to their adoption, draft acts shall be framed in terms and sentence structures which respect the multilingual nature of Union legislation; concepts or terminology specific to any one national legal system are to be used with care²⁶.

On the contrary, the IT version of Art. 20(1) of the *Regulation* (EU) 2016/679 opts for a male representation (m./sg. *interessato*, m./sg. *lo...*), with no apparent reason for excluding the female gender (f./sg. *interessata*, f./sg. *la...*),

L'interessato ha il diritto di ricevere in un formato strutturato, di uso comune e leggibile da dispositivo automatico i dati personali che *lo* riguardano forniti [...].²⁷ (IT version)

and disregards letter B of the *Guidelines specific for the Italian Language* within the *Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament* booklet (2008: 12), where avoiding gender-specific language is suggested and the use of alternative constructions, preferably in short sentences, is recommended:

Ove possibile, preferibilmente nei testi brevi, è consigliabile esplicitare la forma maschile e femminile in riferimento a più persone. Questa strategia, che risponde a un criterio di "visibilità" del genere, è però meno indicata nei testi più lunghi perché appesantisce notevolmente la frase. Per tale motivo è anche poco indicata per i testi normativi. Ad esempio:

– *Tutti i consiglieri e tutte le consigliere prendano posto in aula.*

Nei testi più lunghi e/o normativi, per esigenze di leggibilità e di snellezza del periodo, può essere opportuno optare per altre strategie, improntate invece all'oscuramento del genere [...].²⁸

26 <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/content/techleg/EN-legislative-drafting-guide.pdf>>.

27 <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02016R0679-20160504&from=EN>>.

28 <[EUR-Lex - 02016R0679-20160504 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eur-lex-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02016R0679-20160504-EN-EN-LEX)>.

Overall, the analysis has revealed the existence of an interesting number of EU secondary legislation²⁹ where the IT version diverges from the EN version in the language representation of gender. For reason of space, only a few examples are reported here. However, the following extracts can be considered particularly representative of the discrepancies between the EN and IT versions when comparing the representation of gender in language in each of the two texts.

The first example is taken from the Directive 2012/13/EU, and Table 2 reports Articles 2.1, 3.2d, and 3.5 of the Directive in both the EN³⁰ and the IT³¹ version.

DIREKTIVE 2012/13/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 22 May 2012 on the right to information in criminal proceedings	DIRETTIVA 2012/13/UE DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E DEL CONSIGLIO del 22 maggio 2012 sul diritto all'informazione nei procedimenti penali
Art.2(1.) This Directive applies from the time <i>persons</i> are made aware by the competent authorities of a Member State that <i>they are suspected or accused</i> of having committed a criminal offence until the conclusion of the proceedings, which is understood to mean the final determination of the question whether <i>the suspect or accused person</i> has committed the criminal offence, including, where applicable, sentencing and the resolution of any appeal.	Art. 2(1). La presente direttiva si applica nei confronti delle <i>persone</i> che siano messe a conoscenza dalle autorità competenti di uno Stato membro, <i>di essere indagate o imputate per un reato</i> , fino alla conclusione del procedimento, vale a dire fino alla decisione definitiva che stabilisce <i>se l'indagato o l'imputato</i> abbia commesso il reato inclusi, se del caso, l'irrogazione della pena e l'esaurimento delle procedure d'impugnazione.

29 Every action taken by the EU is founded on the treaties. These binding agreements between EU member countries set out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its members. Treaties are the starting point for EU law and are known in the EU as primary law. The body of law that comes from the principles and objectives of the treaties is known as secondary law; and includes regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions, available at <Types of EU law | European Commission (europa.eu)>.

30 <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012L0013&from=EN>>.

31 *Ibid.*

Art.3(2d) the maximum number of hours or days <i>suspects or accused persons</i> may be deprived of liberty before being brought before a judicial authority.	Art.3(2d) il numero massimo di ore o giorni in cui l' <i>indagato o l'imputato</i> può essere <i>privato</i> della libertà prima di essere <i>condotto</i> dinanzi a un'autorità giudiziaria.
Art. 3(5) Member States shall ensure that <i>suspects or accused persons</i> receive the Letter of Rights written in a language that <i>they</i> understand. Where a Letter of Rights is not available in the appropriate language, <i>suspects or accused persons</i> shall be informed of <i>their</i> rights orally in a language that <i>they</i> understand. A Letter of Rights in a language that <i>they</i> understand shall then be given to <i>them</i> without undue delay.	Art. 3(5) Gli Stati membri provvedono affinché l' <i>indagato o l'imputato</i> riceva la comunicazione redatta in una lingua a <i>lui</i> comprensibile. Qualora la comunicazione non sia disponibile nella lingua appropriata, l' <i>indagato o l'imputato</i> è <i>informato</i> dei suoi diritti oralmente in una lingua a <i>lui</i> comprensibile. Senza indugio <i>gli</i> verrà quindi fornita la comunicazione dei diritti in una lingua a <i>lui</i> comprensibile.

Table 2. EN and IT versions of the Directive 2012/13/EU (Art. 2.1, 3.2d, 3.5) (emphasis added).

In the EN version, the main object is the *suspect or accused person(s)*. It is clear that the English drafter opts for the indefinite noun sg./pl. *person(s)* (here mostly used in the plural form) and the personal pronouns *they/them* to avoid gender-specificity. The IT version, on the contrary, shows a different pattern. With the exception of the first half of Art. 2.1, instead of using the indefinite noun sg./pl. *persona(e)* which is the Italian immediate equivalent for *person/s*, the Italian drafter constructs the expression *l'indagato o l'imputato* disregarding the English word *person* with no apparent reason. Additionally, this choice requires the use of the third male personal pronoun *lui/gli* and the past participle (*privato, condotto, informato*) that has to agree with the subject in gender and number (m./pl. *l'indagato o l'imputato*) when used with the IT auxiliary verb *essere* (EN *to be*).

The second example is taken from the Regulation (EU) 2018/1860, and Table 3 reports points n.6 and n.18 of the Regulation in both the EN³² and the IT³³ version.

REGULATION (EU) 2018/1860 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 28 November 2018 on the use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals	REGOLAMENTO (UE) 2018/1860 DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E DEL CONSIGLIO del 28 novembre 2018 relativo all'uso del sistema d'informazione Schengen per il rimpatrio di cittadini di paesi terzi cui soggiorno è irregolare
(6) This Regulation does not affect the rights and obligations of <i>third-country nationals</i> laid down in Directive 2008/115/EC. An alert entered into SIS for the purpose of return does not, in itself, constitute a determination of the status of the <i>third-country national</i> on the territory of Member States [...]	(6) Il presente regolamento lascia impregiudicati i diritti e gli obblighi <i>dei cittadini di paesi terzi</i> previsti dalla direttiva 2008/115/CE. Una segnalazione inserita nel SIS ai fini del rimpatrio non costituisce, di per sé, una determinazione dello status <i>del cittadino del paese terzo</i> sul territorio degli Stati membri [...].
(18) Personal data obtained by a Member State pursuant to this Regulation should not be transferred or made available to any third country. As a derogation to that rule, it should be possible to transfer such personal data to a third country where the transfer is subject to strict conditions and is necessary in individual cases in order to assist with the identification of a <i>third-country national</i> for the purposes of <i>his or her</i> return. [...] Furthermore, the extensive efforts of the Union in cooperating with the main countries of origin of illegally-staying <i>third-country nationals</i> subject to an obligation to return has not been able to ensure the systematic fulfillment by such third countries of the obligation established	(18) I dati personali ottenuti da uno Stato membro a norma del presente regolamento non dovrebbero essere trasferiti o resi disponibili a qualsiasi paese terzo. In deroga a tale norma, dovrebbe essere possibile trasferire tali dati personali a un paese terzo, qualora il trasferimento sia soggetto a condizioni rigorose e qualora sia necessario in singoli casi per contribuire all'identificazione di un <i>cittadino di paese terzo</i> allo scopo del <i>suo</i> rimpatrio. [...] A ciò si aggiunga che gli intensi sforzi prodigati dall'Unione per cooperare con i principali paesi di origine dei <i>cittadini di paesi terzi</i> il cui soggiorno è irregolare colpiti da provvedimento di rimpatrio non sono bastati ad assicurare il rispetto

32 <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2018:312:FULL&from=EN>>.

33 *Ibid.*

by international law to readmit own nationals. [...]	sistematico, da parte di tali paesi terzi, dell'obbligo stabilito dal diritto internazionale di riammettere i loro stessi cittadini. [...]
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Table 3. EN and IT versions of the Regulation (EU) 2018/1860

In the EN version, the main object is *third-country national(s)*. The English drafter opts for the indefinite noun *national(s)* (here mostly used in the plural form) and the alternative pronouns *his/her* used with *they/them* to avoid gender-specificity. The IT version, on the contrary, shows again a different pattern. Overall, the Italian version follows verbatim the EN text, with one interesting exception that occurs with the plural noun *cittadini* (IT version points 6 and 18). Here, the Italian drafter chooses the m./sg. *cittadino* without any indication of the corresponding f./sg. *cittadina*. In this case, the translator disregards letter B of the *Guidelines specific for the Italian Language within the Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament* booklet (2008:12), where avoiding gender-specific language is suggested through the use of alternative constructions (preferably in short sentences), or by resorting to the plural form of nouns (i.e., *cittadini*, EN *nationals*).

4. Concluding remarks

As shown in this chapter, both the EN and IT vary widely in terms of gender systems showing differences in the number of classes, underlying assignment rules and how and where gender is marked. In the IT, the word gender is usually associated with the biological and social differences between men and women, and the view that grammatical gender mirrors natural gender is still evident in the terms masculine, feminine and neuter that are used to label individual gender distinctions. This definitely is not the case of modern EN.

This analysis has considered the specificities of the selected languages (i.e., EN and IT) and the recent evolution of EU norms and directions towards gender-equality and their effect on the Italian legislation. Quite recently, the increasing tendencies of variation and change in the area of personal reference have been supported by language planning measures and the publication of recommendations and guidelines in the EU and in Italy, with a rather interesting usage of gender-neutral drafting techniques in both the EN and IT. Given the lexico-grammatical specificities of the IT, the analysis has revealed that the EU recommendations and guidelines for non-discriminatory language suggest legislative drafting techniques that offer alternatives aiming at a gender-fair (and symmetric) representation of individuals that are not always applicable to the IT legislative texts.

As an instrument of language planning, EU gender-neutral drafting may positively reinforce tendencies of linguistic change, so far as it is applicable according to the specificities of each Member State's national language, and at no more than a reasonable cost to brevity or intelligibility of the language versions (i.e., Italian version) of the EU original texts. Indeed, each language has important social-cultural functions in that it reflects social hierarchies and mechanisms of identification, and it contributes to the construction and communication of gender. To a large extent, the emergence of a public interest in language and gender depends both on the socio-political background, in particular the state of women's and other sexual minority group movements in the country concerned, and its local language. Future research could consider the impact of these factors on the construction of gender-sensitive language in the legislation.

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Let's make gender equality a reality: Discourse, Metadiscourse and Translation in EU Informative Brochures

1. Introduction

Two assumptions provide the point of departure for this study. One is that “EU official documents consistently tend to avoid being called ‘translations’ and the designation ‘language versions’ is preferred instead” (Koskinen 2000: 54). The second is that “translation in the EU is not translation in the strict sense of the word, but only ‘interlingual text reproduction’” (Kjaer 2007: 19) (cfr. Gibová 2009). With this in mind, a series of gender-related informative brochures produced by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) have been investigated in order to understand how certain features of metadiscourse were rendered in both the English and Italian versions. Our quantitative and qualitative analysis will look at the use of peculiar language constructions in the two languages in relation, among other aspects, to gender equality/inequality, women and men, stereotypes, male domination, female subordination, and the shaping of identity.

Features of metadiscourse (Hyland 2005) are scrutinized in the two languages in order to ascertain whether and to what extent they function as rhetorical markers and convey a persuasive rather than a

1 Although this paper has been jointly conceived, organised and developed, Michela Giordano is responsible for sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 4.1, 4.3. Maria Antonietta Marongiu is responsible for sections 2.1, 2.2, 3, 4.2. Introduction and Conclusions are a shared effort.

merely informative character to the texts being examined. It appears also that the underlying aim of the brochures is to disseminate and circulate gender-related good practices and procedures in controversial cultural contexts and environments, especially those associated with divisive matters. The issue of translation is paramount here, inasmuch as it poses the question of whether the different versions, with clearly somewhat diverse uses of discourse and metadiscourse features, are “translated texts”, “language versions” or “cultural adaptations” of informative texts, thus differentiating and distinguishing them from the two other types of EU texts, namely legislative and administrative (Felici 2010).

After giving an overview of the theoretical framework which forms the basis for this study, we will introduce our corpus and the methodology used to analyse it. We will investigate English and Italian gender-related informative brochures as a descriptive genre and informative text types. In order to answer our main research question, metadiscourse strategies have been analysed to consider how they impact the translation process itself.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Metadiscourse

The notion of metadiscourse first appeared in studies on speech communication during the 1980s (Crismore 1989; Vande Kopple 1985). Initially defined as “discourse about discourse”, it was later more precisely identified in specific discourse features writers use to guide the reader’s interpretation of the topical material provided. Vande Kopple’s (1985) initial classification of metadiscourse as commentaries used to clarify textual meaning on the one hand, and to provide interpersonal meaning on the other, was later to be elaborated by Hyland (2005).

In his seminal work, Hyland described metadiscourse as “an important means of facilitating communication, supporting a position,

increasing readability and building a relationship with an audience.” (2005: 5). He later described it as “the cover term for self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community.” (2005: 37). Accordingly, he provided a taxonomy of reference for the analysis of metadiscourse, defined as *an interpersonal model of metadiscourse* (Hyland 2005: 49), where he distinguished between the *interactive* and the *interpersonal* dimensions of discourse. The former dimension concerns the writer’s awareness of a participating audience and their “ways of organizing discourse, [...] and reveals the extent to which the text is constructed with the readers’ needs in mind”. The latter dimension concerns the writer’s intrusion and commentaries on the message, their textual ‘voice’, their rhetorical strategies to persuade, express judgement or attitude as well as orient interpretation.

2.2. Metadiscourse and translation

As communication is a social event, metadiscourse is context- and culture-dependent. Its use has to do with the conventions developed through participation in common situations, where interests and meanings are shared. Besides, metadiscourse choices may vary depending on the language, or may be genre-governed and subject to individual interpretation. This is why the use of metadiscourse must be taken into account in the translation of specialised texts.

In her analysis of metadiscursive elements in the translation of scientific texts, Suau Jiménez (2010) explains that *tenor* is one aspect of register, a token of Halliday’s (1978) *interpersonal function*, which together with genre, can be applied in the translation of specialized texts. The importance of the implications of genre and register analysis for translation lies in the fact that metadiscourse assists in the accomplishment of some relevant prescriptive functions in specialized fields. If texts are translated without considering metadiscourse of both the source and the target language and genre, the communicative goal and pragmatic purposes are likely to be violated, and the result would be a deficient and an unsatisfactory translation.

Register analysis essentially allows translators to identify *field*, *tenor* and *mode*. Tenor, in particular, tells us who the text sender and receiver are, and so translators try to adapt register to the addressee, making language more or less formal as the case may be. The interpersonal function, or tenor, accounts for the ways in which the writer addresses the reader, and, like the metadiscursive interactional resources, involves the reader in the text.

Herriman (2014) compares metadiscourse in English and Swedish non-fiction texts and their relative translations. She argues that translating a text involves taking into account the fact that the usage of metadiscourse in the target language may be influenced by different cultural preferences. Interactive features raise the level of explicitness in the text and provide new information which the translator believes the target language readers may need in order to interpret the text. Additionally, the interpersonal features help enhance emphasis, thereby increasing the readers' commitment to and involvement in the text. Furthermore, features such as self-mentions and attitude markers increase the visibility of the author, allowing translators to adapt the author-reader relationship of the original text to their target language readers. On this basis, changes made in metadiscourse features occur and appear to be an inherent part of the translation process.

2.3 Translation in the EU

There are a series of basic principles to take into account when studying or dealing with EU translations.

As early as 2000, Koskinen had carried out a study of translation in the EU Commission, stressing the fact that multilingualism is one of the key characteristics of the European Union and that all the official languages of the Member States have equal status. Accordingly, the author explains that the documents are not merely translated but drafted in all languages simultaneously, and that none of the 'versions' is a subordinate derivative of any other (2000: 54). Some years later, Kjær (2007) confirmed that the primary concern when translating legislation in the EU is the reproduction of words and phrases that can ensure coherence and consistency within and across the 23 equally authentic

language versions. Therefore, translation in the EU is not translation in the strict sense of the word but it is essentially “interlingual text reproduction” (2007: 87).

The concept of *institutional multilingualism* (Wagner *et al.* 2012: 1) means that all 23 languages of the EU have equal status. The EU has official languages, some of which are identified as *working languages* or *procedural languages* (English, French and German), or *core languages* as Gibová has termed them (2009: 193). However, the institutions produce legislation that is directly applicable to all citizens in all of the Member States. Therefore, this has to be available and accessible in a language all citizens can understand. Specifically, Council Regulation n.1, determining the languages to be used by the EU, does not mention or indeed refer specifically to translations (Wagner *et al.* 2012: 7): it refers instead to 23 language versions and about authenticity where the word *authentic* stands for *legally valid* (Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 5). It is useful to remember that despite the existence of more than one procedural language, “given the increasing popularity of English, translators tend to choose the English versions as original source texts” (Felici 2010: 103).

2.4. Gender and Translation

Castro (2013) argues that many of the scholarly works produced in the last three decades highlight the role that language and translation play in the construction of the social world and investigate how gender roles are discursively constructed through language and translation. The author explains that over the past few years “the dyad gender and translation has been gaining critical consistency and experiencing a remarkable growth” (2013: 7). She shows how a more frequent use of “inclusive language” is being progressively adopted in translated texts.

Santaemilia (2013) presents a discussion about the translation of gender-related terminology in the EU on the assumption that, as we have seen, all the texts published in the EU must be considered originals and not translations. Focusing on the word *gender* in English and *género* in Spanish, the author specifies that “gender-equality institutional texts are highly sensitive, and their translation is not simply

a linguistic matter, but rather a socio-cultural and ideological issue” (2013: 75). He analysed five annual official reports (from 2005 to 2009) on equality between women and men, published by the EU in their English and Spanish versions, considering collocations, such as *gender equality*, *gender stereotypes*, *gender dimension*, and *gender perspective* and other clusters of words where the ones referring to women come before the ones referring to men, concluding that translating gender-equality documents is not only a linguistic or translational question, but also a socio-political and ideological one (2013: 92).

2.5. *Gender in institutional discourse*

In 2018, the European Parliament issued an updated edition of the gender-neutral language guidelines, having been one of the first international organisations to adopt multilingual guidelines on the topic ten years earlier, in 2008. The guidelines start with the definition of gender-neutral language as “a generic term covering the use of non-sexist language, inclusive language or gender-fair language”. The drafters of these guidelines explain that language reflects and influences attitudes, behaviour and perceptions. Therefore, many international and European institutions have adopted guidelines for the non-sexist use of language. The main aim of the European Parliament guidelines is “to encourage the administrative services to give due consideration to the issue of gender sensitivity in language whenever writing, translating or interpreting”. The guidelines consider such issues as the multilingual context, the natural gender languages (such as Danish, English and Swedish), the grammatical gender languages (such as German, Romance languages and Slavic languages) and the type of texts being considered, together with their register. The subject matters in the guidelines include the generic use of the masculine gender, the names of professions, and functions and use of titles which indicate the marital status of women. The specific guidelines for English consider the generic use of *man*, the generic use of *he* and *his*, the generic use of *they*, titles and gender-neutral job titles.

Sandrelli (2019) focuses on the questions of grammatical gender, gender-specific professions and role nouns, the gendered terms of

address, words with the *-man* suffix, along with the use of personal pronouns. She highlights how several corpus studies have found the existence of a male bias in language towards the “masculine rule”, as noted by Williams (2008). Sandrelli’s study aims to investigate the gender perspective in relation to the English used in European Commission directives and how these directives are transposed into domestic law in the UK. The author concludes that gender-neutrality guidelines have had a tangible impact both in the EU and in the UK, but the ways currently used to avoid a gender-bias “still leave ample margin for improvement” (Sandrelli 2019: 138).

3. Data and methodology

Studies on metadiscourse have mostly focused on the analysis of written texts, and especially of specialized language, such as academic discourse. Nevertheless, very little attention has been given to the use of metadiscourse in translation studies, and particularly in policy document translations, but rather to the use of pronouns, titles and nouns for professions along with some specific collocations such as *men and women vs. women and men, gender stereotypes* and so on. Unlike in previous research, this study focuses on the metadiscursive aspects of gender-related EU documents in English and how they are rendered in their Italian translations.

The corpus under scrutiny here comes from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (<https://eige.europa.eu/>). The EIGE’s publications considered are gender-related informative brochures. Felici (2010) argues that in terms of language use, the Commission is in charge of the majority of the translation work, which deals with a vast array of documents. They range from legislative proposals, reports, Green and White Papers to conference proceedings, incoming documents, internal notes, public information, databases and websites. Text typology is also extremely varied. It ranges from legal texts characterised by stereotypical formulations and the marked presence of institutional jargon, to administrative instruments where style is less

strict, and lexicon has more national and local connotations. In addition, there are thousands of informative texts and technical reports written in all EU languages in a conversational style “full of calques and technical terminology” (Felici 2010: 101).

Starting from Felici’s assumption that these informative brochures are written in a conversational style designed to engage the reader, we expected to find many of the metadiscourse strategies considered by Hyland and meant to involve the readers by providing coherent, intelligible and persuasive content (Hyland 2005: 39). In fact, as Suau Jiménez notes (2010: 8), “(t)ranslation is a process that cannot only depend on the finding of equivalences in communicative functions and terminology; it is also necessary to take into account the interpersonal function, i.e. metadiscourse or the way in which the author addresses the reader. This is what varies from one language to another, from one genre to another, and, possibly, from one area of specialisation to another.”

Our corpus consists of two sub-corpora: the main corpus comprises 15 gender-related informative brochures published in English by EIGE and ranging in time from 2016 to 2020. The second sub-corpus contains the corresponding documents in Italian. The 30 documents under scrutiny belong to different areas. The first one (Table 1) concerns gender-based violence including documents on violence in Italy, (VIO + EN/IT in the table), cyber violence (CYBER) and female genital mutilation (MUT).

EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Gender-based violence		
2016 24 Nov	Combating violence against women: Italy	VIOEN
	Combattere la violenza contro le donne: Italia	VIOIT
2017 23 Jun	Cyber violence against women and girls	CYBEREN
	Violenza virtuale contro le donne e le ragazze	CYBERIT
2018 9 Nov	Female genital mutilation: How many girls are at risk in Italy	MUTEN
	Mutilazioni genitali femminili: Quante ragazze sono a rischio in Italia?	MUTIT

Table 1. EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Gender-based violence

The second area (Table 2) includes gender equality indexes (IND) and a document about gender equality and disability (DIS).

EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Gender equality index		
2016 27 Jul	Gender Equality Index 2015- Italy	IND2015EN
	Indice sull'uguaglianza di genere 2015: Italia	IND2015IT
2018 26 Sept	Gender Equality Index 2017: Italy	IND2017EN
	Indice sull'uguaglianza di genere 2017: Italia	IND2017IT
2018 3 Oct	Gender equality needs to reach everyone: Gender equality and disability	DISEN
	L'uguaglianza di genere deve estendersi a tutti: Uguaglianza di genere e disabilità	DISIT
2019 7 Oct	Gender equality Index 2019: Italy	IND2019EN
	Indice sull'uguaglianza di genere 2019: Italia	IND2019IT
2020 28 Oct	Gender equality Index 2020: Italy	IND2020EN
	Indice sull'uguaglianza di genere 2020: Italia	IND2020IT

Table 2. EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Gender equality index

The area called gender mainstreaming (Table 3) deals with STEM education, financial decision-making and budgeting in EU funds.

EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Gender mainstreaming		
2017 10 Aug	Economic benefits of gender equality in the UE: How gender equality in STEM education leads to economic growth	STEMEN
	Vantaggi economici dell'uguaglianza di genere nell'UE: In che modo l'uguaglianza di genere nell'istruzione delle discipline STEM favorisce la crescita economica	STEMIT
2017 15 Sept	Gender equality in financial decision-making	FINEN
	L'uguaglianza di genere nel processo decisionale finanziario	FINIT
2020 13 May	Toolkit for gender budgeting in the EU funds	KITEN
	Kit di strumenti per il bilancio di genere nei fondi UE	KITIT

Table 3. EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Gender mainstreaming

The last area under investigation is the Beijing platform for action (Table 4), which includes documents about poverty (POV), digitalisation (DIG), youth (YOUTH) and inequalities in care and pay (PAY).

EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Beijing Platform for Action		
2017 21 Apr	Poverty and gender over the life cycle. Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action	POVEN
	Povert� e genere durante l'intero arco di vita. Esame dell'attuazione della piattaforma di azione di Pechino	POVIT
2018 11 Oct	Gender equality and digitalisation in the European Union	DIGEN
	Uguaglianza di genere e digitalizzazione nell'Unione Europea	DIGIT
2018 11 Oct	Gender equality and youth: the opportunities and risks of digitalisation	YOUTHEN
	Uguaglianza di genere e giovani: opportunit� e rischi della digitalizzazione	YOUTHIT
2020 19 Nov	Gender inequalities in care and pay in the EU	PAYEN
	Disparit� di genere nell'assistenza e nella retribuzione nell'Unione Europea	PAYIT

Table 4. EIGE CORPUS 2016-2020: Beijing Platform for Action

Table 5 shows the number of words in each of the documents in both the English and Italian sub-corpora. From an initial analysis, it can be noticed that the Italian versions are all longer than the English documents, so the Italian corpus is slightly larger than the English one.

EIGE 2016-2020 CORPUS: # of words			
CYBEREN	3989	CYBERIT	4904
DIGEN	1999	DIGIT	2438
DISEN	1670	DISIT	2117
FINEN	1194	FINIT	1393
IND2015EN	2369	IND2015IT	2842
IND2017EN	2676	IND2017IT	3247
IND2019EN	3545	IND2019IT	4572
IND2020EN	1595	IND2020IT	1951
KITEN	1338	KITIT	1742
MUTEN	2283	MUTIT	2515
PAYEN	3049	PAYIT	3430
POVEN	2029	POVIT	2525
STEMEN	1525	STEMIT	1958
VIOEN	1527	VIOIT	1836
YOUTHEN	1692	YOUTHIT	2024
<i>EN SUBCORPUS</i> <i>total</i>	<i>32480</i>	<i>IT SUBCORPUS</i> <i>total</i>	<i>39494</i>

Table 5. Number of words in the EIGE 2016-2020 corpus

Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (2005: 49) with its various categories and their functions is used to analyse the documents in the corpora. Interactive features include transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses. Interactional features include hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions and engagement markers.

First of all, a quantitative analysis was carried out using Sketch Engine. Through this concordance software, the English corpus was scanned for the items in Hyland's 2005 list of metadiscourse features (outlined in detail in the next section, notably in 4.2). The concordance lines were then manually checked to look at every occurrence of the items under investigation in order to ensure that they were actually functioning as metadiscourse. The Italian versions of the brochures were analysed to identify any relevant instances of metadiscourse markers in their translations.

4. Discussion

4.1. Propositional content

It is assumed here that metadiscourse is “the linguistic material which does not add propositional information but which signals the presence of an author” (Vande Kopple 1985). Moreover, metadiscourse can be construed as “the author’s intrusion into the discourse, either explicitly or not explicitly, to direct rather than inform, showing readers how to understand what is said and meant in the primary discourse and how to ‘take’ the author” (Crismore 1983: 2).

However, metadiscourse features are the particular aspects of the text which make its organization explicit, provide information about the writer’s attitude towards the text content, and engage the reader in the interaction. Therefore, specialized terminology and the translation thereof also belong to the field of propositional meaning. As for the propositional content, the 50 most frequently used nouns were identified in the English documents (Figure 1).

Lemma	Frequency	Lemma	Frequency	Lemma	Frequency
1 woman	689	18 girl	84	35 w	58
2 gender	487	19 time	84	36 states	57
3 man	379	20 education	83	37 job	57
4 equality	308	21 datum	80	38 victim	56
5 eu	284	22 index	79	39 policy	56
6 violence	199	23 health	78	40 form	51
7 european	159	24 level	76	41 rate	51
8 italy	155	25 score	76	42 service	51
9 work	126	26 employment	75	43 labour	50
10 domain	114	27 inequality	73	44 survey	50
11 care	112	28 risk	72	45 point	49
12 gap	103	29 people	68	46 report	48
13 eige	98	30 hyperlink	67	47 activity	46
14 cyber	93	31 life	64	48 mutilation	45
15 disability	92	32 age	60	49 country	44
16 member	91	33 poverty	59	50 year	44
17 institute	86	34 m	58		

Figure 1. The first 50 nouns in the English sub-corpus

From this list the following ones were extracted because they refer to the themes and topics representing the propositional content in the texts under scrutiny, thus indicating their “aboutness” or the subject matter: *woman, gender, man, equality, violence, cyber, disability, education, health, employment, inequality, risk, poverty, victim* and *mutilation*.

A similar selection has been carried out for the Italian corpus, where themes and propositional content are related to nouns such as *donna, genere, uomini, lavoro, violenza, uguaglianza, assistenza, ragazza, parità, disabilità, istruzione, divario, rischio, salute, povertà, occupazione, vittima*, and *partecipazione* (Figure 2).

Lemma	Frequency	Lemma	Frequency	Lemma	Frequency
1 donna	660	18 disabilità	94	35 europa	60
2 genera	562	19 settore	93	36 povertà	60
3 uomini	350	20 dominio	92	37 occupazione	58
4 ue	254	21 istruzione	92	38 vittima	57
5 lavoro	226	22 vita	89	39 forma	57
6 violenza	221	23 persona	85	40 indagine	55
7 uguaglianza	218	24 online	84	41 servizio	55
8 italia	141	25 divario	84	42 and	53
9 assistenza	135	26 età	83	43 attività	52
10 livello	126	27 membro	80	44 numero	52
11 ragazza	120	28 rischio	79	45 strumento	51
12 tempo	109	29 indice	77	46 tasso	49
13 dato	100	30 unione	74	47 consiglio	48
14 eige	99	31 punteggio	71	48 relazione	48
15 parità	98	32 hyperlink	65	49 media	47
16 istituto	98	33 salute	64	50 partecipazione	47
17 anno	97	34 punto	63		

Figure 2. The first 50 nouns in the Italian sub-corpus

4.2. Interactive features

As for metadiscourse, the interactive features we analysed are *transition markers*, *frame markers*, *evidentials*, and *code glosses*. According to Hyland, *transition markers* are mainly conjunctions and adverbial phrases which help readers interpret pragmatic connections between steps in an argument (2005: 50). They can signal addition, comparison or consequence, as shown in Table 6a, where occurrences are also provided normalised to 1,000 with their standardised type/token ratio (STTR).

Transition markers in EIGE 2016-2020 EN		# of occurrences	Normalised to 1,000 words STTR
Addition: adding arguments	and	1318	40.58
	still	16	0.49
	further	9	0.28
	furthermore, in addition moreover	7 1	0.22 0.03
Comparison: comparing and contrasting events	but	55	1.69
	while	24	0.74
	however	23	0.71
	although	7	0.22
	though	6	0.18
	rather	5	0.15
	even though, whereas	3	0.09
	in contrast, nevertheless	2	0.06
	at the same time	1	0.03
on the other hand	0	0.00	
Consequence: drawing conclusions	because	18	0.55
	result in	11	0.34
	so, therefore	7	0.22
	yet	2	0.06
	as a result	3	0.09
	thus	1	0.03

Table 6a. Transition markers in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

In the English sub-corpus, the most frequent transition marker used to add arguments is *and*, as might be expected, with a STTR of 40.58. Regarding the markers of comparison, *but* is present with a STTR of 1.69, *while* of 0.74 and *however* of 0.71. As for the markers of consequence, results show the presence of *because* with a STTR of 0.55, *result in* of 0.34 and *so* and *therefore* with a STTR of 0.22. While markers such as *however*, *but* and *because* are contained in sentences which have been translated literally into Italian, the consequence marker *result in* involved some kind of sentence manipulation and alteration in the translation process. Consider the following examples:

Excerpt (1-EN)

For example, of the 1160 incidents of revenge porn reported during the first six months after criminalisation in the UK, 61% *resulted in* no further action pursued against the alleged perpetrator. (CYBEREN)

Excerpt (1-IT)

Ad esempio, dei 1160 casi di pornografia della vendetta denunciati nei primi sei mesi dopo la loro configurazione come reato nel Regno Unito, nel 61% dei casi **non sono seguite ulteriori azioni penali** contro il presunto esecutore. (CYBERIT)

In Excerpt (1-EN), the subject of the clause is *61%*. In the Italian version (1-IT), the subject is the noun phrase *ulteriori azioni penali* and the verb in the negative form (*non sono seguite*) is fronted in the clause.

Excerpt (2-EN)

It is anticipated that the new STEM jobs will produce a great deal of work and be well-paid, **resulting in** improved EU competitiveness and a gradual closure of the gender pay gap. (DIGEN)

Excerpt (2-IT)

Si prevede che le nuove professioni STEM daranno luogo a un gran numero di posti di lavoro ben retribuiti: la competitività dell'UE conoscerà un miglioramento e il divario retributivo tra i generi sarà gradualmente colmato. (DIGIT)

In Excerpt (2-EN), the subordinate clause is introduced by *resulting in*. In the Italian translation in Excerpt (2-IT), there are two complex sentences linked by a semi-colon. The second sentence is made up of two compound clauses in the simple future tense: *la competitività dell'UE conoscerà un miglioramento e il divario retributivo tra i generi sarà gradualmente colmato*. Therefore, the notion of result and consequence is missing in Italian, where there is a projection towards *future events* instead.

The distribution of transition markers in the Italian sub-corpus, as shown in Table 6b, is a possible indication of the different organisation of the discourse in the two languages, since in English coordination between clauses is preferred to subordination, while in Italian it is rather the opposite. As in the English sub-corpus, in the Italian sub-corpus the most frequent transition marker used to add

arguments is *e*, with a STTR of 32.44. This last value is meaningfully lower than that referring to the use of *and* in the English corpus. As mentioned above, this is possibly due to the different syntactic preferences in the Italian text production, with hypotactic sentence construction and longer period organisation. As a matter of fact, with respect to the English sub-corpus, a larger variety of transition markers used to add arguments was found in the Italian sub-corpus. The ones with higher frequency were *come*, with a STTR of 2.23, *anche*, with a STTR of 1.77, and *inoltre*, with a STTR of 0.71. Conversely, the occurrence of transition markers to compare and contrast events is slightly lower in the Italian corpus than in the English corpus. Here, *ma* has a STTR of 1.27, while *mentre* of 0.89, and *tuttavia* of 0.66. The most common marker used to draw conclusions in the Italian sub-corpus is *perché*, with a STTR of 0.41, followed by *poiché* with a STTR of 0.30.

Transition markers in EIGE 2016-2020 IT		# occ.	Norm.
Addition: adding arguments	e	1281	32.44
	come	88	2.23
	anche	70	1.77
	inoltre	28	0.71
	pure	2	0.05
	in aggiunta, per di più	0	0.00
Comparison: comparing and contrasting events	ma	50	1.27
	mentre	35	0.89
	tuttavia	26	0.66
	nonostante, anche se	8	0.20
	piuttosto	3	0.08
	invece	2	0.05
	allo stesso tempo	1	0.03
	in contrasto, d'altro canto	0	0.00
Consequence: drawing conclusions	perché	16	0.41
	poiché	12	0.30
	pertanto, di conseguenza	6	0.15
	così, quindi	5	0.13
	a causa di	3	0.08
	in questo modo	2	0.05
	perciò, cosicché, sicché, dunque	0	0.00

Table 6b. Transition markers in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

Frame markers can have different functions such as *sequencing*, *labelling stages*, *announcing goals* and *shifting topic*. As can be seen from Table 7a, their occurrences in the English sub-corpus are very low in frequency.

Frame markers in EIGE 2016-2020 EN		# occ.	Norm.
Sequencing	subsequently	3	0.09
	now	2	0.06
	so far, overall	1	0.03
Announcing goals	objective(s)	2	0.06
	purpose(s)	1	0.03
	goal(s), aim(s)	0	0.00
Shifting topic	so	7	0.22
	now, in this regard	2	0.06

Table 7a. Frame markers in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

Consider the following examples of *subsequently* as an instance of frame marker which helps sequence the information in the text.

Excerpt (3-EN)

Subsequently in 2015, a helpline for victims of revenge porn was established [...] (CYBEREN)

Excerpt (3-IT)

Successivamente, nel 2015, è stato istituito un servizio di assistenza telefonica per le vittime della pornografia della vendetta [...] (CYBERIT)

In Excerpt (3-IT), *subsequently* is translated as *successivamente* in Italian focusing on the temporal order of events, rather than on the causal relationship between facts. Conversely, in Excerpt (4-IT) and (5-IT) below, *subsequently* is rendered as *di conseguenza* and *conseguentemente*, focusing on the logic result of the actions. The structure of the sentences remains fairly analogous since in such cases the literal translation into Italian does not include any amplification or reduction.

Excerpt (4-EN)

The resulting feelings of shame, fear and helplessness lead to low levels of reporting and, **subsequently**, relatively few convictions. (CYBEREN)

Excerpt (4-IT)

Le conseguenti sensazioni di vergogna, paura e impotenza sono alla base dei bassi livelli di denuncia e, **di conseguenza**, delle condanne relativamente ridotte. (CYBERIT)

Excerpt (5-EN)

Gender segregations at all levels of education leads to occupational segregation and **subsequently** impacts on the future career options of both women and men. (IND2015EN)

Excerpt (5-IT)

La segregazione di genere a tutti i livelli dell'istruzione determina la segregazione occupazionale e **conseguentemente** ha effetti sulle opportunità di carriera future sia delle donne che degli uomini. (IND2015IT)

As Table 7b shows, the presence of frame markers in the Italian sub-corpus is altogether appreciably higher than in the English corpus. Indeed, the Italian versions of the EIGE reports seem to use respectively, a higher variety of *sequencing* items, such as *di conseguenza* with STTR of 0.15, of *labelling stages* features such as *ora* with a STTR of 0.58, *attualmente* with a STTR of 0.18, and *in generale* with a STTR of 0.15, of *announcing goals* such as *a tal fine* with a STTR of 0.28 and *shifting topic* markers such as *a riguardo* with a STTR of 0.15.

Frame markers in EIGE 2016-2020 IT		# occ.	Norm.
Sequencing	di conseguenza	6	0.15
	in seguito, successivamente, conseguentemente	1	0.03
Labelling stages	ora	23	0.58
	attualmente	7	0.18
	in generale	6	0.15
	finora	2	0.05
	adesso, complessivamente	1	0.03
	nel complesso, per ora	0	0.00
Announcing goals	a tal/al fine/ai fini	11	0.28
	obiettivo	3	0.08
	scopo/i	2	0.05
Shifting topic	così	5	0.13
	a riguardo	6	0.15
	adesso, a (...) proposito di	1	0.03

Table 7b. Frame markers in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

Evidentials are references to another source which guide the reader's interpretation and establish an authorial command of the subject (Hyland 2005: 51). Table 8a shows the presence of *according to* with a STTR of 0.31, of *Law* when referring to a particular piece of legislation with a STTR of 0.22, and of the expression *research shows*, pointing to research which is external to the text in question, with a STTR of 0.06.

Evidentials in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
according to	10	0.31
Law (reference to a particular Law)	7	0.22
research shows	2	0.06

Table 8a. Evidentials in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

Figure 3 shows the concordance lines for *according to*, which is habitually followed by authoritative research, studies and surveys, and institutions such as the World Health Organisation, Eurostat and the Italian National Institute of Statistics, all of whom are providers of objective and relevant data and information.

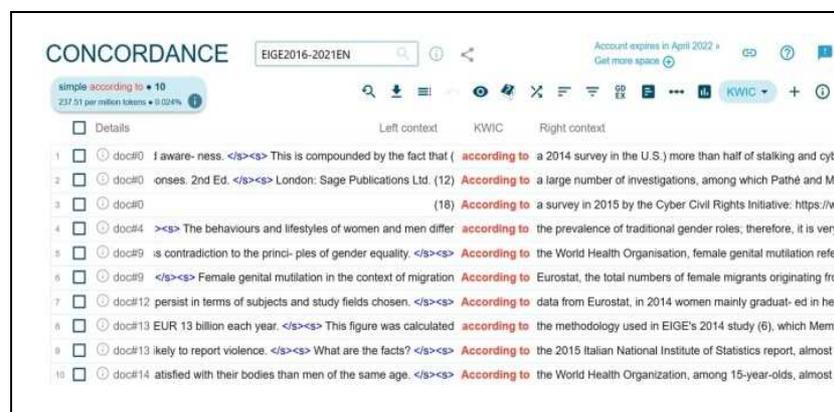


Figure 3. Concordance lines for *according to*, as extracted from Sketch Engine

In the Italian sub-corpus, evidentials seem to be present with a similar frequency to that of the English sub-corpus, as Table 8b indicates. However, it is worth mentioning that the evidential *according to* in

English and the Italian equivalent *secondo* are often followed by expressions such as, respectively, *survey*, *investigation* and *data* in English, and *indagine*, *fonte*, *relazione* and *dati* in Italian.

Evidentials in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
secondo	16	0.41
la legge (reference to a particular Law)	4	0.10
la ricerca rivela/dimostra	1	0.03
a detta di, in base a	0	0.00

Table 8b. Evidentials in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

Table 9a shows the quantitative data in the English corpus for all the *code glosses* we found. These supply additional information by rephrasing, explaining or elaborating what has been said, so as to ensure the reader is able to recover the writer's intended meaning (Hyland 2005: 52).

Code glosses in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
such as	35	1.08
for example	19	0.58
e.g.	7	0.22
this means, defined as, in fact	2	0.06
for instance, specifically, which mean, known as, namely	1	0.03

Table 9a. Code glosses in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

The presence of the code gloss *such as* with a STTR of 1.08 deserves a more thorough investigation in order to understand how it is used in the English sub-corpus and how it is rendered in the Italian versions. Consider the examples below:

Excerpt (6-EN)

Due to this expectation, women tend to work in 'traditionally feminine' occupations **such as** childcare, care for older people, teaching and nursing. These jobs are paid significantly less compared to sectors dominated by men, **such as** information technology. The care industry is dominated by women. (PAYEN)

Excerpt (6-IT)

A causa di questa aspettativa, le donne tendono a svolgere professioni 'tradizionalmente femminili', **come** l'assistenza ai minori, l'assistenza agli anziani, l'insegnamento e l'assistenza infermieristica. Questi posti di lavoro sono pagati molto meno rispetto ai settori dominati dagli uomini, **come** l'informatica. L'industria dell'assistenza è dominata dalle donne. (PAYIT)

Excerpt (7-EN)

Cyber harassment can take many forms, but for the purposes of this paper, it can include: [...]

- Hate speech, meaning language that denigrates, insults, threatens or targets an individual based on her identity (gender) and other traits (**such as** sexual orientation or disability).

[...] However, perpetrators are not necessarily partners or ex-partners and the motive is not always revenge. Images can also be obtained by hacking into the victim's computer, social media accounts or phone, and can aim to inflict real damage on the target's 'real-world' life (**such as** getting them fired from their job). (CYBEREN)

Excerpt (7-IT)

Le molestie online possono assumere diverse forme, ma ai fini del presente documento possono includere: [...]

- incitamento all'odio, ovvero linguaggio che denigra, insulta, minaccia o colpisce un individuo sulla base della sua identità (genere) e di altri aspetti (**quali** orientamento sessuale o disabilità).

[...] Tuttavia, gli esecutori non sono necessariamente partner o ex partner e il motivo non è sempre la vendetta. Le immagini possono essere ottenute anche attaccando il computer, i profili dei social media o il telefono della vittima, e possono mirare a infliggere un danno reale nella vita 'del mondo reale' dei destinatari (**ad esempio** facendoli licenziare dal lavoro). (CYBERIT)

In Excerpt (6-IT), *such as* is translated with the Italian conjunction *come* which introduces the explanation of what has been said just above and provides explanatory examples of traditionally feminine occupations and of sectors dominated by men. Conversely, in Excerpt (7-IT), the first time it appears, *such as* is translated as *quali*, the adjectival and pronominal equivalent of the conjunction *come*. The second occurrence of *such as* in the same Excerpt is translated as the locution *per esempio*, in order to provide an example of *real damage to the target's 'real-world' life*.

Code glosses in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
come	88	2.23
ad esempio	23	0.58
in particolare	20	0.51
quale, per esempio	8	0.20
così, ossia	5	0.13
ciò/il che significa che	4	0.10
che significa, ovvero	2	0.05
specificamente, in realtà	1	0.03
del tipo, nel/in modo specifico, definite come, volendo dire, vuol dire, noto/conosciuto come, cioè, in effetti, di fatto	0	0.00

Table 9b. Code glosses in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

From a translational point of view, we noticed that some expansions are utilised with code glosses to reinforce ideas and concepts. In the following examples, *such as* is expanded through the Italian *come ad esempio*, by using two code glosses together.

Excerpt (8-EN)

Other measures can also be implemented by Member States, **such as** including gender balance in economic decision-making in national and regional strategies and action plans. (FINEN)

Excerpt (8-IT)

Gli Stati membri possono attuare anche altre misure, **come ad esempio** includere l'equilibrio di genere nel processo decisionale economico nelle strategie e nei piani d'azione nazionali e regionali. (FINIT)

Excerpt (9-EN)

In light of emerging demographic trends, **such as** ageing societies, lower birth rates and consequently the decline of the working age population, the need for formal and informal long-term care services becomes more important than ever. (IND2019EN)

Excerpt (9-IT)

Alla luce delle tendenze demografiche emergenti, **come ad esempio** l'invecchiamento delle società, la diminuzione del tasso di natalità e, di conseguenza, il declino della popolazione in età lavorativa, la necessità di servizi formali e informali di assistenza a lungo termine diventa sempre più importante. (IND2019IT)

4.3 Interactional features

The interactional features this study focuses on are *boosters*, *attitude markers*, *self-mentions* and *engagement markers*.

Boosters are words “which allow writers to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say” (Hyland, 2005: 52). In the English sub-corpus, we are considering the occurrences of the verb *show*, in its conjugated forms, with a STTR of 1.39, the highest frequency rate compared to the other boosters (Table 10).

Boosters in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
show*	45	1.39
find*	21	0.65
certain, think	7	0.22
clear, know	6	0.18
always	5	0.15
demonstrate	3	0.09
actually	2	0.06
clearly, never, proved, true	1	0.03

Table 10a. Boosters in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

Figure 4 displays some of the concordance lines of the verb *show* whose subjects are *research*, *surveys*, *the Gender Equality index*, and the results of several statistical analyses as they appear in the left context of the concordance lines.

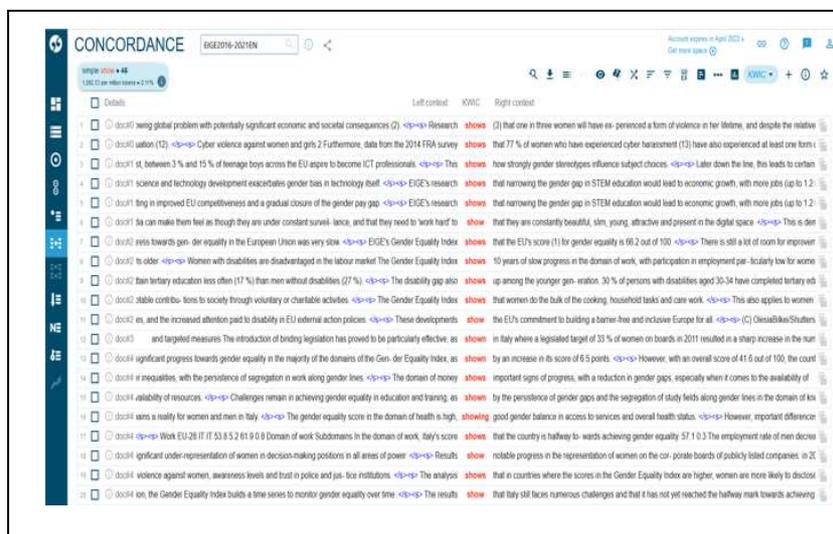


Figure 4. Concordance lines of *show*

In a similar manner, in the Italian sub-corpus we found the verb *mostrare*, with a STTR of 0.63, which has the highest frequency rate, compared to the other boosters.

Boosters in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
<i>mostrare</i> *	25	0.63
<i>trovare</i> *	17	0.43
<i>sapere</i> *	16	0.41
<i>sempre</i>	9	0.23
<i>dimostrare</i> *	7	0.18
<i>chiaro</i>	6	0.15
<i>pensare</i> *	4	0.10
<i>effettivamente, chiaramente, mai, certo, in realtà</i>	1	0.03
<i>veramente, davvero, testimoniare</i>	0	0.00

Table 10b. Boosters in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

Excerpt (10-EN)

When considering the entire EU population, **data shows** that 92% of EU women are regular carers - meaning that they provide unpaid care at least several days a week - as opposed to 68% of men. (PAYEN)

Excerpt (10-IT)

Se si considera l'intera popolazione dell'UE, **i dati mostrano** che il 92 % delle donne dell'UE fornisce regolarmente assistenza - il che significa che fornisce assistenza non retribuita almeno per diversi giorni alla settimana - rispetto al 68 % degli uomini. (PAYIT)

Excerpt (10-EN) exemplifies the use of the verb *show*: in this case the subject is *data* while in other cases, as it can be seen from the concordance lines in Figure 4, it can be *EIGE's research*, *the Gender Equality index*, *these developments*, and the more general *the results* and *the analysis*. The subject-verb constructions in the documents are used to support a claim or express a viewpoint more assertively and convincingly.

Excerpt (11-EN)

A clear indicator of these inequalities is the unadjusted gender pay gap. It measures the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of women and men employees, and it currently stands at 16 % across the EU. **A second indicator** is the gender gap in overall earnings, which takes gender gaps in employment rate and working time into account. It gives **an even clearer picture** of this divide and is much higher across all countries, reaching almost 40 % at EU level. (PAYEN)

Excerpt (11-IT)

Un chiaro indicatore di queste disuguaglianze è il differenziale retributivo non corretto di genere. Misura la differenza tra la retribuzione oraria lorda media dei lavoratori dipendenti di sesso maschile e femminile ed è attualmente pari al 16 % in tutta l'UE. **Un secondo indicatore** è il divario di genere nei guadagni complessivi, che tiene conto del divario di genere nel tasso di occupazione e nell'orario di lavoro. Fornisce **un quadro ancora più chiaro** di questo divario ed è molto più elevato in tutti i paesi, raggiungendo quasi il 40 % a livello di UE. (PAYIT)

In Excerpt (11-EN), when talking about the gender pay gap, the booster represented by the adjective *clear* and the noun *indicator* expands as in a *crescendo* through a second stage to provide *an even clearer picture* of the pay divide in a final stage, using both the adverb *even* and the adjective *clear* in its comparative form. In Italian (Excerpt (11-IT)) *un chiaro indicatore delle disuguaglianze* is followed by *un secondo indicatore*, which is *il divario di genere*, i.e. the gender gap, to finally provide *un quadro ancora più chiaro di questo divario*, an even clearer

picture of this gap. These boosters play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between what the institution intends to argue and the discourse communities who are reading the documents.

Self-mentions refer to the explicit presence of the author/writer in the text, measured by the frequency of the first-person pronoun and possessive adjective.

Self-mentions in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
I	10	0.31
we (exclusive)	5	0.15
we (inclusive)	4	0.12
we (direct speech)	2	0.06
my	4	0.12
our	4	0.12
us, me	2	0.06

Table 11a. Self-mentions in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

As can be seen from Table 11a, the first person singular *I* is present in the English sub-corpus with a STTR of 0.31, while the plural *we* exclusive with a STTR of 0.15, and *we* inclusive of 0.12. However, the first person singular of the personal pronoun is generally omitted in the Italian versions, as shown by Excerpts (12-IT) and (13-IT).

Excerpt (12-EN)

“I’m too frightened to express my opinions online. **I** keep them to myself because **I** know that there will always be someone out there who won’t like what **I** post” (girl, aged 15, Sweden) (DIGEN)

Excerpt (12-IT)

“Ho troppa paura di esprimere le mie opinioni online. Le tengo per me perché so che ci sarà sempre qualcuno che non gradirà i contenuti di ciò che pubblico online” (ragazza quindicenne svedese) (DIGIT)

Excerpt (13-EN)

But **I** think men have more trouble to talk about things. Even if we are abused, we don’t talk about it.” (boy, aged 16, Sweden) (YOUTHEN)

Excerpt (13-IT)

“Penso però che i maschi abbiano più difficoltà a parlare di queste cose anche se subiamo degli abusi, non ne parliamo.” (ragazzo sedicenne svedese) (YOUTHIT)

Excerpt (14-EN)

Digital technology has changed many things in **our** lives, but how is it affecting gender equality? Digitalisation has transformed the character of the labour market, changed the way **we** interact with **our** friends, shaped political participation, is impacting the future of work and also carries the risk of cyberviolence. (DIGEN)

Excerpt (14-IT)

La tecnologia digitale ha cambiato molti aspetti della **nostra** vita, ma come incide sull'uguaglianza di genere? La digitalizzazione ha trasformato il carattere del mercato del lavoro, ha modificato il **nostro** modo di interagire con gli amici, ha modellato le forme della partecipazione politica, esercita un impatto sul futuro del lavoro e comporta anche il rischio della violenza virtuale. (DIGIT)

Excerpt (15-EN)

In addition to stronger legislation, **we need** to support young people, so that they become aware of the risks of digitalisation. (YOUTHEN)

Excerpt (15-IT)

Oltre a una legislazione più rigorosa, **occorre** un'azione di sostegno per i giovani che li renda consapevoli dei rischi della digitalizzazione. (YOUTHIT)

In the examples given here, inclusive *we* is used to include and involve the readers and the public at large (see, notably Excerpts (14-EN), (14-IT)). On the other hand, in Excerpt (15-EN) notice that the inclusive *we* in the clause *we need to support young people* is rendered in Excerpt (15-IT) with an impersonal clause: *occorre un'azione di sostegno per i giovani* which indirectly appeals to the general public, indicating a higher degree of formality.

Excerpt (16-EN)

Each year we score EU Member States and the EU as a whole to see how far they are from reaching gender equality. The index uses a scale of 1 to 100, where 1 is for total inequality and 100 is for total equality. (IND2019EN)

Excerpt (16-IT)

Per calcolare la distanza che resta da percorrere per raggiungere l'uguaglianza di genere, **all'UE e ai suoi Stati membri vengono assegnati ogni anno una serie di punteggi**. L'indice sull'uguaglianza di genere utilizza una scala da 1 a 100, in cui 1 corrisponde alla totale disparità e 100 alla totale parità. (IND2019IT)

Excerpt (16-EN) contains an instance of exclusive *we* used to explain how the *index for gender equality* is calculated. The subject in English is the EIGE itself, while in Excerpt (16.IT) the same clause is rendered with a passive impersonal clause. Therefore, the agent performing the action of scoring is absent in the Italian version.

Self-mentions in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
io/noi/mia/o/e/ei/nostro/noi/me/-mi	0	0.00
nostre	1	0.03
nostra/i	3	0.08

Table 11b. Self-mentions in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

As mentioned, the use of the subject pronouns is usually redundant in Italian as it is already indicated by the verb form; accordingly, in the Italian sub-corpus there are no occurrences of the first persons singular and plural of the personal pronoun.

Let us now consider *engagement markers* and, more specifically, the use of the second person pronoun *you*, which has a STTR of 0.37 in the English sub-corpus.

Engagement markers in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
you	12	0.37
see	6	0.15
your	3	0.09
look at	1	0.03

Table 12a. Engagement markers in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

Some instantiations can be observed below:

Excerpt (17-EN)

At **your** place of work are there workers with the same job title as **you**? Is **your** immediate boss a man or a woman? (Fig. 1, DIGEN)

Excerpt (17-IT)

Nel **suo** luogo di lavoro vi sono altri lavoratori che hanno la **sua** stessa qualifica? Il **suo** diretto superiore è un uomo o una donna? (Fig.1, DIGIT)

Excerpt (18-EN)

If **you're** looking for more statistics on women and men in decision-making, **make sure you** check EIGE's Gender Statistics Database. (FINEN)

Excerpt (18-IT)

Se **state** cercando ulteriori statistiche sulle donne e gli uomini nel processo decisionale, **controllate** la banca dati delle statistiche di genere dell'EIGE. (FINIT)

Excerpt (19-EN)

You can explore all of EIGE's previous BPfA reports and publications at <https://eige.europa.eu/beijing-platform-for-action>. (PAYEN)

Excerpt (19-IT)

Tutte le precedenti relazioni e pubblicazioni dell'EIGE riguardanti la piattaforma d'azione di Pechino sono accessibili all'indirizzo <https://eige.europa.eu/beijing-platform-for-action> (PAYIT)

Excerpt (17-EN) comes from a survey in the brochure about digitalisation. The questions asked regard the gender composition of the workplaces of ICT specialists within the EU. Notice that the pronoun *you* is rendered in Excerpt (17.IT) through the use of the formal third person singular pronoun, the courtesy form, *suo* and *sua*.

In Excerpt (18-EN), the author is addressing the readers directly in an informal manner, using the contracted form of the verb: *if you're looking for more statistics* and the imperative *make sure*. The Italian version in Excerpt (18-IT) maintains the same degree of informality. On the contrary, the direct appeal to the public through the use of the pronoun *you* in Excerpt (19-EN) is not present in the Italian version (Excerpt (19-IT)).

Engagement markers in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
tu, vostra	1	0.03
se si guarda	1	0.03
si analizzi/guardi/veda	0	0.00
tua/a/e/oi, vostro/i/e	0	0.00

Table 12b. Engagement markers in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

Hedges are those markers which “emphasize the subjectivity of a position by allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than a fact and therefore open that position to negotiation” (Hyland 2005: 52). Table 13a shows the hedges found in the English sub-corpus, while Table 13b shows the ones found in the Italian sub-corpus.

Hedges in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
about	46	1.42
likely	31	0.95
almost	21	0.65
often	15	0.46
around	14	0.43
tend to	10	0.31
suggest	8	0.25
relatively	7	0.22
usually, mostly, indicate	6	0.18
rather, it is estimated	5	0.15
generally, in general, largely, from x’s perspective	3	0.09
seems, mainly, approximately	2	0.06
broadly, typically, roughly, quite	1	0.03

Table 13a. Hedges in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

Hedges in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
sul/sull’/sui/sugli	223	5.65
sulla/sulle	172	4.36
su	65	1.65
quasi, circa	23	0.58
spesso	14	0.35
soprattutto	8	0.20
relativamente	7	0.18
in generale	6	0.15
di solito, si stima	5	0.13
principalmente	4	0.10
tende a, indica, piuttosto, tendono a	3	0.08

bensì, invece	2	0.05
ampiamente, sembra, a quanto sembra, normalmente, in genere, approssimativamente, essenzialmente, sostanzialmente, propone, afferma	1	0.03
prevalentemente, largamente, comunemente, tipicamente, usualmente, generalmente, perlopiù, abitualmente, innanzitutto, solitamente, riguardo a, suggerisce, dice, consiglia, ipotizza si calcola, anzi, appare/appaiono	0	0.00

Table 13b. Hedges in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

It is worth noticing that out of the 10 occurrences of *tend to*, as shown in Table 13a, 7 regard the working positions and tasks of women within the couple and the family, as exemplified by Excerpt (20-EN) and (20-IT), in which caring is seen as a stereotypical traditional feminine occupation. The remaining 3 occurrences regard the population and their trust in the police and in the justice institution. The verb *tend to* is used to mitigate the strength of the statements.

Excerpt (20-EN)

Horizontal segregation is the concentration of women or men in certain occupations. It reflects the traditional division of roles in the domestic sphere, which extends to the job market. For example, caring is stereotypically regarded as women's work. Due to this expectation, women **tend to** work in 'traditionally feminine' occupations such as childcare, care for older people, teaching and nursing. (PAYEN)

Excerpt (20-IT)

La segregazione orizzontale rappresenta la concentrazione di donne o uomini in determinate professioni. Riflette la tradizionale ripartizione dei ruoli in ambito domestico, che si estende al mercato del lavoro. Per esempio, l'assistenza è considerata, secondo gli stereotipi, come un lavoro da donna. A causa di questa aspettativa, le donne **tendono a** svolgere professioni 'tradizionalmente femminili', come l'assistenza ai minori, l'assistenza agli anziani, l'insegnamento e l'assistenza infermieristica. (PAYIT)

As far as modals are concerned, as Table 14a shows, the most frequently used modals in the brochures are *can*, with a STTR of 2.12, *should* of 1.17, and *would* of 0.71.

Modals in EIGE 2016-2020 EN	# occ.	Norm.
can	69	2.12
should	38	1.17
would	23	0.71
need to	15	0.46
could	12	0.37
may	7	0.22
might, must	5	0.15

Table 14a. Modals in EIGE 2016-2020 EN

Our attention was caught by the concordance lines of the modal *should*, 25 occurrences of which, out of 38, couple with the verb *to be* in constructions such as *policy responses should be formulated* (CYBEREN), *a gender perspective should be introduced* (CYBEREN), *gender-sensitive provisions should be adopted* (MUTEN), *awareness should be raised* (MUTEN), *data should be collected* (MUTEN). All these verbal phrases are translated literally into Italian, but in most cases the verb in the conditional mood is in initial position in the sentence: *le risposte politiche dovrebbero essere formulate* (CYBERIT), *dovrebbe essere introdotta (una formazione sulla violenza virtuale contro le donne e le ragazze) con una prospettiva di genere* (CYBERIT), *dovrebbero essere adottate disposizioni che tengano conto della dimensione di genere* (MUTIT), *dovrebbero essere realizzate campagne informative dell'opinione pubblica* (MUTIT), *dovrebbero essere raccolti dati* (MUTIT).

In the Italian sub-corpus, the verb *dovere* appears with a STTR of 1.77. It is noteworthy here to point out that the forms of this verb found with the highest frequency are the third person singular and plural of the present tense conditional *dovrebbe*, with a STTR of 0.33, and *dovrebbero*, with a STTR of 0.48, as already shown by the previous examples. Similarly, if the verb *potere* has a STTR of 3.04, the most frequently used forms and moods are the third person singular and plural of the present tense indicative, respectively, *può* with a STTR of 0.84, and *possono* with a STTR of 0.73, and the third person singular and plural of the present tense conditional *potrebbe* and *potrebbero*, both with a STTR of 0.23. The prevalent use of the third persons and of the verbs in the conditional mood in the Italian sub-corpus is due to the preference in this language for less direct, impersonal, more formal

structures, in the written registers, especially in institutional documents which are not strictly prescriptive, but rather informative and divulgative. Thus, *should* is used as a suggestion and a recommendation to the audience and to the various institutions since these documents are informative brochures aiming at convincing the public and the governmental actors of the benefits of a certain action, rather than seeking to impose an obligation.

Modals in EIGE 2016-2020 IT	# occ.	Norm.
dovere*	70	1.77
deve	7	0.18
devono	17	0.43
dovrebbe	13	0.33
dovrebbero	19	0.48
potere*	120	3.04
può	33	0.84
possono	29	0.73
potrebbe, potrebbero	9	0.23
è necessario	6	0.15
avere bisogno di, riuscire, essere in grado di	1	0.03
può essere che	0	0.00

Table 14b. Modals in EIGE 2016-2020 IT

5. Conclusions

This study has endeavoured to show how metadiscursive features are used in gender related informative brochures produced by EIGE, i.e. the European Institute for Gender Equality. Thirty documents were analysed in two sub-corpora, consisting of their English and corresponding Italian versions. The brochures cover topics such as gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, cyber-violence, disability, Stem education, poverty and digitalization. Both quantitative and qualitative results show how some specific metadiscursive commentaries tend to inform the reader in a persuasive manner by employing a conversational register. It has been particularly fruitful to

compare the distribution and frequencies of metadiscursive markers found in the English sub-corpus with those in the Italian sub-corpus because different distributions of such markers in the two sub-corpora revealed to be indicative, not only of different styles, but also of different level of awareness, concern or sensitivity about gender and equality. Interactive and interactional aspects of metadiscourse combine to create a close connection with the readers in both language versions. However, the English documents show a higher level of informality in the use of self-mentions and engagement markers, whereas Italian uses impersonal and passive constructions and more formal forms of courtesy to address the audience, as shown by the concordance lines and the translations found in the Italian versions.

Gender equality is one of the European Union core values, EIGE collects, analyses and disseminates data and information on gender equality issues and its documents in many of the languages of the EU are reliable and relevant for the users. As already argued at the beginning of our discussion, Suau Jiménez had already underlined that not only propositional meaning had to be the focus of translation, but rather how the relationship between writer and reader is established in the different languages. Accordingly, it is vital to take metadiscourse and especially interpersonal functions into account and investigate them both quantitatively and qualitatively. Metadiscourse in both languages, English and Italian, can be deemed as a highly relevant and significant, persuasive linguistic tool aimed at creating a direct line of dialogue with readers on current much-debated topics.

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MARÍA LÓPEZ-MEDEL

Madam Ombudsman: Use and Translation of Masculine Job Titles for Women in the EU

1. Feminisation and neutralisation of positions held by women in English and Spanish

Sexist language has been defined as language that ignores women, describes women as being inferior to men, and is stereotyping and humiliating of women (Niedzwiecki 1993). One of the main aspects of sexism in language is the use of masculine gender for women's nouns and occupations.

In languages with gendered nouns, like Spanish, job titles and professions undergo a slow process of feminisation after one or more women have reached a position previously occupied only by men. The natural process is divided in three steps: first, the masculine noun and article are used when referring to a woman (*el juez*); second, the noun maintains its masculine ending but adopts a feminine article (**la juez*); and third, a new feminine form is created of a previously masculine-only noun (*la jueza*). An exception is made when the noun is invariable and therefore only the article needs changing (*la periodista*). In between these steps we can also find the addition of the adjective *mujer* (*female* or *woman*) to the masculine or feminine noun and the feminine article (**las mujeres jueces, las mujeres juezas*). The trend in Spanish is to gradually feminise roles and professions carried out by women and the language academy constantly adds these feminine endings to the dictionary, although both the order of presentation (always masculine-first) and the content of the entries can be sexist (the masculine form

tends to include the full definition and the feminine is contingent upon the masculine form).

On the contrary, the English language has since the 1980s been subjected to the neutralisation of its gendered person nouns, especially those ending in *man* (*policeman* > *police officer*, *postman* > *postal worker*) but also in *ess* (*waitress* > *waiter*, *air hostess* > *cabin crew*, *actress* > *actor*). In some cases, the masculine noun has replaced the feminine and is used as neutral (*actor*, *waiter*), while in others a genderless option is used for both sexes (*crew*, *worker*).

Both languages have also followed separate paths in respect of forms of treatment. While in English a new form (*Ms*) now prevails to refer to women without mentioning their married (*Mrs*) or unmarried status (*Miss*), in Spanish the title of married woman is applied to all women irrespectively (*Sra.*). Distinguishing between married and unmarried women is a form of sexism because it revolves around their relationship with men (this does not account for lesbian married couples). Nevertheless, the difference is still not clear among women themselves who do not always know which form of treatment to choose when prompted to. This confusion can cause serious incidents like the faulty calculation of the weight of an airplane's load. In April 2020, 38 adult women chose *Miss* instead of *Ms* during registration on a Birmingham-Majorca flight. The airline's software allocated an average of 35 kg for *Miss* and 69 kg for *Ms*. Due to adult female passengers choosing what was supposed to be a title for girls (*Miss*), the plane took off with an excess weight of 1.2 tonnes (Air Accidents Investigation Branch 2021).

1.1. Studies

The use of non-sexist and gender-neutral language has been studied in settings like the drafting of job vacancies. A study carried out by a social media showed that women tend not to apply to a job offer if they think that a male candidate is more likely to be hired or if they do not fulfil all the requirements. In the meantime, men are happy to send an application if they fit 60 % of the criteria (Linkedin 2019a).

Another study by the same network pinpointed the words and expressions that attract and deter applications from men or women in a

job vacancy context (Linkedin 2019b). For example, the word *aggressive* would discourage 44 % of women from applying as opposed to 33 % of men. In the same context, different benefits appeal more to each of the sexes. Besides recommending the use of gender-neutral language, focusing on performance instead of requirements, and adding information on benefits that can attract women's applications, this social media monitors view-to-apply ratios to adapt the appeal of a vacancy to both sexes (Linkedin 2019a).

Notwithstanding half a century of studies and regulations, the drafting and translation of positions and occupations in EU texts still adopt the masculine gender by default (for instance, in EPSO job advertisements and the official directory *Who is who*). Some guides recommend including the acronym *m/f* (in this order, not alphabetically) after the masculine form; the European Parliament's job site uses both *m/f* and *male or female* (*ambos sexos* in Spanish) in brackets also after the masculine form. Nevertheless, it has been shown that the Spanish translation of vacancies is by large masculine except when the original contains a metonym, which is then kept (López-Medel 2021a). The trend to maintain gender choices in translation and the different effects of several non-sexist language techniques, especially in a literal translation setting like the EU's, have also been the subject of study (López-Medel 2021b). As mentioned before, metonyms in the original in reference to people seem to be kept in (literal) translation and contribute to the de-gendering of the target text.

2. EU guidelines

The EU recommendations on equal treatment date back to 1985, when the Joint Committees on Equal Opportunities (COPEC) commissioned a review of terminological ambiguities of professional denominations among the (then) seven official languages in the framework of the *Staff regulations of officials and other servants* (EU 1962). Together with this systematic analysis, a study of traditional feminine professions was proposed and the creation of a mixed terminology that would promote

diversity of employment. A divergence among official languages was found where there appeared to exist two contradictory, and concurrent trends: sexualisation and neutralisation of positions.

One year later, a list of 78 female position nouns in French was submitted. The committee deemed it appropriate to present this list to the French Academy but the language authority was opposed to changes and supported the conservation of masculine denominations for women (Roger 1989). The time when women, especially in higher positions, could be referred to in the feminine gender seemed very far away.

The European Union has issued multiple style guides, either constrained to a particular body or of general use, that contain directions on the gender of professional denominations and that are open to the public. We will review some of these guides on the lookout for instructions in this sense.

The oldest one is the *English style guide* (EU 2020c), created by the Commission's English department and of compulsory use. It was first published in 1982 and since 1993 contains a subsection on gender in language that became a section on its own in 2004 which was then reproduced in the *Commission style guide* (EU 2019) and the *Interinstitutional style guide* (EU 2020d). The latter is the next one chronologically, from 1993. Its gender-neutral language section (only in the English version) corresponds almost word for word with that of the *English style guide*. In 2008, the Parliament was the first EU institution to publish a monographic gender-neutral language guide. Updated ten years later, it contains directions in all official languages. Finally, *Inclusive communication in the GSC* (EU 2018) was published in 2018 by the General Secretary of the Council, also in all official languages, with a section on non-sexist language. The last two guides (the Parliament's and the Council's) are mere recommendations and as such do not appear on the list of resources for writers and translators.

The Parliament's guide authorises the universal use of masculine in occupations in semantic-gender languages (*diputado, député*) unless the sex of the incumbent is of significance. If this is the case, and only if it is a woman, she can choose to be named in masculine and her decision prevails. The rule is to distinguish between the position or occupation (always in masculine) and the sex of the person (in masculine by default). The assessment of whether or not it is necessary

to specify the feminine gender is left to the judgment of the editor or translator.

The Council's inclusive style guide encourages the use of gender-neutral nouns "that make no assumption about whether it is a man or a woman who does a particular job or plays a particular role, e.g., 'official', 'chair' and 'spokesperson'" (EU 2018: 8) and includes *spokesperson* as a replacement for *spokesman* and *spokeswoman*. It also features examples of how to avoid the *man* particle.

The European Commission's *English style guide* (regularly updated) states the preference for gender-neutral language but concedes the generic use of masculine terms. For roles, the guide leans towards neutral forms (*chair, spokesperson*). Also, words containing *man* should be replaced by an alternative.

As previously mentioned, the English version of the *Interinstitutional style guide* has a specific section on gender-neutral language based on the Commission's text.

By contrast, the Commission's Spanish department's guide (EU 2020b) calls for the use of the accepted feminine forms whenever a position is held by a woman. This guide, of internal use since 2005 and last updated in 2020, has a subsection devoted to positions occupied by women. It also asks for the official directory to rectify as soon as possible the masculine spelling of professional denominations regardless of the person who holds each position and calls it a linguistic anomaly.

None of these guides include suggestions related to the noun *ombudsman* with the exception of 6 examples in the *Interinstitutional style guide* that do not mention the existence of a gender issue. The feminine *ombudswoman* does not produce any matches.

2.1. Recommendations and use of ombudsman in the EU

Sweden was the first country to appoint in the 19th century a citizens' representative to mediate before government bodies and its denomination, *ombudsman* (from *commission* and *man*), became a loan word from Swedish in other languages. The role was then extended to deal with complaints made against schools, hospitals, banks, the media, etc.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* traces the first use of the word in English to the late 1950s. It is used in other languages, like Slovak, Dutch, Hungarian, Irish or Estonian, as seen on the translation of the EU's website to its official languages.

The word seems to have escaped the neutralisation impetus followed by almost every other English person noun ended in the *man* suffix (*chairman*, *spokesman*, *fireman*, *policeman*). Nevertheless, the feminine version is present in several dictionaries, although the entries in masculine and feminine can greatly differ from each other, as seen in the following excerpt from the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*:

- Ombudsman: “a person who investigates, reports on, and helps settle complaints: an individual usually affiliated with an organization or business who serves as an advocate for patients, consumers, employees, etc.”;
- Ombudswoman: “a female ombudsman”.

The masculine entry contains a definition (29 words) whereas the feminine one adds the adjective *female* to the masculine noun, forwarding readers to the masculine entry.

The Union's policy with regard to positions occupied by women is to accept the decision of the incumbents to be called in feminine or masculine. The EU ombudswoman (who previously held the same position in Ireland), when asked in 2016 how she preferred to be called (*ombudsman* or *ombudswoman*), admitted that “some of my female colleagues in the office would like me to start calling myself Ombudswoman” and that she was “open to making this change” (Stupp 2016: 1). However, the EU position's name has not been officially changed since she took office in 2013 and, as we will see in the analysis, the EU website and corpus still contain a vast proportion of masculine forms compared to feminine, despite a woman having been appointed to office almost a decade ago.

When contacted for the drafting of this paper, the head of the EU ombudswoman's communication department admitted this is an issue much discussed in the office but any change would necessarily have to be the subject of a modification of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the EU*, which “needs to be updated in this respect” (Gadesmann 2021). The TFEU refers to “European's Ombudsman” and for that reason all official documents use the masculine noun. In fact, article 228 of the

TFEU uses *ombudsman* with the masculine article *he* five times, the possessive *his* six times and the pair *he or she* once.

However, the current ombudswoman “is very happy to be called Ombudswoman” and the feminine pronoun is used in the office when referring to the person, not the institution, according to the communication department. An effort is also made to use other non-sexist terms, like “the Office” (Gadesmann 2021).

The rule of using the masculine form when referring to the position and the feminine if multiple simultaneous conditions are met (when referring to an individual, and if their sex is relevant, and if we know it is a woman and if she has not chosen to be named in masculine) is rarely applicable to English since nouns are generally genderless. Other English-language positions in the institutions are neutral too (*president, MEP, secretariat*), with the significant exception of *chairman*, still in use in spite of a specific reference against it in the gender-neutral language section of the English *Interinstitutional style guide*.

The current EU recommendations on non-sexist language with regard to roles and professions establish the use of the masculine form for the office and the person by default, and the feminine form only if a set of simultaneous conditions are met.

A glance at the etymology and loanword status of *ombudsman* (in masculine) stands in contrast with the neutralisation process followed by other *man*-ended nouns.

3. Method

Since the EU style guides do not seem to include the noun *ombudsman* in their non-sexist language recommendations, we will look at the use of the word and its variants in the official and the department’s websites, and large EU corpora. Other EU language tools are also studied, like the automatic translation service and the terminology database.

The goal is to compare the use of female, male and neutral forms of the noun in EU texts, based on the hypothesis that the masculine prevails. The dominant gender options prevalent in different official languages and the presence of more or less sexist options are other areas of interest.

Another subject of our analysis is the tendency to adopt a neutral form only when the holder of the position is a woman. This can be confirmed by listing the denominations of international offices together with the sex of their incumbents.

With a view to proposing a non-sexist form in replacement of the masculine noun used in the EU, denominations of relevant positions around the world are studied from the listings of specific international organisations. The suggested expressions must not be sexist, be valid whichever the sex of the person when they refer to the office or make gender visible when the incumbent is a woman, and fit in with the scope of the work at the EU.

The final proposal must consider the current status of English in the EU as the main language for drafting and as the source for translations. Therefore, the suggested denominations must not only fulfil the requirements in English but also in other official languages, considering the expectation of a literal translation (Koskinen 2008).

4. Analysis of websites and corpora

A restricted search of the Europa.eu website through Google's engine gives back 375,000 instances of *ombudsman* (in inverted marks) and 1,100 of *ombudswoman* (a difference of 341 times). The feminine form on the EU's official page rarely refers to the current ombudswoman but to national representatives from Croatia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc. If we focus specifically on the office's website, ombudsman.europa.eu (note that the website is also in masculine), the word count is 85,800 times *ombudsman* to 131 of *ombudswoman* (655 fewer times). Interestingly, when we use the feminine spelling, the search engine recommends us to look for *ombudsman* instead (the word

processor does the same and marks *ombudswoman* as erroneous). Finally, the gender-neutral alternative noun *ombudsperson* appears 84 times on the office's site and 9,110 on Europa.eu (still more than *ombudswoman*).

The Directorate General for Translation runs an automatic eTranslation service open to the public, where documents and fragments can be entered for translation. It is an automatic translation tool based on the Euramis memories developed by the Directorate-General for Translation with more than one billion sentences translated by EU translators between the official languages.

In eTranslation, the word *ombudsman* offers only one option in Spanish: *defensor del pueblo* (in masculine). In other gendered languages, the translation is masculine too: *difensore civico*, *médiateur*, *provedor de justiça*, *ombudsmanul*, *Bürgerbeauftragter*. If we enter *Madam Ombudsman*, the resulting translation is feminine: *señora defensora del pueblo*.

Something similar happens with IATE, the EU's interactive terminology database. Out of the 24 results for *ombudsman* from English to Spanish, the masculine gender is suggested in all but one result: *defensor*, *defensor del pueblo*, *diputado*, *valedor*, *síndico*, *comisionado*, *comisario*. The exception is "Justicia de Aragón" as a translation proposed for "Ombudsman of the Autonomous Community of Aragon". This is awarded one star for unverified reliability. The loanword *ombudsman* is used six times in the Spanish results, although its reliability is either not verified or minimum.

Other EU offices may not be written in masculine in English but are masculinised in translation due to the original denomination being an individual person noun and the direct translation having a gender-variable form. The list of masculine denominations assigned to women in the official directory seems endless. The following examples belong to the organisational chart of the European Court of Justice.

Name	English denomination	Official translation (in masculine)	Feminine denomination suggested
Anne SCHNEIDER	Reader of judgments	Lector de sentencias	Lectora de sentencias
Antonia KIROVA	Legal secretary	Letrado	Letrada
Susan WRIGHT	Director	Director	Directora
Alejandra MANZANO VALLE	Head of Unit	Jefe de Unidad	Jefa de Unidad

Table 1. Official masculine denominations of women in the EU directory

4.1. Gender mismatch

The use of *ombudsman* as a gender-neutral loanword despite the *man* suffix (which, as we have seen, the *Interinstitutional style guide* recommends avoiding) and notwithstanding its etymological origin can raise confusion with regard to the gender agreement of other parts of the sentence. This can be seen on the website of the EU department.

The Spanish EU ombudswoman's website shows 14 times (in a 559-word text) the phrase *defensora del pueblo europea*. The adjective *European* has been agreed in gender with the noun *defensora* (feminine) instead of *pueblo* (masculine). A literal translation into English would read something like this: *European defender of the people* (and not *defender of the European people*). In a Google search, this collocation is present 661 times in Europa.eu, mainly on the ombudswoman's website but also on the European Parliament's site and other official EU pages. On the contrary, the direct translation, where the adjective is agreed with the masculine noun that it modifies (*defensora del pueblo europeo*) but the feminine position noun has been kept, appears 5,240 times in Europa.eu. The masculine position noun phrase (*defensor del pueblo europeo*) has 27,800 hits.

Other cases of gender disagreement related to this and other positions can be found in the official directory, which contains 68 instances of *defensor* in masculine and one of *defensora* in feminine. Besides several entries not translated, other positions are masculinised in Spanish despite being held by women (which is signalled through the form of treatment, *Sra.*).

Woman's name	Official denomination (in masculine)	Feminine denomination suggested
Sra. K. MAKOWSKA	Jefe de Unidad Adjunto	Jefa de Unidad Adjunta
Sra. Emily O'REILLY	Defensor del Pueblo Europeo	Defensora del Pueblo Europeo
Sra. Cesira D'ANIELLO	Secretario General	Secretaria General

Table 2. Examples of gender disagreement in the official directory

The use of *jefe* (*head*, in masculine) for women, although vetted by the language authorities, is considered less frequent than *jefa* (feminine) (RAE 2005). In fact, the feminine form *jefa* has been registered in the academic dictionary since 1837 (RAE 2005). The feminine form *defensora* is also the correct denomination for a woman in that position.

defensor, ra del pueblo

1. m. y f. Persona designada por un Parlamento para velar por los derechos fundamentales de los ciudadanos ante los organismos gubernamentales.
[Person appointed by a Parliament to ensure the fundamental rights of citizens before government agencies] (RAE 2020)

Other examples of gender mismatch are the apposition of the title *Madam* (feminine) to *ombudsman* (masculine), with 1,930 hits on Google including the transcription of a speech at the UN's Geneva headquarters in 2005. The United Nations also uses *ombudsman* irrespective of the person's sex, as in the denomination of its regional ombudswomen based in Bangkok, Entebbe, New York and Santiago. The official translation in Spanish is *ombudsman regional* (in French, the adjective takes the masculine or feminine form *régional/régionale*). The use of *ombudsman* for women contradicts the straightforward guidelines for gender-inclusive language in English by the United Nations that call for the use of non-discriminatory language and to make gender visible when it is relevant for communication (UN 2019). Other feminine titles adjacent to this masculine noun are *lady* and *Ms*. The adjective *female* is also used in Europa.eu (85 times).

5. Use of alternative denominations from around the world

Before proposing a non-sexist English denomination for the Union's office, we can hope to find acceptable forms by looking at a sample of English-language varieties of the same office, drawn from the list of more than 100 members of the International Ombudsman [sic] Institute.

In its members list (IOI 2021), out of 100 English denominations 73 contain *ombudsman* and 2 *ombudsmen* in Sweden and Lithuania. There is one *ombudswoman* in Croatia and one *ombudsperson* in Kosovo. The remaining 25 include collective and individual nouns (*authority, commission, advocate, defender, etc.*), as we can see in the table below.

English alternatives to ombudsman	Country	Sex of the current holder
Administrative Control Authority	Libya	man
Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission	Korea	woman
Commission against corruption	China	man
Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance	Tanzania	man
Commission on Administrative Justice	Kenya	woman
Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice	Ghana	man
Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights	Cyprus	woman
Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights	Estonia	woman
Commissioner for Fundamental Rights	Hungary	man
Commissioner for Human Rights	Azerbaijan	woman
Commissioner for Human Rights	Poland	woman
Complaints Commissioner	Turks and Caicos Islands	man
Complaints Commissioner	Virgin Islands	woman
General Inspection Organisation	Iran	man
Health Ombud	South Africa	man
High Commissioner for Human Rights	Russian Federation	woman
Human Rights Commission	Zimbabwe	man
Human Rights Defender	Armenia	man
Inspectorate of Government	Uganda	woman

Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission	Jordan	man
Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights	Ukraine	woman
Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration	Sri Lanka	man
People's Advocate	Albania	woman
People's Advocate	Romania	woman
People's Advocate Office	Moldova	woman
Petitions Committee of the German Bundestag	Germany	man
Protector of Citizens	Serbia	man
Public Complaints Commission	Nigeria	man
Public Defender	Georgia	woman
Public Defender of Rights	Czech Republic	man
Public Protector	Zambia	woman

Table 3. English-language alternatives of *ombudsman* (IOI 2021)

Sometimes, within the same administration (for example, Mauritius) there is an ombudsman and an ombudsperson. The ombudsman, who is a man, represents adult citizens. The ombudsperson, who is a woman (but isn't called *ombudswoman*), represents children. Other times, the neutral *ombudsperson* is used irrespectively of the incumbent's sex. The only sure thing is that an *ombudswoman* is never a man (but most ombudswomen are called *ombudsmen*). The following table includes official designations of *ombudsman*, *ombudsperson* and *ombudswoman*, and the sex of the office holders in various countries.

Country	English denomination	Sex of the current holder
Luxembourg	Ombudsman	woman
EU	Ombudsman (European)	woman
India	Ombudsman Punjab for the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace	woman
India	Ombudsman Sindh for the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace	man
OAS	Ombudsperson	woman
Canada	Ombudsperson (British Columbia)	man
Canada	Ombudsperson (Hydro One)	woman
Canada	Ombudsperson (Taxpayers')	man

Pakistan	Ombudsperson Balochistan for the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace	woman
Mauritius	Ombudsperson for children	woman
Kosovo	Ombudsperson Institution	man
Croatia	Ombudswoman	woman
Belgium	Ombudswoman City of Ghent	woman
Israel	Ombudswoman of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany	woman

Table 4. Official designation in English of *ombudswomen* (IOI 2021)

There are 426 results of *ombudship* in a Google search. *Ombud* seems more popular and throws 20,100 results, like the CERN in Geneva (held by a woman) and a number of universities (for example, the University of Cape Town has a female *ombud*).

The British National Corpus available at the Sketch Engine online corpus management platform (with 100 million words of mostly written English from late 20th century) contains 332 instances of *ombudsman*, and none of *ombud*, *ombudswoman* or *ombudsperson*. On the contrary, *ombud* appears 1,270 times on the English Web 2020 corpus (made up of internet texts with more than 38 billion words), *ombudswoman* 438 times, *ombudsperson* 2,509, *ombudsman* 132,889, but there are no instances of *ombudship*. Finally, the European Parliament's corpus (EUROPARL7) contains 389 instances of *ombudsman* but no *ombudswoman* or *ombudsperson*. EUROPARL7 consists of around 60 million words of parliamentary proceedings in each of the EU's official languages.

In Spanish, the high public officer in charge of representing the fundamental rights of citizens before the public powers is called *defensor/a del pueblo* (in Spain), *defensor/a de los derechos humanos* (in some Latin American countries), *defensor/a de los derechos humanos* (in Mexico) and *procurador/a de los derechos humanos* (in Guatemala) (RAE 2005). The Royal Academy specifies that if it is a woman the feminine form must be used (*defensora*, *procuradora*). It is also possible to employ a metonym to refer to the person through the office he or she leads (*defensoría del pueblo* in Bolivia, Colombia, México, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela).

Perhaps an acceptable Spanish translation can be derived from the denominations of members of the Ibero-American Ombudsman

(sic) Federation (FIO 2021). This organisation profusely employs the English term *ombudsman* but shows gender-neutral options in the denomination of national offices. For instance, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela use the term *defensoría* (*ombudship*). In Chile and Honduras, the office is called *national institute* or *committee* (respectively) of human rights. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua use the metonym *procuraduría*. Only three countries adopt the masculine noun: *defensor del pueblo* in Spain (a man) and the Dominican Republic (a woman), and *procurador del ciudadano* in Puerto Rico (a man). Denominations in other Iberian languages (Portuguese, Catalan, Galician, Basque, etc.) are not discussed in this paper. In total, there are 8 women and 14 men who hold this position in the Iberian-American region. No feminine nouns are used for women (grammatical gender, like in *defensoría*, is not considered).

It can be added that the Royal Spanish Academy admits *defensoría* as a language variation in Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, and offers a masculine definition (“ministerio o ejercicio de defensor”). By contrast, *procuraduría* is the office or position of *procurador* (again, defined in masculine). In this case, the relevant sense is that of a promoter and defender of people’s interests, and complainant of their grievances.

6. Feminisation proposal for the EU

The suggested form for the EU ombuds office should not be sexist but be valid irrespectively of the sex of the person in charge. Also, given the nature of EU texts as originals for translation, the gender effects in translation to other official languages must be considered. In that respect, it is worth noting that person nouns are prone to have gender endings in some languages and therefore it can be more practical (from a non-sexist perspective) to opt for collective nouns or metonyms. Surprisingly, though, *ombudsman* can be translated into Spanish in feminine form in EU texts, although the numbers are low, with 3,112

defensor del pueblo and 1 *defensora del pueblo* in the EUROPARL7 corpus, and 11,841 masculine nouns against 14 in feminine in the EUR-Lex 2/2016 corpus.

The starting point is to discard the use of *ombudsman* because it contains the *man* particle, except when the officer is indeed a man. Therefore, a woman holding this position must be referred to as *ombudswoman*. Also, a true gender-neutral term can be chosen to rename the office and make it permissible, irrespective of the sex of the person in charge.

Being faithful to the word's etymological meaning, an alternative to the noun ending in *man* could be simply *representative*. This is also interesting from a translation point of view, since some Romance languages have an invariable equivalent noun, like the Spanish *representante*, devoid of gender traits when using gender-neutral terms before and after. Nevertheless, in other languages the noun is variable (*représentant/représentante* in French).

A new denomination can be extracted from the definition on the EU website. For example, with a metonym such as "Complaints office".

The European Ombudsman works to promote good administration at EU level. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration by EU institutions and bodies, and also proactively looks into broader systemic issues. (<https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/home>)

Other possible metonyms are newly coined words: *ombud* and *ombudship*. Also, *commission*, *authority* and *office* are used in other organisations.

In Spanish, although we have seen that *ombudsman* can be seldom translated in feminine, the use of a metonym in English could guarantee a non-sexist translation, given the requirement and expectation of a literal translation. Therefore, one suggestion is using a prevalent term in Latin American Spanish when referring to the office (*defensoría del Pueblo*, admitted by the Royal Academy) and the individual variable person noun when referring to the person (*defensor/defensora*).

<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Non-sexist proposal (EN)</i>	<i>Non-sexist proposal (ES)</i>
The office	Complaints office/Ombuds office	Defensoría del pueblo
The person	ombudsman/ombudswoman	defensor/defensora del pueblo

Table 5. Non-sexist proposals for the denomination of the EU office in English and Spanish

Our proposal distinguishes between references to the office or position (a metonym) and to the person (an individual person noun) and considers the effects of the original on the gender of the translation. The denominations suggested are used in other international organisations and have the approval of the language authorities. The individual nouns' gender must match the sex of the incumbent, since the universal use of the masculine gender when applied to women is sexist, in that, according to the definition provided by Niedzwiecki (1993), it makes them subordinate and invisible. Therefore, only the feminine form should be used when referring to a woman.

7. Conclusion

In the fight against gender inequality, language has more than a symbolic role. The Council of Europe positions sexist language at the bottom of the sexist violence iceberg that is topped by femicide (Council of Europe 2020). Non-sexist language is considered a tool for gender equality and can be used to improve the situation of women.

There has been much debate about the appropriateness and necessity to neutralise and feminise language, and about the perhaps not so positive effects of neutralisation for the advancement of women in society. Despite the current neutralising trend, the feminisation of nouns that denote positions and occupations is prone to encounter less rejection than that of other nouns. Sometimes, even grammatical authorities seem to be ahead of speakers in this respect when the former have to keep reminding the public of the long history of female forms like the Spanish *presidenta* (documented since the 15th century).

The 1980s cry for feminising women's occupations has lost momentum too soon and some sectors are still reluctant to discontinue

the use of male forms like *fishermen* or *ombudsman*. In Spanish this is much more worrying given the large quantities of gender-variable nouns, although in positions and profession nouns, Spanish is more likely to be feminine-specific than English.

The lack of representation of women in some areas of the workplace and more so in the higher spheres could be tackled, among other ways, by making women visible through language. Studies are needed to ascertain the effects of feminine, masculine and neutral forms of job titles in the selection process, from application to the recruitment of the final candidate.

In the EU, English texts have followed a process of de-gendering, not necessarily in line with the feminist agenda. Some masculine terms can still be found, such as personal pronouns or the *ombudsman* denomination. The translation into Spanish is dominated by masculine by default and this is supported by the existing guidelines. The directions to use masculine nouns in general and feminine only when a list of conditions is met, cannot be exactly called equal treatment.

More work needs to be done to make the language of EU texts not sexist, according to the European Commission's 2020-2025 equality plan (EU 2020a) to refute gender stereotypes and close the gender gap in work and care. But the use of masculine or neutral role nouns can hardly contribute to this goal. On the contrary, the use of feminine forms, like *ombudswoman*, is not denigrating and needs to be employed normally to prove it.

Feminisation of language is nothing more nor less than the right to exist as a woman in a world which no longer ignores sexual equality. Far from being a futile or superficial, insignificant demand, this is a giant step towards the emancipation of women. (Niedzwiecki 1993: 52)

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