

Gender in Catalan. Structure, asymmetries and changes

I wrote this paper on 2013 for a collective book that dealt with the developments and achievements of two things: on one hand, analyze and, on the other, modify the stamp of sexism in different languages. My article was about Catalan, which is my native tongue. The publication was in English.

As it was addressed to an audience unaccustomed or even unaware of the existence of the Catalan language, the Introduction was used to explain the minimal and basic rudiments of this language.

Once written, the article did not comply with the requirements of publication and therefore remained unpublished. I leave it here should it be of any use to anybody.

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Introduction

Catalan (*Català*) is a Romance language spoken by more than eleven million people in a territory located in Western Mediterranean Europe which covers a surface of 59.905 km² (96.2% of which is inside Spain) and which has almost 13,000,000 inhabitants. This territory encompasses Catalonia, the Valencian Community – except for some inland areas; in this community Catalan is also called Valencian (*Valencià*) –, the Balearic Islands, the Principality of Andorra, la Franja de Ponent (literally ‘the western strip’, an area in Aragon which borders Catalonia to the west), the city of Alghero in Sardinia, an area in the south-east of France which borders Catalonia and El Carche (a small region in Murcia). As with the rest of Romance languages, it comes from vulgar Latin, the common language of the Roman population which settled in Hispania from the 3rd century BCE onwards.

It is an Indo-European language which belongs to the Occitano-Romance branch of Romance languages. It is classified as part of the Western Romance languages. It shares many characteristics with Spanish or Castilian (an Ibero-Romance language) and with Occitan and French (both Gallo-Romance), which is why it has often been regarded as a “bridge” or transitional language between Ibero-Romance and Gallo-Romance languages.

It is a synthetic or inflecting language. The standard sentence order is subject-verb-object, although this is not followed in certain types of sentences, such as interrogative ones. Its morphology is similar to that of the rest of the Romance languages: there is a clear difference between verbal and nominal inflections, a feature it shares with Latin; it has relatively few inflections; two genders; no cases (except in personal pronouns, where some vestiges of Latin declination still remain) and the distinction between singular and plural. With verbs, strong personal pronouns are only used in the subject position for emphasis. The verb morphology is such that sentences do not require an explicit subject. The most common processes of derivation are through suffixation and prefixation. Adjectives generally go after the nouns they modify and are inflected according to the gender and number of the noun with which they concord. It has accent marks. It has a medium vowel range, with eight different vowel sounds. It has various dialects split into two main blocks: oriental Catalan and occidental Catalan. Over the last few decades, the majority of these dialects have come under the influence of Spanish (in the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands) or French (in France), which have left their imprint in the form of new vocabulary and expressions. The reverse is also true, but to a lesser extent.

Catalan is one of the hundred most spoken languages in the world (cf. Torres Pla 2007: 1). A glance at the relationships between ICT, the international context and Catalan will enable us to see just how alive the language is. It is the fourteenth language of the European Union in terms of total number of speakers. According to the Steinke-Institut in Bonn, it is ranked 27th in the list of languages with most economic importance (cf. Tribuna.cat 2011) and 20th in terms of international importance in general (cf. Portalingua 2011). According to data from UNESCO in 2011, Catalan occupies the 22nd place in terms of world languages most translated into other languages. Conversely, as a target language (that is, translated from other languages into Catalan), it is ranked 24th. Among the ten most visited websites in the world, seven have a Catalan version. Catalan occupies 26th place in a classification of languages by absolute number of existing web pages, and 19th place according to the number of web pages per speaker. It occupies the eighth position in a classification of the rate of internet use and is ranked as being between the 10th and 15th most dynamic languages on the Internet. With regard to total number of articles, it is the 15th language on Wikipedia, with over 400,000; indeed, Catalan was the second language to appear on the electronic encyclopaedia after English. It holds the first place in an index which measures the quality of the 1000 most important articles and, for instance, the BBC or *The Economist* hold up the Catalan version as an example. In January 2013, the domain name *.cat* had 61,412 web pages, with a great many contents per page.

This article will be divided into four sections. The first will focus on the description of the grammatical gender and how agreement works in Catalan. The second will deal with word formation and some asymmetries shall be seen in the labelling of women and men. The third part will aim to differentiate between content and form regarding gender issues; it will also give an overview of the subordinating and invisibilising biases when speaking about the feminine sex. The fourth Section will be given over to the representation of women and, where the two previous sections cover several dissymmetric and hierarchising representations of women, in the fourth, the focus will be firmly on an essential and complementary aspect: the changes noted in different spheres with a view to a better representation of women.

1. Gender and grammar¹

1.1 The grammatical gender in Catalan

Catalan has two grammatical genders: feminine and masculine. Those words which were neutral in Latin have generally become masculine words. In fact, there are very few which are semantically neutral (e.g. the pronouns *això* ‘this’, *allò* ‘that’).

Gender is expressed through inflection by virtually all the nominal groups, that is to say, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, determiners (including articles, demonstratives and possessives) and some quantifiers (including numerals, quantitatives and indefinites); morphological specificities are only shown in nouns, determinatives and pronouns. In nouns, because, unlike the other nominal groups, they have an inherent gender: they are lexically feminine or masculine, with few exceptions; in determinatives because they also present the grammatical category of gender, and in pronouns because their gender is activated according to the noun to which they are referring. In the remainder of nominal groups, by contrast, gender is not inherent (cf. 1.2).

Grammatical gender is arbitrary in nouns not denoting people, as is shown by the fact that words like *sol* ‘sun’ or *papallona* ‘butterfly’ have one grammatical gender in some languages and the opposite in others. It is sometimes argued that when a masculine word such as *dia* ‘day’ can also in some contexts include in its meaning the feminine word *nit* ‘night’, but not the other way around, making the latter word more specific and restricted but the former more overarching and generic, this is a demonstration of the prevalence of the masculine gender. Feminine words such as *roca* ‘rock’ or *cistella* ‘hamper’, which denote respectively a thing and an object bigger than the masculine words *roc* ‘pebble’ or *cistell* ‘basket’, prove that grammatical gender is usually arbitrary, except in nouns where sex and gender overlap.

Gender is a grammatical category which is closely related to different levels of grammar: the morphological level, obviously, but also the syntactic and semantic levels. Morphologically, because gender is expressed through a series of inflecting marks which allow the delineation of different nominal classes; syntactically, because (together with number) it is used to mark the agreement established between nominal groups within the nominal syntagma or in certain predicative relationships; finally, on a semantic level, because gender opposition is associated in some cases with distinctions based on sex and, to a lesser extent, with other types of conceptual distinctions.

In fact, traditionally, in Catalan and other languages, noun gender has not been considered to have any direct relation with the sex of whoever is being spoken about. In any case, the progressive recognition of women, their presence in many professional and social spheres and positions of responsibility, as well as the tendency to relate gender and sex in those cases where the referents are animate – especially if they are humans –, leads to the masculine gender being increasingly perceived as exclusive, even when no reference is made to any specific person. This tension and relation will gradually be disclosed throughout the chapter since, in reality, they make up the core of it.

Inflection is the morphological process through which parts of speech characteristic of certain lexical categories are expressed. Only the verb (irrelevant to the present case) and the majority of nominal groups can be inflected.

In most cases the feminine inflects with -a: *professora* (f sg) / *professores* (f pl) ‘teacher(s)’ and the masculine is Ø: *professor* (m sg) / *professors* (m pl) ‘teacher(s)’.

In nouns referring to sexed beings, gender opposition presents us with a clear semantic motivation and, in many cases, the feminine gender is designated to the female of a given species and masculine gender, to the male. These sex-based oppositions can easily be seen in pairs such as: *filla* (f sg) ‘daughter’ / *fill* (m sg) ‘son’, *dona* (f sg) ‘woman’ / *home* (m sg) ‘man’, *lloba* (f sg) ‘she-wolf’ / *llop* (m sg) ‘wolf’.

Gender oppositions associated with sexual oppositions can be established in various ways, inflecting in some cases and non-inflecting in others. It might be of practical use to see them in the context of kinship terms. In the following table, a series of inflecting cases can be seen.

Table 1. Kinship terms which inflect

Female-feminine (sg/pl)	Male-masculine (sg/pl)
<i>filla/filles</i> ‘daughter(s)’	<i>fill/fills</i> ‘son(s)’
<i>germana/germanes</i> ‘sister(s)’	<i>germà/germans</i> ‘brother(s)’
<i>cosina/cosines</i> ‘cousin(s)’	<i>cosí/cosins</i> ‘cousin(s)’
<i>àvia/àvies</i> ‘grandmother(s)’	<i>avi/avis</i> ‘grandfather(s)’
<i>néta/nétes</i> ‘granddaughter(s)’	<i>nét/néts</i> ‘grandson(s)’

¹ . The theoretical foundations on which this Section is built are taken from Cabré (1994, 2002), Clua (2002), Gràcia (2002) and the Institut d’Estudis Catalans (2013).

<i>neboda/nebodes</i> ‘niece(s)’	<i>nebot/nebots</i> ‘nephew(s)’
<i>sogra/sogres</i> ‘mother(s) in law’	<i>sogre/sogres</i> ‘father(s) in law’

Clearly, in terms unrelated to those of kinship, we can also find inflection. Let us see two examples: *noia/noies* ‘girl(s)’, *noi/nois* ‘boy(s)’, *alumna/alumnes* ‘pupil(s)’.

In the table below, we can see some cases in which feminine and masculine have different roots.

Table 2. Kinship terms with different roots

Female-feminine (sg/pl)	Male-masculine (sg/pl)
<i>mare/mares</i> ‘mother(s)’	<i>pare/pares</i> ‘father(s)’
<i>esposa/esposes, muller/mullers</i> ‘wife(s)’	<i>marit/marits</i> ‘husband(s)’
<i>nora/nores, jove/joves</i> ‘daughter(s)-in-law’	<i>gendre/gendres</i> ‘son(s)-in-law’
<i>tia/ties</i> ‘aunt(s)’	<i>oncle/oncles</i> ‘uncle(s)’

We can also find other pairs of words unrelated to kinship terms with this same characteristic: *egua/egües* ‘mare(s)’, *cavall/cavalls* ‘horse(s)’, *mestressa/mestresses* ‘owner(s)’, *amo/amos* ‘master(s)’, etc.

If the two tables shown were to be compared with similar tables from other Romance languages, one would see that they coincide frequently.

The relationship between gender and sex is rather systematic in nouns denoting human beings (or animals), with the exception of some words (cf. Section 1.4) which can refer to both sexes irrespective of whether they are feminine (*persona* ‘person’) or masculine (*infant* ‘child’). In any case, the relevant changes regarding these cases shall be seen.

1.2 Agreements

As has been explained, nouns have an inherent gender and are either feminine or masculine. In the other nominal groups, the use of the feminine or masculine form is syntactically conditioned by the established agreement with the noun.

Nominal syntagmas (1a) and (1b) are marked by gender in three ways: inherently due to the actual noun (*llibreta* (f sg) ‘notebook’ vs. *llapis* (m sg) ‘pencil’), in the determiner (*aquesta* (f sg) ‘this’ vs. *aquest* (m sg) ‘this’) and in the adjective (*negra* (f sg) vs. *negre* (m sg) ‘black’).

1

a. *Aquesta llibreta negra*
‘this (f sg) notebook (f sg) black (f sg)’

b. *Aquest llapis negre*
‘this (m sg) pencil (m sg) black (m sg)’

Gender (and number) agreement is obligatory whatever the accompanying determiner may be.

c. *una/la/aquella tia/jaqueta* vs. *un/el/aquell oncle/abric*
‘a/the/that aunt/jacket’ vs. ‘a/the/that uncle/coat’

Pronouns that replace direct objects also show gender agreement.

2

a. *Vaig veure la dona* (f sg) / *La* (f sg) *vaig veure*
‘I saw the woman’ / ‘I saw her’

b. *Vaig veure els nois* (m pl) / *Els* (m pl) *vaig veure*
‘I saw the boys’ / ‘I saw them’

Pronouns which replace indirect objects, on the other hand, have only one form for both genders.

3

a. *Vaig trucar a l'advocada* (f sg) / *Li* (n) *vaig trucar*

'I phoned the lawyer' / 'I phoned her'

b. *Vaig trucar al porter* (m sg) / *Li* (n) *vaig trucar*
'I phoned the caretaker' / 'I phoned him'

Weak pronouns which replace other main verbal objects (attributive complement, etc.) do not have gender marks either.

Possessives, as has been explained of other determiners, agree in gender with the noun they accompany, as they do in other languages (French, Italian etc.) and not with the gender of the possessor as is the case in, for instance, English. The gender of nominal syntagmas such as *la seva* (f) *ploma* (f) 'her/his pen' and *el seu* (m) *llibre* (m) 'her/his book' depends on the grammatical gender of the object or thing possessed and not on the possessor.

Strong personal pronouns for the 1 of s and pl are invariable words (*jo* 'I' / *nosaltres* 'we'), as are those for the 2 of s and pl (*tu* 'you' / *vosaltres* 'you'). In contrast, for the 3 of s and pl there is one form for the feminine and another for the masculine: *Ella* (f sg) *escriu* 'She writes' / *Ell* (m sg) *canta* 'He sings' // *Elles* (f pl) *escriuen* 'They write' / *Ells* (m pl) *canten* 'They sing'. A little further on, we shall see some problems of agreement which the 1 and 2 of pl forms in particular pose in some writings.

1.3 Main types of nouns and agreements

1.3.1 Nouns with two endings

When talking about a woman and a man at the same time (or a female and a male animal, or one object with a feminine grammatical gender and one with a masculine grammatical gender), agreement is usually expressed in the masculine.

1

a. *La Maria* (f sg) *i en Josep* (m sg) *són bons* (m pl) *advocats* (m pl)
'Maria (f sg) and Josep (m sg) are good (m pl) lawyers (m pl)'

If the subject of the sentence were two men, the agreements would work in the same way (which coincidence does allow margin for ambiguity). If it were two women, the sentence would agree in the feminine.

b. *La Maria* (f sg) *i la Laura* (m sg) *són bones* (f pl) *advocades* (f pl)
'Maria (f sg) and Laura (f sg) are good (f pl) lawyers (f pl)'

If the subject complement in sentence 1.a were the word *homes* 'men', instead of *advocats* 'lawyers', we would see that the supposedly unmarked word *home* 'man' is in reality marked, or in this case it certainly is, since the resulting sentence would be absurd.

2

a. **La Maria* (f sg) *i en Josep* (m sg) *són homes*
'Maria (f sg) and Josep (m sg) are men (m pl)'

The same would happen with any masculine word not applicable to women. This would suggest that in Catalan, "marked" and "unmarked" are not discreet categories.

1.3.2 Invariable nouns

There are nouns which, despite maintaining gender opposition, have the same form for feminine and masculine, and mark the gender only through agreement established with other nominal groups.

1

With the article or other determiners

a. *la* (f sg) *cantant* / *el* (m sg) *cantant*
'the singer' / 'the singer'

With the adjective

b. *bones* (f pl) *cantants* / *bons* (m pl) *cantants*
'good singers' / 'good singers'

1.3.3 Strong personal pronouns

If we bring back strong personal pronouns into the equation, we shall see that the 1 and 2 of s agree in feminine and masculine respectively.

1

- a. *Jo* (f sg) *sóc bona* (f sg)
'I am good'
- b. *Jo* (m sg) *sóc baix* (m sg)
'I am short'
- c. *Tu* (f sg) *ets llesta* (f sg)
'You are clever'
- d. *Tu* (m sg) *ets alt* (m sg)
'You are tall'

With the 1 and 2 of pl, agreement works in the same way as has been illustrated in Section 1.3.2, because in fact the pronoun has only one ending and whether it is feminine or masculine depends on the sex of the person being referred to.

2

- a. *Nosaltres* (f pl) *som bones* (f pl)
'We are good'
- b. *Nosaltres* (m pl) *som baixos* (m pl)
'We are short'
- c. *Vosaltres* (f pl) *sou llestes* (f pl)
'You are clever'
- d. *Vosaltres* (m pl) *sou alts* (m pl)
'You are tall'

With the 3 of sg pronouns *ella* (f sg) 'she' and *ell* (m sg) 'he', concord is made as we have seen in 1.1. The 3 of pl: *elles* (f pl) 'they' and *ells* (m pl) 'they' as in 1.3.1.

1.4 Epicenes

In Catalan there are a certain number of words with a common gender, or epicenes. They are terms which refer to a person or an animal with an invariable word, regardless of the sex they may be. In generic words, grammatical gender is always irrelevant and agrees with the rest of the syntagmatic elements as seen in 1.2.

1 People

- a. *persona* (f s) 'person' *persones* (f pl) 'people'
- b. *víctima* (f pl) *víctimes* (f pl) 'victim(s)'
- c. *ésser humà* (m s) *éssers humans* (m pl) 'human being(s)'
- d. *infant* (m s) 'child' *infants* (m pl) 'children'

2 Animals

- a. *girafa* (f s) *girafes* (f pl) 'giraffe(s)'
- b. *pantera* (f s) *panteres* (f pl) 'panther(s)'
- c. *tauró* (m s) *taurons* (m pl) 'shark(s)'
- d. *mandril* (m s) *mandrils* (m pl) 'mandrill(s)'

Despite this possibility, there are a large number of animals that have either double endings (*lleona* (f) 'lioness' / *lleó* (m) 'lion') or one form for females and another for males (*vaca* (f) 'cow' / *toro* (m) 'bull'), particularly domestic animals. Owing probably to breakthroughs in language to make women's presence more visible, animal designations that were once invariable now have one form for females and another for males (*elefanta* (f) / *elefant* (m) 'elephant(s)'), (*orangutana* (f) / *orangutan* (m) 'orangutan(s)'). Sometimes, the word remains invariable but the determiner or other elements are feminine if referring to a female or masculine if referring to a male (*la* (f) *ximpanzé* / *el* (m) *ximpanzé* 'chimpanzee(s)'). They become invariable nouns which function like those seen in Section 1.3.2.

We could mention a third group comprising words which refer to a group of people. This group can be made up of people of both sexes, only females or only males.

3

- a. *ciutadania* (f) 'citizenry'
- d. *veïnat* (m) 'neighbours'

- b. *població* (f) ‘population’
- c. *clientela* (f) ‘clientele’

- e. *públic* (m) ‘audience’
- f. *electorat* (m) ‘electorate’

The constant changes that are produced in the language in order to make women visible, as well as the economy of the formula, cause numerous new terms to appear which have been derived from existing words; this is particularly true in the work place and administration.

4

- a. *gerència* (f) ‘management’
- b. *dirigència* (f) ‘leadership’
- c. *professorat* (m) ‘teaching staff’

- d. *empresariat* (m) ‘group of employers’
- e. *voluntariat* (m) ‘group of volunteers’
- f. *monitorat* (m) ‘set of children’s supervisors’ [e.g. in summer camps]

2. Word formation²

2.1 Derivation

A very productive procedure in word formation is derivation. Nouns denoting people can derive from verbs, adjectives or indeed from other nouns; this latter process is known as nominalization.

In this Section, we shall go over the main existing derivations that denote professions and trades³, as well as some other terms denoting animate beings. We will also see some dissymmetries existing in the formation of feminine and masculine nouns (cf. Lledó 1992: 43-53).

2.1.1 Words with two endings

Firstly, we shall look at a series of regular formations which have one form for the feminine and another for the masculine.

1

Regular formation ending in -era/-er⁴

- a. *consell* (N) ‘advice’ → *consellera* / *conseller* ‘councillor’
- b. *porta* (N) ‘door’ → *portera* / *porter* ‘caretaker’

This formation poses no problems. If a feminine form does sound a little strange (*fustera* ‘carpenter’) it is not because of the formation of the resulting word, but rather because at present, it is not a common trade for women. When Merkel took up her present post as Chancellor, automatically and with great ease, she was designated the corresponding feminine form (*cancellera*).

2

Regular formation ending in dental consonant + -ora/-or (-tora/-tor; -dora/-dor):

- a. *direcció* (N) ‘senior management’ → *directora* / *director* ‘director/manager’
- b. *pescar* (VERB) ‘to fish’ → *pescadora* ‘fisherwoman’ / *pescador* ‘fisherman’

On the whole, it causes no problems, despite there being an occasional irregular case, e.g. *emperadriu* ‘empress’ / *emperador* ‘emperor’.

3

Regular formation ending in -ana/-à.

- a. *degana* ‘deaconess’ / *degà* ‘deacon’
- b. *ermitana* / *ermità* ‘hermit/recluse’

4

Regular formation ending in -òloga/-òleg.

- a. *astròloga* / *astròleg* ‘astrologist’
- b. *psicòloga* / *psicòleg* ‘psychologist’

² . Throughout this Section I basically follow Cabré (1994, 2002), Gràcia (2002) and the Institut d’Estudis Catalans (2013). I thank Doctor M. Teresa Cabré for her help and encouragement in writing this chapter.

³ . Two pioneering studies in Moll (1989) and in Viladot & Barraquer (1999).

⁴ . Though from a strictly linguistic point of view we would say that really the suffix is -er, and that if it was made to a feminine it would have the feminine -a affixed to it, in this Section we will always show the double segment.

5

Regular formation ending in -ònom/-ònom.

- a. *agrònoma* / *agrònom* ‘agronomist’
- b. *astrònoma* / *astrònom* ‘astronomer’

6

Regular formation ending in -ògrafa/-ògraf.

- a. *comediògrafa* / *comediògraf* ‘comedy writer’
- b. *fotògrafa* / *fotògraf* ‘photographer’

7

Regular formation ending in -ària/-ari.

- a. *funcionària* / *funcionari* ‘public servant’
- b. *bibliotecària* / *bibliotecari* ‘librarian’

8

Regular formation ending in -ica/-ic.

- a. *catedràtica* / *catedràtic* ‘professor’
- b. *diplomàtica* / *diplomàtic* ‘diplomat’

9

Regular formation ending in -atra/-atre.

- a. *pediatra* / *pediatre* ‘paediatrician’
- b. *psiquiatra* / *psiquiatre* ‘psychiatrist’

10

Regular formation ending in -enta/-ent.

- a. *dependenta* / *dependent* ‘shop assistant’
- b. *aprenenta* / *aprenent* ‘apprentice’

This formation highlights an interesting aspect. The two last examples are in common usage and one questions these two feminine nouns ending in -a (e.g. *dependenta*) even though *dependent* (invariable adjective) ends in -ent; the proof of this is that the resulting adverb is *dependentment* ‘dependently’ and in Catalan, adverbs are formed from the feminine adjective, e.g. *bàsica* (f) ‘basic’ to *bàsicament* ‘basically’. It is readily accepted because they are very common occupations for women and, furthermore, the general trend in Catalan is to end feminine forms in -a (cf. 2.1.3). In spite of there being invariable cases of -ent, an increasing number of these words may split off to form the feminine -enta (*gerenta* ‘manager’). It is more than likely that once there are a great many *agentes* ‘agents’, they will end up being named so (e.g. *presidenta* ‘president’).

Quite apart from trades and professions, adjectives of two endings exist (such as *valenta* (f) / *valent* (m) ‘brave’, *atenta* (f) / *atent* (m) ‘attentive’), but there are also invariable forms (*intel·ligent* ‘intelligent’, *eloqüent* ‘eloquent’), although, as explained above, continuing the general trend to finish feminine forms in -a, they will end up splitting off too. In some words ending in -ant, as we

shall see further on, it is already happening (*dibuixanta* ‘cartoonist’).

11

Regular formation ending in -ada/-at.

- a. *magistrada* / *magistrat* ‘magistrate’
- b. *agregada* / *agregat* ‘senior teacher/lecturer’

12

Formation ending in -a / -Ø (these constructions do not hold the same value as the previous ones since they are not formed by any suffix, -a being the feminine ending).

- a. *pagesa* / *pagès* ‘farmer’
- b. *marquesa* ‘marchioness’ / *marquès* ‘marquis’

13

Formation ending in -a/-e.

- a. *mestra* / *mestre* ‘teacher/maestro’
- b. *alumna* / *alumne* ‘pupil’

2.1.2 Invariable words

There is another series of profession words which, in contrast, are invariable.

1

-ant endings

- a. *cantant* ‘singer’
- b. *ensenyant* ‘teacher’

Despite this being an invariable form, the writer Dolors Monserdà (1845-1919), as early as 1904, named a novel *La Fabricanta* ‘The Manufacturer’. A later writer, Aurora Bertrana (1892-1974), in her memoirs prior to the year 1935 uses several times the word *estudianta* ‘student’. It is therefore quite possible for this ending, as with these two cases and as we have seen above with -ent/-enta, to be split.

2

-ista endings

- a. *electricista* ‘electrician’
- b. *telefonista* ‘telephonist’

This ending is very productive. The gender, as with the rest of invariable words, is marked by the accompanying determiner. It does not usually cause problems, although due to the fact that they are masculines ending in -a, there are speakers who, with specific words, e.g. *modista* (f/m) ‘couturier’, force the language somewhat and use *modisto* to refer to a man, thus avoiding a word which “smacks” of women.

3

The remainder of the most frequent invariables are the following:

- a. *astronauta* ‘astronaut’/ *terapeuta* ‘therapist’
- b. *homeòpata* ‘homoeopath’
- c. *escombriaire* ‘refuse collector’
- d. *gallinaire* ‘poultry trader’

There is a series of invariable designations which are usually loanwords (*maniquí* ‘mannequin’, *líder* ‘leader’, *mànager* ‘manager’), or nominalizations (*guia* ‘guide’, *cap* ‘head/boss’). The article indicates the grammatical gender.

There are designations of professional careers that initially were only masculine, e.g. *arquitecte* ‘architect’, and logically so as only men were able to take the corresponding degree. A while after it had become a profession apt for both sexes, the feminine *arquitecta* was created.

2.1.3 Noteworthy aspects and some asymmetries in the formation of feminine and masculine words

Regarding the above point, we shall now take the opportunity to talk about different asymmetries. The tendency to make feminine forms with -a, means that it is not too problematic to create neologisms by adding an -a when women exercise a trade. For instance, the massive presence of women in the textile sector has produced the feminine *oficiala* ‘official’, ending in -a in, a termination (-al) considered invariable for feminine and masculine.

Despite this, there are people who reject some feminine forms, for example *crítica* ‘critic’ o *mecànica* ‘mechanic’ and advocate that it is better to use the masculines *crític* or *mecànic* for the feminine forms too, arguing that in this way, one will not confuse the professional with the related concept (i.e. criticism and mechanics). In the first place, the context would resolve any ambiguity in such cases; in second place, the same argument is never applied for masculine forms when the same ambiguity arises; for example in the masculine *cosidor*, which can refer to a tool (‘sewing box’) and a man (‘seamster’ or ‘one who sews’), or in many other job titles which when expressed in the masculine may be confused with places, objects or adjectives and attributes.

There are words in which a semantic dislocation occurs for reasons of gender. In the pair *secretària* (f) / *secretari* (m) ‘secretary’ the feminine does not have the same value as the masculine. In general, for a man to accept being named *secretary*, he has to hold a senior position. When a woman takes up the same post, it is relatively normal, though now this happens less and less, for her to be named in the masculine form, given that the feminine equivalent seemed to be reserved for subordinate or lowly jobs. A similar phenomenon occurs with the pair *governanta* (f) ‘housekeeper’ / *governant* (m) ‘governor’.⁵

Although social changes have created new feminine forms for many professions, sometimes resistance can be noted in their being accepted, especially if it is about professions of prestige or if the jobs are considered to be more typical of men. For those professionals who have been working in the army for some time, the feminine *soldada* ‘soldier’ has been created. It is interesting to know, however, that when the regulatory dictionary had already admitted this form, a copy editor from a newspaper (*Avui*) preferred to place the feminine article in front of the masculine word (*la* (f) *soldat* (m)), arguing that they would use *la soldada* when it became more common. Obviously, it is difficult for it to become more common if one chooses not to use it. On the other hand, only in cases which affect women do feminine forms already admitted and made official by the regulatory dictionary, cease to be automatically adopted.

Another question is that of derogatory feminine endings. One such ending is -essa (*jutgessa* ‘judge’, *poetessa* ‘poet’). It presents various problems:

- a) firstly, it is strongly linked to words related to the Church (*abadessa* ‘abbess’);
- b) secondly, this is also the case with words denoting noble titles (*duquessa* ‘duchess’) which refer to archaic terms;
- c) thirdly, though not quite so common nowadays, it has traditionally been used to name the wife (*alcaldessa* ‘mayoress’) of a man who is actually doing a given job;
- d) finally, the ending leaves a pejorative aftertaste which leads to a perception of women as being professionals in a somehow separate category to men or professionals who are not competent enough.

In the 90s, when sweeping changes were being made to the regulatory dictionary, women poets were asked which form they would prefer to be named by and the vast majority opted for the invariable word *poeta*, rejecting *poetessa*, which then became a lesser-used form. Furthermore, it has been noted that words with this ending (*advocadessa* ‘lawyer’) have given way to forms which avoid this suffix (*advocada*), so it would seem that this is clearly the direction in which

⁵ □. Semantic dislocation can be seen in other contexts. For example, when the name of the female sexual organ is used disparagingly while the masculine is used as a compliment.

the language is heading. The same phenomenon has been observed in other Romance languages and I dare to venture that in English, even though the way gender works is different from Romance languages, similar signs have been detected; there are women actors who reject the word *actress* as they consider it patronizing and call themselves *actor*.

Related to these cases, there are some derivations that are only used for women and other groups but never for men. For example, the -am derivation produces words that can apply to sets or groups of things (*arrelam* 'set of roots') or homogeneous sets of animals (*conillam* 'multitude of rabbits'); in this sense, it is also productive to define shapeless groups of women (*donam* 'group of women', *femellam* 'group of females'). It is sometimes applied to describe a part of the body (*pitram* 'set of large breasts'). It is also used to name an indistinct group of children (*criaturam* 'load of kids'); it does not exist, though, for men. It is clearly derogatory and lumps together a group of women on one side, with a group of children, that is, not adult persons, or on the other side, with animals: two of the features one can find in dictionaries when women are described.⁶ Conversely, the highly valued -ada derivation can only be found in actions which men perform (*homenada* 'manlike action').

When derivation is discussed, language structure is sometimes ascribed characteristics which are not inherent, but rather which reflect ideological questions (this can be seen in quite a number of school textbooks). Some grammars ascribe the capacity to generate feminine forms exclusively to the masculine. We know, however, that the feminine words *dida* 'wet nurse' or *partera* 'woman who has just given birth' have generated masculine forms like *didot* 'husband of a wet nurse' or *parterot* 'birth partner'. The masculine *beguí* 'beghard' was created from the feminine *beguina* 'beguine' (Coromines 1980-1991 vol. I); further, the dictionary presents the two words in an unusual order: **beguina** and **beguí**, which order is maintained throughout the entry. This demonstrates that the fact that dictionaries systematically put the masculine form first is a modifiable lexicographical convention. In another etymological dictionary (Alcover & Moll 1985 vol. III), **costurera** and **costurer** 'couturier' have separate entries; the first written record of the feminine form is from 1354 and that of the masculine, 1405. It is hard to conceive that there was a profession such as *infermer* 'male nurse' and that from this word the feminine *infermera* 'female nurse' was created. It would appear that the fact of whether a word is feminine or masculine depends on whether the activity was typical or more frequently done by either of the two sexes. It is logical for a job title to have been coined in the feminine if it was a woman's trade and from there for the masculine to be derived, or vice versa. We have proof of this in the designation *prostituta* 'prostitute' and *prostitut* 'male prostitute'. In the regulatory dictionary (Fabra 1954) the headword was **prostituta** and it is in the new edition (Institut d'Estudis Catalans 1995) that the masculine **prostitut** is placed in front of it. The case proves that the -a in *prostituta* is not a mere addition to the masculine form, but rather that it is the masculine which loses it. Androcentrism (cf. 3.2) causes masculine forms to be perceived as being the bases from which any other form is derived.⁷

2.2 Compounding

Though less productive than derivation, compounding is another noun-forming resource, as much for trades and professions as for traits of character.

Regarding professions, compound words formed from a verb and a noun (VERB + N) are frequent; normally, the noun is expressed in the plural.

- a. *neteja* (VERB) 'to clean' / *vidres* (N) 'windows' → *neteja vidres* 'window cleaner'
- b. *escura* (VERB) 'to clean/scour' / *xemeneies* (N) 'chimneys' → *escura-xemeneies* 'chimney sweep'

These are invariable compound words. If one is speaking about women, the gender of the determiner will mark the feminine compound: *la* (f) *neteja vidres* 'window cleaner'. Otherwise, the masculine determiner is employed: *els* (m pl) *escura-xemeneies* 'the chimney sweeps'.

This same structure and agreement procedure are found in compounds that define human characteristics, especially non-physical ones.

- a. *una* (f) 'a' *busca-raons* 'quarrelsome woman' (literally 'a fight-picker')
- b. *un* (m) 'a' *llepa-fils* 'fussy man'

For defining human traits, though, compounds formed by a noun and an adjective are more common.

- a. *cama* (N f) 'leg' *curta* (ADJ f) / *curt* (ADJ m) 'short' → *camacurta* / *camacurt* 'shorty'
- b. *pèl* (N m) 'hair' *roja* (ADJ f) / *roig* (ADJ m) 'red' → *pèl-roja* / *pèl-roig* 'redhead'

⁶ . An analysis of assimilation between women and children in Lledó (2005) and between women and animals in Lledó (2009).

⁷ . The cases seen in this Section are similar to those which Spanish presents (Lledó 2006: 7-18).

In such cases, if talking about a man, the gender of the adjective is expressed in masculine; it does not agree with the gender (or the number) of the noun with which the compound is formed. If preceded by a determiner, it would be masculine: *un* (m) ‘a’ *camacurt* ‘shorty’. When referring to a woman, both the adjective and the determiner would be feminine: *unes* (f) ‘some’ *pèl-roges* ‘redheads’.

We find some symmetrical cases with the words “woman” and “man”: *dona granota* (f) ‘frogwoman’ / *home granota* (m) ‘frogman’. It seems that there is no way of showing that we are referring to a person and not an animal other than by using the first noun (*dona/home*).

Though now in decline, we can still find another type of compound word, this time asymmetrical, formed by one feminine noun and one masculine.

1

- a. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *enginyer* (m) ‘engineer’
- b. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *torero* (m) ‘bullfighter’
- c. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *escriptor* (m) ‘writer’
- d. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *ministre* (m) ‘minister’

These are unnecessary, inappropriate and rather uneconomic formations, given that the second words in each pair are common and regular derivations that pose no problems.⁸ The appropriate feminine forms, following derivation rules (cf. 2.1.1), are *enginyera*, *torera*, *escriptora* and *ministra*.

Worth highlighting is the fact that this type of compound to refer to professions or activities carried out by women is customarily used in two cases: when the jobs are prestigious and highly valued, or when they are deemed by at least a part of society to be extremely typical of men. They are not used, in contrast, to designate a *fornera* ‘baker’ or a *mestra* ‘teacher’. This phenomenon, however, gets worse and sometimes we come across such redundant expressions as the following ones.

2

- a. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *enginyera* (f) ‘engineer’
- b. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *torera* (f) ‘bullfighter’
- c. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *escriptora* (f) ‘writer’
- d. *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *ministra* (f) ‘minister’

These two last groups of compound words basically transmit the message that women are, above all else, women, and secondly, to a lesser degree, professionals. As we shall see, dictionaries (4.3) and the press (4.4) tend to show them in this light. Perhaps this state of affairs has been worsened by bad translations of books originally written in English, where, from time to time, a similar phenomenon is found: the presentation of men taking up the centre and that of women as a deviation from the norm. So, in some English writings the professional designation is reserved for men (e.g. writer), who are presented without specifying any further, yet, when speaking about a woman, she is specified by tagging on the word “woman”: woman writer. It is conceivable then for a bad translation into Catalan to be *dona* (f) ‘woman’ *escriptora* (f) ‘writer’, a formula in which the feminine is marked twice. The form in Catalan is simple and easy: *escriptora*.

⁸ . This bias and other inventories for Italian by Sabatini (cf. 1986: 120-121) are entirely relevant for Catalan and other Romance languages.

3. Form versus content

When analysing the impact of gender on language, it is fundamental to distinguish between form and content. If one bears in mind that languages are simply systems of communication, we will have to agree that any discourse which cancels out women or presents a devalued or subordinate image of them is a reflex of the thoughts and feelings of whoever the speaker is and not at all inherent in the language. With language, one can lie, but this does not mean that language lies; one can make a racist comment, but it does not mean that language is racist. Language X-rays with extreme precision all that is thought or felt.

There are marvellous examples of just how precise language is. The following clearly shows that sexism depends on the speaker and not on the language. In 1994, in a news programme reporting (then prime minister of Pakistan) Benazir Bhutto's visit to Spain, this was said: "The prime minister showed, at all times, signs of intelligence and friendliness". Language is not to blame for this message; nothing in language obliges one to describe a woman politician with the two chosen nouns; nothing in language would stop a man from being described thus.

The fact that the intelligence of the politician was doubted (for if this were not the case, it need not have been mentioned) or that friendliness is considered to be something always expected of a woman, have nothing to do with language and everything to do with the ideology of whoever wrote the sentence. Within the conciseness of the sentence, the nominal syntagma "at all times", which shows surprise at intelligence and friendliness not being mere isolated flashes but permanent qualities in Bhutto, highlights perfectly how amazingly precise language is.

Therefore, when relationships between human presence and gender are analysed, that is, the interrelations between sex and grammatical gender, it is vital to distinguish between *sexism* (which affects content above all) and *androcentrism* (which on many occasions marks form). (Cf. Lledó 2007a: 44-51)

3.1 The concept of sexism

Sexism is basically an attitude characterised by contempt and belittlement – to excess or by default – towards what women are or do. It is an attitude stemming from the supremacy of men and all those beliefs which legitimise this. It can also be defined as the set of methods used by the patriarchy to continue to keep the feminine sex in a situation of subordination. Sexist beliefs and social practices do not only limit women's activities but they are also an inappropriate way of drawing distinctions between the sexes, given that they are not based on any evidence. Sexism has much importance because it is the practice of domination which the whole world experiences.

In discourse marked by sexism, women usually appear, since they are texts which tend to devalue or denigrate women, for example when the appearance of a woman politician is spoken about instead of her work, or when women are treated patronisingly.⁹ By contrast, in texts biased by androcentrism (cf. 3.2) women do not appear, precisely because androcentrism makes them go unnoticed and, therefore, unnamed.

3.1.1 Proverbs as an example of sexist content

Proverbs are some of the best examples of how far sexist content and the main misogynistic clichés can be concentrated. As in all sexist discourse, women are present. Below are instances of the main fossilised clichés that can be found.

1 Comparison with animals

They are mainly compared with the *guilla* 'vixen', the *gallina* 'hen' or the *conilla* 'female rabbit', but also with other animals.

- a. For their physical characteristics: *Oca, dona i cabra, mala cosa si és magra* 'Goose, woman and nanny goat, bad news if they are lean'.
- b. For their non-physical characteristics: *No hi ha animal més traïdor que una dona i una mula* 'No animal is more of a traitor than a woman and a mule'.

2 Comparison with fruit

- a. *La figa, com la dona, quan torç el coll és bona* 'The fig, like the woman, is good when it twists

⁹ □. Examples of the main sexist contents can be found in Lledó (2013: 37-62).

its neck' (i.e. when it dies).

3 Physical characteristics

a. *A la dona barbuda, des de lluny se la saluda, amb dues pedres millor que amb una* 'The bearded woman is to be greeted from afar, with two stones better than one'.

4 Non-physical characteristics

a. *Cap home savi i discret diu a la dona un secret* 'No wise and discreet man tells a woman a secret'.

5 Relations with the husband

a. *A la dona i a la ruca, tots els dies atonyina* 'For the wife and for the donkey, a beating each day'.

6 On work, especially domestic

a. *Dona ociosa, no pot ser virtuosa* 'An idle woman cannot be virtuous'.

b. *Dona que molt mira, poc fila* 'A woman who watches too much, cannot do much'.

Though to a lesser extent, one can also find proverbs placed in the mouths of women who are speaking about their situations: *Mare, què vol dir casar? Parir, rentar i plorar* 'Mother, what does marriage mean? Having babies, washing and crying'.

To round off these brief lines on sayings, I will mention a positive one recorded by Fenollet in 1511: *Si la dona ho vol, Déu ho vol* 'If woman wishes so, God wishes so'. In the book from which it is taken (Conca & Guia 1996: 139), it is noted that although it must have been in frequent use at the time, the various later tracts of paremiology do not record it, something which makes one think that the content favourable to women did not seem exemplary or proverbial enough. The disappearance of this proverb from reference books indicated that investigations in this field not only have to face the sexism of the documents and of the society they are studying but also the prejudices of whoever recorded and analysed the saying.

Proverbs show that sexism affects above all language content: the messages sent out have nothing to do with linguistic structure; therefore, it ought not to be necessary to say much more about it. However, apart from content, sexism also has repercussions in formal aspects of language through certain uses.

3.1.2 Main sexist uses¹⁰

1

Using a diminutive when talking about a woman in a formal context (for instance in a news item)

2

Using, in the same context, surnames to talk about men, but the first name and surname, or just the first name, for women.

3

Use, in the same context, of the article before the first name or the first name and surname of a woman but not before a man's.

4

Placing the word *senyora* 'Mrs' before women's names but not men's in texts which present women and men of equal category (it occurs particularly in political contexts).

5

Referring to women as a separate group

6

Asymmetric use of the word *senyoreta* 'Miss'

7

¹⁰ □. An inventory of the main sexist uses can be found in Lledó (2011: Chap. 5, 2013: 63-87).

Asymmetric use of the designations *femella* ‘female’ / *mascle* ‘male’, *dona* ‘woman’ / *home* ‘man’

8

Unnecessary, redundant use of the word *dona* ‘woman’

9

Enumerating the positions or professions of men but not of women

10

Relegating women to obscurity

11

Systematically naming men before women (this is a halfway use between sexism and androcentrism)

In the uses of language here mentioned, the content might not criticise women; it might even be highly approving content, but the very way they are presented by any one of these uses means that they are not on an equal footing, whether it is because they are treated in an over-familiar way and not from a respectful distance, or whether it is because they are trivialised. I shall give you two examples.

In the first, a headline refers to the vice-president of the Spanish government solely by her first name (Soraya) and not by her surname (Sáenz de Santamaría) or by both (Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, as it did in the main body of the article): “*El cor de Soraya*” ‘Soraya’s heart’ (T.S. 2013).

In the second case, the article *la* ‘the’ is placed before the name and surname of the woman mentioned in the piece of news, but not before either of the two men’s. The treatment is not even-handed: *La història ja és coneguda, la Lupe Villar acompanya Martín Domínguez a veure Joan Carles Doval*. ‘The story is already well known, Lupe Villar accompanies Martín Domínguez to see Joan Carles Doval’ (Vilarnau 2005: 62).

I maintain that this is a use and not a question of content because although it is true that they are presented with a familiarity (reserved for naming those close to us) improper in the press, at no time was anything denigrating said; there was not even an evaluation of them or of what they do.

3.2 The concept of androcentrism

Androcentrism is an outlook oriented by the set of dominant values in the patriarchy or, expressed in another way, by a perception centred around and based on male norms. It means taking man as the yardstick for everything; any discourse showing aspects of women’s lives as a deviation (from the norm) is androcentric. It is fundamentally a partial vision of the world which considers that what men have done is what humanity has done or, vice versa, that everything which the human species has achieved is only down to men; it is also, therefore, an appropriation on men’s part of what women have done. It is believing that the experiences of males include and are the measure of human experiences, valuing only what is manlike and regarding themselves as the centre of the world and the pattern for measuring any person.

Androcentrism, that is, only taking men into consideration when talking or writing has definite repercussions on the uses of language and, to a far greater degree than sexism, it is the cause of some linguistic uses which tend to exclude or invisibilise women in discourse.

Such simple phrases as *Els* (m) ‘the’ *mestres* ‘teachers’ (m) *donen classe* ‘teach a class’ or *Els* (m) ‘the’ *pagesos* (m) ‘male farmers’ *cultiven els camps* ‘work the fields’ tend to invisibilise and steal the limelight from women workers, in spite of their great prominence in the first profession – education being for the most part in women’s hands at all levels – and their major role in the second: not referring to female farmers makes it easy to keep people in the dark about the fact that two thirds of agricultural work is owed to women’s toil. For this reason I qualify the above masculine forms as “presumed generics”.¹¹

In the previous paragraph the utilization of the masculine form to talk about women and men is cited as androcentric usage (in neither case is there feminine presence, something quite normal in androcentric discourse). This is without doubt the most common use. It would also be the case if the words *home* ‘man’ and *homes* ‘men’ were used to talk about both sexes. Occasionally, this discourse takes the experience of men as its centre and presents women as peripheral. Let us see a case.

Reflection on the human body. In order to analyse some of the characteristics of the human body in today’s society, the book proceeds, initially, to a brief explanation of the history of the body in western culture and, further on, it analyses some aspects which are lateral but essential nonetheless for an anthropological exploration of the body as might be the case with, for instance, woman’s body in western culture and patriarchalism as a way of organizing human bodies. (*Serra d’Or* 2003: 67).

¹¹ □. Kramaræ & Treichler (1985: 150, 175) prefer to talk of “false generics”.

The text clearly reveals that the first three expressions with *body* are not universal even though they are presented as generic, since only one line later, it goes on to talk about a lateral aspect, that is to say, a marginal one, and this non-central aspect is none other than women's bodies. When the human body was being spoken about, women's bodies were excluded as the *human body* was only men's.

3.2.1 Text books as an example of androcentric content

When sexism has been referred to, a distinction has been made between the phenomena restricted to content (proverbs) and those related to form (linguistic uses). If we wish to tackle the concreteness of androcentrism, text books can provide us with a good example.

In Catalan there is no systematic and global study of text books. I myself have worked in this field but with Spanish text books (Lledó & Otero 1992). In any case, in my experience, text books in one language or another do not differ greatly. I shall base the analysis on books from two main subjects: Catalan language and literature (both of which I taught in secondary education). Clearly, text books on literature, language or the other school subjects do not denigrate women and are not sexist, unless one interprets androcentric exclusion and undervaluation as an insult.

With regard to literature, androcentrism materialises in the invisibilisation of women writers, since there is virtually no room for them in teaching programmes and readings. Although removed from questions related directly with the way language works, a brief glance at programmes, manuals and compulsory readers care a good indicator of the situation. Going to specific examples, in an index of a popular manual (Arenas & Carbonell & Gadea 1986: 653-656), only one woman author can be found (Mercè Rodoreda). One might expect the presence of Women writers to have grown, but it not the case: throughout the academic years 2012-2015,¹² of the five compulsory readers in the core baccalaureate subject, four are by male authors and the fifth is chosen by the school. For the same period, in the optional subject of the last year of baccalaureate, six works of literature are to be read; the normal procedure is for all the books to be by men or for the ratio to be five to one in favour of men writers. Also for the same period, the subject of Universal Literature is based on readers by forty-six people; forty-four are **men** writers and only three works by two women writers are included. Curiously these are both British (Woolf and Emily Brontë); the six compulsory readers are all by men.

In subject manuals for Catalan Literature, women writers never even reach 5% of the total and the majority of these are 20th century authors. Furthermore, when a prominent woman author is spoken about, fewer lines are given over to her than to men authors of an equivalent category and they are never held up as a paradigm of a literary movement or proposed as an example. Nor can we find any reflection on the role that men writers ascribe to women or the image that they give of them.

This is all linked to a (formal but no less important) question which affects language: the use of the masculine form to comprehend both sexes. In class, if one talks about "Women and men writers", the mere formal decision to refer to them thus conditions content because, unless one wishes to make a fool of oneself, as in the initial statement women writers have been referred to, logically one will be obliged to speak about them. It is not simply a question of names: a specific and apparently formal statement will bring about changes in content. At times, naming a reality is the first step towards talking about it. In my experience, the only way to make pupils understand that there are women troubadours was by referring to women and men troubadours; if I failed to do this and used the masculine, the women troubadours remained firmly in oblivion.¹³

The overwhelming presence of men is also revealed in language manuals. I will mention three of the constants which they show.

- a) The literary texts offered as language models are normally of male authorship, with all the consequences which that brings for the imaginary and evaluation of women and men;

¹² . Only during the leftist coalition government (2003-2010) in the Generalitat de Catalunya was there an increase in the number of women authors, as well as greater diversification. The purviews on education depend on the regional government.

¹³ . Colleagues in other subjects who analyse manuals coincide in saying that the use of the masculine to refer to men and women makes it difficult for women to appear in the contents. Despite this, History books almost always used to present the first topic in this way: "The origin of man" (Fernández García 1982: 5). In another manual, an illustration shows two Egyptian women, while the footnote states: "Textile, a new conquest of Neolithic man" (García 1988: 33). In the same manual it is stated: "Unlike division of labour by sex, this [social division of work] had important social and economic consequences" (García 1988: 339). The subject of History is one of the main supports of the androcentric view (Moreno 1986). Talking about, for instance, *societats de recol·lectores (f) i caçadors (m)* 'societies of gatherers and hunters' and not about *societats de caçadors (m) i recol·lectors (m)* 'societies of hunters and gatherers' means that agriculture, botany etc. are not automatically attributed to men; also it will possibly help in making the women gatherers' tasks more prominent.

- b) the sentences which exemplify various orthographical and grammatical aspects are generally clichéd: they reinforce conventional, often obsolete, roles of women and men in the world, and men's prominence here is widely known;
- c) apparently anodyne sentences which are used constantly in manuals ("John is eating an apple", "John is carrying a book" and so on) tend to be predominately male.

The last two aspects, especially *c*), usually go unnoticed. This contributes to the ubiquity of the masculine form and systematically highlights men's experiences (the same thing happens in questions to introduce problems in subjects far removed from language such as mathematics, chemistry and physics). Moreover, language manuals do not reflect on and therefore do not speak about the relationships between gender and sex; often they do not even present the masculine form as a presumed generic but take it for granted and, in this way, it becomes natural.

Androcentrism also affects information technology, as learning materials by the Department of Education has proved. For instance, one exercise which shows verbal infinitives to be inflected into participles does not accept feminine participles as correct. Thus, a perfectly well-written participle is considered incorrect.

On another matter, the Department of Education, starting in 1993, set about revising sexist and androcentric content in text books as part of a general standardization. This overhaul generated a series of reports regarding images, language used, presence of women, etc. Years later, this overhaul was watered down to become a broader one based on interculturality. In 2006, as a result of changes in educational law, text books stopped being standardized. At no time was a single text book rejected on grounds of its being sexist or androcentric.

4. Representation of women and men in text

In the previous section we started to look at the way women and men are represented in documents. Now, three especially representative and emblematic areas will be spoken about: guides, dictionaries and the press. In all three one can appreciate, among other things, the changes that there are regarding women.

4.1 Induced changes and spontaneous changes

At one end of the scale, guides are used to enable us to see proposals, promoted by various institutions, to write in such a way that, on the one hand, women are not invisibilised or excluded and, on the other, are not denigrated. By nature of the material, then, it is clearly a question of induced changes. At the other end, the analysis of the press will focus on some of the new changes unrelated to those formulae proposed by guides or other documents; which is why I call them “spontaneous changes”. They are normally more radical and profound in the way they visibilise women. Midway between these two are the changes in dictionaries; on the one hand, they reflect existing social changes in the perception of women and men, that is to say, changes caused not through direct action on language but through reality; on the other hand, new models for defining and exemplifying are proposed therein, and thus we are dealing with induced changes and with voluntary action on language.

4.2 Guides

The publication of the first guides on avoiding what is generally known as sexism in language or sexist linguistic usage, is habitually thought to date back to the 80s, when it started as a result of, above all, the documents sent out by UNESCO and, a little later, by the EC (e.g. Conferència 1987 or Grup d'Alt Nivell 2008).

In actual fact, it started earlier. As far back as 1933, at the time of the Second Spanish Republic, forms could be found from the Public Administration School of Catalonia where the wording allowed for variants depending on whether women or men completed them.¹⁴

Years after the Francoist dictatorship, at the end of the 80s/beginning of the 90s, foreign guides arrived on Catalan language soil which exercised a great influence (e.g. Sabatini 1987, Miller & Swift 1988, *À juste titre* 1994). At the start of the 90s, one administration, specifically the Catalan government, issued one of the first documents (*Indicacions* 1992). Previously, the Valencian government had issued one, but in Spanish (*Recomendaciones* 1987).

From the 90s onwards, the creation of guides for writing in such a way that includes women and men caught on and took off. All types of institution issued them, from the Administration to the different universities, as well as many city and town councils, big and small. Apart from these, though more for internal use, guides are created by companies and other government institutions, for example, Parliament. Media style guides also normally set aside a section for this. Guides tend to give over one section to professions; these were influenced by documents in French (*Au féminin* 1991, *Mettre au féminin* 1994). The public administrations of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands have continually issued a series of political documents which make the creation of guides necessary.¹⁵

Aside from certain considerations about sexist content (the denigrating content tends not to be included in the guides) and some others about point of view, guides in short list the main problems caused by the use of the masculine as a generic and thence propose alternatives in order to avoid this. They normally suggest (always bearing in mind the context and with more or less emphasis on some proposals or others, depending on the guide) the following when writing:

- a. Avoiding all or some of the main sexist uses seen in Section 3.1.2
- b. Using the ‘at’ symbol (@). When this did not exist, the use of an asterisk was proposed
- c. Using forward slashes (*professor/a* ‘teacher’). This is a resource that has lost ground and is now very often restricted to lists or forms to complete
- d. Using generic forms (e.g. *la ciutadania* (f) ‘the citizenry’, *el poble català* (m) ‘the Catalan people’)
- e. Avoiding the use of the masculine form as generic¹⁶

There is a criterion which allows us to separate the majority of guides into two groups. On the one side, there are those guides which always avoid using the masculine form as a presumed generic, and on the other side, there are guides which raise the issue only as a recommendation (i.e. whenever possible), that is, if the resulting writing is not especially

¹⁴ □. E.g. *Certifica: Que _____ ha estat inscrit en el Curset* ‘This is to certify that _____ is enrolled [leaving a space for -a in the case of women] in the course’ (Pereña & Batlle 1988: 3). The first administrative document in Catalan (from the 12th century) already showed double forms: *Voluntat d’aquell (m) o d’aquella (f) que testa en sa vida* ‘Will of he or she who is leaving a testament’ (Duarte 1986: 135).

¹⁵ □. I cite as an example a very interesting law by the Catalan government, *DOGC* (2008).

¹⁶ □. To see in more detail the proposals usually put forward by guides see Lledó (2011: Chap. 11).

uneconomic or ineloquent. The guides in the first group start from the premise that clear criteria are essential so that, when they are used, people do not get lost; they also consider that a criterion like “whenever possible” is not objective and depends on each individual’s perception. The guides in the second group highlight the difficulty which is sometimes created by not utilising the masculine as generic.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Department of linguistic Policy of Catalonia revised the criteria for use of the masculine and, though in 2005 it banned this use (*Marcar les diferències* 2005), six years later, in a small opuscle (*Guia d’usos no sexistes* 2011), it softened its stance. The Catalan parliament has followed a similar path regarding criteria for the creation of its documents.

Initially, guides would only deal with one or other type of administrative language, something logical given that they usually came from an administration. They were, furthermore, very short opuscles with vague general recommendations. Over time, guides have evolved and at present, as well as continuing to diversify in the areas they deal with, they are generally longer and more precise, offering wide ranges of specific resources for specific problems which are usually based on real writings.¹⁷ One could say that they have gained in precision and are less frustrating than the first, in which whoever was using them rarely found concrete solutions for the types of problems they were facing.

4.3 Dictionaries

The best way to analyse the changes in dictionaries is to compare two consecutive editions. Specifically, the two last editions of the regulatory dictionary will be analysed. So, the *Diccionari General de la Llengua Catalana* – hereafter the DGLC – (Fabra 1954), in use until 1995, was replaced (and in a thoroughly revised edition) by the *Diccionari de la llengua catalana* – hereafter the DIEC – (Institut d’Estudis Catalans 1995).¹⁸

During the creation of the DIEC, there was a discernible willingness to remove some of the more visible features of sexism and androcentrism. With this objective in mind, needlessly belittling examples (and definitions) were eliminated. An apparently trivial example can be used as to show this. In the DGLC, this example was given to accompany **coloraina** ‘gaudy colours’: “This woman likes gaudy colours” (exemplifying “set of bright and mismatched colours”). Although not belittling, it presents a woman of bad taste. In the DIEC edition, the addition of a simple negative turns her into a woman of good taste: “This woman does not like gaudiness”.

Some data can help in spotting the changes. Below, the first table shows the percentage of examples with women’s presence out of the total number of examples in which sexed human presence was detected (the examples with a joint presence of women and men, some 3%, are included in the examples with women). These increased by 5% from one edition to the next.

Table 3. Number of examples in each dictionary (in %)

Dictionary	Examples with women	Examples with men
DGLC	11,30%	88,70%
DIEC	16,28%	83,72%

In the following table we can see the four categories in which women appear most in the two dictionaries (kinship, physical characteristics, non-physical characteristics and professions); it is no exaggeration to say that these same categories could be used to analyse a great many dictionaries; the Spanish ones, certainly (cf. Lledó & Calero & Forgas 2004). Regarding contents, the examples varied significantly. While in the DGLC the majority covered family relations (especially the affective-sexual ones with men), in the later dictionary, by contrast, most examples are given over to non-physical characteristics and those concerned with physical characteristics decrease considerably. This is a positive sign as it means that women are seen as more than pure nature and more than a mere body.

Table 4. Number of examples (in %). The total percentage adds up to more than 100 as some examples fall into more than one category.

Dictionary	Kinship	Phy. char.	Non-phy. char.	Jobs	Others
DGLC	41,81%	24,00%	21,81%	12,26%	8,13%
DIEC	19,05%	14,29%	31,75%	14,29%	26,98%

Though not to the same extent, the same tendency can be noted in definitions. One may observe a considerable increment in those concerned with professions. This indicates the increasing importance which dictionaries place on

¹⁷ . For example the series of five guides *Esports, dones i llengua*, the first in Lledó (2007b); the other four are on the same website in which the first one appears (cf. *References*).

¹⁸ □. Two detailed analyses on the changes in the regulatory dictionary in Lledó (2000, 2005). Cabré has spoken of the ideological biases of dictionaries on many occasions (Cabré 1993, 1998).

women's public life. It is another good symptom: that women are seen as professionals and beyond the stereotypical roles (wife, mother and so on). This is a change induced by changes in society more than through voluntary action on the language.

Table 5. Number of definitions in each dictionary (in %). The total percentage adds up to more than 100 as some examples fall into more than one category.

Dictionary	Kinship	Phy. char.	Non-phy. char.	Jobs	Others
DGLC	34,72%	26,11%	13,92%	25,39%	10,19%
DIEC	26,44%	19,54%	16,09%	40,23%	5,75%

We could add a qualitative detail to these quantitative data. For instance, in the DIEC, negative examples with women's presence regarding non-physical characteristics decreased and, for the first time, women are used to define global non-physical characteristics of women as well as of men. The inclusion of women and of females in definitions referring to the body also diminished in the DIEC.

From a more formal point of view, which is what is of most interest in this contribution, and despite the aim to eliminate sexism and androcentrism, in the DIEC the masculine form as a global term for men and women is still being used (though not always), as is the word "man" to refer to humankind (though not as frequently).

The increase in definitions concerned with professional activities is accompanied by changes as much in form as in content. The main formal changes (logically having an impact on content) are the following:

- Generic formulae are used more commonly, among which "person who..."
- The masculine formula "he who" to refer to women and men is no longer recurrent and systematic.
- Disappearance of the formula "who enjoys the title of" which appeared in the DGLC and which presented women as essentially women and not professionals or outright owners of a title.

These are, then, induced modifications. In the new edition, there are more formal changes of a greater breadth, for example, the majority of double-ended nouns denoting people comprise the complete masculine and feminine forms (**padrí padrina** 'godfather/godmother', **energumen energúmena** 'man/woman possessed' etc., always in this order). One step further in the visibilisation of women.

4.4 The press¹⁹

In Section 3.1.2, the main sexist uses have been stated and some cases have been cited (e.g. a newspaper headline where a vice-president was referred to by her first name). We can also find writings without a trace of formal sexism. In the following headline: "Contijoch i Comadira, *premis de la Crítica Serra d'Or*" 'Contijoch and Comadira, award-winners of the *Crítica Serra d'Or*' (*El Periódico* 2013), we see that the woman writer and the man writer are equally mentioned by their surnames, precisely in that order.

As for androcentrism, writings can be found which avoid it by using a double form: "*La seva poesia [Kavafis], que Yourcenar tradueix com a poemes en prosa, toca una fibra que fa ressonar moltes cordes de la sensibilitat de l'home i la dona del segle XX o XXI*" 'His [Kavafis'] poetry, which Yourcenar translates as poems in prose, strikes a chord which stirs many feelings in the *man and woman* of the 20th or 21st century' (Racionero 2011).

In the previous case, the double form is "woman and man". Others can be found: "*És habitual que hi hagi una alta proporció de gent jove, a l'autobús, adolescents, nois i noies, mares joves amb una criatura. També al carrer la majoria de gent que veig passar no té els meus anys, però l'espai autobús és tancat i la presència juvenil és més pressionant*" 'It is quite normal for there to be a large proportion of *young people*, on the bus, *teenagers, boys and girls*, young mothers with a *kid*. On the street as well, most *people* I see aren't as old as me, but the bus is a closed space and the presence of *youth* adds more pressure' (Espinàs 2009). Besides the double form (*nois i noies* 'boys and girls'), the excerpt uses different generic forms (in italics) naturally; another possible option. In the press, especially common are the double forms *actor i actriu* 'actor and actress', *nens i nenes* 'boys and girls', and *lectors i lectores* 'men and women readers' / 'readers'.

Other means are also used, for instance using masculine and feminine at the same time: "*No sé pas com es troba a hores d'ara la producció de roses al Maresme, però la invitació de l'anònim(a) (m/f) grafitador(a) (m/f) de Llaveneres a collir-ne consenteix l'optimisme*" 'I have no idea how rose production is going at the moment in the Maresme area, but the invitation by the *anonymous graffiti artist* to pick them might give us grounds for optimism' (Jòdar 2003).

To round off these types of methods, some growing changes which are clearly non-induced will be shown. In language, changes – of varying breadth – can be produced because someone is pushing them; one only has to look at the

¹⁹ □. A global study on contents and the presence of women in the press in Altés & Bach & Gallego & Plujà & Puig (1999).

differences between the language of the Administration during the Franco period and now. In this area it is relatively common for it to be decided that in any given form, instead of putting, for example, *l'interessat* (m) 'the interested party', to put *la persona interessada* (n) 'the interested person' (so that everyone can feel identified), or for generic forms to be recommended. On the other hand, the changes we shall now see are "spontaneous": nobody has proposed them. They do not, however, appear by chance, but respond to profound changes in society regarding the perception of women and, consequently, the language reflects that. This is why it is the most interesting type of change.²⁰

1 The feminine "una"

It is increasingly common in the writings of women journalists and authors to use the feminine *una*, whether it refers to their own experience or to general experience: "*Una* (f) *aprén a lluitar amb les pitjors coses imaginables, trobar l'esperança i tirar endavant*" 'One learns to fight against the worst things imaginable, to find hope and carry on' (Toledo 2008).

2 Alternation

At times, the masculine and the feminine are alternated when explaining a human experience: "*És un espai [plaça de toros] emocionant tant si un* (m) *ha lluitat perquè es prohibeixi la festa a Barcelona com si a una* (f) *li agraden els toros i aprecia la delicadesa del toreig de José Tomás*" 'It's an exciting place [bullring] whether one has fought for it to be banned or whether one likes bulls and appreciates the bullfighting delicacy of José Tomás' (Rubert 2011). This alternation is also performed with nouns.

3 "Universal or generic" feminine

These are writings where the feminine is used since a woman is the main person involved, despite referring to a woman or a man regardless. "*Per primera vegada una catalana* (f) *tindrà despatx a Gènova*" 'For the first time, a Catalan will have an office on Gènova street' (Barbeta 2012).

4 "Specific" masculine

As with a mirror, there are writings which, when speaking exclusively about men's experience, restrict the experience (usually with an adjective) and do not present it as universal: "*I això és el que sembla que passa amb la gran majoria de l'afició viril fidel a Mourinho*" 'And that is what seems to be happening with the vast majority of masculine fans who are loyal to Mourinho' (Balló 2011). Until recently, this method was only used to specify women's experiences.

To these brief overviews, unusual feminisations could be added. From the article: *la* (f) *subjecte* 'the subject', *una* (f) *nadó* 'a baby'; or through inflection: *titana* 'titan', *benjamina* 'youngest child' and so on'.

²⁰ □. To see this type of change and others in more detail, see Lledó (2007a) and especially Lledó (2013: 145-181).

Conclusion

Throughout this contribution, we have seen how the interrelations between language and gender prompt changes in language. The fact that this question was taken into consideration when revising the regulatory dictionary demonstrates the extent of these interrelations.

Professional designations are a rich area allowing us to see the importance of extra-linguistic factors with regard to these interrelations and subsequent changes. Thus, it can be affirmed that there is generally no problem in creating masculines when men start to work in jobs they did not use to do (they are never designated the feminine form); on the other hand, there is tangible resistance to creating feminines when the profession to which women gain access involves having power, authority or prestige. These are difficulties which have nothing to do with the capacity of language for forming new words but with ideological problems in recognising women's progress. This is why the debates on this question are frequently passionate and very often go beyond the linguistic field.

The main point of the discussion undoubtedly revolves around double forms. Almost everyone favours using language which is free of sexist content and usage and almost everyone sees the usefulness and decency of using generic terms. When it comes to the double forms (e.g. "girls and boys") though, thinking becomes polarised.

Whether or not they help to discuss the issue more equably, global and interdisciplinary studies are needed to describe those questions related to gender because, although changes have been seen in many areas, in a large number of them there have only been partial studies. Also to be researched are other aspects which up to now have only been superficially analysed, such as the outlook or the differences between the language of women and that of men.²¹ Intuition tells us that there are differences but it is a virtually unexplored area.

We know that languages change constantly: it is an intrinsic feature. The brief glances taken at the press are those which best prove that change is underway.²² While induced changes – e.g. through guides – give us some ideas and put at our disposal new ways of expressing reality, it is quite clear that those changes exemplified with the press (also in other contexts) are due to the increasing importance and visibility of women; they are changes stemming from the different places that women are taking up in society. The very fact of referring to oneself as *una* (f) 'one' shows that one feels that one's place in the world is more fulfilling and this, together with other innovations, opens hitherto unforeseen and exciting avenues. Further, if the changes in the way one feels about one's place in the world can shape necessary changes in language use, it is also certain that changes in language use help in changing not only the place but also the perception of women. By adopting such changes, language, dictionaries, the press, etc. are confirming this changing reality.

²¹ . An initial overview on point of view in Lledó (2013: 17-36) and on the possible differences in Lledó (2011: Chap. 3).

²² . Sometimes at break-neck speed; for example, in radical left political circles, we can see the emergence of the use of the feminine to speak about mixed groups or even just men. It is normal for a male activist to open a meeting talking about *les treballadores* (f) 'the women workers', including himself in that group; or for a poster publicising a demonstration to say: "*Totes* (f pl) *juntes* (f pl)" 'everyone together'. A completely unpredictable situation.

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