Michele Sala (ed.)

GENDER, LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION. REPRESENTATIONS AND TRANSCODIFICATIONS

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Gender, Language and Translation: Representations and Transcodifications

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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,

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 paradigm[2]. 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

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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 general[3] 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 discoursal 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

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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 is 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 contexual 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 discoursive 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

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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 examples[7]:

> 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]

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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 here[10]): 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 substantiation[11].

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 in 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

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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

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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 (Dialeti 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 education[17]) – 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

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 practice[18] and intrinsically sexist, positing or presupposing gender asymmetries and inequalities, and favouring men over women.

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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. *princ-ess, 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

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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 in 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 research[21] 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)

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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]

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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 Previtt-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 Forum[24] (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 Previtt-Freilino et al.'s original study, see Table 1 and Table 2[25], in Appendix), significantly different considerations can be made[26]. Most noticeably,

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24   https://www.weforum.org/
25   The Table in in Previtt-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, in 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 Previtt-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 then 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

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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 language[27] 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

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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, Bostwana 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, Adzerbaijani, 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 counties (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' intuitions[28]. 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

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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]inspection 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 pupularized – 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

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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 Accademica 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

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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-

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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, pinnace, 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,

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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 'synonimical' 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

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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

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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 positing 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	Uzbeck/Russian*
	overal mean		.68				

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

Rank	Country	L. type	GGG index	Geography	Religion	Government	Language
	overal 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	Adzerbajiani

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-)